

It was owing to the political women of the country, aided by chivalrous supporters in the House of Commons, that married women now have votes in the villages on village concerns, and that women are eligible as members of Sanitary Boards, *i.e.*, the Urban District Councils, and the Rural District Councils.

The very women who will avail themselves nobly of these new opportunities, will some of them, perhaps, shrink from the word political, and yet it is to those who have not so shrunk that they owe these opportunities.

What we have all to learn with regard to the duties of citizenship, is that what is right to be done is right for us to do. No matter with what limitations women first enter into public-spirited work, they are certain to claim before long their own right to take a direct part in the business of the nation. For instance, if women serve on Boards of Guardians, they will be bound to consider the large question of out-door relief, as compared to in-door relief. They will be brought, by seeing the sad condition of honourable old age when allied to poverty, to study the question of Poor Law Pensions. If they exercise their votes for District Councils, and visit the dwellings of the poor, and support members who wish to condemn all insanitary dwellings, they will have to contemplate the fact that we have not sufficient legal powers to provide for the housing of the poor when their wretched hovels are thus destroyed in the interests of the community.

When she begins serious practical work herself, she will soon discover the truth of the celebrated words, that "good laws make it easy, and bad laws make it difficult for men and women to be good." For the sake of procuring the greater goodness and a higher standard of civilization and morality, she will fling off her prejudices and bravely take her stand with those who seek for reform in all directions.

There are upwards of 15,000 nurses in England. Under the general heading of nurses, midwives, and invalid attendants (which doubtless includes large numbers of unqualified persons), we get the number of 53,057 from the census of 1891.

Since Miss Florence Nightingale's wonderful work in organizing the nurses in the Crimean War, the establishment of a training school for nurses (with the sum which the nation subscribed out of gratitude as a gift to her, and which she devoted to this purpose), the organization of nursing and the regular training of women in most of the large hospitals and in the nursing schools, has raised the occupation into one of the noblest of professions, and the Queen has recently created an Order and Decoration for Nurses.

Nurses in Military Hospitals are now a recognised

part of the British Army Medical Staff. There is a Hospital for Women and Children, in London, entirely under the management of women, and in 1893 the names of 79 lady doctors appeared in the Medical Register.

It is therefore clear that there is a large force of brain and heart power which might be brought as a leaven into national life, and which would quicken the zeal for better sanitation, education and administration in every department of public service.

It must not be forgotten that in addition to other duties all human beings have a special duty to the section of the community to which they themselves belong.

All the training and advantages which women have now, as doctors or as nurses, were bravely fought for by the pioneer women. It seems impossible that women who can study Dr. Garrett Anderson's career, and read the inspiring book of Dr. Jex-Blake, and see how she tunneled mountains of prejudice in order to gain opportunities for women students, should now themselves be content to be backward when they might be in the forward movement of women, or when they might be unlimited in the width of their sympathies, should be prejudiced when they ought to be fighting against prejudice.

Women should take part in politics because, as Mr. Gladstone said: "Those who have no votes may be safely neglected," and the interests of women are constantly neglected or postponed to that leisure day which in Parliament never comes.

Though the individual woman may need nothing for herself, for the sake of other women she should claim political rights, in order to safeguard their interests.

There are questions immediately connected with the medical profession that are discussed in Parliament, and where the organized opinion of qualified nurses would have a most valuable effect, such as the Midwives Registration Bill, and the question that will ultimately arise, as to whether hospitals should be supported, or partly supported, by the rates. The progress of the world is not so much retarded by the dull, the stupid, and the unawakened, as by those who seeing, act as if they saw not, and those who hearing, act as if they heard not.

Every woman has a direct *responsibility* towards the State, because she has *power* to affect the nation's affairs for good or evil, and I trust that every woman who reads these words will ask herself: "Why should I not be one of that brave band that is leading the nation towards the light?"—Yours truly,

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