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Editorial.

CHILD CULTURE.

Is there a nurse or midwife who has no affection for children? If so, she has assuredly mistaken her vocation, for an unloved is an unhappy child, and no unhappy child will really thrive.

And the opportunities of nurses to befriend the children are innumerable. Do we not know the nurse with whom babies and children are always good? An infant of a few days' old knows whether his nurse cares for him or not, and older children turn instinctively—as flowers to the sun—to the nurse who mothersthem. Nurses and mothers stand at the gate of life, and as they look down the vista of years to come, their special knowledge enables them to see more clearly than most people the dangers that beset the little feet which they help to set on life's highway. They see small travellers who have never beheld the light of the sun, or the beauty of the earth and sea, stumbling along that road, because through the sins of their parents, or from inexcusable neglect in infancy, they are blind; they see others stunted and wizened because drunken parents have drugged them with alcohol in infancy and allowed them to grow up half-starved and ill-clad, to satisfy their own cravings for drink; they see children who through unwise indulgence on the part of their natural guardians grow up undisciplined and lacking in self-control, so that in later life they find their way into the reformatory and the prison; they see children whose parents, confounding ignorance with innocence, will send them out into the world without a word as to the dangers which await them morally and physically, and who, wrecked and broken, will pass into hospital

and infirmary wards. They see, again, the poor little "come-by-chance," whose prospect of life is so much slihter than that of the child born in wedlock, and who is an easy prey to the baby farmer and the murderer; and they see other children sensitive and misunderstood, whose childish failings are immediately and severely reprimanded, whose childish efforts to do well pass unnoticed and unencouraged. Is it any wonder that the nurse, if she has any imagination at all, is saddened by the weight of unnecessary suffering which falls so heavily on little children, and that she registers a vow to do all that she can to make life a happier and brighter place for them?

And she can do so much. Health through life depends greatly upon the care bestowed on children in infancy, when they are her special charge. Infantile blindness may, through her instrumentality, be banished from the land; she can teach young mothers—and they will listen to her, for she has proved herself their friend—that if they wish to rear healthy and mentally stable children, they should, while nursing, abstain from alcohol, and take nourishing food; and that to drug a child with spirits is to poison it. They can inculcate the duty of wise discipline and the cruelty of over-indulgence; they can urge mothers to teach their children the vital facts of life as they grow older; and they can befriend the babies who are unwanted and uncared-for, and claim for them their right to live.

The nurse or midwife who does these things is a social worker of the first importance, for the strength of a nation depends on the physical and moral welfare of its people, and she will help materially to raise the standard of both if she attends to the culture of man in the making.

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