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## Editorial.

### THE RIGHT OF LIFE TO HEALTH.

The most priceless gift in the world is health, possessing it we are ready to face life, and wrest the best we may from it, without it self support is difficult or impossible, and many of the pleasures which make life enjoyable and happy are denied us. It thus becomes the duty of all parents to endeavour, by every means in their power, that their children shall be born healthy, and that through their early years, when they cannot conserve this gift for themselves it shall be guarded for them as their rightful birthright.

Nature is extraordinarily careful to protect this birthright, and even under most unpropitious circumstances, unless parents are themselves diseased, children are usually born strong and healthy. But, as soon as they begin their independent existence on all sides inimical forces too often work havoc, laying the seeds of delicacy and disease by which they will be hampered throughout life.

Nor is this only the case where poverty limits the powers of parents. In wealthy homes, where affection and solicitude are poured out over the tiny cradle, ignorance may result in disaster, for ignorance—often culpable—is the cause of much ill health, and unwise over-indulgence is as harmful as privation. One of the most potent forces for evil against which the trained nurse wages daily and unceasing warfare is ignorance, in the wake of which follows disease and death.

And, in the homes of the poor, more especially in our great cities, to the evil wrought by ignorance is added that of poverty. Poverty which deprives the growing child of civilisation, of those precious

gifts which are his elemental right, and which are still the dowry of the child of nature. Space to grow in, pure air to invigorate, warmth of fire or sun, pure water in which to bathe the body inside and out, in all of these he revels unconsciously, not realising their pricelessness. In the most primitive surroundings, he grows up hardy, vigorous, strong, and capable of great endurance. Compare the uncivilised Red Indian, or African, and, indeed, the aborigines of any country, with the stunted and diseased population of our city slums, and we shall realise that while nature is beneficent, and under the most elementary conditions of life bestows upon her children everything necessary to health, man, in countries where life is more complicated, gives to his fellows worthless gifts, and deprives them of those of supreme value. The child of Nature lives and flourishes in the sunlight. The child of so-called civilisation too often withers and dies in the glare of the foot-lights, witness our percentage of infant mortality which is a national disgrace.

Two great and allied professions—medicine and nursing—are concerned in the treatment, and care of the sick, but, even more are they concerned, and they are realising it more every day, in the prevention of sickness. It is a good work to restore the sick to health, but it is still better to preserve health unimpaired. To demonstrate the right of every living being to health is the aim of the National Council of Trained Nurses in the Nursing Pageant to be held in the Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, W.C., on February 18th, when the public will have an opportunity of realising how greatly the educated trained nurse can help forward this desirable end.

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