

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

### WHAT IS A CIVIC NURSE? GIVE AN IDEA OF HER TRUE RELATIONSHIP TO THE MUNICIPALITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Catharine Wright, 2, Dryden Road, Bush Hill Park, Enfield.

#### PRIZE PAPER.

The civic nurse is one whose work lies amongst the civil population of a town or district, and she is responsible to the Municipal or Health Authorities appointing her, the Medical Officer of Health arranging most of her work and receiving her reports, bearing on the sanitary, hygienic, and health conditions of her sphere of action.

The appointment is that of a Health Visitor, and in very large towns these duties are divided amongst several nurses, each having separate and distinct work, one doing Health Visiting and Lecturing, another the Tuberculosis Work, and another acting as School Nurse.

In smaller towns or districts these duties are combined, the Health Visitor being solely responsible.

The nurse appointed should be fully trained, with additional qualifications of a certified midwife, special district training, holding also a Sanitary or Health Certificate from a recognized Sanitary Institute where students may receive this special training.

With this knowledge she is able to meet with equanimity the difficulties and problems which arise, and which must be overcome tactfully and pleasantly if her work is to be carried on successfully.

It may be that she is the first Health Visitor appointed to the district, and her position not quite understood by the inhabitants amongst whom she must work, gradually her power for good will be realized, and her advice sought and acted upon readily.

She will understand so exactly the difficulties of the over-burdened working wife and mother, and may be able to suggest simple, economical methods of cooking and housewifery.

She may have opportunities of ante-natal work, impressing upon the expectant mothers (especially the very young women) simple hygienic rules which may ensure their own well-being and that of the future child.

After the period of parturition she may observe if all goes well with mother and child, advising attendance at the school for mothers, or organizing a school if one is not already in existence.

This may very much reduce the infant mortality of the district, because at these schools young mothers are taught to feed the children and to safeguard them from many evils which follow on wrong feeding and wrongly prepared food.

When visiting the schools the early detection of ear and eye and skin affections are of great importance, and may be brought under medical supervision without delay, and the children receive an idea of the importance of detailed cleanliness as they are prepared and made ready for medical inspection.

The tuberculosis cases will be visited, the home conditions arranged to the best advantage for preventing the spread of infection, and any suggestions of open-air treatment advised by the Medical Officer simplified and carried out.

Dispensary patients may also receive her attention, she arranging for the supplies of milk and other nourishment arranged by the doctor, and the charts of weight and feeding kept in order.

There may be opportunities of simple home talks to the working girls, teaching them the importance of hygienic carefulness with regard to themselves.

The result of her work, visiting and inspecting, will be incorporated in reports, and given in at intervals to her Medical Officer, who will estimate her value in the good and improved conditions of her district.

In the performance of these duties there will be other nurses and social workers to meet, but, with a sympathetic and zealous interest, these workers may combine and share in the general well-being, knowing that "knowledge is power," and that healthier dwellings make happier individuals, healthy conditions will follow, and the children, as future citizens of the empire, be helped to attain their rightful status, physically and socially.

#### HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss G. L. Sheppard, Miss M. Martin, Miss J. Ward.

Miss G. L. Sheppard writes:—"The true relationship of a civic nurse to the municipality, and public health, is one of helpfulness—to prevent the spread of disease, to build up the health and physique of the Empire, and is indeed a truly patriotic work."

#### QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

How would you render first aid to a patient suffering from burns in a workman's cottage, where few remedies were available, and what steps would you take to secure the efficient nursing of the patient?

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)