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EDITORIAL.

CLEAN UP ENGLAND.

The problems that lie veiled beneath the oft-repeated term—"reconstruction after the war"—are many and serious; and long-headed and serious-minded people are already looking along the vista and thinking out solutions. Of all the problems that confront us, there is none so great, and none of which the solution is of more interest, than that of National purity; for that, in the ultimate resort, alone spells national greatness, physically, morally, and psychologically. Speaking from the physical view point only—can any nation be great, whose standard of health is continuously lowered by the ravages of venereal diseases, which we seem to take on the whole, very complacently? Our compassion for the victims of the war is very real; but it is questionable if—as a nation—we feel any real practical compassion for the innocent victims of the "frightfulness" of venereal diseases. Royal Commission is a high-sounding term, and when one is appointed to enquire into need for reform, we do take heart of grace and believe that something will be done; and we hope that practical effect will be given to the recommendations of the members. Disappointment usually follows. So it is with the Royal Commission appointed to enquire into this national scourge of ours. To give vigorous effect to its recommendations is deferred, we may be told, owing to the exigencies of the war.

Yet this is infinitely worse. It is a most cruel and cowardly war against the health and happiness of innocent people—wives, and children born and unborn. The country ought to ring with it, the clergy "boldly rebuke vice" from every pulpit in the land, and not in veiled and prudish language, but

in plain English, which will stir the most sluggish soul. Few do it, we say with sorrow; proportionately, therefore, we honour and esteem those who do.

Are we, or are we not, going to allow this vile scourge to continue to maim and murder innocent victims? Go and visit a Lock hospital, where you will find many innocent victims, and among them many children, and your answer will be an emphatic negative. Our sluggish souls were stirred a little by the horrifying facts revealed to us during Baby Week; of how the little human flowers are blighted and destroyed, before birth and after, in such large numbers by the infection of these hideous diseases. "The breath of these flowers is sweet to me" the poet Longfellow most beautifully imagines the "Lord and Giver of Life" saying of His little ones. We have reliable evidence that a higher standard of national purity and public health has been the result of women's political enfranchisement in the American States and in other parts of the world. A male inhabitant of Seattle—one of the large towns of the State of Washington—stated, after thoughtful investigation, that the town had been "cleaned up" after the power to vote had been conferred upon women in 1910. God grant that we women may lay upon ourselves the paramount obligation to "clean up" England when the same power becomes ours in the near future. Let this be the vision of our ideal of reform. There can be no true reform without it, and the need was never greater.

If "Clean up England" seems too large a problem for some of us, then let us begin in our own small corner, and see that that becomes a healthier, sweeter place. Everyone of us can do something to influence or create public opinion, and it should be a matter of conscience with us to do it.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)