

want to know what are its inherent weaknesses, its possibilities, its tendencies. The problem of life has been expanded slowly from "Know thyself" to "Thy neighbour," and lastly, to "Know thy own, and thy neighbour's heredity and environment."

The child, like the man by the wayside, has fallen among thieves, and is robbed by the conditions of heredity, environment, and function.

I think it is useful to regard the child as a plant—say a budding plant—be it daisy, or rose, or orchid: it has hereditary characteristics, it needs suitable environment, nurture, in which it can be developed to the best advantage. It is to this end and aim—full life for each and all—that those who have infant welfare at heart should work. Heredity works through long ages. The stock may be improved, as every breeder of animals, every grower of plants knows. Here and there, it is true, "a sport," as it is termed—something unique and original—may arise, but there is a levelling tendency in heredity—we all tend towards the mean—the average. The babies we shall deal with will for the most part be average babies. We deal with it, as it is (being), we are concerned with what it will be (becoming)—*i.e.*, we have to help bring out or repress what is inborn.

I have already said too much on Nature. Bear with me briefly while I touch on Nurture (environment and function)—a far more familiar ground. Given our plant, the next point to decide is—What does it need? The primitive needs of every human body are—air, water, warmth, rest, food: the amount and quality vary with the individual. The needs of the mind are right sense impressions; the importance of right stimuli to feeling, hearing, seeing, smelling, cannot be over-estimated. If these are appropriate, bad hereditary tendencies will not develop. The child is an imitative animal, and mimicry often prevails over heredity. Love is as the sunshine to the plant: soil, position, pruning, watering, are all useless without sunshine. Local science in infant welfare work is bound to fail if there is not human affection; and love without science also fails, but not so signally. In Sister French, who is to be our first Superintendent, we shall have the lover of babies, and the woman with vast experience and knowledge.

For the first years, the mother is the main factor in the environment. It has been said that infants will live and thrive in poverty and bad sanitation, but will not stand bad mothercraft. Part of the work of the centre will be

the education of the parents (and I much want to include the father), and the health, well-being, and becoming of the mothers, and care and help for the expectant mother. I must just conclude with a little story of Sir John Gorst's. Some people have as confused a notion of the baby as the child who wrote the following, after being taught the elements of physiology:—

"The human body consists of three parts—head, chest, and stummick. The head contains eyes, and brain if any. The chest contains heart, lungs, and a bit of the liver, while the stummick contains the vowels, which are a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes w and y."

I hope at least you will think of the baby as both a reproduction and an original, and that you will all subscribe to the Maternity and Child Welfare Centre that is shortly to be opened at Loughboro' Junction.

### FRENCH FLAG NURSING CORPS.

We regret to learn officially that, as the conditions under which the "1914 Star" is awarded limit the grant to those individuals who were borne on the establishment of the British Expeditionary Force, under the command of Field Marshal Sir J. G. P. French, that the F.F.N.C. Sisters who "crossed the water" before November 22nd, 1914, are not eligible for the honour, as they worked under the French War Office.

A Sister writes: "I was sent to work under the Belgian Red Cross—and nursed Germans all the time in Brussels. I am awarded the Star, but friends who crossed to nurse our French Allies cannot have it, though I own that any British woman who attended German wounded, and washed German feet, deserves a Crown of Stars!"

We hope the French will institute a Star of their own, a Star of Verdun would stand for glorious valour and victory.

The only certificated French Nurse (St. Thomas) who was a member of the F.F.N.C., after doing good work, and resigned upon her betrothal to a military medical officer, has recently been married, and sends us a little letter from Vernueil, where she has been visiting her old friends and sphere of duty. "A very bright, sunny day, the old garden very quiet except for the avions and sound of the guns in the distance. . . . Here is a little snowdrop I pick up in the garden." Let us hope this marriage will bring many years of happiness to M. and Madame Delord. "At present *mon mari* is right up at the front caring for the sick and wounded, in a very hot spot; but should he be moved to the interior his (trained) wife will be able to help him considerably in hospital work, with the skill attained in the celebrated Nightingale School of Nursing."

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