

was the product of a master mind, with a sense of civic responsibility.

One wonders if it is our country's poor appreciation of education which has caused the break in the continuity of these obviously necessary reforms, suggested by great minds of the past. Of course, we have had our many great and grand philanthropists—to mention just two, John Howard and Elizabeth Fry—but our rulers for many centuries have shown a deplorable lack of the civic sense. Why? Well I venture to say there is just one answer to that, namely, *Departmental jealousies and vested interest*. Those two accursed vices strangle the soul and sear the conscience. However, there are many signs that a new spirit is manifesting itself.

There is no more important branch of Civics than Public Health nursing in all its various branches; and as we stand on the threshold of a new era we are proud of the dignity of our new position. We have the Parliamentary franchise, and we have our professional franchise. We are now statutory "persons" for the first time.

This dignity carries with it responsibilities and duties of citizenship in a way we never had it before. How are we going to use this power? One can scarcely emphasise the importance of Public Health Nursing too much, because it would be true to say that there are no conditions of life which do not bear some relationship to health. The care of the sick is closely related to all community problems.

The thing of primary importance for the hour is quite obviously greater standardisation in Public Health Nursing, a universal curriculum. The need for it seems to be particularly needed in Infant Welfare Work. Surely there ought to be one standard of education, and one standard only, for all Infant Welfare Workers. I will not venture to elaborate this point, for two reasons. In the first place, there are ladies here who can speak with greater knowledge and authority than I can. Secondly, this matter will be ably dealt with by the new General Nursing Council. Miss Kent then referred to the Standard Curriculum for Schools of Nursing published in 1918 by the Committee on Education of the National League of Nursing Education, where provision is made for a course of instruction in Public Health Nursing. She said: "The exact reading of the section is, '*Introduction to Public Health Nursing and Social Service (Elective)*.'"

In the U.S.A. it is now recognised as necessary for a complete curriculum for the Public Health Nurse that instruction be given in such modern social problems as Labour Conditions, Immigration, Prostitution, Housing, &c. An intelligent understanding of social problems, other than those of sickness, is now generally recognised by experts in the Nursing world, to be necessary for the Public Health Nurse, "in order to promote the Civic betterment."

I believe that only graduate and registered nurses are now eligible for Public Health Nursing in the States. At least it was under consideration

four years ago by the National Organisation of Public Health Nursing.

I ask your indulgence for referring very briefly indeed to the League of Nations. I anticipate your objection; you are going to tell me perhaps that it is not cogent to the subject. Pardon me, I am going to prove to you that it is.

You perhaps know that an international health bureau is to be set up by the League of Nations.

Sir William Collins has written an article on the League of Nations and health questions. He reminds us that "under Article 24 of the Covenant, various International Bureaux may be placed under the League, if it is desired by the parties concerned." Some of these bureaux have among their objects the promotion of the physical welfare of children and mothers, and of general hygiene reforms. There is no more important body that should have representation on such bureaux than our International Council of Nurses. We shall only have to make application. All international bureaux created in the future will have to be under the League.

I think we should do well to establish something in the nature of a Central Committee on Public Health Nursing. We want greater co-ordination in this work of many branches, and a strong co-operative sense among the members. From a strong recognised body of this sort, we could pass resolutions urging Local Government bodies to give their attention without delay to such things as bad housing conditions, and for playing centres for children, unclean distribution of milk and other food, well-paved and well-watered streets which are essential to health.

The future is full of promise and potentialities. I have a vision of a great Commonwealth of Nurses throughout the civilised world, who being skilled and *State Registered* will take a leading part in all branches of Civics which are in any way allied to Public Health.

We have our Royal British Nurses' Association, the only body of women in the Kingdom possessing a Royal Charter. With the powers we possess under this Charter, together with those recently conferred by the Nurses' Registration Acts, we can remove mountains.

In conclusion, let me say that we can never forget that this great battle for emancipation has been fought under a noble standard, the standard of justice and truth and moral courage, unmarred by any stain of commercialism and self-interest. It is up to us to keep it at this height. May I claim the privilege of an older woman, and say to you young nurses who are going to reap where others have sown: have the courage of your convictions, and don't be afraid of other people, whoever they may be. Instead of grumbling at what you know to be wrong, protest openly against it, and fight it. Craven fear does infinite harm in the world; it stultifies effort, hinders progress, and vitiates the soul. The future of our great profession lies in your hands, upon you will largely depend the health of posterity—a great civic responsibility.

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