

With a view to the encouragement of habits of cleanliness an experiment is being tried in two districts where school nurses organise the attendance at public washing of children whose parents have not good facilities at home. In 1922, 14,033 of these baths were given. It is hoped that habits thus formed will lead to a greater use of public baths, not only by the children themselves, but by other members of the same family. To quote the opinion of a head-mistress, "Plenty of hot water . . . a private room . . . strongly appeal to girls of thirteen and fourteen years of age."

It should be mentioned in conclusion that an insight into the methods of work of the London County Council School Nurses is part of the experience required of foreign nurses studying for the diploma of Health Visitor given by the Board of Education, in connection with the courses at Bedford College for Women, and the Battersea Polytechnic.

CONSTRUCTIVE BIRTH CONTROL.

"OUR OSTRICHES."

We advise those of our readers who are seriously concerned with the problem of a healthy nation, the elimination of the unfit, the fertility and irresponsibility of the section of the community least fitted to pro-create, to see "Our Ostriches," a Play by Marie Stopes, D.Sc., Ph.D., now running at the Court Theatre, Sloane Square, S.W. It will give them food for thought, for whether or not we approve of the remedy advocated by Dr. Stopes, we must all agree with her premises that parents, as well as the nation, have a right to healthy children, and to be instructed how this end can be attained. Moreover, as the heroine of the play plainly asks: "Is it only chance that our class only have small families?" It certainly savours of hypocrisy that those who are acquainted with, and practise, methods of constructive birth-control themselves, should profess righteous horror at the idea of a knowledge of them being imparted to their less fortunate neighbours.

The heroine of the play, Evadyne Carillon, is brought into contact with the Flinkers family through her visits to her former nurse living in the East End of London, and becomes a strong advocate of birth control, when she sees Mrs. Flinkers' dead baby, and learns that she has had eleven children, of whom only six are living, poor, draggled, untidy specimens of humanity, slow, stupid, vacant, and we confess to some sympathy with Lord Simplex, Evadyne's fiancé, to whom, as a son of the Roman Church, the question of birth control is anathema, and who cordially detests having it obtruded upon his notice. We like him better than Brother Peter, Priest of the Earlyan Brotherhood, with his futile acceptance of wrong conditions, and his superficial popularity with the Flinkers children, while he leaves the crying evils of their lives untouched.

The last scene, a meeting of the Commission appointed to investigate the question of Birth Control, with a Bishop in the chair, and a learned professor urging the maintenance of the *status quo* without making any suggestions as to how race-degeneracy can be combated, is typical of such bodies. Dr. Stopes has drawn its members to the life.

We agree with Evadyne, who expressed the opinion to the Commission that the method whereby knowledge as to Birth Control should be imparted to those who, in some shape or form, are unfitted for parenthood, should reach them through the Ministry of Health. The question is a medical one, and should be dealt with as such, but reforms rarely originate in high places. For instance, for how many years, did nurses and midwives have charge of patients suffering from syphilis and gonorrhœa without any teaching as to the nature of these diseases, the danger of infection, and the precautions to be taken in self-protection, being provided for them by hospital authorities, medical practitioners, or matrons? Many, moreover, were shocked at

the idea of such teaching being given after it was proposed by a trained nurse at the Conference of the International Council of Nurses in London in 1909. Now these things are included in the Examination Syllabus of the General Nursing Councils.

In days to come, maybe, nurses who know the cycles of misery all too frequently arising from unfit parenthood, from mothers tainted with insanity giving birth to feeble-minded daughters, who as they come to womanhood have illegitimate children; nurses who have seen, from the inside, the rows upon rows of children in our idiot asylums too foolish to put food into their mouths, or to swallow it when they are fed, without assistance; nurses who realise the menace to the Empire of degeneracy, will arise and demand of the Ministry of Health that the unrestricted begetting of degenerates shall cease.

"If you have canker in the bud it's ridiculous to expect azalea flowers."

The words of the play are published by Messrs. G. P. Putnam's, 24, Bedford Street, Strand, W.C., price 2s. net.

TERRITORIAL ARMY NURSING SERVICE.

APPOINTMENT OF A PRINCIPAL MATRON, 2ND SOUTHERN GENERAL HOSPITAL, ROYAL INFIRMARY, BRISTOL.

The Matron-in-Chief, Territorial Army Nursing Service, would like the members of the 2nd Southern General Hospital to note that Miss Baillie, R.R.C., has resigned her appointment as Principal Matron, 2nd Southern General Hospital, and she has been succeeded by Miss MacManus as Principal Matron, Territorial Army Nursing Service and Matron of the Royal Infirmary, Bristol. All communications, therefore, should be addressed to her in future.

QUEEN VICTORIA'S JUBILEE INSTITUTE FOR NURSES.

ORGANISER FOR SCOTLAND.

Miss J. P. Watt, Superintendent of Fife County Nursing Association, has been appointed organiser for Scotland by the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses. Miss Watt was Superintendent of Motherwell Nursing Association before going to Fife some years ago. She is a native of the North of Scotland, and her professional ability and organising capacity have received recognition on several occasions.

A SLENDER WIRE TO THE PORT BEYOND.

We were very pleased to receive the following contribution from Miss M. Mollett, who now lives in Chili, and hope she will keep in touch with old friends through the JOURNAL. She has never used her exceptionally fine literary talents for half they are worth.

EL FARO.

(THE LIGHTHOUSE), NEAR CALDERA, CHILI.

Blue, blue sky and a blazing sun;
Blue, blue sea and a white, white shore;
Rocks, black and grey in a tumbled welter,
And a surf that beats for evermore:
Stands a lighthouse perched amidst the crags on high,
Foursquare to the winds and the clean blue sky;
With a slender wire to the port beyond,
A voice that calls to the world afar.
Grey crags, black rocks, white crushed shell shore,
Wreck of the age when earth and sea met;
Thundering the death of a world—the birth of a world's,
In the light that warns and the wire that links
The voice that calls to the world afar
From the surf that beats for evermore.

M. MOLLETT.

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