

THE CITIZEN NURSE.

It is satisfactory to note that the progressive wing of the nursing profession is taking its duties as citizens seriously, the duty of every enfranchised person; and that many matters which would formerly have been ignored are realised as a national responsibility. Thus the debate which recently took place in the House of Lords on the planning of reconstruction and development, and that the Government accept the view of the Uthwatt Committee that "all necessary preliminary steps towards the working out of a national plan should be taken as soon as possible." Put in a sentence by the Committee, it is advised that "a central policy for such matters as town and country planning, agriculture, industrial development and transport, is essential to an effective physical reconstruction of this country after the war." With that policy the Nurse Citizen will be in whole-hearted sympathy. To quote *The Times*: "The defects of past development without planning—drab and crowded urban areas; sprawling and untidy suburbs; 'ribbon' building on the high-ways to the country; haphazard location of industry; encroachment on what should remain agricultural land, and disregard of amenities, to name some of the more glaring—these are standing dangers which will recur unless a prepared policy masters them. . . . The pressure of events will defeat planning unless in the meantime the strategy of planning has been made ready for immediate application."

In the rebuilding of hospitals, nurses' homes, and the homes of the poor, the experience of the Citizen Nurse will be invaluable, and let us hope she will be consulted in their up-to-date construction.

The Great West Road.

Londoners who love London have recently been reading an entrancing book, "And So To Bath," by Cecil Roberts, and not without heartache.

That iconoclastic monstrosity, the Great West Road, beloved by motorists, comes in for criticism by the writer on tour. "Let us not hurry too much," he writes, "earth has many prospects more enchanting but few more provocative of thought than the spirit of a new age expressed in the buildings of those industrial demi-gods, 'who make scent, tyres, golf balls, potato chips, razor blades, motor-car bodies, screen wipers, air-conditioning shafts, tooth pastes, swimming costumes, and the innumerable articles of a twentieth-century civilisation.'"

So across open fields . . . to Heston.

"Heston has for centuries been famous for the quality of its land. All around this district of Hounslow, Heston and Isleworth, the rich soil has furnished the larder of London, until the Great West Road ran through the endless orchards and plantations and produced a crop of factories in the place of apples, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, cabbages, lettuces and wheat. A few of these rich market gardens still exist to emphasise the devastation that outgrowing London spreads over the countryside."

"It is difficult now to realise that Heston was once a great granary.

"A more fertile place of wheate, yet not so much to be commended for the quantitie, as for the qualitie, for

the wheate is most pure, accompted the purest in mannie shires. And therefore Queen Elizabeth hath the most part of her provision from that place for manchet for her Highness owne diet, as is reported," wrote a chronicler in 1593.

"Fruit gardens were once upon a time particularly plentiful around here. First the ground is stocked with apples, pears, cherries, plums, walnuts, etc., like a complete orchard, which they call the upper crop. It is secondly fully planted with raspberries, gooseberries, currants, strawberries, and all such fruits and herbs as we know sustain the shade and drip from the trees above them with the least injury. This they term the undercrop. Some of these gardens have walls, which are completely clothed with wall fruits, such as nectarines, peaches, apricots, plums and various others, all properly adapted to the aspect of the wall.

"Gone are most of the orchards and fruit gardens . . . but even until 1930 the motorist made his way along the new Great West Road through six consecutive miles of apple and cherry orchards, for which we now look in vain, seeing only factories and houses that seem cast out of a mould, like the jellied horror that accompanies the prunes on Sunday evening supper in suburban England. Lovers of England have so much to lament to-day in the reckless and appalling changes in the English landscape that almost every new book on the countryside is filled, in wearisome reiteration, with un-availing protests against the vandalism and vulgarity of the age. . . . But let us never again refer to this, let us pass over, in sad silence, the spectacle of a ruined countryside, a vanishing art of husbandry, and tens of thousands of able-bodied men standing in queues at Labour Exchanges while the land clamours in vain for labour. It will take a century yet before the last of England's countryside has been buried in bricks or ravaged by a scab of villas. It will last us out we hope."

We hope no such thing. We realise that in the desecration of this lovely land, we are being punished for the neglect for centuries of the habitations of the poor; the vile slums in which thousands of human beings have been compelled to live and die in darkness—riddled with disease. What we have got to do now is to tackle greed and the jerry-builder, and demand "a central planning authority, with a positive policy for such matters as town and country planning, agriculture, industrial development, and transport as essential to an effective physical reconstruction of this country after the war."

And let the intelligent Citizen Nurse be on the spot.

NERVES DAMAGED BY WAR NOISES.

A novel method of treatment of soldiers whose nerves have been broken by the noises of war is described in the *British Medical Journal* by two specialists in psychological medicine at a military hospital—Dr. F. L. McLaughton and Dr. W. M. Millar.

These invalids are being cured by hearing the noises again.

The B.B.C. has co-operated with the doctors by supplying records of sirens, gunfire, aeroplane engines, dive-bombing, and explosions.

The technique has been found to have a beneficial effect by releasing emotional tension.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)