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EDITED BY MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK, REGISTERED NURSE.

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EDITORIAL.

CLEAN UP BRITAIN.

The problems that lie veiled beneath the oft-repeated term, "Reconstruction After the War" are many and vital; and serious-minded people are 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 more of interest, than that of National purity; for that in the ultimate result alone spells National greatness—physically, morally, and psychologically. Speaking from the physical viewpoint only—can any nation be great whose standard of health is continuously lowered by the ravages of venereal diseases, which we seem to take, presumably in ignorance, 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 disease. Silence is a cruel and cowardly policy against the health and happiness of innocent people, wives and children born and unborn. The country ought to ring with our indignation on this scourge, the clergy "boldly rebuke vice" from every pulpit in the land, and not in veiled or 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 these 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 in the past 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 that towns had been "cleaned up" after the power to vote had been conferred upon women. God grant that we enfranchised women may lay upon ourselves the paramount obligation to "clean up" Britain now that we have the power to do so. Let this be the vision of our ideal of reform. There can be no true reform without it, and the need was never greater than in this hour. Realise the wrecks of humanity—the scarified, blind, incoherent, demented,

paralysed, and long years of agony before release by death. Release the agony of the watchers who love these wrecks. If "Clean Up Britain" seems too large a problem for some of us, then let us begin in our own small corner, and see that it becomes a healthier, sweeter place. Every one of us can do something to influence or create public opinion, and it should be a matter of conscience with us to do it here and *Now*.

AN OUTRAGEOUS DEMAND.

We congratulate the General Nursing Council for England and Wales in refusing to accede to the demand of Mr. Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour, to make training in tuberculosis nursing compulsory for every probationer.

That any Minister of the Crown should venture to compel young nurses to come into contact with this insidious disease, whether they wish to do so or not, is evidence of outrageous autocracy which must be exposed and opposed by every means in our power.

The General Nursing Council is of opinion "that the time is not yet opportune for putting into force the suggestion of the Minister of Labour."

Let us hope the time will never be "opportune" in this country, when any Minister or body of persons, other than Judge and Jury, can condemn free British subjects to death.

DEGREES OF ARROGANCE.

"It may be fairly argued that the arrogance of bureaucrats, when provoked, surpasses that of all other classes of society. For in his own eyes the bureaucrat is not simply a chance functionary of the power of the State. At his desk he has the feeling that he himself is that power. Even though he is only stamping letters, he deems himself of another and higher order than the public, as, let us say, an angel is of another and higher order than mortal man. In his capacity of judge, chief of police, collector of imposts or taxes, he has a far more tangible control over the fates of men than Providence itself. All surround him with the obsequiousness born of fear, for the law is as putty in his hands. From the crown of the Emperor, of which he is in his own conceit the co-bearer, he derives his magic power. He knows very well that in actual fact he is less and knows less than any scholar, physician, engineer, or even than any smith or locksmith who has learned his trade. Rob him of the magic which power radiates, and there is left a rickety and declassified scrivener. Human arrogance tends to defend itself with a bitterness in proportion to its vulnerability. If a bureaucrat is made ridiculous, so is the divine principle of power itself. That cannot be endured."

The Song of Bernadette.

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