

THE RED BLOOD OF THE THE NATION.

(By Nurse Chappell.)

Ruskin says: "It may be discovered that the true veins of wealth are purple—and not in rock, but in flesh—perhaps even that the final outcome and consummation of all wealth is in the producing as many as possible full-blooded, bright-eyed, happy-hearted human creatures." Even then, Ruskin perceived wherein lay the true wealth of nations. It has needed the stupendous war to teach us, and still we are like the mythical Van Winkle, slowly, shaking ourselves and rubbing our eyes. Motherhood, we have at last decided, is the corner stone of the future Empire, but whilst we dally mothers perish. The "life builders" are undoubtedly the Empire builders of the future. The first step, it seems to me, is to relieve the physical strain which is not only crushing the higher attributes of motherhood out of so many mothers, but is making them physically unfit for this high office. The more "life-building" mothers do, the more manual labour is thrust upon them; and whilst the finest type of mothers respond willingly, this fact still remains that, generally speaking, the human "life builders" have the smallest chance of all workers to concentrate their best efforts to produce the most perfect building, and no preparatory knowledge or training is given as to the best methods. It has become so common in our eyes—this "life" being "built," which is so "fearfully and wonderfully made" that the glory of it has been dragged in the dust. For our Empire's sake, if for no higher motive, we must lift it into the place of honour and dignity which is due to the greatest of all miracles that has ever been or ever can be.

To alter this, the mental vision of what can be and what ought to be must be given to each man and woman. One writer says: "As a mother my dignity is supreme, for I am sculptress of the race, the architect of humanity. My body is the temple, the holy of holies wherein are fashioned into indelible shape, for weal or woe, the children who are to come. My part is difficult, but I will not flinch. I must be as strong as the oak on the bleakest hill, and tender and sweet and pure as the flower that blooms in the valley below. For

freedom's sake I must be free, for I am sculptress, architect of humanity, its citadel, its oak, its blossom. I am woman, mother and moulder of the race." Note the words—"For freedom's sake I must be free." No true woman wants a freedom which is contrary to the higher good of the future race. But every true woman, in her soul, demands the freedom which will ensure the best for the coming generation. Governments and laws can never produce this. They can assist by giving knowledge and freedom to this end, but as surely as nations are built up on homes—true homes—so surely are true homes built up on the conditions which will produce the kind of children of Ruskin's vision.

There is too much honour given to the patriotism shown by flag-flying, brass bands, and sitting on this committee or the other, and too little honour given to the patriotism of a good father who nobly helps his overburdened wife and trains his children that they may be good citizens in the future. He is called a "milk sop" or "is tied to his wife's apron strings." Both kinds of patriotism are needed, but the home kind brings the soundest returns in the long run, both in his own happiness and in the welfare of the nation, and his children will know how to honour all women because of the honour they have seen their father give to the Queen of the home, their mother. Many a mother has said to me: "I love my children, but I have no time to enjoy them and train them as I would like. It is just a scramble from early morning to late at night to do what is absolutely necessary for a family. By the time I have cooked and washed and done the necessary house work, attending to the baby and children in between,

I am that fagged and irritable that I am thankful to bundle them into bed as quickly as possible to get a few minutes' space. I used to be quite a good-natured person. I don't know what has come to me." Then a few tears steal quickly down her cheeks, which she quickly wipes away, hoping I haven't seen them, and she goes on: "Then I try to do their patching and mending, or make a few things whilst they are in bed—often into the small hours of the morning." "But," I have said, "you need your rest. In fact, you cannot successfully nurse your baby unless you have nourishing food and proper rest." "Oh! Yes.

I know that is so," she replied, "because when I have a bit of a spell, like when my sister comes and feeds me, I have plenty of good milk, and baby is that good I don't know what to make of it. Still, it can't be helped. It's got to be done. I must try to send the children decent to school, so it's no use talking about it. If baby won't thrive while I work like this, then I must put him on the bottle—that's all. How one's heart aches for such mothers, silently, bravely pegging on, with no human eye to see, often, and no human voice to applaud! Added to these things is the torture of mind because they have "not time" to be the kind of mothers they would like to be. Just as it needs leisure to be cultured, so it needs leisure to give the fine culture of motherhood to their children."

The mental picture which some of us treasure is in sharp contrast to that of children being "bundled into bed as quickly as possible." A white bed, a sweet mother face, a gentle voice, a white-robed tiny figure kneeling down at the shrine of that mother's knees, hands clasped, eyes closed, the gentle voice is heard to say—"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look upon a little child." The childish voice repeats it word for word. Then comes the more intimate part of the prayer. The childish naughtiness of the day is confessed and followed by the prayer for forgiveness. With the "Amen!" all sense of wrong has fled. Gentle hands tuck that little one safe and snug in bed, followed by the good-night kiss from that gentle, wise mother. No king on his throne could compare in happiness with that child.

Let me assure you, the sweet motherliness is in most of these work-driven mothers, though in different degrees, according to character, and it adds to her burden, because the mother has not the leisure to give it expression. Think of the love-starved children, robbed of their birthright of love! Childhood is the time to forge the chains of love and confidence, and every link in that chain will need to be sound and true when the time of temptation comes to hold them steady and secure.

Mothers, have a set time when you "down your tools," and give your children their birthright of love, if all the world has to stand still and wait whilst you do so. Bedtime is the most seductive time for childish confidences, and when little restless