



LIFTING THE SHROUD

By MRS. DONALD SHAW

JUST ten years ago it was vouchsafed to me to be given the trust of a little son—eighteen months before his arrival a baby daughter had been sent to us. Babyhood with all its pains and pleasures has long since passed away—childhood is ebbing so rapidly that only a few brief years will elapse before youth will take its place. And thus to me becomes daily and hourly more vital and insistent the question—"Into what sort of a world am I going to thrust my son and daughter? Is it a better or a worse one than that into which I was launched? Have Science and Medi-

vastating upon the internal health of a nation as are such scourges as tuberculosis and cancer. No mother hesitates to warn her children against the risk of contagion from either of these diseases; she does not hesitate to tell them exactly how to avoid any risk of infection from diphtheria, measles or typhoid—in fact she would consider herself as very lacking in supervision and education did she fail to do so. But in nineteen cases out of twenty, boys and girls alike are launched forth into the world to find their own feet, without one single syllable of warning regarding the risk they will run of

infection from venereal diseases.

I know the word is an ugly one—so ugly that sensitive ears shrink from even seeing it in print sometimes. I know that pure women are still supposed by some old-fashioned people to know nothing whatever about the existence of vicious diseases, or if they have a suspicion, at any rate they must never betray their knowledge—I am fully aware this has been the accepted code up to today for I have suffered bitterly for my own refusal to be bound by convention and inherited prejudice and therefore have all sympathy with others similarly placed. I

Necessary Light

WAR conditions, which have brought to public light the overpowering facts relative to the prevalence of social diseases, have made plain that the right education is urgently needed on this subject. There has been widespread enquiry for the information, and Everywoman's World assumes the burden of the delicate and perhaps thankless task of supplying it in the nicest, purest and best possible form. We have had the most exhaustive and careful research made in order that we may be able to give to Canadian parents the information that will be helpful to them—either in the safeguarding of their own homes, or in the broader interests of community work.

fact in my own street, in fact in my own house and its confines, after school hours, anything under a dozen little boys and girls of similar ages to my own children, congregate like a flock of sparrows to exchange embryonic ideas and ambitions, and their mothers must be thinking about them as I am about mine.

This twentieth Century of ours is undoubtedly a broad and enlightened age—one has only to look round upon the development of mechanical means of transit, for instance, to realize how things have changed, not only since our mothers were young, but since we ourselves graduated from school, to appreciate the rate at which evolution is travelling. Thoughts, inventions, conveniences, that are predominant today are obsolete tomorrow, so swiftly are we speeding. And in no direction has there been greater development and enlightenment than in the realms of Surgery and Medicine. Some diseases have been eliminated from civilized communities altogether; some are so held within bounds by anti-toxins and treatments as to be negative in their effect upon our lives; even the dreaded White Plague is so controlled and understood that the average mother need disturb herself little about its ravages, providing she follows the precautions laid down for her.

And it is through and by means of this very extraordinary development in medical knowledge that we women find ourselves (we mothers and potential mothers of future citizens of the British Empire) brought face to face today with a problem which, if we are to prove ourselves worthy of the sacred name of woman, and still more sacred name of wife and mother, we must face squarely, or be forever branded as cowards and evaders. Never in the history of the world, that is of the world of medicine and social purity and reform, have hands been held out to thinking, conscientious women so imploringly as they are held out just now. Science is crying to women to co-operate with its devotees, and work shoulder to shoulder with them in the crusade against vice and its resultant diseases,—diseases which are now frankly admitted to be quite as de-

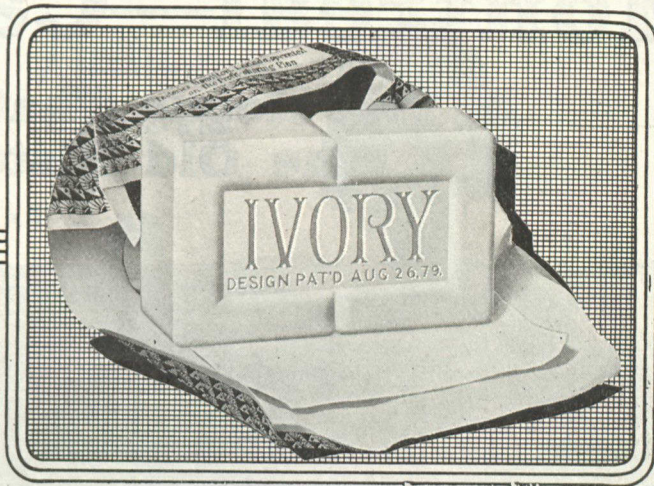
know too, that women are often seized with a sensation of actual physical nausea at the first mention of such diseases and all that they imply, and experience a repulsion and loathing sufficient to make them wish to bury their heads ostrich-like in the sand forever and try to forget, rather than look with unveiled eyes upon the facts—loathsome and revolting and sadly undeniable facts as they are. Truth to tell, I should not think much of a woman who does not experience such sensations—I have felt them myself, and I know others who have suffered too. But there is one thing that should instil courage and resolution, and that is—that it is the very women who shrink and shudder most who are the ones in whose hands the real power lies to put things right, and that knowledge should be sufficient to enable any right-minded woman, after she has fought and overcome her elementary repulsion, to come forth and lend a hand in cleaning out the Augean Stables of humanity. It is such women as these to whom the world is looking to raise and carry forward the Banner of Purity rather than let its folds be engulfed in the mire of selfish oblivion.

And so I ask you all, every individual mother, and mother-to-be amongst you, to think before you turn away in shuddering horror from the prospect presented to you, to think the matter out—and having thought it out—to bring all the influence you possess to bear upon the fathers and potential fathers to think it out also, and then, with unflinching courage to go forward with the same determination with which you would face the unpalatable prospect of, say for instance, cleaning up a house which had been left in a filthy condition by the people who had vacated it. No self-respecting woman, were she suddenly plumped down in an edifice left with reeking floors and stained walls would say with blithe irresponsibility—

"Oh, I'll just lay a few carpets down and put up a few pictures and hangings and forget what is underneath."

Any more than if she found a leak-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 42)



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