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EDITORIAL.

NON-COMBATANTS.

Optimistic people are apt to think the worst can never happen, a better frame of mind far, than pessimism. To be prepared for the worst, and to hope for the best, is perhaps the happiest and most faithful frame of mind to assume; in Cromwellian phraseology, "Trust in God and keep your powder dry." The worst *has* happened, and the thoughts of all of us are irresistibly deflected from our ordinary occupations to the conflict now proceeding.

We are in the midst of what is technically called a "Solemn War"—an axiom, because all war is exceedingly solemn. As Nurses, taking no sides, our pity embraces all those combatants who become sick and wounded; we could have no feeling of bitterness against those who have simply obeyed the orders of their commanders. Probably many English Nurses will shortly be on active service at home and abroad, when they will show themselves—as they always have done—equal to the demand put upon them. We rejoice to think that such detailed and extensive preparations are being made for the care, comfort and consolation of the wounded soldiers and sailors. The non-combatants all over the world—more especially those whose countries are engaged in the conflict—will have but one heart of compassion for those who will have to suffer so grievously for the selfishness and pride of the promoters of the war.

One of the most solemn thoughts of this war is that so many of the non-combatants will suffer quite as much, if in a less acute form, as the combatants; they will suffer in anguish, anxiety, increased poverty, by loss of employment, and by sickness which it will inevitably produce. The warmth of our patriotism must not lead us to overlook the needs and requirements of the suffer-

ing non-combatants, more especially the children. Nurses would do well to remember that by offering themselves for extra social service at home they will be evincing patriotism as true and faithful as those who offer themselves for war service.

As optimists we are bound to look for the silver lining which even this great black war-cloud is not without. We see it in the Relief Fund initiated by the Prince of Wales, which in so short a time has reached the magnificent figure of £648,000. This gives us to hope and believe that a total of a million or more will be finally reached. This prospect will ease the minds of all those who are thinking of the less conspicuous sufferers.

It is an undoubted and indisputable fact that it is the women and children who, in the long run, suffer most by war, and it is the duty of the country at this crisis—more especially the women of the country—by their prevision, and provision, to avert and alleviate, as far as possible, the sufferings that the war will bring upon them. A contemporary, justly respected for its practical idealism, speaks feelingly of the needs of the non-combatants: "Means must be taken to relieve the destitution of those who have neither work nor money. In what form this can best be done remains to be seen. At the moment, the chief thing is that men and women who can organize this should be brought together, and, before things become desperate, an effective means devised." All those who have anything to offer in the way of talents, health and capabilities are certain to find employment; perhaps the most valuable will be those with good organizing powers. The sufferings of all will be greatly alleviated by the willing co-operation of all. Trained nurses will, we are sure, be foremost amongst those who realize the needs of infancy and old age, of the fatherless and the widow, and help to alleviate them.

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