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EDITORIAL.

THE MORALITY OF STRIFE.

"The Morality of Strife in its Relation to War" was the subject of an address delivered last week at Bedford College, Regent's Park, by Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, who said that there were few people who would not grant that a State if attacked, must defend itself.

Could one hope that war would ever cease? She might be sanguine, but she thought it possible to hope at least that it would greatly diminish in frequency.

She pointed out that it was the want of international morality and absence of a moral code, and not merely the failure to live up to one, which had, more than anything else, for many years endangered the peace of Europe, and had now plunged it into a ghastly war. She claimed that women had as great a part to play in the war as men, for greater even than the individual soldier was the spirit that inspired him.

The Lord Chancellor who presided, in paying a warm tribute to the high standard which the lecturer had held up, the precept of courage and determination on the one hand, and high morality on the other, said that these were things which pointed to a spirit which, if it were the spirit of this nation was the spirit of victory. That spirit could not be of the high kind, and compelling order, of which they had heard, unless the whole nation took part, and the women bore their share of the duties of inspiring and compelling.

He hoped that the doctrine of the recognition between States of moral obligations was a doctrine that in time might become a real one—real in Germany as with other nations. In the phenomena before us in the larger political world of the relations

of nations within groups to one another we had indications of how ethical standards might develop, and ethical obligations become binding, although there was no external sanction.

It had been inconceivable for some years past that Russia, France, or the United Kingdom would fall to war until after the greatest and most strenuous and genuine efforts had been made to avert it. Between ourselves and the United States there were the same feelings.

Thus between States not bound together by alliance, but which were together in groups with common interests and common sympathies, there arose that quality of obligation.

If the world arranged itself in groups, and the groups came to arrange with each other so that the ethical feeling should extend beyond the group, then there was hope that we should enter on a new phase, which if it did not give a complete guarantee of peace, would afford assurance against war being regarded as anything else than a terrible calamity.

The words of Mrs. Sidgwick, and of Lord Haldane, indicate to women a way in which they can bear a part of the highest value during the war. British women are convinced of the morality of the present war, for the Empire, and, that being so, they have faced the situation in a spirit of helpfulness, and of unflinching courage. But, more than this, it is their special vocation to strengthen the men in the fighting line, by guarding the high ethical standard which inspired our brave troops when they entered on this conflict, and which is the best guarantee of final victory, and so to develop ethical feeling, that war may never be entered upon except from the highest ethical motives. When this is achieved it is certain that its frequency will be greatly diminished.

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