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EDITORIAL.

THE WOMEN'S TRIBUTE.

The energies of the nation are at present bent on the prosecution of the war to a successful finish—the men in their thousands going forth to war, inspired by the patriotism which makes even life itself a small thing to sacrifice for honour and freedom, and the women stepping into the places thus vacated, carry on their work in their absence with energy and ability on the land, in banks and public offices, on omnibuses and trams, as post women, as messengers, and in munition factories, to say nothing of those who in hospitals, on trains, at railway stations, in recreation huts and elsewhere are more directly serving our sailors and soldiers, sick and wounded, convalescent, and healthy, while steps are already being taken to make provision for a proportion of those incurably ill in the Star and Garter Home at Richmond, through a fund raised by women.

When one looks forward to the Declaration of Peace, and down the long vista of years to follow, one realizes dimly the reconstruction of social conditions which will be necessary, and the unselfishness and forbearance which will be required in effecting the necessary readjustments.

One thing is certain. The first consideration of the women of the Empire must be the sailors and soldiers who have returned maimed, unfitted for further active work in the world. Young, vigorous, healthy, with all the energy and aspirations of youth, who by reason of their disablement can only look forward to "the dire compulsion of infertile days" for the remainder of their lives. Let us remember in the days to come, when the war is of the past, and other things absorb our interest, that these are the men who have sacrificed much to secure to us all that makes life worth living. Can any personal service be too great to make life as tolerable to them as may be.

Why should not the British Red Cross Society, and Order of St. John through their Voluntary Aid Detachments arrange for a systematic service of members who will be eyes to the blind and feet to the lame—who will undertake to read the news daily to the blind man, to take the cripple for a walk or a drive, and who will do so regularly, year in and year out—long after the glamour of war has faded? It should be our pride, as it is our manifest duty, to see that no man broken in our wars should ever feel forgotten or neglected. It is not enough, though it is essential, that he should be secured from want. We should freely extend to him the sympathy, the friendship, the help which will surround him with a cheerful mental environment. Not in any spirit of patronage—God forbid—but as debtors who can never repay the great debt that we owe.

In relation to the able-bodied men who will return home to take their place again in civil life, here also it will be necessary for the women to remember their debt. They took up regular work at some self-sacrifice, to carry on public affairs during a crisis, and many have found happiness in that work and the satisfaction which self-support, self-reliance, and self-respect bring with them. When the war is over some unselfishness will again be needed in order that our soldiers may find remunerative occupation. We should regard it as a debt of honour that places occupied temporarily are surrendered to those who vacated them, and if this entails self-sacrifice, that should be part of the women's tribute, willingly offered, to the gallant men who have defended the Empire ashore and afloat.

Meanwhile "Women's Tribute Week" takes place at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, W.C., from July 3rd—8th. Every woman should help to make it a splendid success.

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