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EDITORIAL.

THE RISING SUN.

Many unexpected situations have arisen in the course of the war, but none more momentous, or with a greater influence on the future, than the recording of their votes by British women on a matter of Imperial policy—the question of compulsory military service—at the Australian Imperial Forces Headquarters at Westminster—Westminster, the battle ground on which the right of women to the Parliamentary Franchise has been contested for years, even within the precincts of the Houses of Parliament from which women demanding the constitutional right of access to Ministers have been again and again ejected, and which—to those with eyes to see only material forces—appeared to be an impregnable stronghold of male prerogative.

But the trumpets of war have sounded not only a challenge to the enemies of the Empire, their clarion call has reached to its furthest bounds, and the hearts of all the peoples within its limits have throbbed in unison. Their skill, their lives are at the service of the Empire in its needs. From far and near they have rallied to the call, amongst them, from Australia, the Anzacs whose loyalty and heroism will be acclaimed so long as the Empire endures. With the fighting men came highly skilled nurses, free citizens of the Land of the Rising Sun—and, when provision was made for having a referendum on the question of compulsory military service outside the Commonwealth, no one could gainsay that side by side with the Australians with the Army in the field, with the Fleet, and in hospitals, the nurses of the Australian Army Nursing Service should record their votes, yet so quietly has this been accomplished that many people do

not now realize what a revolution has taken place.

This vote of the Australian nurses is the more important because, before the war, an argument which was most frequently advanced against the extension of the Parliamentary Franchise to women was that, as they were incapable of fighting, they ought not to be allowed to vote. Their place, it was asserted, was to deal with Local Government, but not with high Imperial politics. Yet Cabinet Ministers have publicly declared that the services of women are essential to the successful termination of the war, and even the Prime Minister has announced the profound modification which his views, as a life-long opponent of women's suffrage, have undergone in consequence.

Who indeed shall judge whose sacrifice is the greater—that of the men who freely give their lives in the Empire's service, or that of the women who send them forth, and then, with brave faces, and anxious hearts, turn to unaccustomed tasks that the work of the nation may be carried on in their absence.

The spiritual force, the earnest purpose, the high endeavour which women bring to bear upon national problems have never been so strikingly demonstrated as in the last two years, because so great an opportunity has never before been theirs.

So far the influence of their special qualities which is needed in the counsels of the Empire has been ignored and wasted, and many of the gifts which women have been eager to use in the service of their country have been rejected, and it is the poorer in consequence. In the land of the Rising Sun the women have already come into their inheritance, and its reflected light illumines the faces of their sisters in the Mother Country who realize that for them too it will rise in majesty and strength.

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