

## WOMEN AND NATIONAL SERVICE.

The great mass meeting of women held in the Royal Albert Hall on Saturday last, which Her Majesty the Queen honoured with her presence, was nevertheless somewhat of a disappointment to those who came from far and near to hear from Mr. Neville Chamberlain, Director General of National Service and those who supported him, how best the service they were eager to offer to their country could be utilised. The message of the meeting was that they were to be patient, until those to whom the organisation of women's work had been entrusted had something more to tell them. The only speech which, in our view, was of practical value was that of the President of the Board of Agriculture, the Right Hon. R. E. Prothero, who was emphatic that the cultivation of the soil had become a matter of urgent necessity, and imperative demand. It might not offer scope for great achievements, but women who had shown that—given the opportunity—they could do great things, would also, if they were convinced of the need, do little things greatly. That was the strength of his appeal.

The Secretary of the State for War, the Earl of Derby, had a great opportunity, which he failed to use. Opposite him, as he spoke, was Her Majesty the Queen, surrounded by the wives of high officials from Over-Seas, and in the boxes on either side of her were distinguished members of the Royal Navy Nursing Service, looking charming in their dark blue uniform faced with scarlet, and spotless kerchief caps, and the representatives of the Military Nursing Services which are in Lord Derby's own Department. The occasion was an ideal one for recognition of the work of the trained nurses of all ranks upon whom the real responsibility of the skilled care of the sick and wounded has fallen, and who by their devoted service have prevented an incalculable amount of suffering and saved many lives; for some public acknowledgment also of the services of the trained and competent nurses who have rallied to the help of our sick and wounded, from Canada, from South Africa, from Australia, from New Zealand, and who have earned the gratitude of their patients by their devotion and skill. Instead he eulogised the work of the unskilled amateur, the V.A.D., of which, he said, it was "impossible to speak too highly." It is small wonder that not only by trained nurses present, but also by members of the public, just indignation was expressed.

The failure to put any organised and concrete scheme before the meeting for utilising women's work undoubtedly deeply disappointed hundreds of women who were present.

### A RECOLLECTION.

I have a vivid recollection of Mrs. Harley at the Suffrage Camp organised by Miss Thurstan at Weymouth in May, 1914. The Camp was pitched on a lovely hill side about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the town,

and we had found one afternoon, when over 1,000 visitors attended, that the soldiers and sailors on leave from the ships were inclined to get a little bit rowdy. Miss Thurstan had the matter successfully in hand at once, but it was decided that, for the evening meeting, a cordon should be formed from the entrance gate to the speakers' tent to prevent people straying over the camp in the dark. We anticipated some difficulty, owing to the very large crowds, many rather excited, pressing for entrance, for Suffrage meetings in those days were still liable to rough intervention, and we had no police or men of any kind to help us. Mrs. Harley, Miss Thurstan, and some others of us joined hands to form a sort of cordon. I was next to Mrs. Harley, and I at once felt that she had the gallant soldier's spirit and would never leave her post. It was rather curious to have this thought in a time of profound peace, but now we know it was a true one.

E. L. C. EDEN.

### UP-TO-DATE NURSES' TEXT BOOKS.

The importance of up-to-date nursing literature to those who are nursing the sick and wounded is obvious, and the series of Books for Nurses published by Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons—an American firm with an English house at 24, Bedford Street, Strand, W.C.—are of a high standard of excellence. Several have no counterpart in this country, such as the "Medical Dictionary for Nurses," by Miss Amy E. Pope; "Hygiene and Morality" (5s. net), by Miss L. L. Dock, a manual for nurses of great value, giving an outline of the medical, social and legal aspects of the venereal diseases, a subject on which it is of special importance just now that nurses should be adequately instructed; a "Text-Book of Materia Medica for Nurses" (Revised in conformity to the British Pharmacopœia), by the same author; and much other valuable nursing literature. We were recently told by the Matron of a large London Hospital that when she was desirous of drawing up a list of text books for her nursing staff she went to the British Museum to acquaint herself with the literature published for nurses, and found the American books much the best.

It will be realised that the recent restrictions of importations include books, but it would be a calamity if those on which so many nurses depend for keeping their professional knowledge up to date were barred, and we sincerely hope that Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons will secure special permission to import nursing literature of such proved utility. They have a strong case.

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