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EDITORIAL.

FIRST WORDS FOR THE NEW YEAR.

Now in thy splendour go before us,
Spirit of England, ardent-eyed,
Enkindle this dear earth that bore us,
In the hour of peril purified.

—L. Binyon.

With the year which has just begun we enter upon the most critical stage of the war, and it behoves every woman of the nation to consider what she is doing to help to win it. For when the very existence of civilization is at stake no one can, with honour, stand aside and do nothing. In another column we place on record the splendid achievements of women, without whose work the war could not have been carried on up to the present time. They will, we do not doubt, continue it stedfastly so long as their services are needed. But, even now, there are many women who, with time, health, strength, and youth at their disposal are not doing active war work, and it is to these we appeal that they should not neglect so manifest a duty, and so rare a privilege.

We read with a thrill of pride of women who "spend their days in the danger build-ings among explosives with as little fuss as if they were knitting socks," of women on the land, whose unaccustomed work needs pluck and endurance, both physical and mental, of a woman who, for instance, will not ask for help in the handling of bulls because "I am always afraid to let anyone know that sometimes I am afraid." Of a woman (Miss Christobel Ellis) who, in September, 1914, offered her services as an experienced motorist to the French Red Cross, and during the days of the battle of the Marne, and the heavy fighting near Paris, when the shortage of ambulances and drivers was very great, sometimes drove for twenty hours at a stretch.

It is only a limited number who can render services of this sort. But, in the great national crisis there is work for all, from the grannie who sits by the fireside and knits socks and comforters, to the child who holds her skein of wool. The one thing to insure is that no one who can help shall remain idle, that every available worker shall do the utmost of which she is capable.

We cannot do better than quote the words of the Prime Minister's New Year's message to the nation:—"There is nobody too old or too young or too feeble to play a part. If we cannot fight in person, we can fight by the vigour and goodwill by which we do our work, the wisdom of our economy, the generosity with which we meet the nation's financial needs. At the moment lending and saving are specially important. Money is essential to victory, and economy is the condition of financial power. It is therefore the duty of all to save what they can and to lend what they can to the community at this time. Every man, woman, and child ought to make it a point of honour to increase his holding of National War Bonds as the year goes by, bonds which have behind them the whole strength and credit and resources of Britain itself.

"To every civilian, therefore, I would say: Your firing-line is the works or the office in which you do your bit; the shop or the kitchen in which you spend or save; the bank or the post office in which you buy your bonds. To reach that firing-line and to become an active combatant yourself there are no communication trenches to grope along, no barrage to face, no horrors, no wounds. The road of duty and patriotism is clear before you; follow it, and it will lead ere long to safety for our people and victory for our cause."

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