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EDITORIAL.

MAY DAY, 1922—WHERE IS MERRIE ENGLAND?

During the years of the war we watched, often with mingled feelings, companies of khaki-clad men pass along our streets, well fed, comfortably clothed, marching with a swing, in the eyes of many of them the exaltation springing from the inspiration of a great ideal. Voluntarily they went, at great peril, to fight for the freedom of the world, for the defence of Empire and home. Our hearts were sad as we realised that many would not return, while we knew that the honour of their country was safe in their keeping. All the world knows what proof they gave of their manhood, with what indomitable courage they faced the enemy, with what gaiety they made light of hardship. In their hearts was the belief in ultimate victory over the enemy, and they looked forward with confidence to returning to homes "fit for heroes to live in."

On Monday last a procession including many of the same men passed along Oxford Street, in fours as of old, and with banners and flags flying. But what a difference! Rank upon rank of shabby, ill clad, spiritless, gaunt, hungry men, in their eyes the hopelessness of those deprived of the power of self-support, the power to support their nearest and dearest. It was not good to look upon the faces of those men who marched down Oxford Street, wearily, hopelessly, police at intervals on either side; and ill wagons in the rear, not the impedimenta accompanying men proceeding on active service, but women and little children, wives and families of those who were demonstrating in so peaceable and orderly a fashion.

None better than nurses know the British working man—his sturdy independence, his strong sense, his patience—and we hope that even through the present troubles he will hold on undaunted until the dawn of a brighter day. But need we be surprised if alien revolu-

tionaries find the moment opportune for sowing their insidious seed, that, as a contemporary points out, "many are working hard to stir up the spirit of revolution in this country, and that they mean by revolution the real authentic thing—burning houses, looted shops, and dead men in plenty in the streets."

There are in our view none who render greater social service than those members of our profession who live among the poor, and bring to them the practical help and sympathy which never fails of a response, and which is a powerful agent in allaying class hatred.

A striking example of this is the work of the East End Mothers Home. Listen to what the Resident Lady Superintendent, Miss Margaret Anderson, writes in her Report for 1921. "The social condition of our people does not improve. The homes get yearly poorer and barer. The usual occupation of the husband is 'looking for work.' Twenty-five per cent. of the men are receiving the unemployment benefit, 25 per cent. are doing casual work, while the remainder are on the parish dole. It is an appalling state of affairs, and sad to witness the downfall of those upstanding men who returned from the war full of pride and energy, eager to work, now fast receding into the ranks of the unemployable. Nothing saps energy and life like dependence on others, and many highly respectable working people have either to starve or go on the parish, with disastrous result to their morale, poor souls. There is apparently no immediate prospect of hauling them out of this slough of despond and setting their feet upon firm ground."

What is true of the East End of London is true of many other districts. What do we mean to do to redeem the pledges given to the men who saved this country from the fate of Belgium and the invaded provinces of France? Both honour and public safety demand that present conditions should not continue, lest in their despair their eyes turn to the Eldorado promised by alien agitators seeking the hurt of this country and Empire.

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