

***HARRIOT
STANTON BLATCH***



***MOBILIZING
WOMAN-
POWER***

Harriot Stanton Blatch

Mobilizing Woman-Power

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MEDICAL CERTIFICATE

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QUALIFICATIONS of Members of Women's Voluntary Aid Detachments for Nursing Service or General Service.

WOMEN'S ARMY AUXILIARY CORPS FORM OF APPLICATION

(Part of the application form used in England by the Women's Land Army.)

WOMEN'S LAND ARMY

THE GOVERNMENT PROMISES :--

FOREWORD

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It is a real pleasure to write this foreword to the book which Mrs. Harriot Stanton Blatch dedicates to the women of Great Britain and France; to the women who through the years of the great war have stood as the second line of defense against the German horror which menaces the liberty and civilization of the entire world.

There could be no more timely book. Mrs. Blatch's aim is to stir the women of this country to the knowledge that this is their war, and also to make all our people feel that we, and especially our government, should welcome the service of women, and make use of it to the utmost. In other words, the appeal of Mrs. Blatch is essentially an appeal for service. No one has more vividly realized that service benefits the one who serves precisely as it benefits the one who is served. I join with her in the appeal that the women shall back the men with service, and that the men in their turn shall frankly and eagerly welcome the rendering of such service *on the basis of service by equals for a common end.*

Mrs. Blatch makes her appeal primarily because of the war needs of the moment. But she has in view no less the great tasks of the future. I welcome her book as an answer to the cry that the admission of women to an equal share in the right of self government will tend to soften the body politic. Most certainly I will ever set my face like flint against any unhealthy softening of our civilization, and as an answer in advance to hyper-criticism I explain that I do not mean softness in the sense of tender-heartedness; I mean the

softness which, extends to the head and to the moral fibre, I mean the softness which manifests itself either in unhealthy sentimentality or in a materialism which may be either thoughtless and pleasure-loving or sordid and money-getting. I believe that the best women, when thoroughly aroused, and when the right appeal is made to them, will offer our surest means of resisting this unhealthy softening.

No man who is not blind can fail to see that we have entered a new day in the great epic march of the ages. For good or for evil the old days have passed; and it rests with us, the men and women now alive, to decide whether in the new days the world is to be a better or a worse place to live in, for our descendants.

In this new world women are to stand on an equal footing with men, in ways and to an extent never hitherto dreamed of. In this country they are on the eve of securing, and in much of the country have already secured, their full political rights. It is imperative that they should understand, exactly as it is imperative that men should understand, that such rights are of worse than no avail, unless the will for the performance of duty goes hand in hand with the acquirement of the privilege.

If the women in this country reinforce the elements that tend to a softening of the moral fibre, to a weakening of the will, and unwillingness to look ahead or to face hardship and labor and danger for a high ideal--then all of us alike, men and women, will suffer. But if they show, under the new conditions, the will to develop strength, and the high idealism and the iron resolution which under less favorable circumstances were shown by the women of the Revolution and of the Civil War, then our nation has before it a career of

greatness never hitherto equaled. This book is fundamentally an appeal, not that woman shall enjoy any privilege unearned, but that hers shall be the right to do more than she has ever yet done, and to do it on terms of self-respecting partnership with men. Equality of right does not mean identity of function; but it does necessarily imply identity of purpose in the performance of duty.

Mrs. Blatch shows why every woman who inherits the womanly virtues of the past, and who has grasped the ideal of the added womanly virtues of the present and the future, should support this war with all her strength and soul. She testifies from personal knowledge to the hideous brutalities shown toward women and children by the Germany of to-day; and she adds the fine sentence: "Women fight for a place in the sun for those who hold right above might."

She shows why women must unstintedly give their labor in order to win this war; and why the labor of the women must be used to back up both the labor and the fighting work of the men, for the fighting men leave gaps in the labor world which must be filled by the work of women. She says in another sentence worth remembering, "The man behind the counter should of course be moved to a muscular employment; but we must not interpret his dalliance with tapes and ribbons as a proof of a superfluity of men."

Particularly valuable is her description of the mobilization of women in Great Britain and France. From these facts she draws the conclusion as to America's needs along this very line. She paints as vividly as I have ever known painted, the truth as to why it is a merit that women should be forced to work, a merit that *every one* should be forced to work! It is just as good for women as for men that they should have to

use body and mind, that they should not be idlers. As she puts it, "Active mothers insure a virile race. The peaceful nation, if its women fall victims to the luxury which rapidly increasing wealth brings, will decay." "Man power must give itself unreservedly at the front. Woman power must show not only eagerness but fitness to substitute for man power."

I commend especially the chapter containing the sentence, "This war may prove to us the wisdom and economy of devoting public funds to mothers rather than to crèches and juvenile asylums;" and also the chapter in which the author tells women that if they are merely looking for a soft place in life their collective demand for a fair field and no favor will be wholly ineffective. The doors for service now stand open, and it rests with the women themselves to say whether they will enter in!

The last chapter is itself an unconscious justification of woman's right to a share in the great governmental decisions which to-day are vital. No statesman or publicist could set forth more clearly than Mrs. Blatch the need of winning this war, in order to prevent either endless and ruinous wars in the future, or else a world despotism which would mean the atrophy of everything that really tends to the elevation of mankind.

Mrs. Blatch has herself rendered a very real service by this appeal that women should serve, and that men should let them serve.

Theodore Roosevelt

I
OUR FOE

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The nations in which women have influenced national aims face the nation that glorifies brute force. America opposes the exaltation of the glittering sword; opposes the determination of one nation to dominate the world; opposes the claim that the head of one ruling family is the direct and only representative of the Creator; and, above all, America opposes the idea that might makes right.

Let us admit the full weight of the paradox that a people in the name of peace turns to force of arms. The tragedy for us lay in there being no choice of ways, since pacific groups had failed to create machinery to adjust vital international differences, and since the Allies each in turn, we the last, had been struck by a foe determined to settle disagreements by force.

Never did a nation make a crusade more just than this of ours. We were patient, too long patient, perhaps, with challenges. We seek no conquest. We fight to protect the freedom of our citizens. On America's standard is written democracy, on that of Germany autocracy. Without reservation women can give their all to attain our end.

There may be a cleavage between the German people and the ruling class. It may be that our foe is merely the military caste, though I am inclined to believe that we have the entire German nation on our hands. The supremacy of might may be a doctrine merely instilled in the minds of the people by its rulers. Perhaps the weed is not indigenous, but it flourishes, nevertheless. Rabbits did not belong in Australia, nor pondweed in England, but there they are, and dominating the situation. Arrogance of the strong towards the weak, of the better placed towards the less well placed, is part of the

government teaching in Germany. The peasant woman harries the dog that strains at the market cart, her husband harries her as she helps the cow drag the plough, the petty officer harries the peasant when he is a raw recruit, and the young lieutenant harries the petty officer, and so it goes up to the highest,--a well-planned system on the part of the superior to bring the inferior to a high point of material efficiency. The propelling spirit is devotion to the Fatherland: each believes himself a cog in the machine chosen of God to achieve His purposes on earth. The world hears of the Kaiser's "Ich und Gott," of his mailed fist beating down his enemies, but those who have lived in Germany know that exactly the same spirit reigns in every class. The strong in chastizing his inferior has the conviction that since might makes right he is the direct representative of Deity on the particular occasion.

The overbearing spirit of the Prussian military caste has drilled a race to worship might; men are overbearing towards women, women towards children, and the laws reflect the cruelties of the strong towards the weak.

As the recent petition of German suffragists to the Reichstag states, their country stands "in the lowest rank of nations as regards women's rights." It is a platitude just now worth repeating that the civilization of a people is indicated by the position accorded to its women. On that head, then, the Teutonic Kultur stands challenged.

An English friend of mine threw down the gauntlet thirty years ago. She had married a German officer. After living at army posts all over the Empire, she declared, "What we foreigners take as simple childlikeness in the Germans is merely lack of civilization." This keen analysis came from a

woman trained as an investigator, and equipped with perfect command of the language of her adopted country.

"Lack of civilization,"--perhaps that explains my having seen again and again officers striking the soldiers they were drilling, and journeys made torture through witnessing slapping and brow-beating of children by their parents. The memory of a father's conduct towards his little son will never be wiped out. He twisted the child's arm, struck him savagely from time to time, and for no reason but that the child did not sit bolt upright and keep absolutely motionless. The witnesses of the brutality smiled approvingly at the man, and scowled at the child. My own protest being met with amazed silence and in no way regarded, I left the compartment. I was near Eisenach, and I wished some good fairy would put in my hand that inkpot which Luther threw at the devil. Severity towards children is the rule. The child for weal or woe is in the complete control of its parents, and corporal punishment is allowed in the schools. The grim saying, "Saure Wochen, frohe Feste," seems to express the pedagogic philosophy. The only trouble is that nature does not give this attitude her sanction, for Germany reveals to us that figure, the most pathetic in life, the child suicide.

The man responding to his stern upbringing is in turn cruel to his inferiors, and full of subterfuge in dealing with equals. He is at home in the intrigues which have startled the world. In such a society the frank and gentle go to the wall, or--get into trouble and emigrate. We have profited--let us not forget it--by the plucky German immigrants who threw off the yoke, and who now have the satisfaction of finding themselves fighting shoulder to shoulder with the men of their adopted country to free the Fatherland of the taskmaster.

The philosophy of might quite naturally reflects itself in the education of girls. Once when I visited a Höhere Töchter Schule, the principal had a class in geometry recite for my edification. I soon saw that the young girl who had been chosen as the star pupil to wrestle with the pons asinorum was giving an exhibition of memorizing and not of mathematical reasoning. I asked the principal if my surmise were correct. He replied without hesitation, "Yes, it was entirely a feat in memory. Females have only low reasoning power." I urged that if this were so, it would be well to train the faculty, but he countered with the assertion, "We Germans do not think so. Women are happier and more useful without logic."

It would be difficult to surpass in its subtle cruelty the etiquette at a military function. The lieutenant and his wife come early,--this is expected of them. For a few moments they play the role of honored guests. The wife is shown by her hostess to the sofa and is seated there as a mark of distinction. Then arrive the captain and his wife. They are immediately the distinguished guests. The wife is shown to the sofa and the lieutenant's little Frau must get herself out of the way as best she can.

My speculation, often indulged in, as to what would happen if the major's wife did not move from the sofa when the colonel's wife appeared, ended in assurance that a severe punishment would be meted out to her, when I heard from an officer the story of the way his regiment dealt with a woman who ignored another bit of military etiquette. A débutant, once honored by being asked to dance with an officer at a ball, must never, it seems, demean herself by accepting a civilian partner. But in a town where my friend's regiment was

stationed a very pretty and popular young girl who had been taken, so to speak, to the bosom of the regiment, danced one night at the Kurhaus early in the summer season with a civilian, distinguished, undeniably, but unmistakably civilian. The officers of the regiment met, weighed the mighty question of the girl's offense, and solemnly resolved never again to ask the culprit for a dance. I protested at the cruelty of a body of men deliberately turning a pretty young thing into a wall-flower for an entire season. The officer took my protest as an added reason for congratulation upon their conduct. They meant to be cruel. My words proved how well they had succeeded.

Another little straw showing the set of the wind: we were sitting, four Americans, one lovely early summer day, in a restaurant at Swinemünde. We had the window open, looking out over the sea. At the next table were some officers, one of whom with an "Es zieht," but not with a "by your leave," came over to our table and shut the window with a bang. The gentleman with us asked if we wanted the window closed, and on being assured we did not, quietly rose and opened it again. No one who does not know Prussia can imagine the threatening atmosphere which filled that café.

We met the officers the same night at the Kurhaus dance. They were introduced, and almost immediately one of them brought up the window incident and said most impressively that if ladies had not been at the table, our escort would have been "called out." We could see they regarded us as unworthy of being even transient participants of Kultur when we opined that no American man would accept a challenge, and if so unwise as to do so, his womenfolk would lock him up until he reached a sounder judgment! The swords rattled in

their sabres when the frivolous member of our party said with a tone of finality, "You see we wouldn't like our men's faces to look as if they had got into their mothers' chopping bowls!"

Although I had often lived months on end with all these petty tyrannies of the mailed fist, and although life had taught me later that peoples grow by what they feed upon, yet when I read the Bryce report,^[1] German frightfulness seemed too inhuman for belief. While still holding my judgment in reserve, I met an intimate friend, a Prussian officer. He happened to mention letters he had received from his relatives in Berlin and at the front, and when I expressed a wish to hear them, kindly asked whether he should translate them or read them in German as they stood. Laughingly I ventured on the German, saying I would at least find out how much I had forgotten. So I sat and listened with ears pricked up. Some of the letters were from women folk and told of war conditions in the capital. They were interesting at the time but not worth repeating now. Then came a letter from a nephew, a lieutenant. He gave his experience in crossing Belgium, told how in one village his men asked a young woman with her tiny baby on her arm for water, how she answered resentfully, and then, how he shot her--and her baby. I exclaimed, thinking I had lost the thread of the letter, "Not the baby?" And the man I supposed I knew as civilized, replied with a cruel smile, "Yes--discipline!" That was frank, frank as a child would have been, with no realization of the self-revelation of it. The young officer did the deed, wrote of it to his uncle, and the uncle, without vision and understanding, perverted by his training, did not feel shame and bury the secret in his own heart, but

treasured the evidence against his own nephew, and laid it open before an American woman.

I believed the Bryce report--every word of it!

And I hate the system that has so bent and crippled a great race. Revenge we must not feel, that would be to inoculate ourselves with the enemy's virus. But let us be awake to the fact that might making right cuts athwart our ideals. German Kultur, through worship of efficiency, cramps originality and initiative, while our aim--why not be frank about it!--is the protection of inefficiency, which means sympathy with childhood, and opportunity for the spirit of art. German Kultur fixes an inflexible limit to the aspirations of women, while our goal is complete freedom for the mothers of men.

The women of the Allies can fight for all that their men fight for--for national self-respect, for protection of citizens, for the sacredness of international agreements, for the rights of small nations, for the security of democracy, and then our women can be inspired by one thing more--the safety and development of all those things which they have won for human welfare in a long and bloodless battle.

Women fight for a place in the sun for those who hold right above might.

[1] Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages appointed by his Britannic Majesty's Government. 1915. Macmillan Company, New York.

Evidence and Documents laid before the Committee on Alleged German Outrages. Ballantyne, Hanson & Co., London. 1915.

II

WINNING THE WAR

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The group of nations that can make the greatest savings, will be victorious, counsels one; the group that can produce the most food and nourish the populations best, will win the war, urges another; but whatever the prophecy, whatever the advice, all paths to victory lie through labor-power.

Needs are not answered in our day by manna dropping from heaven. Whether it is food or big guns that are wanted, ships or coal, we can only get our heart's desire by toil. Where are the workers who will win the war?

We are a bit spoiled in the United States. We have been accustomed to rub our Aladdin's lamp of opportunity and the good genii have sent us workers. But suddenly, no matter how great our efforts, no one answers our appeal. The reservoir of immigrant labor has run dry. We are in sorry plight, for we have suffered from emigration, too. Thousands of alien workers have been called back to serve in the armies of the Allies. In my own little village on Long Island the industrious Italian colony was broken up by the call to return to the colors in Piedmont.

Then, too, while Europe suffers loss of labor, as do we, when men are mobilized, our situation is peculiarly poignant, for when our armies are gone they are gone. At first this was true in Europe. Men entered the army and were employed as soldiers only. After a time it was realized that the war would not be short, that fields must not lie untilled for years, nor men undergo the deteriorating effects of trench warfare