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THE WORK OF THE GOOD CITIZENSHIP DEPARTMENT.

It is well for us sometimes to consider what is the meaning and value of this department, in order that we may see better how to carry on its work. In America it is called the Department of Christian Citizenship, and this may perhaps give us a clue. I have sometimes said that this department seems to include everything which affects the welfare of the community, and which is not covered by any other department of the Union; but I may modify that somewhat. It seems to be not so much a question of special work, but rather of a special attitude towards any kind of work. Christian citizenship should mean the bringing of Christian principles to bear upon all that has to do with our life as citizens; from that point of view there is nothing in our social life that does not come within the working of this department in that special way. If that is so, then we should try to deal with those aspects of life which are at the time brought most prominently before us, and most occupy our thoughts. There is no question as to what that aspect now is; there is nothing else which is of anything like the same moment to us as the war. Indeed, we cannot think of anything apart from this; it colours our whole life, and our attitude towards it affects all we do. It seems fitting, therefore, that those of us who wish to live and act as good citizens should give some thought as to the best method of dealing with it.

Let me say at once that I have no intention of entering into practical questions concerning present conditions; doubtless we all have our own opinions upon the matter, but we are certainly not in a position to take any action with regard to it, nor do I think we are able to judge as to the policy and methods of the war. But we can take up a certain attitude towards it, and use what influence we

have on the side of peace. This seems to me the work which women are called upon to do at this time; we have a great power and a great influence, though unseen, and surely every woman stands for peace, and would use her power in that direction. This does not necessarily mean that we must take steps in the direction of an immediate cessation of hostilities, even if that were possible, however much we may all long for the time when that may be. We are standing before a grim reality, which is beyond our understanding and out of our control; but dark and terrible as it is, through it all there stands out two facts which we cannot afford to lose our hold of, the loss of which would mean despair—Divine Guidance and Divine Love. If we believe in a Divine Hand guiding all things, then we know that, unintelligible though it may be to us, everything is being worked out to a good end; and knowing that Divine Hand to be a Hand of Love, we are sure that Love is the power that alone can put an end to the strife and misery that are flooding the whole world. This is where I believe that our work and influence as women should come in; we can throw our whole force on the side of love.

But we have to deal with causes rather than effects, and causes lie in the mental and spiritual world rather than in the physical. From that point of view, what is the cause of this war? I do not believe for a moment that it would have been in the power of any man or any nation to involve the whole of Europe in a war such as this if the conditions had not been already prepared by the collective thought and desire of all the nations concerned, through many a long year, together with the wrong principles at the basis of our civilization. We are beginning now to recognise that thought is a force the most powerful in the world, that every thought takes form in the mental world, and that when these forces

grow strong enough nothing can prevent them from crystallising into action in the physical. There has been so much thought of war, so much preparation for it, so much fear and expectation of it, and all this has combined to create such a force in the world of thought that nothing could prevent its taking form in the world of action. And we have all had our share in this; every unloving thought, every feeling of antagonism, passion, envy, retaliation, has added to this force and helped to bring about the inevitable result. Each one of us is thus more or less responsible.

What then remains now for us to do? If we recognise this power which lies in our thoughts, we shall understand that what has been brought about by its working can also be counteracted by it. If we can generate a force of an opposite character to that which is now dominating the hearts of men, we may slowly, but surely, create a different spirit, a different atmosphere, and so prepare the way for more peaceful and happy conditions. This is the point that I want to lay stress upon—that we have it in our power to do this, that as the force of hate has brought about war, so the force of love may bring about its destruction.

In a recent number of "Jus Suffragii" there is a paragraph which expresses something of the thought I want to convey:—"There are many women in Europe, many women throughout the world, who are longing for a grand heroic opportunity to bring peace to the world. . . . It may be that the work of women at this moment is patiently and quietly to **create the will** for peace. No heroic sacrifice can make peace in the world until the Will for it has been created. . . . Upon women especially falls the duty of disseminating the will for peace. Each woman in her own place can begin that work now. She can dedicate herself to the cause of peace, pray for it, **think** for