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OCTOBER 25, 1917

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THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE.

Women Save the English Harvest.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

There are 200,000 women saving the harvest of England and Wales and narvest of England and Wales and saving it well, too. It has been a trying time with bad weather and heaps of rain and a skirling wind. But the yields are good, and Mr. Lloyd-George's op-timism as to "We can't be starved" is not misplaced. The Board of Agriculture estimates fairly good yields. Here is the official statement: "Summarising the returns, and express-

ing an average crop by 100, the appearance of the crops on 1st September indicated probable yields which may be expressed by the following percent-ages:—Wheat, 93; barley, 97; oats, 90; beans, 80; peas, 91; potatoes, 104; turnips and swedes, 96; mangolds, 103; hops, 99."

Women have worked well at every phase of harvesting. This is what Mr. Prothero, our Minister of Agriculture, has written to Lady Londonderry, (who is running a series of Farm Women's Competitions at Oakham, a new phase of "sport" which is catching on all over the country):

"In almost every part of England and Wales there are now some 200,000 women who are doing a real national work on the land. They are carrying on to the farms the same patriotic enthusiasm which inspires their menfolk by land and sea. Like them they have cheerfully borne their share of hardship and dis-comfort. Like them, they have set up a high standard of self-sacrifice and devotion to duty. They are truly helping their husbands, sons and brothers

to win the war. "In entering on what is to many women an entirely new sphere of work they had to overcome many prejudices and encounter some ridicule. No one laughs now except at the prejudices. In the management of horses, in the care of live stock, in milking and dairying, in thatching, and in the hundred and one jobs about a farm, women can hold their own. If in other forms of work their success depends more largely on their physical strength, farmers have learnt that women can do as well as men most things to which they have set their

minds. The point that has struck most observers who have lately been watching the progress of work on the English farm is the extremely important part that women, soldiers, girls and boys have had in it. Official and all other reports tell with increasing emphasis of the growing helpfulness of women in almost oversus sort of agricultural work almost every sort of agricultural work. But for them and the soldiers who have been spared, great numbers of farmers who, before and since the war started, looked askance at the other sex would have been on their beam ends with both the hay and the corn harvests, to say nothing of fruit. The tasks that women have successfully undertaken on British farms in the last twelve months have been an eye-opener that has utterly silenced critics, ideal or practical. Instead of asking what can a woman do on a farm, you now ask—is there anything that she cannot do? A far travelled and most experienced authority on British agri-culture says: "I am amazed that there WO should ever have been opposition to or He suspicion of women's capacity. I do not dream of discounting the honest intention of the old type of labor, but for practical conduct of honest intention I prefer well-educated and well-nurtured young women. Farm work demands On conscientious labor above all things, and I prefer a young women like this to all the boys and most of the men at command in more prosperous times. No men of my acquaintance in the long past have done better, cleaner, or more faithful work than girls I have met on farms. Men are sometimes coarse-occasionally brutal-to cows; women Sa never. Men milk with dirty hands, which make women uncomfortable. Women Br weigh the milk religiously. Men weigh it in a perfunctory manner and as un-believers, if they weigh it at all." Many instances might be cited of Yorkshire farmers who, having lost all their men, On Fri have experimented with women, and were Br made as happy as farmers could be, accepting the new position as men who Sec had made new discoveries and mapped out fresh plans of campaign. It is suggested that, as women are not all mothers of children, the land affords Bre Secretary.

them as it affords men a better opportunity of enjoying a happy, prosperous and healthy life than any other occupation.

In most northern counties women have made most handsome response to the call for agricultural volunteers. numerous have candidates been that only the undoubtedly fit have been accepted, fifty per cent. being sometimes rejected. At numerous centres, including Government bursaries, hundreds of women are being trained every month; and, though it is not possible to turn out a woman farmer in a month, smart, capable girls are very useful on a farm after a three weeks' probation. As samples of the vigorous efforts that are being made all over the midlands and the north of England to respond worthily to the call made by Mr. Prothero, in June, for more women for the land, the recent activities of the West Riding Women's War Agricultural Committee may be mentioned. Arrangements have just been completed for a party of 400 women to go for potato picking in the Goole district. Over 50 fruit bottling demonstrations have been held since June. The Government are said to have been slow in supplying bottles, but the sub-committee have now received nearly the whole of an order for 24,000 bottles.

The West Yorkshire Selection Committee have interviewed over 1,300 girls, and more than 350 have been placed on the land in various parts of the country. Most of the recruits are from the industrial classes, and servants have made excellent farm hands. Women land workers in the North Riding are now receiving special training in ploughing, and gangs are to be formed for assisting farmers in threshing, potato picking, etc:

A party of about 50 Leeds Grammar School boys, in charge of Mr. Wynne-Edwards, the headmaster, and other masters, have just returned from a month's stay on the battlefield of Flodden in Northumberland. One of the party reports that they had plenty of hard work, and that everything and everybody was very kindly except the weather. It rained on 18 days out of the 28 days of the visit. The students mostly cut thistles, which grew abundantly every-where. To clear the land of them was their chief work. Last year farmers had not been able to properly clear the land. More soldiers are to be released for

preparing for the winter sowing campaign. ALBION.

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