



SCOTTISH HOME AND COUNTRY



The Organ of the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes.

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To all Institute Members—Greeting!



WE are setting out together on another adventure, and we believe we are fully justified in making the first word of the S.W.R.I. Magazine one of Hope.

Only a few years ago the Institute movement itself was a great adventure. To-day it is a marvellous record of achievement of which its originator may well be proud—a woman's movement with tremendous possibilities, its clarion call "For Home and Country."

Home owes not only its nature but its very existence to woman. The native instinct of savage man was wild and selfish. He roamed the country, his hand against every man's, every man's hand against his. With no higher ideal, he fought for his own existence and selfish aims.

Finding a mate, he entered on the higher life of unselfishness and fought for wife and child, for whose protection home came into being. For their greater protection one home was placed near to another home, and village life was evolved.

Life widened into tribal life, and the first attempts at law and order originated. From tribal life mankind passed to national life; and patriotism became the most esteemed of all the virtues, until for man the claims of country came before those of home or wife or child.

Up to this stage woman's work was almost entirely confined to the home, her influence on a wider world being exerted only through the men of her own household. When she first felt stirred to seek a more direct outlet for her desire to serve her country she was repulsed, but the Great War brought her opportunity, and nobly she rose to it.

During that fateful time a farmer's wife who was also a farmer's daughter and took her full share in the busy home life of the farm conceived the idea of introducing into Scotland the Women's Institute Movement, which Mrs. Watt had so successfully launched in Canada. After strenuous

pioneer work Mrs. Blair formed the first Scottish Women's Institute at Longniddry in June, 1917, and thereby started a movement the object of which was to help the women of rural Scotland to widen and develop both their home and their national life.

If there was anything the War taught us, however, it was that "Nation" was not meant to be the end of our evolution in this particular direction. No nation ever sought national ends more zealously than did Germany, but her zeal served only to bring herself to the dust, and the world to disaster.

With the war there ended the era of nation worship. We passed into the dawn of the International with the birth of the League of Nations and the vision for which it stands.

To us who are women comes a fresh clarion call—For Home, for Country, and the World. It should be easier for us than for men to pass into International thought and outlook, for it never was so necessary for us to cultivate an exclusively national spirit.

We take it as the best of omens that the Women's Institute—one of the first great public movements initiated and run entirely by women—is already of international scope, its aims and possibilities of world-wide significance. It set out to weld into one the interests and sympathies of small and obscure rural communities, and lo! an international bond was flung across the Continents. It is one of the first objects of this little Magazine to strengthen the bond of unity among Scottish Institutes, keeping ever in mind that we are unite in one great whole—a world-wide Peace, Goodwill, and Helpfulness Crusade.

Ought we then to transpose the motto? Assuredly not! The order of the motto is right. It is still a woman's duty and privilege to put home first, and she can best help her country and exert her influence in the world by doing so. She may have a wider sphere, but she still has no finer or nobler than the preservation and expansion of the home life to which Scotland owed her greatness. The first object of the Institute is to help her.