

a wilful and ignorant woman. It was my rule in life to make as few changes as possible, so I endured the work as long as possible. Then I heard of an opening in a munition factory and I took it.

Now, I want to set down just as plainly as possible my reasons for saying I'd rather be a char-woman in a down-town office building than a "general for a small family," or "parlour-maid" in Rosedale. Generally speaking, housework is the hardest work in the world, because it is the least systematic work in the world—as a rule. I admit that a man who works by hard-and-fast routine all day long has a right to relaxation in his house. And it's true you can't run a house like a clock. But thousands of mistresses would be shocked if they knew how much more comfortable they could make their men-folk if their houses did run like clock-work! And they would be shocked to know how nearly like a clock you can run a house—if you want to try. Everybody knows that if you can get into a habit of doing certain things at certain times you save mental wear

and tear. If you don't—if every piece of household detail has, as it were, to take a chance on getting your attention just when it can—it takes just that much more out of you. Canadian mistresses tend to neglect household organization and to depend upon sudden bursts of energy or upon "turning in to help" to overcome accumulations of work. Hours are irregular. Recreation periods for the servant are too often grudgingly given. The servant gets her meals—heaven knows when or how. Most of the time she just shoves back the dirty dishes from a corner of the kitchen table, drags up a chair and makes her meal—well, about as comfortably as the family dog. The servant is made responsible for the cat, the baby and the parrot—and yet rebuked for exercising any authority over any of them. Her work is likely to be interrupted at any moment by the mistress, who happens to feel "blue," or lonely, or talkative. Or else the mistress vents her "nervousness" on the maid—or maintains haughty silence. Only a girl of poor spirit—and therefore of poor

brain-power and no initiative—will work for the average woman in a house. Business women learn business methods. A man may bully you. He may even swear, but he leaves you alone so long as your work is satisfactory. You have definite hours and definite tasks. Your meal hours are fixed. And though your net income may be less, you at least have the feeling of paying for your meals—not just taking what happens your way. Another thing, as a servant you have no social standing of any sort whatever. Garbage collectors, ragmen, barbers and undertakers have their place in the social scale, and they have their fun amongst themselves. But servants are rag-tag and bob-tail. Many a girl I know doesn't know what to do with her afternoon off when she gets it. She goes to the movies and buys a dish of ice-cream for her supper and goes to another movie.

If I was a rich woman I'd give the money to start a school for the training of mistresses. That is my view. But of course you won't agree with it—unless you were once a domestic.

HYDE PARK IN WAR TIME

Main Johnson recently spent several weeks in England, Scotland, Ireland and France. He went as Private Secretary to N. W. Rowell, Liberal Leader in Ontario. He went to Europe with his pores open; eager for Impressions, with a sort of psychological idea of correlating them. He brought back material enough for a book—which he will never write. The article Hyde Park in War Time he wrote on shipboard. He simply couldn't help it. The impressions had to be expressed.—Editor.

SUPERFICIALLY, at any rate, London is much more normal during the war than one would expect it to be—very much less changed, for example, than Paris, which is profoundly transformed, externally as well as internally. One of the familiar sights in London, looking like before-the-war days, is the group of speakers and audiences in Hyde Park, that gathering ground of the democracy.

I do not refer to specially organized meetings, like the gigantic one recently held by trades union members in protest against the high cost of living during the war, although that, too, in its black mass of people, and its fervid tribunes shouting from a number of platforms, was in conformity with similar protest meetings held before the war.

Of even greater interest, however, is to take a bus or taxi from the Savoy on a quiet week-day afternoon, drive through Hyde Park, and dismount at the Marble Arch at about half past five, when shop-girls and boys and workmen and women on their way home have lingered to hear the orators in the Park.

Near the Marble Arch entrance, on this afternoon, there are five distinct groups, each with its speaker. The first one is a woman, with a kind but faded face, her hair bound up under her hat; she is working incessantly with her watch-chain, an operation which occasionally stops the flow of her discourse entirely. She is standing on a very small and insecure table, but holds her balance with precarious safety.

She is trying to arrange a week-end excursion for working people to a seaside town, in order, according to her first appeal, that these workmen and workingwomen, exhausted by the too constant strain of war work, may secure a brief respite, and, afterwards, as the heckling became more and more pointed and severe, in order that the excursionists may give pleasure to a hospital full of poor wounded Tommies who would be so glad to see them.

Never have I realized how heartless and relentless English heckling can be. Such a speaker in Canada, if we could imagine such a speaker in Queen's Park, for example, would probably receive a quiet, even if a bored, hearing. In Hyde Park, however, the crowd is neither quiet nor bored. All kinds of people join in the heckling—not only "fresh" youths and argument-loving old men, but young girls not more than seventeen years old, and respectable married women, stout and complacent with their fifty years of honourable life behind them. All joined in to make the life of the poor woman-speaker miserable, and yet, so intricate is the Hyde Park psychology, these disturbers probably felt that the orator would feel slighted if she were uninterrupted, and, truly enough, she probably would have considered her remarks in vain if she had not stirred up a storm.

The smallest points in the discourse were seized upon, and torn and rent into rags. A violent altercation occurred between the speaker and a young shop girl as to the amount of the regular railway fare from Waterloo Station to the seaside resort, and, as is always the case in matters affecting transportation, everyone had a perfectly definite knowledge on the point, since so-and-so had gone there on the last bank holiday to see their mother's aunt, who was quite ill with worrying over the war, and some

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one else, on quite a different but equally sad mission, had found the fare much higher than the nephew declared it was.

What relieved the bitterness of each of the conflicts was their transitoriness. Concentration is not the outstanding trait either of Hyde Park speakers or listeners, and the topics under discussion shifted as often and as regularly as the clouds kept gliding above the green trees of the Park and above the whiteness of the Marble Arch.

FROM the question of the proposed excursion, which was the real "raison d'être" of this group, the talk shifted to the "colonies" and who among the crowd had travelled there, to the national parentage of the Royal family, and to what should be done with the Kaiser.

"I'd knock him down with my fist," shouted the orator, who rolled back her coat sleeve from rather a pathetically slim and delicate wrist, but who by the same belligerent action, united all her hearers for once, and drowned out heckling in a pleasant roar of approbation.

In the middle of the next group, a very sad and painfully thin young man, holding a Bible in his hand, was trying to unite a most pessimistic mien and voice with encouraging doctrines.

Talk of religion, however, does not grant immunity from heckling, and a disputative crowd, hostile on the whole, surged about the pale and ill-looking young man. He was able to secure tolerably good order, however, until suddenly he found a most unfortunate verse, the reading of which almost precipitated a riot, and swept away the young man in an indignant swirl of human beings, prominent among them a tall, burly soldier, carrying a wee, frightened girlie in his arms.

I haven't a concordance with me (on shipboard), and I can't guarantee to quote the passage verbatim, but the gist of it was this: "Soldiers, do no violence, and labourers, be content with your wages."

These two exhortations apparently were the most unpopular ones he possibly could have selected. His audience was largely made up of soldiers and workmen, and the idea, to the first class, of not doing violence, which they interpreted as the supreme heterodoxy and passivism, and the thought to the second of the economic ludicrousness of being content with your wages, were quite intolerable, and howls, cat calls and execrations closed up that group once for all.

There was no need to go home, however, for just a few yards away, an Indian sergeant, brown and humble, was offering up a prayer before a number of sign boards, tacked to a tree, and announcing "West London Mission," and carrying sheets of hymns in large letters. The Indian was making an impassioned prayer for the redemption of the world and all people in it, a prayer of the simple and earnest kind which one associates with an early type class meeting.

Quite close to the Indian, a much less soothing and simple proceeding was going on.

In the centre of a noisy group was a man who, at

the age of five years, according to his own story, had been struck in the eye with a tin mug. This had damaged his eyesight, and now, slowly but inevitably, he was going blind with the gradual coming of cataracts. He wore heavy black-rimmed glasses, and, in his nervousness, kept interrupting himself to shout "keep quiet" to an unfortunate spectator in the front row, a man a trifle "queer" and on the verge of St. Vitus' dance.

The man who was turning blind was engaged in a bitter, cheerless argument with a soft, domestic-looking workman, who loftily claimed that all disease came either from ignorance or transgression.

Dispute swirled and swayed about this pair, but all the time the tragic principal kept swinging the talk back to his old subject, and kept asking whether his accident with the tin mug with the broken handle came either from ignorance or transgression.

"I suppose you'll be saying," he chided his antagonist, scornfully, "that I was a besotted drunkard at five years old. Transgression, indeed!"

The leader of the next group was an extraordinary looking man, of the kind one sees in Europe, but only dreams or reads about in Canada—types which we meet in Dickens, for example, and still see in the streets of London, or read about in Zola, and still see on the boulevards of Paris.

THIS old patriarch, wearing a white Indian sun-hat, was a most ferocious looking gentleman, with hair growing from all parts of his face, forehead, nose and cheek-bones, as well as from the more ordinary sources, and with a long beard hanging down below his waist. His chief opponents were a Jew and a combative looking labourer, apparently an iron-moulder.

It was quite a long time before I could catch even the drift of the discussion—something about air coming and going, about someone being inside vast boilers, heat and cold, horror and mystery. Gradually there emerged from the confusion a single and consistent idea—cigarettes. The Jew was smoking one and the old man evidently considered the habit a cardinal sin. Now followed a long biological discussion as to smoking among animals, and gradually there appeared the main topic of the debate—hell. The links leading up to the central topic were no more remarkable than the steps which followed, in a course of logic apparently accepted by the crowd, but incomprehensible to a mere Montrealer or Winnipegger. The disputants were soon back again to animals—so big that they couldn't pass between trees, and birds higher than the tops of the high trees in the Park, "with heads on top of that!" Incredulity succeeded attention, and the descent again was made to Avernus.

And all the time, while the woman talked about an excursion to the sea-side, while the sick youth exhorted his hearers in vain against violence and discontent, while the Indian sergeant prayed a Western prayer, while the man doomed-to-be-blind vented his bitterness, and the hairy gentleman assailed cigarettes—all the while the animated life of Hyde Park in war time pulsed on—underneath one of those glorious skies which would relieve even a drabber city than London of an incurable greyness.