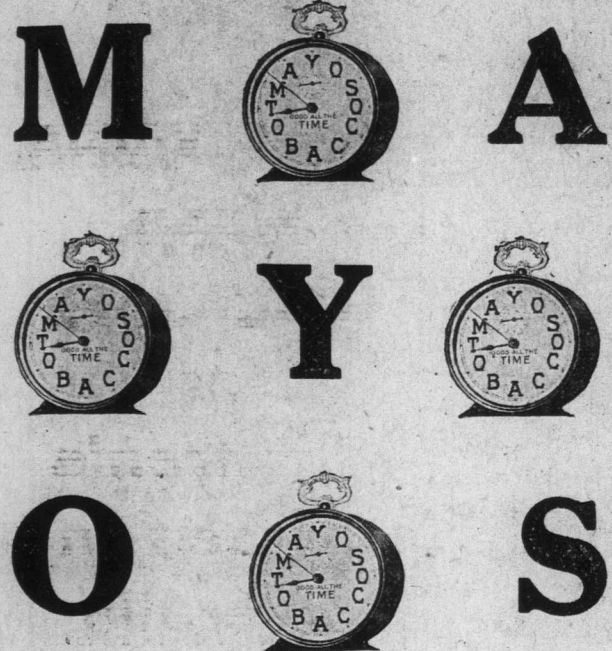


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LONDON GOSSIP.

LONDON, March 30, 1915.

WARTIME LABORS OF ROYALTY.

Few are aware of the immense amount of work done privately by members of the Royal Family for our sailors and soldiers in this period of war. One reads frequently in the Court Circular of the Queen having visited some organization originated expressly as a result of the war, or that Queen Alexandra has in like manner displayed her interest in the publicly known institutions for our warriors, but these efforts do not represent half the work done privately by Their Majesties and their Royal relatives. It is little known that each week a special Royal courier travels to France with a consignment in the aggregate weighing anything from half a ton to a ton of comforts and clothing for the men of some regiment, all made or collected from the Royal residences. Queen Alexandra, apart from her efforts in connection with the Field Force Fund, of which she is the patroness, sends packages to some regiment every week for distribution among the men. Princess Victoria supports her mother in this work, and gets a large quantity of material made up entirely at her own expense at one of the 'Girls' Guilds with which she is associated. The Queen, meanwhile, continues deeply interested in the steady progress of her own Work for Women Fund, which very soon will reach £150,000.

ROYAL PRINCES' TUTOR ENLISTS

Amongst the latest recruits in the Royal Naval Reserve is Mr. H. P. Hansell, tutor to the Prince of Wales and his Royal brothers. He enlisted, I am informed, as an ordinary recruit, and has now obtained the rank of A.B. Another member of the same force is Mr. Vernon, who for some time was tutor to Prince Henry and Prince George, but he joined earlier, and has now left the Crystal Palace for "some other quarters" of the globe. Mr. Hansell is one of the tallest of the force, his height being six feet three inches.

AUSTRIAN EMPEROR AND ITALY.

From Venice I am told that arrangements were being made more

than a week ago by agents of the Emperor Francis Joseph for the removal from the Villa d'Este at Tivoli, which is about one hour's journey from Rome, of many relics belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Imperial family, and especially to the late Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the murdered heir-apparent. The villa, which always has been considered one of the most beautifully situated in Italy, has for years been untenanted and open for occasional public inspection, and the proposed removal of the relics associated with the Hapsburgs is regarded as significant in Italy.

PRZEMYSŁ.

The fall of Przemyśl was a great triumph for the Russians, but it was a defeat for the London newspapers. I noticed that the boys on Ludgate Hill seemed to have come to an understanding among themselves for they were all calling "Fall of Ooka Bazzoka," and laughing at the joke. They evidently had not heard of the standard evasions—Primrose Hill, Paisley, or Pig and Whistle. But it had not taken them long to make up one of their own. Of course it is easy when you know, but so few of us know that it is perhaps as well that Przemyśl has now ceased to trouble the articulation of Western Europe. The fall of this important fortress may have important diplomatic as well as military consequences, for it may bring to a head the feud between Austria-Hungary and Germany which has been smouldering for some months. According, indeed, to advices which have reached Copenhagen, from Vienna, and have been communicated to an authoritative quarter here, a rupture of a significant character between the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments is already regarded as imminent. It is said to have been plainly pointed out to the authorities in Berlin that the Dual Monarchy, having already so much of its territory occupied by Russia, is suffering, or is suffering enough, without making territorial concessions to conciliate Italy, and Baron Burian, the Austro-Hungarian Chancellor, is asserted to have bluntly told the German Imperial Chancellor (Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg) that it is about time Germany con-

sidered what concessions she is prepared to make. Another factor of importance in the situation is that Italy has politely declined to accept Austro-Hungarian promises of trivial compensation to be fulfilled after the war, and has insisted that the only means of seeing the fulfilment of these promises is by the occupation of the territories under discussion.

WAR BONUSES ALL-ROUND.

The extension of the war bonus system has now reached trades not directly affected by any increase in income the struggle has brought. The great and continuing rise in the price of the necessities of life is being recognized by many large employers before it can be put to the use of agitation for a higher wage, and the movement seems likely to spread. One great shipping company, whose "liners" were "commandeered" for Government transports the moment hostilities began, has gone beyond most firms in this regard, for in giving a war bonus of at least 10 per cent. to all in its employ, with a higher rate for the lower paid, it has made it retrospective, and has dated it from the day when war was declared by Great Britain against Germany. This means that every employee has now to draw a tangible sum.

GERMAN INVASION OF SWEDEN.

The reported request of the German Government that the Swedish families should where practicable, move temporarily into neutral countries, and so relieve the food supplies, appears to have been promptly acted upon. A Swedish correspondent, writing from Stockholm, tells me that during the last three weeks there has been a noticeable irruption of wealthy German families into Gothenburg, Stockholm, and many of the sea-side watering places, and that in consequence the price of food has gone up by about 25 per cent. Unless—and he does not quote any figures—this invasion is on a very large scale he may be sceptical as to the rise in prices being entirely due to the visitors, but he certainly makes a point when he argues that all these Germans are bound to exercise some influence upon neutral opinion. Still, against this there is a correspondent from Christiania who points out the growth of a much friendlier feeling between Norway and Sweden and Russia. There may still be a pro-German bias in Swedish financial circles but popular feeling is the other way round.

PROMOTION FROM THE RANKS.

Sir John French's practice of making new officers in the field army by promotions from the ranks, will be recognized as marking an important stage in the historical development of the British Army. It would not have been the policy of a General insouciantly married to the traditional method of officering. The appointments have sometimes been a matter of necessity, though it is notable that the German authorities have preferred under-staffing their regiments to the alternative of promotion from the ranks, in spite of casualties among officers probably greater than those on the British side. Even if the old trend of British military practice is against Sir John French's policy there is reason to believe that he intends to persist in it. It is a field policy, and it will be time later on to consider how much effect it should have on the system of officering in peace time. It is worth noting in connection with this question that the official report of the French Government on the first six months of the war points out that the French army has a superiority over the German in being able to draw more upon the ranks for its new officers owing to the social as well as to the military constitution of the army. It is a common practice for a young Frenchman who seeks a military career as an officer but who does not pass the examination at St. Cyr, to enlist as a private with the definite intention of passing into officer's rank through the door of practical experience. The French Army recognizes this kind of career as a normal feature of its system.

OUR WAR HISTORIANS.

Sir A. Conan Doyle's merit as a military historian, well illustrated in the only readable short account of the Boer War, is that he never loses sight of the soldier in the maze of strategy. For subtle speculation about strategy you must not go to him but to Mr. Hilaire Belloc, who first set the fashion of war lectures. Mr. Belloc's example is now being followed by several of our journalistic strategists, including Mr. A. H. Pollen, whose bold article on the North Sea engagement recently attracted much attention. Mr. Buchanan is also lecturing, has published two volumes of a very promising history of the war. The success of Mr. Belloc and the other platform expositors is largely due to the fact that people will crowd to hear that spoken which they would never take the

trouble to read. In Mr. Belloc's case his delightful dogmatism makes him even more winsome on the platform than he is in print.

MODES OF SEVENTY YEARS AGO.

According to an expert on fashions old-world ideas for "smart" dresses are about to prevail. Ladies will wear figured taffetas, sprigged silks, and spotted muslins when summer has come. Till then warmer materials will be worn, but about everything there will be a touch of bygone days. The Early or Mid-Victorian modes, the short full skirt with the under petticoat of some transparent stuff, are quite in this style. They recall the old familiar portraits in the family album. At a recent matinee Madam Refane appeared in quite the latest creation from Paris—a black taffeta chiton, with fitted skirts and a tightly fitting black corsage to match, such as the ladies of Queen Victoria's Court wore not long after her accession, with a small "porkpie" hat of the same date, complete down to the flowing veil, beneath which one expected to see the chignon of those days with the silken net encompassing it. Long chains of enormous beads have come in with these dresses. Those of amber are perhaps the most modish. Others are of a variegated Oriental appearance, whilst some are very brilliantly colored. The long old-fashioned earrings are often seen with these chains. Perhaps they have come out of old jewel cases or boxes which had not seen the light for half a century or more. Some women carrying the movement so far as to appear in real "corkscrew" curls in bunches at each ear.

THE CANADIAN EYE-WITNESSES.

In all that has been written about the tribulations of newspaper correspondents in this war, I do not think that anyone has touched on the sad case of the Canadians. The first Canadian contingent brought over with it a squad of sharp-writers, armed with rapid pencils and remarkably keen eyes. The journalists of course, were hoping to go with their comrades to the front. While the contingent was at Salisbury Plain, they did fairly well with bright articles about the training, and when the Canadians crossed the water the journalists followed blithely after. They got as far as Boulogne all right, but after they had been back to London with the first booty of copy they found on their return that they were not to be permitted even to remain in Boulogne. At present the military headquarters is an hotel in the Strand. The other day a sympathizing fellow-Canadian who called upon them posted up a large notice on the board, "In Northern France."

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