

## ACTIVITIES OF ENGLISH WOMEN

Hundreds Employed in Small Ammunition Factories

### WOMEN DOCTORS NEEDED

A Serious Shortage of Nurses Likely to Be Felt Soon, Is the Fear — No Women Taxi-Drivers Yet

London, April 8.—The agitation for women's franchise dropped suddenly into the background when the outbreak of the war stirred the nation with a new and greater excitement. Not only the women's associations, attached to the two great political parties but the suffragette societies themselves, set aside their usual propaganda in order to meet more urgent needs. Even the "militant" turned their energies into other channels.

The change was typified in the spectacle of Dr. Flora Murray, one of the most ardent of Mrs. Pankhurst's followers, devoting herself to the organization of the Women's Hospital Corps for service in France. But the war, if it has quieted for a time the political side of the women's movement, has thrown into greater prominence the national importance of women's labor. It is too early yet to speak definitely of ultimate results, but it is already clear that the whole question of the professional and industrial occupation of women in England has entered upon a new stage.

At first there was serious unemployment. The market for women's labor was congested by the arrival of hundreds of women, governesses especially, who had lost their posts in Germany, France, Belgium, or Switzerland, and in some cases all their savings also.

At home the general cutting down of household expenses meant in large numbers of families the dismissal of companions and governesses and the giving up of the music or single, or painting lessons that had provided outside teachers with a regular income. Typists were affected by the retrenchment of the staffs of business firms that had Continental connections. The "flurry" readers suffered an appalling slump. Not only artists and musicians, but women who catered for the demands of fashionable society became suddenly idle. In the Birmingham district alone, from 30,000 to 40,000 women employed in the jewelry trades were immediately thrown out of work.

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Served for men doctors. Women dentists and druggists are also doing well.

In many other occupations qualified women have no difficulty in finding places as substitutes for men who have joined the colors. Women teachers sometimes married, are filling the gaps not only in elementary but in the secondary schools. In the post offices and other branches of the government service there has been an influx of women clerks. The shortage of men has done much to break down the objection to banking houses, insurance companies and shipping offices to the employment of women. Several women trainees in accountancy and bookkeeping have taken excellent posts previously held by men.

There is reported a considerable transference of labor to allied trades, where the skill acquired in an occupation no longer wanted counts for something. Of the unemployed jewelry makers in Birmingham, many have found work in the manufacture of medals, brooches and patriotic badges. A London dressmaker was able to keep on the one hundred women of her establishment by obtaining a contract for the provision of the Queen's gift of woollen belts for soldiers. Independent dressmakers and blouse-makers have found work under firms that are supplying garments for the troops. Cooks hitherto in domestic service are being employed in hotel kitchens. How the conservatism of the West End has been shaken may be inferred from the amazing fact that the Athenaeum Club has taken the desperate step of employing waitresses.

**No Women Taxi-Drivers**  
Women have found their way at last into many other occupations, but taxi-drivers are still a closed world to them. Some are tracing plans in

engineering works. If women taxi-drivers are not yet seen in the streets, it is due solely to the refusal of the police to grant licenses to women to drive motor vehicles plying for hire. Many women, of course, have shown themselves perfectly competent to handle their own private automobiles, but the authorities think that the strain of continuous driving through London traffic involves too great risks to the public as well as to the passengers. Several of the leading department stores in London are now placing their elevators in the charge of girls. Women may be seen serving behind the counter in provision and grocery stores. As the Shop Assistants' Union has sent thirty per cent. of its 61,000 members to the front, there are obviously many vacancies of this kind to be filled. The great firm of newspaper distributors, W. H. Smith & Son, is trying the experiment of employing girl clerks at its news-stands at the railway stations.

There is a movement towards the greater employment of women in the upholstery trade. Hitherto the laws of that trade have prohibited women from work that requires hammer or chisel, allowing them to attempt only what can be done with the scissors. Toy-making is a new calling in which women have been particularly successful. The course of instruction is not long and difficult, and girls previously employed as clerks or typists have shown a surprising aptitude for the work.

Lord Kitchener's speech on the urgent necessity of immediate supplies of ammunition has led to a rush of applications from women for employment in ammunition factories. The motive in most instances was a spirit of patriotism rather than any need of a job. One maid was anxious to fill cartridges or "really needed," said the mistress anxiously, "I'll let her go, but she is only a maid." Before the war the well-known Armstrong firm at Newcastle was employing from 600 to 700 women in its small shops. By the beginning of the war the number had been increased to 2,300.

**PLANS FOR CARE OF CANADIANS INVALIDED**  
Ottawa, April 24.—A board of officers, composed of Lt.-Col. G. S. Munroe, as president, and of Lt.-Col. W. H. Hallett and Lt.-Col. H. M. Jacques, has been appointed to assemble for the purpose of reporting upon the arrangements to be made for the reception of officers and men of the Canadian Expeditionary Force who are invalided back to Canada because of wounds or sickness. It is expected that when casualties become heavy, as they are expected to do soon when the British forces connect a general advance, the problem of caring for Canadian soldiers invalided home will be one of fairly large proportions. The relationship and respective

spheres of action of the Red Cross Society and the Militia and Defence Department will have to be defined in this connection and it is understood the board just appointed will report on this matter.

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