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LONDON GOSSIP.

LONDON, March 2, 1915.
KING GEORGE AND ARMY DECORATIONS.

Those soldiers whom the king has recently honored with various decorations would in normal times attend to receive these personally from him. As the great majority of them are, however, upon active service, this is impossible, though it is understood that as they come home on leave, they will be invited to present themselves at Buckingham Palace in order that His Majesty may congratulate them upon the deeds that earned his official recognition. Particularly will this be the case with the new wearers of the Victoria Cross. The Prince of Wales is acting for the King as far as possible in handing at the front the various decorations to those officers with whom His Royal Highness is able to get into touch. It is usual, too, for an officer to attend a levee at St. James' Palace upon receiving military promotion; but this is a formality that has likewise to be dispensed with. Indeed, it is not yet known whether any of these functions will take place this year, since His Majesty has so far not arrived at any decision in the matter.

ANOTHER ROYAL DEBUTANTE.

Another thing which would have been happening if times had been more normal would have been the entry into London society of Princess Victoria of Teck, niece to the Queen and eldest daughter of the Duke of Teck. It had been expected that Princess Victoria would have "put up her hair" and have been presented in the Royal circles at Court with her cousin Princess Mary, and there had

war could have brought about. On the other hand, the liberality with which commissions are being given from the ranks for service in the field is producing a type of officer with very little affinity with those from whom the "officer class" used to be drawn almost exclusively. I know of a case of a road-sweeper in the employ of the Urban Council here who has two sons in France, one of whom has just received a commission and the other is a N.C.O., who is tolerably certain to get one if his luck in missing the enemy bullets holds out. There must be many such cases up and down the country, and there will be many more before the war is over. In the Navy the chances for promotion, for the seamen, at any rate, beyond warrant officer are much less. But even in this aristocratic service the principle of the open door to the higher rank is now conceded. It will be interesting to see, when things have settled down after peace, whether the former rigidity of the social system will be re-established. It will probably be found that we shall have taken a long step towards emancipating ourselves from class distinctions, and shall have arrived at a social equality not unlike that which prevails in the Dominions, where snobbery is almost unknown.

THE COMING OF THE AEROPLANE SHIP.

In the account of the Dardanelles bombardment we heard for the first time of "His Majesty's aeroplane ship Ark Royal" as "in attendance with a number of seaplanes and aeroplanes of the Naval Wing." This is the first public mention since the war began of a new type of vessel. She has been known in the service as the "mystery ship" and was constructed with something more than the usual care that the details of her design should not be generally known. The secret was so well kept that even the men who took part in her construction probably only those who had to do with her final equipment fully realized the kind of vessel they had in hand. There is now no longer any concealment of the fact that she was built not only to carry aeroplanes and seaplanes, but also to launch them and to receive them at sea—that she is, in effect, a mobile base for aircraft, with all that is required for the equipment and maintenance of an air flotilla. As the first of her type she was necessarily more or less in the nature of an experiment, and in the circumstances was to be accounted a success. It was speedily found, however, that in certain qualities indispensable to modern warfare she was capable of improvement, and other ships of her class will prove superior to her as the super-Dreadnought was to its original type. One or two of these deficiencies have no doubt now been made good in the Ark Royal herself, but their existence for a time presumably accounted for the fact that her name did not appear in the list of ships which took part in the Cuxhaven air-raid. This, it will be remembered, was carried out by light fast cruisers, with the assistance of submarines to await the more belated of the aircraft employed. She was apparently in readiness for use in connection with the Dogger Bank sea light, but her services were not required. Her despatch to join the fleet at the entrance of the Dardanelles was an excellent tactical decision on the part of the Admiralty. In the North Sea she was no longer indispensable, and she supplied an obvious need in the Mediterranean in circumstances in which her best qualities should have full scope.

WAR AND CLASS DISTINCTIONS.

Another thing which the war is doing is the setting up of a new standard of social values leading to a distinct weakening of old-time stereotyped and cramping class distinctions. We are now getting, for the first time in our history, a citizen army, with many men of birth and breeding, and some of wealth, serving in the ranks, quite content to be serving there, and indifferent whether or no the chances of war bring a commission. This has meant a fusion of classes in the Army which is quite new in our national life, and of a kind which nothing but

ulation to a show even of gratitude for their well-meant efforts. The whole plan is so characteristically German in conception, however, that it is easy to believe how seriously the Germans are pursuing it, despite their failures in Ireland, India and South Africa.

THE PAPACY AND THE CENTRAL POWERS.

Relations between the Vatican and the Austro-Hungarian Embassy have become so strained that a rupture would occasion no surprise. As the result of the attitude of Germany towards the priesthood in Belgium and France the relations between the German Embassy (including the special envoy, Prince Bulow) and the Vatican have for some time been of a most distant kind, and it is generally considered that German influence is at the bottom of the growing trouble between the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador and the Papal Conclave. Recent events in Belgium, and particularly the persistent interference with prelates in the execution of their accustomed duties, have deepened an unfavourable impression created upon Pope Benedict XV. by the manner in which the German authorities dealt with Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

ART AND THE ZEPPELIN.

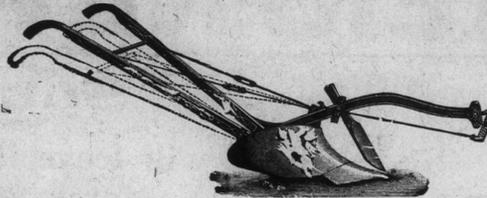
From nearly all the London art galleries and museums some of the most precious things have been removed into strong-rooms and cellars. It is thought just as well not to take any risks, for a chance bomb falling through the glass roof of a gallery might cause a disastrous fire. A tour of London's museums and picture galleries nowadays puts one's knowledge of the masterpieces severely to the test. You see the marks of frames on the walls where the masterpieces used to be, but it is not so easy to remember what has gone. Still, at the National Gallery the most casual of gallery strollers feels dimly the absence of the eloquent back of the Rokeby Venus, the subtle eyes and hands of the Duchess of Milan. In every room there is a zinc bin of sand as an extra precaution against fire. The attendants are tired of explaining to visitors that the big glass cases round some of the walls have nothing to do with the war; they are relics of the dimly distant days of "Militancy." "And the suffragettes did more damage to the pictures than ever the Zeppelins will, in my opinion," says a door-keeper. You enter the galleries under a queer temporary ceiling over the stairs, which shuts out the light of day and gives an eerie feeling, increased by the few oil lamps lighting your way into the denuded galleries. At the British Museum the long Greek Gallery is closed and workmen are busy taking down the Parthenon frieze. The youth of Athens will ride on unseen in the darkness of a basement until the war is over. This is a sad case of deprivation, but from almost every gallery some object or group have been taken to safer quarters and before long probably the great bulls from Nineveh, which inspired Rossetti's great poem, will be hidden away. The precious things from an Elizabethan jeweller's shop, and the Chelsea and Bow china collection, are among the things put out of harm's way at the London Museum. At the National History Museum some of the rarest stuffed birds have gone to roost in the cellars, including the great auk and her colossal eggs. War-time has thinned the population of the galleries, for the soldier has taken the place of the tourist in our midst, and the British soldier as a rule does not spend his precious hours of leave in front of masterpieces of art. In Germany, as we know, from neutral observers, the picture galleries are filled with soldiers, wounded or on leave.

GERMAN MIXED POLICES IN BELGIUM.

Such indications of Germany's "domestic" policy in Belgium as have come out do not give the impression that the invaders' objects are likely to be attained. But I hear that the plan of conciliating one section of the community and ignoring the interests of the other (this latter phase being coupled with apparently organized methods of starvation) is being pursued with all the sedulous method of German politicians. So direct is the bid for the acquiescence of the Flemings in German rule that some Belgian observers now in this country are, I understand, inclined to doubt whether the less well-informed Belgian may entirely resist the influence. The German idea is, as precedents might have led us to expect, fairly crude and obvious. It is to take advantage of the long-standing and occasionally acute controversy between the two main racial divisions of the Belgian people. The pure Flemings have had aspirations towards a more characteristic infusion of the Flemish element in the representative life of the nation. The German proposal to set up two Flemish universities addressed itself to a particular grievance of which much was made in the old country. That is only one of the many measures taken by the Germans in their wooing of Flemish opinion. But there would have been more real cause for anxiety if the invaders had discriminated between different varieties of Belgians when they first overran the country, and so far they have not succeeded in bribing a desperate pop-

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Summerside, April 24th, 1914.
"Your letter of the 21st, to hand this evening, asking my permission to hand my letter to the National Drug & Chemical Co. You have my full permission to do so, and to them I give the liberty to publish and use my name if they wish, because Gin Pills have done for my husband and myself what no other remedy could do."

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