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**LONDON GOSSIP.**

LONDON, May 14th, 1917.  
**BAZAAR FOR THE BLINDED SOLDIERS.**

Queen Alexandra, who opened the Albert Hall bazaar in aid of St. Dunstan's Hostel for blinded soldiers on May 7th, made a young artilleryman who was blinded at Suvla very happy. The ladies at the Duchess of Sutherland's stall learned that he was very anxious to present the Queen with a purple bag he had netted especially for her, but could not approach her. They arranged the matter, and when the Queen visited the stall the soldier had his chance. As he stooped to pick up the bag Queen Alexandra patted his shoulder and assured him earnestly that she would treasure his gift all her life. It was a remarkable bazaar. Royal Princesses, Duchesses and famous beauties, all of whom are taking ten hours of daily duty, presided over stalls loaded with beautiful or very useful gifts. Princess Louise displayed on her stall a miniature escriptoire she had used when a child. Lady Robertson sold soldiers' comforts. Lady Alexander, wonderfully dressed, made a speciality of flowery hats and smocks for women hand-workers. Lady Rothes offered an original copy of the Scottish Covenant of 1620, bearing as first signature that of the Earl of Rothes. The pride of one duchess was a Stradivarius, but it did not compare with the potatoes just arrived from the Transvaal, which sold at the Duchess of Somerset's stall for sixpence apiece.

**MANNEQUIN'S BLACK BOY.**

The mannequin fashion parade at the Albert Hall bazaar was an amusing item in the daily programme. Even the Royal stall holders neglected business to focus their attention on the platform where a succession of belles from famous models' ateliers pass slowly along against a black velvet curtain. One noted firm had sent three tiny girls, one a mere baby, to join the parade. These walked with the professional air, turning in the center to show the back view before gravely curtseying to the amused spectators. One languid belle had a small colored page boy in gay turban in attendance to carry her wonderful tulle cloak when she removed it to show the shimmering dress beneath. Longer skirts for walking and wispy trims for evening wear were features of these dresses, so was their simplicity, with a suggestion of dowdiness in some cases.

**NO MORE STIFF COLLARS AND SHIRTS.**

The order of the Food Controller against converting cereals into starch is now in force, and, although some laundries may have laid in unusual stocks, yet a few weeks will compel us all to wear limp linen. Already, to misquote Browning, "a viscid collar is observable" on Captain Bathurst, while Pemberton Billing was cheered by the House of Commons one afternoon last week for his choice of a costume which looks like a lounge suit worn over pyjamas. A starchless alternative to the soft linen collar has been seen in the House lately, also worn by Captain Bathurst—the stiff collar of celluloid.

**THE WOMEN'S CORPS FOR FRANCE**

The Women's Auxiliary Army Corps now has its headquarters at the Connaught Club, an enormous building near the Marble Arch (one of the entrances to Hyde Park, London), with room for nearly six hundred women. It is here that the drafts come for their two or three weeks of training in hygiene and discipline, and, short as that term is, I am told it effects an amazing change in many of the young, unformed girls. They pass out looking smart and erect, they stand how to march, and they understand how to address their officers, which means that in France—where they will be generally put on their honour as to ordinary behaviour, but will be subject to certain discipline—they will know how to obey orders. They have also lectures and practice in hygiene and first aid, and from various experienced women other lectures designed to give them wide views of their new duties. Great satisfaction is expressed at the fine types of womanhood selected. They are all ages from 20 to 40, but most of them are in the early twenties. Girls of all classes live and work together amicably, and those of them who are obliged even in the club to sleep on hard boards qualified only by straw pallets are quite cheerful in the knowledge that things may be rougher in France. The girls already at work in French base towns send home very happy accounts of their experiences. They were afraid that the men whose places they were to fill might resent their going, and were greatly pleased when they were heartily cheered by the soldiers marching out.

**SELLING THE KAISER'S STUD.**

A report has reached here from a neutral source, which in the circumstances may safely be trusted, that German agents have been endeavoring to negotiate the sale of the Kaiser's stud, which is known to comprise many English and Irish thoroughbreds purchased before the war. The horses were mostly kept at the Hoppert—the German Newmarket—until early this year, when they were moved to the neighborhood of Cassel; and the hope, apparently, was entertained until very recently that one or other of the South American Governments might be induced to purchase them for breeding purposes. These countries, however, are not anxious just now for direct dealings of any kind with Germany, and it is difficult to see what nation at this moment has either the means or the inclination to indulge in the purchase.

**NOVELS IN SUMMER DRESS.**

The London publishers are in an informal way exchanging ideas on the possibility of issuing new novels in paper covers. There is no love for such an expedient—for two reasons. In the first place, paper-bound books keep badly in the atmosphere of cities like London. In the second place, we have no real public, as in France, which likes to bind its books in its own way. But, as the saying has it, needs must when the devil drives; and certainly he is behind the scarcity of paper for new books. We may, therefore, quite expect to see many of the summer novels come out but only in the summer raiment of paper covers.

**THE BEST PARLIAMENTARY "BILL" THIS SESSION.**

The most surprised man in London recently was Mr. Byrne, one of the Nationalist members for Dublin, Ireland. Mr. Byrne was asking a question of Mr. Duke, and this is how he phrased it—"Is not the right hon. gentleman aware that large quantities of mill which were recently consumed in Dublin are now being exported to this country?" The House of Commons dearly loves a "bull," and it shrieked with delight. But Mr. Byrne did not see the joke, and frowned on the hilarity. "It's all very well for you to laugh, but it's serious for Ireland"—whereat the House laughed the more. Mr. Byrne was highly indignant when he sat down, but to do him justice he laughed too when Mr. Chancellor, sitting next to him, pointed the joke out. Certainly it was the best "bull" of the session.

**THE "LIBERTY ART FABRICS" FOUNDER.**

Sir Arthur Lazenby Liberty, whose death is announced, had touched our times unmistakably. His business in Regent Street has been a London institution for half a century. Liberty gowns and Liberty shades were the Futurist ideas of the seventies. They are enshrined in Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera "Patience," and deserve a footnote in the history of Pre-Raphaelitism. Through his efforts delicate colors were introduced into dress fabrics, and the primary colors ceased to be the only wear. Russell, Morris, Watts, Whistler and Albert Moore frequented his shop and were interested in his experiments. It is curious that Sir Arthur Liberty lived into the times when primary colors have returned again as an advanced aesthetic cult.

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