

FIFTH AVENUE ENLISTS

By ESTELLE M. KERR

STARS AND STRIPES everywhere. Flags flying from every window, draped above every doorway, fluttering on every motor, displayed in every shop. The jeweller's window shows pins in sapphires, garnets and diamonds, the florist has worked out the same scheme in flowers, the large stores have a touch of patriotism in every window; sofa cushions, candy boxes, lamp shades, and various forms of wearing apparel, simulate stars and stripes, though the fashion writers are unanimous in saying that clothing in the national colours is not worn in the most exclusive circles. The men have a miniature silk flag in their buttonholes, the women an enamelled pin.

"Most people's flags are things to fight for, but ours seems to be a scheme of decoration," said an American statesman, pointing out the fact that there were more recruits for the army the day before than the day after the declaration of war.

Here and there are British flags, French flags and occasionally a Japanese, or an Italian. Probably the other allied countries are represented as well, but they are not noticeable in the vast array of Stars and Stripes which flutter most aggressively over shops bearing such names as "Schmidt." Motorists are not content with a group of flags of the Allies, such as are seen fluttering on the radiators of automobiles in Canada; they must decorate their windshields and the reflection of their headlights with Stars and Stripes and drape them over the windows of their limousines, to the detriment of traffic. One hundred and twenty-two accidents have been reported recently by these fluttering flags which conported the arm that gave the signal for turning, or distracted the attention of approaching motorists.

All this flag-waving has more significance across the border than it has with us. The placing of the Stars and Stripes in a home or place of business is considered a declaration of loyalty, and suspicion falls on the house that refuses to display it, particularly in the foreign quarters of the town. Even in the homes of the truly wealthy on Fifth Avenue the flag is draped above the doors and mantels, and the aesthetic soul shudders on beholding the harmonious creation of a celebrated interior decorator who has evolved a symphony of colour in robin's egg blue with touches of Chinese red, quite ruined by the crude, conflicting shades in the national emblem! A new problem must be faced by the decorators in homes whose inmates insist on combining patriotism and art.

ANOTHER emblem that figures largely on the Avenue is that of the Red Cross, for not only are there numerous committee rooms for branches of that society, but two of the large department stores have set aside space for working parties under the direction of the National Surgical Dressings Committee, and there the casual shopper can receive information concerning the making of hospital supplies, or, if she has time to spare, her services are enlisted for work on the premises. Red Crosses adorn the aprons of the casual workers, an enamelled pin with the emblem is worn by dollar-a-year members, but a travesty on all that the Red Cross stands for, is seen in a popular style of head-gear worn by foolish little misses who hobble down Fifth Avenue in their high-heeled shoes. At first I thought the wearers of these toques with their flowing chiffon veils and red crosses must be trained nurses, but the illusion was dispelled by a shop window where they were displayed in three colours: red, white and blue, with a card saying, "Look! Only \$7!" Thrift is not apparent

on Fifth Avenue. The luxurious motor cars are more numerous than ever and, in spite of the great heat, nearly all the women were swathed in furs. Last summer they were all wearing white fox, but "where are the foxes of yesteryear?" Not one is to be seen on the Avenue. Fashion proscribes that summer furs shall be dark, and many wear costly sables that will fade quickly in the bright sunshine. The white boots that were so popular in the wet, wintry weather, are now superseded by darker shoes, and it is still considered a crime to appear in anything but silk hosiery. In fact, Miss New York considers it patriotic to dress entirely in silk, for wool and cotton are needed for the soldiers, she says. Economy has not entered greatly into her scheme of things, but when it comes to work she takes her patriotism very, very seriously, and American women have to face problems of which we never dreamed, for enemies are all about, and since ground glass and poison have been discovered in some of the dressings, most careful inspection has been inaugurated in all the working parties and new workers are regarded with suspicion till they have established their identity and loyalty. Thousands of women are taking courses in First Aid and general Red Cross work, and many of these are preparing to go overseas with hospital units organized by Americans.

"Well, I hope you don't meet any of my friends over there. I'd rather have them killed on the battlefield," said a Canadian girl to a pretty young thing, with very superficial training in nursing. But the war revealed talent for courage and endurance in girls of whom nothing was expected, and many who started by scoffing at the V. A. D. have come to pray for her assistance.

OF interest to Canadians is the Fontainebleau War Relief Committee, which has handsome work rooms in the establishment of Madame Irene, on Fifth Avenue. Mrs. William T. Carrington, formerly Miss Margaret Houston, of Toronto, the well-known singer, is chairman of the Committee, and a number of other British and American women devote much of their time to the work of providing comforts for 5,000 wounded French and Canadian soldiers in a hospital at Fontainebleau.

Recruiting posters still decorate the bill boards and windows. Uncle Sam fixes you constantly with his gaze and says, pointing with outstretched finger, "I want you now!" A bumptious youth with shouldered musket advises one to "join the U. S. Marines," and a pretty Howard Chandler Christie girl in a sailor boy's costume says, "Gee, I wish I were a man, I'd join the navy!"

Still more abundant are the posters telling you to buy a liberty bond. In this campaign the poor old Goddess of Liberty worked overtime. She not only stands large and stolidly as ever in New York Harbour, she pervades the whole town. You see her on a background of blue appealing calmly and confidently to your patriotism in financial matters, but still more in evidence are the posters in which she has descended from her pedestal and, very green in the face, eyes narrowed and squinting and brows painfully contracted in her desperate appeal, she enjoins you to subscribe now. It seems as though the draughtsman who conceived this design was a pessimist who did not for a moment think that the amount would be so generously over-subscribed. The same Goddess decorates large posters which hang suspended across Fifth Avenue, and in one of the theatres, the Canadian actress, Julia Arthur, posed nightly to represent the statue, holding a lighted lamp in her hand.

Martial enthusiasm is rampant in the theatre, and as soon as you are comfortably seated with hat, purse,

opera-glasses and gloves on your lap you are called upon to rise for not one, but three National airs! The first is "La Marseillaise," and when, on one occasion, this was fol-

lowed by "Rule Britannia," I subsided to my seat. For our own National Anthem, which followed, I would have stood had not the people about me supplied a few words now and then to show that "My Country, 'tis of Thee," was their thought. They have no right to claim that as their National Anthem. We stole it first! The people around me made many rude remarks concerning my lack of respect, but on my next visit to the theatre my conduct was unquestionable, for "La Marseillaise" and "God Save the King" were followed by "The Star-Spangled Banner."

JUST why a nation where conscription is in force should talk so much about recruiting is not very clear in my mind. The papers loudly boasted of the throngs of young men who did their duty on registration day, and one lady said to me:

"Well, no one can say our town hasn't done its bit! It's simply wonderful the way the boys turned out to register!"

"But I thought they would be put in jail if they refused!" I said.

"Still they might have claimed exemption, and lots of them didn't!"

Glancing over the New York reports it seemed to me the number claiming exemption was proportionately large.

Another lady told me that her brother was worrying greatly as to whether he should enlist or not.

"But I thought conscription relieved one of that trouble!"

"No," she said. "Conscription is only for men under 31. He is perfectly eligible, but unless he enlists he won't be called out unless they need a second draft."

The enlistments in the Home Defence regiments have been most gratifying, but when enquiring about the whereabouts of a certain young man, I was answered, "Oh, he's skulking on a farm."

Many slackers are eagerly seeking work on the land, but I believe the law states that no class of men shall be exempt, each case will be decided on its own merits, and even marriage, into which so many rushed for protection, will not save them from the trenches.

The vast majority don't want to be saved, however, and the prompt and effective action of Americans, both men and women, cannot but fill us with admiration. They are profiting by our example and

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