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GIVE IT A TRIAL.

LONDON GOSSIP.

LONDON, May 25th, 1915.

THE KING AND RACING.

The King, I am told, has caused instructions to be sent to his racing trainer at Newmarket that no one employed about his stables should be discharged in consequence of the new arrangement concerning the discontinuance of racing. Some time ago His Majesty placed every facility in the way of those employed with his racing stud to join the army if they were suitable, and then promised that their places should be kept open for them and their wages paid to those dependent upon them while they were away; and this offer is now repeated. It is expected that his Majesty's lead in this direction will be very generally followed, especially by the larger owners; but with a compulsory end put to horse-racing for the remainder of the year, many of the smaller owners will be compelled to break up their studs owing to their inability to bear the expense of maintaining their stables in idleness.

THE SECRET DEPARTURES.

Now that Lord Kitchener has again appealed for men an recruiting efforts on a big scale are being renewed, it is to be hoped that something of a more rousing character will be sanctioned than anything that has been yet permitted. Recruiting bodies and soldiers themselves have done their best, but the difficulty is to create a central interest which will bring crowds of people together with the one thought in their mind. There are two ways to create this central interest, but although they have been repeatedly urged upon the authorities, nothing has been done. The first plan is to let the people see our soldiers when they are going away, and let them give them a send-off; and the second is to make a display of the trophies they have captured. There was certainly good reason why the troops should go away in secrecy in the first half of the war, but is there any real reason now why this secrecy should be so tightly maintained? The

enemy know that we are always sending out troops, and they have done their best, without result, to prevent these troops reaching their destination. The time when the troops leave London is no clue to the time when they cross the Channel. So far as one can see there is no reason now why the public should not see our soldiers going off to the war. No more moving and inspiring sight could possibly be conceived than the sight of these young men cheerfully offering themselves for the country. Nothing can appeal so directly to the young man who has delayed joining the army. The enthusiasm aroused by such a sight would rob us, too, of the shamefacedness that most people show when the soldiers go by. The other day in Waterloo Station I saw a company of Guardsmen going off. A few relatives had gathered at the entrance to the platform and a little crowd was held up as the company marched in. An attempt was made to give a cheer, but it died away, and people stood with their hats off watching them file past. The soldiers felt equally awkward, and at last they began to shout to the crowd, "Good Luck!" and "Good Luck to you all!" They—the men going out to the mud and fire, and death on the bloody fields of Flanders—wished us good luck as they left us in secure and comfortable England! Surely the veriest slacker would have felt that!

SHELLS AND AMMUNITION.

I learn that the fighting on the West during the past ten days has caused the War Office and the Government still further to enlarge their ideas on the expenditure of men and ammunition which will be necessary before the German can be expelled from France and Flanders. The question of high explosive shells as opposed to shrapnel shells, has also come up for discussion very strongly. The former are the levelling shells—they sweep away wire entanglements, trench defences, steel shells, guns, etc., and leave the way open for an

infantry attack—while the latter, the shrapnel shells, are the men-killers but are no good for destroying defences. It seems to be generally agreed that we must have more high explosive shells, the explosive generally required for these being trinitrotoluol. The expenditure of shells and ammunition has been prodigious on both sides, and wholly beyond the calculations of the thinking and foreseeing branches of the armies of the Allies. Actual experience of war has dispated forecasts and probabilities, and it is now clear that victory in the last resort will be with the side which can gain and maintain a superiority of munitions. Presumably the German calculations of the consumption of shells and ammunition have been disturbed equally with our own. The factors on which the experts worked out their probabilities were the same, and the German brain was no better able to foresee the realities of expenditure than any other. The question is whether Germany has not been quicker to organize her non-combatant population for a still greater manufacture proportionately with the unexpected depletion of supplies. On this there is no sure information. But what is quite certain is that we shall ourselves have to act with greater and continuous vigor. The situation is serious, and new developments in the Government's organization work have become imperative. That, I am assured, is the moral of the recent fighting.

THE RECENT FIGHTING.

An officer's impressions of the recent fighting in Belgium and to the north of Arras, which I heard recently, give an interesting glimpse into the conditions and daily incidents of the struggle. One thing which has been noticed is the careful selection of target which the German gunners seem to make. This, I am informed, is now usually more noticeable than the intensity of their fire. Some of the particular stories about shells falling near the General Headquarters are not true, but it is true that the German gunners systematically search behind the lines for this particularly attractive target. Another point which may justly be emphasized is the credit which the Canadians have won with the rest of the army. They have proved themselves hard and reckless fighters on a soldier's estimate, and there is nothing perfunctory in the official praises which have been showered on them. There is also, it may be added, a general admiration of the skill with which the French conducted their recent operations north of Arras. Their fire has displayed the traditional French qualities in offensive, and their leading in these operations has been very good. It is interesting to know, by the way, that the French troops against which the Germans first used gas were coloured troops, possibly chosen by the enemy as likely to be more susceptible to the first alarm and surprise of this use of the extraordinary weapon.

THE CLERGY AND THE WAR.

It has been remarked that in the clergy training colleges there have been a notable dearth of new students seeking orders since the war began, and hundreds of the younger are known to have vainly begged their Bishops to give them leave to join the army. There are even several instances of clergymen who have resigned living in order to free themselves for enlistment. Some governing bodies connected with the Church are, however, not satisfied with this general appearance of willingness on the part of the present clergy and of most of the students to do military service. They hold the view that even such young men as at this moment wish to take orders should be dissuaded. The Bishop of London's Ordination Candidates Council has passed a resolution to the effect that no candidate shall be accepted unless he proves to the satisfaction of the Council that he is unable to serve in the war.

THE POET AND THE PEOPLE.

No one can have failed to notice the part played by D'Annunzio in the present fateful moment of Italy's life. He returned to Italy for the unveiling of the Quarto monument, after a voluntary exile of some years in Paris, where he lived in an old house in the heart of one of the poorest districts. He saw hardly anybody, and was charmed with the solitude, the silence, the sound of the bells in the distance, the narrow streets with Italian names. From the moment he set foot on Italian soil he became the leader of the people. Every word he said has been treasured. If a politician had said that the rights of Italy were being bartered, the phrase might have been easily put down as a particularly original attack of a partisan against the men of another party. When D'Annunzio said it, the people adopted it as their watchword, and Giolitti became Signor "Parechio" (Mr. "Much"), in reference to the opinion expressed some time ago that Italy ought to get "much" out of the present war without actually taking part in it. Not even Signor Sa-

landa has been listened to with greater eagerness and reverence than D'Annunzio, and it is certain that no politician could move the people as D'Annunzio did. His information, moreover, proved unimpeachable. Days ago he declared that the Triple Alliance had been denounced by Italy, a fact which was only made public on May 21st. It is known that the greatest wish of the poet is to be attached to an Italian man-of-war, and perhaps to emulate Tullifer and be the first to give his life for his country.

DUKE OF THE ABRUZZI.

The Due of the Abruzzi, who will, it is said, take command of the Italian Fleet in the event of Italy declaring for intervention in the war, was for a time very prominent in British yachting. In the early nineties of last century he was frequently to be seen at the regattas of the leading Thames and Solent Clubs, and eventually he ordered the racing cutter Bona, which was built at Meadowside for him from designs by the late George Lennox Watson. He was very popular in English yachting circles, and made a point of playing the game in the British spirit. At first the newspapers, following the example of the club committees, gave the title of the owner of Bona its full Italian flavor, without of course calling him Prince or enumerating his Christian names, of which there are half a dozen. Before long, however, the Duke took the necessary steps to put the matter right from his point of view. "I am," he said in effect, "head of the Abruzzi in the same sense as a Highland chieftain is head of his clan. Therefore call me Duke of the Abruzzi."

BRITISH KNIGHTS OF THE BLACK EAGLE.

There are only four British Knights of the Prussian Order of the Black Eagle, and these are likely to accept with complete equanimity the announcement that the German Emperor is about to remove their names from this Order as a reply to his own dismissal from the Order of the Garter recently. These four are the King, the Duke of Connaught, Prince Arthur of Connaught, and the Duke of Wellington. It was the Emperor's desire some two or three years ago to bestow the famous orange ribbon on the Prince of Wales, but the King requested that this honor might be deferred until the Emperor's war was twenty-one, so that, had it not been for the war, it is probable that the Prince would just now have been preparing to visit Berlin in order to be admitted to this Order. Shortly after hostilities began, His Majesty formally divested himself of the Black Eagle and returned his insignia to the Emperor, an example that was promptly followed by the Duke of Connaught and the late Earl Roberts. It is understood that since then both Prince Arthur of Connaught and the Duke of Wellington have taken a similar course, so that the present "dismissal" would seem superfluous.

THE WEEK-END WONDERFUL. Although, alas! it cannot be seen by tens of thousands of London-lovers, this was the great week-end of the year for London beauty. Nature has made up for the absence of accustomed window-boxes in street and place by the lavishness of her color in every park and garden. Any railway through the near suburbs just now runs through hundreds of little back gardens of foaming blossoms and showers of lilac. It was "Chestnut Sunday" at Bushey, in the southwest suburbs of London, on May 16th, and the grand old avenue there was more splendid than ever with its millions of white spirals like candles illuminating a great victory. The valley of the Thames is scented with hawthorn and gorse, and there are Guelder roses everywhere. Kew Gardens are painted with bluebells. That lovely road between Richmond a popular river-side resort for Londoners, and Ham House, a particular nest of early Georgian beauty in red-brick houses stained with wisteria, and old garden walls of a deeper hue, and lovely gardens with formal terraces and dense cedars, is now at its finest. It takes you to the great avenue to Ham House, and then down the little avenue of limes, now at its most magical moment with its sweet grey-green color, past the face of the stately house itself, and so to Twickenham Ferry, where you are rowed over for a penny to Twickenham Town, according as it has been written.

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WAR HUMOUR IN LONDON'S EAST END.

A visitor to the East End sends to the London Spectator some amusing statements apropos of the war.

What could be more refreshing than to be told by a mother of "my son's money lying, so to speak, dormouse in the bank?"

It is all a little unexpected, when trying sympathetically to take particulars of an absent husband, the wife suddenly throws in: "And I only hope 'e'll serve the Germans as 'e served me."

There is a good deal of confusion relating to locality, as in the case of one mother, who said her son was in France, she thought, "working at the basement."

One delightful old lady, in a conspicuously clean room, described her health as never having been good since the hot summer, when she "made too free with water." She was sure the complications of her son's finances would be straightened out if I would write to the "colored sergeant."

Another mother described her younger son as being now in the "fly corpse," while the elder one "had joined the ditch patch riders."

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