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LONDON GOSSIP.

LONDON, Aug. 21st, 1916.
LORD LANSLOWNE.

One paper said this morning that Lord Lansdowne, because of falling health, is shortly to leave the Cabinet. Now I saw him walking along Piccadilly the other morning looking as fit as a fiddle and I noticed him on August 10th in the House of Lords alert and active, so I incline to accept the story that he knows nothing at all of his reported resignation. Of course, Lord Lansdowne joined the Coalition with grave doubts about his health, and could only undertake Ministerial rank without a portfolio. Should he think, now the darker days of the war are passing, that he need no longer strain himself to support the national unity, then none will grudge him his rest.

FRENCH AND ENGLISH WOMEN MUNITIONEERS.

I am told that French women munition workers are viewing with much interest the influx of English girls who, it is said, are, to the number of several thousands, to come to their assistance. The immediate occasion for this movement is understood to be the disinclination shown by unmarried women in France to engage in some of the processes involved in the manufacture of explosives, on the ground that it leads to a temporary discoloration of the skin. The girls' hands and to a lesser degree their faces turn in the end a bright yellow. Hence the factory nick-name "Canaries." No physical harm is said to result. It is merely a matter of appearance. English girls, who have observed the same result, are apt to console themselves with the knowledge that they are earning more than ever previously. The presence of English side by side with French labor in the munition and other factories of Northwest France, already, however, has brought about an interchange of ideas which may have a far-reaching effect on the international industrial relations of the future.

LIKE OLD TIMES.

Piccadilly is "up." That used to be the conclusive sign that the season was over. Every August when the clubs were closed the Westminster City Council use to tear up Piccadilly, stack the wood pavements, and then do nothing in particular with the job for a month or so. To see the "buses struggling along a narrow track and the rest of the street occupied with

watchmen's huts, urispe concrete, stacks of creosoted blocks, and gangs of elderly and leisurely men in corduroys, is a soothing sight. One feels that the world must be in its senses again, and Society now hurrying between Cowes and the moors. All is as it used to be in those days. Unfashionable people from the suburbs and the provinces share the pleasures of the Park with a native population of sparrows and hairy caterpillars. I won't say that Society has gone to the moors. We know that a good many fashionable people are working hard in town, and the others aren't supposed to take any holiday. But the fact remains that Mayfair is strangely quiet.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES AND THE PETROL SHORTAGE.

The restrictions on the supply of petrol give an added importance to the question of extending the use of the storage battery electric vehicle, but the difficulty remains of getting such vehicles manufactured on a large scale in this country during the war. The petrol restrictions, in fact, have created a new situation since the Government prohibited the importation of motor vehicles in order to save shipping space. Great interest therefore attaches to the fact that the Electric Vehicle Committee (which represents the Municipal Electrical Association and other bodies) is making efforts to get the prohibition removed so far as electric vehicles for commercial purposes are concerned. In the United States, where battery-driven wagons, lorries, etc., are very largely used, there are extensive facilities for their manufacture. It is, accordingly, apparent that an easing of the prohibition in this direction would get many manufacturers, traders, and others in this country out of the petrol difficulty, and petrol would be saved for the purposes of the war. The Board of Trade are now considering the subject. Two other points will weigh with all concerned—namely, that the cost of electric power is much lower than that of petrol, and that the driving and control of the electric vehicle are extremely simple.

JOHN BUCHAN IN THE ARMY.

It is not generally known that that well-known novelist, essayist, historian, and man of affairs, Mr. John Buchan, is also at the front. Very few people know that the "Second Lieutenant John Buchan" attached to Headquarters Staff for special service in a recent "London Gazette" was John Buchan, partner in the firm of Nelson, the publishers (and incidentally the originator of the sevenpenny novels series), editor of "Nelson's History of the War," and the author of many well known books including latterly some highly sensational ones. It used to be said that Buchan knew more about the British army and its dispositions than any living civilian. It is likely that he will soon know more than any other military man. He had previously been out at the front several times. He was correspondent there for a short time for the "Times" and "Daily News" in the spring of last year. The many very useful services he has rendered to the nation can only be told at the termination of the war.

SENTIMENT AND SAFETY.

One of the first suggestions put forward on behalf of those who have been broken in the war was that partially disabled men should be licensed as drivers of public motor vehicles in London. There was a generous impulse prompting the idea, which obtained such a volume of support that the Home Secretary appointed a Committee to consider the question from all points of view. The report of this body has been issued and it is, as might have been expected, not favourable to the general adoption of such a scheme. It is pointed out that under the present standard of efficiency required of drivers of public vehicles in the Metropolis there is no margin of safety to spare in the busy streets, and that any lowering of it would mean an increase in the very high number of accidents and a serious additional toll of fatalities. The members of the Committee are far from unsympathetic to the project, but, looking to the safety of the public as the first consideration, they can do no more than recommend that each application for a license should be considered strictly on its merits by the Commissioner of Police, without regard to sentiment. Incidentally the Committee strongly express the opinion that as regards men discharged from the Army or Navy partially disabled, these should, whenever possible, return to their original occupations. Where the disabilities have rendered them incapable of following their previous employment, and it is necessary to teach them a new trade, the Committee suggest that motor-driving is one of the least suitable.

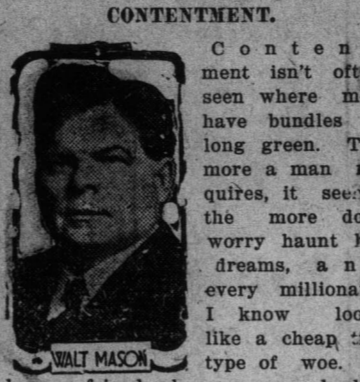
OPENINGS FOR MIDDLE-AGED WOMEN.

The discovery that the supply of female clerks has run short will perhaps lead to an improvement in the treatment of middle-aged women who apply at the Labor Exchanges for posts in either Government departments or commercial houses. Imbued with the idea that the adaptable age has come to an end with the attainment of the thirtieth birthday, the Labor Exchanges—which supply most of the Government departments—all most invariably tell older applicants that there is no opening for them.

ROUND THE BANDSTAND.

The look of things round the bandstand in Hyde Park these brilliant afternoons gives you some measure of the pulse of London in the third War August. It needs an effort to remember what this everyday scene was like in the August before the war, with the wide circle of chairs crowded with tourists from all corners of the earth. This afternoon the sight of an American of the lavish type (broad hat, no waistcoat, and check trousers) was as startling as a butterfly at Christmas. It was a home crowd, three-parts women and convalescent soldiers, taking its ease far more quietly and with less display in dress than in the old days, but still a crowd reacting naturally to the lighter mental atmosphere that has come with the recent good news. There has come about quite recently a noticeable thinning in the usual afternoon stream of glossy, motors with flower-like women inside. The Petrol Control Committee is having its way with these and leaving more room for the old-fashioned landaus to amble out into the sunshine. There was a row of these sedate vehicles ranged up near the bandstand as in former times, all with silver coachmen on the box. Hyde Park has not yet come down to girl ticket collectors for the chairs, as Brighton has, but the ticket men are all ancient beyond reproach. The scarlet bandmen looked like a bunch of geraniums under the theatrical trees and compensated for the absence of flowers in the beds and in the Park Lane windows. The fashionable colour in Piccadilly balconies now is hospital blue. It will take more than a European war to banish the London tramp. I was told he had been tidied away by the broom of war, but the hot weather has brought him out of his obscure retreats to sleep once more on the shady slopes of the Green Park.

Spears of straight ostrich, laid to form a band around the crown, are a novel trimming.



WALTON MASCH

Contentment isn't often seen where men have long green. The more a man requires, it seems, the more does worry haunt his dreams, and every millionaire I know looks like a cheap type of woe. I have a friend who once was broke; then he considered life a joke; he filled the air with gladsome songs, and no one laughed so loud or long. It was a joy to meet him then; he was a tonic to sad men. But fortune slipped around, by stealth, and loded him with unearned wealth. He comes to see me now and then—I wish he'd never come again—and talks so much of dole and gloom, of properties that ceased to boom, of plants requiring ready cash, investments which have gone kormash, the grief that capital endures, the grief no legislature cures—he talks so much along this line, and puts up such a bitter whine, that when he leaves my humble door, my feet are chilled, my heart is sore. Your wealth will buy a lot of things; all kinds of luxuries it brings, but you can't take it to the mart, and buy a glad, contented heart.

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