

Society Again in Frills and Furbelows

Peace Partly Solved the Servant Problem, and It's No Longer Bad Form to Give Course Dinners and Dress Well

By RICHARD BARRY.

OH, I am so glad Madame is to have dinners served in courses again. Now I can wash the dishes between the courses," one servant was overheard to say to her mistress as the new order for the day was handed downstairs after the long, long blowing of the sirens marked the return of peace.

Madame also was pleased, for, from the moment on Nov. 12, when the gas mask factory in Long Island City employing 12,000 first-class female servants was closed down, right up to date, fast-growing ranks of domestics have been trailing back toward the city and their old employments, and the servant problem—bagho!—is fast being solved.

Of course, it is very bad form to discuss the servant problem in a drawing room, but, really, it does exist, being the base and marrow and substratum of all our delightful little joys and sorrows which are so much more important than more important things. So, now that the khaki of the ex-doughboy may be transmogrified into the purple broadcloth and brass buttons of the appareled footman, now that the cotton apron of the lint tearer and the cartridge packer may be translated into the cap and apron of the attentive housemaid, the social matron again breathes more freely. The makers of war munitions are now the makers of the munitions of peace!

What pleasing and attractive structures they are rearing, what a happy comedy of manners they are rehearsing and performing daily and nightly! The mistress, too, has abandoned the Woman's National League for Superfluous Service and has now claimed her privi-



"Domestics are trailing back toward the city."

leges and perquisites as a charter member of the Manhattan Maidens' and Matrons' Social Security Club. No longer is put the question, "What clothes can I spare to give the league?" Instead, every one is asking, "What shall I wear to the costume ball?"

One charming though statuesque matron was overheard to remark the other day, "Now that my sacrifices are over, I can begin again to clothe myself properly." The sacrifices of this fascinating and distinguished patriot took the form of lending her personality, including her admired figure, to the chef d'oeuvre of the late tableau makers. She has been seen at one time and another on floats, parading up and down Fifth Avenue, at bazaars, in the armories, in the hotels, at functions in private homes, and, twice during the last Summer, in woodland vivants. During the period of the war she appeared, by actual count, eleven times as Columbia, draped in the Stars and Stripes; nine times as La Belle France, swathed in the Tricolor; three times as Britannia, enveloped in the Union Jack; six times as bleeding Belgium—she was a bit robust for this, yet very effective, with a strip of strawberry bandage over her temples, and her golden curls escaping underneath; and once as Mighty Russia, though this was in the earlier days before the Great Bear had toppled.

These ennobling sacrifices doubtless made of this admirable lady a veritable American Jeanne d'Arc, and if no one has yet recommended that Congress confer on her the D. S. M., that recommendation is made here and now.

One of the most devoted and loyal friends of society this Winter is the General Staff of the army, for it has issued an order that all officers and men are permitted to wear their uniforms, if they wish, for three months after being honorably discharged. For this society is deeply appreciative. It has had no more thoughtful attention in many a long year. For what is more decorative at any function, be it either a dinner table, the

drawing room, a ball room or an opera box, than a few smart uniforms sprinkled here and there among formal ma'e attire.

While this social season promises to be the best that New York has seen in many years, while every hotel and apartment house is filled to overflowing, while the caterers and the restaurants beg that their orders be less rather than more, the trains to Florida and California are also more in demand than ever before. A party which planned to start on its annual trip to California early in January made application for reservations the middle of December, but was told that even then it was absolutely impossible to promise anything out of Chicago after Dec. 26 and before Feb. 1. Therefore, to get to California in January this party was obliged to leave Chicago on Christmas Day.

The Florida beaches began filling up this year a week or ten days earlier than usual, and doubtless by the time the height of the season is reached, at the end of January, procuring accommodations there will require the same diplomatic and financial resource as getting a table New Year's Eve at a New York restaurant. If there is any problem which is bothering the United States Labor Department it will not concern those who are willing or able to serve as waiters at any of the fashionable Winter resorts.

Last year this luxurious flying about was discouraged in all possible ways. Even the weather conspired with the Government and all the powers in Europe to discourage persons either from entertaining in New York or from entraining out of New York. This year the powers of Europe associated with the Government of the United States, including the Weather Bureau and the meteorological experts, have done all they could to encourage both entertaining and entraining.

Of course, the metamorphosis is not as yet complete. Society is always correct, especially in observance of the technicalities, and we are at present merely

living through the armistice, which, speaking strictly, is but an antechambre to peace. Therefore, we find that our social favorites have not instantly abandoned war activities. These have merely, in many instances, assumed a different form of expression. For instance, those ladies who, before Nov. 11, could be seen in the somewhat severe feminine uniform then in vogue, in the canteens and the tea shops, ministering to the uplift of the sojourning soldier, sailor, and marine, are still employed in similar beneficence.

Woven and entwined in the very structure of this new house of social joys there is a potent apprehension. It concerns the approach of that fearful date, July 1, 1919. In anticipation of the fatal day, it seems that the gayeties of this season are augmented even beyond the powers of a mere armistice. Peace itself could hardly furnish the fillip of the indulgence (discreet, always, we hope) created by contemplation of the awful dryness which must follow next July. Many who heretofore would have refused "just another glass" are now induced to lower the last barriers on the score that they may never have another chance.

Yet, I know a man who boasts of the contents of a vast stone cellar he has built in Canada, where repose the rarest vintages of France and Italy and California, the finest distillations of Ireland, Scotland, and Kentucky. Another has erected on his Virginia farm what closely resembles an old Indian stockade, in which he has secreted enough tipples to last, he hopes, through the long drought. In these fin de siècle fortresses we may imagine them beleaguered by the fanatical hordes of prohibition and bravely defending the final citadels of Personal Liberty!

These fragrant cases in the great desert of enforced teetotalism, however, needs must be located in the far-distant lands, places all but mythical to the average social gathering for whom the old adage must be revised, "Eat, drink, and be married, for tomorrow there will be no more booze."



"She posed eleven times as Columbia."