

London Correspondence.

You will want to know some particulars, I am sure, of the baptism of the Marquis of Blandford at the Chapel Royal, St. James (by special permission of the Queen.) The little man had a brand-new robe, for there is no christening robe in the Churchill family—why, I do not know. He was so good, never even attempting to cry, not even when the sub-dean and several very illustrious persons kissed him after the ceremony. The Prince of Wales made the responses in stentorian tones. It is an interesting coincidence that he performed the same function in the very same building twenty-five years ago on behalf of the father of little John Albert Edward William Churchill. The Duchess looked delicate still, but radiant. She had a very pretty frock of the new lavender blue, with a lace yoke and sleeves over white satin. The company of relations was smart, and the gold cup which the Prince presented was duly admired; it has his arms on one side and those of the Marlboroughs on the other.

This ceremony ended, the Prince started off to pay his attentions to the Marchioness of Blandford's sister, Lady Lansdowne, on the occasion of her daughter's marriage to the Marquis of Waterford. So punctual was he that he reached St. George's a few minutes before his graceful hostess, rather to her consternation. At the reception after the wedding this gave him an occasion, while mildly "chaffing" her, to display his wonderful memory. She had said something about being sorry she had kept him waiting in the church. Said the Prince, with his little chuckle, "Ah, my lady, this is not the first time. Do you know that you kept me waiting for exactly three minutes when I attended the christening of today's pretty bride, about twenty years ago?"

The wedding was very pretty. The aisle and porch were lined by the stalwart troopers of the bridegroom's regiment of Horse Guards, and a very pretty little ceremony was the presentation of the exquisite bouquet of lilies of the valley, tied with their colors, by the men and non-commissioned officers when the bride arrived. Lady Beatrix Fitzmaurice is a slender, brown-haired creature, rather frail and delicate looking, but with a proud carriage of her little head. She made such a fine contrast to her stalwart young bridegroom, who is every inch a Beresford, with the square brow and strong mouth of the fighting race. Her graceful gown was embroidered with silver and diamonds and trimmed with Irish lace so perfect that we beholders coveted vainly. This lovely lace was a labor of love. It was made by the Poor Clares of Kenmare Convent, on the bridegroom's estate, an establishment famed for its wonderful productions in this branch of art. The Poor Clares are cloistered nuns who never leave their convent walls and never see a stranger except through a thick grating. They seldom speak, and every day each digs a portion of her grave. It is pathetic to think of these silent women working patiently for the adornment of a fresh young beauty just entering the world which they have renounced forever. But they are very happy folk, and have by no means buried their womanhood in the grave with their worldliness; moreover, their lord of the manor is much beloved for his many good deeds, so the work for his bride gave them double pleasure. As a further proof of good will they sent a bridal gift, an exquisitely embroidered blotting book, to Lady Beatrix.

One triumph the bride achieved: she contrived to get together eight bridesmaids who were all pretty! They wore white, with pearly velvet hats and any amount of Neapolitan violets, and wore diamond "lucky" shamrocks, the gift of the patriotic bridegroom.

The death of the Duchess of Teck will be severely felt by English society. There are few women living who could preserve such equanimity, not to say effervescence of spirits, under distressing circumstances, as the late Mary of Cambridge. Her girlhood was rendered more or less miserable by the unreasonable jealousy of the Queen of England. Small, lony and insignificant, the latter compared unfavorably with her buxom and really handsome cousin at all State functions at which the twain appeared. Indeed, it was only after the marriage of the Duke of York to Princess May of Teck that their relations reached anything approaching intimacy. The Duke of Teck, a thoroughly good fellow at heart, but with no more idea of management than a babe, shortly after his marriage found London life so entirely to his taste that he commenced a sequence of "good times" that very soon landed him in a condition of stony brookness. His mother-in-law, the aged Duchess of Cambridge, and his wife's brother, the present Duke, aided the Tecks, time after time to regain a position of ease, and although tradesmen to royalty are proverbially and truly toadies, yet even scions of kings cannot everlastingly remain plunged in debt. The Tecks, at the time I speak of, had free lodgings at Kensington Palace, that royal asylum for regal paupers which is tenanted by the Queen's pensioners, and where, among others, the Marquis of Lorne and Princess Louise at present dwell.

Things reached a terrible point early in the eighties. Tradesmen's boys gossiped at area gates and told the gaping maid-servants of the suits brought against the Tecks, of the refusals to serve them any more and of the expedients taken to obtain money. The exile to Florence followed, and while it was universally supposed that the couple, who preserved the utmost complacency all through their trials, were economizing, they nevertheless established a social circle and had the best of good living and the merriest of times possible. On their return to England, affairs once more having been straightened out for them, they were delegated to the White Lodge, Richmond Park.

Those in authority fancied that a residence twelve miles from London would effectually prohibit any gayeties of an expensive character, and I fancy that the Tecks really did not exceed their income to any serious extent at this period, though they drove up to London for theatres, balls and receptions many times during the week and were as unconcernedly jovial as ever. The Duchess grew enormously stout, but retained a pretty countenance and was always so ebullient that she was universally dubbed "Jolly Mary"—not "Fat Mary," as has been stated. Naturally the Queen has had to cordole in public terms with the less occasioned by her cousin's death, but I cannot believe it possible that she experiences any overpowering grief. The difference between Her Majesty in heavy crepe pinning decorations on a soldier's breast without the ghost of a smile and of the Duchess gaily distributing prizes at some athletic meeting with a cheery joke to every winner was marked, and even the London tradesmen, angrily striving after their money, were wont to refer to her gentle terms. "It ain't 'er fault, it's that bloody German's," I heard a long-suffering poulterer once remark, and there is no doubt that such was the case. The marriage of their daughter with the son of the heir apparent naturally placed them once again on Easy street.

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