

London Correspondence

My London correspondent writes me this week as follows:

The poor Duchess of Teck's impressive funeral is over, but her memory will be always green. It is a strange fact that the Queen's request for general mourning attire was very little observed in town, and I hear that the same thing was the case in the country, yet this apparent neglect did not mean lack of sorrow. This is a day of bright colors, every woman had just got home her new clothes for the winter, all of the very gayest, and for the sake of a few days did not feel inclined to get a new outfit. And yet all the modistes have declared themselves absolutely distracted by the multitude of mourning orders that poured in. Perhaps, then, the real reason of the puzzle was that the black clothes were ordered, but not sent home in time.

The royal family are genuinely distressed by the loss. How the Princess of Wales cried during the special service on Sunday! The Duchess of York is pale and self-contained. She says she has been trying ever since the death "to think what mother would have liked and to do just that." You see, the blow was not quite so sudden for her, as she was staying with her parents and knew of her mother's illness, which had been kept a secret from all the rest of the family, even the Wales household. It was like the unselfishness of Princess Mary not to wish to have them worried.

One of her last visits was to Lord Mountstephen, at Bocket Hall, near Hatfield. She stayed there three days with the Duke and a house party, which included the Northcotes, the fiancée (Miss Tufnell), Lady Somers, Lady Margaret Villiers and Lord Selborne (who is Lord Salisbury's son-in-law). Bocket Hall belongs to the Cowpers, but they always let it, as they do not require another place so near their lovely Hertfordshire seat, Panshanger. It is in the midst of a beautiful country, and the Duchess seemed to thoroughly enjoy her stay, joining in long walks through the lanes and also taking drives. Everyone noticed how gay she was; every meal was enlivened by her witty stories and her well known laugh. Nor did she seem tired, for each evening she stayed up till after 12, listening to the playing of Herr Bonawitz, who was one of her guests. On the last night she had left the room on her way to bed, when somebody hit upon the idea of ending the little concert—to which she had contributed some quaint old German songs in sympathetic and sweet style—by the singing of the national anthem. As the strains reached her the Duchess said, "Oh, they're singing 'God Save the Queen'; I must go back," and back she went accordingly to join with great heartiness in the chorus. Another incident of her stay was the taking of a portrait group of all the Bocket party by a young fellow who was among them. This was probably the last time the Duchess was photographed, so no doubt the few pictures that resulted will be treasured. She looked so well all the time no one could have guessed that she was slowly dying.

My space was so taken up last week that I had no time to tell you about the Balaklava dinner given at St. James Hall on the anniversary to the sixty survivors of the famous Charge of the Light Brigade. It was a pretty and touching sight; the veterans, some with their breasts covered with hardly won medals, greeted each other with such enthusiasm. Some looked fairly prosperous, others—to the shame of England be it recorded!—had but just been rescued from the work-house by means of the Light Brigade fund started by Mr. T. H. Roberts, of Fleet street. Of course the pathetic incidents were lightened by some touches of humor, as when one

grizzled and infirm veteran declared, in accents of unutterable pride, "O'm the woild-lookin' divil in the Eighth Hussars that ye can see in Miss Thompson's picture. Ye wouldn't be thinkin' that same now, but ut's thrue." He was exactly like Mulvaney run to seed!

There is joy in the house of Bass because the Queen has granted a special patent of remainder to Lord Burton's only child, Nellie, whereby the peerage is to descend to her small son. The peer's brother, that very rich person, the Hon. Hamar Bass, M. P., is perhaps not quite so much pleased; but he is to have the baronetage that belongs to the family.

Another member of the smart "Beerage"—Lady Ardilaun—has given her name to a very lovely new carnation, which amateurs are now securing with all speed, this being the right planting time. It is most uncommon, orange-apricot with markings of light lavender or heliotrope, and *elegantes* are beginning to look forward to bouquets of it to harmonize with court and evening gowns in the fashionable mauve tints. The Duchess of Portland and the Rothschilds are going in for it. It is being introduced by Mr. Weguelin, of Torquay, who seems to be the guide, philosopher and friend of all the smart women who grow carnations. He has just named another lovely flower after Lady Cadogan, and the Vice-Queen of Ireland has written him a very cordial letter of thanks. Another of his friends is the Duchess of Portland, whose lovely face will—by special permission—form the frontispiece to his forthcoming book on carnation culture, which will be an elaborate work and will be dedicated to her. Certainly the growing of these flowers is becoming a fashionable craze. I am told that we owe it primarily to your example. If so we must thank you, for it is productive of much pleasure, especially as these obliging plants thrive in cities even better than in some country districts. The smoke actually seems to agree with them, so they give joy to us poor town-dwellers.

Apropos of the production of "Diarmaid," it is an amusing fact that Lord Lorne, according to his own profession, knows nothing of music. "I don't know the difference between 'God Save the Queen' and 'Pop Goes the Weasel,'" he said once. Perhaps that is why his lyrics are so unvoiced!

Mrs. Darley—I saw an article today about graveyard insurance, dear.

Mr. Darley—Yes, there is such a thing.

Mrs. Darley—I didn't read the piece, but I can't imagine why any one should wish to insure graveyards. Surely there isn't much danger of their burning down.

Willie—I have proposed to Maud Lexington three times in three weeks and she says she doesn't yet know whether she can marry me or not. What on earth does she mean?

Carrie—That she doesn't know yet whether she can marry some other man or not.

"It is too bad that your husband has got into jail, Mrs. Tantrum. You have my sympathy."

"Oh, I look on the bright side of it. Now I know where he is of nights."

Jaded Jorkins—Ef my bizness was properly appreciated and remunerated, mum, I wouldn't be a-askin' of no hand-outs.

Mrs. Housekeep—What is your business?

Jaded Jorkins—I'm a weather prophet, mum.

Harold—Why so sad, dearie? Has not my avowal the true ring?

Maud—Y'es, darling, but my finger hasn't as yet.

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