

London Letter.

The Duke and Duchess of York put off their Australian tour until next year, as the Duchess is not at all in strong health. If they do go next year, they will use the new royal yacht, which will then be ready; and they will visit every British colony, so they will practically go all around the world. The Duchess will enjoy this better than her consort, for she is a good sailor, while he, despite his naval training is still subject to *mal-de-mer*.

Army men are genuinely sorry about the Duke of Connaught's retirement from the command at Aldershot. He and his wife are immensely popular, although they do things quietly and never put themselves forward or indulge in airs. They will keep up Baginbun Park in spite of the retirement, as they would not easily get another such place near London, and both are devoted to country life. It is rumored that the Duke will get the command of the forces in Ireland. That would be a popular and an appropriate selection. The Duchess could not fail to be liked because she is so amiable and unaffected. She is plain, certainly; and her English is not perfect; but then she is kindness itself, and a dashing horsewoman—which quality seems a necessary passport to Irish affections! As for the Duke, he is still handsome enough to captivate all the colleens; and the children are sweet little things, quite unspoiled. (Not that I should speak of tall Princess Margaret as a "little thing.") I hope, therefore, that Ireland will get this exemplary family. She will see nothing to scandalize her!

People are already beginning to talk of the drawing room on May 10. I suppose it will be the smartest of the season. It is certainly the most eagerly sought after. On the very day after the announcement of it, the first post brought enough applications to fill the presentation lists; so the Lord Chamberlain had to announce that no more could be entertained. Of course hundreds will be disappointed; and the great ladies who have the *entree* plume themselves complacently on their luck.

The Marquis of Exeter's death was quite unexpected. He will be better remembered as Lord Burghley, for he sat in Parliament for a long while under that name, and only succeeded to the peerage two years ago. He leaves an only child, the new Marquis, who is eighteen. Lord William Cecil—the one who married Lord Amherst's daughter—is his brother. These Cecils are only distant relations of Lord Salisbury's family, and are descended from the great minister of Queen Elizabeth's day. Another of their ancestors was "The Lord of Burleigh," whose love song Tennyson immortalized.

So pretty Lady Ashburton has a son at last. Great is the rejoicing in the house of Baring. The eldest of her three daughters is eight; they rejoice in the

poetic names of Venetia, Auria and Angela; and they are as lovely as she was in her childhood, when her mother, Viscountess Hood, used to delight in painting her dreamy face and wealth of glorious golden hair. Lord Ashburton is a very good fellow, a sportsman all around. His wife has one sister, Dorothy Hood, who is also a beauty.

Another son and heir, whose inheritance is less enviable, is the one born in Paris, to Sir Robert Peel and to the rather foolish young lady who ventured upon joining her fate to his!

The Hon. Hamar Bass, M. P. (Lord Burton's brother) who died the other day was a genial millionaire and will be missed. He was never to be put out of temper. Here is an instance of his good humor: During some discussion in the House of Commons, Sir Wilfred Lawson—always willing to have a fling at the "Beerage"—paraphrased Mr. Gladstone's famous saying, and exclaimed, looking hard at Hamar; "It's the Bases against the classes!" The House roared and the victim joined in the merriment. Some time later he was mistaken by a raw Irish member for some other man. "Why," said the Hibernian, "aren't you So-and-So?" "No, I'm Hamar Bass, 'the Bases against the classes,' you know!" was the laughing reply.

Miss "Vi" Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough's cousin, is engaged to Captain Fitzclarence, one of the Earl of Munster's nephews. Vi is Lord and Lady Alfred Churchill's daughter. She is very bright and up-to-date and devoted to private theatricals. Her sisters are Lady Winington, Mrs. Colville and Mrs. Williams. The engagement took place last winter at Cairo, which is becoming quite a matrimonial agency.

The Dowager Duchess of Newcastle is still carrying on her work among the poor in the East End, assisted, oddly enough, by her dashing daughter-in-law, May Yohe! You may be surprised at

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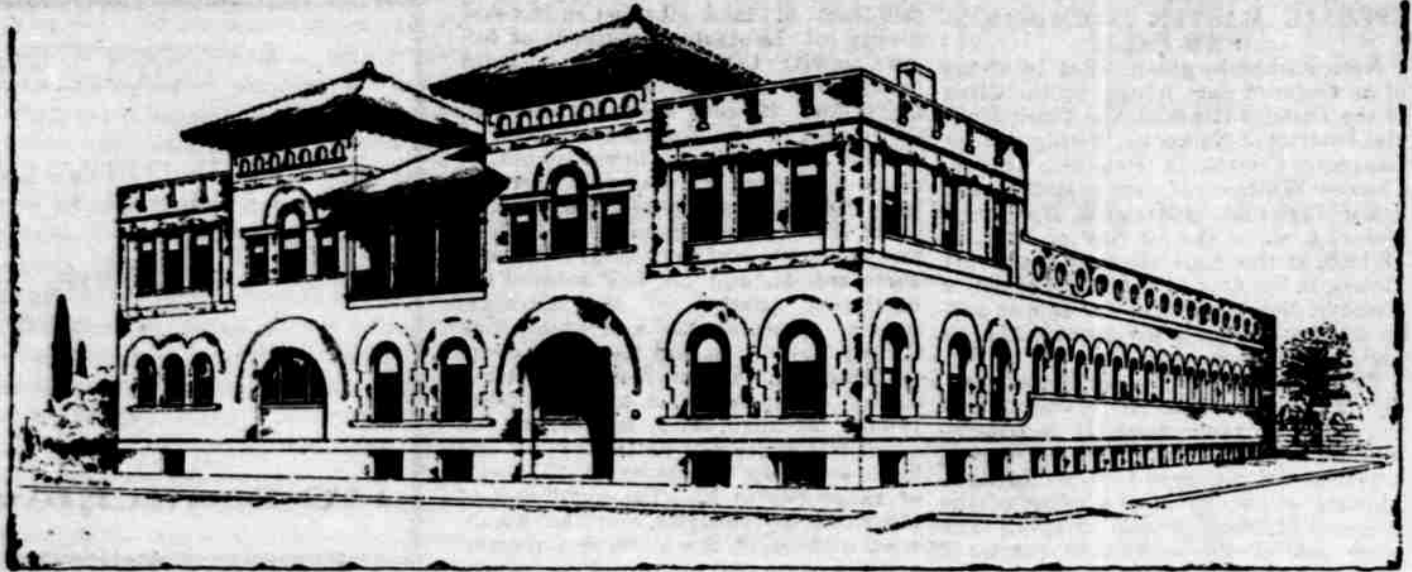
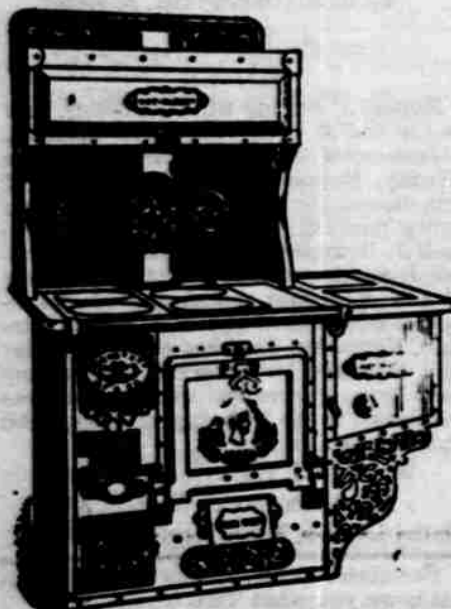
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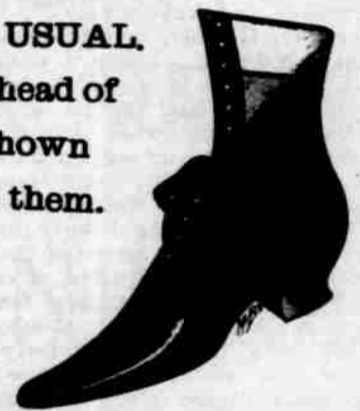
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this, but it is true! The two get on remarkably well, and it is pretty to see them together. The Duchess is so gentle and tactful that she is never in the least priggish. She seems to have quite forgiven all the trouble that Lord Francis Hope gave her.

Lord Hillingdon's death was terribly sudden. He fell dead during service in church. It was a dreadful shock to Lord and Lady Pembroke, with whom he was staying, especially to the lady, for she was sitting next to him in the pew. He was very rich, as a member of Glyn, Mills Currie & Co., would naturally be. His oldest son, who succeeds, is married to one of Lord Suffield's handsome daughters. I suppose that before they have done every one of them will be a peeress, with the single exception of pretty Lady Musgrave of Edenhall, who, by the way, was staying with Princess Victoria of Wales all the time the Princess of Wales was away. Lord Suffield's other daughters are Lady Carington, Lady Hastings, the Hon. Winifred Carr-Glyn (less chance of the peerage here,) the Hon. Judith Harbord (maid of honor to the Queen,) and the Hon. Bridget, about whose engagement the papers and society generally got so excited not long ago. The widowed Lady Hillingdon is Lady George Hamilton's sister.

A most absurd tale is going the rounds to account for the fact that Lord Salisbury, despite ill-health, holds on to the office of Foreign Secretary. It is that no other member of the Cabinet speaks French sufficiently well to conduct confidential interviews with foreign Ambassadors! The Marquis certainly speaks fluently, though his French, like his personality, is essentially British.

"That dog certainly seems almost human at times," said old Mr. Fussy.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Fussy. "He growls over his food quite as much as you do."

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