

London Letter.

The Princess of Wales' success as a prize winner at a big poultry show will make the keeping of fowls and all sorts of birds more fashionable than ever before with ladies who have country places. The Princess has always been devoted to her birds; but her dogs attract so much attention from the outside world that her feathered pets have attained less celebrity. Still anyone who has seen her aviary, at Sandringham, is not likely to forget it. The division set apart for white creatures is, perhaps, the prettiest. The white doves—about thirty in all—have a lovely dwelling place, so arranged that a glowing bank of scarlet geraniums sets off their snowy plumage.

At Wolferton Station, near Sandringham, there is a railway bridge, situated in a rather pretty spot. One day the Princess, who is an enthusiastic photographer, took a snapshot of this bridge. When she had developed the negative she noticed a curve in the bridge, for which defect she blamed her own manipulation of the camera, resolving to take another picture. This she did at the time when an express was passing. Again the curve appeared; so she asked the Prince about the matter. "Why, my dear, there must be something wrong!" said he; "this shall be investigated." Strange to say, the little accidental occurrence was—it would seem—the means of preventing a great calamity; for when inquiries were made and experts consulted it was discovered that the bridge was in a dangerous state, and that a new one must forthwith be built. No wonder Her Royal Highness is more devoted than ever to her camera. But just now her hobbies are in abeyance, poor thing! She is sick-nursing. According to the latest accounts the Queen of Denmark cannot last long, now that dropsy has set in.

Poor Princess Victoria is keeping very quiet and busy. "My work is to be a good aunt; that's what I am living for," she said the other day. And she spends most of her time in making toys and small garments. Poor girl, if her romance had been fulfilled, she would have made an excellent mother. As it is, she is her father's principal solace in his illness.

I asked a friend who is having a gay time in Homburg, whether the rumors about the Crown Princess of Roumania were true. I had heard from several quarters that the pretty young lady was learning to flirt, and that her husband strongly objected, the result being want of harmony almost as serious as that which has separated her sister and the Grand Duke of Hesse. My friend says that things have been grossly exaggerated. Princess Marie's devotion to her husband during his long illness might well protect her from malice; and it is only natural that she should enjoy her freedom a little, now that her cares are lessened. That she is a bit "lively" I do not deny; look at the influence of heredity which must press upon her! and she is naturally much admired. Her husband might remember his own nonsense in the past and the absurd Vacaresco affair before letting jealousy influence him. One little escapade of the Princess has been taken up and made much of in a way that she never intended. When her sister of Hesse was staying with her at Schwalbach for the bath treatment, she had her camera with her and took a snap shot of the Grand Duchess coming out of the bath "mit nodings on." The young Venus was lovely enough to have turned anybody's head but no one else was intended to see the picture, nor would the freak have

leaked out but for the chatter of the bath attendant, who appeared to get a peep, and, of course, spread the story.

From Scotland I hear that the irrepressible Mrs. Asquith is distinguishing herself on the golf links, as usual, and that the visitors follow her about. The other day there was a village fair of some sort, accompanied by "roundabouts"—i. e., wooden horses arranged in a ring and sent spinning round the machinery. Instead of riding in the usual way Mrs. Asquith stood upon the horse's back and kept her balance while whirling around at a marvelous pace. "Dodo" doesn't seem to mind what he does, so long as it is something that no one else has done.

Of course we take interest here in Wilhelmina of Holland, especially as she is just at the age—eighteen—at which our own queen came to the throne. Besides, the little lady is a great admirer of everything English. She used not to be; but a visit which she paid to Paris, when she met the Prince of Wales, made her eager to see more of us; and when she came to England, not long ago, her good anticipations were confirmed. I shall never forget her reception at Eton college, nor her half shy, half impulsive acknowledgment of the boisterous cheers. "Oh, I do like Eton," she said afterward, adding, with a wicked little smile and a blush, "especially the boys!" In fact, this serious maiden is not without attraction toward the other sex. Even her childish games showed this. Four years ago—on her fourteenth birthday—her mother, in order to familiarize her with the accoutrements of her army, presented her with thirty-nine handsome dolls, each in the costume of one of the Dutch regiments. Instead of taking the matter as a basis of study, Miss Wilhelmina giggled most frivolously, and insisted upon being at once provided with thirty-nine court ladies as well; "So that the poor dears may have a chance for a little fun and then get married," she said. It is quite a mistake to suppose—as many do—that she is adverse to matrimony. Her English governess, to whom she is deeply attached, can disprove this. "What I want," said the young queen recently, "is not to be hurried. I love my people and I wish to please them; but my marriage is more my affair than theirs, after all; and I'm sure of one thing, which is that an unhappy wife would make a very bad queen. If I'm a happy woman I shall reign all the better. But if I can't marry to please myself I won't marry at all. I'll be single queen, like Elizabeth of England." Which comparison, on the part of the innocent young girl, suggests that her studies in English history have been made in a carefully Bowdlerized edition.

Recent figures tell us that 33,000 bachelors and 34,000 spinsters are married every year in London; that about 4,000 widowers and only half that number of widows remarry annually. This looks as though woman, having found man out, hesitates to trust him again! But a contemporary unkindly suggests as a reason that a man can propose while a woman may not. As if the actual proposal made any difference! If a woman chooses she can make any man propose to her—given liking to start with.

Because the death penalty is abolished in Swiss canton where the Empress of Austria was murdered, it is said that the assassin will escape condign punishment. But according to the technicalities of diplomacy a sovereign carries her country with her, and the Empress was on Austrian soil when she was attacked. This principle is conceded in regard to all foreign embassies and their attaches. It fol-



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