

London Letter.

When the late Christopher Sykes first became prominent in London society, it was the fashion for everybody who was anybody to be seen in Hyde Park on certain days. "Kit," who was but a fair whip even on country roads, took a few lessons in London driving, and one morning, at the most crowded hour, tooled his mail phaeton to the Row. He had not got beyond the Achilles Statue when his pole crashed through the back of a brougham. "Kit" threw the reins to his man, jumped down and ran to the side of the damaged carriage, which was occupied by an old gentleman. So sincere and profuse were "Kit's" apologies that the aged one was charmed, and begged him to say no more about the accident. That afternoon Mr. Sykes and his mail phaeton again appeared in the park; and, alas! he popped his pole neatly through another brougham! He was very sorry, of course; but not crushed, for he remembered the effect of his judiciously expressed regrets on the first occasion. So down he hopped, and began a string of polite apologies at the window of the carriage. But, to his horror, the head of the same old gentleman appeared, purple with rage, and a voice said: "Oh it's you again, is it? I'm damned if twice in one day isn't too much for anyone!"

Christopher Sykes had his faults, and his weakness made him a butt, yet he was often a useful counsellor to the Prince of Wales, to whom he was devoted. Many a time he had the courage to tell H. R. H. home truths. If the Prince announced an intention of doing a thing not consistent with prudence, Christopher would just say, with a broad Northern accent, "Noo yer wean't!" and the Prince would yield. Another of "Kit's" virtues was that he never gossiped.

Baron Fredinand Rothschild, another of H. R. H.'s most intimate friends, was one of the most modest and popular of men. To make others happy was the object of his life. The death of his wife in the first year of wedlock, put an end forever to his thoughts of love and marriage. Of course he had a few romantic adventures. He was not distinguished in appearance—none of the male Rothschilds are—but his manner was so charming that one forgot his plainness. A certain beautiful countess made a dead set at him for years, and it was very amusing to note the perfect courtesy with which he kept her at a distance. It was so with all women; for the sake of the one whom he had loved he was full of consideration for them; his voice would soften if he so much as spoke of them; he would take any amount of trouble to please them and even to gratify their whims as his guests; but it was a case of "thus far shalt thou come no farther."

The Duchess of Marlborough looked very sweet when she distributed the prizes at the Oxford High school festivity. Her little speech was delivered clearly and with perfect grace. One of her pretty sentiments was this: "I think we women are happy in knowing that we have now made man acknowledge that higher education must be a help to us in any vocation we choose to pursue; but if, on the other hand, we prefer to make man's work and his aims our own in uniting our efforts with his, I think any man will prefer an intelligent and educated woman as his companion and helper." "Companion and helper" her Grace certainly is to her husband.

Lady Margaret Stuart, only daughter of the Marquis of Bute, Disraeli's "Lot-hair," is studying navigation with a view to gaining her certificate. It is to be hoped that she will not do as did Lady Ernestine Bruce, the daughter of

another Marquis, who went in for a master mariner's certificate and ended by marrying a young seaman, to the infinite disgust of her relations.

The sensation of the week in Court circles has been the tempest in a teapot caused by the indiscretion of the Liverpool Post and Quiver. The former published a contribution by Sir Edward Russell, wherein he told a story of the Queen's interview with Lord Rosebery, when she "affectionately begged that statesman not to turn Conservative." The Quiver published a long account, "by a former Maid of Honor," of conversations had with Her Majesty about international peace and war. The article attracted a great deal of attention, as every one naturally supposed it to have received the Queen's sanction. The Queen was very angry, indeed, about the articles. She desired every prominent journal to state, as from herself, that "there was no truth" in the Quiver story; and the Liverpool anecdote was contradicted by Lord Rosebery. Now, of course, everyone is wondering who "the former Maid of Honor," that had made such a blunder, can be!

It is thought that the Duke of York will represent the Queen at the Duke and Duchess of Coburg's silver wedding celebration. The Duke is a very good boy, always willing to do jobs to which his father objects. The reason why the Prince does not want to go is that he dislikes "Billy" of Germany, who intends to be in great force on the occasion, having—so says rumor—a project at heart for the betrothal of his son to the only unmarried Coburg girl, Princess Beatrice. She is fifteen, and the Crown Prince is two years older. He is unfortunately rather delicate. It is easy to understand that the young lady's wealth to say nothing of her Russian connections, make her desirable as a daughter-in-law for "Billy," while the position of German Empress would be a bait to so ambitious a mother as the Duchess of Coburg. The Prince of Wales does not like the idea at all.

The Khartoum boom has begun. A house there and another at Atbara are being furnished for the Connaughts.

Clement Scott must have felt it a wrench to sever his connection with a journal on which he has worked for nearly thirty years, not only as a dramatic critic, but also as chronicler of races, cricket matches, royal marriages and funerals, and the beauties of seaside resorts all over the country. After leaving Marlborough College he obtained, through the influence of his father, "Scott of Hoxton," a well-known writer for the Saturday Review, a position in the War Office, where he had plenty of time to study the drama that he loved. After the usual vicissitudes that fall to the lot of the aspiring journalist, E. M. Levy, then editor and chief proprietor of the Daily Telegraph offered Mr. Scott the position of dramatic critic, which he accepted, and has held ever since. In all probability he will now devote his attention to the compiling of his memoirs, which ought to prove interesting, when one considers the celebrated actors and actresses he was brought into contact with during a busy life.

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