

Why The Polo Victory Jarred England's Snobocracy

The Amazing Story of the Most Unwelcome Triumph Ever Won by English Sportsmen



Lady Wimborne, Who Now Laughs in the Faces of the Snobbish Westminster "Blue-Blood" Set.

SECRET chapters of history, even of social and sporting history, are far more interesting than those which are open for all to read. The apathy, the open hostility, of English society toward the polo team which came to New York this year to fight for the cup has been inexplicable to the general public, not only in this country, but in Europe. But this attitude is all made clear in some secret chapters of English social life which are here presented to the public for the first time.

From these chapters it is seen that the aristocracy of England places its own importance first, with patriotism and sportsmanship playing a bad part. English society would rather have lost the cup than to have had it won by the Wimborne team. The beautiful Viscountess Curzon was one of the bitterest foes of the team, and threw all her influence over to the Westminster crowd.

Polo has always been the sport of kings and millionaires. It has never been a game, especially in and about New York and in England, for those whose incomes stopped short of five figures. An aura of extravagant wealth, of sublime aristocracy, has always surrounded the game. The men who played in the tournaments in this country and England must be of the purest, bluest blood. It had always been thus, and this, thought aristocratic England, it would always continue to be.

In accordance with this belief, after losing the polo cup to the American "Big Four," Harry Payne Whitney, Larry Waterbury, Devereux Milburn and Monte Waterbury, the aristocrats of England, headed by the Duke of Westminster, sent three years in succession a team to win it back. This team was purely of the aristocracy. Each time it went sadly back to England in utter rout. The American "Big Four" played all round them. Last June, when the defeated team reached home, England decided that she had had enough. She, or rather the aristocratic Duke of Westminster and his friends, had spent half a million to win the cup and, lo, the team returned without a game to its credit. Therefore the Duke and England said:

"We have had enough. We will not compete next year. It is too expensive."

But lower down in the social scale were several men who wanted to see

that cup brought back to England. From out of this group strode the wealthy, but not so aristocratic Lord Wimborne, and with one throw he flung his gauntlet in the faces of British and American aristocracy. "I'll send a team to America, and I'll send one that will bring back the cup."

And at once English society was split in twain. The ultra aristocrats lined up with the Duke of Westminster, while of course those who dearly love a lord, and more dearly still, love a duke, fell in line with the Westminster clique. Those who placed sportsmanship above class sided with Wimborne and hoped him luck in forming his team.

As the financial backer, Wimborne was given the privilege of inviting the men to serve on his team. He began of course, by asking those who had formed the Westminster teams. He asked Lord Wodehouse. "No lord," refused, because he had personal business affairs to keep him in England. He asked the famous Captain Cheape. The captain hemmed and hawed, and finally said: "A'tully sorry, but I have appointments with my tailor which will keep me in London during May and June."

He asked Captain Vivian Lockett, but the doughty Lockett regretted that his regimental duties would prevent his playing.

And so it went, every man who ever had any connection with the Westminster teams refused the Wimborne bids.

The British and American public were frankly puzzled. Why? Why? They kept asking. And the "why" is now explained. Lord Wimborne, millionaire and sportsman, that he is, is not of the same "rank" as Westminster and his friends. His present title, that of Wimborne, dates back only a few years, and worse than that, he took the Ashby St. Ledgers title, when he was raised to the peerage in 1910. And the taking of that famous old title by a man they considered a social climber, was too much for the aristocracy of Great Britain. The fact that he is connected with the Churchill and Guinness families does not help him with the Westminster crowd.

These "Little Englanders," as Rudyard Kipling would call them, scoffed at Wimborne's "love of sport."

"It is only a social stepping

stone," said they, when his offer was made. Deep in their aristocratic souls these men of Westminster's thought that no one in England could play polo but themselves. They laughed at the idea that Wimborne would succeed where their duke had failed.

The history of the forming of the team will not rankle in England's heart. The King of Spain invited the Wimborne players to use the royal grounds in Madrid. He took an active interest in their practice games; frequently he played against them—again he played with them. The Westminster crowd looked on aghast. "Well, Alfonso may be a king but he is no aristocrat," said they.

When the players returned from Spain they found English society arrayed against them. They found the wealthy sportsmen were actually crying down the team and betting against it. Such a state of affairs had never been known in "sporting" England. In every way possible the "aristocrats" did their best to keep the Wimborne team from living up to its challenge. The newspapers in England and America were filled with reports of the rottenness of the challengers. It was frequently stated that the challenge would be withdrawn.

There was no doubt that the team needed strong players. Captain Lockett had already, much to the chagrin of the Westminsterers, offered himself to Wimborne and been accepted. He looked bothered whenever anyone asked him why he had gone over to the enemy, but refused to tell.

Then at the eleventh hour, when even Wimborne despaired of getting a stronger team, word came that Leslie Cheape was to play. And lo, Captain Cheape appeared on the team during its last week in England. Westminster was wild. He berated Cheape for having lost his "social sense." Cheape shrugged his shoulders. "Can't help it. The War Department ordered me to on pain of being sent to Africa."

The public did not know these secret chapters. It simply wondered at Lockett's and Cheape's change of

heart. The truth was that the War Department had ordered both men to play for the "honor of the flag," or else get ready to serve at an isolated African post! With this fear at their heels was it any wonder that Cheape and Lockett not only joined the team but played as they had never played before?

But oh, the shock to English society when the "climber's" team won that first game! And oh, the greater shock when it won the second! "Could anything cut more deeply the crust of the aristocratic Westminster crowd than having that cup captured by the Wimborne crowd?"

The fickle fancy of the public veered immediately to the Wimborne's, and in the twinkling of an eye, all men were talking affectionately of "Our Wimmy." If Lord Wimborne went into this cup contest as a social game, he has played so well that not even the Westminster crowd can keep him down any longer. Not even the fact that he was foolish enough to ask for the Ashby St. Ledger title will weigh against him any longer. With the winning of the cup he has won England, let Westminster do or say what he may. Of course, that element which calls the duke their "over lord," will turn the cold shoulder to the victorious Wimborne, but the rank and file at last realizes that even the "Sport of Kings" can be played by "commoners" and England has learned that it is better to win by "red" blood than to lose by "blue" blood.

It is well known that the reason William Buckmaster, the greatest polo player in England, was not asked to play on Westminster's team last year was because he was a "commoner." Buckmaster's social position not coming up to Westminster's standard, kept him out of the team and his absence last year

Viscountess Curzon, Foremost Among Aristocrats English Beauties Who Joined the Duke of Westminster in Deriding the Polo Pretensions of "Mushroom" Lord Wimborne.



was largely the cause for their defeat, so said polo experts.

But "social position first," is the Westminster slogan.

This same attitude has been held to a great extent by the players here in New York. The Polo Association has always given the "millionaire crowd," headed by Whitney, the first choice when making up a team. Because this year the association would not take in the new red blood eagerly clamoring at its doors, the cup went back to England. New blood, strong, young, unexcited nerves are needed on the American team. Let the American Polo Association take notice of the lesson just taught England. If the cup comes back next year, it will be won by "new red" blood, not by the vitiated blood of the present prominent players.

Is France the "Drunkest" Nation

WHICH is the "drunkest" nation? At the fourth Alcohol Congress, Dr. G. Bertillon tried to answer the question by showing that France consumes proportionately an enormous quantity more intoxicating liquor than any other European country.

The figures, regulated on a basis of the number of litres of pure alcohol consumed per inhabitant a year, work out approximately as follows:

France	5	gallons
Italy	3	gallons
Belgium	3	gallons
Switzerland	3	gallons
Denmark	2 1/2	gallons
Spain	2 1/2	gallons
Germany	2 1/2	gallons
Great Britain	2	gallons
Sweden	1 1/2	gallons
Russia	1 1/4	gallons

This table affords a great surprise in that Italy and Spain are usually looked on as the least indulging countries.

Dr. Bertillon's figures do not, however, fairly answer the question, "Which is the drunkest country?"

Great Britain, despite the strikingly low average, probably provides as much, if not more, sobriety than any other state. The beer-drinking countries are Germany and England, and the wine-drinkers are France, Spain and Italy, and if the latter actually consume more alcohol per head, they don't show it so freely.

On the other hand, the saddest state of affairs prevails in Belgium, where absinthe has become practically the national beverage. It has often been asserted that the physique and morals of Belgians make them the least attractive people in Europe.



The Defeated American Polo Team—From Left to Right: Devereux Milburn, Rene La Montagne, Monte Waterbury and Larry Waterbury—Who Share with the Duke of Westminster the Social Discomfiture of Having Been Beaten Through the Enterprize of the "Unaristocratic" Lord Wimborne.