

WITH SUCH A MOTHER— What Will Finally Become of Lady Constance Richardson's Unfortunate Children— Their Father Dead and Their Eccentric Mother Bringing Them Up in a Strange, Impossible Way

WHAT will become of Lady Constance Richardson's three strangely reared little sons now? They knelt last month beside their father's grave. Sir Edward Richardson had been a tender father and sportsmanlike companion for his lit-

tle lads. Dying from wounds received in the war, his last thought was of them. "Rory, old chap," he muttered hoarsely. "Hammish."

There was more than sorrow of parting in his eyes and voice. There was trouble.

When the three boys wept beside their father's grave, their Scotch neighbors shook their heads.

"Poor lads! Poor lads! 'Twas the wrong start they had," said the wise man of the country neighborhood.

Others than the canny Scotch neighbors, and the dying father, have these misgivings for the future of Rory, Hammish and Terquill Richardson. They fear that children trained according to Lady Constance Richardson's ideals may fare sadly in a world of practicalities. Ideals are expensive. They require affluence, or at least competence for their nurturing. They require still more for their practice. The Richardson boys are poor. For the poor life is full of brutal practicalities.

There is not the slightest doubt that the eccentric titled dancer is bringing up the three boys according to her highest ideals and ideas. But Lady Constance's ideals and ideas are, at least, singular. Many believe them impossible.

London society was shocked by her dancing for it in costume nearly as slight as that in which the daughter of Herodias danced before her royal stepfather for the head of the prophet. It was grieved past forgiveness by her dancing in the music halls of England.

When she came to this country to continue that dancing, society mutually bade her farewell. She and the friends of her youth and her family would know her no more.

Her husband reluctantly, but with loyalty, accompanied her to America. There was no question as to his devotion to his beautiful and eccentric wife. Any such doubt was banished from the skeptical American mind by the sight of Sir Edward sprinkling her feet with a siphon of aerated water when his gifted wife returned from her dance to rest in a hotel lobby.

Yet despite this attitude of the cavalier, it was well understood by all who knew the pair that while his wife was brilliant, Sir Edward was sound. That he represented the traditional British virtues of sanity, clear-headedness and conservatism. In all family crises and conferences he was the balance wheel.

While he might not enjoy, nor approve, his wife's public career, he afforded her the protection of his presence. While he may not have agreed with his wife in her unusual theories of education, he permitted her to test them with their three boy babes. They who knew Sir Edward Richardson knew him to be manly, honorable, a good citizen. His fault, if he had one, was over-indulgence to those he loved. His principles were unquestioned. His patriotism he proved by his death in the field for his country.

Such memories will his sons have of him for inspiration. It is their training for service in the campaign of life that is problematic. Lady Constance Richardson's vogue as a professional dancer chiefly depended upon the fact that she stepped out of her class to attain it. It was told by the late William Hammerstein, who engaged her for his famous Corner House of amusement, that he complained to his father, on whose recommendation he had signed a contract for her appearance:

"She can't dance."

"Never mind," responded Oscar Hammerstein. "We don't expect her to dance. Her title does that."

Lady Richardson's professional career has suffered also by reason of the war. England is impatient,

mood with titled dancers and other vagaries.

How will she provide for her sons and how, when they are of the age of personal responsibility, will they provide for themselves? They have, practical people say, not been given the sort of education that fits a child for future self-support.

"I do not care especially what my boys learn," their beautiful mother has often said, "beyond the mere rudiments."

"I will not have their talents trained to the abnormal point of genius. I want them to become simple country gentlemen. I should hate to see one of them become, for instance, a Cabinet Minister."

"A very important part of the education of my children is teaching them a love of beauty. If they love the beautiful they seek to become beautiful. We think of what is about us and we become like what we think about, so it is most necessary to see only beautiful objects. Keeping this in mind, I am most careful about the selection of my children's toys. I never allow them to see anything that is maimed or distorted."

"I went shopping in London to buy my children toys. To my surprise and disgust, I found that the six or seven leading toys were all hideous distortions of human or animal bodies. You may be sure my children received none of these toys. I never give them anything like your Billikens or Kewpies or Brownies. They have never had any dolls with huge abdomens and little legs and heads either too large or too small for their bodies, never in right proportion to them. Your Teddy bears are not bad, because they look like bears. Most animal toys are hideous travesties of the real."

Also the Richardson boys are deprived of the ordinary picture book that so stimulates the imagination of the average child.

"My children's picture books are copies of the sculptures and paintings in the Louvre and Luxembourg and other galleries of art. They have never been allowed to see anything maimed. So clear a picture that I implanted in their minds of the human body that when my oldest son, Rory, saw a picture of Venus de Milo, he said, 'I don't like it.' The arms were missing, and he thought her imperfect. He gave the same criticism of the Winged Victory."

"I let them look at picture books only after I have gone carefully through them and scissors every picture that shows the human figure other than as perfect. Also I cut out every picture that shows killing. My boys have never seen the picture of Jack the Giant Killer, nor of the witch astride a broomstick, nor such an absurdity as the cow jumping over the moon."

Nor have the Richardson boys had their imaginations stimulated by fairy stories. Alice in Wonderland is a forbidden delight to them.

"I read or tell them only such stories as deal with beautiful themes. I go back to mythology for them," said Lady Constance in unfolding her educational theory and practice.

"For instance, I tell them the story of Theseus and Andromache."

Every morning of every day for nine months a year Lady Constance has sent her children naked into the garden to play.

"I make my boys take exercise every morning for fifteen minutes in a perfectly nude state," she explains. "In that way the air and sunshine directly reaches their vital organs. Generally I send them straight from their beds to the gardens. In the mid-winter they take their morning exercise nude indoors, and after the bath. Ordinarily fifteen minutes of play in the nude is enough. A child's instinct for play is an unerring guide. They do not linger at their play. In-

stead, they run about as playfully and tease each other as persistently as puppies, until they are tired. I never excuse my boys from this quarter of an hour of naked play unless they are seriously ill. I have trained them to believe that it is as necessary a part of the day's programme as brushing their teeth.

"I teach my children to respect the human body and to be unconscious of it save to keep it clean. I do not believe in body worship. I do not believe in giving the body undue prominence by excessive athletics. I am training them only to be athletic enough to be healthy."

Lady Constance Richardson's ideals of moral training are not based upon religion. "I never go inside a church," she says. "But I want my boys to believe that it is their duty and pleasure to make those about them happy."

The titled dancer announced that she wished to found a group school in the Highlands of Scotland for ten boys, her own to be included in the group. "My husband and I have very little money," she said. "When I have earned enough to maintain this school I will stop dancing."

Her theories of education she summarizes thus: "I am bringing up my three sons to be perfect men. Bringing up children is striving toward an ideal. My ideal of a perfect man is one whose brain and body and character are equally strong. The perfect man is Nature's best example of balance. His body is strong and handsome, with no muscle developed at the expense of others. His brain is active and well trained without the extreme intellectuality that makes an overdraught upon the body. His character is clean and fine and immovable as to principle. Such is the harmonious individual, the perfect man. I would not have them geniuses. Geniuses are monstrosities."

The dancer mother expressed her hopes that her boys might always live in the country. "But in the unfortunate emergency that they may be compelled to live in town I have prepared them for it," she said in one of her educational conversations.

"How?" hopefully asked a practical American present.

"By their morning nude games," was the reply. "That will make them strong. I am preparing them against possible town life by making them healthy."

"But a—er—special training—for something."

Practical Americans hesitate to speak such crudities as the phrase "earn a living" to British titles, though many a British title pays a visit here for that sole purpose of earning a living by marrying.

"Oh, I shall let them study whatever gives them pleasure," Lady Constance replied.

"I only want them to be harmoniously developed. I want them to be perfect men."

But this hard, material world has formed the habit of asking about a man who must earn his bread not "What is he?" But "What can he do?"

It is pertinent then to this world question to ask about the boys trained by Lady Constance Richardson's curious system: "What can they do?" For it is the world's edict that we must do or starve.

And now with their father dead—their father who would certainly at the right time have asserted his authority and made them more fit for a work-a-day world—what will become of them?

Lady Constance Richardson, the Mother, in One of Her Barefoot, Lightly Dressed Dances. Her Ideas of Bringing Up Her Children Are as Unconventional as Is Her Costume.



THE CHILDREN'S FATHER LIES IN A BRITISH SOLDIER'S GRAVE.



The Three Sons of Lady Constance Richardson in the "Unclad Play" That is So Important Part of Their Mother's Training and Which She Believes Will Help Them to Fight Their Way Through the World When They Have to.

How Increasing Popularity Is Ruining Our Breakfast Melons

By JOHN R. TIMMONS,
The Well-Known Horticultural Expert.

THE increasing demand for melons—and particularly the muskmelon, or cantaloupe—is threatening to curtail the real article only to those who can afford luxuries. During recent seasons there have been many complaints from the people at large that the melons they bought at reasonable prices did not have the flavor or tenderness of those a few years back. The reason for this is in the methods used to get a quickly growing, hardy enough crop to supply the demand.

This has been done in many cases by crossing the melon with a certain variety of squash and pumpkin. This has produced a solid, firm fleshed melon that will stand shipment, but in the process of crossing the new melon has lost much of its flavor and its flesh is apt to be stringy.

However, as the melons have to be grown under climatic conditions that produce quick and early development, and as the best melons will not stand long transshipment, it seems as though there were little else for the farmers to do to supply the demand than what they are doing. Unless, of course, a Burbank arises to do for the cantaloupe and watermelon what the actual Burbank did for the blackberry.

Before the demand for melons became so great, farmers used to try every means to keep from coming about the very thing they are now encouraging. Melon growers would not permit a pumpkin or a squash to blossom on their farm. Great care was taken to keep bees and other insects from carrying the pollen from pumpkin blossoms to the blooms of the melons, as it was known that the mixing of the pollen produced a tough stringy flesh in the melon, and the taste was more or less flat like the raw pumpkin. Some extensive

growers prided themselves on the purity of their melons.

Bees are now kept on large melon farms to carry the pollen from one blossom to another, and when squashes and pumpkins are planted here and there through the fields, of course the busy working bees gather the pollen from the pumpkin bloom and scatter it among the melons. It is necessary to have the bees, as there is sex in melons as well as in anything else, and to produce an abundant crop the pollen has to be carried from one to the other, but the deliberate pumpkin and squash cross threatens to produce a melon that cannot be bred back to its former sweetness and crisp tenderness, such as was to be had in the virgin melons of a few years ago.

Unless there is a heroic effort on the part of careful experts, we shall actually lose our luscious melons and we shall be compelled to eat gourds and squashes in their stead.