



BY THE SEA WAVES

(Atlantic City Letter.)

This place is Thackeray's "Vanity Fair" over again, with a Becky Sharp in view every now and then, and a Rawdon Crawley for every one. Yet at no resort, crowds considered, will there be found a more even tone of conduct, less license and greater average of general politeness and regard for the written statutes. At the same time, too, the city by the sea is "Vanity Fair" enough to supply the philosopher with plenty of material for study and to give the imagination plenty of mental pabulum in review. An incident which occurred at a recent social function at an ocean front hotel gave one young lady something to think about, anyway, for a week or two, and it had a moral attached to it, the which was that it is better to think twice before speaking once. The affair was a dance, and there were present several ladies who had sought and obtained legal freedom from the matrimonial yoke. To one of these the girl in question, who is inclined to a rather talkative vivaciousness, unwittingly spoke of divorce, asking her what she thought of the moral aspect of it. The reply was: "My dear, there are two sides to every question. I, myself, am a divorcee." Covered with confusion, the young lady stammered an apology, and approaching a lady whom she knew by sight, related the occurrence, asking her what she ought to do. "Do nothing, my dear," was the answer. "She probably doesn't feel hurt. I know I wouldn't, and I'm a divorcee, too."

The girl turned red on the instant, and made for a nearby group with her tale of woe, when, to her horror, one of the number laughed and said: "What a coincidence! I'm the unlucky third." She waited for no more, but, seeking her escort, left for home instant. Now she's afraid to look any of the three in the face, although her mistake was entirely an inadvertent one.

Bathing is fast becoming the most popular of Atlantic City's pastimes, and every day this week hundreds were to be found enjoying a dip into the surf. The fashionable bathing hour—in the middle of the day, before luncheon—has found many well-known women and men in bathing suits and plunging into the breakers. The water, although still a little cold, is not too cold if the bather does not prolong his bath. Several parties who tried the temperature said that it averaged about 69 degrees all week, which is only about three degrees lower than the ocean gets by the middle of July. Another week, and especially after the big rush is fairly under way, thousands and tens of thousands will be found daily enjoying a dip. Every now and then will be found some reckless bather, who, over-estimating his strength, will find himself at the mercy of the breakers and will have to be pulled out by the life guards. Notwithstanding the fact that there are any number of reckless bathers, and others who remain in the water so long that they lose their strength, the number of accidents or drownings is remarkably low. Thirty life-guards, all experienced men in this line of work and as brave a set as one could find anywhere, are constantly on duty wherever any bathers are to be found.

They go on duty early in the morning and remain out until the last bather has gone out of the water. Their red shirts and white caps are plainly distinguished among the many bathers on the beach. Outside beyond the line of the breakers other life-guards in lifeboats, equipped with every appliance, patrol the water during the bathing hours. Many lives, of which the reading public knows nothing,

smooth. Even the face baths have bran or starch in them. I do not see why both these baths should not be beneficial. The water we are forced to use is too hard for real comfort and needs some softening influence like bran or starch or oatmeal to make it bearable. I have been devoted to oatmeal, or rather crushed oats, which are easier to handle, for some time, placed in a cheese-cloth bag, which



SURF GOWNS THAT ARE ATTRACTIVE MODELS.

ing, are annually saved through the efforts of these men, who on more than one occasion have been known to risk their own lives in order to save the lives of visitors to the resort.

The latest bathing fad is cheap enough to recommend it to any woman's notice. It is merely a bran bag thrown into the water to make it soft and smooth. A few exquisite cling to the starch bath, which is said to make the body soft and beautifully

can be emptied and washed after the bath. They make the water milky and smooth and leave the skin soft and velvety. Crushed oats are cheap, and so are bran and starch, so that the question of price need not stand in the way of enjoying this luxury. Of soap there is much to say. The delicately scented high-priced soaps are a temptation to women who are fond of perfumes, but they are not the best kind to use on the skin. Pure castile, ivory or wool soap will keep the hands

and body smooth and white, no matter how often they are used. If you are in the habit of washing out fine handkerchiefs, lace, delicate stockings or silk garments which you do not care to entrust to the care of your laundress, any of these soaps will do the work beautifully and keep the hands in fine condition.

A Pathetic Story.

Another more pathetic example was that of an old woman whose husband was incapacitated from further work. He belonged to a friendly society, but for six months of the year was only entitled to draw from it two shillings a week. As it was impossible for the aged pair to live on this sum his wife asked for outdoor relief. Her application was refused, because in the opinion of the guardians, though a dwarf, deformed and the victim of a painful internal malady, she was not yet absolutely worn out. Day after day she

KING LOVES FLOWERS

LEOPOLD II. IS DEVOTED TO CONSERVATORIES.

Mile and a Half of Glass—Fetes at Laeken Occur Amid Towering Palms and Rare Blossoms and Are Unsurpassed in Brilliance.

(Special Letter.)

It has often been said that if Leopold II. of Belgium were not king of the Belgians he would be king among architects or among landscape gardeners, so strongly and well are his artistic tastes developed in these two directions. It is well known that he detests ceremonial and etiquette, and that nothing gives him greater pleasure than to inspect and correct designs for a new building or to plan and lay out an estate. He is now engaged in this favorite occupation on his new property at Villefranche, on the French Riviera. His summer palace is at Laeken, a suburb of Brussels, and the park and grounds which surround it show the influence of his great love of horticulture and floriculture, for they have been laid out in a way that makes them a pride to his subjects and a delight to the traveler permitted to visit them.

To this estate the king has added greatly since he first bought it, and it now covers about 300 acres. His majesty has interested himself immensely in the arrangements of the grounds, superintending the opening up of every glade and directing the preservation or destruction of every group of trees. It



ENTRANCE HALL.

is to this keenness of the royal eye for the beautiful in landscape that the town of Brussels owes so many of its fine open spaces, from which such delightful views of the surrounding country may be obtained, and which add the beauties of an already charming capital.

The queen shares with the king an extreme fondness for flowers, so it is not surprising that the royal couple should have gratified their tastes by building fine conservatories at Laeken, where the queen prefers to reside. These, begun in 1874, they have added from time to time, until now they possess the finest private conservatory in the world. These conservatories are purely decorative (greenhouses for raising and growing the plants being, of course, entirely apart), and some idea of their size may be gained when it is known that they extend continuously for over a mile and a half, reaching from the chateau royal, which stands just within the grounds of the private park, to the palace itself. They have, indeed, been compared to Kew, England, for so though even there the stretch of glass is not continuous; but, just as it would not be fair to compare the park grounds at Laeken with those of estates, where the trees and garden have remained undisturbed for centuries, so it is out of the question to consider private property, such as these conservatories, with an establishment like Kew, which is supported by the state and is an educational department for the cultivation of rare plants and not for the gratification of purely personal pleasure.

When the king went to England last year he took with him his very clever head gardener, M. L. Van Obergien, expressly to visit Kew and the botanical gardens. The principal entrance hall to the Laeken conservatories consists of a fine flight of marble steps, bordered with banks of flowers and leading to what is known as the Hall of the Congo. This is a conservatory ninety-seven feet square, filled with palms and other tropical plants and decorated with azaleas and orchids. It might have been supposed from the name that herein would be specially placed plants obtained from the Congo, but such is not the case, though it may be so in the future. The house was erected at the time of the annexation of the Congo, and the king, whose colonial daughter is very near his heart (for he only won her in opposition to the wishes of almost the entire nation, which has since, by the way, had reason to approve his far-sightedness), named the conservatory after his new possession, decorating it with the star which is the especial emblem of the Belgian Congo State.

At the end of this large hall begins the winter garden, consisting of two fine annexes and a magnificent palm-house, with an entire length of 429 feet. The first annex, 97 feet long by 36 feet wide, is also filled with splendid palms and other tropical vegetables. Here a charming coup d'oeil was obtained of a most effective arrangement of rose-colored azaleas (Mme. Van der Kruezer) seen down the avenue of overspreading palms. The annex leads by a descent of a few steps into the great Hall of Palms, a circular building 251 feet in diameter. This building was finished in 1879 and although over 80 feet high, exclusive of cupola and large ornamental sur-

mounting crown, will soon not be large enough for the magnificent palms it contains, one very handsome specimen from Australia already almost touching the roof. This splendid hall, with its mosaic pavement and forty white columns gleaming against the glossy green foliage, makes a most striking sight. It is here that the king and queen receive their guests at the garden parties or other fetes given at Laeken. The whole of the mile and a half of conservatories is lighted by electricity and the scene, when enhanced by the gay dresses of the ladies and smart uniforms worn on these occasions, makes a very brilliant spectacle. From a side door in the annex opens a crescent-shaped conservatory, which forms the entrance to a small theater, where at one time many dramatic representations, amateur and otherwise, were given. On the left of the great Hall of Palms is the Camellia house, a fine building 117 feet long by 22 feet wide, with an annex of 37 feet. This is claimed to contain the finest collection of camellias in Europe, and certainly comprises some magnificent trees. There are four, imported from Lago Maggiore two years ago (whence the king is also stocking his new gardens at Villefranche), that are 25 feet high and 10 feet in diameter. The trees were, at the time of photographing, in full bloom, and it would have been possible to cut thousands and thousands of the beautiful waxy blossoms.

Beyond the palm house is the second annex, slightly shorter than the other. This is filled with ferns of all kinds, comprising some beautiful tree ferns from Brazil, New Zealand and elsewhere. Here a charming effect was made by carpeting between the tree ferns with maiden-hair and a very light and delicate orchid. Opening from this annex is the orangery, another large building over 300 feet long by 45 feet wide. It contains over 100 orange trees in immense tubs. At the end of the orangery is a large ball-banqueting hall, used as occasion dictates. It will be seen from the measurements given that, as regards spa-

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The Sibilant Sizzle of

pink and yellow... extreme. After the hall of azaleas come a few less important houses, with a small reception room, which leads to the entrance near the Chapel Royal. These conservatories are opened to the public on one week in the year, for



ORANGERY.

four days, and it is needless to say that Belgians and foreigners throng in thousands to feast their eyes on the lovely flowers and luxuriant palms, for the possession of which one can scarcely help envying the king and queen.

Bad Words Over It.

"I don't know whether that's yours or mine," said the doctor, looking at the small chunk of ice that had been thrown carelessly on their common lawn. "It doesn't really make any difference," answered the professor. "It couldn't cause more than a slight coolness between us, anyhow."

A man in his shirt sleeves is either the picture of perfect grooming or the reverse—generally the latter.



FIVE OF A KIND.