

# Poor Lady Lavery—Punished For Her Beauty

*How Jealous Social Rivals of the Former Chicago Woman Are Believed to Have Inspired the Recent Humiliating Rejection of Her Famous Husband's Latest Portrait of Her by the London Art Gallery*



The former Miss Hazel Martin of Chicago, now the wife of Sir John Lavery, the great English artist



Lovely Lady Lavery with two of the innumerable paintings which her charms of face and figure have inspired



Below, Lady Bache Cunard, who is mad clear through because the Tate Gallery would not accept the picture of her friend, Lady Lavery, which she offered as a gift



A charming photographic study of Lady Lavery, now the center of one of the bitterest rows London's fashionable and artistic circles have ever known



LONDON, Aug. 9. IT IS no novelty for a woman to be forced to undergo various forms of social punishment because she happens to be sadly lacking in good looks, but it is most unusual to see one punished, as it is believed Lady Lavery is now being, because she is so generously endowed with beauty of face and figure.

What is strangest of all is that her ladyship's distinguished artist husband, Sir John Lavery, and her warm friend, Lady Bache Cunard, are being made to share no small measure of the punishment that is being meted out to her. As if they were to blame any more than Sir John's American wife herself because she is so extraordinarily good looking!

That Lady Lavery is being punished by some of her jealous rivals in fashionable society for the triumphs her beauty has brought her would seem to be the only reasonable explanation of the recent surprising rejection of her husband's portrait of her by the trustees of the Tate Gallery in London.

This is punishment, indeed, for it has put not only Lady Lavery but her husband and Lady Cunard in a most humiliating position and made them the center of one of the most bitter controversies that has ever stirred London's smart and artistic circles.

Lady Cunard thought she had never seen anything quite so charming as this latest of the many portraits Sir John Lavery has painted of his American wife, the former Hazel Martin, of Chicago.

"It is too heavenly for anything!" she cried, as she watched the artist putting the final touches to the glowing canvas. "I would like to buy it and make a present of it to the Tate Gallery."

Sir John readily agreed to this plan. He was anxious to oblige his wife's friend, and, besides, as he well knew, the walls of his home and studio were already so crowded with portraits of Lady Lavery, painted both by him and the talented beauty herself, that there was really no room for another.

So when the picture had received its last coat of varnish and been appropriately framed it was turned over to Lady Cunard and she carried it off to the Tate Gallery.

But, as Lady Cunard soon learned to her great amazement and indignation, the offer of this picture to the Tate Gallery was as vain a job as carrying coals to Newcastle. Instead of her gift being received with the open arms of gratitude it was given—the cold shoulder of rejection.

Yes, while she listened with ears that could hardly believe what they heard, the trustees of the gallery told her courteously but firmly that this particular picture was not wanted—that they positively could not give it a place in their famous collection.

"But why?" demanded Lady Cunard, who, being an American-born woman like Lady Lavery, was not in the least afraid to engage the august trustees of the art gallery in an argument.

The trustees politely explained, but the reasons they gave for their refusal to accept the picture are not believed to have been the ones that really prompted the rejection.

According to the gossip with which art and society circles are humming, certain jealous rivals of Lady Lavery have long been anxious to be revenged on her and to punish the American beauty for what they consider her "forwardness" in seeking a high place in London society.

They happened to have some influence with one or two of the Tate Gallery's trustees and by working through them they are said to have succeeded in inducing the board to agree to refuse the portrait of Lady Lavery—to "turn it down cold," as you Americans would say.

What the trustees told Lady Cunard was that the gallery already possessed two portraits of Lady Lavery, both painted by her husband, and they thought these quite enough. Even if they were not so well supplied they would hardly care to accept the picture Lady Cunard offered, for they felt it was not up to the artist's usual high standard.

Lady Cunard boiled with indignation at the charge that Sir John's artistry left much to be desired and the implication that her enthusiasm over his portrait was sadly misplaced. And it is said she secretly suspected, just as many others now openly do, that the real reason for the rejection of the picture was jealousy of Lady Lavery's beauty and the prominent place she is taking in the smartest circles of English swifdom.

"This picture is one of Lavery's best," she declared. "The Tate Gallery merely is prejudiced against Sir John. They never have bought any of his works, the two pictures by him which they possess (and which are not his best) having been gifts. I probably will give the picture of Lady Lavery to some gallery in Paris or New York, where it will be appreciated."

With the printing of Lady Cunard's indignant account of the humiliating rebuff she and her intended gift had met at the Tate Gallery the row was on, and nobody knows when it will end or how. It has split not only fashionable society but the art world into two bitterly opposed camps.

Friends of Lady Lavery roundly denounce the meanness of the jealousy that would vent itself in this spiteful

way. The whole thing is, they say, another manifestation of the strong anti-American bias which is making its appearance in smart London society.

Many Englishwomen are growing weary of seeing the places in society they think should be theirs by every right usurped by their sisters from the republic across the seas.

No matter how rich, talented and charming these aliens are their prominence in English society forms a bitter pill for some of the native-born maids and matrons. And it is none the easier to swallow when, as in the case of Lady Lavery, the husband of one of the American invaders is an Englishman.

Besides those who take violent sides for or against Lady Lavery, there are in fashionable society, and particularly in the art world, many impartial observers who think that the rejection of the picture, no matter what the motives that prompted it, is quite likely to have in the end some very good effects.

Although until now few have had the courage to hint any such thing, London has for some time been pretty well "fed up" on Lady Lavery's beauty. Just as orchids would not be so admired and sought after if they were as common as dandelions or daisies, so her ladyship's beauty, it is thought, has lost much of its lure through some picture of it being on view almost wherever one turns one's eyes.

Since he fell in love with Hazel Martin, of Chicago, Sir John Lavery has been happiest only when transferring some hint of her charms to painted canvas. He has preferred her to any other model, and, whether his picture was an avowed portrait of her or one that dealt with some fanciful subject, her beauty has been almost continually the inspiration of his brush.

Since Lady Lavery herself took up painting and displayed a really remarkable talent she also has produced many pictures which look as if she had used her own mirrored image for a model.

As a result the Lavery studio, the walls of the Lavery home, the art gal-

leries and stores and many great private collections display an endless variety of portraits of her ladyship or pictures that were plainly inspired by her. In recent years every Royal Academy exhibition has contained at least one portrait of Lady Lavery by her husband.

Even many of her ladyship's best friends are inclined to think that London has been "oversold," to use an American phrase, on her beauty. Her extraordinary physical charms would be more highly prized, more admired and more thoroughly appreciated, they declare, if they were not displayed on canvas so incessantly.

This is why they are inclined to feel almost glad at the mean trick her enemies are thought to have played on her at the Tate Gallery. Humiliating as it is, it may in the end, they think, serve a very useful purpose.

Distinguished art critics declare in all friendliness that both Lady Lavery and her distinguished husband would be far greater artists if they did not confine

themselves so much to one model and went away from their own fireside more frequently for inspiration.

But Lady Cunard is not one of those who think the rejection of the picture she tried to have enshrined in the Tate Gallery may be all for the best. She seems almost as captivated by Lady Lavery's beauty as the lady's husband, and apparently would be content to have both Sir John and his wife keep right on painting it over and over again.

She has added to the bitterness of the quarrel that is raging by resigning from all connection with the offending gallery.

"One cannot permit an artist of Lavery's distinction and age to be insulted like that," says Lady Cunard, explaining her action. "As I have told them, my resignation is the direct result of their refusal of my offer of Sir John's portrait of Lady Lavery. I should never have dreamt of offering the picture had I not been told by one of the foremost art critics that it was a very fine picture and one of the best of Lavery's he had ever seen."

"You ought not to insult a man at the close of his career. There are persons on the committee who do not like his work, but who like only the French school. It looks like a personal attack upon Lavery, and I know two members of the board who dislike him."



Sir John Lavery and the wife whose inspiration he prefers to that of any other woman