

London Correspondence

All classes are still deploring the death of the dear old Duchesses of Teck, but what her loss must be to her husband and children no pen can rightly tell. She was a perfect mother, not weak for all her good nature, but yet possessed to the full of her sons' confidence, while her daughter's love for her was well known. When her boys were away from her she wrote to them nearly every day. The eldest, Prince Adolphus ("Dolly," as she called him,) who married Lady Margaret Grosvenor, is twenty-nine, one year younger than the Duchess of York; "Frank," who is twenty-six, is serving in the Soudan, and handsome Alexander the Benjamin, aged twenty-three, is on the eve of sailing for Africa to rejoin his regiment, the Seventh Hussars. It is for him that rumor declares the young Queen of Holland is saving her girlish charms. The pair have met and were mutually attracted; moreover, the brother of the future Queen of England is sufficiently highly connected to be a good match even for the little Dutch sovereign, but there are difficulties in the way, and it is impossible to say whether the youthful romance will ever develop into anything more definite. All the boys are heartbroken at the death of their mother, especially the eldest, and the Duke is said to be prostrated. The Duchesses of York, though she was passionately devoted to her, bears up with the fortitude which is part of her strong character.

An actress of considerable achievements says in regard to the current agitation concerning the comparative graces of English and American stage women:

"We recall that intimate English life is at wide variance with our own. It is essentially a home life, and the ingrained habit of home is common to every class alike. This condition arises from their contented and methodic routine of daily existence, their regularly assigned statuses in society, their even and unvaried occupations that have descended through families for generations. The women of the English stage have substantial home circles. They appreciate the duties that devolve upon them as members of well ordered families, and the graciousness and refinement of their demeanor is the natural result. They regard their 'profession' as so many hours, evening and morning, spent in legitimate work; just as the teacher, the milliner, the girl at the desk regard her work hours. To enter the theatre does not necessarily mean to the English girl a plunge into a life of reckless irregularities or languorous dissipation. They pursue their 'profession' amid the protecting influences of the home. When called upon to portray a lady, the quiet, self-containment and simplicity of bearing which constitutes the fundamental qualities of modish politeness leads them instinctively to pursue the proper course when dealing with merely outward attributes of an elegant characterization.

"Of what a different equipment is the American actress! Bred with no sense of home interest, with contempt for the ordinary pursuits of their caste, they regard the theatre as a medium of great gain for the least labor.

"With the usual shop training of the youth of this country, how can they develop those delicate qualities of mind and manner that bespeak the carefully nurtured? Having once gratified their desire for the stage, they rush to the extreme of vulgar obtrusiveness and, deporting themselves noisily and rakishly, give vent to their excited impulses and erratic proclivities. And how they give themselves away when the crucial task is put to them—to portray a lady!

"Two such young women of recognized harm and ability appeared in a New York production in the roles of a gover-

nor's daughters. Possessing none of the nice attributes of the young person of social distinction and being entirely unacquainted with that elegant and exalted order of life, they had only their own narrow experience to inform them. Of course their exhibition was that of the pinked-up shop girl on her company behavior!

"Contrast the conduct of such young women, both on the stage and off—for their private life is the usually disordered one, a daily indulgence in lazy revelry and excess—with that of a little English girl who made a great hit in New York not long ago with her beauty, grace and piquant manner. Did this young person's very marked success induce her to parade herself constantly in public restaurants, popular avenues and other shoddy clientage? Perish the thought! She lived in a modest hotel with her mother as a constant attendant, absorbed in her professional duties and occupying her spare moments with healthful exercise or sitting quietly at her window with the needle work of which she is very fond. And this was a young woman who came of an essentially theatrical family, reared in the theatre and for the theatre, and with so limited a knowledge of the outside world that she was unable to converse on any subject not pertaining to the theatre.

"Yet despite the rude schooling of the playhouse she was a lady instinctively and conducted herself on all occasions with a decorum that is practically unknown to the American actress. There is no gainsaying the plainly evident fact that the rigid home training of the English girl produces a far higher standard of the gentlewoman; not, perhaps, endowed with the verve, the ready wit, the rare fettle of the American girl, but with just as fine endowment of character and mind. And in no walk of life is it so convincingly illustrated as among the women of the stage. For with but very rare exception the dame of high degree is an unknown personage on our stages unless she be set forth by an English actress.

"Of course I would not intimate, even vaguely, that the English woman of the stage surpasses her American sister in the matter of morals; but in manner her easy superiority is little less than painful."

"I see it stated on good authority," said Mr. Corbett's private secretary, "that Fitzsimmons is willing to fight again."

"In that case you had better withdraw my standing challenge."

Uncle Sam—Well, there's at least one good thing about Canada.

John Bull—What's that?

Uncle Sam—The United States.

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