

London Letter.

The Queen looked very well and beaming at the first drawing room of the season. She did not seem in the least tired. For the first time, she viewed her loyal female subjects through a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, which made her look even more than usually benevolent. She was all in black, of course, with trimmings of gauze and paillettes—to which latter she is much attached—and she wore, as she often does, above her long, tulle veil, a miniature representation in diamonds of the royal crown of England. The state carriages of the peers and ambassadors were more numerous than usual and very smart, although there were not so many great ladies present as there are at the later court functions. Of course the Duchess of Devonshire looked a queen, as usual. She was in purple and silvery mauve, with silver embroideries, a sort of idealized pansy blossom. On her head was a curious tiara, like a square-edged band of diamonds, rather Egyptian in effect. She only wore three necklaces, which was moderate of her. I know several ladies who wear six or seven. But the Princess of Wales objects to more than three, so the best-dressed women follow her lead. Lady Helen Vincent was another beauty, of a type in total contrast to the Junoesque Duchess. She is a Tennysonian dream, ethereal, tall, golden-fair, with an air of dainty scorn for all mundane things. One of your compatriots, Mrs. Pierpont Morgan, got a large share of admiration, encomiums being equally divided between her figure, her hair and her dress. The latter was of rich white satin, veiled with white chiffon and creamy-hued lace. The train was of the new duchess shape, and lined with pale blue miroir velvet. A mass of delicate pale pink roses fell in a shower from one shoulder upon the train.

The Prince of Wales went off to the Riviera in high glee. "Thank goodness, I'm off duty," he said to an intimate. However, he had still a little "duty" awaiting him in Paris, as he had to pay the formal civilities to the President and also to pay a long visit of inspection to the site of the 1900 Exhibition. But he consoled himself by going to the theatre—which fact was duly chronicled—and to several other places which report did not reveal to the curious world.

Princess Beatrice was shopping in Regent street the other day. No one seemed to recognize her. She was all in black, of course, but her little daughter was in red. I thought she looked sad; but she is worried, they say, because the Empress Eugenie is breaking up so fast. The friendship between those two women is a wonderfully close one. It began when the poor Prince Imperial fell in love with Princess Beatrice. She would not have him; but there may have been a secret attachment, it would seem so, from his mother's long-continued devotion to the Princess and her children.

The Queen and all the Royal House have been exceedingly anxious about the Empress of Russia's attack of measles, on account of her condition. It was because the late Duchess of Norfolk caught measles at the wrong time that the Duke's only son was born blind, and is subject to all sorts of afflictions, mental and physical. The poor fellow will be twenty next year, but alas! he will never be of any use in practical life. The Duke's devotion to him is almost touching to witness.

If the Queen had wanted any additional proof of the attachment of her people to her person, she would have had it the day when the news that she was "slightly indisposed" created absolute consternation. As a matter of fact, the dear old lady had nothing more romantic than a bilious attack, caused by the cold east winds, and, but for the fact that it unluckily occurred on the day fixed for her journey, no one outside the royal

circle would have been any the wiser. As it was, there were naturally people who attempted to give the incident a political complexion. They have been much gratified by the astute gallantry of the French Ambassador. When he was at Windsor the other day, Her Majesty said to him that she hoped nothing would occur to prevent her journey to the Riviera. "Ah, madame, I hope not, indeed; what a misfortune for France!" said he.

There was quite a touching parting from the York babies, who have been spoiled at Windsor to their heart's content. Prince Edward—who is the "cheekiest" little beggar ever seen—is to have his portrait painted by Angeli, who is to come specially from Vienna for the purpose. (I do think the Queen might have employed a British painter to delineate his characteristically English face and golden curls.) As for wee Princess Victoria, who will be a year old next month, she has been simply tyrannizing over everybody in the castle. It is most amusing to see the inability of the Queen—who can be firm enough with princes and statesmen—to oppose the will of a determined baby.

I am sorry to hear from Mentone that the Duchess of York still looks ill, languid and sad. She has never been herself since her mother died, and her doctors ordered her south, so she has been staying there *incognito*. I suppose she is suffering now from the extreme courage and calmness which she showed at the time of trial. She never broke down once, but went about white and quiet, thinking for everybody and directing everything. It is people like that who take longest to get over a grief.

Some of the papers have got quite excited over what they call "the addition of another actress to Her Majesty's visiting list." All this because Miss Zoe Beatty-Kingston was presented at the last drawing room by her mother. Why this astonishment? The Beatty-Kingstons are ladies, daughters of a distinguished *litterateur* and journalist; accomplished, cosmopolitan and charming. The fair Zoe is getting her training at the Lyceum, where she works hard and unobtrusively. The eldest daughter, under the foreign title which became hers on marriage, writes and does a great deal of interviewing. Olga, another girl, had an alarming adventure when she was twelve years old. She was bitten by a mad dog, and taken for treatment to Pasteur. Subsequently she published, in one of the magazines, a very fresh and clever account of her cure at the hands of the great specialist, and of the strange things she heard and saw at the Institute. All the Beatty-Kingstons are great friends of Patti.

The pretty Countess of Essex has become president of one of the branches of the society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. She made a clever speech the other day in aid of it, and informed the public that both she and the Earl had its success very much at heart. She has "caught on" very much in the smart set here, for she has wit; her prettiness is of the uncommon order, and she dresses with rare originality. But she and her husband must be running through an alarming sum per annum. "Where do they get it?" society asks; my opinion is that they don't get it, but I hope I am wrong.

The Earl of Bradford was nearly eighty when he died. His demise puts a large number of aristocratic families into mourning. His eldest son, Viscount Newport succeeds, whose wife is sister to Lord Scarborough, Lady Bolton, the Countesses of Zetland and Grosvenor, and the Hon. Osbert Lumley. One of his daughters married Osbert Molyneux—heir to the Sefton earldom—only a few weeks ago. They all take after the Lumleys, being fair, blue eyed, rose complexioned, with that warm, pink, sleepy air that reminds one of poor Frederic

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You will be pleased, I am sure, according to recent statistics, our smart men are becoming exceedingly sober. The drink bills at the big clubs are falling off more and more, and are, indeed, astonishingly moderate. Certainly any impartial observer must notice the improvement that has taken place of late years in the physique of our men. The athletic craze has something to do with it, no doubt; so has the example of the Prince of Wales. Since his doctors have been so strict with him he has been particular to avoid tampering with his constitution; people say, too, that various reasons have made him resolve to keep his head level and run no risks. Now he is studiously moderate; which is well, as he is very easily excited.

Mary Moore has turned upon her millionaire admirer, and now declares that there was never any question of her marriage. Ah, well! "*Souvent femme varie!*" But it is hard upon Beit.

The Capt. Donald Macintyre, whose gallantry at Dargai caused him to be mentioned in dispatches, is the brother of Margaret Macintyre, the operatic singer. The young lady has been much congratulated, and so has her mother.

Lady Colin Campbell christened a baby-lion at Barnum's the other day. She looked as handsome as ever; but has rather the air of a disappointed person. She always had too many ideals, ever since the time when her platonic and quixotic efforts to reform the late Duke of Marlborough led to his wife's mistaken and futile action for divorce. It is misfortune for a woman to be at once brilliant and idealistic. It doesn't pay

in this world. If you are brilliant and cynical, or even brilliant and disreputable, you may get on; but to be good and clever is to take to market an unfashionable blend!

From Cairo, a friend writes: There never has been such a season in Cairo; even now, when the season is supposed to be drawing to a close, there are no rooms to be had at any of the hotels. And such loads of Americans! The Horse Show crowd seemed more like New York than Egypt. I ran across Cornelius Vanderbilt and his wife, their doctor and Mrs. Vanderbilt's companion, Miss Townsend; Miss Kernochan, the Hillhouses, Hamilton Fish and family, the California Crockers, Dana Gibson and his pretty wife, Mrs. Bend and her two daughters, the Millers, Abbotts and at least a hundred equally prominent New York people, to say nothing of the rest of the United States. Mrs. Bend brought her beautiful and precious Amy out here; but somehow the English "catches" did not nibble at all. She got acquainted with Aziz Sabit, and presently all Cairo were gossiping about her and her possible choice of the dusky native. Some thought she was after Mahomet Aly, really, but he was busy having epileptic fits and did not have a chance to show his appreciation of the compliment. The Bends are not clever, you know, and could not understand why every desirable Englishman in Cairo would decline the honor of Amy's hand, simply because she is so much "written up." It was noticeable that Cornelius Vanderbilt and the Bends had nothing to say to each other, although Miss Townsend is Mrs. Bend's sister. Amy has done the "professional beauty act" too long. She is not the beauty she was, and such an empty, cold, heartless face as 'tis now I never saw. She never talks nowadays; just poses and dresses.