

BRITISH NOTES

THE announcement, "Druce Ltd. Wound Up," appears to bring to a close the most sensational case of the last twenty years. A company was formed to push the claim of Mr. George Hollamby Druce to the estates of the Duke of Portland, the shares being taken by persons of small means who were dazzled no doubt by the prospect of sharing in the splendour of the final triumph which was confidently expected. The opening of the notable tomb in dispute and the discovery that the coffin contained an indubitable Druce corpse, followed by a confession from Mrs. Robinson, the chief witness, that she had invented the Druce-Portland revelations and the "diary" have brought about a collapse of "Druce Ltd." Probably many of the stockholders were readers of lurid fiction, the sort of stuff in which the honest factory-girl or pretty barmaid becomes the bride of an earl or possibly a duke. To such humble devourers of cheap romance, the idea that Druce of the Bazar and His Grace, the Duke of Portland were the same man made an irresistible appeal. Hence their hard-earned pennies went rapidly into the shares of the hopeful company. What a multitude of castles-in-Spain crumbled away with the opening of that famous coffin!

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THE death of the Duke of Devonshire has removed a character of peculiar influence, which occasion-



The Late Duke of Devonshire

ally seemed to be of a somnolent nature. The first peer was a son of one of the Commissioners appointed for visiting and taking the surrenders of religious houses during the reign of Henry VIII. As the head of the House of Cavendish, which has been a great Liberal power since the days of William III., the late nobleman served many interests of State since 1863, when he became Lord of the Admiralty. Like many other Liberals he was unable to sympathise with Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule measures in 1886 and became the head of the Liberal Unionists. As Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, the late Duke took a deep interest in the fortunes of his *alma mater*. When Mr. Chamberlain's fiscal policy was announced, the Duke of Devonshire at once took the platform in behalf of Free Trade principles. In fact, throughout his career, an independence, both rare and wholesome, was manifest.

His Grace is succeeded by his nephew, formerly Mr. Victor Cavendish, M.P. in the Liberal Union interests for West Derbyshire, who married Lady Evelyn FitzMaurice, daughter of the Marquis of Lansdowne. The present duke is said to resemble

his distinguished uncle both in features and independent characteristics.

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THE serious illness of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman continues to be the absorbing interest of political circles. The underlying urbanity of British parliamentary life which keeps personal friendship from being disturbed by the differences of party debate has been manifest during the last four weeks of suspense. Mr. Balfour has been unfailing in courteous inquiry and the British Conservative press has modified all hostile comment since the Government has been handicapped by Sir Henry's absence. This recognition of the fundamental deficiencies of social intercourse is a feature of British public life which is deserving of emulation. It is related of Mr. Balfour, who is one of the coolest members of the House, that he once became thoroughly enraged and roared at an audience in anything but Balfourish fashion. The cause of this extraordinary outbreak was an act of mob violence in one of the southern towns of England by which a flying missile had struck Mr. Gladstone. On the evening of that turbulent day Mr. Balfour spoke to a crowded audience in the town and forgot in his resentment of the attack on the venerable statesman, to say anything about the policy and prospects of his own party.

* * *

HON. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, Chief Secretary for Ireland, has found his office no couch of roses and the genial author of *Obiter Dicta* is likely to know many sorrows before he removes the grievances of the Irish nationalist. Mr. Redmond and his followers are not to be convinced that half a loaf is better than no bread. Consequently there will be much dissension before the terms of Mr. Birrell's Home Rule idea are finally set forth. Literary circles are deploring Mr. Birrell's devotion to politics, while the powers that legislate are congratulating themselves on the possession of so strong a member. Out of the many questions pressing upon an embarrassed Cabinet, that of Ireland's future status is by no means the least perplexing.

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THE suffragettes are a live issue and are becoming a livelier issue every day. It is impossible to ignore or to despise an association which can raise thousands of pounds sterling in one evening's agitation. Such a feat has recently been achieved more than once by the suffragettes and their supporters. Curiously enough the novel, *The Premier and the Painter*, by Mr. Israel Zangwill, written years ago, and dealing picturesquely with woman suffrage as an election issue has not been heard of during the fray. It would make excellent campaign literature and may be revived before the next election. The suffragettes have made it plain that the men who aspire to cabinet positions must listen to their plea and do more than take it into their respectful consideration.

(Continued from page 18)

a carbon copy of it and thus steal it," responded the proud author.

"Then, too," suggested Miss Taliaferro, "before reading a play himself, Mr. Thompson might want some assurance that you are an experienced writer. Have you written anything else?"

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