

them, but John Bull can go a little further and "see" the partners of the joint concern. At any rate he is not disposed to pay money for sham, and the biggest of all shams is Jonathan. It is not very long ago that Jonathan reported that he had offered to force the Dardanelles for Russia with seventeen iron-clads. Of course, Russia rejected the offer with thanks, for the United States has not seventeen sea-going iron clads in the world, nor one vessel that can pass the Straits of Gibraltar without permission, to say nothing of the Dardanelles. But the offer was never refused because it was never made. It was Ben Butler from beginning to end—a brag and a sham.—*Couticoke Observer*.

THE BRITISH ARISTOCRACY.

The beginning of the British aristocracy dates at the time the Duke of Normandy of France, overthrew the Saxons at the battle of Hastings. The Conqueror possessed himself of the entire kingdom, and thus took place one of the greatest property revolutions ever known in Europe. At one fell blow the rights of every Saxon were annihilated, and they were treated with nearly the same respect as were the serfs of Russia in modern times. William the Conqueror and his officers, in seizing the fine estates of the Britons, appended to their titles such local names as were suggested, and thus arose the nobility.

The English peers of the present day, who do not trace their lineage to some officer of William the Conqueror, derive their titles by the favor of William's successors, the kings of England, and a multitude of causes led to this favor. Some peers are descended from the illegitimate children of the monarch; for, although "aristocracy" is a compound Greek word, signifying "the government of the best," and good birth is defined by Aristotle to be "ancient (long inherited) wealth and virtue," yet I doubt whether the most barefaced American politician of our time would commend to office such beings as began many ducal lines in England. It was a frequent custom for the sovereign to give a husband an office, a title or a grant of land and take his wife for a mistress. This was the case close down to the reign in which we write. Dukes a grade higher were the fruit of intimacies between the king and some actress. Many families were ennobled for military service, for opportune loans of money to the king, or for mere reward of good company.

The sovereign is the head of the British aristocracy. Then follows her family, the princes, or those immediately of the royal blood. After that come three royal dukes, partly of royal blood, twenty-six dukes, thirty-eight marquesses, two hundred and two earls, sixty-one viscounts, and two hundred and fifty barons—in all, close to five hundred and fifty peers or nobles, including fourteen women peeresses in their own right (1854). Besides these peers there are nearly nine hundred baronets, who are not noblemen, and cannot sit in the House of Lords, but are allowed the prefix of "sir," which gives them rank and precedence without privilege. They belong to the aristocracy, however, and so do the gentry or untitled folks of ancient families.

Let us go back into the origin of these titles, for curiosity's sake.

The duke and the count were Roman titles, military words (Latin *dux* from the Latin verb *ducere*, to lead) invented by the later Roman emperors. The count was half magistrate of the Roman Provinces; the duke was general of the same. When the

northern nations descended upon Rome they appropriated these titles. Very soon the military dukes turned about and put themselves ahead of the count-magistrates. After a time, the duke became so powerful in his distant province, that he held it in his own right; and this was the case with the Duke of Normandy when he invaded England. Himself and several other French dukes had reduced the possessions of the crown of France to a couple of cities. A marquis was the guardian of the Roman frontier marches, and this title also the nations of the middle ages appropriated from Italy.

There were no dukos in England except the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy, till two hundred and sixty-nine years after the conquest the only titles in William's army being baron and count.

Marquis, the second rank of nobility, is old as the reign of Richard II. The first marquis was Robert Vere raised from Earl of Oxford to Marquis of Dublin. The oldest marquissate existing is that of Winchester. Probably the richest is that of the Marquis of Westminster, who owns almost the whole of that vast and luxurious district of London called Belgravia. A marquis is addressed, "My Lord Marquis."

Earl is a Scandinavian title of lost antiquity. When first unearthed it was applied to the custodian of an English county. Shrewsbury is the oldest earl; and the second in time—perhaps the first in wealth and power—is Derby, whose name and whose son's name (Lord Stanley) are well known to us in America as associated with our late civil war, and the treaties attempted to be negotiated after it.

Viscount, as an English title, goes back to about the time of the discovery of America and the eldest viscount is he of Hereford. This was the rank of Lord Palmerston, English Prime Minister during our recent civil war, whose title expired at his death.

Baron is a title of vague origin. The earliest extant, Le do Spencer, dates as remotely as the year 1264.

The term "cousin," applied by the sovereign to all peers save a baron, arose from the fact that there was one English monarch, Henry IV., who was related to every earl in the Kingdom.

The above five grades of nobles constitute the peers of England, and they make a body nearly twice as numerous as both Houses of the United States Congress. They were created in two ways besides original military rank and investiture of lands—namely, by writ of summons to come to Parliament and help the Queen with counsel, or by letters patent, naming the exact rank and the circumstances under which the patent is conferred. In former times with every such writ or patent an estate was given. At present it is an expensive favor to be made a peer. The stamps on a duke's patent cost one thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars in gold. A baron pays for his creation two thousand one hundred dollars in gold. The privileges of the peerage are now of little consequence, if except right of exemption from sitting on juries, freedom from common arrest, privilege of seeing the Queen on public business, and trial by one's peers in case of treason or felony.

The baronets, next below the peers, were created out of the pecuniary necessities of James I., who wanted money, first to settle Ulster in Ireland, then to "plant" Nova Scotia, the present discontented neighbour of the United States. He asked five thousand five hundred dollars a head to make baronets in this way.

The sovereign creates a peer to be in him-

self and his issue defender and adviser of the crown, and protector of the royal prerogatives. The nearer a peer is to the throne in office or duty, the closer is he to the fountain of honor and power. Hence many of the nobility are merely attendants upon the Queen.

A private letter from Christiania, received in London, gives some details concerning the French balloon which fell in Norway. It appears that the balloon was sent up from Paris on the morning of the 24th. The wind carried it in a northerly direction with such rapidity that it soon passed over the North Sea, without the occupants of the car knowing where they were. When, however, they found themselves dangerously close to the sea they sent off a carrier pigeon with a message that they thought themselves lost, at the same time throwing out ballast. Ultimately the balloon reached Norway, and when over Mandal a small town on the southern coast, twenty-three miles west-south-west of Christiansand, a sack of letters and newspapers were thrown out, which fell among the astonished inhabitants, who were watching the balloon pass over their heads. After having been many hours in the balloon the aeronauts, whose names are not given, descended several miles further north, on a snow covered mountain, as best they could, and without even knowing in what country they were, there being no habitations near. For nineteen hours they wandered about in the snow in light boots, which later had to be cut off, so saturated had they become. In the meantime the balloon was discovered by some of the natives. The aeronauts were not to be seen, but the remains of the meat, bread and wine in the car showed plainly enough that it had recently contained passengers. Six carrier pigeons were also found in it, seemingly none the worse for the journey. Eventually the voyagers reached one of the small cabins which are to be seen at wide intervals among the mountains, which give shelter to those who look after cattle, and where an aged and poor woman gave them some food. They then discovered, by seeing upon a match box the word "Christiania," that they were in Norway, and made the woman understand as well as they could that they desired to proceed to the town. They were then shown the way to a farmer's house, where they received the attention of which they stood so much in need, as well as dry clothes and shoes. The news of the arrival of balloon passengers did not reach Christiania till Sunday, the 27th ult. On the evening of the 28th thousands of people went to meet them on their entry into Christiania. They were feasted in Christiania that night, and on the following day were to start for Tours, via London.

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