

A SENSATION IN LONDON.

By Our Own Correspondent, London, December 3, 1903

THE chief event of this month has been A. O. Hurst, who sailed for New York to-day, after putting in three or four weeks with his principals Chas. Goodall & Sons, whom everybody knows as leaders in playing cards over here. It is only a year since Mr. Hurst was appointed Canadian representative of this house, but in that year he has made a record for himself. I won't attempt to say how many times the Canadian sales of Goodall's products have been multiplied during the year, but I know that Mr. Hurst received many oats on the back when he came across this year, and he went around wearing a smile of satisfaction that told its own tale. I was in and out of the Camden works several times, and could not help noticing the acknowledged superiority of the genial Hurst. He is certainly on top this year, and his principals are so encouraged with the way their Canadian trade is growing, that their representative returns to Canada to-day with a line of samples of playing cards, stationery, papeteries, etc., that will draw in larger orders than ever, during 1904.

As an evidence of the good feeling that existed I may mention that the house dinner for the travelling and executive staff, which usually takes place December 28th, was held one month earlier this year in order that A. O. Hurst might be the guest of honor. This dinner is always a very exclusive affair, and even your correspondent was not permitted to have more than a glimpse into the room while the festivities were in progress. It was held in a magnificent room of the "Hotel Dieudonne," and the guests numbered 30. The head of the company, Mr. Montague Goodall, was in the chair, and referred to their Canadian traveller in most flattering terms. When the toast "Home and Colonial Travellers" was proposed Mr. Hurst was called upon to respond, and I think he told the company a few things about Canada and the Canadian trade that they did not know before. Not only did Mr. Hurst show himself to be a very entertaining after-dinner speaker, but he proved his ability as a vocalist by contributing several songs to the evening's entertainment, one of which had some topical verses written specially for the occasion.

"They All Love Hurst."

To the Tune "They All Love Jack."

When the ship is trim and ready,
And the jolly days are done
The samples all collected
And Hurst aboard is gone,
The lasses fall weeping
With tears their eyelids burst,
For all their cockney lovers
Are nothing after Hurst,
For all their cockney lovers
Are nothing after Hurst,
For his heart is like the sea
And has room for two or three
So the girls will lonely be,
And the young ones worst,
For if love's the best of all
That can a man befall
Why Hurst's the king of all,
For they all love Hurst.

Where he goes the tarts go with him
On that much sought-after ship,

And the shareholders will chuckle
At a "record breaking" trip,
And as o'er the sea she travels
The stokers down below
Are cool in their surroundings
Compared to Hurst's, I trow,
Are cool in their surroundings,
Compared to Hurst's, I trow.

A very interesting ceremony at the dinner was the passing of the loving-cup filled with champagne. This loving-cup is an exceedingly interesting and valuable piece of crown derby of unknown origin, but dating somewhere in the neighborhood of 1815. It stands about seven or eight inches high, and is decorated exclusively with designs of playing cards, executed by hand. It was in the year 1815 that the first pack of Goodall's cards was produced, and the ace of spades on the antique loving-cup corresponds exactly with the ace of spades specially designed for the first pack manufactured by Goodall. I might mention just here that in these days—the days of King George III., there was an inland revenue tax of 1s. 6d. on each pack of cards that was manufactured, and no manufacturer was allowed to print his own ace of spades. This was printed by the Government, and was recognized as the Government stamp, for which the tax was to be paid. I saw this first pack of cards. It is one of the treasures of the company. The cards are square cornered and thick, with plain backs, and a strange contrast is formed when they are placed side by side with one of to-day's productions. They were made before the days of printing, and were produced by the stencil process, and, as may be imagined, the registration was not in all cases the acme of accuracy. I saw also another pack, dated 1820, which was the first pack made with lithographed backs. At this time the inland revenue tax had been reduced to 1s. Now by the way, it is 3d. The ace of spades, which is always the maker's trade-mark, had been designed by Cruikshanks, the famous artist who illustrated the early editions of Dickens' books, and the design has never been changed.

Although the loving-cup and the original pack of cards are regarded by Goodall as priceless treasures, yet so great is their appreciation of Mr. Hurst's work that they have loaned him these curiosities to exhibit in Canada. He proposes placing them on view in the principal cities of Canada, through the medium of some of the leading stationers. Mr. Hurst is carrying back with him the good wishes of his principals and the entire executive staff of Goodall's. They recognise his ability to do business for them when backed up with good samples and a full meed of the right kind of assistance and co-operation. Mr. Hurst will, during the year, cover Canada from the Maritime Provinces to British Columbia, and he tells me he hopes to have the pleasure of introducing Mr. Montague Goodall, the head of the concern, to his Canadian buyers during the Summer.

Shortly before Mr. Hurst left London he received the appointment as the Canadian representative of H. C. Stevens, makers of Stephens inks. This appointment is one of great importance to all concerned, and no one who knows Mr. Hurst can have any doubt as to the success he will make of it. Both the manufacturers and the newly appointed representative are to be congratulated.

J. M. McK.