

Our English Letter.

(From our own Correspondent.)

LONDON, May 30th, 1892.

Gradually all the members of the royal family are beginning to emerge from their retirement, and to take part in public functions. My particular neighborhood, South Kensington, was favored by the presence of royalty on Saturday last, when the Duke of Connaught opened the International Horticultural Exhibition. I am looking forward to many pleasant hours at this same exhibition, for as you know flowers have a special attraction for me, and here one can revel in flowers. On the opening day the large halls and gardens were a perfect fairy-land, and every one predicted that the exhibition would be a great success. We are to have flower and fruit shows every fortnight, and frequent lectures on horticultural subjects. One of the chief attractions, if not the chief one, is "Buffalo Bill and his Wild West Show." It is five years since his first visit to this country, and then how popular he was! Indeed some of the society papers used to ridicule his exceeding popularity with the fair sex, he was quite the "lion" of that London season. I must own to a decided partiality for the Wild West Show; the whole thing is so delightfully novel and picturesque, and I quite feel there must be a great fascination in the free, easy, eventful life led by these "cowboys" in their native wilds. The Queen has, at length, decided that she will not take part in any public functions this season, therefore, the duty of holding the Drawing-Rooms on Monday and Wednesday next devolves on Princess Christian, she being the eldest daughter of the Queen now in England. It is said that the Duchess of Edinburgh feels hurt at this; but it is the old question of precedence again. It is not difficult to understand, however, that the Queen's daughters take precedence of all her daughters-in-law, with the exception of the Princess of Wales, who, as the future Queen, ranks next to the Sovereign. Society greatly misses the presence of the Prince and Princess of Wales; no festivities or social gatherings seem the same when they are absent. The Duke and Duchess of Connaught have been exceptionally busy this last week, and have performed a host of public functions of a philanthropic nature. The Princesses Victoria and Maude of Wales have benefited greatly from their recent change of air and scene; you know they have been at Marlborough House for the past week, and were often to be seen walking on Bond street, and Piccadilly with their chaperone. They are both very fond of "looking at the shops;" Princess Maude, especially, rejoices greatly whenever she is able to escape from the restrictions of court etiquette, and thinks there can be few things more delightful than to ride on the top of an omnibus. Since the marriage of the Duchess of Fife, her sisters have enjoyed much more liberty. From fear of making my letter too long last week, I postponed telling you of one or two of our usual May Day customs. Coming as it did, on a Sunday, this year, any festivals were kept on a Monday. Of course the great Labor Demonstration took place on Sunday in London, as it did in many parts of Europe, and everything passed off more quietly than had been expected, very likely for that very reason. In Paris, great preparations had been made to prevent any further Anarchist plots and outrages, and several regiments of soldiers were brought into the city to be in readiness in case of emergency. Prevention was certainly better than cure, for the day passed over most quietly and peaceably, indeed the Parisians said that the streets of their usually gay city were as dull and deserted on that particular Sunday as London streets on any Sunday in the year, which is saying a good deal. Some time since I sent you an account of Prof. Ruskin's home at Coniston, and now I want to tell you of a very pretty May Day festival instituted by him about eleven years ago at Whitelands Training College for Girls. As you know, Prof. Ruskin has always taken a great interest in young girls, and this festival is certainly a proof of his kindly feeling towards them. The proceedings began quite early in the morning with a short service in the chapel, which, as well as the rest of the rooms, was profusely decorated with most lovely flowers. After the service, the students dressed in pink and white, walked in procession to the "throne" room, where the queen of the previous year abdicated in favour of her successor. After this a ballot was taken among the students for the election of the new queen. According to Mr. Ruskin's words the choice was to fall upon "the loveablest, the likeablest and the cleverest" among the juniors. The new queen now retired to be robed in a new dress, specially provided for the occasion, during her absence the girls sang some glees, and danced very prettily a few fancy dances, including the Maypole dance and a minuet. The principal gave a short address and then a procession entered, headed by the new queen in a most picturesque and handsome trained gown of pale green silk, and wearing a wreath of fresh apple blossoms. The procession consisted of eighteen tall girls bearing long, white, flower-decked wands, these were the queen's maidens, and they were followed by the queen dowager and the rest of the students. The queen was then enthroned with all due formality, and the countess Cadogan invested her with a gold cross and chain, the gift of Mr. Ruskin. It was then the duty of the new queen to distribute prizes, consisting of all Prof. Ruskin's works, among the senior students. It is altogether a very pretty ceremony, and quite a "Ruskinian" idea. The old May Day custom of bringing round the Maypole is fast dying out, at any rate in London, although I saw several very good ones this year. Our cart-horses, as a rule, present a very gay appearance on May Day, and their drivers must have spent considerable time and money on their decorations. It is quite astounding what an amount of taste is often displayed in these decorations. I noticed one handsome gray horse this year, whose name "Star" was traced in silk over his collar, and who was very prettily decorated with rosettes of the national colors. There is a curious old custom which is observed on May Day, at Oxford. At five o'clock

on May morning the choristers of the college assemble on the top of Magdalene Tower, and sing the quaint old Latin hymn "*Te Deum Patrem Colimus*," etc. The singing usually occupies about five minutes, and is listened to by great crowds of people from far and near, who gather beneath the tower. I have not been able to find out the origin of this peculiar celebration with any certainty; by some it is said to have been substituted for a mass, anciently performed for the soul of King Henry VIII, but it is probably, like other May-day usages, a relic of Pagan times. I have just paid a visit to the Danish Art School of Needlework and Decoration, and was much interested in the many different specimens of Danish, Norwegian and Swedish work which I saw. I think what took my fancy most were the looms for all sorts of weaving. Strange as it may seem, weaving is quite a fashionable employment with Swedish and Danish ladies, and it is quite usual to find a lover in a lady's boudoir. I think weaving would be somewhat complicated for me, but I am thinking of trying the lace-making. I saw such a fascinating little cushion and bobbins with a sweetly pretty pattern commenced that I almost felt inclined to take my first lesson at once. The great speciality of the school is the richly drawn linen work, and it is this branch in which Mrs. Conyers Morrell, the clever editress of the *Art Designer*, takes such an interest. Mrs. Conyers Morrell is quiet an authority for fancy-work; she writes wonderful articles on all the newest work in the *Ladies' Pictorial*. By the way, have you come across the new game "Cozari," in your part of the world? It was lately brought out by Mrs. Conyers Morrell, and a capital game it is too. It is something after the style of croquet, and is played with mallets and balls, but it is far superior to croquet, as being much more interesting and scientific. It has also been adapted as an indoor table game, which will I am sure be a great source of amusement for both old and young in the long winter evenings. Mrs. Langtry is once more among us, and delighting large audiences at the "Criterion." To my mind her acting in the "Fringe of Society," is the one redeeming feature in the play. The character she takes is an unpleasant one, but no one could have done better with it than Mrs. Langtry, and the final scene was really a triumph. As you know Mrs. Langtry is always renowned for her style of dress whether on or off the stage, and in this play she appears in some very charming gowns. For a afternoon visit she wore a long, simple brownish frock with a clinging skirt and corselet bodice; the head covering, (but what a ridiculous name to give the tiny "capelet," which only covered four or five square inches of her hair?) was made of cloth to match the costume, and was simply edged with many colored silk embroidery. The tea-gown which she wore in another scene was a triumph of art, and I certainly should not mind possessing a fac simile. The skirt and bodice front were of silk, a lovely shade of heliotrope, trellised with gold. The tight-fitting back of the bodice, and upper part of the sleeves were of plain silk, and the Watteau train which started from the neck, was of soft undulating *crepe de chine*. It seemed altogether too lovely a form for the stage. In my next letter I hope to tell you something about the gorgeous work at the drawing-rooms, it is whispered there will be some novel departures as regard trains and colors. I heard of a rather good idea the other day for dinner-parties. It was at a house where everything is very well done. Just before handing the wine and dessert, the butler sprinkled the table with Florida water poured from a little watering can. As you may imagine it was most refreshing, and removed any remaining odor of the viands. Although your Canadian houses are mostly heated with hot air pipes or stoves, I believe many people still rejoice in open fire-places as well, not for the warmth the fire throws out, but for the "cheery look" of the blazing coal or logs, which one misses so much with the stoves. If you are the happy possessor of such a fire-place and want a pretty decoration for it during the summer, you cannot do better than to adopt the following. Obtain a piece of thin plate glass mirror the size of the whole opening and have it firmly fixed, if it is fitted into a narrow frame of any sort of wood, it will be more easily draped; this must be done with a pretty soft shade of art muslin or silk to match the coloring of your room; fill in the space inside the fender with folds or rather billows of the muslin and among it stand pots of ferns or flowers. Silver American cloth (as we call it) makes a very good back-ground for the ferns instead of the mirror. Next week I hope to give you some little ideas for summer cookery.

Stop in Time.

Even agreeable people can easily degenerate into bores. Tom Moore was a charming singer of his own songs, but no one could persuade him to sing more than two at one time. He was the pet of fashionable society, and would flit about of an evening from party to party, always importuned to sing, and always willing to gratify others in this way; but he had no idea of stepping over the line and allowing a single person to be annoyed. Two songs would be agreeable. Three or more might cause him to be voted a bore, and so he always resigned his seat at the piano when everyone wished him to remain. If other people, and especially if politicians would act on the same principle! If the young man who drops into a neighbor's once or twice a week and stays there three hours, thus making himself a terror to a well-ordered household, would only limit his calls to thirty minutes. One of these who extended his call well toward midnight was quickly asked by his hostess if he would remain to breakfast. He was a sensible fellow and took the hint in good part, learning a lesson which always helped to make him a welcome guest.

MAMMA. "Yes, poor Mr. Black fell and broke his leg, and now I hear that white swelling has set in, I pity him."
MAMIE (perplexedly). "But how could white swelling set in the leg, ma, when Mr. Black is a colored man?"

Correspondence.

The correspondence columns are open to all readers of the *LADIES' PICTORIAL WEEKLY*. Questions relating to fashions, etiquette, literature or any subject of interest to our readers can be sent in for reply. Address correspondence editor in care of this paper.

GRETA.—It is certainly correct for the gentleman who is with you to raise his hat to the lady whom you salute. It would nowhere be considered forward. Likewise, if two gentlemen walking together meet a lady known to one of them, the other must also raise his hat, out of respect to his companion's friend. Anyone who said such a courtesy was forward, only showed his ignorance.

JOHN C.—You can get very good board at some places in Muskoka. There are fashionable hotels at Beaumarie, Maplehurst, Sandfield, and half a dozen other places. Most of them are fullest during July and August. Some people camp out and board at the hotels. This is a very pleasant way for gentlemen, and healthy for all.

LOQUITOR.—Ascension Day is not a holiday in protestant countries. I should not expect, if I were you, to have leave to go to church services, as you did in your old home.

SAY SO.—The exhibition was free, and by invitation afterwards a fee of twenty-five cents is charged. Yes, I think, if you have an hour to spend and are interested, it is well worth the money. The best pictures are George Reid's foreclosure of the mortgage. Wylie Grier's portrait of Mrs. Kerr, Carl Ahren's cradled in the net, and the Modern Cherub. J. W. L. Forsters, Miss Maude, and Mrs. Dignam and Mrs. Reid's flower pieces. There are many others very good, but you had better go and judge for yourself perhaps.

BROWN EYES.—I am sorry I gave the wrong address for the toilet preparations. I should have remembered that Miss Moote has removed to Yonge street, next Walker's photo studio. The number has escaped my memory.

JULIA DOUGLAS.—I think for a clear complexion, dark hair and eyes and small features, the mauve and white would be very becoming. Don't use embroidery, get the modish new Irish lace, and make a *berthe* and cuff of it.

TRAMP.—For a successful walking party, get some eight or ten people, and arrange so that if anyone is too tired to walk back, they can return by some train or carriage. Don't go too far, have some home where you can count upon a good cup of tea and some light refreshments, and be sure and get home in time for a short rest before dinner. Select a central *rendezvous* and you will not lose time waiting for laggards. It is not necessary to have equal numbers of ladies and gentlemen. Some ladies enjoy themselves without a male escort just as well. It is a good plan to start rather earlier than you suggest, at half-past one or two.

TRAVELLER.—The very best sea-going dress is made of well shrunken navy blue serge, plainly shaped, with bell skirt, short basque and coat sleeve, fashionably loose above. Don't put velvet or any trimming on but plain stitching. Have the seams pressed open and stitched on the right side in two rows. For a hat, a plain felt, and for sea travel, a cosy, warm knitted hood are comfortable and nice.

JOW-JOW.—A ladies' pneumatic safety costs all the way from one hundred dollars up. The advantages of the pneumatic tire, are easy going and increased speed. It might certainly get punctured, but not if you are careful. A cement and apparatus for mending tires can be carried with you, I am told.

INDIGNATION.—It is certainly very trying to have a so-called lady act in such a way, I should be very distant to her in future, if I were you, and freeze out all her advances to intimacy. You cannot be too careful of a curious and gossiping neighbor. At the same time she may mean no harm. In any case, be cautious how you speak before her, and what privileges you allow her.

An Ideal Husband.

98 He is chaste in his language, slow to anger, content with his lot, temperate in all things, considerate for the comfort and happiness of others, amicable in all his domestic relations, patient in trouble or distress, gentle and refined in manner, yet of manly courage, affectionate, amiable, trustful, hopeful, reliable, veracious, and unselfish. He has a high appreciation of all that is beautiful pure and good, is firm in the right, true to himself, and true to his God. Such a husband is worthy the highest homage a woman may give him.

99 He should be able to support a wife comfortably, should have a firm, but kind and gentle nature, should have good judgment, have his temper entirely under his control, kindly reason with and explain all things which she does not clearly understand, if she be cross and ill-humored at times, he should speak to her kindly and he should sympathize with her in all her afflictions and care, he should spend his leisure time with her, see that she has pleasure as well as himself, never deceive her.

100 The man who has developed a character which aspires to manliest manhood, and which is so broad and high that he lifts the fallen, not as fellow-mortals but as fellow-immortals, who partaking of the character of Christ, is true, honest, just, in conversation pure, to age respectful, to his mother thoughtful and good. He will be long-suffering, kind, gentle, considerate, thinking no evil, rejoicing in truth, bearing, believing, hoping, enduring all things for her, whose head he is. If she be indeed "a help-meet for him," their's will be an ideal home, he "an ideal husband."

Opals May Now Be Fashionable.

Queen Victoria, at her last Drawing Room, wore a necklace and some brooches of large opals, surrounded by brilliants. Now, all London is after them, and the world of fashion everywhere. The unhappy significance is forgotten for the time, and all the sad associations clinging to the fatal jewel. Poor Eugenie, the beautiful, ill-starred empress of the French, reluctantly consented to wear a set of opals at the last grand fete given at St. Cloud in 1870. Two days later the Franco-Prussian war was declared, and the empire dethroned. The Austrian empress took from their case a set of opals which for years had been lying by, and wore them on the occasion of her last public appearance, just before the death of her son Rudolph. But now opal is the jewel, and come weal, come woe, the fateful gem will flash upon us everywhere.