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## TWO ROYAL OLD MAIDS

SPECIAL FOR THE CANADIAN HOME JOURNAL.

The only Two Unwedded Princesses in Europe of Advanced Age are Queen Victoria's Granddaughters—The Prince of Wales Supports His Daughter in Her Resolve to Remain Single—The Romance of an Indian Prince that is Whispered Here and There at Court. . . . .



HERE are only two old maid princesses in Europe. Not very long ago the Empress of Germany succeeded in marrying off the last of her sisters, a lady verging upon twenty eight, and gossips say it is annoying to Queen Victoria that the only two royal spinsters left are her namesakes and her granddaughters.

The Queen, it is said, dislikes old maids as heartily as she dislikes cats, and does not take kindly to the unmarried state of the daughters of the Princess of Wales and Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein. Seriously as the parents and grandparents may threaten and repine, there remains little or no possibility of the two spinsters finding mates. Princess Victoria of Wales reaches her thirty-second birthday in the spring, and Princess Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein will never see thirty again; and in spite of their deplorable, conspicuous and unnatural singleness, they are not the most unhappy of high-born ladies. They are fast friends and allies, and though they enjoy few of the same studies and pleasures, they are equally callous in their estimate of the world's and even grandmother's opinion, and equally determined to prove that the life of an unwedded princess is neither forlorn nor unprofitable.

It is an interesting fact that of all the royal household the Prince of Wales has afforded his daughter the most kindly countenance in maintaining her position. The Prince is nothing if not modern and liberal in his views. He believes in a woman making her life to please herself, and he has never come the high parental authority over the only one of his girls who preferred not to be forced into the bonds of matrimony merely for the sake of the conventionalities. Furthermore, it is whispered that the Prince was on her side when for the only time in her life she fell in love.

That event took place many years ago, when a famously rich, handsome, amiable and enlightened young Indian Prince visited

Queen Victoria. His gorgeous jewels, his charming manners, and his excellent pronunciation of the English language, created a great sensation on his appearance first at a garden party given at Buckingham Palace. He was then introduced to Princess Victoria, who was then far and away the best looking of the three sisters, and always the cleverest.

The young East Indian found her Royal Highness most attractive, and when he went to pay a visit to Sandringham he shortly found that the Princess was by no means indifferent to his admiration; that personally she was quite willing to make India her home, and privately her lover asked her hand in marriage. He pledged himself to make her his only wife, to conduct his domestic affairs on the European plan, and he was not refused point blank. He was told to go home and let the Princess's family think it over. He went, and died of the plague three days after reaching India.

The Princess well knew that her lover had been ordered home merely to afford her family time to put other obstacles than the seas between them. It would not have been tactful to refuse so honorable a proposal from a powerful Indian ruler; so when Providence intervened and cut the thread of the young man's life, the whole royal household breathed a sigh of mingled regret and relief. Very well the family knew that had he lived

Princess Victoria would have insisted and the Prince would have clamored, and the highest diplomacy and the severest pressure would have been required to balk Cupid of his victims.

What the Princess's grief was the public has never known, but she has never been very strong since. Shortly after the sad news from India she pleaded with her parents to let her study nursing at Netley Hospital. She refuses to even listen to any proposals to arrange a marriage between herself and any stout young German Duke, and she wears always a ruby ring of surpassing beauty. They say the ring was sent her by the Indian Prince just before he died, to be put upon her finger by one of his faithful servants who brought it to her with instructions to that effect.



VICTORIA OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN.

VICTORIA OF WALES.