

LONDON LETTER

London, Oct. 22, 1913.

AMID all the pomp and ceremony of royal etiquette I had the pleasure of looking upon the bridal procession of Prince Arthur and his bride, the Duchess of Fife, whose wedding furnished an autumn pageant for thousands of admiring Londoners.

It was ladies' day in the West End, and, round about the Mall, where M. P.'s are specially wont to stroll before and after tiring hours in Westminster nearby; there must have been assembled a very considerable proportion of the leisured female population of London. Everyone admits that, among the most undoubted of woman's rights is that of taking a sentimental and heartfelt interest in other people's weddings, particularly so in the case of a gallant and popular young Prince, making what everybody believes a true love match with a charming Princess.

The miniature Chapel Royal, the scene of the ceremony, looked more like a Queen's boudoir than a place of worship, so rich in colour, so snug and elegant, with its crimson carpeting, its red-cushioned benches, and similar appointments of beauty and comfort. The young couple knelt at the steps where some seventy years gone, Queen Victoria once knelt as a bonnie bride, and where other Sovereigns of England as far back as William of Orange and Princess Mary plighted their troth in marriage.

What a strange hush fell on the august assembly as the Duchess of Fife, the spirit of a white flower, was led forward by the King and the Princess Royal to her Prince and future life's partner. The Duchess, a slim, graceful girl, who moved forward as though her little white slippers scarce touched the crimson carpet, might have been likened to some fairy thing in her dainty gown of snowy charmeuse with a lace train in which pearls and diamonds clustered in sparkling array. From the moment of entering the chapel the Duchess did not raise her eyes, but walked with little self-consciousness to the spot where the Prince was standing in front of the altar. Then she looked up and the Prince greeted her with a bright, happy smile.

Apart from the greater Royalties present, two beautiful girl figures received homage of all eyes. They were the Crown Princess of Sweden and Princess Patricia, the latter charming beyond words in a dress of china blue velvet draped with a tunic of moonlight blue tulle embroidered with silver thread. The Duchess of Connaught looking remarkably well after her serious illness, was a handsome and dignified figure in grey and gold. For the Duchess every Englishman wishes renewed vigor on returning to sojourn among the Canadian people whom she holds in something akin to affectionate regard.

UPON the bride and groom returning from the Chapel Royal the crush on Constitutional Hill and in Hyde Park was very great, but the people were rewarded by the sight of as pretty a bridal procession as has been seen for many years past. An escort of Scots Greys on grey horses surrounded the open State landau, drawn by four greys, in which were seated Prince Arthur in uniform, and his bride, wearing her wedding dress and veil. The crowd appreciating this recognition of their hours of patient waiting burst into enthusiastic cheering. Acclamations were renewed about ten minutes afterwards when the Royal pair came out on the balcony hand-in-hand and bowed and smiled their acknowledgment of the cheers.

There were a few human touches in connection with the event which bind royalty and people in the common ties of humanity. For example, when the Duchess of Fife left the Princess Royal's house for the Chapel Royal she found that some unknown well-wisher had thrown a spray of white heather into the carriage as an

emblem of good luck. Carefully gathering it up she carried it with her as she drove to the ceremony. As kindly was the pleasant little surprise in store for the driver, fireman and guard in charge of the honeymoon special train, the Prince and Princess sending an equerry along the train with golden gifts as a memento of the occasion. It was a happy thought of the Prince and Princess to allow their presents, which collectively number about 1,400, to be on view to the public this week, the price for admission being devoted to the relief of the sufferers from the terrible mining disaster in South Wales.

If London people, above all others, are in unpardonable ignorance of historic treasures and ancient buildings, full of objects of the great antiquarian interest that are to be found on all hands in that crowded square mile—the City of London—reported to be the most historic span of soil in the world, unceasing endeavours are being made to dispel it. The latest organization, known as "The Cult of the City Society," has for one of its chief objects, encouragement of personal knowledge of old churches, monuments, buildings and historical sites, and the study of the traditions of the city, and making these known to oversea visitors to the Empire's metropolis.

ONE of our gifted aristocrats, the Duchess of Somerset, widely known for her energy and versatility, is receiving many compliments upon her charming volume "The Impressions of a Tenderfoot." The Duke and Duchess had to wait some time before coming into their own, but probably they were just as happy then as now, especially as their "poverty" was of that relative order which enabled them at least to indulge in such delights as those of big-game shooting in Canada, where, however, they often had to rough it considerably, sleeping under canvas, cooking their own meals, etc. It was her experiences at this period which provided her Grace with material for the volume above named. At the time of the South African war, the Duchess wrote a patriotic song and gave the profits to a fund for the war. To her accomplishments, which are exceptionally numerous, the Duchess of Somerset is also admired in artistic circles as a clever painter.

There is a widespread regret at the announcement of Mr. S. R. Crockett's serious illness in the South of France. The former Free Church minister in the Scottish Lowlands is not the only man of the day who has found a wider fame from his writings as a novelist than from his work in the pulpit. Most members of the cloth who take to the weaving of novels have a prolific output, and Mr. Crockett is no exception to the rule. Between 1893, when he published "The Stickit Minister," and 1912, the date of "The Moss Troopers," he turned out something like fifty volumes.

Among other ministers, by the way, who are fecund novelists is Mr. Silas K. Hocking, while among clergymen of the Church of England there is the Rev. J. Jessop Teague ("Morice Gerard"), vicar of St. Stephen. Coleman street; but the best known is, perhaps, the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, rector of Lew-Trenchard, a living which is in his own gift. The Church of Ireland contributes Canon Hanney ("George A. Birmingham"), famous now as dramatist as well as novelist; and in the Church of Rome is the Rev. William Bary, who has several romantic novels to his name.

I note, too, that a representative gathering of leading gentlemen from the burgh and district of Selkirk has been held in Selkirk Town Hall, when it was resolved to erect in the burgh a permanent memorial to the late Andrew Lang, who was born in the burgh and retained the warmest interest in its affairs throughout his life.

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