

## British Gossip

THE recent visit of the Dowager-Empress of Russia to Queen Alexandra has revived a host of reminiscences of the period when the former first came to England, thirty-three years ago. Among the famous festivities of that visit was a meeting in Northumberland House, last to be demolished among the great houses of the Strand.

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Lord Rosebery, who has been a staunch friend of the London County Council throughout its "progressive" course, is aggrieved at finding that the little town of Epsom, near which stands "The Durdans," his lordship's beautiful retreat, has been blighted by the creation of a colony of lunatics sent from London to occupy "palatial asylums" on the Horton estate. In consideration of the fact that this area already has been afflicted with four asylums, an epileptic colony and an isolation hospital, Lord Rosebery's protest against the "heartless ruin" of Epsom is entirely justified.

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Every week brings fresh announcements of feminine aristocrats who have become manufacturers or commercial magnates. Lady Algernon Gordon-Lennox is to establish a fruit-bottling industry at Broughton, Oxfordshire; Ellen, Countess of Desart, has lately opened a tobacco farm in Kilkenny County. Another bright Irishwoman, Lady Aileen Wyndham-Quin, has allowed her business instincts to take a more romantic turn and runs a successful violet farm at Adare Manor, County Limerick.

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The British music halls are nothing if not enterprising. In order to raise money for the relatives of the victims of the "Berlin" disaster, the dubious procedure was adopted of inviting Captain Sperling and his companion who did rescue work to "show themselves" before a London audience. They were fairly stared out of countenance. Then a Manchester music hall is said to have offered Mr. George Thompson of Clare, Lurgan, who is reported to have remained in bed for twenty-nine years, a handsome sum for merely appearing on the stage. But "the laziest man on earth" declined the offer. In his case, he verily got up one morning to find himself famous.

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This photograph shows the wreck of the Elder Dempster liner "Jebba," a vessel of 3,500 tons, trading from West Africa to England. She ran ashore in a fog at Boat Tail on the south coast of Devonshire. One hundred and ninety passengers and crew were rescued by means of the rocket apparatus in six hours, constituting a record of a big nature. In the photograph the ship is being salvaged by means of the two ropes originally thrown across her by the rocket apparatus. Luggage and cargo of all kinds is being brought ashore. She is firmly wedged on the rocks at this point and is expected to become a total wreck. No lives were lost, even the



Wreck of S. S. "Jebba," Devonshire, England.

ship's cat and two monkeys being brought ashore in safety.

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Marine disasters have come thick and fast this year and the winds of March have worked almost as much havoc as the February storms. The "Jebba" and the "Suevic" came to grief on the same night. The latter is a White Star liner which went ashore near the Lizard. It was cut in two last week by means of dynamite and the after part was finally severed and towed into port, while the forepart remains firmly fixed on the reef.

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The royal yacht "Victoria and Albert" has been re-decorated and regilded for the cruise in the Mediterranean which King Edward and Queen Alexandra are to enjoy this spring. The yacht has been renamed "Alexandra," a much better appellation than the awkward double title. No fewer than five new motor launches are supplied for the royal pleasure trip.

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Dr. Emil Reich, whose lectures on the subject of "Woman" drew fashionable crowds to Claridge's last year, is still a popular figure in London society. At the recent opening of the Royal Amateur Art Society's exhibition he was one of the most feted guests and discoursed as deftly on art as he does on any other subject. Dr. Reich, it need hardly be said, is no friend of the suffragettes whose antics he regards with consternation.

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Among the new members of the London County Council are several peers and heirs to peerages. One of the most promising of these acquisitions is Lord Kerry, the eldest son of the Marquis of Lansdowne. While his father was filling the anxious office of War Secretary during the South African War, Lord Kerry was at the front with the Grenadier Guards; he served as A.D.C. to Lord Roberts and won the D.S.O. He is said to be a great favourite among his father's Irish tenants.

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Mrs. Humphry Ward, whose vigorous denouncement of the enfranchisement of women, was a veritable bolt from the blue-stocking, is a grand-daughter of the celebrated Dr. Arnold of Rugby and was born in Hobart, Tasmania. Mrs. Ward's husband is a writer on the "Times" but he is eclipsed by his wife's achievements as novelist. In 1905 Mrs. Ward tried her hand as a dramatist and her play "Agatha" was performed at His Majesty's Theatre. Apart from her literary work, she is said to be something of a philanthropist, devoting much time and money to the cause of slum children.

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A clever, charming Irish woman, with the romantic name of Miss Elsa D'Esterre, has established a remarkable school in Chelsea, called "Simple Life School for Dames and Damsels." Miss D'Esterre was educated in Germany, was sworn translator to the British Consulate at Frankfurt, and on her return to England taught in the High School of Oxford. Finally she turned her attention to domestic mysteries, with a view to eliminating "Mary Ann." She was so successful that the establishment of the Simple Life School followed and many husbands rise up and call it blessed.

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Mr. Cathcart Wason has actually complained on the floor of the House that Scotland is neglected—and this at a time when, as Mr. Spencer Leigh Hughes reminds him, the Prime Minister is a Scot, the Leader of the Opposition is a Scot, while the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of York, the Leader of the House of Lords and the president of its proceedings are all natives of the Land o' Cakes. It would seem as if the gifted sons of Scotland were really having a fair share of Imperial honours. Mr. Wason must be afflicted with Mr. George Bernard Shaw's infirmity of shyness.

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Mr. Joseph Chamberlain is said to be recovering from his recent illness, although the recovery is very slow. At latest accounts he takes a drive daily.

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Ireland has given many distinguished sons to the service of the Empire, and of these there was no more noted member of the Diplomatic Service than Sir Francis Plunkett, who recently died in Paris. The youngest son of the ninth Earl of Fingall, he entered upon his life work fifty years ago. He retired from Vienna in 1905 among flattering testimonials to his effective service. Tokio, Washington, Brussels, Berlin, St. Petersburg and Stockholm were among his diplomatic appointments.