Another Review of Lady Dorothy Neville's English Remniniscences

From the New York Sun.

THE SOCIALISTS make brave and complicated explanations of why they are such, but the reason after all is pretty plain. Take two children. One has a yardful of glittering toys, the other across the street, has few toys or dull toys or no toys at all and is full of the socialist feeling. The Lady Dorothy Nevill in her excellently entertaining book of reminiscences "Under Five Reigns" (the John Lane Company) speaks of the pleasant terms on which the landowners in Dorsetshire lived with the peasantry in the old days. Changes have taken place, and she mentions one in particular We must quote in order not to lose the charm that abides in her own manner of telling. "Only a short time ago," she records, "I heard that the present owner of a certain country house had created a most unfavorable impression in the district. In former days a number of aged women of the village close by were allowed after a storm to collect the wood and sticks which had been blown down in the garden. This kindly permission has now been revoked, and when after a gale the aged dames arrived according to custom they were roughly ordered away by the new squire, who declared that he was not going to have any widows on his lawn. It is by acts such as this that socialists are created and the good feeling formerly prevailing between landlord and tenant destroyed." Surely such acts provoke hard feelings, and perhaps the socialist has an eye to wreckage and is signified by his desire to pick up sticks after a storm.

Immediately after this we come upon an anecdote that seems to be wholly sociological, with no political significance. An old baronet noted for his contempt of convention came home from a visit to London to find on descending from the train that the air bit shrewdly, that it was very cold. His coachman had come to meet him in a dogcart. After viewing the coachman thoughtfully he made him yield up his greatcoat. Arrayed in this he drove himself home, leaving the coachman to keep up a pleasant degree of temperature by walking. Arriving at his home the baronet was greeted at the door in the dusk by his butler, who inquired, "Well, what have you done with the old devil? I suppose he's missed the train." This too explicit butler was discharged, though there is nothing to indicate that he was not on occasion a perfectly honest man.

This lady of entertaining memories travelled with her parents in the '40s, which were before the day of Baedeker. What discomfort did travellers in that time suffer at the continental inns! These particular travellers arrived at Rastadt in Bavaria at 2 o'clock in the morning. Not a living creature was encountered in the streets. They groped their way up the dark staircase of the inn. At the top of the stairs stood the hair-dressed landlord, looking angry and fierce. He had two available rooms. One of these smelled abominably of mice. The other had to do. No supper. The travellers lay on the unsheeted beds till 6, then resumed their journey, still fasting. At the Goldener Schiff in Salzburg they looked out of their window and saw a bridal train entering the other inn, the Herzog Karl. Two noble families had secured the whole of the Herzog Karl, and as one of these families were having their wedding feast in one part of the inn the other family were having a funeral in another part.

One thing suggests another and an anecdote is related here. The father of the fourth Duke of Devonshire was a very silent man. He and his brother, Lord George Cavendish, who was also silent, on arriving at an inn in Germany were accommodated with a room containing three beds, one of which was already occupied. The occupied bed was screened, but the brothers in turn before retiring drew aside the sheltering curtains and took a peep. In the morning, after a sound sleep, after breakfasting and after paying their bill, the father of the fourth Duke of Devonshire inquired of his brother "George, did you see the dead body?" The reply of Lord George was unelaborate. He said "Yes," and the two proceeded on their journey.

There is comment here upon changes in the way of the aristocracy. There has been a conquest of the West End by the city. In days that the chronicler recalls little was heard of stocks and shares, but that was a day that in passing took its habit along with it. "The older generations rarely spoke of two things—their financial affairs and their digestions. Both are now favorite topics." There used not to be a "smart set" The word "smart" was not, the chronicler thinks, much heard in former days outside of the servants' hall. She cannot imagine what the great ladies of those other days would have said of somebody introduced to them had been recommended to the locution "She is quite smart" Those earlier ladies bearing these words would have thought of a kitchen maid dressed up for Sunday, they would not at all have had the sense of a flattering description of a lady.

The barristers of those days had rough manners, and the judges were not soothing to witnesses. There is an admirable anecdote in illustration of this. We read "Some of the old Bailey counsel were little short of blustering bullies. Witnesses were treated as if they were prisoners and when at last they could hardly speak from trepidation the judge would bellow out—'Why don't you speak up, sir? Speak up or I'll not allow your expenses.' An unfortunate fellow, the conductor of an omnibus, had been in vain entreated by the presiding judge to exalt his voice. The enraged bigwig at length laid down his pen and turning on the witness a curious countenance exclaimed: 'If you trifle with the court, witness, I shall commit you. Speak out, man, as you were on the steps of your own omnibus.' The effect was instantaneous. The witness burst his trammels asunder and his stentorian replies echoed through the court till the very walls rang again. The judge looked aghast and at the conclusion of the examination said to him, with his hands upon his ears: 'Witness, I shall allow your expenses this time, but I hope you will never have occasion to enter this court again; and depend on it, I'll never enter your omnibus.'"

From her review of these rough officers of the law the chronicler passes to the contemplation of a pleasanter legal figure. We are bound to quote her here. "Amongst great lawyers whom I have known," she says, "one of the most charming was Mr. Joseph Choate, who as American ambassador became such a popular figure in London society. I have always had a great liking for the clever men whom the great republic has from time to time sent us, and it was with real sorrow that I learned this most agreeable and clever personality was to leave us. On coming to say good-by he brought me his photograph, which hangs among those of some great men, Cobden, Disraeli, Bright and others whom it has been my privilege to call friends. Mr. Choate was especially clever and witty in conversation. As a lawyer many of the chief triumphs of an uninterruptedly successful career had been achieved by his fascinating humor and winning methods of persuasion, which it was said caused even a defeated side to leave the court in a state of mental exhilaration. Mr. Choate indeed possessed the rare quality of communicating the kindly geniality which was such an essential part of his nature to all he met, and when he smiled even the most soured individuals who might chance to meet him as a rule could not help smiling, too"

Dr. Wolff, the traveller and missionary, married the author's aunt, the Lady Georgiana Walpole. He had humor and he used to say to his wife by way of teasing her: "I, a rabbi and the son of a rabbi, demeaned myself by marrying the little Shentile woman." It is recorded here that a wicked story used to be told of how the doctor's courtship began. Lady Georgiana was well over 30, and was not at all a beauty, her niece tells us. Dr. Wolff had just come back from Bokhara and was a social lion. He and the lady sat next to each other at a luncheon party. Says this entertaining chronicler: "As fate would have it, Lady Georgiana chanced to drop her fork on the floor, which the distinguished traveller picked up and while doing so pinched her foot. The caress in question, entirely novel to Lady Georgiana, made such an impression upon her that she fell in love with its giver and very soon they became engaged" Dr. Wolff was not handsome. The want of beauty in the pair is indicated where this author says: "My father, I remember, who at times had a sharp tongue, used to say if Wombwell (a famous menagerie keeper of the day) could get hold of those two his fortune would be made." The author's father thought a good deal of his family and said so to Dr. Wolff, of whom he did not altogether approve. The doctor was not cast down. "Your children, Lord Oxford," said he, referring to himself and Lady Georgiana, "will be of glorious lineage, for in them will be united the holy blood of David with the illustrious blood of Walpole."

The unhappy Ouida wrote letters to Lady Dorothy. She was a pessimist, Lady Dorothy declares, and this opinion seems to be sustained by a card sent to her by Ouida on the occasion of the Queen's jubilee in 1887. Lines entitled "Jubilee Epitaph" were written on the card. They ran:

Full half a century of measures small,
Weak wits, weak words, weak wars,
and that is all.

Lady Dorothy once wrote to a friend while travelling in a railway train and apologized for her handwriting. He replied that her letter was singularly legible and the substance of it even more electric than usual; he thought that she ought always write in a railway carriage. We may add a single anecdote. There was an actress who was always making herself out very young. Being engaged in a lawsuit she testified that her age was 19. Her son was the next witness. On being asked to tell his age he replied: "Six months older than mother." This answer, Lady Dorothy says, occasioned much laughter.

Beautiful American Woman Captures a Grand Duke

Cousin of the Czar Would Make Mrs. Lee Thompson His Morganatic Wife.

ON THE OTHER side the morganatic wife is not exactly looked down upon. It would be more exact to say that she is thrust into the background and kept there. While her husband shines at state functions, she must stay sweetly at home and amuse herself as best she can, because she and her children are socially dead.

Like many another thing, this rather peculiar status of the morganatic wife had quite a natural beginning. Those who became old enough to discover that they had been born royal also soon enough found out that their proud positions were not all beer and skittles. Among other things, they were expected to marry for reasons of state, to salve over hard feelings between nations, to cement friendships, to secure influence in other courts, and other contingencies much too numerous to detail.

There was where the rub came for royalty. Seldom it happened that the prettiest, wittiest, most generally desirable women at court were of royal descent. Oftener it happened that the courtiers got the real peaches, while to the princes went the ones who would have been wallflowers but for their birth.

Very often, too, the prince was a virile, handsome young chap, just of the type to captivate women. Natural that was, for the primitive rulers were the best men of their tribes, the kind that could vanquish all comers merely to work up an appetite for dinner. By birth and tradition they were looked upon as the first of their lines.

Men of this type wouldn't put up with a scrawny, lanky princess, or perhaps a fat and dumpy one, except as a matter of duty. They felt it their right to live and love in their private lives as they liked. Hence came the morganatic union, the real love match, as distinguished from the union of state.

Naturally, it varied with times, nations and people. Always, though, there has been the distinctive feature that the morganatic bride should give up all natural rights and privileges. The state union was to be inviolate. The morganatic one could be broken whenever the man in the case felt disposed. Likewise, the children were always to take their mother's status, which was no status at all. If the father felt so disposed he might dole out titles to them, but by no means were they to inherit his royal prerogatives.

Abandoned Loves.

In the long run, the ties of state have been stronger than the ties of affection. Particularly in modern times, the princes have not hesitated to abandon their love matches when expediency demanded it.

There are, of course, some notable exceptions. The case of Francis Ferdinand, the Austrian crown prince, is, of these, the most recent. He wooed and won the Countess Chotek as simply and earnestly as if they had both been peasants or tradespeople. At the time there was no immediate prospect of his inheriting the throne. But then there came that still unexplained suicide of his elder brother.

When Francis Ferdinand became next heir to the aged Emperor his attitude toward his morganatic wife changed not in the least. Not all the threats or cajoleries of the most hidebound court in Europe could change him. If anything, he became even more stubborn than before. Little by little, he broke down the barriers that might have prevented his wife from sharing his future honors, until old Franz Josef ended by taking the countess into the royal family.

Against this one conspicuous instance are many others where the morganatic wife was cast aside like an old shoe the moment she became burdensome. Czar Nicholas did not hesitate to throw over his dancer.

In England the tenets which govern royal marriages are somewhat different from those that obtain in other countries. One born to the purple may contract alliances with an inferior in rank, provided he or she has not previously been to the altar. In all cases, though, the union becomes null and void if the royal personage afterward takes a partner of equal rank.

So particular are the critics of pedigrees that some of them even had the hardihood, not so very long ago, to pronounce the union of the German Emperor and Empress morganatic, because the latter was not of equal rank with the imperial Wilhelm when their marriage took place. As a Hohenzollern and a nephew of Queen Victoria, the Emperor was of distinctly superior lineage to the offshoot of one of the minor German lines. In this case, however, old William I. had given his sanction to the match, so that there could be no real attempt to contest the succession of the present crown prince.

Such an extreme shows how jealously the purtie is guarded. It also emphasizes the position in which a morganatic wife finds herself. Being looked upon as a necessary evil, she must keep in seclusion as much as possible. At times the very existence of such matches are kept secret.

At present it is said that the crown prince of Servia has a very beautiful wife of the left hand in Belgrade, and that, despite his wild escapades, he is a loving and devoted husband. This is one of the reasons given for the fact that King Peter is having so hard a time to make him take a bride of equal rank.

Even at best a marriage of this sort could have none of the brilliance that would attract a beautiful American such as Mrs George Lee Thompson, accustomed to associating on equal terms with the rank and fashion of all lands, both at home and abroad.

Perhaps, too, this whole phrase of the matter had something to do with the decision of Miss Elkins. For in the absence of definite information, it has been pretty generally inferred that, if she had consented to accept a morganatic union, all other differences might have been adjusted. In fact if she had contracted an alliance of the half-recognized sort, her position in Italy would have been less favorable than if she had married an ordinary noble or than as plain Miss Elkins, child of a wealthy American senator.

Once a morganatic wife, she would have been subject to restrictions that do not apply to American citizens and their families. Royalty is jealous of its prerogatives. It has to be to remain loyal in the eyes of the multitudes. Let down the bars ever so slightly, and the masses would cease to reverence the ancient lines. Perhaps, too, if a few new-world girls broke into the purple ranks, it wouldn't be long till half the thrones of Europe would be invaded by the feminine representatives of swollen American fortunes.

To folks on this side of the water, who may be married one day and divorced the next, the restrictions on royal marriages may seem wonderfully severe. But in Europe they are literally an institution. Actual sovereignty and the length of time a line has enjoyed it are really more thought of than the importance of the thrones occupied. Were it not so, the German Emperor could not let loose every once in a while about the divine right of kings. Nor would it be possible to let in the offspring of the sovereigns of Montenegro and small principalities, while even questioning the right of the Napoleonic line to consideration, on terms of equality, with the reigning families of Europe.

What, then, is the position of a woman who is not only a commoner, but is further burdened by a divorce? Not an enviable one, surely. Over the water divorces are looked upon with considerable less lenity than here. And when an American woman, accustomed to associating, by right, with all people, woke up and realized the stratum of society in which she had placed herself, she might be tempted to regret her bargain.

Most historic of such instances is that of Prince Jerome Bonaparte, who married Miss Betty Patterson, of Baltimore, only to desert her when the time came for him to occupy a European throne. The deserted wife was the grandmother of former Attorney-General Charles J. Bonaparte.

As for the Russian grand dukes, they are about the biggest rounders to be found on the continent of Europe. Ideal gentlemen in manner, flocking to Paris whenever they can escape from St. Petersburg, speaking almost any language and congenial with almost any nationality, their companionship is naturally much sought. Special champagne is made for them, so sweet that it would sicken one not accustomed to it, and they take to it as naturally as to tea, coffee and cigarettes, of which they consume large quantities.

Typical Young Blades.

Typical young blades of this description were the Grand Dukes Cyril and Boris, sons of the Grand Duke Vladimir. They have dissipated their way pretty much all over the earth, cutting, at one time or another, a pleasure swath along the American continent. They were the real bad boys of Europe, barring such absolute maniacs as the former crown prince of Servia, who abdicated the succession after he had become a murderer.

Cyril went the pace unrestrained until he fell in love with the Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. It seemed a real love match, and all would have gone smoothly if the princess had not happened to be Cyril's first cousin. For a long time the Czar opposed the match, which was not in accordance with the tenets of the orthodox Greek Church, and Cyril went to prove himself a man by fighting the Japs in the Far East. Nothing but a miracle saved his life, for he was on the ill-fated flagship of Admiral Makaroff, which was sunk by a Japanese mine planted near Port Arthur. Mighty few of the crew escaped, because the battleship turned turtle soon after the mine tore a tremendous hole in her hull.

Whether or no, the duke would have his way, and he married the princess of his choice. As have a good many other Russian royalties who have incurred the Czar's displeasure by their marriages, Cyril and his wife have since spent much of their time in France.

This winter Mrs. George Lee Thompson has been one of the reigning beauties of Paris. Since her separation from her husband, the scion of a prominent Philadelphia family, she and her mother have been living abroad, most of the time in France. Last summer they were at Dinard, in Brittany, where the former Miss Julie Phillips was admittedly without a peer for good looks. No less a personage than Andre de Fouquieres described her as "looking like one of Fra Angelica's angels." As De Fouquieres is the recognized authority on matters of men's dress and allied subjects, this remark would have been enough to bring any woman into the limelight.

In Mrs. Thompson's case the compliment was not needed. Everywhere she went the fame of her loveliness preceded her. And as she had the entree into exclusive circles, it was but natural that she should attract the notice of the Grand Duke Alexander, a son of the doughty old Grand Duke Michael, who was a soldier and statesman most of his life until, in his old age and the rejuvenation of the Russian Empire, he spent his declining years at his villa in Cannes.

Only a little more than a year ago the venerable grand duke, who was the oldest representative of the Romanoff line, passed away. He was born in 1822, took up military service at 14, was a general at 20, and fought throughout the Crimean war, 1854-55. Next, in 1877-78, he commanded the army that subdued the Turks in the Caucasus. After that he became a member of the civil commission which carried out the practical work of emancipating the serfs in 1881. He was made president of the council of state, and when the Duma was first organized he was named as its honorary president.

The son of such a man might be a distinguished personage, even if he were not of royal blood. Throughout Europe the ability of the venerable Michael was recognized, and he was rated among the ablest of the Romanoffs.

Though the son has not manifested a tithe of his father's ability, his name insures him great prestige. About 45, spending most of his time in the gayest circles of Paris, he naturally is a prominent figure in the world of wealth and fashion.

To be courted by such a man is a distinction. What wonder that the whole world has been informed that he is wildly infatuated with the beautiful young American, that he is a constant attendant, and that his relatives, the Grand Duke Cyril and his wife, often entertain the object of his affections.

Immersed in the gay and frivolous atmosphere of Paris, this might turn the head of most any woman. It was hardly necessary for the newspaper reports to add that Mrs. Thompson had completely conquered the most exclusive French social set. Any one who is showered with attentions by members of the royal Russian family will find no closed doors in Paris.

As a matter of course, there were reports that Mrs. Thompson was thinking of getting a divorce, that she might contract a morganatic marriage with the attentive grand duke.

That Alexander, son of Michael, should desire Mrs. Thompson as a morganatic bride is not strange, because he could cast her off any time he desired a new alliance with a woman of his own rank. Yet it is by no means certain that he would care to do so, because the royal Russians are much given to morganatic unions, and they seem to like them better than the regular kind.

There is Grand Duke Michael Michaelovitch next in line of succession to the Czar and Czarewitch, who in 1891 Married Sophie, Countess of Merenberg, afterward created Countess of Torby by the Grand Duke of Luxemburg. Nothing has ever been able to shake Michael's allegiance to the Countess Torby. Even when it looked as if he might at some distant day succeed to the throne, through the failure of the Czarina to bear a son, he remained true to his love, even writing a book, "Never Say Die," which told of his own romance.

Because of the Czar's displeasure, Michael spends most of his time in England, where he has a magnificent estate, and where he lives an ideal life with the woman of his choice, and their family.

Another grand duke, Alexis, who died about a year ago, left a morganatic wife in Paris, and his brother Paul is likewise morganatically wedded.

However, what chance an American woman would have of holding a grand duke, if she got him, is problematical. Maybe, after all, Mrs. Thompson is merely allowing the grand duke to show her a good time.

MAKING THE CORONATION CARPET.

Scotland is to have the honor of making the carpets which will cover the floor of Westminster Abbey for the coronation next June, and the looms of a great carpet factory at Glasgow will shortly be busily engaged upon the important task. The floor covering has from earliest times been a specific feature in the preparations for the stately ceremony, and in the Liber Realis prepared for Richard II., a copy of which is in the safekeeping of the deans of Westminster, there is a definite order as to the "Ray cloth or Burrel," to be placed under the "King's feet as he goeth." At all the later coronations the carpet has been of a rich and beautiful character, with as lustrous a surface as possible, and from the quantities needed in the more recent times it is one of the first requirements to be set in hand. The new carpet will follow very closely upon the lines of that ordered for King Edward's crowning. Then as now the color was a singularly soft, rich blue. The design was symbolical and enabled the badge and motto of the Order of the Garter and the Tudor rose, with the thistle, shamrock and lotus connected with festoons of bay leaves and ribbons. These were effectively shown in a rather lighter shade of color and the whole formed an admirable background to the magnificence of the state robes, the ecclesiastical vestments, the crimson of the peeresses' dresses and the military and diplomatic uniforms.

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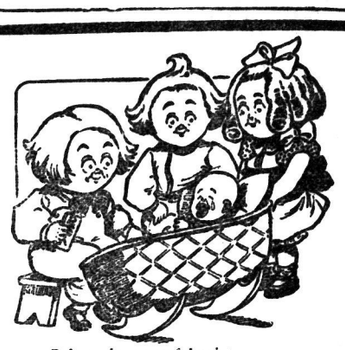

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