

THE PIROUETTING PEERESS, ENGLAND'S NEW SENSATION

Ballet Dancing Now One of Lady Stewart-Richardson's Accomplishments

ENGLAND has a brand-new sensation. And it's all due to a daring young woman who has made that staid land of roast beef and rotundity gasp more than once.

To the long list of her other accomplishments Lady Constance Stewart-Richardson has added ballet dancing. The ballet mistress at Covent Garden, who has been instructing her, says she has a real genius for the art.

There are few men—and not a woman—in all the ranks of British nobility more noted in sports and athletics than this lithe-limbed daughter of the house of Mackenzie. Champion swimmer of the London Bath Club, she is also a fine shot and an expert rider. She has ridden through the wilds of Somaliland, has shot big game in the Rocky mountains, alligators in Florida and wild hogs in Texas, and her prowess is no less with the rod, as she holds the English landing record for salmon.

Will she go upon the stage, this handsome daughter of one of Britain's proudest houses? her country people are asking with bated breath. No one knows what the brilliant and versatile Lady Constance will do—that is, no one except Lady Constance, and she is keeping her own counsel.

PERHAPS a desire to master the art of ballet dancing was born in the busy brain of the then Lady Constance Mackenzie one balmy spring evening shortly before her marriage, when, being on a tour of Egypt, she created a decided sensation at a mask ball in Cairo.

All the elite of the ancient city had gathered in Gezireh Palace, when an apparition of loveliness drew all eyes as a magnet draws iron. It was the dashing young English woman who was already well known upon the streets of the cities and the caravan routes of the deserts. Lady Constance had elected to appear at the ball in the character of an Egyptian scribe.

"Her costume," stated a news dispatch at the time, "was more beautiful than voluminous. Lady Constance, who is blessed with exquisite feet, had no scruples in exhibiting them, with bare legs from the knees downward. She was attended by Miss Bainbridge, in the costume of a dragoman."

At any rate, the young woman scored a decided success and was the center of attraction throughout the evening.

It is not the ordinary or garden variety of ballet of the comic opera and spectacular stage that she has now taken up. She has gone in for the real art of the thing, the art that made La Fontaine, Florence, Taglioni, Fanny Elssler and others famous long before its latest convert was born.

A widespread revival of the old and ever-graceful art of dancing has been attracting the attention of Europe and America, and later, the best dancers are winning fame and fortune here and abroad.

SOCIETY TAKES UP FAD

Even the blasé society circles of New York have taken up the revival with enthusiasm, and not a few of its prominent young people, it is whispered, are mastering the intricacies of the ballet.

"There seems to be no bounds to the length to which Lady Constance Mackenzie will go in her predilection for the unusual," stated an English writer, somewhat plaintively, half a dozen years ago.

Even at that late date the English people had not quite grown accustomed to being startled by the high lites of high society. Aristocratic house parties had not then taken to playing "Raffles" and "burglarizing" for sport the homes of neighbors in the dead of night.

"Wherever she goes," the seemingly astonished writer went on, "Lady Constance now carries with her a pet snake—a tiny creature, to be sure, but still a snake."

"This uncanny familiar she lodges in the bodice of her dress, and upon occasion plays with it, much as the average woman toys with her rings, her fob or a jeweled buckle."

"Twice a week the snake is fed upon fish and insects by Lady Constance, who, it is said, has satisfied herself that the reptile is possessed of more intelligence than the average person credits snakes with displaying."

She did unusual things there is no doubt of that; she had done them since early childhood. And when, four years ago, she placed a crown of orange blossoms

upon her many and daring exploits by suddenly contracting a romantic Highland marriage with Sir Edwin Austin Stewart-Richardson, both her courtship and her wedding were considerably removed from the ordinary.

Perhaps it had not been expected that the young woman who had cantered astride through Somaliland and in many other astonishing but harmless ways set conventions at defiance would ever consent to the stately, more or less prim wedding usually awaiting a society debutante.

Her courtship was romantic. It was conducted largely on horseback while she and the stalwart young baronet of Pitfour Castle were galloping gaily over Scottish hills.

Banns were published in the quaint little town of Tain, in Ross-shire, but as there was nobody in Tain to give the news to the world at large, the world at large heard nothing of it until after the marriage, which was just what Lady Constance desired.

The few persons asked to the wedding received their invitations by telegraph at the last moment, and so suddenly was the hour of the ceremony fixed that some difficulty was found in obtaining a clergyman to officiate. After the ceremony Scottish pipers struck up a clan march, to the music of which the couple drove away.

Lady Constance Stewart-Richardson was born in 1882, a daughter of the second earl of Cromartie, who was a son of the late duke of Sutherland. Her father inherited the title from his mother, who was a Mackenzie. The title and estates are now held by the

Countess of Cromartie, elder sister of Lady Constance, who enjoys an income of \$100,000 a year. Sons were born to the sisters about the same time.

Four years ago, a few months before her marriage, Lady Constance Mackenzie enjoyed an extensive hunting trip through the United States, her prowess resulting in trophies from the big game of the Rocky mountains, as well as the alligators of Florida and the wild hogs of Texas.

Wherever she went she enjoyed herself immensely, but nowhere, apparently, better than among the cowboys and rough riders of Texas, to whom her horsemanship, no less than her skill with the rifle and revolver, proved a revelation.

From the first day that found her on the plains of southwest Texas to the evening when she boarded a train for her return home, she rode and hunted from dawn to dark. Two savage wild hogs were killed by her under circumstances that would have shaken the nerve of most men.

Particularly vicious when at bay are the wild hogs of Texas—called there javelinas and in the dictionary peccaries. Strong and wiry, they possess long and exceedingly sharp tusks that can do fatal execution in a twinkling.

When aroused they fight in a manner calculated to cause terror, ripping and tearing savagely with the dangerous tusks. One of them has been known to kill or maim every one of a large pack of dogs within a few minutes.

It was after a long hunt that Lady Constance came upon her first javelina. She promptly set out in pur-

suit, urging her wiry pony to a dead run. When near enough she drew her revolver and fired.

The shot struck the fleeing animal, but did not disable it. It was made very angry, however. Snarl-

ing and desperate, it turned upon its pursuer.

Lady Constance leaped from her horse and ran straight toward the angry animal, which in turn sprang at her in a frenzy of rage.

She fired again, this time with fatal effect, but not before the ugly beast was nearly within striking distance.

Cowboys who had followed and witnessed the encounter turned as white with fear as their sun-scoured cheeks could do; they fully expected to see the daring girl ripped almost into strips by the knife-like tusks of the javelina.

A little later the intrepid young woman shot another wild hog under almost similar circumstances. Her new friends, the cowboys, now highly enthusiastic, loudly cheered both her courage and her aim.

During the five days that she remained upon the Laureles ranch of Captain John Todd, a veteran cattleman, she was busy and kept others busy during all the waking hours; for five days she hunted and re-lucted to the limit of the physical endurance of a hardened man.

Almost level, the plain of that section is covered with prickly pear cactus, mesquite grass and thickets, in which hide the wild hogs that stray north from Mexico and Central America. It was a new experience for the daring Scotch girl, and she promptly began the hunt.

It was said that the cowboys, accustomed to spend the greater number of their waking hours in the saddle, were scarcely able to maintain the pace set by the young woman from over the sea, who galloped her and there through the brush all day.

"CUT OUT" CATTLE

One of the entertainments provided for her was an improvised "round-up." She placed herself at the head of the cowboys, and all hid themselves over the plains to the pastures where there were 4000 head of graded cattle.

About one hundred of the lot were "cut out" by Lady Constance and her companions. The Scotch girl soon "roped" the pick of the lot and threw him, but had not progressed sufficiently in knowledge of the work to "hog tie" him.

When the party returned to the ranch house Lady Constance delighted the crowd by an exhibition of mounting and dismounting. Standing on the ground, with her left hand on the pommel of the saddle, she would vault into the seat, and at times throw herself clear over the horse.

During her hunting trips Lady Constance usually wore the costume of a man, or at least one very similar. At other times she wore kilt—a her favorite costume, by the way—a sweater, with a handkerchief around her neck and a belt stocked with pistols. This rig was topped with a broad-brimmed felt hat, while high top boots completed the attire.

In addition to hunting wild hogs she engaged in a lively wolf hunt and went on a successful fishing trip. Her greatest amusement seemed to be derived from attending several country dances.

All in all, she made a great hit with the appreciative Texans. "She ought to have been a man," remarked an enthusiastic cow puncher. "For a woman she beats them all. For riding and shooting she's the best I've ever seen."

General attention was attracted to this young woman's athletic abilities when, scarcely out of her teens, she carried off the Ladies' Challenge Shield at the London swimming contests.

She was conspicuous from the first among other

Resting after Swim



Lady Constance Stewart-Richardson, who has turned to Ballet Dancing.



As She Appeared While Hunting in Texas



Her Favorite Costume

Does Woman's Vanity Ever Wane?



DOES woman's vanity ever wane? It is a ruling passion, strong in death as in life!

And does it control, as Paola Lombroso, the observant daughter of the great Italian scientist, declares, the action of the human female from the first baby hour when she is able to creep to the looking glass to the moment when, perforce, she lays her mirror down and breathes her last, expiring sigh?

WHILE residing temporarily in Europe, the

American millionaire—beautiful, ambitious, extravagant on occasion, as the wives of American millionaires are so prone to be—expected a visit from royalty.

At a cost of \$10,000 she ordered two dinner gowns, sublime creations. Until the festive day she could delay making a choice between the two. The gowns came. One, rose colored, transformed her into Eve, the temptress; the other, white, made her an incarnation of the angelic.

Both fascinated her; she could not lay aside either. Her resolve was worthy of the discomfiture of Solomon—or of the vanity of the queen of Sheba.

In the middle of the dinner, while the royal eyes were still ravished with the entrancing vision of rose, an obedient butler, acting upon orders secretly given, spilled gravy in the lady's lap. There was an involuntary groan about the table, but the hostess smiled. The brilliant smile of millions of wives, made her excuses to sympathetic royalty, left the room and changed her gown. So she was able to exhibit both charming creations the same evening.

In a recent article on coquetry, Signorina Lombroso finds the extravagant vanity of the American woman—an anecdote which has, by the way, been told of women of every nationality in every court under nearly every reign in Europe—different in no essential feature from that of the African savage who walked 250 miles through snake-infested jungles that she might procure a yard or two of red cloth.

Women are all alike, she finds, from the cradle to the grave. She argues, too, that it is well they are, for the

instinct of their vanity is integrally part and parcel of the race instinct—the unalterable law which decrees that the female shall be intuitively prone to summon to her side by her silently eloquent charms the male with whom she shall mate.

Anecdotal and philosophic, the distinguished scientist's daughter did not neglect opportunities which her father's famous investigations brought to her attention.

She studied women in jail, the last place where vanity might be expected to survive, for the prisons of Milan bar out the very sight of men from the female convicts.

Well, there the women succeeded in breaking every regulation prohibiting the adornment of their person. One picked the whitewash off the walls, chewed it and secured a powder that enabled her to chalk her cheeks into some semblance of poudre de riz.

Another continued habitually unruly, in order that she might be placed in the punishment cell, where she could steal from the gratings wire, from which she constructed a pair of corsets, that she laced so tightly as to make her faint.

A third soaked crimson threads, which she drew from her prison dress, until she obtained a dye sufficiently strong to paint her face.

A NOVEL REWARD

At last, the governor of the prison, helpless in the presence of the general insurrection, confessed himself vanquished, and made rather becoming tailor-made jail costumes the prizes of good conduct. In a short time all the prisoners were behaving like angels, and all were wearing tailor-made suits.

They have passionate natures, over there in Italy; and it is possible that the Italian bent for beauty might not hold good in the colder climate of the United States.

But the experience of all officials demonstrates that it does hold good in America to precisely the extent to which regard for appearances is displayed by women outside of jail. The completely negligent woman—and she is of the type that frequently arrives in jail—is as negligent, untidy and unkempt in her cell as she was in her home.

But the female prisoner who has been accustomed to preserve her appearance at its best speedily finds ways and means to convert even the prosaic prison garb into an attire the neatness and freshness of which are in themselves an adornment. And, it may be remarked, the worst offenders are often the most presentable prisoners.

Final as the prison's verdict may seem, there are two ultimate depths to which a woman may come that represent the extreme tests of her vanity. One is

when she commits suicide; the other, when she goes mad.

The testimony of coroners is that women, as a rule, present the characteristic of premeditation in their suicides. A man, despondent, caught in the crotch of some nipping adversity, is liable to walk upstairs and, with a hurried blow out his brains, hang himself or cut his throat.

A woman is prone to think it all out studiously, to arrange everything as carefully as she can for the certainty of her death and the settlement of her affairs and to choose the method of suicide which is least painful and the least disfiguring.

That is why so many suicides of women come to be classed by coroners under the head of "asphyxiation." When they take carbolic acid, it is usually because they are in ignorance of the anguish and the unsightly scars they incur; the woman who poisons herself with carbolic acid is commonly the one who snatches up the bottle on impulse.

But the woman who selects illuminating gas, ordinarily, knows perfectly well that she is going to pass away dreamlessly, and that she will be found in the morning with a tinge of strangely lifelike color in cheeks to which the tints of youth have long been strangers.

She will oftentimes dress herself in her best, put under her pillow a memorandum of her accounts and dispose her very body so that the daylight will find her, at least, a presentable corpse.

It is only when women become insane—when they lose the mind that is the seat of all intelligent motives and emotions—that their vanity drops away from them, like some garment that clothed them in such loveliness as they could make adjunct to their sex.

Universal as is the regard for their appearance among women so long as they are sane, certain as are jailers to find always some small trace of womanly preening among the most hopeless of prisoners, expectant as are coroners' deputies of encountering a "best case" when they are called to investigate a woman's suicide, the physicians attendant in a lunatic asylum have their greatest difficulty in keeping the female lunatics from the most complete disregard of dress and of the ordinary conventions of life.

Up to the border line of insanity, even when, emerging from the blank abyss of sheer lunacy, the patient recurs to an intelligent consciousness, all her normal pride or vanity asserts itself. But the hour when her sane self is forfeited, her self-esteem vanishes, so far as any trace is discerned in her physical condition.

With one exception—an important one: That many of the women insane develop a mania for adornment and a pitiful imagination that they are, in truth, female personages famous in history for the beauty of their persons or the magnificence of their raiment. In the intellectual death, as in self-chosen physical death, the ruling passion stays strong.

contestants because of her swimming costume of bright green, with tartan trimmings, adopted in honor of her Scottish connections. This costume, reminiscent of the Highlands, was destined to flash in front of all competitors.

When the next year's contest came on and it was announced that Lady Constance would again enter the lists—or water—more interest was aroused than for a long time. The cream of English society was present, and there were many ladies with proud titles among the spectators. A London sporting magazine of the day, in describing the contests, said:

"On one of the hottest of hot days no more attractive of entertainments could well be imagined than the annual swimming competition given at the Bath Club, in which the lady members competed for the Challenge Shield. The tasteful clubrooms fronting on Berkeley street and the green gardens were scarcely less pleasant than the bath itself, hung with baskets of ferns and creepers and with only a stray sunbeam to lighten the cool depths of the water."

DID MANY FANCY FEATS

"The greatest interest of the morning centered, perhaps, on the swimming and diving of Lady Constance Mackenzie, who won the shield last year, and who certainly proved worthy of holding it another year."

"The competition consists of swimming two lengths of the bath, or fifty yards; motionless floating; fancy swimming and diving from springboard and from 5-foot and 10-foot boards."

"Besides Lady Constance, Miss Vere Dawney, Miss Florence Chaplin, Miss Rita Miller and Miss Edith Bovill entered. The shield was awarded by ballot, and out of a maximum of 23 Lady Constance Mackenzie secured 27, Miss Dawney 24, and Miss Chaplin 20."

"The fancy swimming was much applauded, and among the movements selected by the competitors were swimming under water, waiting and 'sculling'."

"To swim below the surface appears a mere nothing for Lady Constance, and later on, when the instructor and her pupils gave a combined exhibition of skill, she again performed under water, this time in shadow swimming, when one swimmer, keeping time with another directly above her, represents her shadow in the clear water. A wonderful strength and decision of stroke characterized Lady Constance Mackenzie's swimming."

"Will this athletic woman, who is still young and vigorous, win new laurels through her proficiency in ballet dancing? Who knows?"