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THE LETTERS OF HER MOTHER TO ELIZABETH

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LONDON & NEW YORK · *MDCCCCI*

FIFTH EDITION

UNIVERSITY PRESS · JOHN WILSON
AND SON · CAMBRIDGE, U.S.A.

NOTE

EVERY one who has read "The Visits of Elizabeth," in which a girl of seventeen describes her adventures to her mother in a series of entertaining and clever letters, has instinctively asked the question: "What sort of woman was Elizabeth's Mother?"

Perhaps an answer that will satisfy all will be found in the following "Letters of her Mother to Elizabeth."

The Letters of Her Mother to Elizabeth

LETTER I

Monk's Folly, 27th July

Dearest Elizabeth:

I AM glad you reached Nazeby without any mishap. Your letter was quite refreshing, but, darling, do be more careful of your grammar. Remember, one never talks grammar now-a-days in Society, it is n't done; it is considered very Newnham and Girton and patronising, but one should always know how to write one's language. Because the fashion might change some day, and it would be so *parvenu* to have to pick it up.

As I told you before you started on your round of visits, you will have a capital opportunity of making a good match. You are young, very pretty, of the bluest blood in the three kingdoms, and have a fortune

These Horrid Smiths

— to be sure this latter advantage, while it would be more than a sufficient *dot* to catch a twelfth century French duke, would be considered by an impecunious British peer quite beneath contempt. Your trump card, Elizabeth, is your manner, and I count upon that to do more for you than all the other attributes put together. Nature and my training have made you a perfect specimen of an *ingénue*, and I beseech you, darling, do me credit. Please forgive the coarseness of what I have said, it is only a little plain speaking between us; I shan't refer to it again; I know I can trust you.

From what you write I gather that the Marquis of Valmond is *épris* with Mrs. Smith. Horrid woman! the Chevingtons have met her. Mrs. Chevington was here this morning to enquire after my neuralgia. She said that Mr. Smith met his wife in Johannesburg five years ago before he "arrived." He used to wear overalls, and carry a pick on his shoulder, and spent his days digging in the earth, but he stopped at sunset, as I should think he well might, and invariably went to the same inn to refresh

himself, where Mrs. Smith's mother cooked his dinner and Mrs. Smith herself gave him what she called a "corpse-reviver" from behind the bar. At night, a great many men who dug in the earth with Mr. Smith would come for "corpse-revivers," and they called Mrs. Smith "Polly," and the mother "old girl." And one day Mr. Smith found a nugget as big as a roc's egg when he was digging in the earth, and after that he stopped. The funny part was that "Polly" always said he would never find anything, and he had a wager with her that if he did she should marry him. So that is the story of their courtship and marriage, and they have millions. Mrs. Chevington vouches for the truth of it all, for Algy Chevington was out in Johannesburg at the time, and he dug in the same hole with Mr. Smith and knows all about him and "Polly," only Algy never found anything, for the flowers in Mrs. Chevington's hat were in the bonnet she wore all last spring. But let us leave these horrid Smiths; I am sure they are horrid. I can't understand how Lady Cecilia puts up with them. Mrs. Cheving-

These Horrid Smiths

An Eligible Parti

ton says she hears Sir Trevor is one of the directors in the Yerburg Mine. Algy called him a guinea-pig, and said he wished he was one.

Lord Valmond has fifty thousand a year and six places besides the house in Grosvenor Square. You will hardly meet a more eligible *parti;* I hear he is very fast; they say he gave Betty Milbanke, the snake-dancer at the Palace, all the diamonds she wears. If he is anything like his father was, he must be both good-looking and fascinating. The late Marquis was the handsomest man save one that I have ever seen, and could have married any of the Duchess of Rougemont's daughters if he had been a valet instead of a marquis, and the Duchess was the proudest woman in England. The girl who gets this Valmond will not only be lucky but clever; the way to attract him is to snub him; the fools that have hitherto angled for him have always put cake on their hooks; but, if I were fishing in the water in which My Lord Valmond disported himself, I should bait my hook with a common

worm. It is something he has never yet seen.

The African Millionaire

Tell me more about Mr. Wertz, the African millionaire; is he the man who is building the Venetian *palazzo* in Belgrave Square? If so, it was rumoured last season that he was to be made a baron. They blackballed him at the Jockey Club in Paris, and even the Empire nobility who live in *appartements* in the Champs Élysées refused to know him; that is why he came to England. He is a gentleman, if he is a Jew; the family belong to the tribe of Levi. Algy Chevington, who knows everything about everybody, says his Holbeins are priceless, and that the Pope offered to make him a Papal Count if he would part with a "Flight into Egypt" known as the Wertz Raphael. But of course even a knighthood is better than a Papal Count, and if Mr. Wertz gives his Holbeins to the National Gallery he is sure to be created something.

You cannot be too careful of the unmarried girls you know; Miss La Touche is certainly not the sort of person for you to be intimate with. The Rooses, of course,

Lady Beatrice Carterville

are quite correct, they will make capital foils for you; beside Jane Roose is amiable, and has been out so many seasons that her advice will be useful. Be sure, however, to do the very opposite to what she tells you.

If the weather is fine to-morrow, I am going to drive over in the afternoon to call on Lady Beatrice Carterville. She has a house-party, and the people who come to her are sure to be odd and amusing. My neuralgia has been better these last few days. The things I ordered from Paquin have come at last; the mauve crêpe de chine with the valenciennes lace flounces is lovely; the hat and parasol are creations, as the Society papers say. Love to Lady Cecilia and the tips of my fingers to Sir Trevor. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER II

MONK'S FOLLY, 29th July

DARLING ELIZABETH:

I FELT so well yesterday that I drove over in the afternoon to Lady Beatrice's to tea. I felt I must show myself as Paquin made me to someone. It was so warm that tea was served on the terrace; the view of the Quantocks steaming in the distance over the tops of the oaks in the park was charming. There were a great many people present, and when I arrived, Lady Beatrice exclaimed at the courage I showed in coming when the sun was so hot and the road so dusty. She presided at the tea-table in white piqué and a sailor hat which rested on the bridge of her nose. She is as fat as Lady Theodosia Doran and plays tennis; the rouge on her neck had stained her collar, quite a four-inch collar too, and there were finger marks of rouge on her bodice. She introduces everybody, which, while it is not the thing, certainly makes one more comfortable than

Lady Beatrice's Tea

A Live Authoress

the fashion at present in vogue. I always like to know the names of the people I am talking to. Everybody talked about the weather and the dust, and it was deadly dull till Lady Beatrice said she wanted to play tennis. She went off to play singles with Mr. Frame, the Low Church curate, and looked so funny, bounding about the lawn like a big rubber ball, that I nearly screamed. Most of the people strolled up and down the terrace, or leaned over the balustrade above the lake. I sat under my parasol in a Madeira chair, and was talked to by such a curious woman, a Mrs. Beverley Fruit. It was interesting to meet a real live authoress after having read her works. I remember when Mrs. Fruit's first novel came out ten years ago it created a great sensation, but I must confess the sensation was confined to middle-class people and the Universities. Of course, everybody in Society bought it. It was all about Radicals and a silly Low Church curate who threw up his living because he did n't believe in God, and went to London and lived in the slums. Mr. Gladstone wrote a review of it, and they

dramatised it in America. Mrs. Fruit has since written several other books, and each one is more bitter against Society than the last, so you may fancy how nervous I felt at being left with such a woman. But, darling, she is n't at all like her books. I was quite charmed with her; she was dressed so well, and looked quite like a lady; she lives in Berkeley Square and has a place in Essex. In the last election she canvassed the county for the Conservatives, and the Duchess of Rougemont is very, very fond of her. Lady Beatrice tells me that Mrs. Beverley Fruit's son, who is private secretary to a Cabinet Minister, is actually going to marry one of the Duchess's daughters, Lady Mabel, the one with the projecting teeth and the squint. And I am sure I think it is very brave of Mr. Fruit Junior, for Lady Mabel is both ugly and stupid. However, the connection is a good one for the Fruits, who have made their fortune out of books, which I think is decidedly less vulgar than pale ale or furniture. Mrs. Fruit is staying with Lady Beatrice.

A Live Authoress

Lady Ann Fairfax, the *Daily Sensation's*

Lady Ann Fairfax

War correspondent, is also stopping at Braxome Towers. She told me that she had been through three sieges, and never felt happier than when "sniping," whatever that may be. She lived three months in a bomb-proof shelter on quarter rations, was once taken prisoner, and when exchanged was sent through the lines barefoot and with only a blanket round her. She is bringing out a book to be called "What I have been through," and I shall certainly buy it. She is rather pretty and dresses beautifully, and is very amusing; you could listen to her for hours; her stories are like shilling shockers, with a bit of Henty thrown in to give them style. She was quite breezy, and I was sorry when Lady Beatrice shouted triumphantly, "Six love, Mr. Frame!" and came up puffing like a porpoise, her hair soppy on the temples and gutters on her cheeks.

Lady Beatrice was in an awfully good humour, for Mr. Frame beat the Somerset champion last week, but, poor man! he would not dare to even dream of beating Lady Beatrice. She only suffers him to

eat her cucumber sandwiches and drink her Mazawattee for the pleasure of beating him. *The Missing Handkerchief*

The drive home in the twilight was very pleasant. I brought Captain Bennett of the Coldstreams and the Earl of Mortimer as far as the Club in Taunton. They are playing for Gloucester, but, as I dislike cricket as much as you do, I shan't go to see the match. I know my frock was admired at Braxome to-day; poor Mr. Frame, who sat and ate ices near me after his thrashing, would never meet my glance directly, and I overheard Lady Beatrice tell Mrs. Beverley Fruit that I spent altogether too much on dress, while Lady Beatrice always looks as if she considered the expenditure of a five-pound note on her person an extravagance. Dear, dear Paquin!

I am awfully provoked with myself, the lace handkerchief I wore to-day is missing. I am sure it was in my hand when we left Braxome, for I remember sniffing "parfum d'Arabie" in the carriage. It is really quite provoking. — Your dearest Mamma.

The Handkerchief Found

P. S. — I have just received a note from Captain Bennett saying he found my handkerchief sticking to his coat when he got into the Club, and asking if he may restore it to me in person to-morrow.

LETTER III

MONK'S FOLLY, 1st August

DEAREST ELIZABETH:

A Mature Young Man

L'INGÉNUE va bien. I am so glad you managed to put that odious Mrs. Smith in her place. It is really too revolutionary to be forced to accept such people, but what you tell me about her and Lord Valmond surprises me. I can quite understand a woman of her stamp liking the admiration of Valmond, for he is young and good looking, and a marquis, but what can he see in her? He is one of those young men who mature quickly; at fifteen he could tell whether a woman put on her chemise or her petticoat first, and at one and twenty he knew the Rake's Catechism by heart. But I have always heard that he was intelligent, and his people were never afraid of his doing something foolish. He takes his *menus plaisirs* like a gentleman, but why he should be so devoted to this Mrs. Smith I cannot conceive.

The Handkerchief Returned

She is not pretty, she is not witty; Lord Valmond is rich, surely he does not want to borrow money from her. I shall be glad when you leave Nazeby Hall; it is one thing to catch a marquis, and another thing to get scratched in the effort. You must leave at once, otherwise you will be forced to play your trump card — the art of being an *ingénue*. Leave at once, Valmond will be sure to follow. The slap on the cheek was excellent; no man ever forgets a woman who has left the print of her fingers on his face, he will either hate her or love her. If the man *is* a man and was in the wrong, he will be forced to admire the woman who could protect herself against him. Leave Nazeby, Elizabeth; Valmond is a man and a gentleman, let him know that you are a lady and virtuous.

This morning, just before lunch, Fifine and I were dozing on the lawn under the big Japanese umbrella, when James came to tell me that Captain Bennett was in the drawing-room. Of course he came to return my handkerchief — it was very polite of him to bring it himself, especially as

he rode all the way from Taunton in a blazing sun, along a road lying under nearly a foot of dust. Naturally, I could not let him go back without lunch, and afterwards, when I thought he would go, he asked me to let him look over my songs, as he wanted something to sing at a smoker to-night, which the Yeomanry are giving for him and the Earl of Mortimer. He tried nearly all, and tea was brought in before he got one to suit his voice, which is really a very good one. He is a very gentlemanly man, and has a shy way of looking at one, that is quite naïve in a soldier. He would n't believe me when I told him I had a daughter seventeen, until I showed him your photograph. He seemed so astonished that I was obliged to tax him with being extremely ungallant. I asked him if he expected a woman to be old at thirty-five because she happened to marry at seventeen, and he gave me such a look that I felt quite uncomfortable. His eyes were not at all shy, but looked like sparks of blue fire. Just then there was the sound of a carriage driving up, and Mrs. Cheving-

Captain Bennett

Captain Bennett

ton and the Blaine girls rushed into the room. Fell in would be more correct, for so few Englishwomen know how to enter a room quickly and gracefully. They did n't know Captain Bennett, and as I thought I had had enough of him for one day, I would n't introduce him.

He has a horrid way of shaking hands, and left the print of my opal ring on my middle finger. I told him to keep the songs as long as he wished, but he is so awfully polite he said he would return them to-morrow. When he had gone, Daisy Blaine asked me if I had heard that he said in the Taunton Club he intended to marry money, which I thought very spiteful of her.

Mrs. Chevington was greatly agitated by the report that an American family have taken Astley Court. She said that everybody is asking Lady Beatrice Carterville if she is going to call on them. I believe, if Lady Beatrice should marry Mr. Frame, Mrs. Chevington would find an excuse for her. Whenever she passes the lions at Braxome Lodge, Mrs. Chevington is pervaded with the most sacred emotions — she

has admitted as much to me. There are some people to whom blue blood is more intoxicating than champagne, and who look on a pedigree as a reservoir which you can never exhaust. The odd part of it is, that Mrs. Chevington is not a snob, she is merely common or garden respectable. *The Ghost*

The Blaine girls asked a great many questions about you, and if it was true that the ghost walked every night at Nazeby (Mrs. Chevington had told them about your letter which I read to her). Blanche Blaine said she would n't visit such a house as Nazeby for all the possible husbands it might contain, which I think was rude of her, but admitted, when I seemed cross, that once she had a similar experience at Great Ruin Castle. Her adventure was more sensational than yours, for Mrs. Maltravers, who had the room next to her, told her their corridor was haunted and that several people who on hearing noises had come out of their rooms to see what it was, had gone mad. But the ghost has yet to walk who can frighten Blanche Blaine. Immediately after Mrs. Maltravers, who had seen Blanche into

The Ghost

her bed-room to reassure her, she said, had kissed her good-night and left, Blanche opened her door softly and peeped cautiously into the corridor, and while she looked she distinctly saw the ghost advancing towards her; and the ghost carried a candle in one hand, and wore crimson plush knee-breeches and white stockings and its hair was powdered. And while Blanche was uncertain whether to scream or faint the ghost vanished into Mrs. Maltravers' room. Blanche said she waited to hear Mrs. Maltravers scream, but as not a sound came from her room, Blanche believed her imagination had got the better of her, so she bolted her door and went to bed.

The weather has been so fine that my neuralgia has entirely gone, and I am accepting all invitations. Write me when you reach Eaton Place. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER IV

MONK'S FOLLY, 3rd August

DARLING ELIZABETH:

The Parkers Arrive

MRS. CHEVINGTON walked over yesterday before tea expressly to tell me, she said, that Mr. Phineas T. Parker and family, of New York, had arrived at Astley Court, having travelled down from London in a special Pullman attached to the Bristol express. I saw two of them this morning in Taunton going into St. Mary's with Baedekers, and Lady Beatrice called on them this afternoon, and by the end of the month the Parkers will be a county family. They are fabulously rich; I forget how many hundred million dollars Mr. Parker is worth, and of course nobody asks how he made his money. Algy says they are all kings in America and it does n't matter, but as for that it does n't matter in England either, where at the most the millionaires are only barons.

Nobody can talk of anything but their arrival, and everybody is singing Lady

The Parkers Arrive

Beatrice's praises for having called on them so soon. Captain Bennett, who came this afternoon to bring back the songs and stupidly left two behind, says she should be canonised. Mr. Parker and his son have already been proposed and seconded at the Taunton Club; they have been asked to dine at the mess on guest-night; and both Father Ribbit and Mr. Frame, the High Church rector and Low Church curate, have offered them pews under the pulpit, and asked them to subscribe respectively to the Convent School of the Passionate Nuns and the Daily Soup Dispensary. But rumour has it that the Parkers are Baptists, and are going to the chapel in Holmes' the grocer's back-yard. I shall drive Mrs. Chevington over to Astley to-morrow and leave your card with mine.

On coming home from Taunton this morning, Perkins drove by Braxome. You know part of the road runs through the park, and I saw Lady Beatrice's equestrian cook out for an airing on a brown cob, with a couple of Gordon setters sniffing its hoofs. She really looked quite lady-like. Mrs.

Chevington says her habit was made at Redfern's. Lady Beatrice found her in the Want column of the *Standard.*

Captain Bennett Dislocates his Thumb

"Young woman desires situation in County Family, as cook, housemaid, or companion; cook preferred. Must have use of horse daily. Highest references."

Lady Beatrice is delighted with her, and she will hunt with the West Somerset Harriers this coming season.

Captain Bennett dislocated his thumb at cricket to-day, and is *hors de combat* for the rest of the match. When he came back with the songs this afternoon he was suffering such pain that he asked me if I would mind putting on a fresh bandage for him. I told him that the sight of blood always made me faint, but he assured me the skin was not broken, so I took off the old bandage and put on a new one. It seemed to give him great relief, and he said I would make a splendid nurse, and looked at me with that queer blue fire look his eyes always have, when their expression is not as timid as a bashful boy's. He is awfully stupid at conversation, and one has to do all the talk-

Captain Bennett in Delirium

ing. I asked him if they fed him properly at the Club, for he always looked so hungry whenever I met him. He replied that he was literally starving, but that nothing so material as food would satisfy his hunger, and that blue fire look came back into his eyes.

I thought he was becoming delirious from the pain of his thumb, and I begged him to go home and send for the doctor. Then he did so strange a thing that I am sure it was done in delirium; he asked me to feel how fast his pulse was beating — it went tick-tock like a Waterbury watch — and he put his arm with the bad thumb round my waist, and called me an angel in the back of his throat and was hot all over. So I knew he had fever. I was n't a bit afraid, for I have wonderful presence of mind, as you know. I have been told it is best to humour people in delirium, so I said I was sure I was an angel, for everybody told me so, and that if he would kindly stop crushing the jet spangles on my cream-coloured crepon bodice I would act like an angel to him. He instantly obeyed, and I rose and rang

for James and told him that Captain Bennett was too ill to ride back to Taunton. Whereupon, before I could finish speaking, James asked if he should tell Perkins to get ready the brougham or dogcart, and if I thought a glass of barley-water would do Captain Bennett good. *An Ideal Servant*

Such a treasure, James. Really an ideal servant; knows exactly what one wants without one's having the trouble to order it. I can't understand how Lord Froom parted with him.

Just then Monsieur Malorme, whom the Blaines have engaged to talk French with Bertie before he joins the Embassy in Paris, came over with a note from Blanche asking me to a garden party on Saturday. I made Captain Bennett drink the barley-water, which I think must have done him good, because he sat very quiet till James came to say Perkins was ready. Monsieur Malorme is a very good-looking young man for a Frenchman, almost as good looking as Captain Bennett; he has beautiful teeth and hands, but a horrid way of looking out of his eyes, as if he had just winked at you.

Monsieur Malorme He is a Provençal and quite a gentleman; Blanche said they felt obliged to have him eat with them, for he was very superior and accustomed to the best society. When he was coaching the Duke of FitzArthur he always followed the Melton Mowbray pack, and took the Dowager Duchess in to dinner when the family were alone.

I found him quite entertaining and he made Captain Bennett laugh quite naturally, so I knew the barley-water had acted, and I said so. I told Captain Bennett that I would send a groom into Taunton with his horse, and he could take that opportunity to return the rest of my songs, if he had done with them. When he went away, he gave me such a blue fire look and squeezed my hand so horridly that I thought he was going to be delirious again.

Remembering what Blanche had said of Monsieur Malorme's superiority, I took an interest in his pursuits, asked him how long he had been in England, what he thought of our customs, and if he found Bertie an apt pupil. He replied that he had been a year in England, that he found life in Grosve-

nor Square *plus ravissante qu'à Paris*, and that the English women were *comme les volcanes ayant leurs cimes dans la neige*, and that Bairtee was *précoce*, which I knew was a horrid French lie, for you know it is only because Mrs. Blaine's uncle is in the Cabinet that Bertie, whose chin and forehead seem to be racing to see which can get away from the other the fastest, ever got that secretaryship in the Rue St. Honoré. *Monsieur Malorme*

James brought in whiskey and soda and cigarettes, and Monsieur Malorme, who is really quite amusing, became communicative. He assured me that Daisy Blaine was something for which there seems to be no word in French, for he substituted as an equivalent a gesture made by putting the thumb and forefinger to the lips and wafting a kiss into the air. I also gathered that he was at work on a French-English grammar, which was to revolutionise all methods of teaching at present in vogue. It seems that Monsieur Malorme speaks the grammar into phonographs, and one buys the phonograph instead of the book. Lord St. Noodle is quite delighted with the idea, and has

The Phonograph

promised to speak into the phonograph before the grammar begins; and Monsieur Malorme hopes to persuade the French Ambassador and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to recommend it in the same way. To overcome the difficulty of speaking into each phonograph separately, Monsieur Malorme proposes to hire a room and fill it with phonographs, so that all will catch the voice at the same time. He grew quite *farouche* over it, and let one of my Bohemian goblets, which contained his whiskey and soda, fall and break. And he looked at me like Captain Bennett when the delirium was coming on, so I excused myself as having to dress for dinner, and left James to show him out. I expect to hear from you at Heaviland Manor to-morrow. I feel sure Lord Valmond will follow you, for he has a place near, which makes the excuse very plausible. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER V

MONK'S FOLLY, 5th August

DARLING ELIZABETH:

The Dinner-party

LAST night Lady Beatrice gave a dinner for the Parkers. I wore the blue brocade with the Peter Lely bodice, and that odious Mr. Rumple took me in. I am sure Lady Beatrice decided on it at the last moment to spite me, because she overheard me ask Mr. Frame how such a champion as he liked being beaten by her ladyship every day. Captain Bennett sat on the other side of me and Mr. Frame was opposite, so I devoted myself entirely to them, and left Mr. Rumple to lap up his soup like a horse in a water-trough. Society is falling off terribly now-a-days; we are no longer county but provincial families. I really don't see why because Mr. Rumple is Lady Beatrice's lawyer that she should invite him to dine when she has a party, but of course we have no really smart set down here, and one sends into Taunton for a lawyer or a doctor to fill up a vacant place

The Dinner-party

at a dinner-table, just as one sends in for meat or candles. Mr. Rumple is fat and pasty, and has a beard; his only topics of conversation were the assizes and the war. I asked him why he did n't volunteer, and he looked at me with a Dover to Calais smile, and said what did I think would become of his practice. And I replied, "I believe you are a Pro-Boer, Mr. Rumple." He turned green like a gooseberry, and then purple, and Lady Beatrice cried sharply, "What is that you are, Mr. Rumple?" "Pro-Boer," he faltered, echoing my words, and everybody was upon him at once like a pack of wolves. He is n't really anything of the sort, but a Tory who believes that because Lady Beatrice was a duke's daughter she is part of the Constitution. Algy Chevington says he is a rising man, but I prefer to know such people when the process is complete, for this rising is only another term for moulting, which is decidedly unpleasant to witness in the male species of the respectable middle-class.

In the drawing-room, before the men joined us, Mrs. Parker sang "The Star-

Spangled Banner" and "Marching through Georgia," and Lady Beatrice actually joined in the chorus. Mrs. Parker's dress was *not* made at Paquin's, and she only wore one decent ring. Miss Parker, however, kept up the family's reputation for wealth, and wore ropes of diamonds round her neck, which made poor Lady Beatrice in her black and yellow satin and amethysts look positively dowdy. Mr. Parker *père* is, I think, inclined to be jovial if he got the chance. He has small bright eyes, and has lost two fingers on his left hand in the course of his "rising" process. He called me madam continually, and asked me if I thought Lady Beatrice would ever marry, which struck me as so absurd that I laughed outright. "Do you want her for your son?" I said. "God forbid!" he replied, and I thought he was going to poke me in the waist with one of the stumps of his right hand. *The Dinner-party*

Lady Beatrice, as you know, would have fifty fits of the most violent epileptic form if a woman attempted to smoke in her presence, and as I saw Blanche Blaine walking up and down on the terrace with a cigar

Captain Bennett Apologises

in her cheek I was on the point of joining her when I remembered my neuralgia, but I sent Mr. Parker out to her as he said he found it "darned poky" to have to listen to his wife's voice.

Captain Bennett at once took the vacant place, and began to apologise most profusely for his behaviour two days ago. He looked really miserable, and there was n't any more blue fire in his eyes. He has to go back to Windsor to-morrow, and I shan't see him again. He wanted to know if I was sorry and if I would let him come back, and then to my amazement he declared he loved me. It was a most unfair advantage, and I told him so; we were sitting in the middle of Lady Beatrice's drawing-room. Mr. Frame and Lady Beatrice were looking at us as hard as they could, and I am sure Daisy Blaine heard every word he said. I begged him to stop, but he said recklessly he did n't care if the whole room heard; that I had encouraged him and broken his heart. He had never loved a woman before, and if I would n't have him he was going to hell, and it would all be at my door. I think it

was villainously low down of him, and at that moment I would have preferred Mr. Rumple to be sitting next me. I got up to go away, but he had hold of my skirt and said I should hear him out, and as I did n't care to leave yards of Paquin in his hands I submitted. Captain Bennett is a perfect brute, and I am sure he had drunk too much of Lady Beatrice's champagne. And to think how deceived I had been in him! I thought him such a nice, manly young fellow, with such good manners, and such a straight back and long legs, so smart and handsome; and he was so insulting and threatening, and had hold of my skirt so that I could n't budge. How I hate him. As if I would ever dream of marrying a *parvenu*, even if his fortune would build a line of battle ship. When he finally let me move, he said he was going back to Windsor to blow out his brains. I told him with my sweetest smile, for Lady Beatrice scented something and was glaring at me, that if I were he I would do something original, and that I was sure he had n't a bit of originality about him, for he talked

Captain Bennett's Threat

"*Family Herald*" just like the *Family Herald.* He laughed and said he would like to choke me, and that I had not seen the last of him, and he would have me on my knees at his feet yet. A really horrid young man. I wish he would go to South Africa; I am sure nobody would miss him. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER VI

MONK'S FOLLY, 10th August

DARLING ELIZABETH:

The Graftons

I FELT particularly virtuous this morning, and drove over to Romford to see old Admiral and Mrs. Grafton. Such a dear Darby and Joan pair, so different from the foot-in-the-grave old couples one meets now-a-days. The Admiral was pruning roses in the dearest little garden when I drove up; he hobbled up with a wheeze and muddy fingers and opened the carriage door before Alfred had time to dismount from the box. He welcomed me to Romford with an old-school bow, and gave me an elbow to shake because his hands were full of lumps of Somersetshire clay. He asked me to sit down in the dining-room (they always shut up the drawing-room in the summer, and it is as damp as a church), while he called his wife. Mrs. Grafton, who is a dear, kissed me on both cheeks, and asked after my neuralgia and you. Al-

The Graftons

though it was awfully hot, she was wearing the Queen's Indian shawl; they keep the rooms so dark that I nearly sat down on the Angora cat, which was sleeping in the most comfortable chair in the room. While the Admiral was washing his hands and choking with asthma in the next room, Mrs. Grafton told me about the rheumatism in her left shoulder, and that she had thought at first that I was the chiropodist they were expecting from Taunton.

They insisted on my seeing the kitchen garden, and were very proud that their Brussels sprouts took the first prize at the Bath Vegetable Show in the Spring. I saw the pigs being fed, and the Admiral told me that one of his sows had been given him by the Dowager Marchioness of Ealing, who had brought it to him in her arms wrapped in cotton-wool when it was a week old. The Admiral amuses himself with carpentering, and has had one of the conservatories fitted up as a tool-house, but since he mistook one of his thumbs for a shaving and nearly planed it off, he has n't been able to finish the table for the butler's pantry.

Mrs. Grafton made him show me his artificial ice-machine, and he frappéed a Veuve Clicquot for me, but the vacuum or something did n't work and the neck of the bottle broke. Then we went back to the dining-room, where the Angora cat was sharpening its claws in the lace curtains. The Admiral said, "Damn that beast, Maria!" but Mrs. Grafton gave him such a look, and said, "Oh, Arthur! how can you when he has been so ill lately. Puss, puss, purr-r, purr-r." *The Graftons*

A servant brought in some port wine and biscuits, and the Admiral asked me if I cared to see his views of places on the Pacific station. We came to a photograph of a woman in a mantilla, whom the Admiral said was the belle of Lima, and he sighed and chuckled. "Those were days to remember; we were the fastest ship in the Navy, and when we went out of commission there was n't a pair of black eyes from Valparaiso to Vancouver that did n't shed tears." Then Mrs. Grafton told me of the voyage she made out to the station, when she was the only woman on the

The Graftons

steamer, and how two men quarrelled over her in Colon harbour, and another threatened to throw himself in among the man-eaters at Barbados, because she had n't spoken to him for a whole day. The Admiral looked very savage, and wheezed terribly and called her Mrs. Grafton. They were too delightfully Jo Anderson, my jo, John. I could have spent the whole morning with them, for it is so refreshing to find people natural and sincerely attached to each other. They never spoke a word of scandal during the whole visit; and when I left, Mrs. Grafton gave me a beautiful bouquet of Maréchale Niels and said if she were a man she knew she would break her heart over me, and the dear old Admiral insisted on helping me into the carriage and gave me such a charming Early Victorian salute.

I know they only said nice things of me when I was out of sight, and I wish there were more people like them in the county.

Blanche Blaine came to tea in the afternoon; two of her fingers are iodined and she had a leather strap round her wrist; she

The Parkers' Dinner-party

says she sprained her hand at tennis yesterday and can't grip her racquet. Daisy biked over to Exeter this morning with Mr. Frame to represent Taunton in the mixed doubles and ladies' singles. The Duchess of Windermere is to give the prizes. Lady Beatrice is furious because the Committee decided at the last moment to scratch her name in the ladies' doubles. I think it is quite time she gave up tennis, for she can't hit a ball and disputes every point and looks such a fright. She was so mad when she heard she had been scratched, that she refused to go over to Exeter, or to let any of her house-party go. The Parkers took a party in a special Pullman; Blanche thinks they own it, for they always have it wherever they go. The Duchess of Windermere has invited them to sit under the marquee with her.

I was sorry I could not go to their dinner-party last night. Blanche says it was awfully well done. The chef from Prince's and an army of waiters came down from London. The plate was superb, china was only used with soup and fruit — Dresden and Sèvres; the handles of the knives and forks were

The Parkers' Dinner-party

gold, studded with rubies, those of the spoons were silver and ebony. The favours must have cost a small fortune. Lady Beatrice, who went in with Mr. Parker, got a diamond aigrette; Blanche got two volumes of Tennyson's poems in calf; there must have been some mistake in the order, for there were not enough favours to go round, and Mr. Rumple, who sat next to Blanche, found a ten-pound note under the roll in his napkin.

As usual, Mrs. Parker wore a high-necked dress and no jewels; Miss Parker was *à la Paquin* and went in to dinner with the Duke of Clandevil. There was no attempt at precedence, and Lord Froom was in a towering rage that Mrs. Parker went in with Mr. Frame. But I think it was very bad taste of him, as his favour was a gold watch, with the Froom crest and motto in diamonds, and as the Parkers are foreigners and kings in their own country every excuse should be made for them.

Clandevil is stopping at Astley Court, and rumour has it his engagement to Miss Parker will soon be made public. I pity her, for

she seems a decent sort, and we all know what the duke is. He is five years younger than she, and only the ha'penny papers published his cross-examination in the Ventry divorce. But I suppose even an American king's daughter would not refuse an English duke, and Mrs. Parker was heard to tell Mr. Frame with a sigh that it would cost such a lot to stop the leaks in a seven-acre roof. *Mr. Parker Junior*

Mr. Parker, Junior, is very retiring and can hardly be got to speak or do anything. Blanche thinks him stupid, but Mrs. Chevington says he has what she calls "a head for business," for he never goes to the Stock Exchange without causing a panic. Considering the food and the presents, the dinner was a huge success, but Mr. Parker would persist in telling Lady Beatrice how he had made his money, and that fifty years ago, "when you and I were young, Lady Beatrice, I was a barefoot newsboy in Broadway."

You amuse me with your account of the Westaways. I don't pity Lady Westaway very much for having such a daughter-in-

Boys Troublesome

law; if she had used tact with Billy he would probably have listened to reason. I am so glad, darling, that you are a girl and not a boy; boys are such a source of anxiety in families of our station. They are always getting into trouble, and they pick up such vulgar tastes. Why is it, I wonder, that one never hears of girls marrying beneath them, but it takes all the ingenuity we possess to keep the boys out of *mésalliance*. Billy Westaway is a fool, and there are so many like him.

Between us, I would rather have a son as bad as Clandevil than one as silly as Billy Westaway; but if it came to marrying one of them I should prefer it to be the other way about. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER VII

HOTEL NATIONAL, LUCERNE
18th August

DARLING ELIZABETH:

HOW surprised you will be to see the above address. Blanche Blaine and I came here on the spur of the moment, the day after you left for Croixmare. *Lucerne*

Blanche came over in the morning, and asked me if I would go with her to Lucerne for a fortnight. The idea struck me as rather lively, and we went up to London that night in time to catch the Club train for Paris the next day. We were lucky to get rooms at the National, for they are turning people away to-day. We have apartments on the second floor, with a lovely view of the lake and Pilatus; the only blot on the landscape is the yacht belonging to the hotel. As I write in my balcony, I can see it over the tops of the chestnuts on the *quai* bobbing alongside of the jetty with a huge "Quaker Oats" on the sail. The weather is perfect,

Glacier Garden

and the air makes you feel as if you were breathing champagne. This morning we went to see the Lion, to get it over as Blanche said. We saw hundreds in the shop-windows before we got there, and they all looked so sorry for themselves, as if they thought, "We can't help it they made us like this, go a little higher up and you'll see the real thing." The real thing is made of plaster, and you pay fifty centimes to see it in a *boutique*, where they sell Swiss quartz and post-cards. The gigantic thing carved out of the rock is really quite imposing, but the crowds vulgarise it so that it no longer has the atmosphere of meditation and romance Thorvaldsen meant it to have. A party of "personally conducteds" were doing it with Baedekers in their hands and edelweiss in their hats, and they made such funny comments, and asked such quaint questions about it, I am sure that they had never heard of it before, and most of them bought post-cards and wrote on them with stylographs. Then they all went into the Glacier Garden, and the water was turned on to show them glacial action on the rocks.

On the way back, Blanche and I stopped at Hugenin's, and had champagne frappé and meringues at a table on the pavement under an awning, and some people dressed as Tyrolese peasants yodeled in the garden of a café across the street. Crowds of people passed us; some were very smartly dressed, but most of the women wore bicycle skirts with buttons in the back and felt hats with a feather at the side, and carried edelweiss. Blanche said Continental life made her feel wicked, and she bought a package of Turkish cigarettes from such a good-looking Italian boy, with a performing monkey, and a basket on his arm filled with post-cards of the Lion and Pilatus cigarettes. He was so delighted that he made the monkey go through his tricks, and some horrid men in dress suits came and stood about with their hands in their pockets and no hats on their heads. I think they must have been waiters, for presently a gong sounded and they all bolted into the Lucernerhof. The Italian boy gave us such a graceful bow when we went away that Blanche felt sure he was a Count in disguise. She said she had heard

At Hugenin's

The Hungarian Band

that poor Italian noblemen wandered about the Continental watering-places in the summer with monkeys, just like the poor Baronets who sing Christy Minstrel songs to banjos on the sands at Brighton, and that you could always tell them by their manners. She was sure of it, because Sir Dennis O'Desmond had told her he had made quite a lot of money that way one year.

We got back to the National just in time to change for lunch. Thérèse had our frocks and curling-irons ready for us, and was in such a temper because her meals were not to be served in her room. We had lunch in the big *salle à manger*, which is also the ball-room ; the food was excellent and very well served ; all the people looked smart, but we did n't know any of them. The Hungarian band played, and the conductor was such a handsome man ; he wore a blue jacket trimmed with astrachan and silver buttons, and black satin knee-breeches with blue stockings. He was very tall and finely proportioned, with flashing black eyes and curly hair. Blanche, who is always jumping

to conclusions, believes he is the man who eloped with the Princess de Chimay. *Dip in the Lake*

After lunch, we had coffee and liqueur and cigarettes in the hall. The chairs were luxurious, and as all the doors and windows were open it was delightfully breezy ; there was no glare, and it was great fun watching the people.

At three o'clock Blanche went across to the baths and had a dip in the lake, and I drew a sofa in front of my balcony and had a snooze in the shade. When Blanche came back she said the bathing was perfect, but that the boards which separated the " Herren " from the " Frauen " were riddled with holes, and that as far as privacy was concerned the two sexes might as well have bathed together. She insisted on having tea on the *terrasse* of the Kursaal where she heard a band playing. When we got there the place was deserted save for some men who were drinking beer at a table with a very *démodér* woman and little child. We afterwards recognised them as the croupiers who ran the Petits Chevaux. Later on all the tables were taken. The people were

At the Cathedral

mostly cheap Germans and Americans, and they encored the Boer Volkslied which the orchestra played with great spirit. It was the first time I had heard the Transvaal National Anthem. It is like a trek in the spirit of the Marseillaise; you could hear the bullock carts rumbling over the veldt.

At six o'clock we went to the Cathedral to hear the organ. Every seat was taken, and the music was superb; the prima donna from the Dresden Opera sang. The twilight gradually faded into darkness, and they did n't light the candles. The effect of the *vox humana* was very solemn, and the music seemed to be far away up in the darkness like a chorus of angels chanting. I felt very good.

The smart people were very smart, at dinner, and all seemed to know one another. They took the best seats in the verandah afterwards, and watched the flashlight and illuminations on the Stanzerhorn. We are going to spend the day on the lake tomorrow. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER VIII

HOTEL NATIONAL, LUCERNE
20th August

DARLING ELIZABETH:

YESTERDAY Blanche and I went to Fluëlen. *Fluëlen* The boat was crowded, but we got two comfortable seats in front of the wheel and had a perfect view. The scenery was indescribably lovely, and the air was so clear that we could actually see the people walking about on the top of the Rigi. Some Swiss peasants got on at Brunen, and they all had goitre; one was such a good-looking young fellow about twenty; his neck looked positively uncomfortable, but he did n't seem to mind it at all. Nearly all the hotels are du Lac or des Alpas, and have *terrasses* planted with chestnuts, and there was always excitement when the steamer stopped. Two bicycle fiends got off at Brunen; they were English, and we saw them afterwards scorching along the Axen-strasse in clouds of dust, evidently trying

Bicyclists to get to Fluëlen before us. It seemed so ludicrous to see bicycles in such a country as Switzerland, that I told Blanche that I was sure that people only brought them there out of a sort of bravado, and that they did n't really enjoy themselves. An American who was sitting near, overheard, and said in quite an offended way that he had biked over the Brunig from Interlaken to Lucerne, and was going over the Furka in the same manner. I replied, I believed if there was a road to the top of Titlis one would find a pair of knickerbockers astride a pneumatic trying to make the ascent. He smiled contemptuously, and said it was evident I had never ridden. I told him I had tried to learn, and had bought an Elswick, but that the day it arrived a new stable-boy rode it into Taunton without my knowledge, and punctured the tire, which was a blessing in disguise if it had saved me from making an exhibition of myself on a Swiss pass. He became quite talkative after this, and pointed out a great many things of interest like a Baedeker, without the bother of having to find the places. We saw the

Tellsplatte and chapel, and the American told us that there were as many arrows that had killed Gesler in various parts of Switzerland as bits of the True Cross in European churches. We thought of returning in the same steamer and having lunch on board, but he told us we ought to go to Altdorf and see the new Tell monument, and that we could get lunch at an inn there. So we thought while we were about it we might as well do all there was to be done, and return by a later boat. *At Fluëlen*

At Fluëlen we had great difficulty in getting seats in any of the brakes that run to Altdorf, as everybody made a rush for them at once. However, Blanche got a bit of iron bar on the box-seat, and was held on by a German with an alpenstock and edelweiss, who linked his arm in hers, while I was smothered between a Cook's guide, who looked fagged out, and a garrulous female, who told me she came from Chicago and had been hungry ever since she left. She said they did n't know how to make pie in Europe, and had never heard of it; her family seemed specially addicted to pie,

An Omelette Soufflée

and greatly missed this delicacy on their travels. She had a letter that morning from her son, a portion of which she read to me: he was doing the capitals of Europe in three weeks, and had been fortunate in finding pie in Constantinople, quite an American pie, only it was made of pumpkin instead of Howard squash.

Our brake stopped at a des Alpes, and the proprietor came out and made us welcome in the fashion they have on the Continent, as if he were playing the host in a private house. My Chicago acquaintance at once asked for the *menu*, and you should have seen her face when she found there was no pie on it.

As I was very hungry, I had the *table d'hôte* lunch, which was very good, but Blanche ordered hers *à la carte*. The only French thing on the *menu* that Blanche fancied was *omelette soufflée*. It took twenty minutes to make, and when it came it looked like a mountain. I told Blanche they must have thought her capacity enormous, but when she put her spoon into it, it gave a sort of sigh and collapsed, and before Blanche

could get it on her plate there was only as much as you scrape up in a table-spoon.

The Tell Monument

As the *table d'hôte* courses were all consumed and time was pressing, she had to content herself with French rolls and honey.

Before we left Altdorf the two Englishmen whom we had seen scorching over the Axenstrasse arrived. I never saw such objects, they were fairly reeking with perspiration and covered in white dust. They looked positively filthy. I heard one asking the proprietor of the hotel if he could buy a valve in Altdorf, and they both abused the Swiss roads as if they had expected to find them like the Macadam in Hyde Park. The Tell monument was quite worth coming to see, but I think its situation in the tiny *platz* of the picturesque village, which the immense mountains seem ready to crush, makes it more imposing than it really is. I am sure if it were in a city one would hardly notice it.

Blanche was awfully "Cooky," and bought two postcards with it on to send to Daisy and Mrs. Chevington. At Fluëlen, too, she bought a bunch of edelweiss from a Swiss

A Bunch of Edelweiss

doll with goitre, and stuck it into the bow on her sailor-hat. We were quite tired when we got back to Lucerne, and had dinner in our rooms, for Thérèse had gone to bed with a *migraine* and neglected to put out our frocks or have our baths ready. I expect to hear from you to-morrow, and that you are enjoying yourself at Croix-mare. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER IX

HOTEL NATIONAL, LUCERNE
22nd August

DARLING ELIZABETH:

THIS morning between twelve and one, Blanche and I were strolling on the *quai* when we met Sir Charles Bevon. He seemed glad to see us, and asked if we knew any of the people in society here, and when we told him we had only been in Lucerne four days and that he was the first person we had met that we knew, he invited us to dine with him at the Schweitzerhof to-night. It is from this dinner we have just come, and I must tell you about it before I go to bed. *On the Quai*

Sir Charles asked the Marquis and the Marquise de Pivart, the Vicomte de Narjac, and Mr. Vanduzen, an American naval officer *en retraite*, to meet us. I sat between the Marquis and Mr. Vanduzen. The Marquis looks like a little black monkey, with a beard *à Henri Deux*, but his manners are so elegant one never thinks of his looks. He knows

Anglophobia

the De Croixmares very well, and when I asked him what he thought of Héloise he turned so red and looked so uncomfortable that I at once felt that Jean's charming Comtesse had *brisé son cœur* at some period of their acquaintance. He dropped the subject as soon as possible, and quite rudely began to talk of the war, and said that England was the Jew among nations. I cooled his Anglophobia for him by remarking that I would much prefer to have him talk of the Comtesse de Croixmare than attack my country. He seemed positively afraid of me after that, so I am sure there must be something between him and Héloise that he does n't want his wife to know. He got so moody and silent that I told him I thought him very rude, and devoted myself through the rest of dinner to Mr. Vanduzen, who is elderly and "natty." Mr. Vanduzen is quite amusing, but I wish he would n't call people by their full names as if they were a species he was labelling for a museum, such as, "Really, Miss Blanche Blaine, you amaze me." "It was very warm to-day, was it not, Madame la Marquise de Pivart?" "Have you made

the ascent of Pilatus, Sir Charles Bevon?" You know the style of man, Elizabeth, you must have met one or two like him at Nazeby or Hazeldene. If they are English they are called snobs, but when they come from the Land of Canaan on the other side of the pond they are put down quite likely as "so American." *The Marquise*

The Marquise is a fascinating creature, she knows the full value of her figure as one of her attractions, and she clothes it accordingly. Her bust is like alabaster, the neck and shoulders are perfect; her eyes are rather wide apart, which gives her a naïve expression; her smile is simplicity itself, and she talks with a tabloid voice. Sir Charles seemed to admire her, for he addressed nearly all his conversation to her, and he poked me so hard under the table once or twice that I was compelled to say, "The table leg is on the other side, Sir Charles," and he gave the Marquise such a reproachful glance.

Blanche had the Vicomte all to herself, and he seemed to like it. He has an automobile and talked of nothing else, and Sir Charles

Don Carlos

says he does nothing else in Paris. He is going to take Blanche and the Marquise in it to-morrow for a spin in the valley of the Reuss.

Everybody talked at once, as they always do on the Continent, and the effort to be general was quite fatiguing to me who am accustomed to the English method of monopolising one's neighbours. The foreign custom certainly gives more "go" to a dinner, but I think when I am not the hostess I prefer conversation *à deux*.

After dinner we had coffee in the salon instead of outside on the verandah, for Sir Charles said we ought to see Don Carlos and suite go in to dinner. The suite were already in the salon, and they occupied the most comfortable chairs and looked rather sulky, which I suppose was from having to wait so long for their dinner. Don Carlos has thirty rooms on the first floor, but he will neither take his meals in private or at the usual hour with everybody else. He makes quite a point of dinner, and has it in the *salle-à-manger* when the general public have finished. He must be a great adver-

tisement for the Schweitzerhof, for crowds come nightly to see him and the Duchess go in to dinner. When they entered the salon there was as much etiquette among the suite as if they were at a *levée*. They formed themselves in a line in order of precedence; the men all kissed the Duchess's hand and the ladies curtseyed, then Don Carlos gave his arm to his wife and led the way to dinner. As the door of the *salle-à-manger* was open we could see them eating; everybody talked at once, and the suite ate as if it was the only dinner they had had for a week. I am sure they were hungry.

Don Carlos

Don Carlos is a splendid-looking Spaniard, with exile written all over him; whether natural or cultivated, the pose was perfect — the sadness and abstraction, the forced amusement, the far-away look in the eyes — but it was n't melodramatic, and you did n't feel like laughing. The Duchess of Madrid was *reine aux bouts des ongles* and an ideal consort for a banished monarch. She must have been very beautiful at one period of her life, and is still strikingly fine looking. She was dressed as the great ladies on the

Don Carlos

Continent know how to dress, and wore some lovely diamonds. She had the same melancholy far-away expression as Don Carlos, and they both seemed rather bored, as if they had had too much of the suite, who are really nothing but pensioners. Sir Charles says they have not a peseta to bless themselves with, and live entirely on the bounty of Don Carlos. They follow him wherever he goes and form a sort of court for him; they are nothing but a pack of conspirators and professional revolutionists who dare not go back to Spain, and as they have all been broken in the Carlist cause, and still continue to intrigue and make themselves useful, Don Carlos has to put up with them. And I must say I think he does it right royally, keeping up a fine old Bourbon custom, for these people can still say, like the needy noblesse in Louis XIV.'s time, that they "bank with the king."

When we had "done" Don Carlos and his dinner-party, Sir Charles suggested that we should go to the Kursaal and try our luck at Petits Chevaux. We found the room crowded, and most of the people

looked like those I saw at the Monico in London the night Algy Chevington took me there for supper, when he could n't get a table at the Trocadero. At first we could n't get near the tables, but the Marquise went and stood behind the croupier, and got him a place for her. Then a man, who I am sure was a High Church curate, for he had cut off his coat collar and let his hair grow long like a French abbé, offered me his seat if I would touch his money for him. But he gave me bad luck till he was cleared out, and then I began to win. It was such fun, and I raked in quantities of gold and some five-franc pieces made of lead. The Marquis and I won, but the others had no luck, and I saw the Marquis somewhere in the back drinking beer with an impossible female, and I told him so afterwards, and that I thought it was very rude to the ladies in his party, and he looked as if he would like to choke me. The Vicomte told Blanche that he believed the croupier tampered with the machinery and could make any horse win he liked, and the croupier heard. For an instant I thought

The Kursaal

The Kursaal

there was going to be a "scene," but the Marquis said such a *cochon* as the croupier would n't dare to strike the Vicomte, who it seems spends the time he can spare from automobiling in Paris in duelling. "Mais, comme il est sale, ce croupier," the Marquis said to me, and then added that the croupiers at Monte Carlo were as beautiful as Lucifer, and that a friend of hers, a Comtesse Jean d'Outremer, had eloped with one. A *bêtise* she called it. I told Sir Charles after that that I thought we had better go, and they all walked with us as far as the National. The Marquise and the Vicomte kissed my hand, and Sir Charles told me to call on the Marquise to-morrow, as she expected it. My kindest regard to Madame de Croixmare and the family at the château. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER X

HOTEL NATIONAL, LUCERNE
24th August

DARLING ELIZABETH:

THIS morning Blanche and I were sitting in the wicker chairs under the chestnuts on the *quai* in front of the National, when Sir Charles and the Vicomte passed. They both stopped and chatted for a while, then the Vicomte saw some very smart people who were sitting near and introduced us to them. They were the Duchesse de Vaudricourt and Mrs. Wertzelmann, the wife of the American Minister. The Duchesse is Empire and the Wertzelmanns are *nouveaux riches*, but they are at the very top of all the society here. A great many other people came up to speak to them; Blanche and I were introduced, and, as Sir Charles said, before you could say "Jack Robinson" we were *rangé*. As we both had on Paquin we felt quite as well turned out as the other women, who were beautifully dressed.

Smart People

Telling Fortunes

You should have seen the people on the *quai* stare as they passed.

Blanche made quite a sensation by telling fortunes, and everybody wanted their hands read. She did it awfully well, and told the right things to the right people. She told the Duchesse de Vaudricourt, who is fifty if she is a day, but makes up twenty-five, that the only tragedy in her life would be her death, and to beware of a *beau sabreur* who carried her photograph in a locket on his watch chain. When pressed as to the reason she should be cautious of this unknown, Blanche told her that he was destined to perish in a duel over her. The Duchesse was delighted, for it is said that she longs for the *éclat* of men killing themselves over her, but that up to the present no one has ever even fought about her. Mrs. Wertzelmann was to have her portrait, which has been painted by Constant, hung in the Luxembourg, and to marry her daughter to a Serene Highness, both of which Sir Charles had told us were her supreme desires. The Vicomte had a very interesting personality, and was irresistible with women and greatly

respected by men, and was to die in a collision of automobiles, which made him turn rather green. Mr. Wertzelmann, the American Minister, who had joined us, held out a hand like a working-man's, and asked Blanche what was going to happen to him. She said she saw great things in the lines, and something else which she thought could only be confided to his ear in private. *Telling Fortunes*

He was so excited, and Blanche wrinkled her eyes at him in the prettiest way, that he insisted on taking her to the verandah of the National, and hearing the rest of his fortune in private. I don't know what Blanche told him, but he ordered champagne *frappée*, and when they came back his face fairly beamed.

Mrs. Wertzelmann was very gracious, and said that though we had n't called she wanted us to come out to-morrow afternoon to her villa to a garden-party; that she hated ceremony and etiquette and calling, and we might leave our cards when we came. For it seems it is the custom here for strangers to make the first call, but it is really very silly calling at all, for nobody ever seems to

Comte Bella-donna

be at home, and one meets the same people half-a-dozen times a day at the National, which is the rendezvous of the smart set.

It is the thing to have tea in the garden of the National, where the Hungarian band plays from four to six. It is very *recherché*, and the prices are so high that the *canaille*, as the Marquise de Pivart calls the tourists, don't come. So this afternoon we met the same set again, and also a dear little old man, over eighty, who had the most perfect manners, and was dressed faultlessly. In fact the Marquise told me that his only occupation was dressing and paying compliments. His name is Comte Belladonna, and he has a face like the carving on a cameo. He is the most *distingué* person here, and was something to Victor Emanuel, and has seen only the best society all his life. He is quite poor, and has a pension which just about pays for his gloves and handkerchiefs, but everybody adores him; he gives tone to everything, and nothing is complete without his presence. He is like the old beaux we used to see at Cannes and Biarritz, and it is

a wonder how at his age he manages to keep pace with his invitations. Sir Charles says he has a room on the top floor of the National which he gets for nothing, for his name is always put first on the list of the hotel guests in the papers as an advertisement. *Advertising Custom*

There is an Austrian nobleman at the Schweitzerhof who is accommodated there in the same way for the use of his name in the visitors' list, and I think it is very convenient, for it saves all the worry of trying to make ends meet, and one is actually paid for existing, and supported in the best style. I am sure if the Irish peers knew that there was such a custom in vogue they would move it should be adopted at Scarborough and Harrogate, and the other places, only, of course, we have n't any *villes de luxe* at home as they have on the Continent.

Count Belladonna spends his summers at the National and his winters in Rome, where the Marquise says the Government, in consideration for his past services to the State, have given him a post in a *bureau*, where all that he has to do is to occasionally sign his

Comte Bella-donna

name to documents of which he never reads the contents. He is quite the most youthful old boy I have ever met; he doesn't rise at six and walk ten miles before breakfast like old Lord Merriman, who hunts with the West Somerset Harriers in all weathers and golfs on the Quantocks. Comte Belladonna rises at eleven like a gilded youth, clothes himself in the most faultless flannels, and descends to the wicker chairs under the chestnuts on the *quai*, where he reads the "Osservatore Romano," and chats with the *beau monde* of Lucerne who gather there; at one he lunches like an epicure, after which he is ready for any social amusement. He is a charming polished beau, a master of ceremonies, a courtier, and he at present affects an American girl of nineteen, who is quite ready to play May to his January. But Comte Belladonna belongs to the country of Macchiavelli, and *la belle Américaine* has only her face for her fortune.

To-night we dined at a café with the Vicomte de Narjac; Sir Charles and the Wertzelmanns were the only others of the

party. A troupe of Swedish singers sang and danced and passed round a tambourine, and after dinner we went to the Kursaal theatre to see "Puppenfee."—Your dearest Mamma.

Dinner at a Café

LETTER XI

HOTEL NATIONAL, LUCERNE
26th August

DARLING ELIZABETH:

The De Pivarts' Villa

SUCH a jolly time as we had yesterday! In the morning before lunch Blanche and I clambered up the hill behind the National to call on the De Pivarts. They live in a mite of a box of a villa. It is at the end of a street so steep that you feel as if you were going to pitch head-first down it when you begin to descend. The De Pivarts were not at home, according to a man-servant who came to the door in his shirt sleeves and without a collar, and took our cards in fingers that I am sure had previously been engaged in blacking the Marquis's boots or lighting the kitchen fire. But as we came up the hill we saw a man like the Marquis *en déshabille* leaning out of the tiny balcony, and we distinctly heard a female exclaim: "Mon Dieu, je suis perdu! Il n'y a pas des Geraudels! Marie, vite, vite, descendez à la ville pour chercher une boîte."

Lunch at the Gütsch

So we knew where the Marquise got her voice from.

In spite of the villa being so high up, the air seemed quite stuffy, for the hill is full of six-francs-a-day pensions, where there are enough Baedekers to start a library, and where they ring *ranz des vaches* instead of dinner-gongs.

We intended to lunch at the National, but Sir Charles met us on the *quai* and said he had been hunting all over the town for us, as he wanted us to lunch with him at the Gütsch, and go on to the Wertzelmanns' afterwards. In front of the Schweitzerhof we found the Vicomte, who had been automobiling all the morning, and Sir Charles asked him to join us.

The Gütsch is much higher than the De Pivarts' villa, and you reach it by a funicular which creeps straight up the side of the hill like a lift. The view was lovely and so was the cooking; we had a table in front of a huge window overlooking the *terrasse*. Afterwards we strolled in the glades of the pine forest where the light was like the pictures called "Studies in Colour," which

Morale of Lucerne Society

one sees in the Academy and nowhere else.

Blanche and Sir Charles were in front, while the Vicomte and I, owing to the Vicomte's laziness, were considerably in the rear. For once he talked of something else than his automobile, but his conversation was not very edifying, save as giving me a pretty vivid idea of the *morale* of Lucerne society. The Vicomte talked the most outrageous scandal, but in so witty a way that it was impossible to take offence. He knew the *histoire* of everybody, which, if true, proves that Continental society, especially at a *ville d'eaux*, is very much the same as in English country houses where the people are smart. As he spoke in French he sailed straight into the wind, where an Englishman would have tacked a half-a-dozen times before reaching port. The voyage was quite exciting, and when I expected him every moment to be wrecked on the rocks of a Moulin Rouge episode he dexterously dropped anchor in calm water. When we got back to the Gütsch I felt as if I had been listening to one of Gyp's spiciest

novels in which I knew all the characters. They manage these things differently in England, and when Mrs. Smith looks purry-purry, puss-puss at Lord Valmond you may be sure that each sees the ghost of a conscience, and it has the face of Sir Francis Jeune. *Schloss Gessler*

From the Gütsch we went straight to Schloss Gessler in the Vicomte's automobile. We tore through Lucerne at top speed; it was great fun, and the Vicomte said there was no danger, for the road was straight, and that nobody would dare get in the way. Going up the hill outside of the town somebody's Maltese terrier with bells round its neck came tearing after us and got under the wheels. But we did n't stop, and as we turned into the avenue leading to the Schloss one of Mr. Wertzelmann's geese committed suicide by throwing itself in front of the automobile.

Nothing could have been more hospitable than the welcome the Wertzelmanns gave us. Everybody we knew was there, and many more whom we did n't. Mr. Wertzelmann took me to see the ruins, but all that

Schloss Gessler

is left is a bit of stone wall, which looks as if it had begun with the intention of encircling a kitchen-garden, but had decided to visit the stables, and never got any further. Mr. Wertzelmann told me it had once sheltered Gessler, hence the name of the Schloss, but that the place had recently been restored by a Swiss engineer who had made a fortune out of funiculars. Certainly in its present state Schloss Gessler is very fine, and the view from the terrace, which Mr. Wertzelmann insisted were the old battlements, was lovely.

We saw Mrs. Wertzelmann's portrait by Constant and heard the price it cost; we also went down to the jetty, and as many as could got into the steam launch and went for a spin on the lake. Blanche was among the number, but I preferred to remain on the lawn where the Marquise was playing croquet. Her maid had evidently found the Geraudels, for her voice was more tabloid than ever. Some people who looked as if they lived in pensions, and were no doubt Americans, who had come to pay their respects to their Minister and his handsome wife,

strolled about the grounds aimlessly and looked uncomfortable. One of them carried on a polite conversation with a lackey who spoke English, and whom he addressed as "Sir." But the Wertzelmanns devoted their whole attention to their personal friends, and left the representatives of their nation to amuse themselves in their own way.

An Austrian Noble-man

Mr. Vanduzen brought the Duchesse de Vaudricourt and Comte Belladonna in the cab with him, and I overheard him squabbling with the cabman over the fare, for, from what passed between them, I judged that the Duchesse had been a second thought with Mr. Vanduzen, who had only arranged with the cabman for himself and the Comte. The cabman evidently won, and Mr. Vanduzen arrived on the lawn so perturbed that he forgot to kiss Mrs. Wertzelmann's hand, a custom he has affected since taking up his residence abroad.

Behind Mr. Vanduzen's cab there drove up a very smart landau belonging to Mrs. Solomon G. Isaacs of St. Louis, who is stopping at the National with her mother and daughter. The Austrian nobleman, whose

An Austrian Nobleman

name heads the Schweitzerhof visitors' list, for which they give him his room and food when the latter article is not supplied to him by Mrs. Isaacs, with whose daughter he is *épris*, came with them. He is even *plus distingué* than Comte Belladonna, for it is whispered he was a friend of Crown Prince Rudolph's, and knows so much about his death that the Emperor has requested him to live out of Austria. Mrs. Isaacs, who is a widow, well *conservée*, would, I think, sooner than let him slip out of the family, take him herself, but he prefers the daughter, who is an extremely beautiful and innocent girl of seventeen. The disposal of the dollars, of which they appear to possess millions, rests with Mrs. Isaac's mother, an impossible old woman, who looks as if she had acquired the etiquette of the salon after a very thorough knowledge of that of the kitchen. Her thirst for information is apparently unquenchable, and I heard her ask Count Albert if he was related to a *hofdame* at Vienna, whose name I forget. He replied that his maternal grandmother was a Hohenzollern and his great-uncle had married a

Hapsburg, which information so delighted Mrs. Johnson that she smacked her lips as if she were tasting some of the sauces she used to make in the good old days. I believe, old as she is, that she would marry Count Albert herself if he asked her; and I am sure that *he* would not hesitate to do so, if he were certain the fortune was entirely hers. *Madame Colorado*

Mrs. Wertzelmann has a very pretty French woman stopping at Schloss Gessler, a Madame Colorado; she is really lovely, and has the dearest little girl in the world. Madame Colorado knows all the people you have met at Croixmare. On the way back to the National the Vicomte told me she was angelic, as I can well believe; she was married to a brute of a Chilian, who happily killed himself and left her free; she at one time thought of taking the veil, and the Vicomte says her charities in Paris are enormous and that the breath of scandal has never touched her name. I feel quite drawn to her, and shall try to know her better.

To-night after dinner several of us went down to the Schweitzerhof to see the fire-

The Schweitzerhof

works and hear the music. As everybody was in the salon waiting to see Don Carlos and his Duchesse pass through on their way to dinner, we got splendid seats on the balcony. The night was superb. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XII

HOTEL NATIONAL, LUCERNE
28th August

DARLING ELIZABETH:

THE season is in full swing, and yesterday a number of new people "descended," as the French say, at the National. First in importance were the Prince and Princesse di Spezzia from Florence; the Maréchale de Vichy-Pontoise; Mademoiselle Liane de Pougy of the Folies Bergère; and Professor Chzweiczy, who has discovered the bacillus of paralysis, and whose great scientific work "The Blot on the Brain" has been translated into all the European languages. This morning there was an enormous crowd on the *quai* in front of the hotel; Blanche said she was sure a crowned head had arrived, but I thought it was more likely that someone had had a fit, for we could see a circle had been formed round something or someone, people were tiptoeing and crushing one another, and I expected a

New People

New People

sergent de ville to cry every moment, "Air! air!" as they did in Regent Street that morning when we were coming out of Fuller's and found the Duchesse of Rougemont's footman foaming on the pavement. But Blanche insisted it was an emperor, and she was backed up by Thérèse, who said it was just like the crowds she had seen in Paris when the Czar came. We found everybody we knew sitting in the hall of the hotel and in very bad humour, because it was awfully hot and stuffy, and the waiters had brought all the chairs inside lest they should be broken by the crowd. I asked the Marquise what had happened, and she said, with a shrug, it was only Liane de Pougy taking the air under the chestnuts. Professor Chzweiczy sat in the same spot all the afternoon reading "The Blot on the Brain," and the letters on the cover were so big that the Vicomte said you could distinguish them across the *quai*, but nobody paid any attention to him.

The Princesse di Spezzia held quite a court in the hall, and stared at everybody through her lorgnettes; they say she is at the

head of Florentine society and a young Italian, who has a *magasin* on the *quai* Schweitzerhof, and comes to the dances at the National because men are scarce, has begged Mr. Vanduzen to present him. But Mr. Vanduzen refused, and Signor Stefano went off crestfallen, finding it, I daresay, quite impossible to reconcile the selling of precious stones behind a counter with his social ambitions.

Signor Stefano Crest-fallen

Blanche spent the morning yesterday automobiling with the Vicomte and the Marquise, while I remained in the verandah to rest, as we were to drive after lunch with Sir Charles to a Schloss twenty miles away to a garden party. Mrs. Johnson kept me company, and told me that Count Albert had gone to the Rigi for the day with Mrs. Isaacs and Rosalie. She said they had been presented at Berlin and Brussels, and had intended to enjoy the same experience at Dresden last winter, as they had letters to the Minister there, but he made some paltry objection and she had not pressed the matter, though she added that she had written to the Senator, to whom the Minister owed his

Shopping and Sight-seeing

place, and that he would make it hot for him.

I asked her if they had been to London, and she said only for a week, and had never had such a dull time, as they knew nobody, and her room at the Carlton was so cold it gave her rheumatism. They did some shopping and sight-seeing, and had gone from the Bank to Shepherd's Bush in the Tu'penny Tube, but she preferred the Elevated in New York, because of the scenery. However, Mrs. Johnson told me quite in confidence, that if Count Albert didn't propose to Rosalie, they thought of going to London next year for the season, and she asked me if I could recommend a Countess who would run them, and she wanted to know if there was any institution to which she could write and engage one, for she had heard in St. Louis that poor Countesses did quite a business that way. I told her we were not so progressive in England as in the States, and that I did not think there was as yet any association of distressed gentlewomen where one could hire a Countess for the London season, but that perhaps if she wrote to the

editor of one of the Society papers, I daresay he could provide a suitable person who would get her access to the best houses. Mrs. Johnson at once pulled a note-book out of her pocket, and jotted down the names of two or three papers I gave her, then she looked at me rather shrewdly, and asked what I thought would be the fee. I said I did n't think she could do the London season the way she would want to much under ten thousand pounds all told.

Automobile Accident

"Well," she said, "Count Albert won't cost us as much as that, and if we secure him we shan't go to London. From what I can find out Continental society is less expensive than English and just as good."

Blanche returned just before lunch in a great state of excitement: it seems that in going up the hill to the De Pivarts, something went wrong with the automobile, and it began to descend backwards at a frightful pace; the Marquise screamed so loud that a number of people, not knowing what was the matter, rushed into the middle of the road, and the automobile knocked down one who happened to be the croupier at the Kursaal,

Automobile Accident

and he was so badly hurt he had to be taken to the hospital. Just as they expected to batter down a wall at the foot of the hill, and perish horribly, the automobile suddenly stopped; they jumped out instantly, and it was just in time, for it at once blew up with such a noise, that the porter at the Pension Thorvaldsen took it for the one o'clock gun and began sounding the dinner-gong.

Blanche says that the Vicomte took it quite coolly; he declared he always knew the automobile would end like that, and he should compel the company in Paris to give him another, as they had guaranteed it to run without accident for a year. The Marquise fainted, and when Blanche left her she was in hysterics in the Pension Thorvaldsen; it all happened so quickly, that Blanche said it was all over before she could realise the danger. She was not even shaken.

At lunch the *maître d'hôtel* made a mistake and put some Germans at the table occupied by the Maréchale de Vichy-Pontoise, and when she hobbled in, leaning on her cane, and followed by Bijou, her pug,

there was no place for her to sit. She was in a towering rage, and shook her stick at the *maître d'hôtel*, and Bijou looked as if he contemplated making his lunch off the waiter's leg. A seat was eventually found for her at our table, and another for Bijou, who finished his chop in the Maréchale's lap. She glared at us several times as if she thought it was an impertinence for us to sit at the same table with her, and she frightened the waiters out of their wits and found fault with everything. I am sure she is horribly old, for Sir Charles says she was no chicken in the last year of the Empire, when her salon was the most *suivi* in Paris. Her *coiffure* is jet black, and her eyebrows are bald and pencilled in arches. She is awfully badly made up, but, as Blanche says, it would take tons of rouge to hide the gutters on her face which is lined like a railway-map. All her clothes are made in the fashion of 1870; she is covered at all times with jewels and wears a daguerreotype brooch of the late Maréchal.

Maréchale de Vichy-Pontoise

But, of course, she is *très grande dame*, and everyone tries to mollify her, and they

Time to Retire

wait on her and Bijou hand and foot, and the Duchesse de Vaudricourt, who hates her because the Maréchal asked her before the Vicomte and Mr. Vanduzen if she remembered a certain ball at the Tuileries in '68, calls her " Ma chère maréchale."

Thérèse has rapped twice to ask if I am ready to retire, so unless she should pull my hair out by the roots to spite me for keeping her up so late I must say good-night. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XIII

HOTEL NATIONAL, LUCERNE
30th August

DARLING ELIZABETH:

The Sonnenburgs

I NEVER told you of the garden party at Schloss Sonnenburg the other day, and as it will give quite another aspect of Lucerne life from that of the National and Schloss Gessler, I will try to remember what happened. It is rather difficult, for so much transpires in the course of the day that I am apt to forget what I did the day before.

In the first place Baroness Sonnenburg is an Englishwoman, and Sir Charles knows her quite well. So he offered to drive us out to the Schloss and introduce us, telling us it would be quite *comme il faut*, and that the Sonnenburgs would be only too delighted to meet us. The Vicomte occupied the vacant seat in the landau, and we started immediately after lunch, for we had over twenty miles to drive. To know what dust is you must come to Switzerland in August;

A Disagreeable Drive

the road was like driving through sand, we were powdered with it, a nasty, white, itchy powder, and the flies, having devoured the horses which flew along maddened with pain, came to add their sting and buzzing to our own sufferings from the dust. I nearly shrieked with the discomfort of it all, and longed for my balcony at the National. The Vicomte began to talk of love to me, but knowing the danger of such a subject I peevishly begged him to desist, and a huge bottle-green fly, with a most irritating buzz, having drawn blood from his cheek, the Vicomte became as peevish as I. It seemed as if the journey would never end, which made the thought of the return to Lucerne *épouvantable*, and we were none of us in a good mood when a great yellow and black building, whose walls were like a draught-board, suddenly loomed out of a forest of pine trees on the brow of a steep cliff.

When we drove up to the front door two footmen in livery helped us out of the carriage, and I could have cried from the nervousness that the drive had fretted me into. However, we found a maid with

brushes and water and perfumes, and when we were at all presentable again, another carriage drove up with Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Isaacs and Rosalie, and their Austrian Count. They were in as bad a temper as we were from the dust and the flies, and I heard Mrs. Johnson say that if "Mrs. Sonnenburg had n't been a baroness" she would never have come. We passed down a long hall whose walls were covered with family portraits, more than enough to make up the twenty-four quarterings of the Sonnenburg arms. At the end of the hall was a room into which we were shown by a footman. A grand-looking man, who was introduced by Sir Charles as Baron Sonnenburg, gave us the warmest welcome in English, and led us across the room where we were presented to his wife and mother. Baroness Sonnenburg spoke English with an accent which was not affected, for she told us she had not been in England for over twenty years. She was one of the Trevorleys of Devonshire, and the present baronet is her first cousin. I doubt if she ever heard the name of Paquin, and I suppose her clothes are

Warm Welcome

A Pretty Custom

made by a seamstress in Lucerne, yet there was no disguising the gentility of her appearance and the breeding of her manners.

Blanche and I, who, from constant observation of the people we mix with, are rapidly becoming Continental, curtseyed to the Dowager Baroness and kissed the hand she held out. I think it is such a pretty custom, and one we could adopt to advantage in England, where every trace of the manners of the *ancien régime* has disappeared. Such a number of people were in the room that we did not get the chance I should have liked to converse with our hosts, and we sauntered into an enormous octagonal apartment, which we were told jutted sheer over the precipice on which the Schloss is built. The view from the windows was very fine and extensive, and it made one quite giddy to look down into the valley which is nine hundred feet below.

There was a visitors' book here which Sir Charles was signing for us when suddenly there were shrieks of surprise and everybody rushed to the windows. Through a cleft of pine woods standing out against the bright

blue sky was a glittering, dazzling mass. It was the Jungfrau, Baron Sonnenburg said, and was only seen on rare occasions, and nothing could be more fortunate than that it should unveil its peerless loveliness to-day of all days for the benefit of his guests. *An Al Fresco Repast*

An *al fresco* repast was served on the old battlements which have been turned out into a *terrasse*. An awkward, blushing youth was brought up to me by Baron Sonnenburg and presented as his son, and I was told he was going to England in the autumn to learn English, of which he does n't know a word. Two rather pretty, but shockingly badly-dressed girls, were talking to two Swiss officers, but the attitudes of all were so stilted and forced that I am sure they were not enjoying the unusual liberty permitted on this occasion.

The Duchesse de Vaudricourt whispered to me that they were Baroness Sonnenburg's daughters and were considered very English. I was on the point of asking her what she thought *I* was, but thought better of it, and merely said, that from the extreme diffidence they displayed, I should have taken them

The Wertzelmanns

for French girls whose *dot* had not yet been settled.

The Wertzelmanns came late; they brought Madame Colorado, who looked perfectly angelic in a marvellous white crêpe de chine, and a hat that killed you at a glance. They brought the news of the accident to the Vicomte de Narjac's automobile, and Mrs. Wertzelmann excitedly told a circle, who had gathered to admire her clothes and her jewels, that it was the sensation of the season, she had never heard of anything so dreadful. And Baron Sonnenburg, who had never seen either Blanche or the Vicomte before, and had forgotten their names already, was told how the Vicomte's automobile had run away and exploded, terribly mangling the croupier at the Kursaal, blowing the Vicomte and Miss Blaine, such a sweet English girl, to smithereens, and that the poor Marquise de Pivart had gone mad from the shock.

Mrs. Wertzelmann dwelt on the horrible details with a tenacity there was no shaking, and at every exclamation of pity uttered by her audience she but made the story more

graphic. The Vicomte and Blanche, who all the while had listened quietly, unobserved by Mrs. Wertzelmann, stuffed their mouths with handkerchiefs to keep from shrieking. But when the Vicomte heard that a boatman had found one of his arms clinging to a fragment of automobile in the lake, and that they were picking his brains off the walls of the Pension Thorvaldsen, he could contain himself no longer. *An Amusing Story*

You should have seen Mrs. Wertzelmann's face when she saw Blanche and the Vicomte bursting with laughter, and she looked about the *terrasse* as if she expected to see the Marquise and the croupier eating ices in Baron Sonnenburg's beach chairs; and later when we left I am sure she wondered why we drove off in the landau with the fly-bitten horses instead of in the automobile.

"If Maria once begins to tell a story," said Mr. Wertzelmann to me, "there is no stopping her. I knew she would end by putting her foot into it."

As Mrs. Wertzelmann's confusion was so great, and she volunteered no explanation, I fancy the Sonnenburgs, who do not go

An Amusing Story

into Lucerne frequently, are wondering why the *Swiss and Nice Times* have given no account of the terrible automobile disaster.

Don't ask me how we got back to Lucerne, but four more pitiable-looking objects you never would wish to see. We were utterly exhausted, and I never made any appearance the next day till lunch.

I am glad you are having such a good time at Croixmare. Give my kind regards to your Godmamma and my best love to Héloise. I am glad you have been such a success; I pride myself that whether in England or in France *l'ingénue va bien.* — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XIV

HOTEL NATIONAL, LUCERNE
1st September

DARLING ELIZABETH:

The Ball of the Season

THE invitations are out to a *cotillon* at Schloss Gessler on the 7th. It is to be a grand affair, the favours are to come from the Maison Bail at Paris, the supper and the music from the National, and the money to pay for it all out of Mr. Wertzelmann's bank account, which it goes without saying is a big one.

Everybody seems to have been invited, and Mr. Wertzelmann told me he intended that it should be remembered as the ball of the season. Old Mrs. Johnson came and sat next to me on the *quai* this morning, and broke the news that Count Albert has proposed to Rosalie and been accepted. She didn't seem to like it when I said I felt sorry for the girl, because she was too good for Count Albert, who was old enough to be her father, and I advised her to look him up

Count Albert's Proposal

and all his antecedents at Vienna before the marriage ceremony. But she was quite satisfied that he was a real, live Count, because the "Schweitzerhof knew all about him." I should n't be surprised, however, that she takes my advice, for she is a shrewd old woman, but just fancy anyone taking a husband on a hotel guarantee!

A very pretty woman — a blonde, with a figure that the Venus de Milo might envy, and dressed, oh! là, là! shades of Paquin and Worth! — passed us several times, walking up and down the *quai*. Everybody turned round to stare at her, and everybody asked who she was, and the Princesse di Spezzia, who was talking to Comte Belladonna, put up her lorgnettes. The Duchesse de Vaudricourt leaned over the arm of her chair and whispered to me: —

"Voilà la plus, belle courtisane de Florence. C'est une des bijoux de M. le Prince di Spezzia. La fameuse Vittoria Lodi!"

Later on the Prince di Spezzia sauntered out of the National on the arm of the Marquis de Pivart, both dressed faultlessly as usual, *à l'Anglais*, and they actually stopped

and spoke to the *demi-mondaine*. The Duchesse de Vaudricourt became quite excited over it, and gave me a regular *New-York-Herald-Paris-Edition* of Monsieur le Prince. He is very English in appearance, but then Poole makes all his clothes, and he could easily pass for an Englishman, which I think would please him immensely. But why — why will these smart foreigners who affect English fashions always wear lavender or buff-coloured French kid gloves? Perhaps you will say, for the same reason that Englishwomen who are for ever talking of Paris fashions wear English corsets. So under all the artificiality of civilisation national traits come out in a pair of gloves or a pair of stays!

Monsieur le Prince

The Prince looks as if he would improve on acquaintance, but I think it distinctly rude and bad form of him to stop and talk to such a woman as la belle Lodi within a stone's throw of his wife. The Duchesse says he has been a *mauvais sujet* since sixteen, when he disguised himself as a priest and confessed dozens of people, and if it had n't been that his uncle was a Cardinal, he would

Professor Chzweiczy

have got into some very hot water. He drives with the Lodi daily in the Cascine at Florence, and makes her follow him wherever he goes. She has an apartment at the Schweitzerhof. The Princesse does n't seem to mind; I don't suppose it would make any difference if she did. She is always beautifully dressed, and spends most of her time staring at people through her lorgnettes.

Poor Professor Chzweiczy (you can pronounce this name to suit yourself, for nobody knows what it should be, and Blanche calls it Squeezey) sits every day on the *quai;* he holds the "Blot on the Brain" close in front of his face as if he were near-sighted. I think he must have a cast in his eyes, for they always seem to be looking over the top of the book at the people passing. I am sure that if it were known that he is one of the greatest medical scientists of the day, he would be besieged like Liane de Pougy; but nobody ever even glances at him; they have got his name spelled wrong in the hotel visitors' list, and wedged in out of sight between some people whose names

have a globe-trotting sound and who look like a party of Cook's "Specials." *Liane de Pougy*

Liane de Pougy sits now in the garden of the National, for the crowds nearly suffocated her on the *quai*. She is very beautiful and dresses very quietly; you would never dream that she is as well known in Paris as a monument or a boulevard. A young Frenchman has for the last two days been doing his best to attract her attention by sitting near her, and pretending to read her "L'Insaisissable." I believe that since her arrival there are nearly as many copies of this *roman vécu*, as she calls it, as Baedekers at the National. It is hard to say which is the most interesting — herself or her book. I caught her looking at the old Maréchale de Vichy-Pontoise yesterday with the most untranslatable expression. I am not quite sure but that in spite of her triumphs she would change places with the Maréchale if she could, and wear the old harridan's moustache and the daguerreotype brooch of the late Maréchal and feed Bijou and all. As it is, not a woman at the National would dream of speaking to her, and the Maréchale

A Comedy

would as soon think of strangling Bijou as of sitting down at the same table as the famous Liane.

Blanche has just come in to say that a Count Fosca has arrived at the National, having automobiled all the way from Paris, and that the Vicomte is completely *bouleversé*. She is laughing so over something that Thérèse is telling her that I cannot write any more.

I can only catch the words, "Mrs. Johnson," "Prince di Spezzia," "Ascenseur," "no lights." I leave it to you to make a comedy out of the missing links. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XV

HOTEL NATIONAL, LUCERNE
3rd September

DARLING ELIZABETH:

A Mishap

IT rained yesterday for the first time since we have been in Lucerne. As I was looking at the lake which the wind had turned into an ocean with waves mountains high, I saw Comte Belladonna soaked to the skin hurrying along the *quai* to the hotel. Poor little old beau! He had got himself up as usual in spotless flannels, patent-leather boots, straw hat, and lavender kids, and was coming from the direction of the pension where his inamorata lives — the pretty, portionless American girl — when the rain had overtaken him. His legs, unaccustomed to the unusual exercise of running, seemed inclined one moment to run into the flower-beds on the *quai* and another to contemplate a plunge into the lake. Sheets of water fell from the brim of his straw hat, his gloves and his boots were irretrievably spoilt, and his flannels had that

A Funny Thing

heavy, soppy look that bathing-suits have. He was as full of water as a sponge, and I am sure he would have been the better for a squeeze.

I called Blanche to look at him, and we both agreed that he would catch a chill after such a wetting that would carry him off. But when we went down to lunch we found him dry and chirpy, and paying his *devoirs* to the Princesse di Spezzia, as if he had made his toilet for the first time that day.

A funny thing happened in the afternoon in connection with the old beau's wetting that would have covered anybody else but such a consummate old courtier with ridicule. After lunch it cleared off, and the sun came out very hot and dried up things so quickly that everybody had tea as usual in the garden of the hotel. The Hungarian band had just finished playing a valse of Waldeuffel, and the Maréchale de Vichy-Pontoise had hobbled out into the garden and settled herself comfortably in her favourite seat next to the Princesse di Spezzia when something slowly descended from the sky performing curious evolutions. Everybody

speculated as to what it could be and where it came from, when it calmly lighted on the head of the Maréchale, who gave a wizened shriek, and having disengaged herself from it shied it away savagely with the end of her stick. Bijou at once seized it in his mouth, and having gambolled about the grass with it proceeded to improvise it into a broom and sweep up the gravel path with it. The difficulty of getting him to relinquish his possession of it caused a great deal of merriment, and the young man who reads "L'Insaisissable" and ogles Liane de Pougy at the same time suddenly put his foot on it with such force that Bijou, who was scampering off as hard as he could go with an end in his mouth, was brought up short, and, having turned a rather violent somersault in the air, let go and went off whimpering to the Maréchale, who looked as if she could have eaten the young Frenchman. He picked up Bijou's mysterious plaything and held it up, so that everybody could see —a white flannel jacket, or what was left of it, of the jauntiest cut in the world. No one claiming it, he handed it to a waiter who

A Funny Thing

A Funny Thing

discovered on a tag the *chiffre* of Comte Belladonna! Instead of at once withdrawing with the garment he informed the Comte that it belonged to him. The Comte, who knew it all the time and had not cared to make himself the butt of the National, examined it, shook his head, examined it again, and bursting into a laugh exclaimed to the Princesse di Spezzia with the utmost self-possession: —

"My dear Princesse, alas! this rag is indeed mine. This morning, spotless and sweet-smelling, I arrayed my old bones in it, and its mate, whose legs you may see dangling out of that window up there under the roof; but, as if envious of the figure I cut in it, the elements having determined to deprive me of it, flooded me out of it. Not being an American millionaire, I hung it out of my window to dry, and the wind did the rest. Heaven grant that the trousers do not come to look after the jacket. Pity me, Princesse, I had worn it but once; it was cut at 'Old England.' Here, garçon, it is yours now."

It was not the words, which were funny

enough, but the manner in which they were uttered, that made every one laugh *with* the Comte instead of *at* him.

Signor Stefano

The Princesse is a dear; she proved to-night that she is really a *grande dame*, and that it is neither her name nor her pose which makes her one. Young Signor Stefano, a shopkeeper, we would call him in England, came again to the National to-night to dance. The proprietor, who is very anxious that these dances should be a success, has given him, and two or three other young fellows like him, the entrée. Of course, according to the Continental custom, they can ask any one they like to dance, but a natural and creditable diffidence has kept them from forcing themselves upon any of the smart set, and they are generally to be seen reversing and chasséeing with the people from the pensions, who sit at one end of the ball-room and stare at the other.

Young Stefano is very good-looking, and dances divinely, and has attracted the attention of all of us women, and everybody who has been in the *magasin*, where he is in charge of the precious stone department,

Stefano Recognised

has remarked his quiet gentlemanly behaviour. I think I wrote you that he asked Mr. Vanduzen to present him to the Princesse di Spezzia and was refused, and I must say when he came into the room to-night he looked so much a gentleman and so handsome that I horrified Mr. Vanduzen by telling him to bring Stefano to me.

He was covered with confusion when he was introduced, and when we danced he bumped me into two or three people, for he held me as if he were afraid of me, and we took up as much room as four people. I made him sit next me and talked to him, and cleverly turned the conversation on to the Princesse di Spezzia. He said very modestly that desire had got the better of him the other night, and he had presumed to be presented to her and had been snubbed, as he deserved. His *magasin* is transferred to Florence for the winter; he is a Florentine, and has often seen the Princesse in the Cascine and admired her very much; he told me that he had no desire to meet her as an equal, that he knew he was only a *petit bourgeois*, but that he would have been

proud to be presented to such a great lady. I surprised him by saying I would ask the Princesse if she had any objection, and if not it would be easy enough to gratify his small desire. His thanks were profuse, and when I got a chance I told the Princesse the story. She was furious with Mr. Vanduzen and has cut him dead since; she wondered how he dared to refuse to present any one to her without her permission, and she declared it was one of the greatest pleasures of her position to have the people of Florence presented to her and admire her. She chatted for some time with Stefano and gave him permission to address her at any time he chose without any fear of being snubbed. I watched her closely all the time; her manner was totally free from patronage, but it let Stefano know that she was what he had always thought, the Princesse di Spezzia, the greatest lady in Florence.

Princesse di Spezzia

She has immensely flattered his pride by her recognition and preserved her own dignity, and Blanche and I have agreed that in point of manners and etiquette she could

Princesse di Spezzia teach any of our great ladies in England how to hold themselves.

We think she is a dear, and wish we knew how to dress as she does and to stare through lorgnettes and to endure horrid bores such as the Maréchale. I wish the Prince appreciated her more; he plays the devil devilishly well. Sir Charles says there is no question of doubt but that the family was a noble one in the days of the Roman Empire. Adieu. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XVI

Hotel National, Lucerne
5th September

Darling Elizabeth:

MRS. ISAACS (who, by the way, is not one of the children of Israel, if her husband was) went yesterday to Berne. The Vicomte says she carried the Almanac de Gotha instead of Baedeker, and that the porter at the hotel who bought her ticket declared that her ultimate destination is Vienna. So that I suppose they are looking up Count Albert. *The Vicomte*

The Vicomte has been like a bear with a sore head ever since Count Fosca automobiled from Paris. He behaves so childishly, as if no one in the world should have an automobile but himself. He spends several hours a day fencing with an Italian; you know duelling is his other occupation in Paris, and I expect he is going to take it up seriously till he gets a new automobile. He glares at Count Fosca and mutters "So" under his breath like a German, and I am

Ball at Schloss Gessler

expecting to hear daily that they are going to fight, and all over an automobile!

But people are too much excited over the ball at Schloss Gessler on the day after to-morrow to pay much attention to the Vicomte and his grievances. Mr. Wertzelmann told me to-day that if people talked so much about the ball before it came off he wondered what they would say about it after. He never did things by halves, and this was a ball which should be remembered for years to come. It is to cost thousands of francs, and if the Russian *boyar* (don't ask me his name, I know it has an itch at the end of it) who is Mrs. Wertzelmann's devoted admirer, and practically runs Schloss Gessler, does his duty properly, I have no doubt it will be, as Mr. Wertzelmann says, something to remember.

It will be the end of the season here, and, as we have stayed longer than we intended, we shall hurry home after it. We really have managed to do other things besides frivol. We have seen the Lion and we have been to Fluëlen and drove

to Schloss Sonnenburg, but there was little of the country or scenery we saw on that occasion, owing to the flies and the dust. Yesterday we added to our knowledge of the Lake of the Four Cantons by spending the night on the top of the Stanzerhorn. *The Stanzerhorn*

Quite late in the afternoon Sir Charles came over to the National to ask us if we would come with him then and there to see the sunset and sunrise in the Alps from the Stanzerhorn. He assured us we would find a good hotel and that it was worth the trouble, and as we had nothing better to do we went. Thérèse filled two handbags with necessaries and we caught the last boat from Lucerne. There was nobody we knew on the boat, and Blanche said she felt game for anything, and game we were before we saw our comfortable rooms at the National again and our indispensable Thérèse and dear, dear Paquin.

As Sir Charles had described it as a "rough and ready jaunt," and "a picnic in the clouds," and turned up at the National in snuff-coloured "knickers" that looked as if Bijou had been introducing them to the

The Stanzerhorn

gravel-path, and carrying a brand-new alpenstock with "Lucerne" and "Gütsch" and "Sonnenburg" burnt into it, we decided to wear our serge walking skirts and men's shirts and straw-hats. Blanche looked very well in hers, for it is a style that suits her, but I nearly wept at my own reflection, and I was delighted there was to be no one else of the party but Sir Charles. Blanche said my skirt was positively indecent; it came just to the tops of my boots, and was really made for bicycling and not for walking. I felt like a Gordon Highlander, and Blanche declared that if the skirt was a plaid I would have looked like one. Thérèse too went into fits of laughter, and said she was sure that Sir Charles would not recognise me. I was half inclined to give up the excursion, but Blanche said it was ridiculous, and that I could n't possibly take Paquin to the top of the Stanzerhorn, and that I looked charming from my waist up.

I tried to discover a blush somewhere in my veins when we stood in the hall of the hotel, but somehow I could n't find one. Fortunately for my vanity we got on to the

steamboat without being recognised, and I made a mental vow that I would never employ a Taunton seamstress again. The Italian boy with the monkey and the post-cards that we saw the first day we arrived, and whom Blanche declared was a nobleman in disguise, was on board. He went second-class, and was talking to a Swiss peasant with goitre just below us. The monkey travelled first all the way to Alpnacht, for the steamboat people did n't dare touch it; it ate apples at Blanche's feet when it was n't frightening people out of their wits by bounding about the deck. The disguised nobleman, who can't be more than seventeen, recognised us, and gave such a smile and bow! Blanche put a franc into the tin cup round the monkey's neck, and when we got off at Stanz the boy brushed off the gang-plank before we stepped on it, with his cap, though the plank was spotless. As Blanche said, it gave her quite a Sir-Walter-Raleigh-Queen-Elizabeth-and-the-Cloak feeling, and we declared he was the most picturesque tramp we had ever seen, but Sir Charles, who has n't a scrap of romance in him, said

The Stanzerhorn

The Stanzerhorn

he looked as if he belonged to an Anarchist Society.

Stanz is a funny little town, and people only come to it to leave it. Some Germans with ropes and pick-axes over their shoulders, and who looked as if they meant business, got off at Stanz, and as one makes the ascent of Titlis from here, we concluded that was their destination. Sir Charles made us walk to the little *platz* to see the statue to Arnold von Winkelreid, but we preferred Tell's at Altdolf. The funicular to the top of the Stanzerhorn makes one feel goose-pimply all over; it is not only steep, but when you get near the top you look out of the car window over a sheer precipice of two thousand feet. There are two cars attached to an endless cable, and while one creeps up the mountain like a horrid antediluvian bug the other crawls down. If the cable should break, one would catapult little Stanz to atoms and the other would Jules Verne itself to the top of the Stanzerhorn.

When we got to the two thousand feet place a German woman fainted, and I felt as if I were about to develop heart failure.

But Blanche and Sir Charles leaned out of the windows and raved over the scenery, while an American woman read Baedeker out loud to another. As soon as we reached the top, we went to the hotel and got rooms, but discovered to our horror that we had left our bags at Stanz and that we could n't get them that night. We both gave it to Sir Charles, I can tell you, but he only laughed and said the proprietor's wife would fit us out all right. We at once went in search of this individual, and you may imagine our consternation when I tell you that the proprietor was a bachelor, or a widower — I believe he tried to explain which it was, but we fairly shrieked with horror — and moreover the only females belonging to the hotel were some Swiss girls with symptoms of goitre. *The Stanzerhorn*

The proprietor was bland and apologetic, and told Sir Charles that he would see we were provided with the necessary articles before we went to bed. With this we had to be content, and went out upon a sort of promenade where there was a telescope and a man to explain the views. He seemed to

The Stanzerhorn

have learnt his "patter" by heart, for when he was interrupted he had to begin all over. Five minutes before sunset begins they ring a gong and everybody climbs up a tiny peak where you can see only snow mountains and the lake like a cloud far below. We waited for half an hour and saw nothing else; the man of the telescope said it was the only failure of the season. It got frightfully cold all of a sudden, and we went back to the hotel wishing we were at the National.

They gave us a remarkably good *table d'hôte* dinner, considering how remote we were from everything. The people were mostly Germans, and there was such a curious German-American woman who sat next me. If she had been decently dressed she would have been quite pretty; she was very confidential, as strange Americans are inclined to be, and gave us her history from the time she was five. She fairly astounded me by saying she was known as Patsy Bolivar, the champion lady swimmer of the world, and she showed me several photographs of herself which she carries about with her, and also one of the gold belt she

won in New York. Quite contrary to the usual run of celebrities, she was modest, and did not appear at all offended that I had never heard of her before. *The Stanzerhorn*

After dinner we all went to watch the flash-light at work, and saw it turned on to the Stanz and Lucerne, in red, white, and blue. As the sunrise was to be very early we went to bed at nine in time to be ready for it. Blanche and I had connecting rooms, and we found on the pillows of our beds two spotless and neatly folded *robes de nuit*, and a hair-brush and a comb on the dressing-table, and we blessed monsieur le propriétaire. But imagine our horror, when we were ready to put on our host's garments, to find that they were in reality his own! They reached just above our knees, and had "Ricardo" embroidered in red cotton on the buttons. There was nothing to do but to make the best of it, and as it was terribly cold we hastily got into bed in our proprietor's night-shirts, and slept soundly till we heard a hideous gong and knew that it was four o'clock and sunrise. We dressed quickly, and clambered on to the little peak

The Stanzerhorn

again, where we found everybody shivering and jumping about to keep warm, and while we waited the sun rose. I won't attempt to describe it, for I am neither Walter Scott nor Baedeker, and if you want to know what it is like you must come to Switzerland yourself and spend the night on a mountain.

We had delicious coffee and rolls before leaving: Sir Charles paid the bill for us. Would you believe it, they actually took off a franc each for the failure of the sunset the previous day. I thought it exceedingly honourable, and different from the grasping way they have at hotels in England where they have only one way of making coffee and omelette, and that is *à l'Anglaise*. We did n't dare thank the proprietor for the things he had lent us, and he said, with such a nice smile to me, as we left: —

"Madame est-elle bien dormie? Les rêves étaient-ils doux? J'espère ça."

Horrid man!

Thérèse was waiting for us when we got back, and had our baths and Paquin ready. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XVII

HOTEL NATIONAL, LUCERNE
7th September

DARLING ELIZABETH:

The Wertzelmann Ball

THIS is our last day here, and we leave by the express for Paris to-night. Mr. Wertzelmann said he was going to give a ball that would be remembered, and he has kept his promise. I hardly know where to begin to tell you all about it. I had one offer of marriage and one of elopement, and got home at six in the morning.

First of all, Blanche and I, looking every bit as well dressed as any of the smart women here, drove out to Schloss Gessler by ourselves. Comte Belladonna and Mr. Vanduzen hinted outrageously for the two vacant seats, but we did n't intend to have our frocks crushed to save them a few francs, and would n't take their hints.

The Comte eventually got Mrs. Isaacs' seat in Mrs. Johnson's landau, but Mr. Vanduzen had to hire, and just as he was about to drive off the Duchesse de Vaudri-

The Wertzelmann Ball

court rushed up and begged him for a seat, as she could n't get a cab in the town. Thérèse told me this morning that the Duchesse has no maid, and that her room is above the *escalier de service* next to the Comte's, so I fancy they keep *her* at the National too as an advertisement for the sake of her name, though it 's only Louis Philippe.

When we arrived at Schloss Gessler the scene was undeniably lovely ; the grounds were like fairy-land, and Mr. Wertzelmann had had the electric light brought out from Lucerne, and had tried to turn a part of the lake into a Venetian canal. Mrs. Wertzelmann, in the most lovely costume I ever saw, received in the great hall. She never looked handsomer; her dress was made entirely of point lace over white silk, and made as only Worth or Paquin ever make for American millionaires. Round her neck was a serpent of diamonds holding in its open jaws an immense emerald. Both she and Mr. Wertzelmann received their guests with the most perfect sincerity and hospitality. There was not a scrap of affecta-

tion about them; it must be nice to be so rich that you can afford to be natural. Mr. Wertzelmann wore on the lapel of his dress-coat something like a button, with the American flag on it as a badge; all the foreigners wore decorations; don't ask me what they were,—if they were not Garters or Black Eagles, they looked as well. Even Sir Charles wore an Ashantee medal; he went in his uniform especially at Mr. Wertzelmann's request, who said he wanted a bit of colour in the room, only Sir Charles's tunic is not scarlet, and he looked somewhat like a commissionaire.

The Wertzelmann Ball

Madame Colorado was angelic as usual—what a lovely nun she would make! She was helping the Wertzelmanns to receive, and she looked after the Americans from the *pensions* that the Minister felt obliged to invite. It was great fun watching the guests arrive, and as we got there early we saw everybody; the Hungarian band from the National came out in a char-à-banc, but the supper was sent out in the afternoon. The ball-room was draped with the American and Swiss flags, and the national anthems of the

The Wertzelmann Ball

two countries were played before the dancing began. There was no "state set" as we have in England, and nobody paid any attention to precedence. Mrs. Wertzelmann opened the ball with young Stefano. There was something higgledy-piggledy yet very splendid about the whole function; it went with far more spirit than such things go with us; people had come to enjoy themselves, and not to be martyrised by stupid formalities and etiquette. The musicians played ravishingly; they seemed to be intoxicated with their music, and sometimes they could n't contain themselves but sang to the waltzes. There was an *élan* in the air. Mrs. Wertzelmann's portrait by Constant had electric lights all round the frame, and there was a champagne fountain in the refreshment room. The gaiety was almost barbaric in its extravagance, and was contagious. The men said the most outrageous things. The Marquis de Pivart, who had not paid much attention to me since I chaffed him about Héloise that night at the Schweitzerhof, danced with me three times running; he dances well, but held me so tight I could hardly breathe, and

his breath was so hot on my neck it burnt. He asked me if I would like to go down to the lake to see the illumination; the night was splendid and very warm, there was no dew, and you could see the snow on Titlis as the moonbeams fell on it. *The Wertzelmann Ball*

Without any preamble the Marquis burst into the most passionate declarations. He told me he had loved me in secret since the first time he had met me; would I flee with him then and there, catch the night train for Berne and Paris, live like Alfred de Musset and George Sand, and a lot more idiotic bosh; and he put his arms round me, and before I could release myself he bit me on the neck. I was so frightened that for the first time in my life, Elizabeth, I lost my presence of mind — I screamed. I don't know whether any one heard or saw, and I don't care. I told him he was a brute and I hated him, and I rushed as hard as I could under a huge Bengal light where I could easily be seen. I trembled so I could scarcely stand, and some of the wax from the candle dripped upon me. He came up with excuses and more protestations of love, but I said if he

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did n't leave me at once I should scream for help, and I must have looked as if I meant it, for he muttered something in his horrid black beard and went away. Then I went back to the ball-room and found Blanche. I told her what had happened, and asked her if she could see the marks of his teeth. She said the place only looked a tiny bit red, and we went to the dressing-room, where I powdered it.

After that I told Blanche that I should n't feel safe except with the dowagers. They sat in a room by themselves and had waiters bringing them champagne and ices, and they talked the most outrageous scandal. I sat down beside Mrs. Johnson; she said I looked pale and recommended some champagne frappée, and called a waiter and ordered a glass for me and one for herself. She was very talkative and fairly peppered her conversation with French words, though she would n't understand you if you said, "Comment vous portez-vous?"

She told me that the Wertzelmanns were *parvenus* — mushrooms, she called them — and Mr. W. had made his money out of

oil, and that they had never been into Society till they came abroad. She was very communicative also on the subject of Rosalie's marriage, which she said was to take place in Paris in the autumn and would be a very grand affair. As for Count Albert she had n't enough praise for him, and he was so devoted and attentive in coming often to see if she wanted anything that I am sure he knows where the dollars are to come from. I tried to find out what had taken Mrs. Isaacs away so suddenly, but Mrs. Johnson is cunning, she smelt a rat, and the only reason I could extract was "business." *The Wertzelmann Ball*

She made one amusing break. Mrs. Wertzelmann came in to see if all was going well with the chaperones, and exclaimed when she saw me among them. Mrs. Johnson, who evidently hates her, began to put on "side," and talked about her hotel in the Faubourg St. Germain, which she rented from the Duc de Quatre Bras, and described a ball she had given there to which all the *demi monde* had come. Funny as this was, it was made still funnier by the fact that Mrs. Wertzelmann, who knows no more of

The Wertzelmann Ball

French than Mrs. Johnson, did n't see the joke.

I had by this time recovered sufficiently to go back to the ball-room, where, as it was on the stroke of midnight, the *cotillon* was about to commence. Young Stefano came up and asked me to dance it with him. The Marquis had the grace not to put in an appearance; I believe he was playing baccarat in the card-room.

The favours were very pretty and appropriate, as the Wertzelmanns did not choose them, but simply gave the Maison Bail *carte blanche*. The Duchesse de Vaudricourt was disappointed; I believe she expected to get diamonds. The Vicomte de Narjac and the Russian with an unpronounceable name and a *grande passion* for Mrs. Wertzelmann, who, I hope, knows how to contain himself better than the Marquis, led the *cotillon*. They did it awfully well, as if they had never done anything else all their lives. They went somewhere and changed their clothes, and came back with Louis Quinze perukes, crimson satin coats, with lace fichus and

black knee-breeches and stockings, and diamond buckles in their pumps. They really looked quite smart, while an Englishman would have felt self-conscious and foolish, and looked it. *The Wertzelmann Ball*

At two o'clock the dancing ceased, and supper was served at tête-à-tête tables on the battlements, as Mr. Wertzelmann persists in calling the *terrasse*. The supper was delicious, and there was a waiter to each chair; the Hungarian band came out and played, and paper balloons, in the shape of monsters with lights inside, were sent up in the air from the lawn.

It was awfully jolly and gay, and poor Stefano took too much champagne. It made his eyes burn like coals; he began by telling me in Italian that he should never forget me for my kindness in presenting him to the Princesse di Spezzia — they left Lucerne yesterday, and so did the Lodi — and ended by declaring he adored me. He was so fearfully earnest, and his voice was so subdued and tender, and he never attempted any liberties that I almost wished he would. I am sure he ought to have

The Wertzelmann Ball

been born the Marquis, and the Marquis behind a counter. He wanted me to marry him, and told me how many lira they paid him at the shop a month, and that we could keep a *ménage* very well on his salary; we were to have rooms in the Via Tornabuoni over a Bon Marché he knew of, and dine once a week in the Cascine, and look at the smart people. It was too absurd. But he meant it, and when I told him No firmly, two tears came into his eyes, and he had such a Lion of Lucerne look that I almost laughed. And he is only seventeen! Poor Stefano! if they make love like him in Italy, I wonder how the women ever refuse. But your mamma, Elizabeth, knows her world too well to do a *bêtise*. Stefano and his love-making was just the last finishing touch to a delightful revel. When he gets the champagne out of his eyes and the Hungarian band out of his brain, he will forget me. But I think it is a mistake to admit people of such very inferior rank into our society, even if they speak grammatically and read Alfieri.

Comte Belladonna wilted at midnight; he

danced once with Rosalie, and would have given anything afterwards to go back to the National. He is made more for afternoon-tea and dinner parties than for balls. He hinted several times to Mrs. Johnson that they should go, but she is as hard as nails, and waited till the end. When he finally did go, the sun was rising in the Alps; he not only looked his eighty years, but had dwindled till he looked like the boy in the Struwelpter who faded away from starvation. I expect he wished he had never come, like the Maréchale. Ah well, it has been a jolly jaunt, and in spite of the dissipation I feel the better for the change. We shall both be in England together. I wonder if you have enjoyed Croixmare as much as Blanche and I have enjoyed Lucerne. I am so glad we did n't go to Scarborough. Au revoir. — Your dearest Mamma.

The Wertzelmann Ball

LETTER XVIII

Claridge's Hotel, London
14th September

Darling Elizabeth:

In London

BLANCHE and I are stopping here for a few days before going home. After all the gaiety of Lucerne Blanche declared it would give her the blues to drop suddenly back into Somersetshire, with its biking and tennis and gossip, so we decided to break the fall in London. Of course, town is still *en villégiature* as the French say, but I like it, as one can be so much freer than in the Season.

Bond Street is *triste* in the mornings, and as for the Park, oh, la la! — the only people one sees there are the hospital nurses and the policemen. We don't get up till eleven, and then go straight to Paquin, till one. The first day we had lunch at Prince's, but there were such funny-looking people there that we have been to the Trocadero since. I am sure those who were at Prince's were there because they had heard it was fashion-

able. The *maître d'hôtel*, who was chef to the bishop of St. Esau, told me that there had n't been even a baronet across the threshold for two months. I am sure the people came from Leeds and Birmingham, and they stared at one another as if they expected to read Burke or Debrett written on their faces. At the Trocadero the music is good, and though you would never dream of calling the people smart, yet they are interesting. The women look like problem-plays, and I am sure the men spend their time between Sandown Park and St. John's Wood.

At the Empire

We went once to the Empire, but it was awfully stupid, and I never want to go again. Being September, the boxes were empty, and only a few of the orchestra stalls were taken, but the gallery and the pit seemed full, and the Aubrey Beardsley women were walking about just as usual. But such a performance! Blanche and I never laughed once for the night; we were told afterwards that you are not supposed to expect anything funny at the first-class music halls now-a-days; if you want to laugh you must go to the cheap places. A fat woman in tights

At Claridge's

and a stage smile had some performing parrots and birds, and one or two people in evening-dress, who have left the chorus of the Opera to star, sang something, and there was a huge ballet whose chief features appear to be the time and cost it takes to produce — that was all. You could n't imagine anything more deadly dull, and a man near us slept all through the ballet. Blanche and I felt utterly exhausted after it; it was so boring. They say the Palace and the Alhambra are not a bit different; only the Palace, in place of the ballet has a Biograph, which wiggles and makes you feel cross-eyed.

We found it much jollier to spend the evenings in the drawing-room at Claridge's. I don't know why we came to such a place, and I certainly never will again. There are very few people stopping in the hotel, a couple of Grand Dukes, some Americans, and the Duchess of Rougemont, who is up in town for a few days. This morning Something Pasha, with a fez, arrived from Cairo, and Eleanora, Countess of Merryone and her boy husband. I am sure it

is a love-match, for he won't let her out of his sight, and looks at her as if she were something good to eat. She must be fully twenty-five years older than he and looks it, for he has n't a hair on his face, and blushes when you speak to him. But she keeps her youth, and when the Society papers call her beautiful they speak the truth for once. *Countess of Merryone*

I remember her quite well when I was your age; she was known then as the beautiful Lady Merryone, and Society was divided into two parties, one of which declared that she was the most beautiful woman in England, and the other that Mrs. Palsgrave was. Their photographs were in all the shop windows, and their portraits in every Academy, and fashions were named after them. There was the Palsgrave toque and the Merryone bolero, and everything they did was chronicled in the papers, just as if it mattered. Each tried to outdo the other, and Mrs. Palsgrave, who had the most beautiful feet you ever saw out of marble, went to an historical fancy-ball as Cleopatra, and her feet were absolutely bare. Her portrait

Countess of Merryone

was afterwards painted in the costume, but it was hung at the salon, as it was considered too indecent for the Academy. And what a sensation it was when Mr. Palsgrave blew his brains out in the height of a London Season, and left so many debts that Mrs. Palsgrave to get rid of them went on the stage, where a Serene Highness saw her and fell in love with her, and married her. They say you would n't recognise her now, she has changed so; she lives somewhere in Germany and is as grey as a badger and as red as a lobster and bloated with beer.

But Eleanora, Countess of Merryone, is still to the fore. Merryone, who was old enough to be her grandfather, died of a fit of jealousy; then she turned Roman Catholic and went into a convent, but it sounds better in books than it is in practice, and she came out again in six months and married a Bishop within a year of Merryone's death, and buried him within another year. She has been a Primrose Dame and a Temperance lecturer and a Theosophist, and kept a stud at Newmarket, and edited a daily, and started for the North Pole but turned back

at Iceland, and now she has married this boy. And she is n't a lunatic at large, but a woman who ought to have borne children, and had cares and anxieties. *Disguising Age*

It makes me feel quite old, when I think of her and Mrs. Palsgrave, and see all the changes of the last eighteen years. But I won't think of time and the Burial Service yet awhile. I saw Valmond in Piccadilly to-day, and I believe I could catch him myself if I tried, for I have n't got a grey hair, at least Thérèse manages to hide them; and I have n't got a moustache, and my eyes have n't got wrinkles round the corners, and my neck has n't begun to shrink. I am only thirty-five, Elizabeth, and a Society belle's star sets late. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XIX

CLARIDGE'S HOTEL, LONDON
16th September

DARLING ELIZABETH:

L'Affaire Colorado

WE met Sir Charles Bevon in Regent Street this morning. He had just arrived from the continent, and looked it, for he wore a Glengarry cap and a yellow and brown check travelling suit, and carried on his arm a hideous ulster-looking thing that had stripes all over it. He said he was going to the Café Royal to lunch, and asked us if we would join him, and, as we wanted to hear what had happened at Lucerne after we left, we accepted his invitation.

The Wertzelmanns' ball ended the season; when Sir Charles left a week after us the National was almost empty. The great sensation that followed the ball was what he called "l'affaire Colorado." You remember my mentioning the angelically beautiful creature stopping at Schloss Gessler? Well, it seems Count Fosca gave a breakfast-party at the Gütsch, and said in chaff

that he believed Madame Colorado was the "*dame voilée*" of the Dreyfus Affair. This was repeated, and Madame Colorado, it seems, nearly died of mortification. Her brother was telegraphed for, and he came over at once from St. Moritz and challenged Count Fosca. He was a tiny little man, with red hair and a pale face, and looked as if Fosca's pistols would blow him to atoms. He asked Sir Charles and Mr. Vanduzen to be his *témoins*, but both of course refused. Mr. Vanduzen got positively funky, and said his Government would take away his pension, if he had anything to do with duelling. So Madame Colorado's brother asked the Marquis and the Vicomte, who jumped at the chance. I don't know whom Fosca asked. The duel excited no end of talk and scandal. The most awful things were said about Madame Colorado and Mr. Wertzelmann, and poor Madame Colorado, who had had such an unhappy marriage, and had thought of entering a convent, was simply picked to pieces. Every one made the *affaire* his or her own business, and the Duchesse de

L'Affaire Colorado

L'Affaire Colorado

Vaudricourt declared that Madame Colorado had behaved so badly with a priest that the nuns would n't have her at any price. The upshot of it all was that, after the greatest publicity and scurrility, Count Fosca apologised, said his words had been entirely misquoted, that he had the greatest respect for Madame Colorado, and he took her brother and the *témoins* over to Berne in his automobile, and they all signed documents before the French Minister.

Sir Charles said that after that, Madame Colorado and her brother left Lucerne with Mrs. Wertzelmann, and Mr. Wertzelmann went to Berne to transact some diplomatic business. Sir Charles left himself immediately afterwards, and spent some days in Paris, where he met the Vicomte, who told him that Mrs. Isaacs had come back and broken off the engagement between Rosalie and Count Albert. As far as the Vicomte could ascertain she had been to Vienna to make enquiries about the Count, and found out to her horror that he had a wife and several children, and that he was n't divorced. Mrs. Johnson gave the Count

his *congé* and threatened him with all sorts of condign vengeance, but Sir Charles said Count Albert probably laughed, as no doubt it was not the first time he had tried the same little game. *Society at Lucerne*

It was fun for a fortnight, but I am sure the society at Lucerne would have bored me if I had stopped much longer. Of course it has n't got the backbone of ours at home, and all sorts of people mix in it, as you see, from millionaires to clerks. All that is asked of one is to be amusing, and, if you are an American, to spend your money. Nobody knows anything really about anybody else, and, as everybody wants to be distracted, there are no scruples as to the means employed. I should not like to see Lucerne customs adopted in England, but after all one meets the same sort of people in London, and, to give the devil his due, I believe that the Hotel National set is no worse than Lord Valmond's or Mrs. Smith's.

Sir Charles thinks we ought to try a winter at Rome. But I shall settle down quietly at Monk's Folly for some time to

Domestics

come. There is one thing I would willingly exchange with our Continental friends, and that is the domestics in our smart hotels. Here, in England, they give themselves the airs of royal servants, and condescend to wait on us inferior mortals; they make me feel positively uncomfortable with their impudent solemnity. I hear Blanche warning me from the next room not to miss the train, so good-bye till I get home. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XX

MONK'S FOLLY, 18th September

DARLING ELIZABETH:

At Home

HOME once more! I never knew how much I had missed it till I got back. I wonder how I ever left it, everything is so comfortable and refined. I feel quite clean again — I mean morally clean, and that's a sensation that we in our station and particular set get so seldom. I believe the return to an English home is a moral douche. I feel virtuous; I went to hear Mr. Frame preach in the morning and almost went again this evening. I half made up my mind to put aside Paquin and make a guy of myself, I felt so good; but a glimpse of Lady Beatrice in church this morning with a Taunton milliner's dream on her back, put me off, and as soon as I had taken a tiny blue pill and driven the hypochondria of Lucerne dissipation away, I shall be my old self again — the self you know, Elizabeth, all Paquin and Henry Arthur Jones.

Tipping What an awful imposition tipping is. Servants won't look at small change now-a-days, and when I gave the boy who works the lift five shillings, his "Thank you" sounded just like "Damn you." Mrs. Chevington, who came over this afternoon, told me of an experience she had the last time she was in town, but I am sure I should never have had the courage to do what she did. She was only three days in some hotel in the West End; she had tipped the chamber-maid, the man in the lift, the *maître d'hôtel*, the waiter, and sent a half-sovereign in to the cook, and was waiting for a hansom, when up rushed a man she had never seen before to help her into it. He took off his hat and was very polite; hotel-porter was written all over him, and she supposed she ought to tip him, but said her gorge rose at it, as he had never done anything for her. However, she put a half-crown in his hat, and he never said "Thank you," which made her so savage that she took it back again. The result was that at Paddington the cabman thought she was stingy, and he was so

abusive that she had to call a policeman, and compel the man to take the right fare. *Uneventful Things*

But then Mrs. Chevington is masterful, and does n't mind attracting a crowd and being insulted, while I should have fainted with mortification. I am sending you a cheque expressly for tips, for I know that in country houses they are even more grasping than in hotels. I wish Royalty would stop it, for I don't think any other means will ever avail.

Blanche came over to supper, and to spend the night, for she said she wanted to talk of the National and old times, and at home it was nothing but tennis, bicycles, and church. Things have been rather uneventful while we were away; we missed some races at Bath, to which the Parkers took a Pullman-full of people. Lady Beatrice gave a dance, and there was a Sunday-school feast at Braxome, when the boys pulled up all of Lady Beatrice's geraniums, and threw stones on the roof of the stables for the fun of hearing the horses plunge in the stalls, and, to Mr. Frame's terror, when Lady Beatrice scolded them, they made faces at her.

Monsieur Malorme

The Blaines have had to send away Monsieur Malorme; he made love to Daisy, and when she told him it was impertinent, he was so cut up that one of the footmen found him trying to hang himself with his handkerchief from a nail in the wall of his room, having first taken down a snow-storm that Mrs. Blaine had painted when she was twelve. But the only damage he succeeded in doing was to put his foot through the canvas, and pull down half the wall. The Blaines have since heard that he did a similar thing when coaching the Duke of Fitz Arthur. Since then, Daisy has received threatening letters in a female hand from Soho, giving her the choice between being summoned as a co-respondent, and paying ten guineas. Poor Mrs. Blaine has been awfully upset about it, and has put the matter in Mr. Rumple's hands.

I don't think there is any more gossip to tell you, save that Tom Carterville, who was at Eton with Charlie Carriston, and went out with the Yeomanry to South Africa, has come back. Lady Beatrice is so glad to have him home safe and sound that she in-

tends to return thanks to the Almighty by entertaining a good deal. *Society Papers*

Mrs. Chevington told me in the afternoon that she had read in one of the Society papers that the Smiths have taken a house in Park Lane, and that Mr. Wertz, the African millionaire you met at Nazeby, is engaged to marry Cushla O'Cork, the Irish agitatress. But then, you know, the Society papers will say anything to fill up their columns, and it must be so hard to find something new and true every week. I like your habit of always practising the *ingénue*, even in your letters to me, it helps you to act it the better. I hope you will meet Lord Valmond soon again, but of course you will, as he is sure to be visiting at the same houses. Write me all that happens, just as I write to you. There is nothing so nice as a letter full of what other people are doing. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XXI

MONK'S FOLLY, 29th October

DARLING ELIZABETH:

The Hockey Season

THE hockey season has begun here, and the game is played somewhere every day. Of course, I only go to look on, and can't imagine myself, in a short skirt and thick boots, rushing about a damp field. Yesterday the Blaines had a party, and I have been having twinges of neuralgia all day from it, for it was awfully wet and cold. Mrs. Blaine and I sat on an iron roller, till we were chilled to the bone. There was a fog so thick that nobody knew which side they belonged to, and Lady Beatrice, who really at her age ought to stop, got a blow on her forehead just above the nose. The play only stopped a minute for people to shout, "Dear Lady Beatrice, hope you are not hurt!" and Tom Carterville took advantage of the momentary distraction to sneak a goal. Mrs. Blaine took Lady Beatrice indoors, and, as Lady Beatrice

described it to me, she filled a basin with blood. She showed me her ankles, and there was n't a bit of white skin from the knees down, but she said hockey was great fun, and kept her in health. They always put her to keep goal, for she is so fat it is only one chance in a hundred that a ball will pass her. *Father Ribbit*

Father Ribbit came to look on, and walked back to the house with me when the match was over. He said tea was the best part of hockey, and I agreed with him; he tried nearly everything on the tea-table, and talked with his mouth full of chocolate cake about the price of incense. I really can't understand how the Blaines go to his church, but Blanche says it is on account of her mother, who thinks Low Church schismatic. You should have seen Father Ribbit glare at Mr. Frame when he came into the room, looking in his hockey things as if he had been mending the roads. Father Ribbit wears a silk neckcloth with I.H.S. embroidered on it, and Blanche says he puts ashes on his head in Holy Week. Mrs. Dorking, who is a Roman Catholic, told me nothing

Father Ribbit

made her laugh so much as a High Church Anglican; they were always doing odd things, which the Low Church people called "Popish Practices," but in reality nothing was more erroneous, and that she had heard that no two Ritualist priests did the same things. Mrs. Blaine had induced her once to go to Father Ribbit's, and assured her she would n't find any difference between her own service and his. Mrs. Dorking said she stuffed her handkerchief into her mouth to keep from shrieking, for Father Ribbit seemed to be making up rites as he went along, and did n't at all look or act like a real priest. Lady Beatrice, who happened to overhear us, and looks on Rome and Ritualism as the abomination of abomination, said she wished Henry the Eighth was alive, and that she would as soon think of inviting "that Ribbit to Braxome as a play-actor."

Tom Carterville is much improved since he went to South Africa. Before he went out he was only an overgrown boy, but the experience has made him quite manly. His mother is always telling people in his hearing what dangers he ran, and how brave he

was. Like everybody else, she likes to play Aunt Sally with the poor War Office, but her grievance is that Tom has n't been recommended for the V.C. Tom declares he never ran any danger at all, for he was never sent to the front, and never saw a Boer the whole time; and he did n't even get enteric, or kicked by a horse. But Lady Beatrice fairly beams, and says it 's his modesty, and she wishes he had been shut up in Ladysmith, for she knows he would have found a way to raise the siege, and Tom looks quite foolish, and says, "Damn!"

A Maid's Audacity

One of the maids at Braxome dressed up in his khaki uniform the other day, and went into the kitchen, where she frightened the servants out of their wits at her audacity. It seems Lady Beatrice went to the servants' hall that day, a thing she has never been known to do before, and arrived there in time to hear the butler say to the maid:

"What would you do if Mr. Tom should catch you in his uniform?" To which the girl replied, suiting the action to her words, "I should salute him!"

Tom, who told me the story and put a

Troublesome Servants

double entendre in it, like a horrid boy, said it would be hard to say whether the servants were more horrified to see his mother, or his mother at the unheard-of fastness of the upper housemaid, who, he added, was a pretty little wench, and brought him his tea in the mornings before he got out of bed.

I am almost inclined to make my peace with those bores who are always talking servants. Mine have been troubling me so much lately that I feel quite martyrised. I ordered the carriage to go to Taunton the other morning, and got myself ready, when, would you believe, that Perkins sent in to say that I could n't go, as the roads were too heavy and the horses would slip! I sent for him and implored him to relent, and he finally let Alfred drive me in the dog-cart, and Alfred drove so fast, I thought I should be pitched out. I call it quite unkind of Perkins, and he has been with us ten years too. Then, again, the other morning Tom Carterville came to ask me if I could lend him any golf balls, and Thérèse told me afterwards that she found James peeping through the keyhole, and when she remon-

strated, he threatened to blackmail me; now I know why Lord Froom got rid of him, and I have given him notice. But the worst of all, Elizabeth, is the new page. You know how hard it is to get one at all. Well, finally, in despair, I followed Mrs. Chevington's advice and sent to the workhouse in Bath for a boy. They sent me such a pretty little fellow, about twelve years old. I had him measured for his livery, and he looked such a dear in it, and was picking up his duties so quickly, but I have had to send him back to Bath to his workhouse. The kitchen cat had kittens, and cook, very foolishly, gave them to the boy, and told him to get rid of them. Some little while later, I heard a horrid miaouing on the lawn, and went to the window to see what it was. I found the new page digging a hole in the geranium beds, and something sputtering about in the earth. Fancy, Elizabeth, he was burying the poor little kittens *alive*, the little monster! Of course I could n't keep him after that, could I?

Troublesome Servants

So you see, darling, even if you are a pretty and rich widow, and only live for

Trouble-some Servants

Paquin and a good time, you still have your troubles. Lady Beatrice says the question of servants is more troublesome than Home Rule, and I agree with her.

Give my love to Lady Theodosia, but don't tell her that I am glad she does n't live in this part of the country. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XXII

MONK'S FOLLY, 31st October

DARLING ELIZABETH:

Tom Carterville Calls

TOM CARTERVILLE came again this morning to ask if I would lend him Jerry to ride to Wellington, as the equestrian cook has lamed the three saddle-horses at Braxome. I sent to ask Perkins for permission, and after I got it, Tom did n't seem in a hurry to go, and stopped so long that I had to ask him to lunch, and then he waited till tea. He is an amusing boy, but I wish he did n't look so much like his mother. When he is a little older he is going to be enormous. You know he was at Eton with Charlie Carriston, and declares there was n't a greater sneak in the school.

I told him about Cora de la Haye and the diamond necklace, and Tom says she is just the sort of woman to make trouble, and that Lady Carriston had better put on her life-preserver, for there is going to be a storm

Daintree Affair

of Charlie's brewing. He told me all about the Daintree affair ; he called Daintree a rotter, and says he will never marry the girl.

You know Lady Daintree went to the War Office herself, and refused to leave till they promised to order Daintree out to South Africa at once. The girl is suing for breach of promise, — ten thousand pounds damages, — Tom says that the Daintree barony will never stand it, for it has n't recovered from the late lord's plunging on the turf. He says that Connie Metcalfe is good enough for Daintree, who is an awful mug, and that a Gaiety girl would make as good a ladyship as a *coryphée* at the Empire. It seems to me that Lady Daintree is herself to blame for it all ; if she had used tact with her son and brought him up sensibly, she would n't have to eat her pride now.

I asked Tom if he intended to follow the fashion and marry in the theatrical world, and have Lady Beatrice begging the War Office to send him to the Front, so that he might die sooner than disgrace her. He looked at me with a queer expression and said he preferred to follow the other fashion

now in vogue, and marry a beauty twice his age. I told him I believed he was thinking of Miss Tancred of Exeter, the temperance lecturer, who read "L'Assommoir" to the Braxome tenantry last week, and who wears short hair, green goggles and a bicycle skirt, and is fifty, if she is a day. Tom laughed, and said I had hit the right nail on the head. A jolly youngster, and might do for you, Elizabeth, if Valmond turns sour. He will have Braxome and twenty thousand a year when Lady Beatrice dies.

Dinner at Astley Court

To-night I dined at Astley Court; the Parkers have a large house-party. Miss Parker is to marry Clandevil in ten days, the invitations have been out some time; it is to be a very grand affair. Both she and the Duke appear bored with one another already, and Mr. Parker has been heard to say to a compatriot that his daughter had made him promise her a title, and that he had bought her an English duke; it was a bit off colour, but good at the price.

I went in to dinner with an odious man, a Mr. Sweetson; he is Mr. Parker's partner in America, and was so patronising. He

An Odious Man

wore a button with the American flag on it, just like Mr. Wertzelmann the night of the ball at Schloss Gessler, and underneath it there was another one of white enamel with "Let her go, Gallagher," in black letters on it. I wonder what it could have meant; I would have asked him, but I thought it might seem rude. The people at Croixmare could n't have eaten worse than Mr. Sweetson; he put his napkin in his collar, and it was well he did, for he spilled his soup all over it, and he sucked his teeth when he had finished. I asked him what he thought of England, and he replied that he preferred to spend his money in his own country, and could n't see how a man like Mr. Parker, who had the brains to make the big fortune he had, could settle down in one of the effete countries of the Old World. And he added if he had his way he would put the Monroe Doctrine into force and drive Europe altogether out of America. He became quite *farouche*, and I am sure he is an Irish-American, for they say they hate us more than the other Americans. Algy Chevington told me that Mr. Sweetson is

a Tammany Tiger, whatever that is; at any rate it is n't anything nice, and I am sure Mr. Parker had better put him to eat in the servants' hall hereafter. He is some relation to Mrs. Parker, for he called her Cousin Petunia; Clandevil looked as if he could have strangled him, and Algy says Mr. Parker must have put down millions in hard cash, or Clandevil would never go through with the marriage. *An Odious Man*

Mr. Sweetson stepped on Lady Beatrice's yellow brocade after dinner, and ripped out fully a yard of stitches. You should have seen the glance she gave him; it was more terrible than the one she bestowed on Mr. Frame the day he was unlucky enough to beat her at tennis. Mr. Sweetson was awfully embarrassed; if it had been anyone less objectionable, I should have felt sorry for him. He only made matters worse by asking her what it cost, for he would send her ladyship a dress the following day at double the price. Lady Beatrice put up her *pince-nez*, and stared at him without uttering a word; then she sailed across the room and sat down beside Mrs. Cheving-

Mrs. Dot ton. "Cousin Petunia" told Mr. Sweetson that if he wanted to smoke, he would find the gentlemen in the billiard-room. He took the hint.

Tom Carterville came and sat down next to me, and made me nearly choke with the funny things he said about the Parkers, and he believes his mother will drop them. There is such a garrulous old lady stopping at Astley, Mrs. Dot; Tom took her in to supper. She came across the room and joined us. She began to talk about the nobility, and told us she considered she belonged to it, for though she was an American, she could trace her ancestry back to the Scottish Chiefs, and she asked Tom what he thought it would cost to have Burke put her in the peerage among the collateral branches. Then she told us she was descended also from Admiral Coligny. Poor dear Coligny, she called him, and she certainly would have been a Roman Catholic, if it had n't been for Coligny. Tom asked her quite innocently if she had left Coligny in America, and when he intended to come over. "When he comes to Astley,

Mrs. Dot," he said, "be sure you let me know, I'll give him a run with the West Somerset Harriers." *Mrs. Dot*

"He's *dead!* Mr. Carterville," she fairly shrieked.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," he said. "I thought from the way you spoke that he was in New York or Chicago, making money like all nice Americans."

"Oh, is it possible, Mr. Carterville," she went on, "that you have never heard of Coligny, poor dear Coligny, who was killed in the St. Bartholomew Massacre!"

"With all due respect to your relation," Tom said, "I never heard of the sad catastrophe; I don't read any but the sporting papers. I suppose the what-do-you-call-it massacre was in one of your little wars on the frontier. I hope they did n't get his scalp, Mrs. Dot."

Miss Parker, who was sitting quite near and heard every word, turned round and said, "Don't you see they are making fun of you, Aunt?" Mrs. Dot turned very red and simpered, and Tom and I felt as if we were looking for the North Pole.

Novel-reading Servants

I do call it unkind for people to make you feel uncomfortable in their houses. These Parkers are not at all like the Wertzelmanns and the other Americans I met at Lucerne. And I am sure if Lady Beatrice does call on them, that Lady Archibald Fairoaks and the Marchioness of Runymede, who are the nicest kind of Americans, would n't. Good-night, darling, I shall expect to hear from you to-morrow. — Your dearest Mamma.

P. S. — When I got back from Astley to-night, I had the greatest difficulty to get into the house. No one answered the bell, and finally Perkins, who has a key to the kitchen, let me in that way. I went into the dining-room and rang and called; still no one came. I then went upstairs and found Thérèse, the two maids, the cook, and the new page, sitting round a blazing wood fire in my bedroom, and cook was reading "The Master Christian" to them aloud!

I cried from pure vexation, for one can't send all one's servants away at the same

time. I am sure I can't see why the lower classes should have novelists, but they have everything just like us now-a-days. And when I was in town last month, at Claridge's, the Duchess of Rougemont told me she did n't know what the world was coming to, for her maid belonged to a Corelli Society, and she had actually sat next her own footman at a Paderewski Recital the last time the pianist was in London.

Novel-reading Servants

LETTER XXIII

MONK'S FOLLY, 2nd November

DARLING ELIZABETH:

Theatricals

THE Blaines had some theatricals yesterday in St. Leo's school-house, to raise money to give Father Ribbit a host. In spite of the weather being horrid I went. They acted "My Lord in Livery," and a manager came down from a West End theatre to stage it. They only cleared two guineas when all expenses were paid, which of course won't buy a host, though Mrs. Blaine suggested they might find a second-hand one cheap in an old curiosity shop. I thought the acting was atrocious, but they were all mightily pleased with themselves, and are now thinking of playing "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," and renting the Taunton theatre. But that is always the way with amateurs.

Lady Beatrice is getting up tableaux at Braxome in opposition, and Mr. Frame came to-day to ask me to help. Tom

brought me a nice note from his mother, imploring me to say Yes, and I have consented, and there is to be a lunch at Braxome to-morrow to decide on what we shall do. Lady Beatrice says she feels it her duty to use all her influence with the Bishop to have Father Ribbit tried by the Ecclesiastical Court. There is every sign of a church war, for Mrs. Blaine declares she will write to her uncle, who is in the Cabinet, to back up Father Ribbit. And it's nothing but church and theatricals; as you know down here in the country it is always church and something else. I shall do all I can to fan the fire, and Tom has promised to help me, for we are so terribly dull, anything will serve to wake us up a bit.

Church and Theatricals

I have called on the Vane-Corduroys, who have leased Shotover Park from the De Mantons. Poor Lady de Manton cried when she left it, and is living in a boarding-house on the Parade at Weston-super-mare; old Lord de Manton has gone up to London, where he thinks he can get a Chairmanship of a City Company for the sake of his name.

The De Mantons

The Honourable Agatha has gone out to South Africa on a hospital ship, and her brother, the Honourable de Montgomery de Manton, whom, you remember, we met once on the Promenade at Cannes, and I would n't let you bow to him because he was walking with such an impossible woman, has joined the Imperial Yeomanry as a trooper. The family seems quite broken up; it is rather a pity, as they had been at Shotover since the Conquest. Mrs. Blaine says it is all due to Kaffirs; that Lord de Manton would set up as a stockbroker, and you know what a mess he got the lunatic asylum accounts into the year he was treasurer. But, as Mrs. Blaine says, he will probably be back at Shotover within a year, for he is just the sort of man they like to get on directorates in London, and that is such a paying profession now-a-days. He told Lady Beatrice that if worse became worst with him he knew the Colonial Office would give him an island to govern. He did n't seem very depressed when he left, but Lady de Manton was completely *bouleversée*. Tom told me that she had written to his

mother to say that Weston-super-mare was intolerable; they gave her Brussels sprouts and boiled beef six days running; she wanted Lady Beatrice to help her get the post of stewardess on one of the new West Indian line steamers to Jamaica; she makes a point of the fact that she was never sick when crossing the Channel. She seems willing to do anything till poor Lord de Manton "arrives." *The Vane-Corduroys*

How I digress! I started to tell you of the Vane-Corduroys, and I shunted off to the De Mantons; you will think me as garrulous as an old maid.

I don't know how the Vane-Corduroys got their money, but I think it was out of "Sparklets," though Tom says he is sure he has seen "Corduroy's Lung Tonic" on the signboards at the Underground stations. Lady Beatrice, who takes up every new person out of sheer curiosity, called, and of course everybody else had to. But Lady Beatrice, who always has a reason for everything she does, said that she did it for Lady de Manton's sake, who had told her that if the Vane-Corduroys were properly *rangé*, it

The Vane-Corduroys

would help Lord de Manton in the City. Mr. Vane-Corduroy is the very type of a company-promoter; you know what I mean — they are always paunchy, and wear frock-coats, and top-hats, and have a President-of-a-Republic air. Mrs. Vane-Corduroy has dyed hair, the colour of tawny port, and she dresses like the ready-made models at Peter Robinson's. She looks exactly like a doll, and all the time I was talking to her, I felt that if I pinched her waist, she would say "Made in England." I am sure you wind her up with a key. They have completely changed the drawing-room at Shotover — you remember what a splendid air there was about it, with the old, worm-eaten Flemish tapestry, and the oak panelling — well, they have had the upholsterers down from Maple's, and it is now spick-and-span Louis Quinze; there are foot-stools in front of all the chairs, and the De Manton ancestors have all got new gilt frames. They have two children, a boy and a girl. The girl is about twelve, and has a French governess, a strange-looking woman, something like Louise Michel, with a moustache. Mrs.

Vane-Corduroy told me she had the highest references, and that she had come to them from a Russian Grand-Duke's family. The boy is at Eton. *The Vane-Corduroys*

I asked them how they thought they would like Somersetshire. Mrs. Vane-Corduroy said she missed town — there was no Church Parade, no Prince's, no Bond Street, and no dear little Dog Cemetery, like the one in the Park. She thought the latter was such a peaceful spot, and she felt quite happy to think that Fido would rest there till the Resurrection, under his little Carrara marble cross. It was evidently a very depressing subject, and Mr. Vane-Corduroy hastened to change it by saying that his wife found the country a bit lonely just at first, but people had been very kind in calling on them, and that he was sure they would like it immensely, as he intended to fill the house with people from town, and that they should always spend the season at their house in Grosvenor Square, and part of the winter at Nice ; and when they were not visiting, they would either be yachting, or at their shooting-box in the highlands.

A Eulogy

In fact, he gave me to understand that they would probably never be more than a couple of months in the year at Shotover.

They have taken seats at Father Ribbit's, and they have subscribed most liberally to all the local charities. I must say I think it rather an imposition, for they had n't been in the county a week, before they were inundated with appeals for money; but, as Lady Beatrice says, that if such people will mix in our set, they must pay for it, and besides, their names and the sums they give are published in the Taunton papers, so that it is not as if they were not getting any return for their money.

I suppose it does pay in the end, for the Rector of St. William's preached a regular eulogy on Mr. Parker last Sunday, who is restoring the whole church, for he found some old dilapidated tablets in it with "Parker" on them, and he is sure they are his ancestors. He had a letter of thanks from the Bishop about it, and the *Times* devoted a column to it; said it was such things that drew America and England together, and that Mr. Parker's love of archi-

tecture was only equalled by his knowledge of it, and that St. William's restored would be an everlasting monument, in Early English Gothic, to his memory. And I don't believe Mr. Parker knows a gargoyle from a reredos. *A Eulogy*

I must stop now, darling, for Mrs. Chevington has just called, and I must go down and see her. I shall expect to hear from you to-morrow. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XXIV

MONK'S FOLLY, 4th November

DARLING ELIZABETH :

A Frightful Thing

SUCH a frightful thing happened yesterday. The Vane-Corduroys came to return my call in their motor-car, and it blew up at the front door. One of the wheels fell into the conservatory, and the groom was picked up insensible on the lawn. He had to be brought into the house, where he has been ever since, and is likely to be for some days, for Dr. Smart says if he is moved in his present state he will die. Fortunately for the Vane-Corduroys they had just entered the house, or they might have been killed. You never heard such a noise ; it sounded like a cannonade, and Perkins says it will cost me at least one hundred pounds to repair the damage. The Vane-Corduroys apologised profusely, and looked as if they wished they had been blown up along with the groom to hide their confusion. Perkins and the gardener have

been picking up bits of motor-car all over the grounds to-day. I had to send the Vane-Corduroys back to Shotover in the victoria. *Rehearsal of Tableaux*

We had a rehearsal of the tableaux at Braxome in the evening. Lady Beatrice looked absurd as Britannia; she posed herself after the tail of a penny; Mr. Parker as Uncle Sam, and Mr. Vane-Corduroy as John Bull, shaking hands, were quite good, but Mr. Frame, who was working the red, white, and blue light, set fire to himself, and might have been burned to death, but for his presence of mind. He put himself out by wrapping himself in Lady Beatrice's Gobelin tapestry, which she had specially made in Paris last year. You should have seen Lady Beatrice's face, and she called him "Frame," as she always does when she is angry with him, and she told him he might have waited till they brought some water to throw over him. Mrs. Vane-Corduroy, as Lady Macbeth going to murder Duncan, would have been effective, if she had n't laughed in the middle of it. Everybody said that Tom and I in "The Black Bruns-

An Excellent Chef

wicker's Farewell" were the best, but Tom squeezed me so, I could hardly breathe, and when the curtain dropped he said we must do it over again for an encore.

We think the tableaux will be a great success, for all the tickets on sale at Mr. Dill's, the chemist, have been sold, and he wrote to ask Lady Beatrice if he could have some more printed. Mrs. Parker told Lady Beatrice it was awfully good of her to give her drawing-room over to the "peasantry," as she calls the Taunton people.

To-day the Vane-Corduroys had a lunch-party. They have an excellent *chef*. Mr. Vane-Corduroy said he was five years with the Duchess of Rougemont, and only left because the Duchess refused to pay for the tuning of his piano. I think the Vane-Corduroys are afraid of him. Thérèse tells me that he has a room fitted up as a studio at Shotover, and that he exhibits every year at the Salon, and only cooks from the love of it. He has his meals in his own apartments. Mrs. Vane-Corduroy showed me several photographs of Fido, and one of his grave in the Dog Cemetery; he was run over

by a 'bus in the Bayswater road; and Mrs. Vane-Corduroy shed tears when she told me of it, and she said she went into mourning for him for three months, and a Royal Academician is at present at work on his portrait from one of the photographs. She intends to have it hung in the Academy next year, and when I suggested that sometimes the best pictures of the best artists were rejected, she said that Mr. Vane-Corduroy had seen about it already, for he had put the Duke of Rougemont on to something good in the City, and the Duke had promised that he would see the picture was hung, and not skied either. *Two Visitors*

Two women are visiting at Shotover, friends of Mrs. Vane-Corduroy. They look as if they were made at Marshall & Snelgrove; they wore pearl necklaces over their tailor-made walking suits, and long gold chains with uncut sapphires, and their fingers are covered in rings. I forget what Mrs. Vane-Corduroy called them, but she said they were old friends of hers, and such clever girls. It seems they were left rather poorly off, and to gain a living began by giv-

Two Visitors

ing dancing lessons to some people in Maida Vale. They succeeded so well that they now have an "Academy" in Mayfair, and go about the country as well, giving private instruction; their brother had a gymnasium in Brighton, but got the war fever at Ladysmith time, and went out to the front in Paget's Horse, and the sisters are now running the gymnasium — a School for Physical Culture, Mrs. Vane-Corduroy called it. She says that is why they know so many people we do, Elizabeth, for they spoke of Lord Valmond, and Mr. Wertz, and the Smiths, and the Duke of Clandevil, as if they were on quite intimate terms with them. I have no doubt it is very creditable of them to earn their living, but it seems strange to meet them in Society. Really everything is changing now-a-days. I am thinking of telling Lady Beatrice and suggesting to her that they should do Indian clubs or cannon balls after the tableaux, and it would be quite easy to get out a man from Taunton to put up a trapeze in the drawing-room at Braxome. — With love from your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XXV

MONK'S FOLLY, 6th November

DARLING ELIZABETH:

THE tableaux were a great success, and Lady Beatrice gave the Taunton people sandwiches and ginger-beer afterwards in the dining-room. Only one of her Sêvres dishes was broken, and Mr. Frame dropped a Bohemian goblet that was made in 1530, and had belonged to Wallenstein. He was so frightened that he did n't dare tell Lady Beatrice, and she believes one of the footmen did it. *The Tableaux*

We had a champagne supper when everybody had gone; it was awfully good, and the Vane-Corduroys' *chef* did the devilled oysters *à la reine de Serbie*. Mr. Sweetson has gone back to London, so fortunately I did n't have my appetite taken away. He is giving a big dinner at the Carlton to the Copper Trust Directors in honour of a *coup* he made on the Stock Exchange by wire. I don't exactly understand what it is, but I

The Baron

believe he bought all the copper in the world, and that the value of the common or garden penny will go up. Mrs. Dot came, and after what happened the other night at Astley, I was particularly civil to her. She was quite good-natured, and took the olive branch. She asked me if I could recommend a dentist in Taunton; it seems that when she goes to bed she always puts her false teeth in a glass of water, and one of the maids threw them away in the slops by mistake. Fortunately she keeps two sets, upper and lower, but the spare plate was made in a great hurry and bruises her gums. I told her Fellowes in Taunton advertised to make a set while you wait, but I did n't know how long he made you wait, and she is going to him to-day. She told me a story about a Baron Finck von Finckelstein whom she met in America, quite by chance, in a restaurant where he was a waiter. The Baron has a ruin on the Rhine, and the family had become so impoverished that he decided to go to America, where he landed literally in his shirt-sleeves, and on account of his elegant manners, Mrs. Dot said, he of course

got a situation as waiter in a restaurant; and the proprietor made an awfully good thing out of him, for he got one of the New York Sunday papers to devote a column to the Baron and the restaurant. It was a capital advertisement; the article was illustrated, and there were cuts of Schloss Finckelstein, the ruin on the Rhine, of the Baron as he landed in New York, of the Baron waiting in the restaurant, and of the proprietor. Mrs. Dot said that there was such a rush for tables that one had to go awfully early to get one, and that the Baron must have made quite a good thing out of it, for nobody would have dared give him less than a dollar tip. As the Baron could n't wait on everybody, the proprietor had *édition de luxe* menus printed with the Finckelstein twenty-four quarterings on them which you could take away as souvenirs. And Tom Carterville, who was sitting next to me, said he knew the De Mantons had made a mistake in not going to America. Mrs. Dot quite jumped at the idea; she knew the family would do well, and that they would very likely get an engagement all together to travel about the country with Barnum's. She was

The Baron

A Subscription Ball

sure that a whole family of Norman Conquest aristocrats would draw just like the Baby Venus or the Missing Link. Tom looked sheepish, and I believe Mrs. Dot is not as simple as she seems, and was getting at him.

There is a subscription ball at the Carterville Arms in Taunton to-night. The tickets are four shillings. Lady Beatrice is the patroness, and the money will be given to the Soldiers' Widows' and Orphans' Fund. Of course everybody will go, and Paquin sent me such a dream of a frock this morning. I wish you could meet me in town next week for the Clandevil-Parker wedding, but of course if Lord Valmond is in your neighbourhood it would be folly for you to leave. I have written to Octavia to bring him to the scratch. She is so clever and such a dear, and knows how to help you just as if I myself were with you. I am expecting daily to hear you have caught him. Best of luck from — Your dearest Mamma.

P. S. 6.30 P.M. — Mrs. Chevington came to tea this afternoon and brought the news

An Accident

that Mr. Vane-Corduroy was rabbit shooting this morning and blew off two of his fingers. It seems his man gave him ball cartridge by mistake, and the bullet hit Lady Beatrice's horse as she was driving past the field in which Mr. Vane-Corduroy was shooting at the time of the accident. Poor Lady Beatrice was frightened out of her wits, and Mr. Vane-Corduroy, who saw her passing and heard her scream, thought he had killed her. Mrs. Chevington says she thinks the Vane-Corduroys were more worried over killing Lady Beatrice's horse than over Mr. Vane-Corduroy's missing fingers. Mrs. Vane-Corduroy at once despatched a note to Braxome, full of the profoundest apologies, and saying they had taken the liberty of wiring instantly to Tattersall's to send down a horse to replace the one Mr. Vane-Corduroy was so unfortunate as to kill. Mrs. Chevington was at Braxome when the letter arrived. She says Tom told his mother that she should accept the new horse, as it would be undoubtedly superior to the old crock that jogged her about the country, and he thought that

The Ball before Cockney millionaires turned country gentlemen they ought to take lessons at a shooting gallery.

P. S. S. 2.30 A.M. — I have just got home from the ball at the Carterville Arms, and as I find your letter has not been posted, and I am not very sleepy, I will add a postscript to it before going to sleep.

The ball was a financial success, and the Mayor told Lady Beatrice her patronage was invaluable. He took her in to supper, and in his speech he spoke of nothing but her ladyship's virtues. As Tom said, he made you feel that the ball had been given expressly for her benefit, and not at all for the Soldiers' Widows and Orphans. Of course, the Vane-Corduroys were not present, and there was an alarming rumour at one time that Mr. Vane-Corduroy was bleeding to death. Everybody came up to Lady Beatrice, and congratulated her on her narrow escape. In fact, at supper the Mayor quite drew tears to the Taunton people's eyes when he referred to it. Lady Beatrice tried to look unconcerned, as if she

deprecated the Mayor's fine compliments, but when in a faltering voice he declared how the whole countryside would miss "good, honest, steady old Jock, who had for so many years drawn her ladyship about on her errands of mercy," Lady Beatrice burst into tears, and the Mayor became so affected at the havoc he had wrought, that he wished "the bullet of the London mushroom" (poor Mr. Vane-Corduroy bleeding to death at Shotover!) had lodged in his own magisterial breast. Mr. Parker whispered to me that the Veuve Clicquot was sweeter than usual. *The Ball*

There was a daïs at one end of the ball-room, and here Lady Beatrice received the "canīle" as Mr. Parker expressed it. She wore purple velvet and amethysts, and looked perfectly monstrous, and the room was so hot that beads of perspiration formed on her temples, and made little lanes in the rouge on her cheeks. Nevertheless, in spite of her appearance, Lady Beatrice can be quite *grande dame* when she wishes, and she did the honours of the evening in the most dignified way. And I suppose if you are a

Tom Proposes

duke's daughter, and have such a place as Braxome Towers and twenty thousand a year, you can afford to look like a scarecrow. The floors were awfully good, and all my partners danced well. But, would you believe it, that silly boy, Tom Carterville, actually proposed to me, and was quite serious about it too! We were sitting in a sort of ante-room by ourselves, and Tom, who is anything but shy, suddenly became as awkward and bashful as a school-girl, and blurted out how madly he loved me, and had ever since he saw me at Braxome the day he got back from South Africa. He looked just like his mother, and I could hardly keep from laughing, and tried to turn all he said into a joke. Then he got quite hot and perspiry and breathed hard, and he begged me to accept him; he had never loved any one as he did me, and he did n't ever think of or mind the difference in our ages. He acted just like they do in Miss Braddon, and accused me of having given him every encouragement, and wondered how God could make a woman so fair and so false. He took me by the hands

and looked into my eyes, then dropped them and groaned, and wished they 'd sent him to the Front in South Africa. I knew he meant all he said too, because he was so earnest, and I could have half pitied him if he had n't looked so much like Lady Beatrice. He made me feel so uncomfortable, for I thought someone would come into the room every minute, and I begged him to take me back to the ball-room and not be a silly boy. He laughed such a queer laugh ; it had a sort of sob in it, and he said quite fiercely that I did n't know how I had wounded him, but that he loved me all the same, and that if he remained in Somersetshire and was near me all the time, the wound would never heal ; and he intends to go out to South Africa at once, and is going up to London to-morrow, for he wanted plenty of action and excitement and danger to help him pull himself together again.

Tom Proposes

I begged him on no account, if he loved me, to tell his mother, for she would never speak to me again. He said, did I really have such a poor opinion of him, and it hurt

Tom Rejected

him cruelly, for he was a gentleman and a man of honour. I told him he could kiss me just once, if he liked, for he was so very much in earnest, and that we should part friends. But he would n't, for he said the memory of it would haunt him.

When we got back to the ball-room people stared at us awfully hard, and I heard that odious Mrs. Fordythe tell someone, " He is too good for that frivolous little Paquin doll." I am sure she meant me. I do wish boys would n't fall in love with one, for they are so serious and earnest and masterful, and make one feel as if one had really done them an injury. I whispered to Tom before he left me, right in the midst of a horrid lot of frumpy chaperones, that I hoped he would come back safe from South Africa, and he said I was rubbing it in, and he hoped the first bullet would strike home. I really thought someone would hear, he spoke so loud. And there is no telling, Elizabeth, if Tom had been older and not so much like his mother, I might have taken him, for Braxome and twenty thousand a year are not to be found at one's feet every day. But,

as it is, it is quite out of the question, *Tom Rejected* and I charge you not to mention a word of this to anyone, for it would be sure to get back here, and people say such nasty things. Good-night. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XXVI

MONK'S FOLLY, 8th November

Typhoid Fever

DARLING ELIZABETH:

MRS. BLAINE and six others of Father Ribbit's flock are down with typhoid fever. Dr. Smart and the sanitary inspector have traced it to the Communion wine at St. Leo's. The London papers have got hold of the story, and yesterday's *Daily Sensation* had an article on it headed "Bacteria in the Chalice," "Typhoid in a Cup of Holy Wine." Mr. Parker says it beats anything he ever read in an American paper, and thinks we have nothing more to learn in that line from Yankee journalism. Naturally it has been a nasty knock for the Ritualists, and will frighten people away from the sacrament at St. Leo's. Father Ribbit wrote to the Taunton papers to-day about it, and said that he will henceforth advocate the "separate vessel" system, which he understands is in vogue in America, and he is soliciting subscriptions for fifty chalices.

At Mr. Frame's, Lady Beatrice, to whom the cup is always passed first, set the fashion of wiping the rim with her handkerchief, which precaution has, till the present, been efficacious. The Chevingtons, the Blaines, and the best families who go to St. Leo's, are going to provide their own communion cups, but, as Mr. Parker said, it will be interesting to note the strength of Father Ribbit's head, for he has to drink all the wine that is left over that not a drop may be wasted, as of course it is sacred. Altogether, the typhoid at St. Leo's has opened some curious speculation, and has for the moment put all other topics out of consideration. *Typhoid Fever*

Mr. Vane-Corduroy has been pronounced out of danger; his mangled fingers have been successfully amputated. He will not be able to go up to town to-morrow to the wedding of Miss Parker, but the doctor says he must go to the Riviera for a change as soon as possible, as the shock to his system has been a great one. So after this week Shotover will be shut up.

Tom Carterville left for London the day

Tom Enlists

after the ball, as he said, and Lady Beatrice was in consternation on getting a telegram from him saying he would sail for the Cape in the new draft of Yeomanry in a week's time. As I feel that I am in a measure responsible for the grief at Braxome and Tom's exile, I wrote him a nice little note to-day, and enclosed a bunch of forget-me-nots and my photo.

I hardly see anything of Blanche now-a-days; since she and Daisy have taken up theatricals so seriously they have no time for dropping in for tea as they used. Of course, now that Mrs. Blaine is ill, they will be busier than ever, though Mrs. Chevington, who was here this morning, says that they are both still at work rehearsing the "Second Mrs. Tanqueray." Daisy's head seems quite turned by the praise she got in that non-professional drawing-room thing, "My Lord in Livery." She told Mrs. Chevington she always knew she had acting in her, and she wants to go up to London and go on the stage. But that is always the way with amateurs. They begin with one of these pieces peculiar to Church entertain-

ments that one never sees, save in country school-rooms, and they immediately afterwards try Sheridan or Pinero. One hardly knows which is duller to watch. *A Droll Performance*

And talking of plays reminds me that I was particularly asked by Lady Beatrice to go to the Taunton Orphan Asylum this afternoon and see the children do "The Merchant of Venice." It was the drollest performance I ever remember attending. When I got there I found two long files, one of boys, the other of girls, waiting in a corridor outside of the hall. A caretaker, with a nose like Job Trotter's, was keeping the "sexes separated," and the children, who were anywhere from five years of age up to ten, were jabbering like a lot of rooks. I instinctively wondered what would happen if Mr. Trotter's authority was withdrawn for a few minutes. While I waited for the door of the hall to be opened, Lady Beatrice and the matron arrived, and Lady Beatrice, who wore a sort of short bicycle skirt, and a felt hat with a pheasant's feather in it, and looked as if she ought to have carried a bunch of edelweiss and an alpenstock with a chamois-

A Droll Performance

horn handle, exclaimed, in her voice which is always down in her boots : —

"Ah, my little dears! Each good little boy and girl is going to be given an apple and a bun, and each bad little boy and girl will get a slice of bread without any butter. Now I hope you will all be good little boys and girls."

"Yes, please, ladyship," they all piped in unison, and the matron let us all into the hall.

I don't know whether it was droller to watch the brats murder Shakespeare, or the marked interest taken in the performance by Lady Beatrice, the matron, and some of the patronesses. Shylock was too absurd; he was about ten and wore a funny little goatee. He nor any of the others understood a word of what they were saying; they had learnt it by heart like the alphabet, and recited it in shrill sing-song. When Master Shylock called for the scales, they brought him a pair such as you see in doll's houses, and when he sharpened his little knife, Lady Beatrice's "little dears" stood up in their seats with excitement and squeaked like a lot of guinea-

pigs. But even more comical than the children mouthing Shakespeare was the fact of the stage-manager of a London theatre, that Lady Beatrice has had down once a week for the last two months to coach the little actors, coming before the curtain and making a speech, in which he told a lie that was so big I should have thought he would have been afraid he would be struck down like Ananias. He had the cheek to tell us that the Shylock with the goatee and the doll's scales was an undeveloped Roscius — and Lady Beatrice and the matron believed him. *A Droll Performance*

The matron told me that Shakespeare was such a refining influence and that the children were so much improved by his plays, and she was quite horrified when I replied I thought a pantomime would do them more good. After the performance the "little dears" sat down at long tables and devoured apples and buns, and squeaked like guinea-pigs.

Lady Beatrice said it was a huge success, and that they would try, "As You Like It," next year. When Mr. Parker said that

A Droll Performance

Britons as a race had no sense of humour Lady Beatrice should have told him to go with me to see her "little dears" interpret Shakespeare. I am sure he would have changed his mind. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XXVII

MONK'S FOLLY, 11th November

DARLING ELIZABETH:

AM so glad to hear Valmond has turned up at Chevenix Castle. You have it all your own way now. I hear it was the Doraines who gave the Vane-Corduroys their first start last year. It seems the Doraines were in awfully low water and at their wit's ends what to do. Mrs. Chevington says they had almost decided to go to Boulogne when Lord Doraine met Sir Denis O'Desmond and advised them to go to Bayswater, for he said that three months there had pulled him straight. It seems you take a house in a terrace, go to the nearest church, and buy groceries and meat in the neighbourhood, and everybody calls. That 's the way the Doraines found the Vane-Corduroys. Mrs. Vane-Corduroy was presented by Lady Doraine; it cost an enormous sum, and Lord Doraine told Algy Chevington he was making quite a tidy income in Bayswater terraces.

The Doraines

Society Beauties

I should think Lord de Manton might follow his example, but I suppose he is too old for Society. Lady de Manton has gone up to London to him. She is not going as stewardess to Jamaica: Lord de Manton has got "put on" to something, it's to do with a Government Contract; and is very secret and mysterious. They have taken a maisonette in Chelsea, and I am so glad for poor Lady de Manton, for they treated her quite like one of themselves at her boarding-house at Weston-super-mare.

Your account of the ball was amusing; Octavia looked after you, as I knew she would, and managed to play Valmond very cleverly for you. She wrote me herself to say he was so firmly hooked that he would be landed now without any difficulty. I can't help smiling at your being surprised to find that the Society beauties that the papers rave about are *quite*, *quite old*, and not really beautiful at all. Did you think that "age could not wither them, nor custom stale their infinite variety"? Nor was I at all surprised to hear that they flirted with boys; they always do at their age; it's their chief

amusement to pick out the nicest and handsomest boys and make men of the world of them. Dolly Tenderdown may only look fifteen and behave "grown-up," but, depend on it, he knows as much of life as Lord Valmond. Those pretty youngsters have a very quick intelligence, and between the mess-room and the ball-room there is not much that they have not learnt. Immaculate to look at, my experience of them is that they are anything but clean. Tom Carterville belonged to another genus. The Dolly Tenderdown kind only grows when you fertilise the soil, but your Tom Cartervilles grow wild in any soil and in all seasons. *Boys in Society*

I wish boys could be kept out of Society till they are really grown-up, they are such a nuisance. They never know how to preserve their equilibrium, for they are either intense, and make martyrs of themselves like Stefano and Tom, or horrid, fast, impertinent creatures like Dolly. And there are so many boys in Society now-a-days.

The whole Parker family are at Claridge's, and the Pullman is to take the Taunton

Hospital Nurses

guests up to town to-morrow. I shall stop at the Carlton, and remain in London for a few nights, and it is so much gayer there than at the Buckingham Palace *dépendances.* It is an awful time of the year for a wedding, but I suppose Miss Parker thinks that if she postpones it, Clandevil may find another bride still richer than herself. Lady Beatrice is not going; she says nothing but family business would take her to town in November. I think the Parkers feel hurt about it, because Lady Beatrice would give a sort of backbone to the marriage feast that nobody else would.

Mrs. Blaine has been pronounced out of danger, but the girls have had to give up the "Second Mrs. Tanqueray." The hospital nurse from Bath has been so much trouble that they have had to send her back, and Daisy is nursing her mother. It seems the nurse was very pretty, and Berty, who has never been known to speak to a girl, was found in the dining-room with her at midnight with champagne and biscuits. Blanche said, not between them, for they were sitting so close together there was n't

any room, but in front of them. And poor Mrs. Blaine at 105°, and no nourishment had passed her lips for hours. Blanche will go up to the wedding with me.

Hospital Nurses

Talking of hospital nurses, it seems the Vane-Corduroys had trouble with theirs too. She was n't pretty and flirtatious, but middle-aged and "bossy," really to my mind more objectionable than the Blaines'. She had not been at Shotover an hour before she took the measure of the household; the doctor said Mr. Vane-Corduroy must be kept quiet, and the nurse refused to allow even his wife to see him. He was kept as isolated as if he had had the plague, and to amuse him nurse read "Paradise Lost" aloud to him. She terrorised Mrs. Vane-Corduroy, who fairly quaked in her presence; she kept the servants constantly doing things for her, had her meals served her whenever she fancied them, had the grooms riding into Taunton at all hours of the day and night, and made her power felt thoroughly, besides being paid I don't know how many guineas a day, and if everything was not done just as she wished it and at

Hospital Nurses

once, she threatened that Mr. Vane-Corduroy would die as a consequence. Her credentials were so good that even the doctor was afraid of her, but on the second day she fell foul of the *chef*. His suite of rooms was next to hers, and he was composing a *menu* at the piano, which, as it was after midnight, disturbed nurse a good deal. She complained to Mrs. Vane-Corduroy the next day, and poor Mrs. Vane-Corduroy, who is terribly afraid of her *chef*, was driven nearly distracted; nurse even sought out the *chef* himself and ordered him to obey her, and his reply was a gesture more rude than effective, and even went so far as to threaten her if she interfered with his province. That night for dinner there was something with a delicious port-wine sauce, and nurse, who never touches spirits in any shape, did n't know what she was eating, it was so disguised. It upset her equilibrium completely, first, by making her very merry and then by making her horribly sick. She was so firmly convinced that the *chef* had made an attempt to poison her that she went off the first thing the next day in high dudgeon, to

the inexpressible relief of everybody at Shotover. *Hospital Nurses*

I have a love of a frock and hat for the wedding. I will write you next from London and let you know how the wedding went off. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XXVIII

The Carlton Hotel,
Midnight, 13th November

Darling Elizabeth:

The Wedding

THE Clandevil-Parker *noces* took place to-day with great ostentation, as you may imagine. You will read the report of it to-morrow in the *Morning Post*, but I shall probably be able to give you a more graphic account of it. The ceremony was performed by the Bishop of St. Esau at twelve o'clock, at St. George's, Hanover Square, assisted by other prelates of more or less note in the ecclesiastical world. There was a thick yellow fog that made several people arrive at the church after everything was over, and prevented the crowd from congregating as it would otherwise have done. Blanche and I had excellent seats, as we arrived early; the bride was late owing to the fog, and Clandevil looked awfully bored. Following the American custom, there had been a full-dress rehearsal of the ceremony the day

Wedding Presents

before, and the first five rows of pews had been taken out, and the altar banked with plants. The bridesmaids were all earls' daughters, and the best man was that notorious rake, the Honourable Ralph Swift; everyone was remarking at his cleverness in keeping out of jail. You will read all about the costumes in the *Post;* the bride looked well; the lace on her dress belonged to Marie Antoinette, and the dress itself was an exact duplication of that worn by the Queen of Holland at her Coronation, saving of course the royal mantle. Breakfast was served afterwards at the Dowager Duchess of Clandevil's in Eton Place, where the wedding presents were on show! Their value, apart from Mr. Parker's settlement on the bride, of a square mile of New York with a rental of two million dollars annually, is estimated at five hundred thousand dollars, the more costly gifts coming from across the Atlantic. Mrs. Parker gave her daughter a Holbein; Clandevil gave his bride a tiara of emeralds; the Dowager Duchess gave a hot-water bottle; Royalty sent the bride a lace handkerchief, and the bridegroom a horse-

Wedding Presents

shoe scarf pin set with brilliants; the Hon. Ralph Swift gave a solid silver napkin ring; Mr. Sweetson gave a necklace of diamonds as big as walnuts; Mrs. Dot gave a dessert set of Sèvres specially made with the Clandevil arms on it. The Marchioness of Tuke, Clandevil's only sister, gave a solid silver inkstand, and Lady Doreen Fitz Mortimer and the Countess of Warbeck gave a bog-oak blotting-pad, with a tortoise-shell paper knife; the tenants at Clandevil gave a gold loving-cup, and the servants an oak chest of damask sheets; the clerks in Mr. Parker's office in New York sent five pieces of twelfth century tapestry, and from various people in America there came many magnificent things. But Mr. Parker, Junior, the brother, who is in Chicago, made a panic on the Stock Exchange, and sent his profits; the cheque was put to the new Duchess's account at Coutts'. The happy pair left for Clandevil Castle, Tipperary, where the honeymoon will be spent. The Duchess will be presented on her marriage at the first drawing-room.

Mr. Parker seemed delighted, and talked

a good deal after the breakfast of "my son the Duke;" Mrs. Parker seemed depressed, and when she kissed her daughter good-bye, said, "My child, I hope you will be happy." Mr. Sweetson talked to me for some time on triumphant democracy, and the effete monarchies of the old world, his favourite subjects. He said it was cheaper to buy dukes in America than in England, but admitted the price fluctuated, and depended entirely on supply, which not infrequently ran short of the demand. The atmosphere of wealth was overpowering; Blanche said she felt as if she were trampling on diamonds. Everybody thinks it will be a most happy match, for there is no pretence at love on either side, and each has got what each most desired. Flaxie Frizzle, the skirt-dancer, and her two children came to the church: everybody remarked how much the boy looked like his father. *The Wedding*

I should have mentioned that the food and drink were beyond cavil. Mr. Parker told me he always got his "fizz" from the Russian Court, as the best brands were sent there from France. I cannot think of any

The Wedding

more to tell you of the wedding; the crowd and the confusion were so great, I found it difficult to take in all that happened.

Blanche and I returned to the Carlton at three o'clock, and went straight to bed to sleep off the effects. When we went to dinner at eight, we saw the Vicomte de Narjac at one of the tables; we had a long chat with him afterwards. He came over to London to purchase an English automobile, and returns to Paris in a couple of days. We told him of the grand wedding we had been to, and he said he had seen a beautifully dressed woman helped out of a hansom, and carried upstairs unconscious, and when he enquired what had happened, the porter had told him in French that she was one of the *invitées aux épousailles de M. le duc de Clandevil avec une des plus grandes héritières du Nouveau Monde.* Blanche and I set Thérèse to find out who it could have been, and she says it was the Marchioness of Portcullis; we noticed at the breakfast that she and Mr. Sweetson were drinking neat brandy, and wondered at the time what would be the result. The Vicomte was

stupefied; he thought she was a demi-mondaine. *The Lucerne Set*

We asked the Vicomte all about the Lucerne set. He says Mr. Wertzelmann has been transferred to St. Petersburg, and that Madame Colorado has gone to spend the winter at the American Embassy; she was such a dear friend of Mrs. Wertzelmann's. The De Pivarts are in Paris; the Marquis has a *procès* running in the Courts against the Swiss Government, and hopes he will make enough out of it to start a stud in the spring. It seems the Marquise was arrested on a steamboat on Lake Geneva, being mistaken for Mrs. Phineas Porter, the beautiful American, whose husband shot Monsieur Dupont in the Hotel Beau Rivage. And the New York *Paris Herald* has been full of it. Mrs. Phineas Porter lives in Paris, and Mr. Phineas Porter in Chicago; he comes over every year, and, on this occasion, said good-bye to his wife and left for Havre, but returned secretly, and found Mrs. Porter had disappeared. He traced her and Dupont, who is a prominent member of the Jockey Club, to Geneva.

Mrs. Porter

He arrived late at night, knocked on his wife's door at the Beau Rivage, who thought he was the chamber-maid, and forced himself in. Mrs. Porter shrieked, and Dupont, who had retired for the night, jumped out of bed, and was chased by Mr. Porter with a loaded revolver through the whole suite of apartments into the last room, and Dupont, caught in a *cul de sac* as it were, hid behind an arm-chair, where Mr. Porter killed him. As you may imagine, the affair created a scandal, for the people are so well known in Society. Mr. Porter was arrested by the police, and is now on trial. In the confusion Mrs. Porter disappeared, and has up to the present baffled all attempts to find her. The Marquise de Pivart is said to be the image of her, and, as she was embarking about a week after the affair on a steamboat, to spend the day at Chillon, she was arrested by the stupid Swiss police. The Vicomte says the Swiss authorities apologised most humbly when they discovered their mistake, but both the Marquis and the Marquise would not be satisfied with anything less than heavy damages. The *procès* has added

to the Porter-Dupont *esclandre*, and the reputation of the Marquise has been torn to shreds. The Vicomte says it is very amusing to read the accounts in the *Paris Herald*, and everybody says the Marquis could get a divorce as well as the Marquise, but they swore the deepest affection for one another in the courts, and will swear anything for the chance of touching the pockets of the Swiss Government. They are always seen together just like the *ouvriers* on Sundays at Nogent-sur-Marne. The Vicomte added that the sacrifices they were making of their private feelings were well worth one hundred thousand francs, the sum they claim as damages.

A Roman Prince

Old Mrs. Johnson has found a Roman Prince in the place of Count Albert for Rosalie Isaacs. The Vicomte says he is all that can be desired. He has a palazzo like a fortress at Rome, with a priceless collection of Greek marbles which he can't sell, and was so poor that he spent one winter on the Via Corniche, with a monkey and an organ that he borrowed from his former steward, who had just returned from tramp-

Elasticity of Conscience

ing in America with enough to start himself in a small business. But the Prince is not bogus; he has the right to stand in the presence of the King of Italy, and best of all he is a Bourbon *sur la côté gauche.* The Vicomte thinks he cost infinitely less than Clandevil cost the Parkers, and Rosalie's wedding this winter in Rome will be much more magnificent, for the Pope will marry her, and the Royal Family will be present. Mrs. Johnson must be *très fière* of her success. But, as Blanche remarked, the extraordinary part of these American marriages is the elasticity of the religious conscience. The Parkers are Baptists, yet Mr. Parker has been restoring Gothic churches, and Miss Parker, who has been "dipped," was married by the Bishop of St. Esau. And Mrs. Johnson, who told me in Lucerne that she belonged to the Plymouth Brethren, after marrying her daughter to a Jew and her granddaughter to a Roman Catholic, will actually receive the Papal benediction! But of course, as I told Blanche, one must be *à la mode*, and that I asked the Bishop of St. Esau at the wedding if he would not

put in a prayer for Paquin in the Litany after "and all the nobility." *A Prayer for Paquin*

Well, my darling, I must say good-night; it is frightfully late, and the champagne that came from the Russian Court that I had this morning, has given me just a wee bit of a *migraine*. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XXIX

The Carlton Hotel
15th November

Darling Elizabeth:

A Rainy Day

YESTERDAY it rained as it only can rain in London in November, and when it stopped for a few minutes there was such a nasty fog. We had breakfast in bed, and did n't get up till quite twelve; it was such a miserable day we did n't know what to do with ourselves, so we went downstairs and sat in that jolly place with the glass roof and the palms, and there was quite a good band playing. There were very few people there, as it is n't the season, but about one o'clock a great many people began to come for lunch. Most of the men looked like Jews, and they all wore gold rings with crests on their little fingers. I am sure they were company-promoters, for presently Lord de Manton arrived with poor, tottering Lord Ardath, and joined some of the Israelite people, and they all

went in to lunch together. Little Dolly Daydreams of the Tivoli drove up in a hansom with that young simpleton, Percy Felton, of the Scots Greys. We could see them through the glass doors as they got out of the cab; she lifted her skirt up to her knee to keep it out of the wet, and he kissed her on the ear right in front of the porter. Lady Ann Fairfax, the war-special, had lunch with six khaki men, and they made such a noise at their table we could hear them laughing where we were. Medina, Viscountess Frogmore, and Mrs. Beverley Fruit came together and sat down near us for a few minutes when they were joined by the Bishop of St. Esau and the three had lunch together. The Viscountess was in deep mourning, her crape veil trailed on the ground behind her, and she looked very melancholy; you know her son fell at Magersfontein. A smart-looking curate, evidently late, rushed up after they sat down. Blanche says she thinks he is a protégé of the Bishop's, he paid the greatest deference to both the Bishop and Lady Frogmore after lunch when they were hav- *At Lunch*

A Conversation

ing coffee outside in the glass place where the band is. I am sure we shall hear of him one of these days.

A lank man, with long hair and a flabby face, and a woman who looked the wife of the editor of a newspaper, took the seats next us vacated by Lady Frogmore and Mrs. Fruit. The man criticised Mrs. Fruit's books; Blanche whispered to me that she thought he must be an unsuccessful author, for he had n't a good word to say for either Mrs. Fruit or her works. The conversation turned on to "An Englishwoman's Love Letters." The woman said she was dying to know who wrote them; the man became quite mysterious, with a could-if-I-would air. She playfully tapped him on the arm with the handle of her umbrella, and guessed *he* was the author. He looked very self-satisfied, and admitted he knew who the author was, but was bound by frightful oaths never to divulge the secret. But the woman would n't believe him; she declared if he had n't written the book, he did n't know who did, for she was constantly hearing people say they knew the

author and the reason he did not wish his identity disclosed. *A Conversation*

Then the conversation drifted on to Exeter Hall, and Labouchere and Stead and the Society notes in the *Daily Sensation*, and the War in South Africa, and the man talked of some poems he had written, and what the critics had said of them, and the woman listened. When he had exhausted himself, the woman began. She talked of high life just like a pocket peerage ; she told anecdotes of Royalty, which she said were perfectly true ; she knew what peers gambled, who married actresses, who were divorced, who had a *ménage* in St. John's Wood, and she knew what peeresses dyed their hair, and where they did it, and what they said and what they thought. She even mentioned Lady Beatrice's name, and said that it was rumoured Tom Carterville had gone back to South Africa, because he was displeased that his mother intended to marry a Low Church curate. Poor Lady Beatrice ! She also mentioned me, and that I was the best dressed woman in Society (dear Paquin), and that it was considered very improper of me

Lunch with the Vicomte

to let you visit at the places you did. I am sure she was the wife of a journalist, for she knew so much more about Society than Society knew about itself or her.

Just as Blanche and I were about to go to lunch, the Vicomte arrived. He looked immaculate and quite good-looking for a Frenchman; he had been inspecting automobiles the whole morning, and he was as hungry as a lion. We had lunch together in a corner, where we could see everybody; after lunch, the Vicomte had an engagement at the French Embassy, but he said he would be back to dine with us, and take us to a music hall. As the weather had mended, I said I would go to Alice Hughes to have my photograph taken, as I should have to pay if I did not keep the appointment; Blanche went to Marshall & Snelgrove to spend the afternoon. While I was waiting at the "studio," old Lady Blubber came in; she showed me her proofs, and was delighted with them. They didn't look the least bit like her; all the flabby rings under her eyes were smoothed out, and her mouth was made straight and the lump taken off the

bridge of her nose. She said she should order three dozen, that they were the best likeness she had ever had taken! After that I went to a tea-shop in Bond Street, and came back to the Carlton to find that Thérèse had taken the afternoon out. As I can't, as you know, do the slightest thing for myself, I was absolutely helpless, so I just got into a wrapper, and read "Gyp" in front of the fire. By and bye Thérèse came; she was spattered with mud as if she had been spending the day in Fleet Street, and she brought with her a strong odour of malt.

Thérèse Takes an Afternoon out

When I scolded her, ever so gently, for going out without leave, she flew into a rage, and wanted to know if I wished a month's notice. Then she began to weep and pity herself, and her cheeks were the colour of lobsters, and she behaved very strangely. I told her to get my bath ready, and she fell asleep while it was filling, and the water overflowed and did no end of damage. I got very angry, and accused her of being drunk, which she indignantly denied, saying she had only been to see her mother who lives in Soho. I sent her to bed after that,

Goes to the Theatre

and Blanche laced me up and did my hair, but I felt like a fright for the rest of the night.

Dinner was rather tame, as there were so few people in the room, but of course one can't expect the season to last all the year round. The Vicomte had, after great difficulty, managed to get seats for "Mr. and Mrs. Daventry." Between the acts we heard people discussing who wrote it, and in fact, it is as much of an enigma as the authorship of "An Englishwoman's Love Letters." Blanche thinks the same person wrote both.

The Vicomte thought the play very "polite," and was astonished that it had created such a sensation. He said we ought to see "La Dame aux Maximes" and "Demie-Vierge," both now running in Paris. We all agreed that the play was thoroughly representative of Society, but the unnatural parts were Daventry's suicide and the elopement of his wife with Ashurst. People don't do these things in our set. The company was excellent, and Blanche and I both wished we were Mrs. Pat Camp-

bell to have love made to us so delightfully every night by young Du Maurier. Even the Vicomte said they did n't do it better in France, and he is sure Du Maurier did it so well, because he was half French.

Supper at the Savoy

We had supper at the Savoy. The usual sight. At a table near us was an actress *très décolletée;* six of our *jeunesse frivole* were squabbling for her smiles. We left before the lights were turned out, because the people behave so badly in the corridor. The Vicomte leaves for Paris to-morrow; he is so much nicer in England than abroad. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XXX

The Carlton Hotel
17th November

Darling Elizabeth:

Elizabeth's Engagement

HAIL, Marchioness of Valmond, all hail! Your letter gave me the greatest possible pleasure. You have made the match I desired for you, and I do not know who deserves the greatest credit for it—you who hooked this fine fish, Octavia who helped you to land it, or I who taught you how to fish, and then sent you to the pool where my lord trout disported himself. But apart from chaffing, Elizabeth, I am sincerely glad for you, because Valmond really seems to love you, and as men go, he will make you a good husband. As soon as your visit to Octavia is over, you must come straight to me; we will go to Paris for the trousseau and to Rome for the winter; a little delay and absence will do Valmond good, and then, darling, we will come to England and start the season with your *noces*, which shall be

done as befits a Marquis and Marchioness of Valmond. *The Bazaar*

He wrote me to-day, as did Octavia; I am replying by this same post to both. Assure them both of my unfaltering affection.

I had intended going back to Monk's Folly, but, since the news in your letter, I have decided to stop in town till you come in a day or two. Blanche sends her congratulations; she has gone home, as Daisy wanted a rest. Mrs. Blaine is on the high road to recovery, and they will most likely go to Rome with us.

Blanche left last night, after going with me to the Bazaar for Distressed Gentlewomen. It was held at Mauve House, lent by the Duke of Mauve, and was under the patronage of the Duke and Duchess, but organised by Mr. Albert D. Beake, editor and proprietor of "White Lies," said to be the most successful of all the Society papers. The Bazaar was opened by Royalty, and Mr. Beake must have cleared a large sum for the Distressed Gentlewomen as well as advertised his paper and juggled himself and wife into Society for once at any rate. His wife

Lady Hildegarde

is the woman I wrote you about the other day, who came to the Carlton to lunch, and talked so much about Society. I said at the time she was an editor's wife. Mr. Beake was everywhere, but his wife had a stall with the Duchess of Mauve, who looked awfully bored.

One of the features of the bazaar was the Stage Stall. Mr. Beake had got most of the best known actors and actresses to take part. It was a huge success; the people were three deep round the stall, crushing to see the professionals; they sold everything. It was rather odd to observe the stall immediately next to the stage one. Lady Hildegarde Merrioneath presided, and was assisted by some young and pretty girls. The crowd did not know who they were, and they hardly sold a thing. Lady Hildegarde, who is the most refined and aristocratic woman I know, with that mixture of Vere de Vere and sweetness which so often marks our best born women, stood in the back of her stall, looking rather amused at the complete desertion of it. Here was the type of the real aristocrat, the real great

lady, and the *parvenus* could n't see it! I felt like telling the people that they were blind and fools, that if they had any taste, any appreciation, any refinement, all the other stalls would be deserted to overwhelm Lady Hildegarde's. Mr. Beake, running about with a china pig in his hands, which he was trying to raffle, noticed that Lady Hildegarde was not a success, and he actually had the impudence to patronise her. I suppose his vulgar commercial head was turned with the thought that the bazaar was his work, and that his wife was side by side with a real live duchess. Lady Hildegarde replied with some conventional remark, and her smile seemed to me more amused than ever, as if it were all very funny and not worth being angry about. For, after all, she was Lady Hildegarde Merrioneath, and Mr. Beake was only Mr. Beake, and his actors and actresses stars whose lights went out. I shall never forget the picture Lady Hildegarde made in her deserted stall, side by side with the crowded booth of the actors. It made me think of the French Revolution, and the

Lady Hildegarde

The Existing Régime

noblesse going to the guillotine in the tumbrils, so far above her surroundings, was Lady Hildegarde.

A little more pushing and shoving and playing the "Charity trick," and Mr. and Mrs. Beake will be like the Vane-Corduroys, if, for all I know, they are not already *rangé*. But, as Blanche said, the sentiments that pervade the mind of Mr. Beake and his kidney are the mainstay of our national life and the existing régime, and it does n't do to guard the portals to the high born too closely. As a future marchioness, I pray you shudder when you read the Sunday papers at Chevenix Castle with the detailed account of Mr. Beake's bazaar.

Blanche and I bought nothing, nor did the few of our set who were there, which as usual left the charity to the crowd.

I saw Blanche off at Paddington, and wished I had decided to go with her; you need not be surprised if you get a telegram from me to-morrow to say I have gone home. It is wretchedly dull by myself, and I can't take Thérèse with me everywhere; besides

I have to come up to my room early, as it is not proper for me to sit in the public rooms by myself at night. *Talks of Marrying again*

Thérèse, in brushing out my hair to-night, asked me why I did n't marry again; she said that she knew men admired me, for one of the Vane-Corduroys' footmen at Shotover had told her I was a woman to drive men mad. Thérèse of course gauges the value of men's admiration from the footman class, but I think I have not yet got to the shady side of beauty, and that perhaps it is just as well Valmond saw you before he met me. As money will never be a consideration, and I have social position, and as I am not yet forty-five, I shall not marry for love, so I shall keep my freedom, which I enjoy so much.

Once again, my darling, I congratulate you, and wish you all happiness. Good-night. — Your dearest Mamma.

LETTER XXXI

MONK'S FOLLY, 19th November

DARLING ELIZABETH:

Home again

SIMPLY could n't endure it in town in November by myself, so came home to-day. Yesterday, after Blanche left, I counted up the things I could do by myself in order to kill time. In spite of London being so big, there are so few things one can do by oneself to amuse oneself. The early post brought me the proofs from Alice Hughes; Paquin comes out splendidly, but I look silly in the one in which I am standing near a balustrade, holding a sheaf of wheat. I have ordered a dozen of myself in a garden, under a lovely old tree, with a stuffed greyhound at my side. It looks awfully natural, and you would never dream I was more than twenty. I thought the proofs had been sent me by mistake, till I recognised my frock, and then when you look at them a long time, you see how really like you they are. They are just the thing to send one's acquaintances.

Lady Sophia Dashton's Novel

The morning was so foggy that I could n't go out, so I put on a very *chic* costume, and sat in the glass-roof place which they call a "garden," and read Lady Sophia Dashton's novel. It is all about the Roman Emperors and the catacombs, and the love of a princess and a slave. The language is so beautiful, and the descriptions are wonderful: they seem as if they would never end, and you forget all about the story. The book has been well reviewed, and Lady Sophia has taken up literature seriously. I have heard she is making a great deal of money out of it. Mr. Beake will publish anything she writes — all the illustrated papers have got her portrait this week — and there are stories of hers now running in two of the leading Society papers. She began to write for pleasure, but has received such encouragement that she decided to win the laurel. Everybody in Society has bought her book. The whole family are talented. Her father's speeches in the House of Lords on the London drains have been edited at 7s. 6d., with the family arms on the cover; the *Times* said they had the "ring of Burke in them," and

Dry Books

Lady Sophia's brother's "Poems in odd Moments," which have appeared in the "Temple of Folly," are to be brought out in book form. I forget the name of Lady Sophia's novel; Mrs. Jack Strawe, in recommending it to me the day of Miss Parker's wedding, said she did n't know the name, and that very few people did, but when ordering it, it was only necessary to mention Lady Sophia Dashton's name, and the bookseller would know what you meant.

I sent Thérèse to Mudie's for it, and told her to ask for any other books that were being widely read, as I like to be posted on what is being talked of. She brought back somebody's work on Aristotle, with an introduction by the Duke of Mauve, and Mrs. Katurah P. Glob's "There is no Death." Mrs. Glob is a Christian Scientist, and states in her preface that she is the seventh daughter of a seventh son. I could only get as far as what she had to say on vaccination; I make out that she preferred to "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," rather than to incur the penalty of the law.

After struggling the whole morning with

Glob and Aristotle and Lady Sophia, and wondering how learned people were, and how they found time to acquire so much knowledge, I had lunch. Crême velours, sole princesse, noisettes Souvaroff, pommes nouvelles, etc., with Félix Boubel, carte d'or, took the dry taste of the books completely out of my mouth. *At the Aquarium*

Having spent such a morning improving my mind at the Carlton, I thought I deserved some relaxation in the afternoon.

Que faire? Should I consult Salambo, the well-known Oriental lady in Bond Street, as to the future? Should I go to Exeter Hall and observe the Ranter on his native heath? Should I go to St. James Hall and revel in Alice Gome's superb voice? I did none of these things; I took Thérèse with me and drove to that popular place of amusement, the Aquarium, as I had never been there, and I wanted to see the fishes. Alas! How sadly we English take our pleasures! The only fish at the Aquarium are some monsters of *papier maché* and a lonely *piscis vulgaris* condemned to solitary confinement in a slimy tank. Thérèse

At the Aquarium

thought she would like to see the sword-swallowers, so I took seats, and while we waited, such a funny man told us he would impersonate celebrities in quick change. He did a lot of men with beards and long hair, and held up bits of cardboard to let us know who they were, and he called himself Meyerbeer and Rossini, and, as Thérèse said, without the cardboard you would n't have known which was which. Then he did Lord Roberts and Baden-Powell and the Prince of Wales; and when I saw him put on his Lord Roberts' wig and jerk the antimacassar off an arm-chair, I knew that he would impersonate the Queen. And he did, and you can have no idea how grotesque it was, and the curtain dropped and nobody applauded.

The sword-swallower did some amazing things, and smacked his lips, as if the swords tasted nice. His wife swallowed an electric light, and then he told us of a trick he could do which no one had ever done before in England, namely, to swallow a sword and hang weights on to the hilt, but he did n't do it, as he said he had a sore throat. I

would n't wait for the lady who dives from a trapeze into a tank, or drop pennies into slots, or have my photo taken while I waited, though I let Thérèse have six shots at a Boer behind a kopje in the shooting gallery, but she nearly killed the attendant after the third shot. *A Rustic Footman*

Thérèse was so frightened, and began to scream in French, that we had a crowd round us in no time, and a policeman came up and took our names. After that I decided the Carlton was the best place for me, till I could get my things packed and go home. When I got back to the hotel, I found some letters and a ten of diamonds on the table in my room. At a loss to know what significance it could have, I asked the porter how it came into my room. He said it had been left by a footman, but I was none the wiser till this morning, when I received a note from the Honourable Mrs. Maxolme, explaining that her footman was a simple honest rustic whom she had brought up from the country with her, and who was new to his duties. She had spent the afternoon paying calls, and before start-

Threatened with Influenza

ing had explained that it was merely a case of leaving cards, and she told the youth to take charge of them and bring a sufficient number. She had paid all the calls, when she suddenly remembered I was stopping at the Carlton and she drove there. The footman gave the card to the porter, and then Mrs. Maxolme drove to a house where she wished to leave two cards, and called the footman and told him. But it seems he had exhausted all he had brought, and horrified Mrs. Maxolme by saying that he had none left, as he had only brought from the ace to the king of diamonds. Poor Mrs. Maxolme has been writing to everybody since to explain, and as she simply could not write personally so many letters, she wrote one and had the rest type-written.

Now, darling, I want you to come home at once and tell Valmond to bring you, as I wish to see him. I don't want to frighten you, but the fogs and the dissipation of attempting the London season in November have made me ill. I arrived here with a sore throat and a backache, and sent at once for Dr. Smart. As I write, I have a mus-

tard-plaster on my chest and my feet in hot water, and I have just swallowed a dose of ammoniated quinine. I think I am in for influenza. I feel a perfect wreck. — Your dearest Mamma. *Threatened with Influenza*

P. S. — Dr. Smart has just left; he says if I will go to bed for forty-eight hours, he will try to let me go to Lady Beatrice's big dinner on Saturday. He is such a dear, and has such white teeth and soft hands, he drove all my fears away with such a pooh, pooh! But when he had gone, I heard Thérèse tell the maid that I was threatened with pleuro-pneumonia and had a chill on the liver. So exaggerative these French! I cannot write any more; my hand is trembling so I can hardly hold the pen, and I believe I am roasting with fever. Bring the tea-gown I ordered at Paquin's when you come. I am longing to see you and Valmond. Don't alarm yourself about me; I am really as hard as nails — and influenza is *à la mode*.

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