

The Saturday "News" Special Foreign Service.



HIGH JINKS IN DUCAL MANSION

Eaton Hall, Magnificent Seat of The Duke of Westminster, Scene of Skylarking.

GUESTS MAKE ROUGH-HOUSE.

Society Belle Who Danced on Dinner Table in Tights and Lost Her Placette in Consequence.

Special Correspondence.

LONDON, Feb. 6.—Occasionally something gets into the papers which sheds an illuminating light on the manners and modes of life of some of the most exalted members of the British aristocracy. Of that nature was the recent nocturnal raid made by the Duke of Westminster's guests at Eaton Hall on the country seat of the Marquis of Cholmondeley. The story of that mock burglary has been told over America. My purpose in referring to it is to call attention to the contrast it suggests between the commonly accepted notion of how the members of a ducal house party conduct themselves and how they really behave. For the incident was typical of the diversions that take place at Eaton Hall.

MAGNIFICENT HOME. Eaton Hall is one of the most magnificent of the stately homes of England. It cost \$10,000,000 and it took 11 years to build it. Last year 20,000 visitors paid 35 cents each for the privilege of going over portions of it, and incidentally contributing to the support of certain local charities. As they wandered through its grand and sumptuously furnished halls and apartments, many of them doubtless imagined that those who dwell amid such splendor must, perforce, be persons of culture and refinement, quite incapable in their daily life of anything approaching vulgarity.

In that assumption they were far wide of the mark. An income of something like \$2,000,000 a year, and nothing in particular to do but spend it, does not make for refinement and culture unless the gods have added to their other bounteous gifts a superior intellect and temperamental outfit. And that neither the duke nor the duchess possess despite the adulatory flattery that is printed about them in the society papers.

High jinks and practical jokes of questionable taste are the forms of entertainment most in vogue at Eaton Hall. It is the favorite resort of those who are known as "society hoodlums." To make a "rough house" of any place where they chance to be staying constitutes their ideal of a real good time. And they did it at Eaton Hall during the recent holiday season, aided and abetted by their host and hostess, notwithstanding that the latter were ostensibly in mourning for Lord Chesterfield, the duke of the duchess, who was killed in the hunting field.

DUKE SAT UPON.

Only once did the duke venture to remonstrate with his hilarious guests. That was on Christmas eve when, during a rough and tumble go-as-you-please romp in the entrance hall, a society dame was knocked down and smashed. "I am blessed if you won't have to pay for that," said Westminster, coming suddenly on the scene. Did his friends express contrition and regret and promise to be more careful? Not a bit of it. The whole crowd made a rush upon him, bound him, and declared that if he didn't say he was sorry for what he had said they would take him out into the park, tie him to a tree and snowball him. And that was the end of the matter. The whole incident was a joke, and the duke was released. He didn't venture any further remonstrances, and by the next morning he was as merry as the merriest of them. And he laughed gaily when, later in the evening, at the suggestion of one of the

titled "Hooligans," washing lines were stretched across the magnificent hall and ladies' garments, flung from their rooms, were hung upon them as though to dry.

HE WAS PUNISHED.

A man of the party who protested that things were being carried a bit too far, was locked in his bathroom Christmas morning and not permitted to leave it until luncheon, and then only after promising that he would "never again make such an ass of himself as to give good advice." But the "goings on" this Christmas were mild compared with some of the scenes that have occurred at the ducal house parties. On one occasion a society belle, for a wager, danced in tights on the dinner table, after the dessert had made its appearance. She won her bet but lost a husband by her performance, for her fiancé immediately broke his engagement with her.

One of the practical jokes played by the Westminster house party took the form of a bogus invitation, sent in the duchess's name, to a certain well-known American woman who has not yet quite "arrived." But for the tact displayed by the duchess it might have proved a most painful experience for its recipient. It was known that the woman in question had made several efforts to get into the duchess's set and it was realized that were she to receive an invitation, however late the hour, she would be sure to come.

SHE MADE A BEE LINE.

A somewhat showy woman lacking knowledge of savoir faire or indeed of the fitness of things, as was anticipated she made a bee line in her automobile to Eaton Hall, bringing with her her pet dog and leaving her maid to follow with her numerous trunks. She arrived about tea-time when high revels were being held, on me, for I intend to keep her in the house for the same length of time that I have invited you." There were cries of "Outside!" and "You dare!" but the duchess held her own.

FLIRTING IN CABS.

A year or two ago there was a memorable cab at Grosvenor House, the town mansion of the Westminsters, and at about 3 a. m., as a man emerged on his way to his own house in Brook street, he saw a whole row of hansom cabs apparently waiting to be hired. On looking into each, however, he found that it was occupied by a couple, "chacun a chacune," complacently smoking cigarettes. The cabbies were sent into the servant's quarters to have drinks so as not to be in the way and the occupants of the vehicles smoked away to their hearts' content. The ringleader of the performance, made each man of the party fork out to the owners of the hansom half a sovereign for his smoke and that of his partner. So all went well.

JOKE ON GLADSTONE.

The Duchess of Westminster would not be her mother's man. Her husband, not glory in the practical joke. Twenty-five or 30 years ago, Mrs. Cornwallis West was the terror of every house or yacht into which she put her foot. Even the late Mr. Gladstone was not sacred from her larks. At a country house she stitched up his night garments so that he could not get into them. Those who participated with her in the joke managed to keep Mrs. Gladstone talking down stairs after her husband had retired and the fun was when the great prime minister came out on the landing calling for Mrs. Gladstone as he always did when in the joke. What she has forgotten he has thought of. Jack Churchill, Winston's younger brother, has also helped her considerably and so has her brother George, who is married to Lady Randolph Churchill.

"WEEK-END."

Italian Duke Fails In His Socialist Scheme.

Philanthropic Nobleman and His American Wife Establish Utopian Community On Their Lombard Estate, But Peasantry, Unable to Stand Prosperity, Kick Over Traces, Costing Duke and Wife Ancestral Estates and \$60,000.

Special Correspondence.

MILAN, Jan. 30.—Americans probably have heard something of the Socialist experiment on Duke Litta's estate in Lombardy and the failure that has overtaken it. The report has been circulated widely that his experience has led him to renounce Socialism. I have his own authority for stating that this is not true. The duke is just as much a Socialist as ever. His belief that Socialism is the only system by which any great improvement in the lot of common humanity can be effected has not been shaken a jot by the failure of his own efforts to found an ideal Socialistic community. Nor have they changed the convictions of his American wife.

EXPERIMENT CAME HIGH.

The duke's experiment has cost him something like \$60,000 and the loss of the bulk of his ancestral property. The man whose faith in theories of human regeneration can survive a practical test of them which has so greatly impoverished him must be of a unique type in this money-grubbing age. Whatever opinion one may entertain concerning Socialism, no one who has mingled much with men can see the duke and converse with him without being impressed by the lofty character of the man, his broad, impersonal outlook on life, his wide learning and the genuineness and sincerity of his desire to do something for the betterment of humanity. He is not the sort of man one can label as a crank and let it go at that.

ADVOCATES SOCIALISM.

Duke Pompeo Litta Visconti-Arese, the last scion of a historic Milanese family, is a man of rare culture and one of the worthiest types of active Italian aristocracy. Inclined to study of the most serious problems of social life before entering the active field of reform with which he is prominently associated, he realized—and in this he has shown himself unlike the attitude of the Italian high class—that travel is one of the surest means of enlarging personal experience and acquiring a broad view of men and things. While on his pilgrimages he made the friendship of Von Wollman and Bebel, the Henry George of Germany and a member of the reichstag, and through them became convinced that Socialism contains in its essence the highest dogma of human progress.

SECURES DIVORCE.

An unfortunate marriage contracted in his youth with Countess Rosa Tarsis precipitated him for a time in domestic complications. It had its epilogue, however, in 1895, when the duke, after living five years legally separated from his wife, brought an action against her to disprove the legal paternity of a child. The case finally carried before the tribunal of Florence, caused a certain scandal, and was decided in favor of the duke, who later secured a divorce. After some time he again married, espousing an American, Miss Perry of Charleston, S. C., who has been his companion in his labors and a sympathetic advocate of the duke's social ideals.

TALENTED AMERICAN WIFE.

The present Duchess Litta, it should be stated, is more than the agreeable helpmate of an intellectual and high-minded man, she is also an author of mark in her own right, having distinguished herself on various occasions in the literary field. Among the books she has given the public is a recent translation into English of the "Fatti della Gloria," of Padovan, and Negri's great work, "Julian the Apostle." As for the duke, he has quite a long

list of literary productions to his credit. Possessed of the faculty of writing well in French and English, as well as Italian, he has contributed widely to magazines and journals. Lately the Nouvelle Revue printed one of his French stories, and within the last few months a London publishing house has brought out one of his romances in English, entitled "The Soul of a Priest," which has been criticized so favorably by the press that it has quickly passed into a third edition. In it the author has given more than a glimpse of his philosophy of life and his views of social reform. At present Duke Litta is engaged in preparing the "Memoires" of the Italian Revolution left by the late Jessie White, which is shortly to appear through the same London firm.

OLD CASTLE RESTORED.

Casale, the village that takes the additional name of Litta through the vast possessions of the duke, is situated only a few miles to the north of the busy capital of Lombardy, and almost on the border of the Milanese province. Above the village—its position evidently had taken the fancy of an old feudal baron through its picturesque as well as strategic position—is the Castle of Litta. This abode of the duke has in its days passed through many vicissitudes. In the year 1668 it had its rugged medieval character reduced to a milder type of architecture, then subsequently became a ruin. When the duke, after wandering about the world, returned to Italy determined to restore his ancestral home and take up his residence there, the scanty part of it that was still habitable was occupied by the family of his bailiff. Now Castle Litta has been brought back to its former splendor, having been restored with so much intelligence and taste as hardly to suggest that only a few years ago it was almost one of those classic ruins which so delight twentieth century lovers of romantic landscapes.

THEORIES IN EFFECT.

The idea of applying his theories to the cultivation system in Italy came to Duke Litta immediately on taking possession of his present home six years ago. The experiment which he put into effect consisted in transforming his domain into an agricultural community regulated by Socialistic tenets. The colony thus established soon became a success. Then it began to decline. And today, at the confession of the duke himself, it is almost a failure. The causes that lately have involved him in endless trouble with his colony and produced such negative results certainly are interesting and instructive.

It was with the purpose of learning from his own life some account of his experiment and the reasons he deduced from it that I applied to the Duke of Casale Litta and was received by him with a courtesy so great as to recall the duke's remark, "I am glad you have lost a great many things, but certainly not that 'grand air' which at times so well completes the gentleman."

Before reaching the castle one already notes the beneficial effect of the duke's efforts. The land is no more the same. Prosperity reigns where once dwelt misery. The peasantry have a different bearing, brutes of the soil, that inspired La Bruyere with one of the most sublime pages in his "Caracteres."

WHY IT FAILED.

Duke Litta, who in appearance does not suggest an Italian, but rather the cosmopolitan intellectual, offered to explain his experiment and the possible reasons for its failure with great courtesy and willingness. He appreciated the outcome of his ventures showed that he is neither a blind fanatic nor an over-enthusiastic theorist, but a reformer of much practical good sense. "The first idea I had when I came here to live," he said, "was to see if it were possible to ameliorate the condition of my countrymen and infuse into them the sentiments of human dignity. Convinced of its possibility, I elaborated a new system in my little world of Castle Litta by which the countryman might become his own master. The first move, naturally, was to do away with the mass of obstacles that Italian farms interpose between the landowner and the man that works for

him. The chief of these obstacles is found in the 'fittabili'—addressees that rent the ground from the owner but do not work it themselves. These, to make the land pay, keep down the wages of their field hands. Having at considerable cost of patience disposed of the 'fittabili' and other parasites that encumbered the land, one could then deal with the case of the actual laborers themselves.

THOROUGH SOCIAL SYSTEM.

"These workers were then united into an independent society which, after paying the landowner a moderate share, worked the ground in the common interest of the society, its members electing their own directors and supervisors, without reference to any outsider. In short, the society was constituted and the syllabus of its rules established in accordance with the new social spirit. The eminent advocate Signor Garavilla was called upon to examine into the legal side of the constitution. I disinterested myself in the administration and placed it entirely in the hands of the society."

The duke then related that at the time when the constitution was adopted the members of the society consisted of 137 families—the sum total of workers on his lands. The heads of these families, meeting, voted for the constitution, formed all its statutes, and the day after the society began its activities. Out of his domain the Duke saved for his own private use only a very small portion of soil.

SERPENT IN EDEN.

"That was six years ago," Duke Litta went on, "and I must say that for a time the colony seemed to conduct itself admirably. The members of the society, through the scheme had acquired new dignity and independence expressed the deepest gratitude. Though I had disclaimed my right to participate in the colony's private life, I was, for advice, considered me in the light of a father, and on more than one occasion I was obliged to arbitrate between them in their differences. Under the new rules they soon realized that prosperity had arrived. The laborer was no more the starving creature who trembled lest his scanty resources would be devoured by greedy speculators. They gradually began, too, to acquire personality and character of their own. Emulation and initiative entered into their spirit, and the colony appeared in every way to thrive. It was then an Eden on earth. Paradise, that unfortunately contained its serpent."

As the speaker touched on this delicate point of his enterprise I thought that I detected a smile on his intellectual face. Not a deprecating smile, but the smile of the philosopher who, knowing man and things, can forget and forgive. Yet if a man has ever experienced the ingratitude of others it is certainly he.

I asked the duke to what he attributed the decline of the colony after such a sanguine beginning.

HORSTILITIES OPEN.

"Our colony progressed harmoniously all about a year ago," he explained, "when hostilities opened through a most casual event. One day while walking in the wood I noticed that certain trees had been cut down by some criminal hand. I appealed to the society to exercise vigilance in seeing that the damage to the woods should not be repeated. I even asked that a fine that had been stipulated in case of any such lack of vigilance be enforced. It was with considerable surprise I was made to realize that the society had no intention to give me satisfaction. I was obliged to place my own guardians in the wood to guard the trees. The society resented my interference. I held that it was perfectly legitimate for me to protect my property on their declining to do so. More damage occurred after this first friction, and I was obliged in the end to resort to law to obtain the acknowledgment of my rights."

TOO MUCH PROSPERITY.

"To this accidental cause of disturbance of the peace other things contributed to bring about a crisis. I must

say that by this time the common fund was much neglected, and some members of the society had begun to lose ambition and the desire of success. This fact is, in my opinion, due to several things. One of them, as I have learned by some experience, was that the Italian laboring class, being unprepared for such a bold experiment, prosperity and comfort in life tended to develop among them an aching passion for luxury without the wish to gain it by hard work. In consequence dissatisfaction became rampant. It is a fact—I should have deemed it illogical before my experience—that prosperity and ease often serve to destroy the sober qualities of a laborer and wither his moral standards. "There was another cause that greatly diminished the hands in our colony. It was the daily exodus of the workers who desert the plow to seek employment in the neighboring factories. Industry of that kind is, as a rule, more remunerative, and as workmen are educated and more fitted for it they do not hesitate to leave the field for the higher wages that trade at large offers. Once the workman seemed to love his employment, to love the soil. But just on the border of Casale Litta there are many factories arising, and the temptation to seek work among them is great."

Duke Litta added that he was not putting a brand on his undertaking, but, as a philosopher, was expressing what seemed to him, after study, were the causes that had produced such a negative outcome.

FUTURE OF COLONY.

When asked what might be his views of the colony's future he became thoughtful.

"It is difficult," he said, "to tell you, for I have not formed an opinion as yet. Considering that I have given the society a legal constitution, it would be impossible to dissolve it. I am no more the owner of my former possessions. Still, I am little disposed to submit to illegals or violence. My countrymen know that I, who elevated them to the position they now occupy, do not hate to terminate an unfortunate state of things. I am, for my part, determined to fight it through to the end. At present my countrymen do not deem even to answer my letters. They are busy with the idea of having become an outsider in the very society that has its origin in me. But naturally, if the society intends to do away with all responsibility and no longer respect its obligations, the matter must be decided by the courts."

Summing up the case, I asked if his sad experience had caused him to lose faith in his social theories.

HIS FAITH UNSHAKEN.

"No," he replied unhesitatingly. "Notwithstanding the failure of the experiment my faith in the principles it involves remains unshaken. A private enemy of myself was good for five years of prosperity enjoyed by the little community. If prosperity in a way was the cause of its downfall it is only for the reason, as I have said, that the Italian laborer is not yet so constituted that he meets it properly. When he comes to understand that new rights invariably impose new duties, then the realization of my scheme will be easy enough. The workman of Italy is not to be blamed; one must remember that he has lived in a state of abject slavery, under corrupted rule of overseers, victims of an unscrupulous system of husbandry. Let his consciousness once develop, his character evolve, and the colony idea will be a success."

HOPE IN THE FUTURE.

"The times are not quite ripe yet here in Italy for my experiment," concluded the duke. "Yet in the end my dream of a society will be fulfilled. It may be here at Casale Litta or elsewhere; but they will, I am assured, eventually come true. I hope to live to see the new day. The future is the child of better conditions for all the world."

As he spoke his parting words there was a light, a little sad, perhaps, on Duke Litta's face. It was evident, indeed, that the collapse of his humanitarian scheme was not to be attributed to him. He had waged a grave battle for civilization on its dispossessed property, and if he had lost, it was due solely to those he had benefited too much. The pettiness of human nature had conquered by methods against which greatness and nobility of intent cannot always remain secure. Duke Litta suggested to me the figure of a Gulliver overcome by the snarles of Lilliputians; he had been able to meet the grand issues of the scheme, but even strength fails before the subtleties of passive resistance, the subtleties of the low demagogue, the blind malice of the mean. It was through these things that the colony of Casale Litta failed. NOEL VANCE.

BIG SQUABBLES; TRIVIAL CAUSES

English Church Finds Much to Do Besides Teaching Great Lessons.

SOME GLARING INSTANCES.

How Bishops and Vicars Rule Supreme in Affairs, With Which They Have No Logical Connection.

Special Correspondence.

LONDON, Feb. 2.—There has just occurred a striking example of that spirit of intolerance in the Church of England which contributes so much to the growth of the feeling in favor of disestablishment. The Right Rev. Father in God, Edgar Charles Sumner Gibson, bishop of Gloucester, has withdrawn the license of an aged minister for the heinous offence of conducting religious services in a dissenting chapel, and refusing to promise that he would not do it again.

WHO LOCKETT IS.

The Rev. W. Lockett is 50 years old. For more than 50 years he has served the church faithfully to the entire satisfaction both of his parishioners and his ecclesiastical superiors. After having held his last living for a quarter of a century he retired to Sheepcombe to spend the evening of his days and was licensed by the bishop of Gloucester as an occasional preacher in the diocese.

MUCHLY CHEWED BONE.

All went well with him until some months ago when the rectory of the parish in which he served and worshipped changed hands. The new incumbent belonged to the High Church party and introduced various rites and ceremonies into the service. Many contend that such practices are diametrically opposed to the doctrines of the Church of England. It is one of those subjects which pious folk within the fold are always squabbling about. Mr. Lockett could not abide ritualism and he ceased attending the church. Having nowhere else to go and worship being essential to him he attended the Non-conformist chapel and finally was prevailed on to assist occasionally at the services.

BISHOP GETS BUSY.

That brought the bishop down upon him hard. The authority which a bishop can exercise over the clergyman within his diocese is extremely limited. According to the Rev. W. Clarke, a servant of the church who clamors loudly for its reform, a minister may go so far as to hire a curate at a small salary to do all his work for him and take life as easy as he pleases, and his bishop, meanwhile, can do nothing to compel him to discharge the duties for which he may be paid a generous stipend. But participation in Nonconformist worship comes under the head of those things over which the bishop can exercise disciplinary power. And so when Dr. Gibson heard what Mr. Lockett was doing he proceeded to read the ecclesiastical riot act to him.

LOCKETT'S VIEW.

"I am too old to go to a distant church," wrote Mr. Lockett in reply. "What was I to do? Ought I to have spent the rest of my days without any religious service? Being driven to that chapel, and as I never heard anything there that was not strictly in accordance with the Bible, why should I hesitate to take part in its services? More than 50 years ago I was ordained to preach the gospel, and by God's help I mean to preach the gospel as long as I am alive."

IS RULED OUT.

Which as the bishop can't stop him, he will doubtless continue to do. But (Continued on page fourteen.)