

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1899.

GLIMPSSES OF ENGLAND.

It is not every day that one is invited to call upon a Countess, and when this Countess happens to be the most beautiful woman in England and lives in the handsomest castle in this land of palaces and castles, any one would accept with a good deal of pleasure. A note to the Countess of Warwick, asking for information, had brought a cordial invitation to come and see her. On the day appointed the Leamington morning paper said that she was seriously ill, but I decided the proper thing would be to call and leave a card. Going up through a wonderful long and ivy-grown avenue cut out of the solid rock, into the great inner court of Warwick Castle, encircled by magnificent towers and walls, I rang the bell at the main entrance, and to my surprise the footman announced that her Ladyship was expecting me. While waiting, I went out on the stone veranda which overhangs the Avon, flowing many feet below, and gazed on a scene which hardly could be surpassed. The weir with its rushing waters, the moss-covered arches of a ruined stone bridge, a wooded island, the fine park stretching miles away, and, overlooking all, the massive walls of Warwick Castle which have stood unshaken for six hundred years.

Soon a white-capped maid appeared and leading the way up the veritable 'winding stairs,' which one always associates with old castles, ushered me into her Ladyship's bedroom, a lofty and spacious apartment filled with all that is beautiful, artistic and luxurious. I had seen the Countess in full evening costume and in a most becoming gown at a garden party, but never did she seem one-half so lovely as lying among the white pillows under the tall silken canopy. Her rich auburn hair was a mass of soft little puffs and curls, her complexion perfectly dazzling and the faint shadows under her eyes deepened their violet tint. Feminine readers will like to hear about the exquisite negligee of pink silk, the full puff sleeve coming only to the elbow, all over laid with fine lace caught up with innumerable bows of narrow pink velvet ribbon. The wide lace fell over her arms, one encircled by a bracelet of small diamonds and sapphires, the other by several delicate gold 'bangles.' The picture was completed by a bedspread of pale green silk covered with lace. I am compelled to say that Aphrodite was not 'in it.'

There were books everywhere, by the bed a little table with portfolio and writing materials, and on the seafoam counterpane a big basket filled with the days mail which she was trying to read, for the Countess is by no means a woman of leisure. In addition to the great pressure of social duties, she is interested in a number of enterprises, chiefly for the benefit of women and indirectly for that of the agricultural classes. She is in a broad sense, a Socialist and believes thoroughly in the education of the masses, and in the training of women to be self-supporting. It was extremely interesting to listen and watch her as, half-reclining with her pretty elbow in the pillow, she expounded, in her soft musical voice, the exact theories I had so often heard advocated from the platform in the most uncompromising of republics, women whose faces bore the marks of sad experience of the evils they denounced, whose claim to nobility rested solely upon personal character and not on inheritance. From several points of view it was a pleasant hour. The Countess is most desirous of going to the United States and asked many questions as to the places of interest and the best season of the year. 'Do you mean for social festivities or for sight-seeing?' I asked. 'O, to see the country,' she said. 'Society is much the same everywhere.' We spoke of the novel just written by the beautiful young Duchess of Sutherland. 'It never can be popular among the masses,' she said, for it is purely socialistic. 'Not in England, perhaps,' I answered, 'but in America the socialistic question is vital and all-prevailing.' 'It ought to be everywhere,' she replied earnestly.

As I went down the winding stairs I thought if 'walls have ears,' how strange must these sentiments sound to those of Warwick Castle, one of the great feudal strongholds of the ages, for whose posses-

sion many a bloody battle had been fought and in whose mouldy dungeons many a prisoner had lingered and died, innocent of all but political offences. A few days later, when the Countess had gone to London, I went over to see the castle, and found that according to promise an order had been left that the private, or 'living' rooms of the family were to be shown, which are never open to the public. They are very handsome and luxurious, with their rich velvet carpets, the walls of each room hung with brocade silk to match the rare furniture, and a wealth of books, pictures and costly articles of bric-a-brac, a perfect type of an old ancestral home.

Warwick is perhaps the most interesting of the historic towns of England, holding fast to its ancient buildings and antique customs, but these can be enjoyed in a much greater degree of comfort if the traveller make his headquarters at Leamington, two miles distant. It is the Saratoga of England, or one of the Saratogas, for the country is rich in mineral springs. Hawthorne lived here for a long time and described it as 'the coziest nook in the world,' and always in flower. Charles Dickens in 'Dombey and Son' has Mr. Carter and Edith Granger meet first in Holly Walk, Leamington. It is green all winter with charming parks and public gardens, clean and healthful, purely a residence city of perhaps 25,000 inhabitants. Although its springs have been visited by invalids for 400 years, it has a modern and up-to-date appearance. When you start out for your first drive the coachman pauses before a great oak tree encircled by an iron fence and says solemnly, 'The exact centre of England.' And so it is, with the sweetest drives this side of Paradise to Stratford, Rugby, Coventry, Guy's Cliff and to that grandest of all ruins, Kenilworth Castle. In half an hour's time you can go from a new world into an old, from the present into the past, and that past, too, which contains most of historical interest to English speaking people.

There is however, no spot in all England so full of living, breathing, human attraction as Oxford. We see here, indeed the work of hands and brains which passed out of life nearly a thousand years ago, but upon the foundations which they laid are built the vital institutions of today. Oxford University is one of the greatest educational centres in the world. How different the feeling with which we regard the black and time-stained walls of Merton, Magdalen, St. John's and the other colleges from those inspired by ancient castles and cathedrals. It is true that these college foundations were laid in sectarianism, that within these walls were waged the fiercest of religious wars, but here has been also the foundation of English intellectual life and the source of a revolution in religious thought. The transforming force is still at work. Some one has said that the present age in Oxford is one of collapsed opinions. There have been periods of action and of reaction, but each has resulted in bringing the University into a broader existence. Its huge collection of schools of science, history, philosophy, theology are an immense reservoir from which thousands of students drink daily draughts of learning, and eventually go forth to lighten society.

No one can visit this great University and not feel profoundly stirred by the sight of the fresh vigorous young life coursing in and out its college walls. There is no finer sight than the vast University Park filled with hundreds of students engaged in various athletic games and other hundreds cheering and shouting their appreciation. Nothing can be more interesting than stroll down the 'Broad Walk,' bordered by great elm trees, to the River Isis, where the long rows of college barges are moored and scores of sturdy young fellows are skimming the water in their swift boats. There is something in the very atmosphere which quickens the pulse and drives away pessimistic thoughts. Whatever must be omitted in a trip to England, let it not be Oxford University.

Wherever the traveller goes he returns ultimately to London, for all other places are within such little radius. It hardly seems the same city which a few months ago was so full of warmth and sunshine.

The black smoke rises from countless thousands of chimneys and drops down to meet the fog which rolls up the Thames and finds its way into every narrow crooked street. The English do not know what it is to have a fire which warms the farthest corners of the room. Like the natives of our own Florida and California they know there is no danger of freezing to death, and so they huddle over their little handfuls of coal and shiver through the winter while counting the days till spring. Halls are never heated, and not always the bedrooms of well-to-do families. Coal of 'the coals' as they say here, is no more expensive than in the United States, and it would not require nearly so much, or so many, to produce abundant warmth, as the cold here is not so intense, but the English are very 'close' in more ways than one. They have a funny custom, after poking the fire, of standing the poker against the grate with the end pointing up the chimney, which they insist makes the fire 'draw.' Another belief, which you cannot shake, is that the sun puts out the fire, and whenever the blaze gets low they pull down the curtain.

It is never of the least use to rise early in order to get in a good day's work. The streets of London at 9 o'clock resemble those of America at 7. Stores are being opened, traffic barely commencing, lines of employees going to their business, the city just beginning to stir. Banks and various offices do not open until 10 o'clock, and the heads of firms do not go down until that time. They move slowly everywhere and for all purposes. Nobody ever hurries. I often have taken a bundle away from a salesman and carried it home without being tied, not because of any special haste, but lest I should lose my balance if I watched his movements any longer. One really ought to carry a book to improve her mind as she rides up and down in the elevators. One day, when I had waited in the upper story of a large dry goods store till patience was worn out, I asked the elevator man what made him so long coming. 'I was just waiting for the lift to fill up,' he said. Invariably they will tell you, 'We have tried the high pressure lifts and our people won't have them.' Everywhere you see two or three persons doing what one does easily in the United States. If we had been as slow as they are here, New York would still be a frontier trading post.

In America the people want the latest and best. Here they resent an innovation of any kind. There is a great outcry whenever an ancient building is pulled down. They would much rather see an old block patched and propped up than replaced by a new one, no matter how elegant. The streets of London are lighted by flickering gas because the people prefer it to electricity. You see a rumor occasionally that some American company is going to put in an electric street railway here. It will—when the New Zealanders sit on London Bridge. There was a statement to the effect a short time ago, and the Pall Mall Gazette came out at once with a leading editorial in opposition, saying, 'We are perfectly satisfied with the omnibus system which has served us so well so many years.' It then goes on to show how in case of a fire the street cars could not get out of the way, while the 'busses,' running on more flexible lines' could easily do so. They will continue to run for many years yet but not for this reason. There are about one thousand three hundred of these vehicles, slow, shabby, lumbering affairs, unventilated inside and difficult to mount outside, improved but little in the last century. The recent semi-annual meeting of the company owning them showed that during the past six months they had carried 97,006,000 passengers. Fares range from two cents to twelve cents, and, outside the city, twenty-five cents, a distance for which New Yorkers pay a nickel. A yearly dividend of 10½ per cent is paid. The company will hardly move to abolish the system and it will never occur to the people to demand anything better. There is, however, a measure of salvation in the 'bushings,' or two-wheelers, of which there are about twenty thousand. They make a trip of two miles for a shilling, and it goes decidedly against the grain when one returns to

the United States to pay the carriage hire demanded there.

An ancient idea, which has no foundation now, whatever it might have had in the past, is that the English people are stiff, unsocial and difficult to become acquainted with. They are quite as approachable as well-bred Americans. In travelling they are always ready to begin a conversation, and in hotels and boarding houses they meet one full half-way and are even more cordial than people of the United States in offering their addresses and urging that you visit them in their locality. Among the lower stratum there is no such general intelligence as among a similar class in America. They cannot convey information because they do not possess it and they seem stupid, reticent and disagreeable, but most likely this is because one does not understand them. The educated and cultured English people are delightful to know. The men, I think, mean to be irreproachable in manners, but they have not that quick, responsive courtesy which characterizes American men in their acquaintance with women. There is not so much comradeship and sympathy between the sexes. In self-reliance and independence the English woman is about where her sister across the sea was thirty years ago. I may say, sub-rosa, that I think she would not be very attractive to the American man. He would miss something—indeed, perhaps—which appeals to him in his own country woman. Her voice is lower pitched and fuller, but not by any means so soft and sweet as we have been led to believe. The loudest voices I ever have heard have been those of English women, and there is also a certain type of them more aggressive and determined than can be found anywhere else. As a rule, however, they are extremely subservient to men, and since the latter are rather a scarce commodity, they place a remarkable high estimate upon themselves, which the women accept. The young English girl is very pretty, especially as to complexion, and has many charming little ways, but she is utterly without the poise and cleverness and piquancy which render the American girl so attractive. And yet, it must be confessed, that the latter has some things to learn from her English cousin, of old-fashioned modesty, dignified reserve and courteous regard for older persons.

No one can meet and talk with the English people and not be thoroughly convinced of their admiration and friendship for Americans. They have really an exaggerated idea of their capabilities and achievements, and of the wealth and power of the country. Uncle Sam has proved an proved an equal match in what John Bull considers the greatest objects of life—making money and winning battles. He now regards America as one does a poor relation who has come into a fortune. The ties of kinship have suddenly become strong. England fears but one danger—a coalition of European powers, France and Germany, or Russia and France, might threaten her supremacy. 'In that case,' I have heard this said again and again—'of course we should expect the United States to come to our assistance and fight by our side.'

BRITISH ARMY BEARSKINS.

The Imposing Headgear That Could be Obtained Only in America.

For more than 130 years 'a tall hat of fur' has been a conspicuous article of headgear in the British army, and it was with something of a shock that people read in the papers the other day that a committee was going to sit to consider the growing scarcity of the bearskins from which are made the imposing full-dress hat of the foot guards.

War Office committees on clothing are dreadful things, but those who sit on hats are unalterable. Everybody remembers with horror the alleged helmet which such a committee produced a few years ago. It was to be the universal head-covering of the British Army, and must be serviceable and useful. The committee decided, as a first principle, that an article possessing these two qualities must be ugly. Proceeding from this premise, they gave full expression to their ideas of utility, and produced a head-covering, the like of which was never seen before on earth, and it is to be hoped never will be again. There are members of the headquarters staff, who to this day have not quite got over the sight of the experimental helmet devised by the committee. Fortunately, only one was made, or instead of only having to lament the scarcity of recruits, the nation would have found itself without any army whatever. No regular soldier or self-respecting militiaman—a volunteer will

wear anything—would have put it on, and its adoption into the service would have left no service to wear it.

This much is necessary to explain the alarm felt the other day when it was announced that a War Office headgear committee was about to tamper with the guardsmen's bearskins. Fortunately the committee has only limited powers. Its only function this time is, so to speak, to haggle with tradesmen. The plain fact is that bearskins are growing scarce, and the cost of providing the guards with their magnificent 'tall hat of fur' is increasing yearly in a remarkable manner. Only one kind of fur is used for this purpose. It is that produced by the American black bear and as *Ursus Americanus* despite the extraordinary cordiality subsisting between the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race, refuses to produce well-furred integument in sufficient quantities to cover the heads of our guardsmen at a reasonable rate, the never failing resource of a committee has been called into operation.

It costs, on an average, £1 a head per annum to maintain the imposing appearance impaired by the busby. The great caps cost the government about £8 each. Those worn by the cold streams are a little less, but those for the Grenadiers and the Scots Guards cost more than that sum. According to the regulations, a busby must last for eight years, but there are several reasons why the regulation 'life' of a busby, like the regulation life of a whole lot of other equipment, falls considerably short of the war office span. One of the principal reasons is that the cap is only a home service equipment. When a guards battalion is ordered on foreign service the big busbys—stirring battle pictures to the contrary notwithstanding—are returned to the store at the Pimlico clothing factory. They are not kept there waiting the return of their former owners, but are reassigned to newly joined recruits or to battalions returning home, so that men get what is called 'part worn equipment.'

JOUBERT TO BRITISH GENERAL.

A Story of Majuba Hill He Told While Here as Henry George's Guest.

Those who met Gen. Joubert when he was in this city a few years ago as the guest of Henry George recall him as a plain-faced old man with a mass of black hair streaked with gray and a full, grizzled beard. He spoke English, but his wife, a woman prematurely aged with domestic toil, spoke nothing save Dutch, and sat patient, though unmistakably bored at the affairs to which she and her husband were invited. With the father and the mother was a strapping son of sixteen or thereabouts, who strongly resembled Joubert.

The old General told with modesty of his negotiations with the British at Majuba Hill, and his eyes sparkled as he recited his reply to the British commander-in-chief.

'It does not comport with these,' said the British General, pointing to the decorations on his breast, 'to accede to your terms.'

To which said Joubert, pointing to his rifleman, 'And it does not comport with those to offer any others.'

Joubert's best story, as illustrating the perils of South African life was concerning the loss of a somewhat savage but valued cook, who was bodily carried off from the kitchen by a lion.

Over the Falls.

A Wisconsin paper reports an Indian's remarkable escape from death. He was one of a driving crew that broke a big jam above Sturgeon Falls. He attempted to cross the river on a log, and to the horror of the spectators, was carried over the falls. The falls are forty feet high, and consist of two piteches and the rapids. Of course the man was given up for dead, and the driving crew thought it useless to search the river for his body, as the logs were piling over the falls at a rapid rate. The next morning, however, the Indian walked into camp for breakfast. He had been swept down the river and up against the bank, where he managed to crawl out. Finding only a few scratches and bruises, but being as he remarked, 'rather tired,' he lay down and slept until daylight, and was none the worse for his adventure.