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A PRESENTATION AT COURT.

## AN EVENING AT COURT.

BY LADY WILLIAM LENNOX.



HE day arrived. Pouring rain. The evening ditto, so that it was a matter for consideration how, without an awning from the hall door to the carriage, I could make the crossing and yet not spoil some of my "brave attire." However, the moment came—and the umbrella—and a rug underfoot; and at 8.30 I started with a friend for the Palace, both of us congratulating ourselves on being in such good time. But as we drove on and on past other carriages, finally taking up our position behind the last-comer,

misgivings crossed my mind with respect to the earliness of our start, and we began to wonder whether, after all, there might not be some difficulty about finding chairs disengaged, in which event—but I declined to let my thoughts dwell on the possible standing, and hoped for the best. We proceeded on our way with the usual jerks, as the horse was suddenly pulled up with his nose touching the back of the next carriage, and at last we drove through the Palace gates and drew up under the awning. Got out and crossed the great hall to the cloak-room, to leave our wraps and take an extra glance at ourselves, and then went up the grand staircase—guarded by Beefeaters in their quaint costume—in the midst of a rustling crowd of trains, feathers, silks, velvets and every sort of beautiful material set off by jewels and exquisite lace.

"To the right," said one of the ushers in dark blue coat and gold lace, white breeches and silk stockings, and to the right we went, walking through one state saloon after another, all lofty and well-proportioned and brilliantly lit by big chandeliers with "electric" candles. At length we came into a large apartment with dark but yet bright green walls, fine oil paintings, vaulted ceiling in white and gold, and chairs and couches covered with crimson satin. This last fact only discovered later, as, when we arrived, nothing could be seen of any seats, only their occupants, and a crowd of those who wished, but vainly, to occupy them. My misgivings took shape then, and I saw that our early start was not early enough, if we wanted chairs, but the mistake could not be rectified then.

This green drawing-room opened into a crimson-walled short corridor, or ante-chamber, leading straight to the ball-room, now the throne-room, and reserved for persons having the *entrée*, besides, of course, those who are to be presented. These latter do not go through the same suite of rooms as the company in general, who merely attend the Court, but are taken to another apartment, from whence they pass by a corridor to the throne-room, and possibly never meet the ladies who present them at all, except in the case of unmarried girls presented by their mothers, who are required to be with them.

We remained standing in the large drawing-room, speaking to anybody we knew, looking at the pictures, and watching the gentlemen ushers in their smart costume as they went to and fro, or, now and then, a scarlet-coated official passing by, when I espied a small corner of a couch vacant, and forthwith sat down, turning a deaf ear and stony eye to sundry mutterings and frowns indulged in by the woman next me, who apparently considered the seat her own especial property. My views did not agree with hers, however, and so I stuck to my small haven of refuge, and being then at rest as regarded body, I was able to look about me with a more equal mind, and thoroughly enjoyed the brightness and beauty of the scene. But it was only preliminary to the gorgeousness of what was coming.

Presently with clank of steel, in scarlet uniform and

white plumes, appeared the King's Bodyguard of Gentlemen-at-Arms, marching to take up their position in the Throne Room; and then, almost immediately, came the Ambassadors and *Corps Diplomatique* generally, and the Indian Princes now in London, walking in a long procession up the room, all countries represented in all costumes and all colours—a perfect blaze of splendour. Eastern fabrics were there, heavy with gold embroidery or sparkling with jewels, chains and aigrettes of diamonds, and gems of all hues and descriptions catching the light as their wearers moved along. Oriental robes and European uniforms, covered with stars and orders, alike dazzled the sight, some among the former having a singular effect to Western eyes. The two Maharaji wore splendid garments, and the Maharani's small figure was enveloped in white gauze, gold-embroidered at the edge, two tiny white satin-covered feet peeping out below.

The Chinese Ambassador was clothed in blue silk, with the usual cap and pigtail standing prominently out behind, and was accompanied by several of his own people, one of whom wore what seemed to be a bunch of flowers on each side of the head. But perhaps the most picturesque and uncommon-looking personages in this remarkable procession were those composing the bodyguard of one of the Indian potentates. So magnificent, each man might have been a king, as they strode along, their dark fierce faces, eyes like live coals, and masses of black hair, set off by large white turbans, and their warlike air intensified by the curved scimitar and bright round shield carried by each one. Certainly there was that in their appearance which made the bare idea of offending them quite terrific, and overpowered the sense of the ludicrous which otherwise might have been roused by the incongruous finish to their costume, neither more nor less than a very full pleated white muslin petticoat, which stuck out almost like a fan, and had the most curious effect.

After these came a group of tall men clad in light yellowish garments and black fur caps worn so much on one side that, as they passed, I thought they had an abnormal growth of hair on the cheek, and only when I saw the back of the head did I discover the truth. Who they were, or who a great many others were, is more than I can say. I wanted somebody at my elbow to act as guide-book to the moving picture. All I do know is that it was the most beautiful and interesting spectacle possible to be imagined, and one never to be forgotten.

Soon after this a sort of stir in the air gave token that the King was coming, and we all stood up. A number of scarlet-coated officials first appeared, followed by the lords-in-waiting, walking backwards, and I admired the ease with which they performed this difficult feat, and avoided cannoning into each other during the long progress up the room.

Then the great moment of the evening arrived, and the King and Queen passed slowly on, followed by the Prince of Wales and many other members of the Royal Family, and attended by a brilliant suite. It was a "sight for sair een" indeed. The fine room, lined round the walls by a crowd of people about three deep, everyone in Court dress, and many with diamond tiaras and necklaces, all making low curseys as their Majesties passed, bowing and smiling in return; the bright light, the various colours, last, and greatest, the King, looking so well in his Field Marshal's uniform, and the Queen, lovely as always, wearing a train and under-dress of mauve satin veiled with gold Indian embroidery, a crown of diamonds, and splendid ornaments in emeralds and rubies. The sight was beautiful.

Slowly the procession moved on, her Majesty's long train held up by pages, and entered the Throne Room, when two of the Beefeaters placed themselves on guard with crossed halberds before the ante-chamber, and we all resigned ourselves to wait till the presentations were over

and the Royalties would appear again. It seemed a long time, but there were a good many presentations, and at last some of the *Corps Diplomatique* came through, and then the Beefeaters made a line down the middle of the room, and the King and Queen, in procession as before, entered and made the tour of the apartment, finally retiring through another door at the end.

That was the signal for a general move to supper, which was excellent, I know; but the amount of standing had tried me, and I preferred to subside upon a belated chair, which by good fortune I found, rather than tax my powers of endurance any further, especially as there were still the

descent into the hall and cloak-room and the inevitable wait for the carriage to be reckoned with. It rained hard still, so we could not go out to catch the first glimpse of the carriage, although I did observe some hardy souls—and bodies—calmly braving the damp atmosphere and the uncurling of their three feathers, while they waited outside to hear that shout of "Lady" or "Mrs. So-and-So's carriage," which galvanises the most inert of beings into life for the moment. That welcome sound reached our ears after a while. We plunged through the crowd regardless of everything but getting out, jumped into the carriage, and so, as Pepys would say, "home to bed."

## OUR PUZZLE POEM REPORT.

### SOLUTION.

#### LOVE-LIGHT.

The glow-worm in the hedge at night,  
The dew-drop in the morning,  
The fire-flies with their wings of light  
The darkest night be-scorning,  
The diamond in her ring so bright  
My true love's hand adorning—

The very stars so far on high  
That down to earth are gazing—  
None have the love-light of her eye  
When she her lids is raising;  
And when in mine they shine—then I  
Rejoice in love amazing!

### PRIZE WINNERS.

#### *Ten Shillings Each.*

A. Carr, Hornsey, N.  
Mary I. Chislett, Sibstone, Atherstone.  
Margaret A. Fisk, Stoke Poges, Slough.  
Amy M. Henderson, Thames Ditton.  
R. P. Keene, Wood Green, N.  
A. Kilburn, Penkridge, Staffs.  
J. E. Kingham, Brondesbury, N.W.  
Annie G. Luck, Tunbridge Wells.  
Annie and Susie Manderson, Crumlin, Co. Antrim.  
Fred. Wm. Southey, Gosforth, Newcastle-on-Tyne.  
Thos. A. F. Tyrrell, Ramsgate.  
Nellie M. Dartford, S. João do Estoril, Lisbon.  
May Malone, St. John's, Antigua.

#### *Equal with Prize Winners.*

Eliza Acworth, Edith M. Younge, Nora Sullivan (Upper Burma).

#### *Most Highly Commended.*

Hubert J. W. Adamson, Murray J. Bell, Clara S. Berry, Mary Bolingbroke, F. Chute, J. J. Coulthard (China), M. Hodgkinson, Margaret A. J. Hunter, Elsie M. Jay, E. S. Keene, H. E. Klein, Nellie Meikle, Elsie M. Mellor (Australia), Emily Milnes, A. Scouter, Annie Simpson, Mrs. Stewart, Florence Whitlock, Mary Woodcock, M. A. Woodhead.

#### *Very Highly Commended.*

Florence M. Abraham, May Adamson, Emma Adcock, Mrs. F. Adcock, Mrs. Annesley, Annie Arnold, Mary Arnold, Annie A. Arnott, Elsie S. Bale, Miss Bellhouse, Lily Belling, Amy Briand, M. Brindley, Robert P. Brown, A. W. Browne, Ethel F. Burr, M. Cannon, Dr. E. T. Carlyon, Miss Chambers, Rev. J. Chambers, Alice J. Chandler, Rebecca Clarke, Ruth A. M. Clarke, L. Clews, Edith M. Coles, M. M. Collard, M. G. Collins, A. M. Cooper, Mary Cox, M. A. C. Crabb, Edith Cutler, M. Cerise Deane, J. G. Dunham, Nellie Eachus, Winifred Eddington, C. M. A. Fitzgerald, Nellie Fox, Mrs. M. A. Freegard,

B. E. Frowde, Fredk. Fuller, S. E. Gandy, Agnes Glen, Mrs. W. H. Gotch, E. E. Grundy, Arthur J. Harris, E. M. Higgs, R. H. Holloway, Helena Hooper, J. Hunt, A. M. Hutchens, May Jackson, M. E. Jowett, E. M. Jupe, Eva Kelsey, Mabel G. Kelsey, W. S. Lambert, Eliza Learmount, Alicia Lindsay, Florence Martin, M. C. McCutcheon, Jas. McDunnough (Germany), E. C. McMasters, M. E. Messenger, F. M. Morgan, Robert Murdock, M. K. Murphy, Chas. A. Murton, Grace Neve, Mrs. Nicholls, Margaret Nisbet, L. H. Nott, Emily Nunn, Mrs. Hastings Ogilvie (India), Phyllis Pearson, E. E. Peck, M. A. Pentlow, E. M. Price, F. A. Prideaux, F. A. Roberts, May Ruttonji (India), A. P. Sargent, C. L. Simco, Clement M. Scott, A. C. Sharp, Ethel Sharp, Helen Shilstone (Barbados), Isabel Snell, N. H. Sullivan, Emily A. Suttaby (Canada), Annie Tatham, Nancy Treffry, L. Trotman, A. K. True, W. F. White, Margie Whittingham, G. S. Wilkins, Minnie Wilkins, Emily Wilkinson, Evelyn R. Wills, May E. Wood, Annie W. Young, Helen B. Younger.

#### *Highly Commended.*

Maud Abbott, Mrs. Acheson, Edith Barnes, Gertrude Biddlecombe, Mrs. Dora Clarke, May Clegg, Hannah F. Corke, Ethel E. Dives, A. H. Fiske (Australia), Lois B. Gardner, Mildred W. George, F. M. Goodchild, Hilda Grahame, Annie Guildford, Nina C. Hay, Dora Holland, Mrs. B. Hope, Nellie O. Hopwood, Annie F. R. Jackman, H. M. Jarvis, Elsie L. Kitching, Mina Knop (India), Louise M. McCready, Agnes M. McGregor, Constance M. Mallandine, Mrs. Marrett (India), Mary G. Marten, Mrs. C. A. Martin, Vera C. Robinson, Bessie L. Rowe, Florence Sandell, L. Short, Agnes L. Simpson, F. B. A. Skelton, Mrs. E. E. Smith, Gertrude Smith, Harry Sturgess, Miss Talbot (Bermuda), Ellen C. Tarrant, Bettie Temple, Hilda V. Tyrrell, E. J. Tullett, Mabel M. Watts, Millicent Utting, C. E. Vowles, L. Constance Walker, Eleanor Witcher, Olive Williams.

### EXAMINERS' REPORT.

Had it not been for the hen wandering about in a mine, we should have found much difficulty in awarding the prizes. Between thirty and forty solvers discovered the true solution, the others made various guesses, the most common being "in the night" and "in the dark," both of which we accepted as second best. "When in rage," however fierce the appearance of the fowl, could not be accepted as a good reading; nor could "When in glee," because of the marked absence of joyfulness in the depicted bird. "When perturbed" and "When in grief" suggest a heartlessness of conduct meriting the severest censure. Why should "I rejoice in love amazing" because my lady-love's eyes shine with grief or in perturbation? One other reading, "And when they coyly shine," lacks nothing in sentiment, but how can it be evolved from the puzzle?

It was very odd to find several competitors tripping over the *herring* in the fifth line; and, indeed, "topaz," "seap-pearl," "jewels," and other precious stones were suggested