

THE ESTERHAZY JEWELS.

CONSIDERABLE excitement has been created lately in England by the exhibition of a large collection of jewels formerly belonging to the late Prince Paul Esterhazy. The mania for collecting diamonds was a peculiarity in this great family for many centuries; their great wealth having favored the indulgence of this expensive taste. The present collection was worn at the coronation of three of the sovereigns of England: George IV., William IV., and Queen Victoria. The first time these jewels were ever displayed in the collected form in which we now see them was when Francis II. was crowned king of Hungary; they there adorned the person of Prince Nicholas Esterhazy, who was a captain of the King's body guard. The ingenuity of the jeweller must have been greatly taxed to enable him to display 50,000 diamonds, besides emeralds, topazes, pearls, and other gems in so many different devices, each gem filling an important part in the general whole. The necessities of this once noble family have compelled them to part with this vast collection. We give below a description of them taken from one of the English papers:—

"At the first sight of a large glass case under which, mounted on a high black velvet stand, are seen these superb jewels, the eye is really almost dazzled by the flood of light, and it seems impossible for some moments to take them one by one, as it were; yet each is so matchless in itself, that they must be dealt with individually, and not be insulted by being all massed together under the head of 'ornaments.'

The first objects, that attract attention are the diamond orders; five of the Golden Fleece and one of the Bath. The first, on the left hand, is the Spanish Order, composed of diamonds and emeralds, the former of the purest water. In the centre is a square emerald, perfect in form, and exquisite in color, supposed to be the finest in the world.

The second Order is one mass of large diamonds, the great beauty of this ornament consisting in the fact of the Fleece itself being composed of the rare pale straw-colored gem, usually called the yellow diamond. The effect of this delicate tinted stone amongst its brilliantly white brethren is beautiful.

Next comes the Order of St. Andrew, the highest of the Russian Orders, and presented to Prince Esterhazy by the Emperor. The fourth and fifth are of equally valuable diamonds, the centres of each being composed of large topazes of various colors.

But perhaps the most extraordinary and gorgeous part of the whole collection is what we must call the jewelled uniform. Every portion which, in a hussar uniform, would otherwise have been of silver lace, or cord, or fringe, is here represented by diamonds of the purest water, or pearls of far beyond the medium size. The short dress belt, which crosses from the shoulder to the waist, is, perhaps, the most valuable of all. It is composed of a lion's head in brown enamel, the eyes of diamonds. In its mouth it holds a ring in which is set a magnificent diamond valued at £20,000, the largest in the whole collection; and from this depend five strings of pearls the size of peas. These are terminated by a large aigrette in the form of a circular band of diamonds, inside which are five clusters placed at open intervals. There is a stone in the middle cluster valued at £12,000.

Another belt is of black velvet, to which are attached three beautiful ornaments, one oblong, like a large buckle, one a horizontal bar, and the lowest two sides of a triangle. The cartridge pouch, which one of these belts supports, is in perfect keeping, but here pearls preponderate over diamonds. It is covered with rows of pearls, in waving lines, the whole surrounded by a border of diamonds.

There is also another splendid ornament which was worn round the hussar cap, and is intended to represent cords and tassels. The cords are composed of rows or strings of large pearls, with rows of diamonds between them, all hanging in graceful festoons, and attached here and there by diamond rosettes, terminating in a tassel of the same.

In the present day this ornament might really be worn as one of the Benetton chains, now so much in vogue, and yet not be considered remarkable in any way except for its magnificence.

But we have now arrived at the great feature of the whole collection—at that wondrous mass of diamonds before which we stand amazed as well as dazzled—the jewelled plume which the Princes wore in the hussar cap in place of ordinary feathers. This ornament is sixteen inches high and ten inches wide, and contains five thousand diamonds of the finest water. We will begin describing it at the base, which is formed by an aigrette, from whence spring, first, two small feathers surmounted by the four large ones. The tips of these fall gracefully over to the left, and are mounted on springs, so that with every movement of the wearer they must have trembled and shed far and near their rays of colored light, dancing and sparkling as the princely head turned right and left. From the two small feathers at the base rises a spray of various diamond ornaments of different devices, one of which is very curious, being a crescent moon with an admirably formed human profile in its inner semicircle. From this rises the little short stiff feather which hussars of England are wont to call the 'shaving brush,' the only part of the plume which is *au naturel*. Between the four large feathers are branches of leaves, each leaf being represented by an emerald.

The last great object is the sword, with its jewelled hilt, one mass of incrustated diamonds, and its sheath, down the whole length of which are medallions of diamonds, nine in number, on both sides, making eighteen clusters in all, of different forms, and splendid stones.

We complete the contents of the case when we give a glance at the large single diamond which ornamented the prince's walking stick, and the snuff box, with an enamel in the centre of the lid, and double circles of very fine diamonds around it.

We now ascend the stairs to the room in which is exhibited the full-dress suit of a General of Hungarian Hussars, consisting of the stung pelisse, the shell jacket, the belt, and the pantaloons, all composed of claret velvet; but so thick is the embroidery, so completely are many parts covered, that no one could tell of what the fabric of the ground consisted.

The wonderful part of it is, that all this embroidery is wrought with pearls! pearls varying from seed to those of goodly size, almost priceless in value, and only to be counted by weight, not number; and we are told they weigh a peck, without the velvet! The belt consists of, literally, ropes of pearls, the thickness of one's front finger, fastened, four deep, in short lengths, and the weight of the whole suit makes one wonder how any one could have supported it through the whole pageant of a coronation!

This comprised the whole of the collection, and they will never again be seen in their present form. The "Esterhazy jewels" will be nothing more than a name, and a tradition to pass down to posterity.

A CHEAP BAROMETER.—A gentleman in the country has discovered a natural barometer, being no other than the spider's web. When it is about to rain and be windy, the spider shortens considerably the last thread to which his web is suspended, and leaves it in this state while the weather remains variable. If the insect lengthens its threads, it will be fine, and the fineness may be guessed by the length they attain to. If the spider remains inactive, it is a sign of rain; if, on the contrary, it begins to work while it rains, it betokens a speedy change for the better. The spider alters his web every twenty-four hours, and if these alterations are made a little before sunset the night will be fine.

CONUNDRUMS.

WHAT is better than presence of mind in a railway accident? Absence of body.

WHY is the horse the most humane of all animals? He gives the bit out of his mouth and listens to every word.

WHAT would probably be the last act of a pastrycook? His last puff.

WHEN is a clock like a discontented workman? When it strikes.

WHEN are nouns like some of the tales written for the LADY'S BOOK? When they are declined.

"OVER the entrance to the hall where the French court concerts are held, is the announcement that 'You must not look at the Emperor through an opera-glass.'"

There is an old saying that "a cat may look at a king." An emperor, we suppose, is quite a different thing.

We published in our July number an account of the Esterhazy diamonds; the following account of the Shah of Persians pearls, is from a volume, entitled "Half Round the Old World," just published in London:—

"We went through the first court of the palace, and were ushered up a very narrow and steep staircase into a small room, where we found the King's aid-de-camp awaiting us. The designs on the wall here were very well drawn, and the decorations more tasteful than ordinary. The chairs were of pure chased gold, as was also a sort of dumb-waiter that stood in one corner. Of these chairs the Shah possesses forty; of the dumb-waiters nine! Of course, under the gold are wooden supports, unseen. After some tea the jewels were brought in for our inspection in detail. It would be impossible to describe even a tithe of them, or the impression they produced in our eyes. Their value, putting a moderate estimate on them, could not, in our own judgement, and that of the four gentlemen who saw them with us, by any possibility be under forty or fifty millions of pounds, that is, if they were to be sold singly. Of course, in the aggregate, no fortune would suffice to pay for them, and therefore their true value must be depreciated.

"We must attempt to describe a few in the order they were shown to us. An evidently French jewel-case was brought in first and placed on a table, round which we eagerly gathered, awaiting its opening. In this were some forty gold rings, each with a single diamond, of which the largest (diamond, not ring) was some one and a half inch round, and the smallest a quarter of an inch. One was a large yellow diamond. Two diamonds were placed as pendants at the end of a large necklace of pearls, and there were two pearl necklaces, each pearl perfectly round and white, and about as large as a good-sized pea. In two little drawers were two or three more necklaces, the pearls this time much larger; and in the bottom drawer another of the largest pearls we had yet seen arranged—an oblong one and a round one alternately—each, without the slightest exaggeration, the size of an unripe cherry. This casket always follows the Shah wherever he goes.

"Next came a collection of a dozen belts, each surpassing the preceding one in costliness and taste. One of these had the fastening buckle, about eight inches long and three broad, studded with perfect rubies, each about half an inch round, set in gold. Another, diamonds only; a third, a whole band set in emeralds and diamonds, and so on. We were then shown four sabres; all had the flat side of the scabbard richly enamelled in gold; one was one blaze of diamonds on the hilt and scabbard; another was studded with pearls like large peas a third was set with diamonds and other stones, to represent flowers. Two other necklaces we were shown were about two and a half feet long each, and formed of large emeralds, each about one inch and a quarter long, alternating with bunches of pearls. The last tray of jewels was the *bonne bouche*. On this was displayed a belt of plant gold work, the buckle consisting of the celebrated 'De-richnoir,' or 'Sea of Light,' a diamond perfectly flat, except at the edges, and almost two inches long by one and a quarter in breadth; it was set round with other smaller diamonds; with this there were some bracelets of uncut rubies and emeralds, quite as large as pigeon's eggs for the most part. The largest turquoise we saw was perfectly flat, and about one inch by a half. We saw one of the Imperial crowns; the other was kept in the inner treasury in the harem, which is only opened once a year; on the top of this is the famous ruby that once belonged to Aurungzebe, a good deal larger than a pigeon's egg, and uncut. A black velvet robe, with diamond buttons and frogs, looked inglorious, but priceless; others, with the collar and sleeves completely covered with large pearls, were amongst some of the things we saw."

FANCY SOAPS.—A good hint for our fancy soap makers. It is well known that at the hotels on the European Continent that they do not furnish you with soap. Here is a remedy:—

"See, in this box, no bigger than a shaving-soap case, are twenty-five cakes of soap, like medals or coins, and amply sufficient to last the most energetic washer an entire day, and yet not valuable enough to carry away. Thus you have always a clean, fresh piece of soap—a luxury at the price of a necessity—one shilling the box!"

One shilling a box—25 cents of our money. Our enterprising perfumers could get this thing up very nicely, at a cent a cake for the soap and the box to put it in.

THE Germans have a queer way of doing things. Here is one:—

A BITTER LEGACY.—A poor citizen in Berlin was recently left some \$50,000. Being very old and feeble, he was puzzled as to whom he should leave his money. Thinking none of his friends worthy of it, he at last determined to leave it to a bitter enemy, who had a large family and no money except his daily earnings. He made his will to that effect; he made it a condition, however, that the heir should always wear thin white linen clothes, and no extra nuder clothing. Should that condition be violated even once the money goes to the executors.

Here is another from a German paper:—

"My husband is no more. He did not wish to live longer, and if he had, it would have made no difference, for gout entered his stomach and was soon followed by death. I shall marry the doctor who so kindly attended my late husband; I learned then to trust him. Soft rest the ashes of the departed one, whose wholesale liquor business I shall continue at the old stand. MARIA W. SCHLEMM."

And still another:—

"My noble husband, Professor Seil, is dead; the most powerful medicines would not keep him with me. Two sorrowing children would weep over his grave, but alas! our marriage was not thus blessed. As he is dead, and it cannot be helped now, I do not wish to think of it, and do not wish to be reminded of my loss by having people condole with me. His death has placed me in the mournful state of widowhood, and I see no way to get out of it."

A WRITER in one of our weekly papers says that "women grumble much more than men," and enters upon a long course of philosophical reasoning to explain why. May it not be because they have *men* to grumble at, while man have only women? Some one once explained the curious fact that women are fond of kissing each other—when men never do—by saying that men can do better than kiss *each other*, while women *can't*.

FIRST-CLASS IN CHURCH.—The folly of arbitrary distinctions of birth and rank finds an odd illustration in the following recent letter to the *London Times*. The writer signs himself simply "A Younger Son":—

"An incident which occurred to me not many years ago may throw some light on the principles which guide the Chapel Royal officials in their distribution of seats.

"On entering the chapel doors one Sunday morning I was stopped by the vergers, who said there was no place for me.

"I had never attended service in it in my life, for I was of a new creation; but I knew that sons of peers had certainly privileges of entry; so with a little pardonable pride of manner I said, 'I am the son of a peer.' 'The eldest son?' asked the vergers, just as if he were a young lady in her second season. 'No,' said I, ruefully, 'a younger son only.' 'Then you cannot have a seat until the second lesson,' replied the discriminating vergers.

"It is out of my power to say whether the offer of a two-shilling piece would have raised me in the estimation of the simple-minded vergers to the level of an eldest son, for I did not try him, but walked away, moralizing as I went on the advantages and disadvantages attending the position in this world of an elder and a younger son."

Possibly it was thought that the chances of an eldest son going to the place where winter clothes are superfluous, are so much greater that he needs special "means of grace" to set against them.

Mr. B. entering a jeweller's shop in the Strand, asked to look at some rings; and being shown some very massive, thick ones by the shopman, who said they were chased, observed; "You must mistake, sir; these are too vulgar to be *chaste*."

If Mr. B. had taken one of the rings without paying for it he would have been "chased."

Mrs. L. H. G. will please accept our thanks for orange syrup and other receipts.