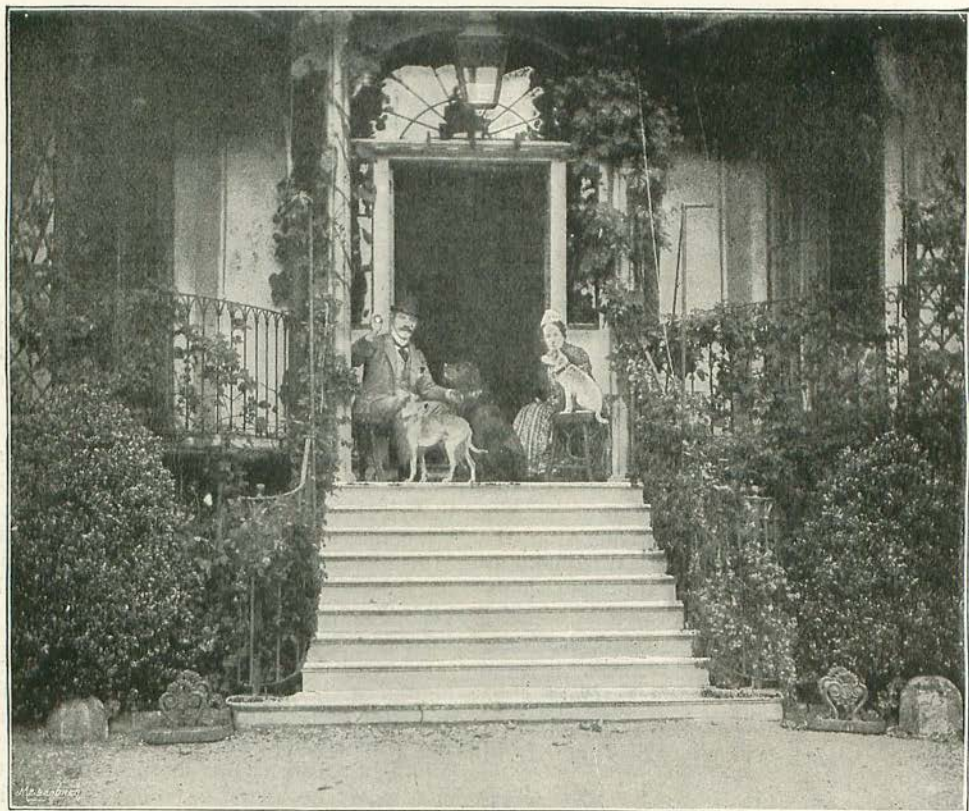


*Illustrated Interviews.*

XXXII.—THE BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS.

BY MARY SPENCER-WARREN.



*From a Photo. by*

MR. BURDETT-COUTTS AND THE BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS.

*[Elliott & Fry.]*



NAME that is a household word ; a personage that occupies a position unique ; one who is deservedly respected and honoured by all classes ; to whom individuals and bodies

of people have turned for sympathy and help, and in whose hearts is built a monument of gratitude, such as surely has seldom been accorded to any human being—such is the truly noble woman who has been for upwards of half a century the pioneer of the majority of benevolent movements and the ready helper of the helpless.

Here is a long life of good deeds, of which yet no record exists : nothing beyond paragraphic accounts—which, spread out over so great a lapse of time, are lost to sight and memory. Interviews,

too, have never been granted ; and when I am told an exception is to be made in my favour, I am not only sincerely gratified, but am also impressed with the magnitude of my task, and the honour conferred upon me by being enabled to give to the world some account of the life and work of one of the most remarkable women of the age.

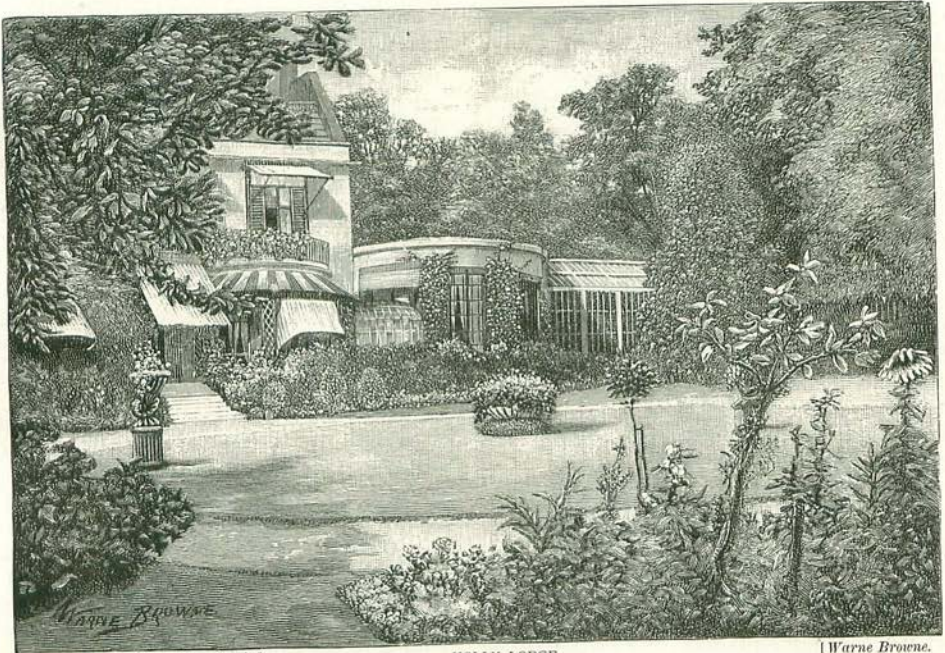
Miss Burdett was the youngest daughter of Sir Francis Burdett, Bart., one of the chief political characters of the early part of the century ; who married one of the daughters of Mr. Coutts, the banker, and of whom I shall have more to say later on. On the death of the banker's widow, who had, after the death of Mr. Coutts, married the Duke of St. Albans, the subject of this article found the enormous fortune was bequeathed to her.

She, at the age of twenty-three, was the head of a banking-house second only to the Bank of England, and veritably the richest woman in the land.

What would she do with it?—was the question that would occur to many, and all sorts of surmises would be promulgated, and various schemes of disbursement planned by many well-intentioned, but too busy, people. We may readily conjecture that, in many hands, this vast wealth would have fulfilled a very different mission; would have contributed rather to the selfish pleasure of its possessor than to the wants of the many. As it is—— but as you read you will gather

ture, high in his profession, to the mechanic or even the “coster” of the streets, has representatives who owe much to her practical help; financial assistance for those who needed it; with encouragement and kindly patronage, combined with the opportunity of meeting the first in the ranks of the world’s genius—to those who, standing alone, would have been lost in the crowd.

Her doors have ever been open. Kings, statesmen, Churchmen, writers, artists, travellers, and scholars—all have been proud to call her friend; and to each and all has she proved herself worthy of their confidence and esteem.



From a Water-colour Drawing by]

HOLLY LODGE.

[Warne Browne.

some idea, though necessarily a limited one, of what *has* been done.

To look back upon the life of the Baroness is an historical education. One recalls the good and the great with whom she has been associated, reads the history of the labouring classes, watches the education of the young, and reviews events which have stirred nations: and in each and every case, where money could help, the Baroness has led the way with munificent benevolence, and what is more, has brought the effect of her example, and so used her enormous influence, that others have thereby been induced likewise to afford valuable assistance.

Every grade of life, from the man of cul-

My interview was accorded at Holly Lodge, a charming retreat on the Northern Heights of London, approached by a steep hill, and standing back in its own grounds in perfect seclusion.

We sat chatting together under the trees: the “we” being the Baroness, Mr. Burdett-Coutts, M.P., Colonel Saunderson, M.P., Mr. Edmund Caldwell, artist, and myself. A very pleasant spot it was; a natural group of immense trees, under whose branches it was possible to feel cool in almost tropical heat, and to enjoy to the full comfortable basket chairs, with bamboo tables, on which are scattered flowers, fruit, and books. Particularly kind had been my reception, and I had

been at once struck with the charming grace of manner and courtesy of the old school evidenced by the Baroness. Tall, slender, with a carriage that would credit a woman of half her age, and a remarkable personality that at once makes itself apparent, you have before you one gifted with talents of no mean order, with strong power of penetration, and, above all, with a kindly and generous nature, a sympathetic heart, and a sincere Christian feeling that finds happiness in the happiness of others.

Mr. Burdett-Coutts, a man of distinguished appearance, pleasing manners, an active and willing coadjutor in the charitable works of his wife, an excellent speaker, an earnest politician, and regular attendant at the House—where he has piloted one or two Bills successfully—a cultured, scholarly man, the writer of more than one clever work, and possessor of one of the finest studs—Brookfield—in the country.

Everyone knows Colonel Saunderson by reputation. He is often heard in the House, where his keen wit and satire create the strongest interest when he is about to speak, and make him at the same time a veritable "thorn in the flesh" to his opponents. Every inch a soldier, and also the most entertaining of hosts and desirable of guests, you can fancy him leading his men into action with flashing eye and stentorian tones, or keeping the whole table alive with witty speech and keen repartee.

Of Edmund Caldwell's work you will note evidences in the illustrations of this article. Perhaps you have seen some at the Academy, where he has several times made notable exhibits; chiefly of hounds, puppies, and kittens. The one hung in 1887 will be, perhaps, best remembered. "For the Safety of the Public" is its title. It gained immense popularity, and the etching by Hester still commands a large sale. Mr. Caldwell—who is spoken of in art circles as the coming Landseer—is one of the most modest, unassuming men I have ever met; yet if once drawn into conversation, he speaks with earnestness and ability.

So much for the personages with whom I am conversing; now, as minor characters, I dismiss them, and resume with the Baroness.

Holly Lodge has much the appearance of a bungalow—it is quite small, surrounded by a veranda, with its trellis-work covered with hops, Virginia and other creepers; about fifty-two acres of garden and park surround it, so well wooded that, from the house, all one gets of the exterior world is a glimpse of

a church spire. The place is old, and was purchased by Mr. Coutts as a residence for himself and second wife. Small as it is, it is most extremely interesting, for it is full of associations of the many friends of the Baroness—of all sorts and conditions of people, and from all parts of the globe.

Stepping over the threshold (where, by-the-by, I notice a horse-shoe nailed—a reminiscence of Mrs. Coutts), you are at once in a cool entrance-hall, hung with some rare old prints and portraits, amongst them being the Queen, the Prince Consort, and a print of Sir Francis Burdett riding triumphantly on a car of curious construction to the "Crown and Anchor." Everybody knows—who knows anything of political history at all—how fiercely Sir Francis fought for the rights of the people and the Reform Bill. Poor old gentleman! His career was by no means smooth. Do you remember how he was committed to the Tower for breach of privilege? I thought of it when I looked at this queer print, and called to mind a room in the Stratton Street residence of the Baroness, which was pointed out to me as the one where the military had broken in the windows in order to capture him, he having barricaded his house. How, when at last he surrendered, the Guards were pelted with stones, the people shouting: "Burdett for ever!"

A little farther on in the hall is Bassano's "Spoiling the Egyptians"; then a print of a vessel that made one of the first Arctic voyages, the back of it being fitted with a glass case containing small trophies given by the commander to the Baroness; then I note a picture denoting a reception of Volunteers on the lawn of Holly Lodge more than a quarter of a century ago. And here I must remark on the great patriotism always displayed by the Baroness. When the Volunteer movement was quite in its infancy, she was one of its most ardent supporters, as indeed she ever has been of anything for the benefit of a country she holds dear. Now we pause before a print of Mr. Coutts, and I listen to a funny story about him which I must tell you.

It seems he was a very eccentric man, and, despite his great wealth, was often very shabbily dressed. Tall, of singularly refined and stately bearing, he was one day walking out in his favourite attitude—hands behind his back. As he thus walked, he attracted the attention of another gentleman, who was also taking a constitutional; and who was immediately moved with sympathy for the evident poverty of the shabby-genteel indivi-

dual in front of him. Being himself in fairly affluent circumstances, he determined to afford some slight relief to the decayed gentleman who seemed to need it so much, and who, doubtless, would not disclose his position in order to obtain assistance. Accordingly, he slipped quietly and quickly up behind him, and putting a couple of guineas into the outstretched hands, he as suddenly withdrew; before the astonished recipient was sufficiently aroused from his reverie to remonstrate. You can well imagine the surprise of the benevolent old gentleman on the next evening, when, on attending a select dinner-party given in honour of Mr. Coutts, the banker, he recognised in him the "decayed gentleman" on whom he had bestowed his well-meant charity the day before!

Were I to particularize the reminiscences of good and great who are departed that I saw at Holly Lodge, it would be an almost endless task. In different parts of the house I came across memories of Dickens, Wellington, Garrick, Gordon, and many others. Wellington was the firmest of friends, taking a fatherly interest in the career of the young girl with her millions of money and her large heart; Dickens and she together visited some of the vilest dens of London, when "slumming" was not fashionable, and even philanthropists were not safe in venturing over the border from West to crime-polluted and poverty-stricken East. If the inimitable writer had never opened the eyes of the many wilful blind to behold the sorrows and sufferings of their plague-stricken fellow creatures, he would not have been unrewarded, for he it was who interested the one of all others who was both able and willing to afford timely help, and to turn sorrow into joy, darkness into light.

Nova Scotia Gardens, a resort of murderers, thieves, disreputable and abandoned, where

rubbish and refuse were shot in heaps, a place which had long been a trap for fevers and loathsome diseases: this was the spot where Miss Coutts introduced wholesale and sweeping reform. Struck with the horror and misery, she bought it all up, pulled down the wretched buildings, and put up four blocks of model dwellings, each block containing between forty and fifty tenements, with every accommodation in the shape of laundry, baths, etc., and the luxury of a good library and reading-room. This, for a people who had been surrounded by abominations of every description, whose every breath had sucked in foul stench, and whose



HOLLY LODGE—UNDER THE TREES.  
From a Water-Colour Drawing by *Warne Browne*.

every footstep had been in slimy pools and decaying matter shot from dust-carts. These buildings, I may add, not only hold their own with those of much later date, but are actually in advance of some for such general requirements as drainage, ventilation, and light. Columbia Square it was named, and from then till now it has continued to be a much-to-be-desired place of habitation for the class for whom it was intended.

Now, glance at "Brown's Lane," another place brightened and blessed by the practical benevolence of Miss Coutts. Go back between thirty and forty years, to a time when the community known as "Hand Weavers" were almost starving in consequence of loss of trade following on importation of foreign silks; when, despite of an association which

had been formed for the amelioration of the sufferers, distress was so prevalent that nothing short of a miracle could stem it. Then Miss Coutts came forward and became the mainstay and almost the entire support of the association. Some of the people were sent out of the country as emigrants, others were given the means of starting in little businesses; girls were suitably trained for respectable situations, and work was found for the women in a sort of sewing-room, where, after 1.30 in the day, they could earn from 8s. to 15s. per week, thus helping very materially to keep things going. The work consisted of shirt-making for the police and soldiers, and one very good feature of the plan was, that each woman as she came in was given a good, hearty meal to commence with. Some, who on account of their families could not leave home, were allowed to have their work out; thus large numbers were benefited. It must also be added that many had actually to be taught the proper use of their needle, and I am very much inclined to think that the same training is just as necessary now amongst our East-end factory hands.

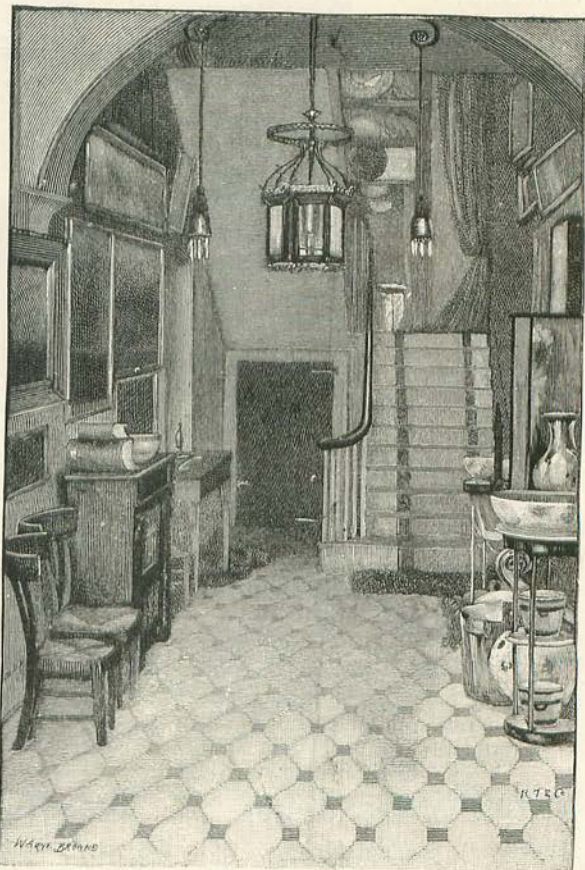
Nor did the work of this true charity stop there: the people were especially visited in their homes on an organized plan, and help afforded them on the report furnished by the visitors. Such visitors, being clergymen and qualified lay people, were fully competent to judge of the cases with which they came in contact. Clothing, blankets, provisions, and wine were freely distributed; half-day jobs were given to unemployed men, outfits were provided for boys and girls starting for new situations, and nothing that money or care could do was left undone.

Then distress broke out amidst the tanners, and again Miss Coutts found a way of helping. In a practical manner, she appointed a trusty agent to attend the police-courts of the distressed districts, where applications for relief were received. By this means funds for present wants were disbursed, and also the means of saving their homes to them until better times.

Some of you may remember the cholera epidemic in the East-end of London in 1867. Then was Miss Coutts again the active benefactor,

and her's was the hand that gave freely, and her's the judicious relief that can never be adequately known or appreciated. Under the superintendence of a qualified medical man, she employed eight trained nurses, two sanitary inspectors, and, under their orders, four men to distribute disinfectants. Let me give you a summary of *one* week's absolute gifts during the course of this fearful disease: 1,850 tickets for meat, value 1s., 250lb. of arrowroot, 500lb. of rice, 50lb. each of sago and tapioca, 30lb. black currant jelly, 50 gallons of port wine, 25 gallons of brandy, 20 gallons of beef tea, 560 quarts of milk, 100 blankets, 400yds. of flannel, and 400 garments: all this in addition to doctor, nurse, and money!

A Shoe Black Brigade, a Boys' Club, and a Relief Committee for discriminate charity may be briefly referred to, as well as the more recent Flower Girls' Brigade; the members of the latter being not only helped and befriended in their present occupation, but



THE ENTRANCE-HALL.

From a Water-Colour Drawing by Warne Browne.

also taught the duties of domestic service, or initiated into the art of artificial flower making in the factory specially opened for them. It is satisfactory to hear that this one society has put upwards of 800 girls into a more desirable way of earning their own living.

The portrait of Charles Dickens gave rise to these reminders of work accomplished in this direction ; and now I take up another, that of an aged coloured man, who, the Baroness tells me, was the first convert of one of the Colonial churches, in which she has ever been much interested. She does not, however, tell me what I subsequently

seating about 700 people, to accommodate a congregation formerly worshipping in a disused warehouse ; and at Westminster the Church of St. Stephen's, with all its adjuncts of schools and institute, was put up entirely at her own cost, and stands as a lasting monument, not only of her generosity, but also of her practical forethought for all the needs of the congregation, young and old. It was in the year 1847 when the buildings were commenced, the consecration taking place in 1850. The actual cost was close upon £100,000. From then till now, the Baroness has entirely supplied the working expenses, no small item when one considers

the manifold branches emanating from this centre of active Christianity. No wants are overlooked : from the tiniest toddler in the infant class to the grey-haired worshipper at the beautiful services, some organization embraces their needs. Clubs, guilds, classes, friendly societies, district visiting, etc., are all in active operation, and, in addition, a self-help club, which deserves more than passing mention. Estab-



HOLLY LODGE—THE TENNIS LAWN.  
From a Water-Colour Drawing by Warne Browne.

lished at a comparatively recent date on co-operative principles, it can now show a working capital of upwards of £2,000. Of the success of the schools I can give you no adequate idea, for facts and figures fail to convey a thorough grasp of the real benefit conferred upon, literally, thousands of a rising generation. When I tell you that upwards of fifteen thousand boys and girls have in these schools been properly trained for their future position in the world, I tell you but little.

learn of these churches, for she is not given to talking of her good deeds. Now, what are the facts? Briefly these : In her warm admiration of our own Church, and her anxiety for its extension, she actually founded the Bishoprics of Adelaide, British Columbia, and Cape Town. I will give you the cost of one ; you will then see somewhat of the magnitude of this branch of her benevolence. For the endowment of the church, £25,000 ; for the bishopric, £15,000 ; and for the partial cost for clergy, £10,000.

So much for the Church in foreign lands. Now glance at what has been done for the Church at home. Here we find that almost the first use Miss Coutts made of her wealth was to distribute it largely in assisting to build churches in London and elsewhere.

At Carlisle she erected a handsome edifice,

It was not only with these schools, however, that Miss Coutts spent both time and money : Stepney, Highgate, and many outlying places have to thank her for substantial aid in this direction. And what one must admire is the very clear perception of all requirements, as well as the prompt manner of carrying out.

Of the Townshend Schools, at Westminster, I must give you some slight particulars. The schools were, in the first place, the outcome of a fund of which Miss Coutts was left a trustee, and which was also immediately under her superintendence. They were literally crowded with the children of people residing in various districts of that part of London, who, unable to pay the requisite School Board fees, yet compelled to educate their children, were thankful to avail themselves of either the free admission or the nominal charge of one penny, where it could be afforded.

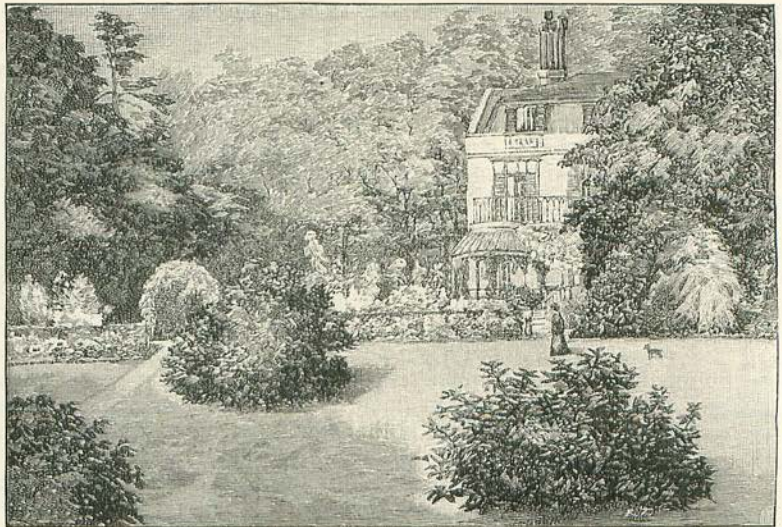
The Free Education Bill becoming law in 1890, made a re-organization of these schools requisite, it being no longer necessary to do what any School Board is compelled to do by the Act. So now the whole of the schools, St. Stephen's and Townshend, run side by side, stepping-stones from each other. Thus, the Townshend are now the "St. Stephen's Elementary"—and entirely free; while the "St. Stephen's Higher Grade," for a charge of from twopence to sixpence per week, are imparting sciences and 'ologies, languages, and many other useful acquirements to the deserving and persevering from the "Elementary Schools"; the transition being made the more easy by a large number of scholarships open to students in the last-named.

The next step is to the "Technical Institute," at which place scholars attending the "Higher Grade" are received for evening study, as are those who have formerly attended them. The Institute is also open to others who may be disposed to join, with this proviso—that every student must be either actually earning his or her living, or purposing to do so, by the arts and crafts here taught.

At the Westminster Institute some hundreds of students are receiving instruction likely to benefit their entire future. That they are deriving immense profit to themselves was strongly

evidenced at the last annual meeting, which meeting I had the pleasure of attending. Here were youths and adults, many of them with horny hands of toil, coming forward to receive well-earned prizes and certificates as a result of technical work of no mean order; the Baroness herself bestowing them with kind, encouraging words, and in addition made a capital speech. And, by the way, I thought we never *should* get that speech, for when her ladyship stood up to commence, the ovation was simply tremendous; cheer upon cheer broke forth again and again. When at length it did subside, the immense audience (and hundreds had been turned away), although the hour was late, sat and stood in perfect silence, eager to catch every word that fell from her lips. The entire affair, in fact, had resolved itself into an unmistakable tribute of affectionate regard; for when the Baroness had entered the hall at the commencement of the evening, everyone present had sprung to his feet and continued standing until she herself was seated. No greater respect could have been paid to Majesty itself; and who better deserves it than one who has made herself acquainted with the wants and sorrows of her poorer brethren?

A new building for the students has just been erected by the Baroness, as complete in every way as skill and money can make it: a series of workshops containing all requisite tools, a first-rate library of technical works, and everything one can think of. Here boys and youths can become masters of carpentry and joinery, bricklayers' and



From a Painting by]

HOLLY LODGE—THE GARDEN,

[Sir Edmund Henderson,

plumbers' work, building construction and builders' quantities, metal plate work, technical and mechanical drawing, and applied art. Girls can become practical cooks and dress-makers; while either sex can go into the Civil Service classes, and acquire book-keeping, shorthand, languages, algebra, mathematics, and a variety of the like useful subjects. I may just add that more than the usual percentage of medals and certificates offered by the City and Guilds of London, the Society of Arts, and the Science and Art and Educational Department were this last year carried off by these students. *Free admission* is given to fifty scholars from the lower school, by means of that number of scholarships founded by the Baroness, other scholarships being awarded annually to deserving children of poor parents.

I may not linger on these educational details, but will just mention the Whitelands Training College and an Art Students' Home, both of them owing their origin to the Baroness, though the latter has since become self-supporting. Then it must also be remembered that some of the really useful things now taught in our schools were first taught there, owing to her persistent efforts; as must also the fact that before education was compulsory, she was a persistent advocate for evening schools, herself entirely supporting a large one in the East of London.

For children the Baroness has always had a large corner in her heart, likewise a large

corner in her pocket, for no effort has been too great, if such effort could help the little ones. Cruelty to children to her is one of the greatest of iniquities, and it is mainly due to her unceasing devotion that the Bill of 1889—which has so materially improved the condition of these poor little ones—passed into law. That Bill made it lawful to remove them from the custody of cruel parents, and also to make such parents contribute towards their support. Many of you may not know that the formation of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was chiefly due to her ladyship, the first committee meeting taking place in her own drawing-room. Great things have sprung from it: for now there is an average of ten thousand cases to deal with annually.

The "Destitute Children's Dinner Society" is also dear to her heart; she has, in fact, been its hard-working president since the death of the good Earl of Shaftesbury. This Society gives each season about three hundred thousand substantial dinners, at a charge of one penny or one halfpenny each.

After the children and the poor may be mentioned the love of animals, ever shown by Lady Coutts; she is, indeed, well known everywhere for her good work in connection with the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, often attending meetings in its furtherance, and identifying herself with the annual cart-horse parades at London, Newcastle, etc.; and what a number of animals,



From a Water-colour Drawing by]

THE BOUDOIR.

[Warne Browne.



of all sorts and sizes, one sees at Holly Lodge! Here is a white donkey, the gift of a number of costermongers; and this reminds me that the Baroness has been in the habit of giving prizes to those men who at the periodical shows could produce animals well fed and well kept. And one of her cherished possessions is a silver model of a donkey presented to her by a costermongers' club. These clubs, I may tell you, she has promoted, with the object of assisting street vendors to purchase their own barrows. The requisite amount was advanced to the men, which was repaid by a small weekly instalment. There is no need to recall her valuable help to the costers in the somewhat recent crisis in their trade. Many of you watched the struggle from one court to another; but the donkey and barrow came off triumphant, and the men still ply their calling in our poorer neighbourhoods.

At one time the Baroness kept llamas, but found the climate hardly suitable for such delicate animals, so gave it up. Two of the pretty creatures are now stuffed, and kept indoors in a handsome glass home of their own. She has also some very fine goats, to which special attention is paid. She calls them the "poor man's cow," and believes they might be made highly productive. I go through the goat stables, first looking at the champion, "Sir Garnet," the finest I have ever seen; in fact, his keeper tells me "he has never been beat"; then on to see some "Nubians"—pretty, timid creatures—from a few weeks old upwards. Then I inspect some fine cows, beautiful horses, pigs, fowls, and creatures of all sorts.

We did no stereotyped inspection, but just wandered here and there before and after luncheon, chatting pleasantly, and stopping now and again for anything with which the Baroness was specially interested, or anything that struck me in particular. Ever and anon we sat and rested under the trees, enjoying the welcome shade (for this was in

the hot days of last summer), and here we had afternoon tea, surrounded by the sweet-smelling flowers, the singing of the birds, and the hum of the bees; for the Baroness is an enthusiastic bee-keeper, and is, indeed, the president of the Bee Society. Privately, I begin to wonder what society she is *not* connected with.

In one of our wanderings we find ourselves on a site known as "Traitors' Hill," actually in the grounds, though right on the other side. This was the spot where the conspirators stood to watch what never came off—the blowing up of the Houses of Parliament. A clear view right over London, as it lays like a huge panoramic picture that has paused for the explanatory guide. Then we return *via* long archways of flowers, gaily arranged beds, and acres of kitchen garden. I notice

that the men employed in the grounds are by no means young, and am told that unless they have been there quite a number of years the others look upon them altogether as interlopers. Many are really past actual work, but there they stay until such time as the Baroness pensions them off.

I have told you Mr. Burdett-Coutts has a fine

stud near: near enough, in fact, to send to for some of the horses. I have no time to visit the place, and when I hear a clattering and whinnying, and find myself confronted with a splendidly-matched pair called "The Ladies," I am glad to have seen some specimens of the fine English breed for which their master has made himself famous. This is indeed a pretty pair; full of fire, yet easily controlled into the most gentle action. They put me in mind of twin sisters, for I have to walk round them two or three times in my endeavours to tell "t'other from which." This is the pair with which Mr. Coutts is wont to drive the Baroness round the park; generally accompanied by one or two pet dogs. The dogs, they are of great importance at Holly Lodge: "Peter" and "Prince" being the favourites, the



From a Painting by]

"SIR GARNET."

[Edmund Caldwell.

former generally accompanying his mistress wherever she goes ; he has a decided taste for geological survey ; and indoors there is quite a collection made by him, burrowed from all parts, the Continent and at home. Another valuable canine had for its father a favourite of the Emperor Charles Frederick ; and still others possess histories of their own, for which I have not space. One thing I can give, though, and that is a good photographic reproduction of a group, specially taken for this Magazine, and given at the head of this article ; there you will observe the Baroness, Mr. Burdett-Coutts, and the dogs, grouped on the summit of the "Lodge" steps. Also, you have a portrait of "Cocky," a self-asserting cockatoo, one of a tribe of feathered creatures, happy and well fed, who live in and around the house. At one time, the Baroness tells me, she made efforts to induce nightingales to build in the surrounding trees, but ultimately had to give it up, as they were just a prize for the bird-fanciers.

At Haydn Hall, a former residence, large numbers of robins were daily fed, and it was quite a usual thing on a winter's morning to hear their little beaks tapping the windows of the sleeping apartments of the Baroness, as a reminder that they were ready for their breakfast. She is a firm friend of the sweet singing bird, and whether it has been in indefatigably promoting an Act for their protection during the breeding season, or whether it has consisted in earnest remonstrances against the reprehensible practice, followed by so many ladies, of wearing wings and even small birds, they have found in her a zealous and powerful advocate.

We are strolling

across the lawn, and are suddenly confronted with an Oriental structure in the grounds, named "Candilia," erected in memory of the Turkish Compassionate Fund. Do you remember the horrors which thrilled all Europe when recounted? Filled with sorrowing pity for the sufferings of the thirty thousand families—passive victims—who had fled for refuge to the villages of the Danube, the Baroness took the matter up warmly, and wrote a letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, which quickly found sympathetic response throughout the country. I cannot do better than give you an extract from this letter :—

"I would pray one and all to bear in mind the unhappy sufferers in a far-away country, of another creed, whose lives are ebbing fast away, uncheered, desolate, and abandoned. We cannot, perhaps, stanch their life-blood ; we can wash our hands, though, free of its stain, by binding up their wounds, if not by our money, by our sympathy. If silver and gold there is none, we have prayers still ; and He to whom all flesh comes, hears the cry of the poor for His creatures suffering from the sword, as He also accepts the gifts of the rich. . . . . When your vast public reads these few lines, I trust much

bodily or mental anguish will begin to be soothed, through that real Christianity which is still, in God's providence, the appointed means by which hunger and thirst are assuaged, sickness alleviated, and consolation given."

This letter was eminently characteristic of her whole manner and conversation: kindly, gentle, mindful of her "duty to her neighbour," and anxious to do that duty. How much better and happier the world would be for more of such !

Well, the



From a Painting by

"Cocky."

[Edmund Caldwell,

"Compassionate Fund" was at once formed, the Baroness starting it with a subscription of £1,000—which sum she afterwards doubled. Collections were made in all parts, and in a few days £30,000 and a prodigious amount of clothing and food were ready for dispatch. Mr. Burdett-Coutts went out as "Special Commissioner," Sir Francis de Winton and other officers affording valuable assistance. What they had to contend with was simply appalling: famine, pestilence, bitter weather, roads crowded with destitute masses of people—many being literally frozen to death; women actually throwing their children into the rivers to save them further sufferings. Driven from place to place, they at length reached Constantinople, where some found refuge in mosques, some

things; that is cool, comfortable, and home-like, and has, moreover, a beautiful view of the grounds. Here we stop to inspect what is the finest—because most perfect—collection of minerals extant. This mineral museum was formerly the property of Professor Tennant: it is a study in itself. Then there is quite a collection of china, all fashioned in imitation of vegetables, a Chinese dragon, a clock tower carved by Russian prisoners, and many other objects of interest.

In the other rooms I note some fine paintings by Wilkie, Brengel, Harrison Weir, Frith, Teniers, and Hogarth; in addition to several by the before-mentioned Edmund Caldwell. One of his, a comic Christmas card, is here reproduced; it shows



Cocky proposes a toast. "Her Ladyship, with musical honours."

A Christmas Card by

THE PETS OF THE BARONESS.

[Edmund Caldwell.

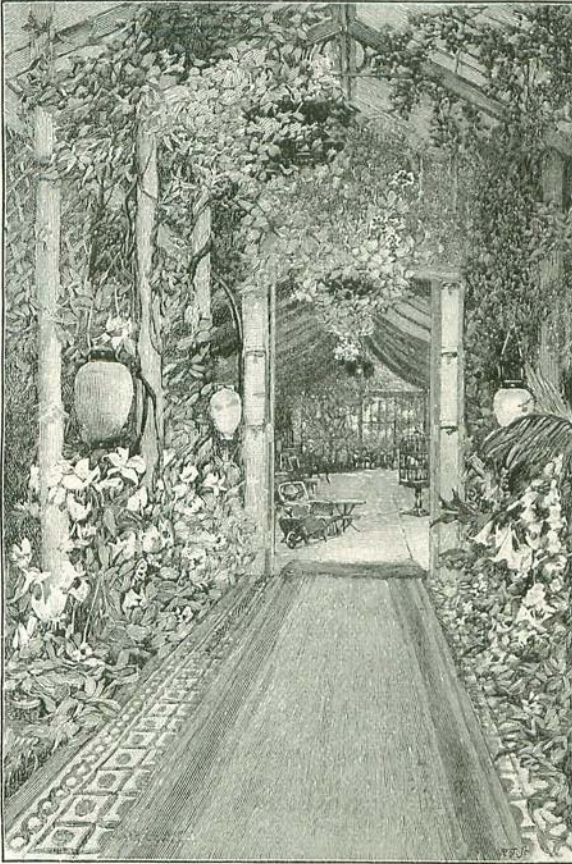
in the houses of the rich, and a large number in the Royal Palace itself, which the Sultan at once threw open for them.

Nearer the house the Baroness shows me the tent dressing-rooms for gentlemen visitors, which she has had put up on account of the extreme smallness of the house, rendering further accommodation necessary when guests are invited to dinner. From there we go to view the kitchens—models of neatness, and bright with tiled walls and polished steel.

Then up into the house again, through a long, roomy apartment, that seems wholly intended for a conservatory, and, indeed, communicates with it actually: an apartment that contains all sorts of curios and precious

the pets of the Baroness. The Baroness is essentially English in her tastes; and at her residence shows her preference for English workmanship—even the piano in her boudoir is from the old English firm of Broadwood and Son; and other articles in unison.

I am not done with portraits yet: here is one of Sir James Brook, an old friend of the Baroness, and another living instance of one who has been materially assisted by her. An ordinary English gentleman in the first place, he became King of Borneo, and founded a sovereignty! Then there is Dr. Moffat, Dr. Livingstone, and other illustrious men; and last, but not least, the brave Christian General and martyr, Gordon. In quiet



HOLLY LODGE—THE CONSERVATORY.  
From a Water-Colour Drawing by Warne Browne.

tones and with saddened mien, the Baroness tells me how much she valued his friendship, and how he often came to see her; how his almost, if not quite, last visit was paid to her; and how, during that visit, he took up a small letter-case lying handy, asking, "Might he have it for a keepsake?" and how she had since had proof of this keepsake being carried with him in his breast-pocket until his death.

How much his captivity must have grieved his friend can only be faintly surmised by her scheme, in conjunction with a few friends, for opening up communication with Khartoum by means of a Morocco merchant, who, disguising himself, managed to convey to poor Gordon the last letters and papers he ever received from England.

No efforts were made by us to rescue him; and well and nobly did the Baroness publicly plead on behalf of her friend. The shame and the disgrace made men and women blush for their country; and when

Lady Coutts's letter found its way into the *Times*, it awoke a universal thrill from all classes. We mourn still the loss of his noble life; and some of us wonder at the necessity of the public appeal for funds by the late Lord Tennyson in order that the Boys' Home, a work dear to the brave General, could be carried on. Is it that we forget?

I might keep on indefinitely telling you of the different things taken up by the Baroness, for everywhere I turn I have something to remind me of such. Now it is the portrait of a most handsome bouquet which had been presented to her by a deputation of Irish women. Everybody knows how again and again the Baroness has spent immense sums in relieving this unfortunate people: in famine and sickness she has come forward for years past and tendered timely help, always seeking, as she herself said, "to improve their moral as well as their material condition." Of the amount of money, food, fuel, clothing, etc., disbursed I cannot give you any correct total, spreading as the work has over so long a period; but I *can* tell you how, thirteen years ago, she offered the munificent sum of £250,000 to the Government for them to use beneficially in aid of the Irish destitute.

Some of this great work was carried on in the fishing villages, where dire famine had made such havoc, that craft had either gone or was in such a battered condition for want of repair that fishing was practically impossible. Scots were actually fishing in the Irish waters, and selling the same fish to those of the Irish who had money to buy with. Then the Baroness made loans to the deserving men of sums of £300, in order that they might purchase new boats, the loans to be repaid by small yearly instalments. Later on, her ladyship established a Fishing School, in which four hundred boys from all parts of Ireland could be thoroughly initiated into boat-building, net-making and mending, etc., carpentering, coopering, and fish-curing. This school the Baroness opened herself in the year 1887, and can it be wondered at that when their well-tryed friend came among them, arriving at night by yacht, flags, table-cloths, and pocket-handkerchiefs bedecked the place,

the people came together in huge crowds, and large bonfires gave ruddy lights on all the surrounding hills? When the actual opening took place on the next day, the scene of enthusiasm was almost unexampled—not in any degree lessened by the presence of a large number of deputations to present addresses.

When I come to the question of her private and individual charities, I must honestly confess that this is a subject upon which I can give you no information. As you may imagine, begging letters arrive in batches, and few that are really deserving apply altogether in vain. Of this the public learns nothing, neither did I, beyond the actual fact above stated.

Everyone was glad when the honour of a peerage was conferred upon Miss Coutts in 1871. This is an instance unique when connected with a woman for her own worthy deeds. The bestowal, to my mind, conferred as much honour upon the Queen who gave it as upon the subject who received it. The Baroness also wears the Orders of the Medjidieh and the Shafakat, given by the Sultan in token of his gratitude for her services to the unfortunate refugees. In addition to this she has had the freedom of several cities conferred upon her.

The last undertaking I shall mention is a literary one; this, by the way, not the first. The Chicago Exhibition is now a thing of the past; but Lady Coutts has given us a work in connection with it that deserves a place on the shelves of every library in the land. I refer to the book, "Woman's Mission," undertaken by the Baroness at the express wish of H.R.H. the Princess Christian. Certainly the Princess could not have placed the commission in more able hands; and the result confirms her judgment. The Baroness set about it in the very best possible manner, and instead of collecting reports, statistics, etc., which would only have proved dull and uninteresting, she put herself in communi-

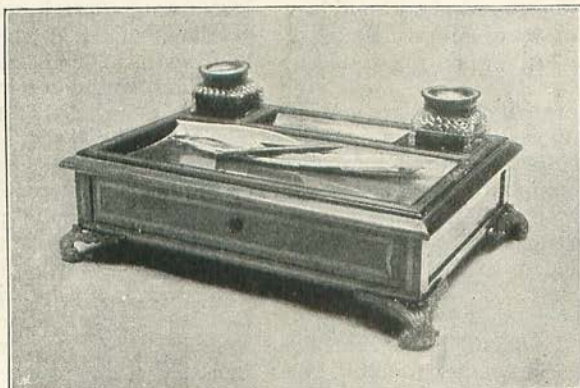
cation with a large number of such well-known ladies as Florence Nightingale, Miss Agnes Weston, etc., and from them obtained accounts of the different works in which they were engaged as women *for* women—each and every paper being stamped with an individual personality which gives life and interest as well as facts and truisms. No fewer than thirty-five of such papers are here presented to the readers of the book, two of them written by the Baroness herself, who has, in addition, also written a lengthy appendix touching upon each; and a preface of remarkable power and earnestness, treating, as it does, of the progressive education of women during the last sixty years.

This, to even a casual observer, is a marvellous production for anyone who has spent the best years of so long a life; and was, as the Baroness herself told me, only undertaken at earnest solicitation, and with the hope that good might be done by its publication, not only by bringing our American sisters more closely in touch with us, but also as a useful review of work accomplished by the women of our country, from the richest to the poorest.

I feel I have far exceeded the limits of a magazine article, but could have continued interminably, so vast has been the goodness and the magnitude of true charity and loving sympathy of the subject of this interview. Not only England, but the world has been better for such a life in our midst; and from many a thousand homes scattered in every part of the globe the name of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts is blessed and honoured.

As I drive to the station in her comfortable carriage, laden with some of her fairest flowers, I feel that this day's interview will be memorable to me for all time to come.

We are indebted to the courtesy of the Baroness for the loan of some valuable water-colours by Sir Edmund Henderson and Mr. Warne Browne, from which some of the accompanying illustrations are taken.



From a Photo. by

TOM MOORE'S INKSTAND.

[Elliott & Fry.

In the possession of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts.