

Old London.

SOME ASTONISHING FACTS.

(From "Scribner's Magazine.")

Nowhere in the world does the glamour of age count for so much as in England, and nowhere is it more jealously guarded than in the corporation of London. This of itself is sufficient to explain the desire of men to preserve these ancient institutions. But critics not a few have hinted that other reasons explain the tenacity with which the livery companies fight for their existence. For the guilds are very rich—nobody knows how rich they really are. They own landed estates in the city, in Hammersmith, Essex, Kent, and Surrey; in Ireland and Wales—in fact, all over the United Kingdom. Their funds are invested in consols and other securities. The 12 great companies own the Ulster estates in Ireland. Much of this property came by gift or bequest for public charities, and the critics insist that the revenue should all be used for public purposes. But the guilds invest their funds and use their revenue as they will. They account to nobody but themselves.

A royal commission was appointed by Mr. Gladstone in 1884 to investigate the companies. The commission included such men as the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Derby, Viscount Sherbrooke, and the Lord Chief Justice of England. Certainly these men were not dangerous radicals. Yet the commissioners declared that the funds of the guilds were public property, and urged the immediate intervention of Parliament to prevent their alienation, and to assure their use for public purposes.

The report stated that 1500 self-appointed committees of the guilds took fees from the estates amounting to over £40,000 a year. In addition they spent £100,000 a year in banquets, while £150,000 was paid for balls and the expenses of the management. It cost at least £300,000 to administer an income of nearly £835,500 derived from trust funds. The estates of the 74 guilds were estimated to be worth a good deal more than £15,000,000. The commission said they would be worth £20,000,000 by 1905.

But the recommendations of the Parliamentary Commission came to naught; the City Corporation was so powerful in Parliament that nothing was ever done. Even to-day the management of the affairs of the livery companies is conducted in secret by committees, which nominate themselves and their successors and acknowledge responsibility to no one.

The guilds, it is true, expend substantial sums for charity. About £200,000 is used for purposes specified in the trust created by the donors. The drapers support the Crystal Palace; they have given largely to the University of London Radcliffe Library, at Oxford, has received large donations from the livery companies. Professorships are maintained in various institutions, and substantial contributions are made to technical education. Gresham College is maintained by the corporation of London, as are many other charities for the poor, for orphans and the blind.

The city itself is also tremendously rich. In addition to such property as a municipality usually owns, the city is a large landlord. It owns one-tenth of the real estate within its limits. It rents its buildings just as does a private owner. It controls the Irish Ulster estates, which were acquired in 1609 during the reign of James I., although the rents and revenues are paid to the livery companies in proportion to the investment made by them at the time the estates were acquired. The city also owns Epping Forest, a great stretch of woodland, 12 miles long east of London, acquired at a cost of £400,000. It also owns the celebrated Burnham Beeches, and has the right of patronage of many city churches. It further owns one of the largest and most beautiful cemeteries in or around London.

The corporation has also a monopoly of the market rights of the city of London. By the terms of a contract entered into with Henry III. it was agreed that no one else should ever be given any market rights within seven miles of the city. And Parliament has protected this ancient monopoly, even though the needs of 7,000,000 of inhabitants of London have been sacrificed in consequence. The London County Council has never been able to secure the right to open a market within its jurisdiction, and only in one instance, if it be an instance, has this monopoly been invaded. In 1852

Charles II. granted to the Earl of Bedford permission to establish a market in the old fields of the Convent of Westminster, near by the fields known as Seven Dials, or Long Acre. This is now the Covent Garden Market, owned by the Duke of Bedford.

By virtue of this ancient grant the Duke still levies tribute on the metropolis of the United Kingdom. No huckster, market-gardener, costermonger or child with a basket of flowers, may offer his produce about the market, or upon the street, without the consent of the Duke, and upon such terms as his agent exacts. For the market privilege is not limited to the side of the market itself, for by the terms of the original grant—made, it is true, nearly four centuries ago—no other market may be established within seven miles of Covent Garden.

Neither the London County Council, the borough councils, nor any other individual or corporation may open a market in Greater London, so sacred is this ancient grant. No one knows the amount of the tribute collected through this monopoly, but it is colossal. Along with rights of the City Corporation the market profits are £200,000. It costs 6d. a day to stand a basket of flowers upon the streets within the confines of the market radius, and three times this sum to back a cart against the kerb. The stalls within the market are very expensive, for all of the South of England competes for them, while all London comes here to buy vegetables, fruits, and flowers. Dynasties change and generations come and go, but grants and contracts, with no higher sanction than the thoughtless whim of a king to a dissolute favourite remain immune from alteration or attack, so sacred is the name of age in the United Kingdom.

The markets of the City Corporation alone are capitalised at £3,600,000. They include Billingsgate, the great fish market fronting on the Thames below London Bridge, where the language is as refined as the odors which emanate from it. The Metropolitan Cattle Market of the city is said to be the largest cattle market in the world. Here more than 4,000,000 cattle are sold every year. Other markets are also maintained under grants which the city obtained centuries ago for the sale of hay, grain, provisions, and vegetables. The revenues of the city from these markets as well as from the real estate which it owns, amount to over £833,000 a year.

The city of London is but one of the many political, educational, religious, and social institutions which linger on in England, untouched by the progress of democracy. They are protected by that veneration for the past that characterises the country. The wealth of the guilds and of the city is, for the most part, expended in inconsequential charities. The great metropolis with its millions of poor, its awful tenements, its ignorance and squalor, needs schools and hospitals and breathing-places the worst way. And were the £20,800,000 odd of trust funds devoted to some big useful purpose a substantial decrease could be made in the misery of the city.

But inertia and privilege are strong in Great Britain, and nowhere are they stronger than in the city itself. Its power radiates into Parliament and the church, and effectively prevents any interference with its abuses.

The Youngest Mother.

An amazing case of precocious parentage is reported in the "Lancet." A special correspondent of that journal has sent a photograph from China of a little boy and girl, with their baby. The mother is eight years old and the father nine. It seems that the Governor of Shansi, the province in which the birth took place, sent official particulars to Peking, but in order to make sure of the matter, the correspondent of the "Lancet" made inquiries through a friend living in Tai-yuan-fu. The friend reported that the facts were exactly as stated in the official report, that the boy was the father of the child, and that the baby was about a foot long at birth. The only doubt about the age of the parents seems to be caused by the Chinese method of reckoning ages. They call a child one when it is born, so that this curious couple may possibly be a year younger than the ages given in the report. The youngest mother hitherto recorded in Western annals was nine years old. There is no record of so juvenile a father.

It makes one feel a trifle sick, somehow, doesn't it?

Society Gossip.

Special to the "Graphic."

NOTICE TO OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor desires to draw the attention of occasional contributors of any items to the Society Gossip columns that name and address must be given with copy, otherwise any such communication cannot be recognised.

All copy intended for publication in these columns must reach the office not later than Saturday morning, in order to ensure insertion in the current issue.

AUCKLAND.

November 28.

At the Show.

THE Show on Friday was a most full cool day, a nice crowd of interesting function. A beautiful people, without any crush, good jumping and amusing exhibits. What more could one want at a show? We watched the jumping for most of the afternoon, and very good it was, particularly the wire-jumping, for which there were about twenty entrants. There were several amusing incidents. One horse took the whole thing with him, wire and posts. Another horse was not quite so lucky, for in doing this he was brought to earth, and threw his rider. In the end Miss Edie Gill was the winner, on Tikitere, and very proud she must have been to win in such good company. Miss Vera Gill's Markham was second. Miss Rachel Gorrie, on a white, jumped well, but her horse refused the first time. After Miss Gill had received the "red ribbon" she calmly turned her horse round and put it at the jump, which was cleared in fine style. We were all so glad, because sometimes this is not the case. In the hunters' class we were treated to some fine jumping. Mr. B. Myers, on Bowler, rode round "at top" in fine style, receiving a round of applause. Mr. Bullock-Webster, on Saladin, was a complete contrast, going at the slowest pace imaginable. Mr. E. D. O'Rorke, the winner in this class, gave a perfect exhibition of jumping on Cloister. In the heavy-weight class Mr. Bullock-Webster scored. After we "teased" at a marquee, which was run by some society or other, we wandered round among the side-shows, and very funny some of them were. "The Petrified Lady" was all she pretended to be. One of our party had his picture taken (likewise framed) "while we waited."

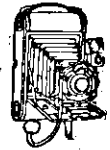
The result was quite fashionable, being "veiled" or dull. There was a most fascinating exhibit of what some soap or other could do in the way of "lather-producing," with a beautiful snow-white fountain of soapsuds coming out from a heap of soap. The roses were very beautiful, and in this tent there were several decorative classes, most of them being very good. The decorated tables were all pretty, the first prize being awarded to a dainty yellow and white arrangement done by Mrs. H. Nixon, of Cambridge. Some dainty yellow arum lilies were used on this table with good effect.

It was rather hard to see people one knew, but those I noticed were:—Mrs. W. R. Bloomfield, wearing white cloth and a pretty amethyst hat; Miss H. Blomfield, white linen, vieux rose tie and belt, and black hat; Miss Neeta Thomas, white linen coat and skirt, and pretty black hat; Mrs. John Reid, dark grey striped Sicilian coat and skirt, and a blue straw toque; Mrs. Holgate, wearing a dark green linen coat and skirt, and a burnt straw rustic hat wreathed with fruit and leaves; Mrs. C. V. Houghton, cream Shantung and a black and white hat; Mrs. H. Tomks wore pale cream linen and a flower-wreathed hat; Mrs. Myers, dark grey coat and skirt, and a grey bonnet with white; Mrs. W. Coleman, smart mole-coloured frock, braided, and a black hat with long black veil; Miss Maud Buckland, cream coat and skirt, black hat with upstanding bow of cream spotted net; Miss Ruth Buckland, blue linen coat and skirt, pretty straw hat with black gluce bows; Mrs. Edmunds, blue Shantung, pretty straw hat with cornflowers; Mrs. Aikie Car-

rick, Mrs. Hark, Mrs. S. Douglas, Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Stopford, Mrs. Morton, Mrs. E. Firth, Mrs. N. Banks (Cambridge), Mrs. McLoughlin, Miss Nora Gorrie, Mrs. Frater, Misses Frater (2), Miss Brodie, Mrs. E. D. O'Rorke, Mrs. Markham.

Takapuna Races.

For the first time I journeyed over to the Takapuna races, and we spent quite a jolly time. We were very discreet, and went over after the rush; so the trip



An Intelligent Present For Christmas!

YOU could not give a boy or a girl a more appreciated present than a Kodak. Photography is a hobby which, affording pleasant recreation, also stimulates habits of observation, attention to detail, and thoroughness—habits which make for success in life.

There is no mess, no fuss, no expense much, with Kodaking, because it does away with the darkroom and mistakes.

PRICES from 6/- to £25

Remember, if it isn't stamped "Eastman" it isn't a Kodak, but an imitation!

STOCKED BY
N.Z. PHOTO GOODS LTD., QUEEN STREET.
SHARLAND AND CO., LTD., LORNE STREET,
W. PARK & CO., WELLESLEY STREET EAST.
H. O. WILES, CHEMIST, QUEEN STREET.
J. L. HOLLAND & SONS, VICTORIA STREET.
WALTER SUCKLING LTD., 58, QUEEN STREET.