

RICHEST HEIRESS of ENGLAND, AND PRETTY TOO

She Is Miss Sybil Sassoon, Whose Forbears Made Tremendous Fortunes as Bankers in the Orient

WELL just omit queens and princesses, although there are plenty of them who couldn't pass muster with a European matrimonial agency that makes its rent marrying off heiresses.

With royalty excepted, the richest heiress in England, if not in all of the eastern hemisphere, is still to wear her bridal wreath and blushes, which will be vastly becoming to her, for she is one of the prettiest girls over there, and her loveliness is yet so young that only this season was the world's admiration due to pay it open homage. Her name is Sybil. A year or so ago, people used to think that it would be hard to beat the front name of Margareta as the proper label for girlish loveliness, the loveliness being at that time personified in the ravishing Miss Drexel, now Viscountess Maidstone. But beautiful Sybil's advent into British society has been accompanied by so much gilding that, for the present, she resembles some dazzling, argent statue of Diana, blinding male beholders into a mere daze of worship that makes them unable to scrutinize too closely the contour of her chin or the pinkness of her dainty little ear.

Her last name is Sassoon—Sybil Sassoon! The combination is so awful that there isn't an eligible bachelor or widower in all England who isn't passionately eager—solely in the interest of nomenclature—to change it for her.

And yet that appalling family name, so ugly in spite of its sonorous sweetness, has clustering about it one of the most entrancing family romances the world remains ignorant of.

CHARMING Sybil Sassoon has come into more than normal prominence—great as that was—by the death of her father, Sir Edward A. Sassoon. This was her coming-out season, the season when a girl already famed for her budding beauty and her expectations of enormous wealth was to be eligible for courtship in a society that can see \$1000 further than Americans can see \$1,000,000. While her father lived, her prospect of half his enormous fortune, which she shares with her brother Philip, was a prospect only. But his death in the latter part of May made her inheritance a tangible reality; and now she may be truly said to be the cynosure of all eyes that are free to pledge to her devotion for the eternity her millions ought to last.

Pretty Sybil herself, fondly attached to a father who was all that was kind and indulgent to her, is mourning his loss and thinking she is cruelly unfortunate to be shadowed by death at the very time when, as the wealthiest debutante England has greeted for many years, she should be most happy. But she has no idea how extremely lucky is her lot that she was born toward the end of the nineteenth century instead of its beginning. Besides being dead by this time, she would have been exposed then to machinations of fortune hunters whose methods in that cruder day make the modern heiress-hunter look as adroit and courteous as a Machiavelli. She would probably not have dared cross the Irish channel, for it was one of the fine, free sports of the period to kidnap any heiress whose attractive figure made her worth a greedy suitor's while. They manage things better now, and the field of operations seems to have been transferred to the United States.

Sybil's father, Sir Edward Albert Sassoon, was a young man to be called away from a wealth and splendor of life which equaled that of any monarch of Europe and exceeded in power that of not a few. He was born June 29, 1856, so that he was not quite 57 years old when he died. His rank was that of baronet, and he succeeded his father in the title when he was 40 years of age. His enormous riches did not make him neglectful of what he considered the duties of an English gentleman; he had served a term in the house of commons as a Conservative member, and he held the rank of major in the Middlesex Yeomanry, the duke of Cambridge's Hussars.

These positions, little more than the level of the simple country gentleman, would seem to argue no very impressive social status. But that is where the social outsider in England would egregiously err. The Sassoons have been the intimate friends of royalty for years, especially while the jovial, pleasure-loving Edward was king.

Sybil, the new heiress, has in her aunt, Mrs. Arthur Sassoon, the wife of Sir Edward's brother, a social protectress who has often played hostess to King George, as well as to his royal father. It would, indeed, be hard to find any family less famed for its social powers and more genuinely influential with the few who really make English society.

Mrs. Arthur Sassoon's home at Tulchan Lodge, in Scotland, is famed as the most luxurious country house north of the Tweed. It makes no boast of size as compared with the mighty strongholds owned by the Scottish nobility. But the immense wealth of its owner made it a sybarite's dream and the moors and lochs surrounding it were among the best-stocked preserves in the United Kingdom. When, to such a combination, the host and hostess added perfection in assembling guests who should meet their royal visitors, together with surpassing achievements in delights of the table and all the other creature comforts hospitality can provide, there is small wonder that the sport-loving, pleasure-loving, comfort-loving Edward, as prince and king, made his autumn sojourn at Tulchan Lodge one of the bright days of his year.

Not was there any wonder that his son, now King George, should enjoy the Sassoon hospitality just as keenly. The intimate favor accorded the family never aroused the smallest jealousy among others in the court circles, for the time when they were "climbers" was many years back, and their title to slight consideration is now as good as that of the highest among England's nobility.

Yet all this wealth and grandeur was but the flowering in England's chill and foggy clime, of a financial dynasty which rooted itself in the rich fields of the orient more than 200 years ago. Behind the elegant luxury which serves as the setting for the modestly borne dignities of the Sassoons there has



Tulchan Lodge, where the Sassoons have entertained English royalty.



Mr. Arthur Sassoon, an Aunt of Miss Sybil Sassoon, who is one of the foremost English hostesses, and entertained the late King Edward.



Miss Sybil Sassoon, who has to have been one of the debutantes of the London season.

always lain a grip of steel on the finances of the east. King Edward knew that, when he was showing favor to one of that house, he was assuring to himself the influence and loyalty of potentates far more vital in importance than gawkwars and rajahs. They have been, for centuries, the very sinews of war, the very mainsprings of power.

By descent, the Sassoons were Mesopotamian Jews. As early as the seventeenth century they were making their place as bankers in that city of fablia and romance, mysterious Bagdad. There they built up, into a mighty engine of finance, the banking house which slowly but pitilessly reached out to clutch the pursestrings of the Mohammedan east.

A hundred years of Bagdad and successive generations of study in the intricate problems of oriental politics ripened the genius of these unfamed wizards of finance and taught them to wait patiently for some great political change which should afford them room according to their strength. They were like crouching tigers, perfectly aware of their resources, fearless of all opposition, waiting only the occasion which should be worthy of their most powerful spring. The opportunity came when England made clear her designs on India, a century ago.

Without hesitation, the Bagdad Sassoons flung themselves into the spoiling of an empire. Some one, some group of financiers, was sure to take the heavy toll of profit that must accrue in the exploitation of that vast territory—why not they?

They transferred their main bank to Bombay; they easily seized upon control of the finances ruling the markets of Asia and Mohammedan Africa. They set their grip upon that richest of all the commercial loots, the Asiatic opium trade, which has lasted for a hundred years, paying them untold tribute of riches, and even yet pours into their coffers the tainted treasures of the storied Ind.

When the Sassoons determined on their quiet, unostentatious invasion of the land of hoarded wealth and growing famine, the political power of the British East India Company had been sternly broken by the home government, and a cabinet minister, with a board of control, was in charge of the ever-growing dominion. The first Burmese war had been fought, and the suppression of thuggery was following the wiping out of the dreadful practice of the suttee. The East India Company itself brought about the recall to England of Sir Arthur Wellesley, afterward the duke of Wellington, because he was following up his victory over the maharajahs at Assaye by extending the company's own possessions in northern India too aggressively to make current profits sufficiently remunerative. It was the dawn of real trade and finance in India, and the Sassoons were on hand to hail the golden sunrise.

REAPED HUGE PROFITS

Their shrewd forecast was not gainsaid by subsequent events. Lord William Bentinck, in his administration, from 1825 to 1835, made the first attempt to put into practice the maxim of ruling the country for the good of the governed, while conquest succeeded conquest, with the Sind and the Punjab added to the British crown. The middle of the century brought the beginnings of superb public works, the introduction of railways and the telegraph, the establishment of cheap and uniform postage and extensive social progress.

In such an era bankers of ordinary talent and resources could not fail to reap huge profits; a house inspired by the genius and the capital of the Sassoons harvested by the tens of millions. When the terrors of the Sepoy rebellion ensued, finance had to draw in its horns; but the secret history of that awful period holds many stories of wealth gained at the expense of the hated overlords. Whatever part the now famous Bombay bankers played, it is certain that they suffered no appreciable losses, and they were the first to profit by the establishment of permanent commerce and finance when, in 1858, the rule of the East India Company was utterly abolished and the final transfer of India's government was made to the British crown.

Royal favor enveloped the Sassoons in its purple mantle as the century tended toward its close. There were then two Sassoons, Albert and Reuben, and they were at the stage of wealth which called for magnificence in extreme. Albert's residence in Bombay, known as Sans Souci, possessed world-wide fame as the most beautifully poetic dwelling ever occupied by man.

But there were yet other heights to be gained, in another land. Albert Edward, Britain's prince of Wales, having met the Sassoons during his travels in India and liked their ways as well as their wealth, expressly invited them to make their home in England. The two brothers obeyed.

Kings of the Opera Trust

IN THESE days of enthusiastic attacks on trusts and all their kind not a word has been said of one of the most powerful, tight, rigid, perfectly organized little trusts in existence. That may be because it's not in the United States, but in Europe, where you can have a company or a corporation and go on doing flourishing business in some brand of monopoly, like steamships, and find nobody except the hungry Socialists to kick about it.

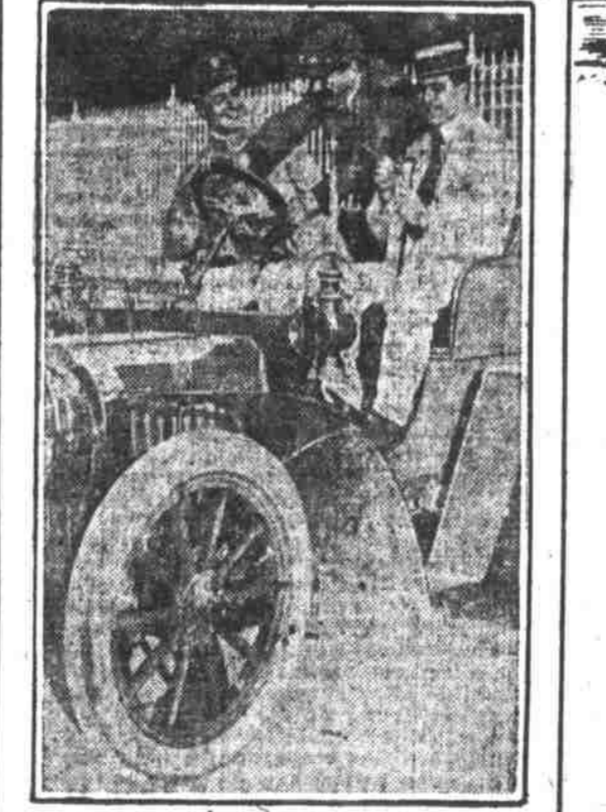
This particular trust is not only one of the most copper-riveted, solid little affairs in the world, but it controls the very last commodity that one could imagine to be monopolizable—music.

You hearken to the most dulcet strains that have ever ravished the ear; you think of whirling disks and cylinders, as the machines in thousands of homes ripple forth reproductions of your ear's delight; and you can't possibly surmise how music, of all the fleeting creations of the brain of man, can be made the property of a trust, and that without the singularly trustworthy genius of some American organizer to do the trick.

Well, it has been done, and by men who come of a family of artists, not financiers, over in Milan, in Italy. The most widely acclaimed composers of our own era have been as much owned by a music trust as any actor who has appeared on the stage within the last fifteen years.

THE music trust is the famous Casa Ricordi, the Italian house of music publishers, with whose conquering imprint such great names as Verdi and Puccini have been identified.

And for slaves, neither of these gifted composers has shown any particular eagerness over his servitude. Such is the way of all successful trusts. They exist because they can keep their own, particular beneficiaries habitually contented; and it is only when some disgruntled protégé or some wroth competitor happens to step in the road and get a kick in the rear that the course of business that the trust is denounced for



Ricordi and Riccardi, Sonzogno, Italy's Largest Music Publishers (on the left) with Sig. Puccini, the Composer.

what it has been doing, with high approval, all along. The Casa Ricordi is denounced by scores of composers, who have yelled "blood-suckers" and "robbers" until they haven't breath enough left to hum the air of their own latest failures.

About 1785, in Milan, there was born a boy named Giovanni Ricordi, who was only half an artist—only

of those maimed souls who intensely enjoy all that is good and beautiful in music and themselves cannot create anything beyond mediocrity. Most of them become critics; but Giovanni, who loved music so well, refused to play Herod to the children of the muse. At least, he could learn to be their foster-father.

Foster-father he became—a publisher of the music of others. Rather early in his career he described the beauties that lay in the "Fretful Delusion" of a composer, Mosca, long admired and now as long forgotten. Such is the fond delusion of genius—as to the influence, power and luck of a publisher once accepted—that signor Ricordi had thenceforth no difficulty in picking and choosing among the most admirable of compositions his time afforded. Being what he was, only a maimed soul, not a dead one, he needed only that opportunity, persistently presented, to enable his trained ear to select all that was best and most likely to prove popular when published.

He might have starved to death if he had been whole-souled in his musical gifts, as many another true musician has gone hungry to the grave. But the very gap his genius held in music was occupied by another gift for which thousands of born composers, in their years of dire extremity, would have given all their prized inspiration. That was the gift of trade. He was the dilettante of music, side by side with the maestro of commerce. Of such stuff trust builders are made. Before he died, in 1853, he had established the Casa Ricordi in the position of first and most desirable publisher of music in Italy.

and the Gazette Musicale, the Casa's own journal of the art, edited by Mazzaletti, was laying down the law to composers and musicians as though it had some patent from heaven on the earth's most heavenly art.

His son, Tito, succeeded Giovanni and extended the business to the stage, where its stock of music included more than 50,000 items, embracing 40,000,000 pages, while the catalog, as far back as 1845, contained 738 pages of large octavo, which was some business in music publishing. Meanwhile, the house had held on to the original score of every opera and other composition it ever published, so that it possesses one of the most valuable collections of manuscript music existing at the present time.

When Tito Ricordi became disabled by illness his son, Giulio di Tito, took over the helm of the business and brought to bear the slow fruition of a breed which, two generations earlier, had shown only the taste for music, not the creative talent. He was a successful composer of drawing-room themes, a practiced writer, a skillful draughtsman and a man of broad culture, peculiarly qualified to perpetuate the grip in which his house held Italian music and astute in extending its influence through Paleschi's "Anuario Musicale," a calendar of musical dates, which became the vade mecum of critics and ambitious amateurs.

The policy of the Ricordis has for years been one that was peculiarly gratifying to its composers, and as exasperating to all others. They never back a loser; and they never fail to pick a winner. But they back only one winner at a time, and so leave out in the cold many others who feel they have claims to the high consideration of the Casa Ricordi, almost as great as those of the fabric fortunate wight; they happen to have gained their all-controlling favor.

They did it with Verdi; they do it with Puccini. They acquired the rights of the famous Lucrezia from his widow, and thus secured the contract of the Wagner operas in Italy, together with a number of other modern works that have proved of incalculable value to them.

Artificial Silk for Gas Mantles

ARTIFICIAL silk is now being used as a basis for gas mantles, taking the place of ramie fiber. This is interesting, when it is remembered that it is only a few years since that material supplanted cotton, which previous to then had been used exclusively in the making of the mantle.

One who is not well versed in the manufacturing of gas mantles would naturally think that this outside basis was not of any consequence and that it serves simply as a foundation for the crystalline substance that furnishes the brilliant light. But this is a mistaken idea, for, though it is true that the material itself vanishes, it seems to partake in some degree of the toughness, the durability and the resistance to shock of the fabric. This is on account of the exactness with which the crystals of the mantle are intermingled with the texture of the foundation, and in its final form simulates the appearance of the fabric.

For that reason considerable interest has been taken in the new artificial silk base for the mantles not only in this country but abroad. The Prometheus has this to say on the subject:

"Experiments with artificial silk have been carried on persistently since the beginning of the present century. Until recently no thoroughly satisfactory results were obtained, a chief obstacle being the fragility of the artificial-silk mantles, which made them unsuitable for transport. Now, however, it is possible to purchase artificial-silk mantles which are far superior to the best ramie mantles. These artificial-silk mantles are even rougher than ramie mantles, the fibers being more subdivided, so that the radiating surface and the luminosity are correspondingly increased. They are far more durable than ramie mantles, owing to the great strength and elasticity of the artificial-silk fibers. Hence artificial-silk mantles are especially desirable for use with compressed gas, for street lamps and in every case where durability is a chief requisite.

The introduction of artificial silk not only improves the quality of the incandescent gas mantle, but also greatly simplifies its production. In the manufacture of cotton and ramie mantles one of the most important operations consists in washing out all impurities which would seriously impair the quality of the product. These tedious and costly washings are not required with artificial silk, as this material already possesses the required degree of purity."

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With so many other composers rampaging around outside of the rich fields, the Ricordis have reserved for their best bet in Puccini, and with practically the whole musical world of Italy ready to call on parliament to readjust the system of composers and publishers' rights, it was natural that competitors without number should be ever ready to take a hack at the Casa Ricordi. The Sonzogno firm seized on Mascagni as the young Saint George to slay this consuming dragon of melody, and for a time such masterpieces as "Cavalleria Rusticana" and "Il Pagliaccio" made the mighty Casa of Milan feel like adorning every other dress of music who turned up with a bundle of music sheets and a bale of conceit. But they had a century of experience and capital behind them; they just set tight and kept on waving the baton for their own dear little Puccini.

The Sonzogno concern couldn't secure enough new hits to deepen the dent it had started, and then it blew up, one half going one way and the other taking the opposite course. The one rival now divided against itself and fighting like brothers over the crumbs the Casa Ricordi had disdained, the ancient firm has gone haughtily on its way, more secure than ever in its monopoly of all that is most profitable in Italian music.

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