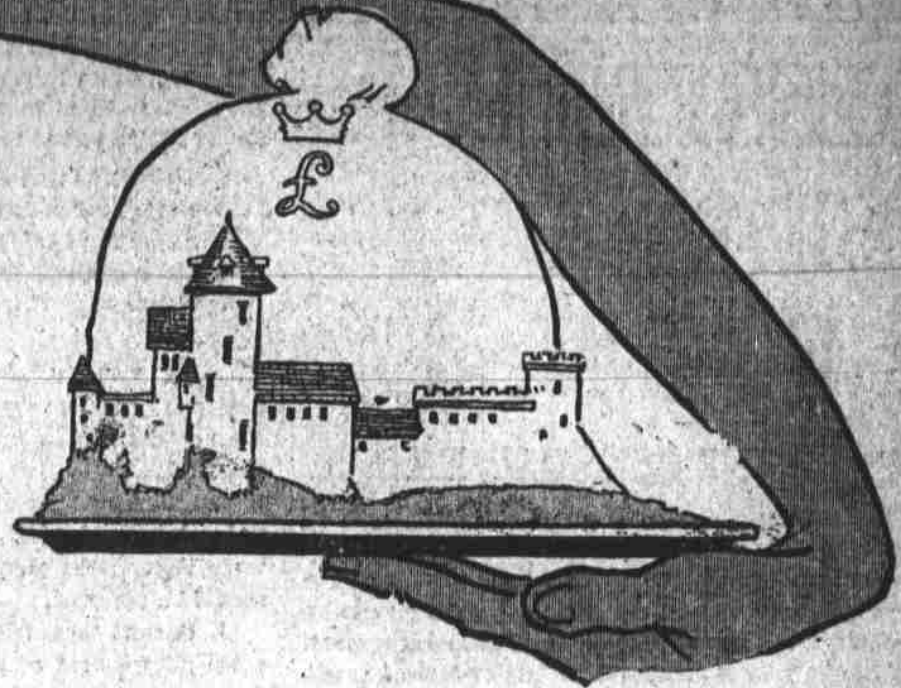
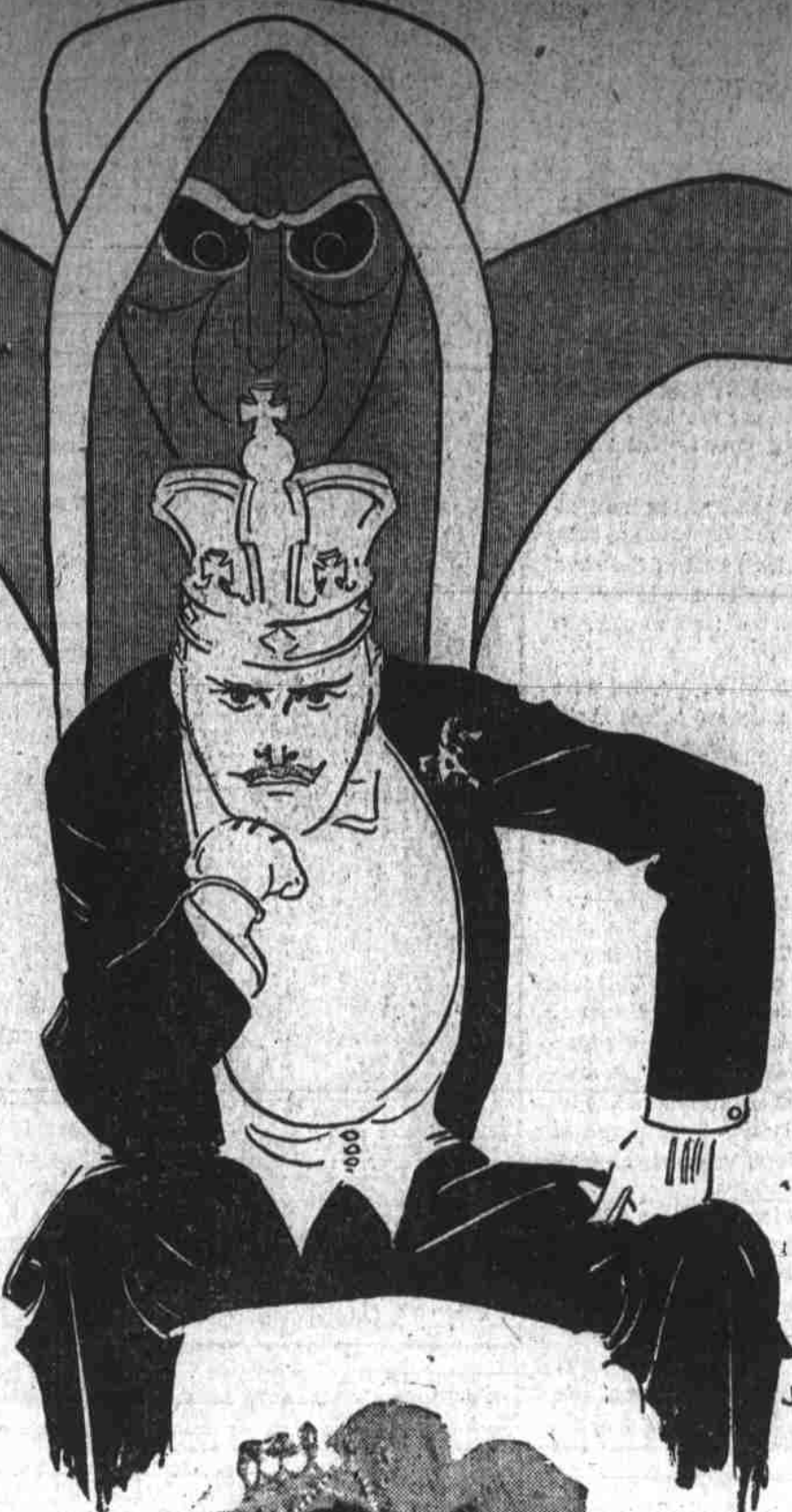




Haughty Mrs. Cornwallis-West's Astonishing Sacrifice

London, March 30.

WHAT is the greatest sacrifice that a wife can make? Mrs. Cornwallis-West, formerly Lady Randolph Churchill, might answer this question from personal experience, for she is just now making a sacrifice that the average wife will call the greatest that woman can make. Beaten at last by her unadorned relations-in-law, the beautiful Princess of Pless and the equally beautiful Duchess of Westminster, she is taking the first steps to divorcing her husband, more than twenty years her junior, thus leaving him free to marry a woman nearer his own age, and one that, gossip says, his sister, the Duchess, has already selected for him.

The Cornwallis-West family is an important one in the society of Great Britain, although having no title. It is a collateral branch of the great Delawar family, whose head is the Earl of Delawar, but the Cornwallis-Wests are keenly alive to their own importance and seldom mention the Delawar connection. Colonel Cornwallis-West, the head of the family and the father of the young husband of the erstwhile Lady Randolph, has been called the greatest commoner in English society. He owns magnificent estates in England and Wales; Ruthin Hall, his Welsh estate, is famous for its beauty and size. He has also a large house in London, and incidentally has money enough to keep all these places in perfect condition. Because of his Welsh estate and his prominence socially, as well as because he was until 1900 a member of Parliament, Cornwallis-West has been Lord Lieutenant of Denbighshire, Wales.

King Edward was for many years a warm friend of Mrs. Cornwallis-West; in fact, when she was the beautiful and piquant Lady Mary Fitzpatrick, she was high in his favor, and many are the stories told of the friendship between this most beautiful of Irish women and the man who was to be her King. It has been said more than once that if the history of the Cornwallis-West women was ever written it would provide spice and to spare for many a London season.

Into this family, noted throughout England and the Continent for its high-handedness in affairs social and matrimonial, married the widow of Lord Churchill, just thirteen years ago. She was forty-eight years of age and the man she married was twenty-five. Before her first marriage she was the beautiful Jennie Jerome, of New York, but before the marriage was celebrated an interesting chapter was added to the history of London society and to that of the Cornwallis-West family to boot.

The entire family from the mother who had been and still was a friend of King Edward, to the youngest girl who was booked to become the Duchess of Westminster, united against the match. The disparity between the ages was, of course, the reason given for their disapproval; but there were others, too.

Of these others later, the present tragedy comes about entirely because of the age objection. At the time that Lady Churchill announced her engagement to George Frederick Cornwallis-West, she and every other member of English

society, from the Prince of Wales down, were at Cowes for the yacht races. It created a sensation and at once the members of the Cornwallis-West family rallied to the fray. And this battle, begun thirteen years ago, is just about to be ended in the divorce court, during the Easter term.

The Princess of Pless, who was the greatest beauty that London ever sent to a foreign court, hurried home from her husband's castle to help outwit the fascinating Lady Churchill. But not all the Cornwallis-West family, nor all the King's horses, nor all the King's men, could separate the two lovers. When the mother of the young officer went to the woman who wanted to become her daughter-in-law, and with tears said, "Why do you persist in marrying my son when he is younger than your own son?" Lady Churchill replied, "We love each other and will have many years of happiness together."

Then Mrs. Cornwallis-West, the mother-in-law, played her trump card.

"We are an old family. It is important that our branch be carried on. It is vitally necessary that my son marry so as to perpetuate his line. He will grow to hate you if you now take a step that will eventually send our estates to a distant connection. Men invariably long to see their names handed down to their sons. It is their form of conceit and you are doing a dangerous thing to make this impossible for my son."

But this availed nothing. The happy lovers kept on meeting. The days when he could not see his fiancée, who looked at least twenty years older than himself, young Cornwallis-West, sulked in his rooms; if another man looked at her he glowered and frowned. He was openly disagreeable to the Prince of Wales one day when that personage urged Lady Randolph to think again before fulfilling her promise to marry.

On her part Lady Churchill was just as much in love. She was unhappy, distrustful, sad, whenever her lover was not with her and wept

real tears when he smiled on younger women.

And all this time the Princess of Pless and the girl, Shielagh Cornwallis-West, who was to become the Duchess of Westminster, carried on their warfare against the match. The Boer War was in progress. George Cornwallis-West was an officer; he was home on leave when his love affair with Lady Churchill was under way. His mother, as a last resort, appealed to the Prince of Wales and all at once orders came for him to return at once to his regiment. He had to go. The day he marched through the streets of London on his way to the station, Lady Randolph stood on the sidewalk and wept, and the young soldier wept too. He looked then, and still looks, ten years younger than his real age. This made his fiancée look all the more mature. Blond, slender and rather weak in expression, even to-day, although he is now in the late thirties, George Cornwallis-West is taken to be but twenty-five.

But the Cornwallis-Wests and the Prince of Wales reckoned without their host if they thought that their battle was won.

Before the transport with the sad lover on board reached Cape Town, Lady Randolph was sailing for South Africa on board the hospital ship *Malne*, and her lover was sick in bed with a curious disease that the doctor on board could not cure. When the *Malne* reached Cape Town, Lady Randolph found that her lover, supposedly ill from a sunstroke, had been invalided home and that she had passed him on the way over. Score again for the Princess of Pless and the Prince of Wales.

But there could be but one end for this romance and this end was marriage. The Lady Randolph returned post haste to England and at once the lovers fell into each other's arms and the wedding took place in July. It was plain even to the War Office and the Prince of Wales that the young officer could not return to South Africa. It was found out that instead of suffering from sunstroke, young Cornwallis-West was really dying from love sickness. After the marriage, therefore, the bride and groom were free to wander as they pleased.

Did they live happily ever after? Would that this love affair did have a happy ending. But as things have turned out it has been proved that the protesting mother-in-law was right. Before they had

How the American Sister-in-Law of the Duchess of Westminster Is Voluntarily Giving Up Her Husband Because She Is Twenty-three Years Older Than He, and the Succession to One of England's Greatest Estate Is Threatened

The Beautiful Princess of Pless, Mrs. Cornwallis-West's Sister-in-Law, and Most Subtle Enemy, Who With Her Sister, the Duchess of Westminster, Has Tried for Years to Separate Her Brother and His Wife.

Mrs. Cornwallis-West, Who, Because She Is Twenty-three years Older Than Her Husband, Steps Aside to Let Him Marry a Younger Woman.

been wed three years it was seen that the young husband's fancy was turning away from his mature wife, that he was spending more time away from her than with her. And at this moment the Princess of Pless and the Duchess of Westminster stepped forward and systematically began to finish the work they started when the engagement was announced. But the young husband felt some love for his wife, then, too, there was no doubt that he felt a certain fear of his stepsons, both of whom are older than himself. He kept up the fiction of living with his wife until three years ago, when he went to live with his sister, the Duchess of Westminster. It was at this time that the Duke left the Duchess for one of his little "tours of happiness" on the continent. For these three years the brother and sister have been inseparable and gossip has it that the brother has met under his sister's roof, the girl he may make his wife and the mother of his children.

There is no doubt that it is not love, at least that it is not because he has lost his love for his wife, but like every other Cornwallis-

West, he wants to hand his name and estates down to one of his own line. His mother knew him better than the woman he married. Her prophecy has been fulfilled. He has grown to hate the woman who is sixty years old to-day, but who bears his name.

During the three years that Cornwallis-West has been under the influence of his sister, he has made every effort to persuade his wife to sue for divorce, but he has wanted her to bring suit in such a way that he would not be placed in the wrong.

It was as though he said to her, Sue for divorce, but do it as though it was your own wish and not mine."

His friends are busy quoting things that he has said recently. Among them are many things bearing on the state of affairs in his household.

"A man should have children by the time he is thirty."

"No Englishman of family should overlook any chance to provide himself with an heir."

But the supremest thing of all she is doing now. In February she called him to their house, her's alone for three years, and said:

"I give you, you can have your divorce and then, perhaps, you will have your heir."

On March 3, therefore, Mrs. Cornwallis-West instituted restitution proceedings. The king's counsel ordered that her husband return to her and resume conjugal relations. He refused and still refuses. The way is now clear for her to enter suit in the Easter Term for absolute divorce. The woman named is one of no importance.

Mrs. Cornwallis-West on winning her divorce intends to take the name she bore so proudly for so many years. She will again become Lady Randolph Churchill.

This sacrifice is one that will draw her sons even closer to her than they have been. Her devotion to Winston Churchill, her oldest son, has won him many elections and high honors in England. He has stood by her all through her second matrimonial episode, and it has been this devotion that, perhaps, has acted unfavorably on his stepfather, who hated to have him around the house, being two years the junior.

While Mrs. Cornwallis-West's unusual sacrifice is the one theme discussed in London society to-day, it is causing as much comment as her marriage thirteen years ago. But in this case every comment is favorable. Her place in English society, which was slightly threatened when she married, is even stronger at present than when she was Lady Randolph. She is one of the best loved and most popular women in England. She won back the friendship of King Edward, forfeited when she married against his wishes, and by this sacrifice has made even her mother-in-law feel kindly to her. But what other woman could do it? Could brave public opinion, could give up a name once proudly borne, could make public acknowledgement that love can not live when the wife is in the winter of her life and the man in the summer of his, could admit that love and marriage, after all, does mean an heir to Englishmen, anyway.

The Honorable George Frederick Cornwallis-West, Who Will Bear the Title of the "Greatest Commoner in England."



PHOTO BY ALTA MARTIN LONDON