

SPECIAL REPORT FROM LONDON:

# Margaret's Tony

By PEER J. OPPENHEIMER



Family Christmas when Tony was 9 brought together his grandmother, Mrs. Messel; his mother, the Countess of Rosse; and his sister Susan, now a countess.



a polio attack when he was a boy. It left him with a stiffened leg that still bothers him occasionally. It also explains his reluctance to partake in Princess Margaret's favorite pastime—dancing.

For lack of any other particular interest, Tony took up professional photography after an undistinguished term at Cambridge. While his early work was heavily subsidized by relatives and friends, his talent showed through before long. As he became fashionable, Britain's notables quickly flocked to his studio.

His big break came when he took the 21st-birthday picture of the Duke of Kent. This opened the door for him as one of the unofficial court photographers of the royal family.

Tony was now in the social swim. He attended most of the lavish balls and parties of the season—sometimes as a guest, usually as a photographer, often as both.

Although he saw Princess Margaret on some of these occasions, he wasn't formally introduced to her until the early spring of last year.

The Princess had invited a few friends to an informal party at Clarence House one night. At the last moment, a girl friend's escort fell ill, and she asked Princess Margaret if Tony would be an acceptable sub-

stitute for him. The Princess agreed.

It was not a very auspicious beginning, however.

Tony's main contribution was to sit on—and shatter—a new long-playing record which the Princess had had flown from the United States!

To make up for his clumsiness, Tony phoned a New York music shop and had a replacement flown over on the first available plane. Within 24 hours, Tony sent the record to Clarence House, together with a note of apology.

Delighted by the gesture, and recalling his obvious regret and embarrassment, Princess Margaret decided to put him at ease by inviting him to another get-together at her home. It was on that occasion that they found out how much they liked the same things, particularly the world of theater and arts.

Nevertheless, there was little at first to set Tony apart from her other beaux. Suitors swarmed around Margaret like bees to honey, but at that time she had eyes for only one man, RAF hero Peter Townsend, whose love she later renounced because he had been divorced.

Meanwhile, Tony was busy with an exotic Trinidad-born Chinese actress, Jacqueline Chan, who is presently playing a "Yum-Yum" girl on both the London stage and in Paramount's film version of "The World of Suzie Wong." When they vacationed together in Switzerland some months ago, there was speculation of an impending marriage, but Jackie now refuses even to discuss him.

Margaret and Tony, in time, found their acquaintanceship deepening. In Tony, Mar-

garet found many characteristics she liked. He has a lot of charm and was able to rekindle in her the gaiety that all but died after the breakup of her romance with Townsend. Tony is at ease in anyone's company, including the royal family's, and he is willing to take second place, which is important because Margaret, as a royal princess, must always take first place at official functions—and also because she is domineering by nature.

**W**HILE BRITISH public opinion has been in favor of the union, some disappointments have been expressed. One source even claimed that it was the Princess who proposed to Tony. This person tabbed Tony an opportunist, unfit for the position of Princess Margaret's husband. Critics say that neither Tony's upbringing, social position, nor manners qualified him for the step he is about to take.

While he hadn't been titled as this was written, there is little doubt that he will get a title soon, probably a dukedom. After all, Queen Elizabeth's sister can hardly be known as "Her Royal Highness, Princess Margaret, Mrs. Antony Charles Robert Armstrong-Jones," and their children can hardly grow up as plain Joneses.

Several mansions have already been discussed as their permanent residence, and Margaret's annual allowance after her marriage will rise from 6,000 pounds (about \$18,000) to 9,000 pounds (about \$27,000).

Without doubt, Antony Armstrong-Jones will go down in history as one of the most fortunate young men in the British Empire since Owen Tudor—whose descendants included five British sovereigns.