

The men and women who have fascinated this adventurous foreign correspondent could not all be judged for their virtue—but they have all been violently independent

nothing. Half an hour later she was called to the set, where she had to play a washwoman. "Action" was called, and Sophia scrubbed and scrubbed. Take One was followed by Takes Two and Three and Four. All the time, the merciless sun beat down, and perspiration poured down Sophia's face. Between takes she looked at me and put her tongue out. I quailed.

Finally the director released the exhausted cast for lunch. Sophia, soapy to the elbows, came after me at a run. "Apologize!" she shouted.

"I apologize," I said.

"I thought you would," she said. "Let's go eat some spaghetti."

A story which illustrates how no one can meet Sophia Loren without loving her.

LOWELL McAFEE BIRRELL also is amusing, but there the resemblance ends. A big, attractive, convivial man, he likes to drink and tell stories which sound taller because they are true. In Rio some time ago, Birrell kept me laughing in spite of



Lowell Birrell

myself, telling me how he frustrated attempts by American authorities to have him extradited from Brazil. Conspiratorially he told me, "I have five important businessmen coming to my office, and the deal, if it comes off, is a big one."

Nobody else in Rio, neither the American Embassy, the press, nor his lawyer seemed to know what the deal was, but I believed him when he said it would be big because Birrell, in the words of *Fortune* Magazine, "has wrecked more corporations, duped more investors, and engineered the theft of more money than any other American in this century."

A former associate of the late, un-

lamented Serge Rubinstein, Birrell was indicted in New York on 69 counts of grand larceny, and his embezzlements were estimated at as much as \$14,000,000. Doubtless he reasoned that if one has to be a crook, one might as well do it on the grand scale.

Birrell wears monogrammed silk shirts and blue silk suits and spends as much as \$6,000 a month on entertaining, taxis, and a luxury apartment. But he has no bank account and owns nothing in his own name. As none of the stolen money was mine, I must admit I look forward to meeting him again.

Another free spender and high liver, but on a legitimate level, was BARON, the great English court photographer, who died in 1956 at the age of 49. A lifelong bachelor, he had been caught at last and was engaged at the time to Sally Ann Howes, who subsequently starred in "My Fair Lady" on Broadway. Born Baron Nahum of a Sephardic family in Manchester, England, he became famous as the photographer of the Royal Family, the confidant of Prince Philip, the most eligible bachelor in England, the escort of many of the most beautiful women in Europe, and a sportsman who lost most of the fortune he earned at the horse



Baron Nahum

track and the gin-rummy table.

Toward the end of his life, Baron decided he wanted to write his autobiography, but he ran against a snag: he was a bad writer. So he asked me to ghost his book for him. We had a hilarious holiday in Rapallo, Italy, and he returned to England for a minor operation on an arthritic hip. Something happened. There was a

blood clot, and he died. London has never been the same for me since.

My last two choices are blood relatives, although they otherwise have nothing to do with each other. Some time ago, while researching a book I was writing called "Kings Without Thrones," I interviewed the heads of most of Europe's royal houses. All were admirable men, but one stood out—the legal kaiser of Germany, head of the House of Hohenzollern. He is PRINCE LOUIS FERDINAND OF PRUSSIA.

The Prince lives with his beautiful Russian wife, Princess Kyra, and



Prince Louis Ferdinand

their numerous children in a pleasant villa near Bremen. Whereas the other pretenders were careful in their choice of words, Louis Ferdinand said precisely what he thought about everything, and it was often rude. He is quite frank about such matters as an early and brief attraction to National Socialism; a certain Anglophobia; a considerable early pleasure in alcohol; his pursuit of the movie star, Lily Damita, across two continents before the war; and the distress he caused his exiled grandfather, the late Kaiser Wilhelm.

And he has a nice modern humor. "Any chance of a restoration of the monarchy?" I asked.

He twinkled. "You never can tell. In the last election I got one vote for President. Might be the beginning of a ground swell. But Prince Ernest August of Hanover got one vote, too. Neck and neck, you might say."

Lastly, PROFESSOR PAUL NIEHANS, inventor of cellular therapy, which, he claims, rejuvenates the elderly. He treated Pope Pius XII, Somerset Maugham, and reportedly, Aden-

auer and the Windsors. Orthodox medicine rejects his system, and he is, without doubt, the most controversial figure in world medicine. His system is to inject his patients with fresh cells taken from the fetus of a calf. Those suffering from kidney trouble are injected with fresh kidney cells, those with eye complaints with eye cells, and so on.

Professor Niehans is Swiss, an aristocratic man in his late 70s, and the acknowledged illegitimate grandson of Kaiser Friedrich, which makes him the uncle of Louis Ferdinand. He is a testimony to his own treatment, walks erectly, and never wears a coat even in winter. "I have enough fresh cells in me to invigorate an army," he told me with a laugh.

I am cautiously against cellular therapy, but I spoke to a friend of Maugham's, who said, "I saw Willie Maugham before he went to Niehans'



Paul Niehans

clinic in Lausanne, and I thought he was dying. His skin was like parchment, and his voice was a dotard's. Then I saw him when he came back—and he seemed like a new person."

Thus I see we have two movie stars, a royal prince, a court photographer, a novelist, a man falsely charged with murder, an embezzler, and a medical luminary; two Americans, two Englishmen, a German, a Mauritian (de Marigny), an Italian, and a Swiss. I met one of them in a small German village, one in Kansas, one in Rio de Janeiro, one in Lausanne, Baron in London, de Marigny in Havana, Loren in Rome, and Fleming used to be my boss.

Which, come to think about it, is probably par in the career of a foreign correspondent.