

The Court

CHRISTMAS at Court is a thoroughly family festival. The King and Queen spend the season in their favourite Norfolk home, surrounded by their children and grandchildren, and occasionally a few intimate friends. Their Majesties always attend the Christmas morning Service at Sandringham Church, which is beautifully decorated with flowers from the Royal conservatories, and a family dinner closes the day. The King and Queen distribute an enormous number of presents to Royal relatives at home and abroad, friends and all the members of the various Royal households, while their poorer neighbours are always well remembered. Alike in London, Windsor, and Sandringham, there are gifts of coal, beef and clothing to the poor and the smaller tenants, besides sundry entertainments on the Sandringham estate. Their Majesties take keen personal interest in the matter, and are sometimes present at the distributions of Christmas gifts at Sandringham. They are very staunch to the old customs, and therefore most of Queen Victoria's Christmas charities are kept up, while the traditional baron of beef, game pie, and boar's head, always figure at the Royal dinner-table.

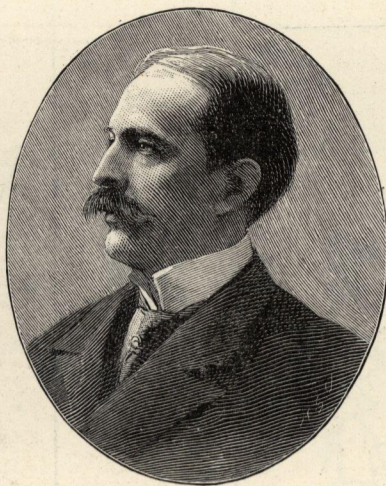
The King and Queen did not leave town for Sandringham till close upon Christmas. His Majesty was very busy with official receptions and audiences—the new Siamese Minister being one of those received. The Investiture was a very big function, as it included many South African honours. King Edward was accompanied by Prince Charles of Denmark and a large suite, the ceremony taking place in the Throne-room at Buckingham Palace. The Orders bestowed were those of the Bath, St. Michael and St. George, the Indian Empire, the Royal Victorian, the Royal Red Cross, the Distinguished Service, and one Albert Medal and one Conspicuous Service Cross, while several gentlemen were also knighted. The Queen and Princesses were much occupied with Christmas shopping, and in the evening the whole party generally went to some theatre.

The Duke and Duchess of Connaught spent their Christmas at sea, travelling in the *Renown* to Bombay. They reached Aden on Sunday, when they went ashore for a short time, and the vessel was expected to reach Bombay on Boxing Day, a grand reception being prepared. Delhi is already filling up with Durbar guests—native princes with gorgeously attired suites and splendid carriages. To prevent any hitch in the great Viceregal procession, numerous rehearsals have been held, particularly with the elephants. The camp looks magnificent, and is so well advanced that only finishing touches have to be put to the buildings.



LORD CURRIE

British Ambassador at Rome, who is retiring. Lord Currie, who has been at home on sick leave, has placed his resignation in the hands of Lord Lansdowne, as the extension of leave granted to him is about to expire. Though his health has much improved it is thought that should he resume his duties at Rome, his further recovery might be retarded. Our portrait is by Elliott and Fry.



MR. H. W. BOWEN

United States Minister to Venezuela. Mr. Bowen is the United States Minister at Caracas, Venezuela, and has been authorised to represent British and German interests during the present crisis. Mr. Bowen is a very popular Minister, and is credited with the desire to use his good offices as mediator as far as opportunity offers.

Between 1,500 to 2,000 guests will sit down to the Queen's dinner to-day (Saturday)—all widows or children of those who fell in battle in South Africa, or who died from the effects of the campaign. It will be a monster meal indeed, but the buildings of the Alexandra Trust are big enough to accommodate all the guests at once, the meal being fixed for 2 p.m. True Christmas fare is to be provided—turkey and sausages, roast beef with potatoes and greens, Christmas pudding and mince pies, fruit and crackers. Private generosity also gives mineral waters, a box of chocolate to everyone, and a toy to each child, while the guests will also treasure their pretty invitation cards with the Queen's portrait. After dinner there will be a variety entertainment, due to the kindly help of numerous public artistes, while the guests will have all their travelling expenses paid by the Queen. All that will be wanting for the people's enjoyment will be the presence of the Queen herself.

The Princess of Wales gave birth to a son on Saturday evening. Both mother and son are doing well. The infant prince is the fourth son of the Prince and Princess, who have one daughter, the Princess Victoria, born in 1897.

A Tour in Cyprus

THOSE who are in search of a place to spend a winter holiday should try Cyprus. The island affords to the visitor novel scenes, the population being a strange mixture of Europeans and Orientals. The island is also rich in points of antiquarian and archaeological interest. It is curious, too, to note how old customs and old fashions still prevail in the island. For instance, one of our illustrations shows a pottery dealer. At first sight his wares would appear to be antiques, but they are really made by the man himself. They are precisely similar to the ancient utensils in use in the island from the earliest times. Phœnician, Greek, Roman, Venetian, Turk—all have used just such bottles and jars as these!

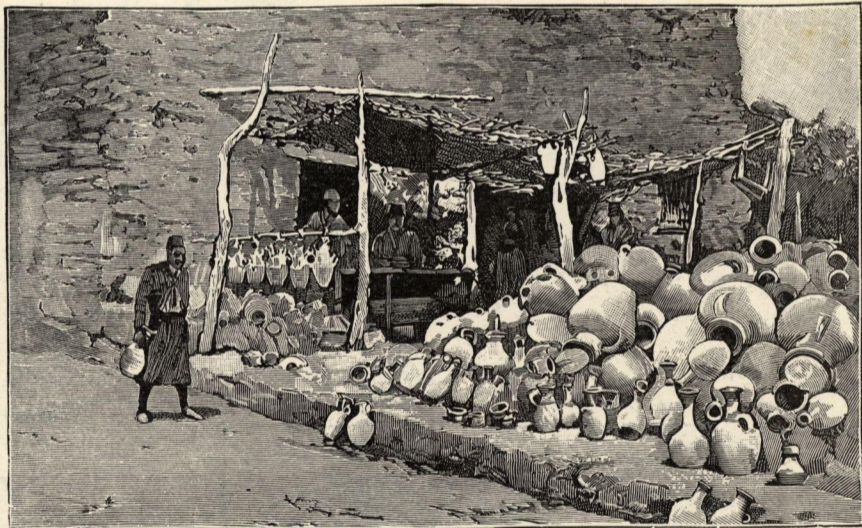
Another illustration represents a good spirited race between Zaptiehs. These races are held at the annual festival of Bairam, and are the great event of the year. The ditch of the fortifications outside the ramparts of Nicosia is the racecourse, and the races are witnessed by thousands of excited Cypriotes. The chief object now upon the shore, once sacred to Paphian Venus, is this stern old Venetian fort, which rises in solitary grandeur from the waves, once cleft by the radiant, sea-born goddess. On this shore were held the rites and sacrifices in her honour.

Paphos, the ancient Paphos, of which we have recently heard a good deal through the exploration of the site by the Cyprus Excavation Society, is now only a village. Paphos was one of the most famous of the shrines of Venus, and the Goddess of Beauty was there worshipped in a celebrated temple, of which there are now few remains. It was built upon the very spot where the goddess landed when she arose from the waters of the sea.

On the height of Troodos, six thousand feet above the sea, is the Government Cottage, a pretty English-looking house, the summer residence of His Excellency the High Commissioner. Upon Troodos also is pitched the summer camp of the troops in Cyprus, and a more healthful and delightful camping-ground cannot be imagined. The principal English residents in the island also spend their summers among the cool breezes of the mountain. Here, upon Troodos, is the only remnant of the great forests which once completely clothed the beautiful island. At the time of the Egyptian occupation immense quantities of timber were cut down and exported to Egypt. On Troodos are splendid specimens of the *Pinus Laricio*, which clothe the slopes at an altitude of 4,500 feet and upwards. The Aleppo Pine also grows to great size, and furnishes the greater part of the forests.



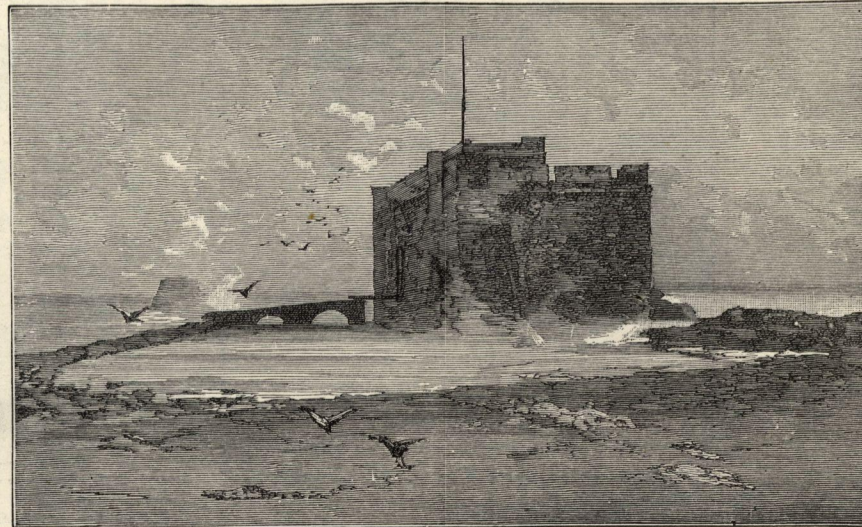
GOVERNMENT COTTAGE AT TROODOS



MAKING POTTERY AT FAMAGUSTA



ZAPTIEH SPORTS AT NICOSIA



AN OLD VENETIAN FORT