

THE VILLAGE GOSSIP

November 1, 1916.

DEAR DUCHESS:—

Here's a pretty howdy-do. My eminent specialist renders me a verdict that my delicate disposition requires absolute solitude. And you advise my going to Pinehurst, because, forsooth, the season hasn't started in October, and there will be "not even a whisper" to disturb my tender calm.

It's just as well the specialist was, as usual, a humbug. I am entirely recovered I found a great crowd already gathered down here. As far as I can see this season starting stuff is pure bunk. If a town full of folks isn't a season, its a pretty fair imitation. To my unlimited satisfaction, I found my immediate death threatened on my arrival.

The Magnolia was open, big as day, and the very first person I saw was Mrs. Robert Hunter, who said she and the Hon. Bob had been here an age or two, prospecting about in the autumnal countryside in a bran new Fordsmobile. I ambled on up to the Club House, and had the shock of my life. It's grown up over Summer into a resemblance to a real club, lacking nothing but the bitters, and was full. On my word it was full for a solitude. There was a foursome driving from the tee, and I could have endowed them all on the spot. Same good old company. Ormsbee and Shannon, Hudson and Cheatham. Bless my soul. I went and got me a stick or two and went out myself.

They are all here for good. Mrs. Shannon came down in the car, and is staying at the Colonel's. The Ormsbees have opened the Plymouth, and both Mrs. Hudson and Mrs. Cheatham are on hand. The whole gang take on Hunter's best ball every afternoon, when there isn't a tournament.

Mr. and Mrs. J. D. C. Rumsey are here to take a hand in the game. Just for greens I watched the performance Saturday. The whole neighborhood had turned out to try to trim the Gates boys, who live out here, Frank and Russell, originally from Montclair. Nothing doing. They ate up all the local talent, including Hennessee and Tom Kelly.

Tom was married last Summer to Miss Hazel Beck of Southern Pines, and they celebrated by removing the pot—which was called a prize—from all the other mixed foursomes in the neighborhood. And the woods were full of them.

I ran into James Barber at the bank. (He was putting in and I was taking out.) He's rolled in to see that they didn't forget to put a roof on his fifty-room "cottage." A lot of other unfortunate house builders seemed to be taking a strange unnatural interest in their chateaux. W. H. Thurston was gloating (inspecting he called it) over a colonial home for the hopelessly golfed that he is finishing up on Society Hill next to Johnson's. A. J. DeMott of Syracuse was here on the same errand. Truth is the Pine Crest Inn is jammed with them. Colonel Jones holds forth for Hughes and Probity there every evening, and they have a great party framed up for election night, with all the country gentry in, and a wee bit grape to crown victory or

assuage sorrow as the case may be. Mr. and Mrs. George Magoon are staying there until their new house is completed.

Eric Parson, the headmaster of the school, and Mrs. Parson are staying with Mrs. Dana out on the plantation, and the school is in full swing. William J. Dana was married recently to that attractive Miss Brown from Southern Pines we used to see at the dances, and left the farm in charge of Trumbull.

A very distinctive addition to the village is William Hill, the famous authority on rural education, who is in charge of the Farm Life School this Winter. He is now established with his family in The Elm. Of course the Tufts and James and Miss Esther are here in the Lenox. The Library is open, with Miss Lucy Priest in charge. The Priests are going to live in their own house, the Linden, this year. You remember, where Mrs. North was last season.

I tell you the town is already buzzing. Mrs. Spencer Waters is in the Maple already, terrorizing the proletarian in charge of constructing her new domain. Mr. and Mrs. John B. Armstrong are in The Orange cottage, and Mrs. Z. R. Bliss has opened The Cherokee.

Mrs. David Houston is already arranging putting parties, but Houston won't be down until after the election. He prefers his returns dealt out according to the old honorable custom, amid throngs and tumult.

The Simplex purred in yesterday over the road from Pittsburgh, with Mrs. William D. Hurd, Mrs. Splane, Nat and Miss Caroline Fuller. Nat's gone up to the Charlotte Fair to acquire a horse or two to break his neck with on the hurdles.

Newcomb's as busy as a bird dog. He runs a regular Real Estate Exchange. Dunlap, not satisfied with one, goes and builds two houses; and now S. Y. Ramage has bought Column Lodge, subject, of course, to the lease. Mrs. Spring will occupy it this Winter.

I suppose you would like to know about when everyone is coming. Mrs. Joseph P. Boylan is momentarily expected from Roslyn. I do not pretend to be an almanac or a prophet, but should guess all the colony would be in by the time you get here. Most of your friends who have not built this Summer will be in the same old places. There are no new cottagers for the delightful simple reason that there are no more cottages. The Danforths of course will be in the Craddock, and Mrs. Brayton from Fall River is to have the Chinquapin. Judge Steele has rented the Rosemary.

If you were to ask me what pleased me most of all, I'd say it was a new and really up-to-date soda fountain in the drug store, and the refreshing spectacle of old Mr. Wicker doing his eighteen holes with one single club—an antique wooden classic from the shades of St. Andrews, driver, mashie, niblic, buffer, spoon and putter all in one. These two, and a paradise of sunshine and blue sky, and flaming sunsets—and incredible sunrises, as I have heard, but not seen.

Yours,
DUKE OF ABERDEEN.



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