

Lady Swaythling

AT 28, KENSINGTON COURT.

LADY SWAYTHLING'S working day may be said to be an object lesson in the economical utilisation of time. How she packs all her multifarious efforts into the space of a few hours is a mystery to those unacquainted with her habits of orderliness and system.

I found her one morning last week busily dictating letters on a variety of subjects to her secretary, but she graciously relinquished her work in order to talk to me about the various projects with which she is identified, and about her beautiful house where she performs her work. In the almost cloister-like stillness of Kensington Court there are many charming houses richly stored with *objets d'art*, but there are few, if any, which possess interiors of such artistic and archaeological interest as that in which Lady Swaythling discharges the duties of hostess.

The most notable features are the Jacobean dining room, the Louis Seize drawing room, the wonderful hall, with its massive fireplace and oak mantelshelf, and the library.

The dining room was taken solidly from an old Jacobean residence in Winchester, and structural alterations had to be made in order to accommodate it at 28, Kensington Court. It is of light oak, and the carving of the panels is particularly well-preserved. The handsome appearance of the old Jacobean furniture is due to the careful result of selecting the timber and splitting it to show the fine figure of the wood. The surface is free from the modern abomination of varnish, and centuries of rubbing have resulted in producing a rich warm tone which it is impossible to copy by any of the subtle arts known to the modern imitator. The light comes from beautiful massive old sconces of the period, and the chairs (the backs and seats of which are of carved leather) are in perfect keeping with the room.

The Louis Seize drawing room is perhaps the most perfect of its kind in England. There is no base imitation here. It is the actual room which environed the occupants of a house in the Place Vendôme during the reign of the ill-fated monarch, and every portion of the walls and furniture (with the exception of the piano), has been brought over here from Paris, the room being altered to fit the scheme. Even the old Parisian windows and sashes are inserted to strengthen the *ressemblance*. The tapestry on the chairs is of exquisite workmanship, and although the work is faded in parts, under the hand of Time, the design is still strikingly effective. There is a stateliness about the *tout ensemble* which one cannot unfortunately associate with modern rooms, and Lady Swaythling humorously remarked that no one would dream of singing a comic song in a room so suggestive of dignity.

On the first landing are cases containing specimens of all that is best in Japanese art, which Lord Swaythling collected during a stay of some months in that fascinating country, and they are cunningly illuminated by electric jets.

The library shelves would fill the breast of any ardent bibliophile with envy, hatred and all uncharitableness, for here, in exquisite cases, is one of the finest collections of first editions of the moderns outside the British Museum.

After having exhausted the beauties of the house, including the charming nursery at the top all decked out in Dutch tiles, Lady Swaythling was good enough to tell me something about the work in which she is engaged, and which takes her many hours every day to accomplish. Her many active public duties are concerned with the Liberal Social Council, of which she is a member of the Executive Committee; Queen Mary's Holiday Home for Governesses; the London Ladies' Association to Found Educational Exhibitions for the Sons of Naval and Military Officers and Civil Servants in Straited Circumstances, of which she is the Honorary Treasurer. Lady Swaythling also takes a deep interest in her husband's work in the Jewish community, and, as orthodox Jews, they conform strictly to the tenets of the ancient faith. She also superintends the whole of her husband's private benefactions, keeping a record of them

year by year, so that she can obtain in a moment the precise amount which he gives to each individual, charity, or institution.

The most interesting evidence of her deep love for her children is the diaries which Lady Swayth-

ling keeps of their progress in school and sport. These constitute charming histories of her children year by year, which will prove in time to come valuable family records. Had mothers of important families done this in the past how historians would have blessed them. She is a strict teetotaler and non-tea drinker, never plays bridge or golf, but is an ardent member of the Bath Club, plays cricket and is an expert swimmer. She teaches her little ones to follow her example. Her youngest boy when he was only four-and-a-half years old swam the whole length of the swimming bath at the Bath Club, an unprecedented feat for so young a sportsman. She is the possessor of a beautiful soprano voice, and has been trained by Tosti and Dr. Lierhammer. Lady Swaythling talks with animation on a

variety of subjects, and her sentences are punctuated by a charming little laugh when anything amuses her. On the subject of the Suffragettes she has most pronounced opinions, although she is a woman of progressive instincts. "The subject," she said, "is so complex, and woman is so unfitted to express opinions on such subjects as the expenditure on the Army and Navy or anything in connection with our temporal forces. With regard to the subjects directly concerning woman, which will come under the cover of administrative legislation, I would allow every woman, no matter what position in life she occupies, to have a voice in the administration of all questions affecting the health and home. But," her ladyship continued, "as Parliament is at present constituted, it is not feasible, as you cannot have members voting on certain questions and not on others. That appears to me to be the stumbling block in the way of the



Rita Martin.

The Right Hon. the Lady Swaythling, who actively identifies herself with social, political, and charitable work.

full exercise of the Parliamentary franchise by women." "Then you are opposed," I remarked, "to the present militant suffragette." "Oh, certainly," she explained. "I think there is such a wide field of endeavour, without agitation, in which women might exert themselves for the benefit of their fellow creatures. Work lies all around us, and if only women of leisure and wealth did that which lies in their immediate vicinity a good many evils affecting the poor would be eradicated." In addition to the beautiful house at 28, Kensington Court, Lord and Lady Swaythling have a country abode at Town Hill Park, Bitterne, near Southampton, where all the joys of outdoor life are indulged in.

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Speaight. The Hon. Stuart Montagu.



Speaight. The Hon. Ewen Montagu.



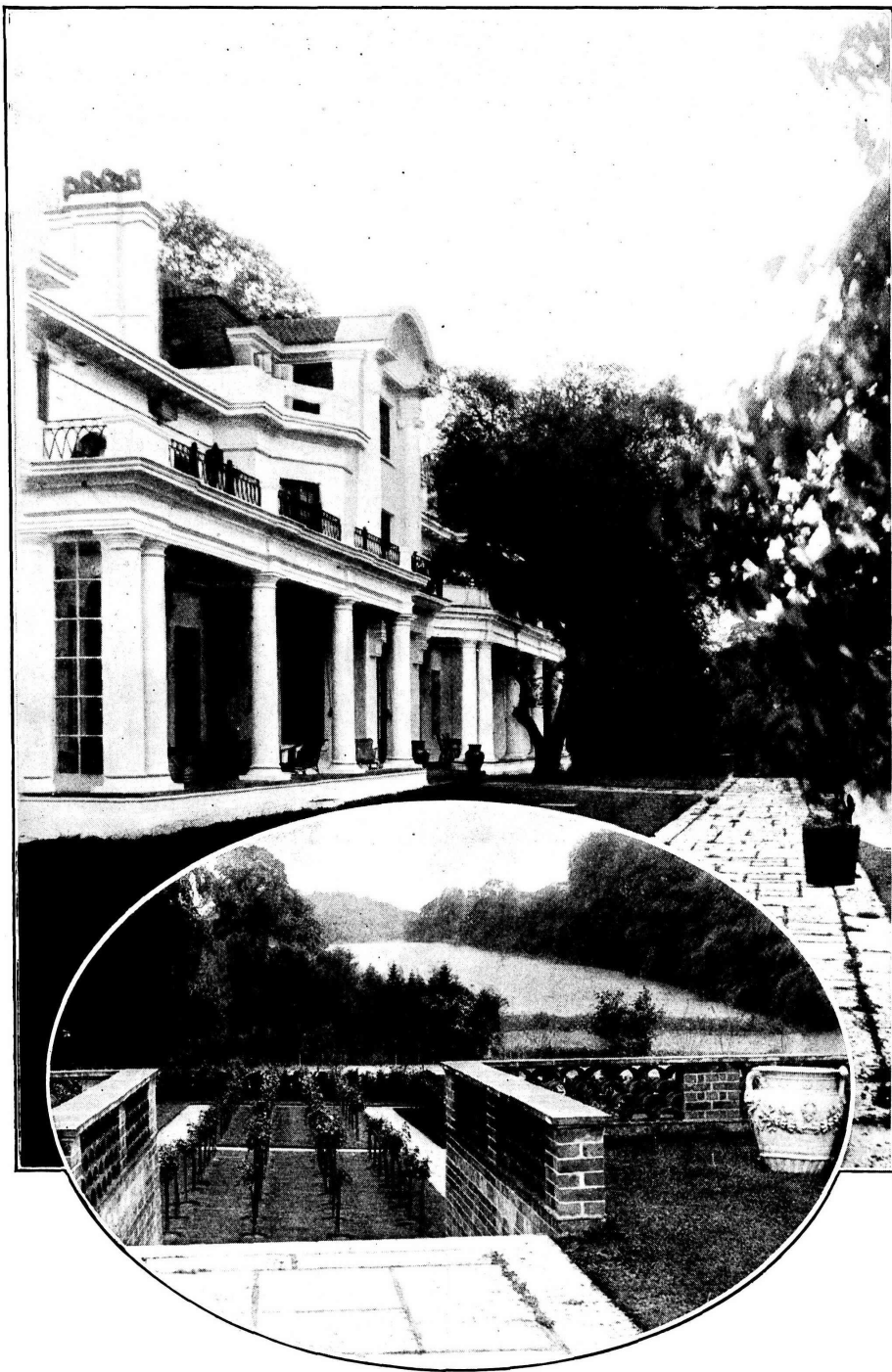
Speaight. The Hon. Ivor Montagu.



Thomson. The Hon. Ivor Montagu, who swam the length of the Bath Club Swimming Bath, when he was 4½ years old.



Wilfred Jenkins. The Hon. Joyce Montagu, the only daughter and youngest child of Lord and Lady Swaythling.



Façade of Townhill Park, Bitterne, the country home of Lord and Lady Swaythling, together with a glimpse of the Terraced Garden.

CHILDREN OF LORD AND LADY SWAYTHLING, AND SCENES FROM TOWNHILL PARK, THEIR COUNTRY HOUSE.