

THE SURREY COMET.

COUNTY NOTES.

SURREY.

The Prince and Princess of Wales honoured Viscount and Viscountess Middleton with their company at dinner at 34, Portland-place, on Saturday. Lord and Lady Desborough and Sir Edgar and Lady Helen Vincent were among the guests.

The Duchess of Albany has consented to distribute the prizes awarded in the annual essay competition of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, at the Crystal Palace, on Saturday, May 8.

Prince and Princess Alexander of Teck have signified their intention of being present at a dramatic performance of "Niobe," to be given by the Amateur Stage Club on Friday evening, May 14, at the Court Theatre, in aid of the London Police Court Missions.

Their Royal Highnesses Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein and Princess Alexander of Teck and his Serene Highness Prince Alexander of Teck visited the Queen and the Empress Marie Feodorovna of Russia at Buckingham Palace on Monday, and remained to luncheon.

In the presence of a very large gathering, which included representatives of public bodies, clergy and ministers of various denominations, and local medical men, Princess Alexander of Teck formally opened a new out-patient department in connection with the Royal Brompton and West Hampshire Hospital, Brompton.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has presented a handsome scarf-pin to Mr. Henry Holmes, superintendent of the line, L. and S.W. Railway, as a mark of appreciation of the very successful efforts made for the comfort and convenience of His Royal Highness on the various occasions when travelling over the line.

Lord Rosebery will not leave England until the marriage of his son, Lord Dalmeny, to Miss Dorothy Grosvenor, which is fixed for Friday of next week. Towards the end of

Lord Rosebery will join his yacht for a cruise in the Adriatic, when he will visit most of the ports on the Dalmatian coast, and will also call at Venice.

Charles Beresford has left town for Stewart, Ireland. Lady Charles Beresford has gone to 14, Brunswick-square, Brighton, to receive letters and communications for the time being must be addressed to 1, Great Cumberland-place, Marble Arch.

Algernon Charles Swinburne celebrated the anniversary of his birthday on Monday, having been born in London on April 5, 1837. He received a very large number of messages and letters of congratulation at The Pines, Richmond, and there was a constant stream of callers. Mr. Swinburne is in excellent health, and in the afternoon of his birthday went for a long walk over Wimbledon Common.

Y. Cockburn, J.P., chairman of the

ALBANY CLUB GUTTED.

Disastrous Early Morning Fire at Kingston.

The Banquet—And After.

A serious fire broke out just before three o'clock on Wednesday morning at the Albany Club, as a result of which most of the upper part of the building now stands practically in ruins. The club premises, as is well-known, consist of a charming old one-storeyed house, situated in wooded riverside grounds near the foot of the Canbury-gardens. A Masonic dinner had been held at the club on the evening before.

The flames spread with extraordinary rapidity, and the whole building was in danger of being gutted, but through the firemen's efforts the outbreak was confined to the first floor. No cause is yet assigned for the fire. When Mr. Bryant, the manager, who, with Mrs. Bryant and their daughter, sleeps in an annexe, made his round of inspection at 1.30, everything appeared safe. Subsequently, however, Mrs. Bryant noticed the reflection of the flames on her window and roused her husband. About the same time P.C. Mumford's attention was attracted to the burning house, and he immediately gave the alarm from Latchmere-road.

Flames Through the Roof.

It was seven minutes to three when the call was received at the Kingston fire-station. By this time the flames were already bursting through the roof, and could be seen by Supt. Drury and his men before they started. Turning out very smartly with the horned escape and steamer, they found on their arrival that the upper part of the building was well alight. The steamer proceeded straight on to the tower, and drew water from the river, the hose being carried up the staircase in the centre of the building, and here the men remained until the flames were subdued. The hydrant from the escape carriage was worked from the road, but the pressure of water was so low, and the quantity obtained so small, that it was of very little use.

The Surbiton steamer, with Supt. Hards in charge, shortly put in an appearance, and a few minutes later Supt. Ives and the Teddington firemen dashed up on their engine, having been called from the Holmesdale-road alarm on the opposite side of the river. The operations of the fire-fighters were directed by Chief Officer F. J. Bell, who arrived close upon the heels of the Surbiton section. Fireman Mould, of the Kingston section, sustained a nasty injury to his hand while descending the staircase, cutting it on a piece of glass which had fallen and embedded itself in the handrail.

The building is old, and it burned almost like tinder, but two hours' steady work sufficed to extinguish the flames. The steamers then took their departure, but a staff of men was left for the purpose of "cooling down." Subsequently they were busily engaged in pulling down the loose rafters and similar debris.

A Sorry Spectacle.

It was a sorry spectacle which the fine old mansion presented later in the day. The right wing, consisting of the billiard room and chambers above, had fortunately been saved by the firemen, but the rest of the house was in a deplorable state. Of the roof nothing remained

RECRUITING FOR T. TERRITORIALS.

A Special Effort to Secure Enlistments Next Week.

THE ROYAL COUNTY TERRITORIALS as a RECRUITING CENTRE.

According to the returns, recruiting for Territorial Force would appear to have been on the decline during the past week. It is not the case, however, as the interest is still maintained. With regard to the Batt. East Surrey Regt., the numbers are about the same as last week. This is not because recruits have not been forthcoming, but accounted for by the fact that resignations come in from men who have completed term of enlistment, and have not seen any way clear to re-engage for a further period. Their loss is to be deplored, but the fact remains that these men are all the better for their military service, and should the country ever need their help they will be capable of bearing arms in its defence. This applies also to the other local companies and battalions whose muster rolls are unaltered this week.

The best return comes from the 5th Bn. whose numbers have increased still further. Everything points to this battalion soon reaching its authorised establishment. The officers are men of very few exceptions, re-engage for a further term, so that practically all the men serving during the past year will be the muster roll for this year also.

Resignations have brought down the numbers slightly in the R.A.M.C., but in the Teddington Company of the Army Service Corps numbers have reached 86, and if the tradesmen and artificers asked for are coming, this company will be full up.

RECRUITING IN KINGSTON.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,—I understand that my letter in issue of last week has been the cause of severe criticism on the slackness of the district in the matter of recruiting, compared with Richmond, especially where the facts of the case are not known.

It must be remembered that there are three Companies and a detachment comprising the full strength of the quarters Detachment, while at Kingston there are only two Companies. Kingston until the last came was as at Richmond.

The above facts do not, however, clear that must rest upon the shoulders of the district if the Headquarters are not at once brought up to full strength. A recruiting area extending over Surbiton, Morden, the District, Hook, the district ought easily to make a whole Battalion instead of only a detachment. There are, I am glad to hear, renewed activity, and if I were better of last week now I should be glad to reduce the number of recruits required.

Next week Major de Munnich's "Englishman's Home" will be at the Kingston Theatre, and I trust this may have the effect of