

- Woman and Her Interests -

HER EXCELLENCY

THE social life of a country is quite closely associated with its politics and statesmanship, and this is true of Canada, as of older countries. The Canadian capital during the session of Parliament is at the same time a sort of social centre, and this again centres around Rideau Hall, the official residence of the Governor-General. The mistress of Government House, as it is usually called, thus exercises a wide-reaching influence on the social life of the country, and, indeed, what may be looked upon as a recognition of the importance of her position has been made by King Edward's recent announcement that the wife of His Majesty's representative in Canada may be styled Her Excellency, in her own right, instead of merely by courtesy.

The duties of Her Excellency are unofficial and undefined, but they are none the less real and numerous, and they have been throughout many régimes faithfully and graciously fulfilled. During the season, which is also the sessional time, these duties are largely of a social nature. Chief, of course, is the Drawing-room held by Their Excellencies on the night but one following the opening of Parliament, and at which are presented annually several hundreds of people, including the wives and daughters of Lieutenant-Governors, Ministers, Senators, and Commoners, *débutantes* of the season, wives and daughters of officers, and representatives of society generally, from every province in the Dominion. Then there are state dinners at Government House, followed by Her Excellency's reception for the wives and daughters of the Parliamentarians and others bidden to the banquet. Luncheons and afternoon teas, some of them quite informal, are frequently given, and the skating and tobogganing parties at the Rideau rink are among the most enjoyed of the winter's entertainments at the Capital.

But her duties as hostess of Government House are by no means all that devolve upon the wife of the Governor-General. Their Excellencies are constantly being solicited to lend their patronage to concerts, balls, bazaars, and all sorts of entertainments for charitable objects, and many of these they help on still further by attending in person.

The Countess Grey, the present chatelaine of Rideau Hall, has already in the two years that she has spent in Canada, formed an acquaintance with a large part of the vast Dominion. A recent trip with His Excellency had the Gulf and Newfoundland as its first objective points, and ended with the Pacific Coast.

Their Excellencies the Earl and Countess Grey have carried out most successfully the idea of extending the benefits of the vice-regal residence to the large cities, outside of the Capital, for a few weeks of each year. These are periods of almost continual activity, for Her Excellency as well as for the Governor-General. At the vice-regal residence for the time being, Her Excellency gives dinner-parties and holds receptions. With the Governor-General she attends balls and receptions, art exhibitions and concerts, meetings of literary and scientific bodies; visits schools and colleges, charitable and philanthropic institutions, and so, on, an almost incredible number of affairs being crowded into the period of the vice-regal stay in the city.

Her Excellency the Countess Grey is Honorary President of the Women's Art Association of Canada, Honorary President of the National Council of Women of Canada, Honorary President of the Victorian Order of Nurses, and a Patroness of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, among national organizations. Lady Grey has always shown a deep interest in the handicrafts movement; she not only attends exhibitions of home industries, but also makes substantial purchases. For the last Handicrafts exhibition in Montreal, the Countess Grey loaned some fine old jewellery, also a beautifully enameled orna-

ment in the form of a butterfly, Her Excellency's own work.

The hospitality of Government House, during the present régime, is gracious, home-like, and widely diffused.

Lady Grey makes of Rideau Hall a home as well as a vice-regal residence. Her Excellency's gracious and kindly manner, her sympathetic and womanly presence, and many little acts of thoughtfulness and consideration have won for her already much real affection among different classes of the people.



Her Excellency the Countess Grey

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