

HER EXCELLENCY IN IRELAND.

DURING the month of June, Lady Aberdeen made a tour through Ireland in the interests of the Irish Industrial Association, of which Her Excellency is president; and if fresh evidence were needed to testify to the quick, responsive gratitude of the Celtic race, writes Faith Fenton in the *Toronto Empire*, it would be found in the enthusiasm that has marked her reception and progress through the restless little isle.

It was during the Aberdeen regime in Ireland that this most helpful association was established; and it is largely due to Her Excellency's organizing skill, social influence and enthusiasm that it has reached its present active and prosperous condition.

In her past position as viceregal lady of Ireland, Lady Aberdeen saw not only its destitution and poverty, but the skill and capabilities of its people—in minor industries—especially that of its girls and women in the art of crochet and lace-making. And with practical benevolence she began at once to formulate plans for encouraging these industries and finding market for them.

The organization of the Irish Industries Association was the outcome of this planning, and its speedy growth and prosperity prove its necessity.

This association has been established for the purpose of encouraging and aiding home industries among the people; especial attention being directed to the fine arts of lace making and embroidery, for which the Irish women are famed.

By employing teachers of these arts; by bringing the workers into connection with the wholesale trade, so that they may not be dependent upon casual custom; by establishing effective middlemen between the simple unbusiness like peasant workers in their homes, and the great wholesale market; by making the industries known and securing more extensive custom—this is the work the association has set itself to do, because in it lies the amelioration of the condition of the Irish peasantry.

Leaving the task of establishing local branches and securing modern design and high quality in the works to able coadjutors, Her Excellency, since her arrival upon these shores, has devoted herself to making these Irish industries known and endeavoring to establish agencies in Canada and the States.

The Irish Village at Chicago last year did much to make known the minor industries of Ireland, and the fine quality of its goods. The Irish poplins certainly attained fame with the World's Fair visitors, while the Irish laces were gener-

ally admired. The pathetically bare Irish cottages, each with its fire place and stack of peat, its old settles and dresses, and its busy occupant carving, spinning or lace making, did much to make the prosperous people of the New World realize the hard conditions under which many of their brethren are laboring, and to fill them with kindly thoughts of help in whatever practical way might be opened. As a result of the Irish village a store has been opened in Chicago, which the association hopes may become a central agency for the United States.

"In speaking of Canada," said Her Excellency at her reception at Cork, "I should like to tell you of the great interest taken in this work by very many people there, and especially, I need not say, by the Irish whom we have come in contact with.

The Prime Minister of Canada, who is of Irish descent, has given me a message of hearty greeting to you in Ireland, and to let you know how deeply he is interested in this work and how proud he is to be a Waterford Irishman himself.

"In Canada we hope to establish agencies for the Association. In fact we have already entered into business relations with a leading house in Montreal. Mr. Murphy came over at the beginning of the year and bought goods and carried them back. The goods were so eagerly sought that he is coming again this month to get further consignments.

"We hope also to have agencies in other places—Toronto and Kingston—and in that way you see our business in Canada is promising."

Upon her arrival in Cork, upon the first of June, Lady Aberdeen was greeted with the heartiest of receptions, and a very large public meeting inaugurated her Irish tour.

It was here Her Excellency delivered her first address, in which she gave a picturesque description of the Irish Village in Chicago last year, entered into details concerning its profits and results, and discussed the possibilities of the American market for the Irish industries.

Throughout her lengthy address, which was listened to with interest and enthusiasm, Lady Aberdeen's business ability was most marked.

It is this practical quality of her genius, coupled with clear-sightedness, womanly enthusiasm and the all-roundness of her thought that makes Her Excellency a force as well as an influence in whatever work she undertakes to do.

Very clearly and in most business-like way she outlined to her listeners, not only in Cork, but throughout her tour, the

objects of the association and the channels of its work. Not one fact was overlooked, not one possibility untouched. To create a market for the industries, to make the industries worthy of the market, to bring the poor workers more in touch with one another and with business centres—each of these aims received Her Excellency's attention, and she enlarged upon the best methods of accomplishing each.

That Her Excellency has given something more than her good will and untiring effort to the Irish industries, especially the lace making, is evident from the statement of the manager of the association, made at the meeting in Cork.

"After the Irish Village in Chicago, I thought the greatest step which the association had taken was the acquisition of the Irish Lace Depot of Ben. Lindsay. Its greatest advantage was that it had already a great foreign connection with Paris, London and Berlin, and through it there existed the means of putting the industries on the basis of a regular wholesale trade.

The establishment of the Lace Depot in Dublin was entirely due to Lady Aberdeen herself, she having put nearly £5,000 of her own money into it.

Lady Aberdeen felt that when Mr. Lindsay, the only wholesale lace merchant in Ireland, died, there was a great prospect that the lace buyers would have a chance to dispose of their work. She bought the premises, the stock, the goodwill and everything connected with the establishment, and the consequence was that all the lace workers of the country, who had been in the habit of sending their work to Mr. Lindsay, were now doing so; and these workers were now paid nearly £400 for their work."

Beginning at Cork, where she visited all the factories and institutions, Her Excellency journeyed south throughout the most picturesque and tourist travel portion, visiting Kinsale, Killybegs, Tralee and Limerick, where, in graceful recognition of the love and service she has given Ireland, she has proffered the freedom of the city.

At every point, she was met by enthusiastic people, and given spontaneous and loving welcome. At the Kinsale convent schools, where so much of fine lace work is done, she was greeted by the following song of welcome:

Welcome to Erin, Mavourneen, Mavourneen,
With hearts full of joy, your coming we hail,
Child of the thistle and shamrock, Mavourneen,
Caed mill's failthe once more to Kinsale.
The Canada claims you from home and from Erin,
Still do you faithfully bear us in mind,
And brave loss and danger, Mavourneen, Mavourneen,
For dear Erin's children employment to find,
Chorus—Welcome to Erin, etc.