

WOMEN OF NOTE.

The Countess Tolstoy and Mrs. Marlon Crawford.

In 1860 Count Lyeff Nikolaevitch Tolstoy, then thirty-two years of age, resolved never to marry, and as an earnest of his resolution, sold the manor-house of his estate. Its purchaser removed the body of the house, leaving what had formerly been its wings standing as detached buildings, and in one of these the hermit Count took up his abode. To this place, two years later, he brought his bride, Sophia, the young daughter of a German physician resident in Moscow, and within its bare walls for seventeen years they made their home. No one who has not experienced the loneliness and retirement which such a residence entails can appreciate how absolutely within herself and her home the wife's interest must have been. And yet, in spite of this, the Countess Tolstoy (this is the spelling of the name used by the family upon their French visiting cards, and in writing in English) has a breadth of character and an aptitude for the larger interests of life, which has certainly not been developed from her environment.

Their summer home—and indeed, the place where the greater part of the year is spent—is called Yasnaya Polyana (Clearfield), and is in the province of Tula. The grounds are extensive and beautiful, more from their rugged and wild picturesqueness than from cultivation or care. The house stands at a distance of about a mile from the highway, from which it is barely visible through the trees. Without and within everything is of the simplest. The park, with its stately avenue of trees, the lawns, forests and ponds of the estate are most beautiful, despite the neglect of later years. A grove and thicket occupy the site of the former manor, separating the wings. One of the wings is occupied by a sister of the Countess and her children, and the other has been enlarged to meet the requirements of the novelist and his family.

The daily routine of life at this Russian "Clearfield" is a simple one. In the morning, tea and coffee, with bread and butter, are served in the large hall, after which a stroll is taken through the woods to the small river, a mile distant, where a bath is indulged in. At twelve o'clock breakfast is served under the trees, at which meal informality reigns, and where for the first time in the day, the entire family assembles. After breakfast there is riding and driving, when the weather will permit, until late in the afternoon. Dinner is served out-of-doors.

The Countess is an extremely clever woman intellectually, and one who is more than a match for her husband in his arguments. She transcribes his books as they are written, as frequently as they are altered and revised, and in the case of the "Kreutzer Sonata," copied it four times before the book was finally completed.

The Countess, who is of necessity the financial manager of the family, has taken possession of the estate which she administers for the good of her husband and children. She it was who issued a few years ago, a cheap edition of Count Tolstoy's novels, on the royalties of which the household has been supported. To her firmness and determination the credit of the home in which the family reside, as well as the blame—if such it be called—for her husband's failure to practice the doctrine of a community of goods, which he so earnestly advocates, must be given; and her realization that a home must be provided for the nine children who have lived of the sixteen born to them, must be her excuse.

The wife of the clever novelist and "citizen of the world," as Mr. Craw-

ford has been styled, is in every respect what her husband's most enthusiastic admirers could desire, a beautiful, talented and charming woman, who, in her cleverness as in her personality, is well fitted to be the helpmate of a man of Mr. Crawford's ability. Mrs. Crawford, whose maiden name was Elizabeth Christopherus Berdan, is the daughter of General Berdan, of the famous Sharpshooters. She was born at the Kimball home-stand, West Lebanon, New Hampshire, and there she spent the first years of her life. In her early girlhood she went abroad with her father when he went to St. Petersburg to introduce the Berdan rifle. His home was first in St. Petersburg and later in Berlin, in which cities his daughter was educated. She returned to the United States in 1880, and remained here till 1882, during which time she met Mr. Crawford. Returning to Europe and then to Constantinople the acquaintance was renewed on Turkish soil, and their engagement followed soon afterwards. They were married on the eleventh of October, 1884, at Buyukdere, on the Bosphorus.

At this time Mr. Crawford had been living about the world, first in one country, then in another, having no settled place of abode. Some time after his marriage, however, he bought a residence at Sorrento in Italy. The house, which is situated upon a bluff two hundred feet high overlooking the Bay of Naples, was rebuilt for his lovely young wife by Mr. Crawford, and here a great part of their married life has been spent, varied occasionally by journeys, which have extended as far as the Crimea and Caucasus.

Mrs. Crawford is the mother of four children, Eleanor, aged seven, Harold, aged five, and Berdan and Clare, twin son and daughter, who will be three years of age this month.

In appearance, Mrs. Crawford is beautiful. She is tall, very fair of complexion, with large, lustrous black eyes, and a great quantity of magnificent golden hair. Mr. Crawford's excellent judgment and keen critical faculty are of the greatest assistance to her husband in his work, and he reads his compositions to her, day by day, as he writes.

A lover and talented student of music, Mrs. Crawford has devoted much time and study to the piano. She plays unusually well for an amateur. She is also an accomplished linguist, speaking four languages with fluency.

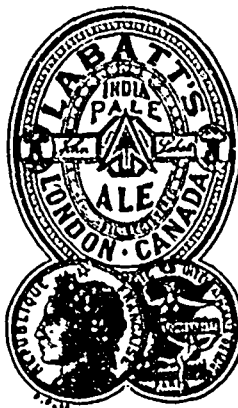
In spite of her long residence abroad Mrs. Crawford's affection for her native land is very strong, and both she and her husband look forward to taking up their permanent residence in this country. To this end Mr. Crawford has purchased land near his wife's birthplace in New Hampshire.

The daily routine at Sorrento is a simple one. Both Mr. and Mrs. Crawford are good sailors, and spend as much time as possible on the sea. Moreover Mrs. Crawford is an admirable housekeeper, and in Italy house-keeping is not a sinecure. Mrs. Crawford was formerly an enthusiastic and accomplished horse-woman, but has of late ridden little, the country near Sorrento being mountainous, meadows cannot be said to exist at all; and this, to one fond of the saddle, is the only drawback to what might well be described as an ideal existence.—*The Monitor*.

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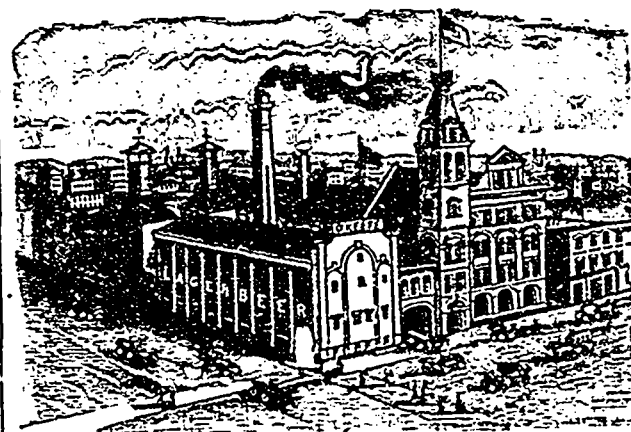
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