

# — Woman and Her Interests —

## AFTERNOON ENTERTAINING



THE 'tea,' afternoon reception or formal 'at home'—by whatever name it is called—continues to be a popular form of entertaining during the social season. The afternoon 'tea' can be anything from the informal meeting of a few friends, on invitation, to a gathering which fills the reception rooms to overflowing, and by which the hostess repays all at once her social debts for the entire season. The crowded reception, or 'crush,' as it has been aptly termed, is not an ideal form of entertaining or being entertained, but it meets certain demands of the complicated modern social life.

Some hostesses—and the number is growing—prefer to give a series of small teas, instead of one or two crowded affairs. These little gatherings really demand more tact and social grace on the part of the hostess than do large and elaborate receptions, and are proportionally more enjoyable to the guests. The hostess, in planning her series, selects from her visiting list, for each of the occasions, people who know one another or who have some common interests, for the more 'mutual friends' there are at a small tea, the more pleasantly it passes off, and the less is the strain on the hostess, who, when she has only twenty or thirty guests, feels more personally responsible for the individual, as well as the general enjoyment. Having the tea-table placed at one end of the drawing-room, is a pleasant arrangement for a small tea, and a little good music is an added enjoyment.

For the large and formal afternoon tea, the invitation cards are sent out a week or ten days in advance, with the time stated, which may be from three to six, or from four to seven. Shortly before the hour named, the curtains are drawn and the rooms are lighted artificially, the common-sense reason for this arrangement being that, as the days are short and darkness settles in long before the departure of the guests, it avoids the awkwardness of having the rooms grow more and more gloomy as the afternoon wears on, with the necessity of a servant pushing about among the crowd to turn on the lights. It is imperative that the light should be soft, not garish, but it must, at the same time, be sufficient to prevent any appearance of gloom. The shading of candles, lamps, and electric bulbs can be made a very effective part of the decorative scheme.

There is a fancy for having the table in the tea-room left bare except for lace centre-piece, and doilies, but a cloth of the finest linen, which may have an elaborately wrought border of drawn-work, lace, or embroidery, is always in good taste, and looks better under the glow of the candles than a bare table, however highly polished. The decoration of the tea-table is always a feature of the affair. It is a mistake, however, to have the floral arrangement so elaborate that the effect of daintiness is lost, and it goes without saying that the flowers used should be in perfectly good condition, therefore those flowers should be chosen which retain their fresh appearance, rather than blossoms, however delicate and rare, which would soon wilt in a warm room. The tea and coffee or chocolate services are placed at either end of the table, with the plates of sandwiches, and fancy

cakes, cut glass, or silver bonbonnières scattered here and there among the other dishes. The ices may be served from the same, or from a separate table. Usually a friend of the hostess presides at each end of the table, and pours the tea and chocolate, while girls in pretty, light frocks hand the dishes about among the guests. At a reception where there are both men and women present, the men assist in this duty, and sometimes the serving of the refreshments is relegated to servants.

The hostess at large receptions sees little of the majority of her guests, except a few words at the moment of their entering, and for an equally brief space of time at their departure, although at a 'crush' it is quite permissible for guests to leave without again

shaking hands with the hostess. If the affair is given to introduce a daughter of the house, or for some friend, the guest of honor stands with the hostess near the drawing-room door, and is introduced to each one whom she does not already know.

If a man-servant is not kept, a maid in black dress, white cap and apron, is stationed in the hall to open the door, and direct the guests to the cloak room. There are places in cities which will supply a 'buttons' for a consideration, but the boy too often gives such an impression of being hired by the hour that his being on hand is more amusing than impressive. After the guests have removed their wraps—but not their

(Continued on page 19.)



**A Canadian Peeress** The Marchioness of Donegall, who before her marriage was Miss Violet Twining, of Halifax, N.S., took an active part in society during the London season just past, for the first time since the death of the late Marquis. She attended one of the drawing-rooms at Buckingham Palace, where she presented one of her young countrywomen, Miss Creelman, of Montreal. The picture shows the Marchioness in court dress. Lady Donegall spent a few weeks of last winter in Canada. Her little son, the present and sixth Marquis, was three years old on October 7th. The country seat is Castle Chichester, Isle Magee, County Antrim, Ireland.