

## WIVES OF OUR HIGH OFFICIALS

### II.

There is a marked difference between the society woman and the woman of societies.

Each term signifies the exercise of distinct faculties and tastes, which carry the possessors thereof into spheres that may touch at times, but never blend.

There is a third sphere into which each of the others may melt harmoniously—that of the home. The public woman may be a home woman, - that is, a lover of home and home-making. A society woman also may lead a dear and tender home life. But the society woman, and the woman of societies, have little in common; and because of this, they are too apt to misjudge each other's motives, and undervalue each other's work.

A woman of societies is not necessarily strong-minded. To be a society woman does not imply frivolity, while the dear little domestic woman is quite amiss, when she infers that to be either of them signifies a neglect of, or indifference to, home life.

In this series of sketches, we shall find that many of the wives of our high officials, while of necessity much before the public as social leaders, are yet true home lovers, whose chief pleasure lies in the daintiness of home-keeping, and the sacred home ties.

Were we to outline the earlier years of the chiefest lady of Ontario, it would be a continuous record of social success and leadership.

From the days when as a merry, witching child she won the indulgent love and admiration of a large home circle, through girlhood seasons of beauty and belledom, into matronly years of high official position, Mrs. Kirkpatrick's life has been an unbroken range of social brilliance and publicity. As a daughter of Sir David Macpherson—one of the most popular Speakers the Senate has ever known; then as the wife of an equally popular Speaker of the Commons; and latterly as regent of Ontario's Government House, she has been placed continuously in the first rank of Canadian social and official life. And so admirably is she fitted for such prestige, so well and generously has she filled every obligation, that we rank her past-mistress of the social art; and the name of the mistress of Ontario's Government House has come to be synonymous with all that is brilliant, bright and merry—all that is hospitable and kindly, as well as much that is tender and womanly.

The doors of the Government House have never been more widely open, its social obligations never more generously fulfilled, than during the vice-regency of His Honor and Mrs. Kirkpatrick; while their quick responses to every call upon them for social support and influence, has won for both a warm place in the heart of our people all the country over.

Mrs. Kirkpatrick is well known in public places. At the balls and parties, the concerts and theaters, the afternoon receptions which call for her presence, not for prestige

alone, but from real pleasure in her brightness. She is familiar also at smaller affairs—meetings of charities; and benevolent homes; while many a struggling young artist has been helped forward by her generous patronage, given not in name only, but

by her presence at recital, lecture or musicale.

A Canadian artiste, a Canadian cause, has never need to ask twice for whatever encouragement of word or presence the lady of Government House can give.

Her face is familiar to us all—even the toilers,—the oval face, with its beautiful dark eyes and pleasant smile. She has grown more slender of late; and sometimes as she sits in public places, a little look of weariness or patience rests upon her countenance, yet it but enhances its attraction. Yet it is only sometimes,—for in all social functions none are merrier or more frankly out-



MRS. GEO. KIRKPATRICK.

spoken, none gayer and brighter than she.

Yet, as all womanly women are seen at their best amid home surroundings, so Mrs. Kirkpatrick appears most charming in the sunny drawing-rooms of Government House. Her Wednesday afternoon receptions are full of easy grace and geniality. When the late afternoon light reddens the great southern windows, and November twilight comes on apace; when the pretty drawing-rooms are kaleidoscopic with bright color and motion, and the warm fragrant air is laden with low speech and gentle laughter; when the rose turns to grey in the cloudland, the soft green masses in the conservatories grow dim, and the lights leap out;—then the hostess of it all appears her merry self, full of the fun that has been hers since girlhood, yet exercising always that social tact which is hers by right—and which experience has perfected.

Yet, perhaps, some of us like Mrs. Kirkpatrick best, when, in her quiet black gown, she descends the broad stairway to greet a casual visitor or friend, and amid her flowers or beside the open grate, sits down for an informal chat.

There is something very sweet and motherly about her face at such seasons;

there is a touch of pathos in the great dark eyes, and a tenderness about the mouth. It is a sensitive womanly face that we see, and a very womanly personality that reveals itself.

For our chat is perhaps of flowers. Mrs. Kirkpatrick is a devotee of the pretty things. Lilies-of-the-valley, violets and roses are her favorites; but she is fond of all blossoms and "green things growing." Just now it is the chrysanthemum that reigns fragrantly at Government House—and all the rooms are gemmed with the white and gold of them.

Or it may be that the talk turns upon domestic affairs. Those who know Mrs. Kirkpatrick merely as a society leader will hardly imagine that she has a positive genius for organizing, and executive work.

Yet so it is, and since she does not believe in platform or public work for women, her gift finds outlet in housekeeping. The lady of Government House is her own housekeeper; she is downstairs and in the kitchen at half past eight each morning; personally supervises household arrangements; and orders all that is needed.

"Every purchase made is by my personal order," she says. "It is necessary in so large an establishment, else the expenses would be enormous."

Doubtless this is true. Yet it is easy to see from her interest and enthusiasm that Mrs. Kirkpatrick has a genius for housekeeping.

Perhaps the tenderest phase in Mrs. Kirkpatrick's character is her love for her little son Eric. True motherhood quivers her lips and shines from the great dark eyes as she speaks of him—her little son who is not strong, but a bright and manly little fellow, who fully returns the affection lavished upon him. And through him, and because of him, all childhood, and especially young boyhood, find a welcome at Government House, and a warm interest in the regard of its mistress.

A social leader, a hostess generous, gay and kind; a woman full of mirthful womanly ways and tastes, a clever housekeeper—and a tender mother; this is Ontario's chiefest lady.

*Betty Trotwood*

Good-will has been preached, and written and sung, till it has become a platitude, and Christmas dinners and teas, festivals and baskets overflow for our poorer brethren during the season. But then we go our ways and leave them to renewed privation. What shall we do with our poor? Visionist, philanthropist, the practical man—each and all are struggling to solve the question; and grand schemes for the amelioration of toilers, for the uplifting of downhill humanity, are occupying thoughtful minds. But at this season we may answer the query in the words of dear, delightful Mr. Dick, who as Betsy Trotwood declared was always right and say: "Feed them."

Ah, friends, among the grateful Christmas thoughts be thankful that you have food enough, however plain; and give, give, give generously to those whom you even suspect may be enduring hunger cravings.

The choicest gifts are sympathy and love, compared with which the outward token is as naught. These are the good-will gifts that should go out from each to each during the Christmas-tide, sweeping away all petty differences and making the echo of the angel song in hearts unused to singing.