

Vice-Reines of Canada Since Confederation.

No. VII. *

The Regime of Lord Aberdeen.
By Margaret Eadie Henderson.

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THE Right Honorable the Earl of Aberdeen was sworn in as Governor-General of Canada on the 18th of September, 1893. Lord Aberdeen came no stranger to Canada and the Canadian people. In 1891 Lord and Lady Aberdeen, accompanied by their children, had made their first visit to Canada, of the broad extent of which they had, as it were, a panoramic view, beginning with the grey fortresses of Quebec, and including many places of interest lying between the historic east and fortified Esquimaux, grimly guarded by the warships of the North Pacific squadron. Long, restful days at "Highfield," Hamilton, where the Earl and Countess of Aberdeen sojourned for several weeks during this visit, and in 1892, a protracted stay at the charming Canadian "Guisachan," had so familiarized Lord and Lady Aberdeen with the country over whose destinies they were to preside for a number of years that during Lord Aberdeen's term as Governor-General their Excellencies were practically Canadians.

Her Excellency had given her impressions of Canada, formed during her previous visits, in her charming little book, "Through Canada With a Kodak." These bright sketches, illustrated with many drawings from her Excellency's pencil, as well as views taken by her kodak, appeared originally in the magazine, *Onward and Upward*, of which the Countess of Aberdeen is the editor, and at the special request of the publisher, and of many who had derived both pleasure and instruction from their perusal, the papers were published in collected form. Charming bits of word-printing they contain, too, as well as a valuable fund of accurate information for the friends of Canada beyond the sea, and of special interest to prospective settlers.

On their arrival in Canada, therefore, the Governor-General and Lady Aberdeen were received as tried friends.

The Countess of Aberdeen is the daughter of Sir Dudley Coutts Majoribanks, the first Lord Tweedmouth, who for a number of years was the active head of the great banking house of Coutts. Lady Tweedmouth was a daughter of Sir James Hogg, and was a woman of great beauty and talent.

The family seat is at Berwick-on-Tweed, but Lady Aberdeen's childhood was spent at Guisachan, picturesquely situated at the head of a lovely strath in Inverness-shire. It was at Guisachan that the little Isabel, then only eleven years old, first saw the Earl of Aberdeen, to whom she was married in 1877. Much might be said of her happy childhood, for the bright, thoughtful, unselfish child very early gave promise of a splendid womanhood. The Honorable Miss Majoribanks, as Lady Aberdeen then was, had distinctly individual ideas upon woman's prerogative, and when, at the time of her marriage, the tenantry of the different estates vied with one another in offering gifts to the popular bride, these tributes, publicly

presented, were acknowledged by the bride herself in graceful little speeches, which elicited not only admiration, but surprise, for twenty-five years ago the art of public speaking was not often found among a young lady's accomplishments.

Among Tennyson's earlier poems, the lines addressed to "Isabel" may with singular appropriateness be applied to Lady Aberdeen, so perfectly do they portray her beautiful character:—
"The intuitive decision of a bright
And thorough-edged intellect to part
Error from crime; a prudence to withhold;

Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,
The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife."

But Lady Aberdeen's happy home life has not rendered her insensible to the needs of others, and the firm conviction that "no man liveth to himself" may be regarded as the key to the fact that the great influence of the Countess of Aberdeen is always to be found on the side of "the cause that needs assistance." Hopeful, ever-seeing latent good, needing only the power of loving sympathy to be stimulated into activity; bright, whether patiently wading through the details of some cherished

of Ireland amid manifestations of regret unparalleled in the history of that impetuous isle. They had used a golden key, and found their way to the Irish heart. For the kindly interest Lord and Lady Aberdeen had taken in Ireland and her industries had been of the most practical kind. The Countess had established agencies for the sale of the textile fabrics of Ireland, the Limerick laces, the ornaments of bog oak, the goodly blackthorn walking sticks, and other articles of purely national manufacture. In this connection it is interesting to know that the Irish lace depot established in Dublin, which was purchased by Lady Aberdeen before she left for Canada, has proved a brilliant financial success. Managed on purely altruistic principles, all profits are expended either in extending the Irish lace industry, or in improving the social condition of the workers.

Lady Aberdeen's executive ability was displayed still further at the Columbian Exposition at Chicago, in 1893, when the Irish village instituted by her enriched the National Irish Industries Fund by the sum of \$100,000, a result quoted by the Countess with pardonable pride. At this village, where the productions of Ireland were exhibited, the simple life of the Irish peasantry was portrayed as vividly as in Carleton's "Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry." A bright-eyed, sweet-voiced Irish girl said in a delicious brogue: "But, it is Lady Aberdeen that is the very soul of the scheme. It is just wonderful the interest she takes in us. And she thinks of everything, too, when you would think she would not trouble."

Some one has said, "The memory of the people is long and deep," and the Countess of Aberdeen is the richer for the warm affection, which her sweet womanliness has won her. With such a record behind her, it is not surprising that the Countess of Aberdeen, when reigning as Vice-reine, came into very close touch with the people of Canada, co-operating with them in every good work. Lady Aberdeen, however, disclaims all achievement on her own part, stating that her "attitude towards the women-workers of Canada is one full of admiration and reverence, and that to the mother country fresh inspiration might well be brought from the resourcefulness, ability and energy of her daughters beyond the sea."

The most courtly, perhaps, of our Lieutenant-Governors of to-day has said of Lady Aberdeen: "She has left so much good work behind her."

The name of the Countess of Aberdeen will ever be inseparably associated with the National Council of Women, of which she was the honored founder. That the work continues without the inspiration of her presence, though encouraged by many evidences of her unceasing interest in the work, merely serves to show upon what broad, upon what firm foundations the Council was estab-



THE COUNTESS OF ABERDEEN

—Photo by Lafajette, London and Dublin.

The laws of marriage character'd in gold
Upon the blanch'd tablets of her heart;
A love still burning upward, giving light
To read those laws; an accent very low
In blandishment, but a most silver flow
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,
Right to the heart and brain, th' undes-

cried,
Winning its way with extreme gentle-

ness
Thro' all the outworks of suspicious
pride;

A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,

project of social reform, or snaring butterflies for scientific examination, in the pale light of a western moon, or in the weird glimmer of lanterns; sympathetic and intensely in earnest, need one ask the secret of Lady Aberdeen's marvelous personal influence?

When Lord Aberdeen was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland he was received as the Viceroys of Ireland usually are—with indifference—but at the end of his too brief term of office Lord and Lady Aberdeen left the green shores

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