

Dawn of Tomorrow

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Many Canadians Are Presented at Court

The reign of Elizabeth the Second is essentially modern. But there is much about it which reminds us of those other great queens of the past—presentation parties, Royal garden parties and receptions.

Years ago a young girl's first real entrance into Society—into the gay world of balls, dinner parties, receptions, of mild flirtation and admiration—was to be presented to her sovereign.

Then debutantes wore white only,

with a cluster of three little ostrich-feather tips in their hair. And all the ladies wore long and elaborate court trains made from yards and yards of silk or velvet.

Today the procedure is simpler, but no less impressive.

Since the end of the war presentation parties have been held in the afternoon, instead of the evening, and the debutantes are no longer "tied" to white. Ladies wear afternoon dresses and hats and men wear dress or uniform.

Invitations are sent out in the form of a Royal Summons, but the attendance is far more democratic than one would guess. With a few exceptions, almost any girl can be presented, though this cannot be done direct. In each case the "candidate", so to speak, must be presented by a married lady who has herself been presented at Court.

A presentation counts for life, even though the girl may change her name through marriage. But a single woman cannot present other people. And after her marriage she must be presented again herself before she can do so. After that she is eligible to present another lady (in addition to her own daughters) every three years. Or she may apply to present her own debutante daughters in successive years as they grow up.

Strict Etiquette

In this respect the traditional etiquette is still strictly maintained, as is the ruling against divorced persons. Divorcees may not be presented at Court, though this rule is sometimes relaxed for the innocent party in a divorce case.

Each year every effort is made to include as many overseas visitors as possible in the Court presentations.

Canadians who are planning a visit to Britain and would like to be presented should apply direct to the Canadian High Commissioner in London. If their application is accepted, they will be "technically" presented by the High Commissioner's wife.

On the day of the presentation, debutantes and their escorts arrive at the Palace about an hour before the Royal party is due to appear. The "presenter" and her husband take their places in the ballroom, while the "debs" gather in an adjoining room.

At the scheduled time the Queen and Prince Philip, accompanied by other members of the Royal Family, enter the ballroom and take their seats on the dais.

Then the real "business" of the day begins.

One by one the debutantes are announced. They walk up to the dais, make their curtsies—one to the Queen and one to Prince Philip—and then pass on.

Later tea is served—and the Royal Family mingles and chats with the guests.

As a rule there are two or three of these parties at Buckingham Palace each year and usually one more at Holyroodhouse for the Scottish presentations.



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