

A VICEREGAL DRAWING-ROOM IN CANADA.



It was snowing fast on Saturday evening, the 5th of February, when the Governor-General of Canada and

the Countess of Aberdeen held their fifth Drawing-room in the Senate Chamber of the Parliament Buildings at Ottawa. But in spite of the snow, crowds of people wrapped in furs stood around the entrance to the Houses of Parliament to

catch a glimpse of the gay dresses and smart uniforms of the ladies and gentlemen as they dismounted from their sleighs—for during a Canadian winter all carriages are taken off their wheels and put on runners; in fact, every vehicle is a sleigh.

The Governor-General's Foot Guards in their tall bear-skins (like those of the Guards at home) were drawn up outside the Parliament Buildings as a guard of honour; and very cold they must have found it, poor fellows, notwithstanding their thick great-coats. There were military bands too, and under the blaze of the bright electric lamps, the grounds and terraces of the fine Parliament Buildings were almost as light as day.

Father, mother and I, went in at the Speaker's private entrance, and so avoided the crush at the door by which the general public were admitted. After we had taken off our wraps in one of the Speaker's rooms, I left mother, and went with father to the Senate Gallery, where her Excellency had very kindly, and to my great delight, given me leave to go in order to see the presentations; and I had a good seat in the viceregal "pew"—for it was really very much like the front seat in the gallery of a church.

When I first came in there were about thirty or forty officers, in all sorts of uniforms—scarlet and gold, blue and silver, green and black—standing in groups on the floor of the Senate Chamber, laughing and talking together; but no ladies were as yet to be seen on the floor, though the end gallery was filled with officers' wives, all in evening dress.

About five minutes afterwards these officers formed two lines extending the whole length of the Chamber, and then the band played the

first few bars of "God Save the Queen" as their Excellencies entered; while they were coming in, attended by their staff, and taking up their position on a slightly raised platform in front of the throne, everybody who had been seated stood up.

The Governor-General was in full court dress; a blue coat, heavily embroidered with gold, white satin knee-breeches, white silk stockings, and shoes with buckles. Hanging from his neck was the badge of an ex-Grand Master of the Order of St. Patrick; and he also wore the star and ribbon of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, and the star of a Baronet of Nova Scotia.

Lady Aberdeen wore a beautiful gown of green poplin with gold embroidery, and a tiara of diamonds. Indeed, whenever she moved, her jewels flashed and sparkled most brilliantly. I thought there could hardly be a more stately looking couple.

The aides-de-camp, the Military Secretary, father, mother, and the other ladies and gentlemen of the household, stood to the right and left of the throne. Mother was dressed in grey brocade, with veil and feathers; father wore his staff uniform.

Then came the presentations. First of all, the ministers and their wives, and the leading officials were presented. These ladies and gentlemen had the privilege of what is called the "private *entrée*," that is to say, they came in at a door to the right of the throne, before the general public were admitted. They bowed low as they passed before their Excellencies, and then the ladies took up positions on the raised platforms at the sides of the Chamber, while the ministers grouped themselves round the throne. The ministers wore their privy councillors' uniforms of dark blue (or black—I am not sure which) with a good deal of gold lace; and the Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who is a Privy Councillor of Great Britain as well as of Canada, and who therefore has a white feather edging to his cocked hat, looked, as he always does, very distinguished and picturesque.

There was a short interval of a minute or two before the other ladies and gentlemen came in; and through the door at the end of the chamber facing the throne I could see that the outer corridor was thronged with people eagerly waiting their turn to be presented.

Then between the two rows of officers there flowed into the chamber a continuous stream of gaily-dressed ladies, with here and there a man in a black evening coat.

The Military Secretary, a tall, handsome man, who stood at the Governor-General's right hand, but not on the dais, looked very imposing in his Royal Scottish Archer's uniform of green and gold, with heavy bullion epaulettes. Each person, on reaching the point where the Military Secretary and one of the aides-de-camp stood, handed a card with his or her name on it to the aide-de-camp, and the aide-de-camp handed it to the Military Secretary, who thereupon read out the name; and then the person named moved two steps to the right, and made a low bow (or if a lady, a curtsy) first to the Governor-General, and then, taking two more steps to the right, another to her Excellency. Their Excellencies had to bow and smile to more than seven hundred people that evening, and this must have been very tiring.

Some of the ladies curtsied very low indeed, and I almost held my breath because I was afraid they would never be able to get up again; but they seemed to do it quite easily. Others went down in what appeared to be a series of little jerks; and then, as their heads bowed forward, their feathers bobbed forwards also, and this had a very odd effect. But almost all of them did it very prettily and gracefully.

Some of the ladies wore long court trains, some short trains, and others no trains at all; but nearly everyone wore veils and feathers. The waving feathers and the sparkling jewels, and the handsome dresses, and the fine chamber in which the Drawing-Room was held, made altogether the prettiest picture I had ever seen.

After all the presentations were over, their Excellencies, preceded by their staff, and followed by the ladies of their suite, and by the ministers and other high officials, marched in solemn procession down the middle of the chamber to the principal entrance, on their way to the Speaker's rooms; and then there arose a great buzz of conversation in the Senate Chamber, and the people began to move off into the lobbies and corridors. The Drawing-Room was over, and I felt rather like Cinderella did when the clock struck twelve.

C. M. V. H.

VARIETIES.

WHERE NELSON FELL.

An old lady went on board Nelson's flagship, the *Victory*. The different objects of interest were duly shown to her, and on reaching the spot where the great naval hero was wounded—which is marked by a raised brass plate—an officer remarked—

"Here Nelson fell!"

"And no wonder," exclaimed the old lady; "I nearly fell there myself?"

IN SYMPATHY.—"How beautiful is sympathy," says George Eliot. "What greater thing is there for two human souls, than to feel that they are joined for life—to strengthen each other in all labour, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent un-speakable memories at the moment of the last parting."

SECOND-HAND ART.

Picture Dealer: "Let me call your attention to this Murillo, very old, formerly hung in the Vatican Gallery and afterwards in the Louvre.

Mrs. Startup: "Of course; that makes it second-hand. How much off on that account?"

BEWARE OF INSINCERITY.—Be honest with yourself, whatever the temptation to be otherwise. Say nothing to others that you do not think, and play no tricks with your mind. Of all the evil spirits abroad at this hour in the world, insincerity is one of the most dangerous.

SCANTY KNOWLEDGE.—After a girl discovers how little she knows, she begins to suspect that possibly others do not know as much as they pretend to.

BOARDING-HOUSE TABLE-TALK.

"A dinner such as we have had to-day," said the elderly lady-boarder, "makes me feel quite young again."

"Indeed," was all Mrs. Hashcroft deigned to reply.

"Indeed. When I think of that lamb we had for dinner I feel that if that was lamb I must be still a little girl."

A HUNDRED GUINEAS A LESSON.—Rossini, the great musical composer, was, we believe, the hero of the record price for a few music lessons. When he was in London in 1823-4, he was worried by a nobleman who wanted instructions in singing, and in order to put a stop to the annoyance he asked what he thought would be the prohibitive price of a hundred guineas a lesson. To his amazement the offer was accepted.