

The New Lady of the White House

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Mrs. ROOSEVELT
AND HER
DAUGHTER
ALICE

MRS THEODORE ROOSEVELT, who now takes her place as the first lady of the land, is a woman most eminently fitted for the position. Although from early childhood she has never been publicly before the world, and has in fact been noted for her shrinking from publicity, here is one of those rare personalities which are bound to assert themselves under any and all circumstances.

And those friends who have known her from childhood are waiting to see how well every duty will be fulfilled, for they know her perfectly balanced character, her marvelous reserve force and her calm, cool judgment of people and things.

Mrs. Roosevelt might be taken as the type of the American woman; essentially feminine and dainty in appearance, she has yet enough fondness for outdoor life and sports to be in touch with the amusements with which her husband is delighted.

Whether Mrs. Roosevelt is entertaining a house party of guests, presiding at some public entertainment or public function, or alone with her children and their governess, she is absolutely the same. The only time when she is in any way different is when surrounded by her limited circle of intimate friends, who are friends of her childhood, and who compose a rare circle of cultivated and intellectual women. Their talk is of the latest books and the leading interests of the day.

A Charming Household.

There is no gossip or scandal allowed in the Roosevelt household. The matters discussed are public issues, and there is no guest who does not feel irresistibly compelled to stand up for what is best and right, so high is the keynote that is sounded. This is not saying there is not plenty of life and jollity, for merriment reigns supreme with young and old, and never has it been allowed that the cares of office or the anxieties of politics should intrude upon the fun and merriment that go on unceasingly.

The Roosevelt household has always been democratic in its simplicity. There have never been any attempts made at elaborate entertaining. A dinner for forty guests is never markedly different from the dinner of six or eight, the only exception being some outside maid servant brought in to lend assistance.

There have been no gorgeous banquets to be chronicled among social events, and when the news columns gave the information that Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt entertained at dinner there have never been any wonderful table decorations to chronicle.

Simplicity Rules.

All about the management of the household has been charmingly simple, very dainty and always the same. A true spirit of hospitality welcomed every guest, who was made to feel that his or her presence was the most to be desired in the world. Wine was always served, but neither the President nor his wife cared for it.

The menu was always simple and never comprised many courses, for the President disliked a long dinner. Everything was well served, but on most simple lines and in a way that would be quite possible for people of half their means. This, however, with an appearance of absolute comfort everywhere—comfort, not show, being apparently the watchword.

Mrs. Roosevelt is not a very great talker, but is a brilliant conversationalist—an apparent inconsistency explainable by her being a remarkably good listener, and possessing that rare charm of drawing out the very best in any one she talks to. She has a keen sense of humor and could, if she chose, be sarcastic, but whether from kindness of heart, good breeding or as an exhibition of her marvelous self-control she rarely if ever exercises that gift.

Not a beauty at first glance, Mrs. Roosevelt is nevertheless an unusually pretty woman, rather above middle height, with a slight, girlish figure. She is a brunette in coloring, with brown eyes and hair, but fair skin, with considerable color. She would be noticed anywhere from her exceedingly ladylike appearance and from a certain individuality in dress, for, while she dresses simply, her clothes always suit her and have a marked personality about them.

She rarely, if ever, wears a large hat, and is generally seen in a small bonnet, and she does not change the style of her hat as the fashions change. It must be becoming and it always is, but because fashion dictates that only hats are to be worn, Mrs. Roosevelt does not seem to find it necessary to blindly follow the law. Her brown hair curls in soft ringlets around her face, but is brushed smoothly back from her temples and arranged in a soft coil at the back of her head.

She wears it in the same style, whether for day or evening, but with evening dress she wears an aigrette, which adds height and emphasizes the long line of her shoulders, one of her chief beauties. She is a woman who looks much better in evening dress than in street dress, and her evening gowns are always rather elaborate.

In some ways she is rather English in style, especially in this matter of dress, for no matter how simple may be her street gown, she always dresses for dinner, and her dinner gowns are more or less elaborate. Her one wish seems to be to have her clothes dainty and attractive, but inconspicuous, yet she admits a fondness for rich fabrics.

"Do you know Mrs. Roosevelt very well?" is often asked of those people who are known to be on her visiting list. There are few who can say they do, for her list of intimate friends is limited, and while she is always gracious and charming to her acquaintances she is not the least diffusive, and seems to keep her list for her husband and her immediate home circle.

She is positive in many ways, with her own ideas firmly settled as to what should and should not be done. It is wondered said that when she first went to Albany and found that public receptions devolved

upon her formal handshaking she announced her intention of not shaking hands with any one. It was wondered how she would avoid it, but when the time came for Mrs. Roosevelt's first pub-

lic reception she was there to greet her guests in the most charmingly affable fashion, but her hands tightly grasped a large bouquet. No one could feel offended at the gracious manner and the

sweet smile and the few pleasant words of greeting and there were few who noticed that the handshake was omitted. She has recognized that it is impossible to give out to everybody and conse-

quently reserves as much strength as she can. She rarely visits away from home, and although she is by no means a recluse, as both she and the President are fond of going about, she never stays late

at any entertainment and is invariably the first guest to leave after a dinner.

No matter how busy and how full her life may be some portion of the day is always put apart for absolute quiet, and certain hours are devoted exclusively to her children, who receive probably the tenderest care and attention that have ever been lavished upon children in their position in life. Their interests are hers and she is more like an elder sister than a mother to them, while in time of illness, no matter how good a trained nurse she may have, the greater part of the nursing falls upon her.

An ideal wife and mother she was often called, and rightly, at the time of the Spanish war. She never made any complaint, never showed any signs of anxiety excepting that those who knew her intimately saw her grow visibly paler and thinner, but she never broke down until after her husband had returned from the war, and during that time she was entirely with her children, her one endeavor seeming to be to prevent any sadness coming to them.

Of Modest Means.

As is well known, President and Mrs. Roosevelt have not been people of large means, and have certainly never lived beyond those means. Last winter when his term of Governor was over and before the inauguration in March, they kept the house open at Oyster Bay, although all their neighbors had long since gone into town. The children attended school then and the governess was retained, but the home life went on exactly as though it was from choice that they stayed there, and to-day the verdict of the children is that there never was a pleasanter winter.

The Roosevelt turnout is a most democratic one. The coachman is certainly not up to the accepted standards of smart society, for he has a mustache, and there is no footman or second man. It has always pleased both Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt to live their lives independent of any changes of fashion or of popular feeling, and the home has been from time immemorial the typical American home, in the best sense of the word, and yet there is no doubt that when at the White House, with the necessary formality that the position must needs bring, the President and Mrs. Roosevelt will carry out in every detail the social as well as the political demands made upon them.

Always a Social Favorite.

The first lady of the land comes from a long line of ancestors well accustomed to social life, and as a young girl she was a great favorite in society not only in this country but abroad. She is thoroughly well posted as to social etiquette, and there will never be a mistake made as to the order of precedence, but the formality that must needs rule will be much mitigated by the indescribable charm of the home life which will dominate everything, as it always has done.

When it was first planned to introduce Miss Roosevelt in Washington this winter all the details of her debut were most carefully planned. These will of necessity be somewhat changed, but an effort will be made as far as possible to follow the lines that were laid down, and one may be sure that Mrs. Roosevelt intends to fulfill to the letter her duties as chaperon and mother.

Miss Roosevelt's Introduction.

Of course there is no time set as to when the formal introduction of Miss Roosevelt will take place, but it may safely be assumed that she will have an unusually brilliant winter for a debutante, and Mrs. Roosevelt has most carefully planned her trousseau, which now will simply need some additions. Already what Miss Roosevelt is to be in being talked over, showing that the personal interest is not to be lost sight of in the sudden accession of public interest that must needs come in such a tremendous change of circumstances.

The world at large will have little opportunity to cavil now at American social life. There has come to an end with the recent tragedy a most wonderful exhibition of a husband's love and tenderness, a devotion rarely if ever equaled, but now as leading lord and lady of the land are a married couple whose devotion to one another and to their children has been to every one who knew them an example of the happiest possible married life and of how a woman can sink herself in her husband's aims without at the same time losing her own individuality.

President and Mrs. Roosevelt are the youngest couple who have ever occupied the White House, and they, with their children, will unquestionably transform it in many ways. But as a nation we cannot fail to be glad that the office has fallen to a man and woman whose aims are high and whose earnest love for one another has been known to all their friends.

No Sweeping Innovations.

Mrs. Roosevelt will not, so say her friends at the White House, but there will be just as much to learn from the way in which she performs her duties as leading lady as in the very recent times when, as hostess at Albany or at the summer house at Oyster Bay, she lived her own life, quite unmoved by criticism or by the example of those around her whose incomes permitted more show and more luxury of life.

It is too early yet to speak of how and what entertainments are to be given, but with the first lifting of the cloud that hangs over the country, and especially the White House, the irrepressible young life of so happy a household is bound to work its way, and that way will never be one with which fault can be found.

Mrs. Roosevelt was Miss Edith Kermit Carow, and her family has been friendly with the Roosevelts for generations. Her father was Charles Carow, son of Isaac Carow, a wealthy New York shipping merchant. Her mother was Miss Gertrude Tyler, daughter of General Tyler of Norwich.