THAT ASSESSMENT COMMISSION.

The McBride government announces that it will be prepared to meet the Legislature on the 9th of February. Through its organs it admonishes the opposition that if no embarrassing discussions are precipitated the business of the session may be put through with celerity and that the members may be let go to attend to their private affairs within two months at the most.

In order to prepare the way for a smooth time an assesment commission has been appointed. The government, in order to parry the open attacks of the opposition and the secret hostility of its supporters to the measure framed by the monetary institutions for the purpose of extracting taxes inequitably from the people, promised that it would appoint a committee to consider the subjects of assessments and taxation. It has taken this course at the eleventh hour because it dared not face the House with its pledge unfulfilled.

The members have acquainted themselves with the sentiments of their constituents, and they realise what will happen if the measure under which the members of the government boast they have produced an equilibrium between revenues and expenditures should be in effect when they next make an appeal for votes.

It is obviously not intended that the report this commission may make shall be acted upon during the session of 1905. The commission is merely an expedient to placate the dissatisfied representatives who keep the government in power.

Nor will the personnel of the investigating committee be satisfactory to the people of British Columbia. We suppose it is fitting and appropriate that the Minister of Finance should be one of the commissioners. He will be, as the possessor of inside information, the counsellor and guide and director of the investigators. Mr. Ker is a shrewd man with large business interests in the province. Mr. Buntzen, as a remarkably successful manager of transportation and other concerns within certain restricted lines, should be capable of giving sage advice to the directors of assessments. But what about the great mining industry, as representing the chief of British Columbia's resources? And have there been no complaints of assessment inequalities from the important commercial houses of Vancouver and Victoria and other distributing centres in the interior? Do the farmers admit that they have been fairly dealt with in the redistribution and the tremendous increase of the burdens of taxation imposed by the McBride government?

What special class will the President of the Council represent on this much-lauded commission? Is Mr. F. Carter-Cotton as a member of the Legislature which voted five thousand dollars for the remuneration of the inquisitorial body qualified to act as commissioner? Would the hon. member be violating the independence of parliament act if he were to accept his expenses as a member of the commission?

No doubt Mr. Cotton, who is a careful and cautious man, has weighed all these things in his mind and is prepared to defend himself in the House against any attacks that may be made upon his standing by the opposition. He may be sure that the question of the personnel of the commission will be discussed adequately; that every other act of the government will be discussed adequately. At the same time there will be no "factious" opposition. The opponents of the government are practical men of affairs, much more practical than the heterogeneous elements which keep the administration in power for reasons which would not bear scrutinizing by a commission of investigation.

AN EMBARRASSING SITUATION.

Society in Washington, D. C., is now upon an established basis just as it is at Westminster, at Berlin, at Vienna, at St. Petersburg, at Ottawa, at Victoria, B. C., or any other of the aristocratic legislative centres of the un-democratic world. The great society event of the year at Washington will be the quadriennial inauguration ball. The date for this great festive occasion is inviolably fixed. It cannot be changed because, like the "American" constitution, its terms are unalterable save on the will of the representatives of the people. This year the ball must be held on Saturday night if precedent and constitutional usages are not to be cast to the winds. As all ball-goers know, dancing, etc., in circles deserving of the name of "society," does not become really enjoyable until after midnight. The spirit of true enjoyment does not take possession of the soul and body until the witching hour has been reached. The masses of the people, said in mistake to constitute the bone and sinew, the pith and marrow, the bulwarks, etc., of the great American nation, would be scandalized if the fact were published that the inaugural ball had been prolonged into the hours of the day of rest. Ward McAllister has been deposed by common consent from the post of director-general of the society events of the United States. There is no recognized leader of the Four Hundred who by birth, breeding, clothing, style and deportment, shape the destinies of the aristocracy of the great democracy. President Roosevelt carries no counterpart of our own late Major Maude upon his staff to dispose of embarrassing questions such as that which is now troubling Washington society. There is apparently nothing for the giddy, restricted, perplexed and annoyed set to do but to dance until midnight and then go home and take its rest at the socially unnatural hour of midnight. A suggestion has been thrown out that proceedings should be commenced at 1 a.m. on Saturday, that an adjournment should be made at daylight, and dancing resumed again in the evening until the programme is exhausted. But that is the idea of an untamed, top-booted, possibly sarcastic Westerner who is not familiar with the fine points of social etiquette. A ball to be a real success must be carried to the point of the physical collapse of most of those who attend. In all his activities, wnether in business, sports or amusements, the American is very strenuous. In obvious trepidation he awaits the appearance of a social Lincoln to release him from the bonds of constitutional conventions.

TRIBULATIONS OF MILLIONAIRES.

The perils of the millionaire is the subject of an able and interesting article in one of the magazines. There are millions of people in the world, ourselves among the number, who would be willing to relieve the unfortunates of a portion or of all of their burdens and to share their dangers and responsibilities. We would even undertake to carry out in the concrete what Mr. Carnegie has avowed himself in favor of in the abstract, to avoid the disgrace of dying rich, for the sake of a few years of stewardship. Yea, we would give a written guarantee to apply our well-gotten wealth for the benefit of our fellow-creatures in return for the favors of the gods of modern finance. But what is the use of speculation upon such topics? What the millionaires have they will hold. The fates and the tariff have made Carnegie and his fellow-sufferers rich. They will all die as they have lived. The fiscal reformers will follow them, and they will have a heavy contract on their hands when they attempt to make the conditions even approximately favorable for producers and consumers.

There is some satisfaction in knowing that the revelations of frenzied financiers contain a lesson for Canadians. The advocates of a tariff for this country equal to that of the United States must hold their peace for a few years. The attempt of a gang of promoters, contractors and conspiring politicians to upset a government which they believed stood in the path of coveted graft contained a revelation, which will not be forgotten in a hurry, as to the methods by which unscrupulous manipulators become suddenly rich.

GENTLEMEN AND COMMON PEOPLE.

A British court in the plenitude of its wisdom has decided that while a schoolmaster may be a gentleman in fact, he is not a gentleman in the eyes of the law. The question was raised as a result of the decision of a registrar in regard to court fees. The taxing officer held that in the matter of compensation for services a teacher, although he was the proprietor and headmaster of a private school, ranked in the eyes of the law with a tradesman or any other individual who earned his bread as a dealer in commodities. Here is a precedent which may be of service in this community in which the decrees of fashon are sometimes regarded as arbitrary, not to say ridiculous. It might be turned to service by the acknowledged gentlemen who compose the active Property Owners' Association and who live in dread lest some of the rising generation who attend the public schools should be educated above the station in life to which they have been assigned by an all-wise Providence. We are thankful for this decision, because there is reason to fear that this favored portion of Canada, which has established its social standards upon no recognized basis, is in danger of becoming more democratic. Lest any obscure individual with no generic past, and presuming on his ability to do something useful for his fellows and for the world, should lay claim to recognition as a gentleman, let us bear in mind the decision of this English Solomon and the interpretation put upon it by the learned counsel of the school teacher who would be a gentleman, that a real gentleman is one who has never done a ha'porth of good for himself or anybody else.

WHY NOT?

A contemporary heartlessly observes that "there are thirty-six Liberals and two Conservatives in the Nova Scotia Legislature. That province did not elect a single representative to the Dominion House. From the Quebec Legislature the Conservative party has disappeared altogether. What's the matter with the party anyway?" Please do not overlook the case of British Columbia. There is a fine nucleus for a party here. The defeated federal leader seems inclined to go out of business entirely, discouraged doubtless by the failure of what the Colonist calls a Liberal conspiracy to accomplish the downfall of a Liberal government. Why not make the able young gentleman who has so successfully led the Conservative party in British Columbia the official as well as the ornamental head of the demoralized party in the Dominion? It has been suggested that Premier Haultain of the Northwest Territories is the man for the position. But what has Haultain done that he should be preferred to our own gifted native son? He is the head of a composite government. Our government is of the pure stuff. There is no filling in it. It is true that the Conservative leader in British Columbia led his hosts against the candidates of the Liberals in the recent federal fight, expressed his confident belief that he had won for his revered leader every division he addressed in his own convincing style, and that he lost in every instance. But Mr. Haultain did but little better. They both appealed to the electors on the ground that the federal authorities had been tyrannical and unjust in their dealings with their respective provinces. The constituencies virtually told them to return to their posts and attend to their own proper business and that they were manifestly insincere in their charges. We cannot understand why the man from the Northwest should be preferred to the man from the West when the question of leadership is dealt with. Besides, we confess it would be a relief to Liberals in British Columbia to get rid of this giant politician and tactician. They are told every day that it is a species of sacrilege to raise their unhallowed hands against the revered head. They do not like to be accused of doing unbecoming things. They look upon that head, which of its own volition challenged them to combat, as something to be hit every time it shows itself. It is not their fault that the head is too handsome to be subjected to the hard knocks which abound in political warfare. They are not to blame that the Premier possesses no defence. Notwithstanding the cries of shame! coward! etc., we fear the bombardment is destined to continue. If Tory objections are to be accepted as valid, the best thing the party can do is substitute a working political head for the present purely ornamental one.

RUSSIA'S FOLLY.

The Russians in Port Arthur are evidently in great straits as a consequence of the shortage of provisions when animals of the canine family are retailing at so many kopecks per pound. Still the garrison is cheerful and as determined as ever to do what it believes to be its duty for the honor and glory of the Little Father and the Great Fatherland. It is not for military strongholds (and Port Arthur appears to be one of the strongest of places or it would have succumbed to the onsets of the ardent Japs) to surrender when its case appears to hold no promise of relief. It must stand fast while a man, with a dog to sustain him, remains. Something may turn up to bring relief. There is scarcely a probability that Kouropatkin will be able to send succor to the beleaguered in time to prevent them from succumbing to hunger or more merciful assault. The Russian general is against a stone wall which he can neither climb over nor break through. There is just as little possibility of relief from the ocean side. Russian naval men candidly admit this. They say the dispatch of the Baltic fleet was not even a forlorn hope. It will be found to be a deliberate sacrifice of the empire's remaining naval strength. All hope of recovering command of the sea and relieving Port Arthur as a result of naval operations must, therefore, be abandoned. A Russian writer in enlarging upon this point and giving his reasons for his belief long before the destruction of the Port Arthur fleet was complete said Rojestvensky when he arrived at his objective point would have nothing to rely upon but his own resources. He did not believe even the Vladivostock squadron would be able to render him any substantial assistance. When all his ships are assembled neither in morale nor in material strength will they be able to overcome the fleet of Togo. The value of the opposing battle fleets, including armored cruisers, he estimates numerically at 613 to 334 in favor of Japan, his calculation being based on a comparison between their fighting qualities in respect of speed, armament, and defensive armor. Even if Admiral Togo should consider it necessary to detach four armored cruisers to intercept the Vladivostock squadron, which he considers improbable, the value of his fleet might still, he calculates, be stated as 451, thus leaving a considerable balance in his favor. The superiority of the Japanese in protected cruisers and in torpedo craft of all kinds he regards as too great for any comparison to be instituted. These facts being admitted, why has Russia determined upon the sacrifice of all that remains of her effective naval forces? Have the advisers of the Czar determined to take a gambler's chance?

A New York jury could not agree upon a verdict in a recent case of a man accused of a criminal offence. It argued and wrangled for hours without any symptoms of unanimity appearing. Then a bright mind in the midst was seized with a happy thought. A coin was tossed in the air. It came down heads and the man was convicted. Here is a valuable suggestion for the next jury that sits upon the celebrated case of the state v. Nan Patterson. Heads the accused shall be discharged; tails she shall be set free. Her manifest destiny is to be acquitted in any event. Why waste valuable time and barrels of money in the hopeless formality of trying her? The show has run for a reasonable length of time already. A representative of the British nobility has been seen upon the bench alongside of the presiding justice as a special attraction. What more can the wealth and beauty and fashion of the present metropolis of the West and the future metropolis of the world desire? Ring down the curtain. Could the scales of justice be more delicately balanced?

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We suppose it will be admitted that any man whom the spirit moves is at liberty to publicly speculate as to the future political position of Canada. Mgr. Archambault, a professor in Laval University, has set the tongues of all ultra-loyalists wagging by speaking to his class on the subject of the future of the Dominion. We submit that that is a legitimate subject for discussion. At any rate, there is no doubt the question will be openly discussed with greater freedom as the years pass by. The action of the British government in practically withdrawing all its naval forces from our waters and its alleged decision to draw off its military forces also must open the matter all the more fully. Nor will the loyalty of the Canadian people be affected in the slightest degree as a result. But the tone of the discussion must to some extent depend upon the environment of the expositors. Mgr. Archambault admits having "dreamed" of an independent French Canada. But he says his tongue slipped when he publicly described his vision. Possibly there are people outside of French Canada who have dreamed dreams relative to the possibilities of the future. If they have, and they were public men, they confess it would be a relief to Liberals in British Columbia to get rid of this giant politician and tactician. They are told every day that it is a species of sacrilege to raise their unhallowed hands against the revered head. They do not like to be accused of doing unbecoming things. They look upon that head, which of its own volition challenged them to combat, as something to be hit every time it shows itself. It is not their fault that the head is too handsome to be subjected to the hard knocks which abound in political warfare. They are not to blame that the Premier possesses no defence. Notwithstanding the cries of shame! coward! etc., we fear the bombardment is destined to continue. If Tory objections are to be accepted as valid, the best thing the party can do is substitute a working political head for the present purely ornamental one.

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Echoes from Elysium

A newspaperman is supposed to be amazed at nothing. If, in the middle of his Christmas dinner he were to receive the tidings that half the world had been swallowed into an awful void his digestive establishment would continue to do business at the old stand and he would at once form in his mind an elaborate plan for the display of the announcement in a glaring "double-headed front pager," with the same enthusiasm and professional zeal that he would chronicle a less astounding announcement. The man who passes his life amid a continuous whirl of excitement is never astonished, even if he, himself, is drawn into the vortex.

That is why I was not startled when, on the third Friday after accepting the extraordinary offer of Charon, the reverie into which I was wont to fall while awaiting my visitors was interrupted by—not one, but two shadowy strangers. I confess I did not expect to participate in a three-cornered conference with distinguished arrivals from Elysium, for I interpreted the terms of my agreement as stipulating that the illustrious shades would visit me one by one. This had been my lot up to that time, as those who have followed my interviews with Napoleon and Demosthenes are aware, but as I had entered into the spirit of the enterprise with so much excitement and interest I was not disposed to kick over the traces. I knew that I was about to meet two strangers, before they entered; I could hear their voices in a dialogue just outside the door, and was able to establish their identity by the names they applied to each other.

"I'm sure this is the place, Walter," I heard a decisive, clear, but not altogether musical feminine voice say. "Charon's wire wasn't very explicit, but it stated that the office was at the head of the first flight of stairs. We'll pass through this wall, anyway."

"Just as you say, Elizabeth; you always did have your way, as Essex remarked just before his head went into the basket," was the reply in submissive, but manly tones, as the pair passed into my view, the lady leading.

And they were a stately couple indeed. There were never two finer stars in their respective firmaments than Queen Elizabeth and her noble courtier, Sir Walter Raleigh. It was unnecessary, indeed, for them to submit their credentials for my inspection, for Christendom has presented but two of their kind for the contemplation and edification of posterity. And right here I will admit that whatever inaccuracies can be charged to history with reference to this illustrious pair, they have not been caricatured, and I would have known them at a glance among ten millions.

Elizabeth to me appeared stately and majestic. Her face was oblong but fair, her eyes small but black and pleasant. Her nose was a trifle hooked, and her lips narrow. Her hands were slender and her fingers long, a fact that she advertised to no little extent during her conversation with me. She wore pearls with rich drops, in her ears, while on her head was a false red wig. She had a small crown of which she seemed rightfully proud. Her dress was of white silk and was bordered with pearls as large as beans. Instead of the famous ruff, which I afterwards learned was stolen by Professor Moriarty, a short time ago, she wore a collar of gold and jewels. Under her arm she carried the shade of a small Spanish terrier, a present from King Philip of Spain, before the Armada expedition. The apparel worn by this canine was alone gorgeous enough to stock my entire wardrobe for ten years if it were transmuted into coin of the realm.

Sir Walter Raleigh, on first sight, was plainly the counterpart of his pictures. He was distinguished by that graceful carriage and winning manner which won the frigid heart of England's brilliant ruler in the days of her earthly glory. The smiling eyes, genial expression, flaxen beard, so familiar to those of us who have seen his portraits, were there, while he wore the rich apparel—silken doublet, breeches and hose—that only a man of his birth was able to order without getting into the small debtor court. A poignard hung loosely at his girdle, while the imposing picture his appearance presented was crowned by the feathered cap which was the custom with courtiers of the Elizabethan era.

I had arisen when the sound of voices first reached me, so that when they entered the apartment I was prepared for my courtliest bow, an anatomical disturbance I had copied from a celebrated Chinese diplomat who had recently visited this place.

"Ha, ha, he does that pretty well, doesn't he, Walter?" queried Elizabeth with a tinge of irony in her tones as she surveyed me from tip to tip, much to my well-concealed annoyance.

"Yes, nearly as well as my Lord of Leicester," the courtier replied, winking at me, with a world of mischief in his smile.

"Pooh, you talk like a fool, Walter Raleigh; you know very well that Robert Dudley was nothing but a friend to me," retorted Elizabeth in withering tones.

"Well, perhaps not," the gallant knight quickly returned, "but you made him Earl of Leicester and told one of his men that you would raise him higher than any of his name had been before. As his father was a Duke, Bob would have had to be a king to go him one better. In the parlance of the gaming table, you would have raised him—with the king. I know he lost his head over you."

"Yes," tartly retorted the late Queen, "and you lost your head, too, but in a different way—and to a man."

At this cruel reminder of an embarrassing and uncomfortable incident Sir Walter reddened and bit his lip. "Have your say, your Majesty," he said with a sweeping bow in which there was much magnificent mockery; "but permit me to remind you that you are keeping this gentleman waiting," indicating me with a lordly wave of his hand.

He was quite right; I was waiting, wasting with one of the largest chairs in the office in my outstretched hand, and my arm was beginning to feel the strain. Her Majesty wholly ignored me and the chair, while this characteristic little tiff was on, but when her attention was called to my presence she turned around and most graciously craved my pardon for her rudeness.

"You see," she explained, as she gingerly seated herself in the chair and deposited the terrier in her lap, "Walter is so aggravating, and often makes me very angry. He is always trying to score a point on my friendship for Leicester, of whom he was very jealous.

"I suppose you are surprised to see us, especially me, here, as in Victoria, I understand, ladies are not admitted to the clubs as members, excepting, of course, the Women's Council, Maccabees and W. C. T. U. Well, they tried to keep us out of the Union Club of Elysium, but one night Delilah, Lucretia Borgia, Semiramis, Dido, Zenobia, Boadicea, Helen of Troy, Cleopatra and myself, went in a body and demanded admittance. A stormy few hours followed our arrival there, I can assure you. Samson, Marc Antony, Henry the Eighth, my father, mind you, Socrates, Solomon, and Brigham Young wanted us excluded. Raleigh, Essex, Lord Byron, Bobbie Burns and Louis the Fourteenth were our champions, while flinty-hearted Napoleon, Caesar and Alexander were indifferent. The meanest man in the batch was Brigham Young, who said he had all he wanted of our sex in Utah, and that if we were admitted he would resign. Well, a compromise was effected by the organization of an association for ladies, affiliated to the Union Club, don't you know, and as we are interested in the crusade for the correction of historical inaccuracies we are determined to have our say."

"I shall be only too happy to speak for you, your Majesty," I volunteered, with my best double shuffle, "but I must protest against a visit from Lucretia Borgia. Much as I would like to mingle among the pleasant company of Elysium, I would prefer to keep my candle alight until it is legitimately snuffed out."

"Poor Lucretia, Elizabeth responded, feelingly. "She isn't so bad as she is painted. I know she never deliberately poisoned anyone in her life, but she was so unlucky with her salads and mince pies. Somebody had to be inconsiderate enough to die in fearful agony every time she prepared the culinary delights at a Borgia banquet. I can assure you——"

"By Jove, Elizabeth, look here!" broke in Sir Walter, who, during my conversation with the Queen had been curiously inspecting the gallery of notables on the wall. "This face is familiar," pointing to a picture of Cecil Rhodes.

"Why, yes," she exclaimed; "it's the new arrival who recently joined the Union Club. They call him the Rhodesian."

"Yes," chimed in the knight. "He's dreadfully exclusive. Chums with fellows like Clive, Warren Hastings, Columbus, Champlain and that sort, don't you know. I can't make him out; he's always dacoing the map of South Africa with red paint."

"Will you be seated, Sir Walter?" I asked, offering the courtier a chair.

"No, thanks," he replied, sunnily. "I would rather stand and smoke," and he drew from his pocket the shade of a pipe, which he filled with tobacco from a capacious pouch. "You don't get this tobacco, nowadays," he pursued, expelling smoke from his mouth like the outpouring from the Crofton smelter stack. "This is the real article, the only original stuff I brought to the Old Country from America about three hundred and fifty years ago. I called it Virginia Sweet, after Bess, here."

"Yes, and a piece of insolence on your part it was, too," came the unappreciative response, like a pom-pom. "That's about the only thing you ever did besides attacking a few Spanish towns and fitting out futile expeditions. All for my glory. D——n!"

I literally leaped from my seat. It was then a fact that I had often read—the mighty Elizabeth swore. Her father, I knew, was never very choice in the selection of his expletives, but I thought that surely Queen Bess had been foully slandered by historians when they wrote that she occasionally dropped an oath. In my introductory I said that a newspaperman should never be amazed. Well, I wasn't exactly amazed, but the sudden, poignant, eloquent and inelegant exclamation by the shade of Elizabeth sounded to me like the bursting of a shell. Sir Walter contemplated my agitation with a smile of amusement, while the Queen wore a puzzled expression on her face.

"What's the matter?" she inquired, innocently and sweetly. "Subject to apoplexy?"

"Oh, no," I answered. "I merely remembered that my life insurance policy was about due; that's all, that's all."

"I thought it was something serious," she replied with apparent relief. "As I was saying, Raleigh did nothing wonderful in his day."

"Oh, I don't know," Sir Walter remarked, airily. "I named a state after you; it was called Virginia, and a pretty good one it is, despite its name."

"Wretch!" broke in the enraged Queen. "And thou saidst that on earth I'd have had thy head."

"Yes, I've no doubt. You seemed to have a penchant for collecting heads. You handled the axe by proxy with better skill than any of your descendants, and the only person to-day who can equal you is Carrie Nation. Oh, yes, you'd have had my head right enough, if I hadn't good enough sense to keep out of the way; I was experimenting in tobacco cultivation, not in that little game of basketball which seemed to be so popular with your own coy, sweet self and your dear, old, corpulent, polygamous papa."

I expected to see the Queen hurl the shade of her terrier full in the knight's face. But a wonderful trait in her character disclosed itself here. Instead of making a terrible, profane onslaught upon him, she rose to her feet, and in the most gracious manner held out her hand for him to kiss. Sir Walter, taken wholly back, made a lowly obeisance and paid his handsomest homage to the virgin ruler.

The noble pair becoming thus reconciled, I was able to pursue the interview. "Is there anything you wish me to say regarding historical inaccuracies now?" I asked—my old stereotyped question.

"Well, there are two or three points," Elizabeth replied, restoring the terrier to her lap. "It has been hinted, just hinted, mind you, that I died unmarried because I couldn't get anybody to have me. Now look right at me; take your time. Do you think that possible?"

"No, your Majesty, a thousand times no!" I replied with fervor. I must confess that I would have hated to play second fiddle to her in the good old days, but I wasn't fool enough to say so. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned, you know. Instead, I said, "Why, your Majesty, had I lived in your time, I would have died in an effort to win the faintest smile from your gracious lips."

"Nicely said, nicely said," she murmured, with a conscious, pleased giggle.

"Yes, spoken like my Lord Burleigh," Raleigh buzzed in; "the Cecils were always diplomatists. They never told what they really thought."

"Oh, you shut up!" forcefully commanded the shade of Bess. "As I was about to say I had a galaxy of admirers. There was Philip of Spain. I repelled his advances, and his subjects were so incensed that they sent to Armada to bring me to Castile by force. Then there was the Duke of Anjou, a Frenchman. I didn't want him, but Leicester got horribly jealous of him. Then, of course, there was Leicester, there was Phil Sidney, there was the Earl of Essex, poor, misguided boy, and lastly and leastly, my good friend Raleigh, here."

"There's nothing like being in the swim," quoth Sir Walter, blithely.

"But I thought too much of my country," calmly continued the Queen, ignoring the interruption. "I couldn't marry them all, and prized them as friends too much to pain one by choosing another. I had to remove Essex's headpiece, but he drove me to it; he drove me to it," she wailed, wiping away the shades of two tears from her cheek. The terrier wept in sympathy.

"How about that cloak incident?" I asked, feelingly.

"What cloak incident?" she inquired.

"Why," I replied, "that little affair on the street when you walked across a mud puddle on Sir Walter Raleigh's cloak."

"Whew!" whistled Raleigh, "have they got that down in their precious narratives?" Elizabeth was on the verge of hysterics and was fiercely manipulating her smelling salts.

She wasn't disconcerted for long, however. She was too self-possessed for that, and quickly burst out with "What nonsense! What silly rot! Does anybody believe that? Do the people imagine that Raleigh wore a suspension bridge about his form? That his pockets were full of pontoons? I happened to be on horseback at the time that incident is said to have occurred, and Raleigh, who had been out all night, offered to throw his cloak in the mud if I would walk on it. I told him to go home and take an ice and some bromo—that's what I said, didn't I, Sir Walter?"

"I believe you made some such remark," responded her companion, sheepishly.

"Will you explain your quarrel with Mary Stuart?" I asked, tentatively.

"No, I won't," she replied, snappishly. "Mary will be along, herself, one of these days and let her tell you. I scorn to hang our family linen on a public clothes line. If I hadn't added Mary's head to my collection she would have had mine on her palace gatepost. But don't you think we had better move?" she asked, turning to her courtier. "I want to drop into Spencer's and have a look at their latest millinery. I would like to compare it with some of mine."

"Please wait," I pleaded; "I would like to ask Sir Walter a few questions."

"Oh, never mind," he replied; "some other time. Besides, Bess has told you enough about me, I trow."

"But what I wanted to ask, Sir Walter, was how does it feel to have your head cut off?" I pursued, anxiously following the couple to the door.

"Go down to Taylor's mill and try it yourself. I should be glad to welcome you at the Union Club," he added, earnestly.

"Yes, and me too, and——Lucretia Borgia," Elizabeth called back and then burst into a peal of laughter.

They had gone and Sir Walter had cleverly evaded my interesting question. I suppose I will have to wait until the next provincial election, when Premier McBride will be politically decapitated. There is a difference, I know, but from a psychological standpoint the impressions of a man who has lost his political head will make engrossing reading.

TO HAVE RETRIAL.

Authorities Preparing For Another Hearing of Charges Against Nan Patterson.

New York, Dec. 24.—Nan Patterson's last hope of spending Christmas with her parents at their home in Washington vanished to-day when District Attorney Jerome announced that he would not agree to a reduction of her bail. This was taken to mean that the show girl will again be tried on the charge of murder of Caesar Young. Her bail had previously been fixed at $20,000.

When the district attorney made his statement, Mr. O'Reilly, of Miss Patterson's counsel, said:

"This surely means that there will be a new trial. We are anxious that it will be called soon and will make every effort to have it called as soon as possible."

Afterward he said that counsel had decided not to attempt to get any bail unless the district attorney does not promise a speedy re-trial. Counsel, he said, believed the best place for Miss Patterson was in the Tombs, as she had been so long there.

The urgency for a new trial on the part of the defence was, Mr. O'Reilly said, due to the fact that the defence has found some new, and what they consider important evidence. Part of this, he said, was the finding of some 32-calibre bullets in Young's trunk. Mr. O'Reilly said that Rand admitted the finding of the bullets, but contended that they belonged to Mrs. Young.

The news that she could not be admitted to bail was broken to Miss Patterson as gently as possible, but she broke down, after making a brave show of cheerfulness all day. Even though she knew she would have to remain in the Tombs over Christmas she had hoped she might be released on bail next week.

Miss Patterson seemed in much better condition this morning, both physically and mentally, than yesterday. It was only with the greatest effort that the hysteria following her last appearance in court was controlled, but she fell asleep about midnight and rested well. When she arose this morning, there was a sheaf of letters and telegrams awaiting her.

District Attorney Jerome announced late to-day that preparations for a new trial will be hurried as fast as possible.

LACROSSE IN EAST.

Inter-University and Collegiate Associations May Combine.

New York, Dec. 24.—If the plans of the Inter-University Lacrosse Association, as proposed at the annual meeting of the organization just held here, are successful, there will be no division of authority as at present, and the game may become one of the most popular of college sports. The amalgamation of the Inter-University and Inter-College Associations has been talked of for some time, but the matter has now been placed in such shape as to give encouragement to the promoters that the two organizations will work together. The object of the coalition is to have uniform playing rules among the colleges of the East. The Inter-University Association is composed of Columbia, Harvard, Cornell and Pennsylvania. The Inter-Collegiate is made of Lehigh, Swarthmore Stevens and John Hopkins.

Hon. W. S. Fielding, finance minister in the Canadian cabinet, arrived at Naples on Sunday night on the steamship Cretic. He will remain for some days in Italy and will then go to Vienna, whence he sails. He will return to Canada by way of London. Hon. Mr. Fielding is stopping at the Hotel Vesuvius.

LADNER NOTES.

(Special Correspondence of the Times.)

Ladner, Dec. 22.—The Westham Island football team gave a pleasant social dance on Friday, 16th instant, in Kirkland's hall, Westham Island.

Mrs. J. Matheson entertained a company of young people on Friday, 16th instant, at her home.

T. E. and Mrs. Ladner will spend Christmas in Victoria.

Bert Arthur is seriously ill with pneumonia.

W. J. Brandrith is around again.

Henry Jordan met with a serious accident on Monday last by being thrown from a cart. He received several bad bruises.

H. K. Wright, of the R. B. C., returned on Monday.

A. W. Hyndman, of the Royal Bank of Canada, returned to Vancouver on Tuesday.

THE PHOENIX MURDER.

Ottawa, Dec. 24.—The case of Joshua Bell, under sentence of execution at Greenwood on January 13th, will probably be passed on at a cabinet council to-day. He was convicted of murder at Phoenix, and in view of the judge's report and the man's record in the United States, there is not much doubt that Bell will pay the death penalty for his crime.