



II.

RATHER EFFECTIVELY!

SUSANNAH AT OTTAWA.

OTTAWA, May 15th.

A QUEER thing about Ottawa is what a lot different folks talk from the way they think. Those members up there at the plantation on the hill say "honorable gentlemen," mighty correct, but they call names in the lobby. They ask with such innocence for "information," when they're jest wanting to kill time. They get so riled sometimes that they let their temper blaze through the thin places in their politeness, and then they go out for walks and bow to the very men that they'd like to use their fists on 'stead of arguments. There have been cases of fists, too, I've heard - fists and noses seems to me 'twas. Now in the country if somebody's dogs chank up a neighbor's sheep, or the geese get into the grain, there's likely a row, and they don't speak - those two. Their wives don't neighbor, and the children won't swap knives or lend skipping ropes. The relations are all drug into the fuss and the folks around take sides. Sometimes it's carried even into meeting. But then when it's a clear case of your mutton, or your corn, it must make a difference. Arguing for a principle's likely to make a person sot in their way, but fighting for bread and butter raises the dander more.

I never used to understand what "red tape" was. It's what they keep folks in line with and tie them up into bundles after they've got them sorted out. When you try to get some place in the galleries where you can hear what is going on, you get sorted. Mr. Speaker's got a gallery of his own, and I guess it's all right too. There's some folks that go up to the House that have got to have an eye kept on 'em, and he can see into his own gallery best. But that isn't what the regulation says. You've got to be blood relations with a member of Parliament or else his wife. Fact is I don't think his mother-in-law would go, even if she couldn't hear well from the nasty little set of dark shelves they call the visitor's gallery. There's a Senator's gallery, too, and it's mostly empty. The Senators are too busy to come, and if their wives go anywhere they'd be pretty sure to want to go to the Senate. There's a public gallery up behind the Speaker's head, but there's a dreadful creepy feeling of punishment for your earthly sins when you get away around behind the throne.

It's good to get sorted into different seats, you learn off the members from different points. Sometimes it's his hat you know, or his head (heads are the most confusing, some are as like as peas) or an ear with an angle in it, or his glasses, or the "chronic" rose in his buttonhole. So a change is good.

Then there's the reading room. They've got all the papers there, and you're not let look at them unless you're a member, or are taken in by a member. Even if you are taken in by a member, you've got to tag around pretty close

to him or they're after you. Ef you go in alone you're warned the first time. At the second offence you get the regulations recited to you, and it interferes with your reading. I got some Ontario politics dreadfully mixed up with them. No wonder I forgot and trotted in again, quite natural like. There's one thing comforts me. I've not been put out of the library yet, but I think it's only because I haven't been here long enough. You see, it's kept me so busy tending to the other regulations and getting sorted, that I've only drifted through there as you might say. But by people's tell, it's got tape-strings for tripping the unwary too. They say when you've got out a book, you're too tired to read it. It's like working all your youth saving your money, and being too near dead to spend it when it's saved.

When a man gets made a minister his fellows down on the floor of the House watch him to see ef he's big enough for his chair. Ef he's a good one, they're hand and glove with him. Ef he's a crooked stick, he gets the cold shoulder. But his wife goes straight up a step-ladder, soon's he's got sorted into his place, and holds a court on the top. The women don't watch her to see ef she's worth while being his wife. Men have more sense in a few things and that's one.

The idea we get that the "servants of the people" at Ottawa, work themselves to death, till they need a trip to furrin' parts, hasn't much in the way of fact to stand on. Some of them do, but we think of them dreadful quick - they're so scarce. The idea is one we get at election times, when there's a big rally in the town hall, or a political picnic in somebody's sugar bush. Even the man that mows the lawn here rides on the mower. It ain't the shaky kind either, and he looks to be having a soulful, dreamy time. The machine goes as easy as the sewing machine the agents explain to you through the crack in the front door. The horse has boots on, and I believe in my soul it's a way they have of making him keep-off-the-grass.

There's something dreadful taking about this place, (in spite of the regulations). It's the hot-bed of history, the nursey of the constitution. It's like the candy places where you get tassy hot. They could set up a sign, "Fresh history every hour" (except holidays.)

But there, it's no use getting enthusiastic, as I did when I first came to see the Buildings. 'Taint ours - it's the members, we're strangers in our own land. We've got to be sorted and keep-off-the-grass. I can stand it when I'm calloused up to it, but not when I'm enthusiastic.

SUSANNAH.



A COMMON PRAYER.

"Give me this day my daily bread."

(From the *Kan's Horn*, the unique, non-sectarian, religious journal. *Kan's Horn* and *Grip* to one address for \$2.25).