

THE JESTER'S INTERVIEW WITH SIR JOHN A.

By PAUL FORD.

The JESTER tapped softly at the door of the ante-room. A messenger appeared supported by two burly members of the Dominion Police.

"This makes the hundredth-and-ninety-seventh to-day. No more offices to be given away this month. Five-hundred-and-forty applicants on the books, and British Columbia yet to hear from."

"How now, sirrah," replied the JESTER, "dost thou take me for an election bummer that thou talkest so freely. Pray tell thy master that I would seek an audience with him."

The messenger and policemen looked in utter amazement and enquired of one another: "This man wants no office! And is he sane?"

Quickly the man of messages disappeared, and hastily following upon his footsteps, the JESTER passed through a row of hungry office-seekers who glowered upon him as he passed towards Sir John's private chamber.

"This is favoritism," said one.

"It is bribery—nothing less," said another.

"It is the JESTER," said a third. "Touch him not, for if you hurt but a hair of his light head your lives shall pay the forfeit."

"Young man," replied the JESTER, touched by such nobility of character, "thank you. Consider yourself on the free list for one year, postage included. Twenty-five per cent. on all subscriptions paid in advance." And the man moved gracefully along with the air of one who had seen better days.

"Sir John will see you, sir."

The JESTER approached gravely as he stepped into the inner chamber, and took the first vacant chair.

"No, not *that* one, please," said Sir John. For it was fast rivetted to the floor. "Know you not," he continued, "there are those who would deprive me of my seat? But they won't," and, as he said this, he rubbed his hands gleefully and a smile came into his eyes as in the days of lang syne. "But what can I do for you? If I understood correctly my man said you did not want an office. Surely my ears must have deceived me?"

"Wouldn't take an office if you offered it to me," said the JESTER. "I want none. I came here to sympathise with you and to assure you how deeply I feel for you, surrounded as you are by these shoals of political sun-fish outside, who would bite at anything."

"Embrace me," said the great man, as the tears welled up into his soft, expressive orbs, "Embrace me. This is kind. You are the first who has come here and who has positively refused an office. How different from Ryan, Stevenson, and others I could name."

And the great man wept. "Pardon this momentary exhibition of weakness, but my faith in the more sterling virtues of human nature had well nigh spent itself." Then going to the door, he said to the messenger: "Out—for an hour and—stay out," and carefully stuffing a piece of wool in the key-hole, Sir John locked the door, took out a cigar box from his drawer and said "smoke."

They smoked on in silence for a few moments. Presently the JESTER said "Sir John, why is this cigar like the National Policy?"

"Don't, please don't, I can't bear it, indeed I can't, at least not yet," and he looked so beseechingly, that the JESTER spared him out of very sympathy for his position.

"National Policy," he continued sadly—"but let us change the subject. How is Perry and how does he feel about the Post-office business?"

"Poor Perry's ailing sadly, that Post-office stamp affair was not worthy of a great Government like your's Sir John."

"There it is again," continued the Premier. "The fact is, Sir, that change was made through one of Perry's warmest friends, who wrote to say what a poor-paying business it was, and how that Perry had been robbed of two hundred dollars, odd; and that if this Government had a spark of generosity it would send some Conservative there who had more stamps to lose than Perry had. And this is the gratitude of a cold, ungrateful world," and Sir John positively sighed. "Anyway," he continued, "it's only worth four dollars a day."

"By the way, Sir John, what are you going to do for Tom White, M. P. Ryan, M. H. Gault, David Sinclair—and the rest of the Junior Conservative Club? Surely they should be provided for!"

"The fact is, my dear JESTER, Tom White is the best of the lot and one of the few men in the Commercial Metropolis who knows thoroughly what he is talking about. As for the majority of the others, you can take my word for it—they'll 'do' for themselves, sooner or later. Gault I respect thoroughly; he's equal to two ordinary members from a money point of view, and we can't afford to slight him. By the way, how is Steve Quinn?"

"Ah, poor Quinn; he ain't a bad fellow when you come to know him."

"Plays a good deal on the horn, don't he?" asked Sir John.

"Used to lead the *Herald* orchestra during the elections; but he hasn't any ear for music now. In the words of the poet I may say, Sir John," continued the JESTER:

No more he'll toot his little horn,
No more Grit music play;
His weights and measures laid aside,
Poor Steve has had his day.

"There's many a worse man than Stephen who has had the unhappy knack of getting into the den of Lyons. The beasts at Ephesus were always living on one another and eating each other up. But how about the Budget?"

"Oh, Tilley will see to that. You know Tilley, of course?"

"Yes, I believe I know something of Tilley. But you'll have to watch him, Sir John, and see that he doesn't throw too much cold water into your Government measures. Take the duty on malt, for instance; why it's a regular Maltese cross to our brewers, and in its present condition will only

brew trouble. The bloom may be on the rye so far as Gooderham & Worts are concerned, but beer isn't quite so prolific of *delirium tremens* in the same time."

Here a loud knock was heard at the door. An altercation appeared to be going on outside, and a voice which fell familiarly on the JESTER's ear exclaimed, "I tell ye, mon, I've as much right to yon appointment as Henry Bulmer."

Sir John got up, hastily unlocked the door, and said, "I'll see you later"—when in walked Andrew Robertson.

STAMP IT OUT.

The man's an ignoramus—
Or, lower yet, a scamp—
Who writes for information,
And sends no postage-stamp.

TOAST AND SENTIMENT.

"The Ladies!" Their eyes kindle the only flame against which there is no insurance.

BLUE BLOOD WILL TELL.

M. Frederic, a Ghent professor, has proved unmistakeably and literally that most of the inferior species of animals have blue blood. This accounts for the "aristocratic" pretensions of those would-be swells who are always expecting "remittances" which never come, much to the disgust of the plebeian boarding-house keeper.

Around Town.

See the conquering zero comes!

Motto for Barbers—Cut, and come again.

Barbers always believe in the hard dimes.

Vennor's "cold dips" are not to be made light of.

Advice to the Health Committee—Try ice-olation.

Why is it that it takes two office boys a longer time to go upon an errand than one?

Nothing succeeds like success—except failure. Assignees please make a note of this.

The man who can square the circle of his acquaintance is a fortunate fellow these days.

If there is anything more cheering than to hear the barber shout "Next," it is to hear the preacher say "Finally" in an extremely long sermon.

Hochelaga boasts a lamp-lighter who is a J. P.—*Witness*. So he has mounted the first step on the ladder of fame, has he? Probably this distinction is given him for his upright habits.

In answer to a correspondent, the veteran Weather Prophet says, "An earthquake cannot be predicted." That fact will at least save many people from going into premature convulsions.

Among other curiosities on exhibition in the Canadian department of the Paris Exposition was a spring chicken from a Montreal west-end boarding-house. It caused quite a sensation, and was in every respect a representative fowl.

Capital Notions.

Carrol Ryeun still blooms at Ottawa.

When you strike Ottawa, you know it at once by its shoddy air.

The royal coachman holds the reins of government in the servants' hall with a firm hand.

Politeness will henceforth be regarded as one of the qualifications of a candidate for the Civil Service.

The official rhyme for Dufferin used to be "sufferin'." The official one for Lorne appears, so far, to be "fawn."

If there is any truth in the tariff changes as foreshadowed by several Grit journals, we may expect ore-iferous times in Canada.

The royal servants at Ottawa are not expected to give away the dripping. It is no longer a perquisite, but is used to baste geese with.

The Dominion Board of Trade have met and adjourned. True, the delegates did the talking, but Mr. Tilley was really the bored.

"WHERE IGNORANCE IS BLISS, &c."

The Prescott *Messenger* and the Cornwall *Reporter* are getting excited about the correct spelling of the word "diphtheria." The *Messenger* insists there is no "h" after the "p." It is very clear that our Prescott has not yet been under the spell of "diphtheria," as commonly understood. But by the time the first edition of his new dictionary is exhausted perhaps know enough about it to spell it correctly. There is not a perience after all.