

A DESPOTIC MAJORITY.

HOW IT RULED IN THE HALIFAX TAX REFORM ROW.

It Was Exercising in the Way It Pushed the Mayor—Five Attesting Aldermen—The Only Public Reference to the Mayor's Voting Highest Five Hundred Dollars.

HALIFAX, Jan. 3.—It is possible for a majority to be as despotic as any autocratic ruler. This is what occurred to some people when they saw how the majority in the city council acted towards Mayor Keeffe in the conflict with him over tax reform, at Monday's meeting of the council. Not that the majority are not right and the mayor wrong in the matter. The reform majority in the council was unrelenting in the way it pushed his worship, and quite regardless of his feelings, or the feelings of his friends. They sat on him without mercy. Progress has already been made acquainted with the fact that a new and more equitable scheme of taxation was proposed and its principles adopted by the council. This was accomplished by over-ruling the major's decisions from the chair. The major at the time submitted, and told the council they had assumed the whole responsibility. The council adjourned to dream over its victory but in the meantime Mayor Keeffe professed to have got new light, and he cast a bombshell into the reformers' ranks by sending a "message" to the council that what they had done was illegal and that he refused to recognize it. The estimates were to have come up for consideration, but after a lively fight with his worship the council adjourned as a practical vote of censure on the mayor.

The council met again on Monday, and the mayor received "the ammunition" he said he expected. He did not receive it in person, however, for he absented himself from the meeting. But in the most cold-blooded manner Ald. Dennis, Redden, Wallace, Hamilton and Morrow attacked his position and without any order all the references of his worship to tax reform, especially "the message" vetoing it, to be erased from the minutes. They forced Recorder MacCoy, too, to say that the mayor's conduct was unconstitutional, and they voted down Ald. O'Donnell's motion to reconsider the reform scheme. The mayor and his supporters were "clean-bowled" and tax reform stood triumphant.

The only public reference to the mayor's taking of that \$500 from the board of works allowance, previous to Monday's meeting, was when Progress told the facts. On Monday it was spoken of with bated breath, and had it not been that the mayor was somewhat discredited after the tax reform battle, probably not an alderman would have dared speak of it then. Ald. Dennis was the man who at first summoned courage to refer to the matter, and it was only by close questioning that he got the city clerk to admit that the mayor had pocketed the money. When he had formally secured an admission that the money was gone he moved that the city clerk be instructed not to draw another such warrant for the mayor without the authority of the council. The resolution "went on the order paper." Mayor Keeffe would never have taken the \$500 were it not that he is in his third and last term, and he can afford to be careless what people think and say. That may be true. He can afford now to depise the civic voter, but then the mayor has his eye on a political nomination and he may hear of this little matter again. There is not much doubt it will be used against him, and with considerable force. If his worship would do those things "in the green tree what would be in the dry."

Ald. O'Donnell is a funny alderman. He is a strange mixture of sense and gross nonsense. This was made very apparent at the last council meeting. His references to opponents are about as amusing as one could wish. An instance of this was furnished when he stated that he had been in favor of a certain measure, but when he saw who the other aldermen were who advocated it, he at once concluded it must necessarily be bad. Nothing good could emanate from such a quarter he said, and he would oppose it. He was as good as his word and voted against the \$500 grant to the school of art and design.

Those who know the city council can imagine nothing stranger than the phenomenon of Ald. Hubley advocating an increased grant to anything. The wonderful occurrence was witnessed this week, when the doughty alderman was in a minority which voted for more aid to some service. The reason must be that Ald. Hubley knew he would be voted down.

City engineer Doane is to be congratulated on his increased salary. The mayor did not share that \$500 with him, which he drew on the quiet, so the council gave Mr. Doane an additional \$300 per year. The city engineer's salary is one of those within the city hall that is earned.

It would furnish an interesting letter for Progress to enumerate the civic salaries that are not earned, and to give some of the proofs for the statement. Such a communication, with all the names, would be timely.

A Solid Rock Castle.

In Bohemia, near the town of Haida, is the rock-castle of Burgwald. It is a perfect fortress, with chambers and chapel, stables and halls, all encased laboriously in the solid rock. The principal entrance to the castle is a V-shaped narrow

stairway, up which only one person at a time can ascend, and this narrow passage is with in other famous rock-castles throughout the world. The castle of Burgwald, Germany, is cut out of a rock, so is the "unparalleled" Fort of Dowlatabad, India. This rock is an insular mass of granite, rising to the height of about 500 ft. above the plain; for nearly one-third of the height the rock has been scraped like a wall, and presents all round a perpendicular cliff; above this it assumes a pyramidal form, or that of a compressed beehive. At Gibraltar, the ancient castle or stronghold is cut out of the solid rock. Vast sums of money, and an immense amount of labor, have been spent in fortifying this celebrated stronghold.

PAULINA IS A WONDER.

Nine Pounds of Girlhood Can Lift Twelve Pounds of Dumb-bell.

Titania in bloomers on a safety, or a Brownie in the regulation leopard skin Arcadian dress suit and distended biceps of the professional athlete would not seem more incongruous than does the new little midget, Princess Paulina now in New York with dumbbells and gymnastics. When the little nine pound young woman trips across the floor with her wicker chair in tow, or tags at dumbbells which weigh half as much again as herself, she reminds one of Church's sketch of a sparrow dragging a Brobdingsgarian roe.

Although but the size of a healthy baby of ten months, she is able to perform feats which many ordinary human beings find it impossible to accomplish in the whole course of their existence, what many young ladies of her age have never even attempted. Placing her tiny hands on the floor or the table, she flings up her little feet with the agility and unexpected rapidity of the traditional long eared lay figure of the comic papers.

The little woman was born in Holland nearly nineteen years ago, and weighs now eight and a half pounds. Her height is sixteen inches. She comes of a family of six brothers and two sisters, most of them above the average in size. The one brother who accompanies her is unusually large, and one of his shoes is large enough for the little mite to sit in.

She is usually good natured, and does not in the least object to being dandled by any scepter who cannot quite believe that a young lady old enough to "come out" can really be lifted as easily as a loaf of bread. Her brother, who assists her at her public entertainments, carries her easily upon his outstretched hand, and she is so elastic that when she is swung like a spider at the end of a filmy cable to the top of a table nearly twice her height from the floor she hops down again like a grasshopper to the floor with very apparent ease. Her eyes are grey and bright, and her aquiline nose quite prominent. Her whole face is full of intelligence and a certain character, which show that in years and thought she is a young woman, though her stature is so almost incomprehensibly small.

"I can speak Dutch, French, German and a little bit of English," she said. "I have been all over Europe in the last fourteen years, but this is my first visit to America. On the way across the ocean I was very sick the first few days, but enjoyed the rest of the trip very much." Referring to the jewelry which she wore, she named the various cities in which the rings and bracelets were given her, and added, with just a suspicion of girlish boastfulness, "They are all from my sweet-hearts, too. But they are all big"—with a little sigh of renunciation—"too big for me."

She did not know much, she said, about the woman suffrage question in America, or about the possibility of women in municipal administration of politics, but was heartily in favor of women voting and sharing equally the political advantages of men. Her diet, she says, is not restricted in any way, and she eats with relish anything her brother and sister eat. Her sister added that she also ate about as much, and insisted always upon having everything in a gastronomic line which pleased her fancy.

Her little dressing room at Proctor's is draped, walls and ceiling, with pink, over which is hung madras, and the little dressing table is decorated in the same way. The drawers of the dressing case are filled with a wardrobe which might easily fit some New York maiden's middle-sized doll. The tiny shoes, in satin and leather, are not more than two inches long, and the Dent gloves, with two big buttons, for street wear, would scarcely hold a kitten's paw. Miniature skirts, the length of a finger, with voluminous ruffles of lace, and dainty bits of undergarb that would delight the heart of any juvenile mamma, bubble out of these drawers, while the tiny pink silk dress, with its black lace ruffles and tulle, looks like nothing but a microscopic caricature of an evening dress.

THE AGE OF WOMAN.

How She Fought Her Way Into the Scotch Medical College.

The influence of women in matters of a public character has been exerted with unusual force and effect during the past few weeks, in various parts of the world. The great metropolis of London has perhaps only once before in its history been stirred up by a moral contest as it was last month by the fight between the London County Council and the Empire Music Hall over the question of a relicensing of that notorious institution. The lead against the Empire was taken by Mrs. Ormiston Chant, who boldly proved the scandalously disreputable character of the place. The County Council sustained her position by a vote of seventy-five to thirty-two. The Empire is an enormously rich establishment, which has been paying dividends of seventy per cent., and which has been backed by one or two of the greatest names of London. The contest meant a great deal, because the Empire was considered as the strongest representative of a class. The victory over that fashionable but immoral resort means a future policy

not narrowly practical, but wholly unselfish. The party in favor of the "unparalleled" Fort of Dowlatabad, India. This rock is an insular mass of granite, rising to the height of about 500 ft. above the plain; for nearly one-third of the height the rock has been scraped like a wall, and presents all round a perpendicular cliff; above this it assumes a pyramidal form, or that of a compressed beehive. At Gibraltar, the ancient castle or stronghold is cut out of the solid rock. Vast sums of money, and an immense amount of labor, have been spent in fortifying this celebrated stronghold.

WELLINGTON'S FUNERAL.

Compare It With the Funeral of Sir John Thompson.

In the funeral procession of the Duke of Wellington twelve horses drew the car; these were covered from eyes to fetlocks in housings of black velvet, with black ostrich plumes upon their heads. The Duke's funeral was modelled upon the precedent of that of John Monk, first Duke of Abermarle, the only change of trappings of the horses being that the animals were only plumed on the head, instead of carrying a second plume on the crupper, which, as the tail was hidden by the velvet clothing, had rather a ludicrous appearance. But in the funeral of the Duke of Abermarle led horses formed an important part of the procession.

"Mourning horses" as they are called, draped in black cloth and plumed, were distributed at intervals in the cortege. The "chief mourning horse" followed the Standard Bearer. The funeral car was also followed by a cream colored "horse of honor" with crimson caparisons, in the Duke of Wellington's funeral procession. The only led horse was his charger, not "Copenhagen," but the animal which he was in the habit of riding in his last years. Yet the riderless steed, pacing behind his master's bier, awakened the emotions of the gazing thousands with an appeal more potent and direct than that of all the accumulated pomp which preceded it.

She Knew She Was.

"I advertised a short time ago," said a comic opera manager, "for fifty pretty girls for a chorus in a big production. On the morning set aside for their reception I found a mob of about 500 women awaiting me. Some of them must have been verging on the sixties, and one or two of them gave me the works. I was very sorry. I had them marched in upon the stage, and then I said to them: 'Let those who think themselves young and pretty step forward.' There was a rush, the aged ones came forward more enthusiastically than the others, but there was only one very young one—who remained behind. She was very nice looking, and my curiosity was piqued. 'Why,' I asked her, 'do you keep in the background?' 'Oh, you are repelled, with a toss of her head, 'you addressed those who think themselves pretty. I don't think I am pretty, I know I am.' That young lady is now playing a leading role in a comic opera not far from New York."

The Flemish New Year's Eve.

The Flemish New Year's eve is called St. Sylvester's day. It is a memorable occasion for the children, for upon that feast youngsters of the more diminutive stamp plot and scheme to abduct and place under lock and key some male member of the family. The father of the house, the jolly uncle or big brother is successfully trapped, and once in custody the young rascals have great fun negotiating for his ransom. No brigands could be more astute. The parleying is conducted through the keyhole, one delegate usually negotiating the conditions of release on behalf of all. Finally each one is satisfied, and pretending to be seriously angry, and with the air of a man who has been put upon by robbers, the emancipated elder days up.

An Armenian New Year's Day.

In Armenia upon New Year's day the maidens make definite choices of their lovers in a somewhat original fashion. At day-break every "marriageable" kneads a cake of maize, and having donned her finest raiment she mounts the terrace of her home, where, after placing the cake well in sight, she watches and listens from behind the chimney. By and by along comes a jack-daw in search of food. As the bird woops off with the cake in its beak the American girl emerges and follows its flight with anxious eyes. Upon whatever neighboring roof the jackdaw settles to enjoy its meal, in that house dwells the young man who is destined to make the maiden happy, but if the bird flies away beyond her sight she abandons all hope, at least for that year.

Too Strong To Worry.

Gentlemen who were urged to Sir John Thompson in his lifetime will not be overcome by remorse when they read absurd stories asserting that his death was hastened by pain and uneasiness caused through attacks directed against his change in the expression of his religious faith. Sir John Thompson was sensible and not sensitive. He was himself the hardest judge of his own actions. If he could please himself he was content, and the disapproval of his own conscience would draw the plaudits of a hundred of admiring voices. Narratives which credit Sir John Thompson with

going away to work when he was strictly forbidden to do so, and the fact that the "unparalleled" Fort of Dowlatabad, India. This rock is an insular mass of granite, rising to the height of about 500 ft. above the plain; for nearly one-third of the height the rock has been scraped like a wall, and presents all round a perpendicular cliff; above this it assumes a pyramidal form, or that of a compressed beehive. At Gibraltar, the ancient castle or stronghold is cut out of the solid rock. Vast sums of money, and an immense amount of labor, have been spent in fortifying this celebrated stronghold.

New Year's Gales.

In county Antrim in Ireland among the Scotch-Irish sites hamlets, with a hole in the wall, the "unparalleled" Fort of Dowlatabad, India. This rock is an insular mass of granite, rising to the height of about 500 ft. above the plain; for nearly one-third of the height the rock has been scraped like a wall, and presents all round a perpendicular cliff; above this it assumes a pyramidal form, or that of a compressed beehive. At Gibraltar, the ancient castle or stronghold is cut out of the solid rock. Vast sums of money, and an immense amount of labor, have been spent in fortifying this celebrated stronghold.

In the Isle of Man a curious belief and custom existed till the middle of this century. In each home the house-wife smoothed the ashes over the kitchen floor just before stepping into bed. If there were found in the morning on the surface of the ashes anything resembling the print that pointed towards the door, it indicated a death in the family within the year. But if the heel of the footprint were toward the door it was a sure proof that the family would be increased.

New Year's in Scotland.

North of the Tweed the most popular holiday is emphatically New Year's day. The religious history of Scotland is explanatory of the decline of Christmas festivities in the country. However, as it is said there are more Scotchmen in London than the whole population of Edinburgh numbers, they in some measure make up for the neglect of the world's greatest day in their native land. The early Scotch reformers were entirely successful in their declared intention of putting an end to the "heathenish" observance of Christmas day in common with several other days which their zeal frowned upon. Scotland is the most conspicuous example of the results of this movement, which was not confined to the Scotch reformer's alone. But, then, Scotchmen never do things by halves.

They Held On.

The first experience of riding in a railway train is undoubtedly very exciting to the person himself, and sometimes the novice affords amusement to his fellow passengers. A correspondent sends us the following anecdote:

I was on a western train when we stopped at a small station where two young fellows entered and took seats near me. They were unaccustomed to railway travel, and were constantly on watch for some accident. Every few minutes they would raise the window and look out. Presently, as the train came around a curve, one of them saw a fence which he seemed to suppose crossed the track. Jerking his head in, he said in a frightened tone loud enough to be heard by every one in the car: 'Hold on tight, Bill, she's goin' to jump a fence.'

The Cost of Cars.

An ordinary flat car costs to build about \$380; a flat bottom coal car costs \$475; a gondola drop bottom coal car, \$525; a double bottom hopper coke car, \$540; a box car, \$600; a stock car, \$550; a ventilated fruit car, \$700; a refrigerator car, \$800; a four wheeled caboose, \$550; and an eight-wheeled caboose, \$700; a fifty-foot mail and baggage car, \$3,500; a second class passenger coach, \$4,800; a first-class coach, \$5,500; and a first-class Pullman car costs \$15,000.

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