

by a speech. It was a speech which would have made remarkable any occasion in any country. It is needless to say that the orator was Hon. Edward Blake, for no other man in the House is capable of such a magnificent effort. The oration was commenced under decidedly disadvantageous circumstances. It was the evening of St. Patrick's day—that itself is not necessarily one of the disadvantages referred to—and Mr. Blake was absent, having been invited to address a public meeting held in honour of the day. The Grand Trunk Double-track Bill was under discussion for a short time after recess, then the order for the second reading of the Orange Bill was called. Evidently the Liberals expected a hot discussion on the question, and that they would have opportunity to choose their time for speaking. But, contrary to precedent, Mr. Hector Cameron, who had the Bill in charge, only spoke long enough to say that he and his allies were willing to forbear from discussing the Bill if their opponents would do the same. The others seemed to accept the offer, for no person rose. The Speaker put the question and actually had the words "Call in the members" uttered when Mr. Mills rose to speak. The sergeant-at-arms, who had, with unusual alacrity, skipped—undignified, perhaps, but true—into the lobby, was called back. All hope of an early settlement was abandoned. Mr. Mills spoke and Mr. M. C. Cameron spoke. They said some good things, but were not listened to, because it was painfully evident that they were speaking against time so as to prevent the question being put before Mr. Blake's arrival. Meantime a messenger was despatched by the Liberal whips to summon their leader, and, while Mr. M. C. Cameron's rasping voice still assailed unwilling ears, the well-known form of the gloomy giant who makes the Opposition speeches loomed in the doorway. Soon after he rose, apparently not at all disconcerted by the fact that his speech must seem much like an elaborate dinner that had been kept warm. Such a feeling as that, however, if any felt it, must have soon worn away in listening to the oration. It was consistent throughout, logical, clear and magnificently worded. Its only fault was that it was too heavily cumbered with quotations. Mr. Blake will probably never get over his lawyer's habit of giving his "proofs" in full. His first argument against the Orange Bill was conclusive. The only reason for asking Dominion incorporation for the Orange Association is because some of the Provinces will not give a charter. The purpose of incorporation—to give the Association power to hold property as an association—is a matter within Provincial jurisdiction. Therefore, for the Dominion Parliament to give a charter would be to force upon the Provinces legislation which they had refused, and which they had a perfect right to refuse. But Mr. Blake went further than that. He put himself squarely on record as personally opposed to all secret societies, because of the opportunities they afforded unprincipled leaders to manage their weaker brethren. Believing this, he objected to all state recognition of secret political societies, and, narrowing it down further, he gave it to be understood that his *bête noir* was the Orange Association and that any recognition of it must be achieved against his most strenuous opposition. But not content with all this, Mr. Blake quoted the Orange denunciations of Roman Catholics, and made these documents the text of a sort of extension of his speech, and in that extension are the points that are most likely to be generally discussed. It is a defence of the Roman Catholics against the charge that they owe allegiance not to this country but to a foreign potentate. The defence is a magnificent one. Was it a bid for the support of the Roman Catholics? That is and always must remain a matter of opinion. The effect of this speech, however, certainly has been to make the French Conservatives feel much better disposed toward the Opposition and their leader than before. The immediate result is a great many eulogies in the French Conservative papers of Hon. Edward Blake and a revival of the talk about a union of forces by him and Sir Hector Langevin.

This brings up considerations of the present state of affairs with the Government. Although Sir John is, in the words of the now famous Wilkinson, "as smart as a cricket," yet it is clear he cannot hold his position long enough to bring a man forward as his successor. Sir Leonard Tilley is an older man, in fact if not in years, than Sir John, and Sir Charles Tupper seems to acknowledge that he has no reason to aspire to lead the Conservative forces. After these there comes Sir Hector Langevin; and after him a lot of nobodies. Not but that there are clever men in the ranks, among them Mr. Dalton McCarthy, Mr. Hector Cameron and Mr. Thomas White; but no man can hope to step from the ranks to the place of command. There seems to be a struggle now in progress between Sir Leonard and Sir Hector for the chief place at late sittings of the Commons and on other occasions when they are together and Sir John is absent. The other evening—or rather morning, for it was after midnight—Mr. Blake crossed the floor to speak to the occupants of the Government benches. Sir Hector was near the back of the Chamber speaking with one of his supporters, but, when he saw the Opposition leader approaching as if to speak to Sir Leonard, he came quickly forward and entered, as of right, into the conversation. A few minutes later a member of the Opposition rose to ask a question of "the leader of the House." The words were hardly out of his mouth when Sir Leonard rose to reply, as if to prevent Sir Hector having any possible excuse for speaking. If Sir Leonard hopes, as he seems to do, for the leadership he is deceiving himself. He has no following worth mentioning, and no man of any force of character at all would follow a leader who has only his respectable record to recommend him. But, if Sir Hector Langevin takes the lead he cannot hope to be successful unless he has a strong English-speaking partner. There is no such man on the Government side of the House. If Sir Hector has personal ambition to satisfy he must seek an alliance with Mr. Blake. Will the great Edward be satisfied some day to have a member of the old Pacific Scandal Cabinet for an ally, or will he put his foot upon Sir Hector's ambition and rule the victorious party alone? The

answer to this question, like Mr. Blake's accession to power, must come after Sir John has dropped the reins of his own accord.

There was a bolt of five of the French Conservative members on the license question the other evening. They argued that the law was now clear that the licenses were under the control of the Provincial Legislatures. That being so, in law as well as in fact of many years' standing, they declared they would not submit to Federal interference in the matter. It is a noticable fact that after declaring several times that the McCarthy Act would be enforced, Sir John has consented to submit a case to the courts to decide as to the constitutionality of the law.

Ottawa, March 22, 1884.

ED. RUTHVEN.

SWEET FERN.

The subtle power in perfume found
Nor priest nor sibyl vainly learned;
On Grecian shrine or Aztec mound
No censor idly burned.

That power the hoary Magian knew,
The dervish in his frenzied dance,
The Pythian princess swooning through
The wonderland of trance.

And Nature holds, in wood and field,
Her thousand sun-lit censers still;
To spell of flower and shrub we yield
Against or with our will.

I climbed a hill-path strange and new
With slow feet, pausing at each turn;
A sudden waft of west wind blew
The breath of the sweet fern.

That fragrance from my vision swept
The alien landscape; in its stead,
Up fairer hills of youth I stepped,
As light of heart as tread.

With me June's freshness, lapsing brook,
Murmurs of leaf and bee, the call
Of birds, and one whose voice and look
In keeping were with all.

A fern beside the way we went
She plucked, and smiling, held it up,
While from her hand the wild, sweet scent,
I drank as from a cup.

O potent witchery of smell!
The dust-dry leaves to life return;
And she who plucked them owns the spell,
And lifts her ghostly fern.

Or sense or spirit? Who shall say
What touch the chords of memory thrills?
It passed; and left the August day
Ablaze on lonely hills.

Danvers, Mass.

THE ADVENTURES OF A WIDOW.

By EDGAR FAWCETT, author of "A Gentleman of Leisure," "A Hopeless Case," "An Ambitious Woman," "Tinkling Cymbals," etc.

VII.—Continued.

On reaching home she had scarcely time to take off her bonnet before the name of her cousin Courtlandt was brought to her by a servant. She went down into the little reception-room to meet him, with rather lively anticipations of being forced to put herself on the defensive. Her sensations had not been unlike those with which we regard the lowering of the mercury in a thermometer, while ordering extra fuel so as to be on guard against a sudden chill.

Courtlandt was standing before the silver grated hearth-place; he watched the black, tumbled blocks of coal with eyes bent down upon their snapping and crackling flames, as Pauline appeared. He did not immediately raise his eyes as her entering step sounded. But when he did raise them, she saw that he was clad in his old impregnable calm.

She sank into a chair, not far from the fire. "Well," she said, with an amused smile playing about her lips, "I suppose you have come to scold me dreadfully."

"What makes you suppose so?" he asked.

"You darted away, there at the Battery, as if you were fearfully shocked."

"I don't think I darted away."

"Oh, well, we won't split hairs. You wouldn't stay, and you might easily have staid. You pleaded stress of business, and you hadn't any, or this appearance up-town at so early an hour couldn't have taken place."

"It is remarkable," said Courtlandt, with his gravest serenity, "how you pierce through people's pitiful disguises. You make me feel conscience-stricken by a realization of my own deceit."

"That is fortunate," said Pauline, with a slight, curt laugh. "For then you will, perhaps, express your disapprobation less impudently."

"I might speak pretty plainly to you and yet not be at all impudent."

Pauline threw back her head with a defiant stolidity. "Oh, speak as plainly as you please," she said. "I shall have my own views of just how impudent you are. I generally have."