

Mr. Justice Strong, of the Supreme Court of Canada, officiated instead of Chief Justice Sir William Ritchie, who is away for a holiday. The ceremony, never an impressive one at best, and usually associated with empty seats in the Senate, a straggling attendance at the Bar of M.P.'s, messengers, and pages to represent the Commons, and an absence of the uniforms and gowns that lend colour and "go" to the opening of Parliament, was even tamer this time. Judge Strong's scarlet and ermine robed figure, topped by the quaint three-cornered hat, was in queer contrast to all its modern and business-like surroundings. On the right, instead of Sir John Macdonald, gorgeous in Windsor uniform and collar of his order, and surrounded by his Cabinet, clothed like unto glorified policemen, stood Mr. Abbott all alone, and in the familiar grey coat, which testifies to a liking for hard work, with no fuss about it; on the left a solitary A.D.C. in blue undress. Even the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod had foregone gold lace and feathered cocked hat for his ordinary black official garments, in which he waits upon the Senate, and very properly, no doubt, indicated in his bows the lesser reverence due to a symbolism twice removed from the thing symbolized. The Commons came and leaned unawed upon the brass railings that separate the outer court of the Temple, where Senators may walk and talk—aye, and flirt sometimes upon the red-cushioned benches that run along the walk—from the holy ground whereon none but Senators may tread, which leads up to the Throne before which all men do obeisance as they pass, empty though it may be. Spectators strolled in and out through the open doors, and talked unrestrainedly all the time while the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery read the titles of the Bills in a perfunctory way, quite different from the solemn and sonorous tones that he used in presence of His Excellency. The table of the House was unadorned by the portly presence of the Chaplain, or by the silk stockinged, steel buckled Master-in-Chancery, with a scarlet bag full of emptiness, who matches the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery in slinness and waxed moustache, as the Clerks assistant match each other in breadth of shoulder and thickness of grey beard, while all wear the involuntary tonsure, so appropriate to their surroundings, which are aged if not old. The list was rattled through in English and in French. The Clerk of the Senate, with a grave sense of the exceeding importance and dreadful responsibility devolving upon it—a sense not shared apparently by everybody else—declared in jerky tones that, "In Her Majesty's name, the Deputy of His Excellency the Governor General, doth assent to these Bills," renewed his bow to the presence on the Throne and repeated the formula in French, concluding with another bow of seeming apology for his intrusion. The triangular hat was lifted in stiff salute to the Commons who bundled out after their Speaker and their Mace. The Black Rod bowed before the Deputy Governor who, saluting the Senate right and left, tucked up his gown after the fashion of men compelled to wear skirts, descended the steps of the dais, and the little procession disappeared abruptly. Then the Senate set at work again upon some query about the Intercolonial Railway. The whole performance had an air of being out of date, the audience knowing that it was getting very near the end of its run on the parliamentary boards, and of the actors sharing that knowledge. But of this was the suggestion from a spectacular point of view, there was another from the practical one. There was undeniably a business-like air which has hitherto been wanting, a feeling among those present that the time has come at last when great changes will be made not only in men but in methods of public business. It is a sign of the times, even though it be only a straw to show the direction of the wind.

The mention of the Intercolonial Railway is a reminder that at the end of the debate Mr. Abbott gave a contradiction to reports current a short time ago, by announcing positively that the Government had never thought of disposing of the railway or of acquiring the branch lines which serve as its feeders. It will be remembered there was a rumour that a successful effort had been made to unload on the Government all these Lower Province railways which, with only one or two exceptions, have proved unprofitable investments. The "Scandal Committees" have been busy enough. The McGreevy investigation has reached the close of the case for the prosecution, but in the Public Accounts Committee fresh charges or rather motions for papers wherewith to establish or to manufacture charges—the word depends on the political stripe of its user—are made at every meeting. The Arnoldi affair continues to be the most serious of the disclosures as yet made there, as it is so connected in the public mind with the other matters affecting Sir Hector Langevin's department, which the Privileges and Elections Committee is dealing with. Mr. Arnoldi's defiant demeanour added not a little to the effect of his admissions, and his "precedents," in the shape of doubtful transactions under the Mackenzie régime, were merely a case of the pot calling the kettle black. The attempts to get at the bottom of Mr. Charlebois' exclusion of other contractors from the new Departmental Buildings, and to find out the "inwardness" of the silver plate testimonial presented to Sir Hector Langevin when those buildings were finished, have so far been unsuccessful. The attack upon Mr. Dewdney was based upon such petty grounds, and the duties of a "Minister's messenger" are so well understood to be to a combination of those of an official porter and a personal attendant, that the objections to its being pursued further do not meet with any very serious condemnation. The charges against

Mr. Haggart's department, involving him personally, were proceeded with to-day, but in the unfinished state of the evidence no conclusion can be drawn.

One of the principal events in the Tarte Committee was the tragic and sad breakdown of Mr. Perley under the combined strain of worry, anxiety, ill health, and the severe questioning of so many experienced and searching cross-examiners. That a newspaper should actually apply the words "old man" to him, who is really as far as age goes in the prime of life, is the best instance of the physical effect upon him of this affair. The scene in the Committee-room was exceedingly pitiable, and perhaps convinced some who had previously been incredulous as to the possibility of his innocence, that after all he had been, perhaps, but an unconscious tool of unscrupulous men.

Mr. Laforce Langevin's evidence was a fine example of what is now known as "the Quebec idea." This is best summed up in his own opinion that people who have big contracts ought naturally to contribute to election funds. His actual testimony was not one-tenth as damaging as his self-sufficient complacency and fatuous laughter. His ignorance was of a totally different order from that of witnesses like Messrs. Murphy, McGreevy and the Connollys trio, but it had the same kind of effect. Mr. Larkin's examination created a diversion, and for a time the boot was on the other leg when his own political friends of the Opposition had to put up with suggestions that they, too, might have election subscriptions, and come to the help of friends in need. The discovery that Mr. Thomas McGreevy's correspondence was not kept deprives both accusers and audience of an expected sensation, although it gave them one in another way.

It is now expected that the evidence will be all taken by the close of this week or early in next week, and then will come the discussion over the report. So that unless some new developments take place there is some apparent chance of the session being closed about the beginning of next month.

A BOYISH OUTING.

AN old holiday! How clearly it stands out from the months and weeks of monotonous toil before and after! Even when years have come and gone its colours are still fresh and its outlines still unblurred in the long picture-gallery of the mind which we call the memory. I wonder if you have forgotten that day we spent together, old friend, so many years ago. I hardly think so; we had planned it too long ahead, enjoyed it too keenly, and talked it over too often afterwards to let it drop out.

The day on which we had fixed was a public holiday. School would be closed, as a matter of course, and, for a wonder, the warehouse people were to shut up shop also. We would both be free and, weeks before, we had arranged our simple programme of pleasure. Such a very simple programme!—a long walk out into the country, a picturesque region within easy reach of the city, a lunch in the open air, and a scramble among the hills. That was all, but it meant spending the day together. It was rarely that we saw each other, except on Sundays, and so we hailed the prospect of a long day of uninterrupted companionship, with the warmth that always attends a genuine boyish friendship. There are no friends like boy friends, and what a friend, you were comrade mine! Everyone liked you and your manly ways, so it is no wonder that I did. In that curious picture-gallery of mine there is a full length portrait of you. I can see at this moment your straight, active figure, your sun-tanned face and the clear eyes that always met other eyes so frankly. I recall your ringing laugh that came so readily, and your trick of colouring to the very hair whenever you were a bit embarrassed. I admired you for many things, your prowess in manly sports, your good nature, and chiefly, I think, your deferential manner to old people. I can hear still the tone in which you used to say "sir" to your father. A whole, long day with such a friend meant a day of unalloyed happiness.

The long expected morning came at last, but with rain. What a disappointment it was to wake and hear the April shower pattering on the roof! The sky soon cleared, however, the sun came out and about nine o'clock we were on our way. In our oldest clothes, which climbing and muddy roads could not possibly harm, and with a small lunch stowed away in our pockets, we took the road and in a short time had passed out of the suburbs into the open country. The sun shone warm and bright and the millions of little raindrops that hung on the leafless twigs on the maples caught everyone a ray of light and flashed and glittered like so many brilliants. When the streets came to an end we did not keep to the narrow, dry, well beaten side-path, but deliberately chose the middle of the road, all mud and standing pools from the recent showers. What did we care for mud or mire? Mud dries and eventually falls off, or can be brushed from one's clothes; getting besplashed and disreputable generally was part of the fun and marked the welcome escape from the enforced respectability of every day. The vagabond nature will assert itself every now and then, even in such commonplace members of society as schoolboys and warehouse clerks. The primal, roving instincts cannot always be repressed. We chose the middle of the road deliberately, arguing, I remember, that there was a severe and useful exercise of the mental faculties; in rigidly adhering to a medial line, not swerving to the right hand or to the left, which we should miss altogether if we tamely kept to the

one side. Besides it was the most philosophic course, Jack contended, a special instance of the golden mean between two extremes; *media via tutissima*. There is much to be said in favour of keeping to the middle of the road.

The day which began in such an unpromising way turned out most beautiful. The sky cleared of all but a few thin, white clouds low down on the horizon. The air was like summer, and yet the maiden freshness of the young year was untouched. Our way led through a wide valley, and at first the road ran close under a range of low but steep hills, thickly wooded. Directly in front of us, we knew, lay the town to which we were going. As yet it was invisible, concealed by the formation of the ground, but its position was marked by the bold forehead of the Peak, which rose behind it above the plain and the woods, like some deserted watch-tower of giants. Back from the road the old clap-boarded farmhouses, once painted bright red and now weathered into warm, softened tints, nestling each in its little orchard, made a continual changing picture. Now and then a turn in the road would reveal a city-like stone house, its front rooms shut up apparently and unused, as is the custom of our rich farmers. Our tongues were not idle as we trudged along in midroad, pointing out each curious or picturesque sight to each other, or discussing our favourite books and heroes and poets. Many a sentence began with: "Have you read —?" Many a great question we settled with the confident world philosophy of boys. How easy the problems of life appear at sixteen! Or else we shortened the way with the jokes and good thing we had been hoarding for each other since our last meeting. It was probably not very wise chat, or very brilliant, but it was young life, happiness, and friendship finding a voice under that pure, blue April sky.

A brisk march of about an hour brought us within sight of the town, our first objective point. Here the road dips down abruptly and makes a short turn to the right. You get a very good view of the town from this point, but not so good as when you stand on the Peak six hundred feet above the plain, with all the roofs and spires far beneath your feet. The town was the centre of trade for this part of the country when the city we had left behind was a hamlet of half-a-dozen houses by the bay. Now the whirligig of time has reversed their conditions, and the tide of trade has flowed away from the earlier settlement. As we stood here resting and watching, a dozen school-boys on a paper-chase crossed the road. They passed quickly, scrambling over the fences and ploughed land, straight across country like a pack of hounds. The hue-and-cry died away and we continued our march down the hill. We were soon on the stony mile of main street, which runs the length of the town, and when the houses at the farther end began to straggle we saw that we were directly under the Peak at last. As soon as we came to a clear space we turned to the right and made for the foot-mounds of the hill. It was a hard climb; our feet sunk in gravel and sand at every step, and the sun seemed as hot as in midsummer. The mounds were really part of an embankment, for a line of railway is drawn here like a long diagonal across the face of the hills which flank this side of the valley. When we reached the level of the track we were hot and out of breath and glad enough to call a halt. What we wanted most was water, and we soon found it, for this is a country of upper and nether springs. A tiny stream flowed from a crack in the limestone and filled the basin below. It had, at one time, been arched in, and a pipe still led to a dismantled brewery in the valley. A few years of neglect had injured the work of man, the arch was broken down, but the spring itself was as clear and sweet as when it first gushed from the rock. How delicious the first mouthful of that water was! Even though we had to lie down flat and drink like the pre-Adamites before cups were invented. Our weariness left us, seemingly by magic and we voted it was worth while tramping so far to feel that one sensation. The spot struck us as a good place for lunch, and we stretched ourselves forthwith on the warm sand beside our fountain and ate our sandwiches with the relish that is only born of hunger and hard work. As we lay there at our ease in the pleasant sunshine, the express train rolled slowly out of the station, which we could not see, and passed over the hundred yards of track that lay between us and the hill.

We watched it with lazy curiosity till the last Pullman car came in sight. On the rear platform stood a group of young people. They had evidently come out to get a better view of the scenery. One well-dressed woman was standing on the lowest step, holding tightly to the rail, but swinging one pretty foot off altogether. She passed in a few seconds, but we saw all this—and more. What boy of sixteen is not interested in all young womanhood? and what interest makes the eyes so keen? We had time to see that she was slight, pretty and evidently enjoying the danger of her frolic; for her face was half turned to her friends behind her and her dark eyes were dancing with delight. She vanished in a whirl of dust but her image remained. In our egoism, the crowded cars bearing their load of human histories, the mighty hill, the merry old world itself seemed simply parts of one huge contrivance made for the special purpose of affording two idle young apprentices, the sight of a charming girl enacting a graceful *tableau vivant*. Pardon, dashing Incognita, if this should seem to make a mere actress of you! Not one thought of ours would do you such discourtesy. If you saw us at all I daresay you took us for tramps—and small blame to you! You will never know what passed