

The Passing Show.

BY WILFRID WISGAST.

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players."

The City Council has done its duty, and the people will now have to settle whether tram cars shall run on Sundays or not. There is, in my opinion, not the least doubt as to the result; but let every man, and woman too, do their level best until the question is decided. I believe we are in an immense majority, but there will be a strong opposition by the religious fanatics, and they are well organized.

When I say "religious fanatics" I do not wish to be misunderstood; I do not mean they are fanatics because they are religious. The extreme party who disgrace religion by their intense bitterness and bigotry are the crowd referred to. A religious paper says I am unfair to the clergy, and speak of them in a contemptuous way. Nothing of the kind; but some of them have been in times past and are just now, in reference to the Sunday question, rather hard on me. It does me no harm. But when I can I like to return a Roland for an Oliver.

The attitude of some of the ministers of religion in this dispute has been a consistent and creditable one. While disliking the idea of Sunday cars they have had the intelligence to see that a question so directly concerning the people must necessarily be settled by the people, and to oppose this position is in direct contradiction to what is called the democratic spirit of the age.

At the present moment all those desirous of removing the absurd restriction with which the Sunday in Toronto is hedged round must organize and canvas for an exhaustive vote for the running of Sunday cars. The vote will be taken on the 4th of next month; the opposition will fight hard, and all of us who want to win must put our shoulder to the wheel. Do this and we shall be able to ride as well on the Sabbath as on any other day in a few weeks.

The *National Review* of London, a first-class monthly periodical, has an interesting and well-written article in the December issue on "Military Life in Canada," by Gilbert Parker. Mr. Gilbert Parker is a Canadian who is evidently going to take a good position in the front rank of London journalists and *litterati*.

I have no desire to say much about the trouble between Mr. J. Ross Robertson and Madam Obernier, especially as I know the lady. But I fear that a good deal of explanation will be required to reinstate Mrs. Obernier in the position she has for a long time held in the estimation of her friends. I was at both the performances of "The Mikado" about which the trouble has arisen, and with some

knowledge of theatrical matters I am compelled to say that the amount handed over to the Lakeside hospital as the proceeds of such an audience was absurdly small.

I was much pained and surprised at the account cabled from London of the charge against and the arrest of Mr. George W. Hastings, M.P. for East Worcestershire. In his capacity of secretary of the Society for the Advancement of Social Science I knew him personally and very well. He was an able man, holding a good position, well connected and both liked and respected by all who knew him, and he was on friendly terms with some of the most famous literary and scientific men both in England and the European continent. That such a man should be guilty of misappropriating money appears incredible to me, but the charge is very specific and the case looks grave.

I felt quite sure that the *Globe* could not keep a stiff upper lip long. When the charges of theft were made against government officials, and something like general negligence was proved to exist among the different departments at Ottawa, the Conservative government appeared to be in very bad case. In the circumstances the *Globe* was very jubilant and very virtuous. Purity was their only cry; in fact, so pure was the *Globe* that it reminded me of the famous picture of "The Harlot at the Christening," where, among all the women present, it is the unchaste woman who alone is shocked at the nakedness of the little child.

So it happened that when the Baie des Chaleurs scandal was unearthed the *Globe* was in a devil of a quandary. Accustomed as it is to taking back water it tried to assume a semblance of virtue, and like the lady above mentioned it was very shocked and raised a hand before its face in shame. It actually kept consistent for a week, and endeavored to convince some of its hay-seed constituency that it was sincere in declaring that a Liberal pick-pocket was as bad a man as a Conservative pick-pocket. Of course many people saw through the truth and laughed. But a few of the minor Grit papers in the country lauded the *Globe* for its fairness and consistency and the *Globe* of course laughed—but reprinted all the extracts and worked a cheap advertisement for what little it was worth.

But some of the party managers began to kick, and the *Globe* was called off. The organ of Louis Riel and the Quebec Nationalists has discovered that there is a constitutional issue at stake. Undoubtedly there is, and there is also a criminal issue at stake for "Count" Mercier and some of his understrappers. But there is a much more serious issue at stake for Quebec.

The conduct of that province is being watched just now by financiers with considerable curiosity and interest. Montreal is in a

state of bankruptcy, and she has for a long time past been cadging about London and Paris to try and arrange a loan on the security of the Province. London would have none of it, but to encourage the "national" feeling a French syndicate "entertained" the proposal; a small sum was lent and a large one promised. In the face of recent revelations, however, it is needless to say the promise is off, and Quebec is face to face with provincial beggary.

Sir George Baden-Powell will start for Washington early next year to assist in preparing the report of the joint commission on the Behring Sea fisheries for the court of arbitration. The suggestion that the court shall include experts in natural history does not meet with official approval at Washington. It is held that the court ought to be composed entirely of jurists.

The death of the Duke of Devonshire calls the Marquess of Hartington to the House of Lords, and almost of necessity calls Mr. Joseph Chamberlain to the leadership of the Liberal Unionist party,—a party that is stronger in English politics to-day than it ever was, despite the Irish-American Associated Press Organization for Spreading Lies by Telegraph.

By-the-by, while on the subject of lying telegraphy, it certainly is amazing to me that Dalziel's agency is used to the extent it is in England. Of course on the London *Times* I quite understand how matters stand. In that office they have some old-standing quarrel with Reuter's agency; they would never use Reuter's "copy" if any other could be obtained, and he was always accorded in the *Times* newspaper the most insignificant "credit" they could invent. Thus, I suppose, it is that, having dropped the system of special wires that the late J. C. Macdonald introduced, the *Times* newspaper is using and advertising Dalziel's agency, the most unreliable and discredited newspaper agency in the world.

It is time Christmas came here to mellow the news a little. The fruits of the present season are railroad accidents, marine disasters, domestic scandals, brutal murders, mysterious disappearances, grip, crankiness and war talk. By all means let us prepare to turn over a new leaf.

Russell Sage may not be a Czar, but he knows what it is to feel like one.

The Christmas number of the "*Dominion Illustrated*" should be bought by everyone; it is a capital number, and able to bear comparison with the Christmas numbers of the *Graphic*, the *Illustrated News*, and many others.

There is trouble in the "Morality Department." By an order of Chancellor Boyd and Mr. Justice Meredith, Archibald and Slein have to divulge the names of the spies whom they have been employing. This is as it should be; we do not want an exhibition of this kind here. And now it is next in order to sweep the Morality Department out of the way.

Quebec has now the opportunity to redeem herself in the eyes of decent people, or to damn herself before the world for all coming time by condoning the stealings of a common thief.