

# Through a Monocle

ONE of the "two Weirs"—as long ago they were commonly known in Montreal—is Provincial Treasurer of Quebec. The other Weir is Recorder of Montreal—an office which answers in many respects to that of our Police Magistrate. There are two Recorders—one English and the other French—but there is only one Provincial Treasurer, and he has just had the pleasure of predicting a surplus of a million dollars. Such things do not happen often enough at provincial capitals to make them commonplace; and it probably would not have happened in this case if it had not been for the good gift of some \$600,000 added to the usual provincial subsidy. In fact, Mr. Weir promises that it will not happen next year, which is entirely proper when we remember that Quebec carries a good deal of direct taxation in provincial affairs. Treasurer Weir is a fighting politician. He has done very effective work on the "stump" for his party for years past, and is one of the best known English-speaking public men throughout the English townships outside of Montreal.

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WHILE Mr. Weir was announcing his surplus in Quebec, Colonel Matheson was announcing another in Toronto. This is a "surplus" time in Canada. Mr. Fielding's surpluses have become so familiar an annual event that they are hardly worth recording in a live newspaper. It might as well call attention to the sunrise. But Mr. Weir's surplus is accompanied by a reduction of the provincial debt, while surpluses at Ottawa for some time ahead will stand out startlingly against a rapid increase of the national debt. Again, the "Monocle" refuses to cloud up at this prospect. There are times when a young, growing and vigorous nation should run courageously into debt. Only in that way can it buy the machinery needful for the working of the farm—machinery which will pay for itself handsomely as the years go by. There is a possibility of being too much afraid of getting in debt. Fear of debt is, after all, a virtue of feeble folk. They are not strong enough to fight the swirling waters; so they are well advised to stay safely ashore. But the conqueror over circumstances—the man who makes progress and lifts his structures to strike the sky—is no more afraid of debt than of any other device for stealing strength from an opulent to-morrow.

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WHEN a Provincial Treasurer announces a surplus, he pays a compliment to his colleagues in the Ministry. If they had been extravagant—if they had insisted upon getting money to distribute among their henchmen with a view to enhancing their personal prestige—he would have had no surplus. A surplus is earned by abstaining from "patronage" and other delectable pursuits which attract the politician with an eye on the elections. A surplus is an appeal over the heads of the clamorous "camp followers" to the sober, sane, second thought of the solid citizens behind them who appreciate sound financing more than a generous distribution of the "spoils." Thus there is more in a good surplus than money saved. There is an evidence of far-seeing and high-principled government—a substantial proof that the Ministers have been studying the interests of the state and not altogether the temporary and purchasable popularity of the moment.

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NOTICE that the popular preacher who edits the "Globe" is proud of his string of libel suits, and expresses the wish that some of his brother clergymen should become so much in earnest that they, too, would be sued for slander. Brother Macdonald has forgotten the privilege of clergy. He would instantly resent any insinuation that he was not as earnest as a preacher before he became an editor as he is now; and I yet do not recall that he ever was served with a solitary writ for libel during all those years of holy zeal. The fact is the people will let the clergy say things which they would take from no one else, and that when a clergyman thinks to bring some of the

uncalculating courage and vigour of the pulpit into the sanctum, he finds the "pew" fighting back in an astonishing manner. As an editor, he is on a level with other men, and must take as well as give blows.

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WHETHER this license of the clergy is quite good for them, is more than doubtful. It tends in some cases to lessen their sense of responsibility and leads them to say things which they probably would not say if they were to be called to account for them in a court of law. This inevitably weakens the effect of what they do say, and creates a carelessness respecting the anathemas of the pulpit which does not exist with regard to the thunders of the press. When people begin apologising for a minister on the ground that he "is not in touch with his fellows" and "does not understand life," it does not matter very much what he does say. His criticism becomes the shrill outcry of the privileged child. It is a great thing to have a sense of keen responsibility for what one says. The fact that an editor may be called upon to prove his statements at any time, or go to gaol, has an excellent effect in steadying and restraining editorial comment. But what I started out to say was that Mr. Macdonald was hardly fair to his fellow clergymen in the matter of vigour. Most pulpits would accumulate more libel suits in a year than does the "Globe" if their utterances were printed as lay editorials in a local newspaper.

*Nidimporte*

## Claridge's Famous Hotel

THE name of Claridge's is well known to every visitor to London. The famous hotel in which princes and millionaires are, so to speak, "three a penny," is about to celebrate its centenary. When it was opened, early in 1808, it was known as Mivart's, after the name of its founder, M. Mivart, a celebrated chef of the period. Mivart has one great claim to fame which no visitor to London should deny. He was the first hotel proprietor to provide his patrons with a bathroom, a fact which he advertised extensively. In 1850 Mivart sold the business to Mr. and Mrs. Claridge, a butler and housekeeper in a ducal family. It is now run by a company.



The Colonel (sadly): "I called twice for trumps, partner."  
Fair Bridgite (whom it has escaped): "Did you? I quite thought you weren't supposed to give hints."—Punch.