

pose as soon as possible to review at some length the more important publications that have appeared for months past on municipal government with the object of arousing and informing the public mind in Toronto where, it is notorious to every one, the efficiency of existing civic methods is not yet perfect. It is by comparisons of different systems of civic administration that we can arrive at some solution of present difficulties and defects.

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

THE LATE SIR MATTHEW BEGBIE.

BY ONE WHO KNEW HIM.

One of the best known figures in the life of the Pacific slope of Canada has passed away with the Chief Justice. He will probably be best remembered for the courageous part he played in the early and troubles life of British Columbia, when men's minds were fired by the gold fever. He was appointed Judge of the mainland of British Columbia as far back as 1858. Those were the days when on the whole Pacific slope of North America shooting was promiscuous, and law uncared for. Chinamen were looked upon as other than human, and killing them was little more than a pastime when work was slack or when John had a good claim. Judge Begbie went up to Cariboo amongst this lawless crew, and the men looked forward to a bit of sport in the shape of judge-baiting, and many were the boasts and schemes got up and talked of. But the judge was a big, bony man, and his whole atmosphere and carriage suggested courage and determination. He soon saw what was before him in Cariboo. A Chinaman had been killed by a white tough only a short time before his visit to the district. Begbie swore in some sort of a jury, and passed the death sentence, to be carried into execution next morning at daybreak. No one thought it could be carried out. Many were the murderous plots and rescue schemes discussed during that night, but the man was hung next morning, and Begbie saw it done with his Winchester ready for use in his hands. The result was remarkable. The toughs at once said that a country where a white man was hung for potting a Chinaman, was no kind of a country at all, and many of the worst sort left. But Begbie slung up many a man in the gold country of Cariboo; short shrift and no favor was his plan. Consequently he was fared on the bench, and liked off it, by all. The Cariboo "boys" used indeed to say that they would rather be hung in the States than have a tongue-lashing from Begbie. You can understand how such a man made the country, even in those early and inaccessible days, a pleasant one to live in. Life and property are as safe, aye safer, in British Columbia to-day than they are in the United Kingdom. Murders there are, but thanks to Judge Begbie's precedent, the murderer is caught nine times out of ten, and punished according to law. Sir Matthew had the name for being a very hard judge indeed. But that as it may, he was the right man in the right place in the rocky, woolly West in those early days. He had one of those pretty homes which are so plentiful in the beautiful climate of the coast, and was very fond of his dogs—thoroughbred Gordon setters. He was, too, a true English gentleman in social life.

Many tales are told of the decided way in which the late Chief Justice would say what he thought. A little while ago the journalists of the Province came under his caustic notice. Sometimes the jurymen serving under him were very severely dealt with. For example, in 1888 a man was charged in Victoria with having killed another man with a sand-bag, and in the face of the judge's summing-up the jury brought in a verdict of "Not guilty." This gained for them a very pointed judicial admonition. Said the Chief Justice:—"Gentleman of the jury, mind, that is your verdict, not mine. On your conscience will rest the stigma of returning such a disgraceful verdict. Many repetitions of such conduct as yours will make trial by jury a horrible farce, and the city of Victoria a nest of immorality and crime. Go, I have nothing more to say to you." And then, turning to the prisoner, the Chief Justice added:—"You are discharged. Go and sand-bag some of those jurymen; they deserve it!" —*Canadian Gazette*.

THE HILL TRIBES OF TRAVANCORE.

The hills are inhabited by several tribes of hillmen, the majority of whom cultivate patches of forest, felling a new bit yearly and deserting it after one crop, a most frightfully wasteful proceeding, which has been of late years stopped to a great extent by the forest officers. There is a small tribe amongst these called *Pandarens*, of whom little is known. I believe that myself and three other Europeans are the only white people who have ever seen them. This tribe inhabits the jungle tracts to the south of the Peermad planting district, or about the centre of Travancore, and live entirely on the roots they dig up, fish and wild honey. They never cultivate, as the other hill tribes do, are rarely seen by natives, and never by Europeans. There are probably not over a hundred, all counted. But the wonder is that any have survived. Probably during the very wet weather they get lower down towards the plains, and sleep under sheltering rocks and such like protection. If a shooting camp be made they will desert that part for years. The only time I ever saw them was on a shooting expedition about Christmas time two years ago. We—that is, my two friends, my wife, with her hill pony and myself—had got to our camping ground long in front of the camp, and whilst waiting heard voices. We sat quite still, and presently along an elephant path a whole family of two men, two women and three children came by. My friend, who knew some of the hill dialects, questioned them, and though they were much frightened they gave intelligent answers. Their clothes were but scanty, the children having only a curiously woven circle of green leaves round their wastes; but the women wore cloths like the Tamil women do, covering their breasts. They said they knew nothing of how the tribe originated, that formerly they did cultivate, but that fever and small-pox had killed so many of the men off that for twenty years they had not done so. They had a few dried crabs and fish, and some fine white flour wrapped in leaves. They were afraid of the village people, as they said they used to ill-treat them and take away their honey and other little stores. They were not afraid of us, though they had never seen a white man before; but they must have been more alarmed than they appeared, for although we promised

them clothes and salt if they would come to the camp next day, they never did so, and in their hurry to get away left behind them a little basket, which evidently belonged to one of the ladies, as it contained a small box with a little looking glass in it, showing that she was a true daughter of Eve.—*London Society*.

THE PYTHON'S DANCE.

The moon was sinking behind the hills, and the lines of trembling monkeys huddled together on the walls and battlements looked like ragged shaky fringes of things. Baloo [the bear] went down to the tank for a drink and Bagheera [the panther] began to put his fur in order, as Kaa [the python] glided out into the centre of the terrace and brought his jaws together with a ringing snap that drew all the monkeys' eyes upon him. "The moon sets," he said. "Is there yet light enough to see?" From the walls came a moan like the wind in the tree tops, "We see, O Kaa." "Good. Begin now the dance—the Dance of the Hunger of Kaa. Sit still and watch." He turned twice or thrice in a big circle, waving his head from right to left. Then he began making loops and figures of eight with his body, and soft oozy triangles that melted into squares and five-sided figures, and coiled mounds, never resting, never hurrying, and never stopping his low humming song. It grew darker and darker, till at last the dragging, shifting coils disappeared, but they could hear the rustle of the scales. Baloo and Bagheera stood still as stone, growling in their throats, their neck-hair bristling, and Mowgli [the boy brought up by the wolves] watched and wondered. "*Banalar-log*," said the voice of Kaa at last, "can ye stir foot or hand without my order? Speak!" "Without thy order we cannot stir foot or hand, O Kaa!" "Good! Come all one pace nearer to me." The lines of the monkeys swayed forward helplessly, and Baloo and Bagheera took one stiff step forward with them. "Nearer," hissed Kaa, and they all moved again. Mowgli laid his hands on Baloo and Bagheera to get them away, and the two great beasts started as they had been waked from a dream. "Keep thy hand on my shoulder," Bagheera whispered. "Keep it there, or I must go back—must go back to Kaa. Aah!" "It is only old Kaa making circles on the dust," said Mowgli; "let us go," and the three slipped off through a gap in the walls to the jungle. "*Whoof!*" said Baloo, when he stood under the still trees again. "Never more will I make an ally of Kaa," and he shook himself all over. "He knows more than we," said Bagheera, trembling. "In a little time, had I stayed, I should have walked down his throat." "Many will walk by that road before the moon rises again," said Baloo. "He will have good hunting—after his own fashion." "But what was the meaning of it all?" said Mowgli, who did not know anything of a python's power of fascination. "I saw no more than a big snake making foolish circles till the dark came. And his nose was all sore. Ho! Ho!" —*The Jungle Book, by Rudyard Kipling (Macmillan)*.

Among the numerous stratagems by which pride endeavors to recommend folly to regard, there is scarcely one that meets with less success than affectation, or a perpetual disguise of the real character by fictitious appearances.—*Dr. Johnson*.