

was agreeably surprised. Before Thursday arrived I knew that I should hear Lord Randolph Churchill speak, and that in all probability there would be a full house to hear the noble lord expound his views. But I did not know that I was destined to be present at one of the most exciting sittings that the House has had so far this session ; that I was to witness what is known as a "scene," and a remarkable one at that ; that I was to hear all the great leaders in the House speak, and that I was to sit within a yard or so of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, and see Lord Rosebery, the Duke of Fyfe, and many others of the nobility. Such, however, was my good fortune. It is of the House of Commons, as I saw it on this occasion, that I shall endeavor to give a pen-picture.

With that zeal which is eminently characteristic of Canadians in general under such circumstances, I was early at the door of the House—to be frank and accurate, I was the *first* there—and consequently when the visitors were admitted I was the first to enter and therefore had the choice of seats. I chose the centre seat in the front row of the Members' Gallery, and from that position had a splendid view of every part of the House. The Speaker was in his seat, but only a few members present. While the first half-hour is being apparently wasted and the benches being filled, let me look around and take note of my surroundings.

The House is a hall-like room, somewhat shorter perhaps and slightly broader than old Convocation Hall in University College, Toronto, used to be. A broad aisle runs down the centre from the table in front of the Speaker's chair, thus dividing the room into two parts. On each side of this aisle are ranged five rows of "benches," much like the seats in any modern Canadian church. These run lengthwise of the house, and are crossed at right angles in the centre by a narrow alley, known in parliamentary parlance as the "gangway." When, therefore, it is said that the Irish members, for example, sit "below the gangway," it is not meant that their seats are at any great distance from the other members, or that they are in a lower position ; the phrase merely means that they sit on the side of the gangway farthest from the Speaker, that, to be accurate, they are *beyond*