

[For the Torch.]

## PARLIAMENTARY PORTRAITS.

PHOTOGRAPHED FROM THE GALLERY BY OUR ARTIST.

No. 9.

Edward Blake is by all odds the ablest lawyer on the Ministerial side of the House, just as Palmer is the ablest on the Opposition side. He is a fine Parliamentary speaker, and a Minister of much administrative ability. He and Sir John McDonald have been the only men in the office of Minister of Justice who could perform its duties. All the others have failed lamentably, and a bill has been passed for the appointment of another law Minister to share the duties of the department of justice. Sir John performed the duties of the office and also attended to the multifarious duties of First Minister, bearing the double burden for years successfully. But Mr. Blake broke down completely under the strain, and had to retire. He is not a delicate man, but one capable of doing more than any ordinary man's work. He is not sick now, but is the picture of health. The fact is that Sir John Macdonald and Alex. Mackenzie are the only two men in the House who have displayed the power of endurance requisite for leading the House and discharging the double duties of First Minister and one of the Departments. While most of the portfolios require more clerical skill, and would run themselves if the signature of the Minister was not required occasionally, the Departments of Justice and Public Works involve a vast amount of work.

Mr. Blake is a tall man, and has begun to develop a corporation that may in time rival Judge Gilbert's. He is rather an imposing figure, as he walks briskly along, peering from right to left through his spectacles, and seeing everything while seeming to look over or through it. "Who is he?" naturally rises to the lips as he passes. His face is fresh, full of color, and round, with a shine to it like that of a schoolboy's after having been washed and wiped by his mother. He looks as though he might blush, if he had cause for blushing, and I know of nothing more complimentary than this that can be said of a veteran politician. His hair is brown, and always has a neglected look. It covers his head, falls over his forehead, and always sticks out behind in more or more profusion. Sometimes he takes his forelocks in his hand and pulls them further down on his forehead, and again he runs his fingers through them and gives them a straggling and demoralized aspect. He is fond of pulling or crushing his hat over his eyes, gathering himself into himself very much, and watching. Whether he is thinking out problems of law or State, taking mental notes of those around him, or merely indulging in dreams of something more satisfactory than the honor of public life, is not easy to say. Sometimes both hands are clasped behind his head, and again his face is buried deep in his hands on the desk. This is a sure sign that he does not want to be disturbed, that he is weary of his surroundings and wants to have nothing to do with them for the time, and no one ever ventures to slap him on the shoulder and say, "A word in your ear, fellow." If they did, however, he would show no annoyance, but would listen to them and retire again into his shell. These and other peculiarities give him rather an eccentric air, and some have even hinted that he is not always exactly sane. But there is no ground for this, as his eccentricities are but the signs of the rebellion of genius against the repressing of individuality for the purpose of conforming to the standards which society and party set up for all men's imitation. He left the Cabinet because he could no longer endure the burden of having always to appear to be perfectly in accord with his colleagues. It would

not surprise me to see him at a ball in a business suit, by way of protest against the law that insists on the swallow-tail uniformity. When listening to the proceedings of the House he is rarely perfectly quiet. He examines his fingers, clasps his hands, nurses his knee, bites his nails, feels of his closely shaven face, strokes his cheeks as though he wore whiskers, and gives many other signs of restlessness. He is extremely sensitive to censure or criticism, and, like other sensitive men, pretends that he is as thick-skinned as an elephant. The only occasions on which he has risen to speak this Session have been when some speaker alluded to him, and the burden of what he said has been in his own defence. His great influence over the Government, considering how little he exerts himself, is wonderful. Whenever he condescends to make a suggestion it is acted on instantly, no matter if it destroys the purpose and changes the principle of the bill they have introduced. The Premier seems nervously anxious to please him in every way without making direct proffers of service. He is afraid of Edward Blake, that is clear, and is never happy when he is in doubt of his approval. He speaks forcibly, clearly, and with good temper. He is seldom severe, in a personal sense, does not draw inferences and state them as facts, as the Premier does, and does not persist, like him, in re-asserting, in another form, what a member denies. It is hardly probable that Mr. Blake will ever again accept a subordinate place in any Cabinet. The place of First Minister might tempt him, but there is no other position which has any charms for him. He is not fond of place and power in the vulgar sense, not fond enough to sacrifice his own opinions for them, and would accept office again only on condition that he was to have his own ideas carried out completely. It would be a serious loss to the country if Mr. Blake carried out his threat of retirement from Parliament. On the Ministerial benches he is a check on the Government, making them feel that they cannot go too far on a wrong road without forfeiting his support, and in Opposition he would, as he has been before, be a keen critic of Government legislation.

## TORCHISMS.

- \*\*\* What is the difference between a dandy, an optical contusion, and a well in which water is frozen? The first is a nice swell, the second is an eye swell, and the third is an ice well.
- \*\*\* A tail more bare than a bear's tail. A talk bearer.
- \*\*\* How to cure a cynic of misanthropy. Give him a good salary and nothing to do. That would be a good cynic-cure. (Sinecure.)
- \*\*\* Why is a place used for coining counterfeit money like the lowest flat in a house? Because it is a base-mint.
- \*\*\* Why is the Turkish religion the most fashionable. Because it's *al-lah-made*.
- \*\*\* The Hon. John Morrissey has won so much money on "mills," that he is now called a Mill-lionaire.
- \*\*\* Where do we look for redress for injuries? In injuries.
- \*\*\* "Attack of the Blues." Beaten by a "Bobby."
- \*\*\* "In tiers I pine for thee," as the pile of pine deals said to their owner.

A constant reader asks if a ship's bow is to be accepted as a mark of politeness on the part of the vessel? Such a trivial question deserves a stern rebuke.—*Norristown Herald*. Better refer the matter to Martin Gale.—*N. Y. News*. We'd rudder not express an opinion.

## SELECT SCINTILLATIONS.

BY "SCISSORS."

"Sale of the Erie Railway postponed." This is the way it always goes with us. Just as we were getting ready to run down to New York and buy a railroad, hearing that one was for sale, they postponed the venture.—*Cia. Saturday Night*. When do you expect to let up on these Erie-sistible jocularities?—*N. Y. News*.

The doctor and a nervous man  
Will never have two creeds;  
For the former needs his patients,  
And the latter patience needs.

—*Hackensack Republican*.

The same woman who can take a mental inventory of another feminine's street toilette in half a minute will occupy an entire morning telling her neighbor the details.—*N. Y. News*.

C. O. Mic says that his wife has hysteria and he has his terror too, at one and the same time.—*Yonkers Gazette*.

Seasonable advice to gymnasts: If you want to learn to turn *Sommer* saults use a *Spring* board, and by Winter your *Antium* make a good tumbler—St. John Torch. Or bankrupt a glass factory.—*N. Y. News*.

"Row"ing with the tied—Quarrelling with a married couple.—*Norristown Herald*.

The Worcester Press says a barber never takes in a silent partner. He would be "taken in" if he did.

In standing up for the right it is sometimes necessary to knock down with the right—*Turkey's Falls Reporter*.

It puts one in a neck-salted condition to have his throat fenced in with a supply of salt pork.—*Yonkers Gazette*.

At a recent church raffle in Nevada one man drew a crowbar. That's a nice kind of a pry to offer.—*Consul Collins*.

We have been without mail communication with the outside world for the last 12 days, being the longest case of "ice-solation" for many years.—*Charlottevona Patriot*.

He who steals our empty purse,  
Takes that which maketh us no worse.  
But he commits most wicked deeds,  
Who steals our paragraphic secrets.

—*Whitchall Times*.

Some of our exchanges are finding fault with the dimensions of the new silver dollar, but in our opinion its size depends altogether upon circumstances. For instance, when you hand it to your wife to pay the last week's washing it looks big enough to eclipse a full moon, but when you toss it on the counter and yell, "Set-enupagin," it looks as insignificant as a peppermint lozenge in a cheese factory.—*Brookville Democrat*.

A Chicago firm has purchased a large drove of steers which are to be sent by steamship to the pastures of North Germany for fattening and sale.—*Ex*. Would they go as steerage passengers?—*St. John Torch*. Of course not, for though steerage passengers may be poor and lean they are not contemptible enough to carry tails about how many horns the captain takes on a trip.—*N. Y. News*.

The Elmira Cemetery Company has paid a dividend.—*Exchange*. We should rather call it a bone-us.—*N. Y. News*. The profits were divided probably.—*St. John Torch*. We rather think they were souled from the body.—*Gowanda Enterprise*. Now, who would have thought that Enterprise would Go-wander-ing off in this fashion?—*N. Y. News*.

There is no truth in the statement that the English are buying horses in the West. It was invented by asses.—*Boston Traveller*.

Are you not bi-ased in your opinion?