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Observations.

BY MARC MARIUS.

My "pious and reverend" friend E. F. Sheppard reminds me very much of the old woman in the fable who upon seeing her wrinkles represented in a looking glass flew into a passion and broke the mirror into a thousand fragments. The only satisfaction she had out of it was that when she surveyed the wreck she saw her own deformity multiplied a thousand-fold. Mr. Sheppard looking at the supposed calamity which he and his friends helped to bring upon the city, flies into a rage and rips up everybody. In striking at Mayor Clarke he forgets that he also strikes at the thousand friends that helped Mr. Sheppard to elect Mr. Clarke, in days gone by, and in reality he is simply striking himself.

It is very amusing to see Mr. Sheppard posing as a king maker, mayor-maker, preacher or whatever you like to call him. Because he has happened to be on the winning side for mayor several times, he thinks that no one but his nominee can succeed. If he sticks to Mr. Osler long enough, he will find out his mistake. The moralizing twaddle in the style of a country parson's sermon about things human and divine that he turns out weekly under the caption of "Don" is enough to make angels weep. Mr. Sheppard's sermons are about on a par with the rot he published in a holiday number some time ago and called poetry. His poetry will live as a unique example of Canadian verse devoid of the first essentials of poetry, measure, thought or rhyme.

A correspondent writing to me wants to know why I have been hitting the labor men of the city so hard. Well, I have not been hitting the labor men. I have only been trying to give the professional labor men, what all the newspapers are afraid to give them, their just deserts. According to the Greeks the gods placed labor before virtue. All great civilized nations, and all great men, have borne testimony to the power of labor. There is no man whom I admire more than the worker, but for the man who takes advantage of his position as a spokesman of labor to further his own selfish and sordid ends, I have the greatest contempt. They bring ruin upon the very cause which they advocate.

Alf. Jury is a specimen of the professional labor advocate. His position has been similar to that of John Armstrong. Jury is the fogleman of the Grits in the labor camp and Armstrong of the Tories. Both have been paid for their party services with commissionerships and government salaries and the honest labor men are about sick of such touters.

There are few citizens who will agree with Mr. Smith and others in their efforts to balk Dr. Allen in fixing up the old smallpox hospital as a temporary hospital for diphtheria. This disease has been spreading in the city with great rapidity and it is of the utmost importance that the patients should not only be isolated, but properly nursed and treated.

The Ratepayers' Association is about the funniest fake that has struck this city, outside of the Christian Scientists, for some time. The ratepayers who attend the meetings of the association do not take the matter seriously, and are laughing at the fool institution. It might well be called the paradise of fools. Just think of the Association appointing a committee to select aldermen, in the different Wards, and desiring to put all the executive powers of this city into the hands of three commissioners. Tammany's wildest schemes never equalled this.

I am of the opinion there is a huge job at the bottom of the new rifle range scheme. It is questionable if the new range will be any safer than the present one to those on boats out on the lake, and then there is the increased cost to every rifleman, not to speak of the cost to the city. All the volunteers will vote against the by-law, and I hardly think the ratepayers feel like assuming any additional burdens. The present rifle range could be rendered perfectly safe by expending a couple of thousand dollars on the butts. By lengthening and by raising the butts about twenty feet higher all danger could be averted. It would not cost near as much to do this as to purchase a new range.

But then there is the Industrial Exhibition Association, it wants a race track, and it would like the citizens to pay for it. This is at the bottom of the rifle range agitation. Where do the thousands gobbled by this association every year, go, anyway. There must be a rat-hole some place.

Quite a number of names have already been mentioned in connection with aldermanic honors. There is one thing, however, I would like to see and that is more business men in the field. I take the position that a good business man is worth a half dozen real estate dealers in the Council.

A great many people are disposed to lay all the ills the city is suffering from at the door of the local improvement system. For my part I cannot see any reason for this. By means of this system streets have been opened up and improvements made of vast benefit to the city and citizens. The city has become a huge loaning corporation, pledging its credit for the benefit of the property holder. The money is a charge against the land, not in the

sense of a general tax for city maintenance, but similar to a mortgage for building improvements on the property. The only difference is that in one case the city is the lender, and in the other it is a loan company.

Another thing that must not be lost sight of is that the local improvement system has virtually done away with what is known as "ward grabbing." If streets were paved out of the general fund the alderman with the biggest pull at the City Hall would get the biggest slice for his ward.

The local improvement by-law is not faultless, however, because it does not take into consideration the value of the land. For instance, we will say that Yonge Street has to be paved. The work is done under the local improvement system, and the man who owns property out at North Toronto pays as much per foot as property at the corner of King and Yonge streets. Of course, it may be argued that it costs just as much to build the roadway at one place as at another. Well, perhaps it does, still the benefit derived in one place is greater than in another.

Another matter that requires reform is the present system of putting down water mains and paying the cost out of the general fund derived from the water rate. Outside of the fact that Mr. Hamilton, superintendent of the Water Works, the man who is all the time tearing up mains and replacing them with others, and also putting mains out to York County, is interested personally in the foundry that supplies these mains, there is still something to be said. I believe the only right way to put down mains is to charge the cost of putting them down in the local improvement plan and charge the water rate on the general assessment. Under the present system the holder of vacant land has the advantage.

For some time the *Globe* has been publishing in its Saturday issue several columns of rubbish, which were first called "Observations," then "All Sorts and Sizes," and then, I think, "Sixes and Sevens." One of the *Globe* staff told me that this was intended as a kind of rival to "The Flaneur" page of *The Mail*, just as "Madge Merton's Meandering" is a spurious imitation of Kit's smartly written "Woman's Kingdom." It is sad to have to say it, but the Observations on the Sixes and Sevens of All Sorts and Sizes will thrill an enraptured public no more.

The talented Canadian authoress, "Marie Stuart," will appear in Public in Toronto next Friday evening as a dramatic reader; the fair debutante has been coached by Professor Clarke.