

THROUGH A MONOCLE

CAN a fat man lead the "strenuous life"? It looks as if we were going to see one make something of a trial of it in Washington; for, although President Taft won his election mostly through a general belief that, being a fat man, he would take a rest and give the country one, still he does not entirely like the idea that people will forget that there is a president now that Teddy has gone. He does not want to be the "chaser" in the Presidential vaudeville, and disperse the audience collected by the fine Rough Riding act we have just been getting. So he is likely to cut a few cart wheels, particularly on the tariff side of the yard. But can a fat man—that is the question. Have we ever had a "strenuous" fat man in Canada? Sir John Macdonald and Sir Wilfrid Laurier have both been remarkable for their slim and upright figures. Sir Wilfrid is not as slim as he used to be when he stood at the head of a lean opposition; but he has never borne the reproach and burden of "fat".

* * *

MR. BORDEN and Mr. Fielding are comfortable, but as far as possible from fat. Mr. Foster could probably have escaped through the hole that they say Bill Miner could not have used. George Graham is spare; and Rodolphe Lemieux would indignantly—perhaps sensitively—deny the soft impeachment. Mr. Monk, Dr. Sproule, Dr. Pugsley, Mr. Oliver, are all free from too much avoirdupois. There was once a fat man in the Commons, Alonzo Wright, the King of the Gatineau; but he was known chiefly as a prince of good fellows who entertained the members royally at his home and made one humorous speech during a session. Still the Commons would rather have spared many sparer men than its one Alonzo; and they tell of a special journey that Sir John Macdonald once made up to his home to induce him to run on one occasion when the typical "mine host" thought of retiring. It is not thought that he quite "ran"; but he "stood" and was elected. He could win an election "standing" more surely than most folk can by running themselves out of breath. But his greatest flatterer never called Alonzo "strenuous."

* * *

BUT what are you going to do with Sir William Van Horne? He is a human dynamo; and yet he would scarcely pass as a sylph. If he does not lead the strenuous life, he certainly gets strenuous results. Sir William has already done enough for the lifetimes of two or three men. He made a great railway in Canada; and he is making another in Cuba. Incidentally, he is an art connoisseur, having rifled Holland and the picture shops of Europe; and, in addition, he is one of the best living authorities on Japanese art. He has lived a full, round life—exactly like his portraits. He has climbed so far up the hill of fortune that one suspects he must have caught the elevator. But he is not built exactly like Tom Longboat. If he were President of the United States, he would probably hustle that Republic along until even it felt a trifle breathless; but he would not ride fifty miles a day just to show army officers that it could be done, nor would he cripple unsuspecting diplomats by taking them cross-country walks which necessitate a subsequent week in the hospital.

* * *

AND do you know, George Ham is getting a little—well, just a little; and yet George is so active that he has to sit down and wait for the "rolling stone" to catch up to him every little while.

Moreover, there was Senator Ogilvie. No grass grew under his feet—that is, no grass of good judgment. He could not be kept quiet even by the soporific atmosphere of the Senate. It is obvious that the heavy weights are not always to be regarded as good natured, stationary and over-oiled low-power engines—not in this climate at all events. They are sometimes on wheels and can cover territory with the speed and ten times the force of the fine-trained foot-runners who never carry an extra ounce. Still, as a general rule, the men of girth are men of moderation, of good humour and of a fine toleration of the things that are. The world seems a better world to the well-padded person than to the "lean and hungry" Cassius who is eaten with envy and driven forward by ambition.

* * *

DID you ever notice that a fat man can get favours where a spare man asks in vain? There is something compelling about the good nature of a fat man which leads others to strive to keep that good nature unmarred. If I were a commercial house—if you will pardon the preposterous supposition—I would employ fat commercial travellers. They may not get to as many possible customers in a day as the lithe and wiry variety; but they will sell more goods to the customers they do see. People like to fatten up their order sheets. A smile on a fat face invariably looks genial; while one on a lean face is hard put to it not to look artificial. Then there is instinctive consideration for a fat man. We do not mind putting a light and active man to trouble; but we will take pains to spare a fat man any unnecessary exertion. It looks so much harder for him than it does for us. As a lazy man myself, I think a little embonpoint would be a profitable investment. The new gospel should read—With all your getting, get fat. You will see that the Americans will take far more from Taft without becoming ruffled than they ever would from Roosevelt. Taft will travel far; but it will be without friction.

N'IMPORTE

OF all the statesmen I have met, I think the late Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone were the pleasantest companions at dinner. Both had the happy knack of seeming vastly interested in one's conversation, whatever the subject, or however frivolous. There was no condescension or "tempering of the wind to the shorn lamb" about it. At the same time, I must own that my feeling of elation for having had, as one considered, a success was speedily destroyed; for the next woman, whoever she might be, who had the privilege of sitting beside either of these great men, would receive exactly the same courteous attention. As for Mr. Gladstone, having once started him on his subject, an intelligent "yes" or "no" was all that was required. But if you ventured a remark (to which he listened in grave silence), he had a disconcerting way of turning sharply round, his piercing eye fixed inquiringly upon you, and his hand to his ear, with the gesture so well known in the House of Commons. His old-world manner was very attractive, and his urbanity outside the House remarkable. On one occasion I had been at the House hearing Randolph make a fiery attack on him, which he answered with equal heat and indignation. The hour was late, and Randolph and I had just time to rush home and dress to dine at Spencer House with Lord and Lady Spencer. The first person I met as I went in was Mr. Gladstone, who at once came up and said: "I hope Lord Randolph is not *too* tired after his magnificent effort." What an object lesson to those foreign politicians who would look upon it as an insult to be asked to meet in the same house!—The Reminiscences of Lady Randolph Churchill.

A PICTURESQUE QUINTETTE OF CATARACTS



The Abitibi here breaks into Five Falls, known as the Iroquois Falls.