

The Passing Show.

BY WILFRID WISGAST.

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players."

Before I again have the pleasure of addressing the readers of this journal the municipal elections will have occurred, and we shall have appointed our civic guardians for the year 1892. The only thing that we cannot be, perhaps, too often reminded of is that we are too careless in a matter of this importance to take the trouble to appoint good men it is no use grumbling afterwards because they have not carried out their duty in a manner we approve.

It is the duty of every one who has a vote to exercise it, and to exercise it conscientiously. The number of abstentions among the voters in this city has for some time past been a feature reflecting no credit on a large number of the citizens. Those who in the main have been thus negligent in their duty have been the very people who, if not from education, at least from their position and responsibilities, should set the example of fulfilling what is a high public trust. The working people usually poll very fully in the municipal elections, but the more well-to-do of the citizens are the most remiss.

As far as the Mayoralty election is concerned the situation is somewhat more defined. Mr. Fleming's chances were exceptionally good, but the support of Mr. Spence, Peter Ryan, and the *Globe* have stamped him so decidedly with the damaged hall-mark of a Grit party candidate that I think his chances have lessened, though he would be a good man in the chair.

Mr. Beatty, I understand, will not go to the poll; Mr. McMillan has obtained somehow the support of the tag-rag and bob-tail of the Clarke *entourage*. McMillan we are told is "honest;" well, it is to be hoped so; only this is a curious recommendation, and from the way it is insisted on in this connection, one would infer that an honest man was a scarce article in Toronto.

But Mr. McMillan is undoubtedly a crank. We want no more of this kind of thing; we have suffered enough from the fooleries of the fanatic Howland, to make us fight very shy of the goody-goody nincompoops and the cold-water crowd. We do not want "honest John," and I ask all my readers to do their very possible best to snow him under.

The last four years I have cast my ballot for Mayor Clark. Had he come out this time I should have voted against him, because I do not want to see the office monopolised by any one man, and for no other reason. Mr. Clarke has made, all things considered, a fairly good Mayor; he has done about the best that his surroundings would permit.

Next Monday I intend to vote for Mr. Osler, who I expect to win the contest by a majority of

at least one thousand, and not improbably double that number, the reasons why he is being objected to in many quarters, being among some of the principle reasons why I shall do so.

Mr. Osler is a man of business and a man of the world, and exactly the kind of man we want in the Mayor's chair. He is not a teetotal "lecturer," nor an itinerant preacher, nor a supporter of the "morality" department; neither is he, as far as I can learn, on the verge of bankruptcy, and chasing after the Mayor's salary to keep him afloat for awhile. Mr. Osler's business success is a strong argument in his favor, as the fact of a man being able to manage his own affairs well is fair presumptive evidence that he can conduct the municipal business of the city.

But the most important matter on which we shall be called on to vote next Monday is the Sunday car question. This concerns the working people of the city, and their wives and children too, much more than who we shall have for Mayor and Aldermen for the next quarter of a century. This is a contest between the parsons and the people, between poverty and privilege, and it will be the fault of the people if they do not win.

Scarcely any of the parsons who are prominent in opposing the popular demand but admit that they habitually ride to their churches on a Sunday. Of course the most twaddling excuses are put forward to explain why they ride. Mr. Macdonald of whom I expected better things—says he rides to oblige his wife; why did he not say his wife's mother at once, and make it a case of "Oh, it is all on account of my mother-in-law?" Will Mr. Macdonald admit that the wife of a poor man has as much right to a street car as his wife to her private carriage?

But I do not care how the ministers go to church, that is entirely a side issue. The question is one concerning the convenience of the whole people, and especially the poorer people and their families. I refuse to make it either a religious or an unreligious dispute. I, as one of the inhabitants of this city, require to ride on Sundays; I know such to be the desire of a large proportion of the people. We have an undoubted right to do so, and we mean to enforce that right.

When I say "enforce the right," I mean of course by every means that constitutional action will allow. I believe those in favor of Sunday cars are in a considerable majority, and I ask everyone of them to be careful to register their votes correctly. This is a question of personal liberty against priestly bigotry and domination; it is an insult to our intelligence and an encroachment on our freedom, and it is time we swept the antiquated anomaly out of the way.

There will be a tough struggle, and possibly a bitter one; only if it be bitter the fault will be with our clerical opponents. We have raised a square issue and mean to carry it through in a square way. It is a question the people must decide, and as long as it is left to their unbiassed judgment we are content to await the verdict

without getting unduly excited. If the people, consulting their own interests, vote for the proposal well and good; it will go. If the people vote against it, we, who shall then be proved in the minority, must abide the decision. Only let the vote be untrammelled with clerical coercion.

The meeting on Wednesday evening was a splendid success, and one that the advocates of liberty for the poor people on Sundays may well be proud of, however the voting on Monday may go. All the argument is on the side of the demand of the people, and all the subterfuge and false pretence on the part of the parsons and the privileged classes.

One thing is certain, if not settled in the affirmative on Monday this agitation has come to stay. The majority of the citizens have quite made up their minds to take the management of their own affairs into their own hands. Let the clergy run their churches, if they can, *without the assistance of the people*, we quite intend to run cars here on Sunday, in spite of the opposition of all the parsons in Toronto united—and they are not united. But there must be a long pull and a strong pull on Monday; we not only want a majority, but a large one.

It is astonishing how encouraging a little friendly advice is now and again, even to persons in the highest places. When the important news was telegraphed from Europe here that the Countess of Clancarty was going to have a baby, I immediately cabled (as I stated in THE OBSERVER of a few weeks ago) and advised the lady, for reasons that I thought sufficient, to have a boy while she was about it. I did this on the strength of an old acquaintance with her when she was Belle Bilton, the popular music hall singer. The lady has taken the advice of an old friend and admirer so kindly that on Monday of this week she presented the most noble the Earl of Clancarty with a pair of boys at a birth! Belle, I congratulate you on your determination to secure an heir to the estate and trust you are "as well as can be expected."

Miss Julia Kavanagh, Beverley street, Toronto, writes to me in these affectionate terms:—"My dear Willy, I like THE OBSERVER and I like 'The Passing Show,' but is not the following paragraph a little obscure; at least I cannot understand it." Well, here is the sentence to which my fair correspondent objects:—"When the little stranger comes, if he takes after his mother it will sing, and sing something racy too. How funny it would sound if the precocious child should some day come out with the rather rude but popular ditty of *la petite blanchisseuse Parisienne*, on the night before her marriage as she apostrophies her lonely bed in the well known words, "*Oh mon lit, mon lit, mon pauvre lit*," and at the same time interrogates her mother in the refrain that may be roughly rendered into English thus:—

I ask you but one question, my mother—
Your confusion I'll help you to smother—
My kind-hearted mother, my loving mamma,
Tell me, pray tell me—who was my papa!"

I beg of Julia not to ask me to be more explicit. "*La petite blanchisseuse Parisienne*," means a little Paris laundress; those obliging young ladies kindly bring home the clean shirts and collars to the lodgings of single young men; they are always young and usually pretty. The second French phrase is a line of a well known and popular song in France; and the refrain, I think, speaks for itself. Oh, Julia! Your simplicity is excessive, and my heart is exceeding sorrowful for you.