

THROUGH A MONOCLE

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

EVERY little while some "City Beautiful" expert comes along and tells us what is wrong with our cities. It is mostly a surprise to us to learn that there is anything wrong with them. We have just nicely got into the habit of showing strangers about them with a series of "What do you think of that?" and "That's pretty classy, eh?" when Mr. Expert arrives and proceeds to talk as if we were very conscious, civilly, of ingrowing ugliness and had sent him a "hurry up" call to come and tell us how to soothe the pain. However, there is no use disputing that he usually does point out some minor defects which certainly could be helped a bit by his prescription; but where he "falls down" is in failing to appreciate how super-excellent the whole effect is—how undoubtedly we have put together with careless ease the very finest city on top of the earth. We have been accustomed to "visiting conventions" which begin to gush over our wondrous achievement in artistic civic decoration whenever we tap them for an opinion. Wake a "visiting delegate" up at midnight, and he at once turns on the flow of flattery. He will, however, do the same for every city which provides automobiles to carry the convention about town. But the result is that we are unprepared for criticism which does not start from the fundamental fact that we have got the "effete old world," and the envious new, "faded" for city-building, even if a hypercritical person might dream of a few doubtful improvements.

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IT all reminds me of the way people were accustomed to load me up, when young and innocent, with the belief that Canadian cheese was the best in the world. They said so, and they proved it by sending a monster cheese to Chicago; and I believed it firmly. Then I began to learn something about cheese and found out that the Canadian variety was about the worst. Yes; I expect that a lot of people will begin to suffer from contortions when they read that statement; but it is nevertheless true. American cheese may be even worse—probably is—but then I have never endangered my life by trying to eat any. But to compare Canadian cheese of the common or garden sort with the round Dutch cheeses, the Swiss goats' milk cheese, the strong cheeses of France and Germany, or even the rich soft cheeses of the English counties, is to trifle with the convictions of gullible Young Canada. However, we were talking of city building. Now the fact is that most cities on this Continent are built in the ugliest possible way. If we had set out deliberately to make a naturally beautiful thing offensive to every artistic sense, we could not have done better than by adopting the mechanical block system which is largely in favor with us.

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WE are worshippers of the utilitarian. With us, usefulness is the great *desideratum*. Beauty is something which we are always a little shamefaced about taking much trouble to get; and there is even a lingering Puritanical idea that the search for it may be mildly immoral. The next time you go down to New York, it will be worth your while to take a ferry boat across the Hudson just for the purpose of looking back to see what the New Yorkers have made of their costly city. It looks for all the world like an odd assortment of gigantic packing cases with regular rows of wood-pecker holes drilled in them. Now a "packing-case" makes a good office building. There are no waste corners, and the hall spaces can be arranged with an eye to uniformity and utility. But it makes an exceedingly ugly city building; and all the fussy little machine-made decorations they can hang over the doors and windows do not redeem it. In Canada, we go in for these packing-case buildings with almost equal ardor, though occasionally our banks do pay tribute to the god of beauty.

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OCCASIONALLY some one with a soul does find himself by accident in a position of authority. Whoever was to blame for the several Crescents in Toronto must have known that curves are more beautiful than straight lines; and the laying out of Rosedale must forever stand to the credit to those who did it. Nature put some compulsion on them, of course. I fear that, if she had not, we might have had another Parkdale or

Westmount. But, in any case, the result is altogether delightful. Ottawa, however, is about the only city in Canada which has gone in deliberately to make itself "a joy forever." I well remember my feeling of delighted surprise when—after having spent my life thus far amidst the perfect work of utilitarianism—I first saw the Lovers' Walk winding around the side of Parliament Hill. Here was something built at considerable trouble and expense wholly for pleasure. It was lovely, and it was not useful. It was not the shortest road to anything. Yet it was thoroughly lovely hung amidst its shrubbery between the sky and the river.

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QUEBEC could not escape being a picturesque and pleasing city. Nature and the great chisel of history made of it one of the most striking bits of romance-in-stone in the world. More and more is it coming into its own as the choicest shrine for the pilgrims of beauty on this Continent; and these pilgrims get something of a foretaste of its delights if they tarry for a day or two in Montreal, and choose with discrimination what there is to see. Montreal is blessed, too, with a splendid situation. Its river front and its natural terraces rising up to the Mountain, have given its builders an opportunity seldom equalled; and some of them—far too few of them—have taken advantage of it. Utility, however, and the haphazard methods of this Continent have done their level best to spoil it all. Toronto—save for a gem or two, such as the western wing of University College, and the setting of Osgoode Hall—is content with achieving the pastoral beauty of a small town. It prides itself on being a "city of homes," which chiefly means a city of garden spaces; but it has turned its chief architectural features over to the booster and the utilitarian. The City Hall is one big, bullying, brag that Toronto is rich and doesn't care a "dash" for expense; and the Legislative Buildings are squat, massive and "wealthy." What we need are a few architects with courage to build for beauty, and a public taste which is as true as the taste shown by most of our young ladies in dressing for a summer afternoon. They choose white and simplicity and fitting coolness, and never think of trying to show how many clothes they can afford.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

The Last of the Patres.

SIR CHARLES TUPPER was in the thick of the Coronation pageantry in London. The veteran Canadian was among the most vigorous and enthusiastic of those who cheered King George to the crowning. The Empire en fete—in what a

host of memories and speculations the doughty Tory baronet must have indulged the last few days. Sir Charles shook hands with dozens of faithful henchmen from overseas, who helped him fight his battles in the Dominion in other days; he read in the *London Times* of the seventeen Premiers gathered in Imperial discussion in Downing Street; he viewed the crowning of another King—who is as much King of Canada as he is of England. Indeed, in one month in London, Sir Charles saw the modern machinery of the great British Empire exposed; no doubt as he watched the smooth-running of the parts, this great Canadian statesman felt the pride of a workman, conscious of the efficacy of his contribution to the whole.

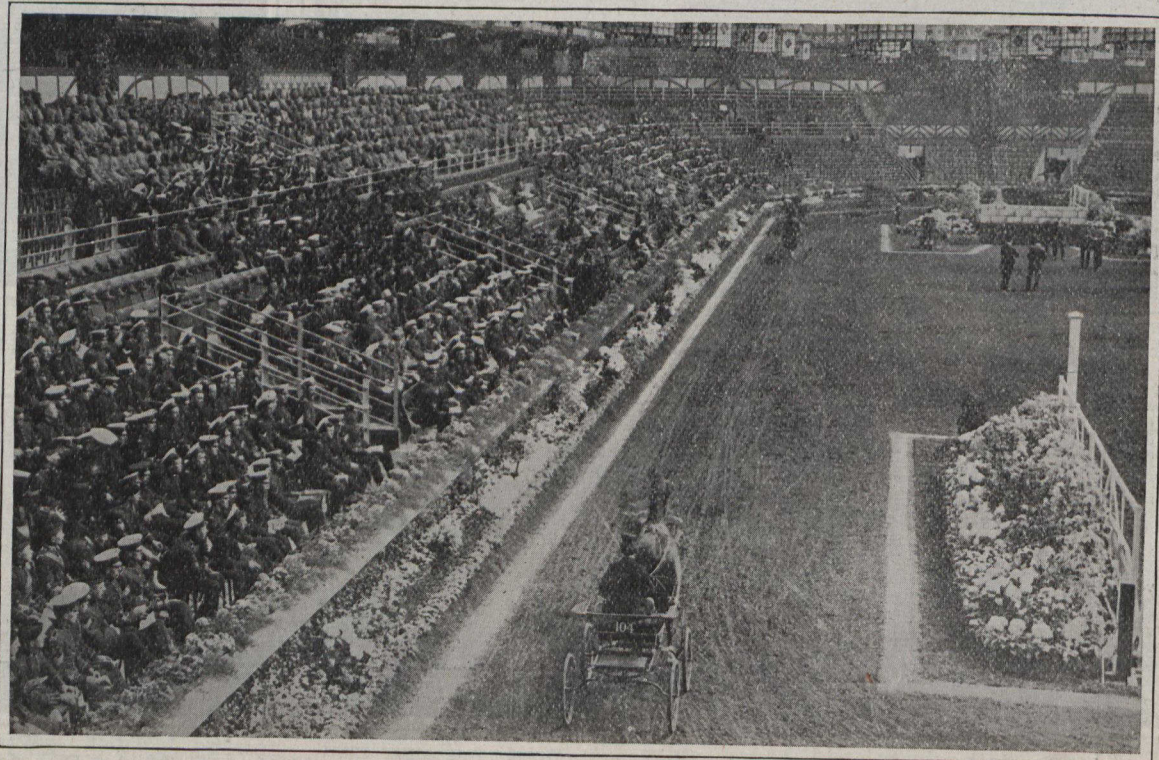
One incident occurred during Coronation week in which Sir Charles was the central figure. That was the unveiling of the memorial in memory of Canadian Confederation at the Westminster Hotel, in the very heart of London. It was in a sense one of the most dramatic episodes of Coronation week. Here in this very room, almost half a century ago, gathered a group of men who smoothed away the final obstacles, which threatened the federation of the Canadian Provinces into the Dominion, which is the wonder of the twentieth century.

The Fathers of Confederation to-day are but a cherished memory. The old picture of them gathered about a table, the mural pride of many a Canadian farm house—well the modern Canadian school-boy needs a key to pick them out. Sir Charles Tupper is there. He alone of the Fathers remains to us. No doubt he has changed since the picture was taken—but in appearance only. Sir Charles Tupper is now an old man. In years he is ninety. But in spirit he is the same old Dr. Tupper of Nova Scotia. Those who were so fortunate to hear him at the Westminster Palace the other day will never forget the scene. Around him were seated the leading men of the Empire. Sir Charles arose to speak. The flash of the warrior was there in his eye, the same challenge of the "Blue-nose" was in his voice, as in vehement, declamatory sentences he declared his faith in the future of the Canada he had helped so much to build.

Sir Charles Tupper is the aristocrat of Canadians. He is the last of the Patres. To his work as a constitution builder, so fittingly commemorated at the Westminster Palace, let Sir Wilfrid Laurier's words bear tribute:

"During the 44 years since Canadian Confederation, there has been only one amendment of an important character, and that came without friction and to the satisfaction of everybody. I say to Sir Charles Tupper, in your name and mine, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'"

Of course eminent Canadians of both political parties were in the audience which witnessed the unveiling of the tablet. But these men forgot for the moment that they were Liberals or Conservatives; they remembered only that they were Canadians; that they had assembled to honour the Canadian Constitution and its founders. Sir Wilfrid eulogized his old political foe.



Indians and Colonial Troops Watching the International Horse Show at the Olympia in London.

Photo by "Sport and General."