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OBSERVATIONS.

Mayor Clarke is a thoroughbred politician after the American school. He operates through organizations. An adept at finesse, he is quite capable of enlisting on his own behalf the aid of rival influences. Popular as an Orangeman who is not ashamed to walk with the rank and file on great occasions, tramping mile after mile under a blazing hot sun along streets packed with agitators of conflicting creeds, he is equally popular with the Catholics, whose good opinion he has captured by setting his foot—both feet in fact—firmly down upon Jumbo Campbell's fanaticism too blatantly and coarsely expounded in public places. He is a right royal courtier to King Demagogues. Therein lies his strength.

He also has other personal qualities which serve him well. Aggressive and firm, he fights determinedly, and never budges from a position he once seizes upon to secure a stronger one. He is not thin-skinned, to use an old phrase. Warrior like, he can stand a lot of abuse without exhibiting any annoyance, although he has been observed to glare savagely at his opponents when they pressed him harshly or rudely—for aldermen are not all gifted with refinement—on the floor of the Council Chamber. He has a man-of-destiny manner too, not Napoleonic never. But who wants a Napoleon in the civic chair? Edward "is all right"—a most effective man for political purposes.

Is he, however, of the sort qualified to lead an administration of the nature of Toronto's municipal government? This is a question difficult to answer. Mayors are not autocrats these days. They have not even the divinity which protects kings. Functionally, they possess certain powers, the exercise of which cannot possibly be arbitrary. In this city the mayor has no absolute authority; if he had, an incumbent of the character of the present one might, for popularity's sake, prove able in reform. As it is, he has little more executive power than the chairman of a committee. In the capacity of first officer he may shine brilliantly on certain occasions; in the capacity of a practical chief administrator he is simply the servant and actuary of the Council.

As long as the existing system of municipal government obtains so long will there be bidders of the Clarke stamp for an office that confers upon its occupant much honor, notoriety and many special favors, to say nothing of the salary which, however, seems to be a little too large for a city of Toronto's size and growing capacities. Such men are fruits of the hour, and they must resort to tact and self-popularizing methods in order to grasp the mayoral sceptre. What inducement is there for them to appeal for the suffrages of the ratepayers on the merit of executive ability? Little or none. It is questionable whether the

city fathers could be brought to a sense of their duty in the direction of civic reform if an angel of light and perspicacity were made mayor tomorrow.

The most formidable obstacle would be civic reformers have to encounter in their effort to obtain for the city a firmer grip upon and more salutary influence over the municipal government is the difficulty of getting first-class men to run for office. If such would step forward and volunteer their services with the zealous determination of effecting reform, there might be room for hope. Some of the aldermen now are fighting the good fight. These should be re-elected next January with a supplementary force of others solemnly pledged to do away with the shameful mismanagement of civic affairs. Now is the time to approach the class referred to. A month hence it will be too late. And six months hence the citizens will be mad enough to kick themselves for not having followed timely advice.

Unfortunately, while in one sense it is a covetable honor to be an alderman, the honor has been shorn of its attractiveness by the disrepute into which aldermanic misrule has brought the City Hall. Men who pride themselves upon their standing in the community, who are conscious of being publicly and privately esteemed for their probity and honorable conduct in all their relations with their fellow-men, naturally shrink from associations that are not unadulterated with reprehensible qualities. Notwithstanding this fact, which redounds to their credit, they should be willing, when asked, to overcome their sensitiveness and lend a helping hand toward making Toronto famous for the excellence and integrity of her municipal government.

The ward-heeler should be doomed to extinction. A creature of the polls, his function is to breed political corruption and foster its attendant result of perpetuating civic misrule. Where and why was he evolved? And how is it citizens who clamor for an honest dispensation do not perceive that those interests whose protection they are the most anxious about can never be properly protected while the ward-heeler is permitted to pursue his unholy calling. He serves the devil in broad daylight or after dark, as best suits his purpose. He has his own peculiar way of bribing for and controlling votes, which is highly appreciated by his master, the alderman-elect, who, depend upon it, has no virtuous designs on the City Hall or he would not employ the fellow.

The voters are aware of this, yet tolerate the ward-heeler's practices, which should involve him in disgrace and social ostracism. Gentlemen, if you desire municipal reform, if you are intelligent enough to detect the difference between a good and a bad alderman-elect, if you are not ward-heeler-

ishly inclined yourselves, if you appreciate the value of exercising the franchise as independent think-and-decide-for-yourself men, you will say adieu to this pestiferous election grasshopper, the ward-heeler. Tell him to go.

Some people are exceedingly hoggish. Proof of this was furnished the other day by two hucksters on Richmond street west. They had just concluded a bargain with a Jew, which left the latter a balance of five cents due to him. This trivial sum the hucksters refused to pay. Then a comedy commenced which Hoyt might dramatize with farcical bearings. The Israelite called in fraternal assistance and both promptly seized the bridal of the huckster's horse. Hebrew curses volleyed against Whitechapel oaths, while Jew and Gentile struck and kicked, each other with dreadful emphasis. The battle lasted twenty minutes. Lemons and potatoes were the weapons finally adopted by the hucksters, who left the field triumphant, carrying with them a little boy whose clothing showed he had been thrown into a mud-poll. All for five cents.

Individualism is fast becoming the slave of wealth. Capital and social influence are all but synonyms. Croesus is hoisted to supreme heights in the realms of politics, society, and even of religion, art and literature. Gold, independent of its functions relative to labor, has now such a tremendous "pull" on the world that it can purchase for its possessor a reputation foreign to his abilities, training and deserts. The rich charlatan buys another man's learning and advertises it as his own. All this is wrong, very wrong, and its pernicious effects may be summed up in a few words. It means the death blow to originality and genius. Bad as things were in Burns' day they are a thousand-fold worse now. Alas! for the future of individualism. A man cannot call his soul his own now-a-days, unless he be a millionaire more or less.

That portion of the Free Library room on Church street set apart for ladies should undoubtedly be provided with the daily newspapers. It is all very fine and courteous for the librarian to point to the gentlemen's stand when a woman or girl is found by him reading, contrary to rules, her own paper, but the gentler sex cannot be expected to thrust themselves among strange men so publicly. I know one young lady who did so. Her experience was so discomfiting she has never repeated the attempt. The stands she wanted were monopolized by gentlemen (!) who, instead of gallantly retiring in her favor, frowned and stolidly read on. It is the citizen's money which sustains the institution, and the citizens should see that the ladies' section of the reading room is supplied with a liberal assortment of newspapers and periodicals.

"How much a day are the Kiely-
Everett people losing through the

transfer bungling?" is a question one can hear almost daily on any street car. There is no doubt whatever that the Toronto dead-heads are having fine fun now-a-days at the company's expense, and there seems to be no way out of the difficulty, so far as the syndicate is concerned, unless their contract with the city is altered, which, of course, it is not likely to be. Business men are asking how it happens that the Kielys, despite their long experience, were caught napping? Now they will have to hire a genius to extricate them from a money-losing dilemma.

It is stated, on authority which may not be undeniable, that certain aldermen have been approached on the matter by not disinterested parties, with a view to modifying the terms of the contract. It is also whispered that the company would eagerly give eight tickets for a quarter all day long, without transfers, if the change could be effected. But municipal consent to such an arrangement is out of the question, just now at any rate. Besides, all the aldermen are not, for reasons painful to the minority, pleased over the city's bargain with the Kiely-
Everetts. If the truth were told, perhaps there was, after all, boodlery to no inconsiderable extent involved in the transaction, boodlery that did not pan out in the right direction, some aldermen might confess.

Speaking of street cars, it is amusing to watch the conduct of people who happen to enter a car in which a stove has been fixed. Nine out of every ten stare at the thing with an indescribable look of curiosity, not always unmixed with awe. Lady passengers invariably plank themselves on a seat adjoining it, if one is vacant, place their hands where they imagine warmth should be found, and then, finding none, examine the article with an air of confusion and contempt. After which they gaze round at their fellow passengers, evidently anxious to satisfy themselves that they have not been fooled in the sight of others. Only the other evening a stalwart policeman asked the conductor where the stove went to. "Through the chimney, when it is fixed" was the reply. Of course, the stove was not "going," and Mr. Policeman looked as though he would have liked to arrest himself on the spot.

Now that the storm of public indignation which burst over the head of the late Charles Stewart Parnell has abated, thinking people are beginning to ask why it was invoked. Was the sin he committed so uncommon and abominable that it was unpardonable? Certainly! This is a virtuous age—most virtuous, you know. Parnells are so scarce—Potiphars' wives so few. Nevertheless, I fancy that when the last howl of disapprobation over poor Parnell's folly has left nothing but its echo to remind us of it, friends and foes alike will wend their way to his tomb, acknowledging that a genius