



## The Cartwright "Reminiscences."

"And Sir Richard said again: 'We be all good English men.

Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil,

For I never turned my back upon Don or devil yet.' Sir Richard spoke and he laughed. . . ."

IN these lily-fingered days—in these days of lady-like politeness and serpentine dissimulation—in these days of "brave women and fair men"—in these days when we prefer the perfumed lie to the rough-edged truth—we have little love for such men as Sir Richard. They have gone out of fashion with the bold, barbaric, brave old days when there was still something to distinguish a man from a woman, save his clothes. But, at times, a spirit still seems to cling to a name. Sir Richard has a stout sound with us yet—though we may be at a loss to know whether we are thinking of the Richards of the clanging past, or of that saturnine, grim, sarcastic, fierce-mustachioed old figure that bore the name of Sir Richard Cartwright.

"OLD Sir Richard, caught at last." He lies now under the pines of Cataragui—not far from his doughtiest antagonist, Sir John Macdonald. We put him away with a little sense of relief that at last our shams and our pharisaism and our smooth conventions were a good bit safer than they were when he was alive and liable at any moment to unsheath the rapier of his scorn or the broadsword of his indignation and fall upon our little puppet show with all his Berseker wrath. We put him away—we buried him deep, deep as the law allows—we called down the blessings of heaven on him and hoped they would keep him quiet. But it seems that he left behind him a couple of volumes of memoirs, and—just as you would expect from such a man—they contain his real opinions. Alas! and alack! Memoirs, written by the right people, are a very edifying variety of literature. No one objects to memoirs as memoirs. But then, of course, it must be perfectly understood that they will contain no more of the news than is quite fit to print—they must be prepared with a wholly proper sense of what the people, spoken of in them, would like to see said about themselves.

MEMOIRS—to be entirely popular with the memoir-ed and their friends—ought to take as their model the ordinary newspaper obituary. But old Sir Richard never thought of that. He wrote down in his memoirs the exact truth as to his opinions regarding the people with whom he had been associated in public life. Just why anybody would have expected that they would be flattering opinions—that is, anybody who knew Sir Richard—I cannot imagine. He never concealed his opinions when he was alive—except for the purpose of making his opinions of some one else bite in more deeply. What I mean to say is that he did conceal from the public his opinion of Edward Blake; but I do not imagine that he did this to spare the Blakes half so much as to prevent his own isolation from his own party, and so the weakening of the effect of his opinions of certain other people. But now that his race is run, he apparently sees no further reason for dissimulation and suppression. And I make no doubt that the truth tasted good on his tongue as he growled it out to the imaginary interviewer.

"TRUTH"? By "truth" I mean the truth as his own opinions—not the truth about Blake or any of the other figures he limned. For example, I, personally, totally disagree with his opinion of Blake. I do not think that Blake was guilty of "treachery" to his party when he left them on the Unrestricted Reciprocity issue and wrote a letter to his late constituency about it. It seemed to me then—it seems to me now—that he was standing sturdily by his sincere convictions in the case. But I have no doubt that it looked like treachery to Sir Richard, who was in the thick of the fight, and who always had a fundamental faith in all proposals for the expansion of trade. He could not see how Blake could be a "free trader," and yet distrust reciprocity. So he put his action down to other motives. To my mind, Sir Richard's judgment was

fatally, cruelly wrong. A Servian might be a "free trader" and yet not want "Reciprocity" with Austria. But, even if Sir Richard was wrong, that was his opinion; and it is something to have his real opinions in his memoirs.

THIS is not a "review" of the book. I have had no time as yet to go over it with the care that that would require. I expect to find plenty of things in it which will make me—and I, I may say, have lived through many of the incidents dealt with—fighting mad. I decidedly do not like his treatment of Blake to begin with. Blake was one of my idols. He was one of the very finest products of Canada, take him how you like. Personally, I think that the Liberal party made a great mistake when they permitted Mackenzie to get the Premiership in 1873—they should have seated Blake in the Prime Minister's chair by force, if necessary.

## Corridor Comment

Ottawa, December 2nd.

HE was a typical country postmaster, a veteran who joyed to tell you that he owed his appointment to "John A." He combined his official duties with those of conducting a general store, where everyone within a radius of five miles or so "got credit," and where, six evenings in every week, the male citizenhood of the village gathered, with corn-cob pipes, to discuss the doings of the community and determine affairs of state. The opening of Parliament was always an annual theme for much illuminating interchange. The coterie was essentially democratic, and consequently liked to linger long over the freely-adjectived descriptions perennially perpetrated by enterprising press correspondents.

Others might dwell on the splendour of garish, gold-covered Windsor uniforms, the gorgeously attired staff of the Governor-General, the brilliant glitter of immaculate militia, or the lure of fair femininity in bewildering daintiness of costume. But, bye-and-bye, the old postmaster would remove his pipe and proceed—as he had done for years—to direct the current of conversation around that most picturesque and interesting of personalities, who always loomed large in the accounts of the opening of Parliament, the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod.

There was something fascinatingly mediaeval and mysterious about the story of this functionary. They spoke of him with awe; they regarded him as a wonderful reincarnation of the strange species of tutelary genii most of them had read about in the Arabian Nights. They dwelt upon his raiment and his procedure. He was attired—so the papers said—in a Fauntleroy suit of rich, black velvet, with beribboned bows on his breeches and silver buckles on his shoes. An elaborate lace *jabot*—at least that was what the missus called it—adorned his bosom, and in his white-gloved hands he carried the magic Black Rod from which he derived his name. His visit to the Commons was heralded by the time-honoured three knocks. He made his entrance with three magnificent bows, triumphs of mathematical calculation and Delsarte accomplishment; and his exit with three more, all in sequence and equally perfect and precise. "Yes," put in the bearded Sandy, a canny and characteristically material Scot, as he borrowed a bit more tobacco, "he makes six bows a year and gets \$3,500 for it, which, at \$583 a bow, isn't bad, is it?"

One day the old postmaster visited the city to make his autumn purchase of merchandise. He was standing in the railway office, discussing freight rates, when he was accosted by a commercial traveller who had more than once visited the country store and been permitted to join in the nightly discussions. He led the veteran over to a large illustration of camp life which adorned the wall. It showed three men disembarking from a canoe. He pointed to one of them, a rough-looking individual with an uncouth slouch hat, a coarse camping outfit, big heavy boots and a browned, unshaven countenance. "That," said he, "is the Gentleman Usher

Blake is the one man who could have dominated the country along what were then Liberal lines. His subsequent attitude toward the tariff showed that he might have forestalled the Protectionist campaign of 1877-8, and prevented the "debacle" of that 17th of September when Mackenzie's cohorts melted away like snow. But it is not necessary that I should agree with the things which Sir Richard says to appreciate his courage and honesty in saying them. His outspokenness was always his chief characteristic; and, though it did not lead people to love him, it did lead them to admire—and envy—him.

I HOPE that we get more such memoirs. I hope that others of our public men will sit down before they die and tell us exactly how their contemporaries struck them. It is well worth while securing the view-point of the men among whom they worked. We are so apt to be put off with the conventional portrait of most of our celebrities—the mask which Bernard Shaw says that all men learn to wear in public—that it is revealing and instructive, and in a high degree entertaining, to get glimpses of these intimate pictures of them, coloured, perhaps, by prejudice, distorted at times by the "personal angle," but at all events uncovering the opinion of their Peers.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

of the Black Rod." The old postmaster all but gasped at the sacrilege of the revelation.

But the traveller was right. Captain Ernest John Chambers, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, when he doffs his habiliment of office, is litterateur, soldier and sportsman, and has established his title clear to all. He has of necessity to be an athlete, since how otherwise could he go through the wonderful contortions of those six bows? But he is more. He is a young Englishman, a native of Staffordshire, who came to Canada in his early youth and took up the calling of journalism. He was for two years the editor of the first daily newspaper in the then North-West Territories. And he has been connected with the militia since he was fifteen years old. He was press correspondent during the North-West campaign of 1885, and performed military service voluntarily. He was present at the engagements at Fish Creek and Batoche, and participated in the operations against Big Bear's band of Indians, receiving both medal and clasp for his services. He is, moreover, the author of some twenty-five publications, chiefly military history, books of reference and volumes of biography, and is a regular contributor to various magazines.

But, best of all, Captain Chambers is a rare good fellow. Everybody who meets him joins in this testimony. His unfailing courtesy, kindness and good humour are a great asset, official as well as personal. For the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod holds a position that but one in every ten thousand could hold. The Scot of the country post office was wrong. It isn't those six bows that a grateful country pays him for—not much. It isn't for sitting sphinx-like in the Red Chamber, tirelessly following the tedious debate of the Senate, for, like the unfortunate Speaker, he doesn't even get a chance to sleep or play solitaire. His duties are infinitely more arduous and exacting. He "runs" the social show. And just think for a moment what would happen to Canadian democracy, not to mention the whole British constitution, if, perchance, through some terrible oversight or accident, the wife of a deputy was permitted to take precedence at some of the myriad state functions over the ambitious better half of a Cabinet Minister!

SURELY the public man, like the prophet of old, is without honour in his own country. While Premier Borden was in England this summer, Hon. George H. Perley, Minister without Portfolio, was duly elevated to the position of Acting Prime Minister. In correspondence he used the stationery of the Prime Minister's office, and signed his letters "For the Prime Minister." Towards the end of his incumbency of the high office he received a letter from a prominent easterner addressed to "Mr. G. H. Perley, secretary to the Premier." Equally amusing was the direction of a communication which reached Hon. Dr. J. D. Reid's office from a manufacturer in one of the smaller Ontario cities only the other day. The envelope was carefully inscribed: "Hon. William Paterson, Minister of Customs for Canada, Ottawa, Ont." H. W. A.