

EDITORIAL.

It has often seemed to the Cynic passing strange, that while, with people of small account in the world's esteem, Dame Rumour is always busy, she frequently refuses to dilate on the merits of retiring respectability, which pursues its way, noiselessly, on the road to oblivion, utterly indifferent to her smiles or frowns. The fickle jade has doubtless much to answer for. She is ridiculously partial and one-sided, and goes out of her way far too often in her anxiety to serve her friends. She has, moreover, contracted a habit—certainly highly blameable—of giving people characters on forged certificates, and accepting as true the statements of individuals directly interested in the propagation of falsehood. Lately she has come out in a new rôle. Not many days ago she astonished us all with a statement that Sir George Etienne Cartier, Baronet, G.C.M.G., M.P., M.P.P., Minister of Militia, and representative of French Canadian domination in British America, was about to retire from the representation of Montreal East in the Local Legislature, and that no less an individual than Alderman Ferdinand David, Chairman of the Road and Drill-Shed Committees of the Montreal Corporation, explorer of the Coaticook quarries, and, in expectancy, Mayor of Montreal, was his "probable successor," adding that the latter is "largely interested in real estate" in the East-end of the city.

Now the Cynic, notwithstanding his gallantry and aversion to wrangling with a lady, has a few words to say to Madam Rumour regarding this extraordinary statement. In the first place, DIOGENES does not believe for one moment that Sir George Etienne can be spared from the Quebec Parliament. Everybody knows that he rules that august assembly, even as Ferdinand David rules the East-Enders in that still more august body, the Montreal Corporation. Everybody knows that without Cartier the whole thing would tumble down like a house of cards. Everybody knows that unless he exercises a personal and present influence over that "deliberative assembly," Messrs. Chauveau, Dunkin & Co. are literally nowhere, and that the so-called governmental machine would come to a dead-lock. So Madam must not be surprised, if DIOGENES declines to believe that Sir George has the least idea of relinquishing his sovereignty over the representatives of a million of French Canadians in the Parliament of Quebec—unless the principles enunciated in the Union Act are about to be abandoned.

With reference to the statement that Alderman David is Sir George's "probable successor," the Cynic is desirous of saying a few words.

Alderman David has been for some years a very active and prominent member of the Montreal Corporation. He has been distinguished as a tactician; has a certain glibness of speech, sometimes set down as eloquence; and he is warranted to wax virtuously-indignant at a moment's notice should any one presume to throw doubt upon his business capacity or his honor. Alderman David is also distinguished by his abhorrence of anything approaching to nepotism, but he is not insensible to fraternal claims when preferred by a needy subject to-whom he "owes his fortune." He is a stickler for the efficiency and independent working of the Corporation departments, but has no objection to an occasional deviation from rule or custom to oblige his friends. He is openly for economic administration, but is not averse to give his vote when the time comes for the perpetration of a monstrous piece of extravagance. He believes in the extension of the East, and will resolutely oppose, when he can, the expenditure of money in the West. The Mountain Park is a luxury; the new City Hall, (in the East), a necessity. The application of the laws of sanitary science is urgently required; and it is, above all, important that a properly-paid

and thoroughly-competent health officer shall be appointed. Alderman David approves of appointing three instead of one, with little or no regard to capacity, provided the claims of race be acknowledged.

Alderman David has grown a wealthy man, and can afford to retire from active life. The Cynic advises him to do so. A seat in the Council may be more honorable than it was a year or two ago, but, then, the honor is not now accompanied by emolument. There are too many men now in the Council who narrowly watch the proceedings of Committees, and carefully weigh the motives influencing votes. Neither Roads nor Finance rest on roses. It is doubtful if the Mayor's chair is particularly comfortable, and DIOGENES is quite sure its present incumbent will not care about occupying it another year.

As for the representation of Montreal East, the Cynic has no hesitation in saying that Mr. David will exhibit gross ingratitude—not to say duplicity—if he does not, on the first intimation of a vacancy, recall from Burlington the exiled Lanctot, and aid in securing his return. Lanctot and David would, on the whole, be tolerable representative men. The former ran Sir George a close race at the last election; and against a weaker opponent he might probably win in another struggle. Anyhow, the Cynic prefers him to Alderman David for the first vacancy.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

Query 1.—Curren Bell in her novel, "Shirley," quotes at length an ancient Scotch ballad entitled "Puir Mary Lee." I have been unable to find this ballad in any collection, nor have I ever met a Scotsman who is acquainted with it. I am inclined to believe it a literary counterfeit of the authoress. The ballad is certainly very beautiful. Its last stanza runs thus:

And never melt awa, thou bonnie wraith o' snaw
That's sae kind in graving me;
But hide me ae frae the storm and guffaw
O' villains like Robin a' Rec.

The word *guffaw* has to me anything but a Scottish sound. Can any of your readers throw light on the subject?

Queries 2 and 3.—Jean Ingelow, in her well-known poem, "The High Tide in Lincolnshire," twice speaks of—

Meads, where *melick* groweth.

What is *melick*?

In the same poem we also read:

A mighty *Eagre* raised his crest.

What is the exact meaning of an *Eagre*?

A. B.

In answer to A. B.'s 2nd Query, "*melick*" is, no doubt, melic-grass—a plant of the genus *melica*, in botany—a species of perennial grass.

The *Eagre* of his 3rd Query is a very uncommon word—a local term, in fact. In Bailey's Dictionary (17th edit. 1759) it is there given: "*Eagre*, the current, the tide, or swift course of a river."

Richardson remarks on the word: "The violent tide of the river *Trent* is so called by us." Dryden, in a note to a passage in which he has used the term, writes: "An *Eagre* is a tyde swelling above another tyde, what I have myself observed in the river *Trent*." The following is the poetical passage referred to:

His manly breast, whose noble pride
Was still above
Dissembled hate, or vanisht love;
It's more than common transport could not hide,
But like an eagre rode in triumph o'er the tyde.

The word is derived from the A.-S., "*eaġor*" or "*ear*"—water,