

The Passing Show.

BY WILFRID WISGAST.

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

The question of paramount interest in Toronto at the present moment is not who is to be mayor, or whether we intend to kick some of the present aldermen into office again or kick them out, or hang a few of them up to telegraph posts as an encouragement to the rest. No, these comparatively minor issues are all put aside for the more important one of Sunday cars.

I have placed my opinion very plainly on record for many years past on this question, but people should remember that the direct question is not at issue yet. Our opponents are not fighting fair; they are trying by all manner of shabby tricks to prevent the citizens from saying "yes" or "no" on a matter of vital interest to us all. Strange, is it not, that the clergy as a class should be so fond of special pleading and of subterfuge?

Is a man like the Rev. Hugh Johnson capable of seeing himself as others see him? It is to be hoped not. For if it be not hypocritical cant for this man to ride to and from his church on Sundays—as he admits he does—and then to object to you and I riding in a street car because, forsooth, you and I should be desecrating the Sabbath, while he is not—if such a line of "argument" be not cant and hypocrisy, then these words have no meaning.

The primary question now is, Are or are not the taxpayers of this city to be allowed to vote on the subject? This will be settled on Monday evening. But in the meantime every expedient will be resorted to for the sole purpose of obscuring the issue, which is—do we really govern ourselves or not?

I ask the people to take special note of those aldermanic jacks-in-office who, disguised in a little brief and beggarly authority by the mandate of the people, have the impertinence to stand up in the council chamber and assert that the Sunday question is a question which the people do not understand, and that only an alderman has the intellect to grasp.

Any man who tells me he objects to all work on a Sunday and, therefore, objects to cars being run on the streets during that day, is a man with whom I shall diametrically differ, but can still shake hands with as a consistent fellow; but the minister who rides to church and objects to his congregation riding to church as well, is on a par with some newspaper proprietors who issue a paper on Monday that all the staff have had to work on Sunday to produce, and then coolly tell us they object to Sunday labor in the interest of the working man.

Let the *Globe* and the *Empire* both be consistent. They tell us daily that they oppose the popular movement in the interest of the working classes. Both these papers should then discontinue their Monday morning issue and allow the large number of men each office employs to rest on Sunday. A considerable public would, I am convinced, excuse the appearance of both these interesting sheets for one morning in each week—especially on conscientious grounds. But are either of these journals likely to do this for the sake of consistency or conscience? Well, not much.

In the interim let the genuine ratepayers continue to sign the petition. Let us clear the Sunday car question out of the way, for we have other work to do. But as far as Sunday cars are concerned our opponents may as well understand that we mean winning, and the best thing they can do is to stand aside.

I am very glad that Florence St. John, the Gaiety actress, has not been allowed her divorce. According to her own showing she is a shameless hussey, and it does appear a satire on the intelligence of mankind that the low intrigues of this painted and powdered wanton should for well-nigh a fortnight have occupied a prominent place in the columns of the leading newspapers of the world.

This young woman was the daughter of a poor man and woman who formerly lived by managing a little green-grocer's shop in the east of London, and yet in the course of a dozen or fifteen years this woman, certainly not very highly gifted in any way, has been three times legally married to men of means, and has also been on terms of very intimate intimacy with many of the nobleman and "swells" of London.

Why is this? Passing strange indeed is the divinity in which many men will invest a woman on the stage. In London a young fellow to be in the first rank of fashion must "keep" an actress. He must, of course, be exceedingly well-off to do it, because owning a yacht or a few race horses does not come as a rule so high as owning, or partly owning most probably, a lady on the stage.

This is the secret of the success of many of the star actresses about whom we hear so much. Like the lady in the *Beggar's Opera*, they have been for "years in keeping," and are proud of it. Only when we are treated *ad nauseum* to so much drivel about the Langtrys, and the St. Johns, and the Camerons, it may not be out of place to remind people that many a poor girl who from sheer necessity is walking the streets of this city to-night is pure both in body and in mind when compared with one of these.

I am pleased to see that Mr. W. J. Hambly is out in No. 2 Ward as school trustee. Mr. Hambly is too well known to require any endorsement from me—he is a jolly good fellow,

only he always appears to me much too diffident in the way of helping himself. He can go in and win this contest easily if he will only do what all the other candidates are doing, and what he would willingly do for anyone else—hustle for himself.

I still adhere to my opinion that Mr. Edward Clarke is the dark horse on which it would be most safe to put one's money for the mayoralty contest. If he runs, he will win, with McMillan for a good second, and a tie between Fleming and Beaty.

Should Clarke be well advised and consider his character before his pocket—that is to say, keep his word and not allow his officious friends to nominate him, it is not improbable that the Conservatives will unite on Osler, on account of the damning support being given by the *Globe* to Fleming. If Mr. Fleming is "snowed under," he will have to thank his friends Peter Ryan, Mr. Spence, and our journalistic Mrs. Gamp.

The other day Mr. George Eakins was presented with a handsome testimonial by his colleagues on the editorial staff of the *Mail*, where he has held the important position of associate editor for eight years. The presentation was made by Mr. Bunting in a frank and genial speech, and suitably and feelingly acknowledged by the recipient. The "boys" were present in full force.

Gladstone being led about Northampton by Labouchere reminds me of Mephistopheles and Faust—the devil, for his own ends, pandering to the senile vanity of an old fool.

I could tell some funny tales of Labby, and "Henrietta," and Northampton, but my space is limited, and—well, "some other day, some other day."

There was a rumor in London early this week that Mr. Du Maurier, the famous society artist of *Punch*, had become totally blind, but a friend cabled on Thursday from Fleet street as follows:—"I saw him to-day. It is true he has long since had the use only of one eye and the other is very much affected, but with the use of blue glasses he expects to retain and regain his sight."

I read in *Le Gaulois* that some French authors have adopted the practice of using green tinted paper for manuscript, finding it less harmful to the eyes than white paper.

Flipper—Did you notice Miss Plumpleigh just now, how she flirted out of the room? It seems to me she is putting on airs to an extent that is positively ridiculous.

Flapper—Excuse me, sir; you make a mistake. She is at this moment putting on a garter to an extension that is positively delicious. I saw her pick it up from the floor.