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Vox Humana

AN IDYLL OF ST. JAMES.

Mr. Speaker, Sir.—The man on his feet, there in the middle of the lower Opposition bench is about to address the house; all eyes are focussed on him, the nervous murmuring which heralded the orator has ceased, and a general shuffling, then silence, illustrates that the House has figuratively dug itself in, prepared to dose through at least an hour's speech. This proves to be simple and consists of laying back, as far as possible, and pressing one's heels against the opposite partition just where it meets the floor.

The speaker is a newly elected member, bringing with him a provincial reputation, and this is his maiden speech. Old members with the experience of many maiden efforts, predict one of those long winded, carefully prepared, statistical orations; and the subject dealing, as it does with some aspect of Unemployment does not seem very inspiring nor at all delectable to listen to. Surely, they think, all the ground has been covered, can there be anything new to hear on a subject over which men like Asquith, MacDonald and Baldwin have exhausted themselves? Silence, and a cathedral like solemnity prevails; up there in the various non member galleries, the Press, the Distinguished Visitors and the Strangers are alert to catch every word uttered; below the six hundred members have been hushed as it were to sleep.

Three o'clock booms out from Big Ben, and as if by some signal, the dusky assembly hall is invaded by a set of multi-colored rays of light, coming through the huge stained glass windows, and falling like a lime light thrown from the wings of some stage, on the speaking member, and throwing in bold relief his slender figure against the monotony of the surroundings.

"Mr. Speaker, Sir.—The first note has been struck, and the melody depends solely on the efforts of the man himself.

He approaches his subject warily, working up his theme, as a chess master might the opening move, of his game, proves his theories and concretizes his assumptions with logic. He does more, for beyond the fact that his speech, as a speech is sound, his voice is the greatest factor in his favour, the clear, pure, powerful voice of a cultured man, the voice of Irving or a Tree, conveying an indefinable charm to the ear, charm, that word so hard to define, yet so easily recognized. There is nothing forced or "put on," about the tone of the voice, the speaker does not seek to create effect with it, it is natural to him, his own voice which he uses every day and at all times.

The House is taking notice, the sense of the speech does not matter whatever, it is good, sound, feasible but it is also quite usual. Birkenhead might have made such a speech, or Balfour or Austen Chamberlain, but none of them could have delivered it like this. Lloyd George or Churchill can create feeling and enthusiasm, but they would use other methods, which would resemble more the actor than the orator.

English, our mother tongue, foreigners deride the, dub the stiff and incapable of expression, but they are wrong. The English as spoken by this man is wonderful, flashing here and there like a rapier, raising the feelings he wants, producing the sensation he requires, and the awe he inspires.

Now the House is silent, but one can sense, with the rising voice, the throbbing of a huge heart, increasing, increasing, until suddenly all the pent up passion has loosed itself, in a storm of applause. All but the golden voice is forgotten, personal injuries, party feeling, national crises, all are forgotten; an Orpheus has charmed his listeners; they only desire to listen.

It is magic, hypnotism or what you will, it is Caruso singing or Krieger, conjuring music at the Albert Hall. It is the Sermon on the Mount.

Reaching his main point through a mass of facts and phrases, the orator elaborates, much as the spider spins her web, never above himself, leaving no room for criticism, advancing slowly and sweeping all possible counter argument aside in his advance.

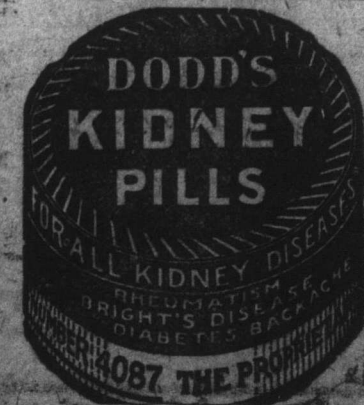
The end of the speech has come, and the note of climax is reached in a spirit of triumph, like the top note of a singer before she bows and steps back to allow the curtain to fall.

Silence holds ten, twenty, thirty seconds, then with a noise of thunder, and from friend or political adversary comes the applause, all around one hears the members talking, "another Monday," "a New Disraeli," neither a new personality has arrived at his home Westminster.

NEMO DIXIT.

London's Third
Oldest Paper

LONDON, Eng., Nov. 20.—(Canadian Press Despatch)—If you walk down Fleet Street and observe the frontages of the north side, you will see tucked away among the ferro-concrete on the north side a quaint-looking build-



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LONDON, Eng., Nov. 15.—(Canadian Press Despatch)—The gramophone, the piano-player, the broadcasting apparatus—all these are raising the appreciation in England of good music, according to Sir Landon Ronald, Principal of the Guildhall School of Music, and one of the most eminent musicians of this generation. Whether the actual patronage of concerts is increasing, Sir Landon is doubtful. Sir Landon has just celebrated the completion of fifteen years as Principal of the Guildhall School, which is under the control and maintained by the City of London Corporation. He is no high-brow, for he has encouraged the study of such works as Gilbert and Sullivan, with the result that many students have stepped straight from the Guildhall School to leading parts at the West End theatres.

Everyone of the 19 items on the programme of Queen's College Concert is worth coming miles to see.—Nov. 21, 54.

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