

# EVENTS

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Whole No. 316.



**M**OST of the time in the House of Commons this week was devoted to the debate on the Autonomy Bill. One of the features of the discussion was the announcement by Mr. Pringle, one of the Ontario Conservative members, that he would vote with the Government on this Bill. It is understood that he will be in good company along with probably twenty members of the opposition. One estimate of the result of the division led to the conclusion that if there was a full house on the night of the division the government majority would be about ninety five. This calculation was based on the expectation that probably fifteen members of the opposition would be found supporting the Bill. On the other hand not a single government supporter is out of line. Mr. Leighton McCarthy, who usually votes with the government as an independent member, has expressed his dissent from the Bill in so far as the education clause is concern-

ed. The government ranks are, therefore, unbroken while terrible inroads have been made on the solid front which the Opposition usually displays on all party questions.

The longer the debate lasts the more it seems to reveal the weakness of Mr. R. L. Borden as a leader. There is no doubt that personally he would accept the educational clause as a broad minded Canadian willing to respect the convictions and, perhaps, also the prejudices of all classes of the community. The Opposition, however, seems to be in the mire of the narrow Ontario politicians who talk the most and are capable of thinking the least concerning large questions of national policy. The fact that good Protestants such as Mr. Pringle, Mr. Perley, Mr. Brabazon, and several others of the Conservative party intend to vote for the Bill and its education clause may help to redeem the party in the eyes of the general public, but the

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general opinion seems to be voiced by Mr. Monk the Conservative leader from Quebec, who is understood to have expressed the opinion that the attitude of the respective parties upon this question will serve to keep the Liberals in power for a score of years.

The division on the second reading is

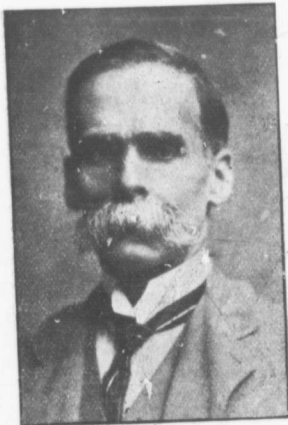
now practically fixed for some day after the Easter recess, which means at the earliest April 25, and practically the morning of April 2 th. The House will then get down to other business on the first of May, and cannot possibly prorogue before some time in July.



The Czar's Quandry.

## The New Minister of the Interior.

**M**R. FRANK OLIVER, M. P. for Edmonton, N. W. T., was on Saturday sworn of the Privy Council and appointed Minister of the Interior to succeed Hon. Clifford Sifton. In some quarters the prime minister's choice occasioned surprise, as Mr. Oliver has not always agreed with the course of the Administration, especially in matters of immigration. In his paper the Edmonton Bulletin, he has frequently criticized the government sharply. In 1900,



HON. FRANK OLIVER, M. P.

The new Minister of the Interior, whose re election is fixed for April 25, if opposed, May 2.

however, he accepted the convention and ran as a straight Liberal, and since then has been in touch with his party. Sir Wilfrid Laurier is too big a man to

bear small grudges, and, anyway, the record shows that the Premier tolerates reasonable divergence of opinion on the part of his supporters. Then it has been the view of many in parliament that Mr. Oliver has broadened and bettered during the past five years as a federal man.

In knowledge of the Northwest and Manitoba the new minister must be well up. A quarter of a century ago he was a printer on the staff of the Manitoba Free Press. Subsequently he founded a pioneer paper in Edmonton when that town was a small settlement. The paper, in size, could have been covered with two hands. It managed to keep out the bailiff and is today a prosperous journal. Over 20 years ago Mr. Oliver was returned to the Northwest Council and remained a member for several years. He was first elected to the House of Commons in 1896 and has since been twice re elected. As printer, editor, publisher, and politician, Mr. Oliver's career reflects great credit on his pluck, industry and perseverance. He carried Edmonton last November by the largest majority of any candidate in the Dominion.

The Toronto press is claiming that the vote in Edmonton is controlled by French half breeds. Other Opposition papers say that the Galicians and Donkobors are the main body of voters. A reference to the census shows what wild statements are manufactured by the party press. At the date of the census, 1901, there was no constituency of Edmonton. It is, however, the northern half of Alberta, and Alberta is shown to have had in 1901 a total population of 65,000 of which 3,700 were French half breeds. Aside from Indians there were 60,000 persons in Alberta and "Canadians" were given as numbering 51,000. There were from the United States alone

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five years ago 10,972 settlers, practically all English speaking Protestants. There were 7,000 settlers from the British Isles and Wales, so there were at least 18,000 against the 3,700 half breeds.

But the Alberta of today has had an inflow of settlers during the five years since the census of probably 150,000 and its population must be now over 200,000. Edmonton constituency must have now nearly 100,000 of a population. The new Capital of Alberta province which contained 2,600 in April, 1901, is now a city of about 7,000. There are 300 halfbreeds there, who

according to the Toronto World, are going to control the result of the election. The British and American residents of Edmonton electoral district outnumber the foreign element ten to one. There were in 1901, including Indians, about 10,000 Roman Catholics against 52,000 non-Roman Catholics, and the disproportion is far greater now.

Mr. Oliver is, therefore, going before the English speaking Protestant body of electors fairly representative of the Northwest Territories.



The most striking portrait of Rudyard Kipling ever made.

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## Revise Postal Regulations

**A**BOUT 50 pages or almost 25 per cent of the Canadian Official Postal Guide are devoted to regulations, and, in addition, there is a quarterly supplement frequently containing new regulations under the heading "information for postmasters." This information generally consists of definitions of existing regulations, or rulings as they would call it in the Custom department. So, first, the department makes an arbitrary regulation and then frequently makes an arbitrary definition of what a regulations means. In examining candidates for the civil service considerable time is devoted to ascertaining if they possess a deep knowledge of these 500 different regulations.

It is about time these regulations, definitions and instructions were revised, abbreviated and simplified. It appears to us that every individual case that comes to the attention of the department not clearly covered by an existing rule one is made by some clerk drafting a regulation to cover the particular case, but of course the new regulation is made general and, along with scores of useless and irritation regulations reprinted year after year long after the evil which it was designed to abate has disappeared.

The newspaper regulations are illustrative of this. The regulations concerning newspapers and periodicals commence with No. 33 and end with No. 67, both inclusive. In addition to these 35 special sections, some clauses have several subsections. One of the experts of the department was eager enough recently to notify the Ottawa city post office to collect extra postage on this paper, because it contained a portrait of Mr. R. L. Borden, the leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons, printed on special paper and used as an insert, conforming in size to the main body

of the paper. It was illustrating a portion of the reading matter contained in that issue and, therefore, came under section 43 of the regulations with reference to supplements, where it is laid down that illustrations which form a necessary part of a publication as illustrating reading matter are admissible thereto whether loose or attached. But so anxious was some person in the department to worry a publisher and invade his time, that he caused a demand to be made upon this office for a breach of section 43 which imposes a special rate upon "enclosures". A demand for an explanation was made in writing to the department, and although some weeks have elapsed no reply has been received the department not wishing probably to acknowledge in writing that a publisher knew his rights under the regulations better than the department.

An examination of this section 43 shows that publishers may enclose in their newspaper, chromos, lithographs and engravings, provided they pay double postage and subject to a number of conditions, including the requirement that when papers contain such enclosures are tendered to the post office the publisher must in writing notify the postmaster of their containing such enclosures, and if he fails to give such written notice he is to be fined eight times the amount of the ordinary postage. Then there is another section, 44, which is a repetition of previous sections but in another form. All sorts of curious things stick out of the whole of these regulations. For instance a newspaper supplement must be in the nature of news, essential to, but crowded out of the regular issue. Why? it requires a very stiff civil service examination to find out why. If a publisher chooses to prepare a supplement once a week containing stories, pictures and spe-

cial reading matter, there is no such thing as it being crowded out of the regular issue. The department appears to try and crowd it out of the mails, but the department should wake up to the fact that it exists for the benefit of those who receive letters and newspapers and not to spend its time trying to invent irritating and useless regulations. Another provision declares that advertisements printed on sheets exceeding in size the regular pages are not admissible, though folded to the size of the regular pages. Again we ask why? If Events printed an advertisement double the size of its ordinary page and folded and stitched it, what damage would that do to the post office, to the revenue, to the postmaster, or to anybody?

Take another regulation and peculiar action on the part of the department with regard to it. A regulation was drawn up permitting a newspaper to circulate for a special number of weeks as many sample copies as it pleased for the purpose of promoting circulation. Last Fall, about the first of October, just the period when publishers are in the habit of sending out sample copies with special offer of the balance of the year and the whole of the following year for the one yearly subscription, the department without any notice whatever suspended the regulations, with the result that some papers printing a few thousand extra copies of their paper were notified after they had gone to the expense and trouble, that the post office would not receive these specimen copies. The idea possessed by the department was that advantage might be taken of the regulation to send out extra copies of

what might be termed campaign literature with respect to the approaching general elections. Putting aside the peculiar notion of the department in suspending a regulation without notice to any publisher, let us ask what harm would be done of a yearly paper, say in the county of Haron, circulating say 2,000 copies, arranged to send out 2,000 extra copies during the election campaign to place before the electors for example the speech of one of the political leaders? Surely it is in the interests of the people that public questions should be widely discussed. But the post office department at Ottawa is so Liberal in its administration that it becomes frightened at the bare thought of carrying anything that might be termed campaign literature. Within bounds it could not be used to better purpose.

The chief point we make, however, is that all the regulations with reference to all classes of mail matter should be revised, condensed, and modernized.

It may be that good reasons exist for the revision of regulations respecting letters and other classes of matter. If a man put a special delivery stamp on the envelope and in his haste forgot to put on, in addition to this exorbitant tax, the regular 2c. stamp, the postmaster is instructed to forward the letter to its destination but to impose a very heavy fine in addition to collecting the 2c. shortage. There is no reason for imposing these heavy fines. There are many other anomalous and uncalled for regulations, so many in number as to lead even the experts in the department to make the mistakes to which we have alluded.





Fighting a rearguard action: Russian artillery holding the Japanese in check during the retreat from Mukden.

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ARNOTT J. MAGURN, Editor

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ONE of the notable speeches made in the debate in the Canadian House of Commons on the Autonomy Bill was delivered by Mr. Walter Scott the young member for West Assiniboia whose headquarters are at Regina the capital of the new province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Smith held the attention of the House for a couple of hours. Although the question had been debated for several days Mr. Scott managed to bring out a number of new points. Even for no other reason than its frankness and sincerity the deliverance was entitled to the good hearing it received. Mr. Scott is one of those who believe that the character of the separate schools established by the people of the Northwest themselves and continued by the Autonomy Bill is such that there is not a Protestant in the territories who would object to them. It is gratifying to note that a young and rising man like the member for West Assiniboia is not frightened by a name, and that he is fearless enough to rise in his place and state his honest convictions. He rebuked Mr. Haultain for his conduct in this matter, and interested the House by showing that the draft bill drawn up a couple of years ago by Mr. Haultain contained a school clause under which ecclesiastical separate schools were authorized.

OUR cover picture this week is a half-tone reproduction of a photograph by Topley of the esteemed member for Ottawa, Mr. Robert Stewart. He is one of the best known men at the Capital as well as one of the best liked. He has won the position he holds in the city by energy, application, and industry. He is a native of the Capital, born about 55 years ago. Indeed, his birthday was on the 7th inst. His wife is a native of the pro-

vince of Quebec. Mr. Stewart has been a school trustee and alderman, and while failing to carry the election when he ran in 1900 for the House of Commons he succeeded in getting there last time by a handsome majority. In politics he is a Liberal and by religious affiliation a Presbyterian.

ONE day while walking in the early spring with the Emperor Nicholas the Iron Chancellor noticed a sentry on guard in the middle of a grassplot between Paul's Palace and the Neva. The Emperor inquired the purpose of the man but none could tell him; he sent for an officer, still without result. News of the inquiries spread into the servants' quarters, and then a very old man gave them the explanation. He had had it from his father, who, pointing to the sentry, had said, "There he is still standing to guard the flower; on that spot the Empress Catherine once noticed a snowdrop in bloom unusually early, and gave orders that it was not to be plucked. This command has been carried out by placing a sentry on the spot, and ever since, day and night, winter and summer, one had stood there on guard.

THE sympathy of all right-minded men has gone out to General Kuropatkin in his fall—a fall precipitated not so much by his own inefficiency as by influences at St. Petersburg. Between the hero and the scapegoat there is but the thinnest dividing line, but the treatment accorded to the two varies vastly. Brave old Blucher, who never feared mortal man on the battle field, was scared out of his wits by the attentions he received after Waterloo. One day the mob fairly held him up in Hyde Park. In their adulation they must actually lay hands upon the hero. Old "Marshal Vorwärts" put his back to a tree and laid lustily about him with his stick. Wellington liked flattery as little. Said a stranger who had helped him over a crossing, "My lord, I have passed a long and uneventful life, but never did I hope to reach the day when I might be of the slightest assistance to the greatest man that ever lived." The old Duke looked at him for a moment, then, "Don't be a damned fool," he said as he turned on his heel.



## Archbishop Elder and the Public Schools.

**A** NEW phase of the much discussed problem of religious education is presented in a letter recently addressed by Archbishop Elder of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cincinnati, to his ecclesiastical subordinates. In this letter it is laid down as the doctrine of the church that "to attend a non-Catholic school constitutes usually a grave and permanent danger to the faith and that, therefore, "it is a mortal sin for any parents to send their children to such a school, except where there is no other suitable school, and unless such precautions are taken to make the danger remote." The Archbishop says further:—

"As the obligation of sending a child to a Catholic school binds under the pain of mortal sin, it follows that the neglect to comply with it is a matter of accusation, when going to confession. We fail to see how fathers and mothers who omit to accuse themselves of this fault can believe that they are making an entire confession of their sins.

"Confessors are hereby forbidden to give absolution to parents who, without permission of the archbishop, send their children to non-Catholic schools, unless such parents promise either to send them to such a school, at the time to be fixed by the confessor, or at least agree, within two weeks of the day of confession, to refer the case to the archbishop, and abide by his decision."

Commenting on this letter, the Philadelphia Presbyterian observes: "If Archbishop Elder's order is not countermanded or if it is enforced, no one need hereafter question the attitude of the Roman Catho-

lic Church towards the free schools of the land." The New York Outlook says:

"It seems clear that Archbishop Elder's rules, if they were universally adopted would greatly circumscribe the influence and power of the Roman Catholic Church in this country. In this free land where every village has its free school, a contest between the public school system and the parochial school system must, in the nature of the case be unequal. The parents who would observe these rules might maintain their allegiance to the church; but the great majority of men and women in his country do not easily acquiesce in any voluntary exclusion from the privileges of a democracy. Over such the church, by adopting such a policy, would lose much of its influence. The best minds of the Roman Catholic Church in America have long ago seen this, and have recognized that the spiritual power of the church can best be extended, not by causing the church to withdraw from contact with the public schools, but rather by so directing the religious life of every community in which it is active that it may impart the religious temper to the teachers and the schools of that community. . . . Recently, Pope Pius X. was reported to have expressed the feeling that his confidence in America was a compensation for his disheartenment over the conditions in France. It is well to remember that those conditions in France are a result of that unhappy conflict between public and ecclesiastical schools from which the United States as a rule, has been happily free."

## Prof. James Bryce on the United States.

**P**ROF. JAMES BRYCE, the author of "The American Commonwealth" has again acted as critic of the tastes and development of the United States. It is 21 years since he gathered the material for his celebrated work.

Of the material aspect of American civilization Mr. Bryce writes:

"That what most strikes the visitor to America today is its prodigious material development. Industrial growth, swift thirty or forty years ago, advances more swiftly now. The rural districts are being studded with villages, the villages are growing into cities, the cities are stretching out long arms of suburbs which follow the lines of road and railway in every direction. The increase of wealth, even more remarkable than the increase of population, impresses a European more deeply now than ever before because the contrast with Europe is greater. In America every class seems rich compared with the corresponding class in the Old World. The huge fortunes, the fortunes of those whose income reaches or exceeds a million dollars a year, are of course far more numerous than in any other country. But the absence of pauperism is still more remarkable. In 1870 I carefully examined the poor law system of two great Eastern cities, and found that, although there were very few persons needing or receiving support at the public expense, the number was expected to grow steadily and quickly as the cities grew. Today I am told that in these cities pauperism, though of course absolutely larger, increases more slowly than population.

"Life has for a long time been comfortable and easy for the workingman and the clerk or shopman, as compared with life

of the like class in Europe. But for the classes standing next above the laborers in point of income life was in 1870 in general plain and simple, simpler than the life led by the richer class in England or France. Luxury was then confined to a very few. Simplicity is not so common today. The incomes of those who correspond to the so-called 'upper middle class' of Europe are much larger than such persons enjoy in Europe, and they live on a more lavish scale.

"The 'easier life,' however, does not mean that life is taken easily. It consists in having and spending more money, not in doing less work. On the contrary, the stress and rush of life seems greater today in America than ever it was before. Everybody from the workman to the millionaire, has a larger head of steam on than his father had."

Of its intellectual aspect he says:—

"There has been within these last thirty-five years a development of the higher education in the United States, perhaps without a parallel in the world. Previously the Eastern States had but a very few universities whose best teachers were on a level with the teachers in the universities of Western Europe. There were a great many institutions bearing the name of university over the Northern and Middle States and the West, and a smaller number in the South, but they gave an instruction which, though in some places, and especially in New England, it was sound and thorough as far as it went, was really the instruction rather of a secondary school than of a university in the proper sense. In the West and South the teaching often ambitious when it figured in the program, was apt to be superficial and flimsy.

giving the appearance without the solid reality of knowledge. The scientific side was generally even weaker than the literary. These universities or colleges had their value, for their very existence was a recognition of the need for an education above that which the school is intended to supply. I ventured even then to hazard the opinion that the reformers who wished to extinguish the bulk of them or to turn them into schools, reserving the degree granting power to a selected few only, were mistaken, because improvement and development might be expected. But I did not expect that the development would come so fast and go so far. No doubt there are still a great many whose standard of teaching and examinations is that of a school, not of a true university. But there are also many which have risen to the European level, and many others which are moving rapidly toward it. Roughly speaking—for it is impossible to speak with exactness—America has now not less than fifteen or perhaps even twenty seats of learning fit to be ranked beside the universities of Germany, France and England as respects the completeness of the instruction which they provide and the thoroughness at which they aim. Only a few have professorial staff containing names equal to those which adorn the faculties of Berlin and Leipsic and Vienna, of Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

"Men of brilliant gifts are scarce in all countries, and in America there has hardly been time to produce a supply equal to the immense demand for the highest instruction which has lately shown itself. It is the advance in the standard aimed at, and in the efforts to attain that standard that is so remarkable. . . . The salaries for presidents and professors remain low as compared with the average incomes of persons in the same social rank, and as compared with the cost of living. That so many men of an energy and ability sufficient to win success and wealth in a business career do nevertheless devote themselves to a career of teaching and research is a remarkable evidence of the intellectual zeal which pervades the people. . . .

Literary criticism, formerly at a low ebb seems to have sensibly improved, whereas in England many people doubt if it is as acute, as judicious, and as delicate as it was in the sixties. The love of poetry and the love of art are more widely diffused in America than ever before; one finds, for instance, a far greater number of good pictures in private houses than could have been seen thirty years ago; and the building up of public art galleries has occupied much of the thought and skill of leading citizens as well as required the expenditure of vast sums. Great ardor is shown in the investigation of dry subjects, such as questions of local history. The interest taken in constitutional topics and economic questions, indeed in everything that belongs to the sphere of political science, is as great as it is in Germany or France and greater than in Britain. This interest is, indeed, confined to one class, which chiefly consists of university teachers, but it is a new and noteworthy phenomenon. Few people thought or wrote on these matters thirty years ago."



WALTER SCOTT, M.P.  
Who has hit the trail for Edmonton to assist Mr. Oliver in the election.

# Postal Rates Between Canada and England.

The Times, 18th March.

SIR GILBERT PARKER, in introducing the deputation, said in 1878 Canada entered into the Postal Union, whereby newspapers sent to Canada from this country were charged 4d. per lb. The effect was to give a preferential rate to the United States, which poured into Canada American magazines and periodicals thus influencing public feeling, and also affecting trade and commerce. During the last two years there had been a reduction upon the rates for magazine and newspapers from Canada to this country to 1½d. per lb., but as yet we had not made any reduction in return. The rate from the United States to Canada was one-eighth of the rate from England to Canada. It was said that this reduction would not take place without considerable loss to the Treasury, but that might be made up by the increase of British magazines and periodicals sent to Canada. The other speakers were Mr. Emmott, who said this was a non-party deputation; Sir William Holland, who said the Association of Chambers of Commerce of the United Kingdom and the Montreal Chamber of Commerce had passed resolutions; General Laurie, and Mr. Jesse Collings.

Lord Stanley in reply, said he was glad that the deputation did not press the Post Office to run any part of their business at a loss, and that there was no attempt on the part of Canada to get out of the net revenue of this country any very large sum for furthering this particular object. They stated that newspapers and periodicals, by the mere fact that they were able to be

brought into Canada at such a cheap rate, were principally American, and therefore the country was flooded with American literature instead of British literature, which they should all wish, and which would be for the advantage of Imperial unity. The Americans would always, by their proximity to Canada, have an advantage which no amount of money could ever purchase. If he granted what the deputation asked, viz., the placing of this country on equal terms, then they must consider the effect it would have upon inland postage. The loss on postage to Canada and the Colonies would be comparatively small as compared with the general reduction on postage within the United Kingdom. The loss on newspapers and periodicals would be considerably more than three-fourths of the postage at present paid, and the increase of business would mean an increasing loss to the revenue. The loss to the Post Office at a moderate computation would be two and a half millions a year, and this would grow in proportion to the amount of business than the reduction of rate would bring with it. In addition to that there would be the loss that would accrue from the loss of periodicals and registered newspapers to the Colonies, and he was not exaggerating when he said that the loss to the revenue would be at least three millions. Last year's profit from the Post Office was £2,660,000, and three millions from that was more than any Postmaster General would incur. Sentiment was an excellent thing, but the price to be paid for it in this case was a

little too high. He could not ask the House of Commons to subsidize periodicals and newspapers to this extent. Much as he sympathized with their wishes, he could not hold out any hope of meeting them at such a loss to the revenue.

To the Editor of "The Times".

Sir,—Will you allow me space in which to refer to the deputation of twenty members of Parliament, on both sides of politics, which I introduced to the Postmaster General on Thursday last in reference to postage rates on magazines and newspapers in Canada? It is impossible to deal fully with the reply of the Postmaster General to the representations made to him until the full report of his speech is before me; but the condensed report of The Times gives one or two salient points, to which I think, in justice to the deputation, a reference should be made at once. In the first place, the Postmaster General, while recognizing the fact that American newspapers and magazines go into Canada at one-eighth of the cost of British magazines and newspapers, thereby securing a preference which practically gives them the control of the market for newspapers and literature in Canada, preferred not to deal with the merits of the question and the obvious remedy, but to throw the responsibility for any concession to Canada on the terms of inland postage to Great Britain. That is to say, he could not find it possible to reduce the rates to Canada unless he reduced the rates of inland postage on magazines in the United Kingdom. The question, therefore, became one of reduction of postage in this country; and upon that basis the Postmaster General made his calculations.

His figures, showing a possible loss of £3,000,000 by the reduction of postage on magazines and newspapers, are startling, but they do not bear investigation. In the first place, the petition from Canada—to which I observe, no reference was made in your report—signed as it was by thirty-five representatives of public bodies in the country, asked for a reduction of the newspaper and magazine rate to 1d. a pound.

believing that this would be full and sufficient to meet the inroads of American magazines and newspapers, filled with advertisements of American goods and sent into Canada at the rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a pound. The request was for a reduction, not to the domestic rate between Canada and the United States, but to twice that domestic rate or 1d. a pound. You must therefore, divide the Postmaster General's £3,000,000 by two, which gives £1,500,000. But I confess it is impossible for me to understand how a reduction of rates on magazines alone in England could represent any such loss of a million and a half.

The anomalies of our inland postage are absurd. A magazine like the Nineteenth Century or the Fortnightly, which weighs less than a pound, is charged letter postage or 4d. each, while a paper like the quarterly double number of the Queen, Gentlewoman, etc., which sometimes weighs  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lb. goes through the post for  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. I can well understand that there is a loss on the newspaper postage of Great Britain, but the loss comes from the gross inequalities of the charges. To level up the charges on newspapers such as those to which I have referred and lower by 50 per cent. at least the rates upon magazines would, I think, enable the Postmaster General to tell a less doleful tale. In any case the postage rate to Canada on newspapers alone is double that of the inland rate upon newspapers in England, and the reduction of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. on ordinary newspapers to Canada could be made without disturbing the present system.

Sir, as I have indicated, I will ask for space in a future issue of your paper to refer further to the Postmaster General's speech when I have it in full before me. At this moment, however, there is no necessity to say more than that his reply was unconvincing. I believe that the required concession can be made to Canada—which has within the last two years lowered the rate of postage from that country to this to  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a pound for newspapers and magazines in the interest of reciprocity—and that the adjustment of the anomalies in our inland system, and

a reduction of rates on magazines, and a raising of rates on the weekly registered newspapers, which immensely outnumber the magazines, would still give necessary revenue to the Post Office and remedy a national and an Imperial grievance.

I have the honor to be Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
GILBERT PARKER,

20 Carlton House Terrace, S. W.  
18th March.

## *In a London Opium Den.*

BY ERNEST A. BRYANT.

CAREFUL inquiry in official quarters had elicited the answer, "There is not in all London such a place as a Chinese opium den." Yet here were we in the midst of one, surrounded by its dismal cadaverous victims, witnessing an orgy similar to those which China, the fatherland of those around us, has sought by fine and even death penalty in vain to suppress.

We were not readily admitted. But my guide and comrade had an irresistible "open sesame"; he had been smuggled in by his Japanese servant prior to the advent of the present proprietor, and the latter dared not now say him nay lest the visitor should turn his knowledge as to the character of the place spitefully to account. When we entered the premises which serve as screen for the real *raison d'être* of the establishment, he sprang forward from his seat to a doorway leading to an inner room and without a word of preface from ourselves, began:

"You too late; all closed; ailee gone."

Into the place which the proprietor had vacated there lurched a giant to bar our further progress.

He was, I think, the most fascinatingly hideous man I have ever seen. About six feet in height, he had the mighty chest and arms of a gorilla, and the face of a medieval gargoyle; eyes dim and small, and half hidden by their pouchy lids, nose flat and expansive like a negro's, and a cavernous mouth from which the two centre

teeth of the upper jaw were missing, as if someone had spurred the man in the mouth.

Between insistence and cajolery we broke through the barriers of opposition to our entry, and passing the giant stumbled up a staircase, unique for its absence of light and the steepness of its narrow worn stairs. There was a window at the bend of the staircase. This Brobdingnag, who now brought up the rear, closed and bolted with a crash. There was a momentary pause in the darkness on the tiny landing outside the door. This later was then cautiously opened by the proprietor, and we entered—China in London. Had some magician transported us suddenly from the accustomed streets of the metropolis to unfamiliar scenes in the far Cathay, the transition could scarcely have produced a more startling effect on one's mind. Five minutes before we had been riding in a well lighted, luxuriously appointed railway carriage; now of a sudden we were ushered into the upper chamber of a Chinaman's house, where, in defiance of law and public opinion, reposed a roomful of men inhaling damnation from their opium pipes as unconcernedly as if the stoutest walls in Shanghai were their shelter.

It was a low ceiled and dimly lighted room into which we stepped, and the sole hope of ventilation vanished when the door closed behind us. Parallel with three of the walls huge iron bedsteads were placed: upon each a mattress and quilt, with a

rough canvas covered bolster running lengthwise, so that occupants must lie across the bed, their heads to the wall, their feet pointing towards the middle of the room. Upon each bed was a cockly lacquered tray bearing the impedimenta of the smokers, with a curious Chinese opium lamp, lighted, as the outstanding item upon each tray. A fire, glowing a dull red, was built high above the topmost bar of the crazy old grate: on the hob at its side bubbled a pot of tea, looking like a biscuit jar, plus spout with a wicker handle. Overhead a jet of gas, turned so low as to furnish merely a bead of blue flame afforded the only light save that given off by the lamps on the bed. The entrance of "foreign devils" caused a significant commotion amongst seven of the occupants. The eighth was unconscious; his stertorous breathing was frequently interrupted by dolorous growlings and mumbings, as if, having in his dreams the keys of paradise which he had sought, he was unable to find the lock. The wakeful seven started to their feet, and, so far as a Chinese under the influence of opium can, stared at us wide-eyed.

Such a chorus of savage interrogatory and protest there was. One lean and aged sinner—named Chung Hi—anxiously fingered an attenuated carving knife which he drew from out a heap of papers stored on shelves at the foot of his bed. I may add at once, however, that he did nothing more alarming than, later, to cut an orange into forty pieces on his bed with that knife: and with it prod each fragment, peel and all, down his throat. The rest jabbered nineteen to the dozen in expostulation and inquiry. Seven Chinese in one room talking their language at its fastest can be likened to nothing else but a den of irate monkeys. Apparently our host made it plain that no danger was to be apprehended from our visit, and that no violence was to be practised upon us; for the seven subsided upon their beds, palpably pacified, but still chattering in weird cadences which made my companion ask, "Are they singing?"

We removed our coats and hats and hung them upon nails driven into the door;

stimulated as by an air as we could command, and took possession of a corner of Chung Hi's bed. This display of confidence quite won him over, and the knife disappeared. He could talk fairly good English; they all could who would. He offered me his pipe, which I declined, saying I had been sick and feared that the inhalation of smoke from the opium would be hurtful to me. "Besides," I added, "I don't smoke; I am only my friend's friend," leaving my comrade to evade a similar invitation by as tame and inconsequent a subterfuge.

Throughout the evening I was asked, on an average once every five minutes to smoke opium. That was what they were there for: was it not so with me? Each man in turn offered me his pipe, ready charged for smoking. There was no suggestion of coercion, neither was there show of resentment at my repeated refusal. According to their lights these men meant well and hospitably by their invitations, just as would your host in desiring you to share with him the cigars dearest to his fancy. So my profuse thanks and apologies—mainly in dumb show—if not fully comprehended, were taken in good part. To one it occurred that I was suffering from surfeit of opium—he could not understand refusal on any other grounds. And he turned up the gas in order more closely to scrutinise my face.

A man, who, I suspected, had some sort of proprietary interest in the establishment, now came and took in hand the slumberer, whom the brighter light more clearly revealed. The new comer was in appearance a magnificent specimen of his nationality; tall, broad shouldered and muscular, and, unlike the rest, not dull of eye nor moist of brow, not pallid nor emaciated. His name was Dol Form; that, at least, was as near as it could easily be rendered into English. When written down in Chinese characters, the signature looked as if a flash of lightning had struck the paper after falling foul of an inkpot. Dol Form, as I have said, aroused the sleeper.

First he shouted at him as if his pig-tail was being torn off by wild horses, then

he punched him, and taking him by his bootles feet, dragged him on to the floor and doubled him up. The sleeper came to in slow and uneasy stages, and sat, gloomy and fretful, for half an hour on the bed, disconsolately sundering the links of the golden chain by which he had fettered his fancy. When thoroughly awake he thawed into conversation. The best dressed man in the room he might have passed for a foreign correspondence clerk in the City. He held a good position on some ship, was a native of Canton, and had been sailing round and round the world ever since his father put him to work in the galley of a ship's cook.

"Did we interrupt pleasant dreams?" I asked.

"No," he said hesitatingly. "Me no like smoke velly much."

The mocking laughter of his compatriots discounted his disavowal.

As I would not smoke he poured for me tea into the common cup—a handleless vessel about half the size of those from which our fathers drank when the spoke of a "dish" of tea. To refuse this proffered hospitality was impossible; albeit, inasmuch as I had seen half a dozen men drain the steaming liquid from the one unwashed cup, a feeling of repugnance was inevitable. The tea was innocent of milk or sugar, but—dare I confess it?—was exquisite in flavour; made from green China tea, of leaves which to me looked like curled sage, and twice as large as any I had previously seen.

By this time one's eyes had become accustomed to the clouds of smoke by which the room was filled, and it was possible to take a mental photograph. Upon the walls were certain regulations in English; by their side hung a card with a legend in Chinese, which was interpreted for me. It enjoined upon persons from dropping matches or pieces of opium upon the floor; from expectorating; and, most important of all, to conceal pipes in case of the entry of a stranger. A print or two hung upon the walls, and Chinese mottoes and greetings on long narrow slips of pink paper. Men's collars with fronts attaching—very English items, these, hung side by side with an implement inevitably Chinese. This was the one tooth brush which the host furnishes for the use of all his guests. For the most part two men occupied each bed. Several of them wore the caps beneath which, in London, they keep their pigtails secretly coiled. They were fully clad, and lay, one on his left side, the other on his right side so that both might face the all important lamp.

We came away with heads throbbing almost to bursting point, and feeling sick from the effects of the fumes which, with more less fortitude we had endured for the preceding two hours. I still have the pungent acrid-sweet of the opium in my nostrils and the whole fantastic horror of the nightmare room is ineffaceably fixed upon my memory.