

THE
SCRIBBLER,

A SERIES OF WEEKLY ESSAYS PUBLISHED IN MONTREAL, I. C.
ON LITERARY, CRITICAL, SATIRICAL, MORAL, AND
LOCAL SUBJECTS :

INTERSPERSED WITH PIECES OF POETRY.

By LEWIS LUKE MACCULLOH, Esquire.

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FORMING
VOLUME I.

*Sunt bona, sunt quædam mediocria, sunt mala, plu. a,
Quæ legis.....* MARTIAL.

Voulez vous du public meriter les amours,
Sans cesse en écrivant variez vos discours.
On lit peu ces auteurs nés pour nous ennuyer,
Quitoujours sur un ton semblent psalmodier. BOILEAU.

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.....
1822.

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THE SCRIBBLER.

MONTREAL.

THURSDAY, 23d AUGUST, 1821.

No. IX.

—————*Jam ardet*
Ucalegon.—————VIRGIL.

Already is our neighbours house in flames.

Causa latet, vis est notissima.———OVID.
Tho hid the cause, notorious is th' effect.

SIR NICHOLAS ASTAROTH Senior^[A], alias Old Nick, presents his grateful respects to those of his friends, disciples, servants and pupils who were present at the sublime and gratifying spectacle that was exhibited last week at the conflagration in St. Paul Street; and returns them his unfeigned thanks for the praiseworthy remissness, indifference, and indolence, with which they stood by and witnessed the destruction of the property of their fellow citizens. He takes this opportunity of expressing his approbation of their proficiency in the system which they know is so agreeable to the principles of diabolism, and, for their encouragement and improvement, transmits them a card of instructions, recommending their diligent observance of them on all similar occasions.

[A] In "Wit's miserie and the world's madnesse," by Thomas Decker, 1596, the Old Serpent, the devil, is represented as sending out, "seven devils to draw the world to capital sinne," who are thus enumerated; "Of Sathan's ministers, *Leviathan* is the first, that prompteth with pride; *Mammon* the second, that attempteth by avarice; *Asmodeus* the third, that seduceth by lecherie; *Beelzebub* the fourth, that exciteh to envie; *Baalberith* the fifth, that provoketh to ire; *Baalphegor* the sixth, that moveth to gluttony; *Astaroth* the seventh, that induceth to sloth and idleness." Beloe's *Anecdotes of Literature*.

He observed, with great disgust, the unwearied and energetic conduct of the military, both officers and privates, who for their unwelcome and officious interference, in stopping the progress of his darling element of destruction, and rescuing part of the property in jeopardy, are deserving of his most diabolical execrations; and he could not help remarking likewise the misplaced alacrity, and undevilish zeal with which several of the gentlemen of the town and others bestirred themselves on the occasion. He has marked them as outcasts from his favour, and only hopes that their example may not contaminate the purity of apathy, and the love of desolation, which it is so desirable to disseminate and cultivate amongst his faithful followers.

Pandemonium, the last day of the *Lion*, (22d August) in the year 7825 from the fall of the *Seraphim*.^[B]

[B] Friezius, Bellovacensis, and other writers on demonology, inform us, that in the infernal regions they reckon their months by the signs of the Zodiac; and, in the catalogue of the names and qualities of the demons by whom the nuns of Laudun were accused of being possessed, as detailed in the *Causes Celebres*, vol. 3, *Astaroth* is described as being of the order of the Seraphim.

CARD OF INSTRUCTIONS TO BE OBSERVED IN CASES OF FIRE.

1. Never think of any thing but taking care of number one, and do not by any means give way to the foolish weakness of doing unto others as you would that they should do unto you. In pursuance of which maxims it would be best (excepting for the benefit of example) for you all, upon an alarm of fire, to remain snug in your beds, or smoking your pipes and drinking your grog, as the case may be, especially if the fire be at any distance; but be sure to enquire which way the wind blows.

2. Though some of my favourites may be indulged in staying at home, it will be proper in order to give a laudable example to the multitude, for the majority to repair to the scene of combustion, for independent of the benefit of exhibiting a pattern of passive indifference, some of you may be likewise actively useful in promoting confusion, in breaking the ranks, and in vociferating contradictory orders; whilst those of you who are of the lower classes may be watching for opportunities of plunder.

3. When there, be sure to keep clear of those meddling fellows, who are for ever dragging decent people into the filthy ranks. If you see one of them approaching to exhort you to assist, it is a good plan to fall back a little behind your neighbours, and let them stand the brunt of entreaty, or get into some corner or deep shade, where you may contemplate the exhilarating scene in tranquility. Or, if you have a sufficiency of brass, you may stand your ground, and give an insolent answer, (observing first, however, whether the man has got a cane) or colour your refusal with a lie, such as, “you have been working all night, and must have time to rest,” or that “your shoulder is lame,” or “your hand severely cut,” or say that “you will come directly.” Nay you may even pretend to do your endeavour and hand a bucket or two, by which you will have the advantage of being able to break the ranks easier, and discourage others. And perhaps this may be the best means of getting near enough to the fire to enjoy the sight more satisfactorily.

4. Always get as close to the burning houses as you can, without as before said, endangering number one; for not only will you be more in the way there, and impede the labours of others, but, what you will hereafter find of great benefit, you will be-times get seasoned to blazing fires and rolling clouds of smoke, which will stand you in great stead when the time comes for being fetched away to fulfil your servitude in my mansion.

5. If you possess the faculty of out-heroding Herod, be loud in blaming all that is done, and palsy the efforts of others by exclaiming that exertion is useless, and that the magistrates and others do not do their duty, etc. etc. by which, though Heaven knows little enough is done by them who ought to do it, even that little will be frustrated or hindered.

6. Do not fail to apply the hackneyed observation that, although you are extremely sorry and much deplore the calamity, yet, since it was destined to be so, you are glad of the opportunity of seeing so grand a sight; herein resembling the Cornish curate, who, when, in the litany, he prayed for “all that travel by land or by water” always added, “but if it be thy blessed will that they be lost, oh, let them be shipwrecked on our coast!”

7. Those of you who are of the classes in society that are addicted to the glorious practices of pilferage and robbery, I need not exhort to follow your vocation; and if, as at the late fire, there is any wine or spirits to be got at, get as beastly drunk as you can, for the honour of your master and

preceptor.

8. A few of you, who are of cold blooded dispositions, may stand a little aloof, and amuse yourselves, whilst others are hard at work, in conjecturing how the fire began, in calculating what the consequences may be upon the prices of the articles you behold the destruction of, and in counting upon the ends of your fingers, how much is insured at the Phœnix, and how much at the Quebec, as well as what the loss will amount to of the individuals who are the sufferers.

Lastly, be sure both then, and the day after, to report that the disaster was not accidental; that incendiaries have been at work, etc. and give all the hints, winks and insinuations you can, that the fire has been purposely kindled, in order to defraud the Insurance Offices, and so forth, in such form and manner as you are all pretty well versed in; but take care to steer clear of the law, and avoid getting into the scrape of being prosecuted for a libel. You may however very safely bet ten to one that my worthy friends at the Insurance Office will most honourably dispute every claim made upon them, and five to one that the insured will have to pocket the loss.

NICH. ASTAROTH, *the elder*.

A very singular NATURAL CURIOSITY always makes its appearance in Montreal, some time after any premises have been burnt, and in front of the place. Indeed the same phenomenon occasionally may be observed in other spots; but, as it invariably is produced after a fire, it must be supposed to have some predominant or latent connection with the operations of that element. Large heaps of stones, after a while, grow up rapidly like mushrooms, in the street, and stretch more than half over it. Mineralogists are undecided as to their species and they do not seem to be governed by any known rules of geology. Some of them have in fact evidently been burnt, and are of a red colour and square shape, exactly like bricks, hence, and on other grounds, virtuosi may perhaps conclude, there is an analogy between them and the stones we read of, which are thrown up by the eruptions of volcanoes; be that as it may, their most singular quality is an astonishing *attraction* they have in the night-time for the shin-bones and noses of the human species, and persons wandering incautiously in the dark often find themselves suddenly and painfully surprised by this irresistible power; whilst, in the day-time, these remarkable productions possess an entirely opposite quality; that of *repulsion*; by which the passengers, and particularly the ladies who are *bien chaussées*, find themselves under the disagreeable necessity of moving in an irregular curve, through every variety and thickness of mud, through the deepest snow, or through deep furrows of dust, according to the weather and the season, at the risk likewise of being run over or knocked down, by a cart, a caleche, or a sleigh. These massy fungi are generally perennial, and are removed very slowly and with much difficulty. They are strongly recommended to the attention of experimental philosophers, particularly with a view to the prevention of their appearance, or the remedy of the evils they produce.

To make amends to the ladies for having just dragged them through mire, filth, and dust, to avoid the piles of building-materials with which our streets are so frequently encumbered, I will lead them into the country, and offer to their contemplation a different scene from that of stone, brick, mortar, fires, fire-engines, and insurance offices.

My friend Erieus' ode to the Moon, put me in mind of a copy of verses composed some five and twenty years ago, when, moonlight-walks had not only the charms they will always have for me, but, when the fervency of youthful love made them doubly delicious. After ransacking my old papers, I at length found them, and here they are, as they were written; if considered a little too amatory, my fair readers have only to look in their glasses, and they will readily excuse the

pruriency of poetry that was inspired by charms like their own.

Now evening, mild with step serene,
Advancing shews her tranquil mien,
And spreads her shadows o'er the green,
And now the pale moon calls for love,
Queen of the night!

Evanishes the distant hill,
And all is hush'd, and all is still,
Save where the softly soothing rill,
In gentle murmurs whispers love,
Stream of the night!

Come, my Corinna, let us stray
Where Philomel from hidden spray,
Delights us with her plaintive lay,
And tunes our softened souls to love,
Bird of the night!

Come to yon mystic shade repair,
No eye intrusive shall be there,
No fears to check my charming fair,
Impervious to all but love,
Bower of the night!

There, softly on the moss reclined,
Rapture and joys and love, we'll find
The bank with fragrant rose-leaves lined,
Will prove an altar worthy love,
Couch of the night!

The moon's pale light will half conceal
The witching charms love would reveal;
Here then, with strict embraces seal
Thy plighted vows to mighty love,
God of the night!

See now yon cloud veils Cynthia's face,
And robs her form of beaming grace;
'Tis consciousness; she yields her place,
And owns thee, glowing queen of love,
Queen of the night!

But Corinna not being always in the same humour, I afterwards set about altering Cowley's version of old Anacreon, which the reader will find in No. 6, and modified it according to my own taste, *ex. gr.*

Ne'er have I yet a woman seen
That had no charm for me,
From fifty down to wild fifteen,
I've loved them all, d'ye see.
'T was colour, shape, her air, her face,
Her temper, or her mind,
Wit, motion, speech, or nameless grace,
In short, 't was womankind.

If tall, how graceful was her air;
If short, why, 't was a pretty dear;
If fair, she's pleasant as the light;
If dark, what lover loves not night;

If plump, rich plenty fill'd my arms;
If slight, how wild is love's alarms;

The young, reluctant, willing, wishful, coy,
The old, experienced, wanton, full of joy;
Each varied shape, or age, or hue, or size,
Or voice, or motion, pleased or ears, or eyes,
Or touch, or taste, and to each lady bright
I'm constant, in inconstancy's despite.

He who loves always one, why should we call
More constant than the man loves always all.

I have been surprised at a paragraph in one of the papers announcing that "His Excellency the Governor had at length granted Mr. Pennoyer permission to bring as many copies of Lavoisne's Atlas (an improvement of Le Sage's) into Canada, as he can obtain subscribers for, *only*." This must either be a libel on the Governor, in the shape of a puff to obtain subscribers; or there must be something very "rotten in the State of Denmark," if an *exclusive* permission can be obtained for the importation into the province of any literary work. Indeed to place any obstacles whatever upon the introduction of any books, wherever printed, is something akin to the gothic and barbarous custom-duty exacted in England upon paintings, which pay so much by the square foot, whether produced by the pencil of a Titian, or the brush of a sign-painter.

L. L. M.

Mr. Little boy Fat-face must excuse the Scribbler from taking notice of the manners of the lady in question, which would be too personal and pointed for these essays. A paper, however, touching generally on the subject will shortly appear, and if the lady then chooses to put the cap on, it is hoped that—it may become her.

In the press and shortly will be published, a musical work for the use of the protestant parish church of Montreal. Address, Mr. Preston, engraver and copper plate printer.

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

[The end of *The Scribbler 1821-08-09 Volume 1, Issue 09* edited by Samuel Hull Wilcocke]