

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, 3d JANUARY, 1822.

No. XXVIII.

Alteri vivas oportet, si vis tibi vivere.—SENECA.
Wouldst thou live for thyself, live also for others.

Fabula narrator, toto notissima cælo.—OVID.
The tale I tell is known to all the world.

Illa nisi in lecto nusquam potuere doceri.—OVID.

For curtain-lectures, tho' begun in strife,
End as they ought between a man and wife.

It is remarked by Dr. Johnson that the promises of authors are like the vows of lovers. Happily, for the republic of letters, he did not, by his own conduct, exemplify the observation; nor did, I believe, any literary engagement he ever came under remain unfulfilled. Following as much as possible the excellent example of so great a man *haud passibus æquis*; I will endeavour to avoid incurring the reproach which gave occasion for his observation; and, considering that we have now entered upon a new year, first wishing my subscribers and patrons all that they themselves can reasonably wish; (and an over-ruling Providence knows full well that to grant the unreasonable wishes of mankind would be to destroy all their happiness, both here and hereafter;) I take old Time by the forelock, and celebrate the excellent ancient custom that exists in this country; for all the world to visit all the world on New Year's day. This custom cements the bonds of society, tends to reunite them where they are broken, and to display a species of equality between the various ranks which is gratifying to the well-wishers of human nature, and pleasing to the great bulk of the people who thereby become more approximated to each other. I have heard many of the British inhabitants both ridicule and deprecate this custom, because probably, without reflecting on other customs at home which to foreigners may appear equally absurd, they were not accustomed to see it observed there; but this they do only amongst themselves, and they have the good sense to join the French population in the congratulatory and festive visits they pay to each other on that day. The objection chiefly urged against it, is that it takes away a day from the pursuits of business, and here shine out those avaricious feelings, those deadening maxims, which characterize the trading part of society, and make the Canadians too justly look upon the generality of their British fellow subjects in this province as adventurers who come out solely with views of making a sufficiency of money to enable them to return, and live at home in a better style than they could have otherwise afforded; men who make gold their god, and worldly prudence their guide, and think they have lost a day when they have not sold a dollar's worth of goods. Hence too the Canadians are apt to form an erroneous idea of the general character of the inhabitants of the British islands: if we except the military, they see amongst them none but traders; our country gentlemen, the solid strength of the empire; our literati, its glory; our beau-monde, its ornament; our nobility, its pride; are never seen, or so seldom that

they

"Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto,"
Seem scatter'd specks on Ocean's wide expanse.

But as in fact the pursuits of commerce, if not pushed to extremes, are not wholly incompatible either with those of polite literature, with true gentility or with solid worth, I would fain see those amongst my countrymen who are ambitious of exhibiting a favourable specimen of British society, drop as much as possible the habits and the language of Thames street and Cheapside, and, by addicting themselves to such reading as the scanty portion of literature to be met with in Canada can afford, together with the study of manners and of the liberal arts, expand their minds above the dirty pursuit of gain alone. It follows of course that I should here recommend them all to become subscribers to "the Scribbler," and not to mind the trifling pain which occasional lashes at their foibles may cause, but if they chance to see themselves in the mirror, with true good sense smile at the likeness, consider to whom amongst their neighbours it may equally apply, (for being kept in countenance in such matters is a great consolation) and resolve to profit by the hint. It is to be moreover devoutly wished that such gentlemen as "borrow the Scribbler from a friend," "drop in at a store where it is taken to read," "receive it for a friend in the country and peruse it en passant," "need not take it because they can see it at the news room" etc. etc. as well as those who decline it because "the times are hard," "their expences are great," "they already take more papers than they can read," etc. etc. will all take the hint, and send their names to-morrow to Mr. LANE as subscribers.

Reverting to the observance of New Year's day I hope the gentlemen of Montreal will not allow the good old custom of saluting all the ladies they visit in the course of their peregrinations on that day, to fall into disuse; believe me the ladies themselves are very far from being averse to it; nor is it fit they should; affected prudery is one of the most disagreeable qualities a woman can possess, and is too often put on to hide that in one woman which lively frankness and playful vivacity are almost sure proofs does not exist in the mind of another. But this prudish affectation is to be met with almost exclusively amongst the ladies that are under the guidance of those male coterie-leaders whom my friend Jack Saunter, (from whom by the bye, I am sorry not to have heard again) exposed so justly last summer. The gentleman who has sent me the following lines I am pretty confident is of my way of thinking in this respect; and probably may have availed of the ceremonial of new-year's day to ascertain by an almost infallible test, in how far the sentiments they express are acceptable.

TO ELIZA.

For fair Eliza's love in vain I sigh,
Nor dare to her reveal my secret pain,
Unmark'd I drink love's poison from her eye,
And feel his rankling barb dart thro' each throbbing vein.

In brilliancy unmatch'd, in witchery drest,
Her bright black sparkling eye with giddy dance,
Unconscious plays around, whilst oft my breast
Beats high with ardent hope to me is meant that glance.

Ah, if to me 't be meant, and if these lines
E'er meet Eliza's eyes, will she not guess
Who now with hopeless passion for her pines,
And whom her bounteous love would with heaven's rapture bless?
POLYDORE.

Amongst the amusements of the season, the manly and pleasant exercise of Curling has been

resumed. It were to be wished, however, that the conviviality of the party that met at dinner on the occasion had not been carried so far as to cause more Curling and twisting in the gait of the bachelors (for the match was between the married men and the unmarried, and in both curling and drinking bouts, the former it seems carried the day) when they retired from table, than was consistent with elegance of step, or uprightness of demeanor. My sub-censor in this department has reported two of them as having disturbed “the public,” but as it is equally stated that “the public” did not treat them very ceremoniously, let us follow uncle Toby’s advice on a similar subject—wipe it up and say nothing more about it.

By the bye, I hold it an unpardonable crime against the dignity of the English language for the word “public” to be used, substantively, as it was under the Montreal head in last Saturday’s *Courant*, in the sense of a dancing master’s ball; if this be any language at all, it is downright Yankee, and tho’ it might be tolerated in an advertisement, ought no more than “lengthy,” or “grade,” or other similar bastard words to be allowed a place in an English paragraph. On the subject of these spurious expressions I have a great deal to say, but I dare not promise an essay upon them, until I am more out of debt as to my other engagements.

And now *Mr. Timothy Tremble*, to reply to your letter of last week; your solution of my paradox that “no woman can be perfectly agreeable without a spice of the devil in her composition,” by proving too much proves nothing at all, for if *mankind*, from being naturally corrupt, require that their helpmates should not be angels, it follows that the more *womankind* resemble the male sex in being naturally corrupt, the better they would be liked, so that those who were *all devil* would have the preference to such as had only *a spice*. I however of course agree that it would not do to have them quite angels, for I should be inclined, like Moore, to say to my angel, if I had one,

“Your soul, tho’ a very sweet soul, love,
Will ne’er be sufficient for me;
If you think by this coldness and scorning,
To seem more angelic and bright,
Be an angel, my love, in the morning,
But, oh! be a woman to-night.”

That a woman may sometimes swallow *the spice-box and all its contents*, I will allow to be very possible, and even to happen too often, yet that is generally when it is given her to swallow, when it is thrust down her throat, by the ill-treatment, ingratitude, or insensibility of the men; and then, instead of the little petulancies of a lively temper, and wayward pouting of a beautiful countenance, the quick sensibility of conscious merit, the chidings of alarmed affection, and the arch and playful malice with which the pangs of jealousy or the pains of absence are sportively inflicted upon the lover or the husband, the union of all which I look upon as that spice of the devil which makes a woman most delightful, and like the cayenne and the anchovy, that render our sauces piquant, gives a seasoning to life, and a condiment to love—if, I say, instead of this little sprinkling, the cook, that is the lover or the husband, for upon them I conceive it chiefly depends, infuses too great a portion of these stimulants, we have—pepper-pot and salt junk with a vengeance. There are undoubtedly many instances on record of ladies who were surcharged with these inflammatory ingredients, Xantippe alone is an host; but then again, who are the historians who have recorded these instances? why, the men. Remember the fable of the lion who being shewn a picture of a man tearing a lion to pieces as a proof of the superiority of the former, observed that if lions had studied the art of painting, there would have been ten thousand pictures of lions tearing men to pieces, to a solitary one of a contrary description. I certainly have known, my dear Mr. Tremble, two instances of women who appeared to be perfectly devoid of the spice we are speaking of, and who suddenly exploded like torpedoes, or Congreve rockets; but my space will not permit my detailing the circumstances attending them at

present, no more than to prescribe the antidotes to the devil's spices; so that I am obliged to continue my interdict, (for which I humbly beg Mrs. Tremble's pardon,) upon the use of her hands and nails, etc. as per last; and likewise lay my commands upon you, my dear Timothy, not to be later than twelve o'clock in coming home at night, nor ever to be more than merry when you come home; and earnestly recommend to you, not to lie on the bed-post but more towards the middle, and to snore as little during the night as possible: also not to speak with particular kindness to the black-eyed Canadian lass that brings in the breakfast. Next week I shall be more explicit in my directions.

I will next animadvert, in no measured terms, upon an occurrence that took place between the time of writing my last Scribbler, and this day of its publication. An officer's lady in this city going to the Episcopal Church walked up almost to the top of one of the aisles without finding any one civil enough to open their pew for her, (the pews appropriated to the military being all full, excepting that which *by command* is *not* occupied by the officers of the garrison) and feeling greatly disconcerted, as could not fail to be the case, was obliged, in the face of the polite congregation, who were staring at her all the time, to turn back, and leave the church. It is true the sexton, who was at first at the other end of the church, followed her, and she returned with him, and was by him then shewn into a pew. How truly characteristic this is of the antisocial, selfish, and aristocratical (though that is a very bad word to illustrate purse-pride) feelings that so much prevail in Montreal, every one here who knows what the real world is can judge. It is a genuine picture of that repulsive disposition which I am endeavouring to combat, wherever it appears, and which reduces our would-be great folks far below the estimation in which they might otherwise legitimately stand. I should be inclined to say a little too here on the anti-religious system of selling and letting out pews in a place of worship. Its being a practice generally adopted in the episcopal churches at home, as well as in many dissenting religions establishments, is no vindication, nor any apology for transgressing the commands of our Lord "Make not my father's house, an house of merchandize." But here again the monster Mammon is fortified in one of his strong holds, and I fear it will require a better pioneer than myself to sap his too deeply fixed entrenchment.

L. L. M.

For sale at James Brown's, St. François Xavier Street, Lay's two sheet Map of Lower Canada, price 10s. plain or 12s. 6d. coloured.

Dr. Holmes's chemical lectures commence the second Wednesday in January, at 7 o'clock, to be continued weekly. One guinea and a half the course or one dollar each lecture. First lecture gratis.

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 1822-01-03 Volume 1, Issue 28* edited by Samuel Hull Wilcocke]