

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.

Nos. 1 to 52,
From 23th June, 1821, to 20th June, 1822.

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 ecrivant variez vos discours.
On lit peu ces auteurs nés pour nous ennuyer,
Quitoujours sur un ton semblent psalmodier. BOILEAU.

PRINTED BY JAMES LANE, IN MONTREAL.
Published in Montreal, and to be had of the proprietor,
SAMUEL H. WILCOCKE, at Burlington, Vermont.

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1822.

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Title: The Scribbler 1821-08-09 Volume 1, Issue 16

Date of first publication: 1821

Author: Samuel Hull Wilcocke (1766-1833) (Editor)

Date first posted: Jan. 20, 2019

Date last updated: Jan. 20, 2019

Faded Page eBook #20190167

This ebook was produced by: Marcia Brooks, David T. Jones, Cindy Beyer & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>

THE SCRIBBLER.

MONTREAL.

THURSDAY, 11th OCTOBER, 1821.

No. XVI.

Glaucumque, Medontaque, Thersilochumque.—VIRGIL.

Tag Rag and Bobtail.

The futility of attempting to please all mankind, has been illustrated as far back as the time of the ancient fabulists in their apologue of the man, his son, and their ass: and no one will be more disappointed in his endeavours to do so than the periodical essayist. The historian writes for one class of readers, the critic for another, the novelist for a third, and in this manner in every distinct branch of literature, an author may acquire celebrity and be the admiration of all; for one set of readers generally take upon trust what another set assert with respect to their favourite authors, and are repaid by an equal degree of credit given to those they are acquainted with. But a miscellaneous essayist is expected to “be all things unto all men,” and unto all women too. Hence he must either effect impossibilities, or must assume a dictatorial tone, and, like a conceited son of Crispin fitting on a boot or a shoe, tell his readers that he knows better than they do what suits them; so that he must make them gulp down his pills, as well as smack their lips at his syrups and sweet-meats. Now it is much easier to play the pedagogue than it is to effect an impossibility, *quod erat demonstrandum*; therefore, I would have all my good pupils to be satisfied that, whether suitable to their individual palates or capacities or not, every one of my numbers has its place in the intellectual banquet which I serve up, as well as its aim and end, although it may escape their immediate penetration to discover them. I am told that by some I am considered as too abstruse, too learned, Heaven bless the mark! by others too volatile; one correspondent would have me turn my thoughts more upon trade and commerce and I suppose would wish me, like some of my contemporaries to publish price-currents of butter, eggs, onions, carrots, and gooseberries: some unconscionable rogues have complained of want of originality in my essays, who perhaps never wrote an original line in their lives, or know a line of Virgil from one in the Seven champions of Christendom; nay one whimsical chap, who is probably enamoured of “tweedle dum and tweedle dee,” don’t like the Scribbler because there is no music in it! But—:

Know all men by these presents, that it will not henceforward be permitted for any one, under the degree of an A. M. to criticise or find fault with any number of the Scribbler without he is provided with a proper certificate that he has read the Spectator, the Tatler, and the Rambler; and is able to produce one original thought of his own invention; or an old idea clothed in new language which will be admitted as an equivalent.

It will be observed that, like an indulgent and magnanimous sovereign, after establishing my authority upon the undisputed basis of my own dictum, I require a very small degree of qualification in those whom I admit into the ranks of privileged critics. But I mercifully consider the state of letters in this country. As Diogenes required a lanthorn at noon-day to search for an

honest man so—but it is enough to have barely shewn the rod.

However as there is a tolerably numerous class of grown-up masters and misses, to whom moral or literary essays are a bore, criticism unintelligible, historical disquisitions tiresome, and even satire never welcome unless it degenerate into lampooning; I will promise to dish them up once every quarter an olio of anecdotes, jests, and epigrams; taking as much care as I can, not to encroach upon the territories of that ancient good and useful ally of all periodical writers, Joseph Miller, Esquire. This number shall be devoted to that purpose; and my other readers must be content once in a while to be entertained with whipt syllabub, maccaroni, and blanc-mangé, instead of more substantial fare.

It was a frequent and well known observation of Dr. Johnson, who had a great antipathy to sound without sense, that “music took away all a man’s ideas, and give him no others in their place.”^[A] A lady, who was a skilful player on the piano forte, being reminded of this assertion, said “I beg leave to differ from the learned doctor, of which he is himself an instance, for it certainly gave him at least one idea, and that no bad one either.”

^[A] Under the rose, I am pretty much of the same opinion.

Dr. Johnson being observed one day to be very inattentive at a concert, where a celebrated flute player was running his divisions upon that elegant instrument, and being told how extremely difficult it was to perform that musical effort to which he paid so little attention, replied, “*Difficult* do you say it is, my good friend, I wish it were *impossible*.”^[B]

^[B] Dr. Johnson is said to have indulged in a hearty laugh at a quibbling application that was made of a line in Virgil to one of Handel’s long fugues;

Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile tempus.

As this is a Latin pun, therefore untranslatable, therefore “caviar to the multitude,” it is thrust down into a note, not to be a stumbling block for the uninitiated.

In early life this great and learned man, married a widow of the name of Porter whose age was double his own, fifty to twenty five; his mother remonstrated with him on the occasion, telling him he was deceiving both himself and the lady, since she had ruined her former husband by her extravagance, and he had neither money to support her, nor family and friends to rise in the world. “Mother,” he replied, “I have not deceived Mrs. Porter; I have told her the worst of me; that I am of mean extraction, that I have no money, and that I have had an uncle hanged. She replied, that she valued no one more or less for his descent, that she had no more money than myself, and that, though she had not had a relation hanged, she had fifty, *who deserved hanging*.”

Oriental Apologue.—Carim Raschid was a most worthy man, and respected by every one that knew him. His wife too, was a most worthy woman, but he had the misfortune to disagree with

her upon every subject; being a philosopher, however, he bore this little calamity with a wonderful degree of patience, besides, he was a very religious man; which came to his aid on those trying occasions. One thing, however, he heretically maintained with some obstinacy. He had the fullest and firmest belief in the *joys of paradise*, but he could not believe, he could not see how, or in what manner, they could be eternal. At length this good man died, and was carried by the angels of Mahomet into paradise, where in the fullness of bliss he received the reward of his benevolent actions upon earth. He had enjoyed this happy estate for some years, when, one day, the portals of paradise flew open, and the spirit of his wife entered to partake of her remuneration likewise. "Ah!" exclaimed Carim, "you see I was right, I knew the joys of paradise could never be eternal!"

A Persian anecdote relates that a young fellow, who, though married, had not yet abandoned his profligate habits, addressed his friend's wife saying, "let me kiss thee, that I may know who kisses best, thou or my wife;" "go and ask my husband," said she, "for he can tell thee, as he has kissed both of us."

"A wife, domestic, good, and pure,
Like snail, should keep within her door;
But not like snail, with silvery track,
Place all her wealth upon her back.

A wife should be like echo true,
Nor speak, but when she's spoken to;
But not like echo still be heard
Contending for the final word.

Like a town-clock a wife should be,
Keep time and regularity;
But not like clocks harangue so clear
That all the town her voice may hear.

Young man, if these allusions strike,
She whom as bride you'd wish to hail,
Must just be like, and just unlike,
The town-clock, echo, and a snail."

A popular preacher in Ireland declaiming against the wickedness of the present times, and declaring it was the most abandoned and profligate age since the creation of the world, added, "wickedness is now arrived at such a pitch that we frequently see children, before they can either *talk or walk, running* about the streets, *blaspheming* their maker."

On the ladies wearing roses in their hair.

The reason why oft' on the heads of our fair,
The sweetest of flowers in full beauty blows,
Is this, the sly wenches are all well aware
The men love a pretty girl *under the rose*.

On their wearing watches in their bosoms.

"Amongst our fashionable bands,
No wonder now that Time should linger,
Allow'd to place his *two rude hands*,
Where others dare not lay a finger."

A very ignorant woman, who seldom attended divine service, one day happened to go to church, when she heard a sermon from Luke xiii. v. 3. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." On her return home some of her neighbours enquired of her what was the minister's text? "O la!" she exclaimed, "a terrible text, a dreadful text! *Except we pay our rent, we shall all be turned out of the parish.*"

Anecdote of M. de la Feuillade, grand marshal of France, under Louis XIV.

Being very plainly clad, the grand marshal, having been dispatched by the king on affairs of the utmost importance, stopped at Lyons to deliver a packet from his Majesty to the Archbishop, who, taking the bearer for only an ordinary person, asked him whether there was any thing new at Paris; "green peas, my Lord," replied the marshal "are uncommonly forward this year!" "You mistake my meaning friend," said the Archbishop, "what were the people saying when you left Paris." "My Lord," answered the marshal, "they were saying vespers." The prelate then fell into a violent passion, saying, "How dare you, friend, speak thus to a person of my quality? Who, and what are you, that you dare to be thus insolent? What are people pleased to call you?"—"Why, my Lord," replied the marshal, with great sang froid, "Some are pleased to call me friend, others monsieur, and the king calls me cousin."

Proclamation made in former times by the town-crier of Innerkeithing in Scotland.

"Aw ye gude fowk o' the toun of Innerkeithen; this is to let ye wat, that there is cum to this toun the day, a beast caw'd a lamb; the laird is to ha' the first quarter, the provost is to ha' the second quarter, and the minister is to ha' the third quarter: the heed and the harigalls gaes to the baillie. I Johnny Bell is to ha' twa sma' puddings for cawing; but if naebody speers for the lave of the beast, it will no be kill'd the day."

A certain Grecian painter who had usually exerted his talents on lascivious subjects, was commanded by the state under which he lived, to atone for his errors by forming a piece which should damp the most licentious appetite. He accordingly drew a naked Venus with all the charms his imagination could suggest, and then, to make her totally disgusting, clapped on a rough black beard, *upon her chin.*

Shortly after the first appearance of the sect of the quakers in England some of them deviated into the greatest degree of fanaticism, in Westmoreland particularly, where they made it a constant practice to enter the churches with their hats on during divine service, and to rail against and reproach the ministers aloud, calling them liars, deluders of the people, Baal's priests, Babylon's merchants, selling beastly ware, and bidding them come down from the high places. An instance of this kind, ludicrous enough, occurred at Orton. Mr. Fothergill the vicar there, happened one Sunday to have exchanged pulpits with Mr. Dalton of Shap, who had but one eye. A quaker, stalking as usual into the church at Orton, whilst Mr. Dalton was preaching, cried out, "Come down, thou false Fothergill." "Who told thee" said Mr. Dalton, "that my name was Fothergill?" "The spirit," quoth the quaker. "Then is that spirit of thine a lying spirit," said the other, "for it is well known, I am not Fothergill, but peed" (a North country word for one-eyed)

“Dalton of Shap.”

“Buy some of this silk, please your ladyship,” said a shopman to lady N. as she was cheapening materials for a dress at a mercer’s. “ ’pon my ’onor, you will find it will last for ever, and after that it will do very well for your ladyship’s waiting maid.”

A gentleman seeing a determined railer against women at a wedding party observed to a friend, that he thought him rather out of place on such an occasion. “By no means” replied the other, “he will serve for an epithalamium.” “How so?” was instantly asked, “why because” was the answer, “you know he is *a verse to matrimony*.”

Oh! jam satis! If here is not variety enough, I will give my best foolscap and bells away for nothing. Moreover, I will wager a set of “Scribblers”, to a calf’s head (no very contemptible object to an hungry author) that before next Thursday, the sources whence I have borrowed, (for most of them are borrowed,) any two of the above trifles, will not be pointed out to me by any one of my criticisers.

L. L. M.

N. B.—*The Widow* will be remonstrated with next week.

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 16* edited by Samuel Hull Wilcocke]