THE

SCRIBBLER,

A SERIES OF WEEKLY ESSAYS PUBLISHED IN MONTREAL, L. 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 ecrivant variez vos discours.
On lit peu ces auteurs nés pour nous ennuyer,
Quitoujours sur un ton semblent psalmodier. BOILEAU.

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THE SCRIBBLER.

MONTREAL. **THURSDAY, 1*st* NOVEMBER, 1821.** **No. XIX.**

——*Sapientia prima est*
Stultitia caruisse.
HORACE.

Wisdom is oft but folly in disguise.

Content, sweet maid, delights in simple things,
And envies not the state of queens or kings;
Can dine on sheepshead, and a dish of broth,
Without a table or a table-cloth——
Sweet nymph! like doves, she seeks her straw-built nest
And in a pair of minutes is undrest;
Without a warming-pan can go to bed
And wrap her petticoat about her head.
PETER PINDAR.

——*Veneficæ scientioris carmine.*——HORACE.

'Twas a more potent sorcerer's spell.

PHILOSOPHY has been variously defined, and has indeed various meanings both amongst different classes, and in different ages. The literal signification of the word is, the love of wisdom: and a philosopher is, in that sense, a wise man, or a searcher after wisdom. But in its colloquial and most generally accepted modern sense it denotes a man who is satisfied to take things as they are, not fruitlessly endeavouring to counteract the course of events, nor repining at what it is impossible to rectify; but yet firmly and calmly asserting his own opinions; submitting, if necessary, to oppression without crouching, and to calamity without flinching, or enjoying prosperity without surfeiting, and elevation without arrogance. Not led astray by wild theories, nor adopting one favourite whim, and decrying the fantasies of others; not yielding by turns to the persuasive eloquence, or the perplexing sophistry of contradictory authors and orators; but feeling and judging for himself, and allowing to others the same privilege.

Let us see how little some of the vaunted philosophers of antiquity are entitled to that appellation.

Democritus, it is true, had abundant reason to laugh at the follies of mankind, but he became himself still more ridiculous than any of those who excited those feelings. His disciples can never prove that philosophy consists in laughing at the calamities of the human race. The deaths of parents, children, beloved objects, were but so many incitements to risibility. Countries ravaged by war, regions destroyed by earthquakes, were all, according to his philosophy, occasions for laughter. Equally insensate in the other extreme was Heraclitus, who taught that every thing, every occurrence on earth, all those sensations and circumstances that engender mortal enjoyment, were sources of misery and required to be lamented; the birth of a child, the marriage

of a friend, drew forth tears and wailings, from the contemplation of the misfortunes to which the one might be subjected, and the miseries the other might produce. Diogenes went still farther in the career of philosophical folly. Not to speak of the “act of shame” which he committed in public in order to testify his contempt of general opinion, and common feelings, what must be said of that madman who, during the scorching heats of summer, rolled himself naked over the burning sands, and in the nipping blasts of winter, hugged, in a state of nature, the fragments of ice accumulated amongst the rocks? Pythagoras, who perhaps, as long as he continued the disciple of Thales, may have been entitled to have been called a sage, yet after he had been to Egypt, and had been initiated into the mysteries of the priests of Diospolis, recollected that his soul had, at former periods, animated a variety of other bodies, and held that beans were of so divine a nature, that it was better to die than to eat that species of pulse. Zeno, that austere stoic, would now-a-days have been relieved, on the ground of lunacy, from a verdict of *felo de se*, for he hung himself, because he had stumbled and fallen, and considered that as a warning for him to leave this world!

All these follies, grafted upon the solid philosophy which was otherwise taught in the schools of these sages, may be traced to the absence of a contented mind; a mind satisfied with those things which are, and which can not be remedied, for

> “——in erring reason’s spite,
> One truth is clear, whatever is, is right.”

I will make no apology to my readers for introducing in this place, as an exemplification of the sentiments of a philosophic mind, the following lines, suggested by a ballad entitled “Stone walls do not a prison make,” by Richard Lovelace, a neglected poet of the seventeenth century. [A]

[A] The first and last stanzas are altered from Lovelace’s ballad, which was chiefly a political one, the rest is original. Lovelace was born in 1618. His polished manners and the uncommon beauty of his person, set off by a graceful diffidence, rendered him the delight of the sex. He delivered the Kentish petition to the House of Commons for restoring the King to his rights, and for settling the government, for which he was committed to the gate-house at Westminster. After four months imprisonment he was set at liberty upon bail for 40,000*l*.——not to stir out of the lines of communication without a pass from the Speaker.

STANZAS WRITTEN IN PRISON.

When love with unconfined wings
Hovers within these gates,
And my divine Althea brings
To whisper at my grates;
When I am fetter'd in her hair,
And prison'd in her eye;
The birds that wanton in the air
Know no such liberty.

When at the grate I taste the meals
Provided by that hand,
And scorn the cates that luxury deals
To princes of the land;
When, midst th' unheeded clank of chains;
We sit thus happily;
The wildest fawn that sends the plains
Knows no such liberty.

When free to her I pledge the bowl,
Print on the brim a kiss,
And, scoffing at the bars' controul,
Quaff from her lips the bliss;
When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
And healths and smiles go free,
Fishes that tipple in the deep
Know no such liberty.

When I hold converse with the Sage,
Historian, Poet, Mime,
And scan each learn'd or sportive page
Of old and modern time;
When round the globe my thoughts are driven
From North to Southern sea;
The viewless, trackless, winds of Heaven
Know no such liberty.

When, on my solitary bed,
In visions of the night,
My raptured soul has, dreaming, sped
Imagination's flight;
When, spurning e'en Creation's bound,
To Heaven I mount on high,
Meteors that shoot this world around;
Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
A prison-cell content can take
For pleasant hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free;
Angels alone that soar above
Enjoy such liberty.[B]

[B] These lines have before appeared in a Montreal paper, but as with the vanity of an author, I am willing to believe "the Scribbler" will have a longer duration and more extensive circulation when

——*futuros*
Crescit in annos,

than the ephemeral sheets of a news-paper, I have availed of a congenial subject to introduce them.

If we look again at the lives and practices of some of the most celebrated philosophers, we shall perceive many of them slaves of superstition, believers in omens, philtres, incantations, and other “weak inventions of the enemy.” Zeno, Epicurus, Cato, and even the divine Plato, are instances amongst the ancients. Hobbes, Cardan, Urceus Codrus, amongst the moderns, nor were even Bacon and Newton exempt from similar frailty.

To keep these grave gentlemen in countenance however, we have the whole female race, who are, either openly or covertly, fortune-tellers, or believers in the art. That they are sorceresses we all know, and that their charms have more power than any philtres, potions, or incantations, take an example.

A young gentleman, when collector in one of the East India Company’s districts in Guzerat, formed a temporary connection with an amiable Hindoo girl of distinguished caste but ruined fortune. His attachment to Zeida was delicate and sincere. He never saw her in public, but at her own house, and she used to enter his durbar by a private door in the garden. Three years had thus passed, when the lovely girl, knowing her friend was shortly to return to Europe, with many tears implored his counsel as to an offer she had had from an officer of high rank, in her own caste, to marry her; pleased with the honourable establishment that offered itself for the acceptance of his mistress, he advised her to consent to it, and the marriage took place. Zeida lived with her husband in a remote part of the city; from prudential motives all former intercourse ceased; and from the different modes of life between Asiatics and Europeans nothing was heard of her for many months.

In the warm nights preceding the rainy season the youth slept upon a sofa on the flat roof of the durbar, to which there was also an ascent by an outer flight of steps from the garden. While reposing there on one of those delightful moon-light nights, known only between the tropics, and seemingly in a dream, he thought something gently pressed his heart, and caused a peculiar glow, accompanied by a spicy odour: under this sensation he awoke, and beheld a female reclining over him in a graceful attitude. Her personal charms, costly jewels, and elegant attire, were discernible through a semi-transparent veil. Her left hand held a box of perfumed ointment, with which her right was softly anointing his bosom nearest the region of the heart. He remained some moments in astonishment, but the lovely stranger, throwing aside her veil, discovered Zeida, decked with every charm that youth and beauty could assume on such an interesting visit. The ointment she was using was one of reputed magical potency, and its grateful scent was principally derived from the odour of the Polianthes tuberosa, a flower of the most exquisite fragrance, which it emits chiefly in the night, and thence has received the name of *Soondal malam*, or “mistress of the night,”[C] from the Hindoos, who compare it to “a frail fair, visiting her lover in the dark, sweetly perfumed and highly dressed.”

[C] *Soondal malam* is translated by Pennant, “mistress of the night,” by Barrow, “wanton of the night,” and by Forbes, “intriguer of the night.” The Polianthes tuberosa was introduced into England in 1664, and is mentioned by Evelyn by the name of Tuberose hyacinth.

Thee, sweetest mistress of the night,
The Indian likens to his fair,
The willing vot'ress of delight,
With flowing locks, and bosom bare.

Sweetly perfumed, and highly dress'd,
Yet elegant in loose attire,
She softly seeks her lover's breast,
A frail, accomplish'd, fierce, desire.

In the sly shades of darkness hid,
No blush is seen to tinge her face,
Whilst love's perfected raptures shed
The balmiest fragrance round the place.

When the first raptures of their meeting had subsided, Zeida informed him that her union had turned out most unfortunate; that in hopes of happier days she had hitherto forborne from complaining, but, seeing no amendment, she had seized an opportunity of repairing to the durbar, in hopes of regaining that affection which had formerly constituted her happiness. Fearful of a cool reception, she had previously consulted the most celebrated *cunning woman* in the city, who had prepared a box of ointment which she was to apply by stealth, as near as possible to the heart of the object beloved, and if she succeeded so far, she might be assured of accomplishing her wishes. She was indebted to a far more powerful charm for that felicity. Zeida accompanied the youth to England, where they were married, and where they now live and have several children.

L. L. M.

FOR THE SCRIBBLER.

AN AUTUMNAL THOUGHT.

Sadly blows the rushing gale,
Sadly roars the foaming stream,
Languid looks the faded vale,
Pale and faint Sol's misty beam.

Varied hues the mountain's side
Gives to the spectator's eye;
All its beauty, all its pride,
Soon shall wither, soon shall die.

Soon the elm's gay summer-robe,
Yielding to th' autumnal blast,
Soon the poplar's sylvan dress,
Verdant coverings, will be cast.

Winter gathering in the North,
Now invades th' ethereal plain,
Calls his cold attendants forth,
Blasting winds, and sleet, and rain.

Nature holds the gloomy pall
That must shroud the closing year;
Shuts the scene, and then lets fall
O'er its tomb a frozen tear.

Such is man! his bloom decays;
Life's pale autumn soon draws near;
Death his glory prostrate lays,
And rounds the winter of his year.

ERIEUS.

Port Talbot, U. C.

For sale at H. H. Cunningham's, *New edition of Lay's Map of New-York and parts adjacent, price $10 portable, or $11 mounted.*

To be raffled for at Nickless and Macdonell's.

Dr. Thornton's Botanical Works, 5 vols. Imperial, value, £100.
Lavater's Physiognomy, 5 vols. Quarto, £31 10.
Encyclopædia Perthensis, 23 vols. Octavo, £10.
Pinkerton's modern Atlas, 1 vol. Imperial, £23.
Ireland's Hogarth, 3 vols. £9.
Malton's views in Dublin, 1 vol. Imperial, £10.

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 19* edited by Samuel Hull Wilcocke]