

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 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, 8th NOVEMBER, 1821.

No. XX.

Dicite Io Pæan, et Io bis dicite Pæan.—OVID.

Let loud applauses shake the crouded Court.

—They lay in wait, as he that setteth snares; they set
a trap; they catch men.

JEREMIAH, v. 28.

Scribere jussit amor—OVID.

'Tis love inspires my pen.

A series of letters from one of the East India Company's settlements have fallen into my hands which relate a transaction that is both interesting as a private narrative, and not uninteresting as a public lesson. It is true that in this colony, no points of similarity will be found, the country, the climate, the manners, the characters, being so different, but curiosity to know what passes in a distant part of the globe, will create a desire of minute information,—which would find such food more palling were the circumstances applicable (which a slight inspection will serve to prove they are not) to the times and persons immediately before our eyes. The matters arising from the story related, it is understood, are still pending, and waiting the ultimate ordeal of legal investigation; although in the mean time two triumphant verdicts of juries have been obtained against the East India Company, so much to the satisfaction of the public, that at the last trial, when the verdict was brought in, instantaneous and involuntary shouts of applause from a most crouded audience rang through the Court, in defiance of set forms and forensic decorum. Hence the final result may be, in some measure, anticipated. Be that as it may, I proceed with

LETTER I.

Pulo Penang, or Prince of Wales' Island.

1st. May, 1820.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I will devote this letter to the commencement of the recital I promised you of a pregnant instance of the blighting and contaminating effects which power and impunity have upon the dispositions and conduct, even of Britons; the brutifying consequences of the pride of purse upon persons pretending to be gentlemen, and the baneful oppression to which the influence of a wealthy association, and the remoteness of justice from its original source, gives rise, even in a colony to which the privileges of a British Court of Judicature, and of the laws of our country,

have been extended by Parliament.

You know our friend S——; you have heard too of the amiable and accomplished Louisa A——; you are acquainted with the domestic disquiets that partly induced him to leave England, and that the unblushing infidelities of his wife were amongst the most powerful causes that first drove him into the arms of Louisa, and were finally the occasion of his acceptance of the situation under the East India Company which he held in this settlement. With the anterior history of the lady neither you nor I are acquainted. Her real rank and family, however, it is hinted, would entitle her, were she disposed to claim merit from such paltry distinctions, to take precedence of every lady in this settlement, the Governor's consort alone excepted. But my knowledge of her has been limited to the time since she came to this island: and that enables me to add that, during the whole of her residence here, (about two years) she has been distinguished by the utmost propriety of conduct. Of retired, domestic, and unobtrusive habits, her graceful vivacity, her unaffected good breeding, her elegance of manner, were displayed only to those who were admitted into the privileged family-circle of S——, whilst her beneficent disposition, the kindness and warmth of her heart, were known and honoured, by all the poorer classes who came within the scope of her attention. Of the circumstances attending the early attachment between her and S—— I am ignorant, but I have often heard both declare, that it is one of seventeen years standing, and of proof against all the vicissitudes of fortune, of climate, and of time. From this you will conclude that Louisa is past her prime; and so she is, if the bloom of youth, and the heyday of the blood alone constitute the prime of woman's life. Yet time, that in other females, makes sad ravages in their personal charms, seems, in the instance of Louisa A—— but to have shed a mellowness of tint over features and a form originally most bewitching, that rather adds to, than detracts from, the attractions of beauty dressed in smiles, and symmetry of shape unrivalled.

S—— had been here a few years, before the lady came out and became part of his establishment. She left, it seems, her country, her friends, her family, and property, (for, instead of being an "aventuriere," as has been propagated here, I understand that, exclusive of what will devolve to her upon the deaths of relations, she has an estate of her own in Kent,) to traverse half the globe, and dwell with the friend of her youth: to be the delight of his prosperity, his solace, comfort, and relief, in adversity. The voyage from London to Calcutta was in itself almost an unprecedented exertion for a delicate and unprotected female; whilst the hardships and inconveniences of a coasting conveyance in the undecked country vessels to this settlement, and in the most unfavourable monsoon, the period when she arrived, would alone form formidable obstacles for many men to surmount; but I have frequently had occasion to be convinced that fortitude and perseverance are qualities which the female sex possess in a far greater degree than the men, whenever the performance of a duty or the satisfaction of affectionate regard are the motives of action or of endurance. In the men these qualities are seldom called into exertion but by the desire of fame, of wealth, or of extrication from distress, in fact only by selfish motives; in women they are the natural and spontaneous results of feeling, of gratitude, and of love, and the farthest possible from originating in self-interest, or even self-preservation. To return, however, to my immediate subject. S—— enjoyed the confidence of the East India Company and the professed friendship and esteem of their agents here in a most eminent degree till recently. The disputes that existed between the East India Company and the sultan of Acheen, concerning the traffic to that part of Sumatra, which was claimed as the dominions of Acheen, the monopoly of which was a great object with our rulers, and the negociations and correspondence which the council had to carry on that occasion, gave ample employment and importance to S——'s talents, and rendered his services indispensable: but his Majesty of Acheen had no sooner expired than that importance in a great measure ceased; and, the whole dispute verging fast into oblivion, the Company having obtained their objects, it has been said that the dismissal of S—— from

their service, which took place at the expiration of the term for which he had been engaged, was in fact to be attributed to that change of circumstances, although various other causes have been assigned; and the countenance, confidence, and friendship of the agents of the Company here were suddenly and totally withdrawn from him. It is not my object to enter into any detail of what his conduct was or was not, or of the motives of a journey he undertook to the continent of Pegu (now you know under the dominion of the Birman empire.) A public investigation of the charges against him will take place, if the Birman monarch does not interfere to claim his person and his property which were forcibly taken by a detachment sent after him to Rangoon, contrary to existing treaties, and in violation of the laws of nations, which, however little the East India Company care about in other instances, they will probably, from the character and power of the Birmans be compelled to respect in this case. Be that as it may, S—— embarked in a Malay proa for the coast of Pegu, leaving instructions, as it is said, for Louisa A—— to follow him, after settling a number of affairs he left in charge with her and with a few of his intimate friends. No sooner was he gone than the agents of the Company gave out that he had embezzled property, to a large amount, and a detachment of troops was procured from the military commandant, and sent after him under the guidance of one of the principal agents of the Company, and a Dutch renegado from Batavia, who was in their service. It has been reported that, though it was industriously and ostensibly stated that he had taken with him property of the Company to a considerable extent, the real cause of the hue and cry raised against him was that he had in his power and possession not only many weighty secrets, but also a number of *papers and documents*, which the honourable Company were apprehensive might fall into inimical hands, and tend to expose certain facts, motives, and conduct which they were interested in concealing; and there seems to have been some ground for this supposition from the avidity with which, throughout the transactions on which I now address you, they have followed, and searched for, and pried into, and secured, *papers* of every description. Be it so, or not, I know, and you know, enough of S——'s honourable disposition to be perfectly sure that whatever secrets of that kind have been entrusted to him, neither perfidy nor ingratitude, injustice nor persecution, will tempt him to betray; and that the confided secrets of enemies are as inviolate in his bosom as those of his friends and of himself. This too they knew, or perhaps they would not have ventured to inflict the outrages upon his feelings which have been exemplified in their brutal and unmanly treatment of poor Louisa. But as I am called for at the durbar I must now break off, and shall in my next proceed with the detail of that disgraceful business, partly derived from my own observation, partly from S——'s communication, partly from public notoriety, but principally from her own unaffected and pathetic narration.

I am, etc.

(to be continued.)

The following lines were written on a torn paper which formed a wrapper to some of the letters; they appear to have been an effusion of S—— previous to Louisa's arrival.

Though from Louisa far I wander,
Fond love by absence still grows fonder,
In fadeless tints remembrance traces
Her witching charms, enchanting graces;
All other beauties at the best,
To hers but serve to give a zest.
When various charmers meet my view,

I thus comparison pursue:
This eye, though brilliant, hers is brighter,
This skin, though fair, hers is yet lighter,
This cheek, though deck'd with blooming roses,
Compared to hers its beauty loses;
And who amongst the gay and fair,
Like her can boast such silken hair,
Adown her ivory neck rich flowing,
And there contrasted beauties shewing?——
Beat slow, my pulse, yet slower—slower——
Nor, thou remembrance, riot lower;
Dare not to sing her blue-vein'd breast,
Half hidden by her happy vest,
For there must love-fraught frenzy dwell,
Where strawberries tip each gentle swell:
But sing those archetypes of blisses
Her dewy lips, provoking kisses:
Memory record, with fondest zeal,
That day when last 'twas mine to seal
Two balmy kisses on her mouth,
Melting and mutual were they both.
O might my flattering fancy rear
A golden beam of hope to cheer,
With trembling ray, this dreary shore;
Thus would my soul its wishes pour;
Go, guardian-genius of my heart,
Go, to her hovering dreams impart
Some faint resemblance that may give
Me in her memory blest to live;
Upon her pillow's edge alight,
Hid in the veil of conscious night,
Watch when her beauteous bosom heaves,
Then send forth thoughts, like silent thieves,
That to her heart may gently steal,
And there each latent wish reveal:
Then, if aright thou formst thy spell,
Her throbbing bosom soon will swell
With soft effusions from that heart,
Which tell-tale murmuring words impart,
Delicious half-formed sounds of love——
O that mine ear those sounds could prove!
And then——let——dreaming fancy aiding,
Silence and night her blushes shading,
Midst broken accents, fragrant sighs,
Love-quivering lips, half-open'd eyes——
Close to her breast a phantom twine,
And let that phantom's form be mine.

The following curious advertisement is copied from the New Brunswick Royal Gazette of the 9th October.

I DO forbid from this date, *James Ackerman*, and *John Ackerman*, and their Wives, and their rising generation, ever to cross my property, from this date to the end of the world: if they do, they must expect to take what follows.

SAMUEL UPTON.

N. B.—This is not for their good deeds.
French Lake, (Sheffield) 26th Sept. 1821.

Ocno-Mentus sits on the same form with Erieus Junior.

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 20* edited by Samuel Hull Wilcocke]