

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.

.....
1822.

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Title: The Scribbler 1821-08-09 Volume 1, Issue 26

Date of first publication: 1821

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

Date first posted: June 14, 2019

Date last updated: June 14, 2019

Faded Page eBook #20190627

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, 20th DECEMBER, 1821.

No. XXVI.

—*Longa est injuria, longæ
Ambages.*

VIRGIL.

Gross is the injury, and long the tale.

“Now there is besides a great man—that is, a great little man, or a little great man, my dear Lawrence,—and his name begins with V. and what believes he? Why, nothing, honest Lawrence, nothing in earth, heaven or hell.”

KENILWORTH. Vol. 3. Chap. 4.

LETTER III.

Pulo Penang, May 1820.

The other sheet under this cover concluded with a reference to the iniquitous and false pretext which was made use of to imprison not only Louisa, but three gentlemen of the settlement who, by a singular fortuity, became most innocently implicated in these transactions. In the course of the strict search in which the honourable gentlemen before mentioned made themselves so dishonourably busy, tho' they could not lay their hands upon any one of the papers specified in their illegal warrant, they took away from Louisa's writing desks and scrutoirs, a considerable sum of money in Birman gold, and in piastres, part of which was her own, and part she stated belonged to S——, they took a great number of papers, her baptismal register, letters from her sister and nieces in England to herself, a bill of exchange on London which was the property of S——, a number of her own accounts and receipts, and amongst other papers they found a letter to her from S—— dated at Rangoon. All these things, (to not one of which the East India Company had the slightest right,) *the Swearer*, did not hesitate, at the command of his superiors, to point out, with a wilful lie, as being the property of the Company; and they were therefore consigned to the rapacious hands of captain Liver. But that letter from S—— which communicated intelligence where he was, and referred Louisa to the three gentlemen before alluded to, for advising and assisting her, in her unprotected state, and in embarking for Pegu, contained also, it is said, some amatory and prurient passages that naturally caused Louisa to be shocked that they should meet any other eyes than those for whom they were intended. It was the Dutchman who made himself the most busy throughout the whole of these unmanly proceedings, and when the letter was found he insisted on reading it. This Louisa resisted; it was, however taken from her by the brutes about her; but she snatched it back, tore it, and attempted to burn it by the flame of the burner under her tea-urn, (for even in this torrid climate Louisa had not broke herself of her

English custom of drinking hot tea;) upon which four of the ruffians held her arms and hands whilst the renegado got the letter back, and placing the pieces together, the cold blooded savage, bade the others keep her off, and sat himself down deliberately to pry into a lady's secrets, and satisfy his employers by a shew of zeal for their service which he will some day or other find is required as all such services are, when little villains allow themselves to be made the cats paws and tools of greater ones, by being cast off when the turn is served for which they were wanted. You may be astonished perhaps, my friend, at the warmth with which I stigmatize the actors in this scene of outrage; but the blood of an Englishman can not but boil at every instance of illegal violence and arbitrary oppression, and still more when the victim is a woman, defenceless, unprotected, and uniting to the most polished education, a person and manners that, in any place but this, where the baleful lust of gold dries up all the springs of humanity and chivalry, would command respect, and disarm even even-handed justice herself.

The search continued for several hours, and in the course of it locks and hinges were forced and broken, papers and letters fifteen years old ransacked and carried off; cases of articles belonging to other persons which were under S——'s charge, knocked in pieces, and the contents scattered about; in short the appearance of all the rooms in the house was such as they would have exhibited after a night-attack of a gang of Malay pirates. Still nothing was found to justify the search, or to give the shadow of a pretext for further proceeding; till in one of Louisa's drawers a paper parcel was found, directed in S——'s hand writing "A watch and pocket-book belonging to the late A. B. Esquire." And now it was that the harpies thought they had got something like a scent; the Major-General held a consultation with his colleague, to which the renegado was admitted, and it was determined that this should furnish a pretence for carrying off Louisa to prison upon a criminal accusation; for A. B. having been connected with the East India Company, ergo, no one had a right to have his property in possession, but the said Company, the articles being marked in S——'s writing as the property of A. B. ergo, S—— had stole them; and being found in Louisa's possession, ergo, she was an accessory to the theft. Admirable logic! exquisite legal precision! But what

"baseless fabrick of a vision"

will not men allege in excuse, or as a pretext, for pre-determined iniquity! They could not barefacedly imprison all connected with S—— which it appears was their purpose from the beginning, and though they had thorough-paced subservient magistrates enough (such is the wretched state of the police in Pulo Penang,) it was necessary to have some legal pretence, however insignificant and absurd. Now the true state of the matter with respect to this watch is as follows. Mr. B. who belonged to Bencoolen, and was chief of one of the East India Company's out factories, had perished miserably in making his escape from the Battas who inhabit the mountains in the interior of Sumatra^[A], by whom he had been taken prisoner. His body had however been found in the woods, and the watch and pocket-book containing his journal with it. S—— who was the only man of any literary talent or information connected with the Company, had been employed in arranging the memoranda of the journal, and writing a narrative of B——'s adventures and death, to be sent home to the board of directors in London. The parcel containing both the watch and the journal had accordingly been put into the hands of S—— for that purpose with the knowledge of the very individual members of the council who were present when they were so found in his house, and also to the certain knowledge both of the Dutchman and the Swearer. In vain Louisa told them that S—— had left instructions with her to send the parcel to the council office before she left the island, and pointed out the address stating whose property it was. No, the watch was stolen, and she should go to prison, and she should be hanged! Yes, even such was the infamous language used towards her. I doubt in writing this, whether it can by possibility obtain belief with you, or with any man endowed with the least

glimmering of common sense, or of a knowledge of right and wrong, that upon so futile and ridiculous a charge, one that upon its face carried the conviction of its own falsehood and malignity, any individual in the widely extended British Empire could have been subjected to one moment's question; but the fact, however incredible, is as I state it. Not only was this made the ground for Louisa's apprehension, but likewise for that of S——'s domestic Patrick, and of the three gentlemen, whose names were by chance inserted in the letter just mentioned. They were all apprehended the same night and lodged in prison. But more of them anon, when I come to speak of their arrest, when I will likewise give you a touch of their characters, for I like to describe the heroes and heroines of my tale, and every one concerned, will get their share as I proceed. I have, however, not yet done with the scene at S——'s. Patrick was called in before the little great men who performed the parts of Dogberry and Verges on this occasion; and asked various questions as to his master's departure, etc. His reply was, in his Irish way, that he would answer their questions when he came before their betters. On this he was told he should be hanged, "and if I am" said he "it will be what many a better man than myself deserves to be." It was now getting late at night, and Louisa was told she must prepare herself to accompany the honourable gentlemen to a magistrate's, i. e. Mr. Tool aforesaid who had so sapiently granted his warrant to search for papers. Fatigued with the many hours she had been thus subjected to insolence and insult, she expressed a desire to have some refreshment; yet, tho' in her own premises, with her own servants about her, that was over-ruled, and go she must immediately; the Major-General, however, assuring her, with his wonted supererogatory hypocrisy, that she should have any refreshment she wanted where she was going to, which she little thought, though he knew it, was a dungeon underneath the common prison of the island where not so much as a drop of water was to be had. She desired leave to lock her boxes, drawers, and apartments. No, they were in good hands. Good hands indeed! the hands of the police of Pulo Penang—none worse in the British dominions! You must observe that one of the objects of the honourable East India Company's honourable agents on this occasion was to get possession of property, no matter whose, or by what base and mean measures obtained; and that it was on that account necessary Louisa should be hurried off, and Patrick also bestowed in like manner, that the vultures who were to be left in possession might have no one to controul or check them. Louisa was even obliged to leave her clothes lying about, in the tumbled and confused state in which the indecent search which had been made amongst them had left them. Many a shawl, many a rich article of dress, many of the valuable trifles that form part of a lady's wardrobe, disappeared in consequence, and were never after heard of. A quantity of jewels, and precious trinkets, which were equally left exposed to plunder, would have shared the same fate, but one of the officers of the police, who subsequently entered the house, secured them, and with an integrity and generosity worthy of a better station, and which ought to make the honourable authors of these depredations themselves blush, afterwards brought them to Louisa when she was in prison. But I am again anticipating.

Late in the evening thus, a delicate female, who never before in this settlement had stirred out but in her palanquin and attended by her slaves and servants, was almost literally dragged on foot through the streets, by these banditti, for I can characterize them as nothing else, considering their rapacious objects, and their brutal behaviour. On this occasion, it being proposed that the Dutch renegado should take the necessary oath to get a warrant issued for felony, it has been reported that a serious misunderstanding took place between him and Mr. Head, the latter being jealous, and not without reason, of this palpable infringement of his privilege as Oath-taker-general to the Company. But the Swearer's services were on this occasion dispensed with, and the Dutchman accompanied the gang to Mr. Justice Tool. What occurred there I will endeavour to find time to detail before the packet sails, but I must go down to the bazaar, or I shall never be able to get a shroff to exchange my rupees for an order on Calcutta to make you the remittance I

promised; so adieu for the present. Yours, &c.

TO BE CONTINUED.

[A] Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, the present Governor of Bencoolen, has concluded a peace with the Battas; and has opened a new and promising source of trade in the interior of Sumatra; with prospects even for the Company to gain possession of the gold mines which abound in the mountains. L. L. M.

THE COMING OF CHRISTMASS.

Written in a County Town in England.

The dormouse is gone to his winter's rest,
The swallows are fled to the south,
And under the eaves, the sly sparrow thieves
Are housed in the martin's nest.

The wood-cocks are come from their cold birth place,
I see one just now in the copse,
And perhaps, brother Joe, when the clock strikes two,
You and I may sit down to a brace.

With hips and with haws the hedges are red,
And the beech and the oak-leaves are sere,
Whilst the brightest green, that now can be seen
Is the moss on the thatch of the shed.

Already the boys to the forest are gone
To pluck of the holly so bright,
And I met one just now, with a mistletoe bough,
For Christmass is coming anon.

Let the windows with yew and with holly be drest,
And see that the wood-house be full;
Of the turkeys take care, Ann, for we must prepare
To welcome our merry old guest.

Let the pig eat and drink, for to-morrow he dies;
I'll warrant the strength of the ale;
Brother Joe, 'tis your task, to take care of the cask,
And mother has made her mince-pies.

The Courant of Saturday informs us that the following paragraph appeared in a late London Eclectic Magazine. "Mr. Buchanan His Majesty's consul at New-York has made considerable collections during his successive journies through Upper Canada, respecting the history of the North American Indians, which, with many other interesting and official documents will shortly be presented to the public." This is as it should be, and when men of talent and research, avail of the opportunities which their official situations afford for increasing the stock of public information, literature is adorned, the world benefited, and their names recorded amongst the benefactors of mankind.

L. L. M.

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 26* edited by Samuel Hull Wilcocke]