

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

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.....
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THE SCRIBBLER.

MONTREAL.

THURSDAY, 17th JANUARY,
1822.

No. XXX.

—O but man, proud man!
Drest in a little brief authority—
Like an angry ape—
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,
As make the angels weep.

SHAKESPEARE.

*Quid rides? mutato nomine,
Fabula de te narratur.*

HORACE.

If he should laugh, 'twill be on the wrong side;
An ass is but an ass, tho' clad in lion's hide.

Væ cæcis ducentibus! væ cæcis sequentibus!—ST. AUGUSTINE.

O ye blind leaders! and ye blind that follow.

LETTER IV.

Pulo Penang, May 1820.

I find I shall have time before the packet sails for Calcutta to go on with the story of Louisa's apprehension and imprisonment. I left her upon the point of being carried before Mr. Justice Tool.^[1] When told that she must go with the honourable gentlemen to the magistrate's house, she remonstrated with them on the lateness of the hour, and entreated to be left in her own apartments were it only for that night, under the guard of a sufficient number of police officers: a request which if made in any other than in this most enlightened and happy of all British settlements, or to any other than the very honourable, polite, and civilized members of the honourable East India Company's council, could not have failed of meeting attention. But as the will of these mighty men is here paramount, so are their dispositions base, oppressive and ruffianly. Taunts even were not wanting, and the circumstance of Louisa's not associating with any other ladies in the settlement, which arose from her refusing the repeated requests S—— had made to allow herself to be introduced into company upon that respectable footing she was entitled to, had created an impression against her, which the utmost propriety of conduct, and retiredness of behaviour had not overcome. To some sarcasms that were uttered with unfeeling meanness, she made no other reply than the scornful glance of an eye, that can speak both celestial eloquence and disdainful indignation. On their way on foot, over the rugged paths that led to Mr. Tool's, one of the soi-disant gentlemen, offered her his arm, which she refused with becoming scorn, and ironically told him she would not so much disgrace him. To you, who as well as myself, know the timid and feminine delicacy which characterize Louisa, the fortitude

with which she bore this and the worse treatment she subsequently was subjected to, must appear astonishing; but such has been the patience, resignation, and constancy of affection with which she has on his account, endured contumely and wrong, distress and imprisonment, injustice and inhumanity, that S—— has often declared that were he a poet he would wish no better theme for immortalising his name, than her suffering excellence, and exalted merit.

[1] The first letter of this gentleman's name is very indistinctly written. It is uncertain whether it is an F. or a T; either or both, however will do.

Proceed we now to the Justice's. There, or on the way, I don't know which, the posse were joined by an officer of still superior rank, no other than Lieutenant General Tonguetye, a name which you will perceive is a fictitious one, for it would be dangerous to expose myself to the volleys of abuse, the oaths and execrations that would flow from the eloquent mouth of this gentleman, should these letters ever get round to him. If miss Edgeworth could be supposed to have known him, one would think he sat for the portrait she has drawn in her novel of "Ennuï" of the man of whom it is said, "*que peut on faire contre une gueule comme cela?*" But more of his character by and bye. When Louisa was taken into the august presence of the magistrate, who had been tutored and prepared for the purpose, the principal thing that was done was the identification of her person and of the poor torn letter; but she was soon surprized by seeing likewise brought in, a writer in the East India Company's service, Mr. Jameson, one of the three gentlemen named in that letter and before alluded to. It seems that a detachment had been sent from the main body to surprize him in his quarters, where, being unprepared for the attack, he was obliged to surrender at discretion. His rueful countenance indicated how little pleased he was with the invitation which he had been obliged to accept. Mr. Jameson became a peculiar object of persecution to the Company, because, being one of their servants, he presumed to choose his own society and was rather of an unbending temper; a well meaning worthy young man, and whom the Company undoubtedly wrongfully suspected when they considered him as likely to be a party to any plot. The other two gentlemen were not then taken, so I shall not speak of them at present. What was next done? The prisoners, viz. Louisa, Mr. Jameson, and Pat, were left in one room under a guard, and the honourable gentlemen retired to consult with the wiseacre whom they had made choice of to disgrace by this business. He, as in duty bound, not only listened to all they had to say, but was willing to do all they had to do; but an unforeseen difficulty presented itself. The honourable gentlemen, producing the letter, and the watch, (wisely, however, I believe, keeping back the paper-covering on which was written whose property it was, for even this imbecile and hood-winked Justice must have been startled at that) required the Dutchman to swear to its having been stolen by S—— and that Louisa and the rest, were accessories to the felony in assisting him to escape. But this was too big a piece of scoundrelism for even the renegade's conscience to swallow at once, especially as the Lieutenant General was most urgent with him to do it, whilst he well knew that it was from the Lieutenant General's own hand that S—— had received the watch in charge together with Mr. B's Journals. He very properly asked why he wouldn't take the oath himself. But catch me, if you can, any of these honourable gentlemen doing their own foul deeds, when they can get any one else to do their dirty work for them. After almost an hour the result was that the Dutchman's scruples were over ruled, probably by promises that have not been nor ever will be fulfilled, and he swallowed the oath, whip goes the pen, and Tool issues me his warrant, to arrest the parties who were then in his ante-room; Captain Liver receives orders to conduct them to gaol, and then to supper, Mr. equitable Justice,

"With what appetite you may."

Oh shame where is thy blush! I hear you exclaim? can such things be? Can any man bearing a commission as a magistrate in any part of the King's dominions be so criminally ignorant of his duty, or so basely subservient to oppression, as, first to issue a warrant to search for *certain specified papers*, then when that warrant is returned before him, not once enquire whether those certain papers have been found or not, and allow a variety of other papers, having no manner of relation to the charges made, together with a considerable sum of money, to be carried away and kept by the gang who took them, under false pretences, from the house that had been searched; secondly when a party is brought before him, and is then in his ante-chamber, instead of examining into the case in the presence of the prisoner, and hearing what he can say, to retire into his closet with the prosecutors of that prisoner, and there to be present, and if not art and part, at least the willing witness to, a conspiracy for persuading a man to take a reluctant oath, by which the taking of the prisoner might be justified, (for before that there was no shadow of right, no writ, no proceeding;) and finally, in lieu of *instanter* hearing the complaint and defence as was his sacred duty, to thrust the prisoner away to gaol, that he might smoke his hooker comfortably, and enjoy his betelnut and attar of roses. But I beg Mr. Tool's pardon, he had some more dirty drudgery to perform, he had to issue other warrants, founded upon the same false and scandalous pretences as the one granted against Louisa; and I suppose it was very late before he could retire to his harem.

Before accompanying Louisa to her dreadful abode, of the wretchedness of which she could form no conception, I must let you into a little of the *nuncheon*^[2] scandal of Pulo Penang. An English lady of Louisa's person and manners, and arriving, consigned, as it were, to use a mercantile phrase, to S——, who then stood high in the estimation of the whole settlement, could not make her appearance without remark. As she never assumed that station in society for which she was so well adapted by her personal qualifications, and to which she was entitled in her own right; she consequently became an object of frequent animadversion, and various surmises, thoughts, and opinions, became in a short time, facts and certainties. She was not only stated to be the mistress of S——; but, of the gentlemen who were occasionally admitted into the magic circle of pleasure and refined happiness that were to be found in her family parties, the three who were the most familiar in their visits were set down, first as her admirers, then they became her lovers, and, rumour being once busy and afloat upon the tongues of ladies, (though to tell you the truth, General Tonguetye, being one of the veriest Sir Benjamin Backbites in existence, was not backward in his insinuations,) when it could not be determined which was the favoured lover, did not hesitate to call them all so. Now this was evidently sheer, pure, unadulterated back-biting, and could only originate in foul minds, and corrupt hearts, perhaps in consciousness of private profligacy, for there are many things in this settlement hidden behind the veils of profession, and appearance, or willingly blinked at by the idolaters of wealth, power, and effrontery, and the most ready to condemn are those who have the art to hide their frailties from the world's observance;

——“and in the morning,
When they are up and drest, and their masks on,
Who can perceive this, save that eternal eye,
That looks thro' flesh and all.”^[3]

But the would-be little great world of Pulo Penang knew nothing of Louisa; for tho', waiving the question of personal beauty; the vivacity of her wit, her winning smiles, and unbounded gaiety when her buoyant spirits “fling radiance from their dewy wings,” are enough to turn the heads of the soberest individuals, she possesses a delicacy of modesty to baffle passion, an eye to controul presumption, and a brow to silence even impudence.

I am interrupted, and must close my dispatch. The packet sails in an hour. Farewell.

(To be Continued.)

[2] In Prince of Wales's island, as at Madras, Bombay, and other British settlements in India, the ladies always assemble in the forenoon about twelve or one, and partake at each other's houses of *nuncheons*, as they are called, consisting of various articles of Asiatic and European luxury, with wines, confectionery and fruits. Betelnut and areca are also served round, and perfumes sprinkled. At these meetings all the ceremonials that attend the tea-table in England are observed, and scandal of course is not forgotten. Vide Maria Graham's letters on India!

[3] Cyril Tourneur's *Revenger's Tragedy*. Act I.

To Inspector General MACCULLOH, &c. &c. &c.

Fort Stark, 10th January, 1822.

After the Pic Nic troops had retired, we enjoyed at this out-post, a considerable degree of tranquility, being only occasionally disturbed by a few light-bobs from head-quarters, until the day before yesterday, when a body of forces under the command of General Littledale, assisted by Major Kisseem, and an Amazonian heroine, Mrs. Brittle, attacked, stormed, and carried our entrenchment. The attacking party consisted chiefly of irregular militia drawn from all ranks and parts of the country, but their discipline and valour were remarkable, considering the short time they have been in the field; and although there is little glory to be gained in this quarter, it is supposed they were stimulated by the example of the Pic Nics, and, as one sheep follows another, came so far as this, to do, what they could have done much more easily and comfortably nearer home. We were, however, reluctantly forced to surrender to them the whole of the *materiel* attached to the Pic Nic army, consisting of cream-coloured crockery, iron spoons &c. in the use of which the militia displayed considerable vigour, as well as in their exercises, particularly in platoon-firing. However I am happy to inform your Excellency, that they retired about one in the morning, without beat of drum or *sound of bugle*, leaving behind them all their spoils, which are carefully stored against the time when we next expect the Pic Nics; who however, it is to be hoped, will not lose so much of their forage, provisions, and ammunition by the overturning of their sleighs in the deep snow as they did the last time.

I have the honour to be, &c.

A. VIDETTE.

AN AMATEUR OF MUSIC, and a SUB-DEPUTY ASSISTANT are under consideration.

SKIMMERHORN will appear next number.

A SPECTATOR will perceive that his communication has been partly availed of; similar articles of intelligence are always highly acceptable.

The lines from *La Chine*, under a signature that is too obvious, are inadmissible, for they can not be the production of the lady herself, either considering their composition or their sentiments.

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 30* edited by Samuel Hull Wilcocke]