

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 28th 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,
Quitoutjours sur un ton semblent psalmodier. BOILEAU.

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.....
1822.

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THE SCRIBBLER.

MONTREAL.

THURSDAY, 30TH MAY,
1822.

No. XLIX.

*Diram qui contudit hydram,
Comperit invidiam supremo fine domari.*

HORACE.

Who strikes at folly's hydra-head, and vice's sevenfold hide,
Will malice find still unsubdued, and must its rancour bide.

Maxima pars hominum morbo jactatur eodem.

HORACE.

Most men are sick of that disease call'd pride.

*Fascia te tunicæque obsuraque pallia celant:
At mihi nulla satis nuda puella jacet.*

MARTIAL.

Nor robes, nor zones, nor veils, nor frowns, nor e'en "O fye,"
Can shield that beauteous form from roving fancy's eye.

Quebec, 20th May, 1822.

SIR,

Amidst the storms that now agitate this city, it may appear dangerous for me to venture again upon my Augean labour of altering, or rather of reprobating, the manners of Quebec. Assailed on all sides by the most virulent abuse, endeavoured to be consigned to infamy and exposed to hatred, the names of Tom Brown and the Scribbler, seem coupled together for the purpose of being execrated by those whom we have exposed: the terrors of the law are held out to frighten us into silence, and the newspapers teem with anathemas^[1] almost as dreadful as the thunders of papal excommunication. However I laugh at their threats with fearless indifference: I hold their writings in contempt; and I will once more expose their follies, and whilst they yet writhe with affronted vanity, I will give them another essay as a balm to their wounded feelings; an opportunity has been afforded for particular investigation by the ball lately given at our Olympus, where were assembled "all the greater and the lesser stars"; and in truth, we in many things resembled the fabled senate of the skies, though, to our sorrow, we were miserably deficient in others. We had many a Juno in state, but 'twas difficult to find a Venus in beauty. —Though the god "of wit, of poesy and light," was never known to have had an imitator here, it must be acknowledged that we have not a few emulators of the jolly Bacchus. Mercury had kindred in all things but his

wit; and pale Dianas shed their lustre with souls as frozen and as chaste as the mistress of Orion. But a truce with these comparisons, in which we seem to lose so much and gain so little; let us estimate our characters by their own intrinsic merit, and criticise them well as they pass in review. The first who underwent the ordeal was Mr. Justice Intrigue; my eye discovered him at the moment he was saluting the family of the Cardinal; (his eminence was not present;) the very bow expressed the man's winding, wily and double character; there was a wish for the appearance of cordiality and good will, which, in spite of all his efforts, was destroyed by a hesitation, and a want of correspondence of the eye with that which the tongue was uttering; there was a specious smile on his countenance, whilst he wished all of them, *his very dear friends*, in the bottomless pit. The justice has sons, some actually small placeholders, others wanting to be so, so has the cardinal, "there's sympathy"; the justice himself has a wish for power, place and profit, so has the cardinal, "go to, then, there's more sympathy," but alas! this sympathy, like Falstaff's, does not breed love, though they are both too much the pupils of Machiavel to let their hatred break out into open enmity, therefore to the multitude they appear "friends fast sworn," but in truth they are, with untired diligence, striving to sap the foundations of each other's fortune, hating, fearing and thwarting each other: the one grasps at power with the boldness and ambition of an ecclesiastic, the other insinuates himself into grandeur with the wary cunning of a hoary lawyer;

"He smirks, he smiles, he wriggles to the chair."

It is a race for power, in which the parties are using desperate jockeyship; but "Jockey of *Norwich* be not too bold," for though the fortune of the justice be upon the wane, he is like a Parthian, never more dangerous than when defeated; fear him, keep your eye upon the goal, and call upon the spirit of Retz to aid you, or you may yet be surpassed by your diplomatic antagonist. Let Milton describe him;

—"False and hollow, though his tongue
Drop manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels, for his thoughts are low,
To vice industrious, but to noble deeds
Timorous and slothful."—

The shock I received from the wife, in some sort, revenged the husband: I asked, with Pope, how could be made to agree

"Sappho's diamonds with her dirty smock,
Or Sappho at her toilet's greasy task,
And issuing fragrant to an evening mask;
So morning insects that in muck begun,
Shine, buzz, and flyblow in the setting sun,"

I willingly turned from this object to the scene around me, where I found glittering dresses and brown skins, high turbans, and plain faces, to prevail amongst the women, and red noses, red coats, wigs and an important gravity of countenance, the most striking objects amongst the men; they

might be classed into jockies, bachanals, politicians, and councillors, though some of the last class were sometimes confounded with the roaring bacchanalian set. Of this we had a strong instance when, late at night, or rather early in the morning, a grave personage fairly lulled himself, by the effects of punch, into a happy forgetfulness of his cares and character. Amongst the little parties that were formed I perceived a trio composed of husband, wife & cicisbeo; happy wife! who has the substantial support of her husbands income, and the delicate attentions of her gallant lover! happy husband! who can, well pleased, and with fearless confidence, resign the care of his amiable wife to his obliging friend! and thrice happy friend! who can amuse both his mistress and himself with the full leave and license of the good natured husband! Thus do these two, at an advanced age, emulate the happy moments of youth, and rival, in this their autumn of life, the pleasures felt in the hey-day of the blood. But, perhaps, indulging in the mild bliss of chastened affection, they may aim at realizing the dreams of the visionary Plato.—Be it so, let no suggestions of mine interrupt their happiness, and break the bonds of such an union or the symmetry of this equilateral triangle; rather would I hold it up to the world as worthy of imitation; but alas, it is one of those extraordinary occurrences in human life that all will wonder at, but few will believe.

My attention was next attracted, and agreeably surprised, by a maiden, whose fair skin, youth and beauty, contrasted strongly with many around her. My eye followed her through the dance, all else was forgotten, and even my thoughts of criticism wandered, and I involuntarily asked myself, who of all the accomplished youths of Quebec is destined to possess this lovely creature?—“*Burn* it, sir,” said an old gentleman, on whose toe I had trodden in my reverie—what, thought I, (without making any apology to the old gentleman,) and must she thus be thrown away? you might, with equal judgement, dedicate a Grecian temple to a Yahoo, or endeavour to improve our species by a cross with the oran-outang.—“It is gold, I dare swear,” said a lady who was admiring a necklace, and which another said had brass in it.—You are both right, said I to myself, it must be gold that could induce such a sacrifice, and he must have brass who would offer even gold with such an appendage. Her partner led her to her family-party, where the sour looks of the father, compared with the winning smiles of the daughter, formed a striking contrast; the eternal snarl on his countenance, is like that of an illnatured cur, who growls at every passing stranger, and if his bark is worse than his bite, it is not from a want of will, but a paucity of wit: as for the mother, “be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow thou shalt not escape *her* calumny.”

The crowd now became so great that I found it impossible to be as minute with all as I have been with these; and I am therefore obliged to dismiss the remaining characters with merely passing observations. The next on my list is Dr. Chopit, whose talents and humanity are such that he would quickly say, and might say with justice, “I have given her physic,

and you must needs bestow her a funeral.” The next is a cashier of a cashless concern, an issuer of light paper^[2] for weighty gold, one who can not think, as the noble-minded Roman did, “I had rather coin my heart, and drop my blood for drachmas than to wring from the hard hand of peasants their vile trash by *any* indirection,” and if he had profited by paternal example and precept, he would not have allowed the law to have got the whip hand of him. In succession then

“A motley figure of the fribble tribe
Came simpering on, to ascertain whose sex,
Twelve sage impannelled matrons would perplex,
Nor male nor female, neither, and yet both,
Of neuter gender, and *Canadian* growth,
A *five-foot* suckling, mincing in its gait,
Affected, peevish, prim and delicate.”

In fine, it was dandy Wheatland, on whom it is too much to have expended seven lines of good poetry.

I fear I have already exceeded the bounds of your paper, but my objects are so many, and my will so good, it is difficult for me to desist.— However, I will stop here for the present. Early in June (I wish to communicate it publicly) I will continue my strictures: I shall meet the inhabitants of Quebec on their field of glory, the race-ground, where I shall have the good fortune to see them *all at home*.

TOM BROWN.

[1] “When the cat’s away, the mice will play.”

Since the temporary suspension of the Scribbler, many a little yelper has come forth out of his kennel, and both the Quebec and Montreal papers have abounded in paragraphs respecting it. I mean, when I have leisure, to answer every one, sending my reply to each respective paper, which, if the editors do not insert, I will then “shame the fools and print it” in my own. I would apply to these puny antagonists Piron’s line in his *Metromanie*,

“Hercule expira t’il sous l’effort du pygmée?”

L. L. M.

[2] The Canada bank at Montreal have, with a tardy resumption of common sense, at length issued notes omitting the ridiculous and invalidating clause, stipulating that payment should be made *out of the joint funds of the association and no other*, and have now a paper in circulation that has all the legal and mercantile requisites of a bank note; as much, that is to say, as any paper issued by *unincorporated* banks, which are not only illegal, but are by statute declared to be *common and public nuisances*, can be. Why do not the Montreal bank find that of Quebec, follow that example?

L. L. M.

I congratulate myself and the public at having so undaunted and able a coadjutor at Quebec in the warfare I am carrying on against evil manners, evil deeds, and evil doers; and I have good reason to hope the effects of such wholesome castigation will be soon as visible in Quebec as it is in many instances in Montreal. One besetting vice, however, will require long and reiterated attacks, and as I am ready to join heart and hand with all who combat that intolerable pride which is the characteristic of the upper ranks of society in Montreal, and which is as baseless as it is disgusting, and as despicable as it is laughable. I insert a communication I

have received from his infernal Majesty, although I have taken the liberty of making some alteration in his poetry, in order that it may better suit these “glimpses of the moon.”

L. L. M.

FRIEND LEWIS,

As your Scribbler is quite in vogue, and all the fine folks are on the alert about it, perhaps the following lines, by one of the citizens of my domain, who assures me he has many devotees in your place, will be read with interest.

PLUTO.

I spurn at all the world around,
From this to earth's remotest bound;
But kings, and lords, and men of state,
I envy, for I dare not hate;
Whilst all who rank amongst the crowd,
Giddy, sedate or mild, or loud,
Whether of modest worth possess'd,
With riches or with virtue bless'd,
The humble poor, the middle race.
I frown on all, with scornful face;
All are an horror to my eyes;
All but myself I do despise—
And who are you? methinks you say—
But stop a moment—stop, I pray—
My name is what all men deride
'Tis overbearing, stubborn, PRIDE.

FOR THE SCRIBBLER.

FANCY, A ROBBER.

In vain, Modesta, you draw down
Over those pretty feet, your gown,
Whenever you perceive my glance
Contemplating their shape askance;
For fancy, of its food bereft,
Has a propensity to theft,
And, (like a stinted servant, driven
To pilfering by want and spite)
Steals ten times more than what, if given,
Would have appeased its appetite.
Then let those pretty feet be martyrs,
In the defence of legs and garters.
In vain you also closely pin
Your handkerchief beneath your chin,
In order to exclude my gaze—
When it in that direction strays;
For fancy, when it finds no gate
Open, can quickly penetrate,
And, (like an army that has storm'd
A town, whence it's been long shut out,)
Is apt, when by resistance warm'd,
To shove the garrison about.
Then let your neck divert the urchin
From a more impudent excursion.
You thought it horribly amiss,
Moreover, when I ask'd a kiss,
And told me that its very name
Had almost made you die of shame;—
Bon!—but, as I declared before,
My fancy when refused steals more,
And if affectedly denied
An innocent reality,
In dreaming always lays aside
All manner of formality;
Thus, should you not the kiss surrender,
I'll dream you're troublesomely tender.

WILL O' THE WISP.

Those gentlemen to whom the Scribbler has been sent for their approbation, or return, and who have neither returned it, nor intimated their intention of becoming subscribers, are respectfully informed that it will be discontinued to be sent to them after the first vol. is completed, unless they request its continuation by letter directed to L. L. Macculloch, Esq. Post-Office, Montreal.

The editor solicits the continuation of the favours of his several correspondents, as before, through the Post-Office, and trusts they will continue to afford him their valuable assistance in rendering his miscellany worthy of that distinguished patronage it has met with.

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 1822-05-30 Volume 1, Issue 49* edited by Samuel Hull Wilcocke]