

THE GRUMBLER.

NEW SERIES.)

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THE GRUMBLER

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THE GRUMBLER.

"If there's a hole in ' your coats,
Trade you out first;
A chief's among you taking notes,
And, faith, he'll prout it."

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1863.

Elegy Written in the House of Assembly.

Conticure omnes.

The Speaker's chair is empty: Yesterday
The blowing herd departed on a spree;
The Sergeant, well content to get away,
Had left the House to silence and to me.

The glittering mace no longer lies in state,
The gassy air unusual stillness holds,
And naught remains to mark last night's debate,
Save paper pellets in the curtain's folds.

Behold how dense the atmosphere is there!
That surely is the Opposition side;
Such clouds of words as float upon the air
Never resolute but from humbled pride.

Beneath the Coat of Arms, the dais shado,
With hangings decked—let's up and take a peep;
Each in a cosy chair, reserved and staid,
The various Speakers of the Assembly—sleep.

The breezy squabble for the floor in turn,
The members twittering from the backmost rows,
The cries of "Order, Order," and "Adjourn,"
Alone can rouse the Speaker from repose.

But then the furious to his gavel yield,
His mind, reproving of a master-stroke;
How quick he clears the noisy battle-field,
Or snubs a Rymal for an ill-timed joke.

Let not a Grumbler mock his useful toil,
Or constant tendency to fall asleep;
His stately dignity would quickly spoil
If Mr. Speaker made his words too cheap.

That boast of heraldry, the pompous Smith,
And honest Scottoe, too, have graced that chair,
And mighty Turcotte (of the bloody myth),
And Wallbridge, always pleasant, mild, and fair.

Nor let the House impute to these the fault,
If graceless members try a dust to raise;
Or, through a long-drawn speech from Brown or
Galt,
Shrill scrapes and rattles drown the note of praise.

Can rattling desk, or animated "bust,"
Back to the subject call the turgid Jones?
Can Speaker's voice allay the rising dust,
When Powell leads the choruses of groans?

Perchance in yon secluded spot has sat
A Wright, renowned for Demosthenic fire;
Or, perhaps, Munro, a Cicero in chat;
Or Smith, a puppet on a single wire.

To their weak minds the *Daily Globe's* broad page,
Rich with the scalps of Ministers, was meat;
So silence stern expressed their noble rage,
The spark electric moved their hands and feet.

Full many an M.P.P. of modest mien,
The hidden, backmost rows of benches bear;
Full many a statesman bushes there unseen,
And wastes his talents on his neighbour's chair.

A village White, that ays with dauntless breast,
The local editor has off withstood,
A mute in glorious Thompson here may rest,
A Rankin, eager for the Southern blood.

Their lot forbade that they should stay at home
To con the ledger, or improve the mind;
But robbed the vestry, left the village dumb,
To serve the state and benefit mankind.

Far from their village home and plodding wife,
They drink in speeches for a pound a day,
Amid the quarrelling, wrangling noise and strife,
They keep the speechless tenor of the way.

Yet even they—one never would suspect,
Some frail memorial try to raise while here,
A little bill, for instance,—and select
A subject like to please the voters' ear.

Their names, their bills, read by unlettered folks,
The place of fame and eulogy supply;
But then their statutes furnish costly jokes,
And knotty puzzles to a lawyer's car.

For who, to dumb uproariousness a prey,
This pleasing axiom, ever yet resigned!
Do what you can, no matter what they say,
What puzzles lawyers, interests mankind.

On some old hobby many a one relies,
Some sign of work the voters eye requires,
Even from a Grit, the voice of nature cries,
Even their blunders somebody admires.

Sometime these mindful of the way they bled,
Dust in their eyes that little bill may throw;
If chance, by mere inquisitiveness led,
A blustering voter asks, "what can you show?"

Haply some vagrant Grumbler then may say,
"Oft have we heard bow mingling in debate,
He raised his voice and in his usual way,
Discouraged those disposed to ceaseless prate.

There at the foot of yonder desk he'd scrape,
Or start applause, or imitate a fowl;
His listless length at midnight would he drapo,
And snore awhile, then wake to raise a howl.

Heard by a Wood, e'er blowing like a horn,
Working his arm to imitate a flail;
Or turgid Jones, that legislative thorn,
Such arguments were never known to fail.

Enough. With solemn tread I turn to go,
Slow through the corridor I wend my way,
Taking one long last look I fly below,
To draw some comfort from a member's "clay."

HOW THEY REPORT CONCERTS.

"Miss Kate McDonald has a powerful voice. 'Twilight Shades are depressing,' and 'The Fisher Hutton' were well sung."—*Globe*, Oct. 16th. (The public will recollect that the "Twilight" song was not sung at all.)

SOME.—*Office*; reporter in his easy chair, reading "New York Clipper," it draws near 8 o'clock; he soliloquizes.

Reporter. "Confound that concert! I wish that the ten plagues of Egypt might fall on all singers, fiddlers, and piano pounders. If it were like Warner's there might be some fun in going; but to sit through two mortal hours,—hearing a man sing through his nose, and another his teeth; to hear one lady warble love ditties as though she were crying, while another attacks her runs so savagely that you expect to see her neck burst out into strips, leaving the backbone open for the inspection of the audience—and then have to come back and praise everything, goes against my stomach and conscience too. Boy!"

Boy. "Here, sir!"

Reporter. "Bring that programme of to-night's concert. Aye, here 'tis; now I'll just do the job at once, and get rid of it.

"Let me think; didn't Jenkins say that they had only a hundred and fifty tickets sold? Allow fifty for sale at the door, and deadheads; down it goes; 'two hundred present.' Mrs. A' sings for the first time, except the last St. George's Church concert, so she must get it pretty strong; she is sure to be encored, and it will be well to praise that Scotch ballad to please old 'Bothwell' and the subscribers. Miss E.; I don't care much for her singing, but it won't do to say so; here goes for a small dose; but it is impossible to say whether she will be encored or not, so that must be left alone. Miss C. made a vile mess of it at St. Lawrence Hall; but as our standing rule is 'praise everybody' I must just find out the smallest falsehood I can, and let it pass, it's not my fault. Of course Mr. D. will expect some notice; there, that's non-committal, which is better than telling lies. Mrs. F. will be applauded, of course; can't guess whether Mr. G. will be applauded or not, so must cut him short. Mr. H.; bother the notice! oh, that will do; non-committed and neat; the confounded thing is finished! Hallo, boy! Copy! And now for the club."

The public, reading the *G*— at breakfast next morning, is rather surprised at seeing that "Twilight" was really sung after all, and wonders how he could have missed hearing it; finds to his astonishment that Miss C., whose performances nearly drove him crazy, sang "sweetly," begins to fear that his own taste, or else hearing, is beginning to fail him, and resolves henceforth to stay at home.