

One of the stupidest things some people in Halifax have ever done has been to call their own city "slow". Those who customarily talk in this fashion will be found to be non-entities, many of them, and doing nothing in the world to make conditions better. It doesn't require brains to abuse the old town: it does require brains to make it go ahead. If people really think Halifax is not progressive, why do they persist in talking about it? Why do they not do something to effect a remedy. It is doing that promotes activity. Supposing some man that says "Halifax is slow," would put on foot some enterprise to-morrow and confine his attention to that. Thereby he would make the city that much "livelier." That is to say provided he can keep the enterprise in being. If he can't, then he has no business to talk. In that case he is not the man to find fault: he is not capable of giving good advice. If he can keep it up, then he will have enough reason to know better, and will have enough to do without talking. This would be a blessing, for the man who goes about with a tale of blue ruin on his lips, you may depend, never does the community any good. Is it any wonder people from other places think of Halifax as "slow," when they hear our own citizens say that? Does Halifax profit greatly by having this idea abroad? I would like to ask it as a favor of all Haligonians that they put a string around one of their fingers to remind them that Halifax as represented by her pre-gressive citizens (and that is the only fair representation of a city) is all right and that they must never acknowledge to others (even if they chance to think so themselves) that there is anything the matter. If they think there is, let them do something to change the condition into one of activity. If Halifax is "slow" it must be because there are some people inactive. It is the sum of human activity that gives a place character. The individuals make up the community and if individuals are not active then is the community in the same condition. No one is entitled to say that Halifax is "slow" who's not working with all his might; and the man working with all his might, hasn't time to say Halifax is "slow."

Personally, I do not believe that Halifax is—"slow." I believe the city has been grossly slandered by some of her own citizens. And I think that this slander has been spread about by people who talk more than they think. I have two good reasons for believing that there is some life in the old town yet. One is a business reason. The other is what you might call a sentimental one.

Now for the business reason. In the first place I am placed where I daily see and hear an immense amount of traffic. It is impossible for me to glance from my office window upon Upper Water Street without seeing a great number and variety

of dray loads going to and fro. The din that comes up from the hard pavement because of their movement over it makes it difficult for me to pen these lines from the very distraction that it makes. I think if some of the chronic grumblers were to stand for a day on a part of Upper Water Street near where most of this traffic originates, they would commence to think that there's a great deal of business done in the city. I don't believe that those people who think Halifax "slow" ever have much to do in that quarter where most of the business is done. But the traffic is only part of the evidence. There is something better and stronger that has appealed to me, for having had a great amount of intercourse with the largest business houses in the city during the past two years, I have come to have a fairly intimate acquaintance in a general way with the business that is being done; and in whatever state the city may have been three years ago, I don't believe that it is unprogressive now. And I think I can tell you some facts in this connection that will surprise you. You have heard how Upper Canadian business houses have been cutting into our trade and threatening to ruin the business of the city? Of course you have. Everybody talks about it. Halifax people talk about and advertise Montreal at their own expense.

But have you ever heard anyone say that there is in Halifax a dry goods house that carries the war into Africa (an apt expression to-day), and takes the ground right from under the feet of Montreal houses? Have you? You have never heard of a Halifax tea house that sells teas in the home territory of Upper Canadian houses, have you? You have never heard how spices and chocolate, biscuits and confectionery, lime juice, rope, clothing, paints, skates, sugar, cottons and many other products of the industry of Halifax and Dartmouth are sold, some of them all over Canada, and some even all over the world, have you? Of course you haven't. It never occurs to people that these things are so. But they are. And there are other things I could tell you more, besides. You may depend upon it, Halifax is prosperous and progressive, and if anyone tells you anything different, don't believe him,—tell him to shut up.

Now then, for what you may call a sentimental reason. Do you think the way we welcomed the returning soldiers was any discredit to Halifax? I suppose there are people who think it might have been better, and are ready to find fault with some small things that were not done. There are always people of that sort. They are *small* people, too. The man who criticises the small points is not usually a broad minded man. He is not big enough to take in the immensity of important things. But we needn't con-

sider him. Only answer this question, Did Halifax do herself any discredit in her welcome to the heroes? And do you think that if Halifax were a "dead slow old town" she would have done herself such credit? I do not know it from my own experience, but I am told that no Canadian city has ever excelled the decorations that Halifax put on to show that she was glad to welcome back our Canadians—not the men of Halifax alone, note, but of every part of the broad Dominion. This shows how the Canadian sentiment has grown among us—another evidence of progress. We have forgotten our sectionalism entirely and are Canadians. If Halifax were "slow," wouldn't we still be clinging tenaciously to the ideas that were dear to us in 1867. The progressive spirit of the age has been working in us quietly ever since that time, and the idea that we are Canadians has grown into a strong and beautiful sentiment—one that enables us to take pride in the bravery and daring of the men from the farthest provinces as well as our own. I heard someone say a few days ago, "Well, Halifax has a reputation for being slow, but she seems to have awakened up this time." Halifax is all right. Nor has she awakened up. She has been awake, but people have had their eyes too tightly closed to see it, and have been spreading bad reports. And the unfortunate thing has been that there have been of our own people some who have been foolish enough to believe the report and give it further currency. However, I don't want to hear that word "slow" any more. It may be that we need galvanizing into life in some ways, but the thing to do is to recognize where the need lies and then act. We musn't be making bad confessions about ourselves. It is a good thing to admit a fault quietly. It is a bad thing to go proclaiming it from the house-tops.

Nov. 1, 1900, will live as a great day (and night) in the provincial memory, for the whole city and part of the province "went clean, ravin', tarin', distracted mad" (to borrow an expression from Sam Slick) "with the sheer pleasure of it." The return of long absent men safe and sound out of the great dangers of warfare was the signal for the greatest demonstration that Halifax has ever witnessed. Lady-smith and Pretoria nights were great events, and the impromptu celebrations on those occasions were participated in and enjoyed with a zest and relish truly refreshing to a people unaccustomed to excitement except in moderate doses. But they are not to be compared with the night of the welcome home. They had the advantage of being entirely impromptu—a great advantage, indeed, the very surprise of them and the sudden vent to pent feelings atoning for their "hurry-up" nature. But they had no advantage that makes us think of them as more enjoyable than the