

THE POKER.

VOL. I.

TORONTO, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1858.

No. 13.

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Genus durum sumus experiensque laborum.

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City Improvements.

Some animals extract poison from the plants which yield honey to others, so among men, some love to find fault while others love to commend. Be it our grateful task to praise, while others grumble.

With the twofold object of improving the drainage of the city, and of giving labor to the unemployed, our excellent Papas of the Corporation have lately sunk immense trenches and laid down magnificent dirt-ducts, in brick, at an expense of some thousands of pounds, of which expense we have, of course, contributed our share; but the drains are but a small part of the results. As every body knows Toronto is a very flat place, a weary, monstrous level, unrelieved by a single natural knoll or mound, and, doubtless, our Dadas felt this, for in addition to the sanitary objects they proposed primarily to accomplish by the great works just mentioned, they bethought themselves of delighting the citizens by the creation of sundry pretty artificial valleys and hills along the principal streets. Thus in King Street West, and up Brock Street and Spadina Avenue we have now a series of pleasant mud holes in the centre, and clay banks at the sides which have a very picturesque and lively effect. Occasionally a cart, waggon, or coach, gets into the interesting position, which the heavily laden Christian secured in the Slough of Despond, but this only adds life to the landscape, or, more poetically, "enchantment to the view." We have heard indeed that it is proposed to level the streets and to cart away the superfluous soil some time between this week and a twelve months hence, but we protest in the name of the arts of design against so vandalistic a proceeding. What are we to forego the anticipated enjoyment of seeing numberless cabs involved in honey pots, and multitudes of pedestrians sunk in fathomless bogs at our very doors—sights which, though frequent enough in the palmy days of muddy Little York, we have now to travel into backwood roads to see—merely because simpering school girls or their very particular mamas complain of the dirt? The thing is monstrous. Let the feminines shorten their skirts and wear good jack boots. No, no, let

the ruts and pits, honey-pots, bogs, and reeking banks remain as they are.

But we notice also that up Spadina Avenue the few gas lamps placed along the side-walk have been erected on a new principle; a principle as ingenious as beneficial. The lamp-posts have an inclination, as near as we can calculate without actual scientific measurement, of 45 degrees, and if they were long enough they would bring the lights just midway over the street. This is a great improvement, and we would respectfully suggest that in future all the new lamps be set up in the same way, for it will prevent jealousies by giving to both sides of the street an exactly equal distribution of light. Then the posts might be provided with notches or steps which would enable the lamp-lighters to do their work without the bothering ladder they are obliged to lug about and poke into people's ribs as they run along. Then again, as to the removal of the unsightly awnings in King Street, there is no question at all that this movement was a judicious one, but its special benefit was chiefly felt at the outskirts of the city, for there, under the awnings, workmen and policemen used to take shelter from the rain, to the great disadvantage of the taverns. Now, thanks to the Papas, when the weather is bad, the blue-coats dive into the grog shops, where they are very useful in keeping the peace, and where one is sure to find them if they are wanted, which formerly was a very difficult matter.

We must be excused a further enumeration to-day, but hope to resume in another issue.

Answer to Sir Edmund's Telegraph.

It will be remembered that when the Atlantic Telegraph was first put in operation, our Governor General addressed the Queen, presenting "his respectful and dutiful compliments." In advance of all our cotemporaries we are enabled to publish the reply. Here it is—

Right Hon. Sir E. W. Head, Bart., Governor General of Canada.

Her Majesty thanks you for your compliments, and expects you to perform your duty with all due respect for the Crown. She hopes that your rule may be fringed with the silver text of prosperity, and if so, that you will be loaded with golden opinions.

B. LYTTON,

Colonial Secretary and Novellist.

Mr. Allchaff

MR. POKER,

In your recent paraphrastic version of Mr. Allchaff's election speech against Mr. Allan you omitted noticing the fact that the orator objected to men having to take off their hats under certain circumstances. On reading the Globe's report of that memorable philippic I immediately concluded Mr. Allchaff was a Quaker—and perhaps a quack too—and this enabled me to understand his extreme aversion to being uncovered; but a greater difficulty supervened. If, said I to myself, Mr. Allchaff is a Quaker how can he support a man who in lieu of simple affirmation even on solemn occasions clinches the most trivial statements with a by—or a prayer for d—n? In much mental perturbation I called upon a religious friend, and asked him whether Mr. Allchaff had any religion, and if so what it was? "O," said he, "Mr. Allchaff is a Methodist, and an acceptable evangelist among that very strait-laced sect." Worse and worse, thought I, for how can he countenance a person who canvasses on the Lord's day, and publicly sneers at religious people as hypocrites? One more conjecture I ventured, perhaps Allchaff was one of those convenient Methodists who manufacture beer, or sell rum. Again I inquired, and found he was a most zealous Teetotaler! This capped the climax of inconsistency. A zealous, godly Methodist Teetotaler, and an Irish gentleman (as I understand Mr. Allchaff to be,) objecting to a God-fearing, man-loving, consistent christian gentleman, because he is a gentleman, and because other gentlemen pay him deference! Why, Mr. Allchaff! I always thought you Irish were sensitive on the subject of manners, and claimed to be, down to the lowest stratum of society a polite people. Not so, thinks Mr. Allchaff, and to make sure that a christian gentleman shall not be returned, he goes to the other extreme, and recommends a ——— well never mind. Surely Mr. Allchaff has dragged his Methodism through the mire this time, if he never did before. Alas for the frailty of human nature.

Your obed't servant,

NOCHAFF.

Uniforms Not Uniform.

The want of uniformity among the uniforms of firemen, militia men, and bell men attending the Exhibition was a marvel (not a most) in our eyes.