

CHARACTER SKETCHES

No. 1.

OUR MONTREAL COSTIGAN.

WE all remember Jack Costigan, who, but for the clever tactics of the Major, would have been the disreputable father-in-law of Arthur Pendennis. We have often seen "Cos" raising his shaking hand to empty his thirteenth glass of whiskey and water, and have felt a kind of pity, mingled with our contempt, for the broken down old soldier who was his own worst enemy.

So Montreal, like all large cities, has its Costigan—two or three, perhaps—who hangs on to the skirts of the class he once belonged to, and is humble or mean enough to accept a drink from anyone who will treat him.

Mr. Jacks is an elderly man with grey hair and whiskers and a red nose, who has the shabby genteel appearance of one having seen better days. Indeed, Mr. Jacks was once in a good position, and manager of a thriving institution, but, without any active vices, he had that failing of being unable to pronounce the small word "No," which has brought him down to what he is.

How Mr. Jacks lives, is one of those mysteries beyond human intellect to fathom. He may be seen pacing the streets methodically during business hours, but though he

occasionally stops and converses with this person or that, we never heard of one who employed him in any capacity, unless to assist in changing a dollar bill. His threadbare suit has the ominous look of having seen the inside of a pawnshop, and though he will wag his head and laugh at a joke, the laugh is hollow and belied by the tears which issue from his glassy eyes—tears of whiskey. Until lately Mr. Jacks had a friend to whose office he would betake himself every day

about two o'clock, walking with a brisk step as though he had a most important mission to perform in respect of which there was no time to be lost. He had also a look of joyful anticipation on his face, but should his friend by some accident be out, it was amusing to watch the change in Mr. Jacks as he emerged from the office. The brisk walk had become a slouching crawl, and in place of the joyful anticipation, a disappointed and melancholy air prevailed over the entire man. He gazes disconsolately round as though uncer-

tain where to go and, finally heaving a sigh, slinks away. Generally, however, the friend is in, and the two will proceed to a convenient resort, where Mr. Jacks is treated to what has become his sole enjoyment in life. His friend has left this sphere and Mr. Jacks grows pathetic over his memory, but, alas, he is but a tippler and it is the glass, not the friend, which he misses. He has only one consolation for every trouble and were you to ask him at any or every hour of the day whether he would have a glass of whiskey and water, he would reply in the English for old Costigan's Irish, "Bedad I will, and that immediate." You in Montreal all know Mr. Jacks (or his counterpart) and should hold him up to your sons as a beacon and warning. Such a life can have but one end, and poor Mr. Jacks may "point a moral," though he would never "adorn a tale."

THE EDITOR'S FYLE.

WE have fixed upon the word "fyle" for many reasons; first it has a double meaning and may be taken either to represent the spike upon which the Editor thrusts contributions to be read over, and letters to be answered, or he may say it is his weapon with which he "files" away at rough sentences to make them smooth and palatable; secondly we prefer the term to that of Drawer or Easy Chair because apart from the latter two being in use by a well known magazine, no one ever heard of an Editor who had a drawer which he used, nor did an Editor ever sit upon other than a very uneasy chair.

The Editor is confident that some very curious effusions will find their way to his file at different times; an immense amount of "chaff" will be hurled at his devoted head, from which he will have to seek diligently for the "two grains of wheat" hidden therein, and probably when found they will not be "worth the search." He anticipates both indignant and pleading letters from disappointed contributors, the former of which he can afford to smile at, but for the latter, what Editor has not felt the difficulty of hardening his heart against those sad little epistles, hoping that he will accept the enclosed verses written to help a sick sister or mother—and oh "the pity of it" the lines are not worth the paper upon which they are penned? No, the Editor's File is not alwaysocular; he has to "keep a stiff upper lip" and remember the maxim "*Fiat justitia, ruat cælum.*" The Editor however will be glad to consider contributions, which, with the small space at the paper's disposal must be terse and to the point, and further he must positively decline to receive either manuscript or visits at his private residence wherever that may be. In his office he is Editor but at home he is but a mortal man liable to be overcome by his feelings, and give promises which will not have a feather's weight when he puts on his office spectacles.

Our readers will find our tales and romances suited to the modern taste, which has changed materially from the taste of even fifty years ago. The Editor was lately glancing over one of the novels of the celebrated Charles Lever whose vivid description of life in the island, which he calls the country of "punch, priests and potatoes," used to delight

