

HERE AND THERE.

As the momentous 22nd of February approaches, the political tension becomes more marked, and the tug of war is participated in by an ever-increasing number of interested combatants. In Halifax, which is already in a measure, and which is destined to become the great winter port of Canada, each of the political parties has placed in the field as candidates two business men; so that, whatever may be the result of the contest, Halifax will have as her representatives in the next Parliament two gentlemen fully alive to the necessity of maintaining and further extending the trade relations of this Port. The fact that Sir Charles Tupper has again re-entered the Dominion Cabinet, and has consented to contest his old constituency of Cumberland, proves that he, at least, has the courage of his convictions, and that no matter what others may assert as to the effect of Confederation, Sir Charles believes it to have been of advantage to the Province of Nova Scotia. As matters stand at present, Nova Scotia is represented in the Cabinet by three members—Sir Charles Tupper, Minister of Finance; Hon. J. S. D. Thompson, Minister of Justice; and Hon. A. W. McLellan, Post Master General. This of course, can be but a temporary arrangement, for it cannot be expected that three seats in a Cabinet of thirteen should be apportioned to a Province which has a population equal to about one-tenth of the entire population of the Dominion. It is rumored that several new portfolios are to be created, and that under these circumstances Nova Scotia's representation will not be abnormal; for our own part we are of the opinion that one, and only one, portfolio—that of Minister of Trade and Commerce—is likely to be added, and if our opinion prove correct, Nova Scotia's third representative in the Cabinet, if the Government be sustained, is not likely to long groan under the cares and emoluments of office. The handsome manner in which the Government has come down with Minutes in Council promising Railway subsidies to aid in the construction of projected lines or lines already partly built, is phenomenal. These are unquestionably election sugar plums, but they will be none the less palatable on that account. It is regrettable, however, that political parties have to resort to such means for securing the good will of the electors—it savors of bribery, and for that reason is a practice that should be condemned. In this respect, neither the Liberal or Conservative party can afford to deliver the condemnatory sermon, for they each have recourse to such methods when opportunity offers. The Liberal party, or at least its leaders, are strongly advocating Reciprocity with the United States, whilst the Repealers hold it out as one of the reasons why we should sever our connection with the Dominion. So far as Reciprocity is concerned, the voice of our electors on this question would be a unit, for the Conservatives as well as the Liberals, are fully alive to the advantages which would result from it; but intelligent men should seriously ask those who advocate Repeal upon the ground that we should then obtain a Reciprocity Treaty with our American cousins; what guarantee can they give them beyond a politician's promise, that Nova Scotia, outside of the Confederation, could secure Reciprocity? And when this question is honestly answered, and it is shown that such men are trusting entirely to a lucky turn in the wheel of fortune, intelligent electors will be able to discount the Reciprocity cry, fully understanding that it takes two parties to make a bargain; and that in this Reciprocity matter, one party (the Dominion) has already signified her willingness to enter into such a treaty.

THE FOIBLES OF GREAT MEN.

How is it that we are all interested in the weaknesses of great men? Is it because human nature cannot endure the sight of a faultless fellow-being? Certain it is that the *unco quid* have very few friends in the world. Or do men, out of vanity, love to hear of the foibles of great men, conscious that they themselves possess these at least in common with the great? Let the many who ape the eccentricities of genius answer for themselves. Or do not small faults and odd habits throw a stronger light upon the inner character of a great genius than his greater qualities and world-renowned exploits? Carlisle, walking in his garden, his hands behind him, and a clay pipe in his mouth, is certainly more real, knowable and human than Carlisle as the author and moralist. The heart of the reader warms towards the clever, impecunious Goldsmith, sitting in a barrel in "Green Arbor Court," playing his flute, while some ragged neighbor's children dance; or teaching his dog to sit on end, while the lines "By sports like these were all their cares beguiled, the sports of children satisfy the child," were still wet on the author's page. Samuel Johnson suffers nothing in our estimation when we see him lumbering down the street, scrupulously touching every hitching-post with his hands, and going back if he has missed one. Nor does Lord Macaulay lose any of his greatness when we know that he regularly played horse with the children; or that he never passed a certain eating-house in London without going in, calling for a large number of empty glasses, trying to stack them in a peculiar way on the table, and always breaking a goodly number of them in the attempt.

But there are other and less admirable weaknesses which we see exhibited by great men, though we do not think of balancing them against the sum total of their excellencies. It is a privilege of greatness to have faults. Many of the greatest characters in history showed a fondness for wine and women which could not be tolerated in less distinguished men. Other great names have stains of such ignoble hue as avarice or vanity. Bacon was called at once the wisest and the meanest of mankind. Macready wrote of his own acting of Macbeth as a noble piece of art. Lord Byron returned a box of pills to the apothecary because they were directed to "Mr. Byron." Napoleon said, "They call me lucky, because I am able; it is the weak men who accuse the strong of good fortune."

Not a few great men have lived in a false, artificial atmosphere throughout their lives. They seem to be acting a part—keeping up a delusion. Thus the elder Pitt, Mirabeau, and Napoleon I had a great deal of the charlatan mixed up with their characters. Nothing could atone for such characteristics but the possession of the most transcendent abilities. And merely intellectual qualities, when coupled with objectionable traits of character, serve only to excite men's admiration; not to win their devotion.

OUR ARMY IN HALIFAX.

Our articles on Halifax Society have drawn a clever letter from "Backslider," which was published in our last issue, and which goes far to prove the correctness of the position we have assumed. "Backslider" admits in the most candid way, that knowing the military is "useful," and that the simple fact of her being invited to dances at the barracks, resulted in improving her position with Halifaxians. It appears then that so great is the worship of the military that the regulation of the social status is left entirely with them. Their smile can raise the wealthy, generous and hospitable door above the heads of our oldest and most respected families, or their frown, condemn to social ostracism. That this power should be left in the hands of constantly shifting sets of officers, is to us incomprehensible, and the more so, as Halifax justly boasts of more than the usual proportion of cultivated and refined citizens.

We have abundant material from which to form a distinctive society of our own, into which (as we have before intimated) officers would seek admission, but internal jealousies and dissensions have divided us into small factions, each warring for recognition by the military. The result is injurious to us in every way and must make us especially ridiculous to the objects of our adoration. Halifaxians are essentially a commercial people, and as yet are not troubled with surplus wealth which they can afford to squander in extravagant living. There is in this city a great field for enterprise and push, but no drones are wanted in the hive. Everything that tends to expand and elevate the mind; the pursuit of knowledge, the cultivation of music, the study of the arts and sciences, with, or even without, some practical end in view, we can afford. But the formation of luxurious tastes and habits, the waste of time and money involved in endless rounds of balls and dinner parties, the neglect of business for the participation in sports and athletic exercises, very few can afford. Most are engaged in a struggle for existence, or are straining every nerve to educate and provide for their families, and anything that tends to make them ashamed of their business, to look upon trade as "low," ("He is in trade you know"), to apply the term gentlemen to those only who live on their money and do no work, is deeply to be deplored. It is here that the military element does the harm. A few of the officers are men of pronounced literary tastes, but the majority devote their leisure time to sports and to social pleasures, of which eating, drinking and dancing form no unimportant part. All these are good in their place, and in times of peace the military are entitled to enjoy them, as they in no way interfere with their duties, but the pursuit of pleasure is only too contagious and the effect upon our citizens and citizenesses is most deplorable.

Admitting that even most of the officers are cultivated gentlemen, there is still a sprinkling of frivolous "snobs" among them, and as Halifaxians in their blind devotion to the military make no discriminations, these men (who are more than likely of no social position at home,) succeed in doing an immense amount of mischief. They enter the homes of our citizens, and by their sneers at trade, make the wives and daughters ashamed of business callings, and almost ashamed of the bread-winners. In time even the latter become affected and, passing their customers over to the tender mercies of their clerks, spend hours of valuable time at the club. Their sons, turning up their noses at trade, insist on studying for the over-crowded professions; or, dressing as nearly like the officers as they can, pass their time in idleness and debauchery. They are quick to pick up all the small vices of the officers but not their virtues, and in their efforts to "keep up the family position" draw heavily on their fathers' purses. Money that is needed in the business is squandered in high living, and neglected customers seek new markets where the merchants will not treat them as inferiors. One day such men awake to the fact that they are ruined. Of course they attribute it to hard times, and the government of the dominant party comes in for its share of abuse, but that does not prevent their daughter's engagements with Lieut.—being suddenly declared off, nor themselves becoming as suddenly invisible to their old friends who pass them without recognition on the street.

The extravagance of living engendered by the military craze is an important phase of the question, and is one of the many causes that have led to the present stagnation in trade. Let us then come to our senses, and while paying the military due attention, manage to retain our own self respect.

The dangers that may arise from premature interment are illustrated by a sensational incident which recently occurred at Trenesin in Hungary. The wife of the Rabbi of the Jewish Congregation (apparently) died suddenly without having been previously ill. The night before the funeral the female watcher, sitting in an adjoining room, heard a noise in the chamber of death, and when, stricken with horror, she ventured to open the door, she found that the seemingly dead woman had risen from her bier, and had thrown off the shroud by which she was covered. By a fortunate accident the interment had been postponed in consequence of the intervening Sabbath; otherwise a horrible fate would have overtaken the Rabbi's wife.—*Jewish Chronicle*.