

SCRAGGS' CORRESPONDENCE.

TO MASTER JAMES LOVEBOOK,

Care REV. MR. LOVEBOOK,

PARSONAGE, STARVETOWN.

MY DEAR JAMES,—You are now home for the holidays, and have time to reflect upon the studies in which you have been engaged. I trust, my dear nephew, that you are making proper use of your opportunities to do good, and are developing the muscular man by sawing and splitting the wood for dear papa, as you have hitherto been engaged in developing your intellectual faculties by attacking knotty points in the course of your scholastic career.

You would have pitied your dear aunt had you seen her engaged in the frivolities of fashionable life at Quebec. You know I was compelled to go down there, much against my will, on account of some matters of business which required my presence at the seat of Government. I had to win over to my side the powerful, and those who exercise an influence almost overwhelming in the present Government. You are now of an age to know how little influence our poor pliant representatives of British interests possess, and well understand that it was, therefore, needless to speak to them. I accordingly devoted myself to the task of flattering the vanity of the governing classes, and I may say, without conceit, I succeeded admirably, and obtained all that I undertook to gain. I fervently hope I may never again have to go through such an ordeal.

His Hon——, although he arrogates to himself the title of Ex——, is an exceedingly weak-minded man,—fond of show and frippery, but very greedy withal. By his extravagance he is fast running the country into debt, and has no difficulty with his Ministry. Dear, dear, what I had to go through,—flattering them all, and making them believe I regarded them as paragons of wisdom. Having been governess in some of the best families, I had an intimate acquaintance with all that constitutes fashionable life. You may well suppose I did not make them aware of how I acquired my knowledge. They supposed I was a member of a noble family, and it is astonishing, with such people, how far this went. Had they really known that I was only an ex-governess, His Ex—— would never have condescended to listen to me. But, as a member of the aristocracy, all I said was received with the greatest deference.

What a world of sham it is! A sham King! A sham Minister of Pub—— Ins——, penning glowing reports of all that has been done to teach the people to read and write, while not one in fifty can do either the one or the other. The only thing not sham is the expense. My dear James, learn a trade,—learn to dig ditches at a dollar a day, work up to your middle in a swamp in freezing weather, or under the broiling mid-summer sun, shoe horses, go into the bush and chop firewood at half-a-dollar a cord, but never, never, I beseech you, sacrifice your self-respect by bowing and scraping before the men with whom local politics must bring you into contact.

Even I, my dear James, had to succumb, and to write

letters to weak, frivolous Mrs. Tattlewell, full of the most fulsome flatteries of the men I had to curry favour with. I knew she could not avoid telling every one what I said, and it is astonishing the effect of the round-about flattery that reached their ears. I was caressed, and invited to all their balls and parties. The *petits soupers* were very mean affairs. All the display is for outside show, but anything private avoid. A lady can always have a headache.

I am glad I managed to have my business accomplished before the much-talked-of ball took place. I am assured it was a poor affair, and that all the stuff in the papers was furnished by a hanger on, who does not excel in description.

I repeat, my dear James, never be a politician. It is the most ungentlemanly business possible. Sooner be a dock labourer. In that pursuit you can, at least, preserve self-respect.

Your loving Aunt,

SAMUELINA JOHNSON SCRAGGS.

LITERÆ SCRIPTÆ MANENT.

To judge by the number of letters advertised as remaining unclaimed in the Montreal Post Office, this would seem to be the device of that institution. The worthy Postmaster in looking at the bumps of the clerks and messengers evidently selects those having great adhesiveness, so that, school-boy fashion, they may stick to their letters. Is there no way of enabling the letter-carriers to discover "Who's Who in 1870?" We believe there is a Directory published, but owing to the low state of the finances, the Post Office authorities have been unable to raise the amount necessary to pay for a copy.

SKIMMINGS OF A CESS-POOL.

As his contemporaries have felt themselves constrained to stir up the filthy depths of what they style "the Byron mystery," GRINCHUCKLE feels bound to give the public a few of the curious things which have come to the surface during the operation. He flatters himself that his summary will be far more complete and intelligible than any yet given to the public.

Byron was a lord; nevertheless he was a poet. He wrote many good things, and did a few naughty ones. Take him, for all in all, we shall never see his like again, which some think no pity. He married. Some say his wife was crazy. If so, it is a question whether he drove her crazy; perhaps he did; if not, he didn't; and if he did, he ought to have known better. Any how, family circumstances arose out of the simple fact that he was married. Mrs. Stowe, remembering how fruitful one Dismal Swamp proved, was happy to go up to her knees in another. Most people think she might have spared herself the defilement and the public the exhibition of it. Perhaps so,—but when dollars and decency come into competition, of course the latter has no chance at all. It is, therefore, unreasonable to say much about Mrs. Stowe's part of the performance. This is all GRINCHUCKLE knows of the affair, and if anybody knows more, he or she is not to be envied.