

The Hearthstone.

GEORGE E. DESBARATS, Publisher and Proprietor.

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In an early number next month, we will commence the publication of another story of Montreal life, which will be entitled,

HARD TO BEAT.

The story is replete with incident, and contains several local sketches which cannot fail to be interesting. It is from the pen of

MR. J. A. PHILLIPS,

Author of "From Bad to Worse," &c.

and will be handsomely illustrated by our artist.

DEAD LETTERS.

Probably very few people think of the importance of addressing a letter intended for the Post legibly, and seeing that it has the full and proper address and is stamped. Post office departments all over the world have annually a great deal of trouble in correcting the errors made from carelessness, or ignorance, by persons desirous of sending letters through the Post; and in forwarding letters to their destinations, or returning them to the writers. It takes very little additional trouble to be certain that letters are properly directed and stamped, not to guess at it, but to be sure; and the saving in time and trouble to the Post Office department would be immense if a proper amount of care was taken with letters at the time of posting. Recent returns of the United States Post Office Department show that upwards of three millions of letters were sent to the Dead Letter Office, Washington, last year, and that they contained over three millions of dollars in money, drafts, bills of Exchange &c., ninety two thousand of which was in cash. Fifty eight thousand letters had no county or State direction; four hundred thousand lacked stamps, and three thousand were posted without any address at all. The general average of

money found in the letters sent to the D. L. O. is about one dollar. A great many people will exclaim, on reading this statement, "how careless the people of the United States must be;" but let us look at home and see what we Canadians manage to do in the way of misdirecting letters &c. The returns of the Postmaster General are not quite so full as the American reports, and some interesting points are not touched upon, but they are complete enough for all practical purposes, and from last year's report we gather the following facts: there were about 27,050,000 letters passed through the various Post Offices of Canada for the year ending 30th June 1871 of which 335,508 were sent to the Dead Letter Office in Ottawa, Halifax and St. John's. Of these about 105,000, or 1 in every 257 of the whole number passing through the various Post Offices, were unstamped. These 105,000 letters (this number is estimated the returns for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick not giving the number of unstamped letters—the number for Quebec and Ontario was 95,445) all posted in the Dominion, while the 27,050,000 includes foreign letters; if these were deducted the percentage of 1 in 257 would be considerably reduced, showing that great carelessness is shown in posting letters without putting on stamps. Of the number of letters sent to the D. L. O. last year two thousand and twenty three contained articles of value, amounting in the aggregate to one hundred and forty one thousand dollars, five thousand two hundred of which was in money; giving an average of forty two cents to each letter. If we make a better average than the Americans in regard to letters containing money, we make a much worse one as regards letters unstamped; for while their report shows that one letter out of seven sent to the D. L. O. was for want of stamps, ours shows that one out of every three was for that reason. To give some idea of the number of letters which do not go direct to their destinations, we will give a few figures taken from the returns of the Postmaster General; the total number of letters sent to D. L. O. since Confederation (years 1868 to 1871, inclusive) was 1,273,908, of which over 500,000 were unstamped; 6,456 of these contained valuables, amounting altogether to \$454,902.86, \$14,842.71 of which was in money. Most of these letters have been disposed of, all those containing money having been delivered, except 77, containing \$324.81 which remained in D. L. O. Ottawa on 30th June. One fruitful source of the miscarriage of letters is the omission of the County or Province in which the town or village is situated; frequently there are several places of the same name in different Counties, or Provinces and the Postmaster is utterly unable to guess for which one the letter is intended. In Canada this duplication of names of Post Offices is common, and in the United States it is nothing uncommon to find a dozen or more Post Offices of the same name, sometimes two or three in the same State; for instance there are 17 "Spring-creeks" 63 "Spring-fields" and 142 "Washingtons" in the United States; and in the State of Ohio alone there are 43 villages, towns and townships called "Washington," so that a letter addressed "Washington, Ohio" would have some difficulty in reaching its destination, for the Post Office would have a choice of 43 Washingtons to send it to, and would, of course, send it to the Dead Letter Office. There are a few plain rules to be followed in addressing letters which would save much time, trouble and annoyance if adhered to; first: always write the address on a letter as legibly as possible, so that the Postmaster may be able to read it without difficulty, there is very little time for looking at the address of each letter and half a dozen illegible addresses will give more trouble than fifty properly directed; second, be sure to give the County or Township, especially if there are several places of the same name as the one you are sending to; third, give the Province or State, and be sure you give it right, we sometimes get letters addressed "Montreal, Ont.," fourth, make sure that the letter is stamped and stamped sufficiently, if you have any doubt on the latter point get the Postmaster to weigh it, and tell you the correct postage; fifth, be careful that the letter has an address on it; this seems almost an unnecessary caution, but it appears that three thousand letters were posted in the United States last year without any address at all; sixth, sign your full name and address so that in the event of the letter miscarrying it may be returned to you. It is the fashion to blame the Post Office for all errors and delays in the delivery of letters, and, undoubtedly the Post Office is frequently to be blamed, but a great deal of the delay and inconvenience frequently experienced in the receipt of letters is without doubt caused by the carelessness of the senders.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.

The annual report of this excellent institution does not reflect credit on a city of the size and wealth of Montreal. It appears that the number of members last year was only 160, or a little more than one for every thousand inhabitants. The mechanics of Montreal are, as

a class, as well educated as could be found anywhere, and quite as well able to appreciate the books provided for them by the Institute as any other body of men; but, somehow, they seem to take no care to avail themselves of the opportunity offered to obtain a large quantity of good reading matter at a very small yearly cost. No doubt the profusion of cheap papers and books has a great deal to do with the noticeable decline in membership of both the Mechanics' Institute and the Mercantile Library, and fathers of families prefer reading at home to going to public reading-rooms; besides which the increase in the size of the city has caused the tide of population to flow from the centre, and renders it inconvenient for many to go to the library to obtain books or read the papers. One of the principal pleas raised during the late nine hour movement was that the workmen wanted more time to improve themselves; many employers in this city have conceded the nine hours, and we hope to see the men use the hour so gained in improving themselves, and we know of no better way for them to attain that object than by lending their assistance to the support of an institution which is designed especially for their advantage.

WISE AND OTHERWISE.

It is a curious fact that poor people are seldom afflicted with kleptomania, although a good many of them are given to stealing.

M. STANISLAUS JULIEN claims to have discovered that chloroform was used by the Chinese between the years 220 and 230 of our era, by a physician named Hon-tou, who made incisions, amputations, &c., on patients under its influence.

THE Irrepressible Insurance Agent is not only a nuisance, but he seems to be an expensive luxury also, the published returns of seventy-one companies doing business in the State of New York showing that their expenses for drummers, agents and advertising amounted last year to eleven millions of dollars.

THERE is now a curious case under the consideration of the Courts in New York as to the right of a photographer to exhibit the photographs of his customers for business purposes, or to sell copies to others than the person photographed. The case is exciting some attention, and the decision is anxiously awaited by those who are fond of being photographed.

AT last the days of wasp-like waists seem to be coming to an end. The N. Y. Mail, which may be considered an authority on such matters, declares that the regulation size of a lady's waist now is twenty-three inches. The doctors and the undertakers will doubtless suffer, but poor humanity will be greatly benefited by the abolition of the absurd and deadly habit.

EARL RUSSELL attained his eightieth birthday on 18th August. His public career extends over a period of fifty-nine years, he having been elected to represent the borough of Tavistock in 1813, and of all the members of the House when he took his seat, not one now survives. He served, as Lord John Russell, forty-eight years in the House of Commons, and has been eleven years in the House of Lords.

THE poet tells us that "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast," but a musician at Huddersfield, Eng., lately found that it would not do to regard his wife as a "savage breast," and endeavor to soothe her. The woman was sick, and asked him to go for the doctor, but he contented himself by trying to soothe her by sitting by the bedside and playing "The Dead March in Saul." The Magistrate did not think this a good style of treatment, and sentenced him to eighteen months' imprisonment.

THE London caterers have had a hard time of it this year, and many of them are said to be reduced to state almost bordering on starvation. The failure of the fruit crop, and the scarcity of fish have left them nothing to sell, and the familiar cry of "All alive O!" is heard but rarely. Herrings have been as high as three pence a piece, oysters have risen in price beyond the reach of all but the very rich, haddock is too dear to buy to sell again, and fruit is altogether too high to run the risk of buying it to retail. The oldest dealers say they have never had so hard a season.

"ALL the world" has heard of Holloway, the pill and plaster man, and many in all parts of the world have swallowed his pills and had his plasters applied to them; but comparatively few are probably aware of the noble use to which he proposes to put a portion of the large fortune he has accumulated. He has lately purchased a site at Virginia Water, near London, on which he intends to build an asylum for the middle classes, the cost of which will be about \$500,000. The asylum will accommodate about two hundred patients, and will be maintained for a year by Mr. Holloway, after which it is expected to be self-supporting.

WONDERS will never cease! There is a man in San Francisco who has discovered the philosopher's stone, and actually knows how to convert the baser metals into pure, shining gold; at least he says so, and, of course, he ought to know. He claims that gold manufactured by him has been frequently tested by the Assayers and pronounced pure gold. Out of respect, however, for the California mines, and the great depreciation in the value of their stock, which would without doubt occur if his secret was discovered, he announces his intention of taking it with him to the grave—and we believe he will.

A GOOD many unfortunate persons have undoubtedly been buried alive, and have had the misfortune not to have the fact discovered until too late, and we have read wonderful stories of frogs and toads which have been buried for many years and have come out brisk and lively after their imprisonment; but a Wisconsin ox has lately had a strange adventure and has come out of it quite sleek and fat. Some time ago he was missing, and no trace of him could be found; after three weeks he walked out of a haystack, which had been blown over during a storm, and had fallen on him, and on which he had lived until he ate his way out. There being snow on the ground supplied him with moisture.

Does it pay to imprison debtors for small debts? It would appear not, if we are to judge by a late parliamentary return compiled from information furnished from the county and borough prisons of England and Wales, which shows that the expense incurred in 1870 for the maintenance of prisoners for debts under 40s. was £4,220; the total amount of debts for which they were imprisoned was only £7,073. Imprisonment for debt has been abolished for

many years past in England, but debtors can still be imprisoned for contempt of Court in neglecting to pay when ordered by the Court; this is to say, if a man is arrested for debt and he has any means of payment, the Judge may order so much a week to be paid, and if the order is neglected, and it can be shown that the party had the means of payment, he can be imprisoned for contempt for six weeks.

THAT the force of getting up presentations to persons of no particular standing, for no particular services, has been rather overdone is one which "nobody can deny," and a contemporary very happily hits off the absurdity by the following notice of a "Presentation."—"Mr. John Smith, a distinguished and popular shoe-maker of Chelsea, was surprised at a late hour on Saturday night by a number of friends, and presented with a new pegawl, with brass ornaments on the handle, the whole said to have cost twenty-five cents, and designed by Mr. John Brown. Mr. John Brown made a neat presentation speech, in which he feebly alluded to the immense benefit Mr. Smith had been to the souls of the inhabitants of Chelsea, and to the very satisfactory manner in which he had enabled them to mend their ways. Mr. Smith made an appropriate response, and the affair was of the most enjoyable kind."

LAUGHING.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

People who do not know how to laugh are much to be pitied. Not every one who laughs knows how to laugh in the highest sense. An irradiating smile is fine a small smile, that glances upon the face like a motor, come and goes in the same instant, is better than nothing. But laughing, like poetry, music, invention, oratory, is given in its highest forms to but few.

We have a relative, a lady, who is gifted in a high degree with the genius of laughing. One should see her when an exquisite story lights up the inner soul. Only the other night three of us sat together. One told an anecdote, that started another, till, like pigeons in a wood, they poured out in flocks. Soon all were in paroxysms. There was no boisterous roaring. Each one performed with refinement, but all were "clean gone." The eldest has a continuous roll that goes on without check till the breath is gone, and the lungs fairly roll down; but, gathering a long breath, he dashes down the same long roll again, till, like the muscles ache; with hands unobscuredly placed, and waving from side to side, his eyes streaming with tears, he at length gains enough control to escape from that eddy which had been whirling him helplessly around.

Another one laughs by a series of short explosive fusillades, recurring rapidly and continuing in what seems likely to be an endless series. But the lady foremost begins in a gentle way, as if controlling every movement. So have I seen a gay rider, ambling at first, then moving off at a trot, breaking into a gallop, and then carried off at a dashing speed in a real run away. It does one's heart good like a medicine to see and hear such a charming performance—so hearty, so natural, so genuinely furious, so possessed with a demon of laughter that will not be cast out. You shall see the beginning of the laugh carried well along till the excess of it seems to disturb her modesty. She covers her face with a newspaper, and some would think that she was resting. But, look! No sound. Only a jelly-like trembling of the whole body! On—till in desperation she runs from the room. Ah, there is good honest heartiness in such an experience, and an overplus of pleasure; the highest pleasure reaches the edge of pain.

It is impossible to discriminate between the wit that produces only pleasure of thought, and that which produces only pleasure of laughter. A very simple incident, narrated strikes the palpitating nerve of laughter, to the surprise of every one. Some things and their power by once telling. Others are never-failing. Even to think of them sets one off. We wake up nights, and happening to think of a good thing, bring down censure on our head for untimely outbursts of laughter, "when all honest and sober people should be asleep!"

One peculiarity of laughter is, that it rages fearfully when you feel in your soul that it is wicked. It is "in meeting" that the danger is the most alarming. Oh, there are some things that one should never think of in church! Resistance would be vain. All that could be done would be to stuff one's mouth with a handkerchief, and smother all sounds.

No man can explain to another why he laughs. There is nothing more absurd than to ask a man "what there is funny in a story." Stories, like percussion bombs, must explode when they strike, or they are good for nothing. Stories that don't go off are poor stock.

There is one story which we never think of without a ripple, and never tell without a rush of laughter. Indeed, we are shaking now; but very likely our readers will see nothing in it. A good deacon had the bad habit of making very long family prayers. His wife was hard of hearing. One morning, for some reason, he prayed short, and then went to the barn to milk. On returning, he found his wife still kneeling, with closed eyes. He stopped up behind her, and shouted "A man!" whereon she very quietly rose and went about her work. You don't laugh? Well, the spark is there, but your powder is not good.

THOUGHTS ON OUR COLONIAL POLICY.

It has been urged by the advocates of the Goldwin Smith policy, who would throw off our colonies, that England would have all the advantages of trade with the liberated settlements without any of the responsibility of protecting them. This is false as it is selfish and cowardly. Statistics show how great is the disproportion between the trade done by England with her colonies and with the Anglo-Saxon communities politically separated from her. I do not intend to quote statistics, but any one interested can at once, by consulting them, see how disastrous (taking the most selfish view of the question) would be this policy. True, the colonies have put on heavy duties for revenue on English manufacturers, but what are these as compared with the relative protective duties which would be levied upon separation from the British rule; these would probably equal the almost prohibitive duties in the United States, and the consequence would be a diminution in British exports to the colonies, quite equal to that which had taken place in the United States. Then, as to the responsibility of protection. It is to be understood that in withdrawing her troops, England intimates her intention of allowing the colonies to defend themselves against outside attack? If so, then it is the strongest incentive to her colonies to secede from the connection with the mother country, because England is much more likely to become engaged in war than any of the States which would be formed by seceding colonies, and during the continuance of the connection any colony is liable to be attacked by the foes of England; therefore her safety is endangered by her poli-

tical connection with a country from which she receives neither the assistance of money, credit, nor armed protection; but let it be asked, has England become so selfish and fallen so low as to leave any of her colonies in the lurch, if unjustly attacked by a foreign power? Because the troops are withdrawn from Canada, would the British nation still still and see Canada overrun by marauding Fenians from the United States? Every one knows full well that the generous sentiments of the people would be aroused, and that even in the event of an attack by the overwhelming forces of the United States Government, they would rise as one man and demand that the honour of England should be vindicated in defending the liberties of her American subjects; thus, in withdrawing the troops of our colonies, we neither save money nor do we practically give up responsibilities, unless we were to sink down to a meanness of which no one will venture to accuse us. But is it true that England is weary of her high mission, that of being the pioneer of civilization all over the globe? Do the English people think that that mission which, so nobly commenced by our forefathers, has been energetically carried forward to the present day is accomplished, and that really the time has come for them to "Rest and be thankful"? No! a thousand times No! England does not believe that her mission is accomplished, nor does she mean to allow other less worthy hands to take up her unfinished work, or to allow that work to remain unfinished. Rather will she, in the full plenitude of her wealth, with undiminished energy buckle to at the old work with increased intelligence and enlarged means. She owes her present greatness mainly to her colonies and her trade, which have stimulated and maintained her home industries, and she will never be mad enough to think of trying to cast off either one or the other of the sources of her prosperity, but rather with increasing knowledge of the power and wealth and loyalty of these distant possessions seek to draw them together into relations of closer unity.—St. James' Magazine.

EPITOME OF LATEST NEWS.

CANADA.—It is reported that George Brown will re-enter public life to assume the leadership of his party in the local Legislature.—The International Railway will be open from Halifax to Amherst at the beginning of October.—Soundings on the Nova Scotia coast for the new cable between England and Halifax are completed.—The imports of the first five months of the year are almost double those of last year.—It is rumored that Mr. E. J. Loring, Clerk of the Crown in New Brunswick, is to be appointed Clerk of the House of Commons.—Major Lindsay, deceased.—A French capitalist has opened an establishment for the preparation of salmon at Rivier Quebec. The little fish are equal to the best of France, and large quantities are received from Quebec and Montreal.—The troops about to start for Manitoba will be uniformed in scarlet instead of the blue uniforms. The Indians are displeased to doubt whether the green coats are really the Queen's troops or not, and the traditional surliness will doubtless have a good effect.—The Dominion revenue for August was \$1,852,977.65; expenditures, \$1,810,448.48.—It is rumored that Kiel is supplied with funds from Ontario to carry on the contest against Attorney-General Clark in Manitoba, and most of the money spent by him is in Royal Canadian bills.—One hundred and sixty acres of land will be awarded to each of the two hundred veterans now being enlisted for Manitoba.—A report is current that the steamer Great Eastern, after landing the cable at Halifax, will take a cargo of coal to England.

UNITED STATES.—Six hundred Mormons have sailed for Utah.—The Government has imported five splendid specimens of the Norman breed of horses.—It is reported that Mr. O'Connor has finally accepted the nomination of the Louisville Convention, through the influence of the Committee of that body, which called upon him in New York.—The statue of Sir Walter Scott for the New York Central Park, has arrived.—The Apaches are again committing outrages.—The little war in the public schools of New York seems to be breaking out anew.—Despatches from Victoria report matters in Alaska to be in a very unsatisfactory condition.—The work of sinking the track of the New York Central Railroad from the Union Depot to Harlow River, has been begun.—The cost of bridges, viaducts and tunnels, which will have to be built, will reach about six millions.—The Pacific Mail Company estimates that strong doubts as to the authenticity of the despatch from its agent at Yokohama, announcing the loss of the S.S. America.—David Glasgow, of North Adams, who married his wife last spring, has been sentenced to be hanged.—White's building on Commercial street, Newark, N. J., occupied by several manufacturers, was destroyed by fire on 12th inst. Loss, \$75,000.—The trial of a second trial of Mrs. Anna D. Fair for the murder of her husband, has been commenced in San Francisco. The dodge of challenging the jury has been resorted to, and 600 jurors have been examined and only one juror obtained.

ENGLAND.—John Rae, who was recently examined by the public in connection with the Belfast riots, and who was committed to prison for contempt of court, but afterwards released, was again committed to prison on Saturday, for a repetition of the offence.—The Government has agreed not to contest the Parliamentary election in Freetown, if the Liberal candidate will pledge himself to advocate the abolition of game laws.—Rinderpest continues to spread in the provinces.—London advises show that the striking miners is prevailing all through the country. The manufacturers of Woombe, the coal men of Lowndes, the silk-weavers of Sudbury, the stone-masons of Preston, and the bakers of Dublin. The London carpenters, bricklayers, and cabinet-makers continue their strikes. The Post Office officials have petitioned for an advance of wages. The journeymen butchers of London have formed a union for the purpose of getting higher wages.—The Times expects that when the Conference at Berlin is over, a circular note will be issued explaining its pacific nature.

GERMANY.—The week has been given up to festivities in honor of the Austrian and Russian Emperor's visit to Berlin.—The disorderly portion of the population of Berlin took occasion during the grand military parade on Saturday last to create many disturbances. One party of violent character, engaged at an advance in the price of beer by Host & Co., made an attack upon their brewery and completely wrecked it. The police was compelled to charge on the crowd with drawn swords, and it was not dispersed until many persons were wounded and a still larger number arrested.—The Emperor of Austria left Berlin on 11th inst. He was accompanied to the railway station by Emperor William, Prince Frederick William, and many other members of the army and court. He repeatedly embraced the German Emperor and Crown Prince before stepping from the platform to the car.

SPAIN.—The budget to be submitted to the new Cortes will show a deficit of 2,500,000,000 reals.—The military agents are becoming troublesome. Fresh outbreaks have occurred on the frontier, troops have been despatched to menaced points and precautions have been taken to prevent the insurgents from crossing the frontier and concentrating in any considerable numbers.—The Private Secretary of the Duke de Montpensier, has been arrested at Merida. The Government has obtained the clue to a conspiracy on the part of Montpensier in the interest of Don Alfonso.

FRANCE.—The last weekly edition of the Illustration, seized by the police because it contained insulting caricatures of Prussians.—Duyrier de Launay pronounces false the report of his engagement to Miss Nellie Grant which first appeared in the Spectator.—Lass, a journalist, committed suicide on 10th inst.

SWITZERLAND.—Rumors as to the amount of the award to the American Government seem to be true; some accounts place the amount as low as twelve millions, some as high as thirty.—The Arbitrators have gone on a visit to Bern, and have been received by the President of the Federal Council.

CUBA.—Late advices report a few unimportant skirmishes between the Spanish troops and the revolutionaries, resulting in defeats of the latter.

AUSTRIA.—Prince Albrecht, commander-in-chief of the Austrian army, died on 12th inst. He was 55 years of age.