

PUNCH IN CANADA.

annexation to the whales of the gulf; from the trapper-trodden ravines of the Winnipeg, to the tourist-tormented ridges of rumbling Niagara,—all is Punch's. Every hut offers him a home; every table has a knife and fork for him, and frequently a spoon.

And thus it is that Punch looks upon himself as a settler;—one who, with sharp pointed instruments, the pen and the pencil of satire, roots up the stumps of humbug from the social soil of his adoption, sowing pleasant flowers where he has cut down noxious weeds. Hitherto the flowers have flourished; their future prosperity, like their past, depends upon the public, the liberal and enlightened public of Punch.

And, in another point of argument, Punch is also entitled to the style and denomination of a settler,—a regular settler. Many knotty points have been readily and completely settled by him. Ministerial measures have been settled by him; incorporated incapables have been settled by him; professional impostors have been settled by him; amateur swindlers have been settled by him, and Annexation is in a very fair way of being settled by him, and will, in his second volume, be completely and satisfactorily settled by him; or else he will perish in the attempt, leaving Judy a disconsolate widow, and Toby a poodle of many woes. Punch then is a settler;—having satisfactorily settled this last question, referred to himself by himself.

The present year will undoubtedly bring with it much grist to the mill of Punch; which shall be ground with care, and served out to his customers with strict impartiality. There will be a good deal of "chaff,"—an article which Punch never wastes; but reserves for application to the object of his particular regard, whether corporate or incorporate, political or social, annexation or anti-annexation.

While the pencil of Punch has been used with a freedom and breadth in keeping with the character of the subjects upon which he has delighted to employ it, he trusts that the chiar-oscuro produced by it has never been tinged with the unholy light painted by the touch of malignity: nor has his pen,—albeit sharp and sure,—descended to daggerism; like the style of the ancient Roman editors, who practised a peculiar and very stylish mode of scratching out their political opponents with the points of their pens. This might have been looked upon as a capital or rather Capitol joke, in those remote ages of journalism; but Punch prefers writing *currente calamo*, and trusts to his baton when it comes to blows. Thus, he is considerably milder than Roman Punch, though at the same time incomparably stronger.

In recurring more particularly to the past year, Punch would hope that his poetical productions have given satisfaction—that they have gone to the heart-recesses of those for whom they were written. Those of Punch's own composition,—and he smiles while he pens this paragraph,—have cost him much mental as well as physical labour. He has climbed to the top of the Parnassus of the Mountain of Montreal, there to catch the inspiration requisite for the more sublime gyrations of his muse; and if he did not catch it there, he was generally pretty certain to catch it from Judy upon his return. He has herded with monstrosities in the meanest cellars of Griffintown, in order to study the characteristics of humanity in its lowest phases—converting the rags of the wretched into torches for the illumination of his readers. He has wandered through the fields and the forests, communing with the spirit of nature, who generally very obligingly perched herself in a tree near him, while he sat and smoked his pipe on a log. From the depths of the St. Lawrence,—the river of lakes and the lake of rivers,—he has brought up pebbles of rich lustre, with which he has lavishly gemmed the golden goblets of his brimming fancy. Punch has done all this; and he trusts that he has not laboured altogether in vain, but that the book of slim and genteel exterior which he introduces to the public with these few preliminary remarks as to pedigree will be welcome to a pleasant situation upon the drawing-room tables of the good, the sofas of the wise, and the window-seats of the witty.

But, in his artistical pursuits, Punch has still greater difficulties to overcome,—still more formidable dangers to contend with. Deer-stalking, in the howling wilderness of the furthest region of the far west yet trodden by the foot of the hunter, is nothing compared with the dodges which Punch had to devise, and the disguises he was forced to assume, when in pursuit of some devoted victim, whose head he had designed for the block,—there to be dealt with by his hewers of wood, after their peculiar fashion. One individual had to be watched until his tracks led the bold pursuer into, perchance, some place of resort for the thirsty, where he was secured and taken off, while imbibing a sherry-cobbler, or plunging into the evanescent extacies of soda-water-and-something. Another would elude with watchful eye the movements of the wary hunter, rendering his expression more difficult to catch than a wild mustang on his native prairie; and a third, having no expression at all, presented a still greater difficulty to the persevering Punch,—that of providing him with one. But difficulties and dangers only bring an accession of energy to the assistance of the truly great;—and so it came to pass that Punch achieved a volume.

And here it is,—the first offering of a Canadian Punch to a Canadian Public. Could the gallant Jacques Cartier have had a foreshadowing of this on the magic canvas of his bold spirit, ere he steered his barque up the blue St. Lawrence, to the heights of Hochelaga? We rather think he had: and so, Punch has a share in the happy discovery of his adopted country; while an additional maple wreath is due to the memory of Jacques Cartier, as the primary cause of PUNCH.