

of his time. It led to his being severely snubbed and censured by William Lyon Mackenzie, by Mr. George Brown and by Mr. Blake.

For his advocacy of Metcalfe, "by the Divine blessing" Ryerson got his reward. He was appointed Chief Superintendent of Education with *carte blanche* to rule, legislate, and expend the public money. It must be owned that he proved himself a most beneficent despot, and that in no other way, and perhaps by no other man then in Canada could the great edifice of our Public School System have been so successfully upreared. Never was public servant so munificently paid. Trip after trip to Europe was taken by this indefatigable holiday-maker at the public expense.

Dr. Ryerson deserves the gratitude of our Province for the eclectic system of the public school education which his common sense enabled him to institute, and his vigorous administrative power carried out against all opposition. When that opposition became unduly strong, he had always an unfailing resource,—a threat of resignation. The Ministry of the day feared his return to politics, and perhaps over-estimated his power for mischief as a pamphleteer.

Dr. Ryerson it must be admitted made mistakes; the Book Depository was one of them. Another was his choice of Works of Art for the Museum. Dr. Hodgins tells us of "the admirable collection of copies of paintings by the old masters (!)." With this estimate I cannot agree, for among artists there is only one opinion as to the "works of art" at the Normal School Museum. They are not only useless, but they are positively injurious: they convey an utterly wrong impression of great paintings, and it is much to be lamented that such daubs should be placed before the eyes of our art students. That they should be destroyed would be a measure of justice to our art school, and of reparation to the memory of Dr. Ryerson, whose utter ignorance of art is one of the minor blemishes on a useful and, in some respects, a great career.

CHARLES PELHAM MULVANY.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

JOAQUIN MILLER'S LETTER.

NEW YORK, Jan. 4.—Never was there nearly such a brilliant New Year in this great city as this of 1884. And that is because this wonderful city was never so full of people, never so powerful, rich, populous as now. This giant seems to have only this year come of age. For five successive seasons I have now taken part in the festivities attending the birth of the new year in this mighty commercial capital of the earth, and each successive year has been more brilliant than the preceding one, until this year the climax seems to have been reached. The whole continent seems to have emptied its wealth, wit, beauty into the lap of the great stone and iron city by the sea.

The New Year's Day passed with even more than the ordinary exchange of calls and courtesies. Each year before the day comes around I hear that this old and honoured Knickerbocker custom is dying out. But I find, as with the display on the streets, that each succeeding New Year's Day is more given to the maintenance of the custom than the preceding one. And each year I note a general improvement in tone and address of the merry callers. This year I think there was less drinking, notwithstanding the increased number of callers, than ever before. I noted but one really drunken man. And he, a slim, pale and dainty youth, most fashionably clad, had the good taste to be very sorry and try hard to conceal his misfortune. He had lost track of his carriage and his friends and was standing on a side street all alone braced up against the iron railing. As I came by he stood up straight, hung his right arm up over the pickets behind him, then his left arm, and then felt around feebly with his head as if hunting for a place to hang that also. But not finding any place to put it he nodded at me repeatedly with his limber neck, and tried to wink and smile familiarly as I passed.

THAT MURDER AT THE WINDSOR HOTEL.

Some justly indignant and entirely responsible parties have called my attention to and asked for some public expression touching the cold-blooded sequence of this murder. I call it a murder simply because it was a murder. And I turn back and invite attention to this sad affair, because the parties who committed that murder are trying to "velvet" over the whole bloody business by abusing the helpless dead. It will not do. One lady writes me that she could not sit even in an omnibus with this gambler or either of the women who appeared at the inquest to traduce the dead. And this, I think, is the universal feeling.

Let us look at this case briefly, bluntly. A gambler—making great show, living in great splendour, professing to be one of the great people of this great city suddenly married. He has been doing something which makes it safest for him to keep the marriage secret. A detective is employed. The marriage is revealed. And the wronged, ruined girl who has been the companion of this man's mother goes to his room, shoots herself and dies at the feet of this man and the woman (?) he has married. "For God's sake keep this quiet." That is what the man said as he bent over the dying girl. He did not think of saving her life. He thought only of saving himself. He did not say, "For God's sake help her." The cold-blooded, deliberate murderer who had brought this girl to her pitiful death, true to his instincts, to his utter absence of honour, thought only of himself as she who had been his mother's companion lay there in her blood.

There are many kinds of murderers. A man who gets his wife to hold a girl by the hair of the head while he blows her brains out is one kind. The man who drives a girl to such desperation that she, crazed and wild with her accumulated wrongs, comes pleading to him, is scorned, and so falls dead is quite another kind of murderer. And of the two, the first is comparatively a gentleman. For he, at least, has the courage to risk his neck for his crime.

As for the women (?) who went on the stand before the coroner's jury to blacken the character of the dead and defenceless girl, what shall be said? What can possibly be said? The girl was dead. She could not harm them. But they felt guilty, and so they swore to too much entirely. May be they felt it a duty to shield this loafer now that this poor girl had come to them in the great fashionable hotel and shot herself dead at their feet. But was it their duty to traduce that dead girl? to insult her corpse with low insinuations till one of the jurors rose up in his just indignation and had that testimony stricken out? No, indeed, it was not. But let us turn from this dark deed of man to the white face of nature.

### THE SNOW.

"Hast thou entered into the treasuries of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasuries of the hail?"

Late it came in New York this year; but calmly, certainly, tranquilly it has at last taken possession and spread its white dominion over the universal North. How noble in its unobtrusive dignity; its descent from the vast somewhere above to the undisputed possession of the submissive earth. This pure white baby in which the new year is born to us forever is suggestive. This bridal veil on the face of nature signifies days and nights of festivities, forgetfulness of toil to the Christian world, and I think children are happier at sight of the first snowfall of winter than they are even at the sweet scent of the first flowers of spring.

Watch the snowflakes fall. Each particle is said to be a fairy's palace. Some of the imaginative and wonderfully learned German scholars tell us that every snowflake is inhabited by happy little beings who are born, hold their revels and live their long lives of happiness and delight, die and are buried, all during the descent of the snowflake from the world of clouds to the solid land. I do not know whether to believe these scholars or not. They are of that same school which tells you that every square foot of air possesses some twelve or fifteen million of, more or less, perfect little beings; and that at every ordinary breath we destroy a million, more or less, of these happy lives. The sigh of a healthy lover is supposed to swallow up about fifteen millions. They insist that the dust which will, as all know, accumulate in the most secure and secret places, is merely the remains of millions and billions of those little beings who have died of old age.

### FLOWER FROM A BATTLEFIELD.

The cannon shot ploughed these fields of ours long ago deep and wide. Some flowers have grown up in the furrows. And while I would celebrate no battle in song or dignify any war or professional warrior with even respectful mention, still I find some pitiful little incidents growing out of our late dreadful war, which go straight to the heart. They can begin to be heard above the loud talk of boastful brigadiers now. And these little deeds of simple and unnamed soldiers will survive the brigadiers all. Here is a little incident sent me from Indiana, which I have put in verse. I had long ago heard of the old Wabash schoolmaster who nailed up his cabin schoolhouse and marched away with his scholars to the war; but the heart of the story is new.

### "GOING UP HEAD;" AN OLD SOLDIER'S STORY.

The low school-house stood in a green Wabash Wood,  
Lookin' out on long levels of corn like a sea—  
A little log house, hard benches and we,  
Big barefooted boys, and rough 'uns, we stood  
In line with the gals and tried to get 'head  
At spellin' each day when the lessons was said.

But one, Bally Dean, tall, bony and green  
As green corn in the milk, stood fast at the foot—  
Stood day after day, as if he'd been put  
A soldier on guard there, did poor Bally Dean,  
And stupid! God made him so stupid I doubt—  
But I guess God who made us knows what He's about.

He'd a long way to walk. But he wouldn't once talk  
Of that, nor the chores for his mother who lay  
A shakin' at home. Still, day after day  
He stood at the foot till the class 'gan to mock!  
Then to master he plead, "oh, I'd like to go head,"  
Now it wasn't so much, but the way it was said.

Then the war struck the land! Why that barefooted band  
It just nailed up that door; and the very next day,  
With master for Cap'en, went marching away;  
And Bally the butt of the whole Wabash band!  
But he bore with it all, yet once firmly said,  
"When I get back home, I'm agoin' up head!"

Oh, that school house that stood in the wild Wabash wood!  
The rank weeds were growin' white ghosts through the floor.  
The squirrels hulled nuts on the sill of the door,  
And the gals stood in groups scrapin' lint where they stood.  
And we boys! How we sighed; how we sickened and died  
For the days that had been, for a place at their side.

Then one fever-crazed and his better sense dazed,  
And dulled with heart sickness all duty forgot,  
Deserted, was taken, condemned to be shot!  
And Bally Dean guardin' his comrade half-crazed,  
Slow paced up and down while he slept where he lay  
In the tent waitin' death at the first flush of day.