

TRIFLES FROM MY DIARY.

"GENERAL WOLFE'S CORNER," PALACE STREET, QUEBEC.

By the author of "Maple Leaves."

Olim truncus eram.....inutile lignum,
Quem faber incertus scamnum faceretne * *
Maluit esse Deum.

Horace—Satire, VIII.—Lib. I.

Henry Ward Beecher begins an amusing sketch of our city, with the words, "Queer old Quebec,—of all the cities on the Continent of America, the quaintest." He concludes his humorous picture by expressing the wish that it may remain so without being disturbed by all the new-fangled notions of the day. Some one has observed that its walls, streets, public places, churches and old monasteries, with the memories of three centuries clinging to them, gave you, when you entered under its massive gates, hoary with age, the idea of an "old curiosity shop," or, as the same Henry Ward Beecher well expresses it, "a picture-book, turning over a new leaf at each street." It is not then surprising that the inhabitants should have resorted not only to the pen of the historian to preserve evergreen and fragrant the historical ivy which clings to its battlements, but even to that cheap process, in use in other countries, to immortalize heroes—signboards and statues—a process recommended by high authority. We read in that curiously-interesting book, "History of Signboards:—"

"The Greeks honored their great men and successful commanders by erecting statues to them; the Romans rewarded their popular favorites with triumphal entries and ovations; modern nations make the portraits of their celebrities serve as signs for public-houses.

Vernon, the Butcher Cumberland, Wolfe, Hawke, Prince Ferdinand, Granby, Burgoyne, Keppel, Howe, Evil and good have had their tithe of talk, And filled their signpost then, like Wellesley now."

If Wolfe served as a signboard recently

in Britain, he has filled the same office now close on a century in Canada, and still continues to do so. He has defied wind and weather ever since the day when the Cholette Brothers affixed to the house at the north-west corner of St. John and Palace streets a rough statue of the gallant young soldier in the year 1771, with one arm extended in the attitude of command, and pointing towards the Falls of Montmorency.

Nor has Mr. De Gaspe, the author of the "Canadians of Old," thought it beneath his pen to indite an able disquisition on its origin—full of material for our antiquaries, and a great deal more practical in its bearing than even Jonathan Oldbuck's great Essay on Castrametation. A Three Rivers antiquarian had attempted to establish that it was Ives Cholette who had been the sculptor of the statue in question, but our old friend (through the church registers—and through ancient and irrefutable records) showed it could neither be Ives Cholette, aged, in 1771, 10 years, nor his younger brother Hyacinthe, aged then but 8 years, who had designed this great work of art, but Cholettes of another ilk.

In those halcyon days of old Quebec, free from municipal taxes and Fenian scares, when the practical jokers (1) and *mauvais sujets*, bent on a lark, would occasionally take possession, after night-fall, of some of the chief city thoroughfares, and organize a masquerade, battering unmercifully with

(1) The quips, pranks and *bon mots* of this jolly corps would fill a small volume. The Bar was represented by the witty Vallieres, the fun-loving Ogden, afterwards Attorney-General, and recently Judge of the Isle of Wight, and the Army by a choice spirit of the 71st too well known for it to be necessary to name him, &c., &c.