

## THE ISLAND.

DEAR GRUMBLER,—I am a bachelor, fond of good eating and drinking, and partial to exercise, when the heat of the weather is moderate. Swimming I am very fond of. I love to plunge into the sea; to sport about amongst the waves; to dive, to float; in short to do every thing that is possible to do when in the water. When I first came to Canada, that is to Toronto, I felt like a fish out of water. I had no sea to plunge into—no mountains to climb—no scenery to admire. But as I came out here with other objects than swimming, or roving abroad in search of the beautiful, I soon reconciled myself to my lot. I learned to see beauties in flat plains, and found a pleasing substitute for the strong salt waves of the sea, in the mild waters of Lake Ontario.

I became a frequent passenger on the *Fire Fly* bound for the Island. Last year we had nothing to complain of. The eastern part of the Island was set apart for those fond of aquatic recreation; and the western part of it was for the most part monopolized by pedestrians, male and female, or to speak more affectedly, ladies and gentlemen. The eastern portion of the Island is completely washed away—and now there is no place in which one can enjoy a swim, without running the risk of being caught in the act by half-a-dozen young ladies—I will call them ladies this time.

Now, Sir, it is not a very pleasant thing for a modest young gentleman like me to be placed in the awkward situation I have alluded to; and it is far more unpleasant still to be obliged to give up a pleasant and a healthy exercise. Therefore I come before the public to know what I am to do. To swim, or not to swim! That is the question. And for my part,—I say by all means, swim! Sink or swim is my motto. But at the same time I would not be churlish. I would divide the Island fairly between pedestrians and swimmers. If the pedestrians take the east—that is the swimmers, we will take the left. If they take the west we will be content with the east. But they, nor we, should not occupy the whole Island.

Before I close, I may as well tell you an idea I have on the subject of aquatics, and that is, that some place should be set apart for our females to wash themselves in. You think I speak queerly on the subject, Mr. Editor; but it's the truth. They must be as fond of the water as we are—of course they must. Every one who has visited a watering place on the sea-side knows that. And what a curious sight it is to see, from a distance, as I have seen, a couple of thousand women "dipping," as they call it, in the salt sea! bobbing around, and ducking up and down, like so many mermaids out on a jollification. Ah! Mr. Editor, it is that sort of exercise that makes the fine, healthy, fearless mothers. Why should we not have something of the same sort here. We cannot have the sea; but our females can have as much fresh water as they like. That is, they should be able to have. For Heaven knows there is enough of water. Why won't the ladies get together and form a club, to be called the "Mutual Dipping and Fresh Water Bathing notwithstanding what any fool says to the

contrary Society." A portion of the beautiful Humber Bay would just be the place for them.

However, I must return from the Humber Bay to the Island, and conclude by requesting that a partition of the Island be made as soon as possible, so that those who go over to enjoy a swim may be enabled to do so without any fear of having their nervous system deranged, say on the eastern portion of the Island, while those who merely want to sniff in the fresh air may do it at their leisure, say on the west portion of the Island. Hoping that my remarks will meet with your approbation,

I have the honour to remain,

Your obedient servant,

DICK DOCK.

## DRESS COATS.

In a recent critique in the *Leader*, the critic professes himself shocked that the gentlemen present at the Opera did not wear dress coats; and suggests that in future they should do so out of respect to the ladies present. We quite agree with the suggestion. It is really very provoking to see the Val-jalism that reigns in the boxes on many occasions; Not only do the gentlemen not wear dress coats, but it is next to a miracle that they wear coats at all. They seem to hold in contempt the established custom of sitting down, and discover a decided leaning towards a reclining position,—their head at one of the seat, their feet at the other. Sometimes the position is varied, the gentleman preferring to hang his feet over the back of the next seat. Some eccentric gentlemen prefer sitting on the back of one seat and resting their feet on the back of the next.

Of course this is all a matter of taste. So also is the beastly habit of chewing tobacco, and quidding the loathsome compound over the floor; and also the vulgar habit of reading newspapers during the performances. But it is a taste that we think more honoured in the breach than in the observance. The secret of this unhealthy state of things is that the theatre is not patronized as it ought to be by the aggregate of our respectable citizens. And we almost despair of seeing them come forward to do so, until the theatre is renovated. If we had a new theatre,—at least, if the boxes in the present one were made comfortable,—there is no doubt that a more agreeable state of things would exist. The ladies would be present,—for the dear creatures dearly love to see and to be seen; and there would be no occasion for any one to complain of the ungallantry of the gentlemen in venturing into their presence in ought but the most unexceptionable dress coats.

While saying all this, let no one think we that go in enobiously for dress coats. Freize is the stuff we hang our faith on. But the right coat in the right place is a maxim that must be adhered to. The critic who made the suggestion in the first place, no doubt had in his mind the custom which obtains in the large cities outside Canada. He would have us assimilate our style to that which is observable in the large theatres of the Old Country. There can be no good objection why we should not. However there is this to say in extenuation of the dress-coat style not prevailing universally; and that is, that

whereas in large theatres there are the dress boxes and the dress boxes, besides two galleries and a pit, here we have only one row of boxes, into which the dress and the undress must squeeze themselves. It is not every gentleman who goes to the theatre that will worry himself into a dress coat, especially when the glass is ninety in the shade, and of course he is right. A gentleman is a gentleman no matter how he is dressed. But in these remarks we especially aim at a class of men,—we beg pardon, gentlemen,—who frequent the boxes, who, we are sure, will at once recognize their portraits without us being more specific. Some people may sneer at the dress coat suggestion, but every right-minded person must admit that if it is an error of judgment it is one on the right side.

## COMPLIMENTARY PIC-NIC.

We understand it is the intention of the members of the Toronto Field Battery to give Lieut. Charles E. Holiwell a complimentary Pic-nic, previous to his departure for Quebec. Lieut. Holiwell has been a very energetic Officer of the active Militia Force, and his brothers in arms take this method of showing some tangible proof of their esteem and respect for himself and their appreciation of his services in connection with the corps. Deservedly popular as he is with the members of the Battery, he is equally esteemed and respected by all who have had the pleasure of his acquaintance, ourselves being among the number, and will leave Toronto with the best wishes of a large number of friends for his future welfare. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the pic-nic will be numerously attended, and that the viands and music will be everything that can be desired. The ladies, of course, will be well represented, to do honor to their favourite Count, and on Thursday, 11th inst., bright Sunnyside will resound with mirth and gladness.

Is it a joke?

"Extraordinary as the feat was, however, a still more astonishing one is yet to be performed. It was actually announced to the assemblage at the close of the performance this evening, that M. Blondin would cross again on the 17th instant; that he would walk across the rope, and then with a wheelbarrow, coil up the rope on which he walks and wheel it to the other side of the river."—*Spectator*.

—A reward of five shillings is hereby offered to any one who will undertake to decide whether the above is a joke or not? The *Spectator* is famous for stupid jokes, which inclines to the belief that on this occasion a joke is meant. If so, we advise the perpetrator to make another and then hang himself. The *Spectator* has now perpetrated its most stupid.

## THE GRUMBLER

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