

THE POKER.

VOL. I.

TORONTO, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1858.

No. 16

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Genus durum sumus experientique laborum.

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City Nurseries.

It has been our pleasant duty to call the grateful attention of the dwellers of Toronto, both fixed and transient, to some of the "improvements and institutions" for which they are indebted to the superlative genius and watchful solicitude of the two and a half dozen of patriotic, self-sacrificing and exemplary gentlemen, who without fee or reward, save much obloquy, devote themselves to the management of the city affairs.

It is not much that we can do to vindicate them from undeserved censure, and to establish their claims to public admiration and gratitude; but what we can do, we will do, and at any rate (as Sir E. W. Head says) the temporary sojourners from the other cities and towns, who are open to conviction, will in many cases, owing to our labors, be enabled to carry with them, for the benefit of their own localities some just conceptions of the advantages of artificial dirt heaps, quagmires, and honey-pots; and before long we may have the high praise of having induced an imitation by other places of the "Porcine Street Institution" of Toronto, the beauty and advantages of which we took some pains to describe in our last number.

By the way, we have not yet received from Aldermen Bugg—the trainer of the Romaine horse—an answer to our interesting query, as to the relative advantages of raising pork in the streets, with the concomitant inconveniences we pointed out, and the keeping of the filthy sows and their rooting children: "to hum." The benevolent Alderman will oblige us by bringing his calculations to an early close, and sending us an answer, which we have no doubt will add much to his already well-deserved fame. Perhaps Constable Hogg would kindly assist him.

To-day we have to suggest to the citizens another ground of thankfulness to the venerable civic Fathers. We desire with becoming gravity to allude to the nurseries, which under their fostering care have grown and spread, until every street, lane, and alley is enabled to boast as many as will meet the wants of the inhabitants with spare room for strangers. By nurseries, our readers will see that we do not talk of orchards and things of

that sort, no, not at all; we have a higher range of objects in view. We do not even mean places where stray babies are sent to be suckled and tended in their infant helplessness; nor yet of Orphan Asylums, where tender hearted women weep over the sorrows, and attend to the wants of little boys and girls whom Providence in inscrutable wisdom, or the nurseries we are going to speak of, have deprived of fathers and mothers. These institutions are doubtless good so far as they go, but the City Fathers are not responsible for them in any way—they have nothing whatever to do with providing for orphans. The Nurseries we have to deal with, and on account of which we claim, for the gentlemen who oversee (overlook?) the interest of the city the greatest praise, are those admirable establishments which consist in many cases of—

1. Four bare walls, and generally a very filthy floor. (It may be that six-penny pictures of prize-fights, horse-races or half-naked women grace the aforesaid walls.)

2. A deal counter covered with shabby oil cloth or painted some dirt colour.

3. A long bench, and two or three old wooden chairs.

4. A shelf behind the counter with three coarse glass decanters, and three or four black bottles supposed to contain brandy, gin, rum, whisky, and wine, but in fact, all containing whisky mixed with abominable compounds, and coloured to represent all the liquors.

5. A ten gallon keg of beer.

6. A jug with water, a dozen small tumblers, and a pail to wash the glasses.

7. An old cigar box with a few plugs of tobacco and a few pipes.

8. Sometimes there is a square hole behind, answering to a room, where will be found a deal table, a bench, and a pack of cards.

As nearly as possible, we have described the city nurseries, some of which are specially authorized by the benevolent City Fathers to carry on their philanthropic operations, while a large number do so out of mere good will, and without particular recognition, let or hindrance. The legal and understood objects of these establishments is to afford lodgings to travellers, and to provide them and their horses with food and attendance while they sojourn in the city, all of which requests are sure to be had by any reasonable number of applicants, as appears by the description just given—provided always, that both the men and the horses can eat whiskey and sleep out of doors.

Over and above the accommodation of travellers, these excellent institutions undertake to train up lads to be the common pests of society; husbands and fathers to become ferocious brutes; and wives and mothers sottish profligates. These things are so well known and it is so notorious that out of ten of these nurseries nine are able to give bed and board in the streets to travellers, and whiskey to boys and girls; that we need not spend time in pointing out the remarkable agreement there is between what they are, and what the law presumes them to be. For all these benefits we are indebted to the City Fathers, and every time we pass one of these filthy holes and hear the curses and blasphemies issuing therefrom, we bless the watchful guardianship which guarantees their daily increase and undisturbed continuance.

Another Phase of the Crisis.

Passing down King Street on Sunday morning last, our attention was attracted by some poetical effusions inscribed with chalk upon the shutters of three of the prominent puffing houses. Under the supposition that they would interest many of our readers, we dotted them down in our note book, and submit them for their benefit.

No. 1.

THE LION AND THE MONKEY.

When a man to a town for a show takes a lion,
'T is usual a monkey the sign-post to tie on;
But here in Toronto the reverse may be seen,
Golden Lion *without* and the Monkey *within*.

No. 2.

THE OLD KING IN A NEW CHARACTER.

In ancient times behind the chair,
Of every monarch stood
Some poor fantastic fool, whose jests
Gave savour to the food.

But we in modern times surpass
This very ancient rule;
Combine both characters in one,—
The OLD KING and the FOOL.

No. 3.

A BULL FROM BARNEY.

Says Barney to Pat "in last session's campaign,
While you was off buying t'other side of the main,
As shure as I hope a soft bed to die on,
I had a grate fite wid the big wooden lion.
Havin' kilt the goold monsther I put on his hide,
And like Hircules, fought the owld King till he died.
No, he didn't quite die, that's a bit of a blunder,
But was glad, my dear Paddy, at least to knock under."
To this bowld assertion long Patrick the twin
Replied, "Barney Bouchal, I'm glad that you won,
Troth, that fable of Asup's at length come to pass,
That the hide of a lion was worn by an ASS."