

of our quiet husbandry life, we really had hurry and bustle, it is awful to contemplate the chaos that would ensue. Broken legs, battered faces, fractured ribs would be the rule not the exception. We should soon look like a hospital city, presenting great attractions to Surgeons, Dentists, and Undertakers. A cursory consideration of the slovenly, dirty, and generally disgraceful condition of our streets, will convince any one that, cleaning out the Augean stables was trifling child's play, compared to the task that Reforming Street Commissioners—when they come—have before them. We willingly give everybody that has ever had, or now has, anything to do with the management of the streets, full credit for good intentions, but would remind them of a certain place said to be paved with such intentions, whilst we prefer more solid material. The profession of good intentions is however no excuse for doing nothing, and that nothing badly. It is in meeting the affairs of every day life, that a certain absolute lack of common sense, or of decent regard for duties patent to a school-boy crops out amongst us, which appears to us to be neither dignified, nor indicative of a very high moral tone. "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori." Won't some distinguished citizen devote himself to death, to call attention to these little oversights. The utterer of the choice morsels of local conversation presented to us in "The things talked of" would be just the man. We won't be exigent as to the manner of his death, the only demand we make is, let it come quickly.

#### OUR LITTLE AMERICANISMS.

Living, as we do, in close proximity with the States, and numbering among our citizens many families of American descent, it is but natural that we should exhibit some unmistakable traits of Yankeeedom in our every day life. Our railroads, our hotels, and our press are conducted almost entirely upon American principles, and our ideas regarding recreation are more in accordance with American than English tastes. It is just now the fashion to abuse everything American and to forget all that Americans have done towards the advancement of civilization; a fashion to our thinking more honoured in the breach than in the observance. To condemn Americanism because it is American, is about as silly as to applaud Americanism because it is anti-English. The Americans are essentially a practical people and their practice has opened our eyes to the fact that in certain small matters they have ere now gone ahead of the Britishers. An American picked Mr. Chubb's lock; the "America," outsailed all the English yachts of her time; and in peeling apples and sweeping floors Yankee inventors stand unrivalled. In certain matters of graver import—such as political economy, personal justice, and commercial morality, Americans have, it is true, gone so far ahead of the rest of the world that they are beginning to feel the inconvenience of isolation, and are ready to admit that they might possibly have done better had they studied less contemptuously the maxims of the old world. We cannot reasonably expect that English maxims can ever exert much influence upon American politics, inasmuch as the relative positions of the ruled and the rulers are based in either country upon essentially different grounds. In America, society was originally founded upon a system of equality, whereas in England, even at the present time, the whole science of Government is leavened with a spirit of feudalism. The election of the members of the Legislature is the main-spring of the English Constitution—the prototype of English habits—the foundation of all legal authority. An English peasant that cannot write his own name is (although in most cases denied a vote,) a person of more real political consequence than the free born and educated Yankee who approaches a ballot box halting between the opinions of two rival stump orators. In England, the right of vote is esteemed a privilege—in America, many men abstain from voting, deeming themselves mere capital in the hands

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who espouse politics as a trade. Every has been trained to shout at successive or for yellow, and it is ten chances to one they can, in their own rough way, give operations concerning the broad bearings of Whig upon their own individual interests. Every fish estate knows that his interests are to a

great extent identical with those of his landlord, and that no consideration would compensate a landlord for the existence of ill-feeling between himself and his dependents. In this sentiment—in this reciprocity of feeling between the richer and poorer classes—in this relic of feudalism lies the true secret of England's prosperity as a nation. In this Province, on the contrary, the people, taken en masse, are somewhat shy of politicians, and accepting no traditional policy, vote with reference to measures rather than principles. In this respect we resemble Americans rather than Britons. But, setting politics aside, let us turn to a department placed side by side with politics in most well regulated libraries—the department of "Art, science, and language." In scientific matters Americans compare favourably with Europeans, whereas their progress in the fine arts has been but small. Nor is this strange, for while scientific culture is indispensable in an age of manufacture and machinery, the fine arts are not absolutely necessary to get a man on in the business world. Since Mr. Power's statue of the "Greek Slave" took the world by storm in 1851, we have heard little or nothing of American art, nor has America ever produced a painter of extraordinary excellence; albeit Benjamin West's productions charmed a king who knew nothing of painting. In this Province we have, all things considered, done as well in the arts as can reasonably be expected. Setting genius aside, such only as have visited the European capitals can be justly supposed to have a sound appreciation of art; but this reflects on us no discredit, inasmuch as the veriest dunce will, if accustomed to see works of standard excellence, probably be a better art critic than a genius from whom such opportunities have been withheld. But it is not only in the fine arts that some fixed standard of acknowledged excellence is necessary to guide our tastes aright. In language a standard of purity is equally desirable, although such standard cannot be fixed by aught save usage. Regarding such usage, a writer in the *Edinburgh Review* justly remarks:—"But although we admit the force of usage, which is continually legalizing expressions before unknown, or proscribing expressions once familiar to our forefathers, we are entitled to claim that these innovations should be governed by the usage of the educated classes and not of the illiterate and the vulgar. A conflict is always going on between the written and the spoken language of a country—because it is written by the more cultivated few, it is spoken by the less cultivated many. Those who write, labour on the whole to preserve the traditions and fences of the language; those who speak to break them down. Hence in colonies or dependencies, where classical standards are unknown, and literature itself is degraded to the lowest forms of the newspaper, the corruption of the language is far more rapid than with us; but these slang and cant phrases of Americans and Australians tend to find their way back to England, and more than one of the most questionable innovations of the day might be traced to base usages of this nature."

The "slang and cant phrases of Americans" are in very general use throughout this Province, and it may not prove uninteresting to note a few instances familiar to us all. An Englishman visits a Halifax eating house and calls for "Oysters"; should he wish them dressed after any particular fashion he will probably say so. But the term "Oysters" is not enough for the intensely practical waiter, and the Englishman is asked whether he'll have them "on the half shell." Now this minute interrogation naturally leads one to suppose that Nova Scotians are in the habit of having raw oysters served up without shells, on a dish or plate, which, as we all know, is not the case. There is in reality nothing gained by such distressingly minute explanations, on the contrary, the Englishman expresses his wants in fewer words than the Anglo-American; the one says—"Oysters, vinegar, pepper,"—the other says—"Oysters on the half shell with fixings." Take another Americanism in common use—the term "on the street." This is clearly incorrect, inasmuch as the term "street" means a way, or avenue between houses, and what pair of lovers—however youthful, ever ventured to hint that a third party was "on the way"? In the country we must perforce walk on roads because we have no streets to walk in, but in town we walk in the streets albeit we walk on the pavements. No Englishman would allow that he was constantly meeting his female relatives "on the street," nor would an American officer exhort his men to keep silent on the