

OUR "UNIMPRESSIBLE SPECIAL" CONTRIBUTOR ATTENDS THE "HALLOWEEN GATHERING" OF THE CALEDONIAN SOCIETY.



CRITICISM being our vocation, and seeing it announced that the Caledonian Society had secured the services of distinguished talent, we were curious to know what the talent was, and how it had been secured, whether by capture or otherwise. We were likewise desirous to know what it was, and how it would conduct itself under restraint. The reason why we concluded that it had been captured, was because they announced that a lady would be there by desire; but whether by her own desire, or theirs, or the desire of her friends, they did not condescend to inform the enlightened public, so we went to see for ourselves. We went the more readily, as we saw it announced that a live knight was expected, and we thought it possible he had been secured for the purpose of being stared at, so we went to see; and as we were told in the magnificent production of last year, that,

"There's stars and garters for the great,  
In Canada our home."

we expected to see the great man's star in the ascendant, but were doomed to disappointment. We suppose the great star of the political horizon had some objections to starring it at the theatre, but we were left in the dark as to the reason of his not shining on the occasion. We were, of course, prepared for a heavy dose of speech-making, but in that we were equally disappointed. There were several M.P.'s and M.P.P.'s, but they were specially modest,—for if they had culled any flowers of rhetoric for the nonce, they exhibited no inclination to waste "their fragrance on the desert air." For, with the exception of the president, no one attempted to fire off a speech; and even he only said what was necessary and no more, leaving the band to discourse sweet sounds, and the piper to "skirl a spring" or two, which to us was a perfect treat, especially at an institutional gathering. (We have often wished they would sing their speeches.) The lady who was there by desire, sang a grand old Scottish ditty in a very desirable manner, and pleased us so much that we desired her to repeat it, which she did, in a very Hibernian fashion, by singing another of equal merit. Of the party secured, one fair captive appeared, who seemed by her smiles to enjoy her captivity, and when she was led to execution, captivated all hearts, and even made an impression on our unimpressible self. Although a young gentleman in a very pathetic manner entreated Scotland to "Draw the Sword." Mr. Nivin, who is, we suppose, a member of the Peace Society, in a very un-Scotsman-like manner showed so much contempt for the bright claymore, that he threw it down and danced upon it.

Mr. Hurst, the great comic favourite, made a serious

attempt to tell us he was dancing mad, but upon discovering the reporter for the *Witness*, he sang small and danced smaller. We suppose Mrs. Weston was secured for the purpose of singing the prize song, for we firmly believe she never would have consented to submit to the torture, unless she had been coerced, so we concluded that she was the distinguished talent whose services had been secured. However, the large and good natured audience sympathized with her. They saw her embarrassment, pitied her condition, were delighted with her pluck, and cheered her accordingly. When the lady withdrew, we saw a visible change come over the president and his friends. The prize song, like Mrs. Cratchet's plum-pudding, was off their minds. They believed the song was bad, because the judges said so by implication, and we suppose that was the reason it obtained the prize. We think the Caledonians, with every wish to do right, have signally failed in this department. We regret that their liberality is not more appreciated by the numerous versifiers who have contributed to the fragmentary literature of Canada. Is it that the usual flow of versification has been suddenly arrested, or is it a silent protest against the disjointed remains of the defunct Literary Club to which their efforts were to be submitted? However, the author is modest, which is saying much for a lawyer, and is not greedy, which is saying more, and we think his production is quite as good as some of the former pieces that have obtained the prize. We think too much credit cannot be awarded to the Caledonian Society for its efforts to rescue the struggling literature of Canada from the mere commercial aspect in which it is made to do duty, so that book-making has become a vehicle for puffing the wares of private speculators and public companies, according to the extent of their advertising patronage.

Bravo! Caledonians, try again. There is no reason why you should not cultivate the legs and arms; but while you do your best to develop the physical, don't forget the mental. Our future philosophers, historians, and poets will not be selected from the Lacrosse and Snow-shoe Clubs. Still, we think a sufficient amount of intelligence exists in the Scottish element to pronounce on the merits of a song without calling in men who, in their corporate capacity, have failed to establish for themselves a local habitation and a name.

When we were about taking our departure one of the competitors for public favour handed us the following for insertion in GRINCHUCKLE:—

THE SONG THAT OUGHT TO HAVE HAD THE PRIZE.

The Caledonian Society having offered a prize of fifty dollars for the best patriotic song, the following was submitted, but the Judges not being good judges, declined it because the author was not a personal friend. The writer believes that if it is not the best poem, it is likely to be the worst, and on that ground—following out the usual routine in such matters—ought to have been prized:—

Dr. Johnny J—k—ns, a word in your ear;  
You may, in your judgment, think this rather queer,  
But, then, why in that case, you know I'm the bard  
That's going to receive the Society's award.  
Though you are not a Scotsman—ah! well you may smirk—  
You have a good thing in the old Scottish Kirk,