

## DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES OF NOVA SCOTIA BY A NOVA SCOTIAN.—HALIFAX, A. &amp; W. MACKINLAY.

We do not exactly know what to say about this little book. It bears strong internal evidence of being the work of a woman, and such being the case we do not wish to be severe.

The author has done her best to describe life in Nova Scotia, and the scenery of this province. Had she done her worst a more faithful picture might have been the result. The book is so filled with attempts at fine writing (which generally lead to bad English), with poetry of a watery nature, and with little touches of Biblical research, that the scenery and the habits of Nova Scotia are completely hidden from the readers view. Had the writer confined her remarks to what she did see, and not what she fancied might be seen, it would have been better. Here is a description of Halifax and its harbour:

The City was partially hidden in fog; from the Dartmouth side it was rising in the pale clouds revealing the harbor, with its islands and numerous vessels. The steamer for England was leaving Cunard's wharf. (The picture would not have been complete without it.) Sloping to the waters are pretty suburban cottages, surrounded by gardens and fields. Above these residences towers the Asylum for the Insane, a large and commodious edifice, (is there a spare cell for our Author), standing in an ample enclosure where the inmates find employment and recreation.

How Halifax can be imagined "rising from the Dartmouth side in thin pale clouds" it is difficult to conceive. How a well built cottage can slope; and whether there is a single cottage built under the Lunatic Asylum we must leave it for our readers to decide. A little further on we find the following:

"We stop a moment at this inn. A smart colored lad gives our horse a pail of water, and we drive along, meeting colored people with pearly teeth and laughing ebony faces, each laden with straw-berries."

"These colored people," said Mr. Urban, in reply to a question "are all that remains of two attempts to colonize the race in Nova Scotia."

That a few colored people, with faces and teeth laden with strawberries should be the only result of two attempts at colonization is a very painful consideration. We read shortly after as follows.

"We counted five hundred buildings below us. On the eastern side of the harbor, which is skirted by pale green marshes, several small vessels are building. On an island on this side, a number of brick kilns also give employment to the villagers. The fishing boats were coming in, laden with treasures of the deep; while at the lower end of the Chezzetoonk valley, the Atlantic rolls its heavy swell, and will continue to roll till that day dawns when there shall be no more sea."

So we should imagine. But why mention the probability of a long continued surge on the part of the Atlantic in connection with this valley alone? Is it to show that the Author has studied the sacred records, or is it to finish off a sentence by a bit of fancied fine writing? We cannot tell. We know this however, that the whole sentence is in truth very bad English and what most people would call twaddle. Again, in a description of the visit of the Prince of Wales, we find:—"In the afternoon he reviewed the regatta from the Nile." So much for the prose portion of the work. Let us now turn to the poetry. Our space will only admit of one example. Our readers may make a wry face but duty compels us to lay the following before them. A touching address to a Moose, begins thus:

Hail! beautiful creature, so stately and bright,  
Is danger behind, that thou art in flight!  
The chasms of mountains, thou clearest at a bound,  
Thy outlers recline, feet spurn the ground,  
Why is it that thou dost spurn o'er the vale?  
With nostrils expanded thou scentest the gale.  
Hail! Lord of the forest. Hail king of the wood, &c.

We cannot continue. The idea of describing a flying

and distressed Moose as stately, bright, and all the rest of it is to drivel too much, and we will not inflict such trash upon our readers. The last part of the work is somewhat better than the first. It contains a few interesting details and anecdotes connected with the earlier British and French settlers in the Province. This gives us hopes that when next the author of these sketches appears before the public something better than this volume may be presented for public acceptance.

## Communications, &amp;c.

*It is distinctly to be borne in mind that we do not, by inserting letters conveying any opinion favorable to their contents. We open our columns to all, without leaving to any; and thus supply a channel for the publication of opinions of all shades, to be found in no other journal in Nova Scotia. No notice whatever will be taken of anonymous communications. We cannot undertake to return rejected communications.*

To the Editor of the "BULLFROG"

MR. EDITOR.—

I am quite sure "Viator" would not intentionally exaggerate the state of discomfort and want of accommodation, he represents to have been on board the *Alpha*, which left for Bermuda last Tuesday week. Allow me to acquaint the public through your columns with the actual facts of the case.

"Viator" writes. "She sailed with 80 first class passengers." After admitting that "temporary berths were fitted up in all the state-rooms" and the saloon converted into a bed cabin affording 16 berths," he goes on to say "even with this additional accommodation only 52 berths were provided. Where the remaining 28 passengers were stowed is a problem which can be best explained by the Messrs. Cunard & Co.—the writer cannot attempt to solve it."

Now for facts. Why, Mr. Editor, there were only 51 first class passengers altogether! so by Viator's own account of the accommodation available, there was a vacant berth for another first class passenger. No wonder Viator was unable to discover "how the remaining 28 passengers were stowed,"—of course not they are simply a myth. Viator must have been also unaware of the fact that Mr. Cunard personally begged some of the passengers to remain for the next boat. No doubt there were more than the ordinary number of passengers—and extra accommodation was therefore required. What did Mr. Cunard do to remedy this? After in vain urging upon some to remain behind and unwilling, many doubtless will say through excess of kindness, to put them to this inconvenience, he actually got the officers of the ship to give up their berths and Mess-room for the extra passengers remunerating them for so doing.

One fact more. Viator draws a dismal picture of the deck of the vessel crowded with 30 head of cattle and 40 sheep. It so happened that Capt. Maguire, R. N. Commanding H. M. S. *Galathea*, went on board the *Alpha* previous unknown to Mr. Cunard, to her sailing, and after going all over her, came away thoroughly satisfied with the complete and perfect order in which the ship was got ready for sea. He considered the arrangements were admirable and reflected great credit on the "Company," and even Viator will admit Capt. Maguire to be a competent judge in such matters. This Officer thinking it only due to the Messrs. Cunard to state what he himself had actually seen, authorized a friend to make use of his name. The last clause of Viator's letter by which he admits that there is not sufficient traffic to this port—to induce a Company at present to start an opposition line is the best answer to the most unreasonable proposal that the Messrs. Cunard & Co. should, for a few extra passengers despatch an extra steamer and thereby incur a dead loss! For the time to come, the Messrs. Cunard had better refuse to take one passenger beyond the actual number who can be provided with berths. We should then, no doubt, hear of a "craak" the other way—the "ungraciousness and hardship" of leaving any behind. As regards the Health Officer inspecting the vessel before sailing, &c., &c. The Messrs. Cunard are the very last people on earth to throw any difficulty in the way, by their contract they are, we believe, only required to provide a steamer of 350 tons—whereas the *Alpha* is not less than 800 tons.

I have had no communication whatever on this subject, with the Messrs. Cunard & Co., but have taken the trouble to ascertain these facts.

Yours,  
VERITAS.