



"AND THE YEARS ROLL BY."

AN UNNECESSARY IMPORT.

HELLO! What's this? A telegram to the *Empire* announces that "Messrs. Bell and Shaver, of Montreal, had an interview with the Minister of Customs to-day in reference to the proper value for duty of a lightning heeling machine, one of which has recently been imported into Canada. Before giving a decision the Department will ask for further information."

It might be supposed that bringing heeling machines into Canada was a good deal like carrying coals to Newcastle, what with the Red Parlor and party caucuses and conventions. Competition on the part of the pauper heeling machines of Europe or the United States against the very effective mechanism for heeling purposes, now in operation wherever there is a Government office to be filled or a monopolist to be enriched by special privileges, might be deemed a bootless task. Talk about "lightning," indeed, in connection with your imported machines. Why, it can't begin to compare with the native heeler in point of efficiency in lightening the pockets of the taxpayer. That is an industry at least in which Canada is *facile princeps* and about the last in which any protection is needed.

BULLITIONS OF FEELING.



"HOME, SWEET HOME."

Some of the Effects of Mrs. Agnes Thomson's Singing.

"The tour of the rising young Canadian songstress, Mrs. Agnes Thomson, through the Province, is attracting a good deal of attention. Everywhere she has appeared the warmest praise has been showered upon her by the press and by all who have heard her wonderful voice. Some interesting stories have been related of the effect which Mrs.

Thomson's touching rendition of "Home, Sweet Home," has produced in individual cases. One rough old drover attended the concert in Woodstock recently. He had listened approvingly throughout, but when, in response to an enthusiastic *encore*, the fair prima donna, with intuitive tenderness, began the dear old song as if her whole soul were in the words and music, he commenced to show signs of uneasiness, fidgeting with his collar, wiping his spectacles and trying his best to look unconcerned. At the second verse he

could stand it no longer; he got up and went out, the tears rolling down his cheeks. "No; I'm not ashamed of it," he remarked afterwards in the Commercial House, when twitted by a friend; "I tell you I'd give \$25 to hear that song again."

The other evening, in Petrolia, no less than four men were noticed to be suspiciously moist around the eyes during the singing of the same selection. "What's the matter?" one was heard to blubber out to his companion. "What's the matter with you?" gulped out the other snappishly; "your face is a regular canal now." And then they both gave up. The pretty vocalist, indeed, has the power of reaching the hidden recesses of the heart and appealing to the finer sensibilities.—*London Advertiser*.

You're right, she has! The anecdotes quoted above give but a very faint idea of the effect of Our Aggie's rendition of that pathetic old song. Out of some scores in our editorial scrap-book we add two or three which may be authenticated by any one who will take the trouble to do so.

At the cricketers' concert in the Auditorium, Mrs. Thomson sang "Home, Sweet Home," in response to one of the innumerable *encores* she received. Before she had finished the first line a deep sob startled the audience. All eyes were instantly turned in the direction of the sobber. It was Mr. George Dunstan. He was bathed in tears. As the song went on its effect upon the sympathetic nature of Mr. D. increased in geometrical ratio. His heart-rending gurgles were awful to hear, while the tears flowed in an ever-widening stream. As the fair singer concluded her wonderful effort, the lessee of the hall came in with a blanched face to find out where the water pipe had sprung a leak, as the plaster was dropping off the ceiling of the room below. A change of clothing and a new, dry seat having been provided for Mr. Dunstan, the programme proceeded on its course.

At Hamilton, when Mrs. Thomson, in response to a recall, sang "Home, Sweet Home," Mr. W. C. Nicholl, of the *Herald*, who had up to this point borne the concert with his usual nonchalance and fortitude, completely broke down. His frame shook with emotion to such an extent that persons in the vicinity feared its joists and things would give way. Oh, it was terrible, and the worst of it was, poor Nick had forgotten to bring his pocket-handkerchief. None of the regular Hamiltonians seemed to be in the least affected by the song. Nicholl had, however, moved there lately from Toronto.

Mrs. Thomson lately sang "Home, Sweet Home," as an *encore* number, at Guelph. The memory of it is cherished by at least one grateful heart—that of the caretaker of the hall. "I only wish that beautiful young woman 'ud come an' sing that there song in this hall regular once a month," said that worthy to our representative. "Why?" we enquired. "It would save me the trouble of scrubbin' out the bloomin' place, that's all. W'y, sir, when she sang that there song t'other night, it set the whole awjence cryin' to that degree, the floor was soaked complete, an' I didn't ave nothink to do but go over it with the mop, sir. She just made 'em 'owl, sir, I assure you."

GOOD STEERING DOES IT.

A MONTREAL despatch says:

It is stated that the annual statement of the Richelieu and Ontario Navigation Company, to be presented to the shareholders early in February, will show a net profit of \$103,000, which will be applied to paying off the floating debt, amounting to some \$200,000.

It will not surprise anybody to learn that the debts of a navigation company are largely floating debts. We suppose the concern proposes to pay them by means of a sinking fund. It is to be hoped that the increasing buoyancy of the money market will enable them to keep their heads above water and remain in the swim.