

THE PRINTER-FIEND.

The night was dark, and not a star
Peep'd through the gathering gloom;
And silence brooded o'er the type
In the composing room.

The printers had to supper gone,
And vacant were their places,
When through the door a villain crept,
And stole Bill Norman's spaces!

Oh, foulest wrong beneath the sun!
Oh, deepest of disgraces!
The darkest crime that can be done
Is that of stealing spaces!

Bill went to "lunch," and left his case
Filled—running o'er—with letter,
And thought he would return again
When copy should get fatter.

When he came back he took his place
Again before his cases—
You should have seen his attitude
When he beheld his spaces!

It was no time for charity,
Or other Christian graces;
He wildly cried—"I'll dot the eyes
Of him who stole my spaces!"

The fiend still lives and walks the earth,
And so must walk forever;
He cannot die—a wretch like him—
For rest awaits him never!

And printers for long years to come
Will tremble at their cases,
Well knowing that his spirit still
Is fond of stealing spaces!

[Written for the Miscellany.]

The Editor that Went to the Barber's.

A SKETCH FROM LIFE.

Mr. McQuabbie was a little old man who had been proprietor of the daily and tri-weekly *Fence Viewer* ever since it had assumed that title, a period of some forty years. The *Fence Viewer* was an old established paper whose origin was lost in the mists of antiquity, which the rising generation of the great commercial centre of this Dominion never cared to pierce. It had probably been founded by some old printer, in a gloomy old stone French building with iron shutters, in some narrow by-street; but its founder had long since departed, and his name, even, lived only in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. However this may be, the *Fence Viewer*, under its many editors and proprietors, had had varying fortunes, and, in Mr. McQuabbie's earlier days, had achieved the reputation of a sound family paper, although, as to politics, its title had perhaps exercised an unconscious influence.

The reputation of a paper is hard to build up, but having been accomplished, in the old days at least, it would run a considerable time on it, even though the enterprise which created it had long since died out. This was the case with the *Fence Viewer*; there were steady old inhabitants who had taken it all their lives, and who had the greatest respect for its proprietor, and still looked upon it as a good family paper, in which entertaining literature, science and agriculture were skilfully combined, with such decorous mention of passing events as could offend no one; and yet, with all this, Mr. McQuab-

bie, though the most inoffensive little man in existence, had his difficulties. In politics, probably from an eye to futurity, but mostly from an accommodating nature, he was anxious to support both the Government and the Opposition, and how the Government patronage was to be retained, with a prudent eye to the Opposition stepping into their shoes, was a problem over which Mr. McQuabbie eternally pondered—one of those things which no man could find out, not even the unfortunate sub-editor who ran the machine. But most of Mr. McQuabbie's troubles arose from a most innocent cause, a necessity from which the lower animals are happily free—that of being shaved. For forty years, on Saturday night, at the same hour, Mr. McQuabbie had mounted the same stairs, to the same upper chamber, had sat in the same chair, and had been lathered and shaved by the same antiquated barber, who had taken the *Fence Viewer* regularly for that length of time and still believed in its Christian and liberal spirit, which he had no doubt found peculiarly applicable to a man who had to shave both the Government and the Opposition, and whose profession demanded that he speak no evil of dignitaries. All Wattie's customers belonged to the last generation, for the young men frequented the new and flashy establishments with mirrors, patent shaving chairs, and china cups, which were now coming into vogue, and which Wattie regarded as superfluities intended to disguise the want of real skill and experience in the profession.

By the time Mr. McQuabbie was fairly established under Wattie's hands, had got well lathered up, and could only open his mouth on pain of swallowing a certain quantity of soap, his old friends (they had mutually expected each other) began to drop in.

"Well, Mr. McQuabbie," one of these worthies would say, "and how's your paper getting on these times? I think you're not so careful, man, as ye ought to be about your local notices, and ye sometimes puff exhibitions which are not worthy of it—likely for the sake of the advertisement; but ye ought to be a little careful and not deceive folk. An editor has responsible duties, and when he's writing out his puffs he should think of those with large families, who may defer to his judgment. I took the whole of my bairns to that conjuring show, and paid fifty cents apiece, and it was a mighty poor business."

Mr. McQuabbie, whom Wattie had now got by the nose, was speechless and heaved a heavy sigh, indicative of his intense mental agony, for he remembered how he had puffed the conjurer, on the strength of that half column "ad," and it came home to him how many poor men with families like his friend he must have unwittingly deceived. But others of his friends had dropped in by this time, and had saluted him, unacknowledged. While he was still writhing under this last infliction, another—a strong Government man—broke out with an allusion to politics, observing:

"It's forty years since I first took the *Fence Viewer*, Mr. McQuabbie, and I have always considered it a sound political and family paper, but I must say that the way in which you support the Government is very doubtful; and some of your articles seem to be almost as favorable to the Opposition. Your paper reminds me of the ass between the two bundles of hay. You'll never keep the Government patronage by such a course, and what will the Opposition give you? I heard a man, whose brother knows one of the ministry, saying that these things were talked of at Ottawa: and this at a time when the ministry want all the support they can get. It's no use, Mr.