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Literature.

ONE ROOM TOO MANY.

A College Reminiscence.

CONCLUDED.

"Is the doctor with him now then?"

"Yes, sir; he's there; but I don't know what he thinks of it all—he won't say nothin." And, old Sam glided away like a ghost.

I made a hasty pretence of breakfast—to eat heartily was altogether beyond my power—and, rushing down stairs, came face to face with the departing doctor, an old acquaintance of mine, who had pulled me very cleverly through a very dangerous illness caught during a long-vacation trip to Algeria.

"Good morning doctor; what do you think of our patient now?"

"Well, my dear sir, it's rather premature to give any decided opinion yet. The nervous system has received a great shock, unquestionably a very great shock; but we shall remove him to lodgings in the town this afternoon, and I hope he may rally by degrees.

"As I shall have no occasion to mention Talboys again in the course of my narrative, I may as well notice here, that he returned home as soon as his health permitted him to travel, not reappearing till the following term—to the huge indignation of the authorities, who were inwardly scandalized at the occurrence of such an uncomfortable catastrophe within the walls of St. Michael's, an occurrence as the head of the college aptly termed it—"altogether unprovided for by the university statutes."

"But what do you think was the cause of it, then; and what makes him talk about the devil, and all that?"

"It's impossible to account for the vagaries of nature, my dear sir," replied the oracular doctor, who never, by any chance, gave a plain answer, if he could possibly avoid it. "It's a very curious case, and I intend to make a careful study of it. I assure you; but in the meantime, it may be just as well to set down the whole thing as the effect of stomach-disarrangement, brought on, no doubt, by the heavy supper last night.—Good morning to you; I have several other visits to pay."

And so saying, the doctor vanished, leaving me plunge in reflections of a very harrowing nature. All the efforts which I made to fathom this hysterical catastrophe only sank me deeper bewildered. Here was a man, healthy, fearless, unimaginative as a man could be, with the nerves of a soldier and the strength of a giant, struck down all in one moment by an agency of which twenty-nine men in a hundred would deny the very existence. What was to think? Had the supernatural, then, any real basis of fact? And as it now, after eluding my grasp on the moonlit Rhine, in the pathless forests of Finland, and amid the rocking superstitions of the Lower Danube, starting up to confront me in sober England, and, of all places, in the heart of a sceptical university? In this unpleasant frame of mind, I turned my steps almost unconsciously in the direction of the back quadrangle, and found old Sam Thorpe pacing around the fatal spot like a raven on a battle-field.

"Sam," said I, "show me Mr. Talboys's room."

"Why, sir, Mr. Talboys ain't there now; he's on the next staircase."

"Never mind that; it's the *room* that I want to see."

"But, bless you, sir, what's the good (if you'll excuse my freedom) of lookin' at a room where there's nothin' to see?"

"That's *my* business, not yours.—Come, just take me there at once."

Sam, with manifest reluctance, led the way up the more distant of the three stairs, and halted before a small door, on opening which I found myself in rather a dingy-looking sitting-room, furnished in the usual simple style, opening into a bedroom of smaller size, but similar furniture.—Except the comfortless aspect characteristic of every room, which is suddenly re-occupied after a long term of neglect, there was, as Sam had forewarned me, nothing remarkable about either apartment; but I had barely had time to look round me, when my eyes were attracted by an object which riveted them (*why* I could not tell), to the sullen exclusion of every other. This was a large rusty iron hook, driven into the ceiling of the sitting room, apparently for the purpose of suspending a large hanging lamp. It is no exaggeration to say that this hook drew my eyes to it as the magnet draws the needle: and so thoroughly was I engrossed with this seemingly insignificant object, that I failed to notice the exit of my guide, who no sooner saw my attention diverted from him than he slipped noiselessly out, and closed the door and slipped noiselessly out, and closed the door behind him. But the moment I found myself alone, a feeling rushed upon me, which I despair of expressing. To call it the instinctive consciousness of an invisible presence of evil, or the mixture of terror, disgust, and enthralment with which we look for the first time upon a loathsome reptile or an executed criminal, gives but a faint idea of its overwhelming intensity. I must borrow from the words of an old legend what my own are powerless to convey:

"The young man was left alone; and hardly did he find himself so, when, like a swarm of demons, the recollection of all his sins rushed on his mind, and, like furies armed with fiery scourges, seemed determined to drive him to despair. As he combatted these horrible recollections, with distracted feelings, but with a resolved mind, he became aware that his arguments were answered by the sophistry of another, and that the dispute was no longer confined to his own thoughts. The Author of Evil was present in the room with him in bodily shape, impressing upon him the desperation of his state, and urging suicide, as the readiest mode of putting an end to his sitting an end to his sinful career."

This is, as it were, the shadow of what I felt; but the terrific reality is beyond the power of description.—With an effort like that with which one breaks from the oppression of a nightmare, I flung open the door, and rushed out, meeting on the staircase the spectral figure and shrivelled corpse-like visage of old Sam, who surveyed my convulsed features with a grin of ghastly curiosity.

"Well, sir, how do you like the room, now you *have* seen it?"

"Sam," answered I, looking him full in the face, "you know more of this than you pretend. Just tell me all about it."

"Lawk, sir how should *I* know anything?" faltered Sam, his sallow over face turning a shade paler than usual. "Doctor says it's summut wrong wi' the gen'leman's stomach; an' he orght to know surely."

"This won't do, my man, answered I, catching him by the arm."—"Men are not to be frightened to death like this, and no one be able to tell how. Either you tell me all you know about this room, before you stir, or I'll go straight to the Warden, and report you."

Sam turned perfectly livid, and shook from head to foot. For a moment he seemed to hold counsel with himself, and then stammered out: "I'll tell you all you want to know, sir, but for 'eaven's sake, don't make me tell it now. If you'll allow me, I'll come to you at eight this evenin' and give you the whole story."

"See that you do, then," I turned away; "for if not—you know what I've poomised you."

All the rest of the day I was in a perfect fever of conflicting emotions. The unusual excitement of the evening before—the extraordinary events of the morning—my own unaccountable sensations in haunted room, and the equally unaccountable terror of my old servant, all combined to throw me into a condition little better than that of Talboys himself; and I was in the humour to believe any tale of horror, however improbable, when, just on the stroke of eight, the door opened, and old Sam's weasened face and lean corpse-like figure came gliding in. He seemed, however in no haste to commence his dismal confidence; and it needed the repetition of my threat of the morning, and the stimulus of a large glass of brandy, to make him at length proceed as follows:

"You must know, then sir, thta about forty years ago, not long a'ter I fust come to be a scout, them rooms o' Muster Talboys' belonged to a gen'leman-commoner (Muster 'Ammersey his name was), what had just come up from somewhares in the West. A small slight built-man he was to look at, with a smooth white face, just like a woman', and never a hair upon it, barrin' a little black moustache, as if somebody had done it with a pencil; and altogether he looked such a dainty Jemmy Jessamy sort o' chap, that some o' our big strappin' fellows in the college beat turned up their noses at him a bit, at fust, and thought he wara't good for nothin'. But he shewed 'em different afore long, for he was just one o' them chaps as seems to be able to do everythin' just as easy as eat their breakfast. He won the 'igh jump, and the long jump too, at the college athletic sports; and he walked to Woodstock and he walked to Woodstock (rather over eight miles) in an 'our and a 'arf, for a bet o' five pound; and when he went out ridin' (he was 'mazin' fond o' ridin', and keep' a oss o' his own at Tollits—a noted Oxford stable-keeper), it looked just as if him and his oss was j'ined together, like them Simoncse Twins the papers makes sich a work about. And the fast November a'ter he cum up, when there was sich a Town and Gown on the Fifth as never was (I remember it well, for I was out myself, as any young chap might to see the fun), he went out and fought as if all the prizefighters in Lunnon had been in his skin; and and he picked out the best man o' the town (Bill Dawson, the butcher 'twas, him they used to call "Mutton-fist"—he's dead now), and giv' him sitch a hidin', that Bill warn't his own man agin for a week. I tell you, sir, it was hawful to see the fight; Muster 'Ammersley minded the licks he got (and he got some 'orrid uns) no mor'n if they was mere flea-bites; and his eyes glared and his lips worked, and his teeth gnashed, as if he was goin' to fly at Butcher Bill's throat and drink his blood. And when I met Bill a while a'ter, and says to him: "Bill, my boy, you've met your match at last!" says he: "Naa, I hain't; 'cos why, that feller ain't a man at all—he's got *the devil's strength and his own too!*" and somehow the sayin of hisn stuck in my head, and wouldn't never go out agin.

"Of course, when all them things got abroad, our gen'lemen changed their tune wonderfully about Muster 'Ammersley; and, little by little, he got to be quite champion o' the college. But our dons didn't like him so well at all; for he was a real wild un, if ever there was one. I don't say but what young gen'lemen *will* be a little wild now and then—that's only human natur,; but this Muster 'Ammersley was out and out the wildest we ever had—there warn't nothin' on earth he wouldn't do, if once he got it in his 'ead; and what with drinkin', and fightin', and card-playin', and breakin of windows, and doin' other things besides, he got so into the black list with the warden and the fellows, that at last they fairly began to think o'makin' him take his name off the books" [that is, leave the college]. "The worst thing about him was, that he did all them wicked things not in a heat or hurry, like most of our young gen'leman, but as cool and quiet as if he was a-drawin a map; and you could always tell when he was at his wickedest, by his speakin in a low, soft, sleepy kind o' voice, and strokin his little black moustache wi' his long white fingers; and when he did that, you might be sure there was some worse devilry than usual comin."

"It was just about this time that summut 'appened which I never forgot, and never shall. There cum a letter one mornin' for Muster 'Ammersley, addressed in a lady's 'and, in one o'them narrow pink envelopes as young ladies are so fond of; and, when I brought it him, he looked at me with the wickedest look I ever see, as if wonderin' how I dared touch it: but all to once he seemed to recollect hisself, and waved his 'and to me to go out, and sat down to read. In about 'arf an 'our I cum in agin to do up the room a bit, and there I seen the letter lyin' open on the table, and him 'starin' straight afore him like a man in a dream; but the minute he saw me, his eyes glared like a dog just goin' to spring, and he called out in a voice that made me shake all over: "Be off!" And off I went double quick; for when his blood was up, I'd sooner have angered anything than him. But a while a'ter that, one o' his grooms cum to Oxford (for the young gen'leman's father was powerful rich, and kep' a whole drove o' servants), and I met him at Tollit's, and we went and 'ad some beer together and I drew him about Muster 'Ammersley, all he knew. And he told me as how the young gen'leman 'ad bin sweet on some young lady as lived near him (as good and as pretty a one as ever stepped), and how they'd bin engaged to be married; but when he got into thesg bad ways o' his, she took back her word, and giv him up, though it was like pulling out a bit o' her own heart to do it (them was his very words, and he had it all from her own maid, what was a sweetheart o' his). Mayhap it 'ad 'a' bin better if she 'adn't gin nim up, poor young gen'leman! considerin' how it all ended; but God knows what's best.

"Well, sir, it was about a year a'ter Muster 'Ammersley fust cum up, that an ugly story got abroad about some poor girl in the town (the daughter a' one o' the college tradesmen) what he'd made love to, and then he played her false, so that she never held up her head agin. A very bad business it was, if 'arf was true as was said about it; and our dons they held a Common-room on the job, and settled as how either Muster 'Ammersley fust cum for the young gen'leman, and thit time it was in a man's 'and: but as soon as he'd read it, he tore it up and chucked it into the grate. There warn't no fire lit ('cos o' its bein' summer); and so, when he'd gone out, I felt to, to pick up the pieces and see if I could make anythin' out o' 'em. (Mayhap, it warn't a very nice thing to do, but cur'osity's Varsity strong sometimes). However, it was so torn that there was only one bit I could make head or tail of, and that seemed to be just the fag-end o' the letter. This was what was written on it: "You have disgraced yourself and me, and must abide the consequences. I will give you no help, and only regret being still compelled to sign myself—your father, F. C. HAMMERSLEY." Then I remembered what Tom the groom had said about there being no love lost 'twixt father and son; and I guessed as how the young gen'leman had got into some hawful scrape, and his gav'nor wouldn't 'elp him out.

"Master 'Ammersley cum in agin towards a'ternoon, and sat like a stone stattey for two or three hours, takin' no heed o' me as I went in and out, and not utterin' a sound, only that once I heard him mutter: "I said 'May the devil take me if I wrong her;' and now I *have* wronged her, and he *will*." About nightfall he went out agin, and there were some as said a'terwards (for nobody never got at the rights o' the story) that he went to some gentlemen he knew, and lost a lot of money at cards.—Anyhow, 'twixt one and two in the mornin', as I was a-comin' across the back quad (I'd bin sittin' up with old Higgins the college messenger, what was raypther bad that night), somebody comes through the passage from the front quad, and goes by me like a shadow; but a glimmer o' moonlight fell on his face, and I knowed it in a minute. 'Twas Master 'Ammersley's face, and yet 'twasn't his—but somehow as if he was dead, and the devil had entered into his body. Up the stair he went as if he had wings; and I, just as if somebody'd told me to do it, followed quietly a'ter him; but afore I could get up, he'd shut and locked his door. I heerd him fidgetin' about inside for a bit, as if lookin' for summit; and then he seemed to come out into the middle o' the room, and said, in a voice like nothin' I ever heerd before nor since: "I curse with my last breath this room, and all that is in it, and all who shall come to it a'ter me; and I give it over to the power of the devil, unto whom I go; and may *his* presence, and *mine*, and that of all things evil, possess it henceforth for ever and ever!"

"You wouldn't believe me sir, if I was to tell you what a turn them words giv' me. I tried to call for help, but my tongue seemed to stiffen in my mouth, and everythin' went round with me as if I'd been drunk; and the next thing I remember is findin' myself lyin' at the foot o' the stair, with the mornin' light just comin in the sky, and Jem Banks (him as was scout on the next staircase then) stoopin' over me.

"'Why, Thorpe," says he, "'ave you bin on the spree, that you lie rollin' here this way?'

"'Jem," says I, for 'eaven's sake, come up quick to Muster 'Ammersley's rooms; I'm afeared there's summut wrong!" Well, sir, up we went together; but it was too late: he'd hung hisself to that ere big hook in the middle o' the ceilin', and them words I heerd was his last. What's more, sir, it's 'appened somehow that them rooms have never bin lived in since then, till Muster Talboys took 'em yesterday; and you see what he's got by it!"

The old man ceased, and looked inquiringly at me; but it was in vain that I attempted to answer him.—Strong as my nerves are (and I may say, without boasting, that they have seldom failed me in time of need), I could not suppress a shudder—fresh as I was from the dismal atmosphere of the fatal chamber—at the thought of the scene it had once witnessed. There rose up before me like a nightmare, the image of that desperate self-destroyer in his lonely room.—A cold sickness came over me, and I bowed my head upon the table at which I sat; when I looked up again my companion had stolen silently away.

Mr. Howe's Letters.

Mr. Howe's letters, 2 and 3, are not so spicy as number one. Probably because the subordinates do not afford so palpable a target for his shots. The people of Nova Scotia hardly required Mr. Howe, to refer to his able and distinguished efforts twenty years ago, in advocating the development of British America; or to his eloquent and comprehensive speeches in England, in directing the public attention to the extensive fields here existing, for colonization; but the allusion is appropriate as they form acts to which Mr. Howe may point, and of which every Nova Scotian may justly feel proud.

To aid in furthering a scheme of immigration, an Emigration agent with a salary of $800 a year was created, and Mr. Thomas Morrison was appointed. Mr. Howe then pays his respects to Mr. Morrison:

"He has remained in office up to the close of last session, when, for very shame sake, the Government had to announce that the sinecure was to be abolished. I cannot compute exactly the amount of money which this person received for doing nothing, but may set it down in round numbers at about $1,000. Under the new constitution he became an officer of the Local Government, and, for the last two years, he has earned his salary from Messrs. Annand and Wilkins by abusing his old friend Howe. As a public officer he was a failure—as an emigrant agent utterly inefficient. Of all the money he has received, he has never given to the country fifty dollars worth of value. Yet this is one of the group of worthies, who has been turning up his eyes in holy horror at my fall from grace, when I accepted a public office, the duties of which I did know how to discharge. This is one of the persons sent, with lungs of leather, to roar at my heels round the Country of Hants, and who stood over my prostrate body in the School House at Nine Mile River, bellowing like a bull of Bashan, while I lay wrapped in my cloak, hardly able to hold up my head. That night I took to my bed, and could not renew the canvass for a month. This old friend, whom I had appointed to office, never had the courtesy or the humanity to say, "'Howe are you ill; sha'l we adjourn the meeting?'" but stood, with his pocket snuffed with sovereigns, for which he had given no value, lecturing me, who had just increased your resources by $2,000,000, on disinterestedness and public virtue. I record these facts, and leave you to judge whether Tommy Morrison is just the person to say to your old friend, "stand aside, I am holier than thou.' * * *

"Some years ago Kidston and Campbell ran for Victoria. Campbell was returned. Kidston came up to Halifax, and pretending to be a liberal, some good-natured people on that side raised funds to contest the seat. The election was set aside, and then a further sum was raised and paid to Kidston to run the County in the Liberal interest. He pocketed the money, went back to Victoria, compromised with Campbell, let the County go by default, and never repaid a shilling of cash to the parties whom he thus treacherously sold.

"There are a few more of these worthies who well deserve a skinning. Dickey, the Smuggler, the history of whose old schooner, doubly insured, would make a horse laugh. Chambers, the Financial orator, whose four years faithful service to Annand and Wilkins met with so ungrateful a return; but why should I waste your time with pen and ink sketches of a pack of pretenders, who, with the exception of Chambers, who I believe to be sincere, have not sixpense worth of patriotism or honor to divide among them. These persons rose on the strength of a tide wave which not a man of them had the ability to create. They fretted and strutted about in the Local Legislature, from which, by the Confederation Act, nineteen of the ablest men in the Province had been withdrawn, and they will sink back into deserved contempt when their falsehoods are gibbled, and their real characters are exposed to public scorn."

The third letter is devoted by Mr. Howe to prove his sincerity, and groups together various facts which rendered his acceptance of the situation a necessity. Of this there can be no doubt. But the ability, zeal, and perseverence of Mr. Howe, gave a character and power to the Anti-Confederation cry, which without him it never could have attained.

The Press on Mr Howe's Letters.

Correspondence to "Recorder."

We had began to think that this once notorious old sinner had subsided into the shades of oblivion, and that we should hear nothing further respecting the old traitor, until the OBITUARY informed us that he had been gathered to his fathers, not full of years and honor, but as brimfull of discredit and disgrace, as ever since Judas Iscariot went to his own place, accompanied any unfortunate wretch to his eternal home. It is amazing that this antiquated old miscreant should muster the audacity to address a public letter to the people of Nova Scotia. One would suppose that rather than remind the people, whom he has basely betrayed, of his existence, he would desire that the name Nova Scotia should be for ever obliterated from the map of America, as this Province has witnessed in him and his deceitful career, an amount of baseness, that no man whom history has recorded ever before attained to. Impelled, however, by a species of insanity, for the bare contemplation of the existence here of some men of pure and disinterested patriotism, drives him into a state of frenzy, he makes a violent attack on Mr. Wilkins and others, and vainly imagines that the shafts of his malice and envy, can reach these men, who are as distinguished for political consistency as he has been remarkable for every species of shameless dishonesty, baseness, perfidy and tergiversation. He deprived Mr. Wilkins of the Judgeship, to which he was entitled, and now pretends to ridicule him for accepting the office of Prothonotary, and, being himself in the Privy Council with $5000 a year, he affects to look upon Mr. W. and his office with contempt.

Surely it cannot be possible that the author of the feeble abuse now being published in the Halifax papers over the signature of "Joseph Howe", for the purpose of assisting in the election of the traitors, W. A. Henry of Antigonish, James McDonald of Pictou, Avard Longley of Annapolis, Hiram Blanchard and Samuel MacDonnell of Inverness, Chas. J. Campbell of Victoria, and their associates, is the Howe who in former days was a power in the land. The man who now writes such pitiful stuff must be an impostor.—*Chronicle.*

MR. HOWE'S LETTERS.—The Hon. Joseph Howe has addressed a letter from Ottawa to the people of Nova Scotia, which has been published in some of the Halifax papers. No one who peruses it can help regarding it as humiliating to Mr. Howe personally, and an insult to the intelligence and taste of his fellow-countrymen. Surely Nova Scotia is not so low in Colonial status as to merit this further infliction from Mr. Howe. How strange it is.—*Cape Breton News.*

THE *Colonist* of Tuesday last has a long letter (marked No. 1) signed Joseph Howe, and addressed to the people of Nova Scotia. It is remarkable only for its egotism, virulence and evidences of failing intellect.—*Yarmouth Herald.*

Howe did not take office till he went to England, and then, aided by the gentlemen who accompanied him, so improved the Quebec scheme of Confederation as to secure for Nova Scotia an additional subsidy of $60,000 per annum.

How the old fellows memory has failed: and how he consequently "lets the cat out of the bag." Here is now a sufficiently plain admission,—all but an express avowal that it was in England that he virtually *took office* in the Dominion Government. Yet it was just about the time of his return from there that he with the prompous air of one of Livy's Roman heroes very much exaggerated, vowed "that he would not forsake Nova Scotia in this the darkest hour of her history;" and further expressed a somewhat frantic desire to deposit all his valuable bones in the mud of Tintamarre marsh as a sacrifice to his suffering country.—*Recorder.*

The first administrative office that ever Mr. Howe held in Nova Scotia was that of Exciseman at Halifax.—He held it but for a short time; but yet, during that time, he managed to be short of a large sum of money. When the matter was afterwards investigated before a committee of the House of Assembly, Howe made frantic appeals to that committee not to expose him; and as a good-hearted merchant, now an earnest Anti-confederate, of Halifax, generously came forward and paid the missing money, he was not *formally* exposed in the committee's report. Years afterwards he, as Provincial Secretary, was entrusted with monies to pay for a number of large fire-proof safes, one for each county of this Province, in which to keep the public records. He did not pay for the safes, but spent the money, and another "raise" had to be made by his friends to keep him out of a most unpleasant difficulty.—*Ib.*

Legislative Items.

A Bill providing for compulsory vaccination passed the House on Tuesday. The Provincial Secretary stated in reply to Gough that the vacancies in the Government have not been filled, as the Government felt after the passage of the School Bill it could give representation to different sections; and that no appointments have yet been made to the Legislative Council.

The Attorney General stated that the Common Law Procedure Act would not be proceeded with this session, and that the codifying of the laws was of the greatest importance and would receive the attention of the Government.

Tuesday afternoon was occupied with Wedderburn's resolution for better terms. Willis proposed an amendment but afterwards withdrew it. Willis, Hibbard, Otty, the Provincial Secretary, the Attorney General, Hanington, Gough and Moore spoke showing the justice of, and necessity for better terms, that this Province had not been treated with the same consideration as other Provinces and that her present revenue was totally inadequate to meet her expenses. The Resolutions finally passed unanimously.

Mr. McQueen on Free Schools.

I shall not occupy the time of the Committee with any lengthy remarks—the principle of direct taxation, for supporting the common schools of the Country, has been discussed for some time. Yet, I deny the charge, that a School Bill by direct taxation, was the issue at the election in the County, which I have the honor to represent. It is true that in my canvass through the County, the subject was frequently discussed—and I never refrained from stating that personally—I was in favour of the principle. I have always been favorable to any measure that would diffuse education more generally. I hold it is too sacred a measure to enter into the area of party politics. King's School Bill, so called, was condemned in my County. I only met with one man in my town, who said he would take it rather than have none. I do not quite approve of the present Bill or the manner in which it was brought before the House. The Government in my opinion, should have brought forward resolutions affirming direct taxation. That being carried, the whole talent of the House should be exercised to perfect the measure, irrespective of Government or opposition. My way would be, after the principle is affirmed, which I well know will be in the House, to divide the Counties into school districts, and save the school houses built by direct assessment; this would be a step in the right direction