



THE SNAKE-TRAP

(From *Fliegende Blätter*.)

I knead not direct you as to Mr. Paterson, of Brant, who, I think, is a baker. He "marks it with T"—only one t, I mean.

From the view I got of Mr. N. F. Davin from the Gallery, I think you would do him an injustice to credit him with any hair at all.

In another letter, maybe, if I have time, I will give you directions about others of my dear Ottawa friends.

Mr. Somerville begged for a private interview with me on urgent business, and I granted it, although I was busy with a new piece of crotchet work. He earnestly begged me to look over some printing calculations he had made, and, if I felt it would help to lift this unfortunate country out of the slough of despond—(those were his very words, and they positively frightened me)—I might send them to GRIP. He said as follows: "The Government farmed out job work to Tory hacks, by which I mean Conservative papers, at four prices. Now, as a printer, I say, if one thousand ems is to be paid for in long-primer, and you measure it according to nonpareil, all fat counting solid, rule and figure-work double, press-work seventy-five cents a token, no allowance for making up, binding and trimming extra, why is the bourgeois of the minion not included in the agate, and the diamond and pearl put in the contract, so that the composition is the job by which the standard rules of the Typographical Union are governed in all this class of printing?" I took the statement down as well as I could, and perhaps readers will understand what is the matter. I do not. But I look on Mr. Somerville as a very able man.

Emboldened by Mr. Somerville's success, Mr. McMullen waited on me—and I then waited on him. He had a whole lot of cab prices, schedules, and so forth, he called them, and two fierce-looking cabmen at the door,

to post him, he said, if he got stuck on distances. Now, what he wants me to tell you is that if ministers would go on the street-cars when it was raining, instead of paying for cabs, there would be saved several hundred dollars a year to the Dominion. Another scheme he propounded was that every time a cab was hired a minister should scare up a friend to accompany him and stand half the cost. A third idea of his was for ministers to borrow horses from country members too poor to keep them over winter, and so save cab-hire part of the year. I said: "Wouldn't the members have to hire a stable-boy, and also feed the horses?" Mr. McMullen laughed derisively, and fairly hissed: "Let 'em make Civil Service clerks do the stable chores; as for feed, what do turnips and chopped straw amount to compared with the villainous outlay for cab-hire?"

I expressed deep sympathy for this much-exercised member, and promised to send you a plain statement of the soul-corroding cares under which he is, I fear, fast sinking into an untimely grave.

Then he and the two other gentlemen went away arm-in-arm.

My friend Owen pointed out Dr. Montague to me, the other day, and added that he was the political hero of the hour, that he could make a speech unsurpassed for fluency, fervor, flower and force, that he had had in a short time more candidature and less seat than any other politician alive to-day, and that I ought to interview him at the earliest possible moment.

The very next day—wasn't it lucky?—as I was going along the street to my milliner's, to see if she had my new bonnet done—Oh, GRIP, dear, you have no idea what a perfect love of a thing it is; so neat and becoming to me, and just the very mate of one worn by a young lady guest at Rideau Hall! It was done, you know, when I called that day. It is the cutest shape—trimmed just too sweet for anything—and would you believe it?—but perhaps I had better tell you a little about Dr. Montague first, though I know you are fairly dying to hear all about the bonnet.

Well, I actually had the courage—did I say I met the Doctor as I was going to the milliner's about my precious little bonnet?—I actually got up nerve enough to stop him and present my card, just the least little bit trembling, you know, and I fancy I felt a tiny bit of blush on my cheeks.

"The member of Parliament for Haldimand?" I modestly queried.

"No madame—that is to say, I—or rather my name is Montague—and er—I am not a Member of Parliament—I am only the Member for Haldimand—at least, I believe I am or was or will be or—or—or—ought to be—or—er—or—something like that—er!" And the poor man got so dreadfully confused he did not seem to really know how to answer me. I confess I felt embarrassment myself and was sorry I had so thoughtlessly worried him.

Bye and bye he recovered his composure partly and said:—"Pardon my hesitancy, Miss Nyas,—and let me say here I have had the honor of hearing about you and your admirable correspondence work in behalf of the leading journal of this Dominion"—(say, wasn't that nice of the Doctor?)—"but the truth is I am not sure, without looking up the court records, who or what I am, politically speaking, at the present moment. You see it is a sort of up-and-down contest between Colter and me, and the courts appear to have got things so badly mixed that one of us, I guess, will have to die or move into another constituency in order that the other may get and keep his seat."