

THE POKER.

"GENUS DURUM SUMUS EXPERIENSQUE LABORUM."

VOL. II.

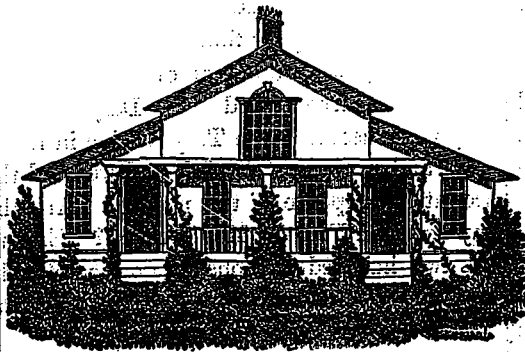
TORONTO, SATURDAY, JULY 23, 1859.

No. 2.

Fire Alarms.

A correspondent full of that refreshing *naivete* and unsophisticated simplicity which eminently characterize residents in the country (that is of course, to say, when said residents do not happen to be members of the Townsend Free-and-Easy Club, ruralising with a view to the improvement of their prospects as well as health) communicates the following in the abundance of his heart:—"It was mid-night, silent and solemn, a season intended for meditation, not for sleep, Diana was driving her rapid chariot along the firmanent, a road (to borrow the language of Homer,) macadamised with nuggets that put to shame the products of Pike's Peak; by the way we often wondered how that antiquated virgin managed to navigate that one-wheeled buggy of hers; but it works, we suppose, on the same unknown principle as the Rotifera—"the sentinel stars had set their watch in the sky"—(Campbell suffers)—though whether under the influence of narcotic or stimulant they appeared more than usually somnolent, at least if we may judge from the frequent winking motion of their eyelids. We never felt our infidelity in the fancies and visions of the old astrologists so vehemently shaken: the heavens, to speak algebraically, seemed to assume the form of an equation, long, complicated and abounding in difficult "roots," to be sure, but yet one which for its satisfactory interpretation required but the value of one unknown and magical quantity x . While busily endeavoring to obtain the solution of said difficult equation with a view to its subsequent insertion in Maclear's Almanac, for the benefit of mathematical readers, my calculations were violently arrested, and of consequence a very fair chance of becoming distinguished (moonstruck, a malicious young lady suggests) was ruthlessly torn from my eager grasp, by an incident very uncommon here, but which I am informed by a travelled friend of mine, is considered with you of ordinary interest and importance. My attention was rather suddenly attracted by the appearance of a bright light at no great distance, and before I could make up my mind to adopt any course of action, the immense sheet of flame which dazzled my eye convinced me that the slave of Prometheus had openly revolted and taken up so strong a position that the only hope lay in cutting off the supplies and thus starving him out. But with the roar of the flames there was intermin-

gled a frequent shrieking, so shrill and dismal that it pierced to the dividing of the joints and marrow. At the same time I could plainly distinguish the forms of men engaged in removing the inanimate bodies of what appeared to be children. Surely methought that must be some ill-fated boarding school, the inmates of which are thus so rudely awoken from their placid slumbers of childhood. I could no longer restrain my impatience to see the full extent of the dismal tragedy. Having, therefore, like Æneas, (*vide* Virgil, Book 2) arranged myself in those articles of apparel usually deemed indispensable to a public appearance, I sallied forth and after some time and many Quixotic, though involuntary tournaments with pine stumps and similar obstructions—for I was at that time totally unacquainted with the district—I reached the scene of the fire, which, after all, merely amounted to the destruction (inmates included) of a gigantic pigstye!



Homestead Letters.

We are happy to announce that we have succeeded in securing the services of that veteran Political Photographer, "W. L. M.," to contribute a series of letters to the *Poker* on matters and things in general. As it has put us to the extravagant outlay of \$00,000 per week we trust those communications, to be termed the "Homestead Letters," will be liberally encouraged.

LETTER 1.—CONTENTS.

Will-Yum Lay-on Make-Em-See persists in restating his age, and challenges Blondin to feats of activity, and stumps him with the deeds of '37.—Discourses discursively of things in general.

Some officious fools that can't mind their own business, or, what is more likely, have no business to mind, are always bothering me about my age. Before entering upon other

matters, I therefore beg the readers of the *Poker* to understand, that I now repeat what I have asserted for the last ten years without contradiction, and what I hope and expect to live and assert for the next twenty years to come, that I am exactly SIXTY-FIVE!! As to my activity, I can run and jump with any boy of my age. All America has been lauding that French Mountebank, Blondin, for his feats in crossing the falls. But Blondin is just like our political acrobat Brown; he will allow no one a share in his glory. He has had the despicable meanness to conceal from the public this challenge I sent him a few days ago, viz:—"That if he, Blondin, would undertake to hold *that* wheel barrow steady, I would dance a Highland Fling in it all the way over, and accompany myself with a skirl on the bagpipes." I got no answer to this; which I set down to national envy and jealousy. When will men grow generous and allow their minds to soar and soar as lofty as their bodies?

But after all, Blondin has done nothing at the falls comparable to what I did there in 1837.

It was well known to Sir Bond Head that I stuck to the burning "Caroline" to the last, and great was the joy of the harpies when it was asserted by those who cut her out and fired her up, that I had gone over with her. They never could account for my re-appearance on Goat Island with a whole skin. I never told the story before, but the facts are these:—When the boats boarded we just blew off one musket with a little powder in it, just to frighten the lads, for we didn't wish to hurt any one.—McCormick got his hand burnt by the powder. Then they all came on very brave. Two big bull-headed Englishmen came up to me—one was Captain Beer or Porter, or some such name, the other was young Light, of Niagara, a strapping six-footer,—now Warden of Oxford. I wasn't *exactly* Sixty-Five then, but very strong. Stooping down I caught young Light by the heels, as an ordinary man might a cat, and whirling him round my head fetched old Beer and Porter down leaving em both stunned. While the harpies were clearing the decks and firing the vessel, I jumped down the after cabin, got the end of a new coil of rope, passed the end out of the cabin windows and got it made fast to the wharf. Away went the "Caroline." I paid out and paid out my rope till just as she was tipping over the falls, when out I jumped and hauled myself back to the wharf, hand over fist. I clambered up and stood before our hor-