

The Quebec Argus.

We watch o'er all—and note the things we see.

[VOL. I.]

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No. 9.

THE QUEBEC ARGUS.

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For the Quebec Argus.

SCRAPS.

IMPROPTS, WRITTEN ON THE BACK OF A LADY'S VISITING CARD.

'Tis a strange fancy, that at times the heart
Weaves a soft spell round some fair name we know,
Breathing a charm whose sweetest doth impart
To our fond dreams a more impressive glow.
Than could be waked by Music's dulcet art,
E'er tho' from song she strains the strain should flow—
For aught in earth, or from th' choirs above,
Can match the music of the am' we love.

NOV. 1841.

TO A DEAR LITTLE FRIEND.

Sweet blooming rose, bud of the sun, it bow'd,
Where first thy young life's being wak'd its breath,
Type, n' thy beauty, of the parent flower—
Itself to be first in the smiling wreath
Which decks thy happy home—may cry to thee
Thy infant's name, and for an expand beneath
Its fostering shade, beam bright on thee, and bless
With all its virtues and sweet loveliness.

Nov. 1841.

MATTERS IN INDIA.

Jungle Grass.—The greater part is covered with jungle or reed-grass; and it will perhaps be scarcely credited that many of the blades reach to the enormous height of twenty-five feet. Unless the author had himself witnessed this strange fact, he would have hesitated to believe such a statement; but he can vouch for its truth, as he happened to be tiger-shooting, and while standing in the howdah of a very tall elephant, the grass in question towered many feet above his head. Of a party consisting of thirty elephants, four times that number of attendants, and several horses, all formed in close line, the whole were occasionally completely concealed from the view of each other by this overwhelming jungle.

Elephants in a Quicksand.—On the banks of the river there are many quicksands; and during this expedition a somewhat distressing scene happened. An elephant incautiously came within the vortex of one; first one foot sank, then another; and in endeavouring to extricate himself, matters became worse; no portion of either of his legs was at last visible, and the bye-standers had given up the poor animal as lost; but, fortunately, an unusually powerful, he three several times, with what appeared to all supernatural strength, drew a foot from the close-lying earth, placing it where, by sounding with his trunk, he found most solidly; not until the third time did the ground bear his pressure, when he gradually raised himself. During the whole period of his troubles his cries were exceedingly dolorous, and might have been heard a couple of miles; his grunt, when they were at an end, was equally indicative of satisfaction. The internal application of a bottle of strong spirits soon dissipated his trembling and restored his equanimity. Many unfortunate elephants are lost in these treacherous sands; when large quantities of grass or branches of trees are not at hand to form an available support for them. After a certain time the poor beast becomes powerless; and the owner can then only look with sorrow at the gradual disappearance of his noble animal, and lament the pecuniary loss he thereby suffers, for all human aid is futile. They have been known to be twelve hours before entirely sinking.

Here is an example of the working of war.
Present scarcity of Camels.—While on this subject, it may not be altogether out of place to allude to the present scarcity in this part of India of the camel; which is in its way as useful and valuable an animal as the other. In consequence of this, the regiments moving upwards, and the commissariat generally, are put to serious inconvenience by the limited means of conveyance available. The English reader will hardly be surprised at this scarcity, when he hears that, from the commencement of the Afghan campaign in 1838, to the present time, (October 1840,) the number killed, stolen, and strayed, is somewhat beyond fifty five thousand. The average value of each may be taken at eighty rupees; which makes this single item of war expenditure above forty-five lacs of rupees, or four hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

THE SNAKE TAMER.

Some ten days ago we received a note requesting us to call at No. 18, City Hall, as soon as convenient. Wondering what could be in the wind—whether President Tyler had sent on an emissary to attempt bringing us over to the support of Veto No. 2, or Daniel O'Connell were about making proposals for our advocacy of the repeal of the Union—we proceeded at once to the appointed place, and upon knocking, a solemn voice bade us enter. We opened the door, and stood transfixed with amazement at the sight which presented itself. A muscular, stoutly built man, about thirty years old, stood in the middle of the room, with an enormous rattle-snake wreathed round his neck, writhing and darting his forked tongue, as if in play; another of the monstrous reptiles in his hands, and two more, lying coiled up as in the act of springing upon a foe, at his feet. After taking the bearings of this startling scene, in less than a tenth of the time it will occupy in perusing these lines, we made a single leap from the threshold to the top of a wardrobe standing near. We were assured by the snake tamer here was no danger; but, recollecting that there was no harm, at all events, in keeping at a proper distance, we chose to reply that we found our situation very comfortable.

The snake-tamer then proceeded to inform us that he was from the apparently so-called "snake digging" in Iowa territory, and, after spending some two or three years in studying into the nature of snakes, as he expressed himself, he had succeeded in taming five or six snakes of the largest size, and had brought them to St. Louis for the purpose of exhibiting his management of them in public. We promised to notice his eccentric labors the next day, and call public attention to the subject of his exhibition, inasmuch as he would instantly look up his "sarmants," and allow us to go on our way in peace. Our readers will probably recollect the article we published a few days since, according to promise. Three of the snakes appeared perfectly docile, but the other two were somewhat vicious, and made several attempts, while he was exhibiting them to us, to bite their keeper. He, however, struck them lightly on the head, as you would a troublesome dog, and they slunk quietly away. The mouths of these terrible reptiles were open, and their fangs, from an inch to an inch and a half in length, were shown to us. They were the genuine article, and no mistake.

We heard nothing more of the snake-tamer until Saturday evening, when we learned that he had been bitten by one of his refractory pupils on the Thursday evening previous. The wound was in the ball of the left thumb; and, when medical aid was called (which was not until six or seven hours after the bite,) the arm from wrist to shoulder was horribly swelled. The surgeon immediately cut down into the wound, laying it open and forcing spirits of ammonia into it repeatedly, with a syringe. A light bandage was then placed round the arm, as close to the shoulder as possible, and drawn downwards towards the wrist—thus throwing the blood in drops from the wound, and preventing, or at least retarding, the infection of the general circulation with the poison. At the same time, spirits of ammonia, accompanied with French brandy, were administered to the patient, with the view to keep up excitement sufficient to resist the approach of mortification. This was kept up through the night, until the patient had swallowed two ounces of sal ammonia and upwards of a gallon of whiskey and brandy.

In the morning the wound looked black and swollen, and large blotches closely resembling the gangrenous blisters, which portend certain mortification, covered the arm in its whole extent. The stimulating treatment was, however, kept up with unremitting vigor—the patient remarking, with a most ludicrous attempt at gravity, that this was the first time he had ever been drunk in his life; but, he added, "I have always heard 'em say that this mixing liquor ain't what it's cracked up to be!" During Saturday and Sunday recovery took a favorable turn, and we were yesterday informed by the attending surgeons that the snake-tamer would probably live to cultivate the acquaintance of a great many more of his favorites. For our own part we do not believe he will ever make any thing out of it—we consider the speculation a dead one.—St. Louis Pennant.

LADY BYRON AND HER DAUGHTER.—The following is from the Foreign Correspondence of the American:

In my last letter, I promised to tell you something of Lady Byron, whom it was my pleasure to meet in London. A few words must redeem the pledge. I have rarely been more interested in any lady on either side of the Atlantic, than in this lovely, young woman. She appears as mild as the blue sky of an Italian evening. I straggled by her intelligent conversation, and charmed with the softness of her voice, which in a wistful, quickened the current of her thoughts. I said to myself, "Can it be that pale blue eye, that mellancholy, those blind manners, beloved by the Lady Byron, the wife of the wild genius whose erratic fire, which it started the round world with its glare, withered all that was sweet and beautiful within its own domestic circle, and ultimately consumed itself by

the intensity of its own heat?" Hidden under the warm cloak and quiet countenance of this unfortunate lady, there may lie the smouldering embers of fierce passions, that once shot their flames through the very veins of that noble bard, and made him the despairing suicide he was—but, I will not believe they were ever in danger.

But, this is a needless conjecture. Moore, the ardent friend of the poet, admits that Lady Byron was gentle and lovely; and the popular world cannot wholly acquit her of blame, in the unfortunate affair to which I have alluded. Let oblivion cover all.

There is a sprightliness in the conversation of Lady Byron that wins and weds her listener, and a dignified common sense that edifies him. The tinge of sadness which I call melancholy, which flows through it, gives a serious and sincere tone to the vein of pure morality which permeates much of her discourse. Her address and manner are familiar and easy. Decidedly plain-looking, her countenance when lying in repose is rather dull and uninteresting. When excited by the ardent conversation of kindred spirits, it beams, but never flashes. Even in her bloom, she could not have been handsome. The portrait of her, which are usually met with in the shops or appended to the works of Lady Byron, are tolerably faithful to the original.

As might be expected, she is very sensitive to all allusions, however remote, to her late husband. I am told she often dwells on the tokens which his name and history are introduced—not rudely of course, but on some fitting occasion. I was standing near her when a well-meaning but hungry gentleman spoke to her of her illustrious husband. With much readiness she abruptly turned the conversation, and politely disengaged herself from the circle.

It is not so with Ada Augusta, her daughter, the present Lady Lovelace. She has seen talk of her father, and is delighted when you tell her that his works are universally read, not only in the seaboard cities of America, but among the far off hills and prairies of the New World. Ada is gentle, witty, and pretty; but neither beautiful nor highly minded. She is said to be the happy wife of Lord Lovelace.

THE WORLD BANKRUPT.—The whole world is bankrupt or nearly so. In England, the ministry are about to call a new Parliament, in order to increase the revenue. France is in herself deficient 180,000,000 dollars. Austria obtained a loan of 175,000,000 dollars—Russia, Prussia, Spain, and Portugal are in the utmost pecuniary difficulty, and would borrow money if they could. Turkey and Belgium have obtained no aid, and Egypt has been obliged to raise the duties on produce. The King of Naples has raised five millions of ducats for Sicily. Prussia is a borrower in England. Lastly the United States, with abundant resources, by following the example of the twenty-four Governments, is reduced to the necessity of raising a loan of 12,000,000 dollars, to carry her through the year.

A WONDERFUL FEETSTRAIN.—On Wednesday week, Thomas Horsfield, a young man from Ashton, undertook at Bolton, near Bolton, for a wager, to perform the following feats within an hour:—To gather fifty peas one yard apart; run a large hoop one mile; run a mile; run half a mile in a sack; walk a mile; and run a mile. He accomplished his task in the short period of 35 3/4 minutes, in the following manner:—he gathered the peas in 9 1/2 minutes; ran a hoop one mile in 5 1/2 minutes; ran a mile in 5 1/2 minutes; ran half a mile in a sack in 4 1/2 minutes; walked a mile in 6 minutes; and ran a mile in 5 minutes.—Manchester Guard.

THE QUEBEC ARGUS.

QUEBEC, 1st DECEMBER 1841.

We have no additional items of news of any consequence to present to our readers to-day; our latest files of English and Colonial papers received, adding but scantily to our former stock, either foreign or domestic intelligence.

We have not yet to announce the birth of a Prince of Wales, though such an event is expected to be very near at hand. Her Majesty meanwhile, continues in the enjoyment of excellent health.

The Queen Dowager, we are told to say, is indisposed at St.bury Hall, having experienced an attack of cerebral inflammation, by her Majesty is recovering from the exhaustion which she has suffered.

The consistency of the Gazette is a matter of admiration. In his paper of Monday night, he (that is John himself, and no less) tacitly allows that the winter office of 2s. charged on the

Louis road, to be less, in the average, than the amount of voluntary subscription hitherto paid by residents on that road for keeping it in order, thus, by inference, acknowledging the turnpike system a benefit rather than an evil. What but omens of his "Black-ale" with its grievances, therefore, & tremendously magnified train of oppressions and hardships? alas! what becomes of all the Gazette's sage predictions and conclusions, when the merest test of common sense is applied to them. Speaking of the truth and force of his particular construction of events, and consistency of opinion, one is tempted of late to ask, in his case—where are they? with the certainty of its being echoed on every side—where are they?

We are confident our elderly friend of the Gazette must feel considerably and highly flattered, with the continued polite attention we presently condescend to pay to him—and intend to do for the future; but as there is a degree of jealousy springing up in another quarter, we will whisper in his ear that, he must shortly be content to share our courtesies with his friends, as on the first fair opportunity, we will make our prettiest professional bow to the other one.

Printers attention, and take care of yourselves.

As the Quebec Mercury of Saturday has published for a defaulter, in the payment of his debts to printers and others, a certain Mr. Innes, who assumes the guardianship of Miss Phillips, otherwise known as "the Child of Aven," and lately repeating her theatrical performances in this city, we beg to subjoin farther testimony, from experience, to the truth of the Mercury's statement. The above named person, during the first visit of the child, Miss Phillips, incurred a debt for work done at our office; and after every pitiful and dishonest evasion, concluded, as a dernier resort, with a most insulting letter to our proprietor and printer, containing a threat of personal violence to him—and this last a most especial cowardly trick, as he well knew the party threatened to be, at the moment, laid up in bed, and utterly unable to move hand or foot. This affair took place in the time of our Editorial predecessor, and of course the option of noticing this worthy or not was his affair; but had it happened during our assumption of office, most assuredly we would have exposed the individual as he deserves. As to the "golden opinions" quoted by the Mercury, at least during the recent visit of this infant prodigy to our city, they were rather, in plain speaking, of the "fine moral" sort, inasmuch as the houses were nearly empty each night of performance. People, in fact, began to find out the humbug of the thing, as this "wonderful child" is scarcely even a medical pupil of the Crummele's Phenomenon school, despite the scandalous puffery of a portion of the press to the contrary.

We beg pardon of our readers for giving them so lengthy a paragraph on such a subject; yet it is nothing but justice that the dishonest tricks of such wandering vagabonds should be exposed even from Dan to Beersheba.

An alarming fire broke out this morning, in Parlor Street, in the house occupied as the Post Office. It was first discovered in the upper story, on the west end nearest the Seminary, and being the 3rd night, no immediate assistance could be got, excepting that of Mr. Ross and the Gentlemen and Students of the Seminary, by all of whom every exertion was made to save the books and papers, but we are sorry to say that a part of them are lost. Those in the safe, on the lower floor, were preserved, but some of them injured. The good old-globe walls of the building, with the coupe fees, saved Mrs. Barry's house, and probably the Seminary, although it is well guarded against fire.

We are glad to hear that the house, which belonged to Mrs. HARRISS, the widow of the late Dr. HARRISS, is insured for £100.—Quebec Gazette.

For the Quebec Argus.

The first of the series of "Balls" to be given at Payne's Hotel, on the Place d'Arms, during the winter which has just commenced, came off last night, with brilliant effect. The room was well filled, perhaps there might be nearly four hundred Ladies and Gentlemen present—but not so much as to enable it to be the appellation of a "crowded" Assembly. There was as usual an excellent display of beauty, the effect of which was sensibly and agreeably heightened by the generally tasteful, and in some instances even splendid dresses of the Ladies—and above all, by the elegance and bewitching ability of their deportment. The company, of course, was in some degree a mixed one, but the utmost harmony seemed universally to prevail. The skill, grace, and affable condescension, and judicious arrangement of the "Stewards" were beyond all praise, and I doubt not, but the example, thus exhibited by them, aided by their praiseworthy and unflinching exertions to promote innocent hilarity, and equality of feeling among all, was readily and universally resorted to—at least it appeared so to be. The dancing did not commence till after nine, (instead of half past eight as is usually the case in the advertisements) and ended in accordance with the pre-arranged arrangements of the Managers, at about one, when the National Anthem was made the signal for departure.