

THE GRUMBLER.

VOL. 2.

TORONTO, SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 1859.

NO. 1.

THE GRUMBLER.

"If there's a hole in 'yur coats
I rese you tent it;
A chief among you taking notes,
And, faith, he'll print it.

SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 1859.

PROVINCIAL SPOUTING APPARATUS No. VII.

I. TAXES ON KNOWLEDGE.

Horé's villain, he has a book in his pocket.—*Jack Cade.*
Put a tax of ten per cent on it.—*Galt.*

The only portion of the unfortunate tariff which it concerns us to notice, is the inexcusable imposition of ten per cent on books and periodicals. It is really monstrous that in a country which has no important literature of its own, and which is therefore almost wholly dependent on foreign countries for its knowledge, the cause of ignorance should find an advocate in a finance minister. No interest will be protected by the imposition; the trade unanimously oppose it, and all intelligent men regard it as a most injurious device. The mere amount of the tax is not so great, though the customs' charges and the extra profit booksellers will require for their trouble, will increase it; it is of the inconvenience and delay which will be caused, and the check it must necessarily give to the trade, we most complain. This attack on literature appears the more wanton as ten per cent has been taken of jewellery, and whiskey remains as before. The dandy's rings and chains are to be admitted free, foreign whiskey is to be poured upon us as before, but the means of elevating the masses and fostering a literary taste, are to be subjected to a duty. In addition to this, the postage on newspapers is to be re-imposed by that elegant *littérateur*, the P. M. General. It seems as if a general conspiracy against intelligence and education, had been entered into by the Government. Let Mr. Galt double the rates on spirits, if he pleases and do what he likes with paste rings and foppish trinkets, but we solemnly protest against a Cade and Dogberry crusade against the moral and intellectual culture of the people.

II. COL. PRINCE'S BILL.

We see that the *Leader* has made a gratuitous attack upon the Hon. Col. Prince for one of the most useful and necessary measures ever introduced in Parliament—that to prevent the carrying of deadly weapons. If interference was ever called for with any social evil, it is in this case.

The cowardly Spanish and American system of attack by knives and revolvers, is repugnant to our British feelings, and the importation of it within the last few years, is rapidly reducing our Province to the degrading state of New York, Washington and New Orleans. The Colonel has, with the true feelings of an Englishman, set his face against the treacherous practice. The *Leader* says that because

he is opposed to interfere with a man's right to eat and drink what he pleases, therefore he is not to shield himself and others from knives and pistols. We fail to see the logical connection between the cases, much less the inconsistency of the hon. gentleman. If he be inconsistent, the *Leader* is also. It is opposed to the Maine Law, but it would, we suppose, hardly sanction cruelty to animals. Yet if a man may drink and kill himself, he may surely set dogs to fight, and cut horse's tails off when he owns them. According to the *Leader's* own showing if you are not to prohibit the first, you have no right to interfere in the last. Who is consistent? "Try moral means" with the man who has a concealed weapon. That means, we suppose, say to every rough looking man you meet—"I don't know whether you carry a revolver, but if you do, it's very wrong." And when a man in anger or drink draws a pistol upon you, you are to request him to stop till you produce scripture authority against murder. The men who carry knives and firearms, are the very creatures who have flung off all moral restraint, and who in wearing them, *ipso facto* declare themselves moral out-laws. The objection that parties are precluded from carrying them when threatened, shows that the editor never read the bill he criticises.

III. PIECEMEAL LEGISLATION.

We can understand the position of men who advocate the Maine Law; they are opposed to the entire traffic in intoxicating liquors, and they have a perfect right to impress their opinions on the legislature. We fail, however, to see the sense of that four hours a week prohibition, which is never attempted in the legislature. We say four hours, because the Sunday liquor traffic is very properly forbidden already, and the only effect of the bill is to close taverns from seven to eleven on Saturday evenings. Now is not this wretched system of piecemeal morality absurd in the extreme? The mover of the bill in the House, said that he thought the liquor traffic should be stopped. Well then let us have an honest bill to abolish it; but where in the name of common sense is the utility of trying to keep men sober four hours out of 144? We suppose the next measures we shall have, will be these:—

An act to close taverns every other day so as to prevent sprees from being prolonged over 24 hours.

An act to prevent drinking after college or law society examinations.

An act to abolish quart pots and to substitute pints.

An act to limit the strength of hot whiskey toddies.

The whole thing is absurd, and as far as this act is concerned, it should be called "An act to prevent the labourer from getting a glass of beer after his week's work." It is purely a class measure, a poor man's four hours' Maine Law.

VOLUME II.

This day THE GRUMBLER dedicates the first number of the second year of his reign to his dear friend the public. This day twelve months we were born; and we had scarcely felt the throb of life within us ere we were hailed by the universal voice of Upper Canada as nothing more nor less than the real choice. This day twelve months we unfolded to the delighted gaze of the public of Canada a plan by which we hoped to work out many reforms, social and moral; and this day we confidently appeal to the public to bear us out in saying that so far we have not swerved from the task we then undertook.

How much of the labour of love has been accomplished it would take up too much space to tell the story if we were egotistical enough to do so. We will not, therefore, dwell on the good we have effected or attempted to do. We will not enumerate the many members of Parliament into whose hearts we have driven, if not a tiny spark of sense, at least a wholesome dread of talking nonsense; nor tell of the many empty babblers whom we have snuffed out of existence—or the many social evils we have exercised our wit upon. We have not brought about a millennium, we are aware; for there are many incorrigible wretches whom neither force of denunciation nor bitter irony will deter from, at all times, making fools of themselves; and there are many more so steeped in sin and bleached in iniquity that they are hardened beyond the power of our charming. We can only pass sentence upon their evil designs and wicked machinations, and leave the public to carry that sentence out.

Since our advent into life we have had to drop tears of regret on the untimely graves of many bantlings whom our success forced into existence. We believe that one or two weak-minded chickens of our herd still stagger along the highway of life. But generally speaking, lack of patronage has proved fatal to our progeny. For ourselves, we are happy to say that we are flourishing, and shall continue to flourish, and although the great lakes may be dried up, and the *Colonist* become a sensible paper, yet we shall exhibit no marks of decay. And when perhaps some traveller from New York shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of the Don Bridge, to sketch the ruins of Nordheimer's Buildings, we shall be found in a back cellar, under the ruins, writing editorials for THE GRUMBLER.

The Gowans Bills.

—The House occupies itself at intervals in throwing out the little bills introduced by "the bore" pre-eminent. To say that the rejected measures have proved entirely fruitless would be wrong in the face of the six dollars which the "independent" author has received for every day wasted in discussing them, to say nothing of the opportunity they have afforded for a glorious display of Gowans and buncumbe.