

Stray Leaves from the Portfolio of a Walking Philosopher.

NO. II.

MR. POKER.—As I was leaning back in my arm chair after mailing my last paper, it occurred to me that a vast deal of the most interesting portion of my history was omitted, or rather remains to be told. I do not allude to my travels in Europe, nor yet to my hair-breadth escapes and adventures in the numerous capitals of the old world. No, I do not refer to this portion of my life, as my continental adventures would fill volumes, and I am sure, if ever I publish them, they will be eagerly sought after. Without more ado, I will proceed to acquaint you of my present mode of living and the style of my lodgings.

Now, do not imagine, Mr. Poker, that I who have been reared in splendor and magnificence—I who have been introduced to the high-born and the beautiful of all climes, live like the inhabitants of this city, in a beggarly condition. Not so. I am none of your stingy, and to use an uncouth phrase, “grab-all” citizens—or penniless adventurers. I am none of your low creatures, picked out of the gutter—a nobody’s son! If I place my name upon a subscription list, it is not because I have a supper, a couple of balls, and etceteras in view. I pray you, do not tell me that I am throwing out hints, or I will drop my pen!

I can say with no small amount of pride and satisfaction, that there never was a meeting at Quebec, at which I was not present, and I never went home after one, but that I made myself comfortable over a cup of tea, and a couple of nicely toasted rolls, after which, I sit down to my desk, and write down all that I heard or saw, staying up generally till three or four o’clock in the morning. I rise up late, and sit in my dressing gown and embroidered slippers, smoking cigarettes at a couple of guineas the pound, twirling my exquisite moustache, turning over the leaves of Reynold’s last novel, or Pennyson’s new poem. Sometimes I chat with my landlady, and carelessly listen to her plans for my comfort. Now Mr. Poker, I inwardly detest landladies and boarding houses keepers in general. Impossible to be more disgusted than listening to their schemes at such moments! Now and then they throw in a graceful compliment, and I confess it sometimes taxes my ingenuity to discover what a landlady would not do. I joke to Mrs. Fidget, (that is my landlady’s name) about it. One day I told her that she might drive a good trade in the next world, if she would arrange comfortable quarters for those friends whom she was destined to leave behind. She held her tongue, so I suppose she didn’t see the joke.

It is always essential that I should appear rich before the species; the richer I appear the richer I shall be under their roof. About noon I dress. Always have my gloves rubbed, and boots oiled. My dress is on all occasions a matter of study, and after a variety of looks and so forth in the toilet glass, I step into a cab, or rush along the street a perfect dandy. Methinks I hear somebody say, that I keep a cab as a matter of policy? So does Sir Edmund Head. Besides, what’s the odds, when I pay up like a king. Now, the reason some people keep a cab is obvious to all. Everybody knows that a cab-holder—one who is

extravagant in his expense, easily finds enormous credit. But, Mr. Poker, I wish you and your readers, that is the world, to understand that I am not one of these. My income is handsome—very handsome indeed—out of which I can give the most brilliant dinners at the Diogene Club, champagne suppers at home, make presents of jewelry to the pretty actresses, see them behind the scenes after the performance, to acknowledge their thanks upon my knee, (I dare not make this confession to the members of the Club.) and smooth their jetty locks, buy cigars, diamond pins, gloves, and other elegant trifles. Now, ain’t I to be envied. Let scoundrel’s sneer. Let them call me adventurer, if they like, behind my back. Adventurer quotha? So is every member of Parliament—so is every man who has made his own fortune! Me an adventurer, indeed! Bosh?

The tailors and the jewellers all contend for the honor of my custom, and seem anxious only to supply the goods, entreating that I speak not of payment when I make my purchases. But I make them understand that I take no credit. They all address me in the following words—indeed it would seem that they have a mutual understanding upon the matter—“Oh! Mr. Titmouse, I’ll set it down in the book, don’t pay now, allow it to stand over.” But I never allow it to stand over. My friend Cutchild, says he does. He has told me over and over again, that he could not withstand such entreaties. To encourage such tradesmen Cutchild always gives large orders, and let his little accounts stand over till Christmas. Thus, he says, he is very popular, very. The reason is obvious—Cutchild keeps his cab. Some day he may slope. For the sake of his creditors—I hope not.

I will conclude this paper with an incident in the life of my friend Cutchild. He is not a member of our Club. But he is a member of the “Devil and his ways, and the African conversion Society.” By them he was lately prevailed upon to give an address at their hall. He did so—and the subject was upon “the whole duty of man.” He is since looked upon as a most unspeakably pious young man, overflowing with the cream of good deeds. Sometime since he was elected President of the Society, for which kindness he wrote a tract called “Light shining out of darkness”—and dedicated it to the many pious members thereof. Since which time he attends church thrice on Sundays, and to appear as pious as possible, he carries a bible in one hand, and a prayer-book in the other—and takes care to stick a hymn-book out of each pocket. Now, Mr. Poker, you will naturally exclaim that he makes a great impression upon the mind! I rather think so. When he reaches the house of prayer, the beadle leads him to his pew, which is close by the pulpit, and when service commences, his responses, especially his “amen,” are deep and very striking—indeed they tend to edify half the congregation! But our Club have resolved to expose his “week-day” habits—to unmask him! We meet twice a week to laugh at his follies—and the follies of other men—ay! and the absurdities of women! To censure their vice—and if possible, to benefit the world. Let those who scorn the virtues of life, and laugh at the great and glorious principles which form the foundations of society, seek a speedy reform—let them

check their pride, ambition, and self-conceit, before they are brought under the notice of the Diogene Club, and lashed in the POKER by

TITMOUSE.

N. B.—Any person who wishes to correspond with us, may direct their letters *pre-paid*, to “the Diogene Club, Post-office, Quebec.” As President, I am requested to state, that a Committee has been appointed to inspect all papers submitted, as may contribute to censure the follies of the day, and advance the public weal.

T. T.

Titmouse House,
Quebec, May 9, 1859.

Lines on the War in Europe.

The sky of Europe is gathering dark
With the storm of contention and war;
A tyrant and despotic would quench the fair spark
Of its peace, and its happiness mar.
Each breeze waits us o’er
From that far distant shore
The voice of the dread coming strife.
The rapid array,
And the arm for the fray,
Whisper darkly “war, war to the knife!”
And the oak of Britannia rides proudly again,
The foe of oppression the wild surging main.
And there, with those nations, in terror and fear
Awaiting the fall of that night,
It is doubting, alarm, whilst the star of peace here
Is yet smiling unclouded and bright.
And long o’er us may
Its calm silvery ray
Shed its glorious light on our plains,
In serenity, far
From that tumult of war
That would darken our hearths with its stains.
But should it, unhappily come to our shore,
We have arms that can strike for the homes we adore.
Yes, dear are our homes—our mountains unstained,
Our fields and our valleys of snow—
And we’ll never behold their bright pureness profaned
With the footsteps impressed by a foe;
And the green of our trees
Waving bright in the breeze
Will not smile o’er the rude foeman’s head;
N! so never ’twill weep
O’er the graves where we sleep
Its night tears of dew for us dead,
And sigh o’er the place where our ashes will rest,
Than bloom for us, living, the fallen, oppressed.

HARRY SWEETPEACH.

“Vox et Præterea Nihil.”

What is our modern patriot’s weight
In crowded legislative hall?
Or raised above the noisy crowd
At out-door meeting’s senseless brawl?
Or when in editorial chair
He scrawls scurrility at will,
To please his rabid readers’ taste?—
Vox et præterea nihil.

What is the value of his cant?
“Reform,” “Retrenchment,” and so forth,
His “Principles,” his “Honor,” “Faith,”
And all the rest, what are they worth?
Who take them at the seller’s price—
Must have a most uncommon skull,
The wiser and the better think
Vox præterea nihil.

QUIZ.

The Difference.—Interesting Conversation in High Life.

Smart Little Miss.—There! pa, you will keep reading your nasty old *Poker*, and will not so much as look at my *Grumbler*. But I am sure you will now, pa, because Macaulay, Bulwer and Dickens are contributing to it. Won’t you, pa?
Sensible Old Gent.—Fudge, child! Fudge. They put in anything to please children.