

Society Notes.

It is somewhat surprising that in an enlightened country like Canada, such a relic of barbarism should be perpetuated. To one philosophically inclined, there is food for reflection in the idea of taxing a dog. Does the collector ever think that by his request to pay at once to save the cost of a summons, he is inciting men to wilful and cold-blooded murder; not of human beings, certainly, but of beings who beat many humans in consistence and general integrity of character. Even the kinder-hearted recipients of the notice are often impelled—by the greatest of all evils, want of coin—to turn certain hitherto sober and respectable members of their family adrift in the streets, to become mere loafers and pilferers, highwaymen and thieves.

We are not going to indulge in a vegetarian tirade against the slaughtering of animals. Some animals are still wild, and we treat them as we would wild men; if it is out of our power to instruct them how to behave decently, we shoot them down in self-defence. Others are tame—very tame—and uncommonly good to eat; these we educate to enjoy the most fattening food, and to acquire a good flavor; and when the season comes that their flesh is at its prime, we kill them and absorb their strength into our own systems. Others are neither savage nor succulent, but are by nature domestic and affectionate, and highly intelligent. Among them the dog comes first, endowed with keen perception and a sensitive conscience. In his youth he is quite as susceptible of educational influences as any human, and if properly trained develops into a most faithful companion, brave, honorable and obedient, always ready to confess a fault and accept his punishment without a murmur. In fact, a carefully trained dog—of high or low degree—presents a character that would make a hero if endowed with a biped carcass.

And yet, in an enlightened country,—a country which has shaken off the trammels of antiquity—and with them, many of the beauties that make the Old World lovely, in an enlightened country like Canada, those who are humane and benevolent enough to find board and lodging, we can't say clothing, *gratis* for their canine friends, are asked to pay so much per annum to the Government in addition. We beg to protest,—make a note of it; *Our Society* protests at last, most emphatically.

Of course it is not the collector who is to blame, it is the benighted government he represents, and we fear very much that no change of Government that is likely to take place for a century or so will prove more enlightened in this particular.

The *St. John Globe*, evidently struck by the flourishing condition of our society papers, argues that "Society and Swell-dom in Halifax must be in a blooming condition." Commenting on our vain endeavor to describe ourselves as a record of "Society and sports," the *Globe* asks under what heading the Easter Services are to be placed. We might say in reply that it is a peculiarity of Halifax that both society men and sporting men are supposed to take a passing interest in the Easter Services at our churches. But we don't want to be caustic, and will content ourselves with thanking the *Globe* for what is a very kindly notice of our little sheet.

A short letter appeared in *Progress* last week on a subject which has lain dormant for some time in the public prints, but which is a constant topic of conversation and discussion among the townspeople. The question whether the presence of the military is a commercial advantage to the city or otherwise is a decidedly old one, and we would like to hear the opinion of leading townsmen on the subject. Perhaps an authoritative settlement might go far to stop the murmurings of those who fancy themselves injured or slighted by the presence of their rivals in uniform, and who are so ready to state as a foregone conclusion that things would go better without them. On the other hand there are some few who do not hesitate to say that in the old times when more than one regiment was quartered here, people were perceptibly better off and trade brisker in consequence.

Without venturing to go so far as this, we do not hesitate to say that we think it would be a very heavy blow to trade generally if the garrison were removed.

In coming to this conclusion, we are influenced by two facts, which might be called characteristics of this city; the first is the scarcity of ready money generally, and the second is the fact that those among the permanent residents who have made their "pile" do not as a rule spend it here. Both these tend to bring about the same result,—a pressing need for the importation of ready money. It is precisely this need that is filled by the military. We do not think we are at all beyond the mark in estimating the pay of officers alone at \$100,000 per annum, not counting private incomes. Even supposing that only one half of this sum is spent in Halifax, it forms a considerable item, as no part of this money is made here. And when we consider the amount spent by the non-coms. and privates, and the sums paid for transport, and the amount of civilian labour incidentally employed by the Government, we are inclined to think that it would take years to recover from the loss of such an enormous promoter of business.

The body of St. Luke's Cathedral last Sunday morning was a perfect flower-garden; one pew in particular with a coat of green paint would have passed well enough for a window flower-box in full blossom. Coming in from the barren outer world, with no sign of spring except in the sunshine, the effect of this blaze of gold and yellow was strange. No one would have felt the least bit surprised if the organist had struck up the well-known air "Tit-willow." However, no outburst of any kind occurred till after the congregation had reached the front steps, when a quiet and gentle, though simultaneous, chorus arose among the male part,—*"The flowers that bloom in the spring, tra la."*

We fail to see anything so highly "sensational" in what is called the "Story of the Halifax Militia Troubles," and we are glad to find someone with a level head advising the public to "Hear the other side," as the only account given so far is obviously one-sided. Of course no one can blame a newspaper for obtaining information about the proceedings of the court of inquiry, but some one connected with the business is open to very serious censure for giving that information, which was supposed to be strictly private and known only to a few officials. And in the service it has always been regarded as a grave breach of professional etiquette to provide any paper with details of military information. On the military side of the question, however, we prefer to say nothing: the results of the enquiry will be public property before long, and will probably be very different from what the public have been led to expect.

On the other side, however, we have a perfect right to speak: and we consider it abominably bad taste, and at the same time bad policy, to parade an officer's private affairs before the public. The whole thing looks uncommonly like a *ruse* to divert the attention of the public and of the officials from the point at issue, and to create a prejudice against an officer by considerations which have no right to any place whatever in the discussion. And this view of the situation is borne out by the fact that several other statements have appeared in the public prints, which must have struck any unbiassed observer as deliberately planned with the same object.

The officer in question has our entire sympathy, and we can only hope that the results of the enquiry will be speedily published, for his satisfaction as well as for our own.

There is very little business done without canvassing, and when it comes to anything in the shape of an election, the result seems to depend simply on the amount of skill and funds—brought to bear in support of the "cause." Even when this is thoroughly understood, it is rather amusing to read in the papers that "The city collector has obligingly posted in his office the list of voters in all the wards (except ward 5, where there is no contest), for the convenience of all interested parties." Any particular man's vote is almost as well-known in advance now-a-days by the "persons interested," as the amount of insurance he "carries" is to the agents of the various companies.