

THE GRUMBLER.

"If there's a hole in a' your coats
I trow ye sent it;
A chiel's among ye taking notes,
And, faith, he's' frae't R."

SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 1858.

PROVINCIAL SPOUTING APPARATUS.—No. V.

League on both your houses.—*ROMEO AND JULIET.*

We have hitherto devoted our attention entirely to the Lower House, for the simplest of all reasons, the Upper House has been kept in a state of uneasy indolence by the perverse sportiveness of their juniors. In future, however, we shall have a little to say of the Lords, albeit with that reverence which is due to their august character and growing usefulness. We certainly believe that the Legislative Council is a far more useful body than the Assembly. Legislation is more carefully managed, the fearful partizan spirit which prevails below, scarcely ruffles the serene air above; and as regards ability, we stake our credit for sagacity by expressing our honest opinion—that Messrs. De Blaquiere and Prince have more sense than the 130 put together.

We don't think that Mr. Vankoughnet is a very valuable acquisition; he cuts much the same figure as a pugilist in a scientific convention; he must be severe and caustic to an extent which in a small body like the Council, is extremely unnecessary and disagreeable; he seems to suffer from unpleasant reminiscences of judge and jury contests, and he evidently entertains the idea that as compared with the Kingston league, the Upper House is a terrible bore.

Passing to the Commons again, we must admit that some spasmodic attempts are being now made at legislation, but there is plenty of grumbling material in both Chambers still.

I. THE EXAMINATIONS AT THE BAR.

"Master Consable, ye go not the way to examine."—*Black And Nothing.*

Of all tedious, unsatisfactory, fruitless and expensive schemes, commend us to an examination of witnesses at the bar of House; and yet as if to demonstrate the utter incapacity and disinclination for practical business, three days have been spent already in a procedure, which to all appearance, may be carried on for a month to come. Dorland and White and all the small guns on both sides, fire a little salute to their own legislative sagacity, by thrusting in an insignificant question now and then; Fellowes and O'Farrell exhibit their sweet tempers whenever a disagreeable query is propounded, while Patrick has positively become an Achilles in this petty business. We venture to say that in three hours a committee could have done much more satisfactorily what the House has wasted three days, at

an expens of £1500, or more in accomplishing. We have no desire to flatter gentlemen, but we can hardly restrain our admiration at the adroitness with which everything really practical is avoided by this honorable House.

II. LEGISLATIVE HUMOUR.

"They do but jest, poison in jest."—*Hamlet.*

We do love to see a taste for the ludicrous in common life, and we were never better satisfied than in hearing the following from the lips of Mr. Noel, one of the tortured at the bar:—

"Mr. O'Farrell said he would give me £100 if I would get him elected without contestation. I asked what he would do if there were a contest. Oh, he said, you can go to the wall before the time, having a watch set for the occasion. I said, do you mean to corrupt me? Oh, said he, I only said so for fun."

Fun was never employed to better purpose. The comical O'Farrell wanted to test Noel's probity, as Satan tried Job's, though of course with nobler intention; he did not like to employ any serious engine to ensnare the fallible Noel, so fun was the touchstone, and he was proved sterling metal. Happy O'Farrell to have such an incorruptible officer, and virtuous O'Farrell in thus striving to insure his incorruptibility. We have no doubt that the poll-books of Lotbiniere, which are the subject of so much unnecessary indignation, were merely developments of "fun" to gauge the virtue of the House in a similar manner: we fear, however, that their trial will hardly be so successful. Noel was proof against fun, but we fear the House is of too humorous a turn to take his absurd view of the matter. We have heard it rumoured that Mr. O'Farrell is about to collect and publish the posthumous writings of the late Joseph Miller of fony memory.

III. THE RUSSELL ELECTION.

Nay, let me alone for swearing.—*Twelfth Night.*

Never in the history of legislation has a more disgraceful and humiliating picture of human depravity been exhibited than that displayed yesterday in the examination of Earl Belet at the bar of the House. This worthy earl, one of "nature's nobleman," his countrymen would doubtless call him, exhibits a wonderful facility for swearing and triking, and if only the moiety of his story be true, the sitting member is infinitely worse. He was visiting Canada on a hunting excursion, and at the request of Castleman, who appears to be as comical as O'Farrell, he was induced to remain too days to see the election, "as there might be some fun." The fun turned out to be a most ludicrous scheme for placing sufficient bogus votes on the poll-book, to insure the return of Mr. Fellowes. This was accordingly done, 46 legal voters exercising the franchise, and 600 Yankee names being placed on the list surreptitiously. The noble Earl says that all this was done at the instigation of Fellowes, and Castleman, and subsequently made an affidavit to that effect. When this instrument was read to the House, Fellowes read another from Bedell, solemnly declaring that he had been bribed by Loux, to perjure himself,

and had taken the first oath for money. Bedell now actually states at the bar of the House, that the second affidavit is a forgery. Can our readers imagine anything more shameful than this expose? Supposing even that the great swearer is a bad character, the poll-books give incontestible evidence that the frauds have been practised, and we appeal to the outraged moral sense of the community, if some exemplary lesson should not be lashed into these sporters with perjury and fraud. We are glad to see that the Government are unwilling to interpose their protection on behalf of the man who has been elected by these means, (we do not say knowingly, although appearances are fearfully against him,) and we feel assured that they will yet vindicate our elective institutions from the foul reproach which the Russell and Lotbiniere elections have cast upon them. If Mr. Fellowes has been deceived in the matter let him manfully resign his seat, and appeal to the county, but if he will not do so, let him be expelled with the contempt and obloquy he deserves.

IV. THE FRANKING SYSTEM.

Franked up to fattig.—*Richard III.*

Can anybody inform THE GRUMBLER why the postal department is charged annually with an enormous sum of money to defray the post office bills of the House and its officers?

We certainly have no objection to a moderate amount being expended in circulating documents for public information; but why should Jones, when he writes to enquire about the health of his grandmother, or Simkins, when he wants to dun a tardy debtor, charge the country with 3d. in each case?

We are informed that no small portion of the postal deficiency is caused by this system; that gentlemen are in the habit of mailing printed business notices, and correspondence about matters utterly foreign to the public interests, at the public cost. This is a matter in which both sides of the House are involved to a most enormous extent. We trust that some immaculate member of the House, say Mr. Mackenzie, will move for a return of the amount expended in this extravagant manner. We shall refer to this again, but, in the meantime, we beg to inform the people that under the pretence of giving them information, many thousands of pounds are squandered in a most reckless and improper manner. The whole amount is charged to the Post-office Department, and, in order to make up the deficiency thus caused, their free newspaper postage has been abolished and the odious and troublesome stamp system established.

General Playfair.

On the general movement, generally to be observed when General Playfair rises to speak in the House of Assembly:—

If Playfair, in vnr, as in Senate, is great,
He must be tremendous in flight,
For whenever he rises to jolt in debate,
He puts all the members to flight.