

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

OLD JEREMY'S SPORT.

Noles is old Jeremy's neighbor;
And while at his work one day,
Turning to answer an angry call
From an angry face above the wall,
Noles hears his neighbor say:—

"Sir! do you know your precious fowls
Have laid my garden bare?
They've pecked and scratched, and torn my beds
Till now 'u may beware!
If you don't keep your hens at home
I'll shoot each bird I see."

"Shoot away, Jeremy," answers Noles,
"Only throw them across to me!"

Crack went the rifle day by day.
And over the garden wall,
The fine fat hens came tumbling down
As fast as they could fall.

For a fortnight Jeremy had good sport,
And neighbor Noles lived high;
When one fine day old Jeremy heard
That Noles had never owned a bird,
And those he'd hunted down so hard
Had wandered from his own fowl yard!
Across the lane hard by.

Over the wall old Jeremy looked,
His face like crinkled curds,
As on poor Noles his wrath was spent,
His outraged feelings thus found vent—
—But I won't repeat his words.

PLUM DUFF.

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

OUR FISHERMEN.

They are a numerous, generous, patriotic, and industrious people. Their line of business exposes them to many dangers, hardships, and disappointments. They are not a discontented and fault-finding class of society; yet I hear a good deal of fault-finding of late, and I believe, not without cause.

For the last three years, many engaged in this branch of toil have not met with sufficient remuneration to enable them to make both ends meet each year; hence, running in debt, or an endurance of pinching poverty. And this state of things must continue until a higher price for fish is realized. Anything less than three dollars per quintal will not pay. But last year, the average price was scarcely two dollars and a half.

There was hope early in the autumn that three dollars or more would be obtained. But this hope is not now likely to be realized, as ten or fifteen thousand quintals from French vessels have been bought by Halifax merchants at a lower rate than they could be obtained from our fishermen. This might seem fair enough, but when we remember that a bounty price on each quintal sold in our Dominion of nearly two dollars is given by their Government, while we are not allowed to sell to them, the transaction is not just and equitable.

Can it be right thus to undermine one of our chief industries? I had no idea that we had merchants in our Province who, to enrich themselves, would try to impoverish our hard-working fishermen. But they are doing it, by supplying the market with foreign fish.

It is reported that one in Lunenburg is attempting the same thing. It would be unjust, unpatriotic, and mean to do so, when thousands of quintals of fish are now waiting for a market.

If our Government, as soon as it has an opportunity, does not put a stop to this kind of trade, and protect the fisheries of its own country, it need not look for much support from the discouraged fishermen.

Lunenburg County, Oct. 27th, 1880.

ALPHA.

THE OLD TOWN OF HALIFAX.

Halifax is now in its 137th year, not large for its age, nor yet very handsome, few public amusements, little excitement of any kind, and yet everybody likes Halifax and calls it a "dear old town;" it has been "old" from its earliest infancy, like some children. It is literally a city built on rocks—I was going to add eternal, but with the remembrance of some of its dilapidated buildings fresh in my minds, I dare not make any assertion as to its eternity.

The city is at the base and on the sides of a high hill, on whose top is the citadel, peaceful enough now, as are all the forts on the harbor and the point, but veritable slumbering volcanoes they are, ready, at the first sound of the war cry, to belch out fire and brimstone.

The docks or wharves extend but a short distance into the harbor for even the largest ships to load and unload. Anyone with a nose can tell the chief article of trade—fish. Many of the wharves are covered with racks where codfish are dried, and the sea breeze often comes to us laden with their delicate aroma. Seal skins from Labrador—scarcely less odoriferous than cod—are shipped to England. These are not fine as the skins of the South Sea Island seal, but, packed in salt, go to England to return as seal skin cape, trimmings, etc.

On leaving the wharves, where all kit 's of crafts that move on the waters are moored, the first street you cross is a series of shippers' offices, sailor boarding-houses with an occasional grog shop, one-sided, tumbling looking affairs, as though their support was unsteady; the next street presents a better appearance and so on, yet in all there is a family likeness,

for the houses are all, or nearly all, of a dingy brown color, built of wood, after the same style, perfectly square, and usually three stories high. Most of the porches are inclosed in glass, and many halls have double doors. The porches as well as the windows, even in the poorest houses, are filled with geraniums, nasturtiums, suchsias, and are fringed around with lobelia. The flowers certainly take away much of the rusty look of the houses. Most of the windows are further ornamented with lace curtains, some have long double curtains, others only a deep ruffle across the window, still from basement to garret all have lace curtains—we do not and must not, however, examine into the texture of the curtains. Windows are seldom open, yet I see no reason for shutting out the very glory of Halifax, its pure fresh air, for the smell of the codfish prevaileth not always.

The stores are shops here, and the shop-keepers always polite, whether you buy for a pound or buy for a penny, still always polite, and the invariable 5 per cent. discount for cash on a bill of smallest dimensions seems strange, but nevertheless delightfully disappointing after you have inwardly rejoiced over the cheapness of the first price.

Halifax makes her boast in her strength; two armies at present hold the fort—the army for the Lord and the army of the Queen, one soldiers of the cross, the other fighters for the crown. Both armies have their worshippers. The English Army is held in much esteem; first by the girls, whose admiration the officers return. The boys worship the soldiers, too, which feeling I don't believe is reciprocated; then the nurse girls, the laundry girls, the maids of all work have weak spots for the soldiers bold. A mutual admiration society is that of Halifax, with as much difference of caste as there are ranks in the army. Then there is a higher power than the military, the titled. The sneezing spell of my Lord (his father is an earl) is of much more importance than the sickness unto death of poor Mr. I-don't-know-who-you-are, who lives in a shorter house, more dingy and with fewer geraniums in the window, though perhaps next door to his highness, for the rich and the poor, the noble and the plain, live as near neighbors here as do the lean and the full sardines in a box.

The guidebook asserts that Halifax is a wealthy city. I should say that the people are comfortably off, without any superabundance of wealth. There are three large sugar refineries, and to my knowledge one cotton factory, and several handsome public buildings; one, the Provincial Building, is where the post office is; one, the Government House, a large, gloomy-looking place, is the official residence of the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia; another great gloomy stone structure is the Parliament Building, where Parliament meets, and where is the Parliamentary Library. The people are quite proud of the portraits that adorn the walls of the legislative chambers, two kings, two queens, four or five judges, and a large oil painting of the humorist Sam Slick. One of the pictures, of I don't know who, is by West. While in Halifax one readily falls into the way of evading a name unless one is sure of the title belonging to it. It is far better to say "beg pardon, what name?" than to put plain Mr. when a title should be there; although lords, sirs, etc., are nearly as common here as majors and captains with us; the people are tenacious of these heirlooms, very probably their only wealth.

Of course Halifax is English—the most English city in America. The inhabitants out-English English in their talk, but make up for the extra width of some of their words by shortening many others. The people wear English clothes, English shoes, drive in English turnouts, with the coachman up behind, unless his seat be pressed into service for a member of the family; they carry English pugs and have English manners, a bit offish at first, but when they know who you are, you know, they are cordial enough. With all their sound English sense, these people have taken unto themselves some of the English foibles, particularly noticeable in the would-be-dude; he has a soft voice, with a sort of hesitancy in his speech, a kangaroo like posture in standing, his hands drooping like the wilted petals of a bronze lily, and then the eye glass—one round glass which he wears when he don't want to see and spits out—excuse the word, expectorate don't express it—when he does want to see—but no more criticism, must I come to Halifax to look for perfection?

Only one suggestion, since I wish travelers to find no drawbacks in this "dear old city." Could not the people advertise when something is going to happen? Since here, I have enjoyed descriptions of what has taken place, but have known of only two things before they occurred—one, the Irish picnic to take place this week, and the other, still more extensively advertised, the advent of Mlle Rhea, who appears to-night in "Frou-Frou."

Saturday is the day of days in Halifax. It is market day, and farmers, white, black and red, come from miles and miles around and station themselves on both sides of the bauquette on the Post Office Square. By 7 o'clock, teams are unhitched, horses and oxen feeding, and the farmers have spread their wares invitingly on the sidewalk. Birch bark baskets filled with blueberries, fern leaves—and ferns are gigantic here—twisted into saucers for red foxberries; fresh laid eggs in nests of wool, inviting enough to bring the fat hen near by back to life; lambs wrapped in clean white cloths; vegetables—great, firm cauliflowers, bunches of celery, squash, beets, pumpkins, beans and peas, potatoes—in fact, every known vegetable except sweet potatoes, all full grown, healthy and fresh looking, just as the native men and women are, some fruit here and there and flowers everywhere; banks of nosegays of every hue; many colored sweet peas, pure looking pond lillies, violet-eyed heartsease, stately hollyhocks, phlox, and poppies red and poppies white, white ones too with a faint pink tinge, a blush like to that on a young girl's cheek.

Across the street, in an open space, the negroes and the Indians congregate. There are many negroes here, quiet, honest people. On market day they evidently put on all they have to come to town. I saw one old African lady with three or four skirts on, two sacques, and as many shawls. Their wares are vegetables, berries and eggs; but they seem to excel in rustic