

DID YOU EVER?

"I wish I could go to some country where there are no ladies," exclaimed Mr. Cynicus Snubb to a friend.

"Ugh, you brute!" ejaculated the other. "What do you mean? A country where there are no women! Why, you horrible—"

"Stay; I didn't say that," interrupted Cynicus, "I said no ladies, not women. I adore a true woman—but we haven't any in Canada!"—and he sighed—"they are all ladies; shop-ladies, sales-ladies, etc., the lady who superintends the pots and pans in the kitchen, the lady who condescends to sweep our floors and who asks for an occasional Sunday out, to visit her mother, the lady who owns the laundry; lady clerks, lady book-keepers, lady cashiers; I suppose a milk-maid is the cow-lady, and—"

And here his discourse was rudely cut short by his being bundled off the sidewalk by two policemen who were conveying an inebriated lady to the ladies' department at the lock-up.

THE CEMETERY VOTERS.

SCENE: Two Citizens meet in the Arcade.
First Citizen, slapping Second Citizen familiarly on the shoulder.

Well! How d'ye feel old man? We beat, you see.

Second Citizen, dolorously.

Mention it not! I have been suffering since from such a strange capillary reaction as makes me feel—it is no longer hair But goose quills that adorn my outer brain pan.

1st Cit.
How now? what's up? What's all this jolly racket? Have you been betting on your man—and lost? No! Well then, if your man missed it, why, our's won. Come, wish us luck; "All's fair in love or war."

2nd Cit.
Yes, yes, all's fair in love, war or elections. So long as you confine yourself to mundane spheres. But when you bring in aid from unseen worlds And by some unknown "devilish contrivance" Open the graves and from the glooms of Hades Bring hither voters—

1st Cit.
Why man, you are drunk! I do believe the Scott Act after all May do some good—I mean to such as you. By the way, I suppose they'll soon submit it here.

2nd Cit.
It may do good—for instance as just now To draw it as a herring athwart the trail, Keep to the point, sir. Tho' "the sheeted dead Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets," We nowhere read they voted at the polls As they did in this city at the late election, All day did Charon backward ply his boat, Bribed by the hope of ferrying o'er the Mayor— Before the year was out. Hark ye! old friend— Drunk or no drunk—that day as I crossed the street I saw a form familiar pass me by. Dull, bushy brows overhung his lifeless eyes; His board lay flat and damp upon his breast; An overcoat he wore, and that old cap— I recognized it first—a heavier fur. Yellow and time-stained, with projecting peak. He passed; and, as he passed, a whiff of mouldy Musty and dark—when I—chilled me to the bone. "Why! who is that?" I cried to young Tom Grey. "That! oh, some fellow just been to the polls." But I, by memory haunted, stood and gazed After the figure as it stumped along, Till, turning the corner, I his profile saw— It was old Gripfast who'd been dead a year!

1st Cit.
Look here, old man—this thing's got to be stopped; Think of your wife and children—you must have 'em back To see ghosts walking round here in Toronto. Come—I'll go up to Dr. Temple's with you; A little chloral now—

2nd Cit.
A little devil! I tell you sir, I saw him with these eyes; More than that, thinking it might be illusion, I sought the scrutineer—one of our lodge, And through his kindness saw the voter's list. There was his name, "John Gripfast," sure enough; I'd know that signature among a thousand. Not only that—what made my eye-balls burn, And queer cold chills meander down my spine; I saw so many more—familiar names, Whose owners I had followed to the cemetery;— Saw them committed to the silent grave, There to await the day of resurrection, Ne'er dreaming that that meant the voting day! One name especially filled me with dread— Old Scrapper—a when he died he held my note For fifty dollars. Fancy my feelings!

After me thinking that Death paid all debts. Here he had been in town! What if I met him? I tell you I felt weak. Homeward I slunk, And on the way could sniff now and again The fumes of brimstone, but I no'er looked up, Lest the defunct should slay me with his eye And I should fall dead at old Scrapper's feet.

1st Cit. (aside.)

Poor fellow! What a wreck! I'll see Langmuir And get him quietly off to the asylum.

2nd Cit.

Nor was this all; when I arrived at home My wife cried "Oh! James, I'm so glad you've come. A man was here who wanted you so bad; He mumbled something about fifty dollars, And left behind him such a sulphury smell. I asked him if he couldn't call to-morrow, But he growled, 'No; old Charon wouldn't wait.' Who's Charon anyway?" I thought I'd faint, But—taking courage now that he was gone— At least until another voting day, I answered "Charon, why, he's Minister of Militia."

1st Cit. (aloud to himself.)

This is deplorable. Look here, my man; These here D.T.'s will be the end of you. Come now, I'll see you home. I really think A man who thus forgets himself—

2nd Cit.

Great Heavens! Will nothing then convince you? There; read you that list Of bona-fide voters; scan these names— Ha! starting, eh? Keep cool—say—who's drunk now? J. K. L.

SCOTTIE AIRLIE AGAIN.



TORONTO, Jennywar, 25th, 1885.

DEAR WULLIE,—This is just twa-ree lines tae let ye ken I'm aye in the land o' the leevin' as yet, though how lang that may be I'm sure I canna tell. I've nae doot but what ye a' thoct I was deid an' buried by this time, but I would just say, that if ye hae really been wearin' weepers an' crape on yer hat—dinna be at the expense o' takin' them aff again till I let ye keo in ma neist letter whether I'm deid or no, for what atween frost an' doon-richt starvation I'm just as likely to be deid as livin'. I'm sure gin I was deid I couldna be waur off than I am—ae thing's certain—I wouldna be any caulder.

I tell ye what it is, Wullie, gin I ever come across that leevin' devil o' an emigration agent I'll pit a flea in his lug that'll gar him dance the deil's hornpipe like a hen on a het girdle. Here's me, that cam oot here, a fine lookin' fallow gaun aboot like a bull dowg wi' his lugs clippet—I ken ye'll no believe me, but it's really the case, I've only half a lug on ilka side o' ma heud noo,—the bit was bitten clean oot o' them wi' the frost, an' when I pat up ma hands to rub them they brak aff as frush as a bit o' shortbread. Losh, Wullie, when a man suffers as muckle as I've dune he grows on-mercifu', ar' as shure's death, if ever I get my fingers on that agent's thrapple, I'll thrav his weasand without gein' him time to say his prayers.

Oh man, Wullie!—ye hae nae notion hoo sair it is tae lie on a hard, ill-happit bed, wi' yer teeth chatterin' in yer head, yer nose rinnin', an' yer fingers stingin' wi' the caulk, sleep is oot o' the question. "Sleep that comes to rude sea boy," as one o' the Henrys says—never vecists the weary e'e o' the man that has to lie a nicht clawin' an' tearin' at his puir frostbitten heels an' tacs, that sting an' burn for a' the world as gin they had the itch. Mony an' mony's the night I've lain an' grutten mysel blin' thinkin' o' the gude, cosy feather beds at hame i' ma mither's hoose, wi' fine pair o' blankets on every wan o' them, an' twa gude bed-lids that ye could steek richt up an' keep oot every breath o' air—eh—wae me! Mony a night when every nail head to be seen in the hoose was like a tappit hen wi' white rime; when the windows were naething but frozen landscapes an' jungles o' Alpine scenery, an' when the vera breath o' my nostrils was veeisible to the naked e'e, an' hung like bawbee caunels frae ma beard, on sic nights—I've earnestly prayed—oh that I could just get a gude bowl o' warm brose! reekin' het, wi' a lump o' saut butter an' plenty o' pepper in't. An' there I would fa' asleep wi' my mooth waterin', an' a' nicht I would dream that I was suppin' an' suppin' an' suppin' fine butter brose, till ma vera lugs were crackin'.

Dear Wullie—dinna take it ill—an' I'll try to break the news as kindly as I can tae ye—noo try an' bear up like a man—ye ken things wull happen in the best o' families—I didna do it till I was fairly driven till't. It was sair work to pit ma pride in ma pouch—an' buckle tae, I've mony a time putten a stoat heart till a stay brace—but faith! this was the steepest brae ever I set ma face till. Dinna be alarmed, I'm no the first ane an' I'll no be the last. But to pit yer mind at rest so far, I'll tell ye I'm no marrit—na, nae fear o' that—its no that; an' yet, I dinna see hoo I can tell ye, or hoo ye'll ever break the news tae my mither. I dinna ken o' ony Scripser that wad be applicable to my case—or I wad gie ye some to fortyfee ye to bear what I'm gaun to tell ye. Ye see, Wullie, there's a kind o' thing they ca' the National Policy in this country—a thing that was tae set a' wrangs richt an' gie the folk o' Canada—the preevilege o' the first copy in advance—o' the first instalment o' the millennial age. There was to be work for a body, man, woman an' child. Under the shadow o' its protectin' wing business was to grow and expand—most extraordinary. An' the country was to rise on the wings o' this National Policy—up—up—as high as Gilderoy's kite. Weel, it did—for a while, very near us high—but the string brak, business expanded till it burst a'thegither, an' noo there's naething but hunger an' hardship to the fore. Weel, Wullie, what was I tae dae, I tried to get wark, but feint the turn could I get tae dae. I chappit at the door o' every manufactory in Toronto, but they were payin' aff instead o' takin' on. I tried Hamilton—they leuch in ma face at the notion o' a man gaun there to luck for wark. Weel noo—what was I tae dae? Without siller, without a bite to eat, nae wark to be gotten—I was desperate. The only thing that gae me consolation was a rumour I heard that Barnum, the great Humbug Exhibitor, was negotiating for the purchase o' the National Policy—an' he's willin' to plank doon "anither ten thoosan'" to Sir John for the preevillage o' exhibitin' the greatest curiosity o' the age—the invention o' Sir John Macdonald—wha hands the patent for gullin' baith Canada an' England, an' wha is the only leevin' man in this age wha can haud the cat while he plays wi' her kitten. Weel, Wullie, my man, ye winna think ower hardly o' me—when I tell ye what I was driven tae at last, an' ye'll promise to keep it a dead secret atween oor twa sels—ye ken could an' hunger are sair to bide. A tume pouch mak's a blate merchant—