

# COMMENTARIES

## UPON TOPICS DEMANDING THEM.

Vol. 1.

HALIFAX, N. S., SATURDAY MAY 4, 1878.

No. 1.

### NELLY MADDOX'S GRAVE

AN AFTERNOON REVELATION.

(From "The Portfolio.")

It was late on a bright, sunny afternoon, in the Autumn of 184—, that I suddenly found myself upon a public high road, upon the east side and near the head of Bedford Basin, —a beautiful expansion of the harbor of Halifax, Nova Scotia. I use the expression—*found myself*—most literally; and the discovery came about in this wise. Although scarcely claiming to be an enthusiastic sportsman, I am rather fond of sport and especially so of wandering alone in the woods. Being temporarily in Halifax, the heart of a sporting country, during the *par excellence* sporting season, I employed my leisure in frequent excursions, gun on shoulder, within the not very remote vicinity of that city, but with what result, so far as the bagging of game was concerned, it is not my present purpose to tell.

There is a tract of wilderness country lying eastward of this same Bedford Basin,—between that and the great Eastern post-road, and bounded on the third, or Northern, side by what, I believe, is called the "Falkland road"—to which my attention had often been attracted. To me that tract, viewed from whatever point of view, looked as if it must abound in game; yet I could not learn that ever anybody had "shot over" it—never heard it named by sportsmen at all in fact. By continuously dwelling upon this thought, I managed to convince myself that, here, almost under the noses of these Halifaxians, was a well stocked, natural preserve which nobody had ever thought of. I quietly resolved to profit by my discovery; and, as a meet reward to my own superior shrewdness and readiness of

perception, I resolved to indulge in a treat therein—all by myself. Accordingly, on the bright Autumn day already referred to, I caused myself to be driven up the Windsor post-road to "the ten-mile house," at Sackville. There I shouldered my gun, stepped off somewhat gleefully for a mile or so along the Falkland road, and then, in delighted loneliness, plunged into the wilderness on my right.

Was not my sly self-sufficiency well served! Never was any poor devil more egregiously self-sold than I. Game, indeed! Not a feather, or a hair, was to be seen—probably never was seen there since the world was made. And then, such a country to plod through! And yet, how innocent it looked, with its gently undulating, foliage-clad hills, when seen from the smooth high road! I learned to know afterwards how deceptive are appearances, even at short distances, in these wilds, and how nearly impassible even to the most agile of inexperienced pedestrians are large tracts of the country along the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia. Mountains and ravines one would be prepared for; but this sort of thing I found much worse. Low crags—beautifully masked, however, with vegetation—had to be climbed with just as vigorous efforts as if they formed part of a mountain side. Then there was the chaos of boulders—*moraines*, I suppose the geologists call them—in the deep troughs between. Where these were plainly exposed to view so that one could pick his steps, it was no light feat to trip over them; but when, as was more frequently the case, they were partially concealed—*glossed over*, I may say—by broad carpets—often exquisitely beautiful, though—of closely woven moss, or thick ferns, or dense low shrubbery, they became a real congeries of man

traps; and every step taken was at the peril of the fracture, or dislocation, of one's nether bones. Then the thickets of half living and half dead timber, tangled and interlaced with rank shrubbery, which appeared at first impenetrable, and which, when once penetrated, seemed as if one's person must be inextricable therefrom. By way of farther variety, there was an occasional bit of bog which had to be crossed, in doing which one sank over the knee at every step, and, in some instances, would probably have soon disappeared altogether had he not most expeditiously broken into that pace which, in Ireland, if not elsewhere, is called "bog-trotting."

I soon discovered that I had truly "put my foot in it," and that my first object must be to "get out of that" as quickly and as little painfully as possible. Game be'd'd any way, in such a country as that. So, I set my face directly towards the declining sun and toiled outwards. At last—as mentioned above—I found myself upon what seemed a public highway, of the existence of which I was not previously aware, but which seemed to follow the general direction of the eastern shore of the Basin, and which I supposed must lead from Sackville to Dartmouth. I determined to follow it to the latter town, whence I could cross over the harbor to Halifax.

Yet, at the point, where I first came out upon this road—and frequently afterwards indeed—I could not but make a long pause in rapt admiration of the marvellous beauty of the scene spread out before me. Far below lay that magnificent sheet of water, Bedford Basin, unruined, glittering like a great mirror of polished steel. Its for the most part wooded, western shore—charmingly sinuous as to horizontal outline, and undulating as to elevation—was, beneath the declining sun, bathed in a golden light which,

with the distance, softened and blended its multitudinous forests tints. The white houses which dotted that shore at intervals, seemed in the distance to rise from the water's edge and, being often embowered amid trees, carried the fancy away to scenes of marble villas on the shores of Italian lakes. Prominent among these sparse structures and directly opposite me, there rose, from its gentle knoll jutting out into the Bason, and from the midst of its pretty grove of graceful trees, the dome and columns of the well known "Rotunda," or "Music Temple"—as I believe it was originally called—which dwellers in the vicinity are proud of pointing out to strangers as the last sole relic of the once princely mansion of the father of their Queen.

Turning to the left—to those nearer forest-clad hills and valleys from the toils of which I had just emerged, the charm presented to the eye was, in its way, no less perfect. Who has not heard of, if he has not seen, the glories of North American Autumnal forest scenery? Whoever has seen them must know how utterly futile would be any effort of pen, or pencil, to describe them. I have often thought there is no part of the whole wide continent where the brilliant variety, or the varied brilliancy, of those Autumnal tints are to be found in such exquisite perfection, as on this Atlantic side of Nova Scotia; and this because of the almost innumerable varieties which spontaneous vegetation there presents within the space of any given acre, or square mile. And I certainly, never at any other time, or in any other place, beheld such a gorgeous massing and mingling of those tints, as in the place and at the time I have mentioned. It was a gorgeousness to intoxicate the sense of vision were such a thing possible.

Leisurely and delightedly wending my way in the direction of Dartmouth, I presently encountered a new surprise. Directly before me, in the distance, I caught the glimmer of water through the trees. Could this be a woodland lake? It could not be Bedford Bason; that was away to my right, although now hidden from view by an intervening ridge. Islets, too, and low craggy promontories, reveal themselves on a nearer approach. As I drew on, I was most forcibly reminded of that description from "The Lady of the Lake":—

"Onward, smil the copse 'gan peep  
A narrow inlet, still and deep,  
Affording scarce such breath of lirin,  
As served the wild-sluck's brood to swim.  
Lost for a space, through thickets veering,  
But broader when again appearing,  
Tall rocks and tufted knowles their face  
Could on the dark blue water trace;  
And farther as the hunter strayed,  
Still broader sweep its channels made.  
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,  
Emerging from entangled wood,  
But we encircled, seem'd to float,  
Like castles girdled with its moat;  
Yet broader floods extending still  
Divid'd them from their parent hill,  
Till each, retiring, e'asms to be  
An inlet in an inland sea."

My discovery proved to be not quite an "inland sea" indeed, but a most charming piece of water nevertheless—a deep cove, or inlet, from Bedford Bason, but so cunningly masked and nearly enclosed by a long and partially wooded island across its mouth, that, although I had made frequent trips up and down the Bason itself and its western shore, I had never suspected its existence. It was, with its surroundings, a lovely miniature harbor—a real gem in its way.

My road wound round the head of this cove, just along the very margin of the beach itself and near the level of the tide; and, on the opposite side of the road just at this point, on a low swell of land, a small field had been cleared, but was no longer enclosed. Here my attention and my steps were arrested by another unexpected object.

*Ruins*, in the Old World sense of the term, may be said to be unknown in most parts of America. One may occasionally see, about the back country, the ruins of a log hut, or shingle house, and a very dreary looking object it is; but even this soon subsides into a mere pile of rotting wood, or disappears altogether. But here, within a few yards of me and separated from the beach by the bare width of the road, was a veritable ruin. It had obviously been a house—a dwellinghouse. The stone walls, of great thickness, were built of the unheun material only too abundant hereabout. The roof, a great part of of which still remained, was of wood—mossed and mouldy, chinked and ragged. Nearly the whole of one gable-end wall,—next the highway—had tumbled out, or been forcibly cast down, whereby the old edifice gaped drearily upon the passer-by. The unsupported ends of joists, with the floors they had once sustained, swung all awry across the opening, suggesting a not very remote resemblance to jagged teeth in the mouth of

a death's head. The chimney had long since, as it appeared, crashed down through all intervening obstacles and now lay, a pile of stones and dust, in the cellar. Of doors and windows, of course there were none; and the orifices where they had been seemed to glare out at one like the open eyes of a corpse. Even the tall clump of wild-rose brambles, with their few scarlet haws like blood-stains, clustered against the outside of one of the walls, had a skeleton look; and it was with an effort one could believe that they had ever borne leaves and flowers.

I had paused, partly resting upon my fowling-piece with its butt resting upon the ground, and gazed long at this desolation, speculating upon what might be its history. Without presuming to apply them in this particular case, I could not but recall the lines:—

"O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear;  
A sense of mystery the spirit haunted,  
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,  
The place is haunted!"

I may have inadvertently spoken aloud whilst these ideas were floating through my mind. Or perhaps it was some involuntary motion on my part which startled another of whose propinquity I had not until that moment been aware. At all events, I, too, was startled, and by the sudden apparition of a man springing up before me, at only a few yards distance and between the old ruin upon which I had been gazing and the water side. From his position when I first saw him, he must have been sitting upon a boulder-stone upon the beach, with his back towards me and his face in the direction of the cove. My leisurely footsteps upon the smooth sward along the road side, previous to my stopping to gaze at the ruin, had of course been unheard by him; whilst he had escaped my observation owing to my eyes having been steadily turned in the opposite direction.

I have said that I was startled; and the abruptness of this man's movements as he sprung to his feet and faced round towards me, and the wildness, if not even fierceness, depicted in his countenance at the moment, were such that I instinctively caught up my gun with both hands in that position which is next preparatory to bringing it to the shoulder. During the second, or two, before either spoke, I was enabled to make out, at all events, *what* the man

was with whom I had been thrown into this unexpected interview. He was dressed in "navy blue," with the broad shirt collar falling over that of his jacket, and was of course a seaman belonging to one of the ships of the Royal Navy of which there were then several in Halifax harbor. He was physically a fine specimen of his class—stalwart, handsome, and one would have said still in the prime of life were it not that, his blue cloth bonnet—on the band of which appeared the name of his ship—being pushed back from his forehead showed that the hair about his temples was grizzled almost to whiteness.

During this my momentary survey, the fierce expression I have mentioned and which was probably only the result of a sudden start, quite vanished from his countenance. He was the first to break silence. Politely saluting after the manner of sailors by a jerk of the forefinger towards the brim of his cap, he said, with something of scorn in his tone: "Why you're not going to shoot me, are you, sir?"

"Oh, no, Jack," replied I, feeling a little ashamed at having been almost surprised into an offensive attitude. "I do not wish to hurt you. But you have wandered far by yourself."

"Oh, I'm no deserter," said he, as if divining what I must admit was my momentary suspicion; but he said it in a tone which seemed to indicate that it was none of my business whether he was, or not,—as, of course, it was not. I glanced around the vicinity, with no very keen curiosity, but still to see if he had not companions near. Again he seemed to read my thought.

"I do n't belong to any broomin' party, either," said he. It seems that ships of war are, or used to be, in the habit of sending parties of men ashore on the east side of the Basin, to cut brush from the dwarf trees and shrubs growing there, from which to make coarse besoms used on board ship.

"It is all one to me, my good man," replied I, seeing no object in prolonging the interview; and my eyes again sought the ruined house. Again, as I gazed, I coned over to myself the above quoted lines of Hood's inadvertently uttering aloud the last verse:—

"The place is haunted!"

"Ay! and well it may be!" said my new acquaintance, who had drawn quite near to me since our interview commenced.

"Why, do you know anything about the place?" I asked.

"Ay!" replied he curtly, but in a tone which sounded as much like a groan as a reply to my question. His eyes became riveted, with a sort of troubled stare upon the old building.

"I should very much like to hear the history. Will you not tell it me?"

No reply. The deep-set eyes continued fixed as if gazing upon some clearly discerned object which was yet quite invisible to me. I repeated my request more than once. At length my mariner acquaintance seemed to arouse himself to a recollection of my presence and said:—

"Ay, haunted, indeed! Desolation—ruins—ruins like all the rest of us. You would like to hear the story, sir? And you a stranger, too. I feel as if it would relieve me here"—pressing his clenched hands, with a sort of convulsive movement, over the region of the heart—"to tell it, although I never did before. Yes, I will tell it all!"

(To be continued.)

## NOTES AND QUERIES.

[Under this heading a portion of our space is at the disposal of contributors, for the elicitation and elucidation of facts, archaeological, biographical, and historical, with more especial reference to the history of Canada—local as well as general.]

WRECK OF "LA TRIBUNE" FRIGATE.—A writer upon "Halifax Antiquities," in a Halifax evening journal, whilst giving an account of the wreck of the "Tribune," can scarcely have failed to revive, even in most persons who were previously familiar with the sad tale, a certain degree of wonder at the magnitude of that disaster, so far as the loss of human life is to be considered. That on a wild Autumn night the ship in question should have been driven upon the iron-bound shore near Herring Cove, after having been all day rolling upon Thrum Cap Shoal, within sight and hearing of Halifax; and that in consequence no less than 235 lives, of the 246 souls on board at the time, should be lost, seems almost inexplicable in the light of any facts which have yet been published to the world.

I will mention one incident which, if it really is a fact—and I have every reason to believe it reliable—may, in some degree, explain this wonder. I had it from the lips of a gentleman, long since deceased—a

gentleman of unquestionable veracity and high social standing, and himself a native of Halifax although he spent the greater part of his life elsewhere. He had the story from his father, who was, I think, an employe in the Naval Yard at the time, and was familiar with the whole circumstances. The account was to the following effect:

On the night of the 23rd of November 1787, there was a ball,—I believe what is called a "Public Ball"—in Halifax—I do not know where, but probably at the old "Pontac," which was for so long a time the head-quarters of such festivities. Halifax was but a small place ninety years ago, and the line of demarcation between social ranks was much more sharply defined than it is now. This ball would be an event. The officers of the military and naval services then at Halifax, mustered at it in all their available strength; and we may rest assured that "everybody who was anybody" among the civilians was there. It was known, during the day, that there was a ship aground on Thrum Cap; but people's minds were somewhat pre-occupied with the coming event of the evening, and the ship seemed to be taking it easy. But when night came—all through the evening, the minute guns from the doomed ship could be heard, and were heard, as well by the dancers as by the commonalty of the town outside. Doubtless the revellers made themselves believe and strengthened each other in the belief, that the peril to which some hundreds of fellow creatures were being exposed in this vicinity was not so great as might be imagined, or that the emergency would keep until morning; or they felt and some other excuse satisfactory to themselves for not leaving the gay ball-room to go out into the dark storm upon a toilsome and dangerous duty. At all events the word with them was:—

"On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;—"

In the morning, we know the appalling news which met their ears; and we can imagine their horror. This incident was, at the time, much and severely commented on, especially in the lower strata of Halifax society. But there was no free press in Halifax then; popular clamour was held as of small account, and those who gave tone to the place, were so generally implicated in the blame and, doubtless, so much ashamed of it, that the matter was hushed up. This account is not flattering to the memory of the Halifaxians—permanent and transient—of the period; but that is no reason why the truth should not be known.

II.

LOCAL QUERIES.—Doubtless there are many persons who can, and I beg that some of them will, inform me—and many others who are equally ignorant and curious—when, why, and by whom, were those old stone walls built that one sees traversing Tower Woods in various directions, and parts of which have recently been broken up to underlay the new roads through the woods.

PARK.

## Commentaries

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### SALUTATORY.

We respectfully make our bow to the public, and beg leave to express a hope that our further acquaintance will be productive of a growing mutual satisfaction. No doubt every periodical, on its very first appearance before the world, not only professes, but is really actuated by, those considerations which are popularly believed to comprise the paving stones of a certain place with an objectionable name and a more objectionable climate, which some persons are now-a-days mercifully trying to do away with. But we know how often and wofully these professors of good intentions fall away from their early promises. With these recollections haunting us, perhaps the less we say of our own intentions the better. It will be as well to let the proof of the pudding be in the eating of it. Still, of the plan which, in our present amiable state of mind, we *would like* to carry out, there are a few traits which it may not be amiss to outline.

As our title may indicate, we claim the right to dip our oar in everywhere—into everything which concerns the public as a *public*. At the same time we hope to be able to rigidly eschew all clash-clash and scandal of a strictly personal and private nature.

We would fain be independent in politics—and everything else. It may be necessary to say that by *independence* we do not necessarily mean *neutrality*—a "sitting on the fence" as between adverse views; a "splitting the difference" as between rival interests; or an utter ignoring of differences which cannot be reconciled. True independence is quite consistent with taking a very decided part, or "side," in any question agitating the public; but what is of its very essence is to discuss every question solely upon its own merits and without bias from any factitious influence whatever.

Whilst wishing and really intending to be independent, we hope also to be *free*. By this we mean, not only to be exempt from all undue restrictions upon our editorial expressions of opinion, but to accord a similar latitude to others. No contributor will necessarily be excluded from these pages because his views—whatever the subject under consideration—differ from those to which special preponderance may happen to be given by us, or from our habitual tone upon such subject. *Some* restriction may be *sometimes* necessary, in view of the limited space at our disposal, and of the indispensability of matter for publication being expressed in seemly terms and, in all cases, ready to be put into the printer's hands without revision.

We expect that, at least, readable articles—original, as well as selected—upon Art, Science, and General Literature, will find their way into our pages. As to *News*, we cannot, of course, pretend to compete with our daily contemporaries, whose special self-appointed mission it is to provide news for the public; but we shall, in each number, place before our readers a carefully compiled and condensed News Summary for the week immediately preceding the day of issue.

Such is our brief programme. Whether we succeed in carrying it out, or not, must be told by the future.

### THE POLITICAL OUTLOOK.

We come into the world just on the eve of what must prove to be a momentous period to that part of it to which we particularly belong—the Dominion of Canada, to wit. Within a few months—perhaps within a few weeks, there will be a Parliamentary General Election in this Dominion, as also a Provincial Legislative Election in Nova Scotia. It is always pretended, in these Provinces, that the season of a General Election is a momentous one. Do the people who so pretend, really appreciate and feel the responsibility which rests upon them on such an occasion? That is doubtful—extremely doubtful. There are, just now, however, special and pressing reasons why the people of Canada should endeavor to orient themselves—to ascertain, by careful inspection, just what their position and relations are in view of the pending event just named. Let us try, as succinctly as possible, to see what that position is.

We have no intention of being laboriously historical. We do not purpose tracing the chain of Canadian events from a remote period, or even from July 1867, down to this the date of our first appearance before the public. We will do the reader the credit of assuming that he is already familiar with the leading events extending over that period. Let us only recall these facts, that, less than four years ago, the Ministry which now rules Canada, assumed office; and that, immediately afterwards, on an appeal to the country, that Ministry was sustained by "an overwhelming majority" in the House of Commons, which majority has been maintained, with but slight variation, ever since. Now, this, the Mackenzie Ministry, is to be again tried before the country. And let not the country forget the important truth, which is so often sought to be smuggled out of sight, that Ministers are to be tried upon their own merits,—and demerits, if they are chargeable with any. This is a truth which cannot be too firmly impressed upon the minds of the public; and it is one from which a certain class of journalists habitually and most persistently endeavor to divert public attention. Multitudinous charges, both of doing what ought not to have been done, and leaving undone what ought to have been done,

have been made, and are now being made, against the Mackenzie Ministry. Some of them, it must be admitted, rest upon only very flimsy foundations, and doubtless have owed their origin to the too excessive zeal and jaundiced vision of partisanship, which can see nothing but evil in the acts, or wishes, or even the thoughts, of a political opponent. Others there are which, the unprejudiced observer must readily admit, are only too well founded. But when the latter are brought home to Ministers, what is the reply—the defence made in their behalf? We are told—seriously and even indignantly told—that a former Ministry perpetrated equally grave misdeeds, or worse! What reply is this to the people of this Dominion? It may serve as a retort to throw in the face of one of those former alleged mal-administrators, if he is now seeking a renewal of public confidence, because he was before entrusted with it; but what is it to the Canadian of to-day, called upon to pass judgment upon the Ministry of to-day, what some other Ministry did, four years, or eight, or twenty, years ago? Nothing. It is outside the question altogether; which question simply is: are the Ministers now in office entitled to a renewal of the confidence of the people of Canada, or not?

Equally absurd, and as impudent as it is absurd, is it to maintain that if the country rejects the Mackenzie Ministry, we must revert to precisely the old state of affairs which immediately preceded its advent to power; or that, in the working of constitutional, representative, responsible government, this Dominion is, at best, doomed to alternate eternally between the great principles of *Tweedledum* and *Tweedledee*. There is no such thing as going back; and we are not confined to a choice of evils; nor are we restricted to an alternative of incapacities. In this young and growing country, and in this quasi-nationality, such ideas are intolerable. If the existing Cabinet and House of Commons have failed to meet the requirements of the country, they should be discarded absolutely and without any fear of consequences, by the people whom they pretend to represent. There are as good men, and as able men, in Canada now as at any former period of her history,—nay, if we are not intellectually retrograding, there must be better; and they will

be found forthcoming if the country calls for their services.

Of course, we cannot pretend, within the limited scope of this one article, to criticise the whole past acts, and present avowed policy, of the Mackenzie Ministry, indicating faults where we deem them to be chargeable, and giving credit where credit is due. That must be a work of time. We will here only briefly allude to two considerations. The existing Ministry of the Dominion, even supposing that its members had not been wadded to power as avowedly the representatives of the "party of purity"—which they were,—did unquestionably attain power on a question of purity of administration. Has this Ministry been—we do not say *no worse* than that which preceded, for that would be absurd under the circumstances, but—has it been even specially notable for the purity of its administration? If not, it is a fraud and, upon that ground alone, is deserving of the reprobation of the country. Again, as is only too well known and felt, the whole Dominion is now suffering under an unprecedented commercial depression; and whilst Ministers decline to countenance, or permit, any legislation having for its object the amelioration of this depression. Is any successful legislation with this object possible? If so, the existing Ministry, in denying it, does not deserve well of the country.

Whatever doubts, if any, the Nova Scotia elector may entertain as to what should be his own action relative to the now existing Dominion Ministry, we find it difficult to imagine him hesitating as to what he owes to the Provincial Administration. To the one which now ostensibly rules in this Province, must be accorded a pre-eminence over all Novascotian Administrations, in that it has surpassed all others in not doing what the exigencies of the time and the Province require. Is it that there is nothing to be done? It can be shown that never before were there so many and such sweeping and radical reforms so pressing demanded at the hands of the Provincial Administration—never before such an accumulation of work awaiting the wise and careful action of the Provincial Legislature, as at the present time. It behoves the electors of Nova Scotia to see to it. At the same time, it is no less imperative upon the people

to make sure that they give not their confidence to those who are guilty, of *freely conveying*—we use a mild term—the public monies into their own pockets. Neither should they think for a moment of tolerating in their public service men who seek to attain eminent official position through the, not only grossly immoral, but the bungling, boobyish, intensely low-lived, and utterly contemptible means of *brbery*. Novascotia is not reduced to the sad alternative, in the choice of representatives for the Legislature, of choosing between those who are guilty of such vulgar political crimes, on the one hand, and the somnolent representatives of an effete policy, on the other. The people are not yet restricted to a choice between King Log and King Stork; and we take this early opportunity of vehemently protesting against the assumption that they are tied up to any such woful alternative. There are worthy and sufficiently able men to represent Novascotia in the Provincial House of Assembly, as in the Dominion House of Commons; and they will be forthcoming if the country really wants them.

It is well to know, however, that these worthy and able men, which ever House they may be intended for, will not condescend to be sent up annually to the capital, with labels upon their backs, like so many pieces of personal luggage belonging either to "the Premier," or to the so-called "leader of the Opposition"; nor submit to be hauled back and forth to either side of the Speaker's chair, like so many dead carcases having no souls of their own at all. No man of proper self-respect—no gentleman, will submit to any such chronic indignity, although factionism should insist upon it ever so loudly. No; the able and worthy men such as should be the country's representatives in Parliament, and such as will be forthcoming if demanded, whatever their known opinions upon any given subject, will yet be the mere creatures of no man, or body of men. They will be as free as honorable in their actions; and they will persist in really possessing souls of their own.

Pay as you go. Ask, but never beg. Help others when you are able, but never give when you cannot afford to.

## ABOUT TOWN.

Everybody knows me, of course; or everybody thinks he does, which answers his purpose quite as well; so, what is the use of telling who I am? It is enough to know *where* I am. Well, I am everywhere, here in Halifax. Dear Halifax! Beautiful, gay, lively, charming Halifax! Some people talk of London, Paris, New York, and such places. Fugh! I pity the "people who have to live in them. I never was there, it is true; but then I know how it is—nobody need tell me. Still, everybody cannot live in Halifax, or what would become of the rest of the world? Halifax has the finest harbor—no, the *most magnificent*—that is the world—the most magnificent harbor in the world. I have known that ever since I was born. It can boast, too, of the most splendid architecture, the most beautiful women—but I must stop. Sister Sarah says it is quite uncalled for, this eternally talking about the beauty of our women folks. Sister Sarah is a strong-minded woman; but I think she herself has gone off a little in her good looks—not that she is old by any means—at least, not as old as some people say.

Will I give you some notes of things about town? Of course, I will. And of course, too, coming from one so well known as I am, and with my experience, and keen powers of observation, they will be well received. I often have grand thoughts—glorious thoughts—especially when I am walking on the Grand Parade. I often promenaded on that delectable spot. Sometimes, on bright moonlight night, I take *her* there with me.—Now I must not tell who *she* is, really. *Her* name is sacred.—Well, I take *her* there with me; and there, for hours, we glide back and forth gently over the smooth, velvety sward, beneath the rich foliage of the stately trees, our olfactory organs regaled with the incense of flowers, listening to the music of the splashing fountains, and admiring the statuary, and the beautifully cut stone work and elegant tracery of the iron railings and bronze gates enclosing the whole square. It is really lovely! It is what people call a "fairy-like scene." Everybody ought to go there and enjoy it.—Now there is that Charles—he says he wishes the Grand Parade was to the d—l; because he says he

has several times nearly broke his neck, crossing it for a short cut, of an evening. But Charles is so impulsive, and is always wishing things to the d—l."

A delightful experience which must be familiar to every charitable soul who walks the streets is the number of beggars one meets piteously asking for something "to buy a piece of bread." Considering that Halifax is *really* rich in charitable institutions and spends a *very large* sum annually in providing methodically for the needy, it is beautiful to see that there is enough surplus charity left to keep up this host of street beggars; and to see, too, that the Halifaxians are so superior to the world's opinions that they don't mind having strangers think that begging in the streets is the only and legitimate way of paupers getting their living here. Still, it is awkward sometimes— as, for instance, when a sturdy trollope plants herself squarely in front of you, upon the crossing of a dirty street, and will not budge until you go off into the mud, or give her something "to buy a piece of bread." Sister Sarah says I ought always to give them a tract; but one can't always have a tract about one. That Charles says the beggars are an infernal nuisance in the streets; that some of them have yearly incomes from investments that would keep him handsomely, rum and tobacco included; and that, if he had his way, he would pack every beggar of them off to Rockhead, or some other place where there was not too much to eat and something to do. Do you know I am inclined to think that Charles is more than half right. By the bye—although I am ubiquitous, I do not pretend to be *quite* omniscient—but is there not some law, or ordinance, against this begging and vagabondage? If so, why is it not enforced? I suppose now the correct thing for me is to say: echo answers *why*.

The street architecture of Halifax can never be too much admired; but one of the most attractive of its accessories is the awnings. They have many admirable points about them; but they are mainly admirable for the great variety of their lines of elevation. Now, some object to that. There is that Charles, for instance. He came in, the other day, with the third new sliding-gunter hat smashed, this spring, already; and he said—

but, no, I can't—that is, I won't—tell you what he said; but he did "swear a prayer, or two," then went out again. People should dodge when they pass under awnings—or bow rather—that is the plan. It is good practice, to learn to bow gracefully; so that when one meets a lady friend, you know. I rather like it.

I do not think I shall ever be able to sufficiently admire the ingenuity which has been carefully scraping up the beautifully black, fine dust and pulverized manure on certain streets; then trundling this stuff off around a corner, or so, and tucking it away among the boulders on the newly "macadamized" streets; so that when the winds of May month—the real *Ventose* of Halifax—arrive, it will be all nice and handy to be whirled about in beautiful clouds and to penetrate the eyes, noses, cars, mouths, throats, hair, and duds of citizens and citizenesses, &c., &c., &c. Talk of us not having genius amongst us! H'm—m—m!

I am not sure but what the greatest felicity I experience in my perambulations is when I drop in to have a feast upon the proceedings of our judiciary. It is a feast to the moral man, you perceive. It is indeed a felicity to be reminded and still again reassured, on such occasions, that the principles of justice are eternal, when two men are lugged in off the street on a charge of trying to sell pictures which they had stolen; and they prove—gratuitously—that the pictures are their own; and the judge discharges them with the assurance that they shall "get twelve months the next time"—that is twelve months imprisonment the next time they are brought before his judgeship;—it was exquisite! Oh, beautiful, sir, beautiful exceedingly! That Charles says, it beats all hollow the verdict of the jury, "up South," who decided that the alleged horse-stealer was "*not guilty*" provided he leaves the State."

*A rivederc*—whatever that means,  
MAN ABOUT TOWN.

Prince Bismarck is entirely alone in Germany. He never works with anyone, never knows anyone, never trusts anyone. He is not satisfied with dictated dictation; his favor cannot be purchased by even the blindest acquiescence in his wishes. He seems to mock at plodding subordinates.

### CONSTITUTIONALISM IN QUEBEC.

THE current week has provided for the Province of Quebec, one of those trials which are yet pending in the case of the Dominion and the Province of Nova Scotia. Our readers must already be familiar with the leading facts which have brought on that trial. Those facts, without indulging in any hair-splitting, or nice definitions of terms, may be briefly stated thus:—Lieut.-Governor Letellier peremptorily called to account and dismissed his ex-Premier, De-Doucherville, and colleagues, averring, as his reasons for doing so, that they had failed in their duty to him and were false to the country; and he then called to his council Mr. Joly and such as he gathered together to be his colleagues, and, upon their advice, dissolved the House of Assembly.

Great and fierce has been the controversy, not only in Quebec, but throughout the Dominion, as to who has been right in this wide difference of opinion between Lieut.-Governor Letellier and his late "constitutional advisers." Unfortunately the question has been discussed less upon its own merits than in accordance with its aspect from extremely partisan points of view. Yet this is not the first time that the same question, or one the same in all essential points, has been presented, and discussed, and for the nonce decided, before the people of British North America. The action of Lieut.-Governor Letellier, on this occasion, happens, however, to be one of those courses of procedure, the rightful, or wrongful, nature of which is determined in popular estimation by the result, rather than by any essential principle which it involves. It seems to be admitted that "whatever is"—in the end—is right." We will cite two cases only to illustrate our meaning.

In 1856, the Now Brunswick Legislature passed, as a government measure, what is called a "Prohibitory Liquor Law," much to the personal disapproval of the Lieut.-Governor; and this measure at once aroused a great clamor throughout the country. To Lieutenant-Governor Manners-Sutton's hearty disapproval of the law to which he had nevertheless assented, was soon added intense disgust at finding that even many of

his ministers—by the bye, one of them, Albert Smith, is now in the Canadian Cabinet—made no scruple of swilling his—the Governor's—wine, at his table, and freely guzzled their own grog in private, whilst claiming an immensity of credit for "robbing the poor man of his beer." In view of what he believed to be the public disapproval of the bill in question, Mr. Manners-Sutton insisted upon a dissolution of the House. This, Ministers refused, and had to resign; a new cabinet was formed; the House was dissolved; and an appeal was made to the country—the Governor sustained by an overwhelming majority, and the obnoxious law forthwith repealed; and Mr. Manners-Sutton's conduct met with the approval of the Home Government.

Again, in 1860, the Earl of Mulgrave, in Nova Scotia, after much fickle dallying with the question, finally refused to dissolve the House, although urged thereto by the legislative Opposition, supported by petitions bearing the names of a clear majority of the electors of Nova Scotia; because his actual ministers had a majority in the House as it then existed. The Ministers by whose advice Lord Mulgrave acted in this instance, continued to govern the province for three years; whilst his course, the very opposite of Mr. Manners-Sutton's was also approved of by the Imperial Government.

It is obvious that the Colonial Office, in Downing street, has in this, as in many other important matters, been only guided by a sort of "rule of thumb"; yet there must be some principle involved—latent, if not patent—whether Secretaries of State have discovered it, or not. Has a Lieutenant Governor any active duties at all? If he has not—if he is to be considered a mere dummy, or lay figure, the sooner we get rid of such expensive bits of useless lumber, the better. If he has any active duties, surely they must pertain to such a position as that of Mr. Manners-Sutton when he asserted himself in 185; or that of Lord Mulgrave when he would not assert himself in 1860; or that in which Mr. Letellier avers that he has found himself in 1878. He is the bulwark—and the only one, for the Legislative Council is worse than a nonentity—between an alleged tyrannical Ministry and servile legislative majority, on the one hand, and an ostensibly oppressed people, on the other. We really cannot see any reason to doubt his right, in the abstract, to take the course pursued.

The question of Mr. Letellier's judgment—whether he had sufficient cause for exercising the right—is a quite distant one, and one upon which there are the widest diversities of opinion. There are no fixed canons upon which we can make our way to a positive conclusion upon this point. Here the *vox populi*, although it be not the *vox Dei*, must furnish the only conclusions we can have.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR —

My feelings on learning, by your letter of the 14th, that you and others are about starting a *really independent weekly paper*, immediately brought to my recollection what the celebrated or notorious Henry Ward Beecher said of his emotions, over—I think it was the battle of Gettysburg. In the first outburst, on that occasion, of what his fellow-countrymen are fond of calling "the wildest enthusiasm," that pious declaimer felt, as he naively told an admiring world, that "it was a time for the mingling of exclamations, and he shouted—*only halloo! halloo!*"

I am really delighted to hear of the project of which you inform me. It is high time something of the kind was attempted. A lack of candor, and of independence and manly disposition to show fair play, is a monstrous deformity of our periodical press, as we now find it. I am unprepared to cast the burden of blame for this, in any particular direction. Perhaps it is owing rather to the state of society in which we live, than to any evil intent on the part of individuals connected with that press. Still, the press as a whole must be held, in a large degree, accountable for that state of society.

Our newspapers exhibit a fair amount of enterprise as news-papers—considering, that is, the sphere in which they have to operate. But they are avowedly political; and being so, they are undeniably partisan, and that means, I am sorry to say, that they are factious. One takes every dirty advantage over an opponent because another does so. I dare say if one of these partisan writers were privately remonstrated with, he would answer by again repeating that hacknied, immoral, ungentlemanly, unmanly maxim that "all is fair in Love and War." All is not fair in Love or War. On the contrary it is in Love and in War that the highest toned principles of honor most loudly insist upon asserting themselves, and where they peremptorily challenge our unqualified admiration.

But, to go outside the line of so-called political discussions, suppose—and here I speak from somewhat sad experience—suppose I wish to address the public through any one of your Halifax journals. My subject only of general interest and not intended to laud any one, or to damage any other

political party, it is more than probable that no attention will be given to my paper unless I can make some personal interest with the editor to get it published. It has no bearing on the main point: the party—what is the good of it? Forsooth? But then again it is almost impossible to write upon any subject, such as is usually discussed in periodical columns, without stumbling, perhaps quite inadvertently, upon somebody's corns. Here is a source of insuperable difficulties. Some of the people with corns are sure to belong to "the party"; and their comfort is not to be disturbed on any account. So one's "celebration goes to the waste basket"; the public remain uninformed; and public abuses continue unredressed; but "the party" is kept in hand.

In short, one can only get into your press through belonging to some ring. I repeat, then, that I am really delighted to hear of your project. From what you say as to your associates, I have no doubt whatever that the venture will deserve success. You are right in supposing that I will be quite ready to contribute my mite in that direction, and I sincerely hope success, in every sense, will be attained. Go on and prosper

Yours,

[We take the liberty of publishing the above letter, although not intended for publication, trusting to the writer's forgiveness for doing so. He may take a too lugubrious view of our press generally; but we know that he is not singular in that view. To all such as our friend above we extend what we hope is a sufficiently general invitation. WHOSEVER HATH ANYTHING TO SAY, LET HIM SAY IT. Our pages are open.—Ed.]

## THE WEEK.

Notwithstanding the adage to the contrary, there are folk whom no amount of experience will teach. Among these are Russia. In 1854, Russia would not believe that England, even associated with France, would presume to war with her. Then she would not believe that "those shopkeepers" could, for a moment, withstand the crushing might of her vast military power. Russia now persists in again believing that England will not dare engage in conflict with her—certainly will not dare to do so if England can be isolated from other European powers; and obviously Russia is again to be most severely undeceived.

During the week, owing to the alleged illness of both Prince Gortschakoff and Prince Bismarck, there has been a suspension of performance of the diplomatic farce which, it is pretended, is to have peace for its de-

noucement. Meantime two detachments of the Anglo-Indian army have successively sailed from Bombay and are now on the way to Malta, the troops being in the highest spirits at the prospect of a brush with Russia. In England preparations for war continue with the greatest vigor; and the policy of Ministers is sustained by the almost unanimous will of the nation. Nevertheless, Mr. John Bright has discovered that we have reached the long prophesied millennium, people having become so good that we should have no more wars; and he is violently endeavoring to convince the English public of that fact.—Whilst Europe teems with rumors of war, the World's Fair, the greatest exemplification of the blessings of actual peace, was, on the 1st instant, successfully, and with the fairest prospects, opened at Paris.—A report, which seems to be more than idle gossip, tells us that Prince Arthur, so well and favorably remembered in Canada is about becoming betrothed to a daughter of Prince Frederick Charles, of Prussia, one of the most distinguished commanders of the Franco-German war.—To return to our own impending war—we hear a rumor, which it is to be feared is more than an idle one, that Germany is taking measures to compel other Northern powers to join her in insisting upon neutralizing the Baltic, in the event of an Anglo-Russian war. Such a step on the part of Germany—or rather of Bismarck, who is as much an autocrat there as the Czar is in Russia—would add to the already great European complication, but is not likely to be tolerated in England. Numerous stories reach us of the intended fitting out of Americo-Russian privateers to prey upon British commerce, of projected Russo-Fenian invasions of Canada, and the like; but they may all be doctored as of the cock-and-bull species.

The Quebec Provincial legislative Election, in which the contest has been of the keenest, came off on Wednesday last,—and quietly, too, for aught we have yet heard to the contrary. The result cannot but be considered a triumph to Lieut. Governor Letellier and the Ministerialists, or Joly party,—considering that is, the vast preponderance of their opponents in the last House. And yet, so nearly balanced do parties appear, that, although Ministerialists evidently have a majority in the new House elect,

it seems, with the information as yet in our possession, extremely doubtful whether the Administration will have what is called "a working majority," or not. Still, this evidence of a revulsion of public feeling shows how rapidly the late Administration has been sinking in popular estimation, these last few years, a fact of which the Lieut. Governor was doubtless well aware before he so vigorously expounded his will.

The Dominion Parliament still drags along. Latterly the House of Commons has been principally engaged in profusely voting local money appropriations, and in making clap-trap motions intended to captivate Parliamentary electors,—two occupations which very usually characterize the last session of a House. Mr. Premier Mackenzie probably means something extraordinary under his Pacific Railway policy. He, at this late stage of the session, still promises a Bill, or some measure, on the subject; and yet, strange to say, he has not yet even produced his Annual Report thereon. Das he, like his friend, Lieut. Governor Letellier, intend some coup?

## Removal and Recuperation.

WM. S. HALL

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—REMEMBER—

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