

The Gleaner

AND

NORTHUMBERLAND SCHEDIASMA.

VOLUME II.]

"Nec araneorum sane tecus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt nec noster vilior quia ex alienis libamus ut apes."

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THE GLEANER.

FROM THE QUEBEC MERCURY.

Being an ardent admirer of the wonderful effects of the power of steam, I like to contemplate its progress and observe its influence upon mankind, possessing some acquaintance with its early application and present state, as applied to marine purposes, I can with greater confidence hazard a few observations, to which you and the public if you think proper, are welcome. I perfectly well remember upon the occasion of some lectures upon chemistry given by Mr Walker, five and twenty years ago, hearing him predict many of the results of the application of the power of steam, which are now actually taking place, and many of his wondering and incredulous audience of that day are now witnessing the accomplishment of his prophecies—may we not now, with less appearance of improbability, venture a little further in the march of prediction? so, with your leave I will predict.—That steam will soon supersede sails on the Atlantic, that we shall shortly have steam vessels carrying goods and passengers to start weekly from a port or ports at each side of the Atlantic; that the average length of the passages will be under twelve days—that the passages both ways will be made for the same money and in the same space of time that it is now done one way, to say nothing of the comforts and even luxuries of a locomotive hotel, such as an Atlantic steamer may be supposed to be; these are my predictions, their feasibility I can prove:

When in its early stage, the steam engine, as applied to manufactures, conferred upon Great Britain her commercial preponderance, it was not known that the immortal inventor had yet a store of benefits in reserve for his country and for the world, a magnificent harvest of which remains to be reaped—the subject needs no flourish of words—it is a simple fact to say that the steam engine has become "locomotive," that it masters the seas and compasses the land and will bring together the ends of the Earth!

I look with pleasure, not unmixed with anxiety to the new steam communication with Halifax, for it requires no prophet to foretell that Halifax will be the centre of steam communication between America, the West Indies, the Canadas and the Old World. The success or otherwise of this undertaking will considerably promote or retard the greater one to which I have alluded; but to cross the Atlantic will require steam vessels so constructed as to unite the experience of both the old and the new world; how far this has been accomplished in the 'Royal William' will prove an interesting and useful experiment. Upon this subject I shall in all probability again trouble you, meantime I refrain from trespassing longer upon your valuable space, and am Sir, &c.

FROM THE WESTMINSTER REVIEW.

THE DO-NOTHINGS AND THE DO-MUCHES.

Property may be compared to a fall of snow: if it were to fall equally and impartially on all to-day, to-morrow it would be in heaps; the snow that fell in a warm valley would be melted on the frigid hill tops it would remain in virgin whiteness till the arrival of summer; on the level plains we should see it accumulated in huge drifts, leaving the land bare in places, and loading it in others. So it would be with money, were the whole stock in the country divided equally between every individual in it. It would soon drift.

Persons into whose possession it has drifted have no uneasiness about the security of their subsistence; their hands are not to labour, but to spend; the industrious world is at their command. The difference of circumstances sets a wide distinction between the spending and the getting glass.

If property has remained long in the same family, or, in other words, if the successive spenders have not

spent too much, the idea of property becomes connected with the idea of a particular family, and the labour-sellers get into the habit of looking upon this family of labour-buyers or labour-commanders as something peculiar—as entitled by birth or descent to some superiority. This is the meaning of the word "gentleman": a gentleman is one who is not under the necessity of doing any thing, and whose ancestors for several generations have done nothing.

The upper class consist chiefly of persons of this class; the lower classes are those who must do something to live. An upper-class man goes to bed as he got up in the morning; a lower class man has changed the world to some small extent: out of a block of wood he has made a chair or a table; out of a piece of cloth, a coat; out of a brute lump of iron, several horse shoes.

The upper-class men, depending on no one, and doing as they like, naturally form a high opinion of themselves; the lower class men are too busy to put their thoughts in the shape of opinion; and, besides, they necessarily incline to bow to the purchasers of their labour, and the possessors of that choice metal, the smallest portion of which would go far to pay for a whole day of their lives. Thus it comes to pass, that the do-nothings become greatly conceited, and the much-doers greatly contemned.

But as people get tired of doing nothing, and must amuse themselves and more effectually securing possession of the "drift," take it into their heads to make the laws. In making these laws they have several things to attend to. First, they must punish with various penalties, from death to cart-whipping, all those who may disturb them in any of their enjoyments; next they must prevent the lower classes from cutting each other's throats, for thereby they would lose one or more of their labourers; next, as these labour-sellers often make more money than is absolutely necessary to subsistence, they ordain that all such sums shall be paid into the state-chest, to which they (the do-nothings) alone have access; and, in order more effectually to distinguish the do-nothings from the much-doers, they direct that they shall wear certain badges, be called by certain titles, and be exempt from the burthens imposed upon others.

In this state of things it is clear that the "drift" is secure in the class to which it belongs; or should it, by possibility, shift, as in some cases of melting or otherwise disappearing, it is renewed out of the state-chest; for it is held, that there is something shocking in the fact of a do-nothing ever falling into the ranks of a much-doer. For a man who never made any thing, except, perhaps, a bad law, to be compelled to make a shoe or a gate, would be held by the whole class of do-nothings as perfectly horrible.

By the examination of the laws of a people, it may be clearly seen which class has made them. If, in the law of high-roads, it be forbidden that a plantation should grow by the hedge-side in a common farm, but the same plantation be permitted in a park, to the injury of the road, it is thence clear that park-owners have made the law. If privileges are accumulated by any particular sect, we may be sure, that it is this sect which has been employed in law-making.

Those who have long been in the habit of making laws become to be considered as the only right law-makers; and, as it has been seen that the do-nothings only make laws, but also are the chief opinion-formers, and esteem themselves greatly, it necessarily follows, that the greater part of mankind view them in their own light, and take them at their own value. This is the plan which has been pursued; by means of it a very few have long had the command of the whole

world. Being in the possession of some power to begin with, they have multiplied it a thousand fold by means of law and opinion, just as the mechanic increases his power by the wheel or the lever.

Deference for the do-nothings is no where carried to a higher pitch than in England; every sign or symptom of doing nothing is respected. A white hand would be bowed over, whereas the broad and brawny fist, speaking of a vast treasure of labour laid out for the use of mankind, would be sneered at as vulgar. A delicate complexion is genteel: its being akin to disease is forgiven for the sake of its connexion with the do-nothings; robustness is low. In Wallachia and Moldavia the boyars used to pretend to be unable to walk, for the same reason; a prince always moved supported by a person on each side, by way of living crutches.

The complexion of the public opinion is, in this respect, suffused over our literature, and in no department more visibly displayed than in that popular branch of it—the Novel. The novel is now read by all classes, and is, perhaps, more relished by those that can read of the lower orders than even the upper ranks; and it may, without fear of mistake, be considered as a tolerably just mirror of the popular prejudices. Now, in the novel, we always find that the interest of the story turns upon members of the aristocracy; for the service of the novel a new batch of peers is always created; baronets are part of the common stock in trade and, if an untitled individual is ever introduced, he is always a gentleman of a very ancient family, the possessor of a mansion of great antiquity, and descended from many generations of do-nothings. The hero or heroine, if they are not of the upper ranks to begin with, always turn out to be so just; it is a demerit of a sufficient interest, if he who has always been supposed a plain Mister ends in being proved, to the satisfaction of all, a my Lord. The romance writers would appear to have followed Tarquin's advice, and cut off all the tallest poppies for the composition of their dramatic persons: their hands are all trumps. It might be supposed from them, that nothing existed under the rank of a gentleman, were it not that they are obliged to introduce tradesmen and others ministering to the wants of the true men; the old story of little china dandled in the arms of crockery.

The newspapers also, in this point, faithfully represent the national tendency. The most trivial movements of the do-nothings are faithfully recorded. Instead of doing nothing, look at the broad sheet, and it might be supposed they did every thing and were every thing. Here is a marriage in high life, and there is a long obituary of a man loaded with titles, whose distinction seems to have been, that he had a free access to the state chest than to any other: in this column we have a list of arrivals, in that a list of dinners, in the next a long enumeration of the horses they are training to run for their amusement. If a do-nothing discovers that a do-nothing had lived a thousand years ago, from whom he is descended, was called Lord Barbecue instead of Mr Barbecue, he proceeds to get himself called Lord instead of Mr. Barbecue, and the newspaper is filled with learned arguments on the subject, and with reports as to what the Lord Chancellor thought on the chain of evidence. If a titled do-nothing has run away with another do-nothing's wife,—for men must be doing something,—the noise is far greater than in the case of a mere lower-class man, and the newspaper is especially copious on the subject.

The great and titled do-nothings have acquired among the vulgar, that is the many, the name of 'Corinthians,' from their forming the capital or top of the social pillar. This is true, not only generally but particularly. What society or institution exists without