

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1891.

WHAT HALIFAX NEEDS.

"FAGIN" SEES MANY THINGS THAT MIGHT BE IMPROVED.

But the Same Can be Found in any City—Bad Sidewalks and High Fences—Spoiled by the Praise of Visitors—The Gifts of Nature.

Halifax is spoiled; that is, its people are. Long accustomed to hearing their city extravagantly flattered by effusive American tourists, Halifaxians have come to look upon such praises as their necessary right, and would, no doubt, be deeply moved were anyone to point out to them the fact that although their city possesses many points of interest and beauty it is, in most cases, in spite of the worst efforts of its people to make it otherwise, and not on account of any trouble taken by them to aid, in that regard, the kind endeavors of a generous nature. The aforesaid tourists are, of course, largely responsible. As a class, they are always lavish in their praises, and inclined to overlook shortcomings, and the ordinary mortal is ever ready to concur in an opinion which is flattering to his vanity, and soothes any faint flatterings of self-reproach. Halifaxians are, perhaps, more susceptible in this respect in regard to their city at least, than most other people. So it is that accustomed to having their attention directed to the attractive side of their city by persons who are too generous or too indulgent to find fault where fault may well be found, they have learned to look at that side only, and to ignore entirely the fact that in many respects the city is far from being what it should be, and noticeably behind other cities which lack both its population and its natural advantages.

Halifaxians are, in a general way, very proud of their public gardens (though, to be sure, the great majority scarcely enter them from one year's end to the other); they are proud, too, of their park, of the city's naval and military importance, and of their harbor. And justly so. The gardens and park are certainly beautiful; the harbor magnificent, and the presence of the navy and garrison of inestimable importance—to Halifax. These features of the city have been so frequently and voluminously described that it may be taken for granted that everyone has read of them, and knows all about them. There are other features, not so pleasant, and not so frequently described, to which it may not be unprofitable to draw the attention of Progress' Halifax readers; features which are fully as striking to the impartial visitor as those which have just been mentioned, and although, perhaps, less commented upon, none the less worthy of comment.

I know of nothing more despoiling than the ride into Halifax proper from the railway depot. A narrow, dirty and ill-smelling street lined with buildings in various stages of delapidation, all of wood, and all, or nearly all, destitute of anything like paint. On that street, one of the chief thoroughfares, and within a short distance of the city hall, are to be seen huts and hovels which would disgrace the most insignificant country village. The need of paint is Halifax's greatest need. All over the city it is the same thing, wooden buildings everywhere, grimy, dark, and crying for paint. What would otherwise be one of the finest views in Canada, that from the Citadel hill, is cruelly marred and almost spoiled by the rows of dirty, unpainted buildings lying at the observer's feet.

And the streets and sidewalks! Save the mark! There is not a foot of street paving in Halifax. To keep down the dust in summer the streets are watered every day, and all day, till the mud is worse than the dust would have been. Every conceivable description of sidewalk is to be found in the business part of the city, excepting planks, which would be preferable to most of those which are in use. From the park, at one end of the city, to the depot at the other, and beyond, the walk on the west side of Pleasant, Barrington and Lockman streets is mud, plain mud, except in dry weather, when it is dust. In fact this is a very popular style of sidewalks all over the city. In other places you encounter asphalt (always rough and exoded), stone pavements (which are worse), bricks, covered with an inch of loose sand; bricks, covered with mortar, and bricks, plain, which curve and twist, up little hills and down miniature dales, with loose bricks bobbing up here and there above the others, till you catch your heels, and stub your toes, and finally lose your footing and your temper altogether; unless, to be sure, you are a Halifaxian, in which case you pick your way briskly along with the serenity and safety which comes of long experience.

It is hard to say which feature of Halifax strikes the casual observer most forcibly, its sidewalks or its fences. Halifax fences are fences that are fences. Halifaxians who own places that are beautified by grassy lawns or green trees act as if they were ashamed of the fact, and at once proceed to conceal it by erecting high, close board fences about their property, so that nothing can be seen from the outside except, perhaps, the tops of the trees. Lest some one should have the impertinence to wish to see something more, the fence is generally surmounted by a row of nasty iron spikes, which, it need hardly be said, seldom fail to secure the desired seclusion. It is the same thing everywhere, pretty places ruined by these hideous barricades, relics of a past age. Were all such fences removed the beauty of Halifax would be increased fourfold. Well-to-do Halifaxians are moreover, as a rule, very neglectful of the outside appearance of their homes, both as regards the dwellings themselves and their surroundings. Men with large fortunes are, in some instances, content to live in houses in need of paint, and quite devoid of attractiveness. Handsome modern residences, of brick or stone, such as adorn Sydney street, Queen Square and Mount Pleasant in St. John, are nowhere to be found in Halifax. Stone dwellings, indeed, are almost unknown, but imitations

abound, wood or brick covered with stucco, and the work badly done in most cases. In fact, this is a favorite material for churches and stores, as well as dwellings, though its beauty or utility are certainly not apparent. With the exception of the post office and Roman Catholic cathedral, there is probably no building in Halifax which possesses the slightest claim to architectural beauty. This is especially true of the churches, which are, in most cases, painfully ugly inside or out.

Halifaxians must be an unusually good-natured people, or they would never submit so long and so passively to the inconvenience and discomfort occasioned by the weekly out-of-door market, which every Saturday renders the neighborhood of the post office so disgustingly "picturesque" and so extremely disagreeable. Three streets in what is one of the best and busiest parts of the city are thus obstructed, for the greater part of the day, with all kinds of conveyances, laden with market stuff, while the owners encumber every foot of sidewalk in the vicinity with their not very clean personalities. Here Halifax ladies are content to come each week and suffer themselves to be jostled and crowded indiscriminately by all ranks and conditions of men and women, of all colors and every degree of dirtiness, or pulled to one side to inspect some carrots, while on the other side a stalwart daughter of Ethiopia urgently invites attention to her blueberries, carelessly burying her dusky hands in them from time to time in order to fully display their lusciousness. A very picturesque scene it certainly is; but are there not qualities more to be desired than the picturesque, which are here notably absent? Other city corporations compel the use of the city market-house, devoting the tolls to civic purposes, and thus benefiting equally the city and the citizens, who are thereby enabled to do their marketing in comfort and cleanliness, and, at the same time, to enjoy a freedom of locomotion on the streets which on market day is hitherto unknown in Halifax.

Other features of the city could be pointed out which are capable and sorely in need of improvement. Such is the three cents toll on the Dartmouth ferry, which should be reduced to one cent, as in St. John, or, indeed, made free. Such is the fact that wooden buildings may be, and are every day, erected on the principal business streets, a menace to the city which is prohibited even in Moncton, with only one-fourth the population of Halifax. Such, too, is the volunteer fire service, which is ridiculously inadequate to the needs of so large a city; and, as a part of that service, the small number and size of its fire engines, dearly demonstrated on the occasion of the recent great fire.

If the people of Halifax would devote less thought to their park and more to their streets and sidewalks; less to their public gardens and more to the appearance of their houses and places of business; less to their harbor, the navy and the garrison, and more to their churches, fire department and market; if, in a word, they would enhance, by well-directed civic and private enterprise, the attractions with which the city has been so lavishly endowed by nature, they could make it, in a short time, all that by reason of its history and surroundings it should be, a very Mecca for tired travellers, a boast for all Canadians.

[Those who have followed the list of Progress contributors know that "Fagin" usually has something to say when he writes. His comments on Halifax are frank but not unfriendly. He should, however, remember that paint and good sidewalks do not make a city. They improve it without a doubt, and my own observation during the past year makes me believe that Halifax is recognizing the fact. Blemishes seem a part of every town. We in St. John have so many of them staring us in the face every day that we cannot afford to complain. But, as "Fagin" lives in neither St. John or Halifax, he is under no such restraint.—THE EDITOR.

GREAT BELL CASTERS. An Industry in Which Russia and China Lead the World.

The Russians and the Chinese are behind the rest of the civilized world in many things, but bell-founding is not among the number, for the bells manufactured by both nations are not only the largest, but among the best of those made by any nation. It is said that before the great fire by which Napoleon was driven out of Moscow there were in the churches of that city 1,706 bells, each of which exceeded 15,000 pounds in weight. The capital of China, Peking, is according to Father Le Comte, not far behind, as in its temples there are seven bells, each exceeding 120,000 pounds, and a great number of less size. The giant bell of the world is in Moscow; it is poetically denominated the King of Bells, and is 19 feet and 3 inches high, and its circumference round the rim is 60 feet and nine inches. Its weight can, of course, only be estimated, but, by the least calculation, it is 443,732 pounds, and its value as old metal exceeds \$300,000, not considering the gold and silver, of which there is a considerable quantity which enter into its composition. This bell, when rung required forty men to ring it, the clapper being swung by means of two long ropes, with twenty men at each. The great bell at St. Ivan's in Moscow, is forty feet and nine inches in circumference, its thickness just above the rim is sixteen inches, and its weight is computed at 127,830 pounds. The bells of Peking have been mentioned, but next to them is the great bell of Vienna, which weighs 40,200 pounds. After these are many smaller, yet of considerable size. A bell of Olmutz, Bohemia, and a bell in Rouen, France, are about equal in size to the Vienna bell; the bell of St. Paul's, London, weighs 38,470; the bell of Westminster, 30,350; that of St. Peter's in Rome, 18,600. Several of these bells are sounded only on very important occasions. The St. Paul bell, the Vienna bell and the bell of St. Ivan's are tolled only at the death of royalty; the bell of St. Peter's tolls at the death of a pope.—Cincinnati Commercial Gazette.

GREAT MEN IN THE HOUSE.

How Canadian Statesmen Look and Act During a Debate.

Had Ottawa, which is by no means an unprosperous city, many unemployed, there would be done from them a vote of thanks to the dominion at large. When wintry winds drive off the capital's streets all who are not by cruel necessity obliged to forsake the genial shelter of shop and house, the strangers' gallery in the house of commons is always filled. There sit men who care little for what the legislators talk of. To them warmth is more than eloquence and they dozingly listen to the speeches of their rulers.

Not unvaried are these speeches. The rendition of them is usually indicative of the temperament of their deliverer. Sir John Thompson speaks slowly, choosing his words, twiddling his glasses between his thumbs, and never raising his voice during his impassive periods. Should he be speaking upon some subject in which his opinion, as leader of the commons, outweighs that of himself as a private member, he often begins a sentence in his place in the vacant row of benches, and, still speaking, walks slowly down the aisle to the seat now vacant, but once occupied by Sir John Macdonald. As he walks down the aisle, there rises in the mind of some who see him an irresistible connection between his manner of walking and the incoming to a church of a surplised choir. Good English Sir John speaks, but his precise manner in a great measure detracts from the fire of his often powerful periods.

Not so Laurier. His French blood is not easily heated, but when his anger is aroused he is a fighter. He seldom forgets himself. It is his not the desk-pounding style of oratory, but he can send forth stinging sentences the like of which even that master of invective, Sir Richard Cartwright, cannot produce. Somehow, Mr. Laurier's French accent seems to make even more forcible his deliverances.

Foster is unlike either of these men. He has naturally a quick temper, but by the exercise of a tenacious will he has it under almost thorough control. But sometimes anger outweighs prudence, and then from under his hat brim come a few words which inflame the already heated minds of the liberals.

Everybody knows Cartwright; his nasal accent, his uncontrollable temper, his lashing sentences. Happily the knight sits in his chair, his slouch but pulled down over his eyes, his shoulders dropped, his chin on his chest. The careless observer would think him to be the most uninterested man in the house, but when his turn comes there is a change. Bolt upright he stands shaking that prehensile finger of his at the government which he so much distrusts. No soft words are his; out he rasps sentence after sentence until he has had his say, and, that finished, he becomes again that bundle of clothes, heaped in a chair.

These are the most notable of the House's speakers, that is, of course, speaking of their most salient characteristics.

There is the monocled Sir Adolphe, who always looks bored, but who can make a rattling good speech when that laziness of his is conquered; there is that evergreen old man, Mackenzie Bowell, who is ready always to fight bitterly or to handily airy witticisms with his friends of the opposition; there is D'Alton McCarthy, who seldom applauds, but always listens intently, and there is Mulock, who is ready to talk on any topic, and usually talks well.

When these men are not speaking their attitudes are characteristic. Laurier seems most comfortable when he can rest his head on his hands; Foster sits half turned from the opposition side, with his hat pulled down over his brow; Sir John Thompson is still as a ramrod, while Mackenzie Bowell usually cocks one leg jauntily over the arm of his chair, and talks in an undertone to his neighbors. Young members almost always signify their newness to parliament by keeping their hats on all the time, but the old stagers have a regard for their hair, and accordingly sit bareheaded.

There are many men in the house who are voters, not speakers, men who are never heard of except when they figure in the yeas and nays. These are the men who are valuable to their parties, at least one would think so to witness the lordly manner in which they distribute tickets to the galleries and receive their visiting constituents.—Toronto Telegram.

Boulanger and the Princess Carlotta. Reminiscences of Boulanger are coming forth every day. Here is one that relates to the beginning of his fortune. He was with Marshal Bazaine in Mexico when Napoleon III. was hoping to establish an empire there. The Princess Carlotta and her husband were holding court there at the same time. The princess was a daring rider, and whenever she left the city for a ride she would gallop over the plains in a straight direction for miles, but no one of the court imagined that she was in danger.

One hot afternoon Boulanger, who was then a captain and had command of the guard at the principal gate of the city, had just rolled a fresh cigarette and was about to light it when he saw a small cloud of dust in the distance, and he waited for the rider to approach nearer supposing him to be a courier. But a few minutes afterward he saw that the galloping rider was the Princess Carlotta, and that she was being pursued by a small body of horsemen. He believed that the Mexicans were trying to capture her as a prize. Throwing away his cigarette he summoned the guard, ordered the gate thrown open, and rushed down the roadway, forming his men in line as the would-be kidnappers advanced. The princess galloped furiously onward and reached the gate in safety. Boulanger and the guard fired at her pursuers, and they, seeing that the princess had escaped from them, turned and galloped away. For that act, it is said, Boulanger was made a Mexican brigadier by Maximilian. When Boulanger returned to Paris Napoleon greeted him very cordially and spoke of the incident. From that day he was a favorite.

HALF-A-DOZEN FAMOUS SMOKERS.

Men Who Did Not Belong to Anti-Tobacco Associations.

Lord Tennyson is said to be particularly attached to a long churchwarden, a basketful of which is placed by the side of his writing-table, while on the other side is a second basket. As soon as a pipe is finished, the poet throws it into the second basket and charges a fresh one, which is treated precisely the same way when finished with.

Mario, the great singer, was an inveterate smoker; he smoked incessantly everywhere, and his servant always stood at the wings of the theatres in which he performed, to receive the burning cigar from his mouth at the moment when he went on to the stage.

In a sketch of Edward Lytton Bulwer, by Maclise, in the South Kensington museum, the great novelist is represented in an easy-chair with his legs stretched out, and smoking his pipe, the straight stem of which almost reaches down to his slippers.

General Grant was a devout worshipper at the Nicotian shrine. During the many arduous campaigns in which he was actively engaged, he subsisted almost entirely on tobacco. The tough Yankee sometimes smoked as many as 20 cigars in 12 hours.

Bismark consumes enormous quantities of tobacco. When any measure of importance was in course of progress through the German parliament, the "iron Chancellor" hardly ever had a cigar out of his mouth, except when he was eating, speaking, or sleeping. In his youthful days he prided himself on being what the Germans call a "chain smoker," or, in plain English, one whose morning and night are connected by a chain of cigars, each link of which is lighted at the stump of its predecessor. "Happy man!" once exclaimed Gambetta of him, "beer and smoke agree with him." On one occasion, when about to light his last cigar, he observed to a friend: "That the value of a good cigar is best understood when it is the last you possess, and there is no chance of getting another."

Victor Hugo was another inveterate smoker, and whenever his friends happened to call they were invariably invited to join him by the fireside and share the honored pipe.—All the Year Round.

THE MAGIC LADY.

Her Disappearance from Sight—Explanation of the Trick.

Everybody is familiar with the trick in which a woman is seated on a chair and covered with a shawl, and at the bidding of the magician the woman disappears from sight just as he withdraws the shawl, leaving nothing behind but the chair and the newspaper on which it rests. The trick has been modified and improved upon in various ways until at present it has assumed a new feature, in that the shawl also disappears simultaneously with the woman.

The preparations are the same as of old. A newspaper made of India rubber has a

large square cut out in the centre, not visible, however, to the eyes of the spectators. This paper is spread on the floor on the stage trap and the chair is placed upon it in such a manner that the trap opens between the legs of the chair. Back of the chair a screen is placed.

The woman comes in and sits down on the chair. The juggler covers her with a silk shawl, beginning at the head and ending at the knees and feet. Then he retreats and pronounces the magic formula, "One, two"—at the word three the shawl and the woman have both disappeared.

As in the former case, so often explained, the woman is lowered on the trap while being covered, and an invisible frame supports the shawl and gives it the outline of the "female form divine."

At the word "three" this form disappears below the trap, the seat of the chair falls into position and the shawl, which is held behind the screen by an invisible thread, is withdrawn so quickly that it seems as if woman and shawl vanishes at the same time.

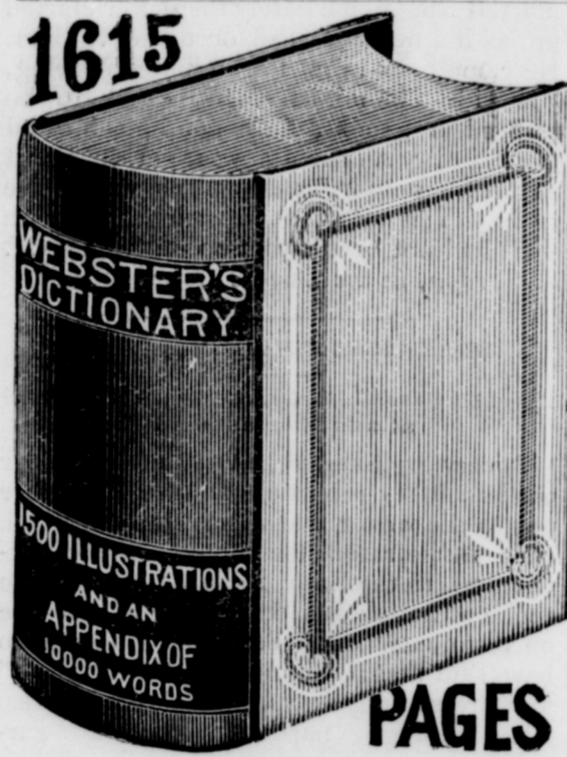
The whole depends, of course, upon the swiftness of the action, which deludes the eye.

"The Corsican Brothers."

The story of the popular drama of this name is stated, upon good authority, to be founded upon the following incident:

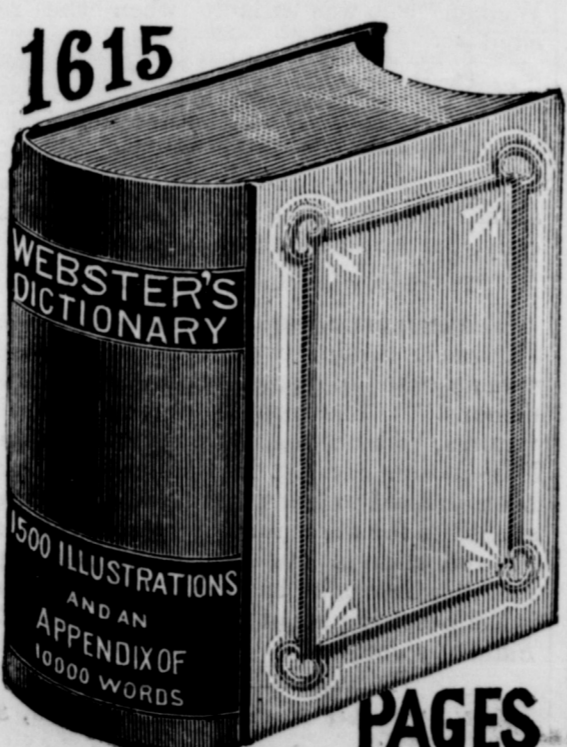
Louis Blanc (a noted Frenchman of the last generation, who took a conspicuous part in the French revolution of 1848) and his brother had a close resemblance in manner, person and features; and, what is still more remarkable, they were connected by a mysterious constitutional sympathy which bound them so closely together in spirit and feeling that, however separated they might be, no accident could happen to one without the other having a sympathetic impression of it. Thus it chanced one day, while the brother of Louis was enjoying himself with a party of friends, he was observed suddenly to change color. He complained of a sensation as if he had received a blow on the head, and he avowed his firm conviction that something must have befallen his brother Louis, then in Paris. The company treated this as a mere freak of imagination; but one or two of them, more curious than the others, noted the day and the hour, to see how far this warning might be justified by the actual event. On investigation, they discovered that, at the precise moment then and there indicated, Louis, while walking along a street in Paris, had been knocked down by a blow upon the head, dealt by some one who had approached him unperceived from behind. He fell senseless to the ground, and the ruffian escaped; nor could all the efforts of the police afford the slightest clue for his detection. He was suspected to have been a Bonapartist, and to have been influenced by political hatred of the uncompromising republican.

We hear the rain fall, but not the snow. Bitter grief is loud, but calm grief is silent.—Auerbach.



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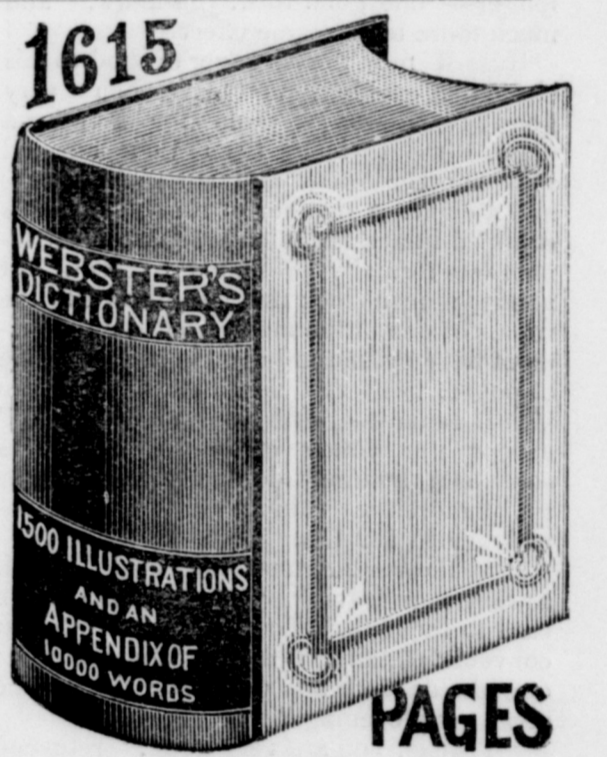
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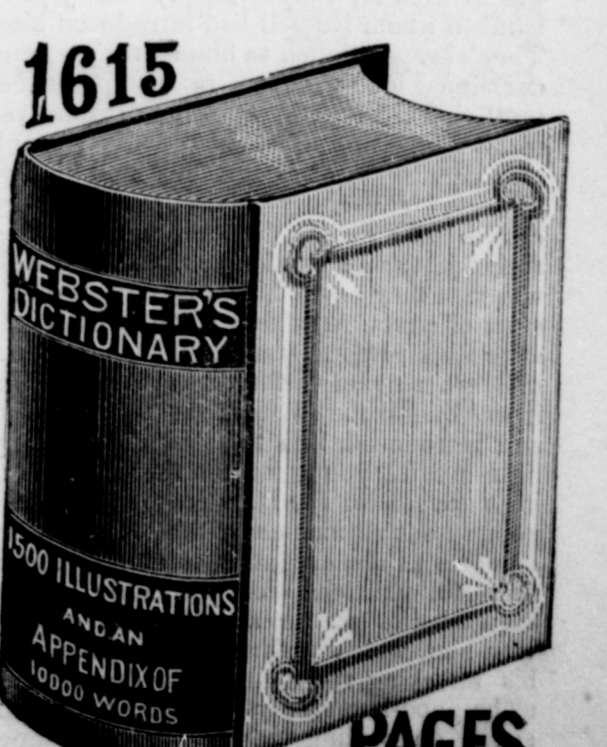
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