

From: Thomas McCulloch, [*Letters of Mephibosheth Stepsure to the Editors of the Acadian Recorder*]: Letter 1: *Acadian Recorder*, IX, no. 51 (December 22, 1821), 2; Letter 16: *Acadian Recorder*, X, no. 19 (May 11, 1822), 2.

Letter 1

Gentlemen: Happening one day to call upon Parson Drone, the clergyman of our town, I found him administering his old, standard consolation to my neighbour Solomon Gosling. The parson has been long among us, and is a very good sort of man; but, I believe, he has fared very hardly: for though my townsmen all respect him, and are the most active people in the world at selling watches and swapping horses, they have never made themselves richer and, therefore, have little to give but good wishes. But the parson, except when he is angry, is very good-natured and disposed to bear with a great deal; and, having acquired a large fund of patience himself, he has become a quack at comforting, and prescribes it indiscriminately for all sorts of ills. His own life has been spent between starving and preaching; and having no resources himself, it never occurred to him that, for the wants and troubles of others, there can be any remedy but patience.

My neighbour Gosling is completely an every-day character. His exact likeness may be found at any time, in any part of the Province. About thirty years ago, his father David left him very well to do; and Solomon, who at that time was a brisk young man, had the prospect, by using a little industry, of living as comfortably as any in the town. Soon after the death of old David, he was married and a likelier couple were not often to be seen. But unluckily for them both, when Solomon went to Halifax in the winter, Polly went along with him to sell her turkeys and see the fashions; and from that day the Goslings had never a day to do well. Solomon was never very fond of hard work. At the same time he could not be accused of idleness. He was always a very good neighbour; and at every burial or barn raising, Solomon was set down as one who would be sure to be there. By these means he gradually contracted the habit of running about; which left his own premises in an unpromising plight. Polly, too, by seeing the fashions, had learnt to be genteel; and for the sake of a little show, both lessened the thrift of the family, and added to the outlay; so that, between one thing and another, Solomon began to be hampered, and had more calls than comforters.

When the troubles of life arise out of idleness, a return to industry is usually the last shift. The habits which my neighbour had been gradually contracting, left him little stomach for the patient and persevering toils of a farming life: nor would urgent necessity permit him to wait for the sure but slow returns of agricultural exertion. But necessity is the mother of invention; and though the family of Goslings were never much noted for profundity of intellect, Solomon, by pure dint of scheming, contrived both to relieve himself from his immediate embarrassments and to avoid hard labour. Though Goose Hill farm, from want of industry, had not been productive, it was still a property of considerable value: and it occurred to Solomon, that, converted into goods, it would yield more prompt and lucrative returns than by any mode of agriculture. Full of the idea, accordingly, my neighbour went to town; and by mortgaging his property to Calibogus, the West India merchant, he returned with a general assortment of merchandise, suited to the wants of the town. When I say a general assortment, it is necessary to be a little more explicit. It did not contain any of those articles which are employed in subduing the forest, or in cultivating the soil. These he knew to be not very saleable. He was aware that though old Tubal Thump supplies the whole town with iron work, he is so miserably poor, that he can scarcely keep himself in materials. The only article of the iron kind which he brought was a hogshead of horse shoes, which a blacksmith in Aberdeen, who knew something of America, had sent out upon speculation. From the number of horses and young people in the township, Solomon knew that horse shoes would meet with a ready sale.

When a merchant lays in his goods he naturally consults the taste of his customers. Solomon's, accordingly, consisted chiefly of West India produce, gin, brandy, tobacco, and a few chests of tea. For the youngsters, he had provided an assortment of superfine broad cloths and fancy muslins, ready-made boots, whips, spurs and a great variety of gumflowers and other articles which come under the general denomination of notions. In addition to all these, and what Solomon considered as not the least valuable part of his stock, he had bought from Pendulum & Co. a whole box of old watches elegantly ornamented with lacquered brass chains and glass seals; little inferior in appearance to gold and Cairngorms.

When all these things were arranged, they had a very pretty appearance. For a number of weeks, little was talked of but Mr. Gosling's Store; for such he had now become by becoming a merchant. Little was to be seen but my neighbours riding thither to buy, and returning with bargains. Dur-

ing the course of the day, long lines of horses, fastened to every accessible post of the fences, rendered an entrance to his house almost impracticable. By these means, the general appearance of the town soon underwent a complete revolution. Homespun and homely fare were to be found only with a few hard-fisted old folks, whose ideas could never rise above labour and saving. The rest appeared so neat and genteel upon Sundays, that even the Reverend Mr. Drone, though I did not see that his flock had enabled him to exchange his own habiliments for Mr. Gosling's superfine, expressed his satisfaction by his complacent looks.

Mr. Gosling, too, had in reality considerably improved his circumstances. The greater part of my neighbours being already in debt to old Ledger and other traders about; and considering that if they took their money to these, it would only go to their credit, carried it to Mr. Gosling's Store; so that by these means he was soon able to clear off a number of his old encumbrances, and to carry to market as much cash as established his credit.

Among traders punctuality of payment begets confidence in the seller; and the credit which this affords to the purchaser, is generally followed by an enlargement of orders. My neighbour returned with a much greater supply; and here his reverses commenced. Credit could not be refused to good customers who had brought their money to the store. Those, also, who formerly showed their good will by bringing their cash, proved their present cordiality by taking large credits. But when the time for returning to the market for supplies arrived, Mr. Gosling had nothing to take thither but his books. These, it is true, had an imposing appearance. They contained debts to a large amount; and my neighbour assured his creditors that, when they were collected, he would be able to pay them all honourably, and have a large reversion to himself. But, when his account were made out, many young men who owed him large sums, had gone to Passamaquoddy. Of those who remained, the greater part had mortgaged their farms to Mr. Ledger and the other old traders; and now carried their ready money to Jerry Gawpus, who had just commenced trader by selling his farm. In short, nothing remained for Mr. Gosling but the bodies or labours of his debtors; and these last they all declared themselves very willing to give.

About this time it happened that vessels were giving a great price; and it naturally occurred to my neighbour that, by the labour which he could command, he might build a couple. These, accordingly, were put upon the stocks. But labour in payment of debt, goes on heavily; and besides, when

vessels were giving two prices, nobody would work without double wages; so that the vessels, like the ark, saw many summers and winters. In the meantime peace came, and those who owned vessels were glad to get rid of them at any price. By dint of perseverance, however, Mr. Gosling's were finished: but they had scarcely touched the water, when they were attacked by Mr. Hemp, who at the same time declared that, when they were sold, he would lose fifty per cent upon his account for the rigging. Such was my neighbour's case when, happening, as I have already mentioned, to step into Parson Drone's, I found that Mr. Gosling had been telling his ailments, and was receiving the reverend old gentleman's ordinary, clerical consolation. "What can't be cured, must be endured: let us have patience."

"I'll tell you what it is, parson," replied my neighbour, "patience may do well enough for those who have plenty: but it won't do for me. Calibogus has foreclosed the mortgage; my vessels are attached; and my books are of no more value than a rotten pumpkin. After struggling hard to supply the country with goods, and to bring up a family so as to be a credit to the town, the country has brought us to ruin. I won't submit to it. I won't see my son Rehoboam, poor fellow, working like a slave upon the roads, with his coat turned into a jacket and the elbows clouted with the tails. My girls were not sent to Mrs. M'Cackle's boarding school to learn to scrub floors. The truth is, parson, the country does not deserve to be lived in. There is neither trade nor money in it, and produce gives nothing. It is fit only for Indians, and emigrants from Scotland, who were starving at home. It is time for me to go elsewhere, and carry my family to a place that presents better prospects to young folks."

In reply, the parson was beginning to exhort Mr. Gosling to beware of the murmurings of the wicked; when Jack Catchpole, the constable, stepped in to say that the sheriff would be glad to speak with Mr. Gosling at the door. Our sheriff is a very hospitable gentleman; and, when any of his neighbours are in hardship, he will call upon them, and even insist upon their making his house their home. Nor did I ever know any shy folks getting off with an excuse. As it occurred to me, therefore, that Mr. Gosling might not come back for the parson's admonition, I returned home; and soon learned that my neighbour had really gone elsewhere, and made a settlement in the very place where Sampson turned miller. This event has not added much to the respectability of the Goslings; nor is it calculated to brighten their prospects. My neighbour's children are as fine a young fam-

ily as any in the town; but it unavoidably happened, that the apparent prosperity of their father introduced among them habits, not very friendly to regular industry and saving. Hob Gosling, the oldest son, is really a smart young fellow; and in haying time or harvest, he can do more work in a day than any three labourers. But hard work requires recreation; and when a young man does any thing uncommon, he wishes to receive credit for it among his neighbours. Accordingly, it would sometimes happen, that it would take Hob a week to tell about the exertions of a day. He would also occasionally recreate himself by riding races, or playing a game at cards when he was drinking a glass of grog with other yougsters over Mr. Tipple's counter: and by these means, though Hob is not a quarrelsome young man, his name was frequently called over in court in assault and battery cases. This, it is true, was not without its advantages. Hob acquired a great knowledge of the law, and the character of being a 'cute young man. But I am inclined to think that the gain ended here; for I remember that after one or two of these causes were tried, a few acres of Mr. Gosling's best marsh passed into the hands of Sauders Scantocreesh, a hard-faced, hard-working Scotchman, who, a few years ago, came among us with his stockings and shoes suspended from a stick over his shoulder, but now possesses one of the best farms in the town.

My neighbour's daughters, too, are very agreeable young ladies. Everybody allows that Mrs. M'Cackle has done justice to their education. For painting flowers and playing upon the pianoforte, they have few equals. Some of my neighbours, indeed, used to complain that, when Mr. Gosling asked them to dinner, the meat was always ill-cooked, and the puddings and pies mere dough; but the reason was, that neither Mrs. Gosling nor the young ladies could get the black wench to do as she was bidden, unless they were always at her heels.

But this was not the only hardship which my neighbour suffered by the elegant accomplishments of the young ladies. To be genteel in the country, is attended with difficulties and losses of which you townfolks can have no conception. Morning visits in the afternoon, dressings and other things, interrupted so frequently with rural industry, that great show and sad accidents are usually combined. I recollect when Jacob Ribs married his fourth wife, Mr. and Mrs. Gosling were invited to the wedding; and as it happened to be on churning day, the young ladies were left to look after the butter-making. But, when the chaise which carried the old folks to the marriage returned, it occurred to the young ladies, that, before proceeding to

domestic toil, they would have plenty of time to return Miss Trotabout's last morning visit; and off they set, leaving directions with the black girl to have the churn before the fire by the time they returned. During their absence, it unfortunately happened that the wench descried one of her black cronies passing; and, running down the lane to enjoy a little talk, left the kitchen door open, when Mr. Gosling's boar pig Mammoth, who was always a mischievous brute, finding a clear passage, entered without ceremony and upset the churn. My neighbour's kitchen was immediately converted into the country of the Gadarenes. To guzzle up the contents, was but the work of a moment. The succeeding scarcity, also aroused that inquisitive disposition for which swine, as well as ladies, are noted; when one of the vile animals, perceiving something in the churn as it lay upon its side, thrust in its snout to examine. In this state of things, the black wench, having descried the young ladies at a distance, returned to her post. Vengeance succeeded amazement; and the first object of it, and apparently the most guilty, was the individual whose fore-quarters had already passed from observation. Now, it so happens that no way has yet been invented to drive a pig straight forward, but to pull it by the tail. As soon, therefore, as it found itself assaulted behind, the unclean beast made a fair entrance into the wooden tabernacle; and, when the young ladies returned to make butter, it was rolling round the floor, to the utter dismay of the girl, and complete discomfiture of the whole herd of swine. From such trials as these, you townsfolds, who have nothing else to do but be genteel, are altogether exempted.

After Mr. Gosling's unfortunate confinement, I went to call upon his family, imagining that the countenance of an acquaintance would help to soothe and keep up their spirits. Parson Drone, too, had prepared a long discourse upon patience, and was come to deliver it. But we found them all very cheerful; and the parson unwilling to lose his labour, made his visit short, and carried his discourse to old Caleb Staggers, whose mare had just died of the botts. Mr. Gosling's confinement they considered merely as a temporary inconvenience, arising from the spite of his creditors. But when his debts were called in, he would pay everybody; and the whole family agreed that, then, with the rest of his property, they would go to a country better worth the living in. I found among them, however, a diversity of opinion about where this should be. Mrs. Gosling spoke of the Ohio; but Mr. Rehoboam declared that it was a new country, without roads; where a young man could not lay a leg over a saddle from the one year's end to the

other. Miss Dinah preferred the Cape of Good Hope, but she was afraid of the Caffres, who sometimes carry off white women. To elope with a lord or a duke, she observed, would be a very pretty incident, but should any person ever write a novel about the Goslings, to be carried off by a Hottentot would appear so droll. Upon the whole, they seemed to think the opinion of Miss Fanny most feasible: that it would be best to go to Botany Bay, where every genteel family like the Goslings, receives so many white niggers, sent out every year from Britain by Government for the supply of the colony.

As your warriors for the winter have not yet opened their campaign, I hope you will find room in your paper for the preceding account of my neighbour and his family. It will not, I know, be very interesting to your readers in general; for they have all seen the like, and heard the like a hundred times before; and as it is no fable but a true story they will not be able to deduce from it any sage moral for their own direction in life. Yet its insertion will oblige a great many readers. By looking over the list of your subscribers, you will see that the Gosling family have extensive connexions in every part of the province and in every kind of occupation; and I am sure it will gratify them all to hear how their relation Mr. Solomon is getting on. Should you oblige them and myself thus far, I may be induced to send you, at some future period, the sequel of my neighbour's trading career.

Letter 16

Gentlemen: Since I began to write my own life, a variety of events has occurred in our town: some of a pleasing and others of an afflicting kind. But the greater part of them it is not necessary to mention, for your readers would care about them just as little as our people care about the society which Saunders and a few others have begun, in order to improve the agriculture of the town. I shall therefore send you only a few brief notices, to show you how we are getting on; and first of all I may observe, that, for anything I can see, Mr. Catchem, poor gentleman, is likely to be ruined. I do not mean that he neglect his duty: but nobody will employ him: creditors now say that it is of no use either to sell property or put debtors in jail.

On the other hand, our townsmen who have been allowed to go at large, have, I assure you, been active in no ordinary degree. Between travelling to Mr. Gawpus' store (which by the by is now pretty well emptied), attending the courts, looking into Tipple's occasionally, visiting each other to

deplore the badness of the times, and going about their ordinary business, such as hanging all day about the mill or the blacksmith's shop, they have been very seldom at home. You must not, however, imagine that our people want industry. On the contrary, they rarely go abroad without making great bargains, and in the meantime, at home, they suffer no loss; for, except during the spring, haying time, and harvest, they have nothing to do upon their farms. Indeed I may say that, in having winter and misfortune together, we have been extremely lucky, for during that season of the year our people can not only talk about their troubles at leisure, but also do a great deal to make them sit lightly. Winter is the time of good cheer, which, you may depend upon it, we have not been neglecting; and good eating and drinking, you know, are a great comfort to persons who have hard times to bewail.

Nor have the youth of our town been less actively employed. But, as I have lately explained the nature of their education, it is not very necessary to detail what they have been doing. I must remark, however, that they, as well as the old people, have been experiencing hard times and misfortunes. Miss Sippit's tea-party and frolic have not passed off with all the eclat which the young lady expected. Never had a meeting of our young folks excited such high expectations, and never before was there a meeting attended with so many serious disasters. Old Stot's son Hodge, in particular, poor fellow, is not likely to get over it soon. To record calamities, is a disagreeable task; but, in the present case, it is an act of justice to our town which ought not to be omitted. It will show you that we have society as elegant and refined as any other part of the Province, and I am sure it will convince all your readers that when the children of farmers become ladies and gentlemen, they have a great deal to do and suffer, and deserve a great deal of praise.

I formerly stated that Miss Sippit, being relieved from the disagreeable necessity of preparing for death, had resolved to redeem her lost time, and celebrate her recovery by a tea-party and frolic. This, of course, required a great deal of preparation and bustling about, such as borrowing a little flour here, and a little butter there; for, though we are a very genteel township, and before company make an elegant appearance, it would be foolish to suppose that our country gentlemen in general possess every thing requisite for the entertainment of a large party. Indeed I may say that the preparation extended to almost the whole town. Near every house, the fences indicated that our young gentlemen were getting their ruffled shirts in

order; and the ladies, their gown or some other part of dress, for the joyful occasion.

At last the expected evening arrived, when our youngsters and Mrs. M'Cackle, who had been appointed mistress of ceremonies, convened in Sippit's. In commendation of this lady, I must observe that a better choice for conducting the business in genteel style, could not have been made. With the exception of Mr. Peter Longshanks, I question if there be another who knows half so much about the manner in which young people should behave in company. Under her direction, therefore, everything was conducted with due decorum. Indeed it was the general opinion that our young ladies had never sat so erectly nor displayed such a ladylike appearance before. The gentlemen, too, exerted themselves mightily to find out the best positions for their legs and arms, which, I assure you, is not easily discovered by a young country gentleman when he gets into a company where he thinks everybody looking at him. Upon the whole, however, Mrs. M'Cackle was very well pleased, and declared that as how they were the most gracefulest assembly she had ever beheld, and indeed how could it be otherwise?—for all our young people and all their finery were there.

Having never myself been in such polite company, I must, of course, be ignorant of the general modes of proceeding, and therefore I shall not attempt to describe them. I understand, however, that it is the ordinary custom for the gentlemen to go about taking care of the ladies. In conformity with this order of things, Mrs. M'Cackle had requested old Stot's son Hodge to have the goodness to be so kind as to hand round the fried pork to the ladies. Hodge was upon the alert in an instant, and, as politeness required, determined to present it with an elegant bow, which in our town, consists in pushing out the right foot and then bringing it back with a scrape upon the ground, at the same time bending the body forward with suitable solemnity. Now, it unfortunately happened that the young gentleman's shoes, which he had sent to the mending, were not ready in time; but in order to be at the frolic, he had put on a new pair of his father's, which the old man had carefully fortified with an abundant supply of hobnails, and scarcely had the poor fellow entered upon his bow, when a shriek from Miss Sippit admonished him that he had begun his scrape at her shin, and was subjecting her satin slipper to an unmerciful visitation. In such a case it was natural for him to draw back his foot as fast and as far as possible; but, in his haste, it escaped him that where the head goes one way and the feet another, there is always a violation of the order of nature, and before

he was aware, he had placed the fried pork, melted and unmelted, in the young lady's lap, and was himself fast following.

Emergency, however, will, at times, produce wonderful exertion. One powerful effort relieved him from the apparent danger. But no man can think of two things at once; and, of course, he who is falling forward does not consider that there may be danger behind. Hodge only thought of getting back from the young lady, but in his haste to retreat, forgetting to take his legs with him, he unfortunately overturned the tea-table and its contents upon Mrs. M'Cackle's new poplin. Whether this unusual combination of accidents had produced a sudden convulsion of nature, or whether Hodge had been dining upon cabbage, which, you know, are a windysome kind of food, I cannot tell; but the poor fellow, in falling, made a lengthy apology, which scandalized the whole assembly of young ladies amazingly, and, indeed, no wonder; for such a speaker was never introduced into any genteel company, and much less allowed to lift up his voice.

Hodge is a stout-hearted fellow, and can bear with perfect equanimity any ordinary trial, such as losses upon a bargain or getting himself capiased; but here was an accumulation of sore adversities—adversities, too, which brought with them the loss of character. One spring placed the door between him and the rest of our young ladies and gentlemen, and since that time he has never been seen by any of them.

When matters in Sippit's were restored to a little order, the young people agreed to get on with the frolicking, and accordingly Driddle was called; but the old man, having been obliged to fill himself with tea instead of grog, was seized with the belly-ache very badly. Here was a real disappointment, for you may depend upon it that a fiddler with the belly-ache has got other concerns to mind than either music or dancing. As Miss Sippit's piano was out of order, all hope seemed to be gone, when young Kickit recollected that he had seen Mrs. M'Cackle sing and dance at the same time. He therefore proposed that she should officiate in the place of old Driddle, and as a compliment to the old lady he insisted that he should open the ball with her. Mrs. M'Cackle, from the recollection of her damaged poplin, was not in a very tuneful mood; still she was willing to gratify the young folks, and no less willing to display her own talents. To it, accordingly, they went; and an elegant couple they must have been, I assure you. Kickit is one of our tallest young fellows, with legs like rafters, and as nimble as Peter Longshanks. Mrs. M'Cackle, too, is a handsome figure, only, not being a native of our town, she is a little differently formed. Nature, in

the construction of the upper part of her frame, had forgotten that legs are an indispensable appendage, and, afterward, in order that the whole might be of a reasonable longitude, she was necessitated to add such extremities as suited the case.

Of the exhibition of this uncommon couple, you must not expect me to give you an account, for I am not very far seen in the dancing myself, and besides I was not there. I can only say, that in the opinion of our young people, between singing, and turning, and wheeling, and shuffling, and leaping, and skipping, it was truly enchanting. But just when delight was wound up to rapture, Kickit's foot, in one of his high leaps, thought of taking a look into Mrs. M'Cackle's pocket, and afterward, like every other violent possessor, positively refused to renounce its claims. Now, it would be unreasonable to expect that any lady would either sing or dance with a gentleman's foot in her pocket. I must, however, do young Kickit the justice to say, that he was still, if possible, more ready than ever to gratify the delighted spectators. Having parted with one foot, he was even more anxious to make the other do the business of two; and the more eager Mrs. M'Cackle became to withdraw from the enchanting scene, the more earnest he was upon the dance, and hopped around the old lady with surprising diligence, till at last a wrong step, from the want of the music, brought them both to the floor.

After a specimen of such superior style, none of the youngsters was willing to exhibit. They therefore agreed to disperse; but scarcely had they left Mr. Sippit's, when the violent rain of last week overtook them, and subjected the gumflowers and other finery of the town to a sweeping destruction.

Our young ladies and gentlemen, you see, are, as well as their parents, meeting with hard times. Still, great as their misfortunes and disappointments are, it is well for them that they are not in the hands of my neighbour Scantocreesh. Saunders declares that if his foot had been in young Stot's shoe instead of kicking Miss Sippit's shins and tearing her slipper, he would have broken the leg of the brazen-faced limmer. The old vagabond Driddle, he says, with his fiddling and drinking and corrupting the youth, deserves to be fed upon tea all the days of his life; and as for the rest of the ne'er-do-wells, instead of letting them off with the loss of their trumpery, he would have applied a cudgel to their backs and sent them home with their buttocks bare; and then, instead of junketing about the town, they would be glad to stay home and wear homespun, like other decent folk.

I now inform you that I have arrived at the end of the first book of *The Chronicles of our town*; and, for a number of reasons, winter must return before I enter upon the second. In the first place, I have resolved to make the ensuing summer the busiest of my life. The exertions of you Halifax gentlemen to promote the agriculture of the Province, have suggested to me a great many improvements, which my present system of farming needs. These I have resolved to make; and when my neighbours are lamenting the badness of the times, and executing the present determination to raise nothing upon their farms till the prices rise, I will banish all discouraging thoughts by working a little harder; and if better times come, or if bad times continue, my good crop will be in readiness to meet them.

Secondly, I have got myself a great deal of ill-will from many of the neighbours, who say that I have made them and our whole town a laughing stock to the rest of the Province. Old Grub, in particular, is very anxious about the mending of the trousers. He says that the high dignity of his office ought to have been treated with greater reverence; and that, as clouting the covering of his nether extremities was no part of his magisterial duty, I had no right to meddle with it. He says also that things in our town are coming to a fine pass, when even the lame despise dignities; and he hopes to see the day, that, when worthy gentlemen are sitting upon the bench to maintain the honour of the town, Mephibosheth, and other like him, will be sitting in the stocks, as a warning to revilers.

That the worthy gentleman should be offended, has grieved me sorely. In vindication of myself I must say that the story of the trousers was told expressly for the purpose of showing his care to maintain the high dignity of his office; for this honourable member of the bench does not always mend his trousers in bed. But the truth is, that some of our young ladies happening to pass his house, and resolving to pop in and see what old Squire Grub was doing, the worthy gentleman descried them coming, and buried the unseemly parts of his frame among the blankets, which was, surely, more becoming the high dignity of his office than if they had found him in his ordinary way, as my neighbour Saunders expresses it. Indeed, he is, in many respects, as I may by and by show you, a pattern of industry and economy, worthy of imitation.

Our reverend old parson, too, is not altogether satisfied. He says that, touching the matter of the swine, I have allowed my waggery to over-run my judgement: that albeit he did nourish and maintain a few of those unclean beasts for the sustenance of himself and his household, it was not

for edification to hold up his labours among them as a spectacle to the world, and much less to place them before his public ministrations. Now, I positively assert that Mr. Drone is not even related to the Tulliber family. He does not feed pigs for sale—he has no delight in feeding them, and, in dividing his labours, would, if possible, place the people of our town before them. But when our folks starve him, necessity has no law; pigs must be reared, and, of course, the feeding of the town limited to the remnants and husks of his time.

In the third place, I have got a character to maintain, and must take care not to lose it, as persons who are perpetually writing very generally do. Trudge, the pedlar of our town, is just come from Halifax with a large assortment of notions and news. Among other things he tells me that when he and Tug the truckman were taking a glass of grog toether, they were both of the opinion that my letters were a very clever thing; and further, that a number of their friends were going to use their influence with government to get me a pension. This, you may be sure, was very gratifying to me; for every decent man likes to be respected by respectable persons, such as Trudge and his acquaintance Tug. At the same time I must confess that when Trudge told me the news, I had some misgivings about its truth, both because pedlars are privileged talkers, and also because when he was speaking about the pension, he was persuading my spouse to purchase a great bargain of a shawl, which would cost her only ten dollars. On this account, when my old woman was telling him that the first ten dollars of the pension should go for a shawl, I resolved not to believe all that he had said till I should learn the truth of it from some other quarter. Still I was very anxious to believe.

You may judge, then, how much I was gratified when Saunders came running over with the Chronicle, and, in the speech of that worthy, clever-spoken, sensible gentleman, the Honourable the Attorney General, pointed out to me the following words: “Turn where you will, folly and extravagance stare you in the face. That *gentleman*, Mephibosheth Stepsure, had given us a picture of ourselves, which, he was sorry to say, was too true; but he did not approve of its being hung up in the newspapers for all the world to look at. But he should be obliged to him if he would go to every door in the province, and sound his reproofs in their ears. For his own part, he was surprised to see our extravagance in dress. The east and the west—the north and the south—the whole world was ransacked, to collect the rags which were to be thrown upon a young woman’s back.”

Who would have believed that lame Boshy would ever be called a *gentleman* at a public meeting of the grandees of the Province? To say nothing of my own feelings, my old woman is wonderfully pleased, and says that honour will not be brought to shame by meeting with Mephibosheth Step-sure: that I am not like Puff and others of our poor gentry, who wear five coats and nothing in their pockets but an account from Mr. Ledger or a summons to the court. On the contrary, that having arrived at great respectability, I have something which will help to maintain the dignity of my character. Even I, myself, too, am beginning to think myself possessed of more dignity than I was formerly aware of; and I have a kind of notion that when I get myself seated in style, with a table before me covered with a green cloth reaching down to the floor, so as to keep my feet out of the way, I shall make a very respectable-looking gentleman. My spouse seems to think that now when I am become somebody, reading the Chronicles of our town at every man's door would confer upon me more notoriety than honour, and, upon the whole, I am rather inclined to shift the business, for I am no great hand at the running; and, you know, it would be necessary to get away very nimbly from every door as soon as they were read. Old Trot, when he is going after the news, could do it very well; but the poor man is getting feeble, and could neither run very fast nor stand much beating.

Could the clever-spoken, sensible gentleman, the Honourable the Attorney General, be induced to comply with the plan of my neighbour Saunders, it would do the business completely. Saunders is delighted with his speech. He declares that it is as good as one of Parson Drone's best sermons, and that the decent gentleman understands the ne'er-do-wells of our town better than they understand themselves. But to put the speech in the papers, he thinks, will do them no good, as they never read anything from one end of the year to the other, except, perhaps, an advertisement at the store or the blacksmith's shop. Could the worthy gentleman, however, be induced to come to our town, and say the same things over again, by advertising a cattle show or a town meeting at Tipple's, our people will turn out to a man; or, he says, that though it be no credit to a decent farmer to be a constable, he and the rest of the hard-working, homespun neighbours, will get themselves sworn in to catch the villains and force them to the meeting; and as he will then be clothed with authority and have the law upon his side, his staff of office shall be faithfully used to command attention and to apply the doctrine.

He thinks, also, that, as our females will of course be there to see that their husbands get full justice when the doctrine is applied, it would not be amiss to tender them a word of exhortation too; not that he wished to have any hand in the application, but he thinks that when their husbands are receiving instructions about industry, a few hints upon the subject of economy might be useful to themselves. Nothing, he says, has prevented our town from being one of the wealthiest places in the world but want of industry and want of economy.

But, as the execution of Saunders' plan is rather to be desired than expected, there is still another scheme which would be equally successful. Were every person who could stand an examination upon the Chronicles, to be made a Magistrate or a Militia officer, the most of our people would soon have them by heart.

Gentlemen, after telling you so many truths about the people of our town, I must now beg leave to say a few words to your readers. Some of them, I have been told, are a good-humoured, laughing sort of folks; and others are just as crusty and angry at the Chronicles of our town. To the former I would observe, that they have a right to laugh at themselves as much as they please, and when they get their laugh out to reform as fast as they can; but when they meet with their angry neighbours they should remember that laughing is a very serious thing, and ought to be tempered with a great deal of gravity, for no man in a passion likes to be laughed at. As for your crusty readers, they have just as good a right to be angry, and far more reason. I would advise them, therefore, to make themselves more angry still, which they may easily do, by telling everybody their complaints and receiving the consolation which their case deserves; and when they have thus learned that everybody is laughing at them, instead of continuing their displeasure against the exposure of folly, they might transfer their rage to the fools who needed to be exposed. For my own part, I am sorry that the Chronicles have affronted them: very sorry, indeed, that their neighbours should be laughing at them; for I must say that all your readers would be a very decent sort of folks if they had only good management. They are not willing to be like lame Meph, whom everybody despised, nor like lame Boshy, whom nobody cared about; but, before they have well fixed themselves upon a wood lot, and raised a few potatoes, they wish to be like