

Communications.

[For the Gleaner.]

THE INDIANS FORTY YEARS AGO.

A New Year's Day is generally looked forward to as a time of merry-making, and its approach is hailed with pleasure by all classes of people. "It is a sad heart that never rejoices," saith the proverb; and in order to keep up the veritable pretensions of the old "saw," every one is supposed to be merry on New Year's Day. It would appear, however, to be the particular holiday of the Indian, who, awakening from a twelvemonth's dormancy, arouses an existence that merely animates his bosom, and for the day exhibits a little of the Micmac spirit, then sluggishly sinks back to his accustomed lethargy. It is the custom for a number of them to meet together, dressed in the tip-top of Indian fashion, and with two or three old guns to fire a salute, a few flags to decorate the procession, to march in *Indian file* through the neighborhood. Our village had the honor of a visit from a fragment of this rapidly passing away people, who gave notice of their arrival by an "irregular discharge of artillery," which is immediately followed by the "habby new year" from the whole group. The band consisted of ten or fifteen Indians and Squaws, with a number of youngsters of different ages, from the half-grown urchin, to the young pappoose in the happy imprisonment of a basket cradle. It were impossible to look upon this miserable vestige of a once active and energetic race, without feeling a deep sympathy for their prostrate and powerless condition. Even in their holiday suit, their faces lit up with all the excitement of their *annual effort*, they presented a miserable apology for intelligent beings; whilst some of them appeared to be solving the problem as to where the point terminated where soul and body would refuse to keep up the miserable connection. Every lover of humanity must rejoice at the efforts that are being made in Nova Scotia, which also embraces New Brunswick, to ameliorate the condition of this too long neglected people. Mr Rand deserves the zealous co-operation of every philanthropist, and the earnest prayer, that his mission, so auspiciously begun, may abundantly succeed, should gush spontaneously from every heart. But to my story.

"Well, well," exclaimed an aged man, (whose silvery hair bore the traces of some sixty winters) who was silently gazing at the group before him; "what a change has forty years brought about. Then the Indians of Miramichi were a noble specimen of the *Tribe*. Stalwart, muscular fellows, they were as ready to contend for what they considered their rights, as they are now proverbial for a tardy inactivity, and a listless, dreamy existence. Many a rencontre have I had with them when a young man, and often had to watch against the spirit of revenge which appears to be a constituent of the Indian character. I remember, when about twenty years of age, a camp's crew of young men, of whom I was one, having finished "stream driving" and rafting, started for the first public house, in order to forget the toils and fatigues of a winter's campaign in a *spree*. And truly we carried out to the letter every species of reckless gaiety contained in that significant word. Some time in the evening, a number of Indians came to the house, who were returning from beaver hunting. Feeling of no small importance, they determined to bring down our crew to a republican level with themselves, and joined in our dance as if they had received a special invitation. It was amusing to see their wild gestures and uncouth manoeuvres, every now and then giving a savage yell as their swarthy countenances became one glow of fierce exultation. In the height of their merriment, one of the most resolute of the party made a bound at one of our crew (whose name was Jones), and fastening his arms around him, said, "me wrestle you, brother," and suiting the action to the word, used every effort to throw him down. But Jones made up in activity what he wanted in strength, and kept up the struggle for some time. However, it was evident the superior strength of the Indian would prevail. I saw that Jones was nearly exhausted, and determined, as if it were by accident, to give him some assistance. Just then they staggered towards me. Apparently to keep them from crushing against me, but in reality to aid Jones, I pushed him from me with all my strength, which gave him a decided advantage, and resulted in laying the Indian cleverly on his back. Whilst in the act of falling, the Indian caught a barrel of water, and pulled it completely over him. This, instead of *cooling* his courage, only increased it; for having noticed the assistance so opportunely given by me, he sprang to his feet with the agility of a harlequin, and fastening his eyes upon me, which flashed with passion, exclaimed, "you do dat, sartin, you do dat." I expected that he would spring upon me with the fury of a wild cat, and had determined to give him a warm reception. But in this I was mistaken. Adjusting his dress, and wringing the water from his long black hair, he said something in a low tone to another Indian, and left the house. A few minutes after, the other returned alone, and, I thought, looked very suspicious. The thought occurred to me that I was to be paid for my interference in Indian currency, and knowing the sanguinary nature I had aroused, determined to be upon my guard. Suspended from the ceiling, were a number of small poles used for drying corn. Watching for an opportunity, I reached down one of the

shortest, and without being observed, stole from the house.

"The path that led to the river ran down a gradually sloping bank, skirted on either side by fir bushes. Taking the path, I had nearly reached the shore, when I saw the Indian leaving his canoe, and by the dim star-light, caught the glancing of a knife in his hand. This, as I afterwards ascertained, was a "beaver spear," an instrument used by the Indians to kill the beaver when found alive in the trap. It was now apparent that he meditated vengeance, and the thought aroused within me a spirit almost as dark as his own. Stepping in the shade of a thick bush, I awaited his approach, determined to make him feel the effect of a maple sapling, with a more than ordinary application. The Indian came rapidly up the path, muttering curses "not loud but deep." Waiting until he was just passing me, I dealt him a blow with all the strength I could command. He fell as if a bullet had pierced his heart, and I, without waiting to ascertain the result, made a circuitous route, and hastened to the house. Without making any remark, I joined in the pastimes of the evening, keeping a sharp watch towards the door. A half hour passed, and no Indian came. I began to get uneasy. What if I had killed him! and the terrible thought ran through my brain like fire. Gladly would I now have seen him enter, with tomahawk, knife, and all the other weapons of savage warfare, rather than endure the savage warfare. I shuddered as I saw one of the Indians go out, no doubt to see what had become of Pierre, as they called him. He soon returned, bringing Pierre with him, but how changed! sinking down in the corner in the most dejected manner, he presented a wonderful contrast to the Indian of an hour before. Anxious to ascertain whether he suspected me, I entered into conversation with him. "Brother, me berry sick." "What's the matter?" I replied. "No know, berry sick up here," placing his hand on his shoulders. "Did any person hurt you?" "Me no sabby; no man, sartin, no man; maybe God, maybe devil; my shoulders almost walk my heart." It was evident he thought the blow had been dealt by a superhuman hand, and no doubt considered it a just punishment for his intended crime.

The old man finished his story, and the band having received the usual *charity*, started for the next halting place.

F.

January 2, 1851.

THE NEWCASTLE TEA PARTY.

Another interesting Tea Party at Newcastle has taken place, nothing inferior to any of its predecessors. The social friendliness became universal, while the warm and tender recognitions of friends, as usual, displayed that man in his every phase is a social and dependent being. The tables were sumptuously covered with the luxurious compounds that always present themselves at our best tea parties, from the white wheaten loaf to the rich and mellow puff-cake, whose delicate richness of composition cannot be exceeded. The great quantity of snow which fell on Monday previous, was a means of preventing a great many who intended coming from Chatham and Douglstown, and those who did come from those places ought to be highly applauded for their perseverance and friendly feeling. The road was so serpentine, and covered by such a number of snow-drifts, that most all who did come, were more than once either necessitated to occasionally jump from the sleigh, or be introduced into the soft and cooling embrace of a snow-bank, without light enough to see how to extricate themselves. Some broke their traces, more their shafts, and other parts of their tackling; but after all these little tragical and nearly break-neck occurrences, the arrival at Newcastle fully compensated for all their troubles, and completely alleviated all their disquietudes. Happy faces greeted them, and tender welcomes met each as they entered the brilliantly lit-up hall, whose joyous inmates smiled from a seat, and received their little narrative of incidents, which each had to relate; and then the "How do you do?" and shake hands passed around, and "how's all at home?" or "all well at home?" those kindly enquiries which ever accompany true politeness.

After all had arrived, and had seated themselves, the Rev. Mr Henderson asked a blessing upon those favors a kind Providence had bestowed upon us; soon after which the tea-cups and spoons appeared to be electrified, for they kept up such an unceasing motion for some time, until their nervous restlessness was somewhat allayed by filling their capacious mouths with a sufficient quantum of that beverage which cheers, but does not intoxicate, after which their movements became somewhat lessened. Then came the "Do you prefer tea or coffee?" answered by "tea if you please," interspersed occasionally by "allow me to help you to a little bread and butter," "I prefer toast, thank you," or "permit me to assist you to a little of this cake," "Thank you, I'll trouble you for a little of that currant cake," &c., while the merry laugh mingled pleasantly as the little groups of friends would engage in conversation together, and exchange the cordiality that absence occasions. After all the appetites were satiated, the Newcastle Amateur Band, who occupied the most elevated situation in the room, clothed in a fine uniform, sent a volume of martial music that drowned completely the gathering in of the empty cups and saucers. After they had ceased playing, a chairman was appointed, who named the Rev. Mr Stuart, John M. Johnson, Jun., Esq., J. T. Williston, Esq., Rev. Mr Henderson, Rev. Mr

Lockhart, and Peter Mitchell, Esq., as the speakers of the evening, who, with the exception of the first, (being absent) successively addressed the assembly upon the advantages of science, mechanics' institutes, the good they have done, and the general good feelings that was produced by tea meetings universally, and social assemblies generally; how they produced an attachment in the members of a community, and allayed that selfish isolation which accompanies seclusion; and a variety of most excellent and appropriate remarks were produced, for want of time I cannot give them. The Band played at the conclusion of each speech. The pleasantness of that evening I will ever remember.—It is associated with my birth-place. The building itself rests upon the ground over which I have often played in boyish thoughtlessness, dreaming of nothing but of to-day. That the Newcastle Institute may prosper, and that the information imparted there may form the nucleus in many a now young and inquiring mind, which eventually will be the means of causing them to shine in future generations, is the hope of

THOMAS SQUARE.

Newcastle, December 30, 1850.

Editor's Department.

MIRAMICHI.

CHATHAM, MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 1851.

NEWCASTLE AND DOUGLASTOWN MECHANICS' INSTITUTION.

ANNUAL REPORT.

The year during which your Committee have been in office having now terminated, this Board feel great pleasure in presenting a Report of their proceedings for the information of the Society.

In the first place your Committee have the satisfaction of referring to the course of Lectures delivered before this Institution during the past year, in all 36, of which 18 were delivered in this place and 18 in Newcastle, many of which were highly instructive and useful, and in all, the Lecturers manifested a strong desire to impart useful and scientific knowledge. Your Committee are satisfied that the public are pleased and edified; and your committee have the assurance that the minds and feelings of the people were with the Institute, by the increased interest manifested by them in their attendance on the several Lectures.

Your Committee have now to Report to the Society that they have been enabled to procure the necessary number of Lectures for the forthcoming Season—in all thirty six—to be delivered alternately on the Mondays and Fridays of each week, as in the previous year, commencing in this place. Among the Lecturers for the present year your Committee have obtained additional talent to occupy the season, and not a few of the Lectures are on more practical subjects which will give an increased impetus to the Institution. Your Committee can already perceive benefits resulting therefrom to the public mind, in some young gentlemen, whose diffidence have hitherto kept them back, are now enlisted as Lecturers, whose leisure hours during the recess have been given to reading and thought, and stimulated by honorable rivalry, are willing to impart their acquired knowledge for the benefit of the Society. In this way your Committee look forward to the permanent stability of the Society, around which they have toiled, and over which the shield of youthful vigor and protection will be cast when the present laborers seek for ease and retirement.

Your Committee prepared a bill for Incorporating the Society, had the same read before the Grand Jury of the County, forwarded the same to the Legislature, which passed into a Law, and the Society is now incorporated under the title of "The Newcastle and Douglstown Mechanics' Institution."

Your Committee at the same time applied to the Legislature for a grant of Money, in aid of the funds, and forwarded their petition to the Members of the County, with a request that they would use their exertions on behalf of the Society, to obtain an amount of money, in which your Committee regret to say they were unsuccessful. Your Committee are satisfied that the Members of the County, individually and collectively, done all in their power—all that human agency could do, to obtain the Grant, and thereby meet the wishes of the Society, and that the failure is attributed solely to the financial embarrassments of the Province.

A number of individuals feeling a lively interest in the success of the Institute, determined to raise means, and erect a Building in the town of Newcastle, suitable for the same; and your Committee look with pride and satisfaction on their praiseworthy efforts. A building has been erected by private contributions, which is an ornament to the Town, and presents itself to the eye of the wayfarer as the harbinger of future prosperity to the town and neighborhood. One gentleman voluntarily gave the land, and he with many others contributed liberally to its erection; and this Board, to enable the Committee of Management to have the Building ready for the forthcoming Lectures, placed the sum of twelve pounds, out of the Funds of the Society, towards the fitting up of the Institute; and your Committee now have to state that the building will be in complete order, and ready for the purposes of the Institution.

At the laying of the Corner Stone of the

Institute, our worthy President, with his accustomed liberality, placed *One Hundred Pounds* within the power and control of this Board, for the purpose of procuring Books, Apparatus, &c. for the Institute, fully expecting that the amount would be obtained from the Legislature. Your Committee in order to lay out the money raised a Sub-committee of four gentlemen to report upon the best mode of expending the same, for the interests of the Society. That Committee have submitted a Report, making a selection of a number of highly valuable and scientific works for a Library, and also a number of specimens of minerals, rocks, and fossils for the basis of a museum. But your Committee have not as yet carried out the Report, or taken the Hundred Pounds, so liberally placed within their controul upon this principle; that your Committee, under the circumstances, could not for a moment think of receiving the amount from the private funds of the Honorable President, unless they had some assurance that the same would be obtained from the Legislature. As such, and the Institute being unfinished, and no proper place for the reception of the books, &c., your Committee forebore receiving the amount until the meeting of the Legislature, when your Committee recommend an application to be made to that Honorable Body, for a Grant, in aid of their funds, and your Committee feel a strong assurance that through the influence and exertions of the President and his Colleagues, a liberal sum will be obtained, when the Report above alluded to can be carried into effect.

Your Committee received a Communication from the Provincial Board of Education, under date the 7th October last, addressed to the President, presenting to this Institute six copies of Professor Johnston's Catechism of Agricultural Chemistry, and a set of Chemical Apparatus, provided by Messrs. Griffin & Company, for illustration; which handsome and useful present, this Board have suitably acknowledged through their Secretary.

The Treasurer has submitted his account with the Society, which has been audited and found correct, shewing a balance in his hands in favor of the Institute of Ten Pounds Fourteen Shillings and Two Pence.

In the Report submitted last year, the Board strongly recommended that a Library should be established so soon as funds could be procured for the same. Your Committee are fully alive to the vast importance of a Library as auxiliary and in connection with this Society, and trust that the funds may be harnessed, and new efforts made, to procure more for this object, as your Committee believe that a well-selected Library of useful works, on Agriculture, Mechanics, &c., &c. will be a powerful means of advancing the true and permanent interests of the Institution.

When your Committee look back to the commencement of the year just terminated, and find that within that period, in many parts of the world, and even in the British Isles, with which we are more immediately connected by the ties of blood and nationality, we find that commotions of a serious character have agitated the public mind, and that the equilibrium of society has been shaken to its very centre, and men's minds agitated by the progressive events of the age in which we live. When we find that in many of our sister Colonies a complete revulsion in their prospects have taken place, and affluence has been succeeded by dire necessity; and when we further find that in one of our sister Colonies a disease of the most malignant kind is stalking through the land, bringing desolation and death in its train, we, as a people, have great cause of thankfulness to the Almighty Disposer of events that this Province, the humble appendage of the British Crown, is at the present time freed from internal and local commotion, that a bountiful harvest has rewarded the toil of the husbandman, that we are not at the present time the subjects of that harassing anxiety and care which distracted the minds of the people for the last four years, "the earth having yielded sufficient for man and beast." It is too true that trade has not adequately remunerated the toil of the merchant and operative, but we trust that a more healthy action has been infused into the energies of the people, that other branches of industrial operations may be prosecuted, and that our agriculturists will redouble their exertions and make the soil the grand point of their achievements. The country, we are persuaded, is surmounting its difficulties, and with energy, frugality and persevering industry, coupled with contentment and thankfulness, we may yet attain the goal of our most ardent wishes. We should bear in mind that although our climate is not the most salubrious, yet a clear and bracing atmosphere nerves the arm and invigorates the mental and physical powers to active exertions, and that neither our minds nor bodies are enfeebled by debility or disease, but it is a notorious fact that both with moderate attention to their care, are preserved to extended old age. We should bear in mind that although our soil is not so productive as in many other places, yet we have the convincing fact before our eyes that in the present imperfect state of husbandry, the toil of the husbandman is bountifully rewarded. And with contentment and thankfulness, and redoubled perseverance, coupled with sincerity and mutual forbearance, and with the introduction of capital and the development of public works, and the resources of the country, we may yet take our stand amongst the first colonies of Great Britain, and the tide of emigration that has been flowing from this Province will, we are convinced, return thitherward, and the vacant farms become again inhabited, and the crown lands of the province rendered produc-