A TRAIN OF THOUGHT

THAT RAN FROM ST. ANDREWS TO TALLAHASSEE.

The Bay Town, After an Eight Years' Interval—Livelier Places in Florida—A Well Without a Bottom—Representatives Who Should Account for their Stewardship.

[EIGHTH LETTER.]

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., April 10.—On awaking this morning from a sound sleep, a train of ideas was running through my head at a rapid rate, and as some of the readers of PROGRESS are fond of *light literature*, I will endeavor to crystalize some of these luminous thoughts into something like palpable form. For example, I passed through Monticello, 35 miles from here, a few days since, and at once your new bay steamer by that name passed through my mind, while the place itself so strongly reminded me of St. Andrews that I could not help but make a note of it. The same broad streets, with scattered residences and grassy roads, without shade trees, and with human beings to be seen few and far between—the whole town flattened out, and the only noise to be heard was the wind whistling along the house tops and telegraph wires. Of course, there is a vast difference in the temperature—here mercury 80°, St. Andrews in this month of April getting up into the 50s. I am glad, however, to think that St. Andrews has bright prospects before her, through the newly formed American syndicate and the Algonquin hotel—for it is high time that so beautiful a place, from natural advantages, were resurrected and brought into the world's eye once more. Formerly a large West India business was conducted here—but for years everything has been dormant, and the once fine wharves have been going to decay ever since. Two years ago—in company with our popular friend, Mr. Wilson, M. P. P., and the late Mr. George Grimmer, of excellent memory—I rode through the streets of St. Andrews. I had not been there for ten years before. Everything looked the same as if not more than a day's interval of time had transpired. The same boys (apparently), dressed exactly alike, were sitting on the ends of the wharves, barefooted, trying to catch fish with long poles, but even the fish did not seem to have any ambition to bite, as the boys never brought any to the surface. Ten years before I saw a man jogging round the corner of a street with a broken straw hat on his head, in a two-wheeled cart, and he had not yet got round the corner when I saw him two years ago. I suppose he is round by this time. The same two young girls who, on my previous visit, were looking out of a second story window, straining hard to see something down the street, were to all appearance the identical girls who were doing the same thing ten years before, as if they had been on the watch (for a young man, perhaps) during all that time. The weathercock that had been bent over on one of the church spires continued in the same shape. Nobody seemed to have ambition enough to go up and straighten it out. Like the tower of Pisa, its want of perpendicularity did not interfere with its usefulness. The same bevy of gentlemen whom I saw ten years before focussed in front of the post-office, smoking pipes and cigars, in earnest conversation, perhaps over the "Scott act"—gentlemen of leisure, apparently—were still transfixed to the very same spot, as if they had not eaten or drunken anything since I saw them ten years before. But perhaps your readers will begin to think I am carrying my allegory a little too far.

We next called at the custom house to see our old friend, Collector Gove, and even in him we could discern no difference. In appearance he was not a day older; but what there was for him to do I could not very well understand, for there was not a single vessel in port, and the "oldest inhabitant" could not remember the day when he last saw a square-rigged ship. I observed a fishing boat at one of the wharves, half filled with water, the very same, I thought, that was lying there ten years before. My friend Gove, however, must not think I am trying to do away with his office—for, no doubt, he finds plenty of employment, my chaffing to the contrary, notwithstanding. I am glad to believe that St. Andrews is about entering upon a new and prosperous era.

But I am in Tallahassee now, not St. Andrews. An effort is being made here for the introduction of water works—not a day too soon. The whole dependence for water appears to be in the old fashioned wells and water tanks. The clay soil is so stiff that it can be cut like cheese—a well 40 feet deep without a single stone to brace the sides, is the rule. Our well is of this pattern cut as smoothly down as if the sides were red granite. Finding the water supply turning a little brackish, a couple of darkeys, a short time since, contracted to go down the well in the bucket, a distance of about 40 feet, to clean it out, for which they were paid $7. The result was they did not only send up a large quantity of accumulated silt and debris, but they actually knocked the bottom out of the well, in other words the soil is so singularly fissured that rivulets run underground in all directions, many feet beneath—the theory therefore is that in digging the darkies disturbed one of the lower strata veins, hence a new channel is so given for the water to run out and find vent in some other direction. At all events we have been without water ever since (I would just ask our temperance friends here if we cannot get water to drink what is to be done?) Not quite so bad, however, so long as Mr. McKenzie on the next corner is willing to supply our wants, and our domestic does not object to be our water carrier. She is in very good humor at present. But as regards the water works in process of introduction Tallahassee will never know the great blessing of the supply until the people become experimentally acquainted with it—not only for household, but for fire purposes, and I am surprised to learn that there is not a single fire engine in the place—wells and buckets being the only appliances in case of fire

Then there is an ice factory near the gas works, run by steam power—the *modus operandi* is interesting, but I have not room here to explain it. Think of freezing ice with the mercury at 85! At present the factory is idle, consequently we have to make our ice cream out of hot water, and as to "sherry cobblers" and "gin cocktails" and "mint juleps" to say nothing of "soda water," no one can indulge in these luxuries until they set the chemicals to work at the mill, which will be, I am informed, "next week"—but "next week," to my knowledge, has been promised by my friends here from time to time for the last two months. Only think of a country without ice!

It is somewhat remarkable to what age the colored people in the south attain. We have a man doing light work about our place, who announces himself to be 106, and judging by his looks and actions we should take him for an antediluvian, born some time before the flood. Gilbert is his name, but I call him "Old Hundred." Of course he was once a chattel, and if he were so still there would be someone to take an interest in him. He is now alone in the world, and there is very little fellow feeling among the Southern darkeys for one another. So poor "Old Hundred" paddles about in his own way, uncared for, and he caring for nobody but himself, which after all, I suppose, is the true type of humanity the world over.

Yesterday afternoon I was present in the House of Representatives, having been provided with an excellent seat by the usher on the floor of the House, near the speaker's chair, so that I would see and hear, to great advantage. The occasion was most interesting, and the hall was crowded with members of both branches, and ladies and gentlemen, natives and visitors. The attraction was an address to be delivered by Senator Call, (a nephew I believe of ex-governor Call,) just returned from Washington, who, having been elected by the representatives of Florida (according to the constitution which governs all the states alike, I suppose) to serve them as Senator in Congress, he now returns and meets his constituents (the representative body) in order to lay before them an account of his stewardship. The hon. gentleman was introduced by the speaker of the house. His appearance was dignified and commanding—his voice fine and language that of one well accustomed to public speaking, flowing in phrases well set, and words and ideas grammatically put together and captivating. He spoke for an hour and a half, and I was so taken with him I could have listened without wearying for another hour and a half. Of course it is necessary to state the tenor of his address—it was based upon his services in the senate of the United States, in behalf of the South, the state of Florida in particular. Although strongly Democratic as all the South is, and although his party was defeated at the recent election for president, he spoke magnanimously of the incoming administration, was willing to accept the inevitable and loyally stand by the constitution, whatever the party in the ascendent, and yet without sacrifice of principle.

It seemed to me an excellent arrangement on the part of the State representatives to call upon their representative in the second branch of Congress, to come forward and inform the people through them, how he had discharged his duties during the congressional session, just ended.

It might be observed here that the political balances of the American constitution are so nicely adjusted that the power of the people is even more strongly and fairly expressed through the senate than the representative body—inasmuch as the smallest state in the union has as much to say in the senate as the largest, each and all of the states sending two members, and two only to that branch of the legislature. Therefore as all measures have to pass through the same ordeal in both houses, and the concurrent action of both is necessary to become law, the interests of each individual state are better looked after or protected, from the fact already shown, viz: that whereas New York sends 40 representatives (or thereabout) to congress, and Florida only four (in accordance with population), when it comes to the senate Florida is as strong as New York, for both are on equality there, as each can only send two members. Hence the senate of the United States is the more influential body. But to return, it struck me very forcibly why would not the same course be adopted in New Brunswick, (as far as circumstances will allow arising from political differences in the respective constitutions)—that is to say, take St. John for example, and upon their return from Ottawa, call upon Messrs. Weldon, Ellis and Skinner to meet the people at the Institute and ascertain from them what had been done during the session, and in what way they had looked after the interests of New Brunswick, their own constituents in particular? And so with the representatives of the other sections of the province. We shall call upon Mr. Temple.

We spent a very pleasant evening with ex-governor Bloxham and his excellent lady at their mansion yesterday, where we had the opportunity of seeing some fine old family relics—and articles of *virtu*, such as an antique gilt side table over a hundred years old, once the property of Louis XVI. of France, afterwards of Napoleon I.—then of Princess Murat, who presented it to the lady just named, in whose possession it now is. I may be doing wrong by thus alluding to private matters, and it may be considered a breach of hospitality on my part, after receiving so much kindness and attention from friends, to make such things public. If so, I ask forgiveness for my conduct. Governor Bloxham is a public man, to a certain extent. Although not now in active politics, he was, up to four years ago, governor of Florida four years—and he is still called "Governor Bloxham," and spoken of on all sides as one of the best governors that any state in the South has had—of first-class descent and fine executive abilities—withal kind, intelligent and genial. As we have, or soon will have, several ex-lieutenant governors in New Brunswick, we hope to say as much for them some day, when we come to publish our second *Political Volume*.

I do not know, PROGRESS, that I shall have time before leaving to write you many more letters; but I have notes enough stored away to fill a volume when written out on my return. If more of our people could be induced to spend the winter months in this delicious climate and among kind friends, they would return, as we feel that our party shall, renewed in health and happy in the recollection of the many weeks of enjoyment we have put in here at Tallahassee.

G. E. F.

LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE.

The Clergy Should Reply.

TO THE EDITORS OF PROGRESS: The following notice appeared in Mr. Watts' paper, *Secular Thought*, of March 30:

For several Sunday evenings past special sermons have been delivered in Halifax, N. S., by the Christian ministers and an eminent professor of the lower provinces, upon "Christian Evidences." The last three of the series up to date were as follows: The Attitude and Demands of Secularism, by Rev. L. G. Stevens; Future Life, by Prof. Vroom, of King's college, N. S., and "Cumulative Evidences of Christianity, by Rev. J. Roy Campbell of Dorchester, N. B. Mr. Chas. Watts is now delivering replies to these lectures, on Sunday evenings, at Science hall, Toronto, and a special article by him on each of these subjects will appear in our next and subsequent issues. The above reverend gentlemen and the learned professor are hereby respectfully invited to meet Mr. Watts in public discussion, in Halifax, N. S., upon the respective subjects of their lectures.

I do not know if Mr. Watts intends to visit this city again, but if he does, I hope our ministers will come forward and show us whether there is anything or not in his teaching. I was one of those who heard him lecture here, last summer, and I must say that when he challenged anyone to come forward and disprove his statements—that, if true, would destroy the very foundation of Christianity—I felt that some of our cleverest ministers should have been there to defend their teachings, and also show the fallacy of his utterances.

If Watts is allowed to come here and hold undisputed sway, it is hard to tell what the consequences may be, and our ministers will have to bear the largest share of the responsibility.

St. John, April 4. A CHURCHMAN.

Is It Safe Insurance?

Members of the I. O. F. have reason to be interested in the argument of Mr. W. Fitzgerald, superintendent of insurance, on the subject of the act incorporating the Foresters' Supreme court. He said, in the course of his remarks:

The rates of the society are acknowledged to be very much less than the rates required by the government standard, due allowance being made for the expense element which is certainly in the Foresters reduced to a minimum.

It is asserted by the chief ranger that the rates are founded upon certain mortality tables, but the persons who formed the tables for the society appear to have fallen into the error of supposing that a premium which was intended to carry a risk for one year was sufficient to carry it throughout life. It is also asserted that a large revenue is derived from lapses sufficient to compensate for the deficiency in the rates. If this be the case, then the funds so derived in the past must be in the treasury and the society should not hesitate to have their liabilities under their policies or endowment certificates submitted to a valuation. It is, however, reasonably clear that it is only among the younger lives that there were many lapses and I am convinced that the revenue derived from this source is much less than is supposed by the officers of the society, and am also quite satisfied that the society does not possess the reserve which the government requires of companies doing the class of business which this society has been transacting, that is the level premium business.

APRIL NIGHT.

How deep the April night is in its noon,
The hopeful, solemn, many-murmured night!
The earth lies hushed with expectation; bright,
Above the world's dark border, burns the moon,
Yellow and large; from forest floorways strewn
With flowers and fields that tingle with new birth
The moist smell of the unimprisoned earth
Comes up, a sigh, a haunting promise. Soon,
Ah! soon, the teeming triumph! At my feet
The river with its stately sweep and wheel
Moves on, slow-motioned, luminous, grey like steel.
From fields far-off whose watery hollows gleam
Aye with blown throats that make the long hours sweet,
The sleeplesss toads are murmuring in their dream.

—*A. Lampman in Scribner's Magazine.*

SAILING O'ER THE BAY,

TO THE LAND OF EVANGELINE AND NEGROES.

This, That and Other Things That Relieve the Monotony of a Day on a Steamer When Seasickness Doesn't—"Brooks" Patronizes the "Monticello."

On board *City of Monticello*; Wednesday morning. Ten minutes before we start for Digby. The passengers are on deck admiring four-masted ship *Lord Downshire*. Old gentleman with white beaver in saloon thinks $2 a barrel is as much as any apples are worth; old gentleman with red cloud tied in a grandmother's knot thinks so, too. Both agree that one barrel of potatoes is better in a large family than four barrels of apples.

We swing out from the wharf; none of the crowd thereon are weeping. Probably know that dear ones are safe while on board.

We are out in the harbor. Old gentleman with white beaver comes on deck. He thinks steamer will swing round now. She swings! We are off. With whistles blowing we pass the beacon. Man comes out of beacon's wood-house and waves his hat; he also rings the bell. It is a half-hearted, salaried ring; evidently thinks it a chestnut. I guess it is. We scud past Partridge Island. The island does not look a fit place for white dresses and linen dusters. The picnic season is not here just yet.

Now we are on the bosom of the briny deep; the same looks like a large mill pond this morning. There are very few ruffles on it. A woman in the saloon is standing as straight as "h," looking out the window. She ain't sure whether she'll be seasick or not; thinks she will. Another woman tells her not to think about it. Also tells her a story. Very interesting; story done; seasickness gone. I go on deck. Young man tells me it is going to be a fine day. I am glad. He spent one day and one night in St. John; says he never saw so many good-looking girls before. He belongs to Nova Scotia. He is going home from the backwoods of Massachusetts; is a great admirer of the achievements of men in said backwoods, in the profanity line. Says they beat the earth. I think so, too, since I met him. Ten o'clock a. m.; man with white beaver breaks out all over saloon. Subject: Cattle.

We are now nestling alongside Digby's new wharf; it is 11.30 a. m. We are taking in freight. I am watching *Evangeline* deck hand in corduroy trousers juggle some trunks. He has one lock near off, and has a hole in bottom of another trunk. He is ably assisted by Indian with wooden leg. The *Evangeline* is a steamboat that takes passengers from Yarmouth train to Annapolis. *Evangeline* is noted for her green chairs and benches in great profusion. Now she's off for Annapolis. She's got a good start on us; so now we're off. Digby's colder than Carleton Heights, N. B. Passengers all go in saloon. All are attracted by loud talking at forward windows. It is the old gentlemen with beaver and red cloud. They think we will catch the *Evangeline* yet. Man with red cloud saw a distinct gain in last five minutes. The *Evangeline* is piling on steam. The general opinion is that we'll catch her. We have six miles to go yet. Two commercial-looking young men are agreeing with the old gentlemen in everything. The fat commercial fellow has caught hold of a pin, by mistake. He meant to pinch the other fellow. Man with white hat says, "Oh, my! but we're gainin' on her." We all think this is a fine boat. The Portland stone cutter thinks we are going faster. I guess we are. We are putting on more steam. I don't think we will want any tombstones this trip, though. Man with white hat is getting anxious about *Evangeline*. He came down in her one day when she was racing. He won't do it again. He thinks they're reckless. Man with strong tenor voice bets cigars we don't beat her. He backs out. It's all the same. We are gaining. Now we're "neck-and-neck." We are laughing at the *Evangeline's* passengers. Man with white hat makes believe throw them a rope. They look glum. *Evangeline* can't keep up.

We arrive at Annapolis. Tide is low; so we have to swing round to reach the wharf. Swinging takes some time. *Evangeline* comes up; is a small boat; reaches the wharf; lands passengers. They laugh at us. We don't laugh. Crowd on wharf to see the boat in.

Annapolis seems to be a very busy and prosperous place. It has more negroes, of all sizes, shapes and forms, to the square inch than any other place in Canada. This is the land of Evangeline. The W. & A. train which arrives is drawn by an iron Evangeline. The passengers that go to Windsor on it were brought here in the boat *Evangeline*. Everything here is Evangeline and negroes.

The people say they don't want a small steamer on the Bay route again. There is some comfort in coming across now. Everything is first-class. The *Monticello* is large and roomy, and fitted out in the best of style. The officers all know their business and mind it. Capt. Fleming is king. Steward Lang and Mrs. Lang are the friends of every passenger, and their large corps of assistants are here, there and everywhere when they're wanted, and seem to think of nothing else but the comfort of travellers. I might here remark that all the officers and hands on board are new men, with the exception of the captain, mate, purser, baggagemaster and cook.

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