

BYGONE DAYS RECALLED

AN OLD TIMER'S REMINISCENCES OF PEOPLE AND EVENTS.

Something about the Institute and the Men who Were to the Front in its Early History—Names which Will Live in the Future Annals of this Province.

IX.

I notice with regret that the Hall of the Mechanics' Institute has taken down its sign, and is about going into liquidation—out of business. By the way, are the readers of PROGRESS aware that the word "Hall" belongs to this edifice; although it was so christened by its promoters 50 years ago, it has always been called "The Mechanics' Institute," whereas it should be "the Hall of the Mechanics' Institute." However, what's in a name? If you call a cabbage a turnip, it will still be a cabbage. It is a pity, too, to part with this old memorial of the youthful frequenters to its portals. It should be preserved if possible, if only to look at as a monument of its founders, and for the pleasure it has afforded to the past and present generation. How many of the promoters of this old Pantheon survive? I can only recall three—Thomas Daniel, now a member of one of the most dignified clubs in London, viz., "The Reform," situated in Pall Mall, where I once had the honor of dining in 1855—however, I do not wish this mentioned again, lest I forfeit the confidence of my old friends, which is worth more to me than a dinner in my old days—Sir Leonard Tilley and Joseph W. Lawrence. There may be more, but I do not remember them. The first gentleman is hale and hearty at 80—a "fine old English gentleman," living at ease. I had the pleasure of seeing him about eighteen months ago in Boston, where we exchanged greetings and opinions of St. John men and things as they were 50 years ago, when he was accounted one of our leading citizens, for his great public spirit and gentlemanly bearing. He was the founder of the "London House," and after accumulating a fortune, retired from business in favour of his nephew Thomas W. Daniel, now of the firm of Daniel & Boyd, very worthy descendants in the same establishment—the oldest now, perhaps, in the Province. Mr. Daniel left St. John about forty years ago, and has never been back since. I hope I am not trenching upon private matters? Also, our Lieut. Governor is among the last of the Mohicans. This gentleman, too, keeps his head well above water—about the same age as the Queen. He has been in many a political whirlpool since he helped to launch the old Institute—one time all but beneath the waves, then floating upon their crest, but always keeping abreast of the current—right side up—in fact too buoyant in spirits ever to sink beneath superincumbent difficulties whatever their size or weight. He carries his years as he does his honours, well; and I hope he will live long enough to wear the blue ribbon of the garter. I am not aware that this gentleman was ever equal to the immortal George in never telling a lie. But I think he may compare favourably with the Governor of Virginia, of whom it is said he was never known to utter a profane word, he never smoked, never took a chew of tobacco and has never drunk as much as half a gallon of spirituous liquors in his life. To which credentials I beg to add that our governor was never heard to utter a severe word, or call a political opponent a harsh name, a practice so universal among politicians; his personal allusions have always been kind, but the lash at the end of the whip seldom failed to reach the raw of a political opponent. Then there is Mr. Joseph W. Lawrence the third of this excellent trio amongst the surviving founders of the Institute. Were it not for a physical imperfection in an important sense, this gentleman must long since have taken the exalted political position for which his abilities and strong individuality so eminently befitted him. He may be emphatically called the historian of his native City. To him appears to have been confided the rare manuscripts of our City forefathers—he is the custodian as it were of every scrap of information appertaining to the first settlement of the place and the pioneers who preceded even the Loyalists, such as the Simonds, the Whites, the Hazens. What Mr. Lawrence does not know in such matters is not worth knowing; and should he pass away before committing to print what he has in store. St. John and the Province generally will be a heavy loser. I am told he has in manuscript form several valuable records—the Lives of the Old Judges, and also of the leading settlers of the Province, etc. I was never able to define this gentleman's politics when in the Legislature. Had he been there longer no doubt they would have been better understood. His leanings probably had a conservative tendency, during the "old school" days. Had he kept pace in the traces with the other old "war horse," he might to-day have been in the enjoyment of a good supply of oats and well-housed in a comfortable stable!

But as to the Institute itself. It has been the scene of some amusing incidents, a few of which I propose to recall, and refresh the memory of your older readers. A lecture was given on one occasion by Dr. Gesner, on the subject, if I mistake not, of Electro-Biology. By way of experiment and illustration, an ox's head was to be brought forward at a certain stage

of the lecture, for the purpose of showing to the audience the effect of the galvanic battery in the way of reanimating a dead carcass, or rather in rekindling the vital spark—in short, bringing back to life an animal that had been to all intents and purposes dead. For instance, it has been asserted that persons hanged or drowned have been restored to life by the exercise of scientific appliances. The intention was not to make the ox's head live without the rest of his body, but to show how he might be brought to life, if there were no dislocation or severance of the spinal cord and great loss of blood. Matters, however, had to be adjusted very nicely, to suit the occasion—a head stark and stiff would not answer the purpose. It must be fresh, even warm, from the aboiteur. The slaughter, not far distant, in the neighborhood, was to commence with the commencement of the lecture, and at the moment the doctor expected to arrive at this head of his subject, the head was to be cut off at a preconcerted signal, a sort of telegraphy carried along the line by boys stationed at certain distances, from the Institute to the slaughter house. Now, to time the proceedings accurately was somewhat of a difficult matter—for there was a large audience, some eight or nine hundred drawn together to witness the wonderful spectacle; and we all know how impatient an audience becomes when there is a failure in the connection. We were all ready for the bloody head, and would have it whether the doctor had or not, on time. At length, after an hiatus of twenty minutes, the ox's head was brought on the platform, reeking in its gore, contained in a large wooden platter prepared for the purpose. And such a spectacle! Its eyes were wide open and glazy—the boys in the gallery, aye, even in the "swamp," shouted and whistled. The whole audience was convulsed from contending emotions—stamping, laughing, groaning, shouting, even fainting among ladies. The wires of the battery were adjusted and connected with the muscles of the head, and when the whole electric force was applied, the head moved, the eyes winked, the jaws began to grind—all done in fact promised by the Lecturer and to the entire satisfaction of the audience. All the newspapers, some half a dozen, represented the performance as sublime and edifying—a spectacular performance no where to be seen outside of Spain, where the matadore and the bull are heroes of the hour, and the onlookers applaud with delight. Would such an exhibition be tolerated at the present day? Certainly not! And yet we all thought ourselves as refined then as we are now.

On another occasion Dr. Patterson gave us a lecture on electricity, and by way of experiment and to show the great power of the electric fluid in destroying buildings, rooting up trees, setting fire, killing persons, he had a miniature house prepared and placed on the table, by his stand. Instead of warning the audience when the supreme moment should arrive for putting the electric spark in contact, that we might all be prepared for the shock, he suddenly turned on the full force, the lightning flashed, the house went off in a blaze—the table caught fire, and the new Institute for a time seemed doomed to destruction in the second year of its existence. The audience became excited—a panic ensued, and the way we all bolted (men, women and children and babies in arms) over the stiff-backed benches for the exit doors, was a scene most grand and sublime. The Lecturer and the officers of the Institute tried to restore order by shouting from the platform, but as well try to keep back Niagara. The only way to treat a panic is to let it take its own course. This one did so in its own way. Those who first found themselves out and upon the sidewalk were the first to try and wedge themselves in again through the outpour, and so between the two wedges of humanity, meeting together in the halls and on the stairways, the lock was complete—nor was the blockade raised until some one in the crowd began to laugh, which proved to be an anodyne that had a most soothing effect. We then began to unravel ourselves, some going back into the hall to hear the remainder of the lecture still going on, while others wended their way homeward to recount their evening's experience.

AN OLD TIMER.

A Lofty Intellect.

It was a Fredericton lawyer, of course, who, in addressing the Jury at a recent sitting of the Carleton circuit court, remarked: "I am at a disadvantage, gentlemen, in this case, as compared with my learned friend, Mr. A., because of the fact that I am a stranger in this county. I am not able to conjecture, as I would if addressing a York county jury, what are the features of the case which are most likely to influence your judgment. The lawyer cannot always know the minds of the jury. There are a great many things, gentlemen, which might impress an ordinary man's mind that probably would not strike a mind like mine." It is needless to say that the "ordinary minds" composing the jury were duly impressed.

Something Larger.

Guest (to waiter)—What do mean by bringing me such a small piece of meat? Have you nothing larger?  
Waiter—Oh, yes, I'll go and get your bill.—N. Y. Sun.

Out at Sea.

PEACE TO HIS MEMORY.

A PEN PICTURE OF A VARIOUSLY GIFTED SERVANT OF GOD.

Some of the Quaint and Curious Ways and Words of a Maine Clergyman whose Wit and Wisdom Endear'd Him to the Flocks Among whom He Labored.

Yes, the mark is set; the final word is written. I see it with misty eyes, and it is a careless paragraph, but it announces the passing of a soul worthy of nobler chronicle. Well I remember him! Well was bestowed in that quaint husk of a body, a manly, capacious being, worthy of remembrance; in that low, queer, lighthouse-body flamed a most clear spirit-torch, that in its glow transfigured the grotesque and scant physique, and made the listener forgetful, in the searching play of wit and sweep of spontaneous eloquence, of that corporeal incongruity, which seems in such cases a sardonic whim, or humor of Nature. Master of laughter! Master of tears! With that grim smile creeping over his leathery countenance, I see him electrifying the minds of crowds who had misseen him passing through them, and by his hearty pathos making green the soul's pathway where he went. Are there no tears in Heaven? Then how must the sweet, gentle weeper be ill at home! Is there no laughter? Is wit under ban? Then how can it be tolerable for this sparkling spirit, to whose close hitting at the mark Truth itself stood indebted?

Spite of modern intolerance of it, he loved the tobacco pouch, upon which so many of his callow brethren stood to pronounce a "Babylonish curse." Listening one day to such a tirade as hung his head for a season, either in shame for himself or them, he gave his rejoinder: "Brethren, this weed deserves burning; therefore, am I burning it as fast as I can." Pushing his chair back from his own table, he avers that the only thing for which green peas and cherry pie can be left is a pipe of tobacco, and soon has he entered the cloudy realm of meditation, and arranges his fitfully amid its fragrant fumes. For some may dream their sermons, some may gather them by the wayside, or catch them as they fly; but perhaps he exhaled his thought that blackest and shortest of clay pipes. This was his foible,—an infirmity of a life intrinsically good and noble. He said of himself: "I am a jug. All the week through I am open and filling up. On Saturday the stopper is put in, and I ferment. On Sunday I pour the vintage; it may happen sweet or sour."

It happened that in the first year of his presiding eldership on B— District, he was to dedicate a church at C—, one fine Sabbath. The church stood on a great hill overlooking the sea, and was large for a country so remote from town. It was full of people, not a soul of whom had ever seen him, and it was a little past the time set for his coming. Entered suddenly an undersized rusty looking farmer, seemingly from a back settlement, passing toward the pulpit, with his head bowed, and a leathery-hued sphynxian countenance. Some one arose to give him a pew, near the door; but of this courtesy he seemed unaware. Horrors! he went into the pulpit and sat down, and there was not even a good old Scotch woman to remind him that the "meenster" sat there, and that it was no place for a "laddie." People looked curiously at him and at one another. He arose, and in a squeaky nasal monotone announced and read his hymn; then there was visible consternation, settling finally into disgust. His prayer being brief, and unimpressive, they were not relieved; and when he proceeded to his sermon, they lapsed into all sorts of negligence and inattention. But, lo! The slow, mechanical manner modifies and quickens; the nasal monotone elevates, varies, and carries with it a thrill; the unexpressive, mask-like countenance, from which the soul seemed forever retired, betrays emotion, and is lighting and working more and more. Now to the front struggles an unusual soul, overleaping all its mean outworks, and delighting in the athlete race for which it is fitted; the pigmy figure dilates, the eye flashes; and with precision and force the classically moulded sentences are uttered, simple and sublime. Look! in his growing fervor, the hands that lay upon the Bible, finger tips against finger tips, are lifted up, and prepare to part; this is the signal of fire. Regard the congregation now! Every head is taken up from the pew on which it reclined; every eye is attent on the speaker, whose eloquence is enchaining his congregation. Now they follow breathlessly his heavenward-flight; and now, while tears run in rivulets at his pathos, sighs, sobs, amens, and halleluiahs, attest the power that moves them. He is evangelical in tone, positive in experience, frequent in confession. "Brethren, a little boy, in my father's barn, more than forty years ago, God, for Christ's sake, converted my soul!" Then would he walk, with that peculiar smile about his lips, as who should say: "Don't call your nut sour till you have cracked the kernel." He said to me: "When I went to C—, they had a pulpit about as high as Fort Knox. I could just see the people over it, without a stool to stand on. I used to load and fire, and then fall back." When first he entered that pulpit, as a newly appointed preacher, he announced himself thus to his people: "Brethren, hitherto you have had a whole

man part of the time; henceforward you are to have part of a man the whole of the time." Yet such sayings did not seem to mar his influence.

He loved a bit of parley with the Bishop; and the conference was always visibly amused when he put a smart saying upon that dignity. It is the custom that when in session each man is called for the yearly examination, that he who makes response shall report the sum he has collected for missions. When, on one occasion, it became the duty of Bro. D— to respond, and his statement was given, the Bishop queried: "Have you taken all the other collections, brother?" Then, with a particularly fine twinkle in his eye, the response came: "No, Bishop; but I took them as long as my pocket book held out."

Woe to pretension or insincerity if they came within the range of his sharp arrows. A sham could not stand before him. Sometimes his shatts glanced upon his friends, whom he did not seriously mean to convict of evil or mistake, in such a way as to make them wince. "Why don't you shout?" cried a sometimes windy, but really eloquent and able, minister, who was leading up a camp-meeting sermon with a rather unwilling altar-service. "Don't feel like it," responded Brother D—. "More of the fire, and then you will!" yells the preacher. "Nay," persists Brother D—; "fire does not operate alike on all substances." "How so? How so?" "Well, wood, it burns; lead, it melts; iron, it heats red-hot; water, it turns to steam; gas, it explodes!" "You are fond of beans in this conference," observed a new-comer, in the vestry, when the third member of the same reverend and doubtful family had been introduced to him. "Yes," responded Elder D—, who stood by, "We are, or we would not have taken so many of them half-baked." Having had, in the connection, some some slight difficulty with young ministers imported from the mother country, who could but imperfectly adapt themselves to altered conditions, he observed: "The only way to Americanize the English mastiff is to take him when he is a pup."

Good bye! We have spoken our final word together, thou choice soul, unique among a company of marked and variously gifted men, who belonged to an earlier time. "Brother, your life is before you," he said, half pensively, as we sat beside a well in the forest, to which they came from the encampment to draw water; "but my work is nearly done, and I am almost at the foot of the hill." The end has been reached; and on the hill side that overlooks the Penobscot, and near his home, rests one, traditions of whose wisdom, wit and eloquence are rife in all the country over which he travelled.

PASTOR FELIX.

COULD NOT FOOL HER.

She Had Learned How to Rebuff the Pedlar and Wandering Book Agent.

She was a very green specimen of a servant girl, and her experience in the backwoods settlements had not rendered her very familiar with the etiquette of visiting cards.

Now, it so happened that her new mistress had set apart Wednesday as her reception day, and the very first Wednesday after the instalment of this woodland flower as second lieutenant in the household, the lady of the house was called away to visit a sick friend. On her return in the evening, the lady from Wayback, who bore the title of Almaine, greeted her with effusion, and following her into the parlor, threw herself into the easiest chair in the room, and remarked genially:

"Guess there's a concert or bazaar goin' on in town."

Frozen silence, accompanied by a stare of calm surprise, intended to wither the offender, on the part of the lady of the house, and a total absence of withering on the part of the servant girl, who continued with unruffled affability:

"There was an awful lot of women here today, I told them you was out, but I asked them to come in anyhow, and they didn't none of them have manners enough, but they all had a pocket-book full of tickets, and they was bound to leave some of them but I wouldn't take them. I said I didn't hardly think you wanted any, so it was no use leavin' em. But one woman was that sassy and that sot in her ways she stepped right in the hall and laid two on the table; so I just up and told her to leave them there if she was a mind to, but I guessed she'd have a lively time gettin' her pay for them! I ain't the kind to be fooled if I hain't been in town long. I'm too used to the pushin' ways of the peddlars that comes to our place in summer!"

Almaine is not quite sure to this day how she got back to the kitchen, nor yet why she has never been allowed to open the door for visitors since.

G. C. S.

'Twas Ever Thus.

Ye cautious manne on ye first morning putteth on his overshoes and goeth forth, but ye daye is drye and warme. Ye seconde daye alsoe he taketh them, and it is warme. Yet again ye third daye he taketh them, and it is warme alsoe, and ye asphalt maketh him sorely lame. On ye fourth daye he leaveth them at home, and behold at nightfall it turneth colde, and ye frost hitteth him where he liveth, and his adversary mocketh him, and he goeth home sadly and thinketh he has la grippe. And soe ye weary worlde doth wag alonge.

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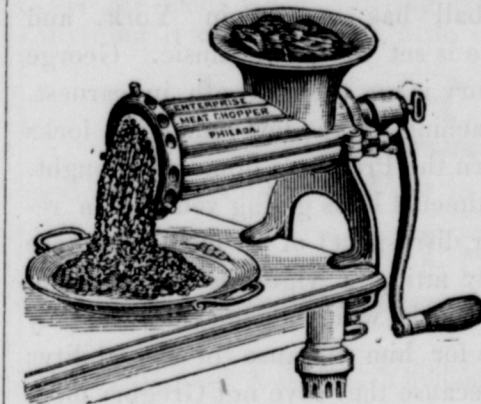
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