

BYGONE DAYS RECALLED

AN OLD TIMER'S REMINISCENCES OF PEOPLE AND EVENTS.

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

I had a friend in St. John, a great horse flesh fancier. He knew all the good and bad points of a thorough or ill-bred animal, equal to Rowley Bunting, then considered to be an authority. Our friend W. D. W. Hubbard, still living hale and hearty near Fredericton, probably at the age of 80, was in his prime as one of the best Auctioneers in St. John. On the occasion to which I am about to refer, a fine black charger was advertised for sale by auction on the Market square. A large assembly gathered, among whom was my friend, whom I will call Horsman for shortness, having an eye to business. The horse (an entire, so called) was a picture to look at—symmetrical body, fine limbs and graceful action, all of which were set of to great advantage by his owner, who kept him in perpetual motion, moving him round in a circle to keep up his warmth and make his coat shine. As soon as put up Horsman sailed in for a bid. He never saw a handsomer or finer animal in all his life, and was determined to be the possessor or die in the attempt. After much bidding all round the horse was finally knocked down to Horsman at \$150. The animal had not long been in his possession when Horsman discovered that he had some weak points, such as being spavined and having a faculty for chewing his bit, backing out of his stall after breaking his halter, running away

street the animal went at the top of his speed, tearing all before him, and into Prince William street, scattering people right and left. While this was going on, or rather while the horse was going on, the overturned bevy of friends were picking themselves up at their leisure, and wondering where the horse went, or would finally bring up. At all events, he was caught somewhere near Reed's Point, and restored to its owner.

This trick was repeated on several subsequent occasions. Horsman's friends at last told him that the trouble with the horse was that he was too highly fed, therefore too spirited, and that he ought to deduct about one-half of his oats at a meal, and reduce his hay in proportion. A happy suggestion thought H., especially as he was always known to be a great economist, and therefore would be able to save something. He did not only take this wholesome advice, but some of his friends were uncharitable enough to assert that he resorted to the plan adopted by Moses, son of the Vicar of Wakefield, who put green spectacles upon his father's horse when out of hay, and turned him into a heap of shavings, thus deceiving the animal into the belief that he had before him a fine mess of green fodder. But all H's plans failed, and so at length he thought the next best thing would be to get rid of his horse if possible—sell him to some one else, in order that said some one else might enjoy the pleasure of fast riding. Now, H. had a small farm some miles out of the city, whither he repaired with his family for weeks at a time, for the benefit of his health, during the summer months. Perhaps he might be able to swap horses with some countryman as wise as himself in such

breaking and something might be done in the way of an exchange—for he was bound to get rid of his splendid runaway for the mischief he had already done, and the constant danger he was to his family should he attempt to harness him again; and now it was H's turn to bluff his neighbour by asking him if he was crazy, and sundry other odd questions; but finally it all ended in the swap being consummated, and the ten dollars boot handed over by H. to S. Each animal was soon after led off in opposite directions to those from whence they came.

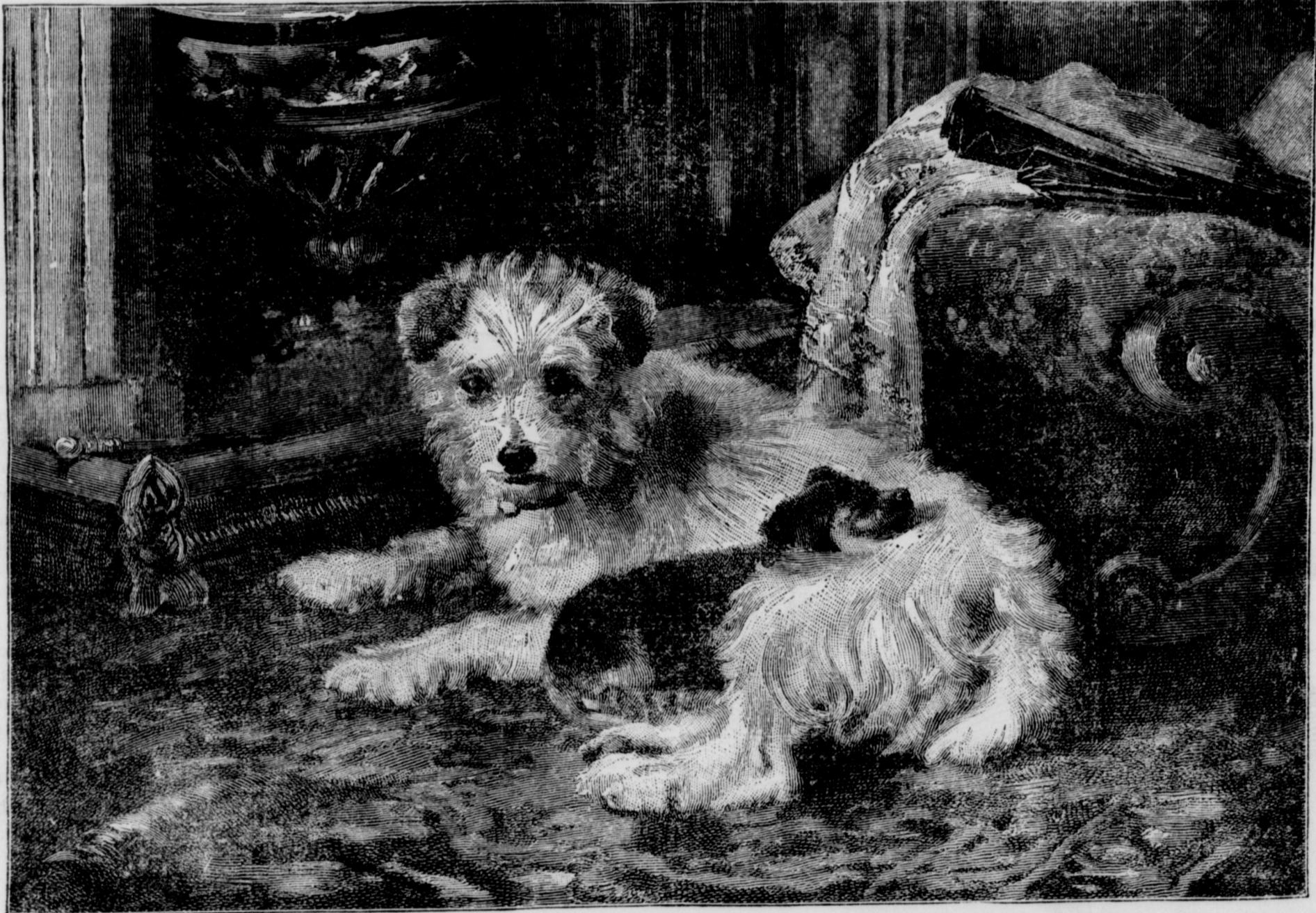
Well, my dear, said H. to his wife that night, we are all right now. It we have not full speed (dank that brute—it makes me shudder every time I think of him), we have safety, and we and the children can now ride out with comfort. No doubt Twisel also had something to say to his wife that same night and in another key, in admiration upon his horse and questionable qualities.

Next morning H. was up betimes and into the stable to discover all the fine points in his new exchange, and when he returned to breakfast he informed his wife that he had the best of the bargain, notwithstanding Twisel had roped ten dollars out of him "to boot." He was quite sure the boot was on the right foot this time, and no broken bones were to be apprehended in future. In order to catch the railway train on its way downward to St. John at ten o'clock, local time, H. harnessed his new horse; the distance between his barn and the station was about three quarters of a mile. By moderate driving he would be on time in a quarter of an hour. "Away went Gilpin neck or naught"—not quite so fast, however; off he started in splendid order, but just as he arrived at the stile gate open-

is something in retributive justice after all—and that revenge is sweet under peculiar circumstances, not of ethical acceptance however.

While H. and his family were seated at dinner on a subsequent afternoon, Farmer Flame came rushing into the room in great trepidation, so full of utterance that he could scarcely articulate, but it was quite evident to H. and his wife—who both dropped their knives and forks together as if by one impulse—that there was something up more than common, or Flame would not open his mouth so wide, or tremble as he did from excitement. The first ejaculation that crystallised upon Flame's lips was, "Twisel and his wife are both killed. They were in their wagon this morning going to town with a load of turnips and potatoes, and just as they reached the brow of the hill near Nauwigewauk, their horse, a splendid black, made a dash for the railroad track, tumbled both of them into the ditch, smashed the wagon, and so mixed up the cargo, that potatoes and turnips all looked alike." At this juncture in the narrative a wicked smile found expression upon H's visage, while Mrs. H., being more tender-hearted than "John," as she generally called him, sighed most pathetically. As the first of a story is always an exaggeration, so it turned out in this case—for it was learned afterwards that nobody was killed, but that Twisel and his wife, like their produce, got a tremendous shaking up, while their wagon was considerably knocked out of shape, so much so as to involve the price of a new one.

But the moral of it all was that H. had his revenge; and he did not know but after all he had the best of the bargain, smart a man as Twisel thought himself.



PRIVILEGED CHARACTERS.

with his carriage when he had a good chance, and sundry other imperfections in his character, physically and mentally. Besides all this, H. learned that the owner of said horse had been hawking him about town and in the lively stables for some days previous to his getting into Mr. Hubbard's hands, to find a purchaser, without avail. The price fixed was \$100 only, not what he afterwards brought at auction—\$150. Horsman found he was in for it—that he did not know as much about horse flesh as he thought he did—and like a true Philosopher he made up his mind that as he had been stuck for a bad bargain he would submit meekly to the inevitable. How interesting all this must have been to the original owner, getting \$50 more than he valued his property.

One day shortly after this H. thought he would take a sleigh ride through the streets of St. John, and at the same time astonish his friends with his fine turnout, a spanking trotter and robes of Siberian grandeur, with ribbons and bindings to match, while the harness, silver mounted, was all in keeping and worthy of Horsman's plethoric pocket-book. Nor did the owner ride alone. He had on board two bon vivants, friends of his who always stuck closer to him than to a brother, for the simple reason that H. seldom went abroad without money, while they were always hard up. On rounding the old Commercial hotel corner, a large wooden building then standing on the northern corner of King and Charlotte streets, kept by Mr. Fellows, Beaucephelus (called after Alexander the Great's nag) took it into his head to bolt—the thought and the action went together—and in doing so the sleigh and its contents overturned, all more or less damaged—down King

speculations. One day a neighbor, who said he felt quite interested in H., informed him that Farmer Twisel (we might as well call him by that name) had a nag of rare quality, a first rate family beast, but not quite fast enough for going to town, so as to enable him to take a wagon load of produce to market and return the same day—that was the only fault, quoth H's pretended friend, but who, it will be seen presently, was trying to drive a bargain for Twisel, who no doubt was to receive a commission for his intervention and trying to get the better of H. Well, said H., how fortunate! My horse, if anything, is a little too fast, and my wife would prefer a horse she can easily manage, instead of one too hard to hold; and I am quite sure Swisel's horse and mine would answer admirably by reversing the owners. Suppose you ask him to bring his over in the morning when and where he can see mine? Accordingly next day Swisel and his nag appeared upon the scene, the two owners no doubt having done their utmost during the early morning to polish up their respective properties and make them appear to advantage in the market sense. Both owners were pleased at sight. The slow horse and the fast one filled the eyes of each of the intending bargainers, and each had his price. H., however, considered his the best of the two, while the other had his own opinions, equally selfish. H's price was \$120; for see what a handsome animal. Prince Albert would not be ashamed to ride behind such a critter. Well, said Twisel, it is no use wasting time, but I'll give you my ultimatum (no one could ever find out from that day to this where he picked up the word), I'll let you have Tom for yourn, if you'll give me ten dollars to boot—neither more nor less. H. now saw the day

ing out into the highway, the new, or rather old nag made a dead halt, evidently with his mind made up to go no further. Whipping and coaxing were alike unavailing. Soon the whole family and several of the neighbors were upon the ground, all doing their utmost to remind the animal that unless he started off he would not be in time for the train, then nearly due, but all to no purpose. The horse had his own opinion. Having some of the Bourbon blood in him, he had all the Bourbon stubbornness, and though other horses might go ahead, as for his part he would stand just where he was, or go behind if they didn't like it. The fact of the matter was he was what is called a "balky horse"—apt to stop at any time upon the road when you least expect it. And so H. made up his mind that he was again stuck and outwitted by Twisel and his go-between, the neighbor who so blandly used his kind offices in bringing about the swap. Thus, from being the possessor of an overzealous animal disposed to run away with him, he had now got hold of one that would not go at all, so that he was as badly off as the ancient Mediterranean mariner who with so much difficulty steered his shallop between Scilla and Charybdis—or more colloquially speaking, he found himself between the horns of a dilemma, a run-away and a stand-still. It is needless to say that H. lost his passage that day, since he failed to connect. The horse was turned about and driven into his stable, while H. retired to the bosom of his family, there to ruminate upon his ill luck in horse flesh, and the troubles of the world in general. Worse than all that Twisel and the farmers all about would have the laugh upon him. But we now came to another stage in this eventful story, which will show that there

When the two gentlemen met some time after this, neither uttered a word about the recent contre-temps, or mishap—both were perfectly innocent that either had any disappointing story to tell about the wearing of the exchanged properties. But when about to part one asked the other how he liked his horse; the reply was, "very well—he is a little fast to be sure—how do you like my old one?" "First rate—he is a little slow, but it is better to be sure than sorry"; whereupon the friends parted in apparent good humor, but no doubt there wasn't much amiability of temper between them. Each thought daggers but used none.

Whatever became of the black horse I was never able to learn, but the balky one turned into an elephant in the hands of his owner, for he could do nothing with him. He was stubborn in the plough and the cart as he was in the wagon—in short, could not be made to go, notwithstanding his good feed. When the summer was ended and time to return to town, the next trouble with our friend was how to get rid of the brute. On arriving in St. John he placed him in the hands of our friend Hubbard, who knocked him down at auction on the Market square to a cartman for two dollars, which amount pleased H. very much—for he thought at one time he would have to take him out on the flats and shoot him—but then our friend John Sears, President of the S. P. C. A., might have been after him with a pointer—a prospect which Horsman didn't very much covet.

AN OLD TIMER.

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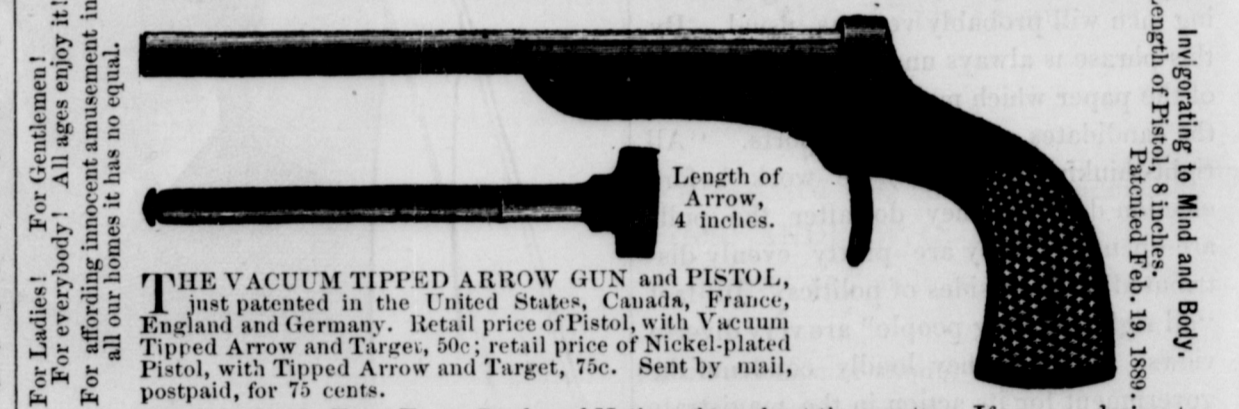
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