

BYGONE DAYS RECALLED

AN OLD TIMER'S REMINISCENCES OF PEOPLE AND EVENTS.

A Mistake That Was Well Paid For—"Old Timer" Tells of How he was Deceived Twice—A Laughable Incident Follows a Good Resolve.

XV. I am now going to present myself to the readers of PROGRESS in a dual capacity, with a view of inquiring what is best to be done in stress of circumstances.

Just about the time of the completion of the Suspension Bridge, my usual afternoon "constitutional" was marked out between the ferry boat (after crossing over), through Carleton, over the Suspension Bridge and Straight Shore road, and so on to the Market square—a stretch, perhaps, of three miles. When on my travels, one afternoon in December, and when just back of the asylum, going towards the bridge, a low sleigh passed me, the horse walking, with a person sitting in on the upper side, apparently taking his ease, as if he felt that he would be in plenty of time to get where he was going.

After passing him a few hundred yards, and by chance looking back I observed the sleigh overturned, as if it had struck an ice hillock, and the said party clinging to the side and beckoning most earnestly for me to return to his assistance.

The impression was that he was under the influence of the ardent—for how could a sleigh going at a walking pace be overturned and its occupant thrown out under ordinary circumstances; and therefore I thought he ought to be able to readjust matters without extraneous aid—besides, there were several persons on the road nearer to him than I was.

So I kept on the even tenor of my way; and when I crossed over the bridge and reached the toll house, I asked the keeper who was that tough customer who had just crossed over in a low sleigh. After thinking a moment, he replied, "O, that was Mr. — of Indiantown—why, what's the matter?"

Although unacquainted with the gentleman, his name and standing, of the highest order, was quite familiar to me, and at that moment I would have given a good deal if I could have changed my entity for that of somebody else.

The parable of the Levite and Samaritan came into my head with a rush, and I wished myself in Jericho; and soliloquized that instead of passing by on the other side, I should have gone to the stranger's relief, drunk or sober. What a fool I was, and how selfish! and so forth.

Now, as the toll-house was the source of my information, whence I obtained the gentleman's name, as an aggravation to my predicament I knew that it would not be long before he would learn my name from the same quarter.

And so he did. It was not long after this, as I learned afterwards, when said gentleman with a broken leg and in great pain, was brought over the bridge by two persons who had gone to his assistance.

It appeared that the sleigh had capsized and the occupant fell under one of the runners, whereby his leg was broken besides having sustained other injuries. As a matter of course my name and fame ran through Indiantown like stubble in a blaze under a strong breeze.

And no wonder. I was innocent and I was guilty of the charge laid against me. And what tended to the aggravation was the fact that I had nobody to defend me, or rather plead some excuse in extenuation of my Levitical conduct.

Nobody to say "now might there not be some mistake," or "I don't think any body would be so hard-hearted." No. I had not the benefit of a doubt. Some folks even went so far as to say all Indiantown would Boycott him (but under another name, as Boycott had not entered the classics at that time.)

But if I was not so treated, I certainly Boycotted Indiantown—for I was afraid to venture in those sunny regions for six months afterwards.

However, I made up my mind from that episode down to the present day, that I should never be caught in such another dilemma—this was a lesson to me—and no matter under what circumstances if I saw a fellow-being in need of help I would be the first man to mount the deadly breach and fall in the discharge of a humane duty.

I will now explain how faithfully I kept this good resolution and the result of my kindness, for I had now become a thorough Samaritan.

Shortly after removing to Fredericton (bringing all my good resolutions with me) I was one night awakened out of a pleasant dream about old times in St. John, by a tremendous rapping at the front door. The house was situated a little below town, and somewhat isolated. The night was very dark. On going to the door two men presented themselves, both apparently in great trouble. The one who spoke up said, "O sir, my mother living near Morrison's Mills, is very low (I don't remember that he said his mother-in-law) and we want to go for the doctor up town—every minute is precious—and we take the liberty of asking if you will be so very kind as to lend us your horse and waggon, and we shall never forget you."

Certainly, was my prompt reply—for the Samaritan had full possession of every atom of my economy. Hold on for a moment until I dress myself—for I must confess I had very little more on than Samaritans generally at this time of night. I soon, however, was in my wraps, and with my strange companions sallied down to the

stable in the darkness and harnessed the horse, and in a few minutes more away they went at full speed—for the doctor.

I took the precaution to tell them how to dispose of the horse on their return—to stable him, lock the door and place the key on the step, and all would be right.

Next morning I was informed by the stable lad that the horse was not in the barn. Ah—ha! said I, from the impulse of the moment, they have stolen the Samaritan's horse. In the course of the morning I thought I would see Phil Mulligan (our whole police force at that time), and lay the case before him and get him to go upon the scent; but before seeing Phil I learned that my waggon was up town all smashed to pieces against a lamp post, and a strange horse had been impounded that morning, caught running at large, and the owner thereof was required to pay \$4 redemption money.

Thus, for my good nature in trying to redeem my former error in the character of a Levite, I lost a waggon worth \$100, and had to pay four dollars for getting my horse out of pound.

It appeared that the two sweets who called upon me were on a bender that night, and obtained the team "under false pretences," and went helter skelter through the town at a break neck pace,—and, at my expense.

Now I beg to ask the readers of PROGRESS what they would advise me to do—next time? AN OLD TIMER.

HE WRESTLED WITH GAELIC.

The Experience of a Provincial Clergyman with a Strange Tongue.

The Rev. Mr. Shephard, who erstwhile presided over a cure of souls in one of the towns in the maritime provinces, was not after the pattern of most Presbyterian divines. He had marked and singular ways of his own, and was particularly noted for absent-mindedness.

A part of his flock consisted of the nation who claim their tongue to have been that spoken in the Garden of Eden—namely, Gaelic.

It was Mr. Shephard's ambition to master the Gaelic language sufficiently to minister to that portion of his flock in their native tongue. He labored long and truly, and one Sunday decided to apply his researches in the Gaelic language practically, and deliver a sermon in that classic tongue.

Sunday came and the sermon was preached. Afterward the minister, with some complacency, asked certain of the congregation how they had liked the sermon. Several hung back and said nothing. Then one bolder than the rest lifted up his voice and said cautiously: "Well, parson, na doot it wuz a ferry fine sermon whateffer, but we could na understand an word o' it!" This was a damper. Mr. Shephard abandoned the study of the Gaelic tongue as something beyond the capacity of mortal man to accomplish.

Some time after this, most of the town, Mr. Shephard included, went to hear a celebrated lecturer, who had drifted that way. In the course of the lecture, Elihu Burritt, the learned blacksmith was mentioned, and the lecturer dwelt on his mastery of a number of languages. Mr. Shephard heard this with some interest, as he had recently been engaged in the study of an unknown tongue himself. He jumped to his feet in great excitement, and roared out, to the infinite astonishment of the lecturer, "There's the Gaelic, let him try that!"

I recall another story about Mr. Shephard, where he was, so to speak, "hoist with his own petard." One member of his flock was habitually addicted to looking upon the wine when it is red, and judging from his usual condition, he did not usually stop at looking at it. Mr. Shephard met him one day, after he had been sampling it pretty extensively. The pastor stopped, and more in sorrow than in anger, remarked, "Well, Donelley, drunk as usual." Donelley looked up with a gleam in his eye and answered, sympathetically, "Hic, so am I, sir."

SYDNEY NOEL WORTH.

Test of Popularity.

Miss Tayke—"Did you get any valentines, dear?"

Miss Sweet—"No. I don't believe I've an enemy in the world."—Boston Times.

WHAT SHALL I CALL MY LOVE?

If there be truth in ancient sayings It surely would be meet That I should call my love "Revenge"— They say Revenge is sweet.

Or I might name her "Conscience," who Makes cowards of us all; Or her that teaches more than books "Experience" I might call.

"Economy" is wealth, they say— She's wealth enough for me; "Consistency" is a jewel, and A jewel, too, is she.

Or "Knowledge" would be apt and true, For that is power I wis; Yet might I dub her "Ignorance," For Ignorance is bliss.

And yet again, she drives us mad, So "Learning" would be it; And she'd do grace to "Brevity," For she's the soul of wit.

But when before her virgin charms My suppliant knee is bent I'd like to call her "Silence," for 'Tis Silence gives consent.

And if in these triumphant arms I hold the winsome elf, I'd call her "History," in the hope That she'll repeat herself.

—Wilson K. Welsh, in Life.

WHEN YOU TAKE ETHER.

THE SENSATION DESCRIBED BY ONE WHO HAS FELT IT.

A Graphic Description of the Sensation When Passing from the Conscious to the Unconscious—An Experience to which that of Dying Seems Near Akin.

I have so often heard people wonder what it felt like to take ether—that is, to be thoroughly under the influence of it, that I thought in the interest of my fellow creatures, I would resurrect a most painful memory and describe the exact sensations, so that "those about to take ether," may know exactly what they have to expect.

The operation for which it was administered in my case was not a dangerous one, but it was sufficiently painful to require a powerful anesthetic, and the services of both a dentist and a surgeon, who were to pry into the innermost recesses of my jaw-bone, and satisfy themselves and each other whether or not a portion of that valuable adjunct to my personal appearance and internal welfare should be removed.

I was accustomed to chloroform, but "the realms of ether," to soar into poetry, were untried territory to me. Would that they might always have been.

I submitted patiently to be enveloped in the long linen shroud that is used on such occasions, and which differs only in color from the genuine article, and clambered cheerfully into the operating chair. I had heard so much about partially etherized patients kicking the glass out of the windows and violently assaulting the doctor, that my great anxiety was to keep quiet and submit to the influence as quickly as possible. I clasped my hands resolutely on my knee and leaned back in the most placid condition of mind and body that I could command. I heard the gurgling of the ether as the doctor poured it out, and the faint, sickly smell crept heavily through the atmosphere.

"Are you quite ready?" he asked, and on my answering came swiftly behind me and clasped a rubber mask over my nose and mouth. Somewhere over the mouth was a sponge or reservoir for the ether.

As I write I can feel the sensation now in all its horror. Suffocation is too mild a term to express it. It implies too slow a process. It was more like strangulation from the fumes of sulphur. The breath was not only caught from my lips, but dragged forcibly from the laboring lungs by a power that felt like an air pump. In spite of myself I threw up my hands with a strangled cry of agony, and the doctor loosened the mask for a moment and gave me a breath of air.

"It's all right," he said cheerfully. "It always acts that way."

Then he tightened the mask again and I began to struggle for breath, which only ended when I grew too weak to struggle any longer, and by that time I did not care; my brain was very active and I knew that I was dying. I remembered being told years ago never to take ether, as it was unlikely that I would ever come out of it, and I was sorry in a vague way that I had taken the risk. I did not see my whole past life spread out before me according to the accepted idea, though I was quite certain that I had only a moment or two more on earth. I wondered if I had not virtually committed suicide, and whether I would be punished accordingly, and I thought of my mother and wished I had said good bye to her. I hoped someone would tell her before they took me home.

Then I felt the surgeon raise my eyelid and pass his finger over my eye. I tried hard to say "not yet," but my voice had passed beyond my control, and the words came out separately and far away in a high strange tone which was echoed several times. Then I grew quite happy. I was sinking far down in a soft, warm darkness that was black beyond all earthly darkness, and that wrapped me close and finally carried me down beneath great waves of water that rose and sank with delightful motion. I knew that I had been drowned, and all pain was over forever. I did not want to breathe or to live, I was too happy as I was. And then all was blank. In a moment more I heard a voice very far away say anxiously, "Is he coming to?" someone else answered, "Yes he'll do now, he has a good constitution, and it will bring him through." I tried to ask "Is it over?" but my tongue seemed paralyzed, and once more I sank into "the peace of nothingness."

I was roused again by someone bending over me and shouting "Hullo! do you know me?" and I saw the doctor's dark eyes and white teeth, nothing else, not even the outline of a face, just the eyes and teeth seen against a faint background of window with a brick wall beyond. I heard him say "He's going off again; we'll have to carry him into the next room out of the fumes of the ether." And the next I knew the kindly doctor was holding me upright while he jammed my hat down on my head, pounded me cherrily on the back, and assured me as he helped to carry me to a waiting cab, that I was "all right now."

All right? I had clambered into that chair at 2 o'clock in the full vigor of youth and health. As the cab drove off the railway whistle boomed 5, and in those three short hours I had changed into a helpless invalid, who might have been just crawling out of a sick bed after weeks of illness. My head was aching as if it would fly apart. My

limbs felt like lead; each nerve was quivering with a nameless pain, and a deadly sickness hung over me like a pall. I had grown into a feeble old man in one afternoon, and I was conscious of but one wish: that someone would be merciful enough to put me out of pain, as we do an animal that is hurt beyond recovery.

I do not know how terrible a thing death may be, or if all suffer alike; but it seems to me that if I had to choose between an ordinarily merciful death and another dose of ether I would almost choose the former.

GEORGE CUTHBERT STRANGE.

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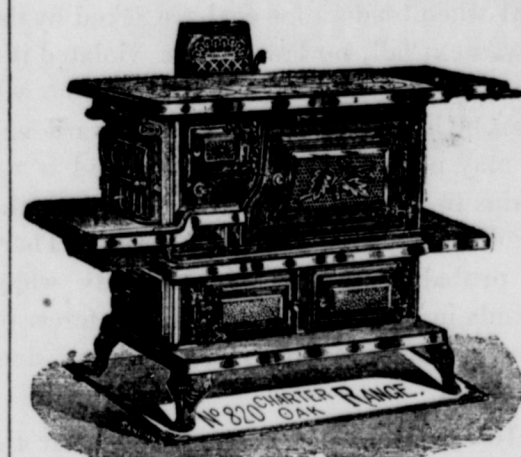
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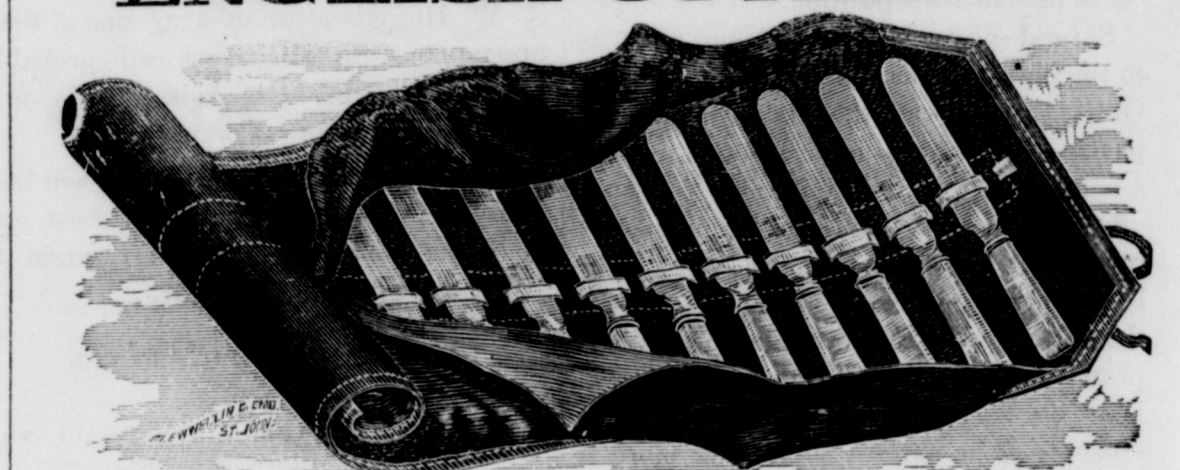
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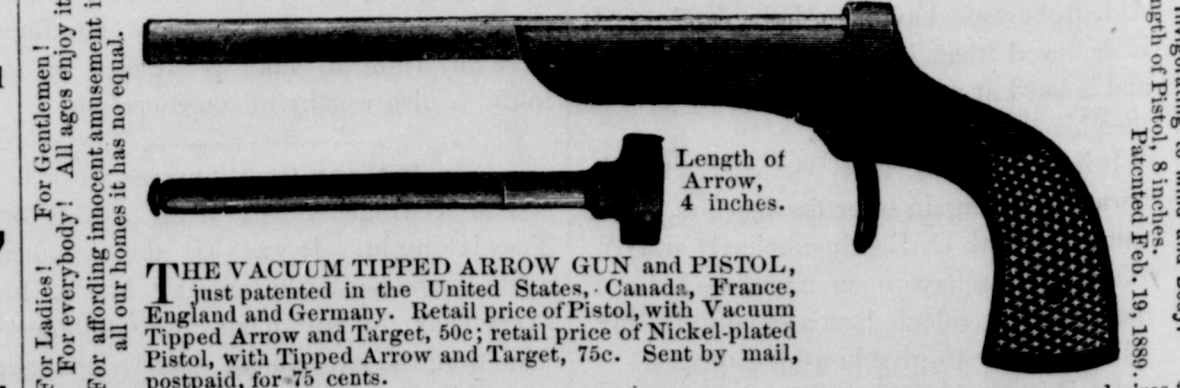
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