

HE HAD MANY FRIENDS.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LATE JUDGE PETERS.

His Popularity was due to his Personal Qualities—It was Always Great—His Place Outside of Politics—Some of the Traits Which Distinguished him as Man.

Few, if any, men in public life in the city of St. John have had the good fortune to count so many strong, personal friends as were ranked in the lists of the late B. Lester Peters. Giving the full measure of credit for all he achieved for himself by natural ability, acquired knowledge, and a thorough mastery of details, it is not too much to say that had he been possessed of inferior qualifications, he would still have been to the front with an army of friends to espouse his cause should their aid be needed. To say this is not to minimize the ability and worth of the man, but to emphasize his popularity among many classes of men, and beyond the limitations of the lines of politics and parties.

Strongly enough was this shown at the time of the appointment of Mr. Robert J. Ritchie as police magistrate. There may have been legal ground for considering that the office was vacated by the amended charter and that, in appointing Mr. Ritchie, Mr. Peters was not displaced. To a large portion of the electorate, however, there was but the color of a pretext in the act. Whatever may have been the subsequent campaign cries, there was from the first, to a large portion of the community, no "religious" cry in the case. Mr. Ritchie might have been a representative methodist or baptist, as far as that was concerned, and the feeling would have been the same. With many who in a greater or less degree could influence public opinion, the feeling was that an injustice had been done Lester Peters. To the thinking and reasonable man, whatever his creed, there was no objection to Mr. Ritchie having an office, nor could an issue have been raised on that fact alone. When the alternative was that Mr. Peters should be "displaced," there was trouble. Easily enough, on these original premises, ignorance and bigotry raised the sectarian cry. The cry became a howl and the local government realized that by yielding to the opinion of some of its supporters a great and far-reaching blunder had been made. Such a wave of public opinion, washing away the possibilities of both a local and a dominion election, could not have run its course had not Mr. Peters been high in popular favor. With some men in his place, the ripple would never have become a wave.

No man can gain and hold a strong personal following without having in himself qualities above and beyond those of the average man. The successful politician owes his strength to his success; his personality may be greater or less as a factor, but as a rule his strength is due to what he can accomplish rather than what he is. The strength of Lester Peters was purely personal. What he might have been had he embraced a political life is only a matter of conjecture. It is not certain that he would have attained distinction. His mind was not of the cast which is usually found in the man who makes politics a success.

Nor in his own profession, the law, can it be known where he would have stood had he been left to win his place among the lawyers of his day and generation. He belonged to a period, in the history of the profession, which has added brilliant names to the roll of provincial jurists—a period of which but few survivors remain to witness the inroads of the modern "drummers" for business regardless of the old time ethics. It may have been that he would have held a leading place as a sound lawyer, as he undoubtedly would have maintained the dignity of a profession which, by ancient tradition, includes only gentlemen in its ranks.

Whatever possibilities may have lain in this direction were spoiled more than thirty years ago, when he was appointed common clerk of the city. This office he held for twenty-eight years. In that capacity he was also supposed to be assistant judge of the city court. He was really the sole judge in most cases. The title of the court—the "severely accurate" title, as Mr. Peters once remarked—was "Before Alderman Numbskull and the Common Clerk," but Ald. Numbskull or Ald. Leatherpatte, or whoever he might be, was usually content to sit silent and let Mr. Peters do the work. It was well done. The civic tribunal for the collection of small debts had previously gained an unenviable reputation as the "nigger court." Mr. Peters clothed it with a respectability and even a dignity before unknown to it. The judgments in such a court necessarily combined equity with strict law at times, but the decisions of Mr. Peters were respected and in appeals, on strictly legal grounds, they were sustained.

The next phase in which Mr. Peters came before the public was in the capacity of police magistrate, as successor to Humphrey Gilbert. To this court, too, he brought a dignity before unknown, and he held the view that it laws were on the statute book they were there to be enforced. Elevated to the bench of the county court, at a later date, he pursued the same line when called upon to deal with convicted offenders. In this court also, his rulings on points of law were

recognized as sound, and in no decision made by him could be found the evidence of carelessness or haste. On the bench he was a most imposing figure, and in this respect, if in no other, it would be more than difficult to supply his place.

The popularity of Mr. Peters, however, never was due to any official position he filled. It was wholly due to qualities within himself. It began at the beginning of his career, and it continued until the hour of his death. Whatever his opponents or critics might say, he could always count on his friends.

It would, indeed, have been difficult for anyone to meet him socially and not like him. The stranger who saw him on the bench or on the street, erect and dignified and apparently distant in his manner, would form a very imperfect idea of the man as he really was. He was of a most genial nature, with a keen sense of humor and in every way endowed with qualities fitting him not only to shine in social circles but to be a most entertaining companion in ordinary converse. He had very positive ideas as to the fitness of things and an equally positive antipathy to the incongruous. Insistence on accuracy of detail was one of his characteristics in whatever engaged his attention. It was this quality that made the old "Peters Battery" of volunteer artillery conspicuous as the crack company of the time, and so it was with other bodies. Chief among these was the masonic fraternity.

Judge Peters had all the masonic honors that a man can get in this country. He was one of the founders of the Grand Lodge of New Brunswick, and the first grand master. He was the first grand principal of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter, Provincial Grand Master of the Royal Order of Scotland, and a member of the Supreme Council of the 33rd and last degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. He had filled the chief offices in all the important local bodies, he represented a number of foreign jurisdictions and was in every way, for many years, a recognized authority in all that pertained to masonry and its interests. Of recent years he had withdrawn from active work and the younger generation have had no opportunity to see his exemplifications of the work of the lodge degrees. Not only did he observe the most scrupulous attention to the minute details of ritual, but it was imperative that all who took part should do so. With an imposing presence and a voice admirably adapted to the enunciation of the sublime in rhetoric, those who passed through this or that grade when he took part can never forget the impression he left upon their minds. It is quite possible for others to be as thorough ritualists as he was—or even, as to work in all the bodies, to be even more thorough—but it is not given to all to invest an office with that high dignity which was attached to the chair filled by Lester Peters on occasions of high ceremonial.

For a number of years, Judge Peters has been known as a high churchman, coming from a Loyalist family, he had, by heredity and education, a profound faith in the church of England. So far as the writer has understood him, he viewed the church and state as closely interwoven. While not, of late years, identified with Trinity church he had a legal reverence for it as the mother church in the Anglican communion here. Because that mother church had established a daily service of evening prayer, he felt it his duty to recognize that step by occasional attendance. He was, however, a regular attendant at the Mission church and one of the trustees, though he was not among the original promoters. His generous hand is seen by all who admire the carved altar front at the Mission, when it is displayed on festal days. In many other ways he was a liberal giver, and usually, when a subscription was on foot, he would tell the collector, "Here is (naming the sum), but if you need any more to make up the amount, come to me again." Nor was he a mere dilettante ritualist, intent only on music, processions, flowers and the like. It is true that, with his precise ideas, bad music annoyed him and inattention to ritual vexed him, but above and beyond all this he accepted, in its fullest meaning, the evolution of the Tractarian movement. That is to say, he believed the church of England to be catholic and only in error so far as it had become protestant. In other words, he believed in the "branch theory," recognizing the Anglican, Roman and Greek churches, and loyally adhering to the church of England with the faith that it had a valid order of priesthood and consequently valid sacraments. "You appear to believe in the Real Presence," said a Roman catholic friend to him once. "There must be either a Real Presence or a real absence," was the reply. He was an earnest member of the Anglican confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. "It is thoroughly catholic," he said once. "Other organizations are confined to this church or that, but this is found in all branches of the catholic church." So, too, in speaking of Carter's Treasury of Devotion, a book largely copied from Roman catholic books of devotion, he said, "I like it because it is so catholic. There is nothing man can invent which can approach the old catholic devotions." Holding the pronounced views he did, some of his Roman catholic friends could not understand why he remained in the Anglican communion,

though from a high church point of view, and with a knowledge of the man, it is quite easy to understand that he would never have been anything but a churchman.

The death of Judge Peters creates a gap that may not be easily filled. He was an exceptional man in many ways, and in his dignity, courtesy and punctilious observance of ethics and etiquette, his life was a standing protest against much that is painfully in evidence in professional and social life today. He taught, or tried to teach, the gospel of good taste in the smaller and the larger affairs of life. He had a high appreciation of what was good in literature and music and was a keen critic. In private life he had many qualities which endeared him to those who knew him; there was much in his nature for which he will long be kindly remembered. To flatter the dead is a thing as easy as to censure the living. It is not needed in this instance. There was much in his nature to win the regard of those who knew Judge Peters, nor will he soon be forgotten now that he has passed away.

THE CZAR'S CORONATION.

Now Nicholas is Married, the Next Thing is to be Crowned.

When Nicholas II, the new czar of Russia, is crowned, as he will be in due season, the ceremony following will doubtless resemble in its main features that which occurred when his father formally ascended the throne.

Alexander's entry into Moscow was under the escort of a procession four miles long, amid a booming of cannon and ringing of bells, at about 7:30 in the morning. At the same hour those dignitaries of the realm who were to take part in the coronation ceremony assembled in the cathedral of the Holy Assumption, within the walls of the Kremlin.

Half an hour later there followed in order the princes of foreign governments, the nobility and the ambassadorial corps. The attaches of the various legations were assigned to positions in the tribune, just outside the cathedral proper, but inside the enclosure of the Kremlin.

When the white walls had inclosed all who could be admitted, a choir of boys chanted the Te Deum, and the clergy, accompanied by acolytes bearing the cross and a ewer of holy water, proceeded to receive the czarowitz. The latter, who was in the midst of a brilliant cortege, took his place at the right of the throne.

When the imperial procession started for the cathedral, it was made known to those inside by renewed ringing of bells, by the music of bands and by the shouts of the multitude outside.

At the head of the procession, preceded only by the regalia, came the czar, wearing the white uniform of a colonel of the Imperial guards, and the czarina leaning on his arm, dressed in the Russian national costume of black velvet embroidered with diamonds.

The pair placed themselves beneath a canopy richly wrought in silk and gold and borne by 32 generals of high rank. The entire body of clergy advanced to meet the regalia, which they sprinkled with holy water and perfumed with incense.

The czar and czarina were led by the metropolitan of Moscow and the metropolitans of Novgorod and Kiev presented to them the cross, to be kissed and sprinkled with holy water. Before the sacred images which flanked the doors of the cathedral the imperial pair knelt and bowed their heads, after which they were conducted to the ancient throne of ivory and silver.

Alexander occupied the historic seat of the czar Vladimir Monomague, while the czarina sat in an arm chair gilded and encrusted with jewels. The throne was on a dais erected between the middle columns of the cathedral, and over the dais was a canopy of scarlet velvet, suspended from the arched roof, embroidered with gold and brocade, which was worked with the arms of Russia and all her dependencies in most ingenious manner.

In front of the thrones were two tables covered with gold cloth, upon which were placed the crowns, the orb and the sceptre. None but foreign princes were accommodated with seats.

The Russian princes and dignitaries stood the entire ceremony, according to the custom of the Greek church. The dignitaries of the realm who were carrying the standard and seals of the empire took their stand upon the steps of the dais.

After their majesties had been seated, the metropolitan of Novgorod asked the czar in a loud, distinct voice:

"Are you a true believer?"

The czar, falling on his knees, read in reply in a clear voice the Lord's prayer and the creed of the Greek church.

The metropolitan, responding, "May the grace of the Holy Ghost remain with thee," descended from the dais. The following customary summons was then three times repeated by the bishop:

"If there be any of you present knowing any impediment for which Alexander, son of Alexander, should not be crowned by the grace of God emperor and autocrat of all the Russians, of Moscow, of Kiev, of Vladimir, of Novgorod, czar of Kazan, of Astrakhan, of Poland, of Siberia, of Kherson-Taurida, of Groust, Gosoudar, of Pskoff, grand duke of Simolensk, of Lithuania, of Volhynia, of Podolia, and of Finland, prince of Esthonia, of Livonia, of Courland, of Semigalia, of the Samoyedes of Bielostok, of Corelia, of Bulgaria and other countries; master and grand duke of the lower countries in Novgorod, of Tchernigoff, of Riazan, of Polotsk, of Rostoff, of Jaroslaff, of Bieloserok of Oudork, of Kondisk, of Vitelsk, of Mstislaff and of all the countries of the north; master absolute of Iversk, of Kastalinsk, of Kabardinsk and of the territory of Armenia; sovereign of mountain princes of Tcherask; master of Turkestan, their presumptive of Norway and duke of Sleswick-Holstein, of Ste. marks and Dithmarse and of Oldenburg, let him come forward now, and show what the impediment is, or let him remain dumb forever."

After reading selections from the gospels the metropolitans of Novgorod and Kiev again ascended the dais and invested the czar with the imperial mantle of ermine, the metropolitan of Moscow saying at the same time:

"Cover and protect thy people as this robe protects and covers thee."

The czar responded: "I will, I will, I will, God helping."

then invoked the benediction of Almighty God upon him and his reign, delivered to Alexander III, the crown of Russia, who placed it upon his own head and, assuming the sceptre and orb, took his seat upon the throne.

He then returned the insignia of his title to the dignitaries appointed to receive them, and called the czarina, who knelt before him. He touched her head lightly with his imperial crown and then formally crowned her with her own crown.

After she had been duly invested with the imperial mantle the archdeacon intoned the imperial titles and sang: "Domine Saluum fac Imperatorem," which was taken up and thrice repeated by the choir.

As this part of the ceremony was finished the bells in all the churches of Moscow rang out in chorus, a salute of 101 guns was fired and inside the cathedral the members of the imperial family tendered their congratulations.

The czar then knelt and recited a prayer, at the end of which the clergy and all present knelt before him.

The bishop of Moscow said aloud in behalf of the nation a fervent prayer for happiness of their majesties.

Shouts of "Long live the emperor!" rent the cathedral and were taken up by thousands outside and carried from mouth to mouth, unto that part of the multitude who were unable to get inside even the ample acreage of the remotest part of the city, where it was speedily known that another czar of the Russias had been crowned.

The cathedral choir then sang the Te Deum, after which the czar ungirt his sword and, accompanied by the czarina and dignitaries, proceeded to the gate. There the metropolitan of Novgorod anointed the czar's forehead, eyelids, nostrils, lips, ears, breast and hands, at the same time exclaiming: "Behold the seal of the Holy Ghost! May it keep thee ever holy."

The czarina was anointed only on the forehead. Both partook of the sacrament, and then left the cathedral wearing their crowns and mantles, the czar also bearing the sceptre and the orb.

After praying in the cathedral of Michael the Archangel, their majesties returned to the palace, escorted by a procession.

The emperor reentered the palace by the celebrated red staircase, whence the laws were anciently promulgated. There he turned and saluted the people, who immediately uncovered their heads, cheering enthusiastically and blessing the czar as he passed out of their sight.

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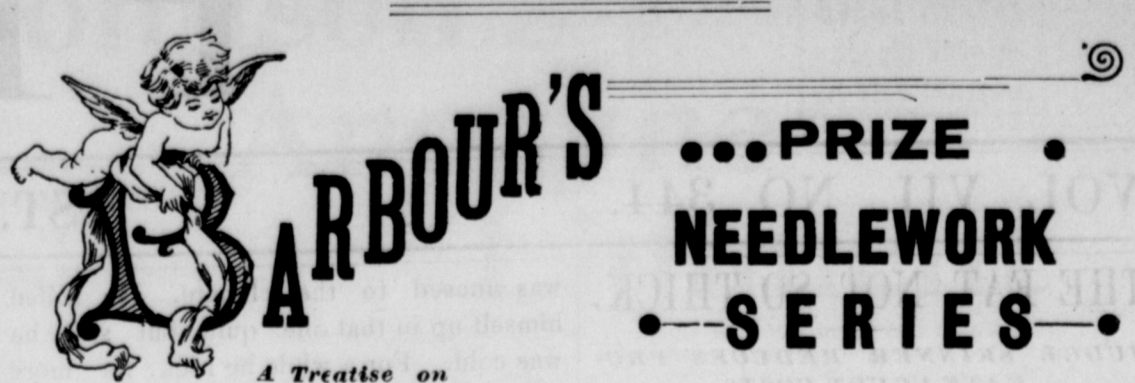
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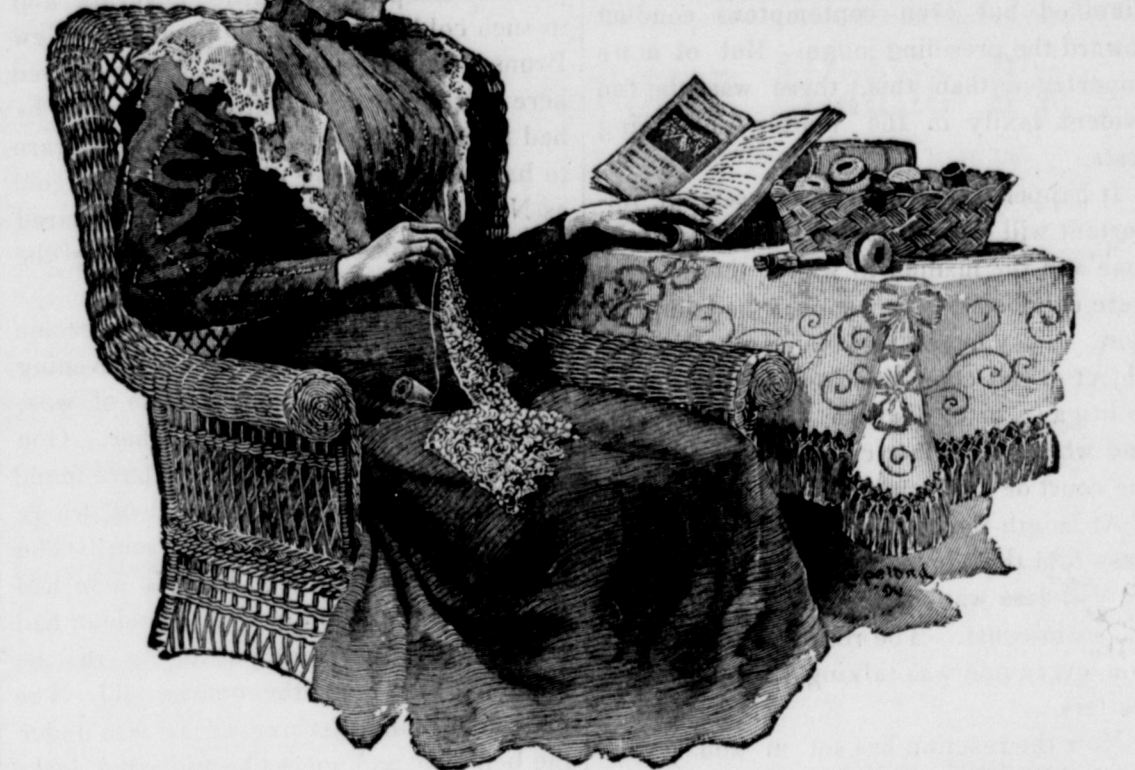
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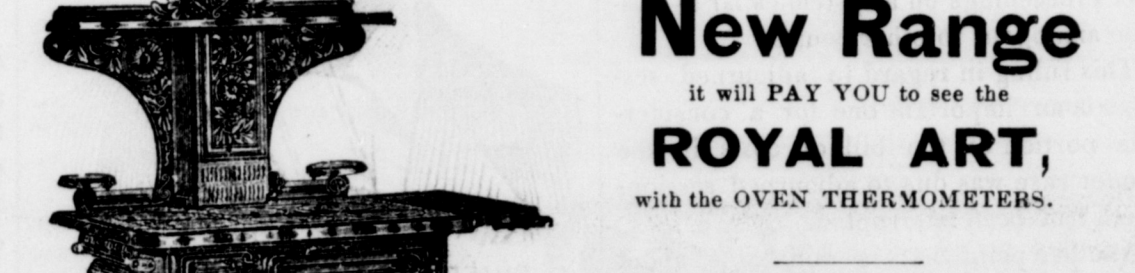
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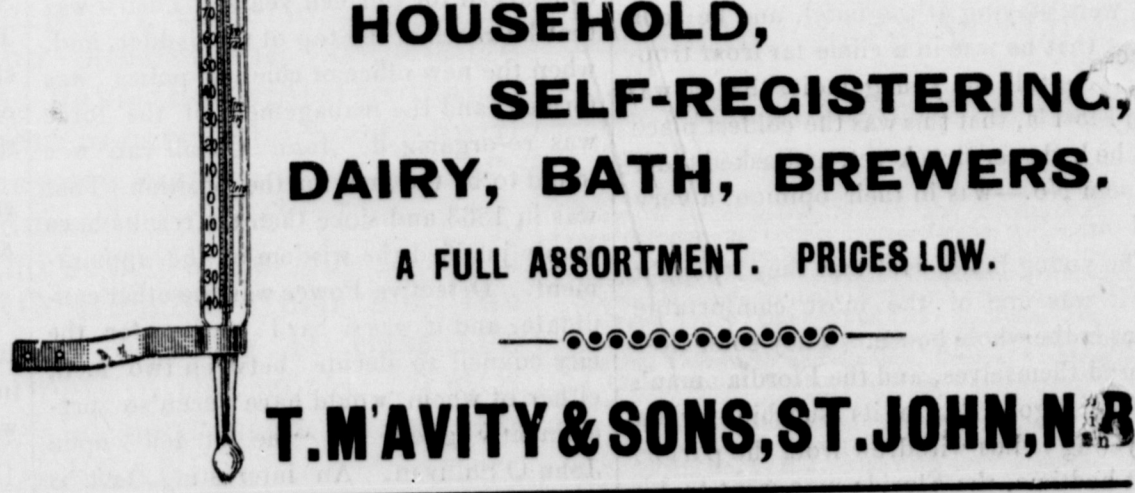


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