

Reflections on the Past and Present.

From a paper accidentally lost by a Minister at Ottawa.

It becomes the sage—the philosopher,—it doubly becomes the patriot—at such a phase of life to remember the past,—to observe the present,—to prognosticate the future. Let me then, at this important period of my political existence, make a few reflections.

Four years ago! What was the condition of my mind? Let me reconsider its operations. At that time, I refused to accept a portfolio, except under the condition that there should be no salary annexed. Why made I that condition?

Compare it with the present. I accept one, on different conditions. The duties are to be small—the salary large.

Think not, O my countrymen who shall read these pages, when the hand which pens them no longer grasps the wand of office—no longer receives the grateful honorarium for the same—think not, O my familiar friends, that my courses are inconsistent. These courses suited the hour—they fitted the ever-changing time.

Let him who would become a statesman read, mark, and learn. When first we guide the bark of inexperience over the shoals of politics, it is necessary to acquire reputation. To acquire reputation—to raise ourselves from the herd—one course is most effective; it is to prove ourselves unswayed by vulgar motives—to show that we despise gold.

Let us suppose the reputation acquired. What next? Is such a glorious reputation to be wasted? Not so, O neophyte! Not so, O lover of thy country's goods—good, I would say. To what use can such a reputation then be put? O friends, having it, we have the key to all. Places, wealth, salaries, honors, are heaped on him who despises. What does the philosopher, O youth? He maketh his pile.

Say not, O unsophisticated learner, that in so doing he loseth his reputation. Know, he can buy one. What is not to be bought? Lo, O ignorant, I have struck the key-note, it is for thee to fill the melody. Sweet, O sweet is the enchanting sound thereof: it ringeth like silver; nay, like pure gold. What, rejectest thou my advice? Nay,

"Then wait me to the harbour's mouth
Wild wind. I seek a warmer sky.
And I will see before I die,
The palms and temples of the South."

Story of a Life.

He had a name and complexion fair,
And a very out of a handbox air.

He was of mild and genteel address,
And spoke of grace and righteousness.

Spoke of them more particularly
To gentlemen heavy in L. s. d.

Which he supposed mistakenly
Of the universe the A. B. C.

Fundamental and grave mistake,
Very many the same do make.

Greatly to mention it I regret
They were this young man's alphabet.

Steadily he studied the same,
Also a small religious game.

Spoke of the city paved with gold,
But thought of that which the bankers' hold.

This young man he had looked around,
This is what he thought he had found:—

Quiet pigs of steady air
Suck of milk the largest share.

And your youth of graces mild
Nowadays is fortune's child.

His the houses fine which meet
Eyes in passing down the street.

His the carriage trim, to drop
Him at bank, and church, and shop.

These our quiet youth had not,
Wished them, and in time them got.

These and very much more were his
Fruits of steady attention to biz.

Stocks and dividends he had no few,
Houses and lands and mortgages too.

Children and wife, but still to him seemed
"Twasn't the thing of which he had dreamed.

Seemed to him though he had everything good,
Folks didn't mind him as he thought they should.

Fact was, he'd given to business his all,
Of everything else he knew nothing at all.

Nothing he knew of the world he was in,
Save as a place to accumulate "tin."

Nothing of politics knew, or cared
Well or ill if the country fared.

Nothing of nature cared or knew,
River that flowed or tree that grew.

Nothing of travel had met his eye,
He'd been to Europe—merely to buy.

Little of books he had known or read,
Studied his cash and accounts instead.

Older he grew, and plenty of gold—
More and more to his heap had rolled.

More than he ever could spend, but he still
Strove the heaped money-bag fuller to fill.

Not that he often was troubled with cares
Money to make for the sake of his heirs.

Long he had known that his children and wife
Wished he had got to the end of his life.

Long he had loved more the cash he had earned
Than wife or than child—the same love was returned.

Older he grew, and of nought could he speak
But dollars or interest—so much per week.

Friends tired out, and acquaintances gone,
Still to his grave jogs the old fellow on.

Soon a grand funeral—then a big haul—
Write on the stone—"He made money; that's all."

Toronto, 1999.

GRIP:

Respected Sir:—

Knowing you to be the oldest inhabitant of Toronto, I have recourse to your memory with reference to the enclosed peculiar document. I discovered it during my researches among the ruins of what is reported to have been the Cathedral of St. James. After much labor, I succeeded in disencumbering the MSS. of an immense debris of stone, mortar, etc., under which it had reposed, it may be for centuries. The latter part of the document is the only part where the words are still sufficiently legible to form a continuous narrative. In the former portion I can only, after considerable pains, decipher, at disconnected intervals,—“porch,” “R—d,” “waiting,” “Thursday,” “get a goodplace,” “doorsopen,” and “seehimfromhere.”

Can you, sir, remember, in the early annals of Toronto, any tragic event that could have given rise to the composition of such a melancholy lay as this appears to have been? Knowing the deep interest you take in all matters pertaining to literature and science, I feel sure of your co-operation in the investigation of an event which appears heretofore to have escaped the notice of the historian.

Yours, etc.,

ANTIQUARIAN.

TORONTO AFTER “HE” LEFT.

A. D. 18**

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“Right bitter was the agony,
That wrung the ladies fair:
As they put aside their Bibles,
And groaned in blank despair.
And one who had his portrait
Turned to the sorrowing band—
Saying,—“This is all that's left us
Of the noblest of the land.
Boating, cricket, boxing, skating,
In each sport he does excel—
Tall and handsome, strong and graceful,
Who like him does all things well!”

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Woe, woe and lamentation!
What a piteous cry was there!
Short ones, tall ones, plump ones, thin ones,
Shrieking, sobbing in despair!—
Oh the blackest day for woman
That she ever knew before!
Oh the good! the kind, the noble!
Shall we ever see him more?
Woe to us, he's gone to England!
He'll see heaps of ladies there!
Think you he will 'scape that widow?
Surely he will come again,
Ah me

There the manuscript becomes finally illegible.—A. D.