

Angels' Wings.

WHEN the summer days were warm, and sweet
With clover bloom and ripening wheat,
We used to lie upon the grass
Within the flickering shadows spread
By leafy branches overhead,
And watch the bright clouds slowly pass.

They were so white against the blue,
With such a glory streaming through
Their silver floeces, we were sure
They must, at least, be angels' wings;
And the mere fancy of such things
Kept childish speech and conduct pure.

We must not quarrel, when the skies,
For all we know, were full of eyes
That watched to see if we were good;
And sometimes just the sight of one
White cloud illumined by the sun
Availed to check an angry mood.

Now we are women grown, and men,
That were but careless children then;
Wise in our realistic lore,
The shining mystery we explain—
Only a vapour born of rain!
And dream of angels' wings no more.

But are we wiser, after all?
Haply the world-worn hearts recall,
With something like a thrill of dread,
What time the Master undefiled
"Set in their midst a little child,"
And what the words were that he said.

It might—we silently infer—
It might perhaps be easier
The kingdom of the Lord to win,
If still in far, blue summer skies
We felt the watching angels eyes
That kept our childish hearts from sin.

A Relic of Methodism.

BY MISS F. L. DAVIS.

WHILE visiting in the pretty little town of Picton, Prince Edward County, a few summers ago, I came across a very interesting relic.

I was taking a rural drive with a friend, following the shore of the picturesque little bay, when she suddenly drew up her very diminutive pony, and said "I have often thought I would like to go in and see that old graveyard. The old church, too, is very old—I believe the oldest Methodist 'meeting-house' in Upper Canada. Would you care to see it?"

While we were standing on the steps, wondering if we could enter the church, a gentleman kindly came and brought the key, let us in, and showed us over the building, giving us many valuable bits of information regarding it; also some interesting and amusing anecdotes and reminiscences. It was built in 1809, and, with the exception of an occasional new roof and floor, is in its original state.

It is a square, frame building, capable of holding about three hundred people; with a cottage-roof which projects quite a distance over the walls. It was never painted, and looks gray, weather-beaten, and venerable. The windows are numerous, though small; and the panes of glass would scarcely cover a man's hand.

In speaking of its renovation, I should have said that the window-glass was renewed a few years ago, for the first time. There was a storm-porch on the front, which, I think, must have been a modern addition—but I neglected to ask.

I brought home some pieces of the glass from the old windows to an octogenarian friend, who had preached in the old church scores of times, and he was more than pleased to hear of the good state of preservation of the old relic. He quietly remarked that the "small boy" of that locality must be void of the usual propensity of throwing stones at disused buildings, or the windows would not have lasted so long. I fully agreed with him.

The church is not now used for any service except Sunday school, and the modern cabinet organ had an incongruous look amidst its antique surroundings.

On entering the building, there was a stair to the right—leading to the gallery—which was built of broad hewn logs, of immense thickness. The floor was slanting—so much so, that it was hard to keep our equilibrium; and our kind guide told us that it was no unusual thing, when he was a boy, to see the people tumble against each other, and look as though they were going to pitch over the gallery. The floor was curiously made—the corners all matched in an oblique direction, like the corners of a picture-frame—which gave it a very odd appearance.

The seats and book-rests were all of the original unpainted wood, and were polished smooth by age and use—where they had not been used by ambitious youth to carve a name to be handed down to posterity and fame, or as a medium for expressing all kinds of sentiments—some of which were not of a strictly devotional nature. Names innumerable crowded each other, many of whose owners have long since crumbled to dust in the adjacent graveyard.

Descending the stairs, we entered the body of the church. The most striking thing was the pulpit, raised very high, walled in to the full height of the book-rest, and having a stair and a door of entrance at one side only. Over this pulpit was a large sounding-board—looking like an exaggerated extinguisher. This pulpit gave the interior a very ancient appearance. I saw a canopy something like it over one of the pulpits in which Bunyan preached. The present stove is a large, old-fashioned "box," with an oven the full size of the stove; but the pipe was twisted into so many turns, and had so many elbows in it, that it excited our curiosity. We were informed that it was for the purpose of retaining as much heat as possible. He told us an amusing incident connected with it. At a service, when he was a small boy, they heard a strange noise in the pipe—a fluttering, rattling sound—which disturbed the whole congregation, and caused considerable excitement, some even having a superstitious creeping through their minds. It turned out, however, to be nothing more alarming than a poor little bird, which had fallen down the chimney, and its frantic efforts to find an exit, among the numerous elbows, had caused the unaccountable noise.

We were allowed to look at the library, which contained some of the original books bought for the Sunday-school, and dated back as far as 1837. In one curious old book, entitled "The Ocean," the pages of which were yellow with age, though in good preservation, I found a copy of a quaintly-worded old poem, relating the sad story of some sailors discovered by a Greenland vessel, in 1774. They were frozen, and had been—

"Twelve years on Polar surges tost,
By northern blasts conveyed;
Destroyed—preserved by iron frosts
Her crew were statues made."

This strange and horrible fact was proved by diaries and the ship's log. We did not fail to notice the very striking contrast this curious old book presented to the beautifully-bound and well-illustrated ones provided for our modern Sunday-schools.

Leaving the quaint old church reluctantly, contrasting its uninviting appearance and numerous evidences of the early struggles and heroic self-denial of our forefathers with the architectural beauty and luxuriance of our modern churches, and the ease and comfort of the congregation, we went out into the church-yard.

Now, a well-cared-for grave-yard is a place of peace, but a neglected one is unspeakably desolate,—and this was a perfect wilderness.

The grave-stones in some places were completely overgrown with grass, vines, and a young growth of sumach trees. Some of the older stones were so moss-covered as to be totally undecipherable. They dated back as far as 1827.

I copied two quaint inscriptions, and would have taken more, but a sudden shower coming up put an end to my antiquarian researches:

"Affliction sore, long time I bore,
Physicians were in vain;
Till God did please and death did seize,
To ease me of my pain."

The second one was hardly as quaint:

"The grave is but the Christian's bed,
On which his wearied body's laid—
What to his ransomed soul is given
To see his Saviour's soul in Heaven."

The meaning of that word "what" is not exactly clear to me, but it is a verbatim copy of the lines. We hurried away, not sorry to leave so melancholy a place.

Not long after returning home I went to see my aged friend, who had so often officiated as a "local brother" in the time-honoured church, and he gave me much information regarding its history. These are his own words:

"Oh, yes! these were queer times, and very different from what they are now. When the people assembled to worship in the winter, they came on a wood sleigh, drawn by oxen—often a distance of six, seven, and even eight miles. The men sat on one side of the church and the women on the other, as they still do in Quaker meeting-houses.

"A Methodist had to dress very plainly. The men wore single-breasted surbouts, with a big standing collar—something like a military undress coat—the shirt collar also being very stiff, and reaching to the ears, it being surrounded by a stiff leather necktie, called a "stock." The women were allowed to wear no bows, flowers, or ribbons of any kind. Why, my wife was once turned back from the door of the Picton church, "Quarterly-meeting day," because she had a bow on the top of her bonnet instead of the ribbon going straight over the top of it!

"The stove in the old church originally was of sheet-iron. It stood on a box that was filled in with bricks, to keep it from burning the floor; yet when they lifted it up one spring the boards were charred. We used to have hard winters then, and kept roaring fires. The men used to have what they called "a wood-bee" in the fall, and drew wood enough for all the season.

"I recollect one day, one of the class-leaders—it was an extra occasion, being a fast-day—closing the ordinary service with this remark: 'Now, my friends, you have been keeping a fast-day to the Lord; now, don't go home and overload your appetites, and make a sin of it.'

"The first minister was a missionary from the United States. I have entirely forgotten his name, One fact worth mentioning was this: At almost every service—class-meeting in particular—there would be one or more conversions. It was no uncommon thing at all.

"I am the only man now living who ever preached in that church in those early days, and I have lived to see a great change and growth in Methodism."

HAMILTON, Ontario.

A WISE son maketh a glad father; but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.