

## A "MARINE" REMINISCENCE.

It was at the close of a tempestuous day near the end of November, 1856, when the steamer "Monarch," a fine new boat on her first voyage, laden with a cargo of general merchandise from Montreal to Toronto, encountered a fearful gale on Lake Ontario, accompanied by a blinding snow storm. At that time the old partly frame and partly stone hotel known as Prevost's, stood near what is now the western side of the "gap" or entrance to the bay at the east end of Toronto harbor. It appears that in the almost impenetrable gloom of the storm the captain of the steamer mistook the light in one of Prevost's windows for the light in the lighthouse, and before the error was discovered the vessel was hopelessly aground, and by morning was a complete wreck.

At that time I was a clerk in the marine department of the old British America Assurance Company, whose offices were in the building now occupied as the printing house of THE MONETARY TIMES, on the corner of Court and Church streets. Part of the cargo of the wrecked steamer consisted of a quantity of port wine, some of which was of excellent quality. On this the company had insurance to a considerable amount, and as what was saved—some eight or ten casks—was supposed to be more or less damaged, the whole was abandoned to the company and the claim paid in full.

In my capacity, as aforementioned, I was detailed to look after the salvage, and accordingly had it carted up to the company's premises and stored in the cellar, where it lay until the following spring, when the directors determined upon disposing of it by auction. Some of the old boys in the office had, in the meanwhile, got it into their heads that there was something good below stairs, and the key to the side door was found to be occasionally missing from its accustomed place about lunch time. And, as what gaugers call the outage in a couple of the casks of the best quality was found to be considerable, there was some surprise as to how the shortage had occurred. The finding, however, behind the casks, of a piece of half-inch rubber hose about two feet in length, which had a strong odor of port wine, might possibly have accounted for the shortage and for the occasional absence of the key. However, a sale of the wine was advertised, and on a certain day in the month of April, 1857, a small but select audience, composed mainly of the directors and their friends, assembled in the cellar aforementioned, to purchase the wine. The auctioneer on the occasion was the late William Wakefield. Well do I remember, as the old gentlemen mounted a chair to announce the terms of sale, whilst his rubicund physiognomy reminded me of the rising sun viewed on Lake Ontario, on a summer morning, his giving expression to one of his numerous jokes. "Here," said he, "now isn't this a remarkable thing, here am I, a seller in a cellar."

To shorten my story, the wine was sold, the services of a bottler secured to bottle it, and some three or four bottles given to each of the office employees for their—supposed care of the wines. My share, however, in some way disappeared unaccountably, and it was hinted that old D— had appropriated my share with his own. This closes the history of the wine saved from the "Monarch," whilst all that remains of the vessel herself is her submerged boilers, over which a buoy now floats near the eastern approach to the harbor, to warn vessels of their danger.

I look back through the long vista of nearly thirty-eight years, and call to remembrance the faces and forms of the old board of directors, and of the old officials who then and for many years previously had directed the affairs and in various capacities discharged duties towards the old British America. Of the directors there were George Percival Ridout, governor; Peter Paterson, deputy governor; E. H. Rutherford, Thos. D. Hennis, Thos. Helliwell, Jos. Beckett, William Proudfoot, Hon. Wm. Cayley, and one other whose name I for the moment forget. Of the officials there were T. W. Birchall, fire manager; Wm. Steward, marine manager; Alex. Davison; John Evans, accountant; E. R. O'Brien, fire inspector, and the writer. All these, with the exception of myself, have crossed the river and joined the great majority. The last mentioned still lingers, like the last leaf on the tree.

An appropriate pendant to this little story is found in the *Acadian Recorder* of recent date. It may be asserted, with all confidence, that Halifax people of those days knew what good living was. In fact, they do so still. We quote from the Halifax journal:—

"A well-known character in fiction was wont to exclaim: 'The good old days! the grand old days! the days of bluff King Hal!' but that there was capacity for good times at least in the days of George IV. is evident from a document which has been placed in my hands, bearing the date of 1826. It was in the era of prosperous marine insurance underwriting; and it appeared to have been the custom, with each new year, to have a little 'spread' for the delectation of all concerned. A menu tells us that the committee for the dinner were: 'Mr. Dempster, Mr. Strachan, Mr. Yeomans, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Almon,' and it is accompanied by this bill:—

Halifax, Nova Scotia,  
6th January, 1826.

The Marine Insurance Co.:	
Bought of George N. Russell.	
9 gals. best Madeira, at 17s. 6d.,	£7 17 6
4 4-6ths gals. do., at 15s.,	8 12 0
1 doz Sauterne,	2 2 6
1 doz. Vin de Grave,	1 7 6
1 doz. Champagne,	5 10 0
2 bottles ditto, at 120s.,	1 0 0
1 doz. do., at 100s.,	5 0 0
	£26 9 6

Reed. payment.  
G. N. RUSSELL."

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN AND ROMAN  
FIRE ENGINES.

History traces the use of fire engines to a very early date. The Romans certainly possessed them, as Pliny is witness. Apollodorus, too, architect to the Emperor Trajan, speaks of leather bags with pipes attached, from which water was projected by squeezing the bags. A far more advanced fire engine, however, was used in Egypt. Hero, of Alexandria, in a treatise on pneumatics—written about the year 150 B.C.—describes a machine he calls "the siphon used in conflagrations." It consisted of two cylinders and pistons connected by a reciprocating beam, which raised and lowered the pistons alternately. Thus with the help of valves, which opened only towards the jet, the water was projected, but not in a continuous stream, as the pressure ceased after each stroke. The air chamber had yet to be invented. To what extent Hero's engine was used we do not know. It is clear that unless several were brought into action simultaneously, such machines would be almost useless. As far as the construction went, however, Hero's "siphon" was a great success, for, with the addition of air-chamber, hose, and improvements in details, it has become the modern fire engine. From the time of Hero to the year 1518, no progress worth recording seems to have been made, although at the latter period we learn that at the building of the city of Augsburg instruments for fires and water syringes are mentioned. In 1657 a fire engine was used at Nuremberg almost identical with that of Hero. It had a water-cistern, and was drawn by two horses. Twenty-eight men were required to work it, and it threw a jet one inch in diameter eighty feet. Late in the 17th century the air-chamber and hose made their appearance. The latter, with the suction pipe, were invented by Van der Heide in 1670, while their use in connection with the air-chamber was first recorded by Perrault in 1684.

## FIRE CORONERS.

The sentiment in favor of fire coroners, whose duty it shall be to examine into the causes of fires, and clothed with the necessary authority to enable them to do this thoroughly, seems to be growing in popular favor. We believe it was C. C. Hine, editor of the *Insurance Monitor*, who first started the idea, and the seed which he so well sowed bids fair to bear fruit. A bill for the creation of the office of State fire marshal has been prepared and will shortly be introduced in the Legislature of Massachusetts, and it is believed will become a law. This bill gives the marshal full authority to investigate the cause, origin and circumstances of every fire, and gives him power to subpoena witnesses and compel their attendance. Farther than

this, he is given power to take measures for the prevention of fires, and the section relating to this reads as follows:—

Section 5. The fire marshal, the fire commissioners of the city of Boston, the board of fire engineers in all towns and cities where such board is established, and the mayor and aldermen in cities and the selectmen in towns where no board of fire engineers exist, shall have the right at all reasonable hours, for the purposes of examination, to enter in and upon all buildings and premises within their jurisdiction. Whenever any of these officers shall find in any building or upon any premises combustible material or inflammable conditions dangerous to the safety of such building or premises, they shall order the same to be removed or remedied, and such order shall be forthwith complied with by the owner or occupant of said building or premises; provided, however, that if the said owner or occupant shall deem himself aggrieved by such order, he may, within twenty-four hours, appeal to the fire marshal, and the cause of the complaint shall be at once investigated by the direction of the latter, and unless by his authority the order of the board above named is revoked, such order shall remain in force and be forthwith complied with by said owner or occupant.

The fire marshal, fire commissioners, fire engineers, mayor and aldermen, or selectmen, as aforesaid, shall make an immediate investigation as to the presence of combustible material, or the existence of inflammable conditions in any building or upon any premises under their jurisdiction upon complaint of any person having an interest in said buildings or premises or property adjacent thereto. Any owner or occupant of buildings or premises failing to comply with the orders of the authorities heretofore indicated, shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$10, nor more than \$50, for each day's neglect.

Altogether the bill seems admirably calculated to meet the exigencies of the case, and in proposing it Massachusetts has taken a step which other States would do well to consider. An efficient fire marshal in every State would unquestionably save thousands of dollars.—*Detroit Indicator*.

## FIRE INSURANCE LOSSES.

What is the use of moaning over the loss of surplus. It's high time for action, prompt action. Fire losses must be paid. An insurance company is after all only a medium for distributing loss. We hear a great hue and cry about assessment life companies not charging high enough premiums to enable them to meet claims. Such companies are called frauds, and they usually go up in smoke. If we were to say that such and such a fire company was a fraud because its surplus was decreasing largely on account of the fact that it does not collect premium enough to cover the losses, what a howl would be raised by the other fellow. But is it not a matter of fact that the surplus of fire companies is gradually decreasing, because a rate sufficient to allow the company to pay losses and expenses of management is not charged? Why not begin the year of grace 1894 and do business at paying rates?—*Chicago Investigator*.

—The sardine factory owners of Eastern Maine met in Eastport some days ago to form a sardine syndicate or corporate union of manufacturers of these goods. The industry was well represented, about 35 being present from Lubec and Eastport, with other sardine towns near. Mr. E. A. Holmes was chosen chairman. The following committee was chosen to design plans, etc., for the trust: Messrs. Holmes, D. Collins and G. O. Grady, of Eastport, and Messrs. B. Pike, E. M. Lawrence, F. Sanders and Q. Peacock, of Lubec.

ISLAND NAVIGATION.—It appears that there is trouble between the P. E. I. Steam Navigation Company and the Dominion Government in regard to the amount of subsidy which the former shall receive. In the past \$5,200 per year has been paid, but an increase of \$15,000 is now asked. The Government refuse to grant the increase, and the company, who control the service between Summerside and Pt. de Chene and Charlottetown and Pictou, threaten to send their steamers elsewhere or sell out. It is said that the Government are considering a proposition by which a steam ferry will be established between Capes Traverse and Tormentine.—*Eastern Chronicle*.