

LOOKING BACKWARD THROUGH "THE VISTA OF RECEDING YEARS."

ST. JOHN'S IN 1847 AND IN 1921.

By ALEX. A. PARSONS.

"forward, backward, backward, forward, in the immeasurable sea, swayed by vaster ebbs and flows than can be known to you or me."

—Locksley Hall.

PERHAPS it is due, more than anything else, to my partiality for men and things of the past, that I persist in sending to the Press extracts and deductions from the contributions of our local "annalists of earlier days." Anyway, it has always been a pleasure to me, particularly at this season of the year, to be reminded, and to remind others, of "the good old days of yore" when our island home, with not much more than half its present population, enjoyed even a greater measure of commercial prosperity, comparatively speaking, than it does to-day.

According to the historians of the times, St. John's, in 1847—the year after the memorable 9th of June fire—had so far recovered from the widespread conflagration manifested as to be again at its accustomed high altitude of prosperity. Her sturdy and enterprising business men had already begun to appreciate the part they had to play in the work of restoration, and the city was rapidly rising from its ashes in a more attractive and enduring form than ever. The unconquerable Anglo-Celtic spirit, then as conspicuous in the leaders of our trade and commerce, asserted itself and dominated the situation. Everybody felt that it only required a little time to restore things to normalcy and make the outlook even brighter and better than it was before the disaster. The recuperative power of Newfoundland is truly marvellous. Holocausts, bank crashes and devastating hurricanes seem to have no lasting effect of a serious nature here. We recover almost immediately and continue to prosper, yea, to "wax fat and thick"—politically at all events—in spite of all such adverse eventualities. But let me return to my starting point, the period immediately succeeding that

unforgettable ninth of June fire: "The present year (1847)" says the chronicler to whom I am indebted for my information, "is now about closed, and up to this time we have had but little of the appearance of winter; while we are writing within view of the Atlantic, two vessels from foreign ports are working in the narrows, three others are signalled, several vessels are loading for different ports, and the entire business of our commodious seaport is proceeding with the same despatch and as little obstruction as at mid-summer. Within the last month some snow has fallen, which, drifted by high winds, interrupted outdoor employment for a few days, but succeeding mild weather and bright sunshine have caused the greater part of it to disappear, and now much of the ground is bare. The year now nearly ended has been one of much activity in St. John's, and notwithstanding the pressure of the times, and the partial failure of our great staple industries, the sea and codfisheries, much has been done towards rebuilding the town.

On the day succeeding the fire on the 9th of June last year (1846), with the exception of Government House and some of the barrack buildings occupied by the troops, there was not a building of stone or brick standing in St. John's. It seemed as if the work of destruction had been all but complete. A few buildings were then in course of erection which have since been finished. In the burnt district, such was the intensity of the fire, that it was found necessary to take down to the foundations the walls of almost all the buildings consumed. As soon after as materials could be imported, several buildings were commenced, and during the summer as the workmen engaged on the buildings finished, they were engaged at high wages, especially masons and bricklayers, for another. The whole of these buildings are now roofed in, and during the winter will be finished and ready for occupation in the Spring. As

far as we could estimate from a cursory examination of the south side of Water Street yesterday, we would say that about one-third of that part of the town is now occupied with buildings constructed of inflammable materials, which, for commodiousness and security against fire, are not to be surpassed in any city in British North America.

On the wharves we counted 22 large stores, several of them from 80 to 100 feet in length, from 35 to 45 feet in width, most of them three, and some of them four stories in height. The greater number of these are slated, the others are roofed with galvanized iron, with the exception of two, those of Messrs. Job Brothers & Co. and Messrs. W. & H. Thomas & Co., which have roofs including rafters, doors, window sashes and shutters of iron, and may be said to be fire-proof, except from fire breaking out within them. Several of the other stores also are fitted up with iron doors and window sashes. Along the south side of the street have been built, by the way, with spacious warehouses attached to the greater number of them, and forty-seven dwelling houses. Several of these are of brick, but the following have elegant fronts of cut stone, namely: those of Messrs. Hunter & Co., W. & H. Thomas & Co., Baine Johnston & Co., R. & S. Rutherford, Wilson & Co., P. Grace, R. O'Dwyer & Co., J. H. Warren, C. F. Bennett & Co., and J. W. Stewart. The shop and warehouses of Messrs. Thomas are fitted up at great expense, with every precaution against fire; the shop front is of iron, with iron doors and window shutters, the windows being of plate glass, and the shutters sliding down in grooves into the basement of the building. Above the shops are spacious warehouses with iron window sashes and shutters; the building is five stories in the rear three towards the street, and is roofed with iron. The premises of Messrs. Robinson, Brooking & Co., Hunter & Co., and Baine Johnston & Co., have ranges of fire-proof brick vaults underneath them through the whole length, and several of the other buildings are fitted up with fire-proof vaults. Of the brick buildings, those of Messrs. Job Brothers & Co., Bowring Brothers and some others, are much admired for their light and elegant appearance. On the north side of the street, the south side of Duckworth Street, and on the intermediate cross-roads, several substantial brick buildings have also been erected, numbering, we believe, nine shops and nineteen dwelling houses. Besides these, an elegant and substantial Custom House has been built on the site of the former one. The building is of brick, with a cut stone portico and contains nine spacious rooms, besides the cellars and vaults. The Exchange buildings on Duckworth Street may also be reckoned among these, rebuilt, the brick walls alone having been left by the fire, and these required some repairs. Beyond the limits prescribed by the Street Act, Mr. Prowse has erected his cut stone houses on the north side of Duckworth Street, the Hon. B. Robinson has erected a brick building adjoining them, the Hon. Attorney General has built an elegant brick residence on Queen's Bridge Road, and two brick buildings have been erected on Gower Street, in the vicinity of the Methodist Chapel. The works of the Water Company will be in operation early next season, after which, the town, in place of being one of the least secure from fire in the North American Colonies, will, as the sheds disappear from the burnt district, gradually become the safest. Besides the buildings erected in the burnt district, a considerable part of the vacant ground on Cochrane Street, to the north of Gower Street, and on the Military Road, has been occupied, and wooden buildings, some of which are finished in a superior manner, have been erected on them. On the whole, the town is improving rapidly in appearance, and the widening of the streets, the greater space occupied by the new buildings, and the introduction of water must add much to its salubrity. On the Cathedral of the Church of England, which was commenced early in the summer, a number of men were employed till the appearance of frost, when the walls were covered over. A number of stone cutters are now employed, and we understand the work is to be carried on vigorously in Spring. To Mr. Fray, architect of this building, the colony is indebted for the discovery of excellent freestone on Little Bell Island, of which the building is to be constructed. The only other building in course of erection is the Colonial Building in the vicinity of Government House; the walls of this building are nearly finished, and were covered in on the appearance of frost.

What changes have taken place since then. We are greatly surprised as we look around and mark the many great advantages we possess as compared with the possessions of our forebears. First, and most important of all, we have Responsible Govt. to contemplate and admire. What a boon and a blessing that has been to us as a people. True, it is an expensive institution when we come to look at it from the taxpayers point of view, inasmuch as it costs us between \$9,000,000 and \$11,000,000 a year to run the machine. But what of that? We've got no need to it now that we couldn't do without it, nor could we if we could. Some people call it "a white elephant," but it is impossible to please everybody. Be that as it may, most thoughtful people seem to be under the impression that the

Imperial authorities gave us Home Rule quite half a century too soon; that even to-day we should be much better off as a Crown Colony than under our present extravagant system of government. Why, I believe, as I have already observed, between nine and eleven million dollars to govern barely 250,000 people. Just think of it—only the population of a second or third class city in England or the United States. But it is useless to croon over mistakes of the past. Newfoundland is not the only country in which similar errors have been committed. What we need now is to get to work in real earnest and reduce our expenses. We must cultivate the virtues of industry, economy and patriotism. Never mind such impediments as are thrown in the way by the ubiquitous demagogue and his followers. We must brush them aside and, in the words of the ancient optimist, Nehemiah, tell them we are "engaged in a great work and cannot come down." Responsible Government, however, is only one of the good things the whilistic of time has turned up for us during the period here mentioned. An efficient and ample water system, a network of railways (another "white elephant," by the way), a spacious dry dock, electric light, wireless telegraphy, the telephone, a tramway through our main thoroughfares, and other modern conveniences have followed in rapid succession until we are now pretty well up-to-date in everything except the art of governing ourselves economically and well. But I have no desire at present to take a hand in politics, and must, therefore, venture any farther in this direction, especially on the eve of the festive season, when it is only in order to wish one another "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!"

A Merry Christmas to All

The Royal Stores, through the medium of this column, wish their many Patrons and Friends a Right Merry Christmas. May it be a time of real enjoyment to all.

The Festival of Christmas tide means much more than just a "Toll-day." It is a time of feasting and merry making—a time when the spirit of Goodwill fills the hearts of men. It is also a time of happy reunions of relations, families and friends, as a result of which we return to our daily tasks with renewed vigour and courage.

Last year, 2 or 3 days after Christmas, I remember meeting an old friend who had been spending Christmas Day at the old home, a few miles in the country, along with ten brothers and sisters, some too, with families of their own. He said he'd had a "glorious time" and he launched out with an eloquently convincing account of what the life of family had meant to him in his life.

In all his business struggles he felt behind him the combined strength of his kinsfolk, giving him a fresh courage when things looked black; in his heart he felt that he was a representative of a name of which he was proud, and which, he couldn't let down. This sense of responsibility to something outside oneself is a great spur to effort.

During the war, in handbooks of military training, this thought was very much emphasized and the sense of "esprit de corps" "esprit de compagnie" and "esprit de platoon" gave many a man just the little extra amount of nerve that made all the difference when the testing time came. Up-to-date firms also foster this spirit among their employees, because it makes for happiness and that business is likely to be successful, which has a happy staff.

Men and women can only give of their best when their minds are at ease; when they are working with congenial and friendly souls, and in proportion as any business grows, tends and develops, this "esprit de famille" will be a happy staff. Work will then mean more than "making a living," it will be enjoying the daily companionship of friends; it will be adding a little to the reputation of the family. At the Royal Stores the importance of "esprit de famille" has always been recognized, and the most delightful spirit of camaraderie, of friendship, of a common aim and a common interest prevails. From the highest to the lowest, all connected with this business realize that they have in their daily work, an interest, a responsibility, and a joy, which others share—in short, that we are really one large happy family, and it is on behalf of this happy family that I wish the readers of these articles a RIGHT MERRY CHRISTMAS.

THE GLEANER.

STAR OF THE SEA ASSOCIATION.—Back to the Old Site. First meeting in New Hall. The monthly meeting of the Star of the Sea Association will be held in the Society's New Hall, Henry Street, on Christmas Day at 2.30 p.m. All members of the Association are requested to be present at this meeting as important business will be discussed. By order, WM. F. GRAHAM, Sec. dec23,21

Mrs. Day Declares She is Now a Well and Happy Woman

After Suffering for Eight Years
St. John's Woman Finds Entire Relief.

"I'm a well and happy woman again, thanks to Tanlac," said Mrs. Mary Day, 21 Coronation St., St. John's, Newfoundland. "It was about eight years ago when I began to have stomach trouble and I was never able to get relief from it until I began taking Tanlac. When I started on this medicine I wasn't eating solid food at all and was almost starved. I only weighed a hundred and thirteen pounds and was so weak I was unable to do my housework. I had rather headaches at times that almost drove me distracted, and I was so nervous the slightest noise made me feel like screaming."

"When I meet my friends now they tell me I look the picture of health, and I know I never felt better in my life than I do right now. My whole system has been benefited and I am now like a different woman. I can truthfully say 'Tanlac has done for me what I thought was absolutely impossible.'"

Tanlac is sold by leading druggists everywhere.

Just Folks to
CHRISTMAS EVE.
It's Christmas Eve, and he's in bed, while here my patient watch I keep, waiting for him to fall asleep. And oh! what thoughts race through my head. Of Christmas Eve long years ago when I hung up my stockings so.

Now that's his stocking hanging there in just the way that mine was hung on Christmas Eve when I was young. But I am in my easy chair, knowing the things I couldn't know in boyhood's happy long ago.

I would to-night that I might go to bed as blithe and glad as he, wishing for him to fall asleep. That little chap will even hear the sound of sleighbells tinkling clear.

He'll dream of whiskers, long and white, and see the jolly saint who comes loaded with horns and noisy drums; and though he'll spend a restless night, around him kindly folk will tuck to let him revel in their stock.

And here I sit with tear-dimmed eyes, for somehow I have come to know too many things that are not so. But I am old and gray and wise, wishing that I might still believe and share his joy on Christmas Eve.

And yet, when he shall older grow, this is my prayer for him so young. That where his stocking now is hung another little boy shall go, and hang his stockings up, and he shall know the joy he gives to me.

"Will you come out for a walk on Christmas Day," asked Mabel of her girl friend who works in a busy store down town. "I would love to if I'm not too tired," she replied. "Last year I was so tired after the Christmas rush, that I had to stay in all day." Just think of that, and receive to do your shopping early, and don't forget to take home some Life Savers for the children.—dec21,24

ERASMUS PERFUMES, SOAPS and all other Fancy Toilet Goods at BOWRING'S. QUALITY and VALUE unequalled.—dec20,21,24

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

We Tender to Our Patrons
our heartiest wishes for
A Right, Merry
Christmas

May it be a time of
real enjoyment to
you and yours.

The Royal Stores, Ltd.

EARLY CABLES.

TRouble in Egypt.
MALTA, Dec. 23.

Two British warships have received orders to proceed to Egypt immediately. Other units of the British Mediterranean fleet are under orders to leave at the shortest notice.

FAVOURING THE TREATY.
DUBLIN, Dec. 23.

Telegrams to members of the Dail now in recess until January 3rd, came today from their constituencies, most of them strongly favouring ratification of the Anglo-Irish agreement. The County Council of Navin sent a telegram to its representative urging the same course as the telegram to Bannock De Valera, yesterday, from his constituents of Clare County. Mrs. Sean Connolly, Dublin, whose husband was executed as a result of the 1916 rebellion, to-day, repudiated the spirit in her behalf. Mrs. Connolly said she was satisfied the treaty secured the freedom which her husband died to win.

DIFFERENCE UNIMPORTANT.
WASHINGTON, Dec. 23.

President Harding, in a formal statement to-day, declared an unjustified effort has been made to magnify his difference of view with the American delegation regarding the interpretation of the four power Pacific

Treaty. He added, the differences were unimportant and the delegates had his full confidence. He also denied the charges that the United States delegation was withholding information.

A GOOD ARGUMENT.
DUBLIN, Dec. 23.

The decision of the Dail to adjourn until January 3, was commented on by all Dublin papers to-day as favorable to the chances of ratification of the British-Irish Agreement.

BALFOUR TO AMERICA.
WASHINGTON, Dec. 23.

Arthur Balfour, head of the British Arms Conference delegation, to-night, issued a Christmas message to the American people. Surely, he said, there are no nations between whom peace and goodwill should be more ardent than between the two great peoples of English speech. Such has always been my faith and never did it seem nearer complete realization than now, when under American leadership so much is being done to diminish armaments and remove the causes of international offence.

FRANCE AND NAVAL RAITOS.
PARIS, Dec. 23.

Premier Briand has sent Ambassador Jusserand in Washington a final and definite acceptance of the Capital ship ratio. France, however, it is said, maintains her position regarding submarines and coast defence ships, although she is willing to negotiate.



"A Pleasure To Take"

our Cough and Cold Cure, because it is composed of pure and harmless drugs. No cough remedy has ever been discovered that will cure every cough, but we think we have one that comes a little nearer to doing it than most of them. We have prepared it for years, it has been tried in all manner of cases and given satisfaction. We ask you to remember and try this:

Because it is safe.
Because it is most certain to cure.
Because it is pleasant to take.
Because it is equally good for children or adults.
Ask for Stafford's Phoratoxone. Price 35c.; Postage 10c. extra.
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Wholesale and Retail Chemists and Druggists,
St. John's, Newfoundland.
Write us for Wholesale Prices.
Phone 610.

JUST ARRIVED:

**Turkeys,
Ducks & Geese,
THE BEST STOCK NOW ON SALE.**

Ex S. S. Rosalind:

50 brls. WAGNER APPLES—No. 1 and Domestic.
20 boxes GLACE CHERRIES.
PURE COCOA by the lb., only 20c.
SHREDDED COCOANUT.
BEST TABLE BUTTER—2 lb. prints and bulk.
DESICCATED COCOANUT.
CALIFORNIA PURPLE GRAPES.
ALMERIA GRAPES, 35c. lb.
CALIFORNIA LEMONS, 40c. and 50c. doz.

Oranges! Oranges!

Valencia .25 & 35c. doz.
Calif. Valencia .60c. doz.
Large Sweet Floridas.
California Navels,
70c., 75c., 85c. doz.
Grape Fruit, 10, 15, 18c.

CALIFORNIA FRESH PEARS.

DESSERT APPLES, 50, 60, 70c. doz.
NOVA SCOTIA APPLES—Wagners and Baldwins, 15c., 25c., 35c. doz.
CHOICE COOKING FIGS, 30c. lb.
FIG AND ALMOND CAKE, 1/2 lb. and 1 lb. cakes.
WALNUTS, ALMONDS, BRAZILIAN, SICILY FILBERTS, SHELLED WALNUTS.
MORTON'S PURE BRITISH CORN FLOUR, 25c. lb. packet.
STOCKINGS, 10c., 25c. up to \$1.70 each.
CRACKERS from 47c., 60c., 70c., 85c., \$1.00 up.
PASCAL'S FIGURES, PRAMS, CANOES, BEDS, Etc.

BEST MALAGA TABLE RAISINS.
CARR'S FANCY BISCUITS in small tins,
viz: CORONATION, AFTERNOON TEA,
DE LUXE.

C. P. EAGAN,

Duckworth Street & Queen's Road