

BYGONE DAYS RECALLED

AN OLD TIMER'S REMINISCENCES OF PEOPLE AND EVENTS.

The Mystery which Attended an Old-Time Wedding—An Old-Timer's Reminiscences of People and Events.

It happened in this wise: It was in the month of June; the marriage was to come off in July.

Wedding presents in galore followed rapidly into the dwelling of the bride-expected, such as cake baskets, pickle stands, cruet stands, smelling bottles, fish knives, card cases, centre pieces, etc., etc., nor did the silver flood stop on the consummation of the nuptials. The wedding tour had been made; the excitement attending all such events somewhat subsided; the happy pair took possession of their residence—old Portland—and yet presents kept coming in from friends far and near. Among the latest arrivals was a box of beautiful Havana cigars—according to the brand—sent by an intimate friend, of the stentorian order, to his once bachelor brother, who was supposed to be a great lover of the weed. Indeed, the presents were so numerous that a room in the second story, and near the bedroom, was set apart as a sort of museum, in which to arrange the articles for future leisurely examination. Nor did the Havana box occupy an interior place in the silver argosy. Our friend, the groom, however, had not finished all the cigars he laid in previous to his wedding day, and therefore had no occasion yet to attack the new box presented to him. In due course of time the dog days approached, and with the hot weather the whole district became effluviated—the inside of the dwelling particularly so. Day and night the smell went on; and the conclusion came to the married couple was that rats had been poisoned in the house by former occupants, and their remains were reeking between the plaster in the walls of the room. At all events, the stench became so intolerable—it increased from day to day—that the bride and groom determined to absquatulate, and accordingly gave notice to the landlord that his rooms were not smellable, or the atmosphere within equal to the perfumes of Araby.

Old Mrs. Jones, in the next house, and old Marm Smith, in the other, rubbed their noses with brimstone, as they "could not stand it any longer." They dispersed themselves on either side, right and left, followed up the street for half a mile calling upon the inhabitants—north and south to smell. If people could not smell anything that distance from the scene of the embrocated quarter, it was (according to the expressed opinions of the ladies) because they had no noses. It was at last determined to notify the Captain of Police, as that functionary had a habit of poking his nose into everything that concerned him or not—that is, when there was no row in the case—in order to ferret out the nuisance and, if possible, take the case to the Police Office for investigation. Accordingly that gentleman appeared upon the stage in obedience to the summons.

Now, said he, on arriving at the groom's house and placing the end of his walking stick to the side of his nose, opening his mouth and looking up at the ceiling, giving the appearance by his demeanor that he knew all about it—"you will please call up the cook, for we must begin at the bottom of this business, and so pursue our investigations upwards, and we will see." Bridget was accordingly rung up. Her hands were coated with flour, as if she had just taken them out of the barrel. "Miss Bridget," said the Captain, "there is a very bad smell in this house, and—"

"Faith," said Bridget, "and its me that knows it."

"Well, Bridget," resumed the captain, "we want to find out where it is. Where do you throw your slops?"

"Me! why, where I always does, in the sink, to be sure, and no where else."

"Bridget, are there many children running in and out of the yard, and how old is the youngest?"

"Shure and niver do I know anything about childrens ages—I never had one myself—and I hardly know my own, and—"

"Stop, Bridget, answer my question and don't talk so much." Thereupon the captain elevated his big, brass-headed stick above his head, which gave him not only a very menacing but authoritative aspect. Bridget subsided immediately and wiped the flour off her hands upon her pink apron.

"The fact of the matter is, Mr. —, (the captain addressing the head of the establishment of bad smells) it is my opinion, (now he began to whisper into the gentleman's ear) that this denotes to my olfactories a case of infanticide. I do not like that girl's look. At all events there is a dead child somewhere." "Very likely," mentally ejaculated the new wife. "I saw a funeral the other day," she was always fond of a joke, and, said the captain, "we must ferret it out. These things are getting to be too common and an example should be set. I think we now have a strong case of circumstantial evidence. I know the smell of a dead child as well as a live one, I have children of my own. Let us see. (Again the big stick was run up at the side of his nose, and his mouth opened like the top of a collar box), where does the smell mostly come from, up stairs or down?"

The new wife interjected, "all over at the same time."

"Precisely so," said the Captain. "now we are coming to it. Suppose we explore the garret, and follow on downwards, till we come to the sink where Bridget throws her slops. But mark my words, we shall find the infant under one of the floors. That girl puts me in mind of one we had at the Police Office on Thursday, and I can almost swear it is her. She was acquitted upon a mere technology."

The Captain and all the household now mounted the stairs and explored the garret—the former using his nose earnestly on the cracks in the floor. Nothing, however, was found here. They came down to the second story, examined all the rooms, looked into all the cupboards, behind the dresses hanging up, into the gentlemen's boots, but all to no purpose. The dead infant was still invisible. They next went into the room among the silver presents—the cigar box still holding a conspicuous position. The Captain's eyes lit upon the box.

"We have it," he ejaculated. "Just as I thought;" suiting the action to the word, he brought his nose in contact with the top of the box and dropped it like a hot poker. "Phah—phoo—O—possible!"—the bride and groom bolted for the door and down stairs in a trice; the smell was overpowering—or they run from some other cause. The Captain pitched the box out of the window. "Murder!" was shouted all over the neighborhood. The smell increased. The reporters of the press were aroused. The news flew like the flames of the big fire in St. John in 1877. Paragraphists nibbed their pens; and while the excitement was still at a red heat, and ere the facts at the bottom of the box could be reached, the public were informed of the dreadful case of infanticide that was discovered in the house of Mr. —, at the hour of five o'clock in the afternoon. The mayor was sent for to learn what was best to do. The coroner had already been summoned, and a reward of \$50 was about to be proclaimed on all the street walls, when, in due course of time, the captain had got the cover off the box, when, lo and behold, his eyes lit upon a pair of five pounds trout in the last stages of magnatism. Hence the awful effluvia which, for three weeks, had created a dreadful panic in the neighborhood. If it was not a dead child in a decomposed state, it turned out to be dead fish that had been "boxed up" during the hottest weeks in the year, which smelt just about as bad—if not ten times more so.

MORAL.—Whenever you make presents to your friends in the way of trout, do not place them in a cigar box with the cover nailed down. If you must put them in a cigar box see that the tails of the trout stick out at one end. Remember!

AN OLD TIMER.

FOUND BY CASEY TAP.

A Lucid Piece of Poetry that is a Little in the Rear of the Season.

TO THE EDITOR OF PROGRESS: While aimlessly wandering through King square one day recently, trying to reconcile a fur collar with 43 in the shade, I kicked under the ice in the path a soiled and torn piece of paper, which had evidently been there some weeks. The writing in some places had been almost obliterated by either tears or rain, some of which, I understand, has fallen in St. John this winter. Although almost two months behind time, it seems unkind to the author of the MS. to allow it to drop into the sea of oblivion after McG—Sh-h-h! so I herewith enclose it. The signature I have failed to decipher, but I do not think it is "Leary."

CASEY TAP.

DEAR MARY, The slippers you sent by express. And likewise that pale blue scarf-tyd for Bess. Arrived here last evening, along with the doll sent by your Jim with the eighteen-inch gill. Your brother's quite "funny," and to me it would seem

He regards Bob Burlette, Nye, and Twain as a dream—

A mere passing phantom of overworked brain, That lives a brief moment, and then quik is slain By Oblivion's scimitar or Vengeance's jewelled knife That soon must glist'ning flash on, high for Dan McGinty's life.

Jim says he thinks it's kind of odd in our "five happy years"

We have no "tender olive-branch to yank 'round by the ears."

And so he sends along the doll. "It beas," he writes, "a kid On these cold January nights when Mercury has slid

"Way down to perdition to get his feet thawed"— But, no more on that point. Say, what is that odd Apparatus you marked for poor Uncle Ben?

We've twisted and pulled the thing end over end, And Uncle Ben says, "Wall, see here, now, by jings!

I've got her all straightened out, 'cept these pink strings, An' these blame'yeller rose-bud 'at hangs on this end, Jes' kind o' skygoogles yer fond, Uncle Ben.

I wish I'd 'leeved in Sandy Claus Jes' like I used to do—

I'd rather think no kin o' mine hed dealt this cruel blow!"

So, Mary, if you'll write to us and tell us what it is, And bring once more a pleasant smile to Uncle's wrinkled phiz,

Our prayerful hearts shall beat for you—aye! 'en beyond the grave

Your memory'll be ever green with Bess and Cousin Dave.

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NOT A PRESSING WANT.

MONCTON NEEDS SOME THINGS BUT NOT A HOSPITAL.

A Candid Opinion on the Probable Result if such an Institution were Established—The Rich Have no Need of It and the Poor would Not Enter It.

The latest agitation amongst the upper strata of Moncton society is a movement for a city hospital, which, so the folks say, is the crying need of the hour. And the agitation above mentioned is spreading even as the late lamented gripe spread a few weeks ago; and it promises to hang on with an equally relentless grasp. Like Miss Mabel Jeness' new doctrine of physical culture which is the ruling passion just now among our American cousins, the suddenly discovered want of a hospital has risen up and assumed gigantic proportions. I believe the idea first originated among two or three ladies, and it was speedily taken up by others. Then those whom providence had provided with husbands interested their lords in the scheme, and by and by the hospital began to journey by easy stages towards a local habitation and a name, until at the present time of writing it has reached the dignity of a "Board of Management," and a "Committee on Location," though I have not yet heard of a resident physician being appointed.

Now far be it from me to poke fun, even of the mildest kind, at these earnest workers who are prepared to give their time and labor cheerfully for the good of their fellow creatures, and who are pushing on the work with such enthusiastic energy; but it has sometimes occurred to me that it would be quite as appropriate to represent enthusiasm blindfolded as either Justice or Love. For, if not quite blind, at least the warmth of her feelings very often renders her shortsighted. So, perhaps, the views of a cold and calculating bystander on the hospital question may not be out of place, while the modesty of the said bystander leads him to feel certain that nothing he can say will have sufficient influence with the general public to do the smallest harm to the general hospital. In the first place the question arises to the practical mind is this: Can Moncton in its present financial condition support a hospital which is, as everyone at all informed on the subject knows, a very expensive luxury? Can we get a sufficient number of paying patients during the year to justify us in maintaining an institution that will cost so much to keep up? for of course it will have to be modelled upon the exact plan in miniature of the larger city hospitals.

During a lengthened sojourn in the railway hub, I can say truthfully that I have not known of half a dozen—no, nor half of half a dozen—cases of illness in Moncton among the upper classes where the patient would have availed himself of the advantages offered by a hospital, had there been one in active operation. Surely a poor showing for the support of such an institution. Certainly, we have the poor "always with us," but then the poor of our town are a genus as yet unclassified by modern science, so very singular are their manners and customs, and I most firmly believe that should the time ever come when the Moncton city hospital is in full blast the first pauper patient who is admitted to its walls will furnish a very interesting free show for all those who chance to be strolling along the line of march taken by the ambulance, from the residence of the said pauper to the portals of the hospital, because, unless he happens to be unconscious, he will have to be handcuffed and gagged ere he will consent to humiliate himself by entering a public institution where he has every reason to fear that he will be subjected to all the horrors of being washed, and perhaps even of having his hair cut.

If there is such a bitter need in our town for a place in which the sick poor can be properly cared for, why is the almshouse not crowded, instead of being—as is usually the case—inhabited only by the caretakers. Talk about poverty, forsooth! Why, Moncton is a place in which you can't get a day's work done, even if you are willing to pay double price for it. Say you want to get your garden dug up in the summer. You first cast about in your mind for a person who will be reasonably likely to undertake the job, and then you proceed to call upon him at his ancestral residence on either Telegraph or Vulcan streets.

The chances are that you find the master of the house at home; he is usually at home, and he is probably sitting on the doorstep, in the sun, smoking. He eyes you with cold disdain, and you proceed to cast yourself, in a metaphorical sense, at that pauper's ill-shod feet. You introduce yourself humbly, and ask him if he thinks he could make it convenient to come up to your house and do a little bit of work for you tomorrow.

"What kind o' work?"

"A little bit of gardening," you explain, cringingly.

"I dunno," says the autocrat. "There's lots of them after me every day. Mr. Smith, he was bothering me to come to him tomorrow, but I haint promised him. There's easier work than diggin', I don't care much fur it myself, and it haint none too well paid nuther."

Well, you plead with that man, you fairly grovel before him imploring him to take the money you offer, and he expectsorate at a given point, and finally unbends suffi-

ciently after you have offered him double what the work is worth, as to say that "likely he'll come." But he does not come, all the same, and after wearing out a large stock of patience and shoe leather in making further calls upon the horny handed son of toil, who presistently declines to fulfil his destiny and won't toil, you take up the shovel and hoe and do the work yourself.

It is very much the same thing if your wife wants a woman to do a day's washing. She has to prostrate herself to the earth before the queen of the washtub, before she succeeds in wringing a reluctant "Maybe I'll come if its fine, but there's so many after me all the time I don't hardly know which way to turn."

The hour of washing comes, but the woman does not, and when you call and timidly remonstrate, you are met with the crushing admission: "To tell the truth I clean forgot all about you, there's so many teasin' me all the time to work for them."

These are no fancy pictures, neither are they overdrawn. Hundreds of careworn housekeepers can vouch for their truth, even with tears. Moncton people are hard working, especially the upper classes; they have to work, for they cannot get anybody to work for them, not for money and far less for love. These then are the people in whose interests we are laboring when we strive to raise funds for a hospital; people who would die sooner than enter such an institution, but who when they are ill are tenderly cared for by the ladies of the W. C. T. U., who make it their business to find out all cases of illness among the poor and who are true sisters of charity in nursing and tending them.

Now, I am quite aware that I have written what will be stamped as rank heresy in some quarters. But, as I know well, there is a popular prejudice in favor of a newspaper man knowing something, however little, of the subjects on which he writes. So, having the courage of my convictions, I have taken some pains to feel the public pulse anent the hospital scheme, and outside of those few who have the work directly in hand, and are of course deeply interested in it, the verdict has been unanimous. "We want a hospital as much as a cart wants a fifth wheel, and no more! When we get it we can't keep it up, and when it is built and furnished with a staff of nurses, and a training school and all other useful appliances, the next item will be for advertising—advertising for patients—for they will never get any unless they resort to some such means." I am almost afraid to send this, now I have written it, and feel inclined to emulate the highly respectable old lady who, having seen better days, was reduced through stress of circumstances to selling crumpets for a livelihood, and who when crying her wares in the street was wont to alternately shriek, "Crumpets!" and gasp spasmodically, "I hope to goodness nobody hears me!" Only I should say, "Do please publish this, oh editor of Progress! I am very anxious that it shall appear, but I hope to goodness nobody will see it, or my life will be in danger."

GROFFERY CUTHBERT STRANGE.

TOLD BY THE COADJUTOR.

A Wayfaring Man who Judged the Man by the Coat he Wore.

The following story, which was told to me by the Bishop Coadjutor, loses much of its charm in being related by other lips than his, for the bishop has a peculiarly graceful way of telling a story, which many may emulate, but few equal.

Some years ago, before he came out to Canada, the bishop was walking through one of the poorer streets of London, one evening, accompanied by a friend. Neither of the clergymen was arrayed in his very best garments, for prudence forbade any great display of opulence in such a neighborhood.

Turning up a narrow street, they encountered two rough, half tipsy navvies, who jostled them so roughly that the bishop and his friend were nearly knocked down. "My friend," said Dr. Kingdon mildly, "there is no occasion for you to be so rude; there is plenty of room for us all."

"Who are you talking to?" responded the biggest navvy angrily. Then gazing with drunken solemnity at the two friends, he added: "What be you, anyway? Y'e're nothing but a second-hand parson, out of job at that!"

The bishop's feelings can be better imagined than described, but no one enjoyed the joke more than he did himself.

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