

Town of Belleville, and subsequently, for many years, an active and energetic member of the Town Council. During a part of this time he was also a Councillor and Reeve of Hungerford, and Warden of the County, which office he filled for thirteen years. During the time that he was connected with the Council, he was unremitting in his labours to develop the resources of the North Riding, bringing his whole energies to whatever would tend to their material interests and welfare. It was he who first endeavoured to induce our people to build the plank road from Belleville to Canifton; failing in this he persuaded an American to undertake the task, which proved to be the best paying stock in Canada. From this time commenced the wish on the part of the people for a more extensive system of Plank and Macadamized Roads, until we have now over 130 miles of free Macadamized Roads in the County, and we hesitate not to say that it was to his indomitable energy and perseverance that the people are indebted for them, and though many have found fault, the County will yet bless his memory, and appreciate his services, when those of his traducers have long been forgotten. In 1849, he was presented by the County Council with an elegant Silver Mug, with an inscription engraved thereon, expressive of their high appreciation of his services to the County. And when he left the Council, a very flattering resolution was passed expressive of regret at his retirement from municipal life.

During the Rebellion he was an active loyalist, and though not the kind of man, from his portly figure, who would be likely to do active service, yet he, though holding a captain's commission, volunteered, and under the command of the late Captain Wellington Murney, proceeded to Gananoque, and did duty upon the shores of the St. Lawrence as a private soldier, remaining with the company until it returned home.

For his services to his party he received the appointment of Registrar of the County of Hastings, which he held until 1846, when through an error on the part of a clerk in the office, for which, as Registrar, he was responsible, he was dismissed by the Baldwin-Lafontaine ministry, more on account of his political proclivities than from any wrong that had been done; for so far as he was concerned it was clearly shown that he had nothing whatever to do with the transaction. In 1854 he contested the North Riding with the late Hon. Edward Murney, and was unsuccessful. In October, 1856, when Mr. Murney resigned to contest the Trent Division, Mr. Benjamin again ran for the North Riding, and was elected by a majority of 646. He continued to represent the North Riding of Hastings until the last general election in 1863. During the time he was in the house he was esteemed by his friends as a reliable man, and by all as one of its most useful members. As a member of the Printing Committee he did good service to the country, effecting a saving of \$500,000 dollars in one Parliament. For his labours upon this committee he received the thanks of Parliament and a grant of \$2,000. Few men were missed more than George Benjamin on the re-assembling of Parliament in 1863, by both sides of the House, and it will be a long time ere North Hastings be represented by a man his equal in point of talent and industry. Mr. Benjamin was for years an active member of the Orange Society, to which he steadfastly adhered until he died, taking a lively interest in all its deliberations and all pertaining to its welfare. He was elected Grand Master in 1846, and continued in that office until 1853, when a division occurred in the Order, arising out of a question of internal government, and though re-elected that year, he repeatedly expressed a wish to retire, in order that he might not be in the way of a reconciliation, but his friends insisted upon his maintaining the position until the end of 1854, when he insisted upon retiring.

## VIII. Papers on Physical Geography.

### 1. CRYSTAL CAVERN IN SWITZERLAND.

Switzerland, already so rich in beautiful scenery, has had a new feature added to its wonders of nature. Near St. Maurice, in the Canton de Vaud, a grand crystal cavern has been discovered, at which one arrives by a boat on a subterranean lake. The cavern lies 400 metres or 1,300 feet below the surface of the earth, and is said to be beautiful beyond description.

### 2. THE KINGDOM OF ITALY.

The Italian Government has just published the result of a census taken since the annexations which constituted it as it is at present. It contains some curious facts of which the accuracy cannot be doubted. The Kingdom of Italy contains a population of 21,777,334 souls. It is, consequently, the fifth Power in Europe as regards its inhabitants; superior to Spain, of which the territory is twice as

extensive, and to Prussia, of which the area is likewise greater.—Were the unity of Italy accomplished its population would amount to 27,000,000. The average population of a commune in Italy is 2,821 inhabitants, while the average in France is only 978 inhabitants. There are nine communes in 300 square kilometres. In France, on the contrary, there are 18 in a similar space. The population is most crowded in the south of the island of Sardinia; it is least numerous in the Marches and in the *Æmilia*. Italy contains on an average 84 inhabitants to the square kilometre—a figure higher than that of France or Prussia, but lower than that of England, Holland, or Belgium. Lombardy and Sicily are the provinces in which the population has increased most rapidly of late years. Sardinia and the Neapolitan provinces come next. The increase of population has been much slower in Piedmont. The wars of 1848 and 1849 have tended to that consequence.

## IX. Miscellaneous.

### 1. AN HOUR AT THE OLD PLAY-GROUND.

BY HENRY MONFORD.

I sat an hour to-day, John,  
Beside the old brook stream,  
Where we were schoolboys in old time,  
When manhood was a dream.  
The brook is choked with fallen leaves,  
The pond is dried away—  
I scarce believe that you would know  
The dear old place to-day.

The school-house is no more, John,  
Beneath our locust trees;  
The wild rose by the window side  
No more waves in the breeze;  
The scattered stones look desolate,  
The sod they rested on  
Has been plowed by stranger hands,  
Since you and I were gone.

The chesnut tree is dead, John,  
And what is sadder now—  
The broken grape vine of our swing  
Hangs on the withered bough;  
I read our names upon the bark,  
And found the pebbles rare  
Laid up beneath the hollow side,  
As we had piled them there.

Beneath the grass-grown bank, John,  
I looked for our old spring  
That bubbled down the alder path  
Three paces from the swing;  
The rushes grow upon the brink,  
The pool is black and bare,  
And not a foot this many a day,  
It seems, has trodden there.

I took the old blind road, John,  
That wandered up the hill;  
'Tis darker than it used to be,  
And seems so lone and still!  
The birds sing yet among the boughs,  
Where once the sweet grapes hung,  
But not a voice of human kind  
Where all our voices rung.

I sat me on the fence, John,  
That lies as in old time,  
That same half-panel in this p  
We used so oft to climb—  
And thought how o'er the bars of life  
Our playmates had passed on,  
And left me counting on this spot  
The faces that are gone.

### 2. THE QUEEN'S BOOK.

A ROYAL WIFE'S TRIBUTE TO HER NOBLE HUSBAND.

It has long been known that the Queen of England was engaged upon a species of biography of her late noble consort. The work,