BYGONE DAYS RECALLED

AN OLD TIMER'S REMINISCENCES OF PEOPLE AND EVENTS.

Turning the First Sod—The Ball that Ended with a Tragedy—How Mr. Jackson and his Firm went Ahead—An Interesting Event which took place in Halifax.

XIII.

The dinner passed off well, everybody was more than pleased, the libations were free, strong and clear—the toasts all to the point, and the speeches and songs highly flavored with railroad piquency and apt quotations, from Watts and George Stephenson.

But to give the occasion still greater *eclat*, a grand celebration, in connection with the turning of the first sod, was provided by the committee of management, to be wound up in the evening with a Citizens' Ball, free to every one—who chose to pay. The "turn-out" was certainly a fine one—every trade was represented in the procession, and each fraternity did its utmost to outrival all others in its banners, devices, symbols, epigrams and trade craft arrangements for exhibiting its artizans at work upon platforms drawn by handsomely caparisoned steeds. Perhaps it was the finest mechanical procession ever witnessed in St. John. The first sod was turned by Sir Edmund Head, near about where the old station house stood, foot of Jeffrey's Hill. The round house was between this point and the Mill Pond, say opposite Fleming & Humbert's foundry—an open sheet of water.

I now come to the Ball for the purpose of relating a tragic occurrence. The round house was fitted up for the occasion. The company assembled was large and brilliant, composed of St. John's top citizens. All went on well until about one o'clock in the morning, when, with a terrible crash, down came the orchestra gallery which had been temporarily erected over the entrance door. The military band occupied this gallery. Persons were moving about under it all the evening, and when it fell a young gentleman belonging to Fredericton was mortally hurt; he lingered in the ball room for several days, as he could not be removed, when and where he died. A young lady was all but killed and became a cripple for life; she is still living. Several others were badly injured but recovered in time. It was a terrible break up to a very pleasant evening. The day's rejoicings ended in a mournful evening tragedy. Now here was a simple matter that might have been easily obviated by proper precaution and a little common sense. After this temporary gallery had been completed Mr. W. K. Reynolds, of Suspension Bridge fame, happened in the building, and, casting his eyes towards the gallery, he told the head workman that a semi-circle extending from one side of the building to the other could not possibly stand the weight of many persons, unless there were central supports, without which it would break down. The workman saw the force of the remark, and said he would attend to it—*but he did not*. Hence the catastrophe. A clear case of manslaughter, which might have been pushed into the courts.

But now for Mr. Jackson and his great promises! The man who was so sensitive of his firm's honor, that he almost vowed vengeance upon any one who might by chance look askance at his end of the table while in the act of speaking, how was it now with him? We shall see presently. Men were set to work immediately to make the turf fly, all along the marsh; navvies with pick-axes and shovels and wheelbarrows, were actively piling up the mud heaps in fine style; but—after operating some distance along the line for about a month, the work suddenly stopped, and the men sent to the right about, the meaning of which nobody could divine, but we all thought everything would come out "O. K." The winter came and went. The summer was following fast, but no sign of a resumption of work. Nor had we the least intimation from over the water as to what the great firm was contemplating. Surely a gentleman who could make such a speech in the Custom House a year or more before this, was not now going to leave us in the lurch? Faith, and it soon came about, for Jackson & Co. failed to redeem their promises—as we learned for the first time when our government, who were at length moved to incompassionate our misfortune, sent a deputation to London to ascertain of these great men what were their intentions. The reply was tantamount to this: that they were in a "fix," and unable to proceed—and that we could build the road ourselves, and they would surrender their charter, if we gave them £90,000 (if my memory is correct) in payment of the work already done, to which the province agreed at the next meeting of the legislature, after considerable diplomacy, in order that the work should proceed. This then was the beginning of the European and North American Railroad.

One of the most interesting sights I have ever seen, was at Halifax, on the occasion of the Duke of Clarence's accession to the English throne. In those days our dependence for English news was upon the sloop-of-war gun packets once a month, and the news was generally ten weeks old by the time it reached us. It was not until eight weeks after the death of George the Fourth that Halifax was made aware of it. There were at this time eight men of war, besides the Admiral's flag ship, lying near the Dock Yard. Sir Colin Campbell was Governor of the Province. A large dinner party was given at Government House in honour of the occasion. One of the King's sons (natural), Capt. Fitzclarence, commanded one of the Frigates—while a natural son of George the Fourth, Capt. Fitzherbert, was in the Rifle Brigade, under Colonel Norcott. Both of these gentlemen were at the dinner, and about thirty of the Halifax gentry—no ladies, as it was got up in honor of the new King, and somewhat roisterous. It had been arranged beforehand, and preparations were made accordingly, that so soon as the King's health was proposed, a signal was to be given and a salvo from the ships in the harbor, as well as the Citadel, should follow as a response. At nine o'clock (it was a very dark night) a line of sentinels was posted from the dining room, to the "outer world," where a piece of ordnance was planted in front of Government House grounds, and an artilleryman with a piece of lighted port-fire ready to give the first bang; and while the toast was being proposed by his Excellency, and the words "long live His Majesty William the Fourth" the signal was given and bang—bang—bang went the whole fleet in most terrific peals of thunder. The whole heavens were lighted up at quick intervals, and while it lasted it seemed as if all Pandemonium had broken loose. It was equal to thunder. A royal salute being 21 guns and nine throats belching forth at the same time, each giving its full quota, the noise created may be imagined. As the inhabitants were not aware "what was up," people were more or less alarmed—while many thought "the Yankees" were down upon us sure. Nor did we get the full particulars of the story until the paper came out—once a week think of it! no "penny papers" then to let the people into secrets, whether politically or socially. In fact the St. John *Morning News* had not then commenced its career, while Halifax was a long distance behind.

AN OLD TIMER.

SOMETHING NEW IN FRENCH.

The Ingres-Coutellier Series of Lessons for Advanced Pupils.

Among the most noticeable advances made in modern teaching, must be placed in the first line the principle which consists in adding to the theoretical studies a practical knowledge of science. Starting from this principle, and applying it to the study of languages, the Ingres-Coutellier school has lately commenced with their advanced students a series of lessons on the following subject: "France, Her People, Her Institutions, Her History." There certainly is no subject more interesting, more instructive and better fitted to complete the study of the French language.

A particular advantage of the subject studied is that in a determined and unique mind it comprises a great variety of details, and thus furnishes a fecund theme of interesting causeries.

The pupils meet at the home of one of them on Saturday evening, and are thus brought to speak freely each one in so far as he has already mastered the language of Victor Hugo.

M. Ingres intends to devote about twenty meetings to the subject, which meetings are not only an exercise of talking but also one of general education useful to all. Besides they may contribute to expel from the mind some of those singular prejudices which many people, even in this great and generous country, still nourish against all that is French.

Emulated the Heroine.

A friend of mine has a little niece to whom she is devoted, and the sentiment is fully reciprocated; indeed, a more attached pair of chums could scarcely be found.

Last week, Katie's mamma sang to the small maiden for the first time the dolorous ballad of "Vilkins and His Dinah," and Katie, who is some months short of four years old, listened solemnly, and was deeply impressed, but instead of bursting forth into lamentations over the sad fate of Dinah, as the writer himself remembers doing the first time he listened to that tale of woe, this strong-minded damsel merely inquired anxiously where her "side" was, and on being shown, she melted insensibly into the elsewhere, and was absent so long that her mamma became uneasy, and went in search of her. In her own little room, and on her own little bed, was Katie, stiff and rigid. "All laid on her side," like the hapless Dinah, and by her side was neatly disposed a large empty pickle bottle.

"Katie!" cried her mother, bending over the prostrate figure, "what is the matter?"

"Cold pizen," murmured the embryo queen of tragedy, in a sepulchral whisper. Unclosing one eye, and indicating the pickle bottle with an imperial gesture of one rigid hand, "I'm Dinah!" ***

A beautiful youug lady became so sadly disfigured wiih pimples and blotches that it was feared she would die of grief. A friend recommended Ayer's Sarsparilla, which she took, and was completely cured. She is now one of the fairest of the fair.—*Advt.*

OUT AT SEA—At the Mechanics' Institute, Monday and Tuesday evenings, Feb. 10th and 11th. Magnificent scenic effect.

WAS TAKEN ON THE FLY.

MR. GEORGE F. GREGORY DID NOT SIT FOR HIS PICTURE.

But "Progress" Managed to Get a very Good one of Him—Also a Pen Portrait—The Graphic Story of How a Great Battle was Fought on the Fields of York.

Few portraits of public men have appeared in PROGRESS of greater interest than that which adorns this column. It is due to Mr. Gregory to say that he did not sit for this picture. The photographer who should attempt to focus the camera upon him would be a very bold man. But while Mr. Gregory is not in the habit of getting his picture taken, PROGRESS is not in the habit of getting left. If the fugitive shadow-graphs on the screen of Time cannot be had in any other way, they must needs be taken on the fly.

Many notable figures went down in the tournament of the 20th ult., and perhaps the most prominent of these was the subject of this sketch. Against Mr. Gregory and his sturdy lieutenant, Mr. Allen, were arrayed the entire government forces in York led by General Blair himself. By means of the Fredericton bridge, General Blair was able to form his line of battle in a commanding position on both sides of the river. The Tenderfoot Home Guards at Fredericton were led to the attack by General Blair himself upon his noble charger, Harry Wilkes, Adjutant Edwards commanding the right wing. General Gregory had his base of supplies at Gibson, his rear resting upon the Northern and Western railway, and his right wing posted at Marysville, under Adjutants Gibson and Hatt. For a time General Gregory held his ground at Gib-

son nobly, but was finally dislodged by the Saint Mary's sharpshooters, under Colonel Rainsford Staples, and forced back upon the left bank of the Nashwaak. At the mouth of Keswick Lieut. Allen grappled with Brigadier Wilson, and fought a gallant but unavailing fight. Then the tide of battle turned decisively. At one o'clock Adjutant Edwards had captured the opposition redoubts at the court-house, and was sweeping everything before him. At about the same hour, the Uptown Temperance Brigade, under Color-Sergeant Pitts, which formed the left wing of the Guards, entered the City hall, and routed their opponents with great slaughter. When evening fell General Gregory, with his chosen band of Crocketts, gazed grimly out from under the family umbrella upon the snow that lay in drifts upon the opposition slain.

Through the province the defeat of Mr. Gregory was felt to be a serious blow to the opposition. He was recognized as a man of superior abilities, well-fitted to assume a leading place in the house. As a financial critic he was thought to have few equals in the province. Had he been elected, the opposition would have fully equalled the government in legislative acumen and debating power.

Mr. Gregory is on the shady side of fifty, though he looks younger than Mr. Blair, who is about eight years his junior. He was admitted to the bar in 1865, and went into partnership with the present Attorney General two years later. That partnership existed for twenty years or until the winter of 1887, when it was dissolved by mutual consent. It was one of the original stipulations of the partners that, while the alliance existed, neither should trench upon the other's field of action in politics. What caused the dissolution is not exactly known; that Mr. Blair and Mr. Gregory are now at variance is a matter of deep regret to the most of the personal friends of both.

Mr. Gregory's political life cannot be said to have been a success. He has been defeated twice for the commons and once for the local legislature. For some years he was mayor of Fredericton and by his diligence and ability he made one of the most efficient mayors that city ever had.

It is thought by some that Mr. Gregory is not adapted to become a popular political leader. His mind like that of Mr. Blake is of a cold and critical cast. His abilities, however, are such as ought to place him in the first rank of public men. At the bar he has few equals in the province. As a debater, while somewhat lacking the vim which is commonly called magnetism, he is very clear and cogent, and orderly in his methods of speech. In conversation he is frank and entertaining. Few men possess a more determined will. On the whole, Mr. Gregory's attainments would probably make him a conspicuous figure if he were able to attain the goal of his ambition in political life. Unfortunately, situated as he is in York county, success for him in that field seems somewhat problematical.

MONCTON'S FIRE BRIGADE.

How it Distinguishes Itself when Duty Calls and the Alarm Sounds.

We had a fire in town on Saturday night, and as I have one of those intensely receptive minds which are always on the lookout for new ideas and fresh impressions, I was deeply interested in studying the methods employed by the Moncton firemen. Not that I contemplate for a moment joining the force. Perish the thought! I have not a sufficient amount of courage concealed about my person for that; besides I am fond of good clothes, being a personable man myself and the firemen's uniform is scandalously unbecoming, particularly the hat. But I thought I would like to tell PROGRESS just how it was done, and thereby perhaps furnish St. John firemen with some valuable hints.

The first thing the Moncton brave does is to carefully smash all the windows in the burning building, so the air can get nicely through and there will be no time wasted in waiting for the fire to gain a good headway. Indeed, I believe there is an unwritten code in fire ethics which forbids a window to be *lifted* under any circumstances.

Smash brothers! Smash with care!
Smash! for the free circulation of the air!

It is also considered etiquette to carry a bureau with the toilet glass attached carefully to the verge of the veranda roof, yell "stand from under" and then let go, and the owner has the inestimable satisfaction of knowing that all the pieces of that bureau are intact, and may be gathered up at any time without even the smell of fire upon them, like Shadrac, Meshach and Abednego of old; and everyone knows what a comfort it is to the sorrowing householder to know that his furniture was only broken, not burnt.

I was deeply impressed with the dauntless courage of one brave fellow on Saturday afternoon. I suppose he was a fireman though he did not wear the uniform, but the boy who stood upon the burning deck whence all be he had fled was not to be mentioned in the same breath with him, he was more courageous and almost as useful.

After the building was nearly burned down, and general attention was directed to saving the next house, this dauntless Rienzi mounted a ladder which reached to the attic window of the only wall that remained standing, hauled a ponderous hose after him, and clung, the observed of all observers, to that attic window sill. From this coigne of vantage he selected a promising hole in the almost consumed roof and squirted a lusty stream of water through the said hole, entirely clear of the burning building into the midst of the half frozen spectators.

"Ah, Betsy Jane, little did I think, when I bought the twins that toy engine, that they would ever put it to the base use of squirting dish water at the tax collector."

And little did the Moncton tax-payers dream, when they purchased the Ronald engine almost at the sword's point, that it would ever be used to drench them and their wives and daughters, to make them take an enforced shower bath on a bitter February afternoon. Selah!

Nathless, the youth on the ladder hung on. And the dear ladies, who were out of range of the water, cried: "Oh, what a brave fellow that is! Just look at him; his cap is on fire, but he won't stir!" At last the window sill burnt away, and the hero had to move down a couple of rungs on his ladder of fame. "Why don't you hold on, Jack?" shouted a brother fireman, facetiously. "I haven't got anything to hold on to," yelled Rienzi. "Hold on to the hose," was the brutal response. This man was probably actuated by jealousy, but his cruel words crushed all further ambition out of the hero, who dropped the hose, and slid ignominously down the ladder to *terra firma*.

Standing directly in front of PROGRESS' correspondent were two small street urchins, who would have done honor to the pages of *Life*. They were a boy and a girl, and they took an absorbing interest in the "exercises."

"Ain't you glad it burnt down, Jim?" said she of the gentler sex.

"You'd just ought to be ashamed of *yourself*," responded the more unselfish Jim. "How'd you like your own house to burn down, hey?"

"Well, then, I just wish our house would burn down, if it'd make as good a fire as that!" responded this infant Jezebel, with spirit.

This rough shattering of all his most cherished illusions regarding the tender and compassionate sex was too much for the gentle Geoffrey, who at once sought the retirement of his boarding house to warm his frozen freet, and see if haply there were any fragments of tea left for him.

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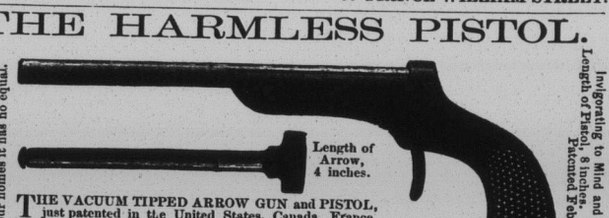

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