

BYGONE DAYS RECALLED

AN OLD TIMER'S REMINISCENCES OF PEOPLE AND EVENTS.

How the People Talked and Acted when the First Railway Project was Hatched—A Man who Talked Like Mr. Leary—A Tribute to a well-known Citizen.

XII.

The new dock enterprise started in St. John for the fourth time within the last twenty years, brings to me recollections of former embryo undertakings, in which St. John has been so prolific and at the same time so barren of results. If its public were equal to its private, individual enterprise, we should today observe the fulfilment of a number of works much talked of from time to time, and recommended by the press, whenever some inventive genius has discovered a new scheme in which money is to be made and every interest in the city greatly promoted—whether it be in the way of bridge building, dry docks, canals, trade bureaus, steamboat communication, railroads, harbor improvements, including grain elevators, dredging, rock-blasting, etc., etc.—in short, too numerous to specify. During the last fifty years boards of trade have been formed and collapsed. Matters of trade have been brought upon the carpet and discussed with all the assurance of legislative right, and yet without power to put into practice a single scheme, however wise or judicious; and in the end all this labor has resulted in a waste of breath. At all events, I cannot at this moment recall but few real good things accomplished through such organizations. True, it is well to have an expression of opinion from any intelligent body of men, especially those so capable of giving it. But are our legislators sufficiently moved to action through such well directed efforts? If great results can be discounted through means of earnest talk and elated hopes, St. John today ought to be in possession of many of the improvements already named. But, as it seems to me, it is nothing but—talk—talk—talk!

Some thirty-five or forty years ago, it was all railroad talk. The press teemed with accounts of these "modern civilizers," as we then called them. St. John, quoth the soothsayers, must expect to go down unless we have a railroad built from here to Shediac—those were the points between which fortunes were to be made (and yet it is doubtful if St. John was not far more prosperous then than she has ever been since)—only set the iron horse on the road and private enterprise would do the rest. Agents were planted all along the post road, at certain distances, between St. John and Shediac to take an account of the number of travellers and teams engaged in business, that passed along and from in a given time—all to be summed up at the end of each week and aggregated. This trial went on for a whole summer, so that at the end of six months data enough was on hand to satisfy "the most sanguine expectation." A public meeting was called at the Court House and some of the best speakers took part—among them John H. Gray (late Judge in British Columbia) W. J. Ritchie (now Chief Justice), William Wright (Advocate General), William Jack, Robert Jardine, Moses H. Perley. The Court House was crowded. The result of this meeting was to be the pivotal point in our destiny upon which everything was to turn and bring about great prosperity. It was agreed on all sides that this road ought to have been built ten years sooner—for according to the statistics furnished as to the amount of traffic, the road if now built would pay ten per cent. profit after all expenses were paid. There was no one present bold enough to dispute this dictum, for as figures were never known yet to tell a story, could anybody present dissent? If so let him now speak or forever hold his peace. We all thought alike, seven points in the argument, because we did not want to think otherwise and perhaps disturb the cream that had so nicely set upon the lactical fluid contained in our watery imaginations.

The resolutions were passed nem. con. published and went abroad upon the wings (not the wind) of the Press, pretty much after the fashion of the present day when political issues are up.

The next Chapter informs us of a Proposition made by Messrs. Peto, Brassey, Betts and Jackson, of London, who offered to build said Railroad—viz: from St. John to Shediac—for £7,500 per mile, and find everything; and to do the work in two years from the date of commencement. (This was equal to the more modern Dock Proposition!) Bonfires were kindled on all the hill tops round about. The papers headed the news with big capitals. (We were not quite so loud with our headlines at that early day, for the simple reason we hadn't any double capitals to spare.) In short, we were all happy and talked over the standing of this great firm in raptures. (The word syndicate had not then been coined.) The Baptists claimed Mr. Peto, as one of their faith. The Presbyterians, Church of England and Methodists each felt that they had denominationally an interest in these gentlemen, respectively, and therefore required looking after.

The Company in St. John, for there was a company—like some other Companies which operate upon other people's means without putting a cent in of their own—next received through their chairman, Mr.

THADDEUS IS AT WORK.

A CORRESPONDENT WHO CAUGHT HIM ON THE FLY.

His Yellow Valise and His Escorted Views of the Political Situation—A Friend of the Government is of Opinion that Mr. Blair is All Right.

FREDERICTON, Jan. 30.—Who will be the leader of the opposition? Will they be able to organize so as to present a solid front when the local legislature meets? The house is not likely to meet until about the usual time, but the situation is becoming interesting already. The fact that a large yellow valise in company with Mr. Thaddeus Stevens, of Westmoreland, has been circulating about the province for the past week is a fact that is not entirely devoid of interest.

Mr. Stevens was in St. John all day on Saturday last. Here he interviewed several members of the opposition and also Mr. Thomas Hetherington, M. P. P., of Queens. Rumor had it that Thomas was open to argument, but Thaddeus did not find him so. In truth he expressed his sentiments to Thaddeus freely. Mr. Chief Commissioner Ryan was in town that day also and had a word to say to Thomas.

The yellow valise went to Fredericton by the Saturday evening train. So did Mr. Stevens. So did Mr. Ryan. It is not surprising that being obliged to remain over Sunday in Fredericton, Thaddeus should call upon George F. He did so and this accounted for the absence of George from the means of grace.

Mr. Stevens is quite outspoken in his views upon the political situation. He makes no secret of the fact that he is marshalling his forces for the grand assault. He claims that the government have been defeated at the polls, and that it would be an evidence of good breeding on their part to tender their resignations to the new regime without delay. In proof of his confidence in the result, he engaged rooms from mine host Edwards, of the Queen, for the first week of the session only. The government, in his opinion, would show remarkable symptoms of longevity, if it survived more than a week after the opening of the house. But he does not underestimate the forces of the enemy. It is the view of Thaddeus that the opposition are badly off for a leader, especially when they have to cope with such a master hand in political strategy as premier Blair. If Mr. Blair was out of the way, Thaddeus thinks the job of ringing in the new era of purity and reform would be short and sweet. He would not mind ringing the bell himself, but is conscious that he would not be acceptable to some of the elements in the opposition.

But, while he cannot be leader himself, Mr. Stevens frankly avows that he will not follow the leadership of Mr. Hanington. Furthermore, he states that Mr. Hanington has no capacity for leadership. Like Mr. Blair, he is really an autocrat, and those imperial will the views of all who profess to follow him must bend. Then again, neither Dr. Stockton nor Dr. Alward will suit. Mr. Hanington would never serve under the former, and he is not popular with two of the Northumberland members. Silas would be unobjectionable, but his political talents, in Mr. Stevens' view, are limited to college oratory. By many Mr. Phinney is regarded as the coming man.

As to where Mr. Melanson would be found, Mr. Stevens thought he would vote with the opposition, though he admitted it was a hard pill for him to swallow when he asked the French electors of Westmoreland to vote for him. Thaddeus has strong hopes of upsetting the government. "If we cannot do it this session," he remarked as he stepped off the Fredericton train with the yellow valise, "we cannot do it at all."

What does Premier Blair think of the situation? the readers of PROGRESS will want to know. Well, those who know the fighting powers and generalship of the man of York would hardly expect him to give up the ship of state without a struggle. On the contrary they would expect him to close-haul the old craft and clear the decks for action. They would regard it strange if he did not try to make it warm for those who proposed to lay hands of sacrilege upon the seals of office. The Premier states that there is no doubt whatever as to the ability of the government to maintain its position. He predicts that at no time this session will the opposition be able to muster more than fifteen votes on a division. His regret at the government reverse in Saint John and his grief over the loss of the Provincial Secretary are a good deal assuaged by the fact that—

George F. has been buried way back in the woods, in a beautiful hole in the ground, where the bumble-bee buzz and the woodpeckers sing, and the straddle-bugs tumble around.

As to whether another seat will be found for Mr. McLellan, the Premier is non-committal. It is safe to say that if a constituency is opened for the Secretary, the battle-ground will be chosen where the opposition guns can fire with little effect. It will not be Kings or Queens county where the Secretary will be exposed to the raking volleys of the opposition camp in Saint John. That much is certain.

SANCHEO.

Out at Sea.

HE WAS TOUGH TO THE LAST.

How a Fighting Farmer made Preparations to Depart Hence.

He had been a very wicked old man, but his long and sinful life was drawing to a close. A mortal illness had seized upon him, and the King of Terrors was so near that the ancient sinner could feel his cold breath fanning his wicked old brow, and making things generally unpleasant. The doctor solemnly "gave him up," and his weeping family besought him to see the minister. But the old Adam died hard, and original sin clung to him like a garment. "He had lived without ministers, and he reckoned he could die without them, too! And, anyway, he wasn't so sure about dying, either; while there was life, there was hope, and he came of a tough family, that was all long livers, and he belonged to the doctor!"

But at last there was no more room for doubt, even in the patient's own mind; he must die, and die soon. The time left for making his peace with earth and Heaven was brief indeed, and at last the dying man seemed softened. The adjoining farm to his own was the property of his most cherished enemy, with whom he had fought incessantly for twenty years. The trouble had originated in the usual way between farmers—the boundary line which separated the two farms—and probably there are few fences that have been taken down and put up more frequently than this one had; and, strange to say, the work was invariably done at night, with no witnesses but the silent stars. Like the two brothers in the beautiful eastern legend, who secretly added sheaves to each other's store at night, these enemies were always working for each other, only the order of things was reversed. Each added six feet to his own side of the boundary, and then built up his neighbor's fence anew for him.

Now, to the amazement of all concerned, the sick man suddenly asked not only for the minister, but for his dearest foe, and on their arrival they were granted separate audiences. Farmer Jones was to go in first, and then the minister. The farmer rushed into the chamber of death, sheepishly, and stood twirling his hat just inside the door, and an embarrassed pause ensued, broken at last by the sick man. "I'm agoin' to die, they tell me, Jones," he began, "An' I thought I'd better kind of square things up before I go; I s'pose it ain't the thing exactly to go out in the world fightin', so I sent for you." The invalid stopped for a moment and struggled hard with himself. "Well I sent for you to say that we've fit for twenty years, but I'm agoin' to die now and I guess it'll be all right. I—I forgive ye."

Farmer Jones was affected to tears, he grasped the trembling hand held out to him, squeezed it hard and too overcome with emotion to speak he turned to leave the room; at the door he looked back, and the dying man raised himself on his elbow, shook his feeble fist, and shrieked excitedly: "Mind you, if I get well it's just the same as ever, d—n you, it's just the same as ever!"

Naturally, after so agitating an interview the patient was scarcely in a proper frame of mind to receive spiritual instruction, and the minister's reception was decidedly cool. Nothing daunted, however, the good man called the whole family in, and proceeded to "improve the occasion" to the best of his ability. He spoke of the uncertainty of life and the certainty of death, the wisdom of living so that whenever we were called, though the summons came in the middle of our years, or the twilight of age, our lamps should be found trimmed and burning. He was fond of the sound of his own voice, and he melted the assembled family to tears. He went on to say that it was never too late for repentance, and none could tell in what hour the penitent sinner might not be received into the fold; and the patient grew more and more restless as the good man proceeded.

"Our beloved brother here, whose time of departure has drawn nigh," said the minister with unctuous piety, "has been a sinner—"

"Look a-here!" yelled the sinner, suddenly sitting up in bed, "your business here ain't preachin'! it's prayin'; you was sent for to pray, an' if you're goin' to pray why in h—l-I don't you get at it!" And the minister immediately proceeded to pray. GEOFFREY CUTHBERT STRANGE.

New Joke on Spring Chicken. New Boarder (to his neighbor)—Is this what they call spring chicken here? Old Boarder.—Yes; it probably gets its name from its elasticity.—Boston Budget.

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Out at Sea.

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IN WINTER Oh, to go back to the days of old! Just to be young and alive again! Headless again to the mad, mad sea! Birds were singing with sigh South they flew at the summer Leaving their nests for stores! Joy that fly and sorrow that Youth in order and hope were v Under the wintry skies to ma

Wearily wander by dale and dale Footsteps fettered with clods Free they were in the days of y Free they never can be again! Fetters of age and letters of pal Toys that fly and sorrow that Youth in order and hope were v Under the wintry skies to ma

Now we chaut but a desolate tale "Oh, to be young and alive again! But never December turns to May A length of living is length of Winds in the restless trees com Snows of winter who us tarri And never the birds come back Under the wintry skies to ma

ENVOI. Youths and maidens, blitheless Time makes thrusts that you Mate in season, for who is fair Under the wintry skies to ma

THE BUTT OF THE He was a mean-looking sp Simon Gilsey, and the Gornan not proud of him. His neck wood was long and proba bird's beak, his hair was thin a his shoulders sloped in such a his arms, which were long waist.

His body started forward fi and he used his hands in a fashion that seemed to beseech cognition as might be convey ing kick.

Simon seemed quite uncon difference between the truth a was not that he lied from h hands said he hadn't "spunk know what malice was—but s obliquity led him to lie by unless he saw reason to believ truth would conciliate his com

He used to steal tobacco and whenever he found a good a and when he was caught his was that of fear rather than of At the same time, the poor thoroughly courageous in the physical and external dangers. est man in the camp could cove look, yet none was promoter face the 'grave perils of break jam, and there was no cooler h in the risky labors of stream-d together he was a disagreeable the lumbermen, who resented a of pluck in any one so manly spirited as he was.

In spite of their contempt, h could ill have done without the axeman. He did small menial his fellows, was ordered abou uncomplainingly, and bore the everything that went wrong in Camp.

When one of the hands was larly bad humor, he could always relief for his feelings by kicking the shins, at which Gilsey would an uneasy protest, showing the absence of his upper front teeth.

Then again the Gornish Cam gishly inclined. The hands v addicted to practical jokes. always wholesome to play the other, but Gilsey afforded a safe the ingenuity of the backwoods For instance, whenever the m it was time to "chop a fellow d fault of a greenhorn from the o ments, they would select Gills victim, and order that reluctant up to the tree-top. This was the hunting of a tame fox, as far as sport and manliness were conce sports in sport, and the men w their fun, with the heedless primitive nature.

This diversion, though rough ous, is never practical, save hands or unwary visitors; but al in dry weather, and for Gilsey tions held. When he had clim as his tormentors thought advan usually was just as high as the tree—a couple of vigorous chopp immediately attack the tree axes.

As the tall trunk began to top sickening hesitation, Gilsey's ey stick out and his thin hair seem to end, for to this torture he never accustomed. Then, as the men y delight, the mass of dark bran sweep down with a soft, windy o the snow, and Gilsey, pale and but adorned with that untailing smile, would pick himself out of and sink off to camp.

The men usually consoled him an experience with a couple of "black-jack" tobacco—which st him ample compensation. In camp at night, when the han gone to bed, two or three wakefu sometimes get up to have a smc firelight. Such a proceeding al resulted in skylarking, of whic would be the miserable object.

The arch-conspirator would go to four-barrel, fill his mouth with and then, climbing to the sh Simon's bunk, would blow the d in a soft, thin stream all over the face and hair and scrabby bear process was called "blowing him counted a huge diversion. On soft nights, when the camp and damp, it made, of course, a nasty mess in the victim's hair, but by contrast, seemed rather to enjoy never woke him up.

If the joker's mood happened to boisterous, the approved proced softly to uncover Gilsey's feet an long bit of salmon twine to each After waking all the other hand, spirators would retire to their bun Presently some one would give tug on one of the strings, and pass