

The History of the Township of Scarborough.*

THIS valuable centennial volume of history has been compiled from records and data supplied by the people of the township. It is a worthy monument not only to the story and enterprise of the past but of the present. Old letters, account books, deeds, documents both private and public have been called into requisition, many of them being rescued and preserved from destruction or oblivion by the enterprise which prompted the issue of the volume. Personal recollections, the living tales told by the old residents who have treasured the stories told by their fathers and mothers of the early days, and their own vividly printed childhood impressions have also added much to the interest of the pages of this history. Would that other townships residents might take heart of grace—rescue their like records, and follow the example so worthily set them by the men of Scarborough.

The opening chapters are devoted to brief sketches of the topography, geology, early settlement and foundation of the township. One of the most interesting items in the latter which should attract the attention of residents of other townships, is the records of the names of the rivers and localities. How few of our people at the present time can explain the origin of the name of the place in which they live, whence it came, or by whom it was so called. Fewer still can tell what were the Indian and infinitely more characteristic names displaced by the more modern and too often insignificant names by which they are known. With what advantage might they not be restored to their true place upon our maps and local knowledge, and the history as well as the poetry of the past revived.

"A little to the west of the Seneca village [Ganeraski, now Port Hope] was a stream that gave kindly shelter to distress canoes; and so by Indians of the next century and of a different race, it was named Katabobokonk, or the River of Easy Entrance? In making its way to the lake it pierced a hill of red, tenacious clay, which sufficiently colored its waters to justify the old French name, Riviere Rouge. In his attempt to reproduce in Upper Canada the east coast of England, Simcoe re-christened this stream the Need, just as we had converted St. John into the Humber, and La Grand Riviere into the Ouse. But like the Grand river, the Rouge fortunately survived the palimpsest maps of Governor Simcoe. It is still the Rouge, and the name is interesting as the sole trace now remaining on this north-west shore of the old Sulpician Mission and of Louis the Fourteenth domain."

The story of the enterprise and endurance of the first settlers who went from York to make a home on the higher and healthier lands above Highland Creek is graphically told in the simple language of the family reminiscences of their descendants. No more romantic tale has been written than the record of the early days of the Thomsons, the brave endurance and patient love and trust of the women who stayed alone in the forest while the men worked in the town or went to fight their countries battle on the frontier in the war of 1812.

Tersely and briefly told, with the strength and vividness of truth. How valuable are such records, how jealous we all should be to preserve them, how insistently we should endeavour to impress upon the minds of Canadians generally that they too should, to quote the words of the preface to this interesting book, "take steps to crystalize in type the knowledge that now exists chiefly in the memories of the oldest people and to bring together the numerous scattered references to municipalities as these may exist in writing or in print."

There are interesting chapters upon the Farm, Councils and Councillors all forming an object lesson of history and of the rapid growth of civilization within the brief period of a century.

Settled as the township of Scarborough was principally by Scotchmen who knew from their own experience and national conservatism the value of education. As soon as there were children to educate, the best schools the conditions of the country and their circumstances would admit of were provided.

The following is a graphic picture of the schools of those early days, a sharp contrast to the finer buildings and curriculum of the day:—

"For many years, indeed during the first half of the century, the school houses were of the most primitive kind. The forest furnished the readiest and cheapest material. The logs, if of pine, were flattened on two sides; if of hardwood, they were generally left round, dovetailed in the usual way at the corners, the interstices between the logs being chinked and plastered. In size the building seldom exceeded 18x24 feet, and were never too high. The fire place usually occupied one end, and desks facing the wall ran round the other three sides. The seats consisted of long forms without backs. Similar forms or benches placed crosswise in the centre of the room furnished seats for the smaller children. The limited space forbade anything in the shape of desks, those luxuries being reserved for pupils in arithmetic and writing. Light was admitted through long windows similar to those common in blacksmiths' and carpenters' shops, and were usually two panes high and ten or twelve panes long, the sashes sliding past each other horizontally for purposes of ventilation. In winter fuel was provided by the parents who were required to bring a quarter of a cord per pupil (commonly 3s 9d or 75 cents per quarter), taking his chances of enrolment—the more pupils, of course, more pay. In the early part of the century it was not uncommon for the teacher to secure his board gratis, staying a few weeks with one and another of the families represented at the school. If unmarried, which was often the case, he sometimes lived in the school, keeping "bachelor's hall." The number of teaching hours were alternating thirty and thirty-six hours in a week, each alternate Saturday being a holiday. About 1860, a change was made, the time of teaching being reduced to five days a week."

I will leave to the readers of this history of Scarborough the record of evolution and improvement in school matters to the present system.

That the teachers were not always boarded gratis within easy reach of the scene of their labors, the record of one of the dominies of the township proves:—

"Mr. James Russell lived near the range 7½ miles from the school (which he taught in the early fifties), and as there were in those days no Saturday holidays, he had to walk ninety miles a week to and from school, to which if we add another fifteen miles to and from St. Andrew's Church, on Sunday, we have a total of 105 miles a week, or nearly 5,500 miles a year?"

The chapters upon domestic life, societies, churches and ministers as well as that relating to the Centennial celebration are compiled by Mrs. S. A. Curzon, whose name is familiar to the readers of THE WEEK, "The Pioneers and Militia" by Miss Mary Agnes FitzGibbon. Not the least valuable portion of the book is the complete manuscript from the Crown Lands Department, of the first patentees of the land in the township—given in the appendix. The book is well illustrated, well printed and bound. The interest taken in the work both by the people themselves, the editors of their records, the publishers and the public, has resulted in a successful reception and a satisfactory financial result. All of which should be an encouragement for the next township to follow Scarborough's good example, and given to those who wish to study the history of their country similar volumes. U. E. L.

BRIEFER NOTICES.

"Handy Andy." By Samuel Lever. (New York: Macmillan & Co. Toronto: The Copp, Clark Co., Limited).—So wide is the notoriety which Samuel Lever's master-work has attained that it is becoming a popular publication for many of the series of books which are being placed upon the market. On the present occasion it appears in Macmillan's three-and-sixpenny library of works by popular authors. The book is too familiar to all English readers to require any discussion. Let it suffice to say that whoever desires to experience a few hours of that delight which is engendered by humour's supreme capacity for entertaining, let him read the unceasingly interesting story, amusing in the utmost extreme, of Lever's "Handy Andy." Lever and Carleton are Ireland's greatest classical humorists, and Lever is certainly not inferior to the brilliant William Carleton. Lever's

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