

## JOTTINGS FROM THE KINGDOM OF COD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "QUEBEC PAST AND PRESENT."

### VII.

SUBJECTS HISTORICAL—LEGENDARY—CRITICAL, &c., &c. *De omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis.*

Drawn, of course, much respected reader, by the purest patriotism, towards the study of all matters and things pertaining to our beloved country, for the time being we have taken in hand the annals of a little known but most picturesque portion of the Dominion, Gaspesia. How many subjects, replete with interest, would still remain "unhonored and unsung" had you merely my poor pen to depend on! Luckily, the beautiful and hospitable shores of Gaspé have attracted many visitors, and recently one of antiquarian tastes and deep research, my much esteemed friend the noted antiquary, Jonathan Oldbuck, Esq. To him shall we look for supplying omissions, for filling up a lacuna. Not having, however, either the leisure or facilities to verify all that falls from the lips of this sage, we must leave to him, to him solely, the responsibility of the facts and theories it has pleased him to put forth.

The Chronicles of the Paspyjacks—by Jonathan Oldbuck, Fellow of the Royal Society, with a notice of a remarkable Prophecy, attributed to Merlin.\*

Few antiquarians there are who at some period or other of their useful career, in ransacking the garrets of old castles or archives of mediæval cathedrals, have not had their acumen tested by worm-eaten charters or dusty parchments, dating long before the day of Winkyn de Worde. Nay, it is within our recollection that a Runic inscription in Massachusetts so puzzled the New England antiquaries that some of them were on the verge of madness; the Dry-as-dust, who had pronounced the inscription Scandinavian and fixed its date to the year 1100, became a raving lunatic when the characters were established to be Indian and comparatively recent. 'Tis evident there is danger in too much learning.

Cimmerian darkness veils the origin of some portions of the chronicles of the Paspyjacks, as traced by our worthy sire, the late Mr. J. Oldbuck, of blessed memory; one of the quaintest parts of this quaint business is that relating to his strictures on the prophecy it contains of evil days to come for the Paspyjack kingdom. One, one copy only of this marvellous book, we recollect meeting in our youth; fortunately some extracts and notes were taken at the time. The fulfilment of the prophecy having caused much disturbance amongst some ferocious pundits of Quebec, the priceless volume was acquired for 1,000 guineas and deposited in the dark and impenetrable recess of an ancient library, called *L'Enfer*; from which, it is currently stated, no power on earth can now extricate it; the more's the pity. Twofold is the principle and source—*fons et principium*—of the Paspyjack chronicles. The prophecy, which, strange to say, is inscribed (with an ink of which the secret is lost) on a piece of birch bark, in shape like a heart, and the chronicles proper—on some musty and ancient parchment, found at Paspebiac in a decayed oaken chest, with steel clasps, supposed to have been landed there by mistake from the "Sea Flower," the brig which brought out the great Charles Robin, Esq., in 1766, the founder of the wealthy and respectable house still known under the name of Chas. Robin & Co., though, like that of Dombey & Son, few of the original names now form part of it. Poland Robin, one of the firm, still lives, we learn, in Naples.

It is especially the history of the ancient Paspyjacks which is curious and instructive; under the teachings of such worthy pastors as he whom we now find watching over them, they bid fair to blossom forth a civilized nation. That scamp Byron used to say that to soothe human woe, there was nothing like "rum and true religion." If the Paspyjacks are better men than they were, it is owing chiefly to having dropped the first and stuck to the second. So much for their early churches.

Let us now view Paspebiac, the chief emporium of commerce in the Baie des Chaleurs, as we recently found it. Its Indian name in Micmac means "Point of Rest"—such it was for the Micmac canoes from Gaspé, &c., frequenting the river Restigouche at the top of the bay. It is formed of two parts: the green ridge of groves, and corn fields crowned by handsome dwellings in rear, conspicuous amongst which are the houses of the managers of the great Jersey firms, the Robins and the LeBoutilliers; and a triangular, low, sandy spit, four miles long—jutting out in the sea—at high water nearly an island, covered with the fishermen's cottages and lofty fish stores and outhouses of the Princes of Paspebiac, Messrs. Robin and Messrs. LeBoutillier; the latter are less ancient, less wealthy, the former are generally known under the mystic combination C.R.C., (Chs. Robin & Co.) Both are deservedly respected for their honourable dealings, powerful by their accumulated wealth and compact organization. Though at least these houses may be said to represent intelligent monopolies, still, during the dreary months of winter, they are the true, often the only friends the starving fishermen can count on. More than one century of success has surrounded the oldest house, C.R.C., with incredible prestige in the eyes of the simple-minded fishermen. C.R.C. is undoubtedly a tower of strength in all Gaspesia; the firm has four fishery establishments

on the coast, at Paspebiac, Percé, Grand River, Newport, and also one at Caraquette on the New Brunswick side, whilst the LeBoutillier firm own establishments at Bonaventure Island, at Forteau, Labrador, at Ile à Bois, Straits of Bellefleur, and on the Island of Miscou. C.R.C. is indeed a powerful combination of brains, activity, method, money. Canada Banks may get into chancery, wind up, the Bank of England might even get tight, hard up, but C.R.C. never! Such is the universal belief in the realms ruled over by this powerful firm. To think that amongst all these bright elements of social success there should be a dark speck! The managers and clerks are denied at Paspebiac the sweet companionship of womanhood; they may own wives in Jersey, where they are generally allowed to spend every second winter, but once in the kingdom of cod and herring, strict celibacy is the order of the day; no undivided attention between family ties and business is tolerated. So was it ordained more than one hundred years ago, by the inexorable Charles Robin, the founder of the Robin dynasty; his laws are like those of the Medes and Persians, they alter not. The historian Ferland observes that even to the food of the clerks is regulated. No change is likewise tolerated in the mode of constructing their coasters; one and all must have round sterns. One of their ship carpenters who had dared to try an innovation on this point was threatened with a dismissal, and round sterns prevailed.

To each fishing establishment is attached a provision and dry goods store; the fishermen receive their pay part in cash, part in goods. This is styled truck. During severe winters, when the fall fishing has failed, without the Robin's and LeBoutillier's help there is no other alternative, for many families, but starvation. So long as the capture of cod and herring continues to supersede the tilling of the soil, the large Jersey firms must continue to retain their hold; their sovereignty will in a measure cease when agriculture shall attract the natives.

The Paspyjacks, as a people, one regrets to say, neglect the tillage of the soil. Far better off than they are the Scotch, English and Irish, with their farms; indeed, they seem a superior race of colonists. A writer has asserted of the English, that the reason why in enterprise, commerce, freedom, wealth, they surpass all other nations, is because they can be likened to a varied and lasting concrete, a mud of many nations, made up: Ancient Britons, Romans, Danes, Saxons, Normans, all blended in one harmonious whole. One cannot say the same of the Paspyjacks; some element is wanting in the concrete. The majority had Acadian fathers; others had Jersey sires, some of the blacksmiths, carpenters and fishermen who came out with Charles Robin, in 1766, but for whom celibacy had no attractions. Wives were scarce on the Gaspé coast; they tamed as a substitute some spruce Restigouche Pocahontas trapped at the Mic Mac settlement; the offspring, bleached tolerably white; one perverse taint remained: a craving for fire-water. A marked trait of Indian character, the love of revenge, occasionally cropped out under the stimulus of the "ardent," rendering them quarrelsome. Hence why the neighbours stood off. The Frenchmen of Percé crested and shunned the fierce Paspyjacks, whilst the canny Scotch and law-abiding English saw little glory in fighting the bellicose Paspyjacks.

Have you ever watched the early dawn breaking over a fleet of fishing barges near Ship Head or Miscou? 'Tis indeed a pretty sight to follow those swift crafts under a press of canvas, steering merrily for the Orphan Bank, perhaps never to return should a storm come on. We have, more than once, seen the whole shore alive with white-sailed smacks in quest of cod. The Paspebiac roadstead contains more than fishing smacks: noble barks, brigs, brigantines from Jersey crowd in; some are drying in the morning sun their fleecy topsails, whilst others, dismantled until the ensuing fall, are riding lazily at anchor in the bay, whilst lighters are conveying to a few their cargoes of salt fish for Brazil, Lisbon, Civita Vecchia, the West Indies; among them you can easily, by her size, recognize the "Sea Flower," a large bark, thus called after that other "Sea Flower" which one century ago brought out the great founder of a Jersey house.

The Paspyjacks are different from other Gaspé communities; they might inscribe on their escutcheon "Hard work and moderate intellectual developments."

JONATHAN OLDBUCK.

### BURLESQUE.

SLOW BUT SURE.—The "slow fighter" was a tall, raw-boned specimen of the Pike County breed, and when he arrived in the mining camp the boys began to have fun with him—to "mill him," as they call it in the parlance of the mines.

He stood it for a long time with perfect equanimity, until finally one of them dared him out doors to fight.

He went. When they got all ready and squared off, Pike County stretched out his neck and presented the tip of his big nose temptingly to his tormentor. "I'm a little slow," he said, "and can't fight unless I'm well riled; just paste me one—a good 'un right on the end of that smeller."

His request was complied with. "That was a good 'un," he said, calmly, but I don't feel quite riled yet—(turning the side of

his head to his adversary)—please chug me another lively one under the ear."

The astonished adversary again complied, whereupon Pike County, remarking that he was "not quite so well riled as he would like to be, but would do the best he could, sailed into the crowd, and for the next ten days the "boys" were engaged in mending broken jaws, repairing damaged eyes and tenderly resurrecting smothered noses.

AN INTERESTING MENAGERIE.—Travelling exchange menagerie—summer exhibition:

A rooster on a farm near Poughkeepsie accidentally had one of its drumsticks cut off, but now stumps about on a wooden peg manufactured expressly for it by an ingenious young man.

A photographer at Council Bluffs was astonished to see a woman, whose portrait he was about to take, cautiously and tenderly remove from a basket a snake six feet long and coil it round her neck. It was her own dear little pet.

A locomotive on the Lake Shore Railroad struck a two-year old bullock. The animal bounded over the smokestack and fell across the boiler, the forelegs on one side and the hind legs on the other. The fireman went out on the engine and held the animal till the train could be stopped. The lively little bullock was scratched; nothing more.

A pigeon perched on the minute hand of the clock in the tower of Trinity Church, Pittsburgh, at a quarter of eleven Friday forenoon and held its post until its body was securely fastened between the two hands. When it attempted to fly it could not stretch its wings, and in a few seconds was squeezed to death. The ponderous machinery was stopped by the sexton, and the dead bird could not be taken out until the hands were unscrewed.

A faithful hound followed the hearse containing his mistress's remains to Bellevue Cemetery, Wilmington, Del., and whined dismally at the grave.

THE TRUTH TOLD BY A SWIMMER.—At noon yesterday a policeman found a boy bathing in a slip near the foot of Randolph street, and he called to the lad to come out and be arrested like a man for breaking the ordinance.

"Is it agin the ordinance for a boy to fall in to the river?" queried the bather.

"No sir, but you are not dressed."

"Does the law say that a boy has got to have his clothes on when he falls in?"

"The ordinance prohibits bathing here, and now you come out."

"Is it bathing when a feller cuts his foot on a piece of tin, knocks his head agin a beam, and swallows four catfish and a gob of mud?"

"I want you!" called the officer.

"What for?" called the boy.

"I command you to come out."

"I can't come," sorrowfully answered the bather. "The real truth is, I jumped in here to rescue a drowning female, but her hair pulled off and she's at the bottom. As I have no witness I darn' go to trial."

"I'll bring you out!" growled the officer as he made for a boat. But the boy disappeared and was seen no more. While the officer was looking under the wharf the half of a good-sized sand pile suddenly slid down the back of his neck and into his boots, and a musical familiar voice was heard saying:

"My shirt's on hind side afore, pants turned around, and this vest is wrong end up, but I feel as clean as a new stamp from the post-office, and Lor! what an appetite I've got for pop-corn balls."

FRITZ'S TROUBLES.—Fritz has had more troubles with his neighbours. This time he determined to appeal to the majesty of the law, and accordingly consulted a legal gentleman.

"How was dose tings?" he said, "ven a vellare's got a garden, und der odder vellare's got some chickens eat 'em up. Don't you got some law for dot?"

"Some one's chickens have been destroying your garden?" asked the lawyer.

"Straw in mine garden? Nine, it vas vegetableless."

"And the chickens committed depredations on them?"

"Ish dot so?" asked Fritz in astonishment.

"And you want to sue for damages?" continued the lawyer.

"Yaas. Gott for tamages, und der gabbages, und der lettuges."

"Did you notify him to keep his chickens up?"

"Yaas, I did notify him."

"And what did he say?"

"He notify me to go to grass, and vipe mine chin off down my vest."

"And he refused to comply with your just demand?"

"Hey?"

"He allowed his chickens to run at large?"

"Yaas. Some vas large und some vas leedle vellares, but dey vos scratch mine garden as der seven dimes itch."

"Well, you want to sue him?"

"Yaas, I want to sue him to make one blank fence up sixteen feet his house all aroundt, vot de chickens don't get offer."

The lawyer informed him he could not compel him to build such a fence, and Fritz left in a rage, exclaiming:

"Next summer time I raise my chickens, too, you bet. I raise fidin chickens, by tam! Vipe off your vest down."

SWIMMING, LYING AND WALKING.—It takes about two dollars to pay for the "lemonade" for

the group of old sailors usually to be found around the ferry-dock saloons. They had a misunderstanding a few days ago as to whose turn it was "to call on," and one old lake captain in particular took a solemn oath never to stand treat again. He was in dead earnest at the time, but yesterday forenoon he thought it all over and concluded to inaugurate the good old custom. He didn't care to give in all at once, and after due reflection, he went out approached a stranger, and the two had a private confab. When the captain returned to the saloon he was followed by the stranger, and pretty soon the old sailor remarked:

"Gentlemen I was just thinking of the accident to the schooner Sunlight, and how near I came to a watery grave."

"How was it?" asked several of the sitters. "Well, you see, it was twenty-four years ago, and a squall struck us when forty miles off Lexington, Lake Huron, she went down like a bar of iron, and only two of us got clear of the rail. This man here and myself were the two. I met him a few minutes ago for the first time since we had that long swim togethe."

"Yes; that's so," added the stranger.

"We had nothing to float us,"

continued the captain, "and after waiting around for an hour or so we struck out for Lexington. It was a clean forty miles, and that swim was the longest on record. 'Mind you gentlemen, we didn't have even a straw to help float us, and were else weighted down wit our clothing. We'd swim for awhile and then stop and pray, and then swim on again, and next day at noon we landed on the beach where Lexington now stands."

"Don't believe it!" shouted several voices.

"Well, I'm telling you the truth," replied the captain in a grievous tone. "When we landed I borrowed \$2 of my friend here for general expenses. I have never paid the debt, but am going to now. Do you think I'd hand him money if I didn't owe it, and if we hadn't taken that swim together?"

The crowd began to believe—also to lick their chops in anticipation. It had been arranged by the captain for the stranger to spend the money at the bar, but when he received the bill he folded it up and said:

"Gentlemen, what the captain says is strictly true. We swam plump forty miles, and he borrowed two dollars of me. He is an honest man to repay it. I'm in a great hurry to go to Windsor or I'd tell you about how we had to sleep in the woods for several nights."

Pocketing the bill, he walked aboard a boat, and the captain fell back in his chair and wouldn't answer any further questions.

RULES FOR MATRIMONY.—They who marry for physical characteristics or external considerations will fail of happiness.

Marry in your own religion.

Never both be angry at once.

Never taunt with a past mistake.

Let a kiss be a prelude of a rebuke.

Never allow a request to be repeated.

Let self-abnegation be the habit of both.

"I forgot" is never an acceptable excuse.

A good wife is the greatest earthly blessing.

If you must criticise, let it be done lovingly.

Make a marriage a matter of moral judgment.

Marry into a family which you have long known.

Never make a remark at the expense of the other.

Never talk at one another, either alone or in company.

Give your warmest sympathies for each other trials.

If one is angry, let the other part the lips only for a kiss.

Neglect the whole world besides, rather than one another.

Never speak loud to one another unless the house is on fire.

Let each strive to yield oftenest to the wishes of the other.

The veriest felicity is in the mutual cultivation of usefulness.

Always leave home with loving words, for they may be the last.

Marry into different blood and temperament from your own.

Never deceive, for the heart, once misled, can never trust wholly again.

It is the mother who moulds the character and fixes the destiny of the child.

Never find fault unless it is perfectly certain a fault has been committed.

Do not herald the sacrifices you make to each other's tastes, habits, or preferences.

Let all your mutual accommodations be spontaneous, whole-souled, and free as air.

A hesitating or glum yielding to the wishes of the other always grates upon a loving heart.

Consult one another in all that comes within the experience, observation, or sphere of the other.

They who marry for traits of mind and heart will seldom fail of perennial springs of domestic enjoyment.

### NOTICE TO LADIES.

The undersigned begs respectfully to inform the Ladies of the city and country that they will find at his retail Store, 196 St. Lawrence Main Street, the choicest assortment of Ostrich and Vulture Feathers, of all shades; also, Feathers of all descriptions repaired with the greatest care. Feathers dyed as per sample on shortest delay. Gloves cleaned and dyed black only.

J. H. LEBLANC. Works: 547 Craig St.

\* *Gesta Paspyjactorum, a Jonathan Oldbuck compila, Regnante Victoria Prima. 1837.*