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Literature.

ONE ROOM TOO MANY. A College Reminiscence.

It was late on a gloomy October evening when I piloted my way up the crazy and ill-lighted stairs which led to Harry Markham's room in the principal quadrangle (or, in college parlance, the "front quad") of St. Michael's College, Oxford. The clamour of boisterous merriment that struck upon my ear as I ascended, showed that the revel was already at its height; for this evening Markham's "set" (a somewhat roystering set withal, as sundry gate-lines and commonplaces before the college authorities continually testified) were celebrating the arrival of a new Freshman from the North—known by reputation to not a few of them—who was expected to prove a valuable acquisition to the college boat, and, by strength of muscle, if not of mind, to enhance the renown of St. Michael's in no small degree. As I entered, the host, with flushed face, and eyes sparkling with mirth and mischief, was just calling the company to "fill their glasses to the health of their esteemed friend, Mr. Joseph Talboys, whose thews and sinews were a sufficient guarantee of good service to be done by him when the time should again come round for St. Michael's to display her prowess on the river." Amid a general shouting and stamping of feet, and the crash of several glasses (it being a special characteristic of a certain class of undergraduate, when slighted by a light, to smash every glass, animate or inanimate, that may come in his way), the toast was drunk; and the new-comer—a beaming, yellow-haired giant from Cumberland, whose broad, jovial, unassuming face promised less of the scholar than his vast, shoulders and Herculean limbs did of the athlete—having lumbered out a few incoherent words in reply, the buzz of conversation again became general.

"Well, old fellow!" cried Markham, turning to the Cumberlandian, "how do you like the idea of sleeping in the haunted room, eh?"

"It's all one to me," answered Talboys, in his deep, heavy, gong-like tones; "it'll be a clever ghost that can wake me, when I'm once safely asleep."

"What about a haunted room?" interrupted I. "I didn't know we had one in college."

"Oh, you know that queer old person in the back quad," struck my right-hand neighbor; "it has been used for ever so long, and because that's a sufficient reason it should be set down as haunted."

But what's the story connected with it, then?" asked I.

"Oh, just that something happened some time, a long time ago," said my informant; "and so, you see, it came to be haunted. If you don't know further particulars, my own scout, old Sam Thorpe, is a man. He's lived in the college for just like a part of it himself, and there's not a thing happened last thirty years, but what he'll tell you at his fingers' ends. Ask about Talboys' room, if you don't know all about it."

And meanwhile, shouted Harry, giving his tumbler, "here's a good rest to Mr. Talboys, may the ghost be as civil to him as he deserves!"

I say, Talboys," cried a rakish man at the farther end of the table, "if the ghost does come, just tell him whether I shall win the Astbury steeple-chase next time, or a good fellow."

And whether I shall get a first at all," added a languid, foppishly dressed fellow beside him, whose amused remark called forth a general laugh.

"Ah! Carrington, my boy!" cried Sam, "I'm afraid your first in this is beyond the power of even a ghost to secure. But come, let's have another bowl of punch, and let's take the ghost and all con-

nected with him!"

Louder and wilder waxed the uproar under the influence of the "second brew," and the evening's merry-making ended, as Oxford wide-parties occasionally do, in the disappearance of more than half the party under the table—the clamorous dispersion of the rest in every direction—an unmerciful smashing of glasses, windows, and even furniture—and a number of bad head-aches and official rebukes next morning. The only two who escaped unscathed were Talboys and myself—the Cumberlandian from his iron strength of head, and I from my natural indisposition to drink deeply. We parted at the foot of the stairs; but as the stalwart Northerner strode across the silent quadrangle, his huge figure looking shadowy and spectral under the fitful glimmer of the moonlight, an undefinable impulse prompted me to follow him to the entrance of the back quadrangle, in which lay the room that he was to occupy.

The so-called "back quadrangle" of St. Michael's is in reality a long straggling court, flanked on one side by the patisade of an adjoining wood-yard, and on the other by the wall of the college itself, the further end being formed by a projecting wing of the building, containing perhaps fifteen or twenty sets of rooms. As I halted at the end of the dark passage which unites the two quadrangles, a cloud suddenly obscured the moonlight, casting a dim and cheerless gloom over the whole space, which appeared to my excited fancy like the shadow of the grave advancing to swallow up my reckless companion. So strangely did this idea take hold of my mind for the moment, that I was on the point of shouting to him to stop; but such childish fancies had little hold upon the sturdy Northernman, who, carolling in a lusty voice a fragment of some song which had taken his fancy during the evening, marched steadily across the open space, and vanished into the deeper shadows beyond. As he disappeared, an overpowering terror, such as I had never before experienced, and of which I can only convey an idea by calling it the terror of expectation—the foreboding of a horror yet to come—seized upon me; and, like a child suddenly left alone in the dark, I fairly turned round and ran back to my own rooms, as if fleeing from some deadly peril.

After such a transgression of my usual habits as the midnight symptom of the evening before, it is not surprising that I slept long and heavily. The first thing that disturbed me was an unusual tumult in the back quadrangle—a shouting, tramping, running to and fro, and banging of doors and windows, such as might have aroused any one whose bedroom, like mine, abutted upon the scene of the disturbance. I sprang to the window and looked out, just as one of the men with whom I had supped the night before came running past.

"Hallo! Sargent," cried I, "what's all this row about?"

"Haven't you heard," he answered, halting for a moment, "Talboys the new Freshman, has been found in a fit on the floor of his room."

"In a fit! How's that?"

"Nobody knows: we didn't get a word out of him that any one can understand. I'm off to fetch a doctor!" and away he ran.

As may be imagined, I was not long in dressing after such a revell, and had just entered my sitting-room, when my scout, old Sam Thorpe (already introduced to my readers by the conversation quoted above), made his appearance at the breakfast-tray. Sam was a lean, under-sized, hatchet-faced old fellow, with small, deep-set, cunning gray eyes, and a dried up leather face, trenched with countless wrinkles, giving it the look (as one of his masters quaintly observed) "of a ruined head haunted with ghost stories." His age was an impenetrable mystery, college traditions unanimously agreeing in representing him as going about in the same snuff-colored

coat, and with the same antiquated appearance, as far back as the memory of man can extend. He possessed a considerable fund of out-of-the-way knowledge; and was a perfect mine of quaint old stories respecting the college and all connected with it, which he narrated with a highly polished and untaught eloquence that made him well worth listening to. As a rule, Sam was always ready for a chat; but on this occasion he seemed in no hurry to begin. At length, having laid the table as solemnly as if he were making preparations for my immediate execution, he hazarded a remark. "Sad business, sir, this of Master Talboys!"

"Have you heard how it happened?" asked I.

"I don't know nothing about it, sir, barring that Joe Leggett, the scout on that staircase, found Master Talboys a-lying all along on the floor, with a face just like one of them stone statues above the hall-door yonder; and he can't even tell one 'ow it 'appened, poor young gentleman—only he keeps sayin' that the devil's in his room, and that he won't stay in it at no price; so the doctor's had him shifted into Master Archer's room, on the next staircase."

Concluded in our next.

COMMUNICATIONS.

The Baie Verte Canal.

To Editor of "Chignecto Post."

SIR,—In view of the deep interest shown in your paper for the speedy construction of the Baie Verte Canal, I beg to send you a few extracts from the Report of the Canal Commission recently laid before the House of Commons. It will gladden the hearts of all the good people of Westmorland and Cumberland to find that this long-talked-of work is placed on this list among those to be first undertaken by the Dominion Government. The Report is signed by all the Commissioners save one, who however, does not object to the St. Lawrence and Bay of Fundy connection as a national necessity. The Report says: "In this first class we have placed all those works which it is for the general interests of the Dominion should be undertaken and proceeded with as fast as the means at the disposal of the Government will warrant." It then enumerates in this category the Sault Ste. Marie Canal between Lakes Superior and Michigan, 1 mile long; the enlargement of the Welland Canal; the improvement of the Ottawa River Canals; the deepening of the St. Lawrence between Quebec and Montreal; the construction of the Baie Verte Canal; the enlargement of the St. Lawrence Canals; the deepening of the channel of the St. Lawrence above Montreal.

We consider (I quote again from the Report) that all the works embraced under the head of first class are really of so great importance, so essential to the welfare and prosperity of the whole country that we feel some degree of embarrassment in recommending which of them should be first proceeded with, but we respectfully suggest that they should be undertaken in the order in which they are here placed, or as far as possible simultaneously." Then follow an enumeration of works of the second, third, and fourth classes respectively.

The size of Baie Verte Canal locks is proposed to be 270x10 feet, depth of water on miter sills 15 feet, cost \$2,500,000, which would seem to be an extravagant estimate. Whatever the amount, it must, unlike the opening of a line of railway, be left out almost wholly upon the spot. The effect of such an enormous expenditure upon the adjacent County, followed as it must be, by the more permanent results of working the Canal, I leave it to your readers to judge.

The obvious change in public opinion throughout the Dominion on this great improvement has been most striking. When it was first brought up in the Senate three years ago by the member for Cumberland, Ontario people asked with a sneer where it was, and what it was for. Now there is scarcely a man from Cape Breton to Sarnia who is not fully alive to its importance as a Dominion work. So much for steady, persistent agitation on a question that can hear discussion on its merits. When this great work is inaugurated, as we trust it will be ere many years, some of us may be constrained to admit that after all Confederation has not been an unmitigated evil, for apart from its other isolated evils must have been unavailing. Even the dissatisfied few who succeed at the Sackville and Amherst meetings must be gratified at the result of the agitation. It is gratifying to hear in mind too, that neither by Mr. Dickey, who first moved for the survey nor by the Westmorland members who supported it, was this question taken up on mere local grounds, as to route or otherwise, and although fact may be found with them for no insisting on a particular route or routes, the result has vindicated the prudence of their course in leaving this as an engineering question to be decided by the survey, and in advocating the work as an inter-provincial and Dominion necessity.

Yours, &c.,
Ottawa, March 30.

that is peculiarly attractive to the farmer. It sounds musically in election speeches, and when accompanying a newspaper, makes it a welcome visitor to his lonely abode. The idea of being equally ranked with those members of the community who have hitherto considered him as necessarily doomed to occupy an inferior position in society, inspires the humble farmer with new hopes, and some of this class have recently so far felt its importance as to essay to advocate its supposed claims through the medium of the press, and boldly withstand what they considered an infringement of its rights. I am led to the above reflections by reading the excellent editorial in your paper on the subject of "Common Schools," every sentence of which I heartily approve, and my object in troubling you with this communication is to call your attention to a matter in connection with that important subject that appears to have been overlooked by editors of papers and unheeded by our legislators when passing the law that is in this Province for the support of schools by direct taxation, viz., the inequitable system of assessment that is enforced in these Provinces, by which the farmers are made to bear nearly the whole burden of taxation, and the rich merchants and professional men almost entirely exempted. You are aware, Mr. Editor, that the rich lawyers, doctors and merchants have thousands and hundreds of thousands of pounds invested in real estate in these Provinces, for which they hold ample security by mortgage, and while struggling to maintain his family, and if possible to lessen the debt that his property is encumbered with, has not only to pay the rich mortgagee his yearly interest, but he has likewise to pay the tax that is levied on the whole estimated value of the farm he lives on, when, perhaps, in many instances it would not sell for much more than the amount that the rich man holds against it. I need not tell you, Mr. Editor, that our rich capitalists have money invested in various other ways besides that mentioned above, for which under our present faulty system of assessment, they do not pay one cent of tax. Now, sir, I ask you, and I respectfully request you to ask our legislators why this unfair system of taxation is upheld. I imagine some of our wise aristocrats say:—

"How can you tax a person's income?—no gentleman would allow the revisors to pry into his private business, and how can they ascertain how much money he has in his chest or how much money he has invested?"

I heard this flimsy argument sounded in the car of a humble farmer last fall after a revisor had been at the house of the said farmer last fall and obliged him to give a correct statement, not only of the number of acres, and value of his land, and value of his cattle, sheep, &c., but likewise of the quantity of hay, grain, potatoes, &c., that he had raised. The Revisor evidently considered it his duty to pry into the private business of the farmer in order to ascertain the value of his real and personal property, and also the value of the year's produce or income, notwithstanding a large portion of said income was the produce of his hard labour.

The Writs will soon be issued for a general election in this Province, and then the old tune of "equal rights and equal privileges" will again be sounded through the length and breadth of the land—the key note will be raised by the rich men in Halifax, and the sound will reverberate sympathetically from hill to hill and from dale to dale, until the election is over; and soon after the melodious sound will have died away, the taxgatherer will collect from the farmer, the full amount of an assessment, based on the estimate taken last fall, which included the value of the produce that has been consumed during winter, to sustain the life of his family and his cattle; while a large portion of the property belonging to those in affluent circumstances will remain entirely free from taxation.

I am not troubling you, Mr. Editor, with an imaginary grievance.—The above is a plain statement of facts, and as you are aware that a farmer's fingers are not sufficiently supple to handle the pen with dexterity, I trust you will espouse the cause of the farmer, and agitate this subject until our legislators are induced to alter this unjust law, so that every description of property and every class of persons in the community will be equally liable to taxation.

Yours, &c.,
A FARMER.
Amherst, April 15, 1871.

FASHIONS.

From Halifax's Bazaar.

There is no change in the breadth of lower skirts of suits. Their shape is the flat-gored front and sides with full back, their width is from three and a half to four yards around the bottom, the length a matter of taste. Ultra fashionables and extremists let the skirt drag an inch or two behind, while sensible women make it just short enough to escape the ground.

The long over-skirt will not continue to be so exclusively worn, since very short and very long over-skirts are among the importations. Many suits are belted and ornamented with a bow behind, but without sash ends. Elaborate sashes are abandoned. The sleeve of the season is a half-flowing sleeve fitting the arm smoothly from the shoulder to midway between the elbow and wrist where it is widened, and the fullest held in a box-pleat covered with a bow or passementerie ornament, or else the sleeve is cut off all around and finished by a plaited ruffle. A single deep flounce on the skirt is not as stylish as two, three or four narrow ones. Bonnets attract the observer in the difference in trimming from the style of last season. Now everything is massed around the crown, and the front or head piece of pretty straw is frequently left bare, or perhaps softened by a narrow row of lace. The standing trimmings round the crown makes the back of the bonnet quite as high as the front.

Neckties for spring are of soft twilled silk, cut bias and hemmed. Striped silk ties, half inch stripes of a color alternating with white are new this season. Straight ties have knotted fringe at the ends and are ravelled on the sides also. Any belted waist of thin muslin in soft folds, trimmed with a row of Valenciennes edging, makes a pretty tie to wear with a black silk dress. The newest lace collar is pointed at the throat, has square outer corners and grows narrow towards the neck. A similar shaped collar, which ladies call *regalia*, is made of thin muslin in soft folds, edged with lace. Pale blue or mauve regalias of China crape or soft silk trimmed with white lace, are made for young ladies to wear over white or black dresses. These are very new and very dressy.

Breach of Promise of Marriage.
Butcher vs. Wright.

Tried in Court of Queen's Bench, Feb. 27.

The plaintiff, a young woman about 27 years of age, was a dressmaker, and occasionally went into service, and the defendant was a small tenant farmer of 50 acres, was 73 years of age, a widower, with three sons and a daughter. The defendant had known the plaintiff all her life, and he was mutually agreed between them that they were to be married in April, but an order or agreement of this kind was never made. The defendant's daughter, however, died, and then he renewed his offer, but the plaintiff declined to marry him unless he made provision for her in case of his death. That he declined to do, or put her in business, as she said he had promised, and she then refused to accede to his action.

The plaintiff's case was that defendant had promised to give her 2000, to commence business on their marriage and leave her 1000, his share.

In cross-examination she said defendant's children were all over 40 years old, and living at home. She never went to his house. It was mutually agreed between them that they were not to tell their relatives know any thing of the engagement. They had some conversation about his advancing money for her to go into business, and on one occasion he asked what security she could give, and she replied herself. C. J. one species of personal security (laughter).

Plaintiff said she was to be put into a business because she objected to go to the farm, and defendant was in no way to live with her. When defendant refused to advance the money she had her suspicion that he did not mean "business." In one of her letters she asked if he was married, because she had heard he was talking to other girls (laughter). She did not know he had lost all his teeth and could not speak plain in consequence. When the defendant did not "come up" about the business and keep his word, she kept copies of two of her letters to him. After the action on the 28th September last, the defendant's solicitor, in a letter to her solicitor, said the defendant declined to pay anything like the sum asked, but that the old man was ready to marry her on the 31st of November, and take her to his farm. She objected, because he declined to make any settlement on her. Her reason for declining to go to the farm was because she was not strong enough to do the work. She said she would marry him if he would agree to keep a servant. Her solicitor wrote to the defendant declining his offer, she would not marry him, and he declined to pay off some debts she had incurred, and on the 31st October he wrote to the defendant to that effect, viz., "The settlement of a reasonable sum on herself and children (if any)." (laughter).

The Lord Chief Justice.—There is a great deal sometimes in a parenthesis. Plaintiff said that defendant's solicitor wrote another letter, stating that as his daughter had died on Monday, and was to be buried on the Saturday, he was then in a fair position to take her to his home.

The Lord Chief Justice said the question was whether there was really a breach before action was brought, and if so she could only receive nominal damages. He afterwards was clearly ready to marry her, and she had no right to insist on a settlement. By doing so she broke the contract. Furthermore, she had no right to stipulate for a servant. The old man never had kept a servant, his daughter in her lifetime having done the household work.

Ultimately a verdict was taken by consent for the plaintiff—damages one farthing, each party to pay their own costs.

The Lord Chief Justice concurred, and said the action ought never to have been brought.

Mr. H. James said the old man was still of the same opinion, and was determined to marry the plaintiff (laughter).

AGRICULTURE.

The Report of the Board of Agriculture for 1870 is before us. It contains the Reports of some fifteen societies—Provincial Exhibition Report; Proceedings of the Board; Audit Report; Essays on the following subjects:—Farm Improvement, by J. D. M. Keator, Hammond River; Artificial manures, by Archibald Harrison, M. P.; and Sheep best adapted to New Brunswick, by T. F. Barker, Esq.

The receipts for the year have been \$57,348, from the following sources: Annual Grant, \$1,400; Exhibition, \$3,000; Regatta, \$170; Admissions to Exhibitions, \$1,301; Stock Account, \$18,099. The expenditure was, Prizes, \$2,241; Exhibition Expenses about \$6,700; Secretary, \$500; Expenses of Board, \$647; Stock, \$16,249.50, leaving a balance on hand of \$1034.

Mr. Howard Treuman, the Secretary of the Sackville and Westmorland Agricultural Society, in his Report, speaks of the importance of the crops the past year, the extensive introduction of mowing, raking and threshing machines. He says:—

"Some of our farmers are making very laudable efforts to improve their practice in relation to—

SAVING MANURE.

While all, or nearly all, are ready to acknowledge the importance of so doing; yet the practice of the great majority is the same as it has been for the last fifty years. The manure heap is exposed to all the changes of the weather, and the leaking process goes steadily on, except when the heap is too hard frozen. No systematic attempt, so far as I am aware, has yet been made to save the liquid manure."

IN FARM BUILDINGS

and shelter for stock, there is some improvement, and as the farmers' means increase these improvements will multiply.

"It is a matter worthy of consideration by the Board, whether they could not do something to place within easy reach of the farmer more labor-saving machines. A very successful effort has been made by the Board during the year in introducing improved breeds of cattle into the Province, but to maintain the character of such stock, and to improve our own, it is necessary that they should be plentifully supplied."

THE SHEEP

Mr. Barker, in my opinion, the Leicesters, because they combine more good qualities than any other breeds. Many have a preference for the Cotswold, but I believe the Leicester to be superior, as the mutton is of a better quality, the wool finer, growing thick and close, thus enabling the animal the better to withstand the storms of Fall and Winter. The Cotswold, from the fact that their fleece is thin and long, are much exposed in stormy weather, while the mutton is coarse, and the fat more like tallow. The Cotswold, I may here add, makes a good cross in some flocks.

"I would recommend the Board to make an importation of Rams from the old country next Fall, as they would not only prove a benefit, but are at the present time very much needed."

"Whatever method of breeding we choose to adopt in order to improve our Sheep, there are standing points which are indispensably necessary in the animals we intend to breed from. These are, width of chest, depth of carcass, breadth of loin, and quantity and quality of fleece, which should show next to the skin a copious yolk or yellow oil. The merits of the Leicester as an improving cross is undeniably exceeding good, and their utility in this respect cannot be questioned. To them we may look to produce that most effective and satisfactory change for the better, so necessary and desirable in the present state of our stock."