

JUDGE HALIBURTON.

"The 'old times' had been noted for the presence of eloquent, versatile, accomplished men," said Sir John Bourinot, in his "Builders of Nova Scotia." Chief among these was good old Judge Haliburton, whose kindly face, beaming with good nature, is here presented to the readers of the REVIEW. Little more than half a century has passed since his books, illuminated by the quaint touches of his irresistible humour, were to be found everywhere in England and America. Now they are difficult to obtain and they have given place to others more modern. The sparkling humour and the keen ridicule that once made his fellow Nova Scotians wince, is illustrated in "The Clockmaker," which is still to be found in many homes throughout the province, though it is a question whether the younger generation of Nova Scotians read, as they should, this book, the inimitable creation of one of our own authors. It is hoped they will; and our teachers may help them to do so.

Thomas Chandler Haliburton was born at Windsor, N. S., and the quaint one-storied house in which he first saw the light of day was also the home of his father, Chief Justice William Hersey Otis Haliburton. "I and my father were born in the same house, but twenty miles apart," the son was wont to say; and it was a fact, for between the two births the building was floated down the river St. Croix to Windsor, from Douglas, twenty miles above. The future author of "Sam Slick" was educated at the Grammar School and Kings College, Windsor. The house in which the Haliburtons migrated was succeeded by another and more commodious one, and this in turn was deserted for the picturesque residence of Clifton, to the west of Windsor, which Judge Haliburton made his home for a quarter of a century. After graduation he was called to the bar and practised law at Annapolis Royal. He was elected to represent Annapolis County in the Nova Scotia Assembly. A historian of the period says of him: "He was then in the prime of life and vigour, both mental and physical. The healthy air of country life had given him a robust appearance, though his figure was yet slender and graceful. As an orator, his manner and attitude were extremely impressive, earnest and dignified; and although the strong propensity of his mind to wit and humour was often apparent, they seldom detracted from the seriousness of his language when the subject under discussion was important." But politics was not to his liking, as the readers of "The Clockmaker" well know. After his father's death he was offered and accepted the position of Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, and when this court was abolished in 1841 he was transferred to the Supreme Court. In February, 1856, he resigned his judicial position, removed to England, and lived for the rest of his days at Isleworth, on the banks of the Thames. He was elected to the English House of Commons, but he found that body even less congenial than the Nova Scotian Assembly.

Judge Haliburton was twice married, first to Louisa, only daughter of Captain Laurence Neville, by whom he left two sons and five daughters. In 1856 he married Sarah Harriet Williams, of Shrewsbury, England, by whom he had no children.

Judge Haliburton was very fond of young people, to whom his humour and conversational powers were very attractive.

His earliest work, published in 1829, was a history of Nova Scotia, which has some literary merit, but is of little value as a history, since documents throwing light on many events were not in his time available. Over a dozen works have come from his pen, all of which are readable and full of spicy observations, but few are read at present except "The Clockmaker." The original design in writing the Clockmaker or the "Sayings and Doings of Sam Slick of Slickville," was, to quote his own words, "to awaken Nova Scotians to the vast resources and capabilities of their native land, to stimulate their energy and enterprise, to strengthen the bond of union between the colonies and the parent state, and by occasional reference to the institutions and government of other countries, to induce them to form a just estimate and place a proper value on their own." He afterwards had gratifying proof that he had succeeded in effecting much good in this direction.