

"The Lunatic Who Built a Brick Block in the Woods"—Continued

The time had come to build a new city hall; so thought the majority of the people, but the extreme west end dissented. The general opinion was, when the question was first mooted, that it should be located where Anderson's store is now, on the corner of Talbot and Hinecs streets. A by-law was introduced in the council to purchase this site, which was offered for a song by the Moisons Bank, in whose hands it was. There is a strong suspicion who brought the influence to bear to block the by-law. At a later date the Ellison block was submitted to a vote of the ratepayers, and voted down. Then in a few months the present Idsardi site was submitted and carried. People generally did not think a low site, requiring a large amount of filling in would be adopted. Then the old residents began to see things. They saw they had been led by a chain that went to an iron hand, and the hand was Idsardi's. It was too late. The day of their salvation had passed, and though they still retained their deserted market, "the sceptre had departed from Judah," and the business centre was to be around the city hall. Idsardi had got the great carbuncle and he knew what to do with it.

The moving into their new and magnificent building by Ingram & Davey marked a mile stone in the business of the city. Others, including Mr. Sutherland, the shoe man, soon followed. These changes left a large amount of unproductive property in the west end. This was regretted. No fair man desired to see valuable property as this was, in its present condition. There may arise conditions when it will give a fair return again for the capital invested. Yet, one cannot but think of the time when a little tact and a little sagacity would have saved the west end business property. It has been done

in other places where the same natural disadvantages existed. If a market had been located on the north half of the post office block, and half of the block north of it, with a good entrance on Talbot street, and the city hall placed where the post office is now, the property as far west as William street would not have shrunk in value to any appreciable extent. What has the market to do with business? Business property is only valuable in a city when it is situated where the people congregate. A twenty-foot store will rent on Main street, Buffalo, for \$10,000 a year, in a place where there is a crowd continually passing, and it will not rent for half that sum in a place where the crowd does not pass. What made the business mostly move east of the post office? Because the farmers and citizens attended the east end market, and that particular locality catches them when they want to make purchases, better than any other. There is no question but that the Horton market has had a large influence in drawing business eastwards. And this business could have been retained two blocks farther west, if ordinary horse sense had been used by prominent men in the days when wisdom was wanted.

The great mistake was made in blocking government for the majority, for, after all, the best government is a government of the people, by the people, for the people.

The people wanted a central market and would have established one if they had not been prevented by the manipulators of the minority. The success of the few over the many when this question was an issue brought such dire disaster to the conquerors that they will carry regrets for their victory to their graves.



The old swimming hole, on Kettle Creek, just above where the first waterworks pumping plant was located.