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MAY 6, 1893.

Watch This Space Next Week. It Will Grow in the Meantime.

MR. MURPHY WAS HERE.

HIS REMINISCENCES OF ST. JOHN AFTER THE BIG FIRE.

Contractors Who Came With the Building Boom—How Some of Them Departed—Why the Citizens Were Suspicious of Men Who did not Pay Cash.

LOWELL, April 25.—In the fall of 1877, there was a building boom in St. John. Contractors and builders, masons and carpenters, and all sorts and conditions of building tradesmen flocked into the city from all quarters—from Maine, Boston, New York and even Chicago.

Wages were good, and business brisk, and the Yankee contractors made the best of it.

One of the men who went from Lewiston, Me., was John F. Murphy. He was born in Carleton, but left for the States long before he was able to appreciate the advantages of a one cent ferry or the eloquence of a West End alderman.

Mr. Murphy is now State factory inspector for Massachusetts, and an outspoken politician with influence enough to allow free speech.

When he went to St. John it was to take charge of the mason work for a building being erected for Mr. McGivern, the coal man.

While there he met a fellow contractor named Webb, who had made considerable money, but lost heavily in business transactions in Chicago, and had arrived in St. John without a cent.

The pair had not seen much of each other, however, before the firm of Murphy and Webb hung out its shingle, and had begun work on a house for Mr. Slipp on Leinster street.

They also built houses in St. John for Master of Rolls Peters of Prince Edward Island; the Williams sisters at the lower end of Germain street, and a number of others.

Mr. Murphy has a fund of reminiscences St. John in 1877, and in his office the other day he rolled them off with a good deal of satisfaction, always ending with the remark that he didn't know a city he liked better than St. John.

The majority of the Yankee contractors who struck St. John at that time, he said, had more nerve than capital, and the straits they were put to in order to complete their contracts were amusing.

Some of them, when they got hold of $600 or $700, left town and this made all who remained, workmen, dealers in building supplies, and every body else, in fact, suspicious of strangers. All bills had to be settled at the end of the week or operations would stop short.

The result was that the contractors had to do some tall hustling in order to get a certain amount of work done, so that they could collect enough money to pay their expenses.

This was particularly hard on such firms as Webb & Murphy who, when Northumberland Straits froze over, couldn't get any money from the men they were building for.

Every Saturday night the workmen flocked to the hotels and boarding-houses, and, if they did not get their money wanted to know the reason.

Mr. Murphy was the financial head of the firm, and while operations were going on, left town, got married, and came back again.

He arrived at the Waverley House late Saturday night, and was not there long, before a delegation of workmen waited upon him

"Mr. Webb wants to see you," said one of them.

"He does? Well, I guess he'll have to wait till morning."

"But he wants to see you now. He wants to get out."

"Out of what?"

"Out of jail."

And sure enough Webb was in jail, and had been there for some days.

When Mr. Murphy left town they thought he had skipped, and they were getting all the satisfaction possible out of the partner who remained. He having charge of the construction, knew nothing about the financial end, and had been unable to give the men money enough to keep them at work.

In 1877 bricklayers and masons in St. John received all the way from $3.50 to $4.50 a day, and other tradesmen in proportion, but the majority of them lived up to all they got. When the cold snap came and building operations suspended there were a large number of men on what in these days would have been called their "uppers." They were out of work and out of money, with a hard winter before them.

They made the best of it, however, living on what they could get, and boarding in the unfinished buildings. In some of them there were dozens of temporary bunks made up and in these the workmen slept at night.

One night one of these buildings caught fire. A stove in the third story had in some way upset, and burned the floor beneath it so that it fell into the next story; burned a hole there and fell tumbling down where the men were sleeping. They put it out readily enough, but, there was a hole large enough for an elevator shaft, up through the building.

The contractor was notified that night and getting out of bed went down to the building, got the men to work and before morning had the beams spliced and the floors laid over, so that nobody would know there had been a fire.

But the building is in St. John to-day and Mr. Murphy says that if it is ever taken down the workmen will see that the floors are not as they should be.

Mr. Murphy was in St. John from September to May of the following year, when he returned to Lewiston. He left there some time after, came to Lowell and has been here ever since.

He remembers a number of the contractors who went to St. John at that time and kept track of them up to a few years ago.

The firm of Croft & Camp which went from New York, dissolved some years ago, and Camp has grown wealthy through building operations in New Jersey.

R. G. LARSEN.

GOVERNMENT RED TAPE.

An Unfortunate Clerk's Petition Refused in Official Style.

A goverment clerk entered the private office of the head of his department to ask for a fortnight's holiday. The offical received him with his usual affability and told him to hand in his request in writing.

"Oh I did not think that was necessary if I applied to you in person," said the clerk.

"Oh, yes: in fact, it is indispensable,"

"Then I will go back to the office."

"No need to do that. See, here, are pens, ink and paper. Sit down and write."

The clerk obeyed. The petition was written out, signed and folded.

"Now said the functionary, "you have only to present it."

"To whom?"

"To me, forsooth!" And taking the petition, he wiped his glasses, carefully adjusted them, read the document from begining to end, placed it on file with a number of similar applications, and then remarked with the utmost gravity; I have read your petition, and regret exceedingly that I am compelled to inform you that I cannot accede to your request."

Japanese Baths.

The Japanese take their baths at a very high temperature--about 110 degrees Fahrenheit—and come out of them as red as lobsters; but there appears to be no fear whatever of catching cold. Every fairly large house in Tokio has its own bath-room; but besides this there are no fewer than 800 baths in the city of Tokio, where 300,000 persons bathe daily at a cost per head of one sen three rin, or about a half penny. The Japanese suffer from many special diseases, due to a too exclusive diet of fish and rice, and to the want of exercise—especially from indigestion; but they escape a great many by their personal cleanliness.

Shakespeare's Name.

The name of the great English dramatist is generally spelt Shakespeare, but there are four thousand ways of spelling the name according to English orthography. Here are a few of the four thousand, as appearing in old documents: Shakspere, Shaxpere, Shakspire, Shaxspere, Schaksper, Shakespere, Shakspeare, Schakespeyr, Shaxespeare, Shagspere, Shaxpur, Shaxsper, Shaksper, Shackspeare, Saxpere, Shakespire, Shakespeire, Shackespeare, Shakaspear, Shaxper, Shakspear, Shaxpeare, Shakspeere, Shaxbure, Shackspeyr, Shakespear, Schakesper, etc.

Ants and Their Boarders.

It is well known that ants harbour a variety of other insects in their nests, particularly Gamasid mites, and Mr. A. D. Michael, from a study of ants in Corsica and at Innsbruck has come to the conclusion that the ants willingly tolerate the presence of the Gamasids, and even protect them. The mites are found to ride away on the backs of the ants when the nest is disturbed; and sometimes the ants carry off the mites and their young just as they do their own. Mr. Michael thinks the mites repay the ants for their hospitality by removing the bodies of their dead, which they devour.

Within His Duty.

Orders are strictly obeyed in the Royal Navy, but the results are sometimes disconcerting to the civilian mind, as a young lady once discovered, much to her astonishment. The officers of a man-of-war were entertaining their friends with a grand lunch, and in attendance were some typical British tars. The young lady wanting some bread, looked behind her chair at one of the sailors in waiting, and asked him to bring what she wanted. But he drew himself up stiff and stern, and to her amazement, replied: "Can't do it, miss; I'm told off for taters."

HOW SOME BOOKS END.

THE FANCIES OF AUTHORS IN THE WAY OF CONCLUSIONS.

Beginning and Ending Are the Difficult Tasks for Novelists—The Style in Old Time Stories—Methods of Some of the Most Famous Writers.

Not a little depends on an attractive commencement to a book, it is true, but it is also not without interest to consider in what manner some of our famous literary works finish.

"Nothing so difficult as a beginning!" exclaims a celebrated poet in his best known work, but immediately adds: "Unless, perhaps, it is the end." Most experienced writers will indorse his opinion.

Some authors take much greater pains than others in elaborating a good opening or closing sentence. In that peculiar but instructive work, "Rasselas," Samuel Johnson winds up his moralizings on mortal troubles by showing his noble hero's difficulty in making the best choice of life to the bitter end: "The Prince desired a little kingdom in which he might administer justice in his own person—but he could never fix the limits of his dominions, and was always adding to the number of his subjects."

A still more famous work, "The Vicar of Wakefield," finishes with a pleasant domestic picture. "According to my custom," says our old friend the Vicar, "I had the pleasure of seeing all my family assembled once more by a cheerful fireside. I had nothing now on this side of the grave to wish for. . . . . It now only remained that my gratitude in good fortune should exceed my former submission to adversity."

That formerly overrated effusion, "Paul and Virginia," ends with an apostrophe to sentiment and scenery, as suits its stilted, old-fashioned style. Another foreign book, "The Sorrows of Werter"—once famous—has an unusual termination in the suicide of the melancholy hero, and ends with the cheerful information that "the body was carried to the grave by labourers, and no priest attended."

That favorite of our young days, "Gulliver's Travels," mostly has for conclusions descriptions of the extraordinary wanderer's occasional returns to the bosom of his family, who show singular forbearance concerning his frequent long absences, which remind one of "Sindbad" and "Crusoe." The latter, if we recollect rightly, ends with an encomium on "the blessings of ending our days in peace."

The shy humorist, Sterne, closes his "Sentimental Journey" by an unfinished sentence which breaks off with a dash—suggestive of an adventure in accordance with the title of the book.

That master of fiction, the Great Unknown, often hurried up the completion of his wonderful narratives at a hint from his publishers. Yet the concluding sentences of most of his books seem as happy as any portions of his marvellous compositions. Some, it is true—notably "Guy Mannering," "Antiquary," "Betrothed," and "Rob Roy"—end, after an old custom, in the words of the novels' titles. The first volume, which gave its name to the famous series, finishes with the drinking of a toast—"A tear mingled with the wine which the Baron filled, as he proposed a cup of gratitude to Colonel Talbot, and the prosperity of the United Houses of Waverley, Honour, and Bradwardine."

One of Scott's great admirers—the gifted Charlotte Bronte—breathes a religious spirit in the concluding sentences of her famous novel, where it records the approaching end and farewell message to the heroine of St. John Rivers, clergyman and missionary.

Washington Irving, in his "Sketch Book," shows, like Scott, a reluctancy to really come to an anchor, and so adds postscripts, one of which closes with the sentence: "'Faith, sir,' replied the story-teller, 'as to that matter, I don't believe one-half of it myself.'"

Kingsley's clever book, "Hypatia," takes farewell of readers in the words: "Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone, whether at Hypatia or Pelagia, Miriam or Raphael, Cyril or Philammon."

Dickens finishes one of his "Christmas Stories" in a sentence characteristic of his belief in the innate goodness of human nature, where Mrs. Lirriper says: "Ah, Major, treachery don't come natural to beaming youth; but trust and pity, love and constancy—they do, thank God!"

A reminder of Disraeli's love of Imperial grandeur may be found in the conclusion of "The Rise of Iskander:" "It is to thee, great Iskander, that Epirus owes its national existence, and its holy religion. All that we have to do now is to preserve them . . . . by entreating thee to mount the redeemed throne of thy ancestors. And all the people shouted, 'God save Iskander, King of Epirus!'"

Grim Carlyle condescends to terminate that extraordinary work, "Sartor Resartus," with a grim apology to his "weary readers": "To one and all of you, O irritated readers, he, with outstretched hands and open heart, will wave a kind farewell."

As effective a finish to a novel as any we can call to mind occurs in Wilkie Collins's "No Name." The lovers, after many troubles and separations, are happy together at last, and the heroine says:—

"Tell me if you doubt that the one dear object of my life is to live worthy of you. I asked you if there was any hard truth to be told to tell it me here with your own lips. Tell it me, my love, my husband! Tell it me now!"

"She looked up, clinging to him as she clung to the hope of her better life to come.

"Tell me the truth!" she repeated.

"With my own lips?"

"Yes!" she answered, eagerly; 'say what you think of me with your own lips.

"He stooped and kissed her."

Few, we think, of our more recent authors take the trouble to compose so striking a conclusion as that, or one so characteristic of the author, and appropriate to his subject, as our concluding example. It is thus Thackeray takes leave of his admiring readers before adding the word "Finis" to his masterpiece, "Vanity Fair"—"A novel without a hero,": "Ah! *vanitas vanitatum*! Which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? or, having it, is satisfied? Come children let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out."

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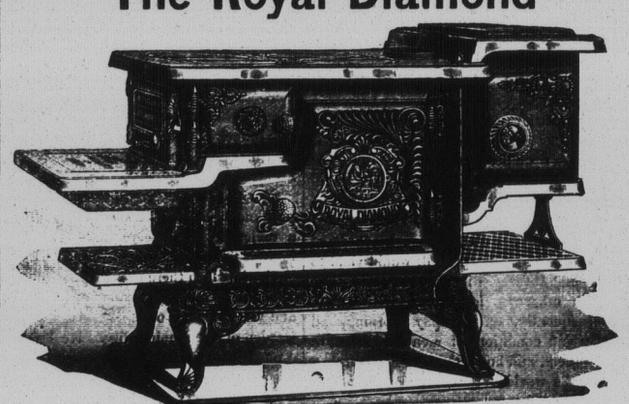

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