

## JOSEPH HOWE AND ONE OF HIS BOYS.

TWO NOVA SCOTIA PRINTERS WHO ROSE TO BE GREAT MEN.

By William Davies Taunton, Halifax Chronicle

WHEN I first went into a printing office to learn the types there was posted on the wall a print of Gutenberg and Faust, examining their "first proof." It must have made quite a dent in my memory, because a scene which I witnessed the other day forcibly brought that print back to my mind. I had climbed up several flights of stairs in a building on Hollis street, Halifax, located directly opposite the Parliament Building. My mission



HON. JOSEPH HOWE.

was to see with mine own eyes a press on which had been fought the battle of responsible Government in two provinces. I was told that I would find a printing office at the top of the building, but the proprietor evidently did not believe in the value of his own wares, there being no sign to indicate the existence of such an establishment. I mounted the stairs with misgivings. But when I reached the top floor my hopes were revived, for there I found,

through the aid of the dim light which struggled through the roof window, a piece of paper posted on a door containing the words "Printing Office." The door was shut, and in reply to my timid rap there came an invitation to "come in." It was there the plate of Gutenberg and Faust came back to my memory, and carried me down the years of the past to the time when I first begun to "learn the boxes." The printing office comprised one small room. A dim light shone in through a window overlooking the harbor, on which the profane hand of man or woman had not lain possibly since Queen Victoria ascended the throne. On this window the dust and dirt of many years had gathered, but the proprietor noticed it not. He probably attributed the dim light to his failing eyesight. Near the window was a frame or two and on one side of the room was a "rack," on which some "half-pied" jobs reposed. In the centre of the room was the press and over it was bent an old man whose appearance indicated that he was not of this age, but rather one whom those who had gone before had forgotten to take with them. He was printing. That is, he was printing after the manner of fifty or even sixty years ago. The old gentleman, who was the sole occupant of the establishment, greeted me kindly, and when the object of my visit was explained he dropped his work and for an hour or more he went back amid the events which went far to make a name and fame for Nova Scotia. The old gentleman was the proud possessor of the press on which the history of Nova Scotia, and the history of the sister and smaller province, Prince Edward Island, was made; the press on which was printed The Nova Scotian, the paper which fought the battle of responsible government in Nova Scotia, under the able editorship of Joseph Howe; the press which had printed Haliburton's history of Nova Scotia and the first editions of the great works which made that author (Sam Slick) famous; the press on which was printed Murdoch's Epitome of the Laws of Nova Scotia, and the press on which was printed The Charlottetown Examiner, the paper which fought the battle of the masses against the classes on Prince Edward Island, and on which the speeches of the island's greatest son, Honorable Edward Whelan, were printed.

No wonder his dim eyes took on new light as he spoke of the glorious triumphs of the old press in the days gone by, when

Joseph Howe was a power in the land. James Barrett, for such is the name of this relic of the art preservative of former days, was one of "Joe Howe's boys." His living contemporaries are few and far between. G. H. Fenerty, of New Brunswick, is one; Louis Knout was another, but he left the case and took to farming, and now resides in Lunenburg County. Among those who have gone Mr. Barrett remembers Edward Whelan, and it is with him this little sketch will mainly deal, as he was closely identified with the old press. Mr. Barrett could not tell when the press was made. The brass plate contains the information that it was built by John J. Wells, of Hartford, Conn., was numbered 83, was of the "patent lever" variety. This indicated that the lever, at any rate, was an improvement on something else. Presses of a similar character are occasionally found in country offices to day, but are generally used for poster work or "pulling proofs." As far as Mr. Barrett can recollect, the press was used in a "printing office" located on Brunswick street, in a building called "De Molitier's Folly." It was then used for printing Bibles - "White's Bibles" Mr. Barrett called them - but he thought the edition was out of print. Then it passed into the hands of Joseph Howe (about 1836), the famous writer, orator, and statesman. Here as an apprentice Edward Whelan inked the forms and "worked off" the "token." Howe sold the press now under review to Richard Nugent, who bought out The Nova Scotian and the entire outfit. Nugent got into a libel suit and went to jail, and William Aumand secured the paper, but not before paying a fabulous price for it. The Nova Scotian is still in existence as a weekly edition of The Halifax Morning Chronicle. Nugent sold the press to J. H. Croskill, who printed on it a paper called The Morning Post. In 1845 the press was sold to Edward Whelan and removed to Prince Edward Island, where it was destined to be instrumental in fighting the people's battle. Whelan in turn sold it to one, Alfred Godfrey, from whom the present owner secured it.

Having introduced the famous press and told of its meanderings, let me record a few incidents in the life of one who used this press in the interests of his country. On Prince Edward Island the name of Edward Whelan is a household word. Any school boy there will tell you that Whelan was a great man - the greatest man the island ever possessed. But while his name is held in reverence there is rising up a generation less sentimental, though fully as patriotic as those who are making room for them, and this younger generation is apt to forget the stories told to them concerning the eventful past. True, Whelan's speeches have been printed in book form, and once in a while the newspapers incidentally refer to some achievement of his - some great measure of reform which he secured. But such references are growing fewer and more vague, and in time it may be necessary to have attached to the portrait of this departed statesman, which adorns the walls of the Provincial Assembly Chamber, a card telling who and what he was. May I then do something towards keeping his memory green. Of Joseph Howe a great deal has been written. The incidents of his life worth chronicling have been duly chronicled. Nova Scotia will never cease - or should never cease - to do him honor. Whelan was to Prince Edward Island what Howe was to



EDWARD WHELAN