

Ap Ball

THE LAND WE LIVE IN

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A MONTHLY JOURNAL, published principally on principle, and partially in the interests of the Publishers and the public, with a strong weakness for matters of Local Interest.



Vol. II. SHERBROOKE, P. Q., FEBRUARY, 1889. No. 21



The Old Swallow Tree.

As your pleasant little journal seems to dwell much on the curiosities of the past respecting our city and vicinity, I thought it not improbable that your young readers might be interested in the republication of a poetical description of one of the curiosities of the past generation, written thirty-four years ago, and somewhat later published in the *Canadian Times* of this city. The "Old Swallow Tree," which doubtless will be remembered by many of our townpeople living at that period. The tree stood on a lot in Queen Street, owned by the late Mr. Chas. Pannoyér, and on which he afterwards built his house. But, a little before that event took place, some one or more imps of mischief, in the form of juvenile humanity, one night set fire to the tree and burnt it to ashes with its myriad feathered songsters, as they had fallen asleep on the bosom of their friendly protector.

Jan. 12th, 1889. G. B.
[We had the pleasure of reading this poem on one of the Australian Gold Fields about the time to which our correspondent refers, and until lately always attributed the authorship to the late Geo. Bernard Esq., for which we trust the genuine "G. B." will pardon us.—Ed.]

THE OLD SWALLOW TREE.

In the western part of this Town of Sherbrooke there stands a fine old elm tree about thirty feet in height and of proportionate girth. It is hollow, and has from time immemorial been the favorite summer haunt of vast flocks of swallows, which repose nightly within its hollow trunk. At sunset the swallows gather by thousands around the tree and perform an incredible number of evolutions round it with military precision, and when weary of this whirling flight, they drop one by one, as quick as the eye can perceive them into the hollow trunk, by means of a hole at the top; the rest continuing their circular flight until all have disappeared. I saw on the Hall noble relic of ages past, whose death word written in dust.
Ere the red man's hunting grounds became a prey to the white man's lust,
When the deer and bison freely ranged through the forest far and wide,
And the weary hunter reposed his limbs beneath the friendly shade,
How grandly aloft they reared their heads in the pride of their forest King,
While the limbs gave shelter to a new-born brood,
Whose notes made the well-in-tune air ring,
How kindly was the bearing, thus a monarch's throne,
Amongst the trees,
Thy foliage rich beyond compare, how it played with the summer's breeze,
But times are changed with thee, old tree—thy glory has passed away,

Thy peers have fallen by thy side, to the woodman's axe a prey,
Alone thou stand'st, a noble work of grandeur scarr'd by time,
Yet thine all-commanding form suggests the glory of thy prime.
But not thy beauty, nor thy pride, is the subject of my song,
For goodly deeds and noble acts to thy chronicles belong.
Thy rapese trunk and leafless boughs afford a friendly aid,
To countless tribes of refugees, who from sunny lands have strayed.
No charge thou mak'st, no dowry, requit'st; thy shelter for all is free;
And the way-worn feathered traveller finds a "Home, sweet home" in thee.
And year by year thy aged limbs do cradle a tiny throng,
Whose grateful hearts, in accents sweet, repay thee with many a song.
How oft when summer evening's sun was sinking in the west,
Have I watched that happy multitude as they sang themselves to rest,
And hover'd round and round thy boughs in the height of youthful glee,
Not dreaming o'er to be deprived of the friendly swallow tree.

I've watched them till the sun's last rays were scattered in the air,
And twilight shadows o'er them stole as they said their evening prayer,
And one by one they disappeared and nestled on thy boughs,
Scour'd from foes or lamposts, here they sweetly sank to rest.
When Autumn clouds bedim the sky and leaves are all a-scar and dead,
Thy grateful refugees invoke a blessing on thy head,
And tenderly they bid adieu and chant a plaintive dirge,
Their withered lingering, loving look to 'er hermits' cells repair.
And far in distant lands proclaim thy virtues, robin free,
And pray that winter's storms and snows may lightly fall on thee;
By eve presaged, long may'st thou stand, O generous Swallow Tree,
May lightning's blast, or woodman's axe e'er be with'drawn from thee!
Long may'st thou live to shame the wretch who never opens his door,
To hear the cries and give relief to the needy household poor.
Long may'st thou stand, a beacon light in a dark degenerate age,
And thy coolly deeds be graven in immortal history's page.

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Transition or The Huron Princess

CHAPTER II.—CONTINUED.

The tidings which had so disturbed Anés were brought by a party of his tribe along with two bloody corpses which they had deposited lovingly and reverently on a couch of cedar boughs in Walsgrave's out-house.

They then entered the dwelling, and after the customary "Boxoo freres!" "Good day, brothers!" squatted on the floor, lighted their pipes, and smoked in solemn silence.

After a few preliminary whiffs, old Anans, who had recognized Edwardes by the more distinguishing salutation, "Sago Coice!" "Hail, Chief!" handed him his calumet which, Ralph foreseeing that a communication and consultation of importance were impending, put into his own mouth, extracting therefrom a few puffs of smoke. He then handed it to Walsgrave, who in his turn passed it over to Anés.

That important ceremony having been performed to the satisfaction of Chief Anans, that worthy rose to his feet and in slow, measured terms informed them that "Jouskeka, the mysterious bad spirit of the Lorette Indians had again, after many years, revisited the Quebec hunting grounds, and that he was then encamped at Lac aux araignees (Spider Lake), that he had been seen there two days ago by himself and Anés two brothers, who had gone there to trap beavers.

They, knowing that Jouskeka entertained a deadly hatred against the Anés Jesuits.

family, against whom that mysterious vindictive being had waged a vendetta for generations past, took up their traps, and departed at once to rejoin their friends, who were encamped at the upper forks of the Saliou River, and that before they had accomplished four hours of their journey, the two young men had been shot by the Huron demon, who was armed with one of those long Kentucky rifles, which were renowned for accuracy at that period at a very long range.

Anés, who had not seen the bodies of the dead Indians became frantic with grief when he ascertained that they were those of his brothers. When he had left with Ralph for the Mégantic woods, he had supposed that they were safe in their native village, but unfortunately they had been tempted by the mildness of the autumn and the plentifulness of the game to protract their stay in the forest.

Had they known that the hereditary enemy, or as they supposed him, the eternal evil genius of their family, was roaming the woods within two hundred miles of St. Francois, they would have waived their annual hunt, and remained at home to make baskets and moccasins with the squaws of the village.

But Anés was not the only one whose generation his father had been killed. Another through the head a few years before while piloting a raft down the Long Sault, by the same revengeful being; now the fiend was within a few miles of him, the sole representative of a once large family. Should he remain to be the last victim?—No! the pere Rousseau had taught him "That vengeance is the Lord's," and his only. He would return to his village, to the love of his squaw, and to the sheltering care of the church and the priest.

CHAPTER III.

The transition from polished society and its concomitants of "aesthetic pleasures and enjoyments for the rough but more natural pursuits of a rural life, instead of blunting our young hero's sensibilities, only tended to strengthen in him those principles of manliness and lofty mindedness which his early education had instilled and implanted in him, and while his body grew and strengthened in muscular texture, his mind acquired a corresponding solidity, consequently when Ralph had attained his twenty-first birthday he was as mature and well-balanced as most men are at forty. But his sprightliness and good nature never forsook him; and he was as frank and jugent as ever, his self-command being based on his self-esteem, it saved him from succumbing to the baser passions and sustained him in afflictions. The winter of 1887 was unusually moist, and consequently very trying to Mrs. Edwardes, whose constitution had never been robust; the political atmosphere of the country was also in a



"PINE TREE ROCK," TERRILL PLACE, SHERBROOKE.