

## School Days in the Village of Galt

School days now pass before us,

Forms and scenes of long ago,

Like a dream they hover o'er us,

Calm and bright as evening's glow,

Days that knew no shade of sorrow,

When our young hearts pure and free

Joyfully hailed each coming morrow

On this town so dear to me.

**T**HERE was but one public school in Galt seventy years ago. It was located at the head of Main street, on north side, and was but a one-roomed building, bounded by Main street on the south, Wellington street on the west, a vegetable garden on the north, and the Mill pond on the east. The building occupied most of the space left. There was no playground for the children attending school in those days but the public streets. The building was roughcast and plain within as well as without. There were no separate seats for the scholars, but rows of seats on each side of the building. A large box stove in the middle of the room, large enough to take in a cordwood stick, furnished the heating arrangement. The girls occupied the seats on the east side and the boys those on the west, while a desk along the north end accommodated the larger boys, with their backs to the rest of the school. The building was taken down some years ago, and a brick building now occupies its place, which is used as a carriage and blacksmith shop.

Mr. Gowinlock, an aged gentleman, was our teacher—the first in the village of Galt. He lived about two miles west of the village on the Blair road, and carried his dinner, the distance being too great for him to go home at noon, as was also the case with the scholars from the country. John Gowinlock was born in Greenhill, Scotland, in the year 1788. Before coming to Canada he and his brother, George Gowinlock, conducted a private academy, which was one of the leading institutions of that time in Edinburgh, being attended by the families of many of the nobility. After a time the strain of teaching told on his health and his physician advised him to come to Canada. It is believed they arrived in this country and settled on Blair road about 1834. They came here

direct from the Old Country and bought that farm with a log cabin on it from a German. His brother and he were amongst the foremost educators of their day. In this country they published a whole set of school books, some of them, especially the arithmetic, were used in the schools for some length of time. He died Sept. 13th, 1868, aged 80 years. Hannah, his wife, died Sept. 30th, 1858, aged 72 years. George, their son, died June 10th, 1835, aged 13 years.

There were but four branches taught in the school—reading, writing, arithmetic and spelling. That was long before there was a railway to Galt, and when we look back to those early days we are reminded that "time flies." And in its flight, one by one of our former school companions pass to the Great Beyond from whence no traveller returns. As far as we know there are but seven of us now left that attended Gowinlock's school in the year 1844, namely, Mrs. Walter Scott, daughter of the late William Ferguson, an old and respected resident of the village, who had a blacksmith shop on the corner of West Main and St. Andrew's streets; she is in her 92nd year, bright and still active;



The Late John Gowinlock,  
The first teacher of Galt's first school.