

Ups and Downs

PUBLISHED ON THE FIRST OF EVERY MONTH, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES.

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We shall be obliged if subscribers will notify us at once in the event of delay or irregularity in the delivery of their papers.

TORONTO, MARCH 1ST, 1897.

IN A NEW ROLE.

"It will be well for you to take a trip yourself and visit a number of the older boys in the country around Peterborough."

A principle laid down in the early days of UPS AND DOWNS' existence was that the latter must be first and last a "Home paper"; a journal devoted exclusively to the interests of Dr. Barnardo's young people on this side of the Atlantic and to Dr. Barnardo's work generally. Many of the fields ordinarily open to editorial effort are proscribed to us, and our friends have little conception of the amount of cogitation and mental perturbation occasioned every month in striving to adhere strictly to the foregoing principle, and, at the same time, to keep our pages free from the charge of lacking variety—not that there is at any time a scarcity of material out of which to make what is known in newspaperdom as "copy"; but the difficulty which must necessarily present itself to those engaged in the management of a journal filling such a unique position as ours, is to deal with that material, from month to month, in a manner that shall not savour of sameness.

This problem was the chief topic of conversation in an interview about two weeks since between Mr. Owen and the writer, and out of its consideration came the suggestion of Mr. Owen with which this article opens, and which was, in fact, a commission to the Editor of UPS AND DOWNS to go forth into the "highways and byways" of Peterborough and adjoining counties, and obtain a supply of freshly gathered material for presentation to the readers of the March number of UPS AND DOWNS.

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Having thus received my commission, the first step towards executing it was to equip myself with a fund of information in relation to the past records of those to be seen, and to the various routes by which the ground could be covered without needless loss of time. Three days were occupied in acquiring this, not only useful, but very necessary, information; and one fact which became very manifest during that period of preparation, was that the regular official "visitors" must be veritable geographical and biographical encyclopædias; the work of "visiting," as understood in Dr. Barnardo's Homes, requiring an accuracy of knowledge in regard to places and individuals that to the uninitiated is, to say the least of it, somewhat appalling.

In spite of three days' close application to "note making" and the study of "The Township Atlas," it was not without a certain amount of doubt as to my ability to locate in a limitless field of snow and in a country where sign posts are, unfortunately, *not* the fashion, the different concessions so easily found on the conveniently numbered map, that I arrived in

the town of Peterborough on the morning of Tuesday, February 16th.

My first visit was certainly not in an official capacity or with a view to procuring copy, but the kindly welcome and hospitality extended by Mrs. Metcalfe, and the kindness of other friends at Hazel Brae, Dr. Barnardo's charmingly situated Home for girls, formed too pleasant a prelude to be now allowed to pass unrecorded. I was extremely fortunate also in securing very valuable assistance for my initial trip on the following day, Miss Gibbs, whose five years' visiting among Dr. Barnardo's girls has given her an intimate acquaintance with the country districts, kindly promising to accompany me. Under such able guidance little fear of "doubling in our tracks."

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There are two things very essential to successful visiting—a good horse and fine day. Mr. Fitzgerald, of Peterborough, provided the one; and the clerk of the weather left little to be desired in regard to the other.

The district around the post-office towns of Lang and Keene, in the township of Otonabee, was selected for the scene of the day's effort. The first place of call is about ten miles from Peterborough in a south easterly direction. The roads at the time are not in the best of condition; while there is snow, deep and untrodden, as far as the eye can reach, on field and lane, and on the sides of the roads; the tracks are becoming very bare: the brown earth shows itself in places, reducing the pleasure of sleighing both for man and horse. There is little of scenic beauty along the route once the suburbs of Peterborough and the pretty Little Lake Cemetery are left behind. It is not our intention to plead guilty to such a materialistic spirit, that of us it shall be said:

"A primrose on some river's brink,

A primrose was to him

And nothing more."

or that snow scenes are without an appealing kind of beauty as a rule; but I am fain to admit that it will require one far more responsively sympathetic than myself to discern cause for rapture in a landscape composed of endless acres of snow plains and miles of hideous snake fences. Turn where it will it is rarely that the eye can find relief; occasionally an isolated elm or maple rears its gaunt length between white ground and grey sky, only intensifying, however, the bleakness of its surroundings; at greater intervals, in the distance, may be seen a handful of cedars or poplars, huddled together, as if fearful that the time would not be long before they were doomed to the destruction which has been meted out by man to most of Nature's gifts in this part of the country; for it is not owing to lack of generosity on the part of Nature that the gaze lights on nothing but snow and snake fence. There are not wanting signs that at one time there was an abundance of bush here, and the unevenness of many of the whitened fields tells an eloquent tale of their subjection to the use of man for agricultural purposes. We realize more forcibly than ever the hardships and endurance of those sturdy pioneers, of one, two and three generations ago, who bravely hewed themselves a home and a living out of the primeval forest. The contrast between the lot of the farmer of to-day and of his predecessor of fifty years ago is also intensified, as we at times came across a primitive little shanty made of roughly hewn timber, or, at best, covered with warped and decaying planks, and lighted by one or two small windows; and turn from this, the farm home of early days, to the comfortable-looking red brick mansion on the adjoining concession, where the farmer and his family have all the comforts and many of the conveniences of a town house. There is often abundant opportunity for reflection as we traverse the unpicturesque country towards Keene.

Our first place of call is at Mr. Anthony Taylor's, where one of Miss Gibbs' charges finds a home. Here we make a few enquiries and learn that the adjoining farm is the scene of Edward Beckett's labours. As Edward has only very recently come here, and we were going to visit him later at a spot some miles distant, the information is very acceptable. We are unable to see Edward, however; he and his employer, Mr. Drummond, are away in the bush. We learn a good deal of our friend from Mrs. Drummond, who it is very evident takes a kindly interest in Edward. We learn that he is a steady worker and anxious to make his way, but does not like farming, and thinks he would do better at a trade. He has made a year's engagement, however, with Mr. Drummond at a fair rate of wage, and we feel sure that Edward, who is now 19, is too wise a lad to give up his present comfortable home on the mere chance of finding a "job" in some other sphere of labour.

Mrs. Drummond has knowledge of a number of our boys, and for all of whom she has a kind word. We find that we shall not have the pleasure of meeting Aubrey Benham (March, '93), who has yielded to the earnest solicitation of his mother and returned to England, a step which we sincerely hope he will not have reason to regret.

William Paviour (July, '85) is also an occasional member of Mrs. Drummond's household. William worked in a cheese factory during the season, and later formed one of a threshing gang. We find him not far away, at Mr. Robert Jackson's, and as he is the first of our friends with whom we come in personal contact we endeavour to "weigh him up" very closely. We had heard of William's popularity in the district, and in the very evident geniality of his disposition and his manliness of bearing we saw much to account therefor. We wish we could report William as being permanently settled, but he prefers to enlarge his experience of places and faces; and about the first week in March he will start with a carload of cattle for the North-West, where he purposes to remain until after harvest. We are inclined to the opinion that the advantages offered by the great North-West to an energetic young man of 25 will be so apparent to William that he will decide to make his home in that country.

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Having wished William every success and secured a promise that he will have his portrait taken before he commences his westward journey, we proceed, according to instructions, "one mile south and one mile east," to see how it fares with George Wright (June, '93) who, for two months, has been working for Mr. Andrew Kent, Keene P.O. The period of probation has resulted in mutual satisfaction, and it is not improbable that an arrangement will be made whereby George will continue a member of Mr. Kent's household for three or four years. Mr. Kent was away at the time of our visit, but Mrs. Kent supplied us with a very encouraging account of George, who, on his part, said he could not have a better place; he was happy and comfortable. He certainly looks it. He is fifteen and a-half, a sturdy, well-made lad, with a good, honest face. I had an excellent opportunity of forming an estimate of George's character, as we remained at Mr. Kent's for dinner, and during the hour and a-half I spent in George's company I watched him closely. I feel sure that his future will prove that I am right in asserting him to be a lad possessed of a sense of duty and a measure of perseverance unusual in one so young. This might appear irreconcilable with the fact that George has changed his situation twice in the three years he has been in Canada, but that he did this in mere wantonness we do not for one moment believe. George has recently entered