

TWENTY YEARS AGO.

In lovely June when flowers in bloom  
With fragrance filled the air,  
And humming-birds in gorgeous plumage,  
So pleasing, bright and fair,  
Sought fairy groves and scented bowers,  
Where sweetest roses blow,  
My thoughts returned to groves and bowers  
Of twenty years ago.

They brought me back to boyhood's day  
And manhood's early prime,  
When through green fields we'd hie away,  
Mount Royal's heights to climb;  
For pure delight with footsteps light,  
Out o'er its crest we'd go,  
To where the tiny streamlet bright  
Ran, twenty years ago.

In sylvan shade, through wood and glade  
O'erhead the birds did sing;  
Their tuneful notes in chorus made  
The grand old forest ring;  
Whilst our light bounding hearts set free,  
With joy did overflow  
In merry glee, beneath the tree,  
Just twenty years ago.

Blithe hour so gay in life's short day,  
How soon thy sands were run,  
How short thy stay—like hoar frost gray,  
Beneath the ardent sun,  
Or, like the strain we loved to hear,  
Whose echoes faint and low,  
In measures clear fell on the ear,  
Just twenty years ago.

Since then, alas! what friends most dear  
And comrades kind and true,  
Have crossed the "bourne" so many fear,  
And laid this world adieu,  
To calmly sleep beside the stream,  
Whose waters as they flow,  
Reflect in ceaseless willows green,  
Since twenty years ago.

Yet many an old familiar face  
We meet upon our way,  
Of those who held a foremost place  
For worth without display;  
And like the some who now, as then,  
On all occasions show,  
They're still the narrow-minded men  
Of twenty years ago.

There's old Per Cent. with back now bent,  
And rigid mien most cold,  
Whose scolded mien is still intent  
On raking in the gold,  
Who ne'er withheld a helping hand  
To one in grief and woe,  
His notions grand are stocks and land,  
Like twenty years ago.

See yonder smirking dandy pass,  
His little face awry,  
With affection's rounded glass,  
Stuck in his languid eye,  
His coat and vest in fashion's best  
And outward form do show,  
That taller still can stand the test  
Of twenty years ago.

Through maudlin fell we still can tell  
You wreck with studied pose,  
Whose cheeks so pale contrast too well  
The brilliant pinched nose,  
Whose tip so grand shows by its brand,  
And bright vermilion glow,  
The thousand treats it's had to stand,  
Since twenty years ago.

Bland eyeopiants with empty plate  
Their "little games" still play,  
To flatter and cajole the great,  
Or hero of the day,  
But should misfortune's sudden blight  
One's schemes and hopes overthrow,  
With bow polite they're out of sight!  
Like twenty years ago.

But, with a few exceptions rare,  
Our men are good and true,  
The young are brave, our maidens fair,  
With eyes both dark and blue;  
Their merry faces bright and clear,  
Unused to care or woe,  
Remind one of their mothers dear,  
Just twenty years ago.

J. HENDERSON.

St. Hypolite Street, Montreal.

SIR ROWLAND HILL, K.C.B.

On Friday, the sixth of June of the present year, a deputation of the Court of Common Council waited upon Sir Rowland Hill, K.C.B., at his private residence, to present him with the copy of a resolution accompanied with a gold casket, conferring upon him the honorary freedom of the City of London. It is a matter of regret that a reward so richly merited should have moved so slowly towards its object, and only have reached Sir Rowland when, by reason of his great age, and of consequent infirmities, he was not able to visit the City, much less to be the distinguished guest at a Guildhall banquet, which is the usual as well as the graceful accompaniment of such honours. The ceremony was consequently of the simplest kind. A deputation consisting of the mover and seconder of the resolution, attended by some of the officers of the Corporation, waited on Sir Rowland at his place at Hampstead where the following resolution and the casket above referred to were presented to him:

"Resolved unanimously that the freedom of this City in a suitable gold box be presented to Sir Rowland Hill, K.C.B., in acknowledgment of the great social and commercial benefits this country has derived from the adoption, in the year 1840, of his system of uniform penny postage in the United Kingdom."

Fully to appreciate the social and commercial revolution which the change brought about, it may be of advantage to see what the postage rates were in the United Kingdom before the introduction of the penny postage system. It may be remarked that the rates levied in Ireland were rather in excess of those imposed in England and Scotland, but the difference was so trifling as to make unnecessary for our present purpose the insertion of a separate table for that island. The following therefore gives the

rates of the postages for single letters charged in England and Scotland:

Table with 3 columns: Distance, £, s, d. Rows include distances from 8 miles to 230 miles.

and for every hundred miles, or for any fractional part thereof over 300 miles, one penny additional. Letters to North America were £0.1.3. The above rates were exacted for what were called single letters, irrespective of the question of weight. Any enclosure, no matter how trifling, doubled the rate of postage. The postage to foreign countries was very exorbitant, as each country charged its own full postage rates. The rate, for example, between Paris and the English frontier was one franc; and between London and the French frontier ten pence, representing together a postage rate of £0.1.8 on a letter from London to Paris.

At the same time the United States' rates were as follow:

Table with 2 columns: Distance, Cents. Rows include distances up to 400 miles.

The Canada rates we may be sure were not less than those of the United States, and as until a comparatively recent period, each country exacted its own rates, it will not be difficult to assume that the amount of postage on a letter from Montreal to New York would have been about fifty cents.

The number of letters arriving in London daily in the year 1838 was from 39,000 to 49,000, representing an average of 35,000. The number of letters and newspapers posted in all offices of the United Kingdom, in the week beginning on the 15th January, 1835, was:

Table with 2 columns: Country, Number. Rows for England, Scotland, Ireland, and a total.

Assuming that the week above mentioned represented a fair average of the mailable matter sent through the post offices during the other weeks of the year, it would have followed that in 1838 nearly sixty three millions of letters and newspapers should have passed through the post offices of the United Kingdom. But the week we have cited could not fairly have represented the post office service during the other weeks of the year, as we learn that the number of chargeable letters delivered in the United Kingdom in 1838 was 76,000,000.

The act establishing a uniform system of penny postage was passed in 1839 and went into operation in 1840. In connection with the presentation of the gold box and the freedom of the City of London to Sir Rowland Hill, it will be instructive to refer to the latest report of the Postmaster General. The letters, newspapers and other mailable matter had increased in number from what they were in 1838 to 1,475,000,000. From 1840 to 1878, that is in thirty-eight years, the post offices and receptacles for the deposit of correspondence had increased from 4,500 to over 25,000. Post office orders for money remitted had risen from 188,000 in 1839 to 18,500,000 in 1878. Moreover, notwithstanding the lowered rates of postage and the increased cost of the service, the net revenue had advanced nearly half a million of pounds and was still advancing.

High rates of postage naturally suggested modes of evasion and encouraged various forms of fraud. It was not lawful, for example, for individuals to be the bearers of letters from one place to another, and yet it was notorious that travellers did carry about them a good deal of correspondence that ought to have gone through the Post Office. This, however, was not the only way in which the authorities were balked and the revenue siphoned. It is within the memory of people still living that on one of the occasions when the poet Coleridge was making a solitary tour among the lakes of Cumberland and while staying at old wayside inn, a postman arrived with a letter for the waiting maid. The charge for postage was one shilling. The girl looked silently and earnestly at the letter and returned it to the postman saying he could not afford to pay for it. Coleridge considerably gave her the shilling which the girl accepted with some reluctance. After the postman had gone she explained to her benefactor that he had spent his money in vain, as the letter was only a blank sheet of paper. The direction on the outside, however, included some apparently careless and insignificant marks of which she had taken careful note before returning the letter to the postman. The direction was in the handwriting of her brother and those marks had told her all she desired to know. "We are so poor," she said, "that my brother and I have invented this manner of corresponding and of franking our letters." How far this system was carried on elsewhere than by the clever maid of the roadside inn and her brother, we have no means of knowing. Letters, not prepaid, were necessarily sent, but as people were not bound to take them they were frequently refused. Now, however, such ingenuity as we have described would not avail, as all letters mailed in the United King-

dom, and in many other countries, must be prepaid.

One looks back with sheer amazement at the difficulties that Sir Rowland Hill had to encounter, and the opposition he had to overcome before he could get Parliament and the country generally to accept his projects of postal reform. Like all benefactors, his plans of amelioration included shocks to some nerves, violent assaults on chronic abuses, and what was regarded as a ruthless interference with vested rights. Members of Parliament and official personages enjoyed the privilege of franking letters, their signatures thus becoming the equivalents of an indefinite number of shillings. Moreover, there was a detestable traffic in such franking, for they were regarded by servants and dependents as perquisites that might be openly sold; hence resistance to a postal reform, that included the abolition of franking, issued at once from high and low quarters—from nobles in the drawing-room, and from their servants in the hall, and from cooks in the kitchen. Then the system itself was regarded as a marvel of organization and completeness, and consequently a source of national pride. Moreover, the profits of the department represented a large annual contribution to the Exchequer. Sir Rowland Hill did not venture to impugn the organization of the service, as we know by subsequent experience he might easily have done; neither did he deny their objections who urged that the revenue would, in the first instance, suffer shrinkage. He wished to substitute a simple for a complicated system of rates, and he calculated on the increase in the correspondence of the people and to the stoppage of illicit modes of conveyance eventually to recoup the revenue for the loss to which it would immediately be exposed. As Sir Rowland Hill, in answer to the speech of the City Chamberlain, touchingly observed: "Like every one else who endeavoured to effect improvements in existing institutions, it had been his lot to encounter misrepresentation, injustice, and strenuous, though doubtless often honest, opposition; but, on the other hand, there were probably few innovators who had had the good fortune which had been granted to him—to live to see his plans crowned with a success far exceeding his most sanguine expectations; to find former opponents converted into zealous friends; and, above all to know, as he did by that day's ceremony, and by other tokens which from time to time had reached his hands, that though nearly forty years had passed since his plans had come into operation, the public still retained a kindly remembrance of his services to their common country, and, as had been kindly said, to the world at large."

It should not be forgotten that Sir Rowland Hill was a benefactor to the whole world, for every civilized country has followed the example of the United Kingdom by adopting the postal system which Sir Rowland Hill so successfully established in the British Islands—a system whose advantages he was able to illustrate with singular felicity when answering the address of the City Chamberlain: "Of those then present," Sir Rowland said, "probably few were aware that a lower rate of postage now carried a letter from Egypt or the farthest parts of Europe to San Francisco, than was charged in 1839 on a letter coming from Guildhall (which they had left scarcely an hour ago) to that house, though the latter distance, as the crow flies, was scarcely four miles."

The great work that Sir Rowland Hill achieved was accomplished with much difficulty, and only by indomitable exertion; for, even after all the evidence had been submitted to the Parliamentary Committee in 1835, that Committee, when the principle of uniformity of postage was put to the vote, was equally divided, and this question of uniformity—the very essence of the scheme—was only carried by the casting vote of the chairman, whose name, though he has passed away, deserves to be recorded, viz., Mr. Robert Wallace, at that time member for Greenock. It is, however, worthy of note that, on the question being put whether a uniform rate of one penny should be imposed, an amendment was carried raising the rate to twopence. This unforeseen difficulty was eventually, and in a somewhat curious way overcome, so that Sir Rowland succeeded in winning his hard fight, and in giving to his country and to the world a lap full of inestimable advantages.

Sir Rowland Hill had previously received acknowledgments from the State and honours from his Sovereign. He has now accepted the right hand of fellowship with the freedom of the city of London, and no doubt his name is held in high honour in many other lands besides his own. All will unite with the City Chamberlain in the wish that the sunset of Sir Rowland Hill's life "may be brightened by the reflection that he has been permitted to become one of the greatest benefactors of mankind."

When signing the roll of citizenship the Chamberlain observed that the archives of the City Library showed that Sir Rowland Hill was the third of that name and family who had become connected with the city of London. The first was a direct ancestor, and bore the same arms, viz., Sir Rowland Hill, citizen and mercer, who was Lord Mayor in 1519, a benefactor of Christ's Hospital and founder of the Grammar School at Drayton. The second was General Sir Rowland Hill, who in 1814 received the honorary freedom of the city for his services at the battle of Vittoria, and the third is Sir Rowland Hill, the author of the system of penny postage prepaid by stamps.

Ottawa.

F. T.

MUSICAL.

Last Thursday the first of a series of grand promenade concerts came off at the Victoria Skating Rink, under the leadership of Dr. MacLagan, with Miss Gertrude Franklin as prima donna. The Overture of William Tell, by Rossini, was the first piece on the programme, the rendition of which was highly creditable to the whole orchestra, and duly appreciated by a fashionable audience. The solos particularly were played as true as we have heard them in large cities on the other side of the Atlantic. Miss Gertrude Franklin sang an air with variations by Rade, which brought out her voice most brilliantly, and by which she fully sustained all that our American critics said of her cultivated voice. The higher keys, especially in "It was a dream," impressed everyone with the fact that Miss Franklin has a bright future before her. Of affection, which often is found among professional singers, she is free, and cannot but gain many admirers among the music-loving public. After every song Miss Franklin was *encored*, and gave "Robin Adair" and "The Last Rose of Summer." Mr. Boucher, in a "Polonaise" violin solo, by De Beriot, showed a remarkable talent, and was well supported by the orchestra, except on two occasions when the accompaniment was a little behind time. It would, however, add greatly to the effect of Mr. Boucher's playing if he could show more repose in his attitudes. Mr. Jas. Shea's singing is well known to our public, and on this occasion has added to the reputation which he has made for himself heretofore. On the whole, we are pleased to chronicle that the first grand promenade concert this season was a success, perhaps not financially, but we hope that the management will be rewarded in future in this direction also, as the music which has been and will be performed consists of masterpieces.

HUMOROUS.

"A saw for the times: 'No man should live beyond the means of his creditors.'"

NORTHMAN will make a bald-headed man so mad as a fly that doesn't know when it has had enough.

In the midst of life we may be called upon by a female task-agent.

AN old joke: Ask a friend to dine with you at a restaurant, and then leave him to pay for his own dinner.

THERE'S many a man whose highest ambition is to successfully contest a seat on a nail keg in a corner grocery.

WHEN an honest hen is laying the foundation for a family and doing all the hard work, some absurd rooster is ready to do the crowing.

THE house-fly held their regular annual convention all over the country the first of this month, and unanimously resolved to adopt last year's platform without any changes.

SCIENTISTS say that the house-fly has 1,000 eyes. With so much eyesight to take care of and none of it poor, it is no wonder that he occasionally leaves his eyes around.

THE coloured brother in a Virginia church hit the nail on the head when he prayed at the close of the white brother's sermon: "Lord, bless de boulder to whom we has listened so patiently."

THE following excellent suggestion is made by the New Orleans *Platypus*: "Loafers should not be allowed to stand on the corners of streets, except for the purpose of being unstruck."

PROBABLY no man so fully realizes the hollow-ness of life and human ambition as the man who laddies a teaspoonful of new milk horse radish into his mouth, under the impression that it will cure him.

A PARISHIONER of a Berkshire pastor was asked what the colour of the parson's eyes was. He didn't really know, "for," he said, "when he prays his eyes are shut, and when he preaches I generally shut mine."

HE was brought before the judge charged with a number of unpleasant crimes. The judge was very severe, and addressed him in most reproachful tones. The fellow was very much annoyed, and at last remarked: "Condemn me, sir, if you will, but don't dishonour me."

WHEN the thermometer marks 20 degrees in the shade in Greenland, the Greenlanders get around mopping the perspiration off their brows and asking one another, "I it hot enough for you?" And they wish a thunder storm would come up and cool off the atmosphere.

ABOUT this time of year city people are getting really anxious about the welfare of the country. This anxiety and solicitude will grow as the season advances, and when they can bear it no longer, they will pack up four children and two trunks and go and see about it.

"I SAY, you fellows have got a queer notion of punctuation," shouted an up-town man to an ice-cream driver. "What makes you put a period after every word on the side of your cart?" "Oh, that's 'cause we have to stop so often." "There was a degree of coolness in the reply that was unexpectedly refreshing to the inquirer."

A BOY stole seventeen bottles of homeopathic medicine from Curtis' drug store yesterday and carried them to the High Street school, where the contents of thirteen of the number were divided up among the children and eaten. The other four bottles were rescued alive. We have not heard that any had results followed this impromptu and ill-advised attempt to practice without a diploma.

IT doesn't do any good to veto a butcher's bill. Boggaby tried it, and the butcher, in defiance of all law and constitutional precedent, absolutely refused to vote any more supplies until the bill passed. Boggaby says the country is on the verge of a new revolution, and in fact the new revolution has come, for he now walks clear around the block to avoid that butcher's shop.

An agricultural journal tells how to make a very pretty window ornament. Taken good sized sponge, it says, saw it full of rice, oats or grass seed and place it in a dish of water. The sponge will absorb the water, and when the seeds begin to sprout, attach a cord to the sponge and suspend it in a window. We should like to serve some of the good-sized "sponges" in this neighborhood in the manner described, but the difficulty is they are already very costly, and will not absorb water worth a cent.