

wards the close of his book on the recent conflagration in St. John.\* There is in these words something of that "modesty of genius" of which we sometimes hear, and which is not altogether a figment of the imagination. Every page of the book gives evidence of great carefulness of research and of the author's capability to deal with the minutæ of his subject. But it is not wanting in literary finish. Far from it. Mr. Stewart could not write on the driest of topics without imparting to it a literary flavour. On no single page of this work do you find the least attempt to excite the imagination by a straining after literary effect; but at the same time you cannot read half-a-dozen pages without being impressed with the fact that it is written by a scholarly man. To the readers of *Belford's Magazine* Mr. Stewart needs no introduction. He is well known to them through his clever essays on the American literary men of the day—Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, Emerson, &c., which have appeared in its pages. It was fortunate for those who must obtain something more than a general knowledge of the Great Fire that the writing of its Story fell to the lot of one not only so competent to perform the task, but who was also an eye-witness of the terrible scenes enacted, and a resident of St. John.

Mr. Stewart takes us from street to street, and from block to block, as the flames spread out their angry claws and took in two-thirds of the whole city in its desperate and destroying gripe. But he does not content himself with being the mere historian of the fire; he is also the historian of the city. He gives us the history of all the public buildings. He tells us when each church was built, and who were its pastors and officers from its erection down to the time of its destruction. With the pen of a clever satirist he gives us a sketch of the inner life, so to speak, of "Chubb's Corner," where the brokers most did congregate and "took it out of" their victims. Over the ruins of the old Lyceum he fondly lingers, telling us something of the men and women who in his time have delighted the people of St. John with their histrionic efforts. He gossips like a very Pepys of the Old Curiosity Shop on Germain St., and gives us all sorts of incidents in the raciest of styles, making us laugh and cry in turns. There are pages descriptive of the way in which some of the citizens met their death on the streets which are written with great power. We must resist the temptation to give excerpts. His talk about the books lost, and the pictures gone for ever, in the last chapter, is a charming bit of reading.

We do things on a big scale on this continent. Chicago a few years ago could furnish one of the greatest fires of modern times. In the destruction of the City of St. John—or at least of two-thirds of it—Canada follows hard on the heels of the United States. Mr. Stewart, from careful surveys and measurements had by himself, says that 200 acres of territory were burned over; the mileage of streets destroyed was nine and six-tenths; the total loss he puts down at \$27,000,000, and he assures us that this is not a high estimate. The City Corporation was a heavy loser. The Dominion Government, which lost half a million of dollars, had no insurance. These are tremendous figures.

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\* *The Story of the Great Fire in St. John, N. B., June 20, 1877.* By George Stewart, Junr., of St. John, N.B. Toronto: Belford Bros.