

# THE SACKVILLE POST.

WILLIAM C. MILNER,  
Proprietor.

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Reserve Success and you shall Command it.

SACKVILLE, N. B., THURSDAY, AUGUST 16, 1877.

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WHOLE NO. 369.

## LITERATURE.

### Story of the Fairbairns.

(FROM CHAMBERS' JOURNAL.)

Towards the end of last century, the family of Andrew Fairbairn resided at the farm of Woodlands, Kelso. Andrew was a man in humble circumstances, but was intelligent and industrious, and fond of reading. He had spent his early life as a ploughboy, and afterwards as a gardener; by which means, along with the perusal of books, he gained a very good knowledge of agriculture. Having in the course of pushing his fortunes gone to reside near a seaport in England, he was, during the exigencies of the American war, pressed on board a frigate, from which he was draughted into a ship of the line, and served under Lord Howe at the destruction of the Spanish fleet at Gibraltar. At the close of the war, he happened to be present at Spithead, when the Royal George sank, August 29, 1782, and assisted in saving the survivors. Receiving his discharge, he returned to Scotland, and settling in Kelso, married Miss Henderson, daughter of a trader in Jedburgh, and in due time had a family of sons and daughters. That may be called the beginnings of the Fairbairns.

Andrew did not return to sea life. He had had enough of naval adventure. Kelso, where he pitched his camp, is a pretty inland town on the north bank of the Tweed, once celebrated for an abbey, of which the ruins still exist, and having in its immediate neighbourhood a palatial mansion of the name of the Duke of Roxburgh. All around is a fertile country, where there is abundant scope for agricultural pursuits. To these he addicted himself, though taking him six days a week from home, and obliging him to devote the upbringing of his children to a great measure to his wife, who was eminently suited for this important duty. She was far from robust, and her poor state of health would have offered a good excuse for idleness; but possessing a spirit of indefatigable industry, she toiled in a way that reminds us of the singularly meritorious wife mentioned in scripture:—"She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." She looked well to the ways of her household, and eats not the bread of idleness. Her children were brought up and she was accurate in every detail. According to the economy of the period, when as yet the domestic spinning-wheel was in operation, Mrs. Fairbairn spun wool and flax, which she spun into yarn, and then she gave out to a weaver to be manufactured. From the varied materials so produced, she provided shirting, sheets, and blankets for the family. And not only so, but for years she made all the coats, trousers and other garments for her husband and sons, besides all the dresses required for her young daughters.

William Fairbairn, the eldest and most notable of her sons, was born at Kelso, February 19, 1789. Educated at the parochial school, he followed like other boys in the Tweed, and acquired a proficiency in climbing the tall, picturesque ruins of the abbey. In 1799, the family were induced to remove to Moy, a farm five miles from Dingwall in Ross-shire. Here commenced a desperate struggle to bring a subsistence out of a piece of land plentifully dotted over with whins, stones, rocks, and other obstructions. Andrew, the father, had an opportunity of exercising all the agricultural knowledge he possessed. Like many Scotsmen in similar circumstances, he did not despair. To remove the various impediments to the plough, he adopted an ingenious method. Having managed to draw the large stones and rock into heaps, he laid over them quantities of dried whins which he set on fire. The stones and rocks soon became red-hot, and by the power of the heat of the whins, they were fractured and blown to shivers, the whirling neighbors, this cheap and ready method of ridding the land of whins and rocks at the same time was considered an extraordinary performance. Next was instituted a system of draining; and in two or three years, splendid crops of turnips and barley were growing on land which had hitherto been little better than a wilderness.

While the family were at Moy, William received no addition to his education, and had to occupy much of his time as a nurse to his youngest brother, Peter, then a child of fifteen months old. To relieve himself of the trouble of carrying the child on his back, he fell on the device of making little wagons with four wheels. It was a somewhat difficult undertaking, for his only tools were a knife, a gimlet, and an old saw. With these and a red-hot poker to burn holes in the wheels for axles, he was able to knock up a little wagon, which proved quite successful. He dragged Peter about the farm, to the delight of the infant and the satisfaction of the mother. Encouraged by the success of the construction, he began to make small boats and mills with a knife, but were the admiration of neighboring boys; such performances giving, as it is believed, a bent to his mind as regards mechanical construction. Some untoward circumstances led Andrew Fairbairn to quit Moy and to become steward to a Highland laird at Milnathory, in this situation he remained only two

years; and now, disgusted with the Highlands, he removed with his family in 1803 back to Kelso. There he left them while he occupied the position of farm-manager in Yorkshire. This was a dark period in the history of the Fairbairns. The father did his best to supply means by transmitting part of his wages, but the wages were irregularly paid, and sometimes the family were on the brink of want. Being now a tall lad of fourteen, William made an effort to get an employment which would bring in a few shillings a week. He considered himself fortunate in getting work as a mason's laborer at the building of the new bridge across the Tweed at Kelso—one of Ronnie's handsome structures. When only a few days at this toilsome employment William suffered a dire misfortune. By the clumsy management of a companion in carrying a hand-barrow, a heavy stone fell on his leg, inflicting a deep wound, and throwing him off work for nearly three months. When the family were in the depths of penury, the father succeeded in getting an appointment at Percy Main Colliery, near South Shields, as steward of a farm belonging to the coal-owners. There was still the disadvantage of being absent from the family, but the pay regularly administered put him in comfort, and he had an opportunity of getting some employment for his eldest son.

The employment so secured was not much to speak of; it was only that of driving a coal cart, but nothing better cast up, and was dutifully endured amidst a dissolute and dissipated population, until, at the instance of the owner of the Colliery, William, in 1801, was bound apprentice for seven years to Mr. John Robinson, the engine-wright of the establishment. Such was the start in life of William Fairbairn as an engineer. As first his wages were low, afterwards rising to twelve shillings a week; but there was extra work paid for separately, by which his small wages was sometimes doubled, and he was able to help his parents, who were struggling with a very limited income.

As we all know, there are two ways of pursuing an industrial occupation in youth. One is to do no more than what is immediately required, caring little for the future; the other is to endeavor, by every available means, to strike out a course of self-improvement, not only for the pleasure of learning, but in the hopes of reaping some future advantage. William Fairbairn adopted the latter method of getting through his apprenticeship. He laid down for himself a programme of self-instruction, whilst the other lads about him spent all their leisure time in coarse and profane amusements. His weekly programme is worthy the attention of young men placed in similar circumstances. Every day had its assigned work—Monday evenings, the study of arithmetic and mensuration. Tuesday, reading, history and poetry. Wednesday, recreation, reading novels and romances, Thursday, mathematics. Friday, Euclid, trigonometry. Saturday, recreation and sundries. Sunday, church, reading Milton, etc. These several exercises were greatly aided by the books procured from the North-Shields subscription library, for which his father bought him a ticket. Besides going through a course of reading the best historical and other works, which widened his knowledge and cultivated his feelings, he in a period of three years went through a complete system of mensuration, and as much algebra as enabled him to solve an equation; also a course of trigonometry, navigation, and some other branches of science. At times he devised pieces of machinery, which taught him the necessity of arranging and concentrating his ideas in matters of mechanical ingenuity. Having a taste for music he made a violin, on which he taught himself to play familiar Scotch airs, though never with any degree of brilliance. His mind leaned towards more solid acquisitions. A kind of proposition, he was removed from the workshop to take charge of the steam engine and pumps. Now, he was more his own master, and had intervals of time at his disposal. No amount of leisure, however, diverted him from his course of self-culture. His companions spent not a idle time and money in beer-drinking, which kept them in poverty, and effectually stood in the way of their advancement. One of his early contemporaries was happily superior to these debasing pursuits. This was George Stephenson with whom he became acquainted. George had the charge of an engine at Willington Ballast Hill, only a mile or two off, and being recently married, was somewhat pinched in the means of livelihood. To enable him to earn a few shillings, Fairbairn frequently took a turn at leaving ballast out of the colliery vessels. It is interesting to hear of facts like this of two men who rose to eminence through self-culture and unremitting perseverance.

At the close of his apprenticeship, and now twenty-two years of age, William Fairbairn went to London in search of employment as a millwright or working engineer. At this time Rennie was engaged in building Waterloo bridge, and offered work to William Fairbairn. But—wrote a sad "but" it was the Millwrights' Society, which assumed the duty of determining who should be employed, would not allow work to be given to him; and, for a time, along with a companion similarly

situated, he underwent serious privations. Unless for succour from some hospitable relatives who gave him a dinner on Sunday, he would have been well-nigh starved. A brighter day at length dawned. A number of workmen had the fortune to resist the monopoly of the Millwrights' Society, and banding together, set up a Society of free and independent laborers, under whose auspices Fairbairn got employment at a patent Ropery at Sladwell. Here and elsewhere he wrought as a journeyman two years in the metropolis, all the time realizing good wages of from two to three pounds a week, and on all occasions using his leisure hours mostly in reading. As he lived very moderately, he saved some money with which he hoped to push his way forward. Unluckily, he fell in with a crazy projector, who had devised a plan of delving land by machinery. The thing was ingenious but not practicable. Induced to make a machine for the inventor, Fairbairn's small savings were swept away. He was more fortunate in his next order. It was to make a machine for chopping meat for sausages, for which he was promised thirty-three pounds by a pork-butcher. The machine, constructed with a fly-wheel and a double crank, with a dozen knives crossing each other, did its work admirably. The pork-butcher was delighted, and paid handsomely for the machine.

Put in pocket by this piece of business, Fairbairn proceeded to Dublin in quest of work, and got employment in constructing nail-making machinery. This lasted during a summer, and back he came to England, the voyage by packet to Liverpool occupying two days. A lucky thought directed him to try Manchester as a field of operations. Here he received employment from Mr. Adam Parkinson, for whom he worked two years, and from his earnings was able to save twenty pounds, a sum which he destined to set him up in married life. For several years he had corresponded with Dorothy Mar, daughter of a farmer at Morpeth, and for whom he entertained an ardent affection. Fortune, as he imagined, being now propitious, marriage with Miss Mar could be directly contemplated, and the marriage took place June 16, 1816. The young pair commenced housekeeping in a very small and modest domicile at Manchester. William, who had had little to make his way in the world, and blessed with this good wife, set about doing it vigorously. For certain spheres of usefulness, Manchester offers better scope than even London. In partnership with first Mr. Adam Parkinson, and then independent career as a millwright, he became a contractor for any large undertaking from a bridge to a spinning factory. The two in setting up in business had hardly any money, but they had brains, which had been pretty well exercised, and people were disposed to try the younger man's way of doing things. A large job executed for Mr. Murray, a cotton spinner, put them on their feet. Well-doing needs only a beginning. Almost immediately followed the works on a new cotton mill for Mr. John Kennedy, a partner in the firm of Messrs. McConnel and Kennedy, then the largest spinner in the kingdom. The skillful manner in which improvements were introduced into the new mill brought a press of orders. The business prospered so greatly, that at the end of five years the young man found himself with a stock and tools worth five thousand pounds. Large and commodious premises were erected, and contracts for gigantic works were undertaken in England, Scotland and Switzerland.

Fairbairn lived at a time when the world was started with the mania of steam-traction on railways, and he fancied that a similar taste for propulsion could be adopted on canals. In this, after several costly experiments, he found himself mistaken, and the drainage of money was so great as to lead to a dissolution of his partnership with Mr. Lillie. Now (1823), he rested entirely on his own energies and resources; but, strong in self-reliance, he had no fears of the result. He turned his attention to a new branch of engineering manufacture, that of iron ship-building. For a time he had two establishments, one in London, the other in Manchester, and collectively employed two thousand hands. In 1835 began his famous investigations into the strength of iron, as regards girders, beams, pillars, etc.; his experiments being of such scientific and mechanical importance. This, indeed, might be described as the great work of Fairbairn's life; for from his discoveries has sprung that remarkable adaptation of cast-iron in various forms—to house-building, the construction of bridges, and other works. About this same time, owing to a strike of boiler-makers at Manchester, he invented a method of riveting the plates of boilers by machinery, which was at once superseded hand-labor. No longer were people assailed with the din of a hundred hammers riveting together iron plates. The machine of Fairbairn's invention substituted a rapid, noiseless, and comparatively cheap method of construction.

Until his fiftieth year, Mr. Fairbairn wrote an autobiographical account of his career, and the projects with which he was concerned, which has been incorporated in the recently issued work, *The Life of Sir William Fairbairn, Bart.*, by W. Pole (Longmans, 1877). Mr. Pole contains the narrative, but in so fragmentary

and meagre a form as to give us little insight into the private life of the person to whom he refers, or of the family to which he belonged. Happily we were honored with the friendship not only of Sir William, but of his brother, Sir Peter Fairbairn of Leeds—the brother whom when a child he drew about in a little wagon of his own making, long ago in the Highlands. Our last interview with Sir William was shortly before his decease, when on what we believe was his farrowest visit to Scotland. From both brothers we learn a variety of details relative to their respective professional pursuits, and on all occasions were struck with the strong practical common-sense and the high level of their attainments. From the humblest possible circumstances, each in his own way had attained distinction by the exercise of sound judgment and persevering industry connected with the manufacture of machinery. The reason which their attainments was that which he fastened on life less generally due to genius than to indomitable diligence along with integrity of character.

Sir William Fairbairn never, as we know, aimed at being a great man. He wanted only to be useful to his own day and generation. His habits of industry were extraordinary. Besides devoting himself specially to new mechanical contrivances and scientific researches, he spent much time in his later years in writing papers for the British Association and other public bodies, and in lecturing on his own inventions. This was the prevention of smoke from factory chimneys, which he showed could be effectually done by a more perfect combustion of fuel. The paper appeared in the Transactions of the British Association for 1841. It is doubtful if it made much impression. There seems to be a determination among manufacturers to disregard all advice or remonstrance on the subject. For more than thirty years we have used a plan for consuming smoke with perfect success and considerable economy of fuel, and our neighbors for the most part perseverely go on polluting the atmosphere as usual.

As is well known, Sir William Fairbairn distinguished himself by his invention of the tubular iron bridge, sustained without stays, and which he fastened to the ground by means of a screw. He was employed in the construction of the famous tubular iron bridge across the Menai Strait, which is entitled to be called the mechanical wonder of England. We have never been shot along in a railway train through that iron tube, but we have seen the square coils placed end to end without thinking of Fairbairn's bold ingenuity. The reputation he acquired by this and other inventions of a useful kind brought him honours from numerous quarters. He had declined to accept of a knighthood, but he was honored with the baronetcy by his son Thomas. Though the family wished the funeral to be private, it was, as a voluntary mark of respect, attended by upwards of fifty thousand persons. Such was the end of one of the great inventors of our age, and whose whole life radiated a valuable moral which it is unnecessary to repeat. His brother Sir Peter Fairbairn of Leeds, predeceased him, leaving likewise descendants to perpetuate the reputation of the Fairbairns.

Hope for the Best.—When the oxy-hydrogen microscopic was first exhibited in Edinburgh, a poor woman, whose riches would never hinder her ascent to the kingdom above, took her seat in the lecture room where the wonders of the instrument were shown, and which were for the first time to meet her sight. A piece of lace was magnified into a salmon net, a flea was metamorphosed into an elephant, and other like marvels were performed before the eyes of the venerable dame, who sat in silent astonishment, staring open-mouthed, at the display. But when at length a milliner's needle was transformed into a poplar tree, and confronted her with its huge eye, she could hold no longer. "My goodness," she exclaimed, "a camel could get through that! There's some hope for the rich folk yet!"

A LEFT-HANDED COMPLIMENT.—"Is he a good doctor?" asked one gentleman of another, speaking of an acquaintance. "Not a bad one," replied the other; "but as far as my experience goes; if I were a patriotic man, and there was going to be a long war I should like him to have charge of the enemy's wounded."

## The Haytian Revolution.

A BLOODY-MINDED ASPIRANT FOR THE PRESIDENCY.

KINGSTON, Jamaica, August 1.—A revolution has broken out again in Hayti. The insurgents are in force about ten miles from Port-au-Prince, in a schooner laden with arms and ammunition, and are known to be in the vicinity, and a Haytian steamer-of-war had been sent to look after her. The city of Port-au-Prince is declared in a state of siege. A large portion of the city was fired on for two days and continued for two days and had not been extinguished when the mail steamer left. President Canal was unpopular with the native element from his known feelings of cordiality with foreign merchants and foreign persons. He is suspected accordingly on that account. He is a good soldier, however, and however strong the foreign element may be it cannot protect him from the designs of those who seek to gain the object of their ambition by assassination. Formerly Minister to England under the imperial rule of Napoleon, he is the present aspirant to office, and he says when he gets into power the colored man and the white man may both look out, and the black republic will be the streets of Port-au-Prince will be the blood of both of them. The southern side of the island is equally disaffected, and at present the newspapers are openly at variance with the existing administration. Numerous arrests have been made by the Government, chiefly among persons suspected of being secret engaged in revolutionary plots. Along and important despatch from Mr. Bassett, the United States Minister, has been sent to the State Department on the subject of the American interests in the present crisis.

## A Self-reliant Dixon.

THREE CONFIDENCE MEN WHO LOST CONFIDENCE IN HIS GREENNESS.

A man about twenty-seven years of age, named Charles Dixon, whose home is in Hamilton, O., arrived in this city yesterday with \$300 in his pocket. He arrived here daily with more or less money in his pockets. He had arrived in good luck, and had enough to pay for a boiled egg but for his courage and the liberal use of a revolver. He was coming west the other day from Buffalo when he made the acquaintance of three travelling rascals. They first tried to get him to come on his back, but he won't do that. They then wanted to sell him a bogus \$1,000 bond for half the face value, but he wasn't in the bond-buying business. A little further on he was asked to give one of the men a ride in a greenback. He pulled out his "wad" of greenbacks, and pulled out one of them grabbed it and the three jumped the train. Mr. Dixon didn't wait long before deciding to follow. He was armed with a large-sized Smith & Wesson revolver, and still being in good luck, the train still being in good luck, the three rascals made across a field for the woods. Dixon followed at a sharp gait, opening fire as soon as within range. One of the fellows had a single-barrelled pistol, and with this he returned one shot. When they discovered that Dixon could not be disarmed, the man with the money threw it down and called out: "Here's your money! You've hit one of us, and that's enough." Money was what the Buckeye wanted, and halted when he had recovered his greenbacks. He is strong in the belief that one of his bullets did hit one of the rascals in the leg; for when he last saw the trio two of them were assisting the third along. Mr. Dixon is a quiet, pleasant looking man, but has the nerve of an old warrior.

## An Unlucky Man.

THE unlucky Kentuckian who met on every race during the week and lost every time illustrates the freaks of fortune in this respect. He had just \$50 left, and in sheer desperation cried out in the crowd that had assembled at the hotel after the race: "I'll bet \$50 I can name two men here with twenty-three fingers." When the bet was taken the child of Fate continued, "Anybody'll do. Here my friend, I'll take you. I have thirteen fingers, and you have ten; that makes twenty-three. If you were a one-brother you could not lose." The stranger gazed at him a moment with a pitying expression, and then said, compassionately, "Well, I'm sorry for you. You have struck a hard streak of luck. I had three of my fingers shot off at Chickamauga!"

NOTHING is made in vain—nothing by a complex process which can be made by a simple one; and it has often been remarked by the most diligent students of the living world, that the infinite wisdom of the Creator is more strikingly displayed in the economy than in the manifestation of power.

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(May 9)

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**Government House, Ottawa,**  
Thursday, 26th day of July, 1877.

**HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL IN COUNCIL.**

ON the recommendation of the Honorable the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, and under the provisions of the 19th section of the Act passed in the session of the Parliament of Canada, held in the 31st year of Her Majesty's reign, chapter 60, and known as "The Fisheries Act," His Excellency, by and with the advice of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, has been pleased to order, and it is hereby ordered, that the following Fishery Regulation be and the same is hereby made and adopted:

"In the Province of New Brunswick, 'Smelts shall not be fished for, caught or killed, by means of any kind of Bag-net having meshes of a less size than one inch and a quarter extension measure.'"

W. A. HIMS WORTHY,  
Clerk Privy Council.

**Government House, Ottawa,**  
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"The use of Seine's for the purpose of catching Smelts is prohibited in the Dominion of Canada."

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