

thought to be altogether in advance of the times, but most of which have since been engrafted upon the statute-book, and are now defended by Reformers and Conservatives alike.

The times were stirring. Europe was moved to its foundations with democratic excitement. Old institutions were falling with a crash in every direction, and it would have been indeed strange had the movement in favour of extended reforms not reached Canada. The young editor found the work upon a semi-weekly journal insufficient for his energies. Thoughts were breathing within him that must find a burning expression by means of some other channel. In 1850 he contributed, under the pseudonym of "Reformer," a series of letters to the *Toronto Mirror*, the organ of the Irish Roman Catholic party, then edited by Dr. Joseph Workman. These letters attracted considerable attention, as their radicalism was of the most pronounced character, and were generally attributed to the pen of Dr. John Rolph. They were widely copied, and freely commented upon by the Reform press. Mr. Clarke's connection with the *Hamilton Journal and Express* terminated in 1850, when he removed to Elora, and shortly afterwards engaged in mercantile pursuits. He still, however, continued to write for the press, and was requested by Mr.—now the Hon.—William McDougall, then editing the *North American*, to prepare a series of articles for that paper. He furnished these under the heading of "Planks of our Platform," each article dealing with one of the reforms then advocated by the editor. About this time also he contributed to the *Dundas Banner*, *Paris Star*, *Toronto Examiner* and other Reform journals.

In 1852, a weekly newspaper, the *Backwoodsman*, was commenced in Elora, by a joint-stock company. Mr. Clarke acted as its political editor for some time, persistently defending the interests of the settlers,

who were then filling up the country from the Grand River to Lake Huron. His pen was always employed in defence of Reform principles. The *Backwoodsman* obtained a fair circulation, and continued to exist for some years, doing a fair share of work in determining the political bias of the locality. In 1852, he married Emma, daughter of Mr. James Kent, of Selkirk, in the county of Haldimand. Until the time of her death in 1878, Mrs. Clarke was truly a helpmeet. She was possessed of remarkable activity of body, was a clear and incisive thinker, a pleasant but not profuse conversationalist, and a mother among ten thousand. Her broad common-sense views, and her cheerful application of them in the affairs of everyday life, were of service to her husband in facing many of the inevitable difficulties that arise during every long and busy public life. By this marriage Mr. Clarke had five children. His only son, Charles Kirk, is now a resident physician at the Hamilton Asylum for the Insane.

In 1857 Elora was incorporated, and Mr. Clarke was elected to the first Council. Next year he was appointed Reeve, and for many years thereafter he occupied a seat in the County Council of Wellington. He was nominated for Warden, but owing to sectional political differences he was defeated by one vote. He acted as a School Trustee for many years, and is now a member of the Elora High School Board, taking a warm interest in educational progress. While occupying a seat in the County Council he was a constant supporter of public improvements, and largely assisted in carrying out the system of gravel roads which did so much to develop the material interests of Wellington. He has taken a fair share, too, in the support of the various railway projects brought before the people of the county.

In August, 1861, he was appointed Lieutenant in a Volunteer Rifle Company formed