

1855

# SOUVENIR

1905



18<sup>th</sup> CENTURY CANAL — 1790  
FIRST CANAL LOCK ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE

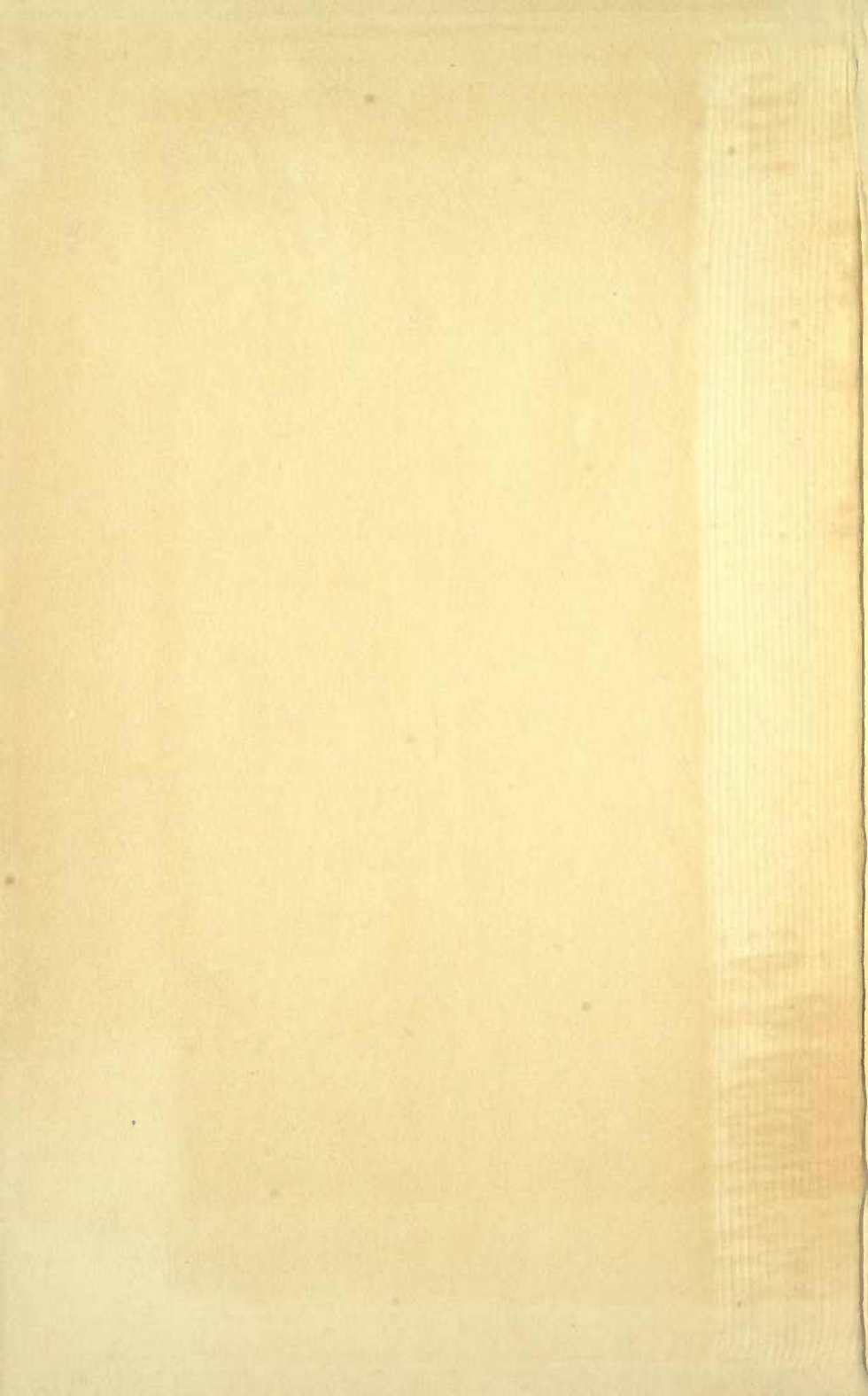
## SAULT CANAL [LAKE SUPERIOR] REMINISCENCES

1855

1888



19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY CANAL.

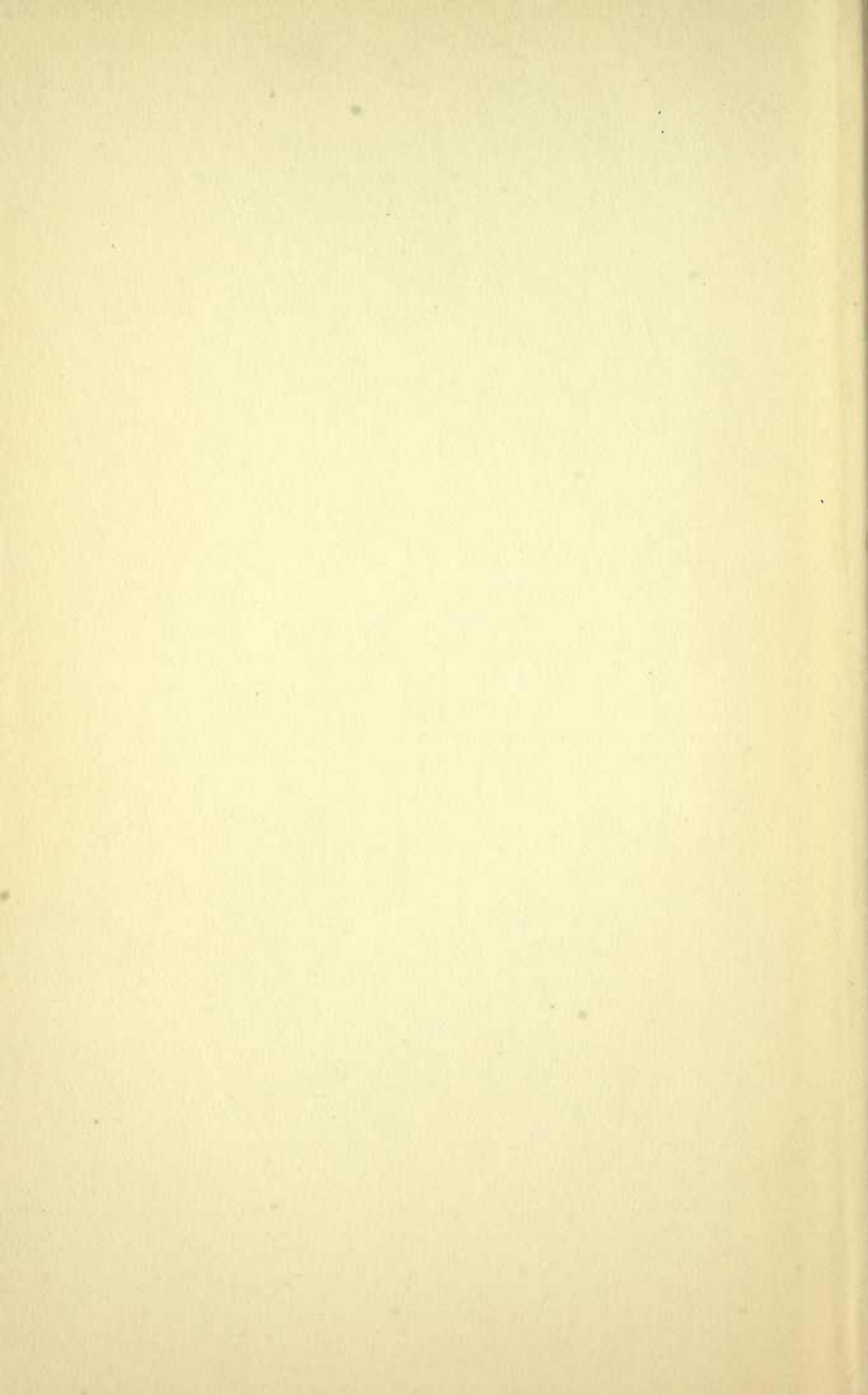




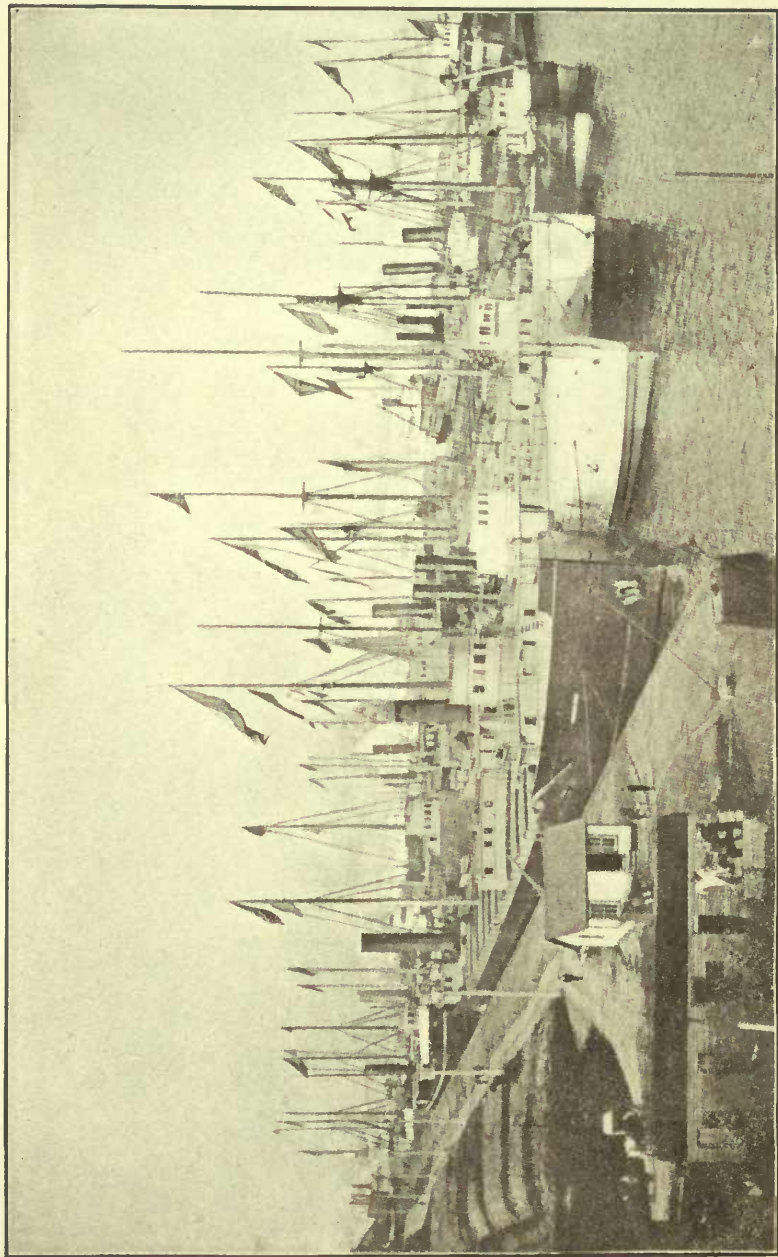












A MARINE CONGESTION.

Photo taken at Eastern end of Sault Canal showing a few hours of accumulation of vessels waiting removal of a temporary obstruction in St. Mary's River Channel, near Hay Lake, 1904.

SEMI-CENTENNIAL  
REMINISCENCES

OF THE  
SAULT CANAL

(LAKE SUPERIOR)

1852-5

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COMPILED BY  
S. V. E. HARVEY  
AND  
A. E. H. VOORHIS

PRESS OF J. B. SAVAGE  
CLEVELAND, OHIO  
1905





## INTRODUCTORY.

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The following sketches of "semi-centennial" incidents came under the personal observation of an active participant, who, at this late date, can certify as to their correctness, and which owe their preservation in the present form to the offer of the undersigned to edit the same, with the exception of the first (and also the third in the series, bearing the title "The Widow of Michael Phelan.") This was written at the urgent solicitation of the editor of the *Magazine of Western History*, in 1889, when the writer was spending his summer vacation in the Maritime Provinces of Canada. More contributions of the kind were wanted, but the author did not respond as desired. The editor of the *Marine Review* was in correspondence with Mr. Harvey for nearly two years before the first of this series was obtained. His friends have heard him narrate incidents of a trip made by him along the south coast of Lake Superior in a small boat in December, 1855, which he has been urged to have recorded in print but has never complied. In a recent published letter to the governor of Michigan, when presenting a unique historical document to the State, he refers to that journey as one when on three several occasions his life "was not worth a five minutes purchase." He has, however, promised that if this compilation reaches a second edition he will furnish for it a more full account than the one referred to. In some of the sketches he is styled the agent, for brevity's sake, instead of his official title of general agent, and also for a short time before his appointment to that office.

The recognition which the congress of the United States and the legislature of Michigan have accorded to the Sault canal in providing for a semi-centennial celebration of its inauguration has afforded an argument for the publication of local "reminiscences" which has proved potent to the extent covered by these pages, and which the compilers trust will add to the zest of that occasion, as well as form a valuable addition to the history of the locality for reference in after years.

It will be noticed that this volume is published in the city of Cleveland, Ohio, and in this connection it may interest readers to know that the author of these reminiscences was born next door to the colonial residence of General Henry Champion, prominent in Revolutionary days and reputed to be in his time the wealthiest citizen of the State of Connecticut. At his house the expedition of his brother-in-law, Moses Cleveland, was fitted out and expenses provided for to survey the mouth of the Cuyahoga river on Lake Erie, whose monument now stands in the central square of Cleveland and to whom it owes its name.

The author of these remembers the general as having taken him on a horseback ride when a boy about seven years old. These two lives cover a period of over 150 years and reach backward to days when no Anglo-Saxon was living within the present limits of the "Forest City" with its nearly half million of inhabitants!

Of similar interest is a quotation from the volume (University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1890) entitled "THE STORY OF A CLEVELAND SCHOOL, FROM 1848 TO 1881," by L. T. Guilford, the honored educator for whom "Guilford Hall," among the buildings of the Western Reserve University is named.

In it she includes an address read to her pupils, entitled "A TRIP TO THE UPPER LAKES IN 1852," in which the following sentences occur:

"It was a sunset of a summer evening twilight, little clouds were just vanishing and tiny stars were peeping out to see

where they had gone, when a steamer glided out of Cleveland harbor. On its deck were gathered little groups watching mostly in silence the receding shores. \* \* \* \* \*

A third morning found us at the entrance of the St. Mary's river, its surface as smooth as polished silver, only wrinkled by the steamer waves sweeping away in graceful curves to the shore. \* \* \* \* \* But now the boat is near the shore (at Garden river, Indian "reserve") and on the banks are a number of birch-bark wigwams, looking like so many big bowls turned bottom upwards.

Each has a canoe in front fastened to a couple of forked sticks. A woman and three children, their heads thatched with tangled black hair, are sitting side by side on a log.

'That,' said a voice, must be the 'family seat.' The speaker is a large framed blond haired Vermonter of twenty-three, full of quips and cranks and boyish Yankee cuteness (within a year he was superintending the construction of the first canal around the rapids). On and on, hour after hour, till in the distance is seen the foam of the Falls: we have reached Sault Ste. Marie.

Then there was a wandering about the old white-washed fort and a trip on the horse railroad built to carry freight around the tumbling slide of water, and at the end of it our only sight of Lake Superior. How we longed to sail over its mighty expanse! But the boat could go no farther.

It was most exciting to watch the little canoes with their dusky guides down that tossing dangerous declivity of the Sault and curious to study the crowd of stolid aborigines lounging about."

Thus the veil is lifted from receding years and scenes of a half century ago are presented by a facile hand. But what a contrast to the present in scenery and personalities. The main current of the former foaming rapids is now turned aside into canals for marine and manufacturing purposes. The aborigines have as a distinctive feature disappeared forever. The blond haired Vermonter, "full of quips and cranks and boyish Yankee cuteness," is now the white haired engineer appointed by the State to be the marshal of the Semi-Centennial Celebration of the Canal Completion and its unrivaled utilities.

S. V. E. HARVEY.

A. E. H. VOORHIS.



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CHARLES THOMPSON HARVEY.

1854.

## CHAPTER I.

### PIONEER SAULT CANAL.\*

By CHARLES T. HARVEY, C. E.

The semi-centennial anniversary to occur next year of the opening of the first canal transit to and from Lake Superior, and the proposal of the *Marine Review* to make its history a special topic adds peculiar force to the request that the writer contribute such facts as came under his personal observation at the time of its inception and construction.

The record of the past half century places it not only far in the lead as to its commercial utilization, but also as without a rival in the economy and rapidity of its introduction into the world's economies, and is without a parallel instance of public spirit and honorable intent on the part of its original constructors who built it under contract with the State of Michigan. It seems well to review its history from three standpoints and concentrate attention upon the main features of its original promoting, providing, and engineering departments.

The earliest promoting measure dates back to 1837, and the progress of the same for the next fifteen years are briefly stated in a folder recently published by the Citizens' Association of Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., from which the following extracts were made:

"The first official action on record with regard to the canal on the American side of the outlet of Lake Superior was that of the Governor of Michigan in his message to the first legislature convened in 1837 (the State having

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\*Reprint by permission from *Marine Review*, August 4, 1904.

been admitted into the union the previous year), wherein he advocated the building of the canal by the State, with the result that a law was passed at that session providing for a survey of the same.

"The engineer in charge reported to the governor recommending dimensions for the canal to be 75 feet wide and 10 feet deep, and for two locks of same depth, each with 9-feet lift, 32 feet wide and 100 feet long, and estimating the total cost at \$112,544. In 1839 a law was passed authorizing certain State commissioners to contract for the canal of the size mentioned, and work was commenced during the spring of that year. But as the canal traversed a United States military reservation, and the federal authorities had not approved of the undertaking, the officer in command, acting under orders from Washington, marched a detachment of soldiers on to the ground, ejected the contractors and caused all further canal work to cease.

"The legislature of Michigan at its next session passed a resolution protesting against the ejection, and demanding reparation from congress, but without result. In 1840 a bill was introduced into congress in accordance with a memorial from the Michigan legislature asking for an appropriation of 100,000 acres of land, but Henry Clay, the famous orator and leading statesman, made a speech against it as, to quote his words, '*a work beyond the remotest settlement in the United States, if not in the moon,*' and the measure was defeated.

"In 1843 the Michigan legislature by resolution invoked the aid of the legislatures of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and Wisconsin in jointly promoting favorable action by congress for the canal, but without avail. Similar proceedings followed in 1844-8-9, but proved futile. Finally as the result of the strenuous efforts by prominent citizens in the Great Lakes region, stimulated by the profitable development of mining enterprises on the south shore of Lake Superior, congress

passed an act on August 21, 1852, granting 750,000 acres of land to the State of Michigan to aid in building the canal."

At the last date mentioned the writer was at the American Sault as an invalid seeking restoration to health. At the age of twenty-one, in 1850, he entered the service of Messrs. E. & T. Fairbanks & Co., the scale manufacturers of St. Johnsbury, Vt., and in 1851-2 was made their general western agent in charge of establishing agencies for the sale of their weighing machines in the large western cities.

In the winter of 1851-2 he was the victim of a most severe attack of typhoid fever but was fortunately able to reach his parental home in Connecticut in its earlier stages. When able to leave his room after months of confinement his principals most considerately proposed to him to try the recuperative powers of the Lake Superior climate and incidentally examine and report upon the mining resources of that region in which they had some financial interests.

Gladly accepting the plan, he was convalescing as a boarder at the Baptist mission at the Sault, when word reached there of the passage of the canal grant by congress. This led him to examine the locality where it must be built with special attention. As soon as his health permitted he proceeded to the iron and copper districts and spent a couple of months in leisurely examining their development, and meanwhile regaining health and strength most satisfactorily.

He saw the first, and then only opening of a Lake Superior iron mine on the Jackson Co.'s location, in Marquette county; also saw the process of cutting up the 250-ton mass of native copper at the Minnesota mine in Ontonagon county, the largest yet found in the world.

Returning to the Sault in October he wrote to the Messrs. Fairbanks of his observations in the mining district of the upper peninsula, and his views of the effect



of the building of the canal as bound to render available the immense latent wealth in minerals there and of the probability that lands of great value could be selected as a part of the national subsidy with remarks upon the probable cost of building that waterway—the lack of public knowledge of and interest in the undertaking, and concluded by asking their permission to devote himself to promoting the enterprise at least so far as to obtain suitable action by the Michigan legislature, which would meet the following January and on whom congress had conferred full control in the premises. The reply came in due course that the firm approved his ideas, and with the proviso that he should first establish an agency for them in Cincinnati, they granted a furlough from further attention to their business the coming winter and authorized him to draw on them for the expenses of the new venture.

In pursuance of this arrangement he immediately proceeded to Ohio and completed matters as his principals desired, then went to Central New York and secured the services of one of the most experienced engineers on the Erie canal, L. L. Nichols of Utica—returned with him to the Sault on the steamer *Northerner*, Capt. B. G. Sweet, late in November, and organized a surveying party. While Nichols made a survey of the canal site he made a trip down the St. Marys river to explore for a suitable quarry to furnish stone for the locks. From information thus in part obtained the limestone quarry was located on Drummond's island from which a large portion of the masonry materials was subsequently procured. With the survey data obtained, passage was taken on the last steamer from the Sault that season.

When the legislature convened at Lansing the first week in January, 1853, its duration was limited by the State constitution then in force, to forty sessional days, which did not leave much time for lengthy deliberations. It soon became apparent that the writer was the only person in attendance who was fully posted as to the survey



data and had personal knowledge of the general features of the case. The latest survey made by State engineers in 1839 for a canal 75 feet wide and 10 feet deep with locks 100 feet long and 32 feet wide had become obsolete. The United States had made no survey, and hence the private one made within the preceding sixty days was the only reliable information available. When the committee appointed to take charge of the subject, composed mostly of farmers, were ready to proceed with the initiatory "bill" and the writer had been invited to explain the situation to them, an executive session was held, at the conclusion of which the chairman informed the writer that as he seemed to be the only person who fully understood the subject the committee requested him to draft a suitable bill for their adoption. He had already established confidential relations with the late James F. Joy, then the legal counsel of the Michigan Central Railway, and with the late John W. Brooks, then its managing director, and after consultations with them drafted a bill which the committee reported and the legislature passed precisely as thus originated.

The size of the locks was generally expected to be 250 feet long by 50 feet wide, and a law specifying those dimensions would have been readily adopted, but the writer's conviction was that the commerce of Lake Superior was destined to require as large steamers as were used on the lower lakes, and accordingly specified in the bill the minimum lockage area to be 350 by 70 feet. When the bill was reported Capt. Eben B. Ward of Detroit, then the largest individual steamer owner on the lakes, caused the following letter to be sent to the members of the legislature and published in the newspapers:

Detroit, Jan. 29, 1853.

"Hon. Wm. A. Burt, member H. of R., Lansing, Mich.:

"Dear Sir:—The deep anxiety I feel in common with the rest of the community for the early completion of the Sault Ste. Marie canal induces me to write to you on the subject. I fear the defeat of our long cherished hopes.

The legislature, in their anxiety to prevent undue speculation by those who would be disposed to contract to do the work are in great danger of going to the opposite extreme, and make such requirements as will deter competent men from taking the contract for the land. The size proposed by the senate bill, 350 by 70 feet locks, is entirely too large for the locks. The crooked, narrow, shallow and rocky channels in the St. Mary's river will forever deter the largest class of steamers from navigating these waters. Aside from the impediments in the two Lake Georges\* there are several places where the channel is very narrow, with but 11 feet of water clear of rocks, and the channels too crooked for the large class of steamers to pass in safety. This I regard as a conclusive argument against making the locks so large as is contemplated.

"I do not believe there is the least necessity for making the locks over 260 feet in the clear and 60 feet wide, as no vessel of larger dimensions that could pass such locks can be used there with safety without an expenditure of a very large sum of money in excavating rock at various points along the river, a work that is not likely to be undertaken during the present century. The value of wild lands may be estimated by ascertaining the amount actually realized by the State for the large grants that have heretofore been made for purposes of improvement when no taxes were collected until the lands were sold to settlers, I think it will be difficult to find a value of 25 cents per acre for all such grants made to this State. A well organized company might make the lands worth 75 cents per acre, provided they were not taxed while held by the company. I have no doubt that the small sized canal required by the act making the grant of land would cost \$525,000, or 70 cents per acre. Add 8 cents per acre for interest during the construction of the work and 15 cents per acre for selection and location brings it to 93 cents per acre, a price at which any quantity can now be located without any risk of loss and with much greater chances of making desirable selections. If the legislature will appoint a committee who shall act with the governor to make the best contract for the State they can, holding them responsible for a faithful discharge of their duties, I feel confident we shall succeed in securing

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\*These names refer to expansions of the St. Mary's river, shown on diagrams page 62.

the great object of our wishes. But if the bill should materially restrict the governor in his powers I think we have good reason to fear that the most vital interests of the State will be delayed for years to come.

"Hoping for a favorable issue to this absorbing question, I remain,

Truly yours,

"E. B. WARD."

A joint meeting of the special committees of both houses was hastily called and the writer interrogated. He gave his reasons for proposing the larger dimensions, and assured the committee that his principals and their associates would make a bid based on the same. This saved a reduction being made and the original bill was passed, but the incident and the letter should certainly be preserved in the canal records as a way mark or milestone from which to estimate the development of after years, in that connection.

One provision in the bill required the State to award the contract for the full amount of the lands donated by congress, but to the bidder presenting the best financial ability, and as the State constitution forbade any special charters to corporations, bids might be received from or assigned to companies chartered by other States.

When advised of the passage of the law, the Messrs. Fairbanks invited well-known capitalists in New York and New England to join with them in making the necessary bid, which was formally tendered and accepted by the State commissioners. The first name in the list of bidders was that of Joseph P. Fairbanks, one of the firm first mentioned, his associates being J. W. Brooks, Erastus Corning, August Belmont, H. Dwight, Jr., and Thomas Dwyer.

Immediately upon this being done the writer, who will now designate himself as the promoter, secured from the governor an appointment as special agent for the State to select the lands to be donated within its border by congress in aid of the canal, engaged a steamer to take him to the St. Mary's river, then closed by ice, and dispatched

a special messenger on snow-shoes to the United States land office for the Upper Peninsula at the Sault and authorized a deputy there to withdraw lands from sale in certain localities which he designated; returning he went to Washington and secured from the United States land commissioner confirmation of his power so to do, which was afterward litigated but sustained by the courts.

The knowledge upon which he had acted he had gained during his touring among the mines during the previous summer, and the 140,000 acres more or less which he thus secured for his principals realized millions upon millions of dollars to them in later years. It will be enough to state that among them was the location afterwards developed into the Calumet and Hecla copper mine. All this was done of his own motion and individual judgment, as not one of his principals had any knowledge of the lands or their value, but his prompt action forestalled the selection of many of the lands by speculators who were waiting for navigation to open to apply for them at the land office later in the season.

The promoter's next move was to proceed to Albany, N. Y., and secure a charter for the St. Mary's Falls Ship Canal Co. from the legislature of the state of New York, to which the individual bidders could assign their contracts. This accomplished in an unusually short time, his principals came together in the building at the corner of William and Wall street, then as now occupied by the Bank of the State of New York, and organized under the charter. At the meeting the promoter was appointed the general agent of the company, with unlimited executive powers, and a substantial stock interest assigned to him for his promoting achievements up to that time.

Thus far as to promoting features; now as to the general business management. The St. Mary's Falls Ship Canal Co. was organized as before mentioned by the election of directors and officers as follows:

President, Erastus Corning, Albany, N. Y.; vice presi-



dent, John W. Brooks, Detroit, Mich.; Erastus Fairbanks, St. Johnsbury, Vt.; John M. Forbes, Boston, Mass.; John F. Seymour, Utica, N. Y.; Benjamin Tibbitts, Albany, N. Y., board of directors; Charles T. Harvey, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., general agent.

The sum of \$50,000 was ordered placed forthwith to the credit of the general agent in bank at Detroit. He was authorized to draw on the treasurer for further funds as needed and requested to commence and take the oversight of the construction work until an engineer and a superintendent of construction were appointed, as was then expected would shortly be done. The general agent then addressed the board and stated that in that remote locality a commissary department was a prime necessity to secure and retain reliable labor, was of double importance as a preventive or regulator of strikes, which were specially to be guarded against under such isolated conditions as would exist at the work, and he proposed to proceed on those lines from the start. To this policy the directors' assent was given and the general agent proceeded to make Detroit his temporary headquarters.

There he engaged C. W. Chapel as foreman of excavation work, purchased horses, tools and supplies, and securing from the United States Indian agent the rental of the "Agency" premises for his own residence at the Sault. Loading the steamer Illinois with the supplies and about 400 men, he arrived at the Falls on June 1 and on the 4th had the men housed and ready for work. He formally broke ground on that day by wheeling out the first barrow of earth from the "cut" and then regular operations commenced. A commissary department in charge of Norman Day as steward was organized. Shanties were built near the work to house fifty men in each, with a man and wife as caretaker and cook. The number of shanties gradually increased to about fifty, and at one time some 500 employes of higher grade found board and lodgings about the town. A hospital was placed on one of the islands

near the rapids, a salaried doctor for the force was appointed, and the expenses provided for by a charge of 25 cents per month per capita.

The practical working of this system was illustrated in the case of a carpenter from Illinois who was a victim of malaria. He worked for a few days, paid his 25 cents, soon after collapsed and was sent to the hospital. He developed a slow fever, was invalided for the winter season of six months, had the attention of trained nurses night and day, the best of food, and when sufficiently recovered to travel received \$25.00 to pay his fare to his home.

"Who would believe it?" he exclaimed on leaving, "that there was a corporation on earth which would provide for a sick man like this."

All cases of injury by broken bones, etc., were also thus provided for, but the crucial test came when the cholera became epidemic there in 1854. But three cases ended fatally of those sent to the hospital, while over 100 died among those living about the town. Every public work of like magnitude in the country was obliged to suspend building operations because of the cholera scourge that season, except the Sault canal, which was not interrupted materially.

The savings effected by the commissary system largely contributed to the ultimate result of the work being the most economically prosecuted of any of like importance on record. The carefully registered returns in the steward's office proved that the average cost of boarding and lodging the men was 19 cents per diem.

Strikes were prevalent and laborers scarce throughout the country. Emissaries from railway contractors swarmed about the village seeking to entice the workmen to engage elsewhere. It was found necessary to send foremen to New York to hire men aboard emigrant ships and bring them in gangs, also paying their fare. Wealthy citizens and some farmers in the upper peninsula now liv-



ing can be named who thus found their way to that district.

But one serious strike occurred and that was concluded within twenty-four hours. While the strikers were marching about town, a long procession of a thousand or more in line, the provisions were removed from the shanties, and when dinner time came and the men returned with good appetites, they were informed by the caretakers that orders had come from the office that no regular meals were to be served on "general training days." Fasting was the only alternative, and before bedtime a committee of the strikers called on the agent to say for the men that if he would provide rations for the next day the men would unconditionally return to work the next morning. The proposition was duly accepted and the work promptly resumed.

To mention one interesting item out of many illustrating the practical working of the commissary system, it can be stated that when the list of supplies to be provided for the winter season, where for six months none could be imported, it was decided to order several thousand bushels of white beans as a reserve for emergencies. The price was then unusually low and the order was filled. When the work was completed a thousand or more bushels of the beans remained left as a surplus—they had not deteriorated in quality but the market price had more than doubled and they were re-shipped to the port from which they came at about \$1 per bushel profit.

#### ENGINEERING—FEATURES OF THE CANAL.

When the canal work was undertaken it was stipulated in the contract that the State should appoint a corps of engineers to inspect and approve of the work as it progressed, and the chief of the corps appointed in due course was Col. Augustus Canfield of the United States corps of topographical engineers, a son-in-law of ex-Governor Cass, afterward Secretary of State. He was a martinet in military etiquette, did not possess an originating mind, but

relied on precedents. He had charge of preparing the plans, and as all small lock gates were then worked by men pushing with their backs against long projecting gate arms, his plans were upon that system. The prism of the canal in rock sections was to be of stipulated width, but if beyond that, the banks were left untrimmed, with jagged edges, with liability of injury to vessels sliding against them, that was deemed the vessel captain's risk, and the contractors were not required in the written agreement to trim up the sides. The colonel came early to the location, and assuming to direct as well as inspect the work on the arrival of the working force in charge of the company's general agent, he treated the latter as though he was of inferior rank and subject to his command. When the assumption was personally applied the result was the agent's demand for an apology on the spot or an undignified alternative. The apology was forthcoming on time and the affront never repeated, but the relations between the two officials were not of the most cordial character ever afterwards.

The colonel had designed pumping machinery and a system of excavation by means of swinging derricks which were introduced at the outset. The agent watched their operation for a time and concluded that the system was not sufficiently labor saving. He made a trial of another method coincidentally, keeping accurate tab on the two. He then sent a report to the head office at Albany proving that every cubic yard of excavation cost nearly double by the colonel's operation and asked for instructions. The reply came back advising him to adopt the cheaper method. He then took full control and the workmen, knowing where their pay came from, changed to the agent's plan. The colonel was furious and announced that he had demanded of the directors that their young, inexperienced superintendent should not interfere in engineering affairs in which he was a novice, but must devote himself solely to the outside business affairs.

The communication went forward, but the facts were known in advance at headquarters, and the directors were too shrewd business men to choose paying double cost for actual work in order to humor notions of precedence and etiquette. The reply came back that the vice president, who was an engineer of national reputation, would visit the work with authority to decide on plans of procedure, but until he made report their agent must direct all the operations for which they were financially responsible.

When the vice president paid the visit and endorsed the agent's methods the colonel took a long vacation, but by consent retained exclusive charge of preparing the lock chamber floors. The fastenings for these proved a dismal failure and a plan of the agent's for the same purpose was substituted with entire success.

The colonel had planned to make his mark in building the coffer dam at the west end of the canal to restrain Lake Superior while full depth in the prism was being excavated. Its site was prepared early in the year with the understanding that he was to have sole charge of its installation, and his corps of assistants were detailed to assist in its progress. Before it was completed the colonel died in Detroit, but his assistants continued the work. Special material was hauled from a long distance to render it waterproof and no expense spared to perfect the plan. Work on the canal progressed until its use became necessary. Then it was tested, but failed to stand the ultimate pressure and collapsed. It was repaired under direction of Major Glenn, the colonel's first assistant, but again on trial it was wrecked. For the third time the same result occurred and a fearful disaster in having Lake Superior pour through the unfinished canal and locks was barely averted. The situation was becoming critical by delay of the work late in the season. The directors became alarmed and the president called on them to meet him at the Sault. A conference with the government engineers was held when the latter said that in pursuance

of previous agreement they had been in exclusive charge of the dam, but were ready to confess that it was beyond their ability to make it equal to the trial tests, the difficulty being that the water under pressure forced channels under the uneven base and lifted the frame.

They had heard that the agent had remarked that he could solve the problem, but declined to act while it was in their control; they therefore requested the board to induce him to assume charge of it, and they would hope for his success. The board immediately acted on the suggestion and in a private session found him quite willing to undertake the case when duly assigned to him. An official order to that effect was passed and he was then asked how long it would require to make it ready. He replied about one week, and at an expense of but a few hundred dollars. As the government engineers had been engaged upon it for many months, involving an expense estimated at about \$50,000, these predictions seemed quite incredible, but the intensely interested directors decided to remain for that time and watch the new methods. The agent immediately caused the frame of the dam to be repaired and refilled as before—then having bought the spare mainsails of several large vessels then unloading stone for the locks he had the same nailed on the top of the dam and their breadth carried up stream and weighted down in place by a few scow loads of gravel. Within three days full pressure was applied, but the dam remained firm and tight as a bottle. Work was then resumed with the agent in sole charge as chief engineer, with the government engineer corps most cordial approval. The directors departed, feeling well repaid for their time and attention at the scene of operations. The colonel's official surveys were found to contain two serious errors: one was that he had established the depth of the canal to be 12 feet, as the law required, when the water of Lake Superior was a foot higher than usual, and subsequent observations proved that it would when opened



only afford 11 feet of vessel clearance. This discovery was made during the season of 1854 and, although the contractors might legally claim that the official data must be their acquittance, the directors decided to have the intended depth actually realized, and accordingly the bottom from the locks to the lake was lowered 12 inches at great extra cost, as two-thirds of the distance was rock and the use of hand instead of power drills was required in the tedious scraping off of the 12 inches in depth over about 25,000 square yards of surface. At the same time the rough rock sides of the canal were faced with smooth walls, not called for by contract, on the slope required by the specifications, but which experience proved should have been made perpendicular, which has since been done. The permission to use cheaply built lock gates was waived and a much more expensive plan voluntarily adopted with a hand windlass power which remained in successful use for a third of a century, whereas the cheaper official plans were vastly inferior, if not impracticable.

But the most serious error was not ascertained until navigation in 1854-5 had closed; then it was discovered that a reef beyond the coffer dam at the pier entrance to Lake Superior above the falls was solid rock in place, instead of sand as indicated on the government chart. A dredge had been provided to remove the supposed sand but as to the rock it was utterly powerless. The ledge tapered from 1 inch to 3 feet in thickness and covered an area of 100 feet wide by 300 feet long, or over 30,000 square yards. Unless this was removed the State authorities could not accept the work, and if the canal was not finished by May 19, the next spring, the time specified in the contract, the latter could be attacked as invalidated and the selection of lands then made, including over 600,000 acres of selected pine lands in the lower peninsula, in addition to those reserved for mineral values in the Lake Superior district, might be adjudged illegal and thrown open to public entry. When, therefore, the agent-

engineer reported the discovery of the rock ledge to the president and directors at Albany by the slow overland mails, which required several weeks in transit, a meeting of the board was called, and the agent's letter asking for instructions was anxiously discussed. The Michigan legislature was about to convene and it was decided to apply to it for an extension of time, but the situation had become widely known, the disappointed land speculators saw a chance to recover lost ground, political influences were brought to bear, until it became evident that such extension could not be obtained. Then the president called the most eminent engineers of the country to meet the directors in consultation at Albany, including the Hon. W. J. McAlpine and Hon. John T. Clark, both having been the State Engineers of New York and the former having had the honor of selection by the Australian government to advise as to the improving of the great River Danube sea entrance.

The conclusion of the engineers was that a new coffer dam would be necessary, requiring the next season for construction operations and a heavy outlay of capital. Later letters came from the agent asking what the directors had decided upon and closing with the remark that in the absence of specific instructions he might proceed to experiment as to ways and means for removing the ledge. To this the vice president as one of the consulting engineers replied, stating the gist of the professional discussions and referring to the agent's suggestion of experimenting himself, informed him that the board urged his doing so and had appropriated \$30,000 to cover his expenses if required, and if he failed no censure would result. At this juncture all overland mail communications were suspended by the spring thaws and freshets. The directors heard nothing more from the Sault and decided to go there by the first steamer. The season being a late one that steamer did not pass through the St. Mary's river until May 10. Besides the president and

directors the two engineers first named were retained to accompany them to advise as to the coffer dam, it was expected must needs be built. A desperate legal contest relating to the land entries was anticipated and the market value of the Construction Co.'s stock had fallen to 50 per cent. below par.

Leaving the directors and engineers on board the steamer nearing the Sault a narrative of the agent-engineer's proceedings for the previous few months will be first presented. After weeks of study on the problem he decided in January to build what he styled a "steam punch." No machine shop existed within 400 miles and only snow shoe trail led away from the location. The machine must be made there in an ordinary blacksmith's and carpenter's shop. To make the desired forging a bar of 4 inch square steel was tapered to a tempered point 1 inch square; then rings were made of increasing sizes and welded around the bar and fused together until a solid mass was shaped 2 feet or more long, swelling from the inch square point to 16 inches in diameter at the upper end. A large freight steamer happened to be at the river dock for winter quarters which had wrought iron blades to its propeller wheel. The stern of the steamer was raised out of water and two of those blades removed. One was welded to the butt end of the 16-inch diameter punch, forming a "thimble" flange to it. The other blade was used to make a "thimble" which fitted inside of the other and into this the end of a stick of white oak timber about 30 feet long and 14 inches square was fitted. Then key holes were cut and a heavy wedge key inserted which passed through both thimbles and held the massive metal punch firmly attached to the timber shaft. To give more gravity to the same, tram car axles were bolted in grooves cut on its four sides until the aggregate weight of the punch equalled some three tons.

The shaft was then fitted with guides into the frame of a tall spile driver on a scow and connected by rope and



pulley with the drum of a portable steam engine suitably placed on the scow, the "drop" was about 15 feet, including the required water channel depth of 12 feet. A gauge was marked on the timber shaft and to sink the same to the water level the "punch" must go a foot below the required bottom level.

Reels were placed in the scow working ropes whose ends were attached to the opposite piers—a turn on the reels moved the scow 18 inches side ways so that in the space the solid punch must sink to nearly its own diameter in the rock to bring the mark on the shaft to the water level.

But the time of trial of the machine did not arrive without serious mishaps. The first was peculiar; the agent was a strict sabbatarian and no unnecessary Sunday work was allowed, or pay authorized therefor. When the agent's plans for the punch were made manifest the skilled workmen employed, knowing its importance, took great interest in its being perfected and expedited. They decided that its great prospective utility warranted Sunday labor upon it, and they concluded to club together and work upon the punch forging the next Sunday without pay and surprise the agent by completing it earlier than he expected. After working all day and late into the night they adjourned to the regular morning hour, but by some unknown means the shop caught fire in the night and little more than the unfinished punch remained. A more penitent set of men were seldom seen. The most serious loss was that all forge bellows on the works were there destroyed. To get a suitable fire to manipulate the forging all had been placed in a battery to produce a sufficient blast and must be duplicated or the plan abandoned. A team and driver were at once selected to take the cashier with funds to buy large bellows wherever the same could be found, and as the nearest settlements likely to have them were at the saw mills scattered along the Canadian shores of Georgian Bay, there the messengers went

and after traversing hundreds of miles on the ice returned in about ten days with six or more bellows of suitable size; soon thereafter the punch was completed.

It was rigged into place, but on the first drop the side of a boulder in the channel was struck a glancing blow which broke the timber shaft short off at the socket and the punch had to be fished out of the channel bottom! Boulders were then grappled for and the few found removed. When the punch commenced regular work three crews working 8 hours each kept it operating without cessation night and day except Sundays, rain or shine, for several weeks. It gradually advanced from the thin edge at the lake entrance to the thicker portions nearer the coffer dam. The canal prism meanwhile being finished the agent opened the dam sluice gates and let Lake Superior flow in on the 19th of April, and the dredge, which was a horse-power antiquated affair, the first of the "Osgood pattern" used on the Great Lakes, was employed in removing the same. Then it was ordered to get behind the punch and test its results. The agent-engineer sat on the pier opposite and waited developments. Several times the scoop came up empty, and his heart almost stood still; he then directed the operator to draw the scoop back to the utmost limit and put on extra holding power. The old dredge creaked and twisted as though it would go to pieces, but when the scoop came up it was full to the brim with broken stone. Then the agent sprang to his feet, swung his hat and gave three cheers. The problem was solved. After the dredge had broken a "face" across the channel the work was as easy as if the ledge were sand. Not a piece of rock came up as large as a man's hand. The punch had pulverized the ledge quite below the required depth. By the 10th of May the channel was complete except some trimming along its edges.

Reverting to the directors then on the approaching steamer, they formed a solemn looking group on the for-

ward upper deck as the steamer neared the dock on which they saw the agent waiting to receive them. Soon greetings were exchanged and eager inquiry made as to the state of the canal work.

"Oh," replied the agent, "that is now completed, only a few finishing touches are needed."

"Surely you do not include the rock ledge," said President Corning.

"Oh, yes, that is all out."

"You should not joke on so serious a subject," was the response.

"Oh," said the agent, "you are all evidently incredulous, come and see for yourselves."

Carriages were called and the directors and engineers rode along the filled canal to the Lake Superior entrance. The dreaded ledge furnished the material for a stone hillock some thirty feet high next to the west pier. The party gathered near the punch and saw it strike blows of thirty or more tons to the square inch on rock 12 feet below the surface with the utmost precision. Vice President Brooks turned and grasped the agent by both hands and exclaimed:

"My good fellow, there is not an engineer in the world but would be proud to point to such an achievement as this."

"We join in that opinion," responded Engineers McAlpine and Clark, who stood in the front rank of the profession, and found their abilities not required, as expected.

The party returning to the village and thence to the "Agency" where they were to be quartered, acted like a party of boys enjoying jokes and laughter. But the happiest person of all was Director Erastus Fairbanks, the senior partner of the famous scale manufacturing firm, who was later on governor of Vermont during the civil war. He first sanctioned the promoter's plan, invited the others to join in the undertaking, and when the directors

met for the first time and held an executive session, in which the appointment of the general agent was discussed.

"Who knows about his financial reliability" was the inquiry generally made.

"My firm is willing to be his surety for \$100,000," replied Director Fairbanks.

"That is sufficient," said they all.

The appointment was made and half that sum at once placed at the official's disposal, and his drafts for over \$1,000,000, including land department expenses, were paid during the construction period.

It was decided to send a special messenger at once to the governor to invite him to meet the directors and accept the work. He responded promptly and after inspection signed the official certificate, which was filed at Lansing on the 21st day of the month, and the canal control and care then passed to the State and subsequently to the Nation.

#### IN REVIEW.

The claim that this was the most honorably performed contract for its magnitude ever entered into with a State or National government is sustained by the following facts: 1st. The contractors could have obtained the same compensation by bidding for locks one-third smaller than they deemed the public interest required and as proved to be the case.

Second. They could legally have followed the government engineer's specifications and saved 1 foot in depth along the canal.

Third. They could have built the lock gates upon the contract plans and saved a large percentage of expense, but delivered a very inferior work.

Fourth. They added a slope wall on both sides of the canal where none was required. At a moderate estimate they increased the cost to themselves over 25 per cent., and thereby doubled the practical value of the canal to the State and the public for the next third of a century.



The following extracts from an address by Gen. O. M. Poe, the eminent engineer, who built the immense lock 100 by 800 feet now occupying the site of the original double locks, as published in the Sault Association folder, furnished remarkable evidence in the case:

"On the whole, however, the canal was a remarkable work for its time and purpose. The construction of the locks especially bore evidence of a master's hand in their design and execution, and it is no reflection upon the ability of the engineer in charge that experience developed the objectionable features enumerated above. These locks are now being torn out to make room for a new one, and every step in their destruction reveals the excellence of the workmanship, the honest character of the materials employed, and the faithful compliance with the conditions of the contract under which they were built, not merely in its letter but in its spirit. All honor then to every man connected with their design and construction. They were long in advance of their day, and if commerce had not outgrown their dimensions they would have done good service for a century.

"I must confess to a feeling of great regret that it has become necessary to destroy these first locks. Inanimate though they were, they seemed to appeal to every sentiment of respect. They had never failed to respond to any demand within their capacity; they had contributed, in a higher degree than any other one factor, to the development of the country to the westward of them, and having done such good work are now to be obliterated in the interest of that very commerce they did so much to establish. The man who, knowing their history, can see them go without compunction is made of other stuff than I am, and, if an engineer, has no genuine love for his profession nor pride in the achievement of those who successfully apply its teachings to the best examples of his art."

The claim that the work was the most economically and rapidly built of any equally important on record, is presumably proven by comparison with the Canadian canal on the opposite side of the river. That is of the same length and size of prism, but is 9 feet deeper—or as 21 to 12. Its lock area 900 by 60 or 54,000 square feet,





## St. Marys Falls Ship Canal Company

"At a Meeting of the Directors"

In Albany, June 15th, 1855,

Resolved, That inasmuch as the completion of the Canal has rendered the office of General Agent of the Company, heretofore filled by Charles T. Harvey, unnecessary: that the same be abolished from and after the thirteenth day of June instant.

Resolved, That the manner in which Mr. Harvey has discharged the duties of the office of General Agent, meets with the approval of this Board; and that we have entire confidence in his integrity, fidelity and ability, and that his energy and courage in the discharge of the duties of his position under great difficulties, and at one period in the midst of disease, entitle him to our thanks.

Resolved, That a copy of the foregoing resolution be communicated to Mr. Harvey.

Attest:

John V. L. Pruyn, Secretary.

Erastus Corning, President.



the State canal being 750 by 70 or 52,500 feet (double lifts). Allowing for the increased depths of 9-20ths that proportion should represent an increase in cost of \$500,000, or a total of \$1,500,000. It was commenced in 1888 and opened for traffic in 1895, eight years. The State canal commenced in 1853, finished in 1855, two years; actual time 22½ months. The cost of the Canadian canal, by official reports was \$4,093,025.60, despite the radical improvements in work, machinery and means of access between 1853-85, or four times and more greater than its American neighbor herein referred to.

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On the opposite page is a photographic facsimile of the framed Vote of Thanks of the Directors of the Canal Constructing Corporation to their General Agent and Acting Chief Engineer engrossed on parchment with the original signatures and likenesses in order as follows:

President Corning.

Director Brooks, V. P.

Director Fairbanks.

Director Forbes.

Director Pruyn (Sec'y and Treas.)

General Agent Harvey.

Director Seymour.

## CHAPTER II.

### NOTABLE MINOR INCIDENTS.

#### A PRELIMINARY "DUCKING."

Scores of interesting incidents might be written as occurring in the early canal annals, but space forbids. As example, however, the following will be briefly stated: When the promoter explored the banks of the St. Mary's river in quest of lock building stone in November, 1852, he hired a boat and crew of Philetus Church, the Indian trader on Sugar island. He crossed Lake George to look at the rock exposures at the Neebish rapids, and in stepping out of the boat on to the icy rocks, slipped and took a plunge into the deep and swift current. The boatmen were active in fishing him out and no loss of life occurred, but the ride back across the 8 miles of lake to "Churches" was a chilly one for him. Yet the warmth of his ardor for the new project did not get cold!

#### A SLEIGH WALK.

The agent-engineer used a mouse-colored pony to carry him about town and along the works, which had remarkable intelligence. It would stand for hours wherever left without hitching, but having been hit a few times by small stones when heavy blasts were fired, he would judge of the danger by the sound; for a loud near-by blast, it would give a spring, and start away at a rate that threatened destruction to the buggy, but at about a safe distance it would stop and remain stationary until its master appeared.

Wishing to arrange for some dimension timber at Pendill's saw mills, near the mouth of the Taquamenon

river on White Fish Bay, 20 miles distant, the bay being covered with thick smooth ice, very glary at the time, the agent took the pony with sleigh after supper and started alone for the mill, expecting a three hours' drive. When about five miles out the pony cast off one of his fore shoes and soon after the other; and then could not stand up, much less travel. The agent found that by putting his arm around the pony's neck it could stand and walk very slowly, and was very careful not to tread on its master's toes. In this position they covered the other 15 miles, arriving at the mills towards morning, where shoes could be obtained. A case where in union there was "go!"

#### LAKE LEVEL AFFECTED BY STORM.

Referring to the coffer dam before mentioned. The vice president, Mr. Brooks, remained at the Sault after the other directors had departed, and was with the agent when a furious storm swept down from Lake Superior, and raised the waters above the falls some 4 feet. The waves swept over the dredge and sunk it with eight horses on board, some being drowned. When that excitement had subsided the two officials realized that the dam was in danger and on going to it were amazed to find that instead of its being 2 feet above water a volume of 2 feet deep was pouring over it. Creaking and twisting, the vessel mainsails still held it steady, but a few more inches pressure would evidently prove too much, and then a catastrophe would follow of vast proportions. The agent stuck his pocket knife blade to mark the height of water on the side abutment and there they sat silent and anxious beyond expression. The thrill of noticing by lantern light that the water within an hour had receded an inch and soon after, the storm abating, it ceased flowing over the dam, was like seeing the fuse light expire before reaching a dynamite bomb. Both had a sound sleep afterward!

## A CONSTRUCTION RELIC.

The metal portion of the steam punch, which wrought salvation to the canal undertaking in 1854-5, is preserved and will doubtless be on exhibition at the Semi-Centennial celebration at the Sault in 1905. Its use saved the contractors probably \$250,000 outlay in meeting the emergency before mentioned.

## A PRACTICAL TEST OF MENTAL CAPACITY.

Near the lower level or eastern dock, then in process of construction and while its timber deck beams were being placed in position by a gang of carpenters, a couple of young shovel-men concluded that it would be safe to shirk their work one summer day and enjoy a quiet "siesta" behind a pile of lumber where no one would be likely to see them.

The chief engineer, while inspecting the work in that vicinity, came upon them before they could grasp their shovels and appear to be at work. "Boys," said he, "your work don't seem to agree with you, perhaps you had better be changed to some kind requiring more mental rather than bodily capacity." Bringing them to the dock he told them to take a rope and keep one of the timber ends from falling into the water when cut off by the carpenters as not long enough to reach the next pier twenty feet distant.

Left to their own methods, the men fastened one end of the rope to the overhanging timber butt and standing on the edge of the pier it did not quite reach, they leaned backwards keeping the rope quite taut. When the carpenters' cross-cut saw severed the timber at the "lap" on the opposite pier, its heavy fall into the water six feet below with a sudden jerk caused the men at the other end of the rope to make a parabolical or eccentric curve in the air and dive head first into the river. On coming to the surface of the twenty feet or more depth of water they were towed to the shore by the carpenters with the boat hooks. On gaining their breath in an upright posi-

tion, the chief engineer told them that their wetting was caused by a lack of mental capacity, and after such a decisive test he would advise them to change their clothes and resume shoveling work as best suited to their developed abilities. They lost no time in following his advice and were never caught "napping" again!

If the carpenters had not imitated the engineer in maintaining serious faces when they foresaw what would happen when their rapid cross-cutting saw had removed all hindrances to the shovellers' special job the test as to "mental capacity" might not have been as convincing to the latter, as it proved!

#### ABORIGINAL REGARD FOR ANCESTRAL GRAVES.

In the near vicinity of the St. Mary's River Falls on the American side there had been from time immemorial an Indian burying ground where wooden crosses marked the graves of most recent date.

The neighboring tribes of Indians had for the first half of the century been under the direct care of the United States government, which by a treaty negotiated by the late Governor Cass had bound itself to pay them certain annuities and also to provide them with teachers and mechanics, especially blacksmiths to repair their tools and keep their fire arms in order for hunting purposes.

In the earlier years they came in large numbers to the "Agency" at the Sault to receive their annual dues which custom was in evidence when the canal was commenced.

Its surveyed line passed through the burying ground and as excavations on the eastern section progressed numerous human skeletons and bones were exposed but no effort was made to collect or reinter them elsewhere.

During this period rumors reached the Sault that upper lake tribes were much agitated by the word coming to them that the local graves of their forefathers were being desecrated and an indignant demonstration was to be made when the next "payment" brought them together there.



About that time an Indian, evidently a chief, appeared, who, on landing from his canoe on the Lake Superior shore, arrayed himself in Indian garb from head to foot. A head-dress of eagle feathers, buckskin moccasins and leggings, a breech cloth and girdle with scalping knives galore, while a Queen Anne style of long barrelled shot gun was especially displayed, and his gestures towards it were construed by nervous observers to convey threats of using it with warlike effect.

As he moved along the line of the canal work and motioned to those he met he was pointed to the agent whom he found near the company's office. Many words and gestures were made to the latter but of course not understood.

A messenger was sent to the well-known Johnson half-breed family to furnish an interpreter.

Before his arrival the higher grade workmen gathered about and discussed the probabilities of a general Indian rising of which the newcomer was deemed a forerunner—with fighting and scalping to follow if he was not conciliated.

They formed a circle about the Indian and the agent-engineer when the interpreter arrived. The latter told the Indian to rehearse his speech, which he did, then amid breathless silence the interpreter translated it thus:

"He says that he understands that you are the government blacksmith and he has brought his gun which he wants to have put in good order."

The throng of onlookers seemed generally to recollect business leading them elsewhere, and soon the Indian, interpreter and agent were left alone in further conference, which resulted in the interpreter guiding the visitor to the government gunsmith where his errand happily terminated.

The agent in relating the story said, that it was the nearest an expression of interest in ancestral mementoes by the Indians that he had ever seen!

## CHAPTER III.

### THE RESIDENTIAL "AGENCY."

During the agent's stay at the Sault as an invalid in the summer of 1852, he boarded at a large two story wood house of a faded yellow color, known in the village as the "Baptist Mission."

Originally provided as a mission station and school of that denomination for the benefit of the native Indians, its intended beneficiaries had dwindled in number until but a few attended the Sabbath services in the school room where one of the notable Johnson family of "half breeds" officiated as interpreter of the discourses delivered in English, and a scant half dozen Indian girls received day school instruction. The aged missionary, known as Father Bingham, with his wife and two attractive daughters formed the family to which a summer boarder or two was occasionally added, and which afforded a home-like congenial resting place for at least one health seeker at that time.

About a mile eastward on the main street of the settlement, was a spacious two-story residence with two large single-story annexes or wings of colonial mansion style, shaded by a grove of magnificent elm trees, and standing on a twenty acre lot extending from the road to the banks of the St. Mary's river, the premises being known as the "Agency." This name originated from the circumstance that the United States government erected and owned the mansion, to provide a residence for the eminent historian, Henry R. Schoolcraft, who was appointed as the Indian agent for that region early in the "thirties," and whose researches relating to the history, manners and traditions of North American Indians were



published by order of congress as of national importance. He lived there for a number of years in a style comporting with his important official position, but after his retirement his successors resided elsewhere and only occupied the buildings during the time of the annual payment of the Indian "annuities."

#### INDIAN AGENCY PAYMENTS.

When "payment" time arrived that year (1852), the narrator was one of the spectators at the proceedings. One of the wings of the mansion afforded ample office room, where at the large table in the center sat the United States Indian agent with his secretary and cashier, and a box of gold coin beside them. The next chair was occupied by Peter B. Barbeau, the veteran Sault Indian trader, who was one of Astor's employees in earlier days. An Indian would be admitted, and advance to the table, the secretary would find his name on the registry and the amount due to him, the pay roll would then be signed by him, usually with a cross, the agent would initial it as correct—the cashier then passed out the amount in coin on to the table, but before the Indian could grasp it, Barbeau would utter a few words in the Indian tongue and with a sweep of his hand slide the gold into a bag at his side, the Indian would then retire and another appear to go through the same form but with occasional exceptions of those living or educated at "missions," or otherwise who did not have dealings with the trader. Whether the coin going into his bag went to the credit of the Indian for goods previously delivered, or to be obtained, did not appear in evidence then, but it was a fact that some of the aboriginals had with their squaws and children paddled their canoes for over 300 miles along the south coast of Lake Superior for the meager satisfaction of seeing the gleam of the pile of coin assigned to them by the government as it slid from the agent's table into the trader's bag! The scene, which annually occurred there previously for a score or two of years, was then seen for the last time.

## RESIDENTIAL RE-OCCUPATION.

The recollection of the beautiful lawn, the elm-trees-grove and the comfortable residence on the agency premises was in the narrator's mind, when, in the following spring, he became general agent of the Canal Construction Corporation. He lost no time then in coming to terms with the official having possession, and obtained a lease of the property, with approval of the Interior Department at Washington representing the government ownership.

He then secured the services of a steward from New England whose wife could act as hostess as well as house-keeper, in good form. It proved a most excellent arrangement, and contributed not a little to the success of the main undertaking, with its safeguards of home life for the agent's health and comfort during the strain of his managing and engineering cares. It enabled him to provide excellent quarters for the company inspecting directors or shareholders, and extend courteous hospitality to distinguished visitors from time to time. The features of the beautiful location on the banks of the crystal watered St. Mary's river, with the foaming rapids in sight where the Indians could be seen all through the summer engaged in capturing the famous white fish in scoop nets, which within an hour might be served on the agency table. Under such conditions no marine food in the world surpassed that noble fish in delicious flavor. Game was also plenty, such as deer, partridges and wild pigeons.

These attractions soon brought distinguished and cultivated guests—Hon. Erastus Corning, first president of the New York Central Railway, Hon. Erastus Fairbanks, afterward governor of Vermont, with the other directors of the constructing company, came expecting to "rough it" as in most frontier towns of those days—but stayed weeks instead of days, and later on, brought the ladies of their families to enjoy life there also.

President Fillmore soon after leaving the White

House was, with his daughter, a guest at the "Agency," and looked on while the agent and Miss Fillmore tried "shooting the rapids" in a canoe.

The governor of Michigan, a victim of chronic dyspepsia, came with his wife as a transient tourist, accepted an invitation to the agency for a day or two, but on testing its cuisine extended his sojourn for several weeks. Similar experience with the local chief factor of the Hudson Bay Company is related in another place.

During those seasons of 1853-5 the "Agency" had the air of a very select fashionable watering place.

Many amusing reminiscences could be given in that connection, but only a specimen or two will be quoted—as follows:

GLORY BASED ON "DOUGH-NUTS."

The governor of the state found that Mrs. Porter, the housekeeper, made a style of cake called "dough-nuts" which he could eat with a special relish without subsequent digestive distress, and between that food and white fish diet he was in a sort of stomachic heaven! As a result, a pan of "dough-nuts" did not last long and care was taken to keep a supply on hand.

When the last evening of his stay arrived a brilliant party of ladies and gentlemen were gathered in the parlor to bid him farewell.

He was informed that a presentation was to be made to him as the head of the State, and must be made in a manner suited to the dignity of the occasion. Accordingly he stood in the center of the room while one of the gentlemen chosen as orator addressed him in rather grandiloquent style. Referring to the state of Michigan as a keystone in the arch of the mundane sphere where on the craggy heights of its great lake shores the eagle—emblem of liberty—might be seen at rest combing its pinion feathers with its beak while occasionally gazing into the face of the mid-day sun with unblinking eye, and feeling at ease because the "ship of State" was sailing on

the vast seas in sight below, with a fresh breeze of prosperity, and with the statesman here present at the helm! That as a token of esteem to him officially and personally the accompanying jewel casket was presented, etc., etc.

The governor responded with appropriate pathos, not for himself only, but for the people who were the sovereigns in the two fair peninsulas forming the State, etc., etc. The ribbons about the pasteboard casket were then untied and out rolled a "dough-nut," with a note from the house-keeper stating that it was the last one in the "Agency," or the casket would have been larger!

AN ASSUREDLY SAFE "GLOBE TROTTER."

The European and American newspapers in those days had frequent notices of Madame Phiefer, an Austrian woman of noble birth and independent means, who had achieved notoriety by travelling in mysterious parts of the earth *unattended*. She had, it was stated, visited the country of the wild Arabs of the desert, had joined caravans under the guidance of Bedouin chiefs where European women had never been seen. Her book of travels had been published and widely read—when the announcement was made that she had started for America to cross the plains and "write up" the Indians and wilds of that continent.

Gradually she drew nearer, until a Detroit paper heralded her arrival in that city and that she was to visit the Sault en route.

When the steamer arrived, the agent with a view of inviting her to the "Agency" stepped on board and asked the purser to point her out. One look at her meager figure, features, and leathery complexion explained to him why she would be safe anywhere! While he hesitated, she was engaged in negotiating with the hotel runners and disputing as to prices, with accent, fluency, and gestures which confirmed the agent's first impression that she would not be a fascinating guest. A Frenchman agreed



to her terms of less than usual rates and she went with him to his "hotel." When her book of travels in America appeared a year or two afterwards, she mentioned the Sault as one of the worst places she was ever in, that the room assigned at the hotel there had no window in it. She found the wigwams of the plains far more picturesque and desirable!

#### A TRANSIENT BOARDER.

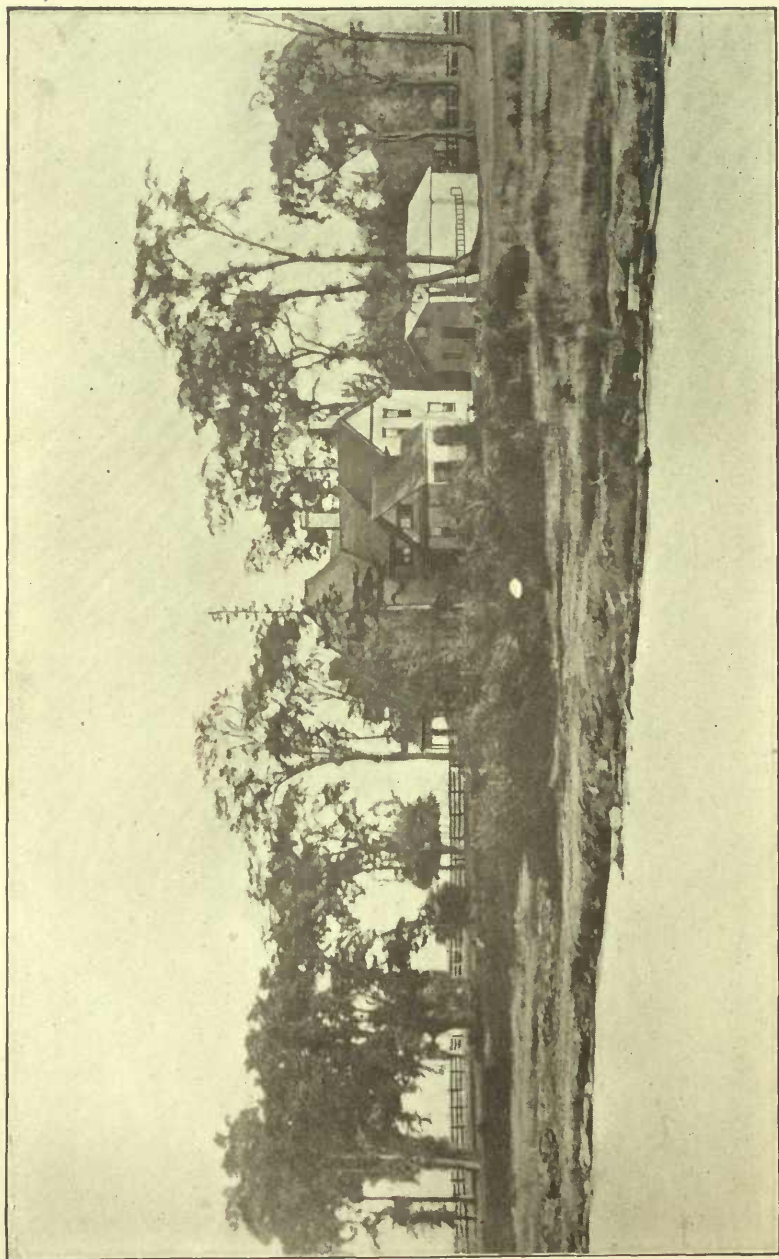
One day when there happened to be no visitors at the agency, the wife of a United States senator arrived on a steamer to look about the Sault for a day or two. She enquired for the best boarding place to stop at. The purser, or a wag on the dock, told her to go to the "Agency" and pointed out its carriage which happened to be there. She accosted the driver, bid him take her trunk, and arriving at the "Agency" looked over the rooms with the housekeeper, chose the best one and was ensconced in it when the agent returned home at night. He took in the situation and arranged to appear as a steady boarder only. The senatoress required considerable waiting on, but on the whole was satisfied with the accommodations, commended the table, pitied the housekeeper for not having more boarders, but might get some friends to come there later on. Soon she wanted to pay her bill. The stewardess made various excuses for not having it ready—but finally explained the situation, with the remark that while the Canal Company which ran the establishment did not allow pay to be taken, the amusement to the household in hearing her criticisms and suggestions how things ought to be done, was a full equivalent! The visitor saw the joke, and with a hearty laugh at the "contretemps" was transferred to the south bound steamer.

#### SENTIMENT VERSUS FACT.

Time has wrought a marvellous metamorphosis at the agency grounds. Where the beautiful slope to the river once was, is now the site of an immense water power







View of "Agency" from Channel of the St. Mary's River, 1898.

building with a great "fore bay" and canal leading to it. The residence building, quite overshadowed, has been in use for offices, but will soon make way for other "improvements."

Little remains of the former conditions on those premises to verify previous local tradition or reminiscences.

The accompanying view of the "Agency" premises was taken from a boat in the river just prior to commencement of the building of the "power house" before mentioned which now occupies the river front for over a quarter of a mile. Bushes had encroached upon the original beautiful lawn and the elms in the grove seemed to have been reduced in number. The building in the rear was erected by the agent in 1853 for stabling purposes.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MICHAEL PHELAN'S WIDOW.\*

#### A NARRATIVE OF FACTS.

The summer of 1853 witnessed the commencement of the work of building the ship canal which was to open up the waters of the greatest of lakes to the commercial marine of its sister lakes in the basin drained by the river St. Lawrence, and make possible the vast commerce which has since been developed upon and through those mighty waters. Then the straggling village of "Sault Ste. Marie," situated near the base of the falls of the St. Mary's river (which, with about eighteen feet of descent within one lineal mile, compelled land carriage of persons and property around them), was nearly as remote from the outer world as a settlement upon the shores of Hudson bay would be at the present time. A few spans of horses hauling cars upon a tramway around the falls, then sufficed to transfer all the commerce of the Lake Superior region!

The Federal government having in 1852 made a grant of land to the State of Michigan in trust, wherewith to secure the means for building a canal around those falls, that State sublet the work of constructing it, for the right to the lands, to a corporation composed of Eastern State capitalists, who appointed the writer of this narrative as their executive under the title of general agent, to organize a force of workmen and enter upon the undertaking.

His headquarters were first temporarily located at Detroit, as the nearest city in direct communication, where

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\*Reprinted from Magazine of Western History, February, 1889. Then published in Cleveland, Ohio.

he enlisted and accompanied a force of some four hundred men as the first detachment, and loaded one of the large lake steamers with them and a due quota of supplies and provisions, tools, machinery, horses, lumber, etc., for transportation to the locality of the work, as the sparsely settled region about the falls could not be relied upon for such resources to any appreciable extent.

A commissariat was organized on the passage, and as soon as the landing was made, horses were hitched up into teams, the lumber hauled to the canal reservation, and in forty-eight hours the men were housed in improvised buildings and regular meals provided for them.

The system adopted was to assign fifty men to one house, or "shanty," calculated to furnish eating and sleeping space in the main structure, while a wing furnished room for a kitchen and the private apartments of the family who acted as stewards for that separate building. Each was numbered, and all were under the charge of a general steward, who had the care of the general supplies and kept accurate accounts with each "shanty," showing the aggregate per diem number of men boarded in comparison with the quantity of provisions consumed. Those stewards who furnished the best return as to economy and efficiency were paid accordingly, while those who were wasteful or slovenly were weeded out. To this was added later a hospital and infirmary annex, where workmen meeting with accidents, or having serious sickness, were sent to receive attention from salaried physicians and trained nurses free of charge, as the result of a small monthly per capita payment from those earning wages. These sanitary regulations were so efficient that the cholera epidemic which swept over the country in 1854 and stopped every other public work of magnitude, while showing its presence also at the "Sault," did not cause a panic nor suspend the work for a single day.

On June 4, 1853, the third day after landing, the workmen were organized into working gangs of thirty,



each under selected foremen, and formed in ranks, while the general agent, "breaking ground" by loading the first barrow with excavated material and wheeling it out to the "dump," set an example which was received with a cheer by the men, and generally followed, to continue for nearly two years, up to the time when the men were again gathered in a group to see the same individual, on the 19th of April, 1855, open the sluice-gate to the outer coffer dam on the Lake Superior level and let its water flow into the finished canal prism, doubtless never to be entirely excluded so long as the world endures.

The building of what was at that time the greatest canal in the world, so far as commercial importance or lock dimensions were concerned,\* in such a remarkably short period of time, was only possible by employing all the men that could work to advantage, and as a matter of fact the force was rapidly increased after the first five hundred were fairly at work, until between two and three thousand were busily employed and the line of the work seemed to swarm like a bee-hive. The number of boarding buildings increased correspondingly, until between forty and fifty were under the supervision of the corporate management.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thus far by way of introduction to the tale indicated by the caption, and to the subsequent use of the first personal pronoun therein by the writer.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was in a sultry afternoon in the month of August, 1853, that I was engaged at writing in my private inner

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\*The statement that the traffic through the Sault Ste. Marie canal for September exceeded that of the Suez canal by 30,000 tons would probably be challenged by those not familiar with the immense development of the lake shipping interests, but statistics furnished by General O. M. Poe prove this to be a fact. In addition to this, the past month records a larger business through the canal than heretofore known in history. To those interested in the improvement of the great water-ways it must be a reminder that the lock-age system now in use in the canal is rapidly becoming inadequate to accommodate the marvelous trade of Lake Superior. The passages through the canal in September were as follows: Steamboats, 574; sail vessels, 309; rafts and unregistered craft, 29. The aggregate of registered tonnage was 531,689, and freight tonnage 553,811, all of which was passed through the new locks, 505 out of the 720 hours of the month being occupied in passing it through.—N. Y. Times, Oct. 7, 1885.



room on the first floor of the construction company's general office building, improvised near the banks of the ship canal at the "Soo" (as that point was generally designated). The entrance was at my back, and as a clerk was usually in the outer office to announce visitors before hand, I supposed myself to be alone, and was absorbed with my desk work. The sensation that someone was breathing behind me led me to wheel in my revolving chair, and no doubt to look as I felt, greatly surprised to find four unannounced individuals near me who had apparently been standing for some time with bated breath, awaiting my movements to secure my attention, which their entrance had not before arrested.

The group was composed of a woman and three girls, all neatly dressed, with faces endowed with a glow of health, ruddy as roses, combined with respectful and quiet demeanor rare to see at that time in that location.

The eldest girl was about twelve, the next about eight, and the youngest probably four years of age. The mother, evidently such from family resemblance, was apparently some thirty years old, rather undersized, and not specially noticeable except for her head-gear, which was a wonder to behold. I had seen pictures of such as having adorned high dames of the Queen Anne period, when an attempt was made to compress most of the beauties of a vegetable garden into the trimming of a high-crowned hat, but now I saw a specimen upon a living model, making an appearance indescribably grotesque. My eyes were drawn especially to one ornament which seemed to be intended to represent a blood beet of the brightest hue, the root lying obliquely along the rim of the structure, while the stem, branching into many upright leaves, towered above the head, counterbalanced by a carrot or some other rank growth of millinery on the other side.

I surmised at a glance that the "topnotty" affair had been bestowed by some wealthy lady (for it was evidently a costly adjunct to female attire) upon one who was not

posted as to the caprices of fickle "Dame Fashion," and believed that what was good once, was always good, if in good preservation.

But before I had reduced my thoughts to speech suited to the occasion, the woman dropped an old style low "courtesy," her knees almost touching the floor, and broke the silence with that cheerily accentuated voice which marks a native of the Emerald Isle, and with the words, "Perraps, sorr, you do not know who I am?"

"No," said I, "there is no doubt about that."

"Sure, I am the widow of Mister Michael Phelan; but, perraps, sorr, you have not heard of him before?"

"No, I would hardly be able to identify him with certainty," I replied.

"And it is a pity," said she, "because he was a most worthy man, as good a husband as ever lived, and a good father to these little girls, pace to his mimicry." Just there and then a genuine tear of affection glistened in the widow's eye and she proceeded, "And he started to come to Ameriky with us on a vessel bound to Quebec. But we had a stormy long passage, during which he sickened and died, and despite all I could say or do, the captain had his body dropped overboard in the wide ocean, and I had to come along without him. We landed in Quebec and thence came to Montreal, where I tried to make a living by keeping boarders, but did not succeed as well as I could wish, and when I heard that a great public work was commencing here, and before it was done a great deal of money would be paid out for boarding of the men, I determined to come here, and by enquiry have found the way, but, on arrival, find that the company employing the men boards them itself, and that as you are the head man, I must come to you or I will have come in vain and won't know what to do for myself and these little ones. What I want is a chance to keep one of your boarding-houses."

"My good woman," I replied, "I control only those

where fifty rough men are housed together and a family is paid to cook for them, of which the husband is the main element to keep order. You, surely, as an unprotected woman and the mother of these nice girls, would not wish to go into such quarters as that?"

"Oh," said she, "if you will give me a chance with my own countrymen, they will not harm me or mine, I am sure; and you need not pay me wages till you see how well I can merit them, and I will meanwhile be earning the bread which we will honestly eat of your stores, and that is what I need to do without delay."

"But," said I, "these children will require more or less of your time and attention, and for you to care for them and attend to providing food and clean berths for fifty men, is simply impossible. Even if you were willing to undertake it, I would not consent to have you, out of respect for your sex in general, and for your welfare and that of these bright children in particular."

"Oh," said the widow, "these children can and will work and help instead of hinder me, as you will see if you only give us a chance."

But I shook my head more and more decidedly, and as the widow saw the tide turning against her with increasing force, a bright thought lit up her face, and she made motions to bring forth something stowed away in the bosom of her dress, exclaiming, "If you had only known Mr. Phelan, and what a good character he had, and how highly he was respected by the great men in his own country, you would not deny the cloy of his widow for honest work wherewith to feed herself and his children! Did you ever hear of Lord John Russell, now in the government in the ould country?"

My reply was: "Certainly, he is one of England's foremost statesmen of this day; but did he know your husband?"

"Ye may be sure of it," the widow continued, "as I have a certificate from his lordship, recommending Mr.

Phelan on account of his good character, that I keep near me all the while, that I may niver lose it. Would ye like to see it?"

"Oh, yes," I replied, "the signature of such a noted man as Lord Russell is well worth examining as a matter of curiosity."

In due time the widow drew forth her guarded treasure in the shape of a package having many wraps, from which, when unfolded, dropped a sheet of letter-paper with a printed heading, which she picked up and handed me as reverently as one would pass a prayer-book to a worshiper in church.

Glancing my eye over it, I found it to read substantially as follows:

Estates of Lord J. Russell,  
.....County, Ireland,  
.....1852.

To Michael Phelan:—

You are hereby notified to vacate the earth-walled thatched tenement now occupied by yourself and family near the ..... road, within thirty days from date of receipt hereof, as it is to be torn down and removed, by order of his lordship.

Attest .....

Agent for said Estates.

Dumb with amazement, I glanced from the paper to the widow, but her honest, serious look of satisfaction in possessing this evidence of her husband's good character was genuine; I had seen too much of the world not to have detected any counterfeiting of such faith as that, and I instantly divined that she could not read, and hence some one had imposed upon her as to the nature and contents of the document. There, also, stood the ruddy-cheeked girls looking up into my face as to a superior being whose lips could make or mar their happiness.

The situation being revealed as by a flash of light, my



heart refused to let my lips be the medium of undeceiving the widow as to the purport of her paper, and of causing her faith in its talismanic powers to be dashed like a fragile vase into a thousand pieces at my feet, never to be restored to its present symmetry and esteem; so, apparently reading the document through again and again, with most intense and deliberate attention, my thoughts were meanwhile busy in deciding how to act. They followed the track of this brave, confiding, little woman, leaving her hovel in Ireland (it might be before dispossessing measures had been taken), which, however humble, was to her a home warmed by affection in local and personal attachments; coming across the stormy Atlantic only to see it relentlessly requiring the sacrifice of her husband for entombment in its dark caverns, with only the dirge and requiem of its wild, deep-toned waves; pressing on to Quebec and Montreal and thence a thousand miles or more to this remote place, and now only asking for opportunities for honest and faithful employment at my hands; how could I refuse at least a trial as a reward for such faith and perseverance?

'Twas a moment described by the great dramatist, when "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin." I beheld before me, not an ignorant immigrant, to be laughed at and thrust aside, as coming on a fool's errand, but a heroine, endowed with a priceless faith which could remove mountains, whose guileless, earnest appearance showed that as a daughter, wife and mother she had done her best;—and who could do more?

My heart had its own way, and then my lips were no longer glued together.

"Mrs. Phelan," said I, as I handed back the document, with the air of one most profoundly impressed, "that certificate settles the matter; as the widow of Michael Phelan, you shall have a chance to provide for yourself and these children of his, if in my power to arrange it with promptness and decency."



Pen nor pencil can never depict the glowing of the light in the eyes of that mother, as she dropped another profound "courtesy," looked triumphantly in the faces of her three little girls and carefully restored her talismanic certificate to its wrappings and place near her heart.

The general steward was summoned, and, learning from him that one of the steward families was just leaving and its successor not then installed, and that a very trusty single man was so far convalescent at the hospital that he could be detailed to keep order and render the widow any needed assistance, I directed that carpenters be summoned and a room in the main building be partitioned off for him forthwith, and the widow be at once installed in the family apartments, as solely for her own use.

Enquiring for her baggage, behold all her worldly possessions were just outside my office door, in the shape of a few bundles! These she and the children gathered up, and, following the messenger, were directly installed in their new abode. The new arrival created a stir in the colony of adjacent buildings, with the query how a widow who only landed from Montreal in the morning could get the coveted steward position before night. Whether the widow ascribed it to Lord John Russell's influence to those who enquired of her, I knew not, but I was very careful not to mention the facts about her precious document to anyone. Even the general steward treated her more deferentially, from the evident endorsement which she had received at the manager's office, not knowing how it was obtained. Not a little of her success was due, however, to her own shrewdness in slipping by all intermediaries and stating her errand only where the final decision was to be made.

Some days later, in passing near her domicile, a glimpse of the widow brought her to mind, and led me to enter her building and inspect her care of it. Its order and neatness were most commendable. The daughter of

twelve years was doing an adult's share of the kitchen service; the girl of eight was, in the men's absence, at work attending to cleaning their quarters, after having made the table ready hours in advance, while the little "tot" of four was seated on a barrel to bring her to the right height by a table at which she was scouring the knives and other table articles with bath-brick, until they shone like silver, and with the steady action of a veteran who thought of nothing but the business in hand.

It was the custom of the steward's department to let the men choose their quarters and change about to suit themselves, so long as the regular quota in each was not exceeded, and they applied for a transfer order at his desk. Soon he was flooded with applications for change to the widow's boarding-house, and, upon inquiry, was informed that it was the most quiet and orderly of any, while the meals in variety and cooking were what Delmonico's was to ordinary eating establishments.

The requisitions for supplies for that "number" contained some items not on the ordinary list, but were honored after due consideration. Soon rumors of a new style of hash served up once a week at the widow's floated about the location, and even foremen called for transient meal tickets to try it, and envied were the men who held vested rights as regular inmates there.

The end of the month, with its tabulated statements, came round, when the figures indicated that the most economical and satisfactory results were from the widow's house. The second month confirmed such conclusion, when her rate of payment rose to the head of the list and continued there to the end of the work, netting her a very nice monthly income. She confidentially explained to the steward that the result was due largely to that famous hash, which, by being sweetened with maple sugar and flavored with spices, enabled her to use the last scrap of every kind of food material on her premises without cloying the men's appetites.

She did not call for her monthly pay until the cashier entered a complaint against her that he could not close his monthly accounts according to rule. Word from me to call at the office brought her there in Sunday attire, including her before described full dress hat. When the rule was explained that she must regularly draw her money, she complied, but only to bring it to me, to request me to personally care for it during her term of employment.

An amusing scene took place weekly. The widow was a regular attendant Sundays at the "mission" church some distance away, when she might be seen wending her way thitherward with her overshadowing perennial hat only equaled in tinge of red by her own cheeks and those of her three girls walking demurely by her side. At a respectful distance behind her would follow a platoon of a score, more or less, of men, dressed in the height of canal fashions and all animated by evident intentions not to be far from her when inside the church, while the crowds outside the edifice formed in ranks to let her pass through, with special marks of consideration. Not a breath was heard against her, but maintaining respect from all, woe would have betided the man who had been reported to the fifty brawny Irish men in her "number," as molesting her in any way.

One day after the widow's reputation had become quite established, she, with her head-gear in position, called on me in the same room as before, to confide to me that she had been asked to marry by not a few of the men, and of them all she thought most favorably of Patrick Flynn, who had been selected as care-taker for her in the first instance, but, after pondering well on the subject when she had almost said yes, the memory of her dear departed husband, with his good character so well certified to, came over her, and she had told Patrick, like all her suitors, once and for always, that she would never be known otherwise than as the widow of Michael Phelan.

Again came the tears as a tribute to his memory, with the remark that in case I heard she was to be married I would know to the contrary in advance.

The widow dropped in very quietly at my office at a later date, and when energetic measures were taken which nipped in the bud an impending strike, many were the surmises where I had obtained the information upon which to act. Its value to my principals, under circumstances too intricate to be detailed here, could hardly be overestimated.

But the time arrived when the last gang of workmen were finally paid off, and a settlement of the widow's account showed over \$600 to her credit. When handing it to her, I said, "No doubt you will take this snug sum and return to Montreal and open a nice boarding-house?"

"Oh, no," said she, "when this canal is opened, business must go to the other end of the lake, and I am going with it to a place they call Superior City and have engaged my passage by the next boat!" All that I had to say about the risks and hardships involved was wasted, and before the canal was officially opened by the State, the widow who could not read her passage ticket was pushing on five hundred miles farther to anticipate its commercial effect!

Two or more years passed, when I paid a tourist's visit to the then "booming" settlement of Superior City, and was walking with a friend along its wooden sidewalks, when I was startled by having my own name called by someone behind me, and on turning about, saw the widow of Michael Phelan in a calico wrapper on her knees, with her hands raised above that wonderful bonnet, asking for "Heaven's blessings upon the best friend she ever had in America!"

Begging her to rise and not compromise me in a strange place, because on-lookers would think that she was pleading with me, rather than with Heaven, she explained that she was the owner of the corner lot on the



opposite side of the street, upon which she had erected a store building and was realizing a handsome rental from a part of it, while occupying the remainder for keeping boarders, and having seen me go by, was afraid that before she could don her best dress as she used to do at the "Soo," I would have passed out of sight. Patrick Flynn had followed her from the "Soo" and was installed as care-taker of her property, but she had not, and would not, prove forgetful of the memory of Michael Phelan, or less proud of the good character which he bore in the "ould counthry."

Declining the request of the widow to look over her title-deeds and give my opinion upon their legality, on the score that the steamer on which I was making the round trip was just leaving, I left the widow in the midst of her corner lots.

Not long after this I read in a leading New York paper, of an official decision as announced at Washington, confirming the right of Mrs. Michael Phelan of Superior City, Wisconsin, to preëempt a quarter section of land, her right to do so without naturalization papers having been stoutly contested, but on appeal, her title to valuable property near the city had been sustained at the Interior Department.

Time passed along a few more years, when I was a passenger between two of the ports in Lake Superior upon the then peerless steamer *North Star*, with the veteran Captain B. G. Sweet in command. While passing along the main deck, a comely, ruddy-faced young woman accosted me and introduced herself as the eldest daughter of the Widow Phelan. "Indeed," said I, "and where is your mother?" "Oh," said she, "mother is down here on the main deck against my protest, who wanted to have her take a couple of state-rooms and let us travel in the cabin like other people, for we can afford it, and I wish you would get mother to do so."

"All right," said I, "we will see what can be done."



Then the widow was interviewed by surprise and without her ornamental head-dress on, but I presumed that it was in one of the several sizeable trunks, which evidently belonged to her. Her shrewdness was again evidenced by the fact that while paying only deck passage and saving probably three-fourths of the cost of cabin rates, she had pre-empted a space behind the huge boiler smoke-pipes and fenced it off with her trunks and other articles of the cargo, so that within the barrier herself and daughters were quite retired and had warm quarters, while the cabin passengers were shivering in smaller and colder places upon the unheated upper deck on a chill autumnal day.

Entering into conversation as to her leaving the west, she informed me that she saw signs of a decline in the land speculation which had prevailed (and which shortly afterward entirely collapsed and continued thus for a decade or more), and had, in anticipation of lower prices, sold out with a view of leaving that region permanently. "Well," said I, "how much money do you bring away with you?" But the widow was slow to divulge, and at last her eldest daughter spoke up and said, "Mr. Harvey, to prove that we ought to have taken cabin passage, I will tell you. Mother has thirty-six hundred dollars in gold in these trunks, beside enough more in bank-bills to provide for all our traveling expenses for a long journey, and yet she will keep us on the main deck, where poor immigrants ride, and now, as the kind friend she has taught us to remember, will you not insist upon our having state-rooms?" "Oh, yes," said I, "that is reasonable enough, but your mother has a mind of her own, which she has certainly used to good advantage since I have known her, and I have learned to deem it better than my own, as to her own affairs."

"But now, Widow Phelan," I continued, "you will certainly consider that I ought to know where you are proposing to go?"

"To a place they call Australia," she replied.

"But do you know how far off it is and how to get there?" was the next query.

"No," replied she, "but I am told that at a city called New York, where I am now going, I can get passage."

"Pray, what led you to think of that distant land?" I queried.

"Well," said the widow, "I have been informed that the governor of Australia is an intimate friend of Lord John Russell and therefore a friend of my husband's, and one who will appreciate the certificate I have of the good character of Michael Phelan as you did, and who will treat his widow well on his account!" Then the scene in my office came vividly to mind and again I was speechless about that document, which I doubted not was then, as before, near the widow's heart.

The steamer's whistle announced landing at the port of my departure, and ended my personal knowledge of the widow of Michael Phelan. But the Phelan history, if continued, might reveal her, later on, as a Melbourne real estate millionaire, and her daughters as among the aristocracy, driving in their own or their husband's carriages.\* All these issues may have hinged, as did those narrated, upon my keeping my face straight and my heart warm when the power of that talismanic certificate was tried upon myself on that August day away back in 1853.

CHARLES T. HARVEY.

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\*That this supposition is not unexampled may be proven by recalling to mind that not long after the date of these occurrences, a widow located at one of the mines in Colorado, who provided domestic conveniences for the miners, married one of her customers, who developed into a "bonanza king" and she into a leader of the fashionable world of Paris. The little girl of the '60's, playing about her domicile, has, during the '80's, married the Prince de ———, the scion and heir of the oldest and most aristocratic noble family of the Eternal city, and the movements of the "bonanza" family, or any of its members, attract the attention of society and the press of both continents at the present time.

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EDITORIAL NOTES, February, 1889.

There is one resident of Cleveland, at least, who can vouch for the truth of Widow Phelan's expressive gratitude, as related on page 57 of this issue. It will not be the betrayal of Mr. Harvey's confidence to relate that the friend who accompanied him in that walk through Superior City was none other than William J. Gordon, Esq., (for whom Gordon Park was so named) then interested in the mining developments of the Lake Superior region. If Mr. Gordon does not recall that circumstance of his trip, he probably will

## CHAPTER V.

### A PIONEER INDIAN MISSIONARY.

#### LOCAL SURROUNDINGS.

After a plunge into the chilly waters of the St. Mary's river on the bleak November day of 1852, as mentioned on page 34, the writer was rowed by his boat's crew eight miles across Lake George (as the expansion of the river was called) to the trading station of P. S. Church on Sugar Island, 12 miles below the Sault (see diagram on next page). "Church's Landing" was then the only point where steamboats stopped along the river, the north channel being the one then solely in use until the southern channel through Hay Lake was opened after many millions of expenditure by the United States government, and the north passage is now quite out of the main line of navigation.

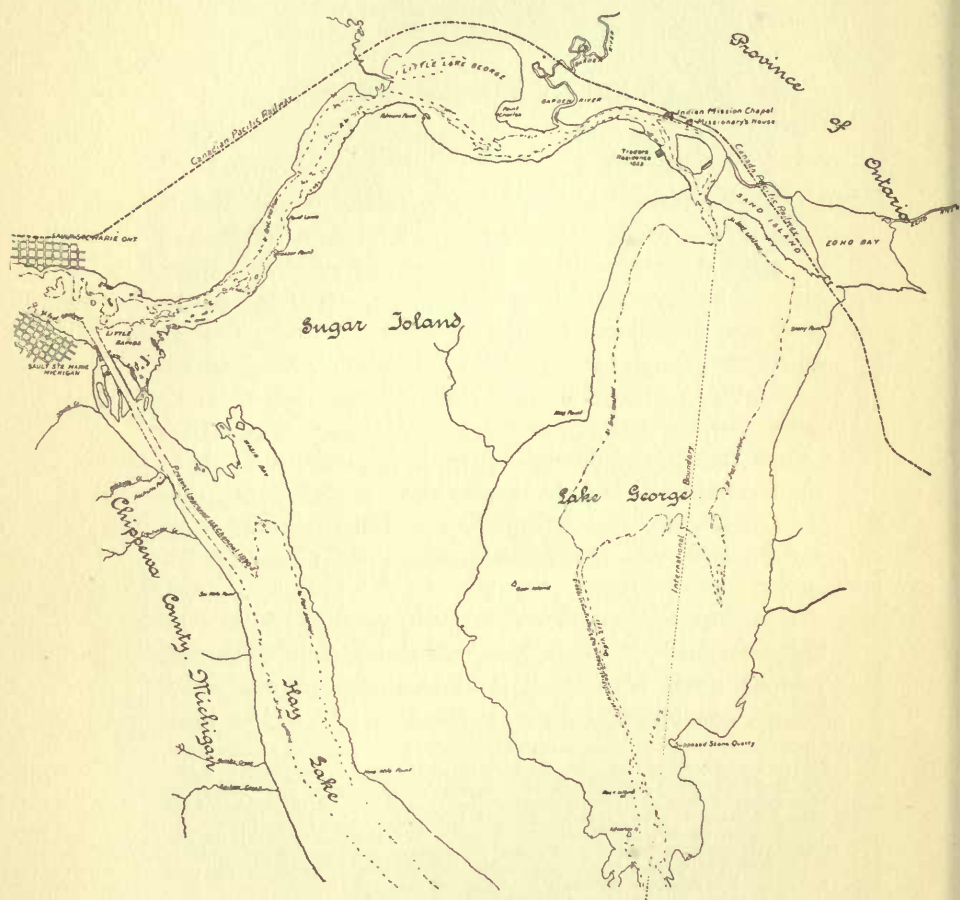
Philetus S. Church was an enterprising trader who had been a country merchant in Central New York, but removed there with his wife and two sons, a few years earlier, and had built up a "raspberry jam" export busi-

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that of starting from Marquette on the steamer North Star, one Sunday morning, en route to the west end of Lake Superior, and that Mr. Harvey declined to accompany him because of conscientious principles against setting forth upon a journey on the Sabbath. With a laugh at Mr. Harvey's expense, Mr. Gordon steamed away. When fifty miles out a break in the machinery caused the steamer to put back; and on Monday morning again made the start, with Mr. Harvey also aboard. Mr. Gordon admitted that in this case the laugh was on the other side.

Mr. Harvey, now of New York city, not only had an interesting experience in connection with the St. Mary's ship canal, but has also passed through some of a more recent nature. His labor in connection with the elevated railway system of New York city is a matter of record; and he is now the possessor of the full-sized model in wood of an elevated railway structure, which he took to Albany in 1867 and set up in the loft of Erastus Corning's hardware store on State street, Albany. At that time most of the legislators, upon his invitation, went to see it before voting upon the first law ever enacted authorizing the erection of such a structure. The legislature of New York is even now endeavoring to discover the full extent to which the people are under obligations to him for his labors and achievements in that direction.

ness by employing as berry pickers the Indians on the Canada side known as the Garden river tribe, and by also dealing in timber, lumber, and vessel knees became



Reproduction of U. S. Top. Survey. Scale 1—40,000. Section of St Mary's River.

wealthy (one of his sons being in late years a leading merchant at the Sault). He was a man of sterling principles and maintained strict temperance rules in dealing with the natives. His residence near his warehouse and



store was a most satisfactory refuge on that Saturday night where wet clothes could be dried, appetizing meals obtained and good beds enjoyed.

While sitting by his evening fireside the writer noticed a window light gleaming on the Canadian side of the river—which was there quite narrow—and on enquiry was informed by the trader that it was at the house of Rev. George MacDougall, a Methodist missionary to the Indians, who had erected a dwelling house and chapel among their lodges and wigwams, and was the source of a marvelous reformation among them. The trader and his good wife grew eloquent in his praise. They said that he was of Canadian birth at a Colonists' settlement near Owen Sound, on Georgian Bay, followed the occupation of farming for a time, then became the owner of a small vessel in the fishery industry, afterwards established a country store, became a man of family, and a prosperous merchant. When thus situated he became interested in religious concerns and impressed with a conviction that it was his duty to become a missionary to Indians with whom he had been much in contact as a lad and had learned their language and customs. Acting upon this conviction he had sold his store, removed with his family to Toronto, and maintained them and himself while he entered a Methodist theological seminary there and for two or more years sought to qualify himself as a preacher. This done he had been assigned to the Garden river tribe and came among them in 1850-1.

He found them pagans and utterly debauched from the effects of liquor sold to them by the Sault traders. He had already overthrown that demon as the dominant influence, had instituted industrious habits, had established a school, organized a church, and among the converts was the old chief, who had been previously crippled by falling into a fire in his lodge when drunk and having his hands permanently mutilated, who was now a devout believer and leading an exemplary life. The trader went



on to say, that, owing to the difficulties of communication, as there was no post office on the Canada side within a hundred miles, and letters had to come by round-about routes through the States, the missionary had been in severe straits for money and food. The trader had helped him with provisions but yet he had not money enough to pay the postage on his letters accumulating at the United States Sault post office. The use of international postage stamps was then unknown. Postage was charged according to distance, about 5 cents for each hundred miles *payable on delivery*. The rate from Toronto would consequently range from 25 to 50 cents on each letter according to weight and route.

The trader's statement led the writer to go to the post office on his reaching the Sault, apply for the MacDougall mail on which a dollar or two postage was due, which he paid and sent by the returning boat's crew to Mr. Church to see delivered to the stranger missionary with the hope that the delayed remittance might be found enclosed therein.

#### A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

The next season (1853) the writer returned to the Sault in charge of the canal construction forces, and was 'ere long introduced to the missionary. The acquaintance became quite intimate as the writer learned to esteem him as a most worthy missionary, an expert business man, and a pulpit orator of remarkable power.

The construction company's steam tug was often used to pay a visit to the Garden river mission and to occasionally attend the church service and Sunday school. Often, visitors at the agency were glad to join in those excursions, which included such eminent men as President Corning (the first of the N. Y. C. Ry.), Director Fairbanks (subsequently governor of Vermont), and other notables who left substantial gifts to evidence their approval of what they saw under such primitive conditions. Some of the prayer meetings were attended when the old

chief mentioned on page 38 was heard in prayer in the "Objibwa tongue," the tones of his voice were thrilling in pathos and gave full proof of his sincerity in addressing the Great Unseen Spirit as his adopted Saviour and life long guide.

#### A BUSINESS TRANSACTION.

The canal work called for millions of feet of lumber and timber, and in searching for that most accessible it was found that a considerable portion could be obtained near the Garden river. The missionary's business training then came into service.

He conducted the negotiation when the writer met the chiefs and made them an offer for their standing timber which they gladly accepted. The largest log house on the location was owned by a junior Indian chief named Ogista, who asked the missionary to let him make the bargain for use of the same. He proposed that the 40 wood choppers should occupy the house except one corner reserved for himself and family to be partitioned off with blankets, and with the privilege of their going to the company's flour and pork barrels and other provisions with an agreement that when those ran low he would supply deficiencies by fishing in the river and turning in his "catch" to the common stores! The missionary and agent kept grave faces while mutually amused. The agent explained that in such a case he would have to obtain consent from his principals at the east which would take too long, but was prepared to hire the premises exclusively at once. To this the chief finally assented. When the timber was paid for to the tribe, much satisfaction was expressed and a letter of thanks to the writer was prepared in the native language and the hieroglyphic signature of the chiefs attached in figures of bears, wolves, beavers, birds, etc., etc. This interesting document was lost when the writer's residence was burned at Tarrytown, New York, years afterwards.

## PULPIT ABILITIES DEVELOPED.

The erection of the first Protestant church at the Sault took place in 1853-4 and the missionary was invited to occupy the pulpit as often as he could. When he addressed a white congregation in his own native language it was easy to discover that he was a natural orator of rare ability, and could have commanded a large salary if willing to cater to that end. But his consecration to his chosen work was constant as it was sincere. When coming to the Sault, as he did frequently during the winter season, he knew that he was always welcome at the "Agency," especially when he brought his good wife and flock of children to enjoy a few days of "outing." Later on his eldest daughter was taken on a tour to some of the Lake Superior villages that she might see life outside of Indian surroundings. In 1855 the writer's residence at the Sault came to an end and his intercourse with the missionary gradually faded out until an interval of some 15 years occurred with no word from him.

## REVIVED INTERCOURSE.

Along in the "seventies" the writer with his wife took a trip to Saratoga Springs and on taking seats at the hotel dinner table found themselves face to face with ex-Judge and Mrs. Gould, of Owosso, Michigan, who had been guests at the "Agency" in its palmy days.

Reminiscences were exchanged and enquiries made as to the missionary at Garden river whom they remembered with much interest. When the writer replied to them that he had lost all clues to that person and did not know whether he was living or not since he had removed from his former location, a gentleman sitting next at the table said, "I can supply information respecting him to date. I am the secretary of the Canadian Methodist Missionary Society, which considers him its greatest ornament. He is stationed at Edmonton, in the North West territories, and is superintendent of missions to the Indians over the





With kindest regards  
of G. M. Gougeon



vast plains between Manitoba and the Rocky Mountains. If you will write him a letter in my care I will see it forwarded to him." This was done and a few weeks later came a reply covering many pages. It gave an account of his leaving Garden river for the northwest, crossing Wisconsin by rail to the Mississippi river, going north as far as he could by steamer on that river, then "portaging" across to the Red river of the North—navigating that on a flat boat to Port Garry, now the city of Winnipeg—then starting in ox carts with his family on a journey of 1200 miles to Edmonton his then location, and ending with a warm invitation to visit him and see the surrounding country which he predicted would be reached by civilization in the future with a grand development in store for it. From that time on, occasional letters were exchanged. And in one he sent his photograph with the autograph signature attached shown at page 67. After a few years, notices of him appeared in the religious newspapers as being on a tour of the British Islands in the interest of the Canadian Missionary Society and stating his eloquence to be such that the largest churches and halls were crowded to hear him, and that he was considered one of the most attractive pulpit orators of the day.

#### THE LAST INTERVIEW.

On his return to America a letter came to the writer stating when and where he could be met in New York city, and there hands were grasped once more. Popularity had not changed him but he appeared the same cheery, zealous, wholly consecrated laborer in his Master's vineyard as when in obscurity at Garden river. An appointment was made for him to spend the next Sabbath at the writer's home at Tarrytown on the Hudson, and occupy the pulpit of one of the churches. But on Saturday came a telegram stating that his missionary society required him to address a missionary meeting at Montreal the next day, and he must comply, much to his regret. *We never met again.*

Not long afterward the newspapers announced that he had lost his life on the great western plains in a "blizzard," that the Dominion government ordered a search for his body by the mounted police, that after an interval of a few days it was found and buried at his mission station, the people in the northwestern territories generally joining in mourning for his loss as a public calamity.

#### VISITING THE GREAT WESTERN CANADIAN PLAINS.

Nearly twenty years later, in 1898, the writer visited Edmonton, on his way to and from a trip to the Mackenzie Basin via the Athabasca river. Then he found one of the missionary's daughters married to a prominent resident of the town. When after a trip of over a hundred miles by buck board wagon to Athabasca river landing he reached the Hudson Bay Co. post there, the wife of the factor of that important station proved to be another daughter, both of whom on learning the writer's identity, vied with each other in making his trip prosperous and adding very materially to his comfort in properly outfitting therefor. The third and eldest daughter became the wife of a brother of Lady Strathcona (when she was plain Mrs. Donald Smith) who was called to the Dominion Senate but had deceased, and his widow, although possessed of a handsome residence in Edmonton, was then absent, but was met later at the east. The eldest son, Rev. John MacDougall, was filling his father's place as superintendent of Indian missions. Another son had become a wealthy rancher residing at Morley near Banff on the Canadian Pacific Railway, with whom the mother was tenderly cared for in her old age. The memory of the pioneer missionary was revered at Edmonton as one of the most eminent men in western Canada. A memorial church was there named for him, and his portrait looks down from the walls of the missionary society rooms in Toronto. He had the reputation of exercising unequalled influence with the wild Indians of the plains with whom

he came in contact, of which many thrilling incidents were related, but only one will now be mentioned.

#### A NOTABLE INDIAN COUNCIL.

In the fifth decade of the 19th century the great plains of Canada were traversed by vast herds of buffalo which annually migrated between Texas and the Peace and Liard river basin of the north and provided the staple food of the Black Feet and other migratory tribes numbering in the aggregate thousands of warriors of cruel and vindictive natures who lived as their ancestors had done from prehistoric times, and as long as buffalo were plenty, cared little for the future. In the following decade the first trans-continental railways crossed all the bison ranges and brought white hunters within easy contact of the vast herds on the plains. Then the slaughter of extermination commenced and the Indian's staple food began to manifestly diminish. They saw white settlers coming in increasing numbers from the east, and concluded that they were the cause of the food supply shrinkage, and after many council deliberations agreed upon demanding that the "pale faces" return from whence they came and leave the Indians in sole possession of the plains. This of course meant a bloody and costly war which the Dominion government was anxious to avoid, but did not see any way to maintain its dignity and authority, other than to send an armed force to overawe the savages. Becoming aware of Missionary MacDougall's exceptional acquaintance with Indian affairs the officials applied to him for advice and decided to act as he thought best. He advised against military measures as sure to bring on massacres of settlers, as had been the case in the States, but to conciliate them by means suited to their natures. A *carte blanche* having been given to him to direct matters, he caused an invitation to be sent to the chiefs to hold a council with Dominion government officials at a certain rendezvous and to bring their camp

followers and families with them to enjoy a feast suited to the occasion to continue for a week or more. Under his directions a large tent was provided and plenty of provisions to be distributed among the wigwams of the tribes. The attendance of the Indians was general and satisfactory. The feasting commenced before the council meeting which was held in the large tent, the chiefs were placed in front of a platform upon which the government officials and the missionary sat. The chiefs were asked to state their grievances which they all did by turn with many words and gestures, in the presence of their own people, as the younger braves, the squaws and the maidens, filled up the tent behind them.

#### A FEARFUL WAR AVERTED BY MISSIONARY TACT.

When they had all been heard with the deference and dignity suited to the Indian ideas of council etiquette, the missionary addressed them in their own language as the spokesman of the government officials then present. He said that before the whites could decide to comply with the Indians' wishes about leaving the country, some conditions must be distinctly understood and agreed upon. One was that they could take back with them the property they had brought into the Indian country. The chiefs unanimously signified assent to this proposition. Then said the missionary we shall want to have you deliver us all the rifles, knives, guns and ammunition, which, as you know, we brought into the country, and wish to take with us when we go. The young braves and ordinary warriors heard this statement and thinking that they were about to lose all their outfit of this description, quietly withdrew to hide their belongings of that kind while there was time! After this condition was amplified at great length with many gestures the speaker next made claim to all the blankets and sewing materials to be found upon the persons or in the tent of each Indian family. To this the squaws and maidens paid strict attention and



one by one quietly withdrew to consult as to that contingency, the general feeling being that, while the chiefs deliberated, they had better break up the camp and flee to the mountains to save what to them were necessities or luxuries which could not be dispensed with. When the missionary finished his long speech and informed the chiefs that they could take time to deliberate and meet in council the next day, the latter rose and looked about to find themselves comparatively alone! When they reached their wigwams, their troubles with the wrathful inmates were still greater. The council reassembled but the war spirit of the chiefs was gone, and instead they offered an opportunity for giving them presents which were accepted, and treaty arrangements made, which averted a war then most imminent, but now no longer possible.

The tact displayed by Missionary MacDougall on that occasion, said my informant,—a leading business man at Edmonton—was worth more to Canada than a brigade of soldiers and millions of money. Considering the experiences in the Riel rebellion, and that the scene of the impending conflict was 1000 miles further from railway connections and base of supplies, this estimate was certainly not excessive.

#### THE CLOSE OF AN ACTIVE LIFE.

The particulars of the death of this noble pioneer were also learned in Edmonton. He had been with a party hunting buffalo on the plains for his usual winter's food supply, and started to return to his home on horseback alone, was caught in a "blizzard," lost his way, dismounted, laid down exhausted and died. His body was found a week or more afterward, the countenance indicating a peaceful end. Wild animals had approached and left the mark of their teeth upon his hunting knife sheath, but his body was untouched, which was buried by loving hands at the mission cemetery.



Thus closed the career of one of Canada's most intrepid and useful pioneers: One who feared God and loved his fellow men, especially the natives of the forests and of the plains. His gospel light first seen glimmering in the hamlet at Garden river, Ontario, increased until it illuminated the vast basins of the North and South Saskatchewan rivers in the heart of the northwest territories.

#### THE LAST LINK IN THE CHAIN.

Fifty years had nearly passed since Mrs. MacDougall came from Garden River with her flock of little children to the "Agency" at the Sault to spend some days of rest which her good husband was anxious she should enjoy. As a widow she came with her eldest daughter (the widow of Senator Hardisty before mentioned), and visited the writer at his residence in Toronto in 1901. Such incidents as she related of the hardships endured in reaching and making a home on the banks of the North Saskatchewan river would alone prove the truth of the proverb that "*Truth is stranger than fiction.*" She gave the parting hand grasp at the door, and was no more seen by the writer, who afterwards had a notice of her death at Morley not long afterwards. Thus the last link of that missionary connection was broken!

## CHAPTER VI.

### CONFLICTS AND TRAGEDIES.

Prior to and during the State canal construction work at the Sault, liquor traffic was unrestrained by any law and proved the source of endless trouble there, as elsewhere under like conditions. Over fifty grog shops were said to be located along or near the main village street, which, part of the way, was nearly parallel to the canal reserve.

The young agent found this evil influence one of the most serious difficulties he had to contend with, but he stood on the vantage ground of a knowledge of its deadly nature, and of practicing strictly temperance habits himself.

When a lad he had been employed in a village store in New England which was situated next to an old style tavern with a bar as its main feature, the side entrance to which was directly across from the alley delivery door of the large grocery department of his employers.

Being much of the time at that point, he saw who were the most frequent visitors to the opposite doorway, and, knowing them, was shocked to notice how many ills including deaths hovered about their daily lives, and how they went from bad to worse, as time passed on. He determined to rouse attention to the curse, organized a temperance society and enlisted a "cold water army" of a hundred or more of the village youths. This brought down upon him the wrath of the dealers, who threatened the merchants employing him with large loss of trade unless he was discharged. But the latter were in sympathy with him and resisted such interference. Then

came trumped up charges and perjured evidence before a magistrate, but he held his ground and license laws were enforced as never before. Hence on coming to the Sault he was no novice in that line of action, and the liquor dealers found that it was wise not to be too much in evidence in breaking over the few safeguards by which he sought to shield the workmen from temptation. Finding one of the dealers one day on the canal premises mounted on a barrel and haranguing a group of the laborers with advice to join in a strike, he walked up, charged the interloper with the offense of being a receiver of stolen goods taken from the company, and threatened instant arrest. The man jumped down and "took to the woods," a spectacle which most beneficially impressed the crowd! But unwary victims were to be found by scores, of which two or three examples will be given.

#### A WIFE'S VAIN EFFORTS.

Dennis O'Brien is the name used to designate a middle-aged Irishman who came to the Sault with a rosy cheeked wife but no children, to be a gang foreman of excavation. All went well for a time, but one day the wife came to the office for a private interview with the agent, and told him that Dennis was getting unsteady and she thought if he could be located where he would not be so near liquor-dens it would be the saving of him, and of unhappiness for her. As a result of her entreaties, Dennis was sent to the company's quarry at Drummonds Island, near Lake Huron, and his wife employed there as shanty house-keeper. The discharge of their duties was very satisfactory, and their wages advanced to a figure at which they could save \$50 or more per month (having no board to pay).

During the following year they came occasionally to the Sault an ideal looking couple. He strong, manly and warm-hearted, she affectionate, healthy and happy—constantly by his side (to keep him from falling into tempta-

tion, as she could do during the few hours of their stay while the stone barges were being unloaded).

Then came the time when the quarry work ceased, and the couple, having drawn a nice sum in accumulated wages, were in temporary boarding quarters. A few weeks later, the agent saw Dennis in the street in charge of a constable with a convict ball and chain attached to his leg. On making enquiry he learned that the poor fellow had fallen into his old habits, that his wife had died, his money was gone, and being a participant in a drunken brawl where a comrade had been killed, he was bound over for trial to the next session of court and in default of bail was allowed "jail limits" on the security of a ball and chain!

#### A PRODIGAL'S INTERRUPTED RETURN.

One day the foreman of a gang of wheelbarrow pitmen reported at the office that a young man of unusually refined appearance had applied for work of that kind, who was evidently not used to it, and asking for instructions, which were given to bring the applicant with him.

The agent looked him over with surprise. A handsome young man of not over 25 years but with a face indicating dissipation. He stated his case as being that of a son of wealthy (unnamed) parents in Buffalo, who had left college and had led a wild roving life for a year or more, to the great distress of his parents. He had seen the folly of giving full license to drinking habits as he had been doing, and now wanted to play the prodigal son act of returning to a rich father, confessing all, and with a parental blessing turn over a new leaf in life quite different from the past one. But he was out of money and, scorning to beg, would like to earn enough to pay his passage to Buffalo, where he was sure of a home welcome. Permission being given and shanty lodgings assigned, he seized a wheelbarrow and went to a place on the "run-way" planks.

It was soon noticed that he had symptoms of delirium

tremens but of a mild form, for which the best remedy was bodily exercise. A man was detailed to steady him at times, and in a day or two he was doing his full share of daily labor with an air of determination that proved the sincerity of his intentions. Thus a couple of weeks or more passed, when a steamer was advertised to go direct to Buffalo early the next morning. That day he requested that he might have the rules as to payment of wages suspended so that he might draw his wages in advance of the regular monthly pay day and take the steamer direct to his parental home. The agent personally supervised this being done, and with money in hand to pay the fare, the young man with tears in his eyes thanked the agent, who, with moistened eyes also, bade him good-bye.

Next morning the latter looking out of the window at the "Agency" saw the steamer for Buffalo sweep by down the river, and fancied that he could see the nameless young man on board.

After breakfast, as the agent was being conveyed to his office, his carriage driver noticed a human body lying in a vacant lot near by. The up-turned face was recognized as that of the young man. The surmise was, that with money in his pocket the latent thirst was aroused, he fought the drink demon once more, lost, wandered off in the chilly night to die and fill an unknown pauper's grave!

No illumination for the "Father's house" in that case!

#### THE LAST STRAW.

The old adage that "a drowning man will catch at a straw" is suggestive of the title to this last example.

One day the agent received a letter from ex-Chancellor Farnsworth, of Detroit, saying that he had a very faithful man as a coachman and house servant by the name of Patrick D—— who was acquiring the habit of "imbibing" too freely, and it was thought well by himself and friends



to have him change his residence and begin life anew elsewhere. Knowing that labor was in demand at the Sault, Patrick had decided to go there with his family and would present a letter of introduction which was relied on to secure him employment.

The writer of the letter was then one of the legal counsel of the company, and the agent of course would treat the request with respect, although the conditions were not to his mind. How Patrick would bear the terrible tests of the Sault surroundings was not a pleasant query.

In due time Patrick appeared with a wife and family of three little girls, found a dwelling place and was assigned to work mending tool handles in the carpenter shop. All went well for a time and Patrick proved to be a faithful workman. But one "pay day" night he became helplessly drunk and took several days to sober up, while loss to the company followed from other men having to wait for their tool repairs.

Patrick was reprimanded, but on profuse promises was reinstated—and kept straight for quite a while. Again he went on a "spree" of longer duration, was taken back, but warned that on a third offense his employment would end. When it came, his wife's pleadings prevailed and a third trial was granted. That sober interval lasted longer than before but ended at last in a week's debauch. Reinstatement was refused until one day Patrick rushed into the agent's office holding a paper in his hand exclaiming, "*Mr. Harvey, I have done it! I have done it!*"

"Done what?" was the surprised enquiry.

"Why," said Patrick, "I have put myself under an oath never to drink again, and of course I never will! Look at this." Sure enough there was a printed form of oath filled in to read: "I, Patrick D——, do hereby solemnly swear that I will never take another glass of intoxicating drink of any kind, so help me God! Signed and acknowl-

edged before me, . . . . . Dodge, a Justice of the Peace for the County of Chippewa, State of Michigan." There was Squire Dodge's well-known signature and the largest kind of a seal attached. "Now," said Pat, "try me again and there will be no failing this time." "All right," said the agent, "we will test this cure," and Patrick went to work again.

Months passed by and it seemed as though Pat was a final winner, but the holidays came round and Pat fell. He seemed to have lost all heart and kept drinking harder until death came, and with it, that of his wife. Word did not come to the agent until both lives were ended. Thus poor Patrick's "last straw" failed to save him. Three little girls, aged about 6, 4 and 2 years respectively, were left alone after winter had isolated the place for a long six months. Of these the agent at once took charge, headed a subscription paper and sent it to the Irish workmen who responded liberally. A nurse was hired, rooms rented, and the orphans made more comfortable than ever before. Every Sunday they were taken by the nurse to the church of their parent's faith, where most of the men attended. The sight exerted a feeling of sympathy among the men and of good will to the company officials, although that was not counted upon at the time. A wealthy resident of the town came forward and offered to adopt the eldest girl and care for the others until relatives could be found. To this the agent as their guardian "*de facto*" cordially assented.

#### SOME SUNSHINE.

A dozen years or more passed when the agent, being again at the Sault, was invited into the handsome parlor of the adopting father. A young lady was called into the room, who, after executing some difficult music very creditably on the piano, was introduced as the former waif, and eldest child of Patrick D——!

## CHAPTER VII.

### EARNEST QUEST FOR "A BIBLE CHURCH."

In the afternoon of a long summer day in 1853, the writer was engaged in engineering duties with his assistant (the late L. L. Nichols) near the Lake Superior end of the Sault canal line, when their attention was attracted to a craft coming towards them from the west, the like of which with its occupants they had never seen before.

It was a large, high-sided, open boat, evidently built by unskilled makers. It had no sails but was propelled by a series of long oars on each side, passed through openings in the sides, and with the motion of the oars corresponded the rise and fall of a row of white objects which bobbed up and down like jumping jacks.

On near approach, it was seen that six young men were rowing who had on high conical shaped caps made of white rabbit skins like those seen in pictures styled "fool" or harlequin caps, which alone appeared above the boat sides and in motion gave it a weird or ghostly look not easily described. At the stern, an old white man was handling the rudder tiller, near him sat an elderly Indian woman, while on forward or aft seats were young "half breed" women and children with camp utensils and miscellaneous bundles, indicating a long voyage. The writer commenced counting them aloud, and when he reached 16, remarked to his assistant, "If Jacob was now going down into Egypt by boat, we might think he was coming this way!"

Soon the boat, on nearing the ground, was brought about so as to land stern foremost. The old man stepped ashore, approached the writer, rabbit skin cap in hand,

and surprised him with the question in rather broken English, "Sir, can you tell me where I can find 'a Bible church?' " There being at that time no organized church or church edifice at Sault Ste. Marie village of the description he evidently meant, the reply was made that the nearest one was at the "Garden river mission" 12 miles down the river, which he would see if he kept near to the left shore going eastward.

Glancing at the near-by rapids he enquired if his boat could pass them safely. Upon being assured that with the aid of a rope it could, if lightly loaded, be eased down from a path near the edge of the water, he asked no other questions, but seeming to have the reaching of that church goal solely on his mind re-entered the boat, spoke a few words to the crew in Indian tongue and guiding the boat to the rapids brink, the occupants disembarked, produced a rope, and following directions soon had their craft on the lower level, resumed their places, and rowed rapidly out of sight as though on business requiring the utmost dispatch!

Some days later, Missionary MacDougall, from Garden river, met the writer at the Sault and accepted an invitation to spend a night at the "Agency." The incidents of the enquiry for "a Bible church" was referred to after supper, and the missionary was asked if he had seen the strange boat and its occupants?

"Oh yes," said he, "the old man you saw landed near my house the same day, and told me of the directions you gave him. He then asked if there was a Bible church in my charge—I pointed to the mission chapel as of the kind he was seeking for. After questioning me closely, and on being informed that a Bible was then in the pulpit to be read and explained in public to all hearers, he became satisfied that his search was successful. He asked permission to use a vacant lot for erecting his family tent and additional lodges near the chapel, and to attend religious services in it with his family.



This request being most cordially granted. "Then," said the missionary, "I was informed that a journey of over two thousand miles, requiring over two years of time, was joyfully ended!"

"I have since learned his history from his own lips," said Missionary MacDougall, "which is a most remarkable one and I can now repeat it to you, substantially as follows:

"His name is John Sebastian, his age probably over sixty years, but he does not know how much more it may be. He was born on one of the Orkney Islands, north of Scotland, and has but a faint recollection of his birth place surroundings, as he was left an orphan at an early age and as a lad was received into the service of the Hudson Bay Fur Company and sent on one of its vessels to the west coast of Hudson Bay at Fort York, at the mouth of the Nelson river. He says that the practice of that company for centuries has been to select indigent hardy Scotch lads and send them to the vast wilds of northern Canada to become expert trappers, and by encouraging them to marry Indian wives and raise families to attach them to certain localities or districts for life, where they proved most valuable retainers or semi-official agents in training the native Indians to rely upon catching furs and dealing with the company for subsistence.

"To this life he was introduced, was sent to a remote district far in the interior, presumably in the Mackenzie or North Saskatchewan river basins, and in the ordinary course of events selected an Indian wife and became the father of a numerous family.

"One of the rules of the fur company was that their high grade trappers, like himself, were to sign enlistment papers for a term of five years at a head office of the district before a chief factor. If during that term they left their districts without permission they were liable to be apprehended and forcibly sent back with heavy fines imposed for neglect of their vocation. When the time of



enlistment came near the close of a successful term they were treated with special attention by the post officers, their families were invited to come with them and trade freely, jollity, feasting and drinking were in order until the renewal enlistment papers were signed and a new five years life of exposure and hardship entered upon. In dealing with the company no money was used. The unit of value was a beaver skin of average quality. A certain number of various inferior skins, like musk-rats and rabbits, were worth a beaver skin. On the other hand, a silver grey fox pelt was worth so many beavers, and so on. The representative emblem or check for a beaver skin was a peculiar water marked goose quill made in London, which could not be counterfeited in that country. Hence when a trapper's furs were brought to the post, inspected, and tallied off, he received so many goose quills. These he took to the company's stores where he could exchange them for ammunition, clothing, food supplies or fancy articles of merchandise, as he chose. In case he did not come annually he could send his furs which were credited to him on account against articles bartered for. His recollection is, that he made at least eight of these quinquennial or enlistment trips to Norway House or Fort York before the one in which he found an itinerant Methodist preacher or missionary holding religious services near by. One of these he attended and at once the long slumbering memories of his native heath were revived. He recalled going to the rude rustic kirk on his native island a few times, hearing hymns sung, the Bible read, and prayers offered up to God. He had never learned to read, and hence had made no progress in supplementing memory by written records, or in keeping pace with a knowledge of the world's conditions or advancement. But *then* a new impulse was given him with the longings to commence life over again. Instead of feasting and drinking during his short stay at the company's post, he plied the preacher with questions, learned about the existence of

the Bible as the word of God, about prayer as a means of spiritual intercourse with Him, and of the appointment of one day in seven as a day of physical rest and religious worship. On parting, the preacher gave him a four paged tract which he could not read. But on his return to his hunting camp, he set to work to learn to read from its letters, and by patient perseverance went over it until he mastered the words and then the sense, and could at the end of five years read it understandingly. Meantime he observed every seventh day as one of rest, and selected a clump of trees where he—unbeknown to his family—went regularly on those days to pray. There he believed God met him and granted him such spiritual knowledge that he was able to accept a free pardon for the past, and was filled with joy and peace, or—in other words—became converted and regenerated. He looked forward to the time when he could receive further instruction on his return to the post, but there was no preacher there and his heart sank within him. He learned, however, that hundreds of miles southward there was a land where Bibles and churches were to be found, but how to get there was apparently an impossibility. Again he enlisted and re-entered on five years of isolated life. Gradually he made up his mind to make a supreme effort to reach that Bible land. He discussed the matter with his wife and his sons and their wives, to whom grandchildren were born, and they all agreed to go with him except one daughter who had married an Indian who would not go, or let her, and they were left behind.

"Again the company's post was visited and supplies exchanged for furs, but this time he declined to re-enlist, notwithstanding the most urgent solicitations of the company agents to do so.

"Returning as far as Lake Winnipeg he turned south, and by hunting and fishing on the way did not lack for food. He followed the lake, it would seem, until he reached the Winnipeg river, and ascended that to 'the

Lake of the Woods,' when winter caused him to go into winter quarters. The next spring he started, and following river courses ascended Rainy river to Rainy Lake, crossed the short portage to the head waters of the Kaministiquia river, and followed that down to its mouth at Lake Superior.

"He had then traversed nearly two thousand miles by a circuitous route from his interior camp and could make his way with comparative safety in ordinary frail canoes, but on the broad deep waters of the greatest of lakes further progress with them became dangerous. He could proceed by inside channels to the vicinity of the Nipigon on Pic rivers but then the broad expanse of Lake Superior could not be avoided. There he spent the second winter near a Hudson Bay Co. post, where he could obtain nails and tools to some extent. There he built the odd appearing boat first mentioned, and clothed the family in rabbit skin garments, including the conical caps which looked like sea gulls fluttering in the sun in full possession of the boat on that midsummer afternoon!

"Thus he arrived at the Sault, and set his foot on the soil of a country he did not even know the name of when enquiring only for 'a Bible church!'"

Thus far the narrative reported by the good missionary.

It made at the time a deep impression on the hearer, who was a witness to the truth of a part of it.

Not long afterward, the writer had a business call to "Church's Landing," near the McDougall mission, and there met John Sebastian once more. Inviting him to a seat on a near-by log, the writer asked him about the incidents mentioned in the missionary's report of his experiences, especially referring to the tract and the statement that he had learned to read by studying without a teacher. "That is the fact," said Sebastian, "and if you wish I will show you the tract." He went to his canoe, crossed the river, and returning placed it in my hands. It was

an ordinary four-page leaflet, printed in London, England, for a missionary society. It has been a matter of regret to me in after years that I did not make a written memorandum of its contents at the time, or enquire if the gift of a larger volume would be deemed by him a sufficient inducement to part with it, that it might be exhibited as proof of what a "mustard seed" like that might grow to!

The writer's present recollection is that it was a simple exposition upon a scripture text, with an impression that the latter was Matt. 11:28-30: "Come unto me," etc., but of this he is not certain.

He told me of his two years journeyings to reach religious instruction in a "Bible church," and that he had at last found one just suited to his needs. He related some very interesting incidents of his journey, including some temptations to abandon it which came in his way, but brevity forbids repeating them.

A digression will here be made to state that when John Sebastian enquired at the Sault for "a Bible church," there was none of the description he had in mind. Steps were being then taken, however, to build a modest edifice in the Presbyterian connection which is still standing on the spot where erected, although now superseded after fifty years of use by a more modern and capacious one of that religious denomination, while others have added several attractive church edifices. But as evidence of the marvelous national growth in the last half of the 19th century, it can be stated that when that pioneer church was built in 1853-4 it was the only similar one in the northern zone west of Lake Michigan--which was then termed the "northwest" section of the United States (except possibly the first one built in the new village of St. Paul, in the then Territory of Minnesota, which antedated it, if at all, by only a few weeks, but is no longer in existence).

*The first baptisms that took place in it was that of John Sebastian, his wife, children, and grandchildren.*

Missionary McDougall advised that they should be received into that church, and officiated at the service.

Employment was provided for the patriarch for a time at the Sault, where he died not long afterward, when the writer was residing in a distant part of the country.

Over forty years after that memorable baptismal scene, which the writer witnessed, he visited the Sault and attended a Sabbath service in the same church edifice and audience room. When enquiring after the Sebastian family, he was informed that the very creditable music then rendered by the choir was in part due to the skill of the organist *who was a granddaughter of John Sebastian!*



## CHAPTER VIII.

### FRAGMENTARY EPISODES.

#### HURRICANE PHENOMENA.

As examples of the terrific force which atmospheric pressure can develop, the following instances at the Sault will be mentioned:

The writer was sleeping in one of the "wings" of the "Agency" on or about April 1st, 1854, when he was awakened at half past one o'clock in the morning by the falling of the brick chimney upon the roof overhead. On opening a window to ascertain the cause of the crash, he found that a thunder storm was raging without, accompanied by electrical flashes so intense and continuous that his sight was blinded, and his eyes did not entirely recover from the strain upon them for several weeks.

The next morning he went through the village to witness marvelous effects, of which the following will be mentioned:

The tornado came from the west and was reported to have torn a swath through the forests south of Lake Superior for a hundred or more miles until it emerged at the river above the rapids. There it encountered the 800-ton side-wheel steamer, Sam Ward, which lay in its winter berth alongside a wharf, to the heavy oak timbers of which it was fastened with two anchor chains. The wind caused the timbers to be broken and shoved the steamer up the inclined banks, leaving it several hundred feet beyond the water line! The owners had a large force employed for weeks in hauling it back to the place from which it started. A singular feature in the case was that while its heavy iron "smoke stack" was twisted

off, its light cabin, frame work and window lights were not wrecked, a condition certainly quite inexplicable.

On the beach near by was a large "York boat" or "batteaux" of perhaps thirty tons capacity, laid up for the winter. The wind raised this and carried it over a field on which small timber had been cut, leaving the stumps to act like a nutmeg grater. Each one took a piece from the boat until nothing remained but the gunwale frame which was dropped whole at the end of the lot as a proof of former existence!

Midway, facing the village street, stood a large two-story tavern. This had its roof raised, carried a half mile and dropped in the middle of the river below the rapids without a shingle falling by the way. The writer loaned the owner some vessel mainsails to cover the lower stories until a new roof could be provided. The ground sections were not materially impaired. Several dwellings were wrecked and occupants in some cases had their limbs broken in bed by falling debris.

The little church, elsewhere mentioned, was raised, moved a few inches on its foundations, and dropped with such force as to give the shattered plastering the appearance of fish scales, but not otherwise injured.

On the lower level river docks bundles of iron rods were lifted and carried a score of feet or more.

The storm was reported to have unroofed a settler's house on St. Joseph Island, taken a bed up with children sleeping on it and dropped them in a pasture uninjured. At seven o'clock that morning a building on the shores of Lake Ontario, between Hamilton and Toronto, was mentioned in the local newspapers as having been demolished by a storm which disappeared on the lake beyond. This was presumably the one that made havoc at the Sault and traversed the 350 miles of air line distance at a speed averaging over 70 miles per hour.

## AN IMPORTANT SAFE REFUGE.

One guarantee of order at the Sault, fifty years ago, was the presence of a United States garrison at old Fort Brady, as the following incident in the case of a civil officer, needing a refuge, illustrated.

A young Irishman in the canal forces had indulged in liquor drinking to excess and was discharged. This was followed by more indulgence and in a frenzied condition he met the agent on the canal reserve mounted on his favorite mouse-colored pony, elsewhere mentioned.

The madman seized the horse-bridle and began a wordy abuse of the rider. The latter's first impulse was to draw back his heavy riding boot and with a blow from it lay the interloper low, but when he saw the blade of a long knife projecting from the latter's side pocket and his hand reaching for it, wisely slipped down from the saddle, walked to the town justice's office and had a warrant issued for the offender with delivery to a constable. Meanwhile, the former led the pony into a near-by liquor shop and in bravado style proposed to pawn it for drinks for the crowd. While a general laugh was going round, the constable appeared with a warrant, the young man made a dash for the back yard with the officer after him, pistol in hand, which was fired (by accident, as the latter claimed), but the bullet killed the fugitive on the spot.

When news reached the canal work "run-ways," the Irishmen, to whom the victim was well-known, dropped their shovels and flocked to the fatal spot and began a search for the constable. He dodged about until compelled to leave cover, and make a run for the Fort. When seen on the street a rush was made for him and for a half mile or more he was running for life with hundreds in pursuit. He gained the pallisades gate, the sentry shut it after him, and ordered the crowd to halt outside. As the garrison appeared on the ground, the pursuers sullenly retired.

The excitement gradually subsided, no inquest was

held, the agent paid for the constable's rations at the garrison until he could leave quietly and take passage on a steamer for "parts unknown."

#### A LAW ENFORCING JUDGE.

Such was a proper complimentary title for Judge Daniel Goodwin, who, while a resident in the city of Detroit, was the circuit judge of the State supreme court for the entire upper peninsula—then one judicial district with summer terms only—held in succession at the several county court towns.

A small sized man of quiet personal carriage, he was a terror to evil doers as his sentences were impartial and usually maximum rather than minimum in penalties.

#### A PECULIAR EXAMPLE.

The State prosecuting attorney for Chippewa county, including the "Sault," was about that time a "roystering" young man highly impressed with his official importance, a convivial expert and notoriously licentious.

A married night watchman, when absent on vocation duties, found occasion to object to frequent visits at his house, but the official, not at all abashed, assumed to threaten the husband with legal penalties for creating social disturbances! The scandal attracted the attention of third parties by whose advice the husband had the attorney brought into court. A change of venue to Ontonagon county was obtained and the trial took place there. On the steamer passing from the Sault, the attorney, who had a seat next to the judge at the cabin table, kept up a lively conversation, cracked jokes freely and was very jaunty in style, evidently anticipating an acquittal or a mistrial. In due course the jury brought in a verdict of guilty, the judge promptly sentenced him to a long term in the State's prison, and on the steamer's return voyage he was not allowed in the main cabin, but took his meals with the deck hands, and had shackles in restraint of personal freedom to such extent as the sher-

iff's deputy thought necessary to insure a delivery at Jackson (prison).

Such examples were appreciated by the vicious element in the communities and law and order were respected accordingly.

#### A NARROW ESCAPE.

Mr. F—— was a carpenter and dealer in lumber in a small way at the Sault from whom some boards were taken for the company's use, before the price was fixed. When his claim was presented the agent reduced the price. The carpenter insisted upon his own valuation and made threats which finally took the form of accusing the agent of stealing the property, followed by a criminal suit against him on that charge, with a sworn affidavit on oath supporting the allegation.

The case came before Judge Goodwin, who dismissed the charge as groundless, but the carpenter rather gloried in the annoyance the affair had caused the agent, by loss of time and enforced attendance in court. The latter, to even up that score, had the carpenter arrested on the charge of perjury, and the judge ordered the trial to proceed the next day.

On reflection the defendant soon realized that he was in a serious predicament. If found guilty of a false oath which he had petulantly made, the judge would have the power to sentence him to a long term of imprisonment and would be likely to exercise it, which would ruin his prospects for life. He lost little time in finding whether the agent was disposed to be vindictive, was relieved from terrible suspense to hear him say that he considered the occurrence as the result of a hasty impulse, by a usually well-intentioned man, and would be ready, on request, to so state to the court, and ask that further proceedings be dismissed without costs. This was ratified in court after the judge had made some remarks on the danger of the sanctity of oaths being lightly esteemed.



A number of years afterward, the agent was walking in a street of an eastern city when a man on the opposite side espied him, hurried across and grasped his hand. "Don't you remember me?" said he, "I am the man who made a fool of myself at the Sault in trying to spite you; and you helped me out of a bad scrape. If I can ever return a favor to you, don't fail to call on me!"

#### LOCAL SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

The Sault settlement, although the oldest on the continent west of Montreal, had not thriven industrially or socially, as at the commencement of the second half of the nineteenth century it had no outlying farms to support population or trade, no roads except the main village street, the nearest settlements were on the island of Mackinac, sixty miles southwards, and at Marquette, one hundred and sixty miles west. It was completely isolated each year by the close of navigation for nearly six months, or from about the middle of November to middle of May. Its fixed population (not counting the garrison) was less than 500, of whom a majority were Indians and "half-breeds" with a sprinkling of white families among them.

The most important residents were the doctor, the editor and publisher of the weekly paper (the only one north of Saginaw) and a recently arrived warehouseman and land speculator. These formed a sort of bar-room-cabal which expected to have individually or collectively a potent voice in every matter of importance in the settlement.

When the canal work commenced, and the young agent took charge of it, they did not like his anti-bar attitude, but might have condoned that if they found financial results satisfactory. Their individual experiences were however quite the reverse. Doctor M—— commenced professional life as a blacksmith, but adopted the medical profession when scientific examinations were

not legally required. He had one specific for nearly all diseases, which was "calomel and jalap" in varied proportions. He was an expert checker player and, being the only medical man in the village, was accustomed to have patients wait for him to finish a game previously commenced. Therefore, when a messenger came from the canal office asking him to give attention to a workman with a broken leg, and he had just commenced a game of checkers, he sent a dose of calomel and jalap by the messenger, with directions to the injured man to take that and wait his arrival after he had finished the game he was then engaged in. It was to him a disquieting episode that he was never sent for again, a non-resident physician was soon induced to come there as the regular medical attendant at a liberal monthly salary, and a young surgeon from Canada was also patronized.\*

Dr. M—— became convinced that the canal work was being mismanaged, and made his opinions loudly known on the street and in the bar-rooms.

Editor B. was the local receiver of land sales revenues for the United States. The agent deposited moneys with him, but when a considerable shortage remained unprovided for and a plot was disclosed to make fraudulent claims upon the construction company, the agent suspended relations with him and advised the directors of the cause. His weekly newspaper then began printing doleful accounts of the agent and of the canal progress.

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\*In connection with the local medical conditions the following incident will be added:

A young man named Saxton, from lower Michigan, obtained the position of a foreman on the work and brought his wife to the Sault. She became ill and seemed to be fading out of life with a slow fever. She longed for cold liquids but the doctor (recently appointed) did not allow their use. The distressed husband informed the agent, and he went to see her. Her face was as white as the pillow it rested on and her voice was reduced to a whisper. When asked what could be done for her, she murmured "ice cream." The agent returned to the office and summoned the doctor. "Can the woman live?" was asked. "Oh, no," was the reply, "opiates are being given to reduce the pain until the end comes. What she wants will only increase her distress." "Well," said the agent, "if she is to die anyway she may as well die happy by having what she wants." Word was sent to the sick woman that ice cream would arrive, and to the housekeeper at the "Agency" to make it and take to her. When it arrived she clutched the pitcher and would not let it go until she had finished the contents, then fell into a quiet sleep. Her continued longings for ice cream were also satisfied and a speedy and complete recovery of health was the final result!

The third member of the cabal was Mr. W., who was the recent purchaser of a warehouse on the river's front which he wanted the company to hire at an exorbitant rental, and when the agent declined to rent it, his indignation was most pronounced, and his predictions of a woeful finale to the canal construction operations were made known without reserve. When navigation had closed, these aggrieved parties met in conclave with the result of at least keeping the village rumors circulating at a lively rate.

Coal not being procurable in those days, a large amount of cord wood for the fifty shanties and otherwise was a necessity. A section of hard wood land was found near by, a shanty erected thereon, roads cut out to and through it, some forty men employed there as wood choppers; while with the advent of snow a large number of teams and sleds commenced moving thousands of cords of the wood to the canal premises.

The cabal before indicated discovered that the new road crossed a tract of purchasable State swamp land and it was forthwith applied for in W.'s name. Then a written notice was sent to the agent forbidding the use of the road across it, expecting that terms would be humbly sought for, when a heavy bonus would be in order. Of course the notice was announced and discussed about town and developments awaited. But no reply came, and the wood teams jogged along over the route as before. After prolonged consultations the cabal decided upon extreme measures. A number of French "habitants" or "half-breeds" were hired in Canada and set at work by night to chop down trees and have them fall so as to block all passing over the road. Word came to the agent and orders were sent back to the wood-chopper-gang to clear out the obstruction, which was done during the day, and the next morning business went on as usual. The cabal at its next bar-room conference decided to increase the obstructing force and have it work

by daylight in vindication of legal rights to their landed property. But when the new operations commenced, ominous sounds were heard in the distance followed by the appearance of the wood-choppers corps in military rank and file, axes on shoulder with the cook in front beating a large metal kettle slung from his neck, evidently considering himself equal to the functions of a brass band! When the Canadian forces were sighted, wild yells, outdoing Camanche Indians, reverberated through the woods, while the choppers brandishing their axes as tomahawks made a rush for the Canadians, when the latter turned and fled to the ice covered river, nor stopped until its northern shores were reached in safety. All propositions to induce them to return were found to be fruitless!

The cabal discussed the situation and decided that such "trampling on the rights of American citizens" must not be longer tolerated, and as injunctions were at that season obtainable only at Detroit and beyond reach, the agent must be held personally responsible. Mr. W. procured a brace of old-fashioned horse pistols, loaded the same in the crowded bar-room and announced that if trespassing on his property continued for three days longer by "the official instigator of the outrages," his blood would be shed, and justice, if not law, vindicated! Excitement in the village was, if possible, increased. The agent had a call from the clergyman whose ministrations he attended, to urge his coming to an understanding with the malcontents on the ground that his life was too valuable to be jeopardized in such a matter.

The last night of the three days of grace found the cabal in session at the — House. W. with his pistols was there and also many eager onlookers.

Suddenly the door opened with a slam and Foreman Saxton entered dressed in the extreme of Texan cow-boy style—pants tucked into his boots—wearing a sombrero hat, a red flannel shirt, a broad belt wherein were two



pairs of pistols and a couple of long "bowie knives." With waving arms Saxton shouted that word had been passed around among the canal gangs that some of the villagers were talking about a fight with them, and a man named W. was to be a leader of the fray. The gangs were at first disposed to come in a body and join in a first-class "bout," but it was finally decided that as they would not know when, or where to stop, "a single combat" was better, and he was chosen to represent them. He did not know W. personally, but had heard him described as a white livered sneaking sort of a "cuss" and he would give any of those present five dollars to point him out and guarantee that he would stand up like a man and fight to the death with either pistols or bowie knives! A hush fell over the crowd. No one had a word to say, and after swaggering about in theatrical style Saxton departed to visit the bar-room of the other hotel, ostensibly to seek W. there. On the bandit's departure, W. hastily took his pistols to his room and the same were seen no more. The meetings were discontinued, the subject dropped, and the cord wood teams finished the season's work in good time.

But the newspaper's unfavorable reports were widely quoted by the outside press and of course attracted the attention of the Canal Construction Company directors residing in the Eastern States. A meeting was held and a committee of three appointed to investigate matters at the Sault, at the opening of navigation. They came and were delighted to find the reports utterly unfounded. The work was proceeding with the utmost order and energy, and marvelous progress had been made. Spontaneously they addressed a letter to the agent in the handwriting of Mr. J. W. Brooks, then general manager and chief engineer of the Michigan Central Railroad, which is before the compilers at this writing and a transcript is inserted as a marginal note;\* while a photo fac simile of the original will be found on following page.





S. M. F. S. Canal Company's Office,

Small St. New York June 8<sup>th</sup> 1854.

Chas. T. Harvey Esq  
Dear Sir

We have been here upon the  
work of the Canal, now something over 2  
miles - & having investigated the progress which  
has been made in the construction as well as the  
manner of keeping the account &c &c we think  
it is but just to yourself, and no affair for it  
is very gratifying to us, to place in your hands  
some written evidence of our views upon the  
conduct of this important enterprise. We feel sure  
that the public and even not a number of our  
friends have very just appreciation of the difficulties  
surrounding the execution of a great work  
in a locality remote from everything requisite  
to its progress. We feel that in consideration of  
the difficulties presented & the progress has been  
such as to show much energy and perseverance in  
its execution. It is gratifying to us to know  
that your enterprise of purpose and action is far  
above the reach of those who praise us without  
deserve, and that it is appreciated by a large circle  
of intelligent citizens here as well as among the  
stockholders of our company, who are also entitled

to you for the success, secured by your  
promptness in the selection of this very  
valuable mineral lands.

We will simply close by a cordial  
approval of your work thus far and  
congratulate you upon the success, under  
very great difficulties with respect the  
work has been so far conducted.

We are very respectfully Yours

J. H. Drake

John H. Drake

John H. Seymour

The directors' letter referred to has been preserved, and is of such an extraordinary character that a facsimile photo has been made and printed on the opposite leaf, the two pages in the original being made into one in the copy. The special reference to the canal is emphasized in the copy but not in the original.

S. M. F. S. Canal Company's Office,  
Sault Ste. Marie, June 8, 1854.

Charles T. Harvey, Esq.,

Dear Sir—We have been here upon the work of the canal now something over a week, having investigated the progress which has been made in its construction as well as the manner of keeping the accounts, etc. We think it is but just to yourself and we assure you it is very gratifying to us to place in your hands some written evidence of our views upon the conduct of this enterprise.

We feel that the public and even not a member of our Board have any just appreciation of the difficulties surrounding the execution of so great a work in a locality so remote from everything requisite to its progress. We feel that in consideration of the difficulties presented the progress has been such as to show much energy and perseverance in its execution.

It is gratifying to us to know that your integrity of purpose and action is far above the reach of those whose praise we should deplore, and that it is appreciated by a large circle of intelligent citizens here as well as among the stockholders of our company who are also indebted to you for the success secured by your promptness in the selection of their very valuable mineral lands.

We will simply close by a cordial approval of your work thus far and congratulate you upon the success under very great difficulties with which the work has been so far conducted. We are

Very respectfully yours,

J. W. BROOKS,  
ERASTUS FAIRBANKS,  
JOHN F. SEYMOUR.

*The reference to the cabal is especially noticeable.* While quartered at the "Agency" the occurrences herein recited were rehearsed to their great amusement, as also some other more comical collateral incidents of which brevity forbids suitable mention.

A needed spring vacation was taken by the agent during which he made a short call upon his aged parents in New England. The pained expression on the face of his mother on greeting him, and her request that he would give her full particulars of the disasters he had experienced during the winter, that she might sympathize more fully with him, led to the discovery that B. had obtained her address and was sending her gratis copies of the Sault newspaper containing slurs upon her son, and lies about the progress of the work!

#### AFTERMATH.

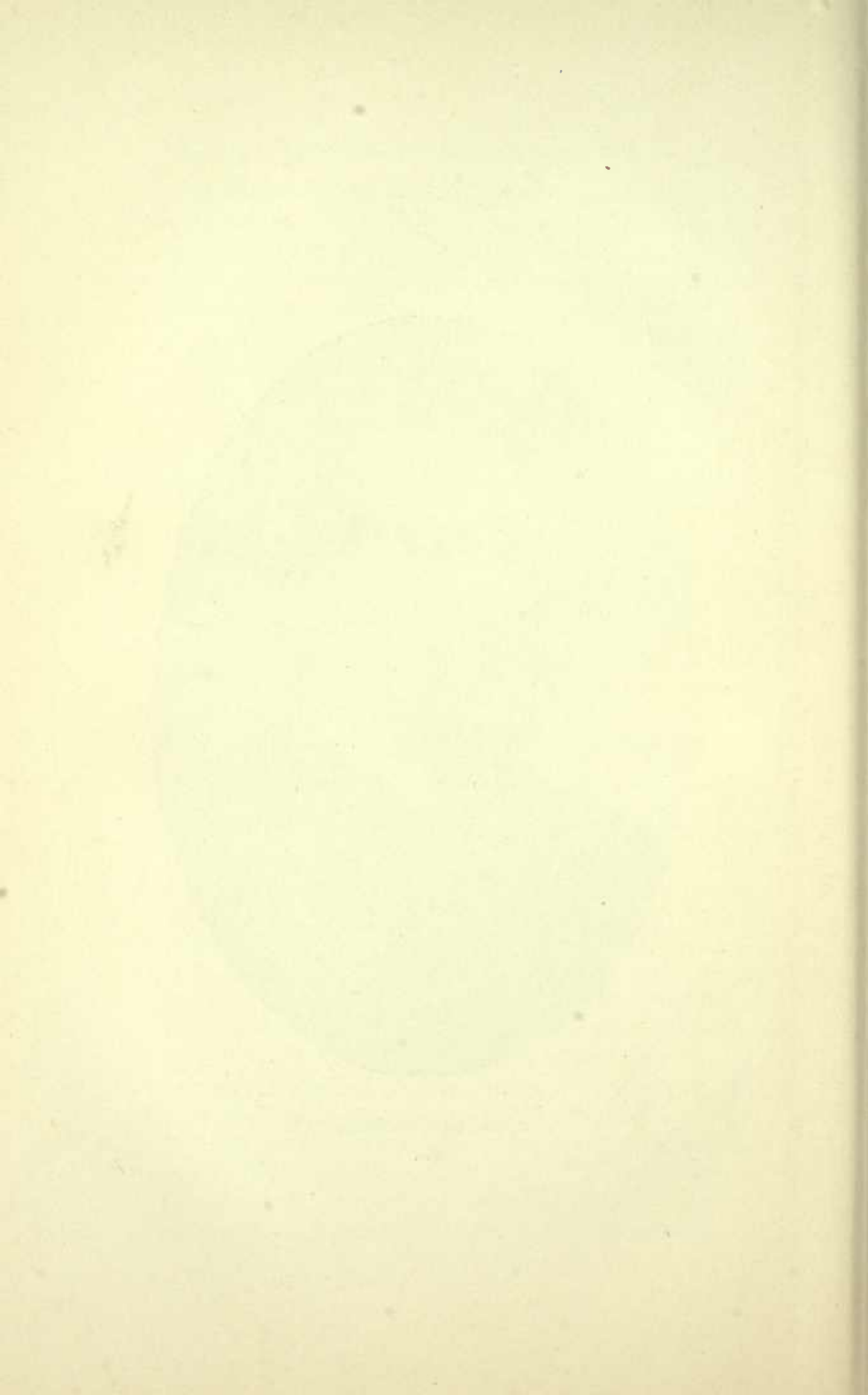
Time's subsequent kaleidoscopic changes in the personal relations and conditions of some of those herein-before mentioned deserves brief mention. The agent, after the completion of the canal, took charge of the company's lands which he selected for it in the upper peninsula with an office at Marquette. A few years later he resigned that position to act as engineer of the first mail road to Lake Superior from the south, of which he was the constructor under an arrangement with the United States government; was also projector, promoter, and engineer of the first railroad to reach Lake Superior from any direction and which is now a division of the Chicago & Northwestern Railway. Through his efforts at Washington, nearly four millions of acres of land was donated by congress for that and other railways in Michigan. In 1864 he changed his residence to New York State, with an office in New York city, while engaged in various engineering undertakings. In 1895 he made a tour in Canada which led to his engaging in engineering matters and removing a year or two later to Toronto, where he is



CHARLES T. HARVEY.

1884.









CHARLES T. HARVEY.

1904.

at present domiciled and in active exercise of his profession as a railway promoter and engineer. Of the cabal trio, Doctor M. retired into obscurity, leaving no available annals for present reference. Editor B. took a downward course. His paper changed hands. He left the Sault under a cloud, lived in very straightened circumstances at Detour on the Sault river, near Lake Huron, for a time, and later removed to Ohio. Speculator W. left the Sault soon after the canal was completed, and led a very checquered life. At one time reported as making large profits in promoting bank charters in Canada, at another as being a prominent negotiator of French capital for investment in the United States, occasionally attending levees of the Emperor in court dress, including knee breeches and a side sword! One day in the "eighties" the ex-agent, when walking near his office, then on Broadway, New York city, was surprised by being accosted by a man in the garb of a tramp with ragged clothes and broken shoes whom he recognized as W. formerly of the Sault. When told by the latter that he had not had food for two days, he took him to a near-by restaurant and gave him a turkey dinner while hearing of his latest run of "bad luck" as he termed it.

Afterwards he was a frequent visitor at the ex-agent's office who aided him in resuming a "presentable" appearance, and also in starting a book agency business in a small way—which however did not prove a success. He found other friends, but failing eyesight required an attendant to lead him about for a time until his decease occurred a few months later.

## CHAPTER IX.

### ONE OF "NATURE'S NOBLEMEN" UNEXPECTEDLY DISCOVERED.

When construction operations on the canal at the Sault, in 1853, were under way and working smoothly, I looked over to the Canadian side of the river with curiosity to discover what there might be of interest there. Aside from an unoccupied substantial stone dwelling house about opposite the "Agency" there was not a building in sight\* until the eye rested on the formidable Hudson Bay Fur Company's fort at the bend of the river, where the immense pulp and paper mills now stand.

The fort occupied a couple of acres or more, enclosed by a high pallisade barrier and with stone and timber overhanging bastions or block houses at the corners (one of which is still preserved, and a photo is inserted on opposite page), with loop holes for muskets or other fire-arm defense on the same plan as the original Fort Brady on the Michigan side then occupied by a garrison of United States regulars.

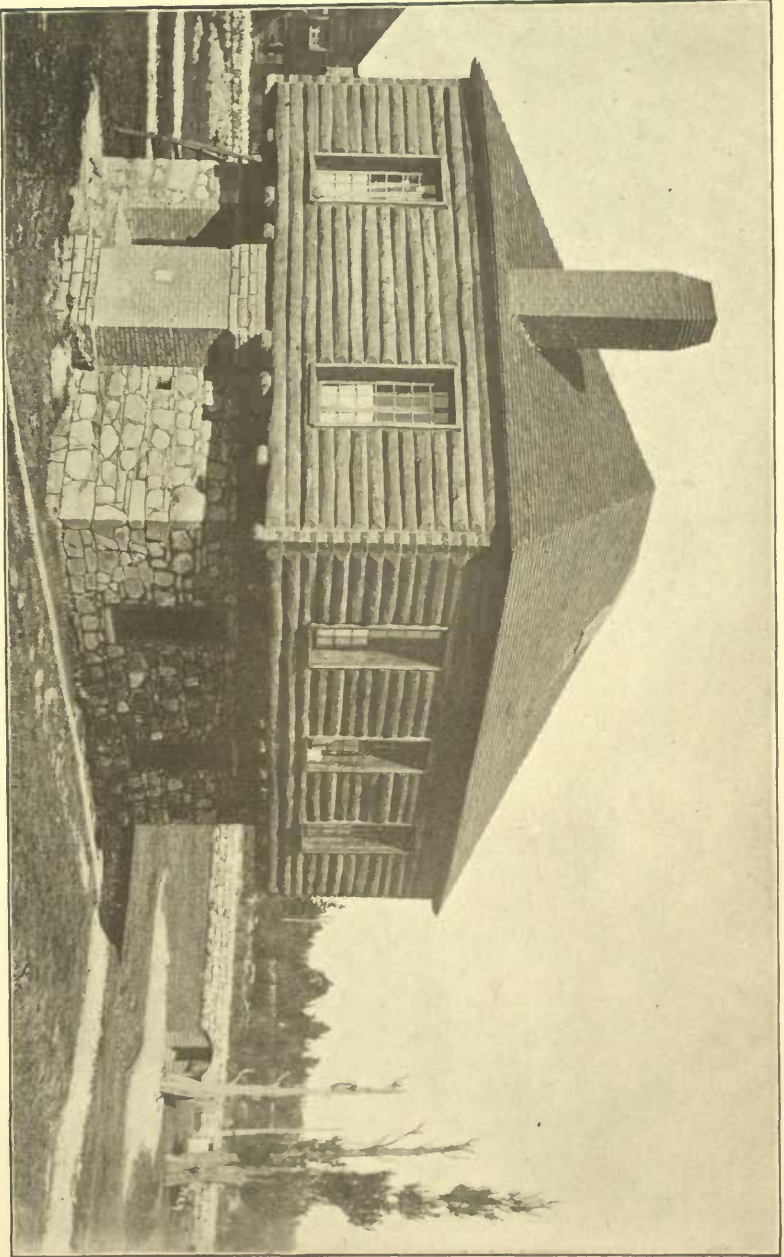
Inside the stockade was the chief factor's residence, the retail store, the large store houses and clerks' or retainers' quarters.

On enquiring about the personnel of the fur company's employees, I was told that the agent, styled the "chief factor," was a Mr. James Hargreave, who ruled the "post" in an autocratic way, that he was very austere in appearance, brusque in his manner, and did not take kindly to "Yankee" visitors, who had learned to avoid him, and some called him a "bear."

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\*The river bank on the Canadian side was lined with a dense thicket of alder bushes and small evergreen trees, which hid the few "half-breed's" one-story houses, on what is now the main street, from sight on the other side of the St. Mary's river.





Remaining "bastion" located at one of the corners of the Fort of the Hudson Bay Company at Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, the other three bastions and intervening palisades having been demolished in making room for water-power improvements.



This reputation increased my desire to see him and judge for myself, so one day I had the canal company tug land me at the Hudson Bay Company dock and wait while I proceeded to inspect the fort and its residents. On knocking at the door of what was evidently the main residence, a maid appeared from whom I learned that the "chief factor" was within, and I was ushered into a spacious reception room. Soon the opposite door opened and the chief appeared. He certainly has not been misrepresented, was my inner thought as I scanned his figure and facial profile. A heavy broad shouldered man of medium height, about fifty years old—a broad face, shaggy eyebrows, deep set eyes and a heavy head of hair, standing straight up like a bear's, made him look the reverse of jovial! Without offering me his hand or a chair when I arose, I opened conversation by saying, "My name is Harvey. I am the general agent of the construction company which has commenced the work of building the ship canal on the other side of the Falls, and am also land agent of the State of Michigan, to act for it with the United States government. I have noticed your formidable fortification, and learning that you were the chief factor of the great Hudson Bay Fur Company, which seems to be almost the sole occupant on this side, it seemed that as we are about equal in rank, we ought to know each other, and finding that I am the youngest, it seems proper that I should show due deference by being the first to make a formal official call." I then extended my hand, and in turn was asked to take a seat. Conversation followed, and I soon found that I was meeting a very intelligent and well bred gentleman. After a time he rang a bell, and on a servant's responding he said, as near as recollection serves, "Take this key, go to the inner wine closet and bring me the bottle in the padded wicker basket, with small glasses." While the messenger was absent, he said: "Mr. Harvey, I will frankly say that I feel much gratified by the compliment you have

paid me in calling as you have, and I will show my appreciation by asking you to drink to the health of the Queen in some Madeira wine that has nearly two centuries of age and cannot be matched in quality in your country I presume, or anywhere else except in the vaults of the chief offices of this ancient corporation. It was purchased and stored soon after this company was chartered by King Charles the Second, about 1670-5. A bottle or two is sometimes sent from London to the officers of my rank, and I will now do what I have never done before to any of your countrymen, as a mark of esteem for yourself personally—ask you to join me in a glass of what our company's officials call 'King Charles Madeira.'" Upon this he filled my glass and, raising his own, waited my response. He little surmised the conflict going on in my brain, which culminated in my stammering out the words, "I will have to ask you to excuse me!"

The look of amazement as he replaced his glass on the table, and then of rising anger—which made his face look like a thunder cloud—and with the swelling veins, was suggestive of apoplexy! As he remained speechless he impressed me with the feeling that whatever was to be said to allay a storm must be uttered instantly, and I broke the silence by saying: "My dear sir, I beg that you will allow me to explain my position briefly thus: First, I am almost morbidly sensitive on the subject of temperance, I joined a total abstinence society in my 'teens' when moved by the matchless eloquence of that temperance apostle, John B. Gough, and have re-signed the pledge whenever a new society or meeting came my way, until I think in some nine or ten instances I have passed my word of honor not to use wine as a beverage. Secondly, if I had not become thus bound, I should do the same as a protest against the frauds going on in my country in spurious wines and liquors of all kinds, which you on this side do not have to look out for to the same

extent, probably. But, beyond this, I have to set my face as a flint in that regard because I am in control of about 2,000 men who are in daily temptation from scores of grog shops with their deadly liquor fumes almost under their noses while at work. They all know that I am a teetotalter—and hold all deviations from that line to be the subject of strict discipline—and am thus able to maintain a fair degree of order, which if I should set an example of indulgence would open the gates of a local hell. Hence it is a principle that impels me—not a lack of appreciation of your courtesy."

During these remarks I could see that his features gradually relaxed their tension. For a minute or two after my words ceased he did not speak, then raising his hand and bringing it down on the table with a force that imperiled the glassware thereon, he exclaimed: "Young man, you are right! You are right! Your adhesion to your principles I admire, and heartily approve. Don't change them! But," he added, after a pause, "I hope that we may not be prevented from drinking to the health of the Queen after all—would you object to doing so over a glass of raspberry 'shrub'?" "Oh, no," I replied, "I am not pledged against that." The servant was recalled, the bottle of wine removed, and one of raspberry juice (called "shrub" thereabouts) was substituted. We then touched glasses, and—the crisis was passed! His wife, a Scottish lady, was called in and with a bevy of small children introduced. A cordial leave-taking took place, with an assurance that my call would be returned. When the long winter days came round, Mr. Hargreave accepted my invitation to spend a week or two at the "Agency," and brought wife and children with him. It was hard to decide which of us enjoyed those social hours the most. Neither of us played cards, but a game of chess we both enjoyed.

In conversation he proved to be very entertaining. He was well posted in history and kept abreast of the times



in literature, but there was one topic to which he had given special attention, namely heredity. He considered that certain races of men owed their pre-eminence to qualities of blood transmitted from one generation to another, and the purer the strain the higher the grade of excellence would become. On his pinnacle stood the Scotchmen! Next came Englishmen, and the hope for the Yankees, like myself, was our ability to trace back our lineage to one of those races. When he was informed that my mother's name was Selden, the granddaughter of the "Continental" colonel who raised the first regiment in New England that joined Washington's army, and who commanded at the only battle fought within the original limits of New York city, where, in the vicinity of Twenty-third street and Third avenue, his regiment blocked the advance of the British forces—over twenty times more in number—until Washington, Putnam, and other generals had time to escape capture via the North river road and Kings bridge—that Colonel Selden was captured, as inevitable, but his captors admired his bravery so much that when he died of his wounds they accorded him the almost unprecedented honor to a "rebel" of giving him a military funeral, with full honors, as if he had been in their own ranks; also that some of the same blood was in my veins as in the Dudleys and Spencers who were then on the list of peerages in England, all doubts in his mind of my ultimate salvation, so far as heredity was concerned, were dispelled, and to him I became more like a blood relative than an adopted son! All reserve was cast aside, while I regarded him as one of the most noble minded and loveable men I ever met.

As corporation agents, we transacted considerable business. The Hudson Bay Company posts on the north shore of Lake Superior then carried on fishing operations, and my commissary purchases of salted fish from that source, through him, amounted to hundreds of barrels. But woe to the stranger who was not dignified and punc-





JAMES HARGREAVE.

Chief Factor Hudson Bay Company.

tilious in his presence! One time, when calling to see him, a governor of one of the States went with me; when introduced, the governor said, "Ah, yes, glad to see you—where were you raised?" "Sir," said the chief factor, straightening up, and with an air suited to the inside of a refrigerator, "I was *born* in Scotland, *educated* in Edinburgh, and have performed my official duties in Canada." The governor felt as though something had "hit" him, but what he did not surmise!

The chief factor shortly after said to me in an undertone, "In Scotland we *raise* cattle, but children and men we educate." The following year he received leave of absence and took his family to Scotland. While there his wife died. In writing to me of the sad event he asked me to indite an obituary notice of her, for publication in her native place, which of course I did. Then came a letter saying that he had found a book of the famous John Selden (esteemed the most learned man of his time) with his autograph on the title page, who he presumed was of the same family as my mother's ancestors of that name, and would therefore be specially prized by me, and to give an additional interest, he had sent the book by the Hudson Bay Company vessel to Fort York with instructions to have it go overland to Fort Garry (now the city of Winnipeg) and thence to my address.

The volume came safely, and was of course of great intrinsic value, and highly prized by me, but was destroyed by fire in my later residence at Tarrytown, New York. He learned of this, and after searching over England could not find another purchaseable similarly placed autograph of Selden, but as it proved, bought another book by the same author. He wrote to me that he had married again, had retired from active service in the fur company with the usual pension, had bought a place on the St. Lawrence river at Brockville, Ontario, to spend his remaining years in, urging me to come and see him there, also sending his likeness as reproduced herein.\* In

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\*See likeness on opposite leaf.

the meantime I had become engrossed in matters absorbing my time and attention, and did not reply, and our correspondence ceased altogether. Years flew by until in 1876 I had for the first time occasion to go to Ottawa, the capital of Canada, via Montreal.

Returning I took a short route via Central New York, crossing the St. Lawrence at Brockville. When on the train I wondered what made that name seem so familiar. After a time it flashed on my mind as the one mentioned years before in Mr. Hargreave's letters as his home. I at once determined to leave my train there and call upon him. On arrival I called at the post office to make enquiries, and was informed that he had died there a few months before, but that his second wife was living at his former home a mile or two from town. As I had never met her I went to the hotel to wait for the next train. Soon after, I was surprised by a call from the widow, whom the postmaster had informed of my enquiries, and she had come to find who the stranger was. On learning my name, she expressed great pleasure at meeting one about whom, as she said, her husband had told her so much. She informed me that one of the little girls I used to see at the Sault was married and lived near by. It was arranged that I was to be taken in a carriage to the Hargreave house, and to dine at the daughter's before train time. The widow called for me and we rode to her residence—beautifully situated by the river. After looking over the grounds and buildings we went to the library.

"Now," said she, "my husband's will provided that if you came here to see him, another copy of John Selden's works, which he had bought and kept hoping to present to you himself, should be delivered to you as a token of his regard and remembrance, and here it is!"

That copy is still near me and the title page is reproduced herewith as a memento of the giver.



# TRACTS

Written by

JOHN SELDEN

OF THE  
INNER-TEMPLE, Esquire.

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The First Entituled,

*JANI ANGLORUM FACIES ALTERA,*  
rendred into *English*, with large Notes thereupon, by  
*REDMAN WESTCOT*, Gent.

The Second,

*ENGLAND's EPINOMIS.*

The Third,

Of the Original of ECCLESIASTICAL  
Jurisdictions of Testaments.

The Fourth,

Of the Disposition or Administration of Intestates  
Goods.

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The Three last never before Extant.

LONDON,

Printed for **Thomas Bassett** at the *George* in *Fleet-street*, and **Richard**  
**Chiswell** at the *Rose and Crown* in *S. Paul's Church-Yard*.

M DC LXXXIII.



After a pleasant repast at the daughter's home I took my departure.

In 1901—twenty-five years later—I was next in Brockville. Again I waited over a train and made enquiries. None of the Hargreave family then lived there. The widow had returned to Scotland, the daughter removed elsewhere, and the place had been sold. When I walked out to that locality, behold the buildings had disappeared, and a magnificent mansion, said to be the finest country residence in Canada, occupied the site. The half century covered by this narration had witnessed such changes and effacements, that the Selden book and the likeness of a face, grown much more benignant in expression than when I first saw it—are the only aids left to memory. My parting apostrophe to it in scriptural phrase, is "Behold" a Nature's nobleman "indeed in whom was no guile!"

CHARLES T. HARVEY.

Toronto, June, 1905.

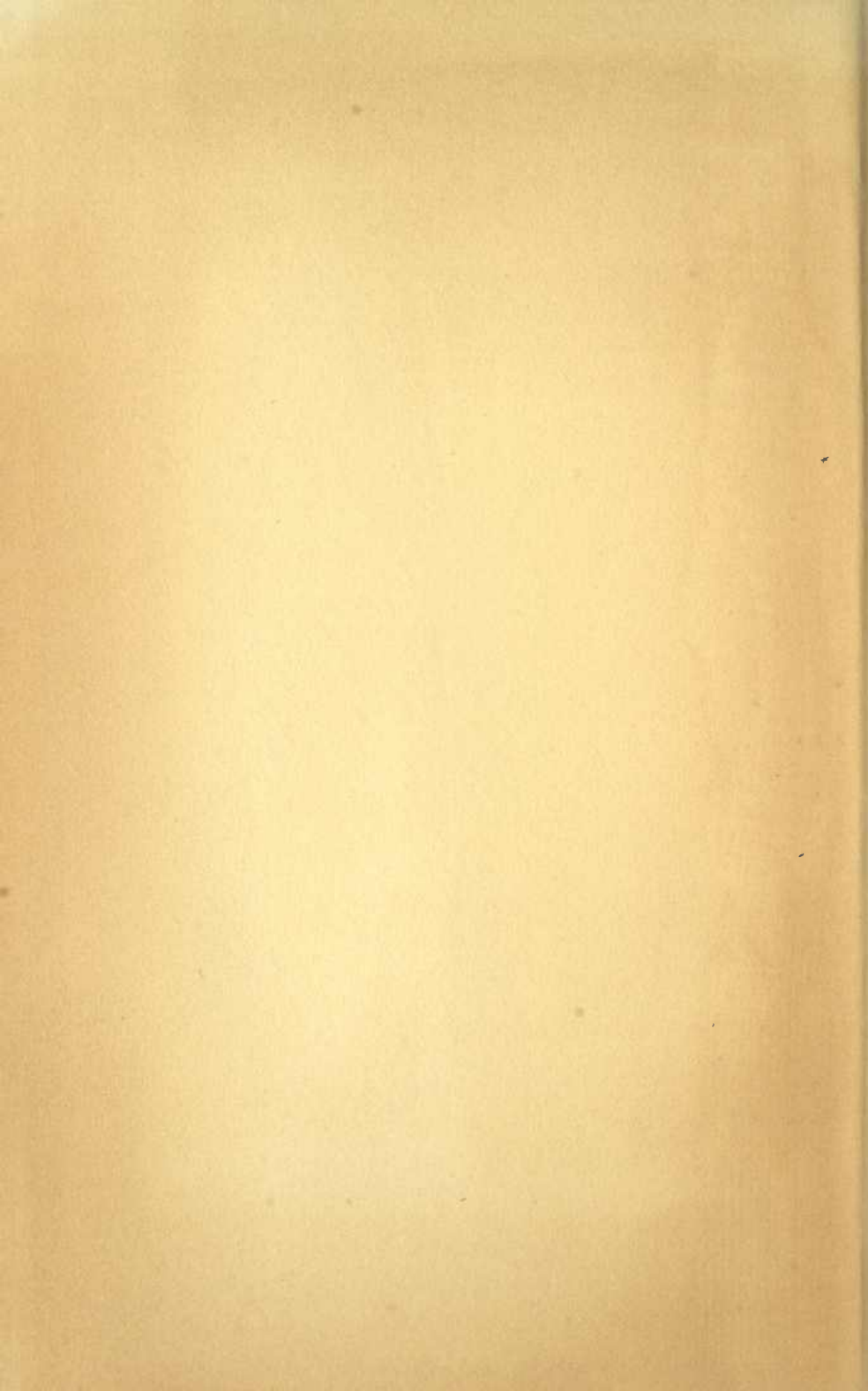


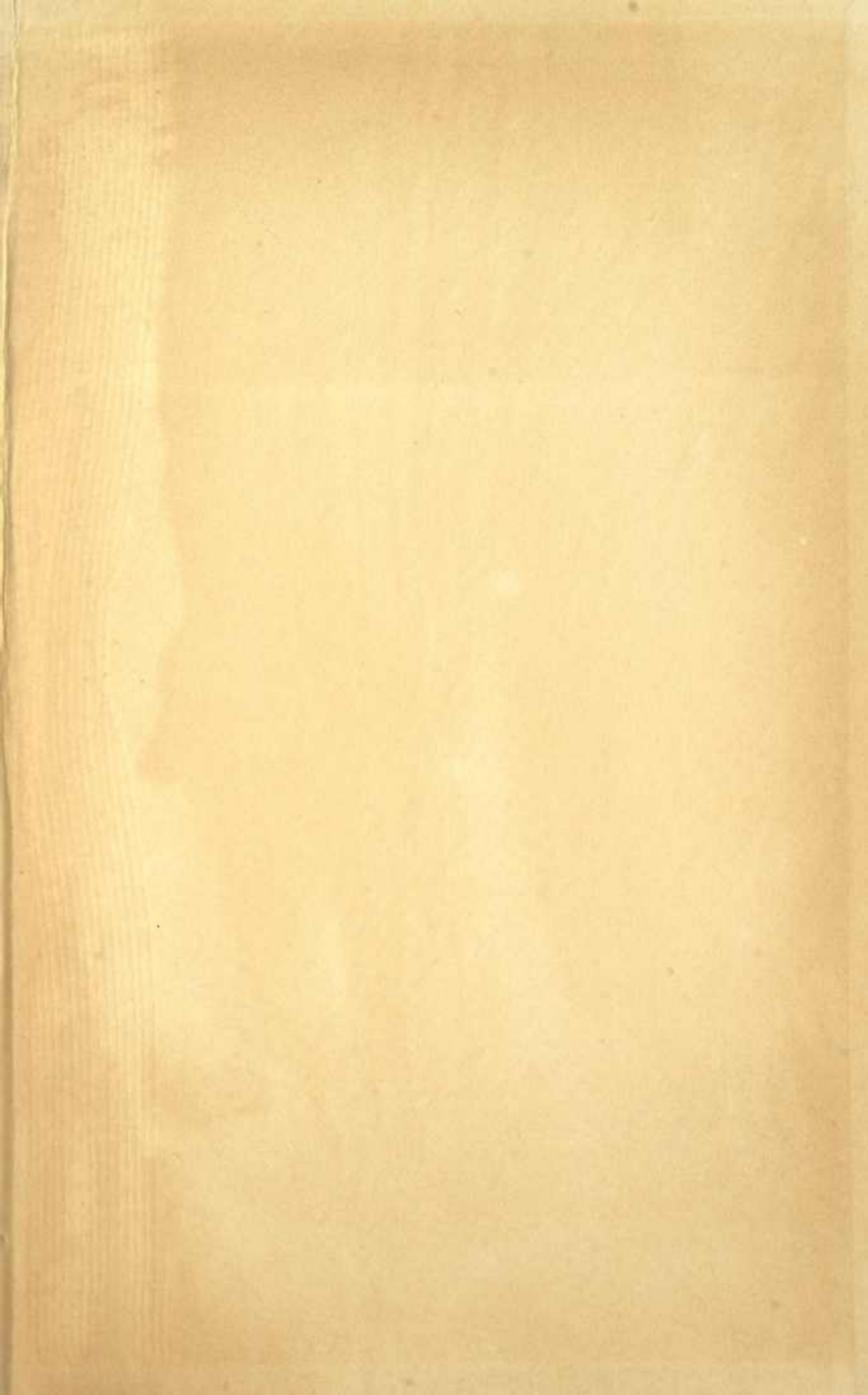


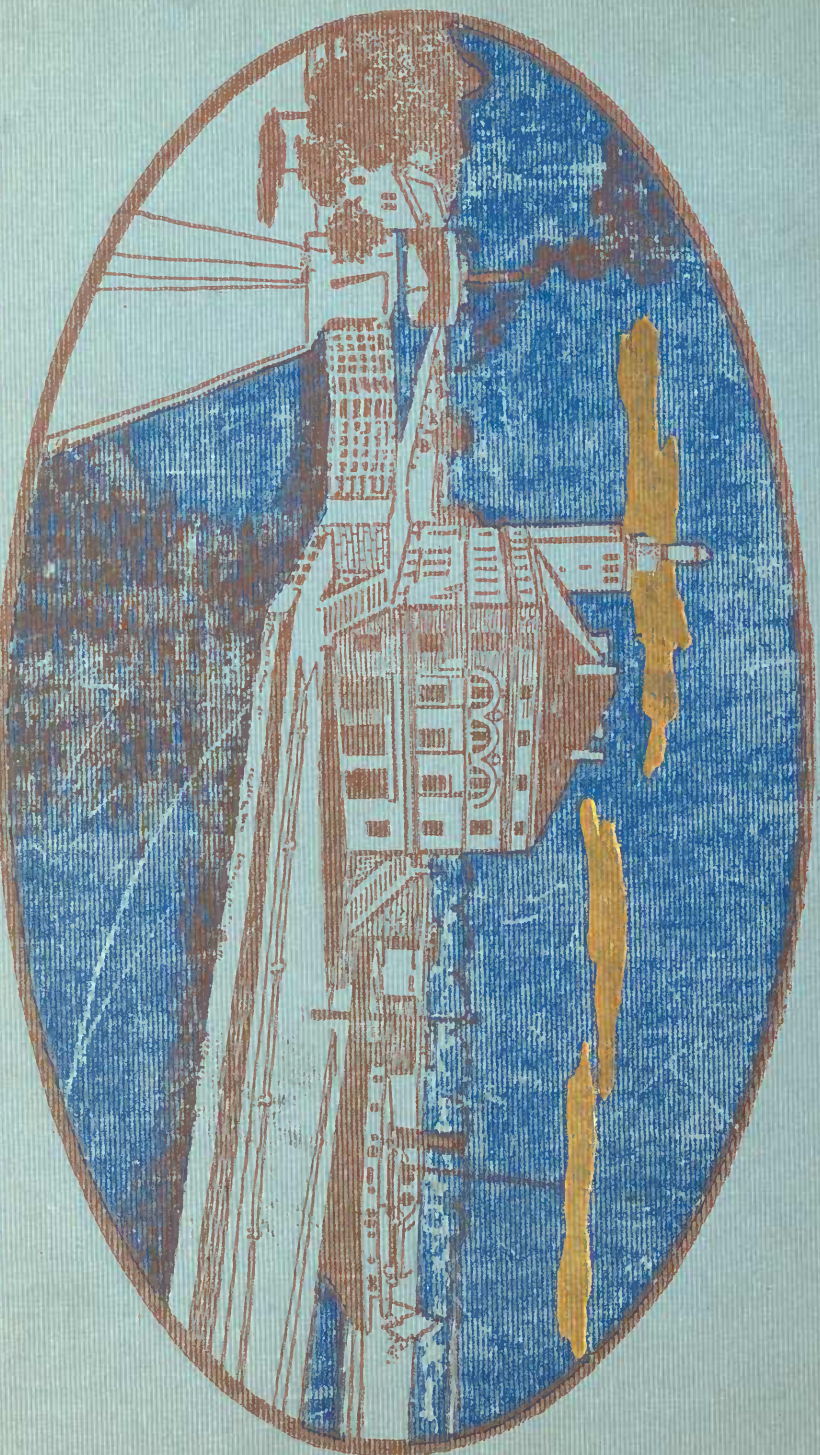












20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY CANALS NOW EXISTING