

WHEN THE "PLAIN SPEAKER'S" TYPE WAS PIED.

BY H. F. GARDINER.

(Read July 7, 1922.)

In reading the "Papers and Records" of the Ontario Historical Society, Vol. XIX (1922), I was particularly interested in Judge Riddell's article on "An Old Provincial Newspaper," because my father, the late Rev. James Gardiner, D.C.L., was employed as a journeyman printer in the *Plain Speaker* office in Belleville in 1838, when the incident occurred, to which Judge Riddell refers in these words: "The soldiers (volunteers) afterwards marched to the office of the *Plain Speaker*, upset the type fonts and trailed the manager in the snow and slush. This movement occurred because the paper appeared one morning with the British coat-of-arms turned upside down in its columns." Judge Riddell gives in a footnote his authority for the story: "Belden's Atlas of Hastings and Prince Edward Counties, Toronto, 1878, page iii," and adds: "I have no means of verifying the story."

I first heard the story in the spring of 1874, in the Russell House, Ottawa. A few of us were having a later session than the laws now on the statute books would encourage. I recall among those present Mackenzie Bowell, Alonzo Wright, Dr. Schultz and Carroll Ryan. Mr. Bowell told us about the *Plain Speaker* and the pied type, and about my father's "rough-and-tumble" with the assailants, which he as a boy had witnessed. We were all amused by the narrative, for Mr. Bowell was a good story-teller. Twenty-three or twenty-four years later, when I was editor of the *Hamilton Times*, I wrote something—I forget what—which annoyed my friend Mr. Bowell. He severely criticized what had appeared in the *Times*, saying in the *Belleville Intelligencer* that the editor of the *Times* was the son of Rev. Dr. Gardiner, of Belleville, who in 1838 had evoked the wrath of the Belleville loyalists by his manner of conducting the *Plain Speaker*. My father wrote a letter in reply, stating that I was a man of mature years, quite able to bear the responsibility for my own words and actions, and he took the opportunity to correct some details of the *Intelligencer's* version of the 1838 affair.

When I read Judge Riddell's article, the other day, it occurred to me that my father, who died in 1909, had made some reference to the wrecking of the *Plain Speaker* office in a manuscript autobiography, part of which I found after diligent search. I present here a summary of the document, which will assist you to decide whether it was or was not justifiable to pie that type; incidentally,

it contains valuable information about the social, industrial, educational and religious conditions which prevailed in our Province during the second quarter of the last century.

My grandfather, William Gardiner, was born in Fermanagh, Ireland, in 1777; married to Isabella Henderson in 1800; died in Hope township, Durham County, Upper Canada, in 1831. James Gardiner, the ninth of the twelve children of William and Isabella, was born April 19th, 1818. When five years of age he was sent to the school carried on by the London and Hibernian Society, in which the primer and other reading books were mainly composed of extracts from the New Testament. "All the seats were movable, and there were no desks. The scholars used a small board on their knees in learning to write. The school sessions were four hours in the forenoon and four more in the afternoon, without intermission; no singing or prayer, but birch and ferule without stint."

In 1825, Margery Gardiner, eldest daughter of William, was married, and in 1826 she and her husband and her brother Edward sailed for America, an uncle having preceded them with his family. In the spring of 1827, William Gardiner followed with his family, rounded out to the even dozen by the birth of three more children younger than James. The voyage on the *Sir Watkin* lasted twenty-one days, and on James Gardiner's ninth birthday (April 19th) a heavy storm endangered the lives of all on board, partially dismantled the vessel and carried away part of the rigging. The passage from Quebec to Montreal was made by steamboat, and from Montreal to Prescott by Durham boat, drawn by oxen and horses on the shore and guided by men with pike-poles. It took eight days to cover 113 miles. After waiting four days at Prescott for a boat, a sail of thirty hours took the party to the Carrying Place at the head of Bay Quinte, whence the journey to Port Hope was completed in a farmer's wagon on a corduroy road, with mud axle-deep in many places. They reached Port Hope May 28th, 1827, and were greeted by the loved ones who had come to Canada in the preceding year.

William Gardiner bought a bush farm in the Township of Hope and proceeded to make a new home for his family. The summer of 1828 was very wet, and ague was epidemic. Every house had its sick; in some, whole families were stricken. Gradually the forest was changed to fruitful fields. More than sixty years later James Gardiner wrote: "At the first election following, my father gave his only vote in the country, for liberty and the rights of the people, against monopoly and compact. A Reform Parliament, with Marshall S. Bidwell, Speaker, gave to Upper Canada and the churches liberties previously withheld and refused. The public schools of that day were 'common' enough, and few of them; none nearer than four miles from our house. There was a grammar school at Cornwall and one at York. The newspapers were local in their circulation and meagre in contents. Books were scarce. Our lights were a 'dip,' or pine knot. Wolves and other wild animals were numerous. The roads were very bad, generally simple openings in the forest. Streams were forded, not bridged. No minister of the Gospel ever visited my father's house during his life in Upper Canada. Marriages in the family—four of them—were all cele-

brated in Cobourg, twelve miles distant. The Methodist preachers in their circuit routes were sometimes heard as a pastime. I attended a field meeting on the farm of Mr. Choate in 1829, Rev. Mr. Case presiding, and was so absorbed in the novelties of the occasion that I laid up very little in my memory. I was not sent to school during my father's life in the new world, but was provided with useful reading—books of sermons and devotion, science, history and biography. Reading aloud in the family was frequent, generally directed by my mother.

“Port Hope had no stated worship, Protestant or Catholic. St. John's Church stood unfinished, with no messenger of the Lord. Town meeting and Training day furnished recreation and entertainment. At bees and raisings there was good cheer and plenty of grog, but not much drunkenness. I think whiskey was sold in every store in Port Hope, and several distilleries were in operation. There was no church or chapel in the township, but there were good men and women, attached to their creeds and sects, living by faith, without works.

“Our third crop in Canada was being harvested when my father took sick and died, September 21st, 1831, after a little more than four years of what he regarded as exile. My eldest brother, Edward, the sole heir under the law of that day, came with his wife and child to make a joint home with our widowed mother and her orphaned family. It was soon decided that I should leave home and learn a trade. My youngest brother was then seven years old.”

After two trials at other business in 1832, James Gardiner was apprenticed in 1833 to learn the printing with William Furby, proprietor of the *Cobourg Reformer*, in whose house he lived, and whom he always remembered with gratitude. The editor, a Scotchman named McDonald, who had been a teacher in his native land, kindly gave the lad instruction and directed his studies. At the end of his apprenticeship, he was assured that he “kept a clean case, furnished a good proof and was a superb pressman.” William Furby, his employer, was a zealous Churchman. “The ministry of Rev. Jonathan Short, in St. John's Church, was beneficial. I had been baptized and confirmed, and by catechism and preaching established in the faith of my parents. The devout pastorate of the incumbent was ennobled by a hearty support of temperance reform, then in its infancy in Canada.”

In his twentieth year, Mr. Gardiner heard a sermon by Rev. William Enoch Norman, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and “by his preaching of the word I was convinced, converted, regenerated, I repented, believed with the heart and received the witness of the Holy Spirit that I was born again. In November, 1837, I united with the Methodist Episcopal Church on probation. The Rebellion of that day raged furiously. I frequently attended revival meetings. A permit to improve my gifts in exhortation was placed in my hands. After examination I was received into membership and my permit was renewed. I resumed work at my trade in Cobourg in June, 1838. Going to a camp-meeting in Sidney, I was greatly favoured with the company of Rev. James Richardson; on my return, another wise man, Rev. Joshua Webster, gave me much good counsel. Removing to Belleville, I was brought into association with devout

and godly people, and protected by the care of the church. I was appointed a class-leader and licensed to exhort at the opening of 1839. I delight to remember among these friends of my youth Bishop Reynolds, Benson Smith, Michael Davy, Joseph H. Leonard, G. D. Greenleaf and Gideon Shepard. I participated in gracious revivals in Rawdon, Thurlow, Sidney and Frankford."

I come now to the incident referred to in the title of this paper. The office of the *Belleville Plain Speaker* newspaper, in which Mr. Gardiner worked as a journeyman printer during the winter of 1838-39, was invaded by a mob, the type pied and the staff roughly treated. The following is Mr. Gardiner's version: "An incident occurred, which I mention only to correct misrepresentation. I was asked to take charge during the absence of the publisher. In the excitement of the times, all our cuts were pressed into use. The British Arms were placed at the head of one article, and by accident the cut was reversed until a few papers were printed. On being observed by Rev. G. D. Greenleaf, it was righted at once. Another article had placed at its head a small Russian eagle. It has been said by many, and repeated, that 'the crown was upside-down and the eagle on top of it'—a vile, intentional fabrication. I kept copies for years."

Leaving the printing office, Mr. Gardiner engaged to teach a school in Sidney, and he was accustomed to hold meetings and exhort in the evenings. On February 27th, 1841, when not quite twenty-three years of age, he entered on the work of the ministry, under the direction of the Presiding Elder, being sent by the Bishop to fill a vacancy at Picton (Hallowell), caused by the location of Rev. S. D. Shorts. On Monday he spent his last night as a layman in the house of Bishop Reynolds in Belleville. Before the next Sunday came he had preached six sermons in Prince Edward County. The Quarterly Meeting was held on Sunday in Picton, and ten minutes before the hour for preaching Mr. Gardiner was ordered by the Presiding Elder to occupy the pulpit, in the presence of three venerable ministers and a large congregation. The duty assigned to the young preacher was to travel over the County of Prince Edward, which contains six townships, preaching ten times one week and nine times the alternate week. That work was punctually performed for seven months. In 1842 he attended the Conference at Cummer's Chapel, on Yonge Street, and was appointed to Brockville, a circuit with six preaching places. During that year he had a long and severe illness, and the doctor reported that if Mr. Gardiner survived he would not be able to preach again. His recovery being uncertain, and his work in the ministry supposed to be ended, he was assigned by the Conference to a nominal appointment designated Nepean and Hull, two townships on the opposite sides of the Ottawa River.

Recovering his health, he went to explore his new field of labor, "In November, 1843, I decided to open an appointment in Bytown. I had to pass through it to get the ferry from Upper to Lower Canada. No bridge spanned the Ottawa River at that date. I made my home in the town at the Rideau Hotel, kept by Burpee and O'Brien. There was no public school house or hall in the town. I applied to the Sheriff for permission to preach in the Court House, but he refused. I found a place to preach in Upper Town, and paid rent for it

each Sunday. When heating was required I bought wood and made the fire. I furnished candles and lighted them. A teacher in Lower Town after a time allowed me the use of his school-house on Saturday afternoons and Sundays. By New Year's of 1844, the salvation of the Lord was revealed, sinners were converted, my soul was comforted. I thanked God and took courage. A society of about sixty was organized. To obtain a building site in Lower Town was very difficult. An ordnance lease was all we could obtain. I did not neglect Nepean and Hull, but preached to them regularly."

Mr. Gardiner goes on to describe the building of his church in what is now the capital of Canada. Mr. John McAmmond, senior, gave a pine tree, and James Gardiner, the preacher, felled it with a borrowed axe, and butted and cut a timber 45 feet long. Mr. McAmmond drew the stick to Bytown during the sleighing, and it became the centre sill on which sleepers were laid in the church of 1844. About the first of September he preached in the unfinished structure. Then he went to Conference, held at Farmersville (now Athens, Leeds county), was examined and ordained. Going back to Bytown, he got the church plastered. "I shall be indulged to state that I carried more than 300 pails of water from the bye-wash to secure this end, and by a stern necessity sat as watch one night to prevent damage from the frost by keeping the fire. I was not contaminated, disgraced, or even reprobated; nor did my popularity suffer by this menial service 'in His name'."

In the second year on this circuit he preached in Nepean, Gloucester, along the north and south shores of the Ottawa River for twenty miles, and up the Gatineau; he established appointments at Aylmer, Chelsea, New Edinburgh, Billings' Bridge—in short, wherever he found an open door. On March 5th, 1845, James Gardiner was married to Matilda, eldest daughter of David and Lucinda Fairbairn, of Brockville. She died in January, 1867. Bytown and its surroundings were a favorite field. More than one hundred persons were converted during the year. There were three weak, struggling branches of Methodism in the town. The Presbyterians also divided and ordained Thomas Wardrope the first minister of the free church. Lower Town, where no Protestant had preached for about ten years when Mr. Gardiner began there, now had three churches. Among the ministers he remembered were T. Berritt, J. Musgrove, J. C. Davidson, Baxter, Goodson, Elliott, Pollard, Andrews and Matthew Richey.

In 1845, Mr. Gardiner was placed in charge of Elizabethtown, that old, historic ground where the first Methodist Conference in Canada was held in 1817. This was a large circuit, occupying seven different townships. This year was fruitful in the salvation of more than one hundred souls. The Conference of 1846 was held in Belleville. Mr. Gardiner was examined and ordained an Elder. *The Canada Christian Advocate*, published by Webster and Leonard at Cobourg, was helpful in church work. He visited the Niagara Conference, held that year (1846) at Cummer's Chapel. The political horizon was very hazy. Ecclesiastics were greatly excited. "Church and State" was the bone of contention; Clergy Reserves, Glebe Lands, Government grants to churches, ministers and missions vexing questions. He was sent to Brockville, at that time regarded

as a difficult charge. The preaching place was in the hall of the western market. The family suffered from an attack of small-pox, but the lives of father, mother and child were spared. The General Conference assembled at Brighton, and he took his seat among the Elders, continuing to be a member of that body, in attendance at all regular and special sessions, for more than forty years. Rev. Philander Smith was elected and ordained a Bishop. The constitution of the Church was revised and liberalized, the laity being vested with more power. A printing office was purchased from Webster and Leonard, and located at Hamilton, with John Baily for Book-agent, and Thomas Webster, editor. Being a practical printer, Mr. Gardiner was associated with the book-agent to value the plant in behalf of the Church. The Conference in Mallorytown, presided over by Bishops Reynolds and Smith, appointed Mr. Gardiner Presiding Elder of the Augusta District. He removed his family to Edwardsburg (now Cardinal) that he might give more help in building a church there. The work was heavy. Attending missionary meetings and official duties kept him so employed that for thirteen weeks he spent but one night in his own home. The district extended from Napanee to Lachute, and northward to Portage du Fort, in Pontiac County, Lower Canada. Closing his reference to this period, Mr. Gardiner wrote: "I sin not in saying—We were poorly paid."

The autobiography breaks off at this period—1849—the year of my birth. In 1850, Rev. James Gardiner removed to Kingston; in 1853, to Belleville; in 1858, to Napanee, and in 1861, back to Belleville. In 1865, he was appointed to Canifton circuit, in 1867, to Farmersville, and in 1870, the General Conference made him editor of the *Canada Christian Advocate*, which necessitated his removal to Hamilton. Four years later he was made Missionary Secretary, and in that capacity he made a tour of Manitoba in 1875, selecting sites for churches and mission stations. In 1877 he was appointed to Ingersoll circuit, and after the union of the Methodist Churches in 1883, to Princeton. At the end of his pastorate in Princeton, he asked for superannuation, and removed to Belleville, where he resided until his death, on January 9th, 1909—more than seventy years after the type of the Belleville *Plain Speaker* was pied.

You who have followed my story can decide for yourselves whether the young printer, who was intrusted to make up the forms, and put the paper to press, in 1838, was the sort of fellow who would purposely insert a cut upside down. Those of you who have had anything to do with the production of newspapers know how difficult it is to avoid slips of that kind in the hurry of getting to press. My chief design in writing these lines is to draw the attention of the younger people to the progress of our country in a single lifetime—the contrast between the journey from Montreal to Prescott in 1827, and a journey of equal length since canals and railways were constructed; a comparison of the wagon roads in my father's boyhood, with those of the Biggs era; the difference between the schools of the early days and those of the Ryerson and subsequent periods. Incidentally, it is worth noticing that preaching ten times a week at the age of twenty-three did not have an injurious physical effect, for my father died in his ninety-first year.

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