

# THE OLD MAN OF THE BIG CLOCK TOWER



## THINKING OF THE DAYS OF YORE

Of, in the still night,  
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,  
Fond memory brings the light  
Of other days around me:  
The smiles, the tears,  
Of boyhood's years,  
The words of love then spoken  
The eyes that shone,  
Now dimmed and gone,  
The cheerful hearts now broken.

Thus, in the still night,  
Ere slumber's chain hath bound me,  
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Of other days around me:  
The smiles, the tears,  
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The words of love then spoken  
The eyes that shone,  
Now dimmed and gone,  
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When I remember all  
The friends, so linked together,  
I've seen around me fall  
Like leaves in wintry weather,  
I feel like one  
Who treads alone  
Some banquet hall deserted,  
Whose lights are red,  
Whose garlands dead,  
And all have departed.

Thus, in the still night,  
Ere slumber's chain hath bound me,  
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Of other days around me.

—Thomas Moore.

## OLD-TIME ENTERTAINERS

Some of our older citizens sometimes feel like asking what has become of the travelling entertainers who a century or so ago used to visit the old town periodically, enjoy the hospitality provided, pick up a few dollars, and then pass on to the next place on their list.

As an old friend said the other day: They seem to have vanished as completely, as the family photograph album of our youthful days, with the tintype photographer and his car, the Jew-harp and the old horse and buggy, which everybody in the town could safely drive. Then, added to these, were the portable plate organ grinder with his cunning little wizen-faced monkey, the cure-all medicine man; the man with the panorama; and the tight wire walker who stretched his wire across the street from Campbell's Hotel to Mrs. Secord's store.

In addition to these there were the Russian, with his trained bear; the little open-air show at the corner; the sawsaw grinder, and the showman who could cut fire, chew glass lumps, chinwags, and swallow swords. And above all of these was the driving through the village of the circus of the day, which showed only at the large towns and cities. What a spectacle for the small boys, and their daddies, yes, and even the grandfathers to see the gilded cages of wild animals, the big band wagons, and the monster elephants parading through the streets. I tell you there wasn't sleep the night before, when a circus outfit was announced to pass through Acton en route to Guelph for the big show next day. Four or even three o'clock in the morning was not too early for us youngsters to get up so as to be sure not to miss the great sight. We'd get out on to Mill Street, and if there was no sign of the advance guard coming, we'd walk out to Young Street, and then out to the third line or to Brown's farm, and once a few of us went as far east as Hammeburn School to meet the wagons and animals of the great show. And with what pride we trudged back to town along the herd of elephants or beside a lion's cage. For weeks we talked of these experiences, for years we remembered them; indeed, they have never been forgotten.

The brass-grinder and the cute little monkey with his little red velvet cap and his tin cup with which he solicited pennies for his Greek or Italian master, were always unfailing attractions. They were followed by herds of the village kiddies—boys and girls—all over town. The tunes were generally popular, sometimes hackneyed and occasionally sentimental, but always enjoyed. The monkey was always a favorite. One of the girls composed this little poem, about the monkey, which I've kept through the years:

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And then the monkey doffs his cap again,  
Again, again.

I like to give him pennies and feel his hands so small,  
But though his lips grin thanks at me,  
His eyes don't smile at all.  
Although he looks so splendid in a coat of red and gold,  
His little face is lonely, and it's very, very old.

He frisks about so spryly, and he chatters very fast,  
And waves at me so bravely as he dices,  
Appears at what he's doing but eyes still seem to say,  
"I'm thinking of my home, you know, so many miles away."

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The sword swallower always commanded a large circle of spectators, and when he appeared in tight and spangles, somewhat rusty and a little the worse for wear. A rug was spread on the ground. The barker announced that the most astounding act ever given by a human, never equalled by any one at any time, in any land, in any climate, was about to take place. With a great flourish the sword swallower was drawn from its scabbard, held aloft, careened effectually, bent. The edge was tested. The sword, be it remembered, was a Damascus blade of finest steel. It had once belonged to the Shah of Persia and had been used in mortal combat.

Dramatically kneeling on right knee, the sword swallower opened his capacious mouth and inserted the point of the sword. Withdrew it. Appeared to be doubtful. The audience stood with bated breath. The sword was raised again. Slowly it disappeared. The man extended his arms. Marvellous! The sword was withdrawn and the sword swallower, from the citizens of that day. The hat was passed, the show was over. But for weeks afterward, table knives, parolled by the small boys, in various homes, mysteriously disappeared in unexplainable ways. The boys had decided to become sword swallowers and began their practice on knives.

What a furore the medicine men with their cure-all remedies created. Stories of wonderful cures were rehearsed, demonstrations were given, and when the bottles of brown liquid, with their bright red labels were offered for sale, they went off at a quarter a piece. "Like hot cakes."

The travelling "painless" dentist was also an occasional visitor to Acton in those days. He claimed to pull every aching tooth without pain, but not without pay! He was accompanied by a trumpeter and a drummer, who played vigorously when the "painless" dentist was engaged extracting the troublesome tooth. Of course, the suffering patient could hardly tell, with all the noise, music and confusion, whether it had hurt him when the tooth was pulled, or not. Whether he did or not, the dentist told him and his audience that "it never hurt a bit." At any rate the aching molar was out. I never tried the experience.

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tion of the show man. Many of the pictures were really good illustrations of historical scenes, old country cathedrals, castles, palaces, beautiful landscapes, scenes from the holy land, kings, queens, and persons noted in history, and various other subjects. I remember attending one of these wonderful entertainments in the Old Temperance Hall when it stood on Main Street, about where the road leading into Henderson's mill is now, not far from the old California House tavern, on the same side of the street, and another in the old Baptist chapel, on Elgin Street.

And my memory recalls these amusements of the old days, so different to the activities of to-day. Simple days, simple joys and there are still some who remember them with a tug at the heart strings, as joys that will never return. I may give you another chapter of the amusements of those old days again sometime, when I am in the humor. I appreciate the rest afforded last week, by the kindness of "An Elder Brother" filling up my column with his excellent article for a change.

## The Old Man

### THE BEGINNINGS OF HOCKEY

On a pleasant Saturday morning, when the frost had hardened the ground in the swamps and low-lying woodlands, little groups of boys, armed with stout jack-knives and hatchets, once used to set out on the important business of cutting the season's supply of "shinbuds."

The inexperienced and the lazy usually chose alder, because it was most abundant and lay handiest; but the choice of the wise was always a shoot about an inch in diameter from a shrub that a benevolent Providence seemed to have created for that express purpose. These shoots are always straight and strong and stiff, and the leaf-buds grow in whorls that cause a slight enlargement of the joints at convenient intervals. At the surface of the ground the shaft makes a quick turn for three or four inches, and then sends down a taproot from another arthritic swelling. Out where the taproot starts, and again just above a joint in the shaft, the shoot makes a "shimmy" that was a perfect implement from Nature's own workshop.

The boys who made these happy annual excursions into the woods are now fifty or sixty years old. For most of them, skating is only a memory. Nevertheless they are the real fathers of modern hockey; for, though the highly organized game of to-day may have a drop of Celtic blood, derived from the old Irish game of hurley, it inherits chiefly from the shimmy that became hockey when it moved from bare ground to the ice.

The puck that those boys played with was a rubber disk bought at a sporting-goods shop, but in the daytime a wooden block picked up at the carriage-maker's or the furniture factory, and at night a tomato can, which could be heard when it could no longer be seen. They had no shin guards or knee protectors. The goals were not cages, but merely parallel lines drawn across the ice two or three hundred yards apart; and the players wore as many as cared to take part—sometimes forty on a side.

The two leaders faced each other above the block and struck their sticks together three times, after which the quicker one drove. The game was on, and it continued until one side or the other had put the block across its opponent's line. No electric-lighted rink turned night into day, but a great bonfire of driftwood and brush from the shore east a flickering glow over the scene—and frequently poisoned the players with smoke from burning wood.

Hockey is a noble and exhilarating game. It calls for head work and individual skill for stamina and team play. But to some of those who watch their sons or grandsons at it come visions of a shadowy throng sweeping down a long stretch of lake or river, the odor of a brush fire, and the sound of many voices yelling, "Shimmy on your own side!"

Life may have been simpler in those days, but it was just as happy.

Struggled with Asthma in the only preparation that seems to convey what is endured from an attack of this trouble. The relief from Dr. J. D. Kellogg's Asthma Remedy is beyond measure. Where all was suffering there comes comfort and rest. Breathing becomes normal and the bronchial tubes completely cleared. This unequalled remedy is worth many times its price to all who use it.

Sevens Out of Ten Are Victims But Write To Us How "Uratals" Bring Swift, Amazing Relief With Renewed Vital Force

"No one knows better than I, the horror of joyless days and sleepless nights. There have been times when I felt hopeless and helpless—and when my weakness caused me the most intense humiliation. Only those who have gone through such tortures can possibly realize my great satisfaction when Dr. Southworth's URATALS brought me quick relief. URATALS are truly wonderful, and I give them full praise." Such amazing evidence serves as convincing proof of the power of URATALS to relieve those distressing ailments so often a handicap to those in middle life. Overworked, sluggish kidneys, and bladder-weakness—being—many distressing ailments which so often lead to serious diseases that every sufferer from Lamenosa, Pains in back and down through groin, scanty but frequent urination, "Cutting-up-Nights," Nervous Irritability and Lack of Force—should try the amazing value of Dr. Southworth's URATALS at once. Any good druggist will supply you on a guarantee of satisfaction or money back.

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## AFTER THE LIGHTS ARE OUT

There are hard questions in the experience of us all that have to be faced, but after the lights are out is no time for their consideration. Many a nervous breakdown is the result of hunting for solutions of hard problems in the hours set apart for rest. Tackle your perplexities and anxieties in the morning, when strength and courage are at their peak. There is good sense in the answer made by an elderly woman to someone who asked her how she had succeeded in preserving her youth and strength to such an unusual extent. Her reply was, "I never take anything but myself to bed."

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After the hockey match  
—a cup of good tea, at the  
rink, at the restaurant, or  
when you get home.

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In the home. On the floor are rugs and linoleums—the better wearing kinds are extensively advertised. What about the kitchen? Aluminum ware, hot water heaters, electric stove, dish and clothes washers, cooking utensils of all kinds—practically everything you use is advertised. You buy advertised products because you have confidence in them. You know that a manufacturer cannot afford to advertise shoddy or unworthy merchandise.

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## The Acton Free Press

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Physician and Surgeon  
Office and Residence—Corner Bowe Avenue and Elgin Street.

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Office:  
Main Street South, Georgetown  
Phone 88  
Appointments in Acton on request.

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DR. J. H. JOHNSON, D.D.S., L.D.S.  
Dental Surgeon  
Office: Mill Street, in the Cooper Block.  
TELEPHONE 45

A. J. BUCHANAN, D. D. S.  
Dental Surgeon  
Office: In Leshman Block  
Hours: 9 a. m. until 8 p. m. Evenings by Appointment  
Gas for Extractions  
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TEACHER OF VIOLIN  
Will be in Acton on Fridays.  
Pupils prepared for Conservatory examinations.  
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