

"THE BOYS IN MILLMAN'S STORE"

(The Methodist Minister at Sparta, Rev. Samuel R. McVitty, read this at a meeting. He said it had been handed to him, but everyone believed that he had written it himself.)

I'm not a poet as you will see
Tho somewhat given to rhyme
Have just been walking round the town
Whiling away the time.
But I have learned the men of today
Are greater than those of yore
Judging by what the fellows tell
In Isaac Millman's store.

Will Gorvett cut ten cords of wood
From rise to set of sun.
Not only cut, but piled it too
"Yes Sir, that's what he done".
To cut ten cords of wood I vow
Is one tremendous chore
But Will cut his behind the stove
In Isaac Millman's store.

Gran Durdle built some rods of fence
One awful summer day
And Charlie Stevens grew so tired
They carried him away
But Gran I guess before he slept
Could have built as many more
He built it where Will cut the wood
In Isaac Millman's store.

John Gorvett's hens laid many eggs
In spite of winter cold
His family couldn't eat them all
So wagon loads he sold.
They could have kept it up
Another year or more
They laid them where Gran built the fence
In Isaac Millman's store.

Charlie Pettit keeps a horse
It trots and paces too
Its ears are long, its tail is short
It's kind and fast and true.
He took it for a trip up west
Some eighty miles or more
He did it all in one brief day
In Isaac Millman's store.

We stepped outside the door one day
And saw two men of rank
The one looks after a certain Church
The other after the Bank
And now the preacher drives the horse
The banker drove before
And the fellows nudge each other
In Isaac Millman's store.

The preacher at the other end
We seldom ever see
He is so very popular
He's always out to tea
Of course the people like it
And fairly him adore
But it's hard upon the chickens
Say the boys in Millman's store.

"THE BOYS IN MILLMAN'S STORE"
(Cont'd.)

Our Doctor wears a shamrock
He's tall and straight and staid
If only you could see him shoot
With Sparta's "Light Brigade"
If the target were a barn
Per chance he'd hit the door
But the fellows say they doubt it
In Isaac Millman's store.
(Dr. George Shannon)

There's Daniel in the Temperance House
It always seems to me
He's at his best when out to drive
With the children on his knee
Of course it's no affair of mine
So I will say no more
But the fellows joke about it
In Isaac Millman's store.
(Daniel Gunn)

Our village butcher he's all right
And keeps the best of meat
But when he gets a little tired
He steps across the street
Soon you'll see a handsome figure
Stand in the butcher's door
When she calls "Is Herbie there"
He skips from Millman's store.
(Herbert Leverton & Maggie McCulloch)

And Lou our paint and hardware man
Is as jolly as can be
But he's a lone old bachelor
As you can always see
The village maidens shy and coy
Peek slyly through the door
As they go tripping by to trade
At Isaac Millman's store.
(Louis Moedinger)

And Charlie Chase with handsome face
It's strange he never wed
You ought to see him hustle
When tying up the bread
The village girls are after him
For he has cash galore
But Charlie he is fire-proof
Say the boys in Millman's store.

This is a jolly temperance town
Of which we are all proud
But a couple of fellows still get tight
You must not speak it loud
I saw him just the other night
I saw him once before
But I guess he got the "stuff"
At some other fellow's store.

There's a little man in this little town
Whom you can always see
Sitting beside the same old stove
With a checker board on his knee
He plays away from morn till night
This is his only chore
And so the days go merrily
In Isaac Millman's store.
(John Bassett)
(He never played again.)

"THE BOYS IN MILLMAN'S STORE"
(Cont'd.)

Of Ike himself we've nought say
But what is kind and good
He never ordered us outside
Although I think he should
So when we need to purchase goods
We step inside his door
And always find the prices right
In Isaac Millman's store.

Come see our village carriage maker
No better man can walk
Whenever anybody calls
John always stops to talk.
If half a day or so you'll stay
Perchance a hole he'll bore
Then strike right off to dinner
Say the boys in Millman's store.
(John O'Brien)

We have two village blacksmiths
The one is tall and slight
The other a little chunky chap
A man of average height.
Now if you want your horse shod
Just call the day before
Or else you'll need a boarding house
Say the boys in Millman's store.

Around the village blacksmith shop
You'll see a grey haired "mann"
It's said that he has lots of cash
Get some of it if you can
He gave away ten cents one day
And ever since feels sore
The rest he's going to take with him
Say the boys in Millman's store.

(James Mann)

And now I think I'd better stop
This wayward pen of mine
Perhaps I've gone quite far enough
In putting things in rhyme.
So good bye friends and cronies all
I guess I'll write no more
But leave you all around the fire
In Isaac Millman's store.

(Added after by Dr. Shannon)
None hath green Erin's Isle among
Her poet sons of yore
Or of today, whose nimble tongue
Can lighter touch and score
Our weaknesses than he who hung
This manuscript before
A laughing public's eyes, We've wrung
The secret out, Asthore
Your name is "Mac", your strength of lung
Is known in Millman's store.

INTERESTING CHARACTERS OF THE VILLAGE IN THE EARLY DAYS

The oldest house near the south-west corner, formerly owned by Fred Strasser, is now occupied by Irwin Fishleigh. This Strasser house had as its mistress a character not to be forgotten and commonly called "Old Sal". Bedecked in a red shawl, rings worn almost to her finger tips, she would promenade up the walks with her head raised to the heavens. This prompted much ridicule. On one occasion she, in defense of herself, threw from an upper window scalding water on the tormentors.

Those now in declining years will remember in their early school days others not so vicious in their tactics, but very entertaining to them.

Old negro, George, the barber, told stories to many a child in his soft toned southern accent.

Just across the way was an old Irish cobbler and his wife, Ellen, given to imbibing freely of the spirits, and with their drunken brawls became a great annoyance to the neighbors. The writer well remembers Ellen coming to the doctor's office begging for a prescription to allow her a wee bit that she might quench the burning thirst.

Another amusing character was old Sarah Doan who attended all the auction sales. In her voluminous skirt she wore a pocket for the purpose of concealing any articles especially appealing to her. On one occasion, when she was peering through the upstairs in her solitude, she made a misstep and the crowd on the lower floor was startled by a leg coming down through a stove pipe hole.

The Frazer sisters lived in the cottage (now owned by W. H. Mills) at the top of the sand hill. Mary Frazer, a dressmaker, was accidentally killed when she was thrown from the buggy in which she was riding down the Port Bruce Hill enroute to the Sunday School picnic. Her sister, Emerilla, continued to live alone in the house for many years where her beautiful garden was known throughout the district.

DOCTORS

As a busy centre and fine location, it attracted many resident physicians to the village. The first locating was Dr. Hawkins who remained until 1840 after which many followed for short periods - Dr. J. T. Wilson, Dr. Kemott, Dr. Millar, Dr. Closson and Dr. D. Willson. In 1859 Dr. Robert Lyon Sanderson, born in Niagara, came to Sparta and practised in the locality fifty-one years. His genial manner and human kindness live in the memory of many. His associates were Dr. Boddington, Dr. Odlum and Dr. Bruce Smith. The last associate was Dr. George Shannon, coming in the early nineties, and with whom a very warm friendship was formed, and in Dr. Sanderson's declining years Dr. Shannon remained to give him medical aid and after his death Dr. Shannon moved to St. Thomas where he established an extensive practice. After his removal from Sparta, came Dr. Ferguson for a short period and Dr. Lee Elliott, who eventually took his office to St. Thomas where he now practises as an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist. Following Dr. Elliott were Dr. Kilgour, Dr. Frank Griffin, then Dr. Herbert White, the last resident doctor who practised until 1934.

In the duration of time and from a declining village, we find ourselves without a resident physician, only to prove that time brings great changes to all human lives and places.



The Russ twins
ORREN and Warren

THE RUSS TWINS.

Orren and Warren Russ were born around 1840. They were the twin sons of Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Russ, they were born on the old homestead at Russ Corners near Yarmouth Centre.

Orren and Warren excited much attention from boyhood. They were exact duplicates of each other. Not only in their physical features were they so similar that close acquaintance experienced difficulty in telling them apart but their voices, their habits of living and their way of natures were the same. All through life the Russ Twins preserved their affinity. Their clothing was identical seven days of the week and both refrained from having their hair or beards cut for years. They took great pride in their long curly hair and pointed beards when they were young men travelling about the world-for the Russ Twins were great globe-trotters in their youth. They explored Texas in the "wild and woolly days" in a covered wagon drawn by mules and they followed the races in Old Kentucky for several years familiar figures at many a bygone classic. Next to their devotion for each other Orren and Warren Russ loved high-bred race horses. To own a fleet-limbed filly with proud blood of a long line of royal ancestors in her veins was the height of their ambition.

The Russ Twins staged their big equestrian sensation at the Belmont Agricultural Fair and also at the Western Fair in the year 1878.

They exhibited a spanking pair of carriage horses as nearly alike as they were. The exhibit took the red ribbons and diplomas in both places. In fact the twins and horses were just about the whole show at Belmont. The horses were dapple gray in color similar markings and physical characteristics. The twins appeared in satorial splendor purchased for the big occasion, tall white plug hats being the crowning glory of their attractive attire.

Buffalo and New York city knew the Russ Twins. In the former city they accepted a position as coachman for a prominent lawyer and every day saw the twins in attractive livery ensconced on the high front seat of their employers coach. They were the sensation on Main street of Buffalo.

In New York city the twins had their first theatrical experience being engaged by the late Tony Pastor. Several other towns and cities in the United States were visited by the Twins usually for short periods and then Orren and Warren got tired of being wanderers and returned to their native heath and fireside there to spend the remainder of their lives inseparable companions to the end.

In later years they were seldom seen outside of the farm and rarely visited St. Thomas and Aylmer.

Neither married nor showed any marked interest in the opposite sex but both were handy as a woman at housework. Warren died in 1920 greatly affected Orren and he didn't live too long afterwards.

Warren and Orren spent much of their leisure time reading, being fond of Shakespeare and other works of nature. They were extremely well posted on international questions.

- 2 RUSS TWINS- (cont'd)

During their stage career they studied elocution and often entertained friends with recitations learned in their youth.

Photographs of the Twins in their "theatrical or touring attire", were quite numerous eighty or ninety years ago. The photograph shows them in their prime of life, when their hair hung luxurious, corkscrew curls around their shoulders and their beards were black and silky.

In their old age the twins hair and beards became streaked with gray and lost some of its silken texture even those changes seemed to take place simultaneously.