

"PEACE" by R.N.Rowsell (1968)

PEACE is a book my father compiled in preparation for the 60th wedding anniversary of his parents, Arthur and Blanche Rowsell. It was type-written, mimeographed and stapled together with cardboard covers. the title "Peace" handwritten on the front cover. He gave a copy of the book to his parents and to each of his brothers and sisters. A letter to his family was inserted into the front of the book. It is shown immediately below.

P.O. Box 69
Topsail,
Nfld
December 31, 1968
To my Brothers,
Brothers, Sisters,
Brothers, Sisters in Law,
Brothers, Brothers in Law,

Greetings!

On November the 11th 1968 Father and Mother celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

The little book enclosed was written to express some of the thoughts that flashed across my mind. The first copy was sent to Mom and Dad as a little memento of that important day in their lives.

I believe you would like to have a copy of this little book for you and your family. It will serve as a memento of a great occasion in our lives as well as in the lives of our parents.

Here it is.

I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I have enjoyed writing it.

Sincerely
Reg

FOREWORD

It was a delightful privilege for me to be with my Father and Mother on the eleventh day of November 1968 on which day they celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

On that day I saw many pictures in my mind's eye. Some of these pictures are described on the following pages. Other of these pictures are indescribable and will be understood only when eternal light shines upon them.

Here I want to set down some little bits of history and some incidents that will be of interest to Mom and Dad, their sons and daughters, their grand children and their great grand children.

RnRowsell Dec. 25, 1968

THE MARRIAGE

The Groom: Arthur William Rowsell -- Born February 14, 1880
The Bride: Blanche Anstey -- Born February 27, 1891

They were married at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 11, 1908.

The wedding took place on Rowsell's Island, Leading Tickles West, Notre Dame Bay, Nfld.

The minister was the Rev. Mr. Stapleton, Methodist.

The "Bride's Boys" (so called in these days) were Israel Rowsell, Willis Spencer and George Rowsell. The Bride's Maids were:- Anna Chippett, Minnie Rowsell and Lucy Rowsell.

The bride and groom and party left the little gray home, walked east in the garden and on through the gate. They walked north on the road along by their garden fence and passed by the family well.

At the corner of the fence they turned west and wended their way up the slow incline to the tiny white church nestled among the Atlantic-toughened spruce.

ROWSELL'S ISLAND

Nobody lives on Rowsell's Island today

Not even the old Church is there. That was launched to Cull's Island by Israel Rowsell and today that Church is lovingly cared for by Kenneth Rowsell, Israel's son and his friends.

I, in a quiet moment, have imaginatively seen and heard my forefathers designing and building their schooners "the Eight Brothers" and the "Rowsells' Barque".

I have seen and heard the saw in the "Sawpit" and I knew my fathers [sic] intended to build a schooner, a boat or a house out of solid stuff.

I have seen and heard them in their "workshops" making their own furniture for these men were cabinet makers of the highest order.

I have seen and heard the women folk as house-keepers, needle-workers, cooks and hostesses and spreaders of fish on bough-covered flakes. These were angels of the noblest types come to earth to be wearers of aprons, saviours of men and mentors to these mens' [sic] children. My mother was one of these.

I have seen and heard that huge iceberg some distance from the shore struggling to free itself from the island's foundations. That berg rolls, grinds its base against the rock, weeps, glistens in the sun, separates [sic] one part of itself from the other in an effort to set itself free. But the ground-swell tantalizes that iceberg mercilessly.

I have seen and heard the seas roll in on Levi's Beach as a token of the ocean's call to anyone who has the sea in his blood. But there is no one on the island now to be beckoned.

PEACE

PEACE is the title I have given to this little book.

This is the Hebrew word for "peace". It is pronounced "sha-lōm"

This is the Greek word for "peace" and it is pronounced "eirēnē"

These words have become flesh and dwell among us for on this day we have seen peace, not in a strange word of a strange language, but we saw it living in Father and Mother, especially in Mother, who, in spite of much weakness bore the day heroically and unconsciously revealed a deep calm in the centre of her life and this deep calm we call peace, "shal-l?m.

They passed through storms enough in these sixty years to make their lives become "void and without form" but instead of that the eternal God through their faith and by His mighty Spirit breathed upon the face of the billows, blew away the boisterousness and created a deep calm, peace.

WE SAW THAT PEACE

That "peace" today was seen by us, their sons and daughters.

Reginald Norman and his wife Ruby (Field)
William Henry Macauly and his wife Lydia (Porter)
Joseph Augustus and his wife Eva (Payne)
Arthur Harold and his wife Edith (Roberts) and his youngest child, Cindy.
Mary Louise and her husband Albert (Evans)
Benjamin Hoover and his wife Mary (Park) and their children Judy, Derrick, Linda, Keith and Cathy.
Ruth Armistice and her husband Leander (Gale)
Regretfully two sons and their wives were absent:-
Baxter Allen and his wife Dolly (Perry)
Gilbert Edward Mark and his wife Doris (Taylor)

And

WE HAVE THAT PEACE

PEACE AND PRAYER

Peace comes through prayer. Mom and Dad have taught us that.

Those of us who are older in the family will recall the practice of prayer our parents demonstrated in the family circle.

The years have made a difference, though. These seems to have been something in the society of the past forty years that took people off their knees in family prayers.

While the practice of family prayer has lost its hold in many homes, we are convinced beyond all doubt that even today there are few if any families in Newfoundland that are remembered more often at the Throne of God in the private prayers of Father and Mother than we are.

Sweet and befitting it was on that glad 60th Wedding Anniversary Day to end the celebrations in hymn and prayer.

MORE ABOUT PRAYER

Being the eldest of the family, I remember, I suppose, things of which most of the family have not much knowledge.

I remember when, in the days of simpler living and when there was no demanding routine, Dad would leave his work about four in the afternoon, go to his room, and pray.

I remember his prayers in the Church or in the cottage meeting how they were uttered in passionate tones, filled with immense sincerity and genuine emotion.

We had three brothers in Word War II of whom two were in the 166th Newfoundland Field Regiment and one in the Royal Air Force. If ever sons in the Services were prayed for, these are they.

How well I know that in my work in the Christian Ministry my parents' prayers have guided me as Hannah's guided Samuel and as Susannah Wesley's guided John.

THE MAT AND THE PRAYER

I remember that in the little kitchen at Leading Tickles when my two younger brothers were asleep in their beds, I was given the privilege to remain with Mother to help her as she hooked her mat.

I cut the narrow pieces from the larger rag, or tore off the narrow pieces of whatever colour Mother needed to hook into the "brin" (sackcloth).

I remember one such night when "the wind was blowing hard" and I had torn and cut a lot of rags, Mother reminded me that Dad was somewhere on his way home from Labrador with "Skipper Henry" Anstey (Mother's Father) in his schooner the Piccadello.

When the "mat-frame" was "lodged away", when the bits of rag were swept from the kitchen floor and before we went to bed, Mother prayer. What a lot of meaning she put into these words:-

"Guard the sailors tossing
On the deep blue sea."

COMMITMENT

The peace that I referred to which lived in Dad and Mom, a peace that came through prayer which wrought not only the miracle of peace in them but the miracle of guidance and protection for the members of the family, a guidance and protection I have noticed more than once.

It must have been rich soil where this peace, this prayer, this guidance were cultivated. It was.

For example: A chap becomes a good motor mechanic when he as a boy becomes interested in motors, when he receives training at school, when he goes to a garage and really gets his hands dirty and when he perseveres in a garage for years and years. This is true in every vocation not excluding the Christian life. Mother's commitment to Christ began when she was twelve years of age; Father's began when he was nineteen. They had interest when they were young, they were diligent in Scripture reading, they had lots of fellowship with Christian friends and they persevered in their calling for years on end. Commitment!

MOTHER ON THE JOB

I remember one winter evening when my Brother, Baxter, and I had brought the water from the well and had our "wood and splits stowed in", Mother noticed that Baxter's mitts had several holes in them.

When the evening meal was ended and the necessary chores were done, mother took her needles and her worsted and began knitting a pair of mitts for Baxter. They were ready for him in the morning.

Mother's baked beans were always good. When the beans were boiled they were placed in a cullender. The "fat-back pork" was cut into scores of tiny cubes. These cubes and a quantity of molasses were distributed among the drained beans and baked. That would be breakfast. How we enjoyed it!

ROMPING

How many evenings in late fall and winter did we spend romping on the kitchen floor.

The hooked mats were pushed aside.

Dad challenged us to wrestle him and bring him to the floor.

He knew so many things to do - the forward bend, the lazy stick, put your toe in your mouth, put your foot behind your head. He taught us how to "leap the salmon", and we've been doing it ever since. There were so many other things we did, romping.

When the agile movements were being performed and there was an uproar in the kitchen, so often I heard Mother say, "O, Arthur, you are worse than the boys."

Then Dad said, "come, boys, put the mats back in their places and get ready for bed. I must make my "chovies" [see Note 1] (I don't know how to spell his word but that is how it sounded. Chovies were "splits" (kindlings) off which shavings were cut with each last end of the shaving not cut from the "split" at its farther end.

A "split" was a slip of wood measuring more or less an inch in diameter and cloven from a dry bullet. [see Note 2]

Note 1:

The word "chovy" is contained in the Dictionary of Newfoundland English.

chovy* noun

Piece of kindling wood shaved with a knife so that the wood curls at the sides; Chiffies-dry shavings made to kindle fires.

Chovee-a split sliced into shavings which are accumulated at one end, leaving a part of the split intact.

When a thin piece of kindling wood is shaved along half its length so that the shavings stick out from it but are still attached, the pieces are called [chovis] or [shovis]. C 68-10 Before going to bed, my father would first cut out some chobbies to light the fire with next morning. 1977 RUSSELL 118 Makin' chovies was a skillful piece of business, and a man with a good sharp knife and some dry kindlin' could make 'em right bushy and fancy like.

Note 2:

Billet is contained in the Dictionary of Newfoundland English and means a length of birth, usually unsplit, cut for fuel.

THE DEPRESSION

In the early Nineteen Twenties we had a difficult time "to keep the wolf from the door." Sometimes we were hungry. Thinking of that, I shall never forget the delightful taste of buttered toast after we had spent what seemed like a long time without butter, without sugar, without cream in our tea.

In these days Mother had a vinegar plant and she used to make vinegar pies. I must confess that I didn't like them very much but they made a welcome dessert.

Father earned a pittance cutting railway ties. I helped him. Even though he did received a pittance, he was completely honest and was certain that every tie he carried from the woods had not less in every respect than the measurements required. Here I saw the big man who left big things for the big Newfoundland.

FINALLY

There are many other things I could set down in this little book.

Some day I hope to write other pages for those of the family that still remain. I shall too, of course, correct the pages I have written here in a hurry.

But right now, I am content to have written this much for the whole eleven of us. How thankful we are that there has never been a death in the family in sixty years.

In the words I have written I expect I have worn my heart on my sleeve. Every person will have to do that I think if he desires to communicate with his fellows.

I write this so that my Mom and Dad will be able to see it with their mortal eyes. I write this so that when the houses of Father's and Mother's earthly tabernacle are dissolved and they enter into their Heavenly Tabernacle, they will have happy hearts and they will know that their sons and daughters are deeply grateful for the things their parents have said and done.