

FOUR SCORE YEARS

Martin Pratt Observes His 80th Anniversary.

Tuesday was not just such a day as Martin Pratt would like to have had for observing his eightieth birthday, but it was so much better than the day following that he is very well satisfied with the weather bureau.

In the neighborhood of a hundred invitations had been sent out but owing to the threatening weather only a little over half that number responded. Those who turned out, felt well repaid for doing so as the occasion was a most happy one. Following an hour of social visit the banquet dinner prepared by Mrs. Martin Schlingerman was announced. It was a repast to which ample justice was paid and at its completion a program of toasts was rendered.

Judge Pratt, of Fairmont, a brother of the host, responded to the subject, "Brother's Boyhood Days," relating a number of interesting incidents that occurred in Martin's boyhood life. Among other things he told about their early experience in going to Sunday school when they had but one pair of store pants between them, Martin going to Sunday school one Sunday and he the next and how it made him feel when twitted by the other lads of wearing Martin's pants. He also spoke

of the school which was reached by following a blazed trail through the wilderness of western New York, the school where Martin graduated and received his diploma. A number of other incidents were also related bringing back the host to the days of long ago.

Hon. Alfred Davis spoke to the toast, "Pratt's Reputation" and handled it in a happy manner, indicating that withal Pratt was a pretty good fellow even if he had no reputation worth talking about.

J. E. Brown, of the Amboy Herald, responded to the subject, "Farmer Pratt". Mr. Pratt had always been a thorough going farmer and when he came to this community he came with a determination to have the best farm, the best buildings, the best crops and that he succeeded is known to all. Mr. Brown said that the fact that Pratt was so well on this his eightieth birthday was largely due to eating codfish two times a day on week days and three days on Sunday, a prescription which he prescribed many years ago when conducting the red front grocery in Mapleton. Mr. Brown also gave an interesting sketch in rhyme relative to the old soldiers of Amboy which was highly appreciated.

A. J. Ellis dealt with the toast, "Owls and Owl Clubs," and while he had not attended but two gatherings

of the Owl Club at Mapleton he had seen enough of them to realize that the owl was not only a wise bird but roamed about at night in search of its prey or in observing the birthday of its members. In conclusion Mr. Ellis drank a beautiful toast to his old neighbor in a glass of sparkling water.

Mr. M. M. Pratt, in the absence of Captain Everitt of Fairmont, spoke briefly of the battle of Gettysburg, in which he participated. Hon. David Cross, postmaster at Amboy also spoke a few words as did Edward Pratt, of New York, and Robert Curry, of Sterling.

Mrs. H. C. Hotaling, to whom was assigned the subject, "Eighty Years," told of the many changes which have taken place in the business world in the days since Mr. Pratt first saw the light of day back in Montgomery county, New York, in 1827. At the request of Mr. Pratt it is published and is as follows:

"A moment, an hour, a day, a month, a year, each swiftly passes by fraught with its many cares and joys. Looked forward to they seem like great expanses of time, ample for any amount of work, but in review how short they have been.

Then again each day appears as its predecessor generally speaking, and so each year, with its springtime and summer; its autumn and winter. But, ah, these eighty years have wrought wondrous changes. Such mighty strides in all channels that we cannot imagine what the future holds in store if the coming eighty years will form as great a klydescope as those just passed.

Eighty years—just take a peep into the old living room where the fire place with its crackling logs heats the apartment and also does the family cooking and the brick oven for baking and compare it with the convenient kitchen of to-day with its modern range, burning wood, coal, gasoline or gas.

Watch the mother of eighty years ago as she cards the wool, spins the yarn, weaves the cloth and then makes the garments to clothe the family, sewing for the boys as well as the girls and now under the ready-made factory system the woman hardly knows the difference between wool and cotton.

Then it was the skilful hand which plied the needle, but now the choice of numberless machines are supplied so cheap that every household is provided with one and hand sewing is almost a lost art.

The evenings spent around the glowing fire place, with a pine knot, or tallow dip, or candle for extra light lives only in far away memory in this age when a kerosene lamp is out of date and gasoline, acetylene, gas and electric lights have grown too common to provoke a passing thought. Eighty years ago a man would have been called visionary or insane had he described the Armour packing plant to the assistants on "butchering day." Did factory canned goods, vegetables meats, or fruit, grace a table eighty years ago.

The journey from home had to be made in the old stage coach for it was eighty years ago the first railway was constructed and that was only for freight and used horse power, and in 1829 a locomotive was completed to run on a four mile track. It was not until brother Pratt was three years old that there was a passenger train. But that 40 miles of track has grown like a spiders web until the whole world is entangled in its meshes, there being hundreds of thousands of miles in the United States alone. From steam cars using wood we have passed to coal and on to oil burners and then electric railways have come crowding the steam locomotives. Street cars also came into existence during this expanse and they have change until the first horse cars would hardly be recognized by their modern cable and electric brothers. Bicycles, what would Mr. Pratt's father have said had he seen young Martin mount two wheels set tandem and whirl down the road at a "devil's speed" leaving only a cloud of dust behind. Then the great automobiles, and the airship. You have all laughed at "Darius Green and his flying machine" but had he lived to-day he might fly in the modern airship. Even the arrival of a letter in those of long ago was an important matter with its heavy postage and slow journey, quite a contrast to our one and two cent postage—fast express, efficient mail clerks, etc. Not content with this we have telegraphy. What a stir the laying of the Atlantic cable made in 1865 and 1866 but the wireless telegraphy now causes no comment. We also stand in our domiciles an talk to the neighbors or

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across the continent and do you suppose 80 years ago the people could have been made to think that possible?

The work out of doors on the farm has made even more strides than mother's kitchen. Note how cutting the grain has changed from scythe and cickle to harvester—to self binder. The threshing has worked up from a laborious task to the great steam thresher. Even the pretty milk maid grows scarce and useless when the cows are milked by machinery. The old pan raised cream forgotten as the separator turns out the cream as soon as the milking is done and the modern co-operative creamery produces the butter almost the next instant.

The "Old Oaken Bucket" lives only in song, wooden pumps and wind mills have had their day and a gasoline engine draws the water to quench the thirst.

The old red school house with its wooden benches has gone. A B C's are no longer taught to the babies, and even in Sunday worship the fathers and mothers of eighty years ago would be strangers. They would think our 20 to 30 minute services hardly worth going to church to hear and would wonder at our many annexed societies, such as the Young Mens' Christian Association, Christian Endeavor, Epworth League, etc. Father Pratt no doubt looked at the corn husks for signs of cold weather and scanned the suns face to see what tomorrow's weather might be, but would he not hooted the idea of one man and his assistant notifying the people all over the state as to the changes, of each day's temperature as our weather bureau does?

Coal trade was then in its infancy, it has grown to such a monster that there is talk of the supply being exhausted and many new fuels are being invented. But little gold was then mined. The great mines of California, Nevada, Alaska all came during these 80 years and the changes in mining operations we could not tall.

John Quincy Adams was president when Martin Pratt was born, but Andrew Jackson was elected the next year and in that election 24 states participated, there are 45 now, and the popular vote at the last election was twelve times as great as in 1828.

The west and middle west were practically unknown. Chicago only dates back to 1837 and Minneapolis and St. Paul—

But why try to tell all, surely it has been true that "Tomorrow brings better things" and quoting from Ralph Parlette. "Let us get all the joy possible out of to-day, for that is the best preparation for tomorrow, and whatever overtakes us, or whenever it comes, we are ready to set up house-keeping on the other side."

Both before and after the banquet the Sterling drum corps produced stirring martial music, the strains which carried the boys in blue back to the days of forty years ago.