



Transcription of the *Soapstone Chips*, a manuscript newspaper, 1886.

This handwritten newspaper is in the collection of the American Antiquarian Society (Catalog Record #615731).

Transcription created in 2023 as part of the Historic Children's Voices project, supported by funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Users of this transcription should note its use in the credit line in any citations of the transcribed source.

Cite the original newspaper as: *Francestown Academy Manuscript Newspaper, 1886*, Mss Boxes Amateur 049, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester MA.

Soapstone Chips.

Dec. 23, 1886.

Volume I. Number I.

Motto: Practice makes perfect.

The Soapstone Chips is to be issued semi-monthly by the students of Frankestown Academy.

To the Public.

In this our first number of the Soapstone Chips we shall endeavor to entertain you for a little while by a few short articles and items of interest, but as it is our first attempt at wielding the editors pen we hope to be excused if our productions are not very brilliant.

Notes and Comments.

In our paper today we have an account of a trip to Nahant beach which though it is quite short is good as far as it goes; though we have never been to Nahant, we have heard others tell about it, and it seems as though it must be a very interesting place to visit on various accounts.

We can only say in conclusion that we wish the contributor who wrote that article had made more of it.

The school does not seem to abound in poets and authors judging by the replies we got when soliciting articles for the paper.

If the contributors were half as anxious to write for the paper as they are to engage in some good lively game, it would not be such an undertaking to get up a Lyceum paper.

The bit of possible news which appears in our paper today, is hoped may prove a timely warning to those who have charge of the Academy building, and thus be the means of preventing such a calamity.

Gossip.

The other day Eddie Bixby came running to me and said that Venetta Brown told him that Maro Brooks told her as a positive fact that Sadie Crosby heard Will Ordway say that Charlie Jellison told Mabel Downes that Mary Woodbury said that Grace Downes was sure Frank Clark saw Wait Livingston shake Leonard Wilkins, and that Emma Pettee told Maud Sleeper that Emma Dunklee saw Annie Morse tell Walter Spaulding that Christmas was coming.

The World!

To some the world is a bright one,
Filled with joys that e'er will last,
To some, the world is a dark one;
In trouble they are cast.

To others, it ever seems,
Full of many loving friends
And to others, a mist'ry
From the first untill [i.e. until] the end.

Then among us there are those
Who lead a lonely life—
For the loss of some dear friend,
Thus the toil, and thus the strife.

Then, too on this earth we meet
Those who are ever gazing
Midst the throng where they may roam,
In their lover, wand'ring

Through some far off distant chime,
And whom they never hear from,
Thinking that they'll meet him,
Sometime, somewhere midst life's storm.

Then too we see some people,
While we stroll along our way,
Some people ever longing
For some far distant day.

Either for some fond meeting
Of relatives, oh, so dear,
Or of friends truest of true
Though far away, yet near.

On this earth we also meet
Some people whose friends are few.
Perhaps it is just because
They take for old friends, new.

When their own old once loved friends
In some unknown land are gone,
Thus when they at last return,
They find their place is won.

Ah! the world depends greatly
On the kind deeds that we do,
On the kind words that we speak,
Whether we're false or true.

The young ladies should be more careful and be sure the gentleman who steers
understands his business, before they slide down very steep hills.

Any one visiting the school would be surprised [i.e. surprised] to see the improvement
in the appearance of the gentleman, since they have placed in their dressing-room a
looking glass, a brush, and a comb.

Anyone in want of perfumery can obtain it of the chemistry class. Prices reasonable.

A Morning at School.

When the janitor enters the school-room in the morning it is cold and desolate but he says to himself "Where there's a will there's a way." He goes cheerfully about his work, sweeping, dusting, and once in while poking the fire vigorously, when down comes the funnel causing a great commotion, but it is soon replaced by Henry and Charles, hindered by Addie and Allie who are always there early; notwithstanding the smoky stove and rickety funnel the Colburns and keeps the room warm and cheerful.

The ringing of the 8:15 bell arouses the Sleepers; during the half-hour the scholars are seen wending their way towards the Academy two and two. At the strike of the small bell a goodly number have assembled in which the White race and Brown are represented, and several of the trades, including the Smiths; also Edward II and Levi; and the sons of Ephriam [i.e. Ephraim] and Jesse, and the Marys and Martha, and much beauty and Grace.

The professor reads a Paige from the good book, and just before the roll is called the Batchelder puts in his appearance and then a few comic jokes are quoted from the daily paper.

The reading class is called and they read a chole Paige from the historu of Queen Annie and Richard(sons). One of the principal features of the forenoon is the class in Commercial Arithmetic, cosisting [i.e. consisting]of a number of young men, not remarkable for size of beauty, but for Wait, the dry rules and difficult problems are explained by Ordways.

Clarke, Wilkins, and Jellison, when not in mischief, are seen attentively watching the Paige, which saves them many reprimands.

Amid the ups and Downes of school life and the Pettee trials, all seem to enjoy themselves, teachers as well as scholars. The assistants are sometimes seen lingering beside Brooks. The kind words and bright faces are ever ready to welcome new comers. "Those men who try to do something and fail are infinitely better than those who try to do nothing and beautifully succeed." Jenkin Lloyd Jones.

Soapstone Chips.

Vol. I No. I

Editorial

Why is it that we are continually obliged to do things which we do not wish? To write an essay, to contribute for the paper, to speak on the question, or do something which we do not wish to do, and which we are sure we cannot do.

We must "aim at the sun," but how are all these little things to help us to reach it? If we write an essay, is that going to help us to write something better some day? When one speaks on the question, how can they tell but that they are practicing for some higher platform.

We should all strive to gain a higher place and we never shall be fitted for such a place unless we are first proposed to fill lower one. Some may wonder where we got our name but if they had been obliged to work as we have had to for our articles they wouldn't wonder that we thought it as hard work as clipping soapstone.

A trip to Nahant Beach.

I started from Boston at nine o'clock, and arrived at the beach about noon. The coast here is a ragged cliff covered with sea-weed. About halfway down the cliff is a small cave in the center of which is a spring of fresh water. The tide fills the cave full every time it rises. Another point of interest is the Maolis Garden with its board walks and shade trees, skating rink, and bowling alley. Barges run from the gardens to Lynn every half hour; where horse cars from Boston connect with them.

A Bit of possible News.

Francestown, Jan. 15th, 1887.

There is great excitement today on account of a destructive fire which occurred here last night. It started in the Academy building, and as there was a strong wind blowing at the time, it spread rapidly, and destroyed several houses in the neighborhood.

The people of the village feel the loss of the Academy building the most, for it will probably not be rebuilt. The cause of the fire is unknown, but it was probably started by

some of the stove-funnels falling down, as they have been known to be in a dangerous condition for some time. Fortunately, there was but little wood in the basement.

What would life be?

Can you tell me what would life be
If we each one strove to do
Acts to make each one's life happier,
With no thoughts of self in view?
Ah! I fancy that you would tell me
It would then be a life hard to lead,
But if we should strive to do this way
Our life would then be a perfect seed.

What would life be without anyone
To love for their own dear sake,
With no one we h'd vainly seek to find,
Of them trusty friend to make?
Life would be sad with none to love us;
The life that we have here given us,
One that God would be willing to take.

What would life be without burden,
A life without a single care,
A life that's not midst darkest shadows,
Could there be one anywhere?
Often behind the darkest shadows
Even the brightest lights may shine,
So let us call their Earth the Shadow
and Heavens the treasured Mine.

Winter's Pleasure.

Winter usually commences by the middle of November, our first snow storm coming about the first of December, and by the fifteenth of December we have good sleighing, which generally lasts until the first of April. Sleighing is one of the amusements which every one enjoys, unless he is obliged to take a trip when the mercury stands about 25 degrees below zero.

It is a custom, throughout New England and Canada to have sleigh rides which the people, both old and young, attend. They usually ride to some neighboring town and spend the afternoon and evening in games or a social dance, and come home by moonlight. Some winters they have three or four of these rides.

In no season of the year do we have more pleasure than during the winter months. We seem to have more leisure time then. Some people think it is because the evenings are longer, and perhaps are right. One of the best pleasures, and one from which the people desire the most benefit is to form a party of young friends and spend the evening in reading, declamations, recitations, and essays, and become interested in some practical subject which will help to develop the mind.

But very few people practice this. Another useful practice is to induce the younger children, when at home to spend the long winter evenings in reading some useful books, which will develop their minds; books of influence, and others from which from which they would obtain business information. People need physical as well as mental exercise. Skating is one of the most healthful amusements, as it brings into play all of the muscles. And those who are just learning to skate often give amusement to the older skaters by their mishaps.

Sliding parties are another source of pleasure, to the young people, and many of our New Hampshire hills are the scenes of this lively sport during those winter evenings. All these out door sports are healthful and students like ourselves, should indulge in them as often as practicable.

Connundrums [i.e. conundrums]

Which of the scholars are essential parts in every house? Sleepers.

Why are soldiers more tired in the month of April than they are in any other month?

Ans. Because they have just passed through a march of 31 days.

What great natural curiosity have we in school? Ans. A Living stone.

Which of the scholars is the son of a medusa? Ans. Jellison.

Sydney Smith says, "The fact is that in order to do anything in this world worth doing we must not stand shivering on the bank, thinking of the cold and the danger, but jump in and scramble through as well as we can."