

## A FLEETING BLESSING.

HOW MONCTON PEOPLE REGARD THE STREET RAILWAY.

When the Authorities Threatened to Close it Down the People Began to Realize Just What a Benefit it was in the Town—Will Now Appreciate It.

MONCTON, Sept. 20.—We came so near losing our brand new electric street railway last week, that all the good citizens of Moncton are a good deal unnerved from the shock, and are congratulating each other tremendously upon the narrow escape they have had. I don't mean that some particularly bold thief tried to put the electric street railway system in his pocket and abscond with it; or even that the historic cow which was to prove the destruction of Stevenson's first engine, has materialized in Moncton, and wrecked the railway and rolling stock by carelessly lying down on the track. No! it is worse than that. A paternal government has threatened to take it away from us, just as a wise, but tyrannical parent disciplines a disobedient child by taking away his toy from him until he promises to be good. And just as the child values that particular toy far more after its removal, than he ever did before, and howls lustily to have it restored to his empty arms, so we have been telling each other with the most impressive earnestness how much we always thought of the street railway and how impossible it would be to exist without it now. We have also bragged to an unlimited extent, and with far more regard for scenic effect than truth, of the number of the times we have used the railway, and the absolute necessity we have found it.

The cause of this very unusual state of affairs dates back to the early history of the street railway, almost a year now, when the I. C. R. authorities first caused objections to the street cars crossing the railway tracks at St. George and Main streets, finally taking the rather extreme measure of removing the diamond crossings during the night thus effectually preventing the cars from crossing the railway, and compelling the company to resort to a cumbersome system of transfers which undoubtedly militated against the success of the street railway at first, many people preferring to walk rather than be subjected to the inconvenience and delay of getting on, and off the cars so often.

The difficulty was finally settled on the understanding—that the I. C. R. authorities say—that the street railway company would eventually put in derailing switches, and then protect the government from the danger of suits for damages in case of accidents.

Meanwhile, the safety of the passengers and the interests of the government were both looked well after, the car being stopped, and the conductor alighting and looking carefully up and down the railway track at each crossing, before the car proceeded on its way. But as time went on the street railway failed to pay sufficiently well to warrant the large expenditure required for the purchase and working of derailing switches, and as the citizens were quite satisfied with the precautions taken for their safety nothing further was done about the crossings. Quite recently, however, I believe the street railway company received notice that the order passed by the I. C. R. committee with regard to the derailing switches, would be enforced to the letter, and unless complied with at once, the crossings would be again taken out. In consequence of this ultimatum the stockholders held a meeting last Thursday and decided to recommend the directors of the company to close the street railway down on Saturday night, as the income of the road did not admit of such an expenditure.

It was when this decision was made public that everybody hastened to evince their warm appreciation of the street car service. People who had never been on the cars before realized that it was now or never and they rushed out to take their first ride in wild haste. Small boys gathered up their pennies boarded the cars in gangs and took charge until they had secured their full five cents worth of ride "scripture measure;" while those who like simple Simon of nursery fame had no pennies to gather, watched their chance when the motor man was not looking, and cheerfully stole a ride. People who did not make use of the street cars once in three months, and had not contributed fifty cents towards their support since the railway was built, talked volubly about the high handed action of the government, and threatened to move out of town now, and vote for the opposition next election, if the street railway was really compelled to shut down. Others who had rather opposed the street cars from the first, and maintained that they only ruined the best streets in the city and made them utterly impracticable for cycling, now recalled the busy metropolitan appearance that the cars imparted to our city, the effect the railway

had had, in improving property, and lamented in advance the lifeless look of the city when bereft of them.

Altogether Saturday was a busy day with the street railway people, and the bustle and excitement made a pleasant change from the monotony of their usual existence. The big motorman said it almost made him think of some of the smaller villages outside of Bawton, and if half a dozen of those small boys did not get killed somehow, it would be a caution, for he had only one pair of eyes and they were not set in the back of his head, not to speak of its taking all his time to mind his machine, and collect all the fares he could reach without taking his hand off the lever, he was finding the need of a second pair of hands more every day since the conductors were taken off the circuit. Late on Saturday evening the strain of the situation was relaxed when the joyful news spread rapidly that action had been suspended in the matter until a reply could be received from Ottawa, to a letter written by the street railway company to the department, asking for delay until some arrangement could be made. And this morning the cars are running as merrily, and almost as empty as ever. There is a good deal to be said on the government's side as well as the company's in this dispute, and it is quite natural, that the I. C. R. people should wish to protect themselves. Of course it is all right so long as no accident occurs, but the moment anything happens at one of these crossings and someone is injured there is certain to be a heavy bill of damages to settle. On the other hand it is difficult to understand why, when no derailing switches are required of the street railway in St. John, there should be any determination against Moncton, especially when the read is paying so poorly that the agreement of such an order would result in closing it down.

It is to be hoped that the difficulty will be amicably settled without subjecting us to the humiliation of shutting down an enterprise which is a very great credit to our city and which will no doubt in time prove a source of profit as well as pride to those who were sufficiently public spirited to risk their capital in its promotion.

## THEIR HARVEST CELEBRATION.

It Was Strictly Allegorical but not a Very Beautiful Procession.

MONCTON, Sept. 24.—The Moncton branch of the Salvation Army had a harvest festival, or procession of some kind last evening, and the sight was a most impressive one to those who are interested in processions of an allegorical nature.

First came a youth arrayed in man-of-war costume and mounted upon a bicycle. He probably typified the speed with which the British navy rushed over the waves and ruled them—at least that was the way some of the bystanders interpreted his get up. He was followed at a more dignified pace by a gentleman arrayed chiefly in holes, so very ragged were his garments, manfully trundling a wheelbarrow, which I fancy contained some of the products of nature's bounty, in the shape of vegetables. He was popularly supposed to represent honest labor bearing home its reward in triumph. The band, led by the bass drum followed, several of the members bearing in place of the usual banners choice specimens of the pumpkin and squash family, while one embraced a water melon, with much tenderness. Several lady members of the army came next, some bearing hay rakes, others squashes, and probably personating Ceres and Pomona or some of the other ladies of mythology whose duty it was to watch over the products of the earth and see that they materialized on schedule time, and were of the proper quality and quantity. The extreme rear of the procession was brought up by some youths armed with pitchforks but whether they were supposed to typify the successful gathering in of the hay crop, or the terrors which await the hardened evil doer at the hands of a gentleman who is usually represented as brandishing a pitchfork, and lashing a pair of cloven hoofs with a very long and pointed tent, no one seemed quite able to determine. Those taking part in the procession did not allow the care of their vegetables and agricultural implements to interfere with their social powers in the least, and as they marched they sang a wondrous harvest chant—at least I think it was a harvest chant—to the accompaniment of the big drum with great effect. The procession was escorted by outsiders, as well as an advance and rear guard composed of several battalions of small boys.

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and a goodly following of admiring citizens from the eastern suburbs of the town. Taken altogether it was a function to be remembered, and its impressive character reflected great credit upon those having the affair in charge. Apart from its comic aspect there was something really pathetic to those who look beneath the surface in this small, but courageous band of men and women who still continue to labor patiently, and with so little encouragement, amongst the poor and vicious whom other methods fail to reach. Poor and tawdry often absolutely irreverent as these methods often seem to the members of regular churches who are taught the most rigid decorum in religious matters, these people are at least sincere thoroughly in earnest, and filled with zeal and are therefore entitled to the respect which they really receive in the main even if they do seem a little ridiculous to us at times.

## HE STILL GROWLED.

Aman who Would be Disatisfied Under all Circumstances.

'Growl ye may, but go ye must,' is one of the recognized axioms of life on the ocean wave, says the author of 'On Many Seas.' Accordingly, he goes on to say, there is no more confirmed growler than Jack at sea. He has, often enough, serious matters to growl about, even now, and in the old days he had more; but when real grievances were not present, he was usually imaginative enough to concoct others. A typical marine growler was Ned, of the old clipper-ship Tanjore, Captain Hurlburt.

One gloomy day a number of sailors, Ned among them, were cleaning paint forward in the rain; for paint-cleaning aboard ship used to be a job reserved for wet days, in accordance with a notion that the rain softened the dirt.

It was not a pleasant task, and Ned was muttering to himself as he scrubbed, running over under his breath a wondrous accumulation of grievances of all sorts. The captain chanced to notice him, and inquired what was the matter.

Ned reeled off a long string of complaints, none of them worth considering, and concluded by saying that he had not had a decent meal of victuals since he came aboard the Tanjore. At that the captain, who always fed his crew well, flared up and told the growler that he had never in his life had better grub than was served on board that ship; but Ned rejoined that he had been where he had chickens and turkeys at almost every meal.

'Where was that?' asked the captain. 'On the coast of China, sir,' said Ned. 'Yes; I know,' assented the captain. 'I have traded on the China coast, and that is so; but I'll bet you growled then?' 'Well, of course,' was the naive and characteristic reply. 'Who do you suppose wants to live on much swell as that? I want good beef to eat, and then I can work!'

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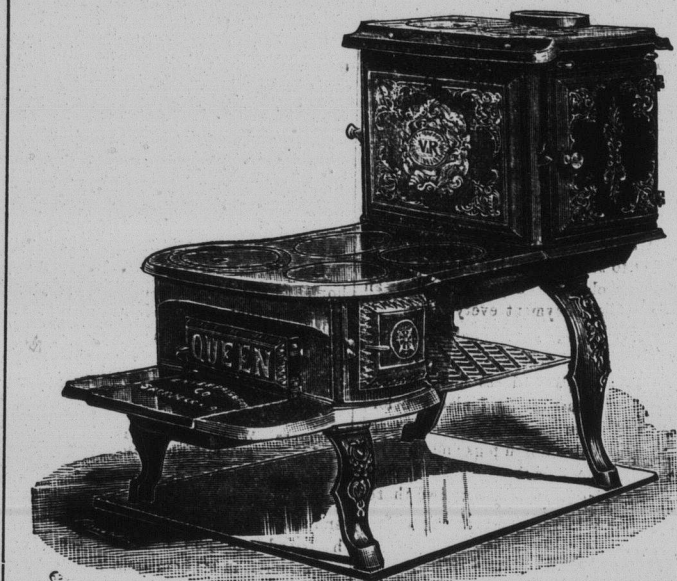
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