

Dr Caniff

PURE GOLD

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PURE GOLD

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PEN PHOTOGRAPHS.

By DR. D. CLARKE, PRINCETON, ONT.

"AULD LANG SYNE."

WE often hear the Pilgrim Fathers extolled, and relic worshippers go into ecstasy over a bit of prominent stone, on an iron-bound coast, called Plymouth Rock. The fact is, these wanderers had nowhere else to lay their heads, and, therefore, a virtue was made of a necessity. The poor pilgrims had the choice of being persecuted, hung, gibbeted, or burned, as an alternative to coming to America, and I think the choice could soon be made. But when they landed and went to work,—not in enacting "Blue" Laws, which smelt brimstone, nor in burning trances, wakers or hysterical women for witches,—then heroism had its more perfect exploits. The stroke of the first axe, made by unskilful but willing arms, was the aggressive effort of a coming conqueror, and the clearing of the way for Westward Empire. It was the knell of the bell of civilization over a doomed barbarism; and to this day the sound of the woodman's axe, in the tangled forest, speaks of victory, and aggression continuously persistent, on the skirmish line of an advancing mighty host. We have often odd ceremonies at the laying of the foundation stone of some stately edifice, or some public work; but no imposing ritual (except the dignity of honest labor and earnest endeavour can be called such) gave the initiatory impulse towards laying the deep and broad foundations of Anglo-Saxon dominion in America. The old log-houses, fast passing away, have a charm for me. The sight of them conjure up in my mind myriad memories of the past. There is the commanding knoll, with splendid beeches and maples, the work of centuries, adorning the highest point of the undulating prominence. As the rustling leaves, in autumn, glided obliquely downward, and performed strange gyrations in the air, as the gusty winds howled in savagery the requiem of the departing year, I gathered the pyramidal beech-nuts—it might be—in nooks or crannies of the ground, or being rocked gently in the curled-up corners of serleated cradles, or partially buried in the clefts of dead trees, or having refuge in the mould of decomposing vegetation. The merciless axe, like an invading foe, swept over the hill, and the fire finished the work of ages, leaving nought behind but smoking ruins and smouldering ashes. The Norland wind, so often heard in the tree-tops, but never felt, now remorselessly blew over the denuded hill, and rage at the cruel spoiler filled my juvenile bosom. Groups of men came, one bright spring morning, and stood, and looked, and studied, and measured, as if a second Rome was to be laid out. Logs accumulated round this focus of coming greatness; and on a Friday morning the foundations of the representative log-house were laid in the midst of shouts, oxen, dogs, and christenings with deep libations of whiskey. A jacketed urchin-sat on a pecked bass-wood log, gazing in wonderment, as notched ends were joined, and the fabric grew up to the rafters, and roof of hollow logs, having the chinked holes plastered with primitive mortar, made from the red clay in the bank down by the brook. For chairs logs were split in two, placed with the flat sides upwards, and the legs protruding from one to four inches upwards

to keep us from sliding off. There were no backs to these seats, and strange to say, no permanent curvatures of the spines of the occupants followed. The stick fire-place, with its alternate layers of mud and timber—the buck-skin door-opener with its huge cross-bar—the rude windows, rejoicing in four flights, fastened with shingle nails—the floor, with its huge rents, the sad traps for many bare and pattering feet, the cobwebbed rafters, smoky, sooty, and festooned with gossamer adornments of sable hue, and the merry, riotous mice gamboling on roof, rafters, and logs, holding high revelry over stray crumbs of mince-pie, Johnny-cake, and dainty biscuits, perched on primitive shelves along the walls. And then, such a capacious fire-place,—none of your "cabined and cribbed" dainty "ingles," but wide enough to roast an ox. The stove abinations were as rare as the plague. Whom ever thinks of calling a stove "our ain fireside?" Black, ugly, sickening sultry, and head-achetive is its history. A cold blast of the breath of sullen Boreas on our faces, drives us to it, but we can't be cheery near it. The rollicking, jolly company, the ruddy cheeks, the brimful of fun, the shining faces have no abiding place around a stove. The "pale faces" are its presiding deities, and its victims can be counted by tens of thousands; but the heat of a fire-place is wholesome. We feel its exhilarating effects in every inhalation. It is fresh and spiritual, for it is a diffusible stimulant. The room where the wide and deep chimney stands has no foul, pestiferous vapors lingering within its precincts, and no "blues" afflicting humanity near its cleanly swept hearth. The stove in its heated blackness, produces sleepiness, fretfulness, and hence domestic scenes of hot strife; and the sable, uncouth fire-friend is, if not the cause, is the occasion of it. I believe such changes of domestic arrangement affect the patriotism of a people. The thought of a cheery home braces up the heart and nerves the arm. We are ready to fight for our "altars and hearths," but stoves have no hearths worth fighting for, and it takes the poetry of the thing to speak of "getting our backs up" about our altars and our stoves. The associations of a family circle gathered around a roaring fire, in winter, are potent for good. The harmless jests of the teened youngsters—the tales of scenes on flood and field, of the white-haired sire or matron, so intensely real as to make the listeners cower in mortal terror, even at the chirp of a mouse—the popping of nuts, and their sudden collisions or divorces, suggestive of life's episodes—the dreamy gaze into glowing coals, and the "bigging castles in the air," seeing towers, minarets, gorgeous halls peopled with soldiers in scarlet, or weird beings in gossamer garments, with "world's wombling up and down, bleecing in a flare," and then being brought back to the real by a punch in the ribs, of the most vigorous kind, from a fun-loving member of the group, are panoramas not to be forgotten. A cheering sight it is to peer through the window of an old-fashioned log cabin, in a wintry night, on such a circle, near Christmas time. It may be a re-union of the family. The big black-log lies like a sleeping giant in the back-ground, with a fiery, red abdomen, prominent and rotund. The forestick crackles, sputters, and shoots in sportive glee its sentillations up the wide-mouthed chimney, or impudently on the laps of the watchers. The well-polished and brass-headed andirons patiently suffer, year after year, their hot and hissing loads. The tongues of flame, like coy maidens, come up intermittently and bashfully retire; each lambent spire becoming more daring than its predecessor, always hungry and devouring as a Theban sphinx, first licking up the palatable combustibles of the centre, and then savagely attacking, with a withering fire, the enemy in front and rear. Like a victorious army, they march triumphantly onward, bringing up reserves, until sparks, smoke, fuel, and laughing groups disappear in the darkness.

A MISTAKE CORRECTED.—An orator holding forth in favour of "woman, dear divine woman," concludes thus: "Oh, my hearers, depend upon it nothing beats a good wife." "I beg your pardon," replied one of his auditors, "a bad husband does."

VARIETIES.

A poor woman finding herself in New York literally penniless, applied for relief at the office Public of Charities. A clerk interrogated her:

"Are you married?"
"I am a widow, sir."
"How many children have you?"
"Five, sir."
"What is the age of the youngest?"
"The last one is dead, sir, but since then I've had another."

Some years ago the police caught in a club an "honorable Greek" who represented himself to be a Peruvian General.

"Was he a general of a division?" asked a bystander.

"Much more like a general of subtraction," was the reply.

"What is the rent of your little apartment on the seventh floor?" queried a man of a Paris landlord.

"Two thousand francs."

"Have you a stable as well?"

"You keep carriage, eh?" was the counter-question.

"No, but it would be wanted for a lodging for the ass who should pay you what you ask."

At a ball given in Philadelphia.

"Then you are fond of dancing, sir?" said a pretty girl to her partner.

"On the contrary, miss, I detest it."

"But this is our fourth polka, if I don't mistake."

"True, but the fact is, my doctor has ordered me a good perspiration at any cost."

A tradesman after having summoned a quack doctor of a certain city to the bedside of his son dying of phthisis, and finding his nostrils to be of no avail, at last decided to call in Dr. E., an eminent physician.

The latter came, glanced at the patient, and said to the father:

"Should he ask you for a bottle of brandy, you may give it to him; he has only three days to live. Good morning."

The worthy man, greatly agitated, accompanied the doctor to the door, and there, with a pallid countenance, said to him:

"Sir, I am a man, notwithstanding you have seen me unable to suppress my emotion; tell me, therefore, candidly, bluntly,—is there any danger threatening a father whose son dies of consumption?"

During one of his African campaigns, the late French Marshal Pelissier, whose passionate temper was so well known to every one of his soldiers, so far forgot himself on one occasion as to strike his aid-de-camp with his riding-whip for wrongly executing his orders. Without a moment's hesitation the young officer drew his pistol from the holster and fired at the general. It flashed in the pan. Pelissier, who had recovered his equanimity, checked him by a gesture, and then said:

"Sir, you will report yourself under arrest for eight days, for carrying your arms in bad order."

That "fine old English gentleman" of a now almost bygone school, Sir Harry Mainwaring, of Peover Hall, in the county of Chester, was as distinguished by his convivial habits as by his feats in the chase. A mighty Nimrod, he was not less a mighty toper, as indeed might well be believed of one who had in his youth been a boon comrade of the "wild prince," and of Charles Fox and Sheridan. Thus he had been for nearly forty years of his life a "six-bottle man," that is to say, a *bon viveur* who daily disposed of his half-dozen old "beeswing" port wine between the removal of the cloth and the adjournment to coffee and the ladies. Sir Harry, however, had for some time begun to show premonitory symptoms of a kind which at once attracted the attention of his friend and family physician, Dr. —, of Kuntford. In fact, his vinous devotions began to tell upon a naturally fine and hardy physique, more especially, too, that the worthy baronet had turned his sixtieth year. So one day the doctor thought fit to open the following conversation:

"This will never do, Sir Harry!"

"What won't do, man?"

"Why, you know you are not so young as formerly, and so much port—"

Sir Harry here glowered at the speaker, who, notwithstanding went on:

"—So much port at a sitting is playing the deuce with your constitution, Sir Harry."

"Bah, doctor, good honest port don't kill one."

"Not when taken in moderation, I grant, but—"

"But me no buts," interrupted the baronet; "and what the d— do you mean by moderation? Tell me I'm not moderate, eh? Why, sir, I've seen Pitt rise to make a three-hour after-dinner speech with seven bottles under his coat—fair, honest drinking, begad."

"Well, all I can say, Sir Harry, is that you cannot refer to the coat of his stomach. Yours, it is my duty to tell you is fast wearing itself out."

"The deuce it is—coat of my stomach going, eh? Well, never mind, there's the waistcoat left, and that's good for the time that that bin of the '24 port will last!"

Sir Harry's predictions was verified. He lived to finish his favourite wine.

A PHYSICIAN was walking along a road in the country one day. An old man met him, who had a bottle of whiskey sticking out of his coat pocket. "Is this the way to the poor-house, sir?" asked the old man, pointing in the direction in which he was walking. "No, sir," said the physician; "but this is," laying his hand on the bottle of whiskey.

ONCE visited a travelling tinker who had become lame, and was unable to follow his daily labor. He was in distress and required help. The pipe on the hob showed that he was a smoker. On my making some allusion to the pipe, he said, "Both me and my wife have smoked sir, ever since we were wed. We have never had more nor less than 'a pen'oth of bacca' every day." Having ascertained the length of time they had been married, I took out my pencil, and made a calculation as to the amount spent by them in these "pennies." Judge of the tinker's surprise when I thus addressed him: "My friend, if you had placed the money in the savings-bank (where you would have had interest allowed for your money), instead of wasting it in smoke, you might today have felt independent of others, for your pennies would have amounted to your bank book to the noble sum of ninety pounds" (nearly \$500).

On a recent Sunday, a worthy father of a numerous family was taking one of his little ones, a child of seven years, to church. On the way, the little fellow met a playmate, and stopped to play marbles. A quarter of an hour after, his father saw him coming towards him, bathed in tears.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

"Papa, I have lost all my marbles."

"Of course. God punishes you for not going to church."

"But, papa, neither did Joseph go—and he has won!"

Youth is the golden period of life and every well spent moment will be like good seed planted in an auspicious season.

NO CHANGE.

Some days ago a man accustomed to travel, and one who understands how to get out of a tight place, took the train at Detroit for this city. His pocket-book was pretty flat—nothing in it to defray expenses for some days to come but a ten-dollar bill. He must keep moving, or else he would find himself bankrupt in a strange city. Standing in the depot and looking at the train which was about leaving, his eye fell on the placard, "This car to Rochester without change." An idea which never occurred to him before, although he had seen a like piece of paste-board a thousand times, came into his head. He stepped on board the car, took a seat and sustained himself in a most upright and dignified position. The signal was given for the train to start. Out of the depot it passed in a few moments, along the suburbs of the city, and then the conductor announced his appearance by the word "Tickets!" Passengers began fumbling for their little pieces of paper or overhauling their wallets for their fare. Our dignified passenger never made a move. The conductor approached, and said shortly and quickly, "Tickets!" No attention given by cool passenger.

Conductor, with a sharp look—Your ticket, sir.

Cool Gentleman—Have none.

Con.—Then I'll take your fare.

Cool Gent.—Can't pay it.

Con.—Do you expect to ride without paying for it?

Cool Gent.—Yes, sir.

Con.—Tell me why.

Cool Gent.—Your advertisement says so.

Con.—Where?

Cool Gent.—That placard on the car says, "This train to Rochester without change."

The conductor, with a look of astonishment at the individual's assurance and cheek, passed him by with a smile, thinking to himself, "This is a new wrinkle in the confidence dodge."

BENGAL.

FROM the census taken during the past winter throughout India, it appears that the population of the presidency of Bengal is much in excess of the number it has heretofore been credited with. With the exception of one or two districts, there has been found in all sections of the country a far greater sum total of inhabitants than had been calculated upon, even by the largest and most recent official estimates. Of late years Bengal was acknowledged to have a population of 40,000,000 or thereabouts. This figure has, accordingly, been imported into school geography, cited in all books of reference, and established as an authority in all matters of legislation and finance. The Blue Book for 1867 gave India a total population of 180,884,297, of which 40,852,379 belonged to Bengal, while the latest official report (after careful revision) placed it at 42,680,169, a maximum increased by the results of the census of 1861-2 to 66,000,000 inhabitants.

It must be remarked that of late years the increase of population in this division of the Anglo-Indian empire has been extraordinarily rapid. Wars have long since ceased to rage, and, notwithstanding that calamity which not a very long while ago made the name of Orissa mournfully notorious, famine at the present day is a thing almost utterly unknown there. Besides, the general condition of the several classes of Bengalese society is one which eminently favors the increase of the human species.

Now that seventy years have elapsed since that keen observer, Sir Henry Strachey, in 1802, expressed himself in what have proved to be oracular terms respecting this question of population, let us in this place recur to them, as follows:

"In Bengal every one marries. It is becoming as difficult to find a bachelor of 25 as a girl of 15 without a husband. . . . The life of the poorer classes is simple and sober—a true domestic life, in fact. Every one lives at home, none are subjected to military service or to servile public labor, so common in many other countries. Women grow old soon merely because they marry too young, but barrenness is of rare occurrence. Polygamy, laxity of morals, religious austerity, the practice of widows not marrying a second time—all such unfavorable conditions as these to a regular increase of population have, on the whole, but a comparatively feeble influence over the general economy of the Bengalese. Finally, children, being less exposed to hardships than in other countries, grow to maturity with unchecked facility. They do not die, as amongst us, from sickness caused by cold, uncleanness, insufficient food. As soon as a Bengalese child is weaned he lives upon rice, runs about naked for two or three years, and grows up to manhood without needing special care. Poor though the people be, it is still possible to rear up a family in Bengal.

Some statistics in conclusion. The Blue Book for 1865 allots 666,828 inhabitants to the district of Midnapore; the late census exhibits 2,500,000. That of Gessor, previously quoted at 831,744, and that of Nuddea at 298,376, prove to have, the first 2,000,000, the second 1,900,000. Lastly, there are 2,000,000 residents in the district of Calcutta, instead of 707,182, as stated by the Blue Book aforesaid.