

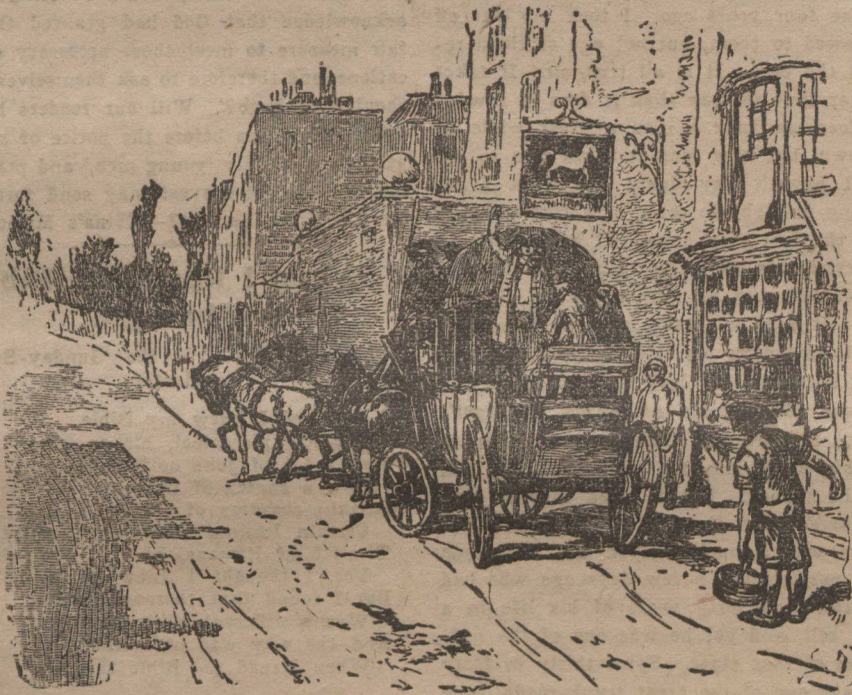
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Saved on a Plank.

I was travelling, some years ago, by coach. I had an outside seat; and, although it was late in the evening, one of the passengers, a sea-captain, tried to excite the attention of the drowsy company by giving a relation of his own adventures.

He had been to sea in a fine ship; in a dreadful storm. His vessel had been wrecked, and every soul on board, except himself and one or two sailors, had been lost. He had saved his life by holding on to a plank, and was at the mercy of the waves for a considerable time.

The company were greatly interested; they pitied the unfortunate captain, who was returning home entirely destitute; but they all wondered that a man telling of an escape almost miraculous, should confirm almost every sentence with an oath. Nothing, however, was said to him.

At one of the stages, when the coach stopped to change horses, Mr. Benn, one of the passengers, proposed to the captain to walk on with him, and let the coach overtake them. The proposal was agreed to. As they walked, Mr. Benn said, 'Did I understand you last night that you had lost your ship?'

'Yes.'

'That all your crew were drowned except yourself and one or two sailors?'

'Yes.'

'That you saved your life on a plank?'

'Yes.'

'Forgive me, then, for asking you one question more. When on that plank, did you not vow to God that, if he would spare you, you would lead a very different kind of life?'

'None of your business,' said the captain, angrily.

The coach by this time came up, and they got up outside. The day passed on without anything occurring to break the journey, and towards evening, as the coach was nearing

their destination, the captain excused himself from joining the rest of the passengers at supper, as he had no money. Mr. Benn took from his pocket a handsome sum, and offered it to him.

'No,' said the captain, 'I am poor, yet I am no beggar.'

'But,' replied Mr. Benn, 'I do not give it to you as to a beggar, but as to an unfortunate brother.'

There was a kindness in Mr. Benn's manner which could not be mistaken. The captain could not refuse the gift, but he took it awkwardly and ungraciously, as if he was half ashamed of accepting a benefit.

The company supped together, and the captain wished them good evening, after having asked Mr. Benn when he would leave. He was informed, on the morrow at sunrise.

The captain went home with a heavy heart, while Mr. Benn retired to rest, thankful that he had helped a suffering brother.

He was surprised the next morning at daylight to hear someone rap at his door. He opened it, and beheld the captain standing before him in tears. The captain took his hand, pressed it, and said:

'Sir, I have not slept a wink since I saw you. I was very angry with you yesterday. I am now come to ask your pardon. I did, while on that plank, vow to God that I would live differently from what I ever have done, and by God's help, from this time forward, I am determined to do so.'

The captain could not proceed. They pressed each other's hands and parted, probably to meet no more in this world.—'Friendly Greetings.'

'The common problem—yours, mine, every one's,

Is not to fancy what were fair in life, Provided it could be—but finding just What may be, then find how to make it fair, Up to our means—a very different thing.'

—R. Browning.

An Important International Peace Congress.

The air has been so full of war and strife in different parts of the world, for the past three or four years, that we do not often remember that the great nations of the world have frequently met together through representatives, to denounce war and to recommend peaceful settlement of the most vital disputes. Or if we do recall one or another occasion on which such gatherings have taken place, it is apt to be with a sigh of regret or an exclamation of impatience that so little tangible result has come through all this effort.

As a matter of fact, however, these peace congresses have had deep and far-reaching results, for to-day, largely through their influence, war is unpopular. Public opinion condemns it; and though some of the best men of a nation may favor some particular war as the only possible way of obtaining what they conceive to be righteous and laudable ends, even they openly deplore it as a necessary evil, while from every quarter rise protests against the wastefulness, the misery, the wanton destruction involved in this barbarous means of settling international quarrels.

Another great peace congress is to be held in October, at Boston, Mass., which promises to be one of the largest and most important yet held, and we commend it to the interest of all our readers.

This will be the thirteenth international gathering of the kind, the second only on the continent of America, the other having been held at Chicago in connection with the Exposition of 1893. The first peace congress was held in London as long ago as 1843, and, though various nations had already their own societies, devoted to the cause of peace, the idea of an international conference of such workers was first broached by an Englishman, the well-known philanthropist, Joseph Sturge, who for years afterwards was one of the leading spirits in these meetings. At this first conference three hundred delegates were present, and of these it is interesting to note that thirty were from the United States—whose peace workers had enthusiastically received Sturge's proposal, made when he was visiting in Boston a few years before. The next congress was held in Brussels in 1848, and as one of the leading figures there we find the staunch New Englander, Elihu Burritt. Paris, Frankfort and London saw the next three conferences, the greatest of all these early gatherings being that at Paris in 1849, when Victor Hugo presided over a convention of two thousand.

For some reason or other, though national endeavor in the interests of universal peace went on steadily, no international congress was held again till 1889, when an influential company again gathered in Paris. At all these early conferences the idea of a permanent court of arbitration was constantly urged, though this idea is often exclusively associated with the more official congress of governments at The Hague in 1899. Since the Paris congress of 1889, other international