

Is Respectability a Curse?

It was a lonely branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and, although such an accident was rather unusual, something went wrong with the engine. The sweet Canadian spring filled the air with lights and tempered the gloom of the surrounding pines, writes G. B. Burgin, in London Answers.

"Say, how long are you going to be before you get this old tin-kettle ready to boil up again?" asked an irreverent passenger of the grimy engine-driver.

GOOD ADVICE.

"See here," said the driver; "you bein' a low-down, so-called civilized sort of mistake, I don't want to have no truck with you. You just earn yourself loose in the bush for a bit, and forget your dollars and your fine clothes and your respectability and go fishin'. There's a lake round the bend. It'll do you good; and by the time you get those store-clothes all mussed up, you'll be more like a human bein' and less like a—"

Apparently, he could not think of a word strong enough to express his feelings, so drove into the interior of the engine.

We followed the path indicated by the driver, and found a roughly-dressed human being sitting on the shore of the loneliest lake I had ever seen. He had a rudely constructed fishing-rod in his hand, made out of a young fir, and was engrossed in his sport. There was a great heap of fish beside him, but our somewhat noisy advent must have startled the remaining ones in the lake, for he slowly collected his catch, gave us one glance and moved off.

"But we want to see you catch some more," I feebly remarked.

He turned upon me in righteous wrath.

"You want to see me catch fish? Fish?"

"You didn't think we expected you'd catch elephants?" sarcastically remarked my companion.

"Gosh!" said the fisherman emphatically. "D'you think I could catch fish with a respectable crowd like you round me?"

Which thing is an allegory.

WHENCE IT CAME.

In the beginning, Man was not cursed with a desire for respectability; he did not worry about how he looked. Then came Civilization.

Eve, to quote an Americanism, "started Fall fashions," and Adam did likewise. Thus, the rivalry began.

I am not going to bore you with all the intermediate stages between then and now; but, my dear reader, let us sit down and have what the missionaries call "a heart-to-heart talk."

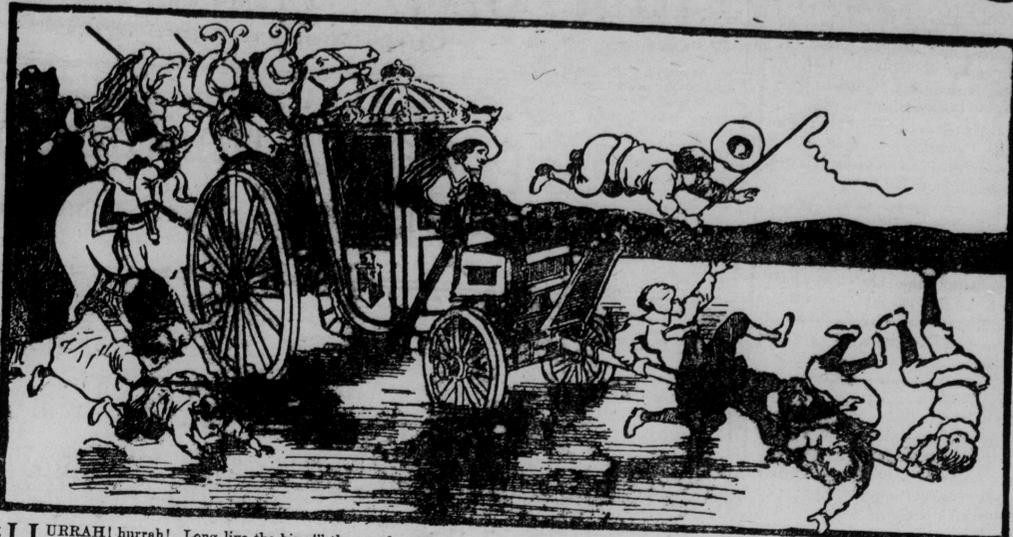
You, John Smith, are a City clerk, mutton-chop whiskered, with well-brushed "pot" hat, etc. Though your overcoat may occasionally be a little shiny at the seams, you are eminently respectable on a salary of a hundred and fifty pounds a year, after forty years' service in the City. It is true, you are mentally hidebound, that you work twelve hours a day, and that you get a fortnight's holiday only once a year. It is also true, you must confess, that you are growing old; that, owing to family expenses and cares, you have not been able to save money; that if you fall ill you will worry yourself into a premature grave lest you should be dismissed at a week's notice. All these things are true.

But, as a set off against them, you are a sidesman at your church, you wear broadcloth, and you are very much respected in your street. True, your wife is getting to look very old from constant anxiety to make both ends meet; your girls cannot bear to tell you how much their shoes want mending, that they have to turn their dresses and get sham fur wraps because your neighbors next door are doing the same thing; and you dare not order the cheaper, more nourishing kinds of food because it isn't respectable, and your neighbors—always the neighbors—would talk about it. Oh, you do dozens of things of this kind—things by which you offer yourself up to your fetish, Respectability, and grow grey and careworn, and have all the manhood knocked out of you because you lead an artificial life and continue to sacrifice to your idol.

A PRAIRIE EDEN.

But, John Smith, let me tell you of a little experience of my own last year out in the wilds beyond Winnipeg. I put up at a prairie farm one night. I did not know the man, but it was the nearest place, five miles from a town, at which to put up; and when I said I was an Englishman, the big, brawny man who came to the neat little farmhouse door said, "So'm I; and we shook hands. Then a very pretty woman—she glowed with health, and carried a lony baby in her arms—said, "If you'll hold the baby, I'll get supper ready for you." And I held the baby while the man put up my horse, and the lady laughed and

To the Health of the King



"HURRAH! hurrah! Long live the king!" the people gaily cry—
Don Guzman, ruler of Castile, is really passing by;
Outdoors they flock; men, women, dogs and children all outpour,
To gaze upon the splendor of their royal visitor;
While slowly and with dignity moves, toward the old town hall,
The cortege of his majesty, flanked by outriders tall.

Before this unpresuming pile the carriage comes to rest;
Arrives the mayor speedily to read his welcome best;
With lowest bow and phrase polite, he makes his gallant speech—
Such grand effects masters of language strive in vain to reach;
And smilingly the king responds, and kindly does he nod;
In manner pleased he beams on all and waves his golden rod.

From Sailor Boy to Cannibal Chief

IN vain the British sloop "Nancy" struggled against the tempest. The waves at last engulfed her, and her sailors, departing from her, struggled desperately with the angry sea. But the small boats could no more hope to weather the storm than could the sloop. Within a few moments these, too, were capsized, and the men were pitched into the water. All of them perished, with the exception of a sailor boy, named Bob.

DISGUISED AS A NATIVE

"I shan't starve for a little time, at least," said he. However, one can't live very luxuriously upon chocolate, so Bob was glad, indeed, when his raft floated into a cove where the water was quiet, and he was finally able to clamber out upon a shelving beach. Frisky followed close behind, as Bob, with the box of chocolate under his arm, started on a tour of exploration. All at once he saw something which caused him to dodge hastily behind a palm tree. "Savages!" he muttered. "Instead of obtaining food, as I thought I would, I'm more likely to be used as food myself, especially as I heard the bo'n's say that cannibals live on the islands hereabouts. Wonder what I can do!"

At last he hit upon a plan. Taking some of the chocolate, which, under the hot rays of a tropical sun, was in a melting condition, he smeared it over his face. After he had carefully rubbed for a while, you would have thought he was a native himself. He also stuck upon his head a few palm leaves, in

TEN YEARS AGO.

"And to thank it! Ten years ago I was a bank clerk; ten years ago my wife was apprenticed to a 'respectable firm of linendrapers'; ten years ago— Well, I went mad at the despair of it all, chucked respectability, black coats, shiny-toed boots, 'pot' hats. I breathed a little prayer to the God who fashioned me in His own image, and I said, 'O God, never mind the outward shams or respectability, but find me some work a man can do, and be happy in the doing with it.' Woman he lives, without dreading that his children will starve. And he drew another long breath as he pointed to the sun setting in

place of a feather headdress. Then he dressed Frisky in his coat and put the sailor cap upon the dog's head. Stepping from behind the palm tree, Bob now let Frisky boldly toward the cannibal chief.

"Siskiyoodelmofo!" said Bob, gravely saluting the chief. "Kyoodeelumdoodle!" cordially responded the cannibal.

Thereupon Bob put Frisky through a number of clever tricks, learned on shipboard. The chief, amazed at those



ACCOSTS THE CHIEF

astonishing feats, bowed respectfully to Bob and led him to the rest of the tribe. Bob, taking Frisky in his arms, bowed with dignity to each member of the band.

But Frisky, who had smelled the chocolate, could not refrain from suddenly licking Bob's face. To the great surprise of the natives, the beautiful bronze complexion of their visitor disappeared, and it became white.

"'Tis a god! 'Tis a god!" they cried, prostrating themselves before the lad. And the chief immediately renounced leadership of the tribe, insisting that this wonderful god honor the tribe by governing it.

Bob accepted this honor, and reigned until a British vessel anchored nearby, a few years later. Then, to the grief of the members of the tribe, he departed them, announcing his intention

of presenting the island to the king of England. "Tis a risky sort of honor—this being chief of a crowd of cannibals," he confided to the captain of the vessel, "and I didn't know how soon they might take it into their heads to see exactly how a god would taste when made into a nice stew."

A CLOSE CALL.

The Terrible Experience of a Trapper in British Columbia. "Puffie" is the name of one of the best of the trappers and timber cruisers who yearly plunge into the wilderness of the Big Woods of British Columbia to woe fortune for timber or fur. A writer in the Cutting Magazine gives Puffie's own story of one of his experiences. "Boys," said Puffie, seriously, "I thought last winter I was out of it. Close call, you ask? Well, pretty close. I had started out from Revelstoke with the usual outfit, about six hundred pounds. I went away up Canoe River, and had been having pretty good luck, when I played

Meantime, enthusiasm great is filling each man's breast;
The good men quick detach the mules, to show unto their guest
How they esteem and honor him, for they themselves would pull
His chariot upon its way, with cheers resounding full;
So when the journey's recommenced they draw upon the traces,
Resolved to prove they know a thing or two about fine paces.

Yet they forget the chariot emblazoned has much weight,
And as they dash along the street, it grieves me to relate,
They cannot turn where they SHOULD turn; the carriage down a bank
Does run into the river, where the water's cool and dank;
Rises the king; "The custom is to drink to hosts," says he,
"But how I'll ever drain this river dry I cannot see!"

Camphor on Water

FILL a small basin with hot water, and throw upon its surface a few fragments of camphor. They will instantly acquire a rotary and progressive motion, which will continue for some minutes. Before the motion ceases drop on to the surface a little oil of turpentine. The floating particles will quickly dart away as if by magic, and will become almost stationary. From a very thin sheet of tin, cut out and shape a little boat. The mast may be made from a splinter from a wooden match.

From the stem of the boat a triangular piece must be cut so that a fragment of camphor can be placed on the two ends, allowing contact of the camphor with the water. This will be sufficient to give power to operate the boat.

Simple Magic

PLACE a coin between your teeth. Then have some one tie your hands behind your back. Now say that you can grasp the coin in your hands without untying the cord that binds them.

Simply drop the coin from your mouth upon a low chair; then your hands will be free to pick up the piece of money with your hands.

No Danger. Mrs. Johnson (to her son)—Tommy, you mustn't go fishing with Peter West; he's just getting over the measles.

There won't be any danger, mother; I never catch anything when I'm fishing.

"I reached Smith Creek all right, but by then my whole foot was black. Boys, may I live to forget it. I fell in, crossing that creek, and I fell in over my head and ears in ice-water, and nothing between me and Revelstoke to help me. If I stopped, besides the certainty of freezing, I knew my hurt would never let me start again, and I didn't think I could keep on going. I felt I was gone, but I resolved to die hard and play the game through."

"Off I hiked on the rackets. Awful going it was, the pain killing frozen solid. 'Night came. I kept on like a madman, for I dared not stop a second. If I drowsed an instant I was dead."

"I reached White's cabin. All nature urged me to go in for a rest. I had reason enough left to know it would be my last rest, so I hit the trail steady with an awful limp. When I had been hiking steady for forty-two hours, I fell in it my own door, and things swam and went dark. 'Twas three months even to crutches. Going out again next winter? Sure!"

During the last year 29,208 vessels entered the Port of London.

Nothing short of a steam roller can stop a middle-aged woman who imagines she can sing.

Baby's Playroom

"WHAT a funny place to put Baby!" every one would exclaim, as they entered the nursery.

Truly, it did seem a queer place, for it was nothing more than a great big box. Yet Baby seemed perfectly happy. Indeed, it was Baby's wish that he be allowed to stay in the box.

You see, during the summer Baby longed to be out of doors all the time. But neither was so afraid he would wander and get lost that she thought of some plan whereby he could be out among the trees and still be safe. That is how Baby came to have the huge box for a playhouse.



HIS SUMMER PLAYROOM

stay there, as well. Once, however, when Bolly was sitting on the edge of the box, she carelessly fell. And she broke her nose, so that she was very much ashamed of herself until it was mended. Then little dog Toby was another playmate. Only he had such funny ideas! When he was inside the box he always wanted to get outside. He would jump down to the ground, even though it was a mighty big jump for a little dog. And then he would bark and bark to get back again. But as Baby couldn't possibly climb out to get him, there he'd have to stay. Serve him right, too!

When summer was over, somehow Baby didn't like to be parted from his box. Therefore it was set up in the nursery, although there was no occasion for its use now. Surely Baby couldn't get lost there! I suppose, however, that Baby likes to play that it's still summer; or, maybe, he thinks he'll hibernate next winter by staying in his box playroom.

A Queer Watchdog



FOR a fox to become a watchdog is like a robber turning policeman, isn't it? Yet that's exactly what happened to a fox in Scotland. He was very young when he was caught, trying to steal a fat hen, and he was a pretty little fellow, too. So the man decided to spare the animal's life and to tame him, if possible.

The fox responded to this kindness, and in gratitude to his new master installed himself as watchdog. As he is so much more keen and quick witted than a mere dog, he serves as a very good watchman, indeed. You see what a cozy kennel he has. Wouldn't you like to have him for a pet?

SENTENC ESERMONS.

Many a big sorry is born of a little sin.

Greater work is the best reward for good work.

Character depends more on conscience than on creed.

Laws always depend on our essential valuation of life.

Religion is not to bind back, but to bind together all men.

The god who can be expressed in figures is only a figurative god after all.

He who sells out his friends lays his own soul on the bargain counter.

Success is not so much in getting there as in knowing what you are there for.

Envy is the habit of extracting our own misery out of the happiness of others.

The greatness of any man's present depends on the length of his view of the future.

Salvation is more than consciousness of my soul; it is the sense of the worth of every soul.

When the preacher gets anxious to popular opinion on his brain, he has not his people on his heart.

You are not likely to do much for the poor fellow on the Jericho road if you are anxious for the approval of the Pharisee.

If you are dissatisfied with your religion because it does not make you happy, ask first whether you make any one else happy.