

A REMARKABLE INVENTION

"Yes, I guess I've seen as much of this old globe as most people. It's queer how some people do shove themselves across its face, and others just stick like limpets. I don't know altogether that one ain't as good as another, but I guess I've never had a call to settle down myself."

Captain Uriah P. Hitchens, his legs resting on the table, smoked serenely and watched the gently swinging lamp hanging from the cabin ceiling. In a long and wearisome crawl from Rio Janeiro to New York he told me many strange things.

"I've tried most things for an honest livin'. I've bin in the freak business, and was once medicine man to some, but their ways didn't size up with my notions of cleanliness, so I left. You see, Britisher, if a man has only one shirt he can't be always a-bilin' it, and I forgive him, for I want nothin' off washin' altogether, and phaserin' their hair up with evil-smellin' grease, Uriah P. Hitchens has had more nor enough."

"Then you have not always been connected with the sea?" I asked. "Not much! This old steam kettle ain't bad and I've a sort of hankerin' after the ocean. I kinder reckon that the old horse-pond in my village inoculated me, but I've done some purty work ashore. There's tarnation little that a man can't do when he's got an empty stomach and they aren't givin' away any vittals."

The steamer lurched as she jumped a wave. The captain watched the jerk of the swinging lamp soberly. "One of the queerest starts I ever had was in the 'inventin' line. It seems to me that some inventors make dollars and others don't. There's a good deal that's gamblin' in the business. Now, for instance, there's Edison. He's 'jest swimmin' in dollars, and when the time comes for him to pass in his checks he'll have a mighty fine funeral and there's me, runnin' a worn-out steam kettle for a livelihood, with the prospect of being dropped overboard one day with a shot to keep me company. Some people hee-haw, Britisher, and some hein't, and I guess that sizes the whole thing up pretty correct-ly."

"I did not know you ever invented anything," I said. "Waal, I guess there is a fair collection of matters connected with the history of Uriah P. Hitchens which you haven't yet committed to memory. However, if you hev such a thing as a decent smoke handy, fairly strong, I don't mind tellin' you how I went into the business."

I handed him the case I kept specially for him. They were certainly all flavored; they made you cough when you looked at them. He took one gratefully, and kept the case handy for fear I might forget to offer it to him again. "I was in Citeenapolis, a one-eyed sort of town down south. I hed been tryin' many dodges to catch the dollars, but things wer' a bit shy, and I was gettin' down to bed-rock pretty quick. The town wer' no great shakes. They hed a mayor and other fixin's, and the stores wer' pretty frequent, but I guess the trade was mostly consarned in bar-tradin'. They wer' a thirsty lot as any I've ever come across, and I hev been in some tarnation dry places. Waal, I'd tried most things. I'd done a bit of poker playin', but they wer' uncommonly cute, and I didn't fix it up into a payin' consarn nohow."

"I ran for mayor, hev'n' a fairly correct notion of spinnin' a yarn, but somehow I got left. You see I made a purty fair-sized mistake. I went in for free trade in liquor, and they wer' set on the teetotal ticket in theory, hev'n' sort of fixed it with their consciences that that hein' so they could go in for a little more rope in practice. The long-nosed critter as wer' elected was hot in passion against bar drinkin' and made a pretty good pile by runnin' two of the best saloons."

"One day I got to readin' a book which sited up Edison and Morse and made a pretty good pile by runnin' two of the best saloons."

hang over the front fence of the place where I located at night when things wer' quiet, barrin' a street fight or so, but it was no good, not any of it."

"I'd almost given up the bizness as a bad job and gone into the travelin' merchant line, when I chanced to read a bit about phrenology in the local sheet. I looked on it as a bit of luck, for you see I had taken up the rag out of curiosity, to see how the editor wiped up the mayor. They hed a deadly feud on at that time, as the mayor hed refused to advertise. So I took that bit about phrenology as a sign, and that night I thought harder than usual, with phrenology as a sheet anchor. Suddenly the whole thing came to me like a flash of lightning to a conductor. So forcible was it, that the fence broke and let me down pretty sharply. You see, it wasn't built to sustain the weight of a great inspiration."

"Waal, Britisher, the notion was pretty simple, and the blamed book held out strong for simple inventions. It didn't take any account on things which wer' twisted and mixed up with screws and notions and wheels, so that a man might lose his way pretty easy. It was all for 'pressin' the button, and doin' the rest, as some all-fired poet writes. Waal, my notion sized up middlin' strong. The idea was simple, sort of notion. A baby might hev cut its teeth on and not hurt any. Lookin' at it from all points of the horizon it seemed to me that that notion was bound to boom; and I take it that blamed Fortune played it pretty low-down when she let me to sneak out of town in the way I did. Some of us do not meet with just consideration at the hands of the world, and I guess that's a true bill."

"Sir, I don't mind confessin' to you that I was proud of Uriah P. Hitchens that night. I figured it out that I could take away our national reproach and raise a score of Shakespeares in a jiffy that would make your all-fired poet sit up in his grave and comb his hair. I said, 'Uriah, my cuss, your country will be proud of you. They will build an exhibition and call it after you, and your testimonial will be worth thousands to any enterprising soap-boiler!'"

"The next mornin' I went down to the smith's and got him to fix up a machine to do the bizness. All I wanted was a sort of vice to hold a man's head steady, and a movable drill with a flat head. I then went round the town to borrow a phrenologist's head. It took me three hours and two bottles of whisky to find it. I located it at last in a chemist's store which smelt some. A lantern-jawed cuss ran the show. "Yaas," he said, when I approached him on the subject, he hed one, but he didn't exactly remember to locate it. He guessed his little girl used it as a doll. He wer'n't quite sure. He'd see."

"Waal, he found it. Half of the labels with the names of the bumps had got chawed off by the baby, but I reckoned there wer' enough left fer me to work on. I sometimes apprehend that the labels hed got shifted, but I don't know that it made much difference."

"I took the head home and set to work to do it up a bit. It was a ghastly-lookin' thing, no attempt at art at all so I borrowed some paint from a friend of mine who was in the house decoratin' line when he wasn't allayin' his thirst, and faked it up a bit. Then I got some more labels and stuck 'em on, as his skull was a bit bare in places and I noticed that some important characteristics wer' left out, such as cleanliness, good poker player, cunnin' cuss, and others. Then I learnt them up so that I could tell at once whether a critter had much chance for a room in White House. When I had finished that my machine was made, and I felt ready to run the whole tarnation show."

"I went down and interviewed the mayor, and got his consent to pre-side at the openin' meetin'. You see, I was a pretty good customer of his. Then I engaged the Assembly Rooms, had some huge posters up with a portrait of Uriah P. Hitchens manufacturin' a few poets and generals and other cusses, with Columbi-a, dressed in a long sheet, puttin' a crown on his head and blowin' a trumpet. That and a column ad in the local rag with a long account of my life-I told you I was fairly smart at a yarn-did the bizness, and a thumpin' big house was assured."

"I don't mind tellin' you I was a little anxious about the show. I'm not what you would call a nervous man. I've killed grassers down west and been through a woman's drapery store in New York, so that you can guess I'm not over-diffident. But somehow I felt purty much like a kitten who has lost its tail and is uneasy in its mind, the whole of the day of that first show."

"When I arrived the room was chock-full, and there was a buzz of admiration when I came on the platform. I had a waistcoat made out of our national flag, a yellow long-tailed coat with big buttons containin' Abe Lincoln's portrait, and my trousers were a neat blue. The mayor presided, and I hed provided a bottle of his own whisky for his entertainment."

"Mr. Mayor, enlightened friends," I said, "we will commence the proceedin's with singin' that time old song on which the sun never goes down--'Hail! Columbia.'"

"They did that heartily. 'By Gum! Colonel, I guess more tunes went to that song than all your music chaps ever wrote. It was a movin' occasion. Some old women wept, but I calculate that was mostly gin."

"Then I made them a speech. I told them I hed chosen that city for my first experiment because I had long heard of its unusual distinction in intellectual matters. I then briefly explained my machine and the science of phrenology. "Distinguished Citeenapolitans," I went on, "as you know, some bumps are good and some bumps are bad. Waal, the whole extent of my notion is the production of good ones and the squashin' of bad ones by artificial means. Where Nature fails there I step in. Uriah P. Hitchens. This machine, the outcome of many years of thought and toll in the cities of the universal and geographical world, is simplicity itself. You fix your head in this vice, and by these levers I can drill out a bad bump, or produce a good one by pushin' the cranium in on the opposite side. The charge is nominal, five dollars fer squashin' and ten fer raisin'. I do not look fer much custom in this enlightened city. Under the watchful care of your eagle-eyed mayor your eminence as a centre of arts, trade, commerce, and other articles too numerous to mention, is known world-wide, and further. But we all hev our failin's-trivin' in your case, I know-and most of us could do with heads a little more bumpy in the good qualities and a little more shiny in the bad. Mr. Mayor, and enlightened citizens, I hope to receive your custom."

"Then I sat down amidst applause. I sat fer a long time and no one moved. At last an old lady came on the platform and said 'she felt she could do with a little more language, as washin' days wer' tryin' in, and her tongue wasn't what it used to be. That rather humored me. You see I hedn't reckoned on a woman-inventions bein' about the only thing a woman ain't curious on. I saw she wore a pretty wig, and I knew I couldn't locate her bumps with an inch or so, so I told her gently that I should hev to shave her. That settled her. I must say as she was mistaken as to her powers of language, though."

"We sat pretty quiet fer a spell longer, and then a tall, lanky man with thin hair, very long, and a vacant expression, came up. I knew him some, fer he was the local poet. "I want," he said, very polite, "a greater facility fer rhymes."

"There I was again! I went over all the bumps I hed learnt, and not one of them mentioned rhyming. Waal, it wouldn't do to refuse ag'in, so I sat him down in the chair and fixed his head in the vice so that he couldn't move, and I trusted Providence to see me through."

"He smiled quite pleasantly, as on Thanksgiving Day, until I started the drill. Then he howled. The drill got mixed up with his hair, and the hair got the worst of the argument. His language was more flowery than genteel, and his howls would have made a coyote blush with envy. These poetry fellows never can stand pain, and he didn't care a fig for the success of my invention."

"Waal, I had to stop. The cusses swore it was a scheme to murder them all, and they dislocated my bit bare in places and I noticed that some important characteristics wer' left out, such as cleanliness, good poker player, cunnin' cuss, and others. Then I learnt them up so that I could tell at once whether a critter had much chance for a room in White House. When I had finished that my machine was made, and I felt ready to run the whole tarnation show."

"Yaas, it was a fine invention, a men hev the most crooked luck, and tarnation fine invention, but some one of 'em is Uriah P. Hitchens."

Not L. Kelly to Visit Ireland London, Oct. 4.-It is not likely that King Edward will visit Ireland. William O'Brien, M.P., urges the people not to cheer him, if he should. Mr. O'Brien says:

"If there be any grain of truth in the gossip about the King's conversion to Home Rule, it is quite certain that that conversion was effected not by puling professions of loyalty, but the scenes of open disaffection, illustrated by black flags and police charges, which accompanied his steps from the railway station day by day until he quitted the country on a former occasion."

Mr. O'Brien thinks the Irish should imitate the Boers in their treatment of England and more would be thought of them."

A gentleman who was visiting one of the public schools in a Scotch town asked a bright-looking boy:

"What profit is there in the study of ancient history?"

"About eighteenpence, I suppose," was the reply.

"What?"

"Well, the teacher makes us buy the books from him, and we have to pay three shillings. I think he gets them for eighteenpence apiece, so he has a clear profit of eighteenpence, according to my calculation."

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WRITES OF KLONDIKE

Harry de Windt in London and Paris

Famous Traveler Completes His Journey Around the World in 248 Days.

Harry de Windt, the explorer and traveler who last summer passed through Dawson en route to New York and Paris on a trip around the world which was made wholly by land with the exception of that portion across the Atlantic, reached New York August 25 and Paris about two weeks later, where he was made much of for having successfully accomplished a feat never before attempted. While in Dawson Mr. de Windt gave a representative of the Nugget a very graphic interview of the experiences and hardships undergone by himself and companion during the previous eight months. His journey occupied 248 days: The story of his trip was published in serial form in both the London Express and Le Matin, of Paris, clippings from both of which have recently been received by the Nugget. Writing to the Express from New York under date of September 2 Mr. de Windt has the following to say of Dawson and the Klondike. A few incongruities appear in the letter, particularly with reference to Last Chance creek being the only producer now attracting attention, but they may be overlooked when it is considered the writer was here but a few days, and scarcely left his hotel from the date of his arrival until his departure. The letters created a great deal of interest in London and on the continent and their repetition here will give a resident an idea of how the Klondike is viewed by a passing traveler, one who saw Dawson at its birth and then not again until six years later. The Dawson of today is referred to as follows:

"The natural charms of Dawson City have hitherto been sadly neglected by writers on the Klondike, and yet it is (in summer) one of the prettiest places imaginable. Viewed from a distance on a still July day, the clear bright-looking town and garden-girt villas dotting the green hills around are less suggestive of the bleak Arctic than of Italy or of sunny Spain. Stroll down the principal street at midday, and you will see a well-dressed but cosmopolitan crowd of both sexes, some driving and cycling, others inspecting the

shops or seated at flower-bedecked tables in the fashionable French 'Restaurant du Louvre,' with its white-aproned garcons, and central snowy altar of silver, fruit, and hors-d'oeuvres all complete.

"Everything has a continental look from the glittering jewellers' shops to the flower and fruit stalls, where you may buy roses and strawberries (Klondike-grown) for a dollar apiece. Indeed, you can get almost anything now in Dawson City, by paying for it on a scale regulated by the local daily newspaper, which is sold for a shilling-and sometimes more. The prices here dwarf those of Nome City. Even in the cheap-eating houses, where sausages steam in the window, the most modest meal runs away with a five dollar note."

"Dawson City lacks the so-called gaiety of Nome, for the authorities have placed a heavy heel upon gambling saloons, dancing halls, and similar establishments."

"On the other hand, Dawson is pleasant enough to live in during the summer months. Oddly enough, there are now no mosquitos in the town, although they were almost unbearable there three years ago. The heat is intense in July and August, but the nights are always cool. The most serious trouble at present is the increasing number of rats which swarm in almost every building, much to the general discomfort. These pests are not indigenous to Alaska, but were brought to St. Michael, on Behring sea, by an old and condemned steamer, which was patched up during the gold rush, from San Francisco."

"A river boat lying alongside her was boarded by the vermin, which were thus brought up to Dawson, and formed the nucleus of a now enormous and flourishing colony. During the quiet twilight nights, the streets were alive with them, but no one seemed to have hit upon a plan for their extermination. A fortune there awaits a smart London rat-catcher."

"A coach runs daily out to the diggings about fifteen miles away, but the once famous Bonanza and Eldorado creeks are now scarcely worth a visit. The good old days are over when fortunes were made in a week and saloon keepers made a comfortable income by sweeping up spilt gold dust every morning."

"Klondike is no longer a region of giant nuggets and fabulous finds, for every inch of likely ground has been prospected over and over again. Nevertheless, some of the creeks are doing well, notably that of Last Chance, which will probably eclipse even Eldorado when machinery has been brought to bear. Almost any claim on Last Chance is now a sound investment; but this is about the only creek which is attracting attention from outside."

"When I was there in 1896 the site of Dawson was occupied by a small and squalid Indian village. There is now a city of 10,000 souls, with fine public buildings, churches and banks,

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wharves and warehouses, to say nothing of the excellent Zero club, and two large theatres. The town is lit throughout by electricity, honey-combed with telephones, and I received a reply from London to a cable within seven hours. In 1896 it took two months to get there from the coast."

"There is now-in the open season-a daily river steamer to railroad and the outside world. In winter time closed and comfortable post sleighs, with good accommodation every twenty miles, convey passengers to the White Pass railway terminus, so that this journey may now be undertaken at any time of the year by the most inexperienced traveller. In a couple of years, at most, the Alaskan line will reach Dawson City, and another decade will probably see this commencement of an 'all world railway' from America to France being extended as far as Cape-Prince of Wales, Behring Straits."

"The three days' river journey up to Whitehorse city is made in small but well-appointed boats, and the trip is not without interest as a spot of danger, for at Five Fingers the steamer is hauled up the falls by a steel hawser, the parting of which would be disastrous."

"At this spot the billows and surf racing madly around the tiny craft, the dark, jagged rocks threatening her on every side, and the deafening roar of rushing water is a novel experience. We afterwards passed through Lake Lebarge, on this occasion smooth and smiling; but which I can recall as unpleasantly rough in an Indian canoe. Above this are the Whitehorse rapids, which have been called the 'Miners' Grave,' on account of fatal accidents to prospectors, and below them is Whitehorse city, a pretty little town where once was a mosquito swamp. There we left the steamer, and there, for the first time since leaving Irkutsk in January last, the sound of locomotives and clanking buffers struck pleasantly upon the ear."

"Persons afflicted with nerves will do well to travel to Klondike by sea and avoid the White Pass railway, for toward the summit the roughly-built narrow gauge line is laid at gradients and along the edge of dizzy precipices which would startle a hardened mountaineer on wheels. There is no cog or cable system, merely a noisy and obtrusive brake, which im-

parts electric shocks of some violence to the passengers, but is otherwise useless. 'Something will happen here some day,' said an American engineer, as we pulled up on the centre of a bridge of flimsy looking wooden trestles at a spot where you could have stepped from the car, without effort, into two thousand feet of space."

"On August 25 New York was reached, and the long land journey of about 18,500 miles from Paris was over. It took us 248 days to accom-

plish a total which, without delays, might have been reduced to a little over four months."

"When you stepped on that gentleman's foot, Tommy, I hope you apologized?"

"Oh, yes, indeed I did," said Tommy; "and he gave me sixpence for being such a good boy."

"Did he? And what did you do then?"

"Stepped on the other one and apologized, but it didn't work."

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