

# The Chatham Daily Planet.

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(PAGES NINE TO TWELVE)

## Logging as a Pastime

Fred W. Tobey an Old Chatham Boy Now Living in the N. W. T. Tells The Planet of His Unique Experiences in the Far West.

Monta, Feb. 27, '04.  
Dear Planet.—My friends and enemies who read The Planet will by now conclude that F. W. Tobey has got lost on the prairie. But such is not the case, nor have I been frozen solid, and am just thawing out. The fact is I have been leading too strenuous a life to find time to write. However, as I have a notion this evening and a leisure hour, I will attempt to write another especially interesting letter, etc., so forth in the afternoon. My subject is a strange one, "Logging as a Pastime," and difficult to make interesting, but, as it was a source of pleasure and mirth to me, possibly if I can but relate my experiences it will be of interest to some of my friends or enemies.

It was during the latter weeks of January that I decided to wade into the stray poplar trees on my property, C. B. property but my own. Having resolved, I proceeded to gather up some tools and to resurrect my logging chain, which had long lain idle. Knowing that it would be long summer time when I returned I had Mrs. Tobey prepare me a very tempting lunch without which I should have surely died. Knowing also here and there on the prairie it was cold, I put paper and kindling into a bag and matched into my pocket. Thus equipped, I applied the whip gently and was soon skimming over the prairie trail.

I was alone. The Indian has his clay pipe and squaw, the half breed his dog; but I (poor me) had nothing but nature to keep me company. However, as the poet says, "There is a pleasure in the pathless woods," etc., I found pleasure on the roadless prairie. The prairie—its open spaces, vast fields of snow, which in the sunlight seemed more like powdered diamonds. The bluffs, above of their summer beauty, but clothed again by nature's dressmaker, Jack Frost, in effeminate vestments of white hoar frost, sparkled like twinkling stars. The rabbit runs, the wolf tracks, the badger holes, the tiny foot prints of the mice and occasional broken trail of the prairie hen all had their little story to tell. Not infrequently one would see a wolf trailing along with an unfortunate rabbit or prairie hen in its mouth, or a snow white owl leisurely eating a hapless mouse on the top of a wind-shattered tree or sometimes on a knoll. All these formed food for reflection and thus the going and coming, the most tedious part of logging, are made much better and less dragging.

Arrived at the battle field, you quickly unhitch the horses and allow them to munch at the hay thrown on the temporary platform which I use to convey me hither and thither in half-civilized comfort. This done, you empty your bag, where you have kicked the snow away. It takes by a moment to cut some dry wood, and soon you have a blazing fire. This adds to the comfort of the horses and helps to make your lunch a meal. After cutting a few logs you throw on a few more faggots, make a crude fork out of a stick and, after thawing about sixteen degrees of frost out of your sandwich, you eat it in peace. After dinner you skid these out, cut enough more to make a load, skid them and then load. Your load on, you throw on your temporary platform, horse blankets, fuel bag, lunch basket, gun and axe, and start for home.

By this time the sun has got fairly well down. Its rays are not so warm and the air is much colder. The trees have lost much of their beauty, and you now try to plan how you can keep your feet and fingers warm. While you are thus engrossed, Jack nips your nose and leaves a pretty white mark. In a day or so this under-goes a color metamorphosis and becomes a brown scale. This, in due season, having fulfilled its mission, drops off and leaves Mr. Nose more liable to be nipped than before.

"Every cloud has a silver lining." Nature is kind even when she appears to be severe. Frost bites are not so bad after all for they remove that stinging, tingling sensation, which precedes the nip and on a cold day continues until the freezing act is accomplished. She unintentionally gives you pain, but attempts successfully to compensate by deadening feeling for a few days.

Arrived home at last, I am greeted with what I parted with, a tender—Mrs. Tobey objects to me putting in that word so I will have to leave out the abstract noun. However, if you try hard you can guess.

I will now have to drift still more from my subject and introduce a new character into this unconnected narrative.

Hard by my homestead there dwells in single bliss, a decrepit bachelor. His legs are diamond shaped and he occasionally slips a cog when he walks. His hands are somewhat distorted from severe rheumatism in his ruddy complexion, open jolly look and silvery locks all are becoming. No doubt he has seen better days, as it were, for he is well versed in matters general, has evidently travelled a great deal through the States and Canada, has at one time possessed a deep rich bass voice and enjoyed all

the comforts of well furnished house. But, as they say, fortune is fickle; and now his equalled fourteen foot bed, saw, axe, sawhorse, home made table, chair, bed and 1872 stove represent his all. For all that, as proud as a prince is he.

Rev. Samson had often tried to induce our hero to attend church but he always excused himself by saying he had no fit clothes. Hearing this and not wishing to see an anxious saint kept from the pearly gates, if I could prevent it, I took it upon myself to fit him out. Having once been a trusted employee of the 2 T's, I was well stocked with pants, furnishings and thought it my duty to offer him the use of one suit for Sundays. Here is where I missed it for, as I said, he was proud. This seeming act of charity touched his pride to the quick, for he said, "Until I can buy a suit I will go with-out. I would work for suit but not wear one that was not mine."

Now I had plenty of suits but few fence rails. Consequently I proposed that he should help me get out some rails and I would give him suit, if he was willing to put up with the accommodation we could give him in our cabin. "When will we start?" "Oh, I'll be over next Monday and we'll get some out," answered I.

Monday was a cold day and the wind was blowing at the rate of seventy miles an hour. However, not wishing to disappoint Charlie, I ventured out and after much plunging through the snow drifts, arrived safely at Poplar Bluff Mans. Opening the door I was greeted with "Good lord, you're not going to cut rails a day like this are you?" "Well," said I, "I had a notion that way."

After warming up and partaking of the many rare delicacies of a bachelor's menu we sallied forth. Now, as I remarked, Charlie was at peace with mankind generally, but always felt that nature's forces were leagued against him. If it was too hot it was too cold, if neither it was too nice a day to work, etc. He would put nature to a severe test. Try as she might she could not please Charlie. Then again he did not see why a fellow had to cut down the entire poplar bluff to get one dry pole. Consequently he would just cut down half the bluff, and, as a result, the other half would be in the way of the axe. I agreed with him there, but having had some experience before, I resigned myself to the inevitable and cleared a little space about each dry tree to cut down. Charlie did not. Thus it came to pass that very often during the day Charlie's axe struck a poplar tree in the unwhim half of bluff. It, feeling that it had done nothing to deserve such a cruel blow, would spring back and give the offender a crack in the eye or elsewhere. Then you would have Charlie deliver one of those word or phrase sermons; sometimes he would go into particulars and make it a sentence sermon, delivering the goods in very strong language.

Now, after the cutting act was completed, there came the time for pulling those small trees or rails out into the open, an operation which is a better test of patience than cutting and trimming them. If not trimmed very closely the projecting ends of branches catch on weasell twigs, holding tenaciously to same. Now Charlie would make it out that branches and trees were possessed of devils and these were tormenting. He would even go so far as to make human monsters of innocent, harmless little twigs that would get in his way. He would declare they were stubborn and talk like this, "You stubborn little —, you'll hold that pole till you drive me mad, but if my life depended on your strength you would break off at once." Had he but turned his pole a little it would have come along quite nicely; but he would deliver a sermon, give it a stubborn pull, and the twig, contrary to Charlie's theory, would break, and so suddenly that he would land on his overalls. At this juncture of the farce I would attempt to say something witty to cheer him up, but, as Shakespeare says, "Mirth cannot move a soul in agony." Likewise I suppose it is as ineffectual when one is suffering from concession of the pistol pocket.

Possibly by now some of my friends or enemies will be wondering what Fred did under such trying circumstances. Well, to speak plainly I avoided most of the annoyances by cutting down the entire bluff, as Charlie says. However, there was a time when a pole caught on a very elastic willow tree or shrub. While doing the turning act it slipped from its socket and sweetened me across the nose and eyes so that the blood came. Being womanish, I did not swear, but allowed the big tears to come to my spectacles and trickle down my cheeks. But with great presence of mind I reflected on the price of salt, made a grand stand play and caught the drops before they reached mother earth. These I allowed to freeze, then stowed them away in my pocket and carried them home and had them evaporated for the salt they contained.

In due season we reached home where I was greeted in the usual way, a sight which brought tears to Charlie's eyes when he realized what might have been. Having but one bed and no room for another at present, if we had it, I was obliged to make a bed on top of our two trunks. After a sociable chat and a game or two Charlie retired. Mrs. Tobey

and I sat reading the Great Home Journal for some time, when suddenly the stillness of the cabin was broken by notes more sonorous than sonorous. Happily it was but for a few minutes for soon he breathed as low and regular as an infant, dreaming no doubt of logging as a pastime. Yours in F. L. & T. F. W. TOBEY.

## The Days of Auld Lang Syne

Interesting Events of Ye Olden Times Gathered from The Planet's Issues of Half a Century Ago.

From Feb. 1, 1858, to Feb. 28, 1858.

The present population of the city of Washington, is estimated at 61,104.

Washington Irving is now engaged on the fifth volume of the Life of Washington.

A bill preventing the marriage of first cousins was passed in the Kentucky Legislature.

A billiard table has just been completed for his Majesty Kamehameha IV, king of the Sandwich Islands.

The first railroad built in Venezuela was opened from Puerto Cabello to the interior on the 20th of February, 1858.

A daily newspaper called the 'Daily News' has been started at Hong Kong by Dr. G. M. Rider. This is the first daily paper that has been published there.

in the Red River country. We have already noticed the fact that a public meeting has demanded annexation to Canada as the means of saving the country. The immediate occasion of this last outbreak was the imprisonment of a trader by the Company, who were forced to release him.

### GREAT PISTOL MATCH.

Mr. John Travis has just concluded the terms of a novel pistol match with S. Snyder, of New York, which are as follows:

Travis bets Snyder one thousand dollars that he will find a boy who will stand at the distance of ten paces and place an orange, not to exceed two and a half inches in diameter in each hand, and one upon his head, which Travis will shoot from their respective locations, no object to intervene between the boy and the oranges. If Travis fails to find the boy who will stand or fails to hit the oranges in the three shots or any shot touches the boy he loses the bet. The match



Chinchilla is used for the design shown above and the hat is of silk pressed beaver trimmed with the fur and a majestic white plume.

The steamboat Islander, Capt. Jas. W. Steinhoff, will run between Detroit and Chatham, the ensuing season commencing at the opening of navigation.

Gregory McDougall, a young man 25 years of age, from Wallaceburg, was lynched in Indiana for counterfeiting. He left a young wife and a child.

The bachelors of the city wind up the social season with a ball in the Masonic Hall. H. V. McCrae acted as floor manager. The music was given by the Detroit Light Guard Band.

Dumas receives twenty cents a line for his romances. One of his constant readers estimates that he has received 25,000 francs for the single line. "A cool perspiration stood upon the forehead of the countess," which occurs in most of his stories.

A man named John Sullivan, of the township of Raleigh, was killed on the 8th inst. by a tree which he had chopped, falling upon him. An inquest was held by Coroner Donnelly, and the occurrence appearing purely accidental, the jury returned a verdict accordingly.

The following appeared in the proceedings of the county council: Moved by Dr. Cross, seconded by Mr. McMichael, that the petition for taking the toll off the Kent Bridge be not granted. And the said motion was carried.

Married—On the 28th ult. by Rev. A. Campbell, Mr. Wm. Hodgson, of Romney, to Miss Elizabeth Sampson, Tilbury East.

On the 4th inst. by the same, Mr. Thomas Pickering, of the village of Blenheim, merchant, to Miss Lois Young, of the township of Harwich.

On the same day, by the same, at Mr. Larke's hotel, Mr. Eli Marsalis to Miss Hanna Smith, both of the Howard.

to be shot in Louisville, June 15, 1858.

The following was a description of Chatham in 1858.

Acres 499,418; assessed value in 1856 \$4,769,292; debentures outstanding, \$27,275; county debt exclusive of debentures, none. Judge of County Court, chairman quarter sessions, W. B. Wells.

Sheriff—John Mercer. Warden—James Smith, Camden. Treasurer—C. G. Charteris. Clerk—W. Causgrave. Registrar—A. Knapp. Clerk of Peace—G. Duck. Clerk of the County Court and District Clerk of Crown—T. A. Ireland. Judge Surrogate—Geo. Williams. Crown Lands Agent—Jno. E. Brooke.

Inspector of Weights and Measures—Donald McColl. Population about 6,000; Mayor, Dr. C. J. S. Askin; Reeve, Dr. Thomas Cross; Deputy Reeve, Richard Monck; Clerk, Duncan McColl; assessed annual value, \$94,704; debentures now outstanding \$107,600; corporation debt exclusive of debentures, none.

At a public meeting held February 22nd, the law of imprisonment was asked to be repealed. The following is part of the report of the meeting: Moved by J. W. Rose, seconded by A. D. McColl, that the law for imprisonment for debt as it at present stands, is imperfect and that a petition be sent to the Legislature praying that such an alteration may be made in the law as will protect any person from being imprisoned for debt except for cases of fraud, supported by the sworn evidence of two disinterested parties.—Carried.

Moved by Messrs. Rufus Stephenson and Alexander Knapp—that the law now in force which authorizes imprisonment for debt is barbarous, impolitic and unjust, because it often prevents the honest man from paying his debts by depriving him of his regular business and lessening his means, and further, because it treats him as a criminal, although he is innocent of all crime, and therefore

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## A Poet Great-Grandmother

Mrs. Burk, Mother of Mrs. N. H. Stevens, Writes Poetry at the Age of 83 that Ranks High in Realms of Literature.

Writing poetry at 83 is certainly a remarkable achievement, but one not impossible, as Mrs. Erastus Burk, mother of Mrs. N. H. Stevens, can prove. Mrs. Burk formerly lived at Blenheim and Morpeth in this County but about thirty-five years ago she and her husband moved to California, where they lived. Mr. Burk fell from his wheel some years ago when 81 years of age and sustained injuries from which he died. Mrs. Burk remained in California till last fall, when she came to spend the winter with her daughter, Mrs. N. H. Stevens, in this city.

Mrs. Burk is a bright little lady, for her years and a pleasant conversationalist. She has a retentive memory and it is indeed refreshing to spend an hour in her company. Writing verses has always been a favorite pastime with her and she has many proofs of really wonderful ability in the art of versification. Probably her best poem is an ode to Santa Barbara, written on February 15, 1899. Mrs. Burk was staying at the time with her son, Frederick Burk, president of the State Normal School at San Francisco. When it is considered that the aged lady was 79 years of age when she wrote it, this poem probably stands without a peer. On its own merits it stands as a poetic gem, but considering the years of the author it is simply marvellous. This is Mrs. Burk's masterpiece. Read it twice. You won't be able to appreciate "To Santa Barbara" if you only read it once:

### TO SANTA BARBARA.

Fair city so favored with Nature's free gifts,  
With verdure unstinted and picturesque cliffs!  
With canyons and nooks through the hills to the crest  
Of the tall rugged mountains that stretch to the west!

They stand as a guardian o'er valley and sea,  
And shelter thy haven, Saint Barbara, for thee,  
Where are loud roaring breakers and murmuring wave  
As each follows other the pebbles to lave.

Less abrupt rise the 'Mea' and less rugged, too,  
Than her neighbors across for her rocks are but few,  
Her green grassy awards with rare trees from all climes,  
From the date of the tropics to the Norwegian pines.

See the isles in the distance with tree and with glade!  
How came they, and when was the upheaval made?  
Beneath them they tell us are caves unexplored,  
And who knows but Dame Nature has treasures there stored?

Each isle named from Saints who their Guardians have been,  
But have long bade adieu to this beautiful scene;  
And the bones of Saint Rosa, Saint Cruz and Miguel  
Repose in the mission on yonder gray hill.

Full a century has passed, yet the Franciscan Friar  
Has sacredly kept the old mission entire,  
And through modern changes we daily unfold,  
With what interest we view this quaint relic of old.

—Matilda Burk.  
Santa Barbara, Feb. 15, 1899.

Mrs. Burk was born in Devonshire, England, in 1821, and came to Canada in 1842. She married Erastus Burk and they lived near Bowmanville till 1854, when he decided to make a change. They sold their farm and started for the State of Kansas.

Mrs. Burk was and has always been a staunch Britisher and a true patriot. She disliked leaving the land of the Union Jack, but never said a word till St. Louis was reached. They stayed at an hotel over night and in the morning Mrs. Burk said that she had decided to return to British ground.

Mr. Burk agreed and they decided to keep travelling till they should both decide to stop. When they reached Chatham they made up their minds to see the place and stopped at Lark's Hotel, now the Park House, corner of Colborne and William streets. Mr. Burk went out to look at the country and purchased a farm near Morpeth. Gilman King, a brother of Hooper King, had a store at Morpeth and later Mr. Burk purchased the store and moved to Morpeth. Later he moved to Blenheim, erected a store about the year 1860, and remained there about 13 or 14 years. At this time, the Sheldon House and McGregor's hotel were the chief houses of entertainment in the village. Mr. Houston owned the mill and John Morris conducted the post office. In 1870, they moved to California and resided at Mountain View about 38 miles from San Francisco. California is very much like a work to itself is Mrs. Burk's opinion of the

sunny state. Mrs. Burk's ability to write poetry is a natural gift and she has found this art the means of passing many a pleasant hour. She has nearly all her poems preserved and many of them are very interesting and clever. The first poem recorded was written in 1848 and describes the wreck of the schooner William of Whitby, owned by William Burk, a relative of the aged poet's husband. The opening stanza gives some idea of the story and the narrative is interesting.

"One night in November, a stormy one, too,  
The William of Whitby was out with her crew.  
Her Captain was Foster, the noble and brave,  
Whose efforts were arduous in trying to save.  
Her cable chain broke and her anchor was gone,  
And soon o'er the deck the mast lay upon."

The "ode to my temper" gives us a little insight into the loving, kindly nature of the poet grandmother.

"Oh, my temper, wretched thou,  
Often thou hast made me mourn.  
Why should trifles so annoy?  
Why such bubbles peace destroy?  
Cess thee, make no more display,  
Show thy strength some other way."

At the time of the Fenian Raid, a number of young men from Blenheim volunteered. On their return from the front, the ladies of the town on the hill collected money and presented a flag to the patriotic young men. Mrs. N. H. Stevens made the presentation and Mrs. Burk perpetuated the event with the following poem:

Lines on presenting the 'Union Jack' to the Blenheim Volunteers:  
The ladies of Blenheim with pleasure present  
This flag to our brave volunteers,  
And hope 'neath its colors you'll often give vent  
To the hearty old English, "Three Cheers."

This mode of expression we take to convey  
The thanks which we feel are your due,  
For the prompt willing way you of late did obey  
The call of our country on you.

We do not pretend all alone to defend  
Our land from the invading foe,  
Yet appreciate much all those who for such  
The comforts of home will forego.

What though hordes of Fenians our country menace,  
Why need it awaken our fears,  
If we judge from the past, we can coincide place  
In Canada's brave volunteers.

The Scotch, Irish, English, all rallied around  
Britain's standard, her cause to expose,  
And our foes quickly found that on Canada's ground  
'Tis dangerous the Lion to arouse.

We know that no boon could such pleasure impart  
To those who are loyal and true  
As this symbolic mark. Even a thrill fills the heart  
At the sight of the "Red White and Blue."

Unfurl then your banner and proud let it wave  
A terror to foe and a shield to the brave,  
And may God save our Queen. In her crown may we be  
A gem whose bright lustre all nations may see.

The dear and dainty old lady still writes when fancy dictates, but her later poems are all to her grand children. Near is the favorite and his many qualities are named in as many verses. She doesn't think that there is anything wonderful in her ability to write and doesn't realize at all that she is the most remarkable lady of her age in Ontario.

### REVENGE.

I.—Last Winter,  
Said the plumber to the coal man:  
"Say, I want a ton of coal."  
Said the coal man to the plumber:  
"Do you really? Why, how droll!"  
Said the plumber to the coal man:  
"Well, perhaps an eighth will do."  
Said the coal man to the plumber:  
"There are scores ahead of you."

II.—This Winter,  
Said the coal man to the plumber:  
"Are you busy, then, to-day?"  
Said the plumber to the coal man:  
"Am I busy? I should say!"  
Said the coal man to the plumber:  
"All my water pipes are froze,  
Will you kindly come and clear them?"  
And the plumber thumbed his nose!