

## THE INCONSISTENCY OF MAN.

MAN is the most inconsistent of all animals. Indeed, he is the only one that is always wanting something that he has not got, simply because he cannot get it at that particular moment. Last autumn our citizens, when wading through the mud on Craig street, longed for the pure and beautiful snow to come and make for them an ideal thoroughfare. Now they are saying dreadful things about the road department because they did not cart the snow away fast enough and let us get back to that nice slimy adhesive mud for which this city is so justly famous. Now, they are yearning for the sun to dry up the mud, and, later on, they will go around clamoring that they are so full of dust that they could use their lungs for polishing their door plates. Then, when the rain comes, and they have to dry their washing at the stove, they will say things with reference to the weather that will cut large livid streaks in the Canadian climate. And we shall stand by and applaud them.

It was always thus. Ever since Eve first bit into the apple and gave the initial impetus to the clothing trade, mankind has been similarly inconsistent. The very men who stood around and made fun of Noah when he started predicting a wet spell were the ones who clamored loudest for a midships berth in the ark, where they would not be disturbed by the animals when once the universal watering of stock began. And when that record-breaking voyage was over, and the dove had returned with an olive in its beak to show that the saloons were open, no doubt these men were the first to howl about the mud on the sidewalks, and to insinuate that "boodle" was at the bottom of it.

When the fair Helen of Troy eloped with her star-boarder, and showed Menelaus that he was not the only pebble on the Grecian beach, the bereaved husband howled like a spaniel dog with its tail in a rat-trap. Yet, we are not informed that he had ever before shown himself particularly appreciative of the jewel he possessed. I have no doubt he compared her cooking with that of his sainted mother, very much to her disadvantage, and that he ogled every girl in Argos on his way down town to business. No doubt, when he came upstairs at night with his sandals in his hand, and fell over the cradle which she had thoughtfully placed in the main entrance to the palace, he thought things that lit up whole constellations before his eyes and caused the passage to smell as sulphurous as a match factory. Yet, when Paris came along, at a time when Helen was turned 60 and certainly old enough to know better, Menelaus forthwith raised a whoop over the loss of his treasure, which led to a number of estimable Trojan citizens being compelled to assume their angel plumage at a time when they were in debt to their grocers and their families were just preparing to go away for the summer.

But we do not need to go back to the days before the invention of the shirt waist for instances of man's inconsistency. Take the average citizen of to-day, the man who, in the bosom of his family, speaks of the demon rum in tones as corrugated as a boarding-house mattress. Land him in a Scott Act town where he has no more friends than a lacrosse referee in a close match, and forthwith he will become as dry as a temperance lecturer in the alkali desert. In five minutes you will be able to hear his lungs rattle, and he will devote all the energy and soulfulness of his nature to discovering where he can secure a drink of whiskey which would take paint off his front door. He will march a torchlight procession down his throat that will cause the hardest microbe in his system to climb a tree, and return to his hotel in all the quiet pride of a strong man who has accomplished a good deed. Yet that same citizen, when he strikes a city as wide open as an alligator's jaws on fish day, would not go into a saloon even to see a dog-fight. He will stand up against a soda fountain and fill himself so full of frapped sizz that he feels like a perambulating Babcock. And he will gaze with cold reproach upon the foaming "collins" and the insinuating cocktail, simply because they are within his reach. He will enlarge upon the tale of the small boy who fell four storeys on to a brewery wagon, and was saved because his head hit a bottle of "soft" stuff. And he will

steadfastly refuse to look upon the wine when it is red, even with lemon and sugar in it, and will take, instead, a cigar, one whiff of which would drive a dog out of a tan-yard.

Let the average man swear off anything, from shaving to Scotch and soda, and his craving for it will become instantly almost pathetic in its intensity. It is at the moment when the cyclist is trying to dodge two trolley cars, a coal wagon, and an old lady with an armful of bundles that his desire to rub his nose becomes most uncontrollable. It is in the pause of dead silence when the baby has finally consented to go to sleep that the average man is forced to sneeze like the explosion of a dynamite bomb. It is not his fault. It is the inherent inconsistency of human nature. And the glare of scorn in every female eye which brands him as a nineteenth century Cain is wholly uncalled for. The man who could refrain under such circumstances would stand out among his fellows like a cameo on a background of bottle glass. He would be the man of iron who moulds nations to his will and writes his name in letters of fire on the bronze pillars of history. And such men are as rare in this commonplace community as a bathtub among the Boers. SINBAD.

## GABRIEL'S WEEKLY FORECASTS.

PREPARED FOR "MONTREAL LIFE" BY MR. JAMES HINGSTON, B.A., OXFORD UNIVERSITY, AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Three forecasts are made for each day of the coming week. The first applies to the world at large; the second shows how persons, born on this day in any year, will fare during the next 12 months, and the third indicates how children, born on this day in the present year, will fare during life. The present series began with December 1, 1899, and back numbers of LIFE, when available, cost 10c. each.

Sunday, April 15.—A good day on which to visit friends.

Many dangers are foreshadowed during this year, among them being loss of money through speculation and extravagance and loss of position in the case of employees. Women will be courted, but marriage will not be the result.

Children born to-day will find it hard to obtain lucrative or steady work, and in other respects also they will be rather unfortunate.

Monday, April 16.—Not a good day for journeys or for writing important letters.

Illness, possibly slight, or accidents and some business prosperity may be expected during this year. Trouble is also threatened to young women who act indiscreetly.

An immoderate love of pleasure will be a characteristic of children born to-day. Prosperous they will be in a measure, but sorrow will come to them through members of the opposite sex.

Tuesday, April 17.—Business will flourish to-day.

This year will bring many unforeseen annoyances. No new enterprise should be started, and no money should be loaned except on gilt-edged security. In love affairs great ill-luck is foreshadowed, and women are cautioned to be prudent.

Clever and ingenious to-day's children will be, yet they will not be very prosperous since their efforts to rise in the world will frequently be thwarted by more influential persons.

Wednesday, April 18.—A favorable day for business and journeys.

As regards business this will be a fortunate year, but illness may be expected in the family circle as well as trouble on account of love affairs.

To-day's children will be very energetic and ambitious and will surely prosper.

Thursday, April 19.—A day concerning which nothing certain can be foretold.

This will be a quiet year and no very important event is likely to happen.

To-day's children will be rather rash, but, if born during a lucky hour, they may prosper exceedingly.

Friday, April 20.—Property may be sold to advantage to-day.

Danger is threatened during this year through an angry correspondence or through legal documents. Employees may obtain an increase of salary.

Children born to-day should look for salaried positions as, if they go into business on their own account, they are certain to lose money.

Saturday, April 21.—A very doubtful day.

This year promises to bring some good fortune and hardly any evil fortune.

Magnanimous and generous to-day's children will be, yet exceeding good fortune in any direction they can hardly expect.

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