The Acton Free Press

THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 1921

THE OLD FARM CRICK

I want to go a-fishing; I'm getting mighty tired
Of sitting in the office here, afraid of getting fired.
I've got a funny feeling, feeling kind o' sick,
I want to go a-fishing down the ol' farm crick.

I want to go a-fishing—this weather's all too fine
To be sitting 'round a dusty desk remembering the time
I could mosey down the cowpath, a-feeling mighty slick,
And yank the speckled beauties from the ol' farm crick.

I want to go a-fishing, I must be sick I guess;
Don't feel at all like digging into this business.
No, sir; somehow, I don't care to take another trick;
I just want to go a-fishing in the old farm crick.

I've got to go a-fishing, that's all there is to it.
No doc. can do me any good, or help to make me fit.
There's one thing, and one only, that will cure and cure me quick,
And that's a-going fishing in the old farm crick.

—Chicago Record.

One Hundred Per Cent. Canadian

By Frederick E. Burnham

"THE trouble is, that we haven't money enough to get under way here," remarked Rufus Saunders, from his seat upon carpenter's horse out in the barn. "It's a nice farm, so far as the land is concerned, but handicapped as we are for tools, we're going to find it hard sledding this first year. I guess old Jake Stiles turned about everything that was movable into cash so as to buy liquor. You know that was what finally killed him."

"Yes, father always said that Mr. Stiles was a drinking man," replied his sister, Stella. "As you say, I guess he disposed of about everything he could so as to buy liquor. It's a shame how little there is left here to do with."

"Well, we'll have to pull along somehow," declared her brother. "If I had two hundred dollars to put into tools this spring it would be a wonderful help, but as we haven't got it, and what is more can't get it, we'll manage to work with what there is to work with. I'm going to make it pay here, Sis, or my name isn't Rufus Saunders. Father always believed that if one does the best he can with what he has to do with, he comes out a winner sooner or later."

"Oh, you'll come out ahead," exclaimed his sister with an emphatic nod, "if you're given a fair chance. You just keep pushing, and I'll do all I can."

"Luckily we've got a plow, harrow and cultivator, and some hand-tools. But what we do need most is a horse, for the haying and a mowing machine and a horserake."

Two days later Rufus made a discovery. He was sweeping out the milk room, which was located in a shed near the barn, when he noted the fact that a rather sizeable flat stone, a square piece of slate, tipped a bit when he stepped upon it. Stooping, he attempted to settle it into place. Much to his surprise he found that it slid very easily, and wondering the cause, for it was evidently quite heavy, he pushed on it. The next instant he saw that below it was a sort of chest, or closet, about three feet square and two feet deep. Examination showed that the stone had rested upon two iron rollers, and one edge of the stone being beveled, it had, upon being pushed, rolled up on top of the adjacent stone, which comprised a part of the milk-room floor.

Rufus was just on the point of lifting the cover of the chest, when, hearing steps, he looked up and found his neighbor, William Farnham, beside him.

"What have you found here?" asked Mr. Farnham.

"I don't know," replied Rufus, with a laugh. "This stone, you see, moves easily, so I'm going to investigate."

Lifting the cover to the chest, while his neighbor looked on interestedly, Rufus uttered an exclamation of astonishment. Standing up straight, he looked Mr. Farnham in the face, and exclaimed:

"Did you ever! It seems that's where Jake kept his liquor!"

Rufus stooped again, and lifted a quart bottle of liquor, and held it up to the light.

Farnham laughed and said, "It's worth finding, and no mistake. I should say! Twenty-four bottles! Why, Jake must have bought this just before Prohibition came into effect! You know, of course, that he was found dead the first day after the prohibition ruling—died of alcoholism, so the doctor said." Mr. Farnham gave the youth beside him a searching look, and then added, "It's none of my business, young man, but I'm wondering what you are going to do with it."

"Do with it!" snorted Rufus. "I'm going to take it all out back of the barn and smash every bottle! That's what I'm going to do with it!"

"That will be rather expensive fun, won't it?" replied Mr. Farnham. "Do you realize what that stuff is worth to-day?"

"It isn't worth anything, to my way of thinking," replied Rufus.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, young man," declared Mr. Farnham suddenly lowering his voice. "Personally I don't care anything about liquor, but I happen to know where I can dispose of it at a good figure. I'll let you have that horse of mine and one hundred dollars in cash, if you will turn those twenty-four bottles over to me. The horse is worth two hundred dollars, so you will in reality, get three hundred dollars for the stuff. Is it a go?"

Before Rufus came a vision of his needs there on the farm. It was a tough proposition—depending upon his neighbor and that for the use of a horse for a day, or half a day now and then. Then, too, he pictured the numerous acres of grass which June would bring, grass which he had expected to cut with a scythe. Again, he saw in his mind's eye the rugged horse to which his neighbor referred. How he had longed to own a horse of his own instead of borrowing or hiring here and there, as the case might be.

"You don't need to touch a finger to the stuff," declared Mr. Farnham. "Just slide the stone back over the bottles, and come night, I'll slip over and take them. Give me your word that you won't disturb them, and I'll have the horse and money over here within a half hour. And I'll do a bit better, young man! I'll throw in that grindstone of mine. I've a new one coming the first of the week. Pretty handy thing to have, eh?—a grindstone right in your shed."

"Mr. Farnham, this country has gone dry," said Rufus with emphasis, looking squarely into his neighbor's face. "Prohibition is accepted now and the Canadian who doesn't do his part to make it a success is not standing back of his country. That is the way I view the situation. Every last one of those bottles is going to be smashed out back of the barn!"

"You're a fool—that's all!" snorted Farnham turning on his heel. "I've been congratulating myself on having a progressive neighbor, but I see I was mistaken. Don't come over to my place to borrow my horse or any of my tools. I don't want such a fool near me."

Going to the barn, Rufus secured a basket, and five minutes later he was demolishing the last of the bottles. Just as he smashed the last one, Stella came around the corner of the barn.

"What in the world are you doing, Rufe?" she cried.

"Trying to do my share toward making the country dry," laughed Rufus. Then he told her about the discovery he had made.

"Did Mr. Farnham see the stuff?" she questioned.

Rufus nodded, then said, "He made me an offer for it. Said he knew where he could dispose of it, and so on. But I didn't feel called upon to take up the offer."

"So that's what was the matter with him," said his sister. "He went by the house a few minutes ago looking like a thunder-cloud, and swinging his arms, as though he'd like to knock somebody over. That is why I came out."

Rufus sat down on the first round of a ladder that went up to the hayloft, and told her about the offer, as he swung a foot to and fro.

"Well, if I ever!" cried Stella, her eyes shining. "Rufe, I'm just as proud of you as I can be. We'll take hold of the summer together and make a good strong pull of it."

As the days went by Rufus found many hard propositions, cramped as he was for money, and handicapped by the want of proper farming tools. But he worked early and late, and his sister, in her realm, did her share, and, be it said to their credit, the young farmers managed to wrest quite a harvest from the soil. The worst undertaking of all was haying. Although it took Rufus a long time to mow the grass by hand, he finally housed the last of the hay and it was good hay, too.

The ongoing year turned out to be a loan one for about every farmer in that section. A late, wet spring, followed by weeks of drouth, putting things back.

Rufus was worried. The first of July a payment of five hundred dollars on the farm was due. From certain of his fellow-townsmen he had learned that Leander Stiles, the mortgagee, brother of Jake Stiles, was a hard man to deal with. Rufus could not help recalling Mr. Farnham's warning, shortly before the incident of the liquor discovery—"none of my business, young man, but Leander won't give you a minute's leeway. Watch out for him, or you will lose that money you have put into the place."

Toward the latter part of June, Rufus had less than three hundred dollars to his credit. The first of July the payment of the five hundred dollars was due. It was not to be wondered at that he was nearly beside himself with anxiety. Stella, too, shared the worry. Their mother, alone, was spared the tense situation.

The first of July, Stiles drove into the yard and tied his horse to the hitching post. Laboriously climbing down, he walked slowly out toward the shed where the milk room was located.

"Well, young man, how's the world using you?" he queried, finding Rufus at work sawing wood beside an adjacent woodpile.

"Not any too good, Mr. Stiles," answered Rufus, a worried look coming into his eyes. "I was telling my sister only yesterday that I must come over to see you."

"M-m-m! You did? Well, it's proving a rather slow season for the farmers about here, and no mistake," declared Mr. Stiles. "Fact is, I drove over to tell you that you needn't bother to make a payment until a year from this month. You might pay me the interest to-day, but the principal can stand."

"Would you be willing to do that?" gasped Rufus, his eyes fixed eagerly upon the man before him.

"Yes. In your case, I'm glad to accommodate you," replied the man. "I've kept a pretty sharp eye on you, and this place, since you first came here. I've noted the fact that you kept pegging away, hoeing an uphill row, fighting it out with odds against you, when you might have made a move that would have caused things to be considerably easier for you. Indirectly I heard about your find when first you took possession here. I want to tell you that I admire a young man that is one hundred per cent. Canadian. I want you to take part in our First of July celebration and march with your head up. There's some of us who know a man who stands by his country—and you are standing by your country."

Rufus reached and grabbed the old man's hand, as he said:—

"And you are standing by your country. March? I should say I will march! I can't tell you what this means to me and my sister. This will be a First of July of more than ordinary importance to us! Thank you, Mr. Stiles!"

Rufus was not the only one who marched with his head up on that First of July morning. From all the country round there came to the celebration loyal sons of Canada, to keep the First of July after the fearful stirring-up that war had brought. Flags were flung to the wind and songs were sung. Rufus bore the big flag from the town hall, and marched with all the energy and zeal that was in him, keeping step to the rhythm of:

"One hundred per cent. Canadian!
One hundred per cent. Canadian!"

LIGHTER THAN ALUMINUM

Under the name of "magnalium" there has been produced alloys of aluminum and magnesium which, while considerably lighter than pure aluminum, are harder than that metal and better suited, it is asserted, for working. With fifteen per cent of magnesium, the alloy resembles brass in the readiness with which it submits to the operations of turning, boring and cutting. By increasing the magnesium to twenty-five per cent., an alloy resembling bronze is produced, but the color is silvery white.

CLASSES

"There are two kinds of men in this world!" thundered the orator. "There are just two kinds, the rich and the poor!"

"You're wrong," shouted a barber. "There are two kinds: those who shave themselves and those who get shaved!"

"You're wrong, too," said the manicurist. "There are two kinds: Easy marks and lightwads."

"You are all wrong," said the egoist. "There are two kinds: Myself and others."

Which merely goes to show that anything can be proved from the point of view.

DIVIDING IT

A case came before a court involving the ownership of an eight-day clock. After listening to both sides, the judge turned to the plaintiff. "You get the clock."

"And what do I get?" complained the defendant.

"You get the eight days," replied the judge.

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SIR JOHN FOSTER FRASER ON PROHIBITION

In the course of an address to members of the English-Speaking Union and others in London recently, Viscount Burnham presiding, Sir John Foster Fraser, describing his experiences during a three years' stay in the United States, from which he has just returned, said:

"I am not a rabid, bigoted teetotaler. When I went over the United States in 1918 I found, of course, that some States had been dry for a number of years, while others were wet. Personally I preferred the wet States. When I went back last year the whole of America was going dry. Of course there were damp spots, especially in New York, and I rather gravitated to where there was less aridity than in other regions. I went on a four months' tour in the Middle West and found nothing but dry States. I did not like it. I did not like cold water with my meals, but I had to get used to drinking cold water. Then I found they were introducing a lot of imitation beverages to take the place of the drinks that were made illegal. A very popular drink was called 'near beer'—which just showed that the Americans have got no sense of distance! The well-to-do carry it in flasks and have pockets especially made for them. In the old days when a man's hand went to his hip pocket you knew it was for his revolver; now it is a sign of real friendship when a man's hand goes to his hip pocket. A car ran into a colored man in Broadway, both of whose hip pockets were bulging. He hobbled to the side and felt a certain dampness down his leg. 'Gosh, he exclaimed, 'I hope that's blood!'

"I was not happy when I had to drink near beer, grape juice, kola, root beer, or other concoctions. But the curious thing is that ultimately I began to like them. I began to feel better in health. I began to get rid of pessimism and take an optimistic view of life. I believe my figure improved. Yet there were times when I felt I would be glad to get home and have a real drink.

"Last year I was invited by a friend to go back to New York and spend Christmas with him. When I arrived the first thing he said was: 'Fraser, what will you have?' 'Whiskey,' I said. But when I started to drink it I did not like it. While I was over there I found there was very much interest in the prohibition question. They talked more about prohibition than about the League of Nations. I found in the States where they were dry there was a lot of contentment. In the industrial districts, while of course there was a great deal of objection, people were getting used to going without liquor. Manufacturers told me that the men were working better. I talked to many workingmen; they resented being deprived of their liberty; they thought they ought to be allowed to decide for themselves. Then they generally added something like this; 'Well, we have got used to it by now; and if I had to vote again, I would vote that we remain dry.'

"There is much drunkenness in some of the big cities of America, particularly New York, because they are using up what they have put on one side. 'Let us eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we shall be dry.'

"When the boat on which I was returning home had cast off from the dock I went into the smoking room and said: 'Bring me a cock-tail.' I was told I could not be supplied. 'Why?' I asked. 'This is a British ship.' 'Yes, but you must wait till we have passed the Statue of Liberty.'

"Many Americans who live in New York, Boston, and other big cities tell you that America does not like what is taking place. They are referring to the class whom they mix with. They say America is going back to light wines and light beer. I may be wrong, I am not a prejudiced teetotaler, but I wandered all over the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Canadian border down to the Mexican, and the conclusion I came to was that, right or wrong, America has become dry and she is going to remain dry. Again and again, wandering about the country, not only in agricultural districts, but in the industrial districts, I saw how healthy the people looked, how well the men, and particularly the women, carried themselves, how bonny the children were. Frequently I had to listen to criticism about England, about our being a decadent, played-out people and when I came home I kept my eyes open, in London, in Liverpool, and in some of the other big cities I have recently visited. I have not been particularly happy since I have been back. The physique of our people is not to be compared with the physique of the corresponding classes in the United States and Canada. Since my return I have been struck by the frequent sight of poor wan women, wretched and evidently ill-fed; and the poor children with skimpy hair showing the lack of the proper kinds of food; and I have noticed the bad teeth which disfigure so many of our people—a thing you rarely see on the other side of the Atlantic.

"America and ourselves are going to be very severe competitors in the immediate future in regard to commerce; and while we think we are going to hold our own and while no doubt we are as well equipped mentally as the Americans, we are not going to hold our own unless we develop in our general population a better physique than they now have."

A NOISY ARMY

The rank and file of the Chinese army can outbugle any army of the world. Mr. Nathaniel Peffner, in the Home Monthly, says that there are always two buglers to every squad of soldiers in the Chinese army.

There is one thing that the Chinese soldier does do: he bugles. The one great, inexhaustible passion of the Chinese army is bugling. I am sure that one out of every three men has a bugle, that one out of every two hours he blows it, and that not one time in three thousand does he blow any recognized call or tune.

He begins at half-past three in the morning—"he" being now used collectively. He plays the same not—"he" now being used individually and each "he" playing a different note—until six o'clock in the morning. Then he switches to another. He stops for meals and for a few hours of sleep—that is all.

When a regiment moves into a town foreigners living in it resign themselves to insomnia. The Chinese do not. Noise to them is one of the normal and pleasurable phenomena of existence the more deafening the more pleasurable.

NOTABLE DEVELOPMENT IN POULTRY-BREEDING

The Experimental Farms of the Dominion are doing some excellent work in poultry breeding. After four or five years, birds and strains have been produced of exceedingly high productive capacity. At Kentville, N. S., eleven breeding pens contain birds that in their pullet year laid an average of 197 eggs, the highest bird laying 270 eggs in 52 weeks. At this station a Barred Rock pullet laid 164 eggs in 164 days. In sections where a few years ago ten or a dozen eggs a year from a hen were a rarity, there are now hundreds that run to from 153 to 250. In the Eastern Townships, Que., 266 eggs have been reached and from 150 to 200 is a common record. In the Prairie Provinces the Experimental Farms have reached high record. At Indian Head, Sask., last year 105 pullets had an average of 183.7 eggs, the highest being 232. At Lethbridge, Alta., the average production has increased two or three times over what it was nine or ten years ago. New Brunswick has a similar tale to tell, one hen at Fredericton reaching 256 eggs in a year. British Columbia, however, takes the palm. At the Agassiz Experimental Farm, 200 eggs are common and from 250 to 270 are not rare. At the Vancouver Island station 200 pullets gave an average of 195.97, 82 going above 200. The high production of 300 eggs in a year has been reached for one pullet. Hens that cannot lay 200 in a twelve month are not wanted and no cockerel is retained unless his mother laid 250 eggs in her pullet year. It should be noted that high class breeding stock and eggs are available to the public from the Experimental Farms. This opportunity is being well taken advantage of, the demand for pedigree cockerels, through which the best egg laying results are obtained, far exceeding the supply.—Dominion Department of Agriculture.

HUMOROUS

Magistrate—"You say the prisoner struck you. Have you any witness to prove it?"

Murphy (pointing to his discolored optic)—"I have an eye-witness here, yer honor."

A story is going the rounds about a man in St. Louis who wrote a will in which he named six bankers to be his pallbearers. "They have carried me for twenty years," he explained, "and they might as well finish the job."

A lady was waiting to buy a ticket at a picture show when a stranger bumped her shoulder. She glared at him, feeling it was done intentionally.

"Well," he growled, "don't eat me up."

"You are in no danger, sir," she said "I am a Jewess."

They tell us that at a sale in a neighboring town last week mamma had taken little Johnny with her. There was some crowd and in the interest in some of the "bargains mamma lost sight of Johnny. He was finally located in another part of the store. Of course mamma scolded some and said, "Johnny you must not get lost again, just hold tight to mother's skirt and you will be all right." Johnny started to cry and mamma asked him what was wrong, and he said, "Well, mamma, I can't do that, for I can't reach it."

An Irishman visiting a friend in the hospital began to take an interest in the other patients.

"What are you in here for?" he asked one.

"I've got tonsilitis, and I've got to have my tonsils cut out," was the answer.

"And you?" he asked another.

"I've got blood poisoning in my arm, and they're going to cut it off," was the reply.

"Heavens!" said Pat in horror, "it ain't no place for me. I've got a cold in my head."

A MINISTER GETS A FORTUNE

Many years ago David H. C. Byrne was engaged in Christian work in the slums of Chicago. He succeeded in rescuing a young woman from a life of shame and influencing her to return to her parents in Florida. Two years later she died. The parents and brother of the girl have since died, and the estate, estimated to be worth $40,000,000 or more, by will goes to the one who influenced the girl to return to her home. Mr. Byrne is now a Canadian clergyman. He announces that one of the first things he means to do is to spend two or three million dollars from the estate in the erection of a home for girls in Chicago. Not every unselfish deed for right and for Christ brings a return of this kind, but all such deeds are rewarded in one way or another both in this life and the hereafter.

AT THE PANAMA CANAL

A great many of the persons employed by the Panama Canal are from more temperate regions and they find the climate of the canal country somewhat enervating. In order that they may be able to keep to the physical standard it is necessary for them to seek a change of environment at regular intervals, but where to go is the problem which has been facing them for some time. A committee of officials is now struggling with this matter, and it is thought that a change of altitude rather than latitude will solve the problem. It is likely that a vacation place for canal employees will be located at some high spot in Costa Rica or in the Chiriqui province of Panama.

LOOK PEOPLE IN THE EYE

There are few trifles which are so inclined to undermine confidence as a failure to look people in the eye. This shiftiness of gaze does not always indicate a shiftiness of nature, by any means. It may be only shyness, timidity, lack of poise, which is responsible, but whatever the explanation the habit should be corrected. Nothing helps more to establish confidence and good feeling than a frank, direct gaze.

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KEEP WATCH OF YOURSELF

There are innumerable people who keep on all their lives repeating the same grammatical errors, though they habitually hear correct English. Their manners are proof, wherever they go, of their lack of culture, and yet they do not realize as they eat their food or converse in company, that there is anything in their manners which differentiates them from the well-bred. They may be observant in some respects, but when it comes to themselves, they take everything for granted.

One of the secrets of improvement is the ability to stand off and look yourself over. As soon as you begin to notice that your speech is incorrect, compared with that of your associates, and that your manners are uncouth, then you will have the strongest possible incentive to take yourself in hand.

Sometimes it takes a hint from an outsider to open our eyes to what we ourselves are. And whether the hint comes in the form of a criticism that cuts or whether friendship enlightens us as kindly as possible, in either case we have every reason to be thankful. For until we begin to notice that what we say or do falls short of the highest standard, the prospects are poor for our taking steps in the direction of improvement.

AMBITION AND IMPATIENCE

Do not make the mistake of confusing ambition and impatience. There is a popular song whose refrain is, "I want what I want when I want it." Most people are quite in sympathy with the spirit of that song, but that does not alter the fact that we get what we want when we earn it.

Success comes early to a few and in those cases it is often anything but an unmixed advantage. Very frequently a quick success demoralizes a young man. He gets an undue opinion of himself. He is inclined to underestimate the value of hard work. He is spoiled. Of course those dire results do not always follow, but it is an exceptional young man who can win success immediately and not be hurt thereby.

As a rule success is not like the strawberry, maturing in the spring, but like those fruits which mellow through the summer and fall and reach perfection with the first frosts. The impatient are in danger of missing it altogether and the truly ambitious must remember that it never pays to be impatient.

SLEEP

Oh! what a wonderful word that is! Can you do it? That is, drop off into a good sound refreshing sleep? If you are unable to, there is something wrong with your nervous system. It is a danger signal. Nervous prostration, melancholia, nervous dyspepsia are only a few of the serious maladies that are liable to develop.

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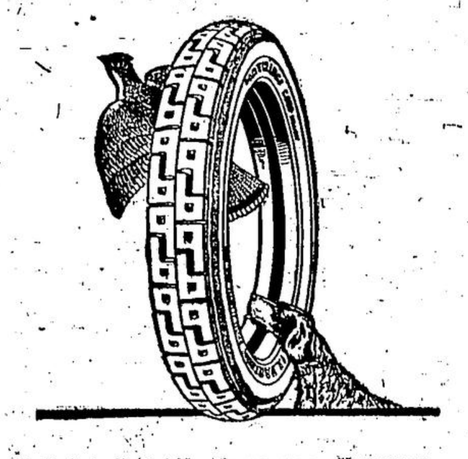

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