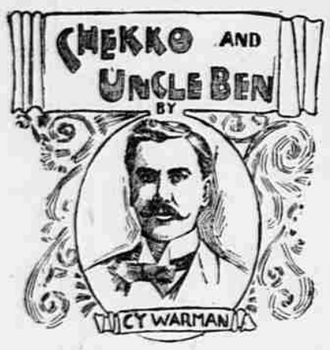

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Truth is stranger than poetry. This tale is true, and you shall read it just as it came to Hector McRea and me. Hector, who is the sole witness to the narrative, is a well known pioneer, guide, interpreter, mining expert and judge of judges. This strange story came to us from the lips of one of the survivors, between sighs that, at times, were almost sobs.

It was in the summer of '97 that a quiet man came to Calgary, on the Canadian Pacific, province of Alberta, to open an assay office. It was a week or two later that a miner, ore-stained and wind-browned, pushed his way into the local bank and asked for the manager. The paying teller indicated a back room, and the man went in. The manager turned slowly on his revolving chair, the stranger looked at him steadily for a moment, shook his head slowly, sighed and turned away.

"No, he's not the man," he said, moving toward the door.

"What can I do for you?" asked the manager.

"O, nothin'; I was lookin' for Mr. Macquagin."

"That is my name."

"Yes—I know, but you ain't the man—you ain't Sandy Macquagin."

The disappointment and bereavement of the stranger interested the manager, and in a little while he had the sad story. The hoary hermit, after years of hill and brush life, seemed quite willing to talk. Finding himself face to face with a white man, the past came back again, even his boyhood's happy days down in old Kentucky.

They had been pards, for years. Macquagin, who was younger, was known as Sandy, and this grizzled trailman as Uncle Ben.

Indeed, that was the only name he gave, or would give.

Yes, they had been pards, but, in an evil hour, they strolled into El Paso, the cards and a woman went against them, they quarreled, each reached for his gun—and then they both changed their minds.

That night they parted on the banks of the Rio Grande, but with the promise that, whichever happened to be first to find pay dirt, should look the other up and share the fortune with him. They were to be partners still, but never again to sleep under the same blanket.

Sandy remained at El Paso, with the senorita at his feet rolling and lighting cigarettes for him. Uncle Ben wandered to the North and fell in with a very wise Indian named Chekko, who lived alone, far from any man, red or white.

In time Chekko and Uncle Ben became fast friends. One night the Indian had a dream. He dreamed that away to the north ran a river whose shoal waters rippled over pebbles of gold. Going into the bush he brought forth a staff of witch hazel—a sort of divining rod—and off he started for British Columbia, followed closely by Uncle Ben.

After weeks and months of weary marching, when in a deep canon in the heart of the Selkirks, Chekko stopped suddenly, and looked at the walls on either side. The divining rod quivered and pointed into a side canon. They had gone but a little ways up the narrow gulch when the rod was wrenched from Chekko's grasp and fell upon his foot. Hard by they saw a running brook the black sands of which were brilliant with pebbles of gold. In proof of his story, Uncle Ben brought from his deep pockets any amount of dust, nuggets and a small bar of pure gold. They had been in the gorge for more than two years. Chekko, in addition to being superstitious, had a great dread of white men. They were all thieves and robbers, he said, and he had sworn by the bark of the witch hazel that no white man would ever come within twenty paces of him, and he, if he knew it, and could avoid it, would not pass within twenty miles of a white man.

And so it had taken Uncle Ben two years to persuade Chekko to allow him to take the gold out to Sandy Macquagin, who, as Uncle Ben had learned, ran a bank at Calgary.

He knew Sandy, he said, and knew him to be an honest man.

But now (he dashed a tear away) it was all off. This Macquagin was not Sandy and he would not deceive Chekko.

Gathering up his gold, Uncle Ben moved toward the door.

"Do you think Sandy would buy your gold if you could find him?" asked the banker.

"O, I don't want him to buy it. I only wanted him to take it and ship it away an' git some sort of machine to git the gold out with. You see the whole mountain's full of this kind o' rock," and as he spoke he produced a handful of the richest gold quartz that had ever been seen in Calgary.

Now the banker could not know, positively, that the slab was gold or that the great nuggets were not nuggets of brass, but this quartz was good rock, and he wanted some of it. As Uncle Ben put the specimens back into his deep pockets and reached for the door, the banker spoke:

"Perhaps, if you can't find Sandy, you'll let me help you out."

The old prospector smiled sadly, and shook his head.

"No," he said, "I don't say you ain't square an' I thank you very kindly, but Chekko won't have it—not fer a minute."

That was all he said, and he passed out into the street, followed the street until it became a dim wagon road, then a trail, and when the trail pinched out disappeared in the trackless forest.

The quiet man with the brown beard and

AND NOW IT WAS ALL OFF.

the Georgia accent, who had come to Calgary to open an assay office became, in a few short weeks, one of the "leading citizens." He identified himself at once with one of the churches (the oldest and most aristocratic in the camp), sang in the choir and taught a class in Sunday school when the regular man was away in the hills. This is of the first importance when you open a new business in a Canadian town—to "identify" yourself.

The manager of the local bank attended the same service and so the two men became acquainted. But the banker did not tell the assayer of his mysterious visitor, or of the faraway river that rippled over a bed of gold. Not that he had forgotten. He lost many an hour's sleep on account of Uncle Ben and his fascinating story.

Three fretful, feverish weeks passed, the door squeaked and Uncle Ben stood once more in the banker's private office. The banker tried to appear unconcerned. He got up and closed the door that Uncle Ben had left open, but before he had resumed his seat the strange visitor had swung it wide again. "The whole wide world ain't none too big for me," said Uncle Ben, "an' they ain't no use droppin' the blanket over a square deal."

The old man had abode so long in the open, seeing and knowing only Chekko, that he hated four walls and no opening.

It required a great deal of diplomacy upon the part of the banker to bring the old miner to consider a proposition from a Macquagin who was not Sandy. Finally, by careful angling, the money man got from Uncle Ben a vague promise that if Chekko could be won over, he would be willing to allow the banker to help them out, but with the explicit understanding that the manager should risk nothing. This was the wish of the honest old prospector. He even insisted that the banker should have the bar, nuggets and the dust tested before shipping the former, so that no embarrassment could possibly come to his new friend. It was further agreed that the banker, for his part in the work, should have a one-third interest in all that Chekko and Uncle Ben possessed.

"But before we do more," said Uncle Ben, "you take this bar to an assayer, or two if they's two in town, an' see if it's all right."

Carefully covering the little slab of gold with a newspaper, the banker stole out in search of a man with crucible and scales and bottles and things for testing ore.

Of course, the old miner went along; not that he doubted the honesty of the banker, but he had sworn to Chekko, touching the witchhazel, that the treasure should not leave his sight. They called upon the old assayer, who had come to Calgary with the railroad and had never accumulated enough wealth to take him farther, but the old assayer was away. They gathered from a scrap of paper tacked on the front door that it would be three or four days before the professor would return.

The banker was saying that he would risk it and send the slab to Montreal, when the keen eye of Uncle Ben caught the swinging sign of the new man.

"Ah, to be sure," said the banker, beaming. "I had forgotten that Calgary has two assayers now. How stupid of me."

"But," said Uncle Ben, tugging at the banker's sleeve, "can we trust this stranger?"

"Yes, indeed. I know him well, goes to our church, fine fellow and from the South, too."

The assayer was busy. They could hear him jingling his tongs, and when the door

"ADIOSE."

opened they could smell the ore roasting in the furnace in the little back room. When Uncle Ben had been introduced he wanted to see the great man at work, but the assayer explained to him that it was only fair to his customers that no one should enter the test room. A sprinkle of dust in a worthless sample, he explained, might cause a millionaire to exchange places with a pauper. The banker expressed the opinion that it would be a good thing—for the pauper—and appealed to Uncle Ben for his opinion on the point.

"Not if he came by it through fraud," said the old man, his steel blue eyes fixed upon the banker's face.

The assayer had informed his friend, the banker, that it would be impossible to do anything for him before the middle of the afternoon, but when the banker produced the slab of gold the assayer said he would drop his other work and make a test. The old miner, having caught from Chekko a lurking suspicion of all white men, kept a close watch on the assayer, and when the latter came with his brace and bit it was Uncle Ben's own hand that guided the auger, the banker holding the bar in place upon the low table.

When the assayer, nervous and excited, had gone into the back room with half the borings, Chekko gathered the rest up carefully, tied them in a knot in one corner of his big cotton handkerchief, and dropped them into his pocket.

In a little while the assayer came out with a bright button of gold and a certificate fixing the value of the bar at $19.10 an ounce. The eye of the banker danced as he looked into the dancing eye of the assayer, while Uncle Ben kept one hand upon the slab. The hand of the banker trembled as he slid a crisp Canadian $5 note into the trembling hand of the assayer.

Now the banker, passing out, called a cheery good-by to the man who had made him happy, and the latter answered "So long," but Uncle Ben said not a word.

When they were alone again in the banker's private office Uncle Ben informed his companion that he did not like the look of the assayer.

The banker only laughed. He was too happy to see anything but good in a world that had been good to him.

"But why did he take out twice as much gold as he needed? It is plain to me that he meant to keep the balance."

"But you brought it away with you."

"Yes," said Uncle Ben, "and I want you to take it to the other assayer when he returns and see what he says."

The banker assured the old man that it was all right.

"Yes, I suppose it is," said Uncle Ben; but I want you to know. If the other man finds the same, then you will be satisfied." So the banker promised.

And in this way Mr. Macquagin became third owner in a mine that was a marvel or—a myth. Still the bargain was not sealed. Chekko's consent must be gained. This could be brought about by Uncle Ben, and by him alone.

Now that he had overcome his own foolish fears, the storm-tanned prospector seemed anxious to win his superstitious pardner over to the white man. It was upon this business that he embarked by train that afternoon for Revelstoke. There was no need of secrecy so far as the banker was concerned, for was he not now as deeply interested in protecting the property as was Uncle Ben and Chekko?

A week passed, and no word from Uncle Ben. The banker called on the assayer. He felt that he must talk with someone who knew about the bar of gold, but the assayer's office was closed. "Out of town," was all the paper talk on the door had to tell.

The banker became uneasy. Could the absence of this man have any connection with the disappearance of Uncle Ben? No, he thought not; but the days dragged like years. A dozen times a day he would take the little gold button from his pocket and look it over. On the ninth day he took the button to the old assayer, and the old assayer said it was gold.

"But what is it worth, suppose I have a peck of those buttons?"

"O, I should say about $19."

The banker slept better that night. The new assayer had been in the bank that day, and this fact helped to quiet the banker's fears.

Still another day, and no news from Uncle Ben. The banker became restless. The suspense was unbearable. After all, what assurance had he that this button came from the auger hole? Ah, the borings! Why not have the old assayer pass upon the shavings that Uncle Ben had saved? Uncle Ben had, of course, carried the bar away with him, but the borings would do as well.

Thirty minutes from the birth of this brilliant thought the banker was waiting in the assay office for the result of the run. After what seemed an age to him, the man came out with a certificate that read, "Gold, $19.10."

The banker slept again that night. It is wonderful what men will suffer, risk and endure for gold. It is the white man's god. The next day Uncle Ben came back to Calgary, but when the banker saw that he had no gold a chill passed down the banker's spine. Chekko would not consent. For nearly two weeks the white man had labored with the old Indian, but he would not. The white men were all thieves and if they set foot in the new camp Chekko would be driven out. Uncle Ben showed plainly his disappointment. He had come back to Calgary only to apprise the banker of what he had done, or rather failed to do, and to warn his new friend against attempting to find out the place of the golden river. Chekko never slept. If any white man came to that camp Chekko would surely shoot him with a bullet made of pure gold.

The banker had another chill. Not at dread of being filled with golden buckshot, but because of a strange coincidence. He had just read in the local paper an item headed,

"BULLETS OF GOLD."

"Mr. Smith, our new and obliging assayer, whose business card can be seen in another column, and whose deep, bass voice may be heard every Sunday at the Church of the Ascension, killed a caribou on Wednesday of this week and sold the carcass to Mr. Grass, the accomplished butcher at the corner of Fourth and Brook streets. Imbedded against one of the animal's shoulder blades the butcher found a bullet of gold. While cutting up the last quarter another golden shot was found slightly flattened against the hip bone of the caribou. One of said bullets can be seen at this office. The other, having been tested by Mr. Smith, and found to be pure gold, is on exhibition in the window of Mr. Grass' shop."

Surely the plot thickens. Just as all things seemed to conspire a few days ago to shake the banker's faith, so did these circumstances rush in to overwhelm him with evidence of the honesty of Uncle Ben and the wonderful richness of the find. To be sure the pleasure of this brightening prospect was marred by the sad news from the camp, the news of the old Indian's obstinacy, but surely a way could be found to get by the Indian.

Why should a heathen savage be allowed to stand between the world and knowledge—between the banker and a fortune? It was absurd. Do not Christian nations kill savages in order to civilize them, and incidentally to save their souls? He would not do murder, but he would cheerfully chloroform this old idiot, and then wake him up a rich and happy man. When he had tried every other argument on the old miner, he suggested the chloroform, but to his amazement, Uncle Ben did not even know the meaning of the word. The banker explained the nature and effect of the drug, and instantly the old miner stood up.

"And you advise this? To take such advantage of an innocent man, to deceive my best friend, rob him of his reason, which is the sunlight of the great spirit, and then, while he is groping in darkness, rob him of his gold. Ah! Chekko is right. The white man is a hypocrite, a liar and a thief. This makes me wish I had been born red, or black, or even yaller—anything but white."

"Stay," gasped the banker, for Uncle Ben had turned and taken two long strides toward the door.

Macquagin heard the door slam, and Uncle Ben was gone.

When the editor of the local paper asked the banker where he was bound for, the banker said he was just going over to Revelstoke on a private matter, which was perfectly true. It was perfectly natural, too, that the banker should take this trip, for his rest had been broken for ten nights.

He had been three days in Revelstoke when he caught sight of Uncle Ben coming out of a grocery store. The prospector would have passed on without recognizing the banker, but the latter would not let it happen that way. He spoke to the miner, calling him Uncle Ben, and showing great surprise and much pleasure at the unexpected meeting. Uncle Ben was remote, but not altogether frosty in his intercourse with Macquagin. After much persuasion the prospector consented to break bread with the man who had offered to help him, and before they left the table they had some white wine that sparkled and bit like hard cider, and it put Uncle Ben in better spirits than he had shown for some time. As the two men came down the long flight of steps that led from the hotel to the depot, Uncle Ben actually leaned, at times, upon the banker's arm.

When the last glint of gold was gone from the western sky and the stars studded the blue vault above the valley of the Columbia, the two men said good-by, and Uncle Ben disappeared in the forest behind the town.

Before they separated the banker succeeded in getting the old man to promise to visit Calgary once more and see if some arrangements could not be made looking to the development of the property that the lucky prospectors had discovered.

Of course, Uncle Ben kept his promise. To the great joy of the banker he brought back the bar of gold. When the two men had been together for an hour the banker had gotten from Uncle Ben the bewildering statement that, in addition to the small slab which he carried, they had cached near their camp a rough bar that would weigh seventy-five or eighty pounds. He was tired of living so, starving in a bank vault, so to speak, and had at last gained Chekko's consent to give up a third interest in the mine for the banker's help. But first Chekko must have some tangible proof of the banker's existence and of his wealth. Finally it was agreed that the banker should weigh up the gold that Uncle Ben had brought—the bar, the nuggets and three bags of dust, and find the cash value of the whole. Thirty-six thousand nine hundred and sixty dollars was what it was worth.

"How much is Chekko's share?" asked Uncle Ben, eagerly.

The banker figured a moment and said: "Twelve thousand three hundred and twenty dollars." "Then take $12,320 in cash and show it to Chekko. He knows money—knows what it looks like—an' if we show it to him he will be satisfied; then you can bring the money back and lock it up in your iron box again. You can bring the big bar of gold at the same time," he added, as if this had been a mere afterthought.

The banker sighed a sigh that was a great relief to him, and then he called the paying teller and told him to put the gold in the vault.

The difficulty that confronted the banker now was how to get this $12,320 out of the bank. He could not draw a check for the amount himself without exciting the cashier. He must have a confederate. He would take in a partner, but it must be someone not connected with the bank.

He called upon a friend who did a little business in a legal way, but the friend was out. He now sought out the editor of the local paper and told him little bits of the wonderful story that had come to him in sections during the past six weeks. The editor was willing, almost eager, to do his part and to take whatever came to him.

Uncle Ben was introduced, asked to supper at the editor's house, and accepted the invitation. Mr. Smith, the new assayer and bass singer, was there, and the banker. It was a pleasant evening. Here were three men of intelligence, all reasonably well educated, men of some refinement, entertaining an unwashed hillman, but they soon discovered that Uncle Ben was unconsciously entertaining them. From the moment he entered the little vestibule he had the whole party at the point of exploding with laughter. He watched the other men hang their hats on the moosehead hatrack, and then deposited his on the floor in the hall. When Mrs. Kling, the editor's wife, offered him a napkin, he said, "Thanks, I've got a hankicher." He had been reserved and very guarded in his conversation with the men, but in the presence of the ladies he thawed perceptibly. The inborn chivalry of the South still showed through the tan and thirty years of beard.

"What a nice coupboard," he said to the hostess.

"That isn't a coupboard, Uncle Ben," said Mrs. Kling sweetly; "that's a piano—a music box."

And then she went over, lifted the lid and let her hands warder idly over the keys.

Uncle Ben said no more, but as she resumed her seat his hostess saw him sneak a corner of his red and white kerchief up to his off eye.

Away along toward the coffee he became talkative again. "Uh," he exclaimed, grasping the stem of a champagne glass in his big brown fist, "that liquor's finer'n moose milk." The roar of laughter in which the ladies joined, seemed to embarrass the old man.

"Tell us a story, Uncle Ben," said Mr. Smith; "a bear story if you will."

"Wolves is worse'n bears," said Uncle Ben, making a dough pill and flipping it at the lamp that hung above the table. "Had a little time 'ith a couple uv 'em to-day, comin' over."

"Tell us about it," urged the assayer, reaching for the nut cracker.

"Yer wastin' good liquor there, pardner," said the old man, as Kling emptied the bottle on the back of Uncle Ben's hand that sheltered his champagne glass.

"When the train stopped at the Glacier fer dinner, I mosied into the lunch room for a bite to eat. When I come out I see a couple o' fellers prancin' up an' down the walk lookin' s'f they'd been there fore we come. Little while after the train started they come into the car where I smokin' one pushed my shoulder down with a punch he packed, jest edzactly like them pinchers at Mr. Smith's mashin' nuts with, an' said to me, athorative like: 'Open up.'

"'What?'" says I.

"'Open up yer pack, sais he, this is the government inspector,' pintin' his pinchers at the other man.

"Jest then we darted into one o' them wooden tunnels, and thinks I, here's a good place to hide the slab. Well, at the minit I was pokin' it under the cushin we darted out again an' one o' the inspectors see me. He caught my arm, trailed it down an' found the slab o' gold. First I'm mad, but some skeered at the same time. Then the second feller spoke. He tuck the slab from the first man, sayin', 'he's an old chap, we won't report it—give back his gold.'

"How much you got?" he asked me.

"Thousand dollars," says I.

"Ten per cent," says he, "give me a hundred dollars."

"Ain't got it," says I.

"Keep the gold then," says he to his pard, an' he starts out with the slab. Now we're in another tunnel. I riz up, an' grabbed the man by the arm, an' he stopped. When we passed out into the daylight again I counted out a hundred, the man snatched it and slammed the door after him.

Well, while I'm still chucklin' over beatin' them out o' the tax on a couple o' thousand more, the ticket man come up to me an' asked what them fellers wanted.

I explained, an' he flew up an' said "I was a soft mark, that them wan't inspectors—them's confidentiel men," says he.

"How much is it?" says I, reachin' fer my sack.

"How much is what?"

"The tax," says I.

"They ain't no tax to pay," says he, an' then he went on through the car, mutterin' somethin' about "suckers in a trout country."

The laugh that followed this story was not very loud. The thing was too pathetic.

At the end of a pleasant evening the guests departed, the banker showing Uncle Ben to the hotel on his way home.

Uncle Ben did not show up at the bank until the middle of the afternoon. It was Saturday, the bank was closed, but the manager was at his post. He had been there every moment from the hour of opening, and every hour expecting Uncle Ben. The old prospector showed no sign of regretting his bargain, but the banker was becoming uneasy. It was Saturday, the regular through train for Revelstoke had passed. The "flash roll" that was to be taken out of the bank to humor the old Indian must be returned before the bank opened on Monday morning. The manager thought of chartering a special train to carry him to Revelstoke, but that would attract undue notice, and possibly create a stampede to the new fields. A better plan would be to secure a permit and go over on the first freight, which would put them into Revelstoke at midnight. It was agreed that Mr. Kling, the editor, should draw his personal check for $12,320. The cashier protested. It was irregular. The man Kling did not have 12,000 mills in the bank, but the manager told the cashier that it was all right. There was $36,000 worth of gold as security in the safe, beside the cash was to be returned Sunday afternoon, or long before the hour for opening on Monday. So the money went out.

The banker and the editor were greatly amused at the quaint sayings of Uncle Ben on the way over. As the heavy freight toiled up over the range the three men sat in the cupola of the waycar. The moon was out full upon the White mountains, making the world wildly beautiful.

"What's them iron strings for?" asked Uncle Ben.

"Those are telegraph wires."

"But what's the good o' them?—they don't hold up the poles?"

"Oh," said the editor, glancing at his friend, "we send messages over them. You write out a message—a letter—and hand it to the man at the station, and he sends it on the wire."

"Go on," said Uncle Ben, turning away to watch the moonlight that was playing on the ripples of the Kicking Horse.

"Honest," said Kling.

"No," the old man answered, "me and Chekko watched them strings fer three weeks once, an' they wan't no letters passed. Chekko said they was put there to hold the poles together, an' that in winter the railroad would be boarded up to keep the snow out. I think Chekko's right."

It was 1 o'clock in the morning when Uncle Ben struck the dim trail north of the town of Revelstroke, followed by the banker bearing the "flash roll." The editor stumbled along in the rear. To the strangers it seemed that they were walking in a trackless wilderness, but the old pathfinder kept his feet swinging as though it were broad daylight. It was an hour before dawn when they were halted by a grunt, and heard the click-click of a rifle cocking. Uncle Ben called in a strange tongue, Chekko answered. The pathfinder told his comrades to remain where they were and then approached the hogan, near the door of which the old Indian had spread his blankets.

Chekko stood forth in the moonlight, a solitary eagle feather sticking up from his fur cap.

The banker, eager to see the Indian, advanced two or three steps. Chekko cocked his rifle again, and the banker stepped back.

"If you come too near," said Uncle Ben, coming close to the white men, "you'll spoil it all."

"We won't," said the banker; "here—take the money and show it to him. Tell him we've got it to burn."

Uncle Ben took the satchel and showed the money to Chekko. The Indian only looked at it, grunted, and turned to regard the strangers.

Presently they saw Uncle Ben put the bundle of bills back into the grip. The Indian waved his hands, talked loud and pointed toward the East, where the dawn was showing.

"It's all right," said Uncle Ben, returning the grip to the banker, "only he says you must be gone before the sun is up. He's all broke up, but he won't make no trouble. He himself will guide you out to the main trail, but you must not come within twenty paces of him. Stay till I bring the bar of gold."

It was a great load—eighty pounds, as they afterward learned. The banker and the editor took turns carrying it, the old Indian leading the way. When it was full day the Indian put out a hand, signing the men to stop. Leaving the trail he placed himself upon a huge rock, pointed a bony hand down the trail and the men passed on.

When the Indian could be seen but dimly outlined against the forest, Kling called back, cheerily, "Adiose."

The banker and the editor reached Revelstoke just in time to board the eastbound train for Calgary.

They were silent and thoughtful. Now and then they exchanged glances and smiles. At Glacier, which was the eating station on the old-time card, Kling left the train and brought some sandwiches and coffee back with him, but the banker would not stir. All the way over he sat one foot on the old rag of a blanket that covered the eighty-pound slab of gold. The old satchel, with the $12,000 in it, lay in the rack above his head.

That night, in the banker's private office, the two men unrolled the old blanket, and there lay the big yellow bar. It was a sight to see. Weary and worn as they were they sat for hours talking over their good fortune.

The manager was busy at his desk when the bank opened for business on Monday morning. Uncle Ben was coming over on the express. "Did you bring the money back?" the cashier asked, entering the private office.

"Sure," said the manager, reaching for the little satchel that stood upon the top of his desk. When he had found the right key he unfastened the spring lock, lifted the bundle, looked at it for a second, and sank back in his chair. The bundle dropped from his hand. The cashier picked it up. It was a bundle of brown paper.

The revelations came swift and fast from that hour. The banker clipped a corner from the big slab and carried it to Mr. Smith, but Mr. Smith's assay shop was closed. The card on the door read, "Adiose."

The old assayer was found, and the yellow slab was found to be worthless. The other bar, the smaller one, was brought out. There was a little gold in the bottom of the auger hole. The rest was tinkling brass. The nuggets were worthless; the dust sacks were filled with sand.

It was scarcely necessary to visit the "camp," but they did, the banker and the editor. Near the cabin they found an Indian false face and Uncle Ben's whiskers. Upon the cabin door there was a card upon which Uncle Ben had written "Adiose."

PHIL MAY INTERVIEWED.

Why He Was Never Before Interviewed—Some of His Likes and Dislikes.

From the New York Press.

It used to be a source of some wonderment to me that no newspaper ever printed an interview with so interesting a man as Phil May. His fun loving qualities appear in every line of his drawings. His pictures in Punch are contrary to the sacred Punch traditions, from an American viewpoint, because they are really funny. His ragamuffins are the most amiable and cheerful of little villains. Surely, whatever such an artist might have to say about his work would be well worth the most valuable newspaper space.

I know now why that yearning space was not filled, for on a recent occasion I undertook to interview Phil May, and on two subsequent occasions tried to round out what had been left incomplete before, with the following as a total of results:

"Oh, yes, dear fellow, about the interview. We must attend to that. Have a drink. No? Have a cigar, then, or have a cigarette, or something." He fished around in the outside pocket of his jacket and drew up a handful of long and rich Havanas. "Throw away that other thing I gave you and have one of these; they're good."

"The exhibition of your drawings in New York—"

"Oh, yes; lively place, New York. Know Jim Ford? Good fellow. Windsor hotel there, too. Can't understand how it burned

PHIL MAY.

down. I stopped there; comfortable place."

"Going to America again?"

"No, don't think so."

"In all probability we should make a fuss over you."

"Hate fuss."

"Is it true, as has been said, that you evolve your drawings by a process of elimination, rubbing out one line after another from the original draft until only the absolute essentials are left?"

"Used to do that; don't any more."

"Your work—"

"Blow work. Come around to dinner next Tuesday and we'll talk about it."

But we didn't talk about it; and that is probably about as far as the interview ever will get. Such as it is, it is doubtless more than any one ever got before. Any one who has seen Phil May's drawings would somehow know the man istantly. Not that he looks like them at all, but that he looks as if he had made them. He likes nothing so much as making his friends comfortable, and dislikes nothing so much as being "dressed up." He abominates any sort of exercise except riding, and can usually be found in the costume in which he is pictured herewith.

SUPPORT FOR PLAYERS' HANDS

Invention to Prevent Students From Dropping Their Wrists Too Low.

From the Pittsburg Dispatch.

To prevent piano students from dropping their wrists too low, a common fault with beginners, a musician of Washington has invented a support which, it is claimed, not only corrects this fault, but offers a very grateful relief for the student. His device, shown in the accompanying cut, has cuffs to be attached to the wrists, with an adjustable strap to pass over the shoulder and be tightened until it lifts the wrist to the proper height. While sustaining the arm and wrist in the proper position for fingering the keys of the piano, this contrivance is yielding to a sufficient extent to permit the hand to conveniently reach all the octaves of the keyboard.

"What Would Happen?"

From the Golden Penny.

A clergyman had the misfortune some little time ago to travel in a Swiss mountain railway car in the company of a very nervous maiden lady, who continually plied him with questions.

"And if these chains broke now what woud happen?" she asked anxiously.

"They would use the special brake attached to the car, so as to keep us from going back down the hill again," he replied.

"But, supposing the brake wouldn't work, where should I go?"

"That would depend entirely upon the sort of a life you are leading, madam!" he answered quietly. And she left him alone.

Objection Overruled.

From the Chicago News.

He—"I am going for a drive in the country this evening. Would you care to accompany me?"

She—"I would dearly love to go, but I'm so afraid of a horse."

He—"But mine is so gentle that I always tie the reins about the whip and let him follow his own inclination."

She—"And you would have both hands free! Oh, how delightful. Of course I'll go."

Tons of Butter Made by Two Sisters.

Misses Mary and Lizzie Fox are the owners of a dairy farm near Kirbyville, Pa. The butter is taken twelve miles to the Reading market by Miss Lizzie.

In making her frequent trips she has traveled 27,456 miles and sold 57,200 pounds. Averaging the price obtained for it at 25 cents per pound, she has realized $14,300 by the sale of butter alone. She has also sold cheese to the amount of over $3,000, besides raising many pigs from the refuse milk.

FOR 39 YEARS A PASTOR.

LONG, FAITHFUL SERVICE OF REV. MR. PROCTOR OF INDEPENDENCE.

He Was a Disciple of Alexander Campbell and Has Seen the Upbuilding of the Campbellite Church.

No better reward could be given the individual than to live to see the results of special or life-long endeavor. The world is full of instances to the contrary. There have been numberless men who have fought for what they believed to be right, to the bitter end of life, and have died in complete ignorance of the effect their effort has had upon conditions they were seeking to change. Such are extreme cases, of course, and the reason is bound up in the inexplicable cause and effect of the universe. Yet every man plays his part in the unfolding of civilization and it should be the lot of every good man who lives to a ripe old age to be able to say to younger men, "Look, this is the work of my hand,

REV. ALEXANDER CAMPBELL PROCTOR.

heart and brain." It is the lot of some men.

When religious reaction against the ironclad creeds of the orthodox churches began to set in in the early part of the century, there was a man to head the movement, Alexander Campbell, the founder of the Campbellite, or Christian church. But this is not the man referred to. It is Alexander Campbell Proctor, for thirty-nine years pastor of the Christian church at Independence, Mo., who has spent his life in spreading the religious principles which he adopted early in life.

"But not I more than many others," he would doubtless protest if he knew the purport of these phrases, yet the fact remains that Mr. Proctor to-day lives in the midst of a congregation that loves him and that in all states adjoining Missouri, Christian churches have sprung up since he first began the work of spreading the Campbellite religion. From Missouri, as a center, to which he returned, a college graduate from Bethany, W. Va., he made long horseback journeys into Iowa, Illinois, Kansas and Kentucky. In these places he preached the truth as conceived by Alexander Campbell, his tutor at college.

A Church of the West.

The Christian church, which is the outgrowth of the orthodox religious reaction, has flourished chiefly in the West. But its origin was in one of the Middle states, Ohio. The man to whom it owes its birth was Alexander Campbell. Those were days of strict adherence to creed; when dissent meant the branding of oneself as an infidel. Yet Alexander Campbell dared dissent from certain articles of the creed. Thus the need for the new church and the man to organize it arose together. Other men, for similar reasons, were treated as Alexander Campbell had been. To these he could talk and be understood and from discussions finally evolved the principles of the Christian church. The father of Alexander Campbell Proctor was one of a committee, in the early part of the century, of men who were set out of the Baptist church in Western Pennsylvania for daring to suggest that certain articles of faith be changed. This made him a ready sympathizer with Alexander Campbell. The latter fact doubtless had something to do with the naming of the son, and, to follow up the causal chain, resulted later in sending Alexander Campbell Proctor to Bethany college, West Virginia. The Proctor family had moved from Pennsylvania to Moberly, Mo., in 1826. Bethany college had been founded by Alexander Campbell. From it, in 1848, Alexander Campbell Proctor was graduated and began his work of home missionary.

For some time the young missionary was an itinerant preacher. Just before the war he came to Independence to take charge of the church of which he is still nominally pastor, although he has an assistant. The rebellion had already begun and political differences were rapidly destroying the religious peace of other churches. But the newness and lack of creed of the Campbellite church saved it from this disruption. Up to the time when Independence was evacuated in response to governmental mandate, only two church members stayed away on account of their political bias.

Church at Independence.

The little church at Independence had 200 members when Rev. Mr. Proctor came from St. Louis to take charge of it. With

REV. ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

a young minister's enthusiasm, he soon built it up to 275. But after the war, only sixteen members remained to effect a reorganization. This same little church today has some 750 members, as many, in Rev. Mr. Proctor's opinion, as a conscientious pastor wishes to care for.

As a method of church building, the spread of the Christian dogmas throughout Missouri is an interesting matter. At one time when Rev. Mr. Proctor had built his congregation up to something like 250, he took fifty or seventy-five members with him, went up the Blue and organized another church. These he left in charge of the new church and went back to Independence to build his congregation up again. After awhile he took another delegation and went to Blue Springs to organize another church. And later, when this decrease in the home church had been made good, another little church east of Independence took its beginning. This active missionary work probably accounts for the fact that next to Ohio, where the Campbellite movement was started, Missouri has the largest membership in Christian churches. Rev. Mr. Proctor came to Independence when the war feeling was at its height. But as he had made up his mind to shoot no man he never enlisted. He has many reminiscences of those early days, when pro and con slavery questions were matters of greatest importance.

Question of Religion and Patriotism.

"The officer who had charge of this section," said Rev. Mr. Proctor, "came to me one of those days when every one was expected to proclaim his political principles.

"'There are many traitors among you,' he said, meaning, of course, pro slavery men. 'Now what I want you to do is to have a flag made and hung up in the church. The flag of the Union must be honored.'

"I told him," said Rev. Mr. Proctor, in relating the story, "that I would make the flag if he ordered it. And, of course, he had the right to do so.

"'But,' I said, 'you will have to put it up. I can't do that.'

"The officer looked at me rather curiously. Then he said:

"'I believe that you're a Southern man, at heart.'

"'Of course I'm a Southern man,' I replied, 'but I'm not a secessionist.'

"'You're a quiet, shrewd man,' the officer answered, 'but I believe if I knew how you prayed I could tell your political policy.'

"Well," the minister replied, "as I was born in Kentucky, I can hardly help having some feeling for Southern people. I do not want to see them destroyed. At the same time I do not want to see two governments established in this country. You see then, if I were to pray my political principles I would pray that Jeff. Davis be prevented from breaking up the republic of the United States."

"By George!" exclaimed the officer, grasping my hand, "I'm that much of a Southern man myself." "My grandfather," said Rev. Proctor, "had slaves. When he died, my father, who settled the estate, set all the older slaves free. The younger ones whom he did not consider fit to care for themselves, he gave to his brothers and sisters. It is a mistake to think that the Southern people did not feel the responsibility of civilizing these slaves who had come to them as part of their inheritance. We can't send them to school. They would say, 'the law doesn't allow it.' But it was a common occurrence on plantations to gather the slaves together, read to them from the Bible, show them the ordinary right and wrong of everyday life and pray with them."

During the war Rev. Mr. Proctor continued his work of preaching and of ministering to the wants of the unfortunate. In this good work he made no distinction of color or class, politics or religious creed. His purpose was to do good to people. At the close of the war he was offered $5,000 to go to New York to preach, or he could have returned to St. Louis for $4,000. He was at that time getting $800 from his Independence church. But he refused both offers.

"I had had enough of city life," said Rev. Mr. Proctor, "to know it was not my particular line of work. I also knew the requirements of a clergyman in the city. His congregation expects him to hold a certain social position and takes this into account when it offers him his salary. The margin of $5,000 in the city over $800 in the country is not so great after all.

"Besides," continued Rev. Mr. Proctor, "my purpose has always been to reach people, and with the five or six trips which I made each year into different states I preached to more people during the year than I would have in the city."

If a comfortable country house be a pleasant place in which to think over the events of one's lifetime, then Rev. Mr. Proctor should be content. Such a place he has at Proctor, the first station this side of Independence.

RUSH TO BAYREUTH.

Many Visitors Will Be in Attendance Upon the Wagner Festival This Year.

Berlin Correspondence of New York Herald.

Bayreuth is now full of visitors for the annual Wagner festival. For a week past the railway station at Nuremburg has resembled a modern Babel. Visitors from all parts of the earth are scrambling on trains bound for Europe's musical Mecca. The

THE WAGNER THEATER AT BAYREUTH.

On Festival Afternoon, Showing the Crowd Thronging the Approach.

streets of Bayreuth, usually so sleepy, now echo with the ceaseless rattle of wheels of box laden hotel omnibuses and droschkes, while in the railway station long lines of gold lace hotel porters are drawn up, waiting for their prey in the shape of foreign visitors.

The prices of everything in Bayreuth have been gradually rising for a fortnight. A lunch without wine, which could have been had for a couple of marks, now costs four, and everything else in proportion. In fact, as a witty Berlin journalist observed, if the afterich had brought Rhine gold to Bayreuth, it would not have sufficed to pay the hotel bill.

In the festwoche this year the Niebelungen Ring is everywhere in evidence. The Holy Grail, in every form from a beer mug to a scarf pin, which was so popular twelve months ago, when "Parsifal" was given, is now nowhere to be seen. They have given way to cups, glasses, bowls and vessels of all kinds, bearing as inscriptions quotations of the words and music of the great Cyclus.

Wagner's head, too, is to be had in every shape from watch trinkets to salad bowls. Siegfried Wagner also is coming slowly to the front, and his bust and portrait can be seen in every shop.

Words With Changed Meanings.

From the Golden Penny.

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