

THE RECOLLECTIONS OF FATHER TIME

BEING SOME EXTRACTS FROM THE
HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED REMINIS-
CENCES OF JOHN W. CHRONOS ESQ.
EDITED BY
JOHN KENDRICK BANGS



"OH! SAID ADAM
WITH A DROLL
TWIST OF HIS
LIPS, 'SHE'S
TAKEN A
PRUNING KNIFE
AND GONE
SHOPPING'."

BECAUSE MY SON, GEORGIA PINE
IS SOFTER.

"THERE SHALL BE NO TRUNKS IN THE STATEROOMS," REPLIED THE ADMIRAL.

It will be asked by those
good enough to be inter-
ested in the following personal re-
collections of a most distinguished person-
age, the world's history precisely how
it came into my possession.
I had been told, for the opera to be re-
sumed, or for some other mysterious
cause I know not, but whatever the
reason the hours that hitherto had simply
flowed now appeared to drag and ultimately
to stand still, and during this latter
moment there rose up indistinctly before
me the figure of no less a person than
Father Time himself, armed as usual with
his scythe and hour-glass.

"I attempted one of the performances
at the Metropolitan Opera
house, and when Mr. Corried's capable
orchestra sounded the dinner hour at the
close of the opening session, rather than
brave the storm without, having provided
myself with a chicken, ham pie and a bot-
tle of ginger ale, I sat in the murky dark-
ness of the upper gallery and consumed
my meager repast in solitude.

The last vestige of the pastry washed
down by the ultimate drop of the ginger
ale, I settled back in my armchair to re-
flect upon what I had heard and seen and
to get my agitated mind refreshed once
more into a receptive condition for the
best appreciation of what was to follow.

Whether it was my impatience, now that
I had been fed, for the opera to be re-
sumed, or for some other mysterious
cause I know not, but whatever the
reason the hours that hitherto had simply
flowed now appeared to drag and ultimately
to stand still, and during this latter
moment there rose up indistinctly before
me the figure of no less a person than
Father Time himself, armed as usual with
his scythe and hour-glass.

"I thought I'd stop just a moment,"
said he, "to ask you if you didn't want to
do me a favor."
"Command me, sir," I replied. "If you
will only accelerate the next three quar-
ters of an hour so that I may again be
enchanted by the dulcet notes of Wagner,
I'll do anything you ask."

"It is a bargain," said he. "I'll make
the coming hour look like thirty seconds
if you will take this manuscript of mine
and have it published. I don't know
where I got it, but I have lately suffered
from a violent attack of the cacophonous
syndrome, and I am told that the only
cure for that is to see yourself in print."

"That depends," said I. "Sometimes
publication of one's stuff aggravates the
disorder instead of curing it."

"I'll take my chances," returned the old
gentleman, hurling a huge package of
closely written papers in my lap and dis-
appearing as mysteriously as he came.
True to his word the following hour
sped so fast that I had barely time to
pack the bundle away in my duffelbag
before the audience came knocking, and
the mysteries of the "praxial" motif
again began to unfold themselves from
below stairs.

In payment for this redemption of his
promise, I have been graciously over-
seen by Father Time's manuscript and taken real
pleasure in presenting therefrom the ex-
tracts which follow, trusting that they
will find in the reader's mind the same
response in appreciation that they re-
ceived from my own.—(Editor.)

Anecdote of Adam.

MY recollection of my first meeting
with Adam is a trifle hazy as to the
precise date of it. There have been so
many calendars in my experience that it
is sometimes difficult for me to fix
exact dates with that accuracy that I
should like always to observe. I do recall,
however, that it was in the forenoon of a
warm, sunny day, such as in those days
we might expect to find in the latter part
of June. Of course, being the first man
to appear in the universe, he was an ob-
ject of some curiosity to me, and I paused
somewhat in my march through the Gar-
den of Eden to see what manner of thing
this new creation was. He was sitting on
the bank of the river reading a copy of
the Eden Home Journal, and I observed
a look of great embarrassment on his
face as he perceived the etiquette
columns of that interesting periodical.
"Well, I'll be hanged!" he ejaculated
suddenly. "To think that I should make
a break like that the very first thing!"
"What seems to be the trouble?" I
asked.

"Why, it says here, 'Ladies first,'" said
he, "and I've butted in ahead of Eve so
many as four times."

Adam's Wit.

THOSE who are accustomed to think
of Adam as a very solemn individual,
devoting his life wholly to the business
of the hour without thought of anything
else, are much mistaken in the man.
Remember one afternoon coming upon him
sitting alone in the small reservation
that he had cleared for the occupancy of
Eve and himself.

It was some time after the unfortunate
incident of the apple, and Adam was
neatly clad in a fine new suit of Vir-
ginia creeper, which, I must confess, I
found vastly becoming. I congratulated
him upon his appearance, whereat he
seemed much pleased.

"I wish you'd say that to my wife, old
man," he observed. "I found this suit,
ready made, and I must say I don't see
anything the matter with it, but Eve
wants me to go and be fitted. She says a
ready made suit may do for business, but
for dress occasions a gentleman should
wear custom-made clothes."

"Certainly, I'll tell her," said I. "Very
glad to. But where is she?"

"Oh!" said Adam, with a droll twist of
his lips, "she's taken a pruning knife
and gone shopping."

A further evidence of Adam's wit lay in

his reply to his son Cain, who asked him
why he made the cozy corner out of
Georgia pine instead of oak.

"Because, my son," said this ever-
ready father, "Georgia pine is softer."

Concerning Eve.

TO SAY that Eve was the loveliest
woman of her time would be no special
praise. To speak of her, however,
as one of the most charming women of
any time would be no exaggeration. Con-
sidering the disadvantages of her extrac-
tion she struck me as being a really won-
derful person. She was a charming
hostess, a devoted wife and a good
mother. In her dress there never was any-
thing that in the slightest degree bor-
dered on ostentation, nor in her social
relations was there any of that scholas-
tic pose which many of her descendants
of the same sex have added to the ter-
rors of their nature.

I remember asking her once what she
thought of Mother-in-law.

"Oh, don't ask me," she replied, laugh-
ing merrily. "I'm more interested in
the matter of my own."

This summed up her whole attitude
toward prose and dramatic literature, and
as for poetry, when I asked her if she
was fond of poetry she replied that she
was fond of the "praxial" experience was
enough for her.

She was fond of domestic life, and
suggested to Adam that he build them a
house to live in, on the "they need one"
basis, and on New Year's day, when I
referred to the hardships
that were hers in having to do all the
cooking for the family, I was much im-
pressed by the happy philosophy of her
reply.

"I'm better off than you think," she said.

IN THE MATTER OF HIS NIBS

THERE were two James Disons—one
of eminent respectability in a small
city of the Empire State, and the
other "one of the boys" in the naughty
City of New York. These two gentlemen
possessed a metaphysical identity with
each other and alternate existence. When
James Dison of the little city went to
the metropolis to purchase goods, James
Dison, of the naughty city, received his
letters and answered them; in particular,
letters from Mrs. Dison of the little city,
in reply to which he insisted, very properly,
on his eagerness to return to the de-
lights of her society and added certain
instructions demonstrating that even dur-
ing his absence his thoughts were of the
moral welfare of that community. In re-
turn for these courtesies in the metropolis,
when James Dison of the small city re-
visited his accustomed office it was his
practice to sign and forward to the
naughty city certain checks in payment
of bills which his metaphysical double had
contracted.

One evening James Dison of the naughty
city found himself possessed of a roll of
"greenbacks" and of a handsome watch,
which bore a striking resemblance to a
gift officially and oratorically presented in
February, 18—, by the Chamber of Com-
merce and the Bankers' Association of the
other city to their "sentimental and univer-
sally honored and esteemed fellow-citizen,
James Dison." The roll of greenbacks
James Dison of the naughty city dimis-
shed from time to time in the course of
the evening with the manner and gesture
of never-mind-the-change. The watch he
consulted toward 8 o'clock in the morning
with an intellectual intensity and decided
that he had made a night of it and would
take a Turkish bath. When he had
emerged from the bath and had breakfast
he remembered that he had an appoint-
ment in Newark at the hour of 10 and
that the ideal way to go to that place is
to take the trolley, which he did.

Burke Ryan was a gentleman who took
his fun where he found it and to whom
the universe owed a living. In the inter-
vals of his pleasures he collected what the
universe owed him, and if he discovered
it for the most part in the pockets of
other people, so much the worse for the
other people. A man has a right to his
own.

At the time when James Dison was mak-
ing a night of it, Burke Ryan saw his
watchman, and purchased his watch, and
took stock of his roll of bills and his man-

ner and gesture of never-mind-the-change.

When Dison entered the bathhouse

Burke also entered it. He had not wanted

a Turkish bath, but he took one. What

he really wanted was to "touch" the little

sum which was coming to him and to go

to bed. When Dison lingered at break-

fast Burke also lingered at breakfast,

though with a growing impatience at the

prolix etiquette of modern times.

When Dison entered the trolley car

Burke also entered it and took a place

beside him, although he had no business

whatever in the city to which that gentle-

man was going. When Dison slept his

watch transferred itself to Burke's waist-

coat; when Dison woke he discovered in

his trousers pocket the two longest and

deftest fingers of Burke's right hand.

Burke was at once so obliging as to with-

draw his fingers and with them the rem-

nant of Dison's roll of bills.

Dison added Burke by the shoulder and

spoke his mind with vigor and idiom.

There were two women and 20 men in

the car. The two women expressed the

judgment of their sex upon the situation

inarticulately, each at the top of her

voice; the 20 men with one impulse lurched

toward Burke. Burke produced a remark-

ably handsome razor, to which he called

Dison's attention and the attention of ev-

ery one in the car. Everybody, Dison in

particular, evinced a sudden interest in

reaching the secret; they fell over them-

selves in their eagerness; the women for-

got even to scream, and one of them for-

got the way to the door and used the

window. The last to desert his place was

the motorman, whom Burke's approach

seemed to afflict with acute insanity. As

a preliminary to jumping off he turned on

the full current, and when the car bound-

ed forward at full speed he leaped. He

did not wait to hold by the handles and

steady himself before his feet touched the

ground; he just naturally got off and did

gymnastics. When he was picked up af-

terward he explained that he had been in

a hurry.

"Stop thief!" yelled the chorus in the

road.

"Go to hell!" grinned Burke.

"Find a telephone," said one of the

crowd, while another called on a man on

a bicycle to "catch that car" and explained

that there was a thief on it. When they

explained also the nature of the thief and

of his company the bicyclist guessed he

was tired and that they might catch the

car themselves. "If any of you gentle-

men wants the loan of my wheel, he can

have it," he said generously. "But for me

—today's Friday; it's always bad luck for

"with no cook in the house to hose me
around, and when I make biscuits old
Adam there can't twit me because they're
not as good as the ones his mother used
to make."

Note.—Father Time follows his attrac-
tive picture of life in Eden at this point
with some entertaining recollections of
Cain and Abel and their funny little ways,
but we have hardly space to reproduce
these, considering the greater importance
of his anecdotes of Noah and the little
story of Jonah, which follow.—Editor.

Anecdote of Noah.

ADMIRAL NOAH was very properly
known as the Sir Thomas Lytton
of his time. It is not generally understood
that he built half a dozen arks before he
finally got one that was laid on proper
lines for the purpose he had in view. His
luck attended most of his earlier ven-
tures, either at the moment of launching
or later in trial trips.

The third vessel constructed by his en-
ergy and enterprise was seemingly per-
fectly equipped, but owing to some mis-
calculation in ballast on her trial trip
with two elephants aboard she turned
turtle and was never started again.

The fifth venture was more fortunate in
the matter of balance, but the weight of

her cargo dragged her water line so deep

below the surface that the sea entered the

port holes and swamped her in 15

minutes from the time of her departure

from the pier. Through all these trials

the patriarch shipbuilder retained an un-

ruffled exterior, saying to all critics who

found fault with him: "Never mind; I'll

lift that menagerie yet."

I shall never forget Noah's firmness and

promptness of action at the hour of the

final sailing that has become historic.

There was much trouble adjusting the an-

imals to their quarters, and at the last

moment it was found that the ceiling of

their quarters was so low that the giraffes

were unable to stand up straight. Shem,

Ham and Japheth, the Patriarch's sons,

were full of noise and bustle, and, running

hither and yon like frightened chickens,

not knowing what to do; but the grand

old man, fertile as ever in resource, was

ready with an instant solution of the

difficulty.

"Change their quarters to the larboard

tailfin," said he, "where they can stick

their heads up through the wind vents."

The greatest difficulty was with the ele-

phants, however, both of which demanded

attention.

"Certainly," said Noah, calmly, "you

have them if you will abide by the

luggage rules."

"What are they?" demanded the refrac-

tory mastodons.

"That there shall be no trunks in the

staterooms," replied the Admiral.

There was no further trouble with the

psychedermis.

His reply to two mosquitoes who applied

for positions in the surgical department

shows his great diplomacy.

"Of course, we'll be glad to have you

along on our cruise, but you must promise

not to dun any of your creditors on

board."

"Which involves what?" asked one of

the applicants.

"That you will not present your bills

until we have disembarked," announced

Noah, significantly.

As to Jonah.

JONAH to me was always one of the

most interesting figures in history.

He was not at all a bad sort, and pos-

sessed a sort of rude humor that had his

luck better would have won him

many friends. I recall an incident at the

Nineveh Club shortly after the whale epi-

sode that is indicative of this.

"What did you do with yourself inside

the whale, Jonah?" I asked him.

"Oh, I read most of the time," said

Jonah.

"Read?" cried a number of the com-

pany. "Why, I thought it was dark in-

side there?"

"So it was at first," said Jonah, "but I

struck oil."

There was a good deal of laughter at

the speech in the Great Republic which it

needed a long initiation to interpret; and

James Dison was initiated. The chief had

the most exalted friendship for the Great

Person Mr. Dison had named. It was

the custom of that Great Personage from

time to time, when he suffered with the

speech, to speak his mind to the chief with

an unreserved heart made the chief's eyes

water with affection. When Mr. Dison

had withdrawn from the Front Office, the

chief made the telephone wires hum with

hurry-up calls to trusted lieutenants with

names suggesting that gifted race whose

people can govern everybody except them-

selves. When Mr. Dison returned with his

credentials, his reception reminded him

that Mr. Dison of the other place was not

the only man in the naughty city who is

blessed with a metaphysical double.

"Have already moved in that matter of

yours, Mr. Dison; an accident that might

happen to any gentleman."

"Even to an up-state son of a hayrick!"

said the facetious Dison.

"I will have your property delivered to

you at 8 o'clock in the morning at your

hotel," said the chief, "and meantime if

there are any little corners of the city

that you would like to look into, I shall

be glad to place a competent guide at your

disposal."