

FOLK THAT PASS ME ON MORRISON STREET BRIDGE.

Study of Portland Men, Women, Children and Freaks as They hurry across the Willamette

by Leone Cass Baer



WHY LEONE CASS BAER. WHY is it, when men and women are such curiosities, singly or in groups, cellmate or wise, should circus men at such expense and outlay of time and truth, stock up with the "greatest aggregation of living animals ever gathered under one tent"—when their fellow creatures would be an even richer exhibition?

But think as long as I can, and as industriously as my cogitation-tank will permit, no solution ever comes to the vexatious question, so I turn it over to some Elbertus Hubbard or Mary Complain-Philosopher, while I sit in my retreat on the bridge and watch the crowd go by.

Such a nice place it is in which to view my fellow-creatures, and see them under stress of hurry and hunger after work is over and the great mass of people, rich and poor, plebeian and



Percy and Mayme.

aristocrat, wend their way over the Morrison-street bridge.

I see you, John Henry, scurrying along like a scared rabbit, whispering to yourself; a roll of meat, oozing juicy through its wrapper, tucked under your arm. I just know you are late for dinner—you look like it—and I can almost hear you rehearsing your carefully composed excuses. Chances are there's company come to feed, and the soup and entrees (that's French Nina, and means peas and beans and spuds and macaroni, and good solid grub before the nicknacks are brought on), are all getting cold and clammy—with poor John Henry and his steak two miles away, walking home to save carfare.

Our old fourth readers contained maxims in plenty, and stories with plainly pointed out morals, for the guidance of those who tarry. Always the boy who loitered on his way home, just missed seeing his dear unknown millionaire uncle, who, having only an hour to stop, could wait no longer, and had set sail for his foreign home, while Willie played marbles in the dusty road. Always the girl who lingered long on the way home from school or an errand, found that dear Aunt Nellie had called during her protracted absence and being unable to wait for such a laggard, had taken sister Lizzie home with her for a long visit.

Dire and unforeseen things always happened to letterers in our fourth readers; they missed meals and pleasure trips, and in one very impressive story I remember that Artie's pa and ma galled for India from somewhere in the middle west, in answer to an urgent telegram—and poor Artie, lingering in the dusky, sweet-smelling roadway, was only vouchsafed a "wave of two handkerchiefs as his parents departed behind old Dobbin in a cloud of dust, and the carryall.

Today, John Henrys and Amanda Catherine beyond counting, leisurely wend their way homeward all un-mindful of the precepts and morals taught in the long ago.

Sometimes, however, retribution awaits the tardy one in the form of a dear Marie (with ideas of her own) absent cod-supper—or an irate hus-

band, with original thinks relative to no supper and a shopping wife.

And always there is a prolific female. Sometimes she just passes my retreat, sailing majestically along, like a ship in full sail, and to follow out the metaphor, bearing heavily along, with her progeny in tow. She is usually trundling a cart of the collapsible now-you-see-it, now-you-don't-see-it variety, wherein is crowded a raffia shopping-bag filled to overflowing, several bundles of assorted staves and color scheme, an umbrella, two bottles, a pillow and extra wraps and rubbers for the whole bunch. If the baby is over 16 months old, he usually toddles along ahead of the buggy, to the wondering horror of sundry unmarried daisies, who can't see what his mother is thinking of, and at the imminent risk of life and limb—his own and other pedestrians'. The other children, like all young lively animals, are now in front, now lagging far behind and anon crowding up like an infantry. When they walk ahead, their mother surveys them complacently and only raises her voice to tell them not to go "too fast, and to be careful of the baby." When they fall behind she walks backward, still busily pushing the buggy, while people scatter before it as before a holocaust, and calls for her offspring to get a move on 'em. Sometimes they favor me with a fleeting visit and eye me askance as their mother seats herself to nurse the baby. Always she searches wildly through the heterogeneous collection in the buggy and valise before she finds the bottle and restores it triumphantly. And if the baby is very young, his feed becomes a matter of personal supervision to us all, and we watch him tug and wrestle before he finally gets it poked into the front of his face. All the other children industriously shell peanuts and eat them with gusto.

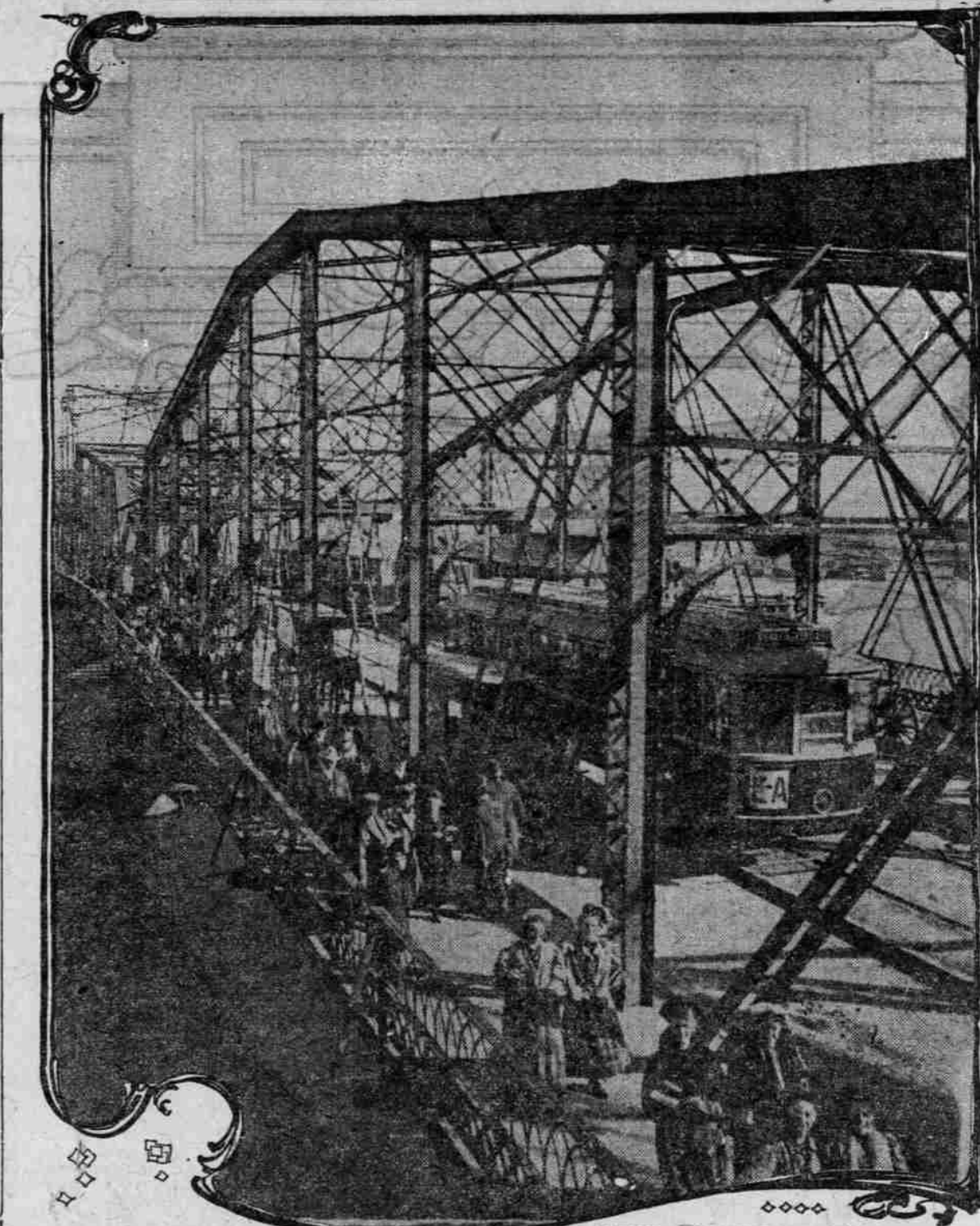
(No, George, gusto is not anything eatable; it is just a term that is over-worked whenever anybody else eats like a porker.)

Did you ever see a healthy, natural child eat peanuts and not scatter the shells all over everything in his immediate vicinity? All my bridge friends scatter their shells just so. Sometimes a banana is the motif. (You see that word only on the society page, but it works in well here, doesn't it?). When a banana or orange or apple is the center of interest, it is always peeled to nakedness and divided in exact portions among the owners. If there's a fractional difference between any two pieces, that fact is immediately made known in a rising crescendo. Susie's petticoat always sags in front and her mother's trails unappetizingly at the back, Frankie's hair and nose invariably need attention and every man, woman or child passing excites audible comments and grimaces from the small audience, while the maternal ancestor, with red, pudgy hands folded about her nursing, sniffing atom of babydom sits calmly accepting her conjugal destiny.

Always there is the girl in the extremely short skirt, whom nature has blessed with pretty feet and twigs (that's polite for limbs). She is always neat and natty and wears her clean shirtwaist (which she probably made and washed and ironed in her 2nd room and which looks as good as Madame Yucatan's at \$6 per shot), with the air of a really truly actress. She wears her dozen bracelets and kid gloves as one to the manner born.

Mrs. Millionplunks rides past in her own automobile and bestows 57 varieties of scornful and questioning looks on the short-skirted damsel. (Yes; it is bad form, Mabel, for some women to wear short skirts.) Mrs. Millionplunks talks and looks voluminous on the propriety of dress, but tonight she goes to a charity ball and will strip her heaving shoulders and puffed red arms, and with 17 yards of spangled lace (just home from the cleaners) about her feet and a priceless diamond tarsi and dog collar, she will dance till worn out for sweet charity's sake. Verily, verily charity, like debt, covers a multitude of sins.

Just prior to election time I grew to know the faces of the candidates quite well, 'epite of the charming and pleasing portraits in the papers. They always



SCENE ON MORRISON ST. BRIDGE

walked home with John Henry and Pete Miggins and the rest of the gang—laughing at every joke, fraternally hailing every man and assuming a near-brotherly love that was beautiful but suspicious. Now Pete and the rest of the gang walk home alone.

Ragged and unkempt imps of newsboys, with ventilator trousers, run indiscriminately between the legs of man and beast, howling and yelling high to heaven, their precocious wisdom concerning their, precocious development or social scandal. They dodge under carts, hike across the bridge, jump on and off moving vehicles and cars, always coming out safe and sound, thriving and prospering in spite of dirt and environment to turn up some day, chances are, as a real rich reporter on a big county paper—or else a millionaire retired advertising solicitor.

Here goes my Fluffy Ruffles damsel—(yes, George, there's another way to spell damsel)—with rainbow-tinted silk be-ruffled petticoats peeping from beneath the precise folds of a natty imported walking suit. She has 17 yards, more or less of green and mauve tulle wound around a five-acre Merry Grass-widow hat and draped a la portiere over the front of her head.

She certainly looks picturesque, with her wide kimono-like sleeves, her tight pumps and her hand-box manner. "This seasonal wave of folly," says I to myself, "must send its ripples farther than the rich alone." Directly, as if in reply, along ambled a barrel-shaped maiden with a tawdry, wrinkled, and palpably made from directions in the manual, "Every Woman Her Own Seamstress," cheap imitation of the Parisian creation. Wound about her sunburned cheeks were several yards of coarse, black velveting—the ends fluttering and flying in the breeze like a signal of distress. It was a splendid burlesque, but let me assure you, the last-mentioned lady was far from regarding it in such light.

Every day I see men who are as much walking advertisements of their tailor's latest concoctions and exaggerated fashions, as any foolish woman could be of her dressmaker's or milliner's newest fangled insanity. The most idiotic woman who ever trilled a long-tailed gown over a crossing or exhibited much length of limb in an abbreviated skirt, or hobbled along a pavement on French heels, knows full well that she can find a parallel for her silliness in the masculine side of the question. If green hats are the proper thing, or freckled stockings and neckties have just come in style, or a ruffled make-believe handkerchief like I saw in a showcase on Morrison (trembling me of another clever contrivance for the furthering of a fashionable gent's wardrobe, namely a circular flat disc, painted to represent shirt fronts, six or eight fronts of a "V" shape on each disc, the middle to be attached to the shirt and the vest

to fit neatly about the outlines of each painted bosom) if these, I say, are the thing, men, blind men, follow slavishly Fashion's behest. Lids, coats, trousers, are long-tailed or short, tight or loose, colored, striped, plaid or plain as Fashion decrees; and the pitiable part is that they unseemingly and unhesitatingly follow her dictates, no matter whether the wearer is short or tall, thin or fat; whether his outline is like an exclamation mark or a period; whether he is built like a tub or a Joe Gans; whether he is princely and physically perfect like a clerk, or just measly nobby-pamby dried-on-the-stem looking like a bank president or a coal baron.

Every day I see Percy, I feel sure his name is Percy or Cyril, and that he



Purely a Matter of Form.

wore earmuffs and curls at 8, and never forgot to wash his neck and wrists—as I say, I see him daily, as he crosses the bridge. He is big and near-athletic, with padded shoulders and immaculate clothes. He looks just as if he had stepped out of a swell haberdasher's window, a Christy magazine picture and an advertisement of the International Correspondence School rolled into one interesting whole. Once he walked home with his mother. I knew it was she because she called him son in the fondest terms; she's a plain, little mouse of a woman who obviously manufactures her hats and dresses. (They are always hats and dresses if they are home-made, other-

wise you refer to 'em as gowns and creations.)

The little woman trotting along beside her manly and awe-inspiring offspring, who seemed afraid some one would recognize him. Can't you just imagine how he felt, poor fellow? Of course it would have been dreadful if the peroxide trimmer or the gum-chewing cashier, his particular lady frens, had seen him. He would have been compelled to introduce that shabby little creature to them as his mother. Gracious! wouldn't that be awful? Now if only his mother could look like something, have some go and style, puff her hair and wear elbow sleeves—but somehow her skirts always have a queer hang and her hat looks so dinky and her ungloved hands are brown and wrinkled. Hang it all, anyway; next time he'll tell her he has some extra work to do, and she can go on alone. Hope none of the bunch gets a look at her.

He passes, most often, sandwiched in between his two stunning lady frangirls of the would-like-to-be-noticed brand, whose automobile stride and swagger remind me of nothing so much as the painful mechanical jerks and stilted movements of a tin man in a wind-up toy. Both of them are walking advertisements of straight-front corsets and Madame Liarres can't detect 'em upholstering. I catch wandering bits of conversation as what Mayme is going to wear at the next dance, what Lizzie's traveling man friend wrote her, and he tells them how awfully jealous all the other clerks and the proprietors are of himself. Not a day passes that I don't meet several priests, fat, serene, and with perfect good humored content writ large on their well-fed chops; even their bodies shake like a mold of jelly as they navigate along the straight and narrow way. (Yes, Lena, you are correct, that thoroughfare is the only one that is not crowded.)

I meet, too, several sisters, with their downcast eyes, and pale, pure faces shining cameo-like from out the sable duskiness of their hooded garb. Every fiber of my unfettered and unconventional femininity cries out against such unnatural seclusion for a woman. One of them, who most attracts me, I have named my Sister Mariquida; she has great Madonna-like eyes and her hands are poems of grace. She took some of her human feeling into the convent walls and is not the cold statue she looks. But no wonder they all look so calm and unpuffed and sweet. They never have to button their waists up the back, go hungry in order to attain or retain a semblance of slimmness, nor read the comic supplements.

I repeat it—no wonder they look serene.

Hundreds of shopping women pass me on the bridge, some scurrying rapidly

home with visions of a hungry, waiting family, some of them are smiling complacently, as if in memory of the many real bargains they got, while some still bear witness that the bargain rick is usually to the swift and athletic. (I firmly believe with you, Algernon, that the shopping mania will never be burned out of women, while there is a timber left of her. Were there nothing but horse blankets and sheep shears on sale at a bargain counter she would purchase them if she had to throw 'em away the next minute.)

Revy little fat loves of children, perched high on daddy's shoulder, peer down laughingly at me as we meet and pose on the bridge. Some of them have such bright red stockings and glossy lapdog curls. I want to notice them all—but they hurry by so rapidly, father in advance with his precocious burden held high in his arms, and mother jogging behind, all smiles and conscious pride as she contemplates the two beings, it is to be hoped, she loves best.

Processions of heavy carts, the drivers lashing and yelling at their nags, with loud croaks of whips, and audible cracking of chestnut jokes, as they slow up for the draw to open. Ever see a fat man or a lean attenuated female pedestrian run to make the draw before it opens? The sight is most interesting, but disillusioning.

The draw always opens when you are in a hurry to reach wherever you set out for. If you have all day to get there, or are going to the dentist, or to pay a bill, or to be married, the fiendish draw works like a charm, doesn't stay open, and your progress is unimpeded.

The frantic bewilderment of the fellow who is left on the draw as it turns, his evident hesitation in jumping the rapidly widening gap, now standing still, now leaping forward, now running forward in that agony of indecision which is the best and surest recipe for a batn in old Willamette is pitiful and amusing at the same time.

But commend me to the girls who walk home three abreast, arms entwined, keeping step, and talking so loud that all within a radius of a block may overhear, just as if they were not in a city, but back in their native heath at Salem.

And the woman who walks one way and looks in another direction. This is always diverting, especially if she



John Henry.

comes with her back towards you and has her orbs fixed on something way up the river or four blocks further up the street back of her.

Then there is the man or woman with the umbrella, who walks steadily ahead in the middle of the walk, sublimely unconscious of other umbrellas being lifted, lowered, tilted and torn to get out of his firm, onward march.

Every day I meet an individual in a sepulchral suit, shoes polished immaculately, with a high hat and a stand-alone-I-am-holler-than-thou air. He bestows keen, penetrating looks on everyone he meets—and if it is in-

tended to crush the sons of Bolla, sufficed. He does it.

Fear devils of the unemployed slouch past me on the bridge, some of them gazing moodily into the dark, treacherous waters awishing below us, others, hands in pockets, staring abstractedly into space.

Agnes goes by, gaily humming, walking with the doubtful grace of a Turk-



Lizzie's New Shoes Hurt Her Feet.

ish lady and causing heads to turn, to all of which she maintains a haughty demeanor and goes on her way like a "perfect lady," to meet Waldo on the corner.

Lillie goes past me, with the inevitable and worn-out buff of jokes—a peek-a-boo waist—with enough pink ribbon tied under its front to stock a small notion counter. Lillie always seems to be wearing new shoes, and her nice thick ankles pop over the tops of her yellow slippers. Us girls do have a awful time, but we must be stylish.

Corpse to Be Changed to Gold.

Chicago Dispatch to the New York Herald.

According to a secret process which Rinehard D. Fuchs, Ben Brostovitch, and John Hauth say they have invented, metal bodies may soon replace cremations and elaborate mausoleums. Those who have hitherto adorned their bondoirs with the burnt ashes of their departed loved ones will be able to substitute the entire bodies in gold and bronze staties. Others who have found comfort in blue ribboned canines and felines may likewise, after the death of their pets, find consolation in their life-size golden images.

All these things are the result of what they declare is a wonderful invention which has just been perfected by the three men mentioned, who until recently have been engaged in a musical publication house.

Mr. Fuchs said that within two weeks he would metallize a human body which would be placed on exhibition in a downtown store. By the secret process the body would be molded into a statue which in appearance would be of solid gold. The cost of the conversion will be about \$1000, including a preliminary embalming process.

Why Don't They Enlist?

(Ambitious young Americans will not go into the Army these days times at \$15 a month.—Army Officer.)

St. Louis Globe Democrat.

"What is the plumber makin' now?" said Piles-on-Parade.

"A dollar eighty-five an hour," the Color Sergeant said.

"What is the scale fr layin' brick?" said Piles-on-Parade.

"A cent a brick, a cent a brick," the Color Sergeant said.

"The carpenter is makin' seven thirty-five a day;"

"A plasterer can scarcely carry all he makes away;"

"A farmer gives a farm hand what he wants if he will stay."

An' they're laughin' at the soldier every pay day."

"What's that a-whizzin' down the street?" said Piles-on-Parade.

"A painter's car, a painter's car," the Color Sergeant said.

"What's that above so high so high?" said Piles-on-Parade.

"A moulder flyin' his balloon," the Color Sergeant said.

There is printers tourin' Europe, an' a-loadin' on their yachts;

There is boiler-makers' gambin' in expensive corner lots;

There's machinists with their motor-boats that's makin' 30 knots.

An' they're laughin' at the soldier every pay day."



THE WOMAN WITH THE DOG.



NEWSBOYS WITH VENTILATOR TROUSERS.