UP AGAINST BENTLEY

BY SEWELL FORD

BEING PROFESSOR SHORTY McCABE'S EXPERIENCE WITH A GENTLEMANLY CATTLE MAN FROM TEXAS

SAY, where's Palopinto, anyway? Well, neither did I. It's somewhere around Dallas, but that don't help me any. Texas, eh? You sure don't mean it! Why, I thought there wa'n't nothin' but one night stands down there. But this Palopinto ain't in that class at all. Not much! It's a real torrid proposition. No, I ain't been there; but I've been up against Bentley, who has.

He wa'n't mine, to begin with. I got him second hand. You see, he come along just as I was havin' a slack spell. Mr. Gordon—yes, Pyramid Gordon—he calls up on the phone and says he's in a hole. Seems he's got a nephew that's comin' on from somewhere out West to take a look at New York, and needs some one to keep him from fallin' off Brooklyn Bridge.

"How's he travelin'," says I; "tagged, in care of the conductor?"

"Oh, no," says Mr. Gordon. "He's about 22, and able to take care of himself anywhere except in a city like this." Then he wants to know how I'm fixed for time.

"I got all there is on the clock," says I.

"And would you be willing to try keeping Bentley out of mischief until I get back?" says he.

"Sure as ever," says I. "I don't s'pose he's any holy terror; is he?"

Pyramid said he wa'n't quite so bad as that. He told me that Bentley'd been brought up on a big cattle ranch out there, and that now he was boss.

"He's been making a lot of money recently, too," says Mr. Gordon, "and he insists on a visit East. Probably he will want to let New York know that he has arrived, and soon, but you hold him down."

"Oh, I'll keep him from liftin' the lid, all right," says I.

"That's the idea, Shorty," says he. "I'll write a note telling him all about you, and giving him a few suggestions."

I had a synopsis of Bentley's time card, so as soon's he'd had a chance to open up his trunk and wash off some of the car dust I was waitin' at the desk in the Waldorf.

Now of course, bein' warned ahead, and hearin' about this cattle ranch business, I was lookin' for a husky boy in a six-inch soft brim and leather pants. I'd calculated on havin' to persuade him to take off his spurs and leave his guns with the clerk.

But what steps out of the elevator and answers to the name of Bentley is a Willie boy that might have blown in from Asbury Park or Far Rockaway. He was draped in a black and white checked suit that you could broil a steak on, with the trousers turned up so's to show the open-work silk socks, and the coat creased up the sides like it was made over a cracker box. His shirt was a McGregor plaid, and the band around his Panama was a hand width Roman stripe.

"Gee!" thinks I, "if that's the way cowboys dress nowadays, no wonder there's scandals in the beef business!"

But if you could forget his clothes long enough to size up what was in 'em, you could see that Bentley was a mild enough looker. There's lots of bank messengers and brokers' clerks just like him comin' over from Brooklyn and Jersey every mornin'. He was about five feet eight, and skimpy built, and he had one of those recedin' faces, that looked like it was tryin' to get away from his nose.

But then, it ain't always the handsome

boys that behaves the best, and the more I got acquainted with Bentley, the better I thought of him. He said he was mighty glad I showed up instead of Mr. Gordon.

"Uncle Henry makes me weary," says he. "I've just been reading a letter from him, four pages, and most of it was telling me what not to do. And this the first time I was ever in New York since I've been old enough to remember!"

"You'd kind of planned to see things, eh?" says I.

"Why, yes," says Bentley. "There isn't much excitement out on the ranch, you know. Of course, we ride into Palopinto once or twice a month, and sometimes take a run up to Dallas; but that's not like getting to New York."

"No," says I. "I guess you're able to tell the difference between this burg and them places you mention without lookin' twice. What is Dallas, a water tank stop?"

"It's a little bigger'n that," says he, kind of smilin'.

But he was a nice, quiet actin' youth; didn't talk loud, nor go through any tough motions. I see right off that I'd been handed the wrong set of specifications, and I didn't lose any time framin' him up accordin' to new lines. I knew his kind like a book. You could turn him loose in New York for a week, and the most desperate thing he'd find to do would be smokin' cigarettes on the back seat of the rubberneck wagon. And yet he'd come all the way from the jumpin' off place to have a little innocent fun.

"Uncle Henry wrote me," says he, "that while I'm here I'd better take in the Metropolitan Museum of Arts, and visit St. Patrick's Cathedral and Grant's Tomb. But say, I'd like something a little livelier than that, you know."

He was so mild about it that I works up enough sympathy to last an S. P. C. A. president a year. I could see what he was achin' for. It wa'n't a sight at oil paintin's or churches. He wanted to be able to go back among the flannel shirts and tell the boys tales that would make their eyes stick out. He was ambitious to go on a regular cut up, but didn't know how, and wouldn't have had the nerve to tackle it alone if he had known.

Now, I ain't ever done any red light pilotin', and didn't have any notion of beginnin' then, especially with a youngster as nice and green as Bentley; but right there and then I did make up my mind that I'd steer him up against somethin' more excitin' than a front view of Grace Church at noon. It was comin' to him.

"See here, Bentley," says I, "I've passed my word to kind of look after you, and keep you from rippin' things up the back here in little old New York; but seein' as this is your first whack at it, if you'll promise to stop when I say 'Whoa!' and not let on about it afterwards to your Uncle Henry, I'll just show you a few things that they don't have out West," and I winks real mysterious.

"Oh, will you?" says Bentley. "By ginger! I'm your man!"

So we starts out lookin' for the menagerie. It was all I could do, though, to keep my eyes off'n that trousseau of his.

"They don't build clothes like them in Palopinto, do they?" says I.

"Oh, no," says Bentley. "I stopped off in Chicago and got this outfit. I told them I didn't care what it cost, but I wanted the latest."

"I guess you got it," says I. "That's what I'd call a night edition, baseball extra. You mustn't mind folks giraffin' at you. They always do that to strangers."

Bentley didn't mind. Fact is, there wa'n't much that did seem to faze him a whole lot. He'd never rode in the subway before, of course, but he went to readin' the soap ads just as natural as if he lived in Harlem. I expect that was what egged me on to try and get a rise out of him. You see, when they come in from the rutabaga fields and the wheat orchards, we want 'em to open their mouths and gawp. If they do, we give 'em the laugh, but if they don't we feel like they was throwin' down the place. So I lays out to astonish Bentley.

First I steers him across Mulberry Bend and into a Pell-street chop suey joint that wouldn't be runnin' at all if it wa'n't for the Sagadahoc and Elmira folks the two-dollar tourin' cars bring down. With all the Chinks gabblin' around outside, though, and the funny letterin' on the bill of fare, I thought that would stun him some. He just looked around casual, though, and laid into his suey and rice like it was a plate of ham and, not even askin' if he couldn't buy a pair of chopsticks as a souvenir.

"There's a bunch of desperate characters," says I, pointin' to a table where a gang of Park Row compositors were blowin' themselves to a platter of chowghi-sumen.

"Yes?" says he.

"There's Chuck Connors, and Mock Duck, and Bill the Brute, and One Eyed Mike!" I whispers.

"I'm glad I saw them," says Bentley.

"We'll take a sneak before the murderin' begins," says I. "Maybe you'll read about how many was killed, in the mornin' papers."

"I'll look for it," says he.

Say, it was discouragin'. We takes the L up to 23d and goes across and up the east side of Madison square.

"There," says I, pointin' out the Manhattan Club, that's about as lively as the Subtreasury on a Sunday, "that's Canfield's place. We'd go in and see 'em buck the tiger, only I got a tip that Bingham's goin' to pull it tonight. That youngster in the straw hat just goin' in is Reggie."

"Well, well!" says Bentley.

Oh, I sure did show Bentley a lot of sights that evenin', includin' a wild tour through the Tenderloin—in a Broadway car. We winds up at a roof garden, and, just to give Bentley an extra shiver, I asks the waiter if we wa'n't sittin' somewhere near the table that Harry and Evelyn had the night he was overcome by emotional insanity.

"You're at the very one, sir," he says. Considerin' we was ten blocks away, he was a knowin' waiter.

"This identical table; hear that, Bentley?" says I.

"You don't say!" says he.

"Let's have a bracer," says I. "Ever drink a soda cocktail, Bentley?"

He said he hadn't.

"Then bring us two, real stiff ones," says I. You know how they're made—a dash of bitters, a spoonful of bicarbonate, and a bottle of club soda, all stirred up in a tall glass, almost as intoxicatin' as buttermilk.

"Don't make your head dizzy, does it?" says I.

"A little," says Bentley; "but then, I'm not used to mixed drinks. We take root beer generally, when we're out on a tear.

"You cowboys must be a fierce lot when you're loose," says I.

Bentley grinned, kind of reminiscent. "We do raise the Old Harry once in a while," says he. "The last time we went up to Dallas I drank three different kinds of soda water, and we guyed a lamals peddler so that a policeman had to speak to us."

Say! what do you think of that? Wouldn't that freeze your blood?

Once I got him started, Bentley told me a lot about life on the ranch; how they had to milk and curry down 4000 steers every night; and about playin' checkers at the Y. M. C. A. branch evenin's, and throwin' spit balls at each other durin' mornin' prayers. I'd always thought these stage cowboys was all a pipe dream, but I never got next to the real thing before.

It was mighty interestin', the way he told it, too. They get prizes for bein' polite to each other durin' work hours, and medals for speakin' gentle to the cows. Bentley said he had four of them medals, but he hadn't worn 'em East for fear folks would think he was proud. That gave me a line on where he got his quiet ways from. It was the trainin' he got on the ranch. He said it was grand, too, when a crowd of the boys came ridin' home from town, sometimes as late as 4 o'clock at night, to hear 'em singin' "Onward, Christian Soldiers" and tunes like that.

"I expect you do have a few real tough citizens out that way, though," says I.

"Yes," he said, speakin' sad and regretful, "once in awhile. There was one came up from Los Vegas last Spring, a low fellow that they called Santa Fe Bill. He tried to start a penny ante game, but we discouraged him."

"Run him off the reservation, eh?" says I.

"No," says Bentley, "we made him give up his ticket to our annual Sunday

"WHEN I'D LEFT HIM HE'D GONE TO BED."

school picnic. He was never the same after that."

Well, say, I had it on the card to blow Bentley to a Welsh rabbit after the show, at some place where he could get a squint at a bunch of our night bloomin' Summer girls, but I changed the programme. I took him away durin' intermission, in time to dodge the new dancer that Broadway was tryin' hard to be shocked by, and after we'd had a plate of ice cream in one of them celluloid papered all-nights, I led Bentley back to the hotel and tipped a bell hop a quarter to tuck him in bed.

Somehow, I didn't fell just right about the way I'd been stringin' Bentley. I hadn't started out to do it, either; but he took things in so easy, and was so willin' to stand for anything, that I couldn't keep from it. And it did seem a shame that he must go back without any tall yarns to spring. Honest, I was so twisted up in my mind, thinkin' about Bentley, that I couldn't go to sleep, so I sat out on the front steps of the boardin' house for a couple of hours, chewin' it all over. I was just thinkin' of telephonin' to the hotel chaplain to call on Bentley in the mornin', when me friend Barney, the rounds, comes along.

"Say, Shorty," says he, "didn't I see you driftin' around town earlier in the evenin' with a young sport in mornin' glory clothes?"

"He was no sport," says I. "That was Bentley. He's a Y. M. C. A. lad in disguise."

"It's a grand disguise," says Barney. "Your quiet friend is sure livin' up to them clothes."

"You're kiddin'," says I. "It would take a live one to do credit to that harness. When I left Bentley at half-past ten he was in the elevator on his way up to bed."

"I don't want to meet any that's more alive than your Bentley," says he. "There must have been a hole in the roof. Anyway, he shows up on my beat about 11, picks out a swell cafe, butts into a party of soubrettes, flashes a thousand dollar bill, and begins to buy wine for everyone in sight. Inside of half an hour he has one of his new-made lady friends doin' a high kickin' act on the table, and when the manager interferes Bentley licks two waiters, to a standstill and does up the house detective with a chair. Why, I has to get two of my men to help me gather him in. You can find him restin' around to the station-house now."

"Barney," says I, "you must be gettin' color blind. That can't be Bentley."

"You go around and take a look at him," says he.

Well, just to satisfy Barney, I did. And say, it was Bentley, all right! He was some mussed, but calm and contented.

"Bentley," says I, reprovin' like, "you're a bird, you are! How did it happen? Did some one drug you?"

"Guess that ice cream must have gone to my head," says he, grinnin'.

"Come off!" says I. "I've had a report on you, and from what you've got aboard you ought to be as full as a goat."

"He wa'n't, though. He was as sober as me, and that after absorbin' a quart or so of French foam.

"If I can fix it so's to get you out on bail," says I, "will you quit this red paint business and be good?"

"G'wan!" says he. "I'd rather stay here than go around with you any more. You put me asleep, you do, and I can get all the sleep I want without a guide. Chase yourself!"

I was some sore on Bentley by that time; but I went to court the next mornin', when he paid his fine and was turned adrift. I starts in with some good advice, but Bentley shut me off quick.

"Cut it out!" says he. "New York may seem like a hot place to Rubes like you; but you can take it from me that, for a pure joy producer, Palopinto has got it burned to a blister. Why, there's more doing on some of our back streets than you can show up on the whole length of Broadway. No more for me! I'm goin' back where I can spend my money and have my fun without bein' stopped and asked to settle before I've hardly got started.

He was dead in earnest, too. He'd got on a train headed West before I comes out of my dream. Then I begins to see a light. It was a good deal of a shock to me when it did come, but I has to own up that Bentley was a ringer. All that talk about mornin' prayers and Sunday school picnics was just dope, and while I was so busy dealin' out josh to him, he was handin' me the lemon.

My mouth was still puckered and my teeth on edge, when Mr. Gordon gets me on the phone and wants to know how about Bentley.

"He's come and gone," says I.

"So soon?" says he. "I hope New York wasn't too much for him."

"Not at all," says I; "he was too much for New York. But while you was givin' him instructions, why didn't you tell him to make a noise like a hornet. It might have saved me from bein' stung."

Texas, eh? Well, say, next time I sees a map of that state I'm goin' to hunt up Palopinto and draw a ring around it with purple ink.

AMERICA'S TEN GREAT PAINTERS

A Truly American School of Art Shown at the Philadelphia Picture Exhibition.

THE exhibition of paintings by Ten American Painters in the galleries of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts may be set down as the best exhibition of American paintings ever held. This is my sufficient excuse for referring to it so late in the day. It is a thousand pities that this exhibition cannot be transferred en bloc to Boston. An effort was made by some of the artist-members of the Boston Art Club to arrange for the transfer of the collection to the Art Club galleries, but it came too late, and dates could not conveniently be arranged. Report has it that there has been some talk of an invasion of London by the Ten. Such an exhibition as that in the Pennsylvania Academy would certainly make London sit up and take notice, if good painting has not been too long obsolete there. For it must be distinctly understood that I am not boasting about American art when I say that it would not be possible to get together in any other country such a collection of 34 paintings by contemporary artists.

It is now exactly ten years since the Ten seceded from the Society of American Artists and flocked by themselves. Their decennial is marked by this white stone—an exhibition in which each one of the ten was asked to exhibit ten works, and the effort has been to present those works by which the men would most care to be represented. And, as Mr. Trask truly remarks in his introduction to the catalogue, this collection gives fuller opportunity for a study of their aims and accomplishments than it has been possible to make within the confines of a single gallery. The installation of the collection, too, is an object lesson in the artistic arrangement of pictures; every work is on the line, and every work has free space about it. There is no attempt to group the canvases by individuals. The collection is hung with a single eye to the best general effect. The three galleries fairly "sing" in perfect unison.

Many have been the aspirations for an American school of painting. We have always been looking forward to the time when we could say with truth that our painters were different from the painters of this, that and the other school on the farther side of the ocean. The Ten are not going to satisfy this yearning so far as subject-matter goes; they are not preoccupied by National sentiment; they are not concerned for the illustration of American life as such. But in one way, a very important way—perhaps the most important way—they have struck out a path of their own, which, since they are Americans, must be regarded as an American accomplishment, whether they have ever thought of it as such or not. I refer to the purely technical perfection of their work, a perfection which is seen at its highest degree of development in the pictures of the Bostonians, Tarbell, Benson and DeCamp.

These men have passed through a period of subjection to the influence of the French impressionist school of painting, have drawn what nourishment there was in it for them, and have emerged from it, fortified, but freed from its mannerisms. They are as modern as artists can be who are cognizant of the traditions of great art. One sees, for example, in Mr. Tarbell's interiors with figures, that he is necessarily an admirer of the work of the little masters of the stripe of Vermeer of Delft and Pieter de Hoog and Gabriel Metsu; we could not help seeing that in his "Girl Crocheting," belonging to Mr. Pratt, but, as he goes on, we see it less distinctly in his subsequent pictures in this class, such as the "New England Interior" (77), belonging to Miss Catherine Codman, the "Girl Cutting Patterns," (painted this year), and the recent "Preparing for the Matinee" (75), belonging to the St. Louis Museum of Art. That is to say, he is not losing ground, but gaining in freedom of expression and originality of style; and the "Preparing for the Matinee" marks a distinct advance in his command of his art, his individuality, and his distinction.

It is Mr. Tarbell's present and constant merit that he is absorbed in the beauty of his metier to the exclusion of all other considerations. He is not a philosopher, like G. F. Watts; he is not a symbolist, like Gustave Moreau; he is not a sentimentalist, like Jules Breton; and, while he is not without a modicum of the illustrator's interest in the human element, he is in a very limited sense an illustrator, like Meissonier. In his devotion to actuality he is more nearly related to Degas on the one hand and to the Little Masters on the other. But his style, which is increasingly independent, tends to grow away from all his forerunners without losing its pungency or delicacy. His types are American. The girl in his "Preparing for the Matinee" is intensely American in her grace, her fragility, her aplomb, qualities which combine to form a new order of personal attractiveness.

We have had some pretty fair painters in America, but I seriously doubt if any of them have ever exhibited a group of ten paintings equal to the ten works here shown by Mr. Tarbell—"Preparing for the Matinee," "Girl Cutting Patterns," "New England Interior," "Bos'n's Hill," "Edward Robinson," "Rehearsal in the Studio," "Summer Idyl," "Dr. Henry Lee Morse," "Girls Reading" and "Mrs. A."

Mr. Benson chose for his ten works a group which represents all the sweetness and charm of his sunlit Summer visions. As one entered the first room in the suite of galleries, his "Eleanor" (4), a lovely girl in pale rose pink muslin, contrasted with a white picket fence, green foliage, and a glimpse of distant blue water, greeted the eyes with a smiling and sunny cheer of color which was like a bird's song in a Spring morning, a thing so full of joy and spontaneity that it made the day happy. There were also his indescribably delicate and luminous pictures of his daughters in their light Summer gowns, "The Sisters" and "Three Sisters," with "The Rainy Day," "The Sunny Room," etc. Most of these paintings have been seen in Boston, but it is a revelation of what a painter is, of what he is doing, of what he stands for, to see so many of his choicest canvases brought together. Mr. Benson does not always strike 12, but when he is most himself, when he is in the vein, there is no one to excel him in freshness, purity, sweetness, freedom, and the joy of living.

The reader scarcely needs to be reminded how finely Mr. DeCamp has forged to the front in his recent works. "The Guitar-Player" (29) was the chief pictorial success of the season in Boston, and has been bought by the Museum of Fine Arts. His "The 'Cellist" (22), "The Brown Veil" (21), and "Sally" (23), with six other canvases, go to form a group which places him well to the fore among the most accomplished artists of the period. "The Pink Feather," as the alternative title for "The Brown Veil" runs, is one of those happy hits which are landmarks in an artist's career. In it the observer finds a new and irresistible version of the Eternal Feminine, set forth with flawless perfection.

To see Thomas W. Dewing at his best it is necessary to know his "Portrait of a Lady at a Harpsichord" (67) from the Freer collection. The rarity of his art, its fascinating preciosity, in this example finds its apogee. Of mannerism there is no trace, of striving for effect no sign; it is the ultimate expression of the artist's ideal. "The Mirror," "Mandolin," "Fortune-Teller," and "Monterey," with three other works, five of the eight being loaned, make up an incomparable group of Mr. Dewing's cabinet-size paintings of the modern woman as she has revealed herself to this exceptional painter.

The group of nine landscapes by Willard L. Metcalf contains nothing that is not entirely worthy to uphold the high standard of American accomplishment in this field of painting. "The Young Spring" (56) is all that its title implies of tender and ethereal promise, in the vernal freshness and elusive delicacy of the budding leafage and the glowing suggestion of reviving warmth and beauty. The "May Pastoral" (54) is another exquisite page of nature's volume, touched in with a truly poetic pithiness and felicity. As in Mr. Benson's work, there is a prevailing sense of joyness and even exultant vitality in Mr. Metcalf's outdoor subjects. Without being in the slightest measure crude or blatant in color, his landscapes are intensely brilliant and luminous.

William M. Chase is represented by nine of his pictures, which are well selected to show his scope and talent. The portrait of Mrs. Chase (11) and the portrait of Dieudonnee (15), both of which are well illustrated in the catalogue, are favorable specimens of his work in this field. His picture called "Ring Toss" (13) is one of his best descriptions of child life. He also shows one of his much-admired still-life pieces, a strong bit of virtuosity.

Robert Reid's contributions include several of the best of his highly personal creations which were in the recent exhibition of his work at the St. Botolph Club, among them "The Butterfly" (59), "Pond Lilies" (60), and two or three of the landscapes painted at Medfield. The originality of the color schemes and the gracefulness of the designs in these canvases are pronounced merits.

In the group of ten paintings by J. Alden Weir there is a novel landscape called "The Red Bridge" (85), which is characteristic of his inventive mind, and has a distinctly piquant pattern. From a low bank the observer is looking up to the vermilion bridge which occupies the very top of the canvas, one end of it disappearing in the right-hand upper corner of the design. Everything that Mr. Weir signs is in some fashion or other decidedly artistic. "The Grey Bodice" (81) and "The Black Hat" (87) fall into this category, and are remembered with a sense of pleasure.

Mr. Simmons pleases his public by sending two of his early figure compositions, "Darby and Joan" (67) and "Mother and Child" (68), which remind us that he started in as a painter of humble life, somewhat in the vein of Cottet, and was very successful in that genre. His later works are marines for the most part.

Mr. Hassam exhibits his full quota of ten pictures. His mannerisms are most obvious in the nude subjects, which hardly respond to the ideal of what this class of paintings should be, either in conception or execution. On the other hand, his landscapes are in several cases extremely original and charming, as for instance, the "Washington Bridge" (42) in Winter.

It is worth recording that of the Ten painters in this group seven were born in Massachusetts. Dewing and Hassam are natives of Boston; Benson was born in Salem; Tarbell in Groton; Simmons in Concord; Reid in Stockbridge, and Metcalf in Lowell. DeCamp is a native of Ohio, Chase of Indiana, and Weir of New York state.—Philadelphia letter in the Boston Transcript.

Date of Birth of Christ.

The exact date of the birth of Christ is unknown. Among the early churches there was no agreement as to the date of the nativity, some celebrating it in April or May, others in January. December 25 can hardly be exact, for it falls in the rainy season of Judea, when shepherds would not have been watching their flocks by night in the open. The December date came into general observance naturally, but gradually. When the heathen races of the North were Christianized they simply substituted for their Yule celebration, in December, the observance of the birth of Christ.

School Children's Petition.

A remarkable petition has just been sent to Washington, to the forest service, from nearly 1400 schoolchildren in Northern California, asking for the establishment of a redwood National park. This petition, which is from the children of the schools of Eureka, Humboldt County, Cal., is unlike any other which has ever been sent to a Government department to ask for the preservation of forests.

The Artificial Hybrid.

Town Topics.

She had bought a little bonnet with a
pretty bird upon it
And she perched it on her forehead one
fine day,
When, to her unfeigned surprise, that gay
Birdie winked his eye
And proceeded unconcernedly to say:

"I perceive, my dear, that you have been
looking at me, too,
And no doubt you also think me rather
fine,
But I really wish to know if I'm just the
way I grew,
And if all these wings and tails are really
mine.

"Now, to my untutored brain it is very,
very plain
That I'm wearing Bluejay feathers on
my right,
While upon my other wing something yellow seems to cling,
Which is very Oriole-ish in the light.

"I've an Owl-ish sort of head, but my collar tuft is red,
And there's something strangely Hawk-ish in my eyes;
Then my tail is wondrous queer—at a glance
it would appear
That 'twas taken from a Bird of Paradise.

"I am somewhat grieved to say I'm constructed in a way,
That reflects upon my pedigree, at least,
And I beg you'll not demur when I add, a
nest of fur
Makes me feel—well, quite a little like
a beast.

"Now, I've often heard it said we must
evolute when dead—
This may be an incarnation, so to speak;
"But"—and here the Birdie sighed—"I'm
sorry that I died,
For I'd rather be a Sparrow than a
Freak!"

HAS PROHIBITION COME TO STAY

A Workingman Points Out the Social and Political Aspects of a Live Question.

BY JOHN A. GOLDRAINER.

TAKING in consideration that the question of prohibition is the foremost topic of discussion by the press and pulpit, also its tremendous gains in this country, the question naturally arises, Has prohibition come to stay? In analyzing previous movements and the present one, can we find an answer?

All movements have been of a religious and political nature remarkable for their great scope, as also for their failure. In April, 1808, a society of 40 members was formed at Moreau, Saratoga County, New York. Their constitution stated: No member should drink rum, gin, whisky, wine or distilled spirits, except by advice of a physician or in case of actual disease (also excepting public dinners), under penalty of 25 cents, providing also for no infringement of religious rites. This society existed 14 years, and accomplished but very little.

The American Temperance Society was formed in Boston in February, 1826; the New York society in 1829, and a year later had 100,000 members. Before the Civil War numerous societies were founded for the purpose of creating sentiment in favor of prohibition, also providing beneficiary features and means for self-culture.

The Sons of Temperance, founded in 1842, grew rapidly in membership and influence. The Independent Order of Good Templars was founded in New York in 1851, it spread over the whole world.

Prominent among other movements were: The women's crusade and the organization of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1874; the Father Mathew Crusade in 1838, in Ireland, where in two years 1,800,000 members took pledges; Bands of Hope, an organization for childen, in 1847; John B. Gough Mission in 1858; the Good Templars, 1868; Blue Ribbon Army in 1878, and numerous other societies.

The Methodist church from the days of the Wesleys advocated total abstinence. The Friends and Dunkards were opposed to the use of liquors since the 19th century; also the Baptist, Congregational and the Presbyterian churches.

In the political field, Connecticut was the first to adopt local option. The National Prohibition party was organized in 1869 in a National convention held in Chicago. On February 22, 1872, the first National convention was held at Columbus, O. James Black, of Pennsylvania, and John Russell, of Michigan, were nominated as their candiates for President and Vice-President. Besides declaring for prohibition they indorsed woman suffrage, and advocated the encouragement of immigration. Only 5607 votes were cast for their candidates in the ensuing election. In 1876 the vote cast was 9787, in 1880 9678. In 1884 their platform declared solely for prohibition, ignoring all other issues. Governor O. St. John was their candidate and received 150,626 votes. In 1892 the party cast 270,710 votes, the largest ever cast. In 1896 the party split in two factions, one favoring a single issue of prohibition, the other, the liberal party, favoring a broad-gauge platform. Bentley received 14,000 votes. The regular candidate, Levering, receiving 131,757 votes. In 1900 John G. Woolley defeated D. S. C. Swallow, the candidate for the broad-gauge faction, he receiving 207,308 votes.

Considering the great scope of the movements, how can we account for their failures? Through their lack of reasoning from cause to effect. Liquor they hold to be accountable for all evils and through statistics, they tried to prove the connection between liquor and crime. Not every criminal who is at the same time a drunkard, has been driven to crime by intemperance. Quite often a man possessing criminal tendencies is at the same time afflicted with a craving for liquor. Degenerates are inclined to become both drunkards and criminals, and even normal, healthy men are driven to intemperance and crime by social conditions surrounding them.

Intemperance is merely the effect of a previous cause, which lies in our economic and social conditions. The great pioneer in the science of physiology, Justus von Liebig, wrote: "The whiskey habit is not the cause of poverty, but its result. Total abstainers lay stress on the power of self-education and the effectiveness of exhortations and good examples. The case of Father Mathew is quoted. It is claimed that through his exhortations the consumption of liquor in Ireland decreased and that during the three years 1838-1842 the number of crimes was reduced from 12,096 to 773. The cause of this improvement was an economic one, and not ethical. Ireland had at that time suffered from a failure of the potato crop and the starving peasants stole potatoes from their landlords. When the British government came to the rescue and the terrible want gradually diminished so also did drunkenness and crime."

But the effect was not a permanent one, which even the total abstainers must admit. New wants called forth new drunkenness and crime. These movements being of an ethical nature, and ignoring economic and social conditions is the cause of their failure.

Will the present prohibition movement benefit society? Remarkable it is, that it should occur at a time when intemperance is at a decline. The corporations have made the struggle of the small capitalist more severe, therefore sobriety is necessary for his existence. The unemployed, as a result of corporations and labor-saving machinery, have intensified the struggle for jobs, also the fraternal and sick benefit orders, together with higher standard of living and leisure time as a result of organized labor, have decreased intemperance among the working class. As the labor movement is becoming more solidified, the class struggle will bring sobriety, as it is most necessary as a cohesive force. Intemperance among the working class prevails where there is no organization and a low standard of living.

While the organization—the active force of this movement—is called the Anti-Saloon League, its object is to bring about prohibition. The support it receives comes from the landlord in the residence district, whose property depreciates through the saloon. As the saloon is driven into the business district, competition with the business man for location gives the movement his support. As to the general public, while they notice all crime and graft on the increase and most blame some one so they blame the saloon. There is no doubt that there is an evil connected with the majority of saloons and that they corrupt the body politic.

That is the fault of the public and not the saloon. In the municipality is the greatest democracy, therefore if there is political corruption it is with the consent of the people, as they elect the officers who make and enforce the laws. Furthermore the public vote a district dry to do away with a saloon, not realizing that they by so doing indorse prohibition. Then they drink at home or in a wet district. If the public cannot elect honest officials who will regulate saloons, how can they elect officials who will enforce prohibition? And if they are so inconsistent as to vote for prohibition, indorse it at the ballot box and then not practice it, how can effective prohibition be expected?

If the evils of the saloon come from the competitive struggle for business, why not abolish competition and substitute another mode of distribution? If the men in the liquor business were active church members, would they be persecuted as they now are by the ministers? The factories where poor, innocent children are sacrificed for gold are owned by church members. The factories and department stores where women are worked such long hours and low wages that they seek consolation in the whisky bottle and prostitution, are owned by church members. All the idle rich, the parasites who live a life of luxury and ease without doing any work, and therefore the working class must work so much longer and take less to support them, are all prominent church members and philanthropists. These are the evils that are greater than that of liquor and are the cause of intemperance and crime.

If these are eliminated, the liquor question will settle itself. While we, of the working class, are striving to eliminate all of these evils at the ballot box we must remember to instill in the minds of all workers the necessity of sobriety, and that intemperance is an evil that should never be tolerated. As this movement is lacking in the moral idea which springs from social impulse, and is thoroughly inconsistent, therefore it will not be of any benefit to society.

The Helpless Bachelor.

London Sketch.

The married man lives scientifically; he never pays a bill twice or thrice over because he has lost his receipt. The bachelor lives unscientifically. He is robbed, right and left; he is the prey of every footpad that lurks behind counters.

The Fishermen's Tales

Baltimore American.

It was a group of fishermen
(All amateurs were they),
A-telling each of wondrous catch
In river and in bay.
And as the stories passed around
They more amazing grew,
And every teller of a tale
Swore roundly it was true.

A pale shade listened to their tales,
Of them, unseen, unwot,
He murmured: "Since I left the earth
Lies have improved a lot.
My record this beats, I admit,
Despite my natural bias,"
Which was a tribute, for the shade
Was that of Ananias.