

HER LAST APPEARANCE.

Stage love? You do not believe in stage love? Then you have not heard my story.

You may remember a period when I was very young, when strained relations existed between the college faculty and myself, and when I disappeared for a time from the world that knew me. It was then that I was graduated from the amateur to the professional stage.

Beddoe, whom you met here last week, dear old Horace Beddoe, kindly allowed himself to be persuaded that I intended to devote my life to dramatic art, and enrolled me in his company. I well remember the pomp with which he introduced me to the other members of the company.

"Miss Lane, Miss Lovell, Miss Fitz-Clarence," he said proudly, "and Miss Fane." I turned to behold Miss Fane. When I saw her, Horace Beddoe and all the rest seemed to disappear: a glory of golden hair lit up the dingy stage; then I saw one face, heard one voice make sweet, brief music, and felt that I should like to look and listen forever; for Miss Fane was my Beatrice.

Little aristocrat that she looked that morning among the other women, in her plain stuff gown with its white cuffs and collar, and her boy's straw hat with the blue ribbon round it.

"A princess in disguise!" I thought, while I stood talking to her for a minute or two. "How on earth does she come here?" The very question, as I knew afterwards, Miss Fane was asking herself about me.

"Now, then, ladies and gentlemen, cried the stage manager, coming down briskly after a colloquy with the head carpenter: 'now, then, we'll begin, if you please.'

To this day I've very little notion what the piece was about. I saw from my own part that Helen Carew, that is, Miss Beatrice Fane, and I had one scene—a love scene of course—in the second act; gathered that the said Helen was a descendant of Mrs. Fleming's (a flirting widow, with a husband supposed to be dead years ago turning up from Australia just in time to bring down the drop on the first tableau); that she fell in love, after the proper amount of resistance, with the wrong man, Bertie Vivian (myself); and that, after the equally necessary amount of imbrolio, all ended happily as far as we were concerned, she and I. Altogether mine wasn't a bad part, I thought; and it proved even much better than my knowledge of the author of "Each for Himself." I had dared to anticipate. This was only a book rehearsal, and ran off pretty quickly and smoothly. In the first act I was only on to make up the tableau; in the second I had to make passionate love to Helen Carew—a duty that of itself.

At the end of the scene I got a "bravo" from Beddoe in the front, a nod of approval from Melville, the stage manager, at the O. P. wing; ironical congratulations from Mrs. Leicester, who hated my Helen; and a most complicated scowl from "Charles, my friend," in the person of Horace Belverstone. So I considered I might conclude that the scene had gone well. Odd if it hadn't, with my little princess in disguise to play to. She was delicious; a born actress, and a born princess to boot, I could have sworn. Again I marvelled how she came to be where she was. Of one thing, though, I felt certain, that after the first rehearsal Bertie Vivian ought to make a hit. It was just the part I could play, especially now I had seen my Helen. Beddoe thought so too.

"You'll do!" he said, when we left the theatre presently together; "I was mistaken in you. You'll make that rather a crack scene with little Fane, when you've looked it over a time or two, I shouldn't wonder."

"Thanks to her then," I returned modestly. "By the way, who is Miss Fane?"

The manager glanced at me sideways out of his shrewd eyes.

"Who is she?" he repeated; "my ingenuite."

"Pooh!" I said, wondering what he was fencing for; "I know that; what else is she?"

"A very good little girl," he returned demurely; "clever and popular"—the managerial notion of talent, this—"and draws well."

"That's all you know about her?"

"What else should I want to know?"

"What do you want to know?"

"Something more than you've told me. Somehow she seemed rather out of her proper element."

"Among those other women, you mean, eh? Well, I've thought so myself. She keeps them pretty well at arm's-length, though; has no friends; and no enemies, either, I believe. They all like her, the women do; but the Leicester, perhaps, who's jealous of everybody. And the men more than like her, without one of 'em daring to make love to her. Yes, I don't wonder you fancied she looked out of place among that lot. However, here we are at your door. Come and dine at five, and be presented to Mrs. Beddoe, will you?"

In due time I made my debut. It was a success. The audience kindly took to me from the first; and I had them all safe when the act-drop fell on the scene between Vivian and Helen. They called us both; the whole house was shouting my name and hers.

"Go on, man," Beddoe said, pulling back the guy wire of the drop with his own hands in his excitement. "Go on! Lead her on! They're so pleased, you ought to get a double call. Now, then!"

I led her on, all quivering with the nerve strain of that last ten minutes, with her hair all loose upon her shoulders, as it had fallen when I had caught her fainting in my arms upon the stage in the course of the business. My own pulses were beating fast and hot, too. They cheered us again and again. It is worth living for, that. We were back out of the footlights, out of the sight of that sea of faces, in the shelter of the prompt wing; the storm of applause dying away slowly.

"I'm so glad!" he eyes said more plainly than her lips to me as I let her go, and she passed on to her dressing-room.

"And I so thankful—to you," I returned. "Gallant!" Mrs. Leicester's voice said mockingly at my elbow, at Miss Fane's retreating figure. The leading lady hadn't had a call this time. I answered her with much presence of mind. "No; only grate-

ful, Mrs. Leicester. Guess what I must be to you."

"Tell me."

The bold blue eyes looked a challenge. Prudently I declined to accept it.

"I dare not," I said.

I went home that night under an engagement to Horace Beddoe for the remainder of the season.

I think I fairly earned my money. I worked hard, played all sorts, and lived a pleasant Bohemian life. My fellow players fraternized after a bit, Howard Belverstone and all; the last chiefly, I fancy, because I resolutely declined the flirtation which Amy Leicester wished to engage me in. The merit was certainly not mine.

What did I care about the Leicester's eyes when I had only eyes for my little Beatrice? How could I be anything but blind to her tolerable undisguised advances when I was in hot pursuit of some one else? For that was exactly what I was engaged in; it was just that pursuit that made the time such a happy one to me. I had found out all about my little princess. She was a princess, as I had guessed directly I saw her. I loved her all the more when I knew how it was she came to be where I found her. I had nearly hit upon the cause the first night. Horace Beddoe was cognizant thereof, it seemed. It was either his discretion, or some notion that I might be wanting to take her away from him, the best ingenuite he had ever had, that had made him fence with me when I spoke to him of her.

That notion of his turned out to be a correct one. I did want, and did mean, to take her away from him—to take her to myself, she would let me. One day I told her so.

For one moment I held her in my arms, and my lips held her lips. The next she had broken away from me, stretching out trembling hands to bar me back from her.

My wife? How could I marry her? I should go back by-and-by, she said, to the world I had left. Could I take her with me? Would she not be pointed at, spoken of, as one who had no right to be there? Ought my wife to be liable to this? No; for my own sake I must go back alone, leave her and forget her.

I told her I would never go back at all but with her, and I pleaded hard. But she could be hard, too; all the harder because she loved me. She kept out of my sight as much as she could, gave me no words but those she had to speak to me—such bitter mockery some of them seemed—on the stage; to k duenna escort, no longer mine, home at night; in short, half broke her little heart, and was utterly merciless to me. It was no longer a pleasant time. I grew savage under my punishment at last, and the day of my deliverance from my bondage to Beddoe being near at hand, swore I would leave the company, and go away from her—I knew not whither.

Mrs. Leicester, I found out afterwards, had a good deal of this to answer for. In her spite, or her jealousy, or whatever ill-feeling it was, she set things afloat concerning my Beatrice and me that hardened the girl's heart yet more, and played the very mischief with the course of my true love. However, never mind Mrs. Leicester. I pass over those evil days and come to the last of my stay with Beddoe.

Every dead wall in the place was covered with huge posters, wherefrom he who ran might learn that to-night was positively the concluding night of Mr. Wilfred Severne's engagement, and that that individual would play "Come Friuli in Retribution," supported by the company.

Beddoe had chosen the piece, expecting that it would prove a success after the light comedies with which he had been favoring our houses of late; and as I had played Friuli often and liked the part, I made no objection. It rather suited my present frame of mind, too; and I went down to the theatre that morning for a final rehearsal—very much the count indeed. Retribution had been very liberally mounted; and I could hear Melville drilling his fellows over the intricate working into place of the boudoir and moon-lit garden scene of the third act, which was to bring down the house, as I made my way through the white-washed, grave-smelling passage on to the back of the stage.

As I came down toward the ramp, I could hear some one else—Horace Beddoe, manager—in a great rage, and using strong language with unusual freedom.

"What is the meaning of this, I should like to know?" he was asking everybody within hearing, apparently. "Ill? Stuff and nonsense! She played well enough last night; and now I'm to believe she's ill? It is a lie! She can't be! It's sheer spite. She knows she can put us in a hole; that there ain't any one else to play the part; and she's ill! Yeh! it's sickening; it is, upon my soul!"

And Horace Beddoe swore again, and executed a short war dance, expressive of fury and disgust. His last twirl brought him face to face with me.

"What's the trouble?" I asked.

"Trouble? Read that, sir!" He thrust a piece of paper into my hand and danced off again. The other people looked on, impressed. No one had ever seen Beddoe in such a state before.

There it was, certainly. An orthodox document, signed by a physician, and setting forth that Mrs. Leicester was, in his opinion, not in a fit state to undertake her professional duties that evening.

Now Mrs. Leicester was to have played Clarisse de Beaupre to my count. The performance of Retribution that night was now knocked on the head.

"Well," the manager asked, "a pleasant state of things, ain't it? What's to be done?"

Melville had come down by this time from his carpenter's rehearsal. Even he, clever at expedients as he was, had no suggestion to make, but stood staring blankly at his chief.

"It's no use," the latter said, after a long pause; "we can't make her play, I suppose, and we can't play the piece without her—confound her! We must do the best we can and improvise a bill somehow; and yet, after all the bother and expense—"

"Yes, Melville chimed in, "it is provoking. Still, I don't see how we can do it without her, as you say; unless," he broke out suddenly, struck with a brilliant idea; "unless—"

"What?" Beddoe asked eagerly.

"Get Miss Fane to play Clarisse," Melville returned, triumphantly. "She'll do

it!—do it better than Mrs. Leicester. And there'll be time for her to run through a rehearsal this morning. She'll pick up the part at once; and you can have a line in the bills asking their kind indulgence—moment's notice—that sort of thing. Don't you see?"

The manager's face brightened at once. "The very thing, ain't it?" he asked, turning to me.

"Yes," I answered as coolly as I could. Melville's proposition had sent such a strange thrill of pleasure through me that I could have hugged the stage manager then and there. My last night, and Beatrice Fane for my Clarisse!

"Ha!" Horace continued, "when Mrs. Leicester hears this, I shouldn't wonder if we have her down here again quite recovered and ready to go on. She thought we couldn't do without her. When she finds we can, she'll be ready to howl with vexation at having given up such a part to another woman, who'll play it better, I believe, and who shall play it now, whatever happens."

The manager kept his word; it was Beatrice Fane who played the count's Clarisse that night.

She appeared presently in response to Melville's hasty summons. A quick flush crossed her pale face when they told her what they wanted of her, but she agreed at once.

The last rehearsal began, the only one Clarisse would get. She hardly needed that. She gave such a reading of the part as quite astonished Horace Beddoe.

"She ought to have had this line before," he said to Melville. "The Leicester can't hold a candle to her. She'll do something tonight, the little one will. The third act will electrify them—electrify 'em, sir!"

I knew that, too. The audience could not but catch something of the fire that made the little hands that clung to me burn and throb. My Clarisse was shivering with fever. Madame de Beaupre was likely to be only too real.

That long, wearisome rehearsal ended at last. She drew her cloak about her and moved away. I followed, in time to see her sink down on a sofa that stood ready to be moved on for the opening scene.

"Beatrice, what is it? You are ill?"

She looked up, so pale, poor child!

"Only tired," she said. "But don't be afraid. I shall be quite strong tonight. The count shan't find his Clarisse wanting, I promise you."

"Don't talk like that. You are ill. You shan't play this."

"I will play it! I wouldn't give it up for the world! After she flung it up—! Ah! how glad I am! She wanted to rob you of a last success; but you will have it and I shall have helped you. I could almost forgive her!" she muttered.

"Forgive her what?"

"Nothing. I didn't know what I was saying. And now I shall go home and rest; it would do to break down tonight, you know."

All she said had been spoken in that strange, feverish excitement that had come upon her during the last few hours since she knew she was to be my Clarisse.

I drew her cloak closer about her as she rose.

"Thanks," she said; "and now au revoir, Monsieur le Comte!" She was going. I sprang after her.

"Let me take you, Beatrice, for the last time."

She stopped and turned, laughing. The soft laughter jarred on me.

"Well," she answered; "come then, for the last time. Take me."

Through the white-washed passage, heavy with graveyard odors, into the street, chilly with autumn rain.

Walking beside her as she hurried along, I pleaded my cause with her yet once more. She would not listen; talked wildly of this and that; then, suddenly turning on me, called me cruel to speak so to her. Why would I torture her? What had she done? What I wanted could never be; she had told me why before. After tonight I should go back to my proper place, and leave her where I had found her, and forget her.

And with that bitter word on her lips she was gone. I had failed again. The girl's pride was stronger than her love for me; there was an end.

I wandered about under the rain, smoking, I remember, hard, all the time, till I had to go back to the theatre and dress.

When I got there the curtain was down on the first piece; they were setting Madame de Pommar's salon for our first act. Melville was superintending, dressed for Morisset; Beddoe, in a state of great excitement, was pervading the stage and wings generally.

"Tremendous house!" he found time to say to me; "all curious about the new Clarisse, I hear. Look sharp, my boy, and dress. We shall ring up in ten minutes."

I waited about a little while longer, thinking might catch a glimpse of her before we began; but she kept close in her dressing room.

The orchestra rattled its death rattle. I knew the curtain had risen by the roar of applause that greeted my Clarissa as she came down with Madame de Pommar to the footlights. Then came a knock at my door, and the voice of the call boy outside. The next moment I had made my entry through the center folding doors of the salon. She had to turn to see me—she alone—to turn, and stand there with her eyes on mine, stricken dumb and motionless at a sign from me, while the other people chattered. White, almost haggard in its feverish emotion, her face seemed not her face, but the real woman's. With the first words I spoke to Morisset my own self-consciousness went from me; I was myself no longer; was the man I played. The audience saw a count and a Clarisse that night, at all events, who weren't acting. The sight of her so changed, my love for her, my wrath against her other self, strung my nerves in a terrible tension I had never felt before. All passed as a dream. As in a dream I heard my own voice and hers; the voice of the other people; Beddoe speaking to me now and then when I came off; the voice of the crammed house, that grew louder and louder each time the act-drop fell. Her hands when they touched mine were now as chill as ice, now as hot as fire. The fever of excitement, the passion she had been trying to fight down, the knowledge that these two hours were to be our last together, transformed her for the time. To you, too, that transformation, so absolute, so utter, would have been something fear-

ful, as I said just now; it startled our audience into enthusiasm, that waxed wilder and wilder every moment.

You know the piece; you may guess how our scenes went. We have two in the first act, between the man with a vengeance and the neglected girl-wife of that gay profligate, De Beaupre, for whom retribution to match his crime is preparing. What that retribution is, you begin to gather when Morisset has left the pair alone for a moment. No love in his tone when she is learning to love, despite all—to love even while she shrinks from him in a vague terror; but a deadly hate when he speaks of her husband who, he tells her, is deceiving her to-night as he did yesterday, as he will to-morrow. She asks for proof in one breath, and then in the next denies desperately that what he says can be.

The proofs are ready when she chooses, he answers; and the curtain falls on her promise to receive them, on those muttered words of his, that tell her whole story, as he watches her off, and crushes the broken fan in his cruel hand. "She's mine at last! Her heart is in my grip!"

The curtain rises on the third act. The scene is Madame de Beaupre's boudoir. The windows look upon a moon-lit garden. Clarisse sits there alone, thinking of that dark, stern man who is coming there to-night at her summons—thinking of him and trembling for herself. What does she care for Victor's boy love when he pleads to her? That love, soon to be sealed with his life, never touches her; the boy's warning only rises icy wrath against himself, for the count's Clarisse is under the spell he had breathed upon her.

Yet she can struggle against it, once more, desperately; De Beaupre is gone; that mock melodramatic letter of advice she saw him write is in her hand, with the miniature of herself that was enclosed in it. She is again alone, and the time of Friuli's coming is very near. The garden gate by which he is to enter is left open. If he found it shut—locked? The wall is too high to climb. Yes, she will prevent his coming. She will see him in broad daylight, when—when it will be safer.

She waits—white and with strained eyes and ears—while Baptiste locks the garden gate and brings her the key. Then she sinks down, shivering, but with the deep sigh of a great relief. "Safe for tonight at least," she muttered. And at that moment the man she dreads and loves so strangely is standing on the balcony outside the window, with the pale moonlight on him, watching her.

He opens the window and comes toward her, so softly that she never hears him. Yet she feels as if his eyes were on her now. Slowly, shudderingly, she turns her head, and sees him.

"Ah!"

Not a scream, for he lifts his hand to stop her, but a low, faint moan, as she covers down before him.

And then begins the great scene in the piece—at last, our great scene that night. The silent, breathless house hung on every word of it, utterly carried away by the strange reality of what was passing before their eyes.

I, like the real man, spoke out of a love I thought lost; the hot, bitter words put into the count's mouth came hotly and bitterly enough from mine.

And that child there, with the fashion of her face all changed, with a wild, broken voice I could not recognize, with a helpless wringing of her little hands, was crouching at my feet—was dragging herself on her knees towards me, praying me to spare her.

Yes; I would go, if she bade me.

"Not in anger," and her arms were stretched out passionately to stay me. And I stop, and take the hot hands in mine. Ah! and hold them still, for she is quite powerless now, when I tell her what my love for her must bring upon her.

Quite powerless she lies there; her fate must be what I will. And I grasp my vengeance at last.

A step on the stairs without—De Beaupre's. In another moment he will be in the room, and she will be lost. And then—the child is so helpless and so innocent—comes a tardy pity for her; and the count loosens his hold and lets his revenge slip, and leaves her.

And on him, as he stands for a moment dark in the moonlight, looking through the open window from the balcony, on her, as she falls sobbing hysterically into her husband's arms, the act-drop descends.

A thunder-clap broke the breathless silence in the front; peal after peal of passionate applause rolled round the house. It called for her again and again.

When I made my way round from the back on to the stage I found her with a little group about her, lying half unconscious in the fauteuil, where she had slipped from Belverstone's arms.

The manager was standing a little apart, looking excited and a little frightened.

"It's been too much for her, that last scene," he said to me. "She flung herself into the part a little too far. I'm afraid she's fainted. But, by Jove! she electrified 'em, didn't she? I said she would."

I pushed my way with scant ceremony through the group. One of the women was bathing my Clarisse's forehead with cologne and water; the others stood looking on helplessly. I cared little enough for their presence. I bent over my poor, pale darling, and called her by her name, and said, God knows what, but words that brought her back to life again, anyhow.

Beddoe hurried up.

"Better, Miss Fane?" he asked. "That's right. You were magnificent—played only too well. Take her on," he whispered to me; "they're yelling for you both like mad. 'They'll pull the house down if they don't see her.'"

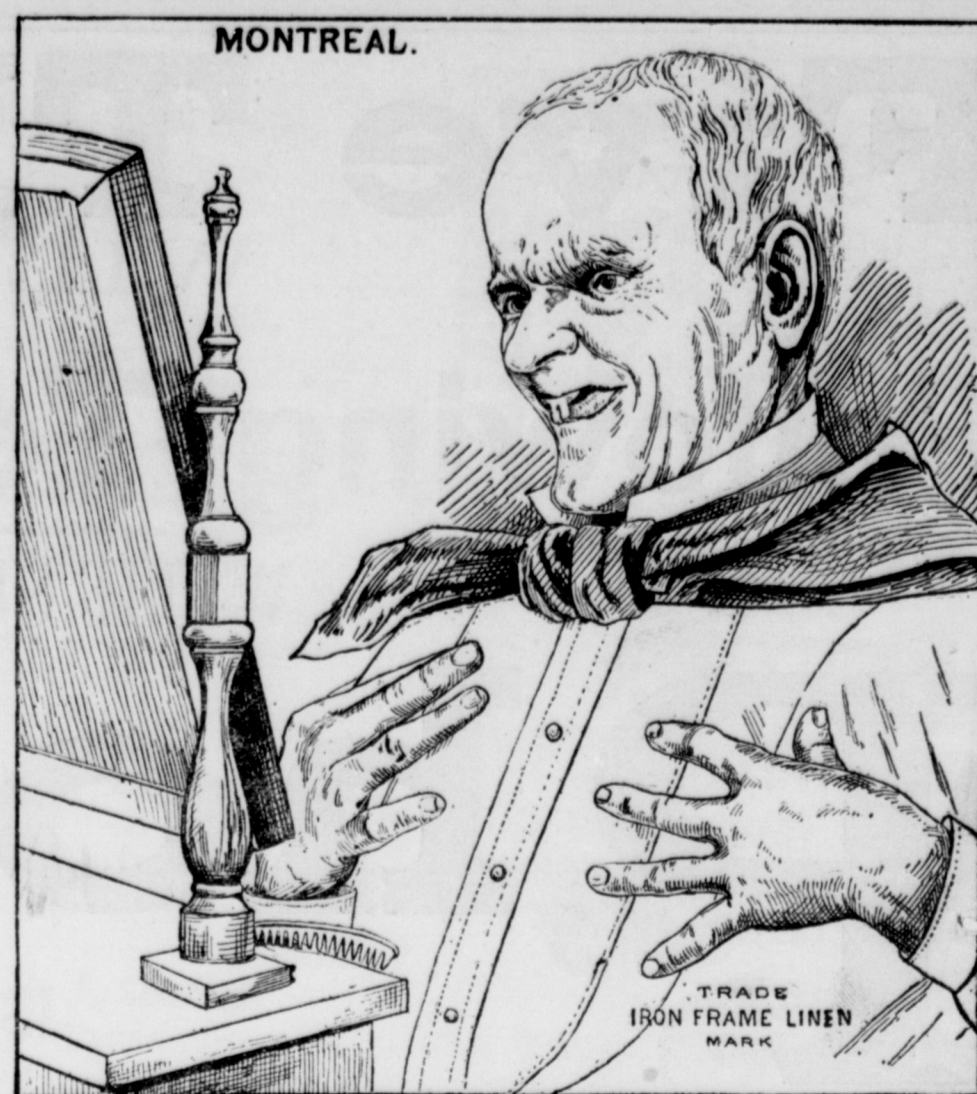
"Let them," I answered, angrily. And then, as I drew her hand under my arm—"Let me take you away from this Beatrice; take you home. You shan't go on!"

"Take her away! Shan't go on!" Beddoe repeated, in high wrath. "Perhaps you'll be good enough to tell me what the devil you mean by that, Mr. Severne. I'm master here, I think."

And Horace Beddoe raged away for some little time. I believe; I neither heard nor replied to him. The cries for her in the front grew fiercer every moment. Melville hurried back to us from the prompter's wing.

"Now, Miss Fane," he said, in his sharp, business-like tone; "they will see you. The piece can't go on till you're shown."

I broke out with something that made Melville stare, and the manager was wild. But she answered, drawing her hand from my arm as she spoke:



CHEERFULNESS.

A man can face a cannon or a "dun" with cheerfulness, but when a man's shirt fits him badly, or his collar is a different size from what it is stamped, he becomes misanthropical, his view of things is gloomy, his temper is savage, life is wretched.

Avoid this miserable state of existence by wearing Tooke Bros.' Shirts, Collars and Cuffs. For sale by the leading wholesale and retail firms throughout the Dominion.

"I am quite ready. Will you take me on, Mr. Severne?" And as she walked, quite firmly, down to the side—"the play must be played out, you know."

And I led her on to receive her ovation, hardly knowing that I was doing so; and the play was played out.

But when my Clarisse knelt, presently over De Beaupre in the last scene, with the last words she had to speak, the fictitious strength that had supported her till then went from her, and she fell back all cold and lifeless.

It was her last appearance. She was quite deaf to all clamor of the audience for her; and Beddoe had to go before them to explain.

It was many a long, anxious day before she knew my voice again. That night had been too much for her; fever fastened on her, and nearly robbed me of my darling;—for mine she was; I heard it from her own lips by and by, when my life had conquered her.

My stage career ended the same time that hers did. You can imagine the reconciliation and the rest of the story.

And now you know why I believe that stage love is sometimes true love.

THINGS OF VALUE.

Every one desires to live long, but no one would be old.—Swift.

For Cholera Fellows Speedy Relief stands ahead of all other Preparations.

Fellows Dyspepsia Bitters is not a new remedy. It has been known in this country over fifty years.

Beauty is like an almanac; if it last a year it is well.—T. Adams.

Take good care of your beard and keep it clear of gray hairs so as to retain your young looks by using Buckingham's Dye for the Whiskers.

Who thinketh to buy villainy with gold shall find such faith so bought, so sold.—Marston.

Kerr Evaporated Vegetables have allowed Miners, Soldiers, and Sailors to enjoy delicious soup when thousand of miles from the fields.

No civilization other than that which is christian is worth seeking or possessing.—Bismarck.

The Early Spring tries Weak Lungs, which then should be fortified by a liberal use of Puttner's Emulsion—only 50 cents a bottle, at all Druggists.

A man who cannot mind his own business is not to be trusted with that of the king.—Saville.

Extract from letter from Sir Chas. Tupper. "Your samples of Kerr Evaporated Soup Vegetables were transmitted to the Naval authorities who pronounced them a very superior article."

Loving kindness is greater than laws; and the charity of life are more than all ceremonies.—Talmud.

To all persons suffering from Kidney troubles I most confidently recommend the use of Wilmot Spa Waters, as I believe from my own experience, that they are a specific.

Mrs. F. BENT.

The cheerful live longest in years, and afterwards in our regards. Cheerfulness is the offspring of goodness.—Bovee.

Letters from home:—

A. I. RICE, Photographer, New Glasgow, N. S. writes:—"I have much pleasure in adding my testimony to those already given that K. D. C. is a positive cure for indigestion and dyspepsia. My own trial of the medicine proved a case of instant relief. I find the same is said of it by all who have tried it."

K. D. C. Co., DEAR SIR:—Having been positively cured of dyspepsia by the use of three packages of K. D. C., I would cheerfully recommend it to any, suffering from this dreadful disease.

J. FISHER GRANT, Merchant, New Glasgow, N. S.

MRS. ALEX. CAMERON, New Glasgow, N. S., says:—"K. D. C. cured me after 16 years of suffering."

E. COLLISHAW, Merchant, New Glasgow, N. S.,—"I have retained nearly 500 packages of K. D. C. in about one and a half years and don't know of a single case where it failed to benefit."

K. D. C. Co., DEAR SIR:—I had been a sufferer from dyspepsia for two years. Two packages of K. D. C. cured me after trying many other remedies without deriving any benefit from them. I gladly recommend it for the cure of indigestion and dyspepsia. JAMES ROY MERCHANT.

RAILWAYS.

CANADIAN PACIFIC RY.

Popular One Way Parties

—TO THE—

PACIFIC COAST!

TOURIST SLEEPING CARS leave MONTREAL (Windsor Street Station) at 8.15 p. m.,

Jan. 6 and 20;
Feb. 3 and 17;
Mar. 2, 16