

**RISE AND FALL
OF THE MUSTACHE**

BY ROBERT J. BURDETTE.

He feels, too, the dawning consciousness of another grand truth in the human economy. It dawns upon his deepening intelligence with the inherent strength and the unquestioned truth of a new revelation, that man's upper lip was designed by nature for a mustache pasture. How tenderly reserved he is when he is brooding over the momentous discovery. With what exquisite caution and delicacy are his primal investigations conducted. In his microscopic researches, it appears to him that the down on his upper lip is certainly more determined down; more positive, more pronounced, more individual fuz than that which vegetates in neglected tenderness upon his cheek. He makes cautious explorations along the land of promise with the tip of his tenderest finger, delicately backing up the grade the wrong way, going against the grain, that he may the more readily detect the slightest symptoms of an uprising by the first feeling of velvet resistance. Day by day he is more firmly convinced that there is on his lip the primordial germs, the protoplasm of a glory that will, in its full development, eclipse even the majesty and grandeur of his first tail-coat. In the first dawning consciousness that the mustache is there, like the vote, and only needs to be brought out, how often Tom walks down to the barber shop, gazes longingly in at the window, and walks past. How often, when he musters up sufficient courage to go in, and climbs into the chair, and is just on the point of huskily whispering to the barber that he would like a shave, the entrance of a man with a beard like Frederick Barbarossa, frightens away the resolution, and he has his hair cut again. The third time that week, and it is so short that the barber has to hold it with his teeth while he files it off, and parts it with a straight edge and a scratch awl. Naturally, driven from the barber chair, Tom casts longing eyes upon the ancestral shaving machinery at home. Who shall say by what means he at length obtains possession of the parental razor? None. Nobody knows. Nobody ever did know. Even the searching investigation that always follows the paternal demand for the immediate extradition of whoever opened a fruit can with that razor, which always follows Tom's first shave, is always, and ever will be barren of results. All that we know about it is, that Tom holds the razor in his hand about a minute, wondering what to do with it, before the blade falls across his fingers and cuts every one of them. First blood claimed and allowed for the razor. Then he straps the razor furiously, or rather he razors the strap. He slashes and cuts that passive implement in as many directions as he can make motions with the razor. He would cut it oftener if the strap lasted longer. Then he nicks the razor against the side of the mug. Then he drops it on the floor and steps on it and nicks it again. They are small nicks, not so large by half as a saw tooth, and he flatters himself his father will never see them. Then he soaks the razor in hot water, as he has seen his father do. Then he takes it out, at a temperature anywhere under 980 degrees Fahrenheit, and lays it against his cheek and raises a blister there the size of the razor, as he never saw his father do, but as his father most assuredly did, many, many years before Tom met him. Then he makes a variety of indescribable grimaces and labial contortions in a frenzied effort to get his upper lip into approachable shape, and at last, the first offer he makes at his embryo mustache, he slashes his nose with a vicious upper cut. He gashes the corners of his mouth; wherever those nicks touch his cheek they leave a scratch a piece, and he learns what a good nick in a razor is for, and at last when he lays the blood stained weapon down, his gory lip looks as though it had just come out of a long stubborn, exciting contest with a straw cutter.

But he learns to shave, after awhile—just before he cuts his lip clear off. He has to take quite a course of instruction, however, in that great school of experience about which the old philosopher had a remark to make. It is a grand old school; the only school at which men will study and learn, each for himself. One man's experience never does another man any good; never did and never will teach another man anything. If the philosopher had said that it was a hard school, but that some men would learn at no other than this grand old school of experience, we might have inferred that all women, and most boys, and a few men were exempt from its hard teaching. But he uses the most comprehensive term, if you remember what that is, and took us all in. We have all been there. There is no other school, in fact. Poor little Cain; dear, inebriate, wicked little Cain—I know it isn't fashionable to pet him; I know it is popular to speak harshly and savagely about our eldest brother, when the fact is we resemble him more closely in disposition than any other member of the family—poor little Cain never knew the difference between his father's sunburned nose and a glowing coal until he had pulled the one and picked up the other. Abel had to find out the difference in the same way although he was told five hundred times, by his brother's experience, that the coal would burn and the nose wouldn't. And Cain's boy wouldn't believe that fire was any hotter than an icicle, until he made a digital experiment, and understood why they called it fire. So Enoch and Methuselah, and Moses and Daniel, and Solomon, and Caesar, and Napoleon, and the Governor, and the Major, and you and I have all of us, one time or another, in one way or another, burned our fingers at the same old fire that has scorched human fingers in the same monotonous old way, at the same reliable old stands, for the past 6,000 years; and all the verbal instruction between here and the silent

grave couldn't teach us so much, or teach us so thoroughly, as one well directed sledge. A million years from now—if this weary old world may endure so long—when human knowledge shall fall a little short of the infinite, and all the lore and erudition of this wonderful age will be but the primer of that day of light—the baby that is born into that world of knowledge and wisdom and progress, rich with all the years of human experience, will cry for the lamp, and the very first time that opportunity favors it, will try to pull the flame up by the roots, and will know just as much as ignorant, untaught, stupid little Cain knew on the same subject. Year after year, century after unfolding century, how true it is that the lion on the fence is always bigger, fiercer, and more given to majestic attitudes and dramatic situations than the lion in the tent. Yet it costs us, often as the circus comes around, fifty cents to find that out.

But while we have been moralizing, Tom's mustache has taken a start. It has attained the physical density, though not the color, by any means, of the Egyptian darkness—it can be felt; and it is felt; very soft felt. The world begins to take notice of the new-comer; and Tom, as generations of Tom's before him have done, patiently endures dark hints from other members of the family about his face being dirty. He loftily ignores his experienced father's suggestion that he should perform his tonsorial toilet with a spoonful of cream and the family cat. When his sisters in meekly dissembled ignorance and innocence inquire, "Tom, what have you on your lip?" he is austere, as becomes a man annoyed by the frivolous small talk of women. When his younger brother takes advantage of the presence of a numerous company in the house, to shriek over the baluster upstairs, apparently to any boy this side of China, "Tom's raisin' mustaches!" Tom smiles, a wan, neglected-orphan smile; a smile that looks as though it had come up on his face to weep over the barrenness of the land; a perfect ghost of a smile, as compared with the rugged x99 smiles that play like animated crests over the countenances of the company. But the mustache grows. Whenever you see such a mustache, do not laugh at it; do not point at it the slow, unmoving finger of scorn. Encourage it; speak kindly of it; affect admiration for it; coax it along—for it is a first. They always come that way. When in the fullness of time it has developed so far that it can be pulled, there is all the agony of making it take color. It is worse and more obstinate, and more deliberate than a meerschaum. The sun, that tans Tom's cheeks and blisters his nose, only bleaches his mustache. Nothing ever hastens its color; nothing does it any permanent good; nothing but patience, and faith, and persistent pulling.

With all the comedy there is about it, however, this is the grand period of a boy's life. You look at them, with their careless, easy, natural manners and movements in the street and on the baseball ground, and their marvelous, systematic, indescribable, imitable and complex awkwardness in your parlor, and do you never dream, looking at these young fellows, of the overshadowing destinies awaiting them, the mighty struggles mapped out in the earnest future of their lives, the thrilling conquests in the world of arms, the grander triumphs in the realm of philosophy, the fadeless laurels in the empire of letters, and the imperishable crowns that he who gives them the victory binds about their brow, of these boys? Why, the world is at a boy's feet; and power, and conquest and leadership slumber in his rugged arms and care-free heart. A boy sets his ambition at whatever mark he will—lofty or groveling as he may elect—and the boy who resolutely sets his heart on fame, on wealth, on power, on what he will; who consecrates himself to a life of noble endeavor, and lofty effort; who concentrates every faculty of his mind and body on the attainment of his one darling point; who brings to support his ambition courage and industry and patience, can trample on genius; for these are better and grander than genius; and he will begin to rise above his fellows as steadily and as surely as the sun climbs above the mountains. Hannibal, standing before the Punia altar fires and in the hissing accents of childhood-swear-ing eternal hatred to Rome, was the

Hannibal at twenty-four years commanding the army that swept down upon Italy like a mountain torrent, and shook the power of the mistress of the world, bid her defiance at her own gates, while affrighted Rome huddled and covered under the protecting shadows of her walls. Napoleon, building snow forts at school and planning mimic battles with his playfellows, was the lieutenant of artillery at sixteen years, general of artillery and the victor of Foulon at twenty-four, and at last emperor—not by the valtry accident of birth, which might

but by the manhood and grace of his own right arm, and his own brain, and his own courage and dauntless ambition—emperor, with his foot on the throat of prostrate Europe. Alexander, daring more in his boyhood than his warlike father could teach him, and entering upon his all conquering career at twenty-four, was the boy whose vaulting ambition only paused in its dazzling flight when the world lay at his feet. And the fair-faced soldiers of the empire, they who rode down upon the bayonets of the English squares at Waterloo, when the earth rocked beneath their feet and the incense smoke from the altars of the battle god shut out the sun and sky above their heads, who, with their young lives streaming from their gaping wounds, opened their pallid lips to cry "Vive L'Empereur," as they die for honor and France, were boys—school boys—the boy conscripts of France, torn from their homes and their schools to fray the falling fortunes of the last grand army and the empire that was tottering to its fall. You don't know how soon these happy-go-lucky young fellows, making summer hideouts with baseball slang, or gliding around a skating rink on their backs, may hold the state and write the history of the hour; how soon they alone may shape events and guide the current of public action; how soon one of them may run away with your daughter or borrow money of you.

Certain it is, there is one thing Tom will do just about this period of his existence. He will fall in love with somebody before his mustache is long enough to wax.

Perhaps one of the earliest indications of this event, for it does not always break out in the same manner, is a sudden and alarming increase in the number and variety of Tom's neck-ties. In his boxes and on his dressing case his mother is constantly startled by the changing and increasing assortment of the display. Monday he encircles his tender throat with a lilac knot, fearfully and wonderfully tied. A lavender tie succeeds the following day. Wednesday is graced with a sweet little tangle of pale, pale blue, that fades at a breath; Thursday is ushered in with a scarf of delicate pea green, of wonderful convolutions and sufficiently expansive, by the aid of a clean collar, to conceal any little irregularity in Tom's wash day; Friday smiles on a sailor's knot of dark blue, with a tangle of dainty forget-me-nots embroidered over it; Saturday tones itself down to a quiet, unobtrusive neutral tint or shade, scarlet or yellow, and Sunday is deeply, darkly, piously black. It is difficult to tell whether Tom is trying to express the state of his distracted feelings by his neckties, or trying to find a color that will harmonize with his mustache or match Laura's shirt waist.

And during the variegated necktie period of man's existence how tenderly that mustache is coaxed and petted and caressed. How it is brushed to make it lie down and waxed to make it stand out and how he notes its slow growth, and weeps and mourns and swears over it day after weary day. Now, if ever, and generally now, he buys things to make it take color. But he never repeats this offense against nature. He buys a wonderful dye, warranted to "produce a beautiful black or brown at one application without stain or injury to the skin." Buys it at a shabby, round the corner, obscure little drug store, because he is not known there. He tells the assassin who sells it to him, that he is buying it for a sick sister. The assassin knows that he lies. And in the guilty silence and solitude of his own room, with the curtains down and the door locked, Tom tries the virtue of that magic dye. It gets on his fingers and turns them black to the elbow. It burns holes in his handkerchief when he tries to rub the malignant poison off his ebony fingers. He applies it to his silky mustache, real camel's hair, very cautiously and very tenderly, and with some misgivings. It turns his lip so black it makes the room dark. And out of all the clouds and the darkness and the sable spotsches that pale everything else in Plutonian gloom, that mustache smiles out, grinning like some ghastly hirsut specter, gleaming like the moon through a rifted storm cloud, unstained, unshaded, a natural incurruptible blonde. That is the last time anybody foils Tom on hair dye.

The eye he has for immaculate linen and faultless collars. How it amazes his mother and sisters to learn that there isn't a shirt in the house fit for a pig to wear, and that he wouldn't wear the best collar in his room to be hanged in! And the boots he crowds his feet into! A Sunday school room the Sunday before the picnic or the Christmas tree, with its sudden influx of new scholars, with irrepressible morals and ambitious appetites, doesn't compare with the over-crowded condition of those boots. Too tight in the instep; too narrow at the toes; too short at both ends; the only

thing about those boots that don't hurt him, that don't fill his very soul with agony are the straps. When Tom is pulling them on, he feels that if somebody would kindly run over him three or four times, with a freight train, the sensation would be pleasant and reassuring and tranquilizing. The air turns black before his staring eyes, there is a roaring like the rush of many waters in his ears, he tugs at the straps that one cutting his fingers in two and pulling his arms out by the roots, and just before his bloodshot eyes shoot clear out of his head, the boot comes on—the strap pulls off. Then when he stands up, the earth rocks beneath his feet, and he thinks he can faintly hear the angels calling his home. When he walks across the floor the first time his standing in the church and Christian community is ruined forever. Or would he if any one could hear what he says. He never, never, never gets to be so old that he cannot remember those boots, and if it is seventy years afterwards his feet curl up in agony at the recollection. The first time he wears them he is vaguely aware as he leaves his room that there is a kind of "fixy" look about him, and his sister's titting is not needed to confirm this impression. He has a certain half-defined impression that everything he has on is a size too small for

(To be Continued.)



The grand and beautiful Bible story of Abraham intercepted on the point of slaying his cherished son has a deep significance, which every mother should take to heart. Too many mothers of the present day bind their children upon the altar of neglect and misunderstanding, all unmindful that beneficent providence forbids the sacrifice. Women who expect to be mothers do not care for their own health as they ought, and thus the health and lifelong welfare of the prospective little one is sacrificed. All women should know and use the health-supporting power of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription in every delicate condition of the organs pertaining to maternity. This special organism is directly strengthened and reinforced by this wonderful "Prescription." It renders the ordeal of motherhood entirely safe and comparatively easy; it gives constitutional energy and vigor to both mother and child; it absolutely cures every form of female weakness and disease. It is the only medicine in existence devised for this particular purpose by an educated, skilled physician of thirty years experience in this special field of practice. A full account of its marvelous properties is given in one chapter of Dr. Pierce's thousand-page illustrated book, "The People's Common Sense Medical Adviser," a paper-bound copy of which will be sent on receipt of thirty-one one-cent stamps to pay the cost of cartons and mailing only, or handsomely cloth-bound for fifty stamps. Address World's Dispensary Medical Association, Buffalo, N. Y. Every woman should read this book.

W. R. Malcolm, of Knobel, Clay County, Arkansas, writes: "Since I last wrote you we have had a baby girl born to us. My wife took your 'Favorite Prescription' all during the expectant period and until confinement, and she had no trouble to mention."

It has transpired that the chief object of Hon. Dr. Borden's visit to England is to personally discuss with the war office the exact relation of the Canadian militia to the imperial army in time of actual war. Hitherto correspondence on the subject had been carried on through the governor general or the major general commanding in Canada, and Dr. Borden is the first minister of militia to take up the matter in person. Advice from London says he will sail for Ottawa on January 12th.

CURRENT COMMENT.

That St. Louis saloon keeper who is turning to chalk probably made the mistake of swallowing everything he put on his slate.—Washington Post.

Thieves at Port Chester, N. Y., stole a flight of stairs. It would be interesting to know if these were their first steps in crime.—Philadelphia North American.

If Queen Victoria continues to shower aristocratic honors on London families in the milk line, the anarchists may yet be driven to champagne.—Washington Star.

A society has been formed to demolish the Santa Claus myth. It ought to be christened "The Society to Rob Childhood of Its Chief Delight."—Philadelphia Press.

Kentucky colonels will not overlook the moral in the case of the St. Louis man who is turning to stone as the result of having drunk too freely of spring water.—St. Louis Republic.

Chicago has a Human Nature club. It would not be strange if its members proved worthy of their names by being prone to postponing the payment of dues as long as possible.—Boston Globe.

Now the bubonic plague has attacked the monkeys in India. Probably this will expedite measures for repressing the plague. Monkeys are rated as valuable, but native Indians are not.—Boston Herald.

Missouri has the most fit de siecle centenarian. He was married on his one hundredth birthday to a lady 23 years his junior. There was no elopement, as it was unnecessary to ask the paternal consent.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The omission of the Trafalgar and Waterloo chariots from the London lord mayor's parade this year was appreciated in France. There comes a time in the life of every nation when it pays to stop crowing over ancient and defeated foes.—Springfield Republican.

28 wadded quilts on sale at from 80c. each to \$2.00 each—worth from \$1.00 to \$2.50 each.—Stratley Bros.—6, 31.

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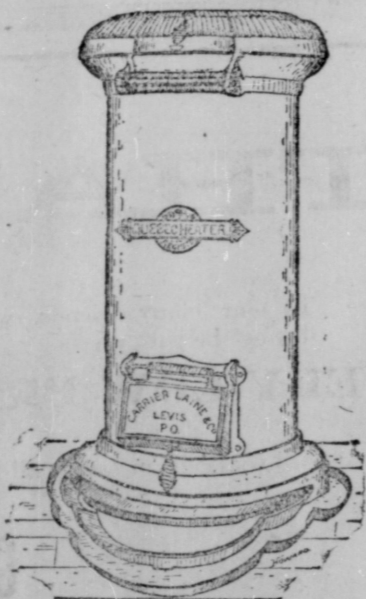
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