

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL SERIES OF EASTERN EXCURSIONS VIA THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

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The Confessions of a Managing Editor

Continued from Page 7

word I was wanted in the business office. On my way out of the city room my financial reporter called to me, saying:

"I understand the old man has promised to leave the city in the dark on the question of lighting."

"What makes you think so?"

"I heard it just now in the office of his stock broker. They had him over there this morning."

On arriving in the business office, I was highly complimented by the publisher for my story on the lighting monopoly.

"You might get some further information along this line," he said, "and have it ready for me when I return. I'm going out of town for two weeks. Meanwhile, see to it that nothing is printed on lighting."

On his return I submitted an astounding array of figures which showed how deep we were in the grip of the lighting company, together with an inside account of their high dividends, inflated stock, etc. My friend the publisher appeared to be highly pleased. He took all the facts into his private office for a further consideration. Let me see—he has had them under consideration now for nearly ten years! Oh, yes, I came near forgetting: his stock broker is a leading advertiser!

In our city we have a Woman's League. It is a league for the betterment of social and living conditions. Of course such a thing should not be, but what are women to do? Upon this occasion they looked into the question of department store hours for working girls. They found the girls of our town working beyond a reasonable time—that is, too many hours a week, especially in the holiday season. Other cities were bad enough, but none equalled ours. What was to be done?

The Woman's League went to the Legislature for reform. They were opposed by the merchants. It was a good news story. Indeed, some of the facts brought out by the women were even

sensational. At any rate, their story touched the heart of our veteran legislative reporter, and he even went so far as to say:

"For Heaven's sake, old man, print their story in full!"

The Woman's League waited upon me with the full text of their argument, requesting us to publish the facts. I promised to do the best I could for them.

What the Woman's League Got for Butting In

Now right here, it might be mentioned, the department store is our best friend—that is, our best advertiser. There are several in our town. One alone pays in something like \$1,000 a month. This, too, in the dull season! So I submitted the Woman's League argument to the business office; in short, to the publisher himself.

He looked over the copy.

"These women who think they know how to run a department store ought to be at home looking after their children," he said. "They make me tired. For instance, take this woman at the head of the list. She's the worst of all. She's an old busybody!"

"How much of their argument do you want me to run?" I said.

"Not a line of it," he answered. "I'll take care of it myself to-morrow in the editorial columns."

He did so. His editorial scolded the Woman's League for interfering in what he said wasn't their business. He made no mention of the facts gathered by them, of the long hours for the little girls, of child labor, etc. On the contrary, his editorial praised the leading department store men for their thoughtfulness in keeping their stores open late!

The argument of the Woman's League, which they had left with me, I returned, under orders, with the following remark:

Owing to the small amount of space, we are unable, unfortunately, to find space for your enclosed argument.

Sincerely yours, THE MANAGING EDITOR.

It pays to advertise! At least, so runs a little refrain sung day after day by the business office. Their song appears in the form of a one-line advertisement scattered throughout the paper. How well it pays may be seen in still another

case at hand. This time the officer of the Board of Health came to us for help in a campaign for cleaning up back yards. He brought a number of photographs showing the disgraceful condition of back yards—principally in the business district. He went to the publisher himself, and the publisher sent for me. We three looked over the photographs together.

"Splendid," said the publisher. "We'll run a good story on it Sunday. It's just the kind of a story we like. It shows the people we are alive to civic pride!"

Friends of the Paper

The publisher himself picked out three of the best photographs; that is, three showing the worst conditions. Then he turned to the city official.

"Now tell us where these back yards are," he said, "so that we can actually describe the condition. Let us begin with this one," and the publisher picked out what he considered the worst of all.

"That is behind the Jones store," said the city official.

The publisher put the Jones photograph in the discard.

"No," he said, "we can't use that one. The Jones store is a friend of the paper."

A friend in this case meant a good advertiser.

So instead of the Jones back yard the publisher chose another one, and the following Sunday we gave up half a page to "The Disgraceful Condition of Our City Back Yards!" We mentioned names and, besides giving a pen picture of the scenes, showing actual photographs!

On looking over the page on that Sunday morning my eye was attracted to a little business office card at the bottom of the page, which read:

"It Pays to Advertise!"

Meanwhile, maybe you wonder what kind of a paper I am getting out? Needless to say, in all these ten years I have done the best I could under the circumstances. I am still doing the best I can—for a man who can't quarrel with his bread and butter.

Three Cardinal Principles

If you remember, when I took charge the publisher said he wanted me to keep in mind three things:

First, a clean family paper.

Second, a certain moral responsibility to the public.

Third, a paper that takes an active part in city affairs.

Now, as a matter of fact, do we print a clean paper? A paper that can be read by the younger people in any self-respecting family?

No doubt if you were to see our news columns you would feel easy in this respect, and yet as I look over the issue now on the desk before me I see, side by side with our carefully edited news, column after column of specialist and patent medicine advertising, in which an appeal is made not only to men and women but to boys and girls. All the quack remedies are there—all of those upon which Collier's turned the searchlight of truth! Everything, from Pinkham to Pink Pills for Pale People, or Post of Postum. There's a reason, of course. There's a reason also for the specialist advertising—the "loss of vitality" and "derangement" reading matter, upon which our readers, young and old, may feast their eyes day after day, year in and year out. Is such an association altogether without its effect upon boys and girls? Is such disgusting reading matter fit for a clean family paper? If my police reporters were deliberately to smuggle in this kind of writing I would have them discharged on the spot. But there—all this advertising is financial food for the business office, and, of course, one can't quarrel with his bread and butter.

Moral responsibility?

Believe me, we try to keep in mind the duty we owe the public, and yet again, as I look over this latest copy now before me, I further see a few things against which, if I had the opportunity, I would warn any one of our 50,000 readers.

In the first place, let us pass over without comment the special columns devoted to clairvoyants, palmists, card readers, fortune-tellers, etc. They are all with us, but compared with the out-and-out crooks, these fakers are a simple lot. Instead, let us look upon the page opposite, where we have the display advertising of three loan sharks—those sleek human ferrets who suck out the lifeblood of the poor. You know them?