

The Alberta Star

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APRIL 2, 1909.

Thoughts from Lancashire

As a person walks down the gangway to the docks or on to the Prince's Landing Stage in Liverpool, the surroundings seem very little different to those of New York or Boston. Liverpool being made of a great variety of people, and as it is in almost daily communication by boat from America, as well as with other great countries, naturally takes upon itself a cosmopolitan air, causing one to feel quite at home. About the first thing to attract the attention of a stranger is double-decked or "two storey" tram (street) car. It is needless to tell you, that for a person unaccustomed to seeing such things, it causes a smile, if not a hearty

laugh to see the conductor bobbing from side to side, and from one deck to the other, up and down a flight of circular stairs of six to eight steps. Just imagine running up and down these steps several hundred times a day eating your meals while punching tickets, and watching the passengers off and on, putting in ten to twelve hours steady labor, often walking a mile or two to and from work, and you will have a mental picture of some of the energy expended by a Lancashire tram conductor. Wages 9 to 13 cents per hour.

Did you ask if these men made any honest (?) side money? Well very little I assure you. Instead of ringing a tally bell for each fare, a numbered ticket is given after it is properly punched indicating the distance you are allowed to ride; further, inspectors may enter the car at any minute to see that all have tickets and that they are properly punched. A penny ride here is equal to a five cent ride in "home land," but no transfers are given. I have concluded that the system here is pretty well adapted to conditions. An attempt was lately made in Liverpool to have first and second class trams, but I suppose the "broadening" spirit from the Western shore was too much in evidence, so you now may be "privileged" to ride on the same tram car with a distinguished man, if you catch your chance; but be very careful you don't speak to him, unless you are the sole possessor of a silk hat, grave countenance and broadcloth frock or you may be looked at with the expression of a young lawyer listening to a school-girl's views on woman's suffrage.

As we stumble off the tram and dodge a few lorries (wagons), motor cars and cabs, we may be ushered into or onto a wagonette, being a strongly built bus with side or cross seats to hold fifteen to thirty persons, and go rattling down the rough stone paved streets. The driver, a typical old English stage-coachman, sits

perched on an elevated seat, and with all of the dignified air to be mustered by one of his occupation, tells you how many generations of coachmen were his ancestors, of his wonderful power to hold down the same job, interrupted by an occasional "Hip, hay, hay!" to warn pedestrians that "somebody's" coming. Usually three horses, one as a spike or three abreast, draw these human freight cars, the appearance in Cardston of which, would send up a roar of laughter from young and old, unaccustomed to seeing such. As we come in front of the great station, our famous old driver produces the usual itching palm possessed by 99 per cent of the public working people of this country, and of course it can only be scratched to ease with nothing less than a "threp'n'y bit" (6c). Tipping is an imposition and nuisance in this part, and I learn it is worse in the continental countries, while on further east in Turkey and Arabia, tips are not tips, but amounts set and exacted, and I suppose if I were surrounded by a set of Turks, as one of my friends was while in the Holy Land, I would "tip" and freely too, rather than be "tipped" and perhaps "topped."

My first sight of the R. R. coaches, or carriages as they are called here, caused another smile, but that soon gave place to reasonable thought, and I saw the necessity of having cars that could be loaded and unloaded in one to two minutes and out of the station again. Immense crowds are handled here in short time. Imagine 50,000 persons coming into one of our Western American stations between 4 and 10 a. m. and leaving on the same day from 8 to 12 p. m. That is not an unusual occurrence here. Last fall at Wigan, during the colliers holiday, more than 65,000 persons left Wigan district and

city and spent the day in Southport, about twenty miles distant. No accidents were heard of more than the usual skull bruises of a few of the many overloaded human beer carriers, with which this shire and country is burdened. I may add here, that it is quite a common occurrence to see female "brawls" on the streets among the poorer classes, and besides men, women and even girls will be seen staggering in and out of public houses (saloons) one of which you can find on almost every corner and two in the middle of the block. I counted thirty-nine on one street about two blocks long, in Wigan, the other day. That was in a "poor" district where poverty abounds.

As I step into the carriage I find myself cooped in with five to seven more persons and the door closed behind us. Should a person faint between stations we would have to stop the train to get water, and then it may have to come from the engine. Of course there are some corridor cars for long (?) journeys, as from London to Glasgow, but usually each coach is divided into five compartments, each separate from the other. One of my acquaintances described it as "being shut up like cattle," but I am beginning to feel quite at home in them. But I suppose we could get used to a cattle car if we wanted to. The question was asked me one day, "Why do you missionaries always ride third class?" I simply answered, "Because there is no fourth."

The coaches are very poorly made when compared with our magnificent ones at home, but of course are made in greater numbers. I have seen a train of empty ones more than seven miles long, so it wouldn't do for each coach in that instance to cost two to five thousand dollars. The locomotive machinery is good and the road beds excellent and well cared for. All of the construction work is hard to beat and I don't think it can be out-classed anywhere. Of course we must take into consideration

that England has less than 25,000 miles of track, while America, or U. S. alone has near ten times that number. The bridges, viaducts, etc., are built for future generations as well as the present. We Westerners can take a lesson here; no lumber shacks and wooden bridges. The old Romans set the example to the Britisher and he wisely followed it. The step previous to correcting a fault is to find it. I have almost concluded that the right place is England for the English and the West for the Westerner. Of course we will welcome to our Golden West, any of the right class, and the qualifications are honesty, sobriety and frugality, coupled with no class or creed distinctions no matter how wealthy or poor. "A man's a man for a' that," and should be treated as such. Money talks, 'tis said, but sometimes it babbles, or attempts to coerce. Yes, we want moneyed men in

the West but we want them to have the above qualifications as well. Class distinction, I am told, is of less evidence in this city than it was a decade or so ago. May true manhood continue to assert itself, here and everywhere else in which similar conditions prevail. Before closing, I commend those who have taken a stand for prohibition, the present topic, or next best, local option, and trust that we as a community, if possible as a Province, can adopt the first named to the everlasting benefit of all colors, creeds and ages within our borders. Such movements I watch with interest and am in hearty accord with any cause that tends to our mutual, temporal and moral aid now and for the future. Jos. Y. Card. 36 Romer Rd. Liverpool. March 18, 1909.

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Burton's Variety Store

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