



"There's only one 't' in cat—unless it's a tom-cat."

THE NEWSPAPER REPORTER

Typical Stories Concerning His Work and Play.

By W. A. CLARKE

MEETING many people and being at many meetings and other gatherings, the newspaper reporter has many interesting and amusing experiences. Otherwise, also, his work is of an unusual nature, and so it is not surprising that he sometimes figures in queer incidents.



Speak to the choir boys?

Police courts are the scene of many good stories concerning reporters. In Toronto's police court one morning a woman who had given evidence in her own defence was told that she could go free. But she lingered in the witness box, and getting the attention of Magistrate Denison, she indicated, with a jerk of her thumb, the desk where the reporters were sitting, and she asked, "Kin I speak to the choir boys, yer Worship?" The court laughed, and the name stuck to the reporters for a long time.

Reporters don't need to work nearly as hard in reporting the afternoon courts as in covering the morning sessions. One afternoon one of them was sitting far forward on one chair and with his feet on another. Suddenly two other reporters pulled on the chairs from under the lazy one. The fall of the stretched out man caused much noise. In the hush that followed, the magistrate said quietly, "I've often heard of the 'liberty of the press,' but this is the first time that I've had any experience with it."

At times, when the pressure of work is not very great, reporters on some papers do considerable "kidding."

"Is there a hyphen in street car?" asked a reporter on an evening paper, while writing a story early in the morning before the day's rush had begun.

"Yes—if the car has a trailer," answered the man at the next desk.

"If it has a trailer you'd better use a piece of coupling," said another reporter.

A fourth said, "And it might be well to put in a gong and put on a fender."

The reporter who thus got a lot of "joshing" came back at one of his tormentors a few days later. The latter had asked for the spelling of a very simple word, and the former gave it and then said, "Also, there's only one 't' in cat—unless it's a tom-cat."

Sometimes a reporter is threatened with rough handling by somebody who has a grudge against his paper. A few months ago, at a municipal election meeting in Toronto, a man who had been nominated to run for an aldermanic seat walked over to the reporters' table when the meeting was closing and asked fiercely, "Is there anybody here

from the Evening —?" The reporter from that paper didn't need to answer, for the others, expecting fun, promptly indicated him. "Your paper has been very unfair to me," said the angry man. "You've said a lot of things you shouldn't say." For a time it looked as if the reporter would be compelled to defend himself by using his fists, but some of the spectators explained to the angry one that a reporter was not responsible for the editorial opinions expressed in the paper. And the reporter jokingly tried to persuade the kicker to "go down and lick the editor."

City editors have had some surprising experiences with reporters who didn't fit into the work. The city editor of a certain Toronto evening paper hurried into the reporters' room one day when the rush was about at its worst. The only reporter who was not busy at the time was eating his lunch. "Call up —," said the city editor, who wanted to get an interview in a hurry. Then he nearly fainted, the reporter's answer being, "All right; wait till I finish my sandwich."

On another occasion the reporter who has been just referred to gave himself away, much to the secret amusement of the city editor. The reporter had stated that an afternoon police court case which he had not reported would not appear in the other papers.

"It won't?" asked the city editor, whose suspicions were beginning to be confirmed. "It won't," said the reporter. "You see, we always arrange among ourselves as to which cases we won't report." The city editor had hard work to keep from smiling at such a confession, but he kept his face straight and said, "Well, you're to write all that happens, and I'll arrange as to what isn't to go in."

A reporter in Detroit, who didn't take life too seriously, often amused the other members of the staff by his funny remarks.

He had one pet saying that always made a hit. Each pay-day, as he came out of the business office, he would hold his pay envelope as high over his head as he could reach, and would say, "Ha, ha! Fooled 'em another week!"

REPORTERS—contrary to the general opinion—don't get princely salaries, and in many instances they are not good hands at saving money. So it can easily be imagined that borrowing "a quarter to go to lunch," or "a bill to see me through till pay-day," is not an unheard-of thing among them.

A Toronto reporter, who owed money to his tailor and other people, and who usually had an I. O. U. in his pay envelope, borrowed "a five-spot" from another reporter. A considerable time passed, and the creditor used to jokingly harass the debtor, while the latter would pretend



"All right; wait till I finish my sandwich."

"Ha, ha! Fooled 'em another week."

to be mightily insulted and would jokingly threaten to never pay up.

One day the creditor—still jokingly—became scornful.

"You're a nice kind of fellow—keeping me out of money that you know I need," he said. "I should think you would have honour enough to pay your just debts."

"Say, old man," said the debtor, smiling, "I have honour enough, but I haven't money enough."

It was a neat touch, and the creditor said, "That's a good one. For that I'll not bother you for the money for a whole week."

AT another time, the man who had borrowed the five dollars—and who by then had paid it back—loaned the other fellow a quarter.

Soon afterwards the other reporters got together and formed an amusing boycott against the man who had loaned the quarter. They pretended that he had been guilty of some journalistic sin, and they made it pretty lonely for him.

About lunch time on the day of the boycott the lonely one wakened up to the fact that he hadn't enough money to buy a meal. However, he had to do some work before he could go on a borrowing tour, and he found it necessary to speak, concerning the work, to the man who had borrowed the quarter. The latter didn't answer a question, and when it was repeated he put his finger to his closed lips, smiled and shook his head, to indicate that the boycott was still on.

Then a bright idea struck the lonely one. He hadn't intended asking for the borrowed quarter, but he saw a chance to get even with one of the boycotting party.

So he shoved in front of the silent one a piece of copy paper on which he had written, "All right. But if diplomatic relations have really been severed, perhaps you'll drag your jeans and let me have that quarter you owe me."

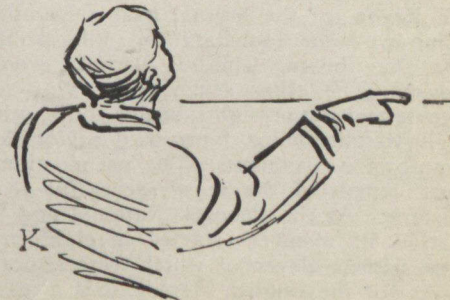
The silent one handed out the quarter and said, "That's where you got even all right. I guess I'd better start speaking to you again."

Usually when a reporter leaves a paper the staff give him a present and insist that he make a speech. Some months ago, when a young lady left a Toronto paper, the boys didn't want to ask her to make a speech. And, as she was pretty well fixed financially, they weren't sure that it would be well to give her an umbrella, a fountain pen, or any other present that they could afford.

However, they got out of the difficulty nicely. They clipped from the daily papers pictures of automobiles, pianos, stoves, bottles of beer and many other things. These they pasted on a big sheet of paper, and under each was written the name of some member of the staff as donor.

And the lady was as much delighted as if she had been given a real present.

It should not be imagined that reporters have nothing to do but tell stories and "kid" each other. The fun is merely incidental to the day's work. Such a strenuous task as reporting requires fun on the side, and so the men joke about even their work. One reporter used to say that he covered "the cattle market and other sports."



"Is there anybody here from the Evening —?"