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Business Department: 3671, Editors: 3672, Reporters: 3673, News Room.

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THE LONDON ADVERTISER COMPANY, LIMITED.

London, Ont., Monday, July 14.

Italy in the Forefront

Italy is rapidly "coming back," arriving, as the French put it. Before the war Italy seemed little more than a picturesque ruin, not as lifeless as Spain, but like Spain, respected and interesting, mainly because of a glorious past. Today Italy is one of the five powers dominating world affairs, possessing great military potency and a matchless position for the achievement of her aspirations commercially and industrially. The Italians have shown admirable aggressiveness and promptitude in going after a place in the sun, whatever may be the opinion as to their methods. They have made themselves masters of the Adriatic and have boldly forced themselves into Eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor affairs, spheres of influence in which they hitherto had little part.

Italy, however, proposes to expand far beyond the immediate neighborhood, and to this end has put in a request for a concession at Shanghai. Italy, like everybody else, desires to get a good footing in the world's markets, and China offers unlimited possibilities. Italy has been charged with flouting the principles of the league of nations and of selfishly "grabbing while the grabbing is good," but there is no doubt she has to be reckoned with as a live wire, enterprising, ambitious and with the courage, tenacity and strength to back up her demands and foreign policies.

Inspect the Stable Doors

There are always a lot of dangerous horses waiting for the moment when carelessness or chance-taking will leave the barn door open. And the moment the stableman's back is turned, away they dash, striking with the cruel shoes of tragedy and leaving white and black crepe on a succession of doorways.

The wise men and newspapers all know what to do after the barn door has been closed again. But they have never yet brought back a life with all their preaching. They never spoke before an Iroquois Theatre fire or a General Slocum disaster or before a boy walked into a river hole or another pulled the trigger because he did not think it was loaded.

So that occasionally it is well to issue warnings in general to the public, to the children, to the parents, to the drivers of those juggernaut motor cars that are as tractable as an elephant until the off-guard moments reveals them all as rogues at heart. Of course, we all feel that we can take certain chances—carefully, in our case. But it is quite as probable that some day our names will appear in the newspapers, ours or our children's or the children of someone else.

Are you in a business or do you engage in occupations that with all your precautions contain the possibilities of disaster? Do you let matters run into routine as to whether the fire escape ropes are really rotten, or the piece of track "apparently" free from split rails? Are your exit doors working properly? Do your employees know what to do if anything happens? Do you accept the fireproof dictum about our schools, or do you make sure that you can get out the children in case of a crisis? Is that insulation on the wires quite safe? A thousand other barn doors need watching.

Why not mend the hinges and examine the bolts on all of them every once in a while, out of season, before disaster may come? Every day the press is filled with instances of the lack of just a little care in conserving the lives of human beings. We can always see how the barn door was opened—afterward.

Searching the Shallows

The effort of the high cost of living commission was a searching of the shallow places. The lead lines were cast out only when it seemed that the committee would not be kept too long on the job. Whenever it appeared that the lines were going deep, the committee evidently believed that the depths need not be fathomed and the hurried sounding of the troubled ocean revealed, according to these marine surveyors, a clear course, without reefs and other dangers to navigation.

Witnesses called from the great companies which held the magic lamp of governmental influence during the war, were not kept on the stand for more than an hour or two. The attitude of the spokesmen of the committee seemed to be sympathetic, and when a Toronto editor who had questioned the cleverness of the committee when matched with Sir Joseph Flavelle's right-hand man, appeared before the committee, he was given the roughest time of all those who appeared.

The situation demanded some man like

O'Connor to delve into the practices of these companies. However he might have disliked the task, it is practically certain that the support of public opinion would have prevented interference with his methods. As it was, everyone, including the company that made more than 300 per cent profits, "got away with it," and must have blushed at the implied eulogies to their business acumen expressed in the report.

There was no one connected with the committee to get at the facts. It suggested a vague sort of Chamber of Commerce to investigate matters. But the last session has departed, the members have hurried home and the high cost of living, so the people are told, is largely of their own making. The amassing of vast fortunes by means of extraordinary war conditions is given the seal of approval.

An election would reveal that the people would take back all but a reasonable proportion of profits made from war contracts by means of rascally combinations and price control.

It is howled from some quarters that profiteering is simply awful in England. Yes, and some Canadian profiteers have been attracted by it. But are we to be led from the scent by this kind of herring drawing? We all know that there are rascals as great in England as in Canada. Perhaps, because Uncle Sam made an example of some profiteers, there has been less of that sort of thing during the war across the line than in any other country. Specialists like Col. Allison in the shell game, as well as Government favorites like Grant Hugh Brown, came across to this side of the line to be at the feast. One of them has been placed under arrest by Uncle Sam. Canada has never arrested a single grafter since war began. She has been forced to turn them from the House of Commons, but it was more in sorrow than in anger.

An Early Closing Appeal

To the Editor of The Advertiser:

Having had over forty years' experience in a retail store I have seen many changes and reforms in the method of doing business during that period, and my knowledge thus gained may be of some value in the much-discussed problem of Saturday early closing.

An old friend of mine whose grocery store was on Dundas street during those good old days when London, with a population of less than 2,000, had not less than fifty barrooms privileged to stay open until 11 o'clock Saturday nights, kept his store open for the many orders which came from the homeward-bound bar patrons. He thought that if he closed at an earlier hour this trade would be lost to a more accommodating grocer. At last he awoke—came to himself and said no matter what the loss might be he would close his store at a more reasonable hour Saturday night. He did so, and never missed the bar-room patrons' orders. They were replaced by a better class of customers.

Again, in those good old days, the errand boys and junior clerks came to work as early as 7:30 to take down the old wooden shutters, sweep out the store, etc. They then proceeded to hang and pile up goods on the outside of the store. By 8 o'clock the senior clerks and often the boss himself were on hand and took part in wlaying the passersby and corraling them into the store.

On market days a boy was sent to litter the market square with bills, and these methods were then thought the way to do business. It took a long time to teach these merchants that attractive window-dressing was far better than a display of goods on the outside of the store, and that persistent newspaper advertising is the magnetic trade-getter.

In the days above mentioned the store did not close until 7 p.m., and the smartest trade of the day was done between the hours of 6 and 7 o'clock. When the 6 o'clock closing was first mooted, to do so the average merchant thought he would be throwing away a good hour's business, but after three weeks of 6 o'clock closing he forgot that he had ever kept open until 7 o'clock. And Saturday night closing in these days—well, in many stores an old time up to midnight. Also the opening up of new goods, etc., was done after store closing, and worse yet on the Sabbath behind closed shutters. Many a merchant pored over his books and papers (he just thought he had to, having no time throughout the week, he was so busy). And what was the result of this strenuous life? Well, for the best of reasons none of these merchants rode in limousines; no, and many of them could not afford a one-horse chaise. And the cemetery headstones tell that many of these men never reached the age of 40 years.

Now from this perhaps too lengthy epistle, I appeal to the retail merchants of today for the early Saturday closing. What? Are you afraid to act for yourself in this matter—are you afraid you may lose some of your business? The chances are you are overestimating your loss. And know this—the worthwhile things a man does in his lifetime are done with sacrifice.

Saturday night early closing. Do it now and be glad.
HARRY PENNY,
537 Colborne Street.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Wilson's present task is to convince the American Senate that he "put one over" over there.

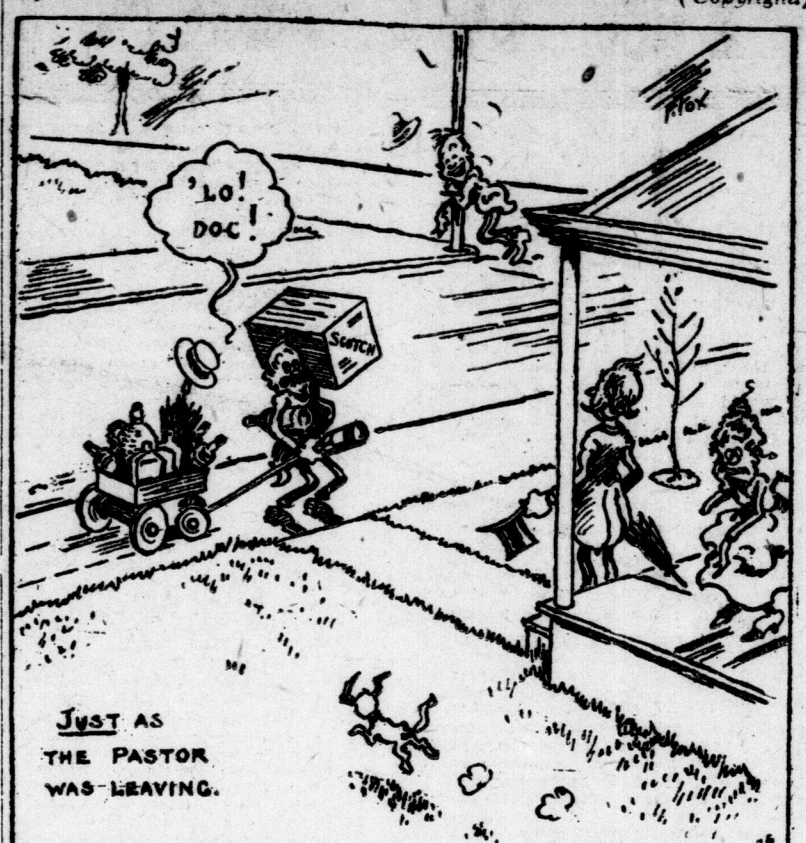
Probably the ex-kaiser will consider as the most stinging insult he has yet received the declarations of some English newspapers that he isn't worth bothering about to the extent of a trial.

In Chicago during the last few days a young girl entered a lawyer's office and shot him dead, while her sister, who furnished the revolver, stood by. The murderess is a giggling schoolgirl at the inquest, and confident in the plea of the unwritten law. The state, however, has had to deal with so many killings by women that it is asking for the death penalty. If the prisoner were an ugly, elderly matron there might be a chance, but no jury will convict while eyes that make men's heads swim are levelled upon its members.

UNFORTUNATE INCIDENTS

By FONTAINE FOX.

(Copyright.)



Of course, Henry had to breeze home from that Auction Sale of wines and liquors—

The Advertiser's Daily Short Story

(Copyright, 1919, by the McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)

THE TROUBLE WITH TOMMY.

[By Will T. Ames.]

The trouble with Tommy Ellis showed itself from the first day he went to school. It was a little school, and there were just fifty hooks on the walls of the boys' "entry," with fifty-one boys to hang their hats on them. Half a dozen of the new boys were younger and smaller than Tommy, who had reached the ripe age of 7; but Tommy it was who had to lay his cap on the floor in the corner because he let the other little fellows grab while he held his cap on the door and trying to put other boys. But somebody's had to go there, and so it was Tommy's.

It wasn't because he was slow or stupid that Tommy trouble that time on took the dust of his schoolmates, and later on the last choice of whatever was being given out in the way of favors or opportunities. On the contrary, Tommy was brighter and cleverer than the majority of boys. But he was utterly lacking in self-assertiveness.

The only occasions on which Tommy's tongue and pen were in time to be ready by the teacher, when she was showing off her pupils to visiting parents or committees, was when he was the only child in the room who knew the answer to the question. If one or two or a dozen of the others were prepared with the desired information they were all sure to beat Tommy to it.

There was a little girl whom Tommy worshipped in his secret soul. One day her hat blew off. She was the school beauty, the boys put chase after the hat. Tommy, as usual, got started last, having been bumped out of his stride by his own schoolmate. It was a freak wind and of a sudden the hat struck its course and came straight at Tommy and missed him by a hair's breadth. Tommy headed it off, and all blushes, took a single step toward his admirer. Then another boy grabbed the hat from Tommy and himself bestowed it upon its owner, with the air of having rescued it from the piddle instead of purloining it from the abashed Tommy's worshipful hand. The little girl, whose name was Annabelle Hester, was smiling benignly upon the other boy, whose name was Floyd Cushman, and never even gave Tommy a glance.

And so it was. At twenty Tommy was holding down the worst possible job in the gift of the superintendent of the one-horse interurban trolley company, a job which he would take and which necessitated his getting up at an unbecomingly early hour in the morning, and walking a mile to the station, and then taking the car to the barn at night, with all his leisure time in the middle of the day—and what was worse, he was to make of the hours from ten until three.

The use that Tommy made of them was to think, hopefully, with Annabelle Hester whose hat he saved from being muddled when he was a boy. Annabelle was a stenographer in the town now, but she still lived in the suburban village and very often rode out on the car on which Tommy collected the fares.

She was always friendly and nice to Tommy, and now and then he ventured to talk to her a little. But now and then, because Tommy fancied Annabelle seemed a little nervous and ill at ease when she was alone with him, he didn't just care about getting too intimate with a conductor. Another reason was that Floyd Cushman, who was in college now and going to be a lawyer, rode out with Annabelle whenever he came back to the village, which was pretty often, and quite took possession of her. Yes, Tommy felt altogether "out of it" with Annabelle.

Then the war came. Tommy went as a buck private and came back as one. He wasn't it appeared, of non-com material, though an intelligent, studious and conscientious soldier. Floyd Cushman, jamming his way into the attention of his superiors at Plattsburg and later in France, attained to a captaincy before he met his finish above Verdun.

When Tommy was demobilized they gave him back his old run, and it was the third evening that he saw Annabelle Hester. The girl had climbed to the platform of the car and was on the point of entering, when she glanced up and saw Tommy. She went white, then rosy. Why, Tommy—Tommy Ellis! she exclaimed. "You on earth! Did you get back? I never heard—"

Annabelle was becoming inarticulate.

Tommy Ellis had been through what no man can go through and still be quite as he was before. Much of his old self-consciousness was gone. "Annabelle," he said in a manly, direct way, "I'm dreadfully sorry about Floyd. I'm the only one you know who was there when it happened. All the way back I was thinking you'd want to know, and that the first thing I'd do would be to tell you. If you'll let me know when, I'll get off and come over to your house and tell you."

"Do, Tommy, come tomorrow in your off time. I'm going to be home. And I want to hear everything," Tommy didn't notice the odd, studying look the girl gave him. But he promised to go, and next day he went.

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