Three Minutes of Fiction Fun

SHORT SHORT STORY

Majolica Vase

By L. T. McFARLAND

HARRY LANG had come prepared to spend fifty dollars for the vase. He sat nervously watching the auctioneer, the people, and the door and prayed that Marjory Higgins (that horrid spinster who seldom missed an auction, and always outbid him for his treasures) had broken a leg or something so she couldn't appear this time when the Majolica vase was to be put up on the block.

He strained his neck for the hundredth time toward the entrance. He wondered if her knowledge of antiques covered old pottery. Maybe not. Maybe his auction-sparring enemy didnt' know a Majolica vase from a beer mug. Yet the very thought of those snapping eyes and that crisp sanguine voice sent his blood soaring.

* * *

"What am I bid for this Majolica vase? A rare antique! Rarest thing in this room!" the auctioneer's well-oiled voice boomed forth while his free hand gestured over wash tubs, kraut shovels, and the toil-worn carpet sweepers.

There it was! Harry looked about cautiously and held his breath for the sheer beauty of it.

"Who will start the bid?" the auctioneer coaxed.

"Five dollars." Harry called out. The girl was nowhere in sight.

"Thank you, sir, five dollars. Who will make it ten?" Thus the bidding proceeded until thirty was reached.

* * *

The crowd was swaying restlessly. Interest was on the wane. Harry took a plunge. "Forty," he finally said. Now the vase was practically on his lap, but the auctioneer held on. "Forty—forty—is all I am offered—who'll make it fifty—?"

"Fifty," called a clear voice near the door.

Suffering cats! It was her voice. The crowd turned en masse to see Marjory Higgins make her way up the aisle to a spot almost directly in front of Harry. She stood there, confidently, already picturing her proud exit with the vase in her possession.

Harry ground his teeth and muttered, Sixty."

"Seventy-five" the crisp voice came back at once as Miss Higgins tossed a swift challenge back in Harry's direction.

"Eighty," Harry took the challenge, and this time Marjory flushed and seemed embarrassed.

"Eighty," teased the cryer. "Eighty I am offered. Make it eighty-five, Miss?"

The girl nodded. "Eighty-five." Harry was really seeing red.

"Eighty-five it is. Now make it ninety, Mister, make it ninety. Don't let the lady outbid you."

* * *

Harry sensed that the crowd to a man was on the lady's side and were inwardly rooting for her, enjoying her sportsmanship—so he raised up and shouted, "Ninety."

Now he had it. The auctioneer scolded and pleaded and begged but Marjory was immovable. She must be pouting. She heard the "Going—going—g—"

Then it happened. Marjory Higgins whirled about and faced Harry Lang. She was trembling. "You cheap skate!" she shouted. "You penny pincher! It's not the money, but the principle of the thing that burns me up. All this embarrassment over a measly nickel or two. Ninety cents—well you don't get it for ninety. I bid one dollar. So there! And now that the vase is mine, I'd like nothing better than the privilege of breaking it over your head."

* * *

She stepped up to the stand and snatching the vase from the for-once speechless auctioneer, threw it with all her strength at Harry Lang's dome. Lucky for Harry he had made his record in football catching forward passes. A moment later it lay neatly tucked away under his arm.

"Touchdown." someone shouted and the crowd surged forward pushing Harry Lang until he was face to face with his assailant.

"Thanks, Madam. Thanks very much for the vase—the clerk will be along to collect your bid," he managed as the crowd pressed up. And in the riot that followed, Harry edged his way outside.

Cream of the Tokyo Baby Crop—These robust Japanese youngsters are part of the group of 25 recently picked as the healthiest babies in Tokyo. Mothers pose proudly with their sturdy offspring, who regard the cameraman with questioning "shoe button" eyes and would rather go to work on their prizes—sugar candy.

First Silent Plant Developed By U.S.

Aeronautical engineers have combined all known noise-silencing devices to produce the first "silent" airplane.

One of aviation's major developments in recent years is the way 200 experts, at Langley Field, Va., for a demonstration, describe the new ship.

Taken up above 300 feet the plane made only slightly more noise than a glider. Its five-bladed propeller, which revolves at a slower speed than the conventional ones but propels the ship at a higher speed, and an engine muffler contribute to its "silence".

It was pointed out that complaints about the noise near airports not only have caused adjoining property to decline in value, but also have brought a number of lawsuits and resulted in many metropolitan fields being closed.

Do you suffer MONTHLY FEMALE PAIN?

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VOICE OF THE PRESS

Slippery Money

Scientists are now making mercury out of gold. We hope this doesn't mean that mercury is going to become the new standard unit of money. The present one, as most of us have discovered, slips through the fingers easily enough.

—Kitchener Record.

Must Be Vigilant

Small children who dash out from the sidewalk after a ball or in pure exuberance of spirits, often from behind a parked car, unknowingly subject themselves to great peril. Vigilant motorists on city streets always drive with this sort of emergency in mind.

—Ottawa Journal.

Must Have 'Em

Planning an overall parade to publicize a buyers' strike, members of the Vancouver Housewives' Consumers' League are presumably busy shopping for the most attractive overalls they can find, at any price.

—Windsor Star.

From Bottom Up

The Massachusetts community of Newburyport has abandoned its month-old 10 percent price cut because suppliers failed to co-operate. All other similar efforts to reduce prices must fail unless the reductions are first made by the manufacturers and wholesalers.

Better Wait First

Time saved by crashing traffic is often lost waiting for the ambulance.

—Guelph Mercury.

Radio-Minded

The small boy who was taken to the country for the first time saw a spider spinning a web between two tall reeds and told his father that a bug was putting up a wireless.

—St. Thomas Times-Journal.

Neglected Language

A Toronto educationist has let the cat out of the bay by referring to the "five languages now taught" in our secondary schools: He names them as Latin, Greek, French, German, Spanish. This explains why so many graduates have an imperfect command of English, which is apparently not taught at all.

—Peterborough Examiner.

Couldn't Do Better

Newsweek Magazine opines that: "Japanese closely associated with Hirohito are carefully studying the British monarchy as a model for the Emperor's future under the new constitution." They could do no better.

—Stratford Beacon-Herald

Ignorance Is Bliss

Everybody likes to be humbugged once in a while, so long as they don't know how it's done.

—Guelph Mercury.

Then Education Begins

Schooling is what you get at school, but education is what the rough old world gives you when schooldays are over.

—Brandon Sun.

Lewis Asks Boost For Mineworkers

According to the latest available figures the soft-coal miners were averaging about $69.50 a week, says the The New York Herald Tribune. This is the highest average for manual workers in any of the country's major industries. The steelworkers, for instance, with their recent wage increases, have an average wage of about $55.50 a week, the auto workers one of about $59.

Yet Mr. John Lewis now insists that his mineworkers get a boost of 35 cents an hour, or else, though the steelworkers and others have been content with one of 15 cents or less and the Northern and Western coal operators have offered 15 cents.

Approximately 45,000,000 people immigrated to the United States in the 100 years from 1831 to 1931.

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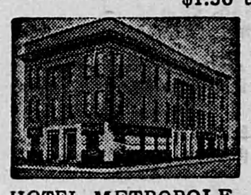


HOTEL METROPOLE

NIAGARA FALLS

OPP. — C.N.R. STATION

FUNNY BUSINESS By Hershberger

"I only have one dunce cap!"

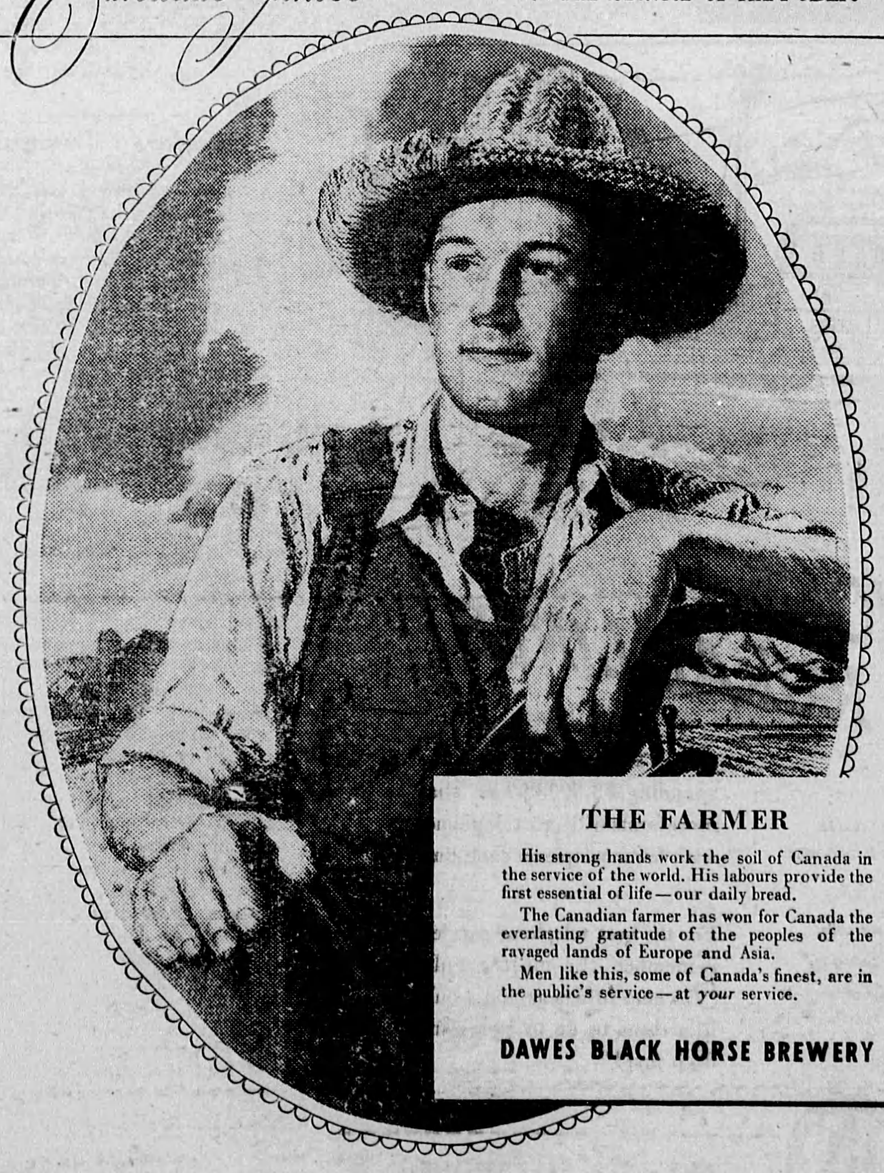
MOPSY by GLADYS PARKER

Mounties To Get Back Their Horses

Return of the high-stepping RCMP mounts is announced. It is certain to win popuar acclaim. With the force resorting more and more to the use of fast patrol cars and planes in tracking down the West's "bad men", it had been feared that the highly-trained police horse was on its way out.

In the minds of people most everywhere the mounted Redcoat is a symbol of law and order. Without the horse, the symbol is definitely weakened. The pages of history cannot be so easily and should not be so harshly blurred. Progress is fine but so is tradition.

Canada's Finest IN THE SERVICE OF THE PUBLIC



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His strong hands work the soil of Canada in the service of the world. His labours provide the first essential of life—our daily bread.

The Canadian farmer has won for Canada the everlasting gratitude of the peoples of the ravaged lands of Europe and Asia.

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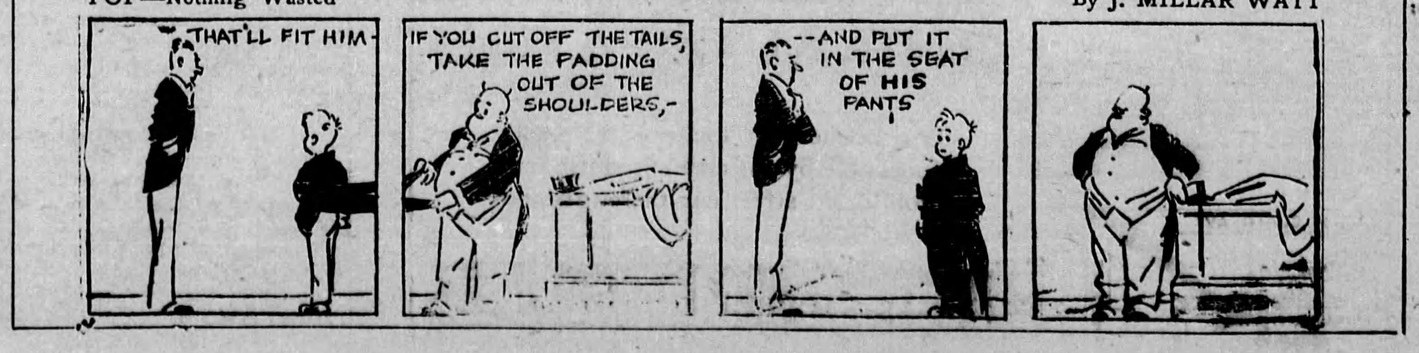
One of a series of advertisements in tribute to those Canadians in the service of the public

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