That Port Hope Peterboro Flyer

Muds didn't appreciate the railroad tracks as much as her children did. . . . At first she complained quite a lot about the cinders and the noise. But the little train only maundered north of Peterboro and back, twice daily, passing at 7 a.m., noon, 1 and 5 p.m., and she soon got so she used the din to tell the time by.

As a timepiece the railroad was at least as reliable as the grandfather's clock, with brass comets and planets sailing across its enamel face, that stood tall as a tree in the front hall. Grandpa Wilson, who had passed this heirloom on to us, used to say that when its hands pointed to half-past ten and it rang six, it was really twenty minutes to four in the afternoon. Considering its great age, Grandpa's clock kept fairly good time; it struck all the quarter-hours with a Big-Bennish clang, preventing most visitors from closing an eye, — or anyway from keeping it closed for more than a few minutes. . . .

The main traffic of our train was devoted to milk and mail-orders, with occasional passengers—except on market days, when it was jammed. We youngsters soon became friendly with the two engineers and firemen, who were an accommodating crew and, like the conductors, always ready to drop everything and step down to help a farmer's wife with a baby or a basket of eggs. They often took us on a run in the cab with them and showed Bud and Jamie how to stoke the engine. Sometimes they even let us ride on the cowcatcher until Old Nosey Bones, the town undertaker brought this to Mud's attention. . . .

"I declare," cried Muds, "I don't see why you children can't just move normally instead of swinging from tree to tree like apes or riding on cowcatchers like . . . like . . . cows!"

There was really little danger, though, for the train could be flagged between stations anywhere along the line and it had to go slowly so not to miss the signals.

No matter what stories you have ever heard about provincial trains, ours could go one better. It was a regular little Baron Munchausen of a train. It ambled nonchalantly through the country trailing a film of its exploits from one country store to another, and thumbing its smokestack at precisionists who claimed that trains ought to start on time. When a botanically minded passenger spied through the window a rare fern or wild orchid, he had only to pull the alarm signal, and the miniature Juggernaut would obligingly stop while all on board got off and fell to picking wild flowers. I remember once we got home two hours late from a two-hour run because we had stopped to gather the tiger lilies that spread like wildfire along the embankment. Meanwhile, the Port Hope post-office bucks had been standing in line for mail and the station operator had wildly telegraphed to every dump to find out whether there had been an accident. Our arrival was a perfect scene for a comic opera, each traveler descending with a flaming bouquet and comparing it with his seatmate's. The Irish conductor was naively surprised at such ado about nothing. What did a bit of lost time matter anyway? "Sure, bad news travels too fast," he said, "and good news is the better fer anticipation." — From "Jam Yesterday," by Kathleen Cannell.

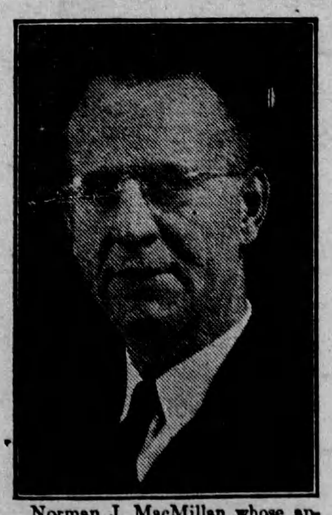
SHAW ADDS UP

A London society woman, having spent a large amount of money on beauty treatment, is reputed to have asked George Bernard Shaw, who recently celebrated his 93rd birthday, "How old do you think I look?"

G.B.S. (looking her up and down), "Judging by your teeth, I should say 18; by your blonde curls, 19, and by your attitude, 14."

The lady was flattered, and said, "Thanks for the compliment, but still, how old do I look?"

G.B.S., "Well, add together 18, 19 and 14, and the answer is 51."



Norman J. MacMillan whose appointment to be vice-president and general counsel of the Canadian National Railway Company and its subsidiaries, and the Canadian National West Indies Steamships Limited, has been announced by R. C. Vaughan, C.M.G., chairman and president of the system.

They Do—Smiling happily, Mr. and Mrs. Winthrop Gardiner, Jr., leave the Park Avenue Methodist Church, New York, after their wedding. The beautiful bride is skating star Sonja Henie. Her husband is a socialite aviation executive.

CHRONICLES OF GINGER FARM

by Gwendoline P. Clarke

"Next week," we say, "next week the rush will be over!" But it never is . . .you know how it is—you look forward to a little leisure when the threshings are finished, or the Exhibition over, or the canning and pickling has come to an end—and then as sure as you live something else crops up and you are just as busy as ever. We certainly are a busy lot of people, aren't we—yet it isn't always work that keeps us busy. Last week, for instance, I put in another day at the C.N.E—at least it was meant to be a day, but it was cold and wet so Daughter and I came home on the early bus instead of staying the evening.

Last time I was down I forgot about "Elsie" but this time I saw her. Not being quite sure where she was I approached a policeman. "Can you tell me where to find Elsie?" I inquired. "Yes, ma'am—straight down that road to your right," said the chief. And he never so much as smiled—nor did he say "Elsie who?"

There were very few people around at that time so my visit with Elsie and Beauregard was quite unhurried. What tickled me so much were the books in Elsie's library although, I can only remember two of the titles—one was "Calves, or a Career" and the other "Bulliver's Travels." I remarked to the girl handing out the leaflets—"You must have quite a time with the kiddies on this job." She laughed—"Oh, we do—it's lots of fun." And I could see she meant it.

One of the guards of the Hope Diamond meant what he said too, only his sentiments were a little different. "How do you like your job?" I asked him. "I don't," he answered, "I never expected to shout myself hoarse day after day like I'm doing."

But now it is all over for another year—the shouting and the tumult dies—the cattle go back to stables; the hens and ducks, turkeys and geese go home again to the quiet and comfort of their own familiar quarters, and quite possibly preen their feathers and tell their stay-at-home brothers and sisters what the Big Fair was like and how much they were admired. And the children are back to school again—which means there are now a few hours during the day when one can drive down the street without fear of running into some child wheeling crazily across the road. The scant attention children give to cars and trucks these days is terrible. It is a wonder more of the more not killed. I was driving down Main Street the other day, and there wasn't a person in sight, suddenly a boy about ten years old wheeled across the road right in front of me. He must have come out from between parked cars because one minute he wasn't there—and the next he was. I jammed on the brakes, missing the boy by inches. All he did was look at me casually and went on his way. It was lucky for him my brakes were good—as for me I had a headache for the rest of the day.

Unfortunately some accidents happen that are entirely unavoidable, but certainly children have little regard for their own safety or that of other people. I beleive one reason for it is that so many parents of today have never ridden bicycles themselves and do not realise the care that is needed. It seems to me no child should be allowed to own a bicycle unless he is first made to realise that he must obey traffic laws—or else. . . .

But I suppose there is danger everywhere. The farm appears to be the safest and most peaceful spot on earth — but we know it isn't. Just today Bob nearly had the tractor turn over on top of him — on the side of a hill where he was working up the wheat ground. Now the field is ready to sow so that danger is over for a few months anyway.

And there is the latest about Honey which might be of interest if relayed to the youngsters. I have told you how she picks up her supper dish and brings it into the house. Now she will also bring the mail up from the road if we give it to her. But today she tried a new stunt all by herself. I was working in the woodshed and Honey thought it might be a good idea to bring in her dish. "No," I said, "no supper yet." But not to be discouraged Honey took her dish into the kitchen. I called her back, took the dish away and put it behind me. "No," I said again, "no supper." Honey looked at me sorrowfully for a few minutes; then she came behind me, picked up the dish, walked down the steps and put the dish down outside exactly where she got it from. Then she came racing back, wagged her apology for a tail furiously, and said to me as well as she knew how: "There now, you see I did understand what you were talking about!"

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ANNE HIRST
Your Family Counselor

"Dear Anne Hirst: My stepdaughter was small when her Dad and I married. I loved her very much, and we were good pals through the years. All my plans centred about her . . . But when she was 16, an older man persuaded her to run away and marry him. (She told a neighbor she left because she was mad at me at the moment.)

"All this was 10 years ago. But we still can't seem to live it down. She has three precious children now, and I'd like to love them as my own—but I am not allowed to. She is so jealous! Both she and her husband find fault with things I say in ordinary conversation, and there is continuous friction.

"I feel that it is time to quit trying, just forget I have a stepdaughter, and forego these lovely children. All this makes my husband unhappy, too. I have told him to visit them when he wishes to, but to leave me out.

"Is there any happiness, or thanks, for—

An Unloved Stepmother?"

TRAGIC SITUATION

I well understand how hurt you are, and how baffled by your stepdaughter's continued unfriendliness.

Now that she is married and has these children, you might be enjoying the fruits of all your labor in raising her. Instead, you are shunted off, misunderstood, and made miserable. It is hard to account for, unless your belief that it is based on jealousy is correct. (I have not space to print all your letter.) I consider it unlikely that her runaway marriage was the result of friction at home. She probably used that as an excuse.

It might be wise to make your visits to her less frequent for a while. I would not consider the break final, however; that could only sadden you more. Let your husband do the visiting, and see what happens. Send the children gifts, and messages when you have an excuse to, and let it go at that.

Look up new interests to keep your mind off this unhappy circumstance, and keep as cheerful as you can, for your husband's sake. It is distressing for him, too, but he is as helpless as you are.

I am so sorry!

HIS MOTHER DISAPPROVES

"Dear Anne Hirst: I am a girl 18 years old, and in love with a boy my own age. He is in love with me, too. But his mother does not like me.

"It is because I've been married before, and have a child. She herself had five when she married her present husband!

"I have never done anything to cause her dislike . . . We want very much to get married. Shall I go and talk to her, or what?

M. L. B."

I doubt that you would get very far in talking with this young man's mother.

Why doesn't your own mother see her, and discuss this? (I suppose your mother approves of the marriage?)

It may be that she considers her son too young to marry now, and with the added responsibility of raising another man's child. This may be her real reason, and it is a natural one.

If she consents to see either you or your mother, it would be wise to emphasize the fact that you are willing to wait until he is of age, and until she is convinced he is sincerely attached to you. And assure her, too, that it is his happiness you seek, as well as your own.

A child's ingratitude is hard to accept. A mother can only comfort herself with the sure knowledge that years dispel misunderstandings, and hope. Anne Hirst's sympathetic understanding will help. Write her at Box 1, 123 Eighteenth St., New Toronto.

HE'S GOT SOMETHING

Sitting in a deck-chair in the garden appeals to me far more than mowing the lawn, so I was delighted to find the other day this passage in Goldsmith, to quote next time my family urge me to unwelcome activity: "Why cut it? Let it grow! Is there anything more appealing than a conglomeration of daisies, buttercups, long grass, and many-kinded weeds?"

I pass it on for the benefit of fellow victims of feminine obsession with tidiness. If it doesn't work, you can try W. H. Hudson's verdict: "An acre or so of green linoleum or drugget, drawn evenly and smoothly over the ground surrounding a large house, would probably have as good an effect as a perfectly smooth grass lawn."

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ONE-ARMED MAN LEAPS TO RESCUE OF DROWNING BOY

Fred Mills, of Bobcaygeon, Ont., pulls boy from canal at Lindsay.

Hearing screams coming from the bank of the Trent Canal at Lindsay, Ontario, Fred Mills rushed to the scene and saw a 5-year-old boy struggling in the deep canal water. The youngster was on the verge of drowning. According to witnesses, Mills did not even pause to remove his shoes. Fully clothed, he dove into the canal and managed to grasp the little victim. Then, unaided and in spite of his handicap, Mills brought the almost unconscious boy to shore and revived him.

We are proud to recognize the bravery and quick presence of mind of Fred Mills through the presentation of THE DOW AWARD.

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