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-sparing enemy didn't 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, braut sheets, 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—gone."

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 an ugly 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 former speechless auctioneer, threw it with all her strength at Harry Lang's dome. Lucky for Harry he had made his records 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—she 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.

Germans Develop Spray System As Protection Against Frosts

Paul Tegtmeier, a botanist living in Hannover, for the last 12 years spp during his studies of plant life, how nature provided a natural protection for her children. Many hours before the night frosts commenced, heavy dew settled on the fields and meadows, often even a heavy mist. The ensuing frost then covered the plants and grass with a layer of ice (by frost and dense mist it became rime). Observing the result, Herr Tegtmeier noticed that by even 5 degrees of frost of lengthy duration, no harm had come to the plants. If, however the frost came quickly without preceding dew or moisture formation, barely one degree of frost was sufficient to kill the plants. The lack of atmospheric moisture did not afford a protection against the sudden drop in temperature.

These observations caused Herr Tegtmeier to experiment. He sank all his available capital into his laboratories, and for many years searched for an effective way to copy nature. Finally, one day, he experimented with a cyclamen in full bloom. With a specially constructed spray he enveloped the plant in a mist-like cloud of atomized water; he then took this plant from a room-temperature of about 68 degrees Fahrenheit and put it outside in a temperature of 18 degrees of frost, a drop of 50 degrees.

Encased In Ice

Within three hours the plant was encased in ice. At about 21.00 hours he brought the plant back into a room-temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit and noticed immediately that, though the plant was encased in armor of ice of about 2.5 cm. the fresh green of the leaves was well recognizable. Late at night the ice thawed again and his expectations had been surpassed. Free of ice and without flaw, the cyclamen stood before him in full bloom.

But a further problem presented itself—the protection of the ground against too much moisture. Many more years were spent in experiments, but at last, after 12 years, he evolved an atomizing spray, producing a mist-like cloud of "water dust" which is so fine and light it does not clog and cake the ground it falls upon. It slowly sinks to earth attaining in the process a temperature very near to the ground temperature and accumulating oxygen from the air, which it imparts to the ground. On account of its mist-like quality it does not cake the ground, and hoeing to loosen the earth after its use becomes unnecessary. It offers the greatest possibilities of protection against frost in spring and autumn without operating the ground with water.

Isolating Layer

The air which is enclosed between the ice-crystals and the plant constitutes an isolating layer against the cold, and the heat of sublimation, released by the ice formation, serves as heating.

If properly used, it produces earlier harvests in spring (about 3-4 weeks) and longer harvests in the autumn; better quality plants and fruit, greater yields and more frequent harvests.

When questioned regarding the cost of such an installation for big market gardeners, Herr Tegtmeier quoted prices which showed that the advantages of even the first earlier harvest would more than cover the expenditure, and the resulting harvests would bring higher profit, increase output and thereby lower consumers' prices.

The German Trade and Industry Department appealed to Herr Tegtmeier to release his invention for the benefit of all, and as the peace and wellbeing of the whole world are his main aim, he has released his invention to the public in order to improve the food situation, and many market gardeners and horticulturists in Germany are now availing themselves of the preferred innovation on old methods.

Today's Fantasy

We can't vouch for the authenticity of this tale which comes from Britain.

Two men, photographing big game in Africa, came upon a huge elephant sitting on a jungle trail. One of them whispered: "Let's circle him and photograph him when he gets up."

As they maneuvered about the animal they ran smack into a second elephant sitting with his back to the first. The boldest of the two men walked up to the creature and demanded: "How come you two are sitting back-to-back?"

The elephant, surveying the man for a moment, rumbled: "Don't shout so—I really mustn't speak—Josephine and I are playing look ends".

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 $58.25 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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Home, Sweet Home Though Mortgaged

Mortgaged, there's no place like home, judging from the statistics, that is about the way the American people feel. Today their homes are carrying a $24.6 billion mortgage debt—the largest in history, says the Minneapolis Star. The sum is 8 percent greater than the previous peak in 1930.

The average size of the non-farm mortgage of $10,000 and under has risen steadily from $2,722 in 1939 to $4,206 in 1946.

So far as home mortgages are concerned, Simon Legree is as out of date as is the model-T Ford. But despite this, there is some sound advice for prospective home owners in "Money Matters", published by the Institute of Life Insurance.

1. Don't invest more than three times your total annual income (after tax deductions).

2. Make as big a down payment as you can and pay off the mortgage as fast as possible.

3. Don't buy a home in which the total cost of upkeep, including insurance, taxes, heating, repairs and interest and mortgage payments, exceed a quarter of your assured income.

Mounties To Get Back Their Horses

Return of the high-stepping RCMP mounts is announced. It is certain to win popular 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.

FUNNY BUSINESS By Hershberger

MOPSY by GLADYS PARKER

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.

Couldn't Do Better

Newsweek Magazine opines that: "Japanese people accustomed 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 knows that a hamburger 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.

Radio-Minded

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

—St. Thomas Times-Journal.

Neglected Language

A Toronto educationist has let the lot out of the hay 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.

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.

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This fine medicine is very effective to relieve such female distress caused by cramps, "dragged out feeling", nervous irritability, due to functional monthly disturbances. Worth trying!

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Yugoslavs Leave Canada for Homeland—Departing Canada, their adopted home for some years, 1,500 Yugoslavs have returned to their native land to help in its reconstruction. These three rombadiers seem happy at the thought of being united with loved ones. There were so many musicians in the first batch which left Montreal a fortnight ago that two orchestras were immediately organized on shipboard.

Sports — And One Thing or Another

By FRANK MANN HARRIS

("A Sixbit Critic")

Those hard-working International Athletic Federation lads have been doing a bit of pre-Olympic butt-ending and gouging, their bone of contention being the old one of just how much money an athlete may accept and still take that amateur oath without the tongue in his cheek showing too plainly. Over the years we have heard this question of "What is an amateur?" discussed countless times and the definition we always like best was that of an old friend—"An amateur is a guy who can't play well enough to get dough at it, or else is too dumb to ask."

* * *

That definition is, perhaps, a trifle on the cynical side. For there is a third kind of amateur—the type who play tennis, golf and other sports we might mention for the sheer love of it, and who scorn all offers of money for their efforts until, of course, such offers get so big that nobody with common sense can turn them down. But these, it might be noted, usually have sufficient incomes that they don't need to worry about the weekly board and room-rent—like the great amateur polo-player who said that the first essential towards excelling in that sport was an easy-going millionaire father.

* * *

And, not that it has any connection with the foregoing, we would like to record here the remark of a small girl of our acquaintance, made at the time when all Canada was ringing with the exploits of Miss Barbara Ann Scott. "If Barbara Ann has been practising eight hours a day ever since she was thirteen, like they say," mused the little maiden, "I guess maybe she didn't have to help her mamma with the clothes and housework as much as I do."

* * *

Examples of fine, sterling sportsmanship are always worthy of note; and the latest to come to our startled attention was that of Mr. Eddie Arcaro—hailed, in some quarters, as "the world's greatest jockey." As perhaps you will recall, Mr. Arcaro had the mount on the favorite PHALANX in both the Kentucky Derby and Preakness, failing to get down in front either time, to the consternation of many investors. Then, in the Belmont Stakes, the comparatively unknown Donoso was in the saddle, and won in handy style. And did Mr. Arcaro, who only makes seventy-five thousand or so a year, rush to congratulate young Donoso on his winning effort? Mr. Arcaro rose to the occasion in a manner worthy of the best traditions of The Turf. "Any one of the fifteen guys in this jockey-room," snarled Mr. Arcaro, could have won that race on PHALANX just as easy." Just a pint-size Galahad!

UTTER IGNORANCE NOTE—Various American columnists are in a high state of agitation over the news that Russian children are being taught that the Red Forces won the recent World War practically unaided. If those poor Russian kids only had the advantage of reading certain largely-circulated American periodicals they would understand, of course, that this particular honor belongs strictly to the United States Navy, Army and Air Force.

* * *

You may have noticed photographs of the English Derby winner, PEARL DIVER, wearing what looked like a thick white muffler on his aristocratic snoot; this being almost invariably tabbed by the newspaper caption-writers as a "white nose-band." Not that it matters a tinker's dam, but just to show our superior fund of useless information, we may tell you that it is not a nose-band, but a shadow-roll The idea is that some high-spirited steeds, when they see a shadow on the track ahead of them, get nervous and try to leap over same; and the shadow-roll is supposed to prevent this. We might add that the kind we have wagered on lately need nothing of the sort, not having enough life to hop over a rattlesnake, let alone a shadow.

* * *

DON'T GIVE IT ANOTHER THOUGHT DEPT. The other day, talking with a former in the North York Market, we got to discussing the lateness of the growing season, and the probability of a food scarcity. "I sometimes wonder," he casually remarked, "if we ever did happen to have a real shortage here, just which of those countries over in Europe and Asia would take the lead in sending aid to the poor starving Canadians." Geography never having been one of our strong points, we quickly changed the subject.

Housework Not So Bad

In England men who helped with the housework during the war found it wasn't half so bad as women picture it; actually, most women love housework because they can come and go as they like. Those are the opinions of Sir Thomas Bennett, Britain's wartime comptroller of temporary housing.

—Woman's Magazine.

Westerner Claims To Have 'Reliable Drought-smasher'

Regina district farmers recently surveyed with delight fields soaked with 59 inches of precious moisture—and a 33-year-old handyman, Donald Johnston, said they could thank his rain-making machine for their good fortune.

Johnston, shy, soft-spoken veteran who rodeo fans at Swift Current, Sask., asked to shut off his "Universicope" when rain interfered with their show in July, 1941, was the foot-square machine for the first time this spring.

He gave his demonstration on Regina's outskirts. He was posing for a newsreel company. When bystanders pointed to large, black clouds forming shortly after he started his machine, he merely nodded his head confidently.

Two hours later the city had its heaviest downpour this year. Weather forecaster earlier had predicted "showers".

The "Universicope," as Johnston calls it, has a solid steel frame and incorporated two horseshoe-shaped magnets. One of the magnets is fixed; the other revolves in a semi-circle about it.

Johnston said the electrical power drawn from the moon by the machine's electro-magnetic field causes electrical changes in the atmosphere, affects condensation when clouds are overhead and thus brings rain.

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Speedboat King Goes Jet-Propelled

Sir Malcolm Campbell, holder of the world water speed record of 141.7 miles per hour, is 61 years old, but obviously by no means ready to settle down to sedate means and rates of locomotion. For the Blue Bird, name borne by all his speedboats because he believes it lucky—is the first jet-propelled water craft designed for an assault on the existing speed mark. And while he hasn't named any figures he does not make no indignant denial when speeds in the neighborhood of 200 miles per hour are mentioned as likely to come out of Blue Bird's tests on Coniston lake in the north of England sometime in the next few weeks, says the Sault Daily Star.

Several New Problems

The latest Blue Bird is powered by a jet engine capable of shooting an airplane through the skies at a speed of more than 600 miles per hour so it's not surprising to hear that one of the problems expected to be posed by Sir Malcolm's experiment is that of keeping his boat in the water. Her hull has been specially modified for that. Another entirely new problem arises from the fact that the jet-propelled craft naturally has no propeller, while on an orthodox speedboat the screw plays a large part in slowing the craft down at the conclusion of a high-speed run. Sir Malcolm points out that he'll be able to stop Blue Bird only by gradually easing upon the accelerator—very gradually, or the hull may simply nose under. Then, there is no real assurance whether at the unprecedented speeds obviously sketched, the Bird will answer her rudder, or turn over.

As if all these new problems were not sufficient, Sir Malcolm will have to face as well the hazards which always have been attendant upon high speeds on water—Blue's course for the plane to cover will be secured by other craft, but it is definitely possible it may not completely clear any body of water, and Sir Malcolm owns that he will have to trust very largely to the luck which has always attended his high-speed performances.

In spite of these disaster-laden possibilities, press dispatches describe him as "singularly unworried" which is probably a highly necessary qualifications for a man of his avocation, that of always seeking still more speed.

RAF Training Pilots In 600 M.P.H. Planes

Great Britain now has the first jet-propelled trainer in service, enabling its fighter pilots the handling and navigation of 600-mile-an-hour planes.

The new trainer is a two-seater version of the Gloster Meteor fighter, which holds the world's air speed record. The pilot and pupil sit tandem fashion beneath a single canopy, and as in the Meteor fighter, have an excellent all-round view. All controls and necessary instruments are duplicated in each position, though no armament or other military equipment is carried.

The trainer is powered by two Rolls-Royce Derwent V jet engines, each giving a thrust of 1,800 pounds with a top speed of 545 miles an hour.

The Meteor trainer thus provides the necessary final link in the training of the modern fighter pilot. No other air force at the moment is known to have a comparable type.

The world's smallest radio set, complete with a tube and circuit, will fit into an empty lip-stick container.

Look First

"Where are you going?" asked the farmer of his hired man, who had just borrowed a lantern.

"Courting."

"Carrying a lantern is a waste of money. When I went courting I went in the dark."

"Yes, and look what you got."

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Headaches?

TAKE

Don't you envy people who never have headaches? The fact that some folks are free from them shows that there must be a reason why you get them. Very often the cause of headaches is found in faulty elimination. Poisonous waste substances accumulate in the system and the result is headaches and depressed feelings. And that's why you can to try Kruschen.

Start tomorrow morning with a small dose of Kruschen in your tea, coffee, hot water or fruit juice. Your organs of elimination will soon respond and your body will gradually experience a feeling of freedom from poisonous wastes. Kruschen is helpful, feel better and healthier, live longer. Kruschen help you. At all druggists. 25c and 75c.

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MUTT AND JEFF—And That's Not All, No Rudder Either! By BUD FISHER