The Acton Free Press.

VOLUME XL.---NO. 43. Every Subscription Paid in Advance ACTON, ONTARIO, THURSDAY MORNING, APRIL 22, 1915. Subscription Price, $1.00 Per Annum. SINGLE COPIES---THREE CENTS

The Acton Free Press

IS PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY MORNING AT THE

FREE PRESS BUILDING

MILL STREET. ACTON ONT

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION—One dollar per year strictly in advance. $1.50 to subscribers in the United States. All subscriptions discontinued when the time for which they have been paid has expired. The date to which every subscription is paid is denoted on the address label.

ADVERTISING RATES — Transient advertisements, 10 cents per Nonpareil line for first insertion and 5 cents per line for each subsequent insertion. Contract display advertisements, for 50 or further more, per annum, 10 cents per inch each insertion. Yearly contracts for reading matter 25 cents per inch each insertion.

Advertisements without specific directions will be inserted till forbid and charged accordingly. Transient advertisements must be paid in advance.

Advertisements will be changed once each month, if desired. For changes oftener than above mentioned the extra composition must be paid for at regular rates.

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Limited
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pleases our customers best. Come in and examine them.

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Poetry.

DOE YE NEXT THYNGE

From an old English parsonage,
Down by the sea,
There came, in the twilight,
A message to me;
Its quaint Saxon legend,
Deeply engraven,
Hath, as it seems to me,
Teaching from heaven:
And through the hours
The quiet words ring
Like a low inspiration,
"Doe ye next thynge."

Many a questioning,
Many a fear,
Many a doubt
Hath its quieting here.
Moment by moment;
Let down from heaven,
Time, opportunity,
Guidance are given;
Fear not to-morrows,
Child of the King:
Trust them with Jesus,
"Doe ye next thynge."

Do it immediately,
Do it with prayer,
Do it reliantly,
Casting off care;
Do it with reverence,
Tracing his hand
Who hath placed it before thee
With earnest command.
Stayed on Omnipotence,
Safe 'neath his wing,
Leave all resultings
"Doe ye next thynge."

—Our Own Fireside.

BUSINESS MAN'S CREED

Business is but a means to an end. It is but the occupation by which you are to exercise and develop your God-given qualifications and talents. It is the area in which you are to practice day in and day out for the great race of the world—the successful life.—Walter H. Cottingham.

Select Family Reading

THE DEFENCE OF EZRA

DORA READ GOODALE

"THERE'S going to be trouble between Matt Ryan and Ezry," said Mr. Knapp, as he unwound his muffler and hung it up on a nail.

"What now, father? Did you hear anything new?" asked his wife eagerly, while the two boys in the background stopped scuffling and pricked up their ears.

"Well, they were telling down at the store how Ryan claims that Ezry moved his barn where he did on purpose to spite him; seems it kind o' cuts off his view."

"How ridiculous for Ryan to say anything like that!" exclaimed Josie Awkwright, who had run in for an evening call.

Mrs. Knapp took an old woollen shirt from a heap of carpet rags and began reducing it to strips with vigorous turns of her shears. "Well, don't you be mixed up in any quarrel," she said at last.

"I don't calculate to," returned her husband closing his obstinate lips in their thicket of beard. "Ezry's in the right of it—I haven't a doubt of that, but Ryan's an ugly man to cross, and there's no need of us taking sides.

"It does seem as if Ezra's friends ought to stand up for him, though," ventured Josie, a shade less positively than usual, for Mr. Knapp was as old as her father.

"Well, they can stand up for him, of course—get their feed of him and so on, same as usual; but if they know what's good for them, they'll mind their own business as far as Ryan is concerned."

Josie made no answer, but her lips curled so rebelliously that good Mrs. Knapp hastened to unstop her vial of oil.

"When you're as old as we are, my dear," she said, "you won't be in any hurry to have a hand in other people's quarrels. It's always best to keep on good terms with your neighbors, even with now folks like the Ryans."

"Well, I'm sorry for Ezra, anyway—nice kind man. I think he's been shamefully used," returned Josie. "Come, Roy, I suppose we had better be going. I promised Eva I'd help her with her algebra before bedtime."

"Come on up with us, Dan, and I'll show you those skees," volunteered Roy, looking around for his cap.

Dan Bawin rose as if used to taking orders and followed a step behind as the young Awkwrights went down the moonlight path together. It was a chilly autumnal night and he found himself wondering with a pang of envy why Roy had three sisters and no none. He was a tall, shock-headed boy of eighteen, rather plodding and slow-witted, who was doing chores at the Knapps' that winter. "Dan is slow; but he ain't disapp'inting," had been his father's recommendation.

"The idea of anyone's accusing Ezra Tower of doing a mean thing out of spite. It's enough to make a dog laugh," observed Roy, adding comfortably, "Nobody will believe it; that's one thing sure."

"Nobody who knows him, perhaps," returned Josie, thoughtfully, "but if a lie isn't nailed on the spot, it seems to leave a nasty impression; a good many people seem to think there must be some truth in it. I'd like to hear anyone tell me he was spiteful. I wonder what first turned Mr. Ryan against him."

"Why, it began with Ryan's wanting to buy Ezra's mill for his son-in-law. Ezra wouldn't sell and now Ryan means to force him out of business and out of the neighborhood if he can. He's working with all his might to get some office—town clerk, isn't it, Dan, or judge of probate?—away from him at this next election."

"Wasn't there some trouble about his driving through Mr. Ryan's lots before he moved the barn?" asked Dan seeing a chance to have a puzzling matter cleared up.

"O, yes; there's been a right of way there for the last hundred years and the place was fenced with that understanding so every one says. You know that barn of Ezra's stood away back in the fields—two miles around to get to it unless you drove through the Ryan place. Well, Ryan suddenly fenced off this private road, and threatened to arrest Ezra if he set foot on the premises. Ezra couldn't or wouldn't go to law, though he was sure he was right; so he moved the barn down near his house, and all the thanks he got is to be called spiteful."

"Imagine putting such a man in for a town officer," exclaimed Josie with disgust. "Why don't all his old neighbors stand by Ezra? That's what I don't understand."

"Half of them are under Ryan's thumb in one way or another—owe him money, or count on him for trade or employment, and the other half think, like the Knapps, that he's an ugly man to run up against. He is, too; and, if you or I were to hear him railing against Ezra—you know what a big blustering bully he is—we should shut our ears and pretend to be absorbed in something on the other side of the street."

Roy laughed tantalizingly; Josie launched out into an indignant denial; and in the midst of it they reached the parsonage, where they rested the argument in favor of algebra and the merits of skees.

This conversation made a strong impression on Dan, and roused his interest in a case that was soon a subject of gossip wherever two women exchanged patterns or two men discussed the price of the apple crop. It was "t' bad, t' bad about Ezry Tower," but Matt Ryan had brought a good deal of money into town, and would naturally be "dictatorious."

Ezra, like every man, had his detractors, and slander took root among the jealous and disaffected; now, too, he began to look shabby and anxious; and first one and then another expressed the conviction that the best thing he could do would be to sell out (to Ryan, of course,) and try his luck somewhere else.

One day in October Mr. Ryan stopped Mr. Knapp on the street with a plan for combining with two or three others to buy a carload of grain—mentioning a price a few cents lower than that charged by Ezra. In the same breath: "That old Holstein of yours, Knapp—I heard you were willing to sell and she's just what I'm looking for. I'll step in and make you an offer next week."

Mr. Knapp was anxious to get rid of the cow, and returned a vague answer about the grain; he didn't "need any just at present." "Business is business though it's a mean trick to run Ezry out that way," he said to Mrs. Knapp at supper.

"It's what comes of ill will amongst neighbors. You can't set things right; so the best way is not to get mixed up in it," cautioned his wife.

Dan pushed back his plate and a slow flush mounted to his forehead. "He wanted to "speak up for teacher." (Ezra had once presided over the school in the district) but one glance at his employer's grim mouth and at Mrs. Knapp's puckered motherly face, sufficed to daunt and to silence him.

After the table was cleared the farmer announced that he "guessed he'd go down to the store a spell," for the approaching election stimulated the gathering of village worthies.

"Don't forget the molasses jug; it's on the green chist," Mrs. Knapp reminded him, diving into a peach basket filled with many-hued carpet rags.

Half an hour had slipped drowsily by when Dan, passing through the kitchen, spied the molasses jug still in its place on the meal-chest. He picked it up, put on his cap, and went out by no means averse to a turn in the frosty night air for head and heart throbbed with disquieting fancies.

As he swung along at a rapid pace to keep his blood in motion he remembered how Ezra Tower had once made him stop to borrow a coat when the mercury was running down hill and he could hear him say with his kind humorous smile, "Pass it on to the ragman when you get through with it, Dan." A clumsy club he had been always at the foot of his class in those ill-clad, shivery days when he went to school to kind Ezra. And now teacher was in trouble, and he had not so much as a vote to give him. If he were a man of position and substance like Mr. Knapp or Deacon Pettingill how easy it would be to turn the tide in his favor.

In the midst of such vague, disturbing thoughts he pushed open the grocery door. Six or eight men in a haze of tobacco smoke were sitting around the fat-bodied coal stove in which a fresh fire had been started. Over by the letter box Matt Ryan, swaggering and self-confident, was deep in conversation with that notorious gossip, Jim Hawkins, while several boys, including Roy Awkwright, were whispering together in the further corner.

Dan hastily advanced to the counter, where the storekeeper took his jug and began to fill it from a hogshead. Several Solons were holding forth but the only voice that Dan distinguished was Ryan's.

"I tell you what," he was saying with a husky pretence of speaking confidentially, "I tell you what every man will hear watching. If he's honest 'twon't hurt him any, and if he isn't—" he broke off wit has unpleasant laugh. "So that's why a few of us are buying our feed somewhere else," he concluded.

Dan's heart gave a thump to his brawny breast. He wanted to turn and denounce the speaker, but instead his shrill blue eyes on the candy-case, noting incidentally the coarse red wrist projecting from his sleeve was smeared with molasses.

Mr. Ryan again took up the thread of his accusations.

"It was like his insolence, claiming a right to drive through those back lots of mine. Why, man, he knew well enough that I was going to fence 'em and plough 'em; it was all talked over when I bought the place and he as good as told me he meant to pull down that old barn of his. Instead of that—well, you know where he's planted it."

A lump like a marble rose in Dan's throat. Why didn't Deacon Pettingill speak? He was influential, fluent, a leader in prayer meetings, an old associate of Ezra's Tower's.

But Hawkins himself had an answer this time.

"You don't say so," he drawled noncommittally. "Well, now his tall is, he wanted to put it down in black and white about driving in through them lots and you said the wa'n't no need, and kind o' persuaded him out on't."

"He said that? Well, it's a lie," declared Ryan.

Dan faced about with a sudden surge of blood to the brain. "Who's that you're talking about?" he demanded hoarsely. "If it's Ezra Tower I say he's as good a man as ever lived, and I won't keep still and hear him abused, and he not here to defend himself."

"You won't eh?" sneered Mr. Ryan contemptuously a moment's glare of astonishment. No boy, least of all a clumsy, hired boy was worth noticing in his eyes.

"Nosir, I've known him more years than you have months—went to school to him two winters and worked for him summers haying and teaming; and I'd take his word against any man in town, I don't care who it is."

"Go it Dan!" said an irrepressible voice from the corner, and there was a little shuffling of feet meant for applause. But the elders sat dumb and embarrassed.

"There ain't a man here but has had dealings with Ezra Tower and they can tell whether he's used them honest."

Dead silence, in which the big clock ticked with painful distinctness.

"Maybe there's some hasn't forgotten how he sat up with them when they was sick, doctored their horses or let their bills run when it wasn't handy to pay. I know he gave me a coat once and I won't keep still—"

"He did, eh? Well I dare say he's promised you another for this, you big, lumbering blockhead," thundered Ryan, whose temper was as violent as his methods were devious.

"Somebody's been electioneering mighty hazarded one man with a wink while Mr. Knapp merely looked up to say dryly, "That'll do, Dan."

Dan grasped his jug and stumbled out of the room, smitten with sudden self-consciousness, too angry and too confused to take note of the faces around him. Hawkins was grinning, he knew that; Ryan had gained his contemptuous sneer, and he himself felt like a fool. He had imagined—if he had ever dreamed of such a scene at all—that others would come to his aid, that there would be at least a hearty "That's so!" or "Good for you."

One or two big blubbering sobs burst from him on his way home. Why hadn't he left Ezra's defence to some one who knew how to dress it up in proper words, someone who could turn Mr. Ryan's weapons, Mr. Awkright, or Josie herself, maybe? Anyone or no one, so that he had left it alone! A pretty fool he had made of himself, meddling in what was none of his business, and call down his employer's displeasure for nothing.

His only hope now was that matters might be threshed out after he left; but he had hardly reached the shed chamber before a team passed, and then another, and Mr. Knapp came in, and went straight to bed. The truth was, no one showed the least disposition to pursue the subject after that explosion of Dan's.

The next night was the Eve of All Saints and not long after midnight Butter Hill was startled by the ringing of the church bell, the patter of running feet, and shrill cries of "Fire!" It was soon seen that the source of the blaze which streamed up toward heaven was no other than Ezra Tower's barn, already the subject of heated controversy and windy debates. Fortunately it was empty except for three or four fatting calves and a few barrels of feed, for the fire had gained such headway that there was nothing to do but let it burn. Half the townspeople were there, even those from a distance. Deacon Pettingill and Parson Awkwright himself in a solemn black coat and no collar. Among the late comers was Mr. Matt Ryan, shaking his head with a mixture of triumph and hypocritical sorrow.

"He lives the nearest, and sleeps this side of the house; and yet he's the last one here, the old fox!" muttered Dan to Roy Awkright. "I'll lay he wasn't in any hurry to rouse the neighbors up when the glare came in at his winders."

Others had noted the same circumstance and it was but a step to yet more sinister conjectures. "You ain't interested to know how it catch, I suppose, Mr. Ryan?" "You didn't happen to light a pipe the last time you went by?" One or another flung out these hints under cover of excitement and the flickering light.

Mr. Ryan saw that he had not been near the barn for a fortnight.

"You haven't any idea how the thing started, have you?" Jim Hawkins was asking Ezra in a lowered tone in another part of the yard.

Ezra laughed nervously. He was a slight, youngish man, with a face stamped with benevolence and a certain natural shrewdness.

"Well, I could make a pretty good guess," he said hesitatingly.

There was an instant shock, and a stir of expectation among the by-standers, already busy with suspicions and half spoken surmises.

Mr. Hawkins felt that the crystallizing moment had come. "You don't suppose—?" he insinuated, jerking a significant thumb over his shoulder.

"No—no—no—no!" ejaculated Ezra, lengthening the discussive syllable with the low, pleasant laugh known to every child in town. "Pshaw, neighbors, isn't this Hallowe'en? And weren't you and I shavers once, and didn't we stop in somebody's farm to light up our jack-lanterns? That's about what happened to-night, if I'm not mistaken. Anyway, there was a good show of candle punkins out on my front fence at bedtime."

"You don't say so!" returned Jim Hawkins in a tone comically divided between relief and disappointment. "And who were the boys?" he continued eagerly. "You didn't see 'em to know 'em did ye?"

"Well, if I did, I guess I won't tell—might make them feel worse when they feel bad already. No, no, don't stir up any fresh ill will where there's been more than enough. What with one thing after another,"—the anxious cloud of habitual care settled over his features,—"business so dull, and now my barn burnt, I may be obliged to make a change before I'm many months older."

"Pooh, pooh!" put in Mr. Knapp, clearing his throat. "Butter Hill can't spare you yet awhile. You're a good man, Ezry Tower; and I know whom I'm going to vote for judge of probate come 'lection day."

"That's so," spoke up Deacon Pettingill, though he supplied Mr. Ryan with fire. wood. "I wrote my son Willard yesterday—you know he's a lawyer in Westfield, and he'll be down next week to talk over that right-of-way business. Won't cost you anything, either; he hasn't forgotten who fished him out of the mill pond when he was a youngster."

"We all know there's one man in town whose word doesn't need any guaranty, and that's Ezra Tower," declared Dr. Kendrick.

"Thank you, neighbors," was all Ezra said; but the hearty murmur and rustle of assent which greeted the doctor's speech was music to sweeten adversity in a good man's ear.

No one observed that while they were speaking three boys with candle grease on their jackets slunk silently homeward. They were Jerry and Luke Hawkins—and Mr. Ryan's only son, Tom Ryan.

* * *

"Twas a landslide for Mr. Tower and no mistake, wasn't it, now?" exclaimed Dan Bawin, meeting Josie and Roy a day or two after election. "I bet Matt Ryan isn't so sure he owns the town as he was last week."

"I met him coming from mill with a load of feed yesterday. He's given up the right-of-way, and Eza is going to put up a new barn back where the other one stood. All the neighbors have offered to turn out and help," announced Roy.

"I guess he knew he'd have to give up if Willard Pettingill took hold of it. They say he's terrible smart."

"Well, I really believe he's ashamed of himself," broke in Josie. "You know what the Hawkins boys let out? That young Ryan was skylarking with them that night. And Ezra knew it, and would not tell who it was. I'm so glad you spoke up for him when you did, Dan; I thought those dear old fossils only needed to have their eyes open. I was dying for a chance myself, but a girl has to stay at home and keep quiet!" and Josie groaned over the restrictions that hedge in her sex.

"It was what you said," muttered Dan; and there he stuck fast, turning redder and redder up to his stock of tousled hair, until Roy helped him out by remarking consolingly.

"Dan touched off the powder, Sis; but I guess it was you that lighted the fuse."—C. E. World.

Rose Baldwin and her Yellow Leviathan Mangels, which was the first prize plot in the school fair. Roots were six inches across on August 1st

For Sprains and Bruises.—There is nothing better for sprains and contusions than Dr. Thomas' Eclectric Oil. It will reduce the swelling that follows a sprain, will cool the inflamed flesh and draw the pain as if by magic. It will take the ache out of a bruise and prevent the flesh from discoloring. It seems as if there was magic in it, so speedily does the injury disappear under treatment.

A Mild Pill for Delicate Women.—The most delicate woman can undergo a course of Parmelee's Vegetable Pills without fear of unpleasant consequences. Their action, while wholly effective, is mild and agreeable. No violent pains or purgings follow their use, as thousands of women who have used them can testify. They are, therefore, strongly recommended to women, who are more prone to disorders of the digestive organs than men.

If you don't gossip about your troubles, probably you won't trouble the gossips.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

Gleaned From the Free Press of Thursday, April 25th, 1895

Cycling is likely to be popular with the ladies this season. Several ladies have either purchased or given orders.

Councillor Williams' new windmill is completed and works like a charm.

Ald. L. O. Barber, of Guelph, one of the most extensive cattle dealers in Ontario, died of paralysis last week.

Mr. Joshua Freeman, well-known by many in this vicinity, died suddenly at his home in St. Marys last week aged 65. His father lived for many years on the homestead adjoining Georgetown. His wife was a daughter of Alex. Brown, Sr., of Acton. He leaves two daughters and two sons. One of the daughters is wife of Rev. Mr. Treleaven, Aylmer.

Rev. Mr. Leggett, the new minister of the the Congregational Church, is rapidly winning the hearts of his people.

Mr. Lachlan Kennedy, of Winnipeg, who was here this week, has suggested that the site of the old Knox Church which is to be offered for sale, be purchased either by the Council or a syndicate, and converted into a little park. The location is good, and the idea would preserve the place with more respect for past memories than the erection of factory or dwellings. There are some fine maples, seats could be arranged, a band stand erected, and when the waterworks, which Reeve Pearson has declared inevitable soon, arrives, a fountain might be added.

Mr. J. H. Hacking, who founded the Free Press in 1875, died at the home of his son-in-law, Mr. Henry F. Hill, in Buffalo, last week.

Mr. Robt. Wallace, Chairman of the Board of Health, has issued the usual spring notice re cleaning up of premises in town.

A barn-raising was held on the farm of Wm. McCutcheon, lot 15, con. 4 Erin, last week. Everything went together without an accident.

Mrs. B. W. Nicklin, who has been living with her brother, Mr. Oliver Lasby, near Creswon Corners, leaves this week for Lowell, Mich.

Mr. and Mrs. E. S. Bronson, of Duluth, Minn., are visiting at Limehouse.

Mr. Robt. Eblage left last week for Gloversville, N. Y.

Mr. George Ritchie, who has been living in Acton the past year, has removed to the Scotch Block, and returned to farming.

Rev. Mr. Golden, the new pastor of St. Alban's, arrived with his family from Allandale on Tuesday.

TURNING TRADITIONS UPSIDE DOWN

Under the agricultural department's new policy, the youngest school children catch the interest in farming that is now the biggest game in rural school life. That interest continues steadily, without a break, till the young farmer has proven his ability to manage the farm and make now records in profits.

At first the farmer—fathers and taxpayers—in the school fair districts, didn't see anything worth while in the fair idea. Now, they are putting grants for the fairs into the township estimates without being asked. The school fair has made good with the farmers who know it.

The idea of this policy is real service to agriculture that can be felt and seen by the most skeptical. In starting education in better farming with the children, it is simply starting where all education has started—except, till now, agricultural education. The novelty of the way in which the Department is now going at the job lies chiefly in their introducing competitive striving as the driving power, instead of the old-fashioned strap! There is no compulsion about the new policy of the department, which "begins with the babies," as one farmer smilingly put it. There is scarcely any coaxing, either—everyone wants to come in and enjoy the fun of learning interesting things, and of showing how much they have learned. There is the guarantee of the tremendous success of the Department's policy and of Ontario agriculture.

School fairs give the boys and girls in school their start in agriculture—and what they have been accomplishing is opening the eyes of their parents, and warming their hearts. When the boys have "graduated" from the school into farm work, they are anxious to keep on learning. This is provided for in High School courses in agriculture, conducted by the district representative with whom the boys have become acquainted in school fair days. Here a close friendship between the boys and their representative naturally develops during the two to six weeks of the course, and the boys go back to their homes with a realization of worth-while things to be accomplished on the home farm, of greater service they can render to their parents, of greater possibilities of profit and zest in their life work.

Three years ago 363 boys took the course; last year 600, and this year a thousand are gathered in groups for six weeks of training and intercourse. This increase shows the grip this movement has on Ontario's young farmers.

Up to this period in their lives the boys have been learning farming as they learned arithmetic, but getting the principles first, and preaching them on their school fair plots—of which more later. When they have taken the course in agriculture they are ready for tougher tasks, and are eager for them. Under the New Policy of the Department, they are provided here with fun and fresh knowledge, to be obtained by entering a competition—open only to students of these courses, in which the contestants strive to prove which can produce the greatest net profit on an acre of a crop selected by agreement among themselves, or on hogs fed for market. The winner in each district is given, by the department, out of the Federal grant in aid of agriculture, a two weeks' short course at Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, with all expenses paid. Here from all over Ontario the county winners came in January this year, meeting on common ground for the ambition—to learn more about better farming. Here again the competition is a feature, a gold watch being donated by the Deputy Ministers personally to the best judge of live stock.—The Canadian Countryman.