

THE GUARDIAN

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The Christmas Spirit

Each year there are many who question the manner in which the Christmas season is observed in this age and it is all to the good that it should be so. If everyone was complacent about the observance of such a festival there would be cause indeed for concern. It is wise and proper to point out the danger of overlooking the central theme of Christmastide amid the detail which crowds its observance.

The detail is far from unimportant, however. The giving of gifts, the remembering of friends, the reunion of families, and the general spirit of festivity are thoroughly in keeping with the joyous season. They are as proper as the more direct way of celebrating by services of worship with their emphasis on peace and joy.

The fact is that to eliminate the social aspects of Christmas would be to divorce life from religion, a severance which no one would intentionally advocate for it would mean the setting up of artificial barriers in life which would deprive it of much richness. The Christmas message is not to mankind in a churchgoing capacity but to all humanity.

By all means let us be joyful in work and in recreation as well as in taking part in the great traditional celebrations of sacred music and story. We must indeed guard against replacing Christ with Santa Claus but it would be difficult to find a more suitable expression of the spirit of Christmas than that happy giver of gifts. He is and should be a vivid reminder of the greatest gift given to mankind.

Faith And Knowledge

The new president of Harvard University, Dr. Nathan M. Pusey, says that lack of faith, not lack of knowledge, is responsible for most of the world's confusion. Coming from the head of a great university which in its long history, and especially in recent years, has given much scientific leadership to the world, the opinion is of more than ordinary significance since it is an indication that spiritual awareness has not been completely supplanted by scientific insight.

Dr. Pusey's statement should do good in another way, too, inasmuch as it will help to check the cheerful, though illogical, assumption which has been going the rounds for a long time, that accumulation of knowledge is in itself a saving grace for man. The plain fact is that in the area covered by what, for want of a better name, we choose to call Western Civilization, there is a super-abundance of knowledge; more, some would say, than can be put to good use. Knowledge is power but it is not necessarily beneficent power. Nothing is so dangerous as knowledge which has no moral or spiritual foundations to support it, unless it be a desire for learning which has no vigorous faith to give it intelligent direction.

The function of faith is not to put impediments in the way of the search for truth but to give it meaning, purpose, and vitality. And it is just as necessary in education, politics, economics, peace promotion, and all the other involvements of modern society, as it is in those things of purely moral and ethical character. Faith, like truth, is indivisible.

Potatoes As A Food

So much has been said about potatoes being fattening that people have lost sight of the fact that there are large groups in our population who have a real need for this great energy-producing food. The following data on the subject has been supplied by the P. E. I. Potato Marketing Board:

The Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, lists the weekly requirements of potatoes for different groups according to age, sex, and general activity in their daily life. It shows that children at the age of one year should receive 8 ounces of potatoes a week, with increasing amounts as they get older until they should be receiving 3 pounds, 8 ounces per week at the age of 12. Boys from the age of 13 to 20 years should increase the amount from 4 pounds 4 ounces to 5 pounds 8 ounces. Men doing heavy work should consume 7 pounds of potatoes per week. Women who are very active, such as housekeepers, should be consuming 4 pounds 8

ounces per week. These figures indicate a suitable diet for young people and working men, running up to almost 300 pounds per person rather than the 94 pounds which we are told was the consumption last year. The figures are doubly interesting when we realize that our astounding increase in population in the main is made up of children whose active life requires an increased use of potatoes rather than the declining consumption that exists today. Students of the situation tell us that this percentage of the population, covering the very active age classes, will continue to increase for many years. Every year will add a larger number to the adolescent group between 10 and 20 which has particular need for an increasing supply of energy-producing food such as potatoes. If the potato industry could do one-tenth as good a job of informing parents of the need for this food for their children as commentators have done in advising overweight persons to cut down on potato consumption, we could put per capita consumption back to where it was 10 or 12 years ago.

This with the present population would require some 400 million bushels in the United States and 75 million bushels in Canada. At the same time it would assure the potato farmer a reasonable return on his investment instead of the heavy losses he is now sustaining at present price levels.

A Word For Department Heads

These are hard days for the heads of government departments, particularly on the national level. For some of them—we are thinking especially about the Prime Minister and the Minister for External Affairs—the strain at times must be almost unbearable. There are so many things in these out of joint times which call for immediate action. There is little or no opportunity for calm and unhurried reflection which in more leisurely days was normal procedure. Often decisions have to be made literally on the spur of the moment. Delay, even of a few hours, is out of the question.

Then, too, many new things crop up for which there is no precedent to help in the building of judgment. Ordinary men find themselves faced with extraordinary tasks where average ability simply will not do. The old rules of diplomacy are no longer adequate to the requirements of world issues. Most of us, looking at things from the outside, see only the glamour and trappings of high places in government. We do not see the anxious thoughts, the overstrained nerves, the frayed tempers, and the fear of making wrong decisions, all of which things are never far away from the men who occupy the high places. The wonder is not that now and then some heavily-burdened minister makes a mistake but that so many of them carry on as well as they do. Complaining about the government is a democratic right; fairness demands that it be exercised with restraint.

EDITORIAL NOTES

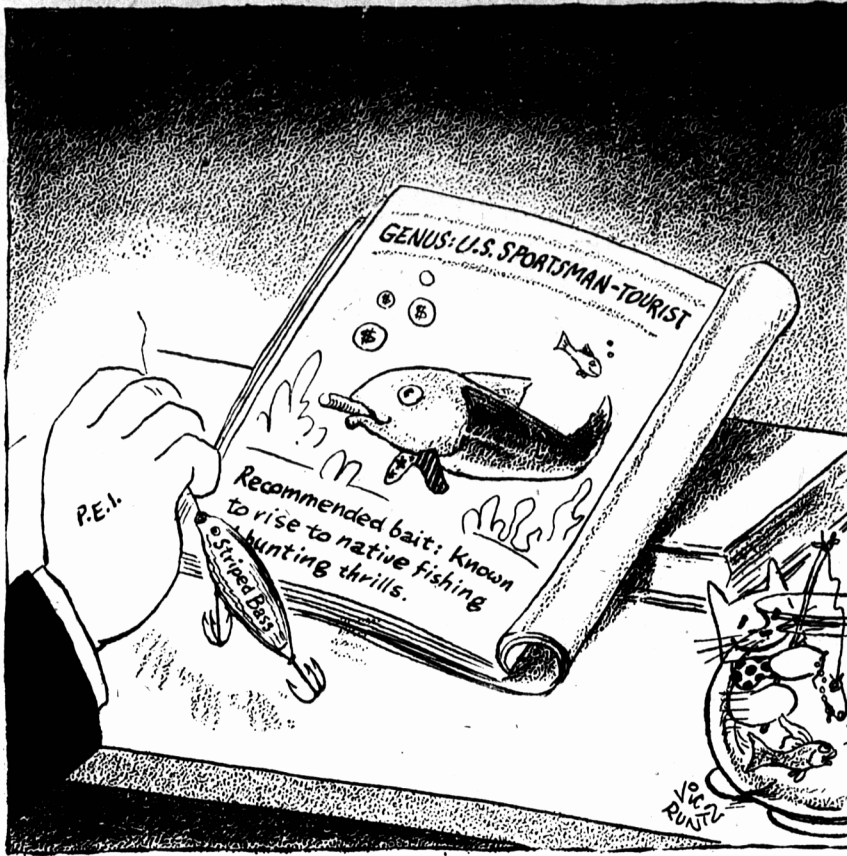
New York merchants acquired a healthy respect for newspaper advertising during the recent strike. They had never before been able to observe the effects of advertisements in the daily papers on total sales.

Canada will be represented at the bicentenary celebration next year of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrew's, Scotland. A special series of matches will take place there starting May 31, 1954. For a good many years the rules promulgated by St. Andrew's were accepted by practically every golf authority in the world. The position, of course, was wholly unofficial and such rules require to be adopted by the organization concerned.

There will be no compulsory retiring age for Dominion civil servants after the end of the year, according to a report in the Ottawa Journal. Regulations are being drafted which permit retirement and provide that those remaining in the service shall not improve their pension position. The new approach is certainly more intelligent and humane than the present rigid regulations which make it difficult to retain the services of highly qualified staff members.

George Washington, first president of the U. S. A., died this date 1799. Surveyor, soldier and wealthy landowner, he was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses and took an active interest in the disputes between the colonies and the English Crown. When civil war came he was selected commander-in-chief. Despite difficulties of men and supplies, faction, and treachery, he succeeded in maintaining the revolutionary cause. He was twice elected president but declined a third term.

Another Lure



PUBLIC FORUM

This column is open to the discussion by correspondents of questions of interest. The Guardian does not necessarily endorse the opinion of correspondents.

FARM LABOR HOURS

Sir—We were sitting by the fireside, after a very hard day with the men among the cattle and hogs on the farm, when our good wife, also relaxing from her share of the work, read from your well reported review of the issue between the Island Telephone Company and its laborers.

A demand for more pay and shorter hours now is ill-timed in any country. It is especially so as far as this agricultural province is concerned. We are amazed that the I.B.E.W. should send such a poorly informed man regarding actual conditions as Mr. Tracey to a Province composed entirely of farmers and fishers and those whose living depends on them.

When he stated that Ontario farmers did not work even a five-day week because of "being snowed out" in winter when they did no "thing", he displayed incomparable ignorance of conditions on any good farm. Higher wages in other avenues of labor, and low prices on the farm, make it impossible for the farmer to employ sufficient help to give him any leisure.

If a stormy day comes he has a backlog of indoor work demanding his undivided attention. Good farmers who produce the food necessary to keep Mr. Tracey and his kind talking have their busiest season during the winter months, feeding cattle and hogs, keeping stables clean, hauling manure, etc., during the day and in the evenings and nights, keeping accounts and doing their best to balance budgets.

Telephone and other workers lived on a standard of equality with farmers in this Province with wages as they are now, and farm and food prices fifty per cent higher. Roasts that formerly sold for 79 cents are now 29. T-bone steak, formerly 85 cents is now 45. Potatoes are forty-five cents per bushel. The farmer is getting a little less than nothing for his work in the potato field, and any farmer or dealer who could make money on cattle on last year's drooping market, would be an Einstein turned economist.

Just why should the farmer be asked to slave endless hours on the farm in all kinds of weather for seven days a week, while other labor asks a five day week and more pay? Should all farmers stop work for six months it would be a far greater calamity than a telephone strike. We have every sympathy for the search after sufficient leisure to develop our cultural and social life. But this must include the farmer. He is entitled to equality at least. He is the real essential of all economy.

I am, Sir, etc. C. C. PRATT. St. Peter's, P.E.I.

Wild Bill Hickok

(M. W. in the Winnipeg Free Press)

In the affair of Wild Bill Hickok, it can only be said that President Eisenhower has been scurvily served by the chroniclers of the wild, wild West. Mr. Hickox was murdered at Deadwood, Dakota Territory on August 2, 1876. Mr. Eisenhower resurrected him for the worst of purposes on November 24 of this year.

The President had been invited by the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League to address a meeting in Washington and chose this occasion to deliver a very timely warning against character assassination. The theme appeared to lend itself admirably to Mr. Eisenhower's favorite technique of drawing on the lore of his boyhood days in Abilene, Kansas. Reminding his audience that Wild Bill, a famous scout and sharpshooter, had been for a long time marshal there, he said: "If you don't know about him, read your Westerns now."

There followed this paragraph: "Now that town had a code, and I was raised as a boy to prize that code. It was: 'Meet anyone face to face with whom you disagree. You could not sneak up on him from behind, do any damage to him without suffering the penalty of an outraged citizen. If you met him face to face and took the same risk he did, you could get away with almost anything, as long as the bullet was in the front.'"

Possibly what the President had in mind when he spoke of "Westerns" were the old-fashioned paper-covered dime novels about frontier daring and romantic rescues of threatened ladies riding the Pony Express. But newsmen, dutifully responding to the President's urgings, made the mistake of consulting the more modern chroniclers with results which will surprise none acquainted with historians and their ways.

From its first dip into "Westerns", the Washington Post comes up with this description of Mr. Hickox. He was, according to the author, Mr. Bruce Nelson, "a notorious gambler and gunman", although it is conceded that "this soft-spoken ex-theological student was one of the more personable."

He has been the least vocal, the most poorly organized and ill represented. He is waking up. He now has access to world opinion through the latest media. He is furnishing his own dynamic for progress. It may be through time and co-operation that he will be able to occupy a chair at home long enough to develop the steno-pygia common to most armchair advisers who invade our peaceful if poor Province to create unrest and economic imbalance.

I am, Sir, etc. C. C. PRATT. St. Peter's, P.E.I.

and law-abiding of the many murderous characters who then passed as 'heroes' on the frontier."

This is hardly an auspicious beginning but worse follows. "Most of his alleged 27 killings had been accomplished in the service of the law as a frontier marshal; but the evidence indicates that he was no more averse than the next desperado to shooting a man in the back to satisfy his own personal pique or whim. It is only in Hollywood movies that famous gunmen gave their enemies fair warning by confronting them in the town streets. Actually the reputations of virtually all the famous killers in the West were made by quite other means. A common practice was to hide in a dark alley, after first screwing up one's courage with whiskey, and then shoot the victim in the back."

Feeling himself, perhaps, a bit constrained by the code of Abilene, Mr. Hickox finally arrived in Deadwood Gulch, where other notables, including Poker Alice, Bedrock Tom, California Jack and Calamity Jane had already established residence.

Here something of a political issue developed when certain persons, discontented with the status quo, proposed to experiment with new-fangled notions of law and order. They had, of course, an obvious candidate for marshal in Mr. Hickox. More conservative Deadwoodians responded to this challenge by hiring a Mr. Jack McCall to discourage Mr. Hickox's candidacy.

From Mr. Nelson's account, it would appear that Mr. McCall thereupon conformed meticulously with "common practice". After first fortifying himself in prescribed fashion, he entered No. 10 Saloon, found Mr. Hickox seated with his back to the door and shot him through the back of the skull.

The evidence suggests that Mr. McCall's intervention in Gulch politics was sustained by public opinion. "Mr. Nelson denounces as 'romantic flubdub' the tale that Calamity Jane, who is supposed to have held Mr. Hickox in high esteem, went after Mr. McCall with a butcher's cleaver."

What actually happened, it seems, is that, following the funeral, Mr. McCall was tried by a jury of gold-miners and that these politically-conscious citizens duly acquitted him. It is true that Federal authorities afterwards intervened, and that Mr. McCall, protesting the violation of his constitutional rights, was retried and hanged. But this detail, involving notions of justice peculiar to the more settled regions, is obviously irrelevant to the question of the frontier code.

Such episodes were of course presented in pleasant fashion

Notes By The Way... An old-timer is the one who can remember when the coffee grinder was on the kitchen wall. — (Calgary Alberta). Brazil is in the market for windmills from Canada. And with Parliament assembled, brother, we've got some dandies! — (Ottawa Citizen). A psychiatrist says conceit is a form of mental disease. If so, it's a strange ailment that exhilarates the patient and makes his associates sick. — (Kitchener-Waterloo Record). A new departure was made in the treatment of sexual crimes in Alberta when Mr. Justice Wilson sentenced an accused to "indeterminate" imprisonment on a moral charge of offences involving two young girls. Psychiatrists who examined him testified he was a "psychopath of the criminal sexual type". The judge accordingly sentenced him to six years' imprisonment in the penitentiary, and further directed that he should be kept in detention at the pleasure of the minister of justice. This means, in effect, that he will not be released until the authorities are satisfied that his perverted tendencies have been corrected, and that he is no longer a danger to the public. — (Edmonton Journal).

Old Charlottetown (And P. E. I.) THE PUMPING STATION "As the Water Works project for Charlottetown is now fairly under way, a few words about the Pumping Station would not be out of place. The contract having been awarded to W. H. Fraser, Esq., he commenced the work of excavation about the first week in May last, and was progressing very favorably for about three weeks when the working party struck a spring of such magnitude that it nearly caused the works to stop; in fact, there was such a flow of water that many of the knowing ones predicted that the well would never be sunk to the depth required. But the contractor, despite the opinions of the would-be wise ones, at once saw the difficulties and, heedless of expenses, immediately sent to Boston and secured the services of a gentleman who has made this particular work a study for more than a quarter of a century. A few days ago, Mr. Fryfield arrived, and at once went to work, and in a very short time had the well thoroughly secured and the water under control. "From that time the work went on steadily; the desired object was accomplished and the foundation stone of the pumping wells was successfully laid on the 17th last. Mr. Fraser lost no time, but at once set on bricklayers and masons, increased the number of laborers, and has at the present time no less than from fifty to sixty hands employed. The stone and brick work has progressed so rapidly that citizens and strangers who visit the wells are really astonished, and the false prophets actually hang their heads. Mr. Fraser has also reached the required depth of a second well, and, should no mishap occur, it will commence to be walled in a few days." — The Examiner, July 27, 1888.

The Poet's Corner THE SECRET Plant the seed and watch it grow. And flower, and fruit. But never know. The secret hoarded in the shell Of that infinitesimal cell Which, bursting into two, and four, And eight—each perfect as before— Repeats the sequence till the root And stem produce the bud and fruit. And, safe within that fruit, the seed Against another season's need. Do not search to probe or scan The intricate omniscient plan. No hand may feel, no eye may see The pulsing vital energy. Which from familiar things — as soil, And sun, and rain — with patient toil Performs an alchemy whose power Can change a seed into a flower. How long, without humility, Shall man trust ingenuitly To thwart extinction — with a wheel, An atom, iron, oil and steel? How long, before his pride concede The secret dwells . . . within a seed. — Jessie Wilmore Murton in the New York Times.

The Age Old Story Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand, said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience. The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought them out of it.

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