

A free, responsible and aggressive Press is democracy's first line of defense

Many People Think So... (And Some Otherwise)

By Frank E. Bogart

Ever since childhood I had always supposed that there was a "Christmas angle" to the poem which begins with these lines:

"Backward, turn backward, O Time in your flight,
Make me a child again, just for tonight."

I can't tell just why I thought this, but it went right along with "Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the house, Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse."

Well, when you have to write a column about Christmas you have to get facts. So I repaired to Baldwin Library where I found that the title of my poem is "Rock Me To Sleep," and its author was Elizabeth Akers Allen, 1832-1911, who wrote it in 1860. It was published anonymously in the Saturday Evening Post and there was subsequently some controversy over its authorship, which was finally settled by the New York Times in 1867. Although she wrote a great deal of verse, "Rock Me To Sleep" is the best known and about the only thing that has survived the years. I am glad of that.

While at the library, I decided to get the rest of the column. We'll start with Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "Voice in the Mist."

The time draws near the birth of Christ;
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on moor and moor,
Saw out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound.

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

In the literature of Christmas, Charles Dickens plays perhaps the leading part, due to the immortality of "A Christmas Carol." But I have always liked "Mr. Pickwick's Christmas." You remember

that Mr. Pickwick and his party were spending the holidays at the Wardles, and the scene is the kitchen hearth on Christmas eve. Here is the song Mr. Wardle gives as the wassail goes round:

My song I trol out for CHRISTMAS
The hearty, the true and the bold;
A bumper I drain, and with might and main
Give three cheers for this Christmas old!

We'll usher him in with a merry din
That shall gladden his joyous heart;
And we'll keep him up, while there's a bit of us,
And a "fellowship" good we'll part.

Don't tell me that, even in a year such as this, with many families split by the demands of the global war, that there isn't something to warm the cockles of the heart about that song of Mr. Wardle's.

"I will honor Christmas in my heart,
And I will keep it all the year,
Perhaps if all of us can do that,
'TIS 1944 WILL be a victorious year."

Happenings of Long Ago

50 YEARS AGO
Dec. 21, 1893

"The gallery of the New Library Hall has been opened. It will seat nearly 100 persons."

"Mrs. A. Partridge has been quite an invalid, caused by one of the severe colds that seems now to be almost epidemic in our vicinity. Both Mrs. Raynolds and Campbell are busy from early morn until almost the next morning looking after the many sufferers."

"There is nothing like a bottle of whiskey in the cellar to make a man thoughtful for the comfort of his wife when the coal-bell is empty."

"Mohammedanism will now have a 'go' at the wickedness of New York, having opened a Mosque there Sunday of last week."

"Who says the English never adopt American ideas? Elevators are being put in all the royal palaces, but they will call them 'lifts' all the same."

"All the churches, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist will celebrate the Christmas holiday with appropriate ceremonies. There is, of course, a Christmas tree, and prominent features to please the little ones."

20 YEARS AGO
Dec. 21, 1923

The front page of the Eccentric, Dec. 21, 1923, was a full page picture of Santa Claus in color.

"As has been the custom for several years past, groups of singers will go caroling Christmas Eve in and about Birmingham. Miss Myra Grattan, instructor of music in the Birmingham schools, has been training the High School Juniors and Seniors for some time past, teaching them the favorite carols."

"The cantata, 'The Christmas Story,' by Matthews, will be sung by the choir of the First Methodist church."

The Unorganized Majority

The political picture in the United States depicts highly organized groups, exerting amazing pressure, and getting what their leaders demand. Nearly every minority is organized. Politicians fear even a small group when it makes up an "association." The unorganized, which includes most of the middle-class people, have no association and they get it, politically speaking, in the neck.

One of these days the great majority of average Americans will discover with a start that their nation has been worked over by the professionals. They will, we hope, wake up and go to work to see if they can recapture the democracy of individuals, seeking the general welfare.

If this ever happens it will be a bad day for the pressure groups, including the organizations that work the political street, the associations that work the business side, and all other propaganda, aggregations that exert undue influence upon the policies of this country.

U. S. Submarines Hit The Enemy

The important American submarine campaign in the Pacific is seen in the announcement that our undersea craft have sunk 355 enemy ships, probably sunk 36 and damaged 114. Secretary Knox declares that three-fourths of Japan's shipping losses can be attributed to United Nations submarine action. Obviously, most of the attacks have been made by American submarines.

The Navy reports that all its forces have definitely sunk 745 Japanese ships in a little more than 700 days of warfare. This is better than a ship a day and is believed to be in excess of Japanese ability to replace.

George Bernard Shaw, the Women's Rights

British author, asked how women could get rid of their handicaps, replied that the woman's freedom movements overshoot itself and "it is the men who are handicapped now."

He knew of no patronizing attitude toward women, saying "men are abjectly afraid of women, not without reason." Moreover, "the country is run by women."

"The movement for 'complete emancipation' of the women refers to it, continues, however, with nearly all females convinced that they need legislative relief."

There is just the prospect, however, when women complete their self-assertion that they will find the sex has lost as much as it has gained.

FOR ALL THE MEN in this community who failed to thank their workfolk for the splendidly prepared food they enjoyed last Thanksgiving Day, we say: Thank you, Ladies—you're great cooks!

FEET ARE MADE TO WALK WITH, AND UPON—not to complain about. Suggesting that he who has a good understanding generally is an optimist.

Church Sunday evening at the First Methodist Episcopal church, Sunday evening.

"Miss Marjorie Alleg, Village Librarian, has just completed an estimation of the value of the books in the library. She states there are approximately 4800 books, valued at about \$6,000.00, based on their present condition."

5 YEARS AGO
Dec. 22, 1938

"The Rev. Charles H. Cadigan, rector of Grace Episcopal church, Amherst, Mass., has accepted the call to succeed the Rev. Samuel Simpson Marquis, D. D., as rector of Christ Church Cranbrook, according to an announcement made by the vestry of Christ Church Cranbrook."

"Birmingham's Community House Sunday afternoon resounded with the happy shouts of 35 Oakland County crippled children who were treated to their annual turkey dinner, visitation of Santa Claus, and distribution of presents."

"They were the guests of Birmingham Rotarians, who transported them to and from each child's home."

"Little girls whose ages range

Betting Ban In Baseball

Kenesaw Mountain Landis, high commissioner of organized baseball, was exercising his great power in the interest of the professional game when he removed the president of the major league club for betting upon games in which his players participated.

We have no idea that the bets placed by the official influenced the playing of his team. In fact, he says, and he is telling the truth, no doubt, that he always bet on his own team.

The danger exists, however, that, some day, some official can bet against his team and develop a crooked combination that will throw games to earn cash. To keep the sport clean it is necessary to ban betting by officials and players and the prompt action of Judge Landis will strengthen the public faith in the good faith of baseball.

Aid to Needy, Aged Citizens

It will surprise some Americans to learn that in August the State of California paid \$725,388 in pensions to 153,412 persons who received and as needy, aged citizens.

Three States, with greater population, expended less money. Illinois paid \$4,225,131, New York \$3,610,557 and Pennsylvania \$2,505,193. Ohio, with about the same number of citizens as California, paid \$3,665,338. The payments listed were for the month of August. Not all of the money came from State sources because the Federal government matches the State's payments up to \$40 a month. In California the maximum payment is \$50 a month.

WAR CERTAINLY CHANGES STYLES. Pity the makers of feminine slacks when this war is over—or will the girls really continue this masculine attire?

WENDELL WILKIE SO FAR CERTAINLY has the Republican Party doing a lot of talk thinking—which isn't bad for the Party either, is it?

The Birmingham Eccentric

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People's Column

December 15, 1943

To the Editor:

For the past few weeks I have noticed different letters and articles which have run in your paper and since these articles seem to be of a rather critical nature, I feel impelled to give you another side of the picture.

Since this is a free country and each citizen is free to express his opinion, I will not in any way attempt to combat or refute the criticisms that have been expressed. Everyone is entitled to his own opinion. All I want to do is to furnish some additional facts which may in some measure render people more capable of expressing a fair opinion.

One particularly glaring example is the Birmingham Liquor Store the yearly volume was at the rate of \$100,000 worth of business. The store employed four male employees.

The Birmingham Liquor Store is now handling a volume at the rate of \$900,000 per year with myself and two women employees. It is not at all uncommon for me to spend twelve to fourteen hours per day in an attempt to keep things in such shape that the business may be reasonably served.

The space which houses the Birmingham Liquor Store was not designed to handle this type of business. Every customer who enters our delivery from the Liquor Commission Warehouse, we are forced to carry down to the basement an average of 700 cases. These 700 cases during the week must be returned to the warehouse by hand, there being no elevator. A case weighs on the average of 50 pounds.

Broadly speaking this means that every week I must carry up from the basement 17 1/2 tons of liquor by hand and distribute them to the proper bins. I wonder how many of the critical customers would like to take on a job of this kind.

Each bottle that is dispensed must be labeled in legible ink. No label must be made out for each bottle and placed on the inventory in the bin, so that we can check our stock over and account for the merchandise we have moved.

Michigan law requires that each bottle be stamped with a date and a signature must be obtained and the card punched for

Stove League



each bottle handled. The cash must be accounted for. New orders must be made up to replenish the stock. There is a tremendous amount of red tape with keeping track of each and every item and recording in an attempt to provide Birmingham residents with a diversified stock.

We do not believe it is possible for any force consisting of one man and two women to handle \$900,000 worth of business per year and to carry 17 1/2 tons of liquor from the basement to the first floor and distribute it in the bins and at the same time keep track of all the records involved and still have a sufficient amount of time or energy remaining to serve each and every customer in a thorough salesmanlike manner.

We believe that there are always two sides to every story. For instance, I might tell you of a woman customer who entered this store this week. Incidentally one of our women employees went home ill. This woman after calling for and examining 21 different bottles of liquor, became annoyed because we would not continue to attempt to serve her. She left the store in a highly indignant frame of mind without making a purchase. There is no use in furnishing her name. This is an extreme case but we have had many others that border on it.

In conclusion I would like to say that I believe that the people of this community realize the handicap under which we operate and that they can understand that we sincerely do not have the time to give each and every customer the consideration which you can reasonably expect from other retail commercial operations. People like to trade where they are the recipients of good salesmanship. The requirements established for us make it imperative that we perform certain necessary functions. The time left over for us is not sufficient to devote the proper amount of time to handle people in a leisurely salesmanlike manner. If we could get more time to give you an establishment designed for this type of business, we believe we could give you a better service with the same amount of time we know how, realizing that the people of this community, in as far as possible, want a reasonable choice of the liquors available and that the first job is to see that the store is run in accordance with the rulings established by the Liquor Commission and the people of this community insofar as possible have an opportunity to buy the very best selection possible.

Very truly yours,
Norman Fisher

December 17, 1943.
To the Editor:

I'm wondering if some of our neighbors aren't getting themselves worked up a little over complaints on our local liquor store manager. I certainly cannot subscribe to the complaint. Frankly in my trips to the store I have received courteous treatment at each and every time. I have seen the high-handed tactics in Detroit stores I say it was high in cost.

Every day I pass two state liquor stores and I have yet to see fewer than 25 persons waiting in line outside. In most cases the customers are not exactly bridge table companions, and I think I can safely say that actually is to be thanked for working under a condition where women may make the fairest purchases at the store without feeling and being out of place as they certainly would at some other store.

One particularly glaring case came up at the store across from the General Motors Building. A lady waiting in line found herself between two decidedly undesirable groups. They simply closed the ranks and left her to drop back of the store after her. When she remonstrated they cursed her and she appealed to a policeman there he said he didn't want to do any-

thing about it as he didn't want to assume responsibility for starting any trouble. That hasn't, I believe could not, happen in Birmingham, due, in my opinion to the efficient way the store is being handled.

It may be that because the package is small and the price relatively low we expect a little cutting. But, entering the store with your mind made up as to the nature of your purchase and not holding up a line while you ask for a long explanation of the ancestry and general history and merits of a brand, I'd say you would come off infinitely better at the Birmingham store than at any other one I've visited.

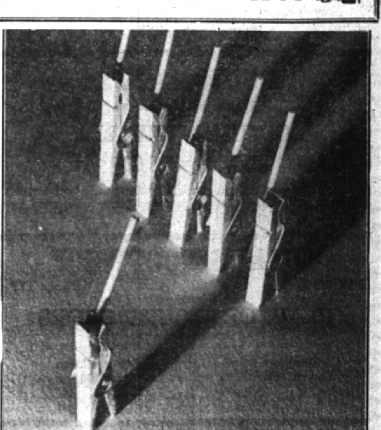
As I say, I'm wondering if some of our neighbors aren't getting themselves worked up a little. Sincerely,
PAUL D. HAMMETT.

Dec. 18, 1943
To the Editor:
Dear Sir:

I have read the advertisement and the articles you have been featuring on the Coveney episode. The incident may have been humorous at first, but a little of that kind of humor can go a long way. Obviously, the ad was placed in your paper to mock rather than to help household help. Under these circumstances I think you have carried on as to the true intention of all this publicity; certainly there can

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THE ECCENTRIC'S Camera Corner



Just a few ordinary clothespins and a clever idea were necessary for this pleasantly original picture.

"TICKLERS" is a rather widespread expression among photographers that the no one people who ever make really excellent snapshots are those who live farthest from home. And that's where the best pictures are taken. "Gosh, if I only had subject matter like that, I could make beautiful pictures too."

Probably we could—given the opportunity—but actually it's high time we photographers stopped depending ourselves. Day dreaming will never add a single snapshot to our collections. And, undoubtedly, it fills us with a sense of the truth as known, there are many excellent picture subjects around us at all times.

For instance, have you ever considered the subjects that can be found in an ordinary kitchen? The plates, the dishes, the cutlery, the fruits and vegetables, provide numerous opportunities for still life pictures. You can get it if you make a dramatic and interesting print.

The moral, of course, is obvious. If you're looking for interesting subjects matter, take a good close look at many of the things that surround you. You'll be surprised at the pictures you can get if you make use of close-ups of ordinary subjects in your home, and in your neighborhood. Even a few spare rods, clearly seen in line form, can make a fine picture if you find the right angle. So stop "picture dreaming"; open your eyes and you'll find that you've tapped new and inexhaustible sources of photographic subject matter.

John van Guilder

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TICKLERS by HAYES



"It keeps away evil spirits."

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