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The Strongest Memory is Weaker Than the Weakest Ink.

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Civic Affairs

There is a reawakening interest in civic affairs to be welcomed as a healthy sign. The recently formed Junior Chamber of Commerce is in a large measure responsible for this, having appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. M. A. Farmer to study the situation and to take necessary action.

A City Improvement Scheme as outlined by the Recorder, Mr. K. M. Martin, is one to be commended. The City Council should form a Civic Improvement Commission of its own for the purpose of submitting plans and estimating costs, together with a definite scheme to be put into effect at the shortest possible notice.

The Junior Chamber of Commerce has set the pace, let all good men and true having our interests at heart, get behind them, and endeavour to have something definite accomplished.

The B. C. Coalition

British Columbia has a coalition government, of Liberals and Progressive Conservatives, formed under a Liberal Premier when the alternative was a state of administrative confusion because no party in the province had the strength to carry on alone.

The speech of Hon. R. L. Maitland, Attorney General and himself a Progressive Conservative, given in the opening days of the current session, shows something of the spirit behind the practical co-operation of the two "old" parties.

Scene Of Desolation

A graphic picture of what Berlin is now like has been given by Jerje Franberg, Swedish correspondent, who left there only a few days ago and is back in Stockholm. By his description, the huge German centre is a place that is woe-ridden, overcast with gloom, charged with fear and tension, and desolation on all sides.

The Allied air onslaught of February 3 caused widespread havoc in the city. Many government buildings were levelled. Hitler's chancellery is damaged, but is not in ruins and still serviceable.

The population is larger than ever as the streams of refugees continue to pour in from eastern Germany in flight from the Russians.

ful scenes of panic at the entrances marked the raid of February 3. The ruins of Berlin are the only sanctuary, now and when the city is besieged, Nazis there are credited with believing that it will be some weeks before the Red Army get to Berlin, as there are massive German defences yet to be cracked between the city and the Oder River.

EDITORIAL NOTES

The baby bonus is still a bone of contention in Quebec and Ontario legislatures, but in both instances it is largely shadow boxing.

British agriculture is at present the most highly mechanized in the world. The tractors in use have increased from 55,000 in 1939 to 90,000 in 1941, 165,000 in 1943 and over 200,000 to date.

Notwithstanding a loss of revenue and decrease of profits to the extent of \$1,199,514 resulting from Federal liquor restrictions, British Columbia Coalition Government showed a net surplus of \$7,275,887.

A newly-invented British pipe-cleaning machine was recently used to scrape a 26 mile strip of water main. This work normally took 65 men 12 days, at a cost of 20c a yard. The machine accomplished the whole in 18 hours (spread over 4 days) occupying 8 men, at an approximate cost of 2c per yard.

Although the Germans made preparations for the offensive by Canadian and United Kingdom troops in the Cleve-Goch region, they were apparently not fully prepared for it when it came. The correspondent of the London Daily Telegraph reports seeing scores of trees cut so that they would fall easily, and of trees cut with holes for dynamite, in some of the dynamite already in place.

Rt. Hon. Viscount Simon, G.C.S.I., G.C.V.O., P.C., K.C., British lawyer and statesman, Lord Chancellor, born this date 1873; educated at Wadham College, Oxford, called to the Bar in 1899, took Silk 1908, entered parliament in 1906; appointed solicitor-general in 1913; chairman of Indian Statutory Commission, 1927, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1937, Deputy Leader of the House of Commons until 1940, until appointed Lord Chancellor the same year; noted orator, and authority on international affairs, been council member for Britain in the League of Nations; publications include Comments and Criticisms, and Portrait of My Mother.

The process of the law is slow in the United States. The Ringling Circus fire disaster at Hartford, Conn., occurred in July costing the loss of 168 lives. Only now have six of the employees been convicted of "involuntary manslaughter," and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Again, the Boston Grove fire of two years ago with a loss of nearly 500 lives, has just resulted in the president and treasurer of the ill-fated amusement centre, being sentenced to two years imprisonment for evasion of Federal income tax laws to be served concurrently with his sentence of 12 to 15 years for manslaughter in connection with that tragedy.

There is no disposition in London to speculate on the trend of operations, but it is pointed out that the British and Canadian advance towards the Rhine has outflanked the forward sections of the line south of this penetration. The prepared positions which constitute the Siegfried Line face west, whereas the British are now attacking from the north, that is, in enfilade. Thus the Allied armies are now once more engaged in that same heavy attritional warfare which previously caused the Germans such unbearable losses that they were forced to stage their unsuccessful Ardennes offensive. The situation is now, however, in many ways, different from what it was before the German offensive: The Germans, having vainly sacrificed a large proportion of their best operational reserves, will now be hard put to it to find the forces necessary to fill those breaches in their line which sooner or later the Allied offensive will force. Furthermore, as shown above, the Germans are no longer in the relatively comfortable position of having to repel the Allied frontal attacks alone, they are now being attacked on their flank as well.

The wisdom of a measure to provide for the sale of beer and wine in New Brunswick hotels is being hotly debated behind the scenes in Fredericton. Some cabinet ministers, according to reports, would like to see this right away, while others are strongly opposed to the idea. Those who favor it point out that one of New Brunswick's best bets for a bright post-war economy is development of the tourist business. They contend that beer and wine legislation would touch off a wave of hotel construction, since it would mean larger hotel profits. They claim that the present hotel facilities of the province are completely inadequate and that unless the sale of beer and wine is legalized they are unlikely to improve very much. Opponents hold the view that the temperance feeling is so strong in New Brunswick that a beer and wine bill would be political suicide. They also claim that beer and wine would lead people, especially the young people, into thriftless ways and prove a boon to business. The only point on which there seems to be agreement is that if anything is going to be done about beer and wine, this is the session at which it will be done. But the deadlock between the "wets" and "drys" may be unbreakable.

Notes By The Way

Politicians are shrewd. They direct their appeals to the emotions rather than to the intelligence. Germany knows the great majority is considerably more emotional than sensible. — Kitchener Record.

Of course we all hope that the Russians will march on through to Berlin, and further. But past performances of Russians, Americans, British, French or anyone else who has been fighting the Germans offer no reason for relaxation of our war efforts. We can see no fighting why we shouldn't continue to put our power up to the moment of victory. If the end comes unexpectedly, we can see no disaster in that. In fact we think we can stand the shock very nicely. — Chicago Daily News.

There will be responsibilities for both sides in the solution of this emergency, not only for the home owner who is afraid of the damage that children will cause to his property, but also for the parents of children who have an obligation and they should be held responsible for possible damage to property which they have caused. — Fort William Times-Journal.

Many Germans must be wishing today that they were back where the Nazis used to call "the days of shame" — the days of the Weimar Republic which through armed and labouring under difficulties was still at peace and regaining for the first time the respect of the family of nations. — From New York Times.

An honest record of history could be lived in all ages and would be impressed, not by what the world had learned of the passage of millenniums, but by what men had learned and forgotten to be forced to relearn again. — The Cotter's Saturday Night.

The popular conception that editors are big, tough guys who push other people around is a legend concocted by Hollywood. Actually, most of them are men of many respects, full of the other person's point of view and just as puzzled over the world as their next door neighbors. — The New York Times.

Last year's death toll from traffic accidents in Vancouver was a record, and this year's bids fair to surpass it. In 1944, traffic deaths in Vancouver averaged more than one a week and the number of cars on the road getting older and less dependable there is every probability that this year's toll will be even higher. — Vancouver Province.

"Women," says an American psychologist, "are the realists and the sentimentalists." There is a good deal of truth in this aphorism. Women—as wives and mothers and lovers—are "close to earth." They are not carried away, as men are apt to be carried away, by the emotion of the moment. — Guelph Mercury.

So the war was just about over! Of course it was. Were the Germans practically through, bled white of manpower? Wasn't Japan beaten and the Pacific helplessly open to us? In these past twenty-four hours, armchair optimists once again had their answer. "On earth," the Western Front, the German counter-offensive on a scale and of a bloodiness surpassing any since the Normandy landings. In the Orient, the statement of an All Force general, commanding B-29's that the Salpan based bombing can not alone destroy the Jap military potential. We expect that Japan will be on her feet and fighting in 1946. This is not the first time reckless cheerfulness has been chilled by events. — Detroit News.

In some places on this continent architects deliberately plan houses to trap the sun's rays. They call them "solar houses." They can be as modern as you like, with whole walls of glass. Or they can be traditional houses simply with extra regulation windows in the south wall. They are becoming popular because as they are pleasant places to live; and for a good practical reason, too: because they save on heating bills. Actual experience shows that sun-drenched heating plant can stay off for some hours in a house that borrows heat from the sun. The savings in fuel bills is a quarter to half that of a regulation house of the same size. You need to think about a number of things when you plan a solar house. First, of course, south. You can't have plenty of windows east and west. But to the north, where there's no sun, it is wise to have a measure of insulation. This compares with Christ's attitude of the last judgment. The sun is to be turned to the south, and less important to the north. — Brandon Sun.

Burns And The Bible

(By Peter Eastmont, author of "Briher's A—A Minute a Day With Burns." "To the Fifth Generation"—A Hundred Minutes with Gladstone." Editor "Stories From Aberdeen," Etc.)

Burns is pre-eminently the people's poet. One reason is that his genius was fed and nurtured on the Bible. A generation ago few Scottish homes were without a Bible, Burns' Poems and his picture. The more Burns is studied the more it will be seen that the Bible inspired his teaching and ideals. The first five years of a child's life affect more than any later influence. In Burns' boyhood family worship and Bible reading were conducted morning and evening. Robert's powers of imagination and composition developed while still a child. Once when his mother's washing hung in the kitchen on a rope hung from the rafters, a rat descended during prayers. Robert wrote:

"A rat, a rat, for want of stairs Ran down a rope to say its prayers."

Burns' father possessed a remarkable strength of character. A Scotchman, he was a man of God and a man of letters. He would take his Creed ready-made from no man.

Crude ideas of Hell fire shocked William Burns. He placed love in the poetry of his son, and that love is to be taught in his own family.

His teaching proved powerful through the poetry of his son, and liberated Scotland from the blighting effect of the doctrine of total depravity so commonly taught, and such a shameful contradiction of the prayer Christ taught — "Our Father Which art in Heaven," etc.

"Past redemption and past the pains of Hell for ever," Burns' father held, and such was his care for teaching the love of God to his family that he wrote a catechism specially for them.

The Cotter's Saturday Night expressed the loving veneration Burns' father had for his son. Burns' idea of true greatness, and is a priceless picture of the best type of family life in Scotland.

"From scenes like these, Old Scotia's grandeur springs, That makes her loved at home, revered abroad, Princes and Lords are but the An honest man's the noblest work of God."

In youthful manhood, when love for a maid stirred his genius, it was purity, goodness and modesty he prized.

"Her face is fair, her heart is true, As spotless as she's bonnie O, The opening gown, we saw Nae purer is than Nannie O"

In his boyhood Burns attended the school of poverty. His father was a broken down man before his rack and ruin. His father's illness left Robert at fifteen principal labourer on the farm.

Robert records that he was "the cheerless gloom of a hermit slave." It is now generally admitted that overstrain in his boyhood sowed the seeds of the disease that caused his early death.

"The losses and crosses Blessings right severe, There's woe that gives thee, Ye'll find nae other where."

"But human bodies are also fools For aye they're broken, reveals that when nae real ill perplex them, They'll snow themselves to vex them."

The Poet's Corner

"See those hands ne'er stretched to save, Hands that look, but never gave, Keeper of Mammon's iron chest, Lo there she goes, unspiced and unblest! She goes, but not to realms of everlasting rest."

Burns' indignation at hypocrisy is in the same spirit as Christ's denunciation of the Pharisees. "Scoundrel, even w' holy robes but hellish spirit," called forth unsparring passion in the "Holy Fair" and "Death and Dr. Hornbrook."

No poet surpassed Burns in his appreciation of true womanhood but his scorn for a virago was intense: "Her body is bestowed well, A handsome grave does hide her, But sure her soul is not in Hell, The dell would ne'er abide her."

Scotland owes much to Jean Armour. Her devotion and loving care of the poet helped him beyond all reckoning. And notwithstanding all his impetuosity and passions his love and veneration ever returned to his Jean.

"O a' the airts the wind can blow, I dearly like the West, For there the bonnie lassie lives The Lassie I lo'e best."

Perhaps the saddest verse Burns ever wrote is from "To a Daisy." "Such is the fate of artless maid, Sweet flower of the rural shade By love's simplicity betrayed and beguiled, Trust, the adieu, Till she, like thee, all soiled is laid low 'till the dust."

His own repentance was sincere, his remorse for his "foul offence" true. The severest critic of Robert Burns was himself.

"God knows I'm not the thing I should be, Nor am I even the thing I could be, He his bitter cry."

He repeated thousands of times the exhortation, "The triumph of the truly great is never, never to despair. Burns appealed to the Eternal Judge:

"Who made the heart, 'tis He alone Decided can try us..." "What's done we partly may compute, But snow not what's resisted."

Burns realized that true happiness was inward. "Say, to be just, and kind and wise There, solid self-enjoyment lies, That foolish, selfish, faithless ways Lead to be wretched, vile and base."

Health and peace and sweet content was his warmest wish for Scotland's sons.

"And Oh! May heaven their simple lives prevent From luxury's contagion weak and vile."

Fatal illness overtook him at the early age of 37. The waters of Brox were tried, but gave no relief. "He had his Bible with him in his lodgings and he read it almost continuously." His last poem was on his favourite subject — How to help those in sorest need.

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