

Strange But True

By F. H. MacArthur

The tiniest gleam—in the candle-light... Will shed a glow—in the darkest night... The shortest "Hello"—Said with a smile... Will brighten a day—that seemed grey for awhile... The simplest message—From a friend to friend... Will keep everyday merry—from beginning to end... Ever hear of the Indian fakirs walking-stick clock? The cane stick was octagonal. At the top, on each of the sides, a small hole was drilled, into which fitted a short peg... When the fakir wanted to know the time of day he lifted up his unique clock by a string attached to the top... The shadow which the peg cast on the side of the stick, showed him what time it was... This saved him the task of measuring the length of the shadows every time, because there were little lines cut on the sides telling the hours... But why so many sides? I fancy I hear you say. Because at different times of the year the path of the sun is different, likewise the shadow, which depends on the sun, does not act the same way in summer as in winter... In summer the sun climbs higher up in the heavens than he does in winter... So the shadow cast at noon-time is shorter in summer than in winter... And that, incidentally, is why the cane clock had so many sides... The great drawback to this kind of a clock was that on cloudy days you just couldn't tell the time with any degree of accuracy... Much water has flowed over the dam since you and I met... is a very old saying... Do you know what this old expression means... It means if you fill a simouar with water and then open the top the water runs off... It might take a whole hour to drain the container... If you filled it a second time it would take another hour to run off, etc... The Simouar is a water clock used in Babylon 1500 years ago... One advantage water clocks had over cane timepieces: they did tell time in bad weather and at night... The Chinese water clocks were rather simple in construction... In fact they were nothing but copper kettles arranged on steps, one below the other... The water passed from one kettle to the other every two hours... In remote part of China these ancient water clocks are still in use by the people... One of the wonders of Strassburg Cathedral is its clock; and the man who hatched the idea was a very skilled workman... This amazing timepiece boasts three dials... The lower one is a calendar; a huge, revolving circle, divided into 365 parts—one for each day of the year... At one side may be seen the figures of Apollo, the god of the sun, and Diana, the goddess of the moon... An arrow in Apollo's hand points to the day... But there's more to it than that... Every year, on the 31st of December at midnight the seven days of the week take new positions... Holidays such as Easter, which fall on different dates every year, ar-

range themselves in their proper order, though how they manage this amazing mechanical feat I cannot say... The center or middle dial is a regular clock, which tick-tocks off the hours of the day... The upper dial is a planetarium, so if you are the least bit interested as to the position of any planet in the heavens you have only to look at the planetarium... Around the circle are arranged the twelve constellations of the zodiac... Seven hands show the position of the seven planets... Tourists who visit Strassburg Cathedral are simply amazed, too, at the many little figures which are constantly on the move about the famous ticker... For example, every quarter of an hour you'll see one of these clock fairies running along the lower gallery... A child comes on the scene at the first quarter... Fifteen minutes later a young man steps in the fairie's place... Fifteen minutes pass and a middle-aged gent comes to view... Finally, when the minute hand points to twelve, a tottering bearded old fellow like Rip Van Winkle passes along the gallery... bent shoulders sits... Death armed with a scythe, so, in the space of one hour, you'll see—if you ever happen to be in Strassburg cathedral, the whole course of human life pass in review on the wonderful mechanical calendar clock made by that master clock-maker Schwilgue... Each of the little figures already mentioned has a duty to perform... They ring out the quarter hours on a set of chimes... At twelve noon there is a solemn procession of twelve tiny figures dressed like monks, quietly they move along the upper gallery to disappear one by one, into the innards of the wonder clock... Then from the tower rings out that familiar sound "cock-a-doodle-doo!" which seems to awaken in every human being a vague feeling of anxiety... The joyful sound comes from a pint-sized little figure of rooster who says hello to the world in his own lingo... Have you ever heard of a clock like that, I say?

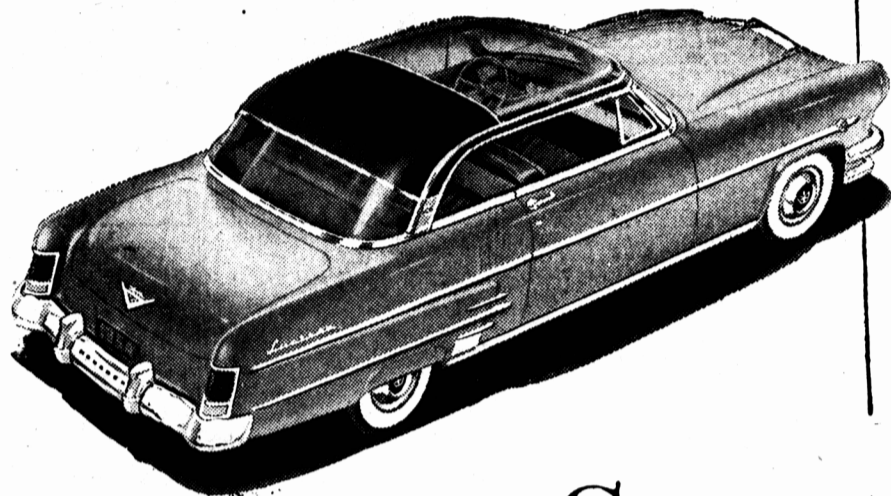
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KILMUIR W. I. There were 11 members and four visitors attending the Kilmuir W. I. meeting on November 19... This was the annual meeting and was held at the home of Mrs. Colin MacDonald... Mrs. D. Stewart, the president gave a brief and interesting address... Election of officers for the coming year was as follows:—president, Mrs. D. Stewart (re-elected); secretary - treasurer, Mrs. Colin MacDonald (re-elected); directors,

Mrs. A. N. MacPherson and Mrs. P. MacDonald; auditors, Mrs. Cyril Johnston and Miss Evelyn MacPherson; Red Cross convener, Mrs. M. N. MacGowan; condolence convener, Mrs. Colin MacDonald... Pamphlets and other literature was passed around for members to read... On reporting the results of the pantry sale held during the month, the secretary reported that every item had been sold and a substantial sum collected... The secretary was instructed to ascertain the amount owing for music instruction at the school and to pay

this bill as soon as possible... The committees gave their reports for the month... Mrs. E. Farguharison and Mrs. A. N. MacPherson will visit the sick during the month of December... The roll call at the next meeting is to be an exchange of Christmas gifts... Concluding a pleasant social hour at the close of the meeting refreshments were served by the hostess, Mrs. MacDonald, who was assisted in serving by Mrs. E. Farguharison and Miss Laurie MacDonald.

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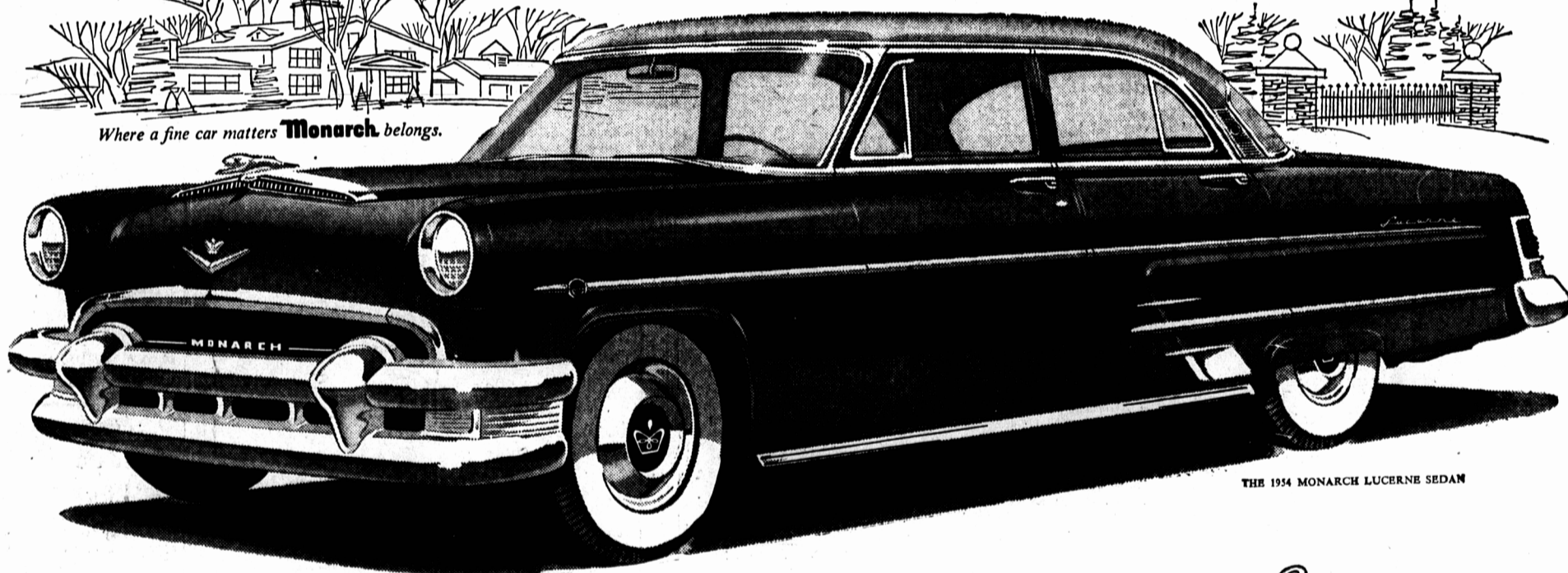


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