



Culver Service

The price of the delay here at the Erie pier, New York, would move that much freight to Utica

Let's get rid of the Horse

By
JOHN T.
FLYNN

Our city streets today are no more adapted to him than railroad coaches are to hoop skirts. Time will come when horse-drawn vehicles will no longer slow up traffic—why not anticipate it?

THE other day a motor truck drew up to a city freight station. If its 2,000-pound cargo could have been unloaded at once, it would have taken fourteen minutes, and then the truck could have gone on its way. But because of congestion around the platforms, largely due to horse-drawn vehicles, the truck was held up for an extra fifty-four minutes. Now, every minute that truck stood waiting like that cost its owners 6 cents. This particular delay, then, totaled \$3.24. For that amount the freight on the truck could have been shipped from New York to Utica.

If this were an exceptional incident, I wouldn't be coming forward now with a suggestion that the horse be abolished from our city streets and main traffic arteries. But it isn't. Every day owners of horse-drawn, necessarily slow-moving vehicles, in cities and on main highways, are causing delays and inconveniences that take money from the pockets of the colossal majority who use motor-driven trucks for the transaction of their business.

Beyond a doubt the time will come when you will no longer see horses and wagons contributing, as they now do, mightily to the congestion of traffic.

But why not anticipate this? The improvement under existing conditions would be remarkable—in a few years the effect would be tremendous.

This suggestion will meet with opposition from only two sources: well-meaning but unthinking horse lovers, and those selfish individuals and corporations which persist in using horses because they are cheaper or more convenient.

The views of the first group justify consideration, but they can be dismissed promptly. Abolish the horse from the smoke-heavy, gas-heavy city streets and you will be doing him a great kindness.

Surely there is no more pitiful sight than a horse, drawn up to the curb, his nose forced almost into the exhaust of an automobile which is giving off poisonous, nauseous fumes. The horse gets small quarter on crowded streets today. Fenders scrape against his legs; horns blare at him harshly; frequently he must be reined in suddenly to give passage to a more swiftly moving motor vehicle.

As for the second group—assuming that they find horses cheaper to them—by what right do they practice economy at the expense of all of us?

A driver of a horse-drawn truck may be saving a few dollars, but he is loading expense on scores of others who are using high-powered trucks and who are held up while his horses slumber in the street or wander unhurried through crowded thoroughfares. He may be saving money, but he is using up more of our streets than he is entitled to.

Joseph P. Day, one of the great real estate men of the country, tells me that a city street is worth in money at least as much as the private property abutting it. On that basis you can easily figure how much property is being held up by the wagon driver whose wagon is parked at the curb taking up much more room than a motor vehicle, or moving along at a little less than three miles an hour—the average speed of a horse and wagon in the city.

Not long ago a big business house in one of our large cities operated 822 horse-drawn wagons. Now it operates 535 trucks, thus removing 287 cumbersome vehicles from the streets. This was like adding twenty city blocks of parking space to the city's resources—at least \$5,000,000 worth of streets.

His Last Stand

THIS is an age of speed. I don't mean reckless, dangerous needless haste. I mean speed in communication, speed in transportation, speed in the mechanics of business transaction. The horse tends to slow it up.

There is nothing radically new in my suggestion. It has been heard before. When Richard E. Enright was Police Commissioner of New York City a few years ago he asserted in an official statement that the horse ought to be excluded from every street in Manhattan. Not long afterward, the president of the

New York Board of Trade voiced a similar suggestion and brought down upon his head denunciation from "friends of the horse." Their arguments were unsound, but they were loud and long.

Chicago, Los Angeles, Denver and other cities have already seen battles over the question in their local legislative bodies. Indeed, Los Angeles did actually pass an ordinance forbidding horses from sauntering through the business section of that city. However, the horse users organized and forced a modification within six months, so that horse-drawn vehicles were forbidden the central business zone during certain hours. In Washington the district commissioners ruled all horse-drawn vehicles out of traffic on Sixteenth Street, a main artery which leads to northwest Washington.

Horse-drawn vehicles are prohibited in Detroit from using any avenue which has officially been dubbed a boulevard, and peddlers operating with a horse and wagon are barred from certain streets. In Chicago an elaborate report recently completed, while it does not recommend the exclusion of horses from the Loop, does, I understand, express the belief that such a movement must be made ultimately.

The department stores of the country operate about 27,000 motor wagons, but between them they have only some 500 horses. That makes about one horse to every twenty stores. That's progress. Fine! The horse is leaving the busy streets himself—but not fast enough.

He needs a little hurrying. One reason for this is that a powerful effort is being made to sell the idea that to certain forms of business the horse-and-wagon is indispensable.

The horse is making his last stand in the milk wagon, the bread wagon, the ice wagon and certain departments of the trucking business.

The horse is supposed to plod along, trained to follow his accustomed route from door to door, without any extra cost for stopping and starting.

I read a speech delivered by an ice-

man before a group of horsemen some time ago. It was a beautiful and eloquent flight of fancy, filled with flowers of rhetoric about "Old Dobbin" and promising that never, no, never, would the iceman forsake the horse. But my iceman has forsaken him, and so too probably has yours. The milk companies and the bakers are finding motor trucks best for very long routes and the electric truck for shorter ones.

In Chicago, for instance, there are 917 bread routes. Of these about 700 have been taken over by motor or electric trucks.

Ask the Horse Himself

THERE are situations in which an operator who would prefer to use motor-driven trucks is forced to use horses because others who are already using horses tie up his trucks at docks and loading platforms. If you go to West Street, along the river in New York or any other similar street in any other city, you will see that 73 out of 100 trucks are horse-drawn. It's a lot cheaper to keep a horse standing still on the street than a motor truck.

The parking problem which exists in all our large cities has been duly recognized and steps taken to cope with it. But the horse-drawn vehicle presents its own peculiar parking problem, not alone when it is standing still, drawn up to the curb, but when it is moving. For surely in this day of swift-moving trucks and busses a wagon lumbering along less than three miles an hour is virtually parked—and parked right in the middle of the traffic artery.

Incidentally, mention should be made of the fact that even when it is literally parked the horse-drawn vehicle, while to some extent out of the way, is sprawled out—the wagon covering more than its share of space, the horses pointed out at an angle of about 45 degrees and occupying more space than the wagon. The engine of a motor truck uses up less space than the hindquarters of those horses—and the truck is moored snugly to the curb.

The ultimate objective should be the retirement of the horse from very large cities entirely. Meanwhile he should be kept off the streets of the active business zones. On all other streets the horse-drawn vehicle should be rigidly forced to keep to the extreme right while from main traveled highways he should be barred altogether and gently led to a peaceful pasture.

And if you think this would be an act inimical to man's noble friend—just ask the horse himself.

Long Distance

A Short Short Story by
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THE telephone rings. On the window sill beside the telephone is a single geranium in a cracked pot. The smudged pane looks out upon a yellow brick wall. The walls of the room are sea-green, and are streaked with dampness; the floor is bare. A wicker basket of clean laundry rests on the ironing board; on the stove is a large boiler filled with clothes. The kitchen clock clicks emptily.

The telephone rings again.

A child wakes in the crib beneath the window and whimpers. The sink is piled with breakfast dishes. The kitchen table has been cleared. A pen leans at a crazy angle from the top of an open ink bottle, and on the top line of a tablet of ruled paper has been written: "New York, N. Y., December 25th . . ."

The telephone rings again.

The door flings open, and a large woman, the base of her neck beaded with perspiration, shambles across the room, wiping her hands on her apron. She lifts the receiver.

"... Yeah? No, she ain't here. No. Who-siss? What? ... I can't hear. ... Oh! Well, wait a minute then, maybe I can find her. I think she went up on the roof to hang out some ... What? I said, wait a minute, I'll call her."

The woman sets down the receiver, shuffles to the door,

turns her face upward, and shouts through the criss-cross of stairs and banisters: "Missus Ran-dall! Missus Randall! Oh, Missus Ran-dall! ... Is Mrs. Randall up there, Mrs. Elder? Tell her there's a long-distance telephone, and to hurry."

She recrosses the room, pauses to remark into the telephone: "She's com-in'," and then bends down and peers into the crib.

"Cudgie, cudgie, cudgie . . . poor little kid. . . ." She sniffs the air suddenly. "Say, you tell your ma"—stepping briskly to the stove—"if she don't watch this stew, you two won't have no Christmas dinner." She sets the pot back on the stove, and ambles slowly toward the door. There is a loud descending clatter on the stairs.

"Hurry up, Mrs. Randall . . . long distance. Maybe it's news about—"

MRS. RANDALL hurries past her breathlessly toward the telephone. She is very young and very thin, and her gingham dress is not very new. For the moment a spot of bright color is spreading slowly over each cheek, like a drop of red paint in water, and her dark eyes are black with excitement. She makes a foolish dab to straighten her wind-blown hair, and grabs the receiver.

"Hello. Thanks, Mrs. Mullaney. . . . Hello. Hello." She clicks the receiver. "He . . . yes, hello, yes, this is she. Yes, this is Mrs. Joseph Randall speaking. . . . What? From where? . . . Toledo? Oh, my God."

She has just time to brace herself against the window sill.

"Hello. Hello. Hellooo-oo-ooo, Ma! Well, Ma . . ."

The color has gone out of her cheeks again, leaving them now very empty. She grasps the telephone until her knuckles show white.

"... And the same to you, Ma, an' many of them. Gee, though, but think of you calling up all the way from Toledo to just say Merry Christmas. Gee, isn't it awful expensive? . . . Is that all? Oh, yeh, but how much for each additional minute? Yeh; well, there you are, you see, there's where they get you. . . . What? Oh, we're—we're fine. Wait a minute till I shut this door, Ma; there's a lot of noise. . . ."

She turns and faces Mrs. Mullaney, still lingering curiously on the threshold. Mrs. Mullaney recollects herself guiltily, then gathers in her chins with wounded dignity, and slams the door behind her like a lady.

"There. . . . Oh, everybody's fine, I said. Yeh, an' the kid too; honest, Ma, you ought to see the kid. Honest, he's the image of his father! Six weeks. Say, he's the cutest—what? Oh, Jo's—Jo just stepped out a minute, Ma. He just went down to the corner to buy me some"—her eye falls on the geranium—"some flowers. Jo's always getting me flowers and things. You ought to

see the marvelous fur coat he gave me for Christmas, and a new silk dress—I got it on now. He's always giving me jewelry and everything; I tell him he'll spoil me sure. . . . Ha. . . .

"Well, an' it's great to hear your voice too, Ma. It wouldn't seem like Christmas without . . . Let's see, it's been just a—a year, hasn't it? Just a year to the day. . . . Say, Ma—not that I care, but—how does Pa feel about me, now? . . . He still does, eh? All right. . . . No, that's all right; I don't blame him . . . in a way. He always was like that. Yeh, well, you tell him how happy I am, see, Ma, an' what a nice apartment we got, an' how good Jo is to me an' the—the kid . . . an' . . ."

"Yeh, we're still at the same address; we like it so here we don't want to move. You and Pa ought to see this apartment, Ma, honestly, you wouldn't believe it. Eight rooms, and elevators, and my boudoir is all in pink and white—like I always wanted, remember? How I always wanted a sunken bathtub, like the movies, and some old armor and an electric ice box? Well, tell Pa I got all that, an' more, and of course we got two servants, because Jo won't hear my doing any housework. . . . Yeh, at Clancey Street. That's just off Fifth Avenue. . . ."

"Yeh. Yeh, I know. Sure, I know. Do you have the tree this year as usual? Fine. . . . And, say, I bet you're having the regulation old Christmas feed, huh, like we used to have? . . . Turkey and all, huh? . . . I wish I could smell over the telephone, ha, ha. . . . Oh, yes, Jo and I are going to have ours right here quietly at home. Jo wanted me to go out to some swell restaurant or other, but I said, 'Oh, no, Jo,' I said, 'Christmas is one day when everybody ought to—stay home an' . . ."

"Nothing, Ma. I just coughed."

"Gee, we must have talked way over our three minutes? . . . Yeh, it only comes but once a year, doesn't it? . . ."

"Wait a minute, Ma, before you hang up. I want you to say 'Hello' to little Joey . . . wait till I hold him up. . . ."

"Here, Joey, that's your grandma. . . . Hello, Grandma. . . ."

"Isn't he sweet, Ma? . . . Well, it was just great to hear from you. . . . No, I—I don't think I'll be seeing you for—quite a while. . . . No. . . . Well, Ma, yes, I will . . . yeh. . . . Ma . . . yeh, and a—happy New Year. . . . Good-by—"

She stares at the mouthpiece of the telephone for several minutes after she has hung up the receiver. She sets it down at last and walks dully toward the kitchen table. She sinks down on a wooden chair and stares at the tablet of ruled paper. Her hand reaches out slowly toward the pen.

New York, N. Y., December 25th.
Dear Jo:

If this note ever reaches you, this is only to say I and Joey are both well; we both forgive you. If you want to ever come back, we are still at the same address and join in wishing you a—

She stops writing and stares at the paper again.

The color had gone out of her cheeks again, leaving them now very empty

Illustrated
by
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