

Featured in February

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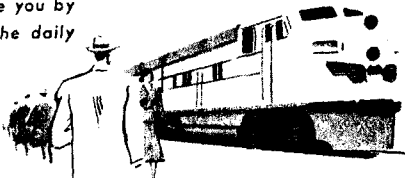
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UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD

Road of the Daily Streamliners

That's What a Machine's for

Dear editor:

I don't know how it got out here on my Johnson grass farm at Circleville, but I picked up a copy of the New York Times which one of my cows had been chewin on the other day, you can say what you please but the finest newspaper on earth is a might poor substitute for salt for a cow and I aim to get mine some the next time I'm in town and think of it, and took it down to the river to my favorite restin place where three trees are lined up so I can sit under one and doze and the other two keep the sun off of me one after the other as the afternoon wears on, and when I got through with my nap opened it up and read where an expert has announced that farmin is gonna be mechanized still more and more but that we ain't got anything to worry about as it won't cause unemployment.

Now I certainly ain't got no objection to mechanizin farmin, any time anybody can invent a machine that'll take work off of me I'm in favor of it. In fact, they can't go too far in this direction, a machine that would crank itself up around January 1, plan a crop and prepare the land and plant the seed and cultivate the stuff and harvest it and honk when it passes my front porch in the summer or fall on the way to market, would suit me all right, although that would be far enough, wouldn't be no need in havin the machine cash the check, I could do that, no use in a man gettin stale.

But what puzzles me is why the expert has to assure us machinery ain't gonna cause unemployment.

Thunder. That's what a machine's for. If it don't throw me out of work, I ain't interested. If we're gonna have more and more machines and still have more and more work, I'd just as soon leave things like they are. What I want is a machine that does more and more work and produces more and more unemployment, if it's gonna be a success with me.

A four-row cultivator ain't no improvement over a one-row cultivator, which wasn't no improvement over a forked stick, if a man still has to go up one set of rows and down another from sunup to sundown.

An elevator is supposed to save people the job of walking up stairs, but I notice most city people use them just to get to work quicker. Ain't no progress in that at all.

Yours faithfully,
H. B. Fox



CHARLES HAWES

Listen to the Music of the Hounds

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

in Hankin's Store, and the matter of hound supremacy had finally reached the "shut up or show" stage. So five eager foxhounds and four proud owners were gathered on the margin of Tobey's swamp.

Roy the plumber was present with his two Walkers, Howie the odd-job-man clutched the lead of his bluetick, Ebb the carpenter carried worn, dog-eared papers to prove his entry was a "gen-you-wine" Trigg, and George the farmer had a heavy chain on his big black-and-tan. Even at the last minute, the latter was required to justify his status in foxhounddom.

"Coonhound hell!" George exploded. "Sure he'll run coons, and rabbits too. But when he's fox huntin', he'll run nothing but foxes. And while your poor fleabags are babbling, cutting and backtracking, Preacher'll be sticking to the line and pushing the fox."

The tirade was brought to an end by a wave of Roy's mittened hand.

"Let's stop the fussing and get down to hunting," he suggested. "There's a big gray been using the swamp. I figured we could meet here and cast the hounds over there back of those firs. There's a crossing there leading up to Palmer's place, and he says he's been losing chickens. They ought to be able to pick up at least a cold trail there. Turn 'em loose."

The Preacher in Action

For several minutes after the hounds had been cast no word was spoken. Then George broke the silence. "Coonhound, huh?" he snapped. "Take a look at my Preacher."

The big black-and-tan, nose to the powdery snow, was apparently trying to gyrate his entire body by the movement of his tail. While we watched, he disappeared into a clump of gaunt sumac brush that fringed the swamp. A few seconds later there was a tentative "bluurrrp" from that point, then a series of gulping, basso roars that lured the scattered hounds like iron filings converging on a magnet.

Bedlam broke out immediately as the pack struck the hot scent. The high soprano of the two Walkers was lauded by their owner, although the Trigg advocate glared sharply and pointed out that his hound was "right in there too."

Perhaps you have noted the expressions

of a crowd listening to a choir on some solemn occasion. If so, you can picture the rapt faces of the fox hunters. Individual animosities were swept away on the fading and swelling music of the hounds. Occasionally, during a brief lull in the concert, the faint, mournful bellow of the Preacher, faithful to the line, told his hearers that the fox was still being driven. George nodded in quiet satisfaction.

Distant Voices of the Pack

Almost an hour passed with hardly a word being spoken. The only movement in the little group was the intermittent stamping of feet to restore circulation. Several times the voices of the pack faded into the distance, only to swell a few moments later. Once, the hounds seemed to be approaching the very rim of the swamp, then for several minutes they were quiet. The sudden cessation of sound seemed unnatural. Then, on signal from that old maestro the Preacher, the chorus soared to even greater heights.

"That fox doesn't act like any gray to me," George announced. "And he's not going to keep swinging around that swamp forever. Chances are he'll break out of there and head either for Carter's woods or Palmer's bog. We'd better spread out and cover some of the likely crossings. Roy, why don't you and Ebb and Howie cover Palmer's, and we'll watch the ledges by Carter's?"

A fox, when driven from its home coverts, normally follows definite trails, or crossings, and local hunters usually know the location of most of these runways. George led me, on the run, to a break in a stone wall on the edge of a rocky, spruce-grown slope. A faint, twisting line in the snow led from the break in the wall across a wide pasture and to the fringe of the swamp, indicating that a fox had been using the trail. The light snow of the previous night had eliminated signs of recent passage, but it seemed a good vantage point. I dropped a pair of shells, loaded with number two shot, into the chambers of my long duck gun, and took up a post in the lee of a big spruce. While this blocked out some of my view, it was out of the bitter wind. George moved on at a lope to another crossing.

The cry of the pack was fainter now and,

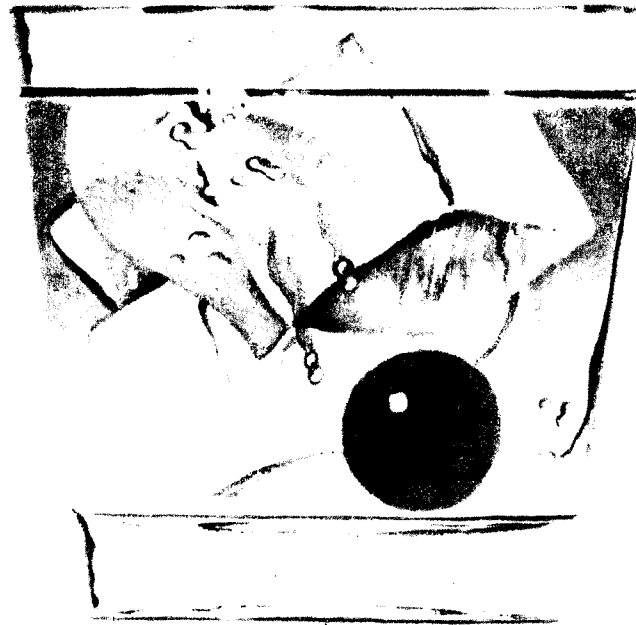


"Everything went fine, Mrs. Evarts. Francie drank all her milk . . . Junior went to bed without a peep . . . and oh, yes . . . a quiz show called. I won ten thousand dollars"

COLLIER'S

LARRY HARRIS

Collier's for February 3, 1951



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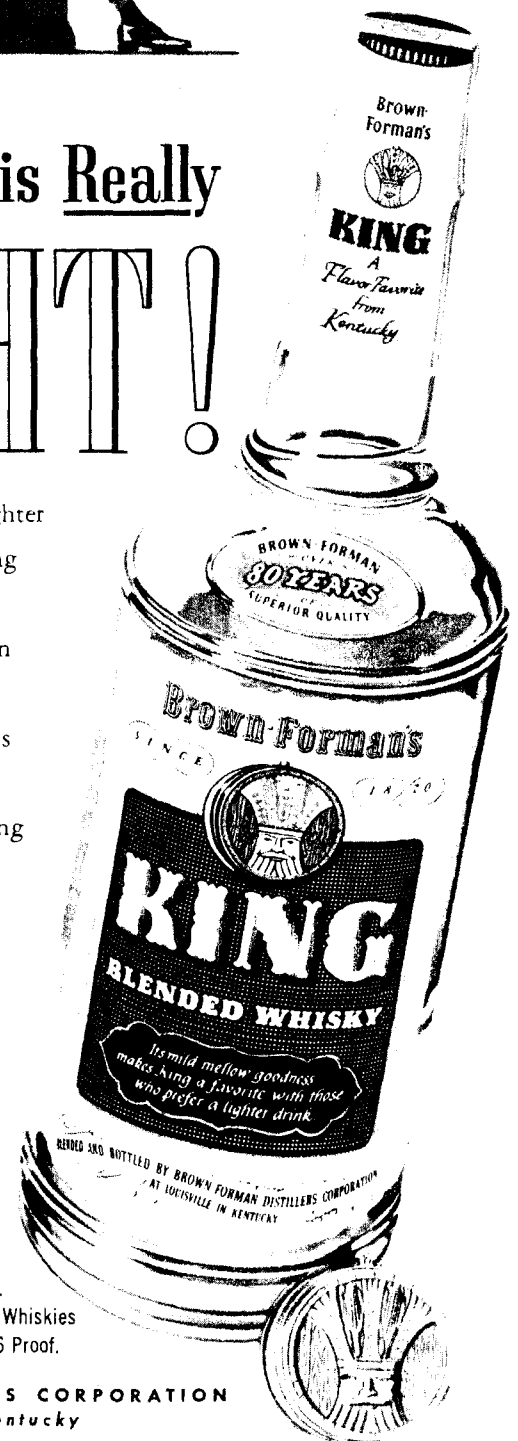
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continent include many gray fox skulls but not one red.

The spread of the red fox to the South as slow, but that of the gray northward as still slower; it was not until 1900 that the gray appeared in any numbers in New England, and it did not sift into the Adirondacks until about 25 years ago. The red is now found in at least 45 states, and the gray in about 40.

Fox hunters the country over have fought the introduction or continuation of bounty payments on foxes, and in some instances with success. The arguments, pro and con, are many and varied. Fox hunters insist that bounties tend to upset the balance of Nature by eliminating the foxes and at the same time bringing about an abundance of less desirable predators. Also, they point out, the system encourages the widespread use of traps with a subsequent increase in hound mortality. Normal fox hunting, these advocates declare, will keep the fox population in almost any area down to a satisfactory level.

In Defense of Brer Fox

In this contention they have the support of some biologists, who are convinced that the fox is too severely condemned as a predator. Both the red and gray are omnivorous in their feeding habits, and their diet includes berries, apples, grapes, acorns, nuts, insects, all forms of rodents, clams, shrimps and such birds as they can catch without too much trouble. Along with the fox hunter, they classify the common house cat as a more serious danger to game birds than the fox. Regardless of the fate of this argument or controls instituted, there is little chance that the fox will be exterminated or even reduced in numbers to a dangerous extent. There probably will be fox hunting in this country just as long as other forms of hunting exist.

You can hunt foxes without the aid of a hound, just as you can hunt quail or pheasants without a bird dog, but the success is seldom commensurate with the effort expended.

Two general houndless methods are practiced, with varying degrees of success; one is the "drive" and the other the "bell method." Both call for physical exertion far out of proportion to the usual results.

The drive method calls for the assembly of a large group of hunters—the larger the better. They are divided into "drivers" and "standers." The latter form a line—with the hunters a theoretical gunshot apart—on the downwind fringe of an area believed to harbor foxes. The drivers proceed to the upwind extreme of the area, spread out, and move toward the standers. The movement of the drivers is supposed to drive the foxes within range of the standers.

Drive Bags Three Victims

About five years ago an exercise of this type was carried out near Buffalo, New York, by one of the local sportsmen's groups, and no less than 1,000 persons turned out to participate. The event was spectacular, and with many incidents of interest, but it reduced the wild-life population of that area to the extent of two foxes and one sleepy woodchuck.

The "bell method" has never been what might be termed popular, and no one but a Yankee hill farmer with plenty of time on his hands and an abnormal desire for exercise would consider practicing it. When a fresh snow has fallen during the night, one hunter wends his way to the nearest woods believed to harbor a fox or two. In one hand he carries a large dinner bell. His function is to stroll through the woods until he strikes the fresh track of a fox. He then follows this track, ringing the bell with vigor. About 500 yards behind this bell ringer comes the man with the gun.

The theory is that a fox, after being pursued by the bell ringer for an indefinite period, will be overcome by curiosity and swing in a circle to come up on his back track in order to identify his pursuer. At this juncture the man with the gun can, theoretically, get in his deadly work. The writer neither recommends nor endorses this method.

Whether you do your fox hunting on the snow-covered hills of the North, around the fires on the fringe of a Southern swamp, or follow the formal pack on an expensive hunter, you will find you have nibbled of the lotus.

As a sport it is interesting, exciting and different. And opportunity lies almost anywhere just outside the city limits—if you want to hunt foxes.

THE END

BUTCH



COLLIER'S

"Teh! Teh! Smooching!"

LARRY REYNOLDS

Collier's for February 3, 1951

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NATURAL OR SUPERNATURAL?
WILL IT DESTROY US ALL?

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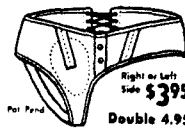
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DORMAN H. SMITH

Reminder to Stalin and Mao

THE UNITED NATIONS RETREAT in North Korea, with its story of bitter fighting and heavy losses, must have turned the minds of many Americans back to Pearl Harbor and the dark days that followed. We have been wondering whether the men in the Kremlin have also been remembering Pearl Harbor. Does it occur to them that their ordering of the Chinese armies into the Korean war resembles the unwarranted, unprovoked attack of December 7, 1941? Do they realize that the Japanese war lords committed an eventually fatal error by their treacherous act? For that act not only infuriated the American people. It aroused and united them.

On the day before Pearl Harbor the country was bitterly divided by factional and political disputes. On the day after, it had closed ranks behind its weak and defeated military force, determined to work through the grim days ahead until Pearl Harbor was avenged and the powerful enemies were defeated.

The entry of the Chinese Communists into the present war was not quite as stunning as the Japanese attack, and the reaction at home was not as immediate and dramatic. Yet we can sense a new anger and a new determination since the Soviet string-pullers, with a cynical disregard

for their mouthings about peace, have dispatched the hordes of vassal "volunteers" to be slaughtered and frozen in an attempt to destroy the United Nations.

There are still differences of American opinion about what should be done next. That is as it should and must be. But the division of opinion is not now so deep. There are still factions, but they are not irreconcilable. The differences are of degree rather than of purpose. No responsible American is preaching appeasement, though there is still disagreement over the limits of the word's definition. And the tendency to underestimate ourselves is also lessening. We are hearing and reading fewer words of hopeless defeatism than when the UN retreat began.

We doubt that Stalin fully understands what is taking place over here, because we don't think any dictator can really understand the workings of the collective American mind. Certainly Hitler couldn't. Apparently he was sincerely convinced that this country was so disunited that its entry into the second World War would be quickly followed by revolution or internal collapse. It would be surprising if Stalin, with his insular and Marx-sodden mind, doesn't feel much the same way.

To a ruler who punishes all deviation from his own policies, to a despot who hates and suppresses free thought and individual opinion, our behavior must seem fantastic. The two parties in our government squabble, call names, and publicly kick around the most delicate matters of diplomacy and foreign policy. They make wild accusations and impolitic denials. The press and the public take sides and express themselves with as little inhibition as a baseball fan yelling at an umpire.

Yet the United States, like many quarrelsome families, can forget its bickerings and present a solid front to hostility from the outside. And when the big effort has to be made, the United States can buckle down to the job and do it.

The country's position now is vulnerable. But if Mr. Stalin has any thoughts of starting another world war, he should not disregard the historic danger that lies in getting the American people good and mad.

President or Politician?

HARRY FLOOD BYRD is a man who calls for government economy as persistently as Cato the Elder called for the destruction of Carthage. So far the senator from Virginia has had conspicuously less success than the senator from ancient Rome, but he keeps on trying. Only recently he sent President Truman a letter which not only suggested that nonmilitary spending be cut by at least \$7,600,000,000 in the new budget, but included a detailed plan of how the cuts could be made.

A few days later, at a press conference, someone asked the President whether he had read the letter. Mr. Truman replied that he had looked at it, but not in detail, because he didn't think the senator knew very much about the budget.

The President's reaction seems to be another example of what strikes us as his rather dismaying habit of letting personal and political prejudice cloud his judgment. Mr. Truman and his fellow Democrat from Virginia are not political friends. But the senator is an intelligent man, whatever one may think of his philosophy of government. And as chairman of the Joint Committee on Reduction of Nonessential Federal Expenditures, he might well have some constructive suggestions on a mighty important matter. Yet the President brushed aside the Byrd letter unread because of a personal, generalized and perhaps debatable opinion that its author didn't know very much about the budget.

It must surely be as apparent to Mr. Truman as it is to the man in the street that the country is facing two serious threats, one by an aggressor from without and the other from a severe strain upon our economy from within. As President of the United States, Mr. Truman has probably thought about the senator's recommendation that nonmilitary spending be "reduced to essentials." He may even have contemplated the possibility of "financial chaos and ultimate disaster" which Mr. Byrd predicted if such a reduction is not put through. But he has evidently decided in advance that the senator could have nothing worth while to offer on the subject.

We think that most of Mr. Truman's countrymen and fellow taxpayers might have some interest in the Byrd suggestions, even if he does not. And, as President rather than politician, we think he owes it to his countrymen to change his mind and give the letter an objective, statesmanlike look.

Collier's for February 3, 1951