

The Alliance Herald
TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

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GEORGE L. BURR, Jr., Editor
EDWIN M. BURR, Business Mgr.

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THE ETHICS OF SWAT

Newspaper men have their faults, heaven knows, and perhaps they are burdened with fully as many as other mortals, but they are gifted in one particular. As our preacher friends would have it, they are blessed with one saving grace. There is something about the newspaper game—call it a saving sense of humor, a magnificent fault of memory, or what you like—that makes a newspaper quarrel distinctive from all other disagreements. Newspaper men—that is, those who are worthy of the name—never allow their public quarrels to dominate their private life. They never let a business scrap, however severe, control their words or actions, outside of the columns of their newspaper.

For an editor's newspaper life is dissociated from his life as an individual. When the door closes at quitting time, just as when the forms close for any particular edition, the slate is wiped clean. If necessary, there's time enough tomorrow to scribble on both sides of it.

Yet newspaper men quarrel fiercely, and, like lesser mortals, sometimes make a great deal of to-do about something of very little importance. A mere matter like comparative circulation, a difference in politics, business methods, a poor breakfast or a punk cigar—these are oftentimes sufficient to cause a mighty battle to wage. The newspaper may carry a column attack on the sheet across the street, fairly bristling with cutting remarks. The vile contemporary may, on the same day, say dozens of mean things, and possibly may stretch the truth in order to make a good case. No matter. Half an hour after the two newspapers are on the street, the two pen-pushers may be observed playing golf together and eating tobacco from the same plug.

This attitude on the part of brethren of the press is, seemingly, a rare gift. For no other class of men possesses it. Laborers have their disagreements, and fight it out with fists, bricks, or shillalehs. Girls in their teens develop violent quarrels, and for four days remain apart, weeping copiously, between dabs at the nose with a powder puff. Dentists probably throw plates at one another. Physicians preserve their ethics at any cost, but pass one another by without a glance. Newspaper men alone are able to fight wholeheartedly, and then spend the evening in the same room, smiling no matter how much something underneath the hide is smarting.

Not that we wish to cast any bouquets at our profession, but it's regrettable that other people can't learn to take the same attitude.

Just now Alliance bids fair to have a public disagreement among preachers. This is something so out of the ordinary that those of us on the sidelines are unable to say what rules should govern. It may be that there are no rules applicable to such disputes. If that's the case, we are proffering the suggestion that, in this case, newspaper ethics be observed.

The trouble seems to be that one or more preachers in Alliance do not like the methods of another. Instead of wrestling in private prayer, with the brother, the public has been invited to view the struggle, which, it must be confessed, starts out well and bids fair to be interesting. Other preachers are said to be taking sides. It follows that their parishioners will also take sides. The attack concerns itself chiefly with the charge that the preacher is seeking to foster class consciousness, by making an especial attempt to interest the members of labor unions, as such, in his church. Be this as it may, there is no question that the discussion resulting from the charge is having that very effect. Those who take sides are making it clear that they consider the attack on the preacher who has championed their cause an attack on the unions. Friends of this preacher have said they believed the whole matter to have been instigated by the chamber of commerce. This charge is ridiculous, of course, but it is being made. Unless something is done soon to correct these wrong impressions, that which has been feared will come upon us. Alliance will have a class war all its own. It will be a needless war, a senseless war, and if we are wise, we will use every means to bring about an early peace.

Suppose, then, that the preachers

adopt newspaper ethics. Why not let the warring parsons make their attacks in their own churches, and answer them in the same place? And, after the morning or evening sermon, let the combatants stroll, arm in arm, or side by side, to their homes. As in newspaper circles, the attack may be renewed with ferocity in the next sermon. But the preachers will discover, as do newspaper men, that while now and then wars may interest parishioners just as they do subscribers, that, after all, these wars never settle anything. All they do is leave a bad taste in the mouth. No man was ever persuaded to drop an idea, good or bad, because his competitor disliked it.

Of course, if the preachers feel there is some vital principle involved, then, for heaven's sake, have at one another, remembering always the tragic end to the struggle between the Killenny cats, who ate each other entirely up, finally choking to death on the tails.

FIRST AID TO PROHIBITION

Federal prohibition enforcement agents at Omaha are considerably stirred up over the serious illness of a dozen Council Bluffs citizens who took to their beds after celebrating the coming of the New Year with a mixture of wood alcohol and shellac. An investigation has been announced, and every effort will be made to bring the guilty bootleggers to justice. But it's a waste of time and effort, and, if the truth were realized, the federal agents are simply defeating their own ends by attempting to capture the men who sold the death-dealing hooch.

Now, if a man tired of life were to hang himself to the old apple tree in the back garden, there wouldn't be any idea of prosecuting the man who sold him the rope. It would make no difference whether the suicide were a man known to be engaged in an occupation and living in a place where he simply couldn't have any use for rope. If another man chooses to shuffle off this mortal coil, and follows the poison route, there wouldn't be any thought of arresting the druggist or hunting for the manufacturer.

The kind of home-made booze that is being peddled in Nebraska these days, is, for the most part, the sort that means certain death within a few days. Eminent chemists have said so, and so far as we are concerned, we're willing to accept their word for it and drop the argument. Therefore, it stands to reason that the man who buys this sort of liquor knows that he's taking his life in his hands, just as surely as does the man who knots a rope around his neck, or the fellow who tosses off a drink composed principally of cyanide of potassium.

If any man, then, buys hooch, it ought to be understood that he takes his chances of death, just the same as he runs the risk of arrest, publicity, disgrace, or other undesirable eventualities. There is really very little difference between selling a slow poison and one that works rapidly. If a bootlegger accidentally gets hold of a can of shellac instead of some other ingredient that smells and tastes the same way, why charge him with murder when his partner, who uses a mixture of rats and offal, and whose product differs only in the degree of deadliness, and the distance at which it will kill, gets off with a fine of a few hundred dollars and a month or so in jail?

Few people believe in coddling bootleggers any more. The judges who a few months ago were handing out fines that were almost as severe punishment as pelting the hooch peddlers with rose leaves, are now realizing that jails are a much more potent force for reform if they are used. Why, then, if we are going to attempt

to enforce the law, should there be any special effort to see that the consumer—without whom the bootlegger would not be in business—gets a fairly decent product? It's a pretty safe bet that the more people who get to death's door, or pass through it, due to poisoned hooch, the less there will be sold. That's what the prohibition agents want. There are plenty of worthy objects of sympathy, without wasting it on the fellow who chooses to risk his life in drinking the sort of hooch that is being manufactured these days.

DANGEROUS FUN

It's a pretty mean man who will interfere with children at play, especially in Alliance, where there are so few opportunities provided for amusement of the younger generation. That may explain why nothing has been done, the past week or two, to put a stop to the kids and their own sport of "hooking on" behind automobiles. Boys will be boys, and girls will be girls, too, for there is a goodly representation of pigtails among those who have been crowding the streets after school and on days when the teachers haven't a word to say.

But—and it's hard to say it—someone in authority ought to put a foot down, and put it down hard. In the good old days, when there were horses and sleighs on the streets almost exclusively after the snows, "catching a ride" was a good way to have fun, with very little danger attached to it. Even now, with automobiles in the game, it wouldn't be so bad if the drivers of the cars who are furnishing the free rides would watch their step, instead of entering into the spirit of the thing with as little thought as though they were ten to fourteen years old and the children were the grownups.

Hardly a man saw the hundreds of children out with their sleds Sunday but had a sneaking notion that he'd like to get a sled and try it himself. The drivers of the cars were just as carefree and as careless as the children themselves. One driver of a touring car spent an hour or more going up and down Box Butte avenue, with as many as fifteen or twenty sleds hitched on behind. A good time was undoubtedly had by all. But passersby couldn't help but notice the recklessness with which the driver speeded up and down the city's principal street, dodging from side to side in an endeavor to throw the sleds' occupants into the snow. There were no serious accidents; at least none were reported. That wasn't the fault of the drivers, though—it was due to the kind providence that watches out for children and for chumps. If there had been but one car on the street, it would have been comparatively safe; but there were dozens of cars out. It's just a plain miracle that some of those children weren't run over by automobiles.

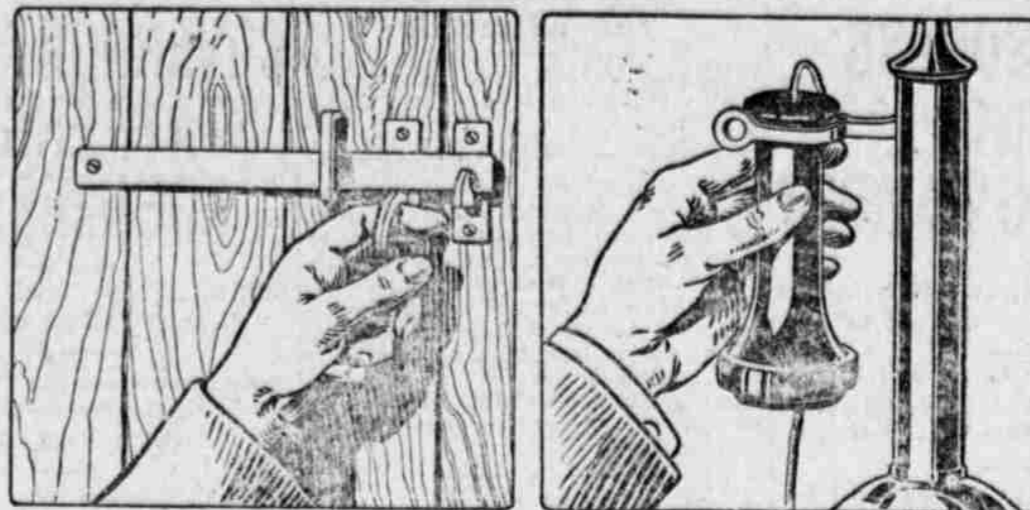
It's a nice, friendly trick to help show the boys a good time. It's all right even to try to dump them out

into the snow. Boys are hardy little rascals, and a fall of half a foot into a snowpile won't do them any lasting injury. But, if there isn't to be a tragedy, the drivers who set out to entertain a group of boys will do well to take them out to the country roads, where there won't be danger from other automobilists.

Here in Alliance, where there are not any provisions for amusement of boys, either in summer or winter, the youngsters probably figure that life is just one "don't" after another. Some of these days, when the pinch of readjustment is over, there'll be enough public-spirited men and women to put over a community building and other projects which will keep the boys off the streets. Until then, parents should do their best to convince the little fellows that it's better to take

fewer chances in their play, and be able to come home whole. It's so easy for accidents to happen, and cripples live such a long time to regret. Do your admonishing early, mothers and fathers.

Diamonds bought during the period of high wages are fast getting back into the market, but it isn't so easy to get rid of silk shirts and silk hosiery.



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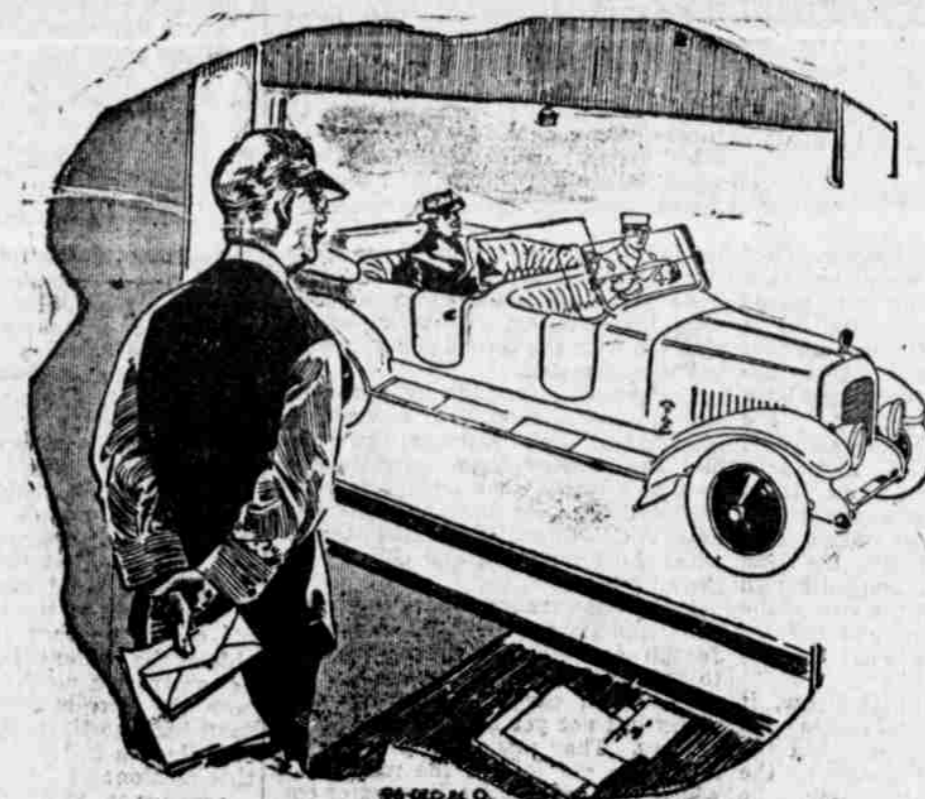
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