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## TELLING THE TIME AT "CONTOVERSIE"

By MARIAN V. DORSEY

PERHAPS there was never such an easy-going household as that inheriting the old home down in Dorset known from early colonial times by the quaintly charming name of "Ye Ende of Controversie."

Its abandonment to the feeling of don't-care is proof of that inevitable law of reaction which nature imposes as the safeguard of mental and physical equilibrium; for these "Controversie" people, though heirs of the land held in their name since 1662, were not, in this generation, born and brought up on the family acres but in the great city across the Chesapeake, where, instead of watching the wheat and corn grow amid its natural environment, the breadwinning members spent the turbulent hours of day with feverish eyes upon the grain ticker which announced, not the helpful showers that presaged a good harvest, but the storms of wreck and ruin that carried under a daily contingent of those who succumbed to its stress and strain.

Needless to say, then, that when fate finally cut the

Scarboroughs off from all connection with that maddening little fiend that registers the rise and fall of fortune on the Corn Exchange, they thanked Heaven for the love of the land born in their bones, though till now latent in their own blood, and got them to their paternal homestead—so heartsick of the very sound of "puts and calls" and "how did Chicago close?" that the man with the hoe seemed a being thrice blessed of the gods.

But—as the murderer takes with him some fatal evidence of the tragedy—they carried the office clock to "Controversie." It was a severe, hexagonal disk, without embellishments of any kind. Just such a relentless looking chronometer as one might suppose had spent its life in harrowing up the souls of men who dreaded the too quick-coming hour of doom.

Yet, strange to say, this uncompromising timepiece, that had never relaxed in all its years in the grain brokers' office, was not long in proving a country convert and as keenly sensitive to environment as its owners; for, as soon as installed upon the dining-room wall, over the high mantel in



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"WAIT TILL YO' KIN STEP IN DE MIDDLE O' YO' SHADDER."

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the corner, it yielded to the enervating effect of old Dorset's drowsy atmosphere; becoming such a "Weary Willie" that it was despaired of as a ticker for even slow-going "Controversie."

It was an eight day clock that ran two days and a quarter, stopping anywhere along the line of march that seemed good to it.

No amount of tinkering, oiling and winding would induce it to keep the pace of its youth among the breathless brokers.

So erratic was its announcement of breakfast time that the maternal meal came to be served so near the hour for luncheon that neighboring farmers and laborers, who came on business, were unpeasably scandalized at the "Controversie" laziness, and it soon came to pass that nobody approached the premises till mid-afternoon for any purpose whatsoever.

Finally, in its complete surrender to the delights of the rest cure, it took a late morning nap that sunk it to the depths of coma, when it failed to arouse "Controversie" at any hour.

All the watches were run down and hidden away in bureau drawers, for who would take the trouble to wind watches and wear them where one felt that "time was made for slaves?"

Nay, there was nothing to set the clock by but one's ingenuity, and that, as is ever the case, was the active principle in the brain of the Little Woman.

One morning conscience, or the persistent howling of a bereaved cow, made slumber impossible and the Little Woman went down stairs to seek her coffee and corn cakes.

Just as she entered the dining room the clock stopped at ten and happening to look out of the window she saw Jack, their beloved collie, coming down the lane from a tramp abroad when he was supposed to have been guarding the premises from nocturnal foes.

All that day they were timeless except for shrewd guesses at the lengthening and shortening shadows on the lawn.

Next day, the bereaved cow-mother still lamenting her transported offspring in no modified tones, the Little Woman again aroused herself betimes and when she pulled up the dining room curtain Mr. Jack ran up the lane again.

Putting her scientific knowledge to instant practical purpose, as is ever the way with the Little Woman, she argued to herself: "Now if it was just ten o'clock yesterday morning when Jack came up the lane surely it is just ten now, judging by the fixed and regular habits of animals. In the name of Darwin, I will set the clock with a feeling of certitude."

And she did.

Presently a machine agent stopped at the door, who was found to have the "latest New York time" among his other up-to-date offerings; and it agreed exactly with Jack's announcement—also with feminine intuition.

"Weary Willie" ran on for two days longer, when he came to a standstill again at three, while the Little Woman was dusting his face off and distractedly casting about in her mind for some other instance of animal precocity that might indicate the point of the meridian, it being quite too late in the day for Jack's homecoming to announce the hour.

Instantly a hen began to cackle under the house and the Little Woman greeted the sound with a joyous laugh—for did she not remember that yesterday at three "Singin' Polly" had run out from under there shrilly proclaiming her contribution to the riches of the world?

Ergo, it was three now, and no mistake. So the long and short hands were whisked around and "Weary Willie" started off for another two days and an uncertain fraction.

"Goto, now," laughed the Little Woman to a mocking, incredulous member of the broker brood as she jumped down off the old Hepplewhite chair.

"Don't every Dorset oysterman know that the kingfisher descends upon the creeks here on the seventeenth of March as unerringly as St. Patrick's parade upon the city streets?"

"And if birds migrate the very same day and hour, year after year, why shouldn't hens lay at the same time every day? They ought to, therefore they must."

"This logic being irrefutable, even the

skeptical cynic had no resource with which to combat it and revengefully determined that he would put the author of it to shame by going up to the village postoffice, getting the time there and proving that she had "overloaded on futures" by forty minutes.

When he came back he looked as sheepish as one of his newly sheared South-downs. "Little Woman," he said humbly, "you hit it on the dot. If you'd take a flyer like that Singin' Polly on 'change, you'd make your fortune on 'shorts' and 'spots. You'd know how long to hold on and just the right minute to let go. I wouldn't buy a new clock for the world. Jack and Singin' Polly are good enough time keepers for me, and dear old 'Weary Willie' has all the charms of the uncertain and the unexpected."

## HANDICAPS AGAINST FLOUR EXPORTS

The London "Working-out Charge" Imposed Only on Imports from America Amounts to a Discrimination of Three Cents a Barrel in Favor of the Continent and Australia—Delays in Transit Killing Export Trade—South African Tariffs—Trade of South America Increases

### Washington Correspondence

WASHINGTON, D. C., July 6.—The subject of transportation of cereals and cereal products will be given much consideration in reports to the Bureau of Manufactures by Special Agent M. H. Davis, now in Great Britain. In a report just received from Mr. Davis, transportation matters are discussed in a general way, together with a number of associated subjects bearing upon the movement of breadstuffs. Mr. Davis says:

"Both in the United States and by steamships on the ocean and upon arrival at the port of London, there are practices which, if improved, would tend to increase the trade.

"Importers here for many years have labored to overcome the difficulties, without material success. They have had the moral support and the active aid of the American mills in all the work of the form thus far attempted. That little progress has been made, has been discouraging, and if efforts at this end have been relaxed, it is because flour from other lands can be and are secured more readily, more promptly, and with less handicaps than from American mills."

### THE LONDON CLAUSE

Mr. Davis discusses in connection with the transportation problem, the rate adjustments, the influence of the "London clause" in bills of lading, and the delays in transit of shipments of breadstuffs from Mississippi valley points to British ports. After considering the policies pursued by the rail and steamship lines in maintaining higher rates on flour than upon wheat, and the apparent impossibility of securing a more favorable adjustment of these rates, Mr. Davis refers to other difficulties in connection with the transportation of these products, both by rail and by ocean. In regard to the difficulties connected with the requirements in bills of lading on products destined to the port of London, the report says:

"At London the arbitrary 'working-out charge,' so-called, imposed by the steamship companies in the Atlantic trade, is a discrimination against American flour, since there is no 'working-out charge' applied to flour coming from Australia nor from France, Hungary, Belgium, or other European countries.

### DISCRIMINATION 30 PER BBL

"This discrimination amounts to 1s 3d per ton, or 3c per bbl—quite sufficient to turn trade, other things being equal.

"The bill of lading in use in the Atlantic trade contains the so-called 'London clause' which makes this arbitrary charge possible above the current rate of freight, and such a clause does not form a part of the Australian or European bills of lading. My opinion is that fairness to the American shipper of flour, as well as to American shippers of other commodities to the port of London, would justify the government in seeking such conference with the Atlantic steamship companies as will eliminate this highly objectionable 'London clause' from the bill of lading. The fact that flour comes to the London market from

Like the rest of us, he is taking his innings now and is only temporarily overcome by the memories of other days when he hadn't the time to faint at the shocks he got.

But now we need not even trouble ourselves to watch for the homecoming dog, the laying hen or the crowing rooster; for as I came along the woods road I had the good fortune to fall in with old Uncle Mose Wanky, an oracle high above even these infallible guides to Apollo's course around the heavens, and he says: "Ef yo' wants t' be dead sartin o' de time t' set yo' clock by, wait tell yo' kin step in de middle o' yo' shadder—kin step right plum on de shadder o' yo' waist-ban"—an' den its high noon er dis sinner-man don' know catfish pie fo'm sweet pertaters an' possum."

has come to my notice, and up to June 1 only 4 bags had arrived. In order to get the 4 bags, the buyer had to pay the draft for the 500 bags and to surrender the bill of lading for the entire lot. In a case of a certain 1,000 bag lot only 80 bags arrived, and out of another 1,000 bag lot only 375 arrived, when the bills of lading had to be surrendered before delivery could be made.

"In all these cases the shipments had been traced and efforts by cable and letter had been made to locate the missing quantities for three weeks, without success. It is now thought that these stray lots will come in this week. In the meantime the influence of declining markets and the uncertainty is not having a pleasant effect on the importer."

### DELAYED AT DOCKS

The investigation made leads Mr. Davis to conclude that it must frequently occur that shipments are not moved from the docks in the United States for as much as two months. He expresses the opinion that "The railroads might, in exceptional cases, require 20 to 30 days to move from Kansas or Minnesota to the seaboard, but ordinarily they need no more than two weeks for the inland haul." The ocean haul, he claims, seldom exceeds twelve to sixteen days, and is often less.

### SUGGESTIONS TO MILLERS

In discussing the subject, Mr. Davis invites the attention of the Millers' National Federation to these points:

"Flour is handled by the importers on a margin of 4c to 8c per bbl, which must cover all charges for services, interest on money advanced on the bill of lading, and time allowed the buyer (which the importers say runs from ten to sixty days), and often includes minor allowances and shrinkages. It must, therefore, be apparent that a united effort on the part of millers and transportation companies to shorten the time of transit and to secure more regularity in arrivals, is most important for the encouragement of foreign buyers.

### CONFERENCE ADVOCATED

"A conference between the representatives of the steamship lines, the railroads most interested, and the officers of the Millers' National Federation might evolve some plan that would overcome the features of this most vexing question."

In closing the report, Mr. Davis presents a list of suggestions to exporting millers. These suggestions, he says, do not differ materially from those sent out by the Millers' National Federation on July 9, 1906.

### A TARIFF POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA

In prosecuting its work of supplying the committees of Congress with data regarding the policies of foreign countries in dealing with tariff matters, preliminary to tariff revision, the Commerce department is collecting much valuable information. From one report discussing the tariff policy of the British Colony in South Africa, it appears that the customs union of the colonies of British South Africa has been considering a new tariff policy for the five or six colonies which constitute the customs union of this new British province. A convention has been arranged to meet at Pretoria in May. It is expected that an agreement will be reached regarding the changes to be made in the customs schedules and that in the policy to be outlined will be determined not only the amount of protection to be given the domestic industries of the colonies, but also the preferential rates to be granted in favor of the United Kingdom.

### ADVOCATES PROTECTION DUTY

Preliminary to this convention a report has been prepared by a commission representing the colonial government which "strongly advocates a protective duty as being absolutely necessary to a new country's progress, and that the protection must be adequate or it is no protection." This is as advanced a position as has been taken by any customs commission in any foreign country in recent years. It is further said to be the policy advocated by this customs commission of "admitting raw materials free where there is no valid reason against such course."

(Continued on page 97.)

### TRoublesome to the Importers

In further discussing this subject, and showing the embarrassments to which the British importer is subjected on account of irregular delivery, Mr. Davis says:

"A shipment of 500 bags March 28, 1908,