

# CLINICAL NOTES

BY GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

*The Tabloids.*—Among the many reasons assigned for the remarkable popular success of the tabloid newspapers, I fail to detect one that doubtless snuggles closer to the core than all the others. To say that the tabloids have succeeded because the public likes pictures, or prefers its news boiled down to a couple of sticks, or itches for sensationalism, or has found the large-size, standard journals too unwieldy, or prefers 12-point type to 8-point, is either to aim at the bull's-eye with generalities, mostly false, or to chase one's tail arguing that a thing is true because it apparently isn't untrue. If the public likes pictures above all things, why were *Burr McIntosh's Monthly*, the original *Collier's Weekly* and *Leslie's Weekly*, pioneers and leaders among latter-day picture publications, such dismal failures? If the public doesn't like large and unwieldy publications, why are the *New York Times* and the *Saturday Evening Post* such tremendous successes? If the public likes large and not small type, why does this same *Saturday Evening Post* enjoy such unparalleled prosperity? If it is merely sensationalism that the public relishes, why are not Hearst papers like the *New York Journal* more successful than they are and why was Enright's *New York Bulletin* driven to the ash-heap in such quick order?

The success of the tabloids may rest in part upon these principles, but only in part. The tabloids have succeeded for another and plainer reason. The public, or at least that great proportion of the public that has taken up these illustrated *demi-blatts*, is the same public that had hitherto rested its pursuit of intelligence and culture entirely upon the old-time yellow

press. The latter, as is known, enjoyed an unprecedented reign of popularity for many years and then suddenly showed signs of a violent seizure of cholera morbus and began slipping rapidly down the coal-chute. What brought this decline about was its peculiar public's cumulative loss of faith in its honesty, for even a public like that which devoured the yellows is not entirely without goat-sense. This public, duped for years with fraud and fake, with murders, rapes, kidnappings, robberies, Black Hand bands, Jack-the-Rippers, mysterious wild men and ghosts that never took place or never existed, finally caught on to the leg-pulling that was going on and refused any longer to buy tickets for the show. And at that moment the small illustrated newspaper, which is an even bigger fake than the old yellow newspaper, was born.

And why? Because "pictures don't lie." Or at least the boob doesn't think they lie. He no longer believes anything he reads in the newspapers, but he believes everything he sees. A photograph showing him an Indiana detective shooting "Dutch" Anderson (carefully posed up an alley by a couple of reporters) seems to him a much more accurate piece of intelligence about the day's news than an article which is similarly very largely the product of a reporter's imagination. An old photograph of Carrie Nation that is made to pass for one of Ma Ferguson, a photograph of the Battle of Manila Bay with the caption "The United States Navy Goes After the Rum Fleet," a picture of the last Armistice Day parade headed "The Funeral of Frank A. Munsey," or the reproduction of a movie still of "East Lynne" with the

inscription "Mrs. Stillman Denies She Will Re-Wed Husband" is entirely convincing to the boob who no longer trusts the news of the day set forth in mere printer's type. And thus it is that such papers as Hearst's *Journal* decline in circulation while such as Hearst's *Mirror* go shooting up.

*Anglo-Americana.*—As the first item for a new department to be called "Anglo-Americana" and to be devoted to the hinter-kissing of the Motherland by Americans, I offer the following dainty from an article by the M. Brander Matthews, entitled, "Compliments of the Season," published in a recent number of the *Century* magazine:

It ill becomes any American to say a word against this British king (George III), for as George Washington has been called "the father of our liberties," so might George III be termed "the step-father of our liberties." If he had not been the able and stubborn monarch that he was, we Americans might now be called the subjects of George V.

*The Klan and the Press.*—Outside of the South, it is probably a fair estimate to say that fully three-quarters of the more important newspapers of the Republic have been and are, either openly or in spirit, against the Grand and Exalted Order of Ku Kluxers. These papers have for two years now opposed the Klan in their news and editorial columns. They have often colored the news deliberately to the Klan's disadvantage and their editorials have denounced the organization as being anti-American, corrupt, a danger to the Union, an inciter of race prejudice, a violator of the Constitution and a hundred other such pestiferous cocci. And yet, today, the Klan still flourishes. The journalistic bird-shot has rolled off its back like water off a duck's. Why?

Whenever the matter has been discussed, the reasons commonly assigned have had to do with the decline of journalistic influence in America, yet it seems to me that only a very unobservant person can bring himself to believe that this influence is

not every bit as strong today as it ever has been. The reason must be looked for in another quarter, and that quarter, I believe, is not in the newspaper columns, but in the Klan itself. Above everything else, above each and all of its open pretensions, above even its political and sectarian cut, the Klan is a club formed by men of common likes and dislikes and of mutual tastes, and a newspaper can no more break up such a fellowship by calling it names and arousing those on the outside than it can bring the Union League Club to serve six oysters on a plate instead of five. Newspaper readers, even where they are most strongly opposed to the conduct and actions of the Klan, feel instinctively that, above its public manifestations, it is, in a manner of speaking, a private organization, like the Elks, the Knights of Pythias or the Beethoven Association, and as such entitled to its place in the community life. All the jokes of the last twenty years haven't disbanded the Elks; all the jazz of the next twenty will not disband the Beethoven Association; all the abuse of the newspapers cannot succeed in disrupting the Klan. The average American may have many faults, but one of them is not a nose-y viciousness when it comes to his fellow American's social federations. And the Klan is, in strict analysis, such a social federation before it is anything else. Had it had the sagacity to choose a more fortunate name for itself, a name in the public eye less symbolic of masked banditry, some such name, let us say, as the Society for American Peace or the Sons of the Republic, no one would ever have heard so much as a peep against it.

*Beauty and Intelligence.*—It has remained for Mr. Albert E. Wiggam, M.A., B.S., author of "The New Decalogue of Science," a gentleman who has attained to the mature age of fifty-four years, to contribute as his mite toward cosmic philosophy the doctrine that beauty and intelligence in women go hand in hand. Despite the fact that this revolutionary collop of

news has been known to every reflective human being since small boys amused themselves sliding down the Esquiline Hill on their toga-seats, the legend that a beautiful woman is necessarily a bonehead has enjoyed a curious persistence. The reason for the vitality of the legend is easily arrived at. In the battle of the sexes, the beautiful-intelligent woman enjoys odds of 100 to 1 over the gent who would subjugate her to his bed, his board and his own biological loveliness. Thus, in order to make the scrap less one-sided, man has craftily spread the doctrine that beautiful women are utterly without sense, a doctrine that has been cultivated by him with such immense cleverness that the beautiful woman herself has actually been made to believe in it. As a result, there are very few women blessed with beauty who do not believe that their homelier sisters are privy to an intelligence that they themselves do not possess. Yet the homely woman generally knows much less than the pretty one. Her lack of good-looks has made a coward of her and knowledge and courage are handmaidens. The homely woman gives the world its supply of schoolmarm and chambermaids. The beautiful woman gives the world its supply of Récamiers, Maintenons, Genlises, Staëls, Swetchines, Du Barrys, Nell Gwynnes and Lady Hamiltons.

*The Literature of the Negro.*—The literature of the Negro pours from the presses as never before in publishing history. A week does not pass that Negro poems, songs, autobiographies, novels and what not do not jostle for favor on the book stalls with the masterpieces of Michael Arlen, the Rev. Thomas Dixon and other such representatives of the white, or superior, race. Many of these Negro *opera* are highly commendable; many throw an illuminating light upon the hopes, dreams, achievements, character and psyche of our black fellow citizens. But, of them all, there is one, published several months ago and designed for the Negro trade alone, that has thus

far been reviewed in not a single Caucasian publication and that is yet perhaps the most remarkable of the lot in showing the trend of the Negro mind as it operates today in certain eminent colorado maduro circles. I allude to "The Black Man, the Father of Civilization," by James Morris Webb, A.M., issued by the Royal Messenger Press of Chicago, Ill.

Dr. Webb, it appears, has no misgivings as to the future of his race. He bases his claims on its past performances, some of which will come in the way of news to his white readers. For example, he states: "The black colonial troops and other black subjects of the British and French government, also the American black Yanks, made it possible for the Allied nations to drive a peace victory over Germany and her allies. The black man was the backbone of it all, just as much so as he was the backbone of the Union army which made it possible for General Grant to receive General Lee's sword as a token of surrender." But this is not all.

"When the Kaiser's army tried to capture Paris twice and failed," continues Dr. Webb, "no doubt General Hindenburg reported to the Kaiser that the Colonial and other black troops from Africa were the backbone of the French and British armies and that it was impossible to get into Paris. Again, no doubt, the Kaiser said, 'Well, Hindenburg, make a stand-pat Hindenburg line.' So this was done. But when the Kaiser had been told that a black American Yank had captured ten German soldiers by himself and other black Yanks were doing similar heroic acts, it became too much for the Kaiser to stand and hence the Hindenburg line began to weaken. Especially when Sergeant William Butler, the black Yank of New York, rescued his white lieutenant and a number of privates from the German side, the Kaiser ordered his army to gradually give the Hindenburg line up and finally the Kaiser gave up the sponge to the Allies."

From this, the eminent Doctor proceeds to the theory that the fifth universal king-

dom of earth, foretold by "the black prophet, Daniel," will be ruled by a black man with woolly hair. "Yes," says Dr. Webb, "his hair will be like pure wool, and the sheep and the Negro have the only pure wool, as see Daniel, vii, 9." But wait! "To prove that this King will be a black man (Negro or colored), Jacob on his dying bed prophesied that He would be an offspring of his son Judah (Genesis, xlix, 10). This Judah married two Hamite (black, colored or Negro) women. . . . The blood still stands, for if the blood of the Negro becomes fused in a family by marriage or in any other way, the offsprings are Negroes. The Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, was born out of the tribe of Judah, a black tribe, so therefore Jesus, the Son of God, could not escape the blood of the Negro. After Jesus was born, a decree went forth from Herod to slay Him. God viewed all Europe and Asia to find a place of rescue, but sad to say none was found. But, fortunately, when God looked over Africa, the black belt, He located a spot on the River Nile, the River Nile where every spoke of the wheel of civilization was borne by black men and women, and He immediately sent an angel to warn Joseph in a dream to accompany Mary and the young child to Egypt. If Jesus had been an Anglo-Saxon child, it seems natural that God would have had him rescued by the Anglo-Saxon race, but as Jesus was related to the black race by blood, it was God's own business to have the Babe of Bethlehem rescued and rocked in the black man's cradle."

The author of this unusual tome, so much having been established by him, next takes up, in order, proofs (1) that it was the white man, not the Negro, who was the deviser of poisonous alcoholic tipples; (2) that the Negro "has ranked as high in society as it was possible for man to go"; (3) that "no law of man will ever keep the white and black races from amalgamating"; (4) that Abraham, the father of the Jews, married a Negress; (5) that Moses married several Negresses; (6) that there are at present 12,000,000 people in the United States who, though neither black nor white, are called Negroes—the responsible persons, the author observes ironically, being "our white brethren who took charge of us against our will and started out to teach us civilization and religion when we were heathens"; (7) that "two of the Twelve Apostles were Negroes, to wit, Barnabas and Simon (see Acts xiii, 1)"; (8) that Judah, of whom Christ was to come, married descendants of Canaan, son of Ham, who was the father of all Ethiopians; (9) that "Solomon, the great, wise son of David, was a Negro (see the Songs of Solomon, i, 5 and 6)"; (10) that "Solomon's most royal guest after the dedication of the temple was a Negro woman, the Queen of Sheba (see I Kings, x, 1)"; (11) that "the royal Jew during Solomon's time was black and the common Jew white"; and (12) that "Bathsheba, before becoming David's wife, had been the wife of a Negro."

Now will the membership committee of Ku Klux hang its head in shame?

## NOTES & Queries

*Queries and answers should be addressed to The Editor of Notes and Queries, and not to individuals. Queries are printed in the order of their receipt, and numbered serially. An answer should bear the number of the query it refers to*

### QUERY NO. 133

Have the poems, songs, and monologues of Bert Williams ever been put in book form? If so, where can I get a copy?

ROBERT H. ENNIS,  
*Daytona Beach, Florida*

### QUERY NO. 134

Can any erudite reader of this magazine tell me the source of the following quotation, referred to by Hardy in "The Interloper":

And I saw the figure and visage of Madness  
seeking for a home.

W. F. T., *Durham, N. C.*

### QUERY NO. 135

There seems to be very little known or in print about the Hon. and Rev. Willie Upshaw, the Georgia dry congressman. Is he a person of cultured tastes? What does he read? What are his recreations? With whom does he spend his evenings? Does he wear silk underwear? Can he order from a French menu? Would he be socially awkward in a drawing-room? Does he dine at the Restaurant Griffon in the Rue d'Antin the first night he is in Paris? Could he tell you Mozart's first name? Does he grease his hair?

AXEL FINKLE, *Weebawken, N. J.*

### QUERY NO. 136

I have exhausted available mythological dictionaries in a luckless search for a description of the attributes of the goddess Aselgeis. Will some reader kindly supply them? Also, where can I obtain a thoroughly good volume of classical mythology, that is, one that has been written for the student and not as a guide for the bedtime raconteur?

CLAYTON I. STAFFORD, *Portland, Ore.*

### QUERY NO. 137

Can any of your readers tell me why there isn't a bridge across the Hudson from New York City to some place in Hudson county? I have important business in New Jersey two or three evenings a week and it's always a gamble whether or not I can get on a ferry-boat with my car. Sometimes I have to wait in line an hour; last Saturday night I waited two hours. There are plenty of bridges across the East river to Long Island. Why aren't there a few—ay, even *one* would do—across the Hudson to New Jersey? Or simpler still: why not cede Long Island to New Jersey and thus let it come under Jersey's laws and Jersey's civilized wink at the enforcement of certain of those laws? Something ought to be done—if you know what I mean.

HEIDELBERG ALUMNUS, *New York*

### QUERY NO. 138

An American statesman—I believe—wrote some verse which starts thus:

The whangdoodle sat on the edge of the strand  
... with his tail in his hand. ...

Has someone a copy of the whole poem? And does anyone know who the author was?

F. DANZIGER, *San Diego, Calif.*