

SEEMS LIKE IT'S BETTER IF YOU DON'T KNOW HOW

by STANLEY K. WILSON

GOOD English is supposed to be amenable to standard and to precept. There are definite rules. Clarity, economy, force, color—you can find out how to achieve them. The "don'ts" are specific. The blemishes have all been tabulated: "fine" writing, labored eloquence, miles of adjectives, blind faith in the cliché, deliberate or helpless obscurity. And yet writing, today, is much of it at all events, presents a staggering anomaly. It is an air-tight example of the failure of know-how. The expert in writing is left at the post by the tyro. Major critical acclaim goes to writers who most conspicuously don't know how to write. That's a pretty harsh indictment, but I think it can be supported. I'll bring up my witnesses in a minute or two.

The specimen authors I wish to examine (I shall muster only four of them) have the critics with them. They've been received with laurels, although not in every case with showers of blessing in the guise of sales. They are hailed as exemplars. They're in danger of becoming founders of "schools." One of them at least—and he is the one I'm going to be particularly noisy about—is held by many to be the most distinguished literary figure of the American day.

The names on my black-list write fluently and in the main grammatically; but they write badly all the same, because they don't know how to handle their literary materials. And I'll launch my case on evidence drawn from the most fulsomely praised of contemporary American writers, potential White Hope of the new world, the man of whom Arnold Bennett said, "He writes like an angel"—yes, children, I mean William Faulkner.

Take off your coats with me, and plunge into "Light in August," Faulkner's most recent novel. You don't have to read far before—well, try this excerpt from pp. 2-3:

"... gaunt, staring, motionless wheels rising from mounds of brick rubble and ragged weeds with a quality profoundly astonishing, and gutted boilers lifting their rusting and unsmoking stacks with an air stubborn, baffled and hemmed upon a stump-pocked cone of profound and peaceful desolation, unplowed, untilled, gutting slowly into red and choked ravines beneath the long quiet rains of autumn and the galloping fury of vernal equinoxes."

Two dozen adjectives in one sentence: what would George Gissing (to name offhand a novelist who wrote like a craftsman) have said of such a page! Sophomoric exhibitionism? Inflation with a capital "I"? And not even a trenchant display of vocabulary. Two repeats: the threadbare "profound" and "gut"—incidentally wrenched to the intransitive. Only two splashes of unbacked color: "stump-pocked," good enough, but spoiled by the arrogant omission of the hyphen—an irritating trick that this author runs to, cf. "hookworm-ridden," "limpeared," "closed-to," "wicked," "manlooking," "cross-slanted" (3 successive s's); and "galloping fury of equinoxes," which is pretty spotty after all, since the equinox is not a storm but the time when it may occur.

Overworked similes team up in Faulkner with overworked words. Thus, "like a forgotten bead from a broken string" is followed three pages later by "like a shabby bead upon the mild red string of road" and this in turn three lines below by "like already measured thread being rewound onto a spool."

Slipshod English thrives in everywhere: "She had not opened it a dozen times hardly before she discovered that she should not have opened it at all."

Reckless and meaningless usage: "the wagon crawls terrifically toward her."

All the above angelicisms are to be found in the first eight pages of "Light in August."

To go directly on. "Armistid grunts, a sound savage, brusque," p. 10; "... a gray garment worn savage and brusque," p. 11; thirteen lines later, "with the abrupt savageness of a man"; two lines later, "She clashes the stone savagely"; eleven lines later, "savage finality"; nine lines later, "savage crew of gray hair." Ho, hum!

Let's take to our own pinions now and skip to p. 107 where we find this:

"On all sides, even within him, the bodiless formidewallow of negro women murmured. It was as though he and all other manslaved life about him had been returned to the light, but wet primegenitive female."

Another merciful jump. Beginning of Ch. VI:

"Memory believes I fore knowing remembers. Believes longer than recollects, longer than knowing even wonders. Knows remembers believes a corridor in a big long garbled cold echoing (echoing the narrow) building of dark red brick southclerked by more chimneys than its own, set in a grassless cinderstrewn-pocked compound surrounded by smoking factory parlous and enclosed by a ten foot (tucky not tenfoot) steel-and-wire fence like a penitentiary or a zoo, where in random erratic surges, with sparrowlike child-trebling, orphans in identical and uniform blue denim in and out of remembering but in knowing constant at the bleak walls, the bleak windows where in rain soot from the yearly adjacent chimneys streaked like black tears."

The fact is, so far from writing like an angel William Faulkner writes like the devil. Don't get this wrong. I'm not talking rules. I'm forgetting the sour syntax. But it's fustian. It's wind. Showing-off. Spluttering fireworks. Clumsy. Chaotic. Attitudinizing. Just dambadwriting, that's all, and don't let anybody tell you otherwise. He simply doesn't know how to use his literary materials. The only things Faulkner has that can conceivably explain his vogue are, first, a completely sincere unshackling of assorted "bastards" and "sons of bitches"; second, removal of all inhibitions on "vomit"; and, third, a most articulate nose for Negro smells.

These are mildly provocative but hardly broad enough to support his reputation. No, there's only one conclusion (you've seen it coming): It's precisely his bad writing that has "made" William Faulkner; the mess he makes of his literary materials is so overpowering that the critics can't classify it, and helplessly decide it must be great. And the dumb public strings along. Ergo, it seems like it's better if you don't know how.

Then there's George Davis, another and scarcely less luminous White Hope. Hullabaloo for his first novel, "Opening of a Door." He's a more sophisticated sinner. Harder to catch out. Davis' crimes are two: a maddening use of ellipsis and non-sequitur and, even more reprehensible, a wanton misuse of words that amounts to perverted genius. Probably he thinks—and no doubt the critics do—that his stuff is fresh, different. But writing does not achieve freshness and difference by flying in the face of sense. Grant that there's a reaching out in this author for new combinations, fresh chords; and that there's a

clear purpose to avoid the trite and the hackneyed. The writing is still bad. His tools aren't sharp enough. He doesn't know what to do with his literary materials. Mere startling propinquity of words never before yoked is not enough, is not the mark of a mature craftsman. Much of his stuff skirts the ridiculous or definitely lands in bathos. Read these sample exhibits from "Opening of a Door":

p. 9 "He left behind of his spirit the savagery of a gentle smile." (Both savage and gentle?)

p. 29 "The amber soprano was warm and moving."

p. 36 "... she lifted her hand to the short iron flow of her hair."

p. 48 "He viewed it (the traffic) with cold passion. His attention slid longingly from the steel excitement to the surge of passing faces."

p. 53 "The morning was marine. Trains waited their turn, like swimmers, for that last hurtling clean cut into the blue."

p. 97 "Words that had been to Aunt Theodora a lucent gesture of amity were to Aunt Flora but the evil flirtation of ignis fatuus through sunken labyrinths."

p. 97 "... a scarlet glint of fear passed through her milk blue eyes."

p. 185 "Aunt Theodora heard the clang of exultant evil." (You can't hear the clang of evil.)

p. 194 "Together they were pitiless... as her strength failed he lifted her up, captured her numbed, melancholy mouth between implacable teeth. Cruel, cruel; they triumphed in the moment. The spirit, divinely pyrotechnic, burst its cold stars."

You can't deny that this author is a master of oxymoron—and the ox-brained Ipse-dixit critics as well as the "You-said-it" morons have got him wrong as a heaven-sent genius of writing.

Robert Cantwell's "Laugh and Lie Down" and Isabel Paterson's "Never Ask the End" round out the quartette. These books have enjoyed a remarkable press. I've yet to find anyone who could finish either (suggested revise of Mrs. Paterson's title: "Never Reach the End.") Why? Well, it isn't easy to quote damagingly from these novels. They don't hurl gaucheries at you. The style is spare, smooth, economical. You read the words easily enough. But after a page or two—what on earth is the author driving at? The sense has eluded you. Holes in the meaning! You go back. Maybe you were just dopey—or something. Then it dawns on you. Whether wilfully or not, these authors are fumbling their literary opportunities. This writing is ineffective writing. You may not laugh, but you lie down.

What is the answer? Are these two mock novels deliberate *tour de force*, tongue-in-cheek assaults upon the gullibility of the public? Their gratuitous ellipses and pervasive clinging fogginess seem a bit too thick to be wholly accidental. But even that posit does not absolve these authors. Whether they can write better or not is beside the point. In "Laugh and Lie Down" (the title alone makes me want to "rare up") and "Never Ask the End" they didn't write well. They didn't so much as write intelligibly. Yet the fact remains that these two books won several sets of very florid bays. It is these books and not the authors' good writing that "made" them. When they abused their literary materials they won the critics' awards. Parenthetically, it is enlightening to reflect that Mrs. Paterson's earlier novels, written in a strong clear style, took no prizes either "literary" or popular. The critics could understand them—and accordingly pronounced them only so-so. It wasn't until both she and Robert Cantwell began to write as badly as they could that they became potentially immortal.

It would be tempting to digress here to pose the question, Who's to be the judge? For if rules and precedents are scrapped it's everyone for himself and the critic no better than you or I. And as a matter of fact nearly everybody thinks he can criticize writing. The dumb-cluckier he is, the more dogma he is likely to air. Just drop the sentence "Two words does it" into a casual group and find out for yourself. Or, to stick closer to our knitting, ask your friends whether "light" in August is different from that in any other month and if that's not the meaning what is and what the hell has it got to do with the book anyway. Maybe you're mulling some highfalutin imaginative twist, tell 'em—and then wait to be told. Or go up a little higher and ask the professional critic what he means when he says a style is distinctive but not distinguished; and what on earth a distinguished style is; and does it embrace "womanshennegro" and "vomit" and "bastard," or is it "glimpsed" through forests of atrophied adjectives; and who the devil is he anyhow to make up decisions for you out of his own head?

The "sonofabitch" probably never read beyond the first eight pages himself.

NATHAN DIGESTS THE THEATRE

"JEZEBEL" (Owen Davis)—M. Davis, a playwright zombie out of the later eighteen-hundreds, stalks the modern theatrical scene with another morgue extract, this one a Schauspiel of the Old South, replete with supernaturated hokum.

"The First Apple" (Lynn Starling)—O

"The Lake" (Dorothy Massingham and Murray MacDonald)—Badly confused effort to mix a little Chekhov with a lot of boiled-over Henry Arthur Jones, the result being even worse Massingham-MacDonald.

"The Locked Room" (Herbert Ashlow, Jr.)—Junk.

"Yoshe Kall" (I. J. Singer and F. Block)—Second Avenue Yiddish drama translated into English and brought to Broadway where, as a consequence, it was unintelligible.

"Big-Hearted Herbert" (Sophie Kerr and A. S. Richardson)—A farce-comedy blank.

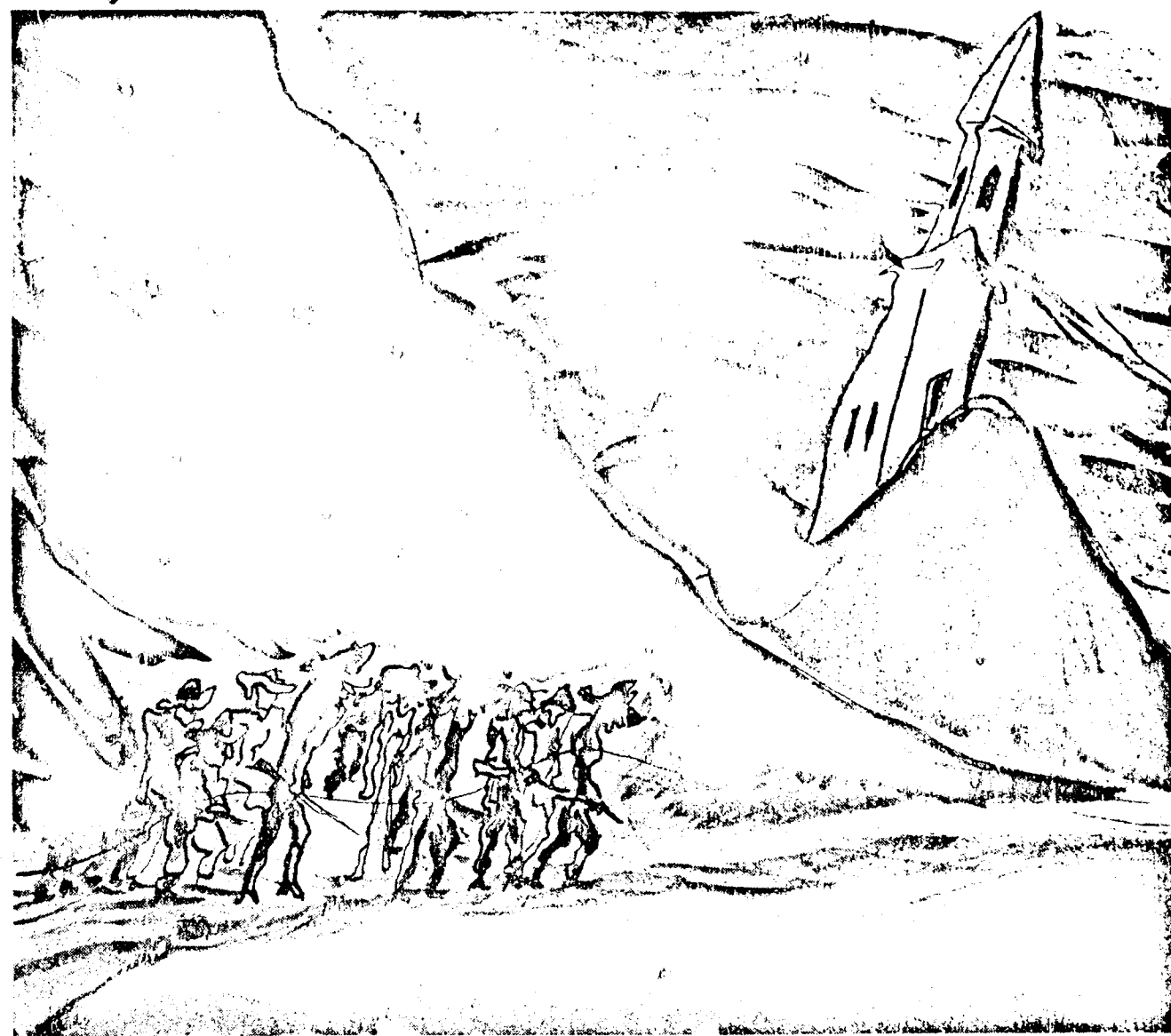
"Halfway to Hell" (Crane Wilbur)—All the way to Hollywood.

"The Gods We Make" (G. H. McCall and S. B. de Lozier)—Terrible.

"Days Without End" (Eugene O'Neill)—It ranks with "Welded" and "Dynamo" as one of its author's worst.

"Oliver Oliver" (Paul Osborn)—Fair comedy, but greatly inferior to Osborn's "Vinegar Tree."

"A Divine Moment" (R. H. Powell)—Whew!



The New South

—Hubert Davis

THE SOUTH AND THE NIGGER

by MERLIN N. HANSON

QUITE unwittingly, the Southerner has provided the darkey with schools and various kinds of training, and this education is bringing out a class of skilled laborers and expert professional men. One should remember, where schools are concerned, that the person with as little as one thirty-second of Negro blood is barred from white institutions. Woe unto the one who creeps by and sits with the sisters and brothers of the lily-white skin! But the Negro's standard of living, forced to the low level of corn bread and turnip greens, has, interestingly enough, resulted in hardy dusky-skinned workmen whose towering strength offers more than serious competition to the white man, for it very often replaces him. And nearly all of this replacement comes from the full-blooded darkey. For those with a high percentage of white blood have absorbed too many refinements from the Southerner to mingle with the "niggers," yet they are ignored by the race which lightened their skin. That sad section of men and women, generally accepting their plight stoically, lives almost in seclusion, or finds friends now and then among the low caste whites. But it constitutes a lost race.

These other Negro workmen, however, are apparently unaware of the advantageous position which they now occupy, and from which they snatch work from the eager hands of the white man. Nevertheless, this subjection of the Negro to frugality has been rewarded by the development of a slowly moving tide of brown, which is now reaching back toward its origin. White workmen, as well as other individuals identified with the labor movement, its union leaders, admit their plight, but with bitterness. "We must make the nigger raise his standard of living to our own level, or we are lost," one of them recently lamented. "He competes with us now in nearly every line of work, and always can underbid us." And one of the other ironies of this amusing situation is that, quite frequently, public officials who have flapped to victory on the wings of the Democratic rooster, symbolic of white supremacy, turn about and award work to the darkey, for he does it just as well and cheaper.

But the contention that the nigger must be kept in his place vanishes where the Negress is concerned, for many whites claim they make better mistresses than their pale sisters. The Negro harlot walks the same streets as the white prostitute, she lives in the same district, consorts with the same men, and in this phase of life also underbids.

Yet the cruel treatment of the male Negro comes mainly from that element which consorts with dark-skinned women. White men can venture forth, attack a Negress, and be fined five dollars for disorderly conduct by a contemptuous judge; but let a colored man try something of the sort in another direction! An insane Negro was once shoved into the docket room of a jail to be charged with rape. He had been discharged from the asylum before he was cured. Officers in the room knew the man to be insane and yet, while prowling about the wild-eyed darkey, sneered at his captor for making the arrest.

"Why didn't you shoot him right where you got him?" they snarled at the policeman. "You could have claimed self-defense. You're a damn fool!"

And finally, two of the most urgent and contemptuous of the cops, black blood-lust moving them, lunged forward, while a local reporter pranced gleefully about, hoping to participate in the approaching orgy of torture—probably death. Fortunately, an alert and more cautious superior officer leaped to the side of the accused man, who was utterly unaware of his danger, and routed the would-be attackers by booming threats of suspension or dismissal.

While preparations were being made to take the Negro to a place of "safety," a mob formed near the edge of the town. Two look-outs were dispatched to inform the mob as soon as the Negro, with his intentionally small guard, started from the jail to the railroad station. The mob waited patiently, then not so patiently. The train arrived and actually left with the Negro unmolested. Later in the night, when the two look-outs were at last located, they were found as drunk as judges, and had forgotten all about their pious duty.

There is another case in which a Mobile man disappeared while hunting at a camp about forty miles north of that city. Eight Negro woodchoppers, who happened to be working in the vicinity, were arrested, and ten separate confessions wrung from them over a period of three or four days and nights. What confessions! What confusion! The pitiful efforts of ignorant black men struggling to satisfy their white masters! Then, one day, while the woodchoppers were aiding officers in a search for the

body of the missing man (it was never found), one of the Negroes slipped overboard into hip-deep water. Eight hours later, according to police doctors, he died of "pneumonia." Mobile physicians laughed. It was the first case on record where pneumonia had been fatal in less than three days. But the nigger must know who is boss; his flesh is worth forty cents a pound when he turns state's evidence.

Two of us representing newspapers finally penetrated that jungle and had been working on the story only a short time when scowling people began threatening us. A return to Mobile was necessary, and when we again went back to that wild desolate bit of so-called civilization, we were not only heavily armed, but had the hardest shooting man on the Mobile police force as body guard. But the thing to be noted is that those people had the most remarkable "grapevine" system I have ever seen. Every move we made, and many of the things we said, were run out to the most remote sections until every person encountered knew who we were, what was wanted, and made duplicate statements to all questions. The investigation was short lived; we were not only in danger, but were uncovering too much third-degreering in connection with the eight blacks.

When those Negroes went to trial, a local holiday was declared; the schools were closed so the town-folk of all ages could witness the gestures of a court of justice. The accused men are now serving life terms.

Of course, there is a different attitude toward the monied Negro. While he is the victim of another form of hatred—that of a flaming, vicious envy—he is not quite so harshly treated; in instances, he is almost fawningly received. But this does not alter his social position to any considerable degree; he is still a "nigger." The name of a married Negro woman cannot be used in a Southern newspaper, even in police news, for it necessitates employing *Mrs.* in front of her name, and that must not be used in the South. Yet, as I chance to know, there was one city editor who always kept a copy of *The Pittsburgh Courier*, a Negro newspaper, in his desk, because he liked its flashy make-up and copied it in his sheet. And here and now I am violating a sacred Southern dogma by capitalizing the word "Negro."

But this gross injustice, this brutality by the police and prison guards, is not restricted to the Negro alone; by some metamorphosis of the money caste, it applies also to the poor or unaffluent whites, although of course not to the same degree. Yet they, too, are victimized by cross-eyed justice, pounced on by prison guards, stuffed into sweat boxes on blistering summer days, and beaten with garden hose (since this leaves no tell-tale mark) for offenses too trivial to list. I have seen Negro and white thus beaten with rubber hose and have heard the pleadings of accused men begging for mercy when officers were attempting to torture out a confession. And often those very men who had been knocked out when arrested, and subjected to the inhumanities of what is so graciously termed justice, were discharged in court, their innocence quickly proven.

So when winter comes to the South, and winds rustle through the scrub oak and sigh mournfully through the pines, some folk liken the forlorn whisperings of the wind to the voice of Old Enoch, an aged slave who used to sing, in melancholy lamentations, the sorrows of the Negro.

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OLD DOC FOLEY

by CHARLOTTE HURD

THE exterior of the place had a sinister look. It called to mind deeds done in the dark, bodies carried out through an alley, carted away and dumped in the river, while righteous people slept.

But nothing so thrilling ever happened in Doc Foley's office. He wasn't that kind of doctor. There should be a question mark after the doctor when referring to Doc Foley. He was that kind of doctor.

The building in which the Doc ministered to the afflicted was in the poorer section of the city. Such offices usually are. It was a tumbledown, three-story wooden affair, squatting in a row of equally tumbledown buildings and stores. Both sides of the street were lined with rooming houses of the cheapest sort, some of them houses of another kind, thinly masquerading as rooming houses. There were hash-houses, paper and cigar stores, and a bakery. In berry season, the bakery window was filled with blueberry pies and cakes and the neighborhood children took great delight in standing at this window and picking out the blueberries and the flies on the cakes and pies.

Entrance to the Doc's office was gained through a narrow door opening directly from the street level. Over his bell hung a sign, reading "Ring twice for Dr."

As there was no other bell or name-plate, this sign seemed a bit superfluous.

To the door was a large pane of heavy glass, curtained with lace that had never associated with water. On opening this door, one ascended a narrow flight of steep stairs, terminating in a dark, foul-smelling hall. There was another staircase above, but the rooms on the top floor were vacant.

The Doc himself was quite distinguished looking. His black hair and pointed beard were just touched with gray. He was small, slender and stoop-shouldered. His voice was soft and his bright black eyes looked straight into the eyes of his patients. As he moved about, his movements were similar to those of a sparrow hunting a fat worm for breakfast.

The linen and hands were immaculate, but this state did not reach to his consulting and waiting rooms, for they apparently never had been cleaned. The former contained several huge glass cabinets, filled with hideous instruments covered with the dirt of ages. In one corner, on a low platform, was an "electric chair." It had numerous wires, push buttons and signs around it, and often, after hearing a patient ring the entrance bell, the Doc's stenographer, working in a tiny room off the main office, would hear the buzz-buzz of the contraption.

The stenographer was in desperate need of a job to work in such a place. She had been out of work and had answered a blind ad. in a newspaper. When she reached the address given, she had been almost afraid to ring the bell, but ladies must eat.

In answer to her ring, the door clicked open, and she slowly mounted the narrow stairs. For what seemed to her an eternity, she stood there, in the dark, evil-smelling hall. She found out later that the Doc made his patients wait also.

Finally, the Doc stuck his head through the office door and told her to wait in the back parlor.

What a parlor! There were no windows. Double doors, leading into the office, were closed and curtained with red velvet portières, the weight of the dirt in them holding their folds stiff and motionless. There was a carpet that had never known the stirring touch of a broom. Two wooden rockers, a red plush sofa and a mahogany table completed the furnishings. No pictures adorned the dirty, red-flowered wallpaper. Not a magazine nor a book was on the table. Doc Foley's patients were certainly able to read—for they read his circular letters.

The Doc finally ushered the waiting girl into his stuffy office and motioned her to a chair. He told her that he was extremely "fussy" about his stenographer. He asked her about forty questions and then said that he would write her his decision. The following day the astonished girl met the Doc at the door of her rooming house. He had come to check up on her. He then told her that she might report for work that evening at five. She was to work evenings and Saturday afternoons.

During the five months that the girl worked for Doc Foley, she found him to be polite, distant, but extremely harsh if anything went wrong. The first day, he told her that his work was a bit different from the usual office work, and that he expected her to work quickly and well, and to ask no questions.

He said nothing about her keeping her mouth shut outside office hours. He must have taken it for granted that she would. Certainly she told no one where she worked.

The Doc's business stationery was a marvel. His picture adorned it twice. His life story of his many wonderful cures was also printed on the letterhead.

After the stenographer had handed the Doc the first batch of typed letters she was scared half to death when the seemingly quiet Doc jumped from his chair, hurled the sheaf of papers back on her desk, and asked her what she meant by wasting paper in that manner. It seemed that the Doc wanted his letters run together in a continuous stream of type, minus paragraphing, margins or double spacing, and using both sides of a sheet. But he had neglected to say so. To teach her economy, he had her type the whole mess over.

In the evening, the girl worked in the main office, but on Saturday afternoon she was moved into the tiny room off it. If an unexpected patient called in the evening, she was unceremoniously hustled into the tiny room, the Doc politely carrying her typewriter and table, while the patient cooled his heels in the dark hall. This tiny room was entirely filled with great packages of circulars, empty bottles, and bottles filled with a dark liquid; wooden boxes of assorted sizes, empty tins, tins containing a yellow salve, and cardboard boxes filled with labels.

Each evening at five, when the girl arrived, Doc went for his supper, locking her in, and telling her not to pay any attention to the bell, as he put a sign on the outside door, saying when he would return.

The first night, the poor girl was so frightened that she could scarcely do her work. But one gets used to anything and after that she stole a few minutes each night looking around the big office. Women are so curious. There were no files to snoop in, as the Doc kept no carbon copies and destroyed all letters sent him.

But the letters he sent out! Pages and pages of dictation, but in no one letter was any ailment, symptom or disease given a name. The Doc's advertising appropriation must have been large.

The first letter sent by the Doc, to a prospective victim, ran thus:

"Dear Madam: I am indeed glad you have written me and I know that I can be of great help to you and your

husband. He need not be a sufferer long and he can soon be returned to health and manly vigor if you will but follow my instructions closely. Please write me on return mail and enclose \$10 (either check or money order) and I will at once send medicine and further explicit instructions."

In due time the money was received and the second letter went forth:

"Dear Madam: Your check for \$10 received. Your husband is indeed (the Doc was fond of that word and used it profusely) a great sufferer and he needs my medicine No. 42. By express today I am sending you two bottles and one tin box. The bottles are marked A and B. The box contains a salve. If you will give him a teaspoonful of the medicine from the bottle marked A every morning on arising, and a tablespoonful from that marked B every night on going to bed, and tell him to use the salve freely several times a day on the afflicted surface, I am sure he will be much better in a month. When these bottles are empty, write me again, telling me how your husband is, and enclose check for \$10, (or money will do) and I will send you further medicines and advice at once."

So it went on, until the money gave out and the Doc lost a customer. But Barnum was right, and there are always plenty more. Such volumes of mail! The number of checks and money orders deposited daily by the Doc! The wooden boxes that he nailed up so neatly each night in the tiny room off the office! Letters came from East, West, North and South. It pays to advertise and the Doc knew how. His advertisements were fuller of promise than the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

Letters from husbands, from wives, from young men—and men not so young—who wanted to be married, and—"Should they tell the girl?" Thus reversing the usual procedure of a girl wondering if she must tell a man her past. Amazing it was that the Doc could hold a customer as long as he did. Letters, checks, bottles of "dope." More letters, more checks, more bottles. The credulity and gullibility of fools is marvelous. Only when the money—that necessary evil with which they hoped to overcome a worse evil—gave out, did hope end. Possibly hope did not then end. But there is an end to money—and with it, an end to bottles marked A and B, and sometimes even C and D—"a severe case, so please send check for \$20 by return mail."

Now, the Doc's stenographer didn't mind quite so much entering his place in the evening after dark, though there were always at least two loiterers around the door, who grinned knowingly if they caught her eye, or thought they had. But Saturday afternoon, when she had to enter the place in daylight, was too much for her. She gave notice. The Doc said he was sorry to lose her as she had been satisfactory (the only word of praise he had ever uttered to her) but added, "I don't blame you, Miss. This is hardly the work for a girl. I will find a young man, I think."

Before she left, the girl thought to confuse the Doc a bit, so she told him that her head had been bothering her greatly with pains and a sort of dizziness, and wanted to ask his advice as a physician. He replied that she had better see a good doctor at once. The girl looked so puzzled that the Doc hastened to add that he had meant, of course, a good specialist for head and eyes.

Perhaps old Doc Foley—he would be old now—is dead. Perhaps he is still filling bottles marked A and B, and sending out his circulars of golden promise. If not, there must be other "doctors" left to fill bottles marked A and B.

BOYD DIGESTS THE BOOKS

"THE Conquest of a Continent." (Madison Grant.) New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$3.00—Dr. Grant here takes a hand in the Nazi Nordic game, by proving to his own entire satisfaction and that of Dr. Henry Fairfield Osborn that this is a Nordic, blond, Protestant nation, sadly corrupted by the lesser breeds without the law. All immigration must cease. How the pure Anglo-Saxons of the South, as described by Erskine Caldwell and William Faulkner, for example, came to such sad state of degeneracy, unassisted by the Irish, the Slavs, and the Italians, is not—strange to say—explained.

"The Paris Front." (Michel Corday.) New York: E. P. Dutton. \$5.00—This popular French novelist has been persuaded by H. G. Wells to publish his diary of the war years. The record is worth preserving, for M. Corday watched, listened to, and noted the day by day imbecilities of those nightmare years, which are now so incredible that people tend to forget them conveniently. The insistent theory of the Allies that any desire for peace was criminal stands out at every turn. The result, as we see it today, would seem to indicate that idiocy is its own reward.

"Wines, Their Selection, Care and Service." (Julian Street.) New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.00—A connoisseur presents in succinct form a guide to the pleasure of wine and dining which should be invaluable to the new generation of drinkers, and which the older generation can read with great profit. Mr. Street is no Saintsbury, nor does he pretend to emulate "Notes on a Cellar Book." His aim is practical rather than literary. Charts of vintage years since 1915, a map of the best wine districts in Europe, and a series of ideal menus complete the book's usefulness.

"Artist Among the Bankers." (Will Dyson.) New York: E. P. Dutton. \$2.00—Better known as a cartoonist and etcher, the Australian artist, Will Dyson, now combines economic criticism with his other talents. Like Judge Brandeis, Mr. Dyson definitely challenges the notion that bankers are industrially creative. He describes the withering and destructive influence upon production of the domination of the world by financiers. Some years ago Mr. Dyson's Fat Man became in England the recognized symbol of predatory greed. His present effort is to do as much for Finance, holding up by way of contrast the ideals of the artist and the scientist. "The arrogance of practical people must be somewhat curbed."

"Jack Robinson." (George Beaton.) New York: Viking Press. \$2.50—This first novel, written over a pseudonym, is the work of a new-comer, an Irishman born in Malta. The fact that it is described as "picaresque" should not deter the reader who remembers recent efforts to continue that tradition. Here the adventures are both mental and physical, and in the world of action, no less than in that of ideas, the author's impressions are rendered with vivacious originality. The book is quite outside the common run of contemporary fiction designed for digestive purposes.

"After the Great Companions." (Charles J. Finger.) New York: E. P. Dutton. \$3.00—This time Mr. Finger writes of his adventures amongst books, not necessarily masterpieces. These are the good companions of all ages. Completely without self-consciousness of either the academic or iconoclastic variety, the author conveys the authentic thrill of reading, from boyhood to maturity, by one who has never feared to follow his own instincts in the matter and to say the pundits be damned.

THREE POEMS

by THEODORE DREISER

EVENING—MOUNTAINS

The shadowy hills
Aloud chant together
In audible crimson.
The high-born peaks
Gleaming in the mournful redness
Of that madman's eye—
The sun—
Declare their defiance
Of their loneliness.
And about them,
In the steeply desert of the sky
Wander cloud camels,
Red,
Slow,
And
In the valleys below
Under a twilight spell
The earth itself
Enchanted
Rests.
And now
Some secret poet of the soul,
Finding this winding stream all black,
Flings upon its bosom
The poem of a star.

CHIEF STRONG BOW SPEAKS

For my beloved people
That the Gods might smile upon them
Send rain and snow to the mountains
Give them victory over their enemies
Protect them from wild beasts
And fierce and armed winters and summers
Give grain in abundance
Children in plenty
Protect all from evil and prowling spirits
That lurk to sicken
And slay.
Have I not prayed much?
Chanted much?
In silence watched
And guarded?
Yea,
Have counseled with the wisest
And strongest
Of my tribe
And yet,
See,
I am old,
I have seen much,
Known much,
And I now testify.
The strong as well as the weak are slain.
The young as well as the old die.
Both rain and snow fall indifferently
On all.
And spirits of evil waste and slay.
Yea, crops are destroyed
And at times are neither water nor food.
For the Gods are good
Yet only
When it is their whim or mood.

LOVE

Like a cactus in a desert
No moisture
No nourishing soil
Sand only,
And the hot breath
Of arid wastes
Blowing—blowing—
A relentless sun beating down
At night a silver, icy moon—
So, love blooms here
Love . . .
Sturdy and unafraid.

EDUCATION

Education is not what I know,
but the quality of my thought.
The satirist is, therefore, the
greatest educator because he not
only changes the channels of
thought but changes the quality
of thought.

—Benjamin De Casseres.

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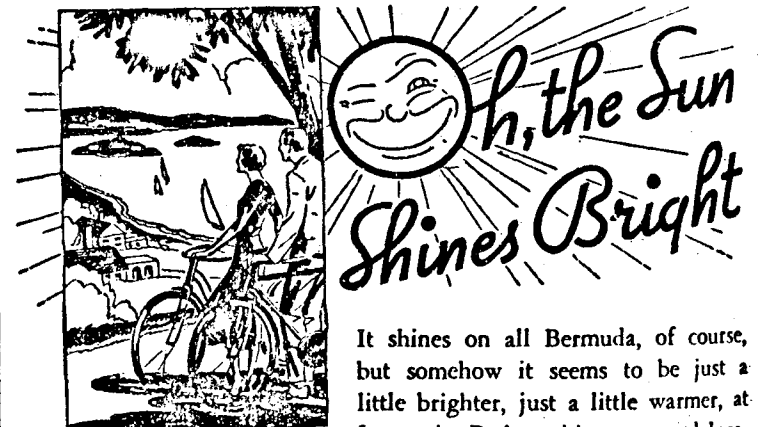
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