

THE BOOKMAN'S INFERNO

"Add'ress."
 "A long-felt want."
 "Along these lines."
 "Ar'is'tocratic."
 "Automo'bile."
 "Balance of—" (except in commercial language).
 "Brainy."
 "Bright" (for "clever" or "brilliant").
 "By leaps and bounds."
 "Clubman."
 "Dandy" (as an adjective).
 "Educational tender."
 "Elegant" (for "good," "agreeable").
 "Enthuse."
 "Exclusive" (as a social term).
 "Exqu'is'ite."
 "Extend" for "offer."
 "Fictionist."
 "Genteel."
 "Gentlemanly."
 "He (she, it) struck a new note."
 "In'quiry."
 "In this connection."
 "In touch with" (except as a technical term in military or naval discourse).
 "Like" for "as."
 "Locate" (as an intransitive verb).
 "Lunch."
 Ly'ceum."
 "Measure up."
 "Mu'seum."
 "Nom de plume."
 "Output" (except in commercial language).
 "Ovation."

"Parlour."
 "'Phone," for "telephone," either as noun or verb.
 "Playlet."
 "Pleased to meet you."
 "Prince Albert coat."
 "Proposition," except in its etymological sense."
 "Quit."
 "Residential district."
 "Resort" (as a noun).
 "School-children."
 "School-teacher."
 "Silk hat."
 "Smart" (for "clever").
 "Social standing."
 "Storiette."
 "Stylish."
 "Sur le tapis."
 "Tender" for "offer" (as a noun).
 "The Four Hundred."
 "The story grips the reader."
 "Thinker."
 "Under the auspices of—"
 "Up against."
 "Up to date."
 "Very sick man."
 "Vest."
 "Well-posted."

So much for the Inferno. At the next opening of the Letter Box we shall pay attention to the numerous letters which have nothing to do with the Inferno. After that, if the boy manages to catch up in his cataloguing, we shall go on with our delightful Picture Gallery.

DAWN, AND A WAVE OF LIGHT

Dawn! and a wave of light
 In the broken eastern sky,
 A rifted gleam in the gloom of grey,
 A flame from the ashes of sunken night,
 And the deep despair of the things that die—
 Dawn! and the hope of day!

Dusk! and a breath of air
 From the farthest hills of peace,
 Sweet as an image of silver light
 Moon-made in a pool where the waters wear
 A lighted calm wherein care shall cease—
 Dusk! . . . and the hope of night.

Frank E. Hill.

THE CONFESSIONS OF A LITERARY DRUMMER



LET me confess at the outset that by literary drummer I do not mean a drummer with literary aspirations or qualifications, nor even a drummer with a pronounced taste for letters. No, one uses literary drummer as one would use the term hat drummer, or shoe drummer, meaning thereby one who travels about drumming up and making sales of literature.

Selling literature is what I seriously believed my occupation was to be, when I first went on the road for a publishing house. The craftsmanship of the story teller, the plot of the story, the execution, the style, the artistry—these were some of the features upon which I would expatiate and dilate, and with which I would woo the orders from reluctant buyers. With this belief in mind I carefully read the new books I proposed to sell; I studied them; I pondered over them; trying to determine what excellencies of style, of construction, of craftsmanship would appeal most tellingly to booksellers. For booksellers, to handle books effectively, must know them, and appreciate them truly, thought I.

With this belief in mind I started to sell my first bill of goods, the goods being literature. It was an important event in my life, and one that made a lasting impression upon me. My customer was an elderly lady, unmarried, who having been brought up in the bookstore of her father, had upon his death succeeded to the business.

"She has been in a bookstore thirty years," I said to myself. "Therefore she knows books; she appreciates good books; she loves them."

In the back of her little emporium, where I was surrounded, it is true, by books, but also by such unliterary objects as rolls of wall paper, stacks of writing tablets, calendars, souvenir postal cards, shelves full of ledgers, account books and filing cases, I unpacked my trunk and displayed my wares. And as I drew forth

each book, or cover, or few leaves of paper, or whatever I possessed which represented a book that was going to be, I dwelt long and lovingly upon it. I told the story of each novel, and I endeavoured to tell it to that old lady in just the way that would have made it appeal to Walter Pater or Henry James. To be sure, my little lecture was accompanied by some disconcerting incidents. A phonograph in the front of the store squawked "Waltz me around again, Willie," with monotonous persistency and maddening iteration. And it seemed fated that whenever I was in the act of making a particularly telling point some customer should approach; upon which my audience would desert me instantly to sell a lead pencil or ten cents' worth of writing paper. Besides, my customer's manner of receiving the information I imparted to her was, to say the least, uninspiring. It consisted of a repetition of the syllables, "um-um." If I said a thing was very good, she said, "um-um." If I confessed it was rather poor, she said, "um-um." And um-um, in a mechanical and non-committal tone, was the only response to my most eloquent periods. When the trunk was empty and I was through, I paused, flushed and excited.

"Well," said the elderly lady, in a disparaging tone, "is that all you've got? I hoped your house would have something *real* good this year."

"Good," I cried. "Great goodness, madam, they're all good; there's nothing but good books strewn all around here."

"No," she said, shaking her head, "your books don't look pretty. I don't believe I feel like placing an order this year."

With madness in my heart I repacked my trunk. And that very afternoon, after an exciting altercation with the proprietor of a department store, a gentleman who spoke with a strong German accent, I sold him fifteen hundred wretched little paper books, with awful, staring covers and insides which no in-