The Last of the Yankees

By THE GENTLEMAN AT THE KEYHOLE

SOME friend of President Coolidge's quoted him recently as remarking in his dry way, "A few years from now I guess I'll be just like any other President."

Perhaps he said it a little wistfully, thinking of his place in history. But he spoke with that sense of reality which is characteristic of him. His head was never turned by the adulation which was showered upon him. Already he is like any other President whose successor has been nominated and elected.

From the moment a national campaign begins, and especially from the moment a new President is elected, the occupant of the White House whose tenure nears its end ceases to be the center of the picture.

One cannot remark the going of Mr. Coolidge without a certain regret, a regret that has nothing to do with his qualities as a public man, one that is purely personal. Mr. Coolidge is a character; he has a pungency and flavor that most public men lack. Even if one does not admire one cannot help having a certain liking for him.

He is a sort of old-fashioned russet apple, of the kind that used to grow on all farms, small, dull-colored, harsh-surfaced, but aromatic and savorsome. They still grow on the stony hills of New England. He is the last of the Yankees, at least the last of the Yankee Presidents. It had been three quarters of a century since there had been a Yankee President when Mr. Coolidge took office, and it will probably be so long before there is another President from New England that the next one from that section will probably have a French name.

A New Name on a Long List

With the rising influence of the newer stocks in national politics revealed in this election anything may happen. Mr. Coolidge may even be the last of the rural Presidents. So leaving Mr. Coolidge behind is like leaving the old home on the farm behind for good and for all.

So far as history is concerned Mr. Coolidge guesses rightly when he says that in a decade or two he will be like any other President, just a name on a list that you find in political almanacs or school histories.

Only two kinds of Presidents are more than names after the years have passed them by, the Presidents who have occupied office in stirring times and those whose fame survives because of their striking personalities.

Lincoln was both kinds of President. He would have been remembered as a remarkable personality even if he had not been head of the American Government in the most critical period of its history. Roosevelt, whose public achievements have little permanent importance, will survive as a personality when no one can remember anything that happened in his administration. People will remember the Great War and the attempt to federate the nations of the world, and thus recall Wilson.

No Historical Significance

But Mr. Coolidge is a negative character and his period was a negative period. He is not a yea-saying man and his had not been a yea-saying administration. And it's the yea-saying personalities and the yea-saying moments of history that men remember longest. Probably he has been happier thus. One cannot imagine him in a critical period when important decisions of a positive nature involving the fate of the nation had to be made. He suited the temper of his time and has been happy. It was one of those lulls in history when a nation stops and takes its breath. His virtues are not of the kind that are long remembered. One cannot for long recall tax reductions, economies and vetoes, however much they are applauded in their day.

Others will come after him who will hold down expenses and save lead-pencil stubs. Their virtues for the moment will overshadow his. His name is writ upon water; but except for one wistful moment, as he contemplates the lengthening list of Presidents whose names one has difficulty in recalling, I do not think that he cares.

I like a story which I heard of his trout fishing a couple of years ago. Invited to a stream which was full of trout he fished with a pole baited with a worm while an aide stood by with another rod baited with another worm. When he hooked a fish the rod with the fish on it was handed to the aide and the baited rod handed to the President. Thus the two rods were kept constantly at work. Once his successor was nominated he began to fish with a fly. What was a kind of arduous pleasure became a sport.

He relaxes, indifferent to that long list on which he is soon to become number —— But what is the number? I have forgotten.

I Can Pick Winners, But-

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an' 'at leg look' bad to me. He jus' look like he catch a lottah dust from dem othah two hosses."

I looked the horse over, and he didn't appear in such a bad way. His trainer said the animal had met with a slight training mishap, but that he had a good chance to win. Still, he admitted that the entry might have been scratched, only the owner wanted to see his colors up.

That changed my mind right there. I was in a receptive mood when the betting commissioner of the owner of one of the other starters told me his boss was going to place a big wager on his color bearer. I started in with the intention of betting on the second horse when I met the trainer of the third starter.

Their Intentions Are Good

He was quitting the paddock, leaving the saddling of his horse to an assistant—a rather unusual procedure in itself—he was and is one of the shrewdest horsemen in the country. While I hadn't figured his entry as having a chance, because he had not been to the post in a long time, I pricked up my ears when the trainer whispered for me to have a good bet down.

"This fellow is right up to a race," he said convincingly. "I've had him under cover in his training, and he's worked fast enough to beat this field in a gallop."

I did know this; and, getting the assurance that the horse was at his best form, I rushed to my bookmaker and wrote out a ticket on the one I had had no intention of playing when I entered the paddock. Then I went to the infield and again met the trainer who had furnished me with the tip I had followed.

"Come on over to the far turn," he said. "I'm going to stand there and drop my hat the second time the horses come around, as a signal for my jock to take the lead and run those other two dizzy. I told him to lay well off the pace until he saw me wave my lid. I suppose I might have told him to wait and make his run the last time around, but I thought I'd play it safe. He hasn't got much weight below the ears, and he's got less above them. But he's got good eyesight."

We took up our position on the far turn, and didn't have long to wait for the start. As the horses came tearing down the backstretch, the trainer's entry trailing by four or five lengths, a strong breeze swept across the infield. It caught the trainer's hat and twisted it from his head. He grabbed it as it was about to strike the ground, and at just the moment the horses reached the bend.

Immediately his jockey, taking the accident for the agreed-upon signal, shook up his mount, and the horse was well in front when they straightened out for the first run down the home lane.

"Maybe he'll make it," the trainer said, "but I got my doubts. They still have a long way to go. I wish that boy's eyes hadn't been so sharp."

The trainer's fears were well-founded. His horse faltered in the last twenty yards because of the terrific pace he had set, and was beaten a nose by my original selection. There is no question that the one I bet on would have won easily had he been reserved to make his run the last time around, as the trainer intended. But the race track is paved with good intentions.

I rely on training trials, past performances, stable information and a general knowledge of horses in making my selections. My opinions are very decided when I prepare my handicap lists, but I get a different slant frequently when I reach the track. Perhaps some of my selections draw unsatisfactory post positions; maybe the riders do not suit me; the odds may strike me as too short—or too long; unfavorable track conditions may come up at the last minute; the stable connections may not be enthusiastic, or even if they are, one of the other factors mentioned may cause me to switch when it comes to betting. Perhaps my original selection wins, and then I pay out of my pocket for a bit of "inside" information.

Owners and trainers who, with the best intentions in the world, tell you their horse is likely to win, or that he has practically no chance to do so, are just as likely to have their figures upset as any handicapper.

The fact that trainers do not fancy their charges does not mean that they are making no effort to win. Possibly the horse has not worked in satisfactory fashion for the race. Mayhap he has not been feeding well or has shown signs of approaching lameness. As often as not they overestimate the quality of other horses in the event.

A case in point is that of Gerard, named by George D. Widener after the war-time ambassador to Germany. The colt was highly tried at Belmont Park by Jack Joyner, who decided to give him an educational race or two, and then await the rich stakes at Saratoga and the Futurity. The youngster was sent to the post in a dash down the Belmont straightaway. Pony McAtee, his rider, was instructed to have the colt give his best but not to abuse him. Gerard won at long odds, with no support from the stable.

"If he can win in this style when still green, what sort of colt must he be?" pondered Joyner. In several later starts Gerard was backed with great confidence, but he didn't win another race.

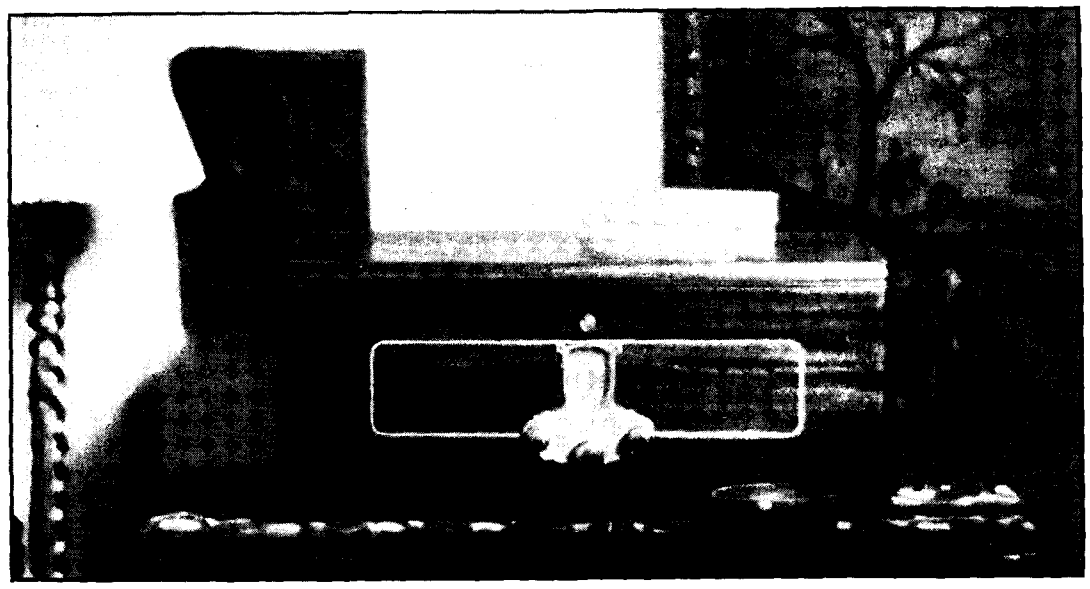
Posing for Snapshot Cost Him Race

Another case was that of Nimba in the Alabama Stakes at Saratoga. This great mare, one of the best we have ever had, was not highly thought of by Trainer Odom. He sent her to the post because the owner, Marshall Field, wanted his colors carried in the famous race. Nimba had a suspicious leg which made Odom think she had no chance to win. But she did and in easy fashion.

Some years ago Clarence Turner, who was just breaking into the limelight, had the mount on Charles Cannell, a heavily backed horse at Charleston. He came into the stretch five lengths in front, and saw a photographer ready to snap him. Turner steered his mount to the middle of the track, so the camera man would be sure to get him, and gave another horse the chance to come up on the inside and win the race by a nose.

Trainers, jockeys, handicappers—all go wrong in their judgment of horses. They can even be right and still fail to profit, as I have tried to show. The late Frank Farrell, first owner of the New York Yankees and a heavy better when he raced a big stable of horses some twenty-five years ago, told me once: "YOU CAN PICK WINNERS, BUT YOU CAN'T BEAT THE RACES!"

To which, let me add, neither can you.



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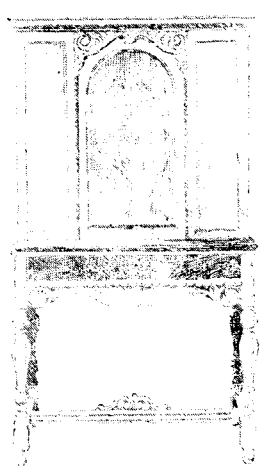

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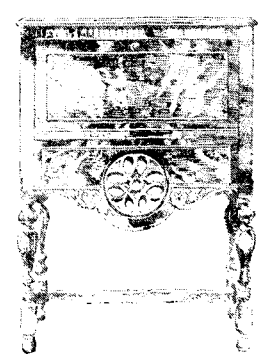

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The "Look and Listens"

By Jack Binns

IN THE height of the ballyhoo over television—the name for radio movies—a New York newspaper ran a section in its radio pages devoted to that fascinating subject. Like most other discussions concerning it, one gathered that television was an accomplished fact.

Perhaps the best description of the present status of radio movies is the absence of that section from that particular radio page now.

Flamboyant stories have hurt television by leading the public to expect too much. Those writing them forget, or choose to ignore, the fact that radiophone broadcasting was in an experimental stage for 20 years before it was in a condition to introduce to the public. Television is right now in the condition that radio-telephony was 20 years ago.

These optimistic stories have also hurt radio broadcasting because so many fans refuse to buy radio sets, believing that within a few months new sets incorporating television receivers will be available.

It is a cruel joke because no such thing is possible. Don't wait for television if you desire to enjoy radio programs during the next few years.

Not a Chain Station

A little news item from the other side of the world reads: "A group of citizens in Auckland, New Zealand, have united and are contemplating the erection of a one-kilowatt radio broadcasting station to be used by the public in broadcasting matters of general interest."

Oh, boy! what a grand and glorious racket that will be, with no censor to guide them.

What the Public Wants

It's too bad all the program managers of the country were not listening when George Arliss was guest speaker at a sponsored hour. In the midst of a delightfully humorous speech on entertainment he asked the age-old question: "What does the public want?" Without hesitation he answered: "The public wants the best it can get!"

He might have added that the best is always produced by an originator—scarcely ever by a copyist.

A Sweet Blond Voice

Out of WLW, Cincinnati, there comes this yarn. The doorman at the studio found a youth nervously pacing up and down outside. In reply to questions said youth declared:

"I wrote to the blonde who sang Dixie Dawn last night, and asked her for a date, and I'm waiting to see if she'll give it to me."

"Do you know her?" inquired the doorman.

"No," answered the youth.

"Then how do you know she's a blonde?" queried the doorman.

"Because her voice is so nice and refined," whispered the blushing youth.

Unfortunately the chronicler of WLW's doings fails to identify the radio Lorelei. Let us hope he will soon relieve a palpitating world, so that we may all tune in on the charming lady and thus learn how a blond voice really sounds.

For All the World to Hear

Over in England the state-owned broadcasting service recently saved the empire's most noted and oldest symphony orchestra from extinction when bankruptcy faced it. Now comes the National Broadcasting Company, in America, in conjunction with the National Music League, with a plan to undertake the sponsorship and cost involved in the débuts of promising young artists.

The joint statement from the two organizations declares the plan is revolutionary. This is no exaggeration, and it is further evidence of the possibility I have been pointing out for the past three years that in the near future those who control broadcast programs will control the major entertainment features of the country. So far, what control there is has been beneficial and in the public interest.

The inexorable law of the survival of the fittest works just as effectively in the realm of music as in any other human endeavor, and, in conformity with it, long established custom has demanded that the young artist must make his début in a New York concert recital, the entire costs of which the artist must meet. Oftentimes the bitter disappointment at the failure of critics to attend such a recital, added to the large cost, has ruined a promising artist.

Under the joint plan now promised the competitively selected artists will make their débuts in a large radio studio auditorium where the New York critics will be invited. The concert will be broadcast throughout the country and music critics in other cities will have an opportunity of listening in at the initial performance by way of local loud speakers. Under this plan the young artists will get a nation-wide audience instead of a possible localized recognition.

Mrs. Otto Kahn, representing the league, declares:

"I think the plan offers a practical and much-needed solution to one of the problems confronting unknown artists who are often unable to give concerts on an adequate scale owing to their inability to raise the large sum which this requires."

Marriage for Two

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Whatever is ready. But quickly. Then chops—potatoes, a salad—"

"Immediately," said the maître d'hôtel.

Tracy detained him. "But first—some brandy. The lady is—not feeling well."

The young man underwent a close scrutiny. He passed it well. This was no prohibition enforcement official.

"Instantly, sir," was the reply.

Tracy sat down opposite the girl.

"Just one minute," he said.

She looked at him listlessly. She made no reply, and Tracy felt increasing embarrassment. It was as though, somehow, he were guilty of the social order that caused young girls to go hungry. . . .

The waiter relieved the strain by his appearance with a tiny glass of brandy. He set it on the table and disappeared.

"Drink it," said Tracy.

THE girl picked it up. Its fumes rose to her nostrils and they quivered ever so faintly. Then she set the glass down. She made as though to rise. Tracy touched her on the shoulder and her weakness made her fall back into her chair. But her pale mouth was stubborn.

"I won't—I can't," she moaned.

"Good God, drink it," said Tracy. Then he thought he understood. "Scruples about liquor?"

"About men," she replied. "I—I haven't any money. I—don't know that I'll ever have money. I—won't pay—the way you expect."

Tracy stared at her. Anger, then contempt, then amusement were in his eyes.

"Are you so vain," he asked, "that you think I'd care a hoot for that sort of pay—from you?"

His psychology was sounder than he had dared hope. Her thinned blood was thickened enough with resentment at the insult to show in her cheeks.

"Now," she said, "you owe me something."

She raised the glass to her lips and sipped it slowly. As she put it down the waiter placed a bowl of soup on the table. He served her deftly. Again her nostrils dilated faintly. She glanced at Tracy. Her lips parted in the slightest of smiles.

"You even," she said, "owe me the soup."

"Let us hope," he said sardonically, "that you'll be sufficiently my creditor to eat a chop. I can then think of some further rudeness which will justify your acceptance of a salad."

Then he busied himself lighting a cigarette. It was not pleasant, watching a famished girl eat her first mouthful since—when?

He put down his cigarette and lighted another. He crushed the burning end of that one upon a saucer and picked up the first. He put the wrong end in his mouth and smothered a profanity. The girl looked up from her soup.

"Lucky for you," she said, "that you inherited money."

He stared at her, surprised by her words into forgetfulness of embarrassment.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

She frowned at him. A spoonful of soup was on its way to her mouth. She swallowed it, and the thinness of her throat made painfully visible the articulation of the muscles. The spoon went to the plate again. The trembling fingers caused the silver to clatter upon the china, and he looked away again. For a minute or two there was silence, except for the tiny sounds of liquid being scooped up from the plate.

He remembered having read something of the technique of feeding starving people. One gave them a little at a time, lest their famished organs suffer more from repletion than from emptiness. He stole another glance at her.

She was holding herself in, he saw. Her impulse was to lift the plate to her mouth, drain it at one draft, but she was slowly, methodically, spooning it to her mouth. He looked away again.

"Thank you," she said.

He knew exactly what she meant. She was grateful that he did not witness more of her humiliation. What manner of girl was this, who in the most dreadful poverty could appreciate nuances of manners that he had only unconsciously observed?

Up to now he had only been sorry for her in a general way. She was typical of all the misery and poverty in the world. But suddenly she became capable of calling upon that specific pity and sorrow which we reserve for individuals who have compelled our admiration.

Poor, humiliated thing! And why should she feel humiliated? People aren't humiliated because ignorance of the rules of right living results in ill-health. People feel no shame because an accident has crippled them. Then why feel humiliation because of economic ignorance or misfortune?

Now the waiter appeared. If he felt slight surprise that Tracy ate nothing, or that Tracy's companion should order at five in the afternoon a meal that was more of luncheon or dinner than a tea, he didn't show it. Perhaps the maître d'hôtel had intimated something about the transfer of largesse to him, or, more probably, the waiter was something of a psychologist himself, and anticipated a suitably gratifying reward for deft and incurious service.

"You may look at me now," said the girl.

HER voice had lost the quality of desperation. There was almost a touch of amusement in its tones. It was an assured voice, the voice of a girl accustomed to other things than the charity of a casual stranger. Tracy, looking up for the third time, met her eyes.

The agony, the horror, the desperation had left them. Oddly, he felt himself color. She had, in some intangible way, taken command of the situation, and the embarrassment that might have been hers had become almost wholly his.

The terrific repression which she had manifested as she attacked the soup was not so plainly visible now, although her fingers still trembled slightly as she manipulated the knife and fork.

She guessed at his embarrassment.

"You may talk to me," she said.

Tracy withheld his amusement at her grand manner. She was, he knew, fighting for self-control, and if her fractional victory showed itself by a something that absurdly hinted at condescension, he would admire rather than condemn.

"What did you mean by saying that I was lucky to have inherited money? How do you know that I inherited money? And why should that have been luck?"

"Men so sensitive that they can't look at suffering are not the founders of great fortunes," she remarked dryly.

Tracy's eyes widened. The philosophy may not have been original with her, but that she could think it and apply it just now proved her remarkable.

(*Continued on page 40*)