

Prophet of Aviation

By Edwin E. Slosson

WITH Zeppelins and airplanes flying across the Atlantic, is it not time we gave a glance at the man of science who foresaw the marvels of the present period with remarkable clarity and had to stand all manner of ridicule from his contemporaries? The following lines by Erasmus Darwin read more sensibly now than they did in 1789:

Soon shall thy arm, unconquer'd steam, afar
 Drag the slow barge, or drive the rapid car;
 Or on wide waving wings expanded bear
 The flying chariot through the fields of air.

And isn't this a good guess at the submarine?

Led by the Sage, lo! Britain's sons shall guide
 Huge *Sea-Balloons* beneath the tossing tide;
 The diving castles, roof'd with spheric glass,
 Ribbed with strong oak and barr'd with bolts of brass,
 Buoy'd with pure air shall endless tracts pursue,
 And Priestley's hand the vital flood renew.

You will note that old Dr. Darwin made use of the gas recently discovered by his friend Priestley, oxygen, to keep the air pure, and it is only by this means that submarine navigation is today possible.

But the greater fame of his grandson Charles has quite eclipsed that of Erasmus. I was quite startled the other day in re-reading Knickerbocker's History of New York to strike this passage where the author apologizes for not going into more detail on the question of Adam and Eve before getting down to the Dutch:

"Neither will I stop to investigate . . . the startling conjecture of Buffon, Helvetius and Darwin, so highly honorable to mankind, that the whole human species is accidentally descended from a remarkable family of monkeys!"

This puzzled me at first because I knew that Charles Darwin's Origin of Species was not published till 1859, and turning to the first page of Knickerbocker I saw that it was published in 1809, fifty years before. But Irving evidently referred to Erasmus Darwin, who had here anticipated his grandson as he had other discoverers.

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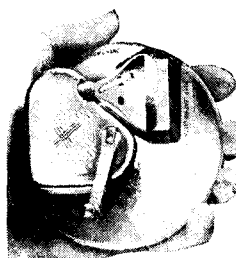
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had increased Albert's critical faculties. "She kin cook kinder good," he grinned, "but Lawd, Lawd, she sho' is ugly, ain't she?"

Lillian giggled. "Yeah, and cross-eyed, too." A little more well-directed flattery would help out, just here, she figured. "Dat's how come she married you," she added. "She put a gree gree on you wid dem eyes er her'n. 'Cause ain't no big ole good-lookin' man like you gonter marry a squincy little ole runty gal like her unless she gree-greed you wid dem eyes."

THE next day Albert spent the greater part of the morning looking at his wife. Critically. She wasn't much to look at. In fact, she was so ugly that it made him tired to look at her.

"Dog gone ev'rything I kin think of," Albert grumbled. "De somethin' to eat she fixes me is all O. K., but jest lookin' at her kind er spiles de taste."

Selma, just then sewing a patch on Albert's trousers, looked up.

"Say which, Great Big Man?" she asked.

"Say I b'lieve I'm goin' down to de river and do me some fishin'," he answered. The idea of going fishing had just popped into his mind, but it sounded like a good one since it would give him an excuse to get out of sight of his wife, and he adopted it.

"Fish won't taste bad," Selma declared enthusiastically. "Hit's a trot-line hangin' on de fence, and you kin borry a skiff f'm Chawlie."

That sounded too much like work for Albert, what with rowing a heavy skiff and baiting and pulling up a trot-line. "I ain't countin' on doin' dat kind er fishin'," he announced. "I'm countin' on doin' a little worm fishin'."

"Dat's de stuff, Heavy-Eatin' Man!" Selma exclaimed enthusiastically. "You worm-fish for dem cats and bring 'em home, and den watch old me cook 'em so brown dey'll make yo' mouf water!"

Albert was too full of baked ham and snap beans and fresh potatoes and hot biscuits to be interested in anything to eat just then. He merely wanted to escape from the house so he wouldn't have to look at his ugly wife.

He took a pole line with hook, sinker and cork bobber, and meandered over to the river. "Worm" fishing requires the least effort. All a boy has to do is bait his hook, drop it into the water, and wait until a fish takes the cork under. There is the preliminary detail of digging for worms, but Albert overlooked that bit of labor.

"Ain't no use in diggin' all dem worms," he told himself when he realized he had no bait. "I ain't cravin' to eat me no fish, nohow."

He found a tree on the bank that leaned over the water and he crawled out, seated himself comfortably in the forks, dropped the unbaited hook into the water and settled back to wait—for nothing in particular. Just to wait. And rest. "Did I put a worm on," he mumbled, "one er dem little old cat-fish'd sho bite, and den I might git finned takin' him off."

An hour passed. Restful, peaceful quiet. No work; no worry. And no ugly-faced wife to look at. Not a thought in his mind; not a worry on his soul. Just fishing with an unbaited hook.

When he went home he explained briefly to Selma that the fish had not been biting.

"Dat's awright, hon," she said. "I got a good supper for you."

Albert ate passively. After supper, they sat on the porch in the dark, and

The Gree Gree Girl

Continued from page 11

talked. Albert was satisfied; not enthusiastically happy nor depressingly sad. Everything was satisfactory, and there was nothing to worry about. Fishing all day would keep him out of sight of Selma, and there was no work to fishing—if one didn't use bait. He even put the good-looking Lillian out of his mind.

"Yes, suh," Selma said, as though she were resuming a conversation. "I always said when I married up to a man, I'm gonter stay married to him." Then after a brief pause: "Maybe ef'n you had used red worms instead er grubbin' worms, maybe de fish would-a bit."

"Who tole you I use grubbin' worms?" Albert demanded. It began to look as though Selma was cross-examining him, and he resented it.

"Nobody tole me," Selma explained. "But I knowed you didn't dig no red worms, so I say, 'I bet dat big stout man er mine is out yonder in de woods, turnin' over dem heavy logs and ketchin' grubbin' worms.' And I knowed de grubbin' worms wasn't lucky, so I up and buyed de shawt ribs—"

Albert was indignant. "You let me lift dem heavy logs and things to git grubbin' worms!" he exploded. "And you knowed all de time de fish wouldn't bite 'em." Of course he had not lifted any heavy logs, but the very idea that Selma might have allowed him to, uselessly, aroused him.

"I ain't de kind er wife which argies and fusses wit' my husband," she said, seriously. "I jest let you go fishin' yo' own way. But whilst you was out fishin' I went to de gyarden and dug up some red worms so you kin go fishin' again tomorrow and ketch some fish."

Albert knew of nothing more to say, so he said nothing.

The next morning he took the can which Selma had filled with loose earth and red worms, and went back to the river. It was easier to take along the worms than it was to argue.

He climbed up to his favorite roost, baited his hook and dropped it into the water. Presently the cork bobbed nervously and then sank. Albert yanked viciously and up came a two-pound catfish.

He took the fish from the hook, ran a cord through its gill and mouth and lowered it into the water. Then he rebaited his hook. "I got you," he declared, "and now I'm gonter git yo' brother, too!"

In a very few minutes he pulled out another one. Then he did get interested.

"Dog gone my skin!" he exclaimed, "I bet I'm gonter ketch e'vy fish in dis river!" And for half an hour it looked as though he was. He had struck a school and seven large, yellow-bellied catfish were pulled out in fairly rapid succession.

AFTER a while the novelty wore off, although he did not realize it. "I spect I better quit now," he told himself, "befo' I wears out all my lucky worms. Ain't no use in a man wearin' out all his worms."

On the way home, he passed Lillian, who was leaning on her own picket fence, waiting for a word with him.

"Been fishin' again, Big'n?" she asked. Albert held up his string proudly. "Kind er looks like, don't hit?"

Lillian giggled. "Um-mmmph!" she said. "What kind er bait you use?"

"Red worms," replied Albert. "I always uses red worms. Dey's mo' lucky."

"You didn't had no luck yistiddy," Lillian recalled. "I seed you draggin' back a empty pole."

Albert chuckled. "Selma digged me dese worms," he said.

"Dat's how come!" Lillian exclaimed. "I bet dat google-eyed ole gal is got a gree gree!"

Albert laughed out loud. "She didn't done nothin' to de worms but jest dig 'em," he explained.

"You didn't git no fish yistiddy," argued Lillian.

"Naw," admitted Albert, "'cause I fished wid a empty hook." He laughed again, and explained to Lillian what had happened, and she laughed. It was a good joke on old google-eyed Selma, all right!

"Yeah," Albert repeated. "She thinks I picked up logs and stuff yistiddy, to git grubbin' worms." And he walked off chuckling.

When he got to Selma's house, she was beaming with pride at the string of fish.

"Dog gone!" she exclaimed, "yonder come my big ole man wid a big bunch er fish. You say yo' name is Albert, but I bet you been foolin' me. I bet yo' name is pore Ole Jonah! Now jest wait to I gits de wire pinchers and de butcher knife, and we'll skin' dem scound'els and have 'em for dinner." She procured the implements named and went to work. "I knowed dem ole red worms was lucky," she went on. "Fo'ks used to tell me hit was onlucky to be cross-eyed, and I used to believe 'em. But hit seems like hit's gittin' lucky, now."

"Um-humm," said Albert. Some way or other the idea of cross eyes and luck clung to his mind after what Lillian had said about that gree gree. It worried him some.

After dinner he adjourned to the porch for a brief private session with his feathers. The feathers, very patently, weren't as strong as crossed eyes, but, still, feathers were feathers and they might help him out some way.

BY THE time Selma had finished clearing the dishes Albert's feathers had functioned. They had helped him come to the conclusion that since he was gree-greed, the best thing he could do was accept the gree gree as final. He could continue fishing during the daylight, and by doing that he wouldn't have to look at his ugly little wife.

"I'm goin' fishin' again," he announced when Selma came to the porch. He looked at her crossed eyes and the silly grin on her lips. "And I'm gonter stay fishin' to dark, too," he added.

The river yielded two more cats and a grinnel that afternoon, and he brought them home. More fish for supper. And after he had eaten so much for dinner, a few hours before.

"And hit'll be some for breakfus, too," Selma declared. "And den for dinner, onless maybe you ketches some fresh ones, tomorrow."

The idea staggered Albert. He hadn't been so keen about fish in the first place, but he had eaten a plenty. At supper it was by the greatest effort that he managed to choke down enough so as not to arouse his gree-greeing wife.

At breakfast nothing short of pure determination enabled him to eat a passably good portion of fish. And he started wearily toward the river with nothing but a dull, sad, fish-eating eternity before him.

But he never got to the river. Big Lillian, seated on her porch busily coiling her hair, hailed him.

"Yeah, yonder, Big'n," she called. "You sho' must like fish."

Albert dragged over to the fence and

(Continued on page 40)

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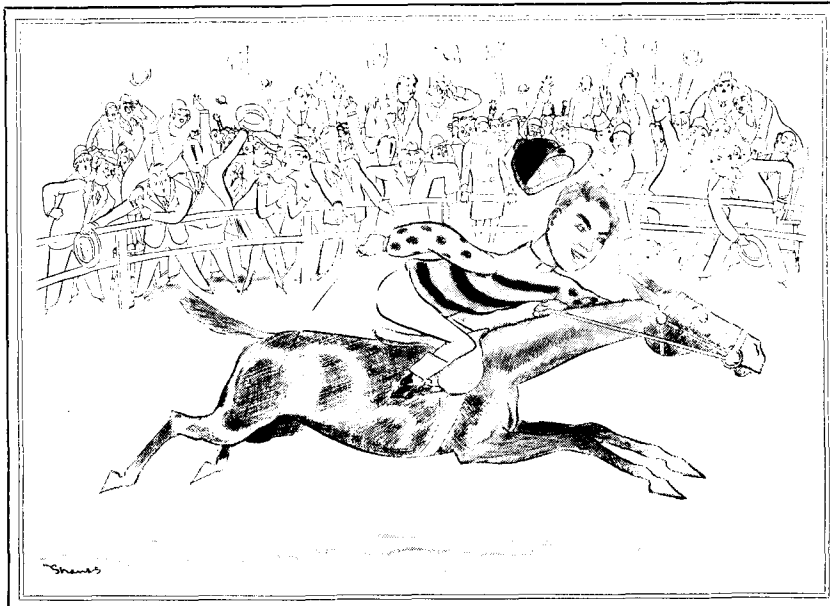
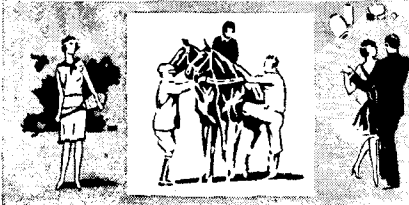
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Backed to the Limit

By **THE GENTLEMAN
AT THE KEYHOLE**

IT HAS always seemed to me that Senator Shipstead lacked just one element that is necessary to make him a real figure in the Senate, and that is a judicious admixture of egotism. He is too modest and his modesty leads him to excessive caution.

Perhaps his reelection to the Senate from Minnesota last November by the astonishing majority of about 320,000 will set him up, give him confidence, so that he will burgeon forth in his next six years in Washington, so that he will be one of the near-great men of the Capitol. It ought to. He is one of the great in one respect at least. He has his state behind him as no one else in the Senate has. He has done what no one else has ever done, got himself reelected running independently and by a bigger majority in proportion to population than anyone else in the Senate has ever received even though aided by the machinery of a party.

He is a coming man. All he has to do is come. And that depends on himself.

It is a tremendous thing to have a state behind one as Mr. Shipstead has his state behind him. It sets a senator free. Nine tenths of the timidity of Washington is the fear of some picayune minority which may endanger reelection. Senators shrink from doing this or saying that from fear of losing a few hundred votes.

Well, Mr. Shipstead ought never be vote-shy again. The bolder and more striking his career in Washington, provided it is always dominated by the good sense he has invariably shown, the greater will be the pride the Scandinavians in Minnesota will take in his career and the larger his majorities will be.

He Has the Looks

There is not a senator in Washington who would not give all he had to stand in Mr. Shipstead's shoes, to have it proved to him that on his own record and personality he could carry his state by a majority equivalent to more than one million in any one of the big states.

Mr. Shipstead has something to start out with. In the first place he has looks. He is a big handsome man on whom greatness would sit lightly. And that is half the battle. He is not the kind of man who is passed unnoticed. Then, too, in spite of his modesty and caution, he is at ease in the world. He is not awkward and self-conscious. His personality is pleasing. He has had a remarkable social success in Wash-

ington, for a senator who is not taken up as a Republican or as a Democrat, and especially for one of foreign origin.

He has a charming wife who is popular in the Capitol. He speaks, it is true, with a slight foreign accent, but his voice is pleasant, with some of the quality and tone of the voices of that race of orators, the Irish. An orator might be made of that presence and voice.

Why the Complex?

What is it then that accounts for his being among that large group of senators who suffer, in their public capacity, from an inferiority complex? First, perhaps, during the years that he has been in Washington, there has been a feeling that he was more or less of a political accident. He was elected in one of those Western revolts against the Republican party as a Farmer-Laborite. There was nothing assured about his political status. Well, the last election has proved that he stood on more solid ground than any party could have given him.

Second, perhaps, the fact that he is of foreign origin. No member of the more recent races in this country ever quite gets over the feeling that he is not wholly accepted on the same footing as descendants of the older American stock. Senator Knute Nelson, a distinguished predecessor of Mr. Shipstead and a power in his day, once when he was having difficulties with President Roosevelt remarked bitterly, "He thinks I'm nothing but a damned Swede."

Well, Mr. Shipstead's origin is of great advantage to him. Part of his hold on his state is due to the fact that he is of the same race as the most numerous element in Minnesota's population. And those fellow Scandinavians of his out in the Northwest are just hungry to see him have a distinguished career.

Then, too, there is the lack of legal training. Senator Shipstead was a dentist. No one takes his place in Congress with quite the sureness that a lawyer does. The attorney has had practice in courtrooms. His wits are trained for the rough and tumble of debate. He has quickness and agility. He has learned to play a more or less public part. But that, after all, is not much more than confidence born of experience. And against all this the Minnesota senator has that 320,000 majority.

9 to 1

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