

man whose husband was "just too tired to slick up and come now that he was working over-time in the ship-yards" took notes laboriously so she could be the teacher at home. A fat convivial reporter, criticized for grammatical errors, wished to "learn the whole thing from the ground up; verbs, nouns, pronouns, and pro-verbs, and to get it quick." Several young couples, healthy and prosperous, came for—well, for the fun and the walk together. Four bank clerks, seeking promotion, were not sure their letters were o. k. and knew their spelling was n. g. A movie producer, the owner of three high-powered cars, wanted some names and pointers on "classy classic" novels.

So night after night the little drama unfolded, and the problem of satisfying the various longings and the vague unrests presented itself poignantly. At first the disparity in age and environment seemed to make my task hopeless, but I felt no one could help making some acceptable offering in the face of such opportunity. No man or woman who had labored long and hard during the day makes the added effort to attend night school without wanting something with a serious purpose. Yet even the most expert teacher can not make a recitation wholly an entertainment, for the student must make some exertion; that exertion on the part of an adult, weary in body and frequently unaccustomed to mental effort, is nothing less than splendidly heroic. Only a slacker of a teacher could be found wanting. Evening after evening strains of strange blood fought for expression; dwarfed imaginations flickered with light; dumb longings and early ambitions, dulled by time and repression, sought realization. Many found increased self-respect and pleasure in their work; some were appalled before creative effort; some were impatient that they could not acquire skill and power without practice. Each evening my admiration for my pupils grew. Their sincerity and kindness made my share in the task light. Never have I met men whose creed was more honest or whose courage was finer than that of some of my students. I am proud that some became my friends, and I shall always regard with affection some of the older women who attacked their lessons so valiantly. Our meetings became social and informal discussions until there was no relation to the old time school recitation. In no other country could such a democratic and conglomerate assembly be possible. No instructor with any red blood could watch the struggle of youth and adult for every opportunity for advancement without thrilling with renewed confidence in human nature and in the future of our great American republic.

A TEACHER.

"Of Making Many Books—"

IT was a rainy afternoon with a rising temperature. At five o'clock the pile of letters still on my desk became insupportable. I looked at them as the schoolboy on a day of spring may look at the school house a block away. And like the boy I fled.

But the manner of my flight and my destination betrayed my middle-aged decadence. Unobtrusively, with the dignified deliberation of conscious guilt, I departed from the administration building and sought the library. I marched brazenly past the loan desk into the stacks. Any one who saw me would construe my errand as scholarly—whereas my purpose was merely to pick out a certain tale by R. L. S. and lose myself for half an hour in the pages I knew by heart. Then I could go home to dinner—and omit the mention of this trifling excursion to my wife.

But the volume was missing from its place, and I straightened up balked, feeling as the truant schoolboy might if, having incurred the penalty of "absent," he should be unable to lay his hand on his fishing rod. Without the mental energy to make another selection, even from the enchanting array of R. L. S., I stared down the narrow glass-floored aisle between the stacks, hideously illuminated by unshaded hanging incandescents.

So many books! Shelves and shelves, stack upon stack. Half a million volumes, according to the university catalogue, in these narrow rooms—narrow as coffins. Fiction, history, philosophy, science, bound volumes of magazines, and "reports"—"reports" without number. And the labor in each one. The months, years, decades of human life. What insanity for creatures with a healthy biological origin thus to entomb their few bright days upon earth.

My feet, without receiving any orders from headquarters, had presumed to carry me into an adjoining aisle—History,—and my eyes rested on a set of three antique volumes handsomely bound in full calf. Their tops were black with undisturbed dust. Surely the animal that furnished that now priceless binding died in vain, and the linen rags consumed to make its pages had better been given to the poor for coverings.

With the bookworm's automatism I reached for the first volume, though I felt no slightest interest. I blew the dust from the top—that horrible habit of the haunter of stacks—and opened to the yellow title-page.

A History of the Roman Republic. I will not give the author's name. His memory is at peace—let me not disturb it; "curst be he that moves

my bones." Printed in Dublin, in the year MDCCLXXXIII—whatever that is—I had not the curiosity to translate. Dedication: *To the King*. Which king? Not having figured out the date, I could not determine. But the author was a chap of some pretensions, evidently, in his day! "Advertisement": "*The reader will be pleased to observe,*" etc. Analytical table of contents in fine old italics—long s's and the c's joined to following t's. At the bottom of each page the first word of the page to come—canny ancient device to lure the flagging reader on; it ought to be revived by the fiction magazines and modern novelists. But how yellow the pages!

How long did it take the man to compose those three thick volumes? Six years or ten—of sunny mornings, long afternoons, pale midnight hours—when he might have been seeing friends, tramping, riding, eating and drinking, making love—to some charming dame or demoiselle in a velvet robe, with plumed hat and painted fan or tall stick adorned with ribbons. I mourned the neglected lady's ennui.

My finger, busy like my feet without instructions, turned the pages, and I glanced at a paragraph. Not a lively style. Pompous, turgid, consciously ornate, lifeless—a powdered wig style—all the

faults of Gibbon without his power. No doubt the lady, quite rightly, refused to look at him—hence these tomes!

And then, suddenly, I perceived that that style expressed a man—a real man, very much alive in his way—and enjoying himself! Undoubtedly enjoying himself! The pride of knowledge, the pride of style (which had betrayed him), the supreme zest of self-expression. How better could he have spent the sunniest morning? The bluest skies, the merriest friends, the most complaisant, fairest fair one had less delight to offer than the labor of this futile composition! After all, as a hedonist no less than as a moralist, the man had chosen well.

I looked again down the strait, glass-floored aisles. Surely of all those volumes few were more tedious, more moribund from birth, than this one. And each had meant the burning of this fire, so warming, cheering, satisfying to the author if never to a mortal soul besides. Even the "reports." How many reports have I not written—not without glow.

"Of making books there is no end, and much study—"

But think of the satisfaction the preacher must have had in "making" that exquisite epigram of learned cynicism!

MAX MCCONN.

Paul Bunyon

THE lumber industry in the United States has produced something more than that ferment of discontent known as the I. W. W. Coming out of the same harsh conditions, rising from the same soil of isolation, there has developed a cycle of stories which may be as near as we shall come to a native American folk-lore, centering about a huge, preternaturally clever lumberjack called Paul Bunyon, for whom there is no known original or prototype. Characteristically they have remained somewhat aloof, known in part in the towns which have sprung up in the lumber regions, occasionally used in diminished form for local color in lumber novels, but on the whole escaping general recognition, particularly the recognition of print, and now fast dying out.

A nomadic class of workers created and inflated them and passed them on from group to group and from generation to generation. Beginning in the forests of New England in the fifties the lumberjacks followed the lead of timber, down into Pennsylvania, along the northern belt which stretched across Michigan, and on into the Canadian Northwest. They were homeless, they lived for the most

part without families, struck some nearby town at the end of the season for a bust, sometimes floated back into the cities and were amalgamated into the life there, but in large numbers kept to the lumber industry, a scattering, restless class, originally American and of the pioneer type, gradually including French Kanucks and Scandinavians, and finally giving way to the flood of Southern European labor which poured into the country in the years before the war, which came with its own interests and seems unlikely to carry on the traditions of the older type.

Professor P. S. Lovejoy of the Department of Forestry in the University of Michigan has an inexhaustible fund of the Paul Bunyon stories, collected in a large experience with lumberjacks and in the lumber industry. He knows not only the tales but the life out of which they grew, has heard them at their best, which appears to have been in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century when there were camps on every river in the lumber regions of the lake states. He has caught their vernacular, and has collected their scattered and sometimes debased remnants in remote and unex-