

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

The Beast in a New Form

SIR: Your readers may care to know that after the hardest battle I have ever had, even in the days of the Beast and the jungle, when both political machines were against me because of the part I took in the exposure of the crimes of privilege, I have won out for the tenth time in twenty-five years. The particularly bitter character of the contest I have just passed through was due in large measure to the fact that I chose openly and actively to oppose the Ku Klux Klan, which became an active political factor in this state during the present year.

The Klan celebrated its first victory in August, with the election of a Klan mayor, whose recall had been attempted. I took part in that fight because I felt it was the beginning of Klan domination in this city and state. My further reason for taking an active part in it was what many of us considered a base betrayal of the city by the mayor's city attorney, who refused to except to a valuation of \$20,000,000 placed on the city's railroad property when the city's representative, Mr. Delos F. Wilcox, had shown that it was not worth over \$10,000,000. The failure of the mayor's city attorney to except to the valuation bound the city to it. It probably means an increase in fares in order to pay the dividend on excessive valuation made up largely of water. Thus, at the outset, I antagonized a powerful city hall machine and the most active of all of our utility corporations in local politics. . . .

The Ku Klux Klan has swept Denver like a prairie fire. It is said that this is the way of the Klan when it is first introduced into some localities and we certainly got our fill of it. It was like the stampede of the herd in full tilt and it seemed almost as useless to try to stem its mad head-on rush. There was no rhyme or reason in it. I was the only candidate for any office who bucked this rush by appearing at anti-Klan meetings. At some of these meetings the lights were put out or there were noisy demonstrations, cat calls, hisses, boisterous and idiotic laughter and every form of insult that could be devised to interfere with the right of free speech. The conduct of the women at one or two of these meetings cannot be likened to anything but that of women before the Tribunal at the French Revolution, demanding the blood of their victims.

In the twenty-five years I have been on the bench, I have had the honor, with the help of our people, to write and place on the statute books some fifty-two items of law for the protection of women and children. Among these laws is that changing the domicile and jurisdiction of non-support and desertion cases to the residence of the wife and child instead of that of the husband and father, the mothers' compensation law under which I have managed to keep some 5,000 children in their own homes, and the maternity law that has already saved hundreds of unborn children from the abortionists, and the mothers from these butchers. All of this service for women hadn't the slightest effect in stemming the fury of Klan women who appeared at some of these meetings.

I recall one woman who was screaming in my face and thus addressing me, "You cur, you dirty cur, you dirty cur!" I encountered this woman outside of a hall and I said, "Madam, why do you call me a dirty cur?" having in mind all that I had done and helped to do for women. She screamed in my face, "You are not one hundred percent American, you are not one hundred percent American, you are against the Klan." It was utterly useless to reason with such people. They had simply gone stark mad over the Klan. They had paid \$10 a head to hate somebody and they were getting their money's worth. Although I am a Methodist and a 32d degree Mason, I was accused of being a Jesuit and in league with Rome to overthrow the republic all because I would not keep silent about the Klan. . . . In no campaign have I ever seen such stark madness, such bitterness, such hatred. It was mostly working people to whose interest I have devoted so much of my life and whose children have profited most by our legislation, who became the victims and dupes of the Klan.

Of course they did not know what they were doing. They are the ready victims of that inferiority complex which gives them the feeling of exaltation with its accompanying delusions of grandeur when they read the Klan literature and are called "men of the most sublime lineage the world has ever seen,"—the only Simon pure one hundred percent Americans. They went into the Klan by the thousands and furnished the strength that enabled

the charlatans to capitalize their ignorance into money and political offices. They were able to capture the Republican name and organization at the primaries with a few exceptions.

Running on the Democratic ticket, I was compelled to buck the Coolidge landslide, which overwhelmed us with 125,000 majority, the City Hall machine, the utility corporations, the Ku Klux Klan with its 40,000 voters in this city, all sworn to their own ticket and the poison-squad of evil-minded women . . . as well as the accumulation of enemies of twenty-five years and two newspapers hammering me, morning and evening—the News and Times. We feel it is a great victory, and, having received a clear majority, it is a clean cut victory over the Klan whose monstrous un-Americanism I have no apology for opposing in the past, as I always will in the future.

BEN B. LINDSEY.

Denver, Col.

A Spelling List for Letter Writers

SIR: This curriculum-making business appears to be still in its infancy and liable to the mistakes of infancy.

A list of words used in letter-writing ought to face first of all the question whether you care for the words used by most people or for the words that a man who uses them uses oftenest. For instance, personal letters normally include frequent mention of the health of family and friends, sometimes even of others; therefore I should assume that the majority of letter-writers will in the course of their lives have to write "pneumonia," but few except doctors and nurses will have to write it often. On the other hand, most people can write letters all their lives and never have to write "jail"; but if the word does get into a man's letter-writing it is likely to get in over and over. So far as I know, the compilers of lists have never discussed the question which of these types of frequency should be given greater weight, but have plumped for the word that came the greatest number of times in a collection of letters without inquiring whether it was grouped in a few people's letters or not.

Not that I care much. To train a child to spell all the words that he is likely to need would take more time than anybody today would think of giving to the subject. If it were done, as soon as the child was out of school somebody would introduce new words like "chauffeur," "antenna," "hooch," which he would need to be able to spell without having been taught them. What the school can do is to give him the habit of noticing the spelling when he reads a word, and writing it as he saw it; and the extant lists are probably good enough for this.

STEVEN T. BYINGTON.

Ballard Vale, Mass.

Canadian Railways

SIR: Mr. Keenleyside, in your November 19 issue, observes that the Canadian National Railways, while showing a profit over operating cost, are not yet earning more than half their fixed charges of approximately \$64,000,000, "due entirely to the mismanagement and extravagance of private ownership."

This mismanagement and extravagance has not burdened the roads with fixed charges in excess of 4 percent on an investment, by Mr. Keenleyside's statement, of \$1,620,000. (Presumably all these charges were incurred by the Grand Trunk & Canadian Northern systems, but these comprise 5-6 of the entire mileage.)

In a comparison with private ownership it should be borne in mind that capital could not be secured for this investment without a return of \$80,000,000 to \$96,000,000. Until the Canadian National Railways returns that sum in profits, in rate reductions, or in some other forms, they cannot be called successful by the standards of private operation.

It is probable that under Sir Henry Thornton's management they will reach this point as soon as the country has caught up with the speculative enterprise of the builders. But management by an able and experienced railroad man "guaranteed a free hand" is not what is usually meant by or expected of government ownership.

WILLARD HELBURN.

Salem, Mass.

Rebels

The Boy in the Bush, by D. H. Lawrence and M. L. Skinner. New York: Thomas Seltzer. \$2.50.

Humpty Dumpty, by Ben Hecht. New York: Boni and Liveright. \$2.00.

MR. LAWRENCE has grafted the familiar story which he has made his own on to stronger stock in the Australia of the eighties. It may be surmised that his collaborator has supplied the intimate knowledge of social conditions in the colony half a century after its settlement, the extraordinary confusion of a population sprung from the mixed blood of soldiers, laborers, adventurers, convicts, and natives. And let it be said at once that as a story of colonial life *The Boy in the Bush* ranks high. Among Australian novels, so far as I know, only *The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney*, by Henry Handel Richardson, approaches it; and as a study of pioneer life it is to be compared with Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*, for South Africa, with W. H. Hudson's *Far Away and Long Ago*, for the Argentine, with Miss Cather's *My Antonia* for our Middle West, and the work of Frank and Kathleen Norris for California. Undoubtedly Australia colored by Mr. Lawrence provides a more impressive physical background than any of these, with its desert, its bush, its wide flung farms, its ugly little cities set in the sand, burned by tropic heat and sluiced by tropic rain; and a more amazing social setting, the old vessels of society broken into shards and painfully stuck together again with a grim English determination to ignore the visible cracks. In this primitive world, women count for less, according to Mr. Lawrence's reckoning, than in an older civilization. The fundamental economic and social importance of the woman pioneer can be taken for granted, and though he finds a Monica Ellis, and, in his last chapter, almost by accident, a Hilda Blessington to match Ursula Brangwen, he is able to concentrate attention on his hero. Jack Grant is Paul Morel of *Sons and Lovers*, and Will Brangwen of *The Rainbow*, seasoned by Australian life into the indomitable Nietzschean male, ready to crash through the walls of a jerry-built society to get what he wants, as his stallion breaks his stable to seek his mare. All Jack's adventures, his breaking of horses, his fighting with kangaroos and with men, his wandering and toil, his slaying and his solitary flight in the waterless desert, his mastery of the world by gold—all lead to this. But the adventure is grandiose. Jack looms large as the giants of his forebear's killing, in the vast landscape which he needs, in which the rest of the human race with their fears and scruples and repressions are but pigmies.

If Mr. Lawrence's typical hero is the result of his own major frustration, in Jack Grant he has achieved a major compensation. And his triumph is presented with his old eloquence, won back after much feeble and slovenly writing. Jack's religion is taught him by the old patriarch of his tribe. "Trust yourself, Jack Grant. *Earn a good opinion of yourself*, and never mind other folks. You've only got to live once. You know when your spirit glows—trust that. That's *you!* That's the Spirit of God in you . . . God is y'rself. Or put it the other way if you like: y'rself is God." And Jack worships his Jehovah in the spirit of the patriarchs.

A little world of my own, in the North-West. And my children growing up like a new race on the face

of the earth, with a new creed of courage and sensual pride, and the black wonder of the halls of death ahead, and the call to be lords of death, on earth. With my Lord, as dark as death and splendid with lustrous doom, a sort of spontaneous royalty, for the God of my little world. The spontaneous royalty of the dark Overlord, giving me earth-royalty, like Abraham or Saul, that can't be quenched and that moves on to perfection in death. One's last and perfect lordliness in the halls of death, when slaves have sunk as carrion, and only the serene in pride are left to judge the unborn.

A little world of my own! As if I could make it with the people that are on earth to-day! No, no, I can do nothing but stand alone. And then, when I die, I shall not drop like carrion on the earth's earth. I shall be a lord of death, and sway the destinies of the life to come.

In *Humpty Dumpty* also the hero is already somewhat familiar to us. Kent Savaron is Erik Dorn grown older, his brightness faded, the gay cynicism with which he was wont to survey the human scene turned to bitter hate and his defiance ending in despair and defeat. Instead of the broad new land of Australia for a background, he has a society already formed and fixed, the Chicago of to-day; and this peopled world is too mighty for him. The Winkelbergs in Mr. Hecht's novel are like the Ellises and Georges of Mr. Lawrence's, except that in their grim persistence they triumph. Kent Savaron as he emerges upon his narrower stage is like Jack Grant, but his sensual ~~power~~ contributes not to his victory but to his betrayal. To Mr. Hecht, as to Mr. Lawrence, women are the object and the symbol of victory. In the primitive world of Australia, Stella Winkelberg would have been the slave of her lord, but with pressure of a compact society and a family behind her she slowly masters Savaron. He loses his assertion, doubts himself, wavers, retreats, falls. His personality crumbles into fragments.

God, how sad he was! He was too deep for himself. There were too many masks, too many closets. He could only stumble around, diverting himself with new attitudes. He was like a room full of strangers continually borrowing his voice and his phrases and dressing themselves up in his soul. That was his biography—a procession of mountebanks. Creatures who made love, who wept with remorse, who went whoring after women, who stood laughing bitterly at the night. Idiots scampering across the stage of his brain, demanding his applause. Demanding he admire them all—as if he were someone else—an audience in the dark. One who looked on. It was this one who was talking now. But how could he know. Could he even trust the despair in his heart now? Perhaps he was still on the stage, gesturing poignantly behind the footlights for the audience in the dark. Still asking applause. Or was this he who laughed, the real one? What a muddle!

Mr. Hecht's world is dark compared to Mr. Lawrence's, without a gleam of beauty or light. His drama is merely domestic friction—the grinding of Savaron's personality in the family mill of the Winkelbergs. His characters are phases of his hatred of the sordid and filthy parasites who crawl upon the dunghheap—a hatred of which the hero is an expression more sustained and more concentrated. Kent Savaron stands out with a certain dignity in his refusal to