

The Wits' Weekly

Conducted by EDWARD DAVISON

Competition No. 40. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the coolest Song for a Very Hot Day. (Entries should reach *The Saturday Review* office, 25 West 45th Street, New York, not later than the morning of August 27.)

Competition No. 41. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the best sonnet called "The End of the World." (Entries should reach *The Saturday Review* office not later than the morning of September 10.)

Attention is called to the rules printed below.

THE THIRTY-EIGHTH COMPETITION

The prize of fifteen dollars offered for the best Behaviorist's Lullaby for a Little Child has been awarded to Alice M. Dowd of Hudson, N. Y.

THE PRIZEWINNING LULLABY

Oh hush thee, my baby; thy reflexes rest,
There's naught to disturb thee while lulled at my breast.
Oh hush thee, my dear. There's no reason to cry,
At least I discover no wrong stimuli.
The shadows of night all thy senses should love;
But stimuli only will make thee behave.
Oh, we were not wide awake when we were small!
But heredity's naught and environment's all.
To be vocal is thought, and thy lung power is strong,
So thy genius hereafter should blossom in song.
Thy senses are perfect. Thou needest no sense.
Thy muscles and glands are thy means of defense.
With reflexes certain, reflection is nil,
And thy future is easy as sliding down hill.
For all that thou needest to do is react,
Without feeling or fancy, just fed upon fact.
The co-ordination of senses and glands
Will bring the behavior that none understands.
And all through thy life-time how blest thou shalt be!
No purpose nor motive shall light upon thee.
Then hush thee, my darling; thy father and I
Will bring thee, to-morrow, correct stimuli.
So rest thee, my dear one, all through the dark night.
Thy senses and reflexes guide thee aright.

ALICE M. DOWD.

David Heathstone is undoubtedly right in his conviction that a genuine behaviorist would never sing a lullaby, although there is no specific "thou shalt not" in Dr. Watson's latest book. But I set the competition in something of the same conjectural spirit that led Sir Thomas Browne to wonder what song the sirens sang. If a behaviorist were to sing a lullaby (which God forbid) what would it be like? The question was answered with nearly a hundred crib-side songs and one or two cradle-songs by competitors to whom the word behaviorist obviously meant nothing.

There was a very large number of amusing entries ranging from the jargonese verses of Helen Faith Keane and Helen A. Monsell to Alice M. Dowd's simpler winning lullaby. These and the entries by Garland Smith, Stella Fisher Burgess, W. F. Bradbury, M. E. Ballantyne, and David Heathstone were the best. As large a selection as possible is printed below. Anita G. Knight's limerick stanzas to the tune of—

All skeletal muscles relax,
Unverbalized impulses tax
And laryngeal itch
Cuts a groove like a ditch
In conscious absorption of facts,

Ralph B. Yule's humming verses, with their climax,

We're raising you logically. Lord,
what a tussle!

But Mama is right; she can prove it
by Russell,

and the poems by J. A. S. B. and Olga Ownes also deserve honorable mention; the last especially for her lines—

Free of hampering relations,
Guiltless of all love fixations,
Sink to slumber, little son,
May your dreams at least be fun.

BEHAVIORIST LULLABIES FOR A LITTLE CHILD

Oh hush you, my baby, your sire's a professor.
Your unlearned equipment and neural reflexes,
(Now we've got rid of your mother, God bless her!)
May fix my comparative chart of the sexes.

Oh lullaby, rockaby, lullaby, lull . . .

Oh hush you, my infant, your strength was expended

In squirming responses to dog and to pussy.
To Stimulus A, yesterday, you extended
Sweet smiles, but today it brought screaming, you hussy.

Oh lullaby, rockaby, lullaby, lull . . .

Oh cry not, if feathers and fur, or a squirrel,
Are slowly sneaked into your playpen, my treasure;
We must "uncondition" you,—also young Cyril,
Until your emotional lives give us pleasure.

Oh lullaby, rockaby, lullaby, lull . . .

Your mother is kind; her example is gainful,—
Except (I confess) she gets angry, my beauty.
We sincerely regret if you find life is painful;
But Heavens! we must not fall short of our duty.

Oh lullaby, rockaby, lullaby, lull . . .

Your father is mild, and he never will chasten:
(There's not one excuse for whipping and beating).

Such emotional outlets he fears will but hasten
Thyroxin production,—much over-secreting.

Oh lullaby, rockaby, lullaby, lull . . .

Oh hush you, my babe, I've a splendid idea,

For which it's essential that you should be sleeping:

I'll fire off a cannon ball close to your ear,

To see if you'll register laughing or weeping.

Oh lullaby, rockaby, lullaby, lull . . .

M. E. BALLANTYNE.

RULES

Competitors failing to comply with the following rules will be disqualified. Envelopes should be addressed to Edward Davison, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, 25 West 45th Street, New York City. All MSS. must be legible—typewritten if possible—and should bear the name or pseudonym of the author. Competitors may offer more than one entry. MSS. cannot be returned. The Editor's decision is final and *The Saturday Review* reserves the right to print the whole or part of any entry.

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