

The Phoenix Nest

PRELUDE TO A STORM

(Note: this poem was dreamed by the author one night in early June, 1940. It was written down the following morning, and was immediately offered to and rejected by every newspaper in New York City.)

DOWN the long silver scrolls
Of our roads and rivers,
Over all our plains,
Over their shimmering pale-green
pages,
Move the umbrella shadows,
Not of rain—
O not of wildest rain!
Not of such heavenly rage,
These clouds that shivering roll
Their incredible shades.

Down, down, down, through the clear
azure ocean

Drift the white clouds of summer
Touching the earthly shore
And shadows of steeple and flower
Lost in the motion
Of shadow and cloud are the broken
Stems of the sun. . . .

Lovers, awaken! Turn no more
In the bracken, in the fern!
This is no hour for dream—
In the cloudy upper room,
Through every cracking beam,
Through the doomed blue shuddering
floor,
Monstrous thunder-beetles burr!
Wild, O wild and black,
September's hurricanes, and kind
Before that darker wind
Blowing these hither,—

For its breath shall wither
All mortal and temporal bloom—
Stem, leaf and bud and flower,
Tongue, limb and breast and womb—
Each intricate perfect home
Of life will burn, will burn!

This is no hour for dream—
This is dark morning,
O dark—for this is Man
Whose mask adheres so well,
Whose armor as a shell
Fits to the ocean mollusc, so to him;
In his new element
Of ether and of fire,

Wrapped in his brother's pyre
He gives no warning he is Death.—
For so conspires the hiss
Of lightning with his breath.

The tunnelling pygmy race
Is Man, too, underneath
Earth's crumbling carapace—
Was god-like Man, his ardor come to
this

Primeval blind desire
To burrow below the mire,
Frantic as any mole,
Soft, eyeless, bloodied, struggling to
a hole.

Beneath fern roots and bracken
Shall the bright tongues blacken?
Man's flesh be feast
For beetle and for beast?
Even his bone be charred, be lost
To Love, its host?
This is no hour for dream—
They move over hills and waters,
Umbrella shadows of clouds
Whose steel rain slaughters.
Must this be the answer to the proud
Body and all its claims,
To the spirit and its gleam,
To Man's towering desires—
This parachuting flame?
The rocketing fires?
O Lovers, rise! Run with the wind of
Time!

This is no shower of June's electric
rain—

This is the darkening cyclonic hour
That never comes again.

STARR NELSON.

It appears to me that I have had the
privilege here of printing, not only a
very good poem but a remarkable
prophecy. As Mrs. Nelson wrote, when
I asked her permission to use it, "I
suppose you could hardly expect any-
body to take it seriously *then*. That
was way before Pearl Harbor, and
years before rocket bombs were in-
vented. But *now* that dream is a dread
reality for millions of people, and it
will come true right here, too, if we
ever have another war."

Witter Bynner, distinguished Amer-
ican poet now residing in Chapala,
Jalisco, Mexico, and recent translator
of Laotzu in "The Way of Life" (John
Day Co.; \$1) sends me this from the
sunny clime south of the border:

A POLITICAL REFLECTION

The Republicans' master manoeuvre
Was Harding and Coolidge and Hoover
And they never get over its ranklin'
That the Democrats countered with
Franklin.

It seems that Robert Frost had an-
ticipated Arthur Krock with the "for-
mic-McCormick" rhyme. Frederick L.
Gwynn, Lt. (jg) Naval Air Corps,
writes me that "Mr. Frost used to as-
sert that he had written his poem,
'Departmental' on the bureaucratic
nature of ants, just for the triumphal
tag in the couplet:

And the word goes round in formic:
Death's come to Jerry McCormick!"

Also Winfield T. Scott, the poet, of
The Providence Journal, says that Mr.
Frost "ant-icipated" Mr. Krock. I be-
lieve that the poem appears in "A
Further Range."

Also, to settle the matter of the
word "logistics" forever, I thank Ger-
trude W. Page of Alhambra, California,
for the following:

Your apology to Dorothy Thomp-
son in *The Phoenix Nest* for Octo-
ber 14, while "noble in intent," was
somewhat hasty. If you had been
able to consult "the complete Mer-
riam-Webster," 1942, you would
have seen that "logistics" is given
but one definition:

LOGISTICS—*n.* [F. *logistique*, from
logis, quarters, lodging, from *loger*
to lodge or to quarter.] Military.
That branch of the military art
which embraces the details of the
transport, quartering, and supply of
troops in military operations.

The noun *logistic* (without the *s*)
is from an entirely different root,
and means, according to Webster,
symbolic or mathematical logic,
which is not at all what Miss
Thompson had in mind. Further-
more, your correspondent Arthur
Kohlenburg, of the United States
Army, proves himself unreliable. He
also is evidently a hasty person,
who has not paused to discriminate
between *logistic* and *logistics*. The
"example" he "adduces" is "A New
System of Logistics," by Willard
Van Orman Quine," but he did not
take the time to notice that the
correct title is "A System of Logis-
tic," or that Mr. Quine, as well as
other logicians, uses the word *logis-
tic* (but never *logistics*) to refer to
a very special type of logic, and
never synonymously with general
logic.

So hold up your head again, dear
Mr. Benét. You were entirely cor-
rect in your first letter!

Thanks!

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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The Saturday Review

The Crostics Club

SOME of you may have read in the *New York Times* of December 3 a letter from Mabel Durham Locke confirming from personal evidence George S. Kaufman's date in "On Getting Mr. Apley Straight" as 1912 for the birth of the Copley Plaza in Boston. The week before I had had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Locke, who had written me of old memories aroused by mention of actors and plays in our DCs. The wife of the late Robinson Locke, editor of the *Toledo Blade*, son of the noted humorist and editor, Petroleum V. Nasby (David R. Locke), Mrs. Locke had, herself, won her spurs as an actor and has known almost everybody ever before the footlights or engaged in writing. She recalled them vividly and her telling was enhanced by a rich voice and a vibrant personality.

Of many welcome letters received lately one from fourteen-year-old Jack Copland, Los Angeles, was unique. As a recent subscriber to the *SRL*, his love of reading and interest in words has turned him toward the DCs. With the help of family and friends he is making fair progress, but he still has "quite a bit of trouble"; hence his letter for specific helps to tide him over.

On several occasions I have been asked to do books of DCs for young folks. My reaction to such invitations has been that even with a choice of simple quotations it is not always possible to control an equally simple choice of words in more than a few DCs; and, further, that the psychology underlying the working of a DC is too complex for the average youngster.

This inability to control entirely the choice of words when many DCs are involved is my answer to pleas from experienced DCers that I discard certain words and use other types. I deliberately discard whole categories of words, like specific scientific terms and not generally known literary characters, and local geographical names, etc.—because I believe that they do not appeal to the liking of the average DCer or contribute usefully to his or her knowledge.

A greeting I gave you a few years ago from George E. Woodberry's *The North Shore Watch* bears remembrance at this season:

On deepest night arisen, the morning star

Trembles across the wide unquiet sea

And heavenward springs, with influence felt afar,—

The world's new hope he leads, the day to be!

Speed on, glad star, and golden be thy flight

Inviolable, serene, the waters o'er!

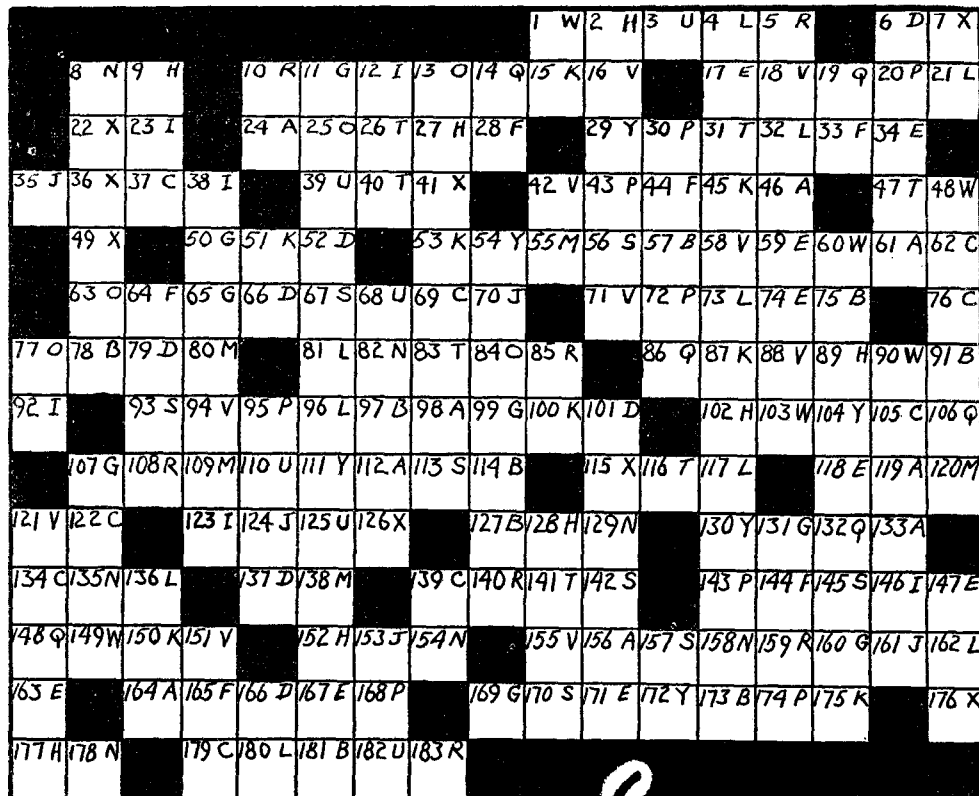
Fear not the eclipsing west, O born to soar,

And dying, die in light.

Bring, bring the morning with her tides of song,

Her floods of amber air, breaking earth's heights along.

E. S. K.



Double-Crostics: No. 561

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1940 edition).

The solution of last week's Double Crostic will be found on page 20 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

- To oppose; resist.
- Members of an Indonesian group of Luzon, P. I.
- Polish pianist and harpsichordist; interpreter of early keyboard music (1877-).
- Scottish friend, steward, and amanuensis of Sir Walter Scott.
- Felt repugnance or aversion to.
- Plying with importunity.
- At once (Colloq.; 2 wds.)
- The embodiment of a form of wisdom (Gnostic theology).
- English founder of *Strand Magazine* (1891), in which "Sherlock Holmes" first appeared.
- Irish poet noted for her beauty and her poem "Psyche" (1805).
- Capital of a western state (U.S.)
- A gem popularly believed to draw out snake's poison (2 wds.)
- A cereal fungous disease or a valuable drug from its dark bodies.
- A snob; a toady (Anglo-Irish).
- Second son of Aaron (Bib.)
- A memento.
- Inactive; dead (2 wds.)
- American sociologist (1883-; "Education in Soviet Russia," "War," etc.)
- Moving aimlessly along the line of least resistance.
- National god of the Moabites.
- American industrialist and political leader, active in Cooper Union (1822-1903).
- To go back to an earlier state.
- Truly; indeed.
- Slaughter of animals for food, acc. to rabbinic law (Jewish Relig.)
- To run counter to.

WORDS

119	112	46	24	184	156	98	61	138
78	114	181	75	97	173	127	91	57
139	134	69	122	105	76	62	179	87
79	137	6	101	66	166	52		
34	59	118	163	147	171	167	74	17
64	83	44	144	28	165			
11	65	160	169	99	131	50	107	
177	102	128	27	89	9	152	2	
23	146	123	38	12	92			
35	124	70	163	161				
53	45	100	175	15	150	87	51	
21	73	136	117	4	162	81	32	180 96
80	55	109	120	138				
178	82	158	135	154	129	8		
13	63	84	77	25				
174	168	20	43	95	143	30	72	
19	148	132	86	106	14			
183	5	140	85	108	159	10		
67	157	170	145	142	56	113	93	
31	40	83	26	47	141	118		
110	3	182	68	39	125			
18	88	58	16	71	151	121	94	157
90	48	60	149	1	103			
7	36	41	126	22	115	49	176	
172	54	130	104	29	111			