

TURN HERE FOR NOSTALGIA...

IN "MRS. CANDY and Saturday Night," Bob Tallant recalls a delectable concoction that was available to school kids at a penny a throw when I was a student at P.S. 10. The vendor would slap a scoopful of shaved ice on a piece of tissue paper and then, in the manner of a barber applying hair tonic, color the ice with a wonderful variety of questionable liquids. Our mothers were convinced that the bright colors were obtained by the generous use of poison, and forbade us to indulge. This edict, of course, made the rainbow ice infinitely more attractive, and raised sales to such a point that our salesman went high-hat and bought a hot-dog stand.

There were lots of other treats you could get for a penny or two when I was a boy that do not seem to be around today. Licorice shoestrings, three for a cent. Jaw-breakers, four for a cent. Chocolate babies (they tasted like Tootsie Rolls), ten for a cent. One year we all were buying vari-colored shoe laces to braid into watch fobs. Another year, we swapped college pictures from Murads, and ball players from Sweet Caps. Then somebody discovered approval sheets from the Scott Stamp & Coin Company. Books? We read "The Rover Boys," "The Motor Boys," and Ralph Henry Barbour, and haunted the newsstands waiting for new issues of *Popular* and *Top Notch* magazines. Today, kids are so enthralled by comics, television, and radio soap operas they don't have time for these things. . . .

WHEN SUMMER VACATION time approached, our mothers industriously set about making our houses as uncomfortable as possible. Lloyd Morris describes the procedure perfectly in "Postscript to Yesterday":

The furniture lost its identity under drab gray covers as shapeless as a nun's habit. Intricately scrolled chandeliers were sheathed in tin-foil. Every picture, sculpture, and clock was shrouded in varnished mosquito netting. Awnings were lowered and shutters were drawn against the sun. Carpets were removed, beaten, rolled, wrapped. Familiar objects disappeared and comfortable rooms were suddenly bleak and beggared.

Men folk had to endure this outrageous disruption of their habitual routine, this profanation of the castle they called home, until Labor Day. Then mother relented, and it was pos-

sible once more to read the paper in comfort in your own living room. . . .

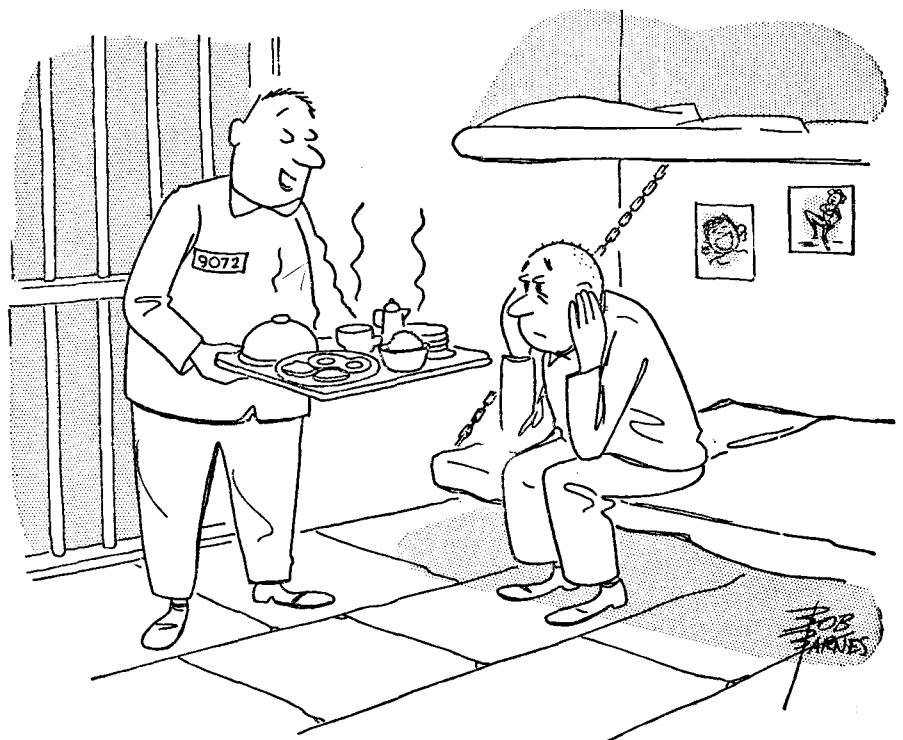
IN HIS FOREWORD for a handsome, new two-volume edition of Rudyard Kipling's immortal "Jungle Books," Nelson Doubleday recalls his boyhood days, and gives an interesting backstage glimpse of an unusual publisher-author relationship:

About my earliest recollection is my avid interest in any story written by Rudyard Kipling. My father had many friends in the magazine business and he frequently brought home advance copies. In one of these magazines, *St. Nicholas*, I read Kipling's story about "how the whale got his tiny throat," which impressed me enormously. I went to my father—who was just starting his own book publishing business—and asked, "If I write to Mr. Kipling and get him to do some more stories like this, will you publish them in a book?" My father replied that he would be glad to consider such a project, but that I would have to be careful about my letter. I sat down at my desk and in my best schoolboy language composed a letter suggesting that Mr. Kipling write other stories like this about animals, such as how the leopard got his spots, how the elephant got his trunk, about the crocodile, and so on. I showed the letter to my father and mother and they both thought it was fine. Then I

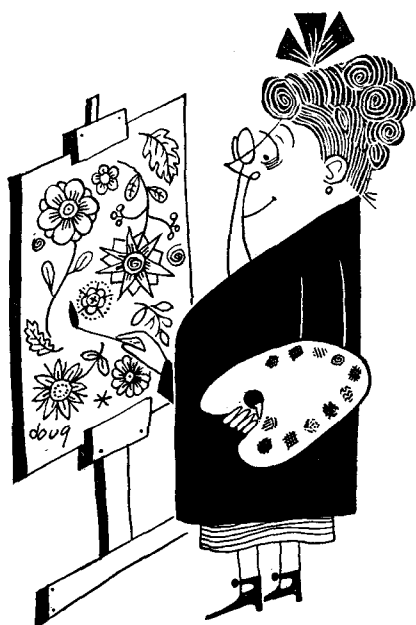
said, "Dad, if you publish this book, shouldn't I get a share in the royalties for suggesting the idea?" In a burst of generosity my father said that if the book were written and published, he'd give me a penny for every copy sold. My final request was for an "advance" on my royalties of a five-cent stamp with which to post the letter to England. My father again agreed, but stipulated that the first five cents earned would have to go to repay the postage—and when the "Just-So Stories" came out in book form, it did. . . .

It was my privilege to know "R.K." very well not long after he wrote "The Jungle Book" stories while living in Vermont. When he was ill at the Hotel Grenoble in New York City in 1899, I used to carry homemade soup from our house at East Sixteenth Street to Mr. Kipling at the now-vanished hotel. When he recovered, he came to our house for dinner, along with Mark Twain and Andrew Carnegie, for a memorable evening. Later, when I was twelve or fourteen, my mother and father took me and my brother and sister to visit the Kipling home, Bateman's, at Burwash, Surrey. I remember how the impish "R.K." used to encourage me to escape from the schoolroom in the house, by a ladder which the gardener conveniently left outside the window. "Uncle Rud" would meet me behind a haystack some distance from the house and we would go fishing, or go hunting rabbits, or sometimes just hiking across the fields.

On some of these walks, I recall clearly, Kipling would hum to himself in a rhythmic way, and then pretty soon he would ask, "How does this sound?" and rattle off a verse his ever-busy mind had composed. Most of these were never written down and never published in any form. There was much material, too, that reposed for years



"You wouldn't want it said the condemned man ate a light breakfast, wouldja?"



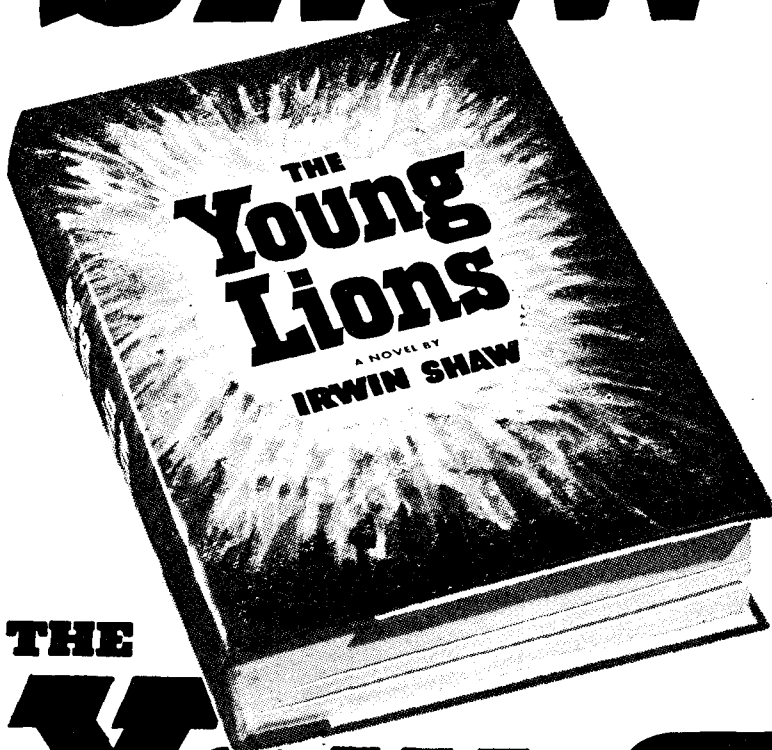
in the big lower-right-hand drawer of Kipling's enormous work desk. He would write stories and poems on envelopes or odd bits of paper and thrust them in his drawer. Some incidents he made use of, others remained in the drawer until the day of his death and unfortunately were destroyed. . . .

I HAVE NEVER MENTIONED *my* father in this column. He was a wonderful and colorful gentleman who was known affectionately as "Pop" by everybody from Fiorello La Guardia and George M. Cohan to the elevator boys at our old offices on 57th Street. He was official critic at Random House and for ten years was never known to say "yes" to any proposed innovation. His slogan was "When I was a boy, I used a packing-case for a desk!" In his youth, my Pop was a catcher of note in semi-pro ranks; he even achieved a try-out with the Dodgers, but he couldn't hit big-league pitching. One of his happiest days was when Gene Fowler brought Gabby Hartnett, then manager of the Cubs, around to the office, and Gabby let Pop tell him how the art of catching had gone to pot since he laid aside his mask and mitt.

It's funny how tiny things will bring back a whole chain of memories about somebody you loved. My two-year-old Jonathan tumbled in the park the other day, and a kindly gentleman gave him a peanut to stop his crying. He came home clutching that peanut for dear life. Suddenly, I remembered a day fully twenty years ago when Pop and I came home from a World Series game, and I hid a peanut in his bed. He never said a word about it, but that peanut began a long series of travels back and forth between us. It bobbed up in the most unlikely places—a desk drawer, the toe of a sock, a package from Dunhill's. Once

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he sent it to me by special delivery.

One day he approached me very gravely. "What do you say we eat that peanut, son?" he suggested. We made quite a ceremony of it. . . .

SOME YEARS AGO, Margaret Mitchell was confined to her bed by injuries sustained in an automobile crash. She spent her time reading books, and finished them so quickly that her husband, John Marsh, was kept busy hauling them back and forth between the public library and her sickroom. In a moment of desperation, he exclaimed, "For Pete's sake, Peggy, can't you write a book instead of reading thousands of them?" "The very next day," avers Margaret Mitchell, "I started mapping the plot of 'Gone with the Wind'." . . . David Guy Powers, author of "Live a New Life," tells about a young doctor who went to Scotland for his health. While he was there, he wrote a novel, but threw it away in a fit of impatience when it failed to measure up to the standard he had set for himself. "I'll never write again," he told himself. Shortly thereafter, he saw a gnarled old Scotsman diligently ditching a bog, but making scant progress. "My father started ditching here fifty years ago," he said doggedly, "and I'm keeping on with it. He knew, and I know too, that if it's only ditched enough, this will be a fine pasture some day." The young doctor, impressed, dug up his manuscript, and worked furiously on it for three more months. Then it was published: "Hatter's Castle" by A. J. Cronin. . . . In "Smile Please," Mildred Spurrier Topp recalls the day she and her sister, both in their teens, proposed to send a valentine, supposedly from their widowed mother, to a prominent judge who had shown marked, if discreet, signs of interest. Mildred wanted to use a new word she heard in Sunday school. "I'm not sure what it means," she confessed to her sister, "but it's in the Bible, so it must be O. K. Besides, it was used about King Solomon, so it's bound to be romancy enough for a valentine." That's how the judge came to receive a gaudy, lace-bedecked valentine that read:

If you will be my valentine,
I will be your concubine. . . .

I SUPPOSE THIS NOSTALGIC MOOD was evoked by the realization of my advancing years. My last birthday was a crusher. Only yesterday, it seems, Max Schuster and I were referring to ourselves as "the boy publishers." . . . Chris Morley had his own way of snapping me out of it. "Cheer up," he counseled heartily. "After all, you'll never be as old as your jokes."

BENNETT CERF.

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"You carry upon your bookshelves the light that guides civilization." From a letter to members of the American Booksellers Association.

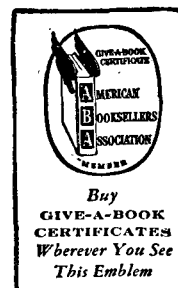
—Franklin D. Roosevelt

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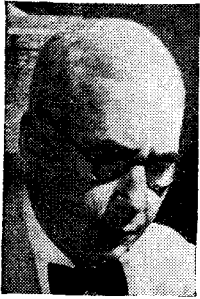
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The Saturday Review

"Roosevelt and Hopkins"

The Years of Desperation and Victory

ELMER DAVIS



—Palmer.

Elmer Davis

of which he ever said. (The men responsible for this latter story, when they could not substantiate it, took refuge in the explanation that, anyway, that must have been what he meant; in the former case he had said only that some people are too dumb to understand certain things, a proposition not easily controverted.) Millions of other people remember him as the administrator and champion of a work program but for which they would have been dependent on a continually diminishing and more grudging charity. And the men who won the greatest war of all time remember him as the indispensable agent of the leader of their coalition. The best Secretary of War in American history called Hopkins a godsend; the greatest military commander in American history said that his service to his country will never even vaguely be appreciated. Other men of course said other things; as his biographer dryly observes, he was fortunate beyond most men in having such enemies and such friends.

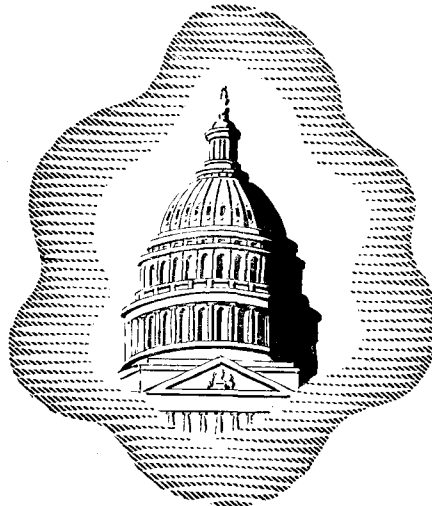
The enemies—who were primarily Roosevelt's enemies—made most of the noise, in his lifetime and since, winning triumphs over the dead that they were never able to achieve over the living. Their dancing on Hopkins's grave, and Roosevelt's, is no great matter; Charles II had Cromwell's bones dug up and scattered, in spite of which Charles II does not quite occupy Cromwell's place in history.

Nevertheless it was time for a counterstatement of the facts, which Sherwood has given us with a conscientiousness that can hardly be too highly praised. Originally he was asked to finish a book which it turned out that Hopkins, at his death, had not even begun; he had collected an enormous amount of material, but before Sherwood was through he had to see everybody, get every version of controverted stories. And because the later and greater Hopkins was only Roosevelt's will in action, the book turned out to be, for the war years, a biography of two men instead of one. "Roosevelt deliberately educated Hopkins in the arts and sciences of politics and war and then gave him immense powers of decision for no reason other than that he liked him, trusted him, and needed him." Hopkins liked to call himself the office boy; actually he was, as Harold Smith said, a sort of civilian Chief of Staff to the man whom T. V. Soong called the Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations.

For writing such a dual biography Sherwood is admirably equipped. He was an unofficial member of the White House staff; he writes a book* that is a pleasure to read; and not the least of his merits is that being a play-

wright, professionally concerned with exploring the complexities of character, he knows enough about it to know how much he does not know. He attempts no "psychograph" of Roosevelt; Hopkins was a far simpler character, but Sherwood does not always explain him; he merely sets down the record—all of the record. Nothing is extenuated; what needs extenuation seems to some of us trivial beside the accomplishment, but Sherwood sets it down anyway; it happened, and he reports all that happened, good and bad. It is a rare biographer who faithfully chronicles not only the errors of his subject, but his own. Not less admirable is his restraint. It must have been a temptation to characterize some of the men who still foam at the mouth, but Sherwood's contempt for them must be read between the lines; the only hostile writer criticized by name is a man so respectable that he might have been expected to be more responsible.

THIS may be as near an approach as we shall ever get to a summary of the way things looked from the White House in those days. Sherwood makes no such claim; he deliberately refrained from consulting Mrs. Roosevelt, so as not to involve her in even indirect responsibility for what he writes; but unless she ("keeper of and spokesman for her husband's conscience," as Sherwood rightly calls her) some day tells us how it seemed to her, there is likely to be no report on better authority than this. It is also the best contribution so far to the history of the war—better even than the Stimson memoirs, since it incorporates a multitude of immensely valuable documents. It may be surpassed by Churchill's later volumes—or maybe not, for Roosevelt, after all, unlike Churchill (or Stalin), was



*ROOSEVELT AND HOPKINS: *An Intimate History*. By Robert E. Sherwood. New York: Harper & Bros. 1948. 962 pp. \$6.