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# Trade Winds



I found this story in that marvelous biography, *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain*. James Henry Riley was an old pal of Mark Twain. Twain thought Riley was the wittiest and most entertaining person he knew. Once, in the boarding house where he lived in Washington, Riley's landlady told him about the old cook next door who had fallen to sleep over her red-hot stove and was burned to death. Without a smile or a moment's hesitation, Riley pronounced the epitaph:

"Well done, good and faithful servant."

When writer Ken Kraft was new to Santa Rosa, California, he made use of the library one day and disappeared into the stacks. When his wife Pat came to meet him, she couldn't find him. She stood in the reading room and looked around helplessly. One of the staff girls saw Pat and quietly asked if she were looking for a book.

Pat whispered, "No, thanks. For a husband."

The young lady sighed and whispered back, "Aren't we all?"

Some friends of mine spent a couple of weeks in their summer house near the sand dunes in Wellfleet, Massachusetts. When they were packing to drive there from the city, the parents told their two teen-age boys to bring along some reading matter in case the weather was bad. When I visited them one day, the sun was shining, but the boys were in the house reading out of the one book they had both brought, and playing with string.

The book was *String Figures and How to Make Them: A Study of Cat's-Cradle in Many Lands*, by Caroline Furness-Jayne. It was first published in 1906, and has been reissued by Dover in a paperback, which has 400 pages filled with diagrams showing how to construct more than 100 string figures. Someone had given the boys this book, and they had been on a cat's-cradle kick for quite some time when I saw them. Their strings and the book had made them forget about the beach.

String figures are an ancient pastime, practiced in all parts of the world, from Fiji to Alaska, from Japan to East Africa. Whoever Caroline Furness-Jayne was, she did a masterful job of collecting the many string figures from around the world, of showing how to make them,

and of writing a history of the game. Every figure has a name, such as "Carrying Money," which pictures four men in Yap carrying one of those big stones they used for money on that island. Or "Two Boys Fighting for an Arrow,"



which is done by the Klamath Indians of the Northwest Coast.

At the time the book was written, no one knew for sure where string figures had originated. The guess was China or Korea. Somehow the pastime had spread around the world to Europe. Not surprisingly, there are similarities between figures in various parts of the world. The most widely spread game is called in the British Isles "The Leashing of Lochiel's Dogs." In this country it is known as the Cherokee's "Crow's Feet," and in Algeria, as "Cock's Feet." In Africa the Ulungu call it "Wooden Spoon," and it is found in Australia, too.

Get yourself the book and some string and you'll have something with which to amuse yourself on a sunny day.

On her way from Bangkok to the beaches of the Gulf of Siam, Jane Hamilton, now of the University of Dayton, used to stop at the little town of Cholburi and have a snack at the Smarnmit Restaurant. On the back of the menu was this message:

Have the map with Thai and English for your-tourist of Cholburi. We have cars at your service all the time. If you reach to Smarnmit-Restaurant already. If you wish to meet someone or want to-go somewhere or buy something. We pleasure to advice to you always. If your car have object, we have the mender for you. If you want the food already make to your resident. We pleasure to bring to your resident or you want the food go with you for travel we have the box prepare for you all the time.

The funny thing about that paragraph is that if you read it carefully, it makes

# Tactical Radio: A report from General Dynamics

In old suspense movies there always seemed to be a sequence in which the fleeing suspect tunes his car radio to the police band, hears: "Car 64, fugitive headed your way—intercept." Whereupon, suspect swings away and escapes.

Even today, by and large, if police car A wants to reach squad car B one mile away, willy-nilly, cars C, D, and E, all tuned to the same channel, have to listen too. And so can lots of unofficial ears.

This problem is compounded a thousandfold by modern military tactical requirements. Hundreds of squads, vehicles, and individuals may be operating separately over a wide area, all scrambled up with enemy units.

On occasion a commander must broadcast orders to a hundred squads at once. But he may also need to talk to a single intelligence scout hidden hundreds of miles away. Or an individual unit may have to call another unit with information or to call for support, without hundreds of ears, friend or foe, all automatically listening too.

Radio sets just that selective are now being delivered or developed by General Dynamics. Small and rugged enough to go anywhere a man can go, and simple to operate, the new radios are a key to modern tactical mobility.

## From 2 to 74,000:

World War II walkie-talkies had one or two channels. The new sets have from 28,000 to 74,000 different channels for voice or teletype communication. A generation ago, a mere 12 channels called for a large fixed installation. Now one with some 45,000 channels will be carried on a man's back. The biggest one can fit the back seat of a jeep.

The enormous number of channels permits direct "calling numbers" for hundreds, even thousands, of other radios within sending and receiving range.

Each set, in fact, has a number of different calling numbers that can be changed in prearranged groups every day, every hour or in rapid sequence on a moment's notice to aid security.

The new combat radios are based primarily on an old principle—single sideband transmission. It took developments of the past decade, however, in both solid-state electronics and ultra-miniature packaging to make practical such sets for mobile ground use.

On an oscilloscope, an AM (amplitude modulation) radio wave looks like a single line. Actually that line is made up of three distinct parts: a central carrier and two sidebands.

The central carrier is generated at a specific frequency—in effect its "address." When modulated, (that is, the message added) two sidebands come into being to carry the actual information. Both bear identical "intelligence."

## Less becomes more:

SSB techniques filter out the central carrier and one redundant sideband. The message is sent on the remaining sideband, which contains all the essential information.

Only one-quarter of the power is now required to send a signal the same distance. Alternatively, the same amount of power needed for a full AM band will send an SSB message at least four times as far.

And with greater clarity.

"Noise" or static, comes from any electrical interference—power lines, vehicle engines, a storm 100 miles away. The carrier section of standard AM is particularly vulnerable. By using only one sideband, two-thirds of the static potential is avoided.

Radio tuning traditionally depended upon quartz crystals, each of which vibrates at an individual wave length. With enough of them, a large number of chan-

nels has always been theoretically possible. The number of fragile and expensive crystals that could be carried in combat was limited.

Today's sets still use crystals but in conjunction with electronic or electro-mechanical oscillators and synthesizers that can create thousands of different rates of vibration—or separate channels—and can change from one to another within fractions of a second.

## Big becomes small:

New packaging techniques have been equally important. For instance, big tuning capacitors were originally the size of a pair of clenched fists. Now their function has been squeezed into a diode the size of a match head. Sets in development are only one-fiftieth the size and weight of World War II sets that had only a tiny fraction of today's channels, range or clarity.

Once upon a time there was room to spare on our radio airways. Today, channels jam closer and closer; interference has become a serious problem. General Dynamics' new sets are today filling military needs. Future civilian applications, however, could double the number of channels available for voice or data communication within the space now taken up by AM transmissions.

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perfectly good sense. What's more, I'll bet there isn't an American out there who knows Thai half as well as the Smarmmit-Restaurant knows English.

**Sharps and Flats:** The largest private coin and money collection in the world is owned by Francis Cardinal Spellman. Valued at \$500,000, it is being displayed in public for the first time at the new branch of the Manhattan Savings Bank at 86th Street and Third Avenue, New York. For some reason, the collection includes the \$80 found in the pocket of John Dillinger when he was shot to death in 1934.

► When Mr. and Mrs. Salvatore Bono arrived at Copenhagen's Royal S.A.S. Hotel September 9, the desk clerk looked at them and cancelled their reservations, saying, "We do not accept guests wearing outlandish costumes." Mr. and Mrs. Bono, better known as Sonny and Cher, were finally admitted to their rooms after two hours of high-level negotiations.

► A small New York publishing firm, wanting to diversify, is haggling over a controlling interest in General Motors.

► R. Blagden reports from Tokyo that Police Inspector Shimpachi Utsugi retired after thirty-five years as Japan's Number 1 foe of pickpockets. He was so expert that often, to save time when he saw a pickpocket pick a pocket, he would pick the pickpocket's pocket and repocket the pickings in the pocket of the man whose pocket the pickpocket had picked, no one the wiser. Inspector Utsugi would then go on his way, knowing that a crime had been prevented, without all the fuss of making an arrest, complaints, etc., etc.

► Leo J. Kessler says: Show me a squirrel's home and I'll show you a nut-cracker's suite.

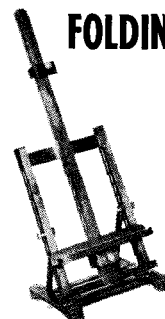
—JEROME BEATTY, JR.

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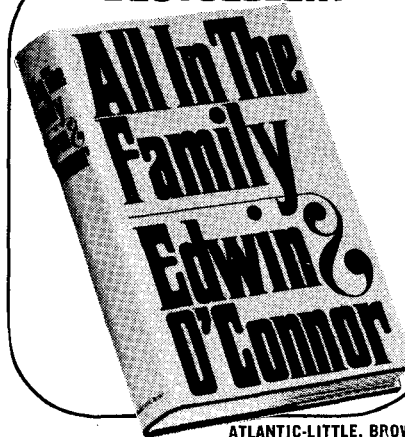
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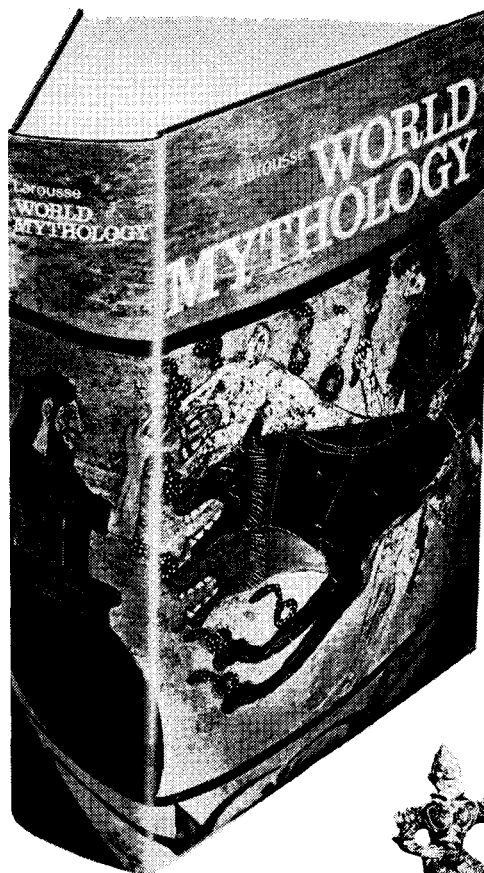
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## The Met's New "Gioconda" and "Traviata"

**Y**EARS AND YEARS AGO, Oscar Wilde suggested that "Nothing succeeds like excess." Somewhat later Edgar A. Guest—or was it Polly Adler?—observed that "It takes a heap o' livin' in a house t' make it a home." Taken together, they provide the reasons for one of the longest opera performances in history as the Metropolitan began its second week of existence in Lincoln Center with new productions of Ponchielli's *La Gioconda* and Verdi's *La Traviata*.

What was at fault about the more than splendid, no less than splendiferous, production of *Gioconda* by Beni Montresor (its predecessor dated to the first administration of Calvin Coolidge) was, in the main, a product of the Wilde-Guest-Adler syndrome—a house not yet become a home, in which it was discovered, too late, that some of the constructions were too high to be moved off laterally, and had to be broken down before the next scene could take its place. This resulted in intermissions of such length that Renata Tebaldi's "Suicidio" came on Friday rather than Thursday. What was right about it will continue to enliven many an evening in the future—not, please God, as many as its predecessor—when the hard-working stage crew, map in hand, can put up and take down Venice and environs in shorter intermissions than would accommodate a performance of *La Bohème* as part of a double bill.

If one separates the action from the inaction, the immediate success was a ringing affirmation for the acoustical planning of the Messrs. Jordan and Har-

ris, rendered *viva voce* by the six leading singers required in Ponchielli's well-stuffed score, as many choristers as the roster affords, and a broad panorama of orchestral playing admirably directed by Fausto Cleva. When the total complement—ranging from Tebaldi as *Gioconda* and Mignon Dunn as *La Cieca*, (Biserka Cvejic, the Laura, was at the moment lying off-stage semi-dead, as the script decrees) to Franco Corelli (Enzo), Cesare Siepi (Alvise), and Cornell MacNeil (Barnaba)—had placed the vocal capstone on the arch of sound in the third act finale, one wondered whether there is another opera house, new or old, where so much sound would ring so true.

Montresor's fertility is of such youthful potency that all the values in his settings might be described, in an Italianization of Wilde, as *issimo*—*bellissimo*, for the riotous richness of the courtyard of the Doge's palace, *grandissimo* for the interior of same, *malignissimo* for the concluding episode on the Giudecca, etc. A good third of it could be spared, with gain to clarity (and, certainly, convenience of movement), but economy is a virtue that youth must learn from age. As a practitioner of the theater, he should quickly realize that a raised, interior stage is a device to be used sparingly, especially when a thrice important scene requires floor space for such an elaborate ballet as becomes "The Dance of the Hours." What he allotted amid the eight candelabra-bearing statues that ringed the stage so hemmed in the dancers that part of

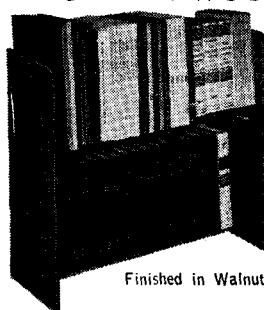
Zachary Solov's flouncy patterns were performed on the stage floor near the footlights. The result was the first split-level ballet in history. This would have embarrassed a more competent ensemble than the Metropolitan ballet, with or without the circumstance of Robert Davis's having flubbed his responsibilities of partnership. His last-minute recovery saved Sally Brayley, the principal female dancer, from a nasty crash from shoulder height, but hardly settled her nerves for what followed.

The handicaps that Montresor's scenic arrangement (picturesque as most of it was) imposed on movement and action were multiplied by Margherita Wallmann's affection for overcomplicating the simplest situation. As noted in her staging of *Lucia* a few years back, she dotes on rather meaningless minutiae—a pantomime of Venetian life behind a scrim as the prelude is being played (no license for it in the score), bits and pieces of by-play during Act I which are motivated by directorial fantasy rather than dramatic purpose, a sly little unscripted "murder" in Act II to add realism to the act's opening, people toting bales and making movements behind the singing of a major musical episode. The rehearsal time required to regiment all this left the principals mostly to their own acting devices, which ranged from crude in the instance of MacNeil to cultured in the instance of Siepi.

As an offset to all this was the awareness, as one scene succeeded another, that Metropolitan operagoers were hearing, for the first time in the memory of all but the most aged, a rendition of *Gioconda* in which all the vocal values were coordinated, and a sense of musical order replaced the in-fighting that usually prevails when this work is "revived" rather than restored. The lion of the evening, in the quality of his roar as well as the shapely mass of his mane, was Franco Corelli, who earned a billing as king of operatic beasts with the best performance he has yet given in New York. He has, through some mysterious persuasion, been brought to the realization that there is as much virtue in a well controlled *piano* as in a blatant *forte*. This gave him access to a more cultivated "Cielo e mar" than has been his norm (not yet Gigli, but let's be reasonable). This is far from the whole of Enzo's part, but the rest, for a tenor of Corelli's capabilities, is a matter of doing what comes naturally. That is to say, flinging out high notes and making the picturesque presence for which Nature designed him. Now, if he could straighten the right leg, and assume a less nonchalant posture. . . .

At another extreme of artistic endeavor was Tebaldi's first *Gioconda* ever, the "happy one" who is thrice cursed—  
(Continued on page 23)

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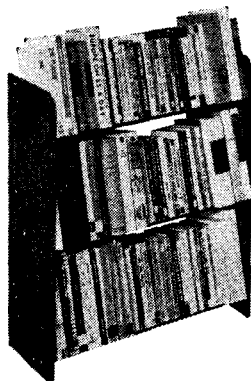
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