

SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

By WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE

ORS is a little town in that part of the country called the West by those who live east of the Alleghenies, and referred to lovingly as "back East" by those who dwell west of the Rockies. It is a country town where, as the song goes, "you know everybody and they all know you" and the country newspaper office is the social clearing house.

In our little newspaper office we are all reporters, and we know many intimate things about people that we do not print.

As the nearest incident of the daily grind, it came to the office that the bank cashier, whose retirement was announced with a column of regret, was carrying \$5,000 about, after 20 years of faithful service, and that his wife sold the homestead to make his shortage good.

Though our loathed but esteemed contemporary, the Statesman, speaks of our town as "this city," and calls the marshal "chief of police," we are none the less a country town. Like hundreds of its kind, our little daily newspaper is equipped with composing machines and is printed from a web perfecting press, yet it is only a country newspaper, and knowing this, we refuse to put on city airs. Of course, we print the afternoon Associated Press report on the first page, under formal heads and with some pretense of dignity, but that first page is the parlor of the paper, as it is of most of its contemporaries, and in the other pages they and we go around in our shirt sleeves, talking people by their first names; teasing the boys and girls good-naturedly; talking the pompous members of the village with straight faces from time to time, and letting out the family secrets of the community without much regard for the feelings of the supercilious.

Nine or ten thousand people in our town go to bed on this kind of mental pabulum, as do country town dwellers all over the United States, and although we do not claim that it is helpful, we do contend that it does not hurt them. Certainly by poking mild fun at the shams—the town pharisees—we make it more difficult to maintain the *deca* lines which the pretenders would establish. Possibly by printing the news of everything that happens, suppressing nothing for no account of the respectability of the parties concerned, we may prevent some evil-doers from going on with their plans, but this is mere conjecture, and we do not set it down to our credit. What we maintain is that in printing our little country dailies, we, the scribes, from one end of the world to the other, get more than our share of fun out of life as we go along, and pass as much of it on to our neighbors as we can spare.

Because we are in a country town, where the only car horns we hear are on the baker's wagon, and where the horses in the fire department work on the streets, is no reason why city dwellers should assume that we are natives. We have no dialect worth recording—save that some of us west-erners burr our "r's" a little or drop an occasional final "g." But you will find that all the "ings" advertised in the backs of the magazines are in our houses, and that the young men in our towns walking home at midnight, with their coats over their shoulders, and the same popular airs that loveless boys are whistling in New York, Portland, San Francisco or New Orleans that same evening. Our girls are those pretty, rosy, well-dressed young women whom you see at the summer resorts from Coronado beach to Buzzard's bay. In the fall and winter these girls fill the colleges of the West and the state universities of the West.

We take all the beautiful garden magazines, and our terra-cotta works are turning out crocheted *valizes* which we pronounce "valizes," you may be sure—for formal gardens. And though we men for the most part run our own lawnmowers, and personally look after the work of the college boy who takes care of the horse and the cow for his room, still there are a few of us proud and haughty creatures who have automobiles. At the flower parade in our own little town last October there were ten automobiles in line, decked with paper flowers and laden with pretty girls in lawns and dainties and lilies—though as a matter of fact most of the lilies were only "Indian head." And our particular little country paper printed an item to the effect that the real social line of cleavage in the town lies not between the cutless set and the devotees of hand-painted china, but between the real nobility who wear genuine linen and the base imitations who wear Indian head.

In some towns an item like that would make people mad, but we have our people trained to stand a good deal. They know that it costs them five cents a line for cars of thanks and resolutions of respect, so they never bring them in. They know that our paper never permits "one who was there" to report social functions, so that dear old correspondent has resigned; and because we have insisted for years on making an item about the first tomatoes that are served in spring at any dinner or reception, together with the cost per pound of the tomatoes, the town has become used to our

attitude and does not buzz with indignation when we poke a risible finger at the home-made costumes of the Plymouth Daughters when they present "The Mikado" to pay for the new pipe organ. Indeed, so used is the town to our ways that when there was great talk last winter about Mrs. Freelingbysen for serving fresh strawberries over the ice cream at her luncheon in February, just after her husband had gone through bankruptcy, she called up Miss Larrabee, our society editor, on the telephone and asked her to make a little item saying that the strawberries served by Mrs. Freelingbysen at her luncheon were not fresh but merely sun-dried. This we did gladly and printed her recipe.

So, gradually, without our intending to establish it, a family venacular has grown up in the paper, which our people understand, but which—like all other family vernaculars—is Greek to those outside the circle. Thus we say: "Bill Parker is making his eighth biennial distribution of eggs today for a boy."

City papers would print it: "Bill Parker is making his eighth biennial distribution of eggs today for a boy."

Again we print this item: "Mrs. Merriman is getting ready to lend her fern to the Narrows, June 15."

That doesn't mean anything, unless you happen to know that Mrs. Merriman has the prettiest Boston fern in town, and that no law window is properly decorated at any wedding without that fern. In larger towns the same item would appear thus:

"Cards are out announcing the wedding of Miss Cecie Norton and Mr. Colby R. Hatcher at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Norton, 1022 High Street, June 15."

A plain drunk is generally referred to in our columns as a "guest of Marshal Furgerson's informal house party," and when a group of drunkards and disorderlies is brought in we feel free to say of their evening diversion that they "spent the happy hours, after refreshments, playing progressive hell." And this brings us to the consideration of the most important personage with whom we have to deal. In what we call "social circles," the most important personages are Mrs. Julia Neal Worthington and Max Priscilla Winthrop Coleman, who keep two nice girls and can pay five dollars a week for them when the prevailing price is three. In financial circles the most

posed to be doing a back-door beer business," he again is "the authorities," and contends that the word strikes more terror into the hearts of evil-doers than the mere name, Marshal Furgerson.

Next in rank to "the authorities," in the diplomatic corps of the office, come our advertisers: The proprietors of the White Front Dry Goods store, the Golden Eagle Clothing store, and the Bee Hive. These men can come nearer to dictating the paper's policy than the bankers and politicians, who are supposed to control country newspapers. Though we are charged with being the "organ" of say of half a dozen politicians whom we happen to speak of kindly at various times, we have little real use for politicians in our office, and a business man who brings in 60 or 70 dollars' worth of advertising every month has more influence with us than all the politicians in the county. This is the situation in most newspaper offices that succeed, and when any other situation prevails, when politicians control editors, the newspapers don't pay well and sooner or later the politicians are bankrupt.

The only person in town whom all the merchants desire us to poke fun at is Mail Order Petrie. Mail Order Petrie is a miserly old codger who buys everything out of town that he can buy a penny cheaper than the local merchant sells it. He is a hard-working man, so far as that goes, and so stingy that he has been accused of going barefooted in the summer time to save shoes. When he is sick he sends out of town for patent medicines, and for ten years he worked in his truck garden, fighting floods and draughts, bugs and blight, to save something like a hundred dollars, which he put in a mail order bank in St. Louis. When it failed he grinned at the fellows who talked him of his loss, and said: "Oh, come over, go easy!"

A few years ago he subscribed to a matrimonial paper, and one day he appeared at the office of the probate judge with a mail order wife, who, when they had been married a few years, went to an orphan asylum and got a mail order baby. We have had considerable sport with Mail Order Petrie, and he has become so used to it that he likes it.

And this is the material with which we do our day's work—Mail Order Petrie, Marshal Furgerson, the pretty



Suppressing Nothing "On Account of the Respectability of the Parties Concerned"

important personage is John Markley, who buys real estate mortgages in political circles the most important personage is Charlie Hedrick, who knows the railroad attorneys at the capital and always can get passes for the county delegation to the state convention; in the railroad yard the most important personage is the station superintendent, who smokes ten-cent cigars and has the only "room with a bath" at the Hotel Metropole. But with us, in the publication of our newspaper, the most important personage in town is Marshal Furgerson.

If you ever looked out of the car window as you passed through town, you undoubtedly saw him at the depot, walking nervously up and down the platform, peering into the faces of strangers. He is ever on the outlook for crooks, though nothing more violent has happened in our county for years than an assault and battery. But Marshal Furgerson never relinquishes his watch. In winter, clad in his blue uniform and campaign hat, he is a familiar figure on our streets; and in summer, without coat or vest, with his big silver star on which is stamped "Chief of Police," pinned to his suspender, he may be seen at any point where trouble is least likely to break out. He is the only man on the town site whom we are afraid to tease, because he is our chief source of news.

When we particularly desire to please him we refer to him as "the authorities." If the Palace grocery has been invaded through the back window and a box of plug tobacco stolen, Marshal Furgerson is delighted to read in the paper that "the authorities have an important clue and the arrest may be expected at any time." He is "the authorities." If the authorities have their eyes on a certain barber shop on South Main street, which is sup-

posed to be doing a back-door beer business," he again is "the authorities," and contends that the word strikes more terror into the hearts of evil-doers than the mere name, Marshal Furgerson.

Our business seems to outsiders to be a cruel one, because we have to deal as mere business with such sacred things as death and birth, the meeting and parting of friends, and with tragedies as well as with comedies. Time and again we have been surprised at the charity of our people. They are always willing to forgive, and be it man or woman who takes a misstep in our town—which is the counterpart of hundreds of American towns—if the offender shows that he wishes to walk straight, a thousand hands are stretched out to help him and guide him. It is not true that a man or woman who makes a mistake is eternally damned by his fellows. If one persists in wrong after the first misdeed it is not because sheltering love and kindness were not shown around the wrongdoer. We have in our town women who have gone wrong and have lived down their errors just as men do, and have been forgiven. A hundred times in our office we have talked these things over and have been proud of our people and of their humanity. We are all neighbors and friends and when sorrow comes, no one is a one. The town's greatest tragedies have proved the town's sympathy, and have been worth their cost.

DIXIE GROWERS AND SHIPPERS' ASSOCIATION NOTES

By DR. FRED COCHRAN, President

Tobacco seeds are arriving at the headquarters of the Dixie Growers and Shippers Association.

Many people will wait until too late to get their seeds and plan a successful crop. This is the failure of unorganized farmers.

To those desiring to grow a tobacco crop this year need to know how to grow tobacco? We give them full instructions, and anybody who can grow a corn crop, a potato crop, etc., can grow a successful tobacco crop since risky, troublesome burning is eliminated.

Boys and girls can grow their tobacco crop and go right on with their school work, because the crop can be sold as it stands in the field. By this plan many worthy young people earn their full college course. This is the history in Kentucky and eastern sections of North Carolina.

Why are the tobacco farmers the richest farmers per amount of acres owned and tilled? The U. S. Government statistics on agriculture will show this to be a fact.

We repeat a correction in the prices of the tested tobacco seeds. They come in packages of one acre capacity for bed sowing. They cost us \$1.00 plus postage. We make nothing on them. If anyone can give us better quotations, we want to hear from them.

Some scrub tobacco seeds can be bought cheaper, but they are useless on the high grade markets, and will not be recognized by this Association. We now have seeds for all who care to get their orders and grow their crop under our careful guidance, from bed sowing, setting out, fertilizing, tilling, curing, and direct marketing.

Why is it that many people will make up their minds to late to get their tobacco seeds and other seeds and plan their crop? The answer is a lack of initiative and faith in a new plan of marketing and growing a real moneyed crop. It is our earnest desire to stay away from any thought of over-estimating the colossal prices that common grades of tobacco are bringing on the markets and, as the markets for last year and this year were light, next year's crop will be in demand. We have to make this statement on facts, and not on sentiments, to get the people interested in a tobacco crop. Take an example for comparison:

One acre of a reasonable grade of tobacco will bring more than 30 acres of corn in this section.

One acre of tobacco will bring more than fifty acres of wheat, and then some left over, after deducting all expenses; for expenses are light in comparison to income.

When any thinking farmer sits down and thinks over these cold facts and then thinks of all the work, sweat, time, hired labor, horse feed, machinery upkeep and buying that are attached to corn, wheat and other crops that now have little return in home markets, that farmer will immediately get busy and plan his to-

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ets in the last few weeks were grown by new, inexperienced growers.

We know what it means to grow up in this remote, mountainous section and to fight for an education so as to compete with the world about us. From this experience we are especially urging many ambitious young men and women planning to take a high school, business, college or university course to take advantage of this opportunity and plan a tobacco crop this year, and sell it right in the field, if it is necessary to go right on and enter in the fall when schools open. This can be done to a great advantage. Most of these young people get their memberships at reduced prices, those under 20 years of age.

Facts show that tobacco farmers are the richest, most independent in financial circumstances, control more banks and have more electrically lighted homes and drive more automobiles, which every hardy farmer has a right to give his family the comfort of, than any other rural people in all the world.

We call attention to all the readers to remind your nearest merchant to make his tobacco seed order, or do it yourself at

Start the Laying!

Now's the time to start your pullets and moulted hens to laying—and cash in on eggs. Moulting puts the egg organs out of gear. Get over these dormant organs with the old reliable

Dr. Hess Poultry PAN-A-CE-A

It puts the egg organs to work. It starts the feed line egg way. It gives red combs and red wattles. It brings back the song and scratch and cackle. Pan-ace-a gives hens pep and makes music in the poultry yard.

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RICHARD S. PARKER
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We have a right-size package for every flock

Hess Instant Louse Killer Kills Lice

Wanted Boys and Girls

The Athens Business College is in need of more boys and girls to undergo the training for bookkeeping and stenographers. The very light attendance in the commercial schools for the past two years has created a shortage among the commercial business firms for clerical help. This makes it an ideal time for young men and women to enter our school preparatory to a good position.

It costs \$150.00 to \$200.00 less to complete a course in the Athens Business College than it does in other schools offering similar courses of instruction. It takes three to six months less time to complete the training.

You will get the advantage of learning one of the best, easiest and simplest systems of shorthand, and one of the most practical courses in bookkeeping.

Why work for \$25.00 to \$50.00 per month when you can earn \$75.00 to \$150.00 per month and get promotion to even a bigger salary from year to year?

Bookkeepers must be had regardless of the boll weevil or short crops—they are essential.

Enter the Athens Business College at once and let the school place you in a good position within a few months.

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