

The Rocky Mount Herald

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REVIVING A LOST ART

Among the signs that this country is at last emerging from the era of wonderful nonsense, don't forget the revival of the old-fashioned spelling bee.

After many years, in which it looked as quaint and out-of-date as the one-hoss shay, the spelling bee again is coming into its own. The New York and Chicago fire departments send picked teams against each other; spelldowns are broadcast over national radio networks; even the schools are finding a new place for this old-time diversion. The lad who can spell "apothecary," "lachrymose" and "desiccate" is in demand once more.

All this would hardly be worth notice if it were not for the fact that some of our more aggressively modern educators decided, a decade or so ago, that all this emphasis on spelling was foolish and uncalled for.

Some strange educational practices grew out of this delusion, and stranger still were some of their by-products.

It was held, for example, that the old way of teaching children to read and write was entirely wrong. Why learn the alphabet at all? Teach the child to recognize words by their looks, instead; free him from the soul-cramping drudgery of the ABC's and he will learn to ride twice as fast. And forget about penmanship. "Everybody" uses a typewriter nowadays; handwriting is an extinct art; if he knows how to make block letters by hand, that is good enough.

So the ultra-modernists put the old arts of spelling and writing on the back shelf and shouted hey-dey for the streamlined system of education.

This was all right until some of the youngsters who grew up under this kind of schooling emerged into the wide world and sought jobs.

Then appalled business began to discover that they were being asked to hire as stenographers and filing clerks bright young high-school graduates who could not write literate letters to save their immortal souls; youngsters who couldn't operate filing systems because they actually didn't know whether "r" came before or after "h"; lads and lassies who couldn't even sign their own names legibly in ordinary script, and who couldn't read inter-office memos unless they were typewritten.

Against this sort of thing, the old-fashioned spelling bee is a useful antidote.

The youngster who toes a crack and wrestles with "parallelogram," "hypothesis," "benefited," and "emolument" may not be broadening his mind very much, but he will at least be able to write a business letter, when he grows up, without causing the recipient to wonder what unlettered mountaineer has been playing with the typewriter. —Gastonia Gazette.

THAT AWFUL STUFF—TOBACCO

Zebulon Record

While one cannot eat or wear it, tobacco is considered a necessity to a great many people. In this section it is the main money crop and church members chew, smoke and dip along with others. Way down in New Orleans last week the Baptist folks (strange though it may seem, the younger preachers) introduced a resolution against the use of tobacco by church members. Louisiana has plenty of cotton and sugar but grows no tobacco, but there were enough users of "the filthy weed" present to quickly vote down the good intentions.

And now the State ABC Commissioners have decided that tobacco may not be used by any one while working in a model and modern state operated saloon. Poor old tobacco! Even the home of John Barleycorn is too respectable for his presence. A chew of tobacco may make a man act like a Billy goat, but never like one possessed with the drink demon. The State seems to be following in the steps of the liquor makers in trying to make conditions so clean and respectable appearing that the people may see nothing but roses. Do what they will, the character and effect of intoxicating drink will be no more changed than a kid's skin on the hands of Jacob made him an Esau, or a wolf clothed in the well-fitting skin of a sheep will make him a sheep. Whited sepulchers are full of dead men's bones; hypocrites may wear long, spotless robes, but their natures are unchanged. And drink anywhere, everywhere, may sparkle and go down smooth, yet "at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder."

Tobacco may be bad, but just now the worst thing confronting North Carolina and Wake County is the curse of legalized drink. Vote against it for your friends' and your family's sake.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS IN SATURDAY'S ELECTION—

The Smithfield Herald

The absentee ballot has come into dispute in elections of the past in North Carolina, and we are wondering how it will be used in the liquor election in Johnston County tomorrow. Already persons are intimating that the absentee vote will bear watching.

Certainly there will be enough absentee ballots for every voter in the county who wants to go fishing or anywhere else on election day. Ten thousand ballots, with the accompanying affidavit blanks and envelopes, have been printed.

By no stretch of the imagination can we envision a need for 10,000 ballots, but preparedness no doubt is a good thing. The election officials apparently are anticipating a large absentee vote and if their expectations prove true they should exercise unusual precautions in handling the votes.

When the election, is over, no matter which side wins, let it not be said that the election was stolen with the improper use of the absentee ballots, or in any other way, for that matter.

Derided by comic sheet artists, spring cleaning, including painting and repairing, is one of the finest phases of our civilization. How fine if outmoded ideas and prejudices might go to the trash pile along with old magazines, old papers, old shoes and other impedimenta that are discarded in the annual clean-up.

Scimitar and Song



Edited By Lura Thomas McNair

Every reader is invited to clip this column and mark his preferred poem in this or any other Scimitar and Song and mail it to this editor. A cent-and-a-half stamp on an unsealed envelope is sufficient. The writer whose verse secures the largest number of votes thereby will receive a book prize, donated by this editor, and the voter will have done his bit toward honoring or encouraging some struggling singer during National Poetry Week—a widely heralded fiesta.

Beauty
There is a beauty in knowing
The glories of mountain and trail;
Of stars in a soft summer evening;
Of spray and swift movement and sail.

There is enchantment in language;
In color and rhythms that blend.
But where is the beauty surpassing
Staunch love in the heart of a friend?

—Grace Stillman Minck
In Midland Poetry Review.

Fragments
Friends are the fragments,
Friendship the glue,
Cementing fragments
Making up you.

You are the master,
Masons are they,
Building with plaster,
Stone-work or clay.

Each little fragment
Making you whole,
Serves as the raiment
Clothing your soul.

Knowing your fragments,
Plainly I see,
All your attainments—
All you will be.
—David Raymond Innes.
In Dittwinding.

A book which lures you on to the last page with reminiscent ecstasy is *Songs of the Cinder Trail*; by Loren Phillips, The Bard of Blue River. The book is a human document. The reader bounds over the rails and enters the enchanting cities with all the care-free feeling of release and the charm of adventure stimulated by the author himself. Favorably commented upon in the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* as well as in many other

papers and magazines the book has paved the way for an offer from a New York syndicate.

Grand Canyon of the Colorado
Somehow all earthly things seem futile here;
Men seem so small and God so near,
Who, having looked upon this scene,
denies
The truth, unfolded here for doubt-
ing eyes.

The above, and the following are from *Songs of the Cinder Trail*, Shelbyville, Indiana.
He revealed the atmosphere of Charleston, and of the other towns I know, remarkably well.

Charleston, S. C.
City of lavender and old lace;
Of quaint, magnolia-lined streets
And of venerable houses,
Whose heavy paneled doors bear
ancient brass knockers.

City of quiet restfulness,
Touched with tender sadness;
Scars of war, and memories of long-
departed glories;
The old order of things and the
new;

Strange ships in the harbor,
Flying strange flags;
The sea, calm beyond and all quiet
on the quay;
The scents of roses and orange
blossoms
Emanating from old fashioned
gardens
With high, brick, ivy grown walls.

(Contributions for this column should be sent to Mrs. Lura Thomas McNair, Jonesboro, N. C. Manuscripts not available for use will not be returned unless postage is enclosed.

Club Members To Attend Nat. Camp

Four of North Carolina's outstanding 4-H club members have been selected to represent this State at the national 4-H club camp to be held in Washington, June 17-23.

Selected from among 42,000 club members over the State, the two boys and two girls will be guests of the U. S. Department of Agriculture along with delegates from other States of the Union.

While in Washington they will be given special training in leadership and will be taken on tours to various government departments and other places of interest, said L. R. Harrill, 4-H club leader at N. C. State College.

North Carolina's delegates are: Ray Morrison, Iredell County; Graham Penny, Johnston County; Alice Falls, Cleveland County; and Mary Lily Foard, Iredell County.

Will Build New State Laboratory

Raleigh—The Council of State has authorized the State Board of Health to issue revenue bonds in the sum of \$100,000 for the erection of a modern laboratory building, which will be located on the Jones Street side of Caswell Square, in Raleigh. It will be known as the Clarence A. Shore Memorial Building, in memory of the late Dr. Shore, first director of the State Laboratory of Hygiene who served in that capacity from December, 1907, to February, 1933. His successor, Dr. John H. Hamilton, was named in May, 1933.

Action by the Council of State followed a conference with Dr. Carl V. Reynolds, State Health Officer, and Dr. Hamilton. Work on the new building, which will have a grand area of 130 by 150 feet, will begin as soon as the necessary formalities are gone through with, and it is expected it will be ready for occupancy within the next year. It will be three stories and will, if possible, be built entirely of North Carolina material, the exterior to be either of stone or brick, but, in any event, the entire structure will be fireproof, also vibration proof.

When the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition closes, Treasure Island will become a super-airport for the San Francisco Bay metropolitan region.

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