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SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 1916

QUALITY VERSUS QUANTITY

In a recent number of The Bookman, Florence Finch Kelly has a thought provoking article on speeding up the author. The lamentable practice of the publisher in following up a writer's success with a demand for more and still more at once has led our fiction writers into turning out novels that are lacking in thought, plot development, characterization and even in the correct English of the ordinary school boy or girl.

Publishers advertise as a drawing card that the author broke the record in turning out the latest best seller. Miss Kelly says that "Me," a reminiscence, a sensational story published anonymously in one of the leading magazines, was proudly advertised as having been written in two weeks, while the author was flat on her back in a hospital. Kathleen Norris had previously held the speed record, writing "Saturday's Child," a book of 180,000 words, in three months. Kathleen Norris, by the way, is one of the delightful writers whose work shows marked and deplorable deterioration, no doubt due in some measure to the Oliver Twist demand of the publisher for more.

This hurried writing, if given careful reading, bristles with errors. Mrs. Gene Stratton Porter, of Freckles fame, uses the singular subject with the plural verb. The genius of Gertrude Atherton fails to reconcile the reader to slovenly expression; and even Winston Churchill is quoted by Mrs. Kelly in a number of glaring grammatical mistakes.

Besides the speeding up of the publisher, the eager desire for money tempts the writer of a successful book to get another on the market before the first is forgotten. Every one remembers the charming story, "Molly Make-Believe" and regrets the continuous stream of what Dooth Tarkinton's Hedric would call, "slush, slush, lovely slush," that has dripped from Miss Abbott's pen ever since. With such a sterling writer as Owen Wister holding forth on "Quack Fiction and Democracy," arraigning the extravagant advertising of magazines of their wares as similar to that employed by the dealers in quack medicines, and with intelligent craftsmen lamenting the output of so-called literature in this modern market, one does not entirely lose heart. It may be that "art for art's sake" will again inspire the earnest pen; and that American literature may hark back to the classic finish and style of Hawthorne, Poe, Sarah Orne Jewett and many more whose laurel wreaths were not worn only for a day.

SINCERITY.

In the somewhat artificial life of the Twentieth century, it is, perhaps, not strange that individual sincerity should decrease and decline. There are today few Quakers, in the practice of yes, yes, and nay, nay, as the conversational ultimatum. Extravagance of description, overworked adjectives, prevarication and the lively little white lies meet us and greet us on every side. Therefore, when one finds a genuine person, admiration and esteem leap so into one's appreciation that we lose the very simplicity, the directness that have excited our praise.

There is nothing more pitiful than the man or woman who strives always to seem to be, rather than to be. Such an individual often is possessed of solid attainments, but, unexplainably, longs to shine as a lover and judge of good literature or of music—qualities utterly foreign to the nature of the plain, matter-of-fact personality that so desires to be considered clever. Such an one deceives himself or herself into thinking that these gifts assumed, are accepted by the inner circle as genuine. Alas, the acting, the assumption of attainments out of one's own line do not pass for the real article. No one is fooled but the poseur.

Therefore, in our week end meditations we uphold sincerity as a sterling quality. Let us not reflect upon the greed faith and workmanship of the poet by striving to make others be-

lieve we have talents that are not and can never be ours.

E. H. NORBURN.

With the death of E. H. Norburn of Acton, who was associated with several members of The Times staff, as managing editor of The Gazette-News, there passed a newspaper man of the class that keeps alive the best traditions of journalism. Mr. Norburn was a young man, and for years was handicapped by bad health, but he had had time to do a great deal of good work in the newspaper field, to leave the impression of his sterling worth.

As a man Mr. Norburn combined many rare qualities. His gentleness, modesty (almost timidity) and consideration for others were most apparent, but they did not obscure his firmness and strength of purpose.

The feeling of Mr. Norburn's associates for him was one of deep affection. His devotion to his work was unusual, and he continued at his post of duty when its demands far exceeded the strength he should have given it.

BIRD PROTECTION.

In connection with the energetic efforts of Commissioner Ramsey to increase the bird census in Asheville, by fitting out attractive bungalows for the musical colony, one is reminded of Thomas Bailey Aldrich's delightful story, "Our New Neighbors at Ponkapog." A young couple are tremendously interested in the advent of an evidently newly mated pair who set up housekeeping in their neighborhood; their tiny home, their evident affection and musical tastes are all discussed through several pages; and it is not until the coming of the fledglings that one suddenly learns that the new Ponkapog people are just birds. Birds are good neighbors, and to induce the school children to build houses for their occupancy is to insure the interest and protection of these children, when they are men and women grown, for their feathered proteges, Mr. Ramsey has started an excellent work; we can't have too many bird houses and bird lovers.

THE WESTERN PRESS

"Up to Snuff" (Old Fort Sentinel)

Just as the sap is rising and the breath of spring is stirring—the poetic time "when a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love"—the Sentinel journals of a leap-year tragedy possessing all the "human interests" points for a sentimental thriller.

Taking advantage of her leap-year prerogative, a certain pretty maid of western highlands had "popped the question" and had been accepted by the blushing youth of her choice. In an ecstasy of bliss, she was about to embrace her captive, when he discovered the tell-tale trace of snuff upon her lips—and fled!

Fears, anguish, anger—all the emotions that belong to the game of hearts—possessed the snuff-stained dame; but the man of her choice had vanished, and she waits—and dips—alone.

This is no fancy sketch—we have the story straight—and we print it because of our hearty interest in the welfare and success of the leap-year lassies. But, girls, take our word for it, you can't hope to win out so long as you distort your face with quid and dip-stick and decorate the landscape with puddles of tobacco juice. If you're "up-to-snuff," just remember that "he" isn't—and cut out the nasty handicapping habit!

(Lanor News)

Boys, your industrial examples are bearing fruit, and are shining like the stars of the firmament. An ambition to do better than his boy caused a Haywood county farmer last year to make the record yield of corn in that county. It was 125.14 bushels of corn to the acre the highest yield in the history of Haywood. It was made by W. W. Wilson. It was a good year for the Wilsons.

Dare and Allegany (Jackson County News)

Our counties show great differences in willingness to bear tax burdens for public progress and prosperity. For instance, Dare with a per capita country wealth amounting to only \$47 is the poorest county in the state,

while Alleghany with a per capita county wealth of \$560 is the richest county in the state. Nevertheless, every school district in Dare levies a special school tax, while only two of the 40 school districts in Alleghany were special tax districts, according to the last report. Alleghany leads in wealth and lags in willingness; Dare lags in wealth and leads in willingness.

(Franklin Press)

The preliminary contest of the state high school triangular debate will be Friday night, March 31. The three high schools of the county, Tott, Higdonville and Franklip, will debate the question: Resolved, That the United States should adopt the policy to greatly increase its navy. Each school will send its negative to one of the other schools to meet that school affirmatively. The school winning both sides of the question will be eligible to enter the contest at Chapel Hill on April 7. The speakers for Franklin are: affirmative, Edgar Carpenter and George Dean; negative, Lettie Hurst and Mark Hawkins. This school is a school event that should be interesting to each of these communities, and the boys who are doing this work for their school should have the hearty support and encouragement of their school and community. Please work with them and for them. Ask them about it occasionally; show them that you want your school to win and you believe that it will. Let's give Franklin's affirmative and Higdonville's negative a good audience at the graded school building the 21st of March.

That Editorial Dream (Mitchell County Banner)

It was in the small silent hours of the night, when all our people were peacefully reposing in the slumber of innocence.

The god of dreams hovered over the editorial couch and spoke in soft and glowing tones of a vacation in the sweet summer times, with a brain relaxed from the tiresome labors of mental toil and the green slopes of a gently flowing stream abounding with the finny tribe.

And the god whispered into the editorial ear and this is what it said: "There are many good people who owe sundry sums on subscription. These people are honest, and they mean to pay, but their minds are engrossed in weightier affairs; to the exclusion of the editor and his needs. I, the God of dreams, will lay the hand of wisdom and remembrance upon these people, to the end that they will all give of their abundant store the little that is justly due. And when each good citizen has handed in the mite that is due, I, the God of Dreams,

With The Women

BY RUTH PINCH.

Dramatic societies have in time past flourished in Asheville. The Strollers, under the fine direction of Burnette Jordan, produced good plays in excellent style and with most artistic stage management. But Asheville has never had a theater for the production of good amateur plays. Our sister city, Winston-Salem has passed us in the dramatic race and we did not even know she was running. Professor Ernest L. Starr, of Salem college is the director of the Drama society. The society puts on its plays in its own playhouse, known as "The Little Theater, Home of the Drama Society." Are we not envious? With Dr. Archibald Henderson, of Chapel Hill, an international authority on the drama, North Carolina should follow far in the development of the theater. Dr. Henderson's book, "The Changing Drama," is read and quoted wherever there is discussion of plays and players.


Ruth would love to see a Little Theater devoted to amateur dramatics, and she would also love to see a Woman's club house, fitted up as a home for all the city clubs and woman's organizations. Happy thought, why not combine the two? After Reciprocity day in Tryon, North Carolina, Asheville women will be led with the spirit of emulation, they will want to have a club almost, if not quite, as creditable, as little Tryon's.

You who would wear gloves, prepared to buy them now. Gloves as we know but do not realize, are made in Germany, when they are not made in France. Local dealers say that it is almost impossible to buy gloves, the serviceable chamois, a favorite especially for summer wear is no more. Chamois gloves can no longer be purchased—and if the war continues, we shall soon go barehanded of necessity.

One of the prettiest stories of the war is told by special correspondent to the New York Sun. It is the tale of a little daughter of an English regiment, a child too young to tell her name or home, who was found by the soldier boys, in a ditch by the roadside at La Bussée. She was taken into the trenches, and after the fashion of some rare children made herself happily at home in her rude surroundings. Sleeping on a military coat, while shells whizzed and cannon roared, did not disturb her; she thrived on camp fare and won the love of every heart that beat beneath a Khaki jacket. She was found by Private Philip Impey, who soon after saved up his life for his country. His comrades christened the little wife, Phyllis and gave her the surname of the departed soldier. The company storekeeper, who had little daughters at home, took her in charge, and she was as daintily kept and cared for as the strange circumstances allowed.

One day the hearts of the regiment stood still, for small Phyllis awoke from her afternoon nap and strode, unsmiling, from the trenches into the rifle range of the Germans. Calmly she tripped along and the enemy serving their fire welcomed the baby, fed her upon chocolate and sent her back to her own command. The sergeant-major of the company was wounded and returned to England,

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do decree that when the sunny days are come again the editor shall leave this toil for a week of rest in some far away spot, where mind and heart may regain the strength and courage for better and greater things in the days to come. And the God of Dreams will bestow his benign approval upon all diligent subscribers who hearken unto this his sage and earnest advice.

If ever a dream comes true, the editor prays that this may be the one. And he has faith that it will be even so.

(Rutherford Sun)
At the last term of Superior court one of the cases tried was suit for damages sustained in a collision of two automobiles the jury giving the plaintiff \$45.00, the amount sued for.

Auto owners and drivers at all times should bear in mind that they are subject to prosecution for careless or reckless driving, or any violation of the automobile law, and that it is the duty of sheriffs, police officers, constables and other law officers to arrest all offenders.

Reckless driving in this section of the state is especially dangerous on account of the many sharp curves in roads. The public is entitled to protection from the speed fiend and if drivers will not use due care of their own accord, there will be general approval of the course of officers in seeing that offenders are prosecuted.

A Commentator.
"What is a counterattack, pa?"
"When your mother goes shopping, Johnny."—Judge.

The child was sent with him and is now in Bedford, under womanly care—but is still attached to the regiment, and will later have all the educational and home advantages a child with a whole trench full of soldier papas should enjoy.

Of interest to the club women is the new arrangement of magazines at the Pack Square library. It has been the custom to tie the year's periodicals in packages and place them upon the shelves, where they have not been readily accessible—except to cobwebs and dust. Only the Century, the Harper's and Living Age are bound every twelve months. By the new system all the magazines formerly unbound are placed in self binders, three copies in a binder, and stand like other volumes upon the shelf. They are readily available for reference and can be conveniently held and read. It is entailing a great deal of work upon our industrious, faithful librarians to bind all back numbers in this manner, but when the binding is brought up to date, the improvement will be a substantial one and one more progressive feature of our excellent library.

At the recent presentation of the portrait of Lee to the Grace school, by the U. D. C. Mrs. Robert C. Stevens recited the following original verses, of her own composition:

An Ode to the Grace Schoolhouse.
Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
That never to himself has said,
"This is my own, my native 'hearth'?"
Whose heart has ne'er within him burned,
As to the schoolhouse he hath turned,
In shadows of the peak beneath:

My memory holds a house of logs,
Upon the summit of the hill,
Where callow youth true wisdom sought,
And some are seeking for it still.

But time with changes hath been fraught,
The logs gave place to frame and wood,
And there bright youths and maids were taught
To see for all that lift holds good.

Two decades pass, and progress still
In wisdom held its sway,
The wooden structure then gave place
To brick and mortar—seen today.
A corps of teachers hold the space
Which one was wont to fill;
And still the schoolhouse is the light
That shines a-top the knowledge hill.

The current issue of the North Carolina Christian Advocate has a poem of Mrs. Stevens, "Day to Day," used as a frontispiece.

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