

### The Daily Tar Heel

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Wednesday, January 6, 1932

#### These Discriminating Critics

On and on rolls the tide of culture, sweeping criticism to greater and greater heights. Now must bow in shame for their puny efforts all the great critics of the ages. Montaigne and Saint Beuve wear but withered laurels in a gloomy age.

Beginning with effuse encomiums, then passing through the various warmths of panegyrics, criticism has latterly jumped to all the phantasmagoria of red hot hyperbole. No longer can a conservative critic recommend a tone because it is "well worth reading," "or passable stuff," but now the jaded reading public's interest must be scared by such phrases as "a book for the ages," "the greatest master of English prose since Chaucer, and time's masterpiece."

William Lyon Phelps, whose province is the whole universe and whose erudite platitudes astound the knowing world monthly as he issues his *Ex-Cathedra* from Yale, that austere and monastic seat of culture, or the more mundane but still as cultured New York, leads the field in both the warmth of his praise and his charming indiscriminate. However, not far distant from the critical Parnassus that Phelps has staked out and laid claim to are struggling *The Saturday Review of Literature*, *The New York Sun*, *The Outlook*, *The New York Herald*, *Carl Sandburg*, *Ford Madox Ford*, *Frank H. Simmonds*, and *Hugh Walpole*.

If you desire proof, pick up any of the so-called literary journals, or reviews. Here is the result of perusing but one of these factors in the improvement of the race:

Sara Teasdale, who writes fair poetry well, says of Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, "It is masterpiece in conception and penetration."

About Kenneth Burke's *Coun-*

ter Statement the careful New York Times ventured this modest bit, "The essay on Psychology and Form is good for all time...."

Another story for all time has been uncovered by an E. M. Delafield who declares that Naomi Mitchison's *The Corn King and The Spring Queen* is "A story for all time."

The learned *Saturday Review of Literature* grows ecstatic over Lytton Strachey; to wit, "The greatest writer of English prose now living."

Owen D. Young, master of finance and international problems, eager for new laurels has recently assayed to criticize Frank H. Simmonds' *Can Europe Keep the Peace* with this startling effect: "The most illuminating and comprehensive statement of conditions in the policies governing the European situation which I know of."

But Mr. Simmonds parried neatly in *The New York Herald-Tribune* by referring to Winston Churchill's *The Unknown War* as "The single volume so far produced which supplies an adequate notion...." This triangle could be most effectively completed by Churchill's eulogy of "The Young Plan."

Not only are there books-of-the-month, but books of the year. Dr. Laurence Stallings, still resting on the glory of his war play, claims for *Wellington* by Philip Guedalla that "This is the book of the year... easily" (hands down) "a book to go on the shelf with the great English biographies." Boswell, then has lived in vain.

But *Wellington* was the best book of the year only until Lewis Gannet could dust off his typewriter to speak of *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* which he names as "The most important book of 1931." But this time he does not stand alone. The sweet singer of rutabagas, Carl Sandburg, also cleaves to *The Autobiography*. Of it he says, "One of those curious books we know in our time is destined to be a classic." Sandburg's classicism is a conviction he has arrived at since he wrote "The Fog" and "Chicago."

Gleb Botkin now basks under the encomium of *The Outlook's* review of his *The Real Romanovs* in which it was held that only "once in a century comes a book like this," which is safe praise, however, when rigidly examined, few authors ever rewriting their books either in their own century or any other for that matter.

William Lyon Phelps was unable to contain himself after he had read Edna Ferber's *American Beauty* but rushed to press with this contribution, to *belle lettres*, "It is a masterpiece.... It is a work of pure literature, but it is also a contribution to history, to economics, to philosophy." The publishers have yet however to advertise it as a textbook in these last named fields.

Hugh Walpole, whose specialty is picking first novels, came to the rescue of A. J. Cronin's *Hatter's Castle* with the statement that it is "the finest first novel since the war." Of Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward Angel* the discriminating Walpole is reputed to have casually remarked that it was "the finest novel in any language."

There will be no "mute, inglorious Miltons" to "blush unseen upon the desert air" in this generation. The mutual admiration society that exists among the literary men of the age and their grateful satellites will ferret out all the classics, the finest firsts, the greats, and the extraordinary before they have finished their manuscripts and are still hawking their literature from publisher to publisher. What is more, this condition will

be with us and will continue until critics and reviewers become old-fashioned enough to read the books they review.

#### The Changing Fraternity Situation

The fraternity man of today, while he may feel himself slightly more fortunate in his social milieu than his fellow collegian who belongs to no fraternity, entertains no false ideas of an assumed superiority. Some eight or ten years ago, a man was said to "rate" if he belonged to one of the leading fraternities; otherwise, he could be either an athlete or a nonentity. Before that, the rift between the faction on the campus that wore the badge of a Greek-letter order and the faction that didn't, was so great that they even published rival papers, the *Old Tar Heel*, and the *Blue and White*.

At present, a student need not be affiliated with any particular organization to attain prominence in the many spheres of activity at Carolina. True, the German club is under fraternity control; but even so, it's a far cry back to the time when the Greeks had charge of practically everything but the registrar's office.

The situation is far more wholesome than ever before. It is good for the non-fraternity man because it gives him assurance that his success in any activity entered will be regulated by his ability alone; it is good for the various activities because the best available men will be in charge; and it is good for the fraternities because they will have to produce good men in order to be represented in responsible positions on the campus.—E.K.G.

#### Sane Confidence Required

With 1,345 banks having closed their doors during 1930 and 1,753 failures reported during the first ten months of 1931, the public cannot help but ask itself, why is this true? Despite the fact that it seems logical that these failures should soon stop, hardly a day passes that the newspapers do not carry an account of some other bank that has gone into the hands of a receiver.

Several factors of equal importance have their influence in bringing about so many failures. Collapse in values due to a general deflation in every field; payment of 4 per cent to depositors while bonds are only returning 3 per cent; a large part of loans being made solely on mortgages, and an under-investment on funds, are only a few of the numerous causes for so many of the bank failures.

Aside from these, however, another factor that is responsible for a large majority of the failures is the fact that there are so many hysterical withdrawals being made by depositors who have lost all confidence in the banks. No matter how strong a bank might be otherwise, a large part of its success must depend on the confidence of its depositors. And as soon as this is lost and a "run" is begun, the bank is in grave danger of soon being forced to close its doors.

Within the past few months some of the strongest banks in this country have closed their doors as a result of an excess number of withdrawals. The only reason for these withdrawals was the fact that the depositors "heard" that the banks were not able to continue. Even the slightest rumor that there is even a possibility of a bank's not being sound will ultimately bring about a downfall of a one-time strong bank.

As a prevention of starting such a rumor, persons doubting the strength of a bank should first verify their doubt before making any statement or before

withdrawing their accounts. Not only is it fair to the bank itself but it is also considerate of the other depositors as well as banks in other parts of the state. When a bank in one city fails, the depositors to banks in other cities immediately begin to lose confidence in their own banks. And before long the public is surprised to read in the papers that a record number of banks have failed during the previous week. Why? Simply because some hysterical person lost confidence in the strength of his bank, withdrew his account, told his friends of his actions, and before long the wave of gossip had started a "run" which swept the bank off its feet.

Rumor is a powerful weapon and is dangerous when used by thoughtless persons.—C.G.R.

#### With Contemporaries

#### Free Speech

Free speech in schools is essential to successful, progressive perpetuation of the desirable qualities of the existing civilization. The American Association of University Professors took due cognizance of this fact and recently voted to boycott colleges and universities which curb the right of free speech.

The successful pursuit of truth and enlightenment presupposes liberty. The main objective of any school should be to teach young people how to think, not what to think. The true aim or purpose of the school will be thwarted, if the freedom of speech of instructors is abridged. Free, examined thought is indispensable. Sociocrats maintained that the unexamined life is not worth living.

It is much better—more safe from a social standpoint—if students bump up against all kinds of "isms" and radical theories in school, rather than in later life when they may have extreme difficulty in arriving at a true and just analysis of these movements and opinions. Impulses and uncriticized opinions are dangerous. They require developing into rational, sane concepts, and this is possible only by means of free, unhampered discussion and teaching.

The association is justified in the stand it has taken. It bodes ill for the permanency and welfare of our nation, if teachers in schools, especially in universities, are denied complete freedom of speech.—*University Daily Kansan*.

Prosperity, we are told is just around the corner, but we ask, Where in the deuce is the corner?

## Longing For Former Stage Life Is Cause Of Maude Adams' Comeback

Actress Who Immortalized Role of Peter Pan Tells Daily Tar Heel Reporter Reasons for Her Recent Appearance in Drama.

By V. C. Royster

"I never really got over being off the stage," said Maude Adams, noted actress for over a generation, to the *Daily Tar Heel* reporter in an interview granted at a Raleigh hotel last week. "The old actor can never outgrow that strange power of the stage."

An old lady of fifty-eight, she sat on the edge of her easy chair and spoke hesitantly, somewhat shyly, of the reasons for her dramatic comeback. A few moments before, upon opening the door to her hotel room, the reporter had been surprised to find himself facing a small old woman, worn and tired. It was quite a shock to find how heavily the years had dealt with her. Was this the immortal star of Peter Pan?

#### Still Peter Pan

Politely she invited the reporter in and sat for a few moments idly talking. As she talked she smiled, a winsome, vivacious smile. The saddened expression on her face faded and her eyes grew bright. The reporter could almost hear her saying, "Do you believe in fairies?"

Here was Peter Pan. Here was the woman whose name for the past generation has been known all over the English speaking world and has stood foremost in the field of drama.

Over thirteen years ago she suddenly and somewhat mysteriously dropped from out the

theatrical eye. "Too old," they said. That was years ago. Now, today, she tours the country as Portia in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. She played in Raleigh last week and the thunderous applause that followed her betokens the esteem in which she is held.

The reporter asked her how she liked playing Portia. She smiled. But this time it was a sad little smile as she said that she did. She went on to tell how she had played Shakespeare before, appearing as Juliet and Rosalind, but never before in *The Merchant of Venice*. As she talked the reporter looked for Portia, but in vain. He saw only Peter Pan in her eyes. Even her motions were quick and spontaneous, not at all like the stately Portia.

It was time to go. The reporter arose and walked towards the door. Once more he endeavored to make her say something about her self or the role she was to play.

"Miss Adams, don't you think the court scene and the plea of Portia for Antonio give excellent chance for you to display your dramatic ability?"

She laughed, not a dignified laugh, the laugh of a lady past middle age, but the light, demure laugh of a young girl. That was the answer.

The reporter went away reluctantly, but he never saw Portia. Maude Adams has come back.

#### LOST

A male pointer dog. Color white with brown patches. One brown ear with white hair giving it a frosty look. Age about 2 years. A reward is offered for information leading to its recovery. Notify C. L. Eaddy, 303 Pritchard Ave.

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