

The Franklin Press

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The Press invites its readers to express their opinions through its columns and each week it plans to carry Letters to the Editor on its editorial page. This newspaper is independent in its policies and is glad to print both sides of any question. Letters to the Editor should be written legibly on only one side of the paper and should be of reasonable length. Of course, the editor reserves the right to reject letters which are too long or violate one's better sensibilities.

Weekly Bible Thought:

"Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed."—Ps. 37: 3.

No Place for Politics

THE State Highway Commission has assumed a monumental task in taking over the maintenance of county roads throughout the state. In Macon county alone there are nearly five hundred miles of county roads, the upkeep of which now devolves upon the new department of the state highway body.

When the General Assembly voted to put this heavy responsibility on the highway commission it was hoped that much of the local politics which hitherto had entered into the county road problem would be eliminated. The new maintenance forces went into action only a little more than two months ago but already small-minded politicians are endeavoring to take the work out of the hands of the engineers and use the new organization for partonage purposes. The inefficiency of the old system was largely due to the fact that it lent itself to political machinations. It is sincerely hoped that officials of the Highway Commission, in the interest of good roads and good government, will deal firmly with this problem and disregard the advice of local politicians solely interested in exploiting a new source of patronage. Highway maintenance, like highway building, is a matter of engineering. The less politics enters into it the better roads we will have. The new maintenance organization's job is sufficiently difficult without having it complicated by politics.

The Highway Commission, more than any other part of the state government, should be non-partisan. Whenever it becomes the machine of any particular party, or any faction of a party, its purposes will be defeated.

Sometimes we are inclined to doubt the wisdom of the General Assembly in turning over to the state such a local matter as county road upkeep. However, this has already been done and, in full justice to ourselves as well as to the Highway Commission, we should give the road authorities full opportunity to work out their salvation. This they will never be able to accomplish if they are hampered by meddling politicians.

School Consolidations Inevitable

SCHOOL consolidations are an inevitable result of modern educational methods and the development of good roads and automotive transportation. No matter how much we regret the passing of the little white or red school house, as the case may be, we can not deny the fact that well equipped consolidated schools with three or four teachers, instead of one, afford a higher standard of educational facilities.

The chief complaint made when a small rural school is merged with another is that the school children have to trudge too far from home. In some instances this is indeed the unfortunate truth, but usually, when a consolidation is viewed as a whole, it is found that it works to the advantage of a majority of the school children concerned. If the schools are a great distance from the homes of the children school busses usually are provided. We do not deny that there are a few instances in which consolidations appear to work a hardship on a few children, but we do not know of a single case where, in the long run, consolidations have failed to benefit a majority of all concerned.

When complaints arise following consolidations they usually are directed at the county authorities. Under the present system the county authorities have very little to do with it. Consolidations are planned and directed by the state department of public instruction and the state equalization board. When orders are given for consolidation, the local authorities are powerless to continue the school or schools eliminated, for nearly all the funds with which the schools are operated come from the state.

"There is only one truly valid and enduring title to land, and that is the undertaking to make the best possible use of it. This holds for a continent, for an archipelago, for a quarter-section farm in Iowa. A man may have a perfect legal title to his farm, but if he is a slacker on the land he will surely lose it."—Garet Garet, in The Saturday Evening Post, February 21, 1931.

Cimarron



by Edna Ferber

Illustrations by Irwin Myers

(Continued from last week)

For years the meandering red clay roads that were little more than trails had seen only occasional buggies, farm wagons, horsemen, an Indian family creeping along in a miserable cart or—rarely—an automobile making perilous progress through the thick dust in the dry season or the slippery dough in the wet. Now those same roads were choked, impassable. The frail wooden one-way bridges over creeks and draws sagged and splintered with the stream of traffic, but no one took the time to repair them. A torrent of vehicles of every description flowed without ceasing, night and day. Frequently the torrent choked itself with its own volume, and then the thousands were piled there, locked, cursing, writhing, battling, on their way to the oil fields. From the Crook Nose field to Wahoo was a scant four miles; it sometimes took half a day to cover it in a motor car. Trucks, drays, wagons, rigs, flivvers, backboards. Every day was like the day of the Opening back in '89. Millionaire promoters from the East, engineers, prospectors, drillers, tool dressers, shooters, pumpjacks, roostabouts, Indians. Men in London-tailored suits and shirts from Charvet's. Only the ruthless and desperate survived. In the days of the covered wagon scarcely twenty years earlier those roads had been trails over the hot, dry plains marked by the bleaching skull of a steer or the carcass of a horse, picked clean by the desert scavengers and turned white and desolate to the blazing sky. A wagon wheel, a rusted rim, a split wagon tongue lay at the side of the trail, mute evidence of a traveler laboriously crawling his way across the prairie. Now the ditches by the side of these same roads were strewn with the bodies of wrecked and abandoned automobiles, their skeletons stripped and rotting, their lamps starting up at the sky like sightless eyes, testimony to the passing of the modern ravisher of that tortured region. Up and down the dust-choked roads, fenders ripped off like flies' wings, wheels interlocking, trucks overturned, loads sunk in the mud, plank bridges splitting beneath the strain. Devil take the hindmost. It was like an army push, but without an army's morale or discipline. Bear Creek boasted a killing a day and not a jail nor a courthouse for miles around. Men and women, manacled to a common chain, were marched like slave convicts down the road to the nearest temple of justice, a rough pine-shack in a town that had sprung overnight on the prairie. There were no railroads where there had been no towns.

Boilers loaded on two wagons were hauled by twenty-mule-team outfits. Stuck in the mud as they inevitably were, only mules could have pulled the load out. Long lines of them choked the already impassable road. Wagons were heaped with the pipes through which the oil must be led; with lumber, hardware, rigs, tools, portable houses—all the vast paraphernalia of sudden wealth and growth in a frontier community.

Tough, careless young boys drove the nitro-glycerin cars, a deadly job on those rough and crowded roads. It was this precious and dreadful stuff that shot the oil up out of the earth. Hard lads in corduroys took their chances and pocketed their high pay, driving the death-dealing wagons, singing as they drove, a red shirt tied to a pole flaunting its warning at the back of the load. Often an expected wagon would fail to appear. The workers on the field never took the trouble to trace it or the time to wait for it. They knew that somewhere along the road was a great gaping hole, with never a sizable fragment of wood or steel or bone or flesh anywhere for yards around to tell the tale they already knew.

Acres that had been carefully tended so that they might yield their scanty crop of cabbages, onions, potatoes were abandoned to oil, the garden truck rotting in the ground. Rawboned farmers and their scrawny wives and pindling brats, grown, spectacularly rich overnight, walked out of their

houses without taking the trouble to move the furniture or lock the door. It was not worth while. They left the sleazy curtains on the windows, the pots on the stove. The oil crew, clanking in, did not bother to wreck the house unless they found it necessary. In the midst of an inferno of oil rigs, drills, smoke, steam, and seeping oil itself the passer-by would often see a weather-beaten farmhouse, its windows broken, its front askew, like a beldame gone mad, gray hair streaming about her crazed face as she stared out at the pandemonium of oil hell about her.

The farmers moved into Osage, or Oklahoma City, or Wahoo. They bought automobiles and silk shirts and gew-gaws, like children. The men sat on the front porch in shirt sleeves and stocking feet and spat tobacco juice into the fresh young grass.

Mile on mile, as far as the eye could see, were the skeleton frames of oil rigs outlined against the sky like giant Martian figures stalking across the landscape. Horrible new towns—Bret Harte wooden-front towns—sprang up overnight on the heels of an oil strike; towns inhabited by people who never meant to stay in them; stark and hideous houses thrown up by dwellers who never intended to remain in them; rude frontier crossroad stores stuffed with the necessities of frontier life and the luxuries of sudden wealth all jumbled together in a sort of mercantile miscegenation. The thump and clank of the pump and drill; curses, shouts; the clatter of thick dishes, the clink of glasses, the shrill laughter of women; fly-infested shanties. Oil, smearing itself over the prairies like a plague, killing the grass, blighting the trees, spreading over the surface of the creeks and rivers. Signs tracked to tree stumps or posts; For Ambulance Call 487. Sim Neely, Undertaker. Call 549. Call Doctor Keogh 735.

Oklahoma—the Red People's country—lay heaving under the hot summer sun, a scarred and dreadful thing with the oil drooling down its face a viscous stream.

Tracy Wyatt, who used to drive the bus and dray line between Wahoo and Osage, standing up to the reins like a good-natured red-faced charioteer as the wagon bumped over the rough roads, was one of the richest men in Oklahoma—in the whole of the United States, for that matter, Wyatt. The Wyatt Oil company. In another five years the Wyatt Oil companies. You were to see their signs all over the world. The "Big Boys" from the East were to come to him, hat in hand, to ask his advice about this; to seek his favor for that. The sum of his daily income was fantastic. The mind simply did not grasp it. Tracy himself was, by now, a portly and not undignified looking man of a little more than fifty. His good-natured, rubicund face wore the grave slightly astonished look of a commonplace man who suddenly finds himself a personage.

Mrs. Wyatt, plainer, more horse-faced than ever in her expensive New York clothes, tried to patronize Sabra Cravat, but the Whipple blood was no match for the Marcy. The new money affected Mrs. Wyatt queerly. She became nervous, full of spleen, and the eastern doctors spoke to her of high blood pressure.

Sabra frankly envied these lucky ones. A letter from the adder-tongued Felice Venable to her daughter was characteristic of that awesome old matriarch. Sabra still dreaded to open her mother's letters. They always contained a sting.

"All this talk of oil and millions and every one in Oklahoma rolling in it. I'll be bound that you and that husband of yours haven't so much as enough to fill a lamp. Trust Yancey Cravat to get hold of the wrong piece of land. Well, at least you can't be disappointed. It has been like that from the day you married him, though you can't say your mother didn't warn you. I hope Donna—I show more sense."

Donna, home after two years at Miss Dingham's on the Hudson, seemed indeed to be a granddaughter after Felice Venable's

own heart. She was in coloring, contour, manner, and outlook, so unlike the other Oklahoma girls—Czarina McKee, Gazelle Slaughter, Jewel Riggs, Maurine Turket—as to make that tortured, wind-deviled day of her birth on the Oklahoma prairie almost nineteen years ago seem impossible. Even during her homecomings in the summer vacations she had about her an air of cool disdain together with a kind of disillusioned calculation very disconcerting to her former intimates, not to speak of her own family.

The other girls living in Osage and Oklahoma City and Guthrie and Wahoo were true products of the new raw Southwest country. They liked to dress in crude high colors—glaring pinks, cerise, yellow, red, vivid orange, magenta. They made up naively with white powder and big daubs of carmine on either cheek. The daughters of more wealthy parents drove their own cars in a day when this was considered rather daring for a woman. Donna came home tall, thin to the point of scrawinness in



"What a Rotten Deal You've Had, Sabra, Dear"

her opinion; sallow, unroughed, drawing, mysterious. She talked with an eastern accent, ignored the letter r, said eyether and nyether and rihally and altogether made herself poisonously unpopular with the girls and undeniably stirring to the boys. She paid very little heed to the clumsy attentions of the Oklahoma hometown lads, adopting toward them a serpent-of-the-Nile attitude very baffling to these frank and open-faced prairie products.

Her school days finished, and she a finished product of those days, she now looked about her coolly, calculatingly. Her mother she regarded with a kind of affectionate amusement.

"What a rotten deal you've had, Sabra, dear," she would drawl. "Rih'allly, I don't see how you've stood it all these years."

Sabra would come to her own defense, goaded by something strangely hostile in herself toward this remote, disdainful offspring. "Stood What?"

"Oh—you know. This being a pioneer woman and a professional Marcy and head-held-high in spite of a bum husband."

"Donna Cravat, if you ever again dare to speak like that of your father I shall punish you, as big as you are."

"Sabra, darling, how can you punish a grown woman? You might slap me, and I wouldn't slap you back, of course. But I'd be terribly embarrassed for you. As for father—he is a museum piece. You know it."

"Your father is one of the greatest figures the Southwest has ever produced."

"Mm. Well, he's picturesque enough, I suppose. But I wish he hadn't worked so hard at it. And Cim! There's a brother! A great help to me in my career, the men folks of this quaint family."

JUST HUMANS

By GENE CARR



"He Just Came Back From Greece."
"What's He Do?"
"He's in the Lard Business!"

I'm not blaming you. If it weren't for you we'd all be on the town—or back in Wichita living on grandpa in genteel poverty. I think you're wonderful, and I ought to try to be like you. But I don't want to be a girl reporter. Describing the sumptuous decorations of dandelions and sunflowers at one of Cassandra Sipes' parties."

Goaded by curiosity and a kind of wonder at this unnatural creature, Sabra must put her question: "What do you want to do, then?"

"I want to marry the richest man in Oklahoma, and build a palace that I'll hardly ever live in, and travel like royalty, and clank with emeralds. With my skin and hair they're my stone."

"Oh, emeralds, by all means," Sabra agreed, cuttingly. "Diamonds are so ordinary. And the gentleman that you consider honoring—let me see. From your requirements that would have to be Tracy Wyatt, wouldn't it?"

"Yes," replied Donna, calmly. "You've probably overlooked Mrs. Wyatt. Of course, Tracy's only fifty-one, and you being nineteen, there's plenty of time if you'll just be patient." She was too amused to be really disturbed.

"I don't intend to be patient,

mamma darling."

Something in her hard, ruthless tone startled Sabra. "Donna Cravat, don't you start any of your monkey business. I saw you cooing and ah-ing at him the other day when we went over the Wyatt's new house. And I heard you saying some drivel about his being a man that craved beauty in his life, and that he should have it; and sneering politely at the newhouse until I could see him beginning to doubt everything in it, poor fellow. He had been so proud to show it. But I thought you were just talking that New York talk of yours."

"I wasn't. I was talking business." Sabra was revolted, alarmed, and distressed, all at once. She gained reassurance by telling herself that this was just one of Donna's queer jokes—part of the streak in her that Sabra had never understood and that corresponded to the practical joker in Yancey. That, too, had always bewildered her. Absorbed in the workings of the growing, thriving newspaper the conversation faded to a dim and almost unimportant memory.

(Continued next week)

Vaccination For Typhoid Schedule

Schools to be visited and vaccinated to prevent typhoid fever on the dates here given:

BURNINGTOWN Aug. 31—Sept. 7-14	ELLIJAY Sept. 25—Oct. 2-9
Oak Dale Burningtown Morgans Tellico	Masiburn Branch Cullasaja Higdonville Ellijay
COWEE Sept. 1-8-15	SUGARFORK Oct. 12-19-26
Rose Creek Harmony Liberty Cowee Oak Grove	Walnut Creek Buck Creek Pine Grove Gold Mine
SMITH'S BRIDGE, etc. Sept. 2-9-16	This vaccination treatment is a preventive of typhoid fever. It is given FREE to all the people of Macon County, regardless of age, who will meet the physician at the places and dates here given. Three trips to the school house in the various districts may be the means of saving a long spell of sickness and it may be life. In some sections of Macon County a few cases of typhoid have been reported this Summer. You never can tell when you may be infected. VACCINATION gives IMMUNITY for from one to three years. It costs only a little time to be on the safe side.
Clark's Chapel Hickory Knoll Upper Tesenta Otto	It is the expectation of the Boards of Commissioners, Education, and Health that not less than 10,000 people in the County will be vaccinated this time.
SMITH'S BRIDGE, etc. Sept. 3-10-17	From the nature of the case it will not be possible to tell the exact hour at which the doctor will arrive. He will follow this schedule: He will get to the first school house on the list in each group by or soon after 8:30 A. M. Eastern Time. He will proceed on to each school in that particular group as rapidly as he can. For example: In the first group given, he will begin at Oak Dale about 8:30 A. M. then Burningtown, next Morgans, and last at Tellico, and so on through all the other groups. If he should fail to reach some schools which are last in their group before school closing time, 4:00 P. M., the people should wait till he arrives. The schedule given here will be followed exactly.
Union Coweta Mulberry	
FRANKLIN Sept. 4-11-18	
Totta Olive Hill Pattons Colored School Skeenah	
NANTAHALA Sept. 21-28—Oct. 5	
Aquone Kyle Otter Creek Camp Branch Fair View Beecher.	
HIGHLANDS Sept. 22-29—Oct. 6	
Highlands Sealy	
FRANKLIN and Cartoogechaye Sept. 23-30—Oct. 7	
Franklin Slagle Allison-Watts Rainbow Springs	
MILL SHOAL Sept. 24—Oct. 1-8	
Watauga Oak Ridge Holly Springs Mountain Grove	

M. D. BILLINGS, Supt. Schools and Secy. Co. Board of Health. August 21, 1931.