

# WRITER'S DIGEST

Over 200  
Different  
Markets  
in Every  
Issue

FEBRUARY, 1940

## **SELLING ADVENTURES**

By HENRY KUTTNER

## **ACTION, AND HOW!**

By EMILE C. SCHNURMACHER

## **SPORTING PROPOSITION**

By ARTHUR K. BARNES

## **THE JUVENILE NOVEL**

By H. W. TEMPLE

## **LEAGUES WITH LEERS**

By JACK WOODFORD

# WRITERS COST AGENTS \$100

## Advice To Scribes On the Make

**TWO** of the leading literary agents in New York were recently guest speakers at my Foundations in Fiction Writing course in New York University. They said that the cost of carrying each client is \$100 a year, not including the cost of the time of the agent himself. For this reason, they explained, an author who is not to be a cash loss to an agent must produce copy that will sell for at least \$1,000 a year (the commission of an agent being 10 percent).

"If you are this good," said these agents to my writers, "you need the help of a sympathetic literary agent. If you haven't done this well, you need instruction, criticism, expert advice, such as offered in this course." I omit the names of these agents at their request; they do not advertise, do not charge fees, and do not wish the expense of returning unsolicited copy.

**THOMAS H. UZZELL** Author of standard college text, "Narrative Technique," and of "Writing As a Career," both published by Harcourt, Brace & Co. Author stories and articles in *Saturday Evening Post*, *Woman's Home Companion*, *Scribner's*, *The English Journal*, *The American Scholar*, *Saturday Review of Literature*, etc. Formerly Fiction Editor of *Collier's*. Instructor in fiction writing at New York University. Special lecturer at University of Missouri, Columbia University, and Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College.

342 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

I never feature sales in my advertisements but this doesn't mean that writers I help are not selling. Story writers, novelists, playwrights, radio, movie writers, editors, I have trained and seen started on their careers are making good all over this country. My time, energy, enthusiasm go to helping them make the first important contact, make the first, perhaps small, sale. The work of established authors I am helping is sold by agents. If you wish to be staggered with some sales figures, write me or drop in and see my secretary.

The minimum cost for a first contact is \$3 for an Agency Report on a story not exceeding 5,000 words. The fee for a Collaborative Criticism is \$5, same maximum length. My pamphlet, "How I Work With Writers," gives full explanation of my methods and is free for the asking. A letter of inquiry will be answered promptly and fully.

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# The Forum

Sir:

You might be interested to know that I first got hold of *Writers Digest* about five years ago. About a year later I began to sell and have since appeared in: *Public Enemy, Federal Agent, The Feds, Shadow, Crime Busters, Clues, Mystery*, the *Philadelphia Enquirer*. In addition I happen to have a regular work-day job, a wife, sister-in-law, two of the finest boys you ever saw—and, oh yes—a dog! My suggestion to writers who are trying to get started: *Writers Digest* and John L. Nanovic, Editor with *Street & Smith Publications*.

EDW. J. DOHERTY,  
1777 Troy Avenue,  
Brooklyn, New York.

Sir:

My partner and I are writing a book which will contain the biographies of every champion professional boxer in every weight class from John L. Sullivan to Joe Louis.

We would like to enlist the aid of any "Digest" subscriber who has information concerning a boxing champion of present or former days.

We read every issue of your superb magazine from cover to cover. It gives us glowing inspiration and many valuable ideas. It's the greatest of the writer's mags!!

Arthur J. Burks is still our favorite contributor. Here's a guy who knows his way around!

Wish us luck on our first great literary venture. We'll need it!

HUGH GEESLIN  
WILLIAM C. HEWITT  
928 Pine Avenue,  
Albany, Georgia.

Sir:

I received a letter in my mail this week which has reduced me to an extremely saddened state. I happen to know and like the agent from whom it came, but I am nevertheless going to write him a very cross reply.

His letter informed me that two new love pulp mags were about to be launched and suggested that I send him anything which had gone the rounds and I would be willing to sell for a small price in order to break into this market. At first glance this looks like a good idea. Why not pick up twenty or thirty dollars apiece for a few stories that I'll never otherwise realize anything from?

But of course it isn't a good idea at all. I like to fancy that after several years of selling to the pulp field my name has some small drawing power with readers. Why then should I allow that name to appear on the contents pages of rival magazines and possibly wean customers away from my better paying markets? That sort of "I will compete with me" practice obviously isn't good sense, and

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## Something New



### UNDER THE STORY SELLING SUN

Dear Colleague:

Captain Bligh, following the Mutiny on the *Bounty*, succeeded in navigating a 24-foot launch across 3600 miles of stormy and, at the time, almost wholly unfamiliar seas, in what stands as the most remarkable open-boat voyage ever recorded.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR OWN NAVIGATION? Are your story manuscripts finding anchorage in hospitable harbors? Or are they tossing about in mid-ocean, with all ports closed against them, until they become disreputable derelicts?

When a navigator of sea, or sky, loses his bearings or is carried off his course by wind or current, he "shoots the sun" with his sextant, learns his latitude and longitude, and sets a new course to his destination.

Have you been misled by false beacons or buoys in your writing, and lost your bearings? WHY NOT "SHOOT THE SUN" TODAY and get help in setting your new course from a board of veteran skippers who, among them, know every reef and port in the seven seas of story-writing and selling?

We of the Story-Market Clinic COMBINE the writer's, the editor's, the teacher's, and the literary agent's points of view. Our clients receive the benefit of OUR INTEGRATED JUDGMENT. We keep in touch with the ever-changing editorial needs of today and tomorrow, and we have

A SECRET SERVICE OF EDITORS AND EDITORIAL READERS from your potential markets.

Cordially,

VIRGIL MARKHAM  
LOUIS DeJEAN  
ED BODIN

### THE STORY-MARKET CLINIC

165 West 20th Street New York, N. Y.

Send for our circular!

# To People Who Want to Write but can't get started

Do you have the constant urge to write but the fear that a beginner hasn't a chance? Then listen to what Fulton Oursler, editor of *Liberty*, has to say on the subject:

"There is more room for newcomers in the writing field today—and especially in *Liberty Magazine*—than ever before. Some of the greatest of writing men and women have passed from the scene in recent years. Who will take their places? Who will be the new Robert W. Chambers, Edgar Wallace, Rudyard Kipling, and many others whose work we have published? It is also true that more people are trying to write than ever before, but talent is still rare and the writer still must learn his craft, as few of the newcomers nowadays seem willing to do. Fame, riches and the happiness of achievement await the new men and women of power."



"I am able to live on the money I earn by writing, and it is not yet ten months since I began the course! Until a few months after beginning study with you I had never had a line published. What more can I say for a course which has enabled me to earn a livelihood by the most congenial work I have ever done?"  
—John N. Ottum, Jr., Box 95, Lisbon, N. D.

**T**HE Newspaper Institute of America offers a free Writing Aptitude Test. Its object is to discover new recruits for the army of men and women who add to their income by fiction and article writing.

The Writing Aptitude Test is a simple but expert analysis of your latent ability, your powers of imagination, logic, etc. Not all applicants pass this test. Those who do are qualified to take the famous N.I.A. course based on the practical training given by big metropolitan dailies.

This is the New York Copy-Desk Method which teaches you to write by writing! You develop your individual style instead of trying to copy that of others.

You "cover" actual assignments such as metropolitan reporters get. Although you work at home, on your own time, you are constantly guided by experienced newspaper men. It is really fascinating work. Each week you see new progress. In a matter of months you can acquire the coveted "professional" touch. Then you're ready for market with greatly improved chances of making sales.

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But the first step is to take the Writing Aptitude Test. It requires but a few minutes and costs nothing. So mail the coupon now. Make the first move towards the most enjoyable and profitable occupation—writing for publication! Newspaper Institute of America, One Park Avenue, New York.

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One Park Avenue, New York

Send me, without cost or obligation, your Writing Aptitude Test and further information about writing for profit, as promised in *Writer's Digest*, February.

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(All correspondence confidential. No salesmen will call on you.) 78660

*Writer's Digest* is your best introduction when writing advertisers.

yet three quarters of the time writers seem to lack the foresight to see what they are doing.

Probably a magazine made up of a nice assortment of duds isn't going to get anywhere anyway. But while it's in the process of floundering on the stands, it may cost a better paying magazine quite a few dollars. Carry the procedure far enough and a lot of bright little fiction writers are going to discover that they'll have to write twice as hard as before to keep up with themselves.

We have on the stands now various reputable love mags published by *Munsey, Street & Smith, Thrilling, Popular, Dell*, etc.—all paying 1c a word and up. On the other hand we have love magazines which pay 1/2c and compete successfully with better markets. And only because writers haven't foresight enough to turn down anything less than 1c a word.

I am not, of course, referring to trade journals and certain other fields where 1/2c is the accepted rate. But in the pulp field 1c should be the low and it's our own fault if we allow it to go any lower.

The practice of accepting 1/2c a word is every bit as disastrous as the selling of second rights and the two should be campaigned against together.

PHYLIS A. WHITNEY,  
1035 So. 22nd Ave.,  
Bellwood, Ill.

Sir:

We understand that you publish a list of all books, magazines, etc., which are in the market for manuscripts and photographs. Will you please be sure to include *Fauna*? Our standard rate is 1c a word and \$2 for each photograph used. Payment is made after publication. Since our magazine is published by the Zoological Society of Philadelphia, articles must be on natural history subjects. The average length of articles we use varies from 1000 to 2000 words.

FAUNA, ROGER CONANT, Editor,  
PHILADELPHIA ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN,  
34th Street and Girard Ave,  
Phila., Pa.

Sir:

We wrote you on October 10th and thank you very much for inserting our notice in the December issue of *Writer's Digest*. However, a typographical error was made and the notice read "short stories of from one thousand words to fifteen thousand words." Would it be possible for you to publish another notice calling for synopses of not over two pages in length, each to be a story in itself, or new and original sequences for the strips already running in *Champion Comics*.

As stated before, we will pay \$10.00 for these synopses upon acceptance.

WORTH PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC.  
LEO GREENWALD, President,  
Champion Comics,  
1 East 42nd Street,  
New York, N. Y.

# JOIN THIS FICTION PARADE

Below Are Some of the Markets From Which I Received Checks or Acceptances During December!



**E**ARLY in December a client wrote asking if I handled mystery stories. After the shock abated I answered telling him I had sold four mystery stories that week; that while I did not handle poetry or plays, I handled fiction and non-fiction for all the national magazines and book publishers.

During December I received editors' checks totaling more than \$8,000 for clients, plus acceptances—checks not yet received—of almost \$6,000, a total during the month of approximately \$14,000 for stories, articles and books sold to 33 different markets.

Whether you write novels, non-fiction books, smooth-paper, intermediary or pulp serials, short stories or short-shorts, I AM WORKING WITH CLIENTS WHO WRITE IN YOUR FIELD AND AM SELLING THEIR WORK.

I am proud of my record of service for professional and beginning writers. When you send a script to me you can rest assured you will receive either prompt and efficient sales service—and refund of the criticism fee—if your story is ready for editorial consideration, or best critical advice if the manuscript is not ready to sell.

**Fees:** For detailed criticism and revision suggestions, \$3.00 for manuscripts up to 2000 words; \$5.00 for 2000 to 5000 words, 75c per thousand thereafter to 10,000 words. An agency report—briefer criticism and revision suggestions with no editing—is 50c per thousand words to 20,000 words; 25c per thousand for novels. Minimum fee \$1.00 per manuscript.

Write for further details about my work and send a 3c stamp for my latest *Market Flash* of editorial needs and a copy of *SHORT STORY FUNDAMENTALS*. It will help you to sales.

## LURTON BLASSINGAME

Author of stories and articles in more than a score of literary, illustrated and all-fiction magazines

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**NEW WRITER'S FRIEND**

1717 Erie Street Long Beach, Calif.

Sir:

After reading that "Writer at the Front Line" stuff . . . what is this, amateur night?

HARRY BALTON,  
New York City.

Sir:

"A Writer at the Front" in the January WRITER'S DIGEST is a swell dish and well worth stopping the presses for. You had your thrill and gave us all something to think about, although I might add—not to puncture any balloons—that we all have plenty of that; what we can be thankful for thus far is that we can think about it while Europe does it!

Caldwell is just whacky enough in spots to express the *multem en parvo* of the rip-roaring, dizzy forties. There is a red-headed kid running at large in my front yard; the Communists are said to have murdered a Finnish patriot's wife with an axe over in California; pork has gone down and beans up. Hell is still as hot as ever, and there's even steam on St. Peter's windows—so let's have another article by Caldwell!

RICHARD TOOKER,  
P. O. Box 148,  
Phoenix, Ariz.

Sir:

Beginning with our April issue we shall include one fiction story which doesn't necessarily have a golf background. However, the story must be timely in nature insofar as sports are concerned. If the Kentucky Derby is one of the big sporting events in May, our May issue might include a short story with a racing background.

These stories should have more emphasis on good writing than on plot. Our rates are 2c a word on publication and we will consider all lengths up to 2,000 words. In very rare cases slightly longer stories will be considered.

RICHARD E. LAUTERBACH, *Managing Editor,*  
Golf Magazine,  
52 Vanderbilt Avenue,  
New York City

Sir:

I'm still reading the Digest. I've been reading it pretty regularly since I started writing in '34 and month by month it's seen me through sales to the Sunday School weeklies, a flock of pulps, a couple of slicks and two juvenile novels. Which is coming up the long way in the right direction.

Frank Gruber's excellent article on the mystery novel has given me an idea and I'd like to ask a question. He mentions a few book houses that pay starvation wages. But no names are named. I don't blame Frank—he's writing for bread and butter and why should he stick his neck out. But I wonder if a magazine like WRITER'S DIGEST couldn't afford to name names.

Writers, working alone, unfortunately can't

Writer's Digest is your best introduction when writing advertisers.

exchange information. And I think that the best way to deal out the racketeers and chisellers is to give them publicity. Publicising them would mean professionals would send their copy elsewhere. And the same for the reprint firms.

Of course, small pay alone by no means indicts a publisher. I have a high regard for several houses that have paid me low rates. But the chisellers ought to go and if you folks could help you'd have that much better a magazine.

W. H. TEMPLE,  
1206 West Yale Ave.,  
Orlando, Florida.

[All of the circulating library publishers listed in the *DIGEST* meet their contractual obligations and are therefore reliable and responsible. Some of them offer \$150 for a novel of 50,000 words and desire "all rights" for their meager fee. The only sensible answer to such a contract is to return it. If your script is worth money, hold out for it, and the publisher will pay it. For years the *DIGEST* has operated a department which gives very personal confidential advice to authors who are about to sign a publisher's contract. Literally hundreds of professional authors have used this service. There is no charge, and the correspondence is never published. When writing, state the facts in full as concisely as possible. Conclude your letter by asking the specific questions that you want to know. Do not ask general questions of wide latitude as for instance: "Are there many unreliable publishers?"

Rather ask: "Are the enclosed terms, quoted from my contract with Smith and Company reasonably liberal, in your opinion, and has this firm in the past fulfilled its obligations to authors?"—*Ed.*]

Sir:

Carlyle House has inaugurated two new departments, a sporting department and a nautical department.

The success of "*The Bird, The Gun, And The Dog*," by Ledyard Sands, which was published last fall, has encouraged us to form a sporting department with Mr. Sands as editor. For this department we shall require books on hunting, fresh water and salt water fishing, and various other sports. Rather than go into detail here, we would prefer to have writers query Mr. Sands regarding their ideas.

The nautical department will be under the editorship of Roland Barker, famous as the author of the classic sea story "*The Log Of A Lime-juicer*," co-author of "*The Middle Passage*," and author of many other nautical works. Authors capable of doing nautical material, either fiction or non-fiction, should communicate with Mr. Barker.

Both Mr. Sands and Mr. Barker are to be reached here.

CARLYLE HOUSE,  
535 Fifth Avenue,  
New York City.

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## MARKETING IS OUR BUSINESS

Every effort expended upon every manuscript that comes to our office is prompted by this thought.

We hope eventually to offer to editors every script that we receive, whether from professional or beginning writer. We direct our efforts toward helping you get your script into likely commercial condition. If your work contains only one serviceable feature, we point out that feature and show you how to utilize it.

Sales possibility in your *manuscript* is the first quality we look for when you come to us. Sales possibility in *you* is the second—because we build up our clients. We analyze your weaknesses and show you how to overcome them. We analyze your capabilities and find for you the fields in which you should succeed. We show you how to work toward the markets that we have chosen for you.

Our method gets results. It has to. We are sales agents whose income derives from the commissions we receive upon the sales we make. We have no collaborations, no courses, no books to sell to you. It is to our interest to show you how to write and what to write for we *must* have stories we can sell and we *must* have clients who can send us salable material.

Send us your manuscripts and let our service prove what it can do for you.

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DISCOVERY OF THE MONTH IN ESQUIRE**

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Don't market haphazardly and write blindly. Send us your manuscripts, or return this ad for our detailed circular. We know we can help you too!

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Sir.

I started writing in 1932, and since have sold five true adventures, and three shorts.

I have written a combination "Cook, Bartenders, Waiters, Maitre D-Hotel, Wine, Pastry, and Service Book." I wonder if you would care to say something about it in your Forum? It would mean so much to me and probably help some Book Publisher refreshen his mind that just such a book is most needed at this time; for the professional, or the new beginner. This book will enable anyone to operate a first class Tavern, Hotel, Grotto, Cafe, Night Club, or Bar.

It's the only book to my mind of almost thirty years experience that covers the full field in "Catering Knowledge."

I am confined where Ernest Booth once resided. He and I were quite chummy.

ROY B. JAMES,  
Box 19834,  
Represa, Calif.

Sir:

According to our custom, the Chicago Fiction Guild starts the New Year with a new set of officers. They are:

President: Mr. Lyman Anson. Vice President: Mrs. Mildred Reid. Treasurer: Mr. John C. Schoenherr. Secretary: Miss Ena Mae Bouslog. Program Chairman: Mrs. Phyllis A. Whitney.

We have just finished a most successful 1939 and are eagerly awaiting the meetings in 1940. They promise to be most helpful and interesting.

You may recall that our meetings are held bi-weekly in the Hotel Sherman. The first one for 1940 will be Thursday, January 4, at eight P. M.

Membership is open to those who have had work in at least one publication of national scope.

ENA MAE BOUSLOG, Secretary,  
Chicago Fiction Guild  
826 South Wabash,  
Chicago, Illinois.

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Sir:

This office regrets exceedingly its present temporary embarrassment financially that has caused a number of complaints to come in to you from your subscribers.

We are managing to catch up to our schedules slowly but surely.

BLUE RIBBON MAGAZINES, INC.

Samuel Dinerman,  
60 Hudson St., New York, N. Y.

[We believe this house to be honest and faithfully trying to meet obligations to authors that at this date are well past due.—Ed.]

Sir:

We are now in the market for articles on the merchandising of farm implements by hardware stores. Articles should be terse yet interesting explanations of "how the dealer did it" so other dealers would understand how to merchandise their goods likewise. Manuscripts should be not more than 700-1000 words in length. A few photographs illustrating the important points are desirable.

It may be well for writers to query before submitting work.

Payment is upon acceptance: manuscripts, 1c per word; photographs, \$2.00 each.

We also are in the market for pictorial quality photographs with a lot of human interest showing in use any of the items commonly purchased in hardware stores. Payment upon acceptance will be made according to quality.

VAL G. JURGELL, *Assistant Editor,*  
Hardware Retailer,  
130 East Washington Building,  
Indianapolis, Indiana.

Sir:

Who, me?

I sold a wad of articles before I sold a single story. But this past year, after reading the *Digest* religiously and Jack Woodford scandalously, I started on the fiction route.

I sold enough so that in this year of grace I quit the newspaper business and came to this town to write. And it's going pretty good.

EATON K. GOLDTHWAITE,  
Six Church Street,  
Mystic, Connecticut.

Sir:

In order that you be able to correct the error that you made in your editorial comment, we are offering you the following information:

The House of Field, Inc., like all other well-established publishers, solicits manuscripts with a view towards finding worthwhile material for publication at its own expense. The House of Field, Inc. has published many books without one cent paid by the author. For example, we recently

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HOUSE OF FIELD, INC.,  
RUDOLPH FIELD, Publisher,  
New York City.

Sir:

Alexander Woollcott, the great horned owl of American letters, believes a ninety-year-old authoress is the world's most fascinating woman; Chaplin its greatest actor; that there are no good city editors any more; and that the phonograph has replaced the music box and is here to stay.

On a lecture tour across country, Mr. Woollcott recently held court in a ninth floor suite of Los Angeles' swank Town House. He talked enthusiastically about his coming February debut at Santa Barbara in the satirical George Kaufman play, "The Man Who Came to Dinner."

"This opus is allegedly a razzberry of Mr. Woollcott.

"Don't fool yourself," said the slightly over-stuffed sage, "it flatters me plenty. There are a lot of very complimentary cracks in it, and I can't wait to go to work for Kaufman. He used to work for me, you know."

Nearly everyone of importance either worked for Alexander Woollcott or was hand raised by the master. He said so himself.

He has helped St. Clair McKelway, Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne, and he is "Uncle Alex," godfather to Helen Hayes' famous "Act of God" baby, Mary. He is literary confessor to dozens of others.

Informal in many matters, Mr. Woollcott followed suit in his costume in which he received the press. This consisted of gaping polka dot pajamas that allowed his embonpoint to protrude in alarming places.

He has great geniality when he wants to be kind; a biting, acid wit that he uses like a Turk's scimitar when something displeases him, and a quick, crisp manner of speaking. He is a connoisseur of words, but he wants them used in the right place and seldom repeated.

He spoke rapidly, it was hard to follow the great man at times, but here follows a verbatim transcription from notes on the back of the breakfast menu:

Someone mentioned radio, said that Mr. Woollcott was good as the Town Crier:

"... radio? Oh, yes, thank you. Radio... yes, indeed, but I don't like new gadgets you know. I'm just catching up with the phonograph. Play records all the time. Enjoy it immensely. Before that it was music boxes."

Mention is made of London:

"... London? That reminds me of the war. There was a boy I was awfully fond of then, Private Harold Ross. I practically raised him and brought him back in my barracks bag. He staged the mutiny on the *Stars and Stripes* when I was fortunately four hundred kilometers away. Nowadays he runs the successor to that paper, the *New Yorker*... though I have less reason to love him now."

(The *New Yorker* not long ago gave Alex the old business).

It was remarked, however, that there was good reporting in the *New Yorker*:

"... the best there is. No metropolitan daily can report like a good weekly. Except for Stanley Walker, there are no good city editors any more. All over the country the big dailies miss good stories. Look at *Life*, *Time*, they assemble their yarns. This boy McKelway, a real reporter. I practically raised him. Awfully fond of him."

The telephone made an interruption. It was *Look* magazine wanting Mr. Woollcott to say something caustic about Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Mr. Woollcott said, "Nuts."

This was repeated to *Look* magazine and then Walt Disney's studio was on the wire about a party and a list of guests.

"... Oh, dear, let me see. Well, there'll be Harpo Marx and Dorothy Parker, Alan Campbell, Edna Mae Oliver, Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne... (quite a list went over the phone to Mr. Disney's studio) Mr. Woollcott hung up and resumed: "... I don't have people giving me parties. I get up my own. I thought of this in Texas and wired Walt. At first I thought I'd have my party at Charlie Chaplin's, but then I thought perhaps he wouldn't want a lot of people busting in on his work. Chaplin's a genius. I know, I've met them all." (a category of genii or geniuses followed).

Someone mentioned women, as someone always does:

"... but she is charming, definitely, and ninety years old and still writing books!" (Who? What reporter would dare stem that tide to ask, and thus reveal that wide-eyed attention had not been paid each instant?)

Before the question could be asked, the conversation leapt back to the standard topic of Mr. Woollcott himself:

"... ah, '*The Man Who Came to Dinner*,' an excellent piece. Very flattering. I look forward

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# WRITER'S DIGEST

The Leading and Largest Writer's Magazine

Volume XX FEBRUARY, 1940 No. 3

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immensely to playing myself in it when we open in Santa Barbara. It will be great fun to work for George Kaufman. Awfully fond of the boy. He used to work for me once. I practically raised him. . . ."

There was a split-second lull, a chance to find out the name of Mr. Woollcott's most fascinating member of the opposite sex. . . . but no:

" . . . now I'll have to ask you to go. I've just got to dress."

Do you know any ninety-year-old authoresses?

PETER O'CROTTY,  
1638 S. Van Ness Ave.,  
Los Angeles.

Here's a letter from one of the DIGEST's own readers about the editorial on page 45.

Sir:

I was born in show business—started doing a full line of "tobys" at the age of 14 on my father's show, and continued until my father's passing in 1928. At that time I was a natural toby, and needed no red wig or blocked out teeth. I DO agree regarding SOME comedians being "terrible baboons" and I have seen quite a number of them. All the time I worked for my father, I never wore a red wig. I was forced to buy one after my father's death and joined another show and went on to do my first toby in a more-or-less legitimate manner.

It was always my father's opinion—and mine too—that a COMEDIAN can get as many laughs in a full dress suit as he can in baggy pants and big shoes. The red wig is supposed to be a signal for the audience to laugh, the same as an "applause" sign to a studio audience in radio.

Incidentally, I was practically raised on Fred "Toby" Wilson's show, who is recognized as being the original "Toby." He was naturally red-headed, so needed no wig. He was always very legitimate and as funny a comic that ever trod the boards.

When I first started doing G-Strings, I used to sit on the curb with towns old settlers and watch them whittle and practice their "spittin'", and believe me you can get plenty of natural, funny, characteristics from these old codgers. I have always preferred G-Strings to Tobys as they seemed more natural.

I disagree with Bill in the fact that tobys should be done away with, but agree with him in the fact that they should wear a clean shirt.

I have been in radio for the past four years—as a gag-writer and a funny-man. At present I am writing, producing and working in a program that is going over a special midwestern network of 13 stations. I am in search of comedy material, gags—and occasionally an idea—so if you have any suggestions where I could get in touch with some gag writers through your magazine, I would appreciate it greatly. (Strictly radio.)

"TOBY" NEVIUS,  
Radio Station KFAB  
Lincoln, Nebr.

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RICHARD K. ABBOTT, *Editor*

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VOLUME XX

FEBRUARY, 1940

No. 3

## Selling Adventures

BY HENRY KUTTNER

THERE is but one adventure story, and it's laid in the South Seas.

At least, that is my reaction, after reading a great many yarns by new writers—unpublished, I might add. When a professional turns out a bad adventure story, he usually can blame it on implausibility. But the novice has plenty of other faults, all of which may be corrected.

This South Sea yarn—I used to see it every week. It opened in a roaring sea-port, where the hero, Joe Twirp, had anchored his schooner after a profitable trip trading through the islands. It continued with an assault on the unfortunate Captain Twirp, who was knocked out and awakened to find himself outward bound, a prisoner of the notorious pirate Sockeye Smeech. Other props included: a mysterious map; a cannibal island; a sunken treasure; a beautiful girl; a crew of Lascars, Fijians, and assorted cutthroats. Diving outfits, storms, reefs, and an octopus or two are included for good measure.

Now Stevenson used these devices and wrote a corking fine novel with them. Why can't the average new writer do the same? Because he works for these plotting tricks, instead of making them work for him.

Even that corniest of gags, the octopus, can be used effectively. One of the most

powerful bits of writing I can remember dealt with a battle between a man and a sea-monster. No, I don't mean "*Toilers of the Sea*"—I mean H. deVere Stackpoole's "*Blue Lagoon*." That novel, incidentally, illustrates the adventure story in its finest form. The characters are so vivid, and the various developments so soundly motivated, that not even the rawest of coincidences can destroy the illusion of reality.

In the horrible example I have quoted—the stock South Sea yarn—there is seldom any attempt at distinctive characterization. The hero, as a rule, is shockingly colorless. If you recall the great legendary and historical heroes, you'll immediately think of their "tags"—their outstanding and unusual traits and tricks. Look at Samson, King Richard, Robin Hood, and, for that matter, Don Quixote. They are all sound, striking characters in their own rights.

Adventure story heroes need not be supermen. But they must be something more than names or stock figures. The reader should care what happens to them.

Motivation, of course, plays its part here. In "*Passage Home*," by Allan Vaughan Elston—an *Argosy* short—the protagonist, Clark Dodson, simply wants to go home.



"Barke always counts ten before starting another novel."

The romantic illusions he'd brought here, three years ago, were rather musty now. In the islands he'd found nothing but heat and hard work. For three drab, sweaty years he'd tried everything from counting bananas to tending counters—for what? For three hundred pounds of savings and a hot hunger to get home with it.

Dodson isn't a superman. He's an ordinary, pleasant young man, terribly homesick. When he is robbed and marooned by the villain, the reader feels a personal interest in Dodson's problem. Note the significance of this theft! It isn't just a matter of a man being robbed of money. Dodson's hard-earned savings were just enough to take him home—and it's a hard-boiled reader who hasn't ever felt homesick, and who can't put himself in Dodson's place.

*A valid emotional problem is necessary.* If the villain tries to kill the hero, that's a problem, but not a very good one. If the hero's benefactor has been killed by the villain, and vengeance is indicated, that's somewhat better, but pretty trite and corny. "*Medals for Madmen*," by Louis C. Goldsmith, has an excellent set-up. It is laid in a Chinese city beleaguered by the Japanese war-machine. Duke Thomas is the hero, a flying adventurer whose sense of humor saves him from being a stock figure. His Chinese allies have been betrayed by a venal general,

who has purchased dud grenades in order to get his "squeeze." Finally, Duke's orderly, a small, ingratiating coolie, is threatened with death, and Duke can save him only by routing the Japanese. The American flyer gets no tangible reward for solving all these problems; he is awarded five thousand dollars, but gives it back.

"Your country has brave soldiers," he said. "Men who will fight with swords against machine guns should not go with empty stomachs. Use this for food."

That leaves a good taste in the reader's mouth. Genuine emotionalism is not out of place in the adventure story. But it must be sincere, and without frills. A man may face a firing squad to save a friend, but he shouldn't deliver the Gettysburg Address while his eyes are being bandaged. Readers are quick to detect emotional hokum and artificial values.

**S**PEAKING of the Chinese-Japanese "incident" brings me to another point: that of taboos. A short time ago I read an excellent story in which the hero was a heroic, sympathetic Japanese. The tale hasn't yet sold, and I doubt if it will. And the reason is perfectly obvious. American readers don't take sides, if we may believe our diplomats, but there is nevertheless a strong sympathy for the Chinese. If an editor ran a story with a Japanese hero, he'd get floods of letters in protest. The average pulp editor does not want to risk ill-will and loss of sales. For that matter, I recently was asked by an editor to eliminate a negro character from a story of mine, since the part the African played would have aroused resentment in the South.

Therefore, *stay away from the controversial.* If you take sides, be sure that your side is the right one. And it's safest to string along with the underdog. For that matter, it's safest to have an American hero. The majority of adventure stories have American protagonists set down in exotic surroundings. Subsidiary characters may be English, Malay, Russian, Hottentot, or Zulu, but editors somewhat prefer Yankee heroes, except in costume drama, which is another matter entirely.

The market for historical fiction is small

but steady. Talbot Mundy, Bedford-Jones, George Challis, E. Hoffman-Price, and some others specialize in it. They have learned to avoid the chief pitfall of this type of fiction—self-consciousness. Most novices, when writing a cloak-and-sword drama, create characters who talk and act with incredible bombast. They forget that d'Artagnan, King John, Leif Ericson, Robin Hood, and Genghis Khan were human beings, and not actors upon a stage. One of the best costume adventure novels is Challis's "The Naked Blade," and it is well worth careful study and analysis. The historical factor is *unobtrusive*, and the characters are human beings who wear armor with fine naturalness.

Even in the modern adventure story the author must be sly. He must cunningly slip in the props and atmosphere and touches of dialect, without halting his yarn's action too obviously. Tie in your props with action and dialogue. If tse-tse flies are present, let a character swat one. If it's unbearably hot, don't just say so. Let your hero sweat. And, above all, be authentic. If you're not sure whether there are tse-tse flies in Pernambuco, do some research. If you can't verify the matter, write around it; don't take a chance. Because some reader is sure to send a letter to the editor and say, "What the hell! I used to comb beaches in Pernambuco and never once saw a tse-tse fly."

I'm taking a chance myself. I don't even know if there *are* beaches in Pernambuco. For that matter, I'm not sure whether there is a Pernambuco. However. . .

I want to point out a few things in "Allah Sends a Reaper" an *Argosy* novelette by E. Hoffman Price. Ed Price is a conscientious writer. Though he has traveled a lot, he doesn't depend on memory. I dropped in to see him one day when he was knocking out a story set in Macao, or some similar hell-hole. Ed was befouling the air with pipe-smoke and poring over a map of Macao. He was surrounded by dictionaries, steamship schedules, reference volumes, and God knows what else.

"What's up?" I asked.

"Well," said the diligent Mr. Price, "when my hero runs three blocks north from the water-front, I want to know what street he comes out on."



"Under my plan, comrade, banks will be forced to cash rejection slips!"

Perhaps this is drawing it a bit too fine, but I doubt if an editor would think so. Painstaking research is definitely worthwhile. I remember once Price landed on me like a ton of bricks because I had a Persian call an American *effendi*, instead of *tuan, sahib, wallah*, or whatever it should have been. "Where's your Persian dictionary?" he asked coldly. "What? You haven't got one? Well, then why use something you're not sure about?"

Exactly! I needn't have used the term at all. And that's an excellent rule to follow. When in doubt, do research. And if that fails—don't take a chance.

*Research will cover a multitude of sins.* When, a while ago, I wanted to write a Crusader story, I spent several days boning up on Lamb's "Crusades," various historical volumes, "Ivanhoe"—to get the flavor of the times—and a few maps of Constantinople and the surrounding country. When I tackled a yarn set in the days of King Alfred, I read Fowler Wright's "Elfwin," Chesterton's "Ballad of the White Horse," some histories—and, again, the invaluable maps in my Britannica. The bare, dry bones of fact aren't enough—one also must soak up the flavor and the atmosphere. An Everglades story is dull without the roaring of alligators, the slithering of moccasins, the sombre shadows of Spanish moss, and so on. In one of my own yarns—"Evil Paradise," Thrilling



"He says it's about ancient Rome!"

Adventures, February—I used a South American island for the locale, and employed these props:

- Palm-thatched huts
- Sarongs
- Sharks
- Giant rays
- Sea snakes
- Machetes
- Parrakeets
- Butterflies
- Jungle
- Ambergris.

Props are, of course, vital, but they must be used judiciously and unobtrusively. The following specimen shows how not to start an adventure story:

Djibouti looks out over the Gulf of Tadjura toward the Indian Ocean. Bill Conroy squatted against the door jamb of a hut, and snored.

His full name was William Harvey Conroy, and the governor general had wondered why the junior partner of Billings, Bemis & Conroy came ashore in the first place. Now he was wondering whether to leave him at large, or throw him in irons until the next boat arrived.

Conroy raised his head and blinked. He needed a shave, and his eyes were now red rather than gray. . . . There was snoring inside the hut. Conroy got up and thrust his head through the narrow doorway. . . .

That is an emasculated version of the start of E. Hoffman Price's story, "Allah Sends

a Reaper." All the color and atmosphere has been cut out. The opening still sets the locale, but the reader certainly can't visualize Djibouti. Let's see how Price actually wrote it, in the published version.

They call Djibouti "Queen of the Sands," which she is, looking out over the Gulf of Tadjura and toward the Indian Ocean; but the sand is full of fleas. Somehow, they endured the sun's glare; and so did the flies that buzzed about Bill Conroy. He squatted against the door jamb of a brush hut, and snored.

His passport read William Harvey Conroy, and the governor general of French Somaliland had wondered why the junior partner of Billings, Bemis & Conroy came ashore in the first place. Now he was wondering whether to leave him at large, or throw him in irons until the next boat arrived.

Conroy raised his head and blinked. He needed a shave, and his eyes were now red rather than gray, like his tropical worsteds. A goat, coming out of a neighboring hut, was finishing his fine but beer-stained Panama. Conroy carefully leaned toward the native butcher shop at his left, picked up a bone, and threw it at the goat.

Then he noticed the flies, and grinned wryly. "Nuh-uh. It's not me, after all."

This seemed to cheer him a little. What attracted them was the discarded mash from a batch of *dourra* beer, and the tangle of guts and crudely hacked joints scattered about the bench of the Somali butcher shop. It must have been the two copper colored girls haggling with the proprietor that awakened Conroy.

There was more snoring inside the dirt-floored hut. When Conroy got up and thrust his head through the narrow doorway, half a dozen chickens squawked and fluttered out. . . .

Note especially how interest is focused on Conroy, and, through him, upon his surroundings. A straight-line description of Djibouti would be dull, indeed. Every photographer knows the value of a human figure in a snapshot of scenery. It should always be remembered that the writer is *telling a story*—and a story, generally, deals with human beings, not with scenery alone.

Local color may be effectively tied in with the plot. In "Passage Home," which I have already mentioned, the following incident occurs:

In a little while sounds of music and clapping hands reached them.

"What's going on there, Caroline?"

"A *kava* ceremony," she told him.

"Also they dance the *siva-siva*. My mother's people always celebrate this way, just after a harvest of copra is sold to a ship."

This bit of atmosphere isn't dragged in by the heels. The copra plays a vital part in the solution of the story problem.

If you are writing an exotic adventure story, tell the reader so. Try and set the location as soon as possible. S. Gordon Gurwit does it in his "Skeletons in Armor."

Dick Harris pointed and said, in Spanish:

"Bueno, Manuel! Pull up into that little bay. That's the spot!"

The leather-skinned plume hunter brought his sailing *piragua* up into the wind and nodded toward the Columbian shore, thick with rivervine hardwoods laced by *llanos*.

"Here, Senor?" he asked uneasily. "Por diablo! This is as far as I go!" His muscular throat moved in a gulp. "Here, in the *bosque*, starts the bloody jungles of the ancients. Me, *cra*, I go no further! It is a place of many dead men!"

Note how the scattered foreign phrases add color. Such words as *bueno*, *senor*, *diablo*, may be readily understood by the average reader. Unfamiliar phrases should be explained—not in footnotes or parentheses, an antique and artificial trick. In the above quotation, it is quite obvious that a *piragua* is a boat of some kind. And if trees are "laced with *llanos*"—*por Dios*, it is plain that *llanos* are not shoe-laces!

Here's the other method of translation:

Conroy bowed.

"Thanks, anyway. *Sahn*—may it nourish you!"

"To you, *salud y pesetas y causas nuevas*—health, wealth, and variety!"

A good adventure story start should, as briefly and unobtrusively as possible, create suspense, possess local color, and explain who, how, and why. It isn't always possible



"No, Doctor, just since he's been getting 3 cents a word."

to do all this in a few lines. But note how well the following examples fit the pattern:

Before the astonished, frightened gaze of the coolie crowd Duke Thomas held the general's orderly at arm's length and shook him until his whole body danced like a suspended marionette.

He released him and the man fell to his knees on the masonry of the old city wall.

"Lin," Thomas commanded his coolie boy, "you speak this man for show proper respect."

This wasn't the boat Clark Dodson would choose to go home on. But who knew when another one would come along? The long view necessarily prevailed.

"Tie up," he said to his Tongan skiffman, "while I dicker for a passage."

It sounded like a poney right from the beginning, but what of it? I am a newspaper man, not a reformer, and if it developed into something that smelled pretty nasty, it would make all the better story for the front pages.

A treasure hunt, imagine that! And I had thought that racket was a turkey before I was dry behind the ears. A sunken ship. Maps. All the props. Boy, do you wonder I pursed my lips and made an unbecoming sound when the managing editor explained it to me?

Jim Ludlow sprawled across the table in one of the bead-curtained booths in the House of the Seven Dreams. He looked as though he were in a stupor,

and as though such a state was common to him. His linen suit was sweat-wrinkled and not too clean. A two-days' growth of whiskers bristled on his jaw. His hair was long and shaggy.

In summation, what are the rules? There aren't any, for rules imply something arbitrary and unbreakable. There are only certain basic principles, which may, on occasion, be violated. But, speaking generally, here are some things to keep in mind when tackling an adventure story:

1. Know your stuff. Don't be afraid of research. Don't take a chance, ever. Don't make inexcusable boners—and most boners of this kind *are* inexcusable, because unnecessary.

2. Get a sound, satisfactory, personalized problem. A problem that will arouse the reader's interest and sympathy. Death and treasure are unimportant, but human emotions are not.

3. Create vivid characters. Supermen are undesirable, and prigs aren't wanted. A convincing idealization of the average young man is always good. Villains, too, should be convincing, and have logical motivation for their actions.

4. Use local color judiciously, to create an illusion of reality and glamor, but never let it slow down the action of the story. Make it authentic, and never let the reader feel that you're parading your erudition.

And—that's all! If you can follow those directions, brother, you've got a damn good adventure yarn! And don't forget that the slicks, as well as the pulps, buy such stories. For that matter, once upon a time there was an adventure story called "The Four Feathers."

#### ADVENTURE STORY MARKETS

*Argosy*. 280 Broadway, N. Y. G. Worthington Post, Editor. Stresses good writing, sound characters, and a soundly dramatic plot. Special needs: shorts of four to six thousand. Novelettes run 10,000-15,000; complete short novels, 15,000-20,000. Serials up to 75,000. Advisable to submit plot synopses before tackling serials. Good rates, Acc.

*Doc Savage*. 79 Seventh Ave., N. Y. John L. Nanovic, Editor. Lead novel done by assignment. Wants action-adventure shorts up to 6,000, with American heroes, any locale. 1c up, Acc.

*Short Stories*. 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York. Dorothy McIlwraith, Editor. Overstocked on ser-

ials at present. In the market for all other lengths from 3,000 word shorts up to 25,000 word complete short novels. Out-of-door, action yarns desired, with any interesting setting. There is no objection to current war interest, if the story itself is good. But Miss McIlwraith is getting too many scripts which drag in submarines, etc., merely because of timeliness, and which are not soundly dramatic stories. 1c up, Acc.

*Adventure*. 205 E. 42d St., N. Y. Howard Bloomfield, Editor. Adventure shorts, novelettes and novels, well-written and distinctive. 1½c, Acc.

*5 Novels*. 149 Madison Ave., N. Y. F. A. McChesney, Editor. Now uses an occasional fantastic yarn, as well as western, adventure, sport and mystery novels. Colorful stories and back-grounds are desired, of the masculine type, told from the man's angle. Lengths, 15,000-20,000. 1½c, Acc.

*Action Stories*. 461 Eighth Ave., N. Y. Malcolm Reiss, Editor. Novelettes, especially westerns, are badly needed, 12,000-15,000 words. Full up on shorts. 1c, Acc.

*Jungle Stories*. 461 Eighth Ave., N. Y. Malcolm Reiss, Editor. Wide open for both shorts and novelettes, 4,000 to 15,000 words. Action stories of the jungle are wanted. The lead novel is done by assignment only. 1c, Acc.

*Blue Book*. 230 Park Ave., N. Y. Donald Kennicott, Editor. Lengths, 1,000-20,000. Complete novel runs 50,000 words. Story value, with high plotting and writing standards, are desired. Period and humorous fiction are often used. Good rates, Acc.

*Thrilling Adventures*. 22 W. 48th St., N. Y. Leo Margulies, Editorial Director. Foreign, exotic locales, American heroes, and slight woman interest. Shorts, 1,000-6,000; novelettes, 8,000-10,000; novels, 15,000-20,000. 1c up, Acc.

10 *Short Novels* and 12 *Adventure Stories* have been discontinued.

Other markets for the exceptionally well-done adventure story include *The American Magazine*, *Collier's*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Liberty*, *MacLean's* (Canadian interest), *Satevepost*, *This Week*, *Elks Magazine*, etc.

*Air Adventures*, 608 So. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. Raymond A. Palmer, Managing Editor. All stories must be modern, up-to-date. Stories of the present war, private flying, stories of South America, of United States; juvenile flying stories; exploration, coast-guard flying, commercial flying, etc. Action opening is essential, dialogue preferred. Lengths from 3,000 to 20,000 words.

*South Sea Stories*, 608 So. Dearborn St., Chicago, Illinois. Raymond A. Palmer, Editor. Stories must be strong in both romance and adventure. Story should open with action, dialogue. Locale is essentially the south seas; no stories of Africa. There should be plenty of exotic south sea atmosphere, with beautiful girls, palm trees and beaches. Lengths from 3,000 to 20,000 words. We use a number of fact articles; length to 2,500 words.

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# Action, And How!

BY EMILE C. SCHNURMACHER

**A**FTER some fifteen years of freelancing on four continents, doing features for newspapers and magazines, I thought, reasonably enough, that I knew what action meant. I've bumped guys off in anything from 500 word shorts to 7,500 word features depending on what the traffic would bear. But that was before I began writing for the action comics, a field which during the past year or so has zipped along almost as fast as the contents of its own publications.

Take that phone call this morning from Tony Feldman's. Tony, who ordinarily seems like a nice quiet gent, edits the new line of action comics for Hillman Publications, 7 East 44th Street, New York, an outfit which started with *Crime Detective* a couple of years ago and has branched out plenty.

"That last installment of *Sky Wizard* is static, no action at all," Tony growled. "Hop over and fix it up!"

"Look here," I answered indignantly. "On page one the terrible giant Snow Men abduct the heroine. On page two, three of them are blown to bits by sky mines. On page four the villain makes a 50,000 foot parachute jump and on . . ."

"Yeah!" hooted Tony. "But page three! What about page three? Whatcha trying to do, cheat our readers?"

Incredulous? A couple of months ago I would have said so too. But that was before I discovered this new and fast moving market which pays decent prices and pays 'em promptly for reasons which I'll point out.

The key to the success formula in this field is something I discovered while doing action comic continuities for *Sky Wizard*, *K7*, *Captain Hazard*, *The Scorpion*, *Dusty Doyle of the Circus* and a couple of others. That word is "chase" and once you get a

chase in your plot, like the old time movie continuity, action is bound to occur.

But mebbe I'm getting ahead of myself, like I've been doing recently due to the action comic influence. Mebbe you're not familiar with this growing market of twenty some odd publications. If not step up to the nearest newsstand, hand over a dime and study one of these pen-and-ink operas. It may strike you at first as something like the old Nick Carter dime novel stuff gone futuristic in sketches. But make no mistake about it. If you write for the pulps or the slicks, or intend to write for them a few years from now, this action comic market, whether you're represented in it or not, *is going to have a marked influence on many future markets.*

That's my prophesy and it's worth checking on. Here's why. Interview any ten year youngster, boy or girl about the action comics. He'll probably tell you all about paralyzing guns, formulas for making people invulnerable, the horrors of life on Pluto and Jupiter, tentacle-armed men, human spiders, green dust to make you invisible and scores of psuedo scientific and fantastic schemes which have a note of realism to him. You won't be able to get in a word about your conservative Jules Verne or H. G. Wells stuff. They're a couple of corny has beens as far as the action-comic reading youngster of today is concerned.

What's more he reads several of these dimies a month. When he gets through with one, he trades it with another kid. That is why publishers think in print orders of at least a quarter million copies. And mebbe that explains too why cartoonists and illustrators are working in shifts churning out the stuff that the action writers turn in every week to meet their deadlines.

With millions of kids eagerly reading this sort of stuff, the kind of material which they

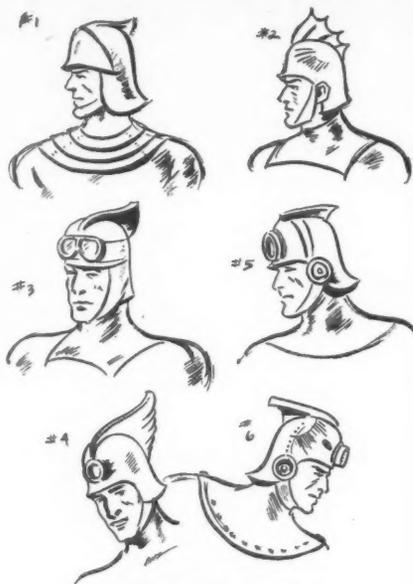
will want to read a few years hence in the pulps and slicks is going to be different, if they are to be kept satisfied. It will have to have more action, more "escape" or fantasy, more scientific hokum.

Suppose now, you've looked over a couple of the action comics and decide that you'd like to get into this market. Pick yourself a hero, a Buck Rogers or a Superman. Put him in an exotic surrounding in this world or another. Get him into a mortal conflict with an arch villain. Work in a chase. Keep your love interest, if any at an absolute minimum. Do that and you've got an action comic sequence and your chance of selling it depends upon the uniqueness of locale and exploits of your hero.

Continuities may be four, eight or sixteen pages as in the case of *Sky Wizard*. Publishers prefer the shorter lengths and pay you \$2.50 a page for your stuff. If you can't turn out at least an eight page continuity in a day, worth \$20 to you, you've never written any action stuff. If you sell it, it will go into a 64 page book which retails for a dime. You'll probably never see the artist who draws it. He gets \$10 a page for his drawings and good artists are turning out so many pages these days that they've got a regular conveyor belt system, with one man to do figure work, another to do backgrounds, a third to ink in and a fourth to letter.

**WHEN** I became interested in this new market a couple of months ago, I learned that Lionel White, for whom I had written when he was editor of *True*, was going to publish two or three of the action comics.

I was writing fact features for both his *Crime Detective* and *Crime Confessions* and suggested that he let me submit an action comic strip. He murmured something about it being my headache but said he'd look at a synopsis. I found out what he meant about the "headache" gag pretty soon. He had been reading so many synopses that turtle neck men snapped at him as he walked down the hall, rocket guns were shot at him in his sleep and strange leprechauns stalked head downward across



The Sky Wizard takes shape.

his ceiling. Pretty soon they were doing it to me, too. That's the frame of mind you get into when you're writing stuff for the action comics.

It was about that time that *Sky Wizard* began to take shape in my mind. Talking to kid readers of other comics I had 'em discuss what they liked and what they didn't in an action comic hero. They liked one to be almost invulnerable, but not totally so. Otherwise there would be no risk in his adventures. They liked him to have some pet gadget like a rocket gun or a paralyzing dagger. And they preferred him to wear the minimum of clothes to show off his beautiful, streamlined body. Whatever else the action comics may be doing to the imagination of youngsters they're stimulating a healthy desire for strong, athletic bodies.

Having assimilated this data I sought out an old A.P. cartoonist friend of mine, Eddie. I found him hard at work turning out action comics for a couple of competing publishers. Because of this, I'm not mentioning his last name.

I told him my idea about *Sky Wizard*, and

athletic young man who was one of the world's greatest scientists living on a helium filled island in the sky. He became enthusiastic and drew a series of sketches. Starting with the first, showing *S. W.* looking like a knight of the Middle Ages, he was modernized, streamlined, then futurized in five succeeding sketches until he took on the appearance and personality he now bears.

After working out a synopsis and throwing in most of the pseudo scientific material in my files, *Sky Wizard's* adventures began to take shape. About this pseudo scientific material, the daily newspapers are full of it. For example a story that an explorer had seen footprints in the Himalayas which an old legend said were those of a race of giant snow men, gave me both locale and villains. Very considerably I added wings to the snow men so that could attack airplanes. Another dispatch from the Western Front which said that the Germans were planning to mine the skies against invading airplanes gave me a swell action situation in which *Sky Wizard* could destroy the flying snow men with sky mines filled with triplenitro. That explosive naturally would be three times as strong as nitroglycerine.

I worried a bit as to where *Sky Wizard* would get food on Sky Island. Then I read a scientific feature on hydroponics—the new method of growing giant vegetables in water and my problem was solved. I mention these things because they illustrate how actual news features serve as a springboard to dive off into the realm of the pseudo-scientific and fantastic and to show that there's plenty of this sort of material available for every writer who wants to tackle this market.

After Lionel White okayed my synopsis, I put it into the form of a "shooting" or drawing strip. And here is where the writer learns to economize in wordage. Both the editor and the artist thinks in terms of action. Dialogue must be kept to the minimum. If a character says something in 12 words that he can in three he's doing too much talking. And here too, the writer learns to "draw" with words. Such words as "hurry", "quick" and "faster" for ex-

ample speed up the action.

Here is a page from my "shooting" script of *Sky Wizard*. Of the many forms of continuity, this is about the easiest for the artist to follow. The average page contains from six to eight panels.

## PANEL

1

Hawk, Spud, Butch dashing for edge of rubberium. BE SURE THAT SPUD IS IN LEAD.

Hawk: No time for the machine guns . . . use your gats.

2

Close up of edge of rubberium, Spud grabbing it, it is already at eye level.

Spud: They're getting away Hawk!  
Hawk: Hold on. we're coming.

3 and 4

Sky Island—the immense oval island is now floating in the sky. On it the laboratory and hangar may be seen, as well as aerodymazon. Spud, a tiny figure is hanging to edge.

Sky Wizard: We're off . . . and just in time!

Spud: Help! Help! I'm losing my grip!

5

Close up of Spud in agony, he has just lost his grip and is falling downward. In his hand is clenched a piece of rubberium and metal which gave away in his frenzied clutch. Be sure to show this as it is important. A bubble from above indicates that Sky Wizard is leaning over edge of Sky Island.

Sky Wizard: One of the crooks was holding on. We can't save him now.

Spud: I'm a goner!

6

Close up of Sky Wizard, Pat and Dick looking over edge of Island, scream is indicated from Spud who is crashing to death below.

Sky Wizard: Now there's one less gangster in the world.

Dick: He got what was coming to him.

Pat: What a horrible death!

And here is how Eddie drew it: (Page 22)

With *Sky Wizard* safely on the drawing boards I began to submit other scripts. And as they were accepted I began to realize more and more what Lionel meant when he said "my headache." I've got one script running, for example which features Dusty Doyle, the Circus Cyclone. I was enthusiastic about the locale and thought I could

16

## SKY WIZARD



For explanation of how this cartoon was created, see page 21. For a detailed list of markets, see page 23.

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hold a lot of interest with it. But when it got on the boards, I found that the artist was drawing mostly tent canvas backgrounds. So I've had to pull Dusty outside of the Big Top for many of his thrilling exploits.

Then again there was *K-7*, Secret Agent, the radio dramatizations of which you may have listened to. *K-7* got into so many complications as a Secret Agent that a lot of explaining had to be done in panels and dialogue. This detracts from action and so I've had to simplify the plots.

As a result of this rather intensive experience, I'd suggest that if you're going to start submitting scripts to the action comics you follow these simple rules. They're easy enough to follow when you learn 'em but believe me learning 'em was quite a job. Here they are:

1. Have your hero *almost* invincible, but not entirely.
2. Put him in an exotic locale.
3. Use a chase theme. There's more action in a continuous story than one of those "in the meantime" which are difficult to handle.
4. Make most of your action take place out of doors. That gives the artist a chance to do his stuff.
5. Keep wordage to absolute minimum.
6. Ditto love element.

Mebbe this sounds like a lot of fuss and dither over submitting a four, eight or 16 page sequence to an action comic. But remember this. If you do land, the \$10, \$20 or \$40 check you land is but the first return. If your character is popular, the kids will want to read him every month. If he is above average, he may land in the movies, on the radio or in a newspaper comic section and take you, his creator with him.

**T**HERE are 60 comic magazines on the stands today. By the time this appears in print, there may be many more.

Most editors state that never was there such an opportunity for the younger artist to get his stuff published. The same with writers of action material, although to a

lesser extent. Most of the publishers listed below are intensely receptive to new ideas. Other publishers not at present issuing comic magazines will listen to their siren appeal to profits if the idea presented is hot enough.

Here is a list of the most active comic magazine publishers:

FICTION HOUSE, INC., 461 Eighth Ave., N. Y. C.; Malcolm Reiss, editor. No free lance work-material; supplied by syndicates. *Jumbo Comics*, *Planet Comics*, *Fight Comics*, *Jungle Comics*.

WHITMAN PUBLISHING CO., 200 Fifth Ave., N. Y. C.; Oscar Le Beck, editor. Buys some free lance material by arrangement. *Super Comics*, *Popular Comics*, *The Funnies*, *Crackerjak Comics*.

NOVELTY PRESS, 525 West 52nd St., N. Y. C.; David Adams, editor. Buys from free lances by arrangement. *Target Comics*.

STANDARD MAGAZINES, 22 West 48th St., N. Y. C.; N. L. Pines, editor. Buys by arrangement with free lance writers and artists. *Thrilling Comics*, *Startling Comics*, *Exciting Comics*, *Best Comics*.

FEATURE PUBLISHING CO., 1270 6th Ave., N. Y. C.; Maurice Reese, editor. Looking for ideas, payment by arrangement. *Prize Comics*.

DELL PUBLISHING CO., 149 Madison Ave., N. Y. C.; Victor Bloom, A. Delacourt, editors. Originates some material, some syndicated material, also buys from free lances. *Popular Comics*, *War Comics*.

FAWCETT PUBLICATIONS, 1501 Broadway, N. Y. C.; Wm. L. Parker, editor. Free lance and syndicate. *Whiz Comics*, *Slam-Bang Comics*, *Master Comics*; this one is advertised as largest in the world.

NEWSSTAND PUBLICATIONS, 330 West 42nd St., N. Y. C.; Martin Goodman, editor. Buys from free lances, payment by arrangement. *Marvel Comics*, *Daring Comics*, *Mystic Comics*.

STREET & SMITH, 79 Seventh Ave., N. Y. C.; Wm. DeGrouchy, editor. Buys from free lances by arrangement. *Shadow Comics*.

DETECTIVE COMICS, INC., 114 East 47th St.; Vincent Sullivan, editor. Buys from free lances by arrangement. *Action Comics*, *Detective Comics*, *Adventure Comics*, *More Fun Comics*.

LOUIS SILBERKLEIT, 60 Hudson St., N. Y. C.; Abner J. Sundell, editor. Buys from free lances by arrangement. *Zip Comics*, *Peep Comics*, *Top Notch Comics*, *Blue Ribbon Comics*.

FOX PUBLICATIONS, INC., 480 Lexington Ave., N. Y. C.; Victor S. Fox. Buys from free lances by arrangement. *Wonder World Comics*, *Fantastic Comics*, *Mystery Men Comics*.

HILLMAN PUBLICATIONS, 7 East 44th St., N. Y. C.; Lionel White, editor. Buys from free lances by arrangement. *Miracle Comics*, *Rocket Comics*.

# Sporting Proposition

BY ARTHUR K. BARNES

THIS article is addressed to two classes of writers: the beginners, who are just prying into those mysteries that surround the successful sale of pulp-paper fiction, and the established professional writers, who may be casting about for a different story type at which to try their hand. To both of these groups I commend the sport story.

Recent years have seen an incredible growth of the sport story market. A field which was once represented by a single magazine, *Street & Smith's Sport Story*, is now supporting almost two dozen publications, consuming yearly over eight million words. This typical publishers' stunt of massacring the goose that lays the golden eggs is bound, I feel sure, eventually to level things off somewhat, with the weaklings being withdrawn from the news-stands. Right now, however, the boom is still on.

The sport story magazines are being recommended to the newcomer for three reasons. First, it is receptive to new writers. Secondly, the competition is not so fierce because there are fewer so-called "big names" in the field. This is due partly to the fact that rates of 2c or over are seldom paid by the sport books, and partly to the fact that the newness of the field has not allowed sufficient time for the development of a great number of big-name drawing cards. Thirdly, the sport story is comparatively easy to write.

Don't get me wrong. I've sold a lot of stories in my few years behind the keyboard

(or is it the 8-ball?)—detective, sport, pseudo-science, adventure, horror—and have yet to find any kind that is really easy. But the sport story offers less difficulties, it seems to me, than most.

The average sport yarn consists of about one-third straight action writing—swift, colorful, dramatic description of the games or races or fights about which your plot revolves. Editors demand that their contributors know their sport thoroughly—and a bad

boner will ruin a newcomer's chances—but it's a fact that nearly every red-blooded man who went through school and college physically fit already knows a lot about half a dozen sports or more. He engaged in some, had friends who played in others. A little selected reading of fiction and fact, and study of new rules each year,

should make most male writers master of several sports for practical purposes.

The sport story can be written, broadly speaking, to formula. To me "formula" is overworked. It denotes a fixed rule. I prefer to look upon the following "formula" as a pattern, a fundamental framework capable of being built into an infinite number of varying creations. However, if you like the word "formula," it's okey by me. Here's mine for the pulp-paper sport story.

The average story should be roughly divided into three contests, beginning, middle, and end. Four out of five sport stories, particularly the shorter ones, begin rightfully by plunging the reader directly into the middle of a red-hot sporting event. After all, the

Henry Kuttner—who sends warm regards, by the way—says I should include an autobiographical blurb just in case. I blush at the presumption, but here are the high spots. Born State of Wash., lived most of my life in Los Angeles and suburbs. Graduated U. C. L. A. (Univ. of Calif. at Los Angeles) in '31, with a Phi Beta Kappa key. Since then I've sold detective, sport, horror, pseudo-scientific, and adventure pulp fiction to every major publishing house in N. Y., and some of the minor ones. Rate a few lines in *Who's Who Among North American Authors*, and I guess that's all. Except that I've had three major operations! . . . Not very exciting, but it wasn't my idea, anyhow.

reader buys this type of magazine primarily because he likes to read of exciting sports action. It's short-changing him to give him anything else. Any sport book picked up at random will give plenty of examples of this much-favored style of opening. Here's one from *Dime Sports*:

The line of maroon jerseys snapped once more, just to the right of the center. The thump of cleated shoes matched the rhythm of "Blubber" Dunphy's throbbing brain. The despairing groan of two thousand Porter College undergraduates swept the grid-iron, and ended in a chatter of perplexity as the Porter secondaries stopped the flying blue jersey after a seven-yard gain.

("Hold 'em, Line"—Arthur Mann)

While this type of beginning is not highly artistic, it has the desirable virtue of pace; it catches the attention. A little more subtle is Clark Bodey's start for "*Mile-a-Minute Madness*," as he has character clash instead of physical clash in the opening sentences:

For just one instant everything about that scene there on Mt. Van Hoevenberg seemed to freeze into place as Bert Falcon came face to face with Jack Norbird . . . Even the air seemed to crystallize with the cold hatred I saw in Bert Falcon's eyes for the rangy kid who had once been his best friend.

(*Thrilling Sports*)

Then follows the swift opening sporting sequence. The important thing to remember is that your short story should have action and *conflict* somewhere in the first thousand words, the sooner the better.

In this opening sequence the hero is introduced and a hint, at least, given of the plot complication that looms over his immediate horizon, some sort of obstacle that threatens his downfall. Between first and second sport-action contests, the writer can fill in the necessary background, introducing the other characters and drawing the broad outlines of the plot. Motivation, and definition of the obstacles that appear about to overwhelm the hero, should be made clear. Thus the *conflict is made significant*.

During the second sporting scene the obstacle appears absolutely insurmountable.



"We're sorry, *Mass Murder Magazine* hasn't used a cuff-link clue since 1923!"

Any ideas the hero may have had about circumventing the juggernaut are proved worthless. Suspense is heightened, perhaps, by showing that the happiness of several swell people besides the hero depends upon his successfully overcoming this problem. No answer is in sight.

In the interval before the final contest, lines are laid down which will, it is hoped, enable the hero to resolve his difficulties and come through a winner. And in the final climactic sport sequence—surprise! surprise!—the hero does make the supreme effort and triumphs. Usually this is a forthright physical victory, though occasionally it may be only a moral one.

In terms of a *reductio* almost *ad absurdum*, the protagonist loses the first two, but wins the decisive match—and the blue chips.

As the writer increases his skill at this type of fiction, and becomes more adept at a plot complication and character delineation, he may find it necessary to dispense with the second game sequence if he's to keep his short story within the usual word-limit. However, in broad outline (and not to be used blindly, as many of the finest stories are off-trail, and not to be fitted into any sort of preconceived pattern) there you have the sport story formula.

Disappointed just a little so far? Don't say you weren't warned. If any of the DIGEST readers are so naive that they believe a formula is an open sesame to literary success, they deserve to be disappointed. It would be too easy. What has been divulged so far is plain for anyone to see in the pages of any sport magazine on the stands. Most professional writers use it to varying degrees, though they may not be conscious of following a set pattern. It's no secret. Indeed, I believe Moran Tudury described something like it in these very pages a few years ago. If so, it can bear repetition, with apology to the man who said it first.

As I say, this pattern is just a beginning, a framework to hang your picture in. So don't go away yet.

**H**ERE are a few suggestions concerning the stuff that goes into that frame. It is called Plot, and is very necessary in the composition of a saleable sport story. Leo Margulies, editor-in-chief of Standard Magazines, has this to say on the subject:

"Too many stories are written with very slight, thin plots, and the result reads like a newspaper report of a game."

Probably the first thing that comes to mind in this connection will be mention of the "obstacle" that threatens to overwhelm the hero. For instance, what obstacle? Well, years ago it might have been something as simple as the boy's inability to make the varsity. But more subtlety or complication than that is demanded by editors nowadays.

The crooked angle, often seen as attempted coercion of the star athlete with money or by threats, in order to stage a betting coup, is one of the commonest clichés among sport story plots. Unless you are a skillful writer, or have a really novel twist to this old to-mato, editors advise leaving it alone.

Another obstacle that has been used many, many times is the mental hazard, or "yellow" complex that crushes the hero. Perhaps he seriously injured an opponent in a furious melee, and ever since he is reluctant to play his hardest, for fear of a recurrence of the incident. This is but one of many guises. The expert writer can get away with this one, too, but editors are inclined to look for

fine craftsmanship before buying a manuscript with this angle in it.

A better suggestion would be a jinx—your hero jinxed every time he has to compete against the villain, so completely jinxed that he and everyone else knows he can't win.

Perhaps more novel still would be a defective motor, in a racing story—an engine that mysteriously goes haywire at vital moments. Or say the hero owns a race-horse that bogs down just when it hurts most. I've used this one myself, in "*Morning Glory*," which appeared in *Popular Sports* for June, 1938. In this instance the horse was a cribber—an animal which likes to chew on wood when the boss isn't looking and suck air between its teeth. A morning spent cribbing so bloats the beast that it runs the afternoon races with the speed and grace of a cow.

These suggestions are taken, of course, from actual stories. Others will occur to the writer.

Does your sport story picture-frame begin to look a little more like something now? Still nothing to yell about, eh? But that's because we still have the most important part of all to fill in—motivations. Now it may seem that the above list of "obstacles" might come under the heading of motivation, and indeed it does take some fancy footwork to keep from confusing the two. But a list of the commonly used motivations will show the distinction. Here are half a dozen or more:

- The protagonist is making a comeback.
- A great deal of money depends on success.
- A job or promotion, for himself or someone else, depends upon his efforts.
- An old wrong is being avenged.
- A newly-designed piece of sport equipment—maybe a new racing tire, or a golf club of radically different balance (this theme can be carried into almost any sport)—must go through the fire of stiff competition and subsequent victory to prove its worth, and the genius of its inventor.
- Rivalry over a girl. (This wishy-washy theme is generally looked upon with disfavor).
- A long-sought championship is being battled for.

- The mortgage on the plantation must be raised. (So help me, this one still sees print now and then!)
- The hero is striving to live up to the sporting reputation of his dad, or older brother.
- A racket must be smashed. (Crooks again).
- The hero wants to redeem himself after some failure.

These lists of obstacles and motivations are far from complete; any writer with imagination or reader of sport fiction can add to them. But they serve the purpose—which is to indicate how to build a sport Plot. A story with motivation but no obstacle will seem very thin; a story with a clever obstacle but no motivation will simply read like “a newspaper report of a game.” But combine the two, and you have the basic ingredients of sound Plot. It’s pretty much like shuffling the cards in one of those patent plot-finding devices.

Taking an example from my own writing, let’s see how it works. In “*Demon in the Putter*” (*Thrilling Sports* for July, 1938), a golf yarn, the job motivation was selected. Not the hero’s job especially, for that doesn’t build up sufficient sympathy, but the job of the aging club professional:

Old Jeff Connor was washed up at Peter Pan, too old, about to be tossed out of the game at which he’d made his living for thirty years . . . The management wanted a younger man who could hit the tournament trail, bring publicity. They had built Peter Pan up as a high society country club, and were offering the pro job to the local social registerite who did best in the tournament . . . Lee Rayburn (the hero) was known to be fond of the old fellow; if Rayburn won, it meant a job for old Jeff . . . If Balboa (the villain) slid through on top—curtains for Jeff Connor.

Matching this against my list of obstacles, I chose the jinx motif, building up an extensive emotional background to show that the Balboas had always jinxed the Rayburns because of a fancied obligation:

Their sons and grandsons after them inherited this strange state of affairs. Scarcely remembering the original reason, and hardly knowing why, a Ray-



“I thought of it after the first million words!”

burn always gave in gracefully to a Balboa, and . . . never defeated the Balboas in any competition . . .

“ . . . ’tisn’t that the Rayburns are yellow . . . But when a Balboa pulls up alongside, something always happens. The Rayburns just don’t click any more . . . Peculiar psychic domination.”

The struggle to overcome this inferiority complex occupies the latter portion of the story, with a complicated rigmarole of psychology and downright trickery finally snapping Rayburn out of it in time to win the crucial tournament. This rigmarole, plus the action scenes, plus obstacle and motivation, all combine to make (anyhow, I thought so at the time) a fairly decent sport story.

Apart from the structural devices outlined above, the thing most likely to make a sport story editor happy is the inclusion of what is professionally known as a “gag ending.” This is a trick, part of the sport itself, used by one of the characters to insure victory. It must be quite legal according to letter and spirit of the rules, and sufficiently clever so that the reader would hardly think of it.

A good gag ending will not sell a uniformly poor story, but it will clinch a check on an otherwise doubtful, mediocre yarn.

The gag ending, of course, is adaptable to only a very small percentage of sport stories. It should be an integral part of the plot, *never forced in just for its own sake.*

Examples: Here’s one. In 1901 Arthur Nightingall aboard Grudon won the Grand

National at Aintree in the snow, because he buttered his horse's hoofs. Snow balls up under the hoof, making it slip at the jumps, so Nightingall stuffed the inside with smooth butter.

A variation of this gag copped the cover of the August, '39 *Popular Sports* as "Ghost Horse."

Another example would be found in "Ironing-board Derby," *Thrilling Sports* for June, '39. In this aquaplane story, the hero's towboat runs out of fuel just short of the finish line. The doctor who is acting as riding mechanic (don't sniff; there were excellent reasons for his being there) digs up two bottles of ether and alcohol from his bag. Both will explode in a combustion engine, so this mixture is dumped into the tank with the little remaining gas. So powerful is the mixture that it ruins the motor, but it does manage to turn the engine over sufficiently to pull the aquaplane over the finish line a winner.

Less effective, but more often used, is a reversal of the gag ending in which the villain uses some kind of illegitimate device, but which the hero overcomes by virtue of superior skill or courage.

For instance, an unscrupulous golfer might make a deal with the greens keeper to have some of the greens soaked heavily so a ball will dig in without much roll, while other greens are left dry, hard, and fast. (From "Bag-rat Frame-up," by Ross Russell, in *Ace Sports*.) Or an enemy pitcher might use a special gimmick on the index finger of his throwing hand to enable him to throw an unusually sharp curve. Examples of this type of thing are fairly numerous in sports magazine pages.

**WELL**, the sport story picture is fairly complete now. It may be an unintelligible welter (though I hope it makes some sense) but it has nearly everything this writer knows about sport story construction. All that remains is to top it off with a sort of shot-gun blast of odds and ends it might be wise to remember.

1. Don't forget that the majority of sports are seasonal, and that the sport magazines are made up anywhere from three to

five months in advance of publication. Baseball stories should be submitted during the winter; football and basketball yarns should hit the editorial desks in late spring. Some editors will buy a *good* out-of-season story and hold it for the proper spot, but in the long run, it's best to submit the type of story that editors are buying at that particular moment.

2. If you're a beginning writer, avoid the major sports. There are two reasons for this. Chiefly, if you stick to minor sports you will meet less competition. Football, baseball, boxing, etc. are the sports that magazines are apt to feature. When they need major sport material, they ask their regulars, the established writers, to do it for them. And conversely these same writers, when writing on speculation, naturally choose the big-time sports because of the more abundant material.

But a number of the magazines are very receptive to minor sport stories, such as water polo, boat-racing, tennis, handball, lacrosse, soccer, golf, etc. Leo Margulies of *Standard* and Harry Widmer of *Ace Magazines* particularly like to present well-balanced issues. So your chances for a sale would seem to be better if you can write a good yarn around a minor sport.

3. Use variety in selecting the point of view from which to tell your story. Too often it's through the hero's eyes that the reader sees the action. Novel angles can be developed by telling the story from the point of view of one of the lesser characters—a caddy, team manager, reporter, umpire, and so on.

4. "Where do you get your plots?" is an oft-heard question. Well, plots come out of your head; no books or articles can do that job for you. But the little "plot germs" that set off a train of thought that leads to a plot—those must be watched for constantly. They are most often found, and I blush to make so obvious a point, in the sport section of the daily paper.

For example, the recent story of a manager whose fighter hurt himself in the dressing room might be adaptable to a story. This manager knew his boy needed the money for that fight, so he donned trunks

and gloves, entered the ring, and kayoed his opponent in two rounds.

Again, a Sunday supplement article giving the background and hazards of the Catalina Island—Hermosa Beach aquaplane race gave me the start for "Ironing-board Derby," mentioned above.

Alertness, and an eye for the dramatic incident, make the recipe that will fill your plot-book with ideas.

5. Remember that all editors demand a certain amount of color in their stories. Color, like glamour, is one of those things easily recognized but difficult to put into words. In the case of the sport story, it seems to mean a conglomeration of a number of elements. It includes the noise and activity of the crowd; the fast-talking sports writers; the various supernumeraries—manager, referee, seconds, trainers in the case of a fight set-up, of coaches, yell-leaders, and others in the case of a college competition, et al; it includes the characteristic lingo peculiar to the habits of the various sports, and the technical, "inside" stuff so dear to the younger readers.

**M**OST important of all, the writer should strive to incorporate into his story the drama of sport. Sport has all the romance, irony, tragedy, bitterness, glory, zest, ugliness, and beauty of life itself—in miniature, to be sure, and sometimes pretty raw, but nonetheless genuine and telling. Perhaps you're wondering if this writer is genius enough to get all this down on paper. Of course not, or I'd be a big shot in the slicks, which I'm not. But I do try, probably with indifferent success, to capture a bit of it with the typewriter.

Where do you find this drama? In the sport itself, naturally. That's one thing you won't pick up second hand. Attend sporting events, talk with the men behind the scenes, haunt the locker rooms, keep your ears open for the little stories that mean human interest.

One of the best places to get this dramatic atmosphere is at a small-time amateur fight club. Go there some night, sit on a

hard bench with the wind sneaking in between unpainted boards behind your back. Smell the odors of wintergreen and bad liquor and cheap perfume and stale tobacco smoke. See the undeveloped kids that climb into the ring, scrawny, nervous, eagerly hopeful, scared stiff.

Maybe tonight the opener brings a tough, bristle-faced Mexican against a thin, gangling Negro, obviously fighting his first fight. Mismatch! Watch the spectators' eyes glisten as they anticipate a bloody slaughter. Nothing can be so generous one moment and so wantonly cruel the next as a fight crowd.

The gong, and somewhere a woman screams shrilly, "Kill that nigger!" The slaughter begins, with the Negro lad taking a murderous barrage of gloves. His eyes roll whitely in agony. Someone shouts, "Hit 'im downstairs! Niggers can't take it downstairs!"

It's brutal. Surely, you think, the colored boy must be taking this beating for some tremendous cause. Maybe his two bucks will swell the fund that is to enable his crippled sister to receive that much-needed operation. But no. Someone sitting nearby knows the poor kid. He just wants the money to buy a cheap handbag for his shy little girl friend across the street.

And one glance tells you it'll take every cent the colored boy earns in that bloody ring for a doctor to patch him up into some resemblance of a human being.

That's not the best illustration in the world, but it's a true one. And its purpose is simply to show that attentiveness is all that is necessary to feel the color and drama that is inherent in all sport. A touch of it in your sport story manuscript helps immeasurably to bring those welcome checks in the mail.

If the rules herein postulated help some of the DIGEST readers to write better pulp-paper sport stories, then this article isn't a complete waste of time. At least they should reduce the odds against success. So take a chance, some of you; even at worst it's a sporting proposition!

*For Markets, see page 62.*

# The Juvenile Novel

By W. H. TEMPLE

THIS article deals with the juvenile novel and specifically, teen-age boys' books. That makes it, I suppose, exclusively for the male sex. Women must write small childrens or girls' books and they have my sympathy because books for older girls are pale and sticky when compared with a rattling good boy's story. If you don't believe me, name one girls' book that can hold candle to "Tom Sawyer," "Penrod," "Jibby Jones," or many others. And don't, for gosh sakes, tell me "Little Women."

Many a perspiring writer, searching frantically for story ideas, would find plenty of them if he turned the spotlight of memory on his own boyhood. And the chances are that if you didn't do anything as a boy that is worth writing up you won't have much success as a writer in any field.

Boys' books will not bring you wealth and fame unless you turn out a Penrod or Huck Finn and these are million-to-one shots. But solidly constructed, well-written juvenile novels have one great advantage over every other type of fiction. They stay in circulation. The best seller fades in a few months or a year or two at most—the good boys' book goes on indefinitely. And year by year small royalties will come in, making a backlog when your story checks falter.

My own juvenile specialty is prep school stories. Let's take a look at one, "The Rebel of Pawling." I attended Pawling and I decided to use the real name of the school rather than invent a fictitious one. I saw no harm in it as long as the background and atmosphere were recorded accurately. Owen Johnson did the same thing in his Lawrenceville stories, written a good many years ago and still selling.

Here is a brief resume of the plot. My hero, Ren Wilcox, had gotten in trouble at high school and his parents determined to send him to a prep school. He enters Pawling determined to make a name for himself

and for breaking a rule is immediately plunged into difficulties. The rest of the book concerns his adventures and misadventures until he changes his tactics and no longer is a "rebel."

The plot is neither startling nor original. But Farrar and Rinehart accepted the book and they want more of them. I think that the reason the book is successful is because it is real. Any prep school student can read the novel and place himself in Ren's position without straining his imagination. Any man who has ever attended prep school can read the book and be carried back to his own school days.

The book is fiction. But the events are plausible. The incidents could happen to any prep school boy, and they have grown out of facts. The facts are manipulated for fiction purposes. I think this statement covers not only juvenile fiction but all fiction writing. The author manipulates facts and elaborates and intensifies them to create drama.

Now let's summarize the main points in a juvenile novel, particularly a school story.

1. Your boys must be real. Your hero should excite interest and the reader should like him. He should have faults. He may be overconfident, or unsure of himself. Don't make him mean, vicious, or sneaky. But don't make him a super boy—a Frank Merriwell. That's out today. He must be a real boy and if he's going to be real he must have frailties.

2. In a school story you should have some sports. This may or may not be the main theme of the book. Personally I like to make the sports incidental. In my books, running about twenty chapters to the book, perhaps five chapters will deal exclusively with sports. I like to give a well-rounded picture of prep school life. However, if you like to write sports fiction you can make this the main theme. Look at the long string of Ralph Henry Barbour books for example. But—

know your sport thoroughly. And describe it play by play in action. Get some sweat on your pages.

3. When you write a juvenile novel, put your heart into it. If you take the attitude that you are writing for children you will write down and lay a turkey egg. The way to avoid writing down is not to think of the book as being for younger readers. Make the book interest yourself. When I write a juvenile novel, during the actual writing I am transported back to prep school. For the time being I am a prep school student. When my hero is playing football or is in danger of being expelled from school for being caught smoking I am suffering all the suspense and agony that he suffers.

4. Most juvenile novels have more than one plot. Two plots are good, three are better. Let's take another look at "*The Rebel of Pawling*." One plot concerns the hero's interest in sports, his desire to shine as an athlete. A second plot concerns his inability to adjust himself to prep school life. These two threads intertwine throughout the story.

I am going to take the liberty of mentioning another book, "*Blaine of the Backfield*" by Donald Hamilton Haines, a juvenile writer of many years' standing and a former professor of mine. "*Blaine of the Backfield*" is a college story, and it has three lines of conflict. One is Blaine's progress as a football player. The second is his interest in becoming a journalist and concerns his experiences as a reporter on the college paper. The third deals with his interest in a radical, political group of students. (This last, you will notice, is an extremely topical theme.)

**I** WOULD advise you not to write a prep school story if you never attended prep school, nor a college story if your education ended with high school. These books must ring true and you don't acquire any knowledge of college atmosphere by seeing collegiate movies. Know your atmosphere. Here again is a principle applicable to all fiction writing.

One more point. Keep your juveniles up to date. When you are examining your own past for material be sure to modernize the events. Boys don't change much but minor things do. For example, when I went to col-

lege, fraternities were life and death matters to most freshmen. If you didn't get a bid you felt that life wasn't worth living. Today fraternities have lost some of their prestige. The depression was probably responsible for this. I would say that you should avoid giving much importance to fraternities in a college story today.

Now suppose you have read this far and you are nibbling at the bait. But you've never gone to prep school and all you know about colleges are the football scores in the fall Sunday papers. And perhaps you dislike athletics. Don't give up the ship.

Maybe you were a Boy Scout. Remember Percy Keese Fitzhugh's novels about Roy Blakely, Tom Slade, and Pee Wee Harris? I understand that Mr. Fitzhugh once had sixty titles on the stands. And his books are genuinely convincing. Mr. Crump, the editor of *Boys' Life*, once told me that good Boy Scout stories are extremely hard to get now. How about it?

But perhaps you weren't a Boy Scout. Maybe you had some disadvantages as a kid. You didn't have time to play, instead of that you had to work. Maybe you sold papers or worked in a newspaper office. Write a career juvenile about a boy starting out as a printer's devil with his trials and eventual triumph. This type of juvenile novel is popular. If you held any kind of a job long enough to know the business details, there is probably a publisher who would like to have a book about it.

I'm not through with you yet. Maybe you never held a job and maybe you never did much of anything except sit around the house. If you never had any real experiences, in other words if you merely existed, your future as a writer is none too promising.

Perhaps, as a boy you didn't do much of anything except to have daydreams. You sat around and thought about buried treasure, haunted houses, etc. Use your imagination and write a thriller adventure story for boys. Or you might have been a lone wolf who went in for photography, or stamp collecting, or working with tools. Is there a book on the horizon?

If none of the above gets you started you probably just aren't cut out for juvenile

fiction. And for gossakes, don't say to yourself that you're above this type of thing but you'll take a whirl at it. If you have that attitude go back and sit down on the bench because you have already been called out on strikes.

Juvenile teen-age books run around sixty thousand words. Send your book to a publishing house that deals in juveniles. Most of the bigger firms have juvenile departments.

At present publishers are proceeding very cautiously with their adult fiction, waiting to find direction of the wind. But in their juvenile departments you will find that business is

going on as usual. There is always a call for worthwhile boys' books and will be, I imagine, as long as there are boys to read them.

And lastly, more than one big name slick writer of today began by writing stories for boys. Clarence Buddington Kelland is an example. Several years ago he was still writing his popular boys' stories about Mark Tidd. The late Ellis Parker Butler, a well-known smooth-paper writer, wrote much excellent juvenile fiction. And of course there is that dean of American writers, Booth Tarkington.

Now go ahead.

## New York Market Letter

BY HARRIET A. BRADFIELD

**N**EW magazines! Slick paper and pulp titles, both, are coming your way.

The outlook seems generally optimistic. Maybe it's the gambling spirit inherent in man, since nobody wants to be quoted as predicting that things are getting better. But while new publications continue to appear and the majority of the old reliables remain reliable markets, writers can echo the optimistic attitude.

In the slick-paper field, *Everywoman's Magazine* is a monthly worth following up. This is to be distributed through independent grocery stores, each copy costing three cents. And it looks like a big three-cents' worth of fiction, features, and useful information for the American woman. It is in the big flat size common to most of the women's magazines. There are lots of illustrations and good color printing. And everything has a lively, modern tone about it. The first issue, dated February, introduces the staff by picture and paragraph—all except the editor, Elita Wilson.

There is an open market for fiction in several lengths. Short-shorts should be kept between 1200 and 1500 words in length. Payment for these is from fifty to seventy-five dollars each. The short stories average about 5,000 words, and these bring from a hundred to a hundred and fifty dollars. Serials may run to three or four installments—about 5,000 or 6,000 words each; a hun-

dred and fifty dollars each part. All payment is on acceptance.

Fiction should be emotional, romantic, entertaining, but never grim or middle-aged. Young love or young marriage situations are always appealing to the readers of women's magazines. Also, stories about children. (But no stories for children are wanted; there is no children's page.)

There is also a market for articles, especially of a humorous nature. These must not overlap with the regular departments, which are all well covered by staff writers. Avoid too serious discussions; also, personality subjects. Articles should be kept fairly short; payment about fifty dollars. There is also a monthly letter contest, with small prizes for the three best letters.

*Everywoman's Magazine* is published by the Coast to Coast Publishing Co., Inc., 501 Madison Avenue, New York. Editor, Elita Wilson.

*Good Healthkeeping* is another new slick publication, planned for early springtime appearance on the newsstands. This is being prepared by the Joe Bonomo Publications, the firm which already has had considerable newsstand success with a series of illustrated books on physical culture, baby training, and dance steps. The publisher himself is a colorful personality, widely known as the "Heracles of the Screen."

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The editorial policy of *Good Healthkeeping Magazine* is to be "self-identification with the subject of greatest reader-interest; i. e., himself." It will seek to help the reader "get more out of life, both materially and spiritually, by living sanely, hygienically, and happily, and so utilizing his or her natural abilities to the fullest measure of attainment." The health problems of the entire family will receive consideration. And the approach will be along orthodox ways. There will be encouragement of "new systems of exercise and new systems of diet that have been reputedly tested, but the magazine will turn thumbs down on fads and on crackpot crusading against institutions of acknowledged value to humanity."

The magazine will use both articles and fiction. Each issue will have about three short stories and a serial—the latter running from 15,000 to 50,000 words in three to six installments. They may range from out-of-door subjects, sports and athletics, to those of romantic interest in which love conquers all material obstacles. Occasionally, marital problem stories are also desired, in which the situation is honestly contrived, without undue emphasis on sex. Fiction should bring in the health angle by implication, being kept entertaining rather than an instrument for propaganda. It should have a good vigorous, clean atmosphere, such as befits a health-building magazine.

Photographs are also wanted, especially ones of attractive children engaged in dancing or athletics, pretty girls, babies, adults with fine physiques.

At the start, payment will be a little better than a cent a word, and will be made "on assignment to schedule." This promises to run fairly close to acceptance. The magazine will start out as a bi-monthly. David A. Balch, former editor of *Success Magazine* and recently editor of the rotogravure service of Metropolitan Sunday Newspapers, Inc., is the editor. Address *Good Healthkeeping Magazine*, at 1841 Broadway.

**I**N the pulp field, Fictioneers, Incorporated,\* is turning out to be a rambunctious child.

\*This is the Fight-Fire-With-Fire Department of Popular Publications.

This is the new little step-sister to Popular Publications in the Bartholomew Building, 205 East 42nd Street (also, 210 East 43rd Street). The list of bi-monthlies includes ten titles at the moment of writing this—pulp in the Western, detective, love, air, and pseudo-science fields. Some information was given out last month. Here are more exact details about many of these newcomers.

The new corporation is well organized, its schedules established, and reports and payment are going along promptly and reliably. Payment is on acceptance. There is an amendment to the statement about rates. Mr. Steeger tells me that rates "are not standardized, but are about a half-cent per word." I understand that only new material is used in the Fictioneer magazines, as well as in those of Popular Publications, most of these pulps bearing the notation on the contents pages of "no reprints."

There are two pseudo-science magazines in the Fictioneers group: *Astonishing Stories* and *Super-Science Stories*. Frederik Pohl edits both. The requirements are similar to those of the general pseudo-science field; with fast action, strong motivation, sturdy characterization, and smooth writing style all important to acceptance. Between 2,000 and 12,000 words.

In the love field, two titles have appeared on the stands: *Love Short Stories* and *Love Novels Magazine*. The requirements for the former were given here last month. The latter uses three short novels and several poems per issue. The title, however, will undoubtedly be changed with the second issue—perhaps to the simple word: *Love*. This is because of the conflict with Munsey's exciting new romantic magazine, *Love Novel of the Month*, which hit the stands first and therefore has prior rights to the use of the title. No announcement seems to be ready yet as to the editor of these love pulps.

*Ace-High* and *New Western* want good, strongly plotted stories and are looking especially for off-trail Western ideas and stories a little different from the over-worked plots seen in every magazine. Both pulps emphasize variety of contents. Any length be-

tween 2,000 and 18,000 words is good here. Mr. Costa Carouso is announced as the editor.

Mr. Carouso is also editor of *Sinister Stories* and of *Startling Mystery Magazine*. These two have a policy somewhat similar to that of *Terror Tales* and of *Horror Stories* in the Popular Publications line-up. There is less emphasis on sex in the new magazines. However, a study of the others will give you a fairly good idea of what is wanted in other respects. Lengths wanted are the same as for the Westerns: 2,000 up to 18,000 words.

Requirements were given last month in the Market Letter for the air magazine, *Battle Birds*. The tenth Fictioneers title is another air magazine, *Fighting Aces*. Requirements are about the same: short stories of 5,000 words and novelettes of 10,000 to 12,000 words, partly about the Western Front of the World War and partly modern air-war. No specific announcement of an editor for the two air pulps has been made.

Rates for all the above mentioned pulps published under the name of Fictioneers, Inc., average a half-cent, not over; but are payable on acceptance. Address: 205 East 42nd Street (or, 210 East 43rd Street).

Manuscripts should be addressed specifically for these magazines. However, if you wish to submit a manuscript to one of the Popular Publications groups, and want to have it considered for the Fictioneers pulps in case of rejection by the higher-paying magazines, you may indicate this in a letter sent with the manuscript. This saves duplicate mailing and postage, in many cases.

**T**HE Popular Publications pulps continue to be active markets for detective, Western, love, air, adventure, and sports stories. The Western field is particularly wide open right now for 9,000-word novelettes. These should be strong in plot complications. More variety of subject is wanted; avoid those overworked themes of range wars, range detectives, and town-tamer stories. Look for new and fresh angles to write about, and acceptance will be more frequent.

There have been several changes in editors of the pulps under the direction of Rogers Terrill (Popular Publications). Here is the current line-up: Willard Crosby edits

*Ace G-Man*, *Strange Detective Mysteries*, *Rangeland Romances*, *Big Book Western*, *44 Western*, and *Ten Story Western Magazine*. Mike Tilden edits *Dime Western* and *Star Western*. Loring Dowst edits *The Spider and Detective Tales*. Steve Ferrelly edits *Dime Mystery*, *Horror Stories*, and *Terror Tales*. All are at 205 East 42nd Street.

*Operator 5* has been suspended for the time being from the active list of Popular Publications.

Albert McCleery, formerly of *Stage* magazine, is editor-in-chief of a new publication due on the newsstands January 25th. The title is *American Theatre Magazine*, and it is to be much like *Stage*, but with a departmentalized set-up. It will be a monthly, and sell for 25 cents.

*China Monthly* is another new magazine, with a contents of news and features on China. The editor-in-chief is the Right Rev. Msgr. George Barry O'Toole, former college professor in Peking. The address: 182 Claremont Avenue.

*One-Act Play Magazine*, which has been suspended temporarily for lack of funds, has acquired new financial backing. Publication is being resumed, under a board of directors including A. S. Burack, William Kozlenko, Lewis Jacobs, John Cassner, and S. Emerson Golden 2nd. Mr. Kozlenko is editor. The address is 112 West 42nd Street.

M. L. A. Publications are bringing out two new monthlies, *Living Romances* and *Intimate Detective Stories*. These are additions to the string owned by M. L. Annenberg, with editorial offices in Chicago. The New York office handles little of the editorial work, except on his radio publications.

**W**RITERS of the first-person confession stories will find that Macfadden's new monthly, *True Love Letters*, opens a wider field to them than might have been guessed. The first issue shows a wide variety of time as well as place, with some very appealing historical incidents, and also some vivid feature articles touching on both tragic and comic phases of love letters. Also, for those interested in contests, there is an announcement of a Love Letter Contest, with eight prizes—the top one \$100. Also, payment at usual rates for all other letters which may

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be published. The closing date is March 1, 1940. A special address is given for the contest: Prize Love Letter Editor, True Love Letters, P. O. Box 425, Grand Central Annex, New York. Manuscripts for the magazine itself should be addressed to 122 East 42nd Street. Lyon Mearson is the editor.

The first-person confession magazines at Fawcett's, 1501 Broadway, present another huge market for this type of material. *True Confessions* plays up the glamorous side of its stories. *Romantic Story* does likewise, with accent on love. The third and newest of this triumvirate of monthlies, *Real Life Stories*, emphasizes the grimmer side. So it would be well to study the magazines before submitting material. Once in the office, however, a manuscript receives consideration for possible use in any one of the three, as the central reading system is in effect.

The biggest need is for shorts of 5,000 to 6,000 words. The editors are especially anxious to get signed by-line stories of people in the public eye, even if it is a rather local public. One of these is planned for each issue of each of the three magazines. So there is considerable market. It is advisable, however, to query the editor first. Miss Beatrice Lubitz is supervising editor.

In addition to the shorter lengths, *Romantic Story* uses a short novel of 10,000 to 12,000 words; while the other two use long novels of 22,000 words. There is also a demand for short-shorts of about 1800 to 2500 words; and for problem stories with the end solution left for advice given by readers in a letter contest. A little poetry is used: love theme with a ruthless note. Eight lines is best. Payment on stories is two cents and up, on acceptance. In the case of first sales, there is a short delay due to the requirement for references. Otherwise, reports are said to be very fast.

*Secrets* is always in the market for first person material: shorts up to 6,000, novelettes of 15,000 words. Payment is over a cent a word, on these manuscripts. This is Rose Wyn's magazine, 67 West 44th Street. Her four love magazines are also wide open. *Love Fiction Monthly* and *Ten Story Love* pay at least one cent a word; while *Variety Love* and *Complete Love* average somewhat lower. But all reports and checks are very fast.

*Lone Wolf Detective* is a new title in the Ace line-up at 67 West 44th Street, edited by Harry Widmer. This uses the lone adventurer type of mystery story with lots of color and action. Woman interest is welcome (as it is in most of this group). But avoid gangster themes. The best general length, and most needed now is 10,000 words. Occasionally shorts are used as fillers-in. Payment is a half-cent per word, shortly after acceptance.

*Ace Sports* and *12 Sports Aces* are looking for sports stories in season: shorts 2,000-5,000; novelettes 9,000 to 12,000 words. *10 Detective Aces*, the one member of this group which pays a cent a word, is a ready market for shorts and novelettes of those same lengths.

The Western pulps in this group are doing all right, and are looking for more action shorts of about 5,000 words. Also, they can use novelettes of 10,000 to 12,000 words, with woman interest. This list includes *Red Seal Western*, *Romance Round-up*, *Western Aces*, *Western Trails*, and *Variety Western*. Address of all just above: 67 West 44th Street.

*12 Adventure Stories* and *Eerie Mysteries* are no longer on the active list of Ace Magazines, 67 West 44th Street. And *Secret Agent X* is overstocked for the present.

THE Warner magazines, *Black Mask* and *Ranch Romances*, never have any startling announcements to make. They simply go along from issue to issue, as dependable markets for those who can sell them, as any there are around town. Detective fiction of all kinds goes into *Black Mask*, except that there is a quiet sort of tabu on too much horror and sex, and the hero should not be the criminal. Lengths run anywhere up to 15,000 words, and payment to regulars is a cent and a quarter, on acceptance.

*Ranch Romances* keeps to its usual length requirements: shorts 4,000-6,000; novelettes 10,000-12,000; complete novel 25,000-30,000; serials 40,000-60,000, with installments not over 12,000 words. Payment is a cent a word and up, on acceptance. Address of these two magazines: 515 Madison Avenue. Fanny Ellsworth is editor.

Gene Fornshell, editor of *Complete Detective Cases*, urges writers to make sure of

(Continued on page 56)

# For Playwrights Only

By JOHN LAWRENCE

**T**HROUGH twenty letters received from circle and tent show managers, I have learned that quite a number of these folk are subscribers to WRITER'S DIGEST. And some of them are burned up at me.

In two previous DIGEST articles "Circles Like Tobys & G-Strings" and "Rag Operas" I mentioned the definite requirements for tent show and "circle" plays as to the number of acts, actual playing time, cast, and stage setting limitations. These suggestions have been more or less ignored by several hundred writers many of whom were anxious to peddle material that they had previously written.

The scripts submitted to some of the managers included numerous one act plays; an historical pageant; a play written in blank verse; another that had something to do with psychology; and two lengthy ones dealing with the early life of Abraham Lincoln, (probably written for the nation wide Lincoln play contest conducted last year) as well as some double vaudeville acts; two monologues; and even some poetry.

I am not criticizing these brain children because I did not see most of the material and as far as the poetry, the play in blank verse, and the one with the plot dealing with psychology is concerned, I wouldn't know if they were good or bad. However I did read one of the monologues and a cross-fire

double vaudeville act and I will say they sounded very good. I thought they were better than some of the specialties used by some actors whom I have associated with during the past year.

But whether such material is good or bad, is not the point. Circle and tent show managers are not interested in *buying, leasing or reading* anything but plays of the type previously mentioned in the December and January DIGESTS. A melo-

drama will intrigue the managers as much or more than any of the other types and I will give you a suggestion that might aid you in the formation of your plot if you are a bit hazy about it.

Borrow (if you don't have one) a book called "The Writer's Market" and read the very comprehensive article therein titled "The Pulp Paper Master Fiction Plot," by Lester Dent.

Where it says "divide your yarn into four equal parts", change this (mentally) to three equal parts. This divides your plot into the three acts.

Next; where the information is given that, at the end of the first three parts (two for you) have your hero "get it in the neck", reverse this and have him almost get out of his jam, and then of course in the last he finally does.

The idea is to have situations on the stage at the ends of the first two acts which will bring applause from the audience at the fall of the curtain. If the plot is such that it is

Nobody likes an editor who fusses at his readers, but we must either speak our editorial mind, or else pass out taffy and know in our hearts that we are insincere. In the December issue Mr. Lawrence told in painstaking detail exactly what the managers of the "Circle" companies want to buy. In January he detailed what the Rag Operas want. Every *Writer's Digest* reader who sends plays to managers listed by Mr. Lawrence, that have absolutely no relation to the requirements listed, does a great dis-service to the entire free lance field. Action of that sort has closed 80% of the radio stations to free lance material. That's why we don't publish a radio column. Let's work together, writers, and not close out markets by flagrant disregard of editorial requirements.

almost impossible to do this, then let the comedy take the curtains with good big belly laughs. But remember to try always to have a legitimate excuse for the comedian being there, not only at the curtains but with all of his scenes.

Before proceeding, I would like to (before I forget about it) get something off my chest that I have been thinking about.

I like the theatrical business—every branch of it, and I have made a living out of it for many years. I enjoy writing about it, especially the production and writing branches and I want you to know that I have done these pieces because I enjoyed them. These articles brought many extremely interesting letters to my desk from new playwrights, as well as from old timers whom I haven't heard from for many years.

It's a treat to meet the *DIGEST* crowd this way.

**A**LL of the "don'ts" listed below are the result of facts sent to me by managers and agents.

Don't query an agent or manager about a play, leaving the impression that you have already written it, if you have not. In one instance the writer contacted my own agent regarding two plays and was immediately informed to send them on, and he had not started on either one.

Don't ask them if they think the synopsis you enclose would make a good play.

Don't ask them to tell you what is wrong with your play when they play it. You will hear about it soon enough.

Don't ask them if they must have the original copy, or if carbon copies will do. Send the carbons.

Don't ask them to copy the parts. You must furnish these yourself.

Don't be afraid to tell them it is your first play. I know a number of managers who enjoy taking the gamble on a writer's first effort if it reads anyways near good.

Don't send the play on until you feel sure it is playable.

Don't ask them if the play ought to be copyrighted and if so, how to do it? Wait until the play is whipped into shape and then if you want to do it you can. Send

to the Register of Copyrights, Washington, D. C., and ask for application blanks for copywriting plays. Instructions will accompany the blanks.

Don't lift the plot and dialogue from some recent magazine story or novel that you have read and expect to get by with it. It will get you into trouble.

The editor of *Bill Bruno's Bulletin*, 818 Wyandotte St., Kansas City, Mo., in his Christmas number, disagreed with me regarding the popularity of the "toby" type of comedy. Despite the fact that he took a full page to give his reason, I think he is wrong. He just writes about plays and I write, sell, produce and have played them.

But that's a detail; if you are doing tent or circle shows, you read Bruno's *Bulletin*. It has the spirit of the field.

Be sure that your script complies with the major requirements of the managers as given in the December and January issues of the *DIGEST*, before sending it on to them.

If there is any question about stage directions or anything else that you want to ask, I will answer you at least at the earliest moment possible (I do a thirteen minute radio script daily for five days a week). If you have a stamp at hand, enclose it; if not, it won't make any difference but you will probably get your answer on a post card.

My address is Worthington, Indiana.

### The Markets

All of the following buy shows following closely on the requirements given in my article "*Rag Opera*" (tent shows).

*Aulger Bros. Stock Co.*, Rome Hotel, Omaha, Neb.

*Ted North*, 2800 Kentucky Ave., Topeka, Kansas.

*J. C. Bisbee, Bisbee Comedians*, R. R. No. 5, Memphis, Tenn.

*Mrs. Jack Brooks, Jack Brooks Stock Co.*, Sabula, Iowa.

*Hal Stone*, 3830 Michigan Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

*John F. Justice*, Tilden, Neb.

*Choates Comedians*, Cambria, Ill.

*LaMore Comedians*, Colon, Mich.

*Harvey's Comedians*, Cortez, Colo.

*Harry Brown's Comedians*, R. R. 1, Box 8, Biloxi, Miss.

*Brunk's Comedians*, 334 No. Lulu Ave., Wichita, Kansas.

*Frank Ginnivan Stock Co.*, Pleasant Lake, Ind.

*Norma Ginnivan Players*, 118 So. Euclid, Dayton, Ohio.

*Madge Kinsey Players*, 312 W. Tiffin, Fostoria, Ohio.

*Jack Hart*, Box 152, Foreman, Ark.

*Ward Hatcher*, New Market, Iowa.

*Almore Players*, 2130 Fairmont Ave., Philadelphia, Pa.

*W. H. Hanneman*, Box 87, Winneconne, Wisc.

*Ed. J. Hart*, 1111 N. 36th St., Omaha, Neb.

*Haverstock's Comedians*, Box 94, Alvord, Texas.

*Seabee Hayworth*, 402 W. Broad St., High Point, North Car.

*Harry Hugo*, Box 548, Grand Island, Neb.

*Jack Kelly*, 132 So. Larch St., Lansing, Mich.

*Madden and Stillman Players*, Lake City, Iowa.

*Kelly Masters*, Box 548, Monroe, La.

*Mrs. J. Doug. Morgan*, Jacksonville, Texas.

*Ed. Myhre*, Grand Meadow, Minn.

*Rosalie Nash Players*, 2217 Bonny Castle, Louisville, Ky.

*Art Names*, McCracken, Kansas.

*Harold J. Porter*, Santa Cruz, Calif.

*Roberson-Gifford Players*, Rt. No. 2, Box 552, St. Petersburg, Fla.

*Rotnour Players*, Richmond, Ill.

*Town Hall Players*, Radio Station WIBU, Beaver Dam, Wisc.

*Cecil Vernon*, Little Ole Co., Radio Station

KGLO, Mason City, Iowa.

*Zarlington's Comedians*, Kenton, Tenn.

*Whitchurch Comedians*, Gallatin, Mo.

*Brownie's Comedians*, 128 Wilson St., Newark, Ohio.

*Wallace Bruce*, 1308 North Main St., Hutchinson, Kansas.

*Tilton Guthrie Players*, Lake City, Iowa.

*Mrs. Bert Gagnon*, 234 South Adams St., Green Bay, Wisc.

*Rice-Percy Players*, Farmer City, Illinois.

*L. P. Davis*, 600 North 5th, Ft. Smith, Ark.

*Lawrence Players*, Worthington, Ind.

If your "Circle" script is completed, query some of the following shows, all of which are quite reliable.

*Feagin-Wilson Players*, 31 Sixth St., N. W. Oelwein, Iowa.

*Tilton Players*, Ashkum, Ill.

*Sid Kingdon Players*, Milan, Mo.

*Billy Fortner Comedians*, North View, Mo.

Sir:

As a writer of "Toby" plays for the past twenty years, I cannot agree with Mr. Bruno that "Tobys" are "out." They may be passe for some shows but not for the general run of repertoire companies playing the smaller towns, and catering to those who live in rural communities.

Mr. Bruno states they are terrible baboons. I do agree with Mr. Bruno that the makeup of some comedians playing "Toby" parts resemble a baboon, but that is not the fault of the playwright, because the playwright does not describe the part in his "cast of characters" as anything but a "Toby" or a comedy part. He does not say "make-up this part to resemble a baboon."

A "Toby" part is nothing more than a juvenile comedy part. A cross between a small town wise guy whose education is limited, and a smart country bumpkin who always has a ready answer. You will find this type of person in every city, town and village in the United States. In some of our very old dramas, you will find this type of comedy, for instance "Hi Holler" in *Way Down East*. In days past these parts were called "Silly Kids," but were not madeup as "terrible baboons." I insist that even today the so called "Toby" part can be played successfully without resorting to a grotesque makeup.

Unfortunately, however, about fifty per cent of our repertoire comedians makeup their "Toby" parts with a red nose, white eyes, pie mouth, freckles, and a red wig. In some rural communities this sort of makeup will keep the audience in an uproar (if the comedian is clever.) In other sections of the country he will fall flat. On the other hand, I have seen comedians play "Toby" parts with a straight makeup and get more laughs than the comedian with a baboon makeup.

Some of our best and most successful repertoire managers have several "Toby" plays in their repertoire. They have been allowed ample time to read them before leasing, and if the dignity of the profession has been lowered by their use, possibly the manager, the director, the cast and the comedian should be blamed for the manner in which the play was directed and produced.

DON MELROSE,

1015 Jefferson St.,

Kansas City, Mo.

Sir:

I have just read both of Mr. Lawrence's articles and also re-read Bill Bruno's editorial in which he takes issue with Mr. Lawrence. I am inclined to agree with Bill although we must admit that for twenty-five years John Lawrence has been one of the standard writers in the repertoire-stock field.

The last five years have been a period of change in the little end of show business, and while at one time a more or less legitimate "Toby" was in public favor, just like the old gray mare, "He ain't what he used to be." To be sure, the public wants comedy and lots of it, but from personal opinion, I believe I can safely say they prefer a better class of human light comedy. My most successful seasons in the past have been with companies that did not use "Tobys." Instead, they used bills with a good dramatic plot, and plenty of good clean comedy relief.

In closing I repeat Bill Bruno's statement, "When 'Tobys' are ousted, show business will resume its dignity and become profitable once more."

JAY BEE FLESNER,

3937 Illinois St.,

San Diego, Calif.

*A reprint of Bruno's editorial appears on page 45.*

# May I Growl, Please?

By ELIZABETH METZGER

**E**DITIONS want something different. Those four words always make me smile. I want to shout, "What you mean different?" Sure, I know what editors think they mean. A *different* story is a properly constructed story garnished with original style and fresh viewpoint. But you try and cover the brittle bones of old man formula with anything but gravy and see what happens.

I'm not claiming this isn't a free country and every little boy and girl hasn't a chance to become president. I know there are dozens of struggling writers today who will be famous tomorrow. But I'm talking about editors claiming they want *different* stories.

During my writing years I've sold enough slants to fill a case. To date I've sold only five *different* stories and those sold not because they were *different* but because, now and then, a liberal minded editor will publish something *even* if it is *different*. My files fairly ooze with unslanted stories which never hope to see a press, not to mention a dozen others which are going the rounds. And don't get the idea these stories aren't worth printing. They may be far cries from masterpieces but they have been recognized by the powers, the late Ray Long, Gilbert Seldes, Whit Burnett, Martha Foley and so on. Let's quote from files:

"This is a very good story. Sorry. Try us again."

"This is a mighty fine piece of work but I can't think of any likely market for it."

"Really awfully swell."

"If it were our policy to publish the realistic story—with careful attention to details—the psychological story—this would be entirely acceptable. You have built up a fine argument."

And here's one came yesterday from the *Saturday Evening Post*.

"We regret that we can find no place upon our crowded pages for this. But we enjoyed reading it and thank you for submitting it."

And here's a line from *Writer's Digest*:

"You can write. Try us again."

"If you can slant, what the hell?" I've had said to me many times.

Well, what the hell? I read the other day that there are two kinds of writers, the ones who write because they can't help writing and the ones who write because they want fame and fortune. I disagree. The only kind of writer is the one who can't help writing. Certainly, he may want fame and fortune, too, but that's only half the story.

Many people want to write and start to write but the person who carries on is an addict. He can't help himself. Maybe he wouldn't help himself if he could. Anyhow he can't. He may have to wash windows to eat but he keeps on writing. He may sit staring at a blank sheet of paper for hours, or days, or even months, but then it starts—first a creeping in the brain and then all the little figures become alive and move, and they love and mate and hate and kill. A child is born. Oh, miracle. Oh, miracle.

But alas! too soon the poor writer discovers no one appreciates the poor child but himself. In fact the poor child is an eccentric. Interesting, of course, but quite out of order. The poor writer is heart-broken until some kindly editor points out how the defects can be remedied. So the writer starts remodeling his child after the fashion. The little face which was homely but full of character is powdered and painted. The wild interesting little character is trained to bow and scrape. Some-

(Continued to page 46)

# Leagues With Leers

By JACK WOODFORD

I AM repeatedly solicited of late to join this, that or the other League of Writers.

It has been rather forcibly brought to my attention, in landslides of mail, and otherwise, that many young writers consider me some sort of oracle, where writing matters are concerned.

An oracle, in the days when the word wove itself into the warp and woof of our language, was a fake, worked with wires.

It is entirely possible that I am a fake worked with wires; but for those of you who consider me an oracle, I would like to put myself on record in regard to Leagues of Writers.

I think that the Author's League of America, under the capable secretarial management of Miss Luise Sillcox, who has devoted her life to it, is the only reliable thing for any writer to join, and if you wish to heed my oraculations I hereby urge that every writer not bolixed to the eyebrows in isms immediately join it.

The Author's League of America is loyal not only to this country, but to the oldest and best traditions of the author.

It has been in existence for more than a quarter of a century, and it is the only League of writers in this country with sound, bona fide affiliations with the august and responsible writers' organizations in other countries.

It, my friends, is the goods.

For a quarter of a century it has fought for better copyright legislation. Many benefits that authors enjoy today that they think came to them by accident did as a matter of fact come to them through the indefatigable efforts of the Author's League of America.

It is a business organization, with a staff of efficient experts. It keeps itself out of politics,

and all of us know that politics is the dirtiest, stinkiest mess in the entire world.

Most of us writers are at heart radicals. As Van Wyck Brooks put it in one of his books of criticism (I quote roughly and hence no quotation marks): The poet would be out of sympathy with Utopia, which would be a very good thing for Utopia, since it would keep it from ossification.

Authors need certain fundamental things from an organization that represents them. They need a permanent lobby at Washington, to keep publishers from making peons of them. They need the services of competent attorneys to collect for them sometimes. They need confidential advice as to the reliability of publishers, agents, and what not; and they above everything else need an organization to which they may write for definite information on every branch of the business side of authorship. And the Author's League of America does all that and more.

THE most reactionary party in the United States today is the Communist party. It will not for one moment tolerate radicalism of any sort; and we writers are by nature, and of essence ought to be, radicals. We should always be "agin the government," for the simple reason that by being agin the government we are forever fomenting issues which either get us slapped down, or get the issue put through. Somebody has to object and yell, or civilization would stagnate; and the Communist party of all political parties in the world today resents and would if it could completely put down free speech, which is the author's life blood.

In a republican country, in a democratic country, an author can shoot off his mouth and nobody bats him down; in a Com-

munist country, the slightest tendency to radicalism is put down by a firing squad, as we all know.

All my life I have been a radical and a rebel, without portfolio. By that I mean that any party, however ideal, should be confronted constantly by rebels and dissenters; otherwise it stagnates. I like to yell my head off at what I consider abuses of government. In sympathy with Walt Whitman I have always felt an anger, or an urge, or a something to attack those invested with the "impudence of elected persons." I happen to think that the current President of the United States is the greatest I have lived under. I think the country is so lucky to get him that it would be sheer madness not to draft him for a third term; but much as I like him, and approve his policies, I want to be free to criticize them in print, as I have, and will; I want to be free to do this without being shot down.

In other words, I want to remain to the end of my days a radical, and a rebel, not because I think everyone should be a radical and a rebel, but because I think there is need of radicals and rebels; and the Communist party shoots them as fast as they lift their heads in countries where the Communist party has control.

An authors organization—for the business side of authorship—has no business in politics.

I write this solely because I happen to be better placed than some of you to know what is going on among writers today.

I have a voluminous correspondence with writers all over the world, and I know that writers today, in every country, are being maneuvered into Front Organizations for the Nazi-Communist party which above all parties sneers at Voltaire for his mighty words about freedom of speech.

**T**HIS is the first time in my life that I have ever written anything in defense of my country. In past years I thought it was in a good position to defend itself, and needed criticism for its arrogance. But I do now write in defense of my country, because I have definite information concerning a Communist putsch to enlist authors in a stinking intrigue to sing songs to Mr. Roosevelt in order to get him to come into the bushes at

the bottom of the garden where the Communist party can emasculate the greatest president we have had in a century.

I don't think that Mr. Roosevelt for one second can be hamstrung by these haters of free speech; these despisers of rebels who made a fugitive of Trotsky for disagreeing with them, who shoot dissenters instead of arguing with them; who vilely tortured human beings in Spain. But if he can be hamstrung, it can be done through overwhelming publicity, and we writers have a lot to do with publicity.

I say that I write in defense of my country for the first time in my life because for the first time in my life I think it is really in danger from within. We all know that the Republican party, much as it stinks of conservatism and reactionism, *does* tolerate radicals and rebels; we all know that the Democratic party *does* let us shoot off our mouths to our hearts content—and we do know that to shoot off your mouth in Russia is to get your head shot off.

So I plead the cause of the Authors League of America, as a clean, business-like, non-political organization for writers; and beg those of you who think of me as a sort of oracle to eschew any and all other writers' organizations, especially those with a political *raison d'être*.

When these new Leagues, fitted with big names, approach you, remind them that you are a radical and a rebel and thus hate Communism, because of the war against free speech that Communism represents.

Because I am known as a rebel, and a radical, I have been approached over and over again by these enemies of free speech, on the supposition that I will stand for Communism. In these approaches I have been given indubitable evidence that these Leagues of Communist-Nazi fooled big-name writers are trying to make our country a political province of the U. S. S. R. Nothing more horrible could happen in the conception of writers.

The one thing on this earth that all writers should fight against is the reactionary, conservative, no free speech aspects of Communism. Writers should remain radicals and

(Continued to page 44)

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- All short short stories must be original, and no more than 1,500 words in length. Stories may be typed or hand-written. Please enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for return.
- Entrants must enclose with their story a subscription (new, renewal, or extension) to WRITER'S DIGEST magazine.
- A six months' one dollar subscription entitles the subscriber to enter one story in this contest. A two dollar one year subscription entitles the subscriber to enter two stories in this contest. No more than 2 stories may be entered by any one writer.
- All stories, and all rights to same, remain the exclusive property of the individual writers. The names of the winners will be published in Writer's Digest. All scripts will be returned within 30 days after the completion of the contest. This contest will not be extended.
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Other editors watch the winners of this contest, because past Digest contests have uncovered real talent, and editorial talent scouts are alive to the fine work WRITER'S DIGEST does in bringing forward talented unknown writers through these contests. As usual, the contest is open to everyone, and there are no tabus of any kind.

Enter your best short-short story, or sit down and write one—*now*. You compete with writers who are in the same position of ability as yourself, and your chances of winning one of the prizes are as good as you are. Keep under the length limit, 1500 words, and good luck to you from the *Digest* staff.

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## Leagues With Leers

(Continued from page 41)

rebels; and of all the political parties known to man, Communism is the one party above all others that will not for a moment tolerate any rebellion, any radicalism.

All my life I have lived with writers, and loved them, and their cause; and I have always taken their cause to be that of free speech, rebellion and radicalism. All my life American writers have been happily free to utter rebellious things and cavort radically, and I never feared for them. It depresses me as nothing else has ever depressed me to find many of the big-name writers of today enlisted in an organization to put down free speech; it is almost incredible that they should fall for such stuffy conservatism as the Communist party represents. I do not condemn them for it; most of the outstanding big-name writers in this country are old

now, and a bit befuddled. They are becoming reactionary and conservative, and hence can be seduced by Communism, can be wooed to the deceitful U. S. S. R. with its hatred of rebellion and radicalism.

But you who read this are the young writers of tomorrow. You will supersede them in the years to come. There is an old saying that when a man is young, if he is not a radical, he has no heart; that when he is old, if he is not a conservative he has no head.

But the conservatism of Communism includes the suppression of free speech. If you must join an authors' organization—and it will help you if you do—join the Author's League, and keep away from reactionarism, and conservatism, and the damning of free speech. An author's league should be a business league; not a branch office for a disreputable foreign nation.

Because it values a free press over and above its editorial thoughts, the DIGEST has never censored the editorial requirements of any publications which we think are socially harmful. Thus, we have published the editorial requirements of the sex crime magazines, with their "strip 'em, beat 'em" titillations, the editorial requirements of the sex pulp books which we feel are woefully harmful to adolescents and to weak-minded adults, and the editorial requirements of the parrot left-wing groups, including magazines such as *The New Masses*.

If the editors of *The New Masses* ever were so unfortunate as to become leaders of this country, the first thing they would do, if we may look to their Russian compatriots for hindsight, would be to forbid the right of free press to all but their cohorts.

The editors of the DIGEST, along with every editor we know who shares the free press privilege (excepting the bewitched idealists who look to Russia's mishandling of Marx as best evidence of Enlightenment in the world today), is anxious to present *both sides* to their readers.

With that in mind, the DIGEST will be pleased to publish any answer to Jack Woodford's article from Communist readers of the DIGEST. We have a few hundred, as shown by their letters every time we infer that the best analogy for the hammer and the sickle is a bloody axe and a blackjack.

To any such reader who desires to answer Mr. Woodford we open our pages.

While we are on the subject of who wields the First Pen of the radical press, we would like to purchase an article which would, in accurate detail, show the truth or non-truth of the recent allegation of Eugene Lyons, to-wit: . . . immediately after the pragmatic Russian-German deal none of the Communist magazines knew what to say. For a day or two they were silent on the subject. Then in a dozen different countries, they all branched forth with *identical* explanations. If this allegation is true it shows beyond shadow of any slightest doubt that the basic editorial direction of the radical press comes not from their own editors as they bravely and laboriously allege, but from a central source—from whom, they trust, all blessings flow. Does any reader care to work up such an article and get the facts?—ED.

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*Bill Bruno's Bulletin* is one of those magazines that you either never heard of, or simply couldn't live without. It goes to wandering minstrels;—stock companies of 5 to 10 people who "swing circles" playing one night at each stand, and coming back a week or ten days later to entertain the local theater goers. (Tickets are 10, 15, 25, and sometimes up.)

In his last *Bulletin*, Bill comments on the *DIGEST's* article, *Circles Like Tobys & G-Strings.*"

The December number of the *WRITER'S DIGEST*, most widely read of the magazines for those who have the urge to write, contained an article by John Lawrence, well known playwright, titled "Circles Like Tobys and G-strings." In the extremely well written article, mention was made of this cockeyed sheet as covering the field for shows using plays containing these characters and, judging from the number of subscriptions we have received during the past week from embryo playwrights in every section of the country, our friend Lawrence has started something. Something that may revert to the everlasting good of show business, because he has called attention to the lack of new plays. This need has been felt for some time past, our present writers, although unusually prolific, being unable to supply the demand. For this reason, new writers will be encouraged. . . . To quote Mr. Lawrence: "A door that has opened slowly during the past few years now stands wide open to playwrights whose Broadway ambitions do not extend to a non-stop flight," and continues with, "There are 150 rural touring troupes that want new plays." He gives good advice as to requirements of the managers and how to market plays. His best suggestion to playwrights about to attempt the market under discussion is that a melodrama is the best bet for their first offering to the circles. We have long contended that melodrama has been given much too little attention by the shows. Instead the majority of the offerings have been a lot of twaddle with nothing happening. Except when Toby rushes on to save the curtain with a joke he has just dug up out of the cemetery. Of course, we may be wrong in insisting that audiences want an occasional melodrama. But what do you in nine cases out of ten see when you go to a movie? You see "dressed-up" melodrama, unless it's clothes horse society sophistication, which usually flops. And even these have their melodramatic moments, as witness one of the cleverest pictures we have seen in months, "The Women."

But we take issue with our good friend Lawrence when he insists that Toby plays are the thing to offer managers. There is little doubt, however, that a certain type of manager who has become an addict to these most terrible baboons will gladly accept any play that will give him all the comedy and allow him to hide his more or less natural talents under a red wig. These monstrosities are the real reason (of course, we expect nobody to side with us when we make the statement) why show business is in its present pitiful

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condition. And the past summer has decisively proven that the Tobys **ARE OUT!** It is noted that even the cotton country has turned down this class of supposed entertainment, for which every real trouper should be thankful. When the Tobys have been ousted, show business will resume its dignity and become profitable once more. . . . The late Robert J. Sherman, most prolific writer of plays for repertoire, tent and circle shows, did not resort to Tobys. Instead he wrote light comedy. His plays continue as the best sellers, even though some of them are twenty years old. Not one of these plays contained a Toby. Nor did he write many G-string parts. When he did, they were humans. And we beg to call Mr. Lawrence's attention to his own "Hal o' the Hills," which continues in popularity after twenty years or more. There is no Toby in that comedy-drama, but there is plenty of action.

We would suggest to aspiring playwrights who contemplate writing for the tent and circle market that they give their talents to something better than Toby's and G-strings, Mr. Lawrence's advice to the contrary. We predict that within two years at the most, there will be an end to the shows offering plays of that kind. It's in the cards. Therefore, if you write that sort of plays, you will find no market for them in a very short time. Write human being comedy that is funny and not offensive. Write heart interest with action. Not necessarily melodrama, but plays that are fast-moving and will hold an audience's attention without dragging in comedy by the horns to wake the customers from their sleep. In our poor opinion, were you to offer managers something of that sort, you would find a ready market and several years of leasing at fair royalty, that paid greatly depending on the worth of your play. . . . And don't overlook the fact that there is really a crying need for new material for the summer season.

## May I Growl, Please?

(Continued from page 39)

times the kindly editor likes the changes, sometimes he doesn't. But which ever way the wind blows the poor writer is still broken-hearted. Alas!

My son is seven years old. His nose turns up, his front teeth are gone, there's a scar where his ear was tacked back on. He reminds me of the old story about, "You must be more than seven years old, little boy. You couldn't get that dirty in seven years." But he's mine and he's himself. I wouldn't make him look like Shirley Temple even if I could. I want my stories to be mine and themselves, too.

"If you can slant, what the hell?"

Well, I told you, didn't I? And I'm telling the editors, "What you mean different?"



# PERSONALS

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## I Told Too Much

By G. R. SPENCER

I'D GOT them back before, of course—a lot of 'em in five years of writing—but this was the toughest disappointment of all. Never before had I ever pulled a reject from the mailbox with such a sickening sense of let-down.

It was a short short, a 1939 WRITER'S DIGEST contest entry, and should have won a prize near the top. Yet for some reason it had failed to rate as much as honorable mention. Why? I hadn't the slightest idea, unless the judges had considered only the entries of relatives and close friends.

I shoved the envelope into my pocket and started home, turning the story over in my mind. It was a nice job; the very best I could do.

I couldn't discover any bugs in the plot. The structure was sound, and it had a good surprise twist at the end. Here it is; have a look at it yourself.

A young kid with a big mouth has drifted into a wild west town and is trying to talk up a reputation for himself as a bad man. But instead of being awed the local waddies give him the haw-haw. His feelings hurt, the kid determines to establish the desired reputation by means of a frame-up. He runs into a stranger, a stew-bum, who resembles the notorious gambler and bad man, Frank Gruno. The kid makes a deal with the stew-bum: he is to impersonate Bad Man Gruno, and then, when he shows up in town the kid will face him over a sixgun and run him out of the place.

It comes off according to schedule—or so the kid thinks. When it becomes known that Frank Gruno is in town the kid goes forth, meets him in a saloon and, in an atmosphere of tense drama, beats him to the draw. Gruno leaves the country minus his gun.

For an hour or so the kid basks in the admiration of the local boys but pretty soon the stranger, the stew-bum he had hired to do the impersonation, shows up—for the first time! The kid wits as he realizes that it actually was Gruno he'd been taking chances with.

Frightened into a measure of common sense by his narrow escape, the kid chucks his bad man ambitions and gets himself a job on a ranch.

Now there's the plot, and I couldn't see anything the matter with it. Yet there was something wrong with the yarn. Upon reaching home I opened the envelope with the idea of going over the script again. I found a letter from one of the *Digest* editors. It said, in effect, "You have a little something on the ball yet you miss the corners of the plate. Study the enclosed pamphlet."

I studied the pamphlet. It named most of the common faults of the short short, but none of them seemed to apply to my yarn unless it was the section which dealt with "Editorializing." "Be careful," said the pamphlet, "to avoid thrusting your views, as author, into the story. Let the characters act and tell the story themselves."

Had I got in the way of my characters? I began by reviewing my first paragraph.

About sundown The Iowa Kid left Charley's Place and headed toward the Elkhorn Saloon. He was a round-faced, red-cheeked kid and I noticed he was wearing his full outfit; wide hat, high-heeled boots, hair-pants and all. He had his sixgun tied down, bad man fashion, against his thigh. I knew that only a kid with an overdose of wild west literature would rig himself out like that.

When he came past the Yellowstone I fell into step. "What's up, kid?" I asked.

I got a hard look from the corner of his eye.

Well, there's the opening I'd used, and what's wrong with it? Pretty good, isn't it? It ought to be; I'd worked hours on it. But the pamphlet had said "Don't editorialize—," which, according to the misses, meant that I talk too much. "After all," the misses said, "your readers are reasonably intelligent. Give them credit for knowing a little themselves!"

So I started work on the opening once more. "Keep your own opinions out of this," I told myself savagely. I produced, as follows:

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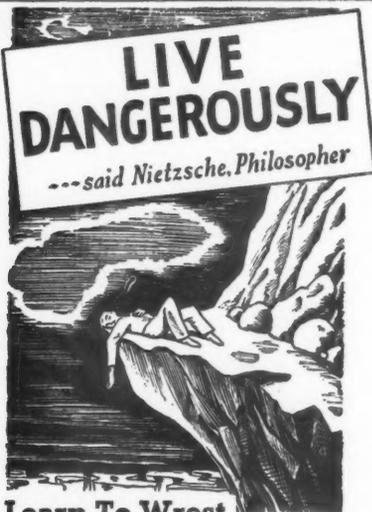
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**The ROSICRUCIANS (AMORC)**  
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About sundown the Iowa Kid left Charley's Place and headed toward the Elkhorn Saloon. I could see him from the door of the Yellowstone. He was young, not more than twenty, with blue eyes, smooth cheeks, and a touchy sensitive mouth. He was wearing his sixgun and I noticed he had tied it down, gunman fashion, against his thigh.

I showed it to the misses. "Better!" she said. And, looking it over, I agreed with her. I hadn't told the reader that only a green, imaginative kid would dress like that. I hadn't needed to! The reader could judge for himself. If not at once, then very shortly from the kid's words and actions.

Encouraged, I went on through the yarn. It went smoothly until the narrator—the "I" in the story—began to attempt to talk the Kid out of meeting this supposed Gruno. The narrator, in telling of it, says:

I looked at the Kid again. I rather liked him; he wasn't a bad sort, outside of his bragging. If he'd settle down and forget the bad man stuff—

Here was more meat for the ax! I picked up the blue pencil. No need to tell the reader that "I" liked the Kid, or that he wasn't altogether worthless. The fact that the narrator was trying to save the Kid from supposed danger was evidence enough of that. So, out that wordage came, in its entirety!

Then, on through the yarn, hunting more "editorializing." None showed up right away—the drama was developing and its tenseness served automatically to keep the deadwood out. But, right at the close, where more than at any other point the reader demands terseness and clarity, came this jewel: The Kid has discovered his error; he knows it was the real Gruno he had faced. He's frightened and repentant. Previously the narrator had offered him a job on his ranch if he'd forget the bad man stuff. Now the Kid takes off his gun. He hands it to the narrator.

"Take it," he said. "I'm through. I guess I was just lucky. If you're still

offerin' it, I guess I'll take that job on your ranch."

This time I didn't have to ask the misses. My mistakes were becoming clear. I applied the ax again. After I'd finished, it read:

Slowly the kid removed his gun. He held it out to me.

"You take it, Sam," he said. He glanced down the street, the one Gruno had taken in leaving town, and drew a deep breath. "Come on, Sam; let's hit for the ranch!"

End

So, there's the story that wasn't worth even an honorable mention, revised according to the tips contained in the *DIGEST's* pamphlet. Not much of a revision, you'll say; actually less than two hundred words. Not enough to make much difference. And yet—

Well, last week the yarn sold to *Elks Magazine*, a good slick-paper market, for an even hundred bucks.

Of course, the whole idea is simply this: Let the actors tell the story. Get out an old yarn of your own, one that just barely missed. Check it over. Maybe *you* told too much.

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## New York Market Letter

(Continued from page 35)

available art work before they list it. With all true detective stories, the pictures are very important. But too many writers submit a list of what they *think* they can get hold of, instead of making sure first. Old files of photographs are not always obtainable when a case is perhaps twenty years old. So be sure to check carefully first. There's no time limit on the cases which may be written up for this magazine; this makes pictures more difficult often. By the way, the editor has a special need for stories of about 4,000 words, as well as the usual one of 5,000 to 6,000 words. Be sure your case is cleared through the courts, and that you build up the detective work and the sex angles vividly. Payment is a cent a word and up, on acceptance. Address: 330 West 42nd Street.

A new magazine in the horror field is being added to the Red Circle list, 330 West 42nd. The title is not yet given out. The best markets in this group are horror and Western stories—most lengths up to 30,000 words. The unknown writer would do best to stick to the shorter lengths, however. In the horror stories, the sex element runs pretty heavy. Robert Erisman, editor of this group, tells me that all the magazines are paying a half-cent per word, on acceptance, and that only new material is used—no reprints.

*Popular Digest* is out of the market at present. This was the Red Circle pocket digest magazine.

Astro Distributing Corp., 67 West 44th Street, has made two changes in its titles. *Your Guide* now appears under the new title of *Marriage Guide*. Requirements are the same: articles of 1200-1500 words on the sexological angles of marriages, preferably written by doctors, registered nurses, psychologists, etc.

*Occult Guide* has been retitled *Astrology—How It Affects Your Life*. This uses material like that in *Astrology Guide*, put out by the same company. There are six titles in all, the rest reported here recently. All are

bi-monthlies, and pay a half-cent per word, on publication.

*Living Age Magazine* has a new editor, Leon B. Block. The rest of the staff remains the same. Address: 420 Madison Avenue.

Eleanor L. Van Alen, formerly literary editor of the *North American Review*, is now associate editor of *Forum Magazine*, 570 Lexington Avenue.

The printer dropped off the end of last month's Market Letter in the middle of things. So here is the correct version of the note on *Foto-Craft*: This magazine, one of the Gernsback group at 99 Hudson Street, has been combined with *Radio & Television*. H. Winfield Secor, managing editor, is buying a variety of material, mostly construction articles concerning radio or photography. Photographs or sketches add to the value of the material. In the department of photographer's kinks, sketches usually are used. Payment varies between a half cent and one cent per word, but is slow—sometime after publication.

*Radio-Craft*, another Gernsback magazine at 99 Hudson Street, is edited for people with specialized knowledge of radio, not the average lay reader. Articles must be technical, and illustrated. Conciseness is important: not over 1,000 words. Pay is approximately a cent a word, but very slow.

There has been a change of editors on the Robert L. Johnson Magazines. Mrs. Dorothy Partridge succeeds Newton Hockaday there. This is the group of smart, entertaining publications which are distributed to the guests of New York's leading hotels under titles specified for each one: *The Ambassador*, *Pierrot*, *The Hampshire*, etc. Address: 135 East 42nd Street.

*America*, a weekly Catholic review, is now published at 53 Park Place.

*American Camera Trade*, 22 East 12th Street, Cincinnati, Ohio, is in need of photographs and interesting shorts about camera dealers and their stores. Unusual window displays, merchandising ideas, and personal sketches of dealers are good material for this magazine. Payment is better than 1/2c per word; upwards of \$1.00 for pictures. Send material to Robert P. Parker, managing editor.

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# Writer's Market

In this monthly department, reliable editors tell you in their own words what they want to buy from writers

## Quality Magazines

*The American Scholar*, 12 East 44th Street, New York City. William Allison Shimer, Editor. Issued quarterly; 50c a copy; \$2.00 a year. "We want articles (3000 to 3500 words in length) from fields of science, politics, economics, the humanities, international relations and education. These should be written in a literary, vigorous, non-academic style—non-technical presentation. Material should be of permanent rather than simply temporary interest. We are not interested in a discussion of one man or his work but prefer to cover a period or group. All material must meet approval of two members of our editorial board. No manuscript is returned unless it is accompanied by a self-addressed envelope. No photographs. We confine our magazine to the publication of longer poems (philosophical in content preferably), which are usually turned down by the ordinary magazine and must wait for publication in book form. In this category we include groups of poems which stand together through a basic theme and can be defined as one poem. Reports are made within a month. Payment is from \$3.00 to \$4.00 a printed page and not more than \$50 for a single article."

*Current History*, 420 Madison Avenue, New York City. E. Trevor Hill, John T. Hackett, Editors. Issued monthly; 25c a copy; \$3.00 a year. "This is a magazine reporting and interpreting significant affairs in history-in-the-making. Authors are encouraged to submit ideas for articles on colorful, significant phases of domestic and foreign affairs. Reports are made within two weeks. Payment is on publication. Rates are flexible, depending on particular article."

*Forum and Century*, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York City. Henry Goddard Leach, Editor. Issued monthly; 35c a copy; \$3.00 a year. "We want articles on controversial subjects. Nothing is taboo so long as it is handled with sincerity and distinction. Average length is 2500 words. We also use personal problem articles and stories of vivid personal experience. No photographs. We use short verse of distinction. Reports are made within two weeks or sooner. Rate of payment varies. Made on acceptance."

*The New Republic*, 40 East 49th Street, New York City. Bruce Bliven, Editor. Issued weekly.

"We use general articles, 2000 to 2500 words, dealing with topics of current interest, especially in the fields of economics, sociology and national and international affairs. Short stories and fictional sketches of 1500 words are used; verse. Payment is 2c a word on acceptance."

*The Virginia Quarterly Review*, 1 West Range, Charlottesville, Virginia. Lawrence Lee, Editor. Issued March 15, June 15, Oct. 15, Dec. 15; 75c a copy; \$3.00 a year. "We use short stories of exceptional literary values—from 3000 to 6000 words. We want articles of undeniable authenticity and authority on all social, scientific, and artistic subjects which might interest an unusually intelligent lay audience. Preferable length is 4000 words, though longer is considered. (Not over 6000 words, however.) No photographs. We use exceptional poetry. Reports are made within two weeks. We pay \$5.00 a printed page for prose (approximately 350 words); 50c a line for poetry, on publication."

## Experimental Magazines

*Books Abroad*, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma. Roy Temple House, Editor. Issued quarterly; 50c a copy; \$2.00 a year (2 years for \$3.00). "We use articles on contemporary foreign literatures. Best lengths, 1400 or 1900 words. We use very short reviews of new books in languages other than English. No photographs. We might use some poetry if it is appropriate to our field. Reports are made within a week. No payment."

*Telling Facts* about the Isms, 128 E. 10th Street, St. Paul, Minnesota. Edward A. Harrigan, Editor. Issued monthly; 5c a copy; 50c a year. "We do not want fiction, but facts; articles and stories of from 1500 to 3500 words exposing activities of communist, atheist and other subversive groups, in the United States, Mexico, and abroad. Photographs are desired with each article; \$1 for each used. No poetry. Reports are made promptly. Payment is about 1/2c a word, on publication."

## Juvenile Magazines

*The American Boy-Youth's Companion*, 7430 Second Boulevard, Detroit, Michigan. Franklin M. Reck, Managing Editor. Issued monthly; 20c a copy; \$2.00 a year. "We use short stories of 4500 words on any subject suitable to high-school-

age boys. Stories should be well plotted and swift moving. Aviation, sports and humor most needed. We are well supplied with non-fiction, but we are always glad to see short features, with action photos, on the achievements of notable boys. We are well supplied with both photographs and poetry. Reports are made within a week. Payment is 2c a word, and up, on acceptance."

*American Farm Youth Magazine*, Jackson at Van Buren, Danville, Illinois. Robert Romack, Editor. Issued monthly; 10c a copy; 75c a year. "We use stories with a farm setting—from 500 to 2500 words. We want farm photos. No poetry. Reports are made as soon as possible after receipt of manuscript. Payment is 1/4c per word, upon publication."

*Famous Funnies, Inc.*, 50 Church Street, New York City. Harold A. Moore, Editor. Issued monthly; 10c a copy; \$1.50 a year. "We want stories of 1500 words in length, packed with plenty of action and adventure, for youngsters between the ages of 10 and 15 years. Payment is \$25 per story, upon publication."

*The Girls' Companion*, David C. Cook Publishing Company, Elgin, Illinois. Anna Margaret Stansell, Editor. Issued weekly; 60c a year. "We need stories of from 2000 to 2500 words concerning the activities of normal high-school boys and girls. Principal character must be a fourteen to seventeen year old girl of attractive qualities. A

## BOOK AUTHORS

**COMPLIMENT OF THE MONTH:** "I believed all along that you would put the book over," writes Wallace Reed, author of *TIME TO KILL*, which I have just placed. "It isn't the first time that you kept a watchful eye open for a year to await the chance of a sale. . . . My work has been handled in the past by a long string of so-called top notch agents, but not one of them could make a sale for me."

**LATEST NEWS:** Look up *THERE GOES THE BRIDE*, by Margaretta Brucker, just published by Gramercy. Also, this month, watch for *EMERGENCY NURSE*, by Carlton Williams, issued by Penn Publishing Company. The author's contract calls for three more books with the same firm.

**LATEST CALLS:** One of the largest general publishers has just taken over a small, highly literary firm, and is now definitely in the market for unusual material. More information if you have a fiction or non-fiction idea really worth while for this high class firm.

Syndicate will now pay \$200 for newspaper rights to light romances, using American settings of romance, adventure, mystery, and perhaps espionage. Be sure to use clean action and strong love interest, and you may also have Canada, the West Indies and South America as background material.

Writers working with me are published by such firms as **DODD, MEAD; DOUBLEDAY, DORAN; APPLETON-CENTURY; WILLIAM MORROW & COMPANY; VANGUARD; E. P. DUTTON; FLEMING REVEL;** and popular book firms like **PHOENIX, WILLIAM GODWIN, GREENBERG, etc.**

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LT. PEERY

How can you be fair to your creative ability if you aren't even sure it is directed in the right channels? Rejections are nothing. The loss of courage that follows UNNECESSARY rejections is the worst thing that can happen to you.

There's no earthly reason for you to lose your courage; if you aren't selling it's because you don't realize that there are markets exactly suited to your individual capabilities. "You gave me courage," writes an author whose recent sales indicate I have found his true market for him. Lt. Paul D. Peery, whose work I have just sold to one of the largest magazine chains, writes, "This is my first break. . . . But it won't be my last. Without your help the sale would not have been made." And S. O. Roberts, of Canada, responds in this wise to my air-mailed check, "It is your patient criticism of my work that kept me going. Otherwise, I would have chucked the whole thing long ago."

Latest sales for authors whose markets I determined include another sale of \$250 as we go to press; 6 sales at 2c a word or better, another sale for \$150, and a two part novelette which marks the author's first appearance outside the short story field.

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*The Little Folks*, Hector, Minnesota. Mrs. Edith Cling Palm, Editor. Issued weekly; 35c a year. "We want stories not over 450 words. These must be suitable for children from four to eight years of age. Occasionally we use photographs. Verse up to 20 lines is used. Reports are made within one week. Rates are low. Payment for accepted material is made after publication."

*The Open Road for Boys*, 729 Boylston Street, Boston, Massachusetts. Clayton Holt Ernst, Editor. Issued monthly; 10c a copy; \$1.00 a year. "We want vigorous short stories, 2000 to 5000 words, aimed to interest boys in their teens; particularly sport, adventure, aviation and mystery. We want articles, 500 to 3000 words, illustrated by photos or sketches, on interesting accomplishments of young men, true but unusual travel or adventure, sports coaching, outdoors, and practical how-to-make or do projects. We use photographs only in connection with articles. No poetry. Reports are generally made within a month of receipt. Payment is 1/2c a word, and up, on publication."

*Our Little Messenger*, 414 West 120th Street, New York City. Pauline Scheidt, Editor. "We need stories of not more than 400 words, poems, puzzles, and things to do. This magazine is read by second grade children, so the vocabulary and content of all material should be extremely simple. Rates are 1c a word, minimum, for prose; 25c a line for poetry."

*The Young Catholic Messenger*, 124 E. Third Street, Dayton, Ohio. Don C. Sharkey, (acting) Editor. Issued weekly. "This magazine is used in the Junior High grades of Catholic schools. It is used primarily in the teaching of current history and in citizenship training. But in addition to this material it uses one short story and one chapter of a serial each week. The short story is usually between 1000 and 1200 words in length. Our first requirement of a story is that it have a strong plot. A moral is necessary but it should be carefully woven into the story so as to seem incidental to the plot. Principal characters should be junior high school age or slightly older. The serial story may vary in chapters from two to eighteen. Chapters should not exceed 1000 words in length. There should be a strong plot with a definite climax. Suspense, if possible, should conclude every chapter. Characters should be of

same age as those in short stories. Reports are made in 3 weeks. Payment is 1c a word, minimum."

### Trade Journals

**Boot and Shoe Recorder**, 239 West 39th Street, New York City. Arthur D. Anderson, Editor. Issued weekly; 25c a copy; \$3.00 a year (two years for \$4.00). "No fiction material. We want merchandise stories, success stories of shoe retailers. Length—800 to 1000 words. Also what's selling stories from various cities. Photographs to illustrate articles are wanted. Payment is \$2.00 per photo. We seldom use poetry. Payment is 1c per word, first of month following publication."

**Hide and Leather and Shoes**, 300 West Adams Street, Chicago, Illinois. Ralph B. Bryan, Editor. Issued weekly; 15c a copy; \$5.00 a year. "We want technical articles on shoe and leather manufacturing; merchandising articles applied to the shoe and leather industry; features about successful shoe and leather men and firms. Please query on subject. Sample copy will be sent on request. Length preferred is 1000 to 1500 words—not over 2000 words. We buy about 20 articles each month. However, we have our own correspondents for news and cannot add more. Use photos at \$1.00, and up, each. Reports are made promptly. Rate of payment is 1c per word, 20th of month following publication."

**Laundry Age**, 9 E. 38th Street, New York City. E. V. Vincent, I. O. Spellman, Editors. Issued monthly; 25c a copy; \$3.00 a year. "We are in the market for material of interest to commercial power laundry industry. This magazine is read by people who work daily at the business of laundering, dry cleaning, cleaning and storing of woolsens and furs. A detailed story of 'How We Do It In Our Plant' is type of material wanted. We want facts, ways and means. No preference as to length, but we do cut out all padding. We also want stories of establishing rug cleaning departments; fur cleaning and fur storage; pillow renovation; linen and uniform supply services. We prefer articles which cite opinions and practice of several competent operators on a single phase of production or selling. In our news columns we carry personal items about commercial power laundry officials and their families (obituaries, marriages, births); expansions in plant and equipment; new trends in the industry. We use photographs for which we pay \$1.00 plus space rates. Reports are made usually within a week. Rates are a minimum of 1/2c a word, with \$1.00 minimum for photos and items accepted."

**The Laundryman**, 9 E. 38th Street, New York City. Elmer L. Marks, Editor. "We use technical production material only. This is edited for the laundry managers of hotels, hospitals and institutions where there is no sales problem. News items deal only with new construction or expansion of institutional laundry plants."

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(Continued from page 29)

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*All-American Football*, Fiction House, 461 8th Ave., N. Y. C. Short stories and novelettes. Malcolm Reiss, editor. 1c up on acceptance.

*All-Sports*, Blue Ribbon Magazines, Inc., 60 Hudson action sport stories. 2000-15,000 words. Editor Abner Sundell. 1/2c and up on publication. "Unusual situations are welcome in which the sports world is linked with various sections of the social world. Doctor, bankers, playboys, etc. having a place in the plot development spread the interest in these stories beyond those interested only in the sport angle."

*Athlete*, Street & Smith, 79 Seventh Ave., N. Y. C., Shorts 5-6000, novelettes 10-12,000. Fact articles 4-6000, but query the editor first on these. Monthly. Editor, Chas. Moran. "Good rates" on acceptance.

*Best Sports*, Red Circle, 330 W. 42nd St., N. Y. C., Bi-monthly. O. Henry twists especially liked. Shorts 5-8000, novelettes 10-15,000. Robt. O. Erisman, editor. 1/2c on 1 1/2c on acceptance.

*Blue Ribbon Sports*, Blue Ribbon, 60 Hudson St., N. Y. C. 2-15,000 words. Abner Sundell, editor. 1/2c up acceptance. Bi-monthly.

*Bull's Eye Sports*, Fiction House, 461 8th Ave., N. Y. C. Quarterly. Shorts, 3-6000, novelettes, 10-15,000. Malcolm Reiss, editor. 1c acceptance.

*Champion Sports*, Ace Mags., 67 W. 44th St., N. Y. C. Bi-monthly. Shorts to 5000, novelettes, 10-12,000; fillers. Harry Widmer, editor. 1/2c up acceptance.

*Complete Sports*, Red Circle, 330 W. 42nd St. N. Y. C. Shorts, novelettes to 15,000. Robt. O. Erisman, editor. 1/2c up acceptance. Quarterly.

*Dime Sports*, Popular Pubs., 205 E. 42nd St., N. Y. C. Shorts 4-6000, novelettes, 10-15,000. Youthful collegiate or professional players, actual game features. Woman interest not desirable. Now monthly. Alden H. Norton, editor. 1c up acceptance.

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*Sports Fiction*, Blue Ribbon, 60 Hudson St., N. Y. C. Bi-monthly. 2-15,000. Abner Sundell, editor. Fast action. 1/2c up on publication.

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*12 Sports Aces*, Ace Mags., 67 W. 44th St., N. Y. C. Bi-monthly. Shorts, 3-5000, novelettes, 10,000. Harry Widmer, editor. 1/2c acceptance.

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## Horse Racing Slang

BY MARY-DOUGLAS STOVALL

*A hot*—horse just returned from workout or race  
*Across the board*—to bet a horse to win, place and show (first, second and third)

*Bat*—whip

*Badge horse*—a one horse stable

*Bang-tail*—a race horse

*Big-train*—horse that carries top weights

*Blanket finish*—when several horses seemingly all finish at one time

*Bleeder*—horse which bleeds from nose or mouth due to exertion of racing

*Break*—start of a race

*Break a horse on the outside of the box*—starting a horse outside the starting gate or barrier

*Break on top*—get away first at the starting gate

*Bookmaker's horse*—horse which finishes close but seldom wins

*Booted home*—riding a horse to a win

*Booter*—jockey

*Breezing under wraps*—keeping a running horse well in hand

*Bridge jumper*—a person who bets on a standout horse to come in third

*Bull ring*—a half mile track

*Buzzer*—miniature electrical device used to excite horse to greater efforts while racing

*Carry the mail*—to take the lead in the stretch for a win

*Carry the target*—run last all the way

*Clocker*—person who identifies and times horses

*Cook*—bad rider

*Comeback money*—money which is bet away from track and wired or telephoned into track

*Cribber*—horse which sucks in air

*Cuppy track*—track that breaks out under a horse's hoofs

*Cushion*—top surface of track

*Dead heat*—when two or more horses are declared to have finished at the same time

*Dope book or sheet*—a book or sheet that gives past performances, age, owner, breeding, breeders and so forth of race horses

*Doped or hop horses*—horses that have been given drugs in order to stimulate them to greater efforts or ease pain of bad legs or internal ailments

*Early foot or early speed*—when a horse runs fast at the beginning of a race but usually cannot maintain this top speed for the full distance

*Find a horse's hole card*—to give each horse the kind of training to which he will respond best

*Finish going away*—finish race easily and with speed to spare

*Freshen a horse*—give a horse rest after several severe races

*Gander a horse*—look a horse over before he goes on the track for the race

**Go to school again**—give a horse more training in conduct at the starting gate

**Hand ride**—riding a horse without use of whip or bat

**Herder**—jockey who cuts off other horses in race

**Jockey for position**—working a horse into a good position during the start of a race

**Kiss the eight pole**—when a horse is beaten off in a race

**Lift a horse across the line**—drive a faltering horse to a win

**Long-shot**—horse running at exceptionally high odds

**Maiden**—horse that has not won a race on a recognized track

**Minus pool**—mutual pool that pays out more than it takes in

**Morning glory**—horse that shows speed in his workouts but seldom wins

**Mud-bug**—exercise boy or apprentice jockey who has never ridden a winner

**Mud-lark or mudder**—horse that runs best on muddy track

**Nominate a horse**—enter a horse in a race

**Pacemaker**—horse that sets rate of speed at beginning of race

**Pasteboard track**—hard, fast track

**Past the post**—onto the track

**Pay peanuts**—pay small odds

**Plater**—race horse usually of the cheaper class

**Picture horse**—horse with almost perfect conformation that seldom wins a race

**Pigeon**—counterfeit mutual ticket

**Playing chalk**—playing the favorites

**Photo finish**—when two or more horses finish so close together that it is necessary to take a picture to determine the winner

**Pocket a horse**—close in about a horse so that his chances of winning are slight

**Policeman**—horse entered in a race solely for claiming purposes

**Plunger**—person who bets heavily on races

**Rail**—fence around track

**Rail-bird**—fans, touts and tipsters who check closely on horse's performance

**Rating a horse**—holding a horse in careful check in order to have something left for the finish

**Rouge's badge**—blinkers worn by a horse

**Run-out bit**—bit that is used to keep horse from running wide on turns

**Router**—horse that runs best and usually wins at long distances

**School**—training a horse receives at the barrier to make him stand quietly or get away well

**Set down**—disqualifying a jockey from riding for a certain period

**Scratch**—excuse a horse from a race

**Sleeper**—horse which wins surprisingly. He is said to wake up.

**Slough a horse**—when one horse swerves into another while racing

**Sprinter**—horse which usually wins at distances shorter than a mile

(Continued on page 68)

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By **FRANK A. DICKSON**

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- 2: Northern and Southern prisoners during the War Between the States. The number of prisoners, the treatment and food, and the most remarkable escapes. Use a local angle, if possible.
- 3: A leading playwright of your state. Highlights of his life and his outstanding productions.
- 4: Folklore of your community. Contact a collector of popular traditions, customs, beliefs, and the like.
- 5: Veteran operator of a tannery. The process of tanning hides and interesting information concerning skins.
- 6: The advent of anaesthesia in your city. The earliest doctors to use ether and their patients. The results.
- 7: The present condition of Gypsies in the United States. Their visits to your section.
- 8: A popular harpist. A review of her musical career.
- 9: Worst epidemics of diseases in your state, as that of Spanish influenza which swept the Southern States in the fall of 1918.
- 10: A day with a hotel bellboy.
- 11: The old-fashioned drummer. How he was chief attraction around a store in the "Gay Nineties."
- 12: The conception of the divorce law in your state. Facts about the divorce situation today, as told by a prominent lawyer.

**13:** Interview with a noted ornithologist. Facts about the structure and habits of birds.

**14:** The life of the first mayor of your city.

**15:** Interview with a woman physician. Her preparation and highlights of her medical career.

**16:** An insight into a casket factory. Points about caskets.

**17:** St. Patrick's Day. Interview a native Irishman about the life of the patron saint of Ireland.

**18:** The oldest county in your state. The first settlers and the growth of the county to the present day.

**19:** Long-time peanut vendor.

**20:** Early means of punishing petty criminals in your section, such as confining them in the pillory.

**21:** The job of chauffeuring. Let a veteran chauffeur describe his duties and recall some of his unusual experiences.

**22:** Interview with the chief game warden of the state. A description of his tasks and the revenue of his department.

**23:** Valuable historical documents owned by a college. The most treasured ones.

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**25:** History of the state firemen's association. Its greatest leaders, in yesteryear and today.

**26:** Experiences of the Attorney General of your state. The number of cases he handles annually and some of his most interesting ones.

**27:** Official photographers of the War Between the States. Any from your state? Illustrate the article with pictures of the conflict.

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## Horse Racing Slangage

(Continued from page 65)

*Sponge*—insert a sponge or other soft material into a horse's nose to interfere with his breathing while racing

*Starter*—a horse is a starter when he has left the paddock and entered the track on his way to the post

*Stretch runner*—a horse that lays back and makes his bid in the stretch

*Stooper*—person who is constantly alert for lost tickets

*Stretch*—distance on track between turns

*Sweated for brass*—to race a horse to death to win purses for his owner

*Swipe*—groom or rubber

*Tack*—jockey's saddle, boots, leads, pads and so forth

*Tiptoe a horse*—rush off his feet to get a lead

*Tote*—totalizer board where odds of horses, prices paid, time in which race is run, time off day, next post time, number of bets on win, place and show and other information is listed

*Tout or tipster*—person who hands out so-called information to the gullible for a small cut

*Turn on the juice*—running a horse at his top speed

*Twitch*—rope loop wrapped around horse's upper lip and twisted with stick to make him stand quietly at starting gate

*Unseated*—thrown from horse

*Unproved horse*—a sire whose produce are maidens

*Under the wire*—across the finish line

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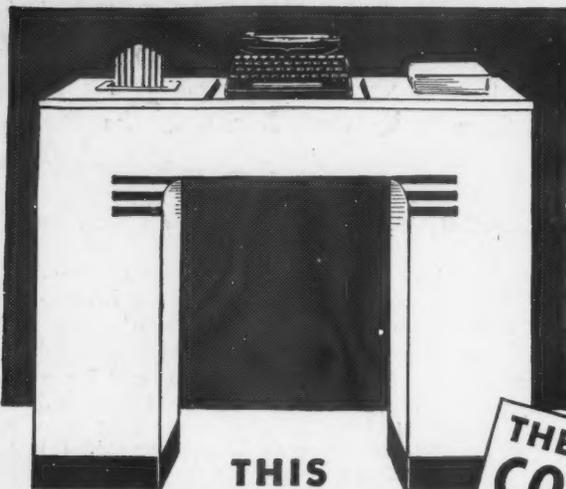
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