

BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 1929

NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have news value and which are written by persons not connected with the office. All copy must be presented before noon on Wednesday. The right to publish is granted on condition that the author, upon request, submit a copy of the original manuscript to the office. Any story submitted for publication is held subject to the office's right to use the same in any form, and to publish the same in any medium. Any person who wishes to see a copy of the Eccentric should apply to the office by Wednesday noon to obtain insertion for the following week.

The Darkness of Saturday Night

Last week, in the nice, shiny sheet which he edits from his nice, shining new building which houses his Saturday Night on East Jefferson avenue, the graduate Harry Nimmo told a portion of southeastern Michigan a few things about the "venerable editor of The Eccentric." So that there will be no deletion of the hefty verbiage of Mr. Nimmo, we are reprinting his editorial, which he so illuminatingly captioned "Light in Birmingham." He said:

"Being a member of a coroner's jury inquiring into the killing of one young man by another to protect a young woman from assault, the Birmingham Eccentric, in the person of its editorial editor, has been called upon to render the verdict for the vindication of the killer."

"That is one time that The Eccentric and Saturday Night agree. We agree that the defendant should be using capital punishment to prevent the commission of the crime contemplated. We disagree with The Eccentric when it argues, as it always has argued in the past, that capital punishment should not be inflicted on those who have already committed a worse crime in the form of murder, and so discourage the commission of such crimes by others."

"Perhaps the venerable editor of The Eccentric is one of those who believe in the use of capital punishment by private citizens or policemen before the arrest and trial of the prospective culprit, but not afterwards. Perhaps, on the other hand, he is a convert to common sense. We wait to hear. In either case it will be to our advantage."

"With no desire to thrust our personal opinion upon Mr. Nimmo, and fully realizing the mental barriers which he has erected against the beliefs of all who oppose capital punishment as a measure of reform, we are willing to express, at this juncture, our own answer to his criticism of our actions on the Ballo jury inquiry. The task of helping the world to better things is not entirely ours; the part we play in it is exceedingly small, yet on occasion when we are called upon to defend the personality of Love, as expressed in human activity, we gladly shall always refer to his banner. (So, friend Nimmo, we are not with us for a moment and, though you still disagree with us, just charge it up to misunderstanding on your part, and inability on our part to change you from hate to love.)"

"To begin with, we admit that the star to which we wish to hitch our ears is not a Uranian one, far, far up in the blue of God's clear sky; it is a star, bright and up of earth's detours, with its deep runs, muddy ditches, and tangled jungles. So, with us, we seek to find a way that is practical, a way that man may make strides upon, yet a road that will take him to places higher than he was in the day before."

"And so, when we refuse to accept Mr. Nimmo's injunction to use capital punishment for persons whose acts bring them under the stern hands of the law, we do so only because the record of mankind's use of the gallows, the guillotine, or the electric chair, has not proved any sane doubt that the use of killing to prevent killing is foolish and unsuccessful."

"Mr. Nimmo believes he finds an inconsistency in our attitude toward a slayer. Because we voted with five other men that one Royden MacKillican was justified in shooting one Walter Ballo, in accordance with the evidence thus far given us at a coroner's inquest, in Boston, a few weeks ago. Of our vote, he asks: 'How can you justify MacKillican, but not yet oppose capital punishment for the State of Michigan?'"

"To which we simply answer: Because, Mr. Nimmo, with all our arguments against capital punishment, we have never yet stated that Twentieth Century society, at individuals, is far removed from the jungle. We do affirm that, in the eyes of most people have one foot within the tangled grasses of an ancient barbaric primitiveness, while the other foot (thanks to the towering intellectualism and countless hoards of fine men and women) has been placed upon firmer ground, ground that is similar to that trod by the Galilean."

"As individuals, we are nearer to a brutal thinking ancestry than we are as collective society. That's why we maintain an expensive humanitarian institution known as the judiciary. When, out of the tangle of life, one or more persons respond to the jungle law, and a killing takes place, the officers of our so-called civilization step into the arena, and, before a calm and deliberate tribunal, the killer's motives are analyzed; it is found that he killed in order to prevent sudden death to himself or his family; or any other person within his care, the tribunal, although basically lamenting the necessity of killing, pardons the act as one of justice. In the case of Royden MacKillican shooting Walter Ballo, capital punishment, as it stands in our discussion with Mr. Nimmo, was not resorted to at all; in fact, MacKillican merely responded to a primitive instinct of self-defense. Capital punishment, as a just instance of self-defense, for Michigan means the 'cold, deliberate, methodical, and calculated' means of reason and will, and thus utterly diabolical," resulting in the use of murder by society against an individual or individuals."

"But it is plain to see, Saturday Night's editor merely failed to separate the two motives of slaying, one of them self-defense, as in the MacKillican case, and the other, premeditated murder, as in the case of a Commonwealth's execution chamber."

"No, we do not condemn, morally speaking, the killing of anyone, not even by a policeman; legally, however, the jungle law says 'thou shalt kill to protect thyself,' and this is what MacKillican did. He simply obeyed the law of the jungle, just as Ballo's reputed jungle methods brought him to the inevitable end of the jungle law—death."

In the quiet sanity of modern life, when one contemplates the manner or means of accomplishing a thing, one uses the best thought that he can muster, from books, from the experiences of others, and from his own; without haste, with no bitterness or unfairness, with only a sincere desire to help his fellow-creatures, men and women ponder their problems to successful conclusions."

MacKillican, confronted by a stranger in whose hand death waited but the hair's breadth motion of a trigger, for the moment, jumped back into the jungle with his assailant, and won the victory. Later, walking alongside the jungle, one foot dangerous over into the land of so-called civilization, a hand closed upon his shoulder as his conscience cried out, 'tell the authorities of Oakland County that you killed Walter Ballo in self-defense.' And MacKillican, desirous of living away from the jungle and its law, confessed his part in the affair."

MacKillican's act was one of self-defense, recognized by man's code of morals as a justifiable homicide; no premeditation, no careful plotting and planning in advance, such as a State does when it seeks to kill with a gallows or an electric chair—just an act on the spur of the moment, an act wholly unlike the act of a person who kills for vengeance, or for property."

No, we are not converted to Editor Nimmo's plan of dealing with major crime in Michigan—even though we stand indifferently in his columns as without common sense. And, if it seems like a piece of news to him, we will inform him that, so long as mankind walks along the front line of civilization, two feet in one foot in so-called civilization, we must admit the necessity of justifiable homicide."

The point we wish to make is simply this: justifiable homicide, inelegant and bad as it may appear when held against the background of pure Christianity, is on a higher level of civilization than first degree murder. Justifiable homicide came into existence after the judicial system became an accepted institution of society, and it is actually predicated upon a desire on the part of society to eliminate first degree murder or manslaughter, strangely paradoxical as it may seem."

Man's two feet have carried him through a ponderous maze of conflicting situations and circumstances; he now has one foot out of the jungle of primitive barbarism and brutality, upon the firm ground of a growing sense of civility, and Mr. Nimmo may rest assured that by keeping it out of an execution chamber he will aid greatly in getting the other extremity out of the jungle grass."

INVESTIGATORS SENT OUT to tabulate the various noises within the city of Milwaukee, discovered 1,600 kinds of auditory vibrations. We suppose the loudest was the popping cork."

NINETY-EIGHT PER CENT of all the automobiles used in Brazil are of American make, our Brazilian correspondent has just learned, after making a complete canvass of all the nuts in that country."

WOULD YOU BELIEVE that approximately 450 trade names for furs are in constant use by the fur industry? Those who refer to them outside of the fur industry call them one common name, "expensive."

CORK WAS FIRST USED for bottle stoppers about the year 1700. It was not until about 220 years later that prohibition was substituted for cork, about the time that graft and corruption supplanted the corkscrew."

TWENTY BANKERS, REPRESENTING New York, Boston, Cleveland, and Detroit financial institutions, last week inasmuch as bankers are interested in the drigible manufacturing company, we suppose there's one investment that they'd like to see "go up in the air."

A KANSAS CITY TRAFFIC officer got married, and two days later, while away from his semaphore for a few moments, he came back to find it decorated with a white wreath, some old shoes, and placards reading "Just Married," and "Another Man Gone Wrong." We suggest that this officer be transferred to the mounted police squad, and made to patrol a bride path."

"20-MILE FIRE IN Wisconsin" belled a headline in last Thursday's Detroit News. People in Wisconsin better watch out, or the fire'll get into the whisky and beer belts—then watch Wisconsin burn up."

AN ASSOCIATED PRESS dispatch from Lansing last Saturday stated that John S. Haggerty, secretary of state, left on a fishing trip with Supreme Court Justice W. W. Potter and Gov. Fred W. Green, and that it was Haggerty's first fishing trip in 23 years. Does this mean that Mr. Haggerty is starting a series of pilgrimages during 1929 that he has never done before? And does it include plans to run for Governor in 1930?

VERNE BROWN, EDITOR of the Ingham County News at Mason, is also a member of the State Legislature. It would, it is a little funny about Michigan getting into the prize-fight business. "Members of the legislature this week without regard to their office on the fifteen round boxing bill, receiving letters of thanks from Floyd Fitzsimmons, prize fighter promoter—thanks for the passage of the bill. Included along with the thanks is an invitation to attend at his person guest on the first fifteen round match held under the new law. Of our part, fifteen round was very Michigan citizen who receives a letter from fight headquarters is a bold line in red across the head which reads: 'State Fair Grounds.' No, thanks, Floyd, hand our ticket to some other who likes your kind of sport better."

"There's nothin' like a golf swing That misses golf ball going; You swing at what you see there And hit the thing that ain't. You count the swing against you, It adds just one back to score. Yet why start in to yell 'let it go!' It's exercise you wanted—not A little, measly score."

(G. R. A.)

NEXT MONTH'S BIG JAIL DELIVERY



PEOPLE'S COLUMN

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications for this column. All communications should be signed, but signatures will be kept confidential upon request.

MAPLE WIDENING

To the Editor: I am the owner of property at 915 east Maple, and I am going to give you my opinion on east Maple widening. Sir Henry Thornton, head of the Grand Trunk and Canadian National railways, has promised rapid transit service between Pontiac and Detroit. Much of the work necessary to fulfill that promise has been done, and the Nelson Construction company, in charge of relaying the tracks, is enlarging its crew in order to complete the work. So there should be little or no doubt that that rapid transit service will be in operation with a comparatively small delay—at any rate, some time before other suburbs get rapid transit, hereby attracting people to this district."

The Birmingham station, being on east Maple, will undoubtedly make that thoroughfare a busy one, causing it to become one of Birmingham's best retail sections. I feel that the Village should determine a new building line now and start condemnation proceedings necessary for the widening so that it will be ready for the increased traffic and the demand for new business buildings."

The city of Detroit has undoubtedly many streets in advance to care for traffic from the new Ambassador Bridge, ready in December and also Michigan Central Depot many years ago. As for shade trees, they are very beautiful. Two neighbors of mine plant a tree some place or other each year. The cost is very little, and it is a feeling of satisfaction to do so. I would like to see other citizens do the same; but we must have room for transportation and business. Fancy Woodward Avenue in our Village, put back to its old width and system of lighting."

GEORGE A. BECKER.

BILL BOOSTER SAYS:

ANY A GOOD MAIL BUY A NEW PAPER FOR HIS WIFE. SHE'S SO NEW SHE'D DO A \$5 BILL TO HIS SON FOR SPENDING MONEY AND DRIVING TO BURDEN IN A \$2.00 CAR, WHILE HE COLLECTS A DIME IN THE DOLLATION BOX."



WHO'S WHO AND TIMELY VIEWS

STATUTES AUTHORIZING TOLL BRIDGES OPPOSED

By JOHN J. COCHRAN, Congressman from Missouri (John Joseph Cochran was born in St. Louis county, Missouri, Aug. 13, 1880. He was educated in the public schools, later studying law at Washington, D. C. He was admitted to the bar but never practiced. From 1912 to 1918 he served as secretary to Congressman William Irons, Harry B. Harris and to Senator William J. Stone. In 1926 he was elected to fill the unexpired term of Congressman Hauer. The following year he was elected to congress from the eleventh Missouri district (1st District).)

The government through federal aid advances in the neighborhood of \$100,000,000 annually for road construction in co-operation with the states. Almost every state has a gas tax and an automobile license tax. The money in most instances goes into the highway fund, and it is estimated that nearly \$1,000,000,000 a year goes into road construction and maintenance of roads. I'm kissed. Give me the things that I lately have missed. I have the ginmings, Oh time in your flight, Give me my girlhood, please—just for tonight."

The WORLD and All By CHARLES DRISCOLL

YOU MEET THEM EVERYWHERE In Paris, during the tourist season, an American doesn't get a chance to be homesick for the American language. To say that the town is full of Americans is understating the case. It is overflowing, bulging out, swarming with Americans."

I had been some time in a part of Spain where I met almost no Americans. On the train northward met a German salesman who spends much time in Paris and he took me with him to the Grand Hotel, where I found more Americans than I had ever met in Battery Park, New York, on a summer Sunday."

When I called for my mail at the American Express, along with a host of other Americans, the smiling gentleman at the window was a former neighbor of mine from Yonkers, Arthur G. Spenceley. He had lived within two blocks of me in Yonkers, and I had never met him. Go abroad to meet your neighbors."

Very soon Spenceley and I were exchanging home-town gossip, and I was showing him snapshots of my little daughters. "I'll let you're lonesome," he said. "Lonesome? Say, that word isn't strong at all. I am confident I'll have to invent a new word."

In the port of Santander, Spain, one morning I saw the Stars and Stripes flying from the stern of a freighter, and it gave me the thrill that that flag alone can give to a patriot. An American in a foreign land. I walked over to the vessel, found that she was from Philadelphia, Galveston and New Orleans, and spent an hour talking American to the Texas and Louisiana men who were on the crew. I was proud to note that she was the cleanest, trimmest and best-cared-for freighter in the port, and there were at least 20 there, flying the flags of many nations."

Of course, one feels more patriotic when abroad. When a Spanish friend asked me, with a dubious smile, "Well, how is Mr. Hoover getting along with the government?" I replied, to my own great surprise, "Oh, fine. Mr. Hoover will do very well. I am confident."

Now, at home I am not always apt to speak so enthusiastically of my president. A president who has been so hard talking me. Mr. Hoover was on my list of heroes before he became public servant, but I conceive it to be the duty of a citizen to a democracy to maintain a critical attitude toward those in high office. But wild heroes couldn't bring from me a critical syllable about

New Homes Near The Quarton School

Several new residences within easy walking distance of attractive new Quarton School. These houses run in prices from \$15,200 for a well built, four bedroom house to the largest and finest structures in fashionable Quarton Lake Estates. With the opening of school only a few weeks away, now is the time to make your Fall plans.

Colgrove Buck & Tillotson REALTORS. Advertisement for real estate services, including a small illustration of a house.

Friendly Thoughts By G. Dewey Kimball. Advertisement for a book or collection of thoughts, featuring an illustration of a landscape.

G. DEWEY KIMBALL FUNERAL DIRECTOR. Advertisement for funeral services, including an illustration of a funeral home building.

Our president in the presence of a foreigner in a foreign land. Really I was surprised. After some little time in Paris, I still award the palm for politeness to the Spaniards. They are polite without appearance of truckling. They are courteous in a dignified manner, as equal to equal, no matter what their status in life. In this very important respect, Spain is a most democratic country."

Club-car forward with comfortable lounge for those desiring to smoke. Observation-car in the rear for ladies and gentlemen. Card in a Pullman smoking-room for me and a mule trade. The mule's yawn."

DIRECTORY. A list of various professionals and businesses in Birmingham, including Dr. G. R. Norton, Dr. J. S. Donaldson, Dr. John P. Wood, D. C. BLIESATH, and McAlpine-Starr, Inc.