BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC

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THURSDAY, MAY 7, 1931

NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have news value and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be received before noon on Wednesday. The right is reserved, however, to make such superficial changes in the work submitted as are necessary to the style of the paper and as are required by laws of the state. Because of a mechanical situation in the composing room, headlines written by those other than members of the staff cannot be issued. Any erroneous reflection upon the character, standing or reputation of any person, firm or corporation which may appear in the columns of The Eccentric will be gladly corrected upon being brought to the attention of the publishers.

Simple Honesty Needed

The people of Birmingham, interested in good government and the improvement of the social order, should not lose sight of the fundamental principles upon which these desirable ends are based.

The American system of government, whether federal, state or municipal rests upon the theory that the voters have sense enough to understand the issues involved and that there will always exist capable and honest men willing to serve the public, as an entity, unselfishly and devotedly.

There is, and has been, we fear, a tendency on the part of citizens to look for outstanding issues in political contests. For example, today one hears much about the "power trust," prohibition and the tariff as the paramount issues for the presidential contest on 1932. These questions, undoubtedly are important and may be the leading issues of the popular campaign but back of them, and vastly more important, is the question of securing honest, intelligent, unselfish and faithful public servants.

The question is too broad to be limited to the presidential contest. In fact, we use national issues as the illustrations only because they are available and easily understood examples. More important to the people of Birmingham and Oakland County is the selection of the public officials who serve this town and county.

The other day we happened to read a newspaper from a far-off state and noticed an account of a meeting of a board of county supervisors. In fact, the newspaper published an account of the meeting of this group of five men who had charge of the fiscal affairs of its county. The thought comes that there exists in each governmental district of the United States a similar board, regardless of its name.

How wonderful and how effective would be the local governments of the United States if each board only contained members of the highest type, men who do not condescend to serve their personal ends but, on the contrary, unselfishly, and intelligently serve the people faithfully in every respect, even to the spending of small sums.

The failure of our governmental system today in many eyes is its inability to attract the highest type of men and women to positions of moderate salary and considerable difficulty. Nevertheless, such a need must be met and every city and county that expects to secure the benefits of proper government must contain a majority of citizens with sense enough to appreciate and to vote for candidates of this type.

They should not permit transient political issues to becloud their vision and persuade them to support a professional politician, who takes care of his friends and relatives at the expense of the public. Regardless of other issues none transcend in importance the question of honor, honesty and good conscience.

Those New Year Resolves

How long ago was it when, in swaddling clothes, spick and span in its immaculateness, the baby we called 1931 was born? Only a trifle more than four months ago, you say—yet how many of the "resolves" you thought of during the closing days of 1930 have you put into action? To the one who is seriously concerned with his improvement, every day is a "new year," a new opportunity to effect the desired change. So, though four months of 1931 have shipped by, perhaps unnoticed, take a new hitch on the old bootstraps and drag yourself a bit closer to that star of hope you promised yourself to reach this year.

SEVENTY-FIVE LOCAL BOYS AND GIRLS are to graduate from the Baldwin high school in June. Dr. M. S. (Mike) Rice, Detroit M. E. church preacher, will address the class. We suggest that everybody attend the exercises; refresh yourself both under the wholesome smiles of the graduating class, with their high hopes and expectations from life, and the powerful entreaty of the church of God. Dr. Rice will bring new courage to tired hearts. Be regenerated under the spell of his Christian influence.

LEGISLATORS AT LANSING criticise Ann Arbor police for their raids upon campus fraternity houses. We agree with the Legislators. If Ann Arbor police really want to see illicit liquors why don't they get out their flagons—pardon us, we mean wagons—at a football game?

THERE PROBABLY IS NO DIFFERENCE between a cherry pit and a cherry stone. But there does seem to be quite a bit of difference between a gravel pit and some real gravel stones in Bloomfield Township.

CHEWING GUM, FLAVORED with garlic, is to be marketed in the vicinity of Shanghai, China, by an American concern. Between the clanking and the odor, breathing ought to go over strong and noisy among the lotus flowers.

ALL WORK AND NO PLAY makes Jack and Jill go over the hill to the hospital.

The Ideal Man

A young woman star in Hollywood sets forth her "ideal man"—and here are four very important requirements:

(1) He is always willing to give credit where credit is due especially when the one deserving it is a woman. The bigger the man the less he needs to monopolize applause.

(2) He endures trifling ailments with as much bravery as though they were wartime wounds.

(3) He does the small, unpleasant duties that are usually left to long-suffering wives.

(4) He knows when he is being flattered and takes the amiable compliments for sweet nothings that they are.

If you ask us, we'll declare that the four requisites outlined by the very able California actress are excellently put. The man who measures up to them has got the luckiest wife in the world.

Rich Men Are Lonely

Another epic in American life lies in the record of the life of George F. Baker, who died in New York last week, aged 91 years. He was born of poor parents, and lived to amass the third largest fortune in the United States, estimated at between four and five hundred millions of dollars. Mr. Baker, whose countenance decorated with mutton-chop whiskers looked out at you occasionally from newspapers and magazines, was a potent force in modern business. He undoubtedly spent many, many sleepless nights, concerned with his investments. He never knew the carefree mind of the worker who carries a dinner pail; he was successful—yet he paid the supreme price for the solitude that was his by right of his material wealth. There is no solitude like the loneliness that is required to keep many money bags from leaking out their golden discs.

100 Years Of Service

Next Sunday the Detroit Free Press, in recognition of its one-hundredth anniversary, will issue a splendid special edition, part of it being 14 eight-page rotogravure sections, depicting the progress of mankind since 1831. We congratulate the Free Press upon its antiquity; though we may disagree at times with its policy upon some specific issue, yet we delight in paying homage to its long record of good things accomplished for society. As its name implies, it stands for much in the affairs of American traditions; with its twin sister, free speech, it has changed a howling wilderness into a certain semblance of civilization. Intelligent people will be thankful for conditions that allow a single newspaper to last for 100 years.

Let The Boys Go Home

So much confusion is manifest among Michigan's legislators at Lansing, that the best interests of the state would be served if the boys adjourned and went home, to be called back in the fall to devise ways and means of tending to taxation problems. The chaps in the House and Senate are tired, as they enter their fifth month away from home. There are spring crops to be put in, and, since Ma has finished the spring housecleaning, the boys will find the old homestead quite agreeable—and an easy chair on the veranda is more restful than those swivel things 'neath the Capitol Dome that hardly let a fellow know in just which direction he is goin'.

Bills, Bills, And Bills

State Senator Chester M. (Chet) Howell, of Chesaning and Saginaw, is an astute member of the Michigan Legislature. Also, he is a good newspaperman—publishes the weekly Chesaning Argus. Perhaps that is why he can see so many phases of state affairs at one time—being argus-eyed. "Chet" had the following to say recently about the Bill family:

"Recently the senate went by the 200th bill and the house came near to the 600 mark and what a record for probably not 100 of all this trash will ever get to first base. Two years ago the house and senate went to nearly the 1000 mark counting in the resolutions but it rather looks now as if the record might be broken. And it looks as if the members will be in the trenches by May 15th or later."

IT IS UNFORTUNATE that out-state Legislators are unable to agree upon an equitable manner of giving Wayne County more representation at Lansing. While we admit that no single county should ever be allowed a majority voice in state affairs, yet we believe that some constructive method should be supplied to alleviate the present situation.

A GROUP OF METROPOLITAN police chiefs gathered for their monthly meeting in Birmingham recently. One of the things they discussed was the Culver bill to bring back the whipping post to Michigan. Well, since the departure of the horse, policemen must be concerned with some kind of a post, don't you think?

RECENT STATISTICS from Hollywood reveal that 25 cents of every dollar taken in by the movies goes to the players; 20 cents for studio overhead; 19 cents for manufacture of sets; various lesser amounts go for other expenses, including "five cents for raw films." The statistics fail to show how much the decent films cost.

KING GEORGE, of England, has ordered that his state income be cut somewhat less than the customary $2,660,000.00 which he has been getting each year. Thus, when the King cut a few spots off his card, the rest of the pack ought to be anything but discarded—or disconsolate.

POOR BABE RUTH wrenched his leg and is kept out of the game of baseball for a while. Well, the Bambino shouldn't monkey so much between bases—the Yankee coach ought to ball him out more for stealing the home plate.

MICHIGAN'S TROUT STREAMS are gurgling and babbling in the minds of many—and also menny—minds these days. There is nothing quite so refreshing as the quick jerk of a silk line as it curves the slender bamboo trout rod—unless it be several jerks.

THE KING AND QUEEN of Siam, very intelligent people, are making a tour of the United States. Don't you suppose that his Highness, if asked if he is enjoying his stay in our land, would reply, "yesam!"

..EX-NTRIX

A LETTER TO JOE IN PENNSYLVANIA

Dear Joe—

Well, Joe, Birmingham is a swell place. You'd like it, but since you're an undertaker I wouldn't advise you to come out here. Not right away, anyway. People aren't dying nearly so fast here as they are up in Pennsylvania. I guess it's because there's so many subdivisions there's no room left for cemeteries.

The only trouble is, Joe, that the people here don't appreciate things like you and I would. For instance, just the other day the trolley line between here and Detroit stopped running, and now the people are fussing because the busses only run every 20 minutes. Can you imagine that, Joe? Can you imagine people wanting to go to Detroit oftener than every 20 minutes? Why, you and I used to think it was pretty nice if we could get to Elmira once every two weeks. But that's the way it is, Joe. The more you have the more you want. I expect we'd be that way, too, if we ever got anything to want more of.

I'm learning more about life every day out here in Birmingham, Joe. Sometimes it's pretty embarrassing, though. Take the other night at the Community House, for instance. They had a big banquet there, and I was sitting next to a nice young woman I'd never seen before, and I supose I acted kind of shy and she thought she'd make things easier for me by getting the conversation started.

That was swell of her, wasn't it, Joe? But it didn't turn out so good as it might have, as you'll see from the following.

She turned to me, and real innocent like she said, "I suppose you play badminton?"

Well now, Joe, if somebody turned to YOU and said that they supposed YOU played badminton, what would YOU say? It wouldn't have been half so bad if she'd asked me whether I played golf or baseball or high-low-jack-and-the-game or even a mandolin. I could have answered just plain Yes or No as the case might be. But badminton—that got me.

"I beg your pardon?" I says, remaining very polite and stalling for time.

"I say I suppose you play badminton?" she repeated, loud enough the whole table could hear.

"Did you say 'Bad Men'?" I asks.

"Well, you can call it that if you want to," she replies with the grace and condescension of a perfect lady.

"I don't think I have," I answers, with enough hesitation to let her know that I think she may be kidding me or that badminton is just another name for seven-up. "What do you play it with?"

"Oh, with a bat and ball with feathers on it."

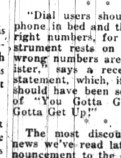
"And what are the feathers for?" I inquires.

And then she developed, Joe, that badminton was invented in England way back in the Middle Ages! And here I'd never even heard of it, Joe, let alone play the darned thing! It just goes to show, Joe, that you and I have got a lot of things to learn.

That conversation reminded me of the time when Jimmy went up to the jail to install a new bed and thought he ought to say something to one of the prisoners and the only thing he could think of was the weather. You remember that, don't you Joe? And then he went right down to the store and watered the artificial flowers.

So long,

Pete



Susan Subgum is shown here being taken aback (way back) by the mental and verbal prowess of her pet parrot, Polly Plotz. "Where on earth," Susan is thinking, "could Polly have learned that?" You see, Susan has been hunting the house high and low for the vacuum cleaner, and not finding it has turned in desperation, bouched, to be sure, with a bit of humor (tee, hee!), to Polly if she knows where it is. And Polly, not being interested in vacuum cleaners and not knowing where it is anyway, has responded with the entire third act from Shakespeare's "Macbeth": "Where is the suppose I learned it?" Polly finishes up, and does not stay for an answer, leaving Susan in as much of a fog as ever to continue her search for the vacuum cleaner.

"Dial users should never telephone in bed and then expect the right numbers for unless the instrument rests on a steady base wrong numbers are likely to register," says a recent newspaper statement, which, it seems to us, should have added to the tune of "You Gotta Get Up! You Gotta Get Up!"

The most discouraging bit of news we've read lately is the announcement to the effect that the General Federation of Women's Clubs has set aside May 24 to 31 as Poetry Week. It may serve a purpose, but we doubt it. Poetry, it seems to us, is much like spinach—you either like it or you don't, and whether you do or don't a special week for it won't make any difference in your taste. You can get fancier from yards out of a Clean-Up Week and squander babies out of a Health Week, but you can hardly hope to get a new crop of poetry lovers out of a Poetry Week. Poetry and people aren't made that way.

From The Eccentric Columns of Long Ago

FIFTY YEARS AGO

The Hungry nine—oh, where are they!

Adam and Eve were snaked out of Eden.

Any postal cards with anything other than the address written on the address side, will hereafter be thrown out of the mails. When you write to your girl, confine your sweet expressions to the blank side of the card.

Tom Adams takes our credulity to its fullest capacity with a story of an Armada lady who, with her feet, feeds herself, uses her handkerchief, and performs any act that any other lady can do with her hands, and she never attracts any extra attention either. If we didn't know Tom's veracity, we would doubt the story.

John Toms, Fred Golden and V. N. Dennison took a trip to the vicinity of Utica one night last week, and captured about four barrels of silver-sided "white fish," and now they have got practiced so they just put a chunk of fish in one side of their mouth, keep chewing and—presto! the bones come out of the other side, "all-e same-e herring mill."

We noticed George Geddes leading a very fine young bovine through the streets, on Monday last, and after a lively breeze from a companion who was helping George drive the animal, we finally got down to business and discovered that it was a fine bred yearling bull of the short-horn variety which he had purchased of Harrison Young and which originally sprung from the celebrated William Whitfield herd of short-horns of Waterford, this county.

Mr. E. S. Blakeslee, Jr. M. of Southfield, astonished his friends by quietly marrying two weeks ago last Saturday. His wife is a Kansas lady who was formerly a New Yorker. What worries the inhabitants of this burg is the fact that E. S. was married two weeks before any one found it out; even Uncle John Waters failed to discover the fact.

TWENTY FIVE YEARS AGO

A new postoffice building for Milford is what makes 'em smile over there.

Miss M. Gould has moved to the first house south of the St. James Church.

Residents on Pierce street, the far south, are anxious for a new cement walk, and with the addition of four new homes to be built at the south end, one of them to cost at least $5,000 and over, we don't think that our villagers will see the new citizens wade in mud very long.

It was a good thing for our baseball boys that it rained Tuesday afternoon, and that there was no ball game. Mt. Clemens came over with a nine composed nearly all of old time professional players, and our high school nine and our boys think that they would do it too easily.

A class of young ladies in the M. E. Sunday School will give an ice cream social in the parlors of the M. E. Church one dish cream, one glass ice water, one piece of cake and maybe two, all for 15 cents. Don't forget the date, Thursday, May 10. Instrumental music with the delicious flavor of ice cream will give you a pleasant half hour.

Baseball is now on and the first game of the season came off last Saturday on the new grounds back of Mr. D. Stanley's where the boys have secured a lease of the land for the coming season. The first game was a good exhibition and won by Birmingham, 9 to 7. The feature of the day and the winning stroke was Fred Blanding's saving hit; with two men on bases and two strikes against him, he lined out the winning hit, saved disgrace and won the game. Did the boys "holler"? Yep.

FIVE YEARS AGO

Governor Groesbeck was in Birmingham last Thursday morning. He was interested in looking over a proposed right-of-way for the new Grand Trunk Railroad's roadbed. He walked over the route between Royal Oak and Northwood to see how accurate a paper drawing may be from the true "lay of the land." It is related that he saw the inaccuracies of the situation, and that the cost of acquiring the right of way will be much less than he was led to believe some months ago. Perhaps the Governor's observations are correct; if they prove to be, he is due for commendation for having personally visited the vicinity of the future state operations and thus saved the taxpayers much money.

Birmingham's latest addition in the realm of outdoor sports is the announcement that the local tennis club is to have its own clubhouse equipped with showers, lockers, etc. Verily, this old Piety Hill doth flourish and grow these days.

Believing that the platting of business frontage in Birmingham has about reached the peak, Village President Charles U. Shain and Commissioners Bell and Ladd Monday night temporarily rejected a plat of the Taliaferro farm on West Maple avenue because it contained 15 business lots facing the avenue. The Commission held that stores in that vicinity would injure the value of adjacent residence property.

Though the bookkeepers for the Community House roll call have no definite report to make yet, they are saying that there have been no discouraging reports received from the canvassers and that they are experiencing the good will and interest of practically the whole community in this annual drive. Mrs. Harry M. Krull, one of the canvassers, reports that Lakeview avenue has subscribed 100 percent to the roll call.

In Spring

Once I heard a robin singing
And I knew a lovely thing,
Cold grey winter days were ended,
It was springtime, lovely spring.

Happy hours that come in winter
We shall treasure evermore,
Gay or sad, each hour enriches
Memories' precious golden store.

Snow is always pure and lovely
Softly blanketing the earth,
Easing tired eyes with its beauty,
From youth bringing shouts of mirth.

Winds so wild and rough and boisterous
Bring to cheeks a rosy glow,
Bring to hearts fresh health and vigor,
Blow, cold wintry winds, do blow!

Glorious silver moon a shining
On a frosty winter night,
Flooding all earth with its radiance,
Gleaming beautiful and bright.

Oh, the joy of cozy firesides,
Books to read and friends to greet,
Laughing children on the hearth rug,
Magic hours are all too fleet.

But when grass and trees awaken
And when skies grow bright and blue
That's the time when life is sweetest,
Friendship then is warm and true.

Sweetest music of the ages
Is the song the robins sing,
Happiest days that mortals live for
Are the glorious days of spring.

—BEATRICE MCDONALD.

THE OTHER CHAP SAYS SOMETHING—

"LET THE EAGLE SCREAM"

One of the favorite phrases of American patriotism some years ago was "Let the eagle scream." The eagle was the symbolic bird of America, and his screaming as he flew along his high places seemed a good deal like the too boastful patriotism of those days.

The orators who were forever bragging that we have the grandest country on earth, that our principles are superior to those of any other, that we could like the world by the superior prowess of our fighters, or the keener wit of our business men and workers, were letting the eagle scream.

It has become evident that we need a different conception of patriotism. True American spirit is not like a screaming eagle. The eagle, in spite of all its famous boldness, is after all only a rapacious bird of prey.

True Americanism might be better likened to some beautiful songster who lives in harmony with man and his brother birds, destroying the pests that ravage our crops, and industriously raising his families in our orchards and fields.

The screaming eagle conception of Americanism never made our country any friends. It produced an arrogant type of citizen who aroused antagonism wherever he traveled, as a braggy and disagreeable person. People disliked to have anything to do with him.

The good patriot of the future will not be comparable to any screaming eagle. He will be the courteous gentleman or lady who meets all the world with deference and courtesy, appreciating the achievements and the successes of the people of all nations, yet firm as ever in his loyal affection for the land of his choice, the glorious home of the starry flag, and ready as ever to serve and sacrifice for its cause.—Royal Oak Daily Tribune.

LOCAL A LA MCINTYRE

The crystallization of a casual thought: The degraded side of humanity which is revealed by careless gossip is a frivolous and dirty business; and as the favorite indoor sport of narrow-minded Ian (S. C.) Tribune.

and ignorant people, it satisfies their vile imaginations and lustful, frenzied appetites for cheap and petty thoughts. Richard Brinsely Sheridan, famed English dramatist, in commenting on this same distasteful side of virtually every human life pointedly remarked, "There is a set of malicious, prattling, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters and kill time; and will rob a young fellow of his good name before he has years to know the value of it." Although this statement was made sometime during the early decades of the nineteenth century, its significance will continue to be salient so long as society is composed of those panegyries of biology, men and women. Such people, if one were to take a telescopic view of them, being so self-enveloped with a self-complacent, superimposed inflation of the ego and being ill-natured, due to heredity or a chronic mental dyspepsia, cannot by the very character of their natures be public-spirited and inclined to work toward constructive goals within the community. Their antagonistic, critical attitudes make them unduly harsh and suspicious of virtually everyone with whom they come in contact, and this adverse condition makes very difficult any social cooperation and mutual trust. In view of this fact, the next time we—that is, you and I—feel our cranky brains and tattling tongues combining to swap lies with a dysentery of words and a constipation of ideas, let's pinch ourselves with a mnemonic flash of that fervent motto in Lawrence Payne's jewelry store: O Lord, help me keep my damn nose out of other people's business.—Durand Express.

If a man is in the right and knows he is in the right, criticism in The Tribune doesn't annoy him. He is willing to be judged by the record. But if he is wrong and knows he is wrong, so that Tribune criticism merely echoes the voice of his own conscience, he gets mad at me and all my kin and goes to his grave still hating me.—Robert Quillen in Fountain Inn (S. C.) Tribune.

All of Us

By Marshall Maslin

Conversation With a Dog Making a Living He Sneered At Me

AS I SAT on the beach, reading a book, a dog came up to me and started a conversation. He was a German shepherd, with a big black and a blue tongue and a happy tail that curled over his back and he said to me:

"What's the use of reading a book on a day like this? Let's have some fun. You pick up a stick or a ball and throw it down the beach. I'll run after it and pick it up on the dead run and bring it back to you. Then you do it again and I'll run after it again and we'll keep that up until I get tired. All I ask of you is to throw it into the water, because when I pick up a ball from the ocean I usually get a mouthful of that salt water, and it makes me sick at the stomach."

So that's what we did. I didn't have a ball, so I threw walnuts at first, but he crunched them to bits in his strong jaws. Then I threw an orange, but he finally wore that out, too. And at last when there was nothing more to throw he came and lay down beside me, with his blue tongue hanging out, and we had a little talk.

He said: "How does it happen that I never see you down here during the week?"

"I must go back to the city," I told him.

"The city must be a swell place," said the dog, "if you can tear yourself away from a nice beach like this."

"No, it's not as much fun as this" said I, "but a man must make a living."

"Make a living? What does that mean?"

"It means earning money to buy meat and clothes and a place to live in."

The dog gave me a puzzled look. "I don't see why you call that making a living. I call THIS making a living—throwing a ball and running after it and looking at the waves and barking for fun, and playing with happy people and wagging my tail. That's making a living, isn't it?" said the dog to me.

"You don't understand," said I, very patiently. "I couldn't enjoy this so much if I didn't do other things that aren't as much fun. You see, we human beings live by contrast. We like to eat because we have been hungry, we like crowds after we have been lonely, we like loafing because we have been working. Do you see?"

"No, I don't," barked my friend, as he walked away, "and I've decided that you aren't as bright as I thought you were."

* * *

I knew I couldn't make him understand.

The "Big Shots" Say:

Albert Einstein, German physicist: "I like the American people very much, with the exception of the journalists."

Will Rogers, humorist: "No debt ever came due at a good time."

Winston Churchill, British statesman: "Everywhere democracies are shirking facts, hoping to pay off perils with platitudes."

State Senator Bush, Nevada: "My bill would permit a decree by return mail. She's been too long for divorce seekers to wait."

William E. Borah, U. S. Senator, from Idaho: "The Russian people realize that the present rulers have done by them in ten years than the old regime did in 200."

Herbert Hoover, president: "I am firmly opposed to the government entering into any business the major purpose of which is competition with our citizens."

John Galsworthy, British writer: "It is unbelievable how many unbelievable things were believed by people during the war."

J. C. Squire: "It is difficult to realize that what happens in our time is history; it all seems so absurd."

Henry Mouquin: "No restaurant wanted to make money on food in the old days. The wine brought the profit, and those who didn't drink wines were served more bone than meat."

Max D. Steuer, famous lawyer: "Even a lawyer should know what he is talking about."

William Lyon Phelps, writer: "In this age of biography it is getting so that a good man is afraid to die."

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications for the people's column. All communications must be signed, but names will be kept confidential upon request.

Editor,
The Birmingham Eccentric:—

As a resident and taxpayer of the village of Birmingham, I, with many others, wish to express appreciation of the stand that Mr. Lowman, one of our commissioners, took in regard to the reduction of the village budget for 1931. His points were well taken and reasonable and should have been adopted by all of the Commission.

We all know that conditions now in general are abnormal, and that all expenses should be cut to the minimum until conditions get back to normal again. Mr. Lowman's points as to where greater reductions could have been made were published in The Eccentric for April 30, so I will not repeat them here.

As I see it, there is a need for a cut in the salaries of some of our high priced officials, including our School Board, whereby a good many thousands of dollars could be saved the taxpayers; and even then our officials would pay two or three times as much to live on as most of the rest of us who have to foot the bills.

So, I say cut to the bone in this our emergency.

JOHN MCCARROLL.
431 Park street.

Our Scrap Book

Friendly With The Sky

Almost every afternoon in winter I become friendly with the sky. I am usually busy wood chopping. I put on my sheepskin, harness my snowshoes . . . and move out to the top of the open pasture where my tracks lead down to the red brick house by the valley road. There are thin curls of smoke drifting from the chimneys, which I shall presently sniff—wood smoke, pungent and always surprising. Even when it is merely blue, the sky is forever a miracle when you are made suddenly aware of it. But it is seldom merely blue when I see it from my mountain pasture at the end of a winter day.

This afternoon it was a great peacock feather. The eastern heavens were broken by bands of clouds, with deep sky spaces between. The upper belts of open sky were exactly that mysterious green-blue of the outer edge of the feather, while the lower belts shaded more and more to purple hill, on the horizon, the eastern hills, and the mountain behind me stretched out over the miles of snow toward this great peacock feather sky like a whisper of amethyst.

Another day, early in March, as I emerged into the upper pasture at quarter of five, the entire eastern sky above the horizon hills was a smooth, translucent dome of clear robin's egg blue, while the mountains below it marched into the north, the much lighter blue of the zenith. The west shadow of my mountain was blue, also, as it touched its cold fingers out across the valley. The whole silent world was a rhapsody in blue.—Walter Prichard Eaton, in "New England Vista."