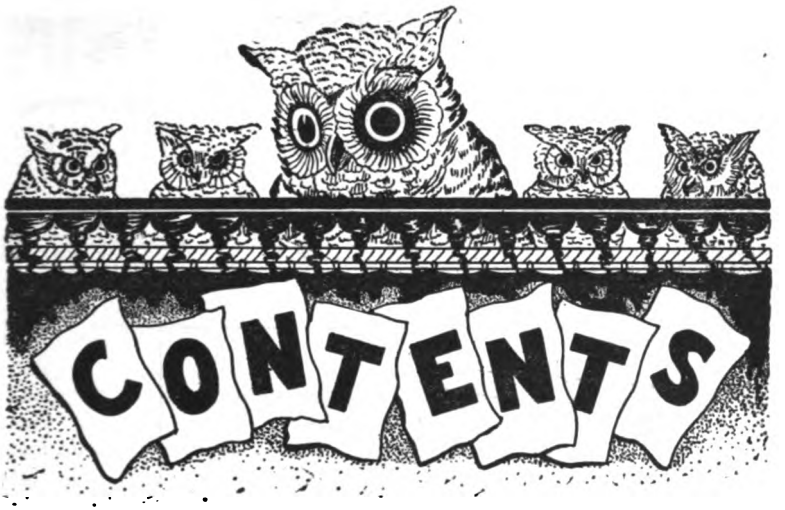

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calculable labor, and, in numerous instances, form the nucleus of valuable articles, poems or stories. As each selection is utilized it is designated by a cross in red ink as a precaution against its embodiment in future writings. These books, including purchase of paper, cost me just $1.50 each, but they are worth double the amount to me every day and are steadily appreciating in value.

Experience has shown me that a very serviceable and convenient pad for pen or pencil may speedily be constructed without the aid of any adhesive preparation whatever. The process is inexpensive and is simply to bind firmly (not tightly) together, by means of a half-inch satin ribbon passed around the middle, a packet of paper—say one hundred sheets of any desired size or quality—having a heavy pasteboard back. Such a pad, while instantly convertible into loose sheets, is admirably adapted to outdoor as well as study work, as the sheets, though unconfined at the ends, are not easily disturbed by the wind, and it can be used with equal facility upon chair arms, the knee or any rough or uneven surface. The sheets, too, may be easily withdrawn without suffering the mutilation invariably resulting from the use of padding compositions, or even bits of cord in lieu of the ribbon. If the latter be fitted with a small buckle the pad can be kept in more compact form. Paper and boards for the construction of these pads can usually be had from printers in any size, tint or quality and at a merely nominal cost.

THE JOKE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

By La TOUCHE HANCOCK

A joke is initially born, not made. We talk of making a joke, but that process comes after the inspiration has been received. Something funny, maybe maliciously funny, will strike us in a person's dress, or manner, in an inanimate thing, in a distorted phrase, in a misspelt sentence, and at once the joke is born in our minds, but, though initiated in the brain, it becomes necessary to "make it," so that other people can share the witticism. At times it is extremely hard to dissociate a joke from its surroundings, and still leave it a joke, and especially difficult is it under these circumstances to persuade one's listeners that there is much semblance of humor in what we ourselves think amusing. When a joke is born, it has, as a rule, considerably more than nine lives. Some jokes, in fact, are perennial, and will continue to be bandied about until the last humorist hears the last trump about which he will probably make a final witticism!

How jokes originate is a moot question. They mostly consist in one knows not what, and spring up one can hardly tell how. Certain it is, however, that one joke makes another. Professed humorists, though they will, one and all, excuse themselves from being classed as such, who send out a bunch of a hundred jokes at a time, must have of necessity trained themselves to a knack of producing witticisms, for no one would ever think of accusing them of plagiarism, or of intentionally appropriating someone else's humor for their own. Every

one has a different method of making a joke. Some have so great a sense of the ridiculous that nearly everything will appeal to them as humorous. This is apt to become wearisome to their friends, for, though a good joke can never be dull, a succession of jokes is far from enlivening, so much so that a bad case of insomnia has often been absolutely cured by the perusal of a jest book on retiring for the night.

It would seem that the most natural people to apply to for information as to the elucidation of the evolution of a joke would be the editors of the comic papers, but, as a rule, there is something so ultra-serious about a *deus ex machina* of this character that you will leave his presence, likely as not, with the impression that humor is a very deadly serious business. And so it is.

Says one editor:

"The influx of so-called jokers has been so great during the past three years that we have been obliged to cut down our prices. I have here a drawer full of all kinds of funniosities, all of which were accepted some two years ago, and" —here he will smile—"all to be paid for on publication. I need hardly tell you that they have little chance of seeing the light. How people make a joke I haven't the least idea. Jokes come, I suppose, naturally, and, when the inspiration does come, the professional humorist runs the ephemeral bard pretty closely!"

Other humorists discuss the evolution in different ways. Carolyn Wells will tell you that a joke is really not a thing to be viewed except at a long range.

"I never think," says she, "of my jokes. They think of me. They come and bang at my brain, begging to be evolved. As a rule, I meet them kindly, and accede to their wishes, but, of course, there be jokes which have no right to evolution. To these I sternly say, 'Go!' Jokes are such nebulous, cobwebby things that I can't consider them seriously!"

Dorothy Dix continues the strain in the following manner: "I have never received my Union card as a member of the Ancient and Honorable Guild of Jokesmiths, so that anything I may say about the evolution of a joke is entitled to little weight, being the mere utterance of a scab, so to speak. So far as my personal experience in the matter goes, however, I have found that jokes are of two kinds—the joke of inspiration, and the joke of desperation. The first strikes me, and the latter I hit up for all it is worth. For the one I am not responsible, but for the other I fear, alas! I am often accessory both before and after the crime. The joke of inspiration flashes on me with a gurgle of delight, ready made. I achieve the joke of desperation by means of fasting and prayer and wrestling with my typewriter after I have been reminded my copy is overdue. In this branch of the manufacture I have been greatly helped by the inspiring words of Mr. George Primrose. I once asked him why all minstrel jokes were of such ancient vintage. He replied, 'My dear girl, the public simply won't stand for a new joke. They call it indecent. Besides, they don't want the trouble of having to hunt up the place where the laugh comes in. I have found,' he said,

'that it takes about three seasons to educate an audience up to a fresh joke.' Thus shall the industrious and conscientious maker of laughs never lack for food as long as the inexhaustible mother-in-law and the inexhaustible twins hold out!"

W. J. Lampton is facetious and serious in his explanation. "How do I make a joke? I really don't know. I usually get hungry first, and need the money. Then I sit down and think out the easiest way of obtaining what I want. The longer I think the hungrier I get, until it becomes so utterly and truly ridiculous that the absurdity of the situation flashes across me, and I make the joke, and send it to some editor. The more I get for it the greater the joke is—on the editor. A joke is a very serious matter. I have frequently sold a bunch of jokes for a week's board, or some new clothes. The difference between the board and the clothes is that a man may wander around the most public thoroughfare with nothing whatever on the inside of him, but he can't do without clothes. Seriously speaking, I think the joke is evolved just as any other thought is evolved, the difference between all thought being merely a matter of development of the lobes of the brain affecting the temperament of the possessors. The lawyer thinks his thought on the legal lobe, the preacher on the pulpit lobe, the doctor on the pill lobe, the fashionable lady on the vanity lobe, and so on. The humorist is just as serious a brain worker as the preacher is, but he works in a different direction, producing different results. We smile with one, and weep with the other; at least we try to do justice to both, but it is easier to make people cry than laugh, because life is no joke on general principles. There isn't a laugh in the whole Bible, yet why it is so, when the whole teaching is love and light and cheerfulness and grace and beauty, I really don't know."

With these opinions from those who wear the cap and bells with the approval of the public, it may be deduced that humor is a natural quality, and a joke the effect of the careful observation of an ingenious mind.

The next step, after having made the joke, is to get it published, and every humorist will, of course, try to sell his goods in the highest market. The rates in New York run anywhere from $2.50 per joke to 25 cents. With this diversity of remuneration the writing of the joke is by no means all that has to be considered. One has to know exactly where to send the witticism when it is written. The various papers have their idiosyncracies, and so do their respective editors. Various means have been followed to discover a market, the most ingenious, perhaps, being that of a humorist who hit on the plan of sending out a hundred or more jokes in bunches of twenty-five each to different papers. These that were rejected by every paper he gave to an artist to illustrate, and so managed to sell more or less of the surplus, for, it must be remembered, that a picture will sometimes carry a joke, and vice versa.

A joke ceases to be a joke after an hour's mental agony, and so it should be the aim of professional

jokesmiths to make their witticisms forcible and intelligible. A laugh once and again made at our own or some one else's—preferably the latter—expense is enjoyable, and we look to our humorists to supply it, no matter how they make it.—*Spare Moments.*

FOR THE ASKING

Is there not another publication called THE EDITOR or some similar name? What is its address?

You are probably referring to *The Editor and Publisher*, "a publication for newspaper makers, advertisers and advertising agents." This is published weekly at 17 Park Row, New York.

What is the average length of the so-called novelette?

It may range from 1,500 or 20,000 words to 30,000 or a trifle more. The novel's minimum length, except for special purposes, is set at 60,000; the short story's maximum is perhaps 10,000 although few magazines care for anything as long as this. The serial is a collection of from three to ten short stories, disregarding the construction and considering only the matter of length.

Would not a page of brief comment upon new or old books of particular interest to writers be worth while? There are scores of books upon literary work of which many of us have never heard. If, in a few sentences, you would show us the aim and merit of each, you would confer a blessing.

THE EDITOR submits this suggestion to its readers. It would be possible to discuss from four to six books a month in a page space. If the demands warrant it, THE EDITOR will be pleased to make selections and comment upon them "without fear or favor."

How shall I indicate that portions of my story—letters from one character to another, for example—are to be set in smaller type than the balance?

If your manuscript is typewritten, simply single-space the matter that is to be set in smaller type. If the manuscript is written with pen and ink, the same method as to writing the lines closer together may be followed, but a better way is to draw a line along the lefthand margin, extending from the first word or line of the writing to be set in smaller type to the last, and write opposite it the way in which it is to be set. Simply the words, "Smaller type," will suffice.

Would you advise writing for a local publication that pays fair rates, but that is never read outside the county, or for a leading publication which is read widely, but which does not pay for contributions?

If you want money, write for the lesser light; if you want fame, write for the other—at least, for a time. As a matter of fact, however, there is in this country no publication that can truly be said to be read widely which does not pay for contributions. The compromise of writing for good publications that may pay comparatively low rates is suggested. A local paper offers practice and compensation; but there is little chance of extending one's ad-