

"Attendance is the Price of Membership"

The Fourth-Rate Performers

Once more I wish to explain. Last week I was asked to address the Junior Chamber of Commerce at Greenville. The News said I would, "contrary to my usual custom." I didn't. Despite repeated telephone calls and persistent special delivery letters, whose author will come close to getting all he wants in this world, I remained at home in stubborn silence. I don't make speeches. I can't make speeches. Surely that is plain. I have been asked to address everything from a national gathering of editors where Mr. Hoover was the only other speaker to a gathering of colored brethren holding camp meetin' here at home. Month after month I decline to address chambers of commerce, booster and brotherly-love luncheon clubs, graduating classes, classes in journalism, press conventions and everything else except assemblies of bootleggers. I decline for the simple and sole reason that I can't make speeches—for the same reason that a cat doesn't lay eggs. If I could make the welkin ring—if I could sway the multitude—if by the magic of voice and personal charm and fine forensic frnezy I could make 'em laugh or weep or stand on their chairs and strain their tonsils, why, I'd do it. But I can't, and that's that. Nature didn't give me the qualities essential to oratory—neither the brass nor the gift of eloquence. And I have a deep-rooted conviction that no man has a right to attempt in public a thing he can't do well. The world already has too many bum speakers. I won't add to its msieri. When a man accepts an invitation to speak, he says in effect: "I accept the job because I am qualified for it. I have the nerve to stand on my feet and face you because I know I can keep you on the edge of your chairs. I am a he-horse and a curly wolf and I know my onions. Get ready for something good." That's what his acceptance means, for no man would agree to do a job if he couldn't, and that's what his audience has a right to expect. If he accepts and then stutters and stammers or spills platitudinous piffle until his listeners begin to wish they could break a leg and be carried out, he is not only a cheat and a faker but a ghastly ass to boot. If a man isn't a hum-dinger, let him for decency's sake remain in obscurity or stick to the job he knows. The world is sick and tired of fourth-rate performances.

—By Robert Quillen, the author.

ROTARYGRAMS

OF BEAUMONT



WEEKLY BULLETIN

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Slants at the Meeting

YOU back-seaters didn't have to strain your auricular nerves to hear Dr. Butler last week. He projected his discourses with lucidity and perfect clarity; no adenoidal interference or nasal static. He had an innate amplifier working with the precision of grandfather's old putter on a miniature. Acoustics took it on the chin and lined it out with perfect harmony, as clear as your sins stand out in eminent danger.

The Dr. gave a little different slant on the mission of civic and luncheon clubs and his theme song was to disabuse the public mind of the prevalence of a "bunch" of Babbitts, hand-shaking, back-slapping, adulating sycophants engaged in self-aggrandizement. He recognized the benefits and extolled the virtues of the clubs in breaking down the spirit of prejudice and in developing that relation of fellowship so necessary to the welfare of the community. He touched on the rapid development of transportation and scientific research into matter.

The cool spell "flushed" a bunch of these regged-edge-60-per centers and the old attendance swelled like flax seed in hot water. Maybe the club will become reconciled to the strange faces of some of the members and tolerate them like a step-father does a mother's children.

The "substitute" secretary had a little fuse put under his left wing by the chair for not introducing Brother Stuckey. The Sec was admonished he "ought to look after 'em". This Sec was always taught, in the case of ministers, it is better to "look into 'em". You heard the story of Dr. Butler

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about the carpenter with a brief vocabulary and his proneness to the use of that very expressive noun. Well, the Sec felt the urge to shout "Who the h-- -- brought him." Really the Sec is democratic and because this visitor was a minister—a chicken eating Methodist like Ben Jackson, Pres Doty and Ed Stedman—he didn't hold that against him. The host or program chairman failed to register him, and of course, the Sec didn't know he was ashamed of him. Anyway Brother Stuckey is a good sport and enjoyed the joke.

We never did learn whether the good brother belongs to the animal kingdom or the cracker family. . . he is a Lion. Too, we didn't analyze his roar; for we are no prohibition agents. But that epicurean propensity of his sect certainly does inspire our highest admiration, and we believe, under the savory influence of a couple of tender pullets, we could break down prejudice like a raging bull does stalks in a cane patch. —Check.

—Rotarygrams—

ROTARY VISITORS

The following visitors were present at today's luncheon:

Randolph Yost, Austin.
Hubert Oxford, Jr., Austin.
C. A. Chase, Houston.
Mr. Hunter, City.
S. L. Van Nort.
O. V. Shane, City.
W. B. Currey, City.
Leon D. Kattache, City.
Dr. O. E. Stafford, City.
H. A. Watts, Orange.
Henry T. Galt, Shreveport.
John L. Henning, Lake Charles.
C. G. Greenlay, Houston.
R. E. Stewart, Port Arthur.
Harve H. Haines, Port Arthur.
W. B. Fulghum, Dallas.

KEEP YOUR HEAD

Men limit their progress in two ways.

First, there is the man who can't stand disappointment without acknowledging his inferiority, perhaps unconsciously. When things go wrong he cracks, and looks for a way out.

Second, there is the man who, if fortune smiles upon him, gets a swelled head and floats around in space like a balloon.

One can't stand failure; the other can't stand success.

Both of these limiting qualities will usually be found in the same individual, because the man who inflates easily generally deflates with equal promptness.

The first-class man knows himself. This knowledge gives him the courage to hold up his head, even under adversity; and when success opens before him he keeps his head, challenged by the conviction that he has not yet done his best work.

The men who dominate us, and by whom we like to be dominated, possess this reserve of power. Whatever burden may be on their shoulders they seem to carry it easily. Our pleasure in working with them is comparable to the satisfaction we get from driving a motor that will take us over anything and through anything, easily and pleasantly.

—Rotarygrams—

HAPPINESS

Everyone is interested in trying to discover the real source of happiness.

Some think it is freedom from want and worry; others think it is a philosophical attitude.

I suspect the real source of happiness is the mastery of nature, of our environment, of ourselves.

Man gains in dignity, nobility, and spiritual stature to the degree that he dominates natural elements and assumes command of his destiny.

All this boils down to self-expression.

Dogs and cows differ from one mainly in their inability to understand their environment and to turn it to the advancement of their own well-being.

The happy man is not one who is leading an effortless life, but one who is creating works on which his personality is impressed. He may be building bridges, raising wheat, tunneling mountains, isolating germs, or composing music. If his work is true and honest it must bring him an exalted sense of satisfaction.