

Down The Spillway

HER MISTRESS was indisposed and she was having extended verbal tussle with one of the numerous house-to-house salesman who had rung the bell that day. The man was persistent, and finally she capitulated.

Upstairs she came with the report that he demanded to see the "lady of the house." Acquiescence being out of the question, she carried back the refusal she had expected. There was more talk, and masculine echoes permeated the house.

Finally the door was closed and quiet ensued. She went about her business, and when finally she mounted the stairs a second time her mistress asked what the man had been saying in such a loud tone. The reply was to the point:

"He said a man couldn't make a living nowadays unless he could see the white folks."

NAN, 3, filched a piece of toast from the table and made off with it at high speed. It was a case clearly calling for discipline, so her mother ran her down, after an exciting chase, and retrieved the toast.

In the process quite a lot of it was spilled on the floor. Nan, after skillfully evading corporal punishment by professing to be terribly sorry about her misdeed, was dispatched to get a dust pan and brush. She returned in due course with the dust pan but no brush. Whereupon her mother remarked: "A dust pan is of no use without a brush. Use your head, my child." That seemed to the young lady a most engaging idea, so, setting the dust pan in the general vicinity of the débris, she proceeded with great alacrity to use her head as a brush, while I, an observer of this domestic drama, made further resolves to beware of the literal-mindedness of infants.

PERHAPS the most gracious act noted in the New Deal at Washington is that detected in my wanderings about the Triangle, where noble new department buildings continue to rise as swiftly and steadily as those same departments economize by reducing their employes and hence, one would think, their need of vast quarters.

I refer to the first real consideration which in my experience any contractor has shown to the happy unemployed who can spend their time watching the marvels of modern construction. Although infrequently in the past some haughty contractors have condescended to put up notice of what buildings they are erecting, most of them ignore that topic of lively interest to gaping spectators and merely record in vast letters their own proud names, plus the names of all the minor contractors, and, as a concession, the architect. Then they erect a high board fence about the lot and go to work.

Nor so under the New Deal. Where new buildings rise, whether in their ultimate granite or in their bare steel bones or in the early stages of excavation, I am thrilled to note a handsome sign identifying this as the Postoffice building, that as the Labor building, another as Archives. But now, in the case of buildings rising at the Apex of the noble Triangle, the New Deal has brought still further happiness. For at intervals in the boarding which surrounds two of these lots a kindly contractor has cut windows so that we loafers who love to see what is going on inside can satisfy that endless curiosity whenever the weather is warm and the sun soothing and the enticing sound of the steam shovel and the riveters is heard in the land.

I REALIZE the railroads are in no position to make expenditures not absolutely essential to the performance of their service. And I suppose that it might well be argued that the expenditure requisite to cleaning up the unsightly remnants of the Hollins Station, on the Pennsylvania railroad north of Baltimore, does not fall into that category. Most of the station burned a few months ago and the balance has fallen into a charred and distorted mess.

I am not sure, however, that what the railroad would gain in morale, both on the part of its workers and passengers, by doing away with this depressing wreck would not more than justify the expense of the operation. At any rate, I hope that the next meeting of the board of directors of the railroad will consider this question. If everything else fails, it might be possible to get the R. F. C. to help.

WITH THE not very definite return of spring, the vendors of frozen refreshments have once more begun their peregrinations about the city streets. One of them, who follows a route with which I have been for many years familiar, is accustomed to take a stand for an hour or two every evening at one of the intersections in the northern residential district.

Passing that way, last night, I was shocked to see him leaning nonchalantly against the illuminated wagon in his shirt sleeves. I was concerned over his apparent martyrdom to the demands of business. "The man will take pneumonia," I observed, "in his effort to make it appear that summer has come," and so on and so on, with a lot of talk about forcing the season.

My companion, who was more cynical about such matters than I, quieted my apprehensions. "Don't bother," I was advised, "he probably has a woolen shirt on under that white thing."

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