

SOME THINGS NOAH WEBSTER NEVER KNEW WHEN GETTING OUT HIS GREAT DICTIONARY

(Chicago News)
Picture the chagrin of Mr. Noah Webster and other purists of yesterday, if they were to awake today and open a dictionary that gives full approval to the language of Kentucky moonshiners, Hollywood movie queens, Sing-Sing inmates and Texas cowboys—intermingled with the best vocabulary of Boston dowagers and Harvard professors!

Imagine Mr. Webster discovering that "blah," "whoopie," "black bottom," "fizzle," "ace," "speakeasy," "blockhead," "awful," "debunk," "dizzy," "deb," "bootleg," "blighter," "Black Maria," "finicky,"—words he probably never even heard—have moved into the dictionary.

Well, what Noah might say can't be helped. For the strange words above—and other equally strange—are going into the first book of its kind ever attempted. A purely American dictionary. This dictionary, to be called the "Historical Dictionary of American English," is being prepared under the auspices of the University of Chicago. The gigantic task has already been under way for six years and still is but one third completed.

Scotchman Compiling It

And—another surprise!—a native Scotchman, Sir William Craigie, directs the undertaking. After spending the summer in Great Britain Sir Craigie has returned, to roll up his sleeves and resume the editorship of the unique collection.

When Prof. John Manly of the English department at Chicago brought Sir William to America, in 1926, to direct preparation of the new lexicon, H. L. Mencken questioned the fitness of putting a foreigner in charge, of such a purely American enterprise. But Mr. Mencken and others soon learned that the eminent Scotchman was the right man for the job. Having been editor for thirty years of the Oxford dictionary a ten-volume work completed in 1928 after seventy years of continuous research, Sir William knew exactly how to start and what to do.

True to Title

The American dictionary, made in Chicago, is to be exactly what its title implies. All expressions indigenous to America or having a bearing on American life and thought—a great number of which Webster and other lexicographers of the past failed to take into consideration—will receive due attention for the first time. The dictionary will not only define the words, but will explain their origin tracing them as far as possible through the evolutionary stages of

their meaning and usage.

Already, more than 400,000 words have been recorded on yellow or white slips of paper. Each piece of paper shows a single word, a sentence or two illustrating the meaning of the word, together with a brief notation of the literary source or sources. Words not fully investigated are tabulated on yellow slips. Those practically ready for incorporation in the dictionary are listed on white slips.

Here Are Examples

Here are a few examples, picked at random:

Take the word "blah." The new dictionary will say it means "pretentious talk or writing," and that the first tangible record illustrating this meaning is found in a sentence in the New York Times book review on Aug. 3, 1926, which says: "There is usually a disgusting blah of important high-sounding words."

As far back as 1814, the word "awful" was already an American favorite. Originally, it meant "disagreeable, surprise." The dictionary substantiates this interpretation with a quotation culled from certain travel accounts of Canada and United States written by one J. H. Beadle, who said "Everything that creates surprise is awful with them. What an awful wind, awful mouth, awful nose, etc."

The expression "don't know beans" is traced to that sanctum of purists, Yale. The dictionary quotes Yale Literary Magazine of 1805 as nothing "Whether he knows of Euclid in Greek, in Latin he don't know beans."

"Dizzy," defined as "astounding, startling," originated in 1883, according to the comment supplied by J. H. Beadle, who wrote "Dance houses and Saloons multiplied and dizzy dames gave an air of holiday to the streets."

The expression "debunk," in the forthcoming lexicon, is defined as "to remove the nonsense or false statement."

Dumbhead Is Traced

"Dumbhead" is traced to the German dum plus the English head. It was first used in 1921 by Mulford Bort in the comment, "Have I got to do all the thinking for this crowd of dumbheads?"

"Blighter" is defined as a contemptible person. Often merely an extravagant substitute for "fellow." The literary source for this slang word is traced to 1896.

The expression "Black Maria," to denote a "prison van for conveyance of prisoners" was used as far back as 1877.

Sources Are Shown

Many expressions popularly imag-

A FIVE MILLION DOLLAR RING UNEARTHED IN PHILADELPHIA; CACHE AND WIRELESS SET SEIZED

Philadelphia, Oct. 20—A \$5,000,000 liquor-smuggling syndicate operating from this city and said to be the largest on the eastern seaboard, was smashed here yesterday after six months' investigation, and last night two of its rumboats were seized.

The boats—a "mother ship" used in running liquor from Canada and a contact speed craft which plied between shore and the twelve-mile limit off the New Jersey coast—were captured when they responded to an "all-clear" signal sent from one of the ring's wireless stations taken over earlier by the Federal agents.

Unlicensed wireless stations were operated by the syndicate from houses on Brown street near 15th and on the North State road, upper Darby, according to federal authorities; elaborate offices were maintained in the Pennsylvania Building and on Walnut street near 17th, the latter suite yielding a mass of data to the prohibition men through an elaborate filing system.

Five Other Ships Sought

At least five other ships are known to have been operated by the ring, and Coast Guards, operating under instructions issued here are expected to take them into custody.

Among the places raided by the Federal men yesterday was a large liquor warehouse in the Upper Providence from which some of the deliveries were made after the orders had been telephoned to the gang's office.

During the questioning of eighteen men and two women who had been taken into custody last night it was learned, Federal men said, that a \$5,000,000 racketeers of this city, New York and Atlantic City to finance the ring.

Beginning their investigation last April, the Federal men, through tapped telephone wires, learned full details of the gang's operations, so the warrants were sworn out last

Wednesday for the arrest of forty-six men and two women, charging them with "unlawfully importing, transporting, possessing, selling, furnishing and manufacturing intoxicating liquor," with an additional charge of operating unlawful wireless stations.

The two wireless stations of high power but operating at low frequencies, were used to communicate with ships along the entire Atlantic coast through an elaborate system of code signals, solved after some difficulty by the Federal agents.

With full details of the gang's activities known an army of the Department of Justice and prohibition agents, those stationed here being augmented by a force from Washington, descended on the gang's various headquarters. Those taken into custody were held, it is believed, in outlying police stations to prevent them from spreading the alarm.

Authorities Co-operate

The investigation was in charge of Federal Attorney Wells and W. E. Dunnington in charge of Department of Justice agents assigned here from Washington. D. Heywood Hardy, special Assistant Federal Attorney, and Captain Driscoll, of the 55th and Pine streets station, co-operated in the investigation and arrests.

Flies in the ring's offices contained vast numbers of names, together with the purchases made by customers. Among the addresses given were several country clubs and fashionable suburbs, together with Rittenhouse Square and University of Pennsylvania fraternity houses, it was said.

Those in custody up to 9 P. M. last night were George James Martin, of Brown street near 15th; Richard P. Flowers, of Wallace street near 18th; Harold Erdman, of Buckingham Valley; Harry Riley, of 13th street near Johnston; B. L. Schuldt, of Buckingham Place near Walnut.

A SACRED POTENTATE WHO SPENDS TEN MILLIONS A YEAR

The Aga Khan, sleek gourmet and (New York Sun)

ruler of India's 30,000,000 Moslems, confers with Mahatma Gandhi emaciated ascetic. From this momentary convergence of ancient cultures there may come something that will toot whistles in the Manchester mills, turn new furrows in Louisiana cotton patches and start blasting and burrowing in Colorado silver mines. Dominion status for India, the lifting of Gandhi's boycott on textiles and the restoration of producing and consuming power among India's 300,000,000 of population are believed to hinge on the possibility of the Aga Khan's Moslems and the Mahatma's Hindus getting together.

Sultan Sir Mohamed Shah Aga, the Aga Khan, is paid a yearly salary equal to his weight in gold. Annually a committee from his ruling Cabinet visits Paris, weighs the Sultan and pays him at \$2 an ounce. Naturally, when the Sultan feels like a cigarette he reaches for a gumdrop, maintaining his weight around 225 pounds.

Once when browsing for candy in Chambrey, Southern France, he was served by the beautiful and demure Mlle. Andree Carron. She was quite unlike the lacquered professional

beauties who followed the Aga Khan around Europe. He married her and gave her the Golden Dawn diamond, fortieth among the seventy-five largest diamonds in the world. His first wife, Signora Theresa Magliano of Italy, had died the day he bought the jewel in 1926.

His bride rules graciously a palace in India, an apartment near the Bois de Boulogne and a magnificent villa at Le Bourget. She remains a Catholic.

The Aga Khan does not have to depend upon his annual weighing-in for a living. Various hereditary fiefs and emoluments give him about \$10,000,000, a year to spend—and he does. He has magnificent racing stables in France and England and won the Derby with Blenheim last year when his new wife was presented at Court. He gives grand banquets, plays for high stakes at Monte Carlo, strews largess in his wake and, like old Omar, "takes the cash and lets the credit go."

Once a year a State delegation arrives from India to get the water from the Aga Khan's annual purification bath. The sacred water is bottled and sold among the 30,000,000 faithful. The "take" from this is considerable.

The Aga Khan is the forty-eighth lineal descendant in the order of primogeniture of Fatima, the daughter of Mohammed, and also a direct descendant of the Old Man of the Mountain, known as the Lord of the Assassins.

"Do you remember that couple we met on the steamer we took such a violent fancy to—I mean the couple we invited to visit us?"

"Yeah. You don't mean to say—" "Yes, the idiots are actually coming!"

STUDENTS AS NURSEMAIDS

Toronto, Ont., Oct. 20—This depression is sharpening the minds of landladies, so several of the students attending the University of Toronto have discovered to their sorrow.

Shovelling snow and coal, attending to furnaces and working around the house is not unusual in return for room and board, but this year a new game has been instituted, and it is called "minding babies." Two or three evening a week, so several of the student shave reported, their landladies go out to play bridge and in their absence the student roomers have to mind the babies.

PREFERS PRISON TO HOME LIFE

Mishawaka, Indiana, Oct. 20—Life on a prison farm sometimes is preferable to the comforts of home, Samuel Beck believes. As a result he is passing this year on the penal farm. Beck was brought into court on a charge of assault and battery against his wife. Judge Albert Doyle inclined to be lenient, asked Beck if he thought he could return home, and behave. "I'll take the jail any time to living at home," Beck replied. Judge Doyle gave him a year's sentence.

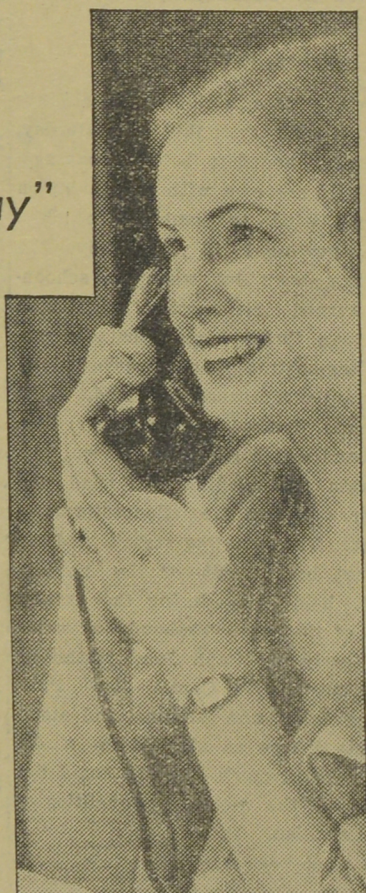
Habits are sometimes regulated by temptations.

"I'm going, anyway"

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