

that while the learning of English is play for his children, it is tedious, elusive labor for the alien father and mother. Neither he nor she can just learn it out of a book. There are, and must be, infinite devices to catch, hold and develop a successful attention. It is a game of artful patience on both sides, but the dividends are there, at the end of it.

So, in our scattered homes, from one coast to the other, there are American women who are helping the alien woman in this her first step towards Americanization. It is not merely a man's game. Within the American home, and even beyond it in the alien's home, this keystone work of language is being wrought by women who find the same dividends in domestic intelligence and loyalty that their husbands find in industrial contentment and appreciation. The thing pays.

The other day I sat next to another poor devil in a barber's chair. In the third chair a pretty young thing was having her hair bobbed as it never had been bobbed before. Great chunks of it fell heavily to the floor. My masculine neighbor parted with lesser and lighter chunks. In my case the parting could hardly be described as a matter of chunks. It all depends upon the supply. But the three of us were alike in our imprisonment, in the lightning play of shears about our polls and in the deluge of tonsorial conversation that fell upon us as we sat. Suddenly the talk took a lateral turn. The intermediate barber, shears poised aloft, was addressing my own executioner, over the half-shorn heads of Smith and me, awaiting patiently the end of this armistice. Beyond us, the war was still on. The bobbed chunks still fell, with thuds that were definitely not dull. The pretty young thing was impassive.

"You ought to read that new Italian paper," said the intermediate barber. "It's the best yet."

"Bah!" replied my executioner expectantly.

"It's the best of 'em all—now take the pictures—"

"Bah! I read the old one."

"Say, ain't you makin' no progress? Ain't you up-to-date Italian, same as me? Huh?"

Beyond us the bobbing suddenly ceased. The third and last pair of shears poised aloft. The armistice was complete. Smith turned his head furtively—not toward me.

"Say, when did you fellers come over here?" demanded the third barber.

"Four years ago," barked the intermediate barber.

"Five years ago—me!" My executioner swelled slightly, shears pointed downward. I shifted, warily,

"Ye-es—and only two years—me," mimicked the third barber. "But I learn English first little bit, in Ee-ta-lee—like that—and now I read Babe Ruth in big American paper—you read Mussolini, little paper—I have beautiful customer—you have..."

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The third barber halted in his scorn, in sudden dismay. The pretty young thing turned her bobbed head and looked Smith square in the eye. With a slight convulsion Smith snapped his poor dome back into place.

"For Heaven's sake, go ahead," I muttered to the executioner. And for five solid minutes, for the time is recorded history, three pairs of barber's shears

clipped in silence—almost, for surely there were sounds from the third chair. They might almost have been giggles. And once Smith sighed. But aloft there was silence, sweet silence.

So much for language. That is the first essential. The alien who can not speak our tongue is helpless; and his Americanization is hopeless.

After language comes the law—the rules of the American game. To know the rules is to play the game. Not to know them, means one foul after another, with all the penalties that attach to fouls. The old saw that "ignorance of the law excuses nobody" is a hard rule to enforce against our foreign newcomers, from the moment they set foot on shore, and yet that rule is the first and the soundest of all.

Of course I do not mean that you, who may be a bit curious about this particular pepper-pot casting, should transform all your alien employees into lawyers. Save the mark! We have enough of those fellows already. Nor are your aliens to become even sea lawyers, or stationhouse lawyers, or yet constitutional lawyers. But surely they should be brought to know the fundamentals of the ordinary rules of conduct and contract that are administered every day in the year by our magistrates, justices of the peace and petty judges all over the land. The minute the alien goes down the gang-plank he walks into the center of that body of law that engages our minor courts—that constitutes the rudiments of the rules of the American game. And it is only a matter of a few minutes or a few days before the alien trips over one of these elementary rules.

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That I know, because I was once a magistrate myself. It is a safe guess that two out of every three defendants who came before me were recently arrived foreigners. Some of them knew our laws very well indeed, and were punished accordingly; but to most of them the whole thing was a hopeless maze of "don'ts"—a chestnut burr of statutory prickles, conceived in the complexities of modern civilization and born of the ambitions of a swarm of nervous American law-makers annually intent upon regulating the lives of all the rest of us.

No wonder the poor foreigner needs teaching here! If he does not learn fast his very liberty—in our "land of liberty"—may be snuffed out overnight just because nobody would teach him the rules of the game. It will pay his boss, his beau ideal, his picked American teacher, to teach him something of those rules. The humble law of right and wrong has grown some amazing shoots in this statutory hothouse that so hems us in today. Where Moses contented himself with but ten rules we insist upon a thousand—and then we have begun the list.

To put the case bluntly, it pays an employer to keep his alien employee out of jail. Beyond that, it pays to keep him clear of penalties less notable but equally damaging to the value of an eight-hour day. And, beyond that, it pays to train the foreigner into an understanding of at least the most rigorous of our rules, because it makes him a better workman, a better subject for ultimate citizenship, and a better American by sheer reason of the gratitude he bears a boss who helps him as well as pays him. It pays