

OPAL'S DIARY INEXPLICABLE EVEN TO FINAL INSTALLMENT

Some Inconsistencies Explained While Others Still Stand—Varieties of Humor Deepen Mystery—Doubters and Believers Unshaken.

BY ELBERT BEDE.
COTTAGE GROVE, Ore., July 31.—(Special).—The concluding chapter of Opal Whiteley's diary appears in the August number of Atlantic Monthly. While this is the concluding chapter of the diary, it has brought no definite conclusion as to the truth or untruth of her foster-parent fantasy nor as to whether or not the diary was written as claimed by the author.

I have received much information that would tend to indicate that the diary was written in later years—but absolutely no positive proof of such fact. I have received much information tending to prove that the diary was written just as the author claims—but absolutely no positive proof of that fact. Many have made statements that they knew of the existence of the diary and its destruction, others that they knew it was written in later life, yet when approached for a positive statement for publication, answers were evasive, or were made only on information and belief.

Inconsistencies Are Found.
I have found many inconsistencies in the diary which seemed beyond explanation, yet have been explained. I have found others which yet have not been explained.

For example, the author tells of making two trips to the home of "the girl with no seeing." These trips were made on two succeeding days. The distance was some five or six miles. Mosby creek, which is a stream of respectable size, must have been crossed on a footbridge. The 7-year-old child was accompanied by a dog on whose back rode a hen and a crow, by two pet pigs, a pet lamb, a load, a woodcock and possibly some other minor livestock. That such a child thus accompanied could have made two such trips at all seems impossible, that she could make two such trips without causing alarm on the part of the neighbors seems more impossible, yet the incidents of the trip and the death of the girl are described with a wealth of detail and with a sincerity which make the story seem most real.

How can be found who are ready to state that they feel positive that the diary was written just as the author claims, yet there are none, so far as I have learned, who are ready to state positively that it was not so written, or, at least, partially so written.

Humor Deepens Mystery.
The varieties of humor which pervade the diary deepen the mystery.

The statements that "Blaise's baby has such a redness of nose from coming a long way in the cold" may be childish humor, but her friend, the little girl—"with a Tam O'Shanter, a frown and a cape" sound more like Will Nye or Artemus Ward at their best.

The entertaining description of extracting a tooth by tying a string to the door knob and pulling on the production of a precocious child, but when she tells her diary that "Dear Love," a young man, who is ready to confide to her (not over a 7-year-old) the expected arrival of a baby and says "one day I will be the secret except Dear Love and her husband and me"—and a dozen or so of her pets of which she gives names, classic names, one wonders if the neighbors were prone to confide in this fairy of the woods such delicate secrets, or whether the incident may not have been dragged in to give a chance to parade a rare piece of humor.

The oft-repeated statement that

"men are such a blessing to have about" will, by many of experience, most certainly be labeled the production of a very young mind or the humorous fantasy of an older one.

Definite Proof Lacking.
If we presume that the diary was written in later life, the question must then arise: Was it so written, the premeditated intent to deceive or did the girl have a dual personality? Did she, as some of my correspondents ask me to believe, have a spiritual being when she became a child and wrote in the spirit the things which have brought to her real self so much of glory and so much of censure? And if written in real life, would her staid not be almost as remarkable as if the diary were produced in the manner claimed?

A study of the mass of correspondence I have received from every point of the compass, after following many leads which at first seemed certain to produce something definite, I must admit that I do not feel that the evidence is irrefutably conclusive either way. I believe that I will in time be able to give a story which will be backed by conclusive evidence as to the truth of the diary, but there is so much of possibility and probability that I would not venture upon a statement as to what the probable future story is going to prove or disprove.

Censure Is Given.
It may be said with certainty that most of those who have always known the Whiteleys and Opal are more firm than ever in the belief that the foster-parent fantasy is fold-deal and many of these are severe in their criticism of the things which have been allowed to appear in the diary which tend to give the idea that Opal was an overworked and abused little girl. Such are prone to recollect an entirely different kind of treatment of Opal and the members of the Whiteley family. Also the production of a diary of some 150,000 words by a little girl during the year between her sixth and seventh birthdays, as stated in Atlantic, all printed most laboriously in the cramped print of a child and the pages childishly decorated in colored-pencil art, would seem alone to furnish all a child could do in that length of time outside of school hours. It cannot be denied that the diary shows its author to have been a most extraordinarily industrious child.

The diary is interwoven with incidents that are known to have happened in the chronological order in which they are so entertainingly related and they are told with a detail and accuracy that is not possible under a presumption that the diary was written in later years, yet the fact that the author has repeatedly written even during the publication of the diary, for verification of dates and facts gives the doubters all the evidence they ask confidently to affirm that the little girl who knew could not and did not do many of the inconsistent things stated in the diary.

One thing can be said with positiveness and that is that it remained for Opal Whiteley to write the most remarkable piece of literature ever put into print—and at the same time to give to the world an unbelievable, yet believable story of foster parentage. Both are full of probabilities and improbabilities; entrancing in fiction, stranger than fact, if fiction.

ROUTINE IN SCOUT CAMP BRINGS HEALTH TO BOYS

Fourteen Hours of Strenuous Activity Compose Day—Lads Stiffly Stand at Attention While Inspection Is Made—700 Enjoy Exercise.

Good morning, Mr. Scout, Scout, Scout, With a smile just as broad as mine! Good morning, Mr. Scout, Scout, Scout, You are really looking fine! Knave and knave you must be! So hurry and tie them and know just why.

Good morning, Mr. Scout, Scout, Scout, With your smile as broad as mine! With your smile just as broad as mine! With your smile just as broad as mine!

WITH this joyous good morning song the members of the Portland land council of Boy Scouts, camped at the foot of Mount Chinidere, overlooking beautiful Wahatun lake, 14 miles up Eagle creek canyon, greet the morning and make vibrant the air every day each year from July 1 to September 1; then follows 14 hours of a happy wholesome and health giving programme of work and play that can be evolved by trained men whose lives are devoted to making real men out of real boys.

For five years the Boy Scouts of Portland have enjoyed a summer camp and during that period approximately 700 boys have been in camp for periods varying from two to six weeks; a significant fact is that during that entire time there hasn't been a single accident, or serious illness among the boys.

Two years ago the present camp site was secured and a camp was conducted in a truly primitive fashion, the boys rolling up in blankets under the trees and cooking for the entire camp being done over a mammoth campfire.

Last year enough of the giant pines were removed for the erection of a commodious log lodge which is divided into kitchen, dining room with huge fireplace, office and canteen or camp store. Further clearing was made for the erection of tents.

This year the clearing has been enlarged for this purpose to be the banner year in point of enrollment as well as quality of work done; already 150 boys have been in camp, many of whom will remain until the end of the season.

James E. Brockway, scout executive, is in general charge of the camp; he is assisted by W. J. Kent and J. C. Oakes, trained scout workers, and Charles C. Hall, swimming instructor. The kitchen is in charge of a competent cook, all other work about the camp is done by the boys.

Each tent is cared for by the boys occupying it and the "K. P. duty" is done by boys who break camp rules three meals being the limit of punishment for a single offense.

Reveille is sounded every morning at 7 o'clock; scores of boys take their morning wash-up in the lake, next comes the roll call and wide awake exercises, Scout song and flag ceremony. Then follows what to most of the boys is the first really important event of the day, breakfast, the chief item of which is hot cakes and syrup.

Breakfast is followed by bed-making and a general settling to rights of the tents, the sweeping of the adjacent ground and the beautifying of the tents and grounds with flowers or ferns for the next scheduled event of inspection by the officers, the names of the best, second best and worst camps being posted on the official bulletin board. Considerable ingenuity and artistic instinct is displayed in the fur-

nishing and adornment of the various camps. Fern Inn is surrounded by clumps of mountain ferns and bracken, the camp being built on the bank of the brook. Jumping Jack Camp is suggested by a real jumping jack carved and strung by the boys in the camp. Lake View Inn is characterized by a pretentious rustic table formed of small bark-covered limbs. Blocks sawed from huge trees constitute tables in several camps. Shining in camps that once held tomatoes, have been nailed onto the sides of these

Special regular features of the

programme being different.

It may include a hike to Mount Chinidere, Indian mountain, Cedar camp, Benson plateau, Mud lake, Rainy lake, Scout lake, Hicks lake, Green ridge, Herman camp, one of the three hikes around the lake at its edge, half way up and the top of the ridge, botany or bird hike.

Scores of varieties of wild flowers abound around the camp and the following birds are also found there: Varied thrush, robin thrush, hermit thrush, russet-backed thrush, water wren, junco finch, pine siskin, cross-bill finch, western evening grosbeak, blue Oregon jay, stellar jay, rufous humming bird, hermit warbler, water ouzel, chestnut backed chickadee, Lewis woodpecker, slender billed nuthatch and bush tit.

Dinner is served at noon and is followed by a quiet hour for reading, study and writing, during this period the Scouts are urged to write home. Indoor baseball, pitching quoits, flag raising, improvement of camp, making of bows and arrows, fire sets and camp furniture and lessons in woodcraft and forestry occupy a part of the afternoon and a second hour is given to water sports. At 6 o'clock supper is served.

In the evening there are games, singing around a big campfire and at 9 o'clock are sounded after the singing of the good night song: Day is done, gone the sun From the lake, from the hill, from the sky Slumber long, pleasant dreams, God is nigh.

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blocks and serve as receptacles for combs, brushes, tooth brushes and pens, letters, pencils, etc. Camp names include Hemlock lodge, the Chick Inn, Quit Cha Kid Inn, Lake View Inn, Ripple Inn, the Sign of the Jumping Jack, Lake palace, the Lone Pine, Oh! Boy, Sleepy Hollow, Kum-beah, Gee Whizz, Fish Inn, Rover, Minnehaha, Linger Longer, Fern Inn, Fir cabin, Happy Go Lucky and O. K. hall, the latter being the abode of the boys. Mr. Kent and Mr. Hall, during inspection every boy stands at attention in front of his tent. A hurried reading of the bulletin board to learn who the day's winners are, is followed by a grand rush for the lake, where fishing, swimming and rafting are enjoyed as only boys can enjoy water when not accompanied by soap and a cloth.

The boys have built log rafts on which they paddle around between dikes and no boy has put in a full day unless he has fallen into the lake a time or two, partly or wholly clad.

The remainder of the morning hours is given over to hikes, games or work around the camp, each day's programme being different. It may include a hike to Mount Chinidere, Indian mountain, Cedar camp, Benson plateau, Mud lake, Rainy lake, Scout lake, Hicks lake, Green ridge, Herman camp, one of the three hikes around the lake at its edge, half way up and the top of the ridge, botany or bird hike.

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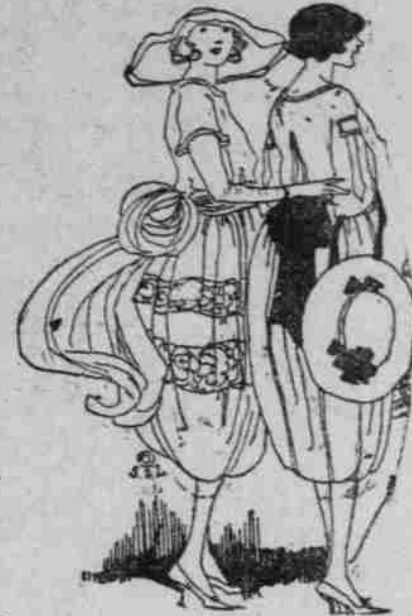
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