

# what Irvin S. Cobb thinks about:

The Big Book Craze.

**SANTA MONICA, CALIF.**—We're promised a historical novel longer than any yet—say half a million words or so. Of course, the author probably uses some words at least twice, but that won't reduce the gross tonnage unless they're very short words.

I can't take it. While still convalescent from "Anthony Adverse," I was stricken down by "Gone With the Wind" and had such a relapse that even now I barely can hold on to my stomach such comparatively light and trifling stuff as volume VET to ZYM of the encyclopedia.

When reading this modern bulk literature, it upsets me to find my legs going to sleep before I do. And the constant pressure makes callouses on my second mezzanine landing. I admit these mass production books serve nicely as door stoppers and for pressing wild flowers. I also heard of a chap who detected a prowler under his window and dropped a frothy little work of fiction weighing slightly less than nine pounds on the back of the fellow's neck, dislocating three vertebrae. At last accounts, the surgeons were still picking long jagged chapters out of his spine.

In my present mood, what I crave is the romantic stuff of olden days, in which our sainted Aunt Sophie was wont to inscribe "Alas, how sad!" or "Only too true!" in pale violet ink on the margins. What happened to all the Aunt Sophies, anyhow?



Irvin S. Cobb

**An Actor's Temperament.** WE'VE all been waiting for something to top it, but the best wheeze of the month remains the one that was emitted, not by a paid gagster, but by a simple stagehand at one of the studios when Mr. Leslie Howard refused to go on making a picture until a group of distinguished visitors, including Mr. Charles Norris, the novelist, had been shoofed off the set.

"He ain't sore at you gents," stated the stagehand to the ousted parties, "but he's been playin' 'Hamlet' on the regular stage and he ain't used to havin' a crowd watchin' him while he's actin'."

If Mr. Norris and his friends wanted to see some really great acting they should have patronized the professional wrestling matches. That's where they put on the heavy dramatic stuff—beautifully rehearsed, perfectly done.

**Children's Education** I LIKE the way the wealthy classes in England rear their children. Little Rosemary doesn't recite for the company after dinner, and if Master Jones-Terwilliger Minor gets uppity at school, he gets thrashed.

Many a rich American has known how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to see his daughter grow up a wanton and his boy turn out a wastrel. Yet, with few exceptions—so few that the newspapers comment on them—it never seems to occur to these fond fathers that less of coddling and pampering and spoiling in adolescence and more of wholesome discipline might produce a higher average grade of heirs.

What set me to thinking along this line was being t'other night at a party where a poor little four-year-old, having already the pitiable assurance of a veteran prima donna, was fetched in to give impersonations. She never again could impersonate natural babyhood though, more's the pity! And her pert small brother was encouraged to dominate the talk.

Mark my word for it, that kid is going to come to no good end—not even a well-spanked end, which would help.

**Mr. Pincus' Coup.** IN THESE topsy-turvy times liberal-minded patriots who are striving to steer a middle course between ultraenthusiastic left-wingers and ultraconservative rightists might do well, methinks, to follow the example set by Mr. Pincus.

Mr. Pincus had opened a clothing store. Immediately on one side of him was the clothing store of Mr. Ginsberg and immediately on the other side was the clothing store of Mr. Dreifus; and three clothing stores in a row were too many even for Essex street.

So the adjacent competitors framed a plot to put the newcomer out of business. Next morning their rival, coming down to open up, found over Mr. Dreifus' establishment a flaming legend, to wit:

**BANKRUPT SALE**  
And above Mr. Ginsberg's door was this equally prominent announcement:

**CLOSING OUT SALE**  
Within an hour, smeared across the entire front of Mr. Pincus' store, exactly in between the other two, appeared a huge sign reading as follows:

**MAIN ENTRANCE.**  
**IRVIN S. COBB.**  
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## WHO'S NEWS THIS WEEK... By Lemuel F. Parton

**NEW YORK.**—George Wingfield, who has been rolling "snake eyes" for the last seven or eight years, is now making six or eight straight passes. I don't know whether the news has reached the East, but the word from

**Wingfield Again "in the Money"**

Los Angeles is that he has regained ownership of the Golden and Riverside hotels in Reno and is again looking out from behind a tall stack of blue chips.

The one-time buckaroo and faro dealer who gained a fortune of \$50,000,000 and owned and operated the sovereign state of Nevada for quite a few years, quietly faded out in 1933, told the court he was broke and relinquished the state with a sportsmanlike gesture. He implied that the croupier had stood him on his head. His friend, William H. Crocker, had a mortgage of \$800,000 on his two hotels. He owned mines and ranches all over the state, in the somewhat metaphysical way in which people owned things then, but his equities came to just a couple of white chips to be tossed into the kitty. He did this gracefully and started out to get another stake, Senator Nixon of Nevada told me how he got his start.

"He walked into my office," said the senator, "and tossed something on my desk. It was a diamond ring. I haven't any idea how much it was worth. He said he had located a good-looking outbreak south of Goldfield and wanted me to grubstake him on the ring."

"I'm not running a hock shop," I said. "There's a three-ball joint around the corner."

"He picked up the ring and started out. Before he got to the door, a sudden hunch hit me like a mule kick. I called him back and gave him \$300 on the ring."

Wingfield had already staked his claim, and started a prospect hole.

A little more digging, and there was the Consolidated mine, and riches for both Wingfield and Nixon. Also the start of Goldfield, a ghost town now, half-buried in sand, but a roaring desert metropolis for a few years. Wingfield's winning streak was on in those days and it was only a few months later that he broke the bank at the Tonopah club.

He joined the Montezuma club, got himself some nice store clothes, polished up his grammar and moved into circles of finance where the house percentage is doubtless stiffer than that of faro. But it seems that he is beating even that.

**A FRIEND** of this writer, who lived several years in Japan, suggests that, if, by accident, Foreign Minister Koki Hirota should find himself dressed in spats and pin-stripe trousers, but with an Oriental robe instead of a morning coat, he would find a middle way and solve the dilemma of Japan's half feudal, half modern industrial state.

"He hates his morning coat and striped pants," said my friend.

**Jap Minister Works Best in Native Attire**

In the dress of an occidental diplomat, he works like one, as wily as the best of them, given to strategy and trick reasoning. At home, in a beautifully embroidered Japanese gown, he reads Confucius, as a pupil of the aged scholar, Mitsuru Toyama. I cite this duality of mind and dress merely as symbolic of the internal contending forces of Japan, vestigial feudalism and Twentieth century industrial imperialism. In a very literal sense, this dead center of old and new epochs accounts for much in current Japanese statecraft that is bewildering to the modern mind.

"Hirota is not of the Samurai caste," he said, "but he stems from romantic old Japan and goes only part of the way with the Mitsus and Mitsubishis of the great industrial dynasties who think they can shoot their way through to a vast Asiatic empire. In his youth, he was a zealous leader of the 'Zen' sect, tonsured Buddhists, whose gospel was humility, pacifism and turning the other cheek. Suddenly, he switched to the 'Black Sea' society, a fire-eating outfit of militarists and jingoes."

**"HE WAS** a stone mason's son, apprenticed as a stone cutter, and educated by the Geneyosha, a fervid patriotic society, with 'simplicity' for its motto. In his first effort, he failed to pass his examinations for entrance

**Stone Cutter Now Shapes Jap Policies**

to the Imperial university, but tried again and was successful. He began as a government clerk, was advanced, entered the diet and finally the cabinet. He is an intelligent man, keenly aware of the anomalies and anachronisms of Japan's politics and social structure."

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## Way Back When

By JEANNE

### FAMOUS SONG WRITER WAS NEWSBOY

**PEOPLE** who are able to help others express happiness and those who amuse us always have a chance for success far out of proportion to circumstances of birth or environment. So, rightly, the world sees to it that persons who can drive away care have no financial worries.

Irving Berlin was born in Russia in 1888, the youngest of eight children. His father, a cantor or psalm-singer in the village synagogue, brought the family to New York's East Side tenement district when Irving was four years old. The boy loved to sing, but his first jobs were as a newsboy, and a telegraph delivery boy. His was the depressing life of the slums child, street-fighting, swimming in the dirty East river, dodging traffic in the streets at play. At fourteen, he left home to sing in saloons for pennies the pa-



trons tossed to him. He was in the chorus of a musical show, was a waiter in a Chinese restaurant, and a singing waiter in a couple of night clubs.

Up to this time, the happiness Irving Berlin brought to others was limited to the few people who could see and hear him. His voice was not unusual enough to bring him to the top rank of entertainers. Then, he started writing songs. The first one brought him only 37 cents, the next, \$25; but thereafter he advanced rapidly. He worked often until two or three o'clock in the morning, and by the time he was thirty-six, 300 songs had been published under his name, including such world-known hits as "Down on the Farm," "Everybody's Doin' It," "My Wife Has Gone to the Country," and "Alexander's Rag-time Band."

### PRESIDENT WAS LAUNDRYMAN

**WORK** is a habit, and to those who acquire it it becomes fun, relaxation coming through the kind of work done. In analyzing the lives of successful men and women, we usually find that they got the work habit early in life and never lost it.

Herbert Hoover was a worker. He was born in 1874, in West Branch, Iowa, the son of a blacksmith. His father died when he was six years old, his mother when he was nine; and he went to live with an uncle who operated a Quaker academy in Oregon. Herbert earned his board by doing odd chores, feeding and currying the horses, milking cows, and tending the furnace. All of this was in addition to his regular school work and, as if this were not enough work for a young boy, he studied English literature and history outside of school hours. Later



in Salem, Oregon, Herbert worked as an office boy for his uncle, and went to night school until he had enough credits to enter Leland Stanford university. He worked his way through by acting as clerk for the registrar, and handling and delivering the San Francisco News on the campus. Later he started a laundry agency, calling for the bags of soiled laundry and delivering the bundles himself.

In 1893, Herbert Hoover got a job with the United States Geological society. He had natural ability at engineering. That together with the habit of work, gained rapid progress for him. He became nationally known as a successful engineer and a business man. In 1928 he became President of the United States.

Herbert Hoover was born with no silver spoon. Orphaned early, he had to fight for every bit of knowledge, for every opportunity. But Herbert Hoover was born with the habit of work, and he had the good luck to keep that habit. His reward was success.

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## Scenes and Persons in the Current News



1—Senorita Anita Lizana, temperamental Chilean, becomes second foreigner to win United States women's national tennis championship in Forest Hills (N. Y.) meet. 2—Desperate to save Shanghai, the Chinese Central government hastily ordered military training for women, who are fighting the Japanese shoulder to shoulder with the men; some have already been killed in action. 3—Tiny Nancy Fello, youngest American refugee from the war in the Far East, as she landed in Seattle, safe and sound.

### NOT I, SAYS JOHN



**New York.**—John, youngest child of President and Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, arriving home from Europe, took advantage of the opportunity to deny again that he had squirted champagne in the face of the mayor of Cannes, France, and hit him over the head with a bouquet, during the annual "battle of flowers." "It must have been two other fellows. I've never met the mayor," he reiterated. His engagement was announced to Miss Anne Lindsay Clark, of Boston.

### "Miss America" Shuns Her Crown



**Atlantic City, N. J.**—Blonde, blue-eyed Bette Cooper (above), seventeen, of Hackettstown, N. J., chosen the most beautiful girl in the United States at the annual contest here, walked out on the promoters shortly afterward, forsaking screen tests and other rewards for school and home. Bette is 5 feet 6½ inches tall and weighs 120 pounds.

## Civilization Marches On in Europe



**Berlin.**—With war becoming more and more imminent in Europe, Germany hastens to protect her youth from the most horrible of modern weapons—gas. As pictured here, officials oversee the distribution of gas masks, making sure they fit properly before the youngsters are allowed to take them home at 2½ marks (about \$1) the copy.

### Sudden Stop for Navy Cruiser



**Annapolis, Md.**—Football's in the air again, and watch out, Army mule! There's plenty of dynamite in the 1937 Navy squad, pictured in workout here. Whitehead, speedy back, is shown being stopped in his tracks as he breaks loose with the pigskin from scrimmage.

### SIGNS FOR F. D. R.



**Washington, D. C.**—Jeanne Kavanagh, twenty, pretty, blue-eyed Iowa girl, pictured here, has been appointed by President Roosevelt as secretary, with the power to sign his name to all land grants and patents. She is the youngest person ever to hold this position.