

The Other Day Something Happened. Now I'm Going to Make a Wide Open Confession.

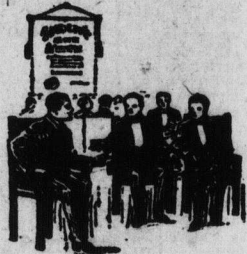


I FEEL that it's an act of common decency, wrung from a busy man, and no matter how busy you may be, I guess you'd better read it.

For years THE LITERARY DIGEST was nothing to me. I had too much reading matter, and too many ways to spend my money.

I thought THE DIGEST was simply one of the multitude of magazines, and the family has half a dozen, or more, lying around the house all the time.

Some fate got after me a month or so ago and began to hand me one knock after another.

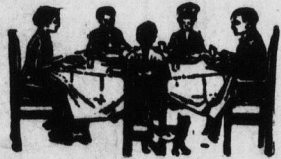


The first one that made a dent, I think, was at the meeting of the lodge. An argument arose over the war situation in Russia. I couldn't hold up my end; the other man knew more than I did, and made the fact plain to several members who were listening. I remarked, not very pleasantly, "You seem to know more than the newspapers." My ill nature brought only a cheerful laugh. "Oh, yes," he said, "THE LITERARY DIGEST explained the whole thing last week." Of course I hadn't seen it.

Coming in on the train a day or two later, my seat companion asked me how I thought France could ever recover from the devastation of her orchards. I said it probably would take five or ten years to grow new ones. Then the fellow opposite spoke up and said, "Oh, no; the French armies are doing miracles over there in restoring to life thousands of fruit trees that were cut down, or circled. The article in last week's LITERARY DIGEST describing it reads like 'The Arabian Nights.'" I hid my discomfiture with a polite, "Is that so?"

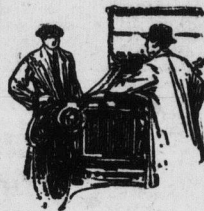


At the dinner table, yesterday, two of the children began discussing the question whether the German U-boat warfare could ever starve the British or French into submission. It seemed strange to hear them quote fact after fact, and opinion of this or that authority which I hadn't read anywhere. I began to be afraid they would ask me some question I couldn't answer. At length I stopped them short by saying, "That will do now; where did you hear all that, anyhow?" And this is what I got in reply, "Why father that is our high school topic from THE LITERARY DIGEST this week." I had forgotten reading in a letter some time ago that THE DIGEST is used as a text in several thousand high schools.



Wife is fond of visiting and has a good many friends among nice people. Lately they have been talking a lot about various plans of food conservation and other new methods of war economy. I heard her telling somebody over the phone the other day about a wonderful substitute for eggs in making cakes. Then I heard a little exclamation of dismay and a few broken sentences of embarrassment before she hung up the receiver. In a minute the trouble was all up to me: "Mrs. Page says I mustn't use that egg powder, because it hasn't any egg in it at all. She says I ought to read the article in my LITERARY DIGEST this week telling all about such things. 'My LITERARY DIGEST! She seemed to take for granted that we have THE DIGEST. I was ashamed to tell her we haven't. Everybody seems to have it except us.' Of course I couldn't admit such a thing. At the same time I couldn't deny having seen THE LITERARY DIGEST in most of the nice homes we had visited.

Saturday afternoon my neighbor called me over to his garage to see his new car. It was a beauty. "I thought you couldn't decide which make to get," I remarked. "How did you settle the matter?" "Why, yes, it did seem like a deadlock between my wife and me, but the advertisement of this car in last week's LITERARY DIGEST was so convincing we agreed, as soon as we read it, that this was our choice. It's getting to be rather a habit with us, you know, to find answers to things in THE DIGEST." The matter-of-course tone in which he spoke, made me wonder what he would say if he knew I didn't read THE LITERARY DIGEST.



Last Sunday morning the dominie mentioned a request made by some church member that the pastor would "not preach about the war." Then he told about the experience of the Church in England and France and the criticisms of its attitude, and what his own position on the subject was. I declare, if he quoted THE LITERARY DIGEST once, he must have quoted it half a dozen times.

Is the answer to everything in THE LITERARY DIGEST?

This was getting on my nerves. The next morning at the office I noticed THE DIGEST on my partner's desk with his personal mail. In the most casual manner I asked him to let me take a look at it. I didn't mean to start anything!

"Do you mean to say you don't read THE LITERARY DIGEST?" he exclaimed.

Why is there anything surprising about that? I don't pretend to read every magazine that's published," I said, rather nettled.

He came back at me strong. "That's just it; you try to read too many magazines, and too many newspapers, no doubt. You might better spend less time with some of them rather than miss reading THE LITERARY DIGEST. You simply can't get on, nor hold your own anywhere without it. I know I couldn't. It's the only magazine in the country that keeps you informed—fully and rightly informed, I mean, free from all editorial bias—on the big, live matters of the war and business, and every other vital topic. Surely! Look it over and see for yourself."



I retired to my own office and sat down, face to face with the magazine that had been challenging me everywhere I went during the past month. An hour was gone before I knew it. I was surprised, startled, thrilled. The world seemed bigger to me, and closer. Things that had puzzled me became clearer. My mind seemed to be opening. I had thought of THE LITERARY DIGEST simply as one of a multitude of magazines which did not concern me. Here it was, now, revealed as THE ONE which I had been really needing all this time. I certainly had been missing a good thing.



Well, I hurriedly sent off my check for the \$3.85 which would bring THE LITERARY DIGEST to my home for a whole year. Thank goodness, that's done! Of course, the joke is on me. It was my own fault. I might have enjoyed THE DIGEST long ago. Now, as an act of neighborliness, I'm making this confession; and I'm telling you, also—you who haven't been reading THE DIGEST—if you now sign and mail an order for it, as I did (when I woke up), you can call it a good day's work.

Harold Bell Wright, the Author, Tells the Reason

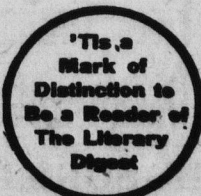
"To attempt to gain anything like a clear view of the world's activities through the fogs of prejudice and the clouds of self-interest that hang always about the local newspaper, is a hopeless task. For one who would look with unobstructed vision upon the moving world forces that make for or against the welfare of human kind, The Literary Digest is a mountain peak in a clear sky.

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