

# CON

by Ambrose Fierce

But phauh! Why waste time with these students and teachers and intermediate types (such as, for example teaching assistants and sessionals, folk whose very psyches are transparent utterly to anyone with a working knowledge of Dr. Spock)? They're boring, dull, tedious. To hell with them forevermore and bad luck to them.

Let us take up a juicier topic: plagiarism.

Plagiarism is a bad, bad thing to do, its inherent evil perhaps serving partly to explain its tremendous popularity. Undergrads steal, grads steal with style, professors, when they steal at all, do so with Jamesian elegance. Except when they get caught. One full professor, who shall here be nameless, and who launched his meteoric career by plundering the dissertation of another with both hands in order to build his own dissertation, had the misfortune (for him) of getting caught. Fully ten years after the original marauding had been done, this worthy person, by this time a department chairman, was confronted with the evidence. Since he was obliged to plead guilty (he could not very well claim that his entire six hundred pages was a typographical error), he did plead guilty. "They" were neither amused nor pleased; they stripped him of his Ph.D., demanded his resignation as chairman, and, with little ceremony, from the department swiftly ejected him.

Thus the sad end of this grave and serious gentleman — although "gravity," as Shaftesbury reminds us, "is the very essence of imposture" — who, having been forced from the sweet grove of academe, was obliged to sustain life by reconditioning used cars and altering their serial numbers.

But of course most detected plagiarists are small-fry. They buy a paper and turn it in as their own. It is a calculated risk — a risk against which I certainly would not raise my voice, even if I thought inveighing against the practice would do any good. (Indeed, one worthy gentleman of my acquaintance laid the foundations for his present considerable fortune as an essays broker, or, if you will, term paper retailer. He is universally respected, and his present vast means have enabled him recently to endow a Chair of Originality at his alma mater.) The risk is this: if caught, the student fails — the paper, probably the course, possibly the university.

*The risk is worth it!* Let me repeat this. This risk is indisputably worth it — not to the student, perhaps who has everything to lose, but to his professor! Think how dismal a professor's life must be, how utterly famished many of these ladies and gentlemen must be for a little diversion! Is it asking too much to catch some hapless student a few times a year,

and have a little fun? I say no. A professor should have some fun too. ("Well, I wonder about your use of the word 'phthisic.'" "Please expand on your quite fascinating insight that we have in this passage 'a true and palpable plenum of rarefied discordia concors the effect of which is, in perhaps all of Western literature, a *frisson* most deliciously unique.'" " . . . vilipending not one Cudworthian anfractuosity" — that is a lovely phrase, please tell me what it means." And so forth.)

All university types have each of them a great fund of plagiarism anecdote. I, for example, am particularly fond of one such story concerning a young lady who stoutly contended her innocence of plagiarism, who snorted with hot scorn at the mere mention of the merest suspicion that her paper might have been plagiarized. "Like hell it was," she blazed, "my very own brother wrote it!"

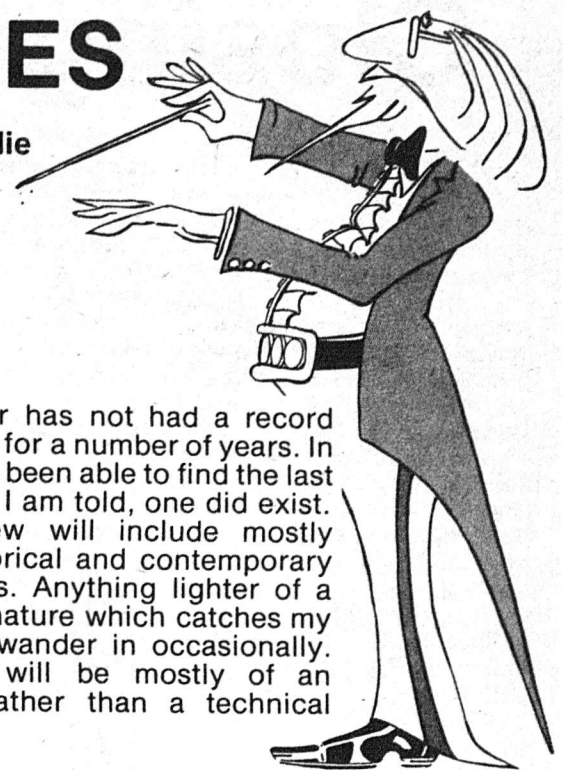
And there was the lad who, accustomed to copying his essays from the *Britannica*, always copied them out verbatim; he never troubled, that is, to leave out all those little parenthetical directives that make the *Britannica* so superlatively readable — directives like "(See map, page 426.)" or "(refer to the following charts.)" and so forth. And of course there were no maps, charts, figures, or graphs, but the young man was predictably enraged and thunderstruck at his eventual detection.

But my favorite plagiarism story of all time, a story true in all its particulars, concerns a good friend of mine in the East who is also a good English teacher, that Noblest and Rarest Work of God — N.A.R.W.O.G. for short. My friend, Dr. Ed Narwog (not his real name), had, at the outset of his career, an experience so fine and pure that even the most jaded of emeriti might well have envied him. This singular experience I will relate in my next column.

Now, however, I must deal briefly with my carping critic in the "Letters" column. "Let a smile be your umbrella" — that is a nice motto, although somewhat inappropriate for a lady aged 104 years, whose own smile must be and I am sure is, a bloodcurdling *momento moron*. Yet I suppose it is as good a motto as any for a crazy old mare Yankee, a sort of pre-Cambrian haploid in quasi-human shape, with about the same excuse for being as the coelacanth. Really, the motto is not a bad one for a spry and moribund person basking and luxuriating, to the intense discomfort of everyone else, in a hideously prolonged senility. "Let a smile be your umbrella." My, my. Really, I am almost beginning to like your motto, Lydia, but here is a better one — mine: *Spread a little hate wherever you go.*

## CLASSIC NOTES

by James Leslie



This paper has not had a record review column for a number of years. In fact, I have not been able to find the last one. However, I am told, one did exist.

This review will include mostly works by historical and contemporary classical artists. Anything lighter of a folk or ballad nature which catches my ear may also wander in occasionally. The remarks will be mostly of an appreciative rather than a technical nature.

Any comments or criticisms would be welcomed. Your suggestions will help make this column into what we both would like to see.

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## Singing those "Five Star" blues

by Milfred Campbell

Music Nostalgia; *Asleep at the Wheel, Comin' right at ya* United Artists LAO38-1973

I heard this record last weekend when I went home to Thorsby. It was after me and the boys went to the Saturday square dance and got in a fight with the Elgrin brothers because Joe Elgrin thought Stubb Stubby had made lewd illusions to Nerba Lott's torn stockings after coming inside the Moose Hall from the bush. Well, Stubb was feeling a little low so we decided to buy us a couple bottles of Five Star and head out to Thad's place. Since there were no girls everybody passed out pretty well after Stubb kicked in the living room wall. Not me though, my head was still spinning from the funny cigareetes I learned to

smoke in university.

That's when I noticed this record on the stereo. Imagine my surprise when I discovered the first song to be *Take me back to Tulsa* an old C & W number by B. Wills (1930) that my daddy used to hum when ma used to pester him. "Take me back to Tulsa/ I'm too young to marry." But then after the first song the lyrics got stranger, and I know it wasn't just

because of the funny cigareetes. The weirdest song was *Drivin' Nails in my Coffin*. "Everytime I drink a bottle of booze / I'm driving nails in my coffin Lordy/ But I'm driving those nails over you." At first I thought these folks had smoked or done somethin' funny, but we all know that only disco bands and Nazereth do that. As I can say is that this is sure different from Wilf Carter.

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