

Writings of the late Warren R. Fisher, Sr.

Thursday, February 19, 1931
This, That and 'O'erher
A page from the diary of a
country editor.

Awake sometimes to a sound that falls like the sweetest music on my long unaccustomed to the roar of rain upon the roof, as sweet a sound, I think, as might greet mortal hearing, after a year of dusty fields, of streams, of a choicely dry, the bed rock of their channels showing like the whited bones of a skeleton, A most unusual year it has been, and to him who arrogates to himself of all animals the boon and curfew of the gift of immortal unimpairment, of his childish impotence in the face of Nature's immutable workings, One has needed all of his faith in the eternal rightness, of the cosmic plan, all of his more or less parroted profession of belief in the everlasting beneficence of an increasing purpose, during this year of strange disturbances.

Like a gray and tortured ghost, third-riden and strangely stripped of the music and beauty which make our meadow vocal with life and joy, our fields and quiet woodlands lovely with a happy summer, we dragged its weary way to a dusty end. And no rain came. Never before has any man now living realized so keenly the pricelessness of the gift, water, the element which man has dragged its weary way to a dusty end. And no rain came. Never, perhaps, has man been shown more clearly his impotence and that the most brilliant fellows in the face of the same natural forces that sent his ancient fathers scurrying into caves or fleeing southward before the coming of the North Wind. Truly, after all, it is the advance of man since he chipped a flint and lurked with the cunning of a dawning thought at some water-hole where a man-o-don came to drink, that has brought us to the boasted science and inventions when the processes of Nature turn away for a season and yet, he has some- what conquered blind, frantic fear with faith and a philosophy of sorts. To it is that we owe, that there comes a feeling of peace long unknown and contentment unshared for a twelve-month in the music of the rain. Soon I look the small streams that meander so bravely through our meadows, and will chuckle to themselves softly as they hurry on their way, the dross of last summer's dusty detritus. Gaunt tortured animals, long third-riden, and weary, they will hurry on their kind of a mind man will come again a content of them that is much reason, acutely conscious when seasons are propitious—in the eternal rightness of the universe. Nature, planned, he feels, with enviable assurance and a naive trust, for his own benefit, although. What piece of work is man!

Sweet the murmur of the rain upon the roof, as sweet a sound which falls upon the early morning ear in our summer seasons, rarely falling to greet the dawn or the coming of a shower, where, I wonder, is that true and gentle brown fellow, Carolina wren, whose ringing song is a veritable message of hope and cheer, though winds and fields blancheted with snow? Did he perchance during those breathless, barren days of a summer when even the cardinal languid in full song? I prefer to think that he has been quick-beating wings which might carry a cinnamon-brown body across the night, and he has sought the rain in more favored fields and will return to us with his red moves in another and another spring. Truly, the long silence of the trees is a most marked that has never ever noted. Only the downy little chickadee and his equally valiant partner, the downy woodpecker, have come to my auct jump this winter. Even the cardinals and those robins that so met me a winter with us seem to have fled before the scorching breath of the Great Drought. What a tragedy if the sweet music of the fields, of tree and bush, and of the new sound now come again! But it will. And spring again, I shall hear the glad sound of the flicker, the whistle of a cardinal, the merry bubbling of a wren, the plaintive cry of a robin, the soft sweet note of a song sparrow and the far-flung carol of a meadow lark—and spring gives away to the fullness of June and the cat bird sings again, the mocker pours out his heart to the beauty of a summer's morning.

It is a relief to grow poetic in this workaday world now and then, though one still a critical grin in the growing, for one becomes matter of fact enough, I find, as the years slip away, and capacious and a critic's crusty and often discovers his cherished philosophy quite futile, his faith a doubtful thing and his fondest illusion a pipe dream. For the state of mind, I think, that a beneficent Nature must have evolved the coffee

bean, in the rich fragrance of which there lurks a potent brew, when properly extracted, which charms away a wretched disposition and sustains a slightly world-weary spirit early 't the morning. Added to which, concomitant of a more equitable frame of mind at the day's beginning I am, I think, most fortunate in the possession of a daughter over whom I am the most foolish, and doubtless the most tiresome doting that ever the world saw. Who takes her porridge upon me—"like a lady"—she informs me, this morning of the coming of the day, and do you love your old daddy?" I ask of this fledgling, who despite her intent to emulate the table manners of a lady, is succeeding in putting a momentum of porridge on each tray check. "You're not old, daddy," replies my infant with that melting sweetness of the sex when they would be particularly lamb-like. And straightaway after: the immemorial manner of males, when flattered by the sex, I am charmed and must admit that not alone has the brew of the coffee bean potency to warm the cockles of the heart, So to breakfast, glazing in the rain, and I have the character of my infant, who recently begins to dramatize the jingles of her Mother Goose Book. Now tilting her mug of milk, with every likelihood of becoming most melodious and dousing herself with the fluid, she says: "Take a cup and drink it up and call it neigheigh-born in." It is pleasant to play the leading role, even in nursery rhyme drama, and the well to play to some, for few of us are cast for leads. And now the last of the porridge being eaten, I repeat at my favorite jingle from the fat store of rhyme that is "Mother Goose." Being well fed, my infant is breeches to wear.

So he bought him a sheepskin to make him a pair; With the skinny side out and the woolly side in— And he had warm and how pleasant said Brian O'Linn.

There who have the adaptability and the merry good humor of the Irish, I think, what more pleasant than the soft woolly warmth of sheepskin and though insanitary, as modern customs advise, a compensating loss, better than no breeches at all, which was the O'Linn's sad state, before he laid down. Dear old Mother Goose, in her sense of rhyme there is much reason, even of harmless idiosyncrasy, the loan of a brain which played with ideas and a body that went happily down. And sitting late, alone by the fire, I ponder many things that I wonder remembering the long torture of the absence of rain and its coming again, those who, with questioning of their faith, left no qualms of recent month, holding steadfast to their trust in the eternal rightness of a purpose, infatigable and incomprehensible.

And I wonder if it is through being impressed by beauty of line, or if I give sincere mental assent—in which common cordial faith one is indeed to find—into the thought of Browning's lines, which somehow intrigue me: I trust in Nature for the stable laws Of beauty and utility. Spring shall plant And Autumn garner to the end of time. I trust in God,—the right shall right And other than the wrong, while he endures.

I trust in my own soul, and can perceive. The outward and the inward, — Nature's good And God's. So, to sit by the hearth, in pleasant, though puzzled reverie, and at length with a joying still in the coming of the rain, to sleep.

An Editor's Random Thoughts
What weather! Spring has plucked warily into the lap of winter during the last week—and we may be wading through the snow in some places by March. The ubiquitous English sparrow is nesting already, I watched one inspect and accept the deserted apartment of a flicker in one of my maples this morning—and the tight-wrapped catkins of the pussy-willow begin to show a tiny speck of saucer at their points. Indeed, in a way, the switches quickly unfurl their catkins into furry kittens. An endless variety is certainly the spice of our climate and an endless series of surprises is the result. A line of verse Richard the Third has been romping through my head for days. It is the sort of line—and Will of Avon wrote many of them—that rolls trippingly from the tongue. It is: "To the lascivious pleasing of a lute." It's the ell sounds, I take it, that impart the honey-flavored rattle of the line for me. No one takes the trouble to write poetry, prose or poetic poetry for that matter, any more. Who of our moderns has written a couplet like: And on a sudden, in the little lake And the long & loiter in of the winter moon!

ago. Perhaps I grow old, in very truth, and my daughter's sweet compliments at breakfast time was but the veriest flattery. And I read and re-read these lines from Jurgen, granted his year of youth, and back now in his proper body of pawn broker in the middle forties.

For who are tax-payers as well as immortal souls must live by polite evasions and formulae and catchwords that fret away our lives as moths waste a garment; we fall inevitably to common-sense as to a drug; and it dulls and kills whatever in us is rebellious and fine and unreasonable; and so you will find no man of my years with whom living is a wonder and mechanism which gnaws away time unprompted.

And so farewell to you, Queen Helen! Hereafter I rove no more a-questioning anything; instead, I pester after hearthside comforts, and play the physician with myself, and strive painstakingly to make old bones comfortable. And no man's notion any other seems worth a cup of mulled wine; and for the sake of no notion would I endanger the routine which goes hideously before me. For I am transmuted by time's handling; have become the lackey of prudice and half-measures; and I do not seem fair, but there is no help for it.

Which saddens me, and does not seem fair, but afterwards, having dined excellently, I wonder if there is not a compensation of sorts for those who bid farewell to youth's illusions, as I do. I think, a compensation of sorts in all things. And again, Jurgen: "Why, man's folly is indeed very good, Missire Jurgen, and the doling of this world into life is not insignificant; and so does it come about that man can be saved by faith alone."

And Jurgen answered, "Ah, but this boy lost his brother's cordial comfort this in the importance of what use they made of half hours and months and years he seldom got it. The usual reply was 'I have nothing to do but there are organizations to care for cases like yours.'" Finally he reached Baltimore and rang the door bell at the house that reminded him of "white folks" houses down South. "What the hell you mean by ringing my front door bell, you 'black rascal'!" he shouted. "Thank God!" he exclaimed the old darkey; "I'm 'mong my own people at last!" And he was, for five minutes later he was spinning back his ears" in the kitchen—

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Tennyson was a master at this sort of thing. One may almost hear Sir Bevis stride over the frost hills. And all to left and right the hare, black cliff clanged round him, As he bowed his feet on jure of slippery crag, That rang sharp smitten to the dint of armed heels.

It seems to me they brought us to appreciate the beauty of smooth flowing line in the days of Hart's Rhetoric and that words are but utilitarian means of expression to most modern pedagogues. Which observation may be but the wistful plaint of one who begins to look backward upon more years than he may reasonably hope lie ahead—And who more careless in the use of words, forthwith, than some of us who were youngsters in the days of the puff sleeves and the linen dusters? We who thrill to tilting measures and sounding prose, yet drop into a vernacular as shabby and careless as an old shoe in our everyday conversation. I, for one, plead guilty to easy "fallin'" and careless tongue unless it when conversing with strangers, or if my company comes, I deplore my carelessness, but I must agree with Joe Jordan, sprightly delineator of the King's Leader, that I rather like it. And Joe again, I have the writings of one who knew his parts of speech, and who I see out in our liking. For I seem to remember that Henry Waterson defended the careless speech and colloquialisms of Kentuckians, pointing to the sturdy English-Americans of their origin. And when I have been long away from home and have heard once more the easy, careless, and plain, it has come with him to a question of beg or hungry and beg he did. He would ring a door bell and with his best manners, but in haste, would ask for a lute to eat. He seldom got it. The usual reply was 'I have nothing to do but there are organizations to care for cases like yours.'" Finally he reached Baltimore and rang the door bell at the house that reminded him of "white folks" houses down South. "What the hell you mean by ringing my front door bell, you 'black rascal'!" he shouted. "Thank God!" he exclaimed the old darkey; "I'm 'mong my own people at last!" And he was, for five minutes later he was spinning back his ears" in the kitchen—

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Polio Immunization June 28-July 1

A Polio immunization clinic started Monday, June 28 and will last through today, Tuesday, July 1 at the Nicholas County Health Center. Hours for the clinic are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Each child entering first grade and each 12-year-old student will be required to present his immunization certificate when he enrolls in school this fall. There will be no charge to Nicholas county residents for the immunization.

Rev. Donald Tipton leads Methodist Revival

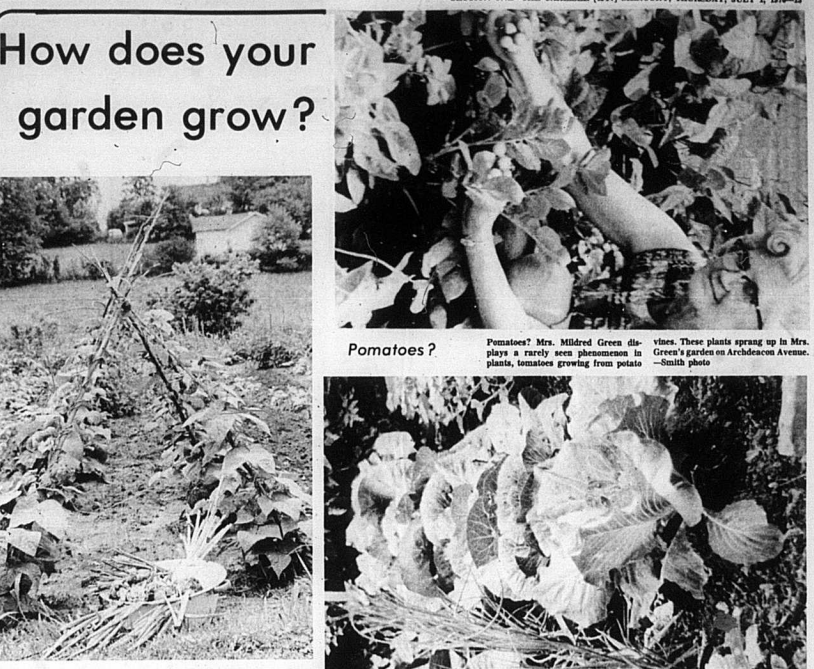
Rev. Donald Tipton of Wilmore, formerly of Nicholas county, is evangelist this week at a revival being held at the Millersburg United Methodist Church. The revival started Monday, June 28 and will last through Sunday, July 4. Prayer time will be each evening at 7 p.m. with services at 7:30 p.m.

Rev. Charles Tanner, minister of the Headquarters and Rose Hill United Methodist Churches, will be song leader. Special music will be presented by Rev. Steve Egehardt of Wilmore. Rev. Willie Lester is minister at the church.

'1776' to be staged in Maysville July 2

The award-winning Broadway musical "1776" will be staged this July in the Old Church Museum in Washington, Ky. "1776" is an exciting re-creation of those lively and historic Congressional debates which gave birth to our new nation. This biennial production gives us a chance to learn of the important actions that shaped our government and American policies. It also offers a view of our history that is sadly missing in our history books. Washington is located four miles from Maysville. "1776" will be produced July 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, and 18 in Washington's Old Church Museum. Evening performances begin at 8:15 p.m. and the Sunday performances are at 2:15 p.m.

For reservations, contact the Mason County Museum, 564-560 between 104 Tuesday through Saturday. Tickets may also be obtained on the dates of the show at the Old Church Museum.



A collection
A collection of vegetables is shown here in front of a row of pole beans in the garden of Ben Pumpnery on East Main.—Smith photo

Potatoes? Cabbage?

Potatoes? Mrs. Mildred Green displays a rarely seen phenomenon in plants, tomatoes growing from potato vines. These plants sprang up in Mrs. Green's garden on Archdeacon Avenue.—Smith photo

Cabbage? This cabbage with unusually large leaves is found in the garden of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Florn on Broadway.—Smith photo

Senator Huddleston: Attacks on tobacco to continue

Attacks on tobacco, both within Congress and within the federal bureaucracy, are continuing—and in some cases they are taking a new approach. Just within the last week there have been three such attacks. Perhaps the most ominous development has been the introduction of an amendment to the tax bill to impose a graduated tax on cigarettes, based on their tar and nicotine content. This tax would replace the current eight-cent per-pack federal tax. This amendment, which may have already been voted on by the Senate floor, is sponsored by Senators Hart, Kennedy and Moss. It is a variation of an earlier bill to impose a graduated tax on cigarettes, designed to discourage smoking. Earlier in the Senate Moss made his annual attack on cigarettes during consideration of the agricultural appropriations bill. Each year he tries to kill all funds for the tobacco price support program. However, we were successful in beating back that attack. As I pointed out in the Senate floor, elimination of the tobacco price support program certainly would eliminate smoking; indeed, the price support program is a control program. If eliminated, there would probably be more tobacco grown. The General Accounting Office has

recommended that tobacco and tobacco products be regulated by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare or some other federal agency. An attempt was made in 1972 to have the Federal Trade Commission regulate tobacco, but that was turned down—in large part through the efforts of my colleague, Senator Wendell Ford, who serves on the Commerce Committee where the legislation was debated.

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This, That, and 'O'erher
Continued from page 12
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