

The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University

Ohio State Engineer

- Title:** The Engineer's Bookshelf
- Creators:** Dumble, Wilson R.
- Issue Date:** Nov-1934
- Publisher:** Ohio State University, College of Engineering
- Citation:** Ohio State Engineer, vol. 18, no. 2 (November, 1934), 9-10.
- URI:** <http://hdl.handle.net/1811/35166>
- Appears in Collections:** [Ohio State Engineer: Volume 18, no. 2 \(November, 1934\)](#)

The Engineer's Bookshelf

By Wilson R. Dumble

PATTERNS OF WOLFPEN—by Harlan Hatcher—
Bobbs-Merrill (\$2.50)

THE FOLKS—by Ruth Suckow—Farrar and
Rinehart (\$3.00)

**THE DARING YOUNG MAN ON THE FLYING
TRAPEZE**—by William Saroyan—Random
House (\$2.50)

Patterns

PROFESSOR HARLAN HATCHER of the Department of English has published another novel which promises to be one of the best sellers of the Winter season. The story concerns the members of the Pattern family and the title of the novel is *Patterns of Wolfpen*. Several years ago Professor Hatcher published his first novel, *Tunnel Hill*, and at the time his friends remarked that better and greater things were to be expected from his pen. That prophecy certainly has been fulfilled in *Patterns*, for one will have to look far and wide to find a more interesting and a more beautifully written book than this second publication.

Members of the Pattern family had settled in the peaceful confines of Wolfpen Valley in 1785. They had crossed the mountains from Virginia, and beholding the calm valley stretching out before them decided that was the place to live. By the time the story opens in 1885, the six thousand acres had passed on to the fourth and fifth generations of Patterns who were about to feel the sting of the advent of commerce and trade.

The story is really told through the eyes of the daughter, Cynthia Pattern, who sees her father dispose of part of his land to a shrewd Pittsburgh lumber dealer, who sits at the death bed of her mother and who experiences her father's dead body carried into the house after a brutal attack late one night on a lonely road. Cynthia herself wants to go to Pikeville to study at the Institute, but before her plans are consummated she falls in love with Reuben Warren, a young surveyor from Cattlettsburg.

The novel deserves the highest praise, not because Professor Hatcher is the author but because it is a work of the highest order.

The Folks

Another splendid novel, the first really good one of the season, is *The Folks* by Miss Ruth Suckow. *The Folks* deals with small town life in Iowa in general, and with the doings of the Ferguson family in particular. Miss Suckow does not see her small town characters as does Mr. Sinclair Lewis in *Main Street*. Quite to the contrary,

in fact, she sympathizes with their petty troubles, and coddles them with a motherly kindness.

Some of her chapters are beautiful pieces of writing, while others are as dull and monotonous as the lives that her characters live. Yet the warmth that spreads over the story as it unfolds is gradually absorbed by the reader, and a satisfying novel is the result.

The Folks is a long novel, containing almost as many pages as does *Anthony Adverse*. It is not the kind of a book that can be read in an evening; rather, indeed, one should take weeks to go through it.

The Merry Widow

Last summer I read in one of the New York newspapers a list of the ten favorite plays of Charles MacArthur, to you, Helen Hayes' husband. In that list Mr. MacArthur, if I remember correctly, included among other plays *The Merry Widow*. I could not help but remember that bit of information when, a week ago I saw the cinema version of that lovely musical comedy on one of the local screens. Then, I wondered just what Mr. MacArthur would have to say concerning the way Hollywood had butchered his favorite.

For the Hollywood version was so unlike the original play that even the old timers failed to recognize it. Some, in fact, most of the delightful music was cut out; and the settings which were supposed to be Paris in 1885 were partly that as well as 1934. The screen Danilo was so awkward in his dance steps that the famous waltz became an ignoble farce.

The Barretts

But, cinema addicts have a lot for which to be thankful. For instance there is *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, to which I hope the critics give the award for the best performance of the year. The talkie of *The Barretts* was almost as good as the stage production, which surely is an admission on my part. Only once before have I seen it equaled and that was in *Dinner at Eight*. That production on the screen still stands out in my mind as the only performance that excelled the stage show.

The Gay Divorcee

Then too, there was *The Gay Divorcee* with high honors justly divided between Alice Brady, Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. Who can resist, I ask, the superb performance turned in by Miss Brady, or the attractiveness of Miss Rogers, or even the splendid dancing of Mr. Astaire? Miss Brady, it seems, is taking precedence over Miss Mary Boland in the comedies of manners. In humor her scene

with the custom inspectors approached perfection; her delightful way in trilling off a joke certainly is not done by any other character woman in the cinema. Nobody I have ever seen on the stage could do it, save, perhaps, the late Minnie Maddern Fiske.

A Survey

And speaking of the talkies here is an interesting bit. Long before the Legion of Decency and its off-shoots had been formed, or even considered, five young public school teachers in Western New York state undertook a survey of children's film preferences. They used the time-honored instrument of such surveys, the questionnaire. The last week of July they completed their findings, based on the answers of 750 boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 15.

Quoting from the New York Times of August 5, here is the summary of the findings:

"Little Women" and "Alice in Wonderland" were not entirely popular. Some of the sophisticates in their early 'teens said "Little Women" was too old-fashioned, or too slow, or just plain uninteresting. One 10-year-old girl liked it "because it seemed so real to me, it was sad like our real life." "Alice in Wonderland" was meaningless to many of the children and dull to others.

In general, the younger children like the Westerns and action pictures, comedies and animal films like "Rex, King of the Wild Horses." The upper grades evinced a dislike for historical and romantic films, unless the latter are light

and well seasoned with comedy.

"Summed up briefly," Harvey D. Butler and Herbert J. Herskowitz, the chief surveyors, concluded, "it appears that children are affected by sex appeal in actresses. Caring for a player does not stop them from disliking a picture he or she appears in. They do not commit themselves to gangster pictures or animated cartoons. Children do have differences of opinion. Taking one to a picture does not guarantee him, or her, a good time. It might even, if force is applied to make him attend, widen the breach between parent and child."

Daring Young Man

A new short story writer has appeared on the American scene of letters during the last two weeks. New York publishers, it is said, clamored for the printing right to *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze* by William Saroyan. Mr. Saroyan is a young Californian of Armenian extraction. His father had been a school teacher in his native Armenia, but had come to this country some twenty-five years ago. The son was born in New York City, and now has just published his first book.

The title story is only one of many in the book that are splendid and entertaining reading. A couple of them had been published in the monthly magazine *Story* where they created nothing less than a sensation last March and April.

For the lover of the short story *The Daring Young Man* makes fine reading. Yet, I must admit, one must be exceedingly modern to read these stories.

Harnessing the Sun's Rays

Near Lashkent, capital of the Uzbek Soviet Republic of Central Asia, U. S. S. R., efforts are being made to utilize the energy of the sun's rays. According to Science Service, Soviet scientists are operating a kitchen, bath, and water-tower by power derived directly from the sun. They are looking toward the construction of a solar-power plant of 30,000 kilowatts capacity. This power is to be used to pump water at an expected rate of more than a million gallons in ten hours.

In this country, Dr. C. G. Abbott, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institute at Washington, has fitted up a solar-cooker near Mt. Wilson Observatory in California. By storing the sun's heat in an insulated tank of oil, this cooker operates day and night and is not materially affected by cloudy weather.

A paraboloidally curved mirror of aluminum strips focuses the rays on a pipe which carries cool oil from the reservoir. The circulation is naturally controlled by convection currents. Dr. Abbott has attached a mechanism which causes the trough-shaped mirror to turn so as to face the sun at all times.

Since it would cost nearly a thousand dollars to duplicate the apparatus, Dr. Clayton does not consider it commercially practicable. From the standpoint of scientific research it provides food for thought. The sun's rays,

properly utilized, would yield power 1,000 times as great as that derived from all the coal, oil, and water-power used annually in the United States.

Super Heat Developed

A new kind of electrical furnace has been developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It is a tiny glass vacuum tube in which hot spots of hundreds of thousands of degrees are developed. To Dr. Edward S. Lamar and Dr. Overton Luhr goes the credit for discovering the method for evolving this intense heat which tremendously exceeds anything known on even the face of the sun.

The new furnace was not developed for heating purposes, however, but to provide a new source of protons for bombarding the nuclei of atoms. It does yield nine-fold more protons than any method previously devised.

The heating element of the tube consists of three electrodes. Its fuel for the isolating of the protons is hydrogen gas. Between two of the electrodes a flaming arc is formed; but it is the boosting action of the third electrode that produces the hot points in the gas. The extremely high temperatures are confined to the hot points; the gas around them remaining comparatively cool.

The points of heat are too small to be detected with ordinary instruments, but their existence and temperatures are revealed by the streams of protons which shoot out from them.—*Ohio State Journal*.