

**Comment--and
Discomment**

We have just been looking over a sample copy of The Home Sector, a weekly magazine published by the same bunch that made The Stars and Stripes the joy of the A. E. F. We'll have to confess that we find it readable enough—clever in spots—but the magazine graveyard has been crowded for years, and among the departed are a number that have The Home Sector backed off the map.

In those stirring days when the boys wore tin hats and engaged in scotch hunts, The Stars and Stripes served to take their mind off their troubles for an hour or so. When the Y. M. C. A. was in dutch for fair, and getting in deeper every hour, the jokes and cartoons served as an antidote against higher prices for cigarettes—for an hour or so. But the war, so we have been reliably informed, is over now.

The Home Sector does not seem to fully realize this important point. Its editors fail to discern that what might interest the cottie-chasing soldier will not hold any particular appeal for the man who is out of the service and fighting other battles. The all important point that civil life changes the tastes of the military man hasn't penetrated. You can realize how it is: John Jones sober won't laugh at the jokes that amuse John Jones when he is slightly intoxicated; Mary Anne in love isn't interested in the things that once claimed her entire attention.

And, failing to realize that the A. E. F. men are now busy with something else, and that only once in a while—say, when beans are served for breakfast—does their mind turn to army experiences, The Home Sector continues to dish up for them regulation army literary grub. The Home Sector is The Stars and Stripes, and not so good as it was, for the editors are actuated now by the desire to make money out of it, whereas they once were actuated by a far nobler aim.

Why is it that a mere taste of the newspaper game is so poisonous? Hundreds of good, steady men, who

might, with proper training, have developed into pugilists or hostlers—and a number of estimable young ladies, who might, if left alone, evolve into cheerful housewives if not stirred by ambition—have been ruined for life because some editor, hard-up for "something to fill" has printed their "stuff." Once let a man or woman behold in print something they have written, and the damage is done. If you don't believe this, read the "Public Forum" columns of your daily newspaper. You'll find that the same people do nine-tenths of the contributing.

The lure of the movies isn't in it with the lure of the printed page. You notice it particularly in university towns. There never was a newspaper in a school town that paid big salaries to its reporters. There are too many brilliant geniuses who'll do the work for the experience and pay their own expenses. A reporter has to be mighty good before he gets money enough to both eat and pay his laundry bills. If he goes to the movie—unless he has a pass, which seldom happens—he goes without pie for dinner for four days to make up for it.

Why do so many of them stay with it? Well, there's a certain fascination to it—just as there is in any kind of work in which you may be really interested. And the dear public looks on a reporter as an important personage, no matter whether he's ever had an assignment that amounted to anything. The public—especially in the cities—isn't to blame. They see a fire, and a reporter calmly shows his badge and pushes his way through the line where they cannot pass. A murder, a suicide, an accident of any kind, and the reporter goes right in. There are privileges a reporter enjoys—lots of them—and this makes up for the smallness of his salary.

The really brilliant reporter don't make any "grandstand" plays. You never see them displaying their badge ostentatiously—they don't have to. And the staff of the daily newspaper contains usually about two good men, and a half dozen or more amateurs—of various degrees of efficiency. Usually the "stars" are men who have been with the paper a number of years, men who know everyone in the city. They draw big wages. But the average reporter doesn't draw as much money by several perfectly good dol-

lars as the man who operates the typesetting machine. Now and then you hear of a genius who forges ahead by sheer force of ability, but there aren't nearly so many as the movies may cause you to think.

The movies, every now and then,

will show stirring scenes of the way cub reporters, after the "star" has failed, go out and bring home the bacon. The final closeup shows the managing editor weeping on the cub's neck, and the proprietor's daughter waiting just outside the railing. Actually, the average amateur reporter

shudders every time he enters the editorial room, hoping that he won't be bawled out too hard, and fearing that he will be decorated with the Royal Order of the Tin Can or made a Recipient of the Blue Envelope. And whenever he sees the managing editor, he doesn't slap him on the

back—no, indeed—he is more apt to bat his forehead on the floor in a wide salaam. The M. E. is some person—more powerful than a navy skipper and more awe-inspiring than an army colonel.

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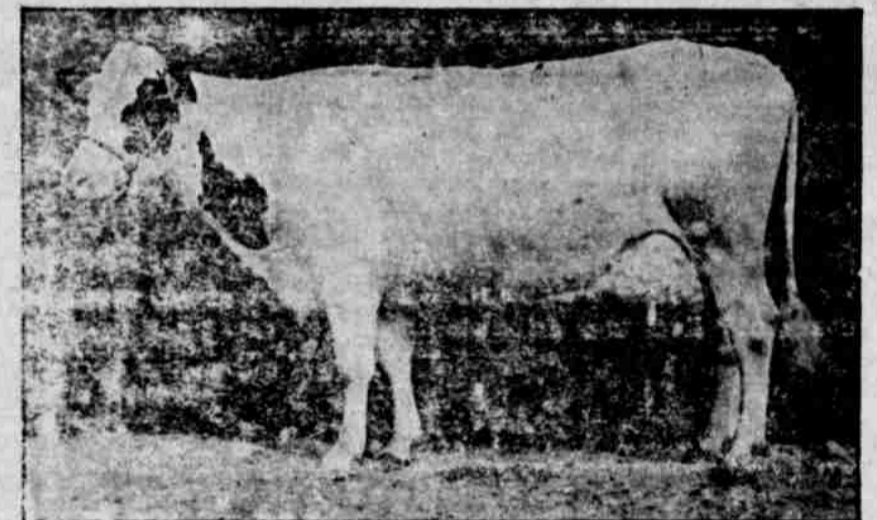
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