

III

SECOND GO-ROUND IN MACON

In late 1924, ~~Mr.~~ W.T. Anderson, ^{the publisher and owner of} asked Mark to ^{the Macon} return to the Telegraph as managing and associate editor. Though ~~Mr.~~ W.T. kept the title of editor for himself, Mark was to write practically all the editorials as well as edit the whole editorial page. The editorial page was ~~and remained~~ ^{is his} ~~and still is~~ Mark's first love.

In those early years of ^{Mark's} newspapering career, the vast majority of newspapers were family-owned and the owners were both the publishers and editors, ~~an exception to the~~ ^{Mark recalls one day} When Mark referred to them, which he often did when talking about "They were great people and they spoke out boldly." ^{to young reporters, he said,}

This sounds faked, more like a speech.

~~Back then~~ Charles Landon Knight, the publisher-editor of the Akron (Ohio) Beacon Journal, ~~was known all over the United States for speaking out for what he believed.~~ So were William Allen White of the Emporia (Kansas) Gazette, Clark Howell of the Atlanta Constitution, Adolph Ochs of the New York Times, Joseph Pulitzer of the St. Louis Post Dispatch, Victor Hanson of the Birmingham News and a few others. ~~Mark has said.~~

Agree and disagree with them philosophically, he greatly admired

Mark ~~xxx~~ believed ^{all his life} that ~~xxx~~ newspapers should be family owned, in spite of a strong and alarming tide toward monopolies and chains ~~for the past thirty-five years or more.~~ He felt ^{didn't} the editorials of chain newspapers ~~xxx~~ mean nearly so much as they did when they spoke with a single voice. Their voices, ^{he was once said, "have been} ~~xxx~~ neutralized and they no longer blast like a trumpet. ✓

Revert to 1st person, but cite occasion,

~~He considered that~~
 Another tragic result of chain ownership of papers ~~was is~~
~~is~~ to deprive the community in which such a paper ~~is~~ was
 published of the vital and primary interest of the
 publisher, ~~to which every community is entitled.~~ ^{He thought of} ~~It is~~
 equivalent in agriculture to the absentee landlord system,
 which has given rise to share-cropping and tenancy.

However, the most tragic aspect of the development
 of these great monopolies and ever-spreading chains ~~is~~ ~~in Mark's opinion~~
 /what they have done to the publishers themselves.

Newspapers have become huge ^{big} business enterprises to
 make money for their stockholders instead of purveyors
 of unbiased, uncolored news and editorial guides with
 policies based on a conception of public service.

~~Then he usually adds,~~
 "Now, I hold no grudge against the business side
 of publishing." ~~Mark was very~~ ~~careful~~
~~to~~ ~~explain.~~ I realize a newspaper is a dual entity, under
 the necessity, upon one hand, of operating its business
 soundly and making a profit, and, upon the other, per-
 forming the functions of an institution dedicated to
 public good and public service and to the preservation
 of real democracy in this country. Obviously, it can
 perform neither function well unless it performs both
 well, but there must be the consciousness that even as
 a business, a newspaper is not sound unless it regards
 its editorial function as paramount.

I object to these great monopolies and chains that



have changed publishers from editors to business executives. The buying and selling and merging of newspapers have had the stultifying effect of throwing publishers into association with other men whose primary interests are financial, rather than intellectual and social. They have lost contact with a newspaper's greatest strength - ^mthe people themselves, the mass of everyday people."

^{He} But that was years later. ^{He} didn't foresee any of these dire developments when ~~he~~ ^{him} W.T. gave ~~me~~ the chance to be the actual editor of the Telegraph. ^{He} saw only the challenging opportunity ahead."

Early in 1925, Mark, the two children, ^{and I} ~~headed~~ ^{and I} went back to Georgia. For the next eight years Mark worked an average of ninety-six hours a week. Every morning, except Sunday, he left home around ¹¹ ten o'clock and returned between ² two and ³ three the next morning. ^{Usually} he brought a quart of ice cream for us to share ^{and} he told me ^{at} the news even on Sunday he frequently went to the office for a few hours.

every day
write to
members

At the ~~very~~ beginning he plunged into the twin tasks of building a news staff and improving the content of the editorial page. He was convinced that ^{producing} ~~to get out~~ a good newspaper you ^{required} ~~must~~ have good reporters. ~~As far~~ ~~back as the early twenties~~ the days of the brilliant drunks in newspapers were past. Reporters had to be professional journalists: sober, reliable, enthusiastic

about ^{their} ~~the~~ work, intelligent and curious. They needed to understand what was happening in the world and be able to judge the significance of ^{the} ~~an~~ event they were called upon to cover. Mark felt university graduates were preferable, but if a young man--or woman--had the proper attitude toward the job and an open and probing mind, he could be trained.

In a ~~very~~ short while he had five exceptionally bright reporters as the nucleus of his staff--Leon Dure, who later became executive editor of the Winston-Salem (N.C.) papers ^{before retiring at 40 to the life of a Virginia gentleman farmer;} Edwin Tribble, who became Sunday editor of the Washington Star; George Burt, who ^{became} ~~ended~~ ~~was~~ editor of the Louisville (Ky.) Times; Mike Johnson, who became a star reporter for the New York Sun and won a Pulitzer ^{Prize} award (his son, Haynes Johnson, ~~who is~~ ^{now} ~~on~~ ^{of} the Washington Post, also won a Pulitzer) ^{award}, ~~the only father-son team ever to do so~~); and Jimmy Jones^s, a remarkable sports editor. Mark bragged he had enough talent ^{on the staff} for several papers.

For the next eight years the Telegraph crusaded on many social, economic and educational fronts but it focused most intently on the Ku Klux Klan; the living conditions of the mill workers, especially those in the Bibb mills, ^{at that time} ~~at that time~~ the third largest in the United States; and the ^(Georgia Georgia) ~~the~~ University system.

When we returned to Georgia he found the Klan had become much more active ^{it was} than when we left, and along with it ^{a neo-Fascist} ~~an~~ organization called the Silver Shirts ~~and~~

For the next eight years the Telegraph crusaded on many social, economic and educational fronts, but its major efforts were aimed in three directions: at the higher education system of the state of Georgia; at the Ku Klux Klan, reaching in the twenties what was probably the apex of its power; and, undoubtedly of greatest concern to the paper's readers, the living conditions of mill workers, especially those ~~in~~ in Macon's ^{Bibb} ~~Bill~~ mills, then the third largest in the United States.

One of Mark's first editorials on returning to the paper, in fact, was , father of future Senator Richard Russell, of protesting the appointment of Judge Wikey Russell as chancellor of the University of Georgia. To Mark, the appointment epitomized the weakness of the university system, a system dominated by Georgia political ~~xx~~ sachems, not by educators.

"Judge Russell," he wrote, "is a politician, not an educator."

A few days later he advocated the reorganization of the university system. Instead of the university and the other state-supported schools being under separate boards of trustees, each fighting before the legislature ~~w~~ for what it needed and wanted, he argued, they should all be under ~~x~~ one head - the chancellor ~~f~~ of the university.

The editorial created such a favorable impression that Mark was asked to write the education plank for the platform to be presented to the next Georgia Democratic Convention. ~~The convention expressed its interest in~~ It passed the convention intact but was sorely weakened in the legislature, where special interests whittled away at it.

Though controversial, the debate over the university structure was rational and ~~x~~ civilized. Not so the confrontations over the Ku Klux Klan.

When we returned to Georgia, Mark found the Klan had become far more active than it had been just a few years earlier, and it had been joined

~~was~~ still another very much like the Klan, organized by John Roach Straton, a famous New York Baptist minister and a graduate of Mercer University. All of them ^{They} ~~Both considered Negroes, Jews and Catholics alien, inferior and~~ ^{subversive,} ~~franked against Negroes, Jews, and Catholics.~~ ^{The} ~~The~~ Telegraph fought them hard. All ^{The} those bright young reporters helped expose their diabolical schemes through the news columns, and Mr. W.T. and Mark hit them as forcefully as they knew how in the editorial columns. The fight went on for more than two years.

The ~~situation~~ ^{confrontation} /often/ was so tense and the letters to the paper so threatening, Mr. W.T. had ~~to~~ ^{ied} carry a sawed-off shotgun wherever he went, ~~and~~ ^{trained} Mark took a German shepherd, ~~a vicious animal,~~ to the office with him every night after supper.

The Klan finally fell when the sheriff found the local leader, a married man, in the woods with a woman, ~~and~~ not his wife. The sheriff arrested him and booked him on moral ^s charges, ~~which seemed,~~ ^{this scene} as far as the paper could detect, to end the Klan's activities in Middle Georgia.

Second to the ~~Ku Klux Klan~~ in the list of abominations ~~was~~ ^{were} the low wages ^{scale} paid by the cotton mills and the feudal system ^s the mills enforced, ^{Under} this system ~~they operated the living quarters of their~~ workers in what were called "cotton mill villages," ^{and} They graduated young people from their own schools ~~when~~ ^{at} they were fifteen, enabling them to go to work in the mills, ^{and} they ran their own commissaries where the

Made even harsher when the crash of 1929 came and ^{by} the ^{was} Great Depression followed. YES

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workers bought their groceries ~~and other necessities~~ with script.

Their wages amounted to 2.50 a week.

any
W.D.?

W.T.?

and no kin of

Mr. W.D. Anderson, the president of ~~the~~ Bibb mills, ~~who made his~~
~~home and headquarters in Macon,~~ took the Telegraph's arrows of criticism
~~for some little time;~~ ^{as long as he could,} ^{in the spring of 1932,} then he struck back. ^{Choosing} ~~the~~ Rotary club, the
largest and most prestigious ~~in~~ businessmen's organization in town for
his audience, with Mr. W.T., ~~no kin of W.D. is,~~ ~~sitting~~ at the Speaker's
Table and Mark, an invited guest, only a few tables away, he ~~angrily~~
spoke his piece: ~~Here is a small part of it.~~

"The average newspaper editor, whose knowledge and experience
in banking is chiefly derived from depositing his weekly pay check
and trying to have it stretched over the checks he draws to cover the
outstanding bills, seems to be able to settle the abstruse ^{economy} ^{casualty} ~~cuewncy~~
and money question with one editorial; all tariff matters, which few
understand after a lifetime study, with another; and finds no difficulty
in offering the formula for straightening out all questions pertaining to
our international relations as he pounds away on his typewriter in a
finish race with the copy boy and the deadline.

"The ~~grave~~ ^{grave} problems of unemployment and industrial relations
~~are~~ are settled daily by men whose widest experience in dealing with
labor ~~is~~ ^{is} in their daily contacts with the office boy or with the
janitor in an effort to get him to do a better job in cleaning the
office spittoon, or in attempting to settle with the wash ~~woman~~ lady
over the loss of a sock from the weekly laundry basket.

"Unfortunately too many of us who are busy with our own
immediate tasks have an idea that these chaps know it all, and we

are impressed with the words and phrases they pick from here and yonder and string together in a connected article which we accept as the gospel. "

Mark ^{answered} ~~spoke back~~ the next day. ~~and how? Asxm Robert Brown~~
~~xxx~~ Under the heading, "Returning the Compliment," ^{his reply} ~~he wrote his answer~~
~~that~~ spread over almost three of the six columns of the editorial page.
~~Asxm Editor and Published on June 11, 1932, carried a great many~~
~~many of its most sizzling lines. As Robert (Bob) Brown, publisher of~~
~~Editor and Publisher wrote me when he sent me a fresh, xeroxed copy of~~
~~of the piece, "Mark always was a firebrand."~~

Mark began by saying: "It ought to be made clear that Mr. Anderson's contempt for newspaper editors is ~~not~~ without exception. He has often referred in kindly fashion to David Clark, editor of the Southern Textile Bulletin, and the late Richard Edmonds, ^{late} editor of the Manufacturer's Record, whose editorials expounded his own ideas on economics and the tariff and the relation between capital and labor. The fact that they were editors did not militate against their right to exercise their minds in the solution of distressing problems as long as long as their conclusions were in the same general location as Mr. Anderson's.

"We repeat that his contempt for editors is not without its exception. If memory served us correctly, Mr. Anderson has expressed admiration ~~for~~ in the past for Benito Mussolini, the Italian dictator who was an editor until he marched on Rome and ~~is~~ still conducts his own newspaper. Incidentally, by virtue of his power he conducts all the other newspapers in Italy and tells them what they can print. This may be the reason Mr. Anderson admires him so much...."

Then Mark took a new tact. "We must plead guilty to the indictment of our poverty." ~~Mark wrote~~ As Mr. Anderson said, the clothes

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bution of the earnings of the people of the earth, if civilization is to survive.

"The Telegraph does not ^{hesitate} to say that its intellectual compass and its sympathies both point in the direction of the greatest ^{of} recognition of all members of society. ~~Mark continued.~~

"We do not advocate any such foolish doctrine as the expropriation of estates or ~~even~~ the even distribution of wealth. ~~What~~ we advocate is the removal of escalators of wealth that carry some men to wealth without volition of their own and the hurdles that stand in the way of most men getting even a decent opportunity to support themselves whenever industry finds it convenient to throw them out of work."

Then Mark denounced, ~~as he had many times before~~, the feudalism of the Bibb and other textile mills. They still conceive it to be their duty to look after their hands; to send the doctor around; to regulate their morals; prescribe rules for their entertainment such as... what card game shall be engaged in and which may not; direct their finances and look after their spiritual welfare, even to pointing out the path to heaven and insisting that they stay in it...."

There was considerably more, but in conclusion Mark ^{said} ~~said, "Thrift is a fine doctrine"~~ ^{that}, while thrift was a fine doctrine for some, it "is not a fine doctrine for the Negro tenant farmer who is paid 40 cents a day in the cotton fields of Georgia; or for the white farmer who ^{to} plows wearily under a midday sun to cultivate cotton that sells for 5 cents a pound so that Mr. Anderson's mills may run.

Thrift as a prescription ^{now} is a mockery; there is only one greater mockery and that is Mr. Anderson's prescription: economy.

"The man who gets flour out of the government's bread"

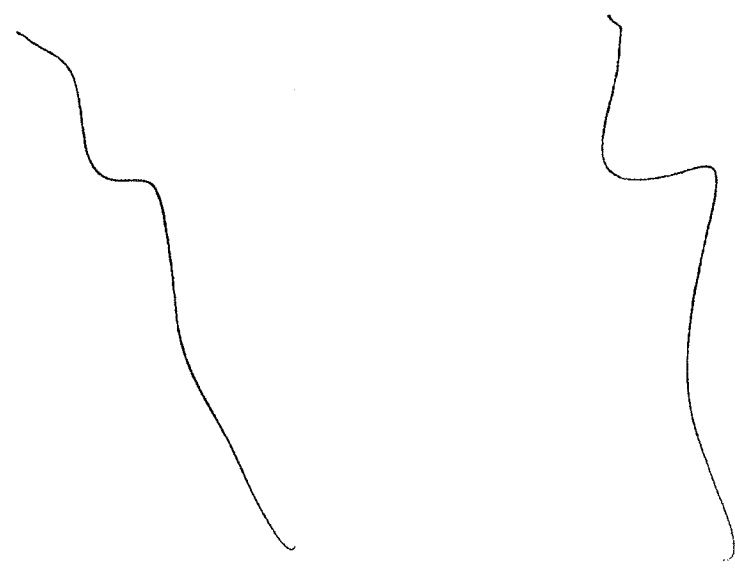
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line- a disgraceful form of the dole- is to make it go a little further. The person who draws groceries out of an Organized Service commissary is to make the turnips go one meal more. Editors who have one pair of socks are to go on with one hereafter....

"Thrift is a great doctrine for an empty bellies and empty pocketbooks."

Transition
The next day a subscriber sent Mark a pair of socks. When Mark's editorial list of mind was not taken up with the Bibb Mills or the ~~Klan~~ Klan it was more than likely pondering Georgia's educational system. In fact, the very first editorial Mark wrote on his return to the paper was one protesting the appointment of Judge ~~W~~ Wikey Russell, the father of Dick Russell, who was senator from Georgia for many years, as chancellor of the University of Georgia. "Judge Russell is a politician," Mark declared. "Not an educator."

In an editrial a few days later, he advocated the reorganization of the whole University system. Instead of the University of Georgia and ~~and each of~~ the other schools of the University system being under separate ~~boards~~ boards of



trustees and each fighting before the legislature for what each ~~of~~ ^l ~~them~~ needed and wanted, he argued they should all be under one head ^m the chancellor of the University.

The editorial made such a favorable impression ~~that~~ that Mark was asked to write the ^{education} plank for the platform committee to be presented to the next Georgia Democratic ~~con~~ convention. The convention ⁿ passed ~~every word~~ ^{intact} of it, but when it got to the legislature, special interests whittled away at it and, although it passed in essence, it was sorely weakened.

As the prestige of the papers increased, Mark was ~~invited~~ in considerable demand as a speaker ⁽¹⁾ and he accepted every invitation he possible could, and always ^{without fee} for free. Never in his life did he accept money or any other honorarium for speaking. He felt it was part of his job as an editor. The speaking on top of his work wore him down. A letter to his mother expressed his mood.

Handwritten scribbles and marks on the left margin.

"Willie and I are infinitely happy, but the job¹
or two jobs, for I took over two jobs when I came
back--ⁿ is pressing down on me... ~~Willie and I talked~~
~~last night about going back to New York.~~ I get to
see so little of the family now, because I go to work
at ~~10~~¹¹ ~~in~~^{even} the morning and work until ^{one} the next morning.
The family ^{she had a third child by now - Georgia, born April 19, 1921} is getting to the interesting age and besides
that, I'd like to have more home life... ~~In New York we~~
~~were ideally happy. I worked all day and had the even-~~
~~ings for reading, or work or recreation. The paper is~~
~~making gains in circulation, but I actually believe~~
~~I'm shortening my life with the long hours I put~~
~~into the paper.~~ ^[yet] It is a satisfaction that the paper is
frequently quoted in the Literary Digest and references
to it were recently made in the American Mercury, in the
National Geographic and in Dr. Nim's book "The Advancing
South"... We have gained national recognition ^{and that is}
~~some compensation, but it is not compensation enough~~
~~for the slow grinding out of all the enjoyment of life."~~

These were the years Franklin Roosevelt was at
Warm Springs, recuperating from his crippling attack
of polio. On the first night he came to Georgia, after
our return, he invited ~~me~~ W.T. and Mark to dinner with
him and his daughter, Anna. They ~~accepted and~~ spent a
long evening with him and felt they really got to know
him.

Mr. Roosevelt had begun coming to Georgia in the fall of 1924, three years after the polio attack. A letter from the philanthropist, George Foster Peabody, had brought him to Warm Springs. Mr. Peabody had written him of a young man stricken with infantile paralysis who had been helped by swimming in the Warm Springs pool. On his arrival, Mr. Roosevelt found a run-down summer resort where people, mostly from Columbus (Ga.), spent their weekends and holidays. But he found, too, ~~that~~^{an} extraordinary spring that pours two thousand gallons of water a minute at a temperature of 89 degrees. It is the largest warm-water spring east of the Rocky Mountains. He planned to swim in it daily.

Some time after that first meeting, Tom ~~Lawless~~^{Law}, who wrote a daily column for the Telegraph, wanted some relief from the constant pressure and Mark asked Mr. Roosevelt if he would ~~write some columns.~~^{write some columns.} ~~supply that relief.~~^{supply that relief.} Mr. Roosevelt agreed and for a good many months ~~he kept returning to Warm Springs~~ wrote columns about soil erosion, reforestation, the necessity of planting trees for wind breaks, conservation, Muscle Shoals, and other subjects along those lines. He forecast in those columns many things he later put into his national program for recovery.

Some Sunday ~~afternoon~~ Mark and I, with Mary Snow, Mark Jr., and Georgia, rode over to Warm Springs to see him. One afternoon, when he was quite relaxed and jovial,

he peeled sugar cane for the children.

In November, 1928, Mr. Roosevelt was elected governor of New York, but he didn't desert Georgia. Frequently he stole away from his gubernatorial duties to return to Warm Springs to swim in its hot pool and relax.

The years of the late twenties ^{and early thirties} were somewhat distressing to Mark, but they could have been much worse. ^{hard} ^{not as hard for us as for others.}

The depression that ~~terrible depression that~~ climaxed ^{W. Eugene, felt} in October, 1929, with the crash of the stock market ^{After the crash,} was, of course, felt in Macon. Mark's salary was cut ten percent, but since neither ~~Mark~~ ^{we}, nor I, nor any of our close friends were in the stock market we weren't seriously affected ^{by} ~~the~~ crash itself.

~~Our manner of living was quite simple.~~ If the twenties were "roaring", ^{in Macon} we missed them. Mark drank very, very little ^{we} and I not at all. Maybe, once or twice a month Mark had a drink or two of bootlegged white lightning at a party hosted by Mr. W.T. or some other affluent, older friend. For ~~most~~ of our social group it was Coca-Colas, Dr. Peppers, and fruit punch. And we played games and charades and had scavenger hunts. With the children we enjoyed riding around Macon and the countryside on Sunday afternoons in our first car, a used Buick Mark had bought from Mr. W.T.

The ^{by pace} ~~business~~ of those years is more vivid in Mark's memory than the hard times or our social doings. He was

very active in the Georgia Press Institute, which met every February at the University of Georgia in Athens. Just about two years after it was started in 1927 by Miss Emily Woodward, publisher of the newspaper in Vienna (Ga.), she persuaded Mark ~~into~~ ^e taking the chairmanship, which he kept for five years. Each of the big papers in the state ~~would persuade their stars~~ ^{sent it} reporters, columnists, correspondents, cartoonists ^m to speak at the meetings, and as a result the Institute had some of the best speeches about newspapers Georgia ever heard. In addition to the newspaper celebrities, the University always furnished an outstanding public figure to give the Washington Day address.

It was at the Press Institute meetings and at the Georgia Press Association summer conventions that Mark and I became close friends of Margaret Mitchell, whom we called Peggy, the soon-to-be-author of Gone With The Wind, and her husband, John Marsh. Though they lived in Atlanta, they sometimes came to Macon for a visit and drove with us to the meetings. They attended because John was the public relations man for the Georgia Power Company and part of his job was to make friends with the publishers and editors.

"You would never have looked at Peggy twice." ^{overheard} ~~I~~ ^{heard} Mark ~~likes~~ ^{loves} to tell friends. "She wasn't big as a minute, with straight red hair, cut in a short bob; full, dead-pan face; sheet-white complexion generously sprinkled with

story of two or three paragraphs; but usually he'd just sit there. ^{Mark thought} ~~he~~ ~~thought~~ he was the laziest man living. Finally ~~he~~ ^{he} fired him. When he saw "Green Pastures" on the New York stage ^{he} ~~Mark~~ realized, of course, that ^{Roark} ~~he~~ ~~was~~ ~~just~~ ~~storing~~ away all those stories he gathered at the Bibb county jail. ^{to use later} ~~They were all in Green Pastures.~~

^{Mark} And ~~he~~ refused to give a job to Erskine Caldwell, who became famous with his play, "Tobacco Road." ~~His~~ ^{Mark} Caldwell's father, the Reverend Mr. Caldwell, came to see ~~me~~ ^{him} at the Telegraph and asked ~~me~~ ^{him} to give Erskine a job. Mr. Caldwell said Erskine had all the qualifications for ^{Mark} becoming an excellent reporter. But ~~he~~ had no place for him. ~~✗~~

~~A writer Mark did appreciate was Sherwood Anderson, author of A Story-Teller's Story; Winesburg, Ohio; Dark Laughter, and other novels, short stories, and essays. Because of Macon's mild climate, I believe, Sherwood came to Macon several Winters in succession and spent a good bit of time hanging around Mark. He'd join Mark at the Telegraph and come home with him for supper in the early evening and, after we had finished eating, he'd sit at the table and talk and talk and talk until Mark had to go back to the paper. He was such a delightful talker that Mark asked him ~~one day~~ ^{one} if he would discuss with a few of his reporters ^{some} ~~some~~ evening how he got started writing. Without a moment's hesitation ~~Sherwood~~ ^{Sherwood} agreed, which did not surprise us. What did surprise us, however,~~