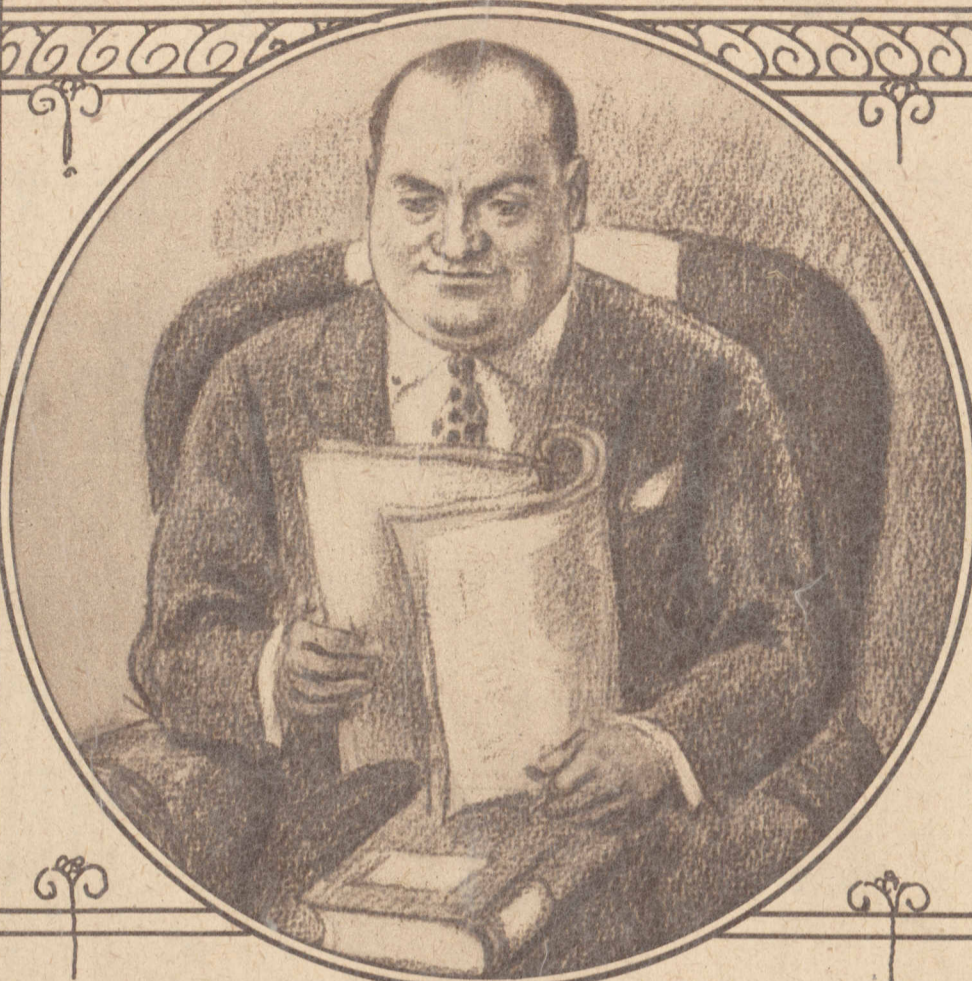


My Books Are My Friends

By W. E. Hill

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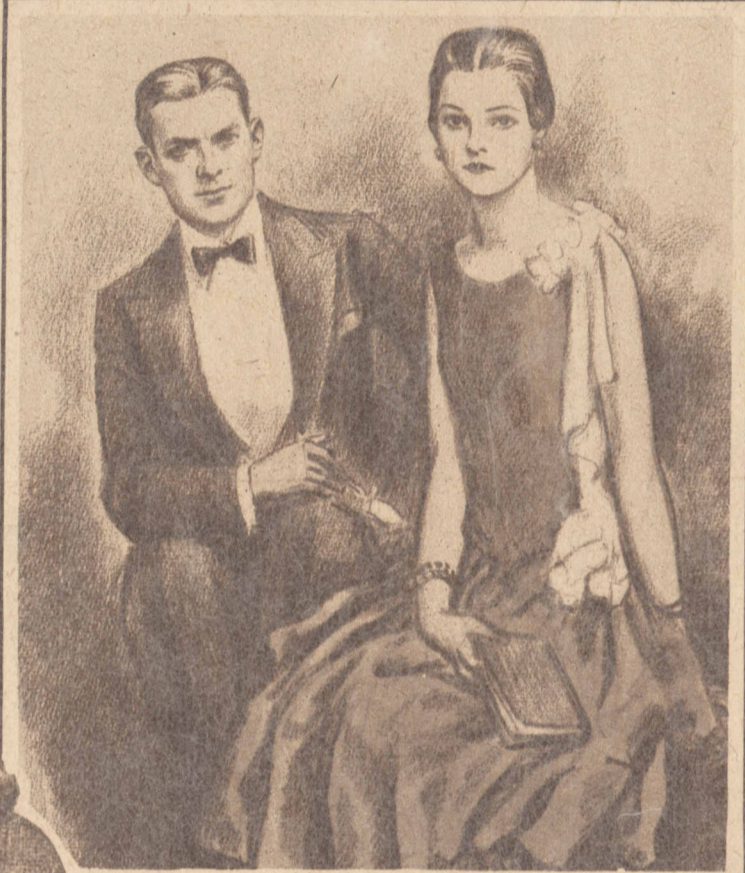


Keeping up with science. "I'll take this book to read on the train," said Joe, who likes a bit of heavy stuff about atoms and molecules, etc., once in a while. Then, just as Joe was finding out whether the atom came from the molecule or vice versa, the magazine vendor sold him a copy of "High School Humor" and science lost out.



The lending library. Mrs. Maginnis belongs to a select lending library where they have the very latest books if you can get hold of them. This morning Mrs. Maginnis, with fire in her eye, is taking back a book to the librarian. Imagine! "The Old Man's Doll" was the title. Mrs. Maginnis wanted something sweet to read aloud to her little godchild, Ethel Anna, so she took it. Well, it turned out to be a very frank book about a terrible girl who had a husband, a fiance and a sugar daddy all at once. Maybe Mrs. M. isn't going to give the librarian "what for"!

The daring novel. Aunt Etta has been reading "Green Cess-pool," one of those naughty modern novels, dealing with life in the open sewers openly arrived at. All the naughty words are spelled right out and everything. One or two of the worst ones seem to have stuck in Aunt Etta's mind, for without any warning she has up and addressed her niece in language that would startle a longshoreman. Unless, of course, he were a very sophisticated longshoreman.



Detectivitis. John and Julia belong to that great public which devours feverishly one detective yarn after another. Julia has been reading "The Mystery of the Bloodstained Claw" aloud to John, and only a quarter of the way through the plot they know who clawed the aged spinster to death. "I do wish," sighs Julia, "they wouldn't always have the least suspected character turn out to be the murderer."



Literature for the long winter evenings. There's nothing like a good thick mail order catalogue to while away the hours in a rural delivery community.

The gloomy novel. Francie is awfully low spirited this morning. Almost suicidal. She's been reading one of those novels about the depressed tenth. All about a grocery clerk with pernicious anemia who hated groceries and never outgrew his environment. He hated his wife and she despised him for being anemic, and each longed to kill the other. And when he lost his job for making false entries in the books (he stole yeast) they moved into a cellar to save money for baby's coming. It rained and the cellar grew damper, and nothing much happened. No wonder Francie is depressed!



For those who think they think. No mother who values the life of her darling offspring will leave her baby for any length of time with an amateur psychologist. With all these books on behaviorism and fixations and worse, a year old baby becomes just another experimental ground to a student of stimulus and reaction. In this instance the psychologist has been discovered by Lenore's mama in the questionable act of coupling baby Lenore's fright sensations, caused by a toy spider, with sensations of bliss at the sight of a peeled banana, and having a perfectly swell time generally at Lenore's expense. Psychologists are very unfeeling at times.



The borrowers. Reading from the left, we have the lady who lends the borrowed book to all her friends before returning it; the man who says, "Gee, I must remember to return your book," and then forgets; the girl who returns the book plus chocolate cake stains and with a great many pages turned down at the corners; and the young man who at the end of a year or more returns the wrong book to the right person.