NOVEMBER 25c

THE American

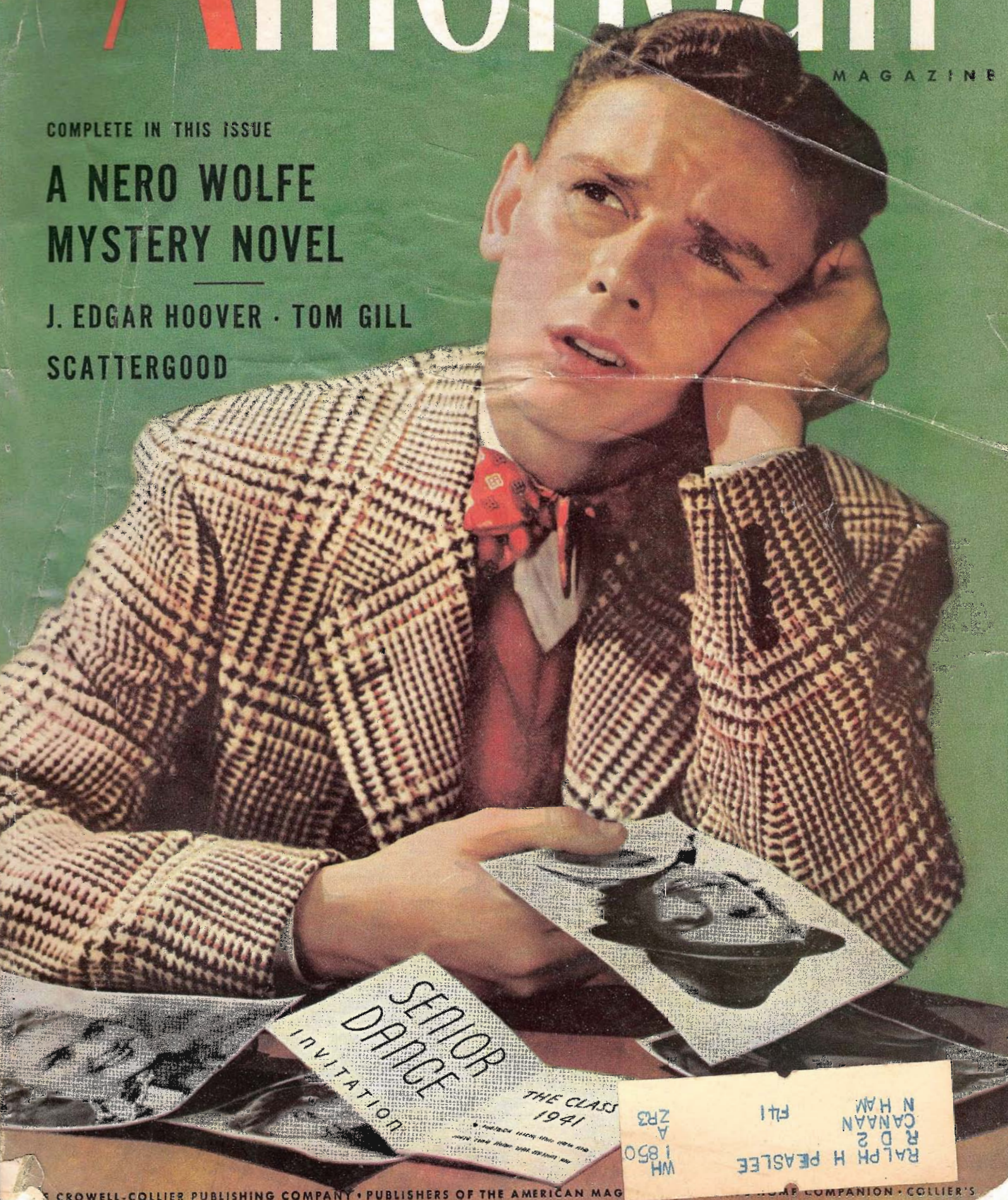
MAGAZINE

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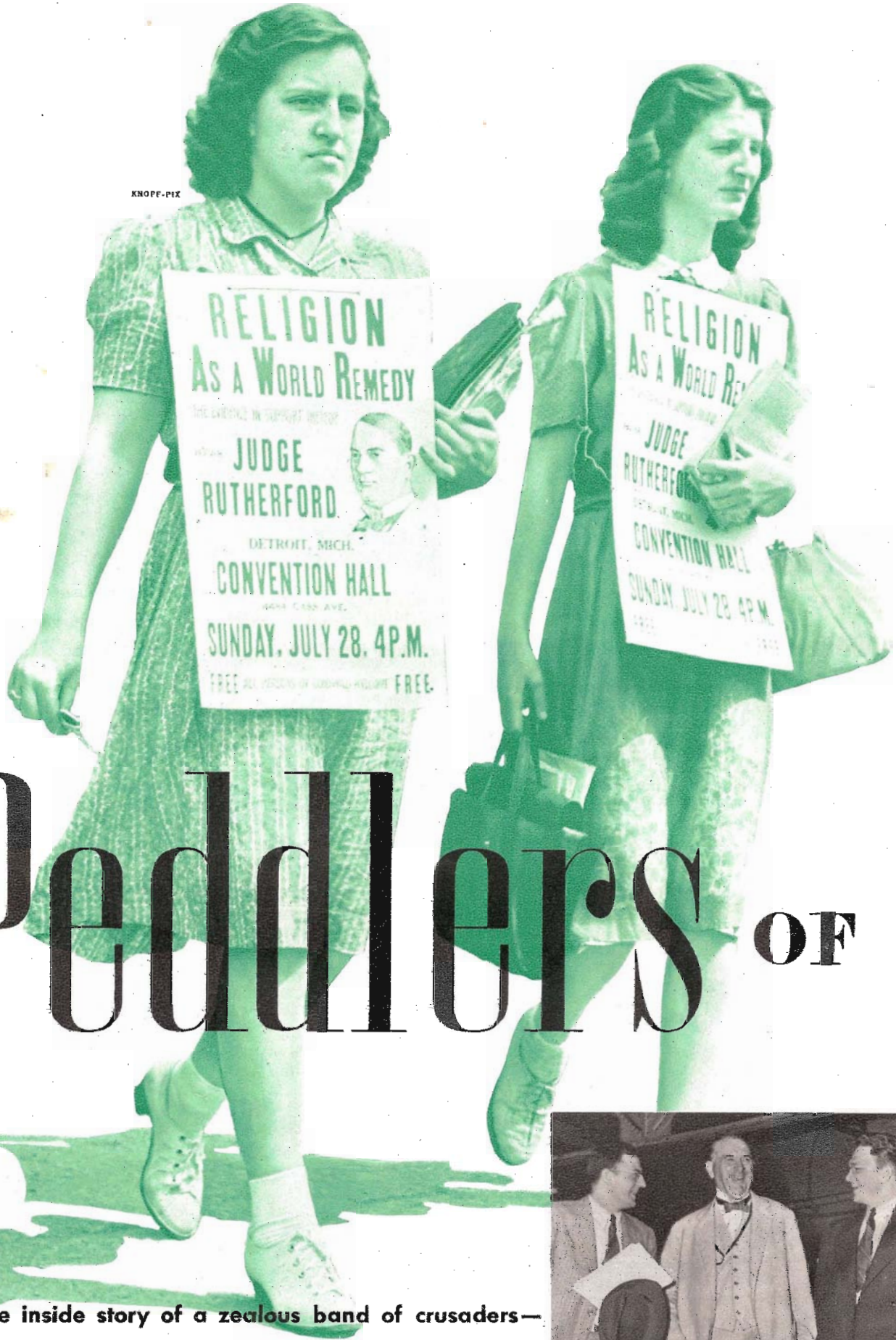
J. EDGAR HOOVER · TOM GILL

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Peddlers OF

Here's the inside story of a zealous band of crusaders—Jehovah's witnesses—hooted and stoned by American mobs. An experienced reporter tells why they refuse to salute the flag, attack established religions, build a $75,000 home for ancient prophets, and sell millions of books and pamphlets





Faces in the audience at a recent convention of Jehovah's witnesses

MILLIONS of Americans these days are hearing for the first time about that hardy band of religious zealots known as "Jehovah's witnesses" (with a small w). In various sections of the country recently, they have been attacked by mobs, thrown into jail, hooted and stoned out of town for spreading their propaganda against patriotism and against established religions.

Led by 70-year-old Judge Joseph F. Rutherford, their militant and mysterious leader, the witnesses have been denounced as fifth columnists, fascists, saboteurs. They have been ridiculed as bigoted fanatics. They stolidly refuse to salute the American or any other flag. They campaign against recruiting and military training, despite any national emergency. Shouting, "Religion is a racket," they attack bitterly the beliefs of Protestants, Jews, and Catholics.

Such bellicose tactics arouse violent opposition and have brought the witnesses into the limelight throughout the world. In Germany, Hitler's dread Gestapo interned 6,000 witnesses who wouldn't "*heil*," and the first conscientious objector executed by the Nazis was a witness. In Canada, where the organization has been outlawed, a magistrate recently sentenced two witnesses to serve six months in prison, and added he would recommend they be interned afterward for the duration of the war. Great Britain, however, exempts them from war duty.

In the United States a mob of 300 men besieged a meeting of 50 witnesses in Mooresville, Ind., shouting, "Salute the flag or you won't leave the hall." The mob blocked the exit until morning, when police rescued the terrified witnesses.

More than 2,000 men set fire to the witnesses' Kingdom Hall in Kennebunk, Maine, dragged members from their beds, and beat them in an effort to teach them patriotism. In Litchfield, Ill., one recent Sunday, 100 witnesses appeared in 21 automobiles, preaching their propaganda against flag-saluting. A mob wrecked 12 of the automobiles and beat up a number of witnesses, while police and other citizens herded 62 men and women to prison for protection.

Witnesses who descended on Monroe, La., with automobiles that broadcast such messages as "Religions are the instruments of Satan," were chased out of the state. In Rockville, Md., a handful of men carrying an American flag broke into a Jehovah's witnesses meeting. When 25 witnesses refused to salute the flag, the place was promptly wrecked and the witnesses ordered to leave town.

So great is the storm of indignation against them that Francis Biddle, United States Solicitor General, warning the public against the spread of hysteria over fifth columnists, said recently:

"A religious sect known as Jehovah's witnesses has been repeatedly set upon and beaten. They had committed no crime, but the mob adjudged they had, and meted out punishment. The Attorney General has ordered an immediate investigation of these outrages. There is no cause for mass hysteria, no justification for mob violence."

Nevertheless, the rioting continues.

Just what is behind this strange organization? Who are its members, what are its purposes, and why is it arousing such resentment? Some weeks ago I set out to find the answers. Since then I have attended numerous meetings of Jehovah's witnesses; I have studied their books, pamphlets, magazines, and talked with dozens of witnesses.

I have found no justification for the accusation that the witnesses are Nazi propagandists. They deny it emphatically, and not a word in any of Judge Rutherford's writings can comfort Hitler. The witnesses abhor all earthly governments and respect only the "Theocratic Government of Jehovah."

The rank-and-file members, I am convinced, sincerely believe that Judge

paradise

by Jerome Beatty

Judge Joseph F. Rutherford (center), 70-year-old leader of Jehovah's witnesses, with Nathan H. Knorr, business manager (left), and his attorney

Rutherford is leading them toward a delightful, and exclusive, heaven-on-earth. The practices which have stirred public demonstrations against them spring from a blind faith in their leader rather than from any subversive conspiracy. Their refusal to salute the flag is an example. To the judge, a flag is a graven image, and a salute distinctly violates the Biblical command, "Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto any graven images." The judge trumpets forth his individual interpretations of the Bible, and none of his followers even questions them.

As far as I could find out, there are about 45,000 active witnesses throughout the United States. They have about 200,000 followers, including children, in this country, and probably 1,000,000 more throughout the world. Among these are thousands of natives in South Africa.

In San Diego, Calif., the organization has built a magnificent $75,000 Spanish home which King David, Isaac, Samuel, and the other prophets are expected to occupy when, according to Judge Rutherford's oracular prophecy, they return to earth most any day now. The judge thoughtfully has landscaped the grounds with date and palm trees, "So," he says, "these princes of the universe will feel at home." Meanwhile, the judge and his wife are occupying the mansion.

I DISCOVERED that Jehovah's witnesses have succeeded in developing one of America's biggest and strangest businesses. In Brooklyn, N. Y., they own a 7-story apartment house and an 8-story modern printing plant that turns out tons of pamphlets every year. Together the two establishments are worth more than $1,000,000.

They have baptismal ceremonies but, they say, no membership roll. One becomes a witness simply by agreeing to do the will of God, as interpreted by Judge Rutherford.

Alluring to some may be the belief that witnesses, as conscientious objectors, will not have to fight in any war. But they might go to jail. In 1918 Judge Rutherford and six associates were sentenced to 20 years each in Atlanta Penitentiary for obstructing recruiting. After the judge had served nearly a year, a court of appeals ordered a new trial, the war ended, and the case was dropped.

The judge insists that Jehovah's witnesses have existed on earth as an organization for 5,000 years and cites Biblical mention of them. More conservative accounts, however, record that the society was founded by Pastor Charles T. Russell, of Pittsburgh, Pa., about 1876 as the International Bible Students Association. He inherited a chain of clothing stores from his father, but, after giving several hundred thousand dollars to the cause, he was said to have only $200 when he died in 1916. In 1910 he predicted that Christ would return in 1914 and end the rule of imperfect men. Witnesses have twisted his prophecy and say he foresaw the World War.

Taking charge of the organization, Judge Rutherford declared that Christ had come to earth, as predicted, but that he was invisible and that Russell meant that in 1914 the Kingdom of God would *begin* to assume control. In 1920 Rutherford predicted that Abraham, Isaac, and other prophets would return in 1925. Now he gives no dates but says that Judgment Day is coming "very soon."

Judge Rutherford avoids personal publicity and appears publicly only when trying a case before the Supreme Court or addressing conventions of witnesses. He is 6 feet tall, paunchy, devoted to wing collars and black bow ties. He is not in *Who's Who in America*. His organization gives out no facts except his age, that he is married and has a son in California who helps him in his work. His health is not good and recently he spent much time in a private sanitarium, the location of which was a closely guarded secret. This mystery with which he surrounds his private life helps to make his followers think of him as a ghostly spirit, not quite of this world. And keeps away hecklers.

HIS parents were farmers, near Versailles, Mo. Rutherford read law in an office in Jefferson City, Mo., and practiced in Boonville. Some of his opponents say he adopted the title "Judge" after serving as a temporary judge for four days in the Cooper County, Mo., Circuit Court. Converted by Pastor Russell's sermons, he joined Russell's legal staff in 1909, at the age of forty. If he wasn't a good lawyer then, his successful appearances before the U. S. Supreme Court indicate that he has developed into one. Undoubtedly he is a first-class organizer and an appealing orator. Even his opponents do not believe the charges that he has made a fortune out of the sale of his publications; they are convinced that he is not out for personal profit.

Upon Russell's death many members deserted the society, some because they didn't like Rutherford, others who lost faith because Russell's millennium had not arrived. Rutherford (*Continued on page 69*)

AN AMERICAN VIGNETTE

HIGH HAT

★

CLASS with a capital C—that's what Moe Bernoff was after in the new restaurant he was opening in New York's crowded West Fifties.

"Suppose you open some hole-in-the-ground," he explained to Enrico, his head-waiter. "You may get customers, but you don't get class. The carriage trade is what you want. Guys who leave folding money for tips."

Enrico nodded solemnly. The two men had worked together ever since Moe opened the first of his chain of fabulously successful cafeterias. Privately, Enrico thought Moe's plan to start a fashionable and expensive restaurant was a bit out of his line, but he was used to keeping his mouth shut.

"This Wentworth house has class written all over it," Moe went on. He looked around admiringly at the huge drawing-room that was already fitted out as a dining-room, with an orchestra platform in one corner and a compact, glittering bar in another.

"I picked it up cheap after old Henry Wentworth died. Those society people will feel at home here. All the big shots used to drop in when the old man was still in the chips, throwing high-class brawls for his daughter."

A waiter stepped up. "A young lady to see you, Mr. Bernoff. Said she had an appointment."

"The doll who wants to sing," Moe said. "Send her in."

She walked over to the two men. Enrico's eyes widened as he took in her soft brown hair, her clear eyes, her trim figure.

Moe kept strictly to business: "Okay, babe, let's hear you warble."

She sat down at the piano, and sang one of those dreamy popular ballads. Her voice was warm and ingratiating, but you could tell she hadn't had much training. When she finished, Moe walked over to her.

"Sorry, kid, but I had something else in mind. Someone with more style and class, maybe."

She took it quietly. "Mind if I look around the place for a little while before I leave?"

"Why not?" Moe grinned proudly. "It isn't everyone that gets a chance to look over the Wentworth mansion."

She turned toward him as she rose from the piano stool. "I guess I didn't tell you," she said quietly, "that my name's Wentworth." . . .

The night the restaurant opened, Moe stood in a corner with Enrico, delightedly surveying the crowded dining-room. In front of the orchestra stood the same girl, singing the same dreamy ballad. A storm of applause greeted her at the end of the song.

"Class," Moe murmured reverently. "Anyone can see she's got class in her blood."

Enrico nodded solemnly. Since he was used to keeping his mouth shut, he didn't think it necessary to tell Moe what the girl had told him: That her father was Mike Wentworth, of Winnetka, Illinois, a retired policeman.

W. A. H. BIRNIE

Peddlers OF paradise

(Continued from page 54)

managed to keep the concern going even through the dark and disappointing days of 1925, when Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob failed to return to set up their kingdom.

About 1927 the society began to show real strength and to collect substantial contributions Meanwhile, Rutherford had stopped selling Russell's books and had dropped from the publications any mention of the founder, whom he once described as "The greatest man that has lived since the Apostle Paul." All the literature was Judge Rutherford's, and he changed the name from "International Bible Students" to "Jehovah's witnesses."

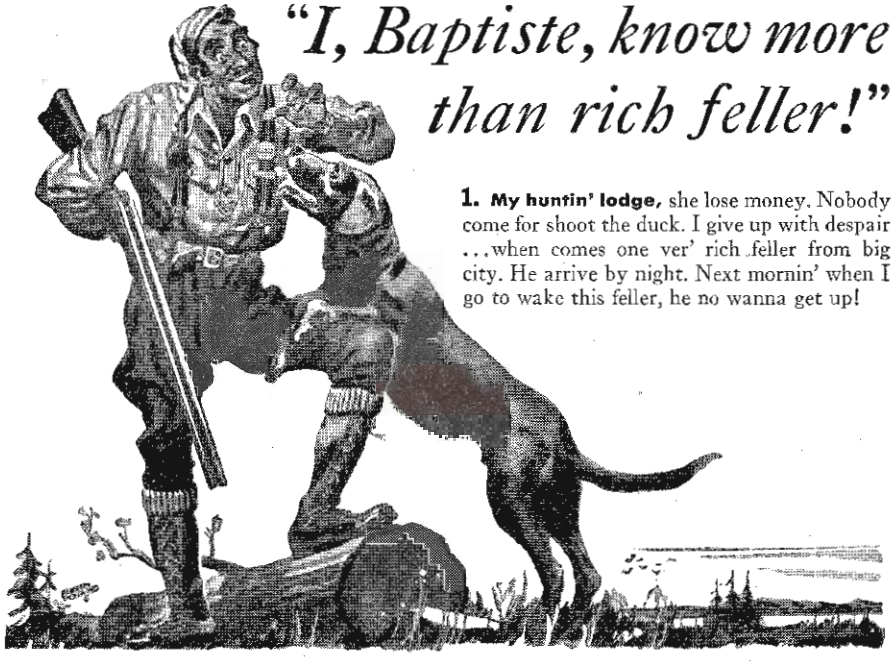
THE 150 persons who work in the Brooklyn publishing house for $10 a month and "found," are witnesses and live in the apartment building, where they rise at 6:30 A. M. and retire at 10:30 P. M. There, too, lives Judge Rutherford, when he is in Brooklyn, and his office aides. They eat silently in a common dining-room. A man who dined there not long ago told me that a microphone was placed in front of Judge Rutherford, so the witnesses could hear every word he uttered, even "Please pass the salt."

In the printing plant a tall, starry-eyed elevator man took me to the top floor to see Nathan H. Knorr, the small, earnest business manager, who showed me the linotypes, 5 huge rotary presses, and a book-binding plant that can turn out daily 20,000 bound books and 150,000 booklets. An assembly plant turns out portable phonographs and sound-car equipment; immense storerooms are piled high with books, magazines, phonograph records. A busy shipping-room sends out publications in about 80 languages.

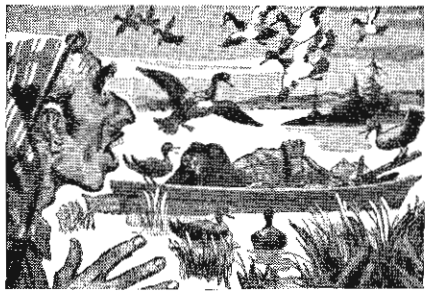
The door-to-door distributors of the literature are called "publishers" and all over the world they "exchange for a contribution" about 11,000,000 booklets and about 1,500,000 books a year—5 cents for a pamphlet, 25 cents for a book, and $1 for a yearly subscription to *The Watchtower*. They also sell Bibles and calendars. The witnesses claim they have printed and distributed to date at least 300,000,000 books and pamphlets.

The portable phonographs are $10 each, including 3 records, and loud-speaker equipment for cars, with a turntable inside the car and horns on the roof, is $140. Brother Knorr said they had 1,000 sound cars and

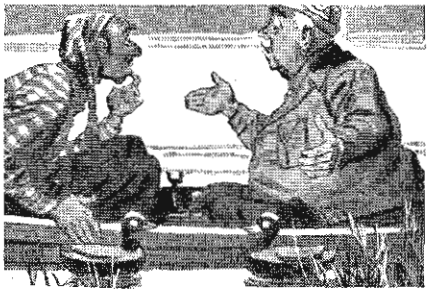
"I, Baptiste, know more than rich feller!"



1. My huntin' lodge, she lose money. Nobody come for shoot the duck. I give up with despair ...when comes one ver' rich feller from big city. He arrive by night. Next mornin' when I go to wake this feller, he no wanna get up!



2. He sleepy like anyt'ing. He stumble out to blind. I leave him in boat. Pretty soon plenty duck come, fly around, sit on water beside blind. By gar, this feller no shoot! I wait one hour, two hour... still he no shoot!



3. I go see what wrong. This feller sound asleep! Duck all gone... no more chance for shoot that day. "Too bad," say rich feller. "I cannot stay awake!" Then he tell me how he drink the coffee on train last night.



4. Caffein in coffee keep rich feller tossin' an' turnin' all night. By gar, he get no rest at all! "I fix!" I announce. "Today you try rest. Tonight I make good Sanka Coffee. She 97% caffein-free, an' no can keep you awake!"



5. I show words on tin: "Council on Foods of American Medical Association says: 'Sanka Coffee is free from caffein effect and can be used when other coffee has been forbidden'." (I no read this good, but rich feller can.)



6. He drink the Sanka Coffee. One cup, two cup. He smack lips. He sleep like bear in winter time. Next mornin' he bag limit ver' soon. "Baptiste," he say, "you smart feller! I buy this lodge, an' make you manager at good salary!"



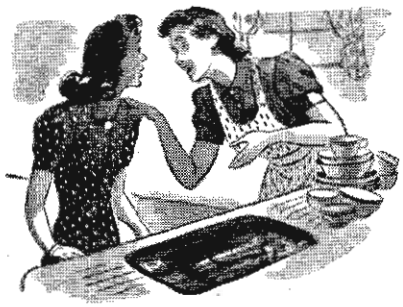
SANKA COFFEE

REAL COFFEE . . . 97% CAFFEIN-FREE

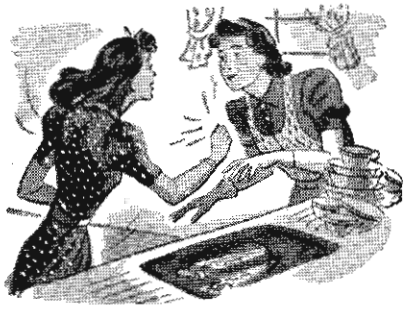
PRICE REDUCED!

The price of Sanka Coffee goes down again! Both "regular" and the popular, new "drip" grind are now selling at the lowest price in history!

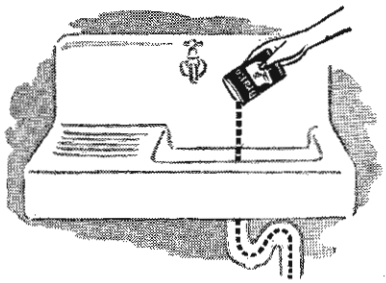
PIPES STOPPED UP? USE DRĀNO



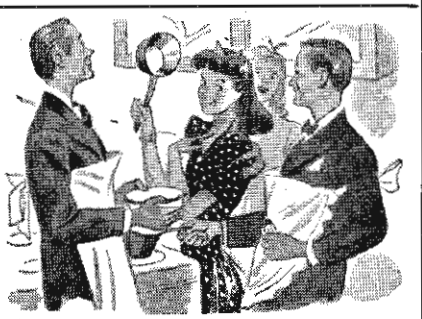
1. "I'm sorry, dear, you'll have to hold your kitchen party at Nancy's tonight. The pipes are stopped up again!"



2. "Oh, mother, I can fix that in a sec. I'll get some Drāno. That's what we use in the lab sink at school. Be right back."



3. Look! Drāno's specially made to put the heat on down where the drain's stopped. Its churning, chemical boiling action melts, frees grease, dirt, grounds.



4. "Am I good or am I good? Now mom's going to use a teaspoonful of Drāno every night after the dishes are done to *keep* the pipes from stopping up."

Drāno

CLEARS DRAINS



P. S. A teaspoonful after the dishes guards against stopped-up drains. Won't harm pipes—no objectionable fumes. Never over 25¢ at grocery, drug, hardware stores.

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Margaret Clarke, Secretary, Pin Money Club
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40,000 portable phonographs in operation, so they have sold to members $140,000 worth of sound-car equipment and $400,000 worth of phonographs. They sell about 150,000 records of Judge Rutherford's lectures a year, for 70 cents each.

The "publishers" probably collect nearly $1,000,000 a year for the books and pamphlets. At least one fifth of that, printers say, must be clear profit. I also heard of one elderly man who married a witness, became converted, and left several thousand dollars to the organization. There probably are many similar bequests.

Judge Rutherford makes public no financial report. He says that all the money goes back into the work of spreading the word. Skeptics have never been able to discover where spare dollars, if there are any, are invested. The society's legal expenses for defense of witnesses are large, the members say, and activities abroad do not pay their own way. Publications in foreign languages, printed in comparatively small quantities, probably are distributed at a loss.

The society owns radio station WBBR in Brooklyn, where its own orchestra and singers entertain between recorded lectures by Judge Rutherford. Once Judge Rutherford had a nation-wide hookup of 53 stations at a reputed cost of $50,000 per week, but his attacks on religions brought so many complaints that the stations cut him off.

With an organization that any publisher would envy, Judge Rutherford has built himself up into the best-seller of best-sellers. Some of his books have passed the 2,500,000 mark, and most booklets, according to the title pages, have a first printing of 10,000,000 copies. He has published 15 books and 26 bulky booklets, most of them crowded with Biblical quotations.

In Port Chester, N. Y., I attended a salesmen's weekly pep meeting, on the second floor of a shabby building. About 25 persons were present, men, women, and children. I was welcomed by the "advertising servant," who has charge of the literature. In his secular life he is a postman.

Charts on the walls showed how far behind were the Port Chester publishers on their quotas. The lesson sheet was *Informant,* Judge Rutherford's monthly house organ for his publishers. It urged witnesses to "Make this the biggest booklet month yet."

The leader insisted they'd all have to work harder. Most of them looked as if they were working too hard, now, all day long.

"We must," he declared, "clear the decks and put aside all obstacles that are in the way of complete devotion to Jehovah."

The witnesses nodded, and the sales meeting ended with a prayer.

AT THEIR regular Sunday-night meetings the services are devoted to a study of Judge Rutherford's writings. The leader reads a question, witnesses who have studied *The Watchtower* recite the answer. It runs like this:

"What do the demons do?" the servant (leader) asks.

An old lady in a shapeless dress raises her hand: "They use religion to debauch the human race."

"Very good."

Given new life by such praise, the old lady sits up, bright-eyed and proud, and lifts her chin a little. She has become a personage.

"What will become of the haughty, righteous know-it-all?"

A shabby man of about fifty-five, broken and dull-eyed, suddenly waves a peremptory hand. Perhaps he has looked for work for months and has been rudely rejected. Triumphantly he shouts, "They will be destroyed at Armageddon. The meek shall inherit the earth!"

There is a gleam in his eyes. He throws back his shoulders self-confidently.

A lawyer in New Haven told me, "Don't get the idea that all witnesses are old and dowdy. There's one young girl who's a knockout. She visits offices and stores."

Unfortunately, I was unable to track her down. I didn't see anybody who remotely resembled her, but I saw many laborers with worn faces, middle-aged women with sagging cheeks and earnest eyes, a few young people, poorly dressed.

In the West and South many of the witnesses are sharecroppers. When they swarm through a city, every witness who lives within 50 miles comes by car or bus to take part. District managers see that they make a clean sweep of the city.

MOST of the witnesses I saw were obviously longing for contentment, rest, and security. Some of them are beaten and helpless and ask desperately for nothing more than enough to satisfy their hunger, for shoes with no holes in them, and for a roof that doesn't leak. Hating all political leaders, they find in Judge Rutherford a lift that helps them through their misery.

But, instead of letting them stay home and rest, grim old Judge Rutherford exhorts them along the endless march "to the battlefield of Armageddon."

In most of their activities the witnesses have the backing of the courts. Witnesses cannot be legally required to salute the flag, except in schools. In an 8 to 1 decision the Supreme Court recently ruled that school boards may expel children who refuse. In this lost battle the witnesses were supported by the American Civil Liberties Union, by the American Bar Association, and by Justice Harlan Stone, who, in dissenting, said that the law that was upheld by the Court "does more than suppress freedom of speech and more than prohibit the free exercise of religion. The state seeks to coerce children to express a sentiment which, as they interpret it, they do not entertain and which violates their deepest religious convictions."

The flag-saluting case spoiled a perfect legal record for the witnesses. They have gone into court successfully to fight all other attempts to hinder or intimidate them.

A cornerstone of the organization is Judge Rutherford's slogan, "Millions now living will never die." Dozens of witnesses assured me that very soon Jesus Christ will establish Jehovah's Kingdom on this earth after the battle of Armageddon, when all but Jehovah's witnesses will be destroyed by fire, pestilence, flood, and sword. The witnesses who have died, I was assured, will be resurrected to join King David and the other princes, who will return to earth in the flesh. But the police who arrest them, the members of mobs who attack them, the judges who rule against them, the men and women who slam doors in their faces and refuse to buy Judge Rutherford's literature—all these are "goats" and will be destroyed. The "sheep" shall inherit the earth and have the happiness, the warm clothing, good food, and comfortable homes that the witnesses so desperately long for.

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Feel the zest of brisk October

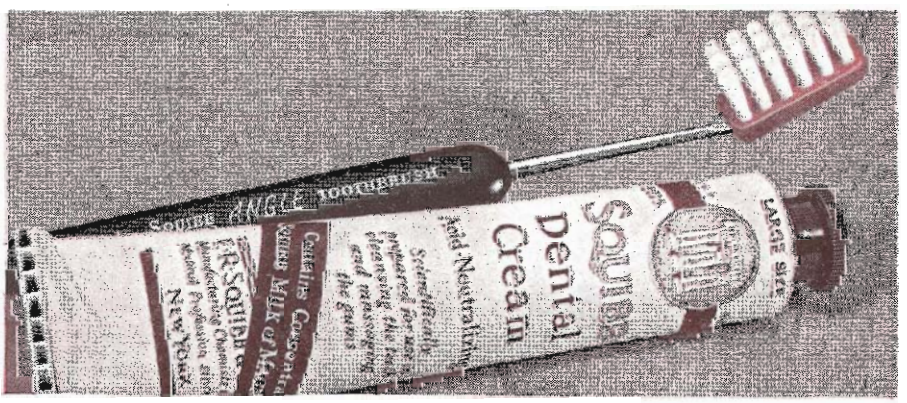
Morning or night, or in between, there can be quick refreshment in the simple act of brushing your teeth



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