



Don't dismiss that tired feeling too easily. It can cause lots of trouble, not only to you but to others.

Fatigue causes accidents at home, at work, and on the highway.

Fatigue lowers resistance and makes you more susceptible to disease.

Unusual or chronic fatigue is serious. It may be the first sign of disease, such as tuberculosis or anaemia, or vitamin deficiency.

You can control fatigue and its hazards:

Get adequate sleep.

Eat proper foods at the proper time and in the right proportion.

Don't skip a meal—going without breakfast is asking for trouble.

Take time off for wholesome and easy recreation, and relax whenever you can.

If your fatigue is hard to explain, or difficult to control, consult your doctor.

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

8/47

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OPTICAL LANGUAGE *Educationese Done Into Verse*

ONE of the latest shots in the campaign against woolly abstract English is fired by the critic I. A. Richards in a recent number of the English "Listener," which marks the Silver Jubilee of the BBC with several articles on broadcasting. Mr. Richards distinguishes between "optical language" and words put together to be spoken. Here is what he said.

THIS has to be a free flight of speculation, uncontrolled by any facts. At least if there are any real facts about the influence of radio on writing, I have not got them, and I am not sure that real facts would be much use to us here, anyhow. The forces that move a writer's pen are so complicated. Just how its motions may have been affected by voices coming out of boxes is not something that facts help us much in guessing, I mean facts in the hard sense, facts of the sort science uses.

None-the-less, it is tempting to guess and give reasons for one's guesses, though we shall not be able to prove we guessed right, nor, please note, to prove we guessed wrong. The forces which move a writer's pen are the most complicated sets of facts known. The pen is the most sensitive and responsive thing there is in the world, except one other thing. Of course, what a pen writes can be a very routine matter. When you write your name and address down you are not usually responding to the entire universe, to your whole past, and to all of the present which has reached you, but if you were a good enough poet or novelist, at work at your best level, you might be doing just that. All the endlessly branching networks of your experience might be pulling on your pen, to make it write one set of words rather than another.

The Dumbness of the Pen

The one other thing more sensitive than a pen is a voice. It is more sensitive than a pen because it not only chooses its words, but how they are to be said, with what implications and suggestions. I think if we are to guess truthfully about influences for broadcasting, on writing, this is a good place to start from.

Any writer of any natural or acquired talent, of course, tries to make up for the dumbness of the pen by suggesting through the way he puts his words together how his sentences should be spoken. But as a rule, that does not get him very far. It is more often than not pretty painful to an ambitious writer, I believe, to hear other people reading out what he has written. In practice, he cannot, or can no longer, control the rhythms his readers will give him. So he falls back on the last apparatus of directive and control machinery, words and phrases like

"but," "certainly," "on the other hand," "in contrast," "in fact," "we should be clear that," "it is very important to bring the point out"—and the rest. Prosaic, supporting tissue. The writing craft has developed a lot of these pointers and controls, tricks and dodges, to take the place of the pauses and inflections, emphases and tempo changes of the voice. If you use these elaborate tricks and dodges enough, the result is a prose style which may be clear and exact and



"It is painful to an ambitious writer to hear other people reading out what he has written"

unambiguous and even impressive, but no one can read it out loud in any fashion which any undebauched ear can bear to listen to.

Addressed to the Eye

It is optical language, in fact, addressed to the eye, not to the ear, not even to the mental ear. Books by sociologists about psychology, about interpersonal and intra-personal relationships and so on are oddly apt to be written in this sort of language. So are income tax and other Government discussions, and it is sad to think that so are very frequently writings on education. Pedagogy is one of the most flourishing among the optical dialects. I ought to give you a specimen of purely optical language, and yet for your sakes and mine, I shrink. Perhaps the best thing I can do would be to take a sample which has been extracted from a Government publication, and artfully arranged in verse, to pleasure the malicious ear, by A. B. Ramsay, the Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge. Its title is "Education." Here it is:

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