

magazines in all their bewildering variety — shelter magazines, fashion magazines, age-group magazines, trade and technical and hobby magazines, magazines dedicated to this or that cause — some of them splendid in appearance, and many of them extraordinarily useful in broadening and deepening the special knowledge and equipment of their readers. What room is left in this variegated picture for the peculiar sort of general, nonspecialized, limited-audience, contributor-written journalism that *Harper's* represents?

Well, sometimes we get a manuscript at 49 East 33rd Street which puts forth new ideas about the national economy, or about American policy toward Germany, or about the place of science in our lives, or what not, and the author says to us, in effect: "If you don't publish this manuscript, who will? It's probably too highbrow for this magazine, too contentious for that; it won't fit the strict editorial policy of this or suit the special concerns of that; and it bears no well-known name to make it palatable to another. My only chance would seem to be with *Harper's*, or maybe the *Atlantic* — unless it's to go to some somber and little-read review." That's the sort of remark that makes me realize all over again why we believe in what we are trying to do: to facilitate a lively traffic in ideas; in an age of conformity, to welcome satire and dissent, without

ever embracing dissent as a form of counter-conformity; in an age of orthodoxies, to invite unorthodoxies; in the congress of opinions, to offer a hearing not only to the yeses and the noes, but to the yes-buts and the no-buts, and even to those who say that the whole discussion is proceeding on the wrong premises; in short, to nourish, in the realm of ideas, that inventive and fruitful diversity which in the realm of practical affairs is already the peculiar genius of America. For this kind of journalism there is very ample room in the country today. And if America is to set the mark which now appears to be within its possible reach, not only in material progress and economic health, but in cultural and spiritual enrichment, the job must not be left undone.

I think it's the realization that what we have been doing — however fumblingly and inexpertly — is well worth doing, that has given us the wallop that we at *Harper's* have got out of our daily chores on the magazine. I am confident that my successors will hold fast in this faith and in these changing times will find new ways of making their service of it effective. Not only that; I hope, too, that they will never lack for rivals in the business of looking for fresh ways of leavening Western thought. For I am sure that whoever serves our American diversity serves both the republic and the cause of freedom.



CACOËTHES SCRIBENDI

by OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

IF ALL the trees in all the woods were men;
And each and every blade of grass a pen;
If every leaf on every shrub and tree
Turned to a sheet of foolscap; every sea
Were changed to ink, and all earth's living tribes
Had nothing else to do but act as scribes,
And for ten thousand ages, day and night,
The human race should write, and write, and write,
Till all the pens and paper were used up,
And the huge inkstand was an empty cup,
Still would the scribblers clustered round its brink
Call for more pens, more paper, and more ink.

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