

Chicago. Dec 7th 1931.

Spent the usual lazy quiet Sunday yesterday. Got in a good deal of work on the "Gold-Bug" all the same. As I put the original story into simplified English, the principles of simplification stand out more and more clearly. In a few days' time, probably, I shall have worked out a complete system or method of ~~composing~~ simplifying texts and thereby of turning out stuff which will be of greater value to the student, and easier to compose, than that of the Michael West system. I have made new discoveries, and these were only possible because of all my previous work on lexicology.

This morning started inauspiciously. Leonard Bloomfield was the man I wanted to see first. Some of you who read this will know that he is one of the two really big men in the field of linguistics in America (big from the point of view of my sort of linguistics). I rang him up three times before I found him. And when he answered, it seemed the peevish voice of an old man. Following his directions I made my way on a tram some six miles to the south, discovered Chicago University, and finally his room. Then what a surprise!

A youngish fellow (ten years younger than myself) who greeted me with spontaneous cordiality. We soon discover that our views on linguistics in all its different branches are identical^{cal}. An interchange of ideas goes on ideally, neither of us going off the main track, neither of us wishing to interrupt the other, each listening and learning eagerly from the other, each confirming the ideas and ideals of the other. This is what I have been waiting for ever since I came to America, and before. I find here a sympathetic understanding that exceeds even those of my contacts with Henmon, Dr. Wood, or even Sapir.

He is unable to take me out to lunch. These days he is crippled

with arthritis and can walk only with a crutch. So he deputed a Professor Taylor to take me to the club.

We take our seats casually at a table where are gathered other high lights of the University. I am introduced. I fancy I catch the name of Coleman. "Coleman," I say; "I am wanting to meet Algernon Coleman." Well this is the man. "What, Palmer! actually here in Chicago?"

He is a bluff, humorous-looking and hearty fellow, and invites me to see him and lunch with him to-morrow, then to meet a group whom he will call together. "We've had Michael West here, and it's only right that you should come and demolish his views; we must hear the other side" [All take it for granted that Michael West and I are in opposition; as indeed we are on some points, but as Coleman is supposed to be on West's side — or West on his — both of them claiming that reading can be taught without speech, this invitation is most reassuring]

"So this is Professor Algernon Coleman" I say, "the terrible Coleman that I have been hearing about ever since I landed, the autocrat of ^{the} American foreign-language teaching world!" Why bless my soul, you don't seem to be so terrible after all; you were the one who was to eat me up....."

Hearty laughs. "Why the things I've been hearing about Coleman and his eighteen-volume report.....!"

"You've got the number right, but I didn't write ~~them~~ 'em, all ... !"

In such wise we chaffed and fenced. ~~He told me~~ "Michael West," I went on; it seems to me that what he did was to loop around and clean up all the funds earmarked for foreign lecturers so there wasn't any left for me!"

"You're just about right there, Palmer. We had some money lying about loose when he came, but, shucks and

got damn it, there isn't any cash lying around loose now, no sir!"

Then he told me all about how sorry he was not to have been able to invite me for lectures, how Herndon Fife (Columbia) had written to him about me

He then talked about a Miss Eddy of Iowa City, of her work on simplification of texts (!), of how I must go and meet her and her crowd, as Iowa City lies on my way west. Yes, Horn was at Iowa, too (Horn who was in Madison when I was there, and who did not manage to meet me in spite of his letter). I had thought of giving Iowa the go-by, but now it looks as if that were going to be my next stopover, for I must discuss simplification of texts (and Gold Bugs) with fellow text-simplifiers.

This meant whisky. It was during the prohibition period.

So there was a fortunate meeting, and all by chance.

On the way back to Bloomfield's Prof. Taylor takes me to see a doctor-friend of his who is likely to give me a "prescription" for sleeplessness. The physician is out, but his wife thinks I'll get it all right if I call later. (In Canada they do not call these things "prescriptions" but "permits") [As it turns out, it is inconvenient for me to call later to-day, but I shall look him up to-morrow when I am in the neighbourhood again.]

More delightful talk with Bloomfield. I accompany him to the University Hospital nearby and we continue our talk while he is waiting for his treatment. After which Mrs. Bloomfield drives us to their home in their car. A luxurious home, indescribably inviting and richly furnished. More talks. A dinner (during which their 8-year old son discusses the Manchurian problem with me, and offers his ideas on the causes of earthquakes and on safety devices).

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Mrs. B. has occasion to go into the city, so she drives me there (Six miles of speedway along the lake — which looks exactly like an ocean; the Lakeside of Chicago by night with masses of skyscrapers all illuminated). It was worth the drive even if by accepting it I was unable to get my "prescription."

Chicago is now ~~be~~ assuming a more friendly air. At first (in spite of Y.M.C.A. cordiality) it seemed rather forbidding, and did not give me the thrill of New York. By the way the Y.M.C.A. people manifest kindness after kindness — as if they cannot do too much for me. Perhaps I shall prolong my stay here — Arizona can wait a bit.

Found a note on my return from Cousin William Harris's files, who called several times. He wants to entertain me. Must write and apologize, and make a date. I only wrote to him this morning — quick reaction.

The Y.M.C.A. people mentioned casually that Dr. Reischauer (from Tokyo) was here — but subsequent inquiries revealed that he was out of town.

And so we come to the end of a perfect day — with the prospect of another to-morrow.

Oh, I forgot to mention. One of the books I saw on Bloomfield's desk was my "Grammar of Spoken English." He is using it in connection with the new and revised edition of his work "An Introduction to the Study of Language" (the book that H.O. Coleman showed me 11 years ago — in his garden at Berkemstead — in order to prove some point against my views). He says it is the only book of its kind in any language, and that it affords a mine of information concerning language. My gracious! this is a glory tour and no mistake — yet the only people who have made me any real recompense for my work are those who prize it least: the Japanese government!

Chicago. Dec. 8th

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I'm liking Chicago. So much so that I shall probably put in several days more. It's freezing but bracing. My digs are most comfortable, more comfortable and friendly than any place I have ever stayed at anywhere — including Beaulieu and St. Ives. Besides.....

This morning I went to the University again. This consists of beautiful Gothic buildings looking like cathedrals and abbeys and cloisters and chapter-houses all set out in park-like surroundings some six miles to the south of here. Saw Coleman (who is exceedingly pleasant and reasonable) who lunched me together with some 8 notables. With some of these (notably Bond) I discussed things linguistic and put in some first class propaganda. Much more pleasant than Columbia (New York) and seemingly more profitable than Madison (profitable as propaganda — not ~~as~~ in the way of lecture fees). My prestige seems to be very high — always on account of my first book.

I am invited to ~~dine with~~ lunch with one Bové to-morrow, to dine with Coleman, and to have a meeting with a special group afterwards. [The collocation-list is the chief attraction; they are never tired of hearing about it].

Afterwards another long talk with Bloomfield. He is quite different from anybody else — we feel drawn to each other and just enjoy being together. For one thing, I need not do propaganda stunts with him, for we see things absolutely eye to eye. But it does seem astonishing that I should be a source of inspiration to him.

~~He~~ [By the way the friendly physician duly left me the prescription which was duly made up at a neighbouring drug-store — "dose; 3 tablespoons 3 times a day, to induce sleep"]

I have telephoned third-cousin William M. Harris. He meets me, takes me in his car to a fine restaurant and entertains me. He has heard of me from his father of Auburn. He is delightful.

After the feed he drives me along the magnificent boulevards beside the Lake which looks like an ocean. Chicago at night from the lakeside looks fairylike. The lighting effects, I think, are more striking even than those of little old New York.

Have had no time for "gold-bugging" to-day (nor shall I have any to-morrow) but never mind; I've got the inspiration. It comes to this; that with my peculiar research temperament I find it difficult — almost impossible — to wax enthusiastic on any of my research efforts that are not current. Like the mill, I cannot grind with the water that is past. I am ready now at any moment to dilate with enthusiasm on the "Principles of Text Simplification" that I am now working at. And fortunately ~~on these papers~~ this subject ~~has a common ground with~~ is ~~groups~~ ~~here~~ one on which we are all equally interested. Whether it is Coleman or Michael West or Henmon or Wilkins, whether we agree or disagree on the Oral Approach or the as Speed attitude, we all agree that there must be text simplification — and in the few days that have elapsed since I started in on this at Madison I have come to be able to throw ~~on~~ a new and important light on this sort of activity.

Oh yes, and I visited the Craigie office. Sir William Craigie, of Oxford Dictionary fame, is working here at the New American Dictionary — a scholarly work that will take some 20 years. Sir William was away, but his second, Dr. Watson, showed me the work and how it was being carried on. I took Dr. Watson for a foreigner at first until I discovered that he was speaking educated but violently strong Scottish — a couple of learned Scots working at Chicago University to produce the greatest work on American English: almost as bad as the Englishman in Tokyo producing the most important work on Japanese Romanization!

Chicago. Dec 9th

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Snow. Snowing. Slushy. Getting ready to spend a third day at the University.

Get there (once again by the rapid, clean, swift-moving electric cars + the Illinois Central, never crowded and very frequent). See Bloomfield once more — probably for the last time. Then to the club to meet Bouée, who takes me to his home. He is in a similar case to mine. Wife French and with grown-up married bi-lingual daughter — who is also a fine attractive-looking girl, also following in the footsteps of her father — at a distance.

I witness Bouée's teaching. It is without exception the best I have ever seen anywhere. His first class consisted of students who have been learning only for two months, and showed an achievement that can only be called marvellous. His second class was students who are one year more advanced. Here the achievement seemed more marvellous still. He spoke rapidly and fluently — I could hardly catch what he said myself. Perfect responses. Rapid reading with understanding — handling French ~~as~~ almost as if it were the mother tongue. And more: deducing correctly various forms (e.g. subjunctives) that they had never seen nor heard before. — And then the personality of the man! No exaggerated features, nor undue play-acting, but a source of enjoyment. His pupils looked happy and followed the lessons with a sort of excitement, as if they were witnessing or taking part in a play.

Bouée told me once again that it was I who had been his inspiration. But he complained bitterly. "Coleman will come and see my lessons; he knows the results I obtain — results in reading, mark you, rapid reading, the very thing that the Colemans are out to get. Result: damning with faint praise! Dr. Michael West comes to see my teaching and results, and because I don't use his technique he is unimpressed. And now, if you please, I am to be deprived of my post as lecturer on method! I am no longer to be allowed to train teachers....."

It does seem queer. Here is a man doing with extraordinary success all that seems to me desirable — and more; and this is his reward!

Later I shall be dining and conferring with Coleman, who, from all accounts, is the most influential of all the foreign language ~~teachers~~ world of the United States; the editor of the "Report" that sets the pattern for all language work; the reactionary, the prejudiced despot, the man who is undoing the work for which I stand, the discourager of initiative, the Walter Ripman, the man against whom I have been warned at Smith College, at Hunter College, at all the places where good, sound teaching is carried on. Shall I, as outside enquirer, put the case of Bouée to him to get his reactions? I shall be guided by events. Bouée ~~tells me~~ reminds me of what Coleman had said to ~~him~~^{me} in his presence: "Oh, Bouée will put up a good show, right enough; there's no doubt about that."

~~and its effects~~ I arrive before the hour at Coleman's, and ~~am~~^{am} received by his sister, a charming elderly teacher of Spanish, with whom I have entertaining talk. Algernon Coleman arrives; most genial and humorous, lively, receptive, a good listener — and apparently honoured by my visit. Keen, hard-headed, slightly apologetic about his reputed categorical attitude:

"Well, you've seen Bouée's teaching. Good show, wasn't it? I know he'd put up a good show; he always does. He must have had the time of his life with you as an audience; he loves that sort of thing. Actor, isn't he? Splendid actor, and splendid teacher. He can get his results. But it wants a Bouée to do it. We can't turn out teachers like that; they have to be born. That's the trouble. It's his personality that gets the stuff across....."

To all of which I listen with interest and a certain dismay, for while he is describing Bouée he is describing me.

We dine, and continue our talk. He wants to know all about Japanese conditions, my work over there, our aims and achievements. I state as a positive fact that on my return to Japan we start in for the first time on intensive and official teacher-training in the ~~colleges~~ ~~4-Ed~~ teacher-training colleges.

We go to one of the comfortable lounges of the University, where we are joined by about a dozen teachers, all high up in the Chicago world of linguistics. I am invited to hold forth. So I touch on the high points of our work in Japan, ranging from ~~not~~ lexicology to our methods of teaching reading. I am careful not to put the point at issue too boldly or challengingly. ~~But they~~ I do not wish to risk a controversial talk which would have no ending. They know perfectly well that I am the advocate of teaching reading through Speech; I know equally well that they are the advocates of teaching reading ~~as~~ ^{through} reading. I feel in my bones that they are wrong — all wrong. But I steer the talk into safe channels, in which we are all substantially in agreement — text simplification, "gold-bug" etc., this leading on to word-counts, subjectivity and objectivity, non-normal collocations, semantic varieties, ~~from~~ syntax-patterns etc. To ward off any awkward and non-profitable arguing about the foundations of reading, I speak of the special conditions obtaining in Japan, and profess non-competence in the matter of the special needs of America.

I manage to show off all that is in my bag of tricks and, almost for the first time, am able to discuss problems of the application of lexicological findings. This would have been impossible at Columbia, and rather difficult at Wisconsin.

The meeting breaks up at 10. I receive congratulations and thanks — they all seem mindful of the fact that I am visiting them at my own expense and at a sacrifice (unlike Michael West, who lectured for a week with good remuneration), and they seem grateful.

Coleman orders straight away a collection of everything we have produced in Japan (that's a good \$10 order)

Then when we are alone, with our coats on, Coleman talks to me of his end of the problem. How he had to be the impartial judge to sum up the vast collection of evidence provided by the

eighteen volumes of stuff representing the results of the linguistic survey. He does not seem to be anti-Bovéé nor unduly ~~pro~~ in favour of de Sauzé (the big man in Cleveland, whom, I had been told, was a sort of minion of Coleman's). He said in effect: "~~Bovéé gets great success in reading,~~" "Bovéé's pupils get high marks in reading and poor marks in grammar; de Sauzé's pupils get low marks in reading and ~~high~~ high marks in grammar, and as Bovée concentrates on reading, and de Sauze on grammar, it is what is to be expected." This seems favourable to Bovée.

What does it all amount to from my angle, anyway? I shall see it more clearly later, when I am out of the immediate environment.

At the end Coleman expressed to me "the great satisfaction that he had had over my visit," with renewed thanks. "Anything that I can do at any time for you here, Mr. Palmer, remember, I shall be most happy to do it." This seemed to be spoken with significance, for, as I have said, his influence is tremendous. He walked with me as far as the station, and lent me his commutation ticket, and we parted, with renewed expressions of devotion on his part.

And so back to my quarters.

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Chicago. Dec. 10th.

Warmer. Snow turned to slush. Read in the paper that Sir Denison Ross (my former chief at the London School of Oriental Studies) is being an honoured visitor in Chicago. So I try to get hold of him but cannot trace him. Cannot get hold of Professor Galland, of the North-Western University, who wants to meet me. Cannot get hold of Cousin William M. Harris, who is to entertain me again to-day. Cannot get hold of Professor Permonster who has run me up in my absence. Can't get hold of anybody.

Nothing much happens during the day.

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Cousin William comes round later and he drives me in his car to the far north end of Chicago and into Evingston²; there I find Galland's house — but the Professor is out, worse luck

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Chicago. Dec 11th

Bouée calls, and we discuss at length the language-teaching situation in Chicago and in the U.S. in general, particularly in regard to his work, efforts, and comparative failure. I must really get hold of the point of view of the Colemans and Bonds, and see what they are really aiming at. So far as I can see, their idea of what they call Direct Reading might pass if it were not that with it the whole Direct Method idea, the "as speech" attitude and disciplines is thrown overboard. Bouée takes me to the University Club here in the middle of Chicago; it is like a Gothic Cathedral.

Later Cousin William calls for me in his car. I have the intention of taking him to a Japanese restaurant. We try here and there, and are directed to a certain address which seems to be known as a Japanese restaurant. But it turns out to be a private Japanese club. The man who runs it (Mukoyama San) soon identifies me with the Premier of Japan, and begs me to come and dine with Cousin William — will we come in 1½ hours' time, so that they may have time to prepare the feed? This suits us admirably, as we want to go and see the Planetarium.

There we are given a perfectly wonderful demonstration. The audience is seated under an immense white dome, under the centre of which is a most complicated instrument — a series of projectors with lantern-slides etc. The hall is darkened, and then on the dome we see the representation of all the visible stars together with sun, moon & planets, which can be made to move in any direction according to date, year, latitude etc. Occasionally lantern slides are projected showing the nebulae etc. as seen through the most powerful telescopes. All this is to the accompaniment of a ~~lect~~ lecture that goes on for exactly 1½ hours. As a pointer a luminous

arrow is made to flash across the dome. I have never seen nor heard of such a demonstration before; it leaves you speechless with its clarity and absorbing interest. There was one attached to the Zoological Gardens in Berlin, but it was closed while we were there. How I wish there were one in London for Trisham to see.

Then back to the Japanese Club. All cordiality and enthusiasm. The manager is delighted to meet a cousin of Mr. Peemer's..... The rest of the time was just a huge gloat and show-off for me, a glory-time, leaving Cousin William amazed and delighted. [He is a most pleasant and splendid fellow, rather young (say 35), handsome, sincere, modest, generous. He enlisted at an early date and served on the western front (receiving wounds) and later ~~he~~ was in the American army of occupation about Coblenz; we took to each other spontaneously, and enjoyed each other's company]. Not that I meant to show off nor even tried to; it was just uninvited honour. Mr. Mukoyama produced an English-Japanese dictionary, the one that I revised - Takehara's - The publisher sent an inscribed copy to Mr. M., who was therefore proud of it, and when he identified me with the reviser (with my name on it and all) he jubilated, and asked me to sign it and to add some suitable inscription. So I wrote:

Shikago ni
Nihongo wa
Shikago da!

with the far-fetched interpretation: "In Chicago ~~the~~ the Japanese language seems a dear [deer] language." which made Mr. Mukoyama chortle with glee. He called to a Japanese naval lieutenant who was there to admire it. The Jap. lieut. turned out to be an old student of Chiba's, Medley's and Fletcher's, at the Tokyo School of foreign languages, and, naturally knowing all about me.

A very nice Japanese meal served by a ne-san. Sukiyaki, awabi and suimono (alas! no sake), which Cousin William

enjoyed as much as (or even more than) I did. He enthused all the time and handled his chopsticks most skilfully. I conversed the while with the ne-san, and found I had not forgotten the lingo. It was nearly midnight when we left, and Cousin William had 16 miles to drive — out to his home. [His wife is not in Chicago at present — she is recuperating at Racine up north on the Lake side. I should like to have met her]. We bade each other an affectionate farewell — and there was nothing perfunctory about it.

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Chicago, Dec 12th

Professor Parmenter has me called for at 11 in a car that takes me to the University. [Coleman, I am told, wants to see me again, by the way]. I am told, too, that Mr. Cooke, the President of the Speak-o-phone Corporation, wants to see me]. Parmenter wants me to make some gramophone records so as to secure my intonation. Close by his laboratory I see Sir Henry Craigie's office, so I enter, and find not only Dr. Watson (whom I wanted to see again) but also Sir Henry himself, and we talk about lexicology — especially the "at"-chart, in which they are interested.

I am shown over the phonetics laboratory, and see the interesting work they are doing in it. What a wonderful university! And what funds and endowments they must have! [And yet the Chicago ~~State~~ Education office (together with the whole city) is virtually bankrupt, and the teachers have been unpaid for months]

A long talk with Coleman, with Parmenter sitting by and joining in. Coleman is certainly a chatterbox, taking about 20 minutes to answer the simplest question I put to him. Parmenter comments on it afterwards, admiring my patience in listening to such a flow of words. Coleman is defending his attitude, and trying to explain and justify this "Direct Reading" method — so hardly allowing Parmenter or me to get in a word edgewise.

We go afterwards to see the Speak-o-phone man. It seems that I met him (with Garwick) in New York, when we were discussing the means to exploit the Speak-o-phone in Japan. He tells me now that he is sending 4 mechanics to Japan — to Okura and Co., requesting them however to give special terms and favours to Naganuma (which really means myself). All this is not clear, so I suggest that he (Cooke) and I speak to Naganuma on the Speak-o-phone, which we do.

After this 7 hours of conferring, discussing, and negotiating, I return to my hotel rather tired, and in no humour for "gold-bugging."

To-morrow morning I leave, and make my way to the next shopping-point, which is Iowa City, where another group is getting ready to tell me all they know about matters linguistic. This is 237 miles away, and a six hours' journey.

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So this is Chicago. I have been here just over a week and have come to feel quite at home here — which is not surprising. I imagine I could secure a post at the University when times are a bit better — but I certainly should not like to live here. No.

This being the week-end I send off this News-Letter.

Will you who read it first now arrange for a new order of sending it on? In view of the lengthy (and to most of you totally uninteresting) descriptions of and comments on the linguistic situation and personalities, which serve as my personal notes, the order had better be from now:

1. Folkestone (and Hythe)
2. Beech (London)
3. Redman (H.V., 20, Aoba, Shibuya, Tokyo)

thus (repetitively) cutting out Brussels and Shanghai.