

Comment by the Editor

ACTUAL HISTORY

"I know histhry isn't throe," observed Mr. Dooley to his friend Hinnessy, "because it ain't like what I see ivry day in Halsted Sthreet. If any wan comes along with a histhry iv Greece or Rome that'll show me th' people fightin', gettin' dhrunk, makin' love, gettin' married, owin' th' groceryman, an' bein' without hard coal, I'll believe they was a Greece or Rome, but not befure."

In the effort to discover grand patterns in the course of events, historians have neglected the details of the design. It is as though a connoisseur, observing a tapestry which depicts the heroics of a nation, should see only the general plan and ultimate effect. His viewpoint is remote, impersonal, aloof. He looks at a pageant of the past, reviewing what is finished.

But the weavers of the mural cloth knew every thread and shade of color. To them each object had the familiarity of an intimate friend, each allegorical episode possessed reality in fabric, and the whole tapestry attained vitality in the process of creation. Their viewpoint was near and personal. Their eyes were on the present — not much con-

cerned with past and future, with completed figures or the shape of things to be.

A similar disparity separates the makers of history from those who write of it. To busy men and women, the even tenor of normal affairs is seldom disturbed by contemplating the significance of Hammurabi's code or measuring the consequences of the sudden death of an emperor's nephew. Yet the historians, yearning for oracular vision, overlook the habitual activities of the multitude. In their zeal for decisive events, dramatic unities, and the cause of effects, they ignore the general experience of the race.

Actual history consists of the daily lives of common folks. To most people the consumption of kind, satisfactory cigarettes may be more important than the protective tariff. Vast industries are founded upon the decline and fall of pedestrianism. Custom is the crucible of history. The true chronicles of any community are the sayings and doings of matrons and merchants, lawyers and litigants, barbers and bus drivers, workmen and widows. Bob Burdette's "Hawkeyetems" may be a better gauge of Burlington civilization than the political sagacity of Editor Edwards and his successors.

J. E. B.