

GERALD CARSON author of CORNFLAKE CRUSADE
and THE OLD COUNTRY STORE

The

Roguish

World

of

Doctor Brinkley

DR. JOHN R. BRINKLEY
stood among common
tent-show medical quacks
as an eagle among sparrows;
he was the most fabulously
successful twilight zone "doctor"
that the U.S. ever saw.

The Roguish World of Doctor Brinkley

by Gerald Carson

At various times there arises some extraordinary popular sorcerer to exploit the people in one or all of such potentially profitable fields as religion, politics and, of course, medicine. Such a man was John R. Brinkley, of Kansas, Texas and Arkansas, medical maverick and potent radio personality, a physician and surgeon with sketchy training, lone-wolf ethics, a sense of glittering destiny and a free-wheeling spirit of adventure, who missed winning the governorship of Kansas twice by a micron's breadth.

Doctor Brinkley revived the old dream of eternal youth on a spacious scale, and devised a goat-gonad operation which, he promised, would make any oldster once again a marvel of sexual potency. Six thousand goats

(continued on back flap)



(continued from front flap)

gave up their virility for his patients, netting the doctor twelve million dollars. He owned the most powerful radio station in North America, and had his own busy hospital. He was a guest at the White House, a thirty-second-degree Mason, and the owner of a vast fleet of Cadillacs, three yachts, and a palatial Texas estate. But, of course, all his life, the law was just around the corner. In the end, the AMA, the U. S. Post Office, the State Department, and the FCC proved too much for him. He died, the finest flower of U. S. medical quackery, in 1942.

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THE
ROGUISH
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OF
Doctor 
Brinkley

by Gerald Carson

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Dr. John R. Brinkley was, as one judge remarked, "on the firing line all his life." His background, education, licensure, high-powered promotion, the nature of his reputation, have been frequently explored in judicial proceedings, and this account of him has been developed largely from court and other official records, and the proceedings of public meetings. I have also made extensive use of Dr. Brinkley's own promotional material: letters, advertisements, pamphlets and other writings issued under his authority. None of the text set forth in direct quotation is invented.

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G.C.

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THE ROGUISH WORLD OF
Doctor Brinkley

“The subject of rejuvenation has a long, insane history.”

MARTIN GARDNER, *“In the Name of Science.”* New York: 1952

. 1 .

One Born Every Hour

☞ Our generous support of odd-ball therapists, one-idea men, crackpots and out-and-out medical hucksters is one of the wonders of American life. The United States has long been a land overflowing with milk and honey for queer medical theories, faith healers, any man with a contraption of coils and dials—and the gifts of the midway barker. By the time that John R. Brinkley, in 1917, hit upon goat glands as something to talk about, the American Medical Association had the records, admittedly incomplete, of some three hundred thousand fakers and root doctors, medical confidence men and nostrum promoters. Kansas City—where Brinkley acquired a medical diploma from an eclectic school which has been described as “vague, obliging and long defunct”—led the parade. The hustling Missouri metropolis, in Doc Brinkley’s salad days, was the home and nesting place of more illegal doctors in proportion to population than any other city of its size in the United States. Across the Missouri River, in the sovereign state of Kansas, three hundred quacks were in practice, with at least thirty identifiable types of fake healing.

In the crowded field of pseudo-medicine, Dr. John R. Brinkley stood head and shoulders above his fellows. But the competition was stiff. It included such gifted operatives as Professor Albert Abrams, whose imaginative inventions included a theory of

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disease called "Spondylotherapy" and a bizarre electronic box which capitalized the psychic awe the average man felt for the mysteries of electricity. High on any list of picturesque quacks of the recent past is the name of Norman Baker. There are many parallels in the careers of Dr. Brinkley and Baker. Baker was an old vaudeville mentalist and steam-calliope manufacturer. He had operated a mail-order course, teaching oil painting in ten easy lessons. Like Brinkley, he got into radio early, with a station at Muscatine, Iowa, KTNT; published a lurid magazine, TNT (*The Naked Truth*). Baker moved in on the medical field with a paste which would take the knots off a horse's leg, promoting the medication as a treatment for cancer. Baker was chased out of Iowa about the same time that Dr. Brinkley was having a similar traumatic experience in Kansas. He also, like Doctor, sought "vindication" through high political office.

Following Brinkley to the Mexican border, Baker set up a powerful radio station, XENT, located just across the Rio Grande River from Laredo, Texas. It was a holdup scheme. XENT would change its frequency, snuggle up close to a rich U.S. station and blow it off the air. Then would come an offer to move—for a price. A snappy dresser, Baker looked pretty sharp in his purple shirts, white suits with bulletproof vest, and orchid-colored car.

An honorable mention should go to Gaylord Wilshire, the very image of a medicine man, with his Vandyke, loud waistcoat, checked pants and tan shoes. Wilshire once sold gold-mine stock to fellow Socialists on time payments. His contribution to medicine was the promotion of a version of the old electric belt into a kind of magic horse collar, which was said to magnetize the iron in the blood when plugged into a convenient socket. Many true believers in this odd device, the "I-on-o-co," who would have scoffed at the idea of carrying a rabbit's foot, were unaware of the fact that magnetism has no effect upon the human body and its processes. They earnestly testified to the therapeutic powers of the gadget (\$58.40 for spot cash, \$65 on the lay-away plan). Among the reported cures were those of baldness, varicose veins, Bright's disease, prostate enlargement and mental derangement.

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Wilshire went on to his reward as a result of a kidney ailment which was beyond the powers of the I-on-o-co, his name perpetuated in Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles.

Dr. Brinkley, the medical maverick of Kansas and Texas, was at once the most preposterous and the most plausible of the brotherhood, the most fertile in idea, fastest on his feet. He made the most money, got the most fun out of being rich, fooled the most people of any American medical irregular since Elisha Perkins waved his own version of the Aesculapian wand, the celebrated "Perkins' Patent Tractors," which closely resembled horseshoe nails. Brinkley demonstrated again what is so often forgotten—that people readily believe in what they hope may happen, especially in a psychologically sensitive area such as sexual potency.

Bilking the people is, of course, one of the oldest professions. In ancient Babylon, the Code of Hammurabi, *circa* 2250 B.C., provided penalties for charlatanism and malpractice. Since the dawn of history the medical pretender has steadily maintained certain identifiable characteristics and the unlettered backwoods Brinkley had them all. The attributes and trappings of the successful peddlers of medical wonders may be itemized. They are equipped, first, with a strong personality, necessary in drawing the credulous to them. They strive for psychological effects through being richly or fantastically dressed. A sixteenth-century drawing by Hieronymus Bosch shows a charlatan garbed outlandishly as a Turk. Hindu costume has often been resorted to for its exoticism, and, in this country, the feathers of the American Indian headdress have been used to play upon the notion that primitive man possesses curative secrets undisclosed to the educated. Dr. Brinkley adorned himself with diamonds and a neat goatee which made him look like the Man of Science as portrayed in the toothpaste ads. Brinkley mingled the newer knowledge of the glands with the ancient symbolism of the billy goat. Greek mythology conferred abundantly on the god Pan, who had the legs of a goat, that special ability in which Dr. Brinkley's elderly patients were particularly interested. The goat, from ear-

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liest times, has been the very image of progenitiveness. So Brinkley, with his Arkansas Toggenbergs and a simple surgical technique, accommodated the psychically impotent with an operation which urological surgeons said could not be successfully performed.

While it appears to be a social law that there has been no change in credulity since the days of Hermes Trismegistus, there have always been plenty of innovations to keep the customers interested. It is not surprising, therefore, that the glands of internal secretion should have attracted the attention of promoters; and so there emerged, in the 1920-30 decade, the gland therapists, who proposed to replace worn-out parts of the human anatomy with new parts obtained from the lower animals.

Dr. Brinkley was the dean of the field, ambitious to rise in the social order. There is, in his authorized biography, more than a hint that Doctor had a schizophrenic personality. Clement Wood, a belletrist who wandered into many strange fields, was paid an estimated five thousand dollars for writing *The Life of a Man* (Kansas City: 1934), which presents an idealized and greatly retouched portrait of Doctor.

“He is convinced that he was placed in this world for a definite purpose,” Wood wrote. He was to fulfill a mission, that of healing the sick, and was convinced “that, as a part of this plan, persecutions must come, ending in his triumph, and the utter rout and destruction of his enemies. He expects to be alive and healing still, after the American Medical Association is destroyed. . . . This intense conviction within him contributes to his strength and force of character. . . .”

There is plenty of evidence that Dr. Brinkley was a man of extraordinary enterprise and imagination. He was, in a literal sense, The Boy Who Had No Chance. He cut the ethical corners to advance himself, and the boy who grew up on Southern mountaineer white gravy, corn bread and precious little molasses to sop it in, lived to be a power in the land. Dr. Brinkley was able to focus all the fears and frustrations of growing old on his goat-gland deal, with such skill that thousands of elderly gentlemen in

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the Western states believed that a frisky young goat, and Brinkley, could make them again as they once were. Thousands of goats gave up their virility in this dubious cause.

There is scarcely a town in the Mississippi Valley and the plains states but what can recall at least one old resident who decided to "go to Brinkley." Sometimes even the fathers of regular physicians sneaked off to consult Doc wherever he was hanging his hat at the time—Milford, Kansas; Del Rio, Texas; or, at the end, Little Rock, Arkansas. Brinkley is perfectly understandable in our civilization, which rejects the aged. He caught the sufferer and the hypochondriac alone with his radio, often at a low moment, late at night. "When sickness comes," runs the proverb, "judgment flies out of the window."

Doctor—Brinkley customarily omitted the definite article when referring to himself, and often used the third person—fought his enemies with picturesque invective. "Smirking oligarchs" was one of his milder epithets for the officials of the American Medical Association. The vaults of many a courthouse across our broad land are stuffed with papers beginning, "Comes now the plaintiff, John R. Brinkley," who, from the first Question and Answer to the final "and further affiant saith not" was battling "malicious design and intent" on somebody's part. Whether or not Doc Brinkley gave his patients anything more than psychological kicks, there isn't any doubt that he contributed to the vigor and economy of our system of jurisprudence through fees and annual retainers, court reporting and transcribing, the issuing of subpoenas, the swearing in of witnesses; through the processes of indictment and extradition; through bailiff's duties, sheriff's fees and scads of legal printing. Legal warfare is expensive. Yet Dr. Brinkley was able to support himself and his family, as Robert J. Landry said in *This Fascinating Radio Business* (Indianapolis: 1946), "in the style of an Austrian Archduke," his wife's diamonds being "universally described as awesome."

As Doc hit his stride out in little Milford, Kansas, he became one of the most celebrated citizens of the commonwealth "born of the Bible and Sharpe's rifles," a kind of self-made Sunflower

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State Galen. Kansans are known as a hardy race, with the fortitude to endure much: drought, grasshoppers, twisters, and sockless politicians. They survived Brinkley, too—all except a few for whom death filled out the R_x at the Brinkley Hospitals.

When Doctor Brinkley regarded his Arabian Nights splendor, he was frankly pleased with what he saw.

“For a poor boy, up from bare feet in Jackson County, North Carolina, this, dog me, is something.”

Doc wanted to eat high on the hog; and he did. If he never got over picking his teeth in public, at least he did it with a gold toothpick. His was quackery in the grand style. His training was sketchy, but his promotional talents made up for the deficiencies. Other and humbler men might mix up a batch of liniment behind a tent and find their forum on the tail gate of a show wagon. Knights of the tripe and keister might pitch their “corn punk”—salve for corns—at the curb in provincial towns when the cops weren’t looking. Itinerant doctors of dubious antecedents might, as lost-manhood specialists, hire an empty store building, moving on to another stand when the local market was milked. But Dr. Brinkley was an eagle among such sparrows. He was spacious, a kind of genius cut on the bias, with his own powerful radio station, his own busy hospital, a special kind of medical evangelism, a platoon of assistant quacks, who “took care” of customers drawn from half the globe, while in the boom days fifty secretaries were required to handle Doctor’s mail.

With his clever rejuvenation idea, his more than Oriental splendor, all the hoopla on the radio, his string of honors and diplomas, and back of it all his unpromising beginnings—Brinkley could be said to have invented himself. Dr. Brinkley is dead now; but his spirit goes marching on. An enterprising Californian offers to cure prostatitis and sexual inadequacy, along with ringing of the ears and twenty-six other diseases, by using blackstrap molasses. Or, one may try the royal jelly of the queen bee, which the Enerjol Wonder Capsule people say “has baffled science for over 200 years.” The important thing to remember about the

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queen bee "is her sex performance," and—here's good news—"Tests on humans showed almost unbelievable results." But wait, there is more. The royal jelly, "Fountain of Youth Cocktail" though it is, has been spiked with oyster concentrate. Every schoolboy knows the mythology of aphrodisiac foods and the role which oysters play in restoring "ambition." As the Owen Laboratories, makers of the Wonder Capsules, say, how fortunate we are to live in the era of penicillin, Salk vaccine and royal jelly; and they add, "This is a marvelous age."

But before loading up on royal jelly and winging off like the queen bee on a nuptial flight, how can one be sure that there is not something even more marvelous just around the corner? Herbal medicine has come up, for instance, with pega palo extract. Known as the "vitality vine," and looking something like poison ivy, the vine has its own *mystique*. It seems that the Fountain of Youth, which the Carib Indians told Juan Ponce de Leon about, wasn't a far-distant, inaccessible spring of water at all. It was a regeneration brew, a specific for pepping up males over forty: pega palo. Until the Food and Drug Administration ordered seizure of the vine, root, branch and tincture, bars were featuring pega palo cocktails at a dollar a throw and Miami, Florida, went on a pega palo kick.

"Pega palo is being used to take the suckers," according to Wallace F. Janssen, Assistant to the Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration. "We don't know of any drug which is an aphrodisiac. The efficacy of so-called aphrodisiacs is one of those behind-the-barn myths."

The rough-and-ready type is apparently always eager to spend his money on some glandular booster aimed at defeating nature. He is usually the guy who has "been around." The trouble with him is that he hasn't been around enough, or he would know that there is no such thing as artificial rejuvenation. But fringe practitioners, renegade M.D.'s and naturopaths with meager medical backgrounds, come upon the town with new ways to work old tricks.


Education, information, a critical frame of mind, are the

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weapons of defense against medical hocus-pocus, backed up by social action to protect the fool from his folly. Dr. Brinkley, who made an estimated twelve million dollars out of goat glands, has been followed by a new generation of innovators in the purlieus of pseudo-medicine, who would like very much to do the same. But Doc still holds the diamond-studded championship belt of the twentieth century for guts, gall and getting away with the loot. Only the boys in the back room will ever know all that went on. Here, in the pages that follow, is *some* of what happened. And so, as the most powerful radio station in North America used to boom out nightly, "This is Dr. John R. Brinkley greeting his friends in Kansas and everywhere."

. 2 .

Story Line for an Alger Hero

 John Romulus Brinkley was born among a God-fearing, gun-toting people in the cloud-wrapped peaks of the Great Smoky Mountains. The visibility has always remained low on his early years. Apparently Doctor wanted it just that way. He is himself the chief and almost the only source of biographical data, made available when he testified in the legal controversies which were a constant feature of his later years. From time to time the story was revised and artistically embellished to illustrate the central theme of the poor mountain boy who made good. Like Cagliostro, the “King of the Quacks,” a Sicilian street boy who made himself a count, Brinkley re-edited various personal episodes into propaganda fairy tales. More fortunate than the count, Doctor did not die in jail.

In his application for a medical license in Connecticut, for example, Doctor stated that he was born in Tennessee, July 8, 1885. In filing for a license in Arkansas, he claimed Kentucky as his native state. He told the medical licensing boards of California and Texas that he was born in North Carolina. Perhaps he was not certain himself where he was from. It appears probable, however, that Dr. Brinkley was born in or near Beta, in Jackson County, North Carolina, a straggling settlement of a few hundred people. But Brinkley never wavered as to the date of his

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birth or the existence of the little log cabin of his infant years. It was chinked with red Carolina mud, a field-stone chimney at one end. There were no windows, just gaping openings in the side walls. The sagging porch was held up by tree-trunk pillars, a clothesline strung between them. Out back was the potato patch.

The American log cabin was nearing the end of its glorious history, but Dr. Brinkley found it good for one more whirl. There were hollyhocks at the front door, Doctor whispered to his radio audience. The clack of the spinning wheel showed that his mother did not eat the bread of idleness; or, if the cabin was silent, perhaps she was at her devotions, for "the Bible was her library." She was a queen, and "a little cabin beside the Tuckasiege was her castle."

All that is known of Brinkley's mother is recorded in the book, *The Life of a Man*, by Clement Wood. The work is autobiographical in nature. The hand may be the hand of Wood, but the voice is the authentic voice of Doctor. The *Life* is a highly sentimental work of unparalleled unreliability, self-serving and wildly overblown in the writing. But it does contain nuggets of fact which carry Brinkley's life up to 1934. Clement Wood was just the man to do what Dr. Brinkley wanted done in projecting his own image. Author of an odd assortment of works—Greenwich Village sonnets; the preface to the official biography of Norman Baker, the Muscatine, Iowa, cancer quack—Wood, a lay analyst of dreams and their meaning, writer of biographies of Henry VIII, Jehovah and Bernarr Macfadden, manipulated various familiar symbols for Brinkley: a vague but aristocratic ancestry, the country doctor father in faded Confederate gray, the dying mother who taught her only child the Lord's prayer, good manners and the wisdom of folk medicine.

Dr. Brinkley once said that his mother "died when I was a kid, in the Tennessee mountains, back in North Carolina, and I don't remember her. I was raised by a good Methodist aunt." It is surprising that Johnny did not remember his mother, since he was five years old at the time of her death, and very bright for his age. Of this subject, as well as others of a biographical and

Story Line for an Alger Hero

professional nature, Dr. Brinkley gave different accounts at different times. He often elaborated his recollections of his mother, despite the statement quoted above; and Wood, in the *Life*, added a wistful and pathetic deathbed scene between the two. Indeed, the whole first chapter in the book deals sententiously and sentimentally with the theme of American motherhood. This material was often reworked by Dr. Brinkley for radio anniversaries and compares favorably with Senator George Graham Vest's famous jury oration, "Tribute to a Dog."

The figure of young Brinkley first appears solidly and in the round after his mother's death, when he lived at East La Porte, North Carolina, with his uncle and aunt—John Richard Brinkley, a general practitioner, and his wife, "Aunt Sally," "a mighty good old woman," according to the recollection of a neighbor. The boy called the Brinkleys "father" and "mother" and, for one or the other of two reasons, substituted the old doctor's middle name for his natal Romulus.

"My mother was fond of the legend," Brinkley once told *The Kansas City Times*. "She named me John Romulus Brinkley. But the boys in grade school gave me such a ribbing I later went into court and had my name changed to that of my [foster] father—John Richard Brinkley."

Wood has it that the preacher who sprinkled Johnny balked at the name of the legendary Roman twin who was nursed by a she-wolf. It was too heathenish for a Southern Methodist.

There is no reason to doubt some details set forth in Wood's *Life*: that the Brinkleys were torn-down poor, that young Brinkley was a barefoot boy, with fair hair, blue eyes, a high forehead; that he wore patched pants, supported by unreliable galls. He was raised on corn bread and turnip greens, educated in the hickory-stick school of pedagogy and gathered on Sunday with the saints in calico at the meeting house on the ridge.

Brinkley was never carried away by the hell-fire theology of the Carolina elders, though he did catch the chicken pox at one revival meeting. Doctor's religious training, like his foster father's teaching—"A good name is rather to be chosen than

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riches and fine gold”—might appear to have been wasted when one first regards some of the gaudier escapades in his subsequent career. Actually, the evangelical hymns, the emotionalism of the mourners' bench, the dramatic dousings of primitive Christians in the nearby “crick,” all were vivid experiences to the clever and impressionable boy. Biblical metaphor, the psychology of cover-to-cover Bible readers, came to fit Doctor as naturally as his own skin.

Like freewheeling medics and faith healers in all ages—like Tommaso Gianotti of Ravenna, who rebuilt a church and set his own image over the door—like the Count de Saint-Germain, who in the eighteenth century won the favor of Pompadour with his rejuvenation water (a laxative!) and claimed to have been among the wedding guests at Cana and to have seen the miracle of the wine—Brinkley placed a high value on public piety. Coming closer to Doctor in both history and geography, mention may be made of O. E. Miller, Ph.D., of Denver (“Rupture Cured Or No Pay”), who also reinforces the point. Miller, the president of a Y.M.C.A., looted a national bank, yet was so strong in the faith that he taught an adult Bible class in the federal prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and during his years in the pokey also managed the music in chapel.

So, too, Brinkley, working in an ancient tradition, and probably instinctively, sought to associate himself wherever possible with the religious symbols which were dominant in Protestant Kansas. The image of devout and fervid Christian zeal which Doctor projected also served him well in politics later when he built a church, kept a parson, and noted, “If I am a quack, Dr. Luke was a quack, too, for he did not belong to the American Medical Association.” Doctor had the sagacity to see that it was useful politically to mix the Beatitudes with his own candidacy for the governorship of Kansas. The voters understood what Doc meant when he retold the story of Christ driving the money-changers out of the Temple. He meant for their imaginations to dissolve to the Corinthian-columned capitol building in Topeka, with himself in the star role.

Story Line for an Alger Hero

In April of 1896, when Johnny was ten, old Dr. Brinkley was sixty-eight and in failing health. He rested, prayed more than usual, sang again the well-loved songs he had learned when he followed the Bonny Blue flag, and then one day, though he had a burning fever, rode off to attend a sick woman in a hill cabin. And there he quietly died, at the post of duty, chewing tobacco in front of the log fire. "The trusty old horse," the younger Brinkley later said on his Mexican radio station, "came riderless home." Doc always remembered April as "my month of sorrow," noting that his own mother, too, had died in April.

Somehow Aunt Sally and the boy kept body and soul together, with the old cow, the potato patch and Sally's going out as a midwife at three dollars a confinement.

"After my father died," Brinkley said, "why, it was a case of root, pig, or die, and there wasn't much soil to root in. We were poor. I attended the local schools around there near home like the rest of the children, mountain schools. I had to walk to school three miles, oftentimes in the winter barefooted with nothing to eat but a piece of cold corn bread. When we got molasses to sop the bread in we had a feast."

The school, which was carried on in a one-room log building at Tuckasiegee, opened about the time the sweet potatoes came in, and ran on somewhat haphazardly for three or four months. It did not issue a state diploma. The modest aim was simply for each student to get as high as he could. Once in a while, but not every year, as Brinkley's first wife, a classmate, later remembered, they had "some little something" . . . they called it graduating and the Professor "would give these students something to show what they had done"; some character of paper, like a diploma. The school was apparently sometimes public, sometimes a subscription school. In Doctor's biography and in his application to the Kansas Medical Board, it became Tuckasiegee High School. The data was impossible to check. By the time Brinkley had made the school an object of inquiry, all trace of it had disappeared. Later the Kansas Medical Society objected to the theory which Brinkley advanced in his application to doctor in the

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Sunflower State—that he graduated from this “high school” in 1908. They couldn’t find Tuckasiegee, and complained to the State Board of Medical Examination that this bit of autobiography ought to go into the record, along with others, as an instance of “grave immorality and unprofessional conduct.”

However, in filing application for a license in California, Doctor declared that he got his preliminary education at Milton Academy in Baltimore in the years between 1902 and 1906. At any rate, during some sort of rudimentary schooling in Jackson County, and possibly while taking a mail-order course, Johnny Brinkley got a job with the agent for the Southern Railroad at Sylva, North Carolina, one R. M. Grasty. Brinkley served WOC (without compensation); but Grasty taught him telegraphy in return for sweeping up, wrestling with the baggage and keeping the books.

“I just learned him the business,” Grasty said. “But I didn’t pay him no money. He picked up the bookkeepins quick.”

Young Brinkley also “rode the mail” on horseback from Tuckasiegee to Sylva and back on Saturdays, starting before daylight. It was fourteen miles from his home to the railroad station, with plenty of time in Sylva for getting in some practice with the key before the return trip. The boy was bright and full of the old moxie, “one of them kind that learned quick,” as Grasty said.

Once, when Johnny was only ten or eleven years old, he had been in the station with Aunt Sally and the agent then on duty noticed and remembered him.

“I was first attracted to him by his curiosity,” the telegrapher said. “He just wanted to tear my instruments off the table, he was so interested in them.”

At seventeen, the wanderlust, the ambition to be a doctor, to rise in the world at any cost, had already bitten deep into young Brinkley. He had a photographic memory, read such home-treatment doctor books as he could lay his hands on, knew his Bible, could grab a letter, scan it and know all that was in it. There was dagger in him; “he was kind of a recklesslike boy.”

Brinkley himself said in after times: “When I was a skinny,

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long-legged kid, I looked at the mountains and wondered what was on the other side.”

The chattering telegraph instrument was probably the mountain boy’s only link with the great world outside, and it also suggested to him the only means of escape. He “got a little machine from Montgomery Ward in Chicago and fixed it up at home,” said Mrs. Laura Wike, mother of the first Mrs. Brinkley. He was always fooling with his telegraph rig or reading a book. And between trains old Grasty continued to help him at the key. Like Edison, Brinkley got his start through telegraphy, and the parallel was often recalled by Doctor.

In December, 1907, Mrs. Brinkley, “Aunt Sally,” died and the following month Johnny, then twenty-two years old, married Sally Wike, daughter of a school trustee and well-known farmer in the river township. It was a stormy marriage which produced three daughters, and a son who did not survive.

Equipped with a useful skill and a new suit of store clothes, young Brinkley became relief agent for the Southern.

It was the beginning of years of nomadic living which took the Brinkleys into some strange places and tight squeezes. “We were packing up and going all the time from one place to another,” his wife recalled.

The position of a doctor was preferable to that of a railroad station agent in western North Carolina. Brinkley kept his eye steadily on medical school; but first he practiced in a school that did not require elaborate preparation. He became a “Quaker doctor.”

“He got up a little play and he and his wife and some more people went on the road from town to town, you know, giving little plays,” according to Mrs. Ann Bennett, with whom they boarded when he was agent at Bryson City, North Carolina. And at Sylva, Miles Parker recalled that Brinkley “and his first wife organized some kind of a show company. . . . It was singing and dancing. . . . I think he showed in about all these little towns out in the west here.”

To a late-come generation, it may be necessary to explain

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what a Quaker doctor was—once a well-recognized genus in the world of entertainment if not of medicine. The Quaker docs put on a medicine-vaudeville show, usually under canvas, with platforms, Baker torches for illumination and other theatrical trappings. The “doctor,” looking benevolent as all get out, and chockful of integrity, wore his hair long, under the wide-brimmed hat, “thee’d” and “thou’d” all over the place, and called the public “Friend.” He made his pitch for an herb medicine or a tonic. The doctors often put on a very un-Quakerish show. It was in the atmosphere of the “physic show” that Brinkley learned his hypnotic style of talking to the whistlers, whittlers and spitters. And perhaps he found something congenial in the professional attitude of the “med show” spieler to whom a dollar gained by his wits had an allure that was lacking in a ten-spot come by honestly.

In 1908, the Brinkleys and their small daughter, Wanda, were in Chicago, living in a basement room on Adams Street. John was working for Western Union, still looking for a break.

“Sally,” he said, “you know I will never get anywhere at the Western Union. . . . I am going to start into medical school to be a doctor.”

So Brinkley borrowed twenty-five dollars and matriculated at Bennett Medical College, corner of Ada and Fulton streets, at that time an eclectic institution. He worked at night and went to school in the daytime, having breakfasted on his thoughts. At noon he had a five-cent glass of beer and as much free lunch as the bartender would stand for. At night he had a ten-cent meal downtown at Pittsburgh Joe’s. These were slender rations for a five-foot-six, one-hundred-and-fifty-pound man. “He found himself staggering under the load,” a radio fan magazine, *Radio Stars*, reported later. “For months, he tried to carry on, pitting his hill-bred strength against sleepless nights and toil-filled days. In three years he was hopelessly in debt and broken in health.”

Brinkley dropped out of Bennett before his senior year for lack of funds. That disappointment was followed by several years of gypsying and drifting from town to town and state to state.

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There is a glimpse of Brinkley in New York, and again in Chicago. Doctor's own claims vary as to his activities in 1911 and the years immediately following. He declared under oath that from September 1911 to June, 1913, he was attending the National University of Arts and Sciences at St. Louis, Missouri; but the list of matriculants and special students of this institution from 1910 to 1914 does not include the name of any John Richard Brinkley. This St. Louis mill peddled medical diplomas for from two hundred to five hundred dollars. College diplomas for buyers interested in general cultural subjects went for one hundred. Brinkley "attended" the college department and had a paper to prove it. The parchment was issued by W. P. Sachs, then a state examiner of Public Instruction of the State of Missouri, and Dean at the National University. The certificate said, "John R. Brinkley has completed two years of college work at the National University of Arts and Sciences and personally appeared before me and in a written examination . . . has made passing grades . . . entitling him to the credits annexed."

Sachs later admitted that the Brinkley sheepskin was fraudulent and had been issued for a cash consideration, that he had never met Brinkley, and that the certificate which purported to have been issued in 1913 was actually filled out and back-dated some five years after that. When asked to identify the document in some California proceedings, Sachs answered, "That's my signature."

He was asked, "Did you issue the original of that certificate?"

A: "I did, sir."

Q: "And you testified you did not know John Brinkley?"

A: "I did not know John Brinkley."

Q: "And that was issued without an examination?"

A: "Yes, sir."

Q: "It is fraudulent?"

A: "Fraudulent."

Q: "It is dated June, 1913?"

A: "Yes."

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Q: "When was it, in fact, issued?"

A: "I don't know exactly, but it was issued a considerable time after that; perhaps 1918."

For selling over a thousand such certificates and diplomas, Sachs was arrested and jailed. A California grand jury at a later date indicted and tried to extradite Brinkley when he offered this forged paper in the attempt to get a license to practice medicine in California. But the Governor of Kansas would not give Doctor up to the visiting *Polizei* from Sacramento. By that time the goat-gland surgeon had become a power in the politics of the state.

Domestically, *chez* Brinkley, there were quarrels, recriminations and separations. In one instance, Doctor kidnaped Wanda from the home of Sally Brinkley's sister, and spirited the child off to Canada. From Montreal, he was able to use the tot as a handle against his wife to pry certain concessions from her, including the dismissal of a suit she had brought against him in Cook County, Illinois. It was rough work, but it served the needs of a desperate hour.

"I let him in," said Mrs. Brinkley's sister, "and I seen immediately that he was going to take the child . . . and we fought around in the dining room and he would have torn the child limb from limb. I let her go for the child's sake."

There were reconciliations, and more wanderings. In the fall of 1911 the Brinkleys spent two weeks in Jacksonville, Florida. In the spring of 1912—there were two little daughters now—the Brinkley family had "rooms in Mrs. Rice's place" in Vineland, North Carolina. From Vineland they went to Dandridge, Tennessee. At the time John R. had a sort of learner's license in that state, as an "undergraduate physician." The couple were in Dandridge long enough to put in a garden, and then were off to Knoxville.

In Knoxville, Dr. Brinkley was for a time in the employ of a "Dr. Burke," the proprietor of a chain of "men's specialist" offices. Here he learned the trade of "advertising doctor" and knew the thrill of seeing his own name, "Dr. John R. Brinkley, of Chi-

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ago" appear in paid advertising in the Sunday *Knoxville Sentinel*. As Brinkley's landlord recalled, "He had an office in the Deadrick Building with a bunch of them down there. . . . He carried large ads in the papers here of some kind, telling what he did. . . ."

History has not preserved "Dr. Burke's" given name, initials, or any description of his medical premises. But in general the "men's specialists" operated "For Men Only" museums of anatomy, arranged to frighten rustic sinners out of their ready cash. The "doctor" would hire an empty storeroom and a floorman. After the chumps had filed past a few papier-mâché models depicting the consequences of indiscretion, the floorman slipped the native the professional card of the famous specialist and steered him into the Presence.

In April, 1913, the Brinkleys were in Chattanooga, where Burke had a branch. They parted again, this time for good, by divorce. There was by then a third baby girl. "At the time he left me in Chattanooga," the wife said, "I had about fifteen dollars and he took the bulk of the money with him and I had the three kiddies."

After the split-up, Mrs. Brinkley returned to her mother's home in North Carolina. Doctor drifted up to Chicago where, as the story is told in *The Life of a Man*, he had something very like a religious reawakening.

In Lincoln Park, he met and caught fire from an enthusiastic evangelist, a Mississippian, about to go out to China. There, the latter pointed out, Brinkley could practice medicine and surgery without being a graduate physician, provided he were a real good Christian. Brinkley felt in himself a surging return of faith at the prospect of becoming a medical missionary. He agreed gladly to detour through Memphis on the way to Hong Kong to help his new friend say goodbye—for Brinkley it would be hello and goodbye—to the evangelist's beloved brother, who worked in the city ticket office of the Southern Railroad.

The episode is an important bridge in the Brinkley story. It was necessary to get Doctor placed in Memphis. For in Memphis

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he met Minnie Telitha Jones, who became his second wife. She was the daughter of a physician, Dr. Tiberius Gracchus Jones. Thus, if Brinkley was not himself a full-fledged doctor, he was at least the son-in-law of one.

According to another account, Brinkley did make the acquaintance of a congenial Mississippian, but it wasn't at the bathing beach in Lincoln Park, as Doctor had it, and the man wasn't exactly an evangelist. The friendship began at the picturesque horseshoe-shaped bar of the Brevoort Hotel. Brinkley's new acquaintance was James E. Crawford, from Oxford, Mississippi, who later resided in federal prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, under a five-year sentence for transporting a stolen car; and also in the Oklahoma State Penitentiary at McAlester for holding up the Hotel Mayo in Tulsa. Crawford has left a lively account of the association between Brinkley and himself. It was a high adventure, which started out in the Chicago barroom and wound up in the clink at Greenville, South Carolina.

Crawford had been a salesman and a rolling stone. "I run all over this country," he said of the time which had elapsed between his boyhood and his encounter with Doctor. "It would be very difficult to say where I was during those four years." At any rate, the pair decided to set up a medical office similar to the ones in which Brinkley had done his internship. They went to Chattanooga and called on Burke, studied his layout, quietly investigated his credit standing, "in order that we might use the same to secure credit wherever we went."

The partners pitched upon Greenville, South Carolina, cased the city and were pleased with what they saw. They moved rapidly to establish credit as they had only ten dollars between them, and opened a two-room office with a sign on the door, "Greenville Electro Medic Doctors." The medical suite was near the southwest corner of Coffee and Main streets, over a shoe store. Splashy ads were inserted in the *Greenville Daily News*—"Are You a Manly Man Full of Vigor?" Apparently a good many citizens of Greenville were worried by this question. The customers came in droves. Crawford, as "Dr. Burke," received them. Brinkley did the treatments.

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What the boys claimed to do was to administer salvarsan or neo-salvarsan. Instead, they used a solution of colored distilled water which was injected either in the hip or in a muscle of the arm at twenty-five dollars for a shot.

After two months of profitable business, the partners skipped out, to the sorrow of the telephone company, which was left with an unpaid bill; the newspaper, which got nothing for its valuable white space; the leading outfitter, which had clothed the young doctors from head to foot; and the drugstore proprietor, who had advanced supplies and rented them their professional quarters. They proceeded in leisurely fashion to Memphis, via Oxford, Mississippi. And it was in Memphis that Dr. Brinkley met and married Miss Jones, quietly but quickly, in the old Peabody Hotel, at Main and Monroe.

After the Brinkleys' wedding trip, to Kansas City, Denver and Pocatello, Idaho, the next time that the Electro Medic Doctors met was when Crawford was lodged in the Greenville jail by the sheriff. And across the hall, in the bull pen, was Brinkley, who had been brought back from Knoxville, braceleted, under charges of practicing medicine without a license, and forgery. Bogus checks signed by Brinkley were outstanding in varying amounts between forty and fifty dollars each. There were so many of them that a local attorney who represented Doctor and visited him in jail was able to make a deal with the victims. Dr. Jones, in Memphis, put up the money to free his wayward son-in-law.

The lawyer advised the boys to get out of town quickly when they were released. "They left their luggage at the county jail," he said, "got a train and left Greenville. I later expressed their luggage to them."

Brinkley and Crawford went their several ways and had little contact in later years. But a couple of episodes are worth mentioning. They met once, accidentally, on Twelfth Street in Kansas City when Brinkley was a student in the Eclectic Medical University of Kansas City; and again in a hotel barbershop when Brinkley informed Crawford that he was running a hospital in a little town in Kansas—Milford.

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"I asked him," said Crawford, "if he was running this hospital on the order that we ran our office and he said, 'Very similar,' or words to that effect."

In 1926, when Doctor was definitely in the chips, and his name and operation were all over the newspapers, Crawford thought again of his old friend and wrote to him. He suggested that Doctor send him a thousand dollars for old times' sake, a charitable opportunity which Doctor ignored.

Actually the pair did meet once more, in an encounter of Crawford's seeking.

"James E. Crawford came to see me in Milford, Kansas, during the summer of 1932, while I was a candidate for Governor of the State of Kansas," Dr. Brinkley said. "He related certain circumstances of how he got out of the penitentiary in Oklahoma. He told me that while he was an inmate in the penitentiary at McAlester, Oklahoma, he was called into the warden's office where he met two attorneys who introduced themselves to him and told him they were from the American Medical Association and that they wanted a certain deposition from him that would be injurious to me and if he would give them that deposition they would assist him in getting out of the penitentiary. And he said that they gave him a box of cigars and candies and \$20 and left, and two weeks later they came back with my lawyers and he gave the kind of deposition they wanted. He told me if I would give him \$300 he would make another deposition saying the one he gave them was all a lie. I told him to get the hell out of my office."

Between 1914 and 1916, Brinkley practiced medicine in various whistle stops in Arkansas on an "undergraduate license" issued by the Eclectic Board of the State. He was in Judsonia for a short time, where the strawberries would have made a good crop, except that the Little Red River flooded. Because of the poverty of the people and the malarial swamps, about all that the undergraduate physician got from the experience was a unique opportunity to study cases of congestive chills.

During a brief residence in Earle, Arkansas, Brinkley came

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upon a circular which pointed the way to his becoming a full-fledged doctor. Although the first Mrs. Brinkley was later to turn up in Kansas at a particularly embarrassing moment in Doctor's career and assert, "He's no more a doctor than I am," the remark was not true. The dodger which Brinkley found in his mailbox advertised the Eclectic Medical University of Kansas City. He noted that it would accept his affidavit of three years' schooling in Chicago and make him a doctor if he would study in Kansas City for a year and put up one hundred dollars. Young Brinkley matriculated and completed the work in a few weeks, according to his account. The diploma came through on May 7, 1915.

As soon as he passed a state medical board examination, the ambitious youth would be a real doctor at last; not, it is true, in the forty states whose licensing boards did not recognize his alma mater and its commingling of conventional materia medica with herbal doctrine, chiropractic, homeopathy and naturopathy. But he could practice in at least one of the other eight states. In hospitable Arkansas, for example.

The whole graduating class of the Eclectic Medical University entrained for Little Rock. There they were shepherded to the Marion Hotel by two professors. The boys were seated at long tables to take the examination. In two and a half days they were doctors.

Professor Date R. Alexander, who headed the Eclectic University, was to play an important part in Brinkley's professional life, and later hit the headlines himself during the diploma-mill scandals of 1922. It was Alexander who encouraged Doctor, showed him the ropes and issued to him the only two medical diplomas he ever possessed. There is no evidence that he bought his certificate. But Alexander sold such credentials to telegraph operators, chauffeurs, ex-bartenders, soda dispensers, salesmen, railroad brakemen, photographers, and so on.

Alexander was a peculiar man. One time, during the public uproar about his activities, but before he was put in jail, Professor Alexander met a reporter on the street. The following interchange took place:

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“Mac, you’ve misrepresented me.”

“How is that?”

“You said in your Brinkley article in *The Star* that I sold medical diplomas for \$200. That’s a deadly insult. I never sold one for less than \$500.”

In February, 1916, Doctor applied for a license to practice in Kansas. License #5845 was issued to him. The Kansas application was signed by the obliging Alexander. At that time there was reciprocity between the medical examining boards of Kansas and Arkansas, by which anyone holding a license in either state could get a license in the other simply by asking for it. Thereafter Dr. Brinkley climbed rapidly up the reciprocity ladder, acquiring the right to practice in Tennessee, Missouri, Texas and Connecticut, too.

Doctor planned to pitch his tent in Kansas as a likelier territory than Arkansas. While he searched for the right spot, he took a position with Swift & Company in Kansas City; he handled minor dressings in the employees’ medical office and did clerical work. And here Brinkley met his destiny—the billy goat.

According to the testimony of three Swift & Company physicians, Brinkley’s duties did not include any work with animals or their glands. But this did not alter the Brinkley story line; and Doctor got his story in first and oftener. The Swift job paid a miserable stipend, Doctor said, but afforded him “an unparalleled opportunity for studying the diseases of animals,” especially the glandular parts. Even Brinkley’s precocity must have been strained by this accomplishment, as he stayed at Swift only a month.

Nevertheless, at Swift, Doctor “was to learn some of the things which later shaped his career and launched him on a study which has resulted in his becoming internationally known as a gland specialist,” according to the *Topeka Capital*. Goats, he said, were immune to tuberculosis and all diseases communicable to humans. A goat was as good as his glands. Doctor filed away this pithy saying for future use.

From this point onward Dr. Brinkley’s course becomes

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somewhat easier to follow. Up to this time he had known the lawless and frantic life of a submerged society. His had been a world of scrounging for the means of existence, of scratch jobs, of barroom and medicine show, of flight from forgery and fraud, of hopping freights and "riding the blinds," of railroad detectives, paddy wagons and squad-room interrogations. Brinkley's education consisted of scraps and ends. His home was where he hung his hat. It was difficult, later, to compose this tooth-and-claw existence into a background suitable for a physician and surgeon. Much that happened, and the reason it happened, dropped out of sight and became incapable of either proof or disproof. Doctor was skilled at putting a good face on difficult matters. His coterie of followers and disciples, many of them intensely loyal even to this day, is proof of it; for Brinkley had an extraordinary personality and matchless resources of courage—or of effrontery, as some would put it. His bitterest foes often had occasion to note, usually in some judicial proceeding, that Brinkley seemed remarkably unruffled when confronted with damaging discrepancies in the accounts he gave of himself. It was as though he had always known, even before he began riding high in radio, that a man who builds up enough authority can override his own inconsistencies.

Much of the controversy which swirled around Dr. Brinkley involved questions of medical ethics. In 1916, he met one such challenge in a clear and unequivocal way. He had pawned his watch, crossed the Missouri River into Kansas, and started to work for a doctor in a town of five thousand, only to find that his employer was an abortionist. "These operations were of course illegal," says *The Life of a Man*, "and strict young Dr. Brinkley included in his own ethics a disapproval of abortion on principle." So Brinkley moved on.

There were brief sojourns in Hays, in Axtell among the Germans and Swedes, and in Fulton, where Doctor arrived with cash resources of three one-dollar bills. Here he began for the first time to feel some solid footing under him. He was able to purchase an automobile, a Saxon Six; and he became a joiner,

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affiliating with the Odd Fellows, the Modern Woodmen of America, the Masons, the Kansas National Guard, the Methodist Episcopal Church, *and* the Sunday school. Mrs. Brinkley, on her part, affiliated with the Rebeccas and the Eastern Star, and made the Methodist her church home. And when Alexander renamed his eclectic medical school the Kansas City College of Medicine and Surgery, in 1919, Mrs. Brinkley also became a doctor with a coveted parchment from the new-old institution, carrying the Alexander holograph. Brinkley himself, perhaps as a form of re-insurance, also took out a new diploma in the new college.

Doctor had jumped fast into World War I as a medical officer.

“Due to the scarcity of army doctors during those hectic days of 1917,” he said, speaking of himself in the third person, “it became necessary for him to do the work ordinarily required of ten men, being on duty twenty-four hours out of the day. As a result, he suffered a nervous breakdown and in August, 1917, was retired by the Surgeon General of the Army.”

First Lieutenant John R. Brinkley, M.O.R.C., dealt vividly with the ordeals he endured in the service. The post of regimental surgeon to the Sixty-fourth Infantry, at Fort Bliss, near El Paso, Texas, was certainly not one for the summer soldier or part-time patriot. Flesh and blood could stand it only so long, he wrote. “I had 2208 raw recruits, without medical supplies, clothing, or anything else. I was the only medical officer and worked day and night trying to get my troupes (*sic*) vaccinated against typhoid and small pox, besides looking after the sanitation of the regiment . . . besides looking after one company of men I had to keep at the International Bridge at El Paso and another company of men that I had to keep at the smelters over in New Mexico, and another company of men on a firing range in the Chihuahua Mountains, other companies out in field practice, besides my raw recruits were coming down with all kinds of infectious diseases like measles, meningitis and besides I had to do the operating on those that needed surgery and treat those I had

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in quarters, visit my sick ones I had in the hospital, make out my technical reports and on top of all this, about twice a week I got orders every evening about six o'clock to be ready for debarkation the next morning. Meaning, that twice a week I had to get all my regiment together, keep every man fully equipped as far as possible, tear down and roll up all my tents and then the next morning the order would be cancelled.

"When you take into consideration that one lone medical officer was doing all this work, it is no wonder that along in August I broke all to pieces and landed in the hospital and they did not know what was the matter with me so they gave me a surgeon's certificate of disability and I went to Milford and rendered private service to our government."

"Yes," commented Sally, his first wife, "he has that way of always pitying himself to gain confidence . . . to benefit himself."

And Mr. Don B. Schlecta, a more objective observer of Doctor, in his thesis, *Dr. John R. Brinkley: a Kansas Phenomenon* (Hays: 1952), comments upon elements of self-pity in Brinkley "that border on a persecution complex." In Doctor's superheated account of his war service there is a good deal more of invention than of hard fact. The official army record of Lieutenant Brinkley's service puts the matter in a somewhat different light. He was actually on duty for one month and five days, and spent one month and three days under observation at Base Hospital No. 2 at Fort Bliss upon his own statement that he was unfit for duty—"tachycardis due to valvular weakness, and rectal fistula, multiple." The lieutenant's commission as a reserve officer terminated in August, 1922, and was not renewed. But booklets sent out to his radio admirers a couple of years later stated, "He still retains his commission as a reserve officer of the Army Medical Corps."

Perhaps the most enduring consequence of Brinkley's military experiences arose because he traveled by train in the Texas heat from San Antonio to El Paso. When the conductor called out "Del Rio!" a kind benefactor dashed into a saloon and brought Lieutenant Brinkley a half-dozen bottles of cold beer. "He didn't

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forget the name Del Rio," says *The Life of a Man*. "It gave him a delicious glow, just to think of the place." And remember Del Rio he did, when things got too hot for him in Kansas.

"The sick doctor and his wife returned to Fulton, Kansas, and discovered that another doctor had moved into Brinkley's location, in his absence," the *Life* continues. Fulton could not support two physicians. In the fall of 1917, Brinkley ran an advertisement in *The Kansas City Star*, seeking a new location, and a letter of reply from Milford aroused his interest. The Brinkleys went to have a look-see. Legend says that Doctor's quick assets at this time consisted of twenty-three dollars cash and the old Saxon car.

Milford was a tiny hamlet on the Republican River, which flowed into the Kaw down at Junction City, the county seat of Geary County. It was twelve miles by dirt road to either Junction City or Fort Riley, and ten miles to the stone monument marking the then geographical center of the United States. It was from the vicinity of Milford, that Horace Greeley wrote, in 1859, that the buffalo passed rapidly through the region "as I should urgently advise them to do."

The principal architectural feature of Milford was a building brought from the St. Louis World's Fair after 1904. It had had a checkered history as a hotel, saloon and gambling joint, but at that time stood empty. The railroad depot was a mile from town, on the other side of the river, in the middle of a cornfield. There was the station building, a siding, an iron pump, a pile of mailbags and lots of sky. The village was hidden from sight by a screen of big cottonwoods bordering the river. But now, as then, if you follow the road and cross the bridge—Milford bursts upon you. Both blocks.

Milford was home to about two hundred people. It was the "wide place in the road" of traditional American rural humor. There were no traffic problems, no sidewalks, no electric lights, no water system, not even a meat market. But there was lots of pure fresh air. The winters were exhilarating. Of the few store buildings strung along the road, enough were empty to suggest

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that Milford's economic prospects were not brilliant. Indeed, there wasn't even a water tank down at the Union Pacific station. Milford was simply a country trading post where nearby cattle raisers might buy a plug of Horse Shoe, a paper of pins or a monkey wrench, without the bother of driving to the county seat.

When Dr. Brinkley told his wife that he believed they would settle in Milford, she cried.

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A Toe Hold in Medicine

Dr. Brinkley pointed out to his wife that they had to live somewhere, and he was “too poor to light in a bigger place.” He could make local calls around Milford for two dollars, as against the ten which Junction City physicians charged when they had to bounce over the dirt roads to the Milford area. Doctor knew that he could not be too choosy. He had the remains of a thirty-five-dollar fee which he had received for removing some tonsils at Axtell, a medical bag, and the Saxon car. Neither the car nor his higher degrees in Masonry were fully paid for.

The town drugstore was empty. Brinkley rented it for eight dollars a month and put in a small stock of patent medicines and knickknacks. There were two rooms in the back of the store building. Brinkley set up an iron bed in one room, and that was home. The other room served as a consultation office. Mrs. Brinkley kept the store, which was opened for business on November 7, 1917, and provided the customary services of a country drugstore. It dispensed postage stamps and cold remedies; sometimes a sport dropped in to buy calamus for the breath, Kansas being a bone-dry state. Sometimes an unfortunate lady came to the prescription counter whispering about an amenagogue.

Dr. Brinkley started in with a general practice—measles, whooping cough, hernias. And then, late one night, soon after

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the store opened, a historic event occurred. The dates shift around in Dr. Brinkley's various accounts of the incident, and there is no other testimony touching upon the matter. In any case, Brinkley told how a man called and asked for the doctor. He was either a Geary County farmer who raised goats, or a Milford businessman. His diagnosis of his own case was, "All in. No pep." "Mr. X"—so called because "for obvious reasons the farmer's name is not appearing here," says the *Brinkley Life*—pleaded with the young doctor to do something for him, a self-confessed "flat tire."

The doctor could not hold out much encouragement, and the conversation became general. Brinkley mentioned his former job with Swift & Company. "You must have seen just what I've seen—those rams and buck goats." Doctor laughed gently. "You wouldn't have any trouble if you had a pair of those buck glands in you."

"Well, why don't you put 'em in?"

Brinkley closed his eyes and considered. There was something about the theory that appealed to him, something about the immediate prospect that repelled him. And yet—was there some guiding hand of destiny that caused the man who was "sexually dead," as he said, to demand of the enterprising young surgeon a set of capric gonads? At first, Brinkley rejected the idea. He hastily told the patient that the thing was biologically impossible, that one could not transplant the organs from a lower order of the animal kingdom to a higher, or vice versa. That was what Doctor had been taught and he believed it. At least he had not considered the idea critically up to that time.

Recollections of his Bennett Medical College days came flooding back. In Brinkley's own words, "Professor Sutow, Professor of Physiology at Bennett, used to quite frequently tell we boys that he believed one of the greatest fields ahead of us was a study of the glands of internal secretion because little or nothing was known of them and one day a professor came or a doctor rather . . . and he gave a very enthusiastic talk about the possibility."

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And then Doctor's mind, according to Wood, turned to another aspect of the situation. "It was such an easy field, he knew, for any practitioner to hold out false hopes to a troubled patient, and charge him almost anything. Other doctors had told him how the suckers bit, at any bait, when they were troubled in this vital aspect of their manhood. And then he shook his head, slowly. The code of ethics his father had drilled into him forever forbade him from any conduct, especially with relation to healing, except the utterly honest and straightforward." There was something about the whole idea that made him feel queasy. But the patient was adamant; argumentative, pleading and threatening by turns, and in the end the thing was done, with a local anesthetic and not, as Brinkley later recalled proudly, "within the white sterilized walls of a modern hospital," but humbly "in the back room of a country doctor's office."

Dr. Brinkley felt scratchy about the whole thing. But he could reassure himself that the deed was done in a very secluded spot, and the situation carried with it a kind of built-in protection. The patient was not likely to broadcast the information that he had tried to pep up his sex life—and failed.

Two weeks later the patient reported the return of normal libido. A year later the surgeon "delivered Mrs. ——— of a perfectly normal ten-pound baby boy," who grew up to be a bright sturdy lad, a chip off the old block, rejoicing in the name of "Billy," chosen in grateful recognition of the role of the donor in his daddy's retreading operation. The father of Billy, incidentally, had no goat odor because his four-footed friend had, by happenstance, been a practically odorless Toggenberg. This had to be worked out empirically. Less fortunate were two young "society men" from California who subsequently took the goat-gland treatment and smelled to high heaven. The bucks involved had been Angoras. After that fiasco Dr. Brinkley used Toggenbergs exclusively.

"So far as I know, I was the first man that ever did this operation of taking the goat testicle and putting it in the man's testicle, yes, sir," the red-Vandyked Doctor maintained. He ex-

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plained: "The glands of a three weeks' old male goat are laid upon the non-functioning glands of a man, within twenty minutes of the time they are removed from the goat. In some cases I open the human gland and lay the tissue of the goat within the human gland. The scrotum of the man is opened by incision on both sides. . . . I find that after being properly connected these goat glands do actually feed, grow into, and become absorbed by the human glands, and the man is renewed in his physical and mental vigor."

Soon another farmer sidled into the Brinkley drugstore, put his hand on his hip, pretended to feel a twinge of pain, and winked.

"Doc, I got the same sort of kidney trouble Jake had. . . . He said for me to tell you, and you'd understand."

The second patient, about thirty-eight years old, went under the knife in the new experiment and reported "complete restoration" of his powers.

"Then I operated on two people kind of having trouble with their minds," Doctor recalled.

Another early case was Charles Mellinger, a businessman in a worse state than the first man had been in. Mellinger had suffered for years from general ill health. The Mellingers, too, within a year, were blessed with the arrival of a baby boy, whom they named, to mark the scientific significance of the event, Charles Darwin Mellinger. Mellinger, like other patients in the early days, before Brinkley got his assembly line rolling, furnished his own goat.

The next gland-transplant job which Brinkley performed provides a convincing answer to the often-repeated canard that his only real interest in the celebrated Brinkley operation was the money he saw in it. One day, as he was passing the Milford barbershop, the men inside were joking and "kind of laughing" about the operation. The loungers were kidding old Charley Tassine, about whether he would have an operation or not, and he said he would if he had the money, yes he would have the operation. "And I was coming along," Brinkley told later, "and I

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said, 'You don't have to have any money, come up to the hospital and I will give it to you for nothing. . . .' He was a bachelor and he got married right afterwards."

It was understood along the street in Milford, in the store and the post office, wherever men chatted, that Charley Tassine "had become a regular billy goat, twice as good as any other man around Milford." That is what he claimed. Doctor was disturbed over the indecency of it all, yet excited by the vistas which his novel surgical procedure opened up. He was inclined to deprecate the things old Tassine was saying. "That is what he claimed," Brinkley would say cautiously. "He was one of those boasting fellows, liked to blow off as to his ability."

More and more elderly callers came to demand Doctor's services, while his imagination grappled with the possibilities of what he came in time to call affectionately "the goat-gland proposition."

"Dimly," he says in Clement Wood's book, "he had begun to realize that he was gifted beyond the run of doctors. . . ." But he must proceed carefully, plan ahead. He needed help. Once again in a time of need he placed a want ad in *The Kansas City Star*. He needed an advertising expert. It was a fateful step that was to bring him into collision with his brethren in the county, state and national medical societies, and with what he labeled later "the jealous sheep ethics, of the leagued allopathic practitioners."

But what Doctor had in mind at first was simply to make contact with a counselor who could advise him as to whether there was anything he could do to increase his business. An ad-man came out from Kansas City, saw the layout and shook his head. Unless there was something new, a new cure for tuberculosis or falling hair, "unless you can pull a new stunt about cancer . . ." and he looked at Doctor questioningly.

"As far as doing anything different," Dr. Brinkley told the press agent casually, "there was a little something I did a couple of years ago, I will tell you, I have done this goat gland operation."

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The advertising expert jumped to his feet, grabbed Brinkley's hand. "Dr. Brinkley," he said, "you have something that is worth a million dollars to you."

"Well, it has been worth a whole lot more than that, hasn't it, Doctor?" a cross-examining attorney asked later in a federal courtroom. The judge wouldn't let Doctor answer the question. But everybody on hand that day knew that the answer would have been a thumping affirmative.

Various episodes in Brinkley's life up to this time have suggested that he was no ordinary doctor. Now he was on the threshold of something big. Yet he hesitated, he said, to fly against the ethics of the medical profession. He decided to share with his professional colleagues the results of the six or eight operations which he had performed.

"I was a fellow of the American Medical Association at the time," he explained. "From my experimentation, my operations, my efforts, my research, I became convinced that there was benefit in glandular transplantation. I thought I had made a wonderful discovery. I thought this was the grandest thing in the world. I wanted the whole world to know about it. I offered it to the profession. I tried to get some of those things published in various medical journals. I wrote letters to doctors in different states telling them about some of the results I had attained. . . . No interest was shown."

And so, reluctantly, he said, he turned to advertising. "My feeling about the matter was that it was something that was too good and too valuable to lay aside and do nothing about it and that the public . . . should have the benefit of it."

Brinkley specifically named the *Journal of the American Medical Association* as one editorial office where he sent a scientific article about his goat-gland work. But the *Journal* wrote back that it could not publish nondescript material. Dr. Morris Fishbein, long-time editor of the *Journal*, later testified that he recalled no such material ever coming in from Brinkley and declared that, so far as he knew, Doctor had never revealed the surgical technique to the medical profession or submitted it to

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the criticism of the profession. Dr. Brinkley also said that he offered to make personal appearances before medical societies with no takers.

One of the inevitable consequences of aging in the human male, is the gradual decline of virility, and what man, in such a case, would not be happy indeed to regain this lost symbol of youth and vigor? Dr. Brinkley reasoned, and brilliantly, that if he had, as it appeared he did, a restorative for the libido, frustrated males over fifty with a goodly portion of this world's goods laid by, would pack up their old kit bag and hit the trail for Milford, Kansas, and the promise of autumnal gratification. He figured, also, that those who, in the first flush of hope, regained that which they had apparently lost, would spread the word far and wide. The human being is so constituted that any surgical operation, any cutting of the skin, carries with it the power of suggestion. Many who came to Doctor were feeble because they thought they were. For them he mixed modern "science" and ancient symbols. After all, the goat has been the stereotype for lechery throughout the history of the Western world. "Hrycus the He-Goat," ran the natural history taught during the Renaissance, "is a lascivious and butting animal who is always burning for coition"; and Pliny, the Fathers of the Church and the Latin bestiaries ran to the same point.

As Doctor gathered in a rich harvest of glowing testimonials, the standard charge became \$750, and sometimes \$1,000 and \$1,500, when the ability to pay more seemed appropriate to a patient's circumstances. One delicate touch was that a patient could pick his own goat in advance, like a guest at a Maine shore place selecting his own dinner from the lobster pound. The operation took about ten or fifteen minutes. It was done under a local anesthetic, with Apothesine, a Parke, Davis & Co. product.

Doctor scrupulously disclaimed the idea that his operation was in any sense a cure-all. But it was indicated for a remarkably wide range of conditions—"for impotency, insanity, arterio-sclerosis, paralysis-agitans, prostate trouble, high blood pressure, skin diseases, disease of the organs of regeneration and for prolonging

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life and rebuilding the human body, I know of nothing that will equal gland transplantation." Dr. Brinkley warned against cults and "suggestion," mental healers, Christian Science, Electro Therapeutics, for, he acknowledged sadly, "charlatans are quick to grasp an opportunity to play upon the credulity of the ignorant. . . . We plead only human," he said, speaking for all honest doctors; "no Christ is among us." But Brinkley had confidence in his technique, insisted that insanity and stubborn catheter cases had been cured, and gray hair turned black. This last case referred to a commercial traveler who had tried everything—patent medicines, osteopathy, chiropractic, even regular medicine. After Dr. Brinkley's ministrations, his hair not only turned black again, but he grew new hair, it was declared by a goat-gland booster, Sydney B. Flower, in an admiring report on the new therapy, *The Goat-Gland Transplantation* (Chicago: c. 1921). Dr. Brinkley kept in close touch with the reactivated knight of the sample case, especially as to "the matter of astonishing sexual vigor" involving details which "cannot be more than hinted at."

On one occasion Dr. Brinkley reported to a conclave of eclectic doctors on the case of an old gentleman who was rejuvenated on only one side. Half of his hair returned to its natural color, while the other side of his head remained as it was, covered with the hoary locks of age. The effect was so remarkable that the poor man, a Professor Heaps of Baltimore, had to use hair dye. The eclectics received this information with deference.

"Results," said Doctor, summing up, "have taught me that I made a wise choice in pinning my faith to the young goat."

With patients arriving by train and "machine" and hardly space in little Milford where a man could put down his valise, Dr. Brinkley urgently needed some way to move the patrons from the railroad station to his premises. So an old World War I truck was made over into a motor bus and, "Happy Harry," who met all trains and always tried to please, at the wheel, began meeting the trains.

A fortunate circumstance made it possible for Doctor to put

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up a modest hospital building. Mrs. Brinkley had just recently—in 1917—inherited a small legacy from her Memphis relatives, which was put into the business. A block of ten lots covered with trees, briars, cowbarns and jackrabbits was acquired, some shares of stock were sold to nearby farmers to flesh out the financing. The sound of hammers and snarl of saws was loud in the little village of Milford during the summer of 1918. Trucks crowded the two streets, groaned under their burden of lumber and bricks as Doctor's goat-gland hospital rose in the center of town. Opened in August, the new facility was a two-and-a-half-story frame building, constructed along the lines of the typical boardinghouse in a college town. A water tower was added, specimen plantings of ornamental trees and shrubs, a fountain and an ugly iron fence. Out back there were pens for the goats.

The new hospital accommodated sixteen patients, and included an operating room, office, dining room and kitchen, with nurses' quarters in the half story. There was also what Doctor called his "Trophy Room," where jars containing appendices and other interesting removals, were lined up in rows, possibly an echo of the anatomy exhibits which Brinkley had found effective when he was a raw youth knocking around as a venereal "specialist."

The patients' rooms were furnished in various styles from ivory suites to gumwood, mahogany and Circassian walnut, an overstuffed davenport in every room. Doctor kept at hand a photograph of the Mayo Clinic hospital at Rochester, Minnesota, and evidently visualized some parallel between the two institutions.

Dr. Brinkley's medical center flourished under various names. Sometimes it was the Brinkley-Jones Hospital, sometimes the Kansas General Research Hospital, or just Brinkley Hospital. Again it went under the style of The Brinkley Clinic, or issued literature—advertising, that is—under the name of The Scientific Press. Sometimes the enterprise was The Brinkley Dispensary or The Brinkley Research Laboratories. In all cases, the names meant the same thing. The office walls were hung with a number

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of souvenirs of Doctor's honors and distinctions which were put on display as he bagged them. Brinkley was Chief Surgeon, but he was also M.D., C.M., Dr. P.H., ScD.; Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; member, American Congress of Internal Medicine; member, National Institute of Social Sciences; member, National Geographic Society, the Association for the Study of Internal Secretions and the American Hospital Association.

Brinkley had occasion to discuss his honors and attainments under oath.

"You ask where I got all of those degrees from. Well, on this diploma I have, it says 'Doctor of Medicine and Master of Surgery,' and that entitles you to say M.D. and M.C. [sic] if you care to. The Doctor of Science degree was conferred on me by the Chicago Law School, an honorary degree, and the Doctor of Public Health was conferred on me by the Eclectic Medical University of Kansas City, Missouri, where I received my M.D. degree. I will declare I don't know whether I also put after my name, sometimes, LL.D. I don't remember whether I ever claim I have had a degree of LL.D."

The American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Hospital Association ungratefully ejected Doctor when they realized he was among them. It has been argued that Brinkley was such a supreme egotist that he did not or could not have a sense of humor. But it appears to the present investigator that he did have a sly kind of humor; *vide.*, the listing of membership in the National Geographic Society which means that he subscribed to a well-known magazine.

The Brinkley Hospital letterheads show what purported to be three physicians connected with the Milford prostate shop. The other two were Minnie T. Brinkley, and "Dr." Horatius Dwight Osborn, a member of the class of 1922 at Date R. Alexander's egregious Kansas City College of Medicine and Surgery. Neither had a license to practice medicine in Kansas. Osborn also held the diploma of the Medical Department of the National University of Arts and Sciences in St. Louis. This establishment

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for manufacturing doctors quickly out of chauffeurs and teamsters was closed up and its charter revoked in 1927. Mrs. Doctor Brinkley was anesthetist and Osborn operated and did the X-ray work. Dr. Tiberius L. Jones, Dr. Brinkley's brother-in-law, was listed as "Visiting Physician"; but Milford looked upon him simply as "the brother-in-law of Dr. Brinkley." Edith Lewis was listed on the staff roster as "R.N." She was "a good common farm girl" and did the heavy housework around the place. The Board of Directors consisted of the Brinkleys and Osborn.

Osborn, who also owned several buildings in Milford, was a kind of chauffeur and general handy man, so close to Doctor that Brinkley often referred to him as his adopted son. He did prostatic diagnosis and most of the knife work. How he cut up people with impunity for some ten years without a license was not the least of the mysteries surrounding the extraordinary enterprise which Brinkley conducted in his secluded setting. There was, for the most part, a constant shifting and changing in Doctor's entourage, but Osborn was a fixture until a time of crisis when the attorney general began to make threatening noises and Osborn found it prudent to leave the Sunflower state for an extended "vacation." But he reappeared later and rendered faithful service right up to Brinkley's flamboyant and Wagnerian end.

There were, of course, interludes, small irritations or misunderstandings such as punctuate any long-sustained relationship. At times, when the tension became almost unbearable, Dr. Brinkley was known to relax with a drink or two, or more. On one occasion Doctor went to the instrument case in the operating room "saying he was going to cut all their throats," as one nurse told of it afterwards. The nurses could not hold him, but the faithful Osborn hit him over the head with a board; and so to bed. A male nurse and Dr. Jones, Brinkley's father-in-law, assisted Osborn. The latter was the only real casualty. He "was bitten by Dr. Brinkley on the thumb," said the nurse, "and I dressed the thumb for him." During the fracas one of the patients tied his sheets together and climbed out of his window. He was frightened, and could not know that the occasion was nothing more than a family argument. Dr. Brinkley must have been a

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formidable barroom fighter. Osborn had only one ear, and Geary County folklore has it that Doctor chewed it off in a similar little misunderstanding.

The Kansas Ponce de Leon did not scale the heights without encountering those “slings and arrows of outrageous fortune” which afflict humanity generally. On one occasion, just when Doctor felt he was getting on solid ground, some girls, heating a curling iron, started a fire which burned out the Brinkley drug-store. At another time the patronage of the Hospital dropped alarmingly because, as Brinkley explained it, “His intensive labors of the year and a half since he reached Milford had had their result in cleaning up all the diseases and operating on all the people, within a radius of thirty miles of his hospital. Everybody was fat and sassy and he couldn’t even find a sore tooth to pull.”

In 1919, Doctor went through his first bankruptcy. Things looked so black that, as a precaution, he took out a license in Texas by reciprocity on his Arkansas license. But his departure from Kansas was delayed by a fortunate upturn in his business. Goat glands were catching the public fancy. So the unusual work being done at Milford went on.

Despite his remarkable endowments there were, as has been suggested, flaws in Doctor’s character and temperament. The mountain lad who triumphed over obscurity and adversity, who impressed those who knew him in the early days as a “reckless boy,” often displayed signs of emotional instability. There was, for example, the time he took an axe and chopped the tires and front end of a fellow townsman’s automobile. Again, he chased the ambulatory patients at the hospital out into the Brinkley botanical gardens with a butcher knife. He was indicted in 1920 for bootlegging, pleaded guilty and got a fine and ninety days. Fortunately, Doctor’s attorney happened to be the law partner of the prosecuting attorney of Geary County. Dr. Brinkley was let off from going to the clink. “The county commissioners said they wouldn’t have me in jail because I eat too good,” Doctor joked; “it would cost too much to feed me.”

Milford neighbors told a representative of *The Kansas City*

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Star, a newspaper which could not be numbered among Doctor's admirers, that Doctor was not a whiskey seller and the *Star* accepted the explanation that Mrs. Brinkley had simply sold a bottle to a dentist from Elyria as an accommodation. The liquor was needed, as it turned out, not for medicine, but as lubrication for some festivities in Junction City, which were so successful that eventually the police found the dentist, as Brinkley later testified, "gloriously drunk." "Kansas has a bone dry law," Doctor explained. "They could arrest you for smelling breath on your liquor—I mean liquor on your breath." Brinkley let the charge run against him to shield his wife. But he steadily maintained that the bibulous caller had been a spy of the American Medical Association and the whole incident a put up job.

There was also a shooting scrape, and as a result Doctor was bonded for \$1,000 to the State of Kansas to keep the peace after he threatened to shoot a neighbor, Jesse Wilson, with a pistol.

Dr. Brinkley rather made light of the whole thing.

"I made some remarks concerning this fellow," he said, "that caused him to be afraid, I guess, and they put me under a bond; I don't know whether I was arrested or not, but I had to give a bond not to shoot him."

Busy as he was with his youth operation, the hospital start-up and various brushes with the law, Dr. Brinkley still found time to study and travel, to spread out, broaden his horizons and advance the work which prospered so amazingly. In 1918 and 1919, he had gone to Chicago, where he took a short course in emergency operative surgery under Dr. Max Thorek at the American Hospital. Dr. Thorek had been working hopefully on the rejuvenation problem. For four years the basement of his hospital crawled with gorillas until he regretfully concluded that a second youth was a false hope.

Dr. Brinkley's diligence in pursuing his postgraduate studies in April, 1918, and after, left much to be desired "because of his indulgence in alcohol," Dr. Thorek said. "I advised him to retake the course a year later, which he did." After the second go-around Thorek asserted, "My observation of the man at that time

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was that he was not reliable in his statements, that his object was solely to make money, without the finer sentiment underlying the practise of medicine playing any role in his make-up. . . . I admonished him to leave liquor alone and to concentrate on worth-while endeavor and improve himself as a man and as a physician, to which he replied: 'I have a scheme up my sleeve and the whole world will hear of it.'

A quite different interpretation of his presence in Chicago was set forth by Dr. Brinkley. He was "called" to Chicago, he said, and "When I came out with my discovery on the transplantation of goat glands" was invited by Thorek to "teach him my technique." But Brinkley noted that he was aware of Dr. Thorek's "game." "He is a Jew and we all know their tactics. His idea was . . . simply to freeze me out of business and take to himself all the glory and income bound to result from such a discovery . . . so I simply refused."

While Doctor was in Chicago, he announced that he needed a larger field and would make his home there. He had operated on 209 cases "with wonderful success." The gland transplantation was "out of the experimental stage." In Chicago, Doctor could better accommodate "the ever increasing number of people who wished to have the work done." Optimistic reports issued from Dr. Thexton's Park Avenue Hospital, 1940 Park Avenue, corner of Robey Street, where Dr. Brinkley had set up camp. A news release was distributed to the effect that several prominent Chicagoans were ready to back Brinkley in building a new school of medicine on the North Side, with a hospital and biological research laboratories attached. There would be a four-year course of instruction in the Brinkley School of Medicine, because gland work could not be taught in a matter of a few weeks.

After a good deal of public interest had been whipped up in Doctor, his ambitious plans and surgical feats, the going got rougher. The *Chicago Tribune* interviewed a cross section of the city's prominent physicians who said thumbs down on the idea that a set of borrowed glands would alleviate impotency, arteriosclerosis, epilepsy, sterility and so on. Among them was Dr. Thorek. He declared flatly that the whole thing was biologically im-

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possible. Then the Chicago police and the health department descended on the Park Avenue Hospital because Brinkley was stabling fifteen goats there, which they called maintaining a nuisance. And, as a final blow, the head of the Illinois Department of Registration and Education, who read the newspapers too, found that Doctor did not hold a license to practice medicine in the state. Before the machinery of government could move, however, Doctor returned to Milford, well content to sit in a little hospital by the side of the road, and watch the world come to him.

Under a smiling sun the fame and practice of the Kansas healer grew, feeding upon information which Doctor either gave out or leaked in confidence—that he had attended Mrs. William Jennings Bryan, that he had been summoned to treat Woodrow Wilson after his physical breakdown, that he was about to erect a powerful radio station which would be connected in some way with his burgeoning hospital. Other legends, too, grew up around the colorful doctor, some which he obviously did not sponsor—that, for example, he had assaulted an unsuspecting goat in Central Park in New York City, sliced out its sex glands without anesthesia and transferred them to, as a writer in *Medical Economics* put it, “an equally unsuspecting ‘goat’ in human form.” Doctor was hurt by this and regarded it as a malicious misstatement, because newspaper reports at the time had clearly stated that the goat came from the Bronx Zoo, was taken into the bathroom and humanely dispatched in the tub. In three minutes the goat glands had a new home. Within ten days the man was fully recovered. And shortly thereafter he was in need of a wife.

The stifling heat of a Kansas summer was so unfavorable to the gland business, that Doctor went to cool Connecticut in June, 1921, to operate there during “the heated term.” The office was in Bridgeport, the Brinkley residence in Fairfield. Doctor had planned to go to Europe this year, but the leaping demand for the goat gonads, forced him to conclude that business comes before pleasure.

Doctor was examined for his Connecticut license, along with a batch of other eclectic doctors, at New Haven in a ceremony

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which must have had its jovial side, since the Hotel Garde handed the State Board a bill for \$1800 worth of smashed furniture as a consequence of a pre-exam party held on its premises. Equipped, the night before, with a set of the questions to be asked, his character certified by good old Date R. Alexander, who was apparently well and favorably known throughout the eclectic medical world, Brinkley had no trouble in passing the examination, or in cleaning up the backlog of applicants for his surgical attentions. When the harvest had been gathered in, Doctor returned to Milford.

Each year, Dr. Brinkley found something interesting to do in the way of professional travel. Early in 1922 he was in California, where some kind of temporary permit to practice medicine and surgery was issued. Doctor often told of how, as a result of a little article he had published in some magazine, he was summoned to Los Angeles at the invitation of Harry Chandler, owner of the *Los Angeles Times*. Brinkley performed his specialty upon Chandler and several of his friends and employees. The publisher reciprocated by giving Brinkley extensive publicity, and some advice. He told Doctor to raise his prices and make some money. Brinkley has left us the image of himself as a devoted savant, an other-worldly scientist, working far out on the frontiers of knowledge, never thinking about such things as fees. But it is doubtful if this picture can be sustained seriously, or if the publisher's advice was needed, as Doctor, in a few weeks' time, cleaned up about forty thousand dollars at the Alexandria Hotel. But, if the advice was superfluous, the publicity was something that he could use, and he made grateful acknowledgment of it.

"It was really Chandler who made me famous," Doctor said.

On this California safari, Doctor also quietly renovated the glands of various bigwigs—that is, as quietly as the headlines in the *Times* permitted. The stars of the silent screen also sought his ministrations. "Many of them," says his *Life*, "still carry on their bodies the telltale neat scar that is the trademark of Dr. Brinkley."

The urge which pushed young Brinkley out of and up from

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the log-cabin world of the North Carolina "mountings" caused him to take a deep satisfaction at this time in the evidence of his own rise in the world, in such experiences as his first encounter with an artichoke or a governor, in being asked to come up to the dais on some public occasion, in being seated at the captain's table on shipboard, even of being awarded an honorary degree from Alexander's Kansas City doctor factory.

When Harry Chandler asked Dr. Brinkley to come to California, the *Los Angeles Times* was just then installing KHJ, the first radio station ever put up in that city. Brinkley was interested and impressed. When he returned to Milford . . . but let him tell about it in his own way.

"I thought it would be a nice thing to entertain the patients by having a radio station close to the hospital where they could lay in bed and listen in on their earphones, and I bought the station and gave lectures over it. . . . I never tried to produce any patients over the radio at all."

The right to operate a radio station was easily secured in those days. During the summer of 1923 a station was under construction in the Brinkley block at Milford. The Brinkleys were motoring through Canada at the time, Osborn at the wheel. Returning they stopped off to visit former patients in Connecticut and New York, where they put up at the Waldorf-Astoria. Dr. Brinkley had Clement Wood insert into his autobiography the circumstance that the party stopped at the New Willard in Washington in the suite occupied just the night before by President Coolidge and family. The Kansas congressman whose district included Geary County wanted Dr. Brinkley to go to the White House to meet the Coolidges. But "Brinkley declined . . . through a sense of delicacy . . . the purpose might be misinterpreted."

The radio broadcasting license came through in September with the call letters KFKB, which were interpreted as standing for Kansas First, Kansas Best. The "Home of Gland Transplantation" was on the air a few days later. Brinkley had definite ideas about programing. Recognizing that the average program was

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ill-suited to the needs of the sick or convalescent—a bold concept which the electronic art has still scarcely accepted—Doctor “decided to entertain not only his patients but sickabeds and shut-ins all over the country.” The station was a thousand watt-er; but only General Electric at Schenectady, New York, used over 500 watts. KFKB was big stuff. Its studio would hold a chorus of three hundred persons, and its signal could be plainly heard in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

Casting about for what to do with KFKB, Brinkley came up with three program ideas: personal travel talks, talks to mothers on their babies and discourses on the world’s great literature by teachers from nearby Manhattan State College. Doctor, feeling his way, even toyed with the idea of a code of ethics for KFKB which would exclude price quotations, transcriptions, merchandising gimmicks, controversies, suggestive language and “risqué music.” He was particular to point out the station’s unselfish character.

“I never said anything about the goat gland operation over the radio on none of my broadcasts,” Doctor insisted.

Brinkley sailed for the Far East late in the fall of 1923, picked up about \$5,000 in Shanghai while staying at the Astor House (\$65 per diem). He went on to Saigon in Indo-China to visit a colony of eunuchs who, he was interested to find, revealed no evidence of prostate trouble. The Brinkleys moved on to Singapore, to Sumatra, Penang, then India and Ceylon, “the pendant jewel of India,” and so on around the world. They were now enjoying frankly and simply the recreations of tourism, tasting the pleasures and relaxations of travel, Doctor’s last professional engagement having been aboard ship in the Malacca Strait, when the Prince of Siam needed a circumcision.

While Dr. Brinkley was buying an exquisite old rug which had been stolen out of a palace, inspecting the dockyard area at Singapore, visiting a nearby pineapple-canning factory, unhappy news reached him from home. The good old days, the wide-open days in Connecticut, medically speaking, were at an end. The state revoked all eclectic medical licenses in December, 1923,

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and Brinkley's, as Doctor delicately phrased it, got "caught in the net." There was one consolation. The Milford specialist was far beyond the reach of any proceedings which could be brought against him in Hartford.

There were also ugly threats of similar action in Arkansas, Missouri, Texas and Tennessee. And the press played up the notion that Dr. Brinkley had "skipped" the country. At this time Doctor had a dream or vision, to which the *Life* attaches great importance. It occurred on the road to Singapore. Brinkley seemed to be on a mountaintop, in a drenching rain. He became entangled in an earth slide, heading down toward a yawning abyss, when three figures dressed in white appeared, his mother and Aunt Sally on either side to support him, and his father leading the way to safety. Then the family group seemed to shift and dissolve, as is often the way with dreams, and Doctor found that Lincoln and Thomas A. Edison were his conductors, with William B. McKinley in a Masonic apron leading the way.

Clement Wood, who had been psychoanalyzed, had worked with Dr. Beatrice Hinkle and had familiarized himself with the theories of Jung, Adler and Freud, was quite excited when he came upon this dream sequence, for he held that "to each leader of man has come some one pivotal moment of vision, when the heavens seemed to open and speak comfort and consolation" to him. The import of the dream was clear to Wood: ". . . it was an internal affirmation that the dreamer intended to achieve success, aided by mother, Aunt Sally, and guided by his father"; as well as Lincoln, Edison and McKinley.

"John R. Brinkley," exclaimed Wood, with what seems to be a particularly confusing non sequitur, "unknown to you, this dream of yours has cleared you, before the bar of modern science of the silly charges levelled against you, more definitely than all the factual evidence in the world could conceivably do."

Dr. Brinkley returned to Milford from his world tour in March, 1924, refreshed, matured, surer than ever in his conviction that "of all afflictions that men are heir to, *impotency is the worst.*" As it was with Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress*, who passed through the Slough of Despond on his journey toward Mount

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Zion only to encounter the Hill Difficulty, then slipped past the Hill to find he faced a pair of lions, Dr. Brinkley's progress, too, was complicated by obstacles and discouragements. When he applied for a permanent medical license in California, the Board made an exhaustive examination of his antecedents and educational qualifications. His application was denied. And in that same year, soon after he returned from his trip around the world, Dr. Brinkley was indicted in California for violating the state Medical Practice Act. It was a matter of no small satisfaction to Doctor that, when the California officers appeared before Governor Jonathan Davis of Kansas, who had enjoyed much free time on Brinkley's new radio station, the Governor received them coldly.

"Why do you want to take this man Brinkley to California?" he demanded.

"Because," said the California gentlemen in the name of narrow legality, "he is not a regular doctor and might injure our people by giving poison instead of medicine."

"Well," said Governor Davis, "California is a long way from Kansas and I don't believe your people are in any danger from him."

This is the way Brinkley remembered it. He added with understandable satisfaction that the American Medical Association had spent \$150,000 to try to get him returned to California. However that may be, there is no doubt that the Governor of Kansas did refuse to extradite him.

"They would have kangarooed me till kingdom come out there," Brinkley mused. He regarded the California rebuff as the first sign of persecution. It was a "deliberate attempt to jail a great man," according to the Wood-Brinkley *Life of a Man*. So Doctor buckled down to his advertising and gave it more bite, with an almost apocalyptic vision of how his operation could be merchandised, his primary trading area no less than the whole United States. Even that expansive concept proved, as a matter of fact, to be conservative as the mail and patients arrived from Canada, Europe and the sultry Latin countries.

"A man comes to me," he wrote, "suffering from Cancer,

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Tuberculosis, or many other dangerous diseases, and in addition, he is impotent. He says, 'Doctor, fix up the Impotency and let the Cancer go hang!'

And again he wrote, "in this day and age the average man, especially of means, when he has reached the age of 50 or thereabouts has taken unto himself another wife, and usually one much younger than himself . . . and he will go to any lengths to hold the affection of his wife. And now about wives. Don't get the impression that women are icebergs and are content with impotent husbands. I know of more families where the devil is to pay in fusses, temperamental sprees, etc. . . . all due to the husband not being able to function properly. Many and many times wives come to me and say, 'Doctor, my husband is no good!'" And so on.

This is the prose and this the reality that kept Brinkley's hospital in dusty little Milford filled with patients—this and the ancient dream which caused Dr. Faustus to make a pact with the devil.

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Old Men with Young Ideas

True science is the enemy of the charlatan. Yet it is also his constant inspiration and assistant. Whenever a new discovery or advance is made in any area of knowledge, some modern promoter of scientific witchcraft appropriates it for his own purposes. And so, a side effect of the ground gained in the study of the ductless glands, for instance, was the prompt appearance of the gland therapist, presenting elements of mystery, science fiction and sex, in a package that people would pay for.

The theory of endocrinology goes back to Théophile de Borden who, in 1778, expressed the idea that certain glands produce tremendously important secretions, internal rather than external. About the middle of the last century a foremost French physiologist, Claude Bernard, thought that he had found the secret of eternal youth in the sex glands of man. Bernard injected himself with an extract of these glands and found that he could run up a flight of stairs much faster than he could before. Excited, he had put forth the extra effort necessary to do it. Bernard, nevertheless, went to meet his fathers at his appointed time.

Another wave of rejuvenation fever swept Europe after the day, in 1889, when Charles Edward Brown-Séquard, the savant who succeeded Bernard as professor of experimental medicine at the Collège de France, announced to the Société de Biologie

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in Paris that he had administered an expressed testicular extract to himself at the age of seventy. Previously feeble and depressed, Brown-Séguard reported that he had been renewed—and shortly died. His work had been so sensationalized that the poor man had fled to England to escape prospective patients; a retreat from fame which Dr. J. R. Brinkley would have found unthinkable.

Brown-Séguard's postulate was that the development of the secondary sex characteristics was the result of a secretion of the sex glands. This was the theoretical basis for his experiments. Later investigators carried on controlled experiments with distilled water. They were, regretfully, unable to confirm his results.

There was another stir when Elie Metchnikoff thought he had found in yogurt the remedy against old age.

In the early years of the present century, around 1914-15, a Chicago doctor, Dr. George Frank Lydston, conducted experiments with emulsions of organs, and also became interested in the therapeutic possibilities of the implantation of the generative glands. His first subject was himself. Dr. Lydston used human material. Doc Brinkley, who usually followed the ancient saying that *a doctor always speaks ill of doctors*, referred to Lydston with unusual urbanity, citing as "an example of heroism" the splendid job he did on himself, and adding generously, "In the use of the human gland Dr. Lydston is as supreme as I am in the use of the goat gland."

Lydston's procedure involved the implantation of glands from the dead to the living. His reports attracted the attention of Dr. Leo Leonidas Stanley, a reputable physician and Chief Surgeon at California State prison; *i.e.*, San Quentin. Dr. Stanley undertook to substantiate or disprove the claims which were being made. He was fortunately situated. San Quentin would, in a vintage year, carry out three or four hangings in which the bodies were not claimed. The prison medics would take the gonads from one and the human implant would soon be neatly bedded in the scrotal tissue of some senile lifer. Most, but not all, patients said they benefitted from the gift, felt better, their out-

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look cheerier, Dr. Stanley reported in writings addressed to both professional and lay readers. Mark Williams, seventy-two, and pretty far gone, showed new pep in five days and could even understand a joke. Old Johnny Meadows, in for life, got a new pair of glands and ran fifty yards in seven seconds. The homographs sloughed off, but Dr. Stanley believed that some unknown bodies which had a stimulating effect were given off into the blood stream.

Stanley enjoyed his measure of fame, and even the celebrated Dr. Serge Voronoff of Paris—whose fee for a set of ring-tailed-monkey glands was five or six thousand dollars or what have you?—dropped off at San Quentin to see the prison surgeon and review his work.

“Oh, zat is fine!” he exclaimed cordially. “Your operations are for zee poor man and mine are for zee rich man!”

Dr. Stanley also experimented on aged prisoners with goat-gland serum to which the Associated Press gave the arresting nickname of “memory juice.” Stanley’s technique was quickly picked up by one Dr. Clayton E. Wheeler of San Francisco, whose contribution to endocrinology was the sending out of elegantly engraved cards to plushy ladies—ladies only—inviting them to intimate lectures on the “Making of Well People, Young.” The treatment consisted of two injections of about one ounce each of nanny-goat extract. It is interesting to note that elderly women desiring to repeat the conquests of their youth chose the gland-injection route in the proportion of three to one over the men. The fading males preferred the gland transplants, the knife to the needle, in about the same proportion.

Dr. Stanley regarded Brinkley coldly. Like most men in the irregular practice of medicine, Doctor Brinkley could not afford to be too sensitive, especially when a colleague could be useful to him. Stanley’s work, asserted the *Brinkley Life*, “has conclusively established that Brinkley was right in all of his contentions.”

The idea that senescence was related to glandular atrophy was revived with spectacular consequences in the early years of

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this century by Dr. Serge Voronoff in France and Dr. Eugene Steinach in Austria. Voronoff, "a Frenchified Russian," accepted Brown-Séquard's theories, but made an important modification in his methods. Preferring the knife to the hypodermic needle, Voronoff transplanted active glands from one animal to another and finally from animals to humans who were, or thought they were, about ready for the scrap pile. Voronoff transplanted entire glands. Since a supply of human material was not readily available, he got his supply from the anthropoid apes that most closely approximate man, the gorillas, chimps and lemurs. To insure fresh materials, Dr. Voronoff established a monkey farm at the Château Grimaldi, among the palm and banana trees of Mentone. There was some public speculation that the gland grafter might develop interesting simian characteristics. Voronoff put this idea down quickly, firmly and scientifically.

Dr. Voronoff's work was explained to the millions by the Sunday supplements as "the monkey gland operation," and he became a fashionable celebrity, although his rejuvenating activities were never accepted by scientists. The evidence was, and is, that the tissue of strange species is rejected by the defense mechanism that is a part of human biology. Nor could Voronoff establish positively that the atrophy of the glands in old men had any causal relationship to the general phenomena of old age. In fact, the degenerative changes of the body incident to age usually far outstrip the decline of the sexual functions. But the placebo effect, the power of self-suggestion, was often able for a time to produce the phenomena of regeneration, as promised. Meanwhile, the foreign tissue was encapsulated and destroyed.

The monkey glands created a furore in the 1920's, although it was just "newspaper publicity with literary touches," as one New York doctor wrote to a friend at the time. Rejuvenation became the topic of the hour, with Voronoff giving daily interviews in Paris. There were monkey-gland jokes, monkey-gland novels, plays and revues about monkey glands, often flippant, with the sexual implications heavily underscored. The effects of the Voronoff treatment were short-lived. But the Russian made the subject of rejuvenation as fashionable as Mah Jong.

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"Nobody," commented Dr. Clarence W. Lieb, "was sure it was a nice thing to talk about and talked about it continuously." He went on to inquire, "Who wants to be made young again?" The answer, it appeared, was: practically everybody.

Another advocate of offbeat therapy for the treatment of the degenerative processes developed a rival technique around 1920. Dr. Eugene Steinach of Vienna reasoned that the male gland had two functions, being the source of life for both the individual and the species. He speculated that surgery which would circumvent the reproductive process would stimulate and energize the somatic life of the human organism. So he ligated—tied off—the duct leading from the male gland, thus permitting, according to the theory, the hormone-secreting parts of the gonad to flourish and increase the amount of the chemical poured into the blood stream. The operation was a simple one, involved no unusual technique, could be done under a local anesthetic by any doctor in his office with ordinary aseptic precautions. The theory was a part of the scientific patrimony inherited from Brown-Séquard, but the tying off did not produce an accelerated development of the cells or an increase in their activity. An early exponent of the Steinachian miracle in the United States was Dr. Harry Benjamin of New York. He conceded that the mind could help the surgery. That is, the patient had to believe the operation would give him back his lost vitality or he wouldn't get it.

All the youthifying fellows worked in secrecy, without controls. The scientific observers were hesitant, the gland operators positive. When objections were raised in Europe they blamed the Church. In the United States the critics were accused of "prudery" and the "Tennessee mentality." The whole subject generated a good deal of acrimony. The medical conservatives and the moralists were themselves more controversial than scientific about the whole subject. But the gland grafters flourished, with their varied specialties, each designed to spark the human ignition system.

By injections, extracts, elixirs, by drugs, powders, capsules, the rejuvenators administered chalk, glycerin and goat lymph at fancy prices. "Rejuvenation" was a vogue word of the period,

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presenting hope for a new lease on life in the days of the shimmy and flaming youth. Drugstore windows were filled with packaged organic extracts and weird mechanical devices which were sold as scientific aids to encourage a physical development that seemed to be wanting. They did no good and probably no more harm than ordinary larceny.

The technical methods of modern surgery were also exploited. As with opotherapy—the treatment by glandular extracts—the results were fleeting. The effect upon the monkeys and goats was unfortunate and permanent. The average man in his middle years, depressed by the melancholy thought that life is merely the process of becoming a eunuch, had but slight conception of what his functional ability should normally be. But all of the publicity and advertising matter set up such a weeping and wailing as “to make still more mournful,” in the words of Dr. Morris Fishbein, “the sexually despondent male.”

It has been estimated that in 1924 there were approximately 750 surgeons, mentalists, necromancers and religious healers peddling gland treatments of one sort or another to the senior citizens of the United States. The alchemists, miracle workers, astrologers and medical messiahs of the Dark Ages never had it so good as the goat-serum vaccinators of the Whoopee Years, who told their story in the newspapers and magazines, to the extent that it could be detailed in publications of general circulation.

Prominent personalities got entangled in the rejuvenation craze. In 1922, Harold F. McCormick, the Chicago multimillionaire, then President of the International Harvester Company and former husband of Edith Rockefeller McCormick, was rumored to feel a romantic interest in the diva, Ganna Walska. It was believed generally that he intended to marry her, as in fact he did. McCormick was hospitalized as the patient of Dr. Victoire Lespinasse, a genito-urinary surgeon who had come in for attention from the press because of experiments which he had conducted with the endocrines. Lespinasse was associated in the mind of any Chicago editor with Dr. Frank Lydston and Voronoff.

The editor of the sprightly *Chicago Herald and Examiner*,

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always ready to take a chance on jail or assassination to share with The People all that the *Herald and Examiner* knew about public—or private—affairs, took note of Dr. Lespinasse's special competence in the hormone field. The *Herald and Examiner* "didn't think McCormick had called him to set a broken arm," as Robert J. Casey, the astute chronicler of the period, has said in his *More Interesting People*; "And so the *Examiner* marked an end to any Victorian reticences that might have been left in the newspaper business by printing detailed reports of the late Harold McCormick's gland operation." Actually, the *Herald and Examiner* did not know whether McCormick had had a new set of glands installed or his tonsils removed, but the story was developed with all the professional skullduggery which was later celebrated in the roaring drama, *The Front Page*. Along with some possible misinformation, the readers of the *Examiner* learned something about music and the opera, the early industrial history of Chicago, the invention of the McCormick reaper and the medical specialty of Dr. Lespinasse. Thus enlightenment was spread throughout Cook County until the *Examiner* tired of the subject.

Wherever there are newsworthy financiers, celebrated authors and an inflammable idea, a public uproar is bound to follow. In the early 1920's, Mrs. Gertrude Atherton, no stranger to the best-seller lists, took the youth cure herself at the age of sixty-six, by the Steinach method, and published a novel, *Black Oxen*, based on the idea of a New York society woman getting a successful youth treatment. *Black Oxen* was the fiction best seller of the year, 1923, joining *The Sheik* and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* as an aspect of the revolt against the genteel mores and manners of the Edwardian past. The flavor of the period is apparent in Mrs. Atherton's titillating tale of a woman nearing sixty, who regained the bloom of youth, with the result that a journalist of thirty-four and an Austrian prince proposed to her. Many physicians considered *Black Oxen* the most misleading and ill-advised publication of the last hundred years, but the book was made into a play, was denounced from the pulpit and put Mrs. Atherton in

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intimate touch, through a voluminous correspondence, with women all over the world who were still young in heart. Of Mrs. Atherton's own subsequent history, it should be noted that when she was seventy-five she was rejuvenated again. She was able to write a thousand words a day until she was ninety, when she died, reasonably enough, of "ailments connected with advanced age."

The undisputed dean of the goat-gland craze was Johnny Brinkley, the piney-ridge mountain boy who wanted to be a doctor, who had admittedly deprived more goats of their reproductive powers, and who had collected more money from elderly men than any of his colleagues in the business of providing boosters for unappeased desires.

Dr. Brinkley took a lively interest in the general gland scene. He shared the postulates of the time regarding the ductless glands, and especially the idea that the sex glands are a major factor in health, temperament and the whole body's capabilities. To the testicular hormone he gave a name of his own devising, in capital letters, "SEXALIN." He was conscious of being a pioneer, "his only guides his own experience, plus his brilliant intuitive deductions." Doctor was gratified, of course, to know that European physicians "accepted" gland transplantation. During Brinkley's Chicago sojourn, Voronoff had visited Dr. Thorek's Hospital. Brinkley must have felt it keenly when he was not admitted to the lecture amphitheatre where Dr. Voronoff made his demonstration. But Doctor owned a copy of Voronoff's treatise on gland grafts. "Dr. Serge Voronoff," he said, "copied after both Dr. Lydston and myself; but gave neither of us credit." What really surprised him was "that *the methods pursued by these foreign surgeons are so plainly inferior to those of our own Dr. Brinkley.*" As for Steinach, "The Steinach operation has been employed by Dr. Brinkley experimentally and has been supplanted in his work by the BRINKLEY OPERATION which has all of the rejuvenating features of the Steinach and in addition consists of the transplantation of a NEW ARTERY and a NEW NERVE, making the operation absolutely permanent. By using this opera-

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tion in connection with gland transplantation, adding the animal gland to and NEVER REMOVING the human gland but assisting it to its proper function of supplying the blood stream with the vital hormones, we have the BRINKLEY COMPOUND OPERATION, which is practically never failing. . . . The superiority of this method to that employed by Steinach is obvious and needs no further comment." Thus Brinkley.

In his critique of Dr. Voronoff and his monkey glands Doctor observed, "His procedure is to slice these glands into segments thin enough for the blood of the patient to penetrate and so adopt this foreign body as a part of his own organization. Again the superiority of Dr. Brinkley's method . . . is apparent to the reasoning mind. . . ." The people of the United States and all North America may congratulate themselves, the folder continued, for being able to obtain the services of the plentiful and reasonably priced goat, plus the ministrations "of one whose technique is far in advance of the Old World experts."

No one deplored more loudly than Dr. Brinkley the fact that hetero-transplantation was a subject that seemed to lend itself to scandal and "smart" journalism. "A vast amount of publicity," Doctor wrote, "much of it sensational (and consequently undesirable) has been given to gland transplantation within the past five years." Dr. Brinkley did not condone the entry of assorted opportunists—authorities, in a Pickwickian sense—into the rejuvenation field, and often reviewed in pungent language some of the novelties which tried to muscle into the business.

Dr. Brinkley fumbled his story for a while when he was getting his publicity machine revved up. He was interested, according to his early announcements, only in giving babies to men and women "cheated of their natural heritage." Let Voronoff make old men young again if he wished, but "Dr. Brinkley claims no such virtues for his operations," said a planted story in the *Chicago Herald and Examiner*. Let Stanley, if he would, pluck spare parts for the human machine from the death house at San Quentin. There was no cadaver work done at the Brinkley-Jones Hospital. Doctor had pinned his faith on the living

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goat, and its miraculous power to assist humans to reproduce. This orientation toward fertility was progressively soft-pedaled as it became evident that the majority of the customers were more interested in physical raptures than in babies. A typical inquiry, picked out of the flood of mail, was that of a gaffer, a Chicagoan, seventy-seven years old, who wrote that he had had sunstroke in 1877, was twice struck by lightning, had had three wives, and felt that goat glands would “tone up his system generally.”

When Doctor caught on to what his patients were thinking about, and would pay for, and had abandoned the theme of the sorrows of childless young marrieds, he noted that many came for his famed operation with a secret thought “that when the operation is over—a celebration is in store and they will proceed to overdo themselves. . . . Why! Do you know wives accompany their husbands to my hospital . . . wives who like the hart ‘panteth for the running brook.’” The public which had the railroad fare from Indianapolis, Denver, or Calgary to Milford, Kansas, and could lay \$750 on the line for a delicate surgical gift from a frisky, non-odorous Toggenberg goat, obviously found the idea of sex stimulation a more exciting subject than the ability to reproduce, or the relief of arterial tension and rheumatism.

As a business booster, Doctor put out a book, *The Brinkley Operation* (1922), which ran through several editions. It was written, as he said, in “clear, unambiguous style,” concentrating attention particularly upon his own surgical specialty, and merely glancing at the vast subject of endocrinology in general. The purchasers were people who were interested in having the operation performed upon themselves, and the tone of the monograph recognized this. It offered plain words on a delicate subject, many anecdotes of patients before and after treatment, the letters skillfully excerpted in the hospital office, and greatly boiled down, of course, for easy digestion.

Brinkley was gratified to be able to say, “I have made good in such a radical departure from the accepted teachings of the Regular School of Medicine. As a medical student I was taught

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that the transplanting of tissues from a lower species of animal could not be successfully transplanted into a higher animal, or one of a different species. . . . Today I am able to announce to the world, without mincing words, that the right method has been found." The glands, after taking up their new home "do actually continue to function as *live tissue* in the human body . . . stimulating the human gland to new activity." The Brinkley Operation, its originator was confident, would soon take its place with Salvarsan, appendectomy and vaccination; for "Facts are stubborn things."

Brinkley's name was in the newspapers. The publicity brought in the business and excited patients gave out testimonials which produced more business. Typically, Dr. J. J. Tobias, aged and garrulous chancellor of the Chicago Law School, told how he had two little Brinkley incisions, pain negligible, patient chatting with the surgeon as two bits of goat tissue from a two-month old kid were slipped into a cleft. "I'm a new man," declared the venerable administrator after the goat glands were sewed up in his innards. He demonstrated for the press how he could jump to his feet, throw out his chest, drop into a lethal John L. Sullivan fighting pose. And he warned especially against levity. "It's one of the great things of the century," he declared. A newspaperman, on the prowl for Ponce de Leon statistics, found Tobias a thin, small, wiry type, incredibly frolicsome, and possessed of a bone-crusher handshake. After an interview the reporter had to pound out his story with his left hand.

Dr. Brinkley began to emphasize and idealize the advantages of prolonging life. The wise judge could stay on the bench. The honest policeman could be saved for further duty on the force. Think, he said, of extending the lives and usefulness of John D. Rockefeller, William Jennings Bryan, of Shakespeare, of Darwin, of your rich uncle. Think of having United States Senators live forever.

But Dr. Hugh Cabot, of the Mayo Clinic, sounded a warning: "I would be tremendously worried if all these old men were rejuvenated." For once Dr. Brinkley and a spokesman for organ-

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ized medicine could agree. "You cannot always trust them," Brinkley would say in deprecation of the randy old men who "want the fires rekindled for revelry and riotous living." Brinkley had managed to compress the whole story into two power-packed phrases: "A man is as old as his glands" and "All Energy is Sex Energy." He re-enforced them with homely references to the frog that couldn't croak; the difference between the cock and the capon; between the stallion, a wonderful example of "horsehood," and the plodding dray horse. The no-man-wants-to-be-a-capon gambit, presented with the distinctive Brinkley touch, produced a golden harvest.

"Contrast the castrated animal, of any species, with the natural male or female. Note the difference, for instance, between the stallion and the gelding. The former stands erect, neck arched, mane flowing, champing the bit, stamping the ground, seeking the female, while the gelding stands around half-asleep, cowardly and listless, going into action only when goaded, with no interest in anything. Observe the rooster and the capon. The rooster will fight and work for his flock. He stands guard over them, protects them, but the capon eats the food the hens scratch up. He will even set on their eggs. . . . Take man himself . . ."

Well, on second thought, perhaps we had better leave man alone. At any rate, Doctor knew by the late 'twenties that his patients "secretly wish for an improvement in their sexual apparatus." But they were also promised, from the Brinkley operation, help with their prostate, eyesight and acne, too, for good measure. And Brinkley cited limitless instances of self-diagnosis from happy customers, showing that the operation was a success in connection with influenza, youthful indiscretions, melancholia, that tired feeling, hernia, dizzy spells and such obscure afflictions as "Husband Acted Queerly," or "Seemed To Be Floating Through Space."

In 1923, Brinkley brought out a little book, privately printed, called *Shadows and Sunshine*, described in a Brinkley press release as "a distinctive addition to the literature of the ductless

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gland." The text consisted of snappy extracts from postoperative letters.

"This man is now happy," it said in *Shadows*, ". . . his wife also." "Complete recovery." "Another home made happy by the Brinkley operation." "That little goat of yours gave me my steady nerve back." "Operation brought about the desired results." "Now . . . is a man." And "This young man was in the Diplomatic Service and quite insane. Completely cured. . . ."

"It would seem," Doctor said, "that practically every disease that man is heir to is tabulated in this monograph. . . . I believe that with the mass of symptoms presented the average prospective patient can locate his trouble in the pages of this book." In fact, he could experience any number of interesting new symptoms just from reading the book.

And so, the busy Doctor would phone his printer down in Junction City to set up the type for another circular about his knife-magic. The tone was always urgent. Doctor is needed in Mexico City. . . . He may close up at Milford soon. . . . You may have to wait until October to get that annoying Impotency cleared up. . . . Aged men and women are looking younger every day as the gland work progresses. The Rockefeller Institute is reported to be experimenting, too. This letter goes to 500 men a day, you are not the only one. Arrange for appointment now. . . . Write to the State Bank in Milford, or any man, woman or child in Geary County about Dr. Brinkley. . . . Come to Milford for an examination on Thursday or Friday. . . . Register with the girl in the front office, get your number and take your turn. . . . Many come under assumed names. . . . Our business is strictly confidential. None but you and I need ever know. . . .

The bearded doctor with the stiletto gaze built the better mouse trap. And then took the precaution of telling the world about it, using the methods of Big Business itself. What advertising could do for soap, Doctor figured, it could do for him.

And he was so right!

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Branch Line to the Fountain of Youth

From time to time Dr. Brinkley employed various press representatives, often as many as three at once, with a man stationed at Milford, one at Topeka and a third posted at Chicago, the free-lance specialists appearing and reappearing as needed to orchestrate the theme. They collected and processed Brinkley data, thinking up ideas and angles for startling announcements and placing them with the Hearst and other publications interested in popularizing the latest developments from the laboratories of science. The publicity men would quiz Brinkley, then hold bull sessions in which they would run an idea up the flagpole to see if anyone saluted. They brainstormed. They initiated crash programs. Sometimes Mrs. Brinkley would gather the staff together and say that here was a crackerjack of a good idea for an article. And so the boys would write it up and try to place it, often with brilliant success.

Priority in these informational programs has been claimed by one H. Roy Mosnat, who said, "I was his publicity man, and got him a lot of newspaper notice"; adding, "he is a likable cuss, if he wants to be." Mrs. Brinkley has confirmed Mosnat's claim to this distinction; for she once spoke out angrily against him as the one "that got Dr. Brinkley into that 'crooked' work."

Perhaps the most picturesque character in the Brinkley

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news factory was an idiosyncratic oddity known as Dr. William Hosea Ballou, a self-styled doctor—of science, of literature, of law—and himself a rejuvenated man. Dr. Ballou said that he had studied medicine, too, for a week. He insisted that he was often consulted by the medical profession because they credited him with “an instinct for the treatment of cases” that “was worth a million.” Ballou said he could vouch personally for the case of an aged millionaire who, as a result of Brinkley’s operation, had stopped repeating his own stories. “That alone” as old Ballou truly said, “shows marked rejuvenation.” He once rejected indignantly the suggestion of a skeptical attorney that he was not qualified to evaluate the Brinkley operation.

“I object to this gentleman,” he fumed, “saying that I am not qualified, because I am a University man and have some honorary degrees and decorations from foreign governments for my services to the world and humanity, from France, from Italy, and all but the American Government, which owes me \$4. . . . I am in this book of *Who’s Who in America*, as one of the most prominent of thirty-five men in the world. . . . I would like to see a man that is more qualified than I am. . . . If you would like to see some of my decorations I will go upstairs and bring them down. . . .”

Ballou’s most impressive qualification for Dr. Brinkley was, however, in a quite different field. He was actually a hack writer, who was able to place popular science articles in the Hearst newspapers and the commodity Brinkley was particularly interested in was publicity. Dr. Brinkley confided to his literary colleague that he wanted to be put on the map, he wanted to be advertised, he wanted to get in the public eye, in the limelight, “so that,” said Ballou, “the world would know him.”

Before Doctor hooked up with old Ballou, who could go on and on about what Arthur Keith told his British colleagues about glands, and what Kingsley affirmed in his *Comparative Morphology of Vertebrates*—before Ballou’s appearance, Dr. Brinkley relied for much of his press agency upon Sydney B. Flower, a daft Chicago cultist who wrote little dollar books on

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will power and dietetic systems. Flower edited a publication called *Hypnotic Magazine*, which became *Suggestive Therapeutics*, then merged with the *Journal of Magnetism* and emerged as *New Thought*. And in due time *New Thought* became *Rejuvenation*, using material on astrology and spirit phenomena. Contributors included Ella Wheeler Wilcox, Arthur Brisbane and Doctor Brinkley. Editor Flower had his glands refitted in Milford and gratefully wrote the little treatise mentioned earlier—*The Goat-Gland Transplantation*, “a layman’s talk to laymen . . . the amazing work that is being done today by Dr. J. R. Brinkley.” (Silk cloth, gold-stamped, 96 pp., illus. \$1.)

So Doctor was admitted to the stable of contributors to a coterie magazine that was right down his alley. And Flower threw in his personal testimony in favor of the Milford operation. He had felt himself slipping, couldn’t remember anything, was indifferent to beauty either in a rose or a woman. Two days after his operation, Flower felt a change come over him. He rushed back to Chicago and wrote two books within fifteen days.

“It would be unbecoming to stress the *quality* of these books,” he said modestly, “but it is noteworthy that the effort could be made. . . .” Resorting to third person rhetoric, he wrote, “And now he appreciates beauty in a rose or a woman.”

He also praised Doctor Brinkley’s honesty and indifference to money, the way he strove with “the bluntness of genius” simply to preserve our great thinkers against decay so that we would still retain among us men who combined Power with Wisdom, men like Arthur Brisbane and the Baptist preacher, Dr. Russell H. Conwell.

Brinkley in turn gave Flower a leg up by merchandising his *Rejuvenation* magazine.

“My Dear Friend,” Doctor began a letter to his sucker list, “If you agree that you and myself were created by Omnipotence for a purpose on this universe and that our existence here is not a happenstance, then it is our duty singly and collectively, to leave this World a better place than we found it. . . . I have selected you to assist in a small way. If I was financially able I would see

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personally that you are supplied with the October issue of *Rejuvenation* magazine, published at 732 Sherman Street, Chicago, Illinois." But one could, if he hurried, send his name, address and ten cents, which was half price, and receive the current issue containing an article by Brinkley.

"I have selected you as one of God's creatures to help spread this message of Hope to a suffering World, and this is your opportunity to, in a small way, give your share."

Thus Doctor got his advertising paid for and read, and extended his mailing list at the extremely favorable price of ten cents a head.

It will be observed that there is a kind of nimbus about the circular letter just cited which suggests, not that it says so plainly and openly, that Doctor was a deeply religious man. Brinkley did not discourage this idea. He often pointed to his Bible. It was always near at hand, or as one might say, on display. It was well worn, as he would indicate, with a calm, religious smile. He had a Southern Methodist background. He had traveled in the Holy Land. He often read the Beatitudes in a solemn voice, or talked on Christian ideals, stumbling slightly over the hard words like "casuistries," "subtleties" and "prose-lytes." Others he just skipped over. When for instance, he came to "You must expect insult and calumny," he adapted the passage freely.

"I had rather save a soul," he might conclude simply, "than be President of the United States."

These outward manifestations of an inward grace, plus certain acts of supererogation—like setting up his own church—were to stand Brinkley in good stead later. He used religion to advance his interests, admittedly, as he did Masonry, but he did it, as one might say, reverently, and cleverly.

Since Brinkley was unknown to scientific medicine, and was only briefly ever a member of a state or county medical society or the American Medical Association, one may conjecture that he sought solace and reinforcement of his position in those socially approved institutions with which he identified

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himself so prominently as time went on—the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Masonic lodge, Rotary International and the Republican party. And his generosity in support of various philanthropies was legendary. The Del Rio, Texas, high school is still said to possess a stuffed tuna fish of Dr. Brinkley's provenance, proof of his prowess with rod and reel, as well as an educational exhibit of great value, linking Nova Scotia with the Texas border country.

Doctor understood the principle of syndication. Thus, the wife of Doc's first gland patient had scarcely been delivered of her Billy than a picture of Brinkley hugging the moppet appeared in the *Topeka Capital*, *Wichita Eagle* and other newspapers throughout Kansas. The embarrassed father rumbled privately that the only thing he had had was lumbago. He huffed and he puffed about suing Brinkley, but his heart wasn't really in it. He knew that Doctor didn't have a dime to his name.

The early 1920's marked the beginning in the United States of the new craft of public relations counsel. Brinkley with his Bal-lous, Flowers and others, was quick to avail himself of the services of various gifted members of the new profession; and who else, but a press agent, would have had the thought, or the nerve, to call Doctor the "Burbank of humanity"? This, of course, was before the sales story on the goat-gland proposition was shifted from fertility to putting new ginger into old men's sex life. Another successful stunt was Brinkley's appeal to Governor H. J. Allen of Kansas for coal to heat his hospital during the 1919 fuel famine. Scorned, as he would have it, by the organized doctors, the "lords of medicine" who wouldn't pay attention to a country doctor, Dr. Brinkley reluctantly took his "case" to the people, and became, like the late Dr. R. V. Pierce, of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery fame, "The People's Medical Servant."

Dr. Brinkley began sending out prepared "mat" stories, "all built up and arranged." Clippings shortly flooded back into Milford, having appeared in Indiana, Oklahoma, Texas and downstate Illinois papers: "Goat Glands Rejuvenate Decrepit

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Kansas Village,” “Japan Makes Goat Gland Transplantation Compulsory.” And what do you think? None other than His Highness, the Maharajah Thakou of Morvi is coming from India to New York for the goat-gland transplant. The Milford surgeon has already instructed the Maharajah’s chief medical officer as to the pre-operative treatment necessary to give the potentate enough vitality to make the long journey. Pick-ups from the *Havana Post* came in, and from the Bahamas. The *Phoenix* (Arizona) *Gazette* reported the screening locally of an animated treatment of the Brinkley operation. “The picture . . . departs as far as possible from scientific terms and seeks to *simplify* the explanation.”

The publication of Brinkley’s *Shadows and Sunshine*, the goat-gland book written “from an entirely new angle,” by the laity for the layman, suggests a snake swallowing its tail, because as the books went out, so did the mats, from the same source—“Grateful Patients Write Book for Noted Kansas Gland Surgeon” and the clippings from Kankakee and Marseilles, Illinois, from Mechanicsburg, Ohio, and points north, east, south and west, were duly pasted in Doctor’s press books. From their own lips, in *Shadows and Sunshine*, come the patients’ tributes to the humble Arkansas goat and the surgical skill of the country doctor, in stories that read like fiction; and for the most part were.

One of the early press handouts, sent to important newspapers, got only a two-per-cent coverage. But that was enough. It brought Chancellor J. J. Tobias of the Chicago Law School to Milford and Tobias lent himself willingly to sensational puffery, because he was grateful, or senile, or perhaps he too liked the limelight. The wire services used the story, and a Newspaper Enterprise Association staffer did a piece on Doctor. By the late ’twenties Dr. Brinkley could check in at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York, notify the newspapers that he was there and know that a press conference was an assured thing. By 1930, when Doctor had rammed himself into Kansas politics, he didn’t have to send out mats to country papers any more. The press associations did the job for him.

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Whenever Doctor went anywhere—and he was always on the move—a story leaked to the press. Brinkley would deny that goat glands were a cure-all. They were known to be good, so far, he would assert virtuously, for only twenty-seven diseases, although the list was constantly being extended. Meanwhile, goat prices were soaring. Or the Chief Surgeon of the Brinkley-Jones Hospital would declare that he could keep Edison inventing for twenty years beyond his natural term. Did people believe twenty years ago we would be flying today? Certainly not! That's the way it is with the Brinkley experiments. Doctor gave the goat-gland work a clever lift by presenting it as admittedly controversial. There were good men on both sides of the argument. The possibilities of goat-gland rejuvenation had to be taken seriously, with medical opinion so evenly divided.

Or, perhaps the hot news was that the first goat-gland operation ever filmed was performed before the cameras of the Fox movie men in the presence of a small assemblage of surgeons, doctors, scientists . . . including Prince Mahoud Hamdi, a visiting fireman—or rather surgeon—from Egypt, studying at Harvard University. The film would be largely censored when shown in the movie houses all across the nation, but hospitals and academies of medicine could see it all.

Doctor announced that he was preparing for the profession a treatise on his first six cases, each of which had resulted in the subsequent birth of a fine, bouncing baby boy. But a short circuit must have occurred somewhere. The news got to the newspapers, all right, slugged in the *Chicago Herald and Examiner* as BRINKLEY PLANS TO MAKE REPORT ON EXPERIMENTS TO AUTHORITIES. And then, before you knew it, the story was on the Universal Service wire. But up to the time of Doctor's death, twenty-two years later, the scientific world never did hear anything more of the report. Unless they read the *Herald and Examiner*.

One cannot escape the feeling that Brinkley must have had a good time with his press relations. When he picked up \$40,000 in southern California in 1922, he took the occasion to announce

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the establishment of a hospital and sanitarium at Ensenada, in Lower California with the especial approval of the President of Mexico. Los Angeles capital was back of the project. A hotel was already under lease, a carload of surgical and laboratory equipment was rolling. The first ten of vast herds of goats being raised under contract, were on their way to Ensenada, too. The climate there was just right for the operation, Brinkley declared. A million-dollar institution, like the Battle Creek "San," like the Mayo Clinic, was just around the corner, Doctor added, as he emerged from the U. S. Grant Hotel in San Diego, accompanied by Osborn, a nurse, secretary and cook.

There wasn't even a road to Ensenada at the time. But thereafter California knew Brinkley. And the name of the Battle Creek Sanitarium got folded in with that of the Rockefeller Institute, with Harvard University, with Princes, Maharajahs—and the Brinkley Hospital out in the heart of the Kansas wheat belt.

John R. Brinkley had shown remarkable agility in enlarging and enhancing his professional distinctions from the days when he had parlayed the diploma he received from a class "C" medical school to full recognition in half a dozen states. His ability to pull strings, and if necessary even to make the strings, his nimbleness in climbing the professional ladder was never more striking than in his acquisition of a medical degree from the Royal University of Pavia, in Italy. This notable feat came to light when the American Medical Association received a one-sentence letter from Dr. Brinkley returning a proof for their Directory—"Kindly change this listing to show graduation from the University of Pavia, Italy, in July, 1925, and strike off graduation from the Kansas City College of Medicine and Surgery in 1919."

What is more, Doctor *did* have a diploma in medicine and surgery, or a kind of complimentary degree, to back up his request. The move to scratch the Kansas City College of Medicine and Surgery may smack of ingratitude, considering that this was the alma mater which gave him his honorary degree of Doctor of Public Health; but the prudence of disassociating himself from the notorious doctor mill is unassailable.

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Brinkley had landed in Pavia, the ancient Tinicum of the Romans, with letters of introduction from Edward Mentor Perdue. Perdue was a self-made doctor, an old homeopath and antivivisectionist who studied histology at home, got his animal tissue for anatomical work at the butcher shop in Fort Scott, Kansas. He had practiced medicine in Kansas City for twenty years without a license. Perdue had been one of Brinkley's teachers at the Eclectic Medical University, and was associated as "director of research" with "The Doctor O. A. Johnson Cancer Remedy" concern during the anxious time when Johnson was under indictment in connection with his cancer medicine, whose most active ingredient was 18 per cent alcohol. Perdue had attended some kind of convention in Rome, and had given Brinkley letters as a result of contacts there.

What must have been the emotions of this man—mountain boy, telegrapher, runner for a venereal outfit, and now a figure who moved with dignity, pomp and circumstance, as he entered the ancient premises of a university founded in 1361, long famous for its medical school, with the oldest anatomical cabinet in Italy? Here Volta made his first electrical experiments. Here Boethius wrote. Here were preserved some of Columbus's ashes. Petrarch visited here. And now—so did Dr. J. R. Brinkley.

Back in '23, at the time when diploma-mill scandals filled the newspapers, and Brinkley's name had been dragged into the sordid reports, Doctor had conceived the idea of getting a degree from a recognized university, an institution about which there could be no question. He had already done some shopping around at the University of Rome, and the University of Turin, but there were, it seemed, difficulties. Perhaps Pavia's more provincial setting worked in Brinkley's favor. Perhaps it was the understanding that got noised around that Dr. Brinkley was not only a prominent surgeon but also, providentially, a rich American who was utterly enchanted with Pavia and quite prepared to make a substantial settlement on the old school. Perhaps it was as simple as this: they had never been up against the likes of Doctor before. At any rate, Brinkley asserted later, "I

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went to the Royal University of Pavia, Italy, took the final examination and received the degree of Doctor of Surgery in June of 1925; returned to Italy in November of the same year and took the nation or state examination which was necessary and passed and became a licensed and registered physician in the Kingdom of Italy.”

Doctor’s thesis was on his gland work. Perdue told the story with a different twist.

“Dr. Brinkley went to Pavia and presented my letters,” he said “and was admitted without examination and was given a degree.”

With his Italian sheepskin in hand Brinkley advanced on London, presented his new credentials, and was admitted as a member of the British Medical Association, with the privilege of receiving the *British Medical Journal*, and was licensed to practice in Great Britain and her possessions. It was a very shrewd move, and became one of Doctor’s principal assets.

But if the mills of God grind slowly, they grind exceeding small. Both the British and the Italians later regretted their impulsiveness. Someone told them that they had been put upon. Perhaps it was Dr. Thorek. Perhaps it was a professor at the University of Illinois, working behind the scenes to inform the Pavians that they had goofed. Perhaps it was Doctor’s *bête noire*, the American Medical Association. At any rate some influence interposed. Dr. Thorek claimed the honor.

“Some five years ago I learned from my friend, Prof. Edoardo Perroncito, the eminent parasitologist of Torino, Italy,” Thorek recalled later, “that this man Brinkley had made false statements to him and to several other scientists . . . and through numerous misrepresentations, induced the University of Pavia to issue him a degree.

“I immediately cabled and corresponded with the authorities of the University of Pavia and showed them that they had been duped. . . .”

Wheels began to turn and in 1927 Doctor was informed that his degree had been annulled, as the Italian consul in St. Louis

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expressed it, "for the fact that he was a student of the Eclectic Medical University of Kansas City, Missouri, an institution lacking seriousness and not recognized by the Department of State of Missouri nor by the American Medical Society." The University demanded that Brinkley return their degree, but Doctor refused, apparently on the theory that finders are keepers. The British Medical Society, having had time to hear from Dr. Arthur J. Cramp, Director of the American Medical Association's Bureau of Investigation, also cast him out and canceled his free subscription to the *British Medical Journal*.

In one of his frequent courtroom appearances, Doctor testified that he never claimed that he was a Pavia alumnus after the Italians proved to be Indian givers, but in this his memory failed him. He made the claim constantly in his advertising. He was broadcasting the connection over the radio three years after the annulment. Indeed, he wrote to the American Medical Association to insert his Italian degree in their new Directory after he knew that he had been included out by the faculty of Pavia. His attention was called to this. His secretary, he said, must have written the letter under a misconception. Doctor had the makings of a very loyal Pavia alumnus.

Dr. Brinkley's great publicity blow-off came in the autumn of 1926 when a lurid unsigned article appeared in the *New York Evening Journal* of September eleventh, under the heading, "Preaches Fundamentalism—Practices Goat-Gland Science"; with the subtitle, "How a Famous Surgeon Combines Old-Time Religion and New-Fangled Operations on a Strange Medico-Gospel Farm." Among the illustrations was a photograph of Doc holding "Billy," the first goat-gland baby. Despite the goings-on at the gland hospital, there was, just across the road, a fundamentalist camp meeting, presided over by Dr. Charles Draper. It, too, was sponsored by Dr. Brinkley. The preacher, "hired at Dr. Draper's own price," preached against evolution and in favor of the literal Word.

According to the *New York Evening Journal*, Brinkley had gone abroad for study and research, winning medical laurels in

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London and at Pavia. Other alums of the venerable institution in Lombardy were mentioned: Napoleon and Michaelangelo. Brinkley was saluted as the only American ever to be accorded the same distinction as Dr. Napoleon and Dr. Michaelangelo. The article is so full of hyperbole, presented so clearly as a projection of Dr. Brinkley as he would like to be seen, that there can be no doubt that it was prepared under the eye of the gifted practitioner himself.

"Here," said *Hygeia Magazine*, looking back at the *New York Evening Journal's* story about Doctor Brinkley, "the career of Brinkley as a giant in quackery begins to develop." People wrote to Brinkley in increasing numbers. The flood of letters rose to three thousand a day, a mountain of mail that gave little Milford a second-class post office and convinced the natives that their destiny was as promising as that of Rochester, Minnesota, home of the Mayo Clinic. Even E. Haldeman-Julius, the publisher of various magazines and the famous Little Blue Books, caught the Brinkley fever, accepted Doctor's ads and published his articles in his *Haldeman-Julius Weekly*, a periodical "devoted chiefly to debunking American life." Haldeman-Julius later made a public apology for his deviation.

The results of what may be called the "Brinkley effect" upon the United States press were felt theatrically in Milford. On a good day some five hundred people would come flocking to the goat-gland Mecca. They crowded into the only restaurant in town, slept in their cars and parked where they could find a spot for one more machine. In 1928 the hospital alone grossed \$150,000. Doctor had put in city water by then, had made Milford an electric-light town, and said he would see to it that the rutted highway to Junction City was paved.

With Doctor the latchstring was always out. "Come and see us when in Milford," he said cordially to his prospects. Milford, he would point out, is safely out of the track of the Kansas cyclone belt, just twelve miles north of Junction City on the Republican River; or, to pinpoint the village's location in another way, it was just about twelve miles above the point where the

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Republican River empties into the Smoky, the two forming the Kaw—"an old Indian name." When you are on Route 40, you are only twelve miles from us. If you use the train, leave Kansas City on Number 103 at 10:40 A.M. If you are coming from the West, leave Denver on Number 104 for Junction City, arrive at 12:15 noon, lay-over till 3:25 when the Milford local leaves. Or phone the hospital and we will send our machine to Junction City and a thirty-minute drive puts you in the cozy hospital. And then Doctor would add with a touch of humor, that if you come by flying machine, "we have lots of wheat fields and alfalfa fields, and you can land any place you fancy."

John R. Brinkley not only *was* a doctor, if you were not too technical about it; he even *looked* like one. With his retreating hairline, personality glasses, sandy, tufted goatee and little brush of mustache, his grave and magisterial manner, he was every inch the wise physician, even when he was hustling about, hatless, in shirt sleeves—for it was often warm in Kansas—a cigarette drooping from his lower lip. Brinkley spoke bodaciously of the future. A new and imposing hospital was in the planning stage, designed to look like the White House. A Brinkley Clinic, too, was under discussion.

"It will cover a whole block," Doctor said enthusiastically, "will cost me a million dollars, and have shops, stores, a gymnasium, a monster bathing pool, beauty parlors, rooms for my clinic and a theatre almost as big as the Orpheum in Kansas City, where we will give the best theatrical shows and talking pictures."

Where would the money come from?

"It all comes from satisfied patients," Doctor declared, beaming. "I've treated many a millionaire here. They come to me from all over the world. And after they go away they send me more money. I could send out a cry for help . . . and get a million dollars in one week, if I needed it. Each of these new buildings I am putting up is intended to be a unit in a great medical and surgical institution that will be in operation, I hope, down through the ages. The Brinkley name will be perpetuated here."

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Life handed Dr. Brinkley many jolts and surprises. But it seldom shook his equanimity. He had been trained in a rough school and was generally prepared for all eventualities. One day a visiting physician came into his office and found Brinkley standing behind his desk with a revolver in his hand, his finger through the trigger guard. He whirled it round and round in the style of the Western gunman.

"You seem to be prepared for any emergency," remarked Dr. R. R. Cave of Manhattan.

"Yes," Brinkley said, "we have to be on our guard here. Just the other day a fellow came in here to Dr. Osborn and stuck a gun in his belly and demanded a shot of morphine. Believe me, they won't do that to me. Any time they stick a gun against me one of us will have to stop right there."

There was a touch of the vigilante in Doctor. It will be recalled that he was once put under bond to keep the peace when he threatened to unlimber his artillery against a Milford citizen, Jesse Wilson. And the report was current in Milford that there was a scuffle and some gunplay involving Dr. Brinkley and his father-in-law, Dr. Jones of Memphis, who was spending a hot and interminable summer in Milford. At any rate, Dr. Brinkley departed immediately after the little misunderstanding and went to Chicago for a "vacation."

Brinkley radiated optimism and confidence about his operation. He called it the "Old Reliable" method. And it was all his, he reflected, a secret. He would share it with no one. In such a mood he would summon his secretary:

"My Dear Friend," he would dictate. "A redbird and his mate are building their nest just outside my bedroom window; the turtle doves are nesting in the cedars south and west of the hospital. The robins have theirs in the stately elms surrounding the main building. The Peonies are almost in bloom, the Iris, Tulips, Japanese Lilies, Jonquils and Hyacinths are out in all their glory.

"It is spring-time in Kansas—May, the loveliest of our months. Will you, for your health's sake, be with us this May?"

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Without getting into clinical details about Doctor's "rescue work" in which he gave his clients "a new battery," it may be said, that his original operation was known as The Compound Operation, or "the mother operation"; although "father" seems perhaps the more apt word. The work, in one of Doctor's explanations, "consists of adding a new artery and nerve to the patient's own sex glands. This artery and nerve give added nerve and blood supply. In addition to this, I add some pure, fresh, healthy, animal gland tissues which act as a 'charger' (battery charger or fertilizer) to your glands. This animal gland tissue gives a 'kick' and with the nerve and artery added, the 'Compound' combination causes your own glands to begin functioning again. Regardless of how old you may be, there is good for you in this combination." The goat tissue "humanizes" in its new home and "blends with and nourishes the human tissue." That is to say, Brinkley claimed at that time that it was a true graft. Before Doctor implanted the goat pellets, the giblets were paraded on a tray before the patient's eyes, a procedure that had much to do with the effectiveness of the Old Reliable.

The Compound Operation appeared to Brinkley in 1922 to be "the crowning point of all my previous effort . . . a marvel of surgical science." It was "the best thing known for Impotency" and on down through a long list of diseases including dementia praecox and cases of "dysfunction of the gonadal endocrine reflex by affecting the sensory nervous system." This last mouthful was addressed to the general public. Doctor rather liked to mystify with learned diagnoses. Sometimes, when the mail was especially heavy, it seemed as though Doctor was physician to a whole nation; and sometimes, with the privilege of genius, he gave a foolish correspondent the rough side of his tongue. To a Minnesota woman, for instance, he wrote, "If your son is taking a diet to cure his epilepsy it is to laugh . . ."

Did every Brinkley patient make a miraculous recovery? "Of course not," he wrote in 1926 in his booklet, *The Compound Operation*, in which he estimated that he had operated upon 4,000 patients. But—"My batting average is high. That is what

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counts. . . . Well, what is my batting average? Oh about 90 to 95%. How's that?" He answered his own question: "Not bad."

Doctor called the operation "Compound" because it is *Compound* in technique and it is compound in results . . . including *IMPOTENCY*. Ah, that last one is the big factor." Whether or not Brinkley did perform the operation described in the millions of pamphlets which flooded the United States mails became the subject of a long and technical inquiry in Topeka; but by that time it was ancient history anyway. Time had marched on. The "mother operation" had been succeeded by improved techniques. There was the two-phase, the four-phase, and the four-phase compound. Doctor had his "budding" operation, just to give it a name, he said; and later it was known as "surgical technique." But all involved the installation of the animal-gland tissue to cure the nutty, make fruitful the barren and rekindle the fires of youth in the decrepit.

In some of his more urgent messages Brinkley talked to his gland prospects like a Dutch uncle. "Many untimely graves have been filled with people who *put off until tomorrow what they should have done today*," he scolded. "Do not get the idea . . . you are immune. . . ." He dazzled them with medical epigrams: ". . . an examiner can be made, but a diagnostician must be born." He confused them with doctor talk. Watch your prostate for signs of hypertrophy and for a fibrous and sclerotic condition. If there is constipation, is there not also obstipation? And how about a check-up to see if your prostate is nodular due to the presence of calculi? He admonished the prospective visitors to Milford in a thirty-two-page pamphlet, *Your Health* (often identified in later litigation as the "blue book" because of the color of its cover), to be vigilant against "those that prey upon the gullible"; thus acquiring virtue by praising it.

Thinking back over his early struggles, Brinkley summarized surgical progress in the gland field in this way:

"The compound, that was back in the days when I was doing work on the vas deferens, implanting the glandular tissue and things like that. . . ." The four-phase operation: "when I was

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speaking of that I was putting in the glands, cutting out a section of the vas and injecting medicine through the vas and bringing down some muscle tissue. . . ." The later "surgical technique . . . was the compound operation under a new name, with slight modification." The principle feature of each was, as Doctor put it, "I took and cut a hole out of the man's testicle and took a chunk out and filled the hole up in the testicle with goat gland . . . and sometimes put them in the abdominal muscles. There were different locations for them."

Each operation, with its special name, its fascinating atmosphere of mystery and hope, its exciting new promotion, had the same effect upon the mass market as sound restyling has in the automobile business. It was, in effect, "new model" merchandising. Another feature which Doctor introduced into surgery was the familiar American one-price-to-all policy.

The arithmetic of Dr. Brinkley's booming practice may be worked out quite easily. Fifty operations a month, as an average figure, at \$750 each, makes a gross take of \$37,500. And there were other sources of income, too, as will appear later.

"We are prospering," Brinkley said, "because our keynote is 'service.'"

One of the most engaging aspects of Dr. Brinkley's personality was the zest with which he put his coin into circulation. When he had it, he spent it. The germ of the future may be seen in the fact that, as early as 1921, Doctor took his bride to New York and bought her a Stutz Bearcat and a fur coat.

In addition to his new model surgery, Dr. Brinkley also had other ingenious devices for separating the youth seekers from their money. He prepared and shipped by express, collect, to all parts of the world, a "Special Gland Emulsion" which was sold on the mail-order plan, a month's supply—with a rectal syringe for administering the treatment—in return for a letter giving the clinical picture in the patient's own words, and a hundred bucks—draft or money order, sorry but no checks. It was recommended as being a remarkable thing, but, of course, not in the same class with the Brinkley Operation. The home treatment

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may not sound cheap. But when one considers that two Milford goats had to sacrifice their heritage to make enough emulsion to last a patient a month, and that the glands were freshly macerated, not cooked, steamed or froze—I mean, frozen—and that a soft rubber catheter with a glass syringe was included, enabling anyone to use the outfit “in the privacy of their home,” it becomes clear, as Dr. Brinkley insisted, that this extension of his gland work was more of an accommodation than anything else.

In the broad picture, the Home Treatment was good publicity and a traffic-builder for the Hospital. The Dispensary Department handled this class of business. All the patient had to do was to write in telling “just how you feel.” His letter would be read without charge and his case prescribed for. “We want a cured patient at every postoffice, as a living advertisement, and the first one to order treatment from your town will receive treatment at one-half the regular price, just by agreeing to tell their neighbors and friends.”

Even more piquant than the Home Treatment was another gimmick of a very special sort. To selected prospects Dr. Brinkley sent out circulars with the heading, “Why Be Half Human and Half Goat?” When a well-rated oil man in Oklahoma wrote to him to inquire about a set of goat glands, Doctor replied on the stationery of the Brinkley Hospital:

“You are able to pay the full price for the boon of youth fully restored—why not do so? Why lower yourself to the level of the beasts of the field by having the glands of a goat transplanted into your body, when you may just as well have the glands of a healthy young man implanted in you?”

The oil man told Dr. Brinkley that he had some friends who were considering coming to Milford for the goat-gland operation.

“I will do this for you,” Dr. Brinkley wrote to his Oklahoma correspondent. “If each of your friends come at the same time and will pay \$5,000 each for a genuine human gland operation, I will give you the same kind human gland operation which I perform at a minimum fee of \$5,000. I have just closed with a case in Los Angeles today for \$10,000. Few surgeons can get hu-

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man glands, but I have an old-time friend in one of our large cities that can supply me.

“Of course, these human gland operations are expensive. I pay a big price for the glands. I must have advance notice. For instance, if you and your friends decide to do this, you must notify me that you will be ready to leave any time within the next six weeks. Then I notify my purchasing agent and he gets busy. He may get the glands in a few days or he may wait weeks. So, it’s necessary for my patients to be ready to come here when I am ready, and a cash payment of at least one-fourth must be sent me as a deposit so that I will not go and contract for something and be the loser.

“I guarantee the human glands pure and healthy and absolutely free from disease. I also guarantee that the seller of them will not be over 35 years of age, thus insuring strong, virile glands.

“Furthermore, I give another, and the best of all guarantees, that the human glands will not slough; if they do I will replace them free of charge within sixty days after the first operation, the patient only paying our regular hospital fees.”

Brinkley explained in the letter that this was the best deal he could make and he only made the offer because they were old friends. There was a second letter in which Doctor was still “Cordially yours, Jno. R. Brinkley, M.D.” but the general tone was more reserved. He had learned in the meantime that the prospective patients were bankers; “naturally close-fisted,” J.R. observed, and unlikely to lay five grand on the line. Brinkley had in mind a different type for his human-gland operation: “Men like oil men, real estate men, men that make big money and make it without manual labor and men that like to put on evening dress suits and enjoy life are the men who crave the better things . . . you will meet some of your friends some day that will be interested.”

Perhaps Dr. Brinkley’s most brilliant formulation, and the one he was to stick with through thick and thin, was the result of his observation, as disclosed in the *Life*, of “a relationship of cause and effect, between the gland operation and the reduc-

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tion in the size of the prostate." He made a tentative generalization. . . . The conclusion was that, as the prostate begins to enlarge, the testes begin to reduce. Suddenly he saw a necessary corollary to this: "that one of the first symptoms of prostate trouble was the decline of sexual power."

Here was something that could be brought home dramatically and very personally to the majority of males past forty in the United States, and there were some thirty-six million of them. What a market! Doctor began to flood the mails with circulars addressed to "the prostate man." It was carefully planned and worded. Every reader felt an incipient case of lumbago as he read the literature. If his imagination was in good working order any farmer, blacksmith, school janitor or plasterer would realize with a shudder that he was nourishing a slowly growing neoplastic growth, vascular in nature, fed by his own blood. In Doctor's stepped-up literature, the prostate, normally a truncated cone about the size of a horse chestnut, but often enlarging up to the size of a grapefruit, that troublesome "old cocklebur," as Doctor familiarly called it, became a symbol of universal evil—the source of all man's miseries.

As he thought about his prostate work, Brinkley was moved to exclaim of himself, "If he should do no more, he has rendered a service to humanity that will live for centuries to come. . . . It is to be wondered that more surgeons do not pay attention to this principle. . . . It certainly behooves a man who has an enlarged prostate to consider it, and we are indeed glad to hear from such men for we are convinced we can render him a real, genuine and lasting service."

Dr. Brinkley did not forget the practical side: how to get to Milford. "We are on a branch line of the Union Pacific, which runs between Junction City, Kansas, and Belleville, Kansas. A cordial invitation is extended to you to visit our radio station and hospital grounds. . . ." John R. Brinkley often confessed that he lacked the ability to describe just how he performed his operations. But he could always tell good and plain how to reach the hospital.

Meanwhile, it was first-come-first-served, as prospective pa-

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tients were urged to make fall and winter appointments early to avoid disappointment. Self-addressed envelope enclosed. Every Sunday afternoon, "Happy Harry" trundled the Brinkley bus from the little station in the cornfields to the bustling village and rolled up in front of the Hospital with ten or twelve male passengers, some older and some younger, but probably averaging about sixty-five years. They were seeking health. They had the right attitude; they were hopeful. But they had embarked upon a great and confusing adventure. If perhaps they moistened their lips, if they swallowed without knowing it, if their Adam's apples went up and down convulsively, one can understand their tensions and apprehensions. Howard Wilson, "one of my secretaries" and a real Brinkley booster, would be waiting inside in the herd-room. Dr. Osborn would be busy with his charts; the Chief Surgeon ready in starchy white and rubber gloves. Framed in the doorway stood Mrs. Brinkley. In a cheery voice, she greeted the shuffling group that straggled up the front walk.

"Here come my men," she called.

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It Shall Be Sent Quickly, Dear Mother—Collect

☛ In 1923, radio had come a far piece since the days when the listener with a bedspring aerial “tickled” a crystal with a “cat whisker” while straining to hear something, anything, through a set of headphones. That was the year in which the American Telephone and Telegraph Company offered to broadcast sedate commercial messages at a nominal charge of one hundred dollars for a ten-minute talk; and lo! radio advertising was born. Dr. Brinkley, too, got in on the ground floor. He was broadcasting even before the establishment of the Federal Radio Commission.

“You are listening to Dr. Brinkley,” he would croon into the microphone, “speaking to you from Milford, Kansas, over station KFKB. Radio Station KFKB operates on a frequency of 1050 kilocycles. Here it is almost the first of June . . . (Squawk, squawk) . . . turned away five people today . . . (squawk). If you would like to have literature telling about our work . . .”

It had been only two years before that Powel Crosley, Jr., bought the parts for a “radiophone” in a Cincinnati store for his young son. Fascinated by the gadget, within a year Crosley himself was broadcasting “The Song of India” from a platter—and WLW came out of the experience. When Brinkley took a hand in the game, radio broadcasting was still a novelty, dependent upon home-built sets, put together in the attic or basement.

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Hams had antenna-raising, and bragged to their unseen friends in the American Radio Relay League that they got the DX (distance) despite QRM (interference), using the international code of three-letter words. In rooms filled with apparatus, the walls plastered with call-letter cards from South America to Alaska, the radio amateurs of Brinkleyland reported that they had heard Harry Lauder singing somewhere in the East, a concert from KDKA, Pittsburgh; and one might with mounting excitement catch, "Yes, We Have No Bananas" from far-off Schemectady, New York.

In Topeka, a large audience gathered at the Y.M.C.A. to hear messages from a ship at sea, brought by radio telephony; and out near Gridley, Homer Hatch, a Coffey County farm lad, after feeding and currying six head of horses every morning, went on the air with a set made largely from discarded telephone parts. Before sunup he was able to tell his folks at the breakfast table just how cold it was in central Canada, how warm in south Texas. And Homer could make a conversation piece out of how a homesteader away up in the new wheat country of western Canada had greeted him with "Good morning, W9AHO in Kansas, what's the weather like in Gridley this morning?" School District 94 could never hold Homer after *that*. And all this for less than the cost of a good buggy!

Half miracle and half nuisance, radio swiftly left behind the headphones and Morse code, and became a business, although many a struggling station, when the going was rough, traded hillbilly music for canned goods. But by 1929 the public was buying 850 million dollars' worth of elaborate console models with seven tubes and built-in superpower magnetic speakers, fascinating to listen to and also highly prized as furniture. Husbands home from work fiddled with the dials and came to know the voices of Graham McNamee, Amos and Andy, Moran and Mack and their vaudeville jokes, Floyd Gibbons and his 127 words a minute. And there was a local Kansas interest. Percy Hemus, a former Topeka boy, who used to sing and wisecrack around his home town, was on the Dutch Masters Minstrels

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“last night,” and gave his famous “Darktown Poker Club” number. The greatest fun was fishing for distant stations. If the atmospheric conditions were just right, one could, before sitting down to supper, bring in Dallas, then switch to WLW to hear Jane Froman sing “St. Louis Woman.”

The air was considerably cluttered up with fortunetellers, face lifters, painless dentists, tips on the horses, and a noisome collection of hate vendors, who scraped a living out of baiting the Jews and Wall Street. Secretary Herbert Hoover operated hopefully on the theory that what was good for the advertisers would also serve the needs of the public; “a faith,” says Lewellyn White, in his *The American Radio* (Chicago: 1947) “to which the courts clung long after the Secretary became skeptical of it.”

From Milford, Kansas, KFKB poured forth fundamentalist theology, calculated to catch the attention of rustic listeners, while preaching also the secular joys of rejuvenation. Boccaccio and Rabelais were tame compared with some of the Brinkley radio talks on the effects obtained through the introduction of the diced glands. To keep the audience glued to its radio between lost-manhood commercials, KFKB offered The Old Timers, a guitar-and-banjo ensemble; Dutch, the Boy Blues Singer; Uncle Bob Larkan and his fiddle; an accordionist; a harpist; cowboy singers, yodelers and crooners. The McRee Sisters did novelties. Steve Love and his eleven-piece orchestra played pop music, while a doctor of magic—not medicine—sold horoscopes. The Ninth Cavalry band from Fort Riley and talented people from Manhattan and Junction City also went on the air as a part of Doc’s folksy and inexpensive programming. For more serious fare, he broadcast the market news—daily prices of corn, wheat and hogs.

Every night except Sunday, Dr. Brinkley gave a gland lecture and explained the male change of life. “Our bodies are not holding up as well as those of our forefathers did,” he warned; “enlargement of the prostate is on the increase.”

“KFKB has a personality, a Soul, if you please,” said the

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station director in explaining the popularity of the Milford broadcasts. Perhaps the soul, or at least the character, of the station is made clearer in the menu for a typical day:

- 5:30 to 6:00 A.M. Health Lecture by announcer.
- 6:00 to 7:00 A.M. Bob Larkan and His Music Makers.
- 7:00 to 7:30 A.M. Hints to Good Health by announcer.
- 7:30 to 8:00 A.M. Bob Larkan and His Music Makers.
- 8:00 to 8:30 A.M. Prof. Bert.
- 8:30 to 9:00 A.M. Old Time Entertainers.
- 9:00 to 9:30 A.M. Markets, weather, cash grain.
- 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Medical Question Box.
- 10:00 to 11:00 A.M. Special Feature.
- 11:00 to 12:30 Steve Love and His Orchestra.
- 12:30 to 1:00 P.M. Health Talk by Dr. Brinkley.
- 1:00 to 2:00 P.M. Special Feature.
- 2:00 to 2:30 P.M. Dutch Hauserman and Cook.
- 2:30 to 3:00 P.M. Medical Question Box.
- 3:00 to 4:00 P.M. Bob Larkan and His Music Makers.
- 4:00 to 4:30 P.M. Uncle Sam and Dutch Hauserman.
- 4:30 to 5:45 P.M. Arthur Pizinger and His Orchestra.
- 5:45 to 6:00 P.M. Tell Me a Story Lady.
- 6:00 to 6:15 P.M. Prof. Bert. French Language Instruction.
- 6:15 to 6:30 P.M. Orchestra.
- 6:30 to 7:00 P.M. Dr. Brinkley.

Since it was one of the most powerful stations in North America, KFKB, Kansas First, Kansas Best—or as Dr. Brinkley sometimes liked to interpret his call letters, “Kansas Folks Know Best”—the Milford signal was hard to avoid anywhere between the Mississippi Valley on the east and the mountain states on the west. It blared out of the transmitter toward Latin America, and was heard clearly in Saskatchewan. Doctor had a large map of North America hung on the wall of the studio office, with pins sticking in it to show where the listening audience was. It looked like a forest of pins, all over the continent; and a week’s mail, from every state in the union and fourteen foreign countries, con-

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firmed the existence of a vast, although thinly spread, listening area.

Sometimes Dr. Brinkley could be heard as early as 5 A.M., C.S.T., or as late as 11 P.M. Thus the farmers of the Midwest used to sit during the long winter evenings meditating on their infirmities, when Doctor's woolly preacher's voice would come burrowing in, insinuatingly, "Don't let your doctor two-dollar you to death . . . come to Dr. Brinkley . . . take advantage of our Compound Operation. . . . I can cure you the same as I did Ezra Hoskins of Possum Point, Missouri. . . ." The message was rifled at an audience of elderly men likely to be awake attending to urgent physiological functions, with their guard down against Brinkley's bedroom voice. It often sounded tired. Doctor would sigh between sentences. He carried a vast responsibility, no less than the woes of the world, on his shoulders. Yet he spoke "with love for all in his heart." Being a public benefactor, living in a state of public-privacy, always on exhibition, was hard work. "My dear, dear friends," Doc would drone on hypnotically, "the smouldering fires of the most dangerous disease may be just starting. Come," he urged, "while still able to get about."

Doctor was also worried about gland troubles, and pointedly added, "no man wants to be unsexed." If you can't come, write. If you write, remember to enclose two dollars, "which barely covers the cost of postage, stenographic hire, office rent and so forth." Doctor knew the hidden Kansas libido, his oriflamme a goat's whiskers, the radio his magic soapbox from which he threw the lightning. To the skeptical *Chicago Tribune*, Doctor was "the Candy kid," offering "the future in a glanderous romance." The KFKB audience heard no oratory from Dr. Brinkley, no elocutionary voice dynamics, no pear-shaped vowels. Doctor was a precursor of the conversational, chatty style. He just did what came naturally.

Sex was never far from the studio when Dr. Brinkley sat down before his gold-plated microphone, "which is good logic," conceded *Variety*. "Among the hillbillies that he caters to there is quite a lot." Doctor was the fortunate beneficiary of the psy-

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chological principle of synesthesia; that is, a sense impression producing an associated mental image. When the Brinkley audience heard the Brinkley voice, they got a sharp visualization of the skilled and trusted physician. He *looked* the part of a doctor, as visitors could see when they peered into the studio of KFKB. And on the air, riffling quickly through the letters before him, he *sounded* like a doctor. His was the voice of the minister and the medicine man, as he intoned, "Greetings to my friends in Kansas and everywhere."

Brinkley would ask in that crooning voice: "What is the use of trying to do anything when there is cancer in your prostate gland?" He did not speak with a noticeable Southern accent. But cancer came out as "cain-cer." It was hill-folks talk. Neither "caincer," nor his many "er-s" and "ahs," his boo-boos and stumbles, his occasional lapses in grammar, bothered the KFKB fans. They also used "like" as a conjunction, and the double negative. They also had difficulty with such hard nuts as "kimmical," "colyum" and "frenny."

One interesting aspect of Doc's many-sided personality was his jovial kidding of his customers. He knew human nature and sensed how far he could go. His fortunes lay, he knew, with that special public which said "Ah" in front of its own mirror and felt its own pulse. "Plenty of them," Doctor said, "get a notion in their head that is hard for a doctor to get out." On one broadcast, when the merchant in him had the upper hand over the scientist, he admitted in a burst of candor that at the Brinkley Hospital the patient was always right. And he cited the instance of a man who insisted upon having an X ray of his head, which proved, as Doc admitted he knew would be the case, that the man's head was empty. Temperamental, touchy, quick with a gun or a lawsuit, human and contemptuous by turns, the only constant thing about Doctor was his unpredictability. When *The Kansas City Star* began to look into Dr. Brinkley's hazy past, Doctor slapped a five-million-dollar libel suit on the paper. Yet, when Ralph Ellis on the old *Kansas City Journal-Post* went after Doctor in some articles, the next thing he knew he received a complimentary live goat from Milford by express.

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Brinkley was definitely the most colorful of the self-promoters of early radio, among whom were to be found hysterical evangelists, enemies of chain stores and assorted proprietors of patent heavens. Falling hair or loose teeth could be arrested—just write. This was the day of the Reverend Bob Shuler of Los Angeles, who charmingly combined the more striking attributes of Aimee Semple McPherson, Cole Blease and Huey Long. It was the era of Tom Heflin and “Tea-leaf Kitty from Jersey City,” who would answer any three questions in a sealed envelope for a dollar. But it was Brinkley who demonstrated that radio had more pulling power than even the experts had imagined. And it was Brinkley again, with his talk-talk about men who were geldings and women who weren’t “icebergs,” who also demonstrated that the newly created Federal Radio Commission was badly needed.

On one occasion, Merck & Co., the well-known pharmaceutical manufacturer of Rahway, New Jersey, was, in the words of a company spokesman, “literally swamped with orders, not only from the regular trade but also from the laity,” for Merck’s Sodium Borate C.P. Powder. It was a startling and inexplicable demand. But there was, it turned out, a reason: Dr. Brinkley was recommending it as a weight reducer.

Radio brought Dr. Brinkley into full flower, and there was a direct relationship between the in-put of wattage that made KFKB a howling nuisance to WGN in Chicago and the overflowing bookings at the Brinkley Hospital.

Examples could be multiplied endlessly. Mr. William Black, a railroad engineer, had a mighty fine radio in his home up in Kenora, Canada. When he got in from a trip on his engine, he liked nothing better than to do a little radio fishing after supper. So, he picked up Brinkley. “I had a trouble that came upon me in my old age and I used to sit here and listen to Dr. Brinkley talk over the radio and he described my ailments exactly. I got so I used to listen to him every day, and he always told how he could cure cases like mine, so I wrote to him. . . .”

“The first time I knew there was such a man as Brinkley was when I heard him over the radio,” said Grant Eden, care-

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taker at the John Brown Park at Osawatomie, Kansas. "I tuned in regularly for a month to hear him tell how safely and surely he could cure prostate trouble, for I was suffering from that. I sent for his literature . . . which put a flowery edge on everything."

Dr. Brinkley's follow-up system sounded a trumpet call to all who wrote to the station, whether they had gland trouble on their minds or only a musical request number.

"You are the man who is sick," Doctor would write to a correspondent, "and you are the man who has the prostate gland . . . If you go ahead to the doctors there"—in this instance, *there* meant Detroit—"and have your prostate gland removed, you will be just the same as a castrated man or an old steer and good for nothing. . . . Wishing you a merry Christmas," etc.

Many a worried stockman or rancher wrote to *The Prairie Farmer*, a trusted adviser on baby chicks or the new strains of hybrid corn, and inquired about Brinkley. Mrs. Lucile F. Miller, for example, wrote to *The Prairie Farmer* about her father. He "is talking about going out there. . . . I don't want my dad to be doctored by a quack . . . dad is hard to convince." But, before *The Prairie Farmer* could answer, perhaps around 5 A.M. the next morning, there would be that voice.

Doctor used the printed word lavishly to back up the radio appeal. "Are you a man of your own mind? Or are you a *weakling*? . . . Men like Edison, Marconi, Burbank and Brinkley have always *thought for themselves*. . . . Must you run to see your doctor before coming to me? Who's prostate is it—your's or the doctor's?" In his little classic, *The Story of Paw and Maw*, dedicated to "The Prostate Man," Doctor pointed out that we have always had progress, and we have always had kickers, scoffers and doubters, of whom Doctor cited the most celebrated, "poor old Thomas, who did not believe until he had seen and placed his hands in the wounds of our dear Saviour . . . kindly continue to read this booklet. . . ."

Once a man wrote to Milford he got plenty of mail: "November is almost all taken now."

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Patients often came for examination upon the reassuring premise that they would be sent home if they did not need an operation. Doctor often stressed that it was a matter of supreme indifference to him whether anyone had the surgery or not.

Brinkley frequently remarked, "Only the doctors are complaining about me and my work." But at times he did have to contend with noisy patients who were far from satisfied. John L. Zahner, who owned one hundred and twenty acres of fertile land near Lenexa, Kansas, described in a hearing before the Kansas State Medical Board how he arrived in Milford on the train with some twenty-odd other men and what happened later. They were shooed into a kind of bull pen, shook hands with the matron, donned a nightshirt, bathrobe and slippers that didn't fit, and lay in bed with their thoughts until called for their examination. Mrs. Brinkley paid Zahner an eerie midnight call, announced that he was a border-line case, from which he understood that he was near the border line separating life from death. Mrs. Brinkley had a check all filled out in the amount of \$750 for the Lenexa farmer to sign.

"She scared me," he confessed later. "I believe I never would have signed it had she come to me in daylight, but at that uncanny hour of night, with the sick men all limping up and down the halls, light flickering, examinations going on . . . I signed it."

Dr. Brinkley often pointed to the remarkable mortality record of his hospital. "Other doctors may kill 'em off," he would say, "but I daren't." But on one occasion a patient did die after receiving a minor preparatory operation, and he never got the major operation he checked in for. The customary fee had, of course, been paid in advance. The probate judge of the county involved—it was Republic County, Kansas—said that a refund was due the estate. A son visited the hospital. The staff insisted he take off his overcoat in the hall, "and after they had looked me over pretty thoroughly (I think to make sure I wasn't armed), I was conducted into the presence of Dr. Brinkley and two of his assistants.

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"He lighted a cigarette and asked, 'Well, what can I do for you?'"

When Doctor grasped that a rebate was the subject of the visit, he became crisp and bored.

"There can be no adjustment," he said flatly.

After further probing, the visitor rose. "There is just one question which comes up in my mind."

"What is that?" Doctor queried.

"Why did they ever kill Jesse James?" the visitor said. "Instead of a horse and gun you have a radio station and a hospital. . . ."

One stubborn patient, perhaps a man who thought for himself, in Doctor's phrase, resisted the pressure and spent the whole night wrestling with the problem. The price was high, he explained at the Medical Board hearing. He was a poor man. Mrs. Brinkley would stop by his bed and urge some more, show him a chart and hold out the danger of uremic poisoning which the chart said was already setting in. Finally he told her he would go ahead. She got a paper which he signed and then she said, "Your check, Mister?"

"Dr." Osborn operated on the John Zahner mentioned earlier. That was Monday. On Saturday Zahner was given notice that he must leave. "All the patients who had gone there with me," he observed, "were cleared out before Sunday. . . . They clean house each week." After he was back home, Zahner tried to stop payment on his check. But Doc Brinkley had already deposited it, and the bank told the farmer he might as well let it go as he could be sued and the amount of the check could be collected.

Correspondence was frequent between Brinkley and his ex-patients. Surprisingly enough, they often got taken again. Dr. Brinkley put up a medicine called "Caprikol," which he recommended highly for postoperative cases that were not progressing well. E. W. Crawford, of Morrilton, Arkansas, for one, took six bottles at \$7.50 each, but grouched that he was worse off than before. To another complainant Brinkley wrote, "I was in Ontario,

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moose hunting, when you were a patient in the hospital here . . . your condition is your own fault. You should have come to see us about the infection. Wishing you a merry Christmas . . .” It was only December sixth, which seems a bit early for seasonal greeting. But it served as a device for the busy doctor to close out an unprofitable correspondence.

Dr. Brinkley knew intuitively that there is no moment in life that cannot be turned to some advantage. In 1927 an only child, a son, was born to the Brinkleys, John Richard Brinkley, Jr.—not, it was stated emphatically, a goat-gland baby. Rather, he came like Isaac, born to Sarah and Abraham long after they had given up hope. The little boy was mentally above the average and dedicated by his parents to carry on as a doctor, “just like his daddy.” Under the pet name of Johnnie, Johnny or sometimes Johnny Boy, he became an advertising feature of the Brinkley enterprises.

Like the classic agitator who seeks close identification with the plain folks, Dr. Brinkley constantly called the attention of the public to the fact that he was a good family man with a happy, wholesome home life. Wherever the blue and gold cabin plane alighted to drop off Brinkley—there were Mrs. Brinkley and Johnny Boy, too. In Brinkley’s speeches, broadcasts and printed advertising, in whatever Brinkley was up to, the wife and child were brought in with heavy emphasis. Once when Doctor was refused a Mexican visa, and suspected that the State Department of the United States was “hounding” him, he closed a lengthy telegram to Vice-President Charles Curtis with this gem:

THE PEOPLE OF KANSAS FEEL THAT YOU ARE INTERESTED IN FAIR PLAY AND THAT YOU WILL HAVE AN INVESTIGATION MADE OF THIS SO THE NEWSPAPERS OF KANSAS CAN TELL THE PEOPLE JUST WHAT IS BEING DONE AGAINST DR. J. R. BRINKLEY OF MILFORD, KANSAS, HIS WIFE AND BABY STOP.

“Dr. and Mrs. Brinkley and Johnny Boy greet you and wish you health and happiness and the best of everything,” the ads

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said. And sometimes, the Brinkley conception of one for all and all for one was carried right into the radio station. By the time Johnny Boy was two years old, he was on the air. As soon as he could read, he handled medical testimonials like a veteran member of Actors' Equity, never stumbling over the hard words, such as "tonsillectomy" or "hemorrhoids." Lifted onto a table, he would greet his little friends of radioland in his childish treble, as he sang "Happy Birthday." It seemed sometimes as though the Brinkleys were engaged in a kind of radio marathon, especially on Sundays and holidays. Yet, Mrs. Brinkley must have spent many hours in her gardens, and in the kitchen, whipping up this and that, because in one of the surgeon's literary works, *Dr. Brinkley's Doctor Book*, it was recorded: "If Mrs. Brinkley lived near you, she would share with you the choicest flowers from her yard, the nicest 'roastin' ears' from her garden. She would run over to your house on Sunday with a big pail of homemade ice cream that she thought was specially good."

The arrival of Johnny Boy was a source of great joy, but it was also an added expense, as every father can understand. Doctor began to look around for some way to supplement his income, some handy source of pin money. He thought of oil and did a little wildcatting. But the holes were all dusters. He found the answer to his problem right in his own back yard; or rather in the studio beside the tall towers of KFKB. It was a program idea and it was a lulu, deeply rooted in the character of the station and its close relationship with its fans. KFKB was known throughout its service area as "The Sunshine Station in the Heart of the Nation." The sentence was suggested by a crippled child or shut-in who thus expressed her devotion to the programs of familiar airs and plantation melodies, of medicine and Methodism, which were poured into the Milford transmitter. In 1928, Dr. Brinkley started a series of lectures dealing with the diseases of children.

"I began to receive an enormous amount of mail from people asking me about this thing and that thing and another thing. I couldn't answer it, and the only way it could be answered was to

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go on the radio and answer a good bulk of it, and in 1929 from answering those letters over the radio, through the radio, patients began to come to me because of radio advertising.

“You can readily understand that no living human being could answer three or four thousand letters a day. . . . I began to realize that I was not doing myself any good by refusing to answer those letters. Therefore I conceived this idea: why not have a Medical Question Box over the radio like Doctor Evans of the *Chicago Tribune* did, and other people like Senator Cope-land, and various magazines giving questions and answers.”

There were thousands of ailing persons in the Middle West who were dissatisfied with their own doctors' treatments. Listening to Dr. Brinkley's mesmeric radio voice, they wondered if he could help them. Wondering, they wrote to him about their cases. The rest was easy. Brinkley was especially adept at inflaming his listeners against the ethical doctors, and in playing on the latent hostility against regular medicine which has old, historic roots in the United States. Brinkley often referred indignantly to the kind of physician whose chief aim in life, he said, is “to get a patient on the operating table.”

The day's mail, then, provided a daily radio feature, “The Medical Question Box.” Listeners described their symptoms and Doctor read them over the air, using some code name to mask the identity of his correspondents. He gave a fast diagnosis and prescribed the medicine required. Once again Dr. Brinkley recalls historical precedents, such as the career of Michael Schüppach, an unlettered mountain doctor of Switzerland in the eighteenth century. Schüppach also prescribed for patients he had never seen, after he had directed them to send him a letter and a flask of urine. Schüppach, like Brinkley, was a strong personality, a dominant feature of the contemporary scene. He had to be viewed, the same as the Jungfrau or Rigi. Even Göethe came to see Schüppach, who impressed him with “the keenest presence of mind I believe I have ever seen.” There were also parallels between Brinkley's procedure and that of a peasant doctor of Cra-cow who gave the absent treatment in this wise: the patient sent

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the doctor his shirt, the doc smelled it and prescribed after he got a whiff.

Brinkley found radio doctoring easy because he was fluent, and a good executive. He knew how to organize, delegate and supervise. One stenographer, Miss Ruth Athey, was in charge of the question-box feature. Eight girls were under her, but the number increased rapidly. They sorted the letters, applause mail, questions and so forth. Miss Athey would pick out as many letters as she thought Doctor could handle in half an hour, say twenty-five or thirty, and put them on his desk. This was done three times a day. The rest of the mail was swept into the wastebasket. Usually Doctor simply picked up the letters as he went to the microphone, leafed through them and made a "snapshot" diagnosis.

The money-making feature of the program developed in this way. Brinkley began to receive numerous complaints from druggists throughout the region that customers were demanding Dr. Brinkley's prescriptions, and they were unable to supply them. Up to that time Doctor had been doing a mail-order business from Milford. His medicines went out from the Milford railroad station every day. The expressman at the Union Pacific station in Junction City still remembers the shipments of goats which were transshipped to Milford, the syrup of pepsin by the barrel and vast quantities of bottles and corks. "Dr. Brinkley could sell anything," he says.

At this point Brinkley's flexibility shows up impressively. He switched to a different plan. A list of his prescriptions, coded by number, was sent out to druggists generally. The druggists put up the medicines and kicked back a dollar on each prescription to Doctor. The scheme was a neat crossing of the prescription counter and the patent-medicine department.

The radio-drugstore plan rooted quickly. Doctor was able to organize the druggists as the National Dr. Brinkley Pharmaceutical Association. It helped Doctor out of a dilemma, for he couldn't have quit giving advice to those who wrote in to ask for it without losing them as followers and prospective patients. The

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Pharmaceutical Association built local druggist support for Brinkley that would offset local doctor opposition. And it brought in a little money, too. Three times a day Brinkley went on the air for half an hour, describing the symptoms of just about every ill to which human flesh is heir. A bedtime-story voice would announce what time it was in the Central-time zone and who was going to sing again pretty soon. But “at this time, folks, friends, and all who are weary and oppressed, Doctor John R. Brinkley will deliver his message to humanity. . . .”

And then came Doctor.

“Here’s one from Tillie. She says she had an operation, had some trouble ten years ago. I think the operation was unnecessary, and it isn’t very good sense to have an ovary removed with the expectation of motherhood resulting therefrom. My advice to you is to use Women’s Tonic Number 50, 67 and 61. This combination will do for you what you desire if any combination will, after three months’ persistent use.

“Sunflower State, from Dresden, Kansas. Probably he had gallstones. No. I don’t mean that; I mean kidney stones. My advice to you is to put him on Prescription Number 80 and 50 for men, also 64. I think that he will be a whole lot better. Also drink a lot of water.”

So Tillie and Sunflower State went to their nearest Brinkley drugstore and purchased Numbers 50, 67, 61, 80, and also 64 or whatever number they thought he said. All were common preparations of ordinary drugs, at prices ranging from three fifty to ten dollars. Price cutters were not admitted to the association. Friends asserted that Brinkley’s radio doctoring made more money for him than the goat-gland proposition.

Again the pain-freighted voice of Doctor comes down through the years.

“Now here is a letter from a dear mother—a dear little mother who holds to her breast a babe of nine months. She should take Number 2 and Number 16 and—yes—Number 17 and she will be helped. Brinkley’s 2, 16, and 17. If her druggist hasn’t got them, she should write and order them from the Mil-

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ford Drug Company, Milford, Kansas, and they will be sent to you, Mother, collect. May the Lord guard and protect you, Mother. The postage will be prepaid."

It is easy to imagine the listener interest aroused by "Doctor Brinkley's treatment for childless homes."

"Doctors say it is vulgar for me to tell you about this," said the voice of the medical iconoclast over KFKB, "but we are taking a chance and we don't think it is obscene down here."

What the lady needed, it appeared, was Numbers 50 and 61 "and that good old standby of mine, Number 67." Doctor predicted that after three months there would be "a great big change taking place."

Even more spicy was Dr. Brinkley's advice, offered to a woman who felt the need of a bit of planned parenthood, while millions tuned in:

"I suggest that you have your husband sterilized and then you will be safe from having more children providing"—and here Dr. Brinkley introduced an earthy jest—"providing you don't get out in anybody else's cow pasture and get in with some other bull."

Whatever the radio medical clinic may have done for the customers, the Brinkley druggists found that it had a tonic effect upon their business. The sales increases sounded more like fairy tales than real-life happenings in the prosaic day-to-day operation of a retail business. Doctor had said that he was going to take the druggist away from his sandwich bar and put him back behind his prescription counter. Doc was, for once, as good as his word. Many druggists, in what may be called the "Brinkley belt," that is, in Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and Oklahoma, reported increases in prescription business up to seventy-five and even one hundred dollars a day on the items, all new business, labeled "Distributed by permission of Dr. Brinkley."

Dr. Brinkley would describe minutely the symptoms of stomach ulcers, and then say:

"If you are suffering in this manner, do not go to your doctor—he may prescribe an operation that will be both costly and

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dangerous—but take my prescription Number 60, which you may get from any druggist selling my remedies.” Immediately, in the five-state area, the pharmacists would be set at putting up oceans of old reliable Number 60. “Be sure to send telegrams to the Brinkley radio station, telling us of cures made by Brinkley’s prescriptions,” Doctor urged his druggists, “and if you have no radio in your store, be sure to get one so that the public may listen to our programs . . . and thus increase your business.”

A little figuring will show how substantially the Medical Question Box augmented Doctor’s income. Suppose that there were five hundred co-operating druggists; and there were. (Wood, in the *Brinkley Life* gives fifteen hundred as the number.) Suppose that each one averaged only four sales a day; a conservative estimate. On this business each store was obligated to send Dr. Brinkley four dollars. Thus Brinkley would take in about \$2,000 a day, or \$14,000 a week, or \$728,000 a year for prescribing in many instances such therapeutic agents as castor oil or aspirin, which could be bought in any Kansas drugstore for \$1.50 or less. The only expense to Doctor was whatever it cost him to type up and mail out the prescriptions and instructions for compounding them. This estimate is theoretical and perhaps on the high side. But a rumor filtered out from banking circles handling the Brinkley money that the amount of the radio prescription business alone averaged about \$10,000 a week. The money went to the KFKB Broadcasting Association in which Doctor and eight other businessmen in Manhattan, Junction City and Lindsborg owned one share each. But Dr. Minnie T. Brinkley held 991 shares.

The radio-prescription dodge lasted thirteen years. For a time it appeared as though goat glands might play second fiddle to Number 50 and so on. In an average week, about twenty—and in good times as many as forty—goats continued to give their all for science. About 95 per cent of the drugstore business came from women, the Lydia Pinkham market. Males were a heavy majority at the hospital. But the women were an influence there, too. “The old woman made me do it,” was a frequent confession

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from a surgical case. Thus the radio broadcasting paid off twice, in the business it produced directly, and in filling up the hospital.

The state of mind of the physicians in the KFKB listening area can be imagined, as their patients left them in droves for the free radio clinic. A great blowoff was in the making. The marvel was that the scheme clicked as long as it did. Dr. Brinkley's immunity from interference by the authorities, while other colleagues of lesser caliber in his line of work were driven out of business or thrown into jail, was a phenomenon which angered and frustrated the physicians and surgeons of the states which fell under Brinkley's sway. Where was the United States Post Office Department? Let some two-by-four quack open a small office somewhere and stick a little half-inch make-man tablet advertisement in the newspapers, and the postal inspectors would fall on him like a ton of brick, issue a fraud order and close him up.

And where were the Better Business Bureaus? Why didn't the Federal Trade Commission go after Brinkley? If someone tried to sell an electric belt in interstate commerce for the rejuvenation of old men on the prowl, the Federal Trade Commission got to him in short order. But where Dr. Brinkley was concerned, the machinery of social control seemed to be stalled by some mysterious malfunction. And so the master showman and free spender went on from one triumph to another, sending back from junkets to the Old World costly rugs and bric-a-brac, starting a million-dollar building program in his little private boomtown of Milford, with a hundred girls working for him, so they said, shipping out literature and medicine by the carload.

"Brinkley is getting to be a perfectly impossible problem," one doctor exclaimed.

Slowly, reluctantly, the medical profession began to move toward the unpalatable task of bringing Dr. Brinkley to book. Doctor laughed that he got fat on opposition. "Nothing the doctors can do now can hurt me," he declared, and likened himself once more to Jesus. He was being "persecuted for healing the

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sick," suffering the anger of the "learned doctors." He would say nothing in reply. Well—not much. Just that they were lazy, incompetent gone-to-seed diagnosticians, tonsil-and-prostate removers and outrageous fee-splitters. Often and often he would read as a warning a letter from some person who had been operated on by his home physician for some disease that made Dr. Brinkley so indignant that he would burst out: "Any doctor who would cut into you for that should be in the penitentiary."

In feuding with the ethical doctors, Brinkley had little to lose and a good deal to gain through the ignorant, the unstable and all who could be stirred up against organized medicine. Doctor had assets, not just money assets, although as far as that was concerned, he was loaded. He could call also on his satisfied patients and testimonialists, his religious piety, the bankers who banked his money, the insurance companies which sold him fat policies, the automobile dealer who provided his custom-made seven-thousand-dollar Lincoln car, the Brinkley Goats, a little league baseball team which he sponsored and a surprising number of the politicians who pulled the strings around the State House. Bold, sagacious, well-connected, Brinkley became a diamond fancier, with a taste for clear stones which would screen about the size of hazelnuts. He acquired a coat of arms, painted in gaudy colors, and hung it in his office with his certificates and diplomas. Sometimes it seemed as though everybody in Kansas was in the game with Dr. Brinkley. Or, if not everybody, enough somebodies to keep a tidy medical empire steadily expanding. The citizens of Milford were not inclined to bite the hand that fed them. The politicians at the capitol building down in Topeka had their own reasons for wishing Doctor a prosperous voyage through life, and made him an Admiral in the Kansas Navy, with the right to wear a natty uniform and carry a short ceremonial sword, just to show how they felt about him.

.7.

No Man Wants to Be a Capon

☞ Solon M. MacNab, seventy-three, gray-haired, an Indianapolis streetcar motorman, needed a haircut. He strolled to Mr. Tucker's barbershop across the street from where he lived, slipped into a chair. A conversational gambit opened up on the subject of Tucker's radio set and how the reception had been last night and the night before that.

"Perfect! Absolutely perfect!" the barber said enthusiastically. "Why, I got Montreal and Minneapolis and St. Louis and some little town 'way out in Kansas. Milford, I believe was the name of it."

"You did?" MacNab, the customer, exclaimed, as excited as the barber was.

And then the barber on the next chair cut in with: "Why I got the same place last Tuesday at two o'clock in the morning. Some doctor out there; he was talking about high blood pressure."

"I'll bet it was interesting," said MacNab fervently, "because he's that kind of a doctor; I know him."

Solon M. MacNab had good reason to be excited. He was a Brinkley alumnus. He had long been a great reader, and he subscribed to a magazine or paper from Kansas called *Life and Let-*

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ters, edited by E. Haldeman-Julius. In it he had read an article about Dr. Brinkley and his Milford Hospital.

"It was an ordinary-sized newspaper," MacNab said as he thought back to those times in the 'twenties, "and the article covered several pages and had pictures and cuts of the first little boy that came as a result of curing the first patient of impotency and they called the little boy Billy. I forget his last name. He was 'appropriately named Billy' the article said.

"The article interested me because it said something about enlarged prostate, and I had it, and I had poor digestion so I couldn't eat much more than bread or meat. Vegetables—potatoes, cabbage and onions and things like that I at one time liked best, I couldn't eat."

After reading the story MacNab got to brooding.

"I live alone, you know, and I had a lot of time to think and I just brooded over it and thought about it and thought and thought about this gland grafting. I thought about it renewing my youth. I had rather extravagant ideas, I suppose, of what it might do. My age was sixty then. I thought of rejuvenation and it kind of got me to red heat. So I wrote to Dr. Brinkley."

Doctor was away relaxing at the time, moose hunting or tuna fishing or just lazing along off Nova Scotia on his yacht. Mac had a lively correspondence with Brinkley's secretary, Ray P. Martin. MacNab told what his circumstances were and how he was saving up for his old age, and he asked if there wasn't some surgeon at Milford who didn't have so much prestige as the Chief Surgeon, whose services were not so valuable. The upshot was that MacNab journeyed to Milford. Brinkley wreaked his will upon one more unfortunate goat, and MacNab got the hetero-transplantation—the animal-to-human gland switch—in April, 1924. MacNab, for one, was not dissatisfied with the results.

With these agreeable recollections of Brinkley's surgical novelty, what was more natural than that MacNab should sit down and write to Doctor of the barbershop episode, thinking only of Dr. Brinkley's enjoyment in knowing that the KFKB sig-

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nal was coming in strong and clear in Indianapolis and that he had an audience, even at two A.M. Thus, innocently, began a historic correspondence which, before it came to an abrupt end, showed Dr. Brinkley's advertising machine at full thrust and revealed some of its inner workings.

Doctor answered the motorman's letter quickly and cordially, and sent him, as a souvenir, a picture of Mr. William Escherman, "one of my old patients," and flattered Mac with a request for his own picture. Dr. Brinkley explained that he would like to "use it in a similar way because many men like to have somebody that they can write to or call or see regarding the work I am doing."

As it happened, MacNab was well supplied with pictures. He had a rather unattractive old shot of himself taken in 1917 when he went to work for the Indianapolis street-railway company, a picture that had been filed with his application for employment. In this picture, a good example of the passport school of photography, Mac looked thin and seedy. He also had a recent studio portrait, taken to send to his brother in Arizona whom he had not seen for forty years, which made him look fine, partly because he had put on weight, and partly because the negative had been heavily retouched. The pictures must have been good or the Scot would not have paid, as he well remembered, \$32.50 for a half-dozen prints. Side by side, the two pictures might be viewed as a clinical comparison of the motorman's appearance before the Ozark goat bequeathed its genital glands to him, and after.

"It was a mighty striking contrast, I can tell you," Mac declared enthusiastically.

So MacNab sent the two photographs to Brinkley with a letter, expressing how kind of uplifted he felt, mentally and physically and all over, and told Doc that he could use the pictures in any way he saw fit.

Dr. Brinkley was back to MacNab in two or three days with a reply.

"As I opened it," MacNab said, "by golly, a check dropped

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out and when I picked up that check I felt as if I had been hit with a club. It was for one hundred dollars and signed 'John R. Brinkley' and he said, "This isn't for your testimonial or pictures. It is just a mark of my appreciation."

Dr. Brinkley could well afford to be appreciative and even effusive. He had in his hands, with a legal release covering all rights of privacy, an artful letter which he quite correctly sized up as a stunning exemplar of testimonial literature. It included these paragraphs:

"Of the prostatic torture, the morbid anxieties, and of my escape from both, these pictures pound home the story more closely than could any words of mine. Today, I live in a new world: or, better, in a world I once knew that has come back to me: a world of light, of the zest of living, of the love of books and of vigorous exercise. What have I not to thank you for?"

"Do with these pictures and with this letter as you like. It will add yet another pleasure to these already so pleasant days, to feel that perhaps they are helping some other poor luckless devil to take the same road to happiness that I did almost four years ago."

Madison Avenue could not have done better. The letter, with Mac's address and the "before and after" photographs, was soon in wide circulation, spreading the glad tidings of what the Brinkley Compound Operation would do for a man with enlarged prostate, high blood pressure, constipation, indigestion, nervousness, loss of sleep and of course failure at marital duties. MacNab began to get inquiries, which he loyally answered, "and gradually we drifted into the matter of my being paid for this work." MacNab was a strange character, ignorant, but lettered, a sort of village atheist type, perfectly willing to do a kindness for Dr. Brinkley, who had treated him so royally. He liked the limelight of Doctor's massive advertising, but the correspondence was becoming a burden. Since Mac had flat arches, an occupational disease with operators of one-man streetcars, he felt he could use some side-line money. He thought, not unreasonably, that he might have some aptitude for the occupation of ad writer.

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But he understood that he was not to function as a testimonialist. A nice distinction was involved there.

“I don’t know whether it was a matter of ethics or a matter of law, but, anyway, there was objection to paying for testimonials. So I was to be paid for advertisements and did not receive pay for testimonials.”

“It is distinctly understood that we are paying you for ad writing and such matters and not for replying to inquiries. Should you ever be questioned in this regard you will please bear this in mind,” the new member of the Brinkley advertising staff was instructed.

Dr. Brinkley was often under heavy pressure from prospective clients to give as references the names of former patients. He said that he consistently refused to do that; “the business of our patients with us is sacredly confidential . . . we are certainly not going to ask our patients, who come here and pay us for our services, to become testimonial writers, like this advertisement you see in the newspapers about this new brand of cigarettes that says something about ‘There is not a sneeze in a carload.’”

MacNab’s first job was to prepare a good circular to mail out regarding the fall appointments at Milford. The September letter always had a seasonal flavor. Doctor himself had written one, taking the theme of autumn; the passing of the season and of man’s life. Martin did one, using “house cleaning” time as his point of departure. It worked fine the first time, incidentally; flopped dismally the next year. But that’s the way it is in the mail-order business. The first copy MacNab turned out was an account of his experiences at the Brinkley Hospital, his arrival there, first impressions, his momentous meeting with Dr. Brinkley, his operation. He took it all up by days: first day, second day, third day, and so on. It was, by agreement between the two high contracting parties, an “article,” not a testimonial.

“But it was something that could be mailed out to people who were interested in Milford and what was being done there,” the adman explained.

So the motorman found his true vocation, at thirty dollars a

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week, joining the picturesque little band of those aficionados Brinkley assembled at one time or another as his official family: Dr. Ballou, the self-styled world-famous scientist; Dr. E. M. Perdue, Brinkley's old professor, who took his medical students down to a cancer-cure institute as a part of their instruction; Sydney Flower, the New Thinker; "Dr." Osborn and two-fisted Howard Wilson; two complaisant Methodist reverends; and W. P. Sachs of diploma-mill fame, who turned up later in Kansas under another name. And there were other, even more improbable characters who were to appear providentially when needed.

After Mac turned in his first advertising copy, he batted out a series of letters for use in answering inquiries from sick men. The Extension Department of the Brinkley Hospital—nom de plume for the advertising department—had a vast number of inquiries classified and recorded on cards. One letter might be to those who had written for Doctor's "blue book"; and there were other types of letters according to the ailments listed on the cards. The prostate cases, for instance, would have their attention directed to their condition with something on Brinkley's being the prostate king. There was an Impotency letter, and a Human Gland letter and special persuaders to ACT NOW. Ray Martin sent MacNab a sample of a post card to be mailed to about ten thousand prospects known to be sick men. The Milford experts knew from long experience that the cards would pull about thirty replies per thousand. "Maybe you could write one better," Martin suggested to Mac. The use of such materials, the atmosphere of cool calculation, suggests the void between Brinkley and ethical medicine. With his printed advertising, as with his diagnoses and prescriptions over the radio, Brinkley persuaded the ill to go to his hospital without definite knowledge on his part of the patient's condition other than the self-diagnosis contained in their frightened letters.

For several months MacNab worked industriously and with imagination for Dr. Brinkley, turning out nearly one hundred high-powered testimonials. One of his efforts Brinkley regarded as a masterpiece and said so. Perhaps the praise was too heady

III

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for the motorman-turned-writer. He asked, with great courtesy and a quite objective estimate of his value as a salesman, for forty dollars a week. Doctor stiffened up right away and came back with a characteristic rejoinder that he didn't think Mac's ads had done much good, but in fact had actually cost him patients.

"I had felt rather proud of my work," MacNab admitted sadly. "That kind of took the ginger out of me and I didn't care a damn, then, whether I wrote any more or not."

But Solon must have been as odd a character in his way as Date R. Alexander was in his—the man, remember, who objected to a newspaper saying that he sold medical diplomas for two hundred dollars but bragged of selling them for five hundred. In each case professional pride was involved. So Brinkley and MacNab dissolved their connection. Yet Doctor was able to wheedle Mac about how the letters would be coming in for a while, and he didn't know what he was going to do about handling them, ending with cordial wishes for MacNab's future enjoyment of life and "sufficient remuneration . . . to provide the things that you need." And Solon, being distressed at the doctor's dilemma, with all those letters and pictures out over the country, went right ahead answering his Brinkley mail until the "stragglers" stopped coming. And he did it free. Gratis. For nothing, the generous Scot. Eight months later he was writing to a fellow up at Fort Williams, Ontario, about how he had been sixty-one in 1924, with high blood pressure, buying mineral oil by the gallon, his prostate kicking up, and with total sexual disability of ten years' standing. His symptoms, he figured, indicated five diseases. Within a month after Dr. Brinkley's ministrations, MacNab wrote that he was "well of all five," and he thought that the goat-gland operation would prove to be an equally good investment for his Canadian correspondent.

"Now, I don't pretend to be a doctor or to give any medical advice," MacNab once said modestly, "but I told them that this rejuvenative treatment helped the whole system and it would drive out—tend to drive out—any unhealthy condition. Now,

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that is all I said. I didn't go and give shotgun advice, telling them it would cure everything. I dwelled most upon my own ailments and what it had done for me, and they could draw their own conclusions, as to what it would do for them."

There was an exciting sequel to the MacNab story. A couple of years later, *The Kansas City Star* sent a reporter to Indianapolis to interview MacNab. He talked freely, disclosing his relations with Doctor, and gave the reporter a mass of correspondence and advertising material. He even permitted a stenographic and notarized copy of the interview to be made. Then he had misgivings. Prompted no doubt by his cautious Scottish nature, Mac called the prostate shop in Milford by long-distance telephone. The warning he got is obvious. So MacNab most inhospitably had the Kansas Citian arrested for obtaining property under false pretenses. He charged that his visitor had told him that he was the representative of a rival newspaper in Kansas City which had accepted many pages of Brinkley advertising. It was probably true, too. But Judge Paul Wetter, in municipal court, dismissed the case and praised the *Star* for its journalistic enterprise.

E. Haldeman-Julius, out in Girard, Kansas, whose original magazine article about the marvels of Brinkley's surgery had been made into one of the famous Little Blue Books, and was responsible, really, for *l'affaire MacNab*, publicly ate humble pie for his mistake and withdrew the Little Blue Book, substituting a new text which was an "exposure of quack rejuvenation."

Dr. Brinkley deserves recognition for his leadership in the application of mass-communications methods to the circularization of known sick men, keeping careful, businesslike records of his mailings and the results obtained. For the most part, at this time—1929—it was suggested to prospective patients that they had prostatic trouble. Through it all the principal attraction exercised by Brinkley was a clever play upon the desire of men to turn back the clock; and MacNab's copy by innuendo emphasized this side of the proposition. But Brinkley was gradually shifting the main sales emphasis to the pathological prostate.

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"The earlier literature," Doctor explained as he looked back on his career, "was built around a gland operation and the gland operation was, we will say, the star of the literature, and then the gland operation was minimized and the prostate work for enlarged prostates began to become the star in the literature to where the gland operation in the literature began to take a back seat, if you will pardon me for such a homely illustration."

When a radio fan wrote to KFKB simply to say that he liked the station's fare, a booklet was shot back at him about the hospital, the prevalence of disease and Dr. Brinkley's high ideals. A letter run off on the "Dupligrath" in the hospital mailroom left space for name, age, occupation, "Disease you suffer from." "Use the reverse side of this sheet," the letter said, adding, "We can't hear *you* by Radio." One Fountain of Youth appeal was headed, "Drunk Every Day Yet He Lived To Be the Astonishing Age of 140 Years," a highly sensationalized treatment of the longevity and geriatric exploits of Thomas "Old" Parr. What a burst of rocketry it was: "This is the news you have been waiting for . . . September is full . . . don't wait too long. . . ."

Doctor knew that a man would get interested in a pamphlet like his blue book, *Your Health*, when he had his first experience with a retention catheter. When the kidneys kick up, when they fail to eliminate endogenous and exogenous products, then the man over fifty begins on massage, soundings, irrigations, silver-nitrate applications, heat, light, drugs, radium, electricity, appliances and soon "our prostate patient," said Doctor cheerily, "is about ready for a toboggan slide to Glory." The prostate gland must come out—"and we can remove prostates just as well as the rest of them."

But, Doctor warned candidly, "after that they are never the same men." Act Now . . . you are playing with fire, Mr. Klotz . . . or do you *enjoy* your poor health? You can get the first two phases of the wonderful Compound Operation, Mr. Klotz, which reduces the blood supply to the prostate, that robber of your gonads, including hospital charges, for \$356.50. Better still, take the complete four-phase operation, all your troubles over at the

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one time, including the goat-gland part, too, for one simple fee, only \$750. Never a failure in 5,000 cases. "My success has been due to the prayers of my darling sainted mother and the side-by-side fellowship of Mrs. Brinkley." No Risk. No Pain. No Danger. You never miss a meal. We're crowded . . . not a spare room in the building. . . . Write in advance for appointment. Our February appointment dates are: the 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd. Paid envelope for reply enclosed. Or, come cafeteria style and pay only for what you select. Bed and board, \$5 a day, each treatment from \$3 to \$10, depending on what it is. Operations performed according to your selection; you pay only for what you choose. Or, if you can't afford even that, you can have the services of the famed Brinkley Clinic on this easy, economical plan: write us a letter telling how you are feeling. No charge for reading or answering the letter. You just pay for the actual drugs used and the prescription our Specialist sends you on our Home Treatment plan. Will you now accept?

It was real basement merchandising: cash and carry, no phones, no charges, no returns.

Doctor scoffed at gland tablets and "such and such a pill," at the kindly old local druggist who gives the sufferer something for kidney trouble. He mocked the advertising offering the discoveries of some famous German chemist; waxed indignant at the old family doctor who sent Paw to a surgeon. The surgeon, Brinkley estimated, as often as not shipped Paw back home in a box—in about 30 per cent of the cases, Brinkley said. Nor did he neglect to warn the younger men of their special problems. Many, Doctor observed, go through premature change of life through "having too many sweethearts . . . frantic when suddenly their love power—their potency—is snatched away."

Men wrote to Brinkley about one of his more celebrated lit'ry efforts, "Send me the *Story of Paw and Maw*, because I can guess what this is," and Doctor would shake his head sadly. He felt disappointed in them, that they had failed him, all being, as he put it "willing to offer their bodies upon the Altar of Eros." Brinkley paid tribute to the continent men, including "maybe

The Roguish World of Doctor Brinkley

you,” who “do not care for amours, the love life is buried over yonder under a little plot of green grass, where the flowers are ever blooming and the stillness of night prevails and you would never be untrue to her memory, and I admire you for this. Yet, we are not all this way and we want to be virile, active men so long as the flame flickers, even though it burns so dimly.”

To men of this kidney, Doctor extended his surgical hand. “Remove the short from your batteries and note the change.”

Although Dr. Brinkley lived in an age of frankness, the United States Post Office Department thought that his brochure entitled *Life* was salacious and suggestive and barred it from the mails. Doctor had a healthy respect for the post-office inspectors and usually tried to keep clear of them by reiterating, “We try to teach by radio.” But the letters he sent out through the mails were as urgent as the final cry of the auctioneer. Once a prospect took the bait, he was smothered with literature, plus a personalized letter about every fifteen days, except July when Doctor was on his yacht or “up here in Canada . . . finding somewhat of a respite from the Kansas summer heat.” One man received six letters in two months in 1927. Andy McBride, of Monmouth, Illinois, wrote to the American Medical Association on ruled tablet paper, in pencil, about statements made in a Brinkley booklet that “he has found out in some way I have been having trouble with my prostate gland. It’s a shame for a man that [is] sick to read a booklet like that.”

The literature went out without a covering letter. “We find that more read it than if there is a letter with it,” said a Brinkley ad official. But a letter was mailed separately saying that their acknowledgment was the only recompense Doctor wished for sending them his circular. About 5 per cent answered. A week later those not heard from got another letter, quoting prices, calling attention to the futility of anything less than the complete Brinkley service. Another 5 to 10 per cent answered this one. Then in ten days the delinquents received another letter, calling them to time just a little bit for not being courteous enough to acknowledge receipt of a booklet mailed to them free of charge. From here on the pace quickened.

No Man Wants to Be a Capon

“We hit them a little harder on having done what they NEED, not what someone wants to sell them,” Ray Martin explained.

Another letter or two would go into the mailbags, “and then we sort of tear loose and ask them pertinently why they send for our literature and do not reply to our letters, try to shame them into saying something if nothing more than to stop writing. After that they get only occasional circulars offering additional literature or something of that sort.”

These methods worked out well for Dr. Brinkley. But there was inevitably, an occasional contretemps, such as occurred in the case of E. E. Cooper, of El Dorado, Kansas. Cooper had heard Brinkley’s stuff on the radio, wrote to Doctor, made an appointment against the wishes of his wife, and set off for Milford. He arrived on a Sunday evening, had the cash-in-advance operation on Tuesday and died two weeks later of peritonitis. His age was forty-seven. The widow was very bitter against Brinkley. She was particularly enraged when a letter came from Doctor addressed to the deceased sometime after his death certificate was filed in the office of vital statistics in Topeka. The letter cordially invited her husband to come to Milford and inspect the hospital.

More serious, from Dr. Brinkley’s point of view, was an episode in which some pranksters humbugged the specialist. One can only say of this incident, regretfully, that it was typical of the horseplay that once went on in the Chemistry Department at the University of Illinois. There were twelve students doing graduate research under Professor R. C. Fuson, who found themselves a rather crowded but highly congenial group in one of the laboratories. The students often worked late with a radio turned on. Thus they were entirely conversant with Dr. Brinkley’s programs developing the theme that sexual impotence is man’s most humiliating affliction. When Brinkley offered a free health book for merely filling out his health questionnaire, Joe Corse realized that Doc’s book was just what was needed to complete the lab’s reference shelf. The questionnaire called for information on such topics as “Involuntary urination, frequently wetting the patient’s shoes” and “What do *you* think is the matter with you?” It went

The Roguish World of Doctor Brinkley

on into interrogations too intimate and scatological for rehearsal outside of technical medical literature, ending with:

“What has been your income for the past five years?”

“How much insurance do you carry?”

A Manila envelope soon arrived at the Urbana, Illinois, laboratory, no plain wrapper business, but emblazoned “THIS IS THE BOOK YOU SENT FOR.” There was a photograph of the hospital in the upper left-hand corner, and the legend “Diseases of Men, Diseases of Women.” At the back of the book was space for the names and addresses of thirty friends of the recipient who were suffering from—shall we say Brinkleyitis?—and who were financially able to reach for the better things in life, which included moving up the scale, medically speaking, from the local doctor to the prostate specialist. Snob appeal, it appeared, could be injected even into surgery; or as Brinkley himself phrased it, “If you pay FORD prices do you expect to ride in Lincoln cars? If you have a beer pocketbook do you expect champagne to be served?”

Naturally, with about three hundred graduate students in the chemistry department at Illinois, Corse had to be rigorously selective in choosing the first thirty names he shipped off to Dr. Brinkley. Corse admitted nothing, but the prank snowballed. Other lists were compiled and sent to Milford. A couple of chemists even put Corse’s name on *their* lists, and a committee was formed to try for the free portable radio set which Doctor was offering each week to the respondent who answered the questionnaire “most promptly and most sincerely.” Just who Brinkley’s pen pals in Urbana were is a bit hazy at this late date, but there is reason to believe that they were Corse himself, E. J. Matson, now a respectable *Doktor* at Abbott Laboratories, and possibly others.

The boys titrated an alchemical character of their own composition to try for Brinkley’s free radio. His name: George L. Howard. His occupation was that of plumber. He was in his middle forties, with a wife, two children, and a satisfactory income. He described to Doc Brinkley what sounded like the symptoms

No Man Wants to Be a Capon

of paresis with prostatic overtones. The key sentence ran, "Could indiscretions committed as a youth have anything to do with my present condition?"

Next week, George, the plumber, won a radio.

The question arose as to whether Dr. Brinkley's Urbana correspondents were not using the mails to defraud, which was certainly a refreshing reversal of roles where Doctor was concerned. The boys wondered if Brinkley had any field agents, and shivered a bit at the thought of "George Howard" receiving a call. The postmaster and chief clerk at the Urbana post office were not sure about the law that was applicable to the circumstances, but they damned well wouldn't return the radio to the sender.

The next problem was to explain George's nonappearance at the Brinkley Hospital. Serious consideration was given to dropping Dr. Brinkley a tearful note from George's widow. The plumber had boarded the train, according to this story line, and dropped dead before the next station. He had waited too long, as Doctor so often pointed out in similar cases.

Careful thought led the group to the conclusion, however, that insofar as Brinkley was concerned, there was a fate worse than the death of a prospective patient. So a letter went to Doc from George, saying that he had lost all of his savings but he sure needed the Brinkley treatment the worst way. Could he get it on credit? No, came the chilly answer, he could not.

Next week the Brinkley radio was won by a man who lived on Cherry Street in Joplin, Missouri, and shortly after that Brinkley read to his listeners a tear-stained letter from the Joplin widow explaining that he had waited too long: he had died on his way to Brinkley. Two free radios in succession for "no show" customers were too much for Doctor. He began giving away Bibles, explaining in an injured tone, "because I don't think you'd cheat on me to get the Good Book."

There is a little more mileage in the Joe Corse story. A short time after the free radio arrived at its destination, 608 West California Street, in Urbana, some of the chemists at the lab

The Roguish World of Doctor Brinkley

casually mentioned to Corse after lunch that a stranger had dropped in looking for him, a kind of big bruiser from Brinkley headquarters and he seemed to be considerably upset because he couldn't find a trace of any George L. Howard, plumber, who was supposed to dribble gently on his shoetops and who was beginning to suspect that his wife no longer cared. . . . The man had some pertinent questions to put to Corse about these matters.

Professor Roger Adams, Chairman of the Chemistry Department at Illinois, thought the whole affair was rather hilarious, and the conspirators were pleased to feel that he was actually rather proud of them for pulling off successfully a modern variation upon an ancient folk motif—the trickster tricked.

“We played the radio in the lab for the next two years,” Corse says, “and when my mother came out from Los Angeles for graduation, I gave it to her. I handed it to her, in fact, on the train, and she didn't notice the signs 'Free Brinkley Radio—Ask How' on the sides. It played for another two or three years until she dropped it, outlasting the Doc himself.”



Wide World Photos

Small, dapper, bedecked with diamonds, Dr. John R. Brinkley was a radio “medicine man” and political speculator. “He could sell anything,” one Texan observed. But Doctor concentrated his shots. His rejuvenation pitch produced about \$12,000,000 in a quarter century.

Doctor's take-off point was this diploma, a document not recognized in forty states even in the spacious days of 1915. Five days after Brinkley got his Missouri sheepskin, he was a doctor in Arkansas—for \$50. When his alma mater phased into the Kansas City College of Medicine and Surgery, Dr. Brinkley acquired its diploma also, perhaps as a form of reinsurance.

Eclectic Medical University



KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI.

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY.

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS THAT

(((John Richard Brinkley)))

has completed with all the requirements of this college and passed the prescribed examinations which entitle him to a Diploma from this Institution. Therefore we, the TRUSTEES and FACULTY of Eclectic Medical University of Kansas City by virtue of the authority vested in us by the Legislature of the State of Missouri, do confer on him the degree of

DOCTOR IN MEDICINE AND MASTER IN SURGERY

with all the Privileges and Immunities thereunto belonging in this and other countries.

In Testimony Whereof We do hereunto affix our hand and signatures, Dated at Kansas City, Missouri this seventh day of May A.D. MCMXV

J. S. Lewis, A.M., M.D.

President

J. C. Love, M.D., D.D.S.

1915

Dr. Alexander W.D.

Secretary

see - 100 - 1 - 1142 - 1000





Dr. Brinkley and his wife in 1920, shortly after Voronoff in Paris had announced that he had been able to rejuvenate animals, and Brinkley in Kansas had sensed the commercial possibilities of goat-gland grafting.



The Brinkley-Jones Hospital, Milford, Kansas, a two-and-a-half-story structure known as the "San." From here Brinkley issued his scare literature. Here he gathered in for the first time something more than bare "eating money." Here occurred the gradual de-emphasis of the original gland operation, just before Doctor left Kansas in a flap.

The kids of frolicsome, non-odorous Toggenberg goats were shipped in from the hills of Arkansas over the Union Pacific, and penned behind the San until their number came up.





International News Photos

A portrait study of J. R. Brinkley, M.D., C.M., Dr. P. H., Sc.D.; Chief Surgeon, College of Physicians and Surgeons (strictly his own institution), head of the Brinkley Research Laboratories, the Training School for Nurses, and various other institutions which the imaginative Brinkley was able to conjure up.

A facsimile, greatly reduced, of a "planted" story in the *New York Evening Journal* which, more than any other one piece of publicity of the pre-radio days, thrust Doctor into orbit.

PREACHES FUNDAMENTALISM

How a Famous Surgeon Combines Old-Time Religion and New-Fangled Operations on a Strange Medico-Gospel Farm

PRACTICES GOAT-GLAND SCIENCE



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[Faded, mostly illegible text from the newspaper clipping, appearing as a large block of small print.]



Wide World Photos

Dr. Brinkley as a radio personality, at the microphone of his private station, KFKB, adjacent to his Milford Hospital. He is about to take up a sufferer's letter and say, "Greetings to my friends in Kansas and everywhere."

The Brinkley Hospital

ESTABLISHED 1917
DEL RIO, Val Verde County, TEXAS

Dear Friend:

Here is the Doctor Book I offered you over the radio.

I receive thousands of letters from my friends asking numerous questions and since I have nothing to sell you excepting my professional services, I must ask my friends if they want a personal letter from me concerning any disease other than prostate work to include \$2.00.

If you send me \$2.00 by money order or certified check and tell me your trouble, I will send you a personal reply which will be my opinion of your condition. If you would like to send me \$1.00 and I will send you a personal letter.

OFFICE, ROSWELL HOTEL
PHONE 202

The Brinkley Hospital

ESTABLISHED 1917
DEL RIO, Val Verde County, TEXAS

January 27, 1936

Guaranteed Prostate Treatment for February 1936 for Only \$250.00

Dear Friend:

THIS IS THE NEWS YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR.

Many people could not take advantage of this offer during January, hence it is repeated during February. Since it is expensive for us to write to you, we will appreciate it if you will answer and tell us whether to keep on writing or not. If you can't come, it is all right, but we would like to know.

During the month of February 1936 we are offering a guaranteed prostate medical treatment for \$250.00. The administration of a thorough X-ray, chemical and microscopical examination, one of our very best examinations, and the examination fee is included in the price of \$250.00.

RESIDENCE PHONE 625

The treatment for
radio for 7 days.

The Brinkley Hospital

ESTABLISHED 1917
DEL RIO, Val Verde County, TEXAS

Guaranteed Prostate Treatment for June, July and August, 1936, for only \$250.00

Dear Friend:

During the months of June, July and August, 1936, we are offering you the guaranteed prostate medical treatment for \$250.00. The administration of this treatment requires you to stay in Del Rio for 7 days. We give you a thorough X-ray, chemical and microscopical examination, one of our very best examinations, and the examination fee is included in the price of \$250.00.

If you are suffering from prostate enlargement or infection and have failed to secure relief by the method of treatment you have been having, I believe it is worth your while to give the Brinkley Hospital a chance. This treatment I am offering you is harmless in every way. We have given more than 75,000 doses of this medicine and have seen mighty good results.

Here during the summer months you are entertained by radio stations XERA on 840

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[Signed]

Nov. 28, 1922

J. R.
OFFICES

Pay the sum of ONE HIR
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To Mr. Edward Stuart
315 Judge Bldg.
Salt Lake City, Utah

of February
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A scattered sampling of Brinkley advertising. Persons who got on the "sucker list" received a letter from the gland emporium about every fifteen days. The prospect was invited to send for the "Doctor Book," read Brinkley's biography (\$1, postpaid), listen

udent perations

ilford, Kansas, I am in receipt
people who have been inter-
in Los Angeles, California,
mine and who claim to be
CLEY OPERATION."

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Doctors in California the
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method of informing
imposed upon by
have not the best

KLEY, M.D.
ilford, Kansas



Tell your friends that good old XER is now broad-
casting as XER-A on 840 kilocycles. You will find
840 kilocycles between KOA Denver on one side and
WWL New Orleans on the other.

Tell your friends to listen in for the kind of programs
you like to hear and Dr. Brinkley speaks each evening
7:30 to 8:00 and 9:00 to 9:30 as well as mornings
5 to 5:30 Central Standard Time.

Also listen to her sister station XEAW broadcasting
on 960 kilocycles.

Season's Greetings to you from

DR. AND MRS. J. R. BRINKLEY
AND JOHNNIE BOY

Del Rio, Texas.

A WORD OF WARNING!

When you arrive in Del Rio, if you are approached by some
stranger and he tells you there is some doctor in town giving
Dr. Brinkley's operation or giving Dr. Brinkley's treatment,
you got the name of the doctor. Before you go to see him, you
ask about him at the Del Rio National Bank, The Del Rio Bank &
Trust Company, and at various business houses, also inquire
about him among the lawyers in Del Rio.

Your health is your most valuable possession and don't let imi-
tators tinker with it. Some few men have been led astray, going
to these imitators. Some of them have died, some of them have
been made critically ill.

When you come to see Dr. Brinkley or see someone at the Brinkley
Hospital you go to the Brinkley Hospital and see them. If you
have confidence in Dr. Brinkley's work, you won't have confi-
dence in the work of imitators.

BRINKLEY, M. D.

DEL RIO, TEXAS

SS ROUND-TRIP RAILROAD TICKET

to Del Rio, Texas, and return, if used before December 31,
have our \$750.00 Compound Treatment for your prostate,
time of operation.

is offer does not apply to former patients

John Brinkley M.D.

to his radio station and, above all, urged to have his prostate gland, that "old cocklebur,"
attended to.

PRATT COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

PRATT, KANSAS

Dear Doctor: You no doubt have heard of one John R. Brinkley of Milford, Kansas. Perhaps you have heard him direct. If so, nothing need be said further. However, if you have not heard him you have missed something and if you have not read his pedigree you have missed something more.

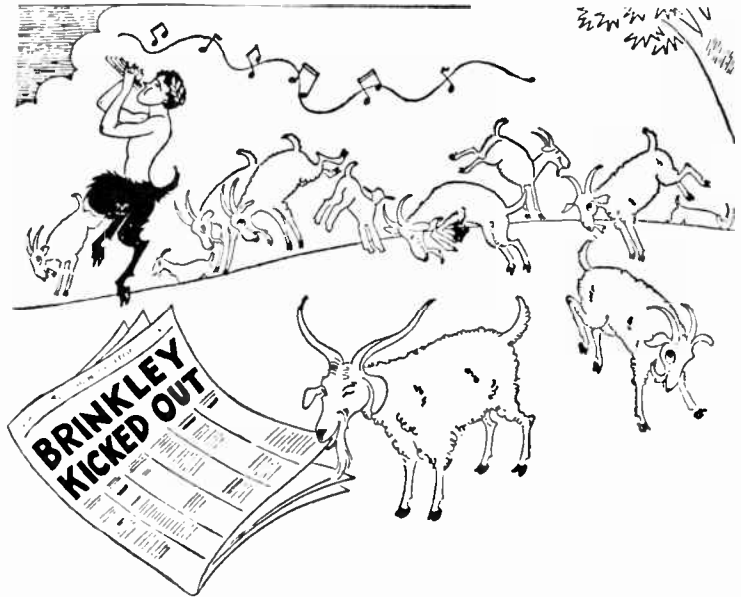
The Pratt County Medical Society has undertaken to place this fellow's pedigree in the hands of every member of the State Society hoping that they in turn will pass them out to their patients and in this way help to expose this fraud. The articles in question were printed in the Jan. 14th 1928 number of the Journal of the A.M.A. We have their permission to use this article and have ordered one hundred thousand from them. All of this takes money and we expect to take care of a great deal of this ourselves. However, it is quite an expensive undertaking and we feel that we are justified in asking you to contribute to the extent that you are able or feel like doing so. You will get your share of the reprints whether you dig up or not but if you can help with the expense it will be appreciated greatly and we will see that the money is rightfully used.

We expect by this means to help do our bit to crystallize sentiment in the state to the extent that we can get this man's license revoked. Send your contribution to Dr. Herbert Atkins or Dr. Warron F. Bernstorff, Pratt, Kans.

P.S. A check for \$5. will be very satisfactory

Pratt County Medical Society
By *[Signature]*

Dr. Brinkley hired a full page in a Kansas City newspaper to reprint and excoriate the letter above. He followed this with a libel suit against the editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and a Kansas physician who handed a Brinkley agent a reprint of the article mentioned.



Cartoon from *The Kansas City Star* celebrating the revocation of Brinkley's license to practice medicine in Kansas. *The Star* played an important part in the build-up to the Medical Board hearings, as well as the cancellation in the same year—1930—of Doctor's radio wave length.



International News Photos

Dr. Brinkley ran neck and neck with Huey Long in introducing electronics to electioneering. The “heavy artillery” was a Chevrolet truck equipped with microphones, talking-picture sound equipment and a good-sized platform. (There was no “Ammunition Train No. 2.”) Political opponents were quick to point out the resemblance of Doctor and his vehicle to the old-time medicine show.

over his Republican ally a few hundred

near the race will be three-cornered. Dr. announced early in that he would make second time. The renominated Governor, and the is put up Alfred oil man from Indiana. This year Dr. name is on the balance has been waging campaign. While ter owns the radio Milford—he was sell it under president the Federal Radio a—he has been over that station

Dr. J. R. Brinkley
WILL SPEAK AT
Sodens' Grove
EMPORIA, KANSAS, AT 8 P. M.,
FRIDAY, AUGUST 26TH

Dr. Brinkley will be accompanied by **AMMUNITION TRAIN NO. 1**, equipped with loud speakers, and Roy Faulkner, the Singing Cow Boy from Radio Stations KFKB and XER, who will entertain. Dr. Brinkley will positively appear in person and the speaking will begin promptly at 8 P. M.

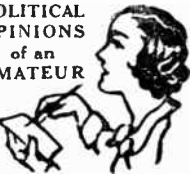
A BRINKLEY HANDBILL

best-loved citizens, ran for governor Mr. White at that in protest against taken by Benjamin, the Republican date, on the issue of Klux Klan. White terly opposed to t and although he elected governor, t licans were so impr the size of his vote too, turned against Yet Brinkley in 19 more votes than 1924. If Brinkley he will immediately target of his enemies are indications that publicans feel that tion is probable an

With his “Ammunition Train” parked just behind home plate on the baseball diamond, Doc spoke to the multitude like a soothsayer, the *Emporia Gazette* said. First a rousing march was played on the radio-phono combination, and the device blared out Brinkley’s campaign song, “He’s the Man.”

“LISTEN, EVERYBODY, there’s a man YOU ought to KNOW.”---Doc’s Theme Song.

POLITICAL OPINIONS of an AMATEUR



Once the Pink Rag practices the art of giving its readers contributors the same right. Such opinions or assertions are the opinions or assertions of the contributors alone.

“We see by the paper” that In-sull is trying to insulate his pass against confiscation.

So President Hoover has finally seen that loop-holes in the R. F. C. have been discovered and is trying to tie them up. More luck to him. He knows that if he doesn’t strengthen it and make it work to the post man’s advantage, Franklin D. will, and reap the honor.

We notice in the Journal that there are twice as many widows as widowers. With such a wide choice (is small wonder the widowers don’t stay widowers long.

No matter how old a man is, or how homely, there’s usually a woman somewhere who thinks he’s grand. But a woman reaches the uninteresting age as soon as a few wrinkles show up. Unless she is a widow—and that gives her a prestige and adds a few years of grace.

Then there’s the increase of the crude oil price—which is another feather in Gov. Woodring’s bonnet.

John Jay Hopkins is in effect that President Hoover’s “ability and leadership” made him just the man to guide us through the difficult days ahead.

If that’s the same high quality that we’ve witnessed so far—we’re sorry, but we just can’t be exuberant over the prospect of another 4 years like the last ones.

It’s all very well for Doc Brink to be opposed to forceful action on farm—but what’s he going to DO about it?

Glances From the Side:

The goal Frin’ has an aviator pal, and she says he’s the first man she ever had to strain her neck to look up to. Well, widows are about the only ones that are looked up to when they “go up in the air.”

Health Bulletin: The cold is much better, thank you. But they still laugh at us when we insist that we’re well. By comparison, we are.

—GUILA R. BROWN.



“Kansas first guess that a new medicine show had come to town were not far wrong. John Richard (Goat Gland) Brinkley,” stumps.

The magazine, “Time”, is 20 years old. It has an enormous circulation. It has built up a big following by telling the unvarnished truth. The following, from “Time”, will give you an idea of the gibes that will be thrown at Kansas in the event of Doc Brinkley’s election:

Political Notes—Capric Candidate: In a half-dozen little Kansas towns, just before sundown last week, a great melancholy voice was heard wailing sad cowboy songs thru the ochre twilight. Citizens investigating the cause of this portent, successively at Liberal, Coldwater, Salina, Herington, discovered a strange motorcade called “Ammunition Train No. 1”. The sides of the motor van had been let down to form a speaking platform. Generators supplied current for a battery of lights and power enough to send the cowboy songster’s voice twanging out over a quarter-mile radius. Parked nearby was a golden-brown, 16-cylinder Cadillac. Kansas whose first guess was that a new medicine show had come to town were not entirely wrong. John Richard (“Goat Gland”) Brinkley, 47, nostrum peddler, was stumping every county in the State, conducting his gubernatorial campaign.

Candidate Brinkley’s show seldom varied. First a preacher from his home town of Milford (ask your pastor about that preacher,—C. H.T.) stepped forth to praise the aspirant’s piety and generosity. Then other independent office-seekers spoke. Then John Brinkley preceded by his wife and accompanied by his son, “Johnny Boy”, made his way to the rostrum. Lights were lowered. Only 1 bright glow overhead illuminated the soft straw hat, the linen suit, the medical gaiter of Candidate Brinkley as he took a seat before his loud-speaker and, wildly gesturing, began his speech. The Brinkley platform: Free school books, cheaper automobile licenses. The Brinkley pledge: That if he gets in office the State is bound to save money because he belongs to no political party.

The American Medical Association regards Candidate Brinkley as a dangerous rascal. Back in the days of head-phones, rural radio listeners of Kansas and entire Corn Belt listened attentively to the persuasive Brinkley voice over KFKE (Kansas First, Kansas Best). Altho he has not been permitted to practice medicine in Kansas for the past 2 years, thousands have had their illnesses diagnosed over the air by Dr. Brinkley, who referred them to certain drug stores where his prescriptions were sold. He also conducted a rejuvenation clinic where he pretended to revive oldsters’ potency by the injection the A.M.A. called, “some giblet-like mixture of glands”. The A. M. A. further claims that Candidate Brinkley has been arrested for bootlegging, indicted in California for medical malpractice, that the license under which he was permitted to practice first in Arkansas, then in Kansas, was gotten thru diplomas from a defunct, unrecognized school and a notorious “mill”. (There’s a bit more of it but that gives you a fair idea of how Kansas will be lampooned.)

The Brinkley died-in-the-would adherents are sometimes tricky: A letter came from “W. R. Pope, Workmen’s Relief Assn., Wichita, Kansas,” giving me hell because I dared call Doc down for saying “there are thousands of starving persons in Kansas.”

Doc has since backed up and has said he didn’t mean that people in Kansas were “starving to death.” He said he meant that they were undernourished.

In the name of all that is decent why don’t he say what he means? And—

If Doc is so concerned about the undernourished people of Kansas, why doesn’t he, a millionaire, spend a small part of the \$98.60 he is spending every half hour he talks over XER for telephone tolls solely and use it to alleviate some of the alleged suffering?

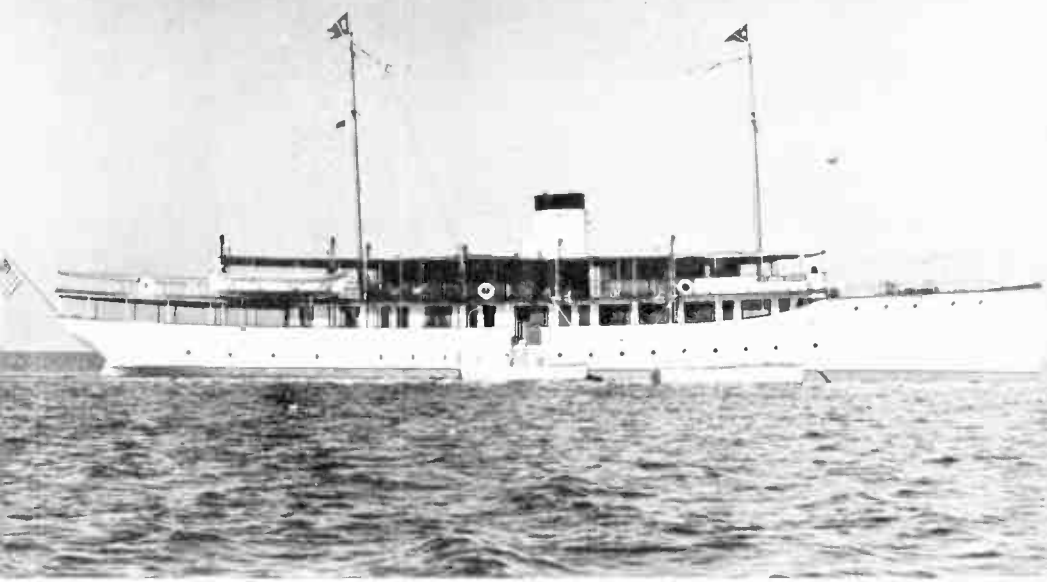
That “\$98.60 for telephone tolls alone” may startle you. To get a “remote control” radio connection you have to have 2 long-distance lines. The medium rate to Chicago (500 miles) is \$1.65. Del Rio is 15 hundred miles—3 times as far as Chicago. Figure the enormous expense! Mind you, that is for toll service only. The radio station cost is 2 dollars and a half a minute. Add THAT to the toll charges.

Then Doc rides an airplane “most every day. The passenger-carrying planes that barnstorm at the Tepeka airport tell me that they make very little money with 8 passengers at a dollar each on a 15-minute ride. That’s \$48 an hour. Likely Doc can cruise in search of suckers at 10 dollars an hour. One can put his airplane expense conservatively at 5 hundred dollars a month.

5 hundred dollars is exactly the sum the law allows him to spend on his entire candidacy for governor. If Doc doesn’t tell stories, and he does little else, he is going to keep within the law and not spend over 5 hundred dollars on his entire candidacy. If so, then the enormous expense must come from contributions. These contributions, Doc himself says, come from people who are sore distressed. At least, if Doc’s charges are true, Helvering gets HIS campaign coin from men to whom he gives jobs.

Doc’s a funny, inconsistent and jittery chap.

This cartoon suggests the crudity and vivacity of Dr. Brinkley’s two serious tries for the Kansas governorship. The third was a complete fizzle. Another lampoon showed a decrepit old man in conversation with a goat. Said the man: “That dangd Brinkley campaign cost me \$750.” (The price of the operation.) Goat: “Yeah, an’ just think what it cost me.”



Dr. Brinkley III was what the owner called this swanky, ocean-going palace; so named “for advertising purposes,” he explained. The yacht required the services of a twenty-one-man crew, who wore “Dr. Brinkley” on their jumpers in inch-high letters. When Doctor went on a cruise, the tab came to \$1000 a day.

“Good old XER,” whence Doctor’s voice boomed northward three times a day. The mighty wave of the 500,000-watt station at Villa Acuna, Coahuila, Mexico, covered the continent with such folksy tidbits as: “Fred’s shaking is so much better. . . . That old prostate hurts when it is cold up there in North Dakota.”





Monotonous miles of sagebrush and mesquite ended at the gates of Dr. Brinkley's residence at Del Rio, Texas — sixteen acres of well-groomed beauty just a coyote's howl from the muddy Rio Grande, with the towers of XERA in plain view. Inside, the



mansion was filled with costly furnishings and the souvenirs of an indefatigable but not particularly well-informed world traveler. The real eye-catcher was a full-length hand-colored photograph of the surgeon in the regalia of an admiral of the Kansas Navy.



Rearing some twenty feet in the air, the “victory” statue which once stood in the front yard of the Brinkley estate now marks the last resting place of J. R. Brinkley in Forest Hill Cemetery, Memphis, Tennessee, beside the modest stone of his father-in-law, a regularly licensed physician.

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Whose Bread I Eat, His Song I Sing

“Glad you came!” said Dr. John R. Brinkley, beaming and smiling with good humor, as he welcomed a reporter to his Milford office. “The American Medical Association has denounced me as a chalatan and quack, but there are two sides to everything.”

As Doctor busied himself with a fresh pack of cigarettes, his caller tried to decide which of his diamonds was the biggest, the one featured in the stickpin in his tie, the big diamond set in a platinum ring on a finger of his right hand, or the one on the other hand. It was hard to be sure, but the one in the stickpin, the reporter concluded, had it over the other two.

Doc evidently had no fear that May Abbot, well-known lady diamond thief, or any other accomplished penny-weighters, would turn up in Milford. An overload of diamonds is not precisely what one expects the well-dressed man to wear today, but in earlier times, it must be remembered, members of the sporting world often carried most of their bank roll in diamonds. You never could tell when a hasty departure might be advisable. Diamonds were quick collateral anywhere. Brinkley’s visitor asked if it were true that Doctor shipped in goats from Arkansas in lots of fifty and a hundred.

“I do,” Dr. Brinkley declared, “and it won’t be long before I am bringing them here at the rate of one thousand a month. If I

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had accommodations for a thousand patients, I would be performing that many goat-gland transplantings a month.”

Brinkley added that he had a half-million dollars invested in little out-of-the-way Milford, all made in thirteen years. The reporter had already observed other indications that Dr. Brinkley was in comfortable circumstances: the four cars in the Brinkley garage, housemaids flitting discreetly about the Brinkley residence. The vacation trips to Europe were a known Brinkley fixture; the paid-up insurance, securities and cash tucked around in various banks were invisible, but definitely *there*.

Brinkley expanded upon his situation like a one-man chamber of commerce:

“I get three thousand letters a day. Our post office is of the second class and has just moved into a new building. They are just finishing for me a new sanitarium of brick that cost me one hundred thousand dollars. It was built under a contract to be finished in fifty days and the men worked night and day to get it done. I am building an apartment house for my employees and am building seven bungalows for my physicians and their families.”

Dr. Brinkley was Lord of the Manor in Milford. The local banker was a stockholder in Doctor's radio station and testified that it was a profitable investment. From six hundred to eight hundred dollars a week of Brinkley's prescription money found its way into the little bank. Deposits had doubled since Doctor came to town, and the population had zoomed. The banker's wife got in the act, too; or rather, she had her own act. She was the Tell Me a Story Lady at KFKB, where she recounted the adventures of little Cuffy Bear. The daughter of the county sheriff was Brinkley's secretary. The better half of the Gospel Quartette consisted of the wives of doctors in Brinkley's employ. Anyone in the countryside who could play an instrument or give a reading could go on the air. The local editor did Doctor's printing. The barber shaved his patients. The hospital would place locally a thousand-dollar order for linens. The bus was marked “50 cents to the Hospital.” Why not? It was the only reason for a stranger's

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coming to Milford. One Milfordite sold Brinkley his milk, another laundered for him, others worked in the hospital as nurses or orderlies. Doctor promoted a new school building, brought in electric lights, and paid for the street lighting out of his own pocket for a couple of years. An undertaker settled in Milford because of the hospital, but he didn't last. "No business," Brinkley grinned. Doc's heavy mailings raised the pay of the postmaster, who kept the general store, from twenty dollars a month to one hundred and twenty. The postmaster also ran the newsstand. When the *Kansas City Journal-Post* started an exposé of the diploma-mill scandals, in which Dr. Brinkley's name figured prominently, the newspaper's Milford circulation dropped to zero. Doctor barred the paper from the hospital. This was scarcely necessary. No little merchant of Milford would have delivered the paper anyway. The carriers played on the ball team called the Brinkley Goats, sponsored by Doc. And they won the Rocky Mountain Championship one year, too. They were not inclined to bite the hand of the public-spirited surgeon who paid for their uniforms.

The Milford druggist did a big business in Brinkley prescriptions. The mayor presided over the administration of a "city." All of this would have been as nothing without Dr. Brinkley's rejuvenation plant, although in spite of it Milford still remained the kind of burg which inspired the drummers' quip: "I spent a couple of weeks there one afternoon." The expressman at the railroad station was kept busy by the goats, bottles, medicines and hospital supplies which cluttered up his platforms. The Reverend Dr. Charles Draper, pastor of the Brinkley Institute, who didn't believe in evolution, but did in Brinkley, had not only the cure of the immortal souls of Doctors John R. and Minnie Telitha Brinkley, but presided over the Institute's exercises, which included the projection of moral and improving motion pictures every Sunday and Wednesday nights.

The projection machine was Brinkley's. He built the bandstand for the local band, placed benches in the park—it was really more of a wooded pasture than a park—erected a plat-

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form and put a piano on it. Milford was his goodly kingdom set upon a hill, or at least on a slight rise above the Republican River. The grateful citizens would gladly have changed the name of the Home of Gland Transplantation to Brinkley and so prayed in district court in Junction City. But the judge refused to make Doctor an eponym because of the confusion which would result. Union Pacific's designation of their station would still be Milford, nor could local enthusiasm for Brinkley budge the Post Office Department from its distaste for change.

The people of Milford were well aware that Doctor had put the name of their hamlet on the front pages of the newspapers. His big radio station boomed out the fame of the little community to the four corners of the air. With Milford it was Brinkley all the way. "Milford was in Geary County and," according to Flower, "Geary County swears by Dr. Brinkley." In a formal letter to Doctor, the Business Men's League of Milford unanimously expressed their appreciation of his value as a community booster, and his work—the underlining is theirs—in the *hospital*, the *church*, in his *Bible Lectures*, and in his ownership of the *Brinkley Goats*. An open letter also appeared in full-page space in the *Topeka Daily State Journal*, headed, "What Milford, Kansas, Thinks of Dr. J. R. Brinkley." It was signed by the Milford Chamber of Commerce and a couple of hundred citizens, which must have been all the males in Milford old enough to carry matches and chew Sen-Sen. They saluted Brinkley as "a high-class physician and surgeon, and a benevolent, charitable and Christian gentleman, and [we] are proud to have him, his family and institutions located in Milford." These effusions provoked Dr. Arthur J. Cramp, Director of the Bureau of Investigation at the American Medical Association, to make some comments of his own.

"The testimonials," he said, "that Brinkley is sending out from the Business Men's League of Milford prove what I have always maintained—namely, that no quack can succeed if he has any sense of humor. Milford is not a town in the ordinary sense of the term; it is a little settlement out in the country, whose very existence practically depends on Brinkley and his

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well-advertised quackeries. Naturally, he owns them, body and soul. 'Whose bread I eat, his song I sing.'"

Occasionally Milford felt a touch of apprehension, a secret shiver, a warning of possible deflation of the goat-gland bubble; as when Doctor took a powder suddenly after the altercation with his father-in-law. Mrs. Brinkley also was on the absent list for a couple of months, then reappeared suddenly to announce that the drugstore had been sold and that she would remove the hospital equipment. It looked as though little Milford would not make the grade as a metropolis after all. The people had believed in Doctor. They accepted his statement that President Wilson had called him when Dr. Grayson had failed. They swallowed the miraculous cures, believed in Doctor's moist piety, subscribed to the official version of Brinkley's early struggles, packed with details unmarred by accuracy. And they had swallowed the goat glands whole. And now, if the hospital were moved, the people meditated, what would they do with the hospital building—a potential white elephant—a complete set of city officials and accommodations for more tourists and goats than the town was likely ever to see again. There were also some unpaid bills.

So, as a matter of ordinary prudence, a midnight call was put in to the sheriff, and he attached the hospital's equipment. Fortunately for all concerned, Doctor returned from where he had been—Chicago—just as the Illinois authorities were getting ready to hold him. Doctor was home again, with a renewed appreciation of the rustic charms of Milford. The grocer, landladies with rooms to rent, the postmaster and the Brinkley Goats were all happy to see him back. The community was his, as Taylorville and Girard, Illinois, had once given their hearts to Harry M. Hoxsey, the cancer wizard, and for the same reason.

When Doctor appeared upon the Milford scene, a successful union of the two struggling churches there, the Methodist and the Congregational, seemed about to be consummated. Dr. Brinkley threw his weight against the proposal and demanded that it be abandoned at once. Doctor went at his church work with the same ingenuity he showed in his business. He put up prizes of

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five dollars for each child who joined the Brinkley Methodist Sunday School, as it was now called, and the Methodists outdistanced the Congregationalists in a competition which struck the Methodist bishop of Kansas as being both narrowly sectarian and highly secular. "The material is on the ground for the Brinkley Methodist Memorial church and parsonage I am going to build," Doctor declared. "It will cost fifty thousand dollars and will have chimes and a fine pipe organ.

"The church and parsonage will be connected by a colonnade. Here is the tablet that will be on the front of the church."

He read it aloud: "Erected to God and His son, Jesus, in appreciation of many blessings conferred upon me: J. R. Brinkley."

The rejuvenated church was to be known as "The Brinkley Methodist Church." Doctor explained the new name in this way: Christ, he said, did not build the church; therefore it would not bear Christ's name, but would be called the Brinkley Methodist Church. Already special services were heralding the beginning of the building program, with a number of preachers conducting ceremonies in connection with the new church. Their point of view was that money was sanctified when put to religious uses. The issue was so exciting it took the minds of many of the church people off the prohibition polls.

But the bishop lowered the boom on Doctor's plan to replace the old frame building with the new Brinkley Methodist Episcopal Church. There were some observers who declared that Brinkley wished to dominate the church life of Milford in order to secure religious sanction for his methods and conduct. If so, Doctor achieved a stunning success. Listen to Doctor's pastor:

"It has been worth two years of my life in the pastorate at Milford to know you, and love you, and feel as I do toward you. Sometimes I have wished that I might be allowed to slip in, just where you were, and sit down and never say a word, but just be conscious that I was with a man of destiny, a great man—the greatest I ever met.

"You are possessed with power, unlike anything I ever

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found in any man before, and it affects me strangely. It caused me one Sunday to rush from your presence to the radio and say things I never knew I said. The critics said I likened you to Jesus of Nazareth, and said I said I felt I had come from His presence. When you sit there on your exalted plane, you inspire me.”

Just what plane the dominie had in mind is not clear; but Doctor was at the time on his third plane, a Lockheed Orion, named *Dr. Brinkley III*.

Brinkley’s biographer, Clement Wood, saw him in the same soft light, as if filtered through the rose window of an ancient cathedral. To Wood, Brinkley was one with Christ crucified, Stephen stoned, Paul mocked, Martin Luther tried for a common criminal, Galileo tortured, Columbus in chains, Dante exiled. “Of their company,” Wood wrote with unaccustomed simplicity, “is John R. Brinkley.” Some of the goat-gland surgeon’s sermons which were interspersed among his ad messages on the four-plus prostate (size: about that of a grapefruit) impressed his patients with their deeply spiritual nature. A particularly eloquent sermon had as its subject the woman taken in adultery. Brinkley portrayed the hooting crowd that took her to Jesus and pushed her forward that He might condemn her to be stoned to death. There was the woman standing and hiding her face with her hands and with her hair. And Dr. Brinkley told how Jesus looked deep into the eyes and souls of the mob and said:

“He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her,” and so on to the conclusion of the familiar passage; “go, and sin no more.”

It was a touching sermon, as Brinkley preached it, and he announced it as his own, but to some listeners it sounded familiar. That night Brinkley preached again, this time on the text: “I shall suffer many things,” and again there was something hauntingly familiar about this eloquent performance, too. A woman in Atchison, Kansas, hearing both talks, reached up to her bookshelf, took down a copy of Giovanni Papini’s *Life of Christ* and there read Brinkley’s morning sermon on pages 223 to 233; and the evening homily which he cribbed almost verbatim from the same work, pages 241 to 252. There were some changes. Doctor

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skipped “obsequious” on page 250 and mispronounced several other words, but he did not mention Papini.

The next Sunday the Milford healer discussed the Beatitudes in a solemn voice, taking his text from the ninetieth page of Papini: “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall be filled.” Brinkley goofed on a couple of hard words.

Many good working people felt that if Dr. Brinkley could bring them such wonderful Christian messages, he must be a great surgeon. But a few felt as Andy Whitebeck did. Andy worked in Council Bluffs, Iowa. He had heard Brinkley talk over the radio, telling how he could cure the ailments that often afflict old men. Andy wrote to Doctor and got his “blue book” and those sweet-talking letters so full of hope and promise and of the goat-gland operation at \$750. Whitebeck didn’t have that kind of money, but he and his wife did have their little home. They had spent a lifetime skimping and saving to pay for it. To get the gland treatment with all the frills, Whitebeck mortgaged his home for \$550—it was all he could raise on the dwelling—and went to Milford.

“Andy told me all about it,” recalled a friend. “He said he and his wife talked it over and agreed that Brinkley was such a good Christian man, he preached such lovely sermons over the radio every Sunday; when he found out how poor Andy was and how he could raise only \$550 by mortgaging his home, he’d surely operate on Andy for that, and maybe, like the Good Samaritan in the Bible, he’d do it for nothing.”

Andy could see it all so clearly. He knew just how it was going to happen. Dr. Brinkley, the great surgeon, would come to his bedside and say, “Andy, go on home and give the money back to your wife and lift the mortgage on your little home and God bless you both.”

The little fantasy which Andy and his missus had cherished was soon shattered. Doc got Whitebeck straightened out: no seven hundred and fifty, no operation. Brinkley was strictly a businessman on business days. Whitebeck just stood there, weeping like a child. He wanted that operation so badly he could taste it. He

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wanted to go back home and back to his old job feeling like a new man, the way the letters said he would.

“But Mrs. Brinkley told him he’d just have to raise the other two hundred dollars,” said Joseph Fritz, who farmed four miles northeast of Pawnee City, Nebraska, and was in the Brinkley Hospital with Andy. “They worked on his fears, made him think the goat glands were the only things that could save him and make him young and strong again. Andy didn’t know where to turn. With tears in his eyes he begged Brinkley to take his note for the two hundred and he’d pay it, little by little, out of his wages as he earned them. But no sir!

“Mrs. Brinkley wrote to the firm Andy worked for, and she got a written agreement from it that it would send so much of Andy’s wages to her each week till the two hundred dollars was paid, and then operated on him, and sent him back to his mortgaged home and his wages also mortgaged for months.”

Farmer Fritz added that the surgery didn’t do Whitebeck a mite of good. “Brinkley merely operated on his pocketbook,” Fritz insisted.

Junction City, the county seat, was larger than Milford and fourteen miles distant, but the city felt Dr. Brinkley’s presence and was aware of his carrot-and-stick methods. Doctor patronized Junction City’s banking and insurance facilities, employed local attorneys when he was engaged in litigation. Junction City benefited in an economic sense from all the goings and comings at the Brinkley Hospital. The owner of the telephone system of Junction City, also a Kansas state highway commissioner, had a stake in KFKB. Prospective patients, arriving by rail, changed cars here for the Milford branch line and often put up in Junction City for the night. Sometimes they stayed long enough to go up and down the street inquiring about the standing of Dr. Brinkley as a surgeon.

“Often,” said *The Kansas City Star*, “the people told the truth about Brinkley and many prospective patients of Brinkley’s turned back home when they heard it.”

Doctor countered with an effective maneuver. He sent detectives into the town to call upon his critics and make them

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think twice before they opened their mouths again. Ministers, merchants and local physicians received calls from Brinkley's private dicks, who went from office to office and store to store with written-out statements of what had been said in derogation of Dr. Brinkley.

"Here, read this," they would say, pushing a paper under the nose of some Junction City citizen. "It is what you have been saying about Dr. Brinkley. We have it from persons you have talked to." Then they would ask the merchant or doctor to make affidavit to the statement he had made that Brinkley was a quack. The result was, in most cases, that those who had spoken out about Doctor clammed up. Some citizens felt that these visits from Brinkley's bully boys had about them an atmosphere of intimidation. One Junction City physician, William S. Yates, knew what it felt like to get the back of Brinkley's hand. Dr. Yates found himself, along with Dr. Morris Fishbein, a defendant in a libel suit filed in the district court of Geary County, which asked six hundred thousand dollars in damages. All the worry and trouble and expense of litigation were brought forcibly home to Dr. Yates: petition and praecipes for summons. Summons issued and returned to sheriff's office. Motion of defendant made. Original petition amended and refiled. Court sustains motion. Answer filed. Plaintiff's motion to strike from answer amended and filed. Subpoenas served here and there. Depositions taken and filed. Court's ruling on motion ordered spread on the record. Defendant's motion for permission to file supplemental answers presented and argued. So it went—motion and reply and supplemental answer, stipulations, arguments, continuances and mandates from higher courts. Many a steel file in the Geary County courthouse still bulges with the history and artifacts of Dr. Brinkley's litigious life, recorded on legal-size sheets, at fifty cents a sheet, and bound up in baby blue.

The case of John R. Brinkley *v.* Morris Fishbein and William S. Yates, No. 6949, Damages, libel, never amounted to anything. After Doctor had squeezed the publicity value out of it, he let it drop on some technicality.

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But Junction City got the point.

"I have lived and practiced my profession for the past forty years in peace and harmony," exclaimed Dr. L. R. King. Then, one day, strangers appeared in his office "purporting to be prospective patients . . . who stopped off at our city to inquire about the merits of this treatment before proceeding on." One man, who said he was "R. M. Leslie, Huntsville, Alabama," asked the usual questions about Brinkley. Dr. King repeated a few statements as he remembered them from an article published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* entitled "John R. Brinkley—Quack, The Commercial Possibilities of Goat-Gland Grafting." The next day two "follow-up men" called on Dr. King to ask if he said what he said, "which I confirmed." King was a man not easily intimidated for the article was the one on which Dr. Brinkley had sued Yates and Fishbein.

Among the men in Brinkley's immediate entourage was Dr. Tiberius L. Jones, the brother of Mrs. Brinkley, who had been associated with the Milford "San" since 1919 and had performed between three and four hundred goat-gland operations himself. He said once that they were 99 per cent successful.

"And what about the other one per cent?" he was asked.

"Oh, they were just chronic kickers," he answered.

Brinkley could count also upon faithful "Dr." Osborn, his deputy sawbones; and Howard Hale Wilson, male secretary and fixer, a big goon with hands like hams, fast on his feet, and quick of wit, too. Wilson once said, "If anybody ever gets in the way of my boss I'll fix him like this"—making the motions of throttling.

During 1931, one "E. J. Meister" lived at the Milford Sanitarium and traveled around the countryside selling stock in a new newspaper, the *Junction City Independent*, which was designed to offer opposition to Harry E. Montgomery's old and long-established *Junction City Daily Union*. The *Independent* called itself "The People's Newspaper" and was violently pro-Brinkley. "E. J. Meister" was an alias for William P. Sachs, the diploma-ring king, who was exposed by the *St. Louis Star* in 1923. Sachs was also the man who had signed Brinkley's forged

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credentials, showing alleged attendance at the National University of Arts and Sciences in St. Louis.

Sachs, or Meister, worked among the German element to raise money for the new publishing venture, which was generally regarded as Brinkley's. A linotype arrived on the freight dock. Money was needed to get it to the shop and set up. Sachs went among the Germans and *Schwatzte ein Bisschen Deutsch*—passed the time of day, chewed the fat—and got the money. He was also useful to Brinkley on the radio where he spoke in German in behalf of the lost-manhood specialist. Sachs was a pretty good rough-and-tumble courtroom fighter himself. When asked what his name was he answered, "I was born nameless."

When asked about "Sachs" and "Meister" he replied that he could do with his name as he pleased; "that is common law."

The *Junction City Independent* might in time have added to the vivacity of life in Geary County. But the millionaire goat-gland surgeon was not destined to become the Lord Northcliffe or even the Arthur Capper of Kansas journalism. The *Independent* folded after three months. The German participants in the enterprise lost their money, but presumably increased their reading skill in English—at a fairly high cost. And they were exposed to many interesting accounts of Dr. Brinkley as The People's Friend.

Beyond his circle of intimates, beyond town and country, Doctor could rely on the Brinkley druggists for support. Just how far Doctor could see into the future is a matter of conjecture. Certainly he had a finely attuned instinct for self-preservation, a kind of personal radar or Early Warning System. The record shows that he was superb at preparing his *salida de emergencia*. When unpleasant eventualities occurred, Brinkley usually had his forces well disposed for defense or attack. In early 1930, *The Kansas City Star* was investigating Brinkley's medical practices and his manorial system up in Milford. The Kansas Medical Society was preparing to ask the state licensing agency then known as the Kansas State Board of Medical Regulation and Examination to revoke Brinkley's license.

There was a real possibility that the Brinkley pharmacists

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were co-liable with him. It is a principle of medical jurisprudence that any physician having undertaken the treatment of any patient, shall use ordinary diligence in his treatment. Every druggist filling Brinkley's radio prescriptions was fully aware that Doctor exercised no diligence whatever in advising his unseen patients. As partners in this profitable but dubious enterprise, the pharmacists could be held responsible for damages inflicted upon the public by their co-partner, under the legal principle of agency. Reports on certain cases emphasized this, such as one cited by Dr. H. W. Gilley, physician and surgeon of Ottawa, Kansas.

Dr. Gilley told of attending a rural mail carrier. He found the patient profoundly collapsed, his face ghastly pale, body cold, pulseless, in shock. When questioned, the mailman whispered, "I took some of Brinkley's medicine."

"Upon my demand," said Dr. Gilley, "a bottle of Brinkley's liver medicine, Number 50, was produced, having the price, \$3.50, printed on the label, with directions and the name of the dispensing druggist.

"This Number 50 is composed of a solution of hydrastis, cascara and chionanthus, the latter a very drastic eliminator of bile already secreted and contained in the gall bladder and ducts. The actual cost of this should not exceed seventy-five cents.

"The action of this combination was so drastic upon the patient as to produce enormous cholera-like gripings and actions and vomiting, causing a tearing open of the old ulcer and violent hemorrhage. On April sixteenth, the vomiting and intense pain continuing, X-ray pictures were taken, showing the pyloric orifice about one and a half inches to be nearly closed, and it will soon be imperative to make a new opening by attaching the bowel to the lower margin of the stomach."

And now for the other side of the coin. The President of the Dr. Brinkley National Pharmaceutical Association was Percy S. Walker, a Topeka druggist, a brother-in-law of the attorney general of the state, and also a member of the state pharmacy examining board. Dr. Brinkley was well deployed legally. His

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counsel included the law firm of Jackson, Forbes and Smith of Topeka. Fred S. Jackson, senior member of the firm, was a former attorney general of Kansas, former member of Congress, and was for years active in politics. Colonel James E. Smith, of the same firm, was a son-in-law of Governor Clyde M. Reed. Both the medical and pharmacy boards were responsible, of course, to the executive branch of the state government.

Some of the druggists were much troubled in spirit about the Brinkley prescriptions. But the business they got was all velvet. The regular doctors were a minor source of profit, compared to Brinkley, and in fact many stocked and compounded their own prescriptions. And Doctor's big radio station was a visible, or at least audible, symbol of his stature. Also in Brinkley's corner were the Vice-President of the United States, Charles Curtis, all the radio fans who thought Doc was both the Mayo brothers rolled into one compact package, and the phalanx of druggists ready to declare war on any officials who undertook to put their best prescribing physician out of business.

A good deal of wise money was ready to say that if the Medical Board lifted "Coat Gland" Brinkley's license, there would be some political goats, too, before the affair was finished. With the wonder Doctor in the headlines and a hot political primary coming up, many statehouse veterans looked forward to the fall elections of 1930 with dread, got buck fever and quietly lost their desire for heavy groceries. There was a real question, too, whether it would accomplish anything to revoke Brinkley's medical license. He could hire other doctors to do the work, the hospital would run on as usual, and, in fact, Doc himself, the master salesman, would have more time to devote to the advertising and selling side.

It was all too clear to the professional politicians that once the Board teed off on the youth-gland specialist, someone was sure to get hurt. No candidate for office enjoyed the prospect of tackling a man who could fire back by air and shoot remarks all over the country. Nor, on the other hand, was it pleasant to think

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of the organized physicians of Kansas and *their* patients showing up at the polls on primary day in a nasty frame of mind.

But that was not the worst of it. There had been scarcely a candidate for state office during the preceding five or six years but had done an important part of his campaigning over the Milford radio station, at no cost. Out of such broad-minded hospitality, Dr. Brinkley had built his own political machine. The privilege of using the facilities of Doctor's nonpartisan station represented a political debt. Brinkley also reinsured his position by making substantial campaign contributions to both the Democrats and Republicans. The political guests on KFKB had also been entertained in the Brinkley home. They had laid it on the line that he was a great doctor and surgeon, and a good Christian. It may be said of Doctor that he did resemble Our Lord in one respect: he certainly sat down to sup with publicans and sinners. It was a case of "You tickle me and I'll tickle you" among the canny Doctor and Charles Curtis, Governor Reed and James G. Strong, who sat in Congress for the district in which Doctor lived. *Circa* 1927 Representative Strong tried hard to get a commission as major in the Army Medical Corps for the man who had been sent home in 1917 by the "benzine board." Only vigorous action by Colonel Fred W. O'Donnell, leading surgeon of Junction City, blocked the appointment.

Strong's son, George, was Brinkley's attorney when there were radio matters to talk over with Washington officials. Thus the line-up. It was around the end of April, 1930, about the time when Kansas housewives clean house, that the issue was joined. Dr. Brinkley was forced to fight on two fronts. He had to defend his right to practice medicine, and also to satisfy the Federal Radio Commission that KFKB's radio wave-length allocation served the public necessity and convenience. Into each life some rain must fall. For Dr. Brinkley, 1930 was a year of above-average precipitation.

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The Silent Army of the Disappointed

✚ The American Medical Association had considered Brinkley a practitioner of medical humbug since the days of headphones, when spellbound rural listeners first heard the persuasive voice from Milford, Kansas. The difficult problem, from an investigative point of view, was getting detailed information about what was going on at the Brinkley Hospital. The unfathomable gland doctor kept his own records. The recipients of Ozark billy-goat gonads were not inclined to be loquacious about their desire to enlarge their sex life. The break came when Brinkley shifted his advertising from the goat glands, a subject upon which the victims were silent, to prostatic troubles, which the patients would talk about. The physicians of Kansas thereupon decided that the time had come to fix Brinkley's wagon.

The Kansas City Star also took careful aim on the Brinkley medical empire in a series of articles of unparalleled ferocity, which some observers insisted was inspired not only by a high sense of responsibility for the public welfare on the far side of the Missouri River, but also by the fact that *The Star's* own radio station, WDAF, felt keenly the competition of Brinkley's folksy station. WDAF was hard put to it to match Doctor's charm, the lachrymose gospel quartettes, Southern melodies, Hawaiian songs of farewell, fiddlers, fortunetellers, prayer meetings and

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nightly fountain-of-youth ballyhoo. This view of *The Star's* motives was warmly supported by Dr. Brinkley himself, who always put a purely selfish, economic interpretation upon the purposes of any individual or institution which questioned his activities. *The Star* said, on the contrary, that it had sent a reporter to Milford on a routine assignment to get a feature story about a flourishing hospital in a tiny hamlet. The newsman brought back a quite different story. He described a mass-production business, dealing in health, that had been built up by ingenious and fraudulent methods, the radio being used as a lure for a fake operation by a promotional genius who had grasped the possibilities of broadcasting and made himself a "super quack." The air channels must be closed to Doctor, *The Star* vowed, and to his would-be imitators. *The Star* was willing to help.

Around the end of April, 1930, the Kansas Medical Society filed a complaint with The Kansas State Board of Medical Registration and Examination, enumerating the reasons why Brinkley's license to practice medicine in Kansas should be revoked. The complaint cited instances of gross immorality, addiction to liquor, malpractice and unprofessional conduct, any or all of which, if proved, were sufficient to remove Brinkley from the Kansas scene under the Kansas Medical Practice Act. The doctors, the newspapers and the courts were in agreement that whatever Brinkley was, he was big time. As Judge Burch of the Supreme Court of Kansas later phrased it:

"The complaint was by no means confined to challenge of the success of the licensee's gland operation, the claimed result of which is that dotards having desire without capability may cease to sorrow as do those without hope, and the complaint was not that the licensee is a quack of the common, vulgar type. Considered as a whole, the gravamen of the complaint is that, being an empiric without moral sense, and having acted according to the ethical standards of an imposter, the licensee has perfected and organized charlatanism until it is capable of preying on human weakness, ignorance and credulity to an extent quite beyond the invention of the humble mountebank who has hereto-

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fore practiced his pretensions under the guise of practicing medicine and surgery.”

The state medical board was not a judicial tribunal and its hearings were not trials. It was an administrative body created under the police power of the state. Its purpose was not punishment but protection of the public health. But the case soon got into the courts as Brinkley moved to block the proceeding on the ground that the board had no power to hold a hearing to find out whether the charges were true or false.

While the Kansas Medical Society was building the case against Dr. Brinkley, the American Medical Association threw the weight of its powerful magazine, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, into the effort to stop him. Under the vigorous and militant editorship of Dr. Morris Fishbein, the *Journal* hammered at Doctor for “blatant quackery.” *The Kansas City Star* produced the death certificates of a number of patients who had had the goat-gland operation and subsequently died, although Brinkley insisted they didn’t die of the operation: they died of tetanus. *The Star* also published on its front page first-person accounts of various alumni of the Milford “San” who were alive but disenchanted.

Sometimes a rancher with \$750 in travelers’ checks in his grip—stipulated by Brinkley as prerequisite to receiving consideration at the Brinkley Hospital—changed his mind about boarding the Milford local as a result of warnings received in Union Station at Kansas City. Rolla M. Reeves, a Montanan, wracked by rheumatism so bad that he could scarcely stay on his horse, found that rheumatism was creeping up his legs. By winter he was unable to tend his cattle. Reeves came from Chinook, where phenomenal winds sweep suddenly down the sides of the Rocky Mountains at fifty degrees below zero, and then bring an unexplained heat that melts away a foot of snow in a few hours. For ten years the rancher and his wife had worked hard. They had lifted the debt off their place and were a thousand dollars to the good when rheumatism laid the husband low. All he could do was sit beside his radio and brood.

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While twisting the dials, fishing for new stations, Reeves heard the words "Milford, Kansas" and Brinkley came on the air with a tale of marvelous cures. The listener heard his own symptoms described.

"He must be able to do what he claims," the cattleman assured his wife. "Otherwise, how could he have remained in Kansas so long?"

They wrote to Milford, received a personal letter from Doctor. He said that Reeves's rheumatism was caused by prostate trouble. A batch of literature followed, then an urgent telegram: COME AT ONCE. CAN TAKE CARE OF YOU. Reeves got as far as Kansas City. As he hobbled on crutches toward the branch line train for Milford, he was handed a newspaper. His eyes fell upon a story of the death of a Brinkley patient from New Jersey. A work-hardened thumb traced the tragic details. Reeves lifted gray Western eyes to the station clock. His train was due to leave in a moment.

"I don't know what to do," he said. "I am desperate. I must have relief. And how do I know who you are?" he questioned the person who handed him the newspaper. "In these big cities people take advantage of fellows like me."

"All aboard," a brakeman shouted. Reeves half rose. Then he sighted a patrolman strolling past. The Westerner appealed to him.

"Is that true?" Reeves asked, indicating the Brinkley article.

"Is it true?" repeated the officer, slapping the newspaper. "You bet it is true. You had better investigate some more."

The Milford train left without Reeves.

The United States Government joined in the effort to close up Dr. Brinkley. Post-office inspectors studied Brinkley's letters and literature to see if Doctor had used the mails to defraud. And, in Washington, the radio commission prepared to hear evidence bearing on the fitness of the KFKB Broadcasting Company to hold one of the eighty-nine air channels available in the United States.

Dr. Brinkley, meanwhile, mounted an effective counter-

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offensive. One characteristic move he made was to hire detectives to interview the members of the state medical board, one by one. The plan was to harass and intimidate them. Dr. Brinkley's use of the private *Politzei* as an instrument of policy has already been noted, as in the instance when he wished to scare off critics in Junction City. Doctor read letters and telegrams of encouragement on his daily radio appearances praising his "great work":

"This scrap on us by 'Fishy Fishbein' has caused the people to swamp us," Dr. Brinkley proclaimed, as he read part of a Fishbein editorial in order to rebut it. Between blasts, he kept right on with his radio doctoring: "This little lady needs Number 60," and so on. Or perhaps it was Number 50. The static made it hard to tell which to ask for. "Don't rush to have your vital organs removed," Doctor warned in closing, "and don't forget to say your prayers. We all go home someday."

Dr. Brinkley also embarked upon a campaign of paid advertising, with lavish use of black and white and rotogravure space in various newspapers in Kansas City, Topeka, Wichita and other cities, portraying what he had done for Milford, depicting the wholesome, close-knit family life of the Brinkleys, expressing confidence, shouting defiance, bidding for the support of The People. The theory: Dr. Brinkley was a success. His success validated his methods. "The building plans are going right ahead. . . . Degrees and licenses do not confer experience and ability. . . . The work will go on," Doctor declared.

A call went out to the Brinkley druggists to come to Doc's assistance by searching for satisfied customers and persuading them to put aside shame or fear of publicity, and testify for Brinkley under oath. It was suggested that many would consider it a privilege to stand up and be counted for Doctor. Voucher forms for affidavits were distributed from Milford and a goodly number of customers who felt they had been restored after taking Number 50 or Number 60 swore that they felt better than they used to. Many who had a scunner against some other doctor repaired to the Milford rallying point. The placebo effect

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worked as impressively in Doc Brinkley's propaganda as it did in his prescriptions.

"When this great medical association starts out to ruin a man, and tear down his character, and endeavor to destroy the noble and great constructive work that a Christian man is doing," one widow wrote to the A.M.A. headquarters in Chicago, ". . . I pray, 'Oh, Lord, give us more such Quacks!'" And she added an interesting observation on the power of radio: "What we *know*, and *see*, and *hear*, with our own ears we *know*."

The complaint of the Kansas Medical Society was served on Brinkley in Milford by the county sheriff on April 29, 1930. Meanwhile, the "organized doctorhood" of Kansas was gathering at the Jayhawk Hotel in Topeka for their annual meeting in a genial atmosphere. They were to hear a stimulating address by Dr. Morris Fishbein. And they were happy to feel that they were getting on with the Brinkley problem at last.

"He came from Arkansas," the doctors said. "We are now ready to call upon Arkansas to take him back again."

During the morning of the first day of the convention a bell-boy created an uproar as he threaded his way through the gathering, calling in a loud voice: "Call for Dr. Brinkley. . . . Call—for Dr. Brinkley."

The lobbies were electrified for a moment. Doctor looked at doctor.

"Is it possible he is here?"

Then everybody laughed. Brinkley wasn't there, they realized; but some wag was.

Dr. Fishbein did not mention Dr. Brinkley in his set speech. But he analyzed the power of the charlatan in what may stand as a classic word portrait of the type. The charlatan, he said, was "a man who is likely to have a pleasing personality; a smooth tongue; able to present his case with eloquence. He will claim educational advantages he does not possess. He will display a large number of diplomas, usually from questionable or foreign schools, and always he will produce a large number of testimonials from the professional testimonial givers, or from persons

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who like to see their names in print.” He traced the quackeries extant in various fields, concluding: “But the charlatan of the worst type is the renegade physician. That man destroys public confidence in a profession. He destroys, but does not heal.”

Next day, as Dr. Fishbein was walking down the corridor to a meeting room, a deputy sheriff of Shawnee County slipped alongside the guest of the Kansas Medical Society and handed him a summons. It was the first move in the libel suit brought by Dr. Brinkley for three hundred thousand dollars actual and three hundred thousand dollars punitive damages; a bold challenge to regular medicine and a classic method of entering a general denial of the charges that had been made against him. But the issue was never tried.

“It is quite the common thing for persons exposed by the American Medical Association to file suit,” commented Dr. Fishbein, noting that the Association had never yet been forced to make a retraction or pay damages and “on only one occasion has it even gone to court.”

In a radio address, Dr. Fishbein put the finishing touches on his picture of the medical fakir: “Sooner or later every charlatan claims divine inspiration, stating that his message came to him from on high. Constantly he exploits faith and religion in attracting his followers. . . . History does not record any charlatan or cultist leader who, having once embarked upon this career, voluntarily discontinued it. The aphorism seems to be once a charlatan always a charlatan. From time to time the charlatan changes the field in which he operates, according to the newest field of science in which the public may have become interested.”

Dr. Brinkley employed every legal maneuver to avoid making an answer to the medical board’s complaint charging unprofessional conduct, gross immorality and fraud. But the Kansas Supreme Court and the Supreme Court of the United States refused to halt the hearing. Kansas was thus assured a new show, spiked with religion, sex and the exposure of a smooth-running system of mass-production medicine.

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Meanwhile, Doctor's radio license was in peril. He was saying in mid-April that if the Federal Radio Commission attempted to take his broadcasting license from him, he would send out a call for help over KFKB and "thousands of satisfied patients" would rise up in their anger and strength and move en masse on Washington to testify before the commission that they had been cured by Doctor of whatever ailed them. Dr. Brinkley estimated that he could run several trainloads into Washington, mentioning at first the figure of five thousand Brinkleyites. Later, he said he would take one thousand. The Commission announced in early May that it would inquire into the character of the KFKB broadcasts, whether indecent language and false statements had been broadcast over the station, whether the station had been deviating from its assigned wave length and, in general, whether its programs were in the public interest.

As good as his threat, Doctor took to the air to appeal to his followers to go with him to Washington, at his expense, and appear as a living petition, protesting the cancellation of his radio license. Lending incidental but impressive emphasis to Brinkley's challenge was the fact that *Radio Digest* magazine of Chicago had just completed a nationwide radio station popularity contest. The winner: KFKB, which received a gold cup in the form of a costly gold microphone for winning the grand championship with 356,827 ballots, more than four times the strength shown by the runner-up. *The Kansas City Star's* station, WDAF, Doctor noted with relish, received in the neighborhood of ten thousand votes.

"I want to take at least one thousand men and women to Washington with me," said Brinkley in his radio talks. "If you can leave your store or office or farm or factory long enough to do this for me, write me a letter this very afternoon and say you will go. I must know at once how many are going so I can notify the Pullman car company how many cars I want.

". . . I will carry you to Washington, in Pullman cars, I will give you a chance to see the historic city of Washington, the nation's capital, and I will bring you back again, all at my expense.

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“. . . I want all my friends to stay with me not only in fair weather, but when the ship is on the rocks. That time is now. I need your help. The doctors are trying to take my radio broadcasting station from me. . . . I have been your friend for years. I have given you fine entertainment free every day. I have been good to you. I have told you how to keep well. Now I want you to help me.

“If you can’t go to Washington, send me your affidavit, stating that you do not want my radio station closed to me, that you have been entertained and profited by it, and be sure and state that I have never talked obscenely over the air. Make that good and strong.”

Brinkley told his hearers that after they had helped him win his fight in Washington, he would need them in Topeka. Later, and with less fanfare, Doc toned down his offer of an expense-free round trip to see the White House, Washington monument and the Radio Commission’s hearing room. It appeared that two or three trains would not be necessary. But one Pullman car was made ready for those who wished to pay their own fare of \$120 plus meals to see the sights, put up at the Mayflower Hotel, and prove to Doctor that they were true-blue believers.

Gray-haired women, pepper-and-salt-suited businessmen, the Milford railroad agent, Doctor’s secretary, several reputed “goat-gland babies” and their parents were included in the Brinkley party which passed through Kansas City in an easterly direction with all car windows closed tight and nobody talking. The blinds on Dr. Brinkley’s drawing-room windows were also drawn as the Union Pacific switched the car to the Santa Fe Navajo in the presence of the small crowd of the curious who have some extrasensory perception for detecting the presence of celebrities. Guards were stationed at each end of the car. No one was allowed to talk or mingle. Dr. E. M. Perdue, Brinkley’s old teacher, joined the party, which also included the president of a life insurance company in which Brinkley had recently taken out a large paid-up policy; and two anxious directors of a building and loan association in Manhattan from which Brinkley had borrowed funds for the expansion of his Milford plant.

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Public interest in Dr. Brinkley's request for a renewal of his license to broadcast on the 1050 kilocycle channel was so great that the hearing was moved to an auditorium on the first floor of the Interior building. There, opera chairs in a semicircle were filled by witnesses; Doctor and his platoon of Kansas lawyers; the supporters who came on the special car; spry donees, grateful to Doctor and their four-footed friends for the kick they were getting out of life; Dr. Arthur J. Cramp of the American Medical Association as a silent observer; physicians and health officials from Kansas and Missouri loaded with affidavits; and strangers generally. The docket was called by Commissioner Ira E. Robinson, who commented that each of the eighty-nine channels available must be operated in the public interest "and not to increase the private revenue of a hospital or a doctor, or to build up a private school of medicine. . . . If we give Brinkley a license to operate a radio station then we can give Battle Creek a wave length, and must we give a license to Lydia Pinkham and others?" Thus the Commissioner brought the name of a famous lady healer into the day's dull proceedings.

Everybody, it seemed, was to get into the act. The Milford druggist told about the prescription business. Dr. Hugh H. Young, distinguished urologist of The Johns Hopkins University who deplored long-range diagnoses, read from the Brinkley classics, *The Story of Paw and Maw* and *Life*. Dr. Tiberius L. Jones, Mrs. Brinkley's brother, also gave a reading from Doctor's works which promised renewal of lapsed procreative powers. Mrs. Brinkley at one point leaped to her feet and shouted, "May I say a few words?"

Doctor's attorney quickly flagged her down.

A group of Doctor's lady fans gave their experiences. Typical of their testimony was that of Mrs. Bertha Lacey, of Wathena, Kansas, who spoke up for Prescription Number 150:

"It is not only good, it's wonderful."

Ten members of her family, she said, were using this prescription. All, apparently, had the same ailment.

"You just listen over the radio to what the other ladies had said about their symptoms," the witness testified, "and you'd be

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awful dumb if you didn't know what was the matter with you."

Also before the Commission was a huge bundle of petitions, asking them not to revoke Brinkley's license, and some fourteen hundred affidavits in his support, obtained as a result of a questionnaire, accompanied by the notarial fee, which had been sent to the hospital mailing list. The other side also produced some very tart testimony from Dr. E. S. Edgerton, of Wichita, Kansas, President of the Kansas Medical Society, who always said "Brinkley," pointedly avoiding the "Dr."

A pride of old men, who leaned forward to listen intently when Dr. Young said that goat-gland rejuvenation was "absolutely impossible," were sworn in en masse. Several cut a few capers in the corridors at Interior, did a buck and wing, in anticipation of their moment of theatre when they would take the witness chair. But they were never called. Later, the troop shuffled out of the building, looking sadder and older.

Commissioner Robinson interrupted again and again, hitching himself forward against the table, putting his elbows on it, leaning over, thrusting his chin out to say with great earnestness: "Is this radio station a mere adjunct of Brinkley's practice and hospital? Is he using it simply to make money? What proportion of Brinkley's time on the air is devoted to the main interest [farming] of the people of Kansas?"

It was black Friday the thirteenth of June for Dr. Brinkley. For on that date the Federal Radio Commission refused to renew the license of the KFKB Broadcasting Company, and the Kansas Supreme Court refused to stop the medical board hearing. Brinkley was caught in the current pattern of reform. A clean-up of the air was in progress, including KVEP at Portland, Oregon, which was used for personal abuse by a disappointed politician; Norman Baker's station at Muscatine, Iowa, which advertised Baker's cancer cure; and the Reverend Bob Shuler's "hate" station in Los Angeles.

All through the hearing, Dr. Brinkley sat silently. He did not take the stand. But the decision flustered him and he went on the radio in a Sunday talk to make wild charges of corruption

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involving the commissioners, the American Medical Association and even President Herbert Hoover.

“Tomorrow our attorneys will go into the District Court of Appeals in Washington and I feel they will undo the orders made by the radio commission, unless the same people who reached President Hoover can reach the Court of Appeals. . . . I suggest that every one of my friends who is listening in send a telegram to his congressman or United States Senator, asking him to see that I get a square deal. . . . Now, if you people think that myself and my station has been crucified and will tell your congressmen and senators that you sent them to Washington to represent the folks back home . . . I may get my radio license back. . . . Now I shall discuss some of the beatitudes of Jesus as they came from His mouth on the Mount of Olives.”

That evening Doctor again warmed to the theme of venality in high places.

“You are listening to Dr. Brinkley, speaking over KFKB. I have been listening to some of the beautiful and wonderful musical numbers in our program. I have been wondering if the Amateur Meat Cutters’ Association and little Fishy will be able to influence the Circuit Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia as they have reached President Hoover and three members of the radio commission. . . . I call your attention to the fourteenth chapter of Job and the fourteenth verse, ‘If a man die, shall he live again?’”

The United States Court of Appeals granted a stay order until the case could be heard. The practical effect was that KFKB could remain on the air until October thirty-first.

The following February, the court sustained the Federal Radio Commission in denying the renewal of the license for KFKB, “The Voice of Dr. John R. Brinkley.” Doc had to shut down on telegraphic orders from Washington. He made his farewell broadcast on the twentieth, portraying the occasion as “a blow to the doctrine of free speech.” Broadcasting to some twenty thousand tearful followers, he told them gently not to grieve. He would come back to them, as Clement Wood con-

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fidently noted, "greater than ever." And in this matter Doctor could be relied upon. By September the medical broadcaster was talking to his Kansas friends again, via Old Mexico.

Dr. Brinkley was busy setting up roadblocks against the medical-board hearing, pushing his suit against Dr. Fishbein, preparing to file another suit against *The Kansas City Star* for millions and millions of dollars. No United States citizen, it seems safe to say, has ever used the machinery of our American system of justice more freely or extracted more benefits from its safeguards than did the suave gland wizard of Kansas. Brinkley's lawyers were dashing all over the country in response to notices that depositions would be taken—in Chicago, in the North Carolina mountains—relating to Doctor's hazy past. If Brinkley liked living dangerously, in a professional sense, the cost was definitely rising.

After Dr. Brinkley had exhausted all legal devices for evading the issue, The Kansas State Board of Medical Registration and Examination opened its hearing on July 15, 1930, in a stifling-hot room on the mezzanine floor of the Kansan Hotel in Topeka, punctuated by some asperities and a near fist fight between a Brinkley attorney and a newspaper reporter. A parade of talkative Brinkley testimonialists ran riot, praising the food, extending the record with various irrelevancies about the friendliness, bathrooms, sheets and pillow cases at the Brinkley Hospital, while Topeka hotels and rooming houses were crowded with others waiting to testify. Several offered lay opinions on hetero-transplantation and lost manhood. One likened the pieces of gland to the eyes in a potato—you don't have to plant the whole potato, he said, to get a good crop. Another former patient said that he didn't know whether he had had the glands or not, "But I shouldn't wonder, for I've been wanting to chew sprouts."

"What is your occupation?" the Attorney General asked a witness who said he had seen an operation well performed.

"Railroad fireman."

"Then, as a fireman, you believe the operation was a good one, not as a surgeon?"

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“Yes, I guess so.”

The board heard testimony from patients who were incapacitated by infections; also urologists and specialists, including Dr. Charles H. and Dr. William J. Mayo. One old granther, who said he could kick six inches higher than his head, had visited Milford at the urging of a young wife. He, too, didn't know whether he had had the gland operation or not. But a month after his operation, whatever it was, his wife left him, so he was inclined to think that perhaps he did not receive the restorative tissue. The wife was said to have consulted a Kansas City fortuneteller, who told her she was soon to be a rich widow, but her husband inconsiderately continued to live. Disillusioned, she departed.

Dr. Clinton K. Smith, Assistant Professor of Urology in the Kansas State University, wound up the state's case, commenting that it would be a literal miracle if Brinkley joined the nerve and artery which he purported to splice.

“Such nerves and arteries have never been joined by the hand of man,” Dr. Smith declared. “If Brinkley does what he says he does, he is just about equal to our creator in his ability.”

Dr. Brinkley entered the hearing room slowly, tugging at his little goatee. Seated at his counsel table, he studied the witness, let his eyes roam across the faces of the members of the medical board. His right hand went up to smooth his hair. He toyed with his beard in a twisting gesture. He scanned the ceiling. Then his eyes fell to the floor in a deep study.

When he took the stand in his own defense, he was calm, courteous, affable, laughed good-humoredly. At one time he referred to “this little show we are putting on here.” And it *was* something of a show. The hearing room was crowded and superheated. Most of the standees were Doctor's women adherents, on their feet hour after hour, blocking the exits, shutting off every breath of air, but indicating where their sympathies lay by their manner of applauding any sally favorable to Brinkley and murmuring when the answers seemed to go against him.

Dr. Brinkley was a good witness for himself. Under the

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guidance of friendly lawyers, he could describe glibly how his operation was performed and rattle off the Latin names of nerves, structures and blood vessels like a clever schoolboy reciting a well-learned lesson, so that his disciples looked at one another with the wonder of it all, that one small head could hold so much wisdom. Doctor admitted that his prostate operation was based on a medical theory unsupported by any medical research or practice except his own, and left the witness stand somewhat cut down in size as a custodian of a surgical secret possessed by no other physician. The skillful cross-examination by the Attorney General effectively disposed of before-the-hearing speculation that the attorney general might make the going easy for Doctor. When the Attorney General had finished, it looked very much as though Brinkley had developed the famous two-phase, the four-phase and the super-duper compound four-phase operations merely for something to talk about.

At the end of the day Doctor had a sheaf of handouts ready for the press, in which he cast himself as defender of a great principle of medical practice: "the right of physicians to adopt and use new methods."

At the conclusion of the July sessions a recess was taken until September. Dr. Brinkley issued a bold challenge. He invited the state medical board to go to Milford and see him perform his specialty. The board accepted the offer. The recess was greeted with relief by the Brinkley attorneys, who wished to round up some more affidavits and to rebut destructive testimony relative to Doctor's unconventional practice, and by the Kansas politicians who had no relish for the goat-gland competition in the headlines. With the August primaries only a few days away, the sun-kissed prairies hot as an oven at 108 degrees in the shade, every Kansan who could read was deeply absorbed in sex-rejuvenation as it was unfolded in a stuffy room in Topeka. The people seemed to be far more interested in the blighted hopes of an orchardist who had had the four-ply job in the prostate shop, than in the more beautiful things in life, such as who were to be the nominees for the state's political jobs. It was a slight

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forewarning of the nasty medicine which Dr. Brinkley was soon to compound for the politicians.

September brought the medical board to Milford, where they found the staff smartly drawn up to welcome them to the gland hospital. Dr. Brinkley bustled out of his residence, all starchy and white, pulling on his rubber gloves, a surgeon's cap on his head. And there came a plaintive bleating down the corridor of the main floor of the hospital.

"This way, gentlemen," said an attendant. The crowd squeezed into a small room off the hall, just inside the main entrance. An orderly held a small, frightened, Mercurochromed male goat some three or four weeks old. A woman surgeon, according to the record of the hearing, her fingers also Mercurochromed, had a tray of shining instruments at hand, a nurse beside her with some gauze. The goat gave an agonized bleat, and two little glands were laid on the gauze. The surgeons noted that the aseptic precautions were not adequate. Goat Number 2 appeared in a minute, and the same procedure followed.

Two operations were performed upstairs: one on a railroad section hand, the other on a rural mail carrier. Brinkley lectured as he worked. Soft music from the radio station floated into the operating room from the nearby radio station. The name of the selection being played at the moment has not been preserved. But a great favorite that summer of 1930 was "Happy Days Are Here Again." Brinkley worked coolly, steadily. No one who saw his performance under the unfriendly eyes of the organized physicians of the state could doubt that the gland doctor had nerve.

The "Four-Phase Compound Operation," as performed by Dr. Brinkley in the presence of the members of the Board of Medical Registration and Examination, was described by its President, Dr. J. F. Hassig, as consisting of "an incision about two inches long in the inguinal region under a local anaesthetic, exposing the spermatic cord, identifying the vas deferens, slitting it and injecting each way through a blunt needle, about two cubic centimeters of one-half per cent Mercurochrome, after which

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the vas was tied above and below the slit, and then completely severed.

“The epididymis was partially separated from the testicle and into the loose tissue was planted the fresh gland of a young Toggenberg goat, and the epididymis was then sutured back to the testicle, and the wound tightly closed with cat gut sutures.”

The medical board retired to Topeka to consider, on the one hand, the testimony of Brinkley’s railroad fireman and similar lay witnesses drawn from the working classes, and on the other, the evidence spread on the record by medical specialists who pronounced success in the animal-to-human gland transplantation a biological impossibility, and described the whole set up at Milford as simply “a good thing” for John R. Brinkley.

Two days later the board revoked Dr. Brinkley’s license to practice medicine in Kansas. It was up to the courts whether Doctor had to stop at once or could string it out for a year or so. A former office employee of Brinkley’s estimated that if Doc could continue to operate his system for a year longer, it would be worth from one-half to one million dollars to him.

Dr. Brinkley endured what had to be endured. “It was not a trial,” he insisted, “it was a persecution.”

An unidentified admirer of Gray’s *Elegy* sent to the American Medical Association his own poetical comment upon Doctor’s dilemma:

*The health board tolls the knell . . .
The Milford herds wind slowly o’er the lea,
The unrejuvenated go their way.*

When Doctor looked back over his stormy past—the inhospitable states which had either refused him the right to practice or later regretted it if they hadn’t; the revocation of his prized diploma from the Royal University of Pavia, decreed, Brinkley believed, by Mussolini to placate the American Medical Association; the cancellation of his radio license to please Mr. Hoover; and now the triumph in his home state of the “learned doctors”—

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the egocentric radio doctor saw about him a sinister, systematic, weblike conspiracy working to thwart his high destiny.

One can speculate on why Dr. Brinkley took the considerable and often unnecessary risks involved in his endless contradictions and tergiversations. Possibly it was because of a kind of contempt he felt for his clientele. Another view is that Doc took himself pretty seriously. If he had begun to believe his own clippings, he must have been somewhat in awe of himself. Perhaps, then, he felt that his own ipse dixits validated any new twist he chose to put on an old story. Possibly, too, he just liked to be intricate in his ways. Brinkley was a temperamental and sudden man.

In the new situation which arose after the medical board took away his license, Doctor refrained from practice while his suit against the board was pending. But he had plenty of other doctors on hand. The hospital was running wide open. Brinkley could still exercise his own fantastic gift of gab. The Federal Communications Commission had stopped Doc in his tracks, it would seem, by depriving him of KFKB, his means of reaching his public. But not so: Brinkley leased a telephone line from The American Telephone and Telegraph Company to a powerful station on the *Mexican* side of the Rio Grande River, station XER. Comfortably installed in the familiar setting of the Milford studio, Brinkley phoned his broadcasts to Mexico, safely beyond the jurisdiction of the United States, then sprayed them back across the border with enough juice to blanket the wheat belt and reach away up into the wilds of Canada. Brinkley was back in business.

Once more the folks doing the dishes after supper on the farms and in the small towns of the high plains could tune in to the strains of "America," Doc's theme song, listen to the familiar cowboy laments, enjoy the Bible-thumping religious flavor of KFKB programming. Best of all, by the magic of remote control, they could still feel their symptoms kicking up when Doc Brinkley began to whisper again.

"My dear, dear friends," came the familiar voice, "my pa-

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tients—my supplicants. Your many, many letters—many hundreds of them since yesterday—lie here before me. . . . I can reply now to a few—just a few. . . .”

The Brinkleyites stirred restlessly and angrily when they heard their sainted martyr describe his recent troubles as a kind of modern “Garden of Gethsemane,” located in the Kansan Hotel. They were deeply moved when he told them how, during the hearing in Topeka, he went down on his knees every night at the Jayhawk Hotel, where he was staying, seeking strength and help from on high. Under the Brinkley spell, middle-aged farmers once more became bemused by reveries of satyrs capering over the landscape in pursuit of woodland nymphs and almost forgot about the price of wheat and their normal sport of whaling the Farm Board. Brinkley sensed the response. His sense of mission was never stronger. Well, no cross, no crown.

After the ordeal in the hot summer of 1930, Dr. and Mrs. Brinkley and Johnny Boy got into their airplane and flew down to Florida for a rest and a whiff of salt air. Returning, the plane put down at Little Rock where Brinkley had a significant conversation with an old medical associate.

The old physician said, “Why the hell don’t you go back up there and get on your radio and become a candidate for governor? You can get yourself elected, then you’ll be in control of the State Medical Board. Go on home and get on the radio and tell the people what a dirty deal you’ve been given.”

At the Little Rock airport, Doc was intercepted by a reporter who asked about Brinkley’s future plans. According to Doctor, he was amazed to hear the words which fell from his own lips. What was he going to do now?

“Why, I think I’ll go back up to Kansas and get on my radio and get myself elected governor.”

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Ballots for J. R. B-R-I-N-K-L-E-Y

✎ The first indication that there might be political overtones to Dr. Brinkley's career had really appeared in the spring of 1930 when the Kansas state medical board sought to withdraw Doctor from circulation in the medical world. As the physicians of the state, the druggists, the newspapers and Brinkley's radio followers got more and more stirred up, the scrap developed political ramifications. But even the most astute observers saw Doctor as an issue, never as a candidate for office.

Dr. Brinkley's remark to the reporter in Little Rock had, apparently, been facetious. On the way home Doctor dropped down at Tulsa to inquire about some oil interests he had in Oklahoma. There was also an overnight visit at Wichita where the Brinkleys stopped at the Broadview Hotel. Surrounded by reporters, photographers, old friends and new ones, ready to catch a rising star, the manager escorted Doctor and Mrs. Brinkley and Johnny Boy to the governor's suite. Perhaps that did it for Doc. He was quite susceptible to such attentions. Perhaps the idea was growing upon him that, if he were elected governor, it would vindicate him in the eyes of his followers. Then, too, as governor, he could indeed apply political pressure to get his license restored.

At any rate, by the time the Brinkley party returned to Mil-

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ford, the congratulatory telegrams and letters lay in huge piles, and Doctor was ready to throw himself into the race for the governorship. On September 23, 1930, Dr. Brinkley announced that he would run as an independent candidate. It was too late for his name to be printed on the official ballot. He had no ticket, no organization—just Dr. Brinkley. Thus began one of the weirdest, wildest political campaigns ever known in the volatile state of Kansas, which had seen everything from bloodshed to prairie fires, populism, the dust bowl and look-both-ways Prohibition—everything, that is, but the kind of politicking that Brinkley introduced to the voters in '30. It included such innovations as a private plane and sashaying around in the most expensive car ever seen in Kansas, lavish use of the radio, a sound truck, cheer leaders to drill the write-in vote, hillbilly music and an astrologer, a heavy infusion of KFKB religion and a goat-gland persecution complex.

“I always feel like there’s some special power guiding what I do,” Doctor said of his rather inadvertent candidacy. He knew that his name would not be on the ballot. But . . .

“I get thousands of letters every day, understand? These people who write to me are intelligent people. They are for me and they know enough to know how to write my name on the ballot.” He proposed to “give the people a chance to vote vindication for the way I have been treated by the medical board.”

The proprietor of the goat-gland fortune assembled a large staff and campaigned vigorously during the few weeks remaining before Election Day. With his radio slogan: “Let’s pasture the goats on the statehouse lawn,” Dr. Brinkley became a powerful focus for underdog sentiment. If he wasn’t a political pro, he certainly was a gifted amateur and he promised plenty—free schoolbooks, free auto tags, lower taxes, a good housecleaning at the statehouse, better times for the working people, an open door to the governor’s office, and a lake in every county. The water evaporated from the lakes would be precipitated on Kansas and the state would become a modern Canaan. It was a program of uplift, happiness, clean-up, good health, lower taxes,

Ballots for J. R. B-R-I-N-K-L-E-Y

higher property values and more migratory game birds. The Brinkley platform could claim a considerable amount of political virtuosity as a first try at the hustings. It struck a popular response. The Milford radio hammered on the theme CLEAN OUT, CLEAN UP, AND KEEP KANSAS CLEAN, while Doctor intoned, "Only you and God will be in that voting booth."

Brinkley was fortunate in his opponents, both boyish bachelors. The two great parties, each of which needed to put its house in order, hit upon the happy idea of nominating an unexceptionable American Legionnaire; and no one could get on the ballot as an independent candidate after the primaries were over. The two gentlemen offered to the voters represented a difficult choice, somewhat narrower than the difference between chocolate and vanilla. The outpouring of Brinkley votes in November represented, then, according to a veteran Kansas political reporter, Mr. W. G. Clugston, "the great Kansas anti-party uprising," a raspberry from irritated voters in a radical state of mind.

The Republican choice for governor was Frank (Chief) Haucke, a former footballer who took the Ag course at Cornell University, friendly, not too polished, a veteran and past state commander of the American Legion, a model farm boy from Morris County who didn't smoke, chew, drink or gamble. The Democrats put forward Harry H. Woodring, from little Neodesha, who sold popcorn, rose to be a janitor and then manager of a bank. Woodring was the only past commander of the Kansas American Legion who could knit, tat and do fancy needlework. Both candidates played it safe. They followed traditional patterns of campaigning, walked up and down the streets of hot, dusty county-seat towns, greeted the merchants and the folks, pumped the hands of the voters wherever a cluster of houses, a store and a grain elevator made a community. They were both unexciting. But they had something that Brinkley, with all his brilliance, didn't have. They had an organization and the backing of the professionals.

The capric candidate carried an American Legion card in his hip pocket, too, by virtue of his sojourn at the Army Base

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Hospital in El Paso. Where he outdid his rivals was in his ability to put on a good show. Before Brinkley arrived at a rally, his radio entertainers gave a vaudeville entertainment. The band played "A Stein Song." The Reverend Somebody stepped forward to praise the aspirant's piety and generosity. And just at dusk, Brinkley sailed in from Wichita or somewhere in his big, blue plane, the *Romancer*, to be escorted to the hall by a brass band, while the crowd cheered and rose to its feet in mighty tribute, and the ladies fluttered their handkerchiefs in the Chau-tauqua salute.

The Republican calculators figured at the outset that Dr. Brinkley would poll twenty thousand to thirty thousand votes. They made no effort to fight Doctor. But the Brinkley vote was a ghost vote. No one really knew what it would amount to. The estimates grew every time the good doctor went on the air and read a fresh batch of letters from his admirers, telling him that the people were for him "by the thousands." In late October the politicians were in a panic as the local workers of both parties reported that the governorship was in danger. The Brinkley strength was especially in evidence in the strip of counties constituting the central zone of the state and in the cities of Wichita, Hutchinson and Topeka. The estimates of the number of voting Brinkleyites mounted to fifty thousand, then seventy-five thousand.

The chief hope of saving Kansas for one or the other of the major parties lay in the election law which compelled the voters to write Brinkley's name in a blank space—J. R. Brinkley; not John R., and not Mr. and not Dr., but just J. R. Brinkley. And they had to mark a cross in a square after the name. The statute did not concern itself with the intent or the wishes of the enfranchised voters of Kansas but with their precision. How many could do it? Dr. Brinkley, flying up and down the state in his cabin plane, gave away thousands of sample ballots, pencils to mark them with and sunflower stickers for automobiles. He led mass meetings in a B-r-i-n-k-l-e-y yell as a device to teach his followers how to spell his name. It was the world's largest cheering section, state-wide in scale, being coached in orthography!

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“Now, friends,” the voice of KFKB would say, “be sure that you don’t write on the ballot the words, Doctor Brinkley, or John Brinkley, or even John R. Brinkley. You must write it—now you write this down as I say it—J. R. Brinkley, and don’t put no M.D. after it.”

Dr. Brinkley often read the election law to his listeners. Knowing the difficulties involved, the intelligence and care required, he repeated his own name over and over as he spoke—always as J. R. Brinkley—and made a kind of chant out of “J. R. Brinkley, with X in square.”

“No doubt this voice is familiar to many of you,” Doctor began on one occasion after the people had assembled and settled down to hear why he should be governor. “It has resounded over the radio until the name J. R. Brinkley has become a household word in thousands of homes all over the country. It is the crux of a pioneering movement in Kansas for life, liberty and justice.

“The Democrats are saying the Republicans are crooked and no good and should be thrown out of office,” Brinkley continued. “The Republicans say the same thing about the Democrats. Why shouldn’t you vote for me? I belong to neither party.

“You often hear about the efficacy of the two-party system because the Republicans watch the Democrats and the Democrats watch the Republicans. Vote for me and you’ll get double protection. They’ll both watch me.

“It has been said that the people who vote for Brinkley think the moon is made of green cheese. You have been called numskulls. But I want to tell my opponents that the greatest handwriting contest that has ever been pulled off in the nation will come to pass on Election Day. Right now there are Germans, Russians, Lithuanians and others who have little knowledge of the English language, staying up nights to learn how to write the name of J. R. Brinkley.”

Brinkley read copiously from his platform, stressing free schoolbooks, which were to be written by Kansans and printed by Kansans, free lakes and increased rainfall, free medicine for the poor, free clinics and old-age assistance. He interpolated that the time had come to teach the old-line parties a lesson. The

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Kansas ship of state is leaking fast, the Kansas Admiral declared at Parsons, in an appropriately nautical metaphor. He advised the voters to "take to the lifeboats."

Among the electioneering novelties which Dr. Brinkley introduced in addition to his retinue of radio performers, were such new wrinkles as having Milford Hospital nurses pass out lollypops and balloons, in an unusual bid for the kiddies' support, and the active participation on the hustings of Mrs. Brinkley and Johnny Boy. The Tuesday ironing was put aside by hundreds of Wichita housewives who hurried to pick up the children at school and gather at the Wichita Forum. There the wife of the independent candidate addressed the multitude at a special afternoon meeting.

The women flocked to the auditorium not only because they were intensely interested in the issues of the campaign, but also to view the fifty-one-thousand dollars' worth of jewels which Mrs. Brinkley had exhibited previously during the campaign, and to ponder upon the six automobiles which she owned, according to the records of the Motor Vehicle Commissioner's office. Compared to his wife, Doctor appeared a poor man. But he was, at least, execution-proof (as the first Mrs. Brinkley complained bitterly in the public prints).

On one occasion, Mrs. Brinkley was attired in a trim *tailleur* of navy blue tweed, and wore oxfords and a close-fitting hat. There was something of a letdown when it was observed that she wore only a simple choker of costume jewelry matching her ensemble. Doctor's wife gave an unaffected, straightforward talk in which she expressed gracefully the hope that, should she be mistress of the governor's mansion in Topeka, she could "fulfill the role of first lady in this great and wonderful state of Kansas with sweetness and dignity."

The Brinkley nurses in smart caps and aprons then passed out the balloons, noisemakers and lollypops to moppets who came up to the platform. Johnny Boy was persuaded to greet his little friends of radioland. Lifted onto a table he sang "Happy Birthday" just the way he had often sung it over KFKB to honor

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some fortunate Kansas child. The Tell Me a Story Lady favored the tots with tales of Little Cuffy Bear and the other wildwood characters she had popularized over KFKB. Many mothers were still talking politics with those seated near them, with suppers forgotten, when Mrs. Brinkley, bearing a large basket of chrysanthemums, stationed herself in the south corridor of the Forum to give a cordial farewell handshake to the men, women and children as they queued up to leave the reception. Johnny Boy, tired now from his exertions, reached for her other hand, so that she was obliged to place the basket of flowers on a seat. Such occasions proved to be both a social and political success and certainly tied up the kiddie vote.

That same night, cheering thousands shouted for Brinkley as crowds milled in the streets, unable to get inside the building. Nothing like it had been seen since the heyday of Colonel Theodore Roosevelt. The regular Milford announcer introduced Dr. Brinkley's jazz orchestra, which played the "Kiss Me" waltz, "The Wreck of Old 97," "The Man of the Hour" and "We Still Get a Thrill Thinking of You." Again a reverend introduced Doc Brinkley. The statesman entered from the right of the stage in a snug-fitting, double-breasted jacket, a flaming tie in vivid contrast to the conservative suit, a big sunflower in the left lapel. Oblivious, care-worn, a man of sorrows, who likened himself to the Christians of old, J. R. Brinkley advanced solemnly to the rostrum with a peculiar air of dignity. He inhaled deeply the aroma of a couple of vases of flowers. The audience rose in tribute. Women young and old seemed to find some emotional release in the roar that greeted the people's hero. Some waved their hands, others danced up and down as Brinkley paused at the speaker's table, and Johnny Boy ran out on stage to hand Doc a copy of *The Wichita Evening Eagle* containing his father's picture, and to get a drink of water.

With a "seriously now" Doctor launched into his discourse, calmly made his diagnosis of what was the matter with Kansas. And then he was gone like a wraith, a man of mystery, lost to the eager army of autograph hunters. Doctor was a tired man.

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He was on the radio for hours every day, and still had to travel and face "live" audiences that same week in Kansas City, Kansas, Newton, Hutchinson, Topeka and Junction City. The orchestra packed up their instruments, while the voters trailed off home to ponder Brinkley's invitation to "try to figure out why a bushel of the farmer's wheat sells for fifty-five or sixty cents and after it leaves the farmer it comes back in the shape of ten-cent loaves of bread, and he buys it back at six dollars a bushel."

J. R. Brinkley also told "the good people of Kansas" that, if elected, he would rid the capitol of the "seat warmers" and requested his friends not to visit him in the statehouse for a few days after his inauguration "because the exits will be crowded with departing job holders." He added that he would install a microphone in the governor's office and another in the governor's mansion and would take the folks into his confidence on what was coming up in the state's affairs, and who was working behind the scenes to block his program. This sounded to a good many people as though it could be fun.

Brinkley found that it was good politics not to talk politics on Sunday in Kansas. But Sunday was not a day of rest for the candidate. On Sunday he swooped down out of the skies, as he did for instance on October twenty-sixth, a fine day for flying, to hit the pasture of "Cash" Davis, thirteen miles east of Wichita. There he gave a Bible talk.

"I do not talk politics on Sunday, boys," Doctor chided the reporters present. But he did unbend enough to admit that he had three hundred thousand votes pledged.

When a plane appeared in the western skies, hundreds of fingers were pointed, hundreds of voices cried, "Here he comes," as if relieved of some great inner tension. Men squinted into the sun. "Brinkley's coming, Ma," the older children chorused. Women said "Hush."

A handkerchief was seen waving inside the plane and the crowd went wild. It is difficult a generation later, in this age of the rocket and the moonwatch, to recall the tremendous theatrical effect the goat-gland messiah produced as he descended from

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the heavens to tell the Easter story in a cow pasture. The multitude surged forward under the plane's wings. The people blocked the door. Doctor opened his window, gingerly extending his plump hand with the big diamond on it. Mothers lifted their babes to glimpse the man with the messianic beard. Old men reached for Doctor's hand.

"God bless you," they said, thrusting up their gnarled, soil-stained paws. "I'm for you."

And Brinkley smiled and rolled his sad, blue eyes. Sometimes he gave some innocent head of golden curls a caress with his skilled hand. Healer, rejuvenator, spiritual leader, child lover, often introduced as a modern Moses, come to lead Kansas out of the depression, the candidate and physician passed men on crutches, women with goiters, children with eruptions, all bent on touching the hem of his garment; as though now, as in times long past, the touch of royalty or some holy person could make them whole again. Dr. Brinkley shouldered through the packed mass of humanity to a rough scaffolding put up for him by the nearby farmers and told the people the story of the Passion. They accepted it as a political allegory of the trials and tribulations of Brinkley. The rejuvenator had been persecuted, too, and he also had returned to save the people. Ten thousand heard his voice. And ten thousand more never got a look at his flying machine, the same ship, the campaign staff often pointed out, in which Lindbergh flew to Mexico City to see his sweetheart. Nor did they hear his homily. They could not get near the field, although they tried for hours.

At the end of the—shall one say, services?—a double quartette closed the meeting with "Faith of Our Fathers," while Brinkley looked impassively over the sea of faces. His own was smooth, unlined. There was no telling what Dr. Brinkley was thinking. But this is what he said: "The men in power wanted to do away with Jesus before the common people woke up. Are you awake here?"

Dr. Brinkley paused impressively. He drank a glass of water. A few minutes later, when the speaker referred to the broken

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body of the Great Healer, the water glass was, perhaps inadvertently, knocked to the floor and shattered.

"I, too, have walked up the path Jesus walked to Calvary," the candidate said. "I have spent much time in Palestine and Jerusalem. I stood in the Savior's tomb. I know how Jesus felt."

Again and again as he spoke, Dr. Brinkley bound himself ever more intimately with the great drama of a good people's religion. When he concluded, there was a hush. Faces of anguish looked up at a new and inestimably clever hero. As governor he would provide the people with loaves and fishes—fish from the Brinkley lakes. He would drive the politicians from the statehouse. He would heal and he would save.

Often Mrs. Brinkley stepped up to the microphone, smiled and said very simply, "You are going to hear J. R. Brinkley. I wish to tell you how much we appreciate your coming and we hope to see you all at Milford sometime."

It was not spelled out whether the callers would be welcome socially or professionally. Then Doctor would take over, dressed in his conservative business suit, with his huge sunflower, the personality glasses, the high forehead, Vandyke beard, all of which contributed to the Brinkley atmosphere. His talk of installing microphones in the governor's office, pasturing his goats on the statehouse lawn, throwing the rascals out, and comparisons of Christ's Passion and his own troubles, went down fine with the bib-overall set. Brinkley himself was a product of that Southern environment which produced a whole flock of professional Friends of the People. Among them may be recalled "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman, of South Carolina; J. Thomas ("Cotton Tom") Heflin of Alabama, and Ellison D. ("Cotton Ed") Smith of South Carolina; the Negro-cussin' "Great White Chief," James K. Vardaman of Mississippi. Like James E. ("Pa") Ferguson of Texas, Doc understood "the boys at the forks of the creek."

Doc Brinkley's goats on the statehouse lawn are a reminder that, in Georgia, Eugene Talmadge, a Phi Beta Kappa who cultivated a rural cracker accent, had a barn and henhouse erected on the grounds of the Executive Mansion, loudly explaining

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that he couldn't sleep at night unless he heard the bellow of stock and the cackle of chickens. Of a piece with Brinkley's homely proposal was something that William H. ("Alfalfa Bill") Murray actually did. He planted chick peas on the lawn of the Oklahoma Executive Mansion. Brinkley was not imitating any of these artists in crowd manipulation. He was of their number by right of his own native talents. But he may, in the difficult year of 1930, have derived some comfort from the career of Theodore Gilmore Bilbo, "The Man," Bilbo. Bilbo was a piney-woods Baptist with jug ears and a diamond horseshoe stickpin, who cried "persecution" when the Mississippi Senate censured him as "unfit." Whereupon his public sang hymns, choked back their sobs and elected him lieutenant governor.

Election Day in the 1930 Kansas campaign was fair, mild and pleasant, with all party workers on the firing line, and Dr. Brinkley, the anything-may-happen candidate for governor, laboring at his microphone from milking time on. Amplifiers in stores adjacent to polling places blared, "Vote for J. R. Brinkley; mark the cross in the square. Write in letter 'J,' letter 'R,' B-r-i-n-k-l-e-y." The loudspeakers were set up on private property and were located far enough away from the voting booths to comply with the election law. Meanwhile astrology was injected into the contest during its final hours by "the people's psychologist" of KFKB, who told the listeners that the stars indicated a landslide to Brinkley.

"Brinkley," he said, "was born under the sign of Cancer—that of Roosevelt, Wilson and other notables. The reading indicates he is a political leader and it shows conclusively that the fourth day of the month—today—is Brinkley's lucky day."

Dr. Brinkley trailed the regular candidates as thousands of Brinkley ballots were rejected because the name was spelled wrong or put down in the wrong place or the voter got Doctor lined up for the wrong office. The Brinkley votes were distributed over both the vacancies in the United States Senate, the state supreme court, several different congressional districts. The people voted for Brinkley for all the minor state offices and

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many of the county jobs. Thousands of the ballots were marked simply "Doc." The Brinkley ticket had few watchers, poll clerks and tabulators at the polls. Those that Doctor did scrape up didn't know the game, were often intimidated by the old hands. Many Brinkley ballots were "lost." It was the night of the "short count."

Brinkley estimated that he had received 239,000 votes if the intent of the voter was paramount. About 50,000 were voided. *The Chicago Daily News* thought that somewhere between 10,000 and 50,000 Brinkley votes were rejected by the party workers who watched for faulty Brinkley ballots, and grinned, "There are times when election officials are very careful about things like that." Despite all finagling, 183,278 Brinkley votes got past the officials. Harry Woodring, the Democrat, squeaked in ahead of Haucke with 217,171 votes. Regardless of how they felt personally about Doctor, the political experts admitted privately that he would have finished in first place if his name had been on the ballot. He even polled 20,000 votes in Oklahoma.

"Three counties in Oklahoma went for me," Brinkley asserted with a touch of self-satisfaction, "when they were supposed to be voting in an Oklahoma election with 'Alfalfa Bill' Murray running."

To the hard-core Brinkley supporters, Doctor was "the unofficial governor of Kansas."

The Republican, Haucke, was only 257 votes behind Woodring, but the Republicans were content not to contest the election. They didn't want the Brinkley vote counted again. Brinkley also failed to demand a state-wide recount. His advisers talked him out of it, and Brinkley told W. G. Clugston that he knew a contest would cost a hundred thousand dollars in addition to substantial sums already spent. It may be that some political commitments were made to him which gave him confidence that he could fight again under more favorable circumstances.

Doctor showed all the symptoms of one fatally bitten by the

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political bug. He could see himself installed in the statehouse suite with the old-fashioned Gothic lettering over the transom—GOVERNOR. He had felt the thrill of being popular, feted, applauded, complimented, lodged in the governor's suite in a Wichita hotel; yes, and being voted for. His clubs kept right on meeting. Doctor notified his friends that he would be a candidate in '32 if they wanted him to. Some forty thousand people, he said, had written to him, pledging their support. Doctor hinted at the possibility of a conspiracy to thwart him. If, for example, he were indicted for using the mails to defraud, why Mrs. Brinkley would be available to become the "Ma" Ferguson of Kansas. As Doctor put it, "You all know that she is a fighter."

During 1931 Brinkley was very much the Kansas Commoner. He appeared at picnics, fairs, wiener roasts and gatherings like the Old Settlers' Picnic at Green, Kansas, where he told once more about the raw deal he had had. He played upon the hostility of the wheatland folks to Kansas City, asked why Harry Montgomery, publisher of the *Junction City Union* was tearing down Kansas institutions—meaning the Doc Brinkley enterprises.

In early 1931, despite all that a legal delaying action could do, Brinkley knew that the jig was up so far as his right to practice medicine or run a radio station in Kansas was concerned. The injustice which had been done him rankled and festered in the temperamental doctor. A year later to the day, he announced a day of humiliation and mourning which he called "People's Day" recalling his "expulsion" from the profitable field of radio medicine in Kansas. Doctor had already made an accommodation with the Mexican government for a 75,000-watt radio station at Villa Acuna, Coahuila, across the international bridge and about three miles from Del Rio, Texas. It was the second-highest powered station in the world.

The Brinkley Hospital was still in Milford. Doc broadcast by remote control over the wire from Milford to XER. But he still regarded himself as a Kansan, still felt an itch to "clean up the grand old Sunflower State and give it back to the people of Kan-

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sas.” Who had had it lately deponent saith not. It was scarcely a surprise, then, when the bewhiskered specialist announced in January, 1932, that he was entering that year’s race for the governorship. The Brinkley disciples flocked to the standard as of yore. A Topeka poetess, a sort of Sweet Singer of Kansas, broke into happy song:

*They drove our friend to Mexico, but we’ll
call him back from there,
Back again to dear old Kansas, to fill the
governor’s chair.*

A startling hodgepodge of a newspaper, *Publicity*, with a strong political bent, plunked for Brinkley. It was frequently asserted, and always denied by Doctor, that he had bought the publication to advance his political fortunes. *Publicity*, issued from Wichita, gave full and slanted news coverage to all of Dr. Brinkley’s political, and indeed, medical, activities. To *Publicity* Doc was “the Lincoln of Kansas.” It serialized *The Life of a Man*, and also sold the hard-covered book. *Publicity* also approved of naturopaths, electrotherapy, chiros, Peruna and W. W. Cooper, the Altoona, Pennsylvania, cancer man. Later in the decade, the sheet became violently isolationist, and supported Hitlerian race theories.

Dr. Brinkley ran again as an independent, but this time his name was on the ballot. He had “Topeka fever,” and used every promotional resource to flood the state with auto stickers, tire covers, banners. Doctor’s grasp of detail was amazing, his preparations minutely complete. He had a campaign song written by the then Maude—“Miss Maudie” to thousands—Schreffler, a pianist at KFBI, successor to old KFKB. The station was owned by a Wichita insurance company, but Brinkley still broadcast from it. The song was called “He’s the Man.” Admittedly corny, its catchy tune was plugged to death over Kansas radio stations at time rates.

Dr. Brinkley began his preparations in the spring of ’32 by

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taking the temperature of the body politic. He wrote to Harold McGugin, a good friend in the Congress, who had helped him out in certain contacts with Vice President Curtis:

“Now I have private detectives traveling over the state, stopping in filling stations, cheap hotels, bakeries, and things like that—just visiting around. . . .”

And again to his campaign manager, Brinkley touched on the same theme: “I have contacts no one knows anything about, and there is very little that takes place in this state that I do not hear of.”

The gubernatorial candidate also hired Pinkerton detectives to study the backgrounds of the politicians in the state. This device became one source of his power. Indeed, Brinkley may be credited with an assist, at least, in breaking wide open a state bond scandal, involving a prominent banking family, which developed after 1932.

Another activity of this busy time was the employment of “one C.N.W.” to locate and interrogate Jim Crawford, Doctor’s old Electro-Medical brother from the Greenville, South Carolina days. Occupied with the song, the new sound truck, with getting out a campaign tract entitled “Dr. Brinkley’s Position” (170,000 copies in print), his hand in or on everything, Doctor still had time to consider his personal safety. He wrote to Ernest A. Dewey, his manager:

“What I want, Dewey, is a bullet-proof vest that goes down below the waist line and protects both front, back, and sides, and fits up around the neck because I am not going to be any too safe along in October and November of this year, facing some of these crazy mobs. . . . This is to be kept an absolute secret. In your negotiations you should never let the people you are negotiating with have any idea as to who wants it or anything about it. Should it become known that I am wearing one, the fellow would aim his bullet toward the head or some unprotected spot. . . . My chest is about 38 and my belly is about 40, and I wear a 15½ collar.”

An invoice dated July 11, 1932, indicated that a size 40 vest

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was purchased from the Detective Publishing Company for \$75. Dewey assured the man who feared that his martyrdom might become real, that the vest "is exactly like the one worn by Al Capone, and therefore, ought to be the best available."

The *piece de résistance* of Brinkley's 1932 race was Ammunition Train No. 1. It was a Chevrolet truck equipped with loudspeakers, electrical-transcription facilities and a collapsible platform for "live" speaking, somewhat like the wagon tail gate that let down for the same purpose in the days of the old-fashioned medicine shows. There was no Ammunition Train No. 2.

Doctor loved the truck.

"I just realized," he said when it was still a nebulous idea, "that I could put a talking machine on my truck and it could stop in a lot of little towns where I would not appear in person to make speeches and, of course, the truck would attract a crowd and . . . I could make a speech or two from the record . . . besides, I could make a record of my Sunday talks to boys and girls, which would give me *entré* to certain Sunday schools."

Brinkley liked the records even better, he said to his manager, than "the 'talkies,' like you are working up now. . . . I think it the biggest idea I have had; what do you think?"

The Brinkley billboard campaign was massive. Doc carried his own preacher around with him, a reverend who nightly laid his petition for the Brinkley candidacy before the great white Methodist throne. The holier-than-thou stuff was laid on with a trowel. Before the campaign was over, the minister was censured by his Methodist brethren for praying and speechifying for the devil.

Brinkley's platform stressed taxation as the chief issue, along with economy in state affairs, public health, the development of more industries in Kansas. There was to be a colored hospital, segregated; and reforestation: "The natural enemies of trees in Kansas are winds, insects and county engineers." The word which occurred most frequently in Doc Brinkley's state papers of this year was the glorious old word, "free." About the only proposition which could conceivably have topped Doctor's pro-

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gram had already been thought of in Chicago by the late lamented James Aloysius Quinn, who proposed to heat the parks.

In the '32 campaign Brinkley's delivery was notably improved over his previous performances. He purred, even when he scratched. There was plenty of hokum, but he put it in a new way. And when Doctor announced that he would speak, from nine thousand to ten thousand people were willing to miss the first picture show, lose out on Amos 'n' Andy, and buck the Kansas heat to hear him. That was more than had turned out to welcome President Wilson or more than heard Cox in 1920, John W. Davis in 1924, or Al Smith in 1928. Doc was no orator. But he packed a new electronic punch. He introduced the easy chair, the sixteen-cylinder golden-brown Cadillac with his monogram on its doors. His was the medicine-show type of gathering, with ecclesiastical trimmings. By this time the vindication theme was a bit shopworn, and Doctor quite properly played it down. But he sensed the power of his "free" offers, and applied them to every phase of the state government that touched the worried farmer or the working man who had had another pay cut.

Rough methods, in turn, were used on old reliable Doc Brinkley. A political sheet called *The Pink Rag* attacked him with innuendo and low humor, asked him to give the editor some lessons in "martyring," charged that he had deserted his first wife and three small children. *The Pink Rag* circulated the Crawford deposition dealing with Doctor's experiences in the Greenville, South Carolina, hoosegow and Crawford himself turned up in Milford to suggest that, for a *douceur* of about three hundred dollars, he would throw down the story he told in the deposition.

How could the voters tell whether or not a candidate was the poor man's friend? If he said so himself often enough and loudly enough, did that make it true? William Allen White in his editorial chair at the *Emporia Gazette*, meditated upon these not entirely abstract questions, especially as they might apply to Brinkley. Doctor had just made a speech in Emporia.

"Emporia turned out to see him sitting in his circus cage," White wrote, "the old patent-medicine man selling his bottles of

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political cure-all to the sick and suffering at new low prices. He talks the good old language of the circus barker, and promises the dawn of a new day. . . .

“Entertainment was there for everybody—solos, instrumental numbers, phonograph records, a rattling good performance of the St. Louis Blues, a good old-fashioned prayer to start with and a dance sponsored by the Brinkley club at the close, with peanuts, popcorn and Crackerjack for the crowd.

“Dr. Brinkley’s platform may not hold much for the poor folks, but he certainly gives them their money’s worth at his meetings.”

White dismissed various unappetizing stories about Dr. Brinkley’s personal life which were being passed around. They were not to the point, anyway. The important thing, he insisted, was that Brinkley wasn’t fitted for the post. “He is not a political crook,” White said. “He just doesn’t know any better.” In a “Save Kansas” editorial that was widely reprinted, White called desperately upon the intelligent people to avert the disgrace which Election Day might bring upon their proud state.

“Shall Kansans,” the Sage of Emporia wrote, “be greeted by a jibing ba-a-a, the cry of the billy goat, when they walk the streets of other states?”

Brinkley’s campaign was deliberately low pressure. He just “visited” with the Kansas folks, had little to say about Alfred M. Landon, the Republican nominee, bore down a bit harder on Woodring, the Democratic governor who hoped to succeed himself. Woodring was portrayed as not bad—just weak; his facility at fancywork and tatting was not overlooked. When the Brinkley motorcade swept into little Neodesha, Woodring’s home town, Doc Brinkley applied the parable of the prodigal son to the local boy. He went to Topeka with high ideals, said Doc sadly, “but, like the prodigal son, he fell among evil companions—Guy Helvering and *The Kansas City Star*, and they, inspired by the devil, took him up onto a high hill, and told him about the golden bathtubs and the ladies’ tatting societies in Washington, and promised him the Vice-Presidency of the United States—all of these things they would give him if he would but bow down to them

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and worship them.” Unlike Christ, the young man of Neodesha did not say, “‘Get thee behind me, Satan,’” Doctor concluded: “And now, folks, the story of your prodigal son will be as that of the prodigal son of Holy Writ, for after election, Harry is coming home.”

The crowd went wild, and in November, Brinkley carried the governor’s home county.

The “Brinkley fever” passed its high point in mid-September. The preacher prayed as hard as ever. The ammo truck was connected up with *two* radio stations. A cowboy crooner warbled ever more sweetly about a coyote on the lone prairie. Doc Brinkley worked his wizardry as of old. But his show was slipping. The excitement over the national election in a presidential year undoubtedly hurt him. Doctor again finished third, although he carried more counties than either of the other candidates. Brinkley split the Democratic vote, thus causing the defeat of the incumbent, Woodring, and allowing a Republican, Alf Landon, to become governor. The final score was: Alfred M. Landon, 278,581; Harry H. Woodring, 272,944; J. R. Brinkley, 244,607.

Although on Election Day party workers for both the Republican and Democratic machines broadcast fake election returns designed to induce a defeatist psychology among Brinkley supporters, Doctor received approximately the same percentage of the total vote as he did in the write-in campaign of ’30.

Willard Mayberry, editor of the *Elkhart Tri-State News*, and later Landon’s secretary, wrote to the governor-elect, “Congratulations . . . tempered by shame that our section of the state went Brinkley. . . . Honestly, it was like trying to sweep back the Atlantic with a broom. . . .”

Doctor’s last gasp, politically, came in 1934, when he ran for governor again, this time in the Republican primaries. As before, he put no ticket in the field, had no organization to speak of. It was believed around the statehouse that Brinkley, if elected, would be impeached. As a result, an unusual number of statesmen offered themselves for the office of lieutenant-governor. At the time Dr. Brinkley was, as he phrased it, “temporarily living in Del Rio, Texas.” There were questions as to his ability to meet

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the residence qualification, but they were not party-inspired. Doc attacked Landon during the hot July weeks before the primary, but the old enthusiasm was lacking. On primary day the temperature was 111 degrees, but Dr. Brinkley was snowed under.

Brinkley remained to some extent a symbol of radical discontent in the turbulent Kansas scene. When the Townsend Plan came along, a Kansas old-age bloc appeared with some two hundred local clubs to work on candidates for Congress. Their greatest strength was in central Kansas, the Brinkley belt, and many old Brinkley henchmen were up to their necks in the clubs.

A year later—in 1937—the Independent Voters' League of Kansas announced that it would sponsor a mass meeting for the purpose of promoting the candidacy of J. R. Brinkley for governor in the general election of November, 1938. Sometimes Doctor would return to Kansas from his new home in Texas to mingle with the multitude, not quite believing that all was over between them.

In the fall of 1937, Doc spoke in Elkhart, one of his strongholds in the southwestern part of the state. After Dr. Brinkley had left town “in Oriental pomp and Byzantine splendor,” as *The Kansas City Star* got the story from the Elkhart newspaper, a traveling hawker of cheap jewelry took over the “tip”—crowd—which had “a Brinkley hangover” and cleaned them out of \$175 before they woke up. The paper said that you could tell a Brinkleyite by the way “he goes about knocking his nice, new, shiny watch against brick walls to start it again!” Doctor, too, went around from time to time, testing out his political dream, hoping that it would tick. Once he eyed the United States senatorship of the late Morris Sheppard of Texas, but nothing came of it. Dr. Brinkley was ready to announce for the governorship of Texas in the spring of 1938 and had his platform all written out. However, he pigeonholed it for some reason after W. Lee (Pappy) O'Daniel entered the race. The dapper surgeon with the load of charm couldn't get his watch to start again.

A few fanatically loyal adherents keep faith even today with the shadow of Doctor's memory. The way his supporters saw him

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is reflected in a remark made in 1958 by the widow of Doctor's 1932 campaign manager:

"Dr. Brinkley died a broken-hearted man," Mrs. Ernest A. Dewey said. "The A.M.A. and *The Kansas City Star* saw to that."

It is an epitaph which Doctor would have appreciated. A different perspective on him is provided in a letter written by "Bill" White, who had thrown the full power of his pen and influence against Brinkley in the closing weeks of the '32 campaign:

"I just went to it hog wild and plumb loco . . . and we shot the old goat's guts full of holes and there he lies today belly up."

Dr. Brinkley's appeal at the ballot box, viewed now in historical perspective, thrived on the Depression. His popularity was an expression of radical discontent with the two major parties. Some citizens—as a kind of Rabelasian outburst—voted for Doctor without fully swallowing his panaceas. His exploitation of his "persecution" won him the sympathy vote. His counter-attack on the medical profession rallied all the popular prejudices against scientific medicine as opposed to the appeal of Brinkley's own surgical mysteries and patent medicines. Brinkley used the language of the lodge, appealed to the same type gullibles who supported Huey Long, Cole Blease and "Big Bill" Thompson, who once campaigned in Chicago accompanied by a rat in a cage, whom he addressed as "Fred"—the name of his opponent.

William Allen White had a theory to explain the supporters of the Brinkleys, Huey Longs and Big Bill Thompsons. About 20 per cent of the population is permanently gullible, any time, in any place, White said. "In every civilization there is a moronic underworld which cannot be civilized. It can be taught to read and write, but not to think, and it lives upon the level of its emotions and prejudices." The Brinkley voters deluged him with protests. They didn't know what "moronic" meant, but they had heard about the underworld from the movies. It meant something wicked. They weren't wicked, they told White. They were good Christian people.

"Dear Brinkley voters," the Emporia editor replied, "you got

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me wrong. I didn't mean that you were bad. I only meant that you were dumb . . . credulous in the presence of crooks, suspicious in the presence of honest men."

Brinkley read freely from clippings written by his enemies, so it followed that he must be honest. He quoted Scripture and sat on his truck in a "dim religious light," so he must be a man of rare spiritual qualities. That went down well in Kansas; so well, in fact that his sermons were credited with stimulating a Ku-Klux Klan revival. There were some "Brinkley crosses" burned on the gentle limestone hills of Kansas. There was at least one convocation of Klanswomen to mobilize the housewives for the Milford soothsayer. And no less a figure than Dr. Gerald B. Winrod, the Kansas Führer, recommended Doctor highly in his magazine, *The Defender*, to "All friends of the Brinkley-Winrod brand of Americanism." The people were urged by Winrod to gather together to hear Brinkley and then at the close to pray for their country.

Looking back on Brinkley as a phenomenon, one may observe that Doctor developed new methods of reaching the men as they gossiped around the stove in crossroads stores. The women heard "the sweet tones and distorted logic of the Brinkley voice" as they washed the dishes or churned the cream. A concourse of habitual nonvoters rose up and cast an unaccustomed ballot for the really sincere guy in the rubber-tired spectacles.

Shorn of his radio and medical licenses in Kansas, his dream of recouping through political leverage gone, Doc reached the correct conclusion that it was no longer gland time in Kansas. Once more the surgeon reaped the benefits of long-range planning. He already had his Mexican radio station going, on which he had broadcast by remote control during the first Kansas campaign. The Mexican permit for XER had come through, good for a period of five years. The document was signed by General Juan Alamazan, Minister of Communications, and carried the great seal of the Mexican State Department. The XER permit represented a high moment in the history of free speech, Doctor

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told a cheering crowd at Wheaton, Kansas. During the rugged autumn of '32 he had, indeed, had the consolation of knowing that the understanding and hospitable Mexicans, assisted no doubt by substantial amounts of cumshaw, had allowed XER to boost its power to 500,000 watts. That made it the world's most powerful broadcasting station. With its right to an input of a half-million watts all signed, sealed and delivered, the new radio powerhouse had enough juice to blanket any United States or Canadian station operating on channels within fifty kilocycles of its wave length. While they were at it, the Mexicans allotted the late Kansas broadcaster an extra wave length. Milford's sun was definitely setting; Del Rio's was on the rise, as Dr. Brinkley carefully arranged his mantle above his well-shod feet and turned to "fresh woods and pastures new."

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Goat Glands on the Rio Grande

Most striking of all Dr. John R. Brinkley's fancy didos was his scheme to pipe his voice by remote control to a foreign land, get his mail in Texas, and keep his hospital humming in Kansas. As he saw it, nothing, really, would change. The new Mexican station, he figured, would easily inherit his enormous audience. There would simply be, via the radio dial, a march of the red-necks to the state where a governor could be elected on the preposterous slogan, "Pass the Biscuits, Pappy." The Master's Voice would blanket the air with the old persuasiveness, the same intimate, homey way of putting things.

"You people will write to me your symptoms and I will prescribe for you as we did before," Doctor said.

He also had some surgical and medical novelties up his sleeve which he thought would—and did—give his business a real shot in the arm.

Back in January, 1931, Dr. Brinkley had paid an exploratory visit to the proper authorities in Mexico City to discuss the mutual advantages of a radio station concession on their side of the muddy Rio Grande. "For ways that are dark," Bret Harte wrote, there's nothing like "the heathen Chinees." But that was before the Mexicans discovered border radio. If the erection of a broadcasting station was his purpose, they indicated hospitably, Brinkley had come to the right place to make his arrangements.

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Reports filtered back that Doctor would soon open a “very powerful” station at Matamoras, or perhaps it would be at Juarez. As a matter of fact, after three weeks Dr. Brinkley returned to Kansas with an option to build a 50,000-watt station *anywhere* along the Mexican border. Alternatively, he said that he might purchase XED at Reynosa, across the Rio Grande from Brownsville, Texas, provided it could be heard in Kansas.

Meanwhile, the United States Government cleared its throat and raised its voice. It was not an “official” action, but one of friendly avuncular warning to Mexico to look out. J. Reuben Clark, the United States ambassador, called upon General Estrada, the Mexican Foreign Secretary, just to fill him in on the checkered past of the Kansas surgeon who did that operation where he took a part of a goat and put it into a man, and also sold liver medicine over the air to strangers with whose livers he was not well acquainted. The record of the hearing in the case of KFKB Broadcasting Association, Inc., v. Federal Radio Commission was sent to the appropriate Mexican authorities; also the record of the proceedings to revoke Brinkley’s right to practice medicine in Kansas.

Mexico couldn’t have been less interested. For a long time, the Mexicans had wanted to talk to the United States about the desirability of a conference which would allot some international channels to Mexico. But the United States didn’t anticipate trouble from interference, saw no reason to divvy up the precious frequencies with a small country that didn’t need high-powered channels anyway. Radio was changing fast. Perhaps the Federal Radio Commission wasn’t as alert as it should have been. It was swamped by applications in its own bailiwick, involved in a maze of litigation, struggling to keep pace with conflicting demands for new allocations, more power, changes in wave lengths. These matters were coming up at a rate of one hundred to one hundred and fifty a week. In 1930, for example, the commission processed nearly eight thousand applications. Current problems concerned interchanges with Europe, new agreements with Canada.

So—where does Brinkley fit in? “Wait,” as Gene Talmadge

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used to say at his Georgia fish fries when a constituent urged him to pour on the coal, "I'm a-comin' to that, boy." The Secretaría de Comunicaciones in Mexico City was delighted to have, in the person of the stocky, bewhiskered Señor Brinkley, a stick to beat Washington with, and proceeded forthwith to accommodate Doctor without regard for international amity or the radio chaos the permit would bring to remote gringo cities like Atlanta or Chicago. All right, XER would blast the eardrums of the *norteamericanos*—so what?

The coming of XER to Villa Acuna was a Del Rio Chamber of Commerce job. The sharp-eyed secretary of the outfit, A. C. Easterling, saw a tiny news item in a newspaper. It had a Milford date line and said that Brinkley would leave soon in his private plane to inspect Mexican cities for a border radio station. Easterling wrote to Doctor. Brinkley asked about landing his plane. Easterling was happy to say that Del Rio did have a "splendid" flying field; an arrow on the roof of the Roswell Hotel pointed to it. Furthermore, the Presidente of Villa Acuna already had agreed to provide Dr. Brinkley with ten acres of land for his station. The Del Rio Chamber of Commerce would guarantee to get clearance on all permits and concessions. Impressed, Dr. Brinkley came and inspected. The rest is history.

During the last frenzied weeks of KFKB's existence, a singer and banjo player billed as "Cousin Paul" was soliciting money on the radio to buy a "people's station" in Mexico for Dr. Brinkley at a dollar a throw. It would be dedicated to what Doctor described as the great principle of "free speech." A club was organized. The faithful were invited to a picnic at Milford (bring your own lunch). They would see good old KFKB once more, hear Doctor denounce the money power of Wall Street, and read copies of letters of protest over revocation of his radio license.

Unfortunately, many donors sent their money to Milford although they had been cautioned not to. Thus the uprising of indignant people ran afoul of the Kansas "blue sky" laws, governing questionable stock-promotion schemes. Ultimately, Brinkley had

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to return the money. Meanwhile, Doc had been carrying on a hedging operation. Negotiations had quietly been pushed for the sale of KFKB and contracts had been signed with an insurance company to sell for a price of \$95,000. This gave Doc the money to start on the construction of XER. But money never was his problem anyway. When he was ordering the gigantic radio tubes for his new station, Doctor asked a radio-engineering firm what they would cost. "Thirty-six thousand dollars," the engineers said.

Brinkley reached into his pants pocket for his bank roll, peeled off thirty-six thousand-dollar bills and handed them over, with the admonition that the engineers should get the tubes to him as soon as possible.

Thus Dr. Brinkley was able to announce triumphantly in early October that he was building a 50,000-watt station at Villa Acuna, across the Rio Grande from Del Rio, Texas. It required fourteen pages of typewriting to state all of the provisions. The general intent was that the Villa Acuna Broadcasting Company could do anything—even start a revolution if it wanted to. The trick was that Brinkley would simply telephone the "lecture" from the old Milford studio, or a hotel room in Del Rio. It was, as Doctor pointed out, "merely a telephone conversation in the United States." Doctor planned to open the station formally on October twenty-first. There would be a big fiesta on both sides of the border, hands across the Rio Grande and all that, special trains run in from Kansas.

But first the new station had to be operated on an experimental basis. One night Doc Brinkley piled in the juice until he had perhaps 100,000 watts or more. That was just twice the permitted power of the mightiest legal transmitter this side of the Rio Grande.

A building was erected for XER in the Spanish style and the highway from Villa Acuna to the studio was nicely graveled and oiled. As the station began to send out test broadcasts, there was a hitch. *Las transmisiones*, done in English, by American employees, suddenly struck the Mexican patriots as Yankee imperialistic propaganda; and the American ownership of the big

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transmitter was plainly contrary to the nationalistic program of Mexico. Protests reached Governor Naario Ortiz Garza of Coahuila. For a while it looked as though Mexico didn't want the goat-gland station either. Doc Brinkley found himself mysteriously barred from crossing the International Bridge to visit his own property.

"They believed that if they kept me out of Mexico, I would be unable to talk over my own station."

The good doctor fooled them. When XER went on the air, Brinkley's familiar voice shouted a triumphant greeting to his friends all over the Middle West. Nothing more could be done to gag him. He was sitting in a hotel room in Del Rio, Texas, obeying all the laws, technically, at least, and well beyond the reach of the Coahuila gendarmes. More sweetener was applied, and Brinkley obligingly shifted the stock ownership of the Villa Acuna Broadcasting Company to nominal Mexican ownership, by "bearer" certificates, which the holders privately assigned back to Dr. Brinkley. Mrs. Esther O. de Crosby, proprietress of a Villa Acuna café was president of XER. The board of directors and officers included the Mexican consul in Del Rio, the state senator of Coahuila, and the mayor of the town. The Mexican Department of Communications thought some more and decided that XER belonged to a group composed entirely of Mexicans, that its erection was strictly in compliance with the law, that it was run legally and in accordance with all regulations in force, and that it did not interfere with United States stations. They noted that any person could use it for "business, scientific, cultural or literary broadcasting." Besides, they said, *sotto voce*, the station broadcasts in English, not Spanish, so it couldn't possibly harm the Mexican public. If XER should broadcast medical propaganda, it would be up to the Department of Health, not the Department of Communications, to do something about it.

"Mexican officials were apparently little interested in fusses originating in the United States," Doc Brinkley commented, for he had "been shown every courtesy and consideration."

"The Spanish-speaking races," said the *Del Rio Evening News*, "have joined the doctor's radio audience."

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That is, if they understood English.

It is perfectly true that the situation, satisfactory in the main, did leave Dr. Brinkley exposed to such recurring small emergencies as the Mexicans might create from time to time. The native officials knew how to make things difficult when they wanted to. Some wiseacres ventured the opinion that Doctor had been taken. But tell it not on the streets of Villa Acuna, tell it not in Del Rio. There the concensus was "he is too big for them—he is the smoothest businessman we have ever seen."

XER broadcast at 735 kc, spang in the middle of the ten-cycle separation customary for stations operating on adjacent wave lengths in the United States and Canada. Any modern superheterodyne would bring in XER, right between WSB, Atlanta, and CKAC, Montreal, only two and a half channels distant from WJR, Detroit. Even WGN in Chicago felt the interference of XER's powerful wave. XER quickly made for Doctor many new friends and a whole flock of enemies, whose kindest characterization of his new venture in mass communications was to call it a "radio behemoth." The average comment in the United States ran more to describing XER as "Mexico's radio outlaw" or a "bootlegger of the air." These epithets were painful to Doctor. Once more he saw evidences of dark conspiracies as the *Journal of the American Medical Association* editorialized that United States radio was in danger of being dominated by "the lamenting and feeble baa-baa of the castrated goat." But engineers looked at each other and agreed that if XER ever deviated, it would be murder.

Dr. Brinkley was highly indignant over the diplomatic representations which were made by the United States State Department at the Mexican Ministry of Communications.

"Believing that my personal business has been interfered with by the present administration in Washington," Dr. Brinkley declared, "I have asked my supporters in Kansas to withdraw their support from President Hoover."

Some news reports credited XER with a power of 350,000 watts. Others raised the figures to a cool half million. As a matter of fact, a year later Brinkley did get the wattage up to 500,000.

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So, while Milford worried and sulked, Del Rio reveled in nationwide publicity “such as the heart of the wool and mohair belt of Texas borderland seldom receives.” *The New York Times* wanted to know more about Del Rio, the *Chicago Tribune*, too, and *The Kansas City Star*. Sunday editors needed photos of the 300-foot towers of XER and scenes along what the Chamber of Commerce called “the colorful and romantic Rio Grande River.” It was all, the *Del Rio Evening News* said happily, “page-one advertising.”

Del Rio was located in semi-arid Val Verde County—mesquite and jack-rabbit country, with a good dove season. The town was known chiefly as a collection point for wool and the hair of the Angora goat. The ranchers were not excited by the advent of Dr. Brinkley. They had a feudal point of view that land and stock were what counted. Their only possible concern with Brinkley revolved around the speculation: Would Doctor’s plane bother the sheep? But the Chamber of Commerce was excited by a development which would bring in a corps of doctors, radio engineers, hospital help, and an influx of tourists, visitors and prostate cases, all of whom could be expected to speed up the horizontal exchange of money in the “Wool and Mohair Capital of the United States.”

By the time XER had established an office in the Roswell Hotel, Dr. Brinkley had begun to talk the Texas lingo like a native son. The giant transmitter was referred to as the “Queen of the Air” and since its purpose was, as Doctor put it with his usual fluency, to spread sunshine between nations (leaving out that Sunday night when XER barreled into Washington on 655 kc, off the reservation by about a hundred kc or so), it became, naturally, “The Sunshine Station Between the Nations.” But Doctor was not yet a fully assimilated Texan. He kept his Kansas contacts fresh and in good working order, fed material to be printed in the Kansas-edited magazine, *Publicity*. Under Editor E. J. Garner, *Publicity* encouraged the Brinkley clubs to continue to look to Doctor as a political savior.

“It is hard to forgive and forget,” Doc remarked, looking

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back at some of the skulduggery of the last gubernatorial election, "but that is what I am going to try to do. That is one of the great policies of conduct promulgated by Our Master. Of course there is a limit . . . we should not forget what was done to the money changers in the Temple."

As the residents of the little border city registered all spare bedrooms for the jubilee, the local newspaper broke out pictures and stories of the Brinkley domestic background: "Wife and Scion of Dr. John R. Brinkley, Kansas Specialist and Political Power." Doctor's life struggles, an authorized version, were spread all over the forward pages of the paper. Flags lined the streets. A new hangar was built at the Del Rio flying field, and the city cleared off some of the mesquite nearby.

Kansas visitors who arrived in Del Rio for the festivities on a share-expense motor trip would find all their old friends from KFKB on hand—the Old Timer; the Lonesome Cowboy; Mel Roy, the mentalist, his Austin and his police dog; the Red Peppers; Uncle Bob, the champion fiddler of Arkansas; Fenoglio, the accordionist, plus a Mexican soprano and lots and lots of Dr. Brinkley. Del Rio blinked. It was only twelve years since the town had heard its first homemade radio set, the coils of copper wire wound around oatmeal cartons, the speaker an old phonograph horn. It had been made by Rufus Sterling and people drove by and parked their cars at the corner of Gibbs Street and Avenue E, just to listen.

"Welcome" advertisements of greeting and felicitation to XER and Doctor bulked out a special twenty-four-page issue of the *Del Rio Evening News*. Villa Acuna interests also saluted the "Queen of the Air,"—the Toltec Café, Mrs. Crosby's nitery, a customs broker.

The Princess Theatre featured the four Marx Brothers in "Monkey Business" during XER Gala Week. But it is doubtful if the movie comics unrolled any more frolicsome monkey business than was hinted at in a story in the *Del Rio Evening News*: "The faithful co-operation rendered by the Republic of Mexico in connection with the preliminary concession and construction

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of radio station XER in Villa Acuna has on several occasions drawn sincere expressions of gratitude from Dr. J. R. Brinkley.”

On the evening of the first day of “XER Gala Week,” Dr. and Mrs. Brinkley were the honored guests of the Chamber of Commerce (one dollar a plate, which included admission to the dance at the San Felipe Country Club). Doc didn’t make it to the banquet, nor was he able to begin broadcasting that night what Gustavo Serrano, Secretary of the Mexican Department of Communications, regarded as “scientific information.” Doctor’s plane was forced down at Ranger, Texas. But Mrs. Brinkley spoke briefly, and Mrs. Lillian Jones Munal, her sister, did a ballet dance. A tenor sang. So, with brief remarks, good music and divertissements, nobody missed the speeches.

Harsh and defiant, the mighty wave of XER washed far and wide over the western hemisphere on crisp October evenings in 1931, jamming Amos ’n’ Andy, brushing aside Charlie McCarthy. The station sold Mexican curios, pecan candy, opals and other national products; later branched out into magic, dream books and fortunetelling, while Dr. Brinkley, the long-distance diagnostician, sang the song of the prostate gland and his skill in its reduction. Four times a day, Doc read heart-rending letters. He was a wholesaler. He treated one case, but it fitted a thousand. If there was a sick person between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains who wasn’t listening in to Doc, it was because he had no radio set. And, often, Brinkley’s routine could be caught in the eastern part of the United States.

“His signal came in quite dependably here in Manhattan,” Robert J. Landry, managing editor of *Variety*, remembers.

Typically, a Dr. Brinkley program would open up somewhat like this: first came an announcement of the correct time and then station identification: “XER, the Sunshine Station Between the Nations, at Villa Acuna, Coahuila, Republic of Mexico.”

Then the announcer would say: “Ladies and gentlemen; we have just heard that beautiful music ‘Little Star,’ sung by Mexico’s Nightingale, Miss Rosa Dominguez, accompanied by our Classic Quintette, Theme Song of Doctor J. R. Brinkley, of Mil-

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ford, Kansas, helper of mankind, who addresses you at this time each day from the Hudson Gardens—another garden, a man and a wife distributing fruits from the tree of life. (CONG SOUNDS) 6:47 P.M.”

And then came the magisterial voice of Dr. Brinkley: “Greetings to my friends in Kansas and everywhere; you are listening to Doctor J. R. Brinkley, of Milford, Kansas, speaking to you. . . . Here I take up a letter from a gentleman in Waco, Texas, and I hope they are hearing me because this gentleman is President of that company up there in Waco—a corporation; he has hemorrhoids. . . . Here is a letter from Duluth, Minnesota. . . . This gentleman should send twenty-five cents to The Brinkley Hospital and ask for our ‘Blue Book,’ and find out about the prostate, and he should also read *The Story of Paw and Maw!* He is now about on his last legs—this gentleman—unless—(static); if he has his prostate removed, it would kill him because his kidneys are in bad shape and his heart is in bad shape. . . .”

And then there was a Mrs. Hines in Wichita, Kansas, with whom Doctor was frankly annoyed because she couldn’t stick to her diet: “. . . what she needs is the Women’s tonic and the Constipation and Kidney Medicine, and I almost feel like spanking her like I would a great big kid if she don’t go on a diet. . . . Next letter is from Union, Missouri; he is badly constipated; he don’t know whether his eyes need a pair of glasses or not. . . .”

Dr. Brinkley understood the patients’ desire to talk; also that their encomiums would later prevent their spreading unfavorable reports. Meanwhile, the testimonialists, like the Judas sheep at the stockyards, led new prospects to Brinkley. An elderly listener would sink into his easy chair beside his radio, a good insurance risk. By the time he heard Doc’s pleasant “Good night” he was a doddering old wreck.

For a couple of years, Dr. Brinkley maintained a residence in Del Rio, occupying it on his flying visits to the city. Then came the stunning news that the Brinkley Sanitarium would be moved to Del Rio, with a retinue of some forty persons arriving about

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November 1, 1933—staff surgeons, nurses, furniture, equipment—the works, bag, baggage and drugstore.

“Tell those folks that Dr. Brinkley states he has a purchasing agreement for Del Rio property and that his staff will occupy it November first,” Doctor announced as he stepped from his plane. “It becomes necessary to reduce expense in the conduct of my business. . . .”

The news that the gland specialist and stormy petrel of politics was to shake the dust of Kansas from his feet was greeted with unrestrained enthusiasm by Del Rio and by the political sachems in Kansas. The feelings of the physicians of Texas were perhaps adequately expressed in the words of Dr. T. J. Crowe: “We want to know what we can do to get him out.”

“I have never been a man to take my troubles to other people,” Brinkley once said of himself. But he went into a good deal of detail about the move to Texas. For one thing, the cost of piping the Brinkley voice from Kansas to Mexico was about ten thousand dollars a month. With a depression on, and the times being what they were, Doctor thought that was too much.

“Mrs. Brinkley, Johnny Boy, and I are down here in Del Rio, Texas, because we were too poor to longer pay the telephone-line charge from Milford to Mexico, and live in Milford.”

While the Brinkleys were trying to make an honest dollar in borderland, two doctors employed at the Milford “San” decamped with files, prospect lists and Doc Brinkley’s secretary. They set up on their own, offering the same scheme at a cheaper price, first at Rosalia, Kansas, and later right under Brinkley’s nose at Milford. To fifteen thousand of his friends, Dr. Brinkley wrote indignantly:

“If your heart goes out in sympathy to we two mortals who have suffered so much abuse and lost almost everything because we have dared to do something for suffering humanity—then I know your sense of loyalty will cause you to support Dr. and Mrs. Brinkley and not those who have abused our confidence.”

When Dr. Brinkley spoke of having lost almost everything, he must have been speaking impulsively, surely in a moment of

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discouragement and without counting. With his paranoid drive, he found it unendurable that other men should reap a reward from the magic name of Milford. In his fury, Doctor razed every evidence of the Brinkley empire in Milford; even his own home fell before the bulldozers. Only a small brick building stands today, a part of station KFKB, amid trees, weeds, plowed land, weed-grown sidewalks and tumbled gateposts.

Dr. Brinkley's bitterness toward the "fellows who worked for me taking my goat glands" spilled over into complaints against the town, too:

"If they wanted a new preacher or a new carpet or a new coat of paint on the church, let the Brinkleys pay for it. The preacher's salary had to be paid by the Brinkleys if he received it. If any street lights were to be put in, let Brinkley put them in. If any streets were to be paved, let Brinkley pave them. . . . Let Brinkley support everybody and operate on everybody free. . . . When I came to Milford they did not have anything. Now Milford is a modern town, fit to live in because Doctor Brinkley and Mrs. Brinkley have lived there."

Perhaps there were elements of truth in all the explanations Brinkley gave of the departure from Kansas; to which may be added the supposition that he knew that sooner or later United States radio law would catch up with his remote-control scheme. In early October, 1933, the Brinkley furniture was loaded into big vans, the equipment from the hospital, too, and a caravan of some thirty families, together with the souvenir of Doc's political aspirations, Ammunition Train No. 1, went thataway—to Texas. Dr. Brinkley and family and the cash on hand left Milford for Del Rio by plane. Mrs. Brinkley had custody of the money. Some \$54,000 was moved to Del Rio through regular banking channels. An item of \$20,000 went into a yacht. There remained \$80,000 in bills. Mrs. Brinkley carried them in the plane with her and kept them around the house for incidental expenses. The money was part of an estate estimated to be worth over \$187,000. Her auditor added that this did not include \$100,000 worth of buildings. The nearly two hundred thousand dollars was just, as he

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put it, testifying at Del Rio, "what she landed here with, so to speak."

None of these figures included Mrs. Brinkley's lumber company, mink coats, diamond tiara, her Anaconda Copper Company stock, and "a few other little stocks that I can't recall"—it's Doctor speaking—"different little pieces of real estate . . . and she may have a little cash on hand."

There was another item. Early in 1933 the Brinkleys became worried about the future value of their money.

"Roosevelt was devaluing the dollar at the time," explained Dr. Brinkley. "Mrs. Brinkley withdrew money from the bank and added it to her \$80,000 to make it an even \$100,000.

"That night we kept the cash under special guard at the Del Rio National Bank. The next day our plane pilot took the \$100,000 and flew it to Canada." . . . The money stayed in the Royal Bank of Canada at Sault Ste. Marie until 1935 brought calmer times, and then Mrs. Brinkley repatriated the money. So, there was something salvaged after all out of the years of Dr. Brinkley's slaving for sick folks up in Kansas; a "nut," in carnival-show language, for the new start in a promising location. The actual ownership of this money later became the occasion for an exciting game of legal cops and robbers in the District Court of the Western District of Texas, Bankruptcy Division, to which Doctor, with the best will in the world, was not able to contribute much solid information. Some of the money, he told the eager creditors, was "really her own." But, "Mrs. Brinkley and I have never counted pennies, swapped dollars, you know, or said 'This is yours and this is mine.'"

Gloom hung over Milford as the Brinkley motorcade rolled toward the Rio Grande, and the wreckers applied pick and crowbar to the town's chief taxables, to turn them into large piles of splintered wood, garnished with doors, window frames, washbasins, lighting fixtures and sinks. A community entirely dependent upon the Brinkley "San" realized with resentment that the wholesale wreckage had been planned deliberately by Brinkley to keep anyone from conducting another hospital there. A

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large "Brinkley for Governor" campaign poster opposite the hospital site was smeared with yellow paint. Indignation probably reached its peak on a Saturday night when citizens of the town that once wanted to change its name to "Brinkley" took chisels and cut the name of Brinkley off the front of Doctor's old drug-store.

In Del Rio, Dr. Brinkley leased a substantial portion of the Roswell Hotel. He established his offices and reception facilities on the mezzanine floor, where Don Howard's office is now. There old couples sat like frightened buzzards, regarding Doctor wistfully as he brushed past during his busy day. Doc was the aloof type. He liked to be admired and revered—no one more so; but at a safe distance, and under controlled conditions. He resembled a cat in that respect. Mrs. Brinkley, as receptionist, shook their hands and asked how they were and suggested that they take a walk while they awaited their turn. The old-timers—from Evening Shade, Arkansas; Beulah, North Dakota; Hamlet, Indiana; and Cash, Arkansas—appreciated Mrs. Brinkley's "mothering" and shuffled gratefully out into the hot sunshine, moved hesitantly along Garfield Avenue, clustering on South Main and Loyosa Streets. With the old men, the palms, the bright sunshine, it could have been St. Petersburg in Florida—except for the coffee-colored peons draped along the curbs.

It was generally understood that Dr. Brinkley did not do the goat-gland operation after he landed in Del Rio except in special cases. Brinkley said he didn't do it at all. But it is remembered that Doctor once tethered goats on the lawn at his home on South Loop Drive. However, at some time in the year 1933, it appears that Brinkley did abandon his original technique. The goat, whose healthy glands Doctor had celebrated in many a touching strophe, was now revealed in Doctor's literature to be diseased and unsuitable as a donor of tissues peculiarly useful to old men.

"There was a lot of kidding and joking about this gland business," Doctor admitted. "Many patients it was found out in their home community that they had been down to Dr. Brink-

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ley's Hospital and got a pair of glands, lots of men's wives were sensitive to the gland work. . . . It isn't necessary to transplant glands any more, because we have commercial glandular preparations that we can buy on the market and inject to take the place of the glandular transplantation."

It is one of life's little ironies that Brinkley's early rejuvenation publicity had so taken hold of the popular imagination that he was typed until his dying day as the goat-gland man. Doctor still devoted himself to the troublesome male gland, the prostate. And it still cost \$750 to get the prostate reduced. But now Doctor had a new surgical wrinkle. It was a procedure in which the surgeon cut the tube leading from the male sex glands, and squirted a drop of Mercurochrome up the duct. Later there was a still newer model operation in which Dr. Brinkley tied the tube off with a suture on the theory that the result would be an increase in secretion of the male hormone. This operation Doctor called his "Steinach No. 2." Most experts were convinced that its apparent temporary success in some cases was due to the power of suggestion and the fact that Dr. Brinkley filled his patients with an intravenous injection of testosterone. During the two days following the treatment, Brinkley's customers voided the Mercurochrome, deeply impressed. A man knew then that something big and scientific had happened to him. But "All of Brinkley's patients," a Del Rio physician conceded recently, remembering the old rowdy days in Del Rio, "insisted that they had more libido after the operation."

Doctor even made a sporting proposition out of the new treatment. Those patients who came to the hospital at a specified time and had their prostate reduced were divided into groups of ten. The one who wrote the best postoperative letter, completing the sentence, "I consider Dr. Brinkley the world's foremost prostate specialist because . . ." would receive a certificate with a red seal on it, "like a notary." The XER announcer, Don Howard, would read the letter over the air, and the lucky winner would be given an Oldsmobile car free.

Dr. Brinkley dropped the goat-gland surgery with something like a dull thud.

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“The operation and treatment that I am now giving is no more like the one given in Kansas than the day is liken unto night,” he declared. And nobody but nobody was going to deal himself in on this one. “Realizing that I had made wonderful discoveries which I felt I should keep for the benefit of Mrs. Brinkley and Johnny Boy, I decided to discontinue the use of the other doctors. . . . My confidence had been so grossly betrayed . . . that I decided to never again allow any physician to know my new discoveries.”

Who, but Brinkley, would have had the boldness to hit the customers again after they had had his ministrations in the hotel operating room? But for one hundred dollars Doctor gave them his Formula Number 1020, so called because the ampules held 20 cc's and because the medication (hydrochloric acid in water) was in proportions of one to a thousand; hence 1-0-2-0. Formula Number 1020 was odorless, tasteless, and came in various colors, red, pink, and the pretty blue of methaline. It was the extra “touch” familiar to all new car buyers—like the porcelainizing job, the radio, the undercoating. The ampules cost Doctor 18 cents each, in quantity. Formula Number 1020 was essentially water. Del Rio city water to which Doctor added a dash of indigo dye would do nicely—water and bluing at one hundred dollars for six small bottles.

The *Journal of the American Medical Association*, reporting on the composition of Formula Number 1020, admitted that Dr. Brinkley was tops in his field.

“Centuries to come,” it said editorially, “may never produce again such blatancy, such fertility of imagination or such ego.”

Eager to recoup from his Kansas reverses, Dr. Brinkley stepped up the pace of his special offers: “Guaranteed Prostate Treatment for January for only \$250.00” was followed by similar “news you have been waiting for” in February, March, April and May; likewise June, July and August. Hurry, hurry, the letters said. Don't stop to write—wire. Come directly to the Roswell Hotel. Go to the mezzanine floor and register at the Brinkley desk, with Mrs. Brinkley or her sister, Mrs. Munal. The telephone number was Del Rio 74.

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The most popular operation, for the masses as well as the classes, was known as the AVERAGE MAN'S TREATMENT. It was not necessarily given by Dr. Brinkley personally. There was also a de luxe version called THE BUSINESS MAN'S TREATMENT. This one definitely secured the personal services of Dr. Brinkley, with a lifetime guarantee, the privilege of writing to Doctor and getting an answer, of coming back for a recheck. And you could have your urine examined every six months FREE. This operation was a combination of medical and surgical procedures, worth fifteen hundred dollars, but the two together could be had by tired businessmen, suffering from loss of pep and coated tongue, for one grand. This model was for men who pride themselves on owning "the finest automobiles, the finest homes, the best horses, best diamonds, best works of art."

There was a good deal of self-revelation in that last stanza! As a humanitarian gesture, Brinkley also stocked the POOR FOLKS' TREATMENT, consisting of the examination and intravenous injection only; no cutting included. The poor folks could board out in town for a dollar a day. If that was too expensive, there was still another deal: send your symptoms and two dollars for Dr. Brinkley's written opinion of your condition. Or, send Brinkley three dollars for a "medicated container," collect a twenty-four hour urine sample and mail it to Del Rio for a complete chemical examination. Doctor called it a "kimmical examination." Or, send for Clement Wood's 332-page clothbound book about Dr. Brinkley's early struggles, and later troubles for only one dollar. Send thirty-five cents for *Dr. Brinkley's Doctor Book*, and get with it a free copy of Doc's lecture on cancer of the prostate. Remember, *your* prostate was once normal. Usually voluble and explicit, Doctor seemed sometimes to be overwhelmed by the problems of communication between man and man. Once he said, rather plaintively, "I don't know how to talk to you any plainer than I do."

Doc told how to get to Del Rio by all forms of existing transportation, how to bring the money, and reminded his patrons to beware of pickpockets. For those who lacked either cash or a

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checking account on which Brinkley could wire, the business office would take the family jewels at a conservative appraisal, or slap a mortgage on the old home place. So efficient was the department of the hospital charged with credits and collections that some patients are known to have found themselves actually stranded in Del Rio. A part of the appeal of the Brinkley "San" lay in the idea that going to see Brinkley was a kind of Southern vacation. Doctor was quite a hand for the chamber-of-commerce talk. Del Rio was located "where Summer Spends the Winter." There the "latchstring" was always out in good old Southern fashion. Dr. Brinkley made a quick and successful adjustment to the land of the purple sage and the outsize demitasse cup, where everybody, it seemed, had a little ole oil well of his own.

"This is Dr. John R. Brinkley, of Del Rio, Texas, speaking to you from my home and hope you are having the lovely weather that we have in Del Rio. Just wish you people in the frozen North could see the trees with green leaves, the roses and other flowers in bloom. . . . We have three hundred and fifty rosebushes and will have two lovely fountains with colored lights through them, showing all the colors of the rainbow . . . when you arrive in Del Rio, come directly to the Roswell Hotel."

Tempting diversions were placed before Doctor's prospects. They would want to see the famous San Felipe Springs, the Quemado Valley, where the cauliflowers grow madly. They could see Old Mexico at no charge except the fifteen-cent bridge fare, walk around shady Hidalgo Park with the bandstand in the center, revel in the sights of quaint Villa Acuna, including the two quaint steel towers of XER, backed up by a third directional antenna offset toward the south to make sure that the radio wave shot north.

Perhaps, Brinkley's literature hinted, you'll find an opportunity to invest your money in Del Rio and decide to stay in the "Queen City of the Rio Grande." In any event, there would be an interesting time socially. On Wednesday afternoons, the Chamber of Commerce entertained Brinkley's patrons and their friends. On the sixth day after your operation, you and your

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lady would be entertained by Judge and Mrs. John J. Foster in their handsome Italian-style residence in the beautiful Hudson Gardens section. On Tuesdays, Mrs. Foster held a ladies' day reception.

There was a somewhat enigmatic promise that the Brinkley country home with its colored fountains and unusual landscaping "will be something that you will long remember." It was not spelled out clearly whether the ligation of the vas deferens and the IICL injections in various colors included the privilege of seeing the inside, or only the outside, of Doctor's estate.

Meanwhile, the Brinkley literature urgently invited you to come—*come*.

Dr. Brinkley's Hospital brought an eye-popping twenty-thousand-dollar-a-month payroll to the little city of twelve thousand people, larger receipts for the United States post office. Brinkley's presence was worth a thousand dollars a month at one department store. Hotels, rooming houses, tourist camps filled up. When big money comes to a small town, it is bound to make a splash. Doctor needed automobiles and insurance and banking facilities. He had risk capital to invest. He represented more news and advertisements for the local newspaper, more photographic work for the H. Lippe Studio. Doc's compulsion to go to law—"litigious paranoia" is a recognized disease—meant work for local attorneys.

The unsung benefactions of Dr. Brinkley were said to be numerous. Some of those which were adequately sung included the Shriners' Crippled Children's Home in Kansas, Father Flanagan's Boys' Town. Coming nearer home, Doctor offered to match dollar for dollar all donations the Del Rio Rotary Club would make to its student loan fund. At a single luncheon, when the members raised eight hundred dollars, Doctor good-naturedly anted up a similar amount. Both Del Rio and Villa Acuna learned they could count on Christmas baskets and a free Christmas tree from Doctor, who also provided uniforms for the Villa Acuna police.

Society and business alike were exhilarated by the addition

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of this remarkable man who could occupy the pulpit of the Methodist Episcopal Church on Layman's Day with all the unction of a man who had been anointed by a bishop, and dicker on Monday with the management of the Hotel Roswell to put up a sign "Brinkley Hospital" which would make it appear as though the whole building was the hospital. For a Southerner born and bred, Brinkley was, they vowed, enough to beat the Yankees. Everybody soon knew the Brinkleys and Johnny Boy, with his body-guard and confidant, Joe E. O'Toole, and the Brinkley chow dog, Rex.

As XER, the radio "Queen" of the gun and gallop country, gradually increased its input of wattage, its transmitter had power enough, wrote Robert J. Casey, of *The Chicago Daily News*, "to light the street lights in Calgary." Dr. Brinkley had made a real discovery in radio. He learned that beyond the primary listening area of XER, there was a vast, although thinly spread, audience of chump listeners. American radio, by contrast, catered to a concentrated, primary audience. A United States station located, say, in Texas, did not expect to pull business from the state of Washington. But Doc's big Mex station was out to grab the bucks from a far-flung rube audience which would like to help the Reverend Dr. Sam Morris bring back Prohibition, get thirty-five to fifty miles on a gallon of gas, buy some stock in a gold mine. XER ferreted out the people who were eager to send in a dollar to what one humorist called "Dollar Rio, Texas" for a diploma to hang their walls, people who wanted the secrets of handwriting made plain to them, or needed hot tips on how to hold the affections of their sweethearts.

The border station with the big muscles was distinctly come-on. It attracted a raffish mob of advertisers who purchased the time Dr. Brinkley did not need. All the tricks of the side show and midway were on display over XER, and on a national scale. The Golden Circle Coffee Co. of Kansas City operated an endless-chain sales plan. A mentalist, who had come down from KFKB, known in the trade as a "spooker," had a book for a buck. He was succeeded by Koran, an old-time carnival crystal-gazer,

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who headed an occult mystic circle known as the Mayan Order. Koran wore sideburns, favored a goatee and printed his literature in brown ink on beige paper. XER also offered an East Indian yogi, who dealt with spiritualistic phenomena. There was a hymnbook and family register deal, with a picture of the Last Supper thrown in. Peruna worked the box-top angle, and Sinose was, of course, for sinus. Sound effects of cheeping heralded an interminable commercial for Carter's Champion Chicks. And every so often a Mexican voice said something about Mexico, just to keep up appearances.

A fruity bass sang gospel songs, and Evangelist Eugene F. Smith recited religious poetry as a build-up for *his* book about the Second Coming—"a month from now may be too late." Sterling Insurance spiced the evening hours with "I Wish That I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate" and sold penny-a-day burial insurance. The underlying idea was to write to a Del Rio post-office-box number and send your dollar.

The evening broadcast of Dr. Brinkley was preceded by a novelty as unique in its way as Doctor's own performance. It was the half-hour program of a blondined uplifter called Rose Dawn, who did horoscopes, pitched perfume, sold a book on how to make your personality flower. Rose Dawn would also pray for a listener for one dollar. A real pro, she watched her ratings like a hawk. Once a woman wanted to see the prayer shrine where the work was done. Rose was almost caught flat. But she was resourceful and quick, took the listener to the local Baptist Church and said, in substance, "This is where."

Rose Dawn worked out an astrological plot for Dr. Brinkley every month, which indicated that the people might yet send their medical servant to the White House. Brinkley accepted the fantasies of the Patroness of the Order of Maya solemnly as modern instances of the prophetic gifts of old. Rose was a familiar and unforgettable figure as she rolled through the streets of Del Rio in an orchid-colored automobile with cerise upholstery, green wheels and green steering wheel.

XER featured a parson who explained that he was against

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the Jews because they owned the booze. "The Singing Cowboy" thumped, twanged and sang "The Song of Sam Bass":

*"Sam Bass he came from Indianapolis
Or maybe it was Fort Wayne . . ."*

On Sundays and holidays Doctor provided a religious or inspirational program. His weekday broadcasts were more secular.

"Can men be reactivated?" a dulcet feminine voice asked significantly. Then a virile male chimed in, "Write to the Brinkley Hospitals for Dr. Brinkley's Book." This duo was followed by a torch singer called "The Girl Friend." And then it was gland time. Dr. Brinkley would explain that he could not be entirely comprehensive over the air on the subject of prostatitis. But he, too, had a book, and 90 per cent of all males, it seemed, had the enlarged organ which, if cancerous, ate out the bone marrow and led to an agonizing end. The book classified thirty-eight symptoms associated with the derelictions of this "robber gland." Doctor could pulverize with the scare stuff. Before having your prostate removed, he suggested, go to your local undertaker. Ask him the death rate from prostate operations. Then look at the tombstones in the graveyard. *Cancer of the prostate is on the increase.*

A North American Radio Conference was held at the City of Mexico in July, 1933, for the reallocation of wave lengths. Brinkley was an obvious target. The Conference was a brilliant failure. Charley Curtis, the former Vice President of the United States, rushed off to Mexico as Brinkley's fixer. There, possibly under the misapprehension that Mr. Curtis was still in office, President Rodriguez gave him a formal audience and he was feted by the Foreign Minister. At the conference, the Mexicans decided to stick with Curtis, Brinkley and the goat glands.

But early in the following year the Mexicans did an about-face. The Mexican Department of Communications got worried about whether Dr. Brinkley was really a doctor, whether he was properly registered in Mexico, whether he was complying with Mexican law governing medical advertisements, whether he had a

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special permit to broadcast by remote control in English. Daily fines were assessed against XER, amounting eventually to six hundred thousand pesos; more, according to Brinkley, than the station was worth.

After Dr. Brinkley had ignored the fines and two court orders, the license of the big, friendly station which claimed 27 per cent of the listening audience in the United States, was revoked. Mexican soldiers in Villa Acuna refused to obey orders from the central government to confiscate the station—perhaps Dr. Brinkley had bought them their uniforms—but federal troops moved in from Monclova and the situation tensed. Brinkley at last complied with the order to close down. He said he did it to spare Villa Acuna the ravages of war.

“The Mexican people will suffer,” Doctor mourned, as the station was sealed up and guarded by the Mexican soldiery.

Dr. Brinkley laid this “interference” to underhanded work by WGN, Chicago, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the chairman of the American radio commission. Doctor’s difficulties with the Federal Radio Commission were transferred to the newly constituted Federal Communications Commission by the Communications Act of 1934. But the troubles remained the same.

Brinkley was inconvenienced, but not silenced, while the XER affair was being adjusted. His voice was soon heard on XEPN at Piedras Negras, across the River from Eagle Pass, and from stations in Kansas, Missouri, Colorado, South Dakota and Iowa.

One fine morning Dr. Brinkley smiled, crossed his legs and leaned back in his chair at the breakfast table with his half-emptied coffee cup in his hand. A dreamy, happy look crossed his face as he allowed how, if Mexico definitely forced him to shut up shop, he might put out to sea in his own radio houseboat to carry on his educational work. He had recently bought a 150-foot yacht, one of the most luxurious in the United States. It was the *Shadow K*, formerly owned by Carl G. Fisher. It was now in drydock at Miami, Florida, for refitting and christening as *Dr. Brinkley II*. The radio transmitter could get its punch from the

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yacht's engines and the resourceful Doctor could undoubtedly find plenty of countries which would sell him an air wave. He could shoot into the United States from Lake Huron or the Gulf of Mexico or some nice vacation spot in the Caribbean.

This widely reported *démarche* was never carried out. The fall of 1935 brought the news that mighty XER was back again with the new call letters of XERA, under the ownership of a new corporation, the Cia Mexicana Radiofusoria Frontieriza, S.A.; "Something like that," Doctor said. "I can't pronounce it." The company was equipped with a full set of Mexican officers and managed by two knowledgeable gentlemen, Ramon Vasques and Walter Wilson, brother of Dr. Brinkley's muscular Howard Wilson. The station's rated wattage was 500,000 but a third tower set to the south as a directional antenna, gave the effect of a million watts beamed to the north. The big, brash station snuggled in between KOA, Denver, and WWL, New Orleans. The fines levied against XER were never paid, and Doctor got a passport. There had been a change of government in Mexico.

Or, as Doctor said, leaning back, "We were able to contact parties interested in our obtaining justice."

It was a veritable "merricle" and Dr. Brinkley must have got a honk out of it. Once more the Thunderer came muscling in on the air lanes, playing hob with reception, causing fading, trembling, squawking on American stations raided by XERA. There was plenty of excitement in the early hours on the American broadcast band, with the rupture cures, electric bow ties, grave-stone bargains and divine healers, selling blessed and anointed cloths to apply to the place where it hurt—anointed in the mail-room! The spooks were back, advising people to leave their husbands or wives, take music lessons, sell their businesses, buy oil leases. The letters from "Anxious" and "Puzzled" were subcontracted out for answers at five cents each. Doctor, of course, resumed his talkathon, with such power that when he got off his line about "Stop letting your doctor two-dollar you to death" ("That is a new one," he said), it was commonly reported that this deathless message jumped out of the telephone receivers.

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Increasingly, when airplanes were still unusual, Dr. Brinkley's plane was a familiar sight in the skies of Texas, flying continuous missions of mercy and prudence—to pick up a well-heeled patient for the Brinkley Hospital. And often and often, when any silver shape appeared overhead, say, at Lubbock, a saucy daughter would cock an eye skyward and say, "Pa, that's Dr. Brinkley coming for you!"

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It has been indicated that Dr. and/or Mrs. Minnie T. Brinkley was or were pretty well fixed when they arrived in Del Rio. Between October 15, 1933, and January 1, 1938—four and a quarter years—Doc Brinkley entertained somewhere in the neighborhood of sixteen thousand patients in Del Rio. The gross income from the hospital alone—leaving out the contribution to earnings of Formula Number 1020, the constipation, liver and athlete's foot medicines, or any other source of income—has been estimated at something like twelve million dollars. Some weeks it was said to run as high as fifty-five thousand. Obviously the opinion of any outside observer who had not seen Dr. Brinkley's books could be in error by a few million either way. Even if Doctor had kept books—which he didn't—it is doubtful if they would have been enlightening. Dr. Brinkley ridiculed the idea that he had ever made more than one hundred and twenty thousand or one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars a month, which works out, taking the more conservative of his two figures, at eight million for his Del Rio, or middle, period.

Dr. Brinkley was not usually chatty about his financial affairs. But he did say on one public occasion that his income in 1936 was either a half million dollars or a million, he didn't remember which. The next year things picked up. The gross was

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one million, one hundred thousand. Doctor referred to it as "eleven hundred thousand." It sounded better that way.

"I have a nice practice," Dr. Brinkley admitted when pressed.

Just to get these figures in scale, the average income of a general practitioner in regular medicine at the time was between \$3,000 and \$3,500 a year. A specialist made from \$6,500 to \$7,000. One of Dr. Brinkley's most engaging traits was his undisguised delight in his material success. He was loaded, and he frankly enjoyed being Westchester-rich. Doctor had heavy expenses, of course—payrolls, annual retainers for a battery of lawyers, travel expense for the airplane and regal vacations on the yacht. It required \$100,000 a year to keep the Mexican radio permit alive. Brinkley, who knew no Spanish, had to maintain a man in Mexico City to keep the contacts working, not only with dollars but with tact and sympathy; which meant paying some attention to national cultural interests, such as learning about bulls and the finer points of bull fighting.

But even after allowing liberally for all sorts of unusual and unlikely expenses, Dr. Brinkley was able to live like a maharajah and still put aside a few dollars against a rainy day. Along the way, Doctor accumulated about a dozen Cadillacs. He never could remember the exact number.

"As to how many automobiles it is I have now, I will have to go to counting up," he explained. He also had three fine yachts, a Lockheed Electra plane, a ranch in Texas, a goat farm in Oklahoma, an estate of sixty-five hundred acres at La Porte, North Carolina, in his native Jackson County, once the property of the parents of his first wife.

In colorful Old Mexico, as Doctor might have phrased it, he owned a farm, at Muzquiz. There were two citrus groves, Number 1 and Number 2, in the fast-developing Lower Rio Grande Valley. Among his other Texas interests were oil wells, an advertising agency and a fernery. In Arizona, Doctor took a flier in a gold mine, and at home in Del Rio he owned a substantial interest in a finance and loan company. To take care of his

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cash flow, Doctor maintained twenty bank accounts in ten banks located in five states and one foreign country. Brinkley's residence had two safes in it. Their purpose? "For the purpose of putting valuable papers and things in them," Doctor said laconically.

At various times Dr. Brinkley operated two other radio stations in addition to the "home" station of XER. One was XEPN at Piedras Negras, Coahuila, with the station office at Eagle Pass. The other, XEAW, was at Reynosa, Tamandepas, across the River from McAllen. Both were powerful stations, souped up in the Rio Grande manner, cutting in on wave lengths used by United States and Canadian stations. Each demonstrated the truth of what Doctor often pointed out: "Radio waves pay no attention to lines on the map."

XEAW advertised a Brinkley Branch Hospital at San Juan, near McAllen, for treatment of rectal diseases, situated in an orange and grapefruit grove, surrounded by a hedge of athol, with leaves like peacock feathers. The nights were delightful, the winters like June in the North. Roses bloomed the year around, fortunes were made in truck gardening, and rectal clinics. Get this straight, the circulars said: San Juan for rectal troubles. Del Rio for the old prostate.

"Dr. and Mrs. Brinkley and Johnny Boy," the ads said, "invite you to come to this lovely land of annual flowers, perpetual sunshine, grapefruit and oranges." And bring your colitis with you.

XEPN was closed by the Mexican authorities for alleged violation of the sanitary code, and eventually the station burned. Ownership of XEAW passed to Carr Collins, well-known Dallas insurance man and politico. Collins was the proprietor of Crazy Water Crystals which, with the good help of XEAW, enjoyed a great vogue among those afflicted with constipation, bad complexion and excess acidity. Crazy Water Crystals, "effective after all other treatments have failed," proved upon analysis to be ordinary Glauber's salt: a horse physic.

John R. Brinkley, the poor little rich boy, might well have

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said, in an expansive mood, "God has given us the prostate; let us enjoy it." He certainly enjoyed being a diamond fancier. N. T. (Nevada Ned) Oliver, the old Indian medicine doctor, used to parade his wagon with a banner which proclaimed THE GREATEST DISPLAY OF DIAMONDS EVER SEEN IN THE WORLD AT NEVADA NED'S BIG INDIAN VILLAGE TONIGHT. The gag was that Oliver's blackface comedian stepped out of a chest in a fancy suit made of thousands of playing cards—diamonds. Such a banner might have been raised over Dr. Brinkley's balding head and it would not have been a joke. His stones could be seen and roughly evaluated, at home or abroad, on the yacht or in court: for everywhere that Brinkley went the gems were sure to go. And they were the real McCoy, about one hundred thousand dollars' worth of sparklers, Millard Cope, a Texas newsman, once estimated. The radio orator would have been the winner in any diamond sweepstakes, even over glittering Hope Hampton or the ghost of "Diamond Jim" Brady.

On his left hand, Dr. Brinkley wore a ring with a stone which weighed 12.92 carats. It was about the size of a quarter. His right-hand finger ring was set with an 11-carat diamond. On his lapel twinkled two diamond-studded lodge pins. When he shot his cuffs, the links flashed like navigational blinker lights. Doctor sported a tiepin that was a masterpiece of gent's jewelry, set with a huge pear-shaped diamond about six carats in weight, surrounded with an inch-high arch of good-sized stones. To keep his tie in place, Brinkley chose a bar clasp two inches or more long and three fourths of an inch wide, bearing more diamonds set in a row. He wore it just above the top of his vest. From his heavy watch chain a Shriners' emblem dangled and blazed.

Aside from the diamond pyrotechnics, and the times when he marched around in more than Oriental splendor in his uniform of a Kansas Admiral, Dr. Brinkley appeared to be a little man with a red, gray or white goatee—depending upon what year it was—and possibly a bit too carefully dressed. He looked like a small-city banker who had turned out for a state association meeting. The boy who had known bitter poverty in the North Carolina mountains, who had wrapped gunny bags around

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his feet in place of shoes, was something of a show-off. "You can take the boy out of the country," as the saying went, "but you can't take the country out of the boy." Doctor wanted to dazzle people. He wanted power and place. Touchy, often crude, yet magnetic, despite his mountain ways which he never put behind him, Brinkley was attractive to men and to women. He was a Jekyll-and-Hyde personality.

In a public place, such as a courtroom, Dr. Brinkley would sit quietly chewing on a toothpick and combing his beard. He carried in his vest pocket a combination tooth and ear pick. It was gold. He used it to pick his teeth, explore his ear and nose, and then viewed the results according to one observer, "with a tender, solicitous expression." Something of his appearance in these triumphant Del Rio years may come through from the instructions sent to an art firm in Knoxville, Tennessee, for hand coloring a twenty-by-twenty photograph: "Hair to be light brown, gray at temples, beard and mustache gray and a little reddish brown. Blue eyes, fair complexion, dark brown horn frames on glasses. Stickpin, large diamond. Shrine pin, white gold. Diamond Rotary pin, blue and gold, large diamond in center.

Post card views of Dr. Brinkley, his wife, his small son, the studio and antennae of XER, his private plane, the Brinkley estate (with an inset of a log cabin), were on sale at all curio shops and tourist trading posts in Del Rio. To what extent Doctor regarded them as helpful to his business, and to what extent they were simply the expression of a colossal conceit, remains a question to which there is no certain and completely satisfying answer. He was blatant, and he was appealing. He was smart. He was devious. Yet he could be naïve, as when he said, deprecatingly, "I imagine there are many men who are probably greater than I am."

The durable doctor's prospects for getting some fun out of his money looked good in the later 'thirties. Certain situations were clearing up. For one thing, Dr. Brinkley quietly dropped his libel suit against *The Kansas City Star* and an action for slander against Dr. Fishbein.

"He never expected to try them," commented the *Emporia*

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Gazette. "He realized that their charges were easily susceptible of proof."

Another suit of similar character, for six hundred thousand dollars against the *Amarillo Globe-News* and its publisher, Gene Howe, who had called the Del Rio medico "the world's greatest bunk artist," was dismissed. The Mexicans were tractable for a change. The throughput of the hospital was at full capacity. The move on the part of the Texas State Medical Board against Brinkley's license had petered out. All the physicians of Texas could do, lamented Dr. T. J. Crowe, Secretary of the State Board speaking of Brinkley, Baker and their colleagues in the border radio jungle, was to beat the tails of the serpents. Their heads were over the Rio Grande.

In the days when a steam yacht was a satisfying status symbol, Dr. Brinkley became an ardent yachtsman and admiral of a fleet of three ships. He started out modestly with *The Amazon*, 115 feet long, cruising her on the Great Lakes. Working up from there, Doctor's second yacht, a 2500-horsepower diesel which he called *Dr. Brinkley II*—for advertising purposes, he said—had eight staterooms, glassed-in quarter-deck, and required a crew of fourteen men, including stewards, chefs and wireless operator. In the *Dr. Brinkley II*, over half a million dollars was done up in 150 feet.

Every June, Dr. Brinkley knocked off work and cruised for three months or so, with his wife and young son, a governess, sometimes accompanied by a daughter of his earlier marriage and by various other relatives; also Dr. Osborn and G. A. MacDonald, Brinkley's plane pilot. Joe E. O'Toole was captain of the yacht, with MacDonald often taking the helm. Brinkley found that under these congenial circumstances, as the *Dr. Brinkley II* knifed lazily through northern waters, he could recharge his own batteries, and think up some new "extras" for the hospital. The cruises were enlivened by such side events as Doctor's shooting a buck on the island of Anticosta, off Labrador, landing a 690-pound tuna off Nova Scotia, or the yacht's running aground at Chebogue Point when making for Yarmouth in a dense fog.

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Everybody took to the lifeboats while a police cutter sped to the rescue.

On festive occasions, Dr. Brinkley draped his increasingly heavy figure in the admiral's uniform which he was entitled to wear under an honorary commission which Governor Walter Huxman had issued to Doc and certain other water-minded citizens of land-locked Kansas. Doctor was inordinately proud of his maritime splendor and once autographed a picture of himself in his admiral's outfit to a pal, J. Travelstead, editor of the Del Rio newspaper, "To Warrior Travelstead, from Fighting Admiral Brinkley." For casual dress Doc affected the yachtsman's blue coat and white pants. When visitors came aboard he would assure them that the ship had a well-stocked cellar, lift his glass in the nautical fashion and say, "Glad to have you aboard, sir."

When he berthed his floating palace in the Potomac, at the foot of O Street, Washington, "to renew old acquaintances," Doctor would naturally make a few political comments: As to the Roosevelt administration, "they've spent too much." Although he was The People's candidate when he ran for office in Kansas, Dr. Brinkley was not sympathetic with Senator Huey Long's Share-the-Wealth plan. "I'm just like any other rich man," he explained. Of his own political future, Brinkley said in 1935, "I'm not a candidate—I don't want to be President," adding impulsively, "I'm not presidential timber."

Doctor relished recalling his humble beginnings in Jackson County, North Carolina. He told anecdotes of the mountain life, and showed a picture of a log cabin—the one which was on sale in Del Rio and represented his putative birthplace. Dr. Brinkley said that money had never gone to his head.

"You probably noticed how easy I was to meet," he once pointed out. "We're simple people; just as easy as an old shoe. Even in an admiral's uniform I don't get all swelled up."

Brinkley wasn't egotistical in the ordinary sense of the word. He was simply awed and immensely pleased with himself, completely open about it. If he is a fake, Ernie Pyle once wrote after an interview on the *Dr. Brinkley II*, "I wish he would give

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me some lessons in fooling the public. I could do with a yacht or two myself, even Dr. Brinkley's other one, the little 115-footer."

The high point in Dr. Brinkley's seafaring career was the acquisition of his third and last yacht, the *Dr. Brinkley III*, after disposing of her predecessor to "the President of Venezuela."

"The one I have now is a mighty nice yacht," he said of number three. "Yes sir!"

Boat Number 3 was considerably larger than Number 2, requiring the services of a twenty-one man crew, all with "Dr. Brinkley" on their jumpers in letters one inch high. A frequent caller in Nova Scotia waters, Dr. Brinkley proudly nosed his new yacht into the harbor at Liverpool, Nova Scotia, to her berth at the Irving oil dock, while harbor craft saluted and the waterfront whistles and sirens blared a welcome. The *Dr. Brinkley III* was formerly the *Caroline*, once owned by Joe Schenck, the movie magnate. Doctor told the *Liverpool Advance* that Douglas Fairbanks and Lady Ashley spent their honeymoon on her.

"Thrice welcome, Dr. and Mrs. Brinkley," said the *Advance*; "you are more welcome than the flowers in May." Doctor later priced the yacht to which the Duke of Windsor took his bride for their Mediterranean honeymoon, but the tag read one million dollars and Doctor shook his head. Lindbergh, Joe Schenck, Douglas Fairbanks, Edward and Wallis—Dr. Brinkley's contacts with the denizens of the great world were tenuous, indirect, usually connected with some deal, but precious to him, nevertheless. They were fully utilized from a publicity point of view.

Nothing demonstrated Doctor's flair for the unusual more than his luxurious residence and its sixteen acres of lush greenery in the driest part of Texas. The mansion, known as "Palm Drive in Hudson Gardens" stood hardly a coyote's howl from the muddy Rio Grande. Two pairs of towering iron gates ornately spelled out in letters the name of "Dr. Brinkley" and provided ingress and egress to and from the curving drive that led to the front entrance of the house. One gate was always locked. The other was guarded by two huskies and three biting geese. Dr. Brinkley tried various color schemes on the house, with acces-

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sories in related colors. When it was pink, the family cars were fire-engine red. Later its stuccoed walls, the drives and walks, were all brilliant apple-green, and so were all the block-long automobiles in the Brinkley garage, including Johnny Boy's—green to match his mother's after she turned in her red Cadillac. These decorative periods came and went on a trial-and-error basis. There was a red, white and blue phase; the house—white stucco; paths—blue; front door—red, with a small ivory stork over it. Swimming pool, built sight unseen on orders radioed from the yacht (cost: \$22,500)—parti-colored. The closely sheared lawns of Bermuda grass remained green, which was perhaps the most remarkable feature of the Brinkley showcase, considering the climate.

Dr. Brinkley could move at will by land, air or water. So far as high-powered motor cars were concerned, Doctor might easily have qualified as a fleet operator. The "flagship" car was a long, low, rakish Cadillac with a custom-built body on which the name "Dr. Brinkley" appeared in thirteen places, from hubcap to trunk. The owner of the vehicle was also identified by a gold-plated radiator cap. Doctor could ride and advertise at the same time.

In this lush, man-made paradise, mid pergolas, pools and palms, Dr. Brinkley could fondle his huge Galapagos tortoises, mingle with his flock of pet penguins (who didn't seem to like Texas weather), sniff his roses, or gaze across the river at the comforting sight of the topless towers of XERA, boldly etched against the skyline. Musing upon the brevity and vanity of this life, Doctor would point out to interested visitors a twenty-foot bronze winged victory in the "front yard," which he had picked out to mark his grave, and the marble group of the Three Graces which was to perform a similar mortuary function for Mrs. Brinkley's grave at some future date. Also done in the round was the Roman she-wolf of the Romulus and Remus legend, a statue eight feet long, in which the twins were having their classic way with the patient she-wolf.

At night, Dr. Brinkley's hacienda was an even more memor-

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able show place. For one thing, it was prettier then. Neon lights flashed and played over the home place set amid the sage, over the eight-thousand-bush rose garden, over the tiled lily pool, the two fountains (five thousand dollars each), throwing water thirty feet in the air, each column shot through with changing multicolored lights. If a caller didn't catch the name on the gates, it was still possible to tell who lived there. Splashed across the base of the fountains in fluorescent lighting was "Dr. Brinkley." Inscribed at intervals in the gold and blue tile walks encircling the swimming pool, and in three places on the pool itself, was the inevitable "Dr. Brinkley."

Unfortunately, there was not to be found among the pergolas and penguins a restoration of Dr. Brinkley's natal cabin. This was not due to an oversight.

"One of the regrets of my life," Doctor said, "is that I cannot bring the little log cabin that was my mother's home down here with me and re-erect it on my premises. I do have the old iron kettle in which we cooked beans sitting on a table in my parlor."

The interior of the imposing residence looked like a furniture shop. That is, it was done in the eclectic style, crowded, a little bit of everything, all expensive, each piece or item with its "story"—where it came from, what it cost. The rosewood piano had belonged to Norma Talmadge. The bit of Chinese tapestry was six hundred years old and had been given to Doctor on his world tour by a member of the Chinese royalty. The album of pressed flowers came from the Holy Land, as did the Bible bound in wood. It was inscribed in Dr. Brinkley's own hand, "This Bible was bought by me in Bethlehem," with the date. Dr. Brinkley made a hobby of collecting things. In one room he exhibited a collection of perfumes valued at more than five thousand dollars. He was just as likely to return from a world cruise with a collection of cameras as of turtles or flamingoes; of Chinese costumes, freak dogs or shotguns.

"If you forget to get anything anywhere," Mrs. Brinkley once said, "you can always pick it up in Suez."

The décor was what a newly popular movie star of the

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'twenties or 'thirties might have put together. The walls of the dining room were almost covered with photographs of Doctor in the first five of the seven stages of man, including his yachts, planes and other luxuries. There was a five-foot enlargement of the estate, with insets of Dr. Brinkley and the missus. At each place around the dining table, a name was carved—"Dr. Brinkley." The name was also embroidered on every napkin. Doc's fishing trophies were displayed in this room, the Gold Cup awarded to KFKB, a set of English bone china with the Brinkley home place reproduced in the middle of each plate. Here, too, was displayed the gold service on which the Brinkleys dined every Sunday evening.

The living room was a man's room—walnut-paneled walls and ceiling, heavy candelabra. The room's focus was the narrow table where Dr. Brinkley sat when he broadcast from his fire-side. It was incised: "Dr. Brinkley." At one end of the room a flight of stairs led upward. At the other stood an electric pipe organ (eleven thousand dollars) on which Captain O'Toole played. Over the organ was draped a gold tinsel cloth, a sort of throw, suggesting the elephant's cloth at the circus, ornamented with the words, "Dr. Brinkley." The organ bench was similarly identified. From a single vantage point a visitor could see six photographs of Dr. Brinkley, including the top eye catcher of them all, illuminated with the soft glow of its own indirect lighting. It was five feet tall, hand-colored, showing Doctor full figure in his naval uniform, with gorgeous epaulets, the tunic laced with gold braid, bicorne hat and ceremonial sword. There was one picture on display which was *not* a photograph of Dr. Brinkley, or his family or his possessions. Yet it scarcely represented a change of subject. It was a shot of Rose Dawn and her husband, Koran, with a long, gushy inscription to the Brinkleys, "inspirers of thousands."

A separate wing of the residence was set aside for young Brinkley and his companion, once the nursery, later called his "bachelor's quarters."

"He's extremely interested in medicine, and he's going to be

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a doctor," Mrs. Brinkley explained. "But not an advertising doctor. Lots of our family have been doctors, but not advertising doctors. It's too much grief and struggle. Why, the A.M.A. are battling you all the time, and I certainly don't want Johnny Boy to grow up into that."

Perhaps Dr. Brinkley's year of greatest happiness and sense of fulfillment was 1937. In that spring, he was busy with his oil leases. He opened an office in Luling, Texas, as headquarters for his deals in Caldwell County where intensive development work was going on. Doctor was drilling in the Number 1 Trammel in the Branyon-Luling trend and was in the chalk at twenty-one hundred feet. He also had taken two large blocks on the Guadalupe County side of the San Marcos River in the Wakefield. He had achieved a satisfying sense of identity with the Del Rio community. His charities had proved to be bread thrown on the waters: the candy and fruit at Christmastime for every child in Del Rio, the typewriters and desks he gave the high school for its commercial department, the stuffed tuna fish referred to in an earlier chapter. He established a fund of twenty-five thousand dollars for a public library building provided the town met two conditions; first, that they should raise a similar sum; and second that the building should be named "Dr. Brinkley Library." Doctor often showed the film of his fishing exploits off the Nova Scotia coast without charge. He liked the Texas sunshine and the people and the social situation where they segregated "Mexican children from white children," in Doctor's own phrase. In one instance Brinkley's warmth toward Del Rio overflowed into a full-page advertisement in the *Del Rio Evening News*, describing his home and art treasures, pointing out the substantial amount of employment he gave to Del Rio working people, under the heading: "Dr. and Mrs. John R. Brinkley and Johnnie Are Friends of Del Rio."

In return, Del Rio did not skimp on its recognition of its most celebrated new citizen. To those he appealed to, Doctor was, as an old-timer with vivid Brinkley memories recently phrased it, "a little Jesus Christ." Brinkley was elected to the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce. He was elected

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President of the Rotary Club in recognition of his infusion of new blood into the city's economy, of his generosity in donating time over XEAW and XERA for Rotary Club purposes, and his contribution of radio talent when the ladies' day luncheon was moved across the river to the patio of La Macarena, a restaurant in Villa Acuna, six blocks from the bridge and one left. Del Rio gladly sold Doctor's post cards, listened to his radio programs and ate his grapefruit.

With the fervor of the converted, Doctor's enthusiasm for the border country showed clearly that he had become acclimated. Del Rio had, Brinkley said, "an imaginary arch of Welcome on all roads leading into this Valley of roses, resting on the pillows of Peace and Love." There was, as a matter of fact, at the city limits, a sign of welcome which was not imaginary. It said, "This is God's Country—don't drive like hell through it."

There were dissident elements in the local Rotary Club, and considerably more in the state and national Rotary organization, which doubted that the famous rejuvenation specialist was Rotary material, let alone presidential timber. But the Brinkley tide was running too strong for them in '37. Doctor did splashy things. He pepped up the local scene, and won the crowd. Doctor's election went through and as a consequence Del Rio Rotary was for a time in the doghouse with the national officers.

If the Rotary Club was divided in its opinion of Doctor, there was no doubt that Doc was whole hog for Rotary, as he stepped to the lectern and declared:

"I was born a Rotarian, because its ideals have ever been my ideals. . . . I will not betray your confidence . . . we live in perilous times . . . all who read and think must have forebodings . . . I thank you again . . . I will carry your flag. . . ."

The spirit of Rotary, Brinkley said, was "shot to the core with the sunshine of love" and "nothing thrums the strings of my heart more" than the Rotarians of the forty-seventh district, "all bound together by chains of fragrant blooms and golden sun-rays."

Doctor paid tribute to the "greathearted but poor people"

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whom he knew in the mountains of western North Carolina. His Kansas friends made his heart beat a little faster when he clasped their hands in his. He had seen the great buildings of the East, the towering mountains of the West. But he had met no finer people, in North Carolina, in Topeka, in New York or among the peaks of the Rockies, than the Rotarians of the Rio Grande valley. "Rotary," he said, "binds us with ribbons of satin and silk. It holds us with carved links of burnished gold." The speaker described his remarks as simple "horse-sense philosophy"; and added a caution against the welfare state and the infringement of private initiative. He closed with a surprising statement:

"I had rather know that you were true and honest and upright . . . than to know that your check was worth a million dollars on the bank."

This was a new Brinkley.

Later, visiting Rotarians were introduced by cities: San Angelo, Crystal City, Villa Acuna, Piedras Negras and so forth. Mrs. Earl Miller, the Del Rio club's Rotary Ann, offered two piano selections, "Juba Dance" and "Turkey in the Straw."

In late April, the Brinkleys pulled off the largest spring festival and lawn party ever staged in southwest Texas; "Hospitality on a heroic scale," the *Del Rio Evening News* called it. Both "Dr. Brinkley" gates were thrown open promptly at five thirty on a Sunday afternoon. Guests registered in a book at the "In" gate, retaining their numbered invitation for identification purposes. They were requested not to cut or pick the flowers or dig up the shrubs and to keep off the grass. Ladies received Japanese parasols as favors at the gate. Door prizes were announced over the loudspeakers.

The wife of the Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce read a poem written for the occasion, and a fortuneteller read the cards in a booth. Music was provided by the Gunter Hotel orchestra from San Antonio, and the pupils of a local dancing class performed "Japanese Cherry Blossoms." Dr. Brinkley greeted his guests over the P.A. system at eight P.M., Mrs. Brinkley and Johnny Boy at nine P.M. Special set pieces of fireworks were ex-

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ploded after each of the Brinkleys' remarks. The grand finale came with a sign which spelled out "Good Night," a kind of gracious "Guests, Go Home." Meanwhile, twenty girls in Japanese pajamas had served 1,380 guests, who ate 12 hams, 192 chickens, 2 cases of eggs, 70 pounds of canapes, 250 gallons of punch, 40 gallons of fruit cocktail, 35 gallons of chicken salad, 9 cases of celery, 15 crates of oranges and 6 gallons of green olives; and an icehouse full of lettuce, apples and green peppers. Butchers from local meat shops carved, while bombs burst overhead to display figures of dogs, cats, airplanes, ducks and soldiers on horseback, floating off on the breeze and gradually getting larger, more elaborate and louder.

A month later, Dr. and Mrs. Brinkley, their son and his tutor, sailed for Europe on the *Queen Mary*, Doctor as a delegate to the international convention of Rotary Clubs at Nice.

During 1937, Dr. Brinkley assumed more and more the character of a public figure in his radio talks over XERA. He spoke as a philosopher, a thinker, a moral leader and elder statesman rather than as a narrow technician with scalpel and syringe. He often adverted gratefully to the "rugged individualism which characterized my environment and my upbringing in the tree-sheltered mountains of western North Carolina." One radio talk was called "Tribute to Mother." There were little homilies on eventide and the beauties of nature, hard work, true success, the dreamer, the preciousness of a good name. Dr. Brinkley said that he had been asked if he felt at home in Texas. He answered the hypothetical question in "Home in Texas." He was, he said, at home with good people everywhere, and especially in Texas where "men are men, women lovely queens." He sat in his rocking chair, sometimes when he had a minute, the stars hanging low over the roof and "the mocking birds sing so sweet, that it feels just like heaven was moving in." Doctor twined the flags of Temperance and Americanism and held them high. But Robert E. Lee and Mother usually tied for the honors.

In his farewell address before leaving for Europe, Doctor said, "I am going to enjoy the splendor of the *Queen Mary*,

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pride of the passenger ships that travel the Atlantic's trackless paths." In his flower-filled suite he would meditate on the little 180-ton *Mayflower*, the Alps and old Roman cities. He would see the blue Mediterranean and think upon the Caesars. At the tomb of Napoleon he would reflect upon the vanities of a life of pomp and circumstance. But never, never, would he forget his radio audience:

"I have an affection for all of you out there in radioland . . . and I am going to come back when the gold of the sun is in the autumn leaves. . . ."

The Brinkley party returned to the states aboard the *Normandie* in a suite consisting of living room, dining room, and two staterooms, not "little bitty staterooms"—the tutor, Lowell Brown, speaking—"where you had to crawl up one over the other to get in bed. They were nice-sized rooms. You didn't climb up. They had twin beds in them."

There was one slight mischance to mar the smooth and otherwise delightful crossing on the *Normandie*. Dr. Morris Fishbein and his family were also first-class passengers. As ship-board acquaintances began to ripen, Dr. Fishbein found it necessary to direct his son to keep out of the swimming pool when young Brinkley was around it.

"I think Dr. Brinkley's son and Dr. Fishbein's boy played together for two or three days," said the Brinkley tutor, "until they knew whose sons they were. In fact, I visited with Dr. Fishbein's daughter and played ping-pong with her a few times, and we drove a golf ball into a blanket hanging on the ship there, and along about the second or third day I visited with her I casually remarked to her if she knew who my boss was and she said no, and I told her and she was interested in asking what kind of man Dr. Brinkley was."

There were several near encounters between Dr. Brinkley and Dr. Fishbein. On one occasion, Dr. Brinkley, walking on deck, paused expectantly in front of Dr. Fishbein as he sat in his deck chair. Dr. Fishbein dropped his eyes to his book. Again there was a face-to-face meeting on the day the *Normandie*

. . . But You Can't Take the Country Out of the Boy

docked in New York; and another at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel where Dr. Brinkley occupied an elaborate suite. It occurred at the reception desk. Dr. Fishbein turned and walked away from the man he had described as a blatant quack. Brinkley's career was a subject which he was soon to take up again. A few months later an article entitled "Modern Medical Charlatans," written by Dr. Fishbein, appeared in *Hygeia*, the health magazine of the American Medical Association. In the context of a historical account of quackery, the article went over Dr. Brinkley's life and works in a brief, pungent and highly uncomplimentary manner, including references to the incidents occurring on the west-bound voyage of the *Normandie*.

Dr. Brinkley was not pleased when he read: "In John R. Brinkley, quackery reaches its apotheosis," and some additional remarks about "shaking shekels from the pockets of credulous Americans." In fact, Doctor considered that said Morris Fishbein did publish and print what he had to say in an unlawful manner, wickedly, maliciously, without cause or excuse. His manner was defamatory, in Dr. Brinkley's view, and his design was to injure Doctor's good name, to injure him financially and to impeach his virtue. Therefore . . . but this is anticipating.

In Europe, Dr. Brinkley had sensed the threat of war. From the fall of 1937 on, his Sunday-night talks were devoted to international politics, with a strong isolationist slant. Don't let American boys be slaughtered "in protection of foreign investments," he said. The clock has struck. The hour is late. Watch out for entangling alliances, meaning with Great Britain. Arise, Christian patriots. Doctor spoke admiringly of General George Van Horne Moseley, thought the Dies Committee too soft on the Reds. In Kansas, *Publicity* saluted Doc's "wonderful campaign against war" and urged its readers to "send a few dollars to the anti-war fund in Del Rio." Write to your Congressman. Write to Brinkley. Subscribe to *Publicity*. The picture of the hypothetical Brinkley log cabin began to appear in *Publicity*.

And then the editor let the cat out of the bag. Dr. Brinkley "would be a real choice for the Republican party to nominate

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for President in 1940.” Rose Dawn began to talk up Doctor’s presidential chances in between plugs for her book on personality development. Mrs. Brinkley leaked the information that her husband had received “five hundred thousand unsolicited letters urging him to run in 1940.”

This was all Doctor’s doing, of course. Like Bernarr Macfadden, he really dreamed of the presidency. For the moment, he was The Most Happy Fella.

. 13 .

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Dr. Morris Fishbein stepped out of the Medical Arts Building in Dallas one noontime with his friend Dr. Edward H. Cary. Suddenly a stranger walked up to him and touched his body with a paper. The man was a bailiff, the paper a legal summons to appear in the United States District Court of the Western District of Texas, at Del Rio, and defend himself, to wit: against a charge of libel based upon two articles which appeared in *Hygeia* in January and February, 1938. The articles, already referred to, placed John R. Brinkley in a high position among contemporary operatives in the profitable but twilit field of conning the public. For this unwanted distinction, Dr. Brinkley was asking compensation of \$250,000.

Dr. Brinkley's income in 1939 was down to "about \$810,000," he said, a drop of a quarter of a million dollars, which he attributed to the going over he received in the *Hygeia* articles. It was generally recognized, however, that the money angle was not paramount with the man who wore a fortune in jewelry on his person. He would be the happiest man in the country, observers felt, if he got a one-cent verdict—vindication, as his friends called it. A court victory over Dr. Fishbein would be equivalent to a win over the American Medical Association, the sweetest thing in the world to the old antagonist of what Brinkley termed "jealous doctordom."

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This time Dr. Brinkley was not bluffing. He meant to carry the fight to the enemy. The case of John R. Brinkley v. Morris Fishbein, which had its moments of tension and of levity, was tried in a small, oblong courtroom in the Del Rio federal building before a mixed company, including the civics class of the Del Rio High School, which came to see what made our judicial system tick. One Del Rio humorist suggested that the vocational class in agriculture should have come, too—referring, of course, to Doctor's goat-gland background, which was explored quite thoroughly during the trial. Every seat in the room was filled by a crowd that gathered an hour before each day's session began. No standees were permitted by Judge Robert J. McMillan, who ran a taut ship. Would-be spectators lined up outside the door, as the patrons used to do in front of a popular movie house. About eight out of ten of them were women. During the trial the civics class may or may not have been enlightened as to our legal system, but they unquestionably got a good grounding in certain phases of human physiology.

The courtroom was adorned with charts, graphs, pictures and blackboard diagrams of the usually censored parts of the male anatomy. They were far more explicit than any men's room murals ever seen at the San Antonio Airport or in the Del Rio railroad station.

This scrap represented Dr. Brinkley's boldest challenge to organized medicine. It was a supreme effort, a kind of Pickett's charge, made in full knowledge of the records accumulated in earlier proceedings in Kansas and Washington, D. C., the depositions and transcripts of testimony lined up like artillery, ready to be fired in a stout defense. One of the peculiarities of a libel suit is that the plaintiff may quickly become, in effect, the defendant, as the real defendant probes into the complainant's career and reputation in an effort to demonstrate that whatever was written was the truth. As the court remarked during the second day of the trial, "A man that comes into a libel suit practically puts his entire life in issue."

With his usual dash and impetuosity, Dr. Brinkley had

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moved toward a showdown. The question arises as to why Dr. Brinkley brought suit on *Hygeia's* remarks about him. Usually smooth, disciplined, sustained by a sense that any publicity was good publicity for his business, Brinkley was, in this instance, baited to retaliation by such statements as:

. . . All sorts of efforts had been made to remove him from the air, but without success.

. . . He performed "peculiar operations" in his Del Rio Hospital.

. . . He demanded his pay in advance, and obtained it by high-pressure methods.

. . . "You send him your dollar, and you get your pill."

. . . The United States Post Office ought to act against Dr. Brinkley because of his use of the mails.

. . . On shipboard neither Doctor nor his wife engaged in conversation with the other passengers because he wouldn't take a chance on what would happen when his identity was revealed.

. . . Still "the money rolls in, which proves that the wages of sin is not always death."

The defense pleaded that the statements made about Brinkley were the truth; that the opinions advanced were based on fact and were reasonable, honest and expressed without malice, representing fair comment upon a matter of public interest, "for justifiable ends," within the meaning of the Texas statute. The articles were, therefore, privileged. The defense was able to get the whole text in evidence, rather than the selected portions complained of. Dr. Fishbein looked upon the whole matter as routine.

"I've faced thirty-five million dollars' worth of libel suits and have never settled or compromised one," he said cheerfully. He added that he had no personal feeling against Dr. Brinkley. "My job is to write . . . for the protection of public health . . . my exposition of various quacks is like dissecting away a malignant tumor from a normal body, and off the body of science," he explained. "I conceive of people who make unwarranted and extravagant claims as to results as a menace to public health."

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Asked on the witness stand what his point of view was on Brinkley, the Chicago editor answered, "It is negative."

Outwardly, Del Rio was much more excited by the fifty-three hundredths of an inch of rain that fell during the trial than in the proceedings going on in the federal courtroom. Inwardly, though, Del Rioans were hoping for a victory for Dr. Brinkley. The big story, it was said on the street corners, was not a controversy between the noted Chicagoan whose medical writings were known to millions of Americans, and the Texan whose goat-gland operations and radio broadcasts had put him in the public eye. The big issue involved in the court battle was whether the American Medical Association should be the guiding factor in medical circles or whether Dr. Brinkley was to take off on a new course, rocketing toward heaven knows what spectacular new orbit. Intertwined in the outcome, said his friends, might be political ambitions. *Quien sabe?*²—what next? in the language of the border country. But it was generally agreed that if the jury of a dozen West Texans gave Brinkley the triumph he sought, it would represent a great setback for the code of medical ethics maintained by the nationwide organization of physicians and, conversely, would turn loose the greatest publicity barrage the country had seen yet for whatever goal Dr. Brinkley had in mind.

"I am the man who originated the goat-gland operation," asserted the dignified, blond Brinkley as he took the stand, stroking his whiskers with a diamond-studded hand, before a jury composed of men, mostly ranchers. It was a jury which could appreciate the proclivities of a billy goat as well as any group in the world. Brinkley had two substantial advantages: He was fighting on home territory. And he could invoke the David and Goliath image. On one side of the table sat five lawyers, their client and a claim agent. On the other sat two lawyers, and the little figure of the man who said he had been damaged, humiliated, made to feel ashamed, knowing that his fellow citizens were flocking to Effie Kelley's newsstand to get *Hygeia*, talking the matter over in street conversations, in the barbershops. Bill

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Turner, for example, in the electric-light office, would remark that the article "was awful stuff." Herman Lippe, the photographer, knew that *Hygeia* "was talking bad about Dr. Brinkley." A Del Rio businessman, in the ice business, stopped at the Gunter Hotel in San Antonio "and that is where I seen this article, this magazine, and read it; it was laying on the dresser in the hotel room just about in the position I have it in my hand right now. . . ."

Dr. Brinkley sat and fidgeted, got up and drew himself a drink of ice water, gazed appraisingly at the oil pumper, the merchant, the preacher, who were going to stand up for him and testify about their operations when their time came to shine. Once more, as it had so often done before in a tight squeak, the underdog psychology was working for Brinkley. Except for a scoffing minority, Del Rio had been solidly for Dr. Brinkley since the days when it had decided, in the words of a member of the Chamber of Commerce that "He was going to set up shop somewhere, and we could use the money he'd bring." The county seat of Val Verde County had, indeed, experienced from Doctor's presence the rejuvenating effect it had hoped for. The waitress who served Dr. Fishbein his breakfast pointed out to him that he was, in a sense, a guest of Dr. Brinkley, since Doctor was a substantial stockholder in the hotel; and that the grapefruit he was eating "came from the Brinkley orchard." A large number of local people shared Dr. Brinkley's view that he was being persecuted by the mammoth American Medical Association for shabby reasons connected with jealousy and economic competition. Some went so far as to compare Doctor with Pasteur, who also experienced difficulties in getting his pioneering work recognized by the medical pygmies of his time.

"Dr. Brinkley is just too smart for the rest of them and they can't stand to see him take in a million dollars a year," was another expression of local opinion in support of the wealthy specialist. In fact, a Del Rio banker loaned Brinkley his own good name without collateral by publishing an open letter "before the outcome of your trial is known." Dr. and Mrs. Brinkley, the

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banker said, were “benefactors” of humanity, and “good, clean Christian folks” . . . the same as always to us “regardless of the outcome. . . .”

The drama opened with pre-trial statements from the attorneys on both sides as to what they hoped to prove. Three days were taken up by expert testimony, the urologists on the Fishbein side testifying that the goat-gland idea was ridiculous. A foreign substance would not join the nervous system or connect with the blood stream, and so could not live as a transplant. The other side said the operation was a wonderful success. One very important point of evidence concerned whether or not the judge would allow Dr. Brinkley to put an old man on the stand to swear Doctor had rejuvenated him; and would the judge then allow the defense to put dissatisfied patients on the witness stand who would swear that Brinkley had charged them a big fee, cut them all to pieces and ruined their health? After an investigation of the law, Mr. Wilbur L. Matthews of the defense team decided that the testimony of patients would not be admissible because of the rule of evidence that a lay person could not diagnose his own case and express a competent medical opinion. Therefore, the defense did not round up any disgruntled Brinkley customers to use as rebuttal witnesses.

The Brinkley side thought otherwise. It has always been a cardinal point with advertising doctors to place great reliance upon lay testimony, and when the witnesses rose in court to be sworn and instructed, Brinkley had some twenty old men on the line. One did a couple of snappy steps of the Highland fling.

“They were the friskiest bunch of old roosters you ever saw in your life,” Mr. Clinton Brown, chief counsel for Dr. Fishbein, said, “so we knew what to expect.”

Sure enough, the first of the Brinkley patients was called. He crossed the courtroom with a jaunty stride. He was a card. As he turned to sit down, he cut a pigeonwing.

“We let him get started,” Brown said, “and then I objected.”

After a colloquy with lawyers of both sides, the Court ruled out the testimony. The oldster crept out into the hall to tell the

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others and all the old men “went down the steps together, some with heads bowed, and all walking as if they were going to a funeral.” Del Rioans friendly to Dr. Brinkley predicted that unless Doctor could get his satisfied customers back on the stand to contradict the scientific testimony of the A.M.A. doctors, the millionaire surgeon would probably lose his case.

One thing was sure, the Brinkley side provided the color during the trial. Doctor was driven to court each morning in a long, custom-built Cadillac. Its finish was fire-engine red. Admirers of Doctor met him as the car drew up to the curb, and noted how the name, “Dr. Brinkley,” was visible on it in thirteen places. As Brinkley walked toward the federal building, his wealth was reflected in his well-cut suit and diamond accessories. Dr. Fishbein remarked that he had never seen a man wear a tiepin and tie-clasp as close together as Brinkley wore them. Rose Dawn also pulled up promptly every morning in her orchid-colored Chrysler, an easily identifiable figure among the Brinkley cohorts.

Dr. Brinkley spent two days on the stand. Brown took him through all his past life: his medical preparation; his degrees; the affair in Greenville, South Carolina; the suit his first wife brought against him in Circuit Court, Cook County, Illinois, charging him with kidnaping; the Kansas license cases. Brown then put Brinkley’s reputation under the microscope: his income, the opposition to his activities aroused in the press and in government agencies. Brown labored to put on Doctor responsibility for Clement Wood’s *The Life of a Man*, which the attorney described as a “propaganda come-on . . . interesting reading . . . if you have a strong stomach,” and gave Doctor a particularly rough time over the chapter heading: “The Most Learned Doctor in America.” The Brinkley prescription business was fully developed, especially as to Formula Number 1020—the jigger of hydrochloric acid that came in assorted colors.

In this connection, a lawyer asked Dr. Brinkley if the solution of hydrochloric acid he injected was “by weight or by volume.” Brinkley looked out of the window. His mind was work-

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ing, studying the question. It had caught him short, and he was trying to figure out what to say. He turned back, after what seemed like hours.

"I wouldn't rightly know that," he said. "I don't try to know all the details of what is in this stuff."

Two things seemed to hit home with the jury: One was the injection of colored water, as described in the deposition of Brinkley's partner in the South Carolina enterprise; and Doctor's admission, in effect, that the goat-gland advertising was deceptive. The literature stated that the gland operation was a true graft. On the stand, Brinkley admitted that it was not. So the advertisements were false.

During the trial Dr. Brinkley kept his big radio station going full blast, offering cash prizes every night to contestants who best completed the sentence, "I consider Dr. Brinkley the world's foremost prostate surgeon because . . ." Dr. Brinkley also got off a shot at Dr. Fishbein on the Mexican radio, saying, "If Dr. Fishbein goes to heaven, I want to go the other way."

Clint Brown, knowing that the jury must have heard the offer over the radio every night for the preceding ten nights, closed his speech to the jury in this way:

"I want to win that five-hundred-dollar prize Dr. Brinkley is offering on the radio, but I'll make a little change in the sentence. The sentence I offer in the contest is this: Dr. Brinkley is the foremost money-making surgeon in the world, *because* he had sense enough to know the weaknesses of human nature and gall enough to make a million dollars a year out of it."

The judge gave his charge and the federal jury filed out of the courtroom. They returned, after deliberating for five hours, to give a verdict in favor of the editor of *Hygeia*. Dr. Brinkley had not been libeled, and so was not entitled to damages, the jury decided. Dr. Brinkley's friends were incensed, termed the trial unfair. But Doctor was not in Del Rio to discuss the outcome with them. His Lockheed Electra monoplane had been in readiness in Brinkley Hangar. Doctor was driven to the plane in the red coupé and was winging his way to Little Rock as his attorneys prepared to appeal the verdict.

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In reviewing the transcript of the record, the United States Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans, said, “. . . the evidence . . . tends to show the truth of the statements of fact complained of . . .” and added, “All learned professions have their standards of ethics. A lawyer who advertises and gives advice by mail without seeing his client would certainly be considered a shyster. There is no doubt whatever that plaintiff by his methods violated accepted standards of medical ethics.

“We think above stated facts are sufficient to support a reasonable and honest opinion that plaintiff should be considered a charlatan and quack in the ordinary, well-understood meaning of those words. We conclude this was a matter of public concern and the articles were published for general information. Therefore, the publication is privileged.”

A petition by Dr. Brinkley for a further review was denied by the Supreme Court of the United States. The loss of his case left Brinkley legally determined to be a charlatan. It was a heavy blow. But Brinkley was tough. He could dish it out, and he could take it. He lost, so he shrugged it off. That was the way the ball bounced; that was the way the cookie crumbled. Increasingly, Brinkley was the prisoner of his own past. And yet he could maneuver superbly. For example, the next year, in 1940, *The Saturday Evening Post* published a piece on Brinkley written by Mr. J. C. Furnas. In reviewing the lights and shadows of the agile physician's past, Mr. Furnas was somewhat less than reverent, and there was some anxiety in the offices of the *Post* that the sensitive Brinkley might take the Curtis Publishing Company to court on another exploration of the possibilities in the law of libel.

But, not at all; what Doc did was to go on the air and read selected passages from the article. His reasoning was impeccable. The Brinkley audience had heard of *The Saturday Evening Post*, but they didn't read it. Doctor talked the piece up, extracted a *succes d'estime* out of the big magazine's prestige, while deleting Mr. Furnas's rougher passages. Each day, to Doc Brinkley, brought new opportunities. Each knock was a potential boost.

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Like Brinkley, Dr. Fishbein was not in court when the verdict in *John R. Brinkley v. Morris Fishbein* was rendered. The news caught up with him in Kansas City as he was rushed by taxicab to the Union station where he boarded a train for Chicago.

“We’ve cured that fellow from bringing any more suits,” Dr. Fishbein predicted. “If we could beat him down there among his friends, we can beat him anywhere. . . . The victory is not mine but a triumph for *Hygeia*. . . . The people of Texas are to be congratulated on having a jury which recognized its responsibility for the protection of the public health. The decision is a great victory for honest, scientific medicine, for the standards of education and conduct established by the American Medical Association.

“Perhaps it will encourage the legislature of Arkansas and the governmental officials responsible for the radio in Mexico to realize that they, too, have a public obligation.”

Dr. Fishbein’s reference to Arkansas was prompted by the fact that the Brinkley Hospital was by that time situated at Little Rock. At the time Brinkley had his final tussle with Dr. Fishbein, his home and business office were still in Del Rio. His radio station, still in Villa Acuna, still boomed out glad tidings for worried but hopeful males: “For a limited time I will personally give to one patient in every ten a modern 1938 Oldsmobile.” But the hospital had since moved, and Dr. Brinkley was commuting every week, up to Little Rock on Monday, back to Del Rio on Thursday to broadcast “live” over XERA and to make transcriptions for the following week.

Dr. Brinkley’s enthusiasm for the charms of Del Rio had cooled considerably and for reasons almost identical with those which caused his idyl with Milford to end in discord—hurt feelings and recriminations. Success had again brought forth an imitator. Another doctor had duplicated the Brinkley specialty and the Brinkley system—heavy advertising over the radio, the same treatments and—most unkindest cut of all—at a cut price. Dr. Brinkley sulked and fumed, and in the end turned sour on Del

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Rio because the community wouldn't boycott the price-cutter and run him out of town.

The object of Dr. Brinkley's wrath was a surgeon with an ethical background, James R. Middlebrook, M.D., who had moved to Del Rio from Alpine, Texas, and who had extended professional courtesies to Brinkley when the latter was a newcomer to Del Rio. Dr. Middlebrook had allowed Dr. Brinkley to use his laboratory and do a couple of operations out at his hospital where, Middlebrook often recalled, he remembered seeing the goat glands brought in on ice. The host remarked at the time, "Doctor, you've got a pretty good racket there," and proceeded to take a hand in the game. Not only did he do the Brinkley prostate operation, including the squirt of Mercurochrome, but he even had his own extension department selling a "Special Prostate Package for Home Treatment," which was advertised as being normally a \$7.50 seller, but offered at a special introductory price of \$5; "when, in fact", complained the Federal Trade Commission, "\$5 is the regular price." With his own radio, a home kit, an operation at \$150, the free use of the same genial sun which shone upon Dr. Brinkley, Middlebrook soon had *his* patients shuffling along Digowity and North Main Streets, sunning themselves on the porch of the Middlebrook Hotel. Dr. Brinkley made snide remarks on his radio about a "One-eyed Skunk," referring presumably to a physical disability of his rival; and Mrs. Brinkley called the other doctor's lady "poor Mrs. Middlebrook." Mysterious night phone calls were received at the Middlebrook residence and the Middlebrook car was tampered with on three occasions. There was room in Del Rio for only one advertising doctor.

It was Dr. Brinkley's view that patients appreciated medical services more when the charges were high and once, while seated in his dentist's chair, he gave a lecture on his philosophy of charging enough. If the patrons want the service, he insisted, they will pay for it. And Brinkley knew how to make them want it.

"Some people like to be overcharged," Doctor insisted. But

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there is reason to believe that he himself was not one of those persons. Prosser Martin, the nation's most widely recognized cowboy outfitter and dealer in fancy saddles and leather goods, once made a traveling bag for Doctor. It was a fancy job. A Masonic-lodge emblem was hand-tooled on one side. Doctor's radio station call letters were outlined in silver wire on the other. When the bag was ready, Dr. Brinkley asked the cost.

"Well, Doctor," Martin told him, "you charge \$750 for an operation. I'm just going to operate on you for one operation."

Dr. Brinkley settled up without comment, but bought his luggage elsewhere thereafter.

The Middlebrook Hospital and Clinic was dedicated to the proposition that there was a worth-while prostate market which would turn away from Brinkley's de luxe price scale if given a choice. Dr. Brinkley got the hotel register system suspended in Del Rio because Middlebrook used to come around and inspect the registers and then get in touch with the Brinkley patients.

"It is reported that there are some doctors in Del Rio having strangers met with a proposition that they are able to do my operation," Dr. Brinkley warned. "So that you will not be disappointed, there is no doctor in Del Rio that had ever seen me perform my operation and none of them know anything about it."

Contact men boarded the Southern Pacific trains east and west of Del Rio to spot elderly passengers headed for Del Rio and switch them from Brinkley to Middlebrook, and vice versa. Once a rider for Brinkley, operating as far away as Houston, introduced himself to a passenger, shook hands, and started in on his sales talk, only to discover that he was working on a well-known Del Rio citizen. Both medics had a "fighting boss," which in Texas parlance means a gent who in the old days used whatever tactics the situation called for to guard fences and water holes. The railroad station platform at Del Rio was the last chance to rescue backsliders, and the pulling and hauling that went on there developed into gang fights on several occasions. It was as much as an elderly through-passenger's life was worth to step off the train just to stretch his legs. Local legend has it that

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some of the pullers-in went to their duties equipped to shoot it out in case the game of snatch got too hot.

“When you arrive in Del Rio,” Dr. Brinkley repeated, “if you are approached by some stranger and he tells you there is some doctor in town giving Dr. Brinkley’s operation or giving Dr. Brinkley’s treatment, you get the name of the doctor. Before you go to see him, you ask about him at the Del Rio National Bank, the Del Rio Bank and Trust Company, and at various business houses; also inquire about him among the lawyers in Del Rio. Your health is your most valuable possession and don’t let imitators tinker with it. Some few men have been led astray . . . some of them have died. . . .”

Angry, wounded in at least two sensitive spots—his pride and his pocketbook—Dr. Brinkley moved the headquarters of his medical industry, to the deep regret of the Southern Pacific Railroad, the Del Rio garages and tourist courts. “Come back to Del Rio,” a group of prominent citizens begged Doctor in an open letter published in the *Del Rio Evening News*. But by that time doctor had established his household gods in the hospitable state of Arkansas which had recently extended sanctuary to Norman Baker following a jail term in Texas.

Baker had established his “Institute” at Eureka Springs, and had already tried once to muscle in on Dr. Brinkley. Baker invited Dr. Middlebrook to come to Eureka Springs and do the Brinkley operation under his aegis, with a guarantee of one hundred thousand dollars a year. This would make it possible, Baker pointed out, for Dr. Middlebrook to ride around in his own private airplane, just like Dr. Brinkley. Middlebrook preferred, however, to continue to play his own hand.

This was not the only time that Baker had vexed Doctor. Baker had once dickered for some radio equipment which Brinkley wished to dispose of in the days of KFKB. While Doctor was off enjoying the sea breezes on an ocean cruise, Baker had the stuff shipped to Muscatine and then refused to pay more than fifteen hundred dollars because he knew Dr. Brinkley was stuck. Later Baker began taking prostate cases at Eureka Springs to

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catch Brinkley's trade. He gave the patients "some kind of fool injection or other," as Dr. Brinkley characterized the Baker treatment.

"But I got my revenge," Doc boasted. "I got my friends in Arkansas to crack down on him. The D.A., the Judge and I sat around and decided how much to give him on the mail charge—four years. And he's going to get another seven for income-tax evasion. I guess I've paid him back for pinching my patients and that fifteen hundred dollars."

In Dr. Brinkley's estimation, Norman Baker was a crook. There is no substance to the brag Doctor made of how he settled Baker's hash.

At Little Rock, Brinkley set up not one but two hospitals. In the city proper there was a fifty-bed hospital out on Schiller Street at Twelfth. This was called the Brinkley Hospital. It was surrounded for two solid blocks with rooming houses for the outpatients and their wives; plus a business office established in an old chain-store building which was modernized with glass brick and chrome trim. Here a staff handled the daily mail, mostly written with pencil stubs on rough tablet paper. And here, in a corner of the office building with the shiny front, was the Romulus drugstore, which retailed Doc's acid-stomach pills for five dollars a hundred, and six ounces of laxative at three dollars.

Doctor arrived in Little Rock with his usual dash. He disclosed in an interview that Little Rock had become his head office. He flew in "yesterday" from Rogers, Arkansas, he said, where he had been in conference with local businessmen over possibly opening a hospital in the Harris Hotel there. Siloam Springs would put up the capital for a 100-bed hospital, but it would take eight months to complete the structure—too long. So Brinkley was going right ahead with enlarging his Little Rock hospital to 120 beds. Local residents were less than enthusiastic and protested that the zoning ordinance prohibited such action. Smiling, toying with his graying Vandyke, the physician commented that he did not believe the Superior Court would agree with that view.

The second hospital was located in a country club about six-

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teen miles out of town on the Arch Street Pike. The Shriners had developed the property in the boom times only to see it go on the auction block. Doctor picked up quite a layout at a knockdown price. There was a palatial natural-stone and wood-trim clubhouse with a main hall about the size of the Union Pacific waiting room in Little Rock. There were several outbuildings, surrounded by a 375-acre golf course carved out of the woods at a cost of more than \$150,000, a 100-acre lake crawling with game fish, as the neon sign on the main building said. Brinkley used the club for convalescents and check-overs and called it—without fear of contradiction—“The Most Beautiful Hospital in the World.”

Dr. Brinkley continued to work his wonders on the air. Opening up with a few bars of “My country ’tis of thee,” Doc went right into the commercial for “Dr. Brinkley’s Medical Book,” the “outspoken” work that discussed frankly, not mincing words, the ailment that besets men over forty, with interesting X-ray pictures of actual cases, and a sentimental chapter on the silver wedding anniversary of the Brinkleys. When the cooing voice said, “This is Dr. Brinkley personally inviting you”—the prospects took it as he said it—personally. Perhaps naïvely, they thought he kept the store himself, with a hearty greeting and warm handclasp for each patient at the front door. This happy vision of empathy, surgery and Brinkley was quickly dissipated when they arrived in Little Rock and found that Doctor was in Del Rio. And he seldom operated when he was in town.

They could have the services of the staff surgeons, though. Petermeyer, the osteopath, was there. Petermeyer was a doctor in Texas but not in Arkansas. So when he was in Little Rock, he worked in the business office. With Osborn it was just the other way around. He was a doctor in Arkansas but not in Texas. So they juggled the jobs according to the state they were in. The X-ray doctor in Little Rock was asked how he happened to go with Brinkley. His answer illuminates fitfully some of the adversities which might attract an indigent practitioner to hole up on Brinkley’s payroll:

“I was left stranded down at San Antonio with a wife and

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three kids, and I started in trying to make a living in South Texas, and there was next to nothing to start with, and I bucked the game over at the little town of Weslaco in the Winter Garden the best I could, and then I went to Karnes City, and from there to Poteet and finally into San Antonio, and in my messing around when I stopped at Karnes City for a spell I met a young fellow by the name of Alvis working in a drugstore there, and I got him out of a rut and got him started, and he happened to drive into Del Rio and start working for Jim Shearn over here in a drugstore, and Dr. Brinkley's X-ray man flew the coop for some unknown reason, I don't know why, and this boy knew my financial straits and he wanted me to come over and do X-ray work because he heard that I did that, and that is how I got there."

Little Rock was the largest town that Brinkley had hit; but the people who were in contact with the traveling public were generally able to recall that he was there. The staff at the Albert Pike Hotel were well remembered by Doctor at Christmastime. Nor did he forget the city's cabbies. But Dr. Brinkley never became the Big I Am in Little Rock that he had been in Milford or Del Rio. Service clubs and charity drives carried on much as they had before. Brinkley brought in a wad of new money, about twenty-five thousand dollars a month. He enjoyed for a time the shelter of the political connections he always seemed able to establish wherever he went. But the Brinkley assembly line scarcely got into full operation in Little Rock. Indeed, Doctor hardly had time to savor the experience of being listed among the guests at a reception at the White House in 1940, when the roof fell in on him.

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Brinkley on the Brink

It is difficult to think of Dr. Brinkley as being financially embarrassed. But soon after Doctor entered the hospital field in Little Rock, under a partnership agreement with his wife, a number of disagreeable events occurred in quick succession to put an unendurable strain on his cashbox.

There were, first, government claims for \$200,000 on back taxes, which included disallowed income-tax deductions for the tear-down of the Milford "San" and other buildings. The cost of Doctor's radio arrangements in Mexico City kept going up and up. Most important of all, malpractice suits amounting to more than a million dollars came to life after Dr. Brinkley fired the feckless son of a Little Rock cancer specialist with useful political connections. And so the taxing power of government, the high cost of radio-station licenses across the Rio Grande and a backlog of suits from patients who charged that they had been injured or maimed, put Doctor in a tight fix. Until this time, Dr. Brinkley had always been able to choke off damage suits, to win them, compromise them out of court, using threats, detectives, judicial quibbling and stalling tactics. Default judgments were entered in a couple of cases totaling \$354,271 while Doc was in Kansas City trying to raise the necessary to pay Uncle Sam. One Little Rock attorney had pending four damage suits involving \$230,000.

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Three other suits totaling \$900,000 were settled out of court. Another lawyer had various suits in hand charging incompetence, negligence, carelessness and peritonitis, the last being figured as worth \$104,200. They represented a liability for possibly several more hundreds of thousands of dollars against Doctor and Mrs. Brinkley, personally and as a partnership. Altogether, more than a dozen suits were instituted between spring and fall, in 1940. A lawyer for Brinkley described the litigation as an attempt to “mulct the defendant,” adding that Doctor’s income had “dwindled from \$1,000,000 annually to nothing.”

The rising tide of difficulties put Mrs. Brinkley in a splendid position to say “I told you so” had she been so inclined. She had been dead set against the Little Rock move all along. After the lawsuits began to accumulate, she refused to have anything to do with the Little Rock business and prudently refused to enter the state of Arkansas.

“Mrs. Brinkley wanted to get out,” her husband recalled later. “She wanted to be released from any obligation so she wouldn’t get mixed up in those affairs up there.”

The dramatic pace quickened as the closing scenes approached. Perhaps the shades of the great mountebanks of the past who once cast their spells upon the wonder-seekers of all ages—Cagliostro, James Graham of the Celestial Bed, “Professor” James M. (“There is Hope”) Munyon and “Snake Oil” Cooper—gathered around their modern brother to guide and sustain John R. Brinkley as time was about to take its revenge upon him. The dynamics of the situation were clear. The moment had come to cache the loot and skip. In July, 1940, Dr. Brinkley entered the state of Arkansas for the last time. The title to the Brinkley residence in Little Rock passed to Mrs. Brinkley’s sister and her husband. Doctor established himself in a hotel in Memphis, received his business mail there and answered it from his Tennessee sanctuary. The movables in the city hospital were trucked out of the state, and the hospital went into receivership.

“Mrs. Brinkley and me dissolved the partnership among ourselves about the middle of May, 1940,” Doctor continued in

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his retrospective account of his strategic retreat. He operated the other hospital "alone," for a few months, "just as an individual." Mrs. Brinkley received approximately \$46,000 in profits when her partnership with Doctor was ended. The funds were drawn from the hospital account in Little Rock and sent to her in Texas "in currency." When she was pressed for more details, she couldn't go beyond saying, "At different times money was drawn out." The windup of affairs in Arkansas must, however, have been accompanied by some pangs; for Dr. Brinkley declared that in 1939, Dr. Minnie T. received \$487,390.15 from the operation of the hospitals there.

Doctor's name soon disappeared completely from the Little Rock scene. The country hospital was still in business, but, as Doctor explained, "Mrs. Brinkley asked me to take away the name Brinkley and give it something else, so I decided to call it the Country Club Hospital. . . . I asked Dr. Osborn to run it, do the best he could with it, that I was not coming back to Little Rock, I would try to work out some disposition of it, because there were too many lawsuits being filed against me. . . . When I finally decided, when Mrs. Brinkley and I decided for me to get rid of it, to get out from under it altogether, I called Mr. Carl Rice (he was a Kansas City lawyer on a \$10,000 annual retainer) and he sent down an agreement of sale to me and my wife at Memphis, and Dr. Osborn came over to Memphis and we signed those papers, and I haven't had any more interest in it."

What Osborn had was a lease with purchase option, and a partner—Johnny Boy. The real estate, the X-ray and slenderizing equipment had been transferred to Johnny Boy. Doctor and Mrs. Brinkley rented the buildings, as partners, from themselves as trustees. So that the transfer to Osborn would not be in the nature of a wash sale, Osborn gave Mrs. Brinkley a promissory note. Doctor thought that Osborn had actually paid her something on the note; but he was not a party to the transaction, and, as he said with cautious precision, "of course, that is hearsay."

The dispersal of Doctor's assets proceeded rapidly while the storm gathered. Station XEAW, the souped-up transmitter at

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Reynosa, Mexico, which was sold to the Crazy Water Crystals man, turned out to belong to the Brinkley Hospital in Del Rio, which was the property of Mrs. Brinkley. So the court passed over that item. Johnny Boy received stock in United States Steel and Bethlehem Steel Corporations. The "oil well department" was turned over to him; also a building in Wyandotte County, Kansas, which housed an aircraft school that was Brinkley controlled. Johnny Boy also owned the airplane engines and other instructional equipment of the school. Dr. Brinkley turned over the livestock and deeded 6500 acres of land in North Carolina to his son for a consideration of love and affection. The Lockheed Electra went to the British Purchasing Commission to be used by the Royal Canadian Air Force for training purposes. The proceeds did not go to Doctor, however, for Mrs. Brinkley owned the plane.

Doctor was down to his last yacht. The twin-screw diesel-motored *Dr. Brinkley III* with piano and pipe organ was sold to the United States Navy. Most of the money was paid to Mrs. Brinkley who had a lien on the yacht. Before the yacht was delivered to the Navy, the furnishings were removed and taken to a home the Brinkleys had maintained in San Antonio while their son attended a military school there. Doctor said the furnishings consisted of "the usual beds, dressers, mirrors, chairs, dining-room equipment, kitchen equipment, carpets, and rugs, dinningport, piano, pipe organ, and things like that."

Doc's advertising agency was liquidated, along with such of its clients as the Home Remedy Company, the Tri-state Remedy Company, and Bashem Home Remedy Company, all Brinkley properties. They were not corporations, but "just the name used for advertising purposes"—like the names on his yachts. Cash sums were turned over to Mrs. Brinkley and the boy, as well as large amounts which went to Brinkley's attorneys "ostensibly as fees," his creditors complained. A car went to Captain O'Toole to be used by Johnny Boy and himself, a twelve-cylinder Cadillac—no, it was only an eight. A blue Cadillac sedan was bestowed upon H. D. Munal and his wife, who operated the citrus

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groves for Doctor; another to one of Doc's trusted secretaries. Doctor explained the bestowal upon the Munalns in this way:

"Mr. Munal and his wife were up here to see me on a visit, he told me he was going to have to buy an automobile, the one he had was worn out, so I said, 'Howard, I don't have any use for my coupé, it is sitting here, I don't drive it, it is just going to sit here and rot, if you want it I will be glad to make you a present of it, you can take it down there and use it any way you want to.'"

Q: "Did you give that automobile to him with the idea of putting it beyond the reach of your creditors?"

A: "Good Lord, no."

Finally, Doctor cleaned up loans and premiums on some \$400,000 worth of life insurance policies. He then went voluntarily into the district court of the United States in Del Rio and respectfully petitioned that he was unable to pay in full but was willing to surrender all property for the benefit of creditors, except such as is exempt by law, and desired "to obtain the benefit of the acts of Congress relating to Bankruptcy."

Thus the surgeon-orator prepared to shake off his creditors, wipe the slate clean and make a new start. Readers of this chronicle who have not had intimate experiences with bankruptcy proceedings may be under the impression that to go bankrupt is to go broke. This is a naïve conception. Nothing could be further from the truth. There are substantial exceptions under the civil statutes of all states. It has not been considered sound public policy to strip a man under any circumstances. In Texas, Dr. Brinkley was able to claim exemptions under the Texas Constitution, article 16, Sections 49, 50 and 51, Revised Civil Statutes of Texas, 1925, Article 3832, as supplemented by Article 3832-a in 1929, and as amended in 1935, to wit. Which, being interpreted, meant that Doc could keep the old homestead with the neon lights and the rococo furnishings at Del Rio, as well as the furniture in San Antonio and North Carolina. The insurance policies were untouchable. Similarly, all personal wearing apparel was safe, the diamonds, pictures and books, kitchen pots and pans, farm tools, the countless photographs of Doc and one car. Texas

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permitted a man to keep a gun and his cemetery lots, if "held for the purpose of sepulture." Brinkley's schedule of assets as submitted to the court was fluffed out with several hundred notes received from patients, most considered to be uncollectible. It appeared at first glance that the advertising agency was worth \$60,000. But this proved illusory. It was simply a bookkeeping item. There were some tangibles—desks, chairs, pencils. They were exempt by statute.

A bank in San Juan had cash on deposit resulting from the operation of citrus groves Number 1 and Number 2. The account stood in the name of the Munals, who managed the grapefruit business. Doctor had a hangar at the Del Rio Municipal airport, mighty useful for garaging your plane, if you had a plane. Doctor had some fishing tackle and a horse over at San Antonio; and at East Laporte, North Carolina, he listed six more horses, ninety cattle, one sow, six geese, two guineas, forty ducks, fifty chickens, twenty turkeys and a harpoon gun. All in all, the carcass had been picked pretty clean, except for a little fat and gristle, with hardly enough left on the bones to make a thin soup.

January 31, 1941, Dr. John R. Brinkley was declared bankrupt on his own petition. This was the beginning of an exciting game of hare and hounds played for more than one and a half million dollars with Doctor's creditors cast in the role of the hounds, and Brinkley starring as the hare. He was supposed to have left along his route, as the game is usually played, "a trail of paper scraps." The trail proved to be remarkably indistinct, with very little assistance from scraps of paper.

"I never had any books," Doctor pointed out.

Preliminary figures listed liabilities scheduled but not admitted of \$1,625,565. The itemization showed that \$800,000 of the debts listed involved damage suits. Assets were \$221,065 on which exemption was claimed for \$165,000. Claims ranged from \$113,000 in federal income taxes, to a \$2.30 laundry bill. Doctor still had \$365,000 in life insurance on himself, and \$43,000 on Johnny Boy. In Little Rock the federal bankruptcy referee declared Mrs. Brinkley bankrupt, but since by that time she had

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no property in Arkansas, her situation may be described as desperate, but not serious.

The interested parties and their attorneys gathered inside the railing in federal bankruptcy court in Del Rio (no smoking, no reading of newspapers) to hear the receiver give his report and to carve up the Rio Grande empire of the radio physician. Dr. Brinkley peered out of a rain-spattered federal courtroom window, thrust his hands in his pockets, took them out again, twisted a large diamond ring as he told a story of dwindling luxuries and how the Brinkley family was getting along with only four cars. But the spoils seemed always to elude their grasp. To the creditors it appeared as though Doc had raised loans on unencumbered property and transferred the money to his wife, and others close to him. Captain O'Toole turned up with a mortgage lien on the hospital equipment, for instance. Some \$122,000 was channeled into the Mexican broadcasting company that owned XERA, although Dr. Brinkley denied that he controlled the company, or even knew except by rumor who did own it. But the steady questioning showed that the creditors thought otherwise:

Q: Well, isn't it a fact that all of the stock in station XERA is in blank?

A: I don't know.

Q: Isn't it a fact that the stock owned by the Mexican company at the present time is made payable to bearer, and was printed in Del Rio, Texas, and the stock is now in Del Rio, Texas, in the possession of either Dr. John R. Brinkley or Mrs. Minnie T. Brinkley?

A: The stock is not in my possession, and is not in the possession of Mrs. Brinkley. Where the stock is, I don't know. I have not seen it in years.

Q: What about the printing of it?

A: I don't know where it was printed.

Q: Do you know whether it was printed?

A: I presume if there is any stock in existence it was printed some place.

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Q: Did you have any knowledge of it when it was printed?

A: I don't remember.

Q: Isn't it a fact that a printer here in Del Rio printed it, and you paid him for printing that stock?

A: I don't remember.

Q: You wouldn't know whether or not a thing happened with reference to a million-dollar radio station?

A: I don't remember anything about it.

Q: Do you now state that you did not have anything to do with the printing, the distribution and the paying for that stock?

A: If I did, I don't remember it.

It was also charged that Brinkley failed to keep records, which was certainly true, and that he had "liberated" about five hundred thousand dollars which rightfully belonged to the creditors. The record ran to 282 pages, as the attorneys probed to find what was left of the Brinkley fortune. The court was finally able to auction off the citrus farms and eight guns. A Brinkley representative bid in the orange and grapefruit orchards. Doctor didn't want the guns. As he sat in the courtroom, Brinkley was wearing all the sparklers that have been enumerated before, plus a diamond wrist watch, a watch chain with Masonic emblem charm and two diamond shirt studs. It was a display of solvency which the creditors could look at, possibly admire, but not touch.

When the lawyers did turn up something that had value, there was always doubt as to who owned it, and whether the money was Minnie's originally. Or, it turned out to be mortgaged. Every time the lawyers thrust into the financial maze of the Brinkley affairs, they got tangled up over what was his and what was hers. Generally, the property turned out to be hers, and when she claimed it, the referee had to stop right there.

When Dr. Brinkley voluntarily went into bankruptcy court to explain his affairs, he personally had the use of only two Cadillacs. This was not counting the one "down to our citrus farm in the valley," or the one that Johnny Boy had while attending military school in San Antonio. At the time Doctor was working as a salaried employee of the advertising agency whose owners he

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knew of only by hearsay. He had made a kind of franchise arrangement for a new hospital in Del Rio. A group of Del Rio businessmen would be permitted to incorporate an institution called Brinkley Hospital, Inc., for the purpose of using Dr. Brinkley's treatments. The hospital was in the Roswell Hotel, as in former times, staffed with old Brinkley employees from Little Rock.

This all sounds familiar, like the beginning of another hayride. But the venture did not click; did not, as Doctor confidently predicted, "fill the town with tourists, the hospital with patients, and bring prosperity to Del Rio once again." The episode is scarcely remembered today, even in Del Rio.

Various witnesses got off some good lines. Asked if a certain tax return was a joint return, Dr. Brinkley's accountant answered:

"Well, it might be called a community return to a certain extent, on the items which may be called community."

When asked how many cars he and his wife owned, Dr. Brinkley said, "I don't know whether I have a car or not. It seems to me like we have about run out of automobiles. . . . I don't think there is but two Cadillacs left."

At another point in the proceedings, the man who didn't know whether he owned a car or not, testified that there had been a time when he had had a bank account all his own:

"Yes, I had an individual account there for a while, a separate account. I never had any large sums of money in it. I think I had fifteen or twenty-five thousand dollars in it at one time."

A grin went around the courtroom in appreciation of that sally, the attorneys sighed, and tackled their papers once more to prepare for the next round. The adverse lawyers paid a rueful tribute to Doctor's performance as a witness.

"I wish, Your Honor," said one, when a Brinkley attorney interrupted a question, "that Mr. Davis would let the witness testify. He has been very successful in taking care of himself."

The creditors wanted Mrs. Brinkley in court, and in due time she received a paper, "To Minnie T. Brinkley, Val Verde

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County, Texas, Greeting . . ." urgently requesting her presence. It was believed that she was a vital figure in the multitudinous Brinkley enterprises, a partner with Doctor in various undertakings and liable for Doc's debts. Dramatics were expected. But Mrs. Brinkley was not talkative. She frequently said with great economy of speech, "The books will reflect our business transactions." There were two sets of books, one for the Del Rio Hospital and the other for the Little Rock Hospitals. Money shuttled in and out of these accounts, but if there was a pattern to the cash flow, it was not discernible. The judge ruled that Dr. Minnie could not be questioned about her own affairs. Some interesting human sidelights developed, such as a strong preference in Doctor's wife for cash, that is, currency—the folding stuff.

Q: What bank does she keep her separate cash in here, Doctor?

A: If that girl has any cash, I expect she kept it with her wherever she sleeps."

Between the beginning of World War II and the entrance of the United States into the conflict, Dr. Brinkley in his fireside chats discussed the international political situation with increasing excitement and a religio-patriotic fanaticism which brought him into congenial alignment with the racists and extremists in the isolationist movement. Brinkley and *Doktor* Gerald B. Winrod, the Kansas Führer, scratched each other's backs vigorously. Dr. Brinkley had set up as an international political observer and pundit on the basis of the '37 junket to the Rotary convention. Doctor's concern for the "mothers and fathers of this once-free America" disclosed wide areas of agreement with such characters as Fritz Kuhn, the leader of the German-American Bund; Gerald Smith, who attracted the element he called "old-fashioned, God-fearing, baby-having Americans"; and Edward James Smythe, an anti-Catholic yet also an admirer of Father Charles E. Coughlin. Smythe called William Allen White a "Jewish stooge" and pointed out that it was significant that the Jews were taking over the Christmas card industry. Another fellow

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worker was Major William D. Pelley, the Silver Shirt leader (blue corduroy breeches tucked into knee-length socks, silver gray shirt with a crimson "L" emblazoned on the left side. It represented Liberation, Loyalty and Love). Pelley thought that it would be a fine thing to set up ghettos in American cities, sympathized openly with the Hitler movement in Germany.

The views of these rabble-rousers were a regular feature of *Publicity* and Brinkley's Sunday-night chats appeared among them. "With fear and trembling I come before you this evening," Doctor started off late in February, 1940. "Sumner Welles is going to call on Chamberlain, Mussolini, Hitler, and that feller Dee-loddy-ay." Pelley told the Select House Committee Investigating Un-American Activities—the Dies Committee—that Dr. Brinkley gave him \$5,000 at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York to finance Silver Shirt political work. Brinkley journeyed to Asheville, North Carolina, where he got lessons in fascism; and Pelley returned the visit although he spoke cautiously about the occasion.

"I visited Dr. Brinkley's radio station in Mexico for one hour with witnesses and came back at once," he said, "and except for that I haven't been outside this country since I went abroad for the Methodist Church."

Despite contributions to the campaign funds of both major political parties, the free time made available on XERA to Texas politicians, and his efforts to mobilize isolationist sentiment, Dr. Brinkley's career pursued a downward course after the libel suit. A long memorandum going into Doctor's background, connections and activities was prepared by the Friends of Democracy, Inc., and sent to Emilio Azcarraga, president of the Mexican Broadcasters' Association and reputedly a close friend of President Cardenas, with copy to the Federal Communications Commission. It called for "decisive and heroic action in dealing with XERA." The FCC still sits on its copy of the memo as "classified" material. It must be pretty hot.

With his adventures in medicine definitely ended, Brinkley purchased, in the name of his son, a piece of industrial property

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in the Fairfax airport district of Kansas City, Kansas. The building housed the Dilley Aircraft School, a comparatively new school with four hundred students, which offered courses in welding, sheet-metal working and the mechanics of airplanes. Backed by Brinkley's daily broadcasts over XERA, the Dilley publicity was marked by many of the characteristic Brinkley touches.

"Why do squads right and squads left at \$21 per month when you can get a good paying job as an aviation mechanic?" Doctor inquired, in his 180,000-watt voice. "America must prepare—be strong—build war machines in factories like this or join the unprepared countries that have had to face the other terrible picture. Uncle Sam has YOUR number and the number of every loyal and patriotic American who has pledged himself to be drafted for defense. . . . Enlist in the ranks of TRAINED workmen to build the instruments of defense."

America was getting air-minded; but Brinkley was air-minded first. He urged XERA listeners to send a \$25 advance fee to the school and enroll in a \$395 airplane mechanics course. The advance on the tuition would be "refunded to you in case we do not accept you," but the way various Better Business Bureaus heard it from the complaints they received, there were no students who could not matriculate, and no refunds to the kickers. Brinkley bore down heavily on such points as individual instruction, the guarantee of a job through the school's placement service, and avoidance of military service. Doctor spoke of the school as being "recognized," though none of Dilley's courses was approved by the Civil Aeronautics Authority. The name of the Better Business Bureau was used as a reference, until they caught up with him. One young man was advised in a letter signed by Brinkley to be careful when he came to Kansas City. "Don't talk to or be guided by any STRANGERS pretending to help you. Come directly to us where you will be in safe hands and fully protected."

Brinkley's forewarning to the boy who would rather carry a wrench than a gun recalls Doctor's infuriating experience in

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Del Rio, where the patients who swarmed to him like lemmings to the sea, were intercepted by Dr. Middlebrook's pullers-in offering the identical treatment at an inside price.

The Dilley literature, combining the "Keep America Strong" theme with the sly suggestion that the reader "must decide whether you are to dig ditches, carry a gun or be a trained mechanic away from the bullets" was Brinkley's last pitch. Doctor's time had finally run out. The Kansas attorney general threw the Dilley corporation into receivership based on findings of the Kansas Corporation Commission. The petition charged that the gland surgeon was looting the \$200,000-asset school. The state also contended that Brinkley had usurped control as "the pretended manager and owner of the corporation," that he had violated the state corporation laws in eliminating the regular directors, and installed instead a crew of his own retainers. But the coup de grâce came at Villa Acuna.

Back in 1937, it had been front-page news, when the North American Regional Broadcasting Agreement was signed at Havana, that the Mexican radio mess was to be straightened out. The border radio imbroglio interfered with the tourist business. So the last stand of the quacks, the gentry who sold wisdom at three questions for a dollar, the peddlers of funny merchandise, were to be cleaned up like a bedroom farce in Boston. Programs, engineering, equipment, were all affected.

Alas for reform, the Mexican officials flew back from Havana with the border-station lobbyists, as thick as thieves. So skillful were the operators of these stations of nominal Mexican ownership in sabotaging the machinery of the cleanup that three years later the X-stations were still going strong. It was necessary to go to the top to get action. Finally, when the President of Mexico was tipped off that the problem had a different dimension than United States discrimination against "Mexicans," things began to happen. The American State Department and the Mexican Communications Ministry had fruitful conversations. Through the reallocation of wave-length assignments under the Havana Treaty, XERA was deleted from the official Mexican log of broadcasting

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stations, effective March 29, 1941. On that date the radio voice of Dr. Brinkley was forever stilled.

Doc Brinkley rushed off to Mexico City himself to try to renew the "fix." There he received a telephone call from Walter Wilson, XERA station manager, who had been across the river to see what he could see.

"Did you know," Wilson inquired, "that the Mexican army is tearing down the station right now?"

A few days later Dr. Brinkley suffered a heart attack due, it was said, to the high altitudes he encountered while traveling in Mexico.

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Genius and Humbug

Dr. Brinkley's personal physician may have believed that the high altitude of Mexico City put too great a strain on his patient's heart. But, during the summer of 1941, Brinkley was living in Kansas City and enjoying the creature comforts at the Bellerive Hotel, where the altitude was comparatively low; and his heart continued to disturb him. What seems most likely is that twenty years of living on a kind of roller coaster, two decades of "managerial fatigue," overwork, litigation and brinkmanship, were probable and sufficient causes for an increasingly severe circulatory condition.

In August a piece of the heart tissue broke away and a clot blocked the large artery in Dr. Brinkley's left leg. Doctor was taken to Research Hospital a "very sick man." It became necessary as an emergency procedure to amputate the leg above the knee. A month later, while Brinkley was still convalescent and under oxygen treatment, following two more heart attacks, the Post Office Department, at last, like a postman delivering a twenty-year-old letter, filed a complaint against him. The charge was using the mails to defraud in connection with the goat-gland treatment. A federal fugitive warrant for Dr. Brinkley's arrest was issued at the request of Little Rock authorities, and served on the rejuvenation specialist and three-times candidate

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for governor of Kansas, as he lay propped up with pillows in his hospital bed.

Dr. Brinkley listened to the reading of the warrant while his attorneys, wife, the United States Commissioner and an assistant United States district attorney stood by. Did it strike him, one wonders, as one of life's monumental ironies, after all his well-laid plans to close up and batten down, that it was the last shipment of literature from Little Rock which had moved the post office to take the action ethical physicians had been demanding for many long years?

The complaint stated that Dr. Brinkley had treated some 16,000 persons at a fee of \$750 each or a total of \$12,000,000. It went on to say that neither Doctor nor his staff were specialists, had little, if any scientific knowledge, "and were not physicians of character and good standing." In what sounds like a close paraphrase of some of Brinkley's ads, the complaint asserted that Doctor and his group "did falsely pretend that John R. Brinkley was a great surgeon, scientist, and physician, that he, while visiting medical centers in Europe, had found a substance which would restore to normal sex vigor sexually weak men and women, and that the Brinkley treatment would cause men and women to live to be one hundred years old." These and other claims were advanced in advertisements, pamphlets and letters addressed to persons in La Monte, Missouri; Jamesburg, New Jersey; Walden, Colorado; Niobrara, Nebraska; West Point, Mississippi and other points. They were all termed "false and fraudulent and the United States mails were used to promote this fraud."

"I guess there isn't any danger of my running away," was Doctor's only comment upon the reading of the fugitive warrant. A federal grand jury also returned indictments charging mail fraud on fifteen counts against the Brinkleys and six employees. Both Brinkleys pled "not guilty" and posted \$20,000 in surety bonds for their appearance in the federal court in Little Rock in October.

Doctor was permitted to leave the hospital, proceeding by ambulance to Union Station accompanied by two nurses, his

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wife, and a bevy of postal inspectors and deputy United States marshals. Another ambulance covered the one hundred and fifty miles at the other end of the arduous trip, from San Antonio to Del Rio. During that winter "Dr." Brinkley—the *Journal of the American Medical Association* now placed his medical title inside quotation marks and *The New York Times* followed suit—was able to get about to a limited extent. But the heart blockage, a kidney ailment and incomplete healing of the amputated leg all indicated that the end was near.

Doctor was scheduled for trial on the Post Office Department complaint in the spring of 1942, but he never had to face the charges. In the early morning hours of May twenty-sixth, death came easily to the fifty-six-year-old surgeon at the home he maintained in San Antonio, as a nurse raised him to give him a drink of water. During his last days, after more than ten years of stormy and continuous legal warfare, the medical broadcaster was shielded from contact with all but his kin and close friends. Doctor's body lay in state at the mansion in Del Rio, clad in a navy blue suit, his Masonic apron and his diamonds. Funeral services at the Spanish-mission-style Methodist Episcopal Church marked Del Rio's farewell to Dr. Brinkley. A funeral cortège traveled overland to Memphis for a chapel service and burial at Forest Hill Cemetery beside the parents of his wife.

The bronze winged victory stands on the plot—poised on top of the world. That is, it rests on a marble globe. The ball in turn stands on a marble pillar. The base displays, in relief, the lettering "J. R. Brinkley, M.D."

The heritage Brinkley left in border radio was kept alive by former associates who established XERF as a successor to XERA. XERF continued to operate in the rambunctious X-station tradition. It played waxed programs of Gene Autry and Roy Rogers without paying a dime to the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers. It sold pyorrhea cures, tombstones engraved with any name, reducing pills, a book of 169 of your favorite hymns, and a guitar—"Don't you know gittarists make money?"

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The X-station market was also profitable for the shouting evangelists. The Reverend J. Harold Smith, whose style of invective kept him in constant hot water with both the Roman Catholic Church and the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, laid the thumping sum of \$100,000 on the line at XERF in return for a half hour of time for the next twenty years. Dr. Gerald Winrod continued to enjoy the hospitality of XERF for his pieces of hate, just as he had done in Brinkley's day. And every night there came the hoarse plea of the Reverend J. Charles Jessup:

"Keep this little old boy from the clay hills of Alabama on the air. I'm your brother; I'm doing the best I can. Won't you, friend, send me your offering today?"

XERF has not changed its stripes with the passing years. Its denizens still shout and pray, fiddle and sell "genuwine" diamonds for ninety-eight cents.

Medical history has known few men of less promising background or greater native capacity than Dr. Brinkley, few of comparable bounce, capable of such grandeur of conception in cajoling the public. Few men arrayed against society have come so near to having the best of both worlds—the legitimate and the outlaw. Neither of the medical schools Brinkley attended ever was regarded by competent physicians and surgeons as a true background for a medical education. But Brinkley was a genius—a man of superlatives. You can still hear it said in Del Rio that Doc literally hypnotized people. He was a glittering showman, a molder and leader of men, and possessed of a fair amount of basic medical knowledge, although his frequent characterization of his practice as "my business"—a property right—indicates his outlook. It was scarcely that of a man who took his medical oath seriously. Had he been willing or able to control his greed for money or his lust for personal power, to direct his abilities toward legitimate aims, he might have made significant contributions in the field of medicine.

Instead, Dr. Brinkley chose to exploit one of man's oldest aspirations, the desire of age for youth's potency, with mili-

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tant, modern promotional methods, bringing thousands to his hospitals. The cornerstone of his meteoric career was his early perception of the power of radio and his skillful homespun prescriptions for a variety of ailments, especially the enticement which lay in the goat-gland-transplant idea.

Dr. Brinkley brought medicine to the air waves. The issues arising from his Medical Question Box on KFKB put the provisions of the Radio Act of 1927 to the test, and so contributed to the establishment of the principle that United States radio programming must be in the public interest. When the Federal Communications Commission forbade the transmission of broadcast material by remote control into another country to be sent back into the United States territory, Dr. Brinkley led the way into transcriptions by putting his talks on records and sending them over to Villa Acuna to be aired on a record player. By his resourcefulness in inventing border radio, Brinkley produced enough chaos, raised enough hell along the Rio Grande, to produce three major international communications conferences including the 1937 Inter-American Radio Conference in Havana. This effort brought forth an agreement that finally put Doctor in a bottle. In sum, Dr. Brinkley made significant contributions to the development of the radio art in America by giving the regulators something to regulate.

Because he was skilled in the methods of the agitator, a ruthless practitioner of a new kind of imperialism of the air, Dr. Brinkley collected fees amounting to more than a million dollars a year for an operation that a federal appellate judge once described as "one which could be done in any doctor's office under a local anesthetic for ten dollars." Could such a performance be repeated today? Human credulity remains a fixed quantity, of course. Clever charlatans still live by their iron code: never give a sucker a break. But the conditions that produced John R. Brinkley are not likely to be duplicated exactly again. The medical licensing boards of the states operate on a far higher level than they did in Doc Brinkley's salad days. The anything-goes epoch in radio called forth regulatory controls which are probably ade-

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quate to take care of such a phenomenon as Doctor's Milford radio station. The claims of the advertisers of panaceas are subject to a tightened-up Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. The Post Office Department is tougher than it used to be.

Inscrutable to the end, Dr. Brinkley was not a man to wear his motives on his sleeve. This applies particularly to his political career. The best conjecture is that he entered the political arena in Kansas, as he said he did, on an impulse, and because of circumstances which brought in view the idea of getting his medical license restored through political influence. But once a campaigner, he developed a taste for power and excitement, the build-up of his following. During his candidacy he revolutionized political campaigning by introducing radio, sound trucks and the airplane. A master of the glib if shallow answer, Brinkley prospered politically when the collapse of the United States economy bewildered, angered and confused the electorate. As William Allen White remarked, "the sort of people who are fooled by Brinkley have to crystallize and scare the rest of us to death" from time to time in a democracy. White accepted the pains and risks philosophically. Brinkley could not "fool all of the people part of the time," White said, "nor part of the people all of the time."

Like Huey Long and other Southern demagogues, Brinkley proclaimed a great and elaborate regard for the wisdom and virtues of the submerged mass of the people from which he himself sprung, and which he understood so well. Actually, he displayed a cynical contempt for his humble supporters and used them solely as an instrument for his own advancement. The candidate moved with pomp and circumstance among the tillers and toilers. His political friends peered at him from a respectful distance as he sat in a glassed-in booth on his sound truck. Brinkley could be seen from all sides. Yet he was curiously remote, a figure of wonder and mystery. The supporters of the people's ticket heard a speech over the loudspeakers. Assistants distributed ballots for straw votes and announced the result. It was all for J. R. Brinkley. Then, Doctor, like an old-time pitchman,

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neatly folded his tripod and kiester and slipped away through the gloaming.

At his end the newspapers treated Brinkley prominently and fairly as he lay in state on their front pages. His rotund, goateed picture peered shrewdly out from the long obituary notices which recounted the story of his spectacular career; and a good many added editorial comment which acknowledged Doctor's authentic if wayward genius. Even such an ancient antagonist of Doc Brinkley as Dr. Morris Fishbein speaks of the controversial Doctor without malice. There was *something* about him. . . . "I don't know what there was about that man," a Del Rio businessman said recently. "You might laugh about all of it. But when you were talking with him—well, you just forgot everything. And you couldn't help liking him."

The old Sunday-school books, after all, had to be fitted out with a complement of scamps; otherwise there was no opportunity for virtue to triumph over sin. Perhaps there is in all of us a latent, unanalyzed admiration for the outlaw who bucks society. The Byronic gesture wins one's reluctant admiration. There is a sneaking feeling of regret when a rogue gets his comeuppance. Dr. Brinkley, at any rate, convinced thousands that he was a romantic fighter arrayed against the medical Goliath. William Allen White concluded his meditations on Brinkley as a political figure with the mild observation that it was better to put up with a Brinkley once in a while than to live in a society where the people were denied "the blessed and educative privilege" of making their own mistakes.

There is still in the central and plains states a scattering of aging Brinkleyites, of true believers in Doctor as a political saviour or as a great physician, who have made his memory a kind of cult. They keep alive the recollection of his kinetic personality with tall tales of his business acumen, his dead-pan humor, his generosity to employees, his mercurial temperament. He was, in their view, one of the truly great pioneers of science—a man ahead of his times, a Galileo or Pasteur. They place the same estimate on his surgical skill as he did: it was superlative.

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They see his difficulties in the same light as that in which he saw them—the result of envy, fear, or persecution. They recount instances of Doctor's courage, as revealed in his handling of various attempts to blackmail him when he was running for Governor of Kansas. Courage of another sort—financial—is revealed in an anecdote of Brinkley's early days in the border-radio game. There was a particular time when WLW, Cincinnati, raised its wattage to an astronomical 500,000, and then couldn't make it work. Brinkley and his cronies were fanning about the problem one night down in the XERA studio. Dr. Brinkley had a brilliant engineer named James Weldon, who remarked that he could put that much juice into a transmitter and make it work all right.

Doctor stroked his blond goatee and thought awhile. Then he said, "I guess you'd better go ahead and do it."

It was a \$75,000 decision.

John R. Brinkley, M.D., Ph.D., M.C., LL.D., D.P.H., Sc.D., Shriner, American Legionnaire, Captain, Coast Guard Reservist, is hard to assess as a man. Did he ever level with anyone, including himself? The view advanced here is that Doctor worked out some sort of rationale based upon ego. Self-interest carried him along to the point where he could no longer distinguish between the genuine and the bogus.

Except as to diamonds.

Bibliographical Note

This is not a formal bibliography but simply a sampling of the kind of material used in the preparation of the text. References identified in the text are not repeated here.

The principal printed sources have been, first, the books, pamphlets, brochures, advertising letters, radio talks and news releases which were issued by or authorized by Dr. Brinkley himself. I have considered *The Life of a Man*, by Clement Wood (Kansas City: 1934) to be a source book because it was commissioned by Dr. Brinkley, used by him as a propaganda tool and it is autobiographical in character. Other Brinkley publications which were useful, drawn largely from the capacious files of the Bureau of Investigation, American Medical Association, are:

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