

N-CIPHERED TEXTS

DONALD E. KNUTH
Stanford, California

Some years ago, while doing research on typography, I made a special font of type that obscured the letters in order to study the effects of spacing. Some of my students happened to look at one of my examples, and decided on their own initiative to figure out the words that I thought had been obliterated. To my great surprise, they were not only able to reconstruct a highly complicated and abstruse text, but enjoyed every minute of the task! They were so hooked on the problem they spent the whole night puzzling it out, and the next morning they challenged their friends to do it.

Believing that others might enjoy scratching their heads over this new type of "many to one" cryptogram, I have generated several simple texts which seem especially suited to this kind of game. Here are the alphabets I used, so that you can determine how the letters from A to Z look in capitals and lowercase:

תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה

These texts include some quotations by famous statesmen, a few limericks, and a surprise or two. Hint: the first word of the first quote is "To". Answers are given in Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.

