Title: Imperfectly Proper

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"We don't know what he struck, but he certainly struck something."—That Motor Boat of Algie's

Imperfectly Proper

By P. O'D. (Peter Donovan)

Illustrated by
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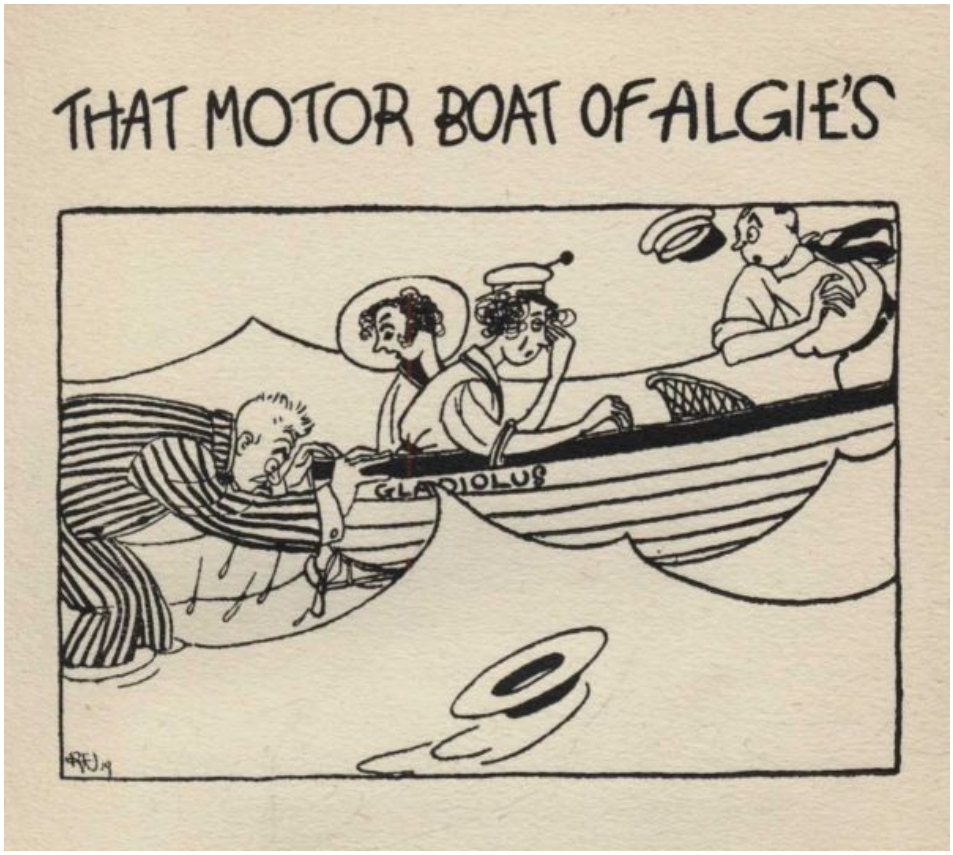
Preface

It is with extreme diffidence that the author presents—but then is any healthy author ever really as modest as he makes himself out in his foreword? Probably not, or there wouldn't be any book. The author, however, is quite conscious of the many defects of these sketches, and only hopes that in book form they will meet with the indulgence which greeted their original appearance. They have been gathered from the pages of *Toronto Saturday Night* and are here reprinted, through the courtesy of the publisher and editor, with such additions and alterations as have been suggested by the increasing years and wisdom of the writer—and the removal of the censorship. And they are dedicated to those two splendid and long-suffering friends, "Constant Reader" and "Old Subscriber," by their very grateful liegeman, the author.

PETER DONOVAN.

Toronto, Sept. 1920.

Contents



THAT MOTOR BOAT OF ALGIE'S

That Motor-Boat of Algie's

His name really isn't Algie. It wouldn't do to use his real name—he has a very nice wife, you know. So we shall call him Algie, partly as a disguise, and partly because we wish to be offensive. We want to hurt his feelings. It is our earnest desire that he should read this account and writhe painfully. We claim to be as patient and forgiving as the next one, but there are some subjects—and that motor-boat picnic is one of them. When, in addition to being made sea-sick, being scared into acute heart-disease, and being banged about in a locoed launch like a bean in a coal-scuttle, a gentleman is forced to ruin his second-best pair of—but we anticipate.

For two or three weeks prior to the fatal invitation and the fatal day on which he perpetrated the picnic, Algie had been coming down to the office late every morning—so late in fact that his coming amounted to an afternoon call. Furthermore, his face and shirt bore mysterious smudges of train-oil. And though Algie was never what is known as a "swell dresser," he was always a very neat sort of chap in the matter of his personal adornment.

As soon as he arrived he would immediately begin calling up all sorts of mechanics, plumbers, boiler-makers, painters, boat-builders, and electricians. Lengthy conferences would ensue in which frequent references would be made to cylinders and hulls and carburetors and propellers, and the time when certain jobs should have been done, and what a helluva nerve they had to ask any such price. The language was usually very technical. But it was occasionally quite lucid and human, though not of a nature to bear repetition in print which is intended to go into Christian homes.

During the two or three hours in the afternoon when Algie was with us, he would run out every few minutes and come back with a coil of lead pipe, or a dry battery, or a can of gasoline. And then he would slip away at about four o'clock with an intensely preoccupied air.

We all knew where he was going and what he was going to do. He had bought a motor-boat from a friend, and he was trying to put it in such condition that he could go out in it without having to wear a life-belt. Of course, the friend had guaranteed it as the safest, speediest, staunchest, and trimmest little craft that ever got in front of a ferry-boat on the Bay. But one should never buy a motor-boat from a friend. Better buy it from a deadly enemy. Then you may discover a big hole in the bottom of it, or a dynamite bomb stowed away forward with a clock attachment. But that is all. Once you have patched up the hole or thrown the bomb overboard, you are all right. But when you buy a motor-boat from a friend you are never done with trouble.

After Algie had had the Gladiolus—his wife christened it—for about a week, he realized that he had to put a new engine in it. He put the engine in, got the thing started, and headed for the Island. He got there just in time—to save his life, that is. The Gladiolus sank gently to rest on a sand-bar in three feet of water. The liquid composing the Bay is admittedly rather thick, but it managed to ooze into that boat in about four hundred and forty different places. Algie said afterwards that it had looked to him as though the boat were being invaded by an army of angle-worms.

With a marine derrick they enticed the Gladiolus out of the bosom of the sand-bar, and got her back to dry-dock. Then Algie started in to put a new hull around the engine. It amounted to that by the time he got all the repairs made. Then she had to be painted. Also she had to have a new propeller, ditto some chairs, ditto lanterns and a search-light, ditto a set of cushions. But at last the work was done. Algie was tired but happy; and he wanted to share his bliss.

"You simply got to come, old man," he said in a spirit of exuberant hospitality, "won't take no for an answer. Ten sharp, Sunday morning, at Sunnyside—the Missus and I will be right there as you get off the car. We'll run up beyond Port Credit and have lunch by the lakeside. Sharp at ten, mind!"

In a moment of weakness we consented. Nay, more, we looked forward to it. We had visions of ourself leaning back in one of the sumptuous deck-chairs of the Gladiolus, as that beauteous speed-devil ate up the watery miles on old Ontario. We could imagine the shores whizzing by, and the Hamilton boats being left hopelessly behind. So we prayed for fine weather. And when we say we prayed we don't mean that we issued an order to Divine Providence like a parson, but we made a timid and tentative appeal. It was answered. It was one of the finest Sundays we have ever seen. We don't suppose we were really the cause of it, you know, but we felt gratified. When a chap doesn't pray to excess, he naturally is surprised and delighted to get what he asks for. But, alas, we knew not what we did.

When we got off the car at Sunnyside—a popular local beach—there was Algie, sure enough, in white ducks and a stern expression of countenance. Just imagine the face of Admiral Sir David Beatty as he prepared to take the battle-cruisers into action off Jutland, and you will have a faint notion of the concentrated solemnity and sense of responsibility which sat upon Algie's features as he shook our hand in an absent-minded manner and told us to hustle aboard. We did hustle. We don't mind admitting that we were impressed. We felt that here was a seaman who entered upon the grave duties of his position in no frivolous spirit—a true sailor who loved and yet feared the mighty deep.

When we got to the wharf where the gasoline wonder reposed her graceful length, we found Mrs. Algie and two other guests. They were very nice people, very nice indeed. The husband was a clerical-looking chap—his facial make-up suggested a curate in an ineffectual disguise. But his conversation was at times decidedly unclerical—at least, it wasn't the sort of thing one gets from clergymen in their more professional moments. When that big wave came over and sloshed down his neck, he said—but again we anticipate.

Algie and his wife were in nautical costume as befitted the skipper and skipperess. Algie wore a nice pair of white ducks and a white shirt very open at the throat. Mrs. Algie was also in

ducks—cut on a different pattern, of course. It was a very fetching little costume. We say "little" advisedly. The skirt had been made remarkably short, or it had grown that way from too long and too intimate association with steam-laundries. The effect, in any case, was to keep it hovering about midway between the nautical and the naughty.

The rest of us were in the ordinary Sunday garb of churchgoers who happen to be going somewhere else. Our clothes were sober and restrained, but natty. They expressed the sombre atmosphere of the Sabbath, with a dash of outing flavor. Personally, we wore that grey suit with the black-line pattern which everyone admired so much. You may have noticed it—two-button coat and cuff-bottom trousers. Really a very pretty thing. We don't mention this from any feeling of childish vanity, but merely because it has a bearing on later developments.

When we saw the Gladiolus we must confess we were disappointed. We had been hearing so much about it, and Algie had spoken with such enthusiasm, that we had formed an idea of a vessel combining the luxury and grace of the Astor family yacht with the rakishness and speed of a torpedo-destroyer. Instead of that gorgeous conception, here was a boat which looked like a very long and narrow packing-case, pointed at one end. It contained an engine that suggested a coffee-mill with a very chunky fly-wheel. Abaft—that, we believe is the technical term—abaft the engine were a couple of cane-chairs.

The Gladiolus, however, was very strong in the matter of decoration. There were stencilled flower-designs in every possible place, and a huge flag drooped over the stern. The cushions presented florid designs of young ladies in sailor-blouses. A large and highly polished search-light glared over the bow like the eye of an enraged Cyclops. There was no acetylene for the light, but it looked well, and it made one feel so much safer.

The party fitted itself into the boat as best it could. It was a very tight fit. Two people seated themselves on the little bench in the stern. They were jammed in so tight that when one was pulled out it made a noise like drawing an obstinate cork. And two sat on the cane-chairs, when they weren't sitting on the bottom of the boat to keep her steady. The skipper had a bench all to himself, so that he could get up and wrestle with the fly-wheel every time the engine paused to think.

When we were all in the boat, she settled down to within three inches of the water—or so it seemed to us personally. We made a hesitating comment on the subject to Algie. He smiled a wintry smile.

"Guess you don't know much about motor-boats, old man," he said in a glacial tone. "You can't have speed unless you have narrow lines and a low free-board. Of course, if you want something built like a grain-barge——"

Hastily we disclaimed any desire for a grain-barge. We stated our entire agreement with him on the subject of low free-boards. Our concurrence was all the more enthusiastic that we didn't know the difference between a low free-board and a loose plank in the fence.

Soothed by our submission, Algie stepped gingerly forward, taking great care not to kick the engine over. He gazed sternly about. We watched anxiously. Algie bent down with dignity, grasped the fly-wheel with both hands, and gave a mighty heave. The engine coughed asthmatically and relapsed into silence. Algie heaved again. The engine cleared its throat—only that and nothing more. Algie smiled a sickly smile, muttered something about the sparker, toyed with a few cocks and levers—that engine seemed to possess more of them than any piece of mechanism we have ever seen—and then heaved that blessed wheel for fifteen minutes without stopping. Nothing doing! Algie was red in the face, his lovely ducks were all smudged with oil, and still the engine preserved the meditative silence of a paralyzed yogi.

It was very trying, very. We all started in to make suggestions, and Algie was so much at a loss that he even tried to carry some of them out, thus losing caste terribly in our eyes. No skipper should ever treat a suggestion with anything but withering contempt. At last he lost his temper and gave the engine a kick. We don't know what he struck, but he certainly struck something. The result was miraculous. The engine started with a roar like an express-train on a bridge, and before we knew we were shooting out into the Lake, just missing a canoe in which a young man sprawled with a double-bladed paddle and beamed at his "ladifren." As we whizzed by, nearly knocking the paddle out of his hand, that young man sat straight up, and while we were within range his conversation was of a character not countenanced by the Lord's Day Alliance.

Thus we started. Of course we didn't keep it up long. After about a hundred yards or so, the Gladiolus settled down to a steady clip of about three miles an hour—when she was going. There were frequent intervals when the engine stopped to get its breath. But we didn't mind. It was a

lovely bright day, and there was very little wind. So with our one-lung engine we gayly coughed our way over the glassy waters. We made many jokes, and occasionally burst into song—all except Algie, of course. Algie insisted on preserving the best traditions of British seamanship. On shore he might relax, but while he was at sea and our lives depended on him, he stayed right there on the bridge, and his stern eyes swept the waste of waters and the rock-bound coast lest danger should lurk there. He must have seen a lot of dangers that no one else saw, for he kept zigzagging and tacking about in the most extraordinary manner.

Pleasantly the hours passed and the landmarks on shore—summer hotels, gaudy villas smirking coquettishly through the trees, boating establishments where gentlemen hire canoes for their ladies, or perhaps ladies for their canoes. Slowly we drew near to Mimico. There is an asylum at Mimico. We have heard friends of ours account for its presence there on the ground that one must be out of one's mind to live at Mimico; but as they had been fined for speeding through the village, it is possible that their opinion was not entirely unbiased.

Inch by inch Mimico slipped past the beautiful low free-board of the Gladiolus. And incidentally, that famous free-board began to seem lower than ever. For some little time the wind had been rising, and the waves kept growing bigger—"quite a sea kicking up," as Algie said—and now and then there was an unmistakeable slap of spray over the side. The original intention had been to go some miles further along the shore for lunch, but Algie finally decided to turn back to Mimico—not that he distrusted the seaworthy qualities of the Gladiolus or himself, but merely as a concession to the fears of the ladies in the party. He announced his intention of landing at the Asylum. He had been a visitor or a guest or something there, and professed to know the doctor quite well. Besides they had a good wharf, he said.

Algie managed to warp in the Gladiolus, after several determined efforts to knock the end off the concrete pier. Then we landed the grub. Each of the three gentlemen—we include Algie—assumed the white man's burden, while the ladies tripped on gracefully ahead. We advanced into the grounds of the Asylum. There were a number of the inmates strolling about, but they made no attempt to accost us. Evidently they thought we were new and more than usually weak-minded arrivals. There was much to support such a view.

We found a nice spot for picnicking. It was on a low bluff overlooking the Lake. Sombre pines cast romantic shadows about us. And the lunch was excellent—just such a lunch as marooned sailors might dream to find awaiting them in heaven. We even had initialed napkins. And as the food went down our spirits rose. We felt that the perils of the deep were a myth, and we said ha-ha in our hearts and asked for another piece of pie. Then, having eaten and the chicken bones having been thrown over the cliff, we lay about in graceful postures, listening to what the wild waves were saying and quoting such verse as we remembered out of the fifth reader.

Suddenly it occurred to someone that the wild waves were saying a good deal and that they were talking in a big bass voice. We woke up to the fact that the wind had wakened up some time previously.

"Lord, but it's going to be rough!" said Algie:

But none of us realized just how rough it was going to be, or we would have all walked to town. Seen from above, waves are very different from what they are when seen from below—a truth which no member of that party will ever doubt again. We hastily packed up and made a run for the wharf and the boat. When we got there we found that another boat had also sought its shelter. Two sun-burned youths in extremely primitive costumes brooded in it and smoked cigarettes and cursed their engine. They had tried everything they could think of, including a lot of language they had never thought of before, and the darn thing wouldn't go. Thereupon Algie climbed into their boat and worked like an African slave for half an hour, in spite of our appeals and unveiled hints that he was an ass.

At last even Algie gave the task up and consented to get back into his own boat and begin a little Græco-Roman with his own engine. Strangely enough, that temperamental machine was quite amenable this time. It took only twelve minutes and a few damns to start it. Promptly we backed into the other fellow's anchor rope and put several fancy stitches into it with our propeller. Naturally our propeller became somewhat involved in the process. The other gentlemen—and when we say "gentlemen!"—refused to let us cut the rope, so there was nothing for it but to land the ladies once more, shoo them away from the wharf, undress Algie, and put him into the water. We kept him there till he had untied the propeller, and then we dragged him in, half-frozen. When he recovered sufficiently to be able to speak, he used some expressions which we are personally treasuring up for an occasion of great mental stress.

We rounded the break-water, incidentally scraping all the paint off one side of the boat, and

then everything happened at once. A great big wave with a white head saw us coming, gave a glad, wild shout, and jumped aboard. The Gladiolus shuddered and groaned, and we all shuddered and groaned. But it was only the beginning. The big wave was followed by a bigger, which also climbed playfully aboard and coiled up in our laps. And then all Lake Ontario seemed to crowd in on us at once. We were breathing, drinking, and absorbing water which we had intended using solely for purposes of navigation.

The way the Gladiolus acted would have been a revelation to a builder of submarines. That rakish craft, with the long, narrow lines and the lovely low freeboard, dived into every wave and shipped it gracefully all over the passengers. With a very little coaxing, she would have plunged down and run along the bottom. Now and then she came up to breathe, and then we all looked a mute farewell at one another and disappeared once more beneath the foam. None of us ever expected to see Yonge Street and the department-stores again.

The most extraordinary thing about the whole damp business was the way the engine kept going. A real engine would have stopped dead the first time a wave came in and lay down beside it. But this rheumatic and asthmatic old bunch of junk, which some heartless pirate had sold to Algie for an engine, kept coughing and sputtering through it all. There was no spray-hood, and the water was about a foot deep all around the machine, but it hammered away with a steadiness it would never have displayed in happier circumstances.

We would have turned back if we could, but we couldn't. Algie was in no condition of mind to steer, and the boat wouldn't answer the rudder anyway. So we just chug-chugged through the welter, holding our breaths when we were under water, and gasping for air when we could get any. Now and then we caught sight of Algie hanging on to the wheel, evidently prepared to go to his God like a sailor. It was noble but it wasn't seamanship.

For years and years we kept plunging into huge waves that rose up from the nether abyss, towered over our heads, and then crashed down upon us like the side of the Woolworth Building. Once or twice we caught a fleeting glimpse of the shore, with peaceful cottages upon it, and we remembered that somewhere the sun was shining and somewhere hearts were light. But we had little time for reflection.

Suddenly, after a century or two of submarine existence, we found that we were at Sunnyside once more. We were very much at Sunnyside. We were on the beach, with huge waves breaking over us, and three hundred people yelling directions at us. Some noble life-savers stood on the end of a wharf and threw us a rope. Algie grabbed it and performed prodigies of pulling. But it was no use. There we stuck, and a lot more waves came tumbling in to play with us. That is where we personally saw our duty, and we did it. We got out and pushed. It sounds simple. Most heroic things do. But it took the eye that saw and the legs that dared. We clambered out in the bosom of a wave, got a firm toe-hold on the submerged soil of Sunnyside, laid our head lovingly against the polished side of the Gladiolus, and shoved her out into the Lake. Then we held her there and got in again, carrying about a barrel of water with us, like a Newfoundland dog coming back with a stick he has retrieved.

Far be it from us to dwell upon this part of the adventure, though we know men who have got their pictures into the paper and the pictures of their entire families for deeds no braver. And these men have been sailors, hardened to the perils of the splashy deep, while we are a raw amateur whose favorite exercise is running a typewriter. But let us pass on.

Little remains to be told. Algie finally managed to blunder into the shelter of the Humber River. There we fished the ladies out of the boat, wrung them out, and we all walked rapidly home. We walked to keep from being chilled to death—also because there wasn't the slightest chance of them letting us board a street-car in that condition. Fortunately, home wasn't more than a mile or so away—Algie's home. But it seemed farther. Our clothes stuck lovingly to our personalities, and passers-by made unfeeling remarks.

Algie and Mrs. Algie did their very best for us. They fed us, gave us old clothes while ours were drying, made us take a little something with hot water and lemon in it, and rendered all the first aids usual in such circumstances. When we came away we told them we had had a lovely time.

"You must come out again in her," said Algie, "when I have had her decked in, and a new four-cylinder engine...."

But that was a long time ago, and we are still resisting the temptation—tactfully, we trust, but firmly.

AESTHETICS AND SOME TEA

Æsthetics and Some Tea

Why anyone should invite us to an æsthetic tea is one of those insoluble mysteries which Heaven alone can penetrate—supposing that Heaven would so far condescend as to notice the matter at all. We are not æsthetic, and we don't care a darn about tea.

What's more, we hate dressing up for it. There might be some sense in dressing up for a case of beer or a couple of bottles of Scotch. But why people should get into afternoon gowns and morning-coats for tea and postage-stamp sandwiches—well, it beats us, dear reader, it beats us.

Of course, nothing was stated in the invitation about it being an æsthetic tea. But we were asked to meet Mrs. De Frizac-Jones, and we knew what that meant. The reader may not know Mrs. De Frizac-Jones—at least, not by that name—but she is a very real person. She is the arch-priestess of the higher cultchaw in our town. And she makes it pay—about five thousand a year

and unlimited kudos! But more of her anon.

So we shook the camphor out of our morning-coat, and put a little indelible ink on the places where the lining showed through the more recent moth-holes in the vest. We sewed a button or two on our striped trousers, took a spot off one leg, rectified the line of our shirt-bosom and cuffs by clipping the feathers off the edges, read a couple of chapters of a book of etiquette—all about leaving your hat and stick in the hall without fear, and making a bright, spontaneous remark to your hostess on entering and leaving (a different remark each time, we presume)—and we felt prepared for the massed attacks of the enemy, including gas.

When we arrived there was already a goodly company assembled—thirty-seven ladies and three men. The ladies were bubbling over with unsuppressed excitement, and the air was filled with extremely cultured badinage involving the frequent mention of Mæterlinck and Mrs. Inez Haynes Gilmore. The three men didn't seem excited. They weren't saying a word. Till we were introduced to them, we thought they were the hired help.

The expression of intense eagerness with which every lady's face was turned to the door as we stepped in, caused a flush of pride and modest confusion to mantle our Grecian features. Not that we are entirely unused to such manifestations of feminine approval—but thirty-seven all at once!

When they saw it was only us—that is, when they saw it was only we—O Lord, we mean when they saw who it was, thirty-six of the ladies turned around again and began talking to the nearest person in loud, casual tones, with a unanimity that we can only describe as unpleasantly marked. The thirty-seventh was our hostess. She, poor woman, had to look at us, and she came forward with a wan smile and her hand stretched out.

"Oh, I'm so glad you have come," she assured us without conviction. "You will adore Mrs. De Frizac-Jones—her influence makes so powerfully for sweetness and light, as dear Matthew Arnold would say. And you newspapermen—you are so dreadfully cynical, so *tout à fait cynique*! She will be here any moment now. We are all longing for her. She is wonderful—so psychic, you know."

So that was why they all looked at the door when we first came in—they thought we were the priestess herself. And we were going to be uplifted. Also we were to be psyched—a hilarious prospect for a healthy, single man! We told our hostess, however, that we were sure we would adore Mrs. De Hyphen-Jones, as we always liked 'em psychic. We were about to explain that as a rule we preferred psychic blondes, but that a good psychic brunette with a neat ankle—our hostess, however, turned and addressed the company at large.

"Just to show you how wonderful she is," she warbled ecstatically, "the very first time she honored our little home with her presence, she simply telephoned to say she was coming, and when I began to tell her the address and how to get here, she stopped me at once. 'Don't tell me,' she said, 'don't even tell me the number. For when I come down the street, I will know at once the house where you dwell by its emanation of your personality, its you-ness, so to speak.' And she did! She came straight to the door."

On every side were heard gurgles of wonder and delight—"Marvellous!" "Isn't she just too wonderful?" "Extraordinary creature of genius!" And right in the midst of that liquid chorus of enthusiasm, we had to break in with one of those inept and devastating remarks which have time and again blasted our hopes of social preferment.

"But if she telephoned to you," we said in a loud voice like the imbecile we are, "she must have seen your address in the telephone book."

There was a chilling pause of indignation and a universal glassy stare. We felt the finger of scorn burning a hole in our shirt-bosom just above our heart. It was a hideous situation for us. We glanced about anxiously for a nice, low sofa to crawl under, when there was a sudden diversion to the right.

Mrs. De Frizac-Jones!—we were a lot gladder to see her than we had ever expected to be. She stood in the doorway, a middle-aged vision in powder-blue (or so we heard one lady describe the color). She carried her head slightly on one side, and a pensive smile lit up the shadows under her blue hat with a blue-and-black ostrich-mount (more eavesdropping on our part). She held out her hand to the hostess as though it were an orchid.

"So sorry to be late," we heard her say. And then the phalanx of ladies charged as one woman, leaving us four men stranded in the middle of the floor. We looked furtively at one another, but no one winked. We were all gentlemen. Besides, we were all badly scared.

"I am so utterly exhausted," Mrs. De Frizac-Jones explained languidly, when the first wild enthusiasm of welcome had somewhat subsided. "I have been lecturing to a class of dear girls on rhythm and deportment, you know, and it takes so much out of one. But their sweet sympathy

and intelligence are very reviving. I was teaching them how they must walk—stooping slightly forward, with the face gracefully uptilted. The mannish swagger of most girls nowadays is so very frightful. I told them that when they glide across a room, they must say to themselves, 'I am a lily swaying in the breeze.' And they understood at once—they are so exquisitely plastic."

All the ladies, talking together, said it was really miraculous how she thought of such lovely metaphors. And it brought the idea home to one so beautifully—a lily swaying in the breeze! Personally, we recalled that the last time we saw anyone trying to walk like a lily swaying in the breeze, was about 1.35 a.m. on a down-town thoroughfare. The person in question was trying to carry a most splendiferous slosh past a watchful guardian of the law without affording an excuse for police intervention. The result was something like a lily, and also something like a wrecking-crane that had got out of control. But we didn't tell the company this bright thought of ours. We didn't tell anybody—we had had enough of telling.

A few minutes later we were presented to the great woman. Our hostess did it with the air of one consciously heaping coals of fire on our head. She murmured something about our being a literary critic—as a matter of fact, the Managing-Editor makes us review such books as come in, because the stenographer has too much other work to do, and the last office-boy he tried it on quit.

"Ah-h-h!" said the prophetess giving us her hand, and promptly dismissing that limb from her thoughts—we nearly put it in our vest-pocket we were so embarrassed. "Ah-h-h! And where is your centre?"

Just casually like that—just as though she were asking us where was our favorite hotel. In fact, for a wild moment we did think she might mean where did we usually hang out socially, and we almost said that we could generally be found after office-hours in the Press Club playing poker or waiting for a friendly boot-legger. But the slight vestige of sanity remaining to us prevented this final catastrophe, and we managed to stammer out that we were not aware of possessing any centre at all—none to speak of.

"Oh, but you must have a centre," she persisted brightly. "We who are engaged in the sacred service of the arts and muses must have a centre, a guiding beacon leading us ever onward and upward to the stars. Have you no star?"

We hadn't the heart to tell the dear lady that the star to which we generally turned our longing eyes in the service of the arts and muses was the hope that the Business Office of the journal on which we work would increase the weight and thickness of our weekly envelope—(the printer will please not spell this "weakly," however appropriate and true the epithet may be). We did not care to introduce these mercenary considerations, so we said nothing and blushed. We may be a benighted newspaperman, but we retain certain rudiments of delicacy. She smiled on us in imitation of a Pre-Raphaelite madonna, and floated away.

Then we had tea—not right away, but after half an hour or so of pained wonder whether or not we were going to get anything at all, and where the dickens the people were all drifting away to. They disappeared, two or three at a time, and none of them came back. We began to suspect that we were being ostracized, when our hostess came up and collected us.

"Oh, you naughty, naughty man," she said in that mischievous and knowing tone which some married ladies love to adopt towards bachelors, "you don't deserve that I should bother about you at all, but you really must have something to eat. Come out to the dining-room."

We went out to the dining-room, disguising as well as we could our extreme eagerness for vittles of some sort or other; and there we found that assemblage of giant intellects wandering about picking sandwiches and little cakes and cups of tea off the mantel, off the side-board, off the window-sill, off chairs, and even off the stairs in the hall. They were taking their food the way the Twentieth Century Limited takes water, scooping it up on the run. We must have looked a little amazed, for our hostess deigned to explain.

"That is the way we eat now," she said. "We do it spontaneously and almost unconsciously. Mrs. De Frizac-Jones suggested it. She said there was something so gross and premeditated about sitting down deliberately to food. One should eat as the bees sip honey, flitting about from flower to flower."

We said we thought it a very delightful idea—no doubt, the cook does, too. Then we walked six miles and a half around the place trying to get enough to sustain the vital forces till supper-time. We finished up by nearly sitting in a plate of angel-cake. And we were still hungry. It may be a good system for humming-birds, but it has its drawbacks for people gifted with the usual thirty-two feet of internal equipment.

When the sandwiches had at last been all tracked down and destroyed spontaneously and

unconsciously, there was a general demand that Mrs. De Frizac-Jones should read something to us. After the usual amount of ah-do-pleasing on our part and no-I-rully-can'ting on hers, she suddenly remembered that she had Mæterlinck's "Death of Tintagiles" with her, and if they rully insisted—and, of course, they rully did.

The company draped itself in attitudes more or less graceful all over the furniture and the window-ledges, and assumed expressions of gloomy concentration. Mrs. De Frizac-Jones cleared her throat two or three times in a silvery way, and then began to read in a deadly monotone of the soul-freezing sort which villains used to employ in the "ten-twenty-thirt's" before the movies killed the spoken drama.

Personally, we feared the worst from the very moment that the name of Mæterlinck was mentioned. It acts like a spell. We have seen big, bouncing matrons, accustomed to bully their husbands and run large families, turn pale and tremble at the sound of it. We have known it to reduce to silence even the sort of prosperous business person who talks continually in a loud voice about his new car, and the cost of its tires, and the number of its cylinders, and the oceans of gasoline it consumes every time it runs around the block. The word makes them feel like a greenhorn at a Spiritist sceance watching a visitor from another plane materialize in the corner of the room.

The only people who seem to thrive on a diet of Mæterlinck are the æsthetes like Mrs. De Frizac-Jones. The gloomier the twilight of his scene, the more mournful the voices that float down the wind, the more the real enthusiasts expand and burgeon. Just give them a nice poetic strangling or something like that, and they are perfectly happy. Certainly, Mrs. De Frizac-Jones seemed to get a lot of fun out of "The Death of Tintagiles."

It was a cheerful little piece, all about a dear child and a black castle and a vampire queen. His young sisters try to shield him in their arms, but the queen's servants tear him away, and she slowly strangles him to death behind a big iron door while his sisters beat in despair upon it.

The reader will recognize at once how much better and stronger one feels when a play like this is over. Personally we almost gave three cheers when the poor little beggar was finally and completely killed. It put him out of pain—us, too. But fortunately Mrs. De Frizac-Jones checked us in time.

"No applause!" she commanded the company. "No applause! Silence is best."

We heroically restrained our desire to clap with our hands and pound with our feet on the rug; and everyone else sat still and frowned in intense thought. While they were wrestling with their souls, we slipped out into the hall. There we found one of the other men slipping away, too. Neither spoke a word, till we were both safely out on the sidewalk. Then he turned and pointed with his thumb to the house.

"Don't they beat hell!" he said.

BEAUTY IN THE BANK

Beauty in the Bank

Somehow we enjoy going to the bank nowadays far more than we used to. It isn't that we are more solvent than heretofore—our solvency does not seem to increase with our years—but the banks are much more interesting resorts than in the old days before the war filled them up with young ladies. The banks now have more color and animation, so to speak—especially since the girls have taken to wearing those gaudy pull-over sweaters.

We were reminded of this changed aspect of our sterner financial institutions the other day, when we caught ourself going in to have our bank-book made up for the third time in the week. Formerly it had been our custom to wait till we got a short and nasty note from the accountant asking us to call around and fix up that overdraught. But now we run right in every time we pass and have a little book-keeping done for us.

Instead of the gloomy young man who used to preside over the records of the savings department, they now have a bright young woman. This naturally introduces a very pleasing social atmosphere. We no longer chuck our bankbook in through the wicket with an air of weary nonchalance, or gaze coldly at the clerk as though daring him to make an insolent remark about the size of our balance and the amount of book-keeping it involves. Our account is still small and very lively, but we don't gaze coldly—on the contrary!

Now we take off our hat, and try to think up something sprightly to say about the weather. If it is a nice day in the summer, for instance, this leads naturally to a discussion of the best place to spend one's vacation, and whether or not one likes sailing, and does one do much dancing in the summer, and how good the roads are for motoring just now.

If it is winter or the weather is bad, it brings one at once to the tragic impossibility of going anywhere or doing anything, and how dull town is just now, and the theatre and the movies—especially the movies! This last is an opening we have found invariably successful. Once you mention Mary Pickford or Francis X. Bushman, acquaintance ripens visibly. Young ladies who turn coldly from almost any other conversational bait rise voraciously to this one, and take it hook, line, and sinker.

A great thing, too, about discussing film-favorites is that it furnishes a most useful index to character. Girls who like Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, for instance, are apt to be of the merry, hoydenish sort—fond of romping, you know, and caramels and practical jokes, and all that sort of jolly rot. The admirers of Clara Kimball Young or Mr. Bushman, on the other hand, are

usually of the yearning, soulful type, the kind of girl who wants you to recite poetry to her in the twilight, and longs for some strong man to protect her—this sort of thing usually leads to solitaire-diamond rings. But the young ladies who enthuse over Theda Bara and Pauline Frederick—well, when we run across one of these we always look around for help. When one meets an amateur of vamping one had best not get too far from one's strategic reserves.

This conversational gambit, is all right, but the trouble in the banks is that they keep changing the young ladies around. Just as soon as we have got things moving along nicely, and have reached the point where we can talk about the young lady's preferences in the matter of supper, or can throw out general suggestions in the direction of an evening's paddle in the Island lagoon, they remove her to an inaccessible portion of the building—perhaps they confine her in the main vault—and we have to start all over again. It is a little discouraging, even though our heart is in the work. Bank managers and chief accountants certainly seem to be jealous devils.

Business men, too, are an awful nuisance. They have a way of breaking in disastrously on our little *tête-à-têtes* at the wicket. One day last summer an awfully nice girl was reading a cheque we brought in, while we playfully seized her other hand which she had left carelessly within reach. Naturally she didn't notice that we were holding it—wonderful concentration these business women have! And naturally neither of us was paying much attention to anyone else—not while this particular business matter was being settled.

"Say, what is this?" a wheezy voice asked at our ear. "Is this a bank or have I butted into a manicuring parlor?"

We looked at the person, a fat and clammy merchant with a bunch of colored cheques in his flabby fist, the sort of human hippo who wears a pink shirt with a Palm Beach suit, and perspires on the end of the nose. We looked coldly down him from the gaudy band on his Panama, to the gilded buckle of his belt—everything below that was concealed by the overhang—but we couldn't think of a darn thing to say. Nothing suitable for a bank, that is.

Fortunately the lady was more than equal to the occasion. She raised her eyebrows and looked at the cheques he held.

"Do you want to cash those?" she asked in silvery tones of hauteur.

"I do," he said with unabashed assurance, "if you can spare the time—and a hand."

"Well, then you had better run out and get someone to identify you—perhaps one of the other butchers might be willing."

We could see the ripples of rage run up the back of that fat financier's neck. He turned a rich magenta, and the diamond on his little finger wobbled about as though he were trying to send a distress message by heliograph.

"Where—where's the Manager?" he spluttered. "I want the Manager. I'll report you, that's what I'll do—you—you minx!"

"Second door at the left of the main entrance," she said sweetly, and reached for a ledger. She did not seem flustered in the least, but our little conversazione was over—this sort of interruption makes it so difficult to recapture the first fine careless rapture.

It was our own fault. We shouldn't have gone in at an hour when business men were likely to be shouldering their way up to the financial trough. In order to take advantage of the social possibilities of present-day banking, it is best to call early—say, around ten o'clock. Then the commercial machine has not got properly under way and little flowers of romance may be made to bloom in the arid paths of business.

But, of course, one mustn't go too early. One must give the girls a chance to exchange their little confidences with one another about the sort of time they had the night before, and what canoe club he belongs to, and how many fox-trots she had with him, and what she said to Reggie when Reggie objected to her going around with a former aviator—aviators presumably being men of flighty notions of morality—and the other vital topics that ladies discuss the morning after.

We made that mistake one morning two or three months ago. A fellow had given us a cheque—it was rather a surprise, we admit—and we were quite short of money, which is never a surprise to us. We needed it and we needed it quickly, so we were at the door of his bank just one minute and a half after it opened. We didn't want to give anyone else a chance to beat us to his bank-balance, so we were there at nine-thirty-six-and-a-half.

The young ladies were present all right—most of them, at any rate—but they had not yet turned their minds to the business of the day. About a dozen of them were gathered in chatty little groups, from which stray snatches of conversation reached our ears.

"I think I'd have frills on it, my dear," said one. "You know those net and muslin frills are all the rage. Gertie was over at Buffalo last week, and she said that the girls were wearing them all

over."

How "all over?" But another broke in.

"Say, have you girls seen Maud's new Dew-Kist silk skirt?" she burbled. "It's just too sweet. But don't you think Dew-Kist is an awful nuisance?—everything sticks to it, you know. And it gets so fuzzy when it's rubbed."

Dew-Kist!—it certainly was a very pretty name. A Dew-Kist skirt suggested Arcadian gambols about the morning meadows, with singing and laughter and—well, there is no need of leaving all the kissing to the dew. But we decided not to rub one of those skirts—not if it was going to get all fuzzy and give us away like that. We even made a brief mental prayer that the vogue of Dew-Kist silk would be a short one, much as we liked the name.

Then we waited patiently for another five minutes, while the conversation turned lightly to chenille hats and knitted sweaters.

"I am doing mine in old-rose silk," one young lady informed the other girls and the banking public generally, as represented by us. "Wool is getting so common, don't you think? And the silk clings to the figure much better. You don't get that bulkiness around the waist."

Under the circumstances, we were strong for silk, and we were glad to think the girls were taking it up. In fact, we found the whole conversation very pleasant and improving. But we could not help reflecting that our financial purpose in visiting the bank was not being furthered by it, and that the Managing Editor might perhaps be impatient for our presence at the office. Of course, his humor would all depend on what sort of golf he had played the afternoon before, but one mustn't count too confidently on a good score.

So we coughed. We coughed gently at first, and then louder and louder, until finally we were tearing the fur lining out of our throat. A couple of fair bankeresses glanced at us as though we were an obnoxious June-bug. And then one of them—we think it was Claire—sauntered over to us humming one of Al Jolson's newest records. She laid a powder-puff on the desk and stretched a languid hand for our cheque. She read the cheque. She seemed to read it over several times. Then she laid it on the ledger and walked back to the group. An idea had evidently struck her—we thought she was going to call the police.

"Oh, girls," she said, "do you know what that dirty little cat, Edith...."

We wouldn't have minded so much if we had been able to catch the rest of it, but she lowered her voice, their heads all drew together, and we were left to beat our forehead against the brass grating in impotent rage. We also thumped on the desk with the end of our cane. They heard us—you could hear us two blocks away—but they heeded not.

Finally, the only man in sight came out of the teller's cage—if we worked in a bank these days, we also would wish to be kept in a cage. We would feel much safer that way. He was a comparatively young man but he looked harassed and worn. He came up to the wicket, and we pointed to our cheque—we were too hoarse to speak. He picked it up.

"Say, would some of you ladies kindly consent to attend to this?" he asked in an O-my-gawd tone of voice. It was the voice of a man who had suffered much and saw no relief in sight.

Claire came back, still humming. Her manner indicated that she despised us both. The Paying Teller—at least, that was the name on his cage—went into the big vault in the back of the office. Then he returned.

"Have you changed your combination, Miss Jenkins," he asked curtly, "or do you wish me to do it for you?"

Her combination—great heavens! We gasped and the purple flood of embarrassment mantled our particularly open countenance. But Claire was perfectly cool.

"Thanks," she said without the quiver of an eyelid, "but I want to get used to doing it myself."

She handed us our cheque and then she disappeared into the vault. No wonder they have big iron doors on those things!

KONCERNING KOSMETICS

Koncerning Kosmetics

As a matter of fact—and we are a bear for facts—it should be spelled with a "k." It comes from the Greek "kosmetikos," meaning one skilled in ornament. Honest to heaven, it does! We looked it up in the dictionary; and who are we that we should quarrel with a ten-pound lexicon? As a concession to custom, however, and to the beauty-experts who spell it with a "c," we will so far unbend from our classical austerity as to use the vulgar form "cosmetics" in the present article. The Greeks aren't likely to buy this book, anyway.

In the meantime the reader is probably wondering what in the world should cause us to write about the subject at all. The reader, we hope, is too well aware of our chaste aloofness of soul to suppose for a second that we have perhaps been cavorting about with persons who dye and stencil themselves—God bless us, no! We wouldn't do such a thing, even if the income taxes left us any money to do it with.

To tell the whole truth as simply as possible—and the person who tells the whole truth is obviously very simple—we were walking down to the office the other morning with a good churchman. Oh, a real pillar of ecclesiasticism! Not that we are in the habit of hunting up good churchmen to walk down with, but if we run into one—hang it all! we have to walk with him. We can't very well shout for a policeman.

Well, as we were walking down with him, and he was telling us some pretty little thing or other about something in the Thirty-Nine Articles—not to be confused with the Fifty-Seven, which are much spicier—we met a young lady, another pretty little thing. We meet her quite often. Morning after morning she walks up the street just about the time that we walk down. We don't know her. We don't even speak to her. But she looks sweetly at us, and we regard her in the tenderly paternal way befitting our years. A very nice little girl, indeed, and one of these days we are going to raise our hat, and...

This morning she dimpled daintily as usual, and we felt that soft glow which even the middle-aged can acknowledge without shame. It was pleasant meeting her. It gave a headier zest to the morning air, an additional sparkle to the winter sunshine, a sudden glamor as of green leaves and singing birds amid the bleak trees of December. It was as though old Pan had suddenly blown a few wild notes on his pipes and set a host of little elves peeping roguishly around the posts and porches of that monotonous and respectable street. For a moment we felt quite young and—well, rather devilish, you know.

"Tut, tut, tut," said our religious friend. "My, my, my—too bad, too bad!"

We wondered what the dickens he was tut-tutting about. He couldn't read our thoughts, and in any case they were entirely innocent. So why the tut-tutting? Why should a well-known drygoods merchant with a grown-up family go along making a noise like a sick Ford?

"What's the matter?" we asked. "Have you left something behind you at the house, or have you forgotten to shut off the draught of the furnace? That's the worst of furnaces, you have to be so...."

But he turned on us an appalled countenance as though he had just caught the rector kissing the president of the Ladies' Auxiliary. Instinctively we felt he was going to say something about our little friend of the dimples. He did.

"She paints!" he gasped. "Isn't it terrible to see a young girl—and rather comely, too, so far as I could observe in passing—paint the way she does?"

The old snooper! And he looked at us in the confident expectation that we would agree with him. We affected to misunderstand him and said that perhaps she did paint badly, and that Cubism and Futurism and the other new movements were playing the very devil with art. Painting wasn't at all what it used to be, and we proceeded to instance two or three men we know who also paint very badly indeed.

"They seem to have lost their sense of tonality and chiaroscuro," we remarked desperately, hoping the technical balderdash would distract his attention. "The vibration seems to have gone out of their paint, and their brush-work is..."

"But she paints herself!" he insisted.

Isn't that characteristic of the truly religious mind? They never miss a thing, those chaps. They seem to know instinctively—at least, we hope it is instinctively—everything that a woman shakes, smears, or pours on herself. They can tell rouge, face-powder, or hair-dye blocks away. If they tried hard they could probably tell you where every woman on the street buys her complexion, her coiffure, and her contours, and how they are put on. It is a great gift. Personally, it takes us years of acquaintance to find out.

We remember once a very churchly young man—the kind that always shows you to a pew and opens the hymn-book at the right place for you—telling us of a musical comedy into which he would seem to have wandered under a misapprehension. We had gone ourself, and it had struck us as being decidedly tame. But he was filled with indignant wonder that the Censor should permit such shameless and Babylonian displays.

"Fortunately I sat at the back of the house," he said, "or I wouldn't have known where to look. One of the girls in the chorus, the second from the right, didn't even wear tights, but danced in her bare legs!"

Great guns! And there we had sat up in Row E on the aisle—the Dramatic Critic let us have the seats that night—and hadn't seen a darn thing. Verily there is some power that sharpeneth the eye of the virtuous man and revealeth unto him the dishabille of the wicked. For an upright heart is more powerful than opera-glasses, and sanctity more exciting than a seat in the front row.

But to return to the young lady we met on our walk down to the office. Naturally we assured our godly friend that he must be mistaken in his suspicions. A little powder, perhaps, to give that pearly translucency to the complexion and soften the high-lights on the nose, but no paint—nothing like that.

"But powder won't make your face that funny shell-pink color," he argued. For a man of pious pursuits, it struck us, his knowledge was fairly broad.

We told him that powder was liable to make your face any shade in the spectrum. We know from personal experience. Occasionally after shaving, when our face feels more than usually lacerated, we rub some talcum on. It seems to take part of the sting out. It also covers the places on our neck where we have made futile and fumbling slashes at our jugular vein.

One morning we shook some powder out of a new tin, patted ourself with it, and then hurried down to breakfast. Our landlady looked at us with an interest and sympathy that were entirely unexpected and a little disquieting.

"Are you feeling well?" she asked, instead of demanding acrimoniously as usual what under heaven we had been doing upstairs for the last half hour or so, while the coffee was boiling itself to a poisonous consistency on the back of the stove.

We said we were perfectly all right, thanks, and would she please pass the prunes?

"But you don't look well," she persisted. "You got an awfully queer color this morning—kind of mauve."

A vague suspicion struck us that all was not well. We went over to the side-board and squinted at ourself in the silly little mirror which furniture-makers put in the back of such things. "Mauve" was right, though perhaps it would be more exact to state that we were a lovely shade of heliotrope, very decorative but rather Futurist in general effect. We looked as if we had succeeded in cutting our throat at last, and were now a pale and beautiful corpse. We suddenly recalled that our heart had been acting a little strangely of late, especially when we were introduced to new and pretty girls. Perhaps there really was something wrong with our old carburetor—or should we say our ignition system? We were scared a still paler shade of lavender.

Then we remembered the powder—somehow it hadn't seemed quite the same as the old stuff, though we had been in too much of a hurry to look closely at it. We ran upstairs and shook some of it out in our hand—it was a pretty and quite distinct violet, both as to color and perfume. Naturally there is no serious objection to smelling like a violet, but we had no ambition to have a complexion like one—we prefer that the resemblance should be confined to the beautiful modesty of our disposition.

We took the tin back to our druggist on the way down-town, and asked him with some asperity what the big idea was. We assured him that we hadn't bought the powder as part of the make-up to play the leading role at a wake, and that even in the event of our being laid out we didn't intend the dash of lavender to be so brazenly conspicuous—a little purple on our tie, perhaps, but none on our countenance.

"Oh, that's too bad," he said calmly—druggists are always calm—"I must have given you the powder for brunettes by mistake."

For brunettes!—but why, in the name of all that is sensible, we asked, should brunettes powder themselves with pale purple? He explained patiently that ladies of a dusky complexion sometimes used it to give their faces that fashionable pallor which is deemed a symptom of a certain blueness of the blood. He had several other shades, too, for other complexions, natural or desired.

We told our censorious walking companion all about this little experience of ours, but it had not the slightest effect on his opinion—you never saw such a hard man to convince. He still persisted that the young lady painted. In fact, he went so far as to describe how they rub the rouge on, spreading it out carefully with a rabbit's foot—for luck, we presume—and then cover it up with powder. Where the devil do these pious fellows get their information, anyway? He was too much for us. We had to let him have the last word.

After all, suppose she does paint—where's the harm? See how healthy and attractive it makes her look. Of course, the thing has to be done skilfully and with judgment. One must display artistic restraint in such matters, and not lay the color on with a palette-knife. Just a *nuance*, a *soupçon*, that's all.

Mind you, there is nothing like the real complexion—for one thing, it doesn't rub off on the shoulder of a fellow's coat. But suppose a lady hasn't a complexion which she can afford to display in unadorned splendor, what's she to do about it? She can't very well go out without a complexion, can she? The thing seems hardly decent.

Personally we have never sympathized with the censorious outcry against the more ruddy cosmetics. Why should this particular bit of camouflage be taboo, when so many other forms of it are regarded as permissible or even obligatory? Look at the liberties ladies take with their waist-line, for instance. Sometimes it is up under their shoulder-blades, and a few months later it is so low they are sitting on it. Half the time a man has to look twice to know where to place his arm.

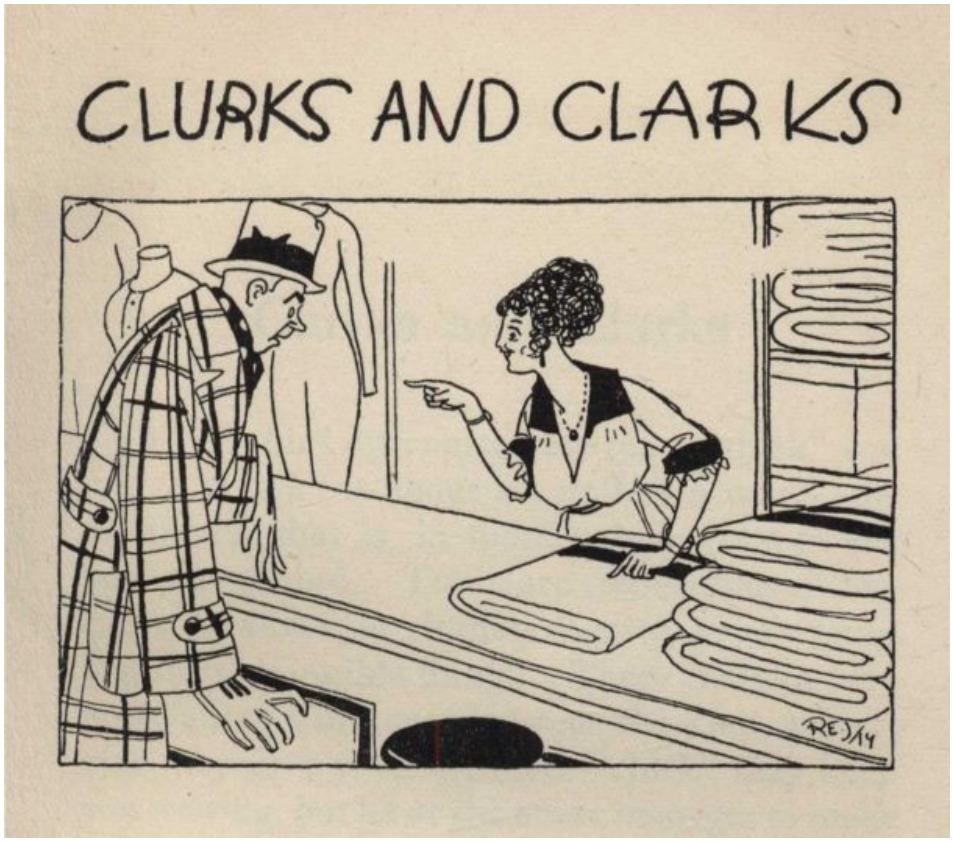
It is true that the added brilliancy imparted to the female countenance by the judicious use of cosmetics constitutes a very formidable weapon against masculine peace of mind. So clearly is this recognized that in Kansas, the home of fearless and advanced legislation, there is a law forbidding the use of rouge by any woman under forty-five years of age. After that age it is felt they are entitled to every possible assistance—barring shot-guns, of course, or other forms of physical violence.

Perhaps it is a realization of the danger to himself that causes the average man to inveigh so furiously against cosmetics. But his attitude is more than a little absurd. He is bound to fall sooner or later, poor chap, and how does it really matter if he falls a bit sooner and a bit harder? Nevertheless, the average man is usually bitterly opposed to his fair friends making themselves still fairer by deftly heightening or counterfeiting the rosy bloom of youth. He is opposed to his own sisters doing it—the mean old thing!—and he frankly rages when he catches his wife at it. Extraordinary how sore hubbies get when they find wifey thus striving to make herself beautiful in their eyes—can it be that they are not quite sure whose eyes?

The deliciously inconsistent part of the whole thing is that no respectable woman ever dreamed of daubing herself up with cosmetics the way the ordinary barber plasters most men with powder and perfumed hair-tonic and toilet dope of all sorts. We have seen fat middle-aged men come out of a barber-shop with their face massaged and powdered, their hair greased back, their mustache waxed, their eyebrows smoothed into place, and their hands manicured, doing their utmost to look and smell like beautiful Circassian slaves. And yet those are the chaps who go home and holler if they catch their wives rubbing a little powder on their noses!

Not that it makes the slightest difference, of course! The ladies, bless their hearts, will go right on making themselves beautiful in every old way they know how, no matter what men say. And you are quite right, girls. Personally we feel that you can't go too far or be too successful. So do your darndest! It's a sad old world just now, in spite of peace with victory.

But there is just one little word of warning, girls. We know you will take it in good part from a man who has grown grey in the intensity of his admiration for you. And that is, don't do it in public. A bachelor, it is true, dearly loves to be initiated into the little mysteries of the toilet, but not at dinner. That talcum powder has an unpleasant way of floating on the soup or the salad dressing. And you can't possibly spread it with the true artistic evenness at the table. You nearly always get too much on one side of your nose. This gives us an almost irresistible impulse to lean over and brush it off for you, and—well, what would the head-waiter think? It would probably cost us five dollars in hush money.



CLURKS AND CLARKS

Clurks and Clarks

The chief difference between a "clurk" and a "clark" is about six dollars a week—the difference, that is, in mere vulgar coin of the post-war period. There are tremendous differences, however, in clothes, dignity, *savoir faire*, and such intangible things. There is also a very pronounced difference between the kinds of service they give you. A mere "clurk" may keep you waiting, but he or she never manages to make you feel apologetic. "Clarks" always do—it is their social privilege.

It is at the blessed season of Christmas that we are especially reminded of these things. It is a time when we are much exposed to clerks—"clerks" being the generic term. We consort—not to say cohabit—with both species. If hanging over a counter for hours at a time, yelling futile directions at a monomaniac who insists on dragging down everything on the shelves except the thing one wants—if this doesn't amount to cohabitation, we would like to know what does. But, of course, there is something to be said in extenuation for the clerks.

Some day when we are a lot older and have made our pile, and have the whole four hundred and sixty dollars salted away carefully in some nice safe mining-stock—some day, in short, when we are independently rich and careless of what we say, we will write down our frank and unexpurgated opinion of Christmas shoppers, and then spend the rest of our life trying to induce some paper to print it. But that is a long way off yet. For the present we will compromise with the simple generalization that the average Christmas shopper is a lineal and typical descendant of such Gadarenes as managed to swim to safety after they had taken that historic jump off the cliff.

We feel that it is only fair to make this statement before we go on writing about the Christmas "clurk" and the Christmas "clark." For the Christmas shopper explains many things. To have to stand for ten, twelve, perhaps fifteen hours a day, while a lot of people, who have gone insane from starting in to do their Christmas shopping early and keeping at it without intermission ever since, howl impossible orders at one, would make the patient man of Uz himself pick up a bolt of dress-goods or a reading-lamp or some such handy trifle and clear a breathing space with it. Samson used the jaw-bone of an ass. But the asses who wedge themselves up against counters and scream at the clerk for things that are sold either two floors up or three circles over, keep their jaw-bones to jaw with.

The movement in favor of doing your Christmas shopping early is no solution of the problem. It has been worked to death. If you want to get ahead of the Christmas shoppers now, you have to start in the latter part of August. In that case your Christmas presents are likely to consist of lawn-mowers, mosquito netting, and parasols.

As a matter of fact, the wise man will do his shopping—unless he is so darn wise that he doesn't shop at all—the very last thing on Christmas Eve. By then all the red-eyed shock-troops will have got through their deadly work in the stores, and will be strapped to their beds surrounded by anxious nurses. A week earlier an ordinary man who plunged into a department-store at any hour of the day would take his life in his hand—along with his eighty-seven cents. If he managed to get through alive, he wouldn't have enough clothes left on him to make it safe to meet a modest policeman.

Another advantage of putting off your Christmas shopping is that you are bound to forget a lot of people to whom you would otherwise have sent a collection of assorted junk. Of course, it is too late by the time you do think of them. You are just that much in pocket, and they are relieved because they won't have to send you anything next year.

But, to return to the clerks, we had a simply awful experience last Christmas. There is a nice old lady for whom we buy a present every year. As she isn't our grandmother—grandmothers are satisfied with any old token of affectionate regard whether it be a postcard or a hot-water bottle—we have to exercise a certain care and judgment. And naturally our knowledge of the personal needs and tastes of old ladies is somewhat limited.

Well, we were standing deep in thought before a shop-window full of fluffy white garments with frills and ribbons, intended for purposes mysterious to bachelor men, when a friend's wife, who occasionally takes a maternal—or perhaps we should say sororal—interest in us, came up and asked us what we were doing there. Her tone suggested that she did not believe our interest to be entirely innocent. But we did not take offence. We told her frankly that we were trying to pick out something that would be suitable as a gift for an old lady.

"But you don't suppose, do you, that a nice old lady would be willing to wear anything in that window?" she asked.

We said we didn't see why not, and that personally we thought that cute-looking garment up there in the corner, with the baby ribbon at the top and the two ruffles around the bottoms, would be just the thing. We spoke in complete guilelessness, but we spent the next ten minutes trying to convince her that we hadn't intended to be objectionable. Will someone please tell us why it isn't all right to talk about a thing that it is all right to display brazenly in a window? If it isn't fit to be mentioned it surely isn't fit to be shown. But you know what women are when they get an idea of that sort in their minds. This one looked us sternly in the eye.

"I don't believe there is any old lady at all," she said, "but if there is and you really want to buy her a present that won't cause her to write and complain to your family when she gets it, why

not buy her a hug-me-tight?"

A hug-me-tight!—now that sounded like the very last thing we would have nerve enough to send a lady, no matter how old she was. Besides, we didn't know that a hug-me-tight was a thing one could send. We thought it was something one did. But we are always ready to learn, especially about things that have to do with hugging, figuratively or otherwise—and the more figuratively the better. But, of course, a good deal depends on the figure. So we got a few more directions, and then we walked right into that department-store and accosted a tall superior person in a morning-coat.

"Where do they sell hug-me-tights?" we asked.

"What's that?" he barked at us, in a manner which would have been offensive in anyone but a real silver-mounted "clark."

"A hug-me-tight," we repeated with emphasis, "a woolly business used by old ladies to protect the chest and back against draughts—the kind that come through the window, not out of a bottle."

We thought to cheer him up with this little touch about the "draughts"—mild, you know, but still a pun. Somehow he didn't seem to like it. Perhaps he didn't get it—these toffs often don't. Stately, you know, but a little slow.

"Woollen goods—third floor!" he finally grunted.

His manner was not of the sort to inspire much confidence, but we took his word—also the elevator. And when we say that we "took" the elevator, we mean that we fought our way into it through an army of maddened suffragettes. We bit the ends off two feathers; we were stabbed in several places with hat-pins; and finally at the third floor we were disgorged into the woolliest woollen department we have ever seen. It was full of woolly garments—some of a most embarrassingly intimate description—and ladies. There wasn't a man in sight. It was rather trying for us. There was on view a great deal of raiment of the sort that is "knit to fit," and—well, it has always seemed to us that there is something rather gross about wool. Now muslin—especially if complicated with lace and insertion—is filmy and charmingly illusive. But wool—no!

We picked out a plump little clerk-lady with woolly hair and brown eyes. We don't know why we picked her out particularly, except that she was the sort of girl we would naturally pick out. She seemed a young person who would know about hug-me-tights. So we went right up to her and—remembering just in time not to take off our hat as if she were a "ladifren" of ours—we asked her as casually as the nature of the case would permit where we could get a hug-me-tight.

"A hug-me-tight—you want a hug-me-tight? You—you?" and the shameless little huzzy buried her face in a pair of blankets with blue borders and bleated convulsively.

We moved on—with dignity, but hurriedly. It was a painful thing to have happen. There are dissolute and daring characters who would perhaps have enjoyed the situation. They might even have taken occasion from it to enter into conversation and find out the young lady's Christian name—if Christian—and whether or not she liked movie-shows. But ours is a mind above such trivial manoeuvres. We moved on, while a clammy perspiration bedewed our brow.

The next time we picked out the oldest and homeliest clerk we could see in that department. Taking courage from the thought that here was a woman who could not possibly put any personal significance into a request for a hug-me-tight, we went up to her and told her we wanted one. Involuntarily we lowered our voice till it was little above a whisper. Too late we realized our mistake. She gave us one horrified glance, and then, no doubt, recalling all the terrible stories she had read of young and pretty girls being "loored" to "roon" and never heard of more, she turned to cry for help. But we stopped her short.

"Madam," we said sternly, "the hug-me-tight referred to is a nice garment for a woolly old lady—no, no, a woolly garment for a nice old lady—and the sole motive in asking you for it is the hope that you might direct——"

"Three circles to the left!" she snapped in a sour tone, which for a wild moment suggested that she was disappointed. But we would hate to think that—at her age, too!

It was fully ten minutes before we could nerve ourself sufficiently to go to that third circle. Instead, we went over and looked at a lot of assorted mittens for children. We gazed at them with an intensity that must have given the young lady behind the counter the impression that we were the father of at least ten children—all small.

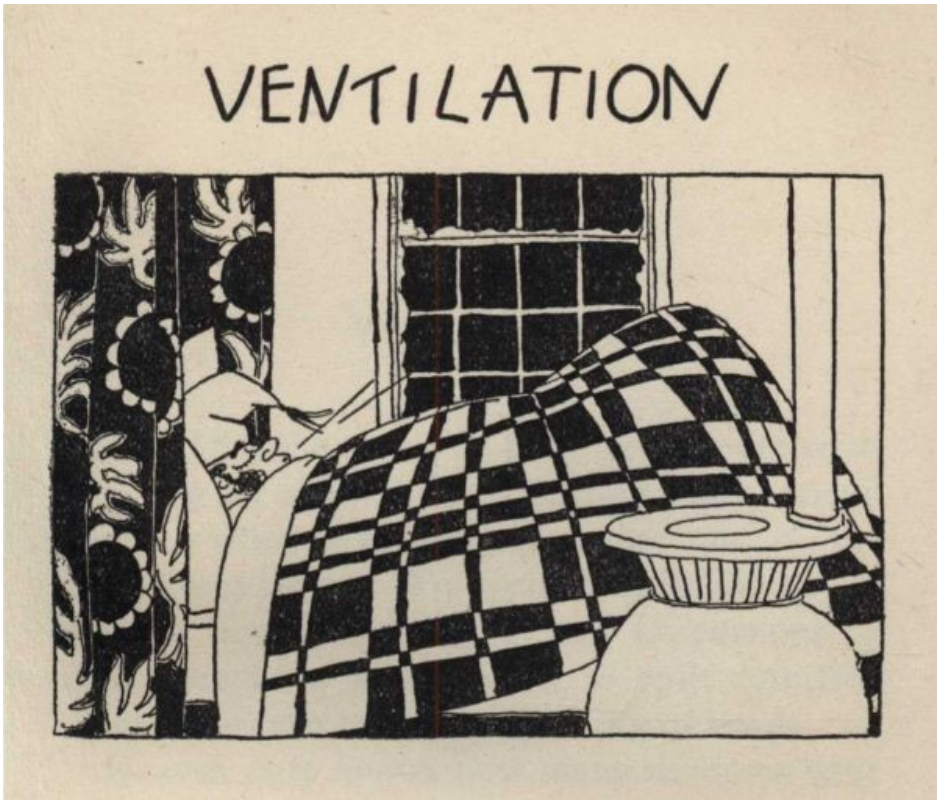
We even got a silly notion of buying a pair of them for the old lady—she has rather small hands. And there was a nice pair of red ones on a tape. Whenever she went out in the back-yard to make snowballs—but we decided against it. We were told to get a hug-me-tight; and a hug-me-tight we were resolved to get, even if they sent in a hurry-up call for the Morality Squad.

By this time, however, we were aware that a hug-me-tight was not a thing for a nervous man to ask a young lady for, without preparing her mind gently. We have always believed that we have a spiritual face—the grave, sweet expression of a monk who is happy in his calling. But any healthy man who says he can look spiritual while asking a lady-clerk for a hug-me-tight is a liar. We hate to be vulgar, but no other word will do. The thing isn't possible—that's all. So we were politic.

"Have you any woollen garments, something in the nature of a jacket," we asked in our most elaborately casual tone, while the blond person patted her hair and stared negligently past our right ear, "which would be suitable for an elderly lady to wear in the house or under a coat?"

"Oh, what you want is a hug-me-tight," she said.

And she never batted an eye! The self-control of women at times is really a wonderful thing. So we got our hug-me-tight at last. But never again—s'elp us! We'll get that nice old lady a meerschaum pipe first.



VENTILATION

Ventilation

This is the season of the year—we are writing on a fine brisk December day, friend reader—when ventilation becomes one of the paramount issues. To open the window or not to open it, that is the question. Discussions on this topic have been known to split families. They have even led to the splitting of heads.

Heaven only knows how many divorces have been started by arguments as to how much air should be let into the bedroom o' nights—with the number of blankets and the thickness of the eiderdown as sub-headings of debate.

Consider the sad lot of the ordinary poor anæmic husband married to one of those hardy modern women, who are so full-blooded that they can't bear to wear anything to speak of above the corset-top or below the knees. We saw one on the street the other day, and about the only difference between her and "September Morn" was a sealskin coat thrown back on the shoulders, and the fact that she didn't stand the same way as the lady in the picture. It was a cold day, too.

Naturally persons of such airy inclinations and fervid temperament wouldn't want to be

burdened with a whole lot of blankets and quilts when they go by-by. Obviously you can't take a really truly "beauty sleep" with several layers of bed-clothes piled up on you like the roof of a dug-out. The thing isn't done—not in any pictures that we have seen, that is. As a pious and embarrassed bachelor, of course, we speak of such matters purely from report and from such evidences as we have gleaned from the movies and from those bed-room scenes now so popular in stage-performances. Stage-beds never have any blankets. Their appointments always are of pink silk, and no conscientious actress would dream of pulling them up any higher than the lace-work on her nighty.

But consider the case of the modern husband. He, poor devil, is not hardened by going around the streets with his shirt laid open so as to expose everything from his collar-bone to his solar-plexus. Also his pants are of wool—or so the tailor claims—and they extend to his feet. If they were made of georgette (we got this from a department-store "ad") and cut off at the knee so as to display about three dollars' worth of transparent silk stocking, they might help to harden his constitution—also his nerve. But, as a matter of fact, he would probably get double pneumonia while the first policeman he met was dragging him off to the station. If he didn't get double pneumonia, he would certainly get three months.

Naturally such a man is soft and sensitive to cold. If he lets any draught into his room at night, he wants a nice, tame little draught that will coil up quietly under the dresser and stay there. His wife on the other hand, accustomed to the rigors of the open street with hardly any other defence than her natural beauty, insists on letting into the room one of those northern zephyrs that play about exposed street-corners in the month of January. That is where the trouble starts, and—well, when we finally get a divorce court in Canada, this will probably be regarded as one of the statutory causes.

Of course, it isn't only a man's wife that drives him into nightly cold storage. There is the pressure of public opinion, for instance. The same absurd force of custom which drags a man out of bed in the morning, blue and shivering, and plunges him into a tub full of icy water, directs that he shall leave his window open all night for fear of what the neighbors would think of him if he didn't.

We are a coward like everyone else, and we do it. We don't believe the health-hints we see in the magazines. We have no wife to bully us in the matter of the aeration of our boudoir. And yet we cower miserably under the clothes all winter long, while icy gales leap in through the window, chucking our garments off the chair where we pile them up, blowing the undress portraits of our favorite characters in ancient history, Helen of Troy, Venus, and Phryne, about the room, and reaching under the clothes to tickle our feet with icicles.

It isn't good for us. It isn't good for any man to spend the night with his head under the pillow instead of on top of it. But what are we to do about it? We don't dare keep our window closed—what would our landlady say, if she found out? She'd probably decide we had measles, and throw us out to prevent the house being quarantined.

And next morning! Great guns, but that room is cold! It would be just about right for a little Esquimau, but we are not a little Esquimau. We don't rub ourself all over with train-oil or whale-blubber. We don't even know how to induce a whale to blubber on us. Neither do we sleep in fur pyjamas, which also serve for business and social purposes. Little Esquimaus don't even have to put their hats on when they get up. They are all dressed as it is.

The terrible predicament of a civilized man dressing in a cold room is that he has to take off what little he has on before he can put on anything else. One's flannelette nighty may be no great shakes as a protection, but at least one has been able to warm it up a little during the night. And then to take it off, while your teeth chatter and your blood congeals—there are few sadder partings than this.

One's only safety lies in speed. If you could only see us as we leap—oh, with a chaperon, of course, dearie—no, no, we don't mean that we leap with a chaperon, but that it would be all right for you to see us if you brought a chaperon—oh, well, anyway, we certainly leap.

But it must be admitted that civilized male habiliments are not adapted to speedy dressing. Neither are female, for that matter, judging by the length of time we have to wait whenever we take anyone to the theatre. If they would only devise some sort of clothes—for the winter months, at any rate—that a man could jump into and fasten with one or two buttons! You know how a firehorse runs into his harness. Well, something along that line would do.

As it is, we drop our *robe de nuit* like Psyche at the bath—only a little more hurriedly, perhaps—and then we start a deadly wrestle with a set of underwear which has deliberately tied itself up in a series of fancy knots. Our feet stick halfway in, and we stagger about on one foot

dragging and moaning, while our epidermis assumes all the colors of a sick chameleon. It is a very painful predicament, mortifying to one's sense of dignity, and hurtful to one's eternal salvation because of the expletives one is sometimes led to blurt out.

And then think of the complication of hose-supports, suspenders, collars and ties, and all the rest of it. Besides, you have probably forgotten to put buttons in a clean shirt the night before, and you have to stand there with palsied fingers babbling in imbecile rage while the studs roll gaily under the bureau. No wonder a man comes down to his breakfast on cold mornings with a seething rage that would make a Prussian hate-party look like a June day in the pigeon-loft.

Who started this ventilation racket, anyway? Our grandfathers had no use for it, Heaven knows. Personally we can recall our paternal grandparent, armed with a large, strong kitchen-knife, shoving gobs of cotton-batting into the cracks around the double-windows, in case a skinny little draught should be able to worm its way in somewhere. And yet the old gentleman was not cut off prematurely by some wasting disease. He celebrated, on the contrary, a very merry ninety-fourth birthday before he went aloft to poke cotton-batting cloudlets, no doubt, into the crevices in the pearly panes of heaven.

We have also known a lot of other vigorous old people who had about as much use for ventilation as they had for a velocipede. Of course, this sort of talk from us sounds very reactionary and benighted and all that, but we can't help recalling that people seemed to live longer and more comfortably in the good old stuffy days than they do now, when a man is a small body of chills entirely surrounded by draughts. Perhaps some brother or sister will rise up in meeting and explain this little matter to us.

Air, fresh air—everyone seems to be shouting for it as though they were Huns caught in a foundered submarine. But old-fashioned business men used to do their work in hermetically sealed offices containing a wood-stove that made the varnish smoke on the furniture. If anyone opened the door wide enough to let in a draught the size of a lead-pencil, they swore at him. And as for opening the windows—only over their dead bodies, that's all! Besides, they were usually nailed down till the next spring.

But your modern business man's ideal seems to be an office that is about as weather-proof as a squirrel-cage. We called on a man the other day, and he was sitting between two wide-open windows with a gale blowing through them that nearly shot us back down the stairs again.

"Great, isn't it?" the Arctic idiot chortled. "Nothing like good fresh air! Keeps up your efficiency, you know, puts pep into you."

We said that obviously a man would have to keep moving if he wanted to save himself from freezing to death in that office. But where did his customers get off? It might be all right for him to freeze out a poor devil of a journalist like ourself, but how about freezing out a pork-packer or a bank-president? Not that we have any painful objection to seeing them frozen, God Wot—we have been frozen out of banks too often ourself.

"Oh, a man's customers come in off the street," he said breezily, "and they're usually wearing their street-clothes, so they're all right."

We took the tip. We buttoned our overcoat, turned up our collar, pulled our hat well down on our head, drew on our gloves, hunched up our back, and were able to talk to him for three minutes about as comfortably as though we were sitting on the top ledge of a sky-scraper in a blizzard. If there's anything we hate, it is a draught in the ear. The only draught we don't object to is the sort that one gets out of a keg, and naturally one doesn't get it in the ear—not unless the party has been going on a long time.

Take our own office. The window swings on a central pivot. The beauty of this system is that you can get more air this way in a shorter time than by any other expedient short of removing the side wall. But you can't get just a little air. Either you don't get any at all, or you get a tornado that lifts you out of your seat by the back-hair.

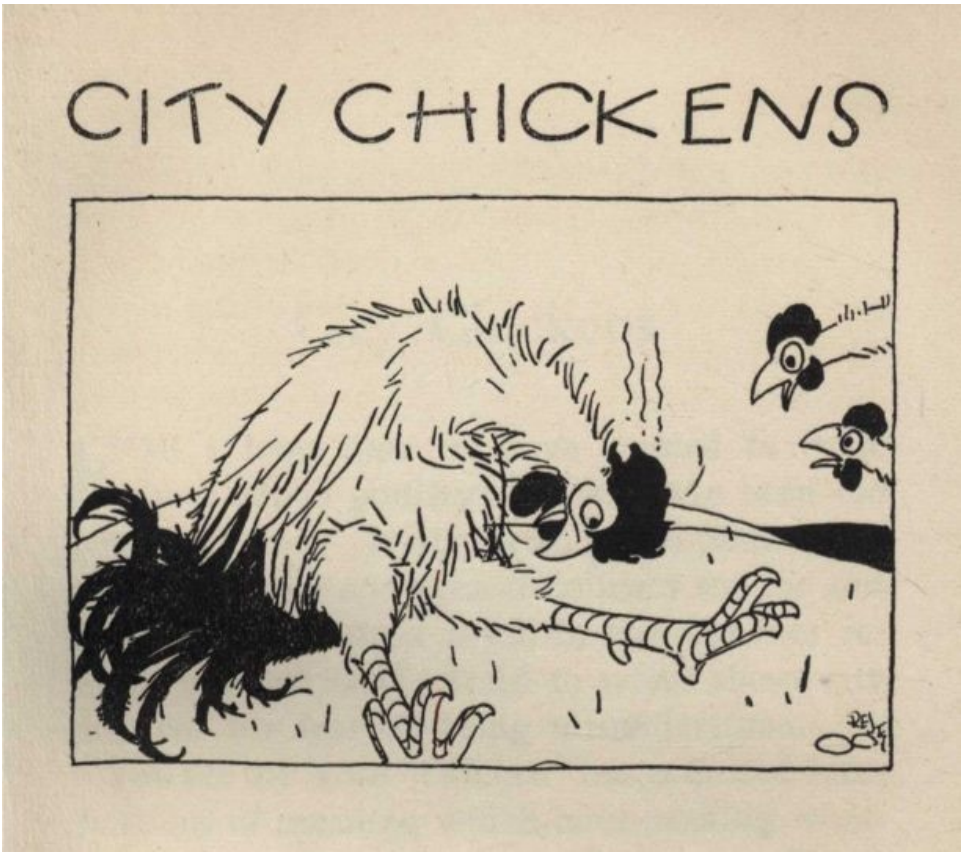
Of course, the system has one advantage—you can aim the draught. By setting the window at the correct angle, you can switch an aerial Niagara into the next office, from which it comes back slightly warmed up and as a rule highly flavored with cigarette smoke and profanity. This vicarious ventilation, so to speak, has its advantages, but it is apt to lead to reprisals—and not always in kind. Some son of a gun, for instance, slipped into our office this afternoon and stole all our matches. We know they weren't blown away, for they were in a drawer.

While we feel keenly on this subject of ventilation and believe that the thing is being greatly overdone, we don't wish to write ourself down as entirely opposed to fresh air. Some concessions must be made to the popular hygiene of the day. All that we ask for is reasonable moderation. We don't mind a nice little draught slipping into the room from time to time, so long as it comes in

quietly and unnoticeably. What we hate is the sort of draught that leaps at the back of our neck and shoves an icy mitt down our collar.

Personally, we look forward to the time—will the reader please excuse us for a moment? The chap in the office next door has just opened his pivot window again, and has blown our hat, ten pages of this manuscript, a dollar bill, and seventeen cents' worth of postage stamps down the corridor. We are going in to speak to him about it.

(We are taking a paper-weight with us).



CITY CHICKENS

City Chickens

For a long time we have wanted to write about urban poultry; but we have been too nervous to start. It may seem to the reader that we are carrying our natural delicacy too far and are becoming almost prudish, but the fact remains that we were afraid to write about city chickens for fear of being misunderstood.

You see the word "chicken" has acquired ramifications of meaning which have nothing whatever to do with Plymouth Rocks, or Silver Wyandottes, or Buff Cochins, or any of the other standard breeds of hen. It occurred to us, therefore, that if we were to start an article about keeping chickens and dressing chickens and that sort of thing, readers of a precipitous turn of mind might jump to indecorous conclusions.

We hasten to assure the reader that we don't mean that kind of "chicken" at all. In the first place, we don't know anything about them. We are too virtuous—also too poor. It is true that occasionally, when forced by our professional duties to investigate the night-life of great cities, we have seen poultry of this sort gaily cavorting about and—but we are growing prolix. Let it suffice to state that this article is written about the sort of chicken that goes garbed in feathers—hen feathers, we mean, not ostrich plumes.

It is really extraordinary how many people in town keep chickens. The love of things rural seems to die hard in the urban breast. Unable to go out in the early dawn and chew straws while he gazes placidly at his hay field or his hog lot, the city man keeps hens.

First of all he purchases a whole library of hen literature. He discovers that there are about seven hundred breeds, and that each one is ideal for his purposes. Finally he buys four hens and a rooster which can trace back their ancestry through two hundred generations or more of aristocratic hendom. No common pullets for the city man who is going in for poultry—nothing but the real blue bloods at about forty dollars apiece.

He has previously built a strictly up-to-date hen-house—steam heat, hot and cold water, nursery, tiled bathroom, maid's quarters, and all the rest. If he is a very kind-hearted man, he may even put in a gramophone and hang comic pictures on the walls. They say it is very important that hens should be kept in a cheerful state of mind. Personally, we have always had our doubts about a chicken having any mind at all. But that's what the books say, and who are we that we should venture to dispute with a book?

Of course, these chickens don't lay. Purse-proud and aristocratic chickens of this sort never do. They have no incentive. Why should they go to the trouble of laying eggs and having a family when they can get everything a hen's heart desires without it? Besides, the late hours they keep tend to a low birth-rate.

The Downer, however, gets it into his poor numb noodle that the food isn't right. He starts experimenting, and once you start experimenting with hen-feed you are headed for bankruptcy and the bug-buggy. The only thing that saves you is that the chickens die in time—chickens that are fed everything from canary seed to lobster and champagne are apt to die young.

Is the owner discouraged?—usually, no. Ten to one he goes out and buys another half dozen members of the poultry peerage. The only difference is that this time he gets a different family, Brown Leghorns instead of Black Minorcas, for instance. But the result is always the same.

Occasionally, of course, a hen will forget herself and the social exigencies of city life and will lay an egg. Now and then they are even known to have a chicken—in extreme cases, two or three. But families of this unfashionable size are extremely rare. At a moderate estimate—allowing only a reasonable interest on capital invested, the house, hens, food, etc.—the eggs cost three dollars and a half each, and the baby chickens six and a quarter. But every time one arrives the proud owner goes about for days telling all his friends what a convenience and economy it is to grow your own eggs and spring chickens right there on the premises.

There is something pathetic about the way the moral character of chickens deteriorates in town. We have often wondered, in fact, why the parsons do not draw stern ethical lessons for their sermons from the way decent, well-behaved country chickens take to evil courses in large cities.

Time and time again we have seen innocent and energetic young roosters from the farm come into our neighborhood—rather a respectable neighborhood, too, as neighborhoods go—nice, young roosters of good habits, who always got up at the proper time in the morning and went to bed early o'nights and crowed with fidelity and discretion.

And what happened? Why, those roosters wouldn't be exposed to the pernicious influence of city life for more than a month before they would be staying up all night, crowing at the electric lights, and keeping the hens up, too. What becomes of family life under these conditions? What sort of future is there before a hennery where the rooster sleeps all day and the hens sit around and hold mothers' meetings without an egg or a chick in the place?

There is a rooster in our block just now, who has gone absolutely to the demnition bow-wows. We first knew him as a kindly young cockerel from one of the small provincial towns, good humored, honest, and orderly. But you ought to see him now—especially you ought to hear him. The brute crows his head off every time in the night that an automobile goes by; and he spends his afternoons sitting on the side fence watching the girls in the tight skirts—with the nastiest leer in his eye! We often hear the hens calling to him; but what does he care about his family responsibilities?—not a kluck!

The neighbors are all talking about that rooster. They are also shying things at him whenever he gets within range. This brings up another unpleasant feature of keeping hens in town. The neighbors are very apt to be cross about it. They never seem able to take the same idyllic view of chickens that the owner does—very narrow-minded people, neighbors, as a rule.

Even the best-behaved fowl are likely to fly over the fence occasionally into a neighbor's yard and dig worms out of the gravel walk or make impromptu salad of his geraniums and young onions. And you have no idea how annoyed the neighbor gets over these little outbreaks of playfulness. Think, too, of the eggs that must result from it. Just imagine, friend reader, an egg with a geranium shell and a flavor of young onion!—or heliotrope and carrot tops!—or burdock and tomato can! The possibilities are unlimited.

This reminds us of a man we knew once who lived back of a brewery. We didn't seek out his acquaintance and make ourself a friend of his just because he lived back of a brewery—it happened that way, that's all. We couldn't very well cut a man just because he lived back of a brewery, could we?

He also kept chickens. We didn't let this interfere with our friendship either. But he had certainly the gosh-darndest time with his chickens of anyone we ever knew. There were about fifty of them—four roosters—and they had a nice, roomy hen-house with separate beds and great big perches to sit around and talk on, every comfort in fact.

But did those chickens stay at home and lay eggs and rear large families and attend to the other duties of their station in life? No, they did not. They took to drink. We can hear the reader snort in disgust as he reads this—if he does. The reader no doubt thinks we are lying. Not knowing the sterling honesty of our nature, the reader doubts our word. But fortunately we have court records to back us up, for our friend sued the brewery for damages.

You see, the brewers used to throw out their used malt and the lees of the beer-vats in a huge pile just back of our friend's fence. One day an enterprising young rooster, whose moral upbringing had been neglected, hopped over the fence and tried some of the malt. It tasted good. Little did he know, poor bird, that he was getting into the clutches of the Demon Rum. He ate fermented malt till he couldn't jam down another grain.

Did it go to his head? Did it?—dear reader, that young rooster accumulated the loveliest load of lush, the most beauteous and bountiful "bun" ever seen in that district—and it is a district rather famous for its "buns."

It was long after dark when the young rooster got home—trying to find the key-hole, no doubt—and he aroused the whole hennery. He staggered around crowing comic songs, insulted all the most respectable hens in the place, started out to whip the other roosters, and put the whole place on the blink generally.

Our friend was aroused by the uproar, and rushed out, thinking that a rat or a stray dog had got into the hen house. He said that it was the finest representation of a hilarious "jag" in an old ladies' home that he ever saw. But, of course, he didn't know at the time what was wrong with the young rooster. He thought he was sick, and went out next morning and gave him some bread and milk—or whatever it is one gives sick roosters. But the rooster would have none of it. He didn't want bread and milk. What he wanted was some bromo-seltzer or a "Collins."

Was the young rooster enlightened as to the evil of his ways? Did he take the pledge and climb on the water-bucket? Alas, no! What that young rooster did was to fly right back over the fence that very afternoon and tank up once more. Worse still, he brought the other roosters with him.

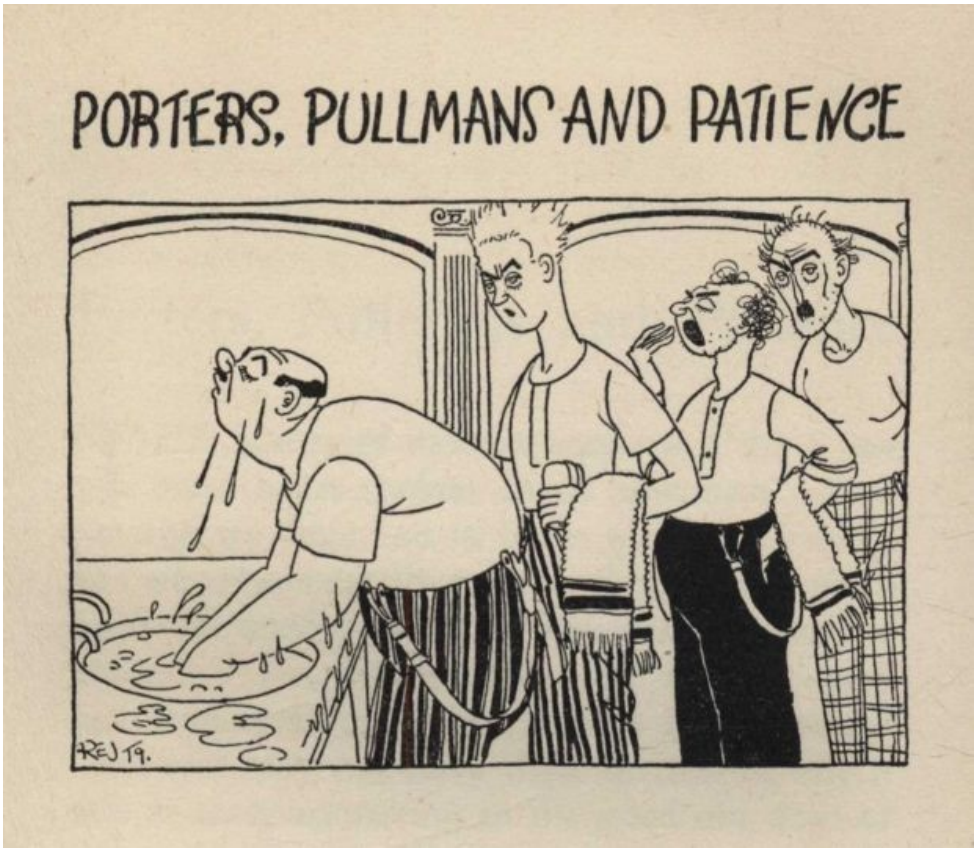
That night there was another rough party in the hennery—four times rougher than the other, for there were four roosters in it. They went in for close harmony in their choral work, and also did a little close scrapping. They even tried to whip our friend the owner when he went out to restore order.

Talk about drunkards' homes and temperance lessons!—that hennery would have furnished the W.C.T.U. and the Prohibitionists generally with arguments for a five years' campaign. In a few days every chicken in the place had developed a taste and capacity for beer that would have filled half the population of Bavaria with envy. Life for them became just one big "bust" after another.

Instead of hopping cheerfully from bed at the first peep of dawn, those chickens slept in till noon. They didn't care who got the early worm. Then they piled over the fence to the malt pile, and stayed right there till closing time and after. They stayed, in fact, till our friend went over and carried them back. He said it made him feel like a police van on the Twelfth of July.

Nothing could keep those hens away from the booze. Our friend built the fence higher; but they dug a tunnel under it. When he blocked that up, they flew over into the neighbors' yards and got around that way. They would even go out by his front gate and walk around the block, and come staggering back at all hours of the night in a way that would give any house a bad name.

Finally he sued the brewery for alienating his hens' affections—they only laid one egg in three months, and when our friend tried to eat it it went to his head it was so full of alcohol. But the Judge said that a man who kept hens in town should be shut up somewhere and have his property managed for him.



PORTERS, PULLMANS AND PATIENCE

Porters, Pullmans and Patience

The luxury of modern travel is a thing one often hears spoken about nowadays. Personally, we have had to listen to it for so long, and we are so heartily convinced that it is a piece of arrant humbug, that we are finally moved to protest. "The luxury of modern travel"—pish tush, and again pish! There ain't no such thing.

Travel may not have been luxurious, but it was at least interesting in the good old days of the mail-coaches. We like to think of them rolling with a tremendous clatter of hoofs and a flourish on the guard's horn through grey villages dozing among their elms, right up to the doors of glorious old inns where the hostlers tumbled out with fresh horses and journeying gentlemen tumbled in for a glass of mulled port.

That was travelling, bless you! There was some sport to that, some exhilaration. A man might well be moved to song on the top of one of those old coaches of a fine spring morning with the hedge-rows all in tender green. Even we ourself, who have a voice that causes people to turn around and scowl when we join in a chorus, even we might be led to troll a rollicking catch under such circumstances as that.

But who ever heard of anyone singing in a Pullman car—unless it should be a traveller in the smoking-room who had travelled not wisely but too well? And even those days are past now. Singing isn't done, that's all. There is no excuse for it, except inebriety or a brainstorm—and we have ruled out inebriety, more or less. Besides, the man who manages to get an extra Scotch or so nowadays doesn't make a fuss about it. He keeps the fact a dark and happy secret. So, instead of singing in a Pullman car, one simply sits and grouches until that blessed moment of release when the porter has brushed all the dust off one's coat into one's eye, and one can seize one's grip and totter out into the open air once more.

The misery of modern travel starts from the moment the traveller, laden with disheveled impediments of all sorts, plunges madly out of the house watch in hand—this is difficult but it can be done—to the taxicab which has come just twenty minutes late. The driver says it is because the people at the garage gave him the wrong address, the intimation being that he had finally arrived at the right one by some process of complicated and inspired ratiocination. The real truth is that he stopped to talk to a "ladifren."

Personally, we plunge out and catch a streetcar. We are a democratic cuss. Also they don't make one wait so long. Moreover, it is so exciting to stand on the back platform and pull out

one's watch—it is ten minutes fast, though one doesn't suspect it—and break into a cold sweat every time anyone stops the car either to get on or off.

The car-line we usually take crosses railroad-tracks in two or three places. This may seem to the reader an irrelevant detail, but it wouldn't seem so if the reader had to take it. Invariably when one is in a bigger hurry than usual, a shunting-engine and a crew of leisurely fiends in dingy overalls are engaged in chivvying a bunch of freight-cars backwards and forwards over the crossing, while one notes the second-hand of one's watch slipping merrily around and one mentally calls on all the lurid reserves of language.

Rushing into the depot—dear reader, did you ever rush into the Toronto Union Depot? Did you ever sprint madly, with your bag banging against your knees, down that interminable corridor—it seems a mile and a half long at the very least—from the main entrance to the door where a cool ruffian in a uniform insists on stopping you and seeing your ticket, though you have just four seconds to catch your train and you know on what track it is just as well as he does? And when you have finally got by him, did you ever slide down one of those flights of iron steps into that damp and dismal tunnel where the trains stand? If you have ever done any of these things, you can sympathize with us when we repeat with an intonation of melancholy contempt, "The luxury of modern travel!"

But somehow or other in a fashion which strengthens our belief in a kindly Providence, we catch the train. We always do. Just as the porter picks up his little stool and climbs aboard, we hurl ourself and our bag into the vestibule after him. Then, when the conductor and brakeman have lifted us off our ebony brother in livery, we are shown to our berth. Removing our overcoat and picking out of our bag a book and such cigars as have not been reduced to fine-cut, we adjourn to the smoking-room.

There is a general notion, principally among ladies, that the smoking-room of a sleeping-car is a place of extraordinary hilarity and indecorous enjoyment. They have visions of men sitting around in their shirt-sleeves playing poker, drinking out of pocket-flasks, and exchanging amid clouds of smoke stories that would make even the porter blush. But, alas, it is not thus.

Our own experience of Pullman smoking-rooms is that they are the dullest holes on earth. The smoke is there all right, dense clouds of it. And such smoke!—any old thing that will burn, native shag, Turkish cigarettes, five-cent cigars, pipes of every age and degree of disrepute, all mixed up together. But of conversation there is none, except when a couple of commercial travellers start a competition in mendacity as to the number of orders they have taken in the towns along the line. As for stories—we haven't heard a new one yet.

So far as cards are concerned, we once saw a man play solitaire. And on two or three occasions in the more convivial past, crude but friendly souls have drawn from hip-pockets pint-flasks which they have timidly proffered by way of brightening the general gloom. We always hated to refuse—exhibitions of hospitality were so rare there. If an African chief came in and wanted to rub noses—we believe that is the usual expression of friendly interest in Ashantee—we would hardly have had the heart to decline.

About midnight, when one has no decent excuse for putting it off any longer—especially as the porter, who sleeps in the smoking-room, comes in and scowls every few minutes until one gives it up to him—we drag ourself to our berth. That is, we stow ourself away in a dark cubby-hole, too short for us by three inches actual measurement, and just high enough to bruise the top of our head every time we sit up. There we proceed to divest ourself of our garments and lay them away in places where they will fall down on our face at intervals during the night—the intervals being whenever we start to doze.

We would like to go into the details of our divestiture, with a view to comparing notes with other tall gentlemen who have been compelled to remove their habiliments—mentionable and otherwise—within the confines of a berth. In view, however, of the somewhat intimate nature of the case, we are obliged to let it go with the general statement that the performance is a highly acrobatic one. We get our things off somehow or other—probably we give anyone coming along the aisle the impression that a sea-lion or a dromedary has got into our compartment. And then, our final frantic struggle having made us free, we address ourself to sleep.

Sleeping-cars are so named because you try to and can't. Some people can, of course. When they can, they always snore—fiendishly. Invariably there is a man across the aisle with one of those going-down-for-the-third-time snores, the kind that suggest a muffled shriek of agony. All night long you keep hoping against hope that he is really strangling. But he never is. Next morning he always bobs up smiling and rubicund, and informs everyone in the wash-room that he slept like a top—meaning, of course, a racing automobile with the muffler cut out.

Somehow the night goes by. It is one of the melancholy compensations of life that everything passes. Just about dawn you drop off into the first decent nap you have been able to get; and twenty minutes later the porter reaches in and punches you in the ribs or pounds on the roof of the berth to let you know it is time you were up. As a matter of fact, you have a full hour or more before you arrive. But he believes in getting people up early. It gives him a chance to roll up the berths and stow them out of sight in the mysterious recesses the Lord and Mr. Pullman have provided for that purpose. Besides, it is a display of authority, and this is always dear to the porteresque heart—most people's hearts, in fact.

So you sit up suddenly and bang your head. Being thus thoroughly awakened, you glance out of the window and study the fence-posts or the clay banks past which you are speeding. Then you poke a frowsy head into the aisle through the curtains, and promptly drag it back as a large lady in a flowered kimona bears down upon you with an angry glare. It is obvious that she thinks you have been sitting there for half an hour peeping into the aisle till you could get that chance to look at her in her dishabille. Naturally you can't explain. What is there to say? Least of all can you tell her the simple truth, which is that if you had known anything like that was prowling around the car you wouldn't have peeped out for a flock of limousines—or should it be "covey?"

Will someone kindly tell us, will someone please explain, why it is ladies assume that frigidly severe attitude when anyone happens to look at them during their matutinal parades up and down the aisle? If we ourself catch anyone glancing at us while we meander towards the wash-room with our toothbrush and our other collar—anyone, that is, of the opposite sex, and it is surprising how very opposite some of them are—we merely blush in simple-hearted confusion. We may wonder why the lady should look at us. But it would never occur to us to be indignant over the matter, not even if we were wearing a flowered kimona and carried our toilet tools in a cute little silk bag.

In the wash-room you stand for half an hour behind a row of gentlemen with their heads in basins. Every now and then one comes up to breathe, and then he goes down again for another five minutes during which he throws soap-suds all over you. When finally you manage to get a basin yourself, the car gives a sudden lurch and it empties itself gracefully into your lap.

When you have contrived at last to wiggle into your clothes—they always look as if you had spent the night tying knots in them—you go back and sit on the end of your suit-case in the aisle, or somebody else's suit-case, while the porter brushes everybody in sight and takes a quarter away from each of them. We don't mind the quarter. We'd gladly give much more than that if he would only leave us alone. But he won't. He fixes us with his shiny eye; he beckons to us; and we walk away down the aisle to meet him. There he turns our coat-collar back, sifts an ounce or two of coal-dust down our neck, deftly blows the rest of it into our ear, knocks our hat all out of shape, seizes the coin which we feverishly proffer him as the price of our deliverance, and then drops us for the next victim.

"Montreal—this way out!"

One staggers painfully from the car down to the station platform. There a horde of "red caps" descend upon you in a flying phalanx. Taking your luggage and your breath at the same time, they vanish, only to reappear ten minutes later at the station door—you have just about decided they have absconded with your bags—and there they demand salvage for them.

"The luxury of modern travel"—O Lord!

HELPING OUR FRIENDS TO ECONOMIZE

Helping our Friends to Economize

We are of a saving nature. We say this more in sorrow than in pride. It has been forced on us. We have saved stamps and cigar-bands. We have saved cigarette pictures and theatre programmes. We have even made sporadic endeavors to save our soul. For the past few months especially our gaze has been fixed on the skies. We had hoped that once the fighting was over—but peace hath her battles no less than war. So we turn our eyes to those celestial abodes where the Bolsheviki cease from troubling. Our only hope is in heaven. In fact, even a nice, quiet corner in hell—but, hush, let us not think of such things!

When we speak, however, of our saving nature, we refer principally, if not exclusively, to money. We have a disposition to save money. We would like to put away huge jars of it. We would enjoy sneaking down to the vault in the middle of the night to count our gold and gloat over it. We would do it even at the risk of getting our new pyjamas all dirtied up with gold-dust.

Not that we have ever been able to accumulate any vast amount of coin, specie, mazuma, cush, dust, rhino, bullion, long green—in short, money. No trust companies grow plethoric with our securities. No vaults strain at their rivets with our lacs of rupees. But the disposition is there on our part. We would save if we had the wherewithal.

That is why we have such a kindly feeling for others who are trying to save—especially now when the high cost of living has combined with the high cost of killing, as represented in war-taxation, to put such a crimp in a fellow's income that it looks like a French pea to a famished ostrich. That is why we never feel aggrieved when our friends don't invite us to dinner, or give us cold mutton or stew when they do. That is why we never make any remarks on the age of their hats or complain of the cold in their houses or express wonder that they don't light the furnace sooner. They are cutting down expenses and we sympathize with them.

We like to see people save. We smile benignly, as one who murmurs, "Bless you, children," when we catch them laying by for a rainy day. We believe in economy. At the same time, it should not be carried to extravagant lengths—at least, not at our expense. We are willing to help our friends to economize, but there are reasonable limits. They must not crowd the kindly mourner too far.

For instance, there is Binks—awfully nice chap, Binks. You must know him, short, fairly stout, wears lavender ties, and rides down to the office every morning on the rear platform of the street-car for the sake of the air. Great fellow for hygiene is Binks. Plays a good game of tennis, too.

Binks invited us over to dinner one Saturday not long ago.

"Tell you what," said Binks in his buoyant way, "come on over early—say, about two o'clock—and we'll walk out to my new lot in the West Annex if it's a fine day and get back in nice time for dinner. Great for the appetite—you'll feel like a prize-fighter after you've strolled around through the woods for a few hours."

It sounded good, and the day was fine, and we were there at two sharp—difficult as it is for us to be anywhere at anything sharp. We were neatly but inconspicuously clad in our walking clothes, Norfolk jacket, green hat, and pipe. We also wore a tan cane and chamois gloves. Nothing elaborate, you know, but grace in every line.

Binks, on the contrary, had on the worst suit we have ever seen out of the furnace room. A greasy old peak-cap reposed on his head, and his trousers were patched and frayed. We didn't mind that. We are not snobbish. But we did object to the tools.

Binks had a cross-cut saw, a sledge-hammer weighing approximately twelve pounds, an axe, and two steel wedges weighing about five pounds each. We looked long and hard at them, and longer and harder at Binks. He had the grace to blush.

"I hope you don't mind, old man," he said with affected lightness, "but there's a bit of a tree fallen down on the lot, and I thought it would be good sport to cut it up this afternoon. Great exercise, you know—brings all the muscles of the back into play. Besides, the wood will come in handy in the grate this winter. Stringency, you see—got to save every penny these times, eh, what?"

We are weak. We gulped once or twice, but what was there to say? We could do nothing but fall in with the plan, and let on that we were overjoyed at the prospect of bringing the muscles of our back into play. It did occur to us, however, that there might be jollier methods of doing so than cutting up fallen trees.

"You better carry the saw," said Binks, "it's light. I'll pack the rest of the stuff—unless you could carry one of the wedges. It's only a short way to the car, you know."

It was only a short way to the car, true enough. But, friend the reader, have you ever tried to carry a cross-cut saw? This particular one was about six feet long, and it had a full set of two-inch teeth, the suppleness of a boa-constrictor, and the temper of a worried weasel. It was simply a long thin band of steel with a heavy wooden handle at each end and enough elasticity to curl around you twice and reach up and bite the top off either ear.

The instant that we put the infernal saw oh our shoulder we realized that we had made a mistake. It slashed around in the air a couple of times to get the exact range, and then it dived down and chewed a neat triangular piece out of our trouser-leg. It would probably have kept right on through our own leg, if we had not by some happy chance or unconscious skill managed to get our cane in the way. This saved the leg, to which we not unnaturally attach a certain value, but it was the last of a very fine piece of malacca. That ferocious saw gnashed its teeth just once, and there were two canes where only one had grown before—two nice little canes each about twenty inches long and cut somewhat on the bias.

This was only a starter. In two seconds that saw had us tied up in a complicated knot, with one handle gouging us just under the left ear, and the other playfully wandering about our frame, while the teeth nipped off exposed pieces of cuticle here and there in an arbitrary and capricious manner. When we got a chance to examine ourself that night in the chaste seclusion of the boudoir, we looked as if we had been tied up in the cellar and the mice had got at us.

We shrieked to Binks to pull the thing off us. After some time and effort—also a few light casualties of his own—he finally did manage to extricate what was left of us. We were going to quit on the spot. We told Binks so with what he must have regarded as a great deal of unnecessary emphasis. But he is a very persuasive cuss, and—well, as we said before, we are weak. We consented to see the thing through. But we declined firmly to carry that saw another foot of the way. We finally compromised, however, and each took a handle. It was awkward but safe enough. The thing bucked occasionally and made frantic efforts to jump on one or other of us; but we held it tight and we got it to the car without further bloodshed.

When we tumbled on board, the conductor took one good look at our equipment and immediately became distinctly unpleasant. He asked us if we had mistaken the car for a motor-lorry, and whether or not we intended to bring a few trees along, too. He said it seemed too bad to leave them behind when there was all that room in the aisle. He also suggested that we should put the saw on the roof and let the handles hang down at each end of the car—he said it was less likely to kill anyone up there.

Our position was most embarrassing—even Binks almost lost his temper, though that

wouldn't have done any good. The worst of it was that the passengers seemed to consider the vulgar brute funny, while we couldn't think of anything crushing to say in reply till we had got off and the car was blocks away. Then we realized that we should have said—but perhaps we had better save this up. We may need it some day.

We reached the lot at last after tramping through so-called woodland scenery for miles and miles. The landscape was a tumbled stretch of scrubby bush which had never been fit for anything once the original big trees had been cut off. So a soulless real-estate agent had sliced it up into suburban lots and sold it to enthusiastic asses like our friend Binks. Twenty years from now it will, no doubt, be a thriving and even fashionable suburb, but not now—Lord, no! It is possible, however, that we are somewhat prejudiced against this particular landscape. Who can enjoy scenery while tramping through it with a twelve-pound sledge, a five-pound wedge, and the handle of a cross-cut saw—sounds almost like a refrain, doesn't it?

How the mischief Binks was able to tell his own lot in that wilderness will always remain a marvel to us. But he picked it out all right, and there, sure enough, was the tree. It was the biggest, knottiest, meanest-looking jack-oak we have seen in years. No wonder the lightning struck it. The only wonder is that it didn't burn it right up.

"Isn't she a beauty?" gloated Binks insanely. "Won't those gnarled logs crackle fine in the grate this winter?"

We looked at him in gloomy wonder. Did the poor idiot think we were going to help dissect that ligneous monstrosity entirely? We didn't mind cutting off a limb or two, but no more—not in one day. Little did we suspect the fate that was hanging over us.

"And now to work," said Binks with the imbecile cheerfulness of his kind. "We'll cut this old rascal into handy lengths in a couple of hours or so, and then the carter will come along with the team, and we'll ride home on the load—just like one of those old pictures of forest-life, you I know."

But we were in no mood to enthuse. Slowly and sadly we pulled off our Norfolk jacket and folded it neatly. We turned a wistful and lingering regard on the landscape; and then we betook us dismally to our toil. We were helpless in the grip of Bink's will, a regular slave of the lamp.

That afternoon will remain a nightmare for years to come. Whenever after this we go into gilded dens of folly and eat lobster *à la Newburg*, whenever we commit indiscretions with mince-pie or home-made whiskey, we know the form our penitential dreams will take. We will see ourself standing at one end of that awful saw with Binks at the other, and we will go on forever and ever shoving the saw away from us and pulling it back again through a cast-iron log with Bessemer-steel knots, which will shriek in agony at every stroke. And Binks will be wearing a red suit of tights and a pair of cute little horns and a spiked tail.

It was a terrible experience. What Binks said about bringing our back muscles into play was perfectly true. We brought them into play with a vengeance. We brought into play muscles that we never dreamed of possessing. But we didn't like the way they played. There was something very rough about it.

The shades of night fell softly upon us, and still we sawed. The hoot-owls hooted at us in derision, but still that fiendish saw rasped on. In the beginning we had suggested rest a few times, but Binks merely assured us that once we got our second wind we would be all right.

We got our second wind, but it wasn't long before we used it up. Then we called out our third line of reserves, our pulmonary landsturm, so to speak, and we exhausted that, too. By the time we finally quit we were using only the extreme upper lobe of each lung, and all we could do was to gasp and hang on to the handle of the saw lest the thing should leap at us and sink its teeth in our jugular.

Finally Binks stopped. We had cut through the last knot of the last limb of the last length of that interminable trunk—by this time it seemed seven miles long. Binks stopped, and we fell in our tracks. We dropped where we stood, right there in the saw-dust.

"Tell you what," said Binks mopping his brow—we could barely see him in the darkness—"tell you what, there is nothing like this fine, simple, open-air life to make a fellow feel like a king."

The creature was inexorable. His remark was a gratuitous insult; but we were beyond the desire or even the possibility of reply. We could only lie there on our back and look up longingly at the stars, and think how mother used to steal in and kiss us in our little white cot, and how horrified Binks would be when he discovered that we were dying.

"Great Jumping Jee-hosophat!" shouted Binks a moment later. He had struck a match and looked at his watch. "It's a quarter to eight, and we were to have been back at dinner at seven. And that damn carter hasn't come yet!"

He said a lot more about the carter, and the carter's family for some generations back, and the carter's prospects in the future life. Binks is not exactly a cussing man, but he gave a very fair imitation of one—it would do till a real cusser came around.

We heard him, but we heeded not. We just lay there and smiled blandly at the Milky Way. We had reached the point where we didn't care a darn if the race of carters became utterly extinct, and we were extinguished with them. All we wanted was to be left alone.

Binks, however, was indomitable. That man's energy was positively terrifying. He got us on our feet, put our coat on us in spite of our feeble resistance, stuck one end of that fatal saw in our hand, and dragged us two miles or more through the bush and the darkness to the street-car. With the help of the conductor he lifted us on and propped us up in the end of a seat. We remember that we moaned when they took the handle of the saw away from us. We had grown attached to it.

We don't recall much about the trip on the car, except hearing the conductor tell Binks that people who couldn't carry liquor any better than we seemed able to do shouldn't be allowed to have any. He said that sort of thing was what started Prohibition movements. And Binks agreed with him!

When we got to Bink's house, the dinner had long since been burned to a crisp, and Mrs. Binks registered about six hundred pounds pressure on her temper-gauge. It was a terrible meal. We don't remember what we ate, or whether we ate at all. All we know is that when it was over, we stumbled right over to our hat and then back to Mrs. Binks.

"Goo' night—lovely time," we said. "Hope you're the same!"

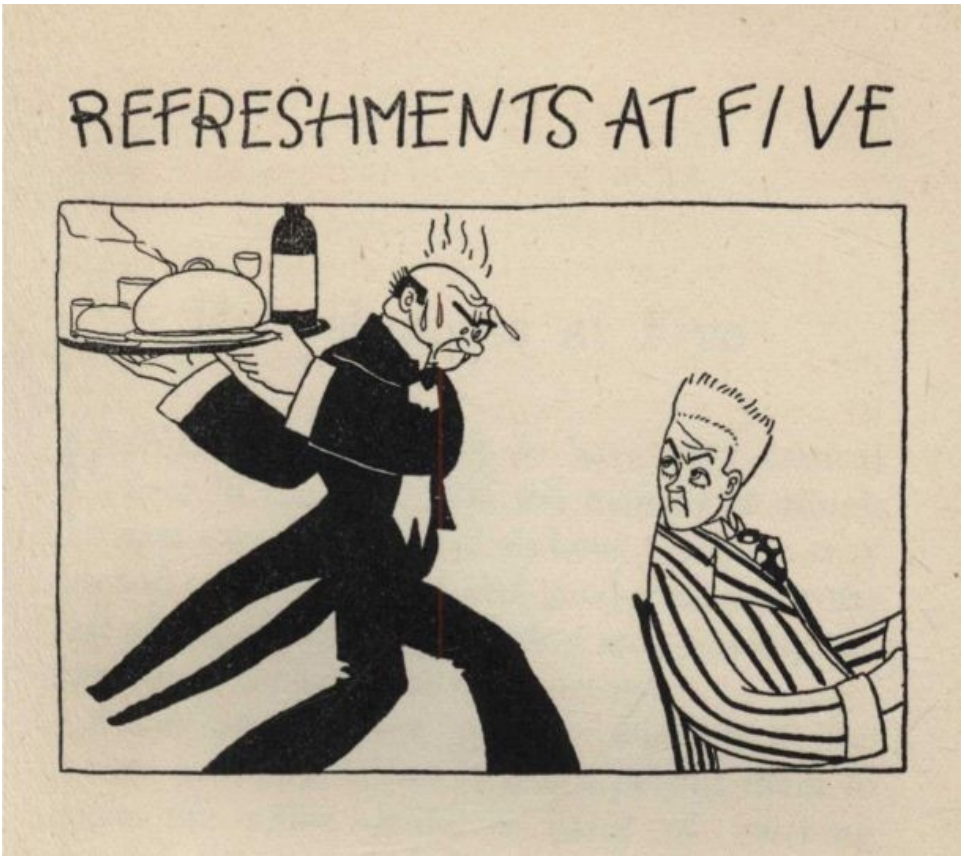
Binks saw us to the door. As a matter of fact, we had started to walk into the fire-place. He seemed to feel the need of some explanation.

"Sorry, old man, about that infernal carter," he said, "but tell you what we'll do. Some day next week we'll stroll out to the lot and have the fun of loading up, and then...."

We are not quite clear what it was that we said to Binks, but we must have said something fairly significant, for neither Binks nor his wife has spoken to us since.

Of course, we are sorry that Binks and his wife feel that way about it. But after all the first law of life is self-preservation, and we can't afford to run that sort of risk again. We didn't heal up for a week or more after that dreadful grapple with the cross-cut saw. In fact, we had some notion of going to a surgeon and having the bites cauterized.

Even this was nothing to the soreness in our legs and arms and the famous "back-muscles" that Binks brought into play. We spent all our evenings for the next fortnight rubbing arnica into them—also a wonderful liniment which our landlady gave us. It must have been a fine liniment for it smelled so strong that people turned around and looked after us on the street, as if they thought we ought to be quarantined and were in two minds about calling a policeman. And we didn't dare visit our friends. But then what's the use of going to see a lady if you moan in pain every time you try to put your arm around—well, around the back of the chair?



REFRESHMENTS AT FIVE

Refreshments at Five

Five o'clock appears to be a very critical time in the day. On the manner in which the next three-quarters of an hour are spent may depend one's well-being and good temper for the rest of the day and the evening and possibly the first couple of hours of the morrow.

Some people—low persons who need the money or whose bosses will not permit them to leave the office—make a habit of working through till six, or whatever time it is that they punch the clock and go home in a street-car strap. Naturally such persons have no place in an article of this character.

To sensitive and cultured people who have spent the afternoon playing bridge or in the cellar brewing the family liquor—that, we believe, is the intellectual pastime of the moment—or in mahogany-furnished offices persuading innocent folk with money to buy Nicaragua banana-lands or bunk stocks on punk margins, five o'clock is the blessed hour of surcease and repose. It is balm in Gilead, cool rains after the heat of the day, a friendly hotel after walking across a "dry" county, divorce after—oh, g'wan and make your own metaphors!

Personally we are an ardent and determined five-o'clocker. We have played it every way there is—straight, for place, for show, and across the board. There is no kind of five-o'clock performance—in accordance, that is, with the purity and piety of our character and upbringing—that we have not done or witnessed. We have attended teas of every description and shade of color, pink, yellow, mauve, and with dashes of cerise. We have gone to the tango kind, and to those discreet teas in sequestered corners of tea-rooms to which one conducts fair students of the drama after the matinee.

In older and perhaps happier—certainly freer—days, we were a frequent guest and occasional host at little informal five-o'clock functions, where one inquired of the rest of the company what they were having and requested the attendant to "fill 'em up again, Jawn!" We attended such functions in clubs, cafes, and those democratic places of resort which were entered by swinging doors—up to eleven on ordinary nights and seven on Saturdays. And we did this as part of that systematic study of humanity—including the things they eat and the drinks they drink—which is recommended so earnestly by the philosophers.

All this is by way of letting the reader see how thoroughly qualified we are by nature and training to write on this important subject of five-o'clock refreshments. We say "important"

advisedly and with no ironic intent. We have devoted to the question of how best to spend the time between five and a quarter to six much time, energy, and serious thought—not without considerable difficulty and several vigorous rows with persons we have at various times consented to work for. And, as a result of our studies, we are convinced that rest and refreshment at five are a human necessity, whether you take it with two lumps or with soda, and whether you eat out of the "curate" or off the free-lunch counter.

Of course, this whole institution of five-o'clock refreshment is an intensely modern and hyper-civilized development—at least, here in Canada. It represents a reaction from the nerve-stresses of up-to-date urban existence. Our sturdy forefathers knew it not, and verily there are still many places where people do not practice it. Farmers as a class, for instance, have still maintained their ancient prejudice against eating and drinking till it is too dark or the weather is too bad to do anything else.

Naturally there would have been something absurdly incongruous in our great-grandfathers stopping in the midst of shooting bears or Indians or burning out a clearing, in order to tramp back to the log-cabin for a pimento sandwich or a cup or two of oolong. But, even at that, we would hate to believe that the old boys didn't occasionally knock off for a few minutes about five, and drag the old cider-jug from its place of concealment in a hollow stump, and have a pull or two at the juice that cheers and eke inebriates—if it is "hard" enough.

Five-o'clock refreshments, however, as we know them, are a peculiarly modern institution. We got the habit from England, where we get our spats and our knighthoods, our green hats and our Governors-General. In England they all do it, and it won't be long before we are all doing it, too. Talk about the effects of the War on our soldiers!—if you could see the splendid fellows now pouring their own in the tea-rooms, you would fear the worst.

A friend of ours who occasionally—and even oftener if things are slow at home—takes a run over to London to refresh his accent and to study life in its more dignified and also its lighter phases, has told us of a visit he paid to a great English factory. As he was being shown over the plant by the owner—jolly old dog, too, egad!—a gong sounded suddenly. Everybody instantly dropped their tools and climbed down from their machines; a gang of waiters burst upon the scene carrying huge trays of steaming cups with two little crackers on the side of each saucer; and everybody had tea. Even the boss, just to show what a democratic old cuss he was, had a cup with the rest—the clawsses drinking with the mawsses, so to speak.

Once in our journalistic youth—we felt about a hundred and eighty in experience of life—we had occasion (meaning we were sent by a profane and peremptory city editor) to interview the heads of a great business corporation regarding the financial situation. It was a time of panic, and this particular concern was reported to be in a bad way. A heavy sense of responsibility weighed upon us as we loosed our pencil in its patent sheath, and entered the office of the two brothers who directed the destinies of the company.

They were at tea! A fat, perspiring waiter—why do waiters always perspire?—had just carried in from a neighboring cafe a large tray bearing a tea-pot, a jug of hot water, plate of sandwiches, ditto of cute little cakes, and all the various accessories of tea-making and drinking. Our heart sank. We felt that this particular company was doomed. It wouldn't have been a greater shock to us if we had discovered them playing marbles—in fact, we would have been more likely to regard marbles as an amiable eccentricity.

They hospitably insisted that we should join them, but we declined with decision. We felt as if we had been invited to take out our sewing and while away a pleasant hour with the rest of the girls doing embroidery and eating marshmallows. But our contempt for these particular gentlemen was slightly modified by their producing cigarettes—very good cigarettes, too—after tea and lighting up. Naturally we joined in that. And our feelings were changed to something like genuine respect when we discovered what rattling good "copy" they could talk. Oh, they weathered the financial gale all right, in spite of the tea. And the experience made us more tolerant of the vice.

As for the ordinary sort of pink tea—you know the kind of thing where the dear boys in morning-coats pass the vittles to the dear girls in feathers and a string of beads—we are a hardened and weary veteran. We used to be one of the best young amateur waiters you ever saw, and could juggle a "curate" with a grace and efficiency that would have been the despair of Beau Brummel, if he had survived to witness it. But never again!

Incidentally, why are those three-storey arrangements called "curates?" Is it because they are always planted among the girls? Or because social events are not really respectable without one around? Or is it simply because they can hold so much cake?

Whatever the reason for the name, we became an out-and-out expert at wielding the things. Handing cups of tea with the right hand, and with the left dealing from the top or bottom deck of the "curate" with equal ease, we must have been a genteelly inspiring sight. But we have no joy of the recollection. Think of a healthy man spending his time like that!

Of course, we still go to teas occasionally—even the most fertile and mendacious excuser is sometimes caught without an alibi. Not that these social evasions are lies exactly, but you know the way one says: "Next Thursday did you say, my dear? So good of you, and I would just love to, but I'm all filled up for next Thursday," etc., etc. And being "all filled up," naturally one cannot be expected to fill up any more. But sometimes it is not so easy to get out of it, and we are occasionally caught by a sudden flank attack. But we are never a willing prisoner—we go down fighting desperately to the last.

As a matter of fact, teas long ago ceased to hold any delight for us. Like Martha we chose the worser part; but this was back in the wicked days before Prohibition descended on us all like a bomb from a Zeppelin. Every now and then—not every day, for we were not unabashed in our delinquency—a friend or two would drop in about five. We would discuss the weather in a dispassionate and scientific manner, as well as the Mexican situation—it was the only war on at the time—and the prospects for the baseball or hockey championship, according to the time of year. We talked of many things, but all in the same cool and detached way, as of men whose minds were elsewhere and busy with more vital matters. Then suddenly we would all rise up as one man and go silently away to a place we wotted of, where the clerk knew us by name, and asked us if we were having "the same old poison." Or better still, he would nod in a friendly way and without waiting to ask would set out the materials on the ba—no, no, counter!—with calm assurance bred of an intimate knowledge of our preferences.

It is a curious trait in human nature but the average man used to take much joy and pride out of having a refreshment-clerk—and when we say "refreshment" we use the word in its most dynamic significance—call him by name and hand him out his favorite brand without asking. It did him more good than if the president of the bank he made his over-draughts on had picked him up in the presidential limousine as he was walking down to the office of a morning.

Perhaps we should not speak about these things now that they are over and done with and everyone is reformed and uncomfortable; but how is the coming generation to know anything about the habits of us their ancestors, unless someone tells them the thirsty truth? As a matter of fact, it is more than likely that the reader of fifty years from now, coming on this book among some empty bottles in a dark corner of the attic, won't know what the dickens we are talking about. Poor old John Barleycorn may have ceased to be even a memory, and—but then again perhaps he won't. Very hardy old chap, John!

We do not wish, however, to close this veracious and useful disquisition on what might be called the Bacchic note—though Bacchic in the most gentlemanly and respectable sense, of course. Besides, all this talk of teas has reminded us of one which we like best—though it is a wistful pleasure—to remember. You see, it was quite a long time ago, and—but let us get on with the story.

To begin with, we had telephoned to the house—Heaven only knows about what! Any old excuse was a good excuse in those days. And she said, after a certain amount of persiflage and badinage—you know the sort of thing people talk over the 'phone in the spring—she said to come up and have a cup of tea with her.

It was right in office hours and we had a lot of work to do. But did we go? Yes, Friend Reader, we did. We rushed out clutching our hat in our hand, nearly broke a leg catching a car, and every time it stopped to let anyone on or off, we indulged in a line of mental profanity which must have created a faint blue aureole around our head like a mediæval saint.

They were all out—the family, that is—even to the servant-girl. But we didn't mind. In fact, our relief was such that we realized at once it would be unseemly to show it. Our recollection is that we expressed a certain mild regret for their absence—Lord, what a liar a man can make of himself at times! Then having behaved like a really nice boy, we had an apron tied on us, for we had to help make the sandwiches. A pair of very pretty arms reached round us from behind and hung a silly little arrangement of linen and frills upon our manly waist, after a great deal of tugging and squeezing, which was rather complicated by our irresistible inclination to twist around and watch the strings being tied in the middle of our back—obviously a difficult feat of an acrobatic nature.

The sandwiches were finally made—we remember we were told we had spread the butter too thick. Then we carried the tray in beside a grate-fire, just an ordinary gas-grate, but if it had been

the fires of the eternal dawn it couldn't have seemed any more cheering. Sunlight streamed in through the window on a big bowl of daffodils, themselves like a great splash of sunshine. Outside in the street youngsters were at play. We never even yet eat a certain kind of sandwich that we don't remember....

But, oh, pshaw, what's the use? What's the use? Besides, think how much freer and more solvent we are in our present celibate condition. But there are times and moods, mere trifles like a glimpse of flowers in the spring or a robin's song or the odor of wet lawns, which bring her back to us again and make us wince once more as we recall that her name is now Mrs. Spoffkins.

MANNERS FOR THE MASSES

Manners for the Masses

"Manners Makyth Man."

How often in our eager youth was that hoary old maxim quoted to us with stern insistence, what time we had seized the last piece of cake on the plate, or were absorbing our soup with a noise like that of a punctured vacuum cleaner. Manners makyth man, perhaps; but in those days manners made us tired.

Now that we have attained manhood's estate, however, and grey hair and a nice discrimination in Scotch, when there is any to practice on, we realize the need of more manners—manners for the masses. People in general are not so polite as they used to be and ought to be. Street-car conductors, for instance, do not treat us at all times with the consideration we feel to be our due.

We do not object so bitterly to being told to "step lively there," or having the conductor jab the end of the fare-box into our diaphragm. Such little crudities of manner are perhaps inseparable from his rather trying profession. But the other day we handed a conductor by mistake a quarter of suspicious antecedents—metallurgically speaking, of course. Money we can't pass is the only sort of tainted money we recognize. We fear this particular coin contained more than the usual amount of alloy. As a matter of fact, we hadn't intended giving it to him at all. We had laid it aside for a church collection, or a tag-day, or the first pretty Salvation Army lass we should see with a "self-denial-week" box at a street corner. But it got into the wrong pocket.

We handed it to the conductor and said, "Blue, please!"—alluding to the cerulean hue of the tickets. He turned it over two or three times in his hand, glared at us, walked down to the rear platform to see it in the better light there, asked two or three men what they thought of it, and then carried it back to us between the thumb and index finger of the right hand as though he were holding something dead by the tail. The whole car watched him drop it with a thud into our grey-suede palm.

"The Company don't let us take nothin' but silver quarters," he remarked in a loud voice and with quite undue emphasis on the "silver."

We had to hunt through our pockets for a five-cent piece to put in the box. It was a very painful moment, and naturally the only nickle we owned hid itself amid a mass of coppers—we had enough of them to bust our suspenders. And while we hunted, the conductor stood there and shook the box belligerently under our nose.

Therefore, we repeat, let us by all means have more manners—manners for street-car conductors and plumbers and elevator-men and the masses generally. Not even bank-clerks are altogether above reproach in this respect. We have had several rather regrettable experiences with bank-clerks—usually in connection with slight over-draughts. And yet bank-clerks are generally regarded as the budding Chesterfields of the financial world.

Talking of Chesterfield reminds us of that period in our development at which his "Letters" burst upon us as a brilliant and a guiding star. We were about sixteen, and our voice still oscillated between a squeaking treble and a booming bass. We were also having considerable difficulty in keeping our extremities decently within the compass of our clothes.

Our manners at that time were those of a breezy but well-intentioned caveman. No effete conventions for us!—no, sir, nothing but the simple, unaffected utterance of the heart. It was our aim to be a rough diamond, a fellow whose shaggy exterior concealed a beautiful soul, and whom people would come to understand and love after a long time—maybe, after we were dead. We could see ourself smiling peacefully in our padded coffin, while the family wept all over the oxidized-silver plate bearing our name and two dates—n-n-nothing m-m-more!

Perhaps this shaggy-breast-and-heart-of-gold business was not "getting across" as successfully as we had hoped. Perhaps we had grown weary of doing little acts of kindness and of love in a rude, untutored way. Or perhaps the time was merely ripe for a new phase of our social development. Anyhow, we one day picked up Lord Chesterfield's "Letters to My Son," and at a bound became a suave and graceful man of the world, concealing under a smile of wistful charm a cynical and disillusioned heart. Whatever might be the bitterness of our regrets, as befitted a man who had known life and women and had suffered, no shadow disturbed the serenity of our brow. We continued to smile and bow with the old nonchalant grace, as though it were roses, roses all the way. This was the impression we tried to convey, at any rate.

The family received our change of heart and manner in a spirit of levity against which our new ideals were not always proof—but you know the gentle way of families. Instead of teaching the young idea how to shoot, they are apt to suggest that it ought to go out and shoot itself. Naturally we suffered, and not unresentfully. In fact, we so far forgot ourself as to try to lick our younger brother—a very un-Chesterfieldian endeavor, and not entirely successful. He had a rushing style of fighting which—but there are bygones which had best be has-beens.

Of course, we have long since realized that it isn't wise to carry even so good a thing as manners to an over-elaborate extreme. Not long ago we had an instance of this—which brings us back to a street-car again. Wonderful how much one can learn in those humble but interesting conveyances! It was a crowded car, and we got up when a statuesque young woman in a very tight skirt stood right in front of us. We got up as gracefully as the movement of the car would permit, and hanging on a strap with the skill of long practice we adroitly removed our hat and bowed. We wanted to let her know that our action was the expression of a distant but chivalrous respect.

The statuesque young woman never quivered a hair of her expensive willow-plume, but stared penetratingly at a male collar-ad just over her head. Perhaps she had not seen us in her reverie. Perhaps the face of the young gentleman in the dreadfully conspicuous collar reminded her of someone she knew or loved or both—though we have never known any human being to look like those faces, and certainly would not think of loving him if he did.

Whatever the reason she certainly did not see us. We waited for a block or two, and then we made bold to touch her arm just above the chain of her beaded bag—it looked like something the Shah of Persia would wear.

"Madam," we said in our most mellow and flute-like tone, "won't you take this seat?"

She flashed on us a pair of large, dark pupils—belladonna, we presume—and said in a voice like the drip of an icicle in a cemetery, "I don't care to sit down."

That was all—no "Thank you" or "Much obliged" or any other of the ready phrases of casual courtesy. Just, "I don't care to sit down."

It was an unfortunate and deucedly embarrassing experience. We didn't like to sit down again—in our confusion we would probably have sat in someone else's lap. And yet it seemed frightfully silly for the two of us to go on standing there in front of that empty seat. So we stopped the car and got off half a mile from home.

Now, why did she do that? Was she afraid that if she sat down and said, "Thank you," we might presume on her graciousness to make a few timely remarks about the weather, and after a brief survey of the Russian situation or the newest thing in "movies," should end up by offering her some gum? Or, on the other hand was she a suffragette who refused to be put on a basis of inequality and treated as a member of a weaker sex? Did she see in our action the gloating superiority of man the master?

Then again she may have been unwilling to sit down because—well, because—oh, dash it all, you know how tight those skirts are! Besides, occasionally in shop-windows and while hurrying modestly past certain "circles" in department-stores, we have inadvertently seen articles of feminine attire (warranted pure whalebone) which would seem to make the operation of sitting down a difficult and painful feat of compression. We feel a certain delicacy in mentioning this, and not for worlds would we dream of using the language in which these garments are described in the newspaper ads—the accompanying photographs almost make it impossible for us to read them. But the fact remains that the statuesque young lady in the car may not have been able to bend any more than her neck, which was quite bare and untrammelled halfway down the lungs.

Of course, Lord Chesterfield and all the books of etiquette since his time have been strong for self-possession. A man, they say, should be self-possessed under any and every circumstance—the more surprising and unpleasant they are, the more self-possessed he should be. It is the secret of good manners.

Now that is just the sort of excellent and utterly futile advice that we are always getting. Be self-possessed—sure! But how? That's what we want—specific directions, not general advice. We would welcome a few concrete illustrations for maintaining one's self-possession when meeting one's recently divorced wife, for instance, or after dropping a soda-check in the collection plate, or while mother is showing pictures of one as a baby, or while purchasing long silk hose and explaining that auntie is having a birthday. Situations such as these are apt to occur in the most skilfully regulated lives, and naturally we would like to know what to do—meaning, what to do with our hands and the perspiration on our brow and the blushes on our face.

Just as a case in point—we went into a department-store some months back to buy a thimble. We do a little sewing now and then, you know—nothing fancy, just buttons and repairs of a temporary and intimate nature. It occurred to us that we ought to have a thimble. A bed-post is all right, if it is handy. But you are not always near enough to be able to shove the needle against it; and naturally one can't very well carry a bed-post around with one, can one?

So we decided to buy a thimble and went into a department-store for the purpose, having previously steeled our breast and made brazen our countenance. But we didn't have the courage

to ask anyone, least of all a floor-walker, where the things were sold. For fifteen minutes we wandered about peering at the various "circles," and rousing the worst suspicions of the shop-detectives. There were at least two men shadowing us by the time we finally saw a tray of thimbles and rushed at it with a gasp of relief.

Our relief, however, was premature. There was a girl standing back of the tray—not the usual beauty in a lace blouse, who toys with her back-hair and stares through a man with devastating indifference. We were prepared for that sort, and had several curt and peremptory things ready to say. But this was a nice, motherly girl, the kind of girl who makes a man feel that he is just seven years old and is about to have his face washed. These are overwhelming!

"A thimble?—you want a thimble?" she asked with an air of bustling solicitude. "What size? But, of course, a man never does know the size. Let me see your finger."

Now, we had started out with an insane notion that we would say the thimble was for our wife, who was too ill to come down-town and wanted a thimble for a little crochet-work or something to while away the time. You know the sort of silly yarn a man would naturally invent. But we realized at once that it was no use here. We felt that this girl knew we were a bachelor; knew the sort of sewing we do; and probably knew just what buttons were missing on just what coat, and all about that rip in the waist-band of our trousers.

So we held out our finger—our index finger! Patiently she put it back and took the next one to it, holding it very firmly while she tried two or three thimbles on it in rapid succession. We felt like a June bride watching the bridegroom fiddle with the ring.

"Will you take this thimble?" she finally asked.

"I w-w-will!"

The infernal phrase slipped out in spite of us, in a voice which we in vain endeavored to make assured. It was an absurd predicament. All that was lacking was a parson and that tum-tum-tiddee thing from "Lohengrin."

"But isn't it a little loose?" she persisted. Then she took it off and tried on a few more. By this time three or four other girls had come up, and were inspecting us with a detached and somewhat contemptuous interest—all except a little fool who blushed and giggled. If the maternal one hadn't had such a tight hold on our finger, we would have run. We could feel the perspiration sizzling on our burning cheeks.

"Ah, that's better," she said at last, after she had tried on about fifteen. "Men always like them tight, you know. And now you want some thread, don't you?—some nice, strong, black and white thread."

We did, but we wouldn't have admitted it for anything in this world—or the world to come either. Not if we had to fasten our suspenders with clothes-pins. We simply seized that infernal thimble and hurried away in such a blind agony of shame that we forgot our change and nearly knocked a floor-walker down.

Self-possession—gawd!

RAIMENT AND MERE CLOTHES

Raiment and Mere Clothes

Women, of course, dress to annoy one another. We wouldn't be guilty of a truism of this nature, if it were not that a lot of worthy people have gone about lately talking and writing and warning from pulpits as though women dressed for the express purpose of luring the minds of men from the contemplation of the higher and more spiritual things to which they are naturally inclined.

There has even been a Papal Bull—or if not a real honest-to-goodness Bull, at least a good husky yearling of the sort known as an Encyclical—condemning slit skirts and demi-tasse waists and the dances people do in them, on the ground that they put in masculine minds ideas that wouldn't be there naturally. This, however, shows how little the Vatican knows about feminine psychology—though their ignorance is naturally very much to their credit.

In the first place, no lady would do such a thing—would you, girls? In the second, the average man is too unobservant. And in the third, the women are too busy considering how to "put it over" one another, to have time to worry about the effect of the things they wear—or don't—on their male *entourage* (with the accent on the "—rawzh," the Society Editor assures us). As we

said above with epigrammatic force and brilliancy, women dress to annoy one another. The mere fact that someone else or several may have said the same thing before does not lessen the truth of the aphorism or the pleasure we take in it.

Whatever their motive, women devote a lot of thought, time, and some man's money to the subject of dress. Most people are agreed on this. With men, however, it is supposed to be very different. There is a curious theory that men don't give a dern—whatever that may amount to—about their clothes. People generally seem to have an idea that a man waits till his suit is torn, or so shiny that he gives the effect of an animated heliograph, before he orders another. And when he does, he is supposed to rush in to his tailor for half a minute between important business calls, or he rings him up on the 'phone.

"Send me up a new suit," he shouts, or something to this hasty effect. "What color?—oh, any old color you got. Something that will wear a long time. Solong!"

That is the way most women and a few men think the average man buys his clothes. But they are wrong. If you want to know how wrong, you have only to go into a tailor's place, Friend Reader—supposing you keep a tailor and not a bargain-counter—while some fat old boy with mutton-chops and a protuberant abdominal profile is raising the dickens because the poor tailor can't take the strain off the trouser-band and put it on the top buttons of the vest. Then you will learn that the shaping of collars and shoulders is a matter of supreme masculine concern, and that the hang of a trouser-leg is a thing on which the happiness of years may depend. Then possibly you will come to the conclusion that the average man thinks a great deal more about his attire than you have ever suspected.

Not that the average man's clothes are numerous or conspicuous—not at present prices, anyway. On the contrary, they are usually quite few and inconspicuous—except possibly from age. But the fewer they are the more attention he has to devote to them. That is the paradox of the thing.

A wealthy Adonis—or one with a good line of credit, at least—can adopt a careless attitude towards his clothes. He may even keep a valet to worry about them. When he orders a new suit he orders two or three. His shirts and ties and socks he buys by the dozen. Suits he doesn't like, he doesn't have to wear. If he grows weary of a certain color or pattern—one of those shepherd-plaids you can play chess on, for instance, or a nice hot brown that would melt the film of a camera—he tosses it to his man or an itinerant Hebrew and turns to one of a dozen other outfits in the wardrobe. Why should he worry? He doesn't.

The man, however, who gets a couple of suits a year—or more probably only one—has a quite different problem to face, calling for the finest qualities of artistic and economic judgment. With what anxiety he studies the various samples of cloth! Will this wear well? Will that one gloss? Will the grey go with his brown overcoat?—perhaps not, but then the green is so striking that people will notice it next year and remember.

Then as to the cut. It must be in the style, but not too pronounced. Those lapels are too wide, or the slit in the back isn't long enough, or the cuff on the trousers isn't sufficiently deep. One has to be careful, for—dash it all!—the suit has to do two years. So he worries the life out of his tailor for an hour a day through a fortnight or more, brings the coat back three times for alterations, and then pays for the suit in small instalments.

If a man's troubles were over once he got his suit, it wouldn't be so bad. But the older a suit gets the more trouble it gives. For one thing, you have to keep it pressed. Coats will get wrinkled, and human knees are obviously intended by nature to put bags in trousers. Occasionally, too, while playing approach shots with the soup or making short putts in the pudding sauce, a gentleman is liable to foozle and get it all over his vest—unless, of course, he makes a habit of tying his napkin around his neck. Incidentally, this is a much more sensible system than draping it over his right knee. Who ever spilled anything on his right knee, anyway?

These are serious questions to resolve. What should one do about it?—have a fellow in livery and a Ford call around once a week and carry one's garments off and bathe them in benzine and manhandle them with electric-irons? This is handy, of course, but in a few months it costs more than the suit is worth. Tip the cook, then, to press your trousers, and trust to heaven and a patent-hanger to keep the coat in shape? Sometimes this works, but naturally a lot depends on the cook.

Once we entrusted the trousers of our "other" suit to the cook, a colored lady of unblemished character and cheerful disposition. We were going out informally that evening, but we wanted to make a good showing, and we needed those trousers pressed in a hurry. She pressed them all right. She pressed them so hard she almost split the cloth on the edges. But when we saw them—

modestly stretching a bare arm for them around the corner of the door—we smiled bravely, thanked her for her exceeding goodness, and then closed the door and wept feebly upon them. She had put the creases in the sides! Since then we make a point of keeping our "other" trousers under the mattress that they may be ready in cases of sudden emergency.

Another difficulty is in the matter of the buttons to be sewn on and the occasional rents to be mended. These are more slings and arrows of outrageous fortune which noble bachelor minds are called upon to suffer. Landladies are sometimes kind-hearted and can be flattered into displaying other domestic virtues than those connected with the making of beds and the frying of matutinal bacon. But usually they are too busy. Of course, a man can always get married, but ... and you don't always get your buttons sewn on, at that.

Personally, after much worry and embarrassment, we have acquired a very decent skill with the needle—nothing fancy, you know, but substantial. We can't use a thimble yet with any confidence, but there is usually a bed-post handy to shove the needle against. Not even during the patriotic activities of the war did we have any occasion to sew in hotel-lobbies or at concerts or in street-cars. What sewing we do is done in the privacy of the boudoir, and only when vitally necessary.

We have a friend, rather a dandy, who says that the ideal of good dressing—no, not the kind that comes with a turkey, girls—is that a man's personality should show through his clothes. This, of course, is very æsthetic and quite as it should be. But the thing must not be overdone. Occasionally a man's personality shows through too clearly, and then the only thing to do is to take a large needle, double the thread, and sew the place up.

Some day we hope to have a million—honestly acquired, we trust, but still a million. When that happy time arrives, we will dress as we darn well please. We will wear old clothes and let our pants bag at the knees. We will cease to pinch our feet in tight boots, or half-strangle ourself with high stiff collars. And people will not despise us for our shabby exterior. On the contrary, they will admire us for it, and think we are a democratic old cuss, and forgive us for owning so much money.

Till that period of affluence arrives, however, we will be forced to go on devoting too much time and attention and money to our habiliments. Not that we are a "knut," Friend Reader—the mere thought fills us with horror. On the contrary, our whole endeavor is to avoid the garish and extreme. We aim at elegant discretion. It is our ideal to give the impression that we are a wealthy amateur who has taken up journalism as a hobby.

A time there was, however, when we cherished other notions of journalistic attire. It was when we had first left our *alma mater*—one's *alma mater* may be anything from a night-school to five years at Oxford—and had entered on the high mission of moulding public opinion at "twelve per." Then it was our ambition to be Bohemian. We wore very wide-brimmed hats, and low collars with generous openings in front so as to display the Adam's-apple in all its unfettered freedom. We never brushed our clothes, and we kept our hair rather long. We wanted to look like an eager young genius, whose gaze was on far and high things, and who spurned such petty distinctions as are conferred by creases in the front of one's pants.

One night our theory of sumptuary beauty received an awful jolt. The discovery was forced upon us that other people did not see eye to eye with us in the matter of the æsthetics of dress. There was one suit we owned—one of the two, that is—which we hated with a whole-hearted hatred. It was too much even for us. We bought it from a friend who had just gone into the tailoring profession. It was probably his first case, and the operation was not a success—he was nervous, perhaps. The cloth was a heather-mixture—that is what he called it, at any rate, though the color suggested that a number of chameleons had committed suicide on it. The cut was indescribable. The coat was dimly reminiscent of a Roman toga—we had told him to make it loose—and the trousers were obviously modelled on those of Micawber in old illustrated editions of "David Copperfield."

Being unable to afford the relief of throwing the thing away, we tried to get a certain amount of wear out of it under an overcoat. One evening when we were surreptitiously taking it for a walk under a mackintosh, we met an artist friend of ours. He was all muffled up to the throat, as though he, too, were concealing a sartorial mishap.

"Come on over to the Art Gallery," said he, "there are some rather nice things over there—imported."

We like pictures, especially those foreign ones—"Lady with Green Stocking," you know the sort—so we hastened gladly along with our friend, only stopping twice on the way. It was before the advent of Prohibition, and—well, if we had known what we were going to run into at the Art

Gallery, we would have had about a quart, neat.

When we reached the place and our friend struggled out of his overcoat, we saw that he was in evening clothes. We were surprised, but thinking he was perhaps saving his business suit—besides, you never can tell how an artist will dress—we said nothing. But when we got into the gallery we understood. It was opening night, private view, by invitation only—the complete formal caper, b' Jove!—and every blessed soul in the place was in full regalia. Every woman present seemed to be "posing for the bust"—that, we believe is the technical phrase—and the gentlemen could be distinguished from waiters only by the wrinkles in their clothes and the faint aroma of camphor and moth-balls.

We would have cut and run if we had been given the chance; but our friend was a hospitable chap. He grabbed us by the arm and dragged us about from picture to picture, while we perspired agony at every pore and everybody in the gallery glared at us as though we were the tattooed man clad only in our illustrations. Art-lovers are supposed to be an unconventional set. If you want to find out how unconventional they are, go to an "opening night" in business clothes, and see!

Finally we made our escape—we pleaded illness or a twisted ankle or something of that sort. We hurried home and as soon as we got there we pitched that suit out of the window. It caught in the branches of a tree where it stayed till the family made us get a ladder and take it down—they said it gave the public the idea that the gentlemen in the house ran around without any clothes on.

We never did wear it again. The very next day we went out and bought a set of open-faced formal clothes. For months afterwards we wouldn't go out for a walk in the evening without them. We didn't feel safe. Mere clothes might be all right for millionaires and geniuses, but sumptuous raiment for ours! We couldn't afford to wear less.

THAT FUR COAT

That Fur Coat

Ever since our downy and callow youth the fur-lined overcoat has been for us a symbol of wealth and a certain dashing deviltry. Of course, we are perfectly well aware that a number of tame married men, holding positions worth about twenty dollars a week, own fur-lined coats. Even on the editorial staff of which we are the bright particular star there are two or three overcoats lined with something definitely recognizable as fur.

Nevertheless we have never been able to conquer our instinctive feeling that a fur-lined overcoat indicates the possession of a great deal of money and a doggish tendency to spend it on wine, women, and—well, the singing is not so important in the picture. Whenever we see a man sporting a fur-lined overcoat our first thought is to wonder whether or not his wife has found out about him. Our second is to wish we had a coat like it.

The origin of this curious and somewhat pathetic feeling about fur-lined coats is probably to be found in the days of our adolescence, when we wore deliriously exotic ties and attended the presentations of refined melodrama. We devoted much thought in those days to the subject of

masculine attire—possibly with some obscure notion of attracting the weaker sex by the brilliancy of our plumage—and the villain always fascinated while he revolted us. We had much joy of his clothes.

To see the handsome devil swing across the stage with his light but fiendish ha-ha, his cigarette, and the dress-suit which is the national costume of villains, always gave us a thrill which the chaste embraces of the hero and heroine seldom provided. Even to this day we wouldn't give a darn to watch some other fellow hugging a comely young woman.

Usually the villain wore a fur-lined coat at some stage of his hellish machinations—preferably at the height of them, when he was about to boil the heroine's baby, for instance, or was engaged in tying that long-suffering and virtuous lady in the path of the onrushing train. It was at such moments that he threw open the coat loaned by the well-known firm of local furriers—as the programme never forgot to state—and displayed the mink lining of luxurious sin. We always wondered how the heroine found the strength of mind to resist his wicked advances to her.

Incidentally, we noticed that no matter what liberties the hero might take with the person of the villain—the hero was usually a muscular blond—he always forebore to lay the hands of avenging justice on the fur-lined coat. He might pitch the tr-r-raitor-r off a cliff, or slowly choke him to death after a furious grapple, or shoot him in the nick of time and the chest, but never with the coat on. If the villain forgot to take it off, the hero always taunted him into doing so. Whereupon the villain, knowing full well that he had come to the end of his evil tether, either hung the coat carefully on a handy hook or folded it neatly on a chair. The owner might be down in the orchestra seats.

Such scenes bred in us a superstitious reverence for fur-lined garments. It became the dream of our young life to possess such an overcoat, a gold cigarette-case, and three or four wives whom we had married for their money. But you know how disappointing these dreams are apt to be. We didn't even get the wives.

The nearest we ever came to a fur-lined coat was owning one with a Persian-lamb collar. We never cared much for that coat. There was an air of superficiality about it. Not that we have anything against Persian-lamb collars so far as they go. But they don't go very far. Besides, they make one look like a police-lieutenant or a chauffeur.

Mind you, it was a swagger garment in its way. In addition to the fur collar it had a double-breasted front, and was fastened with barrel-shaped arrangements instead of buttons. It had everything pertaining to a fur-lined coat, except the fur-lining.

Of course, you wouldn't notice that vital defect unless we opened the coat or took it off. And we never did either in public. We have sat in street-cars up near the stove with that coat buttoned up to our chin, until people have moved away from us under the impression that we had the measles. We have almost had to thrash butlers to prevent them helping us off with it—if there is anything obstinate on earth, it is a butler with the idea that you are hiding something from him. We have even retired into dark doorways to get a cent out of our pants-pocket to buy a paper, rather than open the coat on a busy corner.

In spite of these precautions, we always had the feeling that people knew about that coat and discussed it. They had a way of looking at it as though they thought the collar had been put on with safety-pins. We grew to hate the coat. Finally the moths got it. That is, they bored holes in it—probably looking for the lining.

Still our thwarted ambition to possess a real fur-lined coat has persisted. We want it as badly as we ever did. It is nothing to us that they have gone out of exclusive style. We care not that every second man on the street has a coat with some sort of hairy stuff on the collar and the interior draped with the mortal remains of the commoner sort of muskrat. We are still faithful to our early love.

From time to time we have gone into one or other of the various local emporiums—or should it be "emporia?"—of skins, peltry, fleece, hides, and fur, and have priced the garment of our longing. We have looked at mink-lined ones, rat-lined, rabbit-lined, and even seal-lined. We have tried them on and talked sagely to salesmen about them. But we have bought not, neither have we paid down in instalments. We have sighed, jingled the quarter against the small change in our pocket, and said we would call again soon.

The trouble is that the only coats we like are those ranging from about four hundred up—up as far as you can see, and then some! The seal ones we definitely gave up. No one but a former manufacturer of munitions or an inventor of booze-substitutes should aspire to those. It isn't only the initial expense but the way you have to live up to them—taxicabs, diamonds, and half a dollar to the hat-boy every time he helps you on with it.

That left mink, and mink we resolved it should be, in spite of its scarcity. You see, the mink is a small animal of retiring nature and celibate instincts. At least, the mink does not seem to run to large families. The rabbit takes up fatherhood as a profession—but nothing like that for the mink! One or two little minks, and that's all. The mink is a sort of natural Eugenist. "Better babies" is his slogan, not "More babies." As a result minks are hard to get, and correspondingly expensive.

Frequently have we cast eyes of longing on mink-lined coats in fur-store windows, as we strolled along to the office on cold mornings in our combination raincoat and winter ulster. They have been handsome coats, too, many of them, but there has always been something about them we didn't like—sometimes the collar, occasionally the shell (how those military terms will creep in even yet!), and nearly always the small tag hanging from the upper righthand button-hole and proclaiming the price.

But one fine day during that very cold snap we finally saw the fur-coat of our youthful vision. There it hung, or rather stood, in the window, spreading its mink lining to the ravished gaze and ruffling its otter collar in tantalizing beauty. That collar had been peeled off the emperor of all the otters—or the crown prince, at the very least—and Heaven alone knows how many minks had delivered up their fluffy integument to furnish forth that sumptuous lining.

It was a beautiful thing, God wot, and the price was right—only two hundred and fifty iron men, simoleons, bucks, bones, or spondulicks. Not that we take a light view of a sum which in the old days would have bought two thousand cocktails, and if judiciously expended on "lush" would have enabled one to laugh at Prohibition for many happy weeks. But what is two hundred and fifty dollars for a fur-coat which was originally five hundred as the tag explicitly declared, and had come down through successive stages to this absurdly inadequate figure?

We rushed right in and made a clerk drag it out of the window. He did it a little doubtfully, it seemed—evidently unaware how many moneyed men dress very plainly, not to say shabbily. But our enthusiasm finally impressed him. He held it up for us, and we slipped with a sigh of tremulous delight into its soothing embrace. Lordy, how that coat fitted! How gently it caressed us, and how gracefully it hung upon the angles of our frame! There is something positively sinful in such comfort as that.

Of course, it wouldn't do to let the clerk see how delighted we were with it—he might raise the price again. So we controlled our voice as best we could, and asked him if the skins were all right. We even tried to look disparaging.

"All right?" he almost shouted. "Why, if it wasn't for the stringency and all that, this coat would be selling at three times—but you can see for yourself. Just look at those skins—everyone of them taken in the middle of winter!" And in his indignation at our attitude, he grabbed a couple of minks and crumpled them up as if he were going to tear them out of the coat and throw them away.

That's a peculiar thing about fine furs. The finer they are, the more the connoisseur seems to abuse them. Poor skins have to be handled with great care, we presume, but when your real expert gets hold of a good piece of fur, he shakes it and beats it and tries to pull the hair out of it.

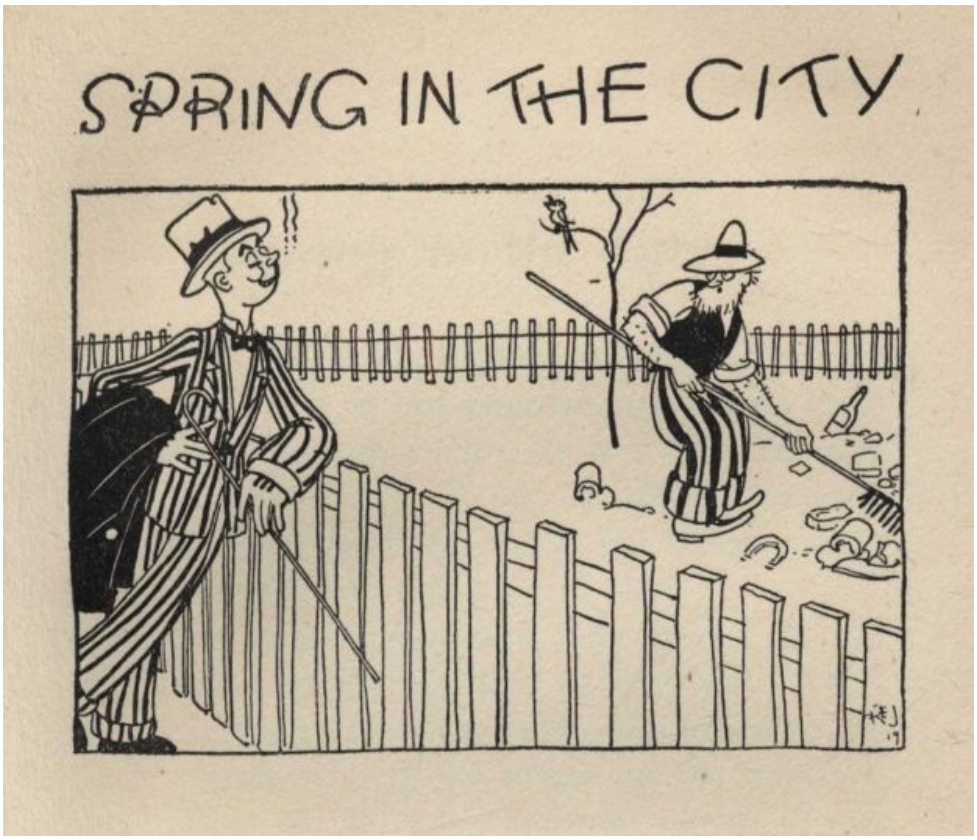
It was also very nice to know that the minks had been taken in the winter when they had all their fur on. In the summer, when the minks are wearing nothing but their swimming-trunks, so to speak—but the thing doesn't bear thinking of.

It was just the coat we had always wanted—the clerk said we looked great in it—but after a hasty recollection of our bank-balance as it appeared when we last put a dint in it, we told him we would call again. And we kept calling. We called about a dozen times. We simply couldn't keep away from that fur-coat. And every time we went we brought a friend or two with us to look it over and give us advice. We put the coat on and walked around the store in it to show how it hung, and then we took it off and adjourned to the nearest cigar-stand or blind-pig to discuss the matter. The coat cost us about twenty dollars in a couple of weeks.

Our friends all admired the coat, but curiously enough, they all advised against us buying it—perhaps from a conscientious objection to seeing so much money tied up in mere fur. They always warned us that if we once wore it, we'd have to go on wearing it all the time for fear of catching cold. They said that's the worst of fur-coats—one doesn't dare leave them off. But naturally, if we got that coat, we intended to go on wearing it till about the middle of June. When it got too hot to wear it open, we'd carry it on our arm with the lining turned out.

Lately the clerk had been getting quite sniffy. The last time we were in, he intimated that the coat was beginning to look rather used from being worn around the store so much. We finally had to discontinue these visits, but we hated to tear ourself away from that glorious garment. The first thing we knew some butcher might buy it.

But perhaps some rich relative of ours, turning up rather unexpectedly—we don't insist on any close consanguinity so long as he is rich—may see this pathetic screed and feel that here is a chance to help genius in distress. What's the use of erecting monuments to us after we are dead? How much better and kinder it would be to buy that coat and send it down to the office while we are still comparatively alive. In fact, this is our idea in writing this article.



SPRING IN THE CITY

Spring in the City

A thick, creamy, white lather covering that part of our countenance which indicates strength of character, showed that we were about to shave. It is our matutinal custom. Poised in our hand was the lethal weapon with which we perform this painful rite.

At that moment we heard the robin! At that very instant of the morning of Saturday, April the sixth, the voice of the robin was heard in the block. Immediately we threw up the window, and careless of the rather intimate nature of our habiliments, we leaned out over the ledge.

There was no robin in sight. No glimpse of red-breast gladdened our heart. We looked in vain at each of the miniature plots of mud which residents on our street refer to as the "lawn." Nowhere could we see Cock Robin sturdily dragging a large, thick worm from his lair, or waiting with dignified alertness for breakfast to poke up its head. But his voice filled the street, clear and high and vibrant with delight—the very voice of triumphant spring!

"Some class to that whistlin'," said someone below us.

We looked down and saw a dingy man with a bag of tools on his shoulder, who was frankly watching us and grinning with disgusting familiarity. Plumbers never are in a hurry.

"Makes a fella feel like chuckin' his work, don't it?" he persisted.

"It does," we burbled through the lather, and drew in our head with reckless haste. We afterwards discovered some of our back-hair still clinging to the lower edge of the window-frame. But not even the painful presence of a protuberance on our skull where none had been before could banish our joy in that robin's song.

Spring was here at last! It is true there was still much ice in our backyard, and in our

neighbor's backyard, and in the backyard beyond his. It is true also that icicles hung from the roofs, and that the water in our bath-tub was still of a temperature to produce curiously mottled effects on our general complexion. But we were happy and we sang as we splashed about, for we knew that spring was here.

Therefore did we kick into a corner with joyous abandon the thick, fuzzy garments—warranted pure wool and unshrinkable (base deception!)—with which we had armed ourself as with triple brass against the onslaught of old Boreas. And from a camphored recess in our trunk we drew forth tenuous and elastic vesture which clung to our manly form and restored to it its summer slimness.

When the coal-man's bill arrived in the morning mail, we threw it carelessly aside for our landlady. Our attitude towards coal-men had suddenly changed from anxious propitiation to bored indifference. The strike news in the papers moved not our Olympian serenity. We sympathized with the miners. We felt that if we were a miner ourself, we would strike at once and stay struck till the dog-days caused us to long for subterranean coolness.

Then draping our light overcoat in a jaunty way over our arm, we walked down town. It wasn't a case of going out with the avowed intention of walking, and then sprinting after the first street-car we saw. No, we really walked, inhaling large breaths of vernal ozone. And a lot of other men were similarly engaged. Fellows that we used to see morning after morning furtively slipping into a street-car—the same car that we slipped into ourself—now swung along with their chests swelling out of their coats and a good-to-be-alive expression on their faces. We also noticed that they seemed to take more than the normal masculine interest in the spring dresses which flitted by—especially those affectionate gowns which cling so alluringly to their fair owners. Verily it was the spring.

In a bit of ground where the mud had been pounded to the shiny consistency of overdone chocolate blanc-mange, three very dirty and very serious-minded urchins played marbles. Further on a spoiled darling of fortune who possessed a top spun it with studied indifference—and with a cord, too, of course—while a couple of other youngsters less favored of the gods looked enviously on.

A garden patch littered with sticks and wet leaves and the water-logged aftermath of winter held a resolute little old man with an immense rake, who was endeavoring to introduce some order into his chaotic cosmos. He was having a very busy time, something like a pup who had got into a boneyard. He scratched and tugged and grunted, and here and there he managed to get the stuff gathered into piles. He may have had some notion of burning it, but it would take many sunny days before the stuff would be dry enough to burn anywhere but in a very hot and active volcano.

We leaned on the fence and sniffed the moist rich odors of the dead leaves. They brought to mind pleasant pictures of the approaching time of planting, when enthusiastic amateurs, heedless of the mud on the knees of their trousers, would be jabbing holes in every available bit of ground and sticking seeds and bulbs into them. And we reflected sadly on the sardonic humor of fate which had made us a book-reviewer instead of a happy farmer lad carolling to the sun as we went about the simple and healthful duties of our husbandry. We thought of striding out to the fields with the sun turning the frosted grass to silver filigree, and then we noticed that the old gentleman was contemplating us with the cold and wary eye of a disillusioned sparrow.

"Are you looking for work, young man?" he asked, "or are you merely looking at it? Because, if you really want a job, there is one right here that I would like...."

But we were already on our way. We suddenly recalled that the mail must be piled up on our desk, and that our presence was urgently needed at the office. Did we want work? And so in an instant we were brought back from the golden meadows of dreamland, where we saw ourself wandering a flushed young god in the morning of the world, and became once more a middle-aged office-man, somewhat stooped from bending over a desk.

The spring was in our blood, however, and our spirits revived at the first park we came to. On such mornings one makes a point of walking through the parks, and Allen Gardens lay right on our line of march. They were a scene of joyous activity. Chief gardeners and assistant and deputy-assistant gardeners ran about in amiable confusion. There was a tremendous raking up of straw and mulch—mulch being the technical name for everything that is thrown on a flower-bed, from bricks to sardine-tins.

Around the fountain a lot of blithesome little toddlers pulled one another's hair, or made frantic efforts to drown themselves, while the nurse-girls exchanged confidences as to the precise tone in which "he said" and the elegant vivacity with which "I said to him."

The benches were out and they were occupied. Perhaps it is enough to say that the benches were out. They are never left unoccupied on a nice day of spring. Gentlemen of shabby leisure abhor a vacant seat. One is led to wonder where the men who sit in parks go during the winter—into cracks in the wall, possibly, like the flies. But the day was warm and the bench-boarders were out. There they sat blinking their eyes in drowsy contentment and sniffing hopefully the breezes of spring.

We paused to make some of the kindly and philosophic reflections which are dictated to us on such occasions by our whimsical genius. We looked about us with just such a keen and humorous expression as we felt Montaigne would have worn under similar circumstances. We were preparing to say something rather clever to ourself about the life of man, which is as a spring day, etc.

"Well, the long winter is over at last," said a voice at our elbow, or rather at our left shoulder-blade. It was a melancholy voice, a voice which intimated that the owner doubted he would ever see another spring. But a large face of more than usual redness caused one to question the likelihood of a demise so immediate.

"Yes," we admitted, "it seems to be over, and it is about time."

"Ah, the spring is a great season for them as is young and strong and handsome."

The wistful expression with which this battered, red-faced, watery-eyed person regarded us indicated that he thought we were all these things. We blushed slightly, and to hide our embarrassment—we are not used to such compliments, implied or otherwise—said in a voice of great heartiness:

"Ho, yes—nothing like the spring! Makes a fellow glad to be alive."

"Yes, yes," he agreed still more wistfully, "it makes a handsome young gentleman's heart expand—it makes him free-handed and generous." A sudden cold suspicion seized our vernal ardor and strangled it. Could it be possible that ... yes, it could! And that rubicund old scoundrel proceeded to inform us that the "temporary loan—(the printer will please emphasize temporary")—of half a dollar would cause him to recall our memory with gratitude at frequent intervals for the rest of his life.

If we had had half a dollar in our pocket, we might ... but what man who is paid on Saturdays ever had any money to bring down to the office Saturday morning? We hinted discreetly at our destitution, but the red-faced man merely grunted and turned away. We fear he did not believe us.

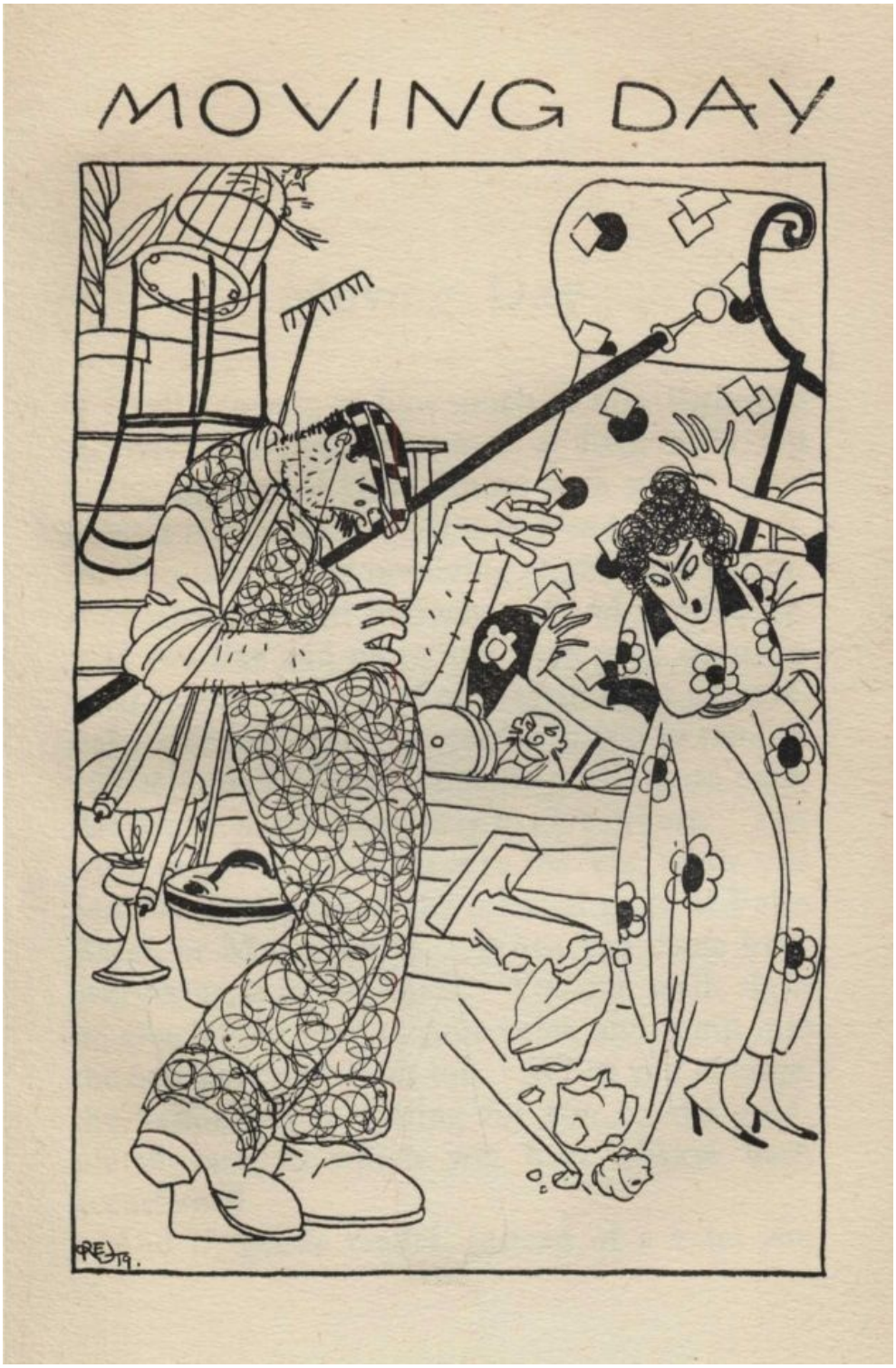
We regretted his distrust, of course, but, as Emerson might have said, it is great to be misunderstood in the spring. In a few minutes we forgot our embarrassment and remembered the ruddy one merely as a humorous episode of the jovial day. We chuckled all the way down to the office as we thought of the open and unabashed admiration with which he had regarded us, till he discovered that we were a good Samaritan without the price.

At the office everybody was glad to see us. Even the Managing Editor was amiable. He said nothing about the hour we got in—he seemed to think it was very nice of us to come down at all. And then he sat on the corner of our desk and talked about the beauty of living in the country, and waking up in the morning with the calves bleating around you and the hens and all that, and walking out in the fields to see the fine, healthy farmer lads turning up the sod and reaping and harrowing and everything.

Of course, it was immediately obvious to us that the Managing Editor's idea of country life had been gained from the reading of sentimental verse. Unfortunately, we find it difficult to share this enthusiasm for rural life. You see, we worked on a few farms when we were a wild lad just out of college—we were seeking inspiration in the soil. So we know just how a farm looks and smells in the spring when they are enriching the ground. But we didn't disillusion the M.E.—we wanted everyone to be happy.

* * * * *

It is true that winter rose again Sunday morning. It is true that Monday was cold and blustery, that there was a thick covering of snow on the ground Tuesday morning, that we had to get out our woollens once more, that in the interval we caught a cold in the head. We knew it, but we heeded not. Our eyes had seen the glory of the coming of the spring.



MOVING DAY

Moving Day

It all depends on how much or how little you have to move—the much or little referring to the amount of impediment with which your habitat is furnished. At either end of the scale moving is a matter involving slight personal inconvenience. But midway toil and trouble lie.

If you live and move and have your meals in what reporters are fond of describing as a "palatial residence," and if it occurs to you to remove yourself and all that is yours to a still more palatial mansion, you have only to give orders. The work and worry you leave to the 'elp, while you and the family spend the interval gaily at Palm Beach or Monte Carlo. When you come back everything is in readiness. You can walk right in, chuck your grip to your valet, and jump into the new porcelain bath-tub. When you emerge, the bath-towel is waiting for you on the gold-plated rack to which you have always been accustomed.

And if, gentle reader, instead of a valet you should have a maid—even among the most modern women maids are still usual—it makes no difference in the general readiness of the new

home. You trip joyously into your boudoir, she unhooks your gown, and you—but, of course, at this point visitors are always asked to wait in the library. But these details are irrelevant. The main thing is that all the work has been done for you. All the worry has been borne by someone else. It only remains for you to accustom yourself to your new surroundings.

In the same way at the other end of the social scale, moving is equally a matter calling for little thought and less trouble. The mover puts his tooth-brush and his comb in his vest-pocket; he throws his other pair of trousers into his bag along with his other shirt and the pair of shoes he had half-soled; and then he slips quietly away while his landlady is not looking. It is not that he is running away exactly, but that he is sensitive and shy, and dreads the emotional strain of bidding farewell. Parting is such sweet sorrow that she might not let him go without keeping his grip as a souvenir—just to remind her of that "ten" he promised to give her at the end of the week.

Gentlemen who make these periodical migrations do not worry much about it. Even if they did pay their bills, they would still grow tired of staying in the same place. So they pack up and move, suddenly and with light-hearted unconcern. They don't call it "moving." They refer to it as "making a getaway."

It is not our intention, however, to treat of either the wealthy or the "stony broke" in this serious consideration of the crises in the affairs of house-holders known as "moving-days." The wealthy don't move often enough, the "busted" move too often, and both move too easily to make the operation an important factor in their lives. But the fellow on a one-cylinder salary who uses a fifty-dollar-a-month house for purposes of domicile—he is the man to whom moving is all that General Sherman declared war to be. It is a revolution, a cataclysm. He dates important events as occurring in "the year we moved" from this house to that other. Moving-days mark off periods of existence the way the Olympian games served for the ancient Greeks.

Why then do people do it? Sometimes because they can't help it. Landlords have a way of handing over their property to syndicates to build apartment-houses on the site. At other times landlords, whose actions no man can foretell, decide to raise the rent. Or they may object to the playful ways of the tenant's children—perhaps the little dears have dug a cave or two in the wall of the living-room, or have in childish glee filled the plumbing with half-bricks and gunny-sacks.

Then there are landlords who have acquired the please-remit habit to such an extent that a trifling delay of a couple of months with the rent leads to intense unpleasantness. They won't even take it in kind—except Scotch, perhaps. And that, of course, is too good for landlords. In fact, there are a thousand and one things which may cause friction between the man who lives in the house and the man who merely owns it. As the landlord generally refuses to leave, the tenant has to.

This explains a good many movings, but not all, nor even the greater number of them. Most people, as a matter of fact, move for the simple reason that hope springs eternal, and man never is but always to be. Every house has its faults and drawbacks. Even the palaces which cost eighty-five dollars a month serve to remind their occupants that there are beauties and comforts which even their comparative affluence cannot command. And naturally the lower one drops in the financial scale the truer this truism—the truth of truisms is our chief objection to them.

Man wants but little here below—just a nice, twelve-room house, hot-water heating, lawn all around, commodious shed where he can stow the lawn-mower and the spade during the period of hibernation, enamel bath, electric lighting, and such other necessities of the simple life as improved by Edison. But he wants that little a long time before he gets it—for fifty dollars a month. Therefore he moves.

Probably the house he already lives in has a hot-air furnace that goes into a state of coma on cold nights, the kind of plumbing that has to be operated on every few days by a surgeon in over-alls, and a roof that permits every thunderstorm to come right down and jump into bed with him. Probably the girl next door plays "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows" till midnight every night of the week, except Sunday when she plays hymn-tunes. But he has hopes. He feels that the next house is going to possess all the beauty and comfort of Aladdin's fairy palace, and that the landlord will be one of those dear old boys with white whiskers, who will answer every complaint with, "Just have the work done and send the bill to me." There is no such landlord, but the tenant keeps on looking for him. He moves. And lo, in another little while he moves again. He keeps right on moving, poor chap, till that final move when they put plumes on the moving-van.

Your old experienced mover starts in early. He makes a real occasion of it. After he and his wife and the baby-carriage have strolled around town for about six weeks, they finally select a prospective residence. It is just about the same as the old house—they are lucky, in fact, if it isn't worse. But they see the new one through pink spectacles. Everything looks like a sunset-scene in

a musical comedy.

"Oh, how happy we're all going to be!"

Exit dancingly. Then they go home and start packing up.

The first thing you always do when you pack is to take up the carpets and oil-cloths. You don't bother picking up the tacks. They are picked up in instalments by members of the family in the early morning and late at night. No electro-magnet ever had half the allurement for a tack that a bare foot exerts. A defenceless big toe will draw them right across a room.

The next move is to drag all the trunks and packing-cases out of their lairs in the attic or cellar and place them in the upper and lower halls in the most unexpected places. Then one is always sure to find them in the dark. Uncle especially, coming home rather late from the lodge meeting—but this is a tragic theme. We have been in uncle's place.

Pictures are then taken off the walls and laid in readily accessible places on the floor. In this way one can put one's foot through a lovely seascape, or tread upon the features of defunct relatives in enlarged photographs, with the minimum of exertion. Personally, we prefer walking into mirrors—the pieces look so much prettier.

Gradually the house assumes the appearance of a place in the devastated area of Flanders. Furniture is piled up in barricades everywhere. Bales of linen and curtains and that sort of thing are built up into parapets. All they need is a firing-step and a periscope or two to look like the real thing. Behind these obstructions the family cowers as it eats its meals—if the food may be so described—and seeks shelter from the prying eye when it goes to bed. You see, the windows are all bare and one can't be too careful of the observer in the sniping-post across the way. Probably the best course is to sit on the side of one's bed and undress in the dark. Not only would this plan of action be more likely to commend itself to the Moral Reform League, but it has the further advantage of avoiding the tacks. One is not so apt to give an impromptu imitation of a man who has inadvertently stepped on a porcupine.

At last the great day arrives! You are awakened by a large hairy man, who wants to know when you are going to get out of your bed so he can take it apart and load it into the van. Hurriedly you jump into the oldest and most primitive clothing permitted by the rules of society and the state of the weather. And you get busy—Homerically busy!

It is true that you have hired a couple of men and a huge waggon. But these gentlemen are professionals. They direct the operation. They are the headquarters' staff, so to speak. Occasionally they take a hand in the game and then you wish they hadn't. You beg them to be careful with the piano—rented—and promptly they carry off half the front porch on the end of it. The enormous walnut whatnot, which has been "an old family possession" ever since you bought it second-hand, is made to look like part of the steerage furniture of the Ark.

Some artistic friends of ours had a fine cast of the Venus of Milo. It was the only thing in the house to be proud of, and they were. They loved it so much that they had never even pawned it, no matter how bitter the temporary stringency. Then one sad moving-day, a horny-handed cyclops with fusel oil instead of brains picked it up and dropped it. If Venus had disputed the right-of-way with an armored car she couldn't have been reduced to more or smaller pieces.

"Oh, how could you—how could you be so stupid?" sobbed the lady of the house.

"Ah, it ain't worth makin' all that fuss about," growled the son of Anak, "sure the darn old thing was bust anyhow."

Finally all the household effects are piled out on the sidewalk, while the neighbors sit on their stoops and make remarks about the quantity and quality of your equipment. Of course, no furniture would look good under such circumstances. If the fittings of Buckingham Palace were piled up on the front lawn, they would hardly be impressive. And you are keenly conscious that your furniture has nothing on King George's. The only thing to do is to pretend that you don't see your neighbors while your sofas and chairs stand on their heads on the sidewalk, kicking their ancient legs in the air, and showing with painful frankness the places where they have been mended.

In the meantime, you keep travelling between the old house and the new one. As the pile keeps diminishing in front of your home that has been, it keeps growing in front of your home to be. There, too, the neighbors are on the watch, and as your old mattresses are carried in, bleeding excelsior from a dozen wounds, you can see their anticipations of your desirability as an addition to the society of the block going steadily down to below the freezing point.

At last the work is done. Everything you can think of has been piled up higgledy-piggledy at the new place. The family sits forlornly in the midst of it—camping out in a strange house!

"Where's the baby?" shrieks mother suddenly in the midst of the weary silence.

Then you remember that you left the little innocent in the bath-tub in the old house for safe keeping. As you tear madly off to retrieve him, you keep wondering if he has turned on the water and drowned himself.

And yet, the following spring, your fancy lightly turns to thoughts of still another move.

VACATION VAGARIES

Vacation Vagaries

Vacation is an excellent institution. Anything that makes a man so contented with his job and his ordinary lot in life as it does must be a good thing. After two weeks spent at the average summer resort the food at home or in the old boarding-house in the city seems rich and varied, and the work at the office proves an intellectual recreation.

The best thing about vacation is making plans for it. This is a truism, did you say? Of course, it is a truism. Occasionally we indulge in truisms, though our natural preference is for "isms" that are not true.

When we say "making plans," we mean plans only in the most general and romantic sense. Once you come down to details all the poetry is squeezed out of the thing. The business of writing to hotelkeepers and railway passenger-agents and other rich but dishonest people for information is a bore and a burden. So also is packing up.

Honestly, now, as one man to another, dear reader—or as one woman to a man, or whatever the circumstances may require—did you ever bring half the things you wanted, and did you ever use half the things you brought? Did you? No, of course not. No one ever does.

Personally, we have travelled light, and we have travelled heavy, and the result has always been the same. The year we took a trunk with raincoats and overcoats and various weights of underwear, and all the other encumbrances of civilization, the weather was fine and warm throughout, and all we really needed was a couple of shirts and some duck trousers. Even our toothbrush was useless, for we got practically nothing to eat.

The next time we decided to limit our impedimenta very strictly, and we carried our belongings in our pocket and a brown-paper parcel. That year we encountered every one of the

fifty-odd varieties of weather and temperature, and two freight-cars couldn't have carried all the clothes we needed. The irony of things?—yes, also the tinnery and leadery, and any other base metal you can think of.

Therefore, we repeat, the practical details of getting ready for a vacation are a weariness and an abomination. But the general plans, the vague and glowing dreams—ah, the pictures of one's self poised like a god in the path of the breakers while the peaches on the beaches gaze longingly upon one, or again smiling carelessly while one steers canoes containing beautiful ladies down dangerous rapids, or still again singing amorous madrigals by moonlight while one drifts in the shadow of the pines! These visions are well worth the disillusion which follows.

Every young man—whether fifteen or fifty—has cherished these or similar dreams of the joys that await him in the days of vacation. And nearly every young man has had the same experience of going up to the same old summer hotel or boarding-house, where you sleep on a lumpy bed with a crazy quilt, battle with the flies for your food, and spend your evenings rowing a fat girl around a pond in a flat-bottomed boat.

Are we pessimistic?—well, perhaps we are pessimistic. But we have had some experience of summer resorts. We have sat on the porch with the married ladies in the evening, and listened to the merry crash as character after character fell in ruins to the ground. We have gone fishing for mythical bass and trout in famous fishing-grounds, where there hadn't been a fish within the memory of man—driven out by the mosquitoes, probably.

And the girls of summer resorts! We have walked with them, and read poetry to them, and eaten ice-cream cones with them, and discussed with them whether marriage is possible where true love is not. We have paddled them around on hot afternoons, and retrieved the balls which they drove into the river when we played tennis together. We have even proposed to—but we must not carry these confidences too far. Suffice it to state, that even those who accepted us let us see clearly that they regarded the eternal affection we swore to one another as being subject to recall with due notice. Sometimes they didn't even bother to give us the notice.

It was all vanity, vanity! But we cannot help remembering that some of the vanity was of a rather pleasant variety. There was that blonde up at—oh, never mind where!—a little thin, you know, but very soulful. She "adored" Browning, and claimed to understand "Sordello"—which was a lie, of course. And the little brunette, brown eyes and reddish hair—very "chick," eh, what?—with an abnormal appetite for brandied chocolates. Nice girls both. But time passes and one forgets. We don't even remember where they work!

If a man—almost any unattached male will do—wishes to feel the joys of being sought after and an object of general female attention, let him hasten away to a summer hotel, especially in one of the less fashionable resorts. At the fashionable ones there are always a few gilded youth about, who own motor boats and look divine in flannels. Their glory would be apt to make his seem like a star in the presence of the sun.

But at the others, those quiet family-hotels, to which people go ostensibly because the air is so much better, and they dislike the noise and fashion of the other places, but really because the board is five times cheaper—at these seminaries of bored spinsters a rash bachelor who intrudes can easily persuade himself that he is a combination of Richard the Lion-Heart and Don Juan.

What gay and girlish groups will be formed about him! How they will laugh at his jokes and listen with awe to his opinions! With what warmth they will admire his atrocious ties and homicidal socks—the colors are so striking and virile you know. They may even sit still while he sings.

The only objection is that popularity of this sort is apt to send a man back to the office a mental and physical wreck. Even a year of loafing on the boss's time hardly qualifies a man to paddle canoes, play tennis, walk miles, go for hay-cart drives, eat canned goods, and dance the foxtrot till one every morning, and then retire to fight for his life with a dozen big husky mosquitoes that have been sitting on the foot of his bed waiting for him in bloodthirsty fury for hours.

Talking of mosquitoes, have you ever seen any mosquitoes or flies to equal for size and ferocity those that flourish at any summer hotel or boarding-house? And the poorer the place the more various and highly developed are the entomological specimens.

There are mosquito-nets on the windows, of course, but they seem merely to annoy those birds of prey, and exacerbate their naturally hasty temper. After being obliged to bite his way through two or three folds of pink or blue gauze, no wonder a mosquito sits on your pillow and shrieks insanely in your ear what he is going to do to you. He then proceeds to do it, worse luck!

As for the flies, deserting in the most heartless manner the cows and horses they have lived

with all winter, they rush with a glad shout into the dining-room, and standing with their hind feet in your bacon-and-eggs, reach over and lap up your coffee, or whatever it is people serve under that alias. Very chummy those flies, much more democratic than flies in town. The simple life of the country probably accounts for that—also for the way they wade into the butter like a hired man.

But if you really want to know what flies and mosquitoes—not to speak of ants and beetles and caterpillars—can really do, you ought to go "roughing it." As if the ordinary summer boarding-house wasn't rough enough for anything but the most exotic taste! "Roughing it" is a disease to which Canadian youth between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five is peculiarly liable.

We succumbed once. We went with a canoe and a tent and some beans and a couple of fellows who said they were old woodsmen and knew how to cook. Some day we may be able to bring ourself to write up that trip in detail. But it is only ten years ago, and the memory still rankles too bitterly.

After two weeks of carrying loads over portages, washing dishes, eating the bread and pancakes those two murderers baked, and sitting up nights to stab the bugs that crept upon us in the dark, we had almost to be sent to a sanitarium to recuperate. But good nursing and cod-liver oil brought us around again in a month or so. Roughing it?—yes, only "rough" seems a mild word to apply to it.

Everyone has his own notion of the perfect vacation. We have ours, and that is the vacation which takes one home to a small town a long way off. This, of course, implies considerable foresight in picking out one's ancestral seat. You must also arrange to have a mother there waiting for you—preferably with white hair. Always mention the color of the hair when ordering a mother. White is best, and perhaps next to that iron-grey.

Let us suppose that you haven't been home in a couple of years or more. You have written a number of letters and telegrams telling them the exact hour you will arrive, and so when you finally chug-chug into the little station on the same old stub-line which is always half an hour late, you find them all drawn up to meet you.

For a few minutes the world becomes one blur of arms that go around one's neck, and faces held up to be kissed. And then you are gravely passed in review, the cut of your clothes and the color of your hat, and whether or not you have got stouter or leaner or greyer than before.

In the ordinary world where you live and move and have your job and vote, you may be a man of standing, a well-known politician or banker or editor. But here, whether captain or clerk, you are just "Mollie's boy, Bill," or "Annie's boy, Pete," or whatever may be your mother's first name and your own. Here you are never permitted to grow up. Here you are liable to be called "Willie" or "Babe" to your death at eighty.

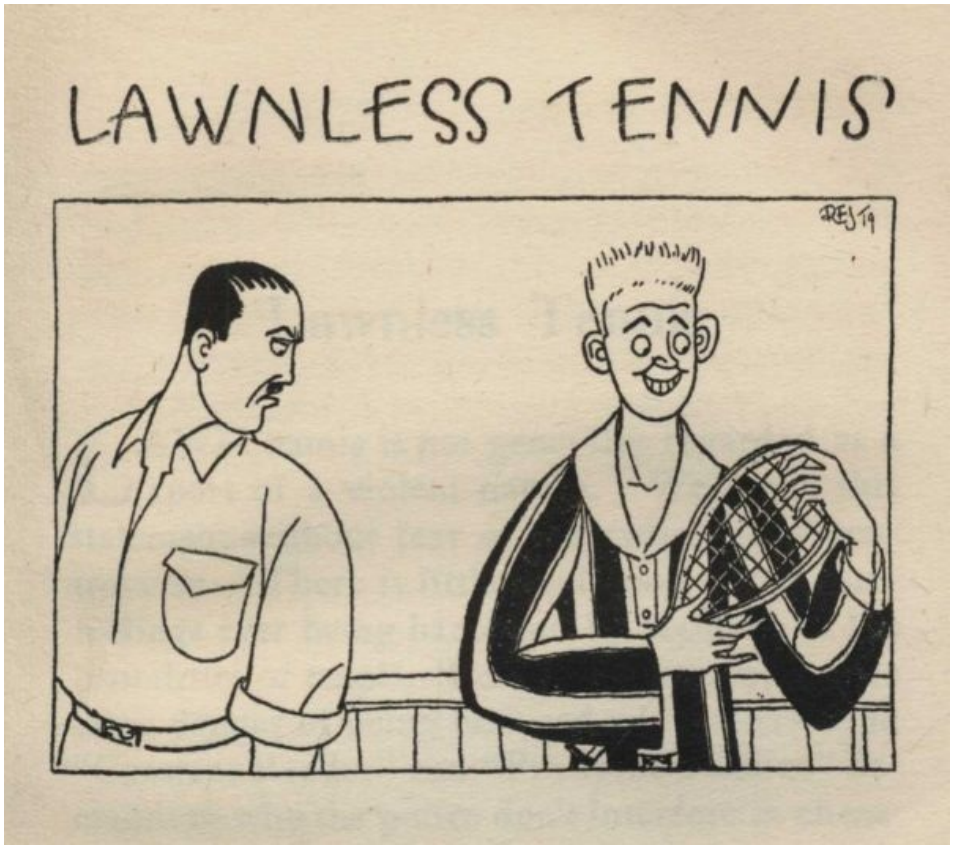
Outside the station the same old family horse is rubbing his ear against the same old battered telephone pole to which he is hitched. He gazes with mild indifference on the confusion and bustle around him. He has long ceased to show interest in anything but oats.

As you drive up the main street you notice with extraordinary interest that old man Johnson has put a new plate-glass front in his store, and young Brown has hung his shingle up as a doctor. You pass by the one street-car waiting to make its half-hourly trip, and the motorman yells joyfully, "H'lo, Pete, when did yuh get back?"

At the house the dinner is waiting—ah, a dinner that really is a dinner! There are all the things you used to like, and have ever since wistfully dreamed of in city restaurants, the fried chicken and the pumpkin-pie and all.

"And now," says mother, as you lay down your knife and fork and come up to breathe, "how is your Aunt Kate, and have you seen Cousin Maggie lately, and have you heard how Lizzie is getting on with that fellow she married, and when were you last in—?"

And you begin and talk for two weeks.



LAWNLESS TENNIS

Lawnless Tennis

Lawn tennis is not generally regarded as a sport of a violent nature. We make this statement without fear of contradiction or controversy. There is little likelihood of our finer feelings ever being harrowed by accounts of the brutalities of tennis. Editors of newspapers are in no danger of being besieged with letters from "Constant Reader" and "Pro Bono Publico" demanding why the police don't interfere in championship tennis matches and bind the participants over to keep the peace.

No, tennis is not usually a violent or brutal sport. In fact, it is frequently associated in the popular mind with weak tea and girls and beg-pardons and curates and other evidences of the amenities of life. Rough persons who play lacrosse or football are apt to class tennis with tiddlywinks or casino.

We had some such idea ourself before we took it up. We could see ourself treading daintily across a verdant lawn and popping a nice white ball, covered in wool so it wouldn't hurt anyone, over a nice white net to a nice white young lady on the other side. If we should have the misfortune to put it in a place where she couldn't pop it back to us, we would apologize in a profuse and genteel manner, and then would go blushingly to the other side of the court and pop it over again.

Somehow or other the picture did not at first appeal to us. Was thy servant a bank-clerk that he should do this thing? And yet we needed exercise, gentle exercise. Not that we were getting fat—we are not of a stout habit—but we could feel our arteries hardening from day to day, and rheumatism working slowly but surely into many of our most useful joints.

We decided to do something to arrest the progress of senile decay—something easy and pleasant. Besides, we knew a fellow who belonged to a tennis club, and he insisted on us joining it. We succumbed at last, but it was a long time before we admitted as much to our newspaper associates. One is so apt to be misunderstood.

The first day we went up to the tennis club Harry accompanied us. Harry was a nice chap who wore glasses and spoke grammatically, and we felt we were in safe hands. He was also very fond of music, and we had some dim notion that perhaps he played the mandolin and sang in the shade between "sets." We made up our mind that we wouldn't sing ourself, no matter how much the company insisted. The way we came to know what a "set" meant, was that we had been preparing ourself by reading several volumes on the history and practice of the game, with short

biographies of about a hundred champions. We had decided to become one.

The first shock came in the club-house when we were taken into the locker-mom. It was just like the locker-room of any athletic club. Wire lockers were ranged along the walls, and the benches were of somewhat battered wood. Somehow we had expected silk curtains and cushions and natty little bows of pink ribbon.

On the benches a number of gentlemen in various stages of dishabille, and with varying claims to manly beauty, were getting into or out of tennis clothes. When they didn't like their own clothes, they took some out of someone else's locker—just like the pirates who occupy their leisure with rougher games. If Harry had not been there we would have felt sure we had got into the wrong place.

Every now and then a man would stagger into the room in very damp ducks or flannels, would tumble out of them, and would totter over to a shower where he would yell with inarticulate rage as the cold water struck him. Sometimes they were very pale, and sometimes very red in the face. But always they were perspiring and exhausted, and we could not help wondering what the dickens they had been doing to get themselves into that condition. Too much tea, perhaps!

We got into our own outfit—all nice and new and unspotted of the world. We had brought it along in a suit-case. We had white ducks and white shoes and a white shirt, low in the neck. We felt like a young girl high-school graduate just about to receive her diploma. Also we had a blazer. Possibly the reader does not know what a "blazer" is. We would hate to think so, but we will explain. A "blazer" is a striped sack-coat, which was originally designed as part of a costume to ride zebras in, or to prevent dangerous convicts from escaping—we are not sure which. Anyway, it makes the man who wears it look like a party-brick of ice-cream—you know the way they deposit the stuff in gorgeous layers.

Our blazer was composed of stripes of purple and black, each about two inches wide. We selected it because it was so quiet compared to the others. When we put it on that first day, however, we had an unpleasant consciousness that two or three gentlemen in our immediate neighborhood said something about "hell." Possibly a little theological controversy. Just the same, we never wore it again. We lost our taste for it.

Being both togged out in our tennis outfit, we stepped through the door leading to the courts. Personally we gave one wild look around and turned to Harry with a gasp of dismay.

"But where's the lawn?" we asked.

Harry seemed annoyed, but we couldn't help it. We had expected to see a wide smooth lawn, with shady elms and tea-trays and gentle curates and all the rest of it. We thought that was why the game was called "lawn tennis." What we actually saw was a great big backyard with a pounded clay floor. A series of dingy nets ran down the centre of it, and it was crossed and recrossed by a gridiron of half-obliterated lines.

It was easy to see what had obliterated the lines, for some eighteen or twenty active young men in badly rumpled attire were tearing up and down in clouds of dust, working like demons, jumping and rushing and dodging about, and all the while banging away with fury at balls which we afterwards discovered did not possess a particle of wool to cover them. It had all been knocked off. Gentle popping?—good lord!

Surrounding the courts was a lovely vista of other backyards with clothes hung out to dry. Extraordinary the amount of washing the people in that block seemed to do! Every day was wash-day in that neighborhood. During the weeks that followed we became thoroughly acquainted with the clothes of its inhabitants. We discovered who wore red flannel petticoats, and who leaned toward gay and passionate pyjamas. We also knew who wore—but perhaps we had better stop right here. There are things which no gentleman should discuss—certainly not in the cold light of public print. But it was astonishing how life-like they used to look—especially in a breeze.

Over that first game with Harry we would like to draw a veil, a good thick veil—say, several plies of sack-cloth. We did not shine, or, if we did, it was rather as a conflagration than a star. We turned red with the very first ball we hit—we knocked it on to a neighboring housetop—and we slowly became a richer and richer maroon during the progress of the match. Somehow or other we seemed to be too strong for the game. When we hit a ball, which wasn't often, we put it into the bleachers for a home run, or tore a hole in the net with it.

The rest of the time we fanned the atmosphere in a ferocious manner which was not without its humorous features. We didn't notice the humor ourself, but a number of our new fellow-members did. They stopped playing and crowded around to see us. They were very encouraging, but we were a little confused by their coaching. They kept counting us out on strikes, or when we

got a hit would beseech us to stretch it into a three-bagger or slide into the home plate. They got us so worked up that we actually called "Ball!" like a baseball umpire when Harry served out of the proper court. Presumably we were waiting for four before taking our base. It was a very trying game—very!

Of course, this was only the beginning. We wouldn't write about tennis at all, if we couldn't give the reader a better account of ourself than this. Our first game filled us with rage, but also with determination. After that we were up at the courts every day the weather permitted, and a few that it didn't. And we worked—Heavens, how we worked! If we had worked like that in the office, we would own the plant by now. When we came in day after day out of the dust and smother, we used to be too tired even to holler in the cold shower. There was no hot water—it was considered effeminate.

Did we make ourself a great player? Well, we are a modest cuss, and although it is with the greatest reluctance that we deny the charge of greatness, we still deny it. Of course, dear reader (presuming that you have been sufficiently interested in our tennis career to read thus far), if you didn't know anything about tennis and were to see us smashing out some of those brilliant drives of ours which always land just a few inches out of the court, or getting that meteoric service over the net—sometimes we rully do, rally!—you might think we were great. But 't is not for us—you understand the delicacy of our position.

As a matter of fact, we did begin to suspect that we were a winner. Not that we got into the habit of bragging about our playing at all, but occasionally we would tell our ladifrens that we thought Norman Brookes and McLaughlin were greatly overrated, and that we wished our club would send us over to Wimbledon to take part in one of the tournaments. They would always assure us that they felt we must be a very fine player, for we were so well built for tennis, so tall and active and such a long reach. Nice girls!

Just when our self-confidence was at its height, we spent a week-end at a place on the Lake where they had a good court. They also had a couple of pretty girls in the family. There was another chap, too, a weedy little Englishman with a blond moustache and a tenor voice that was almost a soprano. The conversation turned on tennis—we believe that we brought it around to that point ourself—and we gave a dramatic account of an awful beating we had handed out to a fellow at the club only a day or so before. We even contributed living pictures of several of our most deadly strokes.

"You play tennis, too, don't you, Mr. Blyth?" asked one of the girls, more by way of bringing him into the conversation than anything else.

He blushed and said he did—a little. Then nothing would do them but that he should play a match with us. He seemed very unwilling, and the more unwilling he was, the more anxious we became to play. Finally we gave our word of honor that we would not drive very hard. He said it was awfully decent of us, and he borrowed one of the girls' rackets, while we drew our gold-medal beauty from its nifty leather case.

Did we drive hard? No, we didn't drive hard. We didn't get a chance. His first ball paralyzed us. Then that little blond brute would get into the middle of the court, and he would place the ball just an inch inside the left-hand line. If we got it back—by a miracle we occasionally did—he would place it just an inch inside the right-hand line, varying the programme with smashes which a man twenty feet tall couldn't handle. He had a service which broke in all directions except where our racket was; and he could pick the ball off the ground or jump ten feet in the air and kill it with equal ease. He drove till our knees wobbled and our head swam; and then he popped over little lobs with a cut on them, which made us look like a cinnamon bear trying to catch butterflies.

We could hardly eat any dinner that evening. For the rest of the week-end the girls sat at that little bounder's feet and begged him to show them how to "serve," how to hold their rackets for the back-hand stroke, etc., etc.

Later we learned he was champion of half a dozen English counties.

THAT GLORIOUS FIRST DRIVE

That Glorious First Drive

Safety lies only in complete absence—we hope the printer won't make this "a couple of absinthes," though they might help if one could get them. But, remember, if you really wish to escape the infection, stay away from golf-courses. Touch not a single club, not a blooming ball. Above all, resist that desire to swing one of the darn sticks—"just to see how it feels." That way madness lies. As soon as you touch the leather end of the thing, the malignant animal magnetism gets to work and you are lost. After that there is nothing for your family to do but appoint a guardian for you.

Do as we say, don't do as we did. For we, who write this in sack-cloth and ashes—we speak metaphorically, of course, though we do notice a little cigar-ash on our vest—we neglected this simple precaution and are suffering accordingly. We let ourself be lured to the links. We picked up a driver and waggled it about a few times, and now we are suffering from an acute and very distressing form of the disease. This is how the calamity occurred.

An old and esteemed friend of ours, for whom we feel the respect which one able man feels for another, said to us not long ago: "Doing anything Saturday afternoon, old man?" He spoke with an affected carelessness, but we have since had reason to suspect that his casual manner covered a seething ocean of vindictive purpose. It was his intention to infect us with the virus of *dementia golfiana*.

"Oh, nothing special," we said, after pausing for a few moments to give the impression that we were mentally conning over a long list of important social engagements. "Oh, nothing special"—fatal words!

"Good! Come on down and walk around the course with me at Barborough"—that isn't the name exactly, but it will serve—"they're getting it into nice shape now. It'll do you good to get out into the country a bit. Will you come?"

He spoke with an appearance of cordial good-fellowship. We believed in the entire friendliness of his intentions—alas, ours has always been a trusting nature! We said we'd go.

"All right—catch the two-fifteen radial. I'll be waiting for you at the club-house. You can't miss it."

We caught it, along with two hundred and sixty-seven children, women, and men, who were likewise wooing the country breezes at points along the road. Several of the children made the trip in our lap. The little dears seemed to know instinctively how much we hated it. When we got

there our trousers had a large number of creases, in addition to those which our valet puts in them. But fortunately we were wearing our other suit.

When we had walked back half a mile or so from where the curmudgeon of a conductor put us off, we discovered the club-house. It is a very handsome building, impressively combining the characteristics of a munition-magnate's bungalow and a summer hotel. Obviously it had been built long before Prohibition became a serious menace.

We looked all about for our friend. He was nowhere in sight. Several gentlemen in soiled negligee roamed aimlessly about the grounds, dragging what looked at a distance like short lengths of drain-pipe. We discovered afterwards that they were golf-bags and these gentlemen were doing their own caddying—the caddies, we presume, being all engaged as bell-hops in the club-house.

Finally, a very hot and dusty and particularly disreputable gentleman, dragging a reluctant bag by the nape of the neck, came towards us. We recognized our friend. He looked tired and unhappy, and his eye had the dull stare of a somnambulist. We have since learned it was merely a mild form of golf-face.

"Come on over to the tee," he said.

We brightened up at once—our throat really was rather dry. But that wasn't the sort of tea he meant. Instead, he took us over to a little square terrace. Gouging a handful of damp sand out of a box, he made a tiny mound and set the ball on top of it. Somehow or other it looked very small and pale and pitiful—especially as it was already pretty badly scarred up. Then he wiped his hands on his trousers—in view of their condition perhaps it would be more accurate to call them pants—and drew out of his bag a long stick with a wooden head about the size of a small cocoanut. It was certainly an awesome weapon.

Stepping up to that miserable ball, he carefully assumed one of the most awkward positions we have ever seen a human being adopt. His feet were about a yard apart and his toes were pointed with elaborate care. Then he laid the cheek of that murderous club alongside the ball, waggled it a few times, gazed long and earnestly at a point in the landscape a mile or so away, and finally brought his eye back again and fixed it on the ball with a hypnotical glare. We thought we could see the ball tremble. Our own heart was palpitating frightfully. We had no idea of the strain of watching a man play golf.

Slowly that ponderous club arose. Higher and higher it went. But never for a fraction of an instant did our friend cease to glower at that unfortunate globule. Then, just as the strain was about to become unendurable, he swung. The mighty knob on the end of that stick shrieked through the air. It made a complete circle and a half and nearly threw our friend off his feet. We have since learned to recognize this as the "follow-through."

So interested were we in our friend's extraordinary movements—we had never seen him act like this before—that it was almost a full minute before it occurred to us to look for the ball. It was still there. Missed? Could it be that he had really—but no!

"I always make a trial swing," he said with a smile decidedly wan and unconvincing. "Helps a fellow to get the force into it, you know." We didn't know, and we had strong suspicions, in spite of our entire ignorance of golf.

Once more he went through the performance, waggles and all. Once more the big club swung up, and once more it came down. This time it hit the ball—hit it with a vengeance. Tearing a nasty gash in the top of that miserable pellet, the club sent it bounding in agony along the ground for about forty yards.

Our friend grew violently red in the face, and he said—but, on second thoughts, it doesn't really matter what he said. There are times when even the best of men.....

We followed meekly as he strode after the offending spherule with a homicidal gleam in his eye. Hurling his bag of clubs to the ground, after he had picked out a thing with an iron head which no man should be allowed to carry around in a law-abiding country, he sneaked up on the ball and hit it a clout which drove it clear out of sight over an intervening hill.

"Ha! ha!" he said, with a chortle of maniacal glee, "that's better. That's more in my style." But personally we felt as though we had aided and abetted a murder.

Then we both went and looked for that blessed ball. We hunted under every bush and blade of grass, but it had crawled away wounded to die alone. Fifteen minutes later he decided to drop one on the edge of the green. He finally got it into the hole all right after several lovely putts.

We have no intention of giving a minute description of our friend's game. We have since found reason to believe that it was not exactly an awe-inspiring exhibition. But, as he explained to us several times in the course of play, we should have been there earlier to see his work during

his first round. So far as we could judge from his description, it would have made Harry Vardon jealous enough to quit the game and get a job delivering meat.

"You should have seen my shot from the third tee—the Devil's Drive, we call it. It was a lallapaloosa! By the way, what is the record drive? I've forgotten for the moment."

We told him not to ask us, as we wotted not of such things. He smiled at us with what seemed an expression of great relief, as though he felt he could speak with confidential frankness.

"Well, whatever it is," said he, "mine was at least three hundred and sixty yards! How about that?"

We said that it was very fine; and no doubt it is. But we noticed that he lowered his voice as he spoke—perhaps because of the impressive nature of the statement, perhaps because he was afraid someone would overhear him, someone who knew better.

As we said above, it is not our intention to enter into the details of our friend's game, or to give a verbatim report of the language he was led to use on several regrettable occasions. Our whole purpose in writing this article is to tell what we ourself did in a moment of recklessness. We are telling it to serve as a warning to others who still are unbitten by the dread microbe of "gawf."

We had gone right around the course, and had finally got back to the club-house and the first tee. We had duly admired the scenery of the grounds, which were really far too beautiful to be delivered over to a lot of feeble-minded golfers. Our friend threw down his bag of clubs with a grunt of relief.

"Better take a shot or two," he said, "while I slip into the office to have a word with the secretary."

That was the moment of doom. That was the time when, breathing a brief prayer to such of the saints as we still have a pull with, we should have sprinted down the road to the car-line. We should have begged our friend to take the things away with him. We should have broken every stick in the bag and burned the pieces. We should have thrown ourself down in a fit. We should have done anything rather than run the risk we actually took. Alas, we knew not what we did.

Heedless of impending doom, we laid our new hat on the ground. We playfully extracted the big club with the swollen head and the brass bottom. We clawed out of the box a handful of wet sand and made with it a neat little pyramid, on the top of which we carefully placed the ball. Then we stepped back and contemplated it. It was a very pretty thing—a nice little pyramid and a nice little white ball. It looked shamefully easy.

The club felt rather queer, and it wobbled in our grasp. If we had recognized the omen, there might still have been hope for us. But we were cheerfully, idiotically irresponsible. No time was lost on the proper "stance." We stood any old way. Our only desire was to knock that ball off that silly little pile of sand; and we simply made a swipe at it—crack!

Did we hit that ball?—O Lord, did we hit it! The birds around Barborough must still tremble when they think of the way that blessed ball went whizzing among the clouds. Don't ask us how we did it. We don't know. We just swung the club as hard as we could at the ball, heard a nice, crisp crack, turned around two or three times, almost putting our legs out of joint in the process, and then recovered in time to see that locoed spheroid sailing along like a racing aeroplane, a mile high and going due north. Just missing a crow, it vol-planed to earth and lay shimmering like a diamond in the sun. How far away? We won't tell you—you wouldn't believe us if we did.

"Some drive!" said a voice at our back. It was the club professional! Our cup of pride filled up with a rush and slopped all over our soul. Hastily seizing an iron, we ran after the ball. We didn't hit it hard. We didn't want to break the windows in the club-house. But a couple of brisk taps dropped it dead on the tee again. We weren't trying to play the hole, of course, but were merely batting the ball around. If we had tried to play it, we would probably have done it in about three.

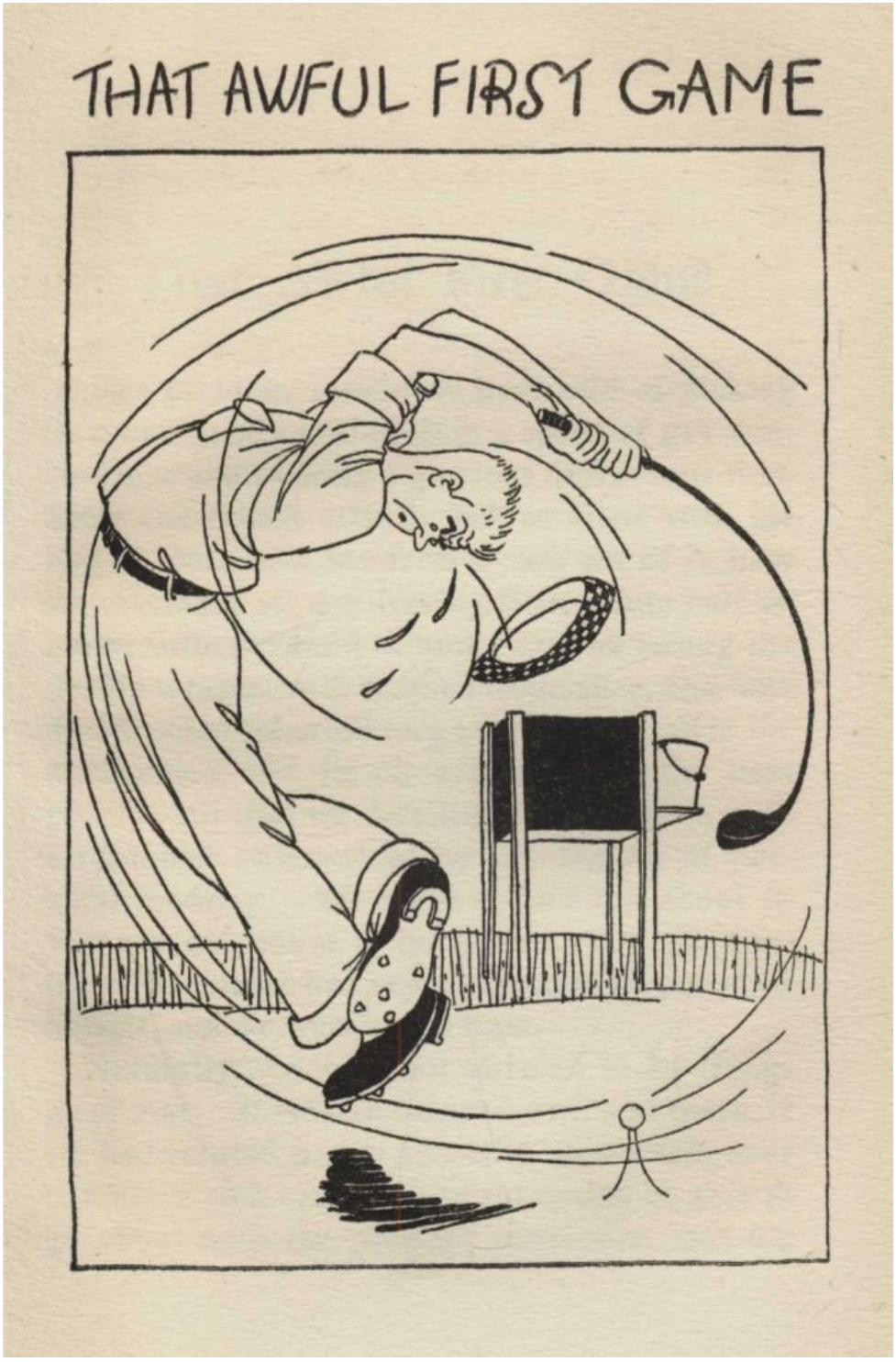
Naturally, we repeated the performance several times. We were in a fever of delighted excitement. We couldn't miss the ball if we tried. We had it tamed and domesticated. It would eat right out of our hand, sit up and beg, and lie dead. And all the time we didn't suspect for a moment that this exhilaration was merely the first symptom of that dreadful and incurable disease—gawfitis!

We have since learned that this is not at all unusual with beginners. Every golfer we have discussed the matter with tells us that he had a somewhat similar experience. In fact, one fellow assured us that the first time he ever had a club in his hand he played the first four holes in par—he was holing putts forty feet long as though there was no place else for the ball to go. But we didn't know this. We didn't suspect that the demon of golf lures his victims on. We simply took it for granted that we were a natural master of the game, and that all we had to do was to devote

an occasional afternoon to it and we would soon have our room filled with silver cups big enough to bath the dog in.

Our friend came out of the club-house and stood for a few minutes with the professional watching our work. But the presence of a "gallery" did not disturb us. We were beyond all that. We had Colonel Bogey down and were thumping the life out of him. When we had finally and reluctantly finished—it was time to go in and get something to eat—our friend told us that the professional had said: "That man has the makings of a real golfer in him."

It may seem to the reader that it was very nice of our friend to pass this compliment on to us—especially after the exhibition of golf he himself had given. But it wasn't nice. It was the refinement of cruelty. Then and there our doom was sealed. The mid-iron was in our soul. That glorious first drive had done it. A few days later we went out with another friend and played our first game. But that is quite another story.



THAT AWFUL FIRST GAME

That Awful First Game

In a previous article we have told of picking up a friend's golf-club in a spirit of gay nonchalance and making a glorious drive—our first. How our friend artfully left us alone with his bag of tools, how we drew a club out of it, how we carelessly set a quivering little white ball on a neat little pyramid of sand, how we swung the deadly weapon with serene insouciance, and how that doomed spheroid tore a shrieking gash in the atmosphere and lit on a hillside in the next county—all that we detailed to our friends with a frankness untempered by any feeling of personal modesty. We were not modest about it. We saw no reason to be modest. On the contrary, we felt we had every reason to be proud of ourself, and we were at the time.

Naturally, we were not satisfied to let things go at that. If we had stopped then and there, if we had refused firmly and with cuss-words ever to touch a club again, we might to-day be able to go about with the pleasant conviction that we were a champion in possibility. When people talked of young Ouimet, as they still do occasionally—it is a great man who is famous for more than a few months in these bustling times—we could smile in a thoughtful way and ask casually if we had ever told them of that time when we had picked up that club and placed that ball, etc., etc.

Of course, they would probably be bored by the recital—especially after we had told it a few dozen times—but think of the satisfaction it would be to us to know that if we turned our giant intellect and steel muscles to the subject of golf, we would have Ouimet wishing that his parents had apprenticed him to a grocer or a plumber instead of making him a little caddy.

Unfortunately, we did not refrain from golf. We allowed ourself to be persuaded into going out and playing a game—starting a game, that is—and now whenever we hear the word "golf," we turn a peculiar bright salmon pink, and get a trembling all over us. That first game of ours was a thing no man who respects himself could look back on with anything but agony. Nothing but our passion for truth, even at the risk of exposing all the weakness of our nature—it is the same determination with us as with St. Augustine and Rousseau and the other great confessors—nothing but this could lead us to mention the game at all. But our favorite motto is, "The whole truth and then some." So with trembling pen we tear the veil from this crying gash on the milestones of memory—there seems to be something wrong with this metaphor. But never mind. On with the tale, let truth be unrefined!

A few days after that famous first drive we dropped into a friend's office to discuss several important matters of business—such as the weather and the market quotations in the leading blind-pigs. Our real purpose, however, was to tell him, quite incidentally, how we picked up that club and placed that ball, etc., etc., etc.

"Ah, ha, sounds like a pretty nice drive," said Bjones—let's call him that, anyway—when we had finished our modest little recital of how we had established a new record for the course. "You must come out and have a game with me at Boozedale to-morrow afternoon—hope I can give you a game all right."

As a matter of fact, this friend of ours is a mighty golfer. He's the sort of player that spends a bad night every time he takes more than eighty-five to go around in. And when he plays he drags around with him a leather barrel—or rather, the caddy drags it—containing enough carnal weapons to arm a division of the Bolshevik army. To see him coming to a decision between a jigger and a driving mashie, to see him taking his stance and addressing the ball, would fill the breast of the least reverent with awe. Napoleon playing his famous approach-shot with the Old Guard at Waterloo had nothing on our friend Bjones dropping one dead on the eighteenth green. But, alas, it was only later on that we discovered all this.

"Hope I can give you a game," said he.

We knew not the irony that lurked in his suave tones. It ran right off the umbrella of our self-satisfaction. We could see in it nothing but deference to our huge natural genius for the game. Besides, we were delighted at this chance to give free rein to our golfing abilities. We felt that to refuse the invitation would be flying in the face of Providence, which had obviously designed us for a champion. We did not accept too eagerly, however. We felt a certain reluctance about taking a fellow out to his own club and making a holy show of him. But finally we allowed ourself to be persuaded. The hour was named and the car.

Next day at the appointed time we were on the job. It was a lovely day, not too warm and not too cold—just the right temperature to call out the best that was in us. We felt that we would make our previous driving record look like something that had been done in the palæozoic age. When we caught sight of Bjones, however, we felt twinges of regret. Bjones seemed to look older

than usual. And his stoop was more apparent than ever. We thought we could see lines of anxiety on his face.

When we made that famous first drive we were, of course, in our ordinary street-clothes—not that they are so ordinary, you know, not at all—but still the garb of convention. This time, however, we removed our civilized habiliments and got into a curious assortment of garments that Bjones dug out of his locker for us. They must have been in his family a long time. There was an old khaki shirt, and a pair of lavender trousers with a tendency to open-work effects. The boots had evidently been worn for years by a gigantic policeman, till a blacksmith came along and filled the soles full of horse-shoe nails. Bjones said they were fine for side-hills. Perhaps they were, but they made us feel like a touring-car travelling in chains.

After Bjones had succeeded in making us look like a tramp that had just been run off a farm by a couple of bull-dogs, he led us out to the first tee—right in front of the verandah where a number of ladies were sitting. They smiled at us and seemed to wonder if our escape had been noticed, or if we had been discharged as cured. It was a mortifying position. We found consolation, however, in the thought that our first stroke would show them that a champ' is a champ' for a' that.

A couple of men who were ahead of us drove off and hurried down after their balls into the valley below. After a suitable pause Bjones teed his ball up and whacked it into space in the general direction of a little white flag on the other side of the valley. But we waited. We could see the pair ahead of us putting on the first green, and we weren't taking any chances of slaughtering a fellow-creature, even if he did take four to the hole—mentally we allowed ourself about two.

Finally they holed out and disappeared on their way to the next tee. Carelessly we jabbed down a little lump of wet sand, set the ball on it, took a good look at the flag in the distance, waggled the club a few times in a business-like manner, and swung. There was no joyous crack. We gazed off over the landscape, but could see no ball wildly careering.

"Ahem, you were a little too hurried, old man," said Bjones.

We retrieved the ball. It had rolled about six inches under the impulse of the wind raised by the club. It was a painful moment, and we murmured a few words which we hope will not be remembered against us in the day of final reckoning. Then we erected a slender column of moist sand, somewhat on the model of the tower of Babel. It was a miniature campanile. On the top we carefully set the ball.

This time we were cautious—there could be no question about that. We were still confident, but were running no risks. Half a dozen times did we change our grip. For a full minute we wobbled the club about the ball, picking out the exact spot where we were going to hit it. Then slowly we brought the club back, higher and higher. Keeping our eye glued with maniacal intensity on the globule, we finally made a tremendous swipe at it and—carefully cut the sand from under it, so that it came down kerplunk! We had driven it just two inches—straight down. Bjones said nothing. There are times when silence is more precious than radium. And the caddy—the caddy was beyond speech.

We don't know how we finally managed to persuade the ball to vacate the tee and seek the green expanse of the valley below. But we did at last, and stumbled down the hill after it with vengeance in our eye. Selecting the ugliest-looking iron club in the bag Bjones had given us, we remorselessly drove that ball and a number of sods right up to the edge of the green—in eight, we believe. Or was it eighteen?

"Now, a nice little tap, a wrist-shot," said Bjones, who had holed out and had smoked half a cigar in the meantime.

It was a nice little tap. Tearing a hole in the flag and just missing the caddy's head by a fraction of an inch, that perverted pellet plunged screaming into an oak-forest, where it buried itself and will probably in the course of time grow into a cork-and-rubber plant.

"Hard luck, old man," Bjones murmured. But there was something very wistful in his smile. You see, that ball was brand new, and had cost Bjones just one dollar. The next ball he gave us was not quite so new—not by several gashes.

We have no intention of going into all the painful details of that game. Suffice it to state that after three hours of play and seven balls we had made eight holes. We didn't count our strokes. It would require one of those patent calculating machines that can add up three columns of figures at a time. When we hit the ball a good wallop, it invariably sought refuge in the woods or in a creek. The rest of the time it just dribbled along.

"Your game isn't so bad," said Bjones in answer to our apologies, "if you could only get it distributed properly. The trouble seems to be that you do all your putting from the tee and on the

fairway, and all your driving on the green. If you could only reverse that, you would be a real winner." But, of course, that was precisely what we couldn't do.

One hole was an especially depressing experience. The tee is on the edge of a cliff, at the foot of which a little bubbling brook burbles beauteously. Now, any human being with the full use of one leg could kick a golf-ball over that stream without the slightest difficulty. So could we. But we made the mistake of going at it with a driver. We swung with savage determination, nicked the ball neatly on top, and had the pleasure of seeing it describe a pretty parabola and plunge with a gurgle to a watery grave. That, if we remember well, was the fourth ball. Of course, about thirty or forty pairs went "through" us. That is, some sixty or eighty gentlemen in more or less mussy garments came up behind us, watched us cynically, and then with grins more or less politely disguised went on ahead. Again and again, when we had just made a wicked drive of several yards, a fat duffer old enough to be one of our remote ancestors, with a red face and a girth that indicated years of reckless indulgence in pork and port, would come along, watch us for a moment, and then, growling apologetically, would drive like a rifle-bullet straight for the green we wouldn't reach for half an hour. And we have always rather fancied our lithe and athletic build!—or so we like to describe it.

Bjones was awfully decent about the whole thing. Bjones is a thorough-bred. He kept framing excuses for us, blaming the clubs he loaned us and the clothes he had induced us to wear. He even spoke harshly of the state of the turf in several places. We must admit that it did look pretty rough—after we got through with it.

In the end even he fell silent—that was when we had broken the second club. Unbroken gloom settled like a pall on our soul. We were too depressed even to swear. Besides, we had used up all the expressions we had been treasuring up for a time of mental stress, and we ceased to find consolation in the repetition.

The only sensible thing for us to do was to put the clubs—those that remained of them—back in the bag and refuse to take another swing. But no one is ever sensible at golf. We still kept hoping that the next shot would reveal the superb natural genius for the game that we had possessed only a few days before. And now and then a shot really would go right—usually when we lost our temper completely and simply took a savage swing at the ball without any formalities whatever. But the next stroke always plunged us into more horrible depths than ever. When we had finally managed to dribble and stagger our way to the last green, we felt so sick and lonesome and helpless that we could have lain right down there on the velvet sward and cried into the little cup—only we probably would have missed it even with our tears.

The only hole we could have played in really masterly fashion was the nineteenth—the one they used to keep in the club-house. Only it wasn't there any more. The Prohibitionists have seen to that. Driving right on to the green carpet, we would have putted discreetly with our right hand, and would have holed out with a quart bottle and a glass in two. Vardon himself couldn't play it any better than we would have done if—oh, those "ifs!"

We might moralize easily and at great length on this experience of ours, but what's the use? Besides, the moral is obvious. It is this. Once you have made a fine drive in a moment of reckless inspiration, either keep your hands off golf-clubs for the rest of your life, or go away somewhere and practice in secret for several years with an instructor to whom you have given hush money, before you display yourself and your golfing skill on the links. Otherwise, you will fill the caddy's soul with loathing—-we did.

ON KEEPING COOL

On Keeping Cool

The worst of hot spells is that they always occur in the summer. Now a nice hot spell in the middle of winter or the beginning of March, when we are all getting sick of the snow and heavy woollens, would be—but enough of this! We are not the man to fly in the face of Divine Providence and suggest changes in the climatic arrangements. We leave that to the parsons.

It is quite possible, of course—in fact, with our usual luck in such matters, it is highly probable—that by the time this has been printed, bound, and inflicted on the public, the public will be sitting in front of a grate-fire with a shawl and a cold in the head, having been caught in the sleet on the way home from the office. The public will therefore regard our advice on the best way to keep cool as an impertinence and an imposition. And we hate to have the public think us a jackanapes or a darn fool. Of course, the public is bound to find us out some time, but we would like to postpone the dread day as long as possible.

Whatever the weather may be like at the time of reading, at the time of writing and for some days back we have been going through a period of torridity during which keeping cool has been an art—a lost art, we regret to state. Having devoted to it all the powers of our mind and all the energy we had left after the business of perspiring, we feel qualified to speak on the subject with assurance and authority. Not that we have ever considered it necessary for us to feel qualified before speaking, but it is just as well.

As soon as the heat-wave hit us in our office-chair, we took off our coat, vest, collar and tie, and knotting our suspenders around our editorial waist, we sent out for all the heat-literature that could be obtained for love or money—preferably for love. And then we plunged with characteristic impetuosity into the task of mastering this subtle science or esoteric philosophy or whatever it is. Only we didn't master it.

We never in all our life became so hot as we did reading the various directions for keeping cool. When we got through we were stuck to the back of our chair, the pattern of our shirt had been roughly transferred to our epidermis, and we had gone into liquidation to the extent of several pounds—avoirdupois, not sterling. But we had the satisfaction of feeling that we knew all there was to be known about keeping cool, all the hints, surmises, suggestions, and epizootic bosh generally.

Advice on how to keep cool, so far as we can find out, usually concerns itself with clothes, food, rest, and the state of one's mind. The crest of the heat-wave is always littered with

suggestions as to what one should wear and eat and drink—especially what one shouldn't—how much one should rest, and how peaceful and serene one's mind, or what one uses in its place, should always remain. This last is considered very important. Perhaps if one can only get cool, a cool mind will help one to keep so. But we never get—not till the hot spell is over.

Concerning clothes we are told that we should wear as little as possible—as little, that is, as the crossing-policemen will let us get by with. And what little we do wear should be of silk or linen or thin flannel, and very light in color, preferably white.

Now, so far as the girls are concerned, this is easy. They have already at the dictate of fashion removed all the lower strata of clothing, retaining only the extreme outer layer. And even this they have cut so low and slit so high, that there is practically no obstacle in the way of the weakest zephyr that ever zephed. And, as for mosquitoes, a really sporting mosquito would scorn to take opportunities so easy.

But men are somewhat handicapped. We still retain vestiges of primitive reticence. Or perhaps it is only that we do not think we would look so well in transparent garments. The thought of wearing muslin trousers tastefully slashed to the knee causes us to shrink painfully. Nor would we like our shirts cut low to display our collar-bone and Adam's-apple. There is something crude and ungainly about masculine architecture when exposed in that unabashed way.

Of course, there are linen suits and mohair suits. Now and then one even sees a silk suit—very seldom, though, for few men are dare-devils of this unfaltering type. But, though cool enough in a way, there are disadvantages to all such clothes. We know, for we have tried them.

Five or six years ago, we recall, there was a hot spell of the good old blast-furnace type. In its tropical glare one's ordinary suit felt like the winter garb of an Esquiman. Fat men became slim, though not graceful, in a single afternoon. It was like being rendered in one of those German plants for producing glycerine.

Personally, we became desperate. Not that we are of a fat or particularly full-blooded type. But then neither are we a lightning-rod—not, except in the most figurative sense. We rushed out to our barber and had him reduce our dome of thought somewhat to the appearance of a stubble-field. We got a pair of canvas shoes and a Panama hat. We tried beer. Then we tried ice-cream sodas. Then we tried beer again—this time we gave it a really good trial. Still no relief. As a last resort we bought two linen suits. We were desperate, that's all! The idea in buying two was to wear one while the laundry was hanging, drawing, and quartering the other.

They were nice suits—not a doubt about it! On the stage they would have caused matinee-girls to dream about us. But for private life, especially such a modest and retiring private life as ours, they were rather pronounced. One of them was made out of a genteel sort of gunny-sacking; while the other was smooth with hair-line stripes at wide intervals. But both had the same general color-effect. It suggested a sick canary—yellow, you know, but not up to its usual form.

The first time we put one of them on, we sneaked out the back way. We didn't dare step out where the neighbors could see us. Of course, there would not be the same occasion for nervousness nowadays, when suits of this airy character have become so much more familiar. But this was five or six years ago, when masculine tastes were less Arcadian.

While we stood waiting for a street-car—we felt as though we had been waiting several hours—hot blushes coursed over us from head to foot. The perspiration fairly sizzled on our cheeks. We couldn't have felt hotter in a coon coat.

As the car bore down upon us, we noticed that the motorman kept his eye fixed on us with withering contempt. He fairly snorted with indignation as he applied the air-brake. We put it down to jealousy. He was wearing one of those nice serge suits, blue and shiny, made of cloth weighing half a pound to the square foot, and bound with leather at the wrists, as is popular in municipal-traction circles. A coat like that is about as pervious to air as a zinc roof. We tried to persuade ourself that he envied us.

The conductor, while he held out the box for our yellow ticket—no, we didn't choose it to match the suit—studied us as though we were a new and exotic specimen at the local zoo. Then he went up to the front of the car, and as he went the motorman turned halfway round and said in a stage-whisper that carried easily the full length of the car: "Fer gawd's sake, did yuh see what got on?" Then they talked seriously together for a moment or two. They seemed to be considering whether or not they ought to throw us off. It was very difficult to look unconcerned, but we tried.

There are many painful recollections connected with that day. We bore up against the flood

of contumely and ridicule as best we could. But in the end it was too much for us. We passed a group of boys on a street-corner. We had passed several such groups during the day, and had been obliged to listen to many personal remarks of a vulgar character utterly lacking in true wit. As we went past this last group the usual derisive comments were made, but we neither slackened nor hastened our stately progress. Then in the midst of them a shrill voice suddenly piped up: "Oh, you Votes-for-Women!"

It was too much. Our cup was full—in fact, it was sloshing over our anguished soul. We hurried home and tore the suit off, and were only prevented by fear of our landlady from burning it in the corner of our room. We never wore it again.

As we pointed out before, however, the public attitude towards garments of this sort has changed very considerably in the past few years. A man may now clothe himself like the lily—the orange lily, that is—without causing people on the street to suspect him of being a poet or a professional fox-trotter. Think of the vogue of the Palm Beach suit in the past few years!—which reminds us.

We were sitting in the office the other day—a real sizzler, too!—with the door locked for protection and most of our clothes piled up on the extra chair. Oh, it's all right. We had arranged with the office-boy to ring a bell when he saw anyone coming towards our door, so we could put some of them on again.

Well, we had hastily scrambled into our coat and an expression of alert dignity when a fat man was ushered in. He is a friend of ours who had dropped in to show us a nice new Palm-Beach suit he had bought for ten dollars and a quarter the day before—heaven alone knows what the quarter was for! In fact, at the first glance we wondered what the ten dollars was for.

To be perfectly frank—always an interesting and perilous endeavor—we took a scunner against that suit. In the first place it was so darn baggy; and then the color! It hung on him in folds like an elephant's skin—a light tan elephant who had been crossed in love. We wouldn't wear a suit like that—not, if we had to go around in our pyjamas. But naturally we didn't tell him so—there is such a thing as tact. We said all we could for the suit. We remarked that there seemed to be a good deal of cloth in it for the money, and it would be a nice invisible shade for sitting around the beach in the evening. Even the sand-flies would hardly be able to find him.

If we had let the matter rest right there, we would have been all right. He wasn't flattered exactly, but he was satisfied. Unfortunately, in our desire for information, we asked him if the waiters in the better-class restaurants made any objection to serving him.

You should have heard that fat man talk—that is, when he ceased to foam and his rage became articulate. What he said about us and our clothes we would hate to admit in the police court, let alone print in cold type here. He wound up with the statement that the only reason we hadn't been sun-struck before now was because there was nothing in our noodle for the sun to strike. And this was flattering compared to some of the things that went before.

Finally we were forced to remind him that he was exhausting what little air there was in our office. As a matter of fact, we don't know of anything that will exhaust the air of an ordinary room so quickly on a hot day as a fat man in one of those pale, porous suits.

The immediate chill that ensued in our conversation was very grateful to us. It was the first chill we had had in days, and we were looking for chills. Night after night we kept hoping some burglar would break into the house, or a good gruesome ghost start strolling around, so we could have a few authentic chills chasing one another up and down our spinal column. But no luck! You couldn't hire a burglar in such weather—not if you doubled the regular rates of the Burglars' Union. And as for ghosts—well, they found it cooler, no doubt, even in the place where the naughty ones are sent.

By way of finishing with the subject of summer clothes, we may as well confess that we bought a mohair suit once. It was very nice stuff, a little shiny, but quite cool. All went well till we were caught in a shower. Then that suit did things we had never before thought possible for anything but a snake or a contortionist. It tied itself into incredible knots. The trousers climbed up one leg, and twisted frantically in an endeavor to break the other. The tails of the coat curled up, presumably with a view to getting around our neck and strangling us. It took a couple of our friends to pry the suit off and restore our circulation. We never felt the same towards it afterwards.

So much for the heat-suggestions about clothes. And the advice they give you in the matter of food is almost as bad—nothing but milk and eggs and salads. Spoon-feed and garden truck! Fine stuff to expect a man to do his work on. Not that we are so set on working that we eat solely with that end in view. But one must hold one's job, if one is obliged to have such a thing at all. And

holding a job implies, so far as we are concerned, a certain number of steaks and slices of roast-beef-rare.

"Ah, but, my friend," says the heat-suggester, "you must not over-exert yourself. You must repose, especially during the heat of the day. You may do a little work in the early morning and again in the evening. But from eleven to four—nay, nay, 't is very unwise." And then he proceeds to dwell at length on that beautiful Southern custom of the siesta.

It is a beautiful custom all right. Far be it from us to deny it. For years we have been dreaming of nice little siestas out in the grape-arbor with a bubble-pipe and a couple of senoritas singing Spanish love-songs to the silvery tinkling of the mandolins. We realize that the bubble-pipe is not especially Spanish, but it is cool and that is the principal thing.

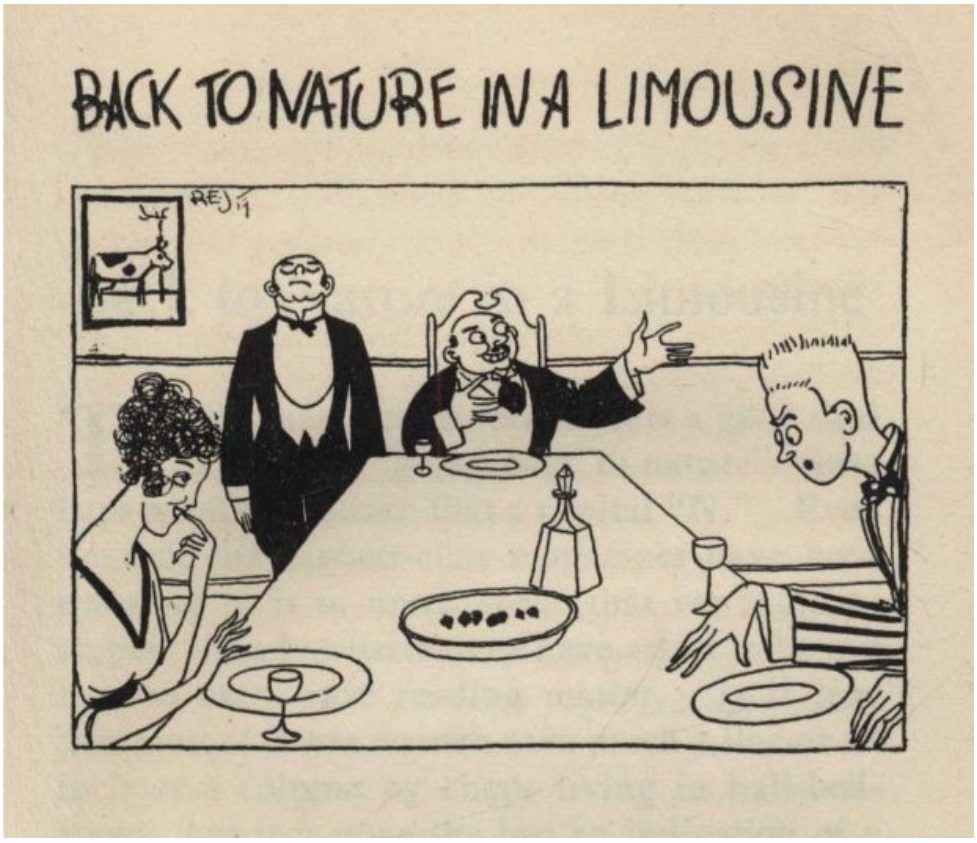
We have never dwelt on this ambition to the Managing Editor. We do not believe he possesses a romantic imagination—not sufficiently romantic, at any rate. But what do hot-weather tipsters care about managing editors?—pish-tush and less! What do they care for jobs, or even positions? They simply refuse to take them into account. All they ever stop to consider is temperature.

In the same way they take no stock of human infirmities and foibles. They ruthlessly cut out all the pleasures of life, innocent or otherwise—especially otherwise, as you might expect, but the innocent ones, too. For instance, you mustn't smoke. That raises your blood-pressure! We presume that having one's blood-pressure raised is a very serious thing, something like having one's taxes raised. Anyway, we are warned against it.

The same applies to drink—only much more so. God bless us, yes! Of course, when we say "drink," the reference is to fluid of a sociable and cheering character, not to iced tea or well-water or such other insipid means of internal refrigeration. But then the Prohibitionists have cut drink off, too—and much more effectually, alas!—so the warnings of the health-cranks find us unresigned but acquiescent. We may even be soothed by their assurances that "booze" is bad for us in the summer, though personally we have never found much consolation in reflections of this nature.

The thing is done, however—at least, for the present, whatever hopes one may entertain for referendums in the future—and we must accept our thirsty destiny. So farewell the jovial Collins and the smooth and voluptuous Gin Fizz, whether silver or golden. No longer must we soar on the bounding High Ball to celestial regions where the heat-waves cease from troubling and the mercury is at rest. The pungent and appetizing Cocktail is not for us, nor the enticing Rickey. Even the mild and genial Shandy-gaff must we shun, for it contains Beer, and the name of Beer is anathema in anything but negligible percentages.

Their merry reign is over, and all their kingdom is given up to plebeian beverages like Sarsaparilla and Soda-Pop. But those of us who are royalists at heart will still continue to look forward to a restoration of the old regime. They have gone, but their memory is green in our hearts—green with sprigs of mint.



BACK TO NATURE IN A LIMOUSINE

Back to Nature in a Limousine

There has been in recent years a good deal of talk about "going back to nature"—perhaps we should make that a capital "N." Even some of the highest-class magazines have been devoting to it so much space that we begin to suspect the advertisers must have asked to be put next to extra-pure reading matter. It is true that most of it was written at so much a line or an inch or a column by chaps living in hall-bedrooms, but it is none the less an indication of a genuine back-to-the-land movement. We know for we have taken part in it ourself.

Last summer we went back to the land for a week-end. As a result of our experience we wish to state that we now approve of the land as an institution. But you have to go back to it right. Everything depends on that.

Years and years ago when we were younger and foolisher than we will ever be again, we trust—as a matter of fact, we were fresh out of college, very fresh—we went back to the land. The experience embittered our nature for years. We made the mistake of going back to work on the land. Never, never do that. That way misanthropy lies.

Brutally heedless of our "B.A." and our other scholastic honors, big, coarse farmers bullied us around from four o'clock in the morning till ten at night. The rest of the time was our own. We went out at dewy dawn and hitched two or three imbecile horses to a rusty old plough, and spent the day tearing irregular gashes in the scenery till it looked like a crochet pattern, and till our head swam and our knees wobbled.

When we tottered in at twilight, an old and broken man, we had to go and chase home several festive cows who did the Maxixe and Tango and several other dances quite unknown to human beings at that time—they are still unknown to all but dancing professors. It usually took an hour at least to shoo them into the barn and hog-tie them so they wouldn't kick us through the pail, or the pail through us—they didn't care which.

We were supposed to be doing this for our health. We had never been robust, though always very sound as to appetite, and the family said the fresh air and joyous work of the fields would do us so much good, poor boy. It nearly did us for good and all. When we got home to mother after a year of it, with callouses on our hands and on our soul, the house-dog sat up and howled in anguish of mind, and the town-undertaker licked his lips and measured our length and breadth—there wasn't much breadth—with his eye. We could see him wondering whether the family would stand for solid silver handles or just the plain oxidized kind.

For years afterwards the mere mention of the word "farm" would cause us to tremble from head to foot and perspire clammily at every pore. We couldn't look at a cow without wanting to heave a brick at her, or a hired man without a sudden desire to go over and shake his honest hand and murmur a few words of sympathy.

So when a wealthy friend of ours—we make a point of picking 'em rich—called us up last summer and suggested that we should go out to his "little place in the country" for the week-end, we feared the worst. We realized in a moment that his hired man had quit or had died of over-exertion, and that he was trying to work us in as a substitute—for our keep. But we couldn't think of any decent excuse to give, so we yielded a dismal consent.

"You mustn't expect too much," he warned us, "it's the simple life, you know—no fol-de-rols, but just good plain farm fare."

Our heart sank at the words. Not that we have ever been so stuck on fol-de-rols. We don't mind an occasional fol-de-rol—a fol-de-rol for two, say, with a quart of "extra dry" in a tin pail of ice alongside. But we have never hankered for them as a steady diet. At the same time the warning sounded ominous. Plain farm fare!—we could see the platter of pork and cabbage and the slab of marmoreal pie.

He called for us—or rather, we stood on the street-corner and he picked us up in a ten-thousand-dollar limousine, lined in grey silk, with a big bouquet of roses concealing the chauffeur from the gaze of the occupants.

This cheered us up somewhat, but we had a feeling that our doom was merely postponed. We had a notion that we were being lured. We had heard of people who had been made "white slaves" that way. And if a farm-hand is not a white slave, we would like to know who has any better right to the title. Not that he is so very white, but....

With the engine purring softly and the cushions heaving voluptuously, we swiftly glided—or should it be "glid" or "glode?"—out past the last suburban lot, meaning about thirty miles. It was a beautiful pastoral region, occupied mostly by golf-clubs and villas. Long rows of peonies and Canterbury-bells and flowering shrubs were the nearest approach to farming we could see—these and a few cows of the domestic-pet variety.

Our host was very chatty all the way, and his talk was of the beauties of the simple life and the general rottenness of civilization as evidenced by stock-exchanges and clubs and all-night restaurants.

"Luxury and indolence," he assured us over and over again, "are eating the heart out of modern society. We are all living too fast and too high. We have too much money—that's what's wrong with people in our class."

We said he was quite right and that too much money was certainly the cause of gout and divorce and all the other ills to which we were heir. We spoke with as much conviction as we could, while we listened to the merry clinking in our right-hand trouser-pocket of the six dollars and eighty-odd cents which we had received that morning along with the I.O.U's in our pay-envelope.

"Look at what we eat," said our host, "and look at what we drink!"

Of course, our host was one of the lucky ones who still have some drink to look at. He could therefore afford to adopt a somewhat deprecating attitude on the subject of beverages.

Suddenly the limousine whirled off the high-road and shot along a beautiful private driveway under swaying elm-trees. We were on the farm! Wildly we gazed about for the fields of grain, the hog-lot and the cow-pasture, the big red barn, and, and all the other familiar stage-properties of our agricultural tragedy of years before. But we saw none of these things.

Instead our eye rested on well-groomed apple-orchards and cherry-groves, on clumps of pines and Japanese summer-houses, on strawberry-patches and vegetable gardens. The vegetable gardens may seem to the reader to suggest farming. But the "kitchen-garden" on a real farm is merely a frowsy patch where "table truck" is grown. This particular vegetable garden was the work of a landscape artist. Judging by the amount of toil which had been put into designing it and weeding it and picking bugs off it, every potato or carrot would cost about forty cents each.

The big car swung on a wide curve, and "round the cape of a sudden came the Lake!" Browning!—we know. We do that sort of thing now and then just to show that we are a literary editor in the half of the week that we don't spend farming with our friends among the idle rich.

There was good old Lake Ontario shimmering in the glimmering sunlight, or glimmering in the shimmering sunlight—it works either way. And there was the thirty-thousand-dollar farmhouse nestling in the midst of ten acres of lawn. There, too, was the farmer's wife on the steps to welcome us—she was clad in a simple little importation from the Rue de la Paix. It was a

lovely rural scene.

"Well, and what do you think of the farm?" asked our host.

Farm! Good Lord! Our thoughts leaped back to the real farms we had known, and in a broken voice we tried to tell him that this was the sort of farm we had dreamed of but never worked on. This was farming as it should be—farming de luxe.

We began farm-life that very afternoon on the grounds of the adjacent golf-club, where we planted several balls in various parts of the landscape and couldn't find them again. There would be a very decent little grove of rubber-plants on that course in a year or so, if they would let us play there a few times.

Then we went back to the farm for dinner and had a sample of the farm-fare. It was a simple repast of seven or eight courses. One of the farm-hands, a butler, waited on table. Most of the food was of the sort that we try to conceal on the menu-card from a lady, in case she should order it and we would have to leave our watch with the waiter.

In the midst of the meal there was a solemn pause. We felt dimly that some marvel of the culinary art was about to appear. In came the butler with an air of importance and a silver dish containing six or seven anæmic radishes.

"Grown on the place!" said our host in the tone of a man who expects to astonish. He glanced with pride at his wife and she glanced back in affectionate joy at him. Theirs was the delight with which young parents exhibit their first-born.

We nibbled a little piece out of one, while they leaned back and waited confidently for our words of almost incredulous admiration. We are a bad liar as a rule—persistent, that is, but unsuccessful—but we would have cut off our right hand rather than disappoint that good man and that dear lady, so charming both of them in their simple faith. It had taken fifty or sixty thousand dollars and several years of thought and labor to produce those poor runts of radishes. So we forgot all the lessons of truthfulness that we had learned at our mother's knee—perhaps we should say, while laid across our mother's knee—and swore that they were the finest radishes we had ever tasted, and that no joy in life was equal to eating the vegetables grown on one's own door-step, so to speak.

"You're right, my boy, you're right," beamed our host. "The only truly happy and independent man on earth is the farmer."

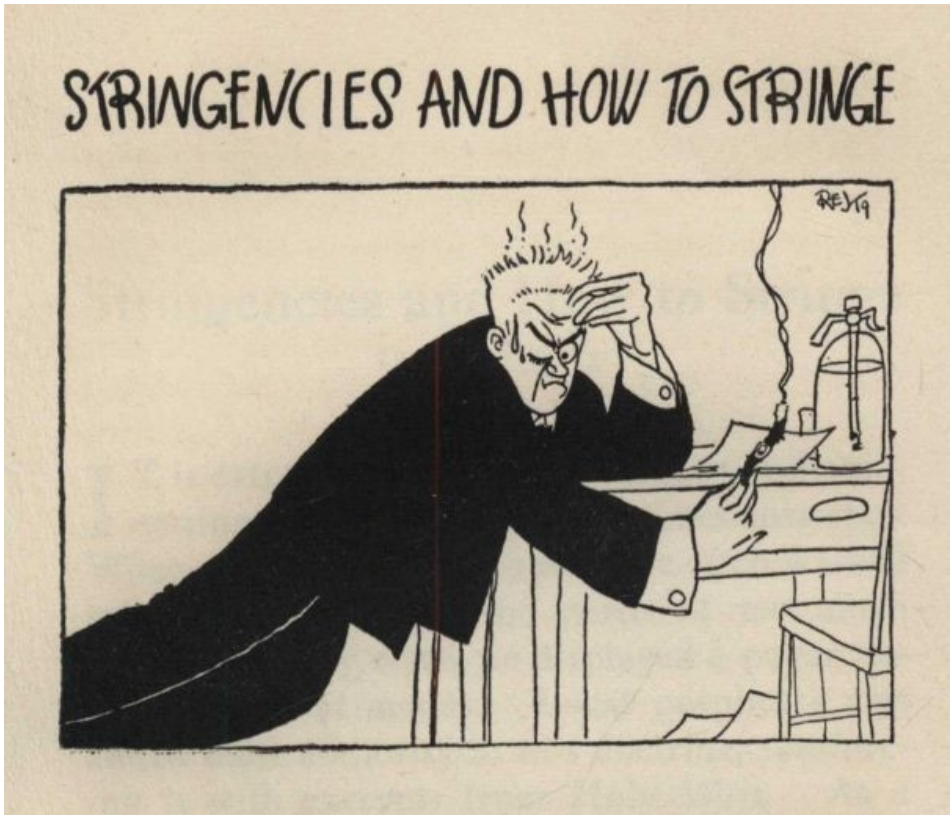
The next day they showed us over the farm. We saw the aristocratic cows, whose ancestry went back as far as that of the kings of Ireland. Their milk, at a low estimate, must have cost about as much as a vintage wine.

We were particularly interested in the hens. They all belonged to the royal families of hendom. Most of them had been exhibited and had won ribbons or medals or whatever it is they give hens. They certainly were beautiful in a poultry way, but they seemed cold and proud. Our host said they didn't lay very well. We suggested it might be for the same reason as prevents people in the smart set from having any children.

"No, I don't think it's that," said our host very earnestly. "I believe it's because they haven't enough to interest them. I read in a poultry book the other day that hens must be kept bright and cheerful."

We recommended comic selections on a gramaphone. We also asked him if he had ever tried reading our articles to these haughty fowl. We felt that might draw a cluck or two of amusement out of them. But he treated our remarks with the silent contempt they no doubt deserved. We would like to tell a lot about life on that farm—about the trip in our host's big motor-boat, and the dance in the evening, and the horse-back rides on high-stepping horses that chinned themselves at every step and were always going up when we were coming down. We would like to tell also about the tennis and the billiards and the canoeing.

We would like to do all this, but we haven't the heart. Some real farmer might read this article, and go right out to his barn, and fasten a bit of rope between his neck and a beam, and kick the box over. Our only hope is that if one should happen to see this, he will merely grunt to "maw" that we are another of "them dern slick liars in the city," and refuse to believe a word of it. We don't wish to spoil his life.



STRINGENCIES AND HOW TO STRINGE

Stringencies and How to Stringe in Them

It is extraordinary and also somewhat disconcerting how prayers are sometimes answered. When we were a little boy we were often warned by pious relatives of the perils of too much wealth—usually when we displayed a pagan desire for pocket money. Local pulpiteers also added their authority to this doctrine, reinforcing it with excerpts from Holy Writ. As a result our young soul was filled with horror at the thought of millionaires and camels trying to crawl through the eyes of needles. And, being a very earnest-minded little boy, we prayed that we might never be rich.

This prayer has been answered. We are not rich. Moreover, present indications are that we will never be rich. Whether or not our character has been benefited by the chronic depression which has been the outstanding feature of our financial career, we are in no position, and are far too modest, anyway, to state. There are times, however, when we would like to test our moral fibre by exposing it to the seductions of wealth. We might even like to succumb once or twice, or three or four times or oftener, just to show that we are one of those supermen who can "take it or leave it alone." But these opportunities for moral "swank" have been denied us.

We prayed for poverty and we got it. We have prayed for a lot of other things in our time, which we haven't got. But the celestial Committee on Prayers certainly O.K'd that poverty-petition of ours. They gave it to us "good and plenty," in the vulgar idiom. Of course, there is no use at this late date in explaining to the Powers that we were only praying against becoming a millionaire—half a million would more than satisfy our modest requirements. The thing is settled. As a result we have become mighty careful what we pray for. There is always a chance that we might get it.

This introduction is by way of letting the reader know that stringencies, such as the one through which we have all been passing ever since peace started, are no new thing with us. We are quite undismayed by the present state of the markets of the world. We are facing the situation with unruffled brow and the assured air which bespeaks long experience. We know how to deal with stringencies. We have tackled many of them. In fact, we have reason to regard ourself as one of the best little stringe-ists in this part of the country; and we are prepared to stringe with anyone of our financial weight for a reasonable purse and a modest side-bet.

There was that time, for instance, Friend Reader, that we went broke in 'Frisco, many, many miles from home and mother and the bed in the spare room. In a week we were acquainted with every free-lunch counter and ten-cent restaurant in the City of the Golden Gate. As a result of the acquaintance we developed a horror of "boiled beef Spanish," which has remained with us to the

present day. And we ended up on a dairy ranch—thirty per and our keep! But let us draw the veil—we hate to think of the way we used to talk to those cows.

Stringent experience such as ours is a very valuable thing at a time like this, and we feel that it is in the nature of a public duty for us to lay before our readers—the whole five of them—the ripe results of our painfully acquired wisdom. Of course, we may be compelled to make revelations of a personal nature; but we don't mind. We can stand it. We have no social position that we need be worried to lose.

The trouble with the general public is that so few people know how to tackle a stringency. They are impulsive and unscientific. They go at it in a precipitate, not to say temerarious, manner.

Take, for instance, all those eager little housewives who rushed right out on the news of the declaration of war and tried to corner all the flour the grocer had, and all the bacon in the butcher-shop, forgetting that by the time the family had eaten about one-fifth of the supply, the flour would make a Limburger cheese seem like sweet hay for aroma, and the bacon would be scratching at the cellar door to get out. They even bought crates of eggs and oranges and cart-loads of vegetables!

Men's notions of economy are frequently not much better. We have a friend—oh, we still manage to keep one or two—who announced not long ago that he had given up cigars. He said they cost too much. We were rather sorry to hear of his decision, for he is one of those large, expansive fellows who are becoming to a cigar—he smokes them with the band on. We expressed our surprise.

"Not giving up smoking altogether, are you?" we asked. "Won't you find it difficult to think without nicotine to act as a...."

"Certainly I'm not giving up smoking! I've taken to a pipe, and believe me, my boy, it's the only smoke that...."

But you know how they all talk the first few days.

He showed the pipe to us. It was a beautiful thing, meerschaum, all dolled up with gold and amber. And it reposed in the cutest little case—one of those plush and papier-maché affairs that add a dollar and a half to the cost of any pipe. They are really worth about seven cents.

He showed us also a new tobacco pouch—grained leather, with gold monogram and rubber lining. Eight dollars, if it cost a cent!

Under his arm he carried a tin of tobacco that looked as big as a hat-box, and his pockets were full of pipe-cleaners, special ash-trays, and a patent combination arrangement of tools with which you could tamp the tobacco down in your pipe, gouge holes in the wad if you got it too tight, scrape the charcoal off the sides, and dig the pipe out when you had smoked it. All the thing lacked was a compartment in the end for ice to cool your tongue.

Altogether the outfit cost about twenty-five or thirty dollars. We said nothing. The thing was too pathetic. Three days later we met him smoking a cigar—still with the band on. He looked us straight in the eye with a truculent air, as though daring us to make a comment. We didn't. We knew how he felt. We had been through it all ourself.

Personally we have taken to smoking cheaper cigars, ever since that last increase in taxes. In our days of affluence we used to walk into the shop of our favorite tobacconist, and throwing down a quarter with a reckless hand, would say, "Gimme three!" Now we slip into a drug-store—we cannot bear to abate a jot of our lordly air in the presence of our tobacconist—and dejectedly buy a "five-cent straight," though they cost ten cents now.

(No, girls, the cigars are not always straight, nor are they always made of straight tobacco—on the contrary! We presume that they were called "five-cent straights" because they were bought by people in straightened circumstances, in dire straits, so to speak.)

In happier days if we had dared to smoke five-centers around the office, we would have been subjected to nasty personal remarks from the other members of the staff. But nobody says anything now. They are smoking stogies themselves, or consorting with pipes of ill-repute. The Financial Editor in the room next door smokes a villainous briar that growls even at its owner. We hate to say this, but only the other day we put our hand too near it as it lay on his desk asleep, and it almost got our little finger.

Not only are we smoking cheaper cigars, but we are making them last longer. How do we do this? Easily, dear reader, easily. We don't light them, that's all! We bite the end off very carefully, and insert the cigar at a rakish angle in the middle of our expression, and carry it around like that for nearly an hour before we touch a match to it. That way two cigars can be made to do the work of six. The worst of lighting a cigar is that it becomes oxidized so quickly. After that it isn't

any good, except possibly as tooth-powder.

Another economy we indulged in during last fall was the buying of a straw hat. Of course, it may at first seem rather late in the season for one to start in and buy a "boater." But we got this one for ninety-eight cents—a three-dollar hat, the salesman assured us. But more of that anon.

You see, we had met our old friend Bjones on the street, carrying under his arm a box about the size of those they crate oranges in.

"G'wan in and buy one before they're all sold," he gasped, "greatest bargain I ever saw!"

"But what are they?" we asked, displaying an indulgent interest by ceasing to twirl our silver-mounted cane—(yes, a present from a lady).

"Hats, of course—ninety-eight cents—worth three and a half or four! Just bought six of them. Everything going up—got to keep supplied, you know."

We never stopped to reflect that Bjones would take the next six years to wear those hats out, and that his wife would probably divorce him if he tried. In fact, that may have been part of his plan. But we caught the fever from him. We hunted up the store and rushed right in. There was a big table of sailor straws, with about thirty men grabbing them up and trying them on. The lot didn't contain our exact size, so we took the nearest we could get. It was a little small, and it sat up on our head in a way that suggested an amateur performance of "H.M.S. Pinafore." But it was a very nice hat. That is, we thought it a nice hat.

Candor, however, compels us to state that we showed it to a friend in the hat business whom we met while we were triumphantly carrying it home. We asked him if he didn't think it was a mighty nice hat.

"Oh, yes, it's a nice hat all right," he answered cordially. "Why, those hats cost forty-nine cents each, buying them by the dozen wholesale!"

We tried to ascribe his words to professional jealousy. But somehow we took a sudden scunner against that hat. In fact, we tried a few days later to give it to the office-boy. But he declined. He sports a six-dollar one himself. Besides, his head is bigger than ours.

We have also been looking at some celluloid collars lately—just looking, you understand. Of course, we wouldn't think of wearing one of the things, but it is just as well to keep them in mind, for you never can tell, with the price of laundering where it is. Besides, they aren't so bad—a little blue and shiny, perhaps, and with peculiar button-holes. But with the washer-ladies buying closed cars, and the stringency becoming more stringent all the time, it is well to know of collars that can be done up with a tooth-brush or simply left on the neck when taking a bath.

But we have no intention of wearying the reader with a further account of those symptoms of a financial depression which has long since become chronic with us. We are no more depressed now than we ever were, except inasmuch as any kindly and sensitive heart must be depressed at the sight of widespread destitution—especially among millionaires.

Depression—and when we speak of depression we naturally refer to financial depression and not to the state of a man's liver or conscience—depression, we repeat, is largely a relative matter. A man is depressed or otherwise in comparison with the high-water mark of his prosperity. A financial status which would make the hairs of John D. Rockefeller's Sunday wig rise up in separate and individual horror, might cause us in sheer exuberance of joy to buy and stock a "Winter Garden" just for ourself alone. In view of the jeopardy which would ensue for our eternal salvation, we are glad—or should be that this is not immediately imminent.

It is really the rich who suffer most in a period of stringency. The mental anguish of hardened stringe-ists like ourself is nothing to what must be endured by the people who have never before had to ask the price of anything. We met one of them not long ago on the street. He is not a regular millionaire—only an intermittent, so to speak. Every little while he manages to chin himself on the trapeze of wealth, though he never quite succeeds in climbing securely into it. He was looking very gloomy, his suit needed pressing, and the diamond in his tie seemed smaller and less brilliant than of yore.

"Hello, old pirate, why so glum?" we asked insolently—we always make a point of being rude to millionaires. "What's the trouble?—those naughty stocks misbehaving again, or does some fresh Aleck of a legislator propose to investigate you?"

He looked at us with a melancholy and lack-lustre eye. There was none of the old bounce and condescension in his manner.

"It's all right for you chaps to make bum jokes," he grumbled. "You're on Easy Street. What difference does the depression make to you? You haven't promised a new touring-car to your wife as I did. And now the poor little girl has to worry along on last year's model. And I could only give her a pearl pendant for her birthday instead of the diamond sun-burst she wanted. While you...."

But we hurried away. Far be it from us to stand idly by and gaze upon a strong man's agony. The vision of that defeated and broken man has followed us ever since. Not even the little sunburst she wanted—gawd, can such things be! Why doesn't someone start another war so that he can get back into the munitions business? There must be dozens of others like him. And while these deserving millionaires are in this state of comparative destitution, here are gay, care-free fellows like ourself swaggering about town, jingling the quarter against the small change in our pocket, and wondering whether we will blow it on two cigars or on three. It doesn't seem fair, does it?

It has been said thousands of times—therefore, we have no hesitation in repeating—that one-half the world doesn't know how the other half lives. Not that millionaires constitute half the world—God forbid! They are not even the emerged tenth, if we may say so. But it is none the less true that the rest of us don't know how they live.

You may see the magnificent, yea, verily, the palatial residences they have built after the model of famous prisons and royal stables abroad. You may hear the accents and see the spats of their sons who have been to Oxford—in fact, you can almost see the accents and hear the spats. You may gaze upon their daughters at theatre-parties, clad in feathers and the rail of the box, with nothing between them and lumbago but the backs of their chairs. You may be dazzled by the flash of the twenty-carat headlight in fawther's dress-shirt, or by the soft refulgence of mother's stomacher of pearls. You may witness all this—you may even envy it. But little you know the breaking heart that may lurk in the limousine.

To look at the average millionaire you would never suspect what worm may prey upon his damask cheek—or should we say, damaged cheek? The gilded sausages of his double watch-chain may be as ponderous and resplendent as ever. The crease in his trousers and the shine on his shoes may still show the skill and energy of an expensive valet. He may curse at the waiters in his old lordly manner, even though he no longer is able to order his cocktails in a tumbler. But he is not at peace within.

If you are a shrewd observer you will notice that his sixty-cent cigar is not quite at the old aggressive, betcha-million-dollars angle. And the familiar wad of mazuma in the right-hand front pocket of the pants is not so swollen as of yore. We should say it is thinner by several one-hundred-dollar bills. In fact, it may be padded up with fives and tens and other bills of small denomination just to make it look good.

In a word, the average millionaire is not the man he was only two or three years ago, when the war was on, and orders were flowing in, and he was picking what crumbs of comfort he could—and also quite a few nice, bright little nuggets—out of the general chaos. It may seem to you that he is going as strong as ever. You may suppose that once a week he still has a lorry back around to the side entrance to take his profits down to the bank to be weighed and shoveled into the vaults. You may imagine that he still spends his leisure hours clipping the nimble coupon. But such is far from being the case, as you would realize if you could only get him to open his heart to you.

Try asking him to increase your salary—this is a really good way to find out. Then you will discover that most of his business day is devoted to running around with his hat in his hand begging hard-hearted bankers to let him have just a few more hundred thousands—surely a man has a right to this pittance—so that he may pay his bills and be able to look the world in the face once more. You will be horrified to learn of such hideous octopuses—(thank you, Professor, we should have said "octopi")—as Labor Unrest, Overhead Charges, Depreciation, and Stagnant Markets. Secure in your weekly envelope with its usual twenty dollars—unless like ourself, dear reader, you draw an occasional I.O.U.—you may care little for the vagaries of any other market than the one at which your wife or landlady buys the family meat and vegetables. But this great and good man has to bear the brunt of the fight. Is he complaining? No, friend, he is not.

"It is not for myself," he tells you in a voice quivering with emotion and considerable brandy-and-soda—they can still get it, of course. "It's not for myself, my boy. I must keep the old plant going for the sake of the men and their families."

Just about then you burst into tears and beg his pardon for ever having even thought of such a thing as more pay.

"You have no idea how delicate and complicated these financial problems are," he assures you in a burst of confidence, "You don't realize, for instance, that if I were to raise the wages of everyone in the institution a dollar a month, I'd simply have to shut the old place up. And I couldn't bear to do that—the associations, you know."

You have a vision of him in his poverty-stricken old age, out of work, condemned to spend all

his time at Palm Beach or the Riviera. If you are a man of real feeling, you will tell him you think you could get along on ten dollars a month less, and would he please take it to help tide him over his difficulties?

It is experiences like this which convince a man that these are indeed times of depression. And everything deepens the feeling. See the lines of people waiting to buy the best seats for musical comedies and hockey-matches! See them crowding into the cabarets at midnight! And the jolly little dance-and-supper parties after the show in homes where the cellar has not yet been entirely despoiled of its treasures!

All this is merely a proof of general anguish of mind. They are seeking for respite and nepenthe and surcease of sorrow. They are dying game, so to speak. If they were to sit down quietly at home and think things over, they might become so desperate as to cut down their expenses. So they roll out the old touring-car instead, and collect a few congenial spirits, and possibly some more spirits under the cushion of the back seat, and go—but it doesn't matter so much now where one goes. All towns are alike.

Of course, there are financial giants, whose position is so secure that no money panic can ever disturb their equilibrium or equanimity. We called on one the other evening—two floors up over a grocery store. It was a cold night, the heat was off, he was wearing his overcoat in the house, and was feeding old newspapers into the parlor grate. In the intervals he was reading Anatole France in the original, and consulting a big French dictionary every line or so.

"Come in," he roared, "and help feed the fire. I've left the hero in a delicate and somewhat improper position, and I want to see if anything happened. I'll tell you in a minute." And he reached for the dictionary.

We intimated that we would certainly like to know if anything of an indelicate nature occurred, so that we might rush right out and report the matter to the proper authorities.

"But how can you be interested in such things as that," we enquired, "when hundreds of your fellow-millionaires and near-millionaires—they are human beings after all—are writhing in financial agony? Have you any European holdings, any Russian roubles, or anything of that sort?"

"I'm not holding 'em any longer," he said with a shameless grin. "I gave them to the butcher as an instalment on last month's bill."

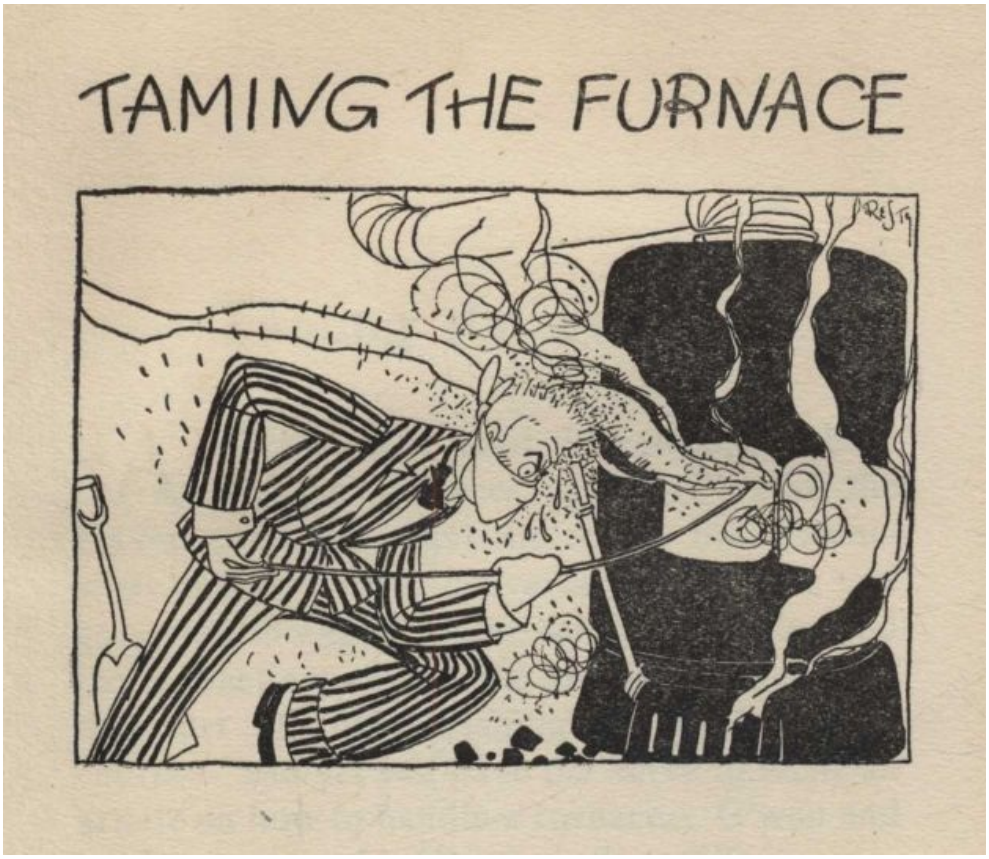
"But you must have some stocks on margin—are they properly covered?" we persisted. That's the kind of fellow we are, always looking for information—the more unpleasant the better.

"Huh, what's that?" he grunted, after a long pause during which he had been hunting feverishly for a word. "What's that, margins? Are my margins covered? Sure, they're covered, old top—and so are the missus's and the kid's. Our margins are all protected from the weather—also our chests and such other places as one usually takes cold in."

But what's the use of talking to a man like that? He shut the book with a bang and reached for the tobacco-jar.

"Now what do you know about that?" he groaned. "Nothing happened after all. Just as things were at their liveliest, and the hero held out his arms, and the heroine—well, just then the old Abbé blundered in and...."

But there is something criminal and callous about such indifference as this.



TAMING THE FURNACE

Taming the Furnace

"And what the devil do you know about taming furnaces, anyway?" asks the reader, presuming that the reader has a somewhat abrupt style in conversation. "Here you go around bragging about being a bachelor and having inclinations for the monastic life and all that sort of rot"—meaning the bragging, of course—"and yet you have the nerve to write an article on how to handle a furnace. G'wan and teach your grandmother to suck eggs!"

Thereupon, the reader in torrid indignation drops the book and goes down into the cellar, and seizing a short shovel with a broken handle tosses half a ton of coal into the maw of the steel dragon there—a dragon which consumes its own heat and lets none of it get as far as the radiators.

Incidentally, why should it be regarded as the height of absurdity to teach one's grandmother to suck eggs? Why should one's grandmother be expected to know all about sucking eggs? Is one's grandmother a weasel that she should be universally regarded as a supreme exponent of this art? We are aware that this paragraph is in the nature of a digression, but we have all our life been puzzled to account for this curious tradition that grandmothers know everything to be known about removing the contents of eggs by the primitive process of suction. We feel quite sure that both our own personal and private grandmothers knew nothing about it. We are also sure that we would never have had the nerve to teach them how to do a thing so obviously vulgar and futile. Furthermore, no one's grandmother could afford to suck eggs at the present market quotations. So what would be the use, anyway, even if she did know how? Altogether this seems to us a very silly proverb.

But, to return to furnaces, we really do know something about them—not everything (what man does?), not even a great deal, perhaps, but still something. And we ought to know something, for we have wrestled in spirit and otherwise with every one of the fifty-odd varieties—hot air, hot water, steam, and everything that lies between. Some men are born furnace-tenders. Some learn it from plumbers. But we have had our knowledge forced upon us.

One of our earliest and least-treasured recollections is of an enormous old furnace in our grandfather's house—a mediæval contraption, all bricked-in, as big as a cottage, with a mouth the size of a pair of folding doors, and a capacity for coal which would make a twin-screw steamship turn a dark bottle-green. We used to be held up to the door of it when we had been

very naughty, and have it explained to us that naughty boys were sent to a place bearing a general resemblance to that bed of red-hot coals. We do not recall that we had much joy of the prospect.

Later on, when we had got to the point of having Holy Writ retailed to us with expository remarks—our preceptors usually picked out something infernally gruesome—we used to associate that old furnace with the various trials by fire mentioned in the Old Testament. Especially could we see those three brave young Hebrews, who were condemned by old Nebuchadnezzar to be burned to death, standing smilingly on the familiar coals—each with a fire-insurance policy in his pocket, as we presume now. Else why be so cheerful about it?

Even as a boy at grandfather's place we began to form that intimate acquaintance with furnaces which has been the bane of our young life. When the furnace man did not turn up—usually as a sequel to a nocturnal endeavor to make the distilleries enlarge their plants—we had to shovel coal into that grinning old monster until our back and arms ached, and we would cheerfully have thrown in a few sticks of dynamite if there had been any handy.

But, of course, that sort of thing is part of the penalty of being a member of a family. We have no complaints to make. If a fellow will permit himself to be dragged into a family he must pay the price thereof. What we really object to is that since we have attained the dignity of manhood and the responsibility of a vote in provincial and federal affairs, we are still obliged to toil in cellars with a coal-shovel—a black-and-white slave, so to speak.

It would be different if we were married. We would expect to look after a furnace. And, anyway, to a married man what is a little trouble more or less?—he has lots of it. But freedom from worry about the furnace should be one of the most sacred privileges of the bachelor. We have been deprived of our rights. Instead of "the" furnace, we have several to think about. We are one of the busiest little amateur stokers in town.

There must be something in our appearance which suggests that we have a masterful way with furnaces, that we can make them eat right out of our shovel. It has become a habit with our lady friends when we call on them in the evening—naturally we have social duties to perform—to pat the radiator in a reflective sort of way, and then smiling brightly at us to say in a casual but wheedling tone something to the following effect:

"Oh, Mister O'D."—a few of them call us Peter in a sisterly way—"I just hate awfully to bother you, but paw is at the lodge and—well, you are such a good hand with a furnace. It's such a comfort to have a man who is really handy around the house, and—just a shovelful—thanks!"

So we bid a temporary farewell to the company and to all the delights of polite conversation, and retire to the cellar to give first aid to a rusty demon of a furnace whose vital spark is almost extinct. Laying our coat neatly folded on the bottom step of the cellar-stairs, we first seize a long lever which comes out every moment or two on our toe, and we shake enough ashes out of the grate to stifle Pompeii. Then groping our way to the coal-bin—away at the other end of the cellar—we proceed forcibly to feed the furnace with a broken scoop-shovel. About half of each shovelful misses the little opening—why the dickens do they put such small doors on the things?—and by the time we have accomplished the chore we are knee-deep in anthracite. Great stuff for a nice, new serge suit, that!

When we come upstairs again we are coated with a soft covering of powdered ash, our collar is melted, our hands suggest that we have been working on a slag-pile, and the young lady insists on sitting on a little narrow chair instead of on the sofa as usual. Every time we stir she glances nervously at the rug and the upholstery. The social atmosphere grows chillier and chillier, though the water is boiling in the "rads."

About an hour later "paw" comes home from the lodge, disappears into the subterranean depths, and emerges in a moment to ask in a loud belligerent voice who th'ell has been and gone and put all that coal on the furnace, and if people are aware that coal costs fifteen dollars a ton, and if people wouldn't be better advised to mind their own business. Whereupon daughter blushes violently and rushes out to him in the hall. There is a brief dialogue which is brought to a conclusion by "paw" grunting, "Oh, him, is it?" in a manner not altogether flattering.

Even at home in the flat where we lived for two somewhat cramping years—we swept the pictures off the walls every time we put on our shirt—we could not get away from furnace troubles. The thing was an obsession, that's all. Our proprietor, that inaccessible local divinity, was supposed to supply heat, which naturally implies a furnace and a furnace-man. There really was a furnace and also a furnace-man, but the two were seldom found in conjunction.

Down in the cellar there was an enormous structure of cast iron, with twisted pipes sticking out of it in all directions as though it were some sort of mechanical octopus. And down in the very

heart of it there were usually half a dozen coals smouldering away. That was its ordinary condition. But two or three afternoons a week a local financier, who had about thirty furnaces on his visiting list, used to call and pour a ton or so of coal down its throat. Then he opened wide all the drafts and went rejoicing on his way to the bank to deposit his latest dividend.

About midnight on such days we were all awakened by a noise which seemed to combine the roar of the angry surf with a riot in the Ford automobile plant. There were also suggestions of a volcano in active eruption. The furnace was boiling! Then one hustled into a dressing-gown and one hurried down to the cellar to shut the thing off; and, as one passed bashfully by, one saw sights through open doors that no gentleman would ever speak of.

We have a friend, however, who has mastered the furnace problem—about as well, that is, as mortal can hope to do it. He has devoted years of thought and much bullion and energy to the task. He has a huge furnace all encased in white asbestos—it sheds its nighty every now and then and has to get a new one—and on this furnace he has more electric attachments than would run a suburban trolley system. All he has to do before he goes to bed is to wind up two or three clocks and set half a dozen hands on as many dials, and the furnace does the rest. It keeps the house at a certain specified heat—unless, of course, it goes out, which it does every so often—and moreover, it will turn on the heat at any specified time in the morning. Instead of having to get up in a chilly house and wander dismally down to the cellar to open the blamed thing up, he has only to lie awake in bed and listen if the regulator is working properly—and three times out of five it is. But, of course, this is rather hard to hear, and if it shouldn't be working and he didn't notice it—well, on those mornings he eats his breakfast in his coon-skin coat.

Naturally he has to remove the ashes and shovel in the coal, but that only takes an hour or so a day. Besides, it is fine exercise. Nothing like putting on your furnace-clothes and tying a damp silk handkerchief over your face and going down for a little bout of græco-roman with the furnace to give you an appetite. And the thirst!—but what's the use of talking about that nowadays?

It may be thought that we are prejudiced against furnaces. We are. We admit it frankly. And we have good reason to be. If it hadn't been for a furnace that went out, we might to-day be a happily married man and the father of a large—oh, well, perhaps that is taking a little too much for granted. But we might have been married, at any rate.

She was a druggist's daughter, a lovely girl of about eighteen summers. That is, she claimed eighteen summers, though perhaps a few summers were so short and so cold that she forgot to count them. Her father lived and had his shop in a Prohibition town—this was before there was no other kind of town. Naturally he was the principal citizen of the place and the popular saver of many masculine lives. Father used to prescribe for gentlemen for miles around, the prescriptions being usually taken in the back of the store. No one ever bought anything out of the show-case except cigars.

We used to drop into the store occasionally to ward off a chill or a fever or something of that sort—we were always strong for preventive medicine—and it was there we met daughter. It was a case of one good long look, a few words about the weather we were having, and then we went straight home and tore up all the pictures on our chiffonier. Not long after we got into the habit of taking her out in father's buggy—it had a large top and the horse could be trusted.

So we whiled away the autumn. At Christmas we sold something and blew the proceeds on a couple of dozen of those red, red roses, which are almost as significant as an engagement-ring. Gwendoline—'t was thus she loved to be called—told us several times with thrilling emphasis that she "just loved those roses to death." Everything seemed to smile upon our suit.

The night we went with our mind made up to settle the matter conclusively—even to the date of the ceremony and the nicest place to spend the following week—was a bitterly cold one. In fact, the parlor where we sat waiting for Gwen to come down seemed decidedly chilly. But she floated in looking radiantly beautiful to the eye of affection, and the light was low, and—oh, dash it all, we forgot about the temperature entirely. It is a poor lover who can't furnish his own heat.

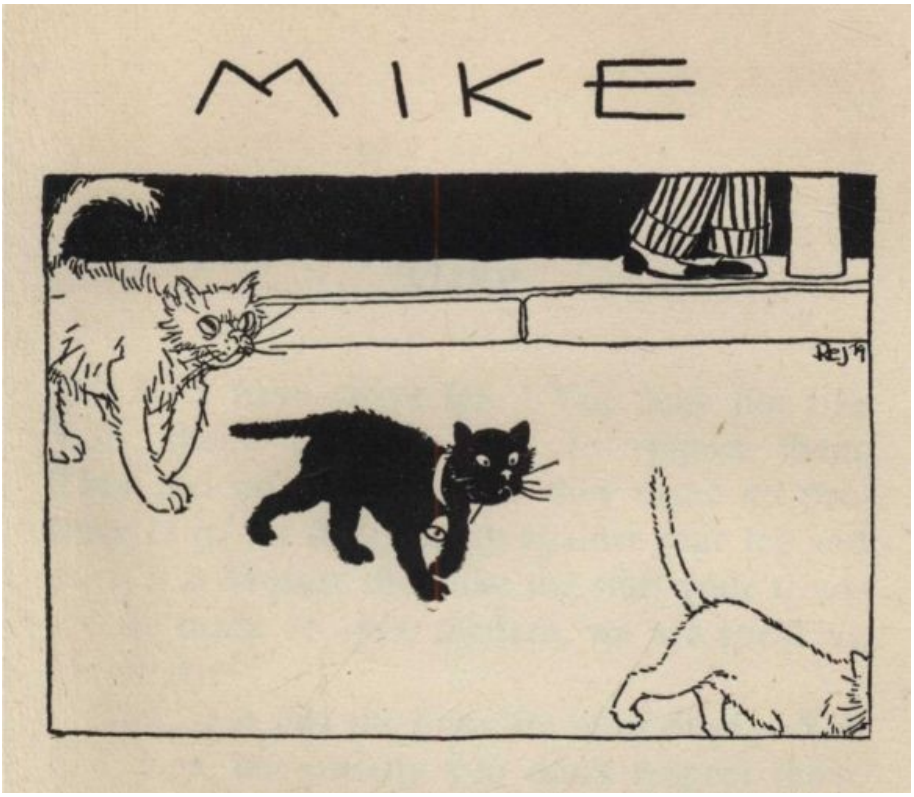
Conversation was graceful and animated, but with an undercurrent of serious purpose. We felt that something was expected of us, but naturally a man of tact and romantic feeling doesn't plunge into a proposal of marriage as though it were the purchase of a dog-collar. It is a thing to be led up to; and we were casting about in our mind for the most graceful and effective way of doing so, when we began to realize that the room had grown strangely cold and that the lady was looking rather blue—with a tendency to redness about the nose. Also she was gazing at us in a curiously critical way, and we remembered that we never look our best when we are chilly. There is a certain spottiness—but these details are unnecessary.

It grew colder and colder. Gwendoline got a shawl, and we turned up our coat-collar as

unobtrusively as possible and put our hands in our pockets. The lady became absent-minded, and in spite of ourself our thoughts wandered to tall glasses with something hot in them and pieces of lemon floating around.

There is no use dragging out this account of the disaster. The whole thing simply fizzled out. A masterful man might perhaps have saved the day—or the evening, to be accurate—by seizing the lady, slamming her against his throbbing heart, and warming her up at the fire of his own ardor. But we let the psychological moment shiver by. She passed us with a curt nod on the street next day, and six months later was married to a chap in the bank. Her father took him into the business at once—she was an only child.

Do you wonder we hate furnaces?



MIKE

Mike

Cats have character. You may not like them, but you have to respect them. They feel no affection, and they make no pretence of it. If they rub up against your leg and purr, it is because they like the stuff your trousers are made of—yes, madam, we are speaking for ourself!

Now, it is just the opposite with dogs. You like dogs, but usually you don't respect them. They are not sufficiently self-centred and independent. They lack poise and that repose of manner which is the unfailing sign of the aristocrat.

Dogs are too fond of you—in itself an evidence of a lack of discrimination—and too demonstrative. One of the meanest-souled human weasels that ever slunk home from his office in the evening to be nasty to his wife and slap the children has a dog. And that dog watches for him for hours, and comes tearing down the street to greet him, barking his head off and turning somersaults in delirious joy.

Now, who ever saw a cat come tumbling and barking down the street to greet anyone? The finest and ablest man in the Empire—Lloyd George, Haig, or even Sir Arthur Currie or the virtuous Newton Wesley Rowell—couldn't get a flicker of a cat's whisker, if they came home after six months' absence all covered with medals. The only arrival to make a cat sit right up and mew in salutation is the milkman in the morning.

That's the fascination and mystery of cats—their independence and their inscrutability. Furthermore, they have utterly no morals, and they are perfectly unabashed about it. If a dog does something he knows to be wrong, he hangs his head and his tail and crawls around on his stomach and presents a ridiculous spectacle of contrition and self-abasement, till you let him know he is forgiven. Then he probably jumps into your lap, and licks your glasses off your nose, and sticks his paw in among the cigars in your vest-pocket. The only safe way to forgive a dog is from the top of a high ladder.

But a cat doesn't care whether you forgive her or not. She feels no compunction and shows no gratitude. She will walk off with a porter-house steak or present the household with a family of war-kittens with equal nonchalance and aplomb—we always make a point of using French words when discussing these matrimonial irregularities, such is our delicacy.

Of course, Mike wasn't that kind of a cat—to present the household, that is. He might figure as the injured husband or the co-respondent in these regrettable affairs, but never as the fair, frail one. Though, as a matter of fact, the family at first was under the impression that he was a tabby.

Mike was an under-sized and very quiet black kitten, with a pair of the worst bow legs we have ever seen on anyone but Harry Lauder. His back legs were straight enough, but he looked as if he had been run over by a motor lorry in front, or brought up with his head under a low beam. They gave him a curious resemblance to a somewhat battered prize-fighter—whence the war-like title, "Mike."

It has never been clearly established in the family who was responsible for bringing Mike into its bosom and its milk-pitcher, so to speak. Mike arrived, that's all—probably he liked the air of cultured serenity about the house and walked in. With a promptness which is a strong tribute to his fascination of manner, even at this early age, he won our landlady's heart, and was formally adopted under the name of Yvonne.

Personally, we were always opposed to Yvonne as savoring too much of coquetry or hauteur. We wanted something simple and homely like Mary Elizabeth or Emma Jane. But Yvonne it was, and Yvonne it remained till it became generally apparent that the name didn't fit Mike's gender or his mode of life.

We would like to devote a great deal of space to telling the reader what a cute little rascal Mike was in his Yvonnehood, so to speak, and how we loved to come down in the morning and find him sitting in our Toasted Pine Flakes, or stuck in the cream-jug—he used to come right up from the cellar to be with us.

We would like to tell all this, so that our unmarried lady-readers could write in to us about their own cats and their cunning ways, and all we girls could have a perfectly lovely time together—they might even bring the cats down. But *tempus fugit*—these French phrases will break in—and we must on to the mournful and disheartening story of Mike's adult life, with the sad light it throws on the impotence of pure and beautiful surroundings to correct a naturally evil character.

The beginning of Mike's downfall was staying out o' nights. While still a kitten Mike had been accustomed to take an evening stroll, but his notion of bedtime grew hazier and hazier. He became distinctly less and less retiring. Finally Mike had to be stalked like a chamois every evening and dragged by the tail off some perilous peak of fence.

It was then that we got a brilliant idea, one of those flashes, you know. We reminded our landlady that Mike always came running when he heard anyone whet the carving knife on the steel, knowing that it was a musical prelude to dainty tidbits of meat.

"Why not go to the back-door and rub the knife on the steel?" we asked, modestly trying to appear unconscious that we were getting off something rather dazzling. "Then when he hears it, he'll rush up and you can—"

The suggestion was so obviously sensible that, in spite of its coming from us, our landlady adopted it at once. Other suggestions of ours had not worked out quite according to specifications, but this one looked good. Our landlady was even moved to say that she hadn't expected so much wisdom from us.

She got a chance to try the ruse soon after. It was a warm dark night, when the feet of even the wisest cat might stray from the paths of piety, and Mike's had very evidently wandered. In fact, it seemed to us that the strong but lyric tenor voice singing of love down the lane might well belong to him. But we couldn't be sure. There was a good deal of singing going on, mostly of a sentimental nature.

We cheerfully undertook to do the knife-grinding, being an adept at any operation connected

with eating. Squaring our elbows in a professional manner, we gave three or four slashing cuts on the steel that would have earned us a job in any packing-house. We made a noise like a duel in romantic comedy—some of that matinee idol stuff, you know, "Have at ye, caitiff knave!" lunging in tierce and quart, and then a quart or so in the dressing-room after the act.

Did it work? Yes, friend reader, it worked. It brought Mike all right—also every other cat off every other fence in that block. Before the landlady could slam and bolt the door, about ten frenzied felines hurled themselves into that quiet and orderly kitchen and immediately started trying to throw one another into the stove or drown one another in the sink.

While it lasted—and it was some minutes before the landlady's screams brought sufficient assistance, including the Chinaman out of the laundry across the way—it was the liveliest little scramble one could see outside the Petrograd Soviet. In ten seconds that kitchen looked like the plucking room of an otter-shop. Those cats just grabbed the fur in handfuls and threw it away. We got it in our porridge for weeks after, giving to that wholesome breakfast dish a still further resemblance to soft mortar.

Mike finally took to staying out all night. It was about this time that we began to entertain doubts as to his sex and morals—we were still calling him Yvonne in moments of friendship. He also wore a bow of red ribbon and a bell, the bell being for the purpose of tracking him around the house when he elected to go up and sleep in someone's bed.

The bell must have been an awful nuisance to Mike. Perhaps that is why he never could catch a mouse. We saw him tracking one in the grass one night. Every time he got ready to spring the infernal bell would tinkle, and Mike would sit up and moan. It was no use, and Mike definitely gave up mouse-catching as a steady job—stone-deaf mice being presumably rare.

His bow and bell, no doubt, made him unpopular with the other Toms. The decoration was not particularly becoming—he was about as pretty as a prize-fighter in a rose necklace—but his *confrères* probably regarded it as a sign of a vain and uppish disposition. So they used to chasten him—three or four at a time, we should judge from Mike's mussed appearance when he came home for breakfast.

His bandy front legs must also have been a handicap at first in these nocturnal affrays, but he learned how to use them to good effect after a while—they were probably all right for upper cuts and short hooks from either side. We noticed that as time went on he used to bring more of his fur back with him in the morning, and we judged he was working well up towards the top of his class—welter-weight, we should say. Mike never got beyond medium size, and he was always rather lean.

His voice, however, was superb. He was the Caruso of the block. His range was tremendous, with great power and fine quality all the way. His upper register especially was quite wonderful. There were tenor notes in Mike's voice on still summer nights that could be heard for six blocks in all directions. We have no doubt that a greater number of useful articles, such as boots, hairbrushes, perfume bottles, and shaving mugs, were thrown at Mike than at any other ten cats in that end of town.

But he wasn't stuck up about it. He remained the same simple, unassuming fellow—no professional airs whatever, and always willing to sing. He loved his art, that's all.

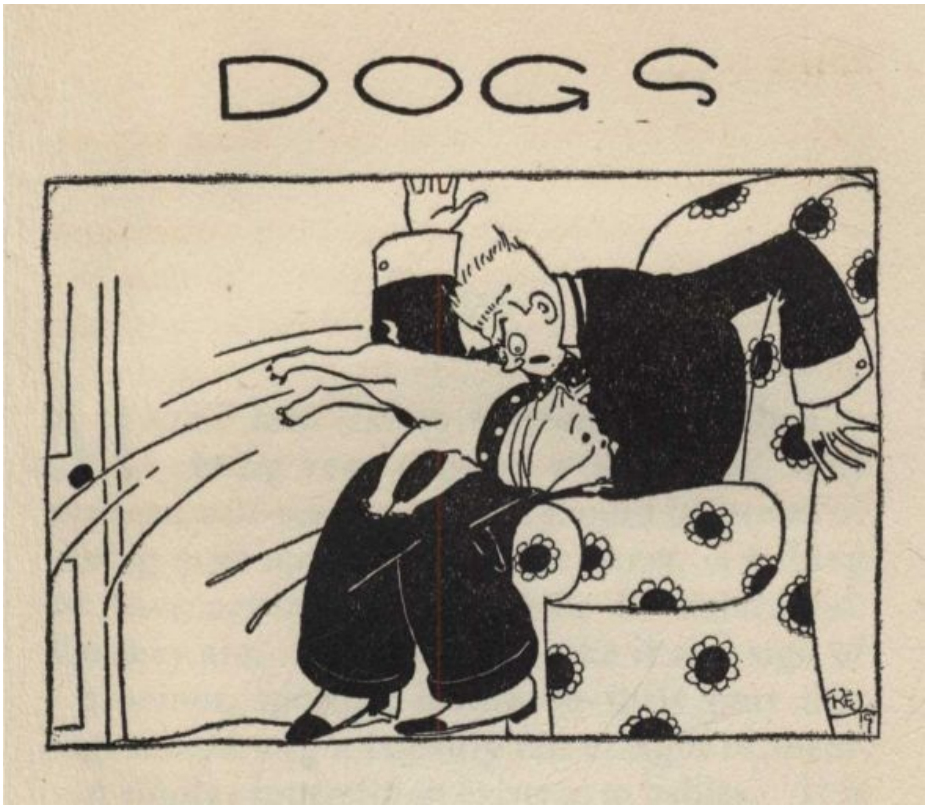
Mike is gone, however. He hasn't turned up for a week, and we write this article in the hope that if any reader sees a black Tom with a red bow and a brass bell, the reader will please destroy him in some speedy and sure way. Poor Mike, we may never look upon his like again—such is our heartfelt prayer!

The last time we saw Mike was about two a.m.—we had been detained at the office. As we neared the house, mentally debating whether or not we would take off our boots downstairs—the last time we did so we absent-mindedly hung them on the hat-rack—we noticed a nice grey tabby stepping daintily across the deserted street ahead of us.

It had just occurred to us that this was no hour for a well-brought-up cat to be strolling around, when we noticed Mike pussy-footing along about three yards behind—no doubt with some chivalrous intention of seeing that she got home all right. He was wearing his bell and an expression of concentrated interest.

And right behind Mike came the biggest and dingiest tomcat we have ever seen. With a few dabs of paint he would have made a very fair panther; and he had much the same glare in his eye. It seemed to bode ill for Mike, and we felt vague stirrings of pity, which a moment's reflection caused us sternly to repress. We decided to let justice take its course.

We have never seen Mike since.



DOGS

Dogs

Most men like to represent themselves as being very popular with dogs. Why any sane, self-respecting man should be proud of having dogs notice him on the street, is a thing we have never quite been able to understand. But they are. They seem to take it as a sign of a generous, sporting nature on their part that dogs should wag a friendly tail at sight of them.

A similar superstition exists as to babies. It is quite true that it is sometimes deuced embarrassing for a man to have a baby conceive a sudden passion for him. But even the victim is proud of it. The onlookers, especially the parents—oh, God bless us, yes!—regard it as an absolute certificate of character. They would hardly find it in their hearts to blame that man if they afterwards heard he was a burglar and a wife-beater. He might be indiscreet, but still "how Baby took to him!"

Now, personally, we get on pretty well with babies—also with grandmothers. Up to the age of six and after the age of sixty the girls seem to love us. Affection for us appears to be a characteristic of childhood—first or second. It would do your heart good to see the little dears grab for our watch and bang it on the arm of the chair or the top of the table, or anything that is handy and hard.

Grandmothers, too, are always very nice to us, and laugh at our jokes—especially if they are a little off color (the jokes, not the grandmothers). But girls of sixteen, say, or twenty-six, make it clear from their manner that they consider us a tiresome old stiff, afflicted with a pathetic hallucination that we are funny. There is something a little depressing about this.

As for dogs—well, frankly, we don't get on with them at all. The best we receive from them is a cold neutrality. Of all the dogs we know not one has a gosh-darn bit of use for us—except when we are sitting at their master's dining-table. Then they come and fix us with a threatening eye and black-mail us out of half our dinner. In fact, we have a suspicion that nothing but a certain leanness and stringiness in our lower members prevents them from eating out of our leg.

There is a house, for instance, where we dine almost every—well, as often as our hostess will let us. We like eating there. The cooking and the conversation are excellent. Also they don't regard the wine-cellar as a place to keep the winter's coal and ashes in.

But they have a dog—a big, black, furry dog, with feathers on his legs, and the ability to sit

up and beg for hours at a stretch. He has also the biggest mouth we have ever seen on a dog of his size. When he opens it he splits himself apart right down to his hind legs. Some day in a moment of forgetfulness or excitement he is going to take our right arm off at the elbow. But still we go on feeding him. We don't dare stop.

In addition to getting most of our beefsteak and our lamb and our veal, that dog has got our goat. He sits right up beside us and counts every mouthful we take, looking all the time as if he hoped it would choke us. If we don't "come across" promptly with what he considers his proper "rake-off" on our food—the brute regards us as a parasite, anyway—he howls in fury.

"My dear," says our hostess to our host with characteristic thoughtfulness, "I think your dog is misbehaving himself—hadn't you better put him out?"

"Oh, the dog's only a little playful," says our host, eyeing us with the cold disapproval of a man who has his own opinion of a fellow who would sit in front of a big plate of roast beef and trimmings and let a poor dog suffer. "You don't want him put out, do you?" says he to us.

"Not for worlds!" we roar in counterfeit horror at the thought, and chuck a slab of sirloin into the gap at our elbow—it's as big as a manhole in the street. After that, whenever we catch this nice little doggie's eyes, we give him whatever happens to be on our fork, all the time hoping that he will go out on the street next day and eat a sausage full of arsenic, or some ptomaine pork.

If we don't catch his eye often enough, he pats us on the arm with a paw the size of a Virginia ham. He did that once when we were drinking a cup of coffee, and we poured it over a new pair of striped pants. We never cared to wear them afterwards—in fact, we didn't care to wear any at all for several days, until the new skin formed.

Talking of clothes reminds us that we were mistaken when we said no dog ever loved us. One did—Lord, how that dog worshipped us! He was a brindle bull belonging to an uncle of ours, who had an undershot jaw, one ear gone, a broken tail, and a record of seventy-odd murders—that is, Mutt had, not uncle.

Mutt was in many respects a very tough dog, but he loved us dearly. He dogged our footsteps, and he dogged us when we sat. In fact, when we were visiting uncle, which was fairly often—uncle always kept a few bottles on ice—that darn dog did nothing but dog us. He was the doggonest dogger we have ever known.

But we had little joy of his affection. We would rather have had him form a taste for anyone else on earth. We wouldn't have cared if he had taken up with the niggers down around the barn. In fact, when uncle wasn't looking, we used to punch him in the face and kick him behind the ears—even farther behind than that. But he regarded these caresses as proofs of affection, and would leap upon us and slobber in a riot of emotion till we were reduced to soggy helplessness.

That was the whole trouble—the slobbering. A friendly bulldog is a moist beast at best. If he loves you he drools on you, and the more he loves you the more humid he gets. But this brute was the dankest, wettest, coziest, sloppiest bulldog that ever drivelled his affection on a fancy vest. His finer feelings were a perfect swamp. His welcome was an inundation.

If, in a moment of forgetfulness or exhaustion, we so far relaxed our vigilance as to sit down, Mutt would waddle up with tears of love in his eyes and lay his head in our lap. He would gaze at us in worship as though we were a god or a side of beef, and in two minutes we would be soaking from the waist down. The trenches in Flanders had nothing on Mutt for sogginess.

Once, after we had been away for some months, we were visiting uncle, and were sitting in a nice, deep, easy chair—you know, those chairs that are so hard to get out of in an emergency. Suddenly the door burst open and seventy pounds of slobbering enthusiasm hurled itself upon us. There was no escape. Mutt took us fair in the chest and knocked our breath and all thoughts of resistance out of us in one agonized grunt.

Before they pulled him off our hair was licked into tufts, our collar was melted, the colors had run in our new tie, and we were wet to the skin. We couldn't go home that night for fear of catching double pneumonia. Mutt was a grand dog in his way, but if he took a fancy to you, you weren't safe in anything but a bathing suit or a raincoat.

Nearly all our friends have dogs—Airedales mostly. Now we have nothing against Airedales. They are good enough dogs in their way. It is true that they are as ugly as a moth-eaten buffalo in a zoo, as boisterous as Billy Sunday, and as quarrelsome as a female peace-advocate. But they are good dogs—let it go at that.

There are no less than six Airedales on the staff of the paper we work on—that is, six dogs more or less definitely recognizable as such. In fact, if you were to take the whole six of them—one dog's ears and another's tail and another's legs and another's coat—you would almost have a real Airedale, which is pretty good going with average Airedales these days.

One of them got lost the other day. They are always getting lost. Airedale books and salesmen will tell you that you can't lure an Airedale away from home. The suggestion is that if you were to invite a neighbor's Airedale out for a walk he would knock you down and bite a piece out of your Adam's apple.

Well, all we can say is that every postman or butcher boy or grocer's man in town is escorted on his rounds by two or three Airedales belonging to the best families. We even used to know one that came down-town and spent his days in the back room of a saloon. We saw him there ourself, but he cut us dead—perhaps because we didn't treat him.

The Staff Airedale that got lost is principally distinguished by the possession of a thoroughbred tail. So the owner claims, at any rate. He has frequently called our attention to it, and asked us to note the correctness of the angle at which it is held. But we could never see much in a shaggy stub of that sort, no matter how perpendicular. Now, if it was a nice, long curly tail—but then, of course, it wouldn't be an Airedale. And this dog was bought for an Airedale, the price being the principal evidence of pure breeding—that and the tail.

Well, when the dog left home, the owner immediately advertised for his recovery. Personally, we would have moved at once to another street to prevent him finding us again. But the owner advertised; and for the past two or three days we have spent most of our time listening to him answer enquiries over the 'phone. He is called up every twenty minutes by someone who has an Airedale which he is sure must be the one wanted.

The thing begins to sound like a conspiracy. Are people trying to work off a lot of second-hand Airedales—model 1916—for the sake of the reward? Or do they just want to get rid of their own dogs, and are too kind-hearted to shoot them? Anyway, this is how it sounds—his office is near our own:

"Hello!—yes, an Airedale—where did you find him, hey?"

A long pause, during which the person at the other end of the line tries to prove honesty of character and purity of intention.

"What sort of a tail has he, hey?—is it a good tail?—what do I call a good tail, hey?—well, a good tail stands up straight with a little bend in it—oh, about four or five inches long and pretty thick."

Another long pause, while the person at the other end of the line drops the receiver, goes out to the barn to study the dog's tail, and comes back to report.

"It isn't standing up now, hey?—well, did it stand up before?—does it stand up most of the time, hey?"

Usually the answer is favorable. Naturally a man with a dog he doesn't want speaks as well of its tail as he can. Thereupon our friend seizes his hat, rushes out of the building for the nearest car line, and comes back two hours later to expatiate on the crass stupidity of people who find dogs.

The tail, it seems, is never the perfect tail he is looking for—thick, shaggy and perpendicular, with a slight bend. Half the time the dogs are not even Airedales. The last one he went to look at—seven miles away in the suburban slums—proved to be a Scotch terrier, a bandy-legged, little black chap.

We told him he ought to have taken it anyway. But he is a persistent beggar, and he is still answering "ads." He is weakening, however, and we are laying bets that he will take whatever the next person who 'phones in has to offer—A Persian cat, perhaps, or a Belgian hare.

ON BEING HANDY WITH TOOLS

On Being Handy With Tools

We are not handy with tools. We state this with all solemnity and knowing full well the nature of an oath. But even if we were handy with tools we would perjure ourself rather than admit it—we know what that admission leads to.

We have a brother, dear reader—a tall, broad-shouldered, handsome fellow, as you might guess, with a very open face. That is the chief cause of his troubles, his face is so very open. And in his tender youth he used to open it regularly and widely about the things he could do with tools.

There was nothing that boy couldn't make or mend. There was no domestic emergency which he couldn't meet with the appropriate tools—either the family tools or the neighbors'. Did a tap need a washer? Frank was right there with a rubber disk in one hand and a monkey-wrench in the other. Were the electric lights on the blink, or was the gas-stove doing its best to suffocate the cook? Did the family dog, a descendant of several shaggy breeds, require a hair-cut or a shampoo? Had the horse kicked the side out of his stall?—we are not bragging, friend reader, as you would realize if you had ever seen that ancient charger. Or was the barn itself in need of a coat of paint? In any and all of these cases Frank was electrician, gas-fitter, barber, carpenter, painter, or whatever the circumstances called for.

And what was the result of all these various services so far as he was concerned personally? Did he get any special consideration because of them? Was he the favorite child of the family? Did anyone kill even a lean calf for him, or clothe him in a coat of many colors? Not that the rest of us ever noticed. About the only way we ever showed any gratitude or any acknowledgement of his skill and energy was by saving up jobs for him.

No matter what the emergency might be, no one else ever touched a hammer or a saw or a paint-brush for fear of breaking in on Frank's personal preserves and so hurting his feelings—at least, that is the way we put it. If ever he went out of town for a few days, he had to work nights and Sundays when he came back, so as to catch up with the chores and odd jobs. And because he had always done them he went on doing them. He might grouse about it, but you know how it is once you have established a family tradition. The laws of the Medes and Persians are nothing to it for permanence.

All this happened because he was handy with tools and fancied himself as an amateur mechanic. The boy was clever at it, too, but this is something one should never admit about one's self. If a job should turn up to be done around the place and you should be asked if you can do it,

deny it utterly. Say you know not neither do you understand a darn thing about it. If they ask you again, deny it again. Then if one come up to you saying, lo, this is a handy man, curse and swear and say that the only nail thou canst hit with a hammer is that which groweth upon thy thumb. Even so wilt thou find peace.

You must be eternally watchful, if you would keep yourself clean from the taint of handiness. There is something balefully fascinating about tools. They are so shiny and efficient-looking, or so rusty and inefficient-looking, that one is tempted to try them in either case, just to see how they work. And they are always lying about within easy reach—except perchance when you want some particular tool very badly. Then, if so be you desire a tack-hammer, you will find many gimlets and screw-drivers and eke a saw or two. But aye verily we say unto you, you won't know where th'ell the tack-hammer is, but will be obliged to tack down that bit of linoleum with a sad-iron—perhaps that is what makes the irons so sad. If, on the other hand, thou shouldst require a gimlet in thy business, then surely will there be tack-hammers in every drawer, but the gimlets will have crawled off into a hole somewhere to play with the young rats.

Even young children are inoculated with the virus of handiness. Little boys at Christmas-time are presented by silly old uncles—generally uncles who do not have to live in the same house—with sets of little tools all nicely arranged in gaudy boxes. Then the little boys, having bright and enquiring minds, proceed to saw sections out of the piano-legs and drive nails into mother's Circassian-oak dresser. The result is usually much pain for the little boys, though not in the parts of their anatomy which they use for purposes of sawing and hammering.

When we were a little boy, we were even as other little boys in this respect, though much more beautiful and clever—we state this on the authority of our maiden aunts. Having been presented by some reckless relative with a set of tin tools, we went right out to the family shed and built a nice little house with a real fireplace in it made out of two or three half-sections of brick. Then we started a fire in it, and when it got going nicely, we ran off to tell some of the other boys in the block about it.

There could be no question about that fire. It wasn't a big fire as fires go nowadays, but it was a lively one. It took two hose-reels and a chemical engine half an hour to put it out. We don't know what grandfather told the insurance company, but even over the lapse of years we distinctly remember what he told us. You see it was grandfather's shed, and grandfather at that period of our life was acting towards us *in loco parentis*—certainly there can be no doubt about the amount of loco which he put into the role of parent on that particular occasion.

Our natural genius for mechanics was nipped in the bud by that unfortunate occurrence. Ever since we have struggled manfully and—with a few exceptions—successfully against any inclination to monkey with tools. Taps have wheezed and leaked in our presence for weeks on end, but we have carefully ignored them till such time as a plumber or brother Frank was around. Coal-bins have broken down, but never have we taken saw and hammer in hand to put them up again. We have sworn off tools.

It is true that we have sometimes been compelled to run a lawn-mower. But then a lawn-mower is not properly a tool. It is more in the nature of a plague, something like typhoid fever or Prohibition.

We have stated that there were two or three exceptions to our abstinence from tools. Alas, yes, we succumbed to temptation or pressing need, and the result was in each case deplorable. Worst of all was the little ladder we constructed so as to reach certain high book-shelves in the room which the family calls "the study"—probably because no one would dream of doing such a thing there. It was a pretty little ladder, a bit of work we were proud of. But it cost us an inheritance—not actual, you know, but prospective.

We made the ladder out of a couple of pieces of scantling and parts of an old packing-case. We planed and fitted and nailed it, till it was goodly to the eye and fairly sound to the feel. Then we painted it an art-green, and put nice round knobs of leather on the ends that leaned against the wall. It was really an ornament, the sort of thing that people years ago used to gild and hang up with pink ribbons. But unfortunately it was not a very reliable ladder. It would do everything but ladd, so to speak.

Uncle Aleck was in the house one day, and having nothing particular to do formed an evil desire for a book on the top shelf. This particular uncle, be it understood, is regarded as a wealthy old bachelor—though personally we can't be sure to what extent he is either single or rich. Anyhow, he always professed a special affection for us personally, on the curious ground that we were the image of himself at our age—a reflection which furnished us no pleasure from the point of view of physical pulchritude, however flattering it might be as a financial prospect.

We were regarded by the family generally as his heir—alas, that we should have to say we "were" regarded.

Naturally Uncle, seeing this book which he shouldn't have wanted to read—at his age, too, the old rascal!—seized that infernal ladder and climbed up. It let him get right up to the top rung, and then it bucked or shied or kicked or something equally effective. When they got the splints off Uncle's leg and he was able to move around on crutches, he sent for his lawyer. Ever since he has regarded us with ill-concealed dislike. Whenever we see a short ladder from that fateful day to this we get a curious "gone" feeling under the middle button of our vest.

This is the sort of luck we have had with tools, but, of course, there are people who have had worse. We have a friend, for instance, who is an absolute victim to them. He has a fine home and a charming wife, not to mention the dog. But he is gradually undermining his health and wrecking his own happiness and theirs by his insane conviction that he is a plumber, a carpenter, an electrician, a cabinet-maker, a plasterer, and a stone-mason combined. There are three or four other trades as well, but these will do to go on with.

When he built his house, he had a large room constructed down in the basement adjoining the boudoir occupied by the furnace and the coal-bin. It is a really beautiful room, a little low as to the ceiling, perhaps, and a little dim as to the light. But there is a fine cement floor, fine big beams in the ceiling, and splendid brick walls in all their natural beauty of cool grey. It is his workshop. He tries to persuade his wife that some day it will be the billiard-room. But she, poor woman, knows better. It is his workshop now and forever, till his last tool is rusted and his last finger busted and—well, there are "dusted" and "crusted" left to rhyme with.

He has that place simply jammed with tools of all sorts and work-benches and the like. He keeps a regular harem of hammers and hatchets and saws cooped up down there, each in her own little cubicle. Not even the Sultan himself in all his matrimonial glory was ever half so jealous of his better halves—perhaps one should say, his better ninety-nine one-hundredths—as our friend is of these same tools. Why, if he were to catch anyone cutting with a chisel of his, or planing with a plane from his seraglio, he would be liable to bowstring the poor tools and throw them into the Bosphorus, as represented by the sewer or a neighbor's backyard or some similar abyss of oblivion.

Sunday afternoons and any evening when his wife has company, he disappears down into this den of hardware, and the noise of hammering and sawing which emerges from it—the place sounds like a busy shipyard on the Clyde—indicates that he is having much joy of his chilled-steel darlings. Every now and then he comes up to have a piece of court-plaster put on a new place during the temporary absence of cuticle. Then he goes back with the solemn and determined expression of a man who at great personal sacrifice is accomplishing a sacred duty.

What does he do down there? Generally speaking, Heaven only knows. We have heard him talk in vague terms of the new set of storm-windows and storm-doors he is making for the house. But that was over two years ago, and there have been some very tidy little storms since then. But never yet have we seen sash or panel of those doors and windows.

It is true he did make a set of window-boxes for the flowers in the sun-room—so-called because you can sit in there and look at the sunlight outside. But even a union carpenter could have made those boxes in half an hour, and members of the union have never been accused of undue and ill-considered haste in such matters.

It is when our friend comes up out of the cave, however, to do a job in the upper regions of the house that things really happen. There was a tap in the bath-room, rather a nice tap as taps go—a very handsome tap, in fact. But, in the case of taps, handsome is as handsome pours. And pouring was one thing this particular tap refused to do—thought it vulgar, perhaps. So our friend one bright Sunday afternoon—these things seem always to happen on Sunday—got an idea in his mind and a big monkey-wrench in his hand, and went up to the bath-room and took a half-nelson on the handle of that tap. He gave one twist—just one. It was all that was needed. The tap came away with a jerk, and a solid jet of water as thick as your wrist took him in the face.

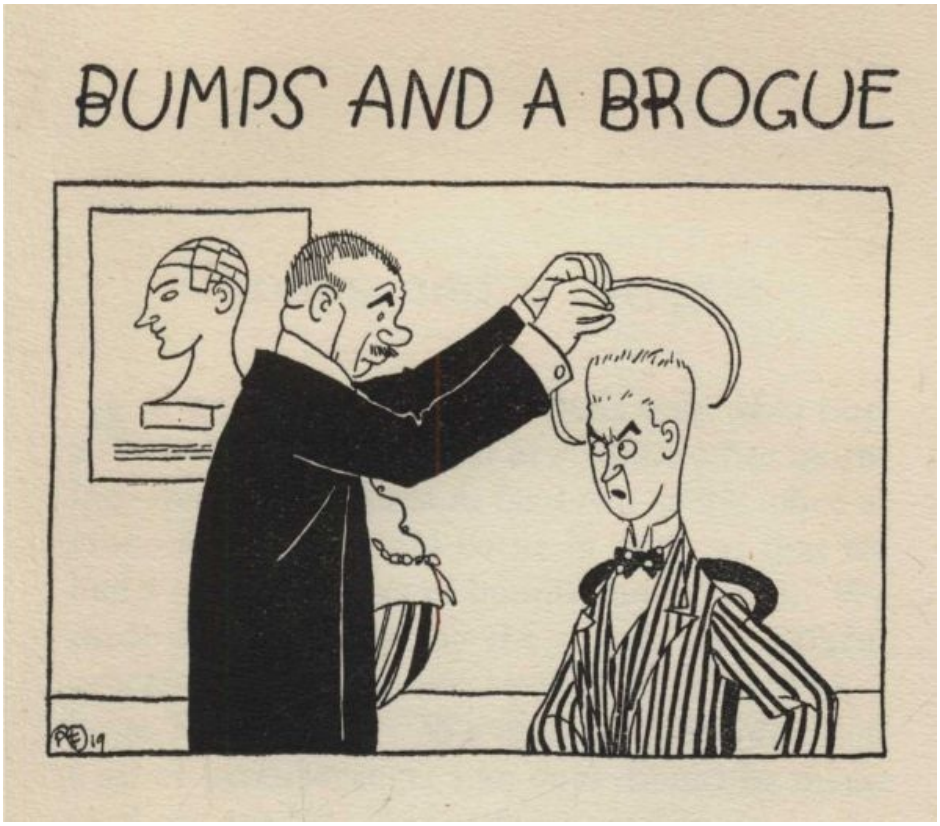
Gurgling yells of agony brought everyone in the house to his assistance. Naturally we had to be right there among the shock-troops, heedless of the nice new suit we were wearing for the first time. We dashed in and found our friend standing in front of the pipe into which he was vainly endeavoring to stick his thumb—mindful, perhaps, of the famous exploit of the little hero of Haarlem. We succeeded in prying him away, but our new suit never looked the same again. If we had had any sense we would have left him there till he was washed away. The trouble was that no one else knew where to shut off the water, and—well, we simply had to drag him away to do it.

The next day a battalion of plumbers, plasterers, and decorators did what they could to repair

the damage to the house. It took them about a week. But our friend is still hopeful. He still thinks he is a mechanical genius wasted as a mere lawyer. Only the other morning we dropped into his office. He was laboriously trying to make a piece of black court-plaster about the size of a war-map stick to the back of one hand by holding it down with the bandaged thumb of the other. There was a lump on his forehead and one of his cheeks was badly scratched. But he was in excellent spirits.

"Tell you what, old man," he burbled in his enthusiasm, "there's nothing like being able to do the odd-jobs around the house. Why, only last night I went down into my workshop, and I——"

We wiped away a furtive tear. There is something very pathetic about a fine mind falling into such decay as this.



BUMPS AND A BROGUE

Bumps and a Brogue

As we were combing our hair somewhat hurriedly in our boudoir at 8.58 the other morning—we are supposed to be down at the office at nine—it was suddenly borne in upon us that we had a remarkable set of bumps on our head. We made this discovery by the simple and painful process of running into several of them with a large, sharp comb. We thereupon decided that a set of protuberances like ours should be measured at once by a competent phrenologist.

We had seen the Professor's notices in the "want-ad" departments of the local dailies; and our attention had been drawn to them by their diagrams of extraordinarily bumpy heads, and the peculiar line of language in which the Professor advanced his modest claims to be regarded as a benefactor of the human race and one of the greatest phrenologists of all time. Besides, the Professor's protuberance-parlors were on our way down to the office. They have a central location, so that phrenological patients can run in every now and then and have a new bump examined, we presume.

We read the handsome and dignified brass plate on the door, and we knocked a respectful knock. After two or three minutes of waiting we knocked again—less respectfully. After we had knocked several more times, with constantly diminishing respect and constantly increasing force, the door was opened by a blond and comely young woman who explained that the Professor's

hours were from three to five in the afternoon, and from seven to eight in the evening—to accommodate people who might drop in on their way to the theatre, no doubt. Did we want a chart as well as a reading?

"How much does the Professor set one back for a chart?" we inquired, as we toyed with the forty cents left out of our weekly envelope of the Saturday before. Two dollars for a reading and five dollars for a chart.

We stated firmly that we would have two dollars' worth, and that we would come for it at three o'clock in the afternoon. We were going to see this thing through if we had to hock something. As we bowed our adieu smilingly, the young lady pressed upon us one of the Professor's cards, in which we were advised to "get my new great chart and be helped—as many also numerous worried, etc., have—for life." On the back of the card there was more of the Prof's best phrenological English, which promised among much else that "marriage adaptions" would be explained. Immediately we resolved that we would see him that very day or expire in the effort.

We got there at three. The same blond and comely young woman let us in. Would we take off our hat and coat and sit in the parlor till the Professor got through examining the bumps on someone else's cranial arch? We would and we did. We sat down by a table on which there was a pile of calling cards—presumably left by grateful persons whose protuberances had been explained—and also a bound copy of the Professor's famous chart. We opened it and glanced through a few long passages on amativeness and combativeness and philoprogenitiveness and other polysyllabic characteristics, as indicated by convexities on the skull.

While we read there floated down to us from the mysterious regions above a rich Hibernian voice and the most superb brogue we had heard in many a long day. It was one of those thick, mashed-potatoes-and-buttermilk brogues which usually go with a semi-circular rim of reddish whiskers and a prehensile upper lip. We dropped the book and listened. We didn't pay any particular attention to what was being said—far be it from us to display an ungentlemanly curiosity as to the meaning of anyone else's bumps! We just listened to the voice. It made us think of St. Patrick ordering the snakes out of Ireland.

The voice came downstairs and accompanied someone to the front door. "Goodboy and good luck to yez both," said the voice—perhaps some cautious young man was having his fiancee's head studied—and then we were told that the Professor awaited us in his sanctum. We hastened out just in time to see a pair of short, thick legs scurrying upstairs ahead of us. We joined them in a neat little office at the top—where legs are usually joined—and found that they and the voice belonged to the Professor, in whose hands we had come prepared to place our head and a two-dollar bill.

The Professor looked us over, and we in turn gazed at him with the respectful and somewhat timid interest due to his professional insight into human character and destiny. But we must confess to a distinct disappointment. We had expected to see a large and impressive personage, with the face of a seer, piercing eyes, flowing locks—also a flowing robe, covered with cabalistic signs. We had expected him to be a sort of cross between a medicine man and an ancient alchemist. Instead we saw a round-faced, plump little Irishman, with close-cropped hair, a bristling mustache, and a decided leaning towards rotundity in the abdominal profile.

"Well, young man, and what can Oi do for ye?" asked the Professor, as though we might have come to get a tooth filled, or be measured for a new pair of pants.

We explained that we had come to have our head read, with a view to finding out what business in life we were best fitted for, and also to have our "marriage adaption" explained.

Without a word the Professor sat us in a chair in the middle of the room. Still without a word he seized a pair of callipers that were unpleasantly suggestive of ice-tongs. Then in ominous silence he proceeded to pick up our head by the ends, by the sides, by the front, by the back, under the ears, and in several other painful places where heads are not usually picked up. We felt as though our head were a block of ice, which was being carried up several long flights of stairs. And each time the Professor seized it in the tongs, he carefully scrutinized the scale at the top of them. Some measurements he took several times, either to verify them, or to make it plain that he was working hard on our case.

Having finished with the callipers, he drew out a tape and measured our head in more ways than we had ever thought possible—around the rim, over the dome, back of the ears, till we must have resembled a new real-estate sub-division. Only he didn't drive in any stakes. Finally he tilted our head back as far as it would go, and very solemnly measured us over the eyes to the point of the jaw on each side. This he did four or five times, gazing sternly at the tape each time like a

judge warning a backward witness.

Then he gave us the third round. He grasped our head firmly in his hands, and pressed our various bumps with fingers that seemed to be about the size and shape of chocolate-eclairs. But they were not soft. On the contrary, they were very hard indeed. Just when we felt sure that our last bump had given way under the pressure, he rocked our head violently from side to side, backwards and forwards. Reducing us to a momentary condition of coma by gouging his thumbs into us at that sensitive point where one's spinal column joins one's cerebellum—or is it one's medulla oblongata?—he seized us by the hands, each in turn, wobbled our wrists, twisted our fingers, and finally did his best to remove our thumbs completely. This, we believe, is what alienists call the "thumb test."

The Professor sat down. All this time he had preserved an absolute and ominous silence. Now he gazed at us with melancholy interest, and we nerved ourself to hear the worst. Immediately he plunged into an abyss of statistics. We can recall only a few of them, and probably these few are not altogether correct. We never were much good at arithmetic. Besides, the Professor reeled them off at breathless speed.

"The average head is twinty-wan to twinty-wan and a half inches in circumference," he roared in a voice that would easily carry a block in all directions, "and your head is twinty-three and a half. Over the dome the average head is twilve to twilve and a half inches; yours is fourteen. In len'th the average head is siven to siven and a half inches; yours is eight and a half. And your head is six and three-quarter inches woide, while the average is only foive and a half."

We asked if he had any objections to our jotting down a few of those figures. He had.

"Niver you mind, niver you mind," said the Professor impatiently, waving our question aside, "ye don't need them. You listen to me and to what Oi'm tellin' ye. It doesn't matter if ye forgit thim misurements. But here is wan Oi don't want ye to forgit. This is the most important of thim all. Oi misured ye over the oiyes to the temporo-mandible j'int. Well, the average woman misures there from tin and a half to ilivin inches; and the average man from ilivin to ilivin and a half. And many a foine, dacent, respectable man comes in to me that doesn't misure over tin and a half. But you, me young man, you misure twilve and wan-eighth inches."

The Professor leaned back to let it soak in. We gasped in delighted amazement. What do you know about that?—"twilve and wan-eighth" inches to our temporo-mandibles! Nothing cheap about our mandibles, eh, what?

"Av coorse," said the Professor deprecatingly, "Napoleon misured fourteen inches; the Duke of Wellington misured thirteen; and Timothy Eaton—gawd rest his soul!—misured twilve and three-quarters."

We were out-classed! There could be no doubt of it. But then who are we that we should compete with the great immortals, with Bonaparte and the Iron Duke and the founder of a department-store? Besides, we were in good company with our "twilve and wan-eighth." So we plucked up heart of grace and listened cheerfully to the Professor as he continued.

"You have a foine head," said he, "one of the foinest that has come to me in a year or more. But it's a head that requoires special attintion. In fact, it requoires moy thurd course, which is tin dollars. Me terms is always the same. There is no change and no reduction. It is two dollars for a plain readin', foive dollars for a chart, and foive dollars extry for me thurd course of special attintion and secret advoice. Just that, tin dollars, no more and no less!"

The Professor said it with great solemnity and impressive slowness, especially the last phrase, presumably with a view to forestalling any endeavor on our part to obtain this wonderful "thurd" course for nine dollars and a half or eight-ninety-eight. We dismissed the whole subject, and asked him what calling in life we seemed best fitted for—if any.

"Oi'm comin' to that, Oi'm comin' to it," said the Professor in a very testy tone of voice. "But furst Oi want ye to understand the advantages of havin' a chart. No man can possibly remimber all the things Oi'm goin' to tell ye, and it is quoite essintial ye should have a chart. It will be worth thousands to ye."

Suddenly we saw the reason why he had been so very peremptory in his refusal to let us take notes. He wanted to reduce us to helpless amazement by the flow of his statistics. We were amazed all right, but still firm in our resolve to spend no more than two dollars—it was all we had been able to raise at the office.

The Professor returned to that magnificent head of ours, intimating that it stood out like the rock of Gibraltar from amid the ordinary run of heads that came to him for inspection. But this did not make us so conceited as the reader might imagine. It occurred to us that the average head that comes to a phrenologist may be rather small and thick, possessors of such heads

having naturally most reason to wonder what they are fitted for in life.

"You have a big head," said the Professor, "a head quoite large enough for almost anny purpose known to man. And it is a well-shaped head. Some heads that have a big dome have a depression in the top. But you've a ridge on yer skull that ye could balance a lead pencil on. That shows great stren'th of character. But you have one fault. On either soide of that ridge, where the bumps of hope ought to be, you've a hollow. Ye lack confidence in yerself. Y're nervous and diffident. And that is where moy chart would be worth untold wealth to ye. It would show ye how to develop yer hopefulness, and also yer chest—the chest havin' a great deal to do with yer hopefulness. Whoy, with a head loike yours ye could do almost annythin'!"

Instinctively, we sat very erect, feeling that the Professor was about to enter on a list of the splendid careers from which we had only to choose. We were confident that he was about to proclaim the magnificent position we would one day occupy in the literary hall of fame. After what he had said about our peerless set of protuberances, we felt that no forecast could be too rosy. So we straightened up in eager expectation.

"With a head loike yours," said the Professor in his loudest and most impressive tone, "ye'd have no difficulty in takin' a very liberal eddication if ye'd only lay yer moind to it. Ye moight roise to be a bookkeeper or a commercial thraveller. Ye moight even become a lawyer or a doctor or a professional man, if ye only had confidence in yerself. Ye could be a foine piano-player and an iligant parlor singer. Ye could also be a fluent and graceful public speaker. Ye have a good deal of real-estate ability and consid'rable speculatin' capacity and quoite a bit of organizin' talent. Ye could be a furst-rate draughtsman; and ye have a genius for inventin'. In fact, ye could be almost annythin' ye made up yer moind to be—and there ye are!"

Yes, there we were! We could take a "liberal eddication," if only—and all the time a big parchment with a huge red seal lay carefully rolled up in our trunk as evidence of our scholastic attainments! It is the only evidence we possess. We could "roise" to be a book-keeper or a commercial "thraveller"—but never a word to the effect that we might some day be able to write or might ever aspire to journalistic eminence. Not that the Professor was necessarily so far astray at that. He may have been quite right. We admit it humbly. But it was a sad blow to have such a commonplace future outlined for us, after the way he had raised our hopes. And real-estate ability!—it sounded like an attack on our moral character.

"Moreover, ye could become a foine boxer," he continued, "or a beautiful fencer. Ye have such soople movements. Ye could learn to fence in half the toime it takes an ordinary man. And a useful thing it is, too. Suppose ye were attacked on the street, fer instance."

All we would have to do in such a case, we presume, would be to draw our flashing rapier, throw ourself on guard, and "have at you, varlets!" Or perhaps the Professor intended that we should do this with our walking-stick or rolled up umbrella. Somehow the idea did not appeal much to us—spitting a man with your umbrella musses it up so dreadfully.

A bright idea suddenly occurred to us to relieve our deep dejection. Our "marriage adaptions" still remained to be explained. Timidly we broached the subject, for ours is a tender and shrinking nature, and we are not in the habit of speaking out in meeting about our dearest hopes. Our voice sank to a whisper as we asked if he thought we ought to get married.

"Would Oi advoise ye to git marrud?" roared the Professor, possibly for the benefit of some new patients who were just being let in—he had stopped to listen to the door-bell a few moments previously. "Av coorse Oi would. There are physiol'gical reasons for it. Ye know what they say, don't ye?"

Here the Professor smiled and winked in a distinctly doggish manner. We felt that he was about to say something decidedly improper in connection with those same "physiol'gical" reasons. We blushed violently.

"Ye know, they say that single min go insane much oftener than marrud min. And it is explained on physiol'gical grounds. Take the Turks, fer instance. Look at the foine, upstandin', healthy min they are, with their harems and their Circassian slaves and all the rist of it. And Oi remimber when Oi was in the heart of Africa forty years ago...."

"What part of Africa were you in?" we asked, expecting to be told that he had acted as a guide for David Livingstone.

"Oi was at Cape Town—no, no, Oi was two thousand moiles north of Cape Town, up in a country they call Nay-tawl. The whole district was filled with magnificent fellas, great, big, deep-chested, two-fisted, up-standin' six-footers, ivry wan of thim with their six or sivin woives—and divil a bit of immorality in the whole country!"

Under the circumstances we could easily believe in the high moral status of the inhabitants of

Natal. But we didn't see how it helped our own particular case. Whatever may be our personal opinions on the subject of polygamy, police magistrates have been known to cherish prejudices against people who carry "physiol'gy" as far as that.

Then the Professor went back to his chart. He dragged one out of a drawer and insisted that we should gaze upon the picture of a hairless gentleman with his head neatly divided into choice building lots, each containing a little sketch suggestive of the characteristic represented by a bump at that point. For instance, in the section allotted to "amativeness"—lovely word!—there was a picture of a young man and young woman kissing. In the section labelled "combativeness" two prize-fighters faced one another; while in the "love of home" department a gentleman sat under a large stump and gazed wistfully at a barn in the distance.

We still refused to be won over, even by these allurements of graphic art. Thereupon the Professor read out several extracts of a nature to help us in the development of hopefulness and our chest.

"Ye must practice self-confidence and hopefulness," said he. "That's the only way ye can develop yer faculty of hope. And the chart shows ye how ye can do it."

Presumably the chart contained directions for fifteen-minute hoping exercises to be gone through morning and night. In the course of time, no doubt, we would develop into one of the best little hopers in town. But for the time being we were still somewhat dejected. We couldn't get our mind off those "foine, up-standin' min in Nay-tawl."

As a final inducement, the Professor took a five-cent piece out of his pocket, and bent it to show the strength of his fingers. He said he didn't do it for everyone—whether on account of the wear and tear on his fingers or on five-cent pieces, he left to the imagination. He also made us feel his biceps and watch the expansion of his chest, all acquired by carefully following out the directions on the chart—five dollars!—and also the third course and secret advice, which we would have to swear not to communicate—ten dollars!

"Oi'll tell ye the secret soign possessed by all the strongest min in the world," he assured us, "not only proize-foighters and wrastlers, but great doctors and artists as well. Oi'll tell it to ye so ye can pick thim out on the street. That's part of the secret advoice."

But we refused to rise to the bait. As a result we are still unable to tell a "wrastler" on the street from a drug-clerk, or a "proize-foighter" from a country curate.

We entrusted a two-dollar bill to the Professor's care. We thanked him for the information he had given us. Then we came sadly away, wondering vaguely how much was the fare to Nay-tawl.

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