

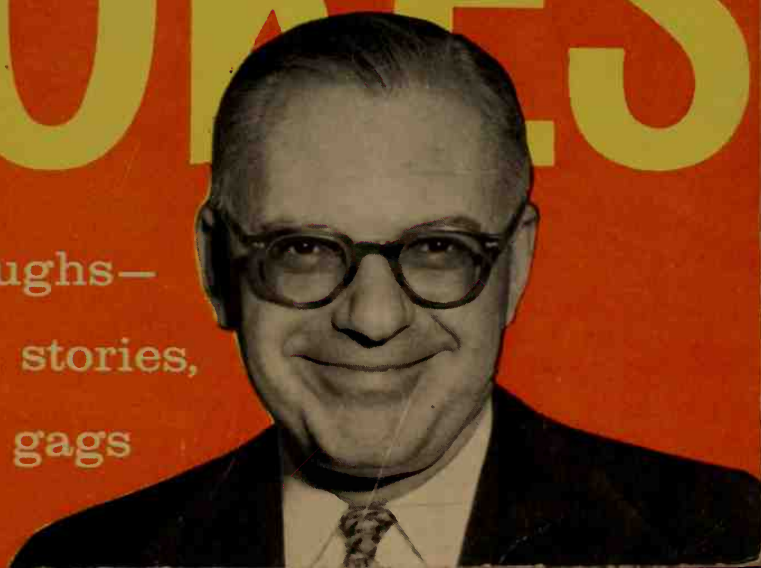
BENNETT

SUMMER

50¢

CERF'S BEST JOKES

All for laughs—
jokes, wit, stories,
puns and gags





Bennett Cerf's fame is not that he has made America pun-conscious, although he has certainly done that. Nor will his laurels all be pinned to the quick wit that makes him so valuable to "What's My Line?" And while there may be those who save his column, "The Cerfboard," from *This Week* every Sunday, that delight is not Mr. C's chief contribution either. It is possible that his bold new publishing ventures — The Modern Library, Landmark Books and Dr. Seuss's cat, for example — will ensure his renown, but somehow we think that first and last he will always be recognized as a man who knows how to laugh and, more important, how to make others laugh.

THE EDITORS

BENNETT

**CERF'S
BEST
JOKES**

With Drawings by Al Ross



Publisher FRED R. SAMMIS

Editor HASKEL FRANKEL

Art Director ANTHONY LAROTONDA

Managing Editor PAT HAGAN MURRAY

Associate Art Director PAUL WEISS

Copy Editor ELIZABETH HULING

Associate Editors ILENE DORN

DORIS MULLANE

Production ARTHUR GUBERNICK

LISABETH JOYCE

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AUTHOR, AUTHOR!



● In *You Bet Your Life*, Leo Guild, ace publicist for Warner Brothers, tells about the day a Warner Bros. writer studied the rushes of some scenes he had written. They were terrible. When the lights went on in the projection room, Jack Warner asked the writer to see him in his inner sanctum. A violent electric storm was raging outside. The writer, dejected, walked down the hall with two friends. Suddenly all the lights flickered and faded. "What's that?" asked one of them. "That's Warner testing the chair," said the writer grimly.

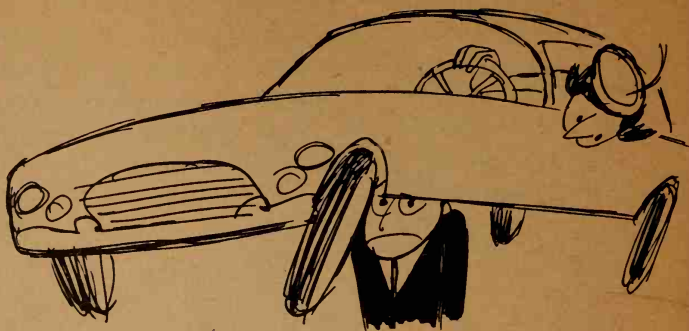
● One of the most improbable anecdotes about the late George Bernard Shaw concerns an evening when a lady dramatist hornswoggled him into attending the tryout of her new play. "Now, you naughty man," she chided kittenishly, "you're not to sneak out in the middle of my drama." Shaw was planked down behind her and leaned forward to get a better view of the proceedings. Halfway through the first act, the authoress felt a tickling sensation on her neck. Groping in the dark, she felt a loose strand of hair and tucked it firmly into place with a big hatpin. Suddenly Shaw, thoroughly bored by this time, decided to fall back in his seat. He cried, "Ouch!" Then he told the authoress, "Madam, if you will kindly take my beard out of your hair, I promise I won't budge out of this seat until your confounded play is over."

● A young writer with a considerable reputation on Broadway was given a contract by a powerful motion-picture studio. When he turned in his first scenario, the head of the studio called for an aspirin and the writer's agent. "Get rid of this fellow," he roared. "He's such a highbrow I bet he writes failures on purpose!"

● Harry Kurnitz, witty scenario writer, and author of several first-rate mystery books under the pen name of Marco Page, escorted Florence Rice to a performance of *Die Walküre* at the Hollywood Bowl. All librettos had been disposed of when they got there, and Miss Rice confessed that she had never heard the opera before. "Give me some idea of what it's about," she requested. "Well," began Kurnitz. "The heroine is a girl named Brünnhilde, who comes from a rather good family. Her Father is God."

● Two street cleaners paused for a chat on Fifty-seventh Street. "What do you think of Ernest Hemingway?" asked the first. "Great stuff," said the second, "but don't you think he's a little too precious for the man in the street?"

AUTOMOBILES



● "Our new power brakes are out of this world," a salesman for the Indestructible Eight told a prospective lady customer. "Now with that equipment, instead of running over a victim, you can stop squarely on top of him."

● "I hear you picked up another beautiful girl this evening," said one motorist enviously to another. "How on earth do you do it?" "Simplest thing in the world," boasted the successful Romeo. "A mere case of winkin', blinkin', and nod."

● A kindly Cadillac owner spied the driver of an Old Model-T Ford in difficulties at a roadside and offered to tow him to the nearest garage. Along the way, he forgot all about his tow, and ran his speed up to ninety miles an hour with the Ford careening madly in his wake. A state trooper set out in pursuit, but was soon out-distanced. He phoned a side-kick twenty miles ahead and warned, "Get the driver of a green Cadillac coming your way. I'll bet he's doing a hundred." "Okay," was the reply. "And that isn't all," added the first trooper. "I don't expect you to believe me, but there's a loon in a Model-T Ford right behind that Cadillac, blowing his horn like crazy and trying to pass."

BARBERS

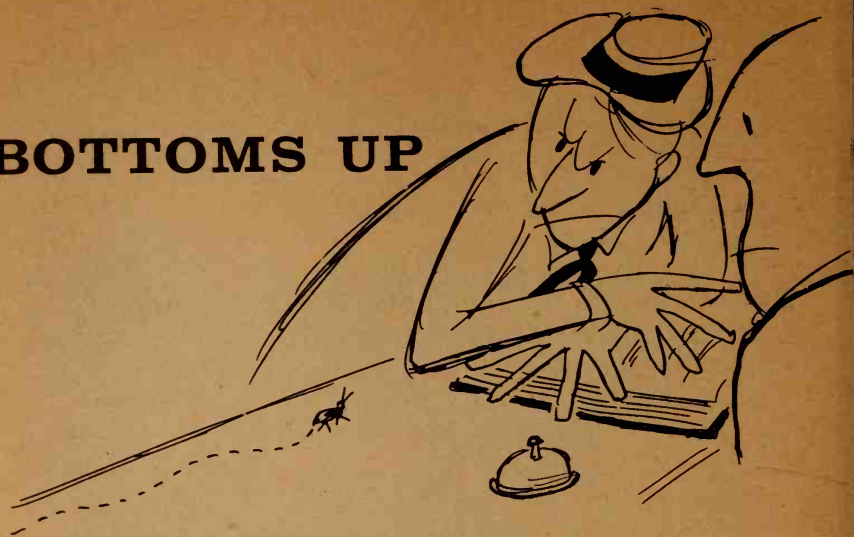
● Al, the tony barber at the New Weston, was surprised to get a tip from editor Haas *before* the latter climbed into his chair. "You're the first customer who ever tipped me *before* I gave him any service," commented Al. "That's not a tip," Haas announced brusquely. "That's *hush* money."

● In one shop a customer demanded a new face lotion. "I have a date with a luscious babe," he explained, "and I want to have the most provocative tang possible." "Here's one guaranteed to knock her cold," enthused the barber. "It has an ether base."

● "Can you *prove* this is a good hair tonic?" an oft-fooled bald-head asked his barber. "I'll tell you how I can prove it," asserted the barber. "One lady took the cork out of the bottle with her teeth and twenty-four hours later she had a mustache!"



BOTTOMS UP



● A well-lubricated drummer staggered into a hotel lobby, and picked up a pen to register. As he did so a remarkable facsimile of a bedbug crawled across the desk. The drummer recoiled and informed the reception clerk, "I've been in lots of hotels, and I've been bitten by some mighty smart bedbugs, but—hic—this is the first time one ever came down to see what room I was getting!"

● A long-suffering wife was about to berate her husband for staggering home at 3 A.M. "Before you begin," he warned her, "I want you to know I been sittin' up with a sick friend." "A likely story," mocked the wife. "What was his name?" The husband gave this problem deep thought, then announced triumphantly. "He was so sick he couldn't tell me."

● After his fourteenth highball, Jackson staggered out of Clancy's bar, and crashed head-on into the corner lamppost. Rubbing his forehead sadly, he next tripped over the fire hydrant. Reeling across the sidewalk, he somersaulted down the steps of Mrs. Sullivan's basement, and landed in a bloody heap. "T'hell with it," he told himself as he curled up for a good sleep. "I might as well stay here 'till the parade passes."

THE CAMPBELLS ARE COMING

● A thrifty old Scot named MacCrindle stayed with a business associate in London and became deeply attached to the latter's black cocker spaniel. The dog returned his affection and kicked up such a fuss when MacCrindle was leaving that the Londoner insisted he be taken home as a gift.

"This is uncommon kind of ye," declared MacCrindle, "and as soon as I get back to Scotland, I'll be sending ye the biggest finest turkey ye ever did see."

Several months passed before MacCrindle ran into his English friend again. The latter remarked in passing, "By the way, that turkey you were going to send me never did arrive."

"I forgot to tell ye," replied MacCrindle. "The turkey got well."

● McTavish had been in America only a few days when he made his first sortie into a supermarket. An attendant opened the door for him, another provided him with a big pushcart. Before him was an array of fruits, vegetables, breakfast foods, and canned delicacies of every description. The enraptured visitor piled his cart high and headed for the exit.

There, effectively blocking his path, stood the cashier. "The devil take it!" cried McTavish, abandoning his cart. "I knew there'd be a catch in it."

● McGregor lay breathing his last. He roused himself to whisper to the assemblage round his bedside, "Tannish owes me fifty pounds." "It's a great mind the man has," marveled his wife. "Clear as a bell to the very end." McGregor spoke again: "I believe I owe Sandy Mollinson a hundred pounds." "Ach, the poor mon," sobbed Mrs. Mac. "Take no notice of his delirious meanderings!"

● Another salesman, representing the Highland Kilt Company (he had a kilt complex), ran into a spell of dirty weather in the Midlands and notified headquarters, "Likely to be marooned here for several days. Wire instructions." Back came a telegram—collect—which read, "Begin summer vacation as of this morning."

● Scotch joke variation Number 68414: Excavators in Aberdeen have come upon a Scottish penny dated 1588. A few feet away they then unearthed three skeletons, all on their hands and knees.

● Shortly after Sandy's funeral, the pastor called on his widow. "I've got the lazy good-for-nothing working at last," she said. "What talk, Maggie," said the cleric, "and him dead a whole week." "True," she agreed, "but I had him cremated and now I've got his ashes in an hourglass."



CAMPUS COMEDIANS

● An old grad was belittling the present-day gridiron warriors. "When I was in college," he told the coach, "I helped Williams trim Amherst three years in succession." "Zatso," nodded the coach. "Which team did you say you were playing for?"

● A Princeton junior appeared in the middle of a tennis tourney and asked casually, "Whose game?" A shy young thing looked up approvingly and murmured, "I am."

● If the following selections from this season's college comics sound vaguely familiar, it is only because the same stories, or reasonable facsimiles thereof, were appearing when the editors sported handle-bar mustaches and you still could snag a free lunch with a ten-cent schooner of beer:

"I can't stand necking," she protested softly, "so what do you say we sit down?"

She talked in her sleep so he sent her home to mutter.

"I'm knee-deep in love with that dame. You see, she has a wading list."

Statistics prove that blondes make the best students.

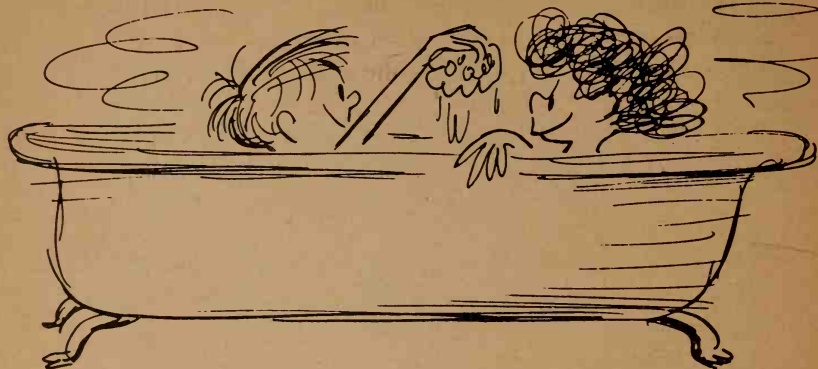
"You're looking great. What happened to that pain in the neck?" "Oh, she's at the bridge club."

"Doctor, what's your favorite sport?" "Sleighing." "I mean apart from business."

Stuff like that!

● An impetuous young Williams student named Wimpfheimer negotiated a date with a pair of Siamese twins one night. "Have yourself a good time?" asked his awe-stricken roommate later. "Well," reported Wimpfheimer, "yes and no."

CHILDREN



● The six-year-old son of a Protestant lady in Bronxville had for a steadfast playmate the little Catholic girl who lived at the end of the block. One afternoon the two children were soaked to the skin by a flash thundershower, and the boy's mother, without further ado, stripped them and propelled them into a hot tub to prevent sniffles. An hour after the little Catholic girl had been packed off to her home, the boy came to his mother and announced with vast satisfaction, "Well, at last I understand the difference between Protestants and Catholics!"

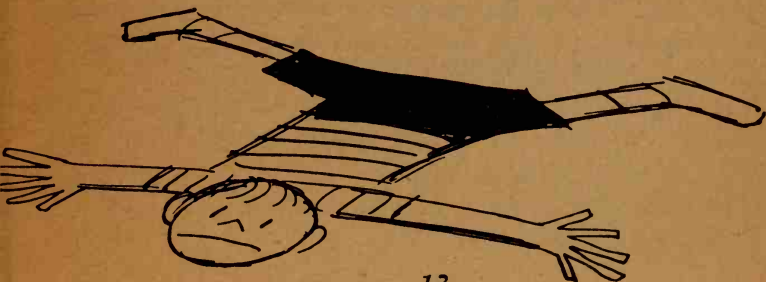
● Eight-year-old Claudia was packed off to Waterbury for a visit with her old-maid aunt. Her last minute instructions were, "Remember, Aunt Hester is a bit on the prissy side. If you have to go to the bathroom, be sure to say, 'I'd like to powder my nose.'" Claudia made such a hit with Aunt Hester that when the time came for her to leave she was told, "I certainly loved having you here, my dear. On your next visit you must bring your little sister Sue with you." "I better not," said Claudia hastily. "Sue still powders her nose in bed."

● Emily Kimbrough attended a luncheon in a fashionable suburb of Philadelphia where the eight-year-old daughter of the house was permitted to sit at the table after being reminded that "little children are seen but not heard." She behaved like a little soldier all through the meal, never uttering a word. As coffee was being served, however, she felt she simply had to say something. She waited for a lull in the conversation to put in her two cents' worth: "Do you ladies know there are a kind of dog with two rows of buttons on its stummick?"

● Louis Kronenberger, drama critic of *Time*, and his wife Emmy have a nine-year-old son who has been educated in one of New York's most progressive schools. Recently Kronenberger père and mère became involved in a domestic argument, and Kronenberger père's voice rose steadily as his exasperation increased. Suddenly the son ended hostilities by pulling on his father's coattails, and imploring, "Father, please lower your voice. The neighbors will think you're yelling at *me*!"

● Of course children are not all quite so obstreperous as the little monster who crawled all over Tallulah Bankhead one afternoon. "Our little Philip is certainly a problem," admitted the mother. "We don't know what to make of him."

Miss Bankhead seized a moment when Mama's head was turned the other way to give Philip a hearty cuff on the ear and suggest, "How about a nice rug?"





THE CHORUS

● A musical-comedy producer scheduled an audition for new show girls. One girl was pretty as a picture and sang well enough too, but she carried herself abominably. The producer said, "You'll do nicely if you can ever learn to watch your posture. The way you slouched across the stage was awful. Learn to stand up-right, throw your head back, understand? Hold your breast well out." "Yes, sir," said the girl, "which one?"

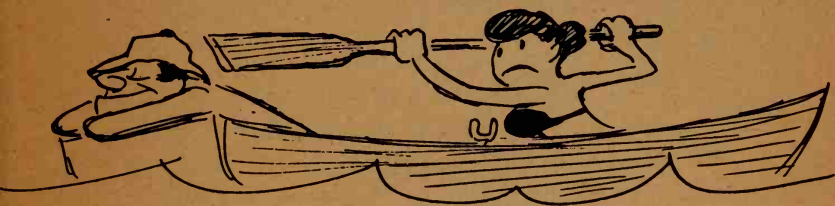
● Gypsy Rose Lee tells the story of a chorus girl in her company who grumbled, "Why ain't I never invited to swell parties like you are, Gypsy?" "It's because your conversation is too limited," Gypsy told her. "Those fashionable people are mighty smart. Everyone talks like an expert on 'Information Please.' Why don't you read a book and broaden your horizons?"

The chorus girl thought that was an excellent idea. She read a book. A short time later Gypsy took her along to a publishers' party. She said nothing for the first half hour and then suddenly startled the assemblage by inquiring in a loud voice, "Wasn't that too bad about Marie Antoinette?"

CROSS COUNTRY

● When the Shriners convened in Los Angeles one year, a main boulevard was roped off for their climactic parade, and only official cars, prominently marked "Potentate," "Past Potentate," and the like, were permitted to use the thoroughfare for hours preceding the big march. One smart lawyer, anxious to avoid a detour that would make him thirty minutes late for his golf game, devised a sign for his car that got him right through the police barrier and enabled him to sail majestically up the empty boulevard. His sign proclaimed: "Past Participle!"

● The first time Martha Raye ate at the famous Pump Room in Chicago, she was a member of a dinner party hosted by Jimmy Durante. When a waiter passed with a portion of shishkebab (lamb on a flaming sword—a specialty of the house), Miss Raye was startled and exclaimed, "What on earth was that?" Durante explained, "A customer who only left a ten-dollar tip."



● In Miami Beach, the aging author of a half dozen inspirational novels turned up with a ravishing if gaboring miss in tow, explaining she was his "niece." The niece walked out on him three days later, disillusioned with the literary life. "Not only did he lie to me about the size of his yacht," she complained to newsman Jack Kofoed, "but he made me do the rowing."

DOCTOR, DOCTOR!



● Young Dr. Anderson hung out his shingle for the first time on a Tuesday, but no patient showed up until Friday morning. When one came into the room, Dr. Anderson thought it advisable to impress him. He picked up his telephone and barked into it, "I have so many patients scheduled to visit me today that I am afraid I won't be able to get over to the hospital to perform that brain operation until six this evening." He banged up the receiver and turned to his visitor with a disarming smile.

"What seems to be paining you, my good man?" he said. "Nothing is paining me," said the bewildered visitor. "I have just come to hook up your phone, sir."

● A very rich lady loved to read a very successful magazine because every month it gave the details of a rare new disease, which the rich lady immediately imagined she was suffering from. Several doctors made a handsome living out of this. Up in Maine for the summer, however, she suddenly ran into one old country doctor who wasn't having any of her nonsense.

"You couldn't possibly have this disease you say is destroying you," he told her gruffly. "In the first place, if you did have it, you'd never know it. It gives no warning, causes absolutely no pain or suffering whatever."

"Just as I suspected," crowed the rich lady triumphantly. "Those are my symptoms precisely!"

● Billie Burke was in the dining salon of the *Uruguay* when she noticed that a gentleman at the next table was sneezing and sniffing dreadfully. "Bad cold, eh?" she asked sympathetically. The man nodded dolefully.

"I'll tell you just what to do for it," said Miss Burke. "Go back to your stateroom, have your steward get you lots of orange juice, drink it all, take four aspirin tablets, and then cover yourself with all the blankets you can stand. Sweat the cold out. I know what I'm talking about. I'm Billie Burke of Hollywood."

The man smiled warmly and said, "Thanks, I'm Dr. Mayo of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester."

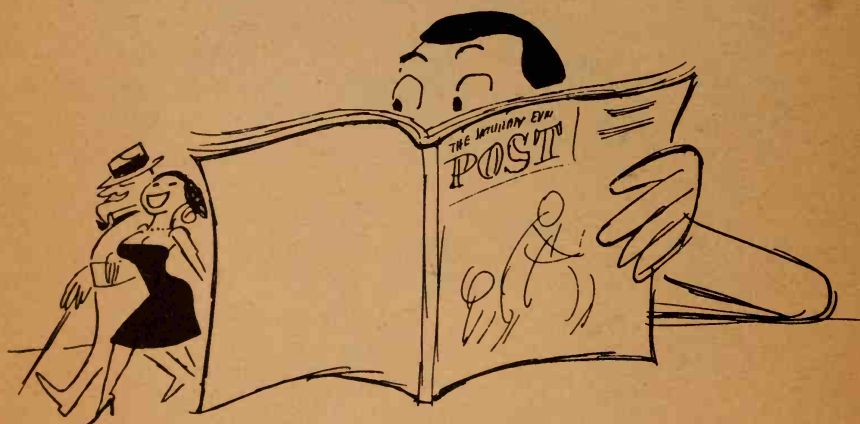
● A magazine called *The War Doctor* ran a cartoon that showed a group of physicians surrounding a patient on an operating table. From an incision in his stomach issued a stream of moths and butterflies. "By God," ran the caption, "he was right!"



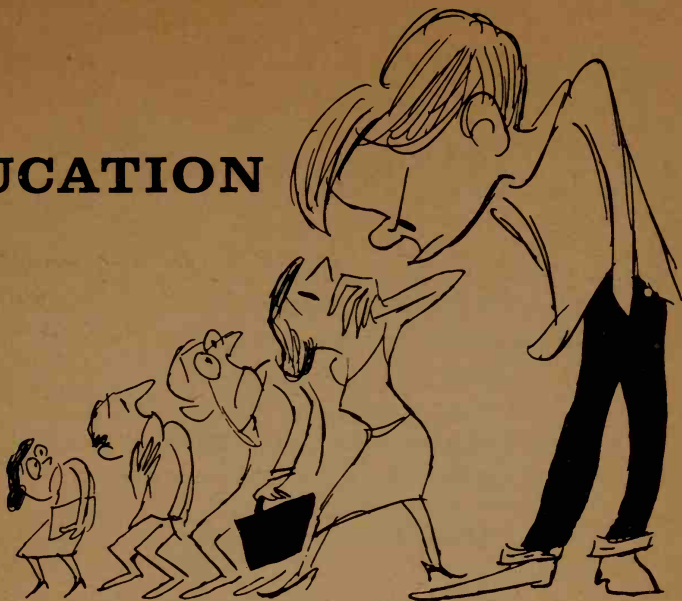
EDITORS

● That great editor, Maxwell Perkins, always maintained that guests at a literary cocktail party never listened to what anybody else was saying. To prove his point he shook hands with Marcia Davenport at a gathering in her house and said, "I'm sorry I'm late, but it took me longer to strangle my aunt than I expected." "Yes, indeed," beamed Miss D. "I'm so happy you have come."

● George Horace Lorimer, renowned editor of *The Saturday Evening Post*, never permitted an off-color situation, indecent word, or suggestive paragraph to be printed in *The Post*. One lapse occurred when Katharine Brush's *Red Headed Woman* was serialized in 1931. Installment one ended with a secretary dining tête-à-tête at her boss' apartment. Installment two began with her still there for breakfast. When several strait-laced readers protested, Lorimer stuck by his author. "*The Post*," he answered firmly, "is not responsible for what the characters in its serials do between installments."



EDUCATION



● "The trouble with our school system nowadays," explains educator William Brish, of Maryland, "is that the teachers are afraid of the principals, the principals are afraid of the boards of education and the boards are afraid of the parents. But the children of today—they're afraid of nobody!"

● Forty-six years ago Philosopher George Santayana came into a sizable legacy and was able to relinquish his post on the Harvard faculty. The classroom was packed for his final appearance, and Santayana did himself proud. He was about to conclude his remarks when he caught sight of a forsythia uncurling in a patch of muddy snow outside the window. He stopped abruptly, picked up his hat, gloves, and walking stick, and made for the door. There he turned. "Gentlemen," he said softly, "I shall not be able to finish that sentence. I have just discovered that I have an appointment with April."

● A man whose children had attended a progressive school whose schedule he strongly disapproved, told his wife coldly, "Madam, your two sons do not know their R's from a hole in the ground."

EGGHEADS

● Advice from Richard Carlson to neophytes aiming for *The New Yorker*: "Write with *The Saturday Evening Post* in mind—then chop off the last two paragraphs."

● A giddy hostess once asked the late Professor Einstein to explain his theory of relativity in "a few well-chosen words."

"I will tell you a story instead," said the scientist. "I once was walking with a blind man, and remarked that I would like a tall glass of milk.

" 'What is milk?' asked my blind friend.

" 'A white liquid,' I replied.

" 'Liquid I know. But what is white?'

" 'The color of a swan's feathers.'

" 'Feathers I know. What is a swan?'

" 'A bird with a crooked neck.'

" 'Neck I know. But what is crooked?'

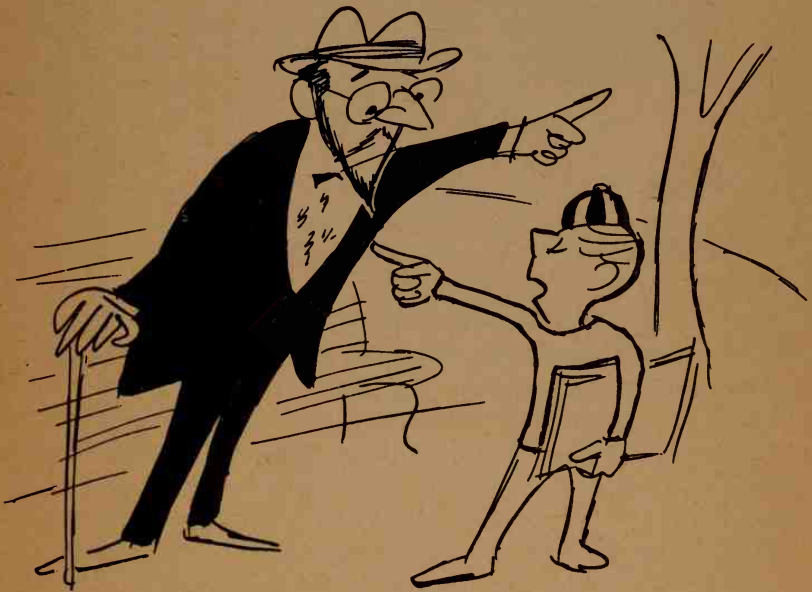
"Thereupon I lost patience. I seized his arm and straightened it. 'That's straight,' I said, and then I bent it at the elbow. 'That's crooked.'

" 'Ah,' said the blind man triumphantly, 'now I understand what you mean by milk.'

"Do you still want to know about relativity?" The hostess decided to change the subject.

● Perhaps you have heard of the twelve-year-old girl who fell into the habit of dropping in on the professor every day on her way home from school. Her parents were gratified, but somewhat mystified too. One evening the mother found an opportunity to ask the professor, "What do you two talk about every day?" "Oh," laughed the professor, "she brings me cookies and I do her arithmetic for her. It's a fine arrangement."

● Irwin Edman, brilliant author and professor of philosophy at Columbia University, is that stock comedy character, the absent-minded pedagogue, in actuality. Beloved by his students for his wit, erudition, and uncanny ability to make any subject sound easy, he is also the source of a whole saga of campus humor. One day he stopped a student on Riverside Drive and asked, "Pardon me, but am I walking north or south?" "North, Professor," was the answer. "Ah," said Edman, "then I've had my lunch."



● A dreamy-eyed individual, obviously a poet, drifted off the elevator into the editorial department of the Viking Press and asked if he could use a typewriter for a few minutes. He sat down at the machine indicated, inserted a sheet of blank paper, and explained, "I have to add six very important asterisks to my manuscript." He did so, thanked everybody, took his script and asterisks, and left.

ENGLAND FOREVER



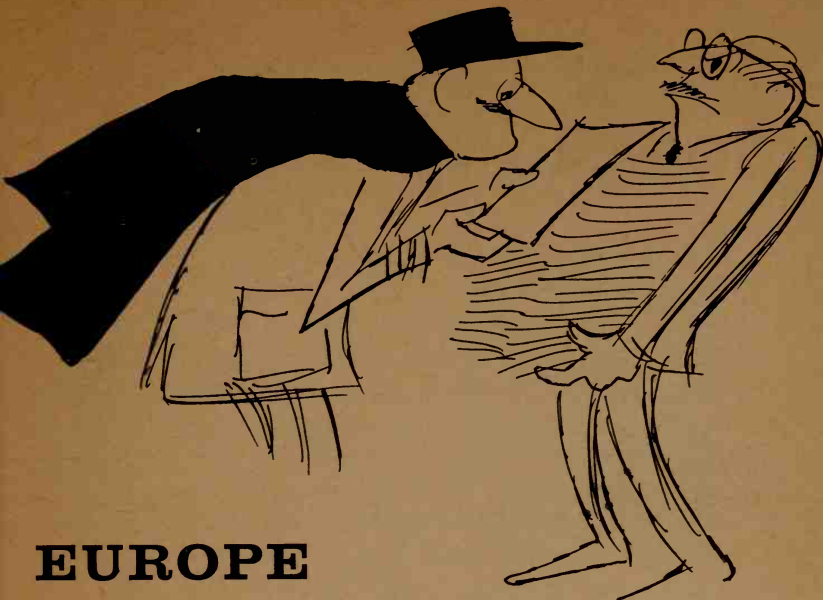
- British pride in native products has not dimmed.

A London plutocrat was driving his fine new Rolls-Royce over the Alps when he heard a disquieting "twang." His front spring had broken.

He called the Rolls plant in London by long distance, and, in what seemed like no time flat, three gentlemen arrived by plane with a new spring—and off went the owner on his jaunt.

Now comes the really interesting part of the story. After six months the plutocrat had received no bill from the Rolls people. Finally he appeared at the plant in person and asked that the records be checked for "the repair of a broken spring in Switzerland." After a brief delay the manager of the plant appeared in person, gazed at him rather reproachfully, and announced, "There must be some mistake, sir. There is no such *thing* as a broken spring on a Rolls-Royce."

- Two crooked, but very formal, Londoners had shared the same cell in jail for over six years. One's reserve finally broke down and he assured the other, "No need to call me 'Number 855625' from now on, old chap. Henceforth, to you, I'm plain '855'!"



EUROPE

● En route by automobile to the Riviera in Southern France, movie tycoon Darryl Zanuck stayed overnight at a small inn south of Vichy. "You must fill out registration papers for the local gendarmes," the proprietor reminded him. "It is the law, you know." "I'm tired of these darn forms and regulations," said Zanuck. "Fill it out for me. My full name is on all the baggage." He went upstairs to refresh himself, and upon returning was presented with his filled-out registration form. The first line read, "Monsieur Warranted Genuine Leather."

● A reader of society columns couldn't understand why so many stalwart gentlemen from Tiflis and Batum seemed to be princes. George Jean Nathan explained it. "In Georgia," he said, "a prince is a man who rates the title of 'mister' in any other country."

● Two Americans met on the Champs Elysées on their first visit to Paris. "This sight-seeing sure takes a lot of time," grumbled one. "I've been here nearly four days and I still haven't visited the Louvre." Suggested the other, "Maybe it's the water."

FATE'S WAY



● In an exclusive dress shop in Beverly Hills, a regular patroness saw a new creation she fancied, and asked the price. "A thousand dollars," said the proprietor without batting an eyelash. The lady recoiled and exclaimed, "This time you've really gone too far. New look or not, you're never going to get a thousand dollars for that dress. In fact, I'll bet a hundred dollars you don't." "It's a bet," he replied, "and furthermore, when I do, I'll even tell you the name of the customer who bought it."

As luck would have it, the proprietor did sell the dress for a thousand dollars just a few days later, but he never figured a way to break the news to the lady with whom he bet. The buyer, it seems, was the lady's husband, making a little gift to his secretary.

● In a drab suburb of London there lives a dignified lady whose social status is high but whose bank balance is dangerously low. I will call her Mrs. Stockwell.

Because of her impeccable family connections, Mrs. Stockwell received an invitation to the wedding of Princess Elizabeth and Philip Mountbatten at Westminster Abbey and immediately was confronted with the problem of what gift to send. Rummaging desperately through the stocks of the curiosity shops and pawnbrokers in her neighborhood, she came upon three isolated pieces of an old chess set that caught her fancy. They obviously had been carved by a master—and the price, fifteen shillings, was right. Mrs. Stockwell bought them, wrote out her card, and resolutely ordered the proprietor to send them to the Princess at Buckingham Palace. Amidst the splendor of all the other gifts, Mrs. Stockwell rather hoped her own paltry offering would be overlooked.

When the presents of the royal couple were put on exhibition for relatives and friends, Mrs. Stockwell peered anxiously at the glittering array. There was no sign of her chessmen. Some understanding secretary evidently had hidden them away. She turned in relief to leave the room—and then she saw her chessmen, alone in a glass display case, people gazing at them in admiration.

Explained the placard: "These priceless pieces have been missing for a century. Three generations of the royal family have commissioned experts to search for them. Mrs. Henry Stockwell found them. Her invaluable gift completes one of the finest and most precious chess sets in the world."

Mrs. Stockwell drew her moth-eaten fur boa a little tighter about her neck and walked proudly out into the cold sunlight of the November morning.



● The widow of a confirmed bibliophile, friend of H. C. L. Jackson, slowly read a letter left for her by her husband. "My dearest," he had written, "it has been a sorrow to me that you never shared my interest in rare books; but then, you have been patient. Not too often did you refer to the money I spent on this hobby of mine.

"This note will come to you after I have gone. The mere fact that you are reading it will prove that once at least you have opened one of my favorite books."

The note had been tucked in her husband's best loved volume. It was sent to her, without comment, by the dealer to whom she had sold her husband's entire library three days after his death.



FEMININE LOGIC



● Eddie Foy, Jr., tells about the chorus girl's daughter who attended public school for the first time. The teacher asked her, "What does Y-E-S spell?" The little girl answered, "Mink."

● The eight-year-old daughter of a wealthy Park Avenue family was obsessed with fine clothes. She learned to read from the expensive fashion magazines, cut out pictures of fur coats for her scrap-book, and preferred window shopping to romping in the park. One day her mother decided the time had come to acquaint her with the facts of life and told her about the bees and flowers, et cetera. The eight-year-old listened carefully, nodded her head, then remarked, "One thing you didn't tell me, Mama. What kind of a dress does a girl wear for a thing like that?"

● Average mortals never realize how many things they crave until a cagey advertising expert points out the facts to them.

A thriving little industrial plant in Panama employed twenty local women. One day they just stopped coming, and such inducements as higher pay and shorter hours didn't budge them an inch. They had earned all they needed for months at least, they explained: why work any more? The boss, after much worry, finally hit upon a solution. He sent each of them a thousand-page Chicago mail-order catalogue. They were back at their places—every last one of them—the following Monday.

FINANCES

● Mrs. Pomeroy's maid took to her bed one day, obviously ill, and the family physician was summoned post-haste. When Mrs. P. left him alone to examine the patient, the maid confessed, "Doctor, I'm not sick at all. I'm shamming. That skinflint owes me three months' back salary and I'm not getting out of this bed till she pays me." The doctor's face brightened. "She owes me for my past ten visits here," he declared. "Move over."

● A peddler, his cart loaded with boxes of cheap stationery, advertised his wares in a loud voice at a Delancey Street corner, but attracted nary a customer. Nobody seemed to want a "box of genuine linen station'ry an' fifty envelopes for twenty-five cents." Suddenly, however, another hawker wheeled a bigger cart right next to the first one, and began bellowing, "Here y'are folks! Box of fine stationery an' fifty envelopes fer ten cents—one dime! Don't pay more!" The two men glared at each other. A crowd gathered first to watch, and then to buy out the stock of the ten-cent merchant completely. The *Tribune* reporter who caught the story declares that all Delancey Street bought enough stationery to satisfy five years' demand. Then everybody hung around to jeer at the disconsolate peddler who had thought he could get a quarter for his wares.

On a sudden hunch, the reporter followed the quarter-man when he wheeled his cart away. Two blocks down, he caught up with the ten-cent peddler. The two men shook hands gleefully and started dividing up the quarter-man's inventory. "It worked like a charm," chuckled the latter. "Let's try Mott Street next!"

● Grady had been trying to make O'Leary pay off a poker debt for months. Cornered, O'Leary finally gave Grady a promissory note, and sighed with relief, "Thank God, that's paid!"

FUNNY BUSINESS

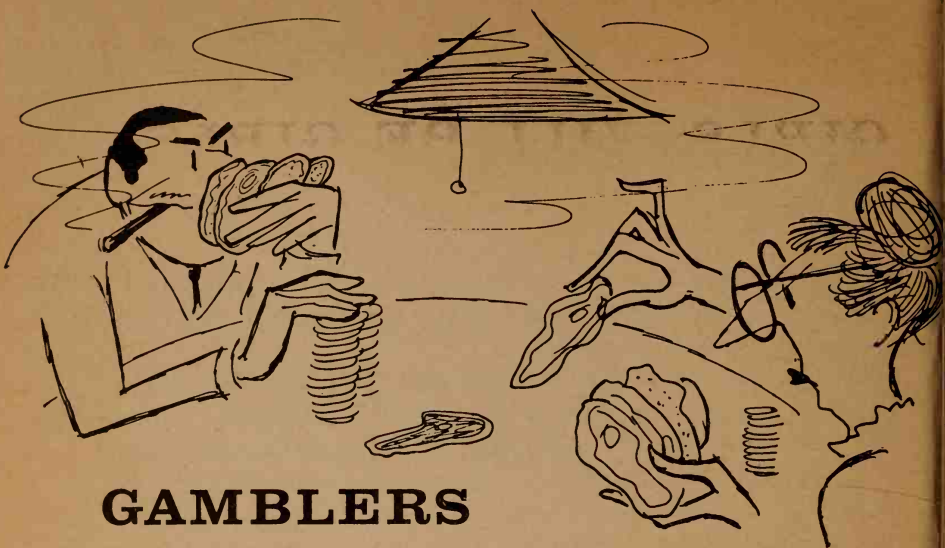
● "But I thought..." said the secretary meekly.

"Don't think," barked the industrialist. "That's not what I pay you for. Take down what I dictate and then type the letters. Is that quite clear? Now take this."

That afternoon, his girl planked down this letter for signing:

"Dear Smythe: The idiot spells it with an 'E'. Thinks it's aristocratic. His old man was a plumber. With regard to your letter of—look it up. Anybody who can read that handwriting deserves a medal. You ask the cost of replacing worn parts in the machinery at your plant. Our experts figure—hey, Joe, what was the estimate on that Smythe job? Two thousand? Okay—our experts figure that three thousand dollars is our rock-bottom price. The extra thousand is for that damn 'E' he sticks on his name. Trusting to receive your esteemed order, etc., etc., etc. There, that's done and you better get off my lap before my partner walks in."

● A traveler for a big publishing house couldn't wait to get to St. Louis, where his oldest friend owned a prosperous bookstore. "Sam," he said to the owner the moment they were alone, "I want you to lend me \$2000." "The answer, Joe," said Sam, "is positively no." "But Sam," protested the salesman, "in 1929 when Bond and Share broke from 189 to 50, who gave you ten thousand dollars to keep you from being wiped out?" "You did," admitted Sam. "And in 1931, when your daughter Shirley had that tropical disease, who took her down to Florida because you couldn't get away from business? Who did, Sam?" "You, my friend, you did." "And in 1933, when we were fishing together, who dove into the rapids and saved you from drowning at the risk of his own life?" "You did, Joe. It was wonderful!" "Well, then, Sam, in Heaven's name, why won't you lend me \$2000 now when I need it?" "All the things you say are true," said Sam, nodding his head slowly, "but what have you done for me lately?"



GAMBLERS

● In his early barnstorming days, Lewis stopped once at a boarding house whose proprietress could make a pound of food go further than any other landlady in history. She produced a platter of cold cuts one Sunday that were actually transparent. "Did you cut these?" asked Lewis politely, indicating the slices. "I did," said the landlady. "Okay," said Lewis. "Then I'll deal."

● Education is not neglected at Las Vegas. There's a new elementary school that Joe E. Lewis has christened P.S. 6-to-5. "How old are you?" Arlene Francis asked one of its cutest pupils. The little girl answered, "Four, the hard way."

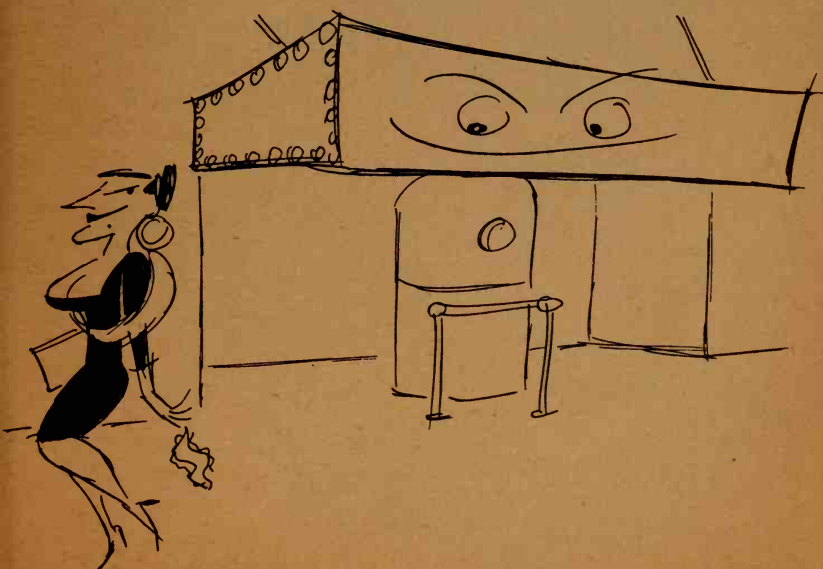
● A race-track devotee of many years' standing, thoroughly versed in the lore and form sheets of horse racing, was astonished to note that two dear little old ladies picked the winner unfailingly in seven straight races—some of them fantastic long shots. Finally he whispered to them, "Divulge your system to me, ladies, and I'll show you how to pyramid your bets so you'll make a million." "There's really no trick to it," chuckled one of the ladies happily. "We just bet on the ones with the longest tails."

GIRLS WILL BE GIRLS

● A nearsighted society girl in New York, too vain to wear glasses, was at a dinner party when the butler handed her a note from the hostess. She gave it to Lord Doodlesworth on her left, beseeching, "Won't you read this for me, Your Lordship? I have something in my eyes." His Lordship read, "Be nice to old Doodlesworth. He's a terrible bore, but we're hoping to be asked to his estate in England next summer."

● At a Cambridge dinner party, Mrs. Lodge-Cabot preened herself and said aloud, "That South African gentleman says the nicest things! He remarked particularly on my birdlike appetite." "Hmmpf," said Mrs. Lowellstall. "He runs an ostrich farm!"

● When Gloria Swanson's mama heard that she had married a titled gent in Paris, she hastily phoned her lawyer. "What's a marquee?" she demanded. "It's one of those things," he explained, "that you hang in front of a theatre to keep the rain off customers." "My God!" cried the good lady. "Gloria married one of them this afternoon!"



● There was a scene in Sherwood's *Reunion in Vienna* that Alexander Woollcott particularly loved. It was played by the returning Hapsburg (Alfred Lunt) and the old beldame who ran the Vienna restaurant (Helen Westley). Lunt speculated idly as to whether she still wore her old red flannel drawers, and at an opportune moment lifted her skirt to see. One night the unpredictable Miss Westley forgot to put the red flannels on. Lunt gazed in horror, and choked over his next line, which read, "Well, thank God there is one thing in Vienna that hasn't changed!"

● Bea Lillie was being fitted for a number of dresses by a leading Chicago modiste. A lady who had married into the Swift hierarchy was next on the appointment calendar, and fussed and fumed because she was being kept waiting. "Tell that actress in there," she said very loudly, "that she is delaying Mrs. Swift!" This tactic, of course, resulted only in Miss Lillie's taking a half hour longer in the fitting room. Finally she tripped blithely out and, as she passed the fuming Mrs. Swift, said airily to the modiste, "Tell that butcher's wife that Lady Peel has finished now."

● During a rehearsal of a John Barrymore play, the leading lady aroused the star's ire, an incautious procedure, to say the least. Barrymore gave a pungent lecture on her paternity and nocturnal pursuits. "Kindly remember," sniffed the actress, "that I am a lady!" "Madam," snapped Barrymore, "I will respect your secret."



GOLDWYN

● Here's a story I never heard about Sam Goldwyn, the inimitable motion-picture pioneer, and it comes from Miriam Howell, who was one of his chief lieutenants some years ago. "Miriam," proposed Sam one morning, "we've got to get some new blood around here. I want to sign up some young writer, talented but completely unknown, who'll bring us fresh ideas and a fresh viewpoint." "Splendid," enthused Miriam, "and I know just the man for you." "What's his name?" asked Goldwyn. "He's a young playwright named John Patrick," said Miss Howell. "Never heard of him," said Mr. Goldwyn. "Who else can you think of?"

● One time he stubbed his toe with a foreign beauty named Anna Sten. Goldwyn starred her in a version of Zola's *Nana* and lost a fortune on the venture. Some time previously he had signed a new director and assured him, "I don't want 'yes men' around me. I want you to 'no' me once in a while—even if it costs you your job." This intrepid soul took him at his word, told him the script of *Nana* was terrible and Miss Sten was miscast, and refused to have anything to do with the project. Goldwyn fired him. For years thereafter, if anybody suggested that this director be used on another picture, Goldwyn would shake his head vigorously, "No, sir! That man was connected with my greatest failure."

● And Moss Hart tells about the day Mr. Goldwyn asked how he was progressing with his script on the life of Hans Christian Andersen. "If you don't like the job I've done," proclaimed Moss earnestly, "I will emulate Van Gogh, cut off my ear, and present it to you." "My boy," said Goldwyn, "in my desk I've got a whole drawer full of ears. All I ask from you is a good strong box-office script."

GOLF



● A church father was inveigled into a round of golf and enjoyed it so thoroughly that he became a fanatic on the subject. Finally the archbishop had to send for him. "My son," said the archbishop, "I have always encouraged healthful exercise, and I consider golf both an excellent diversion and a means of communing with Mother Nature. But if one plays golf too much, one is apt to neglect his real duties."

The father was crushed. "May I ask why you seem to think I am overdoing it?" he asked humbly.

"I noticed," said the archbishop gently, "that when you approached the altar this morning you were holding your psalm book with an interlocking grip."

● It is estimated that a prominent attorney in our town has now taken golf lessons from thirty-seven different pros in the past four years. "I can't understand it," he wailed in the locker room one day. "Despite all the lessons, I played worse last year than the year before, and the year before it was worse than the year before that." "How are you doing now?" asked his friend, Dr. Morris Fishbein. "You shouldn't have asked," said the attorney sadly. "Already I'm playing next year's game."

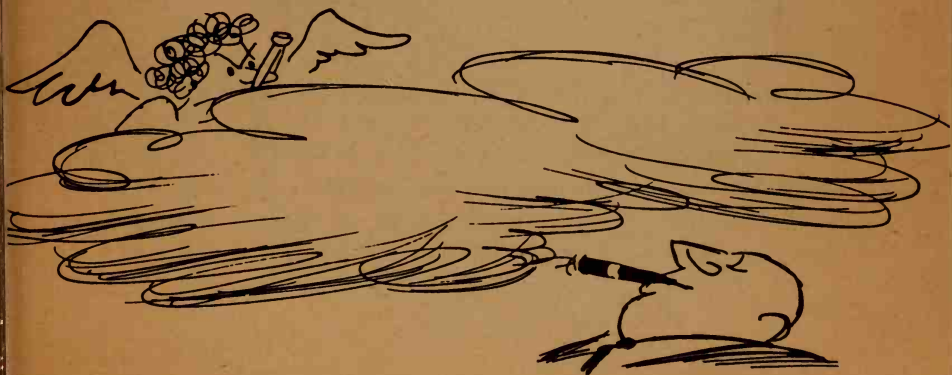
HEAR, HEAR!

● A speaker at a Detroit function, confides Harvey Campbell, couldn't get his audience to settle down in silence for his address. Finally he thundered over the loud-speaker system, "Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen-so-called: Your committee assured me I would be greeted here by a vast audience. As I look out into this great auditorium and see every other seat empty, I realize that what I have instead is a half-vast audience!"

● This story was told in Kansas City by a prominent Democrat once stationed in Washington (you guess!). A garden specialist, in the course of a lecture at a women's literary club, mentioned blandly that one of the best fertilizers is old cow manure. At the conclusion of his talk, one of the richest ladies in the community told him that she had enjoyed his talk and meant to heed his tips. "But tell me," she pleaded, "where can I find an old cow?"

● A prominent speaker recently was engaged to address a women's club in Chicago. An ardent cigar smoker, the speaker lit one rich Havana cigar after another before he rose to make his address. A friend wrote him the next day, "I suggest that you smoke fewer stogies when you are completely surrounded by ladies."

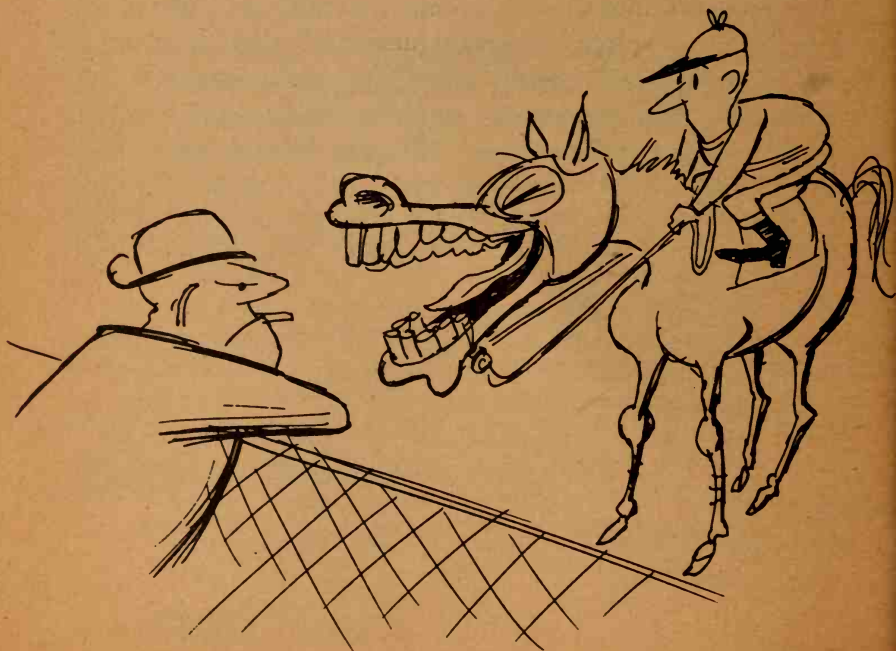
The speaker wrote back: "Where there are angels, clouds are nearby." They've hired him for next season—at double the fee.



HELLO, FRISCO

● High among countless anecdotes about the late, stuttering comedian, Joe Frisco, ranks the one about the time Joe was regaling his friends with a yarn when a midget walked over, propped his chin on the edge of the table, and regarded Joe with a solemn stare. Joe took one look, gulped, and screamed to the waiter, "W-w-what's the idea? I didn't order J-j-john the Baptist!"

● Frisco was an unending source of stories for the hard-pressed columnists. One of the latest chronicles the touch he made from Charlie Farrell, the ex-movie star and present hotel magnate in Palm Springs. "It's only a hundred d-d-dollars," pleaded Frisco. "I need it for a new set of teeth the dentist is making f-f-for me." Farrell gave him the century note, but three days later Frisco was back asking for more. "What did you do with the hundred I gave you Tuesday?" asked Farrell suspiciously. "I had b-b-bad luck, Charlie," confessed Frisco. "My t-t-teeth finished seventh!"



HELP! IT'S DOMESTIC

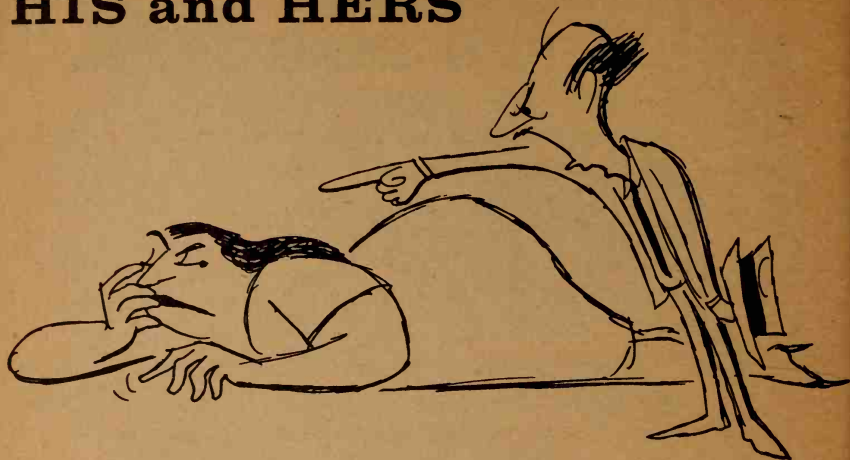


● The new maid had been functioning, in a manner of speaking, for two weeks, and since she had shown no response to instruction, threats, or cajolery, Mrs. Brown decided to try sarcasm on her. "Do you know, Maymie," she said, "that man was created from dust?" "Yas'm," said Maymie. "And that when people die they turn back into dust?" "Yas'm," said Maymie. "Well," said Mrs. Brown forcefully, "I looked under the rug this morning, Maymie, and there's quite a crowd there either coming or going!"

● Mrs. Russel Crouse was interviewing a new nurse, and asked why she had left her last post. "I didn't like the setup," said the nurse frankly. "The child was rather backward, and the father was rather forward."

● John M. Weyer, reports Leonard Lyons, gave a dinner for gourmets and told a new maid, "Please remember to serve the fish whole, with tail and head, and a slice of lemon in the mouth." The maid appeared surprised, but said nothing. That evening she bore the fish triumphantly to the table, complete with tail and head. And in her mouth she carried a slice of lemon.

HIS and HERS



● "How long are you going to let your wife henpeck you?" sneered the companion of a typical Mr. Milquetoast. "How's for reasserting your mastery of your own home?"

Milquetoast strode into his apartment and hollered, "What time's dinner?" "Seven-thirty, like always," answered his wife without thinking, but she recoiled when he announced, "Nothing doing! Tonight, it's seven sharp. And I want a steak, not that canned slop you usually serve me. And put out my dinner jacket. I'm going to take that little blonde in my office out dancing."

Mrs. Milquetoast froze with astonishment. Drunk with power, her husband continued, "And when I'm ready to have my black tie fixed in a neat little bow, do you know who's going to tie it?"

Mrs. Milquetoast recovered her voice. "I certainly do," she announced grimly. "The man from the Riverside Funeral Parlor."

● "I'm getting mighty exhausted contesting my wife's will," admitted Mr. Hecubar to a confidante. "I never knew she had died," said the shocked confidante. "That's the trouble," sighed Mr. Hecubar. "She didn't."

● A fantastically henpecked husband finally did something entirely on his own initiative. He dropped dead. His nagging wife mourned his loss—and the fact that she had nobody left to badger. A visitor sympathized, “How you must miss Wilbur.” “Yes,” said the widow wistfully, “it seems but yesterday that he stood at that very door, holding it open until two flies got in.”

● A woman stalked into the office of the head of a private detective agency and demanded an interview. Before the startled head of the firm could say a word, the woman launched into a tirade against her husband. Finally, when she stopped to get her breath, the detective was able to get a word in.

“Just what do you want me to do, madam?” he asked.

“I want my husband and that woman followed,” snapped the visitor. “I want them followed night and day, and then I want a complete report on what she sees in him.”

● A long-suffering husband took one look at his huge pile of unpaid bills for the month and reached for the family shotgun. “I’m going to end it all,” he threatened. His spendthrift wife remained totally unimpressed.

“Put down that gun before it goes off by accident,” she ordered. “If you have something to say, shut up!”

● George S. Kaufman and Franklin P. Adams took the former’s bride to a cocktail party, introduced her to numerous persons who said “hello” and then forgot her, and deposited her on a cane-bottom chair in the corner. The cane-bottom collapsed, and the new Mrs. Kaufman found herself imprisoned in the framework, her posterior drooping to the floor like a loose coil of rope. There was a sudden hush while everybody turned to stare. Adams added to her confusion by remarking, “I’ve told you a hundred times, Beatrice: that’s not funny!”

HOLLYWOOD

● According to a Hollywood journal, a cinemadorable was in the process of getting married for the fifth or sixth time. The officiating clergyman, flustered by all the publicity and glamor, lost his place in the ritual book. The star yawned and whispered, "Page 84, stupid."

● A great star, now a grandmother but still beautiful, dropped in to Sardi's for a bite with a lovely young thing who had just been graduated from Vassar. The star's manager, at another table, took one look at the youngster and sent over a note which read, "Who is that ravishing kid?" The star answered, "Me."

● Norman Reilly Raine recalls a famous Hollywood magnate who decided he wanted to produce an epic on Custer's Last Stand, but then promptly turned thumbs down on seven scripts. The final veto broke Raine's spirit completely. "I'm ready to give up," he admitted. "I really slaved over this last script. It's the best I can do. Just what is there about it that displeases you?" "I'll tell you," confided the magnate. "I hate Indians."

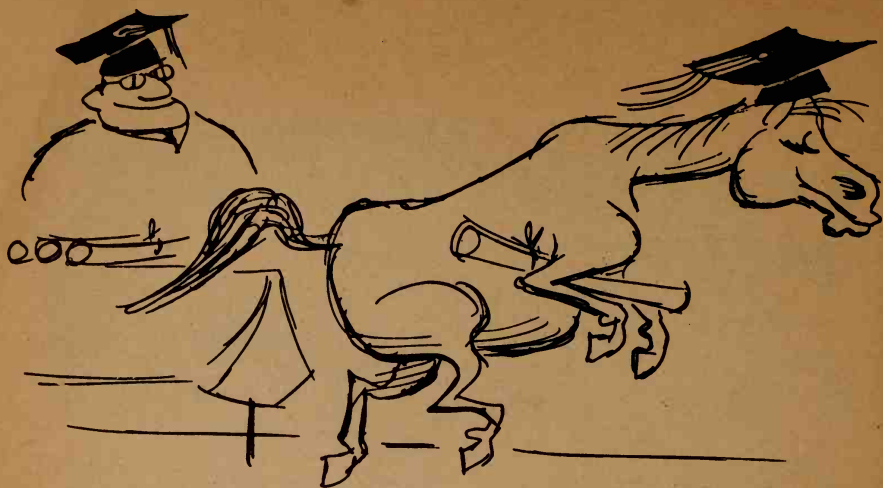


THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE



● "Pop," said a boy of ten, "how do wars get started?" "Well, son," began Pop, "let us say that America quarreled with England—" "America is not quarreling with England," interrupted Mother. "Who said she was?" said Pop, visibly irritated. "I merely was giving the boy a hypothetical instance." "Ridiculous," snorted Mother. "You'll put all sorts of wrong ideas in his head." "Ridiculous nothing," countered Pop. "If he listens to you, he'll never have any ideas at all in his head." Just as the lamp-throwing stage approached, the son spoke again: "Thanks, Mom. Thanks, Pop. I'll never have to ask that question again."

● Bob Lovett, a mainstay of the War Department, was an important banker before World War II began. He was entertaining Bob Benchley and Donald Ogden Stewart, among others, at his Locust Valley home one evening, when he was called to the telephone. "Why, yes!" his awestricken guests heard him say. "Let Austria have eight million dollars." Next day Stewart sent him a telegram which read, "You have made me the happiest little country in the world." The signature was "Austria."



THE IVY LEAGUE

● A not-too-reliable report has it that a horse was recently graduated from Harvard. At the Commencement exercises a guest speaker (a Yale man, no doubt) remarked, "This is the first time in history that Harvard has graduated an *entire* horse."

● "Harvard graduates," observed Cleveland Amory, "are a conservative lot. Twenty years after a Harvard man has left the campus, you can tell by his suit he's from Cambridge." "Sure," agreed a Yale alumnus nearby, "because it's the same suit."

● Ted Weeks, editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* and authority on all matters pertaining to Boston, swears this happened. Two old Brahmins from Louisburg Square were dining in the Harvard Club and discussing the career of an old classmate who had defied tradition and gone down to Washington to assume a post in the Cabinet. "They say Bob is doing quite well," allowed the first Bostonian. "Making quite a reputation for himself." "I suppose he is," conceded the other Cambridge man grudgingly, "but purely in the national sense."

THE JUDICIAL WORD

● The foreman of a jury reported rather angrily to a judge that no agreement on a verdict seemed in prospect. "The jury will have to continue its deliberations," ruled the judge. "If you haven't come to a decision by seven, I'll send in twelve suppers for you." "If Your Honor doesn't mind," said the foreman, "I suggest the order be changed to eleven suppers and a bale of hay."

● A little bit of a man with spectacles and an umbrella was brought before Judge Maguire in Magistrates' Court recently. Behind him towered his wife, a Junoesque creature who looked strong enough to tear telephone books in half with her bare hands. Judge Maguire was amazed to discover that the shrimp was accused of beating his wife. "Guilty or not guilty?" he barked. "Guilty," said the little man promptly. "\$50.00 fine," said Judge Maguire.

After the fine had been paid and the ill-assorted couple had disappeared into the gloaming, the court clerk said to Judge Maguire, "Weren't you a little hard on that poor little fellow?" "I don't think so," answered Judge Maguire. "I punished him for out-and-out bragging."

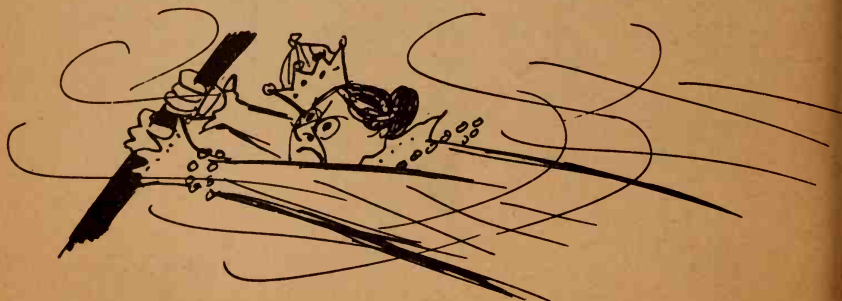


KINGS and QUEENS

● There's probably not a word of truth in this story, but it concerns a time when George, later George V, was a little boy at school. Temporarily out of funds, he wrote a heart-breaking letter to his august grandmother, the same good Queen Victoria, begging pecuniary assistance. The good queen didn't fall for it. Instead, she wrote him a sharp note telling what happened to little boys who exceeded their allowances. Back came a letter which read, "My dear Grandmamma: I am sure you will be glad to know that I need trouble you no longer for money. I sold your last letter to one of the tutors for three pounds."

● King Christian of Denmark has been making a good-will tour through every hamlet in his little kingdom. In one village fully five hundred children waved flags and pelted him with flowers. "Where on earth do all these children come from?" laughed the King. "Your Majesty," the local mayor assured him gravely, "we have been making preparations for this day for ten years!"

● In Pierre Barton's lively *The Royal Family*, he recalls a sea trip Queen Victoria made to Ireland. The ship encountered dirty weather, and one monstrous wave almost knocked Her Majesty galley-west. Regaining her equilibrium with some difficulty, she commanded an attendant, "Go up to the bridge, give the admiral my compliments, and tell him under no circumstances is he to let that happen again."



THE LIFE LITERARY

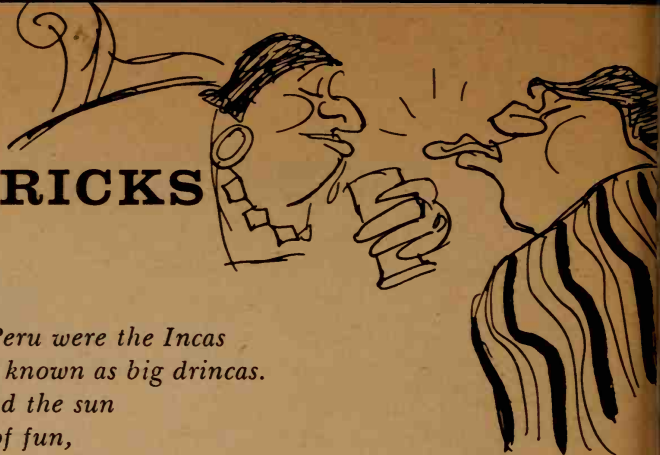


● The Algonquin's late Frank Case loved William Faulkner personally, but was no admirer of his tortuous prose and pictures of depravity in the South. Faulkner met him in the lobby one morning and complained, "I have an upset stomach today." "Ah," sympathized Case, "something you wrote, no doubt?"

● Emmet Dedmon tells about a book salesman who was selling his line to a dealer in the deep, deep South. "Our next novel," said the salesman with an apologetic cough, "deals with the problem of—er, incest." "That's the trouble with you Yankees," snapped the dealer. "You make a problem out of everything."

● In London, three Oxford professors of literature resisted the determined advance of a group of fancy ladies they encountered on Picadilly, then sought to find a phrase best describing them. The specialist in the Barchester novels voted for "A chapter of trollops." The Shakespearian scholar clung to "A flourish of strumpets." The collector of short stories carried the day, however, with "An anthology of pros."

LIMERICKS

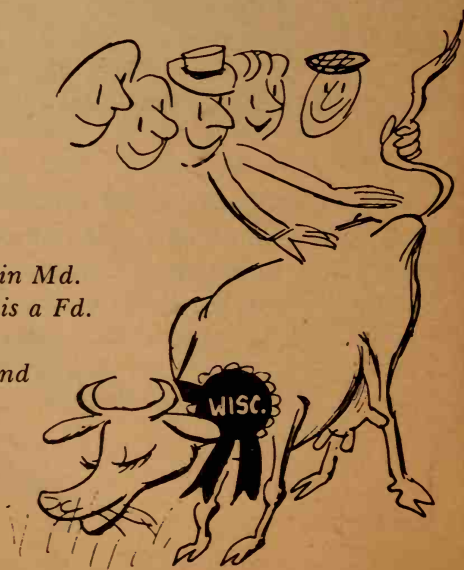


*The kings of Peru were the Incas
Who got to be known as big drincas.
They worshiped the sun
And had lots of fun,
But the peasants all thought they were stincas.*

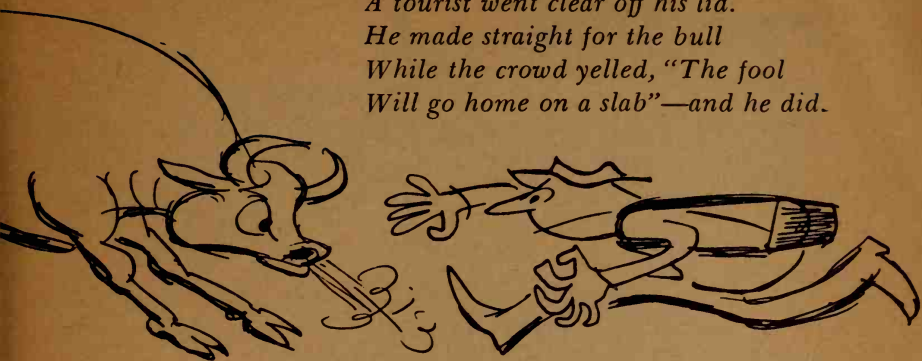


*A lady who rules Fort Montgomery
Says the wearing of clothes is mere mummery.
She has frequently tea'd in
The costume of Eden,
Appearing delightfully summery.*

*There are plenty of people in Md.
Who think that their state is a Fd.
It seems odd to find
That they don't seem to mind
That Wis., not Md., is Dd.*



*At a bullfight in sunny Madrid
A tourist went clear off his lid.
He made straight for the bull
While the crowd yelled, "The fool
Will go home on a slab"—and he did.*



*A doughty young private of Leeds
Rashly swallowed six packets of seeds.
In a month, silly ass,
He was covered with grass,
And he couldn't sit down for the weeds.*



*A student from dear old Bryn Mawr
Committed a dreadful faux pas
She loosened a stay
In her new décolleté
Exposing her je ne sais quoi.*

THE LUNATICS' FRINGES

● A lunatic registered a terrific beef with his keeper. "You just don't treat Napoleon like this," he pointed out. "Yah," jeered the keeper. "Last week you told me you were Julius Caesar." "That," said the lunatic with great dignity, "was by my first wife."

● After ten years in the booby hatch, a patient was declared sane by the authorities, and ready to face the rigors of the postwar world. As a last test he was allowed to shave with a straight razor, a privilege never before allowed him. The patient began shaving in front of a mirror that hung from the ceiling on a string. As he shaved he began to describe to the guard what things he expected to do as soon as he was free. He became more and more animated as he talked. Finally, in turning to face the guard, he made a wide sweeping gesture with the razor and cut the mirror down. When he saw what he had done, he burst into violent tears.

"It's not that bad," soothed the guard. "Why are you crying?"

"I am the unluckiest man in the world," sobbed the patient. "After ten years in this place they tell me I am cured and that I can go home, and now look what I did to myself. I cut my blankety-blank head completely off."



MADISON AVENUE



● The junior account executive of an ad agency married a glamor puss, bought a suburban villa twice too big for his income, and threw a monster housewarming party. His directions to friends were most explicit: "Get off the Merritt Parkway at Exit 42, turn left, and look for the first Frank Lloyd Wrightish creation. You can't miss it. It's the one with the big mortgage."

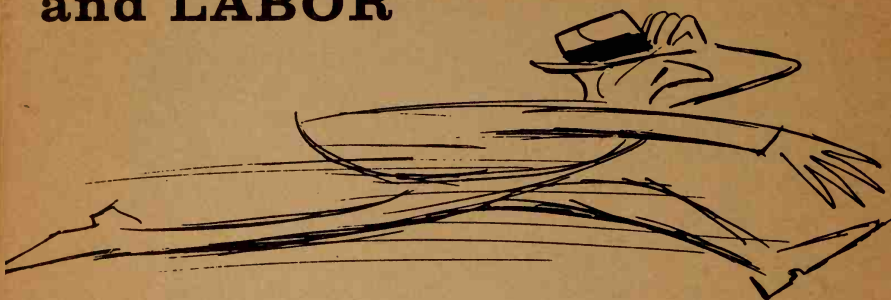
● A big Madison Avenue ad agency was buzzing a couple of years back with the rebuff suffered by a lady operative who was ordered to telephone several hundred big shots and ask what brand of cigarettes they fancied most. She got along fine until she lured Dr. Alfred Kinsey, author of *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, to the phone in Indiana.

"We'd like to ask you," said she, "what cigarette you smoke."

Dr. Kinsey, the tireless investigator, snapped, "I never discuss my personal affairs for publication," and hung up.

● Two ulcers stopped to exchange greetings on Madison Avenue. Sighed one, "I feel awful. I must be getting an advertising man!"

MANAGEMENT and LABOR



● "It's such a fine day," said the broker to his assistant, "that I think I'll go down to the club and shoot a round of golf." "I wish I was rich," the assistant said a little later to his secretary. "I wouldn't mind getting out into this sunshine once in a while myself." "Don't be a sap," the secretary told him. "How will old Poopface know if you call for your wife and sneak off to the beach for the afternoon?"

The assistant thought this was an excellent suggestion. At his home, however, he had considerable difficulty getting the front door open; when he did force his way in, there was the boss making violent love to his wife! The assistant gasped, stole silently out of the house and paddled back to the office as fast as his little feet would carry him. "What happened?" said the secretary. "Didn't you go to the beach?" "What happened," echoed the assistant. "You and your fancy ideas! On account of you I darn near *got fired!*"

● Two young employees of a dashing midtown publisher were discussing his merits. "He's so good looking," enthused one, "and he dresses so well!" The other amended happily, "So quickly, too!"

● From London comes the story of the tycoon who was reading a prepared speech to a meeting of the nation's big shots.

"The average business man is tired," he thundered, pausing now and again to readjust his glasses. "He worked twenty hours a day on war work, and more recently on reconversion problems. He is physically and mentally exhausted. But what a lead-pipe cinch he has had compared to the defenseless secretaries who have had to type all this interminable hogwash." The delighted audience let out a roar of laughter. The tycoon turned brick-red, gazed at his script in disbelief, and mumbled, "Extraordinary! I never wrote anything like that!"

● Mrs. Washburne was sitting in her husband's sumptuous office when a beautiful, stream-lined blonde undulated in. "I'm Mr. Washburne's wife," said Mrs. W. "That's nice," said the blonde. "I'm his secretary." "Oh," said Mrs. W., "were you?"



THE MILITARY

● A soldier disembarked in San Francisco after two long years in the Far East, and was greeted with appropriate ecstasy by his beautiful young wife. Alone at last in their room at the Mark Hopkins Hotel, they were disturbed by a sudden clamor in the corridor, and a cry of, "Let me in!"

The soldier jumped four feet and exclaimed, "I'll bet it's your husband." The beautiful young wife answered angrily, "Don't be silly. He's thousands of miles away somewhere in the Pacific!"

● A three-year hitch in the Army enabled one observant recruit to boil everything down to three sacred rules. One: If it moves, salute it. Two: If it doesn't move, pick it up. Three: If it's too big to pick up, paint it.



● A Camp Dix correspondent swears this actually happened during the let-down period that followed V-J Day, which ended World War II. The commanding officer of the post entered the barber shop in the middle of the afternoon and found one of his assistants getting a haircut. He remarked caustically, "I see you're getting your hair cut on government time, eh?" "Yes, sir; it grew on government time," pointed out the assistant. "Not all of it," pursued the C. O. "Right sir," agreed the unperturbed assistant. "I'm not getting all of it cut off."



MODELS

● Models of distinction:

1. The cover girl who suddenly turned up at Palm Beach on the arm of an eligible playboy. "Hallelujah!" marveled a friend. "Where did you dig up this one?" "I'm not sure," admitted the playboy. "I opened my wallet and there she was!"

2. The model from Honolulu who taught all the other girls the hula. "It's easy," she maintained. "First you put a crop of grass on one hip. Then you put a crop of grass on the other. Then you rotate the crops."

● A Cincinnati camera club, tired of photographing the Ohio River and the local ball players, threw caution to the winds and hired a model for some nude photographic studies. But when the moment for action arrived, it developed that the model had been wearing such tight garters, their imprint on her legs could not be erased.

The members decided she must wait in an anteroom for an hour while they went out for dinner. When they came back, the marks on her legs were gone all right—but alas, she had been sitting the entire hour on a cane-bottomed chair!

MOTHERS

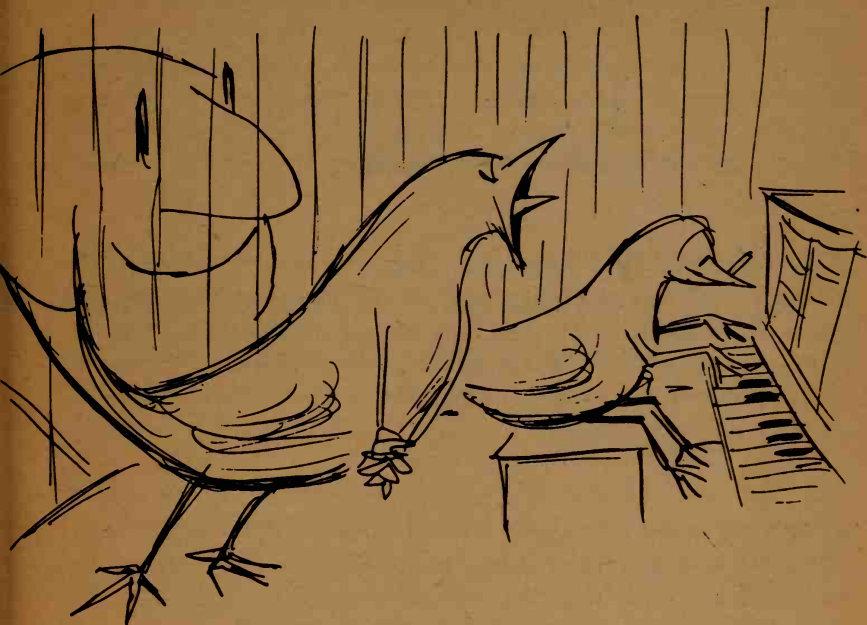
● A mother of eleven unruly kids was visited by a sympathetic social worker who marveled, "How on earth are you able to care for all eleven of these children?" The mother explained, "When I only had one, he occupied every second of my time. What more can eleven do?"

● Ade's most successful play was *The College Widow*. His mother came to see it and said, "George, do you really get more than five hundred dollars a week for doing that?" "Yes, Mother," answered Ade. "George," she begged, "you keep right on fooling them."

● A little girl was having a hard time in Brentano's Bookstore selecting a book to be given to her mother as a birthday gift. "Does she like fiction?" asked the clerk. The little girl shook her head. "Biography? History? Books on art? Humor?" The little girl continued to register disapproval. Finally the exasperated clerk demanded, "Well, what on earth *does* she like?" The little girl said, "Men."



MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC



● Babcock was intrigued by the advertisement of a canary that could sing every song in the world. What's more, the bird lived up to all his advance notices. On request, he warbled "Melancholy Baby," "Rule Britannia," and an aria by Bach. "How much?" said Babcock. "Two hundred dollars," said the proprietor, "and you'll have to buy this other bird with him." "The two hundred is steep enough," complained Babcock. "Why must I buy this other bird as well?" "The canary needs him," said the proprietor. "That's his arranger."

● When Mischa Elman made his triumphant debut at Carnegie Hall, the rapturous audience demanded encore after encore. Finally his father whispered to him, "Make the next one quick, Mischa. The bank closes in twenty minutes."

● Bernard Shaw story number 6471: He was eating his usual meatless dinner with a learned confrere when the restaurant's orchestra struck up a particularly noisy piece. When, after the briefest of intermissions, it launched into an even noisier one, Shaw summoned the headwaiter. "Does this orchestra play anything on request?" he asked. "Oh, yes, sir," said the headwaiter. "Excellent," snapped Shaw. "Kindly tell them to play dominoes."

● The pianist Moritz Rosenthal suffered in silence one day while a bitter rival was receiving most of the plaudits of a group of giddy clubwomen. When one lady begged the rival for a "teentsy weentsy message" in her autograph album, however, Rosenthal could stand it no longer. "Why don't you write down your repertoire?" he suggested.

● And of course everybody must have heard about the night that Stokowski was conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra in the rendition of Beethoven's *Leonore* Overture No. 3, and the off-stage trumpet call twice failed to sound on cue. Directly the last note of the overture had been played, the apoplectic Stokowski rushed into the wings with murder in his heart. He found the trumpeter struggling in the clutches of a burly watchman. "I tell you you can't blow that damn thing here," the watchman kept insisting. "There's a concert going on inside!"



NEON NEWS



DAIRY: "If our eggs were any fresher, they'd be insulting."

CHIROPODIST: "Let me be the master of your feet."

TAILOR (near Yankee Stadium): "We fix everything but football games."

BAKERY: "Special! Canasta cake! It melds in your mouth."

BEANERY #1: "Pies like mother used to make, 25¢. Pies like mother thought she made, 60¢."

BEANERY #2: "Our silverware is not medicine. Don't take it after meals."

BEANERY #3 (on 45th Street in New York): "Our hotcakes are selling like tickets to *My Fair Lady*."

BEANERY #4: "The best dollar meal in town for three dollars."

DIAPER SERVICE: "Rock-a-dry Baby."

DANCING STUDIO: "Not only do we keep you from being a wall-flower: we remove the pot."

KENNEL: "The only love money can buy. Pups for sale."

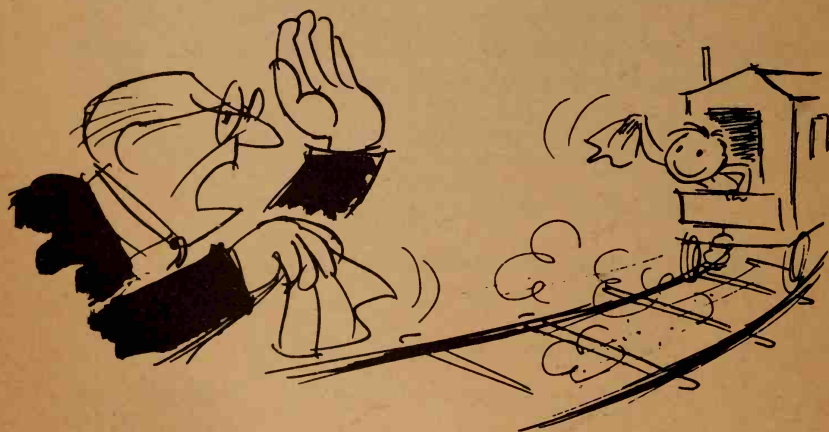
TRAFFIC SIGN #1: "Drive carefully. Don't insist on your rites."

TRAFFIC SIGN #2: "The average time it takes a train to pass this crossing is ten seconds—whether your car is on it or not."

NEWSPAPERS

● When "Bugs" Baer, ace humorist of the King Feature Syndicate, first landed a good job, his friend, Ward Greene, suggested that he acquire new raiment to match the job. "What's the difference?" said Baer. "Nobody knows me." Fifteen years later Greene caught him wearing the same old rags. "What's the difference?" repeated Bugs. "*Everybody* knows me!"

● When the late Adolph Ochs was running the *New York Times*, one of his pressmen named Carr was the proud father of eight children. He dutifully reported every birth to Mr. Ochs and was rewarded each time with a bonus of \$50.00. One morning he appeared before Ochs again, hat in hand, and announced cheerfully, "Well, sir, my wife has just presented me with another little Carr." Mr. Ochs produced the expected \$50.00 and said drily, "Might I suggest that you make this new little Carr the caboose?"



● A Hollywood columnist once circulated an erroneous report of W. C. Fields' death. The bulbous-nosed comedian called up the editor in a rage. "I hope you noticed," he roared, "that your foul newspaper announced my death this morning." "That I did," admitted the editor coolly. "May I ask where you're calling from?"

● Newsmen, swears Robert J. Casey, are simple boys at heart. They treasure clippings with typographical errors for months, particularly when the result verges on the pornographic. They play infantile tricks on one another. They wake up outraged strangers by 4 A.M. phone calls. In Chicago they found an unfortunate innocent named "Upjohn" in the directory, and called him in relays all night long to inquire sweetly, "Are you Upjohn?" A Boston group found a Paul Revere in the book, and yanked him from bed with a phone call to demand, "Why aren't you on a horse? The British are coming!" I myself knew of a sophisticated group spearheaded by no less a personage than Harold Ross, editor of *The New Yorker*, who spent a deliriously happy afternoon calling Long Island society matrons, and saying that they spoke for a nationally-known yeast manufacturer. They offered five thousand dollars for a signed testimonial, and further played on their victim's vanity by adding: "Of course, you won't keep this vulgar money yourself. We will leave it to you to pass it on to your favorite charity." The matron would coo with pleasure and then the tormentor plunged in the harpoon. "We simply want you to say," he would murmur into the mouthpiece, "'A year ago, before I discovered Blank's yeast, my face was an unholy mess of pimples and unseemly blotches.'" . . . There usually was a violent click at the other end of the wire at this point.

● The young daughter of one of Louis Sobol's newspaper pals came home from Sunday school with an illustrated card in her hand. "What have you got there, honey?" asked the father. "Nothing much," said the little girl. "Just an ad about heaven."

PATIENTS



● An author was hit by a car on his way to his favorite bar, and was knocked unconscious. The proprietor of the bar sent for an ambulance, and watched first aid being administered. "He's coming out of it, boys," said the proprietor finally. "See that motion? He's trying to blow the foam off his medicine."

● A doctor's most important patient demanded his presence at her bedside just when he was whooping it up at a class reunion. He endeavored to sober himself sufficiently to take her pulse, but gave it up, muttering disconsolately. "Blotto! Boiled to the ears!"

The following morning he received a fat check, with a note reading, "Thank you for your prompt and expert diagnosis. It will be appreciated if you keep it strictly to yourself."

● Dr. Pullman, the society dentist, tried desperately to soothe his richest but most difficult patient, a Mrs. Gruber. "Don't shake your arms like a semaphore and make those faces at me," he begged. "I haven't even started drilling yet." "I know you haven't," said Mrs. Gruber, "but you're standing on my corns."

● When Forain, the French engraver, was on his deathbed, his family, gathered about him, simulated confidence in his recovery. "You're looking much better," his wife assured him. "The color has come back to your cheeks," said his son. "You are breathing easier, Father," his daughter observed.

Forain nodded and smiled weakly. "Thank you all," he whispered. "I'm going to die cured."

POLITICS

● After a round-table radio broadcast, Philosopher Irwin Edman and a star reporter on the New York *Herald Tribune*, a dyed-in-the-wool Republican newspaper, joined a heated discussion in the next room. "I must admit," said the reporter, "that in 1932 I voted for Roosevelt. Gosh, I hope we're off the air!" Edman told him, "You're not only off the air. You're off the *Tribune*."

● Here's a story that sounds as though it came straight from the headquarters of the Republican National Committee:

It was a day late in 1980, when socialized medicine had become the law of the land. A man was seized with a violent cramp in his stomach and sought relief at the modern white structure erected for the purpose in his home town. Upon entering the building, he found himself in a hall with two doors. One was marked "male," the other "female." Naturally, he entered the door marked "male."

He found himself in a room with two doors. One was marked "Over 21," the other "Under 21." Since he was 52, he entered the door marked "Over 21."

He found himself in a room with two doors. One was marked "Serious illness," the other "Minor indisposition." Since he was doubled up with pain by this time, he staggered through the door marked "Serious illness."

He found himself in a room with two doors. One was marked "Democrats," the other "Republicans." Since he had voted straight Republican all his life, he entered the door marked "Republicans"—and found himself out on the street.



PRESIDENTS

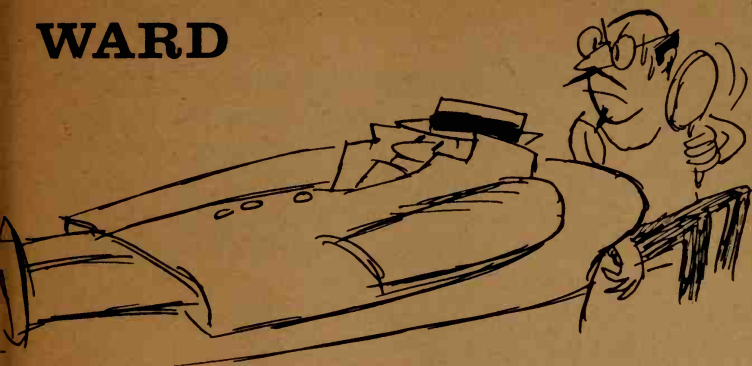


● During Mr. Coolidge's tenure of the White House, there was a touching display of diplomatic nicety. The ambassador from Great Britain was breakfasting with the President, discussing an important trade agreement. He was somewhat taken aback when Mr. Coolidge carefully poured his cup of milk into a saucer, but, gentleman to the last, did precisely the same with *his* milk. The President smiled slightly, but said nothing as he stooped down and gave his saucer to a gray cat waiting patiently at his feet.

● During President Hoover's last year in office, he was walking down Pennsylvania Avenue with his Secretary of the Treasury, Andrew Mellon. "Andy," said the President, "I came out this morning without a cent in my pockets. Lend me a nickel, will you? I want to call up a friend." "Here's a dime," volunteered Mellon. "Call both of them!"

● One of Heywood Broun's pet hates was ghost-written political speeches—particularly when they failed utterly to reflect either the convictions or the personalities of the big shots who were delivering them. Warren G. Harding pulled one of these phony orations at a newsmen's banquet shortly after he had assumed the Presidency—a pompous, cliché-laden address that sounded more like a circus press agent than a President of the United States. There was some polite applause as Harding resumed his seat. Then Broun jumped up and cried "Author! Author!"

THE PSYCHIATRIC WARD



● Relatives brought poor old Mr. Lewisheim to a psychoanalyst when he refused to take off his heavy winter overcoat straight through a ten-day hot spell that broke all records at the weather bureau. By the time the doctor got him, Mr. Lewisheim's condition could be described as high. He sat huddled in a corner, clutching the heavy coat frantically about him. "I dassn't open it," he explained after the psychoanalyst had won his confidence. "I got three butterflies in there and if I open the coat they'll escape." The doctor put him under an anaesthetic, and before he regained consciousness, pinned three dead butterflies to a card. "See," he told Lewisheim, "your butterflies are gone. No reason to wear that coat again until December." Everything seemed fine, but a week later the despairing relatives brought Lewisheim back, wrapped tighter than ever in his heavy ulster. "What now?" asked the doctor sternly. "You saw for yourself that the butterflies were gone. What's the point of still crouching in that great coat?" "I gotta," whispered Mr. Lewisheim. "If I open it, how do I know three brand-new butterflies won't fly in?"

● A worried merchant sought a psychiatrist, explaining, "All day long I eat grapes." "So what?" scoffed the analyst. "Everybody eats grapes." The merchant gasped, "What? Off the *wallpaper*?"

PUNS

● In England, a scamp named Sam Rollins became so expert in counterfeiting small coins that he avoided detection for years. Scotland Yard, however, finally caught up with him. On his way to jail, Rollins asked his captor disconsolately, "How did you track me down?" The Scotland Yard man, obviously a night-club devotee of Joe E. Lewis, hummed softly, "Sam, You Made de Pence Too Long."

Another counterfeiter's proud boast was, "I'm an expert with the bad mintin' racket."



● Phineas Wagstaff swallowed 4 pages from *The Congressional Record* and rushed to the medicine chest for relief. "What on earth are you doing?" called Mrs. Wagstaff. Her husband explained airily, "Oh, just boring from within."

● A special maestro was hired to conduct a concert of music by Bach and Mozart. In rehearsal he pushed the civic orchestra so intensely, he became known as a Bach Suite driver.

● Clifton Fadiman steering a party of friends to a little Italian restaurant he had praised to the skies, discovered he had misplaced the proprietor's card. "We'll have to go elsewhere," mourned Fadiman. "I seem to have lost my Spaghettsburg address!"

● There are any number of pun-icious characters in Peter De Vries' novel, *The Tunnel of Love*. One thinks a seersucker is a man who spends all his money on fortune tellers. A second keeps asking his analyst, "Have I told you about my aberration?" A third—my favorite—calls his place Moot Point (because there's a legal difficulty about the right of way), and, when asked if he ever heard of a dance called the czardas, asks dubiously, "That's by Hoagy Carmichael, isn't it?"

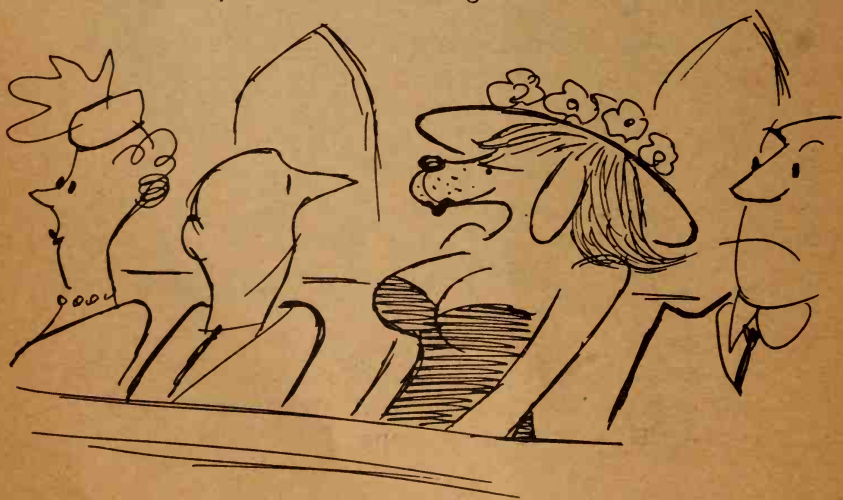
✓ ● The captain of an undermanned sailing ship was offered a consignment of hardened convicts during the Napoleonic Wars. "Nothing doing," protested the wily captain. "Too many crooks spoil the sloop."



QUESTIONS THAT ANSWER

● A Cabinet member pleading for still higher taxes was taken apart by a syndicated gossip columnist. A reporter asked him, "How do you classify gossip columnists, sir? Would you call them newspapermen?" The Cabinet member snorted, "Would you call barnacles ships?"

● Van Cartmell, the Garden City anthologist, tells of an old preacher who was warning his parishioners about sin. "Sin," he said, "is like a big dog. There's the big dog of pride, and the big dog of envy, and the big dog of gluttony, and, finally, brothers, there's the big dog of sex. Now folks you gotta kill those big dogs before you're ever gonna get to heaven. It can be done—I know—'cause *I've* done it. I killed the big dog of envy and the big dog of pride, and the big dog of gluttony and yes, brethren, I killed the big dog of sex!" A small voice rose from the rear of the church: "Brother, are you sure that last dog didn't die a nat'chel death?"





● Ernie Byfield admitted that he sometimes carried a memo in his pocket of all the "ad libs" he proposed to use at a party. He'd consult this card from time to time under pretext of looking at his watch. One day while driving to a party his wife saw him searching frantically and in vain for his card of "ad libs." "What's the matter, darling?" she asked sweetly. "Did you forget your famous personality?"

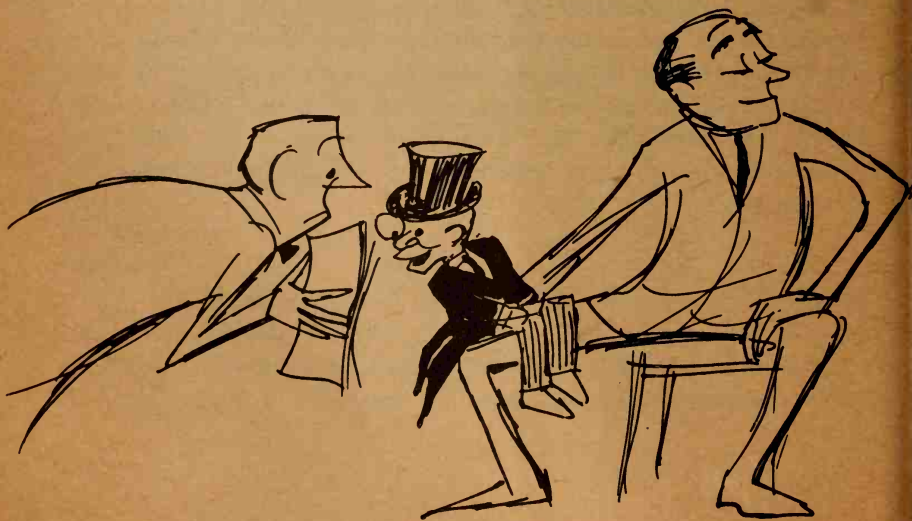
● Miriam Hopkins made her debut as one of the "Eight Little Notes" who served as the chorus of the First Music Box Revue. On the out-of-town tryouts an aging soprano was penciled in for a leading role, and sought to impress Miss Hopkins. "I'll have you know," she declared, "that I insured my voice for \$50,000." "That's wonderful," said Miss Hopkins. "What did you do with all that money?"

● John D. Rockefeller, Jr., conducts his affairs in a very comfortable but modest office. A visitor, disappointed, asked, "How can you hope to impress anybody in an office like this?" Mr. Rockefeller answered, "Whom do I have to impress?"

RADIO RESURRECTED

● Alan Reed (who created the role of Falstaff on the Fred Allen program) explained that he had changed his name from Bergman. "Where could I get with a name like Bergman?" he asked. "Who knows?" was the reply. "Ingrid Reed seems to be doing all right."

● Edgar Bergen made his radio debut in 1936 when he managed to engineer an audition for the guest spot on the Rudy Vallee program. The sponsor declared audibly that anybody who thought a ventriloquist could hold a radio audience's attention was screwy as a bird dog. Bergen was so nervous that he almost dropped his precious Charlie McCarthy and muffed several lines in the script. The sponsor chortled derisively. An assistant waved a copy of the script at Bergen and said, "Here's your place." Bergen nodded and the assistant moved away. "Hey," yelled Charlie, "let *me* have a gander at that script." The young man wheeled about and unthinkingly thrust the script before the wooden dummy's eyes. The sponsor stared at the spectacle, muttered "I'll be damned," and ordered, "Make out a contract for that guy."



● Back in radio, Abe Burrows declares, "All I need now is sex appeal. Mine is the only show women turn off for hockey games."

● Here are a few of the things the growing Association of Ex-Sponsors of Henry Morgan hold against him:

He complained that a maker of peppermint drops was gulling the public by putting a hole in the middle.

He auctioned off the entire executive board of the Mutual Broadcasting Company, fetching \$83 for the lot, including plant and good will.

He announced with proper enthusiasm that a popular candy-and-nut bar was a meal in itself, but added that, after three meals of them, "your teeth fall out."

He broadcast a list of missing persons in Philadelphia and threw in the name of the chief of police and the manager of the local radio station.

Extolling the virtues of a brand of iodine, he suggested, "Try drinking a bottle for a broken arm."

His idea of a boost for a popular make of automobile was, "Our cars are now rolling off the assembly line; as soon as we keep them on the assembly line, we'll start delivering them."

● A bright young star of the Theatre Guild was scheduled to do a radio show one Sunday evening in Los Angeles. Lawrence Langner, High Nabob of the Guild, made a note to phone her from Westport, Conn., and congratulate her. By some miracle, he actually remembered it and when the call came through assured her, "My dear, you were absolutely superb."

"It's very nice of you to tell me that, Mr. Langner," she said coldly, "but I must point out that I won't begin the broadcast yet for fifteen minutes."

Mr. Langner was taken aback—but not for long. "Don't forget, my dear," he reminded her without skipping a beat, "that it is three hours earlier here."

REALTY

● Landlord Vogel slid an overdue rent bill under the door of a dilatory Broadway character, who promptly slid it out again. Twice more Vogel pushed it back into the room—and twice more it came back. Vogel straightened up, sighed deeply, and reflected, "I guess I'll have to fix his window after all. There's certainly a powerful draught in here."

● An English guide was showing Kenilworth Castle to some soldiers from the Bronx. "For hundreds of years," he proclaimed, "not a stone of this edifice has been touched, not a single thing repaired." "Say," observed one of the soldiers, "we must have the same landlords."

● The landlord eyed his prospective tenant coldly. "I must remind you," he said, "that I will not tolerate children, dogs, cats, or parrots. And no piano playing. And no radio. Is that perfectly clear?"

"Yes, sir," said the tenant meekly. "But I think you ought to know that my fountain pen scratches a little."





RELIGION

● Fulton J. Sheen relates that shortly after his elevation to the rank of Bishop he made the first of his many appearances on television, and stopped for a cup of coffee at the drugstore in the building where the studio was located, with his red cape already in place. The girl at the counter, obviously used to serving actors in every kind of costume, took the red cape very much in stride and asked blithely, "What's yours, Cock Robin?"

✓ ● There's a venerable psychotic patient on Welfare Island who spends her entire time reading the Bible. She explains, "I'm cramming for the finals."

● An old bishop in the nation's capital was sick to death of the socials and embassy parties he was expected to attend every other afternoon. At one of them he entered wearily, glanced sourly at the over-familiar cast of characters, and sank into the nearest chair. The hostess asked coyly, "A spot of tea, Bishop?" "No tea," he growled. "Coffee, Bishop?" "No coffee." An understanding woman, she whispered in his ear, "Scotch and water, Bishop?" Said the bishop, brightening, "No water."

RESTAURANTS



● Three young sprouts from a prominent publishing house lunched at a crowded Automat one Monday. The only table with three seats available was already pre-empted by a formidable old lady, whose presence put a decided damper on the exchange of tall tales of week-end conquests they all had been looking forward to. One of the crafty sub-editors had an idea.

"I promised my girl I'd take a bath Saturday night," he said with a wink to his companion. "It'll be exactly a year since I took one last."

"Well, well," said the second. "If that's the case, I think I'll change my socks. I threw them up to the ceiling this morning, and the left one stuck there for five minutes."

"Youse boids sound like Y.M.C.A. convoits," sneered the third (a graduate *cum laude* of Harvard). "I ain't been in a tub for tree years. I *love* doit."

The three brilliant plotters looked hopefully at the old lady, but she placidly continued munching her pie. Then she poured cream into her coffee, and spoke for the first time. "Would one of you stinkers," she said, "kindly pass me the sugar?"

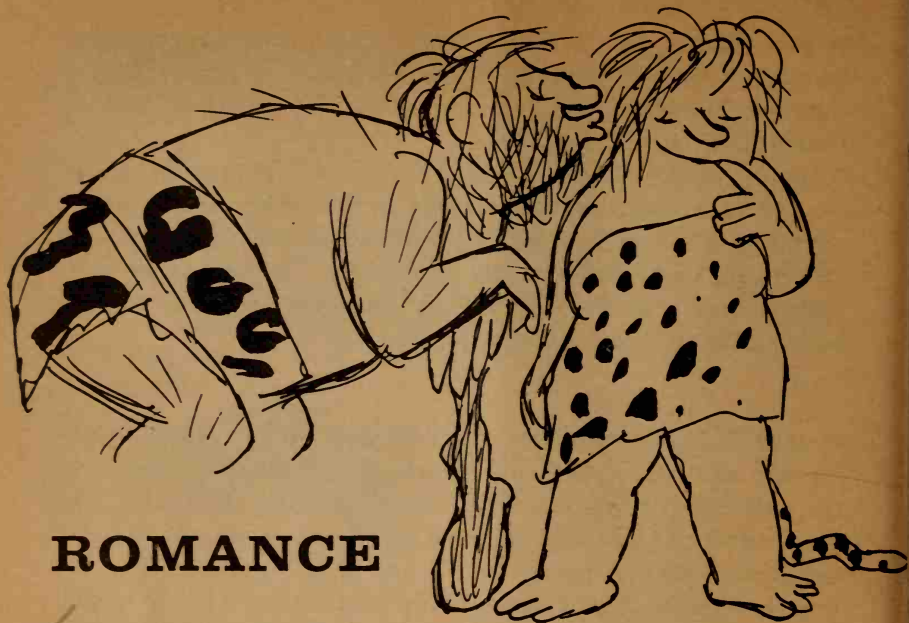
● John Mason Brown, following the lead of all good parents, utilized the Easter vacation to take his two small boys to Washington. They saw everything, with a side trip to Mount Vernon thrown in as a matter of course.

Several months later, Brown came across a picture of Mount Vernon in a magazine and decided to determine how much, if anything, his boys had learned from their trip to the capital. "Meredith," he asked the one aged eight, "do you know what place this is?" "Don't be silly, Pop," answered Meredith. "Everybody knows that. It's Howard Johnson's."

✓ ● James McNeill Whistler, the celebrated artist, rather prided himself on his knowledge of French. In a fashionable Paris restaurant one evening he insisted upon ordering the dinner and got very angry when a friend tried to help the waiter understand everything that was being said. "I am quite capable of speaking French without your assistance," he grumbled. "That may well be," soothed his friend, "but I just heard you distinctly place an order for a flight of steps."



● Mrs. Wilson left her gloves, as usual, in the restaurant. She discovered her loss at the door and turned back. They weren't on the table, so she got down on all fours and began to search underneath. A waiter tapped her on the shoulder. "If it's your husband you're looking for, madam," he said respectfully, "I think you'll find him in the washroom."



ROMANCE

● Rupert Hughes claims he knows the origin of kissing. "A prehistoric man," avers Hughes, "discovered one day that salt helped him survive the fierce summer heat. He also discovered he could get the salt by licking a companion's cheek. The next thing he observed was that the process became ever so much more interesting when the companion belonged to the opposite sex. First thing you know, the whole tribe had forgotten all about salt."

● A bashful swain wrote to an advice-to-the-lovelorn column in San Francisco, "Last night I treated a young lady to dinner, theatre, a night club, and a twenty-mile ride home in a taxi. Do you think I should have kissed her good night?" "Certainly not," answered the sarcastic editor. "You did enough for her as it is!"

● Hoarsely the impassioned swain begged, "Whisper those three little words that will make me walk on air." So the debutante sweetly told him, "Go hang yourself."

RUSSIA

● Stalin, the late Russian leader, was reviewing a crack regiment in Red Square when someone in the ranks sneezed. Stalin stopped in his tracks and demanded, "Who sneezed?" Nobody answered. "Shoot down the front rank," ordered Stalin. When the order had been executed, Stalin again asked, "Who sneezed?" Again there was silence. The Premier, apoplectic, roared, "Shoot down the second rank." This done, he put his hands on his hips and demanded, "Now maybe the man who sneezed will speak up."

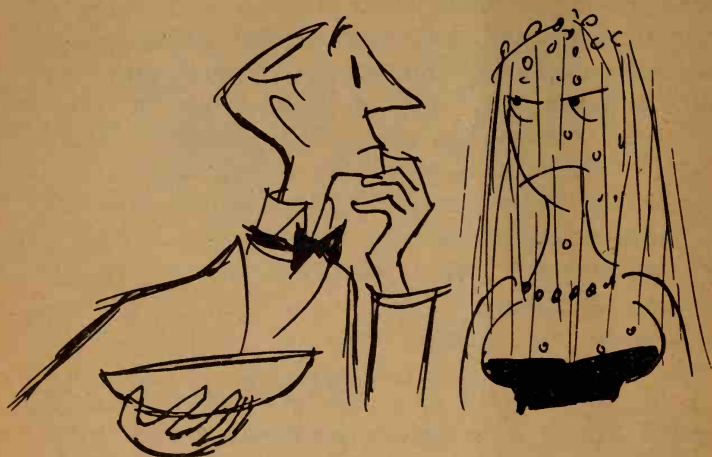
From the very rear row came a terrorized voice, "It was I, Comrade Stalin, who sneezed!"

"Aha," said Stalin. "*Gesundheit!*"

● A Budapest merchant, traveling through Russia and bordering states, sent his friend a series of telltale postcards. The first read: "Greetings from Free Moscow," the second, "Greetings from Free Warsaw," the third, "Greetings from Free Prague." Then there was a month's silence, after which a final message arrived, post-marked Paris. This one read "Greetings from Free Rabinowitz."



SHAGGY DOGS



● A very shy young man sat next to a glamorous debutante at a dinner party. In the middle of the main course he seized a bowl of succotash and poured it over the debutante's chic coiffure. The young lady rose indignantly. "How dare you?" she blazed, plucking corn and peas out of her hair. "How dare you throw succotash at me?" The young man blanched. "Good heavens," he stammered. "Was that succotash? I thought it was spinach!"

● Milton Berle once played Pittsburgh for a one-week stand. On Monday he picked out a restaurant that looked attractive to him, and liked everything except the bread. "I always eat whole wheat," he told the waitress, but she brought white. On Tuesday, he reminded her about the whole wheat, but was served white bread again. Wednesday she made the same mistake, not to mention Thursday and Friday. Finally on Saturday when she took his order, Berle said casually, "Just for the heck of it, I think I'll take white bread today." "That's funny," said the waitress. "Aren't you the party who always orders whole wheat?"

● A man's ear was bleeding like mad. "I bit myself," he explained. "That's impossible," said the doctor. "How can a man bite himself in the ear?" The man said, "I was standing on a chair."

● A continental refugee in London had one big ambition in life: to be able to afford an English suit, made to order by a really first-class English tailor. He scrimped and saved, and finally had enough to order not only the suit, but all the trimmings to match —Homburg, shirt, tie, oxfords, stick. The day came for the final fitting, and he was able to study the full ensemble in a full-length mirror. Suddenly he burst into tears. The tailor, dismayed, begged, "Tell me what's wrong, sir. Are you displeased with the fit? Do any of the accessories bother you?" "No, no," the refugee assured him between sobs. "The clothes are perfect. Ripping, in fact. *But demme, why did we have to lose India?*"



SHIP SAGAS

- From the diary of a globe-trotting young cinema queen.

Monday: The Captain saw me on deck and was kind enough to ask me to sit at his table for the rest of the trip.

Tuesday: I spent the morning on the bridge with the Captain. He took my picture leaning against the "Passengers not allowed on this bridge" sign.

Wednesday: The Captain made proposals to me unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

Thursday: The Captain threatened to sink the ship unless I agreed to his proposals.

Friday: I saved eight hundred lives today.

- A Philadelphia socialite, returning home with his family from a two-month tour of Europe, was asked by reporters when his ship docked at Quarantine, "Did you see many signs of poverty abroad?" He answered bitterly, "Not only did I see signs of it, but I've brought some back with me."



THE SPORTING LIFE



● An irate lady, seeking a divorce in court, told the judge, "My husband is an out-and-out loafer who thinks of nothing day and night but horse racing. He doesn't even remember our wedding day." "That's a lie!" shouted the outraged husband. "We were married the day Twenty Grand won the Wood Memorial."

● Harry Ruby tells about the prize-fight manager whose inexperienced new middleweight was taking an unmerciful trimming in his first professional bout. Finally the manager propped up his unhappy charge and told him, "I don't care if it's bad luck or not—but this is the ninth round coming up, and kid, you've got a no-hitter going!"

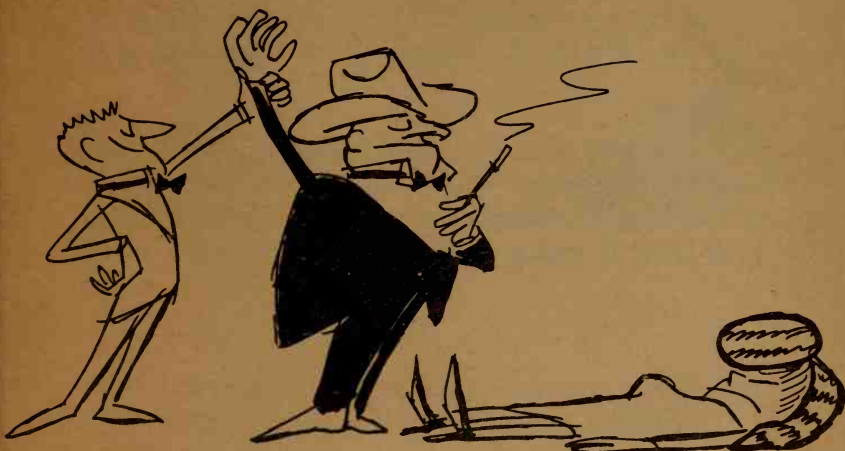
● In the early days of Babe Ruth's stardom with the Yankees, he gave his manager, Miller Huggins, many a headache with his antics off the field. You could chastise another player for breaking training rules, but what could you do about the greatest star in baseball—the man thousands of fans came every day to cheer? One day, relates Robert Smith, Huggins really lost his temper. He told a reporter, "I'm going to speak to Ruth this time! You wait and see!" At this moment the Babe swaggered into the hotel. "There's your man," needled the reporter. "Are you really going to speak to him?" "I am," insisted Huggins. "Hello, Babe!"

● In the clubhouse one day, another Babe, Babe Herman, pulled a cigar out of his pocket and asked for a match. Before anybody could oblige him, he took a couple of puffs on the cigar. A flame glowed on the end, and a thin line of blue smoke rose in the air. "Never mind the match," said the Babe with no apparent surprise. "I guess it was lit already."

● An English lord was taken to one of the first Army-Navy football games ever played. It was a bitter struggle, and a lot of players were hurt. "I say," commented the Englishman after a scrimmage that left two men prostrate on the field, "wouldn't it be simpler if they gave *each* team a ball?"

● Fred Russell, sports editor of the Nashville *Banner*, tells about the time Coach Fritz Crisler was giving his boys a hot pep talk before the Yale game. He worked himself up to the point where not only the squad, but he himself was sobbing with emotion. "Now men," he begged with a broken voice, "go out on that field hallowed with the blood of your grandfathers and *fight*." The team went out to do or die and Crisler was well pleased with his act until a lowly sub walked over and whacked him on the back. "Come on, Toots," he said sternly. "Get hold of yourself."

STATES OF MIND



● At a dinner party down South, Peter Lind Hayes refereed a hassle between a proud daughter of Kentucky and an equally proud son of Texas. The fur and the boasts flew in all directions.

"Why, we have so much solid gold stored in Kentucky," concluded the young lady, "we could build a wall of the stuff, ten feet high and four feet thick, clear around the borders of Texas."

The Texan smiled tolerantly. "Go right ahead and build it, honey," he urged, "and if we like it, we'll buy it!"

✓ ● A Northerner insulted a South Carolina bartender by asking anxiously, "Are you quite sure you know how to mix a very dry martini?" The bartender gave him a withering look and drawled, "Mister, ah been mixin' martinis heah fo' nine yeaHS—an' in that time ah've used exactly two bottles of vermouth!"

TEACHERS

● An English teacher in our nation's capital asked a new student, "What do you know about Keats?" The student scratched his head and replied, "Please, sir, I don't even know what they are."

● A world-wise history teacher in an Oklahoma City high school ended one lecture by saying, "Will Aaron Burr win his duel with Alexander Hamilton? Will the American people go for the Monroe Doctrine? Come to class next Monday and find out."



● "Miss Jones," said the science professor, "would you care to tell the class what happens when a body is immersed in water?" "Sure," said Miss Jones. "The telephone rings."

● A successful banker, back on his college campus for a class reunion, visited his old economics prof, and picked up the current semester's final exam. "Holy smoke," he exclaimed, "these are precisely the questions you asked our class fifteen years ago. If you always ask the same questions, don't you know the students will get wise, and pass them on from class to class?"

"Sure," answered the prof blandly, "but in economics, you see, we're constantly changing the answers."

TEMPTRESSES



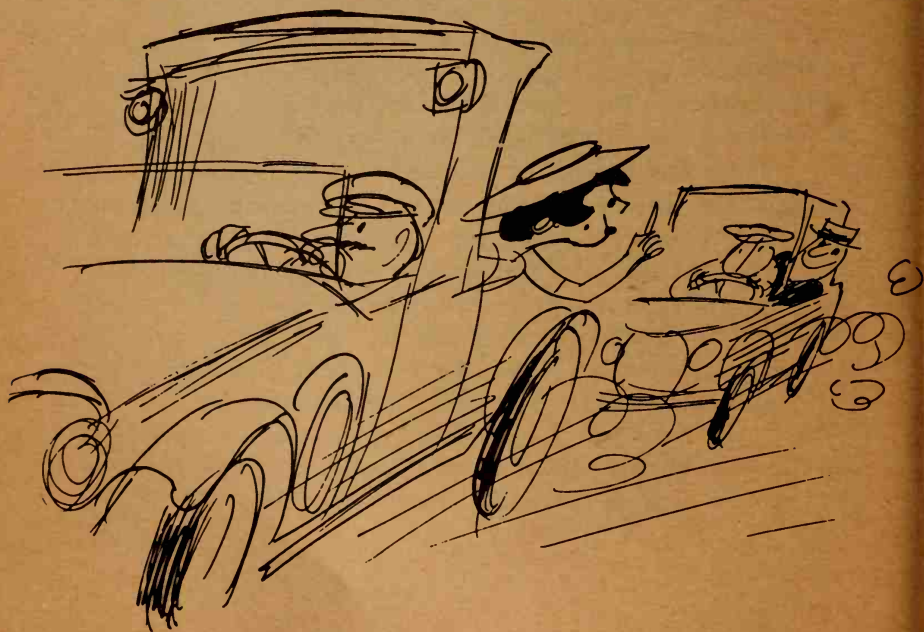
● Somebody asked Bob Hope what went through his mind when he got his original view of Dorothy Lamour in a sarong. "I never gave it a second thought," he averred with the famous Hope insouciance. "I was too busy with the first one."

● One of our leading publishers, disdaining the theory that fifty-five is no age to start skiing, broke his leg in three places. The sight of him reminded a Park Avenue host of a similar misfortune—but his, however, was not the result of skiing. "No," explained the host. "My trouble dates back to an evening five years ago. I was staying at the Crillon in Paris, and the chambermaid came into my room with fresh towels. She was a gorgeous thing—blond curls, blue eyes, shape that reminded me of a Hershey bar—you know, all the almonds in the right places. After she gave me the towels, she said softly, 'Is there anything else, sir?' 'Not a thing,' I assured her cheerfully. 'You are absolutely sure there is nothing I can do for you?' she persisted. 'Absolutely,' I said—so she left.

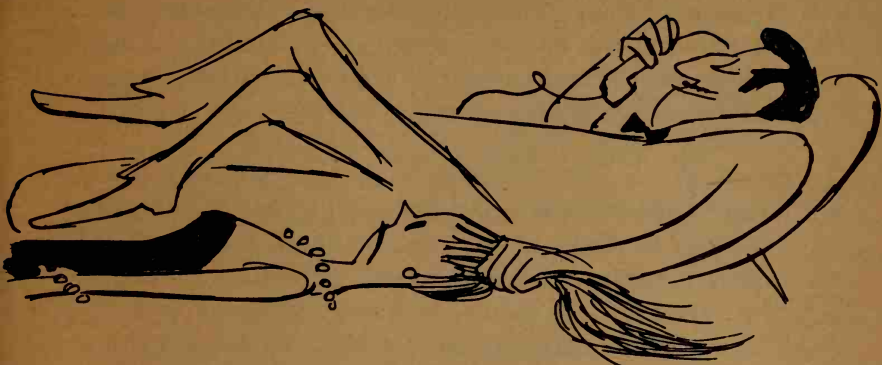
"Well, sir, last night I was standing on a ladder hanging a picture, when suddenly I realized what that girl was driving at five years ago. So I fell off the ladder and broke my leg."

● That always reminds me of the sinner who sat in church, bored and dejected, while the pastor rumbled on about the Ten Commandments. Suddenly he reached Number Seven, and intoned "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The man snapped to attention, brightened visibly, and exclaimed with satisfaction, "*That's* where I left my umbrella!"

● An heir to millions, native of Cincinnati, was dining alone in Paris when he thought he detected a "come hither" look in the eyes of the prettiest girl he had ever seen. "She jumped into a cab," he told his friends when he returned to America, "and I jumped into another. 'Follow that girl,' I commanded. Down the Champs Elysées we raced, across the Seine, and up the Boulevard Raspail. When she alighted at a studio building in the heart of the Left Bank, I was only a few steps behind her. I caught her on the landing of her apartment, and with a happy sigh I never will forget, she melted into my arms." "What happened after that?" his friends asked breathlessly. The excitement died down in the heir's voice. "After that," he admitted, "it was just like Cincinnati."



THE THEATER



● The leading man in a touring Feuer and Martin musical show recently behaved so shabbily to a young lady in the chorus that he was dismissed summarily by telegram. That night he phoned the producers long distance and wailed, "How could you do this to me? Wasn't I giving a satisfactory performance?" "Your performance on stage couldn't have been better," they told him, "but we fired you because in private life you are the most unmitigated scoundrel we have ever encountered." "Thank heaven," exclaimed the actor. "You've made me feel like a new man again!"

● A school that taught playwriting by mail received a script from a student that began with these lines: "Time of Act of One: 7000 years ago. Act Two: One day later."

● Deems Taylor tells a story to show that even the greatest get twinges of jealousy. He attended an audition of young talent with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. The participants—mostly female—quavered their way through the sleepwalking scene in *Macbeth*. None showed any particular distinction.

Afterward, Lynn whispered to Taylor, "Absolutely no talent in the whole group," and added, "thank God!"

TOPPERS

● A prominent society physician was well equipped when he set out on a hunting trip, but he returned empty-handed. "I didn't kill a thing today," he admitted. "That's the first time that's happened in years," said his unfeeling wife.

✓ ● A racing habitué bought a broken-down filly in a claiming race, When he went to the paddock to examine it, he found it on its side, with two veterinary surgeons attending it. "Is my horse sick?" he asked. "She's not the picture of health," said the vets, "but we hope to pull her through." "But will I ever be able to race her?" persisted the habitué. "Chances are you will," one vet assured him, "and you'll probably beat her too!"

● By common agreement, the TV master of ceremonies who won this year's award for the prize boner was the hapless soul who asked a small boy three times, in increasingly urgent tones, to name "the cereal you love to eat every morning, sonny." Sonny finally broke his silence by pointing out to the M.C.—and the coast-to-coast TV audience, "You're hurting my arm, mister."

● Little Linda checked with her mother. "You told me, Mommy, that angels have wings and can fly, didn't you?" "Yes, I did," said the mother. "Well," said Linda, "last night I heard Daddy calling my nurse an angel. When is she going to fly?" The mother answered promptly. "Tomorrow morning, darling."



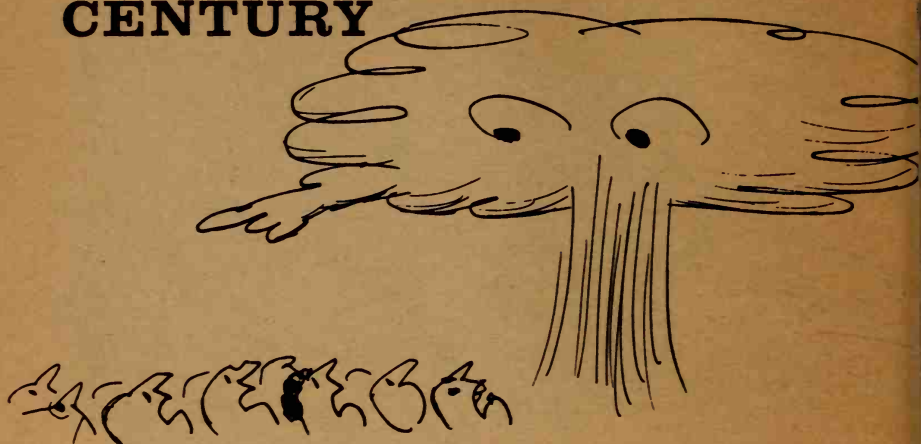
TRUMAN TATTLE



● Harry S. Truman likes to remember the time a visitor called on his mother just a few weeks after he had been inaugurated as President. "My, but you must be proud of your boy Harry," gushed the visitor. "Of course I am," said Mrs. Truman, "but I've got another son just as fine—right out there in that field, plowing."

● No President was the subject of more jibes and anecdotes than the same Harry S. Like him or not, one had to admire the unfailing good nature with which he greeted them—at least, in public. He himself retold the one, for instance, about the three most disastrous occurrences in our history: the Galveston Flood, the San Francisco Earthquake, and the failure of a certain haberdashery in Kansas City. There was another about a Californian who remarked to a man from Houston that he heard Truman was going to raise taxes. With no further ado, the Houstonian arose, and knocked the visitor cold with an uppercut to the jaw. A friend protested, "What did you want to do that for to a man who merely said 'Truman's going to raise taxes?'" "Is *that* what he said?" mumbled the Houstonian, his face flushing with embarrassment. "I thought he said 'Truman was *raised in Texas*'!"

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



● The shortest, and one of the most effective editorials on the unveiling of the atomic bomb consisted of exactly two sentences: "The atomic bomb is here to stay. *But are we?*"

● A distinguished scientist, says Louis Sobol, was observing the heavens through the huge telescope at the Mt. Wilson Observatory. Suddenly he announced, "It's going to rain." "What makes you think so?" asked his guide. "Because," said the astronomer, still peering through the telescope, "my corns hurt."

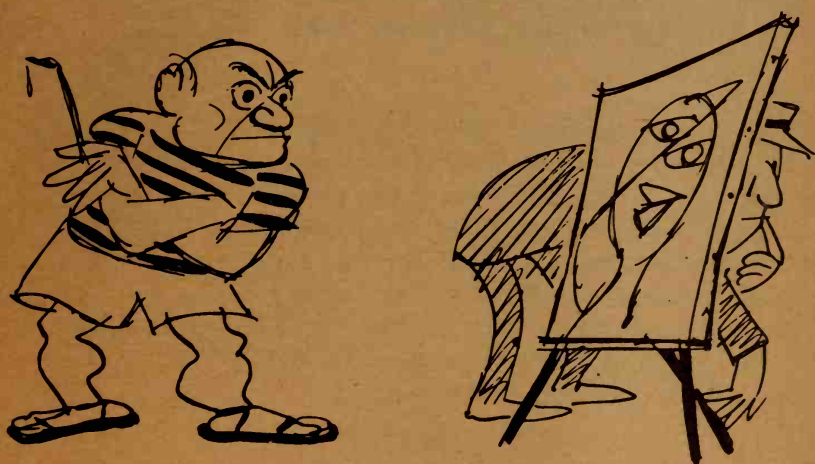
● A prominent and pulchritudinous starlet in Hollywood was discovered gazing blankly into space by Sid Skolsky. "Why the depression?" asked Sid. The starlet sighed deeply, then explained, "My analyst just told me I'm really in love with my father. What'll I do, Sid? He's a married man!"

● Goodman Ace says he's discovered how really to enjoy television. "We do it all with a six-foot screen," he explains gravely, and when his visitor invariably expresses astonishment, he adds, "Yes, it's a Japanese screen, and we place it directly in front of the television set."

● Gordon MacRae says that, what with all the science fiction stories flooding the market, editors will soon have to change their formula to "Man gets girl; man loses girl; man builds girl."

● "What is the thing I'm most anxious to get out of my new car?" grinned a businessman in answer to an advertising expert's question. "That's easy! My seventeen-year-old son!"

● A visitor to Picasso's studio found the great painter staring dejectedly at his latest creation and muttering, "It's a failure." "How can you say that?" protested the visitor. "I think it's a masterpiece." "No," said Picasso, "the nose is wrong. It throws the picture out of perspective." "Then why not fix it?" asked the visitor. "That's not possible," said Picasso. "I can't find it."



UNANSWERABLES

● It's hard to keep track of family trees out Hollywood way, with divorces and remarriages so prevalent among the movie elite. They say two lads at an executive's estate got into a big fight, with one star's son taunting another, "My father can lick the daylights out of your father." "Don't be silly," answered the other calmly. "Your father *is* my father!"

● A pompous old bore was once forcing his attentions on Miss Mary Garden. The diva was wearing an extremely low-cut evening gown. "I can't imagine what's holding it up," said the old boy, leering. "Possibly," suggested Miss Garden, "it's your age."

● Frank Sinatra was invited to lunch one day with the big shots in the MGM executive dining room. He reported later that the conversation had shifted ever so briefly from inevitable shop-talk to the subject of self-control. One producer—Sinatra disguises him under the name of Brown—asserted boldly, "I haven't touched liquor, played cards for money, or bet on a horse race in twenty years." "Gosh," interjected Sinatra, "I wish I could say that." "Why don't you?" urged L. B. Mayer. "Brown just did."

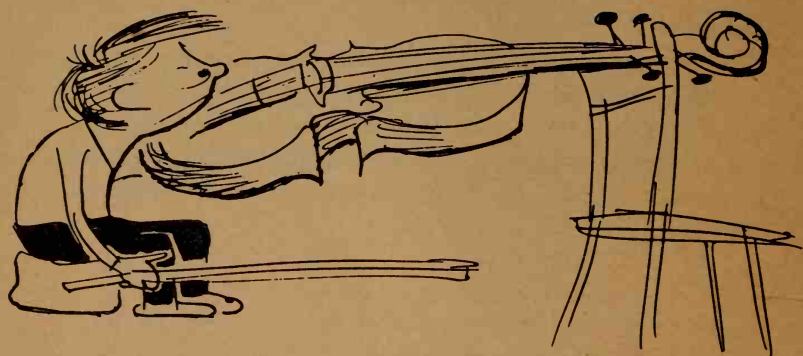
✓ ● John Straley, the Wall Street wit, has performed a notable whitewashing job with his story of an impetuous swain who told his lady love, "Honey, I'm going to kiss you to death tonight." "I dare you," responded that timid, shy young thing. The suitor's talents, however, failed to send her into raptures. After some minutes, in fact, she pulled a feather out of a pillow and began to stroke him lightly on the forehead with it. The suitor inquired, "What's the big idea?" "Comparatively speaking," she answered crossly, "I'm beating your brains out."

● Groucho Marx proposed this toast to a socialite hostess: "I drink to your charm, your beauty, and your brains—which will give you a rough idea of how hard up I am for a drink."

● Gertrude Lawrence was starring in a London play that was honored by a visit from the late King and his Queen. As Queen Elizabeth entered the Royal Box, the entire audience arose to acclaim her. Miss Lawrence, watching from the wings, murmured, "What an entrance!" Noel Coward, on tiptoe directly behind her, added, "What a part!"



VIOLINISTS



● When Mama made up her mind that little Joe was destined to become a great violinist, Papa's complaints about the racket and the expense fell on deaf ears. Finally on the music teacher's recommendation he bought Joe one of those "half violins" specially designed for the kiddies.

To the surprise of everybody but Mama, Joe turned out to be a born fiddler. First thing you know, the teacher demanded that he have a full-sized violin.

Complaining bitterly at every step, Papa hied himself to the music store, where his eye fell on a big violoncello. "There's the one I'll take," he announced happily. "Let the little so-and-so learn to outgrow that!"

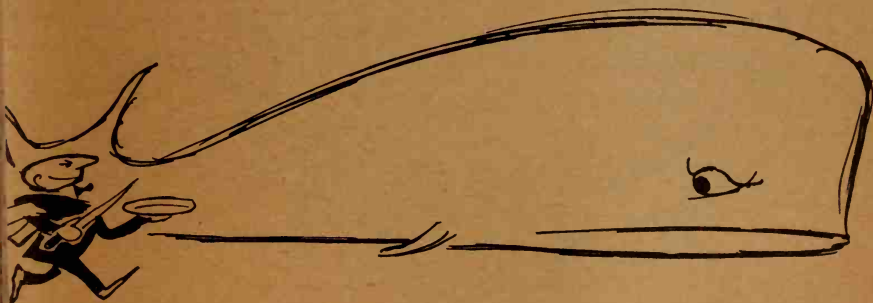
● The story goes that Mrs. Vanderbilt once demanded to know what Fritz Kreisler would charge to play at a private musicale, and was taken aback when he named a price of five thousand dollars. She agreed reluctantly, but added, "Please remember that I do not expect you to mingle with the guests." "In that case, Madam," Kreisler assured her, "my fee will be only two thousand."

WAITING ON TABLE

● A motorist stopped at a big roadside tavern for a bite of supper. His waitress had eight tables to take care of, but only one customer seemed to find fault with the service. He became so noisily abusive, in fact, that the motorist chivalrously volunteered, "If that lout is bothering you, I'll be happy to toss him out on his ear." "Lay off, mister," the waitress whispered. "That's my husband and we've worked this act down to a science. He makes the other customers feel so sorry for me that they all give me extra-large tips."

● At another midtown restaurant, popular with stage folk and columnists, the menu is the attraction, and not the service. Publisher Max Schuster asked one idle waiter, "Can you give me the time?" The waiter answered, "Sorry, that ain't my table." Schuster asked another servitor, "Which way is the washroom?" The reply was, "Mister, I only got two hands."

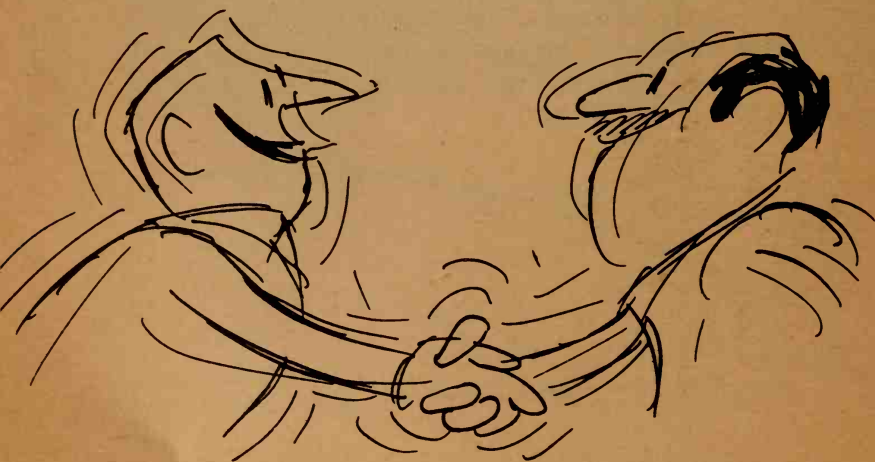
● A famous delicatessen in New York has a sign prominently displayed on the wall that reads, "We make every kind of sandwich in the world. Just ask for it." Late one night a prankster demanded a whale sandwich. The waiter stalled and said, "I'll have to speak to the boss." He came back after a hurried consultation and reported, "The boss says he's damned if he'll cut up a whale just for one sandwich."



WITS' WISDOM

● The late Joshua Liebmann, author of the fabulously successful *Peace of Mind*, presided at the funeral of one of Boston's most unpopular citizens. The next day he overheard members of the congregation tearing the reputation of the deceased into shreds. He was accused variously of being a skinflint, a cheat, a four-flusher, and a tyrant. A stranger, however, disagreed violently. "You've got the poor fellow wrong," he pointed out softly. "I happen to know he was the soul of generosity, consideration, and gallantry." "Your partner, I suppose," said somebody sarcastically. "No. I never even met him," said the stranger, "but I married the lady who divorced him some years ago."

● A fine distinction between acquaintanceship and friendship has been established by such Southern tobacco auctioneers as haven't been exported to New York for radio appearances. Several were convening in a backwoods bar, when a newcomer approached. One of the group patted him on the back and said, "Russ, you know Joe Arbuckle, don't you?" Russ grudgingly extended a hand, and allowed, "We've howdied but we ain't shook."





● A San Franciscan had just decorated a grave in the public cemetery with a garland of roses when he noticed a venerable Chinaman placing a bowl of rice on a mound adjacent. "What time," whispered the American, "would you be expecting your friend to come up and eat that rice?" "About same time," answered the Chinaman, "yours comes up to smell the flowers."

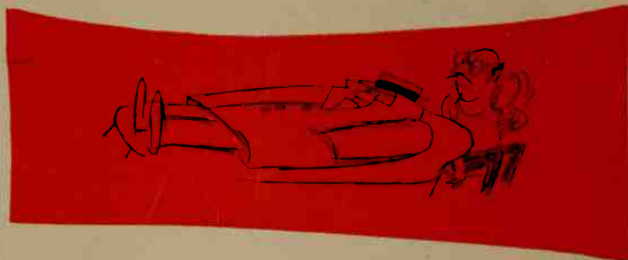
● Rita Hayworth, describing the innate courtesy and tact of the French mayor who performed the wedding ceremony for her and Ali Khan, told of the day he had to make out a passport for a wealthy but slightly disfigured old crone who had rented a chateau on the Mediterranean shore. He knew how vain the old girl was, so in the space reserved for personal description he noted, "Eyes glowing, beautiful, compelling, tender, and passionate, but unfortunately one of them is missing."

ZOOLOGY



● The favorite animal story of the late H. T. Webster, creator of Caspar Milquetoast and "Life's Darkest Moment," concerned the kangaroo who suddenly leaped twelve feet over the barrier at the Bronx Park Zoo and took off in the direction of Yonkers at eighty miles an hour. A keeper dashed up to the baffled lady who had been standing in front of the kangaroo's cage and demanded, "What on earth did you do to that kangaroo to make him run that way?" "Nothing, really," the lady declared. "I just tickled him a little." "You'd better tickle me in the same place," suggested the keeper grimly. "I've got to catch him!"

● The late Al Jolson had a cat which he told his friends was worth \$5000. Came the day when he decided to sell the animal, and the skeptical friends waited eagerly for him to return from the pet shop and disclose the selling price. "Did you get the \$5000?" they jeered. "Certainly," answered Al. "Did you think I was kidding you?" "Show us the dough," demanded the friends. "Well," admitted Al, "this pet shop fellow happened to be a little short of cash so he gave me these two \$2500 dogs instead."



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