

Pearls Of Wisdom Mid Roulette Wheels

Poet-Philosopher of Sagebrush and Sands Wins Fame In Las Vegas' Roaring Gambling Halls



Charming Betty Logan, the young newspaperwoman, who found and interviewed "Tijuana Eddie" in one of Las Vegas' notorious gambling halls.

By Betty Logan

THE Gay Divorcee, my companion, was perched on a stool in the Northern club of Las Vegas, hunched over a stack of chips at a roulette table. Dame Fortune was smiling. Only a feeble gambler myself, and growing tired of looking on I wandered toward the back of the house to watch the other games in progress, dice, twenty-one, faro bank, poker and blackjack.

One of the oldest places of its kind in town, the Northern club has seen some hilarious days and is still the mecca of the old timers. Tobacco-chewing men from the desert tilt their chairs back against its walls and swap yarns. And along with the miners, muckers and prospectors is that travel-wise class, the tourist. With unfailing instinct for ferreting out true local color they have beaten a straggling pathway to its door. So side by side with Texas Slim from the Lone Star state, Boston Bill dressed up to kill, and Happy Joe from Mexico, you'll see bespeckled Grandma Brown, the tailored Mrs. Trowbridge, retired Judge Windy, or any of the "nice" people that can now indulge that secret flare for gambling with perfect impunity, since the old double doors have swung open to all classes and both sexes.

Aimlessly starting to read current news chalked on blackboards covering one wall I was electrified by the expressive phrasing and vigorous word sketches of highlights on world affairs. This was no parrot report of news, but a comprehensive, forceful presentation with thrusts of ironic humor.

Anyone who has ever turned in news to a paper never quite loses the scent again, and my free-lance antenna signaled me the unique was in camp.

MADE inquiries of the management, and before I had a chance to explain I was acting in no official capacity, my purpose was taken for granted and I was passed to an attendant as "newspaper woman to interview Tijuana." So I met and interviewed Ellsworth E. Kerr, known in the West as Tijuana Eddie, philosopher and poet of the sand and sagebrush, and now editor of the News Reel Blackboard.

Though he talked willingly in an easy flow of words it took several visits and many hours to learn much about Tijuana himself. When pinned to direct questions, after admonishing me to remember that he "hadn't really ever been anywhere or done anything," he started to answer, but soon wandered off into a trail of rich anecdotes about people and places, intertwined with the most delightful pot-pourri of miscellaneous information I ever listened to.

Following an irrepressible urge to "go, look, see," Eddie pulled up the home roots in Michigan at an early age, and looked up into the questionable face of life and the benevolent one of the Golden Rule Jones, the mayor of Toledo, Ohio, whom he supplied with his daily Toledo Newsbee.

EDDIE remembers letters of appreciation coming to the old homestead from P. T. Barnum, when his father, a horse and cattle buyer, had supplied that insuperable showman with an especially striking pair of beauties for the ring. With the love of horseflesh coursing through his veins, the turf was a natural point of gravitation for the young adventurer. The biggest thrill was riding horses in Kentucky. Those were the days when Mrs. Van Dusen sat in her box and Colonel Bradley and Jett Ward were running their thoroughbreds, names to remain classics of the race track.



A photographer cleared a portion of the Northern Club one night and took a flash of Tijuana's Blackboard, the newspaper which boasts the largest staff of cub reporters in the world.

Here Eddie first wrote the race horse Blackboard. Being before the advent of pari-mutual tabulating, a good board writer that knew his horses could elevate or bury a horse and incidentally amass a tidy sum for himself. In the horse Eddie watched fortune come—and go.

Race horse fans may remember him as the "Tijuana Eddie" of the Tijuana Jockey club. The moniker which has clung to him through fifteen years of roaming the western states was first bestowed at the Mexican border during army days of the World War. Even the officers stood by admiringly when left-handed Sergeant Kerr, with his perfect 20-20 eye hit the target in what General Le Jeune called the most exact timing he had ever seen. They kept him there, as instructor of the target range and Browning automatic, and assistant editor to the army paper.

HE HAS summered and wintered in the desert regions, and knows when to find each face of its varied topography at its best. Those who woo the desert find her a mistress of moods and strange fancies. Intimacy is hard won and long suffering. Tijuana she has touched with gentle hands, and her gifts have been sufficient and revealing. In regions called accursed he has located springs to carry him safely through. In canyons beneath high peaks he has found spots of virgin forest from which he takes timber and chemically treats it to bring out shades of rich yellow and golden brown. Some tool work, carving, and the result is beautiful little curios and crabbage boards that are finding a steady market in the desert and hill towns.

From the plants and animals of the desert he has fashioned articles that won favor in those

Tijuana on a "cruise" into his beloved sagebrush country. Sitting in the prairie schooner is his life-long friend, Bob Wagner, who served five years in the Gran Chaco and who has a Bradstreet rating of a quarter of a million dollars.

colorful gift shops one finds all over the West, featuring Indian and western craftsmanship. A specie of cactus when combined with tanned skin and rawhide makes decorative rustic pieces of small furniture, and when he can make up his mind to kill a desert turtle he fashions it into a handsome lamp. A resident of Las Vegas now has one he treasures highly.

TIJUANA has friends among the Indians on the reservations, and he has a prescription that sounds to me very much like it had its origin in the pharmacopoeia of Indian lore—pure rattlesnake oil and greasewood oil, gently massaged three or four times a week will heal the bruised spot, reduce the swelling and relieve the soreness—"Doctor" Tijuana vouches for its soothing powers. With every kind of oil on our drugstore counters, from avocado's to whale's, that need not stretch our credulity. As for the chamiso of the mesa, commonly known as "greasewood," you may still find descendants of the early Spanish families who will tell of its value as an antidote for snake bite and lockjaw. It held a place of honor in the old Spanish gardens, and in Monterey one may still find a stray bush clinging to the base of an adobe wall.

Those diamond marks along the back of the rattler are just dollar signs to Tijuana. Besides using every drop of the oil which he has found the most healing of all, he treats the skins, converting them into beautiful wall tapestries, \$7.50 each; from the bones he makes necklaces, colored, or old ivory, strung on fine silver and copper wire, \$3.00 to \$5.00. I forgot to ask him what he did with the rattles.

He will soon leave his Blackboard News for the summer months, and go to his cabin at Mother Brown's place at Rice. Not far from the Colo-



Tijuana Eddie in person. Rich and poor come to him for his advice and to enjoy his companionship.

rado river that forms the entire California and Arizona border, it is nestled among some of nature's most fantastic sculpturing, surrounded by the legends of lost mines. Mother Brown herself is an almost legendary figure that will be perpetuated in the saga of the desert long after she has departed. Already there is "Mother Brown's Well" and "Mother Brown's Secret."

HERE Tijuana makes his headquarters, and from here he goes out with his implements, the axe and the pen, to his camp sites and caches in surrounding ranges. Back from the Turtle mountains, the Maria's, Plute range, Iron Mountains, Snaggle Tooth range, and the Riverside mountains he will bring skins and hides, ironwood for carving, material for articles and stories, snakes and turtles—sometimes fossils and samples of ore.

Of course, he has prospected. Tijuana has three claims, two in California, one in Nevada. His path has often crossed with that of Death Valley Scotty's, and when in each other's vicinity they pause for a friendly chat.

Most precious of all to Tijuana is the time and material the desert has afforded him for writing. He has recently received recognition from magazines and periodicals, and this summer he will again work on a manuscript and collect the writings he has left behind after stop-offs with friends along his nomadic trail.

In what at first struck me as rather naive contrast to his many other interests and accomplishments such as prospecting, amateur geologist, writer, craftsman, crack marksman, trapper, and taxidermist, I found his most intense absorption was economics and compound usury. As he talks, beautifully simplifying the things on which our politicians have bent much of their energies only to mystify us, and you hear his clear dynamic voice charged with restrained oratory—you wonder if here is not the natural vocation of this vivid personality. Though unsympathetic with all radicalism, he remains a sincere and steady worker for the "little man," giving willingly of his time to exert what influence he can through speeches and work on petitions and committees.

MOST of Las Vegas that gets down town, steps into the Northern every day to read Tijuana's pithy writings, and comments on national affairs. It becomes a habit like morning Java. The News Reel Blackboard's are varied enough to make a well-rounded little organ. The gist of current events are summarized, the weather and market report noted. Tijuana adds his elegantly concise editorials, excerpts from his writings, a joke, and an occasional verse. Left-over spaces are filled with quips for the "stiffs"—a pet public of Eddie's, the brotherhood with which he has traveled and split his bank roll. One of the "boys", as he calls them, came down from the north one day with a little quatrain for Tijuana and it was given due consideration:

"This News Reel is so short and fat, that we often find it breathing heavily, and plodding laboriously behind you."

"Due to the fact that the News Reel Blackboard has the largest staff of reporters on earth we only hope to catch up with you from time to time, as you travel swiftly along the highway of life."

"One of our cubs, a member of the S. I. G. A. (Stiffville International Grapevine Association) was in Jimmy Perkin's gambling house this week. You know Jimmy's place, the one in Spokane. Anyway, he snatched this verse. It was hanging on the wall:

"For when the one great Markler Comes to write against your name He scribes not that you won or lost But how you played the game."

Who Stole The Governor's Pants?



G. B. Sikes



Robert Bounds

The constable rushed to the outskirts of Tempe and there they were—the governor's pants—walking along the road with a man inside them. The governor's coat was there, too, and a man likewise was inside THAT.

By Jerry McLain

MANY a governor has "lost his shirt," but Governor Benjamin B. Moeur, Arizona's colorful physician-governor, has lost his pants!

It was a perplexing situation.

There was Dr. Moeur, wanting his pants, and he couldn't have them, even if he was the governor.

There were two men in jail, neither caring if he ever again heard of the pants, the governor or the Tempe, Ariz., police.

But the desire of the two prisoners to forget, even if they had nothing to forgive, didn't in the least help Arizona's governor get back his pants, nor the linen suits that would have felt so nice

and cool in the warm weather.

It all happened when Governor and Mrs. Moeur stepped out to a banquet in Tempe, and returned to find that burglars—apparently unaware they were visiting the home of the state's chief executive—had slashed the screen of a rear door and in a tour of the dwelling had outfitted themselves with the latest in "what a governor wears."

Other articles of the governor's wardrobe were carried away in a suitcase. Worse yet, the burglars had selected his summer garb.

Mrs. Moeur lost no time in notifying the police, and Harry E. Pearl, Tempe's constable, soon located two men on the outskirts of Tempe, apparently headed for the bright lights of Phoenix, Arizona's capital city, nine miles away.

"WELL, fellow, the governor's pants don't fit you very well."

If the man wasn't surprised, he was chagrined. But the pants really were a poor fit, so he didn't lose much when he had to give them up.

The sequel was written weeks later when, with summer temperatures soaring, the State of Arizona wrote him to the case of the governor and his missing pants.

G. B. Sikes, 41, and Robert Bounds, 34, who pleaded guilty to burglary of the governor's home shortly before they were to be tried in Maricopa county superior court, were hustled off to the Arizona prison to serve one year.

And Governor Moeur got back his linen suits, which had been admitted in evidence, and by law couldn't be released until Sikes and Bounds were acquitted or convicted.