

THE HOTEL CLERK ON VACATIONS

BY IRVIN S. COBB

"G OIN" somewhere on your vacation?" asked the House Detective of the St. Reckless.

"I believe it's customary," said the Hotel Clerk. "At this season it is generally expected that a couple who've been perfectly happy and satisfied all winter in a two-room-and-a-Boston-bull-terrier flat will feel it incumbent upon them to go off and spend all the money they've been able to save up since this time last year, for two weeks of something that's not near as comfortable as what they get every day at home."

"Where do you think you'll go?" asked the House Detective.

"Well, I don't know," said the Hotel Clerk. "It's a matter that a careful man ought to give a lot of thought to. If your system is all run down—and every man who's working on a salary develops that kind of system, I notice, along about this time—you ought to be very careful about picking out the place where you go to recuperate or you'll be coming home a complete wreck. It takes a strong and hardy nature to endure the rigors of the average vacation. A business trip is all very well, but when you're embarking on a pleasure excursion, as the poet says, you should safeguard your health."

"They say the Thousand Islands is pretty fine," suggested the House Detective.

"Yes, they do so," said the Hotel Clerk. "But after you've closely examined three hundred and thirty-three and a third of them, all looking just alike, you begin to sort of lose interest in the other six hundred and sixty-six islands and two-thirds of an island."

"Well," said the House Detective, "there's plenty of other places you could go. I just thought maybe I could help you out."

"Much obliged," said the Hotel Clerk. "But when you come right down to the hemstitches, Larry, there's not such later gets strength enough to turn and a wide range to choose from. I've tried 'em all, from the classy resort, having all the latest conveniences, such as the automatic stopecockroach and the folding-bedbug to the dear old farmhouse up in the mountains, where the butter runs during the early part of the season, on being stabbed with the moist warm blade of a kitchen knife, but bite back. I've paid eighty cents for the Summer hotel portion of much-rooms on toast, consisting of a scorched slice of bread, under a glass dome, with a shirtwaist set strewn carelessly over it, only when I looked closer I saw they were not moss agate studs but mushroom buttons given to me as much as two bones for the far-famed shore dinner, composed of three burglar-proof clams, part of a slawey fried egg, and a fine-tooth comb with a skin wrapp'd around it, called a planked shad. I've gone to the seaside to take the morning refreshing dips in the salt water, and forgotten to take any compass because I was busy pinning for the mountain scenery. Then I've gone to the mountains, but couldn't enjoy the scenery because I longed with a great pas-



ONE OF THEM HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY BOYS WITH A MANDOLIN

sionate long for the sound of the surf rolling up in a majestic splendor and splashing against the foundations of the bathing pavilion, the tin type gallery, and the moving-picture show. And I've stopped at places where they'd charge an invalid corkage on his hot water-bottle."

"Where wuz it you went to last year?" inquired the House Detective.

"I went to one of the fast card places," said the Hotel Clerk. "Nothing below a ten-spot could get in. By borrowing several diamonds from friends of mine, I managed to look enough like big casino to slip by."

"What made you fall for a joint like that?" asked the House Detective.

"I became enamored of a picture on the back of a circular they sent out," explained the Hotel Clerk. "It was a work of art. It showed a regular Howard Chandler Christy boy sitting on the green sward dressed up in a ye-heave-yeo necktie and a pair of those non-creasable duck pants like you see in a clothing ad, playing a mandolin for a lovely lithograph in a ball-room costume, who was paddling a brand new birchbark canoe up a creek an inch and a half wide. In the background the silvery moon was rising over a noble verandah full of beauty and chivalry, the same as the grandstand of a Southern fair the day they have the country trot. Under-



ONE OF THOSE LIFE-OF-THE-PARTY BOYS

neath was a line saying rooms would be five a day and up. But when I got there, they didn't have anything left but ups.

"Didn't the rest of it pan out according to the chromo?" said the House Detective.

"Well, not so as to cause any grateful guest to rush away and make an affidavit," said the Hotel Clerk. "Any young gentleman who sat on the green sward in front of that hotel, in a pair of duck pants, couldn't play the mandolin with any degree of satisfaction. He'd have to play the grind organ, so he could have one hand free to skimish for the red ants. That hotel may have been shy in some regards, but she excelled in ants. Persistent little creatures they were. They'd play Mystic Maze in and out of a peck-a-boo waist until they got dizzy and fell down the back of some passing neck. I got enough red ants in the two weeks I was there to last me through the Fall and well into the Winter."

"How 'bout the gal with the canoe?" asked the House Detective. "Didn't they have her, neither?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, she was there," said the Hotel Clerk. "But she didn't sport many low-neck princess gowns, nor while I was around. She was shamed like a model tenement, and she didn't wear any shoes, and she had those large, dark red, self-repellent feet, and she lived down by the river in a tent with her husband, who was a bushy party with thumb nails

like a couple of Brazil nuts, and they had seven children all the same age. They sold the hotel its fresh fish."

"The assemblage on the veranda was also a disappointment in some respects, Larry. Most of the time it was dogged up with stout ladies that came down in the morning with so many diamonds on that they looked like a bunch of crystal wedding celebrations. When they worked through the breakfast card as far as the date, line and union label at the bottom, they'd come out on the porch and sit in a row and be exclusive. A lady with two stomachers and a tiara wouldn't speak to a lady with only one dinky little stomacher, and no tiara at all, and the poor, forlorn lady who only had a pair of diamond earrings would sit there alone with 'em hanging down on each side of her unhappy countenance like quotation marks enclosing a harsh word, and she'd have to talk to herself."

"It was one of those establishments where everybody dressed for 'inner and then tried to look like they were used to doing it every night at home. Their attire was so correct it was painful. An elderly gentleman would come toddling down stairs in his dinner coat and his lingerie vest, accompanied by his lady wife, all in white, with three kinds of jewelry. He'd be looking like one of those foolish birds they call a penguin, and she'd be a cross between a floating island and a memorial window. But they couldn't keep from reverting to form when they began to eat. He needed a laprobe and a pair of overshoes when he tried to invade a grapefruit, and when she went to the consommé the general effect was something like draining the baas tuba after a hard street parade. But after dinner they'd go out on the veranda, and when the band wasn't playing they'd have a strictly private discussion in a loud, clear tone of voice about whether they'd buy another touring car right away or try to struggle along a month or so with the four or five they had."

"You know how it is, Larry. After a while grandeur palls on you. But I've always been very proud of the fact that I once paid eight dollars a day for a room the size of a bureau drawer."

"I think it was the year before that I went to the seashore. But I didn't care for the water I had. It was a warm Summer, and he was so open-pored,

That's my luck at a Summer hotel. I always catch a barber that's having a tooth treated and a waiter that suffers from the extremes of weather. I seemed to notice the open pores in my water this first day, and after that I asked him to bring me mine in a covered dish. He did, and then it reminded me of rain on a tin roof."

"So I didn't think so much of him. If I went out on the beach after dinner I butted into one of those life-of-the-party boys telling back-page humor to Maggie Giggie and her cousin, Mame Gurgle, or else a flock of mosquitoes the size of homing pigeons came out of the marsh and tried to address me. If I struck to the porch I missed the child comedian, but I always got wedged into a corner by some stout old party who went to sleep with his mouth ajar, so he looked like a general delivery window in the face and made noises with his larynx like a scallion coming up to breathe in Puget Sound."

"Well, there's them country farmhouses where they have home cooking and everything," put in the House Detective.

"I've taken that course at the Summer, normal, likewise," said the Hotel Clerk. "You lay awake in your snug little bedroom upstairs over the kitchen refecting a smelling content between a coal-oil lamp, a bouquet of wax flowers in the parlor, and the afterglow of the fried cabbage. A pinching bug a little larger than a Philadelphia roasting chicken comes in and tries to bust his brains out against the ceiling, and can't make it, and gets disgusted and falls in your eye and wants to settle there and make his home. A dog lies at something for dinner that didn't agree with him gets under your window and refers to the matter. And so you lay there thinking of the close, stuffy city where the lights are all lit on Broadway, and where the roof-gardens are going, and where the electric fans are buzzing, and where everything must be miserable, and then about about daylight, when you're just drifting off, all the roosters in the county and the adjoining county begin to practice one of Victor Herbert's pieces, and you have a perfectly grand time. Or else you walk three miles through the dust to a roadhouse and crowd into a box stall and drink meadow lark booze. You know the meadow lark brand—the kind that makes you want to sit in the damp grass and sing to yourself. And you order soft-boiled eggs of a morning and when they come you're sorry you didn't make it dropped eggs, because the best thing you can do with that kind of an egg is to drop it hurriedly and then wash it down. And you go out in the woods, and the poison ivy gets you. Leastwise, it always gets me. Poison ivy will skip right on by fully 30 young, teething babies, all with a predisposition toward nettles rash, in order to touch me up with red spots until I feel like a Studebaker wagon."

"It does look like you're kind of limited," said the House Detective. "What d'ye reckon you'll do?"

"I think maybe I'll stay in and have a real vacation," said the Hotel Clerk.

Conversations with an Old Sport

IN WHICH HE HANDS OUT SOME DOPE CONCERNING THE GOSPEL OF FAIR PLAY.

BY JIM NASLUM.

THE day Old Sport arrived home from a short visit, after taking the Western trip with the team, he met the Parson coming out of the postoffice.

"Well, brother," said the Parson, "no doubt you enjoyed your trip with the team boys, but after spending so much of your time with the worldly and seeing so much wickedness, I suppose it is a great relief to get back into a Christian atmosphere again."

"Well, I'll admit it is a great change," replied the Old Sport, "but getting down to cases on this here Christian atmosphere dope, I'm compelled to say that I have busy pinning for the mountain scenery that I've seen splattered around over the world of sport and transplant it in your church pews, then irrigate it pretty thoroughly with some of the milk of human kindness, there'd be a thundering lot of your congregation that'd have a better batting average on the Recording Angel's book. I've been attending divine services to some extent, yes, and I've been listening to a brand of gospel that hasn't ever been preached to any great extent in this little old dump of a town, and it hasn't showed its mug in the pulpits throughout the country to the extent that it should, either."

"What denomination is that?" asked the Parson.

"The denomination of Fair Play," replied the Old Sport. "It is a denomination that preaches a practical sort of a religion in a practical sort of a way. A gospel of action and not of words, that has to do with every action of your everyday life. The Bible is splattered full of it, but too many of you sky pilots lose it in your interpretation. Have you ever considered, Parson, that 'fair play' is merely a shorter and simpler way of saying 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you' It is the Golden Rule belted down."

"Let me tell you, Parson, that you can wade through scripture from Genesis to Revelations, and when it comes right down to cases you'll not find anything that isn't expressed in those two words: 'fair play.' It is not only the cornerstone on which Christianity is built, but it is the whole framed structure. If you pulled it out you'd have nothing left but a flimsy shell of plaster that would crumble

into ruins at the first stiff breeze. And let me give you a tip, Parson, that there's a thundering lot of your congregation who are plugging along through life trying to live in that flimsy shell right now."

"I'm not saying that this condition exists because you aren't dealing out the right dope, Parson, but I do say



COULDN'T HELP WONDERING HOW MUCH HE WOULD HAVE PULLED DOWN AT A CONVENTION OF BANKERS OR A CHURCH CONFERENCE.

and I'm wise to the fact that there are a lot of guys connected with sports who taint the air worse than a glue factory. But let me tell you that you've got them among your merchants and your doctors, in politics, law offices and pulpits, too. You'll find them everywhere, and the atmosphere surrounding a lot of those business joints isn't a blamed bit purer."

"I wish I could, Parson. I wish I could," replied the Old Sport. "It's all right to hand out these spels about the ante for the distribution of the Pearly Gates, and all that, but it'd take a powerful lot of preaching to make me think that there was much wickedness in a man who has always played fair with his fellowmen, no matter what his calling or position in this life may be. I've got a good sized bunch that will be mighty hard to kick out of my system, but he is one guy who has about as close to a cinch on the Pearly Gates as it is possible for mortal man to have."

"You'll find a bunch of long-faced old skinflints in this world, Parson, who think that they have the Pearly Gates cinched just because they cough up the ante for the distribution of the basket every Sunday, and they fondly imagine that when they climb up the Golden Stairs they are going to enter the New Jerusalem through the passageway that leads to the private box. I believe some of these old crabs really nurse the dope that they are eternal holders of the ante, but let me tell you, Parson, that I know a lot of good square sports who have always played fair and never kicked a man when they had him down, feeling that they'd drop him from the so-called higher classes of this old dump of a misguided world, and who are scorned by a lot of hypocritical old hypocrites when the season closes and the Recording Angel figures up the official averages."

"Let me give you an instance, Parson. Coming home from the West last week, I sat in a game of poker with three guys who were perfect strangers to me. In the course of the game I copped four kings, two of the fellows dropped out, but the other guy had his mug plastered up against a royal flush. I raised his bet, of course, and would have kept right on down to my shirt as four kings are good enough any time to take a chance at betting your head off. The other guy was sitting behind the highest hand in the deck, but he stoney called it to the limit, but he refused to take advantage of an opportunity where he had no chance to lose. Now, how many respected business men have we in this world of the New Jerusalem, they'd at least find enough ball players loafing along the curb stones of the Golden Streets to scare up a game of rounders."

"I hope you'll pardon me for handing you this little spiel, Parson, but I've been wound up on this subject for some time, and you came along and touched off the spring."

"Oh, that's all right," replied the

Parson, "go ahead. I'll confess I'm interested in your views. Who knows but you will make me a convert and an ardent worker for your gospel of fair play?"

"I wish I could, Parson. I wish I could," replied the Old Sport. "It's all right to hand out these spels about the ante for the distribution of the Pearly Gates, and all that, but it'd take a powerful lot of preaching to make me think that there was much wickedness in a man who has always played fair with his fellowmen, no matter what his calling or position in this life may be. I've got a good sized bunch that will be mighty hard to kick out of my system, but he is one guy who has about as close to a cinch on the Pearly Gates as it is possible for mortal man to have."

"You'll find a bunch of long-faced old skinflints in this world, Parson, who think that they have the Pearly Gates cinched just because they cough up the ante for the distribution of the basket every Sunday, and they fondly imagine that when they climb up the Golden Stairs they are going to enter the New Jerusalem through the passageway that leads to the private box. I believe some of these old crabs really nurse the dope that they are eternal holders of the ante, but let me tell you, Parson, that I know a lot of good square sports who have always played fair and never kicked a man when they had him down, feeling that they'd drop him from the so-called higher classes of this old dump of a misguided world, and who are scorned by a lot of hypocritical old hypocrites when the season closes and the Recording Angel figures up the official averages."

"Let me give you an instance, Parson. Coming home from the West last week, I sat in a game of poker with three guys who were perfect strangers to me. In the course of the game I copped four kings, two of the fellows dropped out, but the other guy had his mug plastered up against a royal flush. I raised his bet, of course, and would have kept right on down to my shirt as four kings are good enough any time to take a chance at betting your head off. The other guy was sitting behind the highest hand in the deck, but he stoney called it to the limit, but he refused to take advantage of an opportunity where he had no chance to lose. Now, how many respected business men have we in this world of the New Jerusalem, they'd at least find enough ball players loafing along the curb stones of the Golden Streets to scare up a game of rounders."

"I hope you'll pardon me for handing you this little spiel, Parson, but I've been wound up on this subject for some time, and you came along and touched off the spring."

"Oh, that's all right," replied the

more spirit of fair play, more dejected for an equal chance all around, in sports today than there is in everyday business methods."

"An equal chance and a fair deal is the very spirit of sport, without which it ceases to be sport and becomes a graft. You don't cough up the ante to get into a prizefight to see a heavy-weight knock the eternal daylight out



THINK THEY HAVE THE PEARLY GATES CINCHED BECAUSE THEY COUGH UP THE ANTE FOR THE CONTRIBUTION BASKET EVERY SUNDAY.

of some skinny little shrimp of a featherweight like you see the strong combinations of capital putting it all over the little guy in the business world. Not on your life. In the sporting world each contestant has to be doped out to have a chance or there is nothing doing. The trouble with a lot of you guys, Parson, is that you place yourself on a pinnacle so high above the world of sport that you can't see its good points with the Lick telescope. And if you do condescend to take a peep at it, you plaster your mug against the wrong end of the telescope."

"Now, while we are on the subject of prizefighting, which this old dump of a world probably regards as the lowest form of sport, let me tell you about an incident which made a dent in my thinking machinery that time can never plug up. I was planted in a bunch of low brows at the ringside one night when, just before the windup came on,

a weazen-faced cripple kid crawled through the ropes and leaned on a crutch in the middle of the ring. The shriveled little body was twisted and distorted, and the prematurely aged face had physical and mental suffering plastered all over it. The noisy mob instantly buttoned up the gabs to see what was going to come off, and the kid's weazen little face opened and

lot of those long-faced old crabs who like to chuck a few coins where the rest of the world will hear them jingle and know all about it would only show half the charity that is being pulled off every day in the world of sport that nobodies would ever see. A cold dump of a world would be splattered with a little more happiness, and the sunshine would filter through the chinks into the dark corners with a little more frequency."

"It is the spirit of fair play that prompts charity, Parson, and the spirit of fair play is the heart of every Christian impulse. And let me give you the tip that 'fair play' an equal chance and being a good loser, are the little lessons that every sensible man should pull out of sports. That's the Christian atmosphere that I've been pumping into my lungs, Parson, and it's the gospel that I've been spreading. If you can beat it in this old dump of a village you've got to show me."

"I'll confess there's some food for thought there, anyway," replied the Parson.

"Well, think it over, Parson; I'll see you later," replied the Old Sport. "As the old sport passed the parsonage next morning on his way to the blacksmith shop to pitch quotes, the Parson halted him."

"Come around to the church next Sunday," he said; "the text of my sermon is to be 'Fair Play, or the Golden Rule Bolled Down.'"

"I'll be on the job," replied the Old Sport.

Talking Record Says Too Much.

New York Tribune.

"Take it from me," said a commercial traveler who has just returned from a long trip, "if you have the talking machine habit at your house and you send records to your wife with loving messages, have a dress rehearsal every time before you address the package. I sent a record from Chicago, and when it came my wife called in the family, the children and my mother-in-law to 'hear papa talk.' Things must have got mixed in the shipping department at Chicago, because it wasn't papa's voice at all, and what the machine did say was probably arranged to be heard anywhere except in a family circle. My wife stopped it in time, but her mother-in-law, as I said, be sure and avoid trouble and insist on the dress rehearsal."

Submarine for Sponge-Fishing.

London Echo.

Illustrations, together with a full description, are given in a Parisian journal of a novel type of submarine intended for the sponge-fishing industry on the coast of Tunisia. The vessel is built wholly of iron and is 16.4 feet in length by 5.24 feet in diameter, the general form being cylindrical, with hemispherical ends. It is intended to carry two men, and is fixed so as to enable the vessel to move along the sea bottom. An electric lamp with reflectors fixed in front will serve to illuminate the bed of the sea, and a glazed spy hole in the bow of the vessel enables the crew to seek out and to gather the sponges.