

'WE NEVER HANG ANYBODY UNLESS HE'S NOBODY'

SAYS THE HOTEL CLERK

BY IRVIN & COBB

"It was mighty strange about that last murder trial they had over in New Jersey," mused the Hotel Clerk.

"I didn't see nothin' so strange about it," said the House Detective of the St. Reckless, speaking in the professional tone befitting one who had once belonged to the uniformed force. "The lady wuz found dead in a swamp, as I remember, and her husband couldn't properly explain where he wuz the night she larned there, and he wuz showed to be in the habit of takin' a club to her every once in a while and labelin' her features with one of them places marked X showin' where a blow was struck, as the newspapers say. Of course, they didn't have no actual proof that 'twuz him croaked her, but puttin' one thing with another—"

"I didn't mean that," said the Hotel Clerk. "The strange part was they didn't find him guilty. I can't understand it. It must have been a serious blow to state pride and a deep blot on New Jersey's fair escutcheon. I wouldn't be surprised to hear they'd sent up to the escutcheon works for a new one. I can't imagine what could have come over those jurors. I understand there's still considerable suppressed feeling against them in Hoboken, Weehawken and environs."

"It don't usually turn out that way over here," said the House Detective.

"Not that I recall," said the Hotel Clerk. "Heretofore getting tried for murder in our sister state, she is our sister—has been something like being chased the length of a thorough vestibuled train and thrown off at a hump factory without stopping the train. Those New Jersey jurors must have begun to get soft-fibbered and weak-kneed since their state Legislature abolished the good old slipnose under the left ear, of their fathers, and voted in the comparatively tame and uninteresting Morris chair having straps on the arms and live wires running down its legs. Up until the time they installed electrical features in the Trenton penitentiary, you'd read that the indictment had been returned and shortly thereafter you'd see it printed under a Tom's River dateline that the condemned man spent several hours of his last night on earth playing the rational game of pinochle with the death watch, named Heiney and August, after which he slept as peacefully as a little child, but arose early and donned the suit of neat black that had been provided for him by Sheriff Buitenhelm, ate a hearty breakfast, consisting of ham and eggs, muck-melon, canned corn, ice cream, country sausage, three cups of coffee, doughnuts, buckwheat cakes, a cigar and two kinds of pie, custard and mince—and announced that he was prepared to meet his God."

"We weren't in the habit of hearing much about the trials, because they were so brief and satisfactory as hardly to merit passing mention. The procedure was something like a military court-martial of a suspected revolutionist, with the Central American and something like one of those English trials at the Old Bailey, where the presiding Jus-



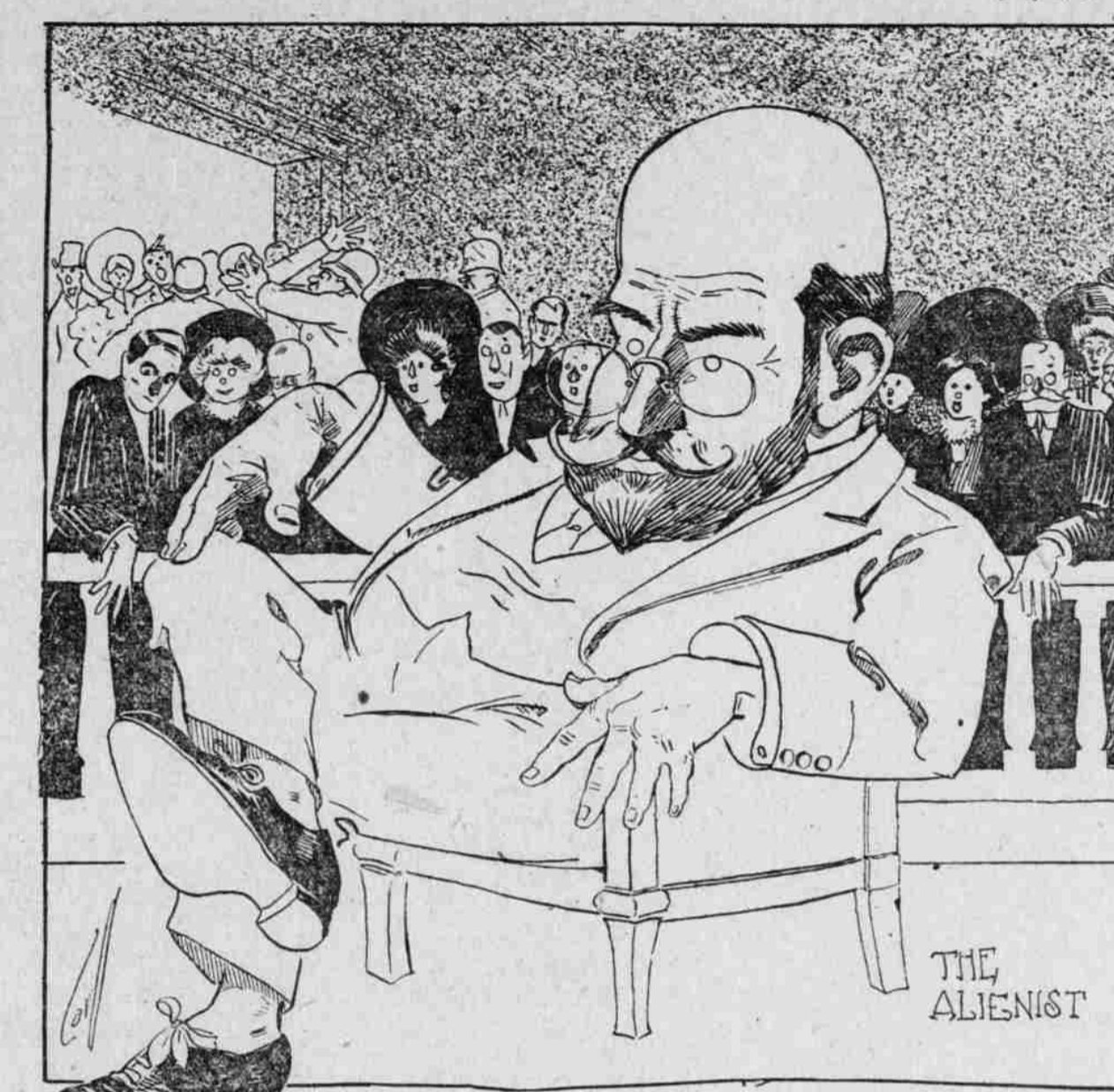
"GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY, AND IF NOT WHY NOT?"

dice is in a hurry to get home to dinner with the High Sheriff or the Lord Mayor or Sir Thomas Lipton or somebody, and so, in a brisk tone of voice, he asks the cringing wretch at the bar whether he's guilty or not guilty and, if not, why not, and then inserts part of his wig into a neat, black cap, such as a fat traveling man wears on a railroad train in this country, and takes a peep at the calendar and decides that Friday fortnight will be a very good day for it, and everything's as good as settled before the foreman of the jury gets through writing 'without extenuating circumstances' on the verdict.

"Over in Jersey 'twas only slightly different. About the time the lawyer for the defense was concluding the foolish formality of summing up, an elderly gentleman in black, with rope lint on his clothes, would quietly approach the defendant and ask him what size collar he wore, and if he was as heavy as he looked to be, and at that the word would run through the crowded court that Colonel Van Hise, the ever polite and accommodating official hangman, was on the job, getting the necessary plans and specifications. That's the way it was until lately. The only thing a man could feel safe in committing in New Jersey was suicide, and even then there was the awful thought that they might put the bee on him after he was dead by burying him in the state.

"How different, how very different, with us here in New York, Larry! Over there, they've been accustomed to hanging nearly everybody and over here we hang nobody that's anybody and rarely ever anybody that's nobody."

"Ever now and then we do manage to



THE ALIENIST

convict a guy for puttin' some other guy away with a dose out of a dark bottle, or some such game," amended the House Detective.

"Since you mention it, I believe that oversight has been allowed to happen once in a great while," said the Hotel Clerk. "But the Supreme Court can always be depended upon to rectify it as soon as they get around to it, which will be after 150,000 other cases on the calendar can be disposed of, which they do dispose of at the rate of from two to four every Winter. The only drawback is that the guilty party has to stay in jail 20 or 40 years before the learned Justice

Spillfinger or McGugging, as the case may be, can begin the congenial task of blasting reversible errors out of the record. And so they order a new trial, but by that time the witnesses are all dead or in jail themselves, and serves them right, too, and a third generation has grown up which feels no interest in the person that was put out of the way away back winder in 1897, and so they turn the prisoner out of his cosy cell, where he's been writing autographs and eating the cocanut layer cake and the chocolate fudge sent him by admiring ladies who read his sad story as told by Nell Bunkley in the Evening Exhaust, and he gets a job writing for the magazines and bulldozes his villa over on Long Island and is looked up to.

"But when insanity is the plea and there's a defendant that's got a large available cash balance, or his family has that where the conditions become ideal for sailing and boating. If he happens to be one of those real sports from Sportylvania, that's never had anything of importance under his hat except the part in his hair, and if the lady in the case is a lovely model, who once posed for the leading house, sign and portrait painter in Pittsburg, and if the crime took place in some quiet, secluded spot like the corner of Forty-second street and Broadway, at a quarter past five on a Saturday afternoon, and if the descriptive writers are feeling in good health at the time, and if all of the little troupes of performing adjectives are ready, and if the alienists don't begin cutting the union



THE OLD-FASHIONED DOCTOR

rate on one another in order to get the job, why, then it's time for every one to put on his bathing trunks and jump in and splash up. First, they get the jury. That's the start of it. It only takes ten or twelve weeks, or in extreme cases, four months. And when the box is filled, they tell the prisoner to stand up and look at the jury and the jury to stand up and look at the prisoner, thereby providing a treat for all concerned. Then they shove all the facts into the back ground, if there are any facts, and trot out their expert testimony and compel those twelve real estate dealers and delicatessen princes and retired fair dealers to sit and listen to brutal disclosures in regard to the pneumogastric and other intimate subjects that should remain forever sacred to the individual who owns them, until their poor tired brains turn to mayonnaise and they don't know whether the medulla oblongata is a

grand opera or the name of a Spanish restaurant, but are rather inclined to think it is. This part is very important, Larry. It's called informing the jury."

"Is them alienists wot testify in murder trials the same ones wot also do the alienating in divorce suits?" asked the House Detective.

"You're probably thinking of the special co-respondents," said the Hotel Clerk. "An alienist is a family doctor who hates the night work. There was a time when a doctor wasn't expected to do anything but doctoring. In Winter time he went to bed in his pants and his ear muffs, and his horse kept beating the shafts with the bridle pushed up on his forehead. He made his rounds carrying a gallon crock of eight-year-old calomel in one hand and in the other dark blue pills resembling the style of ammunition that was once used in a Navy six. But nowadays, if he dislikes the late hours and loses all his patients, either through them getting wise or else dead, he can buy himself a pair of gold-rimmed eye glasses and trim his whiskers down to a point like an evergreen in a cemetery, and if he can climb up on a witness chair all fatted out with importance like a trained sea lion and be prepared to reverse himself as often as a quarter-mile track, why, he's an alienist and amply qualified to make an appropriate answer to a hypothetical question beginning as follows:

"Assuming, doctor, that on the night in question the prisoner had been eating a large quantity of things, or else drinking them; and assuming that he had a breath like a family grocery store; and assuming that his eyes rolled from side to side the same as a china doorknob, only different; and assuming that a man's souce is his castle, as the English lawyers would say; and assuming that he's willing to pay well for what you are about to answer; and assuming that his Uncle John Henry, commonly known in the evidence as Exhibit A, had to wear cotton in his ears to keep his brains from blowing his side-whiskers off; and assuming that they were acutely maniacal side-whiskers, which all side-whiskers necessarily are; and assuming that his hair was quite mussed up; and assuming that an Irishman wears red suspenders to keep his trousers up; and assuming that he was afraid to go home in the dark and—"

"Wot talk have you?" put in the House Detective. "If it's a murder trial, why don't they tell the jury about the murder?"

"It's not customary," said the Hotel Clerk, "and besides, it might confuse their minds as to the main issue, which is whether they ought to turn the defendant loose and give him his pistol back and let him resume his flirtations with Mary Widder and Maudie Graw, or else send him up-state to enjoy the society of Mattie Wann awhile. That's a joke of my own, Larry, and I'd thank you to laugh heartily."

"Well, anyway, we never hang any innocent men in this town," said the House Detective.

"I know a lot of innocent men that I could spare," said the Hotel Clerk. "Bein' innocent is a crime in this town, anyhow."

Conversation with an Old Sport

IN WHICH HE TALKS AT LENGTH ON THE "COLLEGE ORNAMENTS."

BY JIM NASIUM.

"TELL you Dad, she's a swell bunch of skirts, all right, and I'll gamble that she won't be in the family a year till you're a blamed sight more stuck on her 'n I am. I've shown enough goods to cinch my job in the big leagues now, an' when the season closes we're going to hook up and paddle down the stream of life together. And take it from me, you'll be blamed proud to float on the same raft with her. I ain't goin' to throw you down, Dad, 'cause no bunch of skirts that ever floated could make me leave you at the post, but you're comin' into the stretch in the race of life now, an' she'll be a blamed nifty little filly to be trotting at your side when you go under the wire." The Kid puffed out like a pointer pigeon as he got this out of his system.

"That's all right, Kid," replied the Old Sport, "she may be just the swell little filly that you say she is. But let me hand you the tip that picking women isn't a blamed bit like picking pointers. A filly in skirts may set the circuit on fire in her maiden race, but after the marriage stakes she's mighty apt to balk at the barrier and show a reverse of form. Take it from me, you can't dope out the skirts from pedigree and previous performances, and the marriage stakes is a swine race in which the guy who puts up the dough is usually sold."

"And another thing, Kid, a guy is mighty apt to be more careful in buying a horse than he is in picking a wife. It seems to be the way human nature is built in this old dump of a world. When he buys a horse he'll take her out on the track and put her through a course of sprouts and watch her gait from every angle to see that she isn't straightened or sprained or wind-broke, and he'll look at her teeth and watch her feed and take care that she isn't doctored up to deceive the public eye. But when he cops out a bunch of skirts he's usually satisfied with superficial survey in the dim light of the silvery moon or the moon chandelier when she has her makeup and hair puffs on, then he kicks like a maverick when he gets her in the stable and finds that she has a cork leg and a glass eye."

"I suppose that's the case, because a lot of you kids in the mushhead stage of development, nurse the dope that marriages are made in heaven, but you take me that a thundering lot of these affinity love matches are made in the back parlor with the light turned so blamed low that a guy can't see what he is up against. Now, Kid, I'm not saying that this bunch of skirts of yours isn't just exactly the fancy piece of bris-a-brac that you say she is, but you don't want to sign any contract for life with a partner ornament, because you can buy them too cheaply. So, if you take my tip, you'll sneak around the stable about 7 A. M. and see how this filly of yours tackles the ham and eggs, and keep your eye peeled on how her peachy complexion stands the test of the kitchen range. You can take it from me that the method of picking winners for the marriage stakes is in the bedroom and back parlor department, and not in the kitchen."

"You're not sore 'cause I'm mingling



THE GUY WHO HAS LEARNED TO GLIDE THROUGH THE MERRY WIDOW WALTZ ALL NIGHT WITHOUT SPINNING HIS PARTNER

with the skirts, are you, Dad?" asked the Kid.

"No, I'm not sore, Kid," replied the Old Sport, "but you want to be mighty careful and not let the skirts put you on the bum. There's been lots of good ballplayers who have been shoved into the Down-and-Out Club by the calico. Once the kid lets the calico get his goat he's mighty apt to pay more attention to the grace of his action and to the poetry of motion when the batter aims a hit out his way than he does to getting his mitts on the ball. The skirts are all right, and the guy who fouts them off

is shy on plastering up in his garret. But at the same time, when a kid gets it so bad that he beats a trail to the corner drug store and buys up enough pimple lotion to beautify the complexion of a horned toad, then it's all off with the hall of fame gas for his. The guy who has learned to glide through the Merry Widow waltz all night without spiking his partner is mighty apt to develop into one of these 'every-move-a-picture' dubs when he hits the baseball lot.

"It's all right for the guy who can be an ornament to society without becoming a wart on the business world to butt into the society game, and he can mope over the skirts and do the 'hearts asunder' trick to his heart's content, but when you're planted on a baseball lot with five thousand excited fans looking you over and ready to hand you the gaff on the slightest provocation, you don't want to be going into any mystic seances with Dan Cupid. If you get this Laura Jean Libby dope planted in your roof garden, along about the time when your mind is reaching out and wrapping itself around your lady love, some guy will slam a bit through you and you'll wake up a step nearer the bottom of the ladder which leads to success."

"But, Dad, you talk as though a ball player shouldn't be anything else but a ball player," said the Kid.

"And let me tell you, Kid, that's pretty near enough to being the Old Sport. The guy who can rip up the sod in the outfield with line drives and butt into the milky way to pull down hits has a double-dribbled cinch on the hall of fame. He doesn't have to lead a cottillion or butt into the smart set at Newport to get his name and a half-tone cut that is a libel blasted among the want ads in the daily papers, and he doesn't have to play a dozen different hands and earn his dough in one way and pile up fame in another. All he has to do is concentrate what little mind he has on the baseball lot and chain it there so it can't jump the fence or sneak out the pass gate and he'll be talking about him long after a lot of these chimpanzee banqueters and golf-playing captains of industry have been forgotten."

"Now I don't give a brass mounted continental what diversions a ball player has, but they must be only diversions for the time being and not permanent tenants in your upper story. They've got to be obliging enough to move out during business hours. And let me give you a tip that the society gas and Mr. Daniel Cupid isn't that kind of a tenant, not by a long shot. Once Dan Cupid gets his trunk into your upper story and sets up housekeeping it's all off with the business downstairs, and you couldn't pry him out of there with a charge of dynamite."

"There's nothing to it, Kid, you never saw a guy who had been plugged through the heart good and plenty with an arrow from Dan Cupid's bow who could get his mental machinery working on anything else. And the guy who butts into the society game usually has his upper story so full of monkey dinners and pink tea biscuit shootings that business is crowded out onto the back veranda."

"And there's no two ways about it, a ball player mixes in society just about as successfully as a dose of castor oil in a seltzer lemonade. As soon as you begin to mix with the society bugs you're going to put either your ball playing or your lallygagging down for the count, that's a cinch. Stick a bunch of sun-burned brows and sinew into an open-faced suit and plant him in the center of a ballroom, and you can take it from me that he'll race the surroundings just about as much as a May Howard poster would in The Louvre. And you can gamble that he'll feel about as much at home as a fish in a sand pile. He may be right there with the iron nerve in front of the holiday crowds on the baseball lot, but the first time he'd have to cross a bare expanse of ballroom floor

by his lonesome it's a ten to one shot that he'd spike himself and fall in a dead faint. And about the first time he'd unbuckle his face and turn loose his accumulated brand of gab to that society bunch they'd all cover up and back into a corner. Can you imagine Mike Donlin, Spike Shannon, Hans Wagner or Husk Chance leading a cottillion? If you can you can stick the shoe on the other foot and it won't look a blamed bit better. Jam Harry Lehr and Reggy Vanderbil and some of that bunch into a baseball suit and plant them out on the diamond, and they'd look as much out of place as the peach bloom on an old maid's nose.



ABOUT THE TIME YOUR MIND GETS WRAPPED AROUND YOUR LADY LOVE SOME GUY WILL SLAM A HIT THROUGH YOU

nity there with a jimmy. I think it's playing the string a little too far to expect a kid to bundle up in the evening time a bunch of skirts dashes her lamps at him."

"That's all right, Kid," replied the Old Sport, "but just the same, he's got out of the grand fraternity of has-beens and never-was's, and if you hadn't swam in a different pool from the gold-fish while you were in the knowledge factory, you can take my tip that you'd have woke up to find that you was only a sucker after all. Your average ball-player in the knowledge factory is a guy who tries to spatter a lot of grand and beauty around the lot, and he wades through his college career as though he had matriculated in the living picture class. The result is that he cuts a wide swath in college circles and is elected Grand Division Superintendent of a half dozen Eta Hita Phi societies or something of that sort, and when he grabs his roll of sheepskin and his collection of personal photographs and hustles out to stab the world in the face he busts into something and wakes up to find that there is no opening for alabaster vases or human statuary."

"No, Kid, you won't find many great players who have been pulled out of the college garden, and when you do you'll notice that they are a bunch of hard-working guys who never mingled much with the Copenhagen and Drop-the-handkerchief squad while in the knowledge factory. The Wagner, the LaJoles, the Ty Cobbs and the Cy Youngs grow among the rag-weeds on the cinder dumps with a seed of tobacco in that face big enough to smother the entire aggregation of intercollegiate championships."

"These guys don't lend that chaste and artistic finish to a social gathering that is splattered around the surrounding territory by your college Adonis, but let me tell you that they are making a success out of their chosen calling, and that's a blamed sight more important factor in this old dump of a world than a lot of your college ornaments will ever pull off."

"And that's all I expect you to do, Kid, specialize and do one thing and do great in one thing. I don't give a brass-mounted continental when you do you'll notice that the guy who tinkers with the entire gamut of human accomplishments, so, whenever you feel the magnetic power of some outside force pulling at your coat tails to throw you off your stride, you want to slip your jacket and keep on plugging in Labadie dope filter through the slinks in your belly now, Kid, and see if I'm not right."

A Woman's Tears.
Burlington, Ala., Aug. Herald.
There's just no use in talking.
When a woman starts to cry,
She can have 'most any bauble
That a pile of gold can buy.
If she desired 'the ocean
And melted into tears,
Some chap would try to scoop it up,
If it took a million years!
Some of the German health insurance companies have found it a paying investment to establish a fund for the care of their consumptive policy holders.