THE HOTEL CLERK ON RESTAURANT LIFE

BY IRVIN S. COBB

"I WISH I knew some place to get a dinner," said the Hotel Clerk of the St. Reckless.

"Wot talk have you?" answered the House Detective. "I'll bet there's more'n 1000 different kinds of places to eat in here in New York, not countin' this here hotel."

"Wrong again," said the Hotel Clerk. "There're only three kinds when you come right down to cases. The poor devil who picks his living off a printed price tariff in this town hasn't got much more choice than he'd have in Paducah Junction, where he wouldn't have any choice at all.

"To start off with, there's the quick lunchery where even the slower varieties of victuals make from 800 to 1000 revolutions a minute. In the front window you find an artist in a white cap pouring buckwheat batter on a hot griddle and making it spread out nice and flat, like a hired girl's feet. Just beyond him is a large mound of toothpicks where you're perfectly free to take all the toothpicks you want and use 'em just as publicly as if you'd bought 'em out of your own pocket. Beyond this you come to the restaurant proper, this being the place where you masticate in haste and indigest at leisure. It's a case of seven seconds for getting it down and seven hours for keeping it down.

"You sit at a long table surrounded on all sides by a pleasant clamor that sounds like feeding broken queensware into a patent corn sheller. The wall finish is similar to the glazed decorations that are so familiar to all who have ever had occasion to examine the bottom of a porcelain churn. The soothing bleat of the whistle on top of the coffee boiler mingles with the bell-like tones of Percheron Pansy, the large strong girl at the front table, as she requests the chef, who's a quarter of a mile away at the rear of the cave, to make it two blue fish on the iron and let the whi cks and mpl syp come right along. On one side of you is the coming champion of middleweight dyspepsia taking his implements in hand and performing a snare drum solo on an order of baked beans. On the other is one of those food prestidigitators who makes a pass at a wedge of pie with an edged tool called an eating knife and the next moment shows you a perfectly clean plate. Immediately opposite is the rival parlor magician who executes a pleasing feat of legerdemain by hurling a portion of corned beef hash in the general direction of his face and causing it instantly to vanish. Using the Spencerian or free-hand method he then conceals a cup of coffee inside of his person deftly, slaps himself violently upon the features with a paper napkin and concludes his part of the entertainment by producing a long strip of ribbon-shaped hiccoughs, in assorted colors, from the upper portion of his waistcoat as he passes the cashier's desk going out.

"I don't think I could ever again learn to care for the quick lunch cavern, as I once did, Larry. I like music with a meal but I prefer not to furnish it myself. Besides I'm not as young as I once was, or anyway my stomach isn't. I've known it to turn and bite the hand that would caress it. I do not seem to be able any more to take a hard boiled egg the same way a man in the Malaria Belt takes a quinine pill. Every once in a while now, I find it almost absolutely necessary to stop and chew."

"You uster like them tabble dehotty places fairly well when I first knowed you," said the House Detective.

"I admit it," said the Hotel Clerk. "But you must remember that it was in the old carefree days before I got my hair cut and began to wear regular clothes. I'm afraid the dear old place in the basement of the former residence on a side street, with the dotted fly-paper and the sign 'Dinner with Wine, Forty Cents,' in the front window is not for me any more. I used to enjoy sitting down in the midst of the mail order Bohemians and the cooking sherry epicures and the other gay dogs who'd learned the trade of a gay dog at a business college. Since then I have graduated. I have learned that the difference between the clear consomme and the beef broth was that if you ordered beef broth a fat waiter put his thumb in it. If it was the consomme you wanted you got the same thing only they withheld the thumb. Most of the solid provender was furnished by the well-known firm of Sam Brothers—Flot and Jet. Your portion of the chicken was the upper thorax and the lower groin of a "Fitzsimmons-built bird that had succumbed to exhaustion while trying to get down to bantam weight. You finished off with a hard frost on a soupplate, which was known as a lemon ice, and one of these El Putrefactos that smelled like a smouldering blaze in a damp liverystable, and a chunk of cheese that had been improperly embalmed and either had to be eaten right away or else sent back to the undertaker's before the Board of Health could get wind of it and serve notice. I also find that I am now able to discern the difference between real wine and pink pokeberry juice in a pint bottle. In some lights the color seems similar but the taste is found not to be identical.

"So that's about all for the table d'hote haunt of the true Bohemian, Larry. Which really leaves us only one more variety of food emporium. I refer to the exclusive Broadway restaurant which is so called because they bar out livestock on the hoof, coochie-coochie dancers in the costume of their calling and gentlemen who are so soused that when they lean over to wet their finger tips they fall in the finger-bowls. It certainly does take away from the zest of a well-ordered meal to discover a pickled party at the adjoining table going down for the third time with a gurgling cry in a cutglass finger-bowl, and besides the waiters often get their clothing splashed up while rescuing such a person from a watery grave with a slice of lemon-peel in it. So they bar him out.

"But anybody else can get in. Only the manner of your approach to the onyx and potted-palm portals makes quite a material difference. If you drive up in a single-seated Broadway aeroplane and hand the driver a suitable pour boire, which is a French name for thirty cents of forty, I forget which and do so with the air of one to whom money is not an object, you are kindly received. One boy takes your hat and another boy takes your cane and a third, but smaller boy, takes your gloves, after which a party in a dress-suit who gets paid a large salary for looking as if he owned the place, escorts you to a table that's not more than two hundred yards from a front window. If you come with a muffled, roaring sound in a red taxicab, wearing the look about you of one who would part from as much as ten dollars in a lump sum without experiencing a cold griping or sinking sensation at the pit of the stomach, it takes more people to get you settled than it does to write an English musical comedy or bury a dead Tammany leader. And if you arrive all dressed up like a totem pole, in a costly touring car, cut empire, with your initials embroidered on the side plackets, and if you seem to exhale the very aroma of new-mown currency of the larger denominations, you are in the nature of an impressive public function. It is with the utmost difficulty that the head-waiter refrains from kissing you on the forehead and the ex-captain of German Uhlans who's taking your order, calls attention to the rare vintage stuff that's printed in red letters on the second or sporting page of the menu, in the voice of a high-church rector pronouncing the benediction over a rich congregation on an Easter Sunday.

"But suppose, on the other hand, you enter afoot and without any formal rites and ceremonies. What happens to you then? I can only explain by telling you what happens to me, because that's the way I do my entering. While the honorary pallbearers and the commander-in-chief of the uniformed forces are fussing over the guest of honor at the front table, a haughty foreign gentleman leads me the length of the place, walking far enough ahead to show that there is no friendly relation existing between us, and sequesters me in a dark corner commanding a view of a swinging door opening onto the kitchen. He then silently steals away in order to avoid the sight of my sufferings. So then I sit there famishing in the sight of plenty and at intervals rapping vainly for help on the rim of my glass.

"More time passes. Nearly all the time there is passes.

"I realize that the accounts which the papers have printed from time to time of the pangs endured by the starving poor have not been exaggerated. I shudder to think what would happen if a nice, clean little boy with plump bare legs were to venture near me unaccompanied by his parents or guardians. I wonder if my remains will be recognizable when finally discovered. Reason totters on her hungry throne. At this juncture, when all hope seems indeed fled, the waiter providentially returns. He stations himself three paces to the rear and slightly to the left of my emaciated form. He is consciously aware of the fact that he speaks more languages than I do. He is away. When it comes to silently stealing away from me a Broadway waiter has got the original Arab folded up in his own tent.

Having gone away, he then forgets me. Time passes. At length a third deputy assistant helper comes with languid grace and invades my secluded nook long enough to bestow upon me a roll that some one else has rejected, a glass of partially ice water and a napkin. He likewise withdraws in an unostentatious also proud that he can wear his tin roof shirt and his scoop-shovel evening vest in the daytime while I must wait for nightfall to put mine on; that is, if I have any to put on. He is reserved in manner yet at the same time abstracted. He steadfastly regards a fly on the far wall. His thoughts seem many miles from here. I am trying to decide what I'll eat. He is trying to remember where he left his umbrella.

"In a voice, which I can still faintly recognize as belonging to me, I state my desires. Only they are not really my desires. I had originally entertained the idea of calling for a small steak with some fried onions and possibly a little meat on the steak. But the rows of ostensibly French names that swim before my affrightened vision have thrown a Gallic kibosh over my swooning senses. But anyway, I give my order. He goes upstairs, or downstairs, or somewhere and hands my application in to the board of governors or the house committee and if nobody blackballs me, he allows another suitable period of time to elapse and then brings me something which I did not ask for, cooked in a style which I do not care for."

"Well, can't you always complain to the manager?" put in the House Detective.

"To be sure you can," said the Hotel Clerk. "And it won't bother him a bit, either. From long practice his mind is so trained that he can dismiss the matter from his recollection almost instantly. The best way, Larry, to enjoy a pleasant meal for about a dollar in a high-class restaurant in this town is to put about $4 more to it before you start."

Conversations with an Old Sport.

IN WHICH HE SAYS THAT PEPPER AND PUSH ARE THE GOODS THAT CAP PENNANTS IN BOTH BASEBALL AND BUSINESS

BY JIM NASIUM.

"WELL, Kid," said the Old Sport, as he dropped into an easy chair and filled his pipe, "the season's about over now, and the pennant's been won and lost and you guys are out of it for another year. It's a mighty good time now, Kid, to kind of look back over the season's work and figure up your mistakes. I'm not very strong on post-mortem examinations, but whenever a guy can pipe off a mistake and kick it out of his system so it won't butt in and bill the town for a return engagement, post-mortems are a mighty good thing."

"Yes, Dad," replied the kid, "but post-mortems never brought many victims to life again and gave them another chance, and I guess they never won any pennants yet, either."

"No," said the Old Sport, "but the kid who doesn't cop out a lesson now and then from his past performances as he plugs along the path of life will blamed soon get so far behind that he'll meet himself coming back. Take it from me, if mere mechanical baseball could cop the pennant you guys would have had it cinched long ago. You've got the best team in the league as far as playing baseball is concerned, but you got nosed out by a bunch of guys who got your goat on their nerve.

"The lesson I want to put you next to, Kid, is the dope that mere ability in any line will never do more for you than hold the job you've got. I don't give a continental cuss if a kid is the best in his line that has ever been dumped into the world, if he isn't there with the nerve and the pepper he'll never be more than a valued employe. The guy who gets on the Brussels and has a desk plugged with push buttons and runs the whole shooting match is the one who has a little ability seasoned with a thundering lot of pepper and scrap, and goes after a thing to either cop it or get copped himself, and never thinks of stalling for the bell.

"Take it from me, Kid, pennants in baseball are won the same as pennants in the business world. In either case the guy who is there with the nerve and the bluff and the pepper is mighty apt to put it all over the guy who is playing a lone hand with his ability. Give me the kid who has push and the snap to make his own opportunities and the nerve to bluff his way through and get away with it and he can carry my money against all the plodding ability you can stack him up against What this old dump of a world buys when it goes to the store is the goods that are advertised. There may be a blamed sight better brands on the market, but nobody knows it.

"So it's the kid who kicks the door of opportunity open himself and slips through and braces his feet against the door jam so that nobody can throw him out that we hear about, while the kid who is waiting outside for some one to ask him in gets lost in the shuffle.

"This dope about 'virtue being its own reward' is all right, and you can take my tip that that's about all the reward it gets in this old dump of a world. The guy who camps in church all day Sunday and minds his own business and keeps his mouth shut the other six days of the week, gets himself buried in the garbage along the path of life, but the political brigand who is slick enough to steal a railroad and shoots the hot air into the reporters gets to be boss of the universe. I'm not handing you this dope to show you that it is necessary to be a highway robber in order to succeed, but it only shows that the reason wickedness triumphs over righteousness in so many cases, is because righteousness is too blamed modest and is shy on pepper and push.

"Now, Kid, getting back to baseball, pepper and push add 50 per cent to a team's winning powers the same as a guy's winning powers in the business world. The guy who is as quiet as a Philadelphia Sunday, may play the game right up to the handle and plug through without a wobble, but take it from me, he's just a little bit shy in the pinches. If you'll just look over the records you'll find that the teams that have the hitters, but are shy on the gab and the nerve, are hitting in double figures in lots of games that they lose to teams that are getting fewer hits, simply because the guys with the gab and bluff get their goat and put their ability at a discount and they fall short in the pinches.

"You'll notice that the guys who make their spurt in the Spring and put it all over the other teams are usually found plugging along in the second division after harvest. These are the teams that are loaded up with blamed good players, and if mechanical ability alone could win pennants, they'd make monkeys of the other guys. They get away with the early games all right with straight ball playing, but they are soon outgamed and out-bluffed by the teams that are there with the pepper and the nerve goods.

"Take the lineup of the teams that are making the fight for the rag in both leagues, and individually they haven't got anything on the tailenders except nerve. So you can take it as a straight tip that nerve and bluff are the distinguishing points between a good baseball team and a pennant winner, the good team having the ability and the pennant winner having both the ability and the bluff. And you can take it from me, Kid, I don't give a continental cuss how much ability a guy has in any one direction, if he doesn't mix it up pretty well with nerve and bluff, and pepper and push he won't hang up many pennants in any walk of life.

"The prizefighter may have both the wallop and the science, but a yellow streak in his system will forever keep him from becoming a champion. A banker may be up to the financial game from soup to nuts, but if he is shy on the push and isn't there with the nerve in a crisis, the world will never get wise to his existence. The guy who sells prunes in the little dump store on the corner may know the mercantile business as well as the guy who runs the big department joint down town and has his ad. splattered all over the Sunday sheets, but you'll find that the guy in the big joint has the pepper and the push and the bluff. And so you'll find it with the ballplayers. A team may be there with the mechanical ability from the star pitcher all the way down to the squint-eyed bat boy, but if they haven't got the scrap and the pepper the only championship they'll ever hang up is the cellar championship. Take it from me, Kid, the difference between the able man and the successful guy in any walk of life, and it's a thundering big difference, is simply the difference between a dead one and a live one.

"Joe Wheeler won the Battle of Santiago on a bluff. John Paul Jones paddled up the English Channel on a bunch of pine boards,' and put it all over the pride of the English navy on his nerve and bluff, and the Continental Army was a joke outside of the nerve and bluff under the ragged jackets and coonskin caps. On form, the British army should have wiped up the Western Hemisphere with the handful of patriots who grabbed a pitchfork and sailed into them in 1776, but form doesn't cut much ice when it stacks up against nerve and grit and gameness.

"On form, few picked the New York Giants as pennant possibilities last Spring, but they're getting away with the stunt just the same in spite of the dope sheets of the wise guys. On form, the Detroit Tigers haven't got anything on several other teams that are taking their dust. But these two teams have got away with a thundering lot of games during the season that they had no license to on form, simply because they out-gamed and out-bluffed the other guys. If you'll keep your eyes peeled on the Giants in a game you'll notice that they have a thundering lot of chin-music to spit out to the other guys when they're changing sides, and let me tell you that right there between innings they're doing a thundering lot to cop that pennant. The St. Louis Americans were never a pennant possibility till they stuck a couple of scrappy players like Hobe Ferris and Jimmy Williams in the infield.

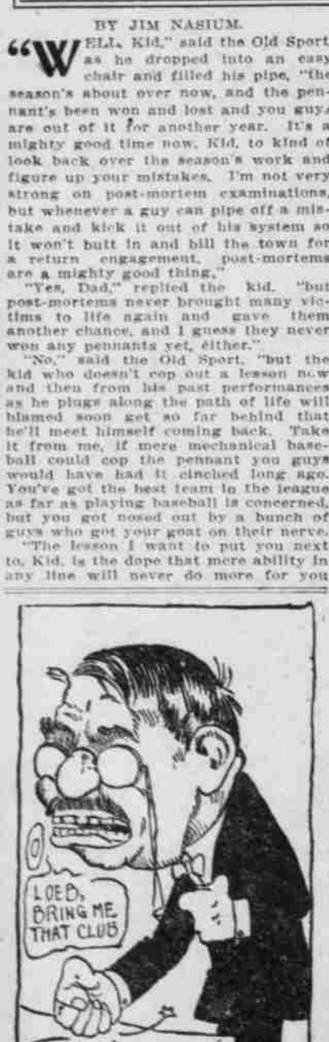
"And if you'll just let this dope I'm handing you filter through the chinks in your garret, Kid, you'll blamed soon see why you fellows have the ballplayers but are out of the pennant race. When it comes right down to cases, Kid, you've been bluffed out of the flag. On form, you've got the other guys backed clear off the boards, but on the field is where pennants are won and not on the form-sheets. And when you fellows get out on the lot, although to the casual observer you seem to be putting up a good game, when you stack up against a scrappy team you're always just a little bit shy, because the other guys' gab and bluff has got your goat.

"Take it from me, Kid, these guys who go nutty howling about clean baseball can yell till they're blue in the face if they want to, but clean baseball alone never won any pennants and never will until they change human nature, and it takes a blamed sight more than baseball legislation to do this. And you can take my tip, Kid, that as long as there is anything in the power of mind over matter the mere possession of ability will never win success in any walk of life.

"When did you ever see a baseball team that wasn't there with the pepper and the scrap running away with the pennant? You've got to show me, because I can't remember of such an occurrence, and in spite of all this howl about clean baseball, you'll notice that the fans always cough up the ante in bunches when a scrappy team hits the village.

"I tell you, Kid, pepper and scrappiness may not make a guy pleasing company to loaf around with, but it will do a thundering lot toward giving him a boost up the ladder of success, and this old dump of a world has acquired the art of justifying a winner. Where do you suppose Teddy Roosevelt would have been if it hadn't been for his pepper? I'll gambie that he'd never have butted into fast company at all.

"So, Kid, if you take my tip you'll put in the off-season laying in a supply of pepper, and maybe next season you won't be quite so popular a personality socially, but you'll be a blamed sight more valuable commodity to your manager. One peppery guy on a ball team or in a business joint will do a thundering lot more for the success of that institution than a dozen pieces of human mechanism. Get wise, Kid."



Canada's Land Exploitation Attracts the Farmers

Washington (D. C.) Herald.

There is one phase of the report of the Canadian commissioners of immigration that cannot fail to be of intense and grave interest to many Americans. For many years now, we as a nation, have been welcoming to our shores immigrants from various countries, and so steadily has the tide flowed in our direction that it has been, as a matter of course, that we have regarded the fact that for the privilege of American citizenship, literally millions of immigrants have gladly thrown off their allegiance to the country of their birth.

During the recent business depression immigration into the United States has fallen off in a marked degree, and the same thing has been true in Canada. There the increase in immigration for the past six months has been nearly one-half of what it was formerly, and all this decrease is charged up to European countries and Asia. The immigration from the United States to Canada has not only not fallen off, it has shown a slight increase. During the year just passed, over 7000 American citizens dropped their allegiance to the United States and became citizens of Canada and subjects of the King of England, and it is reported that in the past six years the sum total of United States citizens absorbed by Canada is 40,000.

It must seem strange that so many people would be willing to give up what most Americans regard as one of the highest of wordly blessings, citizenship in this nation; and, of course, the causes are distinctly industrial, not patriotic. It may safely be ventured that not a single individual has gone from the United States to Canada because of dissatisfaction with the American form of government.

Most of the emigrants from America to Canada are farmers, and Canadian farming has been having a great boom in recent years, owing partly, to many natural advantages possessed by the Northwest, and owing more largely, perhaps, to a system of exploitation and advertising liberally employed by the Canadian officials, ably seconded by the Canadian railways. During the period of this American emigration to Canada the railroads of the United States have been feeling the depression rather keenly, and this has halted enterprise, while the Canadian railways have been having a period of prosperity, of wonderful activity, resulting in the opening up of new territory and the placing of millions of acres of the very best farming land in the world on the market at ridiculously low prices. Canada's homestead and timber-claim laws are most liberal, and assistance is rendered the incoming agriculturist wisely and generously. All these things combined have gone to account for the strange increase in emigration from the United States to Canada and our loss in American citizens.

We need not be ashamed, as a people, to take a lesson from our Northern neighbor in methods of exploitation. We have still great tracts of land that only need the right sort of immigrants to become enormously productive and an added strength to the nation. We must let the people who want farms, and who desire to carve out homes, know about the lands we have for them, and how to reach them. We must learn, as Canada has learned, that "it pays to advertise."

Up in the Air.

Washington Evening Star.

"I suppose you expect to have a lot of people up in the air before you get through with your flying machine?"

"Yes," answered the promoter absentmindedly; "especially investors."