

THE HOTEL CLERK ON FOOTBALL AND ROMANCE.

BY IRVIN S. COBB

"I'm glad the Fall is here at last," said the Hotel Clerk. "Quit riding on the trailer," said the House Detective of the St. Reckless. "According to the way I dope it out, Fall's more'n half gone."

"Not at all," said the Hotel Clerk. "Not at all. In this part of the country Fall is not properly entered in until the weeklies begin to print full-page pictures of the football heroes and the Pullman people recognize the fact that you've just put on your flannel fuzzy wuzzies by warming up their cars to the even temperature of a steam-heated incubator. One of these days some ill-starred snorer who's wearing his heavy underclothes will be killed while riding on a sleeping-car, and when the news comes back from the Other Place that he's caught a congestive chill, due to the abrupt change to a cooler climate, the railroad people will become zealous to the fact that it's not absolutely necessary to hermetically seal all the windows and tuss up the radiators until the G-string snaps in order to make traveling a comfort after the thermometer outside has fallen to 45."

"Speak'n' of football, wot wuz the score today?" asked the House Detective.

"I didn't pay much attention," said the Hotel Clerk. "It's hard to get enthused over a newspaper account of how the young college boys are out in the bracing November air kicking goal and the bucket. I can get all the thrills I want reading how the Night Riders of the Sunny Southland just held another informal lynching of a Circuit Judge. But as nearly as I recall the score today was 4 to 3."

"Four to three, in a football game?" inquired the House Detective, wonderingly.

"Sure," said the Hotel Clerk. "Four ambulance calls for Harvard to three for the other lads. There were no touchdowns, and so the Coroner had comparatively nothing to do, and went away at the close of the second half feeling that a slight had been put upon him."

"I thought you wuz strong for football," said the House Detective.

"What I'm strong for is the pictures that the magazines print at this season and the stories that go with the pictures," said the Hotel Clerk. "I also confess to a weakness for the graphic description in the morning papers of how dressed Beef Boragan, the lusty young fullback for Yale, broke down and wept because they took him out of the game in order to push his shoulder blades out of his eyes and take his hip joints off his chest, and how he was moaning and protesting that he could never get over the shame of falling to kick goal. When I see a story like that I can't keep from thinking that if his various sections are ever properly reassembled and he goes out in the world to make his way he'll be surprised to know how few large business men will care whether he did or did not make the hundred-yard gain for Dear Old Bill in the fall of 1902. If his parents had the forethought to make spelling in its



THE DESPISED YOUNG SUBSTITUTE GOT THE BALL.

time she discovers that if she wants a husband with a working knowledge of the world and filled scientists with wonder. But as soon as they tried to take a little morning spin along the milky way before breakfast they invariably dilled the hospitals with inventors and the bystanders with splinters.

But the Wright aeroplane has demonstrated its ability to go up and frolic with the pigeons and sparrows till lunch time, then swoop gracefully down into the back yard without dingling the earth or tearing up the sod with the aviator's wishbone. With a few improvements Mr. Wright has hopes that his machine will soon be in general use for distributing the morning milk, driving the cows, running errands, carrying the mail, jumping hotel bills, subpoenaing dodging, picking cherries, painting houses, rushing the cans, seeing baseball games, jall breaking, making campaign speeches and getting out of trouble. We would also recommend that some of our acquaintances buy one and get off the earth.

A French syndicate has already ordered a hundred thousand dollars' worth of aeroplanes from Wilbur Wright, and when they come down to two for a quarter I am going to buy a couple to prune the trees with. They'll come down all right, because all airplanes come down. Some more rapidly than others.

Already society all over the country has taken up the idea of aerial navigation, and every town of any consequence and Philadelphia has its aeronautical society. You can't be in the social swim any more if you're not a skilled aviator. It won't be long till they'll be leading the cotillon in the aeroplanes, and holding pink teas and

duce business named James K. Toik. If James K. ever had any ebon curls doing the athwarting thing across his brow they have long since been driven back over the brow of the hill. When he wants to brush his hair he has to take out his collar. His waist line extends some distance in front of the foundation line in an Italian balcony effect, and he has large, well-filled feet that look as if internal injuries might develop if he ever smashed one of them.

He is not up on guitar culture, his favorite musical instrument being the double-entry ledger. His idea of a pleasant evening is to take off his shoes and read the produce market in the evening paper, after which a short, open-faced nap is enjoyed. The only

Spanish love name he ever calls her by is 'Old Lady.'

Then there's the girlie who just knows that she was cut out for the clinging vine role. She has a mental picture of herself as a large family-looking trustfully up to some sturdy oak about 14 hands high. In the last chapter we find her engaged in the athletic feat of running a boarding-house with one hand and a large family with the other, while husband sits back behind the prescription case at the drug-store down by the corner for hours at a time pointing out the mistakes of the second Cleveland administration.

Members of the ostentatious stranger sex don't pick 'em any better. The politically-framing youth who feels that the cravings of his temperament demand a helpmate that will understand the longings of his soul and be able to wander crest with him into the uplands of fancy, culling sweet garlands of sentiment and truth from the bowers of the soul, is discovered in an unguarded moment looking to the altar Mrs. Henrietta Vestpaski, widow of the well-known clothing dealer, a stout lady who looks just like a block on the road, a confusion of the lightline arrangement of the block signal system, when she puts on all her red and green jewelry. Or else he falls for one of those gladiolous spirits, fondling a chorus who wears a standing-room-only skirt and four pounds of bracelets on each arm and has all the conventional brilliancy of cuckoo clock.

"The girl who knows that she could feel the mad consuming passion only for some brawny hero that would save her from a team of runaway horses or a boat-rocking contest, is eventually coupled in the running with a small person having thin legs, bright, outstanding ears like red semaphores, and an Adam's apple that is constantly trying to turn porch climber and his most daring achievement in life is adding up four columns of figures at once. The man who feels that he must have for a wife some timid creature who will bend to his imperious will and tremble when he's angry, becomes the silent partner of an iron-jawed club lady who buys his clothes for him and selects who her thus reducing him to the level of the tapeworm, which is the only other living creature which that's never permitted to pick out what it's going to eat.

"The man who can never be satisfied without beauty wins a lady whose teeth are mainly being worn on the outside of the face this season, and she has a countenance that turns to a red interior scene when she smiles. The girl who must have intellect for her's gets a banker's son whose brain stopped working after he learned how to sign a dinner check and crank up a machine.

"And so it goes, Larry. Romance is a grand thing but it don't seem to stand the acid or marriage test. Three X's on one of sweetheart's letters before marriage means kisses and—

"And from marriage, wot?" broke in the House Detective.

"Well, said the Hotel Clerk, "after marriage it means don't forget to order that barrel of XXX Hour sent up."

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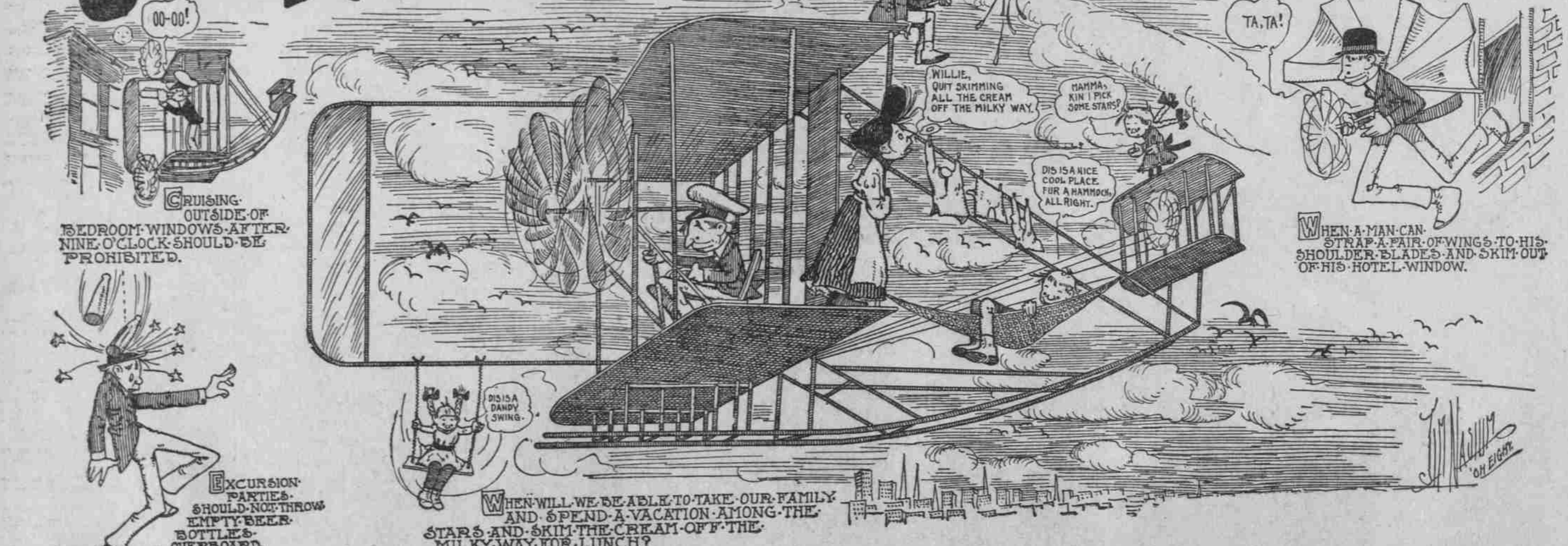
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Jim's Museum of the Conquest of the Air.



00-00!

CRUISING OUTSIDE OF BEDROOM WINDOWS AFTER NINE O'CLOCK SHOULD BE PROHIBITED.

DISCUSS DANDY SWING.

EXCURSION PARTIES SHOULD NOT THROW EMPTY BEER BOTTLES OVERBOARD.

WHEN WILL WE BE ABLE TO TAKE OUR FAMILY AND SPEND A VACATION AMONG THE STARS AND SKIM THE CREAM OFF THE MILKY WAY FOR LUNCH?

WILLIE, QUIT SKIMMING ALL THE CREAM OFF THE MILKY WAY.

MAMMA, KISS SOME STARS?

DIS IS NICE COOL PLACE FOR A HAMMOCK, ALL RIGHT.

TA-TA!

WHEN A MAN CAN STRAP A PAIR OF WINGS TO HIS SHOULDER, BLADES AND SKIM OUT OF HIS HOTEL WINDOW.

THE conquest of the air is an assured success. As we go to press the ozone was yet overcharged with dirigible balloons and "heavier-than-air" machines and transatlantic liners and aerial excursion boats and air-line expresses, and the trolley car and the subway are still doing business at the same old stand, yet the progress that has been made in navigating the air during the past year, and the recent successful flights of the Wright brothers in particular, have demonstrated beyond peradventure of a doubt, to make his wherever that is, that the day is not far distant when a man will be able to take his wings down from the hat rack and jump off the roof and skim into the open window of his 25-story office.

While there is nothing new about the practice of "going up in the air," the idea of using an aeroplane for the purpose is comparatively recent. Since the time of Adam most people have found it easy to "go up in the air" without the aid of an aeroplane or a dirigible gas bag, using nothing more than a patient medicine ad and a blood-curdling account of a checker tournament, or a fat chunk sliced off my funniest cartoon to make room for the weekly embroidery pattern.

But the aeroplane is the latest and

most improved form of aerial trolley car. The do-funnies erected in the past for the purpose of sailing up through the ethereal intervening space into the wide canopy of heaven and staking out a claim on the moon have all become more or less discouraged at the pernicious activity of the law of gravity and descended in a vertical air line when somebody pushed them out the roof. If the aviator (this is what they call the chauffeur of an airship) were sufficiently able-bodied and lived long enough after they dug him out of the main springs of his invention, he invariably showed his temper by dragging it into the woodshed and splitting it into stove lengths for the kitchen range. Many a repeat of lam and eggs has stizzled over the blasted hopes of aspiring inventors who have tried to defy the law of gravity.

M. Santos Dumont acquired some little fame with his dirigible gas bags, but they weren't quite satisfying enough to smash up his automobile and invest in an airship, because if the weather conditions weren't exactly propitious and according to the Marquis of Queensberry rules, when you had made up your mind to take a little flyer into New York you would either have to change your mind and go to Pittsburgh or else stay at home. As a matter of choice most people would prefer to stay at home than go to Pittsburgh.

What the suffering public has been awaiting for is a contraption that a man can pack away in a valise and take into his room in a hotel, and that he can put together some morning before breakfast and strap to his shoulder blades and fly out of the window of his

16th-story room in a New York hotel, leaving nothing but his empty valise and his kindest regards, and alight in Chicago. Such a machine would prove popular, and I predict an immense sale for it when it is perfected.

This is the sort of aerial navigation that reaches the hearts of the common people. We are not interested in military experiments, and we don't give a continental cuss how many times a man can circle the parade grounds in an aeroplane when the atmospheric conditions are according to the rules and regulations of the local aeronautical society, or how many tons of dynamite a skilled assassin could chuck down on the heads of an invading foe. What we want to know is how long it will be before we can purchase a pair of wings and defy the Rapid Transit Company in all kinds of weather, and how long we will have to wait before we can take our family and spend a vacation among the stars and skim the cream off the milky way for lunch. Then we'll be getting down to cases.

The French have probably been more interested in problems of aerial navigation than any other nation, but then the French have always been a fly people. Their inventors have a natural advantage, as it doesn't take much to make a Frenchman "go up in the air."

But the latest improved aeroplanes of Orville and Wilbur Wright have succeeded in "getting off the earth and staying off it with more degree of certainty than any inventions that have preceded them. Many inventors have succeeded in constructing graceful and artistic-looking machines, but they have nearly all committed the same mistake by trying to fly in them. As

long as they kept them for exhibition purposes only they attracted the attention of the world and filled scientists with wonder. But as soon as they tried to take a little morning spin along the milky way before breakfast they invariably dilled the hospitals with inventors and the bystanders with splinters.

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ping pong tournaments along the milky way. The use of the aeroplanes in society will also give a fresh stimulus to the affinity fad, as an aeroplane will be much harder to locate on a dark night than a downtown cafe.

If the progress in aerial navigation continues at its present rate it won't be long till the atmosphere will be so charged with aeroplanes, aerial runabouts and pigeon wing freight trains that we'll have to breathe through a sleeve. The aerial shipping docks of our cities will be so crowded with commerce as to shut off the sunlight and render pit-lamps necessary.

As the time is rapidly approaching when every man will be skimming through the air on a pair of wings, a few words of advice from an experienced aviator may be helpful to the public. We will, of course, have to have a new set of traffic laws. The following suggestions are based on a long experience of studying halftones of airships in the newspapers:

Cruising outside of bedroom windows after 9 o'clock at night should be prohibited.

While unloading freight, dock hands should be compelled to spread a net beneath the shipping to insure safety to pedestrians. Otherwise the citizen who gets hit on the cerebellum with a falling crate of cheese or caddy of mackerel has good grounds for a damage suit against the company.

Excursions and picnic parties should not throw empty beer bottles overboard.

To prevent tying up to church steeples aerial hitching posts should be provided.

Any person cruising over baseball grounds for the purpose of swiping fly balls should be arrested for high lar-

eny and have his license revoked.

Mashers caught loafing along the Great Milky Way for the purpose of flirting with Venus should be looked up and the practice discouraged.

Any aviator who gets hit in the eye with a shooting star has no just cause for a damage suit, as he should stick to the chorus girls and leave the stars alone.

Freighters should keep to their regular air channel, and not interfere with the pleasure craft and mail steamers.

Any ship's officer who throws a monkey wrench or a sparky plug at a deckhand should be held personally responsible for the damage he does to the town he is passing over at the time.

If any one falls overboard and becomes impaled on a lightning rod or weather-vane it is not necessary to put out a lifeboat.

Newspaper editors getting out of jurisdiction of the courts will be given right of way at all times.

Trust magnates securing a priority of claim on the sun, moon and stars should not be permitted to charge exorbitant rates for light and heat.

Any person trespassing on the earth's surface and obstructing its progress should be fined and imprisoned.

Trust magnates should be enjoined from staking out a dairy claim on the Milky Way.

Other rules and regulations to govern aerial traffic and meet the new conditions which confront us will suggest themselves from time to time, and any aeronautical society or inter-planet touring club wishing advice should not hesitate to acquaint me on the subject. As time rolls on and the public becomes more accustomed to the novelty of sitting on the edge of a cloud with

a gum overcoat on, we will take a higher view of things and realize that it is no longer mere idle badinage when some one tells us to "get off the earth."

The Card System.
New York Sun.
Mack is in the harvest field.
Bringing in the sheaves.
Hitchcock is the loomsy wood.
Indexing the leaves;
Voter, Voter, have a care,
Careful what you do!
Indexers are everywhere
They've got tabs on you.

Bryant in the writing-room
Fretting all day long,
Dover's on the sad seashore
Counting all the waves;
Balanced sheets are being drawn,
Who's to bring the glue?
Voter, Voter, have a care,
Voter, don't you dare to sneeze.
Some one's tabbing you.

Mack is running here and there,
No time, he, for words;
Hitchcock's running everywhere
Treading on the toes;
Clarks are indexing the stars
In the heavens high and low,
Voter, don't you dare to sneeze.
Some one's tabbing you.

Indexed, sorted, classified,
Listed, tabbed, arranged,
Balanced, added, argued-eyed
Clarks are piled and changed
Ticked and tied and checked,
Careful what you do—
Eas your whole career is wrecked.
In a sling box.

Experts are about the oases
Ticketing the rocks,
Everything's a yellow card
In a sling box.
You're a check mark made some place
Lasting until
All the world's a filing case,
You're a card—that's all!