

THE HOTEL CLERK ON PRESS AGENTING

BY IRVIN S. COBB.

"SOMETIMES I wish I'd started life as one of those cab reporters," said the Hotel Clerk of the St. Rockless.

"For why?" asked the House Detective.

"So's I could grow up to be the press agent of some enormously wealthy man," said the Hotel Clerk. "It's a grand trade. It used to be, Larry, that Journalism was like virtue. It was its own reward. When a reporter wore out his legs or his imagination, or both, he became an editor, which is an awful comedown for a reporter, so I'm told, and after that nothing was heard of him by the general public until his death at the ripe age of 87, when, after holding down the exchange desk for 24 years with a rank somewhere between the head office boy and the man who does the questions and answers department, he passed away leaving an estate consisting of a pair of shears and two shares of stock in a building and loan company that went out of business in 1884.

"But nowadays if he's been sagacious enough to plant his pipes right he is retained at a large annual salary to get things into print for prominent persons and corporations, or to keep things out of print for them, both of which he frequently does neither."

"I take it that this thing of being a press agent must be a growin' business," said the House Detective.

"It should say it is," said the Hotel Clerk. "It's growing faster than anything I know of except the Republican vote, the membership in the Floradora Sextette Alumni Association and the number of old gentlemen who were childhood companions of Abraham Lincoln and saved his life that time he almost got drowned while in swimming as a small boy. Anybody that is anybody, or hopes to be, has a press bureau to secure publicity, or head it off. Yet I can distinctly remember when there were only three regularly organized and recognized press agents in the United States, Major John Burke was one and Tody Hamilton was the other two. There were a few itinerant knights errant in fancy vests and white fedoras, wandering around the country two weeks ahead of Rice's 'Evangelium' and 'Lady Audley's Secret,' paying their hotel bills with orders on the treasurer of the troupe and rewarding chambermaids and the dining-room help with passes to the gallery for the opening performance, but they didn't really belong. The Major and Tody constituted the membership of the order. Major Burke would blow into a country office wearing his wild Western hair done up on top, the head and a wide expanse of white shirt front, with a jeweled cluster in the center, that looked like the roof off of a hot house, and suggest the advisability of slipping in a few words in reference to the Bill Show. And Tody Hamilton would arrive in the Spring of the year exuding passes and 39-cent cigars from every pore and hand in a few stanzas of natural history stuff about lions and tigers from which, try as he might, he could not keep the names of two friends of his named Mr. Barnum and Mr. Hatley, from occasionally creeping in."

"But now there are press agents everywhere. You see them on every hand, some leading theatrical stars can get along without one, but no large concern can that's liable to be fined \$25,000.00 by a careless Chicago Judge any day. I look to see employment



THE PRESS AGENT SUGGESTS A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE SHOW

agencies springing up soon that will make a specialty of providing press agents by the day, week or job, and correspondence schools that will teach press agency in all its branches, in 20 easy

lessons, by mail. Even our best little murderers have press agents on the staff these days, if there's any class to them. A chivalric gent takes an automatic gun and shoots some other gent so full of holes that he looks like a Swiss cheese. Then he gets a lawyer and the lawyer gets a press agent, and the press agent gets busy. While the accused is in his cosy cell eating the toilet soap and put-

ting hay in his hair and cultivating that glassy, maniacal stare out of the eyes, and turning up his knees reflexly for the alienists, and otherwise developing a typical case of the variety of insanity which appears to be so catching in a country jail, the press agent is darting hither and yon, passing out the private correspondence of the lady in the case and picking the last remaining basting threads out of her reputation and molding public opinion until the mouldy odor is noticeable for a long distance. At the trial the press agent is just as indispensable as he would be to Duncan Clark's Lady Minstrel on tour.

"It used to be hard sometimes to sell the homeseeker one of those choice seaside residential sites where you can gather claims when the tide's out and bluefish when it's in. If the prospective purchaser insisted on seeing the property before signing the papers there was danger that he might choose the wrong hour for visiting the place and find his desirable lot at the corner of Oceanview Heights, and Homedale Terrace could only be viewed by going



bankruptcy law. So he lures some publicity expert in to help him in the job of spreading sweetness and light all over the premises.

"Thus we find the successful financier enthroned alone in his inner sanctum wearing a hard boiled face, garnished with side whiskers. He taps a bell. One of those shrinking wind-flowers that rich men love to surround themselves with, opens the door a quarter of an inch and oozes through, trembling slightly. Large capitalists with defective livers always seem to prefer secretaries that are tall and slender and have pale yellow complexion like a sprig of Michigan celery. I suppose it takes a few of the unluckiest of an inverted disposition to be able to have somebody around that will quiver violently and turn a light green color when spoken to.

"Our financier barks at his servant once or twice just to hear his teeth chatter and then says: 'Send in Mr. Pulpis.' The human lizard departs, crawling on his stomach in a noiseless manner, and in comes Wood Pulpis, the reformed space grabber. When he was a regular reporter, he sometimes made one shirt do the work of two, and he was often careless about his hair, but now he's all dressed up like Vanderbilts' cook. 'Pulpis,' says his employer, 'it is my intention to smear on about eighty millions, endowing a few hospitals and colleges and things. Do you think you could induce the papers to print a few lines about it?' And Pulpis, knowing that he has a story which any city editor would give both his legs for, whisks an interior wink to himself and says 'I'll be a hard job, but he'll try it.'

"The press agent for millionaires has the easiest time of all, I assure," said the House Detective.

Real Meaning of the Word Frazzle

NOW President Roosevelt has become the "frazzler" of nations! The noble Briton sprawls in dumb perplexity, even while his cousin Jumbo megaphones from the housetops and twacks the tail of the clamorous bird of freedom, England, which is the seat of the great British empire and headquarters of the table sauce industry, is steeped in bewilderment. The throes of the American Presidential election prostrated a supposedly fearless noncombatant, in chop stick terms, England is "frazzled." Who "frazzles" this haughty nation? Mr. Roosevelt, America's rising executive, who has just placed "frazzle" in the same deathless category with "unfathomable," "nausea faker" and "shorter but siller."

"We have got those beaten to a frazzle," ejaculated the President when he saw how everything was coming for that. With hawklike eagerness the correspondents pounced upon the incident, and shortly it was called to the London newspapers, the editors of which considered it a sensational "frazzle" incident, of "Hits by the Suffragettes" formerly "Hints for the Household," and now it is loosening the whole tight little lid.

CURIOUS FACTS WORLD OVER

SIBERIA, says an English geographer, contains one-ninth of all the land on the globe. Great Britain and all Europe, except Russia, together with the whole of the United States, could be put into Siberia.

GENERAL LEONARD WOOD TAKES COMMAND AT GOVERNOR'S ISLAND, SUCCEEDING GENERAL GRANT



LEFT TO RIGHT: GEN. LEONARD WOOD, MRS. J. WOOD, MRS. S. P. GRANT, GEN. LEONARD WOOD

NEW YORK, Nov. 28.—(Special.)—General Leonard Wood, returning from the Philippines, took command at Governor's Island, succeeding Gen. Grant, recently. The ceremony was simple. General Grant and his wife greeted General and Mrs. Wood and surrendered their home to them. General Grant started at once for Chicago.



GEN. LEONARD WOOD

color line from the collar to the foot. The waist and skirt, if in two pieces, must match. The gown must preferably be from one piece from the collar bone down.

Trolley Traffic in Capitol of Japan

Electric Railroads Have Banished Much of City's Charm.

TO UNDERSTAND what streetcars mean to a place like Tokio one needs to keep in mind that the capital city of Japan covers a territory that is said to be as large as that of London and has a population of about 2,000,000. If you are at all disconcerted by the number of miles as compared to the number of people your mind may be set at ease by the reflection that Tokio consists of the most part of one-story and two-story houses—the top of the first story of which you can often reach with your outstretched hand—so that by the necessity of the case it requires a great deal of room to store away a small number of people.

It is to be taken for granted, in a hurry, you will have to fall back, after all, on one of the old-fashioned modes of transport to be found at every corner. While you may inveigh against their comparative slowness, you will highly commend their sureness.

The total deposits in American savings banks diminished by less than 1 per cent during the last fiscal year. In Pennsylvania, these institutions showed an actual gain, though a slight one, during the period of economic depression—Philadelphia Bulletin.