

CONGRESS NOT COWARDLY; MERELY CAUTIOUS

SAYS THE HOTEL CLERK BY IRVING COBB

"I've been reading about the doings of Congress," said the Hotel Clerk of the St. Regis. "Only there aren't any to speak of."

"It gets past me how you can fall for dry stuff like that," said the House Detective.

"There are too many like you, alas," said the Hotel Clerk. "The greatest curse of this country, except eight or nine thousand other curses that any Socialist would be glad to tell you about, is that it's full of ignorant plant-heads like you, Larry, that go through with a daily paper when they've read the sporting page to see whether any of their friends got ticked and then read the crime department to see if any other friends got pinched. But as for me, when I'm tired out by the cares that infest the day, just let me put my feet up on a heater and turn to the Washington special and before you know it I'll be drifted off into a peaceful slumber that any babe might envy. Nothing gives me more real pleasure than spending an evening with Congress and I know of nothing more restful to the mind. If it stays quiet and nobody comes in and wakes me up I can spend many a refreshing hour that way over the proceedings of the great law-giving body from which we derive so much wisdom and beneficial legislation that the Supreme Court knocks in the head as soon as it can get around to it. For Congress gives and the Supreme Court takes away, and thus the course of Government takes its way, except, of course, when T. Roosevelt happens to be President."

"Yes, sir, Larry, I like to keep posted on Congress. There used to be an upstate member of the House that sent me all his printed speeches on the great economic topics of the day, such as the Panama Canal and the tariff and the bill to appropriate \$2,000,000 to make Mink Creek navigable at all seasons of the year except from May to October, when it goes dry and from December to March, when it's frozen up. They were great speeches, too, Larry, take it from me, with interruptions like this (laughter) or else this (continuous applause) stuck through them, like the studs in a dress shirt. I got to thinking that the Honorable Wilbur J. Widener must be the greatest orator this country has produced since Daniel Webster, until one time when I happened to run up against him addressing the Rutland County Chautauque and Livestock Breeders' Association. He had one of those cream separator speeches, you know the kind that hangs down in thin, drooping lines

like these warnings for a low bridge that you see at a railroad crossing, and his eyes were bright, quick orbs that looked something like a couple of steamed clams, and he seemed to have about one separate and distinct thought every change of the moon. After listening to him for a few minutes my heart went out in a great burst of pity to his private secretary and the members of his immediate family. And I don't endorse any more warnings of that kind, though, unless you strike those conspicuous, appalling things, in a franked copy of his latest discourse, because I know now that he must put 'em in with a patent button-hole machine."

"I notice a lot of people here lately have been sayin' Congress was cowardly for not aint' after Teddy on account of what he said," ventured the House Detective.

"That's a base libel," said the Hotel Clerk. "Congress is not cowardly, Larry. It's merely cautious, in the extreme. You take the House for example. There's a great cautious, deliberative body for you. About all the members of the House are afraid of is the President and the W. C. T. U. and Uncle Joe Cannon and the committee on rules and the general public and each other and the opposition, and what the papers will say and what the papers won't say and their constituents and the canteen question and all other questions whatsoever, and the young fellows that are growing up back home with bank-ruptcies for office, and the district, state and national organization, and the first second third and fourth class Postmasters, and the local bosses and some other things like that. With those few exceptions, the members of the House are so courageous that they actually verge on the darddevilish, and the Senators are even more so, being elected for a longer term and having nothing to distract them from the performance of their high and sacred duty except to keep an eye at all times carefully on the nearest store clerk. These Senators are certainly the derring-do lads for you, Larry, make no mistake about it. Nick Carter had nothing on them when it comes to innate courage, but as I say they are cautious at times."

"To be sure, I wouldn't go so far as to say that Congress, for its sake, and total disregard of consequences, is quite up to the impetuous standard of the Home. I doubt even if it has quite as much of that reckless contempt for peril as characterizes the Girls' High School, or marks the course and conduct of the inmates of the incurable ward of a hospital for paralytics. But this much I will say, that I regard Congress as being every bit as foolhardy and defiant of danger as the court and hardy buccaners of Wall Street, and those same Wall-street financiers are, I may add, about the gamest

of a crack in the waistcoating, what does Wall Street do? Jump up on a chair and pulls her skirt up to her knees and shrieks for help. And when deposits begin to shrink and the populace takes its foot in its head and lights out for the deep woods, with its spare change in its shoe, don't we find those fearless bankers and brokers and railroad promoters all standing bravely

by out in the open, urging everybody to show renewed confidence by putting their savings right back into the banks, to replace the private accounts which the said bankers, brokers and railroad owners have carefully withdrawn previously and buried in the back yard? We sure do."

"And in its particular sphere Congress is just as game and gritty as Wall Street and just as much imbued with the same indomitable spirit which prompts it to never say die or anything else that is liable to bring on complications. Just look at what happened when the W. C. T. U. came along sometime back and called upon Congress to pass the canteen, which was an institution where a private soldier might go of an evening and sink his soul in the hideous debauchery of seven-up at 5 cents a corner, and 10 cents a setback, and meanwhile poisoning his system and destroying his better nature with as many as two long glasses of that accursed brew which is common to the Senate and the House except in the Spring of the year, when many refer to it as back. The enlisted men thought pretty well of the canteen, and the officers said that if it was a secret alliance with the devil, as stated, they couldn't figure how the silent partner was making much profit out of the business. But Congress took counsel with itself, looking at the proposition from both sides, which is an easy thing to do when you are sitting straddle of it, watching which way to jump, which is Congress' customary position in such cases; and Congress said to itself, "These ladies have not votes, it is true, but many of them have husbands, and if we're any judges of human nature, which we must be, we wouldn't be here, those same husbands will vote the way their wives want them to vote, or else go to the hospital. And, anyway, what right has a guy who works for sixteen dollars a month and his grub?"

"Being thus emboldened, the W. C. T. U. called on Congress to abolish its own little canteen down in the bowels of the Capitol. And the House passed the bill to the Senate, and the Senate passed the bill to the Senate, and the Senate passed the bill right back to the House in accordance with its usual courageous yet cautious custom, and that explains why, Larry, that a snug corner of the Capitol basement which was formerly quite popular is now comparatively deserted, and was once a hotbed of a flat dark half-pint flask labeled 'cough syrup' for their labors with a morning and leave in in the cloakroom in the care of a trusted attendant that had taken the Keeley cure. While, as for the humble enlisted man, down at the fort, any time he feels the

need of a slight retreatment, all he has to do is to run the guard line and he'll find a quiet little canteen nestling just beyond the reservation, that is presided over by a hospitable member of the Royal Leary O'Brien gang, who keeps a barrelful of a temperance mixture made by himself from a private prescription out of wood alcohol and brown sugar, that will bring results almost instantaneously.

"But I doubt if Congress was ever so wrought up as it was here a few weeks ago, when the President handed out one of his characteristically short and con- cise messages in which he stated that in his humble opinion Congress was opposed to an increase in the secret service staff for the same reason that the Humpty Jacksons abhor the idea of a larger police force. There was tremendous excitement. It seemed certain that Congress would do something desperate. It was freely predicted that Senator Pillsbury was going to utter a few remarks that would make 'The Last Ravings of John McCullough' sound like a young child cutting his milk teeth on a rubber teething ring, while over in the House everybody felt morally certain that the jail- lers and reformers the daylight from the outside when Congressman Oily James arose to give vent to his sentiments and the sentiments of his outraged and indignant colleagues, irrespective of party ties. In the aroused condition of Congress no one could safely foretell what the next 24 hours would bring forth."

"What did the next 24 hours bring forth?" asked the House Detective.

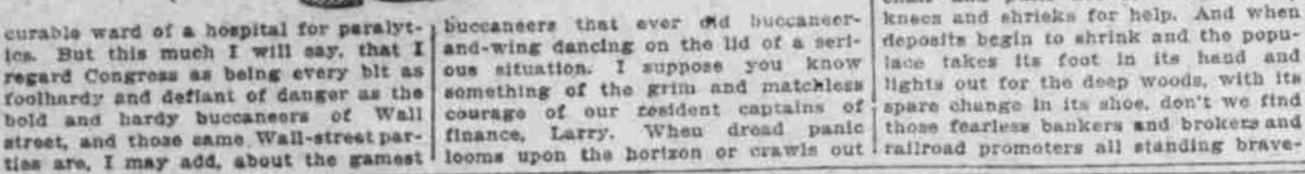
"Well," said the Hotel Clerk, "the Senate met pursuant to adjournment and dispensed with the reading of the minutes, and the House omitted the rollcall and took an adjournment out of respect for a deceased member from the state of Florida."

"It's a great system they have down here at Washington, Larry. A young member comes up with the idea that about the second day he'll kick the committee on rules in its esteemed breadbasket, and that if Uncle Joe Cannon tries to tawart him he'll swing up his frame just the same as if Uncle Joe was a grape trellis. He has a mental picture of himself climbing Uncle Joe like he was an extension ladder, and sitting on the top round with his feet hanging gracefully in the air, and when he's taken a hand right away and taught more different ways of lying dead and jumping over and begging for bones than the clowning in Gentry's troupe of animal prodigies ever learned."

"There may have been a time, Larry, when Congress declared war to the knife on somebody or somebody declared war on Congress," asked the House Detective.

"Now wot?" asked the House Detective.

"But now we live in the era of the safety razor," said the Hotel Clerk.



MANY MEMBERS BRING A HOT WATER BAG OR A DARK HALF-PINT FLASK

MANY WHO STILL WORSHIP IDOLS

Man-Eaters Are Powerful Gods to the Savage Dwellers by the South Seas.

IN VIEW of the wide distribution of sharks and their strength and ferocity, qualities which appeal to the savage mind, it is not strange that the cult of shark worship should have arisen. This worship is especially common in the South Seas.

In the Solomon Islands living sacred objects are chiefly sharks, alligators, snakes, etc. Sharks are in all these islands very often thought to be abode of ghosts, as natives will at times announce that they will appear as sharks. Afterward any shark remarkable for size or color which is observed to hunt a certain shore or rock is taken to be a ghost and the name of the deceased is given to it.

Such was the case of Sauihimatava at Ulawa, a dread man-eater to which offerings of porpoise teeth were made. At Saui certain food, such as coconuts from certain trees, is reserved to feed such a ghost shark, and there are certain men of whom it is known that after death they will appear as sharks. Therefore, are allowed to eat such food in the sacred place. In Saui and in Ulawa if a sacred shark had attempted to seize a man and he had escaped, the people would be so much afraid of the shark's anger that they would throw the man back into the sea to be drowned. These sharks also were said to catch the souls of the departed, for taking which supernatural power was considered necessary.

In the Banks Islands a shark may be a tangaroa, a war god, or a god of Malu, the chief man in Vanua Lava, had eaten a shark. He had given money to a Manawa man and would come up to him when he went down to the beach at Nawono and follow along in the shore. In the New Hebrides, some of the natives believe of changing themselves into sharks.

The Samoan natives believe that his gods appeared in some vessel in which it is the particular thing in which it is an object of veneration. Many worshipped the shark in this way, and while they would not eat the shark, they would eat others they felt that death would be the penalty should they eat their own god. The god was supposed to avenge the insult by taking up the body of the offender's body and causing to generate there the very thing which he had eaten until it produced death. In one village, Taeman, the war god was present in a bundle of shark's teeth. These carvatures were done up in a piece of native cloth and consisted before going to battle. If the bundle felt heavy that was a bad omen, but if light the sign was good, and off they went to the fight.

In the Fiji Islands Viava and other gods claim the shark as their abode, and their devotees must never eat of that fish, as if they did they would be partaking of the god himself. In the Caroline Islands the natives and their gods eat the guise of some special bird, fish or tree in which they are supposed to reside and with which they are identified. These they style their "Ban-war" god. Their worship of sharks was due largely to the fact that the belief in the transmigration of souls is quite general among the Polynesians, and the Hawaiians would feed their dead to the sharks under the supposition that in this way the soul of the dead would enter the shark, and so animate the latter as to incline them to respect the living.

Each of these shark gods had a special keeper, or kahua, who was responsible for their care and worship. The office of kahua was hereditary, and was handed down from parent to child for generations, or until the family became extinct, when it

waters of Kauai, and the fishermen were compelled to propitiate them with offerings.

Should a fisherman by an unlucky accident injure or destroy a shark held sacred by his family he was bound to make a feast to the god.

There are many old superstitions about sharks. In parts of New England, in order to cure a toothache a dogfish, a species of shark, is hooked, and the horn that projects from the back is cut off, after which the fish is thrown back alive into the water. Place the horn on the tooth and as the animal swims away so will the toothache. Shark's teeth rubbed on the gums help children in teething.—Washington, D. C. Post.

That Play When You— Exchange. A man who has been in an amateur entertainment never hears the last of it.

HOW "PROPHETS" ERRED IN 1908

Some of the Tragedies That Were Predicted, Including the End of the World.

THOSE who have survived the awful year of 1908 may well be thankful—they hardly know the terrors and horrors they have missed.

For the benefit of the uninitiated it may be stated that the beginning of every year certain "prophets" tell us what's going to happen. Occasionally somebody hits it right, and then he enjoys a reputation.

The greatest prophets—of predicting events give that title—have been Lee J. Spangler, Edmund Scribner Stevens, Gustav Myer, of Hoboken, "The Nation's Counsellor," Zadkiel, a mystic; Mme. de Thebes, of Paris; William Macabee, and the weather man's friend, A. J. Devoe.

Now what has been predicted and what has happened?

The end of the world has been predicted as early as the time of the first recorded prophecy was that of the Bishop of Hippo, in 430 A. D. Since then there have been hundreds of prophecies, including 1908.

Now for the prophets.

This from L. J. Spangler, grocer and prophet, issued on December 23, 1906, and repeated a year ago:

"Trouble and disaster will beset the nations of the earth throughout 1907 and 1908, until, at the close of the second year, the wrath of God will descend upon the earth and it will dissolve."

"At the end of 1908, New York, the greatest city in the world, will be destroyed, followed almost immediately by the destruction of the world. Boston will sink. It will require less than an hour for the destruction of New York."

Well, New York is still here.

It need hardly be mentioned that King Edward was doomed, as well as the Czar. They seem still to be on the job.

Prof. Edmund Scribner Stevens contented himself with predicting the general aspect of the world would be changed.

Among those doomed were the Sultan of Turkey, Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria, and the Emperor Dowager of China, all of which was to break the peace of Europe. Now, it may be said that Prof. Stevens is a great prophet; that the Emperor Dowager did die, she being close onto 80 years of age. But what a greater prophet Prof. Stevens would have been if he had predicted the death of the Emperor of China, who was only 42 years old.

Passing on to the Nation's counsellor, who resides in a modest little house in Hoboken, Gustav Myer, we get a more moderate prophecy for 1908. He hit it right every time: hats off to Myer! He predicted a financial panic—it was on at the time he predicted—bank failures, robbery, riots, strikes, calamities below and above the earth; loss of life and property on land and sea, and shipwrecks, all of which events have duly happened, just as they did last year and the year before, and will happen next year and in years to come.

If Mr. Myer had counseled the Nation only that far he would have won out, but unfortunately he went farther. President Roosevelt's life was to be in jeopardy, our regular mortality was to be tremendously increased, there were to be earthquakes and great fires, involving tremendous loss of life, and New York was to bear the brunt of the fires.

He also predicted that there would be any war with Japan. Bully for Myer! Not stopping, he went on:

"I fear that the Czar of Russia will be assassinated during or not later than the Summer of 1907, and at the same time I fear that the Emperor of Germany will be in grave danger of passing away, brought about through cancer."

We now come to Zadkiel, who also predicts. He lives in London and makes his living by outlining the year for us all by aid of the sun, moon and stars.

Passing aside all the first railway accidents, shipwrecks, race riots, and labor troubles predicted—all of which we have regularly, as does every other civilized nation on earth—we come to more startling things. Said Zadkiel, with appropriate warnings:

"In all the years that I have been studying the stars their influence has never been more sinister than it is for 1908. The year will be one that will live long in memory of man. By the middle of January, Washington will be greatly worried over the dilatory attitude of a British colony, the intervention of one of the great European powers in the quarrel, and the possible necessity for war."

What was the colony?

And:

"It is highly probable that a formidable foreign fleet will make its appearance on the Atlantic coast, and that doubtless to its purpose will result in a hurried mobilization of American military and naval forces."

No fleet appeared here, but several foreign ships did slip into New York Bay with abrupt notice, that the American naval officers, who were in the city, should forthwith come aboard and have all the champagne they could drink. The Americans took their orders very seriously and trawled aboard, but no intelligent foreigners. And in an hour they were gone.

All the regiments in New York and Brooklyn went to camp as scheduled, and maneuvered, too. "Cost the state quite something to pay for the blank ammunition that was fired off at our own men."

The floods for New York for April, as predicted by Zadkiel, did not occur. There was to be a strike and the dynamiting of the Panama Canal, with great loss of life. Earthquakes in the south-eastern part of the United States were due for October, as well as strained relations with Japan.

If these things happened, the World talked to print them, it did print the fact, however, that the United States had entered into a peace compact with Japan, which event none of the prophets foresaw.

The poor Pacific fleet started out most unpropitiously. It was to be badly battered in a storm, and several of the battleships were to be given up as lost for days.

"Only by the narrowest of margins will Admiral Evans' great fleet finally reach a harbor in safety," said Zadkiel.

The fleet's great trouble was getting away from a harbor in safety, so enthusiastic were each country's greetings. It may be added that the fleet is still floating, though Mars, Venus and Jupiter had in it for every day.

Professor William Macabee went deeper into detail than the 16 devoted battleships. He said in his social language: "At the time of the departure of the United States fleet the zodiacal sign Pisces was rising and the evil planets, Mars and Saturn, were in the ascendant, with a true ominousness to the Pacific."

Professor Macabee predicted a change of parties at election because of the start at the opening of the polls on November 3, 1908. This is now it: it proved to any mind:

"The ascending sign at this time is Libra, and the first testimony to be noted is that Venus, the lady and the ruler of this house, is in the sign Scorpio, 23 degrees and 56 minutes. That is to say, Venus is going out of one sign, Scorpio, and going into another, Sagittarius, at which stood Bryan's party."

Anyway, Professor Macabee accurately predicted the character of the next President: "He will be a man of great ability, great ambition, regard for the rights of others; a man in whom all the people will have confidence."

Mme. de Thebes, the great French prophetess, said this to say at the beginning of 1906, blaming it all on the planet Mercury:

"The year 1908 will be a most fatal and disastrous one for the United States of America. Four America's She has seen her best days, and they will never come back any more. I see nothing but anarchy, defeat, ruin and bloody defeat for her."

"November will see the inevitable reckoning between Japan and the United States. Four months after the death of the German Emperor, the loss of a vast number of warships, the fall of Germany, a mob attacking the Vatican, an uprising of the hordes of Islam against the Christians, seem trifling. But Mme. de Thebes predicted all this.—New York World.

PRINCE OF WALES IS IN TRAINING FOR SUCCESSION TO THE DUTIES OF KING

Assumes Some Official Functions and Prepares to Assume Others When Necessary.



PRINCESS WALES AND PRINCE EDWARD

NEW YORK, Jan. 16.—(Sp.)—The illness of the King of England may be exaggerated, but it is credibly reported that the Prince of Wales is assuming some of his official duties, and this in accordance with a view to having the Prince on hand and prepared if anything should happen to the King. There is no questioning the King's wonderful vitality. As a young man, he went the pace with an earnestness that won for him the admiration of his contemporaries.

When he came to the throne it was freely predicted that he would not live more than a year or two. At the time of the coronation, shopkeepers and standkeepers took out insurance on his life in the fear that he might not live to be crowned. Of course there was no serious question of his health at that time and to insure against the death of any public man is a common form of gambling in England.

An interesting fact in connection with this insurance was that no one insured against the King's illness. Now the illness of the King made just as much immediate difference to the shopkeepers and standkeepers as would his death. And it is also an interesting reminiscence that the British courts decided that standkeepers need not refund the money paid them by American tourists (among others) for seats to witness the coronation parade on the ground that the stand-