THE HOTEL CLERK ON SOCIETY'S AMUSEMENTS

BY IRVIN S. COBB.

"ARE you keepin' Lent?" inquired the House Detective of the St. Reckless.

"I am," said the Hotel Clerk. "I've given up barefoot dancing. Until after Easter Sunday you'll not see me doing a single step of the barefoot waltz or polka, as the case may be, no matter how great the temptation."

"Have you gone plum dippy?" asked the House Detective.

"I have not," said the Hotel Clerk. "Why don't you read the papers? Don't you know barefoot dancing is the latest Lenten diversion of our best society? So far it's been confined to the ladies, but any minute I'm prepared to hear that Edisha Lyer, Jr., had been leading a barefoot cotillion with one-night corn plasters for the favors, the ladies wearing interfering boots and the gentlemen thumbstalls on their toes.

"'Twas a great idea all right. Society demanded a new diversion. Grand opera was over. The divorce season wouldn't open up good for a couple of months yet and anyhow so great was the desire for change that merely changing wives and husbands wouldn't satisfy, as it had frequently done in the past, for months or even years at a time. A momentary flurry of interest, yet when all's said and done, only a flurry, had been created by young Mr. Biddle, of the reigning house of Philadelphia, a great clubman among the pugilists and a great pugilist among the clubmen, who desiring that most priceless ornament of the devotees of the manly art of self-pretense, a cauliflower ear, induced Mr. Phila. Jack O'Brien, also of his native city, as the name would imply, to don the gloves with him, thereby securing in a few hurried but painful rounds not only a cauliflower ear, but a peach of an eye and a boiled dinner nose, with tomato sauce; the whole constituting what might be called a four-course face.

"It was at this juncture that the Lady Constance Stewart-Richardson took off her shoes and stockings and came to the rescue. In England, where she comes from, I suppose the name is pronounced Constantly Stewed-Rxyn, or something of that sort, but in this country we sounded it like it was spelled and let it go at that, which was wrong, of course, but the best we could do with our own inferior knowledge of the mother tongue. The Lady Constance, who is a noted sportswoman and very daring, as she proved, was over here on a visit to some of our leading dynasties and in the name of charity, which, as the poet says, covers a multitude of shins, but hadn't uncovered any up to that time, she consented to oblige at a semi-private feet recital given at Sherry's, tickets $10 each, and no rain checks.

"Just the mere announcement created a sensation the like of which had not been known since the memorable year when Mr. Harry Lehr robbed a zoo to strengthen the intellectual pitch of a Newport dinner function. And, you can take it from me, there was a notable assemblage of notables present on the auspicious day when the Lady Constance came forth dressed in the costume worn by the ancient Greeks during an ancient Greek hot spell, and tripped the light fantastic toe, some say tripped it and some say stubbed it; but anyhow she was there with the light fantastic toes 10 in number. The performance started after several outsiders, including newspaper photographers and a chiropodist, had been ejected.

"I read the accounts of it very carefully myself. Wearing draperies of a diaphanous but economical nature, this gifted young noblewoman, who had gone to such ends, such ends indeed, for sweet charity's sake, appeared before simple chaste draperies of long, dark green, and with her locks bound flat to the brow with fillet, the ancient Greek substitute for the modern headache bandage, she gave a programe which ranged from Ostermoor's Springs Song to something from Bach, who in my opinion was all right as long as he stuck to beer but fell down hard when he closed up the brewery and began to write music. Opinions of the performance seemed to vary. There was apparently a disposition in some quarters to intimate that if they had not been the property of a person of rank, the limbs in question might have belonged to a hired girl without subjecting her to the importunities of theatrical managers looking for members of a beauty chorus, while some surprise was caused by the feet seeming to fit on at right angles, just as in the case of a common person. One carping critic, belonging to the metropolitan school of carp, went so far as to say that the ankles which he saw twinkling hither and yon, and occasionally twinkling up against each other with a quaint mocking sound, were either Ionic tree-box design or else Doric nose-bag, he wouldn't care to state which until he'd consulted some standard work on the earlier forms of Greek architecture.

LADY CONSTANCE DOES THE BARE FOOT DANCE.

"But these were merely the hypercritical remarks of interlopers. In the charmed inner circles of society, Lady Constance Stewart-Richardson's dancing was generally accepted as charming in the extreme and, besides, after paying the necessary expenses, a sum amounting to nearly $8.50 was realized for charitable purposes. So they put it down as a success and now barefoot dancing has a vogue that hasn't been equalled since Father Kneipp announced his discovery of curing cold in the head by walking in the wet grass of a morning with nothing on the feet except generous Nature's chilblains.

"I'm glad the Lady Constance happened along when she did, dressed like a fireman coming down the brass pole with his boots and things over his arms to answer a midnight alarm, and that she gave the jaded soul of society such an inspiring fillup. Only I'm afraid it won't last. It's distressing to think of a bright spirit of society, leaning wearily up against something all Lent with nothing on his hands but cuffs, and nothing important pressing on his mind except the part in his hair, yawning from sheer ongwe until a full face view of him is like looking down a megaphone.

"I'm a loyal American, Larry, but I'll admit they manage these things better abroad. Over there, where the upper classes have been cultivating repose of manner for a thousand years or so, an aristocrat can be idle for months at a time and feel rested enough at the end of it, to continue right along the same line indefinitely. But with us, even in our most exclusive society, the National restlessness which a desperate effort to the contrary has not yet succeeded in entirely eradicating, drives our society people on and on, until after awhile they fall down on their foolish maps.

"It's that same craving for sensation that makes our society women old before their time. I don't know exactly what their time is, but I know they are old before it. I've seen 'em. Think how earnestly some of them espoused the cause of woman's suffrage this past Winter. Why, if the Wardens of the State Penitentiary would only be considerate enough to have Paquin devise a becoming costume for lady convicts, done in the Empire mode, and provide bridge prizes of golden handcuffs with turquoises set in the links, I'll bet you that there's plenty of our society suffragettes would stand willing to martyr themselves for the cause and go to jail in defense of a great principle, the same as their courageous English sisters have done.

"And before Lady Constance came along with her talented feet, some had even been driven into settlement work among the poor, although that really ceased to be the correct thing as far back as three seasons. But I wouldn't like to speak disparagingly of settlement work. It was a treat for both sides, giving the rich a chance to see the poor and the poor a chance to see the rich, and nobody the worse off for it. Picture yourself, Larry, living in a restricted residential slum district. It is a neighborhood typical of your class. There are four saloons on the corners just below your own cosy slum, all flourishing and doing well; but the delicatessen store in the middle of the block closed up for want of business last week. The street below resounds with the cheerful clamor of ambulance gongs, cops beating the heads of the peasantry and babies falling off the fire-escapes, mingled with the prattle of the children as they chase the blithesome duck to the lighted side door. So much family linen is being aired from the windows that a stranger might think there was an unhappy married member of the Gould family living on every floor. You have just licked your wife and lighted your pipe for a peaceful evening, when the door opens and, with the subdued jingle of a diamond stomacher rubbing against a pearl dog collar, in comes a patrician representative of one of the oldest Knickerbocker families, forsaking all her social obligations and even forgetting to collect the alimony, in her desire to carry hope and cheer to such as you. Would you not feel honored and proud to have her freely interesting herself in your most private family affairs without even being asked? Wouldn't you feel, for a time, that a great spirit of uplift had come into your life?"

"I'd feel for an axe," said the House Detective, "and do a little upliftin' myself. Can't society people find no better way to amuse themselves than dancin' barefooted and messin' in poor people's pussonal business?"

"The trouble with society people is that they can amuse everybody but themselves," said the Hotel Clerk.

THE WISDOM OF JESUS OF NAZARETH—SOME OF HIS STORIES

NO. II.

AND he taught them many things in parables, and said unto them in his teaching. Hearken: Behold, the sower went forth to sow; and it came to pass, as he sowed, some seed fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured it.

And others fell on the rocky ground, where it had not much earth; and straightway it sprang up, because it had no deepness of earth and when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

And others fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

And others fell into the good ground and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing; and brought forth, thirtyfold and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

And he said, Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Investments.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls; and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

On Forgiveness.

Then came Peter, and said unto him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?

Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven time; but, Until seventy times seven.

Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would make a reckoning with his servants.

And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him 10,000 talents. But forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

The servant therefore fell down and worshiped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant being moved with compassion, released him and forgave him the debt.

But that servant went out and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence; and he laid hold on him, and took him by the throat, saying, "Pay what thou owest."

So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him: "Thou wicked servant; I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me; shouldst not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to his tormentors, till he should pay all that was due.

So shall also my Heavenly Father do unto you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

Who Is My Neighbor?

And behold a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying: "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And he said unto him: "What is written in the law? How readest thou?"

And he answering, said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."

And he said unto him: "Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live."

But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus: "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, which both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance a certain priest was going down that way; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.

And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

And on the morrow he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee.

Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?

And he said, He that showed mercy on him.

And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

The Foolish Man.

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully; and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits?

And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my corn and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry.

But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou has prepared, whose shall they be?

So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

But he said unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many; and he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

And they all with one consent began to make excuse.

The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee have me excused.

And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused.

And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

And the servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said unto his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame.

And the servant said, Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room.

And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

GOD IS LOVE.

1. To Save That Which Was Lost.

And he spake unto them this parable, saying, What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.

I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, which need no repentance.

Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a lamp, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost.

Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

2. Welcome for the Sinner.

And he said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living.

And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his field to feed swine. And he fain would have been filled with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him.

But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight; I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight; I am no more worthy to be called thy son.

But the father said unto his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf, and killed it, and let us eat, and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.

And they began to be merry.

3. An Unloving Brother.

Now the elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called to him one of the servants, and inquired what these things might be.

And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

But he was angry, and would not go in; and his father came out, and intreated him.

But he answered and said unto his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a commandment of thine; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends; but when this thy son came, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou killedst for him the fatted calf.

And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine. But it was meet to make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

Self-Centered or God-Centered.

And he spake also this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee and the other a publican.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I get.

But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

I say unto you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Limit of Patience.

Hear another parable: There was a man that was a householder, which planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country.

And when the season of the fruits drew near he sent his servants to the husbandmen to receive his fruits. And the husbandmen took his servants and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did unto them in like manner.

But afterward he sent unto them his son, saying, "They will reverence my son."

But the husbandmen, when they saw the son, said among themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance." And they took him and cast him forth out of the vineyard and killed him.

When, therefore, the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

They say unto him, "He will miserably destroy those miserable men and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

Jesus saith unto them, Did ye ever read in the Scriptures,

The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner;

This was from the Lord.

And it is marvelous in our eyes?

Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and shall be given to a Nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter them as dust.

And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables they perceived that he spake of them. And when they sought to lay hold on him, they feared the multitudes, because they took him for a prophet.

Be Ye Ready.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For the foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

Now while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. But at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him.

Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast: and the door was shut.

Afterward come also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Watch, therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour.

For it is as when a man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey.

Straightway he that received the five talents went and traded with them, and made other five talents. In like manner he also that received the two gained other two. But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth and hid the Lord's money.

Now, after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them. And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other five talents.

His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

And he also that received the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents.

His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter: and I was afraid, and went away and hid my talent in the earth; lo, thou hast thine own.

But his Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest. Take ye away, therefore, the talent from him, and give to unto him that hath the 10 talents.

For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away. And cast ye out of the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Test Principle of Life.

But when the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all the nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not, sick and in prison, and ye visited me not.

Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me.

And these shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into eternal life.

RICHEST HEIRESS AND DEBUTANTE OF 1909

MISS MARY DUKE.

NEW YORK, March 20.—(Special.)—Mary Duke, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin N. Duke, is the richest heiress and debutante of 1909. Her father is treasurer of the tobacco trust. His fortune is reckoned at $130,000,000. There are only two children, Miss Mary Duke and her brother Angier. The Dukes have homes in New York, London, Paris, Durham, N. C., and in Florida. They have a steam yacht, many motor cars and all the other appurtenances of wealth. This portrait of Miss Duke was made at the time of her presentation at court recently.

ONE OF MOST BEAUTIFUL AMERICAN WOMEN IN LONDON

MRS. RICHARD M'CREERY, FORMERLY LADY GREY EGERTON.

NEW YORK, March 20.—(Special.)—Lady Grey Egerton, one of the most beautiful American women in London, is no longer known by that title, but is now plain Mrs. Richard McCreery. She was the daughter of Major J. Wayne Cuyler, of New York, when she married Sir Philip Grey Egerton in 1893. She divorced him in 1905 and married Richard McCreery. There is a curious condition relative to the succession to the Grey Egerton title. Lady Grey Egerton was the mother of twins, and it had to be determined which of them (as both were boys) should succeed to the title. The one born first was named Philip and the second one Rowland.