

landscape decorating and get "a showing."

He knows many pat spots where vacant spaces are aching and yawning and stretching out their lonesome arms to be "covered" with a sniped piece of show paper.

But he may find on them the handiwork of another—mayhap a rival—sniper, representing some other playhouse. This is inviolate by the entente cordiale of the profession, the freemasonry of snipers and the rigorous rules of the union. As long as the attraction named on the sniped sheet is still in town, that snipe is "live," and must not be molested. But the minute the show "closes" all the snipers start in a race to cover the paper of the departing brother.

The sniper must be, therefore, an alert and faithful and spirited cuss. He must not be afraid to climb—and, believe us, he must know, also, how to run. Nothing can undo him except the three words "Post No Bills," and when there are too many of these he goes out after dark, when he cannot see them, and thus double-crosses his conscience.

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OF LATE years sniping has gone into declension for many reasons. To begin with, the cost of paper has skied, and it runs into money like the mischief where it was at one time reasonable; secondly, property owners for years fussed and shrieked and sued, until the available locations were whittled down to comparatively few and not select, within a high enough percentage to get back in advertising the high cost of sniping and the trebled charges for printing and stock.

But some theaters still employ snipers, and the old-time and traditional managers deplore that the sniper, like the noble bison, is being killed off, for they swear that sniping is the lifeblood of "show business," and that the plaguey movies and the passing of the sniper have strangled the industry between them.

Back in the happy days when the sniper sniped rampant there was a famous ash-can billposter and general sniper known to the trade as "Center Flash" Higgins. The name grew from Higgins' custom of covering every possible inch in or near the center of the town, especially early every Saturday for a week-end flash which would live through the period between regular ac-

tivities that sweep down transitory locations.

A pedestrian strolling through the principal streets on a Sabbath day could see on every side the product of Higgins' application. And many a lonesome traveling man was lured thereby to the theater that hired Higgins. And Higgins was great in his profession and drew down \$30 the week, which was notorious compensation.

Higgins saw the years take from him one by one his pet spots. Here a building was finished and its inviting scaffolding and pine-board construction huts vanished. There an old ramshackle two-story affair that had been abandoned in the running, and which was duck-soup for one-sheets and show-cards, was gobbled by a real estate manipulator and turned into a granite skyscraper. Wood—that great friend of the sniper—gradually fell away, and stone and steel, those invincible and forbidding substitutes, arose and held forth hard looks and cold exterior to the surviving snipers, who could moan and cuss the evolution of civilization as they wished, but who could not raise a finger to stop the wiping out of their vocation.

Higgins knew no other way to make a living. He had been a sniper through all his adolescence and maturity. And now that he was 60 and odd it was too late for him to learn new tricks. The theater which had regularly employed him let him out—even him, though he was the last. Now and then he got a stray job of sniping, and then he was happy, for there were still a few of the locations left here and there. But his regular business was ruined. He became a hanger-on, and in time a pest.

He "made" the theaters regularly and applied for sniping to do. It got so that the managers were no longer "in" for him. But one day he ran across Phil Taylor, one of the deans and sages of the prehistoric methods of show promotion, who was in the city as manager of a flamboyant moving picture.

You may have noticed—yes, you may have even reflected—that the movies, the newest of the show games, utilize many of the oldest ways of making themselves known and attractive. The discarded ideals of melodrama were revived, pulmotored and brought back to a greater vogue than they had ever enjoyed since they had risen, flourished and decayed in the "legit." The slapstick comedy, discredited and kicked out long since

from the stage door of the speaking theater, has come back not only bigger than ever, but the biggest thing in the new industry itself.

And, not so strangely, many of the managers began to apply old and obsolete advertising systems, too, with the aspiring and newly rich film.

Phil Taylor's fingers had itched for long to again direct and captain a crew of snipers. And when Higgins came before him—Higgins the Napoleon of the sniping world—his fever burned hotter and he knew that he must yield. His attraction was renting the theater outright, and the posting as well as the paper supply was in his hands.

"Hig," said Taylor, "what can you do with a bundle of snipe paper?"

"What can I do? Me? Say, I can plaster this burg so you won't be able to find the city hall. I'll post a one on the front door o' the society leader, on the statue o' the general in the park, on the main window o' the main store on the main street, on the back o' Hogan's goat and on the marble posts in the marble lobby o' your hotel. That's just the plain stuff—or do you want fancy work?"

"If I give you 10,000 sheets of—"

"Ten—how many?"

Ten thousand sheets was an extraordinary consignment—it would have been in the gladdest heyday of high days.

"You heard me. Can you place them?"

Higgins would have said he could if he couldn't. He who had for years cursed the disinclination of managers to have paper sniped—could he, now when one manager had yielded tenfold, back down? He gulped, he sagged a little, he recovered, took off his hat, looked squarely and calmly into the eyes of Phil Taylor, the emancipator of the sniping race, the reviver of an era, and said:

"Sh-sure!"

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THERE'LL be 10,000 sheets of paper in the billroom tonight," said Taylor. "You get at 'em early tomorrow. Take what time you need, put the stuff where you can; but get out the 10,000 and have 'em where I can see 'em, as I'm going to go 'round and look at the showing."

"Done—tanks," said Higgins, and he walked dizzily out.

How, where and by what wizard-work could he post 10,000 sheets of outlaw paper in this town, bone-dry of high spots?

He went home to his wife and nervously ate a little supper; but his heart

wasn't in it. He had taken on a job. He had promised the impossible. The paste brush was no magic wand and miracles weren't in his line. Now what was he going to do about it?

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BEFORE the night watchman had surrendered his office to the-day janitor Higgins, pale, worn, haggard after a painful and sleepless night, was banging at the door. He was admitted to the room under the stage where the paper was stored. He attempted to whistle, as of old, when cutting the ropes on packages of printing, as he opened these heavy and numerous bundles; but nothing came out, for his throat was dry and his tongue was limp.

He mixed his paste and he shouldered his brushes and went forth. The bagful of paper was heavier than it had seemed of yore—and yet it was made up of but the conventional 500 sheets. The sun was rising and Higgins blinked up at it. It hurt his eyes—they were not as strong as once they had been when their keen glances had detected at 1,000 yards bare spots just big enough for one-sheets.

His feet were not entirely steady and his shoulder ached with the rheumatism and with the burden of his stock. But on toward the "center," his hunting ground of glories past, he shuffled.

A policeman, seeing him pass and surmising from his tools his mission, halted him and gave warning that no violations of ordinance or liberties with property would be countenanced. Higgins nodded wearily and pressed on. He knew a spot or two, anyhow, where paper could be slapped. After that? He would seek further—he would seek where he knew the finding would be slim. But he would try. Providence would provide—it always had until the managers shut off its need.

It took him half an hour, with stopping twice or thrice to put down his bag and rest, to reach the principal corner of the city. There, through force of old habit, though well he knew he could discern no waiting location, he stood and pivoted slowly. He felt a faintness and he dragged himself back against the building. There he stood in semi-consciousness for many minutes, as his breath came hard and jagged.

His coma was dispelled by the arrival across the street of a crew of workmen. What was that? They were putting up a barricade of planks. Oh, glory! Here, on the garden spot of the main stem, was to go up a sniper's paradise. He watched them, electrified. The apparatus was a modern one, erected in advance and set up by application of a half dozen ready bolts.

It was up.

Higgins reached into his bag and drew forth a gaudy one-sheet. He gripped it at the top edge, clutched his short brush in his other hand, with his paste pail hanging off his wrist, and started eagerly for the bulwarks of the repairmen.

His steps were light—the first two; then of a sudden his knees bent under him. He pitched across the walk. And the one-sheet, which he still held, fell face up, shrieking in its three-color eloquence the sensational merits of the unrivaled photofilm.

And thus the corner policeman found him—dead of heart disease.

But there he lay, undisturbed and unmoved, and the one-sheet lay there, too, for the full half hour it took to call the "wagon." And in the thousands who saw was Phil Taylor, who was the first to later identify him at the public morgue.

And Taylor sent the widow a check for \$200, the price of posting 10,000 sniped sheets, with this letter:

He was a sniper to the end. He gave the show a showing on the busiest corner that couldn't have been touched if he'd put up all the 10,000 ones as in the bygone days. It was the greatest "center flash" of his career. Accept my sorrow and this check. He earned both.

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NAMING THE COCONUT

THE brown, hard shell nut covered with coarse fiber and containing a white, brittle, oily "meat" and some sweetish liquor, generally called "milk," is the coconut, and not the coconut. This fruit of a great palm tree is a familiar thing on the fruit stands and in the fruit shops and food markets all over the world. It has been an acceptable article of food among Europeans for centuries, among Americans ever since there were such people as Americans, and among the peoples of the tropics for an undetermined number of centuries. It is one of the very useful things that grow, its use being so extensive and its uses many.

Its name is a curious one. Being about the size of a man's head, the Spanish early explorers and oversea traders called it the coconut, "coco" being a slang or vulgar Spanish word for a man's head. The word in that sense survives in American slang, and American audiences generally laugh when a low comedian says something about beating another comedian over "the coco."

So, some early Spaniard, disregarding the native names for this nut, capriciously called it a co-co-nut, and there being something catching in the name it passed from mouth to mouth until it became established as the proper name of the nut.

A man who took the trouble to look up the reason why the coconut is per-

haps more often than not called the coconut has written:

"Coconuts have been misnamed for a century or more. It is 100 years since a proofreader in London allowed the word to slip into a dictionary as coconut. As many dictionaries printed since have shown a sheeplike imitation of this edition, the misspelling of the word has been established. The word 'cocoa' is the name of the bean from which chocolate is made."

The oil of coconut enters largely into the life of the natives of the coconut-growing parts of the earth. They use it in cookery as we use olive oil, cottonseed oil, lard and its numerous substitutes; they use it as medicine and as an illuminating oil. It is said that American soldiers in the Philippines found the houses in the interior of the island, with the exception of those of the so-called "better classes," lighted only by the flame of coconut oil, though there are numerous other vegetable oils used by natives of the tropics. Some very crude lamps may be seen among the humble people of the tropics. Lamps have been found where a glass or small earthen or wooden vessel is filled with coconut oil, and across the top of the vessel a piece of tin from a tin can has been laid. In that tin the natives have punched a hole, and in the hole a wick made of one of various kinds of fiber has been set.

The milk from ripe coconut is used for

cooking vegetables, all kinds of "greens," breadfruit and squash, and as a substitute for cow's milk in making ice cream. In the parts of the tropics where manufactured ice is to be had an American who has lived in the Philippines has written that "coconut milk imparts little or none of the flavor of the coconut to the ice cream, and the ice cream itself is made in much the same way as the cream made from cow's milk, and is rich in body and satisfying to the taste."

The blossom of the coconut tree is not unlike a head of cauliflower, and is esteemed very much as the "cabbage" of the cabbage palmetto, which grows to some extent in Florida. The coconut blossom is boiled or eaten raw with a salad dressing. From the blossom of the tree the natives also make a pleasant drink, soft when first made but strongly intoxicating when fermented, and quite often it is allowed to ferment. By one treatment of this flower-liquor it is also made into a native vinegar.

The trade in copra, which is the dried meat of coconuts, is one of the important trade lines of the world's markets, copra giving forth coco oil, which has many uses, its principal use being in the making of soap by the great soap manufacturers of the world. Coco butter has also come to be an important article of world commerce and much dried coco meat is used throughout the world in the confectionery business.—[Baltimore Sun.]