

Wise or Otherwise

By Ethan Grant

The underlying cause of admiration is secret desire. I admire other men because they possess characteristics I wish were mine. I admire a man who can think cleverly out loud, because I can't. I happen to be the type of person who thinks of the smart comeback two or three days late.

I have great respect for the man who can engineer a clever but harmless prank. And I don't mean the wag who puts thumb tacks on chairs, or slips a mickey finn in somebody else's soup.

A few years ago there lived in New York a man who could think up pranks that were truly classic. He had a friend who expressed a hatred of cattle. On each of his birthdays he received by parcel post a cow's horn. The prankster remained anonymous, and as the years went to the bovine hater became so furiously annoyed that he offered a substantial reward for the identity of the sender. But he never found out.

Once the prankster put on overalls, took a pick and shovel, a "Man At Work" sign and spent all afternoon digging a hole in a busy intersection of New York. At dusk he climbed out, hung a red lantern on the sign and disappeared. It was days before the various city departments and public utilities who dig up the streets stopped blaming one another for the mysterious hole.

The only clever prank I ever thought up backfired so thoroughly that I was cured for life. A pal of mine named Bob had gone to Europe. He wired me on Saturday afternoon that he'd returned to New York and would arrive in Detroit on the 7 o'clock train Sunday morning.

I conceived the prank at a party my wife and I were attending Saturday night. You should have heard the others laugh when I outlined the idea. That was early in the evening, and as the party progressed it seemed more and more funny.

My plan was that we at the party, 12 in all, would dress in the most disreputable clothing we could find and meet Bob at the

train. He was a shy, dignified young man, and the one thing he hated most was being the center of public attention. Moreover, he fairly loathed persons who made spectacles of themselves.

The station would be crowded on Sunday morning, and we'd give him one of the noisiest receptions a man ever had. His embarrassment would be so funny you'd laugh for a week.

When the party broke up, around 2 a. m., it was still a funny idea. We went home, set the alarm and went to bed, still chuckling over the prospects. When next morning we got up and dressed as we'd all agreed, I laughed at my wife and she laughed at me. We arrived at the station a few minutes before train time and strolled in, looking for all the world like a pair of hillbilly hayseeds.

People glanced at us, blinked and glanced again. Then they turned away, so we wouldn't see them laughing, and nudged others. It was embarrassing, of course, but we'd be well rewarded for that later, when we found other members of our party and all met Bob. We stood there, trying to be nonchalant, trying to pretend we didn't know everybody in the station was laughing at us.

Presently I began to feel uneasy. The others seemed not to have arrived. It was nearly train time and not one of them was there. I could keep a straight face, because I was now beginning to get mad. My wife's face had turned a deep red and her eyes were beginning to have that rolling-pin snap.

Then, as the train finally pulled in, I saw something that literally raised the bristles on the back of my neck. The other scoundrels who'd promised to join us were standing at the side entrance, in respectable clothing and laughing so hard they had to hold their stomachs.

"Never mind," I said. "We'll surprise Bob anyhow."

And we stood right where we were. We stood there watching the passengers come up the ramp, until every last one of them were

in the station and the gate was locked. And Bob wasn't among them. He'd arrived on an earlier train.

Being mad and embarrassed at the same time put me in a dangerous frame of mind. It was fortunate that I didn't have any sticks of dynamite to throw around. For now, not only the people who'd come to meet the train were laughing, but also the people the train had brought in. And when my wife said, "For gosh sake, let's get out of here!" I was already set to run.

But we turned and bumped

squarely into a man I knew, with his wife, whom I didn't know, and her sister, who had arrived on the train. He spoke to me, looking as if he had a pain. I couldn't run away without explaining, so we stopped. And then I couldn't seem to find words suitable for explaining a thing like that.

So we just stood there, feeling sillier than we looked. And my friend felt silly and wanted to laugh. And so did his wife, and her sister. And my wife and I ran like the devil—or a pair of devils.

Hazards Sought Out by Firemen

SILVERTON — L. F. Tucker, chief of the Silverton Volunteer Fire Department, reports that a fire hazard survey will be made at Silverton in the near future. Business houses will be asked to cooperate in ridding their basements of superfluous trash in order to avoid any unnecessary hazards. All efforts are being made at Silverton to prepare the town for a safe fire season. The firemen are also asking that the public not crowd too close

to the fire, and not run over fire hose that is so hard to replace at present. Some difficulty has been experienced at recent fires from the too curious public.

Roy Heer Visits Sister in Los Angeles

CENTRAL HOWELL — Roy Heer went to Los Angeles last week to visit his sister, Miss Eida Heer. On his return he expects to be called into active duty with the army air corps soon. He was accompanied to Los Angeles by Leonard Roth, RT 2/c,

who was returning to his base after a few days leave. Heer expected to see Robert Simmons at St. Marys on the return trip.

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Gardening Today

By LILLIE MADSEN

An interesting letter from George W. Alling of Salem was received this week in which he gives answer to a recent query of M.L.L.'s concerning new roses. I'll run the greater part of the letter for I feel it will be of interest to many of you who are now showing a great interest in roses.



Lillie Madsen

"There are," Mr. Alling writes in reference to roses, "probably 50 new ones introduced and despite the war, most of them came from Europe. I now have Fred Edmunds rated the best on the Pacific coast, and named after the curator of the Portland Rose Test Garden; Lowell Thomas and AARS Yellow, Sweet Sixteen—a beautiful pink; Mirandy—a very large deep red, but good only in very hot weather; Horace McFarland, a good deep pink on a miserably weak plant. All of these bloomed here last year. There are specimens of Brandy Wine, Panorama and Catharine T. Marshall in South Salem. According to my records, however, Panorama is not a pink but a pink-with white reverse giving a contrast something like the usual red-and-gold contrasts. I now have for blooming this season, Catharine T. Marshall, Sonata, Highland Park, Show Girl, 'V' for Victory, and three as yet unnamed seedlings."

Mr. Alling goes on to speak of the something different-but-not-necessarily-new roses. Including the little 2-foot Mexican to the big 8-foot ones "using, of course, judgment that you do not get one of the great big ones in a 2-foot space. I have microphilla and Metabilla, the Fantastique, RT, a maine yellow with each petal tipped with carmine similar to a Fico-tee tulip."

Two other new roses not mentioned by Mr. Alling might be the Mme. Chiang Kai-shek rated as the 1944 All-American winner and the Douglas MacArthur.

Among the new gladioli year books out, the Canadian society book has an interesting section on selections. The list, a rather long one, includes such general favorites as Margaret Beaton, White Gold, Red Charm, Myrna, Corona and Elizabeth the Queen. Tips from "The Gladioli, 1944."

published by the New England society, include "the use of good corns in good, well-drained soil after the earth gets warm is the way to start successful gladioli plantings." It is suggested that irrigating be done thoroughly once a week. Mrs. Hanna E. Mann of Des Moines, Wash., suggests digging trenches seven inches deep and six inches wide, placing compost three inches deep in the trenches and setting the corns six inches apart, and covering them will two inches of regular soil. Then she gradually fills the trench with soil from the compost pile.

We are going to hear a lot about oleanders from those of our soldiers who are interested in gardening. We may even hear something about this plant from those who have not heretofore been interested in garden. I understand, from first hand sources, that many of the American soldiers in north Africa have been highly impressed by the single pink oleander growing in the Atlas mountain streams. This will be fine, particularly for California where, in so many sections, the oleander can thrive out of doors. Here, it has to be confined to indoor culture or at least to winter protection of basement or house.

A.G. writes to ask if Nicotiana is a "weed" if permitted to "go." To anyone who loves the smell of "sweet tobacco," and I am not referring to cigar smoke, Nicotiana can never be a weed. J. Horace McFarland, one of the country's best known gardeners, refers to it as a "cherished weed." When once started, it is true, it will bloom year after year from self-sown seed plants. But the fragrance of these in early evening should be welcome to any gardener.



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