

Terry, the Fox

By R. H. WILKINSON
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"YOU can't fool an old fox like Terry Oakes," Anse Aetell was saying. "Not even if you're the smartest bank robber and gangster in the country." He chuckled, reflecting on the story he was about to tell.

"Glenville was pretty well wrought up that summer. In June government agents came through, warning all the small town banks in the countryside to be on the lookout, and advising what to do. Duke Insabato and a couple of his henchmen, driven from their haunts in the large cities by a concentrated effort of local and federal agents who were dead set on bringing an end to the current wave of crime, were hiding out in the sticks and whiling the time away by staging spectacular daylight hold-ups of small town banks.

"The trouble was that no one knew where the varmints would strike next. Duke Insabato was smart.

"The folks of Glenville was scared. There wasn't much chance of Duke dropping in on them because the Glenville Trust company was even smaller than the general run. But it was easy to imagine things, and by imagining you can scare yourself half to death. Every one was scared but Terry Oakes the trust company's president. When the government agents called on him he listened gravely and promised to be careful. But he didn't install any new-fangled gadgets. He couldn't afford to.

"This didn't help to allay the fears of Glenville's citizens. Employees in other banks had been shot down unmercifully. Terry, they thought, ought to do something to protect his own life and the bank's money. But Terry only smiled and shook his head. The other banks, he reminded, had all sorts of burglar-proof gadgets, and they hadn't done any good at all. Merely a waste of money. Duke Insabato was too smart to be defeated by gadgets.

"Some of the Glenville Trust's depositors lost faith and drew out their money.

"June passed and part of July. Gradually the fear of Glenville citizens began to subside. Only one other small town bank had been held up, and that more than 150 miles away. The depositors who had withdrawn their accounts re-established themselves as customers. They were a little sheepish about it.

"Terry didn't gloat. He was an old-timer at the game and he understood human nature. Early in June he'd had some signs printed and hung around the lobby of the

bank. Such things as "Save for Your Old Age". "Deposit with Us and Your Money Will Be Safe." The citizens smiled a little. Terry was trying to reassure them. One other sign was printed and inserted behind the glass in the front door. This, too, amused them, but it didn't annoy them any. They were too accustomed to Terry's queer habits. Presently the signs were forgotten.

"On July 15 the quietude of Glenville's main street was abruptly and harshly interrupted. A high-powered black sedan suddenly appeared at the town's south entrance, roared down on the bank and came to an abrupt halt. Loungers in front of the general store jerked erect. Three men had leaped from the car. Two of them, one carrying a machine gun, ran toward the bank. The third stayed on the curb, a second machine gun nestling in his arm.

"The loungers, pop-eye and frightened, watched in stupid fascination. To their utter astonishment they saw the two bandits turn at the bank door without entering, rush back to the car, pile into it and drive away.

"It all happened within seconds. For a moment or two the loungers sat transfixed. Then of one accord they leaped up, raced across the street and entered the bank. Terry Oakes was talking on the telephone. He hung up and smiled at them.

"Two to one," he said calmly. "Sheriff Irons picks up Duke and his gang at Jepson Corners. I just phoned him." He looked from one pop-eyed citizen to another. "No harm done, boys. They didn't even get in."

"But why didn't they? What happened?"

"Terry grinned broadly. "Duke Insabato knows small towns. He was a small-town boy himself. That's why he picked this hour to do his hold-upping. Right after lunch. Why, shucks, the town's deader this minute than at any other time of day. He figured if he killed me it would be five or ten minutes before anyone would come to their senses enough to notify the sheriff. That's where I fooled him." Terry paused to chuckle and glance toward the front door. It's lucky Duke knows small towns. Otherwise he might not have taken any stock in my sign."

"The bewildered citizens turned toward it and read. They were a little dazed, being rather dull-witted and not quick to understand.

"The sign read: 'Bank closed. Out to Lunch. Return in One Hour.'

what Irvin S. Cobb thinks about:

War Debt Hangovers

SANTA MONICA, CALIF.
—In summarizing governmental finance for the fiscal year, Secretary Morgenthau doesn't even list the thirteen thousand millions of dollars owed to us by defaulting foreign nations.

But Americans at large won't forget. If you doubt this, wait till one of these debtor countries gets in a fresh jam and turns to Uncle Sam for succor—and, brother, you can spell that last word the other way and still be right.

We didn't know what we were getting into when we stuck around too long after the fighting ended in 1918. Makes me think of a colored labor battalion who went on the loose at Brest on Armistice day.

A hard-boiled top sergeant rounded them up:

"Get to work on dem freight piles," he commanded.

"But de mess all done over," declared a spokesman. "And us boys only enlisted fur de duration of de war."

"Lissen," barked the sergeant, "de war may be over, lak you specifies, but fur sich ez you de duration ain't hardly started."

Influenza Complications

SINCE the last bedside bulletin, so many souls have inquired, that I am offering a supplemental report on the work of the wrecking crew.

First I cracked an ear drum. (Cries of "Whose?") Then this clinging California influenza moved slightly south by west within your correspondent's area. So now I've fallen into the hands of a throat specialist.

A fine fellow—but easily satisfied in the matter of entertainment. His idea of a sprightly conversation is to hold down my tongue with a spoon and have me say "ah." What I claim is, when you've heard one "Ah," you've heard 'em all. But he fairly hangs on my words. There's a gleam in his eye I don't like. He's beginning to crave my tonsils.

Taking Political Sides

TODAY some entirely fair-minded patriot who is snuggled up close to the throne or hopes soon to be, proclaims: "Landon is as synthetic as a rubber duck. Roosevelt is the only hope of an imperiled people. What price a constitution when we can have frankfurters?"

Tomorrow another gentleman, who likewise is as unbiased as a spite-fence, bursts forth with something like this:

"Re-elect Roosevelt and your country forever is wrecked. Landon alone can save our threatened institutions. A real statesman. He eats in the kitchen and hates to wear neckties."

The Two Opposing Camps

ON THE Republican side there temporarily is a lull. Incredible though it sounds, Col. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., is not getting ready to run for anything. Later reports may change this.

A writer who isn't taking sides wonders at length whether the homespun suspender-wearing qualities of Gov. Landon can overbalance the melodious and limpid lines of President Roosevelt. For this problem the appropriate musical accompaniment would seem to be, "Poet and Peasant."

IRVIN S. COBB.

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