

Historic Hoaxes

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON
Western Newspaper Union

The Gold Machine

ALCHEMY, the professed art of transmuting baser metals into gold, has been one of man's dreams for ages. But it remained for a Connecticut Yankee to give it a practical application which, metaphorically speaking, lined his pockets with \$200,000 worth of gold obtained from credulous investors in his "gold accumulator."

This was the invention of Prescott Ford Jernegan, once a minister of Middletown, Conn., who interested Arthur W. Ryan, a jeweler, in his plan for extracting gold from sea water. In February, 1897, Jernegan lowered into Narraganset bay in Rhode Island, his "gold accumulator," a flat box containing a small battery, quicksilver and other chemicals and constructed so that the sea water flowed over the quicksilver. When the box was raised 24 hours later what appeared to be gold was discovered in place of the quicksilver and the jeweler's tests proved to his satisfaction that it was real gold—\$2 worth.

So he joined with Jernegan in forming a company and selling \$500,000 in stock. A plant was built at Lubec, Maine, and the two "accumulators" began bringing up increasing amounts of gold. This went on for more than a year. Then in July, 1898, Jernegan went to Europe and at the same time an employee named Charles E. Fisher disappeared. The "accumulators" ceased to produce gold, for the very good reason that Fisher, who was a professional diver, had been placing the precious metal in them before they were brought to the surface.

When the fraud was exposed, the directors of the company who had been made victims of the fake, gave back the profits they had made and eventually the stockholders recovered about 36 per cent of their investment. There was some talk of trying to extradite Jernegan from Europe, where he was living off the \$200,000 he had obtained from investors, but nothing ever came of it.

Nature Faker Par Excellence

THE modern champion of all writers of nature fakes was undoubtedly "Lester Green," of Prospect, Conn. No matter how preposterous his yarns, which several metropolitan newspapers printed for the amusement of their readers, there have always been some people who have believed them.

When he told how a setting of hen's eggs, which he had found in a block of ice taken from a flooded meadow, hatched out chickens covered with fur instead of feathers, a Canadian farmer wrote to him and wanted to buy some.

When he declared he had discovered the fluid responsible for the curl in pigs' tails and his wife had obtained beautiful permanent waves by rubbing it on her hair, "Mrs. Green" was flooded with requests from women for samples of this magic fluid.

When he told of spraying his apple trees with glue, which not only prevented the apples from falling but also preserved them in a fresh condition on the trees throughout the winter, both American and Canadian glue manufacturers wrote to ask what kind of glue he used, hoping to get a good "testimonial." One Boston firm even sent a representative to Prospect to investigate his stunt.

And these are only a very few of the marvelous achievements of "Lester Green" who was, by the way, the brain child of C. Louis Mortison, Prospect correspondent for the Waterbury (Conn.) Republican-American.

Spectrist Poetry

DURING the second decade of the present century there was a sudden growth of new "schools" of poetry and art, among them such cults as Futurism, Vorticism, Cubism, Dadaism and Polyphonic Prose.

So in 1916 when the publication of "Spectra: a Book of Poetic Experiments" was announced, it was hailed with delight by the "emancipated souls" who were struggling for new methods of self-expression. The authors of this volume were "Anne Knish" and "Emanuel Morgan" and immediately they had a host of imitators who wrote the new Spectrist poetry. Nobody could understand it, of course, but that made it seem all the more important.

Then the whole movement was revealed as a hoax which had been fathered by two authentic poets, Witter Bynner and Arthur Davison Ficke, who used this method to satirize the current fad in new poetic cults. But, in a sense, the joke was on them. For those who had been duped and had become devotees of "Spectrism" insisted upon continuing to write their verses in that form and to perpetuate the new "movement," which still flourished among some of America's intelligentsia.

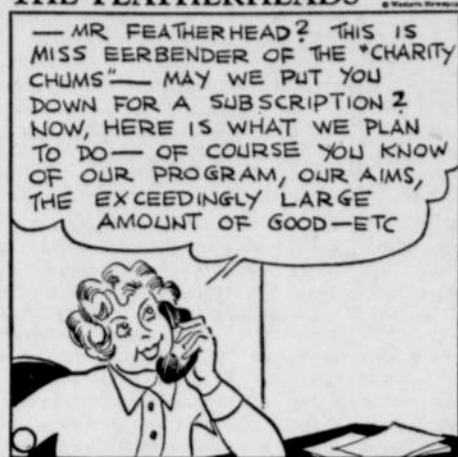
Borax From Chile

From Lake Ascotan, in Chile, 15,000 feet above sea level, is obtained half the world's supply of borax.

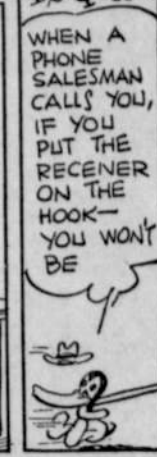
Fun for the Whole Family

THE FEATHERHEADS

By Osborne

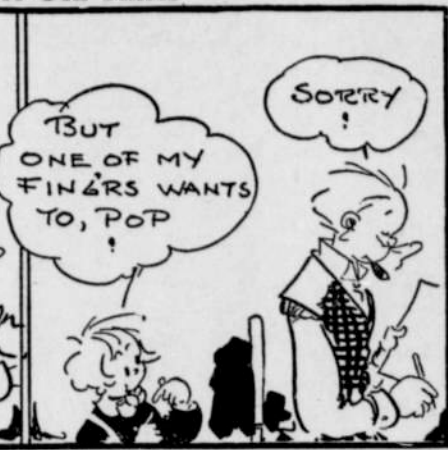


Hook, Line and—



S'MATTER POP— One Point for Old Timer

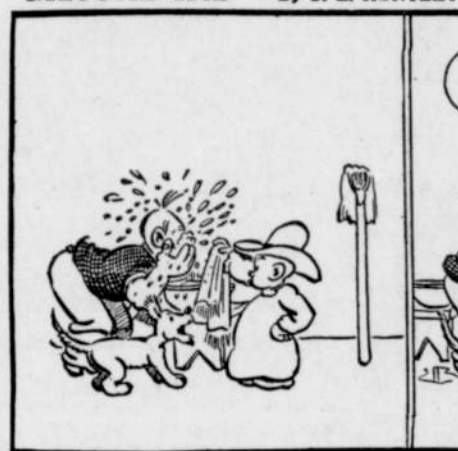
By C. M. PAYNE



MESCAL IKE

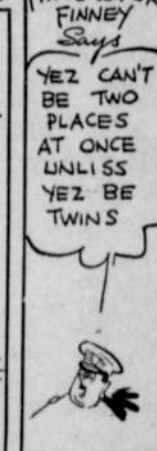
By S. L. HUNTLEY

Account of It Seemed Like a Good Idea



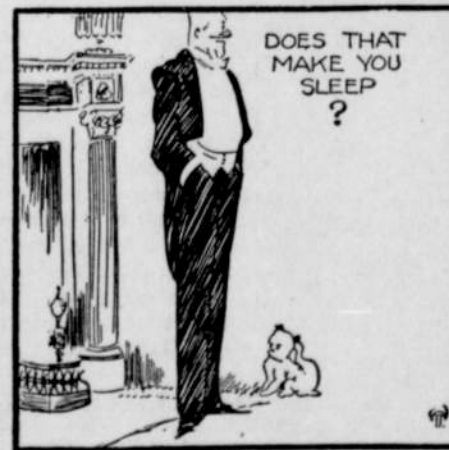
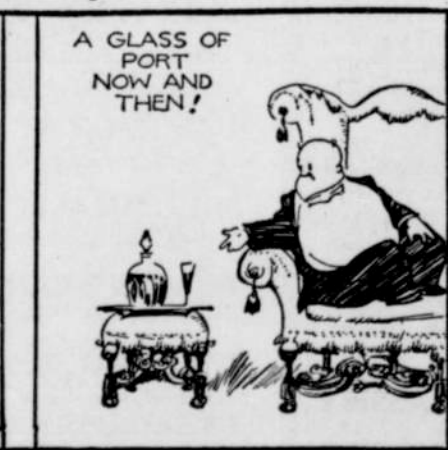
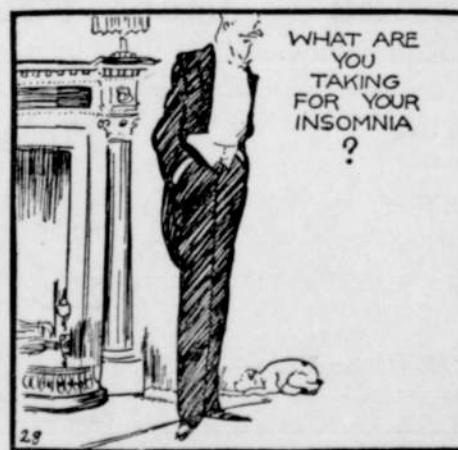
FINNEY OF THE FORCE

By Ted O'Loughlin



POP— When a Man Doesn't Miss Sleep

By J. MILLAR WATT



THE NEW SLED

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



MY GOODNESS!

Teacher (pointing to a deer at the zoo)—Tommy, what kind of animal is that?
Tommy—Gee, I dunno.
Teacher—Oh, come now. What does your sister call your brother?
Tommy—Gosh! Don't tell me that's a louse!

That Was Why

He—You look like a sensible girl. Let's get married.
She—Nothing doing. I'm just as sensible as I look.—Stray Stories Magazine.

Coin-Cidence

"I'm a coin collector."
"So am I! Let's get together and talk over old times."—Boys' Life.

SHE GAVE UP!

They tell of a shiftless character who piled into bed one night after a coon hunt, with all his clothes on, including boots. After a while his wife shook him, "Get up. You got your shoes on."
To which he mumbled, "That's all right. They ain't my good ones."

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