

AMERICANA

CALIFORNIA

NOSTALGIA conquers a transplanted Kansan interviewed by the *San Diego News*:

L. A. HUSSONG: "I like to go out in the old garage in the early afternoons and wade in my mud puddle. Two buckets of hot water put it in fine condition. And when I roll my pants up to my knees and step in and feel the mud squash up between my toes it reminds me of days sixty years ago in Kansas, when we used to go wading. I do this two or three times a week. Squash of warm mud between the toes feels fine."

LOVE on the far left — an ad in *The American Guardian*:

YOUNG MAN 29, nice appearance, seeks leftist lady friend. —, East Los Angeles, Calif.

THE WEST is beginning to take credit for everything, according to an editorial in the *Los Angeles Times*:

Justly proud that it is the place where the custom began, Southern California will turn its face toward the East tomorrow morning in Easter sunrise services.

ILLINOIS

STRANGE DOINGS in Chicago cinema

temples are reflected in a *Tribune* personal:

WILL gentleman wearing brown striped suit with dark wavy hair, who sat next to me in theatre on West Madison St., Aisle 5, about 15th row, seat 3, on Sunday, April 28, after 3 o'clock, and commented about "Thomas Edison" picture, starring Mickey Rooney, call J. — at Wabash —. URGENT.

MODERATION leads to a happy old age, according to the *Chicago Tribune's* How to Keep Well column:

G. K. writes: Does the ear-splitting belcher who attempts to awaken the dead with his loud "reports" have as good a chance to live to a ripe old age as the quiet burper?

REPLY:

By no means. So great a waste of energy is likely to lead to premature senility. Furthermore, the individual is subject to assassination on the part of some distracted, long suffering victim of his stentorian vocalizations.

MASSACHUSETTS

THE Massachusetts Legislature adjusts the law to meet war conditions:

In the event that "blackouts" are ever enforced in this State, dog racing would be permitted afternoons under a bill which has been reported favorably by the Committee on Legal Affairs.

MONTANA

APPEAL to keep bright the torch of learning, from the *Kaimin*, University of Montana student organ:

LOST — In Men's gym Monday, large blue notebook, containing entire college knowledge. Return to Kaimin office; no questions asked.

NEW YORK

As the world fashion center shifts to New York, our *artistes* go at the thing scientifically. Writes the *Times*:

The relation of the elements of fire, earth, air and water to color analysis in clothes was the topic yesterday at a spring fashion show held by Oppenheim Collins.

Sara Garrard, astrologer, as commentator, said that the chemical elements of the body . . . were acted upon by magnetic forces. On the basis of one's "elemental content," she added, basic and complementary colors are advised either to subdue or stimulate personality characteristics of the individual.

Models born in various months demonstrated that outer harmony could help develop inner harmony. The basic colors of the "fire" group were brilliant reds and blues, combined with gold, chartreuse or green. A red-haired model under Leo (July 23 to Aug. 23) wore a fiery red crepe dirndl street dress, girdled with green grosgrain. . . . "Earth," whose browns, blacks, garnet reds and soft blues rule over those born April 20-May 20,

Aug. 23-Sept. 23 and Dec. 22-Jan. 20, was decoratively illustrated by a model in a brown faille silk suit with pep-lumed jacket worn with emerald green accessories.

The "air" elementals, who are interested in mental activity, wore mostly purples with aqua or turquoise as companion colors. . . . The "water" girls, who are reportedly emotional, tend toward blues and greens in nebulous shades.

TEXAS

NEW FRONTIERS in high-pressure advertising — a Jim Crow real-estate notice culled from the *Dallas News*:

LARGE river-front garden tracts, all the fried catfish, yellow-legged chickens, pork-chops, sweet potatoes and watermelons you can catch, raise, cook and eat. Close to courthouse.

WISCONSIN

PROGRESS of culture, as reported by the *Ladysmith News*:

Eating and dunking with a reckless abandon which broke down all competition, Lawrence Zimmer, of nearby Troy, won the national doughnut dunking contest at the Knights of Pythias Hall and was crowned king in a colorful ceremony. In the finals a sack of 24 sinkers was placed in front of each contestant and they were permitted all the coffee and water desired. . . . Within half a minute of the time limit Zimmer had eaten the two dozen sinkers and was starting on a new supply. Others trailed along with 16 to 18 to their credit.

(THE MERCURY will pay \$1 for items accepted for Americana. Those found unsuitable cannot be returned.)

DOWN TO EARTH

BY ALAN DEVOE

The Ingenious Spider

IT is an evident fact of the outdoors, although writers in the tradition of the Victorian nature moralists are still accustomed to avert their eyes from it, that a major occupation of all creatures of earth is the killing of other kinds of creatures. It is to this end that myriads of evolutionary specialisms have developed: the curved erectile fangs of vipers, the silent soft-feathered wings on which the great horned owls glide through the darkness to snap the spines of rabbits, the cushiony paws on which lynxes lope across the snow. The quietest woodland, the serenest meadow drowsing under the sun, is hourly the site of uncountable scenes of carnage. To have life is to have hunger; to sustain life is to require the sacrifice of other lives. In the natural world there is always the smell of newly-spilled blood on the wind, the scarlet blood of mammals, the viscous blood of plants and roots, the yellow blood of butterflies.

The ways of killing among animals are very many. There is death

from the air, death by stalking and a final pounce, death by ambush, by swift pursuit, by cunning and agility of a thousand kinds. And there is death, most curiously, by trapping. This is the art preëminently of the arachnids, the eight-legged scuttling little predators that we call spiders. In early summer now the spiders are abroad in every hedgerow, every grass patch, busy with the work of their singular death-engineerings.

Spiders are not insects. They move on four pairs of legs — instead of on three as insects do; their bodies are divided into two sections instead of three; they grow no wings. The diet of many insects is vegetation and the sap of vegetation; but the hunger of spiders is for fresh-killed flesh. Certain of the hugest spiders, like the hairy, heavy-bodied tarantulas of Central and South America, are strong enough to capture and kill birds and make a diet of warm blood. There are other species, only slightly smaller, that can enmesh mice in their snares and kill them