

Classics in Slang



HELLO, lads and lassies, is it cold enough for you? (Shouldst you live in South America, that don't go.) Well, speakin' of the preposition "cold," your hero's just back flush with victory and the spoils of war from slappin' Four-Jab Prostrate as frigid as a stepmother's embrace. I'll have you know I'm poison to palookas of that type, no spoofin'!

Really, people, I don't seem capable of losin' since I been appearin' under the managements of Ethel Kingsley, a better looker than Venus the Milo—and Ethel's arms ain't broke off at the elbows like that lady's is, nyther. They may be some amongst my listeners-in which at this critical point will exclaim, "Who the sheol are *you* and for that matter who the Dante's Inferno is Ethel Kingsley?" To them scoffers I can only say just the minute and I'll broadcast all.

To make the clean bosom of matters, I'm One-Punch McTague, viz, the greatest heavyweight since the heydays of Samson and no lady barber will ever make the monkey out of *me* like Delia did that mug eyther. On the other hand, Ethel Kingsley is my manageress, and in her time off from that exactin' billet she acts as caretaker to Ye Olde Booke Shoppe on Amsterdam's Avenue, left unto me by my thoroughly dead uncle, Angus McTague. Now that we got this nonsense out of the ways, leave us get some place with the anecdote itself, for of a truth I'm as anxious to get it over with as you are.

From some place unknown to me, Ethel got a hold of the novel idea that a touch of education wouldst greatly add to my manifold attractions. As I'm far too old to be amused with such toys as college, and correspondence schools runs into too many stamps, this charmin'

damsel hit on the darin' scheme of havin' me read one of my own books each week and then write for her what I remember about it. By this unique fan-

tasy, I'm gettin' all the benefits of a university course without the annoyance of crossin' a campus and if "Readin' maketh a full man," as some old master mind cracked, why, I'm intoxicated half the time!

The last conundrum Miss America gave me to scan was "Ivanhoe," ie, the latest poultrice from the busy typewriter of Walt Scott, a boy which I'm satisfied will make the name for himself in the scenario racket if he don't clown when he hits Hollywood. I'll give you a order of "Ivanhoe" later—first, leave us consider my adventures, gentle readers, which if they ain't as raucous as Ivan's is at least more truer.

THE mornin' after I mastered the mysteries of Scotty's noted fable, I was bringin' my home work on it in to Ethel, when who do I stumble over outside Ye Olde Booke Shoppe but Jack Hootmon. This dizzy egg is the only inhabitant of the universe which ain't fond of me, I'm that likable. On top of that, he's as rich as chocolate puddin', bein' the sole breed of old Elihu Hootmon, the Trillionaire Thumb-Tack King and a incurable addict of Columbia's College.

For many moons young Hootmon has tried with might and main to sell himself to Ethel, usin' all the arts and wiles which wealthy college boys is known for the world over, and we're all aware that when a rich man begins showerin' attentions on a poor girl it only means one thing, namely, the girl is later throwed out in the snowstorm by her stern father. I've oftentimes thought, when viewin' them dramas on the screen, that if it wasn't snowin' the gal's dad wouldst prob'ly of overlooked her little peccadillo.

How the so ever, once upon a time this Hootmon tomato hadst made a bet with me, the gist of which was that shouldst he lose he wouldst stay away from Ethel forever and a day. The poltroon lost, and here I find him struttin' his stuff outside my loved one's bower. I hope to tell you I was overcome with cholerick and mad enough to smash a precedent!

Like a pencil sharpener, I got right to the point, what I mean.

"I thought you was to stay out of my bailiwick, Senseless," I bellered, with a threatenin' wag of my shapely ears. "I got the good mind to knock you cold!"

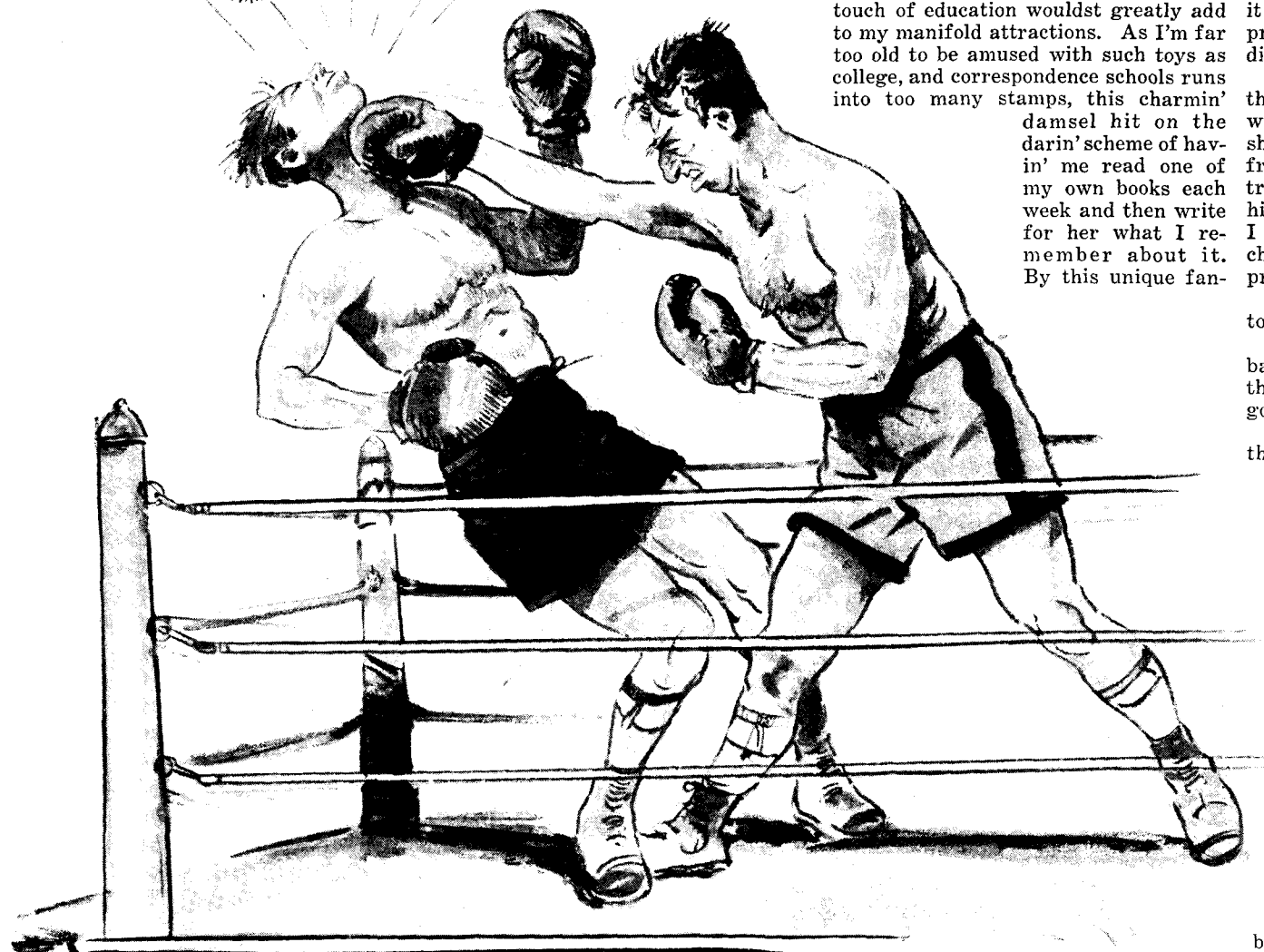
"Keep your shirt on," he exclaims, though I trow I hadst scant intentions of takin' the nobby garment off, "I'm cold enough as it is, thank you!" and suitin' the action to the words he shivered in the icy winds. I was only wishin' I hadst pneumonia, or even oldmonia, so's I couldst of give it to this eyesore!

"If you believe in fair play, McTague," goes on this error, "you'll give me a chance to get even with you. I'd like to make you a wager on your coming bout with Four-Jab Prostrate. I think he's too clever for you."

"Leave him be clever," I says, stanchly, "I ain't goin' to exchange wise cracks with him; I'm goin' to trade smacks with him. What's your proposition?"

"The same as before," he comes back. "If you win, I stay away from Miss Kingsley, and if you lose you give me a clear field. What do you say?"

"I think I should have something to say about all this!" exclaims a delicious voice behind us, and we both whirl



JOHN SARGENT

In a fit of pique the mock turtle Four-Jab took a murderous swing at me. I cleverly blocked the punch with my chin

IVANHOE

by H. C. WITWER

One-Punch McTague gives us a simple understanding of Sir Walter Scott's great novel

around to gaze into the lovely pan of Ethel, which positively has "It" and I don't mean I reckon so! She don't seem much elated. "There is no necessity for you to make any wager involving me," she continues. "I'm not an article of merchandise. I'll see you both—when-ever business demands it. Were you going to buy a book, Mr. Hootmon?"

"Why—er—yes, of course," he stutters, "I—"

"They's plenty book stores downtown, Funny-Lookin'." I cut him off, bein' very impartial to customers which tries to promote my thrillin' saleslady. "Besides, we just hauled off and took a sacred oath not to sell less than forty thousand dollars' worth of reading material to any one client. Add that up!"

"Don't be silly!" says Ethel, but a smile got away from her. "Come in and look at our new fiction, Mr. Hootmon. Mr. McTague loves to joke."

"And how his parents must have loved children!" remarks this proper ape, lookin' me up and down with the leer. That was a foul, and he practically leaped inside the store when I took a tigerish step toward him.

"I WANT to get a good book for a gift," he tells Ethel, "and I don't want to go over a couple of dollars. What would you recommend?"

"I'd recommend tryin' another book shop!" I butt in, executin' a sneer. "Two-dollar sales thrills us like it thrills a jockey to watch a merry-go-round!"

"Be still!" cries Ethel, stampin' her little footsie. "We haven't made expenses this week, and we need all the sales we can make!"

I'll state I don't care what I make, if I can eventually make Ethel.

"Well, what are your lowest terms for college students?" inquires Mr. Hootmon.

"Lounge lizards and garter snakes!" I says promptly.

"Are you tryin' to insult me?" demands my hated rival, lookin' as vicious as an enraged field mouse.

"If the shoe fits you, buy the pair," I purrs.

Just then they's a interruption in the shape of Lucifer (Red) Higgins, viz, my nee manager, which went to work and sold me to Ethel for a hundred bucks when Rabbit-Punch Weird laid me like a rug. Later, Red seen me flatten Weasel-Faced Jibby, and that deed made him thoughtful.

"Greetin's!" cackles this mug, beamin' on one and all. "Long time no see. McTague, how'd you like to come back under my wings again?"

"Don't make me laugh!" I says, in a welter of disdain. "You and me is as far apart as A and Z. I got a real manager now!"

"You got a good-lookin' one, anyways," admits Red, with a smirk at Ethel. "But I got a chance to toss you in a ring with Tunney—what d'ye think of them grapefruit, Big Boy?"

"Tunney's got to show me more than a mere win over Dempsey," I tell him. "I can't be annoyed workin' out with them powder-puff hitters, I crave bigger and better heavies. Gene's far too careful and cautious."

"In your case, he'd probably hurl

caution to the winds," says Red, with a sarcastical grimace, "because he knows you dote on action. I wouldn't be surprised if he knocked you stiff with the first punch, rather than take any chances with you in a long fight."

"Mr. McTague's contract is not for sale!" Ethel exclaims with no little firmness and four icicles on each word. "I paid you a hundred dollars for it and—"

"And that ends the subject!" I finish for her.



"Blah!" snorts Lady Rowena and sticks her pretty tongue out at him

"Listen, Stupid!" snarls Red at me. "You got nothin' to do with this a-tall! Speak when you're spoke to and not out of turn. You're meanin'less—plenty nothin', get me?" Then he wheels around on Ethel again. "Beautiful," he says, "I'm willin' to let you click off some gravy for yourself on the deal. I'll put out a hundred and five bucks for this dry-tank diver's contract. Grab this offer whilst I'm still crazy!"

"I'll give you just exactly five minutes to shove off, you burglar!" I bawls at him, fit to be tied. "And I hereby declare four and a half of them five minutes is up. Haul hips!"

With that I made a ferocious rush at him, and with a panic-stricken yelp Red galloped out the door. Then I grabbed the grinnin' Monsieur Jack Hootmon by the lapels of his valuable overcoat. "Are you goin' to purchase?" I ask him wickedly.

"Why—I—you—see—" he stammers, greatly alarmed.

"Outside!" I snaps and shoves him sprawlin' out the door without further ado. They's no quibblin' with me, good people, once I get under way, what I mean!

Dustin' off my gigantic hands, I looked at pretty Ethel, which is regardin' me kind of half mad and the other half entertained.

"That wasn't very gentlemanly," says this traffic stopper.

"They's times when bein' a gentleman is quite a handicap," I answers demure-

day he was on the job. Can you imagine that?

How the so ever, the big night fin'ly dawned, and me and Ethel taxied over to the Canvas Kissers' A. C. in the country of Brooklyn, where the attempted murder was to take place. Like per usual, Jack Hootmon and Lucifer (Red) Hig-

Illustrated by
TONY
SARG

gins has ringside seats, and they sneered at me brutally when I floundered through the ropes and sit down in my corner, shiverin' with confidence. The crowd, which wouldst of packed the joint to the roof shouldst they of all showed up, greeted me with admirin' silence and then Four-Jab Prostrate heaved himself into the ring. My adversus was taller than me by at least a quarter inch and hadst the priceless advantage of a good half pound in weight, what I mean.

The sounds of the bell is still on the air when I dashed into Four-Jab's corner and hit him in the lug with a right I started from the basement of the club. His knees bent under him and he seemed somewhat aghast, but when I stuck a left in his eye, puttin' a mouse under it, he grew extremely peeved. Makin' a horrible face at me, he plunged into a clinch and beat on my tummy like it was a drum. I soon sickened of this horseplay and tore myself loose, skip-pin' gayly backward around the ring with Four-Jab runnin' after me madly. The house went into a frenzy, and I couldst not keep from laughin' out loud at Four-Jab's clumsy and frantic attempts to catch me. It was quite droll, as we say on Tenth Avenue.

The referee (Continued on page 32)

The Reign of Error

"WHY did George Washington cross the Delaware?" demanded Uncle Henry. "Why did Paul Revere leave his comfortable bed, jump on a horse an' gallop off into the night? Why did Benedict Arnold offer to sell his country, announcin' that he would accept any sort of bid? Why did Francis Marion live in such fashion as to be called the Swamp Fox? I'll tell you, 'Lonzo. They were tryin' to get away from questionnaires." "What is a questionnaire?" asked Mr. Stubbs.

"Good Lord!" gasped Uncle Henry. "Do you mean to say you've never got one? Write to your senator at once, my poor neglected friend. Demand an instant investigation. Put Cal Coolidge an' every Washington bureau head on the stand, an' make 'em tell why it is that you, a free-born American citizen, are set apart, discriminated against an' put in the light of bein' despised.

"Questionnaires, 'Lonzo, constitute official Washington's favorite indoor sport. The game is played with four or five hundred stenographers, roll-top desks, swivel chairs an' the city directories of the United States. It's somethin' like cricket in that it's a game that goes on for ever an' ever, never stoppin' except for tea, naps an' week-ends.

Pertinent, Also Impertinent

"DO YOU remember that old joke, 'What is it that stands on one leg an' barks like a dog?' Stork was the answer, the bit about the dog havin' been put in to make it hard. Well, that's the principle of the questionnaire. If any of the questions have any sense to 'em, the guilty clerk is kicked out of his soft government job an' made to go to work. "The thing's got to be a regular reign of error. Questionnaires flood the country. Instead of tryin' to avoid the deadly

"I've been tryin' a month to get some bathroom repairs but the plumber is still answerin' a questionnaire"

Uncle Henry

hazards, golfers actually seek 'em, for when he's down in the bottom of a sand trap or ravine, a man has some chance of escapin' the mail carrier. False whiskers are goin' at a premium, an' speculators are reapin' a rich harvest sellin' tickets of admission to storm cellars.

"Secretary Hoover has figured that it costs business an' professional men fully \$50,000,000 a year to prepare answers to the steady stream of questionnaires that Washington sends out. I can well believe it, 'Lonzo. Consider the cost to a country doctor to answer a questionnaire like this:

Take any fiscal year ending on a Tuesday and give approximate mileage made by each of the following complaints: (a) Creeping palsy, (b) Walking typhoid, (c) Galloping consumption.

Do you confine your practice to the treatment of sick people, or are you a specialist?

Who was the Sick Man of Europe?

What is the percentage of mortality in your district compared with the illiteracy rate of Abyssinia?

Is the Department of Agriculture, in your opinion, making a mistake in not attempting to make use of hives? Should the Forestry Division be called as consultant in a case of shingles?

"An' how is a member of the Doughnut Molders' Union to meet the expense in a questionnaire that wants to know if he molds around the hole or waits until the completion of the ring before insertin' the hole, an' what's the per capita doughnut consumption of the United States for 1776 to 1927? An' how is a street cleaner to cope with a thing like this:

How do the street-cleaning systems of the

"Watchin' whole days . . . What do they get out of it?"

United States compare in size and inefficiency with those of (a) Arkansas, (b) Scandinavia, (c) Los Angeles, (d) Mittel Europa, (e) Asia?

"It's almost impossible to get anything done any more, everybody is so busy answerin' questionnaires. I've been tryin' a whole month to get some repairs in the bathroom, but the plumber is still figurin' on the number of times he uses the same piece of waste, the life of a monkey wrench an' the ductile strength of Pittsburgh steel as compared to German steel. I want to give my wife an old colonial dresser for her birthday, but the antique dealer is still busy with a questionnaire that runs like this:

In the preparation of genuine Hepelwhite chairs, which give the best results: (a) Worms, (b) Boring beetles, (c) Woodpeckers?

In making Sheraton for the Oklahoma trade, have you ever tried the San José scale?

Figuring on your own output, and letting x stand for the number of antique dealers in the United States, how many pieces of genuine colonial furniture can be turned out in a day by (a) A skilled workman, (b) An interior decorator?

Why is a morris chair?

"The other day I received a questionnaire addressed to a prune picker. An' what do you think they wanted to know? Whether the prune was more influenced by heredity or by environment, an' could I give four reasons, not more than three bein' the same?

"I don't say that the principle of the thing is wrong, 'Lonzo. It's the operation that I quarrel with. Why waste time on lady boiler makers, sausage grinders, zither players, bankers, floor waxers, lawyers, doctors, etc., when there's so much more important information that the world stands in need of? For instance, what a boon it would be to have the followin' questionnaire answered by the people who've asked you to spend a week-end:

How many bathrooms are there in your home?

Are guests expected to get up for breakfast?

Does any member of your family recite?

Is there a family album?



"Figurin' on the number of times he uses the same piece of waste"

Are guests expected to accompany the host on visits of inspection to (a) Gardens, (b) Stables, (c) Greenhouses?

Is it your idea that visitors should be "entertained"?

Do you go in for parlor games? Can you furnish conclusive evidence that no member of the family, on both sides of the house, and as far back as you can remember, ever played (a) Charades, (b) Forfeits, (c) Riddles?

Are children allowed to come to the table?

"Now that home is a place where people go only when everything else is closed, what more important than to get all possible information about restaurants? Think what it would mean to have these questions answered by a waiter:

How long does it take to get toast chilled enough to serve?

How do you manage to keep from looking at a patron when he is trying to attract your attention? Is it a gift or can you acquire it?

Do your feet hurt because you are a waiter, or are you a waiter because your feet hurt?

When a patron asks for a napkin or a knife, where do you spend the hour that elapses before your return?

Something on the Lip

"FOR another thing, 'Lonzo, I would like to have questionnaires sent to those people who spend whole days watchin' workmen dig a hole in the ground or tearin' down a buildin'. They must get somethin' out of it. An' how about puttin' these questions up to a traffic cop?

Which form of address is judged to be most effective in forcing respect for the law?

(a) Who the hell do you think you are?

(b) Hey, you! Where the hell do you think you're goin'?

How many words is a driver permitted to use before the rules require you to say, "Gimme any more lip an' I'll take you down to the station"?

Do all faces displease you?

Why is your invariable retort, "Don't make me laugh"? Why this fear of innocent mirth? . . .

"Those fellows in Washington make me sick," said Mr. Stubbs. "Jes' a lot of time killers."

"That's the trouble," declared Uncle Henry. "They don't kill it. The poor thing is kept lingerin'."

