

# DOWN THE HOME STRETCH

The men and women who never register their opinions in straw votes are the shock troops in the political army. They are the precinct, ward, or district workers. They haven't anything to do except get out the vote on election day. In the past six weeks Walter Davenport has talked with these men on the firing line in the states which political wise men have regarded as doubtful: Tennessee, Missouri, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Illinois. What he saw and heard has convinced him that Herbert Hoover will be victorious on November 6th. Moreover, what he saw and heard is reported here with Collier's well-known independence—without trimmings.



The nomination of Herbert Hoover produced nothing which would have fetched a frown to a tea party back in the nicer Nineties

THE excitement attending the nomination of Alfred E. Smith was so terrific that several erstwhile obscure citizens died then and there, strangled by their own emotions. There were other fatalities more deliberate in procedure. For example, there was the Missouri patriarch who got it via radio, swallowing the quill toothpick which, his neighbors assured the world, he had not removed from his mouth since he came into possession of it at a Champ Clark banquet at Joplin eighteen years ago. That it would one day be the death of him had been generally predicted.

There were other casualties of a less enduring nature. A number of impressionable ladies and gentlemen whose hearts and souls had long since been consecrated to such simplified organizations as the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Loyal Temperance Legion, the Society of Christian Endeavor and so forth promptly took to their beds. Others, running a bit wild under the influence of the Smith furor, fell over things like furniture, fire hydrants, loose planks and window sills, breaking bones and variously unjointing themselves.

And some gave way mentally, their more religious friends hastening to explain with cold conviction that such dismal results of the carouse of the Democratic Party were but heaven's warnings of the wrath to come were the wet and Romish head of Tammany Hall to be installed in our habitually Protestant White House.

Now on the other hand the nomination of Herbert Hoover produced nothing which would have fetched a frown of disapproval to a Lowell-Cabot tea back in the nicer Nineties when, as you probably know, it was even less respectable not to be a Republican.

The decorous cheering over, Mr. Hoover and his party's purposeful leaders paid their hotel bills in full, tidied up their rooms, put the chairs back where they belonged and left Kansas City in parlor cars bearing strictly Nordic names. Back home again they set about organizing their sectors for Hoover with all the decorum, thoroughness and efficiency of a Red Cross drive.

Nobody, except a few common persons in St. Louis, Milwaukee, Memphis, New York, New Orleans and other crude spots, called them unpleasant names, and nowhere was a single voice heard in criticism of Quakers.

## With the Boys and Girls

Now it soon thereafter fell to my lot to ride hither and yon throughout our country and talk to politically occupied people of all social and factional complexions. For the most part I ignored the better elements, choosing rather to spend my time with the boys and girls who were neighborhood politicians and who had been entrusted with the intimate and important mission of getting out the ward, district and precinct vote.

Earnestly hoping that I shall not offend you beyond recovery, I dare give you a sample or two:

"A couple of weeks before the convention in Kansas City," said Mr. Matty Schoonover, Republican master of a populous ward in Cincinnati, "they come to me and says, 'Matty,' they says, 'what'll you give for Herbert Hoover?'"

"Oh, so it's him, is it?" I says.

"Of course it's him," they says, 'we wouldn't be asking you to go to work now if it was going to be someone else.

Also he's coming dry and he's against floods and he's a Quaker, which means absolutely Protestant, and you can play up prosperity and the full dinner pail as far as you like. It's all set.'

"Well," said Mr. Schoonover, "I says, 'Just as you say, Senator,' and I begin lining up the boys and thinking up a program of picnics and outings and Hoover Hurrays, trusting that nothing would slip up at Kansas City. It didn't. When the boss got home we were all set.

"That's the boy, Matty," says the senator. 'Here.' And he hands me a roll and says there's more where that come from. And by the time the Democrats get home from Houston I got a lease on the two halls in this ward that'll hold more than a hundred and fifty standing and sitting and got a Hoover Glee Club all ready to break out, not to mention . . ."

## An Habitual Victor

We turn from the highly organized and organizing Mr. Schoonover of Cincinnati and listen to the lament of the Hon. Michael F. Tansey of Boston:

"Listen," said he, "it looked easy at Houston, didn't it? Well, it wasn't. We busted our suspenders putting Al over. And what happens when a man busts his suspenders? Why, his pants fall down."

The Hon. Mr. Tansey was morosely silent for a moment. Then he turned to me again and said:

"My boy, that's no way for a man to be caught. Especially in politics."

Mr. Hoover, for whom I have great respect but for whom I did not hope, is, I am convinced, going to defeat Governor Smith. The physical proportions of his victory is for wiser, more courageous, more presumptuous investigators and surveyors than I to forecast.

I did not find anything outside of sectors which are as incurably Democratic as Maine is Republican that indicated that local Democrats had done more toward organization in Smith's behalf than to shake hands with each other and pass congratulations that the year had come when they'd not lack for money.

Not that they had any idea of raising funds themselves. They reasoned thus: Their candidate was an habitual victor. He didn't know how to lose. He was a New Yorker and his calling list was composed almost exclusively of men and women to whom a paltry million dollars was a mere stock-market turnover.

The party had nominated a magician, they told each other. There was nothing to do but sit down somewhere and wait until November 6th, when, with a nonchalant gesture of disdain for all Republicans the great and happy warrior, Al Smith, would vault lightly into the Presidency, carrying with him, of course, all Democrats to four and probably eight years of beer and skittles in unlimited quantities.

Presently a scattering of the more perspicacious began to notice that there were few if any retaliating cheers from the Hoover people. In New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky, notably, this lack of Hoover noise was accepted at first as evidence of the absence of Hoover votes. The Democratic cheering grew louder thereafter. But there were a cognizant few, led by Governor Smith himself, who suspected that if the Democrats were minded to depend upon their eyes and ears as well as their mouths they would have unlimited evidence that the Re-

## By Walter Davenport

publicans were at the moment much too busy to make a noise.

The pro-Hoover workers (or perhaps it is more correct to call them anti-Smith) understood that fundamental axiom of warfare which has it that an enemy cannot win so long as he is restrained from attacking. Therefore, the Democrats, when finally they got down to work, found themselves on the defensive.

For weeks, for at least three months, their entire energies, from national headquarters down, were absorbed in denying things. The anti-Smith forces had deployed themselves in a manner that would have fetched joyous and spontaneous applause from any of such old-time bosses as Mark Hanna, Boise Penrose, Henry Lodge and Joe Cannon.

### Bellows, Not Whispers

There in the front line of the Republican army lay the evangelical churchmen. Behind these sturdy volunteers were the Republican job-holders prepared to die if necessary for their post-masterships, their collectorships and so on and so forth. And in the rear lay the oratorical artillery, the funds-collecting commissary, the vote-fetching recruiting details already busy and successful on the Democratic flanks.

Across political no-man's land—Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Washington—the Democrats presented a picture which must have caused the eyes of Senator George H. Moses to dance. Just a mob. A large mob, to be sure, but a remarkably disorganized one. And Mr. Moses understood, and Mr. Hoover understood, that one well-disciplined machine-gun crew can lick a mob.

So the first thing the anti-Smith regiments did was to force the Democrats to deny things. They found the Democrats so fond of denying things that they kept it up. The Democrats are still denying things. Whispering? Nonsense. Bellowed accusations, I'd call them.

Governor Smith, howled the front-line attackers, had taken a secret oath at a midnight conclave of Knights of Columbus to appoint to his cabinet and to federal judgeships none but Roman Catholics. And these dreadful creatures were first to have the sanction of the Pope. (In Illinois, Kentucky and Tennessee I found the Smith Democrats so busy denying this that they hadn't noticed that the old Bryan and Wilson votes were being kidnaped in precinct lots by the Hoover press gangs.)

"Do you mean to tell me," gasped the Kansas City lady who had been rewarded in 1919 with a personal letter from Mr. Hoover for her work for the American Relief in Belgium, "that you are writing politics and don't know that Al Smith's campaign speeches and statements are first visé by the Apostolic Delegate in Washington?"

Incredible as it sounds, I found Democrats devoting all their time to denying this. This and a story that the Pope had promised papal titles to all and sundry who contributed not less than \$1,000 to the Smith campaign and excommunication to certain designated capitalists who gave less than a minimum of \$10,000.

Thus launched upon a career of denials which consumed much valuable time, the Democrats were kept at bay by their foes, who assured large audiences of shocked voters that Governor Smith was usually quite drunk, that he had never worked in a fish market as

a lad but had made a horrid living selling policy slips for one Johnny McLaughlin of Tammany Hall. (The Louisville gentleman telling me this assured me that he had it straight from Mr. McLaughlin's son, who, upon the death of his abandoned father, had changed his name and migrated to Kentucky to start life anew.)

That Governor Smith was really illiterate—so much so, in fact, that Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote his speeches and heroically sat up of nights teaching the governor to utter the phrases just as you'd coach a child.

That the governor of New York was cruel to his family, preferring to sit up night after night in his private speakeasy in Albany to spending his evenings respectably with Mrs. Smith and the children. (Of this I was assured by an eminent clergyman in Tennessee.)

And while the Democrats were thus held off from any local organizing which they might have had in mind, Republican men and women carrying the genuine Hoover credentials were hustling and bustling hither and yon forming Hoover clubs for Italians, Poles, Swedes, Germans, French-Canadians and for various other racial groups who were glad enough to be so flattered by hail fellows of both sexes.

Especially did the Hoover organizers address themselves to the women. It is wholly likely that there never has been in any political campaign a harder and more sustained drive to corral the woman vote. To women generally the Republican candidate had appeal.

Mr. Hoover had fed Europe's widows and orphans. He had succored the starving and war-weary from Sicily to Dorpat, from the Zuyder Zee to Lake Baikal. He represented pacification, the binding up of wounds. He understood things called international crises and, while few of the men going about giving currency to their interesting sidelight on Mr. Hoover were quite sure what constituted an international crisis, it went extremely well with the women to whom it meant the makings of more war. A state committeewoman in Illinois told me that Mr. Hoover could be depended upon to stop all international crises the moment he was elected.

### A Paucity of National-Size Issues

Lest you take it that I make little of these Hooverish virtues I hasten to deny it. I go farther and agree that most of these nice things said about the Republican candidate are happily true. But my point is that while the unorganized Smith votes were standing there waiting for a miracle to happen right under their own hats, while they were still dividing their time between cheering the Houston result and singing The Sidewalks of New York and Al's Me Pal, the Republicans were quietly lining up vote-breeding votes and assuring all and sundry that the problem was an extremely simple thing:

"Which would you rather have: three nicely balanced meals a day or a glass of highly improbable beer?"

The farther one traveled in quest of signs of what was going to happen on the sixth of November, the more deeply was he impressed by the paucity of national-size issues in the Republican appeal. Mr. Hoover's personal aides were doing their best to be dignified but with that lack of success which would be any gentleman's who is forced to appear in public clad only in his son's nightshirt and his grandfather's beaver hat.



Local Democrats hither and yon told themselves that the party had nominated a magician in Alfred E. Smith

Governor Smith had two passion-arousing appeals for votes, both involving large questions of human conduct: Man's right to drink alcohol and his right to be a Roman Catholic and not be penalized therefor. The Republicans had—Mr. Hoover.

In what looked like sheer desperation, the Republicans in their search for something to call an issue quietly robbed the tomb of the McKinley campaigns and fetched forth "Prosperity, or The Full Dinner Pail," a slogan which Mr. Bert Horner of Pittsburgh's strip district revised after a week or two of furious mental effort to read "Applesauce, or the Fool's Dinner Pail."

Mr. Horner, a dripping-wet Republican, assured me no fewer than ten times that he wasn't any more afraid of Andy Mellon than he was of Andy Gump.

"Being that there ain't any ladies with you," said Mr. Tom J. Boland, President of the Al Smith Shoe and Boot Welt Stitchers' Association of Lowell, Mass., "I will say that this Full Dinner Pail issue is a lot of horse's neck. Practically every corner in Massachusetts is full of the unemployed, with the textile mills dying on their feet and the boot and shoe business falling off now that everybody's riding around in automobiles and not wearing out a pair of soles a year. (Continued on page 34)



# Awfully Marvelous

By David Thibault

*A simply gorgeous episode in the life of a youthful genius who happened to have brothers*

"MARVELOUS! That will be wonderful, Clay. It's perfectly gorgeous of you to ask me." Clay Albert Prather felt that his seventeen years had not been lived in vain. Red, hot and incoherent, he had walked from Valmont Street, where he should have taken the street car, to Nashville Avenue, where he knew Dorothy Babin took it. All he had offered was an invitation to see John Gilbert the next evening. But no matter; proffer of a little green apple or of the universe would have loosed the same gracious words from Miss Babin, and they would have gushed forth in precisely the same order.

"I think he's pretty good." Clay ran a shaking forefinger between his collar and neck and swallowed. "He's the one played in The Big Parade."

"It was marvelous! I just adore him. He's perfectly wonderful. He's my favorite actor!" Dorothy was perhaps a month or two older than Clay, but she already knew that eyes and a voice properly used are sufficient equipment for a successful life, and she philosophically refused to worry about acquiring others. Clay would never know that; he was a predestined and willing victim. With their car a half square off, he was noting how the sunlight struck through Dorothy's curls and how firm and sweetly rounded her neck rose from the delicately embroidered collar of her cool dress.

THE car was jammed. Clay found arm room and forked up the fare.

"You mustn't do that, Clay! Put it back—it's marvelous of you to offer." Dorothy fumbled with a ridiculous little purse from which frothed a tiny handkerchief laden with overpowering, nearly tangible fragrance.

Clay paid.

"It's marvelous to have such wonderful friends," Dorothy rewarded him; he was sorry the joint fare was only fourteen cents.

"That's nothing. I'm a working man now," he grinned.

"Are you really, Clay? That's simply gorgeous. I know you are doing just fine. It's a grand and glorious feeling, isn't it? Of course I'm helping around at the library. But it's different with a man. I'm afraid I read more than I work." Dorothy knew her glories too well to waste all of them upon an unmarried boy. Clay was getting one picture show's worth. There was a surplus for the several interested men who stood jammed in the aisle of the car.

It was while Dorothy was collecting admiration of these that Clay first recognized as a life force the little ringlets that clustered in front of each of her ears; and discovered that these ears were like pressed flowers that somehow still lived. He saw too that Dorothy's eyebrows were just so wide and no wider, and that they seemed to have been pruned from infancy. Her nose might have seemed short to some coarse-natured people, but he thought it perfect.

"Isn't St. Charles Avenue marvelous this time of year? I think New Orleans is simply gorgeous, even if I do live here. Don't you, Clay?" Then, as though in apology for having nearly thought: "Aren't the flowers all along just wonderful?"

"I like the grass," Clay stated with heavy finality. He wanted to say that the light in her eyes reminded him of tree shadows moving over close-clipped lawns. He put the thought away for future elaboration and use.

"The grass is marvelous too. Isn't that just like a man to think it is prettier than all the wonderful flowers?" Her laugh bubbled up. Clay was sure all the packed humanity in the car was absorbed in them, but he didn't even care. Dorothy's face held his eyes. Dorothy permitted him that much fascination. One picture show's worth; but she was generous in her allocations and rather liked picture shows.

"Oh, Clay! I just thought: What were you doing catching the car at Nashville Avenue? Don't you usually—"

"I sometimes kinda like to walk in the morning." Clay's voice was nearly gruff. He averted his face.

"I think walking is marvelous too," Dorothy lamely assented.

Always after getting a date Clay had a severe let-down. He had rash courage, but no fortitude, and he did not go out very much, for a number of reasons, several of which contributed directly to the feeling of smoldering depression which followed the exaltation of "asking her." For Clay was underfinanced and overfamilied. In the bosom of this family there was for him seldom peace and never privacy. Nor could he be aloof for more than just so long at a time. Clint and Jake were barbarians with no regard for what Clay knew as "one's more sacred thoughts," but they were wealthy barbarians from whom one could borrow raiment surreptitiously, and—occasionally—money. Cissily and Mary didn't count; they were a sisterly, derisive chorus, aggravating the murderousness of Jake's wit or Clint's heavier belaborings. The parents had been dead for years; Cissily had mothered them all with elastic spirit and a devotion greater than any of them suspected. Clint, Clay's eldest brother, was premier breadwinner. Both he and Jake worked. Mary was just out of high school, where Clay would be a senior next term. There was probably never a more loving group or a group which took more pains to dissemble their affection by merciless and unintermittent absorption in

each other's peculiarities and defects.

It was accepted family procedure for Jake and Clint to thrust at Clay's sensibilities until he was wild, but there would have been disapproval had he killed either of his tormentors, as he often had a perfect right and a cosmic urge to do. Clay himself recognized these complications of primogeniture, despite the fact that his soul was one and a half times too big for his body. Between the ages of fourteen and seventeen he had only thrown the carving knife at Clint once; Jake, subtlest of persecutors, had escaped all violence.

FOR once Clay had money enough to finance his date unaided. His vacation job in the shipping department of Holderman's department store attended to that—since it was just two days after pay day. But other worries pressed close and hard. His straw hat was last season's, his suit needed pressing, and he had no new ties. Clint had a blue tie. Perhaps it was the snappiest tie in the world. For full six months it was designated in the Prather household as "Clint's two-dollar tie. . . ."

These thoughts now and then got between Clay and Dorothy's eyes as he walked from the car line home that evening. He could not be called methodical by any charitable interpretation of the word, but his mind clung to things that must be done, and in his own way he usually managed. He must be es-

Illustrated by  
R. Van  
Buren



pecially nice to Clint and Cissily. That meant he must ask Clint's advice about something and demonstrate his liking for whatever dish Cissily was featuring that evening. He could always tell what Cissily wanted them to like best. Usually something "fixed different." And Clint liked to be consulted about all phases of finance except personal loans.

Clay shamelessly wallowed in ulterior motives. As a background to anything pleasant in the Prather home, Cissily's complacency was necessary because they all, in their own way, loved and admired her. As for pleasing Clint, that was a matter of neckwear. Mary didn't count; she always sided with the older brother in any controversy.

Against Jake, incorruptible as Savonarola and as insensible to flattery as an adder, there was no defense. One survived Jake if possible; unlike others, quick of wit and tongue, he always had, as Clay reluctantly admitted thousands



A towering figure swathed in white looked grimly at Clay over the top of the paper



of times, that stuff called "the dope." They were all seated when Clay came into the dining-room.

"Marvelous!" Jake greeted. "I'll bet our wonderful little brother's going to take the most gorgeous gal livin' to the picture show tomorrow night."

"He better have the jack," Clint contributed dourly; "it's not my turn to lend him the price."

"Who's asking you?" Clay was at white heat instantly because of Jake's uncanny penetration, and did not scruple to take it out upon the latest assailant.

"Ca'm your marvelous self," Jake suggested reasonably. "How's Miss M. W. G. Babin these days?"

"Her name's Dorothy!" Clay barked

of total indifference. "The one that glues herself on to every grown man she sees?"

"You keep your mouth shut if you can't talk about her any other way!" Clay sensed just enough truth in this description to rouse him to murder.

"Then I better keep it shut," Clint signed off with amiable finality.

"You ought to see her at a dance," Mary giggled.

"It would do some people a lot of good to see her anywhere," Clay witheringly thrust back. Mary laughed more honestly and choked.

"Marvelous!" Jake commented upon everything in general, and smote his gasping sister between the shoulders. "Wonderful! Gorgeous!"

as he sat down at his place tense and defensive. He had tried before to overwhelm this brother's limpid, cherubic stare with a glare of gloomy dignity. It didn't work any better this time.

"Don't look soul kisses at me," Jake advised him. "Save 'em for her. I saw you trying to help her off the car at the library without touching her. Don't she ever let you touch her?"

"I didn't! She does! I don't want to!"

"Says which?"

(A city of half a million souls, and the only person in it *without any soul at all* had been on that one particular car at that one particular time!)

"Dorothy Babin's—"

"You mean Marvelous-Wonderful-Gorgeous Babin?" Jake asked as one earnestly wishing to know.

Clay choked and turned to Cissily, while the family as a unit wondered if he would rush from the table or merely bark a response at Jake of a temperature demanding reprimand. "Cissily, why don't you say something to him? He can take it out on *me* if he wants to; but when it comes to dragging this innocent girl—"

"It hasn't," Jake explained. "It's nearly always the innocent girls that do the dragging. It's marvelous what wonderful draggers some of the gorgeous creatures are."

"Is she that little short-nosed kitten-looking girl?" Clint asked, with the appalling quiet

Clay straightened in his chair. Then between himself and righteous indignation came the sane thought of the coveted blue necktie. "Aw, ring off!" he suggested with sudden docility. "Say, Clint: You think building and loan's better than a straight-out savings account for a feller fixed like me?"

"Well, I don't know—" the elder brother began sententiously.

"I do!" Jake pushed back his chair and stood up. "I know there's going to be a touch or a necktie missing by this time tomorrow."

When Clay peeled off his everyday suit in the boys' room at seven o'clock the following evening, feverish haste did not prevent his removing from his inner coat pocket with unusual care two white, unsealed envelopes. He closed both doors—after thrusting his head into the adjoining rooms—and placed the missives upon the dressing-table. He eyed them slantwise as he struggled out of his tie and collar and ripped off his shirt. Then, with one of those sudden accesses of languor common to adolescence, he sat down on the upholstered clothes chest and reached for the envelopes. Neither was labeled in any way. From each he drew out a folded sheet of letter paper written upon in ink.

One of these he identified with a glance and put aside. The other he took up as though he feared to touch it, then laid it down, rubbed his hands vigorously with a clean handkerchief, and picked it up again. This time he unfolded the paper and with rapt attention read the three verses written there. They were headed, "To My Lady. By Clay Albert Prather."

CLAY refolded the sheet of paper, glanced swiftly at both doors, arose, stood before the mirror, and, looking himself in the eyes, raised the manuscript to his lips. Then he returned it to the envelope and picked up the other paper. Clay had written this note the day before. It ran:

Dear Clint:

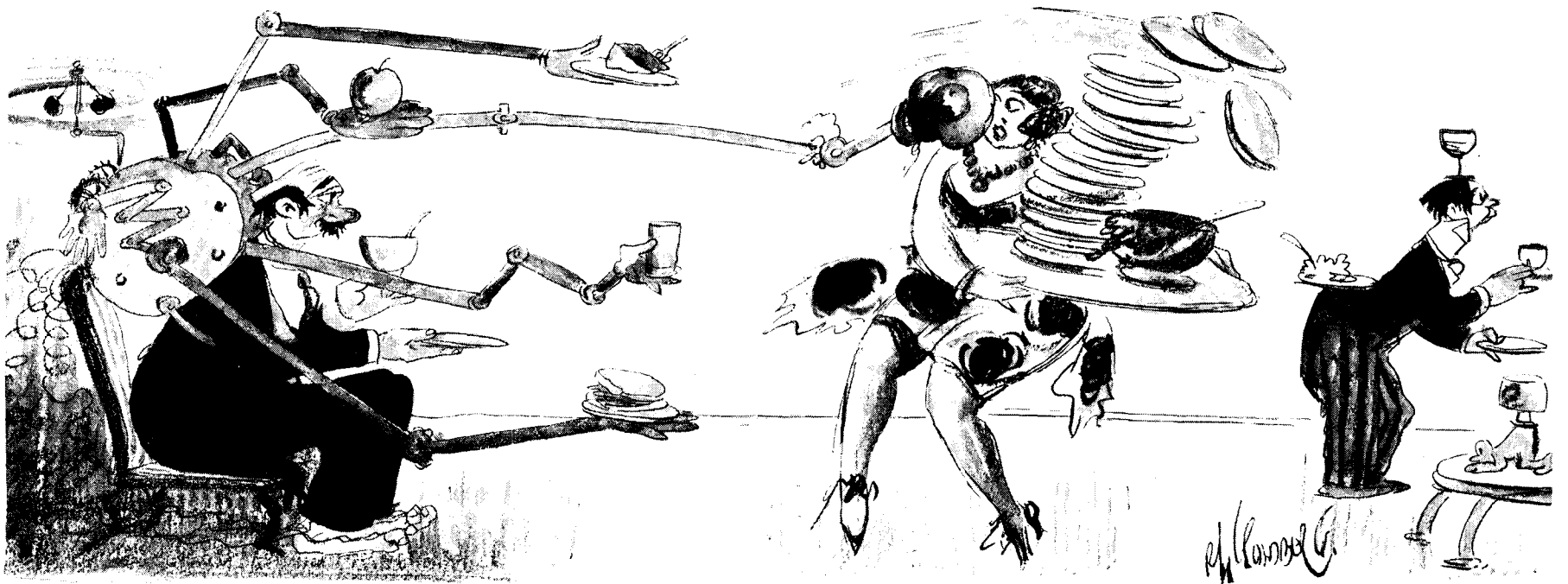
I'm all jammed up, and the washing hasn't come back yet. Cissily says it won't be back until tomorrow. All my socks are out except that pair of silk socks you gave me Christmas, and they have a hole in both of them where it will show. I knew you wouldn't mind as I'm in a hurry, so I'm taking a pair of yours for this date, as she lives up on Nashville Avenue, and yours fit me better than Jake's. I had to take one of your union suits too because the top button is off the two of mine that are not in the washing, and they come open at the top, and you can see right through the thin shirts like mine. I knew you won't mind helping me out.

Hastily, CLAY.

P. S. At the last minute I can't see a one of my ties. I guess the girls have been straightening up in here again. I hate to take that blue \$2 silk one of yours, but it is time I was nearly there now.

The postscript was the thing. For forty-eight hours Clay had planned how he might get that blue silk tie. It was new and beautiful; he hadn't the nerve to ask to borrow it, and he knew if he simply took it there would be war and a protracted period of gloom during which Clint could not be relied upon for aid in any undertaking. The idea of drawing a picture of desperate exigency in ink, and leaving it on the job to mollify Clint while he himself was at the show with Dorothy and the tie, was one of those flashes of genius which hard-pressed men sometimes have in spite of themselves. He knew Clint would come to dinner ten (Continued on page 45)





No afternoon tea habitué should be without one

# It's the Little Things that Matter

By Rube Goldberg

*Radio, television and airplane suicide are fine things. Their inventors no doubt are important men. But to find the real friend of mankind we must go into the cloistered calm of Prof. Butts' laboratory and there interview the inventor of the Perpetual Sock, the Self-Destroying Memorandum Pad, and countless other homely comforts*

HERE we sit in a complacent stupor believing that modern science has so completely assisted nature in assorting and indexing all the elements of land, sea and air that the only help needed of us is to breathe and negotiate an occasional yawn.

We think that past generations were out of luck because they could not turn a little knob and hear the Paragon Garden Hose Quartet sing "Don't Think That I'm an Onion Because I Made You Cry." We believe we are the white-haired favorites of the scientific gods because we can open our morning paper and see an actual photograph of a hatchet murder committed yesterday in Australia. Electrical wizardry has so completely synchronized the arts that the eye and ear get instantaneous service. Science has been boiled down to a hit-and-run quick-lunch affair.

Even the old-fashioned method of dying is obsolete. The great fear of having to be pushed around in a wheel chair in our old age has been entirely eliminated by the blessings of latter-day enlightenment. There is no such thing as declining years, with a vulgar band of hungry beneficiaries waiting for our arteries to harden and our brains to soften. All we need to do to avoid the perils of senility is to take an airplane ride or drink a cocktail. We surprise the legates by dying young and leaving everything to the Society for the Perpetuation of Whiskers on Billy Goats.

Inventions have made such rapid strides that, with few exceptions, no single person can stand out as the inventor of any great mechanical appliance. Ask any ordinary citizen who perfected the radio and he will not know. Try to find out who made it possible to telephone a photograph across the continent and you'll get nowhere. It



We believe we are favorites of the gods because we can see a photograph of a hatchet murder

may have been Senator Borah or One-Eyed Connolly or Jascha Heifitz.

The great electrical companies employ thousands of scientifically-inclined young men to wrestle with artificial lightning and make possible the impossible. The results have grown bigger than the individuals. One inventor starts an experiment to grow hair on barren domes and then goes to the corner for a minute to get a frosted chocolate or a nut sundae. When he gets back he finds that the other boys have carried the test so far during his absence that they are sweeping up the floor after giving the doorknob a haircut.

## Innocent Victims

But is this right? Isn't there something wrong where individual accomplishment is lacking? Doesn't the huddle system by the very nature of its physical solidarity overlook the small, sensitive vibrations to which the human system responds? Was any great poem ever written by more than one person? Was any fine painting ever executed by more than one artist?

This situation had troubled me for some time. While all the big inventions were giving the astonished world fresher and louder gasps of incredulity, I could see around me many things that by their glaring deficiencies were crying out for urgent reform. While the large groups of inventors were toying

with great forces of the universe and dispatching the human voice and image to all parts of the world in the amazing speed of less than nothing, I looked around me in anguish.

I still saw gravy spots on otherwise immaculate vests. I still saw lighted cigarette butts burning cruel holes in thousand-dollar rugs. I still saw innocent victims of afternoon teas trying to juggle four plates, a cup and saucer, a napkin the size of a postage stamp and a slice of flexible cake, with the force of gravity still triumphant. I could see lawyers talking judges and juries to death in courtrooms with no human force to stop them. I could see drug-store sandwiches cut so thin that the floor in front of the counter was actually strewn with starving stenographers. I could see collar buttons sticking into the backs of people's necks and causing them to bow to folks they had never met before in all their lives. I could see doughnuts with holes in them so large there was no doughnut left.

I could see derby hats that pushed their owners' ears out of all reasonable shape. I could see cigar lighters that set fire to everything but cigars. I could see grapefruit that, with one touch of a spoon, developed into the morning shower bath. I could see revolving doors that got the whole office force dizzy on the way to work and ruined all chance of commercial progress.

I could hear radiators that kept up a constant tom-tom like the drums in O'Neill's play "Emperor Jones" and caused all the members of the family to join Mother in a nervous breakdown. I could see menu cards printed in strange languages, so that discriminating diners continually kept getting hash when they repeatedly ordered Something-or-Other à la Duc de Richelieu. I could see bathrooms with nothing in them but guest towels. I could see red flannel underwear that

scratched. I could see lumpy pool balls that rolled uphill on flat tables. Great Scott, what couldn't I see!

In sore distress I called on my old friend and classmate, Lucifer G. Butts, A. K. No doubt you have heard of Professor Butts. But, to refresh your memory, I will recall the fact that his outstanding achievement was the invention of the park bench. He made it possible for the great mass of the retired population to sit down and give the Board of Public Works a chance to fix the streets. He also invented the Christmas card and thereby built up large practices for physicians who did nothing but treat letter carriers for lumbago.

## The Sly Old Dog!

Professor Butts retired from active service in disgust when inventive science took to mass production. When individual creative genius became standardized, he lost the incentive to help humanity. Due to his inactivity over a number of years, the real vital needs of the human race were sadly neglected. While the great laboratories ground out spectacular nonessential wonders, shoelaces still kept on breaking and hot dogs ruined the digestive organs of our children.

I found Butts—I always called him by his last name in the old days, although some of the other members of the class would jokingly call him "Nuts" through an impish slip of the tongue—sitting in his laboratory holding up a bunch of red, white and blue bananas. The sly old dog! He was still up to his old tricks. I (Continued on page 28)



I found Prof. Butts holding up a bunch of red, white and blue bananas