

TWO gentlemen entered an ex-speakeasy in the West Forties of New York City and walked along the dark lower hall and up the sagging stairs to a back dining-room. The speakeasy was in an old stone front which had originally been converted into a boardinghouse and was now converted into a restaurant. The entrance was through the cellar door under the front steps as it had been in prohibition days.

"Do you remember when we used to live in places like this . . . \$3.75 a week?" asked the first gentleman.

"I never paid more than \$2.50," said the second gentleman decidedly, continuing to climb and puffing a little from the effort.

The second gentleman was rotund at the waist and he had a beaming face and a ring of hair around the back of his crown and he was Guy Kibbee. One point of his soft collar was flopping at the end and his tie was slipping down at the other side, but nevertheless he seemed content with the world. The other gentleman was younger and more dapper and no one could take him for anything but an Irishman. He answered to the name of Frank McHugh. They are now character actors of importance in Hollywood, but they were referring to the days when they played one-night stands, stock and repertory dates all over America.

"If I'm on a train and it pulls into a station," said Mr. Kibbee, "I can stick my nose out the window and tell by the smell what town I'm in."

"Whenever I stick my head out the window," said Mr. McHugh, "it's always Kansas."

Mr. Kibbee was born in El Paso, Texas, in 1886, and was an actor for thirty years before he reached Broadway. Mr. McHugh made it in fourteen

years, starting at the age of nine in Homestead, Pennsylvania, with the theatrical McHugh family (mother, father and four acting children) and thinking he had reached the top when he finally got sixty dollars a week in stock at Des Moines, with what was considered at that time the best stock company in the world.

The paths of the two gentlemen first crossed when they played with the Blaney-Empire stock at East Liberty, Pittsburgh.

The Golden Age of Stock

"A good company, that company," said Mr. Kibbee musingly. "We paid royalties for the plays. When I first started out we didn't do anything foolish like that. We played the shows all right but we had our own titles. Being short on actors didn't make any difference either. I remember a fellow named Clay Harris who was out doing rep. We were in Wichita, Kansas, and he was playing in Girard and I went over to see him. They were playing The Virginian with four people—Harris, his wife, his little girl and the fellow who

drove the truck. They'd have played Ben Hur with six people and a mule."

"Listen," cried Mr. McHugh. "I played St. Elmo a hundred times and I still don't know what it's all about."

He got up and began to recite the lines.

"Gertrude, soon the silly moths that hover about will seek a brighter flame to attract. Then will come the terrible sense of being alone and you will end in a suicide's grave or a death in the gutter [Long Pause], where you belong."

"And then the scene between St. Elmo and Murray Hammond about the duel. . . . 'St. Elmo, you have insulted me. I demand [Pause] satisfaction. . . . 'You mean a [Pause] duel?' . . . 'Yes.' . . . No! Duels are for gentlemen. You are a blackleg! When I meet you, I will drive you, as a snapping cur back to his kennel, with my riding whip! [Lashes Murray Hammond.] So! So! So! and so!"

Mr. McHugh sat down and he and Mr. Kibbee began to eat. After two spoonfuls of minestrone Mr. Kibbee was reminded of something.

"As a matter of fact, Frank, Holly-

wood's pretty soft after that stock training. We spent half our lives playing in one show and rehearsing for another, and now all we have to do is learn a few sides of dialogue for a day's work on the lot."

"What's good about Hollywood," Mr. McHugh pointed out with his soup spoon, "is you can knock off work at night and go home. When did we ever have a home before?"

Mr. Kibbee admitted they had been short on permanency.

"My wife and I used to talk about that," he said ruefully. "We finished up one season in Bellows Falls, Vermont, and when Brownie and I got back to New York we had six dollars between us. We got one of those \$2.50 rooms and I went out hunting for something. I said to myself, 'Either we get a New York show or I'm through with the business.' But I didn't even get a chance to talk to a New York manager and I didn't know how to get any other kind of a job, so the first thing we knew we were out on another road job."

Broadway at Last

"You're making me cry," Mr. McHugh reminded him.

"That one lasted about a year," Mr. Kibbee went on, without paying any attention. "We played everything in the Middle West and on the Pacific Coast and I had colic from the hotel meals and my back was like a washboard from the beds and I made up my mind the theater could get along without my genius. When we got back to New York I got a radio job and that was fine. We had the same \$2.50 room, Brownie and I, but we had it permanently. Then Arthur Hopkins put out a call for character men for Torch Song and I went

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Guy Kibbee, who stars at character parts, as he will appear in the forthcoming production, *Wanderlust*



A characteristic pose of that genial drinker of the films, Frank McHugh, in one of the earlier stages of the evening



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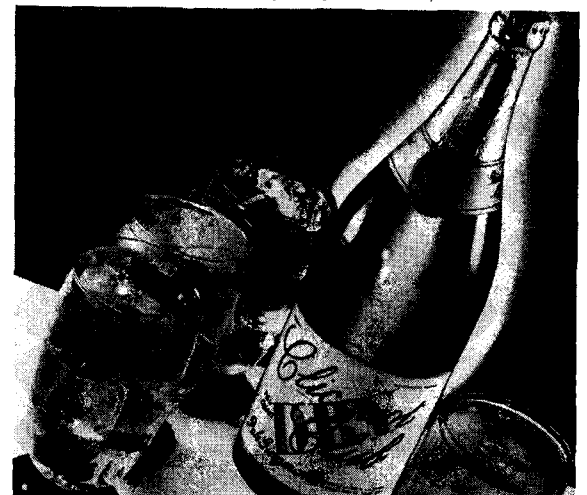
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MOTORISTS WISE

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Greatest of Ease

Continued from page 16

"You know, a good deal of the exhilaration and relaxation that come with exercise in the open is due to plenty of fresh air and the blood coursing freely in your veins. So try this whenever you are weary and tense.

"Standing before an open window, feet slightly apart, inhale, raising the hands straight over the head and feeling that stretch all through the body. Exhale slowly through the lips, letting the arms drop. The head and shoulders are slightly poised, the abdomen in, the rib cage high but collapsing in toward itself like an umbrella shutting. Repeat several times without the arm movement, rhythmically and easily.

"Then flop over, knees straight and abdomen in, but letting your arms and head dangle while you flop loosely as though there were a spring in the center of your back and slap the floor with your relaxed hands, first palms and then backs. Then straighten, slapping your body all the way up till your arms fly to the stars in an abandoned gesture. Repeat, slapping your way down and up. Then shake each leg in turn. Maybe that doesn't loosen you up and make your blood leap."

Easy Does It

She came up flushed and sparkling, each blond curl springing with energy.

"Here's an exercise that can be done inconspicuously anywhere, and it relieves that tension so many people get in the back of the neck. Swing your head forward as far as possible onto your chest, feeling a sense of relaxed weight in it; swing it back toward the shoulder blades, keeping the shoulders down and flat and the body steady, all the stretch and movement in the neck. Swing the head from right to left, keeping the chin in.

"Those are favorites with speakers and singers. And the easy, upstanding posture that is essential to the speaker or singer is just as important for anyone who wants to be free of stresses and strains. For tension in the upper part of the body is often due to weakness in the middle. What a lot of energy people use, just standing still! Shoulders tense, as though the weight of the world rested on them, head out turtle-fashion. And the muscles of the middle regions, which should be supporting the body, sagging so that the abdomen protrudes and the buttocks ride out behind. Very tiring and unlovely.

"But do this. Stand before a full-length glass, feet together, knees easy, lower back down and slightly in, abdomen up and slightly in, arms hanging easy, head lightly poised, weight on the balls of the feet. Now imagine that you are a sandwich, back and front flat and the filling pressed very thin indeed. That resulting feeling of support and tall, slim-through look, are the things to aim for. The rib cage is lifted well out of the hip girdle, leaving the waist the slim isthmus it should be. When that feeling of lift and strength in the middle becomes second nature, then you are well on the way to effortless, natural poise and easy movement, legs and arms swinging free.

"And the right exercises all work toward the same happy result, an easy and untiring flow of movement. We can demonstrate and practice it every day in walking. Try it, holding yourself with that slim-through look, your head hitched to a star and your body swinging from it, ribs high and legs swinging from them, depending on the swing rather than muscular effort for move-

ment. Your weight passes smoothly through the foot from heel to toe with every step, the knee straightening out as each foot comes forward. The arms swing loosely, the feet are straight. It's an easy, flowing motion, no jerking up and down. You are limber and buoyant and light on your feet, instead of stiff and tense and a burden to yourself."

But now that you are getting at those hampering tensions of yours and learning how to shake them off, you don't stop there. Now that you are getting a grip on yourself, you must look to your environment. Is it annoying you in any of those little ways that do count?

Your easy chair, for instance. Is the name in reality a mockery, the chair tipping you so that you must brace your feet against the floor? Most chairs do. Then consider the Moderns, for whatever else you may think of them, they have at least earned your gratitude by making comfortable chairs—seat and back at such an angle that you can sit down and actually take your weight off your feet without hoisting them onto the table.

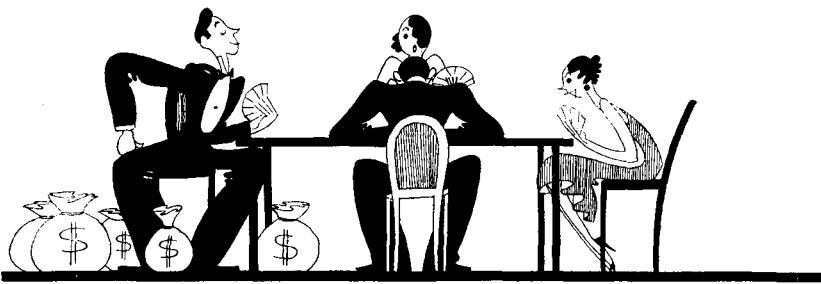
And your bed. What do you do about a bed? Enterprising stores through the country are rapidly installing Sleep Shops, given over entirely to devices for encouraging our powers of relaxation. They set forth beds of tested and different resiliences, so that you can plop down right there and decide for yourself whether you are the Spartan type or seventy per cent luxury loving. The bed that is neither soft nor yet very hard is considered most apt to give eight hours' rest for eight hours' sleep. Thirty-six inches is the narrowest any bed should be. These stores urge coverings that are light in weight—all wool for cold weather—and plenty long, declaring that no adult sheet should be less than 103 inches long, hemmed, nor a blanket less than 86 inches, preferably 90 inches.

And So to Bath

They remind you with colorful bath salts and oils and fluffy towels of the soothing, relaxing effect of a tepid bath before you slip into bed. (Have the water just a few degrees below body temperature, soften and freshen it with oil or salts, soak lazily for a good quarter-hour, languidly blot yourself dry, and you probably won't have time to think about relaxing before you fall asleep.) They get worked up over the matter of warm drinks, relaxing books, light-proof blinds, noise deadeners—like the ventilator-air-filter-silencer contraption you can put in your partially opened window, that will purify your air, circulate it and leave all street noises, radios and the like on the other side. Need we go into what fighting noise does to tighten you up?

And when it is time to wake in the morning, they implore you to resort to the good old alarm clock. You'll sleep better if you don't have it on your mind to wake up at seven-thirty. There are all kinds of alarms, so choose the one to suit your type. If you are a deep morning sleeper, you'll want one with a good strong ring, that repeats itself ten minutes later, just in case. Or perhaps chimes would appeal to you, starting softly but working up to quite a pitch if you don't respond at first. If you are a light sleeper, you might indulge in a clock that plays a jolly, light little tune.

So now, with all the aids of mind and exercise and matter—just relax.



Keep Up with the World

By Freling Foster

New York City has a large number of wealthy persons who labor under the impression that they can successfully play bridge with professionals because many exclusive bridge clubs and bridge experts are supported in excellent style by them. In fact one professional has had little trouble in winning an average of \$2,000 a week for a number of years.

In this country today only two states grant divorces on the ground of attempted murder of the plaintiff, only two grant them to the husband when the wife refuses to follow him, only two on the ground that the partner is a fugitive from justice, only two on the vagrancy of the husband, only one on incompatibility and only one on the inability of the husband to support.

Today Japan rules over a larger number of individuals than the United States. Through the "warless" war that it has carried on in Manchuria, Mongolia and China proper during the past two years, this small country has added 2,000,000 square miles and 100,000,000 people to its empire, an accession that is equivalent to 66 per cent of the area and 80 per cent of the population of the United States.

One of the earliest electric lamps in general use was the Nernst Glower, which had a glowing tube that had to be warmed—"lit"—to start the current and that could be "blown out" by blowing until it cooled to the point where it lost its conductivity.—By Arvie W. Gordon, Madison, Wisconsin.

In 18th-century England no modest person was ever seen in a bathing suit. The bather rented a "bathing-machine," a covered wagon that was backed out into the water. Its particular feature was a canvas awning which was let down over its back steps to conceal the occupant from public view and thus permit him "to enjoy the pleasure of bathing in so private a manner as to be consistent with the greatest delicacy."

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Color is having a difficult time fighting its way into motion pictures because of its tremendous cost. Not only does the process require three strips of negative, instead of one, but the costs of developing and printing are likewise tripled. Thus the addition of color to a feature film increases its cost between \$80,000 and \$90,000.—By David S. Epstein, Hollywood, California.

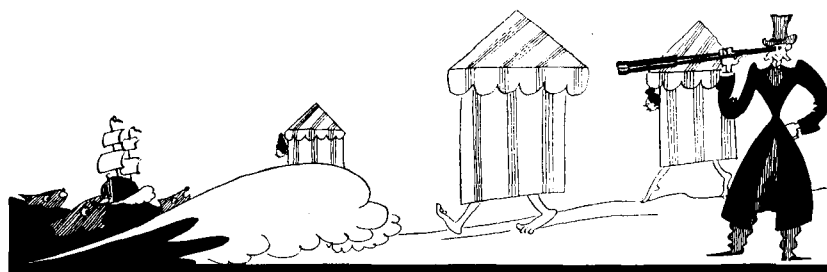
The British Empire is under the administration of about 1,500 men whose appointments are based solely on their extensive education, each having been obliged to pass the world's hardest examination—on a variety of subjects. One question under psychology is: "Expound and illustrate the ways in which the topic of perception would be approached by the associationist, behaviorist and Gestalt schools respectively."

Every evening since May 21, 1925, a dog has come to the entrance of Shibuya Station in Tokyo and waited in vain for hours for the return of his dead master whom he, when a puppy, had only known for a few months. The devotion of "Hachi" has so touched the heart of Japan that it has not only erected a statue of him beside the spot where he still waits, but it has sent statuettes to every school throughout the empire as a symbol of faithfulness.—By Tokuo Doi, Kyoto, Japan.

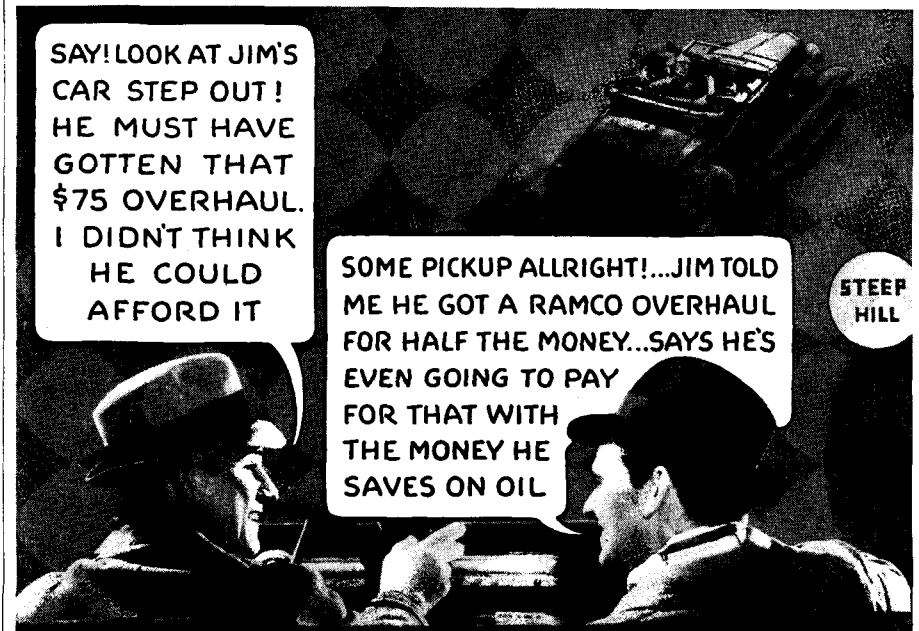
Good luck, in the form of four-leaf clovers, now can be purchased in any quantity. A company in the Canal Zone, growing beautiful specimens, sells them in lots of five, carefully pressed, so they retain their natural shape and color.—By W. S. Brophy, Yonkers, New York.

Women today constitute 95 per cent of the pearl divers in Japan, 50 per cent of the bartenders in England and 17 per cent of the coal miners in Russia.

Five dollars will be paid for each interesting or unusual fact accepted for this column. Contributions must be accompanied by satisfactory proof. Address Keep Up with the World, Collier's, 250 Park Avenue, New York City.



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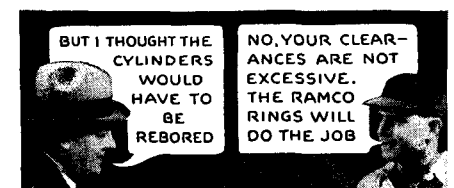
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