

Washington Day by Day

News Gathered Here and There
at the National Capital

MISS SHONTS WILL NOT WED FRENCH NOBLEMAN

WASHINGTON—The departure of Theodore P. Shonts, former chairman of the Panama canal commission, with his two daughters, for New York, where he is now head of the Metropolitan traction interests, has again revived talk concerning the engagement of Miss Shonts to the Duc de Chaulnes.

If there ever was an engagement it is now off, as Washington society has the story, and the reason for this failure of another international alliance is said to be the refusal of Mr. Shonts to grant the ducal demand for a settlement.

It is accepted here as the correct version of the departure of the duke without a bride that Mr. Shonts stood firmly for the American idea of marriage settlements. He is reported to have told De Chaulnes that he would give his daughter a stylish wedding, provide her with a trousseau fit for a princess, and a substantial wedding allowance that would keep her in pin money for a long time, but to enter into any agreement to settle an income on her for life before marriage.



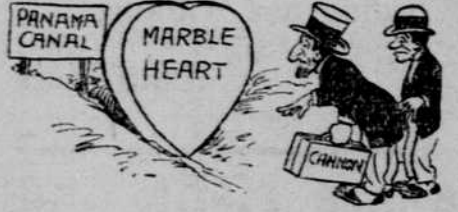
And it feeds upon the Prosperity of the Country Towns—A Menace to the Nation.

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As the years go by we are more than ever brought face to face with the vital question of trading at home. During the past decade the habit of buying goods abroad has grown to such proportions that the country merchant may well feel alarmed at the probable outcome unless something is done to forestall the great calamity which will surely result therefrom.

Trade conditions 25 years ago were satisfactory. At that time catalogue houses were entirely unknown and country merchants were "monarchs of all they surveyed," so to speak, in the lines represented, and the people were prosperous and happy. Perhaps not so much because they generally had money enough to meet their wants, but because of the contentment that prevailed throughout the country at that time. The farmers raised good crops, generally, and received good prices for what they had to sell. They sold their surplus stuff to the local merchant and bought what they wanted; and this was the height of

While in New York the Misses Shonts will help their father in selecting a home for the family, to which they will move from here some time early in June.



CANAL ZONE MEN HURT PRIDE OF CONGRESSMAN

THE real reason for the estrangement between Speaker Cannon, eight other members of the congressional party and the canal zone officials was not because of the quarantine regulations but because Speaker Cannon and his party did not believe they were properly treated.

When the steamship on which the Speaker and his party were arrived at Colon the men who are digging the canal and caring for the canal zone did not even send a rowboat out to meet them. The party boarded a train at Colon, going to Panama and after it had started and was nearing Culebra cut Speaker Cannon went strolling through the coach ahead. In it he found Chief Engineer Stevens, who recognized him and talked with him a few minutes.

"Well, good-by," the chief engineer said, waving his hand, as the train approached Culebra cut. "This is where I get off."

The congressional party headed by the speaker believed they had been so badly treated that they had the steward on the steamship prepare their luncheon for them. Each member of the party on the train carried a lunch box.

When the train pulled into Panama Superintendent Beard of the Panama Railroad company had prepared an elaborate luncheon for the members of the speaker's party. They went in the dining-room and ate the luncheon, and on leaving the table each member of the party left at his plate the customary price for a luncheon. Superintendent Beard found the money on the table, and, as his guests had none, sent it back to the steamship with a curt note that he was not authorized to collect money for the luncheon.

"The Panama commission may have gentlemen in its offices in Washington, but it certainly has none of them at work on the canal," the speaker is reported to have told Gov. Magoon.



FAIRBANKS' AMBITION OPENS HIS POCKETBOOK

WITH a presidential bee buzzing merrily in his bonnet, Vice President Fairbanks has entered on a social campaign that has made the whole capital rub its eyes in surprise and wonder at his extravagance.

Since the Fairbanks weather eye was fixed steadily on the White House the expenses of the family, it is said, have jumped from \$20,000 to \$100,000. Mrs. Fairbanks now is one of the most popular hostesses in Washington, and from the occasional receptions of two years ago has developed to two formal affairs a week.

Formerly the Fairbankses lived in a modest house at Eighteenth and Massachusetts avenues, the rent of which was \$2,000 a year. Then they had only five servants in all, and they were without a carriage, hiring a vehicle whenever needed. Now they pay \$12,000 a year for the mansion of

Col. Edward Morrell, of Philadelphia, and they have more than a dozen servants, with twice that total several days a week. Over the Fairbanks' kitchen now presides John Rook, the chef who was the joy of Levi Z. Leiter and his friends.

Rook has so much money to spend that he gains precedence in the market over Pinckney, the buyer for the White House. Fairbanks has given his man a free hand to stock the pantry with the choicest luxuries, and just what this means may be gathered from the fact that at two receptions nearly 1,000 guests partook of a buffet supper at which tartan, every kind of shell fish and the finest imported wines were served. Lavishness is the keynote of the Fairbanks establishment, and to her regular entertainments Mrs. Fairbanks now has added frequent and large theater parties.

TO HAVE GOVERNMENT PAY CAMPAIGN EXPENSE

TO HAVE the proper and legitimate expenses of national campaigns paid from the national treasury for the different political parties, and to permit in presidential campaigns only a closely limited use of money other than that drawn from the public funds, is the striking project which the president has in his mind as a means of purifying national politics and preventing improper use of money drawn from improper sources.

There has been much doubt whether the scheme of publicity, after election, of campaign expenditures would be very effective. Practical politicians have protested that it is locking the barn after the horse is stolen.

It would be required, of course that all money should be carefully accounted for, vouchers should be made and carefully audited, and the purposes for which it could be used would be limited to speaking, literature and organization.

It is understood that the amount made available from the public treasury would be apportioned among the parties on some such basis as the relative votes polled at the last preceding national election. This would let in the small parties for their share.

Politicians regard the scheme as Utopian, but are not at all certain whether it could be defeated if seriously presented to congress by the president.

The president has not developed details of the plan, and may be convinced yet of its practicability, but he has talked of it with much interest, and is thus far disposed to re-

gard it as more than an impractical vision.

Politicians say that if the idea should be followed to its logical conclusions it would eventuate in nothing less than the creation of a great election board possessing unlimited opportunities for corruption.

Cable Aids Weather Reports.
The completion of the submarine cable under construction between Iceland and the Shetland islands is expected to afford facilities for a great extension of the area covered by the existing system of weather prediction.

Iceland in the winter time occupies about the center of the Atlantic low pressure, or storm area, and the absence of telegraphic communication with that island hitherto has prevented the collection of information of great value to meteorology.

By utilizing the Iceland cable and the reports from the Central Physical observatory at St. Petersburg, covering the vast stretch of Siberia, the United States weather bureau hopes hereafter to possess a knowledge of the state of the atmosphere completely around the earth in the northern hemisphere, a fact of great importance in long-period weather forecasting.

Keeping on the Safe Side.
Caller—I'd think that your father's duties as building inspector would be awfully dangerous, going around unsafe buildings.

Small Son of the House—Oh, no, he doesn't go near 'em till after they fall down.—LIFE.

MAIL ORDER EVIL

ITS RISE IS NOT THE RESULT OF LEGITIMATE DEMAND.

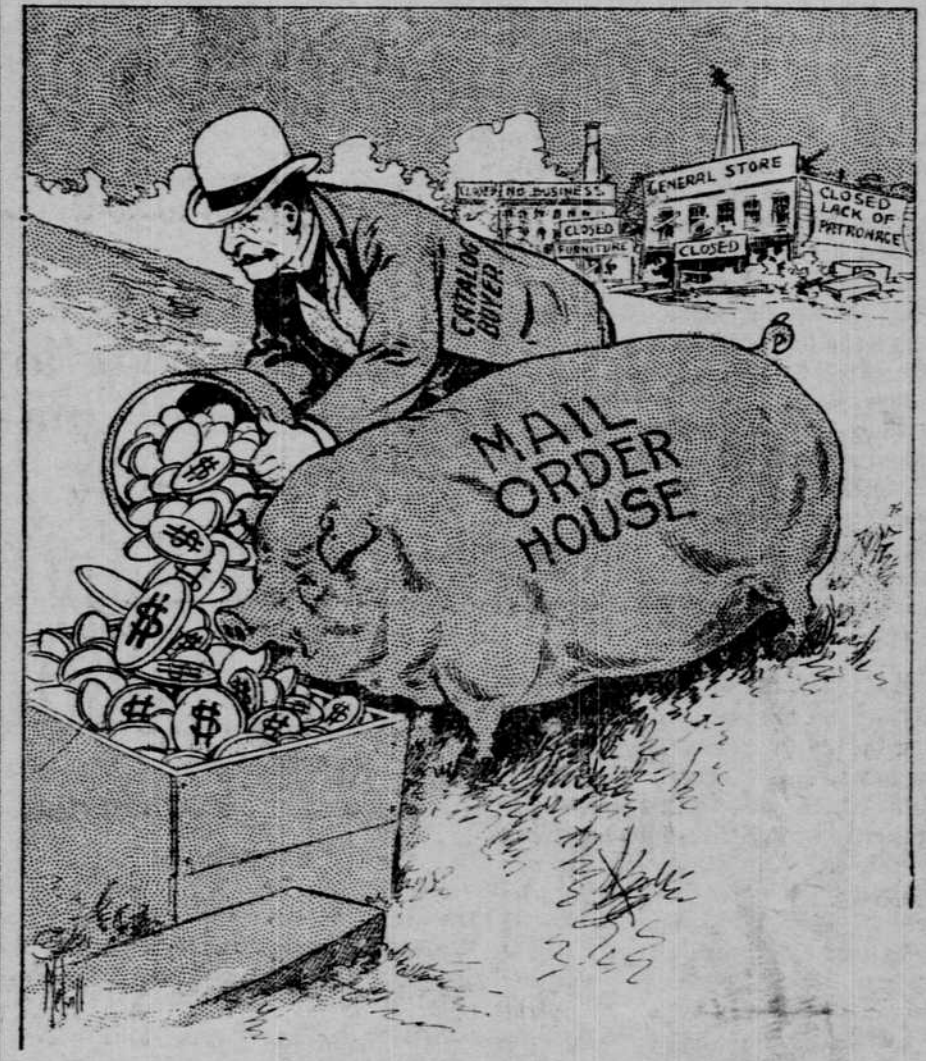
DUE ENTIRELY TO GREED

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As the years go by we are more than ever brought face to face with the vital question of trading at home. During the past decade the habit of buying goods abroad has grown to such proportions that the country merchant may well feel alarmed at the probable outcome unless something is done to forestall the great calamity which will surely result therefrom.

Trade conditions 25 years ago were satisfactory. At that time catalogue houses were entirely unknown and country merchants were "monarchs of all they surveyed," so to speak, in the lines represented, and the people were prosperous and happy. Perhaps not so much because they generally had money enough to meet their wants, but because of the contentment that prevailed throughout the country at that time. The farmers raised good crops, generally, and received good prices for what they had to sell. They sold their surplus stuff to the local merchant and bought what they wanted; and this was the height of



Are you, Mr. Resident of This Community, feeding to the mail order hog the dollars of this community? Are you pouring the money that should stay in the home town into the trough from which the gluttonous hogs of the city feed? If so you are doing not only the town, but yourself, an irreparable injury, and one that you should stop at once.

their ambition, hence the contentment that prevailed.

But in after years, when cities grew and trade expanded, the merchants of these cities not being content with conditions of trade, devised plans by which they might reach out for more business. Advertising in the newspapers being a cheap way of putting the merits of their goods before the people, this plan appealed to them and it was adopted. At first they operated on a small scale; then, as the merchant saw the opportunity for making it pay, he added to his advertising fund. And so it has continued until to-day millions of dollars are annually sent to mail order houses by the people of the United States.

The best and most effective way to throttle the catalogue house has been a question uppermost in the minds of country merchants for several years past; some advocating one plan and some another. There are several plans which might be presented to induce the farmer to buy at home. In the first place his pride might be appealed to. There are very few farmers who own their own farms but that would be interested in building up his own locality. He realizes the fact that if his farm is to be valuable it must be farmed in the most scientific manner and all buildings, fences, etc., must be kept up in the best possible shape, and above all the farm must be located not too far from some good town, for we all know that farm land brings a much better price when near to some good town or village. It is not hard to get the farmer to realize this, for he ever sold any farm land or tried to sell any, he knows this to be a fact. Well, then, after he has realized this fact, the thing for him to do is to patronize his home merchants and business men, so they may be able to build and maintain a good town.

Public schools are much better in the towns than in the country for the reason that where the population is most dense, there is more taxable property to the amount of territory covered, hence there is more money collected for school purposes, and as a result more and better teachers are employed. All this is of the highest importance to the farmer, as most farmers who are of any importance in their profession are interested in giving their boys and girls a good education. And right here is where the good town proposition comes to him with great force. He knows he can send his children to the village school at a great deal less expense than to send them away to college, and that in most cases better results are obtained.

If the farmer seriously desires all these good things he must of necessity help to build them. Let him understand that he is one of the main spokes in the great wheel of commerce in his vicinity and that he can afford to send abroad to purchase even the smallest item of merchandise, though it may seem to him that he is saving a few cents by doing so.

Burden We Would All Assume.
Rich may be a burden, but few of us are willing to kick at a burden of that kind.

It seems that it could be easily pointed out to him that if there was no town near him and he had to drive 20 or 30 miles to take his produce to market and haul his groceries the same distance home, he could easily see that his land would greatly depreciate in value and the disadvantages he would encounter on every hand would be very disastrous to his time and he would gladly spend his money at home to divert this calamity.

One of the most potent levers with which to control trade in country localities is the liberal use of printers' ink, coupled with intelligence in advertising the wares of the merchant.

Trade catalogue houses employ the best talent obtainable to write their advertisements and spend large sums of money in this way. Besides advertising judiciously they advertise on a large scale and consequently get the business. The old saying that "You must fight the devil with fire" will apply in this case. The home merchant must advertise. He must do more than say: "Come to Smith's to trade, cheapest place on earth." He must describe his merchandise as he would in private conversation over the counter to a customer, and then quote the price. This will nearly always act as a clincher and will at least put him on a standing with the catalogue house. In fact it will give him an advantage over the catalogue house, for in almost every case he can sell the same grade of merchandise cheaper than the catalogue house can sell it. This is not mere theory but a statement of fact, for the reason that the country merchant's business is operated at a very much less expense than that of the mail order merchant.

AT ONCE AN INFANT AND GROWN WOMAN

PERPLEXITY IN WHICH MISS MABEL MERCER OF PITTS- BURG IS INVOLVED

FIGHTS FOR HER FREEDOM

Laws of Pennsylvania Place Her Under Father's Control, But in New York She Is Her Own Mistress—During Escape from Institution in Which She Had Been Confined—Ward of H. C. Frick Involved in Romantic Story.

New York.—Grown woman in New York, infant in Pennsylvania, Miss Mabel Mercer has decided that she wants to stay in the metropolis.

She thinks that the laws of the Empire state give her a better chance than those of William Penn's old state. As long as she stays in New York she is perfectly safe from capture by her father, who put her in the Country Home, at Germantown, Pa., the other day, because she wants to be independent.

Miss Mercer is just turned 18. Here the law says that a woman of 18 is of age. In Pennsylvania a father is a child's guardian until she is 21, and until then she is an infant.

Of Prominent Pittsburg Family.

The Mercers are among the best known people in Pittsburg. The father is Capt. George S. Mercer, superintendent of buildings in Allegheny county. Now, Miss Mercer had finished school, and was about to take her place in society, when she met young Carl Borntraeger, a ward of Henry C. Frick. He was young, good-looking, and he stands to inherit a fortune. He proposed; she accepted.

But Mr. Frick couldn't see it in the light that the young people did, and for that matter, neither did Capt. Mercer. There was a stormy scene, some hot words, and Miss Mercer stalked out of the house.

"All right," she said, "you don't have to support me. I can get a position on the stage if I have to."

Her father laughed at this, but the girl made good her threat. She did get a place in "The Earl and the Girl" company, and she came to New York to rehearse for her part. It looked as if she would succeed. She was dainty, winsome, extremely pretty and chic. But along came Papa Mercer.

"Your mother is very ill," he said "and you must come home to see her."

Of course the girl gave in. Tearfully she took the train for Pittsburg, as she supposed, hoping to see her dear mother before she died and to beg forgiveness for running away from home. There was a stop at Philadelphia.

"We get out here," said the father, sternly, and suddenly a detective appeared—he had been coached for his part.

"You've got to come along," said the man, "and it'll be better if you don't make a scene."

Then Miss Mercer realized that it had all been a trap. Her mother was not ill and she wasn't going to Pittsburg at all. Instead she found herself on the way to the Country Home, an institution conducted by the Protestant Episcopal church at Germantown, a suburb of Philadelphia.

Before the girl could recover from her surprise and indignation she was in uniform and under restraint. That was on March 25 last. Right then and there she made up her mind to escape. And escape she did. Now she can snap her fingers at the laws of Pennsylvania and her father, too. She is of age in New York and an infant no longer.

Here she's a woman; there she's a child.

So here she proposes to remain.

Planning Her Escape.
All this took wit and pluck. Miss Mercer realized that she was being watched every minute. She was made to scrub floors and wash dishes, wait at the table and make beds—things she had never done before in her life. She scrubbed and washed and ironed until her white little hands were all red and sore. But all the time she was waiting her chance.

She found herself practically a prisoner. Matrons watched her all the time. Even her clothing was taken away from her and she had to wear the uniform of a prisoner; if she escaped it would tell all the world that she was under restraint.

Miss Mercer's native wit overcame all the obstacles. She heard the honk of the automobile out in the road, she hastily made a rope of sheets, she forced upon the window

and squeezed her trim little body between the iron bars of her window and slid in safety to the ground. The automobile did the rest.

But let Miss Mercer tell the story herself: "I have broken with my father forever," she said, emphatically, with a toss of her shapely little head, "and no power on earth can ever get me under his control again. I'm a woman here in New York, even if the law says I'm an infant in Pennsylvania."

"I did run away from home—I wanted to go on the stage. My reasons for leaving home are my own secret. I won't tell them to anybody."

"At once my father made a search for me, and finally found me in the Plymouth hotel. I was about to secure an engagement to go on the stage when he appeared with another man and forcibly took me away. My father told me that my mother was sick in Pittsburg and wanted me home."

Invited into an institution.
"We took a train for Pittsburg. However, after the first stop, when we got over the Pennsylvania line, the strange man, who proved to be a New York detective, left us. I became suspicious at this, and my suspicions were confirmed when we got off at North Philadelphia.

"When we stopped at a restaurant to eat I tried to get away. I found that I could not do this, but I had a chance to write a telegram and send it out by a boy. It was to my New York hotel, directing that no one be allowed to remove my effects without my consent. From the restaurant we went to an Episcopal mission on East Walnut lane, Germantown.

"My father left me after I heard him tell the matron that I was to be put at hard work."

"I had never worked before in my life. I had to scrub, wash, iron and do other mental tasks. I made my escape last Saturday. The day before I had noticed a window on the third floor from which I thought I could squeeze through. That morning I pretended

Philadelphia where I had stopped with my father the Monday previous. This he did.

"Who was he? Don't ask me."

It was young Mr. Borntraeger, Mr. Frick's ward, however.

"There at the restaurant," went on Miss Mercer, "I told the proprietor's wife of my escape and she was kind enough to help me.

"I know that I am right in what I have done. A lawyer whom I have consulted has assured me that my father has no right to force me to go with him, home or any other place. I am fully capable of earning my own living and of living my own life, and I am going to do so."

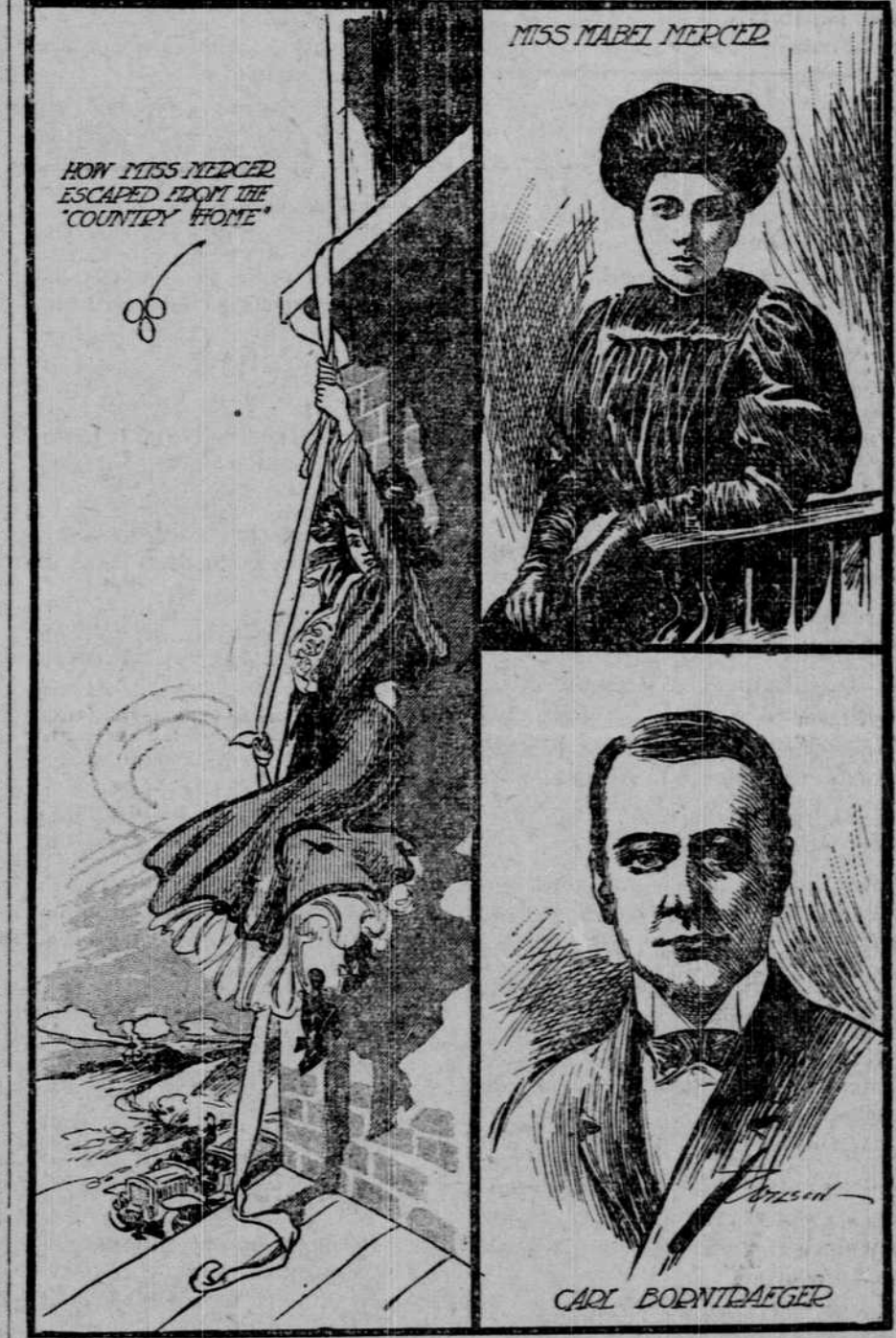
Family Is Divided.
"I am going to make every effort to get my daughter back," declared Captain Mercer. "She is incorrigible."

"And I am going to help my sister keep out of the hands of her father," said her brother, George A. Mercer, a deputy coroner in Pittsburg, when he heard of this.

Miss Mercer has two other brothers, one a clergyman and the other is still at school. As for young Borntraeger, he isn't saying anything, but something may happen any day. At any rate, when he's 21 and comes into the \$2,000,000 which Mr. Frick is husbanding for him, there may be a wedding.

"This is the letter Miss Mercer wrote to her brother when she arrived here in free New York, where girls of 18 are no longer infants.

"Suppose you have heard about dad putting me in some kind of a convent, and also of my escape. Monday he put me there. Saturday, about 12 o'clock, daytime, I escaped by unscrewing iron bars, crawling over two roofs and falling. By mere good luck I reached New York in a half-living condition. I had not a cent when I ran away in a calico costume of blue and white check. These roofs were covered with barbed wire, and my arms are all covered with bandages. Soon as I could I communicated with a Mr. O'Reilly, the Thaw attorney, and



that I was sick and they locked me in my room.

"At about two o'clock one of the matrons came into my room. I sprang out into the hall and turned the key in the door, locking her in.

"I had nothing but the ugly uniform of the institution on, and I knew that if I did get out the chances were that I could not get very far away. However, I was desperate. The window I got out of opened upon the roof of a porch. It was protected by a sash of iron-work, but I managed to lift up one end far enough to squeeze my body through.

Freedom at Last.

"It was a hard task, and left black and blue marks on me that I have yet. But once on the roof I slid down on a rope of sheets I made from my bedding, to the porch below, and then I lost my balance and fell to the ground.

"The only person who had seen my escape was a young man who was standing by his automobile across the street. I appealed to him for protection. I explained as quickly as possible that I had been placed in the convent against my will. I asked him to take me to the restaurant in North

received advice and help from him. The detective had had with him in all kinds of trouble. Even a murderer cannot be taken from one state to another without a warrant from the governor, and, too, I am of age in this state.

Would Have Gone Crazy.

"I am too ill to do any law fighting, but have a good attorney to fight for me. I should have been crazy had I stayed in the convent much longer. As it is now, I have nervous prostration.

"I look terribly battered and ill. I have \$25 to last me until I start to receive my wages. This I borrowed from a girl I met in the other company. Strangers have all been good to me.

"In that convent, while kneeling for hours in their worship, I thought they were fools to think a God existed or also that no hell but here on earth existed. I feel ashamed for their religion. I tell you I would have committed murder had I stayed there much longer.

"My thoughts were terrible in that six by ten room. Lovingly,

"MABEL."
Does the pluck of this sound like an infant's?—New York World.

AND THE BEAR FELL DEAD.

Remarkable Hand Held Against Owner's Four Aces the Cause.

"Had a pet b'ar cub once," said Zebekeh Hagin, the most venerable landlord in Kansas. "Didn't git it 'doptin' it out uv pity, 'cause 'twuz an orphan—me havin' shot its mother in the wilds uv Arizona—but I took up a claim on it rite here in my hotel on the only 'n' main stret uv Dodge City."

"'Took a wond'ful liking to me, did that b'ar. Bein' 'a moughty observin' creature, it soon cum to learn all 'bout the game uv draw poker. It mought have bin 'cause it wuz born in Arizona or count uv keepin' such a close watch on me that it got wise to all ins 'n' outs uv poker, 'n' cum to know the value uv cards as nat'ral as if 'twuz born in Arkansas. It couldn't deal, secin' its fingers wuz all toes."

"It used to help me out tho' consid'ubly by standin' behin' the 'other man's chair 'n' puttin' me wise to the strength uv his cards. At sight uv a full hand, it would wiggle its left ear to and fro, and times when it

stared at four aces 't would lay both its ears close down to its head. 'Twant like stackin' the cards or ringin' in a cold deck fur the b'ar to do this, so I didn't make no objections. Anyhow, 'twuz the b'ar cub that played crooked, not me.

"Whenever those two ears dropp'd close to the b'ar's head I laid down four kings without seein' the raze. If only one ear wiggle I bet my four kings fur all they wuz worth. I soon becum known to the bunch as the most skillful card player on the cattle ranges. I made a bar'l uv munny—'til Eph Scott uv Clairfield, Neb., cum to take a hand in the game.

"Cards didn't run very in'rustin' in the first ha' hour uv the game. The bizzzy little slit in the green cloth got most 'ov the munny that had bin in 'tween 'em. Then there cum a jackpott fur ten dollars. Bein' the dealer, I had dealt myself four aces. It wuz Eph's fuz say, 'n' he didn't do a thing but pass. I opened it fur \$25. Eph staid, 'n' ask'd fur four cards. I dealt myself one card, not that my four aces could be helpe, but that Eph mought think I was only holdin'

two pairs. I picked up the card 'n' made believe I was studin' rite hard, so's Eph mought think I wuz bluffin'. Bein' as I wuz the opener, I finally bet \$50. I thought it like findin' munny when Eph put in the 50, but I felt diffrunt when he razed it. \$200 more.

"I had sech confidence in them four aces that I hadn't even think of lookin' at the b'ar. It 'peared to me such a lead pipe cinch that I didn't need any outside assistance. When the \$200 raze was made I took a squint fur the b'ar. I had seen him stanin' behin' Eph's chair a mought bef'ore, but the cub was nowhere to be seen. Rasin' my wuz a leetle in my seat, I saw the b'ar lyin' stiff 'n' stark on the wooden floor. Its shaggy fur wuz streamin' with cold moisture 'n' its forefeet were stretch'd out at full length as if in agony uv death. It cost me \$200 more to call Eph's raze, but I found out what had killed the cub. He had dropped dead when he saw Eph make a straight flush with his four-card draw.

"Knowin' draw poker as well as I do, I can't exactly blame that b'ar."