

COMMENT & DISCOMMENT

A number of estimable Scottsbluff women are on the warpath. They have discovered that a skin lotion can, under certain conditions, become a "skin game," and the way they acquired that knowledge hurts exceedingly. Every little while the newspapers expose grafts of one sort and another which are worked upon the unsuspecting by sharpers and city slickers, but despite repeated warnings it's always possible for the smooth-tongued to find suckers. Usually they pick the men—but sometimes the fair sex fall for their guile.

We remember, back in the days before we had attained editorial dignity, we were working the typesetting machine in the home office. Being the son of the boss, we had the privileges of the front office, and occasionally, when the heat was poor or the copy shy, we would wander up to the regions where customers were dealt with. On the morning in question, we were toasting our shins atop a cold radiator when the door opened and an angular lady of about fifty-five or sixty entered.

The visitor was tall and skinny, and had a voice that reminded one instinctively of a can-opener. She had but one redeeming feature—her hair was beautiful, as very very few heads of hair can be, especially when they are streaked with gray as was hers. It was a magnificent head of hair, and the homely cut of her jib didn't detract particularly from the radiance with which it impressed itself upon those who gazed upon her.

With Yankee directness, she talked business immediately. She wanted some printing done—some bottle labels for a hair tonic and scalp invigorant that was, so she confided in us, simply wonderful in its effect. And looking at that mop of hair, we mentally agreed with her. She accepted our price after some attempt to have it reduced, promised to call for the labels at noon, and went out to make up some of this tonic. The demand for it had been something terrific, she assured us.

And so, having no further excuse to loaf in the front office, we took that job of labels out to the back room and started to put it in type. It was written in an execrable chirography, and this is the way it looked to us, as near as we can remember it:

- 5 oz. Tlas.
- 16 oz. Xorab.
- 1 qt. Distilled Water.
- 3 oz. Glycerin.
- 2 oz. Ados.
- 3 oz. Grain Alcohol.

There may have been a few more ingredients, but if so we have forgotten them. Now in those days we were studying chemistry, and the more we looked at those abbreviations, the more our curiosity was aroused. The handwriting was rotten, and we felt certain that perhaps we hadn't been able to read them correctly. We wanted the printing to be O. K.—and we had collected half the price in advance—so we put on our hat and ambled down to get a coke and consult with Clark Neir, who kept the drug store next to the corner.

We confided our troubles to Clark while sipping at the coke, and he got out his glasses and examined the old girls' formula. Then he shook his head and went over to his copy of the pharmacopoeia. We joined him and looked through the T's. There wasn't a single drug that had the abbreviation Tlas, and yet that was one of the words that was written comparatively plain. We looked through the X's and Xorab was a new one on the compiler of that massive work. And so was Ados. We finally decided that she had made some error in the spelling, but she was to call at noon, and we rushed back and printed the bottle labels as she had them written.

When she came in, however, we mentioned the fact that she had evidently misspelled the words. She looked at the labels. "Not a bit of it," she said crisply. "They're exactly right." We ventured to suggest to her that our favorite druggist had not been able to place them. "He's just a simple-minded country pharmacist, probably," she said. "He's got a whole lot to learn about drugs. And yet he pretends to be able to compound prescriptions. It's an outrage." We went into details with our customer, and explained that in the whole of the pharmacopoeia not one of her drugs had been located. You see, we wanted to set her right. We didn't want her to continue to spell those names wrong.

Then our customer blew up. She upbraided us for being suspicious of her—and up until that time we hadn't the least suspicion. Honest! She told us a lot of other things, meant for our own good probably, and after assuring us that she was a lady, she took that package of labels and beat it up the street, declaring that we'd never get another cent of her business, even if she stayed in that town thirty years. Incidentally, she neglected to pay the remainder of the bill, and we were too dumbfounded by her flying off the handle to remind her of it.

But, after she had gone, we picked up that label—we'd saved one for seed. Maybe we hoped we could get it filled, and grow as nice a head of hair as she had. And after studying

those infernal words for a few minutes, a great light burst upon us. Why, darn it all, those weren't abbreviations. They were simply words spelled backward. Tlas became plain, common, every-day "salt," and Xorab, that formidable looking word, was "borax." Yet that infernal old schemer had been selling bottles of stuff that cost her not over fifteen cents at five dollars a throw—and she had boasted to us that her customers included three bankers' wives, half a dozen clubwomen and others. She had showed us her sales books, with the names written down.

We had quite a bit of fun out of it—enough to pay for the balance of the bill she owed, anyhow. And that experience is filed in the family archives along the good-looking young girl who sold dad a couple of dollars' worth of that handy "Stick-alene," a stick of dried mucilage. All you had to do was to wet it and it could be used any time. Never spilled on the desk—never wore out. Handy as a pocket in a shirt. Inside of forty-eight hours it had dried to the consistency of sealing wax, and even hot steam failed to make it loosen up. Even while it was young, it wouldn't stick anything.

And there was the young lady who had a novel scheme of selling perfumery. She didn't try to sell it to women—only men. Fifty cents a throw for a one-ounce bottle. She'd brace one man in a crowd of men. He'd turn her down. Then she'd darn him to match her for it. If he won, she'd give him a bottle. If he lost, he'd buy one at fifty cents. They cost about 2 cents each. We saw her making up a fresh supply at the barber shop when we went home to dinner. Of course, no man could refuse to be a sport and decline to gamble with her, especially if he were in a crowd.

The Scottsbluff women invested in a recipe for a skin lotion, which is a variation of the hair tonic game. The Star-Herald describes the modus operandi thusly:

"The smooth talking agents, after tossing several bouquets to the lady on whom she was calling proposed the sale of a face lotion recipe, assuredly the finest thing ever offered. Only ten dollars for the recipe, which also carried the sole rights for the preparation and sale of the lotion in Scotts Bluff county. Sold again, doctor. It was as easy as snatching the proverbial sweetmeat from the also proverbial kid. It worked splendidly and to the satisfaction of all concerned until a day or so later when a couple of ladies met and in their both talking at once managed to convey to each other that they had very fortunately had the opportunity of securing the sole agency for a face lotion. Then they stopped talking, looked at each other a moment and then laughed. Investigation brought to light the fact that the suave agent had disposed of some 'six or seven 'sole rights' in Scottsbluff, and goodness knows how many may not be reported, all at ten dollars each. The same thing occurred at Gering, and it is presumed at all of the other towns of the valley."

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, 'We're stung again.'"

Stock hogs wanted by the Nebraska Land Company. 103-1f

THE LAST STRAW

A well-known packing firm is advertising a number of brands of canned meats, among them was hamburger steak and onions. It was noted that complying with the pure food law, the cans containing the hamburger carry the legend, "With cereal added." Just why it should be necessary to add oatmeal to hamburger is one of the mysteries of the age. We can forgive the butcher for putting it in sausage; it is so much cheaper than pork, and quite filling, if not so tasty, but in hamburger! Stars and garters! When we figure out what hamburger is made of we marvel that expensive oatmeal should be added.—C. M. Jackson in San Francisco Bulletin.

TURN OLD CLOTHES INTO CASH

Get the best price in the city for used clothing, shoes, trunks, bags, guns, etc. Workman & McLaughlin, Corner Second and Box Butte. 104f

SELF-PROTECTION

"You admit, then," said an Alabama judge, "that you stole the hog?"
"Ah sure has to, jedge," said the colored prisoner.
"Well, nigger, there's been a lot of hog stealing going on around here lately, and I'm just going to make an example of you or none of us will be safe."—Lawyer and Banker (New Orleans.)

Stock hogs wanted by the Nebraska Land Company. 103-1f

Mrs. Fred Nelson of Lingle, Wyo., who is at St. Joseph hospital recovering from a serious operation, is reported to be doing nicely.

See the Fur Man
Monday and Tuesday, at
Highland-Holloway Co.

HERMITS AND HUMBUGS

By JESSIE E. SHERWIN

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Fads and cults came only occasionally to Brookton, but when they did they found a ready high priestess in the shape of Miss Alice Wade. She was thirty, comely still, and prided herself as the object of adoration of several widowers and bachelors, but so far had disdained all suitors except Robert Simms.

"And she keeps me trifling along," Simms told his sister Ruth, "as though we were going to be young forever."

"Alice loves youth and variety and excitement," Ruth reminded Robert indignantly. "She has plenty of money and enjoys spending it."

"Frittering it away, you mean," corrected Simms with some asperity. "There was that moon-faced prophet of the stars, that astrological humbug who won her over as patroness of the occult flight of the Great Bear. He managed to swindle her out of a cool thousand."

"What is the trouble now?" inquired Ruth.

"Oh, a new exponent of spiritualistic science—calls himself Professor Aboukar Hamad. He has delivered a lecture on his new theory of soul culture, and Alice and the society of which she is secretary have gone wild over his economic and social nostrums, idealisms and illogicalisms."

But Professor Aboukar Hamad had no idea of departing from the rich field he had wandered into. He professed to have found in these new devotees "mystic mediums," capable, under culture along psychological lines, of aiding him in his great experiments.

"It is only by segregation that a revelation from the spirits can materialize," he pronounced. "I have discovered a natural hermit cell over at the edge of the town, and a week of solitary reverie may fit me to reveal absolute demonstration of ghostly suggestion."

The "hermit's cell" proved to be an abandoned habitation on the lonely summit of Prospect hill known to every resident. It had been the home, or rather den, of an eccentric old man who lived all to himself. After he died the rumor that he was a rich miser led to the ransacking of the place, but no hidden treasure was found, although the professor indicated that by his magic art the same might come to light.

A generous purse was made up for him and a wagonload of provisions brought to the place by three associate mystics, as he termed them. Some marvelous developments were pledged by the professor as the result of his isolation. His faithful sponsors looked learned and solemn as they spoke of the week of retirement and reverie to which the professor had sacrificed himself for the good of the cult.

Robert Simms went out of his way to evade passing the Wade home. He railed to his sister every evening against the faddists and declared that all was over between himself and the lady he loved.

"Why, those infamous swindlers, I learn, used to travel about the country with a cheap show, playing the clairvoyant and mesmerizing fakes to credulous audiences. I have found out that the money donated for their revelation racket was invested mostly in liquor and cigars, and Farmer Albin told me that he drove past the old hermit place last night and the illustrious professor and his fellow scientists were having a regular jamboree."

The special committee of the club that had financed the retirement of the professor was in session in their quarters two nights later, when there was a great commotion in the street outside. Then the doors were burst open. In horrified amazement the ladies shrank back as the professor reeled into the room. His nose, always red, was more rubicund than ever; his long hair was matted and in disorder. He was followed by his three devoted assistants, and the quartette fell against one another and engaged in the maudlin chorus of a drinking song as they staggered towards the platform.

"Great materialization, ladies," pronounced the erudite professor. "Spirit of Plato fully materialized. I will now make my famous address on the divination of spectral entities."

"Not here you won't," announced the village marshal, coming forward with several assistants. "You and your crew are wanted by the police of Mayville for passing counterfeit money. Peter Potts, alias Professor Aboukar Hamad, your career of glory is over."

Miss Wade rushed from the hall in tears. She fled even from her humiliated sisters. A crowd outside jeered and yelled. Some one caught her arm and led her out of the hubbub and commotion.

"Oh Robert," she sobbed, looking up and recognizing her rescuer. "How can I look respectable people in the face again?"

"Look me in the face," directed Robert seriously, "and assure me that this is your final faddist experiment, and I will see that the incident passes into oblivion."

She obeyed him, and so pleading, so penitent was the expression of that tear-stained face that Robert Simms bent down and kissed it and felt sure that his bride soon to be was safely cured of her folly.

MARSLAND

Mrs. William Tarbutton returned to her home at Osage, Wyo., this week after spending a few days here visiting her son, Virgil, who attends school here.

Dr. Rogers, who had intended locating in Marsland, left Monday morning for another location after staying here for a week.

The Junior league held a box social and program at the church Saturday evening. The youngsters enjoyed themselves and realized a good sum from the sale of the boxes.

Mrs. Young returned to her home in Scottsbluff Thursday after a short visit with her sons. Mrs. Young, Jr. entertained a few ladies Tuesday afternoon in her honor.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Townley are moving into the Trussell house this week. Their goods which they have had stored arrived here Tuesday.

Wade Curry has gone to California where he will spend the winter.

Frank Black was in Hemingford between trains Thursday.

S. H. Trussell came home Sunday afternoon from a business trip to Kansas and left again Monday morning for the eastern part of the state.

H. A. Huntley left Monday for Sheridan, Wyo., where he expects to locate.

Mrs. Holingrake, Mrs. W. Kendrick and Mrs. Snow have all been sick with the gripe the last week.

Dayton Sullenburger was in Crawford on business several days this week.

Mrs. J. M. Tollman entertained the M. E. Aid society last Wednesday afternoon.

Miss Helen Brown of Alliance spent Thanksgiving with her friend Mrs. Earl Gregg.

Mr. and Mrs. G. C. Alexander left for St. Paul, Neb., last Thursday after a two weeks' visit with the latter's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Steve Arrents.

Fireman Whittier of Alliance visited Ernestine McLaughlin over Sunday.

Alex Smith who had a hard siege of pneumonia is able to be up and around again.

Stock hogs wanted by the Nebraska Land Company. 103-1f

1. GS FIRST.

A visitor at an Irishman's farm in a southwestern state did not find everything as he deemed it should be. Among the first things he said was: "See here, Pat, you keep your pigs too close to the house."
"That's just what the doctor told me," said Pat, "but for the life of me I don't see how its going to hurt the pigs."

REAL HUMOR.

"I'm putting on a show for the boys from France, and I want something funny. What do you suggest?"
"Show them some battle scenes from the war movies produced while they were away."—Life.

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