

HIS "READY MADE" SCOOP....

By CHARLES WELSTED

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Jerry was as smart a newspaper reporter as ever went on the police detail, but he was not liked by the other fellows. All track of Jerry would be lost for an hour or so, but he would turn up smiling, and next morning the public would be treated to another freak story in the Twister—a small "scoop," as newspaper men call an exclusive item of news. Then we police reporters, one and all, would have to face our city editors that day and make some explanation.

There were three of us who became tired of this sort of thing and almost found ourselves shuddering at the very name of Jerry, because, as for me, the city editor had said point blank and without any frills on it that if the Daily Twister got a "beat" on me again I would be expected to look for another berth.

We were loading around the detective department at police headquarters one night about 11:30 discussing Jerry. He had been around most of the day, and we knew he was taking in one of the theaters that night, so we had no fears. "Say," said Currie of the Stellar, "wonder if he would bite at the old gag?"

"Oh, the dickens," put in Briggs of the Mercury. "He is too old in the business for that."

"Don't know about that," I ventured. "I have seen some pretty old birds fall into that same trap. He is at the show, and after seeing the girl home he'll be late, and if we get away early he'll naturally be anxious, do you see?"

"Well, let her go!" said Briggs. "What's it to be?" "Must be a mystery," put in Currie. I pulled a wad of copy paper out of my pocket and began to write.

"What is it, Scotty?" asked Briggs. "Suicide on the water front," I mumbled as I wrote on.

"Where?" asked Currie. "Oh, just on the water front. Give him the whole water front to work on."

By this time I had written three sheets, put the first two in my pocket, and, numbering the third "19," crumpled it up and threw it on the floor beside my seat, where it could easily be seen.

"What number did you have on the last sheet, Scotty?" asked Currie. "Nineteen," I replied.

"How does it read?" "Begins in the middle of a sentence and breaks at another, giving a partial description of a suit of clothes found on a dock."

"Good boy! I'll begin on page 23. Listen to this as I write," and Currie scribbled on, at the same time repeating:



HE WAS MOPPING UP A BIG SPLASH ON THE FLOOR.

ing: "Also a soft felt hat. What drove the poor fellow to such a horrible method of ending his life is hard to conceive. Spots of blood were discovered."

"Stop there," said Briggs. "Give me a show," and he began: "Page No. 40—But the police authorities both in that division and at headquarters claim they know nothing of the mystery, which leads to the belief that—" And here Briggs crumpled up his sheet and left it on the table. Currie had left his page on the desk just as he had written it beside a few other blank sheets.

We left the room, walked over to the Hub, loafed round a bit and then phoned No. 1 station.

Currie was at the machine and called: "Hello, sergeant! Has Jerry of the Twister been over there?" Currie waited a few seconds, then roared with laughter. "Never mind, sergeant," we heard him say; "we'll bring you over a Key West cigar. Yes, two of them. Very good! By by!"

Currie joined us in the small room, laughing heartily. "The sergeant says Jerry must have been drinking. The fool," said the sergeant, "thinks there is some mysterious suicide on the water front, and called me a liar when I told him there wasn't."

"When I laughed," continued Currie, "he tumbled. Let's go over!" Briggs bought the cigars, and in we trooped to headquarters. The sergeant was smiling and pointed to one of the station men, who was mopping up a big splash on the floor.

"What's the matter?" I asked. "That fool Jerry called me a liar, and, as I couldn't get at him quick enough, I threw the mangle pot."

"This was rich, and again we had a good laugh, and handed over the cigars. There was nothing new at the station, so we all reported at our respective offices, and each told his city editor the yarn, which was much enjoyed.

Next morning Currie, our city editor, called me in, and he laughingly held up a copy of the Twister.

"You fellows allowed that joke to go too far, Scotty," he said. "This will cost Jerry his job, I am afraid. He has got a yarn here a column and a half long, and it makes good reading too. He even names his victim."

I laughed. The joke had gone splendidly. "Mr. Scott," said the office boy, "some one wants you at the phone." I went.

"Hello! Briggs, that you? Did you see the Twister? Ha, ha! What? Currie? Is he? Going to leave town? Why, yes; I'll be out in a jiffy. At the Hub? All right."

What was up now at the Stellar office? Currie, the last of all men. I reached the Hub, made at once for the small room, and there sat Currie alone smoking a cigar, and three cocktails ready for immediate consumption were on the table in front of him.

"What's the row, old man? Where's Briggs?" I asked in one breath. "Here's Briggs now," replied Currie, as the door opened. "Now sit down, fellows. Drink up, and Briggs, you press the button for another. We'll need it."

"Buz-z-z" went the bell. All was silence. "We—are—scooped—again," said Currie slowly, with great emphasis on the "again," and it's up to George Currie of the Stellar, Fred Briggs of the Mercury and Bill Scott of the Bounder to pass in their chips.

The waiter entered at this stage. "Don't know what you are driving at, Currie," said Briggs, and, turning to the waiter, continued, "but we'll have to have another drink anyway. Same all round."

"Look here," said Currie. "I have seen my city editor, I have been at police headquarters and at the morgue, and I have seen Jerry and that one and a half column yarn of his in the Twister is a bona fide story. The suicide happened across the bay on the island, and no one would have located it until today, and we would have been all right, every one of us, but for that joke of ours last night. It made Jerry search the water front until 1 o'clock this morning, and then when he could find nothing he hired a boat, rowed to the island, and I'll be hanged if the story was not there waiting on him."

Briggs said something I hate to repeat, only it sounded most appropriate for the occasion. We wrote three notes to three city editors, pooled our finances, and next day three bright newspaper men were looking for a job down the coast.

Why Pyramids Were Built. The interest of the Delhi and Benares observatories lies for us in the fact that they recall a time far in the past when astronomers sought for exactness by the erection of huge structures of stone. Of these the great pyramid is by far the greatest and most perfect example. Britain has its own monument—Stonehenge—which has been claimed as, if not indeed, an astronomical observatory, at least an astronomical temple, and many attempts have been made to determine the date at which it was erected. The difficulty, not to say the impossibility, of solving this problem in the present state of the monument may be inferred from the fact that the dates which different careful observers have deduced for its erection extend over a period of more than 2,000 years, says a writer in Knowledge.

The real work of astronomy was never done in edifices like those. Nor indeed does it require much knowledge of human nature, essentially the same 5,000 years ago as today, to see that the true secret of the pyramid, the amply sufficient cause for its building, was the vanity of the ruling pharaoh. Alike at Delhi, at Gizeh and on Salisbury plain, as by the Euphrates, to "make a name" was the exciting motive. Astronomers may have been employed to superintend the work, astronomy, or the cult of the celestial bodies, may have been the excuse, but the real object was advertisement.

What the Fingers Tell. As far as the fingers are concerned palmists divide hands into three classes. First come those with long, slender and tapering fingers. A person with such fingers has an innate love of art, poetry and music and probably also for literature.

In the second class the fingers are shorter, nearly equal in length and with blunt tips. They show a practical mind of a rather commonplace order, thorough and reliable rather than brilliant. A woman with fingers of this description would make a good housekeeper, while a man similarly provided would be cautious and thorough in business.

In the third section come hands with short, thick and square looking fingers, with short, wide nails cushioned at the sides. The owner of such fingers is probably strong and active, with a hearty appreciation of the good things of life and a keen eye to his own interest. He is seldom hampered in his undertakings by diffidence and rarely errs in thinking too much of the feelings and interests of others.

AERIAL POLO.

A Queer Kind of Amusement on a Pacific Ocean Island. Writing on "Our Equatorial Islands" in the Century, James D. Hague says: "It became an amusing diversion to overturn the large flat stones beneath which the rats were hiding in solid masses and watch them as they scampered in all directions, pursued and quickly snatched up by the man-o-war hawks. These crafty birds were apt to learn that the appearance of a man walking on the island, especially with a dog, meant rats for them, and any one thus going forth was usually followed by a hovering flock, ready and impatient for the sport they had learned to expect. A rat brought to hand by the dog was quickly tossed in air, where the birds were ready to snatch it, sometimes with a contest on the wing for the disputed possession. One form of this sport, a sort of aerial polo, which seemed to be as good fun for the birds as for the observers, consisted in tossing two rats into the air at the same moment, not singly and apart, but tied together with about six feet of strong twine.

Instantly the birds made a dash for the rats, and the successful winner of the first prize went sailing off with one rat in his bill and the other swinging in the air beneath until snatched by the second winner, when, after a quick, sharp struggle and a taut strain on the cord, the bird with the weaker hold was compelled to let go. This then went on as a continuous performance, with somewhat Jonah-like but rapidly repeated disappearances and reappearances of the little rats, swallowed and reluctantly disgorged by the birds in quick succession until the flock, thoroughly exhausted by their impetuous flight and extraordinary exercise, alighted on the ground for a short truce, when the two temporary stakeholders would be found sitting face to face, keenly eyeing each other from opposite ends of the string still connecting them, each anxiously on the sharp lookout for sudden jerks and unpleasant surprises, while all the other pursuers gathered around in a ring, waiting for the two prize birds to fly. The general aspect of all participants seemed to verify the familiar adage that the pleasure is not in the game, but in the chase.

A PET ECONOMY. **Almost Every Man Maintains One, Small Though It May Be.** "Got a match about you?" asked the bookkeeper of the chief buyer.

"Wonder you wouldn't buy matches once in awhile?" growled the buyer. "I've been supplying you with matches for years."

"I never buy matches—never have and never will," said the bookkeeper. "It is my pet economy. Most every man has one."

And the bookkeeper was right. Nearly every man has a pet economy and will go to a great length to indulge it. At the Union club they still tell of a worthy old member who was particular about using a certain kind of soap, but was not willing to buy it. They used the soap at the club, and he appropriated the cakes as fast as he needed them. He needed so many that the steward changed the brand.

The same spirit of economy in small things makes other people stuff themselves with bread in order that no butter may be left on their plate and wasted. Hundreds of men would not dream of buying a lead pencil. To save buying stationery others write their letters at hotels which are generous in providing writing materials. Scores of men and women save pennies by picking up discarded newspapers in the elevated trains and ferryboats. And so it goes. It is not so much the actual money saved that moves people in these little schemes; rather an inborn desire to economize in something.

But to return to the bookkeeper, the buyer and the matches. The bookkeeper continued: "You are stingy with your old matches. I'll just take a lot, and then I'll be independent of you."

Then he emptied out half the box.—New York Tribune.

SHOES. Never wear a shoe that pinches the heel. Never wear a shoe or boot tight anywhere. Never come from high heels to low heels at one jump. Never wear a shoe that will not allow the great toe to lie in a straight line. Never wear leather sole linings to stand upon. White cotton drilling or linen is healthier. Never wear a shoe with a sole narrower than the outline of the foot traced with a pencil close under the rounding edge.

Never wear a shoe with a sole turning up very much at the toes, as this causes the cords on the upper part of the foot to contract. Never have the top of the boots tight, as it interferes with the action of the calf muscles, makes one walk badly and spoils the shape of the ankle. Never think that the feet will grow large from wearing proper shoes. Pinching and distorting make them grow not only large, but unsightly. A proper natural use of all the muscles makes them compact and attractive.

One Kind of Conjunction. "What is a conjunction?" asked the teacher. "That which joins together," was the prompt reply. "Give an illustration," said the teacher. The up to date miss hesitated and blushed.

"The marriage service," she said at last.—Chicago Post.

A Languid Japanese Lady.

In a recent address in Tokyo a prominent Japanese educator said: "The influence of Japanese ladies is something amazing. I know a daughter of a certain peer, but a brand new one, and this young lady's influence is really beyond the idea of ordinary mortals. She will not even open her mouth for herself. As soon as she is time to retire to her bed arrives she issues her order, 'Now I will retire,' and at once three or four maids spread the underquits, help her, or, rather, make her, for she simply stands like a doll, to change her clothes, and at last the girl, swaddled in her night garment, is put to bed just like a person suffering from a serious illness, and so the poor thing goes to sleep and releases her maids from their trouble till the morning, when the daily routine is resumed. First of all she issues to the maids waiting in her anteroom this extraordinary order, 'I shall get up now,' and then the process exactly the reverse of that of the night before is forthwith commenced by the girls. Day after day this routine is gone through, and the spoiled child of the proud upstart peer forces herself from her mistaken notion as to dignity to lead the life of an invalid and to cripple the normal development of her body."—Chicago News.

Fish Proverbs. "I have other fish to fry" one says in declining a task. "A pretty little of fish," says another in designating a pretty bad mess. The "kittle" is the tackle of the fish hook, which may easily get into a sad snarl. "There are other fish in the sea," says the rejected suitor. "Mute as a fish," "Dead as a herring," "As uneasy as a fish out of water," "To fish for compliments," are among the best known figurative expressions referring to the funny tribe. "Very like a whale" we may refer to ill to Shakespeare's time ("Hamlet," III, 2). "White as whalebone" was coined when walrus ivory was taken for whale's bone. "The shark flies the feather" is a sailor's saying, indicating the fact that this voracious fish will not touch a bird. The use of the term "land shark" is not confined to seamen by any means. Shakespeare makes use of another nautical expression in "Twelfth Night," I, 8.

True Literature. We are inclined on the whole to believe that the stimulus to literary production exists within and not without the man. It is not external circumstances, poverty or riches, sickness or health, greatness or humbleness, that determine the production or output of genius. It is the characteristics of the man that determine not what he shall learn or what he shall think, but what he shall do. A stimulus from without, such as poverty, may start production, of course, but that is merely the physical awakening of a disposition that in any circumstances would have been awakened in some way at some time. True literature is the voice of the soul calling from the windows of the house of clay in response to those things of life that touch the nature of the soul that speaks.—London Spectator.

Yawns of Wrath. The singular habit of signifying anger by yawning is confined to the monkey tribe and is most marked in the baboon family, though the Gibraltar apes also indulge in it. It is probable that the gesture is originally intended to frighten an adversary by a display of teeth, just as a dog does and that the constant wide opening of the mouth produces an involuntary yawn. In fact, if a human being keeps on opening his mouth in this way a yawn will result. If two strange baboons are put together in the same cage, they immediately confront each other and commence yawning, and if vexed or insulted by visitors they will do the same thing.

Fat Crystals. If small quantities of butter, lard and beef fat be separately boiled and slowly cooled for, say, twenty-four hours, the resulting crystals will show very marked differences under the microscope. The normal butter crystal is large and globular. It polarizes brilliantly and shows a well marked St. Andrew's cross. That of lard shows a stellar form, while that of beef fat has a foliated appearance. In course of time, as the butter loses its freshness, the globular crystal degenerates and gradually merges into peculiar rosette-like forms.

An Old Verb. To laze is an old verb. In Samuel Rowlands' "Martin Markall," 1610, we are told that "loyterers laze in the streets, lurke in alehouses and range in the highways." The word occurs, I believe, in some of Mortimer Collins' lyrics: But Cupid lazeth 'mongst the fairy lassies, Whose clere complexion he oft sweareth passes.

Notes and Queries. Every one out of bed likes to claim occasionally that it is force of will power alone that is keeping him up.—Acheson Globe.

The Cobra of India. Among the true cobras of India the naja is found all over India and Ceylon, Burma, the Andaman Islands, southern China and the Malay peninsula and archipelago. It ascends the Himalayas to an altitude of 8,000 feet. It extends also over Afghanistan and through Persia to the eastern shore of the Caspian. It may attain a length of nearly seven and a half feet, but it is usually not more than a little over five and a half feet long. Najas vary much in color and markings, but have generally the spectacle mark on the back of the neck, which they always distend before making an attack.—Quarterly Review.

THE WOODCOCK.

Where Does It Hide During the Moulting Season? It is during the months of August and September that the mystery of the woodcock's life begins. This is the moulting season, when the bird changes its plumage before beginning its journey southward. At this time it leaves the swamps. Where does it go? That is a question which has never yet received a satisfactory answer, although each sportsman and naturalist has his own opinion, and many fine spurs theories have been advanced. Some say that the birds move toward the north, some that they seek the mountain tops, coming into the swamps to feed only after nightfall; some that they seek the cornfields, and there have been many other such theories.

Probably the truth lies in a mean of all these statements. I think it probable that the birds know the loss of their feathers renders them to a certain extent helpless and more exposed to the attacks of their natural enemies, and they therefore leave the more open swamps and hide in the densest and most tangled thickets. It is certain that they scatter, for at this season single birds are found in the most unusual and unexpected places.

Years ago when shooting in Dutchess county, N. Y., I knew one or two swamps, which we called moulting swamps, where in August we were sure to find a limited number of birds. These swamps were overgrown with rank marsh grass and were full of patches of wild rose and sweetbrier. If we killed the birds which we found there, we were sure in a week or ten days to find their places filled by about the same number.—Outing.

The Wedding Gift. It is a golden rule to send a wedding gift in good time, the first to arrive being much more appreciated than that which is one of the many pouring in from all quarters during the last week. By adhering to this rule one will be saved the annoyance of hearing that the suitcases are charming—the third set already received.

A month before the wedding day is not too early to send the present, which should be accompanied by a visiting card. The package should be addressed to the bride, if one is intimate with the happy couple, and to the bride's house, addressed to the bridegroom, if it is he with whom one is best acquainted.

The Diagnosis. There are things that only a doctor can successfully accomplish, and there are other things which the physician may safely relegate to a competent assistant. "I understand the doctor has just been to see your husband, Mrs. McCarthy," said Mr. McCarthy's employer. "Has he made a diagnosis?"

For a moment Mrs. McCarthy was submerged in a sea of doubt, but she rose triumphant. "No, sorr," she said confidently, "he left it to me, him saying I was well able to do it, sorr. It's to be made wid linseed on a shilout muslin, sorr."

Sagacity. "Why, yes, I have seen a good deal of Tom Robinson recently. Fact is, he's one of the most entertaining men I ever met. Really, I didn't know there was so much in him. He's positively brilliant when you get him talking. Most delightful companion and so hospitable and"—

"I see. Which of Robinson's sisters is it—the little one with the black hair or the tall blond one?" "It's the little one with the black hair."

A Kiss and a Snap. In 1837 Mr. Thomas Saverland brought an action against Miss Caroline Newton, who had bitten a piece out of his nose for his having tried to kiss her by way of a joke. The defendant was acquitted, and the judge laid down that "when a man kisses a woman against her will she is fully entitled to bite his nose if she so pleases."—The Kiss and Its History.

Lapsus Lingue. "You understand, of course, that my daughter has been reared in the lap of luxury?" "Why, she told me last night that mine was the first—er, that is, I hope, sir, that I may be able to make such provision as to keep her from pining for the lap you mention."—Chicago Herald.

The Same Old Climate. "Is not your climate rather changeable?" asked the tourist. "No, it isn't," answered the old settler who always contradicts. "If it was, don't you suppose we'd have changed it for something else years ago?"—Washington Star.

A Modest Thespian. Briggs—That fool Stephigh considers himself the greatest actor on earth. Benson—Is that so? He's getting strangely modest. He used to consider himself the greatest actor that ever lived.—Tit-Bits.

The Useful Men. Encourage the useful men in the community. Don't start foolish and untruthful stories about them and discourage the work they are doing. If you cannot do anything for the public good yourself, don't discourage those who are willing to give their time and money toward developing the community in which you live.—Acheson Globe.

She Did. "Auntie, Charles Gass proposed to me last night." "The impudent fellow! Somebody ought to sit down on him." "Why, auntie, I rather think somebody did."—Baltimore News.

Rattlesnake Flags.

After the rattlesnake had been adopted as an emblem and had appeared on the flags of several of the colonies Benjamin Franklin defended the device on the grounds that the rattlesnake is found only in America; that all serpents' emblems were considered by the ancients to be symbols of wisdom; that his bright, lidless eyes signify vigilance; that he never attacks without first giving fair warning of his presence; that his rattles, while distinct, are so firmly joined that they cannot be separated without being ruined forever, and that as he grows older the rattles increase in number, as it was to be hoped the colonies would.

Indeed this idea was made use of in a flag device which represented a rattlesnake with nine joints, each joint lettered with red silk. The head was marked "N. E." (New England), the remaining sections "N. Y.," "N. J.," "Pa.," "Md.," "Va.," "N. C.," "S. C.," and "Ga." This curious standard was discarded for the one made by Mrs. Ross in Philadelphia in 1777, a flag similar to the United States flag of today, only with fewer stars.

Only Pursuing His Profession. A Brooklyn magistrate recently had four darlings who were caught in a gambling raid before him. The first of the lot to be brought to the bar was an undersized man, with a comical face, as black as night. The dialogue between the magistrate and the prisoner created some merriment in the court.

"What is your name?" inquired the magistrate sternly. "Mah name's Smiff," replied the dandy. "What is your profession?" "Ize a locksmith by trade, sah."

"What were you doing when the police broke into the room last night?" "Judge, I was pursuin' mah profession. I was makin' a bolt for the door."

"Officer," said the magistrate, with a merry twinkle in his eye, "luck Smith up."—New York Tribune.

Steel Skyscrapers. An architect of New York says that with the modern steel frame a building can be carried to a height equal to seven and one-half times the diameter of the base. By this rule on an ordinary city block could be erected a building 1,500 feet high, 500 feet higher than the Eiffel tower. It would have 125 stories and cost about \$30,000,000.

A Pointer. Briggs—How do you know Mrs. Dulcet is such a handsome woman? You say you never saw her. Griggs—No, but you should hear how the other women talk about her.—Boston Transcript.

Somebody figures that there are 1,437 remedies for rheumatism. But it gets there just the same.—New York World.

Method in His Deceit. "I thought you said you were going to bring a friend home to dinner," said Mrs. Skimp to her husband. "He couldn't come, Anna," replied Mr. Skimp as he sat down with great satisfaction to the first good dinner he had had a chance to attack for a long time.

What Disturbed Him. Miggles—I hear you upset a plate of soup on Miss Smith's gown at dinner last night. Wiggles—Yes, and it was awfully embarrassing. You know it isn't polite to ask for a second plate of soup.—Chicago News.

Parr and Erskine. Dr. Parr on meeting Lord Chancellor Erskine, with whom he was friendly, once said, "Erskine, I mean to write your epitaph when you die." "Doctor," answered the great lawyer, "it is almost a temptation to commit suicide."

Their Single Thought. Hook—That young married couple appear to be two souls with but a single thought. Nye—Yes. He thinks he's the only thing on earth, and she agrees with him.—Philadelphia Record.

Filial Sympathy. "When I was your age," said Mr. Goldbags sternly, "I earned my own living." His son looked uneasy, but was silent. "Well, have you nothing to say for yourself in that connection?" "N-nothing, sir, except that I sympathize with you, and congratulate you on the fact that it's all over."—London Tit-Bits.

Not as Considerate as He Might Be. "He's a good friend of yours, isn't he?" "Oh, only medium." "What do you mean by medium?" "Oh, he listens while I tell him all of my troubles, but he also wants me to listen while he tells me all of his."—Chicago Post.

Her Childish Faith. A little girl on East Third street, who is noted for her slangy conversation and has besides the sublime faith of childhood in the providence of God, startled the household the other evening by her irreverent speech, which, of course, she didn't mean in the way she put it. After she retired her mother heard her calling "God, God," several times, and hastened to her crib to learn what was wanted. The child asked petulantly as soon as her mother had arrived: "Mamma, can't God hear?" "Yes, dear," replied her mother. "Why?"

"Well, I've been calling for Him for half an hour and He hasn't made a sound!"—Duluth News-Tribune.