

# Omar was right," says Billy Leet, Who has Dedicated Life to Pursuit of Pleasure



*Anna Robertson who got \$45,000 in alimony from "Billy"*

By J. T. ARMSTRONG

A stalwart, carefully dressed young man, equipped with a well-trimmed mustache, a platinum wrist watch, and several cartons of gold initialed cigarettes, made his advent into Omaha four weeks ago.

His arrival was an "advent" for the young man was no other than Omaha's own millionaire sportsman, William Allen Leet.

His advent was a welcome one for waiters, bell boys, chefs, house detectives, and as "Billy" himself admits—for vendors of liquid contraband.

### Interval Is Golden.

He arrived in Omaha fresh from Palm Beach, Cuba and Bermuda, and his private yacht, and his brief interval here was indeed a golden one for those associated with him.

There were parties at which liquor flowed like water; there were dances which netted fortunate orchestras crisp notes of three figures, and there were tips which caused waiters' eyes to bulge—for "Billy" found a niche in Omaha's night life and filled it.

Yet at all night dances, and liquor at \$35 a quart, and bills which would demolish the ordinary bank account were simply a matter of routine to "Billy."

In fact he was rather bored at it all, and the day before he left on his year's trip to the Orient he asserted that Omaha was too "provincial" and that it was impossible to spend money here.

"After all there is nothing to do in the world but seek pleasure," declared "Billy." "That's my religion. I may change, but I don't know why I should."

Omar Khayyam had the right idea. "A jug of wine, a loaf of bread, and thou, with emphasis on the wine, that's me."

Thus did "Billy," heir to millions, twice married and twice divorced, and known throughout the continent of North America for his escapades and lavish spending, define his motive in life.

Now, at the age of 24, "Billy" has carried out that motive so thoroughly that he asserts there is nothing left to experience in America, nothing novel to look forward to.

"Billy" was born in Audubon, Ia., a typical middle-west American town. He was a typical, tow-haired small-town boy with ambitions to become a railroad engineer, until the death of his father, Frank M. Leet.

His father's estate, which consisted of Iowa farm land and majority stock in several banks, was divided between "Billy," his mother, and his sister, Mrs. Ralph Tood of Aurora, Ill. The value of the estate has increased greatly since that time, but then was estimated at more than \$1,000,000.

### Transformation Begins.

With his father's death, which occurred in 1905, "Billy's" transformation began. He went to a military school and learned the value of unlimited wealth. He was a leader of a reckless element in the school, and in a short time was sent home, only to be sent to another school by his mother.

He returned from this school to

Omaha, where his mother had purchased a home, but he was no longer the unsophisticated, small-town youth of a few months before.

And his return marked the beginning of a series of escapades and and orgy of spending which drew yards of newspaper space in all parts of the country, and kept at least one attorney busy in his or his estate's behalf at all times.

**First Bid for Attention.**  
"Billy's" first bid for attention was made when he acquired a siren whistle for one of his cars. It was an ingenious affair which permitted "Billy" to play the popular songs with a volume that rivaled that of a fog horn.

But the suburban residents of the city objected to its use. They told the mayor they had an ear for music, but that they also needed sleep, especially after 1 and 2 in the morning.

So police put a stop to "Billy's" musical ambitions, and an ordinance was passed prohibiting siren whistles in Omaha.

**Winters in Florida.**  
"Billy" spent most of his winters in Florida, and succeeded in getting his share of notice in Palm Beach, in spite of his youth and of stiff competition.

Then he met Miss Anne Robertson, prominent in Omaha's younger society set, and a sister of Mrs. Fred Hamilton.

There was a whirlwind courtship, and then an elopement.

The marriage ceremony was performed in Blair with great secrecy. Even after the ceremony "Billy's" mother stoutly denied her son was interested in Miss Robertson, and when she actually learned of the marriage she voiced violent opposition.

Later she threatened to have the marriage annulled on the grounds that her son was not of age, but did not put the threat into execution.

**Devoted Six Months.**  
"Billy" was a devoted husband for about six months, according to his wife. They honeymooned in Florida, and then established a "country home" at Manning, Ia.

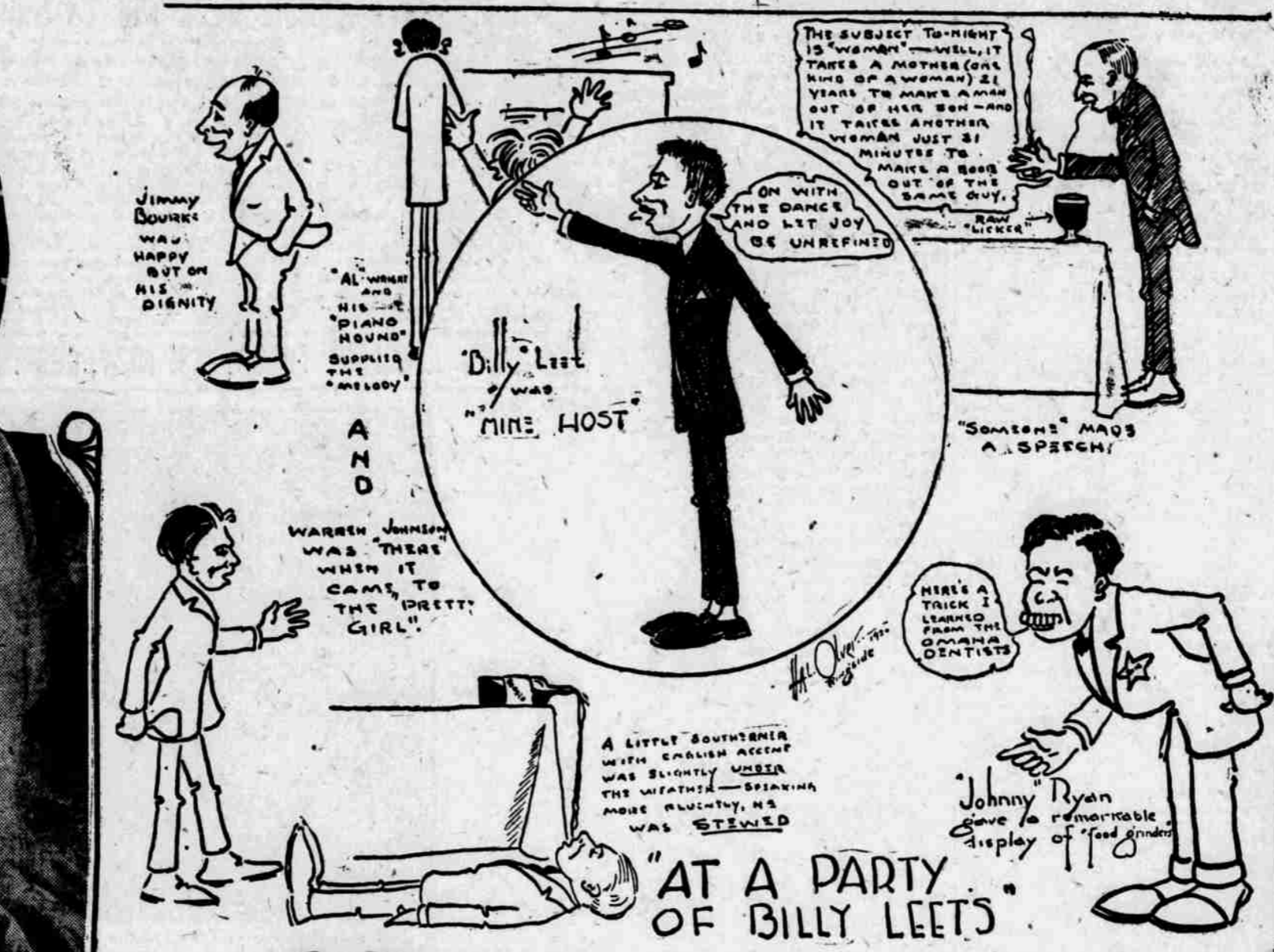
"Billy's" first move toward the domestic life was to build a huge bungalow at a cost of \$50,000. The bungalow was planned by one of the most famous architects in the country and was a show place for a large part of Iowa.

Then came a sad awakening for Mrs. Leet. For the simple life, among the pigs and chickens, was not for "Billy."

**Takes Night Ride.**  
Like Paul Revere, he took a famous night ride, awoke the countryside with the roar of his high-powered motor and arrived in Omaha in the wee hours of the morning, in time to get a taste of metropolitan night life before day dawned.

And, like the famous ride of Paul Revere, "Billy's" ride not only aroused the countryside, but caused them to take up arms in protest. They resented being aroused from peaceful slumber.

But "Billy" became addicted to these dashes "for a bit of freedom,"



*Martha Ruddy, who was so glad to get rid of him, she asked for no alimony*

as he described them, and the fact that town constables and farmers, armed with shotguns, began laying in wait for him bothered him not in the least.

**Eager to Escape.**  
Occasionally he condescended to stop and pay for unfortunate poultry and stock which chanced to interfere with his progress, but usually he sped onward, for he was eager to escape the rural atmosphere.

To these drives "Billy" attributes his success in the annual American amateur championship race in Chicago, where, with his Mercedes stock car, he outdistanced all other contestants and won a huge trophy cup.

He loves to tell of the race, because it was the "one time in his life when he actually "got somewhere," he says.

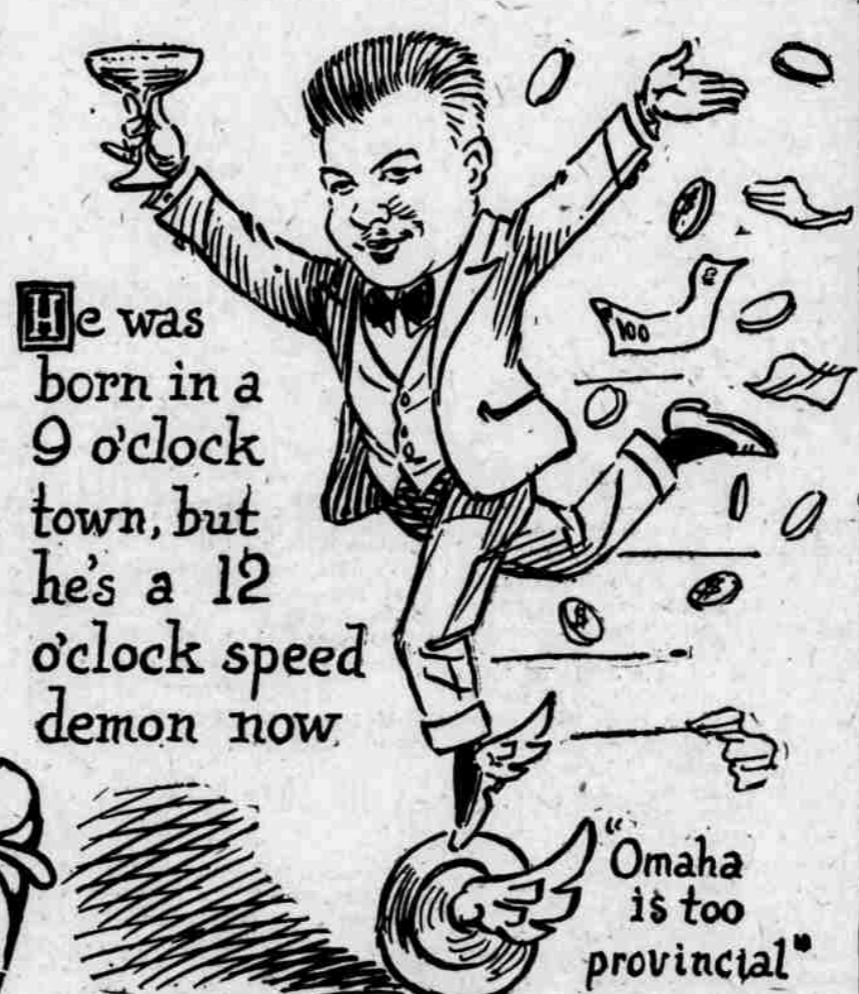
**Put on Big Party.**  
"We put on a big party the night before the race," relates "Billy." It was a wild, wild party, and when I got on the track everything was in a whirl, for I hadn't had even an hour's sleep.

"After I got to going I got the idea I was tearing up the road between Manning and Omaha, so I gave her all the juice she had. I didn't seem to hit any chickens or pigs, so I decided to slow down and see what was the matter. When I did I found I'd won the race."

And the night of the race "Billy" celebrated. His celebration is still a shining spot in the annals of Chicago night life. The scene of the festivities was the Stratford hotel. And the trophy cup won by "Billy" was filled with sparkling champagne many times, and quaffed as many times more.

Later the cup was placed in a prominent place in the lobby of the Stratford, for "Billy" neglected to take it with him. And according to reports it still remains there, a silent reminder of the days when liquor flowed in unstinted quantities.

**Failure as a Husband.**  
But if "Billy" was a social success he was a distinct failure as a



*He was born in a 9 o'clock town, but he's a 12 o'clock speed demon now.*

### High Spots in Billy Leet's Career

He was born in a 9 o'clock town but turned out to be a 12 o'clock guy.

His first marriage was an elopement to Blair January 11, 1915.

His first divorce cost him \$45,000 alimony.

He won the annual American amateur championship automobile race in Chicago after indulging in a 12-hour champagne party the night before.

He was discharged from the army for attempting to mop up a dance floor and a second lieutenant.

He married again in December, 1918, and moved with Mrs. Leet No. 2 to San Francisco.

A few months later he quarreled with Mrs. Leet No. 2 and attempted suicide on the closed threshold of his apartment in San Francisco.

He was divorced by Mrs. Leet No. 2 in March, 1920.

He went to Florida, bought a yacht, and cruised the Caribbean.

He returned to Omaha three weeks ago, filed a suit against a friend to collect half the cost of a party staged here, and testified that "three quarts at \$30" and "three more quarts at \$35" were part of the cost.

He left for Minneapolis ten days ago en route for Japan and other oriental countries.

wealthy Illinois family. He met her while visiting his sister, Mrs. Tood, in Aurora. The ceremony took place in December, 1918.

**Then Quarrel Comes.**  
The millionaire newlyweds moved to San Francisco and took up their residence in the exclusive St. Francis Court apartments there. Conubial bliss was theirs for a time, but then came a quarrel, a separation and a divorce.

The quarrel came first, of course, and when the smoke cleared away, "Billy" found himself no longer an occupant of his regal apartment. To add to his discomfort he found, on investigation, that the door was locked.

With great indignation he attempted to force an entrance, but was foiled by the San Francisco police department.

For the first time in his eventful young life "Billy" began to think the world was a failure.

**Aim is Poor.**  
He secured a revolver. 50 rounds of ammunition and a bottle of courage-giving liquid and placed himself on the closed threshold of his apartment.

Then with a plaintive "goodbye, cru-el world," or some similar utterance he shot himself—in the arm.

His wound bled profusely, staining several oriental rugs valued at several thousand dollars.



*"Billy" Leet*

### Here's Fire Chief Offered Sixty-Day Vacation and He Doesn't Know What to Do

On Job for 42 Years Without Even One Day For Himself.

There are men in Omaha who have been heard to say that vacations are bores to them and that they go vacationing just to please the missus and the kiddies.

"I enjoy a day or two now and

games, but to go away on a regular vacation which has been planned for weeks ahead—good night," asserted one mere man.

How would you feel and what would you do if the boss should say that you could have 60 days off with pay? That is what happened to Charles Slater, chief of the fire department, last week.

**He's Not Enthusiastic.**  
His boss, City Commissioner H. B. Zimman, said: "Chief, I am going to give you 60 days off this summer and I want you to have a real vacation."

The chief said he would consider it, but he was not very enthusiastic over the idea of being away from the job 60 days. He has been with the fire department 42 years and has never taken a vacation, says he doesn't need any. Someone in his office suggested perhaps he intends to wait until he has served 50 years and then take a regular vacation.

But Mr. Zimman is serious about the 60-day vacation, because he knows how faithful Charles Slater has been as Omaha's head fire fighter and the commissioner said he could not think of anything that would do himself more good than to know that the chief would be enjoying two months this summer.

**They Plan His Trip.**  
The subordinate officers of the department have been planning itineraries for the chief. One of these includes a trip to California, with a few days of tuna fishing near San Diego or wherever it is that tuna fish are caught. Jim Walsh recommended that if the chief does not like tuna fish, he may obtain tarpon in the Gulf of Mexico. The Shasta route trip has been recommended and also an outing along the Columbia river. And, along with many others, a splash in the Pacific along the beach at San Francisco, where the Seal Rocks loom majestically out of the brine.

and returned to her family in Illinois. She had asked for no alimony.

"Billy" remained in Omaha for several months after his return from Colorado.

On one occasion during Billy's career here he conceived the idea that he was a bird, as a result of a prohibition intoxicant, he later asserted, attempted to fly.

**Second Hop Is Crash.**  
He hopped in a birdlike manner from his automobile to the roof of the Henderson greenhouse, on South Twenty-fourth street. But his second hop was disastrous.

He crashed through the glass roof of the greenhouse and landed in a bed of roses. The watchman, who was nearby, fell to his knees when he saw the figure descend under the illusion that some heavenly being had pounced upon him.

He discovered his error a minute later, however, seized "Billy" and called police.

"Billy's" recent visit in Omaha was "one continuous party," he asserted before he left. During his three weeks here it is estimated that he spent \$10,000. He appeared in municipal court the day before he left to testify against Hugh Bennett, film exchange employee here, in a case which he started to make Bennett pay half the expenses of a party. Evidence introduced showed that there had been "three quarts at \$30 a quart," and "three quarts at \$35 a quart," purchased for the party.

The next day "Billy" left Omaha for a year's trip in the Orient, equipped with nine trunks, a fresh supply of gold initialed-cigarets, and "his man."



*Chas. L. Salter*

then when I want to go fishing or to see the world's series baseball