

AMERICAN PRESS HUMORISTS

WHAT THIS AGGREGATION OF JOKESMITHS DID AT THEIR FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING.

Much Subtle Humor and Keen Wit Wasted by the Sober Minded Members, Says Lampton—First Joke Opened For Inspection Near Los Angeles—How They Got Revenge in Pasadena—Greeted With Dead March at Venice—Other Funny Incidents.

By W. J. LAMPTON.

I HAVE but recently come from the annual meeting of the American Press Humorists, an aggregation—not a trust—of sober minded men who do not make jokes for the fun of the thing. They need the money. The annual meeting of the A. P. H. is held every year. This is no joke. Ask those who pay for the pleasure. It is almost as serious as owning an automobile. Indeed, only a wealthy editor can own a funny man and an automobile at one and the same time. The purposes of this aggregation of jokesmiths are promoting good fellowship, upholding the quality of modern humor and permanently retiring decrepit jokes of all classes. Among the hundred members are Rev. Robert J. Burdette, better known as Bob; Wilbur D. Nesbit, S. E. Kiser, Strickland W. Gillilan, Thomas A. Daly, Edmund Vance Cooke, Frank Thompson Searight, Robertus Love, Judd Mortimer Lewis, Sam Davis and other clever funmakers. John D. Rockefeller, whose humor is of a rich and oily variety, is an honorary member. John D. is the best paid jokesmith in the bunch. His income is \$21 per minute.

This the fifth annual meeting of the A. P. H. was held at Los Angeles, a

he innocently inquired how the cars got up the pole. This was considered very fair for a beginning and caused roars of laughter among our hosts. Nothing but a place of rest would have made a humorist smile after that 2,000 mile ride. We weren't used to it. Since the late cruel railroad pass preventive legislation we have walked so much it lames us to ride.

Morning broke fair after a good night's sleep in a \$2,000,000 hotel, the Alexandria, whose regal appointments just seemed to be made for humorists, and we hied ourselves forth to get our first breath of the glorious climate of California we had heard so much about. The glorious climate at this season needs a nice, cold mint julep to sprinkle it down. It has a thirsty air. It hadn't been rained on for weeks.

Now the orgies begin. At 9 o'clock we were whisked away to Monrovia, where we were lunched and received and autoed, and beautiful ladies and gallant gentlemen vied with each other in extending hospitalities of every variety, and our pictures were printed in the Monrovia News, and nobody tried to sell us any real estate, and the dust stayed on the ground where it belonged, and paradise was spilled all

sand is done on foot or pony back. A peculiarity of the climate was discovered here—to wit, the higher the temperature is the lower it is. Anyway, a thermometer on top of Mount Lowe shows about 15 degrees lower than at the foot—the same thermometer, too, so it must be true.

Thursday we went to Venice-by-the-Sea, put there by Mr. Kinney of cigarette wealth—he doesn't smoke them himself, hence his wealth—and we were received by a brass band which played the "Dead March" as we struck the ground from the car. It was the most serious thing that has happened in Venice since the times of the council of ten. We almost felt as if we were standing on the Bridge of Sighs. Nobody laughed but the man who had hired the band, and he quit when he saw the bill. However, we were given a bath in the noble Pacific, discovered by Balboa several years ago, fed on a ship and treated as well as if we had come down to buy property.

Auto Ride in Riverside.

Friday Riverside, famous in the beauty show business, called us thither, and we went in a special car over the Salt Lake and were autoed over about a thousand miles of magnolia and pepper and palm avenues which would be worth \$40 a foot to any town east of the range. Then we scooted to the top of Rubido mountain and were given a birdseye view of more topographic loveliness than we could pay for in a million years if we got \$4 apiece for jokes of any vintage. This road cost \$50,000 and is of such grade that an auto will run from top to bottom without using a drop of gasoline or jumping the fence a single time. None has ever tried to use gasoline, but several have tried to jump the fence. You can't trust an auto. Said our chauffeur to me—he was a prominent citizen—"An auto is just like a woman—you never can tell what she will do next." It didn't sound like a joke to me, and I didn't laugh. After a minute he said, "But when you get her going right she beats the world." Then I laughed, and he said he meant the auto. All the humorists don't belong to the A. P. H.

We were fed at the Glenwood tavern, one of the show hotels of California, and strutted around the place with our chests puffed out like haughty millionaires out to buy health at \$90 a throw. Mr. Miller, the boss, who is also an artist and poet, was in Europe, and I sighed to think how much literary atmosphere he was losing. Riverside has a population of 30,000 people and several million varieties of tropical plants, which flourish regardless of expense.

Saturday night we took a Salt Lake special for Goldfield and reached that auriferous spot at midnight Sunday, being met by a committee with a barrel of beer on a truck. Sunday being a sacred day to humorists, we went to bed to get ready for the Monday doings. Goldfield dug up a wheelbarrow load of raw material, converted it into currency and blew itself. We got right in the draft and stayed there. It was grand—50 cents for an egg and a dollar for a bite off the hen. Somebody else paid the bills, and we simply wallowed in wealth. They showed us the town and everything clean down into the earth for 350 feet. Millions of dollars in gold were in sight down there, but it was fastened to the ground, and we were unable to move it. At night a grand exhibition of slugging was tendered to the "American Humorists of the World" at the Hippodrome Opera House, with intellectual stunts by the visiting humorists between scraps, and the scene begared description. Goldfield has 25,000 population and is the greatest mining camp in the world. One saloon, with gambling on the side—all sides—has been capitalized at \$100,000 and pays 35 per cent a month. The town is on the desert, and the only green spot in sight is a small dooryard which costs the owner \$100 a month to keep it green. House rent is whatever a family will pay rather than sleep in the sand. Girls get \$4 a day folding papers in a printing office. Lady stenographers pull \$50 a week, with chances to speculate in mines, and two of them have accumulated \$75,000 each. The dust is so thick that when the wind raises it they have to blow it away with dynamite. Bootblacks charge 25 cents a shine and have to pay 10 cents a shoveful to remove the dust before applying the polish.

Everything in town is wide open except the churches. It's a bully place to be when the luck is right, and everybody seems to think that the luck will come his way, if it hasn't already. Go to Goldfield. It's a warm baby! And you should see the town.

Reception in Salt Lake.

Tuesday morning at 9 we got away for Salt Lake City—at least the remnants of us did, for the party had broken up somewhat—and we struck that well known place at noon next day. We were received by the Herald and other newspaper men and moved out to Great Salt lake to take the freshness of our jokes. Salt Lake City is handsomer than Los Angeles, though very different and not half so big and busy. At night we had dinner at the beautiful Alta club and once again felt that the humorist had much to be thankful for.

Somewhere, some time, we held a meeting for business and elected Frank T. Searight of Los Angeles president and Judd Mortimer Lewis of the Houston Post secretary. There was no opposition is about all I remember, and also that the next annual meeting will be held at Houston, time not yet determined. Houston is in Texas. We will not have to carry our guns with us. There is a local supply sufficient for all needs, Secretary Lewis assures us.

CHEERED PRESIDENT

Mr. Roosevelt Gets Noisy Welcome at Vicksburg, Miss.

PEOPLE PACKED STREETS

In His Speech the President Advocated Deeper Channel in Mississippi River, to Make That Section Rich in Agriculture.

Vicksburg, Miss., Oct. 22.—After a fortnight spent in the canebreaks President Roosevelt, bronzed and vigorous, paid a flying visit to Vicksburg and made a speech. The president arrived at Delta, just across the Mississippi river. He immediately embarked, and, followed by a flotilla of yachts, made his entry into the city. The bluffs overlooking the river were lined with people, who gave the chief executive a hearty and noisy welcome.

President Roosevelt entered the forward carriage at the pier, and with Mayor B. W. Griffith and General Stephen D. Lee, headed a parade which passed through the principal streets to the national cemetery.

The president was received with enthusiastic acclaim. The streets were packed with people, who cheered the visitor at every opportunity.

The president's speech was almost wholly confined to advocating a deeper channel in the Mississippi river. He said in part:

"While I do not like to say in advance what I intend to do, I shall break my rule in this case and say that in my next message to congress I shall advocate as heartily as I know how that the congress now elected shall take the first steps to bring about that deep channel way and the attendant high and broad levee system which will make of these alluvial bottoms the richest and most populous agricultural land on the face of the globe. I think that any policy which tends to the uplifting of any portion of our people in the end distributes its benefit over the whole people. Here we have a policy whose first and direct benefit will come to the man on the plantation, the tiller of the soil.

"We are now digging the Panama canal, and it is being well done. One reason why the work is handled well is that we refuse to go into it until, after careful study, we did not make any false steps, in other words, we acted on Davy Crockett's principle: 'Be sure you're right, then go ahead.'

"I believe that ultimately we shall be able to deepen a large number of streams and waterways in the nation; but, take the big rivers first, take the Mississippi and its most prominent tributaries first."

Vardaman Dodges.

Jackson, Miss., Oct. 22.—Declaring that President Roosevelt is a cruel bear chaser, Governor Vardaman announced that he would not be in Vicksburg to welcome the president to Mississippi. He went to Memphis, so that he was not in the state at the same time as the president.

TOBACCO ATTACHED

Government Seizes Shipment Under Anti-Trust Laws.

Norfolk, Va., Oct. 22.—A shipment of leaf tobacco and cigarettes said to be valued at \$7000, from Durham, N. C., consigned to the British-American Tobacco company, of Great Britain, has been attached by the government here and is now being held by the customs authorities. The action was brought following a conference here last week between Collector of Customs Hughes, United States District Attorney L. L. Lewis and a representative from the department of justice at Washington. The business of the latter in Norfolk was declared to be in connection with an important prosecution under the Sherman anti-trust laws.

N. Y. Bank Superintendent Resigns.

Albany, N. Y., Oct. 22.—Luther W. Mott, who was recently appointed state superintendent of banks by Governor Hughes, resigned, giving ill health as his reason. It is understood that Mr. Mott had recently been looking into the banking situation in New York city and became greatly discouraged by the outlook. It is understood that in his present state of health he regarded the work involved as too arduous for him to undertake.

Son Missing Two Years.

Chicago, Oct. 22.—Falling after two years to find their lost son, Harry, in San Francisco, where they supposed he had gone, Mr. and Mrs. Louis F. Nonnast will begin at once a world wide search for the young man, now 21 years old. The young man, who had been in ill health, disappeared two years ago. "As he had talked of going to the Pacific coast the father hurried across the continent, but he could get no trace of him.

B. T. Washington's Daughter to Marry

Boston, Oct. 22.—Announcement is made that Miss Portia Marshall Washington daughter of Dr. Booker T. Washington, is to be married on the 29th inst., at Tuskegee, to W. Sidney Putnam, an architect, of Washington, D. C., a graduate of Tuskegee, in 1897.

The Weather.

Forecast for this section: Fair today and tomorrow; slightly warmer; light variable winds, becoming fresh southwest to west.



PROMINENT MEMBERS OF AMERICAN PRESS HUMORISTS.

large and growing city of southern California. Members of the general body gathered in the glorious climate—this expression is not copyrighted—of that delicious land and for six entire days revelled in all the luxury of tropical temperaments and hilarious hospitality. Then they were taken to the departing train in ambulances. A funny man knows a good thing when he sees it, and he won't let it get away until he loses consciousness. And he won't lose consciousness until everything else has gone.

Off For Los Angeles.

But I am digressing before I really get started. The point of gathering for the eastern contingent—everything is eastern to California which lies this side of the Rockies—was Chicago, and there we took the Los Angeles limited at 10 p. m. of a Thursday and settled down to a continuous performance of elegant leisure at forty miles an hour until Sunday midnight. During those days and nights more subtle humor, keen wit and brilliant jeu d'esprits were wasted than would have supported half a dozen families in comparative comfort if marketed at the current rates. But what cared the humorists? They are generous men and spend what they have the most of with a lavish tongue.

We were met somewhere up the road from Los Angeles by a committee consisting of Mr. Frank T. Searight, secretary A. P. H. and the real cause of all the trouble; Mr. Douglas White, a modest and diffident Salt Lake route man, and several prominent citizens on foot and in carriages and escorted within the walls. It was too late for the brass band boys to be out and Sunday besides, so we got in without undue demonstration. The first joke opened for inspection in that neighborhood was presented by a thoughtless visitor. While waiting for a car this person observed a sign halfway up a telegraph pole, "Cars Stop Here," and

over us. Oh, but it is grand to be a visiting humorist in southern California! Then the San Gabriel mission, older than the oldest joke the Yonkers Statesman man ever got off, and other scenes of interest, and back to the hotel, where there was a banquet at night, with Bob Burdette, the A. P. H. chaplain, presiding and letting everybody else do the talking as much as possible. And, oh, it was grander than ever to be a humorist among an appreciative throng of polite people who laughed at everything we said!

Next day we were lunched at the beautiful home of Brother and Sister Burdette in beautiful—this adjective is used advisedly—Pasadena, and we were autoed around town, and some of us got beyond the Arroyo Seco to the home of Mrs. Foy and her daughters, where more reception waited for us and joy was unconfined.

Dined in Pasadena.

In the evening the Pasadena board of trade dined us at the Hotel Maryland, but it did not wine us. Pasadena is a dry town. When a southern California town is morally and meteorologically dry, say, the desert of Sahara feels like getting wrung out and hung up for improvement. Still we did our banquet stunts and took pleasure in it, for every time we made those Pasadena people laugh it cracked their lips open till they wished sincerely that they had waited till after we came before they voted the Prohibition ticket. It was our dearest revenge.

Wednesday we hit the trail for Mount Lowe, stopping at Hollywood to visit the flowery home of Paul de Longpre, who paints flowers so naturally that he has to put nets over them to keep the bees off and has a home prettier than any of his pictures. The ascent of Mount Lowe—every humorist in the bunch remarked that Lowe was a funny name to give a high mountain—was made by sliding scale for 5,000 feet, and the other thou-

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