



"Now listen:
if
anyone
says
to you,
'How d'ja
like
the camp?'
you say
'Fine.'"

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it wants a good deplorable situation to talk about, to neighbors and outsiders, at the beach, in the club and the home, on trains. That is the nature of the American citizen. Does he go around praising Hoover's administration for being cleaner than Harding's? No. He secretly scoffs at it for being duller. The inhabitants of any commonwealth must have something infamous to talk about. If, tomorrow, corruption in the city courts and departments could be brought to an end by going down to the City Hall and filing complaints with the Mayor, not one citizen out of a thousand would budge. Those who did go down would probably complain merely that they were becoming bored. Not an end of graft, but bigger and more exciting graft is what the people want.

Warrior

IT'S probably no good trying to end wars by picturing their horrors on the

stage and in the movies. A lady we know is convinced of this. A young man who works in a garage was giving her a driving lesson on the edge of town. "Have you seen 'All Quiet on the Western Front'?" he asked her, to make conversation. She said she had. A wistful look came over his face. "It's a swell show," he said. "I'd like to get into a war like that."

Tric Trac, Clic Clac

BACKGAMMON is very generally played now, having widely invaded the home. The shopowners are selling sets by the hundreds, yea thousands, including fancy ones at prices of up to five hundred or a thousand dollars. Saks-Fifth Avenue have opened a special department, or salon, devoted to the game, with Mr. Grosvenor Nicholas in charge. Mr. Grosvenor Nicholas is the author of a book on the subject, "Modern Backgammon," a kind of Milton Work in his

field. The sale of bridge paraphernalia has been seriously affected, a situation which may bring mild ironic smiles to a few old-line players who have stuck with the game through most half a century and can remember when the rise of card-playing did backgammon in.

We have heard much debate on whether backgammon is basically a game of skill. Mr. Nicholas says it is, ranking about with contract—about as much skill required, about as little depending on luck, in the long run. One afternoon at the Racquet Club he won thirty-five games in a row, against a variety of players, so there must be much in what he says.

The Egyptians played backgammon generally and so did various peoples of history right down to a big fraction of the New York clubmen of the last century. Then came the popularity of various card games, and backgammon went into obscurity, existing for most of the present generation as markings on old checkerboards to which no at-

tention was paid. A few years ago the game showed signs of reviving. The boom stock market seems to have been largely responsible. The lately mown crop of financial wizards were wont to wager on it of an afternoon while idling around the ticker at their brokers' offices, when a thousand dollars didn't mean as much to them as it does now. Also the fact that the boards and sets are decorative, and fit in well around a living-room or porch, was a factor. Also, they say the innovation of "doubling" was important. This, according to one story, was thought of by the Grand Duke Dmitri, who lives in Paris, where backgammon is called "tric trac," and who has been playing it for years. Under the doubling practice, either player, at any stage of the game, when he thinks he has the best of it, can say "I double," and if doubled back that can go on indefinitely. Do this often enough and the stakes, under the pernicious influence of geometric progression, mount up. For instance, a couple of stubborn gentlemen, new at the game, got to doubling each other in the University Club one day, lost track of where they were at, and when they paused to make calculations found their pot had run up to one million six hundred thousand dollars. By mutual agreement they called the contest off.

Another dodge which adds gaiety to the game is called "chouette." It's from France and means that onlookers can place bets on the outcome of a match, thus putting kibitzing on a sporting basis, and dragging in a roomful of people. Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt had a horse called Chouette who won a race at Belmont last season. Mr. Charles Amory has named a colt Backgammon. Mrs. Henry A. Curtis has a giant backgammon board painted on the porch of her house at Southampton. Distinguished devotees of the game include John W. Davis, the Guernsey Currans, Mrs. Charles Sabin, Mrs. Randolph Hearst, and Edsel Ford. Shows what the situation is. Just one more thing this week: tric trac is not clic clac, which is another old French game. We won't go into that now.

End of a Friendship

WAGS, and a certain type of resourceful person, will, you know, sometimes pretend to be

phoning someone when they're really not. They hold the hook down with their finger while the receiver is at their ear. A special peril is inherent in this stunt. We hadn't thought of it until we heard what happened to a man in Roslyn the other evening. After dinner he had been earnestly importuned to stay all night. He didn't want to by any means, but he finally said he would if everything was all right at his house. So he called his home—keeping his finger on the hook. He did very well at feigning surprise and disappointment, for his host and hostess' benefit. "Well, have you called a veterinary?" he asked in a loud tone. "What, you can't get one? Well, if it's that bad I'll come home right away. I was going to stay here but—" At this point the phone rang.

Strange Fruit

JOE COOK, the comedian, has added another feature to his golf course, which we described once. At the first tee he has set out a golf-ball tree which is bearing fruit this summer. Most of the balls are still green but some have ripened into whiteness and a few have fallen off on the ground.

Foiled

MR. JAMES A. BURDEN, whose vine-clad home at Syosset, you will recall, was the residence of the Prince of Wales when he was here, had trouble in this house this summer, with sparrows. They got in the ivy and twittered, apparently by the thousands. They were especially annoying just after daybreak when people were trying hard to sleep. They got terribly on Mr. Burden's nerves and he decided to do something about it. He couldn't find

anyone in this country who knew what to do so he sent to England and hired eight professional sparrow-catchers. Professional sparrow-catchers, if you don't know, use a net to catch sparrows, trapping them at night while they sleep. The eight sparrow-catchers arrived here in due course and showed up at Syosset with vanloads of ladders, ropes, pulleys—and their net. The net was a marvellous one. They brought it over in parts and assembled it here. They spent several days doing it, clambering around on the ridgepoles of Mr. Burden's house. Finally, one evening, they announced they were ready. The household was dispatched to the city for the night. As darkness fell the sparrow-catchers lowered their net, a mammoth thing as big as a circus tent, which enclosed the entire house. The next morning Mr. Burden motored to his home to learn the result of the effort. He found that one sparrow had been caught and that one sparrow-catcher had fallen off the house and broken his arm. The sparrow-catchers have gone back to England.

Souvenirs

YOU might think that New York, with its summer tourist trade, would be the biggest souvenir market in the country, but it isn't. Niagara Falls is the biggest, Washington is second, and Gettysburg third. Then comes New York. We have this from a big souvenir man who has the facts of his business at his tongue's tip. The market in New York has been good this summer. The demand is still heavy for metal ashtrays embossed with a view of the Brooklyn Bridge, and for miniatures of the Statue of Liberty, either with a penny bank in the base or a minute electric-light globe on top. The real leader nowadays, however, is a massive "key to the city," gilded, with a thermometer set in the handle for utility's sake. Something like ten thousand people have bought one of these this summer and sent it back to the folks at home, just for a joke. The taste in pictures of pub-

