

Embarrassing the Professor

By B. BLUMBERG.

Last Sunday morning I met Mrs. Simpkins, Mrs. Kenneth Simpkins, as she was leaving church. No, I did not meet her—not exactly. I tried to pass her, whereupon the lady, so frequently described in our local press as a charming hostess, one of our leading thinkers, etc., started a sort of an ungraceful jig not unlike the steps executed by vaudevillians to the first ump-pahs of the orchestra. I confess to having witnessed similar steps gracefully executed, but Mrs. Simpkins has a double chin and recently read a paper at the Woman's Club in which the wearing of short skirts and fur-topped boots were scathingly condemned, as reported in the Palladium.

Mrs. Simpkins stopped. So did I. For the first time in my life I appreciated the feelings of the hero in the "Midnight Alarm" who is seized by the villains in the play just as he utters, "Stand aside! Let me pass!"

But no, I did not say it.

"Why, good morning, Mrs. Simpkins, I'm so sorry to have missed the lecture of Professor Dyster's Friday afternoon. I—I—"

"Oh, yes, undoubtedly," she broke in.

Mrs. Simpkins clenched her teeth. She glared and the rosy tints of her cheeks became tinged with purple.

"You, you—"

"I, I, what?"

"Yes, what have I done?" Her impersonation was better done than the jig.

"I should think you would grin."

"Mrs. Simpkins, will you kindly explain?" This in the blandest manner possible.

She continued to glare and took a deep breath.

"Do you mean to tell me that you did not engineer that affair at the club Friday? It was mean, contemptible, I call it. The very idea! It's simply maddening." Then as if soliloquizing:

"I, after weeks of urging, induce the Woman's Club to secure Professor Dyster for a lecture on 'Industrialism and Ethics'—"

"And he came here—er—in—er—no condition to speak?" I interjected with a mingled expression of horror and surprise.

"Professor Dyster delivered the most

profound lecture ever given before the Woman's Club," she went on frigidly, "and but for your suggestion it would have been voted the most brilliant affair of the season, from an intellectual standpoint."

"My dear Mrs. Simpkins, I'm still in the dark; but, inasmuch as the professor has the reputation of making his audiences feel comfortable, I fail to understand your agitation. True, you just mentioned my suggestion, but for the life of me"—here she eyed me narrowly—"why, you don't mean to say that the carrying out of your plan to have a few representative wage earners at the lecture, a suggestion to which I acquiesced, was a failure?"

"The Palladium account was rather complimentary," and here I took a copy of the Saturday issue from my pocket.

"See, here it is on the society page."

I started to read:

"EXCITING MEETING AT WOMAN'S CLUB."

"A meeting bordering on the exciting was held by the Woman's Club yesterday." Here followed the usual laudatory patter relative to the speaker. "What is the tremendous change in ethics industrialism has forced upon us? Socialists and anarchists claim industrialism is bad and will overthrow itself, but that is not so," was one of the scholar's telling remarks.

Here I was seized with a fit of coughing, which did not abate even though Mrs. Simpkins made reference to a "bad cold" in a coldly metallic voice.

"Why, there's nothing in this article," I said, or rather wheezed, "to indicate that—"

"Oh, cut—stop it. I've read it."

I tried to appear puzzled.

"Then why—"

"Then why," she mimicked, "why the excitement? The Palladium account is good, as usual." Then, as if speaking to herself again, "The way that lassie ripped that bunch!"

Then, with a sigh of resignation.

"Well, your experiment was a success. I've got to hand it—I've got to give you credit. Your proletarian friend is not mentioned as among those present, but in the four minutes she occupied the floor—well, read it."

Mrs. Simpkins handed me a copy of the Workers' Herald, which was distributed throughout the city every Sunday. Upon the first page of the Herald was the following:

"Professor and Proletarian Clash!"

"WORKING GIRL PUTS IT OVER TEACHER OF THE DISMAL SCIENCE AT WOMAN'S CLUB."

"Yesterday the Woman's Club had a program that will be remembered, and it may be added, remembered with chagrin and regret for many a day."

"The 'cultivated ladies,' as our contemporary refers to the members of the club, planned a feature calculated to give spice to the never-ending supply of chop suey which threatened an epidemic of intellectual pelagra in the uplift circle. That danger is past, for the present."

"The experiment, a novel one, yeh know, was to have a few real, live wage earners, yeh know, comment upon Professor Dyster's lecture, and the prof., in turn, was to gracefully crush representatives of the hol-polloi, Socialists preferred."

"The first part of the program moved splendidly, smoothly. The prof. was in fine fettle. As the sport writers would say, 'he had everything'—imposing appearance, well groomed, fluent, the knack of gracefully saying nothing and a master at revamping hoary generalities and platitudes."

"We will not take space to give a

review of the 'profound thinker's' address, as the Palladium termed it. We content ourselves with what must prove to be a feeble effort to explain just how the novel experiment worked out."

"After the professor had concluded, the chairman announced that all present were invited to take part in the discussion."

"The usual polite silence followed. In fact, it was more polite than usual, or at least more marked. Plainly matters were not going as per program. Faint, smug smiles were being worn by those whose parted lips and wide-open eyes had simulated attention but a little time before. They now leaned back comfortably. It was a triumph, but nevertheless a disappointment. The 'cocksure Socialists' were crushed."

"Finally a few 'nice' things were said about the speaker and his address. One lady softly inquired of the professor which picture should first be used for the benefit of the working people to help develop their taste for higher things. Another made a plea for bringing out the emotional side of the workers, and to that end suggested several poems."

"Missis Chairman," Smug looks gave way to knowing grins. The voice was husky, but in it there was confidence and almost defiance.

"Missis Chairman, this meeting is a treat to one who is a member of what the speaker termed the 'lower class.' By that term he meant those who prepare the food he consumes, the clothing he wears; those who printed and bound the books he reads, made and equipped the schools he attended."

"The professor is franker than those who orate on the dignity of labor. With them, as with all of you, he would uplift the lower class; bring light and joy into their cramped lives, 'bring out the emotional sides of their natures,' as he put it. Much of the learned professor's lecture was devoted to ethics and democracy. Comment is superfluous in view of the part this country's rulers are taking in the European slaughter."

"A professor of economics descending upon ethics—well, it strikes one as a grimly humorous indoor sport."

"At this point the ladies fidgeted. The knowing smiles and smug grins gave way to looks of silly-concealed anger. The speaker apparently was the most self-possessed person in the hall."

"There is so little of the mirthful in the workers' lives. They live in a condition aptly termed 'the Great Fear'—the fear ever haunting them of being jobless; denied the privilege of being robbed. Little time is left for contemplation of the good, the true, the beautiful."

"Millions of workers feel, though not all understand, the constant terrific economic war—the class struggle. 'How,' said she, turning to the professor, 'do you reconcile the democracy, which came in for so much praise, with the existence of the lower class so frequently spoken of this afternoon?'"

"You further assured these cultured ladies' (whereupon the ladies were undecided whether to appear pleased or angry) 'that the workers are not and cannot be interested in economics; that their emotions must be appeased to.'"

"True, they are not concerned with the economics taught in the colleges, the colleges which give unlimited attention to the works on Marxian criticism, while forgetting, apparently, that the works of Marx are easily obtained."

"His work, which the economists for the past sixty years have been 'refuting,' has been the inspiration to the workers. It has laid and continues to lay bare the sophistry of preacher and professor." At this juncture, he it said to his credit, the professor blushed.

"The potency of their emotional appeals is dying. To a growing number, they are peddlers of a slave morality, 'singing the song of those whose bread they eat.'"

"Your ideal worker is what the red-blooded, clear-headed proletarian terms

Health in Dollars and Cents

There are far too many people in this land of ours who can't grasp or understand a thing unless it is put up to them in the form of dollars and cents!

Therefore, Dr. Irving Fisher, of Yale, quietly set to work and figured out, from government statistics, that "needless sickness, death and fatigue" annually cost this country—GUESS!

Well, the enormous sum of \$1,500,000,000! (One billion and a half).

Think of it. Fifteen hundred million dollars wasted yearly just because the most of us can't or won't take a few minutes each day to fill up our lungs with fresh air, to exercise, to heed the need of moderation in eating and to THINK about the condition of our health.

Perhaps it will sink deeper if we pick out one disease. Take tuberculosis! Statistics show that the average cost of each death averages \$8,000.

Well, in 1914 there were 75,000 deaths from tuberculosis in the registration area of this country (which includes only 66 per cent of the population), so the money loss thus represented—

REACHED THE ASTONISHING SUM OF \$600,000,000.

After the Meeting

By CARL SCHLOSS.

You Comrades that I met tonight,
Whose hands I grasped, whose names
I cried,

My heart goes out with boundless love
To you, with whom I stand or fall.
You are the keepers of the fires
For which a hundred thousand died,
Who, dauntless, slough away their lives,
Shoulder to shoulder, back to wall.

Our rugged steps will be assailed
By creatures darting from the slime;
Our quivering limbs will shiver for rest
Until our ears throw back the sound.
Our bleaching bones will mark the miles
We gain upon the upward climb,
But we will fight while yet we breathe
To spread the light that we have found.

We see the future sharp and clear
That marks when we shall come to grips—
The monster opens its fiery jaws
To slay us with its flickering breath—
But we push on until the end
With iron laughter on our lips,
For we are brothers, you and I,
In weal and woe, in life and death.

a "mission stiff," that is, one suffering from moral atrophy and mental paralysis; but, of course—of course—you ladies, schooled in civility, are merely whispering approval of my words to one another."

"The chairman's gavel, tapping nervously, was head above the excited hum and buzz."

"Your time has expired," the chairman snapped.

"Pardon me," this with the sweetest possible accents, "will have expired in twenty seconds, according to my watch. Surely you are democratic and so will abide by your four-minute rule."

"The workers, in numbers ever growing, have caught a glimpse of freedom. They are learning to unite in all the prisons of wage slavery and upon the field of political action to gain that freedom. The goal reached, your arduous uplift labors cease. Instead, you will enjoy the right to do useful work."

"All of that for which you stand is doomed."

"Truly it is said 'that ours is the conscious voice of history itself.'"

"Stop us if you can."

I returned the copy of the Workers' Herald to Mrs. Simpkins. She still eyed me narrowly.

"Well," she queried with acidity, "what do you think?"

"I think the next program will probably be a subject akin to 'Fossils in Our Country,' though a symposium would be better taking as a subject 'Should Amateur Humorists Permit Their Angoras to Wander?'"

"Well, good-bye. Here comes my car," and I waved a farewell to Mrs. Simpkins, Mrs. Kenneth Simpkins.

The Conservative American

That the American mind, generally speaking, is more conservative than the English mind is one of the suggestive assertions of A. C. Benson in his recent book, "Escape and Other Essays." Benson denies that the spirit of American literature has been the spirit of democracy. "It has not," he says, "except in the case of Walt Whitman himself, shown any strong tendency to invent new forms or to ventilate new ideas. It has not broken out into crude, fresh, immature experiments. It has rather worked as the Romans did, who anxiously adopted and imitated Greek models, admiring the form but not comprehending the spirit. A revolt in literary art, such as the Romantic movement in England, has no time to concern itself with the old forms and traditions. Writers like Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Byron, Walter Scott, had far too much to say for themselves to care how the old classical schools had worked. They used the past as a quarry, not as a model. But the famous American writers have not originated new forms, or invented a different use of language; they have widened and freshened traditions, they have not thrown them overboard."