HAD AN INSPIRATION

MAN WHO INVENTS FREAK PARTIES FOUND LONG SOUGHT FOR IDEA

CAME TO HIM IN RESTAURANT

Vocation of Inventing Some New Form of Amusement for Blase Humanity Is a Profitable One.

"I've got it," exclaimed the youngster, bringing his hand down with a cautious bang upon the table.

The man opposite stared. It was one of the warmest evenings of the late unpleasantness in the weather line. The man had dragged himself into and through the stifling rooms of a French restaurant not far from Madison square. The back yard was full of small tables, grouped around a miniature fountain, says the New York Sun, where red and blue incandescent lights peered hotly through the spray. He had dropped down at one of the tables, the last empty one.

Then the youngster had come in. He man was nearer forty-four and felt like the thermometer, which was 100. Years or degrees, it seemed pretty much the same thing to the man. It irritated him to have the youngster take the seat opposite him. The seats were scarce, but that made no difference. He didn't want anybody exhaling additional heat in his neighborhood.

So they sat there in silence. The man glowered, and, when the waiter brought hot soup, relieved his feelings by damning the soup for being hot and the waiter for bringing it. The youngster absent mindedly took his portion of soup and as absent mindedly mopped the perspiration which it sent welling from every pore. Then he slapped the table softly and exclaimed:

"I've got it!"

The man stared across because that was easy. He didn't have to move to do it. He wouldn't have turned around to look at a king. Not in that weather! But if people would come opposite his eye and exclaim to themselves and slap on the table—his table—he would allow those eyes to rest on them. So he stared and the youngster saw it.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "but I had an inspiration."

"How does it make you feel?" drawled the man. "Any hotter?"

"On the contrary," laughed the youngster.

"The fires of genius don't give out heat, then?"

"Not much genius in this. Still I think a 'Three R's Party' may net me as much as a poem would. More, in fact, than one of my poems."

"A Three R's party?" repeated the man as he motioned the waiter to carry the fish far, far away. It had seen better days.

"Yes," said the youngster, absently picking a nest of fish bones out of his mouth. "You see, I'm an inventor of parties."

"Do you—do you patent them?"

"Alas, no! I wish I could. I think I'd have made a pretty good thing out of my left-handed party. I padded it all I could, but I had hard work to make 2,000 words out of it. A paltry $20 you see."

"No," said the man with a patience which surprised him; "I can't say that I do see."

"Do you mean that you would like to have me explain?"

"Well," with a feeble laugh, "I wouldn't put it so strongly as that. But if you can stand it, I can."

"Since you urge me," said the youngster, "I'll explain to you. You may have some suggestions to offer."

"Not I!" groaned the man. "A cold storage party is the only one which I wouldn't regard as the invention of the Evil One. Begging your pardon as an inventor yourself."

The youngster paused with suspended fork. Then he slapped the table again.

"Capital!" he exclaimed. "I'll elaborate that idea. Just now I'll show you what it is to be an inventor of parties. Perhaps you don't know that there are thousands and thousands of women all over this country who are getting cross-eyed trying to look both ways for what they call a new idea in entertaining. In small towns it is a mania. Especially in the West do they hunger and thirst for these freak parties. Did you ever go to a left-handed party?"

"I am happy to say I never did."

"There you are! That's the scornful New Yorker all over. Let me tell you that you don't know what childlike glee is until you go to a left-handed party. Talk about inspirations. I had one sure enough when I invented that particular form of foolishness."

The man grunted an assent to the "foolishness."

"I'll just give you a brief synopsis of the feature of a left-handed party," continues the youngster. "The moment a guest enters the door, his right hand and arm are put in a sling, and from that instant are regarded as hors du combat, so to speak. He hangs up his hat, if he does hang it up, with his left hand. You must remember, by the way, that these parties are not planned for city folk, with maids and valets galore, but for what are called in towns a small company.

"The men, and the women, too, must do their cloak room primping with their left hands. The hostess shakes her guests by the left hand. There are prizes, of course. What is a party without a prize? has superseded the question, What is home without a mother? Everybody has to write a copy of a verse of poetry with the left hand. The ladies sew a seam left-handed. The gentlemen have to make left-handed compliments about the ladies. Everybody must eat with the left hand. There is a brief programme of left-handed music. Everybody draws a left-handed picture of an animal. And so on. They tell me it is a youth renewer. You ought to try it.

The man frowned but the youngster was innocently feeding crumbs to the goldfishes in the fountain.

"That was a noble idea," he said, "and I sold it off, snap, to a magazine which purveys that type of literature. Another hot-cake idea in the party line was my 'Trip around the World.' I forgot to tell you that the invitations to the left-handed party were written with the left hand. The invitation to the tourist party announced that So-and-So was invited to join a party of friends for a trip around the world, and was asked to meet the other travelers at ———, naming the residence of the hostess.

"The host and hostess wore traveling costumes. Each guest received a small rec book, marked 'Baedeker,' and containing a list of about sixty numbers, with blanks after them. Scattered through the rooms were sixty numbered objects, representing cities and countries all over the world. The objects were products for which the different places were famous. For instance, you would have no difficulty in guessing that a cigar represented Havana."

"It would depend on the cigar," said the man, drily, with a passing shudder as he got a whiff from the youngster's literal weed.

"Naturally," said the youngster, with imperturbed complacence. "Cutlery would also mean Sheffield to a man of your intelligence; a bottle of Johann Farina would mean Cologne; a bogwood pipe would convey the idea of Ireland; a bale of cotton would mean New Orleans; if you did not guess Lyons to be the antecedent of a piece of silk brocade, your wife or daughter—" the man frowned again—"would give you the hint. Tea would be for Ceylon, a pot of baked beans for Boston, a piece of iron for Pittsburg. You see there are great possibilities.

"When the guest started on the guessing tour, the host rang a bell and called 'All aboard.' At a certain point he stopped the excursion and the guests went to a postoffice, fitted up in one corner, and got their mail. This consisted of illustrated postal cards, souvenirs from foreign places of interest. When the guessing was over, refreshments were served at a lunch counter, such as one finds in stations. The prizes for the best guessing were traveling articles. Good idea; don't you think so?"

"Well, I suppose for the people who like that sort of thing, it's the kind of a thing they like," remarked the man.

"How about your three R's party?"

"Oh, I haven't worked out the idea yet, but I think it's a good one. The invitations will announce that the school for the district will open on such and such an evening, at the residence of the hostess. There will be teachers and monitors, benches and a platform, classes in the three R's, speaking and so on. I'll have to work out the whole programme. Dear me, if I keep this thing up the people in the towns will laugh and grow young perennially. I am really a public benefactor."

"How about my cold storage party?" asked the man, somewhat sheepishly.

"I'll have to study that out right away," said the youngster, with enthusiasm. "The thing to do is to strike while the iron is hot."

"Well, it's all-fired hot now," remarked the man.

"Yes," absently, "I think I'll have to ride the trimmings for that idea out of me. You see, this sort of literature has to have heroic treatment. When I can't get any ideas out of my brain I ride on the roughest street car line in town, and that seems to jolt them out. Good-by."

He hesitated.

"It's surprising," he added, more absently than ever, "what a temperature you can stand, what fish you can eat, and what cigars you can smoke if you keep your mind pegging away at other things."

The man looked after him sharply.

"Was he bunting a little sermon my way?" he muttered.

He looked at his watch and then put it to his ear.

"Nine o'clock," he said. "I owe him a clean half hour of comparative comfort."

"Well, perhaps he is——"

He interrupted himself with a movement of disgust.

"No, sir!" he exclaimed. "Not the fish! The cigar—possibly. But the fish, never!"

THE GREAT DISMAL SWAMP.

Forest and Stream.

The Great Dismal Swamp is a region strange and interesting, weird and solitary. It occupies a billowy plain some forty miles in length by twenty-five miles in breadth along the Atlantic seaboard, extending from Suffolk, Va., in a southerly direction, well into the bounds of North Carolina.

Its deep shades, great stretches of brake and its very solitude makes it a region of interest. To the naturalist and sportsman it has much to offer. In its silent fastness the black bear finds a home admirably adapted to his protection and in every way favorable to his increase. Here amid the dense growth of underbrush and timber he may live in comparative safety. And there is perhaps no locality in the whole eastern United States of like extent which can offer a larger bear population than this great morass. The white-tailed deer is also an abundant denizen, frequenting the elevated parts.

In addition to the deer and bears, there is a big game feature of a rather unusual nature: The swamp abounds in wild cows. These are animals of a brown color and somewhat smaller than the ordinary cow, having for many years been under the peculiar conditions of the swamp, until they are almost completely specialized, are extremely wild. They are feralized from the herds of the farms adjacent to the swamp, and are the descendants of cattle which many years back wandered into the fastnesses and were lost to their owners finally becoming wild. Being no longer recognized as property, the sportsmen may call game all they may have the prowess to shoot.

Lake Drummond, some ten miles from Suffolk, Va., is the only great body of water in the swamp. It is a beautiful sheet of water, of an oval contour, and fringed with a heavy growth of timber, mostly cypress, white cedar and black gum. The water is of a dark color, owing to the decaying vegetation of the surrounding country, but it is suitable to drink, and possesses the quality of remaining pure longer than most other water. For this reason it is often carried to sea by sailors on long voyages.

The characteristic mammalian fauna is of a semi-tropical nature as regards the smaller forms, while there are many tropical plants. Of birds there are not many kinds, prothonotary, hooded and Swainson's warblers and the Maryland yellow-throat being the principal smaller forms. The trees, some of which are primeval, are large and beautiful, while there is a luxuriant growth of ferns and aquatic plants. Cane grows in profusion.

Shot at Himself.

Denver Times.

"I shot this magnificent tiger myself, in Africa."

"Tiger? Why-er-that's a lion, man."

"Damn that clerk!"