

Preacher, student and thief provided gossip in 1914

At the end of January in 1914, readers of *The Daily Telephone* found some tidbits to gossip about in the lobby of the courthouse or across the counter in downtown stores. Three items during that time caught the readers' attention for different reasons.

The Rev. L.C. Howe, pastor of the First Christian Church in Noblesville was in town to conduct a revival. He was determined to stamp out sin, and gave his hearers an earful about pitfalls and their consequences.

First of all, Howe warned the congregation about the evils of dancing. The turkey trot and the tango came in for his especial wrath. But he was also deeply concerned about "joy rides in autos and present day methods of courting in parlors with the blinds down and the lights turned low.."

How dare an Indianapolis newspaper provide its readers with actual instructions for the tango! Tuberculosis resulted from too much drinking and brought untold misery into America's homes.

Howe saved his most emphatic oratory for the subject of lust. "...but I consider lust the paramount evil of the nation. Certain phases of this evil cause 90 per cent of the cases of



LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

blindness, and statistics, which I have gathered from eminent physicians of Indiana, show that 65 per cent of the inmates of the state asylum contract the origin of their mental trouble either directly or indirectly to some form of social evil."

Well! Surely those of his congregation who nodded off to sleep, were jolted rudely awake. If they had not absorbed the significance of the 65 percent statistic, he had another one for them. "Seventy-two per cent of the children in the state feeble-minded school at Fort Wayne, can attribute their condition to various phases of lust infection."

Then, Howe climbed way out on a limb. He said that 65 percent of the women who undergo operations "have taints of the disease."

Did his startling revelations bring an even larger audience on the next night? *The Tele-*

phone did not reveal that.

At least one student at Indiana University wasn't present, or if he was, he didn't take Howe's sermon seriously enough.

The *Telephone* editor tried to be funny when he stuck a flippant headline over a front page article later in the year. It read "STUDENTS AND A CHICKEN, Plucked Out of Local Hotel Saturday Night."

A male IU student booked a room at a local hotel, telling the desk clerk that it was for his sister. She turned out to be a Bloomington girl, name unspecified in the article.

The problem was that the 18-year-old student didn't act sophisticated enough to suit the clerk, who called the police. And the truth of the matter was, the young woman wasn't a relative.

The two were marched across the square to the jail, "the girl crying and protesting, and the boy endeavoring to get the police to turn them loose." They got their wish after an hour. It is likely they got a convincing lecture.

Then there was the case of the women suspected of stealing some money from the Annabus family who lived on the west side of town. The sketchy article indicated that the

theft took place at a boarding house.

Women at that place had taken the law into their own hands before the police arrived and searched the woman, whose name was Mrs. Helen East. No money was found by the women.

Prosecutor Barclay was summoned, and he was told that she had already been searched by the women. "Did they look in her hair?" asked the prosecutor.

Concluded the *Telephone*, "The women had not, but the police did and found the missing bills. Mrs. East was lodged in jail and until midnight kept the Jones club (a sarcastic name for the jail) awake by her cries and lamentation. The women is said to be a drug fiend, and during the night a physician was called by the sheriff to relieve her sufferings."

Perhaps when she was released, she started looking for an attorney to represent her in a libel suit against the *Telephone*. "Is said to be" is not a viable defense against libel. It is not known whether the Rev. Howe touched upon drug addiction during his revival.

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