

# THESE CHARMING People

Reg. U. S. Pat. Office

No variety show of guest columnists would be complete without one of the ladies who lives by her wits and typewriter . . . Of the Washington newspaper gals, none knows her business better than Hope Miller, a blonde bombshell from Texas . . . Once a school-teacher back home, she now teaches newcomers the ropes around the capital . . . In her 10 years as society editor, author of a nationally syndicated column, and now free-lance magazine writer and assistant on a network television show, this gal really gets around! And apparently she does a lot of listening.—AUSTINE.

## HAPPY TALK

By HOPE RIDINGS MILLER

**A** LITTLE LISTENING is a dangerous thing in this talk-talk metropolis. It is if you wish to appear always alert or, at least, in your right mind. For the clattering walls of Washington are attuned to sounds that sometimes do not echo sense and an inattentive ear, plus long reliance on stock social responses, may make you appear slightly less brilliant than you are.



MRS. MILLER

Every big and little shot in our town could match the performance of the proverbial party-goer who, weary of trite chitchat, once tried a waggish experiment and proved once and for all that no matter what you say in a reception line you are apt to get the same kind of reply. Legend has it that she smiled expansively at her host and muttered: "I choked my mother-in-law to death this morning."

"How KIND of you!" he said, squeezing her palm. Then, bending toward her, he whispered intimately: "If all my guests could be as thoughtful as you!"

The *non sequitur* is a ubiquitous capital quality because the exigencies of name-and-career-chasing are tense, demanding, and of more concern than what is heard, or thought is heard, or even what is said. Generally, while preoccupied with weightier matters, any person of importance can lend a half-ear while others talk and then respond passably enough to avoid confusion and consequent merriment at his own expense. Generally, but not always.



**A**N embarrassing moment in the career of Sen. Kenneth McKellar dates to Winston Churchill's latest visit to this country. The Tennessee solon was wearily presiding over a virtually empty Senate chamber that resounded to a western senator's lengthy diatribe against England's former prime minister.

The speech ended on the plea that "Churchill should be advised by the American people to stay home and mind his own business!"

Just as the senator sat down McKellar snapped to attention, banged his gavel, and intoned: "Without objections it is so ordered!"



**O**NE foreign chatelaine who freely admits that her ears frequently deceive her in Washington is Lady Franks, wife of the British ambassador. She cites as a case in point a tea-time reunion with a friend who had just returned from India. The two greeted each other happily, and after innumerable interruptions from other guests began to chat about what had happened since they last met. As they talked Lady Franks thought she heard her friend say "I lost my twins in India."

"Oh, how terrible!" was the sympathetic response.

"Not at all. It was the most delightful experience I ever had!"



**H**UNTINGTON CAIRNS, scholarly secretary of the National Gallery of Art, after a confusing exchange with former Sen. Henry F. Ashurst, who misses fewer tricks than most, is not sure who misunderstood whom. Anyway, as Cairns recalls the episode, he joined Ashurst at a crowded buffet luncheon table and said above the surrounding hubbub:

"I met one of your close friends last month. And a sad thing happened shortly afterward. Perhaps you haven't heard: he died quite suddenly."

What Cairns understood Ashurst to reply was "Why that's the best news I've had lately!"