

# LONELY MANUEL HERRICK, "FIERCEST OF LOVERS," DEFIED RIDICULE FOR PUBLICITY'S SILVER GLARE

## Eccentric Oklahoma Congressman's Daredevil Stunts in an Airplane and His Beauty Contest That Diverted a Nation Are Only a Few of His Thrilling Escapades

### POURED SOFT NOTHINGS INTO EARS OF BEAUTIES, SENT BURNING MISSIVES

"Whenever He Got Real Fierce in His Courting, He'd Act Just as if I was Congress and Stand Up In Front of Me and Make Long Speeches," Said One Girl

WHAT would you give to be in Congress? What would you pay to get more publicity than any of your colleagues if you were in Congress—and particularly if you were serving your first term in Congress?

What would you give to be pointed out as you passed down the corridors of the Capitol—

"There goes Hoozit—of Pennsylvania, you know. What? Don't know Hoozit? Everybody knows Hoozit! Sure! Hoozit—the famous Hoozit—name's always in the papers—always getting into something. Yeah—Hoozit of Pennsylvania!"

Would you, for instance—

Be willing to acquire a reputation as the most eccentric man in public life?

Accept the disdain or good-humored toleration of your colleagues?

Take airplane flights and do stunts in the air over the Capitol for their benefit?

Conduct a beauty contest and carry on a fervid correspondence with the entrants?

Introduce bills to prohibit beauty contests, and make speeches about them?

Get mixed up in fist fights—plain, everyday fights—with parents of the beauties?

Get yourself sued for a million dollars or some other huge sum for breach of promise?

Have stage stars give out long and lurid interviews describing the ardor of your love?

Write poetry, raise corn, cuss a little in the course of congressional debate and on other appropriate occasions—to help along the publicity?

If so, shake hands with Congressman Manuel Herrick, of Oklahoma. You are kindred spirits. That is part of the price he's paid. And he still breaks into print with a regularity that astounds colleagues from Sandy Hook to Seattle, from Buffalo to Baton Rouge—but without arousing envy. They like publicity—most Congressmen. But they won't pay Herrick's price. His star outshines them all, in his own individual firmament. You hear: "Oh—Herrick's crazy! Yes—crazy—like a fox!"

"Eccentricity is not a crime in Congress. It's something of an asset to some men. There are men who wear their hair long about the ears. There are members who bring their lunch. There are millionaires and paupers and slim men and fat men, tall men, short men, bald men, men who shout, men who whisper, men who chew tobacco, men who flirt with the galleries, noisy men, gum-shoers, scholars, statesmen, demagogues—all kinds of men in Congress. But Herrick surpasses them all. For sheer eccentricity—for capacity to do things differently, and do different things—Herrick is unapproached.

"Lonely Manuel," they call him. He's proud of his title. He has few friends in Washington, either in or out of Congress. He hasn't a relative on the face of the earth—or so he says. Yet, week in and week out, Herrick breaks into print about as often—or oftener—than any man who has come to Congress in many years. His news sense never fails.

### Herrick's Giant Corn Made Him Famous

But think not that Herrick's claim to fame lies only in his capacity to conceive original "stunts" and then do them. Far from it. He was famous before he came to Congress. "Herrick's Giant Corn" did it. For Herrick is a farmer, lives in a rude one-story shack in Oklahoma when at home, raises corn and cattle on a rocky 320-acre ranch and says when he goes back this summer to fight for re-nomination and election he intends to tell his constituents what he's been doing in Washington as their "third man." Even in Oklahoma his eccentricities crop out. They're part of the Herrick makeup.

Then Herrick is one of the best storytellers in Congress. His dialect and idiom are his own. He is frequently original. He is always appropriate. His illustrations are pointed.

One day in the House of Representatives, Blanton, of Texas, the stormy petrel of that body, who has come nearer being expelled from Congress without suffering than any other member, was describing how he had driven all the Socialists out of his district. Blanton is an inveterate foe of union labor and socialism. He had told the House how Socialists had come into his district to live, how he had hounded them until they left; how Socialists and union labor organizers had sought to spread their doctrine, how he had followed them on the stump and "run them out," until not one was left.

Herrick—stooped, angular, gaunt, awkward—rose to his feet as Blanton finished. In a high-pitched voice he said:

"I've just been a-gettin' here a-tellin' to the gentleman from Texas—about the Socialists. I would like to remind the gentleman from Massachusetts that in this endeavor he ain't no different from me. He reminds me of one of his

### "He'd Roll His Eyes When His Love Grew Fierce"

Miss Anna Elizabeth Niebel, former Philadelphia high school girl, but who was with the Follies at the time Herrick conducted his beauty contest, permitted the so-called "fiercest lover" to call upon her. She listened to his ardent courting, and when the beauty-contest plot was exposed she brought suit against him for \$50,000. The suit was never pressed.

The Follies beauty in describing her experiences with Herrick said:

"Whenever he got real fierce in his love making he'd act just as if I was Congress. He'd stand up in front of me and make long speeches with gestures. He'd place his hand on his bosom and roll his eyes at the ceiling. I didn't understand what it was all about, but I knew it was just his way of being loving, and I just loved it."

"Herrick said when he married me and we went to Oklahoma I'd have to live on the ranch. We quarreled over this."

I want to say that any man that takes all that credit is taking entirely too much credit.

"I just been wonderin' if the case of the gentleman from Texas ain't parallel to the case of the 'flea' that set on the axle of the wagon. As the wagon rolled along and the wheels went around the flea looked back on 'er said: 'Oh, what a devil of a dust I'm a-raisin' in.'"

It took the House five minutes to quiet down. Blanton wasn't heard from on Socialists for several weeks.

### Tinkham Stopped One of Herrick's Fast Ones

On another occasion a Republican caucus had been called to consider Representative Tinkham's resolution rescinding the representation of the South as a punitive measure for refusal of Southern States to permit Negroes to vote. Tinkham, who struts, wears a Van Dyke and is pompous and ponderous in manner, presented his case. Then Herrick got to his feet.

"The trouble with the gentleman from Massachusetts is that he's got a hobby," said Herrick. "In that case he ain't no different from the rest of us. We've all got hobbies. But the difference between the rest of us and the gentleman from Massachusetts is that we keep our hobbies for ornaments, while the gentleman from Massachusetts insists upon and persists in ridin' his hobby on every occasion and no occasion."

"Perhaps the gentleman from Massachusetts feels that he's called on to start a crusade for the purpose of rightin' all the wrongs on the face of the earth. The effort to right all the wrongs on the face of the earth is laudable even if it is futile. I would like to remind the gentleman from Massachusetts that in this endeavor he ain't no different from me. He reminds me of one of his



Congressman Herrick in an airplane ready for one of his daredevil flights



Right—Iola Swinnerton

Margaret Gorman, one of the entrants in Herrick's Beauty Contest



"Lonely Manuel" Herrick



Miss Irma Maybury

### Who received one of Herrick's burning missives

Illustrous predecessors who lived about 500 years ago—Mister Don Quixote. This here guy Don Quixote started out to right all the wrongs on the face of the earth and ended up by gettin' into a battle with a windmill—an' gettin' the wind knocked out o' him. I hope that won't be th' fate of the gentleman from Massachusetts.

"I would like to call the gentleman's attention to the fact that President Harding has called the Sixty-seventh Congress in extraordinary session for the purpose of passing constructive legislation and not for the purpose of going on a wild-goose chase at the behest of the gentleman from Massachusetts.

### Some Inside Stuff on Disfranchisement

"The gentleman seems to be considerably wrought up over the question of disfranchisement. I, myself, used to think that disfranchisement was something awful, but since I began for to look into the question a little, I began to view the matter in a different light. I began to realize that it was saved from being ruled by a conglomeration of Negroes, Chinese and Japanese, while a certain amount of disfranchisement was necessary for the gentleman's idea to prevail, would set a precedence for turning all the West Coast States over to the Chinese and Japanese in the near future, for the natural increase of the Japanese now in California will be in complete control of the entire State Government in forty years' time—even if not another single 'Jap' is admitted, unless some sort of disfranchisement is practiced to prevent it, for it's an unfortunate fact that the average American white family ceases to raise children just as soon as they get a little bit well to do, and if they want any pets about the house they get them a pugdog, while the Chinese and Japanese live upon a pound of rice a day and raise a family of thirteen voters."

"The gentleman from Massachusetts and his proposer of disfranchisement of the Southern States were bowled over by the storm of laughter and applause that interrupted and followed Herrick's speech. Tinkham hasn't been heard since on that subject.

Since Herrick's "beauty contest," which brought him national notoriety, he "hangs out" part of his spare time in police headquarters in the House Office Building. There he finds congenial company. He appealed to the Capitol police originally for protection from beauty contestants and fraternal parents. When the necessity for protection passed he got into the habit of dropping in occasionally to talk to the force.

It all started when Herrick introduced a bill in the House to prohibit beauty contests. He was against them. He thought them inimical to the morals of young women who entered. He had heard stories of young women who, through the publicity received in such contests, had been flattered, lured from home and deceived by designing individuals seeking to capture and capitalize their beauty.

"Owing to my high position, it is necessary that this contest be carried

on secretly in order not to bring notoriety or ridicule upon my high position by my political enemies.

### Eulogy and Love In This Missive

Invitations to confer with the Congressman were accepted by eight of the Washington girls who received the letter, a combination eulogy of the writer and a love missive.

"Do you wish to enter a prize contest, the contest for the greatest prize on earth that any woman could ever win—the contest for the whole heart and whole soul, love and hand in marriage of one of the fifteen men who are now living on earth who can look God and all humanity square in the eye and say: 'Against my body there rests no mortal stain, for I have kept my soul free of all mortal stain in order that I may look my virgin bride in the eye without guilt and shame in my heart.'"

"The girl who is the winner in this contest will have the love of a man whose love will be so great that if that was the one and only price that would purchase your soul salvation he would ransom your soul out of hell with the price of his own. This man holds one of the highest offices in the Nation and will at a time not to exceed eight years hold the office."

"You quite naturally want to know something about the man who invites you to enter the contest for his love, so here is a description: Age, thirty-four; height, six feet; weight, 184 pounds; chestnut brown hair, brown eyes, as far as masculine beauty, taking 100 as perfection, would grade about as follows: Face, 80 per cent, body, 98 per cent."

### Fought Way to Wealth Then He Wanted Love

"And now a few words in closing: I am the last scion of a noble family. I lost their political power during the overrunning of Europe by Napoleon the First and whose family has become extinct except myself. Left practically an orphan in infancy, I faced a cold and cruel world penniless and alone, after overcoming superhuman obstacles, have fought my way to wealth and power and am now seeking a bride worthy of my love."

"No young lady should hesitate to enter this contest because she may think herself too young to become a wife, for if any such should enter the contest and be the winner, the marriage would be cheerfully deferred until she should have attained sufficient age, and any young lady to whom this invitation may come, whether the same is sent you by mail or is brought to you by my personal ambassador, will please address the same with your name and address and the notation 'accepted' or 'rejected and returned,' in order that the process of selecting a winner may proceed."

"Immediately upon the acceptance by any young lady of this invitation to enter this contest a meeting between myself and the young lady will be arranged by my ambassador."

"At the end of the letter is the following questionnaire, designed to enter this contest a meeting between myself and the young lady will be arranged by my ambassador."

"What is your age?" "What is your religion?" "What is your nationality?" "Would you be willing to live outside of Washington if political reverses should ever come?"

"Two of these letters which Herrick now refers to as "decoys" were turned over to the postal authorities. A question was raised and the man in whose name the decoys were kept was

attacked by relatives of young women to whom he wrote and suffered other unpleasant experiences.

Herrick talks invariably in a loud, high-pitched, sing-song voice. When he becomes interested in a conversation the pilot under instructions to "give her everything there is," Herrick styled himself the "aerial daredevil of Congress." He announced in advance he would circle the Capitol, to indicate the "falling leaf" of the Zimmerman turn and all the rest of the tricks in the airman's repertoire. But the War Department said the "falling leaf" was not to be used and that he could only be taken aloft for a short time, without any of the death-defying antics he anticipated and announced in advance he would perform.

Up he went, but he wasn't satisfied. The flight was too tame. Manuel was peeved, perturbed and petulant. He let the world and army officers at Bolling Field know it. Also the galleries.

"Somebody has tried to throw a monkey-wrench in my plans," he said. "I probably came from downtown Philadelphia, but I'm going up if I have to get a wheelbarrow."

Manuel then took his "aerial" flight off to Bolling Field a second time, with the avowed purpose of doing something not at all in keeping with the chilling atmosphere up above if he didn't get a ride in the "stunt" plane and a chance to make good on his announcement.

And he got his "aerial daredevil" flight with all the thrills known to the aviation world. Lieutenant L. J. Mayland, one of the army's most expert fliers, took him up in an American-made British experimental machine. They soared for forty-five minutes.

Manuel was treated to a loop-the-loop, tail spin, falling leaf and every other stunt possible.

But the edge was taken off Manuel's joy because the House had adjourned, and the members were at their way home before he began to get up over the dome.

### He Was "Fierce in Love Making," Says Follies Girl

Anna Elizabeth Niebel, former high school girl here, but who blossomed then in Ziegfeld's Follies, "permitted" Herrick to call on her, listened—as she said afterward—to his ardent courting, and when the beauty-contest plot was exposed threatened to sue him for amounts ranging from \$50,000 to \$1,000,000. She finally brought suit for \$25,000. It was later dropped—or at least never pressed.

The Follies beauty described her experience with Herrick thusly:

"Whenever he got real fierce in his love-making he'd act just as if I was Congress. He'd stand up in front of me and make long speeches with gestures. He'd place his hand on his bosom and roll his eyes at the ceiling. I didn't understand what it was all about, but I knew it was just his way of being loving, and I just loved it."

"For hours at a time he'd sit and read to me all the bills he introduced in Congress and it was simply thrilling."

"He told me that some day he was going to be President of the United States. He'd say: 'Well, kid, some day I'll have the highest office in the land.' He always called me 'Kid.'"

"He said that when he married me and we went to Oklahoma I'd have to live on the ranch. We quarreled over this."

"The Western Congressman was very much hurt and shocked when he learned of my stage career. He told me and down he didn't approve of the stage, and was sorry I had been on it. He inquired whether my mother had always accompanied me, and when I told him yes, he said he was glad."

"He spoke of a snake and a bird. 'The snake,' he said, 'is the stage, and the bird lovers around me. I'm glad you haven't been stung. You are very young, kid, but if you are satisfied with me, I'm her prize, with all that belongs to me. That is it.'"

"When the future arose by his beauty contest was at its height, Herrick was waylaid and beset at his office, threatened with violence, was

### Throws Down Gauntlet to Capital Aviator

Herrick next threw down the gauntlet to Herbert J. Fahey, Washington aviator, and issued a challenge to "milk and water flying" when the latter flew in a rebuilt training plane of a Board of Trade and bank at Chesapeake Beach, Md. This was quite recently.

"The World's Greatest Aerial Stunt Flying Congressman" advised Fahey that if the latter would make arrangements with the War Department to obtain a plane, he would accept Fahey's challenge to make him "lose more than his necktie."

"Fahey had advised the Oklahoma 'daredevil' that if he could obtain a regular army plane "it would be capable of the performance of such aerial stunts as I would like to put you through."

"I shall not make any more requests of the War Department, because I am sore at the War Department for issuing an order that I must not do any more stunt flying over the Capitol for fear that I might fall upon the skylight and fracture a plane or two, and thus put some slivers of glass some sleepy Senator's or Congressman's nose," Herrick advised Washington flier in a letter.