The Unemployed
By W. E. Hill

The hot dilettante. Edgar’s pops has so much money that in the average monthly the sum means about as much as something in the fourth dimension. So, naturally, Edgar doesn’t have to tie up with any steady employment. Spends most of his time at Harvard, one at Oxford, and one on the left bank of the Seine, where he gets into the free verse habit. Edgar is proud of his poem beginning: “The field winds’foot over the corpse of the suicide.” It was thought pretty hot on the left back. Back home in Bexley one reading of it brought on his mother’s neuritis.

“If she came into my kitchen once, she came into it twenty times a day, peaking into the ice box, and asking where the white meat had gone, till she fairly turned my stomach, the sweary thing.” Mrs. Hilda Feeney is giving Miss Jewel Meehan the lowdown on her last place. Miss Meehan, Mrs. Feeney, and Mrs. Maye Heeney are very airy arrant, and their present lack of employment is due wholly to sensitive natures. They are trying their wares in an intelligence of fox, so called because in it a housewife has to summon every ounce of intelligence at her command in order to convince an apathetic cook that she wants to come and work in said housewife’s kitchen. This is a difficult job, because a cook out of work is happier than any other member of the great unemployed.

The night club hostess. Miss La Vere, popular night club hostess, is a member of the great unemployed due to pressure from without. It’s this way: First one political faction will make a drive for the house dry vote by shutting down on a night club. Fine. Then the rival party will make a big grand stand play for the dry vote by picketing nothing. Fine again. And Miss La Vere being almost more of a celebrity than even President Coolidge or Marie of Roumania, they usually know where to find her, which is pretty hard on the girl. No sooner does she open the Cab Cab club than they padlock her. Then the same thing happens to the Cab Cab club, and so on. O, it’s a sad, sad world.

The hotel lobby mannequin. Mrs. Toy sold the old house and now lives in a big apartment hotel, with no housekeeping to worry about and nothing to do but brood over her daughter-in-law’s not writing as often as she should and other grievances. Does a lot of complaining about the management and about the restaurant, the maid and elevator service, besides devilling the life out of her hired companion.

The grass widow. Hattie has her divorce, and now she’s one of what less polite circles than Hattie’s call the matrimonially unemployed. Every morning Hattie goes to the beauty parlor and trims out the astringents, the puffy eye patches and the lifting massage. There’s always a chance that she may come out looking, if not sweet sixteen, a nice, ripe thirty-six, which is a small age for a girl who knows her whereabouts. Hattie is a great movie fan, favoring those pictures which feature Ramon Novarro and Gary Cooper.

Otis Eastlake and the little wife have joined the happily unemployed. Every bright boy gets a break some time or other, and when Otis, through a friend or two in the legislature, got the state road contracts, he sat down and thought hard. After considering and measuring and dividing by two (by three, in some cases), Otis discovered that by using a mixture of cheap grade molasses and wood ashes, instead of tar and gravel or what usually goes into a state road, prices could be cut to a minimum, leaving a nice big residue for the Eastlake next egg. So now Otis and the little woman have a box at the opera and Mrs. Eastlake is learning to say “Didn’t she do something terrible tonight?” with the rest of the highbrows.

The beneficiary. Addie, being a product of the naive decade, was brought up just to be a perfect lady, and it was thought of an opportunity to an emergencies at that remote period. When the estate was settled it was found that Addie’s knowledge of dividends and refunding 7 percenters was faulty, and that she very often confuses a handful of railway coupons with the kind she had been saving for a pensioner. So now a trust company with very gentlemanly employee sees to Addie’s affairs, and everything is lovely.