

Wild Oats

By W. E. Hill



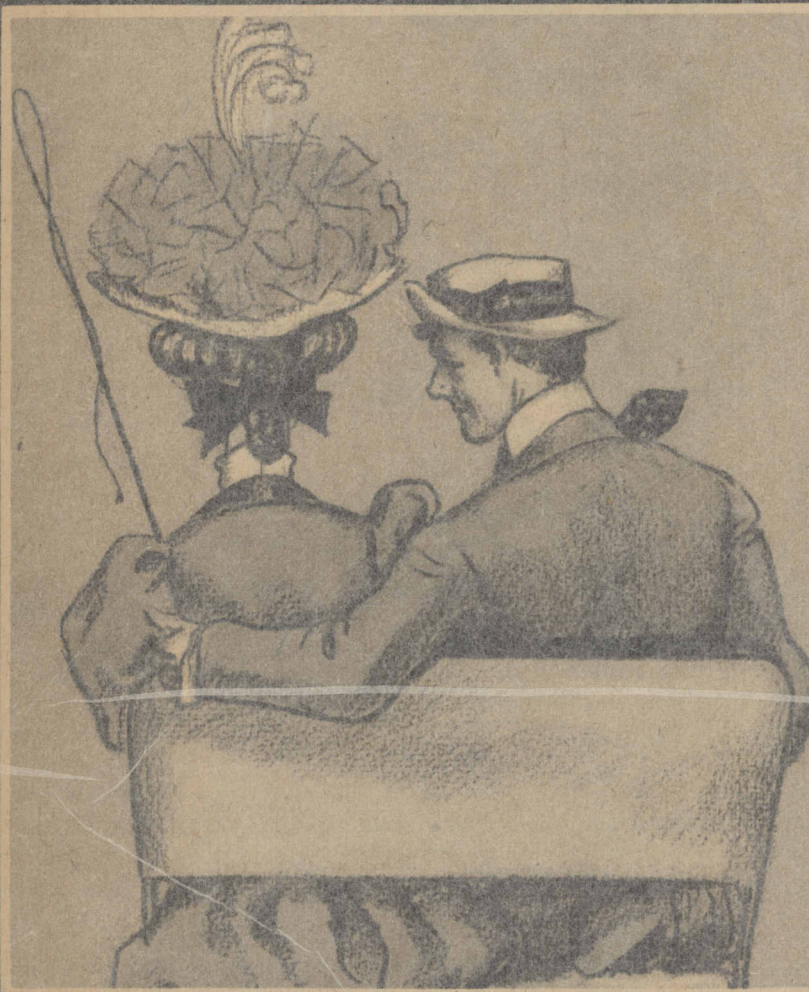
The little widow's late crop of wild oats, while not the wildest, is the most expensive in the long run. Dancing partners de luxe come high these days.



Collegiate wild oats were pretty wild in the good old days of 1906, just twenty years ago. "Tug" and "Bud," the Kollege Kut freshmen, are going back to their Alma Mater after a football game, and there being no upper classmen around to dampen their revelry, they are doing their best to paint the train red. At each station they get out on the platform and give a long yell for the team. Later on they are planning to initiate the brakeman and the conductor into the Eater Sweetener Pie society with appropriate hazing. Ask dad, he'll know!



Some boys like to press agent their wild oats far and wide. And very often they get wilder in the telling. Listen to Fred. "Boy," he's saying, "I was with a tough bunch last night. Any one of them would have killed a man for a nickel. And, say, maybe the liquor didn't flow!"



Boys would be boys, and girls would be girls twenty years ago just as they will today. And the petting party on the public highway wasn't so very different from the modern stuff when you come right down to brass tacks. The horse-drawn buckboard hadn't the speed of the 1926 roadster perhaps, but the cosmic urge was the same.



It's the boy who never sowed any wild oats who has to be watched. Many's the sleepless night his wife has to face, wondering when and how he'll break loose.



Sowing wild oats in college comes naturally to some boys. Take young Joe. He can get away with anything short of murder just because he seems to be the type that goes with flaming youth. People look at him and say, "Oh, he's just sowing his wild oats. It'll do the boy good." Take Hollis, on the other hand. He may have all the feelings of a wild guy, but he isn't the type. One look at Hollis' face and you think of Phi Beta Kappa, the Y. M. C. A. drive and subscriptions to the Literary Monthly. If Hollis is seen loafing over a maple nut sundae, even, people cry, "For shame, you should be studying for the biology exam!" There isn't a chance in the world for Hollis to be wild.



Pansy, the simple country maid, has come to town for the winter. She's waiting on table at the Commercial house and, oh, the hearts of the traveling salesmen that are set palpitating by Pansy's winsomeness. It's this way, Pansy's folks live on a farm, way out from nowhere, so to speak. Even the hired man is over eighty and never heard of the Charleston except in geography. It was very hard for Pansy, who likes to step out now and then with a beau.



One little oat once in a while will do for some boys. Take Claypool for example. Every so often he will patronize a quick lunch and my, oh, my, won't he be a devil with the waitress, looking roguish at her (which is a terribly hard thing for a homely man to get away with), and giggling at her till the poor girl doesn't know a baked apple from an order of split pea soup. Then Claypool will plunk down a nickel tip with a sly wink and say, "Give that to your old man!" No wonder the waitress, who is very conventional, is, to use her own words, "all over perspiration from embarrassment!" (Copyright: 1926: By The Chicago Tribune)