

# THE TWENTIES IN NEW YORKER CARTOONS

Created in 1925 to offer an urbane alternative to *Life*, *Judge*, and similar weeklies, the *New Yorker* soon came to epitomize modern sophisticated commentary on the times. Its essays, reviews, and fiction set a new standard for periodical offerings, and its cartoons became a phenomenon in themselves. Providing guidelines for cartoon submissions, editor Harold Ross wrote: “Generally speaking, ideas should be satirical without being bitter or personal; our secondary need being for ideas that are unusual, extravagant, or ‘nutty.’ Situations should be plausible. Ideas should be literal and show how, unconsciously by their speech and acts, individuals of every New York type show up their hypocrisies [sic], insincerities, false fads, and absurd characteristics.” By 1928, writes one of the magazine’s biographers, “the *New Yorker* cartoon was on its way to becoming a singular American art form.”\*

In this collection are thirteen *New Yorker* cartoons from 1925 through 1929 that encapsulate the magazine’s take on the “the Age.” Among the topics are the modern woman, the city, the automobile, radio, Prohibition, the Klan, the Scopes trial, consumerism, stock speculation, and the event that dramatically ended “the age”—the stock market crash of October 1929.

- ❑ What constitutes the unique humor and graphic style of “the *New Yorker* cartoon”?
- ❑ How did the cartoons reflect and satirize prevalent issues and attitudes of the Twenties?
- ❑ How did they reflect Ross’s cartoon guidelines?
- ❑ How did they offer to modern readers a form of witty self-examination?
- ❑ How did they function as a mirror of the Twenties as well as a mirror on the Twenties?
- ❑ Select one cartoon and explain it. What aspects of the drawing and caption funnel the point to the reader? What makes the cartoon *funny*?



“We’re really awfully cynical, I guess.”  
 “We can’t help it, dear—it’s the Age.”

1927



“Pretty—*isn’t it?*”

1925



Cartoonist: Nate Collier  
Reproduced by permission of the *New Yorker*.

*The New Yorker*, March 14, 1925



Cartoonist: Frank Hanley  
Reproduced by permission of the *New Yorker*.

*The New Yorker*, March 28, 1925



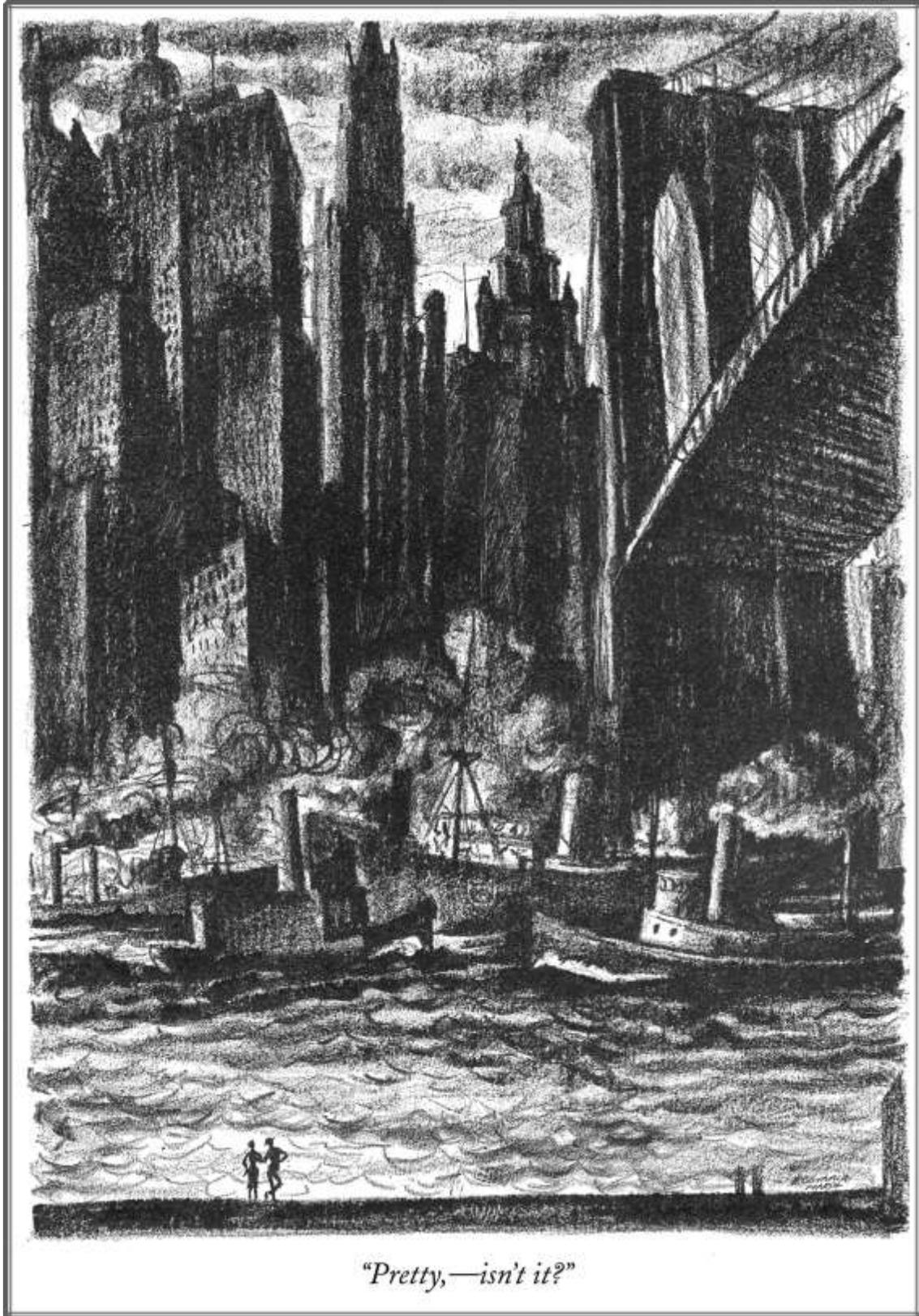
Cartoonist: Frank Hanley  
 Reproduced by permission of the New Yorker.

The New Yorker, May 30, 1925



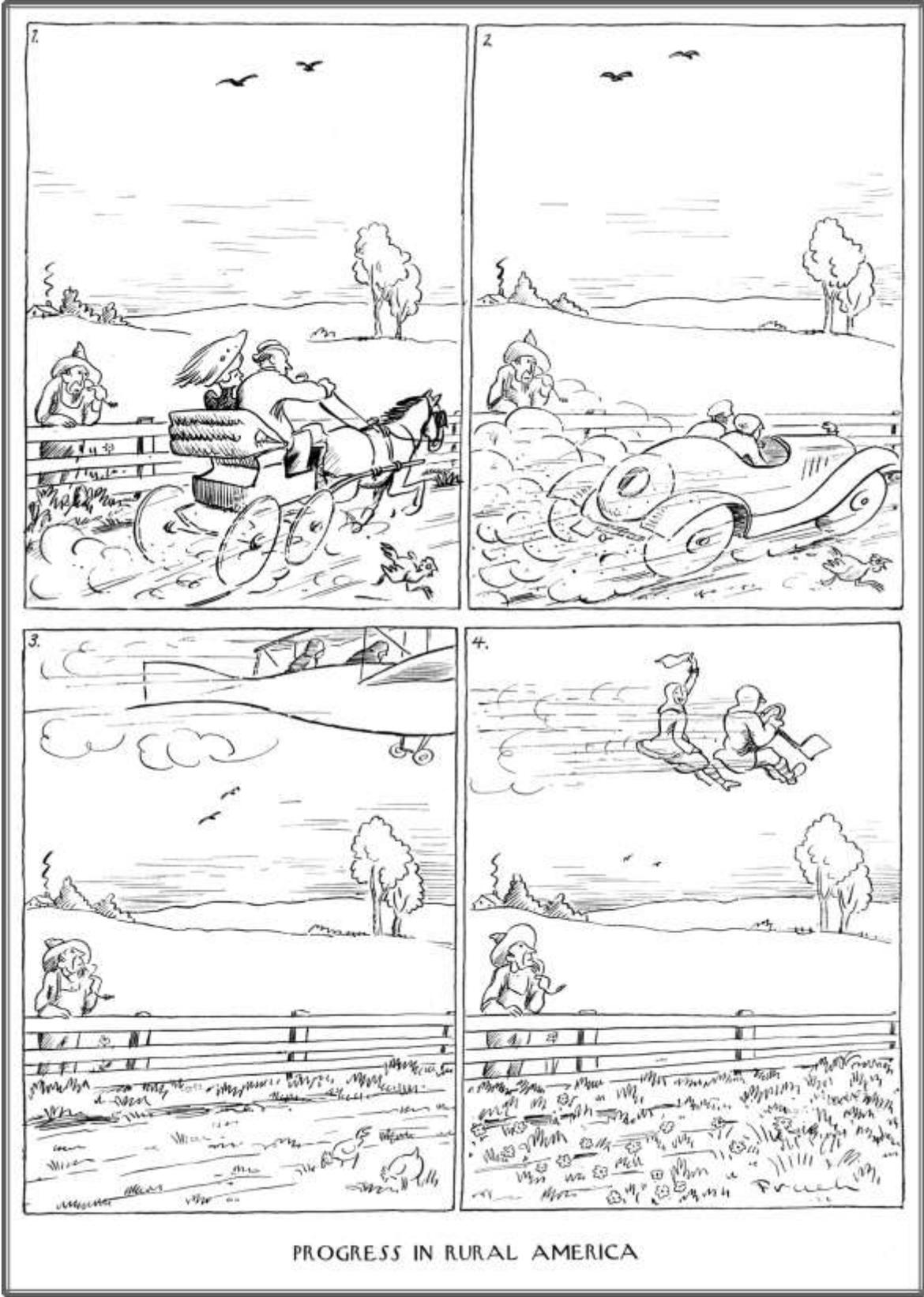
Cartoonist: Al Frueh  
 Reproduced by permission of the New Yorker.

The New Yorker, July 25, 1925



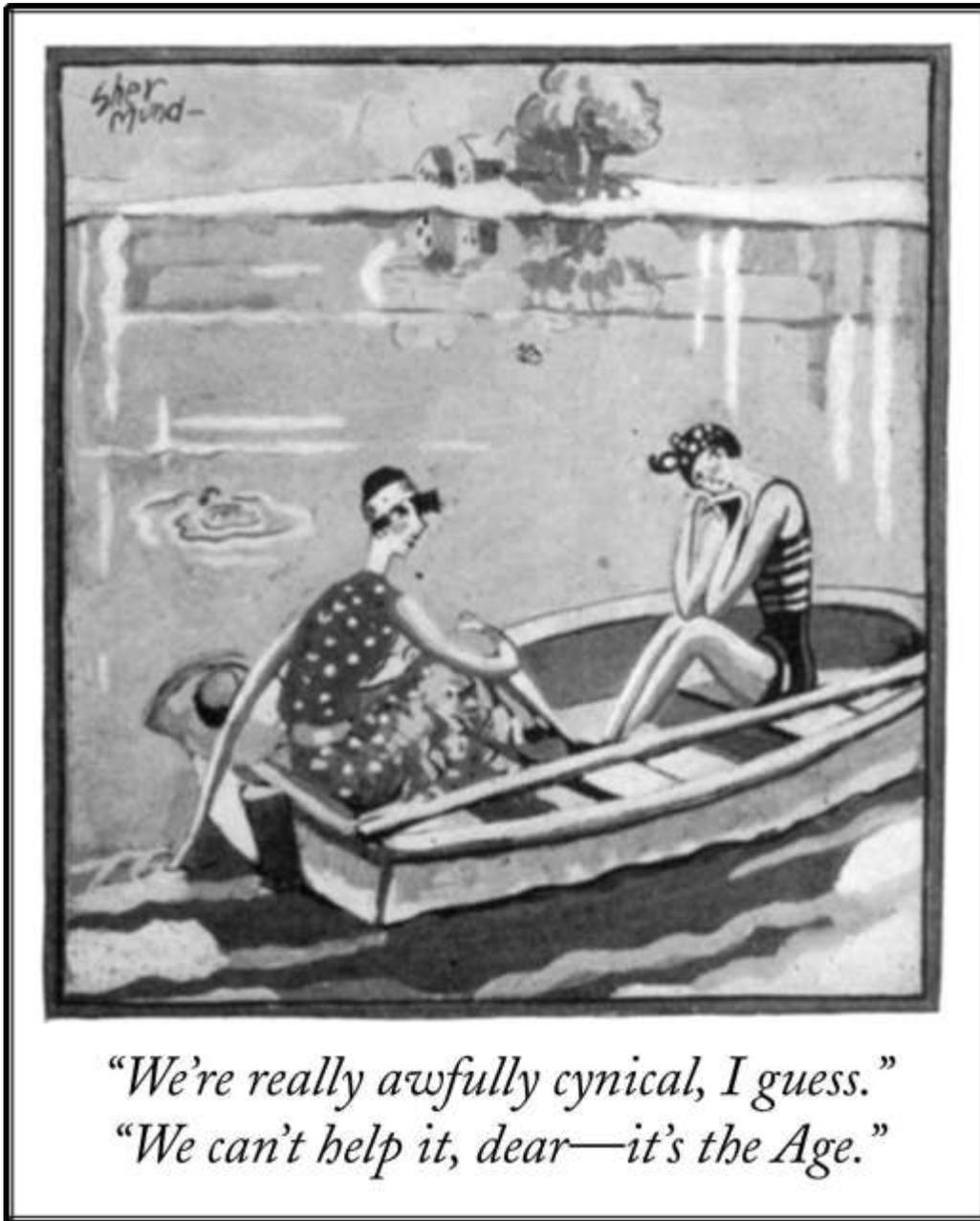
Cartoonist: Reginald Marsh  
Reproduced by permission of the *New Yorker*.

*The New Yorker*, September 19, 1925



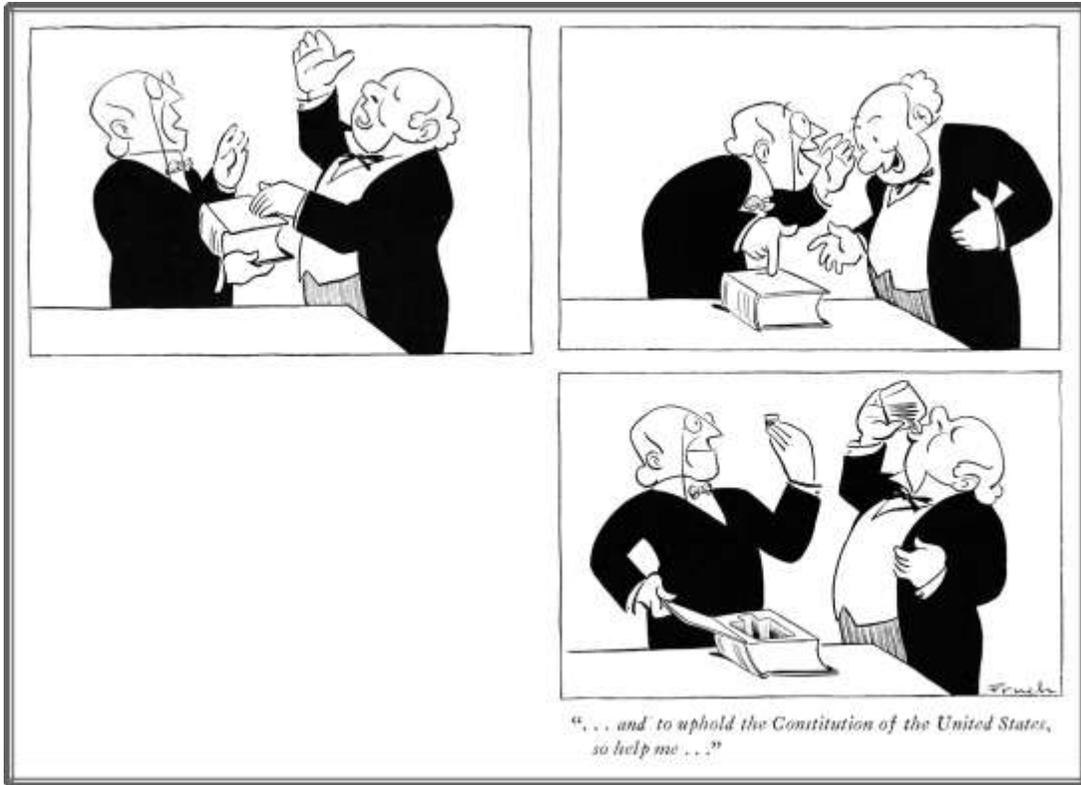
Cartoonist: Al Frueh  
 Reproduced by permission of the New Yorker.

The New Yorker, June 18, 1927



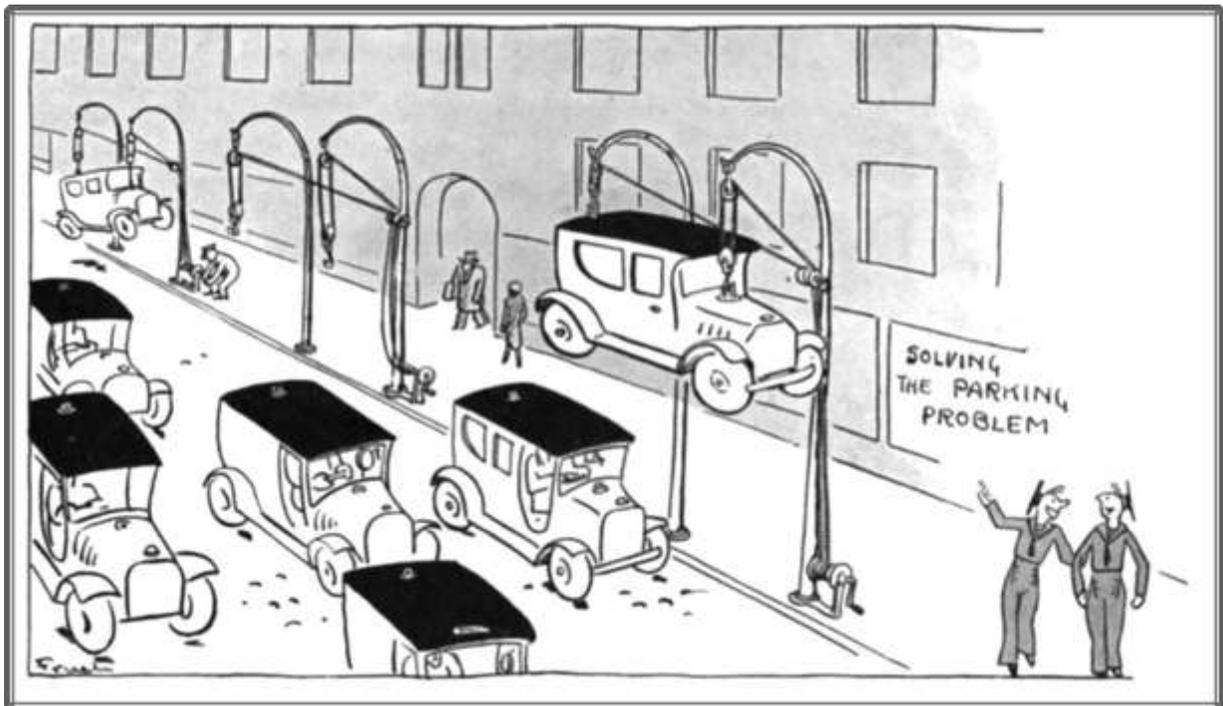
Cartoonist: Barbara Shermund  
Reproduced by permission of the *New Yorker*.

*The New Yorker*, August 27, 1927



Cartoonist: Al Frueh  
 Reproduced by permission of the New Yorker.

*The New Yorker*, April 13, 1929



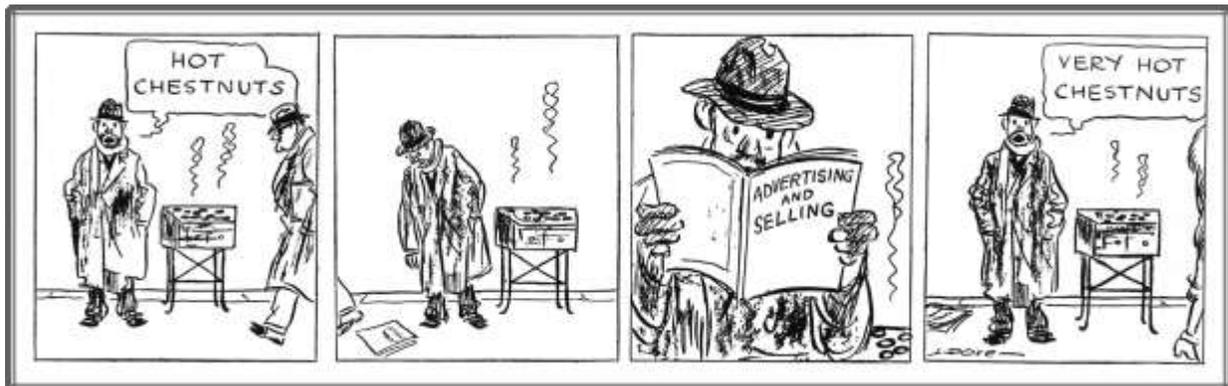
Cartoonist: Al Frueh  
 Reproduced by permission of the New Yorker.

*The New Yorker*, May 8, 1926



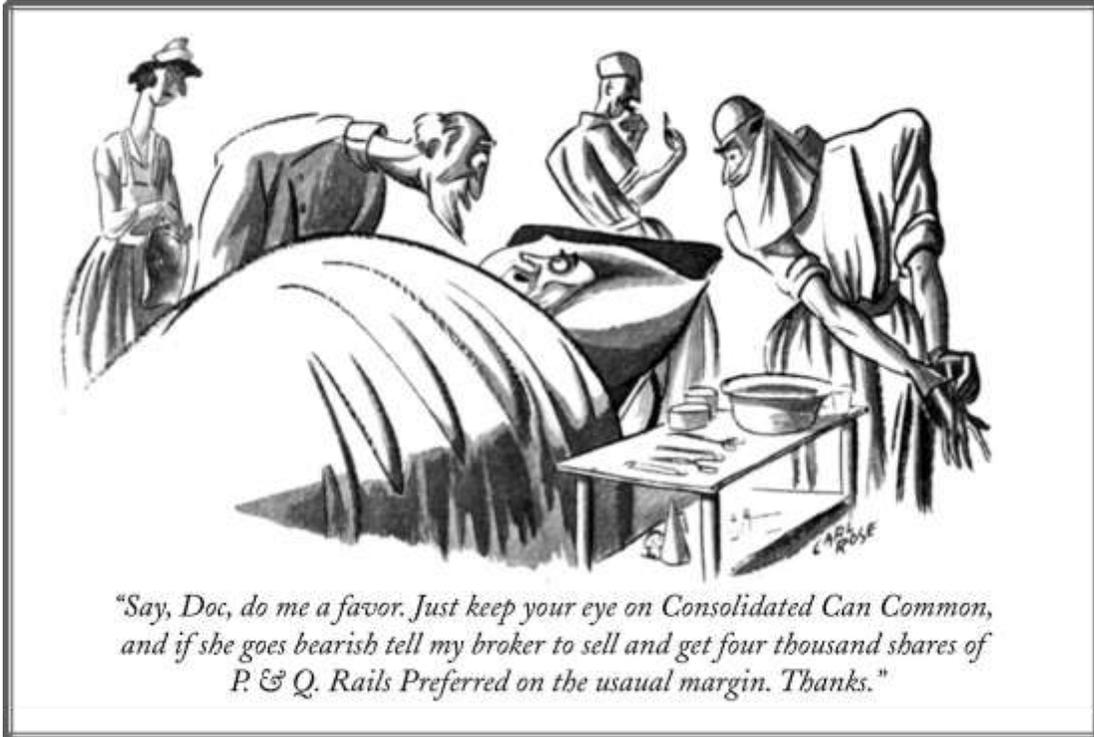
Cartoonist: Edward Graham  
 Reproduced by permission of the New Yorker.

The New Yorker, October 29, 1927



Cartoonist: Leonard Dove  
 Reproduced by permission of the New Yorker.

The New Yorker, October 26, 1929



Cartoonist: Carl Rose  
 Reproduced by permission of the New Yorker.

The New Yorker, September 9, 1927



Cartoonist: I. Klein  
 Reproduced by permission of the New Yorker.

The New Yorker, December 14, 1929