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PARIS (Tex.) NEWS

AUG 23 1935

## New York Day by Day

90 BY O. O. McINTYRE

NEW YORK, Aug. 22—I like to think of Will Rogers as flying on. Certainly no material crack-up should halt that blithe spirit. Freed of the cloddish body, he must be ascending new heights, scaling new peaks. This I firmly believe. Consciousness after death is not



a mere "something to be hoped for" with me but a conviction—as certain and fixed as the scatter of stars at night.

If Will Rogers were not one of the most talented men of his time, he should have achieved greatness for this simple statement in a world swollen and angrily red with hate: "I never met a man I did not like."

Trite, yes.—But all truths are

O. O. McIntyre trite. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor" is trite.

I have known Rogers for 20 years, intimately for 10. We met when I was a brash and fresh-every-hour press agent for Flo Ziegfeld and he was the rope twirling, gum chewing comedian star of the Frolic Roof. He called Ziegfeld "Mister Zeeg-field" then as he did to Ziegfeld's last lingering days when he looked out for him and later for the interests of his widow and daughter.

Some years later Rogers and I rode herd in the same syndicate outfit. We saw each other usually when he came to town or exchanged telephonic insults. I loved and admired him as I have few men. We have bunked at political conventions and sat on the dais together at many stupid banquets in the days when such things were not the terrific bore to me they are today.

I have visited at his many aced ranch in Beverly and seen the tenderness and devotion that he expressed for his wife, two sons and the especial apple of his eye, his daughter Mary. I never knew him, nor has anyone else, to do a mean or petty thing. His honesty was as natural as the pine springing to the sun.

Such rugged forthright men, just as Lincoln did, come but once to a generation.

Rogers' charm was largely in that quality I should call unpredictable. Few men did things as he did. There was a time walking on the street with him in Kansas City that he turned suddenly into a rather second-rate clothing store.

"Want a brown suit," he blurted to the surprised clerk, who of course, recognized him. He tried out three, decided on the third and transferred his pocket possessions. He could get more mileage out of a necktie than anyone I have ever known. He simply put one on and wore it out.

So I suggested a new tie. He riffled through a dozen or so on a rack, nervously snatched one of the modest designs and, tossing the discarded one to the young clerk, grinned: "Take that home to your ma. It's better than a soup bone."

I have seen Rogers in tears, too, because one of the smart alec professional hooters in New York had written something that hurt him something unfair, savage and without justification. Yet there was no rancor, no stinging invective of which he could be the master. He had spent years in the hurly-burly of the ranch house.

But he simply read it, choked up, recovered and talked of something else more pleasant. He came to my apartment often with Irvin Cobb and Amon Carter, of Texas, and they formed an unbeatable trio in yarning and riposte.

Cobb and Carter lounging back in easy chairs and Rogers walking up and down, twisting, turning, jiggling things on the desk, peeking into the kitchen, tearing up match flaps—always like a fighter on edge. He never seemed fatigued; a day at the studio or a night of rehearsal, nothing slowed him up. In fact I remember his wife Betty saying one day: "I have never heard Will say he was tired."

And when one thinks of the amount of work he did, the things he accomplished, the incessant furious pace he set, one wonders how he spanned more than a half century in top physical form.

I saw him last February 2 of this year at a small dinner party at the Will Hayes in the Waldorf. Betty was there. The Joseph P. Kennedys and my wife and I. He was as always in fine conversational form, hesitating and darting about like a wren in a hedge-row. Suddenly he jumped up, glanced at his wrist watch and said he must be off. He was to speak at a dinner, as I recall, of real estate men. He slouched out, turned in the doorway in that head-tucked-under-the-wing manner of his and called "So long, folks!" I did not know of course, that I was never to see him again in this world.

We drove Mrs. Rogers around the park before delivering her to her hotel. The talk, as always, was about Will. She and Mary were going on a winter cruise in the Mediterranean. Before she left in a few weeks, she was to go to Chicago and Will was to fly from Beverly for a week-end and to say goodbye. "It will be a sort of brief honeymoon," she said tremulously. Their love was great and splendid as any I have ever seen.

So they are burying Will Rogers today—that is his bruised and battered body that was only his shell. His brave spirit goes winging on!