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Fun With Elsa

WHEN we heard that Elsa Maxwell was going to be in town to deliver a lecture on "The Science of Laughter," wild horses couldn't have kept us away. Anyone in the audience who hasn't heard of Elsa Maxwell? For shame!

Elsa is to modern cafe society what the court jester was in the days of old. Elsa is a stout, 57-year-old philosopher of fun. Elsa is the jolly leader of society's entertainments. Why, cafe society would as soon shrink from a camera as to have a party directed by anyone other than Elsa.

Elsa is mirth; Elsa is gaiety; Elsa is unrestrained merriment. We were laughing even before we got to the Shoreham Hotel where Elsa was scheduled to convulse us all.

Elsa wasn't long in getting to the fun. Announcing a prize of a Chinese humidor for the best retort of the evening, she asked the question: "If you had a chance to be a president, general, dictator, musician, or artist, which would you be, and why?"

The winner—this will slay you—retorted: "President Roosevelt, so that I'd know whether or not he's running for a third term."

The hilarity had scarcely died down before Elsa was asking: "If you could have witnessed anything that ever occurred, what would you have preferred to see?"

Cried one of the listeners: "Noah's Ark—so's I could get hold of the first two mosquitoes."

While ushers raced about helping people who were rolling in the aisles, the winner's answer was heard above the hubbub: "Adam—when Eve gave him the apple."

Fun With Elsa



Elsa Is Mirth, Gaiety and Merriment

There was no letdown from the swift pace. Asked why she had never married, Elsa said, "No one ever proposed." Asked the formula for enjoyment of life she suggested that everyone "adopt a mental banana peel and slip on it—mentally—once in a while."

We stole out at this point and no one saw us go. They were all screaming delightedly at the woman prize-winner who squealed that if she had to be an animal she'd rather be a skunk, "because then society would respect me."

As for us, we went home—slipping on mental banana peels all the way, glad that Elsa had given us the key to happiness, glad that we had found out how society amuses itself—so glad that we laughed and laughed into the brisk, night air. And we barely noticed at the time that the echo of the laughter had a slightly hollow ring.