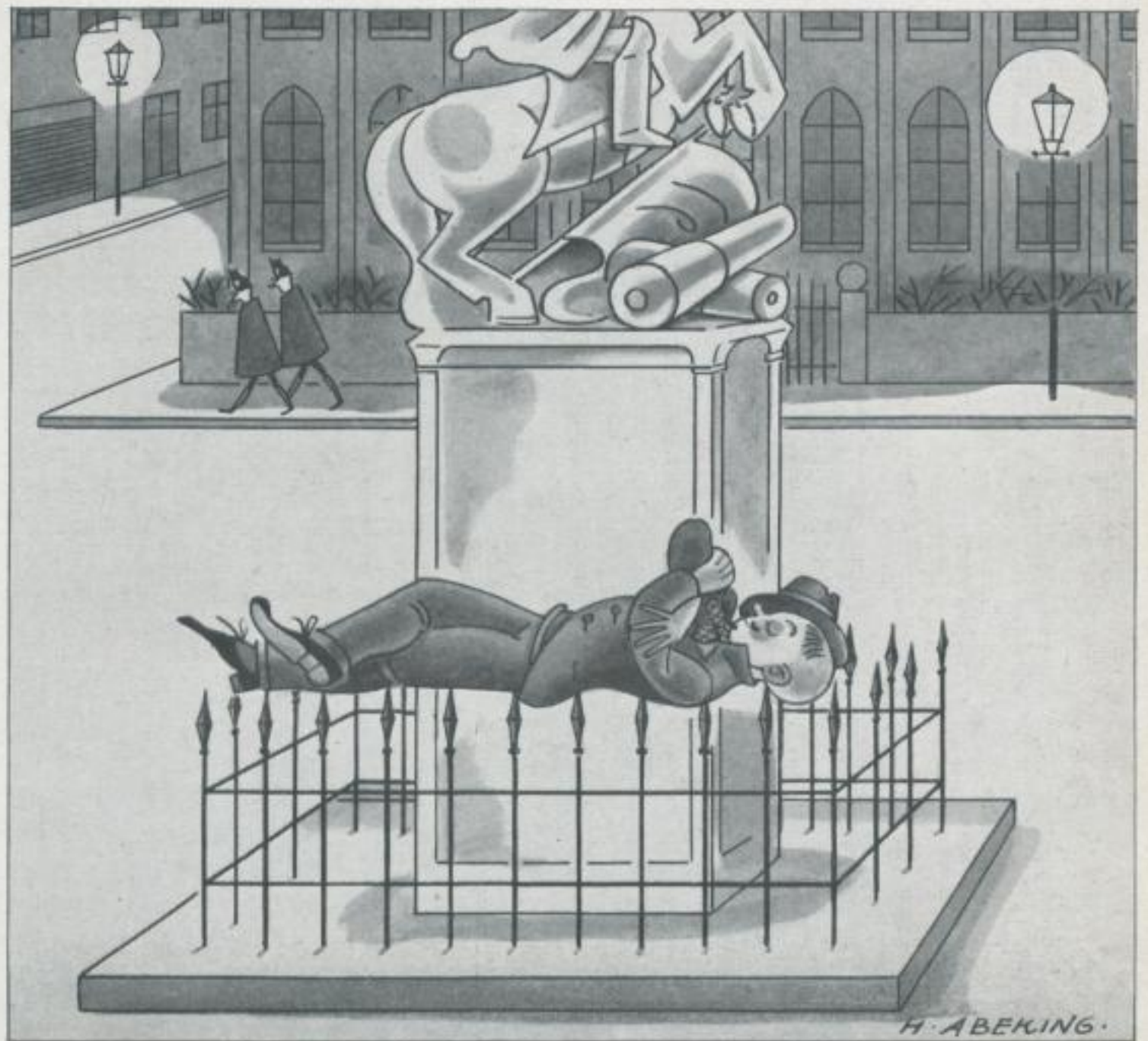


ABEKING



In his book on laughter, Henri Bergson once remarked: the more a drawing reminds us of the mechanics of things, the funnier it seems.

This saying reminds us irresistibly of the remarkable abstract drawings by Hermann Abeking, appearing week after week on the same page of the „Berliner Illustrierte“. We laugh at them, we are delighted with them, but very few of us stop to consider why we laugh and just what it is that makes these drawings so comical.

It is a particular gift of humor, such as is only possible to people who have not lost the power to wonder about things.

Ordinary people never wonder about anything. They take things as they come in relation to everyday life. One can put on a hat, smoke a cigar and eat a pancake. The wildest formation invented by the civilised world, the strangest apparatus, the most complicated machine cannot disturb their equilibrium for a moment.

It is a different matter with the artist, particularly if he look upon the world about him with the eye of a humorist. Things are always changing their aspects. They are dead or very much alive, according to how one chooses to take them, they have their own *reductio ad absurdum* and begin to behave in the most impossible fashion the moment we attempt to set their mechanism in motion. Abeking has a whole series of drawings which treat of nothing else but such trickeries of matter. We have a pancake serving as gramophone record, a pig's snout as electric wall contact, a round salami sausage as automobile tyre, and so on.

It is the humor of the under dog, the same kind of comic distortion of everything pertaining to plain common sense which is the basis for the fame and success of the American grotesque film. With one difference: the artist has the benefit of the literary, the anecdotal — he has the magic of the word at his command. One of the most brilliant and wittiest sketches ever made by Abeking is „Always

Macht der Gewohnheit
Der obdachlose Fakir

Force of Habit
When a fakir is evicted

