

ADE GEORGE

KNOCKING THE
NEIGHBORS

George Ade

Knocking the Neighbors

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George Ade

Knocking the Neighbors

THE ROYSTERING BLADES

Out in the Celery Belt of the Hinterland there is a stunted Flag-Station.

Number Six, carrying one Day Coach and a Combination Baggage and Stock Car, would pause long enough to unload a Bucket of Oysters and take on a Crate of Eggs.

In this Settlement the Leading Citizens still wear Gum Arctics with large Buckles, and Parched Corn is served at Social Functions.

Two highly respected Money-Getters of pure American Stock held forth in this lonesome Kraal and did a General Merchandizing.

One was called Milt, in honor of the Blind Poet, and the other claimed the following brief Monicker, to wit: Henry.

These two Pillars of Society had marched at the head of the Women and School Children during the Dry Movement which banished King Alcohol from their Fair City.

As a result of their Efforts, Liquor was not to be obtained in this Town except at the Drug Stores and Restaurants or in the Cellar underlying any well-conducted Home.

For Eleven Months and Three Weeks out of every Calendar Year these two played Right and Left Tackle in the Stubborn Battle to Uplift the Community and better the Moral Tone.

They walked the Straight and Narrow, wearing Blinders, Check-Reins, Hobbles and Interference Pads.

Very often a Mother would hurry her little Brood to the Front Window when Milt or Henry passed by, carrying under his arm a Package of Corn Flakes and the Report of the General Secretary in charge of Chinese Missionary Work.

"Look!" she would say, indicating Local Paragon with index Finger. "If you always wash behind the Ears and learn your Catechism, you may grow up to be like Him."

But—every Autumn, about the time the Frost is on the Stock Market and Wall Street is in the Shock, Milt and Henry would do a Skylark Ascension from the Home Nest and Wing away toward the rising Sun.

They called it Fall Buying because both of them Bought and both of them Fell.

At Home neither of them would Kick In for any Pastime more worldly than a 10-cent M. P. Show depicting a large number of Insane People falling over Precipices.

The Blow-Off came on the Trip to the City. That was the Big Entertainment.

Every Nickel that could be held out went into the little Tin Bank, for they knew that when they got together 100 of these Washers, a man up in New York would let them have some Tiffany Water of Rare Vintage, with a Napkin wrapped around it as an Evidence of Good Faith.

On Winter Evenings Milt would don the Velvet Slippers and grill his Lower Extremities on the ornate Portico such as surrounds every high- priced Base-Burner.

While thus crisping himself he loved to read New Notes from Gotham.

He believed what it said in the Paper about a well-known Heiress having the Teeth of her favorite Pomeranian filled with Radium at a Cost of \$120,000.

Whenever he got this kind of a Private Peek into the Gay Life of the Modern Babylon, he began to breathe through his Nose and tug at the Leash.

He longed to dash away on the Erie to look at the Iron Fence in front of the House of the Pomeranian.

When the Day of Days arrived, Milt and Henry would be seen at the Depot with congested Suit-Case and their Necks all newly shaven and powdered for the approaching Jubilee.

Each had pinned into his college-made Suit enough Currency to lift the Debt on the Parsonage.

Furthermore, each had in his throbbing Heart a determination to shoot Pleasure as it Flies, no matter how many Cartridges it took.

Already they were smoking Foreign Cigars and these were a mere Hint of what the Future had in Store.

While waiting for Number Six they wired for Two Rooms and Two Baths and to have Relays waiting in the Manicure Parlor.

Up at the Junction, where they caught the Limited, they moved into the High and began to peel from the Roll.

The Steak ordered in the Dining Car hung over the edge of the Table and they scuffled to see which one would pay the Check.

As for the Boy in the Buffet, every time he heard a Sound like 25 Cents he came out of the Dark Room and began to open small Original Packages.

When they approached the Metropolis, via the Tunnel, they thought they were riding in on a Curtiss Bi-Plane.

Between the Taxi and the Register they stopped to shake hands with an Old Friend who wore a White Suit and was known from Coast to Coast as the originator of a Pick-Me-Up which called for everything back of the Working Board except the License.

The Clerk let on to remember them and quoted a Bargain Rate of Six Dollars, meaning by the Day and not by the Month.

They wanted to know if that was the Best he had and he said it was, as the Sons of Ohio were having a Dinner in the Main Banquet Hall.

So they ordered a lot of Supplies sent up to each Room and wanted to know if there was a Good Show in Town—something that had been denounced by the Press.

The Clerk told of one in which Asbestos Scenery was used and Firemen had to stand in the Wings, so they tore over to the News Stand and bought two on the Aisle for \$8 from a pale Goddess who kept looking at the Ceiling all during the Negotiations, for she seemed out of Sympathy with her Sordid Surroundings.

Then to the Rooms with their glittering Bedsteads and insulting prodigality of Towels.

After calling up the Office to complain of the Service, they shook the Moth Balls out of their Henry Millers and began to sort the Studs.

When fully attired in Evening Clothes, including the Sheet-Iron Shoes, they knew they looked like New York Club Men and the Flag Station seemed far away, as in another World.

Instead of the usual 6:30 Repast of Chipped Beef in Cream, Sody Biscuits and a Stoup of Gunpowder Tea, they ordered up Cape Cods, Pommies Let-it-go-at-that, Sweetbreads So-and-so, on and on past the partially heated Duck and Salad with Fringe along the Edges and Cheese that had waited too long and a Check for \$17.40 and the Waiter peevish at being slipped a paltry \$1.60.

Heigh-ho! It is a Frolicking Life!

Pity the Poor Folks who are now getting ready to court the Hay in Akron, Ohio, and Three Oaks, Michigan, and Tulsa, Oklahoma, with no thought of what they are Missing.

They remembered afterward being in a gilded Play-House with the Activities equally divided between a Trap-Drummer and 700 restless Young Women.

Then, being assailed by the Pangs of Hunger, they went out and purchased Crab Flakes at 20 cents a Flake, after which they paid to get their Hats, and next Morning they were back in their rooms, entirely surrounded by Towels.

On the third Afternoon, Milt suspended Fall Buying long enough to send his Family a Book of Views showing the Statue of Peter Cooper, the Aviary in Bronx Park, and Brooklyn Bridge by Moonlight.

Then, with a Clear Conscience, he went back and put his Foot on the Rail.

The morning on which their Bodies were taken to Pennsylvania Station broke bright and cheery.

Milt said somebody had fed him a Steam Coie and put Mittens on him and unscrewed his Knee-Caps.

Otherwise, he was O. K..

Henry kept waving the English Sparrows out of the Way, and asking why so many Bells were ringing.

Two weeks later, at the Union Revival Services, when Rev. Poindexter gave out that rousing old Stand-By which begins "Yield Not to Temptation," Milt and Henry arose from the Cushioned Seats and sang their fool Heads off.

MORAL: One who would put Satan on the Mat must get Inside Information from his Training Quarters.

THE FLAT-DWELLER

Once there was a tired Denizen of the Big Town whose home was at the end of a Hallway in a Rabbit Warren known as the Minnehaha.

It was not a Tenement, because he had to pay \$30 a Month for a compressed Suite overlooking 640 acres of Gravel Roof.

Sitting back in his Morris Chair with his Feet on the tiny Radiator he would read in the Sunday Paper all that Bunk about the Down-and-Outs of the City hiking back to the Soil and making \$8,000 a year raising Radishes.

He saw the Pictures of the Waving Trees and the Growing Crops and the oleaginous Natives and he yearned to get out where he wouldn't hear the Trolleys in the Morning and the Kids could get Milk that came from a Cow.

So he gave up his Job in the Box Factory and moved out to Jasper Township and tackled Intensive Farming.

He had been Precinct Captain in the Ate Ward and by applying Metropolitan Methods at the Yap Primaries he succeeded in breaking into the Legislature and soon owned the Farm on which he lived and two others besides.

MORAL: One may get close to Nature, even in the Country.

THE ADVANTAGE OF A GOOD THING

Once there was a prosperous Manufacturer who had made his Stake by handling an every-day Commodity at a small Margin of Profit.

One Morning the Representative of a large Concern dealing in guaranteed Securities came in to sell him some gilt-edged Municipal Bonds that would net a shade under 5 per cent.

"I'll have to look into the Proposition very carefully," said the Investor, as he tilted himself back in his jointed Chair. "I must have the History of all previous Bond Issues under the same Auspices. Also the Report of an Expert as to possible Shrinkage of Assets. Any Investment should be preceded by a systematic and thorough Investigation."

Having delivered himself of this Signed Editorial he dismissed the Bond Salesman and went back to his Morning Mail.

The next Caller wore a broad Sombrero, leather Leggings, and a Bill Cody Goatee—also the Hair down over the Collar. He looked as if he had just escaped from a Medicine Show. After lowering the Curtains he produced from a Leather Pouch a glistening Nugget which he had found in a lonely Gulch near Death Valley.

The careful Business Guy began to quiver like an Aspen and bought 10,000 shares at \$2 a Share on a Personal Guarantee that it would go to Par before Sept. 1st.

MORAL: It all depends on the Bait.

THE COMMON CARRIER

Once there was a little E-Flat Town that needed a Direct Communication with a Trunk Line.

A Promoter wearing Sunday Clothes and smoking 40-cent Cigars came out from the City to see about it.

The Daily Paper put him on the Front Page. Five Dollars was the Set-Back for each Plate at the Banquet tendered him by the Mercantile Association. A Bonus was offered, together with a Site for the Repair Shops and the Round House.

When the College Graduates in Khaki Suits began to drag Chains across Lots, a wave of Joy engulfed Main Street from the Grain Elevator clear out to the Creamery.

Then came 10,000 Carusos, temporarily residing in Box Cars, to disarrange the Face of Nature and put a Culvert over the Crick. Real Estate Dealers emerged from their Holes and local Rip Van Winkles began to sit up and rub their Eyes.

One morning a Train zipped through the Cut and pulled up at the New Station.

The Road was an Assured Fact. The Rails were spiked down; the Rolling Stock was in Commission; Trains were running according to Schedule.

There was no longer any Reason for Waiting, so the Citizens hiked over to the Court House and began to file Damage Suits. The Town Council started in to pass Ordinances and the Board of Equalization whooped the Taxes.

Horny-handed Jurors hung around the Circuit Court-Room waiting for a Chance to take a Wallop at the soulless Corporation.

When the Promoter came along on a Tour of Inspection, the only Person down to meet him was the Sheriff.

Children in the Public School practised the new Oval Penmanship by filling their Copy-Books with the following popular Catch-Line: "When you have a Chance to Soak the Railroad, go to it."

And the Trains never ran to suit Everybody.

MORAL: Go easy with Capital until you get it Roped and Tied.

THE HEIR AND THE HEIRESS

Once upon a Time there was a Work-Horse who used to lie awake Nights framing up Schemes to Corral more Collateral to leave to the Olive Branches.

They may have looked like Jimpson Weeds to the rest of the World but to Pa and Ma they were A-1 Olive Branches.

Pa was a self made Proposition—Sole-Leather, Hand-Stitched and Four-Ply, with Rivets around the Edge.

His Business Career had been one long Rattle with Adverse Circumstances. Nothing was ever handed to him on a Sheffield Tray with Parsley around it. The World owed him a Living, but in order to collect it he had to conduct his Arguments with a piece of Lead-Pipe.

He was out for the Kids, if you know what that means. He was collecting Hebrew Diplomas and he had a special Liking for the light-colored Variety with a large C in the Corner.

He was going to provide for his Family, regardless of what happened to other Families.

He had a little Office back of the Bank and made a Specialty of helping those overtaken by Trouble. Any one in Financial Straits who went into the Back Office to arrange for a Loan was expected to open Negotiations by removing the Right Eye and laying it on the Table.

Pa had Mormon Whiskers and a Mackerel Eye and wore a Shawl instead of an Overcoat and kept a little Bag of Peppermint Drops in his Tail- Pocket and walked Pussy-Foot and took more Stock in Isaiah than he did in the Sermon on the Mount.

The Above is merely a Rough Outline, but it will help you to understand why his Wife preceded him to the Other Shore.

She was a Good Woman who never formed the Matinee Habit and up to the Day of her Death she could put her Hand on her Heart and truly say she had not wasted any Money on Jewelry or Cut Flowers.

But she could have written a large Book on how it feels to get up in the Morning and stir a little Oatmeal.

Pa and Ma saved and skimped and held out and trimmed and maneuvered for Years.

They had been brought up in the School of Hard Knocks, but they wanted Bertrand and Isabel to go through Life on Ball Bearings.

Pa finally went to his Reward, according to the Local Paper, and then it came out that Bertrand and Isabel had \$400,000 each, which was more than Pa had ever turned in to the Assessor.

These two Children had been sheltered from the Great World, although never stinted in the matter of Sassafras Tea or the Privilege of reading Books written by Josephus and others.

As soon as he came into his inheritance, Bertrand looked about in a startled Manner and then bought himself a Plush Hat and began to cultivate Pimples.

A few Days later he might have been seen riding in a Demonstrating Car with a Salesman who wore Goggles and who told him that all the Swell Guys were putting in Orders for the \$6,200 Type with the jeweled Mud- Guards. And next Morning the Sexton observed that Father, by turning over in the Grave, had somewhat loosened the fresh Earth.

Bertrand had Modern Plumbing put into the Old House and built a Porte Cochere on the Side and moved a lot of Red Velvet Furniture into the Parlor. Some said that the Moaning Sound heard at Night was only the Wind in the Evergreens, but others allowed that it was the returned Spirit of the Loan Agent checking over the Expenses.

Isabel stopped wearing Things that scratched her and began ordering from a Catalogue, because the Local Dealers didn't carry anything but Common Stuff. Also she began to Entertain, and the first time she served Hot-House Asparagus in January, the House rocked on its Foundations.

Bertrand soon knew the Difference between a Rickey and a Sour and was trying to pretend to let on to be fond of the Smoky Taste in that Imported Article which has done so much to mitigate the Horrors of Golf.

In the meantime, Isabel had got so far along that she could tell by the Feel whether the Goods were real or only Mercerized, and each Setting Sun saw a new crimp in the Bank Account.

All Statisticians agree that a couple of Heirs can spend Much Money and yet besides if they do not work at anything else. Especially when every Pearl in the Rope represents a Chattel Mortgage and a fancy Weskit is a stand-off for One Month's Rent of a good piece of Town Property.

Bertrand married a tall Blonde who knew that Columbus discovered America, and which kind of Massage Cream to buy, and let it go at that.

They went abroad and began to Ritz themselves. Every time Madam walked into one of those places marked "English Spoken while you Wait"—Zing! The Letter of Credit resembled a piece of Apple Pie just after the willing Farm Hand has taken a Hack at it.

Isabel hastened to make an Alliance with one of the oldest and toniest Families west of Bucyrus and north of Evansville. She succeeded in capturing an awful Swell Boy who wore an Outside Pocket on his Dress Coat and made a grand Salad Dressing (merely rubbing the Bowl with a Sprig of Garlic) and was otherwise qualified to maintain Social Leadership all the way from the Round House up to the Hub and Spoke Factory on the Hill.

Isabel's Husband built a House near the Country Club so as to get the Automobile Trade, coming and going. Some of the Best People would drop in and show the Ice-Box how to take a Joke.

Late at Night, when a Hush fell upon the \$28,000 Bungalow, the Deep Quiet signified that some had Passed Away and others had locked Horns at Bridge—10 Cents a Point.

Even Lake Superior would go Dry if tapped at two different Points by Drain Pipes of Sufficient Diameter.

After Bertrand returned from Europe with his Paintings and a Table d'Hote Vocabulary, he and Brother-in-Law began to compare Mortgages. By consulting the Road-Map they discovered that the Primrose Path would lead them over a high Precipice into a Stone Quarry, so they decided to take a Short Cut at Right Angles and head for the Millionaire Colony.

The Day they started for New York City with a Coil of Strong Rope, their purpose being to tie Kuhn, Loeb Co., Hand and Foot, it is said that a long vertical Crack appeared in one of the most expensive Monuments in Springvale Cemetery, as if some one underneath had been trying to break out and Head Off something.

In preserving the form of a Narrative it becomes necessary to add that Bertrand is now the obliging Night Clerk at a Hotel in Louisville, with a Maximum Rate of \$1.50 Single and a Shower Bath.

Brother-in-Law is Assistant Treasurer at a Temple of Amusement which guarantees all the latest and best Films.

What became of the Bundle?

Listen.

When Pa locked up his Desk and started for the Pearly Gates, he left behind in the office an humble Man Friday, who took care of the Books and did the Collecting.

This Understrapper was a Model Citizen of 35 who wore a plain String Tie, drank Malted Milk and was slightly troubled with Bronchitis.

When the Children began throwing it at the Birds, he bought himself a Net and got Busy.

Any time Anybody wanted to plaster a Mortgage on a Desirable Corner he was there with a Fountain Pen and a Notary.

It nearly broke his Back to carry all the Property, but he kept buying it in and then hung over his Desk until all Hours of the Night figuring how he could meet the Payments.

He wore the same Overcoat for nine years and his Wife never saw one of those Hats with Bagoozulum and Bazoosh flounced all over it unless she went down town and looked through a Window.

One Day a friend remonstrated with the Slave.

"Why are you wearing yourself to a Shadow and getting Old before your Time?" he asked. "What shall it avail a Man if he is Principal Depositor at a Bank when it comes to riding behind Horses that wear Plumes?"

"I will tell you," replied the Slave. "I have a Boy named Bertrand and a little Girl named Isabel and my Wife and I have decided that it is our Duty to leave them Well-Fixed."

MORAL: Somebody must rake up the Leaves before the Young People can have a successful Bon-Fire.

THE UNDECIDED BACHELORS

Once upon a Time two Mavericks lived together in a Cubby-Hole in a European Hotel in a surging Metropolis.

They worked for a grinding Corporation, each pulling down a Stipend that enabled him to indulge in Musical Comedies, Rotation Pool, Turkish Cigarettes, Link Buttons and other Necessities of Life.

Often they would put their Feet on the Window Sill and talk about the Future.

They said that every Man should have a Home of his Own. To the Beanery thrice a Day and then back to the Box Stall was no Life for a refined Caucasian.

Number One had a Theory that Two could get along as cheaply as One, if Wife would practise Rigid Economy. Rents were lower in the Suburbs. He looked up into the Pipe-Smoke and caught a Vision of a Bungalow with Hollyhocks in front and a Hammock swinging in the Breeze. Somehow he felt that he never would save any Money until he took the High Jump and became a Family Man.

Number Two had a vague Yearning to experiment with Matrimony, but he said he would wait until he was Fixed. When he could open up the little Bank-Book and see in plain sight the Ice-Box and the Talking Machine and the Dining-Room Chairs, then, and not until then, would he ask a Nice Girl to leave a Comfortable Home and take a Gamble.

Number One picked out a Stenographer who was ready to retire, on account of her Spelling, and then he called on the License Clerk, a Presbyterian Minister and the Weekly Payment shark.

He packed up his Banjo and the Military Brushes and left Number Two marooned in the Rat Pit with the Oak Dresser and the Pictures of Anna Held on the Wall.

Number Two said he would swim the River and join him in the Promised Land as soon as he was Two Thousand to the Good.

Soon after the break-up of the Damon and Pythias Combination, one of them was transferred to the Detroit Branch.

They did not meet again until ten years later.

One day the Benedict had little Marjorie and the Baby out at the Public Zoo, so they could hear the Sea Lions bark, when Number Two came along in a Sight-Seeing Automobile with other Delegates to the National Conclave of the Knights of Neurasthenia.

It was a Happy Meeting between the two Old Friends.

Number One reported that his Little Girl could recite long Poems by Heart and was about to take Music Lessons. He was living in a Flat, but was about to move.

Number Two said he was Finer than Silk except that Hotel Cooking had got to him at last and he had to stop in and see an Osteopath every Morning.

"You are still Unmarried?" asked Number One.

"Yes," was the Reply. "I am still \$2,230 Shy of what a Guy needs before tackling such a risky Game. How are you making it?"

"I am Broke, thank you," replied Number One.

With the utmost Good Feeling re-established between them, they took Marjorie and the Baby over to see the Sacred Cow and the other Dumb Animals.

MORAL: Opportunity knocks once at Every Man's Door and then keeps on Knocking.

THE WONDERFUL MEAL OF VITTLES

Once upon a Time a Rugged Character from the Middle West was in New York City fixing up a Deal.

Although he wore overlapping Cuffs and a ready-made Tie, he had a Rating, so a certain Promoter with an Office in Broad Street found it advisable to make a Fuss over him.

The Promoter invited the prospective Mark to Luncheon and arranged to have the same served in a snug Corner entirely screened by Oleanders and Palms.

The Chef received private Instructions to throw himself, so he personally supervised a dainty Menu.

When the Visitor entered the far-famed Establishment and found himself entirely protected from the Vulgar Gaze he knew that at last he was in the Headquarters for sure-enough Food.

"What is it?" he asked, gazing into the liquid Amber of the First Course.

"Turtle Soup," replied the Host.

"We shoot the Blame Things just for Practice, out our Way," said the Guest, "but if I went home and told my Wife I'd been eatin' Turtle she wouldn't live with me."

So the Alsatian Nobleman hurried it away and substituted a Tid-Bit with Cray-Fish as the principal Ornament in the Ensemble.

"It's a Craw-Dabber!" exclaimed the horrified Man from the Plains. "I see Ten Million of them little Cusses every Spring, but I wouldn't touch one with a Ten-Foot Pole."

To relieve the embarrassing Situation, the Host gave a Sign and the Menials came running with the Third Course, a tempting array of Frog Saddles.

"A Frog is a Reptile," said the Hoosier, backing away from the Table.

"I've heard they were Et, but I never believed it. I can go out any Morning and gather a Car-Load."

The next Serving was Breast of Guinea Hen with Mushrooms under Glass on the Side.

"On my Farm I've got a lot of these Things," said the Guest, poking at the Guinea Hen timidly with his Fork. "We use them as Alarm Clocks, but I'd just as soon eat a Turkey Buzzard."

"How about the Mushrooms?"

"Eight People in our Township were poisoned this Summer from foolin' with that Truck. My pasture's speckled with 'em, but we never pick 'em. Most of them are Toadstools. I tried a Real One once at a K. P. Banquet. It tasted a good deal like a Rubber Glove."

The only remaining Item before Dessert was a tempting Salad of Water Cress.

The Guest identified it as something that grew in the Crick below the Spring and was commonly classified as Grass.

"Perhaps you had better order for Yourself," said the Host, as the lowly Water Cress followed the others into the Discard.

The Guest motioned the Waiter to come close and said: "I want a nice Oyster Stew and some Sparkling Burgundy."

MORAL: A Delicacy is something not raised in the same County.

THE GALLOPING PILGRIM

A certain affluent Bachelor happened to be the only Grandson of a rugged Early Settler who wore a Coon-Skip Cap and drank Corn Juice out of a Jug. Away back in the Days when every Poor Man had Bacon in the Smoke House, this Pioneer had been soaked in a Trade and found himself loaded up with a Swamp Subdivision in the Edge of Town.

Fifty years later the City had spread two miles beyond the Swamp and Grandson was submerged beneath so much Unearned Increment that he began to speak with what sounded to him like an English Accent and his Shirts were ordered from Paris.

On the 1st of every Month the Agents would crawl into the Presence of the Grandson of the mighty Muskrat Hunter and dump before him a Wagon- load of Paper Money which had been snatched away from the struggling Shop-Keepers, who, in turn, had wheedled it from the people who paid a Nickel apiece for Sunday Papers so as to look at the Pictures of the Decorations in the Supper Room at the Assembly Ball graced by the Presence of the aforesaid Bachelor whose Grandfather had lifted the original Catfish out of the Chicago River.

Then the Representative of the Old Family would take a Garden Rake and pattern all this hateful Currency into a neat Mound, after which a milk-fed Secretary would iron it out and disinfect it and sprinkle it with Lilac Water and tie it into artistic Packets using Old Gold Ribbon.

After that, it was Hard Lines for the Bachelor, because he had to sit by a window at the Club and dope out some new Way of getting all that Coin back into Circulation.

As a result of these Herculean Efforts to vaporize his Income, he found himself at the age of 40 afflicted with Social Gastritis. He had gorged himself with the Pleasures of this World until the sight of a Menu Card gave him the Willies and the mere mention of Musical Comedy would cause him to break down and Cry like a Child.

He had crossed the Atlantic so often that he no longer wished to sit at the Captain's Table. He had rolled them high at Monte Carlo and watched the Durbar at Delhi and taken Tea on the Terrace at Shepherd's in Cairo and rickshawed through Japan and ridden the surf in Honolulu, while his Name was a Household Word among the Barmaids of the Ice Palace in London, otherwise known as the Savoy.

Occasionally he would return to his provincial Home to raise the Rents on the Shop-Keepers and give out an Interview criticising the New School of Politicians for trifling with Vested Interests and seeking to disturb Existing Conditions.

Any time his Rake-Off was reduced from \$10 a Minute to \$9.98 he would let out a Howl like a Prairie Wolf and call upon Mortimer, his Man, for Sympathy.

After Twenty Years of getting up at Twilight to throw aside the Pyjamas and take a Tub and ease himself into the Costume made famous by John Drew, the Routine of buying Golden Pheasants and Special Cuvee Vintages for almost-Ladies, preserved by Benzoate of Soda and other Chemical Mysteries, began to lose its Sharp Zest.

In other Words, he was All In.

He was Track-Sore and Blase and full of Ongway. He had played the whole String and found there was nothing to it and now he was ready to retire to a Monastery and wear a Gunny-Sack Smoking Jacket and live on Spinach.

The Vanities of the Night-World had got on his Nerves at last. Instead of sitting 8 Feet away from an Imported Orchestra at 2 A. M. and taunting his poor old Alimentary System with Sea Food, he began to prefer to take a 10-Grain Sleeping Powder and fall back in the Alfalfa.

About Noon the next Day he would come up for Air, and in order to kill the rest of the Day he would have to hunt up a Game of Auction Bridge with three or four other gouty old Mavericks.

When the Carbons begin to burn low in the sputtering Arc Lights along the Boulevard of Pleasure and the Night Wind cuts like a Chisel and the Reveler finds his bright crimson Brannigan slowly dissolving into a Bust Head, there is but one thing for a Wise Ike to do and that is to Chop on the Festivities and beat it to a Rest Cure.

That is just what the well-fixed Bachelor decided to do.

He resolved to Marry and get away from the Bright Lights and lie down somewhere in a quilted Dressing Gown and a pair of Soft Slippers and devote the remainder of his Life to a grand clean-up of the Works of Arnold Bennett.

He selected a well-seasoned Senorita who was still young enough to show to your Men Friends but old enough to cut out all the prevalent Mushgush about the Irish Drama and Norwegian Art and Buddhism and the true Symbolism of Russian Dancing.

Best of all, she had a spotless Reputation, holding herself down to one Bronx at a Time and always going behind a Screen to do her Inhaling.

They were Married according to the new Ceremonies devised by the Ringling Brothers. As they rode away to their Future Home, the old Stager leaned back in the Limousine and said: "At last the Bird has Lit. I am going to put on the Simple Life for an Indefinite Run. I have played the Hoop-La Game to a Standstill, so it is me for a Haven of Rest."

As soon as they were safely in their own Apartments, the beautiful Bride began to do Flip Flops and screech for Joy.

"At last I have a License to cut loose!" she exclaimed. "For years I have hankered and honed to be Dead Game and back Excitement right off the Cards, but every time I pulled a Caper the stern-faced Mater would be at Elbow, saying: 'Nix on the Acrobatics or you'll lose your Number.' Now I'm a regular honest-to-goodness Married Woman and I don't recognize any Limit except the Sky-Line. I grabbed you because I knew you had been to all the Places that keep Open and could frame up a new Jamboree every day in the Year. I'm going to plow an 8-foot Furrow across Europe and Dine forevermore at Swell Joints where famous Show Girls pass so close to your Table that you can almost reach out and Touch them. I'm going to Travel 12 months every Year and do all the Stunts known to the most imbecile Globe-Trotter."

A few Weeks after that, a Haggard Man with tattered Coat-Tails was seen going over the old familiar Jumps.

MORAL: Those who Marry to Escape something usually find Something Else.

THE PROGRESSIVE MANIAC

Once there was a staid and well-behaving Citizen who took home a dab of Steak, wrapped up in Brown Paper, nearly every Evening, and found his Excitement by working on the Puzzle Column in the Church Paper.

In order to run out to his Farm and save the Expense of keeping a Gee-Gee, he purchased a kind of Highway Beetle, known as a Runabout. It was a One-Lunger with a Wheel Base of nearly 28 inches and two Coal Oil Gleamers.

When standing still, it panted like a Dachshund and breathed Blue Smoke through the Gills.

It steered with a Rudder, the same as a Canal Boat, and every time it started up a 4 per cent Grade it became Black in the Face and tried to lie down.

All the large brutal-looking Cars with the swollen Wheels came along and tried to Ditch him. They showed him the same courteous consideration that would be lavished upon a Colored Republican Orator in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

When he pulled up alongside of the Road to adjust the Buzzer and jiggle the Feed and clean the Plug, the idle Spectators would stand around and remark that the mixture was wrong and the Ignition was a Punk and the Transmission was a Fliv. So he knew he was In Wrong.

He traded for a dashing 2-Cylinder Affair painted Red, with a Tonneau as wide and roomy as a Telephone Booth, and approached from the extreme Rear by a small Door, as in the case of a Blind Pig.

When he turned in the Runabout, he was allowed one Outer Casing and a Monkey-wrench in Exchange.

He was Some Motorist for about Three Weeks after the delivery of Juggernaut Number Two. He wore Leather Clothes, the same as Barney Oldfield.

But when he bumped up against the Owners of the Big Touring Cars he was just as much at home as a One-armed Man at a Husking Bee.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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