

ADE GEORGE

FABLES IN
SLANG

George Ade
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THE FABLE *OF THE VISITOR WHO GOT A LOT FOR THREE DOLLARS*

The Learned Phrenologist sat in his Office surrounded by his Whiskers.

Now and then he put a Forefinger to his Brow and glanced at the Mirror to make sure that he still resembled William Cullen Bryant.

Near him, on a Table, was a Pallid Head made of Plaster-of-Paris and stickily ornamented with small Labels. On the wall was a Chart showing that the Orangoutang does not have Daniel Webster's facial angle.

"Is the Graft played out?" asked the Learned Phrenologist, as he waited. "Is Science up against it or What?"

Then he heard the fall of Heavy Feet and resumed his Imitation. The Door opened and there came into the Room a tall, rangy Person with a Head in the shape of a Rocky Ford Cantaloupe.

Aroused from his Meditation, the Learned Phrenologist looked up at the Stranger as through a Glass, darkly, and pointed

to a Red Plush Chair.

The Easy Mark collapsed into the Boarding-House Chair and the Man with more Whiskers than Darwin ever saw stood behind Him and ran his Fingers over his Head, Tarantula-Wise.

"Well, well!" said the Learned Phrenologist "Enough Benevolence here to do a family of Eight. Courage? I guess yes! Dewey's got the same kind of a Lump right over the Left Ear. Love of Home and Friends—like the ridge behind a Bunker! Firmness—out of sight! Reverence—well, when it comes to Reverence, you're certainly There with the Goods! Conscientiousness, Hope, and Ideality—the Limit! And as for Metaphysical Penetration—oh, Say, the Metaphysical Penetration, right where you part the Hair—oh, Laura! Say, you've got Charles Eliot Norton whipped to a Custard. I've got my Hand on it now. You can feel it yourself, can't you?"

"I can feel Something," replied the Human Being, with a rapt Smile.

"Wit, Compassion and Poetic Talent—right here where I've got my Thumb—a Cinch! I think you'll run as high as 98 per cent on all the Intellectual Faculties. In your Case we have a Rare Combination of Executive Ability, or the Power to Command, and those Qualities of Benevolence and Ideality which contribute to the fostering of Permanent Religious Sentiment. I don't know what your present Occupation is, but you ought to be President of a Theological Seminary. Kindly slip me Three Dollars before you Pass Out."

The Tall Man separated himself from Two Days' Pay and then went out on the Street and pushed People off the Sidewalk, He thought so well of Himself.

Thereafter, as before, he drove a Truck, but he was always glad to know that he could have been President of a Theological Seminary.

Moral: A good Jolly is worth Whatever you Pay for it.

THE FABLE OF THE SLIM GIRL WHO TRIED TO KEEP A DATE THAT WAS NEVER MADE

Once upon a Time there was a slim Girl with a Forehead which was Shiny and Protuberant, like a Bartlett Pear. When asked to put Something in an Autograph Album she invariably wrote the Following, in a tall, dislocated Back-Hand:

"Life is Real; life is Earnest,
And the Grave is not its Goal."

That's the kind of a Girl she was.

In her own Town she had the Name of being a Cold Proposition, but that was because the Primitive Yokels of a One-Night Stand could not Attune Themselves to the Views of one who was troubled with Ideals. Her Soul Panted for the Higher Life.

Alas, the Rube Town in which she Hung Forth was given over to Croquet, Mush and Milk Sociables, a lodge of Elks and two married Preachers who doctored for the Tonsilitis. So what could the Poor Girl do?

In all the Country around there was not a Man who came up to her Plans and Specifications for a Husband. Neither was

there any Man who had any time for Her. So she led a lonely Life, dreaming of the One—the Ideal. He was a big and pensive Literary Man, wearing a Prince Albert coat, a neat Derby Hat and godlike Whiskers. When He came he would enfold Her in his Arms and whisper Emerson's Essays to her.

But the Party failed to show up.

Often enough she put on her Chip Hat and her Black Lisle Gloves and Sauntered down to look at the Gang sitting in front of the Occidental Hotel, hoping that the Real Thing would be there. But she always saw the same old line of Four-Flush Drummers from Chicago and St. Louis, smoking Horrid Cigars and talking about the Percentages of the League Teams.

She knew that these Gross Creatures were not prone to chase mere Intellectual Splendor, so she made no effort to Flag them.

When she was Thirty-Four years of age and was able to recite "Lucile" without looking at the Book she was Married to a Janitor of the name of Ernest. He had been kicked in the Head by a Mule when young and believed everything he read in the Sunday Papers. His pay was Twenty-Three a month, which was high, if you knew Ernest.

His Wife wore a red Mother Hubbard all during the Remainder of her Life.

This is invariably a Sign of Blasted Hopes.

Moral: *Never Live in a Jay Town.*

THE FABLE OF THE NEW YORK PERSON WHO GAVE THE STAGE FRIGHT TO FOSTORIA, OHIO

A New York man went to visit a Cousin in the Far West. The name of the Town was Fostoria, Ohio.

When he came into Town he had his Watch-Chain on the outside of his Coat, and his Pink Spats were the first ever seen in Fostoria.

"Have you a Manicure Parlor in this Beastly Hole?" asked the New York Man, as they walked up from the Train.

"What's that?" asked the Cousin, stepping on his own Feet.

"Great Heavens!" exclaimed the New York Man, and was silent for several Moments.

At Dinner he called for Artichokes, and when told that there were none, he said, "Oh, very well," in a Tone of Chastened Resignation.

After Dinner he took the Family into the Parlor, and told the Members how much they would Enjoy going to Weber and Fields'. Seeing a Book on the Table, he sauntered up to It and said, "Ah, one of Dick Davis' Things." Later in the Evening he visited the only Club House in Town. The Local Editor of the Evening Paper was playing Pin-Pool with the Superintendent of the Trolley Line. When the New York Man came into the Room,

they began to Tremble and fell down on their Shots.

The Manager of the Hub and Spoke Factory then asked the New York Man to have a Drink. The New York Man wondered if a Small Bottle was already cold. They said Yes, but it was a Lie. The Boy had to go out for it.

He found One that had been in the Window of the Turf Exchange since the Grand Opening, the Year after Natural Gas was discovered. The New York Man drank it, remarking that it was hardly as Dry as he usually got it at Martin's.

The Club Members looked at Him and said Nothing. They thought he meant Bradley-Martin's.

Next Day the New York Man was Interviewed by the Local Editor. He said the West had a Great Future. In the Evening he attended the Annual Dinner of the Bicycle Club, and went Home early because the Man sitting next to him put Ice in his Claret.

In due time he returned to New York, and Fostoria took off its White Shirt.

Some Weeks after that, the Cousin of the New York Man had an Opportunity to visit the Metropolis. He rode on an Extra Ticket with a Stockman who was shipping three Car-Load of Horses, and got a Free Ticket for every Car-Load.

When the Cousin arrived at New York he went to the address, and found the New York Man at Dinner.

There was a Sheaf of Celery on the Table.

Opposite the New York Man sat a Chiropodist who drank.

At his right was a Large Woman in a Flowered Wrapper—she

had been Weeping.

At his left was a Snake-Charmer from Huber's Museum.

The New York Man asked the Cousin to wait Outside, and then explained that he was stopping there Temporarily. That Evening they went to Proctor's, and stood during the Performance.

Moral: A New York Man never begins to Cut Ice until he is west of Rahway.

THE FABLE OF THE KID WHO SHIFTED HIS IDEAL

An A.D.T. Kid carrying a Death Message marked "Rush" stopped in front of a Show Window containing a Picture of James J. Jeffries and began to weep bitterly.

A kind-hearted Suburbanite happened to be passing along on his Way to the 5:42 Train. He was carrying a Dog Collar, a Sickle, a Basket of Egg Plums and a Bicycle Tire.

The Suburbanite saw the A.D.T. Kid in Tears and it struck him that here was a Bully Chance to act out the Kind-Hearted Pedestrian who is always played up strong in the Sunday School Stories about Ralph and Edgar.

"Why do you weep?" he asked, peering at the Boy through his concavo-convex Nose Glasses.

"Oh, gee! I was just Thinking," replied the Urchin, brokenly. "I was just Thinking what chance have I got to grow up and be the Main Stem, like Mr. Jeffries."

"What a perverted Ambition!" exclaimed the Suburbanite. "Why do you set up Mr. Jeffries as an Ideal? Why do you not strive to be like Me? Is it not worth a Life of Endeavor to command the Love and Respect of a Moral Settlement on the Outskirts? All the Conductors on our Division speak pleasantly to Me, and the Gateman has come to know my Name. Last year I

had my Half-Tone in the Village Weekly for the mere Cost of the Engraving. When we opened Locust avenue from the Cemetery west to Alexander's Dairy, was I not a Member of the Committee appointed to present the Petition to the Councilmen? That's what I was! For Six Years I have been a Member of the League of American Wheelmen and now I am a Candidate for Director of our new four-hole Golf Club. Also I play Whist on the Train with a Man who once lived in the same House with T. DeWitt Talmage."

Hearing these words the A.D.T. Kid ceased weeping and cheerfully proceeded up an Alley, where he played "Wood Tag."

Moral: As the Twig is Bent the Tree is Inclined.

THE FABLE OF THE BASE BALL FAN WHO TOOK THE ONLY KNOWN CURE

Once upon a Time a Base Ball Fan lay on his Death-Bed.

He had been a Rooter from the days of Underhand Pitching.

It was simply Pie for him to tell in what year Anse began to play with the Rockfords and what Kelly's Batting Average was the Year he sold for Ten Thousand.

If you asked him who played Center for Boston in 1886 he could tell you quick—right off the Reel. And he was a walking Directory of all the Glass Arms in the Universe.

More than once he had let drive with a Pop Bottle at the Umpire and then yelled "Robber" until his Pipes gave out. For many Summers he would come Home, one Evening after Another, with his Collar melted, and tell his Wife that the Giants made the Colts look like a lot of Colonial Dames playing Bean Bag in a Weedy Lot back of an Orphan Asylum, and they ought to put a Trained Nurse on Third, and the Dummy at Right needed an Automobile, and the New Man couldn't jump out of a Boat and hit the Water, and the Short-Stop wouldn't be able to pick up a Ball if it was handed to him on a Platter with Water Cress around it, and the Easy One to Third that ought to have been Sponge Cake was fielded like a One-Legged Man with St. Vitus

dance trying to do the Nashville Salute.

Of course she never knew what he was Talking about, but she put up with it, Year after Year, mixing Throat Gargle for him and reading the Games to him when he was having his Eyes tested and had to wear a Green Shade.

At last he came to his Ninth Inning and there were Two Strikes called and no Balls, and his Friends knew it was All Day with him. They stood around and tried to forget that he was a Fan. His Wife wept softly and consoled herself with the Thought that possibly he would have amounted to Something if there had been no National Game. She forgave Everything and pleaded for one Final Message. His Lips moved. She leaned over and Listened. He wanted to know if there was Anything in the Morning Papers about the Condition of Bill Lange's Knee.

Moral: *There is a Specific Bacillus for every Classified Disease.*

THE FABLE OF THE GOOD FAIRY WITH THE LORGNETTE, AND WHY SHE GOT IT GOOD

Once Upon a Time there was a Broad Girl who had nothing else to do and no Children to look after, so she thought she would be Benevolent.

She had scared all the Red Corpuscles out of the 2 by 4 Midget who rotated about her in a Limited Orbit and was known by Courtesy as her Husband. He was Soft for her, and so she got it Mapped out with Herself that she was a Superior Woman.

She knew that when she switched the Current on to herself she Used up about 6,000 Ohms an hour, and the whole Neighborhood had to put on Blinders.

She had read about nine Subscription Books with Cupid and Dove Tail-Pieces and she believed that she could get away with any Topic that was batted up to her and then slam it over to Second in time to head off the Runner.

Her clothes were full of Pin-Holes where she had been hanging Medals on Herself, and she used to go in a Hand-Ball Court every Day and throw up Bouquets, letting them bounce back and hit Her.

Also, She would square off in front of a Camera every Two Weeks, and the Man was Next, for he always removed the

Mole when he was touching up the Negative. In the Photograph the Broad Girl resembled Pauline Hall, but outside of the Photograph, and take it in the Morning when she showed up on the Level, she looked like a Street just before they put on the Asphalt.

But never you Fear, She thought She had Julia Arthur and Mary Mannering Seventeen up and One to play, so far as Good Looks were concerned; and when it came to the Gray Matter—the Cerebrum, the Cerebellum, and the Medulla Oblongata—May Wright Sewall was back of the Flag and Pulled up Lame.

The Down-Trodden Man, whom she had dragged to the Altar, sized Her all right, but he was afraid of his Life. He wasn't Strong enough to push Her in front of a Cable Car, and he didn't have the Nerve to get a Divorce. So he stood for Everything; but in the Summer, when She skated off into the Woods to hear a man with a Black Alpaca Coat lecture to the High Foreheads about the Subverted Ego, he used to go out with a few Friends and tell them his Troubles and weep into his Beer. They would slap him on the Back and tell him she was a Nice Woman; but he knew better.

Annyhow, as Bobby Gaylor used to say, she became restless around the House, with nothing to do except her Husband, so she made up her mind to be Benevolent to beat the Band. She decided that she would allow the Glory of her Presence to burst upon the Poor and the Uncultured. It would be a Big Help to the Poor and Uncultured to see what a Real Razmataz Lady was like.

She didn't Propose to put on Old Clothes, and go and live with Poor People, and be One of Them, and nurse their Sick, as they do in Settlements. Not on Your Previous Existence! She was going to be Benevolent, and be Dead Swell at the Same Time.

Accordingly, she would Lace Herself until she was the shape of a Bass Viol, and put on her Tailor-Made, and the Hat that made her Face seem longer, and then she would Gallop forth to do Things to the Poor. She always carried a 99-cent Lorgnette in one Hand and a Smelling-Bottle in the Other.

"Now," she would say, feeling Behind to make sure that she was all strung up, "Now, to carry Sunshine into the Lowly Places."

As soon as she struck the Plank Walks, and began stalking her prey, the small Children would crawl under the Beds, while Mother would dry her Arms on the Apron, and murmur, "Glory be!" They knew how to stand off the Rent-Man and the Dog-Catcher; but when 235 pounds of Sunshine came wafting up the Street, they felt that they were up against a New Game.

The Benevolent Lady would go into a House numbered 1135A with a Marking Brush, and after she had sized up the front room through the Lorgnette, she would say: "My Good Woman, does your Husband drink?"

"Oh, yes, sir," the grateful Woman would reply. "That is, when he's working. He gets a Dollar Ten."

"And what does he do with all his Money?" the Benevolent Lady would ask.

"I think he plays the Stock Market," would be the Reply.

Then the Benevolent Lady would say: "When the Unfortunate Man comes Home this Evening you tell him that a Kind and Beautiful Lady called and asked him please to stop Drinking, except a Glass of Claret at Dinner, and to be sure and read Eight or Ten Pages from the *Encyclopædia Britannica* each Night before retiring; also tell him to be sure and save his Money. Is that your Child under the Bed?"

"That's little William J."

"How Many have you?"

"Eight or Nine—I forget Which."

"Be sure and dress them in Sanitary Underwear; you can get it for Four Dollars a Suit. Will you be good enough to have the Little Boy come from under the Bed, and spell 'Ibex' for the Sweet Lady?"

"He's afraid of you."

"Kindly explain to him that I take an Interest in him, even though he is the Offspring of an Obscure and Ignorant Workingman, while I am probably the Grandest Thing that ever Swept up the Boulevard. I must go now, but I will Return. Next time I come I hope to hear that your Husband has stopped Drinking and is very Happy. Tell the Small Person under the Bed that if he learns to spell 'Ibex' by the time I call again I will let him look at my Rings. As for you, bear in mind that it is no Disgrace to be Poor; it is simply Inconvenient; that's all."

Having delivered herself of these Helpful Remarks she would

Duck, and the Uplifted Mother would put a Nickel in the Can and send Lizzie over to the Dutchman's.

In this manner the Benevolent Lady carried forward the Good Work, and Dazzled the whole Region between O'Hara's Box Factory and the City Dump. It didn't Cost anything, and she derived much Joy from the Knowledge that Hundreds of People were Rubbering at her, and remarking in Choked Whispers: "Say, ain't she the Smooth Article?"

But one day a Scrapy Kid, whose Mother didn't have any Lorgnette or Diamond Ear-Bobs, spotted the Benevolent Lady. The Benevolent Lady had been in the House telling his Mother that it was a Glorious Privilege to wash for a Living.

After the Benevolent Lady went away the Kid's Mother sat down and had a Good Cry, and the Scrapy Kid thought it was up to him. He went out to the Alley and found a Tomato Can that was not working, and he waited.

In a little while the Benevolent Lady came out of a Basement, in which she had been telling a Polish Family to look at her and be Happy. The Scrapy Kid let drive, and the Tomato Can struck the Benevolent Lady between the Shoulder Blades. She squawked and started to run, fell over a Garbage Box, and had to be picked up by a Policeman.

She went Home in a Cab, and told her Husband that the Liquor League had tried to Assassinate her, because she was Reforming so many Drunkards. That settled it with her—she said she wouldn't try to be Benevolent any more—so she joined an

Ibsen Club.

The Scrappy Kid grew up to be a Corrupt Alderman, and gave his Mother plenty of Good Clothes, which she was always afraid to wear.

Moral: *In uplifting, get underneath.*

THE FABLE OF THE UNINTENTIONAL HEROES OF CENTREVILLE

In Centreville there lived two husky Young Fellows named Bill and Schuyler—commonly abbreviated to Schuy. They did not find any nourishing Excitement in a Grain Elevator, so they Enlisted to Free Cuba.

The Government gave each of them a Slouch Hat and a prehistoric Firearm. They tied Red Handkerchiefs around their Necks and started for the Front, each with his Head out of the Car Window. They gave the Sioux Yell to everybody along the Track between Centreville and Tampa.

While in Camp they played Double Pedie, smoked Corn-Cob Pipes, and cussed the Rations. They referred to the President of these United States as "Mac," and spoke of the beloved Secretary of War as "Old Alger."

After more or less Delay they went aboard a Boat, and were landed in Cuba, where they began to Shoot at everything that looked Foreign. The hot Rain drenched them, and the tropical Sun steamed them; they had Mud on their clothes, and had to sleep out. When they were unusually Tired and Hungry, they would sing Coon Songs and Roast the War Department.

At last they were ordered Home. On the way back they didn't

think of Anything except their two Lady Friends, who worked in the Centreville Steam Laundry.

They rode into Town with a Machete under each Arm, and their Pockets full of Mauser Cartridges.

The first Thing they saw when they alighted from the Train was a Brass Band. It began to play, "See the Conquering Hero Comes."

Then eight Little Girls in White began to strew Flowers in their Pathway.

The Artillery company ripped out a Salute.

Cap Gibbs, who won his Title by owning the first Steam Thrashing Machine ever seen in the County, confronted them with a Red, White, and Blue Sash around him. He Barked in a loud Voice—it was something about Old Glory.

Afterward the Daughters of the Revolution took them in Tow, and escorted them to Pythian Hall, where they were given Fried Chicken, Veal Loaf, Deviled Eggs, Crullers, Preserved Watermelon, Cottage Cheese, Sweet Pickles, Grape Jelly, Soda Biscuit, Stuffed Mangoes, Lemonade, Hickory-Nut Cake, Cookies, Cinnamon Roll, Lemon Pie, Ham, Macaroons, New York Ice Cream, Apple Butter, Charlotte Russe, Peppermint Wafers, and Coffee.

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