FABLES IN SLANG

by

GEORGE ADE

ILLUSTRATED

by

CLYDE J. NEWMAN

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This collection of George Ade’s correspondence begins in the gay nineties, when the journalist was bustling around Chicago to garner copy for his column. As the twentieth century dawned with exuberance and big beginnings Ade was bringing out successful books. It was a decade of national optimism and self-confident innocence. Albert Beveridge remarked that Americans were “trustees of the world’s progress.” Ade as a popular author and playwright reflects this spirit. He had progressed from a reporter to the toast of Broadway. While enjoying the limelight Ade returned to his native soil to follow the rhythm of planting and harvesting. His letters indicate that he was interested not only in accruing royalties but in helping the local postmaster. The tall, spare, dapper writer who was in great demand chose the life of a gentleman farmer. After sojourns in London, Pasadena, or Benares, he returned to the land which continually provided him with inspiration—Indiana.
TO JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

Chicago [Illinois]
Sept. 20, 1894

Dear Sir:

The inclosed explains itself and in extenuation I would say:

In August 1893 I made my first and only attempt at dialect stanzas. The thing was done anonymously and the Chicago Record, with which I have been connected for several years, assumed the responsibility. A year later the lines reappeared in various eastern publications, with the dialect altered to suit the New York conception. Proper credit was, in each case, given to the Chicago Record. Now comes the St. Louis Republic and prints the stuff, omitting one line, reading proof on "Peru" and otherwise embellishing to the extent of printing your name at the bottom. I have written the Republic requesting that a correction be made and that the Chicago Record be forced to acknowledge the parental relation.

It has been ten years since I met you. I was then attending Purdue University at La Fayette and the ambition to do something in dialect, which ambition has destroyed some of the best school-teachers in my native state, had not come to me. When it did come, it remained but a day. I was delivered of the "brakeman" stuff and went back to writing world’s fair specials. Charles E. Wilson, Booth Tarkington, Maurice Butler and some other good people whom I know will testify that I meant no harm to you when I wrote those rhymeless verses and then hid behind the name of the Chicago Record. I cast all blame on the exchange editor in St. Louis.

If you have found occasion to deny the authorship of the lines, or if you now choose to do them the honor of casting them off, my request is that you do not incidentally criticize. They have suffered enough already and the author is not in the business. He is writing "Stories of the Streets and of the Town" in the Record and there is testimony to the effect that they are altogether prosy.

Believe me to be your sincere admirer.

Truly &c.

George Ade

An altered version of Ade’s poem, “Wayside Ambition,” appeared as the work of James Whitcomb Riley under the title “To be a Brakeman,” in the St. Louis Republic, September 20, 1894.

Ade included "Wayside Ambition" in his Verses and Jingles, 1911.
My Dear Mac—

Your letter of this morning was a surprise, as we had supposed that you were out on the bounding billows by this time. Hope you will get away next week. There is a report here that you were seen at Indianapolis last Monday. How about it?

Your mother and Jessie [McCutcheon] left on Tuesday. On Wednesday I moved to 113 Cass St. and took up with Drury Underwood. The place is a quiet and imminently respectable boarding house, although it has the size & the conveniences of a hotel. I like it very much. Ben [McCutcheon] is at the Grenada [Hotel] and I am inclined to believe he will remain there.

The stories & cartoons provide the same old grind. [Carl] Saska is doing quite well, especially with the cartoons. He is not a good illustrator, principally regarding house interiors and women's clothes.

This evening I am going to [Roswell] Field's. They have their 12th night celebration rather early this year. I hope to get away without breaking any furniture. Have not seen the [William] Camps or [Orson C.] Wells since you left—Was at home for Christmas.

I have a horrible confession to make on the McCrea testimonial. Could not get the doggerel to suit me in time to get it to them for Christmas so I have been compelled to make it a New Year gift.

No mail for you that I can find. Everybody has given you up for gone. Wire me just before you sail. Also, when you send back letters to your mother or someone else, cant you have them forwarded so I can answer questions?

My regards to [Edward] Harden.

Wish you a pleasant voyage.

Truly &c.

George Ade

Ade and John McCutcheon shared a hall bedroom in a rooming house in Peck Court, 1890–c.1893. McCutcheon describes this lodging in Notes and Reminiscences, (Chicago: 1940), pp. 39–44. They then shared a room on LaSalle Avenue with newspaperman Charles Rhodes. From here the team moved, c.1895, to “The Commune,” a Chestnut Street boarding-house where other journalists lived. Ade and McCutcheon moved from Chestnut Street to the Grenada Hotel on Ohio Street. When McCutcheon
left with Ed Harden to cover the Battle of Manila, Ade shared expenses with another newspaper man, Drury Underwood, in the Cass Street boardinghouse. By the time McCutcheon returned home from the Philippines in 1900, Ade was living at the Chicago Athletic Club, where he stayed until he moved to Brook in 1904.

Ade wrote Mildred Ryan Beatty, July 18, 1931 (InLP), that he lived in the Shoemaker house in Highland Park, Illinois, during the summer of 1903. There he wrote The County Chairman.

Carl Saska was assigned to illustrate Ade's column when McCutcheon went on his assignment abroad.

John McCutcheon, Drawn From Memory (Indianapolis: 1940), p. 81, contains a photo of a Twelfth Night party at the home of Roswell Field, Eugene Field’s brother.

3 ☞ TO JESSIE MCCUTCHEON

Chicago [Illinois]
Nov. 16–1899.

My Dear Jessie:

Your letter came to me while I was in the sunny south. When I came home and walked into my transformed apartment I understood your reference to decorating. Certainly the room has been greatly improved. I walk softly across the floor now for fear that I will “joggle” down one of the canes and not be able to hang it up again—Ben [McCutcheon] and Mr. Casey of the Record will be in La Fayette on Saturday to see the football game and I should like very much to accompany them but I am due to attend a dinner at the Athletic Club. You may be aware that Grand Opera is now raging in Chicago. The engagement will continue for two weeks after this and if you find it possible to come up during the season I will promise you a couple nights of it. That is about as much as I can stand at one time. John [McCutcheon] wrote a long letter from Yokohama, which came last week. He was about to start for Manila. Trumbull White of the Record, who has just returned from a trip around the world, saw John in Japan and spent an afternoon with him. He said John was well and quite contented to remain in the Philippines until the close of the war. On Monday I forwarded a Christmas present of an ascot tie and a scarf pin. The tie was the best to be had in Chicago and the pin was of solid gold, a sort of unicorn design with pearls in it. I know that John has a weakness for swell cravats and old scarf-pins—You may be interested to know that the “Fables in Slang” has proved a success beyond all reason-
able expectations. It promises to outsell "Artie" three to one. [Herbert S.] Stone [and Co.] cannot get them out rapidly enough to fill the orders. All of which is very satisfying. Remember me to your mother and to George [Barr McCutcheon] and let me thank you for your valuable services as a house decorator.

Very sincerely,
George Ade

John McCutcheon was one of three reporters on location for the battle of Manila. See McCutcheon, Drawn from Memory, p. 104–16.

Trumbull (Butch) White was a reporter and later editor of the Chicago Record.

4 ➙ TO FRANK HOLME

Chicago [Illinois]
May 11, 1901.

My Dear Frank:—

The Fable for next week will be about the four Men who sit down to play Poker for just one Hour. You can imagine the rest. One gets behind and doesn’t want to quit. Another is way ahead of the game and does not dare to pull out so they prolong the game and double up on the Jack-pots and every one gets sore and tired and the Man that was ahead gets bumped &c—a typical poker game, that is all. You could make three pictures of characteristic attitudes in poker-playing—say one of the offensive winner, another of the man who is down to his last chip and sore and another of old crafty that plays his hands close to his Bosom. It is probable that I will not get the Fable to you before I send it to [R. H.] Russell. If not you can send the Pictures the latter part of next week. I had a letter from Mac [John McCutcheon] this morning. Russell says he is going to get out a limited edition of the Fables next fall—5 a throw with an autograph and a picture thrown in. We will declare ourselves in and get a copy. Next week I am going down to my old home at Kentland, Indiana to attend my parents' golden wedding celebration so if you want to get any word to me you had better write so that I will receive it by Wednesday of next week. Remember me to the comrades.

With best wishes, Yours very truly,

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George Ade
Early in 1891, I escorted John McCutcheon to Asheville, North Carolina to enable him to recover from pneumonia. While I was in Asheville, Frank Holme came there to remain for a while, hoping that the altitude might help him to fight a tubercular condition. At that time, I was syndicating my Fables and I made an arrangement with the agency handling my stuff to use one of Frank's pictures with every release. He received rather good pay for his pictures and I was glad to help him. He was full of courage and as happy-go-lucky as ever, although evidently a sick man. Later he went to Arizona and it was out there that he produced the crude copies of the Strenuous Lad's Library, printed in a country print shop with old type and the wood engravings carved out by himself.

5 TO ROBERT UNDERWOOD JOHNSON

Chicago [Illinois]
Nov. 21, 1901

Dear Mr. Johnson:

I have been casting about for some material that will prove a pleasing substitute for the stuff which you have in your office. I am thoroughly tired of the fable style of narrative and shall do my best to get up something entirely different and possibly little more worthy. What do you think of the idea of a story dealing with the experiences of the Homely Politician of some inland State who is plucked out of his backwoods home and made a consul in some town where he is compelled to mingle with the artificial society of the old world and what this society thinks of him and what he thinks of it? While on a business trip to Europe, three years ago, I visited about 30 of our consuls and of course I know the small town life of the middle West and so I think I can bring some knowledge to the subject. It will be a story necessarily humorous because of the facts of the situation and it might be an indirect criticism of our consular system but it would be particularly an effort to show that the man who is absolutely good and first-class in a country town is a very sad misfit in the consular service. If this brief suggestion of an out-
line appeals to you I shall go ahead and work on a story of three thousand words or more and submit it to you.

I am, with best wishes,

Yours truly,

George Ade

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6 TO FRANK HOLME

Chicago [Illinois]
June 25 [1902]

My Dear Frank:

I am afraid that I have been insisting too strenuously on the wood-cut style. [R. H.] Russell wants a change by way of experiment and to satisfy a request from the Boston Globe so I am going to ask you this week to make three with a black border and a bold heavy style. Make them slightly old-fashioned and not too comic. I shall still insist on the wood-cut pictures going into the book, particularly if we can get the same effects that we got in some of the first you made.

This week, however, change your style and make something more modern and catchy and we will see what Russell thinks of them.

The Fable is to be about the family that tackles the Dollar Excursion given by the Steam Fitters' Union. A man and his wife and two children go on one of these humble railroad trips out to a country grove where they have the usual picnic experiences, a chestnut topic but perhaps I may be able to dress it up in a new way. I want one picture of the family with baskets &c on the way to the train. Another picture may show the Working Lad doing a dreamy waltz with his Girl, heads together and clinched &c. There may be a picnic background. A third picture may represent the "grove," a few lonesome trees, a pavilion, a hot sun overhead and one or two buildings. Use your judgment on this and if you happen to think of some other characteristic feature of the Sunday picnic that will fit in make it. If you can mail these by Saturday or Sunday
it will be time enough. When you mail them request Russell to let you know whether or not he likes them better than the wood-cuts.

Mac [John McCutcheon] is here, as well as ever. Remember me to the colony.

Sincerely,
George Ade

7 ☞ TO FRED HILD

Chicago [Illinois]
8th August, 1902

My dear Fred:—

Perhaps you have heard something of the scheme originated by Kirke Le Shelle, of New York, to organize the Bandar-Log Press, which Frank Holme has been running in a small way on his own account.

Holme's friends have agreed to subscribe for shares of stock and send Frank to Arizona, where he may get out his little books and at the same time recover his health. The shares of stock cost $25.00 each, and we want you to take one share if you can do so. We want Holme to start to Arizona right away, as the doctors advise him that it is necessary. We are going to put the Bandar-Log Press on a business basis and every stock holder will get a copy of the books, which are to be issued four (4) a year, and also will get his share of any profit that may accrue. John McCutcheon and I have charge of the Chicago subscription list, and we shall have prospectuses out in a few days. In the meantime, if you are disposed to take a share of stock, please send a cheque for $25.00 to Kirke Le Shelle, Knickerbocker Theatre Building, New York City.

Very truly yours,
George Ade

Fred Hild was the city librarian of the Chicago Public Library.
Ade wrote Frank C. Lockwood, May 25, 1927 (CSmH):

Frank Holme was a very good black and white artist who had done both newspaper and magazine work. Along about 1902 he was in Arizona trying to save his lungs. While out there he issued the little books of the Bandar Log Press, carving the wood cut illustrations himself and borrowing the type from a local newspaper office. The name “Bandar Log” was borrowed from [Rudyard] Kipling. I have
a few copies of my own stories done by Frank in Arizona. Since starting to dictate this letter I have dug up these little books and find that they were printed at the office of "El Progresso," Phoenix during the summer and autumn of 1903.

See Edwin B. Hill, More Than a Memory (Ysleta, Texas: 1936). This pamphlet contains a memoir of Frank Holme and the Bandar Log Press.

TO R. H. RUSSELL

Chicago, Illinois
[Spring? 1903]

Dear Mr. Russell:

I am sending the Sultan half-tone proofs to you direct because I want to make a request or two in connection with illustrating of the book. I notice that Miss [Gertrude] Quinlan (Chiquita) does not figure in any of the pictures. As you know she is the manager's pet. I have protested against her appearance in the piece and [Henry] Savage knows that I do not like her work. If her picture is omitted from the book, he will think that I am deliberately trying to slight her and get back at him. We must put her in, whether she ornaments the work or not. Also I wish you would get in the soldiers somewhere, either as volunteers or Imperial Guards. If possible use three or four additional pictures and bring in the other principals. These actors are given to small jealousies and if any are left out, there will be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. Rush the proofs.

Sincerely,

George Ade

Colonel Henry Savage produced The Sultan of Sulu. Ade and Savage were at odds over script revisions. Ade revised the operetta several times. He reduced the script from three acts to two, kept twenty-two of forty-six songs at the insistence of Savage. Later Ade and Savage quarreled over royalties. Ade wrote L. C. Wiswell of the Savage organization, November 30, 1915 (InLP), indicating that Savage was unfair in his royalty demands. Ade wrote Daniel L. Brown, September 15, 1930 (InLP):

Mr. Savage showed a disposition to claim one-half of all royalties which might come to me from any source on account of the old plays, I indicated a willingness to establish a flat rate of one-third to him for all of the old plays but that was based upon the assump-
tion that he was going to do some business with the old plays but he never turned up any business. Every one of the old pictures ever sold was sold by me or through my agents and Mr. Savage or the Savage office turned up to claim a percentage without even turning over a hand. I have read the contracts carefully and I am convinced, and my opinion is backed up by legal authorities, that I absolutely own all of the rights in all of the old plays except possibly THE SULTAN OF SULU and PEGGY FROM PARIS.
My dear Wheelock:—

As I wired you last night, I cannot give any definite assurances as to the time when I can have the piece finished until I know how much re-writing will have to be done on the musical piece we are bringing out; we never can tell until after the first performance.

I have a letter from Miss [Elisabeth] Marbury in which she says she has been talking with you in regard to getting an offer from a manager. I suggest that we do not become involved in any misunderstanding regarding Miss Marbury. I have no doubt that she is a very clever woman and that her services would be of great value to an author seeking to establish connections with managers but I cannot see that her services would be of any value to one who is seeking to avoid connections with managers; in other words, I have had more offers than I wish to entertain and have had several offers for the piece which I mentioned to you, the terms being fully as liberal as those suggested by Miss Marbury. There was nothing in my conversation with her which would justify her in believing that I wished her to approach any managers in my behalf and I have written Mr. Charles Frohman to that effect. As I told you, I am not at all over-anxious to do any play writing for a long time to come and it would be nonsense for me to give Miss Marbury 10% of my royalties in order to induce her to make contracts for me when I don’t want the contracts made. All that I want is to be let alone. You are the only man on earth that I have promised to talk business with at all for the next year. Because of my personal esteem for you and my faith in your abilities, I did tell you that I would take up with your manager a proposition in regard to the piece we have discussed.

Candidly, and without any reflection on our very clever friend I don’t think we need the intervention of Miss Marbury. She would claim 10% of all the royalties that may ever come to me and I cannot figure out how she would be entitled to them since I already have two or three offers for the piece, some of them being much more liberal than those she mentioned in her letter. It is not so much a matter of terms with me as being associated with people in whom I have confidence and with whom I can work in sympathy.

There is no need of having any smash-up with Miss Marbury;
simply let her know that I will be very busy on other matters for a time and then later on, if we decide to come down to cases with Mr. Frohman or any one else, we can do so without referring the matter to her.

With best wishes,
George Ade

While Ade was working on The Sho-Gun Elizabeth Marbury, the theatrical agent, wrote him about handling The College Widow and The County Chairman. Ade wrote Miss Marbury, February 25 and 29, 1904 (InLP), emphatically stating his unwillingness to employ an agent. He wrote Charles Dillingham, the theatrical manager, February 25, 1904 (InLP), explaining his agreement with Jan Wheelock and asked Dillingham to inform Charles Frohman, the producer, of the "little three-act piece" (The Bad Samaritan) he had outlined and intended as a vehicle for Wheelock.
tee of protection. I most certainly will not consent to any reduction of the royalties and I suggest that in fairness to all persons concerned you do not transfer these publication rights until you are sure that you have the legal right under our present contract.

For instance we have in our contract a clause declaring that the agreement shall be null and void if payments are not made at the time specified. This clause has been violated by you but I have not taken advantage of it to nullify the contract but shall do so if necessary to protect my rights.

Under the circumstances I think the reasonable thing to do would be to compromise and allow me to take back these books since you no longer find them salable. I shall be glad to hear from you regarding your views of the matter.

Yours truly,
George Ade


11 ⚪ TO JOHN ADE

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
May 17, 1905.

Dear Father:—

I am enclosing a letter from Mr. Hotchkiss of Chicago in regard to the naming of the new station on the railroad. If you don't wish to be immortalized now is your time to object.

I heard that he was going to glorify me by giving my name to the station, so I wrote to him and begged him not to do so. I suggested, also, the name of Bluford. I did not request him to name the station Ade, but I did say that if any one in our family was to get any credit here in Newton County it should be you on account of your long association with Newton County affairs.

If, for any reason, you prefer not to have this name used perhaps you had better communicate with Mr. Hotchkiss. Personally I don't see why you should object.
1905

Am coming over to see you in a day or two,—as soon as the weather and the roads will permit.
Give my love to all.

Enc. InLP

Sincerely, George Ade

TO ALICE FISCHER HARCOURT

[New York, New York] November 4, 1905

My Dear Mrs. Harcourt:
I have received your very kind invitation and am wondering if I could muster the courage to attend your Club Meeting and be publically unveiled. The fact is I am heading for Indiana on Monday, so that I may help save the country on Tuesday. For a Hoosier not to vote is almost a crime. So I am going back to retain my standing.
I shall be in N. Y. occasionally during the winter, and hope that some day we shall meet.
Thank you very much for remembering me, with such a cordial invitation.
I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely yours,
George Ade

Museum of City of New York

Alice Fischer (Mrs. William Harcourt) was born in Indiana. During the 1890s this actress did melodramatic parts. By the 1900s she was playing comic roles.

TO E. A. BRADEN

Brook, Ind. Nov. 7, 1905

THE TITLE: I quite agree with Mr. [Henry] Savage, from whom I had a letter yesterday, that it will be advisable to change the name and have in mind several titles which I will put down here for your consideration:
Fifty-two years young.
The Old Boy.
The Unhappy Millionaire.
Uncle Ike.
Uncle Ben.
Uncle Ben's Money.
Second Time on Earth. (A musical piece by this title has been produced.)
The Elderly Boy.

Of these titles I rather fancy either one of the first two. I believe it has been the rule that the plays with money mentioned in the title have never appealed strongly to the public whereas the idea of the old fellow becoming a boy again is always popular. THE OLD BOY would be a very short, simple and catchy title; probably it has been registered but I don't think it has been used. Whichever title you decide to use I would announce that the play will be "A Farcical Play with Music."

MUSIC: My principal idea in suggesting the use of music was to permit [Raymond] Hitchcock to retain the songs which, I understand, went exceeding well in DAWSON. So far as I have outlined the stuff in my mind I have made no provision for any elaborate or conventional musical numbers. My idea was to open the piece with a number of young people playing country games on the lawn in front of the hotel and to have incidental music continue throughout these games and perhaps have them introduce one or two of the old-fashioned singing games which went so well in the SHO-GUN, but of course not repeating anything that we have done before. Incidental to the first act I want UNCLE IKE to have an old fashioned singing school in which he lines off the songs to the young people and they sing it after him. This is the old fashioned way of singing, and I never have seen it done on the stage. Also he may have organized a very bad male quartette which attempts a selection and breaks down. I don't want any trained voices or any serious vocal treatment, but just a little incident. I think his best song should be introduced in the first act also so that the second act will be given over to rapid, farcical complications. I think I have a scheme now for leading up to an effective climax. In brief, let us not struggle to find places for the introduction of music and let us not use any unless we are sure that it will be effective. I think that Hitch wants to retain some of the music that he used in DAWSON and there will be no difficulty in finding spots for it.
THE CAST: This will be radically changed and our effort will be to eliminate as many of the elderly characters as possible and try to pervade the whole piece with the spirit of youth the same as in THE WIDOW. We will retain some of the characters that we used before but they will not be of the same relative importance. For instance, the young fellow who loves JESSIE will now be the lawyer employed by UNCLE IKE to fight the nephew for possession of the property, thus giving the part a dramatic interest that it did not have before. I will enumerate the principal parts as I now have them in mind with various suggestions concerning them and I hope you can get enough of an idea to permit you to cast the piece. Some of these names may be changed, but I will give you merely a suggestion of characters.

UNCLE IKE (or UNCLE BEN): This will be Hitchcock's part and we will try to give him most of the fat.

ALONZE, [Alonzo?] the nephew: This part will be much the same in character as it was before although possibly not of so much relative importance.

HIGGINS: Proprietor of the hotel—very much the same as before, as I think it is a good part if we elaborate the interest in the struggle between HIGGINS and UNCLE IKE to capture the housekeeper. The rivalry between them should be more probable and interesting as Hitchcock will play UNCLE IKE as a younger man.

JACK WESTON, returned from the Golden West. This is a young mining expert who owns a gold mine out west and is trying to raise money to work it. UNCLE IKE backs the scheme heavily thinking it is a good way in which to squander the money before the nephew can get hold of it. At the end of the second act when all of Uncle Ike's reckless speculation suddenly turns in his favor and make[s] him twice as rich as he was before the young miner returns from the west with a barrel of money and in the last act captures one of the village girls who has been waiting for him.

(The parts of GALLOWAY, McGEE, JONES and GARCELINI will be cut out absolutely.)

SPILLERS: This part will be retained much the same as before except that the love interest between him and the village belle will be elaborated and as a greater period of time elapses between the first and last acts his slangy scene in the last act will be more consistent and probable.

THOMAS GILROY WEBB, the young lawyer in love with JESSIE GRIDLEY: This part will be entirely rebuilt and will be an energetic and oratorical young lawyer who is striving to capture
JESSIE and at the same time is compelled to turn her parents out of doors.

PURKEY, the Notary Public. I think we can retain this part and perhaps make a little something out of it. The same is true of HENRY, the boy who works in the livery barn.

MR. FOX, of the detective agency. I believe his pantomime bit in the second act can be made very effective with Hitchcock and it will be retained.

THE CHAUFFEUR: I have been told by Mr. [Charles] Frohman and others who saw the piece that this is the best bit in the piece and it will be retained.

The Waiter, Bell-Boy and other small bits can be easily handled.

THE WOMEN.

MISS WHEATLEY, housekeeper. I have great faith in this part if it is played as a strong-minded character woman. It will be entirely changed and must be played as a vigorous matronly woman of thirty-five or so. I believe it is possible to have a very effective comedy love interest between Hitchcock and this woman, whose principal reason for refusing to marry him is the fact that he has money and she is afraid that people will say that she married for money. This will give IKE an excuse for blowing in his capital.

MRS. ALONZO: I think it will be necessary to retain this part although it was not very effective before. It will not be an important part but will help to give variety to the characterization.

JESSIE: This part should be improved by the development of a dramatic interest in her love affair with young WEBB.

BELLE HINKLE: This part will be of much the same character as before but probably can be made more effective by making it more positively a low comedy character.

BESSIE PUTNAM: This will be the girl with whom the young miner is in love and to whom he becomes reconciled after his return from the west.

BITS: About a half dozen attractive girls who in the first act are at the village lawn party. At the end of the first act UNCLE IKE takes them under his wing to give them a seminary education in the city. In the second act (three months later) they have blossomed out as seaside belles with city manners and in the last act they are back at the old town dazzling the natives.

(NOTE: I am in doubt regarding the part of LAURA who becomes the French Maid. The part was played in such an exagger-
ated and grotesque manner that it was absolutely impossible so I think I will play safe and cut it out entirely.)

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS REGARDING CAST AND EXTRA PEOPLE

So far as I am concerned I want no large crowd, no variegated costumes and no attempt at spectacular effects. Even in the second act where we will have all of our people at the seashore I want simply light colored summery costumes. I want the piece to depend upon the new situations which we introduce, upon the lines and upon character drawings, and not to attempt anything suggestive of spectacle or extravaganza. In other words, if we haven't got the goods we cannot help it a particle by making it a cumbersome or expensive production.

THE SCENERY: There will be three sets. The first scene will be laid at New Boston in the spring, the second scene will be laid at the seashore three months later and the third will be back at New Boston in the autumn. For the first scene we can use the present set, except that I would like more stage room, take out the pumpkin patch and the corn fields up stage and give us more elbow-room. Make it more wide and free and open the same as the first act of THE WIDOW or the second act of THE CHAIRMAN. I think this can be done with very little trouble. Put some rustic benches at stage L built around the trees or put under the trees so that UNCLE IKE can group the young people in front of him when he is conducting his old-fashioned singing-school. For the second act I want a semi-interior at the seashore. At R and L are the entrances to the seaside hotel which may be in light colors and not fancy. Overhead, sheltering this half-enclosed court, a striped awning. At the rear opening out from this semi-interior is the long promenade or board walk leading off right and left and beyond that the open sea. I don't want anything gorgeous or spectacular about the set, but would like to have it in good taste suggestive of first class establishments and harmonizing in tone and decorative effect with the simple summery costumes that will be worn in this act. The third scene will be once more in New Boston. I thought that in THE SAMARITAN we could get a finer result by showing the first scene with autumn effects in the trees and the vegetation. For some reason we failed to get this effect; there seemed to be no striking contrast between the first set and the last and therefore if it is possible I should like to vary the last act set showing the autumn effects and also the country hotel, but looking at the whole picture.
from another point of view. If possible move the hotel building over to stage L so that if we were looking at it from the north in the first act we are now looking at it from the south. This will necessitate changing the panorama drop at the rear but it will vary the pictures and I believe that in a three-act piece of this kind it would not be safe to duplicate two of our sets. On the other hand I think that the three sets as I have indicated them herewith will make effective stage pictures, answer all of our purposes and will not make a cumbersome production requiring long time for setting.

I am sending herewith some simple ground plans of the sets as I have them in mind. Inasmuch as the second and third act have now been welded into one act I believe that our only safe plan to head off criticisms of the kind we received in New York is to make our second act set comparatively simple. I don't see how we can modify the big third act set so as to make it answer our purposes and besides it is the safe rule in playwriting to always use an interior for a semi-interior for scenes depending upon lines or comedy situations rather than upon crowds or spectacular effects. Inasmuch as this is a farcical play and not a big musical comedy it will be a great mistake to strain for big scenic effects. In other words make each of the three sets modern and realistic and not fancy.

I hope I make myself clear on this point.

As I said before the only assurance I can give you is that I will go right to work and prepare the stuff as rapidly as possible. You can help me if you will let me know which of the parts [Flora] ZABELLE will probably play and I will build it up accordingly. Also indicate to me just what songs or musical numbers you have on hand and wish to interpolate and I will find the spots for them. It will be better to wire me suggestions you have to make except those regarding the songs; this will probably require written explanations.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

InK

George Ade

The Bad Samaritan an Informal Comedy in Four Acts had opened at the Garden Theater in New York, September 12, 1905. The play failed. The Joseph Reeve papers (InK) contain a manuscript of Fifty-two Years Young. A Three-Act Farcical Play with Music. There is no record of this revised version of The Bad Samaritan ever having been performed.
1906

Raymond Hitchcock, a comedian under the management of Henry Savage when he starred in Easy Dawson, had recently married Flora Zabelle, an actress.

14 ➡ TO ADALINE WARDELL BUSH ADE

London [England]
Feb. 2, 1906

Dear Mother:

I suppose you received the cable announcing our safe arrival in London. We had pleasant weather nearly all the way—only one bad day and on deck it was so warm that we seldom wore our overcoats. As this is my fourth visit to London, I feel at home here, I have done but little sight-seeing, although Will Kent and Will Esten have been going around every day with a guide. We expect to leave here next week and after a few days in Paris, sail from Marseilles for Alexandria, Egypt on Feb. 14. We do not know how long we shall remain in Cairo—it depends on how we like it. All of us are feeling pretty well and enjoying our trip. Give my love to all.

Sincerely,

InK

George

Will Kent, the son of the founder of Kentland, Indiana, Ade’s birthplace, was a childhood friend, as was Will Esten.

15 ➡ TO CHARLES BELMONT DAVIS

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
June 20, 1906.

My dear Davis:—

I am sending you herewith a number of clippings to show you the kind of “overheard conversations” I used to do for the daily papers. Some of them are pretty crude but they will give you the idea. There are specimens of boy-talk, chappy-talk, girl-talk, streetcar-conversations, etc. You can run them over and indicate which you like the best. Also I have sent several monologues or “thoughts spoken aloud.” I have thought that “innermost thoughts” would be a good heading for a series of this kind. For instance you will find
one on the innermost thoughts of the hobo. This was done hastily for the newspaper years ago; it could now be rewritten and greatly improved. Would the fact that I used this stuff in the newspapers years ago make it unsaleable now provided the stuff is entirely reconstructed? Or would you want me to get up something entirely new following the lines of some of the stuff I sent you?

After you have looked over this stuff please pin to the various clippings any comments or suggestions you wish to make and return them all to me.

I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

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Charles Belmont Davis of Collier’s did not publish any articles based on the clippings Ade describes.

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16  TO CHARLES W. FAIRBANKS

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
January 10, 1907

My dear Mr. Fairbanks:

We have as postmaster at Brook, Indiana, a very capable, courteous and efficient man named Morris A. Jones. He is an old soldier, a good Republican and I don’t know why any one should want to see him put out, but I have heard that complaints are being lodged against him and that somebody here, I don’t know just who, is trying to get his job.

I trust that he will be retained and I give you my assurance that he has conducted the office in a manner highly satisfactory to this community.

Mr. Jones has not asked me to intercede in his behalf, and I am not sure that there is any immediate danger of his removal, but I have learned that an effort is being made to remove him and if you are at liberty to make any suggestions in the matter of his retention and feel disposed to do so, I want to assure you that you will make no mistake.

Largely through his efforts the business of the local office has been developed until, on January 1st, it was advanced to the third class and now that the office pays a fixed salary of attractive dimensions somebody else wants it.
1907

I regret to say that I am detained at home by the very critical illness of my mother. We are much alarmed regarding her condition. Remember me to Mrs. Fairbanks and permit me to thank you again for your extreme kindness to me while I was in Washington. With best wishes,

Sincerely,
George Ade

Charles W. Fairbanks was vice-president of the United States 1905–1909.
Morris A. Jones retained his position as postmaster.
Adeline Ade died January 26, 1907.

17 ☞ TO JOHN M. STUDEBAKER

May 10, 1907

UNDERSTAND YOU ARE NEGOTIATING WITH CHARLES DILLINGHAM REGARDING LEASE OF STUDEBAKER THEATRE. SINCERELY TRUST YOU MAY COME TO AGREEMENT WITH HIM AS I BELIEVE HE IS MOST ENTERPRISING AND RELIABLE OF THE MANAGERS. AM WRITING MY NEW PLAY FOR HIM AND HOPE IT CAN BE PUT ON AT STUDEBAKER THIS FALL. BELIEVE WE CAN DUPLICATE SUCCESS OF CHAIRMAN AND WIDOW.

GEORGE ADE

Artie advertising postcard
John M. Studebaker and his brothers owned the largest vehicle works in the world. J. M. Studebaker also owned the Studebaker Theater, Chicago, Illinois. He was a friend of Ade’s father.

Ade was adapting Artie for the stage.

18 ❂ TO JOHN M. DICKEY

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
June 3, 1907

My dear Mr. Dickey:

I am grateful to you for your cordial letter but I am still unconvinced regarding any “call” to the rostrum. I do know, however, that I can do much better than I did at La Fayette. I have no hankering to undertake any platform engagements as long as I can get money doing something else, but as I wrote you once before, if I decide to tackle this form of graft I will communicate with you.

I am with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

Ade wrote Robert Mountsier, June 30, 1908, and Aug. 24, 1908 (NJP), refusing to speak at the University of Michigan.

19 ❂ TO LA TOUCHA HANCOCK

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
July 16, 1907.

Dear Mr. Hancock:

I don’t know that I have any definite opinion as to the wisdom of keeping up a course of reading while doing a protracted job of writing. When a man gets to working on a job under pressure, he doesn’t want to read anything except ball scores. I think a little reading on the side would not hurt under any conditions, and when a man is writing plays it will help him to read from the good modern plays every day in order to remind himself of the importance of keeping dialogue boiled down.

Yours truly,

George Ade
(Ernest) La Toucha Hancock contributed verse and humor to magazines and newspapers. Desultory Verse, 1913, is representative of his work.

20 TO B. F. LAWRENCE

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
November 26, 1907

My dear Sir:

Pardon my delay in acknowledging receipt of your letter. I cannot recall that I did anything in the dramatic line until about ten years ago, when I submitted to May Irwin a little one-act play entitled "Mrs. Peckham's Carouse." Much to my surprise she accepted the play and sent me a check for $200. It seemed wrong to accept such a large sum of money for such a small manuscript but I needed the two hundred and I kept it. Miss Irwin put the manuscript into her trunk and forgot about it.

Occasionally during the last ten years I have been tempted to return the money to her feeling that I had obtained it under false pretenses. Last winter she was in violent need of a one-act play to fill out an evening's entertainment, so she fished out my first effort and played it. Much to her surprise and much to mine, the little play was highly successful. I had always regarded it as the crude and amateurish attempt of a beginner, but the critics, who supposed that it had been written the week before, recognized in it a ripening improvement in technique, construction, sub-plot, etc., (which are understood only by critics) over certain other plays.

"Mrs. Peckham's Carouse" seemed to excite so little enthusiasm on the part of Miss Irwin that it was five years before I had the courage to take a second dip into the troubled waters of dramatic authorship with The Sultan of Sulu.

Yours truly,
George Ade

B. F. Lawrence was the managing editor of the Indianapolis Star. According to Irving Lewis, "Written Hurriedly on a Pullman Car and Produced Therein, etc." New York Telegraph, Sept. 25, 1904, Ade created his first dramatic effort "Conquered in the F.[irst] R.[ound]: or Woo by Force," in 1894. The reporter concocted this farce while traveling by train to cover the Midwinter Fair in San Francisco. John McCutcheon made
handbills which the journalists-turned-actors passed throughout the train. No women responded to the invitation, but the "Pullman Car Monadnock Theatorium" was packed with male passengers who witnessed two Chicagoans, Hogan (The West Side Chicken) and Tandy (The North Side Nobby One), stage a fight in McCaffrey's Gymnasium to decide who would win the girl both loved. After the slapstick pugilism, Ade and McCutcheon, dressed in formal attire, traded jokes in "Sidewalk Conversation," and finished with a song.

In 1897 Ade wrote "The Back-Stair Investigation," which he labeled "a satirical take-off on the attempt to discover wickedness in our beloved city." This spoof of the Baxter Investigation, which poked fun at the political chicanery rife in Chicago politics, was written for the team of Hap Ward and Harry Vokes while they were playing at the Great Northern Theater.

Amy Leslie had suggested that Mae Irwin contact Ade to write her a comedy. Ade wrote Mrs. Peckham's Carouse in 1898. Miss Irwin incorporated the skit into her vaudeville act in 1905. See Mrs. Peckham's Carouse, ed. Richard Cordell (Press of the Indiana Kid: Pawnee, Indiana, 1963).

21 TO WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT

New York, New York
June 20, 1908

ACCEPT MOST CORDIAL CONGRATULATIONS YOURS FOR GOD FOR COUNTRY
AND FOR YOU.

DLC

GEO ADE

22 TO FRED SIMS

[Hazelden]
[Brook, Indiana]
August 26, 1908.

My dear Mr. Sims:

I write you in regard to our rally here on September 30th. Please regard what I say about Charley Hernly as confidential. I don't want to hurt his feelings and I am not making any complaint against him, but he, meaning well, has put me into an embarrassing position.
When he was up here last summer he proposed to some of the republicans here that we should have a big rally here this fall. We were heartily in favor of it, so he went back to Indianapolis and gave out an interview announcing a barbecue here at the Farm, and saying that thirty steers would be slaughtered to feed the multitude. I regarded this announcement as one of Charley's jokes until the other day I found a big first-page article in the Star to the effect that this rally would be the most stupendous affair ever pulled off in northwestern Indiana, and that I would kill forty steers in order that the republican host might be fed.

Since this second publication I find that all the people in this part of the state are considerably worked up. They have taken Mr. Hernly seriously. Aside from the fact that forty good steers would cost at least $4,000, the republican [carbon incomplete]

InLP

Ade refers to the rally held for William Howard Taft who opened his Indiana campaign for the presidency at Hazelden, September 23, 1908.

23 TO WARREN T. MC CRAY

Benares [India]
Mch 11, [1909]

At last we have struck a country in which the cow is respected according to her real merits.

InK

G. A.

This postcard depicting Anapurna Cow Temple, Benares, was sent to Ade's brother-in-law, who raised prize Herefords. Ade sent many postcards to his sister's family, most of which he addressed to his niece, Marian McCray. Since Marian collected postcards, Ade usually just dated and signed his contributions to her album.
TO W. M. TAYLOR

[Algiers]
[March 24, 1909]

I have just had a rye & soda but this is all I could see of her face.

InK

G Ade

*Ade refers to the photo of a veiled Moorish woman on the postcard.*

*It was his custom to write a “one-liner” referring to the picture.*
WHO? GEORGE ADE? WELL, I DON'T EXACTLY KNOW HIM BUT MY COUSIN LIVES WITHIN HALF A BLOCK OF A TAILOR WHO PRESSED A PAIR OF PANTS FOR HIM ONCE

GOSH!

THE SULTAN OF SULU
BY GEORGE ADE
COMIC OPERA AT STUMENTHREE THEATRE

TWO GEORGE ADE FANS MAKE A CLOSE CONTACT WITH THEIR HERO

Drawn by H. T. Webster