The second decade of this century was perplexing. There was ferment as new ideas clashed with old traditions. The avant garde expressed itself in publications such as *The Masses*, and clamored for social and political reform. In addition to publishing books and articles at which America chuckled, Ade was also interested in improving conditions, but his middle-brow approach was to work within the framework of existing institutions. Although Ade was vitally interested in the man who thought the White House a bully pulpit as well as in Theodore Roosevelt’s Progressive Party, his political concerns were centered on the state rather than on the national level. His country club, activities as a board member and benefactor of Purdue University, and work for the State Council of Defense all point to a localizing of interests during the World War era when everyone pitched in to make the world safe for democracy.
My dear Mr. Barrett:

I am in need of information, and I believe you are the man best qualified to give it to me, although I do not want to draw too heavily upon your time and patience. I am undertaking a play dealing incidentally with some experiences of an American Minister in an imaginary Republic somewhat on the order of the smaller republics of Central and South America.

In the case of a minister to one of the smaller and less important republics, what would be his official family?

What would be the name of his official residence? The consul’s home is a consulate, and an ambassador lives at the embassy; but where does the ordinary medium kind of minister live?

Would his secretary and confidential man for dealing with the general public probably be an American or a resident of the country?

Would there be a military attache?

How far would his authority go, unaided by instructions from Washington, in preventing local authorities from dealing with American citizens who have become involved in a local revolutionary movement? This covers a lot of ground, and you need not bother to go into any discourse on the powers and limitations of a minister, but I thought possibly you could give me an idea in a few words.

I want very much to conform to the possibilities if not the probabilities in my comedy. It is being written for William H. Crane, and he will play the self-made, homely, rather unpolished type of American who is not well acquainted with the rules of diplomacy, but manages to acquit himself with credit because he is a man of action and possessed of rugged common sense.

If there is any printed document laying down rules for the guidance of American ministers of course it might be a big help to me.

I have visited American ministers and consuls in all parts of the world, have been through the West Indies a couple of times and to South America once, and I know something of the general atmosphere of these Caribbean countries and the social customs, but of course I am not familiar with the rules of the state department. If you can help me in getting a line on the exact scope of the duties of an American minister to one of these smaller republics I will be exceedingly grateful.
In response to Ade's request for information pertinent to his writing U. S. Minister Bedloe, John Barrett, director general of the Pan-American Union, urged the playwright to insert favorable comments about stable South American governments, then answered each question in detail.

26 📝 TO HELEN HERRON TAFT

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
June 21—1911.

My Dear Mrs. Taft:

I was happy to find myself invited to your anniversary festivities and I am sending—even though a day or two late—a little piece of silver that may possess the merit of being different. I found it in Java, and it is a good specimen of native workmanship.

You and Judge [William Howard] Taft, as we still feel impelled to call him, have our neighborhood best wishes for many pleasant years.

Sincerely,

George Ade

27 📝 TO MC CLURE NEWSPAPER SYNDICATE

October 21, 1911.

Gentlemen:

I am sending this in care of the McClure Company as I have a notion that you have moved since I had any correspondence with you. I write to ask you to tell me whatever you are at liberty to tell regarding the present syndicating of fables. Perhaps you know that they are being syndicated without my authority and in opposition to my wishes.

The facts in the case are as follows. About a year ago I undertook a series of twelve sketches of 1500 words each for Mr. Norman Mack of Buffalo. The stuff was to be printed in his Sunday Maga-
zine which is circulated as a supplement to certain Sunday newspapers. After I had written seven of the stories I became involved in other work, and also desired to take a trip to the West Indies, so I expressed a desire to discontinue the series. Mr. Mack asked me to complete it. I told him that if he would permit me to stop the series for a while I would break my solemn vow not to write any more fables, and would write him five installments of fables, of 1500 words for each for the same price that I had been receiving for the sketches, namely, $150.00 each.

I explained to him that I could get much more for the fables by syndicating them in the Sunday newspapers, but I did not care to assume the perils and responsibilities of a new series, but would have no objection to writing just a few for his magazine. I did not make any legal stipulation that he should not syndicate the stuff but I most certainly indicated my wishes in the matter, and besides we had a very definite understanding that the stuff I was writing for him would appear in the Sunday Magazine and then revert to me if I wished to put it in a book later.

After I wrote the first fable he asked me to split the stuff up into short ones. I did so. He took the five installments for which I received a grand total of $750.00 and syndicated them through your agency, as I have since learned. I had no indication of his plans until I saw myself billed like a circus all over Chicago.

Now, if I am not breaking into your confidential arrangements with Mr. Mack, I would like to know what success you have had in handling the present series. Whether or not they have been favorably received and whether or not it might be advisable for me to write a few more. I am back in the game against my own will but since I am once more being syndicated, I might as well get something out of it.

You will understand of course, that Mr. Mack will not figure in any future arrangements regarding the fables.

I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

The fables to which Ade refers ran from September through December, 1911, in the Chicago Daily News and other papers. Dorothy Ritter Russo, A Bibliography of George Ade 1866–1944 (Indianapolis: 1947), pp. 180–81. A number of these fables appeared in Knocking the Neighbors, 1912.
28  TO HAMLIN GARLAND

French Lick, Indiana
Nov. 15, 1911.

Dear Mr. Garland:—

Your letter has been forwarded to me.

I regret to say that I have not on hand any one-act plays except some old ones that have been used a great deal. You may remember the rather serious little play, for men characters only, which was done at the opening of the New Theater in Chicago. You are welcome to this if you care to use it, but I dare say you would not care to repeat anything so familiar.

I have a few little plays in outline but I could not promise to get them ready very soon and I could not give any assurance as to the quality after they were finished. So I fear that I can not be of help to you.

Sincerely,
George Ade

Hamlin Garland, the novelist, had urged Ade in 1895 to write a novel. Garland and Ade corresponded on occasion, but they were antipodal personalities and remained distant.

Ade's only serious play, Marse Covington, premiered at the New Theater, October 8, 1906.

29  TO ROLLAND PHILLIPS

Chicago [Illinois]
February 27, 1912.

Dear Mr. Phillips:—

Pardon the delay in answering your letter. I wanted to give it my prayerful consideration.

In the first place, the compensation you offer is altogether satisfactory. It is extremely generous. The only doubt in my mind is whether or not I should attempt any more Fables. In one month the last Fable will be printed in the McClure Syndicate. My plan for fixing up the twelve for you, will be to go over all of those that I have written and check off the ones that have been most popular and talked about, so as to get a line on the topics that have the most general appeal. I will deliver the Fables as suggested to you, but I
should like the privilege of sending on revised copies. If you will let me know the date on which each one will go to the printer, I could send on the first draft for the use of the artist and then after the stuff got cold, possibly I could go over it again and greatly improve it, for in this kind of stuff, the merit lies in the manner of telling and not in the subject matter, which is usually common-place.

Regarding the option on the twelve additional Fables I will agree to your suggestion, if it be understood that I am not under compulsion to deliver the extra twelve, in other words, there will be no additional series, except by mutual agreement, but if I do any more, certainly you shall have the option on them.

I shall be glad to submit to you any short story stuff I may do within the next year.

The only clause which needs explaining, is the one in regard to the option. I may be in your city at the end of this week, but probably you had better address your letter here. The first installment will be in your hands by April 1st.

Sincerely yours,

George Ade

Ade began publishing fables in Cosmopolitan, August, 1912, and continued to contribute fables and other pieces until 1925 when Hearst's International combined with Cosmopolitan. Ade wrote regularly for Hearst's International until 1931. See Russo, pp. 232–36, and 239–40.

Ade had other offers to syndicate his fables, but with characteristic loyalty he adhered to his original agreement. In a letter to William Gerard Chapman, head of the International Press Bureau, May 19, 1913 (VU), Ade stated that Rolland Phillips, the editor of Cosmopolitan, had syndication rights.

30 ☐ TO THOMAS R. MARSHALL

April 12, 1912

My dear Governor Marshall:—

I have a letter from your Secretary informing me that you have named me as one of 5 representatives from Indiana on the National Committee for the Celebration of the Hundredth Anniversary of Peace Among English Speaking People. I thank you for thus honoring me and I wish very much to act as a member of the Committee, but my acceptance will hinge somewhat upon the dates of the Committee Meetings. I am booked to sail for Europe early in July and
will return early in September. My plans for going are quite definite and could not easily be cancelled. Perhaps your esteemed Secretary can tell me something about the plans of the National Committee, as I say I wish to accept this very flattering appointment, but I do not think it fair to accept, unless I can actually participate in the work of the Committee.

I am with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

InLP

*Thomas Marshall was governor of Indiana, 1909–1913.*

31 ✯ TO WINFIELD T. DURBIN

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
[c.]Oct. [15, 1912]

My Dear Colonel:

Pardon the delay in answering your kind letter. I have been away from home most of the time for two weeks. What you have heard about me is true. I have enlisted with the Progressive party because, under the new alignment I wouldn't be satisfied anywhere else. The so-called progressive policies might have been made effective within the republican party and a split averted if the majority had not been overruled by the minority at the convention in June. I am heartily out of sympathy with men who dominated that convention. I dont believe I agree with them in any thing. If they constitute the authority of the party, I no longer wish to be known as a republican. But I will not quarrel with my good friends who remain with the organization.

Sincerely,

George Ade

InLP

*Winfield T. Durbin, governor of Indiana, 1901–1905, had written Ade a lengthy personal plea to reconsider his decision to join the Progressive party because Durbin felt Ade would take other Republicans with him to the new faction.*
My Dear Kurfess:

If you have won any large sums on the election, give us a lift on our house-furnishing fund. We don't like to nag the recent alumnus but if you can help us, we need the help and your example may induce some of the others to loosen up.

Sincerely,
George Ade

William Fred Kurfess married Ardis Ade, the author's niece, in 1921. Ade contributed about $25,000 to the building of the Sigma Chi Fraternity House at Purdue University. He also donated truck loads of furnishings which he had gathered in this travels. He had been elected grand consul of the Sigma Chi Fraternity in 1910.

The first tournament of the Hazelden Golf Club will be held during the week beginning October 13th.

On October 13th, 14th and 15th every member desiring to compete for the trophy must play 18 holes (twice around the course in continuous play) and turn in a carefully kept score of the total number of strokes required.

The eight contestants having the lowest scores shall be qualified to contest for the championship.

On October 16th the four pairs of contestants will be matched up by drawing the names from a hat. Each two shall play an 18-hole match. The four winners will then be matched for the semi-finals, to be placed on the afternoon of the 16th or the morning of the 17th.

The final round between the two remaining contestants will be played on the afternoon of Friday, October 17th. There will be an approaching and putting contest also, followed by the first annual dinner of the Club, at which time the prizes will be presented.

These contests are open to residents of Newton County. All
who have been invited to play on the links are considered members of the Club. Other candidates may now be admitted on the nomination of members.

Let every one take part in the preliminaries. The trophies will be on exhibition during the tournament.

InLP

George Ade

Ade wrote innumerable bulletins to the members of the country club which he built on the grounds of his estate. He usually wrote these bulletins in epistolary form, had them mimeographed, and often signed each copy. In later years Ade had a secretary or members of the club copy his signature on mass produced communications.

34

TO WILLIAM C. BOBBS

Chicago [Illinois]
January 30, 1914.

My dear Colonel—

I was glad to have your letter because it contained the first real information as to what all this fuss was about. It is evident that when you are stalking a timid bird you want to be right up on him before he suspects anything.

I thought that long wire I sent you the other day would convince anybody that I am not a candidate. However, I shall try to make this letter more emphatic, if possible. When your wire came this week, I was at the hospital. That is why I did not write you on Tuesday. Perhaps you don't know that I have been pretty badly under the weather for many months. I have not been able to do any work since early last fall. I was booked to go on a cruise to South America, starting next week, but my doctor would not permit it. And yet you suggest that I now embark on the troubled sea of politics. I am still feeling a little weak, but I have to laugh when I think of it.

Why don't you make James Whitcomb Riley your candidate this year? He is a thousand times more popular in Indiana than I could hope to be. He would enjoy the publicity and the hand-shaking and the speech-making just as much as I would, and he is almost as well qualified physically as I have been for the last six months.

If I felt strong enough to fight Gunboat Smith tomorrow I would
not even consider being a candidate for anything. I am not qualified by temperament or training to be a campaigner and I would as soon serve a term at Michigan City as sit in a legislative assembly. Furthermore, I do not propose to convert my peaceful country home into a bear pit. Also, as I have not done a stroke of remunerative work since last September and my chauffeur requires a new Packard, I am not in position at this moment to purchase immunity by financing somebody else's campaign.

Now then, why in the Lord's name, do you want to see me and talk to me? What is there to talk about? I am going to the country tomorrow to spend Sunday with my father. I am coming back here sometime Monday. On Tuesday I will be packing up; Wednesday morning I take a train to LaFayette, arriving there at one o'clock. We have a meeting of the trustees at two o'clock. I have planned to spend the evening quietly with some friends there and then take the night train to Florida.

I would gladly try to have an interview with you if there was any earthly reason for it; but why is it that you do not give me credit for knowing the state of my own mind? If [Albert] Beveridge and others are pestering you, refer them to me and I hope I can convince them that I am not a candidate for anything, although I may violate some of the U. S. Postal regulations in doing so. Just consider that we have had the interview and that it is all settled.

Sincerely,
George Ade

InLP

Senator Albert J. Beveridge and William C. Bobbs, the publisher, were both anxious for Ade to run for the state legislature on the Progressive party ticket. Ade wrote G. R. Coffin, February 15, 1911 (InLP), reiterating his decision not to seek political office. Ade continually refused to participate actively in politics although he remained interested in government throughout his life.

35 ☝️ TO THE NEW YORK TIMES

Hazelden
Brook, Ind.
[Autumn, 1914]

I suppose the best joke or anecdote a man ever hears is the latest new one. For some reason the joke that I seem to remember
best of all is a very brief wheeze that I caught from the pages of a funny paper several years ago.

Two solemn-looking gentlemen are riding together in a railway carriage. One gentleman says to the other, "Is your wife entertaining this Summer?" Whereupon the second gentleman replies: "Not very."

I know it is a chestnut now, but it will always seem fresh and glistening to me.

New York Times

George Ade

The Times asked seventeen humorists to give their favorite joke. The letters of reply were published under the title "What is Best Joke? Answered by Humorists," New York Times, November 1, 1914.

36 ☞ TO WINTHROP ELLSWORTH STONE

Chicago, Illinois
4th January, 1915.

My dear Dr. Stone:

I have your letter, and before it came I had learned something about the scrapping between the coaches and the Athletic Director.

I hesitate to make any definite suggestion at this time. I believe that the final and proper solution of the problem of directing athletic contests will be to have the general control vested in a Board in which the faculty, the alumni and the undergraduates will be equally represented. I do not believe that the alumni representatives should be members of the faculty. They should be men of sufficient age and experience to permit them to stand as a kind of buffer between the intemperate zeal of the under-graduates and the restraining conservatism of the faculty. I believe you will find out that in colleges which have adopted this plan of control the faculty and alumni usually work together to correct and modify the too-ambitious projects of the students. I believe this Board should select a good coach for each department of sport and that it should have a capable business manager who has no connection with the work of coaching. The plan of having one Athletic Director and giving him supreme control might work out all right if you could accomplish the miracle of getting a man who would command the loyal affection of the students and win a large majority of his games.

Chicago has [Alonzo] Stagg and for a long time Huff came very
near being the boss of Illinois, but even Illinois has changed her plan and George Huff is very much in favor of giving the students a voice in the management.

I can well understand that faculty members often become discouraged when compelled to abide by student legislation, but we must remember that the men in college average more than 21 years of age and are supposed to be ready to go out and manage important business affairs, and I believe the modern policy will continue to be to give the under-graduates certain legislative powers, even if they do mess things up once in a while.

A Board, such as I have suggested, would control the general athletic policy of the University and select the coaches, but it would not undertake to deprive the faculty of the right to pass upon the eligibility of any athlete, supervise the financial management or reserve a final veto power if some action of the Board went squarely against the best traditions of the school. I think that even in Yale and other eastern schools, where student control is very strong, the faculty would always have the power of a kind of supreme court, if it cared to assert it.

I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

Winthrop Ellsworth Stone was president of Purdue University, 1900–1921.

Alonzo Stagg was director of athletics at the University of Chicago.

George Huff was director of athletics at the University of Illinois.

My dear Elsie Janis:—

Confirming my wire of last evening I am more than pleased to turn the play over to you if I receive the royalty usually paid for regular union author and can have some assurance that it will be prepared and produced by people who know their business. If you are on the job I think the piece will be protected. As I wired you, I could not undertake the immediate preparation of a scenario but
I will be glad to go over the book and make suggestions and possibly revise the dialogue and subtitles.

Remember me to your mother.

Sincerely,
George Ade

Elsie Janis, the actress-comedienne who had starred in the stage play, requested that Ade let her do a film version of The Fair Co-Ed.

Ade wrote Thomas Meighan, July 14, 1927 (InLP),

Last year Mr. [William Randolph] Hearst bought for his Cosmopolitan picture outfit the old play which I did for Elsie Janis called THE FAIR CO-ED. It was understood that I would do nothing on the play. Mr. Hearst and Marian Davies have been looking over the play and they want to change the character of the star part. In doing so, they have wiped out the old play. Ray Long and Salisbury Field met me in Chicago about three weeks ago and explained the situation to me and asked me to submit an outline which would permit the star to play a yap country girl.

The Fair Co-Ed was never filmed.

38 TO CHARLES DENNIS

Belleair Heights, Fla.
March 12, 1916

Dear Mr. Dennis:

I am much pleased to have your letter and I wish I could get frolicsome and try to report a real fight once more. I remember that Mr. [Victor] Lawson, discovering that the lowbrow public was feverishly interested in these polite arguments, used to send me on every time when two of the champions got together. I rather enjoyed seeing them and I would not mind watching the big fellows in the approaching contest, but my plans are such that I cannot be in New York on the date of their controversy.

I trust you are well and happy.

Sincerely,
George Ade

This letter is printed in Charles Dennis, Victor Lawson (Chicago: 1935), p. 165.
Because Ade had given "remarkable service at pugilists' training camps and prize fights" in the 1890s, Charles Dennis had tried to get Ade to cover the Jess Willard–Frank Moran fight of March 25, 1916, for the Chicago Daily News.

TO WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
April 17, 1916.

My dear White:

I find awaiting me the book you were good enough to send and I sure thank you for remembering me, and for the pleasure I have found in the reading. No doubt you are enjoying the political spectacle just at present. Our old friends of the old party are in a bad way. One year ago, it seemed certain that all they had to do was name some dignified old party wearing a frock coat, and having a church connection, and land him right in the White House. It is now evident that the voters have no hankering for any old Ruff who refuses to admit that there is a war in Europe. I don't know what is going to happen, but it looks as if the Colonel [Theodore Roosevelt] might be in evidence.

I am with best wishes,

Sincerely,

DLC

George Ade


On May 25, 1916, Ade and other writers sent White the following wire (InLP): "WE A COMMITTEE REPRESENTING MANY AMERICAN AUTHORS HAVE SIGNED AN ADDRESS TO [THEODORE] ROOSEVELT EXPRESSING THE HOPE THAT HE WILL BE THE NEXT PRESIDENT MAY WE ADD YOUR NAME PLEASE WIRE ANSWER IMMEDIATELY TO HAMLIN GARLAND TWELVE VAN-DERBILT AVE NEW YORK CITY."

Ade wrote Hamlin Garland, September 17, 1916 (CLSR), endorsing Charles Evans Hughes for vice president.
TO MR. WENGLER

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana

Dear Mr. Wengler:

I have your long and friendly letter. Of course, I do not undertake to write plays of any sort on order. It takes just as much time and hard pumping to write a college play as any other kind of a play, and no college club could afford to pay what an author counts on receiving in the way of royalties from any sort of success. The work I have done for Purdue has been not only gratis, but I have followed it up with plenty of hard coin. Believe me, I am not looking for another job as private playwright for a college dramatic club. At the same time, I am always willing to help out, if I can do so without involving myself too deeply. If your club wished to take the Revue done at Purdue last winter and local-ize it for your own club, dividing up the authorship, I would be quite willing for you to use the manuscript and I think that you could get all the music and parts from the club managers at Purdue. I have nothing in manuscript form that would be of any use to you, and under no circumstances would I attempt the presentation of anything that would serve for a whole evening’s entertainment.

I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

Ade had written Around the Campus for presentation by the Harlequin Club of Purdue University April 24, 1916. Ade enlisted the help of Charles Dillingham and Irving Berlin on the revue which was elaborate, if deja vu. Around the Campus boasted a college widow, a fair co-ed, and a football cheering scene.

TO THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Belleair Heights, Fla.
March 7th, 1917.

My dear Colonel:

Thank you very much for the book. I think I have read most of the articles as they came out but I shall read them again with satisfaction and profit.
During the past few months I have been with you more emphatically and more angrily than ever before. I am wondering now if, when the time comes for us to make a show of defending ourselves, the bewildered people will accept with confidence a leadership which never has had any confidence in itself. More power to you! You were on to him from the very start. He was re-elected by an incredible fluke and I really believe that he regards his re-election as a vindication of the policy of inaction. [Edgar G.] Sisson of the Metropolitan [Magazine] came down to see me the other day and he tells me what I never knew before—that Col. [Edward M.] House has been urging the Professor [Woodrow Wilson] for many months to arm this country and get it ready, but even his counsel is rejected. When Robinson Crusoe refuses to confer with his man Friday he surely does find himself on a desert island. I am with best wishes,

DLC

Sincerely,

George Ade

*Theodore Roosevelt had sent Ade Americanism and Preparedness (New York: 1917).*

Woodrow Wilson's special adviser, Colonel Edward M. House, even as Theodore Roosevelt, had been of the opinion since 1915 that the United States would go to war against Germany.

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TO WILLIAM FRED KURFESSION

Belleair Heights, Fla.
March 11th, 1917.

My dear Fred:

I am much interested to have your news from Lafayette, and to know that the boys are managing their affairs so well. Henry De Hart is undoubtedly a capable fellow and am mighty glad that Judge [Henry] Vinton and I went to the [Sigma Chi] house and compelled the boys to take him in. I have not been at Purdue for about a year. I left there disgusted with Doc [Winthrop] Stone and most of the Faculty and thoroughly discouraged because of the lack of any real spirit or enthusiasm among the students. After devoting many weeks of hard work and a considerable sum of money to putting on the annual show, it did not seem to me that
the general body of students were grateful or even interested. A man's only reward when he tackles a college job is the knowledge that the boys are with him so I have been off of Purdue ever since. I have made no definite plans for returning at any time although I still have the kindliest feelings in the world for the Sigs. As for Doc Stone I wish him everything he wishes me and I could not say anything rougher than that. Remember me to John [Sayler].

Sincerely,

K

George Ade

In a letter to Ade, May 9, 1916 (InLP), Dean Stanley Coulter of Purdue University apologized for the lukewarm reception of Around the Campus. The Purdue annual Harlequin Club show of 1917, One Moment Please was written by Henry T. De Hart. There is no indication that Ade was connected with this Purdue production.

John Sayler was William Kurfess' roommate at Purdue in 1912.

43 TO JAMES A. STUART

French Lick, Indiana
April 26th, 1917

Dear Mr. Stuart:

I shall try to enclose herewith a brief boost for the Penrod stories, which deserve all the praise that may be lavished upon them.

Sincerely,

Enc.

George Ade

I hope you can read the copy. Better have it typewritten & checked up.

We Hoosiers may not be properly keyed up over our home attractions. I understand there is a man in South Bend who went to Luxor to see the Temple of Karnak but he has not been to Indianapolis to see the Soldiers' Monument. Our own majestic work of art lays it over the clumsy relics of Egypt. It is in a better state of preservation and has more late-model cars parked around it.

By the same token, the literary clubs that get the head-ache working on Bernard Shaw and [Edward Plunkett, Lord] Dunsany and Ipskovich (there is no such person but he may appear at any moment) must not overlook the luminous fact that we have, right
here in our own bailiwick, an expert literary craftsman who has taken the husk off of boyhood and shown us the entrancing processes of the most inward section of the juvenile soul.

George Ade

James A. Stuart was the editor of the Indianapolis Star.

TO THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
June 12—1917

My Dear Colonel Roosevelt—

I thank you for your friendly letter. The other day a harelipped man working for me stopped me and said he wished to ask a question. I told him to shoot, so he said: "I want to find out who got us into this war. I know [Woodrow] Wilson kept us out, but I can’t find out who the dickens got us in."

You are quite right. We cocained ourselves into believing that the war was no quarrel of ours and now, when asked to arouse ourselves, we are still a bit dopey and incredulous. A medley of mellifluous sounds is not always a battle hymn. Probably we will have to be kicked a couple of times in some vital spot before we get fighting mad.

I am on our State Council of Defense and trying to be of some help. We find it hard work to induce the farmers and other small investors to take the Liberty Loan bonds. They have been talked at so much from so many different angles that some of them seem to be in doubt as to the wisdom of taking advice from any one. The enlisting in this northern half of Indiana was active and continues so, I am happy to report.

We have a hefty job ahead of us but I suppose the only thing to do is go ahead and use the tools at hand. We must not even think out loud, but ever and anon give three silent cheers for some of the lawyer-politicians down at Washington.

I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade
My dear George:—

I am trying to be a retired and reformed playwright and I am not looking for extra work just now as I am a member of our State Council of Defense and busy with a lot of volunteer duties, but the suggestion for a play popped into my head the other day and it has stuck there ever since, so I am going to relieve myself by telling you about it. I select you as my victim because I think that you are an expert on the practical end of the show business and understand the value of any story which might combine comedy and melodrama.

Just now I suppose you managers are wondering what the public will go after during the war period and we certainly are in for a period of real war. A few months from now, with thousands of men embarking every week and with the advance guard fighting in the trenches, there will be a lot of interest and attention given to the real issues of the war. The whole fight on the part of the allies is to prevent Germany from enforcing her cold-blooded and deep-laid plans, with the rest of the world as victims. If some one could write a play taking off the German method and applying it to an individual and illustrating, in a dramatic way, how the German method works out, it seems to me that the public would be interested especially if the play is given the comedy treatment. It seems that during war times there is a special demand for plays that amuse.

Doubtless you will agree with me that Germany, in the present war, has out done all of the villains of melodrama that ever were put on the stage. Germany has frightened the weak, bribed the corrupt, tortured the virtuous, slandered the upright and pulled every other conventional trick of old time melodrama. Of course, we could not put a character into a play and call it Germany, but the idea that came to me and which I am putting up to you, is as follows:

The play would be called “Efficiency” or “The Efficient Man.” At the beginning of the play a young man of large ambitions has returned to America after several years in Europe. He has large ambitions, he has become imbued with European notions and cannot help but show a certain contempt for the crude and simple-minded people of his own country. Although the word Germany need not be used in the play his plans, as outlined to a friend, will
indicate that he is following the very policies which have governed Prussia. For instance, we find him at the beginning of the play desirous of marrying the girl of much wealth and personal attractiveness, of putting out of the way her dissolute brother so that she may inherit the whole fortune, of check-mating a rather easy going and not very intellectual rival for the girl, of causing dissention between the girl and her friends who oppose the match, in fact, working all of the opposing influences against each other. This ambitious central figure in the play, outlining his program, gives the whole key-note to the German method of procedure. He has become convinced, while living abroad, that a man has a right to anything he can take, that a man is a fool to be bound by any scruples or even written obligations, when his own interests are acutely involved. He believes that nearly all of the people in the world are simpletons, some to be won by flattery, some to be frightened into submission, some to be bribed by money and some possibly to be put out of the way altogether, but all to be controlled, absolutely by a man who is bold, resolute, systematic in his methods and with enough blood and iron in his system to go ahead and execute his plans without flinching.

The play would be the attempt of the young man, highly educated, perfectly groomed, with knowledge of the world, and perfect manners, starting out to use all the people about him for his own selfish purposes. All of the servants surrounding the people he wishes to handle and influence are either bribed or intimidated to take orders from him and make reports to him. All the time he is working on his devilish schemes he is smiling, polite and agreeable. You may recall that while Bernstoff plotted to kill the women and children on the Lusitania he continued to drink tea with the ladies in Washington and pay them courtly attentions and they will still tell you he was the nicest man in the world. It is admitted that Germany has the most wonderful spy system in the world and the cleverest method of getting information from one agent to another. It could be shown in the play that the gentlemanly villain upon entering a room where his agents were employed as servants could tell, by the arrangement of the furniture or the character of the books that had been placed on the reading table, just what had happened since his last visit and how his plans were progressing.

Without attempting to go into details, which I have not tried to work out, the development of the play should indicate that there is such a thing as a man being so clever that he gets in his own way and that the man who plays every other person for a fool or a
crook, cannot hope to claim very many real friendships. Also, and this will be the important and valuable development of the play, it must be shown that a good many easy-going, patient and good-natured people in this world become exceedingly combative and fairly dangerous when they have been kicked too often in the same place, and that the smoothest con man that ever lived never fooled all of the people all of the time. For a time in the play it should appear that the plans of the smooth citizen are working out perfectly. He becomes confident and over reaches himself, "tips his hands," so to speak, and before he gets through all of the people he has tried to control and influence and use to his own selfish purposes are lined up against him and he is in the discard.

From the above outline, it would be very easy to construct an old-fashioned melodrama of the Al Woods variety, but any play written this year with the German idea of efficiency as a central theme, should be given the comedy treatment I believe.

I have given you only the barest outline of what might be put into the play and possibly the fool thing will sound idiotic to you, and yet I have a feeling that a good saterial [sic] comedy with the Prussian modern military religion of efficiency as the central theme, would appeal to the public at this time. I have no plans for writing such a play and don't know how far I could go on a scenario. What I want to know now is, does the suggestion strike you as having any merit?

I am spending most of my time in the country and feeling much better than I did a few years ago. About the only work I do is an occasional story for the magazines, I mean by that the only writing work. I am busy enough with forty things that do not get my name into the papers.

Remember me to Sam Harris, Bert Feibleman, Eddie Dunn and all the other comrades.

Sincerely,

George Ade

_Ade served as publicity committee chairman of the Indiana State Council of Defense, 1917–1918. During his term of office he wrote a number of patriotic articles. See Russo, p. 116._

_Since Ade had not written a highly successful play for more than a decade, he was wary of becoming directly involved in theatricals._

_George M. Cohan had written Ade, May 3, 1906 (InLP), suggesting that his partner Sam Harris travel to Indiana to discuss the possibility of_
1917

Adé’s doing a play for the actor-playwright noted for his patriotic musicals.

When Adé sent his suggestion for “Efficiency” eleven years later Cohan insisted that Adé was the only playwright to tackle the story.

46 \footnote{TO VICTOR BURBANK}

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
29th July, 1917.

My dear Mr. Burbank:

I have your letter.

You may go ahead and work up twelve (12) Fables from the list submitted, the price to be two hundred and fifty dollars a release. I shall not produce Fables with any other company while you are handling this series.

I think it is important that we should strike a happy medium in the matter of inserting sub-titles. The first Fables produced were shy of sub-titles. Toward the end, when the scenarios were returned to me for more text, possibly the sub-title thing was over done. These sub-titles must be crisp and concise and absolutely boiled down, so there will not be one superfluous word. There should be no straining for comedy effects. Mr. [Richard Foster] Baker tried to improve my text, and very often the sub-titles would become involved and altogether too long.

If you want me to pass upon the sub-titles, I shall be glad to do so and if I change them it will be to make them more compact and not more intricate.

I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely,

InLP

Victor Burbank was a representative of the Essanay Film Company. Fifty-nine Adé fables were made into films by Essanay between 1915 and 1917. A number of these one-reel movies were directed by Richard Foster Baker.

Dear Mr. Latham:

I thank you very much for Hamlin Garland's new book "A Son of the Middle Border." He certainly knew the middle west when it was bleak and formative and he has told the uncharming facts in a very charming style. This part of the middle west has passed beyond the lonesome and unrewarded existence of the frontier farmer. The farmer who owns a Ford and Victrola and whose children play the ukuleles and go to the movies two or three times a week and have all their clothes made to measure—he is not the same fellow that Garland describes. But Garland told the truth about a very interesting period of middle west development.

I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

H. S. Latham of MacMillan Company forwarded Ade's endorsement to Hamlin Garland who wrote Ade the following commentary (InLF):

Your letter endorsing my new book deeply interested and pleased me. I am the veteran—you can not rightly claim to be of my precise generation and yet the west you knew and in which you now live is essentially the same as that of which I have written. You could not have known the precise life and precise place of A SON OF THE MIDDLE BORDER for you are my junior but your quick imagination has more than made up your lack of experience in Iowa and for Dakota. It was, as you say, a bleak and formative period but the point is, no one considered it so in those days. As a nation we were in a vain and boastful mood and resented any criticism from idealistic folk whether of foreign or domestic derivation.—

What a change is indicated in a few words. The motor car, the telephone, Free Delivery, two dollar wheat, thirty cent cotton and the Motion Picture Theater! and yet do you know there is still considerable drudgery on the farm? Of course it falls on the renter and the hired man but it is still there for I have seen it. I wonder who curries that herd of percherons at Hazelden farm? This is a poor time to express sympathy with the hired man (wages sixty dollars per month) but I find the taste of equine dandruff just as annoying to me now as it was in the days of the Middle Border. I'd hate to
curry a herd of shetland ponies "let alone" a herd of percherons.—Well, Well! We both belong to the "I Knew Him When Club" now and sometime I hope to drive out in my feeble flivver and congratulate you on your success as a Captain in the Live Stock Industry.

Courtesy Isabel Garland Lord and Constance Garland Doyle

48 ✈ TO THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Jacksonville, Fla.
March 27th 1918.

My dear Colonel:

The big drive on behalf of the third Liberty Loan is at hand and the State Council of Defense wishes to arouse a proper interest among the people of Indiana. The editors will be smothered with copy from various sources. We wish to send to the newspapers of Indiana some very short but very good appeals signed by well-known people. I am asking of you merely a paragraph on behalf of the good cause. Make it as compact as you choose and you need not use up more than one hundred words.

When you have the stuff ready, mail it to E. F. Warfel, State Council of Defense, State House, Indianapolis. The time is short and we must get the copy to the editors very soon. I know you are being hounded with requests, but so are all of us, and this time I am asking only a paragraph.

I am, with best wishes.

Sincerely,
George Ade

Theodore Roosevelt sent Ade a copy of the speech he made to the Liberty Loan group at Sagamore Hill, April 2, 1918, and promised to write something else if this did not prove satisfactory.

49 ✈ TO WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE

French Lick, Indiana
22nd April, 1918.

Dear Mr. White:

I have two letters from you, one in regard to the book, which probably will be waiting for me at the farm, and which I know I
will enjoy ever so much. The other letter, which I should have answered a day or two ago, is in regard to Will Hays. Mr. Hays is all right. He isn’t much to look at, being frail and skinny and having ears that stand out from the head, and, for a long time, I had a poor opinion of him, probably because he was at the head of the regular stand-pat organization in this state. In the last two years I have come to know him well and we have been together on the State Council of Defense for about a year. I have learned that he is personally on the square. He is a fellow of ideals, inspired by genuine patriotic motives. The worst you can say about him is that he is a strong organization man, but I believe he recognizes the value and the necessity of the recent progressive movements, and believes in giving the fullest recognition to the progressive elements in the future organization of the Republican party. Probably he does not endorse now all the planks in our platform, but I really believe he would welcome the nomination of the Colonel and be glad to support him. He is a sincere little cuss and a hard worker, and I think you will like him after you get next to him. Sam Blythe reports that out in California he has made a great hit, and that all of the factions out there have taken him to their various bosoms.

I am with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

William Allen White had sent Ade a copy of The Martial Adventure of Henry and Me (New York: 1918) with an accompanying letter, April 16, 1918 (InLP). In a letter of April 30, 1918 (InLP), White advised Ade to read Chapters 7 and 8 “because it was for those two chapters the book was written.”

In a second letter dated April 16, 1918 (InLP), White had requested information about Will Hays because the Republican chairman had invited the editor on a trip.

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TO SAMUEL M. RALSTON

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
May 20th, 1919.

My dear Governor Ralston:

I am taking courage to write you because I learn that you are on very good terms with Mr. [John] Hillenbrand, one of the trus-
tees of Purdue University. I am taking an awful chance in writing this letter because I don’t know what you think about Doctor [Winthrop] Stone of Purdue. What I think about him cannot be set forth in this letter as I do not wish to violate the federal statute against sending profane matter through the mail.

Without pestering you too much, I may explain that there may soon be a crisis at Purdue and the re-election of a new president. The trustees are now about equally divided. I rather suspect that Mr. Hillenbrand may have a deciding vote some time or other when it comes to electing a president. A great many of the alumni believe that Doctor Stone by his hard and dictatorial methods, his lack of tact and friendliness, his failure to establish any sympathetic relations with the students and his vindictive attitude toward all those who do not fully agree with him, has been a blighting influence at Purdue instead of a help. A lot of the alumni are hoping to see a regular human being at the head of the school. Probably you are in a position to learn from Purdue men something about the Doctor’s attitude toward the students and alumni of recent years. He has banked on a very foxy control over the trustees and a sort of business and political alliance with Henry Marshall, editor of the La Fayette Journal. He and the alumni have been carrying on a running fight and it seems to me significant that his allies in this fight are outsiders who never attended Purdue and who cannot have the sentimental regard for the school felt by the older alumni. If any private inquiries you choose to make lead you to believe that it would be better for Purdue to have a president who can establish a morale and work in harmony with students and alumni I hope you will not hesitate to have a little talk with Mr. Hillenbrand some time and sort of brace him up to vote right when the time comes. He is a bully good fellow and I like him very much.

If you want to ask any further questions regarding the Purdue situation, I shall be only too glad to tell you everything I know. I am so absolutely convinced that the future development and influence of the school will be enhanced by a change of administration that I write you this very candid letter. Of course the letter is not for publication, but it is not so blamed confidential either because it contains nothing which I am not ready to say to anybody at any time.

I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

Samuel M. Ralston was governor of Indiana, 1913–1917.
In 1921 the Purdue alumni managed to have a law passed which stipulated that three of the governor's appointments to the university's board of trustees should be based on the recommendation of the alumni.

Ade favored liberal, student-oriented policies. Winthrop Stone held a conservative and at times autocratic course during his term as president of the university. For a consideration of Ade's conflict as a trustee, see H. B. Knoll, The Story of Purdue Engineering (Lafayette: 1963), pp. 50-52+.

In addition to his duties as a member of the board of trustees Ade edited the Purdue Alumnus. The first issue which he brought out appeared in November 1918. At that time he changed the format from a magazine to a newspaper of eight pages entitled Purdue Alumnus Newspaper and War Bulletin. In June 1919, the publication reverted to the Purdue Alumnus. The last issue Ade edited appeared July 1921. From October 1921 until his death in 1944 he was listed as a member of the editorial board or as contributing editor.

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TO WILLIAM DUDLEY FOULKE

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
June 24th, 1919.

My dear Mr. Foulke:

I am wondering if you would find it possible to visit my farm here on the Fourth of July and make a little speech to all the soldiers and sailors of Newton County. I am speaking for our county committee. You would get away from the city and out into the country and I believe you would have a good time and you would not be expected to make a real long speech. How about it?

I enclose a folder which will indicate how you can get here if you decide to come and, of course, we will meet you at any station you may select within reach of here.

I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

The homecoming for returning military was held July 4, 1919. Fred C. Kelly, George Ade: Warmhearted Satirist (Indianapolis: 1947), p. 221, describes it as one of Ade's largest parties, "with thousands of cars parked in his nearest pasture."

William Dudley Foulke (Robert Barclay Dillingham, pseud.) a distinguished political reformer, was at this time devoting most of his time to creative writing. Foulke did not attend Ade's party.
TO DAVID E. ROSS

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
October 17, 1919.

My dear Dave:

I think it highly advisable that the Purdue alumni who are opposed to the [Winthrop] Stone administration at Purdue should begin to take counsel among themselves regarding the election of a Governor next year. I have been approached by a local committee and asked to sign a letter of endorsement for Warren McCray. There are certain reasons why I should sign such a letter. Mr. McCray is my brother-in-law. He is a Republican and so am I. He is the only candidate from this part of the state. We have not been in political accord at all times in recent years and there has been a degree of coolness between us and if I refuse to endorse him, my refusal will be attributed to petty reasons and small local jealousies. I want you to know that my refusal to endorse him is based upon the fact that when he became a trustee at Purdue he was an ardent supporter of Dr. Stone and his policies, without giving the alumni a chance to state their case. He declared emphatically to friends of mine in Kentland that Dr. Stone was altogether in the right and that I was altogether in the wrong regarding the investigation ordered by the State Council of Defense as to the treatment of soldiers at Purdue. Mr. McCray is on very close terms with Henry Marshall, of La Fayette, and I have a feeling that he is virtually committed to whatever policy Marshall may suggest in regard to Purdue. Also I understand that Dr. Stone has been compelled to support Ed Jackson for Governor and that gives us some hope of a division in the opposition.

Several weeks ago Mr. McCray called on me and asked me to give him my support. I told him that I would not make any attempt to prevent his nomination but I also told him that it would be impossible to line up the Purdue alumni in his support since it was believed that he was outspoken in his support of Dr. Stone and in his opposition to the alumni. He replied that he was not committed to any support of Dr. Stone and would be glad to get further information in regard to the Purdue matter and would be guided more
or less by my judgment in the matter. I do not attach much importance to those vague promises because he put himself on record long ago regarding the Stone issue. Now I am coming to the point. I am told that Mr. McCray is going to be nominated and that probably he will be elected. Is it worth while for the Purdue alumni to try to get to him and show him the facts in the case? The alumni cannot master any terrific vote. If the alumni openly oppose him and he is elected, of course, we will have no standing. If we support him, will we have any standing?

Shall we attempt to get the new bill through the legislature before a new Governor is elected? I am informed by an Indianapolis man who claims to be posted, that John Isenbarger is going to be nominated by the Democrats. If so, I will be in a devil of a fix. If I support McCray, I will have to throw down our best friend on the Board and I am more interested in Purdue University than anything else in Indiana. If I support Isenbarger, I will have to desert my party and oppose the man who married my sister and I will be given credit for being actuated by small and selfish motives. If the Purdue issue were out of the way, I would be willing to line up for Mr. McCray. I don’t see how I can declare for him, however, without throwing down all of my Purdue friends who have been with me in the long fight against Dr. Stone.

What shall we do in the premises? What is the wise and politic thing to do in order to help our case?

I am sending duplicates to [Franklin] Chandler and [Henry] Vinton and I will ask them to give me a private opinion.

I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

InLP

Warren T. McCray lost the gubernatorial primary in 1916, when James P. Goodrich became the Republican candidate and subsequently governor. In 1919 the party machine backed McCray, who won the governorship by a vast majority in 1920.

Edward L. Jackson ran against McCray in the primary of 1920; he became McCray’s secretary of state.

John Isenbarger was a candidate in the Democratic primary. See Thomas R. Johnston and Helen Rand, The Trustees and the Officers of Purdue University 1865–1940 (Lafayette: 1940).