1920-1930

The Great War ended and America devoted itself to having fun. During this period of national adolescence Hollywood became the glamor capital. Ade devoted much energy to writing movie scenarios, but he did not succeed in devising a film formula palatable to the lost generation. The author blocked out a number of story lines. Numerous submissions were rejected. In the Tea Pot Dome era political scandal touched Ade’s family. There were compensations, however. People continually sought his advice. There were reunions and trips with old friends. It was the past rather than the present that concerned Ade as the decade crashed to a finish.
TO JAMES D. RATHBUN

Belleair Heights, Florida
6 February, 1922.

My dear Jim:

Glad to have your letter of the 1st. Probably you have received a box of grape-fruit from here. I sent it rather soon after the first shipment because my friends who run the packing-house here were about to make the final shipment of the season. A hurricane swept over this region in October and blew nearly all the fruit off the trees, but I was assured that the stuff they sent you would be very good.

I note what you say about the political situation. So far as I am concerned, I will have to climb a tree. I have known [Albert] Beveridge for years and of course we were together in the Progressive movement and I could not very well oppose him, but it happens that Harry New, with whom I have not always been in political sympathy, is a very good personal friend of mine, and incidentally a fraternity brother. Over a year ago, before there was any intimation that he would be opposed by any one, he wrote me a letter of inquiry and, although I have no copy of my reply, I think I told him that I had heard of no opposition to his re-election and that I would be friendly to him. So you see I am in somewhat of a hole. I learn on good authority that the administration has offered Beveridge all sorts of important posts but he has refused all of them and is evidently determined to make a fight for the Senate. I hear the President is willing to make Harry New Postmaster-General but New would rather go back to the Senate. I wish you would let me know the date of the primary so that I can arrange to hide somewhere until it is over. I don’t mean this literally, but I am really in a predicament as to what I should do if I am called upon to commit myself.

Glad to get the news from home at any time. Joe and Otto showed up the other day for a visit and both are enjoying good health and having the usual number of arguments. Best wishes to all.

Sincerely,

George Ade

James D. Rathbun married Nellie Ade, the author’s niece. Rathbun managed Ade’s property.
Albert Beveridge was a senator from Indiana, 1900–1910. The Old Guard never accepted him completely. He was defeated for a third term in 1911. Beveridge went with Theodore Roosevelt in the Republican split of 1912, and became temporary chairman of the Progressive National Convention. He lost the senatorial race of 1922 to Samuel Ralston. After this defeat he resumed his career as a historical biographer, working on the first volumes of Abraham Lincoln.

For a consideration of Beveridge’s campaign and his difficulties with Harry New see Claude G. Bowers, Beveridge and the Progressive Era (New York: 1932), pp. 530–35.

TO JESSE L. LASKY
[Florida]
8 March, 1922

My dear Mr. Lasky:

Thank you for your telegram and for your very kind offer to assist the Indiana Society. The date for the dinner has not been set and it probably will depend upon the time when the picture can be secured. The whole idea is being worked up by the officers of the club in Chicago. I would much prefer to find out what we have in the way of a picture before we try to make a splurge with it. If you have any inside information as to how the darned thing is working out, I wish you would let me know and, if you can now make a guess as to when the picture might be secured for a private showing before the Indiana Society, I will be very much obliged.

Now, in regard to “Back Home and Broke”: The treatment accorded me by you and all of your associates has been such that I am extremely prejudiced in your favor. I would rather do a picture for you than anybody else. As I wired you, I have been disposed to wait and see what we had accomplished with “Our Leading Citizen” before I tackled another continuity. I have been connected with the show business long enough to find out that nothing must be taken for granted and that no play is a success until the returns are in. Also, I have always hoped that sometime or other authors writing for the screen might be paid on a royalty basis. I never have made important money selling stuff outright. Each successful play which I did for the stage brought me in a great deal more than the sum you are now offering. The two failures which I had out of a total of fourteen plays on which I drew royalties brought me practically nothing, as I never in my life asked or accepted an advance
payment until I signed the contract with you for “Our Leading Citizen.” Two or three pieces that were moderately successful brought as much, or more than I am able to get for a screen play, and the real winners such as “The College Widow,” “The County Chairman” and “Father and the Boys” ran as high as a hundred thousand dollars for a single play before the piece was finally sent to the stock companies. Always in writing for the stage I had a chance to get some real money provided the producer got his. Of course I am not pretending that I know anything about the details of your business. Under present conditions and when you are compelled to take a gamble on an untried story, I can understand that you would not feel disposed to offer large money, but on the other hand the author who has only a few stories ready to market can see no prospect of juicy returns so long as he sells his stuff outright. I am convinced that sooner or later the plays for the screen will be produced on a percentage basis. The percentage would not have to be high. At present undoubtedly a good many writers would possibly be skeptical as to the bookkeeping methods of some of the companies, but I would not be afraid to trust your organization.

I am trying to come to a decision regarding “Back Home and Broke.” I could use the fifteen thousand dollars but I don’t want to sign unless I feel that I could deliver a good continuity on the date you set and that the play would not infringe upon anybody else’s story. What would be your idea as to the date of delivery? I expect to go north about the middle of April, or sooner, and I would much prefer to do the work at the Farm as I believe that I could turn out a continuity which would include everything we might want to use and then be subject to cuts, the same as the other play. I believe in letting the first draft run very full and not attempt any editing too soon because one can never tell in advance which part of the story will develop the best. After a script gets cold it is very easy to work the blue pencil, and Mr. [Frank] Woods and Mr. [James] Young will tell you that I am just as much in favor of cutting as they are. The only time I might put up a kick is when the changes have a tendency to alter the whole intent of the story.

I shall be very glad to hear from you at your leisure. Perhaps Mr. Woods has told you that the American Magazine has accepted a story for the May number, to be out April 15th, which I believe will be welcome reading to you and your associates. I am still considering a proposition from the Bell Syndicate to do eight or ten articles for a whole string of newspapers. I want to be sure that I have the proper material in sight before I promise delivery. Mr.
[Seymour] Eyton promised to send me some photographs and data, and I suppose they are on the way. This is a good time to pull some sensible propaganda and offset the vicious and inexcusable stuff being written by Doherty, of the Chicago Tribune, and others.

I shall be at this hotel until March 18th, and then for a couple of weeks I will be at the Hotel Alcazar, St. Augustine, Florida. I will notify the studio as to my movements after that time.

I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

On February 17, 1923, Jesse L. Lasky, the head of Famous Players Corp., had sent Ade a contract and had enclosed a $5,000 advance. Ade was holding out for a percentage of the gross.

Frank Woods was a scenario writer.

James Young was a director.

The propaganda to which Ade refers is his “Answering Wild Eyed Questions about the Movie Stars at Hollywood,” American Magazine (May 1922).

TO THE NEW YORK AMERICAN

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana

June 16th, 1922

Gentlemen:

I have your request that I shall name the greatest woman in the United States and give my reasons for the choice. I submit the following:

To attempt to elect the “greatest” woman in the United States, at a time when talented women are in evidence before the public, is a difficult and dangerous task but after considering the claims of several candidates, I shall vote for Mary Roberts Rinehart. Mrs. Rinehart is a highly successful novelist, a playwright of marked ability, an essayist with a real sense of humor, a traveler and explorer and a student of all present day problems. As a young woman she qualified as a nurse and because of her early training she was enabled to render war work of unusual value. She went to the front and flew in airplanes and put herself strenuously into the big activities of the war. She is a good mother. She never has sacrificed any of the distinctive charms of her sex. She is well-groomed
and companionable and interesting. I know of no other woman in this country who has shown so many unusual qualities and retained at the same time all the desirable qualities of womanhood.

Yours very truly,

George Ade

Ade wrote Mary Roberts Rinehart, August 19, 1927 (InLP), and reiterated his high opinion of her.

56  TO WILL HAYS

To: WILL HAYS

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
29th June, 1922.

My dear Will Hays:

Just for your information and so that you may keep track of some of the absurdities of the present methods of censorship, I want to tell you what happened to OUR LEADING CITIZEN in Pennsylvania. I would have sworn that this picture was fumigated, deodorized and scrubbed up until even the most finicky censor in all the world could not find a scene or a word of text which might not properly have been shown in any church on a Sabbath evening. It remained for one of the wise birds in Pennsylvania to detect in a sub-title a phrase which he must have regarded as unpatriotic to the point of treason, for he had the words cut out.

You will remember in the picture that after Dan Bentley meets the girl in France, she comes home and talks to the women's club as to her experiences at the front. This scene is preceded by the following text:

After the Great Disturbance had ended, and people were trying to find out what it had all been about. Katherine Fendle was telling them—back in Wing-field—that Foch and Pershing and Major Dan Bentley really won the war.

The Board of Censors in Pennsylvania cut out:

and people were trying to find out what it had all been about.
Why? Of course the phrase was put in as a mere pleasan- 
tray, but also it was meant to suggest the fact that 
everywhere, since the war, people have been discussing 
the issues involved and trying to discover the hidden 
causes of the great conflict. I don’t think the censors 
meant to dispute the suggestion that people have been 
talking about the real causes of the war. It is pretty hard 
to fathom the mental operations of the feeble-minded, 
but I suppose these censors figured that I was trying to 
put over an implication that there was really some doubt 
as to the righteousness of America’s participation in the 
war. Of course we meant nothing of the sort and I can’t 
imagine any one detecting dangerous propaganda in 
such a harmless little paragraph.

All of which is submitted merely for your information. 
I don’t know that we can do anything in the premises.

I am, with best wishes, 

Sincerely, 

George Ade

Will H. Hays served as president of the Motion Picture Producers and 
Distributors of America, Inc., 1922–1945. The Hays office was the censor 
librorum of films. This incident inspired Ade to write “Censorship in 
America,” Indianapolis Star, January 14, 1923.

TO WILLIAM FRED KURFESS

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
11 October, 1922.

My dear Fred:

Whatever Miss [Grace] Smith’s scenario may be, I have 
no doubt it will look like a D. W. Griffith script com-
pared with the one which came in the mail with your 
letter last night. It was from Mrs. Fowler, of Watseka, 
Illinois, and the title was THE GYPSY’S WARNING. 
She had condensed a six-reel feature into two hundred 
words and, as nearly as I could make out, the plot of the 
piece was that George and Frank both loved the same 
girl and Frank pulled a lot of dirty stuff and deceived
the girl for a while but eventually virtue triumphed and the girl threw herself into the arms of the true-hearted, faithful and honest George. After reading Mrs. Fowler's scenario, I am convinced that she has a great name for her hero. These people who have an itch to write for the movies little know about the drudgery connected with the preparation of a real working script. Our final revise of BACK HOME AND BROKE consisted of ninety-five long typewritten pages, about four hundred and fifty separate photographic "shots" and three hundred and fifty inserts of text. Of course we will cut out possibly one-third of this stuff on the final editing but, at that, we will do much less photographing than usual. Many of the plays which are finally exhibited in six thousand feet, or so, are cut down from twenty to thirty thousand feet.

When Miss Smith sends me her manuscript I shall try to break some of the horrible truth to her.

I count upon visiting you in your new apartment. Before I close the house next month you and Ardis [Ade Kur-fess] must come down here and load up on honey. We took a hundred and fifty pounds away from the bees yesterday. Also, we have a large crop of hickory nuts. If there is no chance of your being here within the next three or four weeks, I will ask Jim Rathbun to take charge of your share and see that it is delivered. Remember me to Ardis.

Sincerely,

George Ade

Dear Mr. Boynton:
I have your letter asking for an expression of opinion as to what Mr. [Will] Hays and his associates may accomplish in the way of regulating and improving the output of motion pictures.

I believe that Mr. Hays is sincere and has a very definite program
in mind and will be of immense help to the makers of motion pictures. Also I believe that the public, which is paying to see plays on the screen, will gradually decide upon the kind of plays it wants and that these plays will be somewhat different from most of the picture plays which have been released up to date. I think that the screen drama probably will go through the same periods of evolution and change as those which have marked the development of the spoken drama in America. All of us can remember when every native play was a melodrama, packed full of sensational incidents and leading up to highly theatrical climaxes. Gradually we got away from the “thrillers” and the intelligent theatre-going public became interested in plays in which the story moved deliberately and in which characterization was just as important as plot. Up to the present time the average producer of motion pictures has felt that he must put into his picture, all of the time, swift action and intense melodrama. He has piled one sensational episode on top of another. I think we are due now for a reaction against this feverish type of picture play. The same public which reacted against the lurid melodrama of years ago is now getting tired of the play which is merely a series of death-beds and crimes. Of course, love interest will always be sure-fire but I am convinced that the public is ready to accept and support picture plays which tell a simple story in a pleasant way without making any attempt to be bloodcurdling.

I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

L. W. Boynton, editor of the Exhibitors Trade Review, had asked Ade for his opinion of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc.

59 ☟ TO WILLIAM FRED KURFESS

French Lick, Ind.
22 November, 1922.

Dear Fred:

I am glad to know that the tickets turned out all right. Tomorrow I go up to LaFayette to pull for Purdue against Indiana and I hope we may win at least one game.

You ask me about [Albert] Beveridge: He was defeated by
the Republicans. The old stand-pat crowd organized very carefully against him, picked out a certain number of men in each precinct and pledged them to vote for [Samuel] Ralston. It was all done very systematically—not only to punish Beveridge for supporting [Theodore] Roosevelt in 1912 but also to prevent him from becoming a Presidential possibility. The old organization men knew they could not control him, and so they formed a secret organization which was a darned sight more effective than their regular organization and deliberately knifed him. For instance, in one strong Republican district in Indianapolis, Merrill Moores, a Sigma Chi and a stand-pat Congressman, was elected by six thousand majority and Beveridge, in the same district, was defeated by six thousand. This made a difference of twelve thousand votes in one district. The regular Republicans in this district voted against him, not because he was against union labor or they doubted his war record, but simply because they were good organization men and did whatever the party leaders told them to do. They were lined up and pledged and the work was done so thoroughly that Beveridge never had a chance. Undoubtedly he got a great many women votes from the Democrats and a lot of independents favored him, and yet he was defeated by about 34,000, while the Republican State ticket made up of nobodies and claiming only the regular party support went through by about 24,000. When all of the facts become known, I think we will have civil war in Indiana. The stand-patters have told us all the time that we should vote for the party nominee, no matter what our personal preferences might be. They voted for Ralston this time in order to remove Beveridge from public life, and I have a notion that the old Progressives all over the State will be fighting mad.

I arrive back in Chicago Sunday but I count on leaving for White Sulphur Springs on Monday to meet Tom Meighan and discuss plans for another picture and at the end of next week I go on to New York to help edit and cut BACK HOME AND BROKE. I will be back in Chicago shortly before the Indiana dinner, which falls on December 9th.

Remember me to Ardis [Ade Kurfess]. I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade
January 9, 1923.

Dear Mr. Bowes:

I have postponed answering your letter of the 4th because I have been laid up with the grippe.

I shall now attempt to include in one letter all the advice and tips that I can give you. I thought it was understood from the beginning that I would not attempt to write anything for this review and it must be understood that my name is not to be used in any way. I have a great amount of work which must be done and I simply can’t assume the responsibility for a show which is being put on far away and beyond any possible supervision. I will go through your letters and take up various points which have been suggested by you and try to make a clean up.

1—When you lay out the show be sure that you know what scenes are to be used and what settings and fix up your scenes so that all the changes can be made promptly and without holding up the show. Do not postpone your set rehearsals too long. Get the mechanical end of the show organized and let the boys run through the changes repeatedly so that they understand the order in which everything comes.

2—It will be necessary to alternate front scenes in one with deeper sets and, of course, finishing Act I—with a big full stage scene and many people.

3—In putting your show together remember Act II—shall be shorter than Act I—and should contain your best material. The stuff that you are confident will get over big. Do not rehearse acts in the order in which they come on the bill. Put in more time on numbers coming late on bill than on the early features. Whatever you do keep the show moving. Cut out the two verse songs with long waits between verses. I know you won’t do this but if you don’t your show will suffer. Every author thinks that his song will not get over and get a fair show unless two verses are sung. This is all nonsense. Have some pity on the people in front. Sing one verse and then go to your chorus and dances. Do not permit encores unless actually demanded. This is most important and is the secret of the success of a good Ziegfield show. The curse of amateur performances is that every author wants two or three verses of his song done and every singer wants to respond to encores. Keep the performance speeded up. Go from one scene to another without delay. Have
your people come on promptly, deliver the goods and then get out of the way for the next feature.

4—Do not attempt to carry any story through a review. Make your entertainment a series of singing and dancing and a dramatic feature. Make these various numbers as short as possible and avoid the type of number for which college clubs seem to have a special fondness. That is, all the lights down and somebody in evening clothes with a spot light on him singing a long dragging sentimental song to some beautiful goddess. It is all right to have two or three numbers in which light effects are employed but most of the time keep your stage lighted and shoot your stuff promptly and don’t over play the sentimental stuff.

5—You should have at least one or possibly two features where no music is used. If you want the very catchy little song entitled “Words Mean Nothing To Me” now being done in the “Music Review” and recently seen in Chicago, I can get the manuscript from Sam Harris. Also I think that out on the farm I have a sort of burlesque play using the radio called “Old New Stuff.” Your one act program stuff should come in the first part of the show.

I wrote Mr. [O. K.] Quivey approving his general suggestion but I wish to say now that his proposed number in front of the new Union Building should not run eighteen or twenty minutes. It should be kept down to six or eight minutes and consist of songs only. No talk. The idea of showing the old couples on the side is very good. But this kind of an act with only a few people employed and no chorus and with the lights down would die a terrible death if strung out for twenty minutes. It could be made a good feature, snappy and not too serious.

He makes another suggestion in regard to [Purdue] “Blues.” The song would have to be a corker to stand for twelve or fourteen verses. A safer plan would be to have some boy on the Harry Clark corner come out with a big book and do a series of parodies. Take all the popular songs of the last year and write a parody for the refrain of each and let him do them one after the other, saving three or four of his best one[s] for encores. In my opinion the “blues” stuff has been over done and is a little out of date.

In regard to the “Conference Medley.” It is good and the scenes are all fine for a college farce. This feature has been done before but it is always safe.

I note his fourth suggestion, the number called the “Butterfly and the Rose.” In a review of this kind it is always advisable to open Act II, with a full stage setting and have some kind of alle-
gorical dance number. This would be a good feature for the setting he proposes but would not make it a song number. I would make it a dance number.

The great thing to remember in connection with numbers of this kind is that they must not be too long. The only possible exception might be a big dance number beginning Act II. This can be made a little longer if you have several principals to draw on. I think for a college show a safer plan would be to have a ball room setting introducing different kinds of ball room dancing. I have seen very few amateurs who can get away with the “allegorical” stuff. When they try that Isadora Duncan acting, they [act] as if they were trying to pick grapes. Put in lots of dancing. You can’t have too many good dance numbers and you need a good teacher who knows stage dancing. You can also stand for at least two big musical numbers keeping the larger act for the latter part of the show.

I note that some of the boys have been writing sentimental songs. They are all right if you get them in and get them over with but—don’t try to string them out with a repetition of voices.

The trouble with the suggestions you are sending on is that they do not make any provision for comedy. They all deal with moonlight and love and the other old ingredients. You might do this year a number which I suggested once before. Show a football coach talking to a bunch of candidates in playing costume. Pad the costumes out and make them look like giants. He is predicting a successful season. Have a messenger from the faculty come in and take out some man who is behind in his work and offer as a substitute some man who is absolutely tough in everything and weighs about ninety pounds. As the practice progresses and the conversation goes on various professors come in and black list players and substitute others, until the team consists of a bunch of misfits. The finish being someone representing Dr. [Edward] Elliott coming out and telling the coach to go ahead and beat Chicago.

I note that Miss [Katherine] Kennedy favors the song entitled “The Little Red School House.” The suggestion sounds promising, but remember you must not make a mistake in getting all your songs alike. Don’t get too many sentimental songs.

A feature easily worked up and one that is always good would be to produce a photographic album. Have a huge album built into the middle of the setting, someone to give a talk about the different students of the past and then open the album revealing one at a time some of the funny looking types of the past.

I note your suggestions in regard to style show scene. I have
never thought that these could be done well enough in a college show to pay one for bothering with them. You can't expect to compete with the big producers so far as dresses are concerned. A college show should consist of wit, life and color and there is no need of struggling for a lot of elaborate costumes.

A good finish for Act I, would be "Memories of the Purdue Minstrel." Build up the setting so as to show off your people and make it a big singing finale, with a couple of jokes and possibly some brass on the elevated seats.

I wish I could undertake to assume the responsibility for this show but I cannot do so at long range and my time will be so taken up that I would not dare to undertake the job. I have simply tried to give you a few hints and also feel quite sure that you will find them available if you have the courage to put them into effect.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

Arthur S. Bowes, the manager of the Harlequin Club of Purdue University, had written Ade for advice on a proposed revue. Bowes, Katherine Kennedy, the director, and O. K. Quivey, the composer, expected Ade to write the dialogue.

This revue was never staged. The Harlequins presented George M. Cohan's George Washington Junior, April 26–28, 1923.

61 ☞ TO ROBERT G. KANE

Miami Beach, Florida
January 26, 1923.

My dear Mr. Kane:

I am going to ask you to do me another favor and for the present you may regard this letter as confidential. Here is my tale of woe:

About a year ago Tom Meighan asked me to send to Dick Barthelemes the story which I had submitted to Tom called "The Melancholy Hoosier." I thought it would be good for Tom but Tom believed it would be better for a man of Barthelemes' type. I sent a very full outline of the story to Mr. Barthelemes and he kept it for several weeks and I gathered from the letter he wrote me that it was considered by his associates. He finally returned it saying that it was a good story but it was a comedy treatment and he
thought he could do better in more serious parts. I did not urge him to consider the play any further and did not offer to change the outline so as to make it fit him, although, it would have been an easy matter to do so.

Two or three weeks ago I picked up a picture magazine and read the outline of the new picture play called "Fury" in which Barthelemes is starring and was considerably upset to find out that the outline of the story was in all instances practically the same as "The Melancholy Hoosier." I said nothing about my discovery. My secretary, Mr. Ray Rice, who is now in the North went to see the play in Chicago and immediately wrote me that the outline was exactly the same as our story. I had not asked him to look at the picture. He helped me in preparing the outline and was familiar with our story.

"Fury" was written by Mr. Gouldey or [Edmund] Goulding who does all the scenario work for Mr. Barthelemes. I do not want to do anything in haste but from the outline of the play sent to me by my secretary, we are put out of business so far as "The Melancholy Hoosier" is concerned. The back-grounds are changed, but what you might call the dramatic essentials are exactly the same in each story.

In each story the central character is a young man who makes a pledge to an older man to avenge a certain wrong. In my story he is an adopted son. In the other story he is a natural son.

In each story the older man knows he has but a short time to live. He has a "bad heart," and so he tells the young man the story of his ruined life. Of the man who came between him and the woman he loved and how this man wrecked not only his life but the woman's life. How he has brooded over the villainy of this man and therefore he pledges the young man to hunt up this man who has done the great injury to him and punish him. In other words, beat him up.

In each story the young man dare not tell the girl he wants to marry. In each story the young man dare not marry the girl until he carries out the promise.

In each story the girl misunderstands the situation and thinks that he is neglecting her or throwing her down.

In each story the young fellow hunts up the man he has promised to lick, never having seen him before he deliberately picks a quarrel with him and is therefore beaten up.

In each story the young man then makes a new vow that he will keep his promise. He carefully prepares himself for a second
battle with the villian and this time he is successful and licks the man and is free to marry the girl.

Now that this story has been produced I feel that I would not dare go ahead with “The Melancholy Hoosier” for everyone would say that I was stealing the “original” story done by Mr. Gouldey or Goulding. I don’t know what to do in the matter, but I am absolutely convinced that somebody in the office of the Company handling the play for Mr. Barthelemes did grab my story.

A few months ago Mr. Douglas McLean asked me to show him the manuscript of “The Melancholy Hoosier” and he has been after me ever since to give it to him for production, promising that he would get me a good production and a good price for the story.

I have heard very convincing reports regarding Mr. Duerr, the head of the Company, and I am reluctant to make trouble but I simply can’t help but feel that somebody double crossed me.

When Tom Meighan gets back I will put the thing up to him. I am perfectly willing to employ a good lawyer to go to Mr. Duerr and lay all of the facts before him. I am quite sure that I have been badly treated. If the Company was getting ready to produce a play that resembled my play they should have said so. Instead of that they go ahead and produce a play that has exactly the same outline as mine without saying anything to me.

I hope that I am not bothering you too much but I surely want your advice.

I am with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

Robert G. Kane was a representative of Famous Players Lasky Corporation.

Edmund Goulding published Fury (New York: 1922). Fury, which was credited as “From a novel by Edmund Goulding,” was released by Inspiration Pictures, Inc., 1922.

In a letter to John N. Wheeler, July 2, 1926 (InLP), Ade described The Melancholy Hoosier, a comedy version of Hamlet, as a “rip roaring farce, full of physical violence and melodrama.” Famous Players rejected The Melancholy Hoosier, September 30, 1926.
My dear Governor:

I have read over very carefully the document left here yesterday. It strikes me as very binding and obligatory and probably was framed by some enterprising attorney for the bank who wished to make everything air-tight. The sum of money involved is so large and the chances of marketing any kind of farm property within the next few years are so uncertain, not to say hazardous, that I cannot bring myself to the belief that the signing of this document will be a mere formality. If I have read the document in its true meaning I would be assuming an obligation equivalent to all of the assets that I could possibly command, even by a forced sale of all of my holdings. As I told you yesterday, I am operating in a small way now—I am not buying, selling, or speculating, but simply trying to live safely within my income and carry out some reasonable plans in connection with Purdue University and other institutions in which I am interested. I would not dare to guarantee any project of my own which involved the sale of large tracts of land within the next few years and I am just as reluctant to guarantee any projects for any one else.

In the matter of contracts I have found that the only safe plan is to submit all written instruments to my attorney, Mr. [Carl] Meyer, of the firm of Mayor, Meyer, Austrian & Platt, of Chicago. I have sent in to him a copy of the proposed guarantee or surety and I am asking him to what extent I would be obligated and bound in case I signed my name. I am awaiting an opinion from him, but I think it is only fair to let you know, in the meantime, that probably I will be compelled to say that I cannot sign any document which would put into jeopardy everything that I possess. I would not do it for my own benefit and I cannot convince myself that it is my duty to assume what might develop into a large risk, however much I am desirous of granting a favor.

I shall write you again when I hear from Mr. Meyer.

I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

InLP

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
July 5th, 1923.
Warren T. McCray had asked Ade to sign a guaranty which would make him personally liable for $600,000 and any legal fees incurred in connection with the enforcement of the guaranty.

TO THOMAS MEIGHAN

[Hazelden]
[Brook, Indiana]
Sept. 7th, 1923.

My dear Tom:

As I wired you today I was very happy to get your letter written on Sunday, and to learn that the old play was going right through on schedule time. Unless I made some mistake on figuring our footage should be much less than it was in the other plays and unless a lot of new material has been put in the cutting should not be a hard job.

Regarding what I wrote you about love interest, I did not mean to compare you with some of the former stars and I quite agree with your point of view regarding the necessity of a good clean love story backing up the comedy and drama. What I have felt, in looking at a good many pictures, is that the studio methods of indicating that a young man is in love with a young woman are a little too emphatic. Somehow I don’t like to have the hero take the girl in his arms until we know that he has a right to do so. Of course, we will all be interested in studying this new picture and I really believe people will like you in the part. You are not a woman-hater but a very busy man who hesitates to plunge into an affair with any woman until he knows what he is doing.

I note what you say about the possibility of another story. Let us wait and see how the present one turns out. I don’t mind telling you that at times I have been very much afraid of it. If we do tackle another one I hope we can get all of the main points settled so far in advance that there will not have to be any mad house work on the script just before the shooting begins. In the case of the present picture there was a long delay because we were dickering over terms. When [Thomas] Geraghty and [Al] Green[e] came here we did not know what the construction project was to be and that held up the whole thing. Mr. [Jesse] Lasky insisted on my coming to Hollywood at once, so I could not talk with you and get your views. Consequently after you arrived and made your suggestions, which were all good, we had to take the whole thing to pieces and
put it together again. Ray [Long] and I would get up at seven o'clock in the morning and go at that script. We made practically three different copies out there and revised as high as fifty pages of script a day. After working all day I tried to attend parties at night and the consequence was that when I arrived at San Francisco I keeled over. I had the doctor come in Tuesday morning and I did not get out of my room until Saturday afternoon and I sure was in a bad way. If I tackle another picture I want to get my program laid out in advance and have a thorough understanding with you and the director and every one else as to what we are trying to do, so that I will not be compelled to go through any such strenuous experience as I did this summer. Of course, I am not putting the blame on any one else but conditions were such that in a short time ... and this fact, with other complications, put me on the hummer. After I got back to Chicago Doctor [Frank] Billings told me that I must never tackle another picture and I took a solemn vow that I never would although I am convinced that there is no need of all this strain and worry and anxiety if we all get together in plenty of time.

As I wired you this morning, I count on going to New York with you. Of course, I would be delighted to have all of you come to the farm, but Geraghty will be in New York and the facilities for editing and cutting will be much better at the studio. I have written [John] Jenks asking him to go along. If he cannot go I will gladly join your party and share a drawing room with anyone (male) who needs a roommate.

The idea of the preview is mighty good. I am just as sorry as you are about Larry [Wheat] not being in this picture. The part was written for him and I supposed he would be in it until I got word from you that he had signed with Miss [Norma] Talmage. When I arrived at Hollywood Mr. [George] Agnew had been practically signed up.

I have seen some of the advertisements and the new title looks good in print. I think we acted wisely in making a change.

Remember me to Mrs. Meighan, Al, and all the others. I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,

P.S. How about changing spoken title 175, in the revised text,—speech by Col. Lynwood, to read as follows:

"—the absolute finish! We sail tomorrow—on the Majestic. I'm going back to England—the home of the Scotch!"?

InLP

G. A.
Ade had known Thomas Meighan since the actor played Billy Bolton in the New York production of The College Widow. Frances Ring, who had appeared in The County Chairman, at Ade's behest, played Jane Witherspoon, the "Widow." Meighan married his leading lady and Ade considered himself "their matrimonial agent." George Ade, "Thomas Meighan," The Lambs Script, 3 (August 1936).

Ade had recently returned from the West Coast where he had completed the scenario for Woman-Proof.

64 TO JAMES P. GOODRICH

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
October 24th, 1923.

My dear Governor:

I have just arrived home after a busy month in New York City where I have been engaged in a moving picture project.

I find on my desk a note from you regarding that note of mine which we do not remember to have received here. I have no doubt it was merely lost somewhere but I was advised by a very good authority in Chicago yesterday that if the note every should turn up it might make trouble for me. I was advised to get an indemnifying bond which you very kindly offered to send me and I wish you would do so so that we could close the incident and know that there would be no chance of the darn thing showing up and making trouble. The note was dated August 22nd, the amount was ten thousand dollars, payable to you at the Continental & Commercial National Bank at Chicago on August 31st and the rate of interest I believe was seven per cent. The check to take up the note was dated August 24th and was received by you and acknowledged by your secretary on August 25th with the understanding that it was to be used on the 30th to take up the note. It was deposited in your bank on the 29th and was cleared in Chicago on the 30th.

I don't want to bother you by sending a lawyer over to have an indemnifying bond made out and I don't want this incident to annoy you, but I am simply making this suggestion on the advice of . . . [carbon illegible] friend who says I should protect myself against the remote chance of somebody getting hold of the note in some way and possibly using it as collateral or being led to believe that it was negotiable.

I have kept some track of developments while I was away and
have been rather interested to learn that the Governor did not show you any degree of gratitude for your work in organizing the jackpot. It is certainly a terrible mixup and the passing out of the bank at Kentland has had a most depressing effect upon our whole community.

I will be here at the farm for the next ten days. With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

George Ade

James P. Goodrich had been helping Warren T. McCray to avoid scandal by organizing a group of friends to raise $350,000 to aid Governor McCray pay his outstanding debts. The press referred to the fund raisers as the Goodrich Pool.

Earlier in October James Moorman, McCray's political adviser, accused Goodrich of instigating the Washington investigation of McCray's financial affairs for political advancement. Goodrich denied the charge. McCray in his holograph Memoirs (InK), notes that Moorman was loyal but ill advised in his accusation.

During the Marion County Grand Jury investigation, witnesses from McCray’s hometown of Kentland testified that they knew nothing of the obligation of notes on their firms which their banker had negotiated. The repudiation of the governor's notes resulted in a run on the Discount and Deposit Bank of Kentland, and the institution was forced to close for reorganization.

The grand jury investigation was postponed in mid October when McCray was charged with forgery of a note signed “A. Messman and Co.” in a suit filed by the Brownstown Loan and Trust Company against the Meyer-Kiser Bank. The Inter-Southern Life Insurance Company filed suit to foreclose on the mortgage of McCray's Orchard Lake Stock Farm. The grand jury then demanded McCray's records for the $155,000 loan from the State Board of Agriculture. Post office inspectors sent questionnaires to state banks inquiring about McCray's dealings with these institutions through the mails. As a result, McCray was accused of thefts which totalled $255,000 in eight indictments containing 192 counts.

He was convicted of using the mails to defraud, April 28, 1924, and was sentenced to the Federal Penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia, for ten years.

Ade wrote John McCutcheon, Autumn 1923 (InLP):

I was interested to know that W. T. [McCray] had written you. He is very firmly convinced that he never did anything wrong and from his point of view I dare say he didn’t. Probably you will agree with me, after trying to borrow money from one bank, that anyone who
can borrow from 207 banks should be given the Nobel prize and a Carnegie medal instead of being incarcerated at Atlanta. We are trying to get him out but I don’t know what he will do after he gets out because the last shred of his fortune has gone but he thinks that he is a financial wizard and can immediately make large sums of money by generous and judicious investments. I don’t know where he expects to get his money. He told a visitor lately that I was going to provide it. If that is the way he is talking he should be in an asylum instead of a federal prison.

65 \*\* TO JAMES D. RATHBUN

French Lick, Indiana
November 11, 1923

My dear Jim;

Glad to have your letter. The dentist certainly did things to me. I was under the gas for half an hour and he busted a couple of teeth and mangled me more or less—my jaws are still aching.

Glad to know that everything has been attended to over at Hazelden.

I had an awful shock last night when I got the news from the Ohio game. It is not a very hopeful prelude to Home Coming.

All the later reports on the picture are most encouraging. I understand it went very well at Lafayette.

The news regarding the Governor [Warren T. McCray] does not surprise me. He has always regarded me as a criminal because I had a few amiable vices of which he sternly disapproved. His code seems to be that if you never drink a highball or play a game of poker, you have a dispensation to go out and rob the widows. Of course I talked about that letter from [James P.] Goodrich. It was not confidential and the facts reported in the letter were already known to the people with whom I talked. I am enclosing to you another letter from Goodrich which you may return to me in due time. Joe Kealing and Tom Taggart have given me some interesting dope down here. They are certainly off of the Governor for life.

I am sending you some hickory nuts, about the hardest thing in the world to get this year.

With best wishes to all

Sincerely,
George Ade
Note enclosures—Also, see if you can find in Mss. drawer—lower large drawer in large file, some type-written copies of “The Microbe’s Serenade”—Send me a couple. Here until Friday morning.

InLP

G. A.

Joseph B. Kealing, a prominent lawyer, had served as the United States district attorney for Indiana, 1891–99.

Thomas Taggart, former United States senator from Indiana, 1916, had been elected chairman of the board of directors of the Fletcher National Bank of Indianapolis. This institution figured in the Warren T. McCray case.

Ade had written “The Microbe’s Serenade” as a lyric for The Shogun. This Gilbert and Sullivan imitation proved too difficult for the chorus, and was excluded from the libretto. It remained one of Ade’s favorite verses, and he frequently recited it when called upon to speak and handed out printed and mimeographed copies to friends.

66  TO CHARLES G. DAWES

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
Sept. 24, 1924.

My dear General:

I want to explain somewhat in detail my reasons for sending the wire inviting you down here for a meeting. I am sending a copy of this letter to the Speakers Bureau at Western Headquarters of the National Committee.

The county chairmen of Newton and Jasper Counties joined with me in a suggestion for a meeting because my place out here in the country is much more suitable for a “rally” than the main street of a town. I have around my house many acres of shaded lawn and the place itself has an interest for visitors on account of the flower gardens and landscaping and whenever we open the place for a big meeting of any kind we always have a great crowd. We have good roads in all directions and our visitors come from Crown Point, Logansport, Monticello, LaFayette and a large number of smaller towns in Indiana and also from Kankakee, Waseka, Danville and many smaller towns in Illinois, as we are only ten miles from the state line. When motor cars were not very abundant Mr. [William Howard] Taft opened his campaign here at my place
in 1908 and the crowd present was estimated at 20,000. In 1919 we had a home coming for soldiers which was intended to be a county affair although visitors from the outside were not barred and we had about 3,000 motor cars here that day. At the Red Cross golf tournament in 1918 we cleared over $5,000 which was about four times as much as was realized at any other match in Indiana. When we pull a big show we always have a crowd here. We are equipped with everything needed for pulling off a big meeting under pleasant conditions. We have shade and water and parking space and can arrange for all of the seating capacity needed. I am telling you all of these things so that you will understand that we are not planning any small front porch affair but would expect to have a whale of a meeting. I have no particular interest in dragging my old friend Charley Dawes down here except that I favor him very strongly and a large number of people down here have been urging me to invite him. So, if the meeting is arranged, it should be quite an affair. The visitors from Chicago could come down on the Monon or the Big Four in the morning and arrive here in time for luncheon and we could get fast trains back to Chicago during the afternoon. We have no particular dates to suggest. The farmers have their work well in hand and would turn out at almost any time.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,

George Ade

Copies S. C. Robinson, Rensselaer, Ind.
Kenneth McCain, Kentland, Ind.
Speakers Bureau, Western Headquarters,
National Republican Committee,
Conway Building, Chicago, Ill.

InLP

In a letter to John McCutcheon, September 28, 1924 (IEN), Ade expressed concern that Ku Klux Klan candidates would disrupt the Charles G. Dawes rally. The meeting took place November 1, 1924. In addition to the political speeches Ade arranged for a picnic, dancing, a horseshoe pitching tournament, band concert, and fireworks in honor of the vice presidential candidate.
TO JESSE L. LASKY

March 17, 1925.

Dear Mr. Lasky:

I have your letter of March 10th and also the scenario. When you said that drastic changes would be made in the script, you did not overstate the case. I discovered several commas which might have been in the original text.

I am glad that it will not be necessary for me to definitely express my wishes at this time. I want to read the script again. In the meantime if you have any proposition to make, feeling that it would be fair to all concerned, I should be very glad to hear from you, and I shall be at the Ponce de Leon, St. Augustine, from the twenty-second until about April first.

I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

M.S. notation to Thomas Meighan: Copy Please return as it is all I have. I want it for the files. G.A.

InLP

Ade wrote to Thomas Meighan, December 20, 1924 (InLP), outlining the scenario of Old Home Week:

Soon after your first visit home, you have the first test of the big Gun and then things blow up because of the bad construction, and you then start in and build a new one, watching every part of the construction yourself. Before starting the second one, you are in desperate need of funds, and you go back to the home town and plaster a big mortgage on your last piece of property which helps to convince the people there that you are no good. When the Gun is finally accepted by the Government, you are still under a pledge of secrecy, and the nominal sum you accept cannot be paid until after a lot of red tape proceedings, so you and Larry [Wheat] are absolutely down and out when you get word about the Circus. I think you will see that we are getting a condensed outline which will keep the Story going and give us a little comedy all the way through.

When [Thomas] Geraghty came yesterday, both of us had thought of putting in another character, a young wise-crack small town loafer, who is no good and lazy, but who thinks he is very sly. He is a kind of a private detective for you and is your faithful friend.
and admirer, and when you finally win out of course it is a big day for him, and he gets a job with the Circus.

_Thomas Geraghty was the continuity writer for Back Home and Broke and Old Home Week._

_Ade wrote John N. Wheeler, October 31, 1926 (InLP), of his general reaction to film writing:_

You cannot do business with a producing company unless you have ready at a certain time an outline story which seems to fit some star who is all ready to produce another play. Also, each studio has tucked away hundreds of magazine stories or books on which they have an option or the rights and the boys in the scenario department have to work these off or else they will be jacked up for buying stuff which is not good. The producers will fall for a successful play or a talked about novel or magazine story, but will turn down good picture material which has not yet been produced in any form. They have no faith in their own judgments.

68  TO THOMAS MEIGHAN

[St. Augustine, Florida]
March 28, 1925.

Dear Tom:

After I sent the wire yesterday I received your letter of the 25th. I can assure you there is no reason why you should feel embarrassed or annoyed because of the unfortunate complication.

I wish I could have explained to you my ideas in regard to the play. I deliberately tried to make the play different from those in which you had been playing. I did so because I had heard expressions of opinion from dozens and dozens of your admirers, and I thought I knew what kind of a play they wanted for you. I did not attempt to get in much melodrama, and I did not attempt to build up the love interest as much as some of the directors seem to demand.

I believed, and still believe, that we had the right outline to start with—a man goes back to his native town and finds that he has no standing with his relatives and old time friends. He finds that a lot of false alarms are regarded as great men. He is engaged in a big and honorable task which is greatly to his credit, but which is bringing him no immediate money or glory. In order to win the girl and rebuke the small town skeptics, and to square himself with
everybody, he starts out to make good. Just when he has a chance to grab some money, he does the generous thing and gives his important discovery to the Government free of charge. As a result he has neither money nor glory.

He is still, so far as the old home town is concerned, an utter failure. He is a great man at Washington but he cannot tell of his big achievement. Then, by a curious turn of fate, he is pitched into the circus business by the death of an uncle who ran away and had been for years the black sheep of the family. In a spirit of fun, and realizing that, to a small town, the circus is the biggest thing in the world, he sails into his home town in triumph, as a gaudy showman and wins everybody except the girl, who is disappointed in him and does not yield until she learns, by accident, at the last moment of the really big thing he has accomplished.

That, boiled down, was the outline of the story I saw for you, and I still see it as the kind of story which I think you should do, in spite of the fact that I have been shot into the waste basket by Mr. [Victor] Heerman, Mr. [Edward] Sheldon and others. What I plan to do is to take this story and write a long serial for one of the good magazines, either Cosmopolitan or Liberty, and prove to some of our friends that the thing has story merit, whether they like it for a picture or not. The point is, that the stuff I put in, and which they took out, I deliberately put in and knowing that a good many people connected with the business would not class it as picture material. Of course, we had too much material, but we did not have nearly as much material either as to shots or titles as we had in “Back Home and Broke” when we started making that picture.

I am perfectly sincere in saying that I want to get out of the jam as gracefully as possible. I have taken on all of the work which I can handle for a long time to come. I enjoy doing it and the financial returns are very satisfactory and the people for whom I am working tell me that the stuff is running better than it has in years, and I don’t believe they are kidding me because they have voluntarily raised prices.

Under all the circumstances, the sensible thing for me to do is to regard “Old Home Week” as a closed incident, so in any arrangement you make with Mr. [Jesse] Lasky I simply want you to suggest that I be given whatever is fair compensation for my work up to date, remembering always that I submitted my material well in advance and that it was approved, and that Mr. [Thomas] Geraghty, representing the company, approved the script and accepted it. Repeatedly, while I was at work on the stuff out in California, I
suggested sending the script, a few pages at a time, by fast mail to make sure that we were not doing anything which would be disapproved later on by somebody at Long Island, but he always said that there was no need of sending any pages on as he had been given full authority to pass on the stuff. If, while he was putting his okey on this material, he privately disapproved of it and was sending word back east that the material was not what you wanted, of course he was putting me in a tough position. He did not write a single word on the script, and he made no suggestions which I did not immediately try to carry out, and that is why I was led to believe that he favored the general outline and did not, after he arrived at Long Island, favor rejecting the whole story. That will be about all for the present.

Last evening I dined out on the “Claribel” with John and Clara [Brander], and John’s sister. Mrs. Herb Jones went home yesterday. The Branders leave here Monday. I leave on April 2nd for Augusta, Ga., remaining at the Bon Air-Vanderbilt until about the 15th, and then I go to White Sulphur [Springs] for ten days or so. I am feeling fine and shooting pretty good golf.

With best wishes to Mrs. Meighan,

Sincerely,
George Ade

---

Ade was working on the scenario of Old Home Week, which was to be directed by Victor Heerman. Eddie Lowe and Edward Sheldon had requested script changes. The Long Island studio of Famous Players Lasky rejected Ade’s scenario.

---

69 TO CHARLES T. NELLANS

[Miami Beach, Florida]
January 22, 1926.

Dear Doctor:

I am exceedingly interested to have your letter, and it confirms my own opinion as to a most unfortunate situation. Ever since some of us began making an effort to secure a pardon or a commutation, a lot of emotional friends and relatives have been telling Mr. [Warren T.] McCray and his relatives that our efforts were sure to succeed almost immediately, and the consequence has been that possibly false hopes have been raised.
I quite agree with you that he should not be constantly reminded of the present critical situation. I am wondering how I can be of some help.

I believe I will write a careful and confidential letter to my nephew [James D. Rathbun] at home, a very bright young man who handles all of my business affairs, and who is in close touch with all of the relatives and many of the friends, and let him, in a quiet and diplomatic manner, pass the word around as to the wise policy to be pursued.

I can well understand your situation in the matter. W. T. or Warnie as we always call him, had the misfortune to be convinced that he was a child of destiny and that all the influence in the world were co-operating to give him great political importance, tremendous influence, and unlimited wealth. He did things which got him into trouble while deluded by certain happy beliefs.

Knowing him as I do, I can understand why he now is unable to understand why all of the necessary influence are not working in his behalf.

You understand that this letter is for your perusal. I think he has been terribly punished, and that it would be an act of mercy and common justice to permit him to go to his family, and I am willing at any time to do what is needed in his behalf, but I agree with you that it will be most unwise to excite him with all kinds of promises and assurances until we know where we stand.

I shall be glad to hear from you at any time and possibly I may report to you later.

Sincerely,

George Ade

Warren T. McCray had suffered a stroke and was hospitalized for three months. Dr. Charles T. Nellans, the prison physician, attended him at Atlanta Penitentiary.

McCray had sent Ade a copy of the nine-page résumé of his career, (c. March 23, 1925), which he sent to Will R. Wood and a number of other politicians (InLP). Wood was to present McCray's case to President Coolidge. Thirty-two governors and former governors and twenty senators interceded for McCray. A petition requesting his release circulated in the Indiana General Assembly contained 142 of a possible 150 members' signatures.

Ade wrote James D. Rathbun and Joseph Reeve, December 11, 1925 (InK), of his forthcoming visit with Calvin Coolidge:

I went up to the Capitol with Tom Shipp and met our new Senator.
1926

As soon as I saw him I remembered him. He was out at the farm once with Henry Vinton. He certainly exerted himself to make everything pleasant for us, and I was very favorably impressed.

Will Wood is out of town, but will return tomorrow morning, and left word that he wanted to see me as soon as possible. I think he is planning to take me to see the President. I shall act on his advice, no matter what it is.

I have a letter from Everett Sanders, which arrived at the farm after I left home, and he indicated that the President would not discuss the case with anyone until a report had come from Mr. [John G.] Sargent, but possibly Will has arranged for an interview. Will Wood called on W. T. [McCray] the other day, and his report in regard to the general physical condition is not favorable. I will let you know regarding later developments.

Thomas R. Shipp was private secretary to Senator Arthur R. Robinson, who was appointed to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Samuel Ralston. Robinson took his seat December 7, 1925.

Everett Sanders was secretary to Calvin Coolidge.

John G. Sargent was attorney-general.

McCray was not pardoned until he was eligible for parole after forty months in the penitentiary. Paroled August 30, 1927, he did not receive a pardon until December 23, 1930, when Herbert Hoover restored the former governor's civil rights.

70 ❸ TO JOHN T. MC CUTCHEON

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
May 6th, 1926.

Dear Mac:

I am interested to have your letter of the 4th and, of course, I am delighted to know that the copy of PINK MARSH was so welcome. If I were you I should not be discouraged over the fact that these illustrations seem so good that you have to wonder if you could turn out as good work now. Recently I sent in to the Cosmo an essay that I wrote when I was 13 years old and it was far more didactic and inspiring and uplifting and reformatory than anything that I could possibly compose at present.

You must remember that when you made these pictures for Pink Marsh you were simply a newspaper illustrator. Since then you have been a world traveler and a writer of books, a war correspondent,
promoter of public enterprises, prominent citizen, and successful family man. Along in the 90's you were concentrating as a specialist along one line. Now you have become a citizen of the Universe and you need not be discouraged because you may have neglected your one-time specialty. All of which means something if you can discover what I am driving at.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,

George Ade


71 ✁ TO JOSEPHINE CROWDER

[Hazelden]
Brook, Indiana
Aug. 29th, 1926

Dear Miss Crowder:

I have been some what under the weather lately and my regular work has been so interrupted that I simply cannot undertake to dictate a long article for you this morning and it must be understood that I am not writing and signing any article for a syndicate. I have not your letter at hand but I think you wanted me to say something about the turning point in my career. I don't think that any man determines his whole career by any single performance. He is constantly changing the program. Of course, a very important day for me was the one on which my father told me that I might go to Purdue University. If I had not gone to Purdue it is probable that I would not have broken into the centers of population and had all the interesting experiences which came to me as a newspaper man and a playwright and a traveler.

In 1890 when I went up to Chicago and joined John McCutcheon I was simply carrying out a plan which had been in the back of my head all of the time. I became a newspaper worker. The day in 1894 when the editor put me in charge of a department was an important mile post because I was given a chance to write the kind of stuff which could be put into books and my long service as a story writer prepared me for writing dialogue and inventing situations and so in time I found myself writing for the stage. The money
which permitted me to travel and sort of map out my own timetable every year came from the theater. So I suppose the day on which Henry Savage induced me to submit a play to him was another turning point. Going back to that, the day on which John McCutcheon and I decided to go to Europe, even if we had to swim, was another turning point.

I think the important moves I made were those which put me in the way of seeing the world and which led to independence. I don’t believe that a man who writes for a living should sacrifice everything in order to get the money. I think it important and highly convenient for him to direct his efforts so that he will get some money which will enable him to take orders from himself instead of all the time being a creature of circumstances.

I am sending you some material which may give you some ideas but which, of course, you do not wish to copy verbatim. Also, I am sending you under separate cover a photograph.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,
George Ade

TO THE EDITOR, HERALD TRIBUNE

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
Sept. 8, 1926

My dear Sir:

Yesterday I found on my desk a wire reading as follows:

NEW YORK CITY
SEPT. 7, 1926.

JOHN H. RAFFERTY ONE TIME OF CHICAGO RECORD ASSERTS FIRST CHAPTER [THEODORE] DREISER’S SISTER CARRIE IS WORD FOR WORD PLAGIARISM OF STORY YOU WROTE IN NINETEEN HUNDRED FOR RECORD. WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR RECOLLECTION OF THIS.

HERALD TRIBUNE

I could not get a wire to you last night as our local office closes in the early afternoon, when the operator goes home to milk the cow. Furthermore I was afraid to trust a long message to the operator so I simply wired you this morning:

MAILING STATEMENT REGARDING RAFFERTY STORY ABOUT DREISER BORROWING MY STUFF.
I have just dictated the enclosed and you may do with it as you please. I am sincere in my statement that I do not wish to annoy Mr. Dreiser in regard to something which happened nearly thirty years ago. I haven't a copy of SISTER CARRIE at hand. If you care to dig up one and then get a copy of the fable which was printed in the first volume issued by Stone & Company in 1899 you can find out for yourself just how much resemblance there was between my paragraphs and his paragraphs. If you decide to print nothing whatever I shall be just as much pleased but if there is to be any publicity I think it only fair that you should use my statement or the essential parts of it.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,
George Ade

You have asked me if Theodore Dreiser in his novel of Sister Carrie incorporated in one of his early chapters part of a story which I had written for The Chicago Record. Before I reply to your inquiry let it be understood that I am simply complying with your request to give facts. I am not stirring up any charge against Mr. Dreiser—not after all these years.

Along about 1898 I wrote for The Record a story in fable form called THE TWO MANDOLIN PLAYERS AND THE WILLING PERFORMER. In that story I had a character known as Cousin Gus from St. Paul. He was of the type then known as "a swift worker." Probably we would call him a "sheik" today, seeing that we have made such tremendous advances in recent years. In my little story I detailed the tactics which would be employed by Gus if he spotted a good looker on the train between St. Paul and Chicago.

When the very large and important novel called SISTER CARRIE came out I read it and I was much amused to discover that Theodore Dreiser had incorporated, in a description of one of his important characters, the word picture of Cousin Gus which I had outlined in my newspaper story and which later appeared in a volume called FABLES IN SLANG. It is true that for a few paragraphs Mr. Dreiser's copy for the book tallied very closely with my copy for the little story. When I discovered the resemblance I was not horrified or indignant, I was simply flattered. It warmed me to discover that Mr. Dreiser had found my description suitable for the clothing of one of his characters.

Many people came to me and called my attention to the fact that a portion of my little fable had been found imbedded in the very large
novel by Mr. Dreiser. I figured that he had read my story in the newspaper and had found that my character in the fable was about like his character in the novel and that he absorbed the description and used it without any intent of taking something which belonged to some one else.

Most certainly I do not accuse Mr. Dreiser of plagiarism, even by implication or in the spirit of pleasantry. I have a genuine admiration for him. To me he is a very large and commanding figure in American letters. While some of us have been building chicken coops or, possibly, bungalows, Mr. Dreiser has been creating skyscrapers. He makes the old three-decker novel look like a pamphlet. He is the only writer in our list who has the courage and the patience and the painstaking powers of observation to get all of one human career into one story.

Theodore Dreiser was born in Indiana and we other Hoosiers are very proud of him. I knew rather intimately his brother, Paul Dreiser, who wrote so many popular songs and the one song so highly esteemed here at home, THE BANKS OF THE WABASH. I was active in planning a memorial to Paul to be placed on the banks of the Wabash down near his old home. While we were planning the memorial I had some correspondence with Theodore Dreiser and also with Louise Dreiser who is supposed to have been Paul's sister but she wasn't. Paul made her take the name because it helped her to get theatrical engagements. She was from Paul's home town and her father and Paul were great friends.

I am rather sorry that some one has reminded The Herald Tribune, of which I am a constant reader and regular subscriber, that Mr. Dreiser got into his novel something which read like something written by me before his novel came out. It all happened so many years ago! It seems to raise the absolutely preposterous suggestion that Mr. Dreiser needs help. Anybody who writes novels containing approximately one million words each doesn't need any help from any one. As I said before, while most of our guild are at work on tiny structures which stay close to the ground, Mr. Dreiser is putting up skyscrapers. If in building one of his massive structures he used a brick from my pile, goodness knows he was welcome to it and no questions were asked or will be asked. These are the facts in the case. Mr. Dreiser hasn't hurt my feelings at any time and I don't want to hurt his feelings now.

InLP

110

Ado wrote Mrs. John Kendrick Bangs, September 13, 1926 (InLP), giving a personal reaction to the plagiarism:

I must confess I was flabbergasted to have some one rise up after all these years and accuse Mr. Dreiser of having purloined some of my vernacular. I hope to goodness that he was not annoyed or angered. You know, H. L. Menken [sic] says that Dreiser is the present day giant of American letters, but that he is, also, a “lonely and weather-beaten figure,”—a colossal genius camping alone on the heights. I am ready to admit anything that anybody says about him but, between you and me, he uses up so much language that, at times, he is mighty hard reading.

73  TO RUFUS LE MAIRE

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
Sept. 14, 1926.

My dear Mr. LeMaire:

When I told you that I was out of the playwriting game I meant it and possibly you were joking when you tackled me to give you some tips, but I am going to send you a little story I heard the other day and maybe you can do something with it. It was told to me by Admiral [Hugh] Rodman who has retired from the Navy and has been helping to teach the boys at Culver Academy this summer. You may remember that he was with Admiral [Frank Edmund] Beatty in the North Sea all during the war and he is a great character. The story he told me was as follows: some years ago out in Honolulu a junior officer had been running wild every night in the tough part of town and finally the Admiral ordered a Court-Martial for him. Several friends of the young man went to the Admiral to plead with him but he was very strict and strait-laced and insisted that the boy be tried. The judges of the Court consisted of a Rear Admiral, two Captains and two Commanders, who seated themselves behind a long table and named another officer to question the witnesses. The accused was brought in and confronted with the charges and then they called the witnesses. The first witness was a large and highly decorated dame who told the Court that her name was Madame Clarice and that she kept a well-known resort on the Hula Hula Road. The officer who was asking the questions then
told her to take a good look at the accused. She did so. Then he asked her, "Do you recognize him?" She shook her head and said, "No, I don't know him at all but I know all of these other gentlemen very well," indicating the five dignified judges behind the table. Whereupon they all fell out of their chairs and the trial came to an end. Of course, you could not use the skit which might reflect on the Navy but you could do this: have the curtain go up on four or five solemn and queer looking elderly birds back of a table set at stage right or left. Open the act by having the prosecutor address them, so as to put plenty of speed into the thing and get to the finish. The prosecutor might say: "Gentlemen, members of the discipline committee of the Men's Purity League, you know why this meeting has been called." They nod their heads in unison. The prosecutor goes on to say it has been reported that one of their members, young Mr. Abner Hemmingway, has been visiting a notorious cabaret, with one of these crazy names such as the Blue Goose or the One-eyed Pup or The Bucket of Blood. The prosecutor tells the members of the committee that this cabaret or night club is one of the toughest joints in the world. The doorman pats every customer as he goes in and if he hasn't a hip flask he can't go in. The dancers dance so close together that it would be impossible to put a razor blade between them. One of the judges wants to know if anybody ever tried to. The prosecutor says not that he knows of and the judge says it would be a mean trick. Bring in the accused and without mentioning the name of the particular dive have the prosecutor tell him that he, the defendant, is accused of frequenting low and disreputable dives and dumps where jazz music is played and the law is defied. Then the prosecutor says, "I will call the first witness," and he brings in a gal who is made up like a circus. Of course, the whole thing wants to be very brief. He would ask:

Q State your name.
A Do you want my real name?
Q No, just the one you are using now.
She gives a hifultuting name. When she comes in she may bow to everybody in the room in an impersonal way and the judges may all gaze at her, as if fascinated, but it must not be tipped off that she knows them or that they recognize her. The prosecutor says:

We want to know about an infamous resort known as (so and so). She replies: "It is not an infamous resort. It is a night club." He asked "What is the difference?" and she says they are running a nice place and after the patrons go blind they send them home. He
asks: “Are you the keeper of that resort?” and she replies: “I am the hostess,” and again he asks “What is the difference?” She replies that a keeper knows only a lot of rough characters but a hostess knows everybody. Then the prosecutor adopts a blustering tone and says to her: “Now, I want you to come through and tell the truth. Take a good look at this man” and points to the accused and then the prosecutor asks: “Do you know him?” She studies him carefully and then pulls the tag line: “No, I don’t recognize him at all.” And then she arises and with a sweeping gesture to the men behind the table concludes: “BUT I KNOW ALL THESE GENTLEMEN VERY WELL.” They should do a flop backward as the light goes out.

The trick of the thing would be to play it very straight and heavy up to the time that she pulls the surprise and, of course, the shorter and snappier it is made the better it will be. I have dictated this thing in a great hurry and, of course, I have not put in the proper dialogue or names or anything. I have no doubt that Lester Allen and Billie Halligan and some of your other boys could take and fix it up in a hurry. The story itself gets a laugh and I never heard it until the Admiral told me. Of course, my name is not to be used in connection with the skit if you should decide to try it out and my only compensation would be the privilege of buying some good seats when I am in town. I just happen to think that possibly the thing might be twisted into a snappy little feature. If you can do anything with it you are welcome to it.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,
George Ade

74 TO GRANTLAND RICE

Dear Grant:

I am delighted to have a message from you and I am enclosing a little piece I wrote for the local paper. By the way, you might be interested in knowing something about the party on Sunday evening. It was too late in the season for dancing in the pavilion or sitting down to watch a picture and we could not seat one hundred and fifty people for card games. So we had a Monte Carlo party.
As each guest entered the house he was given an envelope containing $5,000 in stage money, marked in various denominations. We had desperate gambling games in operation in every room in the house so as to keep the crowd spread out. We had games as follows: one roulette, one hazard, three old army games, two free for all crap games, one wheel of fortune for cash, one paddle wheel for fancy baskets, dolls, boxes of candy etc., and one Keno or Beano game for an assortment of prizes including aluminum ware, glassware, dolls, strings of beads etc. etc. The persons having the most money laid up after four hours of gambling won the prizes.

This kind of party is the wildest and most hilarious thing you ever heard. Before we got through Sunday evening the crap shooters were rolling for a hundred thousand a roll. Even the local Methodists and leaders of the Klan cannot bring the law down on us because it is not real gambling. No one can lose anything. Of course, having it on Sunday evening was a scandal but everything we do on any evening is a scandal.

My plans for the winter are indefinite. I am not very keen to go back to Belleair. The place is too darn sporty. If you go to the parties you cannot do any work and if you don’t go to the parties you might as well live on a desert island. I am thinking of doing some cruising this winter. I had a month in the West Indies last Spring on the California and enjoyed every minute of it. It was my seventh cruise to the West Indies. It is the best 30-day trip in the world.

I trust that Mrs. Rice is staggering with renewed health and that you are well and happy. By the way, Purdue is out of the joke division. We played a close game with the Navy with hardly any practice before the game, defeated Wabash, held Wisconsin to a tie, and licked Chicago. I am afraid Northwestern is a little too husky for us but we should clean up on Indiana. Anyway, we are out of the cellar and going strong. Jimmy Phelan is a good coach and we have a Freshman team almost as good as varsity. We are beginning to get some results from years of patient battling.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,
George Ade

Grantland Rice, the author-journalist whose column, The Sportlight, syndicated 1914–1930, was a friend of Adé’s. On occasion Ade sent Rice items for his column.
My Dear Tom:

First off, let me thank you for the golf clubs which were sent on by Gene [Sarazen] and which are beauties. I have not tried them out because we have had practically no golfing weather since you were here and I have been away much of the time.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. [William] LeBaron and also returning to him the three magazines he sent me a long time ago through you. Pardon the delay in reporting but I have been terribly busy while at home. I will give you a condensed opinion which may not be worth a darn. I think the title is good and would excite interest and look well on the printing and signs—“Once a Gentleman.” The story is well written in spots and at other times it is rather crude. The general idea of a menial or underling masquerading as an aristocrat or nobleman is very old, of course, but all of the sure-fire material is old. It was used very effectively in “The Tailor-Made Man.” I understand that you might make radical changes in the story but you could not use the story at all without making Tom a valet or man-servant and I doubt if the people who go to see him on the screen would care to see him in that kind of a part. Unless you would explain in the early story or the text that he came of a family which had been in service and which brought him into America where he had ambitions to be a man instead of a man’s man. It is pretty hard to make a hero out of a valet or barber unless you have him an aristocrat who is merely pretending to be a menial. William Gillette had a fine play written by [James] Barrie, I believe, called “The Admirable Crichton.” A few people were stranded on a desert island and the moment they found themselves helpless and away from civilization, the butler took command of the outfit by sheer force of his superior intelligence and dominated all the scenes and the girl fell in love with him and then a rescuing party arrived and the moment the party found itself in contact with the outside world, the butler lost all his importance and became a servant again. This type of play has more meaning in Great Britain than it would have here.

In the magazine story Tom has a love affair with the good looking housekeeper. I would be doubtful about that. It might be hard
to get people excited over an affair between a clothes brusher and a furniture duster. I have felt often that you should not play, too often, the rugged he-man with hair on his chest who commands the love of the beautiful heiress, but, at the same time, I doubt if you would feel at home playing the part of a man servant because of a prejudice in this country against any male who makes his living by doing house work. I am compelled to say that I don't see much in the picture except the title. In the great mess of material which I submitted for OLD HOME WEEK, and none of which was used, I had the story of a young fellow who was brought up by a grumpy uncle and a kind but pious aunt. The boy comes to visit the relatives and finds a stranger standing across the street looking at the old homestead. It is another uncle, the black sheep of the family, who ran away from home years before and whose picture is turned toward the wall. The bad uncle takes a liking to the young fellow. Later on the young fellow is down on his luck and busted and desperate when he gets word that the bad uncle has died and left him everything. In the story I submitted we made it a circus. Why not a string of race horses and let the nephew go against all of the difficulties and dangers which are waiting for any green horn who breaks into the horse racing game. Of course, he will have to win the Derby and the girl at the same time by getting her and her horrified relatives out to the track where they are carried away by the excitement, as any one will be who goes to a real big race. Why don't you get out at a race track for once and own a string of horses? That is one thing you haven't done in the pictures although we talked once about a picture called ON HIS UPPERS in which you lost everything and became a hobo and finally met out west the news-stand girl who had been your friend and who had become an attractive young widow and saved her from a gang of sharpers, of which you were supposed to be a member.

I am just hanging along here and expect to start south next week and be in Florida by the 15th. Along in February I may take a cruise to the Mediterranean if [John] Jenks does not make out on me.

Give my best wishes to Mrs. Meighan.

InLP

Sincerely,

George Ade

Once a Gentleman was never filmed.

William LeBaron, editor, playwright, was associate producer of Famous Players Lasky, 1924–1927.
March 4, 1927.

As we wound up the preceding letter we were heading close up to the most notorious rock in the world—the huge boulder known as Gibraltar. Beyond some low-hanging storm clouds it was standing up very majestically from the sea, a bright sunlight beating down on it. By the time we were in the sheltered harbor alongside of it and ready to land, the clouds had closed in and rain was falling. We went ashore on the first tender and found ourselves in Great Britain, beyond all doubt. The rugged architecture, the painful cleanliness, the dignified soldiery, the blue-and-white signs above the shops, the crowded show-windows, the soft aroma of Scotch Whisky in the air, and even the overcast skies and damp pavements were sure reminders of dear old England.

Gibraltar is a huge mass of green-covered rock towering above the narrow entrance to the Mediterranean. It is honeycombed with tunnels, which the visitor is not permitted to see, and from those tunnels there are peek-holes out of which guns can be pointed in any direction. Only a few years ago the fortress could have blown to pieces any ship trying to get in or out of the Mediterranean. Now we have the sub-marine, to say nothing of the air-plane, and there is a question as to the defensive value of the stronghold. At least, it is most interesting, because there are soldiers all over the place. Sprawled along the base of the rock is a town with a population of 25,000 and, it being a free port, prices are low and the shoppers off the ships lose all control of themselves.

We are not going to describe all the places we visit. Go to your encyclopedias and histories and you will find all of the interesting dope which one might send you if we could take the time to write it down.

We drove around Gibraltar and then across a neutral zone to the town of Luica, in Spain, and the moment we motored across the frontier we were in another world—of squat houses, gay colors, bad pavements, noisy talk, squalor, poverty, making up in smells what was lacking in sanitation. Senoritas, smeared with mouse-colored powder, leaned from the windows above and brave Spanish gentlemen, urgently in need of shaves and clothes pressing, lunged gracefully along the untidy side-walks. We visited the bull-ring and

117
saw a good fight between two sturdy donkey-drivers and waved away whole regiments of begging children. It was the first time in Spain for all of us and we were glad that we organized our own excursion instead of taking the Cook trip, which was merely a ride around the town. We did not go ashore in the evening as Gibraltar is not a lively spot after dark, but early next morning Mr. Jenks, Mr. Shekleton and Mr. Ade stole a ride ashore with the second and third cabin passengers who went in by the 8 o'clock tender. Many of them were Jews, headed for the Holy Land. When they got together in a group, you couldn't see them for the whiskers. On the dock we picked up an enterprising guide who had helped us the day before, and he secured a car for us. We motored around the bay to Algeciras, a Spanish town west and opposite of Gibraltar. We saw a farming district which was very productive, growing mostly wheat and beans and potatoes and also we saw a pasture full of long-horned fighting bulls.

Algeciras is an old and interesting Spanish town. We visited the room in which Lloyd George and the delegates from several great powers met in 1905 to determine the future policy of the civilized world regarding Morocco. The conference gave Morocco to Spain, which was like presenting a friend with a rattle-snake. We went to a most attractive tourist hotel above the town—the Cristina—surrounded by palms and tropical plants. Then back to Gibraltar for a little frenzied shopping before going aboard to sail at 1 o'clock. All of which was on Monday, Feb. 28th. Tuesday, March 1st, at sea, was the loveliest day we have found since leaving New York. Early yesterday morning we looked out of our ports at Algiers, which was a huge panorama of white buildings rising in a crescent shape to the very tops of the mountains circling the bay.

We can't begin to tell you about Algiers. It has been the high spot—one half a beautiful and cleanly metropolis and the other half a rocking bedlam. When you are in the French quarter you can well imagine that you are in Paris. When you are in the native quarter you can well imagine you are in the Old Testament which has been scrambled, stood on edge and saturated with all the disagreeable odors in the world. We climbed up and down slippery and slimy and gloomy chasms and tunnels, surrounded by dusky and dirty men, women and children in rags and nighties, through an atmosphere which could have been cut up into cubes and taken away as souvenirs.

Mrs. Morse was so fascinated by the picturesque Arabs that she picked up one of the ragged babies, heavily encrusted with dirt and
germs, and carried it for a while finally restoring it to the mother, an estimable one-eyed woman, who was so flattered by the attention paid to her offspring that she shook hands with Mrs. Morse and wished her well during the remainder of her visit to the Old World. All of which did not happen, the facts being, that Mrs. Morse, who discovered anti-septics, is said to have returned to the ship and taken a bath, after filling the tub with Listerine.

We drove all around the city, finally escaping from a Cook guide who was leading us to all the places we did not care to see. Lunch-eon at the St. George, a lovely hotel on a terraced hill and bordered with palms and lemon trees. At the hotel Messrs Jenks and Ade met Charley O'Brien, an old friend who lived at the C.[chicago] A.[thletic] A.[ssociation] for years. He had been at the hotel for two months and enjoyed it, even though surrounded by frozen-faced British wearing monocles and prominent front teeth.

We couldn't tell all about Algiers without copying pages from the guide-book. It was a most interesting spot—a strange mixture of the modern and ancient civilization in full bloom and the dregs of humanity steeped in ignorance and filth, too poor to have much of anything except religion.

It is now Thursday, March 3rd and we are headed over a smooth sea toward Villefranche, the port of Nice and Monte Carlo. Our fellow-passengers are late in coming out. They were ashore last night, dancing and hunting up a second-rate African imitation of night life in Paris.

Something about the weather. Algiers has been cool and wet for two months. We needed our overcoats at Gibraltar. The only real summer weather was at Madeira. We are not suffering from the cold but we wear light woolens and take our wraps along when we go ashore. We have not seen any Palm Beach suits or straw hats. In other words, you do not, at this season, get Florida weather in the Mediterranean.

Mr. Jenks and Mr. Ade will join up with an old friend, Fred Babcock, at Villefranche tomorrow morning. We will have a full day and evening around Nice and Monte Carlo and sail for Naples early Saturday morning, arriving there Sunday for a motor ride to Pompeii, Sorrento and Amalfi.

P.S. Mr. Ade won the ten dollar decimal pool today, the first lift in the clouds.

InLP
Ade may have intended the newsletters written while on this Mediterranean cruise for publication.

George Morse, the zoologist, was the director of the Shedd Aquarium, Chicago, Illinois.

John Jenks, a Chicago businessman, was a long-time friend of Ade’s, who traveled with the author frequently in later years.

Vincent Shekleton was a partner in Shekleton Bros., Chicago real estate subdividers and developers.

TO JOHN N. WHEELER

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
May 31, 1927.

My dear John:
I have your letter and also the script which I will go over, very carefully, at once. I did not know that you were going to have some one tackle this stuff and I will tell you very candidly that I do not wish to sign my name to work done by some one else. This is no reflection on Mr. [Ring] Lardner who, probably, is more up to date and snappy than I am, but I just have the very emphatic feeling that any writing man of any standing whatever would never wish to have his name used on material that he had not prepared himself. It is really against the rules. Furthermore suppose we go ahead and market, as well as we can, this little batch of material, what are we going to do after we use up this stuff? It will then be up to me to come across with something or other and I will be right back where I was before—up to my eyes in the weekly release grind. I am supposed to sit down now and get up material for a book and I cannot do it if I go right back on the old routine again.

I feel most uncomfortable about this arrangement which you have made with Mr. Lardner. Once or twice before to fill a gap he padded out some pieces for me and did the work well but the point is that every man has his own style and his own way of doing things and I just know that I could not go into this kind of an arrangement.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,

George Ade
John Wheeler was associated with the Bell Syndicate. Ade wrote John McCutcheon, Autumn 1924? (InLP): “Jack Wheeler has been very fair with me and has succeeded in selling a lot of old stuff that was warmed over so I have a feeling that I should stick with him and give him the first option on anything I do.”

78  TO RUTH M. WOODWARD

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
July 1, 1927.

Dear Ruth Woodward:
I am glad to have your letter and I congratulate you on having the courage to sit up and wise-crack while you are still in the shadow of the hospital. I have been to the hospital a few times but I never volunteered. I do not like the gentle odor of disinfectants or the cold professional air of the hired help. I am wondering if you were ever in a hospital where they had one of those sepulchral annunciators which keeps repeating in every corridor the name of some Doc who is needed at once in some other ward to help a patient die. I admire good nurses but I think there are too many rites and ceremonies connected with the noble profession of nursing. Just when the sufferer wishes to be let alone the angel in white insists on doing something which can be recorded on the chart and make it look like a real chart.

We have no further news regarding our robbers. They are all in jail but my personal property is still at large. Chirk up if you can and use a little Christian Science.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,
George Ade

79  TO WILLIAM SHAW

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
Sept. 4, 1927.

Dear Mr. Shaw:
I will try to answer your questions the best I can. I have lived at
1927

Hazelden and tried to keep a garden going since 1904. The name Hazelden is a variation of a family name, Hazelton, and also it was a good name when we moved out here as the house was surrounded by hazel brush. I don't think I have any unusual passion for flowers. Of course, my mother always had an old-fashioned garden. My father often told me of the gorgeous floral displays on the open and unbroken prairies away back in the fifties. Along in late summer the rank flowers, mostly blue or yellow in color, grew many feet tall. The traveler, winding across the prairie on one of the trails, would have to stand up on the seat of the vehicle in order to get his bearings and for miles he would see an expanse of these gay flowers.

I am trying to find a copy of an article in which I spoke of the plan for a park in every county and a scheme for preserving plant life.

In my garden here I have favored the old-fashioned and wild flowers because they seem to fit in with the old-fashioned architecture and the natural condition of the landscaping.

I will be more than glad to receive some prints.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,

George Ade

Ade wrote Mrs. J. Bennett Lowe, September 26, 1939 (InLP), that he named his estate in honor of his grandmother's sister Ann Hazelton.

TO THOMAS B. WALL

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
Sept. 4, 1927.

Dear Mr. Wall:
I am much interested to have your letter. It is true that while I was in London I was writing an article for the Cosmopolitan Magazine and I said that the average American was poison to the British and could not help feeling a chill in the air. I said this because I knew it to be a fact. I have visited London many times. I like the atmosphere of the town and I revel in the play houses and always put in many happy days shopping but this year I discovered that I was an
object of frigid suspicion. I do not wave the flag or force myself upon strangers or talk in loud tones or patronize the most lowly. I am quite sure that the so-called "typical American," as imagined by the English, is a rare specimen and not typical at all. My father was born in England. I have every reason to entertain a friendly regard for the cousins, but I am not going to undertake any demonstrations of affection for cousins who insist upon regarding me as a crude barbarian and who kick me on the shins, even when I am keeping perfectly quiet and trying to behave myself.

Some of the data and statistics you send are most interesting and I have no doubt they are reliable.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,

George Ade

TO LOUISE DRESSER

 Hazelden
 Brook, Indiana
 Sept. 9, 1927

My dear Louise Dresser:
I am interested to have a letter from you. Of course, nothing would make me happier than to deliver to you a story which could be worked up into a good picture but I am not sure that I have the knack of outlining the kind of stories that the directors like.

I saw THE GOOSE WOMAN several times and it was a beautiful character performance that you gave. It is the kind of story I could not do on a bet. The things I have done that are worth anything at all are shy on heavy melodrama and run more to comedy. I had a story outlined once but never did anything with it. It was called AUNT FANNY FROM CHAUTAUQUA. A very rich man with a modern family gets word that his sister, whom he has not seen for many years, is coming to visit him. He has a large country place and the young people are getting ready for an important house party. They know nothing about Aunt Fanny and the fact that she is about to land in on them is bad news. Father has only one picture of her and that was taken at the World's Fair in Chicago and shows her as a funny looking little country girl. It appears that she is forty or forty-five years old. To a flapper of 18 that is just the same as
ninety. Besides she comes from Chautauqua, the home of piety, prayers and psalm singing.

The idea of the comedy would be to demonstrate that a good many women of 40 who do not live in the cities are still snappy and up-to-date. The aunt lands in and sizes up the situation. The guest of honor is a rich and distinguished bachelor, one of these handsome dogs of the Louis Stone variety, a little gray around the temples, but very good looking and what the young girls would call “dis­tang-gay.” The bachelor is just what Aunt Fanny is looking for. He is a little older than she is and has a fine social position and money and looks so there begins a battle between the flappers and the old maid. They plot to expose her real age and her country breeding and she evens up by cooking all sorts of things for the bachelor and making him talk about himself. The young ones are trying to impress him with their importance, the old one is trying to impress him with his importance. Of course, for the purposes of the drama the older one must win out. I will confess that this outline, as far as we have got with it, doesn’t contain very much drama but possibly a few exciting episodes could be worked in. As I said, I probably could not do a real serious play and I don’t know that this story which I have vaguely in mind would work into anything, although the character of Aunt Fanny would be a good one.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,

George Ade

Aunt Fanny from Chautauqua was published posthumously in One Act Plays for Stage and Study (New York: 1949).

TO FLORENCE IRWIN

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
Sept. 20, 1927.

My dear Miss Irwin:
I have your letter with the enclosures and I want to tell you that I am interested and sympathetic but the fact of the matter is that I definitely stopped writing for the stage a good while ago. I haven’t on hand a script which would be any good for you and it would be
a miracle of miracles if, without any idea as a starter, I could sit down now and hastily prepare something that would be any good for you. It would have to be done hastily as I have taken on certain contracts for syndicate stuff, stories and magazine articles which will keep me busy for a long time to come. I am mighty sorry.

I never heard before that there was any question as to the ownership of the play. I sold the script outright to your sister May [Irwin] for $200 and supposed that she simply had it put away somewhere until she took it out and tried it at Boston. I never wept over the fact that I might have collected thousands of dollars in royalty. When May bought the play I was an unknown, at least as a playwright. She took a gamble on a little story I had and won out and I was very pleased when the play made good. I am sorry now that she is not disposed to let you use the piece but I haven’t any pull with her or the husband and, as I have already said, I am not in a position to fix up something and send it on.

I am, with best wishes

InLP

Sincerely,

George Ade

Florence Irwin had been stopped from using Mrs. Peckham’s Carouse by her sister Mae, who demanded a $50 a week royalty, and stipulated that her sister use the play only when playing Chicago and cities west of Illinois.

Kurt Eisselt was Mae Irwin’s husband, press agent, and manager.

TO F. A. HOOPER

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana

My dear Mr. Hooper:
I am interested and flattered to have your suggestion that I do a little piece about EUGENE FIELD. Possibly I could look at the data and give you the condensed information you desire but I have a feeling that the contribution should be written by Charles H. Dennis, Managing Editor of the Chicago Daily News, who wrote the book EUGENE FIELD’S CREATIVE YEARS, published by Doubleday Page & Company. Francis Wilson wrote a good little
book about Field. Mr. Dennis and Mr. Wilson knew Eugene Field much better than I knew him. He was associated with an older set of men about the time that Brand Whitlock, Peter Dunne, John McCutcheon, Ray Baker, and a lot more of us were breaking into the game in Chicago. When I began to do a department on the old MORNING RECORD, I was assigned to the desk which Field had used. By that time he was in ill health and what ever writing he did was done at home. You had better find some one who was intimate with him and I think Mr. Dennis is the man.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,

George Ade

F. A. Hooper had asked Ade to write a biography of Eugene Field for the Encyclopædia Britannica.

Francis Wilson wrote The Eugene Field I Knew (New York: 1898).

Charles H. Dennis, Eugene Field's Creative Years (New York: 1924), pp. 313–14, gives an account of the beginnings of Ade's years as a columnist.

84 TO MILDRED V. HAXTON

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
Nov. 2, 1927.

Dear Miss Haxton:

Replying to your inquiry as to whether or not the author usually selects a title before he writes his story, I should say that usually he has a title in mind but often enough he changes it after the script is completed and then after that very often the title is again changed at the suggestion of some magazine editor or publisher who wishes to put a popular label on the work. Very often a title is selected and a story is built around it. I have written some plays which really started with titles which were felt to be unusually good. I mean THE COLLEGE WIDOW, FATHER AND THE BOYS, JUST OUT OF COLLEGE, BACK HOME AND BROKE, and THE SLIM PRINCESS. These are titles which helped the stories. Anita Loos had a very tame and meaningless title for a story but Ray Long, Editor of the Cosmopolitan, had her to change it to GENTLE-
MEN PREFER BLONDS and the title helped to make the play a great success.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,
George Ade

85  TO JOHN N. WHEELER

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
Nov. 13, 1927.

My dear John:
I went to French Lick a week ago and was called home by the sudden death of my brother Joe [Ade] and I have neglected my correspondence.

I have a letter from [Art] Helfant which I will answer in detail soon, although I wrote him briefly this morning. Regarding the three strips, which were rejected by the Philadelphia Ledger, I don’t know what in the world to say about them except that I think they are very proper and Presbyterian as compared with most of the stuff that is being printed these days. We cannot now recall them. You might say to the Ledger that in the future we will try to avoid putting into the strips anything which could bring the blush of shame to the face of a very old person. I am sure the young ones will think they are very mild.

I await, with some interest, a report on the syndicate as I really hope that we will succeed in getting some money out of them sooner or later.

I am with best wishes

Sincerely,
George Ade

Art Helfant drew Fables in Slang, by George Ade for the Bell Syndicate. The comic strip ran in 1927.

Ade wrote John Wheeler, Sept. 10, 1927 (InLP):

I think we should remind Mr. [Art] Helfant that we are not going after the kid trade and that he should avoid making his people too low comedy. Make them good comedy characters but don’t make
them look too much like monkeys or we will fail to please the people who have been interested in the fables.

Ade wrote Wheeler, Oct. 5, 1927 (InLP):

I am sending you two more strips. I shall be keenly interested to know how Mr. [Art] Helfant feels about this stuff I am sending on. I don’t wish to insult his imaginative intelligence by giving him too many directions and in the future I will not indicate anything about the pictures unless he wants some tips. As it is, I have made the suggestions very brief.

It might be a good idea to let the prospective customers know that a good deal of the material contained in the new series will be entirely new. You might get up a sample sheet including new stuff sent in and ask the editors to look at it and note that we are giving a new kind of treatment to the fable material.

86 TO WILLIAM HERSCHELL

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
Nov. 23, 1927.

Dear Bill:
I am enclosing a brief tribute to our old friend Tom Taggart and I hope it will be what you want. I am glad to join with you in this

FABLES IN SLANG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FABLE OF THE COAXING TEASER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHEN EGBERT SETTLED HIMSELF WITH FLORINE AT 9 P.M. HE ASKED HER TO GIVE HIM SOME ENCOURAGEMENT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT 10 P.M. HE WANTED HER TO GIVE HIM A PERMIT TO HOLD HANDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT 11 P.M. HE WANTED HER TO GIVE HIM AUTHORITY TO GO AHEAD AND DO SOME NECKING</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

128
little movement because Tom who really had done something for his fellowmen has been the target for a lot of cheap abuse.

I did not see you at Bloomington last Saturday but I hope you were there. We were scared pink for a while but everything turned out all right.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,

George Ade

Enclosure:

In 1892 I met Tom Taggart. He was Chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee and I was a newspaper correspondent, come down from Chicago to learn the truth regarding political conditions in Indiana. He aroused my wondering admiration at our very first meeting because he looked me in the eye and gave me some facts, instead of dealing in evasive generalities.

That was thirty-five years ago and I have kept track of him, with a friendly prejudice in his favor ever since. We have met countless times. I never came up on him, from behind, that I did not find him performing some act of gracious courtesy, binding up a wound, dealing out the soft answer that turns away wrath, or giving some other evidence of the fact that he is a kindly man of large sympathies and abounding charity. All he ever needs, at any
time, is a strand of sleigh-bells and a few reindeer to be a real Santa Claus. 

He has done more for Indiana than any one hundred of his critics, all of whom are narrow between the eyes and have dark minds. Our state educational institutions were starving until he arranged to have them fed. In the United States Senate he always voted right. He is a beautifier of landscapes, a builder of highways, a promoter of good feeling and prosperity and decent toleration. We honor ourselves in honoring him.

InLP

87  ❖ TO VICTOR RICHARD RUBENS

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
May 27, 1928.

Dear Mr. Rubens:

Here is a hard luck story regarding the use of tobacco, which I regard as the most amiable, genial and tolerable of the smaller vices. I learned to smoke, by painful efforts, when I was a small boy, starting in on corn-silk and graduating up to the stub-tailed cheroots, which came in small paper boxes and sold three for a nickel. During my collegiate days I smoked cigarettes and a pipe. The Lone Jack and Marburg mixtures were very popular in the eighties. I hope that they are still used by discriminating pipe smokers. The favorite cigarettes were Sweet Caps and Richmond Straight Cuts. We all knew the ancient wheeze to the effect that it was a Richmond Straight Cut that finished Richard III.

For many years after I took up the writing game I smoked whatever was readily obtainable, with a preference for a mild Havana Cigar of the Panatella shape. In November, 1918, just as I got through with some war work and the Big Trouble was ended, I was put flat on my back for a month by an attack of illness. Of course, while I was propped up in bed I did not smoke. When I convalesced and tottered back to my usual haunts I learned that I had retained a modicum of my normal thirst but I had lost all desire to smoke. I would light a cigar or cigarette and take a few puffs at it and experience a sense of disappointment and discontinue the effort. For ten years I have not smoked. I love to see other people smoke and I select cigars and cigarettes with great care for my friends
who have not enjoyed the misfortune of being cured. I wish I could smoke now but I can't.

I am, with best wishes,

Sincerely,

George Ade

88 TO FRANKLIN P. ADAMS

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
June 9, 1928.

Dear Frank:
I am glad you are tackling that piece about the old Olymp and I will give you all the help I can. I was a regular there for several years and when I start digging I will turn up some antiquities, I can promise you. I know of a man who can give you a world of stuff. Chris Lane, who was one of the favorites at the old house, singing extemporized songs the same as Rolling Mill Kelly did years ago and Harry Breen later on, is now connected with the Benson amusement agency in Chicago. The thing to do is to get hold of Chris and Abe Jacobs and then consult the files of the old Clipper and I think you will strike a rich lead. [Joseph] Webber and [Lew] Fields were often on the bill. You must get a picture of young Mule Hoey, brother of old Hoss, the only comic who ever combined a ballet skirt with a full set of whiskers. I remember the Lorenzo Brothers who tore paper and also the Leonzo Brothers who did wild west melodramas at the Clark street dime museum. They featured the trained dogs and when a female of the troupe gave birth to a litter [William F.] "Biff" Hall announced that the boys were going to send out a number two show the next season. We will fix it up later on to get together but we will need Abe Jacobs and also some list of the troupers. The house did not advertise in Chicago except by hand bills.

I am interested to learn that Chase Osborn is living near you. He is an interesting character and, if encouraged, will talk to you.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,

George Ade
Franklin P. Adams, whose column "The Conning Tower" and other writings gained him a place at the Round Table, had been friends with Ade since the two had worked on Chicago papers. Ade wrote Richard Welling, a New York attorney who collected Ade's books, May 14, 1938 (InLP): “I knew Frank P. Adams about that time [1899]. He was a student at the Armour Institute. Even at that time, he was doing a little writing and he would bring an occasional contribution to my column.”

See Franklin P. Adams, “Olympic Days,” Saturday Evening Post, 201 (June 22, 1929), 18+. The Olympic Theater was a third-rate vaudeville house in Chicago which Ade frequented in the 1890s.

Chase Osborn was governor of Michigan, 1910-1911.

89 TO SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
June 27, 1928.

Gentlemen:
I suppose there is no sadder moment in the life of an author than when he is compelled to return a check sent to him by a publisher. The enclosed letter and remittance from you to me will explain itself after you have carefully gone over it again. I was delighted and surprised to receive a check of this size but when my assistant and I began to check over the items we found on page 6 some addition which filled us with grief, because there was an error of $1,000 and it was not in our favor! I hope I have not brought trouble upon one of your valued employees by calling attention to this error. Perhaps the sportsmanlike thing for me to do, in order to protect your bookkeeper, would have been to pocket the check and say no more about it, but, it seems, there is one New England conscience out here in Indiana and so I am sadly returning the whole thing and will ask you to go over it again and send me the amount really due, which I fear is exactly $1000 less than the amount you sent.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,

George Ade
My dear Colonel:
I have your letter and I have been brooding over the thing. You are dead right that some one should put a lot of stress on the fact that the battle against prohibition should be based upon the consideration of taxes. I have a feeling, however, that I make a fool mistake every time I dabble in politics or issues of a political nature. I have friends in both parties and what little reputation I have acquired or what success I have made has been due to the fact that I have been friendly with a large number of people and have avoided making enemies. Just at present I have no connection with any newspaper or magazine which would permit me to do any preaching and I doubt if I would be acting wisely in getting too much mixed up in this prohibition fight which will be, for the next few months, a party issue. I am disgusted with the general hypocrisy and evasion shown by party leaders in regard to the enforcement of the Amendment and the Volstead Act. They sit in their rooms and drink and then go outside and talk dry. It is the hardest thing to find, even in this part of the dry belt, a man who will not take a drink when he gets a chance. Also, he will sit in a private room and curse the dry enactments, but when he gets out before the Methodists, Baptists and bigots and W.C.T.U’s he either dodges the whole issue or says, vaguely, that he is in favor of law enforcement. I don’t think the issue can be sidetracked for ever and I know that a lot of men must show their courage by coming out and battling for a commonsense solution of the problem, but, just now, I haven’t the ambition or disposition to be the head crusader.

I am, with best wishes

InLP

Sincerely,
George Ade

Charles L. Jewett was a New Albany, Indiana, lawyer.
The W.C.T.U. (Women's Christian Temperance Union) was founded in 1874, “banded together for the protection of the home, the abolition of the liquor traffic and the triumph of Christ’s Golden Rule in custom and in law.” This largest and most active temperance organization exerted considerable influence during Prohibition.
Dear Mr. Wells:
I am interested to have your letter and the sheaf of material which I shall carefully preserve. As I told you, this is a new game for me and I am not sure that I can be of any help to you. Whatever I do I will do because of my interest in all “troupers” and not for revenue. I have at this moment a freak idea which might be worth considering if it has not been done by others in your line of work. Open the act with a fake microphone all set and adjusted for broadcasting. You come out and talk into the “mike” announcing the name of a fake station in the town where you happen to be playing and say you have a very interesting program ahead and then you can read it into the mike, using a number of “locals,” naming people in the town in a way that will give offense to no one. If there is a confirmed old bachelor in the town have him sing a sentimental love song. Name the local celebrities and say they will do their stunts, etc. Then announce that you yourself will be the star of the program, whereupon Mrs. Wells, as the prima donna could come in and insist that she is the star of the program and you could open with a brisk quarrel in front of the “mike” with thousands of people listening in. After you start on your act as agreed upon you would not have to pay much attention to the microphone but you could give novelty to your act by having a super in a messenger’s uniform bring in many telegrams from people listening in, some praising you some praising the lady and possibly some finding fault with both of you. These could come from out of the way places and you might have some of them come from notables. Also you might ring in telephone calls from local people. The main idea would be to have fun with the radio. Possibly including imitations of some of the well-known entertainers. You would have time to study them up. This idea may be worth nothing and possibly it has been worked before in your line of entertainment but I have not seen the kind of act I am suggesting. I shall be pretty busy for a week or two and away from home most of the time but later on we can talk over this idea or some new ones which may occur to me.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,

InLP

George Ade
TO DONALD FREEMAN

Dear Mr. Freeman:

I have your inquiry and I am not going to cast a ballot for anyone but I will tell you what I think of the candidates and the parties at this time. The Republicans start with a big edge because they have reduced taxes for those influential citizens everywhere who provide campaign funds and know how to mold public sentiment by indirect methods. Their candidate has been a most useful citizen but I do not think he will ever be a popular figure. I think he is too clammy and autocratic. The party has treated the farmers of the middle west with extreme contempt. It is bad enough to starve to death without being scolded about it. The Republicans deserve defeat for their absolute cowardice and hypocrisy regarding Prohibition and the Volstead Act. The national and state legislators and the delegates to all of the conventions sit in their rooms and drink anything that comes out of a bottle and has an alcoholic content and then march over to the convention hall, stepping high, and vote for "rigid enforcement." They do not believe in it and if enforcement ever became rigid they would suffer greatly but they continue to enact the sickening farce because they are afraid of the Anti-Saloon League, the Baptists, the Methodists and the W. C. T. U.

The Democratic party is certainly a medley, an olio, a crazy quilt and an assortment of odds and ends. This year it has a good candidate. Sooner or later we should elect a Catholic to the Presidency just to prove that we are living in the 20th century instead of the 18th and that witch-burning and religious persecutions are no longer the pastimes of a free and intelligent people. Al Smith is entitled to all the praise in the world for his courage and sincerity in saying the truth about the 18th Amendment and the Volstead Act. He said what 10 thousand politicians in the Republican party knew to be true but were afraid to say out loud. He will develop great strength in the east and in the cities and will be ambushed by all of the Protestants and fanatics and bigots who have dark minds and are narrow between the eyes. When I check up on the principal opposition to Governor Smith I am tempted to vote for him because I do not wish, at any time, to be found in the same camp with the mental dwarfs and perverts who are raging against him. I think he would be a much pleasanter room-mate than Herbert Hoover. I suspect
1928

that Mr. Hoover would expect his room-mate to press the Hoover trousers and take orders every morning from an efficiency expert by the name of Herbert Hoover. Al knows how to sing a song and to him the world is an alluring spectacle. No one can deny that Mr. Hoover has been a real humanitarian but he does not sing. He has filled many a stomach but probably never made a heart beat any faster. If he is elected, our beloved country will continue to be run on a factory system of scientific management, and prosperity will continue. If it continues much longer in the present direction, we who have invested our money in farm lands will be playing checkers in the large red-brick poor-houses which dot the middle west.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,

G. A.

93 TO MARGARET M. SCOTT

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
Oct. 9, 1928.

Dear Miss Scott:
I am rather out of contact with the old-fashioned Christmas. Perhaps the old-fashioned Christmas has passed on, with many other Victorian institutions. I can remember distinctly when Christmas meant bob-sleds, sleigh bells, skating on the open ponds of the wind-swept prairies, possibly a tree at the M. E. Church, and, without fail, hanging up all the stockings on the evening of December 24th. We really believed that Kris Kringle could beat all of the [Charles E.] Lindbergh records established later, and proceed from house to house, all the way from Maine to California, and go down chimneys which were not large enough to take care of a nest of barn swallows in the summer time. I am a bachelor but if what they tell me about the young people is true, they can no longer be fooled by any myth regarding a very old gentleman driving reindeers. They probably know what they are going to get, a week before Christmas, and what the darn things cost. However, I am just talking from hearsay. I have been south every Christmas for a number of years, and down there the only special observances seem to be the playing of golf by the adults and the exploding of firecrackers by the young ones. There is no suggestion of Christmas when the
beach is crowded with bathers. I have always been in favor of Christmas and I hope that somewhere it is still being observed.

Yours truly,

George Ade

Margaret M. Scott was an officer in the Woman's Press Club of Indiana. She had written Ade, November 17, 1924 (InLP), requesting a Christmas message to be used at the meeting. Ade sent the following answer: "We have come to 'peace on earth' because we are worn out from fighting. Now let us have 'good-will toward men' because we are decent and want to behave ourselves."

The above letter was probably prepared for the Christmas meeting of the Press Club.

TO FRANKLIN P. ADAMS

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana
Oct. 21, 1928

Dear Frank:

Yes, I have read the Edna Ferber book and I thought she did very well in describing the Carry Watson establishment in view of the fact that she had never, I hope, visited same.

As for the Olympic [Theater], I am pleased to inform you that I wrote it. For several years I was a Monday afternoon writer and I knew every act on the bill, also, the after pieces put on by Frank Hartwell after one rehearsal, with all the actors doing ad lib stuff.

You speak of your picture on a Worlds Fair pass. I have my pass put away somewhere and the photograph is terrible. You may recall that I secured, from the official photographer, at the Fair, the unimproved prints of William Dean Howells and Archibald Forbes, the British war correspondent. I showed these photos to a number of police officials in Chicago and asked them, secretly, if they could identify the boys. Most of them said that William Dean was a confidence man and that Archibald was a yegg. It made a dandy story which I must dig up and reproduce some time.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,

George Ade
Carry Watson ran a Chicago purlieu which Edna Ferber used as a model for “Hetty Chilson’s place” in Show Boat. It is interesting to note that in evoking Chicago in the nineties Miss Ferber mentions Ade as one of the devotees of Billy Boyle’s Chop House.

In a manuscript notation on a letter from Douglas Silver to Ade, December 20, 1926 (InLP), Ade recorded that the passport picture story was published in The Chicago Record.

NEWS LETTER NO. 7 FROM GEORGE ADE AND OTHERS

Peking, China
8 February, 1929.

In the previous letter, mailed from that fascinating but frozen little “Sacred Island” in the Inland Sea of Japan last Saturday, the 2nd, we apologized because we had so little to tell. Be assured, good friends, who are far away, that since Saturday we have had so many strange and bewildering experiences that this letter could take up ten pages without telling half of the story.

After we got clear of Japan we headed to the Northwest. It was cold in Japan, but before we got through with our Polar expedition we had discovered a new brand of cold weather. . . . Last Tuesday morning, the 5th, we arose at an early hour and looked out of our port-holes and learned that the big BELGENLAND was crashing her way through floating ice floes. We were many miles out from the port of Chinwangtiao. The temperature was just about zero. We peeked out and saw, several miles away, a good-sized steamer trying to break through the ice and get to us. Here was an experience not on the program. When we looked over the prospectus of our cruise around the world we did not see any pictures of large steamers fighting their way through ice eight or ten inches thick. We anchored well out in the harbor and our tender, which was really a tramp steamer of good size, bucked the ice and finally came alongside, but we were hours late in getting ashore and, oh, what a frigid ride it was from the steamer to the landing.

We were all day Tuesday getting from Chinwangtiao to this most marvelous and interesting and frost-bitten town. It is the most spread out place in creation. When you go anywhere you ride for miles and miles. The Imperial City and the Forbidden City and the Legation Quarter have the widest streets in the world and the buildings seem to be set miles apart. In the native quarter the
streets are not so wide and they have a seething, swarming population suggesting bee-hives, if you can imagine bees with high cheekbones, breathing steam. The wind blows most of the time and dust is everywhere. We have ridden for miles and miles, visiting temples and palaces of incredible size and beauty, some of them slightly gone to seed and others filled with the most wonderful museum displays of Chinese art dating away back to B.C., when our ancestors were living in trees. . . . All of our party, including Mr. and Mrs. [Bob] MacKay, Mrs. [MacKay] LeRoy, Mr. and Mrs. [Dave] Noyes and Mr. [Ray] Rice, have been comfortably housed at the Grand Hotel de Pekin, a large and modern establishment in the heart of the Legation neighborhood, a little run down because conditions have been so unsettled in recent years that the tourists have been timid about coming up to Peking. . . . We cannot undertake to tell you of the marvels of the Imperial City and the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace and the lofty gates and the rambling walls. You will simply have to go and read up for yourselves. We have been very cold while sightseeing, but we have been dazed and fascinated by what we have seen. Also, we have gone a little loco on shopping, because the rugs and the porcelains and silks and linens and what not are different from anything we have struck before and prices seem low, although we shall have to pay an 11% tax on anything we take out.

We had an interesting experience Wednesday evening, when we attended a reception given by Lady Bredon, said to have the most beautiful home in Peking, with over three hundred rooms, stored with art treasures of every kind. When we arrived at the reception a fire was raging next door, and our hostess was in a state of collapse, while her twenty-five or thirty boy servants were out fighting the flames. Later we went to the large and beautiful home of Mrs. William J. Calhoun, who used to be Lucy Monroe of Chicago. Her husband was formerly Minister to China and she is about the most popular and best known woman in Peking. She has converted an old temple into a beautiful residence and lives in much splendor, although we have quietly agreed among ourselves that we would not care to live in Peking forever. . . . We have shopped to the limit and viewed such a panorama of Chinese life that our heads ache. . . . Tomorrow morning very early we take a train back to the frozen port and head south for Shanghai. Very soon we shall be in warm weather. The warm weather will be welcome. Most of us have sniffly colds. Otherwise we are all right.

InLP
Ade wrote John Wheeler, October 4, 1928 (InLP), proposing to do a series of autobiographical recollections for newspaper syndication while on this round-the-world cruise:

I will have with me a former Secretary [Ray Rice] who is lightning fast and accustomed to my dictation and we could send stuff back from various points and keep the thing going. I don't know just how it will work out but I will sit down this morning and make a lot of notes and then I will dictate or write out for you what I think would be one of the releases and you can size it up in a hurry and decide whether or not it is any good. It seems just now that the boys who break up their stuff and discuss a large number of topics—serious, semi-serious and comical are more entertaining to the average reader than the fellow who delivers a broadside.

The Log Book series Ade describes was never published.

Robert MacKay had played in the Broadway production of Ade's Father and the Boys.
and a half dozen or so along Clark Street, but Mike McDonald and George Hankins were the best known of the lot. I might add that George had a wife named Effie Hankins who ran a well known bagnio. George and Effie made enough money to build a beautiful stone mansion in Michigan Avenue near 18th which may be standing now. After they went broke Ald. John Powers bought the house for May McKenna with whom he was hooked up.

I am certainly glad to be back home after a tedious tour and I am getting all rested up. Come down and see our golf course. It is better than ever before. Jim Rathbun and Joe Reeve are here and wish to be remembered.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,
George Ade

InLP

Rex Gay was a novelist and screen writer.

TO LOUIS F. SNEDIGAR

Hazelden
Brook, Indiana

My dear Red:
I have your letter and here is what you may want:

Last winter I made a cruise around the world. It was supposed to be a pleasure cruise. We were on the same ship for nearly five months, much of the time looking out at a wide expanse of empty water and living on cold-storage food. When you eat certain kinds of food which has been in the ice-box for three or four months it is just the same as trying to eat an inner tube. It tastes like nothing whatever. It is just as tender as a piece of buckskin and it provides no nourishment. We went up to the north of China where it was 10 below zero. Soon after we were down on the Equator and 120 in the shade. Now, I had been around the world once before and I am still wondering why I went again when I might have gone to Florida and had good food all of the time and pleasant surroundings and a civilized climate, never very hot and never very cold. I have said it many times and I will say it again, because it is the simple truth, that the climate of the east coast of Florida is the best winter cli-
mate in the world, and I have tried them all. Nothing can stop people from going to Florida every winter. The man who can afford to go to Miami Beach and can get away and remains up in the Polar regions to shovel snow and have the flu and nurse his chilblains, is simply wrong in the head.

I am, with best wishes

Sincerely,

George Ade

Mayor Louis F. Snedigar had asked Ade for a favorable comment on Miami Beach to read on radio.

98  

TO FRANKLIN P. ADAMS

Miami Beach, Florida
Dec. 8, 1929.

Dear Frank:
I am interested to hear from you and I am compelled to reply that various press agents at different times had me engaged to all of the young ladies mentioned in your letter and several others including some I never met. Because I didn’t run around much with the gals back of the foot lights the publicity boys seemed to think it was a great joke to float these wild-eyed stories about my pursuing Dorothy Tennant or Helen Hale or Irene Frizelle or Elsie Janis. The story about Tennant was the one most widely circulated although I knew her very slightly and had spoken to her timidly a couple of times at rehearsals.

I trust you are well and happy.

Sincerely,

George Ade

Dorothy Tennant starred in The College Widow.
Helen Hale starred in Peggy from Paris.
Elsie Janis, So Far So Good (New York: 1932), p. 94, recalls her rumored betrothal to Ade: “In the play [The Fair Co-Ed] I was engaged to marry half of the college, which necessitated my wearing a string of fraternity pins. George Ade started my collection by giving me his Sigma Chi pin. The humorous gesture was taken seriously by the press and my engagement to George was announced.”
Amy Leslie (Mrs. Lillie West Brown Buck), the daughter of the editor of the Lafayette paper for which Ade worked, shared her reviewers' tickets with Ade when he was a cub reporter in Chicago. It was rumored that the veteran drama critic was in love with Ade.
This previously-unpublished sketch of Ade and his dog Spry was found in one of Mildred Gilman’s scrapbooks.