THE FAMILY ALBUM

BY "BUGS" BAER

(3) 16-

Cornelia Adamaki

THE FAMILY ALBUM

The FAMILY ALBUM

By

ARTHUR "BUGS" BAER

With an introduction by

GILBERT SELDES

Illustrated by

HERB ROTH

ALBERT & CHARLES BONI

NEW YORK :: 1925

Copyright, 1925, by Albert & Charles Boni, Inc.

Printed in the United States of America

INTRODUCTION

The first thing to be said of Bugs Baer is that he is one of the entertaining American humorists. That at once distinguishes him from the majority of his fellow-workers; and what gives him distinction, in the literal sense, from the rest is that he expresses himself in an intensely personal way. There are humorists so gifted that even without a style of their own, they have the capacity to amuse us; Baer is not one of them. Remove him ever so slightly from his manner, tell over one of his amazing Family Albums with the change of one adjective, and it is all lost. His fun is neither furious nor rollicking, but it is rowdy and this rowdiness runs through his manner. I have suggested elsewhere that he is a kinsman of Falstaff and his companions, and this is not a purely literary analogy. I found it by the simple accident of quoting phrases for several days when I had been reading both, and finding that at least half of the time I had ascribed them to the wrong source.

His work seems to me wholly outside the literary tradition, even outside the American tradition of vulgar humor. He is not like Bill Nye and not like Mark Twain; with the latter he shares the gift

of illuminating exaggeration, but with Baer the exaggeration is in a phrase, not in an incident. The Government bureau of hopeless statistics having informed him that two-dollar bills do not last long, he writes that it is not news; "one-dollar bills turn up right in your hand and fifty-cent pieces explode on contact." This sentence is unusual for him in that it contains all the customary parts of speech; a much more representative sentence is his question: "Are motion picture directors robustly correct when they claim that average skull age of public is but eight slender years?" His whole work is a cable-language of his own.

He is neither a satirist nor an ironist. What he has is an exceptionally oblique outlook upon the world and an elliptical expression which gives the same effect as small and agreeable galvanic shocks. In the Glutt he has created a wild roughneck and a home-town hero, exaggerated beyond all imagination, a mad bull of caricature. His daily comment on sport has the same quality, slightly toned down. Recently he said, after describing an inning in which nearly every player hit safely that if any more had passed first base they would have opened a United Cigar Store there. He has the extraordinary faculty of seeing the relation between the most incongruous objects, and his elliptical method jams them up against each other in such a way as to make pleasure follow swiftly on surprise.

I say that his outlook on the world is oblique. This does not refer to his predilection for violence, although to refined people there must be something unpleasant in a person who could every week for two years describe the physical encounters of an average household. I mean that things come before his mental and physical vision which no one else seems to see. "Hello" is the beginning of one page in the Album, "we heard you at the door, but just thought you were part of the bad weather." (I have before me this solitary example of his work, and it is proof enough of his quality that it contains everything essential in him; he is so specifically himself that in spite of his imitators you can identify his work from half a sentence.) "The folks," it continues,

> "are in having supper at each other, and pop says that unless uncle can get control of his table manners he will have to eat by himself, if he can get that far away from anybody." When you have read half a dozen of his pages you will understand what he means by the word "at" in the first line. "Pop was a very hard man to please no matter what you gave him," and after the fight:
>
> "Mom decided that pop had outgrown our town and thought it would be a good idea if we moved . . . and pop could start life all over again and grow a new set of thumbprints.

"But pop wouldn't leave the town where he had been born and ignored. . . .

"Well, that started intimate hostilities between pop and mom, and pop as usual finished second best. . . ."

He is always leaving out the intervening, the logically necessary, step, and giving you premise and conclusion as if suddenly. It is one part of his peculiar nature, and others bring him full into the stream of mad humor which is one of the most entertaining of current phenomena. It is enragingly irresponsible; it has none of the usual points of reference, it exists intensely by itself and has probably not a vestige of social or philosophical significance. What on earth does he mean when he says, "Not that pop wasn't optimistic, because he wasn't"? And how on earth does he manage to make it seem to mean everything as he places it in his sketch? How, in fact, has he managed to make the character of the narrator of the Family Album seem so definite?

My only suggestion for an answer lies in the book itself—in the irreducible quality you call his personality or his style. He writes and thinks as no one else writes and thinks; in a way it is lunatic; in another way, not the very greatest way, but in a refreshing way, it is genius.

GILBERT SELDES

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Grandpop Has a Subtle Argument with the Minister	17
Why Should a Young Girl Talk About Pop's and Mom's Fiftieth Anniversary	24
Sad Cases of Brother Jerry and Pop's Brother Eb	28
Well, Anyway, We Can't All Be Civil War Cronies, So Here's Who's Who	34
Easter Sunday Recalls the Romantic Episode Concerning the Reluctant John	39
The Life of Cousin Bill Shows That Tonsorial Art Is Not Always for Heart's Sake	45
The Tragic Conclusion of Cousin Alex's Go-Hither Attitude on the Discomforts of Home	50
Why Do People Sing in Rowboats? Maybe Aunt Ella Knows but Won't Tell	57
The Seemingly Enormous but After-All-Intensely-Average Adventures, of the Old Man's Nephew	61
Grandpop's Only Fault: He Was About 400 Years Ahead of His Age	67
One Cylinder Reminiscences, in Which the Rut Bound Past Merges Into the Smileless Present	71

PAGE

The Glory That Was Grease and the Askma That Kept Beezie Home . . 78

Uncle John, Whose Detachment for Aunt Beenie Did Not Deter Him from Pursuing His Lofty Ideals 82

Uncle John Elopes with a Posse. Ensuing Complications Reveal Life's Fitful Uncertainties 88

Pop was Full of Ginger, Anyway . . . 95

Uncle Joe's Gambling Instincts Succumb to the Bow Wow 100

Moving Memoirs of Domestic Life in the Old Days 105

Aunt Dot's Oleaginous Married Life was Not Precisely a Bed of Roses . . . 111

What's in a Name? Anybody, According to Those McGurks 116

Aunt Etta's Ruling Passion Was, Getting Her Picture Took 120

When Life Was Just One Family Dinner Table Riot After Another 126

The Whimples Were Certainly Strange, but How About Pop? 130

We All Know Riggity 134

An Eccentric Acrobat Meets Aunt and Uncle—Object, Dancing 139

Beautiful Sister Loobie 143

Aunt Albie Couldn't Get Uncle Wimger Over the Long Distance Without Paying the Toll Rate 148

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
He would let his beard hang down in the fish bowl	19
He used to drive past a little shack	31
Then John took Pop out to the rain water pond and pointed out a big turtle	41
He used to go up on the roof and dress on the chimney	53
About two rubs and the pole would come down	63
The first motor car ever wrecked in our village	73
He was always looking for a blue bird	83
He showed a big posse the way out of town	89
Pop never missed a circus	107
Along would come another photographer	121

THEY MADE ME LAUGH

I have been reading jokes and humorous writings and books for thirty years. I stopped laughing ten years ago, when the thirteen hundredth blonde came in with her pink ribboned envelope and told me that her family and friends went into gales of laughter over the funny things she got off, and this without giving them a thought.

Now "Bugs" Baer has stirred me from the purple melancholy of a decade.

My share in this book consists solely in reading it and making the chapter headings. The publishers told me Gilbert Seldes was to write about the author, so there is really nothing for me to say. That is why I am saying it.

I state unreservedly that "Bugs" Baer is a great humorist. I don't think that anybody has ever properly defined a great humorist, but whatever he is, "Bugs" Baer is it. This stuff is racial, penetrative, stereopticon in its vivid characterization and true in its exaggerative qualities. Its simplicity may deceive you. Be not fooled. Human nature is here on exhibit, unadorned, as it should be.

My, what folks they are!

THOMAS L. MASSON.

THE FAMILY ALBUM

THE FAMILY ALBUM

GRANDPOP HAS A SUBTLE ARGUMENT WITH THE MINISTER

THAT'S the family carry-all. When Grandpop made his will, he left that carriage to Uncle Abner with complete equipment. There was a whip and harness and a full set of carriage dogs.

Aunt Moosie cried a little when grandpop died. She was always crying. In fact, she wept so much she made everybody's corns ache.

It was grandpop's own fault that he died. He was opposed to not drinking. It broke granny's spirit when grandpop used to come home every night and try to catch the goldfish in the parlor aquarium, using his whiskers for bait. He would let his beard hang down in the fish bowl and the goldfish would snap at them.

He never caught any goldfish, but it used to clean his whiskers because grandpop was a careful drinker but a careless eater. There was always some bread

crumbs or other knick-knacks in his beard. That naturally was a harvest for the little fish.

Finally, grandpop's heart got tired of trying to catch up to his breath, and—yes, those burned holes in the pages are marks of grandpop's thumb. He loved to look through the album and used to wet his thumb on his tongue so he could turn the pages. We don't know what he drank, but his wet thumb used to scorch the paper.

He was an earnest student of the Scriptures and loved to argue with the village minister on intemperance. Once he woke up in the middle of his pew and interrupted the sermon which was on alcohol in all its ramifications and grandpop started quoting but got a little mixed up.

The minister says, "He who drinks shall be damned." That was when grandpop woke up and said, "You've got to stop swearing at me." The minister wasn't swearing at him, because there was lots of other folks in the church. But grandpop started quoting authority and said that drink was sanctioned by the prophets and the minister told him he was wrong.

So grandpop quoted, "Wine is a mocker and

HE WOULD LET HIS BEARD HANG DOWN IN THE FISH BOWL

strong drink is raging, and he who is overcome thereby shall inherit the earth."

Everybody applauded, but the minister who told grandpop that there was no alcoholic edition of the Bible. So the minister said that grandpop was quoting from his own memory which was very poor, especially at collection time.

But grandpop told him that was his story and he would stick to it. So the minister said that grandpop ought to stick to the Sunday edition of the Scriptures and don't pay so much attention to the Saturday night extra.

Then he showed the congregation the real passage that didn't say anything about he who is overcome thereby, inherits the earth.

He said to the old man: "Wine is a mocker and strong drink is raging. But he who is overcome thereby doesn't inherit the earth."

Grandpop said: "Well, he thinks he does, anyway, and that's the same thing."

The minister waved his arms and told him that it wasn't the same thing and that if grandpop didn't reform he was doomed to eternal torment and grand-

pop said there wasn't no torment that alimony couldn't cure. That brought grandmom into the argument and developed two strong cliques in the congregation. One faction thought grandpop was right and the horse ran away with the carry-all during the excitement. Naturally, the carriage dog ran with him and all the folks ran outdoors and chased the carriage.

That's the picture of them there. Grandpop isn't in the carriage because the family wanted to make it a group picture and he didn't want a good horse ruined by a bad load. So they decided just to take a picture of the horse and the carriage dog which was a white hound with tobacco juice spots.

It's a funny thing about carriage dogs. They ain't got no future and nobody cares about their past and they run along under the wagon. Yes, our carriage was a wagon on week-days, and the dog never gets anywhere and if he does he's got to come right back.

If the wagon runs away they run with it and if the horse slows up they slow up and they're like some folks, they're victims of their environment. That dog there never did an original thing. Once there was a wreck when the milk train struck the wagon right in gran.

His name was whatever you wanted to call him and he wouldn't answer anyway, because he only followed under the carriage and trusted to others to guide him. He is dead now, which is all for the best because there is nothing to run under but those family flivvers and you don't want carriage dogs getting mixed up with differentials and there's so many hills that a carriage dog would wear himself out changing gears.

Well, good-by, and don't forget to write.

WHY SHOULD A YOUNG GIRL TALK ABOUT POP'S AND MOM'S FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY?

THAT'S pop and mom's fiftieth wedding anniversary. It took them that long to grow old and gray together. It doesn't take that long nowadays. No, the people didn't check their eyes at the door. That's a flashlight. Yep, that's me in the back of the celery. I squint awfully when the explosion comes and then the smoke goes in your mouth and the photographer charges you fifty cents for a picture that makes you look like the police wanted you.

Now, I wasn't such a bad looking girl at that time, even if I do say it myself, who shouldn't. But pop was sort of nibbling at some domestic home-brewed wines, that he had said later had a kick like the fox gnawing at the bosom of the Spartan youth.

One peculiar thing about pop was that he knew Riley Wilson and had a porcelain eye. He lost his eye during the Civil War. He wasn't in the army. Because if pop had been in the army, all he could have lost was a heel.

I don't like to say it, who shouldn't, but pop wasn't too brave when he wasn't sampling domestic cordials, but he was a fine man when you consider everything, which nobody ever does.

He and Riley Wilson used to go around together and they both had glass eyes. Riley used to carry a pocketful of them, like coughdrops in Winter, or camphor balls in Summer.

He would go into a buffet and say either "Good morning" or "Good night" to the proprietor, all depending on where the bouncer happened to be at that inopportune incident.

Then he would sidle up to the brass rail and speak familiarly to the strangers gathered round, who would return his greetings with accrued interest.

Then Riley would say to the barkeeper when he caught him in a listening mood, "I'd like a snifter."

The bartender would say, "So would I."

That didn't discourage Riley any. He would say, "Who are you?"

Being skilled in verbal persiflage, Riley would say, "What's it to me?"

The barkeep then would chirp, "One word leads to another."

That was Riley's opening.

He would say, "I'd give my right eye for a drink."

The bartender, if he was a good bartender and had the interests of his employer at heart, would say, "I doesn't seem enough."

Then Riley would get his drink and pick out his glass peeper and lay it on the bar. It wasn't his right eye but his left. In the confusion very few bartenders noticed the diplomatic error.

The bartender would put the agate lamp in the cash register and ring up "No Sale" on the keys.

Then Riley would thank him with a few well chosen oaths and saunter out on the bouncer's boot.

He would then select an appropriate filler for his vacant eye and continue on to the next head-

ache depot. It was just a frolic in Summer and fun in Winter.

I don't know how I switched from the fiftieth wedding anniversary—no, not weeding—wedding. I don't know how we got on this subject, but really, Amiel, you are so good looking—

Well, sorry you have to go—

But—

Don't forget to write.

SAD CASES OF BROTHER JERRY AND POP'S BROTHER EB

THOSE six pictures on this page are brother Jerry. That one there was taken when he was about two years old, when we were afraid that he wouldn't live. This one was taken when he was seven years old, when we were afraid he would.

The family don't talk much about him because he was kind of a wild boy and used to sass pop and mom awful. By the way, did you hear that Rockerfeller gave six million dollars to Hopkins? That means the University and not Peggy. But between the two of 'em the Hopkinses is getting all the money in the country.

Jerry was about sixteen when he fell in love with a girl from a small town in Pennsylvania. Mom used to tell him that no man should think of getting married before he was forty years old. By that time he would be old enough to know better.

That's a strange thing about divorce and scandals. It's all from getting married too young. They call me an old maid, but that ain't because I never had any chances. When grandpop died and left me

twenty-four dollars, I've been afraid that some unprincipled adventurer would marry me for my money.

We never saw grandpop, but he remembered us fine. We had a farm on a flat rock up in Maine. That's what pop used to say, anyway. Anyway, Jerry went and got married and pop disinherited him without a dime. That's the only way pop could disinherit anybody, because he didn't have the dime himself.

Pop wasn't much of a home man even if he did have fourteen children.

Pop sold wild-hair tweezers. When a man would shave himself he was liable to get an ingrown hair. Then pop would sell him a tweezer. But there wasn't much of a market for ingrown hairs as people tried to avoid them. Pop endeavored to make them popular but he didn't succeed much.

Pop had a brother who was kind of lazy, but it wasn't his fault. He suffered a whole lot from a blighted romance. This fellow, Bill Adams, that I was telling you about last week when you stopped at our house to take off your new Sunday shoes that were pinching you, is the man that caused it.

Pop's brother's name was Eb. And Eb used to

drive a coal wagon. He worked harder than his own horses, because Eb sold coal by the ton and generally the horses only had to pull around twelve hundred pounds.

Eb was no Beau Brummel on his coal wagon, but the family used to think he could have kept his face cleaner than he did. When his day's work was done he used to drive past a little shack on his way to the coalyards. It was always twilight at that time. On the porch of the little shanty was a beautiful girl who used to smile at Eb. She looked wonderful in the dusk on the porch in a hammock.

Now, here is what ruined Eb's career on his coal wagon. Do you know that in the old days there wasn't any gas or electric lights, and this girl's family didn't have coaloil lamps. This girl was really an African princess and she was from a royal family in that country. She was a Kaffir, I think.

But she was darker than a club flush. But Eb didn't know it, as he never saw her in the daylight. And she was a nice girl, but she never saw Eb without the coal dust on his face. She thought that he was a Kaffir Prince Charming on his milk-white coal wagon.

But one Summer night, as they sat on the porch,

HE USED TO DRIVE PAST A LITTLE SHACK

there came a flash of lightning. And Eb saw she was a Kaffir and she saw that Eb was what you might call almost a white-skinned man, if it hadn't been for his neck.

He had a little coal dust in his eyes and his ears, too, but she knew that Eb came from a good family. Naturally, that blighted Eb's romance like boll weevils in the South. Our family didn't care much what Eb did.

It was her family that objected to the match.

He wasn't good looking, but he was kind of absent-minded and good-hearted. Maybe, being absented-minded was what made him good-hearted. You know, our folks have got a reputation for being stingy.

But we never had anything. And you can't give away something you haven't got. When we started to get something, we were so used to not giving anything away that we didn't.

Life is all habits. Eb never recovered from the shock of his wrecked romance. He couldn't work. And it looked like he might die any minute.

That was fifty-six years ago, and Eb still looks that way.

WELL, ANYWAY, WE CAN'T ALL BE CIVIL WAR CRONIES, SO HERE'S WHO'S WHO

JUST to think that Tuesday is the Fourth already. Doesn't time pass quickly when you haven't got a watch?

We don't have those old-fashioned celebrations that we used to have when grandpop was alive. That's grandpop's picture there in his faded Civil War uniform. He claimed to be the youngest drummer boy in the war, which must have been a musical conflict because every soldier you meet was a drummer boy.

That fellow there alongside of grandpop was an old fellow who drummed with Stonewall Jackson on the Southern side. Grandpop and him were great friends in photographs, but they used to fight like the devil outside of pictures.

On the Fourth, they would get dressed up in their war uniforms and march down Railroad Avenue until their feet gave out.

After the parade was over, the newspaper photographers would take pictures of grandpop and his

friend whose name was Yoder. Both of 'em were over eighty years old, but grandpop felt much superior because he was a bass drummer in the war, while Yoder was only a kettle drummer.

Grandpop claimed that he had much more territory to cover than Yoder, showing that his general had more confidence in him. That always made Yoder mad and he would squirt tobacco juice in grandpop's direction.

Grandpop was kind of cowardly except when it came to drums, but this always got him mad, too. I always found that no man was a coward when he was mad, because anger is a good substitute for bravery.

Grandpop would shake his hickory cane at Yoder and say, "I out-drummed you in '61 and I can do it now."

Yoder would switch his tobacco quid from one cheek to the other and holler, "I'll knock you for a row of old Virginia bee hives."

Grandpop would get so angry then that his collar would blister. He used to say, "I'll take you like Grant took Richmond."

Yoder would holler, "That took four years."

Pop would answer, "I got plenty of time."

Then Yoder would say, "You'll need it."

Yoder would threaten to punch grandpop so hard in the jaw that it would bleach his hair.

Just when it looked like they had to scrap or something, along would come another photographer to take a picture of these two old friends who drummed at each other sixty years ago.

Yoder would shake his skinny knuckles at grandpop and say, "I drummed you out of Virginia."

Grandpop would retort, "How about Gettysburg?" That would make Yoder plenty mad and he would answer, "How about Bull Run?"

It would look pretty unsettled then, but another photographer would always come up and ask the old boys to pose in one of those friendly enemy pictures with two old foes, now pals. An armistice would be declared until the picture was taken, and then the battle would start right in where it left off.

It was dangerous to try to separate them, because

they would borrow chewing tobacco off of perfect strangers. Us folks used to think that the quarrels were staged to bring the village constable within borrowing distance, as he bought the kind of tobacco that fitted grandpop's mouth, but not his pocketbook.

Grandpop would holler, "I'll drum at your funeral."

Yoder would say, "You'll annoy everybody but me."

Grandpop would boil over and howl, "I was the youngest drummer boy in the war."

Yoder would call him a liar and claim that he was so young they had to fill his drum with milk.

Grandpop would think a while and then holler that he was so young they had to put rockers on his drum like a cradle.

Along would come another newspaper photographer and the old drummers would stop hostilities until they had their picture snapped again in a love and kisses attitude. Then they would bust out fighting.

Seems to me that grandpop and Yoder ain't much different from other folks who are very friendly in group pictures or flashlights, but let you turn your back once and they tear all the buttons off your reputation.

Well, good-by, and don't forget to write.

EASTER SUNDAY RECALLS THE ROMANTIC EPISODE CONCERNING THE RELUCTANT JOHN

WELL, well, Easter Sunday always reminds me of the time when I was a girl. They call 'em flappers now, don't they? Girls nowadays are terrible. They're like Easter eggs. Hand painted and hard boiled.

If I got a buggy ride and a piece of sponge cake on Sunday my heart would beat so hard that my two false teeth would rattle. But these flappers want automobiles, flowers, caviar and everything.

That picture there is John. He was my first sweetheart. He was good-hearted but awfully stingy. Pop used to say that John would give you two feet for a yard any day.

John invited pop over to his farm one day. Pop was hungry, and John said to him, "Do you like terrapin consomme?"

Pop's mouth started to water like the plumbing was busted. He said, "I like it so much it hurts."

Then John took pop out to the rainwater pond and pointed out a big turtle. Pop looked at it enviously, and John said: "Well, you know that turtles live to be a thousand years old?"

Pop shook his tongue in the affirmative.

Then John said: "When he dies we'll eat him."

That made pop just as happy as a lark with a broken leg. Then John showed pop a century plant and told him it bloomed once every hundred years. Pop came home and told me that I could expect a bouquet in the near future.

A woman's idea of beautiful Easter music is the squeak from a new pair of shoes. But if I had married John I'd been running around just as barefooted as a pet cat. He was so stingy that he wore his pajamas in the daytime for underwear.

Of course, I don't think a man should waste his money, but there ain't no law against a man being generous on holidays. John asked me to marry him, and then he took out a Staten Island ferry schedule and said: "Where will we go on our honeymoon?"

I always wanted to see something of the world so

THEN JOHN TOOK POP OUT TO THE RAIN WATER POND AND POINTED OUT A BIG TURTLE

I thought that Cuba would be a good place. But John said Bermuda.

I was against Bermuda for a wedding trip, because I didn't want to go there on an onion-moon.

We got quarreling over the trip and John suggested that we turn it into a bicycle race.

He saved everything and has still got a ticket for the Ferris Wheel at the Chicago world's fair in 1892. He chased the mice out of a nest, stuck a feather duster in it and gave it to his sister for a new bonnet.

He wore a rubber collar and used a carpet tack for a back button. Once he went across the river on business. At that time, telephone calls cost ten cents. John wanted to speak to pop. So he sent pop a telegram collect.

The telegram cost pop twenty-eight cents before he realized the contents. The messenger boy wouldn't let pop open it first. You know curiosity killed the cat. But realization brought it to life again.

Pop paid the money and then read the telegram. He turned white with condensed rage.

Pop got so mad that he called John up and asked

him what he wanted. John told him he had never talked on the telephone before and wanted to see how it felt in his ear. Pop reached way down into his vocabulary for some new blistering words and told John what he thought of him.

John hung up right in the middle of some valuable profanity and the mad escapade cost pop thirty-eight cents in ready cash.

So he broke off our engagement until John paid the money back. That was twenty-two years ago and it begins to look like a bad debt.

THE LIFE OF COUSIN BILL SHOWS THAT TONSORIAL ART IS NOT ALWAYS FOR HEART'S SAKE

THAT'S cousin Bill Adams. He was my aunt's niece on his uncle's side. He's almost the image of George Washington with that wart on his nose. Maybe it's Lincoln. Anyway, Bill had so many warts that his photograph looks like a railroad map.

Bill went to college and when he was about thirty years old my uncle decided that Bill ought to go to work again. Bill didn't like this so good because he claimed that one backward step would make any man lose his carpet slippers.

Anyway, Uncle borrowed enough money to send Bill to college again for the pest-graduate course. It was a barber college and Bill cut almost as many classes as customers. They used to give wound stripes for injuries received in the second chair from the right and perfume was used whenever they couldn't get anesthetics.

Bill was the prize student and used to operate on subjects at the daily clinic. The other pupils

would gather around out of morbid frivolousness while Bill would shave the victim and carefully explain the use of each part of his face as he held it up so they could see it.

After he graduated out of the nearest exit uncle gave him enough money to open a barber shop. He thought this would keep Bill quiet. It was a good idea, but used cars aren't the only things that don't work.

Bill had eighteen chairs in his place, nine to each barber.

That kept both of 'em busy. When they had eighteen customers in there on a Saturday night they would slap hot towels on all their faces and try to scare the whiskers off instead of using hammers or some more civilized system.

Bill would be scalping some bird in Chair One, while another tourist's face in Chair Eleven would be frying. Whenever he smelled something burning he knew the whole bunch was done and he would turn 'em out like biscuits.

The service wasn't so good, but it was accurate and fast. And by getting shaved eighteen at a time the customers could get club rates.

Once Bill made a mistake and shaved a guy with the back of the razor instead of the edge. Do you know that this man was the only customer who ever came back the second time?

Business got so prosperous that Bill's creditors invented the safety razor to drive him into some other business where tools weren't weapons.

So Bill got married and furnished his house with the insides of a barber shop.

They had a palatial bungalow in the suburbs and it was beautiful in the Spring when the caterpillars were crawling among the buds on the red and white revolving barber pole in the front yard.

Bill had his shiniest nickel-plated and enamel chairs in the parlor. They looked fine. There was eight of 'em in the parlor and fourteen polished brass cuspidors. Besides some of the handsomest tonic and dandruff signs you ever saw. Of course, the signs had strangers' faces on 'em. But Bill didn't like us relatives, anyway.

The parlor, corridor and other rooms were all papered with Bill's mirrors and there were six more barber's chairs in the dining room.

Bill had twin barber chairs in his wife's boudoir and she soon got used to sleeping sitting up in a beautiful chair. But it was kinda funny if she happened to get a cold. Bill would rush to the doctor and holler, "Hurry up, Doc, my wife is sick in bed on two chairs." This got to be a standing joke among the neighbors who spoke to Bill. So Bill never heard it.

Mrs. Bill used to cook New England dinners in the boiler which Bill used to use to steam his towels. There was always a Turkish taste to the food, and Mrs. Bill could never get the soapy flavor out of the coffee mugs, which had customers' names on 'em, but not their telephone numbers. Not that Bill was jealous, but there were some beautiful gilded cups in his dining room dinner set. They didn't match, anyway.

The kitchen was great. The ketchup and vinegar were in bay rum bottles, and Bill used to ask his visitors to shake 'emselves another plate of soup into their consomme barber cups.

It required good bookkeeping to get your food right. Pond's Extract was tomato sauce, and Eau de Cologne was gravy and sometimes it was Eau de Cologne.

Quite often the icing on the angel cake turned out to be lather. But Bill's wife didn't mind that so much.

What made her get her divorce was whenever Bill left home for a trip.

She stuck out her lips for Bill to kiss, and instead Bill would dust her face off with a whiskbroom.

THE TRAGIC CONCLUSION OF COUSIN ALEX'S GO-HITHER ATTITUDE ON THE DISCOMFORTS OF HOME

YES, that's Cousin Alex in his sample clothes. Alex was a very neat dresser and he was always looking in the fashion magazines to see what our well-dressed men were going to drink this Summer.

He was a traveling man for a big Danbury firm and only came home to sober up. He lived in hotels and Pullman trains so much that he often longed to get married and settle down.

But when anybody started to talk about the comforts of home, he would immediately pull his bachelor ideas up around his ears and get mad.

He'd say that all the comforts of home propaganda was pro-alimony literature gotten up by lawyers and their confederates.

He said he never got a good cup of coffee at home in his life and everything was so burned they ought to use a fire alarm for a dinner gong.

It used to be mutton on Monday, veal on Tuesday and all those et cetera things, and you had about as much choice as coal on the chute. Talk about forcible feedings, home cooking was force without any feed.

But in a hotel a man can look at the bill-of-menu and he could order what he wanted and the waiter didn't want to be kissed and the manager of the hotel wouldn't bust into tears if he threw a plate at the cashier and missed. He said it was easier to dine with gentlemen than like one.

Hotel owners never asked guests to get up early in the morning and make the furnace fire, and so far as mending clothes was concerned, he said he never knew what real comfort was until he had lost all the buttons off his red flannel underwear.

They'd put enough starch in the cuffs to support a broken leg and if the neckband was any tougher they could chip diamonds with it. And anybody who wore a home-laundered collar did so with suicidal intent.

If you wanted your trousers mended your wife would slash a piece to match it out of your coat. Then she would have to chop up your vest to fix the coat and by the time they got through match-

ing patches you looked like you were made up to play a busted sofa in the church cantata.

Hotel tailors overcharge you, all right, but they do things quick and they get their mistakes back on time.

And it's more fun fighting with strangers than with relatives, because once in a while the cops think you are right. And if you want to sleep late there ain't nobody to hammer on the door and ask if you're awake, and no kids playing leapfrog on the chandeliers. When a man is feeling sick in a hotel he don't have to ask any questions and that angel's ministering hand on the fevered brow might be all right in poems, but cracked ice was a darned fine imitation, and don't pull any of that Thomas Edison questionnaire business.

Alex wasn't exactly against family institutions, but when a man is away from home so long he forgets the language. He used to say that home comforts and privacy were legends handed down from the time when folks lived in jungles, and that life in hotels and upper berths proved the Darwinian theory enough to please him.

He lived in upper berths so much that any time he came home he used to go up on the roof and

HE USED TO GO UP ON THE ROOF AND DRESS ON THE CHIMNEY

dress on the chimney. Once he went down to Coney Island and got on the merry-go-round and left his shoes with the ticket taker. When he called on any of our neighbors he would leave his shoes in their vestibule, and he got mad if they weren't shined when he said good-by to come home.

His habits were so single that it surprised everybody when he got married to a widow with four children. That's her on this page with those seven little boys and girls. All hers. You know you've got to marry a widow to find out just how many children she really has got, because all widows seem to think that children should be subtracted and not seen.

When Alex discovered that he had married one of those University Extension families, he got mad and claimed the widow had mobbed him instead of married him. All the kids went on their honeymoon with Alex and his new bride, who was new to him.

This was the first time that Alex had ever taken out a road show that was so big you needed an advance agent. When he got to towns he seemed surprised that there wasn't any billing up on the fences.

When you talk to him about home comforts, he don't say anything, but his eyes look like his ears are glad that he is still a traveling salesman.

WHY DO PEOPLE SING IN ROWBOATS? MAYBE AUNT ELLA KNOWS BUT WON'T TELL

THAT'S Aunt Ella when she went to Lake Hopatcong on her vacation with Uncle Ed. Uncle said that if America ever went dry he would be a man without a country.

Uncle was very historical and loved to read how the United States got started. It seems that Christopher Columbus discovered America by getting some jewelry from women, and uncle used to say that it must be so, because us men have been giving it back to them ever since.

Then everybody got tired of being independent and signed the Declaration because there was a tax on tea. They went on a boat and threw tea overboard, and uncle said if he had been on a boat he would have thrown the tea overboard and also the rest of the meal.

Tea was the only thing that was taxed then, but now they tax everything. Uncle said that if you wanted to drink something else, you had to step off the wharf onto a U. S. Shipping Board boat. He

said that it didn't make any difference whether he stepped off the wharf to get a drink or whether he drank first and stepped off the wharf afterward.

Uncle claims the school children aren't getting their history right in nowadays schools. It doesn't make 'em patriotic. They take their history like ice cream sodas when it used to be all sulphur and molasses. He said look at John D. Rockefeller. He's a great philanthropist, ain't he? He gives away money to little babies. What does that D. stand for? It stands for Dime. Yessir, Uncle would say, John Dime Rockefeller. He gives so many of them away I think he must be trying to make 'em popular.

History is changing. Uncle said it was a great war when the North fought the South, but wait until the East fights the West. Never thought about that, did you? With California boasting about its climate and Florida claiming the biggest grapefruit, there is bound to be hostility break out into totally unexpected places.

Ohio is a great State for hog raising, although they have stopped that and are going in for Presidents, because the people feed the Presidents and corn costs a lot of money.

So you can see that war is coming between the

East and West because St. Looey is sore at the New York Giants and Long Island is trying to outshoot Hollywood and competition is what makes trouble.

Auntie would say were're on a vacation now at Lake Hopatcong and let's hire a boat off Will Morrisey and go over to see the Latzes. Uncle would brighten up then and ask Morrisey what he wanted for a canoe. Morrisey would tell him about two dollars for about an hour.

Uncle would holler what in the name of something insulting is this about stuff. About this? And about what? Do you figure that ten cents is about two dollars?

Morrisey would say all right, ten cents is about two dollars and ten seconds is about an hour.

Uncle would get mad and say that he hated these about guys and he didn't like 'em about. Morrisey would tell him that if he didn't like it he could lump it. So Uncle would ask a lump of what and Morrisey would say a lump of cheese. Then Uncle would tell him something sudden and quick and ask him what he charged for drowning by the hour. Morrisey would say about two dollars, and Uncle would tell him to take three hours' worth and charge it to him.

One word would lead to another, because I never saw people who went on a vacation that enjoyed themselves, because most folks travel so they can criticize other folks' cooking and table manners. They get all starched up for dinner, and the women folks change their dresses fifty times a day, even if they have only got two dresses.

Lake Hopatcong is a fine place to send postal cards from, but everybody steals the hotel letter paper and envelopes. Eddie Miller would come along in his boat that has engine trouble instead of oars and invite Uncle and Aunt Ella for an excursion wreck up the lake.

Around twilight, when Uncle's nose was throwing long shadows across the lake, they would all start to sing. I don't know what makes people sing in rowboats, but they all do, even if they can't. Uncle had a nice parlor voice for hollering out into the kitchen for some hot water for his bunion. He wasn't much on rowboat opera, though, and Aunt Ella's ears would get very much annoyed. Still they had some pretty good times on the lakes, and if folks would sing in canoes I guess it would be a pretty good plan to give everybody a rowboat for a wedding present.

Good-by. Don't forget to write.

THE SEEMINGLY ENORMOUS BUT AFTER-ALL-INTENSELY-AVERAGE ADVENTURES, OF THE OLD MAN'S NEPHEW

WHEN Aunt Beenie's old man got the gambling fever and swiped the traction company car hoss his wife left him. But the old man didn't miss her expenses, because he had to buy oats for the hoss, which ate almost as much as a wife.

Being a car hoss, the old hatrack wouldn't gallop unless he had a motorman on one end and a conductor on the other. The extra weight finally bent the hoss's spine so much that he looked like a scenic railway at Coney Island.

They lost the biggest race of the year because the hoss stopped at each turn to take on passengers.

In the homestretch the old man and his conductor started to fight because the conductor was jerking plenty of nickels, but no bellrope.

That wound up the turf business. All the old boy had left was his jockey outfit and a whip, which ain't much good to-day with all these flivvers run-

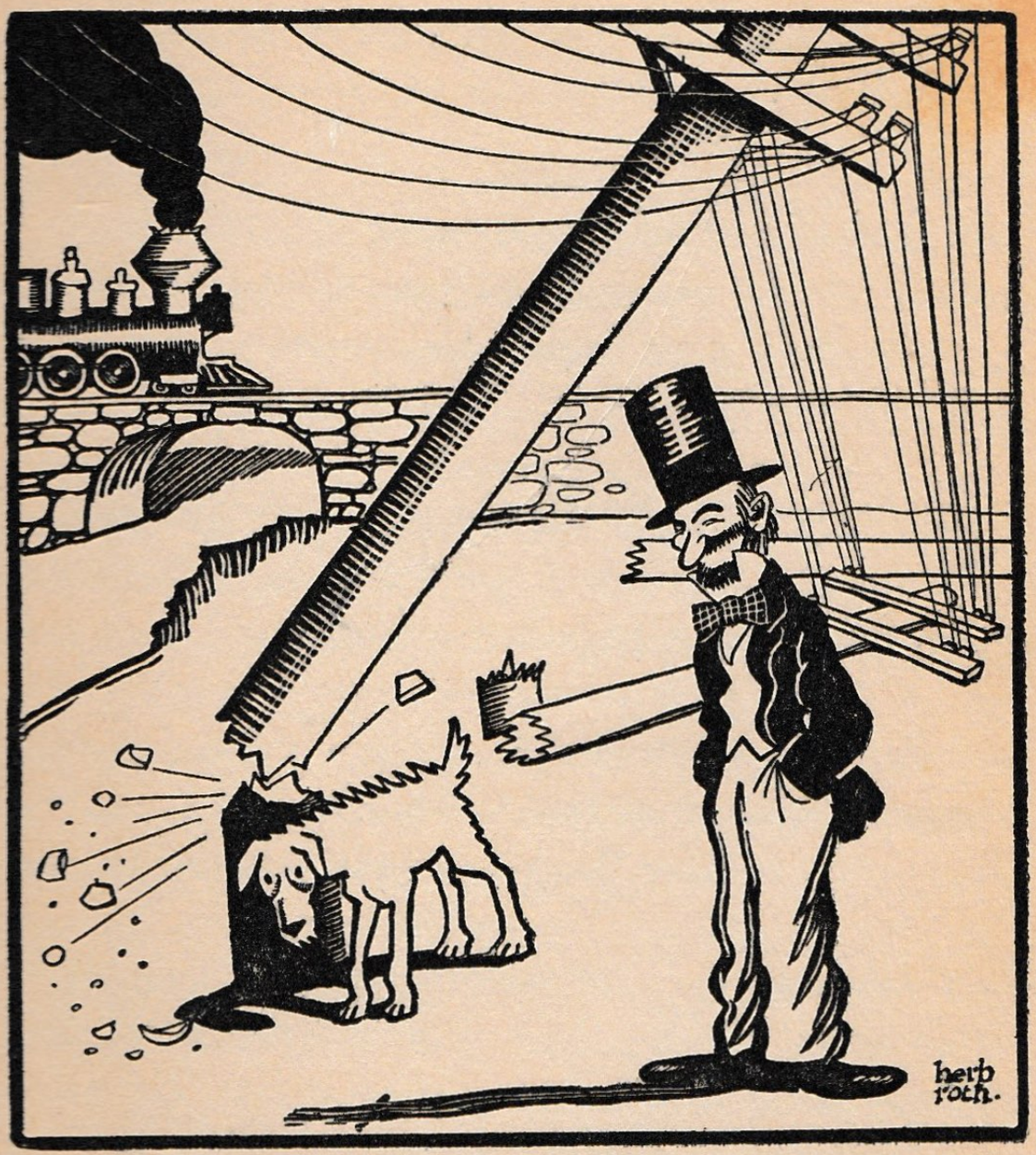
ning around. Finally the old man went into politics and joined a Republican club to keep warm in the Winter.

He was a Democrat in the Summer. But their club didn't have any stove.

The picture on this page is his nephew. He was a Jake-of-all-trades and belonged to fifty unions. So he never ran out of strikes and didn't have to work. He had a wire-haired terrier that he used for a sawmill.

He'd sharpen up the wire hairs, then he'd put a flea on the pup. The terrier would scratch his back on the nearest telegraph pole. About two rubs and the pole would come down. That was a good living for about two years, when the telegraph company started to wonder what was becoming of their special messages.

So, altogether, the old man's nephew didn't get more than five or six years' living out of it. He sold what was left of the poles back to the company. He could never figure why the home town gas corporation had a "No Bills" sign on their fences, because they used to send him one every month. Sometimes they sent him the same one for years.



ABOUT TWO RUBS AND THE POLE WOULD COME DOWN

He liked his gin and orange juice, but when prohibition started in he found it difficult to get the orange juice. So, in spite of all the friendly advice he used to hear when the married neighbors were throwing dishes at one another, he got married to a lady acrobat.

They started in housekeeping with a birdcage and trapeze. Then he went into business like the United States Cigar Stores and opened up a profit-sharing chain of police stations.

After that he came to New York on the O'Sullivan Line. The first thing he did was to go into the theatrical business and managed a lot of shows.

Folks didn't exactly say that he kept all the money. But they did say that he managed Singer's Midgets because they had small pockets.

He was very temperamental and possessed that artistic flare that made him get his nails manicured just before he threw a Belgian block through the window of a Chinese laundry. He was always dieting and claimed to be a vegetarian, but when he was invited out to dine he could do more to a free meal than Nebraska's thirty-sixth vote did to the brewery business.

Funny how so many guys can be vegetarians be-

tween bites on a donated lamb chop. Then his wife came back and they had a quarrel. He was a country gentleman. But he had never been out of a big city. You could tell that. When the boys were treating each other to cigars and drinks you could easily see that he was an out-of-town buyer.

His wife and he decided to break up what housekeeping they had. So she took the trapeze and the birdcage and left him without a place to sleep.

By this time he decided that any flu germ that bit him would get an awful headache, and drank so much near-beer that he had to learn to swim. He got so fat that he looked like a picture of Shakespeare surrounded by his friends.

His last illness was short and dry. They operated on his hip pocket and removed the appendix to the Bartender's Guide.

His life shows that all is not tinsel and glory, but that if a man starts out to make good in this world he has a good fighting chance if he is in the draft age and hasn't got busted arches or a friend on the board.

Taking it all in all, we would say that he was a good average citizen. Which is equivalent to the reason why they build annexes to sanitariums.

GRANDPOP'S ONLY FAULT: HE WAS ABOUT 400 YEARS AHEAD OF HIS AGE

YES, our album is the finest in the village. It has steam flower decorations with filigree hinges and a melodeon in the back. It plays beautiful music when you wind it up, but the key was lost when grandpop threw it at Aunt Etta during one of our numerous family reconciliations.

That dent in the cover is where Aunt Etta threw it back at grandpop and struck one of the twins on the other twin's head.

Grandpop was kind of a slow man, but vindictive. He lived so far back in the woods that his wife had to make omelets out of owl eggs.

He was a very patriotic man and was exempted in every war since 1848. Only last week he came down out of the woods and shot two letter carriers. He thought they were Confederate soldiers.

Grandpop was a very peculiar man and hated everybody in the world. He used to have very queer names for people he didn't like. He called the village pastor a moopus one day because the pastor asked him why he didn't come to services. The pas-

tor asked him what a moopus was, and grandpop told him it was a man who whistled at funerals.

Then the pastor asked him what that had to do with grandpop coming to the church, and grandpop said that question made the pastor a gimber.

The minister was scared to ask him what that meant, but grandpop told him it was a man who talked to himself with ear muffs on.

Then he walked away, leaving everybody very much startled, because we all thought he was starting a rival dictionary to Webster's and intended to revolutionize science, education and ignorance.

Grandpop walked away with his Adam's apple chuckling to itself, because he was a man who didn't care if anybody understood him or not, because he always had plenty of explanations for the same questions. He was something like a United States Senator who clears up muddy situations by stirring them with a stick.

Grandpop came home and told us that he wouldn't stand for no doodlums, alive or dead. Grandmom wanted to know what a doodlum was, and grandpop said that it was a man who stood up in the bow of an excursion steamer and allowed the breeze to blow

all the dandruff on his coat collar back on the folks in the stern.

He said the world was full of blixxes and tibbens, and that he was going back to the woods where there wasn't any gumbos. It seems that blixxes and tibbens were people who ate with their hats on. A gumbo was a lady who put bluing into everything she washed on Monday, including her face.

Most of us never heard of people who did those queer things, but grandpop was a man who did some odd things himself. He would shave in front of a mirror and put the lather on the looking glass instead of his face.

Then he would go out into the woods and talk to the ants and bees and said that he got better answers from them than he did from any blatt, which was a man who put hair tonic on a toupee.

He used to wear gloves made of thimbles and drum on kitchen tables when people were talking and claimed that he was an ipper. In grandpop's language an ipper was a man who slept with his shoes on. His explanations never matched anything that he was trying to explain and the neighbors used to put their fingers to their foreheads whenever grandpop started to talk.

Then he would stop talking and call them all lummoxes. That meant folks who had "Welcome" on their doormats and were never home. Grandpop said you were welcome just as long as you stood on the doormat and the nearest those people ever came to issuing invitations was when the Board of Health put up a quarantine sign on their doors.

Naturally, all our neighbors got to dislike grandpop very much. Fortunately, he lived up in the hills and only came down when he had some new words to explain about people.

A swimp was a person whose false teeth projected over into public property and who wore his napkin under his chin when he was eating and looked like he was being shaved by a barber instead of dining.

Grandpop never laughed unless he thought he was alone and then he would chuckle in his throat like defective plumbing. Some day, I'll tell you some more of his explanations if I can remember them.

I guess that makes me a dabber. That's grandpop's name for a girl who is so vain and silly that she should be educated by guillotining.

Well, good-by, and don't forget to write.

ONE CYLINDER REMINISCENCES, IN WHICH THE RUT BOUND PAST MERGES INTO THE SMILELESS PRESENT

THIS picture was taken over twenty-five years ago. It shows pop driving the first motor car ever wrecked in our village.

We were very proud when pop came driving home the cows that day and discovered the car right in the middle of them. We don't know yet how it got there, but pop thinks it might have been frightened by a scrap of paper in a policeman's hands.

It's a Brush roadster. Do you remember those cars? They buttoned up the back and cranked up behind the left ear.

Pop said now that it's here we might as well get some cheap annoyance out of it before its frightful owner claims it.

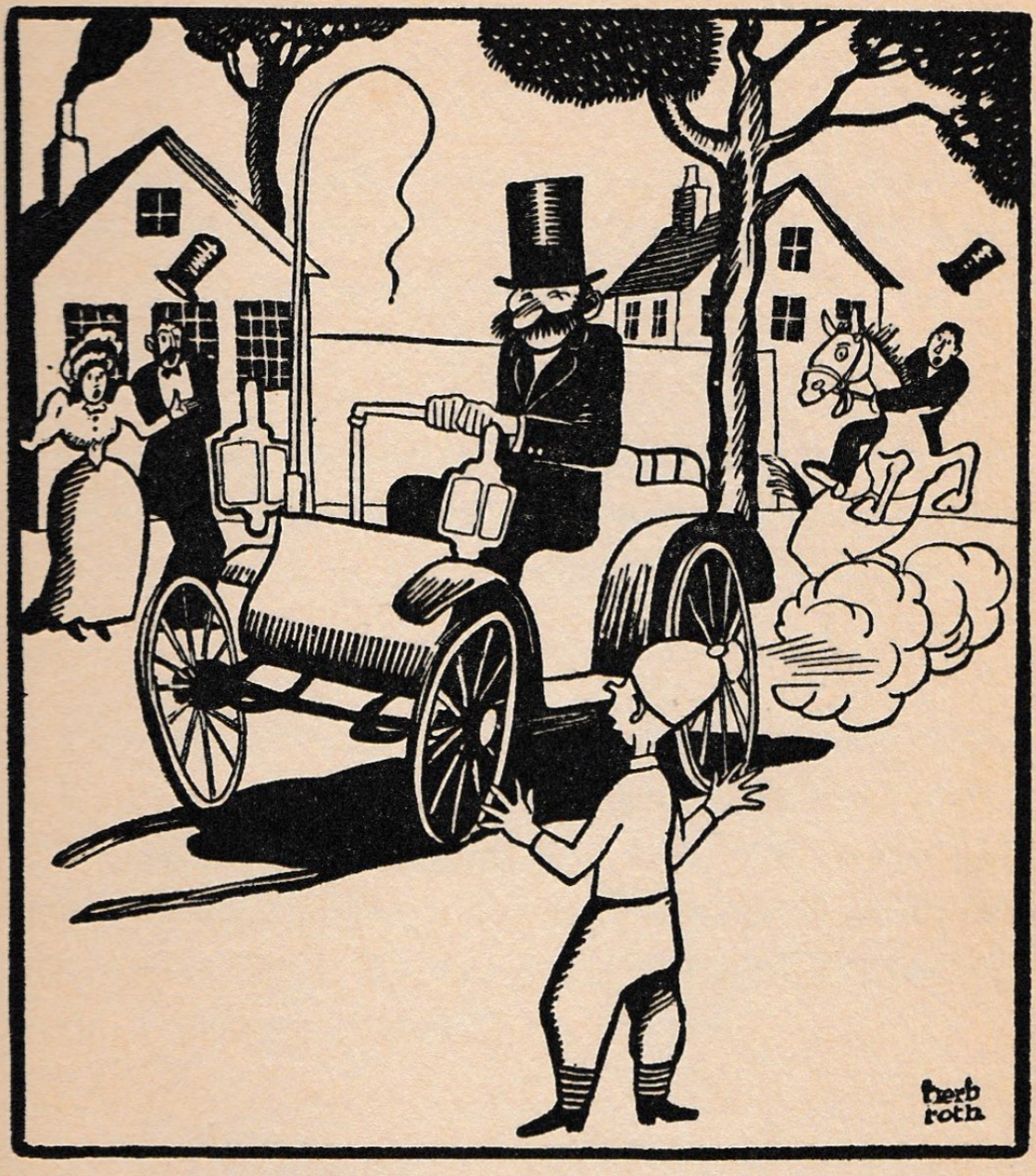
So mom and us climbed into it and pop started to crank up, but it was like trying to pump water out of a bread box.

Aunt Ella said the dust will ruin my complexion, but pop told her that dust would smooth her complexion off. Which was about right, because Ella was wrinkled like Geronimo who used to take permanent waves out of people's scalps.

Uncle Al wouldn't climb into the car because he said he had a dream the other night. He was invited to a temporary banquet to get some permanent indigestion and he dreamed he was trying to get his shoes on. They were tight and he dreamed he was using a double-edged razor for a shoe horn. This dream frightened him so much he refused to pay his back taxes on some property he owned which was confiscated by the Government.

It was a fine piece of malaria estate right between two large lakes. One of the lakes was a swamp and the other was its little brother, and Uncle Al had been trying to sell it by mail. He had some pictures of it taken with a weak camera and printed them on souvenir postcards for distribution through the swamp buying districts.

Pop had bought one of Uncle Al's irrigated bogs on credit and told Uncle Al that he intended running for Congress on the frog ticket and should be elected sure.



THE FIRST MOTOR CAR EVER WRECKED IN OUR VILLAGE

Al told him he was of age and he didn't buy the property with his eyes closed. Pop said that was all right, his eyes were open but he was holding his nose.

So he told Uncle Al to come along on a joy ride, except they didn't call 'em joy riders in those days. They called 'em scorchers.

Al said no scorching for him. Pop told him to come along and that he was as welcome as a kick in the pants to a guy on the edge of a wharf.

Al reciprocated by indulging in some close-fitting personal remarks and it looked like we were going to have the first family quarrel ever held in an automobile when suddenly the engine started after two hours' cranking. It was a one-cylinder engine and when it missed it wasn't an engine.

Uncle wouldn't come along and so we bounced down the road from rut to rut when pop started in to indulge in some finely assorted profanity.

Mom cautioned him not to teach the children

to swear and Pop choked back so many cuss words that he gained eleven pounds in weight.

It's a funny thing about people driving cars. They never have any fun. They are always sore at the driver ahead of them. They cuss the driver in back of them. They blast all the traffic constables. They swear at the tires, condemn the roads, argue with the signposts, get black in the face with congested Billingsgate, roast all the speed regulations, hurl threats at the pedestrians and renounce civilization.

I never have yet ridden in any cars where the man at the wheel laughed except at some suffering on the part of humanity. The minute he starts to steer he becomes a plague to education and hopes that some orphan asylum will turn up or that somebody will twist a canary bird's neck.

I never ride in automobiles any more. The only chauffeur I ever saw smile turned out to be feeble-minded.

He was driving with one hand and had the other around my waist and he asked me to marry him and

I said yes and then his relatives threw a net over him.

Well, good-by, and don't forget to slam the door in your face.

THE GLORY THAT WAS GREASE AND THE ASKMA THAT KEPT BEEZIE HOME

THAT'S a group picture of Aunt Fismee. She was one of the prettiest girls in Montgomery County, but ran off with a billposter for one of those carnival shows. He decorated some of the most important fences in the whole United States, but Auntie discovered that he was already married and loved his wife when she happened to be in the vicinity.

Auntie was valedictorian of her graduating class in the village cooking school, but when she got up on the platform and said, "The glory that was grease" —that's about as far as she got, because somebody slapped her in the middle of her speech with a testimonial potato fritter.

Her sister Beezie was even prettier than Flamee, but she never got married either.

Beezie had askma.

No, not asthma. I know what asthma is, because everybody in town had a copy. She had askma.

Lots of eligible young men used to call on her and hold her hand, but when they wanted to kiss Beezie she would say, "Ask ma."

The young fellow would ask ma, who always put her carpet slipper on the entire proposition and that naturally compelled the young man to take some hats and coats and go home.

Then her pop would come running in and say he would punch the young man in the nose, and seemed to consider the proposition one of the best offers he ever made in his business career.

Beezie is still a spinster and askma is what did it.

But all that talk is about as useless as a smoke-stack on a rowboat. Her pop didn't live very long after that. It was just about the same time of the year that it is now when he thought he heard a robin singing and changed from his red flannels to his beeveedees.

Later on, they discovered that the robin was a cuckoo and they engraved some beautiful prescriptions on her pop's tombstone.

It read:

Angus Browsdorf,
Born 1845,
A. D.
Died 1896,
B. V. D.

There were fifty carriages in the triumphant procession to the cemetery. They could have said more on the epitaphs but it seemed to describe the situation exactly, and no matter what you say nobody believes it anyway.

His wife had been married so many times and buried so many husbands that she had an epitaph on a rubber stamp. All she had to change was the names and the dates. She thought that inscriptions on tombstones was light Summer reading and no matter how hard she cried she always had enough presence of mind to flirt with the pallbearers and try to be resigned to ultimate fate.

The trouble with our family was there were too many aunts and not enough uncles. When you live out on a farm you get lazy and when it was cold none of the men would want to go out and chop the wood and get water from the pump. Pop used to say that writers could say all they wanted about

The Great Outdoors but give him The Great Indoors.

He loved his linoleum slippers and his Morris chair, and would stay there all night with the lamplight streaming on his white beard, and looked almost ghastly in his dignity. Ma would be showing us how to wash the dishes in the kitchen sink without getting our hands wet. And we never did.

Yes, that's a melodeon in the back of the album. It doesn't work now, but when it did it played "Bonnie Prince Charlie" just like an alarm clock.

Well, good-by. When you go out will you throw the doormat into the vestibule? You've got to be careful nowadays, with all the bank robberies.

UNCLE JOHN, WHOSE DETACHMENT FOR AUNT BEENIE DID NOT DETER HIM FROM PURSUING HIS LOFTY IDEALS

THAT'S Uncle John. Don't get thumb marks on his picture because Uncle John hated thumbprints.

He married Aunt Beenie in 1889. It was love at first look and Aunt Beenie never got another look.

Uncle disappeared on his wedding day and didn't come back for over thirty years. And then, he only came back to change his collar.

He had promised Beenie an automobile ten years before they were invented and Aunt Beenie never recovered from the expected shock.

Then Uncle went West and opened up a laundry. But he didn't have a Chinaman's chance. He lived in a boarding house where they called prunes "365" because they had 'em every day in the year.

Then he opened up a restaurant that closed so quick, an order of four-minute eggs were homeless

HE WAS ALWAYS LOOKING FOR A BLUE BIRD

the last three minutes. But it was the healthiest lunchroom in the world. You always came out of that place with an appetite.

Uncle was very good to whatever wife he happened to be married to at the time and gave Aunt Beenie the only set of jeweled clothespins in America.

He was very optimistic and was always looking for a blue bird. He used to look for it day and night, especially night. Naturally, it was dark and Uncle John couldn't tell what color the bird was, but being optimistic, he would take it anyway. And after the feathers were off, dead birds tell no tales. Uncle John never got a blue bird but his optimism was so infectious that farmers used to buy henhouse locks right in Uncle John's hardware store.

Uncle John moved things in the best society.

He would never pay back dues to his ex-wives. The court ordered him to pay alimony, but Uncle John said paying alimony was like buying oats for a dead horse.

He was very quick at repartee but dangerous in a street fight.

After he came home to see if Aunt Beenie was still alive, he was known as the best dressed man in Connecticut. He had a vest for every stain in a dinner.

Don't misjudge Uncle. He had reasons for not working. He said that your body was only a machine and that he was no mechanic.

He once had a job in a lawyer's office. His job was to stir up the flies and make the place look busy. But he lost that job after the flies got used to him.

He used to say that no man should be in debt, and he used to pay his bills as fast as Aunt Beenie could lay her hands on the money.

Once his neighbors asked him to make a Fourth of July speech without warning. Uncle agreed to, but as he claimed he wasn't up on history, he asked the neighbors to correct him if he happened to be right.

Then he said that he liked our first Constitution the best, and that amendments were all right to frighten children, but he didn't want water on the brain or any other place.

He gave George Washington a little boost, but

said he couldn't figure how such a guy like that ever got away with standing up in a rowboat in a river full of ice. The only time Uncle tried that he said he got whacked on the skull with an oar.

He wound up with something about eagles and flags and said that he believed in freedom, if possible. But he said that you can always judge a man by what he eats and that therefore a country in which there is no free lunch was no longer a free country.

That was Uncle's last speech by request.

UNCLE JOHN ELOPES WITH A POSSE. ENSUING COMPLICATIONS REVEAL LIFE'S FITFUL UNCERTAINTIES

WELL, Uncle John had no sooner finished that Fourth of July speech than he showed a big posse the way out of town. They were strangers, so Uncle kept ahead of them so they wouldn't get lost.

This left Aunt Beenie without a husband again. So she kept right on working.

One day her father was in the grocery end of his tailor store trying to match some beer samples with his thirst. A stranger came in. He looked like one of those men who buy their clothes out of a catalogue. So, naturally, he fell in love with Aunt Beenie.

That was fine if it hadn't been for Uncle John, who was still Beenie's main non-support.

A drummer happened to get wrecked near town and tried to sell Beenie's pop a bottle of non-alcoholic tonic. The old man sniffed one toothful of

HE SHOWED A BIG POSSE THE WAY OUT OF TOWN

it and then sent it back marked, "Opened by mistake."

The old man used to save souvenir postcards and ate lollypops. He was enslaved by beauty and drugs.

But he was quite a scientist and once attended a lecture given by Doc Neary, who said he had discovered a cure for compound fractured dandruff.

During the lecture Doc Neary said he had taken a serum of turtle corpuscles mixed with sawdust from a furniture factory. He inoculated a neighbor's horse with the result. After three weeks the horse started to walk again, so Doc gave him another vaccination with a mixture of broken toothpicks and glue.

Then he loaned out the neighbor's horse to other scientists, who tried a lot of curious vaccine on him and the poor old nag got so he couldn't gallop unless he was sick.

The Doc was telling his audience about what all the other doctors did with that borrowed hoss, when Beenie's old man hollered, "That must have been Playfellow."

That broke up the meeting like an iceberg in the Gulf Stream.

Then the neighbor came home and didn't see his thoroughbred laying down in the usual place. So he investigated, and when he got his hoss back it was in fine shape for a rug.

The old man was much interested in municipal affairs and never got tired of voting. He used to go to a church where they allowed smoking in the three last pews and got sore when the preacher told about a man who had escaped from Arabia into Turkey, where he was massacred.

He got up and hollered, "Do you call that escaping?"

One thing he did well and that was to drink. Some folks say it was awful to see him. But he lived to be 108 years old, even if liquor did shorten his life.

As a matter of fact, that had nothing to do with it, because he never touched a drop until he was almost seven years old.

The old boy drank everything he could lay his credit on. But when he was eighty years old he decided to stop.

A friend asked him how he could stop drinking after eighty years' guzzling. And the old boy answered, "Will power."

This was all right for folks who hankered after the pomp and splendor of jewels, furs, limousines and money, but that wasn't getting Beenie her divorce from Uncle John.

She was a very pretty woman, but had a very plump complexion. In fact, she was so fat that she used an elephant's ear for a beauty mark.

But the stranger who fell in love with her was still in love with her when he left town, still a stranger.

That sounds rather simple, but Beenie's old man didn't mind so long as his brother citizens looked up to him. To tell the truth, they looked up to him at all times. Their last look was up at him, but the rope broke.

He was a man of great executive ability, and his employers had such faith in him that they gave him full charge of the entire front end of a hoss car. Later on he started to gamble and rode the car hoss in a race.

Uncle lost that race, but got an idea. Being a

car hoss, the nag wouldn't run with only one jockey. He needed a motorman jockey on the front end and a conductor jockey on the rear end.

After that the old man and his conductor never lost a race. Both of 'em rode that hoss to victory. When he died the old man honored his memory by burying him in a glue, fertilizer and button factory.

POP WAS FULL OF GINGER, ANYWAY

THAT'S another picture of pop in one of his many hazardous moods. Pop had more critical moments than an incubator baby. He used to argue with everybody on the slightest excuse. One day he told us we were all going to hear the Chautauqua lecture by some big reformer, so we all put on our spare collars and extra emergency curls.

The man who was to lecture chose for his subject: Prohibition, and who remembers it?

Pop hollered out that it looked like the subject chose the lecturer. The man looked at pop and said that one lecturer at a time was enough. Then he asked what prohibition was.

Pop hollered that it was a wet blanket.

The lecturer wanted to know what pop meant by that. But pop was busy trying to break our little six months old baby brother of the aspirin habit, and paid no attention.

The lecturer then said something about bootleggers turning our national emblem into a crazy quilt.

I think the lecturer's name for that evening was Professor Dunwiddie, which sounded very synthetic to pop.

Pop was good at repartee which is a French word for quick insults.

He interrupted the lecturer so much that it sounded like Professor Dunwiddie was interrupting pop. Three or four ushers came down to assist pop in any general direction, but pop said speech was like the air. They were both free to any American citizen.

One of the ushers told pop that if he thought speech was like air they ought to go outside and compare them. But pop said he had paid for his ticket and he was going to hear the lecture through until the finish and the quicker the better.

So Professor Dunwiddie continued his opening remarks. He said the law is very dry reading, but damp drinking. Also that unless people like pop observed the law, that we should soon be a nation of law busters. He said the average man pays $15 for a quart of terrible moonshine that is strong enough to take the wrinkles out of a bloodhound's face.

He warned, behooved and beseeched folks like pop to break their capillary tremor habits before it was too late, and said that the stuff the amendment poachers are peddling would tan leather.

Pop hollered that he came to be entertained and not contradicted.

The Professor said that anybody who would put that stuff into his stomach would give his baby daughter two hungry lions for her birthday.

Professor Dunwiddie told the audience and pop that anybody who drank one drink of bootleg gin a day wouldn't live six months. He said they made gin out of anything within reach. And the labels on the bottle didn't mean anything more than weather reports.

Also the stuff they call Scotch isn't anything but liniment and creosote. The liniment is strong enough to make a railroad roundhouse change its shape.

The creosote is what they waterproof railroad ties and wharf timber with and makes the wharf so tough that catfish sharpen their whiskers on it.

Pop hollered out to the Professor and asked him

if he knew so much about wharfs why didn't he jump off one.

The Professor pointed at pop like he was on exhibition and told him to keep quiet or he would be thrown out through a good window and pop rolled up his knuckles and told 'em to come on and do it. Eight or fifteen ushers jumped on pop. They had red coats on with gold braid like a circus band and when they got through with pop, then pop started in on them.

Pop was so cross-eyed that he thought the sun set in the east.

But he could fight and hollered that nobody could throw him through the best window in the place unless that guy went first to show him the way. It looked like the lecture was nearing the close when he started peeling those braid coats off the ushers like a farmer shucking corn on a bet.

Pop's eyes were black and blue from being run through that hand laundry but he was full of fight to the finish. He said that he was good for four alarms anytime that he started and mom told him to lay off that stuff or she would crack one dish into a 144 piece dinner set on his anvil shaped skull.

So pop went into the Sunday parlor and picked up a carpet tack to use for a needle on the graphophone. He hadn't nothing to use for a record except a stove lid. But when he started it going, it played "The end of a perfect day."

UNCLE JOE'S GAMBLING INSTINCTS SUCCUMB TO THE BOW WOW

THAT'S Uncle Joe. He was awfully stingy and so lazy that his best suit was his working clothes.

He wasn't a bad looking man, and didn't inherit the big family mouth. He used to say that grapefruit was invented for people with big mouths who really liked oranges.

You could tell any of our family wherever you went, because their mouths looked like china closets with the doors open, and once in a while there was a gold tooth that looked like a collar button on the keyboard of a piano.

Uncle Joe had some bad habits. He would gamble on anything, dice, cards or horses. He was always going to make a big winning some day on the Honduras Lottery. He had his house papered with elapsed lottery tickets and some left over to make rugs with.

He said that if he ever knocked off the big prize, he would save his money and have every bank in the country laying eggs for him.

But he never got within an adding machine of the prize number. Once he had 67,987 and 27,189 won and he took his ticket and tore it up slowly as if he realized that it meant just as much in pieces as it did whole.

The truth is that it did, because those Honduras people never gave any money away. Some days you would hear that George Smith, at No. 1619 Twelfth Street, won $50,000. But when you inquired at that address there wasn't no George Smith living there, and if he did he was six months behind in the rent.

Uncle Joe used to play those lotteries every month like people took baths. You couldn't convince him that it wasn't as crooked as the chimney on a shanty in a hurricane.

He would swear off the lotteries and cuss everybody in Honduras—man, woman and strangers. Then he would go right out and buy another ticket and promise to pay for it as soon as he won the prize.

Every month he would get a big sheet of paper from Honduras with a mess of numbers on it. He would read it, and then look at the number on his ticket. His head would keep bobbing back and forth

from the paper to his ticket until he looked like a crow in a cornfield watching out for farmers.

But it was something like a Quaker arsenal, with nothing but blank cartridges in it.

Uncle Joe never won anything on the lottery, but he didn't stop until our Government made it illegal for any foreign country to swindle U. S. citizens when there were so many home industries waiting for their chance.

After lotteries turned sour in the U. S. Mails, Uncle started in to bet on the races. He made what bookmakers call laundry wagers.

Laundry wagers are something about betting on the cuff and the bookmakers used to laugh at Uncle when he would motion for them to give him fifteen to one, which would make thirty to two for two cuffs.

After that, he got discouraged and took to childish gambling like pinochle and casino. All us folks used to try to get him to stop figuring out percentages with a borrowed lead pencil, but he went right on trying to pencil his way into some money.

He got so that he and three other men would hang out in the back yard playing poker without any cards. They went through all the motions, dealing and raking in chips, and mom thought that maybe Uncle was going what they call cuckoo.

She sent me around for the doctor to look him over and after seeing the shape of Uncle's head, the Doctor asked how long it had been shaped that way. Mom told the Doctor that Uncle's head was that way all his life. So the Doctor told her that it would never get any worse because it was that bad at the start and after a mouse was drowned it couldn't get any wetter.

What finally cured Uncle of the gambling habits was being bitten by a bulldog.

The dog bit him on the left leg.

Uncle had two legs but one of them was wooden. The right leg was the timber one and the left leg was meat.

When the dog bit him on the meat leg, Uncle got out his pencil and figured close. He doped that for once in his life he started with an even chance. With a fifty per cent chance of being bitten on the wooden leg the dog had picked out the other.

So he quit gambling. If he couldn't win with a fifty per cent chance, he figured that he might as well quit gambling altogether.

And he did.

MOVING MEMOIRS OF DOMESTIC LIFE IN THE OLD DAYS

THAT'S an old tin type of pop taken in 1892 at the circus. It's a beautiful example of the roofing art, ain't it?

Pop was a plain spoken man but never used oaths except in conversation. Pop was a great admirer of the theater and its tickets and never missed a circus. He felt that the drama was at stake.

His business was so good that he had just been forced to build an addition to his push cart. So he told us kids to put on some collars and he would take us to see Zip. Pop used to be a great admirer of Zip's and said he wasn't so crazy as folks thought he was because any man with a head like that saved a lot of money buying hats.

Well, us kids went up and washed the public part of our faces. Then pop changed his mind and said he wasn't going to the circus because it was sample night down at his lodge and he was going to get some souvenirs. Seems funny now, but our house lived on samples and give-aways. The parlor was furnished with euchre prizes by the women folks, outside of the wicker rocker that was of the instal-

ment period. Then we had a Ridpath's History of the World that four collectors had died on.

Pop didn't have much money, but he was a credit to the neighborhood. The coal man, butcher, baker and milkman know that now. When they got stubborn and threatened to sue for their money we would move to another part of the city.

Makes me feel funny when folks talk about their old homesteads. We moved so often and lived in so many houses that our old homestead would look like the picture of a city.

Whenever pop got his first and final notice from the landlord he would tell the moving man to call around that night if there wasn't any moon.

All our furniture had wheels on instead of casters. After the wagon was loaded we would tie the rest of the beds and bureaus on the dashboard. Then we would climb aboard and the man would whip his team up to give them strength instead of oats.

There was ten of us kids at that time, and if we passed any policemen they would think it was a picnic party coming back from a fatiguing Summer at one of the fashionable Winter resorts.

POP NEVER MISSED A CIRCUS

The moving wagon called around so often that pop used to say it was better than having your own horse and carriage. Every time that we finished moving it would be after midnight, so it was too late to put up any beds and we would sleep on the floor. It was very economical and pop would have saved a lot of money if he had any to start with.

I don't think living is more expensive now than it was in the old days. The only trouble is that all those scientists got looking around among their pet germs and discovered that money is payable in advance.

That's what makes living seem so high. What sense would there be moving now? When you go into a new apartment, or house, you've got to plank down your first month's rent first. That takes all the romance out of it.

It cost just as much to live in the old days. The only difference was that nobody paid it.

Now, grocers and delicatessen people wouldn't trust you any further than a stuffed owl can hoot.

I guess it surprised folks who lived next door to an empty house to go to sleep at night and wake up in the morning and find the empty house was

densely populated by strangers within easy credit distance of the corner stores.

Sometimes, they wouldn't talk to us, as there was a stigma on moonlight moving, as they called it. But affidavits didn't bother pop any, as the less neighbors talked to him, the more he could concentrate his fury on us kids.

We lived in some beautiful houses, both with and without roofs. And we never had any heartburnings when we left a family homestead, because we never lived in one long enough for sentiment to start fermenting and get in its deadly work.

I always wanted to travel and see the world, but sometimes I think that ocean tourists who get their names in the society columns and go from Paris to London and to Cairo and places in catalogues, keep moving for the same reason we used to in the old days.

If you do big things they print your face and if you do little things they only print your thumbs.

Well, good-by, and if our cat is in your apartment, feed it and kick it out.

'AUNT DOT'S OLEAGINOUS MARRIED LIFE WAS NOT PRECISELY A BED OF ROSES

THAT'S Aunt Dot. Seems a funny name for a woman who weighed three hundred pounds, but Aunt Dot had two of the most perfect figures that Heaven ever gave one woman.

She used to diet on any kind of food she could lay her hands on. But it did no good. She just naturally grew fatter and fatter until her husband threatened to leave her. She didn't notice that she was getting fat until one day she observed she was much taller sitting down than she used to be.

Her husband was a sort of lazy fellow and never got home until early in the morning and sometimes not then. So Aunt Dot told him if he was going to leave her any more than usual, he'd have to start quick.

His name was Winsor, and he was a great fellow for the ladies. He had been married fifteen years and he used to say that he hadn't got the habit yet.

He was a kind of queer mixture of harmony and

meanness. Something like a darky orchestra. 'All banjos and razors.

Uncle Winsor was a night watchman in his home town. There wasn't anything in that town to watch but night.

They had two street cars in the town. But only one track. So the cars couldn't pass each other unless some wagon came along and knocked one car off the rails. But they had lots of accidents. So the service was fine.

Uncle Winsor was born in Spring Lake, Michigan, which town was just as well lighted by the Aurora Borealis as any town in America. He had insomnia so bad that he couldn't sleep when he was working.

He never gave Aunt Dottie a nickel. When she complained about her bonnet, Winsor used to say she was old and didn't need one. And then Aunt Dot would tell him that, thank Heaven, she wasn't as old as that bonnet. They got along fine.

Uncle was awful mean. Auntie used to claim that he was so stingy that when he went to the town photographer to have his picture taken, he asked for a profile picture so he would only have to get one side of his face shaved. He and the barber had quite a

scrap as to the charge, which was fifteen cents for a full face and back of the neck. Uncle always wore his coat collar up, Summer and Winter, so he didn't have to shave his neck.

They agreed on a once-over shave for eight cents without lather.

Uncle Winsor was an expert in the manly art of selfish defense. He had a heart like last month's biscuits. And he wouldn't give those away either. If a tramp came to his house and asked for food, Uncle would kill a turkey and give him the wishbone.

He used to borrow everything from the neighbors and return nothing. He even tied strings on the lump sugar so he could dip it into two cups of coffee. If a neighbor wanted to cut his own lawn, he'd have to wait for a snowfall so Uncle would give him the mower back.

There may have been deep drinkers in our family, but Uncle was a shallow drinker out of his saucer. When he started in to go phloop, phloop, phloop, with his coffee when they had visitors, Aunt Dot was so ashamed of his illegitimate table manners that she used to hold her own saucer over her eyes so she couldn't see him.

He used to run around awful. When he got sick and the minister came and asked him to repent for a wasted life, Uncle told him he hadn't wasted his entire life. Only the evenings.

That made the minister laugh, and Uncle got dressed and chased him out of the house. This made Aunt Dot so hysterical that she called to the neighbors for help. They didn't hear her, and by that time she was so weak that all she could do was to throw the piano through a window. This attracted the neighbors, especially Mr. McGurk, who owned the instalment house and had been trying to get the piano back or its equivalent for months.

By the time they got there the quarrel was all patched up except the piano, and the minister accepted another invitation for dinner when Uncle was a little sicker and hoped it would not be long before he was breaking family bread instead of windows.

So you can see it wasn't all a bed of roses being married. Finally Uncle got a job and made enough money to support himself and left Aunt Dot, who grieved herself into another fifty pounds, which don't show in the picture because it is only from the waist up.

It does seem funny that Aunt Dot and her husband never got their pictures taken together, but Uncle used to explain that maybe that was because Auntie was so fat that nobody could stand close enough to her to be together.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? ANYBODY, ACCORDING TO THOSE McGURKS

THAT group picture there is the six McGurk children. No, they're not members of our family, but we had sixteen or seventeen empty pages to fill. Of course, that destroys the family flavor.

But when we wanted some smiling faces in our album we had to get photographs of strangers.

Not that the McGurks were strangers, because we used to borrow their knives and forks whenever we had guests who used them.

That little fellow there is Roslyn McGurk. No, he isn't triplets. Those two things alongside of his head are his ears.

Old man McGurk was a hard-working man, but his wife read novels by Marie Corelli and Charles Garvice. Her mother named her Thelma, after the name of one of Marie Corelli's novels. Funny, but there was a terrible crop of Thelmas around 1895. So if you know any girl by that name you can bet she is close to thirty years old, no matter how she dresses.

All Henriettas are about sixty. The Glorias who were named after Marion Crawford's books should be about forty now. It's a terrible thing for a mother to name her child after a well-known book, because her age gets so much publicity in Mr. Carnegie's libraries.

Suppose they named boys after novels. Around 1940 the world would be full of Sheiks.

Old man McGurk wanted to name his first son Joe or Pat or some other name that would be substantial in a stone fight.

But the Mrs. held out for Roslyn, and Roslyn it was. Then they had another child, and this one was a girl. So McGurk said we'll give this one a good old name. But they didn't.

Mrs. McGurk said the little girl's name was going to be Mineola.

Old man McGurk dashed out with plenty of excitement to the corner saloon where my pop was. Pop got just as excited as he was, but not enough to ask him what he was going to have.

McGurk started tearing at his hair and yelled: "My gosh, they're naming my children after suburbs!"

Mrs. McGurk said they would go to church the next morning and name the child.

Old man McGurk had staggered home by that time, and he said that they couldn't take the kid to church with that name; they would have to christen it in a railroad station.

They had four more children, and they were named Roselle, Winfield, Corona and Auburndale.

That made 'em read like a time table. Mineola, Roselle and Corona were girls.

Roslyn, Winfield and Auburndale were boys.

Old man McGurk used to say he felt like a conductor when he got home from work at night. His wife would go out on the front porch and yell to the kids for supper and strangers would rush into the house, thinking it was the Pennsylvania depot.

It might have been worse, as Mr. McGurk said to my pop, during a lull in the corner saloon. Suppose it had been some other suburbs like Yonkers or Metuchen.

Pop agreed with him and told him that if he had to have suburban labels on his crop of kids, he ought

to be glad enough to buy a beer because none of 'em were named Great Neck, Flushing or Wawa.

That got both of 'em to thinking and McGurk agreed that it was a good job the old lady didn't hang Passaic or Freeport on one of his otherwise innocent babies.

Then pop thought of Walla Walla for twins and supposing they had been triplets, what would the old lady have thought of?

Then some lady poked her head into the saloon and hollered "Come home, Vanilla." Old man McGurk flushed up and didn't look and it was Mrs. McGurk who came in, banged him over the head with a cane that used to be an umbrella. Pop said is that your name? McGurk said yes, my old lady got it out of a cook book.

Then another lady came in and shouted for somebody named Alhambra. Pop turned redder than a crime wave and this time it was mom who came in and grabbed him by the coat collar.

Vanilla said, "Is that your name, Alhambra?" Pop said it was and that his old man had named him after a new theatre in his town.

Well, don't forget to write.

AUNT ETTA'S RULING PASSION WAS, GETTING HER PICTURE TOOK

IT'S hot, 'tisn't it?

Oh, yes, you can take off your coat for supper. Pop objected to that. He was very fastidious and always dined with two napkins over his overalls.

This picture here represents our family on a neighbor's picnic.

That distinguished looking lady picking her teeth with her thumb is Aunt Etta.

She loved to have her pictures taken and would run miles to get into a group picture of anything. Whenever there was a flashlight taken of an unhappy wedding party, Aunt Etta would dash in between the bride and groom like bad news. If she heard the ambulance gong playing she would rush to the accident and pose gracefully among the injured and wounded although she preferred accidents without survivors. She was the first woman to reach the scene of the Johnstown flood in a bathing suit.

It almost broke her heart when she read of the San Francisco fire three thousand miles away. But

ALONG WOULD COME ANOTHER PHOTOGRAPHER

she organized an excursion party for non-resident members and that's her picture there with a handful of ruins that she brought home to use for pepper and salt. Catastrophes were appetizers to her.

When Auntie heard about twenty million Chinese starving without assistance, she tried to leave for China on the next raft. The authorities stopped her but she went on an enforced diet and had her picture taken with very good results.

She was an awful sympathetic woman and easily influenced by gypsy warnings. These two pictures are very interesting. One shows her surrounded by auntless orphans and the other by students in the Old Folks' Home. Any time there were pictures being taken of prize winning infants, you would be sure to see Auntie come dashing up in a baby carriage in time for some group pictures of her profile.

She had one very economical fault. She never would buy any pictures.

This picture shows her in a fireman's hat and this one was taken in the visitors' gallery in the Senate although Auntie tried hard to be included in the official records as the first lady member of a minority report.

You notice that all of the pictures are turning black. That is because they were never toned.

They are all photographer's samples. Auntie would order one dozen full length pictures of her nose and chin. The photographer would tell her to look at the birdie.

Auntie would collect her expression and the photographer would tell her the birdie wasn't an ostrich. He would say look like you thought it was a robin or some beautiful bird.

The operation was never successful because all her untoned pictures look like she thought the bird was a cuckoo.

Then she would go home and deliberate over the proofs and that was all the photographer ever heard of her. He was out all his time, his labor and his flirtation.

By this method she got plenty of untoned pictures. When they got faded and black, she would put her back combings up in curl papers and go out to fool another photographer.

I guess it wasn't very honest of Auntie to fool them out of their untoned proofs, but they had

the satisfaction of knowing they would soon turn black like an African king. Still, lots of folks go through life that way living on untoned pictures.

No matter where you go you see the same people like Aunt Etta standing in the front row of group pictures while the important people are six rows back and when the photographer tries to sell copies at one dollar apiece he goes into untoned bankruptcy because the people in front rows never buy pictures and the folks in the back rows don't want to frame pictures of utter strangers.

Did you ever see those flashlight men rushing back to the banquet with their sample pictures? They show them to invited distant relatives who look at the picture in surprise like they thought the dinner was last year sometime. They never buy any but you always notice them before the flashlight standing on the tables. When the time comes to buy the picture you find them under the tables. Yet, when the man on the stepladder tells 'em to hold steady and pulls the string that makes the explosion, they stretch out their necks like stove pipes in January.

Well, good-by. And don't forget to write.

WHEN LIFE WAS JUST ONE FAMILY DINNER TABLE RIOT AFTER ANOTHER

THAT'S Uncle Noblick, who took a very active part in the exempt class during the big war in 1861. Uncle passed out of this vale of sorrow in 1896. He might have lived longer if Congress hadn't given him a Government pension in 1895. But, of course, nobody could live on that.

Uncle Nobbie was a commission broker. You know, one of those men who seem to regard honesty as unfair competition.

He married one of those Tomilson girls, whose father had very prosperous looking whiskers but didn't have a dime to get 'em shaved.

Old man Tomilson was a cousin of the Delards, who came to our town from southern Germany, but now claim it was northern France.

The Delards were very nice folks except that their grandpop was a terror whenever they had visitors. All those European folks like garlic in their food, and the old man would sneak out into the kitchen

and put garlic in everything—even the rice pudding and the coffee. His table manners were terrible.

But I don't think they were any worse than our family. It's funny how folks seem to think the dinner table is the best place to fight and argue. Our folks used to scrap something awful and every meal time sounded like a meeting of the board of directors of an insolvent boiler factory.

Pop was the worst because he was that stubborn kind of a man that insisted on answering every insult. When he got excited he got red in the face and he used to holler at the top of his untrained voice. Then my brother used to stab with his fork at his food like he was afraid it was still alive.

We had four brothers and four sisters and that made ten at the table with everybody grabbing at the food like frogs at June bugs on lily pads. Pop would first pile up his own food with meat and potatoes garnished with back talk from brother Jerry and Herbert and the twins would start crying because they were stealing each other's bread without butter.

Pop wouldn't say grace until he was sure that he had his own plate full of food and he would then mumble something that sounded like those gypsies

explaining to a farmer that they hadn't seen his stolen horse.

All the neighbors could tell when it was supper time at our house because the voices sounded like choir rehearsal by involuntary members of a wolf trap. Pop had a fearful temper and would often serve us kids with dinner right through the windows.

Mom would bawl out pop because he didn't wear his collar to dinner and would roar at us kids because we didn't like fat or onions or any kind of substantial food that didn't have raisins or icing on it.

When Aunt Beenie and Uncle Ben used to come over to eat with us, that made things worse because they had some family secrets that the neighbors didn't know yet and the policeman on the beat used to look in through the window to make sure that we were only eating dinner and not turning cannibals.

Us smaller kids didn't get much to eat because table etiquette was mostly dependable on the length of your arms and by the time a plate of bread reached us there were some very fine crumbs on it which might have furnished detectives with a clue but didn't contain very much nutrition.

Pop's voice was adjusted just right for talking to people on roofs, and the Anathans and the Rottners and the Moellers would holler over and suggest that pop take us kids and drown us, which pop would have done willingly if lawyers weren't so expensive.

But I guess our roof manners weren't much worse than his table manners, and if there is any place where a kid feels at home it's on a roof or any place where he doesn't belong.

But that's all long ago now, and pop got very good natured around the house after all us kids grew up and could whip him. We often laugh over the old times, and then the supper bell rings and pop tries to be polite, but somebody always asks him why he don't put his collar on to dinner, and that starts everybody arguing again.

Scientists say that you shouldn't quarrel at the dinner table because it gives you angry indigestion, but how are you going to stop it in big families unless you eat in the automat, which is a very good invention and stops a lot of hypocrites from saying graces they don't mean.

THE WHIMPLES WERE CERTAINLY STRANGE, BUT HOW ABOUT POP?

WELL, well, if that isn't funnier than a teething crocodile. I don't now how that picture got in there. It's a group of the Whimple family. They were borrowing relatives of ours on papa's side.

That man standing there between the two beautiful cross-eyed girls is Mr. Whimple. He was the handsomest bowlegged man in our town.

The Whimples were a very strange family. Mr. Whimple didn't believe in saving daylight, because he liked his daylight fresh every morning. He had capillary tremors, caused by an over-indulgence in spontaneous invitations. He said that prohibition wouldn't affect him, because he only drank when he was home and he felt at home anywhere.

Mrs. Whimple was slightly affected with St. Vitus dance, both of the girls stuttered and the cat threw fits. When the Whimples gathered around the parlor lamp for a quiet evening at home, folks thought that the cornerstone of their house was a rocking chair.

Mr. Whimple would start to shiver. His wife would start making imaginary gestures, like she was knitting socks for theoretical soldiers. The two girls would commence some sweet stuttering songs and the cat would start contributing fits with a lavish hand.

Minnie, the youngest girl, was a perfect Greek type. She worked in Ninth avenue restaurants.

Her sister, Lolly, was a brunette by birth but a blonde by habit. She was an awful heart-breaker and loved diamond engagement rings. She had so many rings on her fingers, that she developed new muscles in her thumbs. She wore so many bracelets that her arms looked like a cane full of doughnuts.

None of her diamonds were really good. They were off-color and pop used to say that Lolly's fingers reminded him of a Government reservation.

Mom, who had a very inquisitive mind during normal rates of exchange, would ask him what he meant. What Government reservation looked like Lolly's handful of diamonds?

And pop would say Yellowstone Park.

Mom would say, "That reminds me, how about a vacation for me? I haven't got any yellow diamonds or any kind. You gave me a one-candle power engagement ring with a stone in it that looked like a flea's eye. Then you pawned that to buy me my wedding ring and we had to sell that to go on a honeymoon. In fact, I think a pawn ticket is my marriage certificate."

Pop would say, "Why remind me of my early mistakes? I ain't so rich that I think the United States Treasury is a poor-box.

"I work every day, don't I? Look at them hands, stained by free lunch and honest toil." Mom would retort, "You ain't claiming that our marriage is a failure, are you?"

Pop would scratch his head to think. His family over in Europe were the largest dandruff manufacturers in France. Pop would tell mom, "No, I don't think it's a failure, because some failures pay two cents on the dollar."

Mom would say, "You couldn't pay two cents on a soda cracker. If it wasn't for me where would you be?" Pop would get an expression on his face like a pane of glass in a hospital window and start scratching his bald head again.

Then he would say, "I'm going down to the corner and kill the evening." Mom always told him that he ought to keep away from those bums down in the corner saloon, and if he wanted to kill an evening they would call on the Whimples.

Pop told her that he wanted to kill the evening, not to torture it.

Mom always started to cry then and pop would pat her on the back with whatever he had in his hand, generally a lamp or a rung out of the chair. We used to have cane bottom chairs without the cane, and when visitors sat in them it was like falling through a trap door.

So pop would take his hat off again and say, "All right; I'll assassinate the evening at home."

But first he would butter the inside of a tin kettle so the bartender couldn't fill it with foam and then go down and get some beer on tick. That meant the bartender would trust pop for a dime and the Whimples would call and Mr. Whimple's hand would tremble so that he trembled the kettle empty.

Well, good-by, and don't forget to write.

WE ALL KNOW RIGGITY

THAT'S a flashlight picture of pop taken at his best in the thickest part of a banquet.

Funny how you never see any eyes in a flashlight picture. Pop's head is nothing but mouth and teeth, which may be all for the best, seeing as it was taken at a banquet.

Another thing about those flashlights is that everybody has an eggshaped head and looks like he was laid by a hen.

When pop got the invitation to attend the flashlight with food, he didn't want to go because he didn't have any full dress to wear. But mom went down and borrowed an outfit from Bill Adams, the undertaker, and pop dashed off to the banquet looking like he ought to have six silver handles on him instead of buttons.

Pop started to make a speech after he had snatched all the food in reach and one of his gestures knocked Riggity Brennan off the table. Riggity got mad at pop and pulled pop's necktie out and let

it snap back again. It was one of those automatic neckties on a rubber band, and when it flew back it made pop swallow his Adam's apple. In the excitement, pop figured the dinner committee lost four hundred dollars when that many policemen ran in without buying dollar tickets.

Riggity was always making trouble that way. He was only a little fellow about four feet long and he married a great big woman about six feet. Riggity wouldn't work after he was married, and Mrs. Riggity used to take in washing so that Riggity could get enough money to be thrown out of Ott's saloon on the corner.

He was always fighting and used to like to kick big foreigners in the shins. The big fellows would fetch him a backhander and knock him into a cuspidor and he would go to sleep. Sometimes, he would go out into the back yard and he was so little he would go to sleep and the saloon cat would drag him back into the saloon.

One day, Riggity started some trouble with a big Bohemian's shins and a fierce fight commenced. Riggity's oldest son looked under the saloon doors for an education and saw his pop being booted

around in a friendly way and he ran home to tell his mother.

Mrs. Riggity told Mrs. Savage that she was going down to the barroom to collect Riggity. Then she hurried over to Ott's and went right in among the fighters who would never strike a lady first.

By and by, the village sexton met Mrs. Riggity coming back from the saloon on her way home and he noticed that she was holding onto her apron by both corners like it was full of potatoes.

The village sexton knew that Mrs. Riggity had a lot of trouble with her shrimp husband and he thought it was a shame that a woman had to carry such a heavy load of potatoes.

So he stopped her and said it was a fine evening and what did she have in her apron that was so heavy.

Before she could answer, Riggity's head popped out of the apron and he said:

"A man—and that's more than you are!"

The sexton was a peaceful man and he didn't want to fight but Riggity jumped out of the apron and soaked him an awful one on his bunions. So he

booted Riggity like the village habit and Riggity was kicked right back into the apron.

Mrs. Riggity went on her way home, with Riggity's head sticking out of the apron and hollering:

"A man's in here! And that's more than you are!"

Mrs. Riggity dropped him on the kitchen floor and he went to sleep. After a while the mice came out and started pushing Riggity around and he kept hollering in his sleep.

"A man! And that's more than you are!"

That scared the mice away but brought the officer on the beat who wanted to know what the trouble was about. Riggity took a slam at him and wound up in the county jail where the bars were so far apart that they had to keep little Riggity in a shoe box for safety.

I guess that Riggity was like all the other little men. The smaller and thinner they are, the more important they think themselves. Big, fat men are goodnatured, but I never saw a little two-legged spider who didn't think he was Gosh almighty.

Well, good-by, and if you see anybody in Bridgeport that I know, tell them that they are looking well.

Don't forget to write.

AN ECCENTRIC ACROBAT MEETS AUNT AND UNCLE—OBJECT, DANCING

YES, that's Aunt and Uncle. Auntie is the one who is standing up. They say that if two people live long enough together they get to look like each other. But you could always tell Uncle and Auntie apart. No matter if you saw them in a street car or any place, Auntie would be the one who was standing up.

They met each other at a strawberry festival in their home town. I think it was New Braunfels. That was a town where half the population was foreigners and the other half chiropractics.

Uncle and Auntie met at this festival where a tap dance was going on. New Braunfels was one of those towns where they have wet streets on dry days. Uncle was a great politician and he asked Congress for an appropriation of one million dollars to pave the streets. Congress refused. So Uncle passed another bill asking Congress for two million dollars so he could dig the streets a foot deeper and make them navigable for ocean steamers. That was refused too. So Uncle said he was washed up on poli-

tics. He left Congress flat and said he would never darken their visitors' gallery again.

You know what a tap dance is. The fellows and girls dance to the band music. If a fellow wants to dance with another fellow's girl, he would step up and tap him gently on the shoulder. The boy who was tapped would have to give his girl up. Now, there was a stranger in town who was dancing with Auntie, who wasn't married to Uncle at that time, but hasn't been so fortunate since.

Uncle tapped the stranger lightly and started to dance with Auntie while the stranger stepped aside. Uncle hadn't got more than two good steps in—you know, they used to dance with their feet in the old days—Uncle hadn't got more than two good steps in when the stranger tapped Uncle. Now, that made Uncle mad. His celluloid collar turned two shades brighter in anger.

Auntie danced with the stranger while Uncle stood there gnawing his lip and part of his whiskers. Auntie sort of seemed pleased to dance with the stranger, so Uncle tapped the visitor. This time he tapped him with two fingers and the stranger got up and dusted himself off and handed Auntie to Uncle with a gracious bow.

Away went Uncle and Auntie in the maze of a delightful flat-footed two step. But no sooner did they get started than the stranger tapped Uncle with three fingers and part of a thumb. Uncle waited until he got his breath back and by that time Auntie and the city slicker was dancing fine on the outskirts of the strawberry festival. Uncle tapped the stranger lightly with his fist and the stranger bowed to New Braunfels' etiquette.

Then the stranger, to show that he wasn't brought up on corn cobs and other rude implements of diet, salaamed Uncle, who salaamed him back like the Grand Llama of Tibet.

After the salaaming was over, Uncle tapped the intruder with a delicately engraved chunk of a table leg, which entitled Uncle to another dance with Auntie, who was having a tough time keeping step, as Uncle could do nothing but jig, while the stranger was an eccentric acrobat and kept throwing Auntie through transoms and windows.

It was right at the start of a dreamy Austrian waltz that the visiting delegate tapped Uncle again with one complete handful of paperweights and ink wells. Uncle tapped him back with both hands and the stranger countered fashionably with a blackjack.

All during the tapping Auntie wasn't losing a step. When Uncle was brushing his clothes she was dancing with the other fellow, and the other way round.

Uncle went out to the check room and got his sledge hammer and came back and tapped the outsider on the head, but he didn't stay tapped.

He got up and while he was dancing with one foot with Auntie he kicked Uncle with the other foot under Uncle's chin. Uncle swallowed a borrowed chew of tobacco, which made the owner sore, as he was waiting to get it back and had only loaned it to Uncle so that Uncle could look distinguished during the Virginia reel. So he tapped Uncle, too, and by that time most everybody must have decided to dance with Auntie because the tapping got universal and everybody tapped everybody else.

When it was all over the pastor came back to town and said, "After this the only dancing in town is going to be done by Japanese waltzing mice."

But after the first festival the management cut down expenses and made money because they never wasted money buying strawberries again.

BEAUTIFUL SISTER LOOBIE

WELL, well, well, if it isn't Abner. You went away so sudden, we didn't expect you back so quick. Pa said you jumped out of the window like a mattress on fire.

Oh, yes, I was showing you the family album, and you suddenly turned paler than nose powder. Why, this is the picture we were looking at when you got sick. That's Sister Loobie by a former marriage.

Loobie is gone, poor girl, but she was a wonderful girl right up until the time she stopped taking dental lessons on her last tooth.

She was very softhearted and kind to dumb animals and possible husbands. She used to say that you could catch more flies with sugar than you can with vinegar. But who wants flies? Loobie wasn't what you might call a beautiful girl by any means, but she had a wonderful profile.

She was very plain looking when you happened to catch a head-on collision of her face, but she had a

fine Greek profile. I think she got that way from eating in Greek restaurants.

She happened to discover her Greek side-face accidentally, but like a cat with one mouse, she made the most of it. After that, she went through life sideways.

She walked sideways, she ate sideways. She ate off a sideboard. She would nibble nothing but side dishes.

She walked on one side of the street at the time. If there was a family quarrel, she always took sides. You see she was intent on profiling her way through her career.

If anybody angered Loobie, she would sideswipe them with a terrible profile look.

All her photographs are profiles. Many times before fate shunted her off to a lonely siding it looked as if Loobie might get married on the side. She put some money aside for a rainy day, but all her suitors seemed to prefer getting wet.

There was one fellow who was real gone on Loobie. They used to walk down Lover's Lane side by side.

His name was Abian something, but he got into a fight with Loobie when he asked her to go automobiling. Account of her grand profile Loobie would ride in nothing but a side car of a motorcycle.

Pop took Loobie's side, but Abian circumvented them by losing his job without much effort and Pop said Loobie couldn't marry no man who didn't earn enough to keep his wife hungry. Loobie was well on the wrinkled side of thirty then, but she said nothing and put all her energy into her profile.

It seems strange to think of a person going through life sideways just on the strength of a weak face. I forget what she looked like now because the last time I saw her full features was the time she went out to buy some fish food for the goldfish and sprained her neck trying to primp sideways in a gum machine mirror.

Her neck was all twisted and she used to get dizzy trying to profile people, because she wasn't just sure what angle her face was on. You can hardly realize the strain a person is under trying to keep her best part of her face toward the public. She used to walk sideways and looked like a leopard in a cage.

It was a fierce strain on her eyes because she had to squint cati-cornered to see anything. If she went to the movies, she would have an aisle seat with her feet out in the aisle so she could keep her silhouette toward the people in back. Can you imagine that? The result was that she only used one eye on everything and the other got very weak and the side of her face that she didn't use got very flabby from lack of exercise.

When the sun was out, she would take a seat in the front yard and arrange her features so her profile shadow would be thrown on the garden. And she would stay there for hours admiring the outlines of her profile on the onion bed.

At night, she would pull down the light, lavender window blinds in her room and light the oil lamp. She would take a seat between the lamp and the window so that her shadow was on the window shade and there she would stay all night. Isn't that romantic?

So far as Loobie was concerned, I'm glad she was crazy about her profile instead of her teeth. Suppose she went around biting people like she went around profiling them?

I guess it's all for the best and Loobie is up in Heaven now playing quoits with a golden halo.

Well, good-by, and don't forget to write.

AUNT ALBIE COULDN'T GET UNCLE WIMGER OVER THE LONG DISTANCE WITHOUT PAYING THE TOLL RATE

THAT'S Uncle Wimger in a group picture with a keg of dandelion wine. Uncle has been dead these many years, but he was an awful nice man and claimed that he never struck his wife except in self-defense.

Aunt Albie used to mourn for him extensively, because she missed his smiling face any time anybody was hurt or injured.

She finally got so low that she consulted a medium. Yes, that's all she called herself. Not medium this or medium that. But just medium. She was a Filipino lady who had escaped from government self-determination and came over to our town to live. Most folks leave this town for the same reason.

The Filipino woman could talk with those who have been gathered to their fathers and she was as mysterious as the people in back of those slots in the Automat. She would hypnotize herself and go into a trance and then the air would be full of

voices and bells. It sounded like thirty Boy Scouts dancing on a tin roof.

Aunt Albie loved Uncle Wimger so much that she wanted to argue with him just once again. So she paid the Filipino lady fifty cents and the Filipino lady took it without any effort. It seems strange that Conan Doyle should have the same ideas as Aunt Albie, but they say great minds run in the same gutters.

The medium woman lived in the parlor end of a bird and animal store on Railroad Avenue.

She would take fifty cents and go into a trance, and the air would immediately be very mysterious and hard to breathe. There would be handwriting on a slate, bells ringing and queer whistles and noises.

Even as music, the racket was worth at least a dollar, the medium used to remark. But Aunt Albie never paid more than fifty cents, because she didn't believe in the tipping evil, even with ghosts.

Then she would hear a voice saying something she didn't understand. So she knew it was Wimger up in heaven. Then she would answer him at the

top of her voice and the medium would wake up and say it was all over, and Aunt Albie would go home crying and much refreshed.

Nobody in our family believed in communication with the departed or anything else that cost fifty cents.

So we argued with Auntie not to waste her money that way, as mediums were all fakes.

Auntie said they weren't, because the table rocked. Pop said that was the bunko. He said there was a million rocking chairs and a billion cradles rocking. But soon as one table rocked everybody started to pray.

Auntie said that was made very reasonable, but how about the bells ringing? Pop said why shouldn't they ring on Railroad Avenue with trains running over people every five minutes.

Auntie wasn't convinced and she said she saw writing on a slate. Pop told her he could get a thousand school kids to write on a thousand slates, and they didn't have no angel wings. In fact, they were more like devils.

This made Auntie mad and she said there was

voices and sounds in the store. Pop told her why shouldn't there be with parrots and monkeys jabbering.

Then Auntie told him that the medium must be very good, because she had felt faint and the air was hard to breathe.

Pop laughed at that and said why shouldn't the air be hard to breathe in a bird and animal store. He told Auntie if that was any good she ought to consult a leather tannery instead of a bird and animal store.

But Auntie wouldn't be convinced, because she thought she had heard Uncle Wimger's voice asking for something. Pop said that must have been him all right, but how much have you spent?

Auntie said she had invested two dollars and fifty cents on the queer voices. That was five trances.

So pop told her to go back to the bird store and try to talk with Uncle Wimger on credit and she would see it was a fake.

And Auntie tried to talk on tick, but the medium

hung out a No Credit sign on her and she came away disgusted.

Pop was right for a change, and since then we haven't heard from Uncle Wimger. Maybe it's all for the best. Good-by.

Don't forget to write.

THE END