

***GEORGE
ADE***



***ADE'S
FABLES***

George Ade

Ade's Fables

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THE NEW FABLE OF THE PRIVATE AGITATOR AND WHAT HE COOKED UP

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Ambition came, with Sterling Silver Breast-Plate and Flaming Sword, and sat beside a Tad aged 5. The wee Hopeful lived in a Frame House with Box Pillars in front and Hollyhocks leading down toward the Pike.

"Whither shall I guide you?" asked Ambition. "Are you far enough from the Shell to have any definite Hankering?"

"I have spent many Hours brooding over the possibilities of the Future," replied the Larva. "I want to grow up to be a Joey in a Circus. I fairly ache to sit in a Red Wagon just behind the Band and drive a Trick Mule with little pieces of Looking Glass in the Harness. I want to pull Mugs at all the scared Country Girls peeking out of the Wagon Beds. The Town Boys will leave the Elephant and trail behind my comical Chariot. In my Hour of Triumph the Air will be impregnated with Calliope Music and the Smell of Pop-Corn, modified by Wild Animals."

Ambition went out to make the proper Bookings with Destiny. When he came back the Boy was ten years old.

"We started wrong," whispered Ambition, curling up in the cool grass near the Day-Dreamer. "The Trick Mule and the Red Cart are all very well for little Fraidy-Cats and Softies, but a brave Youth of High Spirit should tread the Deck of his own Ship with a Cutlass under his Red Sash. Aye, that is Blood gauming up the Scuppers, but is the Captain chicken-hearted? Up with the Black Flag! Let it be give and take, with Pieces of Eight for the Victor!"

So it was settled that the Lad was to hurry through the Graded Schools and then get at his Buccaneering.

But Ambition came back with a revised Program. "You are now Fifteen Years of Age," said the Wonderful Guide with the glittering Suit. "It is High Time that you planned a Noble Career, following a Straight Course from which there shall be no Deviation. The Pirate is a mere swaggering Bravo and almost Unscrupulous at times. Why not be a great Military Commander? The Procedure is Simple. Your Father gives the Finger to the Congressman and then you step off the Boat at West Point. Next thing you know, you are wearing a Nobby Uniform right out on the Parade Ground, while bebies of Débutantes from New York City and other Points admire you for the stern Profile and Military Set-Up. After that you will subdue many Savage Tribes, and then you will march up Pennsylvania Avenue at the head of the whole Regular Army, and the President of the United States will be waiting on the Front Porch of the White House to present you with a jewelled Sword on behalf of a Grateful Nation."

"You are right," said the Stripling. His eyes were like Saucers, and his Nostrils quivered. "I will be Commander-in-Chief, and after I am laid away, with the Cannon booming, the Folks in this very Town will put up a Statue of Me at the corner of Sixth and Main, so the Street-Cars will have to circle to get around it."

Consequently, when he was in his 21st Year, he was sitting at a high Desk in an Office watching the Birds on a Telegraph Wire. The Knowledge he had acquired at the two Prep Schools before being pushed into the Fresh Air ahead of Time had not made him round-shouldered. He was a likely Chap, but he wore no Plumes.

He became dimly conscious that Ambition was squatted on the Stool next to him.

"Up to this time we have been Dead Wrong," said the Periodical Visitor. "There is only one Prize worth winning and that is the Love of the Niftiest Nectarine that ever came down a Crystal Stairway from the Celestial Regions to grace this dreary World with her Holy Presence. Yes, I mean the One you passed this morning—the One

with her hair in a Net and the Cameo Brooch. Why not annex her by Legal Routine and settle down in a neat Cottage purchased from the Building and Loan Association? You could raise your own Vegetables. Go to it."

Four years elapse. Our Hero now has everything. The jerry-built home of the Early Bungalow Period stands up bravely under the Mortgage. Little Dorothy is suspended in a Jump Chair on the Veranda facing Myrtle Avenue, along which the Green Cars run direct to City Hall Square. The Goddess is in the kitchen trying to make preserves out of Watermelon Rinds, with the White House Cook Book propped open in front of her. Friend Husband is weeding the Azaleas and grieving over the failure of the Egg-Plant.

He finds himself gently prodded, and there is Ambition once more at his Elbow.

"You are entitled to One Hundred Thousand Dollars," murmurs the stealthy Promoter. "Why should some other Citizen have his Coal-Bin right in the House while you carry it from a Shed? Your Wife should sit at her own Dinner Table and make signs at the Maid. And as you ride to your Work with the other dead-eyed Cattle and see all those Strong-Arm Johnnies coming out of their Brick Mansions to hop into their own Broughams and Coupés, have you not asked yourself why you are in the Horse-Cars with the Plebes when you might be in a Private Rig with the Patricians?"

For, wot ye, Gentle Reader, all this unwound from the Reel before the first Trolley Car climbed a Hill or the first Horseless Carriage came chugging sternly up the Boulevard.

So Ambition received special Instructions to make Our Hero worth \$100,000.

Those were the days of tall Hustling: If he saw an Opening six inches wide, he held it with his Foot until he could insert his Elbow, and then he braced his Shoulder, and the first thing you knew he was on the Inside demanding a fair cut of the Swag.

The Golden Rule received many a Jolt, but he adhered strictly to the old and favorite Admonition: If you want Yours, take a short piece of Lead Pipe and go out and Collect.

On a certain January First he made a careful Invoice. All the Hard-Earned Kale dropped into the Mining Companies or loaned to Relatives of Wife he marked off and put under the Head of Gone but not Forgotten. He was a True Business Guy. Even after subtracting all Cats and Dogs he could still total the magnificent Sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars.

When he looked at this Mound of Currency, he felt like a Vag and a Pauper. For he had climbed to the table-lands of High Finance and taken a peek at the Steam-Roller methods of the Real Tabascos.

"Make it a Million," said Ambition, leaning across the Table and tapping nervously. "Are you going to be satisfied with a Station Wagon and a Colored Boy when you might have a long-waisted Vehicle with two pale Simpsons in Livery on the Box? When you go into your Club and see the Menials kow-towing to a cold-looking Party with rippling Chins who seems to favor his Feet, you know that he gets the Waving Palms and the Frankincense because he is a Millionaire. You and the other financial Gnats are admitted simply to make a Stage Setting for the Big Squash."

"I always said that when I got a Hundred Thousand I'd take a long Vacation in Europe and learn how to order a Meal," suggested Our Hero, holding out weakly.

"When you came back you would find your hated Rival on the Hill with the Batteries turned against you. Camp on the Job and work straight toward the High Mark. And remember that anybody with less than a Million is a Two-Spot in a soiled Deck."

From that day the Piking ceased. No more of the dinky trafficking of the Retailer. He went out and bought Public Service Utilities on Nerve, treated them with Aqua Pura by the Hogshead, and created Wealth by purely lithographic Methods. And, if he wanted to reason out a Deal with a contrary-minded Gazook, he

began the Negotiations by soaking the Adversary behind the Ear and frisking him before he came to.

A Fairy Wand had been waved above the snide Bungalow, and it was now a Queen Anne Château dripping with Dew-dads of Scroll Work and congested with Black Walnut. The Goddess took her Mocha in the Feathers, and a Music Teacher came twice each week to bridge the awful chasm between Dorothy and Chopin. Dinner had been moved up to Milking Time. Sweetbreads and Artichokes came into the Lives of the Trio thus favored by Fortune.

One day the busy Thimble-Rigger took his Helpmate into the lonesome Library and broke the glad Tidings to her.

"I have unloaded all of my Cripples," he said. "They have been wished on to a Group of Philanthropists in New England. Sound the glad Tocsin. I have a Million in my Kick."

So she began packing the huge Saratogas and reading the Folders on Egypt and the Riviera. He sat in his Den pulling at a long black Excepcionale. Through the bluish clouds of Smoke came that old familiar Voice.

"Let the Missus and the Heiress do the European Thing," said Ambition. "You stick around. Wait for Black Friday. Then get busy at the Bargain Counter. By and by the new Crop will begin to move, and Money will creep out of the Yarn Stockings and a few Wise Gazabes will cop all the Plush. In every Palm Room there are more Millionaires than Palms. But the Big Round Table over by the Fountain is always reserved by Oscar for the Lad who can show Ten Millions."

The Ocean Greyhound moved out past Sandy Hook with the Family and all the Maids on board, but Papa remained behind to sharpen his Tools and get ready for another Killing.

Every time he was given a Crimp in the Rue de la Paix he caught even by leading a new Angora up the Chute and into the Shambles.

When the fully matured Goddess and the radiant Heroine of the latest International Alliance came home with the French Language and two tons of Glad Raiment, they found themselves reuniting with the Magnate at the big Table over by the Fountain.

Our Hero was now sleeping in a Bed almost twelve feet wide, with a silk Tent over it. One Morning he found the Companion of many Years sitting on the edge of the Mattress.

"Again?" asked the Multi-Millionaire. "What next?"

"The Exercises up to this Time have been Preliminary," said Ambition. "What is the good of a Bank Roll if you cannot garnish it with the delectable Parsley of Social Eminence? Get a Wiggle on you. Send for the Boys with the Frock Coats and the Soft Hats and let them dig in to their Elbows. Tell the Press Agent to organize a typewriting Phalanx. Assume a few Mortgages on fluttering Newspapers. Lay a Corner-Stone ever and anon. Be Interviewed."

"What are you leading up to?" asked the Financial Giant, a sickly Fear creeping into the Region formerly occupied by his Heart.

"The Logical Finish," replied Ambition, with a reassuring Pat on the Shoulder. "You must go to the Senate. The White Palace, suitable for entertaining purposes, now awaits you in Washington. The Bulb Lights glow dimly above the Porte Cochère. A red Carpet invites you to climb the Marble Stairway and spread yourself all over the Throne. On a Receiving Night, when the perfumed Aliens in their Masquerade Suits rally around the Punch Bowl, your Place will resemble the Last Act of something by Klaw & Erlanger. You will play Stud with the Makers of History and be seen leaving the Executive Mansion."

This Line of Talk landed him. He Fell for it. That year the Christmas Tree drooped with valuable Gifts for the Boys who stood after they were hitched.

He went up to Washington with an eviscerated Check-Book in his Pocket and a faint Odor of Scandal in his Wake, but he was a certified Servant of the People. His Cut Flowers were the Talk in

Official Circles. The most Exclusive consented to flirt with his Wine Cellar.

To a mere Outsider it looked as if Ambition had certainly boosted his Nobs to the final Himalayan Peak of Human Happiness. He had a House as big as a Hospital. The Hallways were cluttered with whispering Servants of the most immaculate and grovelling Description. His Wife and the Daughter and the Cigarette-Holder she had picked up in Europe figured in the Gay Life of the Nation's Capital every Night and went to see a Nerve Specialist every Day. The whole Bunch rode gaily on the Top Wave of the Social Swim, with a Terrapin as an Escort and a squad of Canvas-Back Ducks as Body-Guard.

Notwithstanding all which, Father was the sorest Hard-Shell that motored along Pennsylvania Avenue.

The Dime Denouncers printed his Picture, saying that he was owned by the Interests and hated the sight of a Poor Working Girl. When the High Class continuous Show in the Senate Chamber showed signs of flopping and the Press Gallery became impatient, some Alkali Statesman of the New School would arise in his Place and give our Hero a Turning-Over, concluding with a faithful Pen-Picture of the Dishonored Grave marked by a single Headstone, chiseled as follows: "Here lies a Burglar."

When he went traveling, he had his Food smuggled into the Drawing-Room. He knew if he went drilling through the Pullmans, some of the Passengers who had seen the Cartoons might recognize him as the notorious Malefactor.

One day, while he was cowering in a dark corner of his Club to get away from the pesky Reporters, he was joined by the Trouble-Maker.

"I gave you the wrong Steer," said Ambition, now much subdued. "You are in Dutch. Beat it! All the Rough-Necks down by the Round-House and the fretful Simps along every R.F.D. Route are getting ready to interfere in the Affairs of Government. The Storm Clouds of Anarchy are lowering. In other words, the new

Primary Law has begun to do business. Every downtrodden Mokus owing \$800 on a \$500 House is honing for a Chance to Hand it to somebody wearing a Seal-Skin Overcoat. From now on, seek Contentment, Rural Quietude, and a cinch Rate of 5 Per Cent. on all your Holdings."

So Ambition, after leading him hither and yon, finally conducted him to the swell Country House surrounded by Oaks and winding Drives and Sunken Gardens.

Far from the Hurly-Burly he settled down among his Boston Terriers and Orchids and Talking-Machines and allowed Old Age to ripen and mellow him into a Patriarch of the benevolent Pattern.

At the suggestion of an expensive Specialist, he went in for Golf.

After he had learned to Follow Through and keep within 100 yards of the Fair Green, he happened to get mixed up in a Twosome one day with a walking Rameses who had graduated from the Stock Exchange soon after the Crime of '73. This doddering Shell of Humanity looked as if a High Wind would blow him into the Crick. When he swung at the Pill, you expected to hear something Snap.

Our Hero had about 10 Years on the Ancient, and it looked like a Compote. But the Antique managed to totter around the Course, playing short but safe, always getting Direction and keeping away from the Profanity Pits.

He never caught up with Colonel Bogey, but he had enough Class to trim our Hero and collect 6 Balls.

Ambition rode home with the unhappy Loser in the \$12,000 Limousine.

"Buck up, Old Top," said the faithful Prompter. "Fasten your Eye on the Ball and don't try to Force. He is sure to blow up sooner or later. Take another Lesson to-morrow morning and then publish your Defi in the afternoon."

He never had been strong enough to stand off Ambition. So next Day he took on Old Sure-Thing again and got it in the same Place.

No wonder. The Octogenarian was of Scotch Descent. He was the Color of an Army Saddle. He never smiled except when the Kilties came on tour. His Nippie consisted of a tall Glass about half full and then a little Well Water.

A plain American Business Man with a York State Ancestry had a fat Chance against this Caledonian frame-up.

But that same persistent Ambition kept sending him back to the Ring to take another Trouncing.

One day he failed to show up at the Club House. The Trained Nurse, who fanned him during the final Hours, never suspected. But the Caddy-Master knew that he had died of a Broken Heart.

MORAL: Those who travel the hardest are not always the first to arrive.

THE NEW FABLE OF THE SPEEDY SPRITE

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One Monday Morning a rangy and well-conditioned Elfin of the Young Unmarried Set, yclept Loretta, emerged into the Sunlight and hit the Concrete Path with a ringing Heel.

This uncrowned Empress of the 18th Ward was a she-Progressive assaying 98 per cent. pure Ginger.

Instead of trailing the ever onward Parade, she juggled the Baton at the head of the Push.

In the crisp introductory hours of the Wash-Day already woven into the Plot, Loretta trolleyed herself down into the Noise Belt.

She went to the office of the exclusive Kennel Club and entered the Chow Ki-Yi for the next Bench Show. At the Clearing House for K. M.'s she filed a loud call for a Cook who could cook. Then she cashed a check, ordered a pound of Salted Nuts (to be delivered by Special Wagon at once), enveloped a ball of Ice Cream goosed with Chocolate, and soon, greatly refreshed, swept down on a Department Store.

A Chenille Massacre was in full swing on the 3d floor, just between the Porch Furniture and Special Clothing for Airmen. Loretta took a run and jump into the heaving mass of the gentler Division. She came out at 10.53 with her Sky Piece badly listed to Port and her toes flattened out, but she was 17 cents to the Good. Three hearty Cheers!

So she went over to an exhibition of Paintings, breathing through her Nose for at least an Hour as she studied the new

Masterpieces of the Swedo-Scandinavian School. Each looked as if executed with a Squirt Gun by a Nervous Geek on his way to a Three Days Cure. Just the same, every Visitor with a clinging Skirt and a Mushroom Hat gurgled like a Mountain Stream.

In company with four other Seraphines, plucked from the Society Col., she toyed with a Fruit Salad and Cocoa at a Tea Room instituted by a Lady in Reduced Circumstances for the accommodation of those who are never overtaken by Hunger.

The usual Battle as to which should pick up the Check and the same old Compromise. A Dutch Treat with Waitress trying to spread it four ways and the Auditing Committee watching her like a Hawk. Then a 10-cent Tip, bestowed as if endowing Princeton, and the Quartet representing the Flower of America's Young Womanhood was once more out in the Ozone, marching abreast with shining Faces and pushing white-haired Business Men off into the Sweepings.

Loretta went to a place with a glass Cover on it and had herself photoed in many a striking Posture. With the Chin tilted to show the full crop of Cervical Vertebrae and her Search Lights aimed yearningly at the top of the Singer Building, she had herself kidded into believing that she was a certified Replica of Elsie Ferguson.

As a member of the Board of Visitation she hurried out to the Colored Orphan Asylum to check up the Picks and watch them making Card-Board Mottoes.

After that she had nothing to do except fly home and complete a Paper on the Social Unrest in Spain, after which she backed into the Spangles, because Father was bringing an old Stable Companion to dinner.

In the evening she took Mother to a Travel Lecture. The colored Slides were mingled with St. Vitus Glimpses of swarming Streets and galloping Gee-Gees. They came home google-eyed and had to feel their way into the Domicile.

Tuesday A.M. dawned overcast with shifting winds from the N.E.