

***GEORGE  
W. PECK***



***PECK'S  
BAD  
BOY  
ABROAD***

**George W. Peck**

# **Peck's Bad Boy Abroad**

**Being a Humorous Description of the Bad Boy and His  
Dad / in Their Journeys Through Foreign Lands - 1904**

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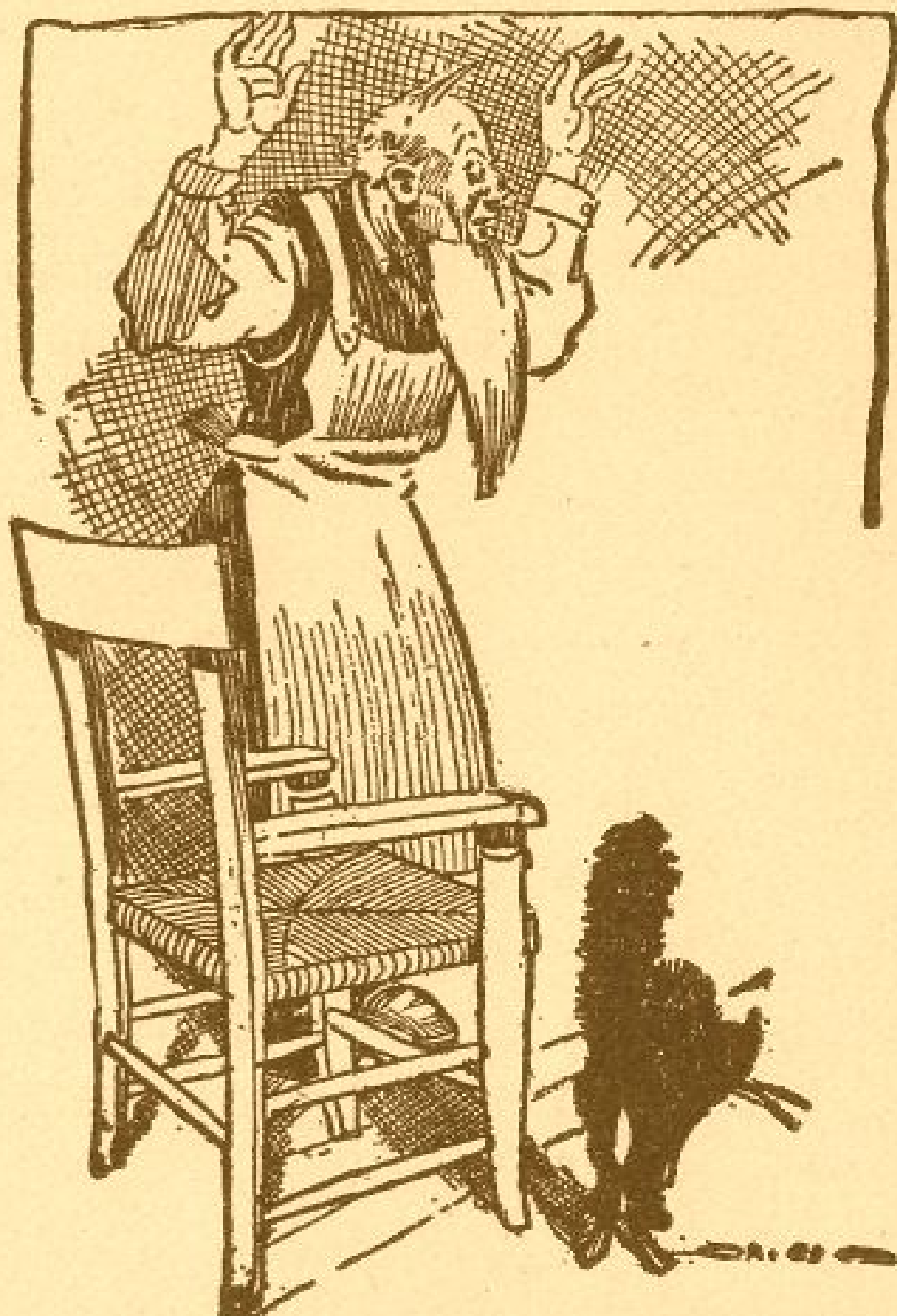
# CHAPTER I.

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The Bad Boy and His Chum Call on the Old Grocery-man  
After

Being Away at School—The Bad Boy's Dad in a Bad Way.

The bad boy had been away to school, but the illness of his father had called him home, and for some weeks he had been looking about the old town. He had found few of his old friends. His father had recovered somewhat from his illness, and one day he met his old chum, a boy of his own age. The bad boy and the chum got busy at once, talking over the old times that tried the souls of the neighbors and finally the bad boy asked about the old groceryman, and found that the old man still held out at the old stand, with the same old stock of groceries, and they decided to call upon him, and surprise him. So after it began to be dark they entered the store, and found the old groceryman sitting on a cracker box by the stove, stroking the back of an old maltese cat that had a yellow streak on the back, where it had been singed by crawling under the red-hot stove. As the boys entered the store the cat raised its back, its tail became as large as a rolling pin, and the cat began to spit, while the old groceryman held up both hands and said:



*Don't shoot! gentlemen, please.*

"Don't shoot, please, but one of you go behind the counter and take what there is in the cash drawer, while the other one can reach into my pistol pocket and release my pocketbook. This is the fifth time I have been held up this year, and I have got so if I am not held up about so often I can't sleep nights."

"O, put down your hands and straighten out that cat's back," said the bad boy, as he slapped the old groceryman on the back so hard his spine cracked like a frozen sidewalk. "Don't you know us, you old geezer? We are the only and original Peck's Bad Boy and his Chum, come to life, and ready for business," and the two boys danced a jig on the floor, covered an inch thick with the spilled sugar of years ago, the molasses that had strayed from barrel, and the general refuse of the dirty place, which had become as hard as asphalt.

"O, dear, it is worse than I thought," said the old groceryman as he laughed a hysterical laugh through the long whiskers, and he hugged the boys as though he had a liking for them, notwithstanding the suffering they had caused him. "By gosh, I thought you were nothing but common robbers, who just wanted my money. You are old friends, and can have the whole place," and he poured some milk into a basin for the cat, but the animal only looked at the two boys as though she knew them, and watched them to see what was coming next.

The bad boy looked around the old grocery, which had not changed a particle during the time he had been away, the same old box of petrified prunes, the dried apples that could not be cut with a hatchet, the canned stuff on the

shelves had become so old that the labels had curled up and fallen off, so it must have been a guess with the old groceryman whether he was selling a can of peas or tomatoes, and the old fellow standing there as though the world had gone off and left him, as his customers had.

“Well, wouldn't this skin you,” said the bad boy, as he took up a dried prune and tried to crack it with a hatchet on a two-pound weight, turning to his chum who was stroking the singed hair of the old cat the wrong way. “Say, old man, you ought to get a hustle on you. Why don't you clean out this shebang, and put in a new stock, of goods, and have clerks with white aprons on, and a girl bookkeeper, and goods that people will buy and eat and not get sick? There is a grocery down street that is as clean as a whistle, and I notice all your old customers go there. Why don't you keep up with the times?”

“O, I ain't running a dude place,” said the old man, as he took a piece of soft coal and put it in the old round stove, and wiped the black off his hands on his trousers. “I am trying to get rid of my customers. I have got money enough to live on, and I just stay here waiting for the old cat to die. I have only got six customers left, and one of them has got pneumonia, and is going to die, then there will be only five. When they are all gone I shall sit here by the stove until the end comes. There is nothing doing now to keep me awake, since you boys quit getting me mad. Say, boys, do you know, I haven't been real mad since you quit coming here. The only fun I have had is swearing at my customers when they stick up their noses at my groceries. It's the funniest thing, when I tell an old customer that if they don't like my



goods they can go plum to thunder, they get mad and go somewhere else to trade. Times must be changing. Years ago, the more I abused customers the more they liked it, and I just charged the goods to them with a pencil on a piece of brown wrapping paper. I had four cracker boxes full of brown wrapping paper with things charged on the paper against customers, but when anybody wanted to pay their account it made my head ache to find it, and so one day I balanced my books by using the brown wrapping paper to kindle the fire. If you ever want to get even with the world, easy, just pour a little kerosene on your accounts, and put them in the stove. I have never been so free from worry as I have since I balanced my books in the stove. Well, I suppose you have come home on account of your dad's sickness," said the old groceryman, turning to the bad boy, who had written a sign, 'The Morgue,' and pinned it on the window. "I understand your dad had an operation performed on him in a hospital. What did the doctors take out of him?"

"Dad had an operation all right," said the bad boy, "but he is not as much interested in what they took out of him, as what he thinks they left in. They said they removed his appendix, and I guess they did, for dad showed me the bill the doctors rendered. The bill was big enough so they might have taken out a whole lot more. If I had been home I would never have let him be cut into, but ma insisted that he must have an operation. She said all the men on our street, and all that moved in our set, had had operations, and she was ashamed to go out in society and be forced to admit that dad never had an operation, She told dad that he could afford it better than half the people that had operations, and

that a scar criss-cross on the stomach was a badge of honor. He never got a scar in the army, and she simply would not be able to look people in the face unless dad was operated on. Dad always was subject to stomach ache, but until appendicitis became fashionable he had always taken a mess of pills, and come out all right, but ma diagnosed the case the last time he was doubled up like a jack-knife, and dad was hustled off to the hospital, and they didn't do a thing to him.

“He told me about it since I came home, and now he lays the whole thing to ma, and I have to stand between them. He is going to get even with ma, though. The first time she complains of anything going on inside of her works, he is going to send her right to a hospital and have the doctors do their worst. Dad said to me, says he:

“‘Hennery, if you ever feel anything like a caucus being held inside you, don't you ever go to a hospital, but just swallow a stick of dynamite and light the fuse, then there won't be anything left inside to bother you afterwards. When I got to the hospital they stripped me for a prize fight, put me on a table made of glass, and rolled me into the operating room, gave me chloroform and when they thought I was all in, they took an axe and chopped me. I could feel every blow, and it is a wonder they left enough of your old dad for you to hug when you came home.’

“Say, it is kind of pitiful to hear dad talk about the things they left in him.”

“What things does he think they left in him,” asked the old groceryman, as he looked frightened, and felt of his

stomach, as though he mistrusted there might be something wrong with him, too.

“O, dad has been reading in the papers about doctors that perform operations leaving sponges, forceps, and things inside of patients, when they close up the place, and since dad has got pretty fussy since his operation he thinks they left something in him. Some days he thinks they left a roll of cotton batting, or a pillow, or a bale of hay, but when there is a sharp pain inside he thinks they left a carving knife, but for a week he has settled down to the belief that the doctors left a monkey wrench in him, and he is just daffy on that subject. Says he can feel it turning around, as though it was miscrewing machinery, and he wants to consult a new doctor every day as to what he can take to dissolve a monkey wrench, so it will pass off through the blood and pores of the skin. He has taken it into his head that nothing will save his life except to travel all over the country, and the world. I am to go with him to look after him.”



G.R.W.

*Believes the doctors left a monkey wrench in him.*

“By ginger, it's great! Just think of it. Traveling all over the world and nothing to do but nurse my old dad who thinks he is filled with hardware and carpenter's tools. Gee! but I wish you could go,” said the bad boy, as he put his arm around his chum. “Maybe we wouldn't make these foreigners sit up and take an interest in something besides Royalty and Riots.”

“Well,” said the groceryman, “they will have my sympathy with you alone over there.”

“But before you start on the road with your monkey-wrench show, you come in here and let me put up a package of those prunes to take along. They will keep in any climate, and there is nothing better for iron in the blood, such as your dad has, than prunes. Call again, bub, and we will arrange for you to write to your chum from all the places you go with your dad, and he can come in here and read the letters to me and the cat.”

“All right, old Father Time,” said the bad boy, as he drew a mug of cider out of the vinegar barrel, and took a swallow. “But what you want to do is to get a road scraper and drive a team through this grocery, and clean the floor,” and the boys went out just ahead of the old man's arctic overshoes, as he kicked at them, and then he went back and sat down by the stove and stroked the cat, which had got its back down level again, after its old enemies had gone down the street, throwing snowballs at the driver of a hearse.





*Went out just ahead of the old man's shoe.*

“It is a solemn occupation to drive a hearse,” said the bad boy.

“Not so solemn as riding inside,” said the chum.

## CHAPTER II.

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The Bad Boy and His Dad Ready for Their Travels—The Bad Boy  
Labels the Old Man's Suit Case—How the Cowboys Made Him  
Dance Once.

The old groceryman was in front of the grocery, bent over a box of rutabagas, turning the decayed sides down to make the possible customer think all was not as bad as it might be, when a shrill whistle down the street attracted his attention. He looked in the direction from which it came, and saw the bad boy coming with a suit case in one hand and a sole leather hat box in the other, and the old man went in the store to say a silent prayer, and to lay a hatchet and an ax handle where he could reach them if the worst came.

“Well, you want to get a good look at me now,” said the bad boy, as he dropped the valise on the floor, and put the hat box on the counter, “for it will be months and maybe years, before you see me again.”

“Oh, joy!” said the old groceryman, as he heaved a sigh, and tried to look sorry. “What is it, reform school, or have the police ordered you out of town? I have felt it coming for a long time. This is the only town you could have plied your vocation so long in and not been pulled. Where are you going with the dude suit case and the hat box?”

“Oh, dad has got a whole mess more diseases, and the doctors had a conversation over him Sunday, and they say he has got to go away again, right now, and that a sea voyage will brace him up and empty him out so medicine



over in Europe can get in its work and strengthen him so he can start back after a while and probably die on the way home, and be buried at sea. Dad says he will go, for he had rather die at sea than on land, 'cause they don't have to have any trouble about a funeral, 'cause all they do is to sew a man up in a piece of cloth, tie a sack of coal to his feet, slide him off a board, and he goes kerplunk down into the salt water about a mile, and stands there on his feet and makes the whales and sharks think he is a new kind of fish."

"Gee! but that is a programme that appeals to me as sort of uncanny," said the old man. "Is your dad despondent over the outlook? What new disease has he got?"



*Labeled his Dad's valise.*

“All of 'em,” said the boy, as he took a label off a tomato can and pasted it on the end of the suit case. “You take an almanac and read about all the diseases that the medicine advertised in the almanac cures, and dad has got the whole lot of them, nervous prostration, rheumatism, liver trouble, stomach busted, lungs congested, diaphragm turned over, heart disease, bronchitis, corns, bunions, every darn thing a man can catch without costing him anything. But he is not despondent. He just thinks it is an evidence of genius, and a certificate of standing in society and wealth. He argues that the poor people who have only one disease are not in it with statesmen and scholars. Oh, he is all right. He thinks if he goes to Europe all knocked out, he will class with emperors and dukes. Oh, since he had that operation and had his appendix chopped out, he thinks there is a bond of sympathy between him and King Edward that will cause him to be invited to be the guest of royalty. He is just daffy,” and the bad boy took a sapolio label out of a box and pasted it on the other end of the valise.

“What in thunder and lightning are you pasting those labels on your valise for?” said the old man, as the boy reached for a Quaker oats label and a soap advertisement and pasted them on.

“Oh, dad said he wished he had some foreign labels of hotels and things on his valise, to make fellow travelers believe he had been abroad before, and I told him I could fix it all right. You see, if I paste things all over the valise he will think it is all right, 'cause he is near sighted,” and the boy pasted on a label for 37 varieties of pickles, and then put on an advertisement for hair restorer on the hat box.

“Say, here's a fine one, this malted milk label, with a New Jersey cow on the corner,” said the old man, as he began to take interest in the boy's talent as an artist. “And here, try one of these green pea can labels, and the pork and beans legend, and the only soap. Say, if you and your dad don't create a sensation from the minute you take the train till you get back, you can take it out of my wages. When are you going?”

“To-morrow night,” said the boy, as he put more labels on the hat box, and stood off and looked at them with the eye of an artist. “We go to New York first to stay a few days and see things, and then we take a steamer and sail away, and the sicker dad is the more time I will have to fill up on useful nollig.”

“Hennery,” said the old groceryman, as his chin trembled, and a tear came to his eye. “I want to ask you a favor. At times, when you have been unusually mean, I have thought I hated you, but when I have said something ugly to you, and have laid awake all night regretting it, it has occurred to me that you were about the best friend I had. I think it makes an old man forget his years, to be chummy with a live boy, full of ginger, and I do like you, condemn you, and I can't help it. Now I want you to write me every little while, on your trip, and I will read your letters to the customers here in the store, who will be lonely until they can hear that you are dead. The neighbors will come in to read your letters, and it will bring me custom. Will you write to me, boy, and pour out your heart to me, and tell me of the different troubles you get your dad into, for surely you

cannot help finding trouble over there if you go hunting for it. Promise me, boy."

"You bet your life I will, old pard," said the bad boy. "I shall have to have some escape valve to keep from busting. I was going to write to my chum, but he is in love with a telephone girl, and he don't take any time for pleasure. I will write you about every dutch and duchess we meet, every prince and pauper, and everything. You watch my smoke, and you will think there is a train afire. I hope dad will try and restrain himself from wanting to fight everybody that belongs to any country but America. He has bought one of these little silk American flags to wear in his button hole, and he swears if anybody looks cross-eyed at that flag he will simply cut his liver out, and toast it on a fork, and eat it. He makes me tired, and I know there is going to be trouble."

"Don't you think your dad's mind sort of wanders?" said the old groceryman, in a whisper, "It wouldn't be strange, after all he has gone through, in raising you up to your present size, if he was a little off his base."

"Well, ma thinks he is bug-house, and the hired girl is willing to go into court and swear to it, and that experience we had coming home from the Yellowstone park some time ago, made me think if he was not crazy he would be before long, You see, we had a hot box on the engine, and had to stay at a station in the bad lands for an hour, and there were a mess of cow boys on the platform, and I told dad we might as well have some amusement while we were there, and that a brake-man told me the cow boys were great dancers, but you couldn't hire them to dance, but if some man with a strong personality would demand that they

dance, and put his hand on his pistol pocket they would all jump in and dance for an hour. That was enough for dad, for he has a microbe that he is a man of strong personality, and that when he demands that anybody do something they simply got to do it, so he walked up and down the platform a couple of times to get his draw poker face on, and I went up to one of the cow boys and told him that the old duffer used to be a ballet dancer, and he thought everybody ought to dance when they were told to, and that if the spell should come on him, and he should order them to dance, it would be a great favor to me if they would just give him a double shuffle or two, just to ease his mind.

“Well, pretty soon he came along to where the cowboys were leaning against the railing, and, looking at them in a haughty manner, he said: 'Dance, you kiotes, dance,' and he put his hand to his pistol pocket. Well, sir, I never saw so much fun in my life. Four of the cow boys pulled revolvers and began to shoot regular bullets into the platform within an inch of dad's feet, and they yelled to him: 'Dance your own self, you ancient maverick; whoop 'er up!' and by gosh! dad was so frightened that he began to dance all around the platform, and it was like a battle, the bullets splintering the boards, and the smoke filling the air, and the passengers looking out of the windows and laughing, and the engineer and fireman looking on and yelling, and dad nearly exhausted from the exertion. I guess if the conductor had not got the hot box put out and yelled all aboard, dad would have had apoplexy.”





*"He began to dance all around the platform."*

"When he let up, the cow boys quit shooting, and he! 'ol aboard the train and started. I stayed in the smoking car with the train butcher for more than an hour, 'cause I was afraid if I went in the car where dad was he would make

some remark that would offend my pride, and when I did go back to the car he just said: 'Somebody fooled you. Those fellows couldn't dance, and I knew it all the time.' Yes, I guess there is no doubt dad is crazy sometimes, but let me chaperone him through a few foreign countries and he will stand without hitching all right. Well, goodbye, now, old man, and try and bear up under it, till you get a letter from me," and the bad boy took his labeled valise and hat box and started.



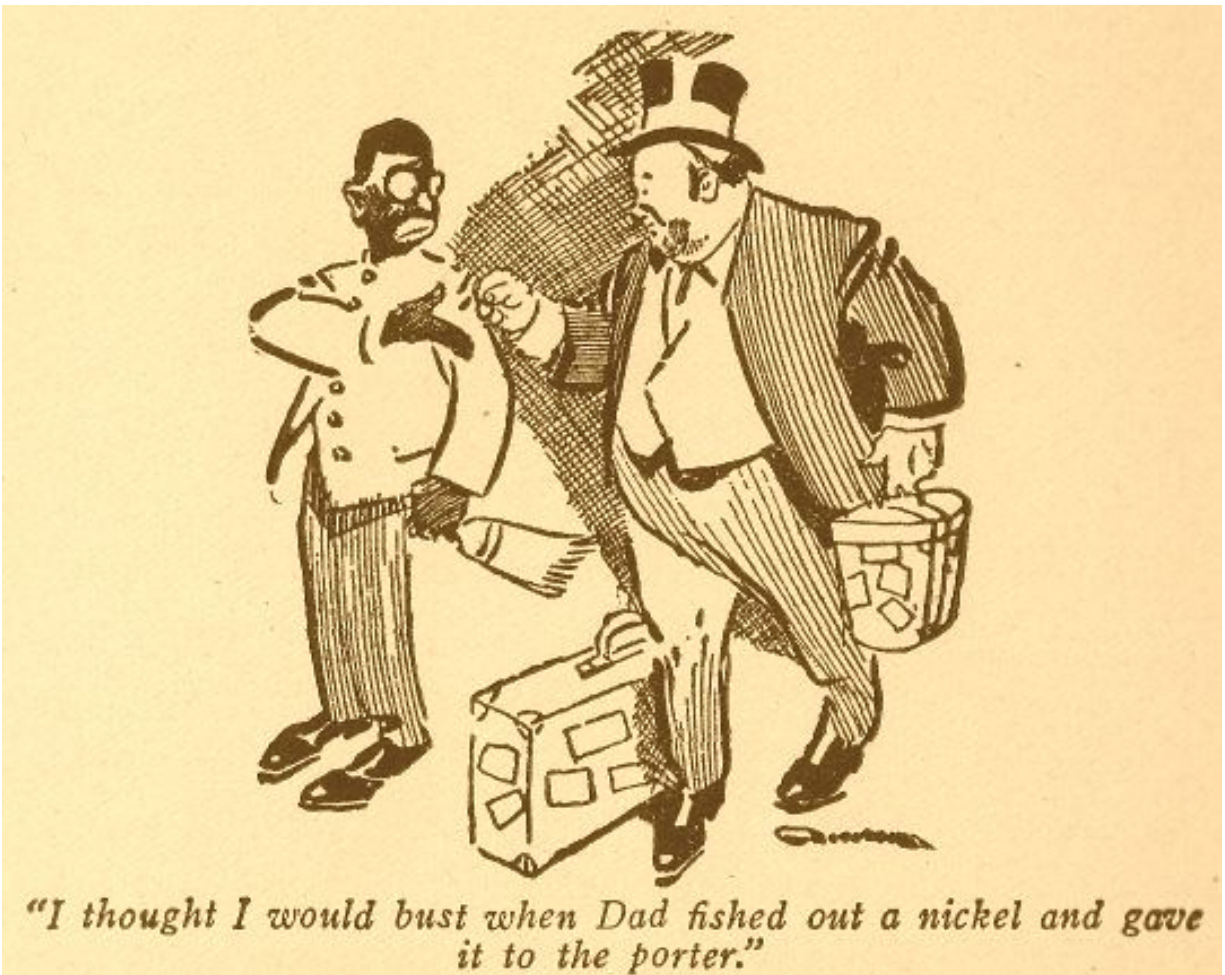
## CHAPTER III.

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The Bad Boy Writes About the Fun They Had Going to Washington—He and His Dad Call on President Roosevelt—The Bad Boy Meets One of the Children and They Disagree.

Washington, D. C—My Dear Old Skate: I didn't tell you in my last about the fun we had getting here. We were on the ocean wave two days, because the whole country was flooded from the rains, and dad walked the quarter deck of the Pullman car, and hitched up his pants, and looked across the sea on each side of the train with a field glass, looking for whales and porpoises. He seems to be impressed with the idea that this trip abroad is one of great significance to the country, and that he is to be a sort of minister plenipotentiary, whatever that is, and that our country is going to be judged by the rest of the world by the position he takes on world affairs. The first day out of Chicago dad corraled the porter in a section and talked to him until the porter was black in the face. I told dad the only way to get respectful consideration from a negro was to advocate lynching and burning at the stake, for the slightest things, so when our porter was unusually attentive to a young woman on the car dad hauled him over the coals, and scared him so by talking of hanging, and burning in kerosene oil, that the negro got whiter than your shirt, and when he got away from dad he came to me and asked if that old man with the red nose and the gold-headed cane was as dangerous as he talked. I told him he was my dad, and that he was a walking delegate of the Amalgamated

Association of Negro Lynchers, and when a negro did anything that he ought to be punished for they sent for dad, and he took charge of the proceedings and saw that the negro was hanged, and shot, and burned up plenty. But I told him that dad was crazy on the subject of giving tips to servants, and he must not fall dead when we got to Washington if dad gave him a \$50 bill, and he must not give back any change, but just act as though he always got \$50 from passengers. Well, you'd a dide to see that negro brush dad 50 times a day, and bring a towel every few minutes to wipe off his shoes, but he kept one eye,' about as big as an onion, on dad all the time, to watch that he didn't get stabbed. The next morning I took dad's pants from under his pillow, and hid them in a linen closet, and dad laid in his berth all the forenoon, and had it out with the porter, whom he accused of stealing them. The doctors told me I must keep dad interested and excited, so he would not dwell on his sickness, and I did, sure as you are a foot high. Dad stood it till almost noon, when he came out of his berth with his pajamas on, these kind with great blue stripes like a fellow in the penitentiary, and when he went to the wash room I found his pants and then he dressed up and swore some at everybody but me. We got to Washington all right, and I thought I would bust when dad fished out a nickel and gave it to the porter, and we got out of the car before the porter came to, and the first day we stayed in the hotel for fear the negro would see us, as I told dad that porter would round up a gang of negroes with razors and they would waylay us and cut dad all up into sausage meat.



Dad is the bravest man I ever saw when there is no danger, but when there is a chance for a row he is weak as a cat. I spects it is on account of his heart being weak. A man's internal organs are a great study. I spose a brave man, a hero, has to have all his inside things working together, to be real up and up brave, but if his heart is strong, and his liver is white, he goes to pieces in an emergency, and if his liver is all right, and he tries to fight just on his liver, when the supreme moment arrives, and his heart jumps up into his throat, and wabbles and beats too quick, he just flunks. I would like to dissect a real brave man, and see what condition the things inside him are in, but it would be a waste of time to dissect dad, 'cause I know

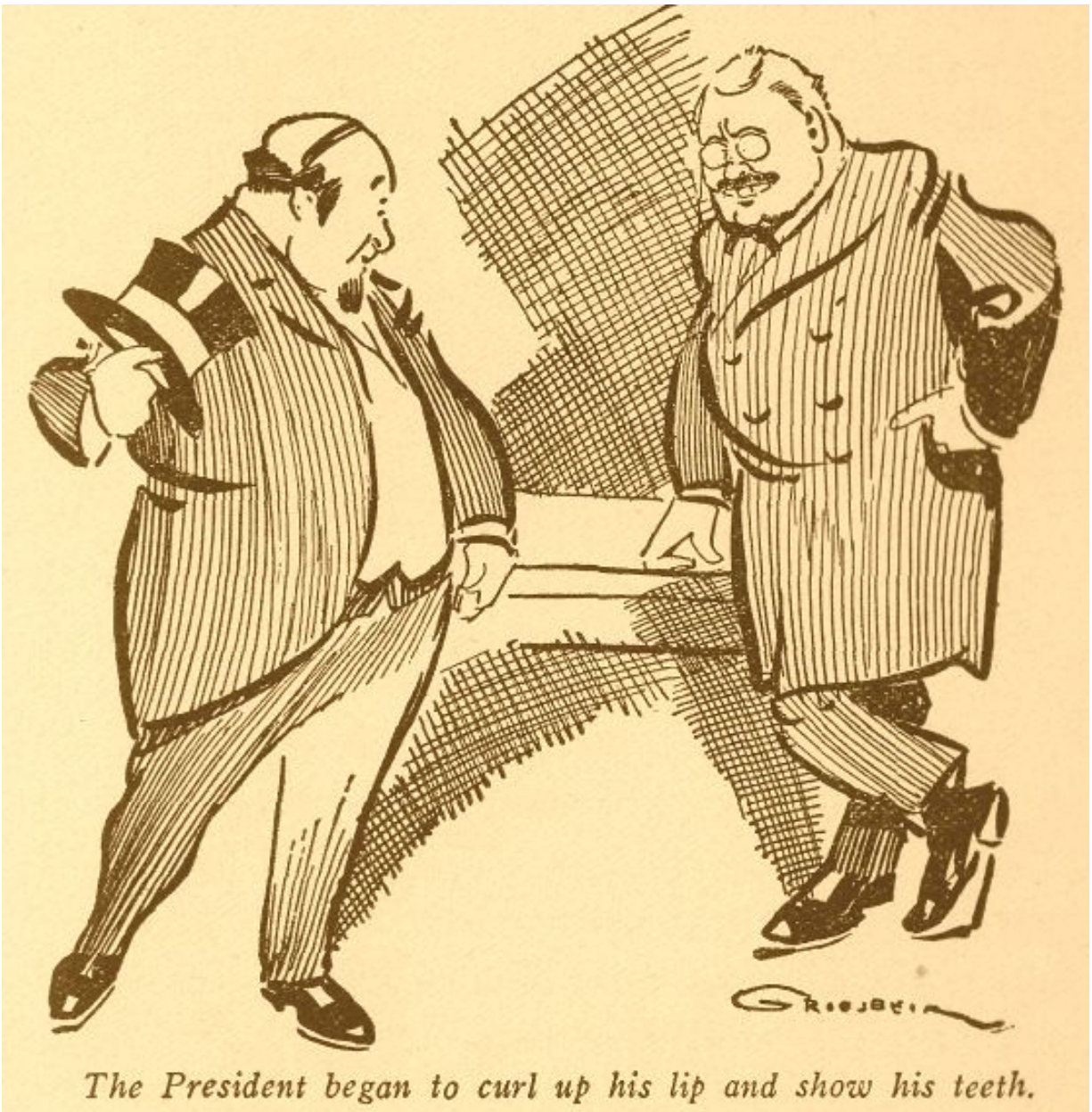
all his inner works need to go to a watchmaker and be cleaned, and a new main spring put in.

Well, this morning dad shaved himself, and got on his frock coat, and his silk hat, and said we would go over to the white house and have a talk with Teddy, but first he wanted to go and see where Jefferson hitched his horse to the fence when he came to Washington to be innogerated, and where Jackson smoked his corn cob pipe, and swore and stormed around when he was mad, and to walk on the same paths where Zachariah Taylor Zacked, Buchanan caught it, and Lincoln put down the rebellion, and so we walked over toward the white house, and I was scandalized. I stopped to pick up a stone to throw at a dog inside the fence, and when I walked along behind dad, and got a rear view of his silk hat, it seemed as though I would sink through the asphalt pavement, for he had on an old silk hat that he wore before the war, the darnedest looking hat I ever saw, the brim curled like a minstrel show hat, the fur rubbed off in some places, and he looked like one of these actors that you see pictures of walking on the railroad track, when the show busts up at the last town. I think a man ought to dress so his young son won't have a fit. I tried to get dad to go and buy a new hat, but he said he was going to wait till he got to London, and buy one just like King Edward wears, but he will never get to London with that hat, 'cause to-night I will throw it out of the hotel window and put a piece of stove pipe in his hat box.

Well, sir, you wouldn't believe it, but we got into the white house without being pulled, but it was a close shave, 'cause everybody looked at dad, and put their forefingers to

their foreheads, for they thought he was either a crank, or an ambassador from some furrin country. The detectives got around dad when we got into the anteroom, and began to feel of his pockets to see if he had a gun, and one of them asked me what the old fellow wanted, and I told them he was the greatest bob cat shooter in the west, and was on his way to Europe to invite the emperors and things to come over to this country and shoot cats on his preserve. Well, say, you ought to have seen how they stepped one side and waltzed around, and one of them went in the next room and told the president dad was there, and before we knew it we were in the president's room, and the president began to curl up his lip, and show his teeth like some one had said "rats."





*The President began to curl up his lip and show his teeth.*

He got hold of dad's hand, and dad backed off as though he was afraid of being bitten, and then they sat down and talked about mountain lion and cat shooting, and dad said he had a 22 rifle that he could pick a cat off the back fence with every time, out of his bedroom window, and I began to look around at the pictures. Dad and the president talked about all kinds of shooting, from mudhens to moose, and then dad told the president he was going abroad on account