The Birmingham Eccentric

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GEORGE R. AVERILL — Editor and Publisher
ALLEN TENNY — Managing Editor
PAUL NEAL AVERILL — Sales and Advertising Manager
ARTHUR N. WINGERDEN — Asst. Advertising Manager
CLAUDE E. WALKER — Production Manager
CLARENCE S. WARNER — Sales Representative

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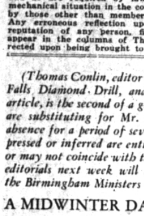
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1934

NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have news value and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be presented before noon on Wednesdays. The right is reserved, however, to make such superficial changes in the work submitted as are necessary to the style of the paper and as are required by laws of the state. Because of a mechanical situation in the composing room, headlines written by those other than members of the staff cannot be used. Any erroneous reflection upon the character, standing or reputation of any person, firm or corporation which may appear in the columns of The Eccentric will be gladly corrected upon being brought to the attention of the publisher.

(Thomas Conlin, editor and publisher of the Crystal Falls Diamond Drill, and author of the following article, is the second of a group of "guest editors" who are substituting for Mr. Averill during the latter's absence for a period of seven weeks. The opinions expressed or inferred are entirely Mr. Conlin's, and may or may not coincide with those of The Eccentric. The editorials next week will be written by members of the Birmingham Ministers Association).

A MIDWINTER DAY DREAM

George Averill was supposed to depart from Birmingham for a trip south, his family only accompanying him. But, it didn't turn out that way. When he drove out of his yard he had this writer as companion in the front seat. My astonishment at being included as one of the party was as great, no doubt, as is that of the average reader of The Eccentric, and, undoubtedly, of Mr. Averill himself.



Mr. Conlin

I was puzzled, at first, to know why George had included me in the party and my amazement was heightened immensely when, after passing out onto Telegraph road and "headin' South," Mr. Averill reached down under the seat and unloosed a spring. Behold! The Averill car, tin house and all, rose in the air and speeded swiftly along at the rate of 1,000 miles per minute. We headed out over the Atlantic, in a short time, and soon the rocky cliffs of Gibraltar loomed up to tell us we were safely over the ocean. We skirted the north shore of the Mediterranean and in a very short time thereafter we were over Greece, which country we circled and George set his craft down safely in a glen of Mount Parnassus in which was located the Delphic Oracle that functioned so famously in the days of Grecian mythology. George maneuvered his machine up within hailing distance of the subterranean opening from whence, in days gone by, came the voice of the priestess, who, seated upon her golden tripod, gave out replies to the questions asked of her. That was in the days when oracles were oracles and not weekly newspaper editors without honor in their own country.

The journey was made in such record time that I had not had the opportunity to learn from Mr. Averill whither we were destined or why. However, when he set us down in the ancient surroundings I connected it with Mr. Averill's well known proclivity for visits to, and interviews with notables. I concluded that this time he was seeking information from no less a source than the ancient Delphic Oracle and in this surmise I was correct.

We unloaded from the car and seated ourselves on some ancient stone benches. We had just time to get seated when a voice from the subterranean depths called out: "Who are you and why come you here?"

Then occurred the following dialogue between Mr. Averill and the Oracle.

George: I am George Averill of Birmingham, Michigan, U. S. A. Those with me are the members of my family and a friend. We come here to get information about the future of our government and to learn your opinion about some strange political doctrines that are being preached over in our country.

Oracle: Ah, I see. You are one of the "Doubting Thomases" that fails to swallow, hook, line and sinker, the deductions of your so-called "Brain Trust." You come to this oracle of antiquity to get the opinion of age and experience?

George: Yes, Oracle, you have me pegged correctly.

Oracle: What subjects would you have counsel with me upon, man of America?

George: You've been on the job here a long time, haven't you, Oracle?

Oracle: You are correct in your assumption, man of America. I am indeed old and have seen many strange things happen in my day!

George: I take it that you have seen many governments come and go in your day and are acquainted with governmental planning of the past years in all corners of the earth. Am I correct, Oracle?

Oracle: Again, man of America, you are correct in your assumption. I saw the dawn of civilization make its approach over the horizon of antiquity. I watched while Menes introduced the first form of civil government in the Valley of the Nile; I saw the inscription written on the wall of the palace of Belshazzar; I beheld Darius as he lashed the waters of the Bosporus because they impeded his passage; I saw Leonidas hold back the horde of the Persians at Thermopylae, only to be overwhelmed and perish in the end; I saw the she-wolf nurse Remus and Romulus to vitality and witnessed the founding of Rome upon the seven hills along the Tiber; I watched Alexander the Great marched away from his Macedonian plains with his myriad of Greek followers and heard him weep when he learned there were no more worlds for him to conquer; I noted the hesitation on the part of Caesar as he paused upon the banks of the Rubicon and saw the avidity with which he pressed his advance after the die was cast; I saw Pontius Pilate hand over Jesus upon the demand of the Pharisees that he be crucified; I beheld the rainbow of promise that appeared in the sky and which was one of the influences that caused Constantine to renounce Paganism as the state religion and bring Christianity openly to the entire world; I heard Charlemagne utter surprise when on that Christmas morning the Pope placed the crown of the Roman emperor upon his head; I saw the civilized world plunged into the darkness of the Middle Ages and saw it emerge again as Hildebrand and Peter the Hermit preached the Crusades; I watched King John as he affixed his name to the Magna Carta which the Barons had wrung from him unwilling hands; I saw Cromwell disperse the Long Parliament and usurp the rights of the people when he felt himself strong enough to make his will law; I heard Louis XIV in reply to the warning of his ministers say "After me the Deluge"; I saw the Pilgrims land on Plymouth Rock and listened to the shot that was heard around the world at Lexington; I looked on as Cornwallis handed over his sword to the victorious Continentals and French; I witnessed the scene at the Constitutional Convention when Washington led the assembled delegates in prayer to their God asking that he guide their hands and hearts and crown their deliberations with wisdom; I saw the angry pack batter down the doors of the Bastile when taxes upon their bread became unbearable; I watched as Napoleon grasped the crown of France from the hands of Pope Pius VII and placed it with his own hands upon his own head; I saw Abraham Lincoln as he signed the document that loosed the shackles from the limbs of the millions of negroes held in bondage; I witnessed the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt upon a platform that radiated hope Right and saw his administration veer more and more towards the Left. All these things and many more, man of America, I have seen and heard in my day. I ask you, do you think that I am competent from age and observation and experience to speak upon questions affecting the rise and fall of nations?

George: Yes, Oracle. You are qualified to speak of the past, but what brought us here is to peer into the future; to learn what this New Deal we are confronted with in America means when read in connection with happenings of the past. Do you feel competent to speak upon this subject, Oracle; can you draw aside the curtain of the future that we may guide our decision by what you show to be in store for us?

Oracle: Man of America, have you not already been fully informed upon those points; have your professors not demonstrated to you by words of wisdom drawn from books on economics; have they not projected your future for you from volumes of statistics and built up for you a millennium?

George: Yes, Oracle, the young men have done all the things you say they have done and they have arrived at a determination satisfactory to themselves, but some of us wonder if the old things can be entirely discarded; if the future can be builded entirely upon new foundations and the solid buttresses of the past years be discarded; there are skeptics among our people and I have come to you to learn if age and experience can be supplemented by equations and statistics. What think you, Oracle?

Oracle: Read you not in your Book of Books, your Bible, the story of Rehoboam; how he scorned the advice of the old men and forsook their counsel for the enthusiasm of youth; how the prophecies and promises of these inexperienced men failed to materialize in the long run and how the plain people who knew not anagrams and equations and statistics grew angry in disappointment and stoned Rehoboam to death?

George: Yes, Oracle, that is one of the warnings that the element in our population which believe that the past should not be entirely discarded in this new planning are taking cognizance of and I am come here to get your opinion upon what may be the ultimate outcome of many of these queer happenings.

Oracle: Upon what specific items do you seek information, man of America?

George: Well, to begin with, they tell us that not only our methods of dealing with things material must be changed, but that our thinking can and must be changed by legislative acts so that the ills and injustices of the civilization of the present day may be banished forthwith and a new mental atmosphere be brought into being by legislation. What think you of that proposition, Oracle?

Oracle: From my vantage point here I have seen many peoples pass in review. I have watched the inception and developments of government from democracy to autocracy down to the present efforts of Stalin and the Third International. I have seen each in turn vanish from the earth and have noted that the same influence that caused the death of one caused that of the other—human ambition, human jealousy, human selfishness, human greed. These elements are in existence today much as they were in the days of the first marshaling of groups into states and they must be reckoned with. It is but a thicker veneer exists above the outside today, due to the advancement of education. That influence has submerged the outward demonstration of these human attributes; has caused them to recede further from view and many are thus led to believe that they have been neutralized but, in deeper beneath this outer skin of education, and you'll run onto the same veins that existed and directed impulses when government first began. The same impulse that caused Cain to slay Abel stands back of much of your crime today; the kiss that Judas planted upon the cheek of your Savior carried no more deceit than the honeyed words of your scheming, notoriety-seeking, self-serving governmental agents of the present. The wench that followed the armies of Alexander has her counterpart in the loosening morals of your women of today; the same impulse that caused Peter to deny his Master thrice is inbred in the buck-passing public officials of today; the same ambition that caused Alexander to aspire to world power is back of many of your rulers of business and government today and fires the heart of the power-grasping, wealth-seeking, designing profiteers and gougers. Eventually these human traits come to the surface. The success of your American attempt depends upon the disinterestedness of person and devotion to purpose upon the part of your leader and his ability to snuff out and keep in the background the adverse efforts on the part of his subordinates. History has demonstrated that all movements of this character have their good as well as their bad sides and they all eventually wear out and go off the slate, the longevity of each depending upon the strength of character of the directing personnel.

George: If I get you correctly, Oracle, the nostrums and economic plannings that are being tried upon us are not new; they have been tried before in the world's history and have been discarded as they were found to be defective or were circumvented by the ingenuity of human nature to get around them and proceed along natural lines. Am I correct in that assumption, Oracle?

Oracle: Man of America, heard you not the admonition of the sage, "There is nothing new under the sun?" You are correct. Your economists are re-entering horses that have gone their best and been distanced in the race with human progress. Debasing the currency is a trick of the ages; even in the days when I was comparatively young and had influence, the regimenting of peoples and trades was tried and ran its course. Curtailment of production has been tried and found wanting from the time of Abraham. There are but one set of laws that are permanent fixtures in the development of the world—the laws of nature.

George: That being the case, Oracle, how long do you think America will remain a force in the world?

Oracle: So long as Rome remained Roman, just so long did Rome endure. So long as America bases her efforts upon the ideals of those who gave her birth, just so long will she stand as the America that we have known. It's history repeating herself. When nations grow fat they grow lazy and diseases are bred of indolence. Your America has become rich and powerful—and lazy; conscience lazy. Your people are now crying because they have met with days of famine after so many years of plenty, years of voluptuousness. They "can't take it," to use one of your slang phrases. They refuse to get down to the plane upon which they can begin to grow again. They are too much enamoured of ease and excesses, of pleasures and profits. They appeal to incantations and the witch-doctor stuff to lift them out of their slough of despond and they find the incantators ready and willing to apply their charms. Your people seek to replace the methods, the teachings and the ideals of those who laid the foundation of your great nation with importations of great experiments in an effort to short-cut their way back to ease and sufficiency. Your populace, like the Romans of old, seek to revel in the indiscriminate showering of corn and bread upon them by your government; corn and bread that they do not earn. They seek to continue luxuries in government that they cannot afford; they are content to be amused and idle away their time. That is foreign to American beginnings and if continued must lead to the same end that such gratuities have led to in the past. So long as America remains American, just so long will America endure.

George: What form of thinking would you say, Oracle, is detrimental to the maintenance of America as a nation.

Oracle: One of the greatest fallacies of modern thought is the pronouncement in your Declaration of Independence that "All men are born equal." What it's author meant and the principle that was accepted was that all men are born "politically" equal, a just and wise declaration. Had your people adhered to that principle and not neglected their political equality, all would have been well with you. But, your people grew politically lazy when faced with ease, luxury and increasing wealth; they neglected this God-given quality with the result that fakers have chiseled in and absorbed much of the power that primarily belonged to the people. These interlopers are preaching the doctrine of physical and mental equality instead of political equality. Man can regulate the things that he creates but he can't regulate those that are not of his making. You are being told that you can and therein lies one of the sources of much immature and unstable thinking.

George: How about individualism, Oracle? In your opinion can the individual be eliminated and the group substituted therefore?

Oracle: Can the atom be separated from the mass and the mass remain? Can the wolf be separated from the pack and the pack remain? Does not the law of the jungle say that the **strength** of the pack is the **wolf**? Not only the strength but the degree of activity. Nations grow while vigorous individuals constitute their make-up; nations die when individuals merge their individuality with the mass. Because of his individual nature man exhibits great inhumanity to his fellow man but, balancing the evils of one with those of the other, the existence of vigorous, outstanding individualism is necessary to the well being of any nation.

George: Then, if I get you correctly, Oracle, you are skeptical about a condition coming to pass when man can exist in leisure and have the inventions of his brain serve him without effort on his part. In other words, that the objective a government should seek is so much comfort as will keep the individual active, both physically and mentally, as compared with a maximum of leisure and comfort.

Oracle: Your philosophers are not first that taught the doctrine of leisure and luxury, nor are your "brain trusters" the first to seek that objective. Your Bible answers that question when it says, "By the sweat of your brow shall you eat." Idleness is a source of disintegration. Sufficient leisure to allow a man to enjoy life commensurate with his ability to do so is a fine objective; idleness, sought after and allowed above that limit, is a source of decay. Idleness for the mass means wealth run riot; the loss of initiative and the numbing of all those natural attributes that prompt man to be and to do more. It is appropriately disposed of by the poet when he said:

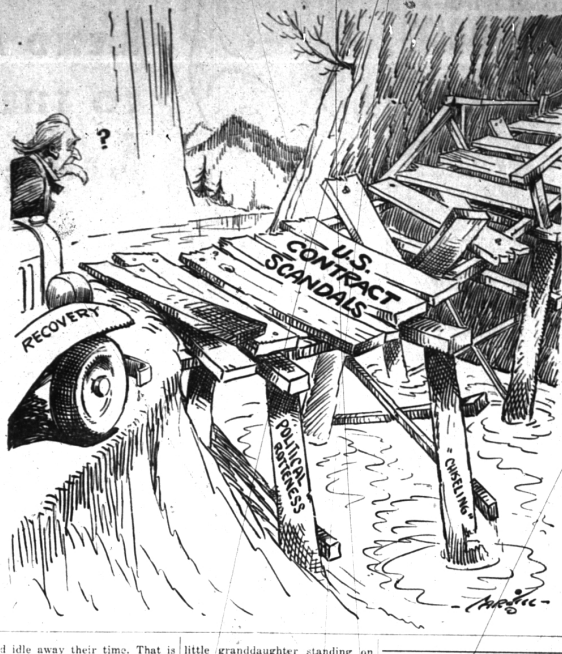
Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.
Princes and lords may flourish or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold, peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

* * *

Just then "Billy" came out of the trailer and in passing me, stepped on a sore toe that caused me to yell out in pain. And, behold! I opened my eyes and found my little granddaughter standing on my toe that has a corn on it, pounding on my stomach and crying out—

"Dinner is ready, wake up Grandpa, wake up."

CONTRACT BRIDGE!



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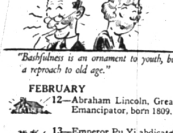

"Bashfulness is an ornament to youth, but a reproach to old age."

FEBRUARY

12—Abraham Lincoln, Great Emancipator, born 1809.

13—Emperor Pu Yi abdicates the Chinese throne, 1912.

14—Great gold discovery in Australia startles world, 1851.

15—Battleship Maine is sunk in Havana Harbor, 1898.

16—Hawaii is annexed to United States by treaty, 1893.

17—War of 1812 with England ended by treaty, 1815.

18—300th automobile registered in United States, 1895.

Jest For Fun

Complete Efficiency

Our office has twin decks where
filing clerks index
Our Inter-Cross-Referenced files,
Which fully extended and laid end-to-ended
Would stretch out for several miles.
Our plats and our surveys, our charts and our curveys
Are kept with meticulous care;
We never require 'em, but should we desire 'em
We know how to find 'em and where.

We've got a new shipment of office equipment
Reducing our labor by half,
(Though now that we've done it the people to run it
Will probably double our staff.)
Our time-clocks and daters and sales calculators
And bill computators are grand.
Our daily shop-record is red, blue and checkered;
Why, none of us quite understand.

We've copper and brass kits of holders and baskets,
We each have six separate phones
And buzzers that buzz in at least a dozen
Completely dissimilar tones.
We have each appliance of up-to-date science
With more waiting out in the hall;
And so, in conjunction with making them function,
We cannot do business at all!

—Berton Braley in "Life"

—o—

Famous Firms
High & Mighty

—o—

Reason Enough

"Why were there so few girl athletes in the gay 90's?"
"They were all bustle-bound."
—Arizona Kitty-Kat

—o—

Go Easy, Doc!

"I'm sorry," said the dentist, handling the case. "The trouble with this tooth is that the nerve is dying."
"Then, please," said the sufferer in the chair, "treat the dying with a little more respect."

—o—

Thicker After Dining

"I suppose the mosquitoes were thick out where you spent the summer."
"No, long and slim."

THE OTHER CHAP SAYS SOMETHING

THE ALLIED YOUTH

It seems that already all over this country there is a protest agitation on the part of young people against the booze traffic. These young people are organizing themselves into what they term the "Allied Youth." A large representation of some 7,000 members of this organization from Detroit waited upon our present legislature at the time they voted for repeal, but it was kept good and quiet! There are reported to be over half a million members in the country at the present time.

One interesting incident was when an irate father who had worked for the repeal called up the organization and insisted that the name of his boy should be stricken from the roster. The boy asked his dad if he didn't believe in personal liberty, and he continued his membership. A short time later, his brother appeared and asked for a membership card. The secretary thought he should not attempt to join because his father was so opposed. Why, the boy said, "my father sent me." When the father saw what the organization was doing for his lad, he wanted the other boy to become a member, and his mother said, "We have had our last cocktail!"

These are the young people of today, but the voters of tomorrow, and half a million of them will have to be reckoned with. Of course, by that time, there may be not only a half million but many half millions.—Frank D. Bryce in Grand Ledge Independent.

FAREWELL SWEETHEART

We see where Governor Comstock has put on the war paint and feathered bonnet and has set himself on the trail of pale face Kit Clardy, looking for Kit's scalp. Well, there's a lot of good republicans in Ionia county who won't be wearing black on their sleeves if the governor happens to be successful in his quest. Kit was one of those accidents of politics. Fresh out of law school at a time in life when most boys are getting their seat by the fireside ready, Fred Green gave him some work in his campaign headquarters and later saw that he had a place as dishwasher in the attorney general's department. Then along came the gallant and grandiloquent gentleman from Saginaw, who used to ask his wife every time he appointed a statehouse janitor, with his kitchen economy and rightaway Kit, as dishwasher, fitted into one of the best paying jobs in state employ, that put members of the utilities commission. For several years now he has had a fat salary, but when it came to contributing a thin dime to helping out the expenses of the Republican county committee, Kit has been about as shy as a young girl with her first beau. He wasn't even decent enough to make good a promise that he'd kick in with his share—he let the rest of the boys shoulder the load.—Fred D. Kiester in Ionia County News.

One Minute Pulpit

There shall be no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.—Proverbs 12:21.

Believe It Or Not.

At a recent election a returning officer was questioning a Chinaman who had been naturalized. "What's your name?" asked the officer. "Sneeze," said the Chinaman. "Is that your Chinese name?" "No," was the reply, "I had to translate it into English." "Then what is your name?" demanded the officer getting angry. "Ah Chew," said the oriental.—Boston Transcript.

FROM THE ECCENTRIC COLUMNS —of Long Ago

Bits Of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric—The Items That Make Up The Historical Background Of The Birmingham Of Today.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

Pedestrians had an ice time getting along the streets this week.

John Frickie, a recently disappeared Metamorafte, has turned up.

William Hunt has taken the milk traffic recently relinquished by Charles Starr, and now dispenses the lacteal fluid to numerous customers.

H. H. Chatfield of Troy is living on Mackinaw Trout, his son-in-law, Mr. J. S. Robinson, having expressed to Hiram a monster.

You can't have too much of a good thing, and here comes Kip Opdyke, happy as a clam at high tide, over the arrival of a great big boy on Sunday last.

The whist party at the residence of C. M. Raynale on Friday evening next has been postponed until Friday evening of next week on account of the old folks party at National Hall on the evening of the 15th.

Jack caught a pickerel in Woodpecker Lake on Friday, which weighed 19 and 3/4 pounds. The fish was captured with a pin-hook, and the veteran blacksmith informed us with tears of remorse in his azure tinted eyes, that the hook was irretrievably ruined.

Charles Adams has been drawing wood for Gilboe, the wood dealer of Pontiac, and to facilitate matters, had a pile of wood at the top of Bloomfield Center Hill to top out with. It was discovered that a prominent citizen high in official life at the Center, had taken a portion of the same. Mr. Gilboe called on his lordship (Mr. City Official) and secured pay for the absent wood, cash in full.

—o—

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Say, do you realize that village election is close at hand? We haven't heard any nominations made as yet, but we always were a little slow in this line, until we reached the home stretch, when things then liven up enough to show the outside world that we are still alive and awake. Trot out your candidates.

One of the reputable citizens of the Campbell's addition, roused the neighborhood the other morning by kicking against the blow of a hen house in his neighborhood and yelling bloody murder! It was some sort of a snap lock on the door and the wind blew it shut after the reputable citizen went in—and there he was—'locked in the stable with the sheep!" Oh dear! Dear! we forgot to say it was his own hen house.

A club is being formed of those citizens who have lived 50 years in Birmingham. Are you eligible? If so hand in your name or send it to F. Blakeslee and await the result. If enough interest manifests itself, there will be doings in the near future.

Mrs. F. J. Warner and Miss Ruth Davidson had two days of fine visiting in Pontiac and Detroit last Saturday and Sunday, while F. J. stayed home like a little man and ran things in his able manner.

Mrs. Edgar A. Parks is entertaining the grippe for the third time this winter.

Did you ever see hail, snow and rain pack itself away as it did all day Sunday—Answer: "I never did."

—o—

FIVE YEARS AGO

A proposed budget for $403,570.22 for 1939 is in the hands of the Village Commission today following its presentation by Manager James W. Parry. Of this total, $331,444.22 would be raised by direct taxation. There is a credit of $72,126.

Voters of Birmingham at the elections to be held Mar. 11 face a second bond issue of $62,000 following action of the Village Commission in passing a preliminary resolution Monday night to place the matter of purchase of municipal buildings on the ballot.

Whether Oakland County will have a grand jury investigation into its public offices will be decided this week, it is expected by the three circuit judges who have the matter under advisement.

The Village Commission today stands on record as opposing the annexation to the City of Detroit and Wayne County of the Detroit southern part of Oakland County, including municipalities there.

An order for redrawn plans of the proposed addition to the Baynum School is in the hands of Fred D. Madison, Royal Oak architect, today following action of the Board of Education Monday night.

Approximately 800 persons are expected to attend the Father and Son banquets to be held in the churches of Birmingham at 6:30 P. M. tomorrow evening in connection with the nation-wide observance of the week.

ALL OF US

By Marshal Maslin

HUSBANDS ARE people who aren't much help to their wives. They have plenty of ideas, but rarely at the right time.

For example, when people are coming to dinner a wife never learns that it is useless to ask him: "What shall we have?" But she almost always asks him. He thinks a little and brightens up and says: "Well, we'll have a salad and a meat order and some kind of dessert," but he doesn't say what kind of meat or what kind of dessert. Like as not, he'll suggest chops or meat balls or corn on the cob or something else that no housewife ever thinks of serving to guests. . . . And, having suggested these dishes, he retires into himself and thinks he has been a great help to the hostess.

Marshal Maslin

And when she asks him, "Who'll we invite?" he's just as helpless. He never seems to understand that choosing your guests is also a high art. His idea is to invite a lot of people and then circulate around amongst them and make them feel at home. . . . He's deaf and blind to all those little nuances, shades and undercurrents that make or mar a party—and terribly self-confident about his ability to smooth everything over and make everybody happy. . . . And after everybody's gone home, he'll smile triumphantly and not know any better than his wife is a fool.

A husband is also one of those people who aren't much help before a holiday or a birthday. He thinks it's a simple matter to go shopping and see something and buy it and give it to somebody, and he's rather proud of his ability to select just the right thing. . . . But when his wife asks his advice, he hems and haws and makes some suggestion that is sillier than a powder puff in a snowstorm. And having done his share, he throws up his hands and tells her to use her own judgment.

* * *

I could go further and say much more, out of my own experience, but this ought to be enough to show you how wonderful women are and what strange creatures men are at times—and why women wonder how men ever get as far as they do in this world—being so illogical and scatter-brained and so frivolous and so childlike in their ways.

P. S.—As for me, I think chops are a good thing to serve and a lot of people make a nice party and a pair of stockings is always an acceptable gift.

WABEEK STATE BANK

Wabeek Bldg.

BIRMINGHAM, MICH.

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W. M. CORNELIUS — HENRY T. EWALD
FRANK COUZENS — GEO. B. JUDSON
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