



The Banquet Bore

I have heard in song and story of
the man behind the gun,
Of the man behind the plowshare
and the pen.

I have read of hero medals on the
field of battle won,
And of honors won by writing
deeds of men.

But I come to sing the praises of the
man who makes a hit
With the people who attend the
banquet spread—

Of the witty, clever talker who well
knows just when to quit,
And who quits before his auditors
are dead.

I have heard of martial heroes in
their panoplied array,
And I love to hear their praises
sweetly sung;

But I'd rather hail the hero of the
gustatory fray
Who can realize just when to stop
his tongue.

It is easy to go whooping up the
bullet-ridden slope
With your comrades all a-whoop-
ing by your side—

But it's hard to stop the speaker
who is full of lingual dope
And keeps pouring out his talk in
endless tide.

We have had the nervous fidgets on
occasions quite a score
When the endless talker over-
worked his jaws;

We have sat and dumbly suffered
while some double-winded bore
Talked and talked without a sign
of halt or pause.

We have seen the weary feasters
marching out in solid squads
To escape the turgid flow of "elo-
quence";

But we've always had to suffer from
the bore's linguistic wads
That were merely endless words
sans rhyme or sense.

Here's a health to banquet speakers
who are wise on when to cease,
And who quit when they have
nothing more to say;

But the weary, dreary spouter—may
he know no rest or peace
Till he comes to face the final
judgment day.

Then may he get nought but justice
—and this sentence I'd impose
On the endless banquet talker's
bullethead:

"Through the ages you must listen
to your drivel as it flows
From the redhot phonographs
around you spread."

"Easy Marks"

After traveling around quite a bit
in this Vale of Tears—as the pess-
imists call it—the Architect has
reached this conclusion on one ques-
tion: If he wanted to sell gold
bricks he wouldn't tackle the Amer-
ican farmer, but would tie himself
to some metropolitan city and select
his victims from among the wise
guys of the city. Just how easy
these city folk are is illustrated by
a little story—and a true one—about
the Architect's friend, Judge R. E.
Culver, of St. Joseph, Mo.

Judge Culver is one of the big
lawyers of Missouri, the attorney for
several big corporations, including a
railroad or two, and a man who has
traveled extensively. As Judge Cul-
ver tells the story himself it must,
of course, be true.

"I've read of bunco steerers and
all that sort of thing," remarked the
judge to a bevy of friends, "and I

thought myself wise to all their
curves. But a few months ago I had
some business in Sioux City, and in
that Iowa burg I fell for the bunco
game. After concluding my business
I went to the depot to catch my train
and a few minutes before train time
a bright-looking young man rushed
up and said:

"How are you judge! Going
back to St. Joe?"

"I told him I was.

"I represent Wheeler & Motter
down there," said the young man,
'and I want to borrow your ticket a
few minutes.'

"I asked him what he wanted it
for and he told me.

"The baggageman here has it in
for me and is trying to hold me up
for a lot of excess baggage that I
shouldn't have to pay. It's a skin
game and I think he is trying to
work a hold-out. But anyhow I'd
just like to have the ticket for a
minute or two.'

"As he was a man from home I
thought I'd help him out this once,
so I handed over my ticket.

"I'll hand it back before your
train is ready to start," said the
young fellow, and off he went to
check his baggage.

"I waited and waited, but he
didn't come back. My train was
about ready to go, and still no trav-
eling representative of Wheeler &
Motter. I tried to get past the gates,
but the gentleman wouldn't permit
it until I showed him a ticket—and
I had no ticket. Finally I thought
of an annual I carried over a certain
western railroad, being its attorney
here, and I got past the gate by
showing it. I caught my train just
as it was pulling out, but that is all
I ever did catch. I never caught
that young man, nor did I ever catch
any trace of the ticket. It was use-
less to try and get the ticket, of
course, for there was no way of trac-
ing it, and so I had to charge it up
to profit and loss. But I can no
longer say that I have never been
the victim of the bunco man."

And when they can land such
clever ones as Judge Culver, what's
the use of wandering over the coun-
try roads to find 'em? The Archi-
tect would take his chances in the
big towns if he went out looking for
a gold brick market.

A Friendly Letter

This department makes no apology
for printing the following letter,
which is dated at Little Rock, Ar-
kansas, and addressed to "The Man
With the Happy Habit," care The
Commoner:

"Will you allow an Arkansan to
intrude just a moment? I want to
tell you how I enjoyed your article
on going back to your boyhood home.
It really was the best ever. I once
had a home of that sort, and like
several other great men, I was once
a boy, having been born in a little
log cabin. That's about the only
way I resemble great people. Am
not so old, either, but I have been
away from home a long time, having
had to dig for myself since I was
sixteen years old. Have a little home
of my own, a good wife and a fine
boy. I prize these three, and they
are the only things I have which I
would not part with—except my rep-
utation. I have been mixed up in
politics a little for several years, and
at times when I was worried and
busy I wish for the ol' swimmin'
hole and the scenes of my childhood,

and for the pies like mother used
to make. Your article took me back
in fancy to the time when I told
mother good-bye and set out to make
my fortune—which I have yet to
make. I was a boy again while I
read of the good time you had that
one day, and I envied you. Wishing
you many more days of that sort,
and hoping you will drop in and see
an old 'print' if you are ever down
this way, I remain with regards,
yours very truly,

"EARLE W. HODGES."

A card enclosed with this letter—
the card bearing the little old
"joker" that we union printers love
so well—announces that the writer
thereof is a candidate for the demo-
cratic nomination to a certain state
office in Arkansas. We are not ac-
quainted with the political situation
in Arkansas, but up here in Nebras-
ka there is one man who has a favor-
ite candidate for the office which the
writer of the above letter aspires to.
You have one guess.

Correct—the writer of that cheer-
ful and complimentary letter. Here's
hoping, Brother Print.

Dodging

The United States senator was met
at the train by a delegation, ready
to escort him to the Chautauqua
grounds. He was once more at his
home, and the people wanted to hear
him talk.

For weeks they had been watching
the tariff debate, and trying at the
same time to locate with exactness
their senator's position.

Naturally they were expecting to
hear him expound his position.

Thousands gathered in the great
pavillion to hear him.

Slowly and with befitting dignity
the senator arose, buttoned his
Prince Albert coat with impressive
slowness, thrust his right hand into
his bosom and cleared his throat.

Breathless, the great audience
waited for the words of wisdom
concerning the one great question that
had to do with the bread and butter
problem.

Then the senator proceeded to
speak for two or three hours upon
the undesirability of government
ownership.

Yet there are those who object to
the election of United States sena-
tors by direct vote of the people.

Strange Fact

Colonel Samuel Stone, a prominent
business man of St. Joseph, told the
Architect a little story the other day,
and the story is worth repeating be-
cause it contains food for thought.

"I was stopped on the street the
other day," remarked Colonel Stone,
"by a woebegone individual who
asked for a dime to get something
to eat.

"Why don't you tell the truth?"
I asked. "Why not say you want
to get a drink of booze?"

"I'm telling you the truth," de-
clared the hobo. "I don't have to
ask for money to get booze. A fel-
low can always get a slug of whisky,
but it's mighty hard sometimes to
get a meal."

"Do you know," concluded Colonel
Stone, "I've thought about that a
whole lot—easy to get the stuff that
hurts a man, and hard to get the
grub that makes a man."

Amended

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the
speaker of the occasion, "with your
permission I shall now proceed to
discuss the tariff."

"Hi, there!" shouted a victim in
the rear. I move to amend by strik-
ing off the first three letters of the
word 'discuss!'"

The amendment carried with a
whoop.

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