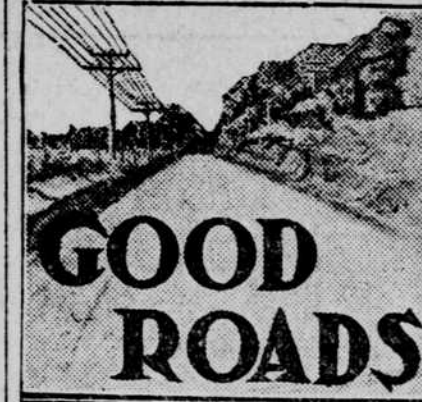


The SABLE LORCHA

By HORACE HAZELTINE

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GOOD ROADS

UNITED STATES LAGS

Way Behind in Matter of Improved Highways.

Of 2,200,000 Miles in This Country Less Than 200,000 Are Up to Date—\$250,000,000 Is the Annual Loss to People.

What is the use of rural free delivery mail routes and the parcel post system if there is to be no improvement of the public roads for the economic delivery of parcels and mails? According to a bulletin issued by the office of public roads, there were in the United States in 1909, 2,199,645 miles of public roads, and the total mileage of improved public roads was only 190,476. Yet we boast that the United States is a highly civilized country and make faces at the effete countries of the old world, in some of the most decadent of which, as we are accustomed to call them, the people know where they are going when they start, and have some idea of when they will get there and what it will cost them to make the journey. There is a good deal of humbug in the claims we make for ourselves, particularly when it comes to practical things, although we are willing to admit without argument that we are the most practical people in the world.

Recently what is called the second National Good Roads Federal Aid convention was in session in Washington. The place of meeting could not have been better selected; the time could not have been more inauspicious. Nobody was thinking about good roads, except the nearest cut to the White House and the offices waiting for distribution. It was announced in the official program of the meet, which was called by the American Automobile association, that "the distinct purpose of this gathering is to create a concrete plan which shall logically involve our national government in the highways progress of the country."

That is a fine purpose; but with the old ones going out in shreds and the new ones coming in without any special purpose or any purpose they have been formulated clearly, this was hardly the time for the association to make a very deep impression upon the legislative and disposing mind. For two days the convention discussed good roads in a most intelligent way and a mass of valuable information was obtained from expert testimony, foreign and domestic, that would lose much of its force if it should be suffered to "perish with the using" or the speaking. The main contention of the association is that it is the duty of the federal government to supplement state and county systems with a plan of national roads connecting all parts of the country. That is a most ambitious project, but none too ambitious for a country so big as this. There are something like 3,000 counties in the United States and it is well within the mark to say that in not one-half of these counties is there anything like what could be called by the utmost stretch of courtesy a road "system." The official figures prove this without argument.

The ratio of good roads to bad roads is as 199,000 is to 2,000,000, and, as Mr. Dooley would say, "there ye are." But it is as certain as taxes that good roads are coming. The idea is taking hold of the public imagination and will soon make its way into the public pocketbook. It costs from five to ten cents, according to the classification, to haul a ton of freight by the much abused railroads; a hundred miles or so; it costs about twenty-three cents a mile to haul a ton of almost any sort of freight over most of the public highways in this country, and these highways are in the daily use of the people in their most intimate and necessary business. It has been estimated that bad roads cost the people of the United States not less than \$250,000,000 a year.

Cost of Transportation.

It costs the American farmer 25 cents a ton per mile on an average to haul his produce to market or to the railroad station. In England, France and Germany hauling costs from 7.7 to 13 cents per ton mile. The difference is due mainly to the improved roads in Europe.

Keep People in Country.

Good roads will keep people in the country and will bring city people to the fresh air.

To Town by Telephone.

Did you ever hear this? The roads were so bad that the only way to haul get to town was by telephone.

Increase Morality.

Good roads will increase health, happiness, education, religion and morality.

Decrease Profanity.

Good roads will decrease profanity, discouragement, back taxes, sheriff's sales, sour grapes and grouches.

Good Trade Mark.

Improved roads are a good trade mark for any community.

Invoke a Blessing.

Good roads invoke a blessing upon any people who build them.

Horse Knows.

If you want to know if good roads are a good thing, ask a horse.

Prosperity and Profanity.

Good roads promote prosperity; bad roads provoke profanity.

Does Backache Worry You?

Many who suffer with backache and weak kidneys are unnaturally irritable and fretful. Bad kidneys fail to eliminate all the uric acid from the system, keeping you "on edge" and causing rheumatic, neuralgia pains.

When your back aches, and you notice signs of bladder irregularities, suspect your kidneys and begin using Doan's Kidney Pills, the best recommended special kidney remedy.

Get Doan's at Any Store, 50c a Box

DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS

FOSTER-MILBURN CO., Buffalo, New York

SPECIAL TO WOMEN

Do you realize the fact that thousands of women are now using

Paxtine

A Soluble Antiseptic Powder

as a remedy for mucous membrane affections, such as sore throat, nasal or pelvic catarrh, inflammation or ulceration, caused by female ill health. Women who have been cured say "it is worth its weight in gold." Dissolve in water and apply locally. For ten years the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co. has recommended Paxtine in their private correspondence with women.

For all hygienic and toilet uses it has no equal. Only 50c a large box at Druggists or sent postpaid on receipt of price. The Paxton Toilet Co., Boston, Mass.

Any way, the sign of old age is never a forgery.

Red Cross Ball Blue gives double value for your money, goes twice as far as any other. Ask your grocer. Adv.

The two most important needs in a woman's life seem to be love and money.

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for Children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic. 25c a bottle.

A soft sweater may turn away wrath, but it saves a lot of useless talk.

Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets first put up 40 years ago. They regulate and invigorate stomach, liver and bowels. Sugar-coated tiny granules. Adv.

The old fashioned mother and her slipper have qualified many a man for the presidential chair—even if he didn't land.

Women who spend most of their time trying to improve their complexions never think of the old-fashioned method of steaming it over a washbub.

Both True.

"I heard quite a paradoxical remark the other day."

"What was it?"

"That though there is no excuse for crime, there is generally a warrant for it."

A Negative Merit.

She—Have you any strawberries? Dealer—Yes'm. Here they are, a quarter a box.

She—Goodness! They're miserable looking, and so green.

Dealer—I know, mum, but there ain't enough in a box to do you any harm.

Alarmed for His Mother.

Little Harry, hanging about the kitchen, saw a stuffed fowl sewed up before roasting. He was much impressed by the sight. A few nights later his mother, hastily dressing to go out, found that a new frock had been sent home without the proper allowance of hooks and eyes. Summoning aid, her sister basted the frock together up the back.

"Grandma," said Harry, seeking the source of perennial sympathy and comprehension, "come and see what auntie's doing to mamma. I think she's going to roast her, for she's sewing her all up."

Everybody From Kid To Grandad Likes Post Toasties

Thin, crisp bits of white Indian Corn, cooked to perfection and toasted to a delicate brown without the touch of human hand.

You get them in the sealed package

Ready to Eat

A dish of Post Toasties for breakfast and lunch, with thick cream or rich fruit juice, is a dish that epicureans might chortle over.

Nourishing, economical, delicious, "more-ish."

SYNOPSIS.

Robert Cameron, capitalist, consults Philip Clyde, newspaper publisher, regarding anonymous threatening letters he has received. The first promises a sample of the writer's power on a certain day. On that day the head is mysteriously cut from a portrait of Cameron while the latter is in the room. Clyde has a theory that the portrait was cut while the room was unoccupied and the head later removed by means of a string, unfastened by Cameron. A young woman, Cameron's niece, with whom Clyde is in love, finds the head of Cameron's portrait nailed to a tree where it had been placed. Clyde tells her that the artist who painted the portrait had borrowed a rifle from Cameron's lodgekeeper. Clyde makes an excuse to call on Murphy and is repulsed. He pretends to be investigating alleged infractions of the game laws and speaks of finding the bowl of an opium pipe under the tree where Cameron's portrait was found. The Chinese boy is found dead next morning. While visiting Cameron in his dressing room a Nell Grayson mirror is mysteriously shattered. Cameron becomes seriously ill as a result of the shock. The threatening letters mysteriously on Cameron's sick bed. It makes direct threats against the life of Cameron. Clyde tells the doctor that Cameron is empty. He tells Evelyn everything and plans to take Cameron on a yacht trip. The yacht is hijacked by a man drifting helplessly in a boat. He gives the name of Johnson. Cameron disappears from the yacht while Johnson is turned. A fruitless search is made for a motor boat seen by the captain just before Cameron disappeared. Johnson is allowed to go after being closely questioned. Evelyn takes the letters to an expert in Chinese literature, who pronounces them of Chinese origin. Clyde seeks assistance from a Chinese fellow college student, who recommends him to Yip Sing, a prominent Chinaman in New York. The latter promises to seek information of Cameron among his countrymen. Among Cameron's letters is found one from one Addison, who speaks of seeing Cameron in Pekin. Cameron is subsequently declared to Clyde that he had never been in China. Clyde calls on Dr. Addison. He seems that Addison is not a doctor, but at one time intimate friends, had a falling out over Cameron's denial of having been seen in Pekin by Johnson. Clyde goes to meet Yip Sing, sees Johnson, attempts to follow him, falls into a basement, sprains his ankle and becomes unconscious. Clyde is found by Miss Clement, a missionary among the Chinese. He is sick several days as a result of inhaling charcoal fumes. Evelyn tells Clyde of a peculiarly active anesthetic which renders a person temporarily unconscious. Murphy is discovered to have mysterious relations with the Chinese. Miss Clement promises to get information about Cameron. Slump in Crystal Consolidated, of which Cameron is the head, is caused by rumor of Cameron's death. Cameron is found on Fifth avenue in a dazed and unaccounted condition and takes him home. Cameron awakes from a stupor and speaks in a strange tongue. He gives orders to an imaginary crew in Chinese. Evelyn declares the man is not her uncle. Evelyn and Clyde call on Miss Clement for information. She finds that the Chinaman who was to give him his job was murdered. Miss Clement gives Clyde a note which he reads after he leaves the mission and then destroys it. It tells of the abduction of a white man by the Chinese who shipped him back to China. The man is accused of the crime of the "Sable Lorcha" in which 97 Chinamen were deliberately sent to their death by one Donald McNish, whom they declare is not a doctor. Evelyn declares that Cameron has a tattoo mark. The nurse is called in and describes a tattoo mark on his patient's arm. Clyde attempts to investigate and find the patient attempting to hide a letter. It is addressed to Donald McNish.

CHAPTER XXV.

Another Problem Crops Up.

There are, I dare say, those who will not hesitate to charge me with an unpardonable lack of perception. "Even from your own telling," they will probably declare, "we realized from the first that the creature you discovered at two in the morning, supporting himself by means of a Fifth avenue area railing, was not Robert Cameron, but his physical counterpart, and a not very deceptive counterpart at that."

I shall not dispute the justice of the criticism. As I look back at it all now, I sometimes wonder, myself, how I could have been so blind, so credulous. And yet there is something to be said on the other side, too. An able advocate, I believe, might make out a fairly strong case for me if I were disposed to defend myself; which, as it happens, I am not, since the verdict can make no possible difference either to you or to me, and would only delay the culmination of our narrative.

Nevertheless I must tell that for some minutes after reading the letter which had so opportunely fallen into my hands I stood at the foot of the bed, and in the glare of the blazing electric, studied with keenest scrutiny the face which had so deceived me.

In general contour and individual feature the likeness to Cameron was monstrous in its fidelity. The same rugged power, inherited from Scottish forbears, was traceable in every lineament. But there the similarity ended. The face I gazed upon lacked illumination. Character, so strongly indicated in the other, was from this totally absent. In its place was an admixture of craft and brutality, so palpable now—so clearly, unmistakably evident—that I marvelled at my former delusion.

grew hazy, too, as I read the fond, quaintly couched phrases of endearment, penned half a year back in Dundee, by this God-fearing old Scotchman, to that infamous, blood-stained reprobate, who, to her, was still her "ain bonnie bairn."

It all came out, eventually, that McNish had traveled the world over in the sixteen years intervening since the coolie massacre, employing a score or more of aliases and so studiously avoiding the name by which he had then been known, as to have almost forgotten it, probably, himself, until, yielding to the call of home, he had at some early period of the last twelve-month returned for a brief visit to his native town and his septuagenarian mother.

It was then, most likely, that he gave to her the address of the New York hotel. Fate influenced the mother to write, and Fate sent the son there six months later to get the letter, and so carry upon his person the confirmatory evidence of his identity, just at the time when it would prove fatal.

"How did it happen," I have been asked, "that you didn't examine immediately the clothes that the supposed Cameron wore, when you found him?"

In view of subsequent events it is very easy to see what an important bearing such an examination would have had. But at the time, there was no one who thought of it. Our chief purpose then was to get the injured man to bed, and to secure a physician and nurse to minister to his recovery. If he had been found dead, then, of course, we should have gleaned what information we could from his pockets.

But we daily expected him to be able to tell his own story, and in the anxiety and confusion of the moment the possible pregnancy of the disclosures that lurked in his apparel was entirely lost sight of.

When we did make the examination, on the morning following the episode of the letter, it was to discover that the suit and overcoat worn by McNish were of Scotch manufacture, having been made in Dundee, according to sewn-in labels, early in the current year.

The contents of the pockets were not significant. The letter he had been so anxious to secure and destroy was the only letter, apparently, he had carried. There was a cheque-book on a Chicago bank, and there was a wallet containing a small sum of money in bills, and a few business cards of importing houses, which we took to indicate that the possessor was still desultorily engaged in trade, or some species of smuggling, with the Malay states and the Straits settlements as his field, since most of the cards made reference to goods of such origin.

That morning, which succeeded the night of exciting events already detailed, was crowded with another succession of happenings scarcely less sensational.

At seven o'clock, O'Hara, in obedience to my instructions came to my room in the Loyalton, rousing me out of a heavy sleep; for I had not got to bed until four, and then had lain awake with teeming brain until after five. I received him in bath robe and moles, sitting on the bedside, and slipping coffee, while he, perched on a low, brass-bound clothes chest, poured forth his story.

"Sleep!" he echoed, when I had made my apologies. "I haven't had a wink, myself. I've been with the boys all night doing as pretty a round-up as you ever see. We've got the bunch right this time, Mr. Clyde, and there'll be a clearin' out down there in Chinatown such as hasn't been known since the Chinks discovered Doyers street."

"Yes," I said, encouragingly.

"It's another war of the tongs," he went on. "They have 'em periodically, you know, and there's always a few of the moon-faced boys snuffed out, which ain't much loss now. But this time they interfered, you see, with you and Miss Grayson, and they beat up that driver of our buzz-carriage something fierce; and the Commissioner's issued orders to put the whole yellow population on the pan if necessary to get the ones that is responsible."

"Were any arrests made?" I inquired.

O'Hara smiled. "Were any arrests made?" he repeated in a tone that indicated supreme pity for my ignorance. "Why, we took 'em in by the whole sale. We lowered the net and dragged it and you ought to see what come up. There was one fellow, a skinny old geezer half-breed, neither Chink nor white man, but a slimy mixture of all that's bad in the two. We've had him on the griddle all night. Talk about the third degree! He got it good, and he's made enough admissions already to send him straight to the chair."

"And Murphy?" I suggested.

"He's a tough one, that lad! When they'd brought him to, they figured they'd get him to convict himself in the same old way. But there was nothin' doing. He just shut his trap, and not a word would he answer one way or the other. But his turn'll come, all right. I've got it on him, Mr. Clyde. While I've been shadowin' him for the past month I've picked up a bunch of stuff that'll come in good. To be gin with, his name ain't Murphy. It's Pat Moran, and his mug's at headquarters."

"His mug?"

"Sure! In the Rogue's Gallery. And his record's there too. He's done time, already."

"For what?"

"For stabbin' a man in the back."

It requires no great mathematical ability to put two and two together. The result is always either four or twenty-two. So, in logic, the answer is

invariably either right or wrong. Murphy had stabbed a man in the back; McNish carried the scar of a knife wound under his shoulder blade. There were the two and two.

"What were the facts?" I asked, with kindled interest. "Whom did he stab? When? Where?"

"The bloke's name," O'Hara answered, after a moment's thumbing of his nose book, "was MacNichol—Douglas MacNichol. It was in Buffalo, in 1900."

"My putting together of names could hardly be a coincidence.

"Pat Moran served five years in Auburn," the detective added.

"You don't know what became of MacNichol—I mean MacNichol?"

"No."

"Nor any facts about the cause of the stabbing?"

"That's easy got," O'Hara informed me. "But it ain't in the record at headquarters. What is there, though, is that Moran had lived in Chinatown in Frisco, and was arrested there, and tried for smuggling opium, but was acquitted for lack of evidence."

For a moment I sipped my coffee in thoughtful silence.

"The skeleton guy knows Moran, all right," O'Hara broke in.

"You mean the half-breed?"

"Yes. He give that away."

"What does he call himself?"

"He's known in Chinatown as John Soy. He says he's a cook."

Once again I was busy with two and two. Unless all signs failed this John Soy and Peter Johnson and the Eurasian cook of the Sable Lorcha were a single entity.

"O'Hara," I said, finishing my coffee, and putting down the cup and saucer, "I have the key witness in this case. You and I together are going to take him with us and have him confront both Murphy and John Soy. I promise you the result will be interesting."

The detective looked his perplexity.

"Some one who knows them?" he asked.

"Unless I am very much mistaken," I answered, "it is some one who knows them both better than any other person in New York. Unless Heaven is just now engaged in constructing enigmas simply for the bewilderment of us mortals, the witness I have is the man whom Murphy stabbed in the back, in Buffalo, eight years ago."

But before I could carry out my plan there were several minor matters which claimed my attention. Ever since reading the note which Miss Clement placed in my hands I had been uneasy concerning her safety. To judge from O'Hara's report Chinatown had been in a ferment most of the night, and I feared lest the blame for the disturbance be visited upon the brave woman missionary and some measures of vengeance meted out to her.

For half an hour I tried unsuccessfully to reach her by telephone. The Mission did not answer. With my anxiety intensified by this repeated failure, I ordered my motor car around at once, and taking O'Hara with me, made the trip to Pell street in record time, despite obstructive trucks and other vehicles which were encountered.

Eager inquiry of none-too-eloquent neighbors eventually elicited the information that Miss Clement, alive and uninjured, had started at day-break, if not indeed before, to hunt up a brother of the murdered Ling Fo, in Long Island City.

Half an hour later, having stopped at Bellevue hospital on the way up town to inquire as to the condition of Eliot Lacoste, the injured chauffeur, and leave instructions that everything possible should be done for his comfort, I alighted from the car at the door of Dr. Massey's office on West Fifty-sixth street.

I trust I am not that type of man which, when guilty of error, delights to shift the responsibility to other shoulders. I had small excuse to make for myself in confronting McNish with Cameron, yet I confess I had much less for the family physician, who had been so easily deceived. Dr. Massey greeted me almost jovially, but checked himself as he observed the seriousness, the coolness even, of my manner.

"Our—our patient is not worse?" he questioned, taken aback.

"No, doctor," I answered, tempted to a grim humor, "that would be impossible, I fancy."

For a second he regarded me with frowning incomprehension.

"Our patient," I repeated with a sarcastic emphasis that could not be misunderstood, "long ago, I fancy, reached the limit of blackguardism."

The doctor's eyes widened, his lips parted and he stood aghast.

"But—but—I don't quite see," he stammered. "You have quarreled with Mr. Cameron? You have—"

"No, no," I returned, interrupting him. "Would to God I had him here to quarrel with. Miss Grayson was right. The man you have been using your skill upon is no more Robert Cameron than I am."

I hardly knew whether to be irritated or amused by that which followed. Dr. Massey threw back his head and roared with boisterous laughter.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! That's the richest kind of a joke, my dear fellow!" he exclaimed, as his mirth subsided. "Not Robert Cameron? Why, do you know, Mr. Clyde, how many years I have been his physician? No. Of course you don't. Ten years and over, and I know Cameron as I know myself."

"Then tell me," I said, irritation having its way, "why on earth he

CHAPTER XXV.

Enemies Face to Face.

As events shaped themselves the problem presented by Dr. Massey found a speedy solution. Had I been compelled to grapple with it unaided I am not yet sure what course I should have pursued. Of my own volition I must have hesitated to take a step which could not fall to throw suspicion—at least among the only partially informed—upon my absent and defenseless friend. But all choice in the matter was denied me.

I arranged with Dr. Massey that he should go unaccompanied to his patient's room, and, without so much as a hint that he was cognizant of what had transpired on the previous night, make whatever examination he deemed necessary to a definite conclusion.

In the meantime, having learned from Checkbeatty that Evelyn was in the breakfast room, I joined her there. Her curiosity had ripened by a night's suppression; and having dismissed the footman who was serving her, she at once demanded the fulfillment of my promise to tell her everything.

"It's another case where you have the right to say, 'I told you so,'" I began, as I took a chair next to her.

In her wide blue eyes I read that she divined my meaning.

"Yes," I went on, "the man upstairs is not your uncle. We have been nursing a viper, it seems, who promises to give us a deal of trouble before we are through with him."

There was no need for her to question me. Rapidly, succinctly, I told her the story I had learned from Yip Sing; told her, too, of the scene in the bedchamber, after I had left her on the previous night; and showed her the letter from McNish's poor old Scotch mother.

"There, there," I soothed, as in silence but with quivering lips and eyes overflowing, she started to read the tremblingly penned sentences a second time. "I'm sorry for the dear old creature, too, but—"

"Phillip," she interrupted me, her face and voice alike pleading, "let us send him back to her!"

"Send him back!" I repeated in amazement.

"Yes. We can, can't we? We don't have to give him up to those horrid Chinamen, do we? He's well enough to go, isn't he? Why can't we call a cab, give him enough money for his passage and send him, at once? There's a steamer sailing this morning, isn't there?"

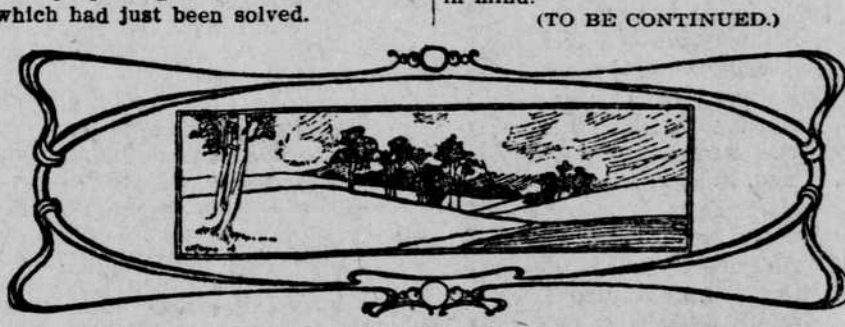
For just a moment I was on the point of yielding. Seldom has a villain had a more puissant advocate than had McNish in this enthusiastic, resolute girl, spurred to his salvation by the pathetic appeal of that maternal yearning which breathed from every line of the letter before her. The unselfish purity of her cause illumined and transfigured her. Her beauty was radiant.

"Answer me!" she insisted, impatient at my silence. "Isn't it possible? Isn't it really the very best way out of a difficulty? It will never do to admit that we have had that man here in mistake for Uncle Robert, you know."

"But there is something you have forgotten, my dear child," I objected, with all the mildness I could bestow upon the words. "In your wish to give joy to this poor old mother—and in that I am with you heart and soul—you have quite overlooked the fact that we are still with scarcely a scintilla of information concerning the present whereabouts of your uncle."

"Oh, no, I haven't," was her prompt rejoinder. "But I don't see what that has to do with it, except that it makes it all the more necessary to pretend that we still believe this McNish is he. How will sending McNish abroad hinder—?" And then she broke off, suddenly, as I had rather expected she would, knowing what a keen brain she had and how once she got a clear perspective on the situation, she must see again the very point she had suggested once herself, and which I had still in mind.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



Duck Rid Room of Flies

Management of Chicago Hotel Will in the Future Pin Its Faith to Domestic Bird.

The manager of a big Chicago hotel has found a very simple solution of the fly problem. It is a flock of ducks. The ordinary hotel perhaps has no particular accommodations for live ducks; but in this there is a fountain in the center of the approaches to the various dining rooms. The fountain has a large basin, and just by way of novelty the manager several months ago placed a few ducks in the water. They paddled around and enjoyed it, and the guests enjoyed seeing them. But, better still, the ducks also enjoyed the flies that attempted to enter the dining rooms and feast upon the good things therein. The flies—in Chicago, at least—fly low; and ducks, as any one who has ever seen them knows, are especially quick in catching insects. The consequence is, this particular hotel, once troubled with flies, now has practically none. And the ducks, once lean to verge of scrawliness, are fat and sleek.

The duck method of disposing of the fly nuisance cannot, of course, obtain in private households to any degree; but in this particular hostelry the ducks have caused the wire fly swatter and traps to be thrown into the ash heap.

Perhaps next year the enterprising manager will attach some sort of a meter to every duck, so that at the end of the season he can tell how many flies each busy fowl has disposed of with neatness and despatch.

One Way of Putting It.

Even the women admit that a certain Topeka baby is homely. But they put it diplomatically. They say it looks like its father.—Topeka Capital.