

STORY BY
WALLACE
IRWIN

The BOOSTERS' HONEYMOON

WHEN IS A HICK —?

ILLUSTRATION
NORMAN
ANTHONY

"MAPLE-HONEY-KID!" Brian Buro Blaney leaned from Pullman seat 25 and thus addressed himself to the somber orbs of light becomingly set in the features of the very new Mrs. Blaney, that lady being comfortably cushioned in Pullman seat 27.

"Sugar-boy-dear!" responded the previously matter-of-fact Betsy. Then, with a momentary lapse into sanity, she whispered: "Brian, the whole car is looking at us!"

Responsive to the warning, Brian made a sudden movement, and several handfuls of rice clattered to the floor from various parts of his clothing.

"Darn that god-speed stuff!" he grumbled. "The more I see of rice the worse I hate Japs."

"Sugar," she said, after a pause, "I wish you'd take that thing"—pointing to a bright blue button almost as big as a saucer and labeled "Boost for San Bruno"—"and put it in your pocket."

"Now, Candy-bag!" protested Brian, in a hurt tone, "we ain't ashamed of the home town, are we?"

"You bet we aren't!" agreed Betsy, warmly. "And that's why I think it's up to us not to make the home town ridiculous."

"Funny!" he said. "Those are the very words Obrey O'Malley said to me this morning."

"What words?"

"Don't make the home town ridiculous. Y' know, when the Boosters took us to the train, C. W. Ketchum pullin' my arm loose at the socket while kitchin Sid Eilditz poured 18 cents worth o' rice down my collar? Well, old Obrey O'Malley led me aside for a minute. Uncle Obe's got more sense in his upper right-hand eyelash than Ketchum can hire in his whole office force."

"Brian," says Obrey, "you're going to see N' York for the first time. It's a great big town full o' things a young man can slip up on and fall over. I hope you won't think me impertinent, but I want to give you a word of advice—don't be a hick."

"I say to O'Malley," Brian went on, "Uncle Obe, what can I do to conceal my hickory origin?"

"I'll give you a few Dont's for Hicks," says O'Malley. "Don't smoke a cigar with a band on it. Don't get up in street cars and offer a lady your seat. Don't let the barber shave the back of your neck. Don't talk politics with strangers. Don't wear tan shoes with buttons on 'em."

"(Furtively Betsy noted that her husband's shoes were of the kind described.)

"Don't drink Volstead hyphenated Manhattan cocktails. Don't be ashamed to walk over people's knees in the theatre. And don't offend the head waiter by trying to tip him in public. Those are a few rough rules which may keep you a while out of the Order of Straw along the Great White Graft," says Uncle Obe.

"O'Malley gave me this letter of introduction," Brian fished a large envelope from his inner pocket. "Said it was a real N' Yorker—a fella belonging to a Knickerbocker family so old it considers the Vanderbilts vulgar trades people."

"Now, you must present this letter as soon as we get to New York," said Betsy, in a slightly abashed tone.

Brian turned the envelope critically in his hand, reading the address at every conceivable angle.

"Mr. Dyckman Wynkoop, 13 1/2 Washington Square," he read aloud; then added: "That ain't a name; it's a label on an imported cheese."

Just the same, Brian was impressed and was discovered gazing disgustedly at his buttoned tan shoes at intervals during the trip.

THEY were amid the horrific grandeurs of the Royal Gorge, battling ground



McCosh was seen to rise rather feverishly, extend a loving hand to his victim, and stride forth into the unknown.

of Titans (according to prospectus), when an impertinent intrusion appeared in the person of G. Hunter McCosh. Slight-seeing passengers were assembled in the observation car, huddled around each window, to let no marvel pass.

"Just look at that!" said a resonant voice at their shoulders. "Just look at that!"

"Jaggy rocks fit for some race of demijohns—I gocha," said Brian, appreciatively.

"You may sing, young man," continued the eloquent stranger, "of the terrors of the boundless deep or the wonders of the tropic night—but look at those rocks. By ginger, ain't they great?"

"In the real estate business?" inquired Brian, affably.

"Well, no—not exactly."

"I thought by the way you went at us," continued the Little Booster, "that you were trying to sell us the Rocky mountains on the easy payment plan."

"Ah, youth!" rhapsodized the big one. "Youth will have its quip at the wisdom of age. Youth and love. I see you're a bridal couple. I hope, madam," turning a ravishing smile upon Betsy, "that you can spare your husband a moment."

Turning to Brian with a suspiciously glib motion of the thumb and forefinger. "Play cards, sir?"

"Not with you," announced Brian, looking the other coolly between the eyes.

"I trust I'm not making a nuisance of myself—"

"Not yet," replied Brian, turning for the first time in the direction of the scenery.

THE farther they rushed eastward, the more earnestly Brian hated his shoes as a recognized badge of Hickdom. He did not look up Mr. McCosh in Car 3, but that thoughtful gentleman made occasion to sit down next to Brian in the buffet when the latter was enjoying a solitary cigarette. They were approaching Chicago at the time, and McCosh sat paring his broad fingernails with a pearl-handled knife.

"Try one of my perfectos," he said

suddenly, offering an ostentatious roll of tin foil.

"Thanks; I never smoke," responded Brian, taking a fresh cigarette from his box.

"Say, you're a cagey kid, all right," laughed the big one, changing from the grandiloquent to the vernacular. His eyes slanted and his weather-beaten mouth came down at one corner. "What's your line?"

"I'm a fly-catcher."

"Haw-haw! You're a smart kid, anyhow. Now, look here. As an enterprising young business man from the West, launchin' out on life's voyage with a fair young helpmeet, and awaitin' alert and joyous to hear the welcome knock of Opportunity at your door—Opportunity, the goddess who knocks but once—you are unspooled, you are ambitious, too smart let the golden moment pass unheeded. Ever thought of investin' in mining stocks?"

"Show me," said Brian in a level tone. "As you see by my card"—he extended a square of pasteboard—"I am General Director of the Goodfellow and Surprise Gold Lode Company, Incorporated."

"Pshaw! It is as bad as that?"

Mr. McCosh's fat fingers deftly unfolded a bale of handsomely printed papers engraved in rich orange, the seal of Nevada at the head, an intricate, wavy border down the margins. He laid a compelling palm on Brian's knee.

"In six months from now they'll pay you twenty-five cents on the dollar—twenty-five per cent!"

"Honest," said Brian, carefully folding the stocks and handing them back; "you're the coarsest Wallingford make-up I've struck yet."

"How's that?" spluttered the big one. "Excuse me, while I take a good look at you. I thought they had all the old-style con men stuffed and under glass by this time. And to think of one of you whiskered dodos trying to panhandle me—with a line o' minin' stock stuff that was passed up by Adam and Eve. The face of the honest Mr. McCosh suddenly settled into tragic lines.

"If I'd 'a' known you was one of us," he began, sadly. He made the sign of Three Walnuts between his thumb and fingers. "If I'd known you was in our line o' goods, I'd never come that con on you. But, since you mention St. Jo, I'll put you wise to something. The Middle West circuit's worked dry. I had to borrow from the constable to get out of Emporia, and in Keokuk I was blackmailed poor by a Rube I tried the badger game on."

"So you're advanced on New York."

"That's the stuff! The only town in America where you can catch the hick off his nest with the golden eggs exposed. I got a cousin doin' well there on the old glass-ring game."

IT IS the conventional thing for the newcomer in New York to pause Aladdin-like, mind whirling, eyes blinking at the magic works of these djinns who have bewitched mankind. Shall he fly first to the Metropolitan Museum or shall it be the Metropolitan Tower? Shall he climb the Statue of Liberty or descend into the Subway? But Brian Buro Blaney, his feet set on Manhattan, was tortured by no such doubts. He called a taxi at the Grand Central station, and, after tucking his baggage and his Betsy safely inside, called commandingly to the chauffeur: "Beat it for the first shoe store on Fifth avenue."

They drew up before a plate glass window with masculine footwear discreetly displayed.

"None," he announced to the smiling clerk. "I don't want anything similar to what I got on. Gimme something like Vince Astor kicks around in."

They sold him a pair with tapering toes, flat soles, and unostentatious eyelets. They cost him \$18.

AFTER lunch, Brian complained of his new shoes pinching; but he bravely kept his footing within their resting soles, and plunged still further into the gulf of conventionality by changing to

a suit of quiet gray and an inoffensive necktie.

"Going far?" inquired Betsy sleepily from her couch.

"To 13 1/2 Washington Square," he said. "I'm going to present O'Malley's letter to Dyckman Wynkoop to see if he's cheese or human. Want to come along?"

"No, you little old big foolish; I'm not being introduced."

"Did you find him?" asked Betsy, who was waiting, with the patience of an experienced wife, to be hooked up in the back.

"Who? Dyckle Chickencoop? Nope. Say, Dyckle lives in a boy's size brick palace with a white door, and a brass knocker. When I banged the knob, out shoots a Woodrow Wilson effect in butters. 'Not to hum!' he says. When I called him Chaxley, he snatched my card away from me and slammed the door so quick he 'most pinched off my nose."

"Sugar Boy, he probably saw you were a hick? Yes. But how did he know? So I hired an open taxi and sallied forth to discover N' York."

"What did you see?"

"Saw the Woolworth building, a Jew cop arrestin' a drunken Armenian, the Brooklyn bridge, a fight, a Wall street shark, the Pennsylvania station, and Leon Erro tryin' to light a cigar on a windy corner."

THEY dined beneath golden cornices, beside roseate tapestries, eating from precious plate and draining goblets of brilliant crystal.

"Don't make any quick moves," Brian cautioned his wife, "because every time you do it starts a waiter this way, and that costs you \$5 extra."

The bill was \$19.

"Score three!" warbled Brian, keeping imaginary tab on his cuff. He led Betsy rather hastily toward the foyer. It was getting on toward 10 o'clock, and round the corner, glaring amid the internal glories of jumping gigantic electric images, stood the Cabaret de l'Obsterre, home of jazz.

"Let's twirl!" came Brian's enthusiastic voice in Betsy's ear, for the band had now struck up "We'll row, row, row, and many couples took the floor, every Jack to his Jill, every Bacchus to his Bacchante. By way of divertisement, a Princeton gladiator had arisen from a tableful of college boys, and was inviting the head waiter to put him out.

"Let's go!" pleaded Betsy, seizing Brian's arm.

"Stick around, kid," Brian urged. "We needn't be afraid of this dancin' stuff. All New York's doin' it."

"I bet half the men here are traveling salesmen from Duluth. Don't be a hick!" This was Betsy's quelling word.

"Speaking of hicks," whispered her husband, nudging her sharply, "look what's just come in!"

"Who is he?"

"A Rube I saw give his seat to a lady in the subway. He's hopeless!" For, even at the word, the newcomer—who wore buttoned tan shoes—was ordering a Manhattan Volstead hyphenated cocktail.

"He must be the King of the Hickeries," muttered Brian, becoming more and more concerned. "Ain't it pitiful!"

The object of Brian's commiseration called to him the head waiter and, in the presence of the whole room, handed him a \$5 bill. Then he lit a cigar and kept the band on.

"He's got every one of O'Malley's 'How to Tell a Hick' marks, except he don't shave his neck. Probably he's waitin' for the barber shop to open in the morning."

Down the aisle came a florid, familiar face. The head waiter pulled out a chair next the unprotected strag. And the person who occupied the seat, presenting a cordial palm to the helpless hick, was none other than G. Hunter McCosh, the superannuated bunco man of the D. & R. G.

Brian quickly forgot the charms of tango in the study of bunco as the elderly rascal laid his fat palm caressingly over the hand of the younger man, who was

neat and rather small, with oyster-colored eyes and a sallow mustache.

"No, my boy; you can't afford to thicken this," began McCosh, in the tone of thick gravy. "Take an old man's advice and—"

"The rest was lost in the musical racket.

"If we could only find a place to talk more quietly—"

"It is kinda noisy here," McCosh admitted. "Supposing you and me go over to Gotham grill—the details of this splendid proposition."

"Come on!" breathed Brian in Betsy's ear.

"Where?"

"To Gotham grill!"

"PRETTY work!" murmured Brian, as they sat at a table far out of earshot but well within view. The hypnotist was evidently imbuing his subject with enthusiasm, confidence, honest conviction, for the fat hands of Mr. McCosh were working busily in circles more complicated than any Futurist dream. And the dupe looked up with the expression of a tired child who hears a new fairy story and loves to believe it true.

The two figures at the distant table leaned back. Something was settled. The elder man brought forth a packet of papers folded lengthwise.

"McCosh was right," said Brian. "You can make the man from Keokuk do stunts in N' York he's never dreamt of in his home town."

"Maybe it's not so bad as you think," suggested Betsy.

"Didn't you see the orange-colored engravings on the paper? That's Goodfellow and Surprise bunk he's sellin' the hick—and look! Rube's pullin' his check book!"

Sure enough, the lamb was already reaching for McCosh's fountain pen. There was a moment of intense scribbling, during which McCosh bit a black cigar and forgot to light it. Finally a pink leaf from the check book fluttered in his palm, and he handled it like a rare orchid. An instant later McCosh was seen to rise rather feverishly, button his coat over the new-made check, and stride forth into the unknown. Brian jumped from his chair.

"You're not going to—"

"You bet I am! As a stranger in town, I ain't a-goin' to sit here and see my helpless brother skun bright red on Broadway."

THE young man sat reading an orange-printed sheet of Goodfellow and Surprise raptuously, even as the Moslem scans the Koran, when Brian accosted him.

"Excuse me!" said the Little Booster. "I don't know what part of the Woolly West you come from, but you'll take back less wool than you brought with you."

"Meaning?" inquired the youth, adjusting his eyeglasses.

"Do you know who that bunk is who just—"

"That 'bunk,' as you roughly term him," said the young man in a modulated

barytone, "is Mr. Hotchkiss, well known in the Goodfellow and—"

"His name was McCosh when I met him. Now, listen to mother. There ain't any time to feed the chickens, I'm telling you. You've just fallen for a man who's a professional walnut-pusher, a dot-and-carry card-holder, a life member of the Gold Brick Layers' union—in plain Californian, a bunco man. Because you left your brains the other side of the Ohio river, I'll wise you. You've been bilked, trimmed—"

"But he came to New York with the highest references."

"Splash! I've a good mind to touch you for a thousand myself. How much was in that check you just signed?"

"Forty-five hundred and fifty."

"Get your bank the first thing in the morning and stop it."

"Lord!" groaned the callow one. "It's on the Night and Day bank!"

"Telephone—hot foot, kid!"

The sedate grillroom was enlivened by the sight of a red-headed enthusiast dragging a dazzled youth across two chairs toward the telephone booth. A few minutes later Betsy, to her relief, beheld her husband returning calmly with the new-found hick.

"Now, Marcus," Brian was saying, "we've got to kite it over to the Night and Day and identify you. Friend wife and I'll tag along to see that the rest of your wad don't jump out of the window."

When he emerged from the sleepless portals of the Night and Day, there were tears in the hick's pale orbs, suggestive of sea food.

"They fixed it—but it hurts me to think I've been betrayed by a friend," he sobbed.

"That's what they all say," chirped Brian, brightly. "Now, Mrs. Bride and I'll escort you past the bogies to your hotel."

The young man gave a number to the chauffeur.

The taxi stopped before a brick house with a white door.

"You've pulled me out of an awful hole, old man," said the hick, as he stepped out. "I'd like to see more of you. Here's my card."

The hick's face stared into the taxi door, pale and anxious. Brian, as he accepted the card, felt a thrill of remorse. Perhaps he had been a bit rough in his language to this outsider, who, after all, would learn his New York in time. Under the flickering corner light Brian held the card, spelling each letter carefully. Then he put it in his pocket. Already the hick was disappearing up the front steps.

"Say!" said Brian, calling after him, and again looking at the name on the card. "I got a letter of introduction to you."

And, as the hick returned, the Little Booster brought forth O'Malley's envelope addressed to Mr. Dyckman Wynkoop, 13 1/2 Washington Square.

"I thought I might as well hand it to you now, seein' I'm around your way."

(Copyright. All rights reserved. Printed by arrangement with Metropolitan Newspaper Service, New York.)

THE young man sat reading an orange-printed sheet of Goodfellow and Surprise raptuously, even as the Moslem scans the Koran, when Brian accosted him.

"Excuse me!" said the Little Booster. "I don't know what part of the Woolly West you come from, but you'll take back less wool than you brought with you."

"Meaning?" inquired the youth, adjusting his eyeglasses.

"Do you know who that bunk is who just—"

"That 'bunk,' as you roughly term him," said the young man in a modulated

neat and rather small, with oyster-colored eyes and a sallow mustache.

"No, my boy; you can't afford to thicken this," began McCosh, in the tone of thick gravy. "Take an old man's advice and—"

"The rest was lost in the musical racket.

"If we could only find a place to talk more quietly—"

"It is kinda noisy here," McCosh admitted. "Supposing you and me go over to Gotham grill—the details of this splendid proposition."

"Come on!" breathed Brian in Betsy's ear.

"Where?"

"To Gotham grill!"

"PRETTY work!" murmured Brian, as they sat at a table far out of earshot but well within view. The hypnotist was evidently imbuing his subject with enthusiasm, confidence, honest conviction, for the fat hands of Mr. McCosh were working busily in circles more complicated than any Futurist dream. And the dupe looked up with the expression of a tired child who hears a new fairy story and loves to believe it true.

The two figures at the distant table leaned back. Something was settled. The elder man brought forth a packet of papers folded lengthwise.

"McCosh was right," said Brian. "You can make the man from Keokuk do stunts in N' York he's never dreamt of in his home town."

"Maybe it's not so bad as you think," suggested Betsy.

"Didn't you see the orange-colored engravings on the paper? That's Goodfellow and Surprise bunk he's sellin' the hick—and look! Rube's pullin' his check book!"

Sure enough, the lamb was already reaching for McCosh's fountain pen. There was a moment of intense scribbling, during which McCosh bit a black cigar and forgot to light it. Finally a pink leaf from the check book fluttered in his palm, and he handled it like a rare orchid. An instant later McCosh was seen to rise rather feverishly, button his coat over the new-made check, and stride forth into the unknown. Brian jumped from his chair.

"You're not going to—"

"You bet I am! As a stranger in town, I ain't a-goin' to sit here and see my helpless brother skun bright red on Broadway."

THE young man sat reading an orange-printed sheet of Goodfellow and Surprise raptuously, even as the Moslem scans the Koran, when Brian accosted him.

"Excuse me!" said the Little Booster. "I don't know what part of the Woolly West you come from, but you'll take back less wool than you brought with you."

"Meaning?" inquired the youth, adjusting his eyeglasses.

"Do you know who that bunk is who just—"

"That 'bunk,' as you roughly term him," said the young man in a modulated

TRU-BLU
Graham's

Delicious!
Nutritious!

"For Goodness Sake"
that's the one big reason why TRU-BLU GRAHAM'S are demanded by all relishing the Great American Cracker! They have the FLAVOR, the CRISPNESS, the GOODNESS that delight both child and grownup. NOW **15¢**

NEXT SUNDAY --- "AH, MOON OF MY DELIGHT" BY ALICE GARLAND --- NEXT SUNDAY