



MONEY TO BURN
BY
PETER B. KYNE
W.N.U. SERVICE

CHAPTER VI

MEANWHILE Elmer Clarke's final period of service at the Smoke Shoppe was drawing to a close. During that two weeks one incident alone upthrust itself in Elmer's consciousness as a pleasant variation from the orderly procession of morning, noon and night.

On the third day following the great news, the editor of the Clarion fathered a thought truly bucolic. Remorse for the light manner in which he had once offended Elmer Clarke in his local brevities column now overtook him. What if Elmer should take a notion to back some smart metropolitan Journalist in a new Pilarcitos paper and run the Clarion out of business!

Horrible! A vacancy occurring on the board of trustees of the Union high school at this time, the Clarion came out with an editorial blast in bold brevity with a three-column head, suggesting the election to the board of that sterling and distinguished citizen, Elmer Butterworth Clarke. The proponents of another candidate to the office, which was without salary, promptly pointed out the inadvisability of shattering an ancient and well-established custom of electing to the school board only those men and women who had demonstrated their fitness to superintend the education of the young by providing the community with young to educate.

In an indefinite and roundabout way Elmer sensed a covert slam in this. At any rate it aroused all of his new-born antagonism to provincialism. Egged on by his friends, he decided to demonstrate to Pilarcitos that a young man of heart as truly as did his opponent, Henry Tichenor, who was the father of twelve children. Indeed, in the midst of her subtle banishments she suddenly conceived the idea of making Elmer the leading citizen of the county, if not of the state.

Nellie was delighted, because this evidenced on Elmer's part a subconscious decision to continue to live in Pilarcitos and grow up with the town. She advised him to conduct a furious campaign against the mossbacks of the community, to prove that he had its interests at heart as truly as did his opponent, Henry Tichenor, who was the father of twelve children. Indeed, in the midst of her subtle banishments she suddenly conceived the idea of making Elmer the leading citizen of the county, if not of the state.

In one illuminating instant she caught a vision that caused her to tremble. As the sole proprietor of Elmer's place, she knew her man couldn't be elected town dog catcher, but as president of the Pilarcitos Commercial Trust and Savings bank she could elect him mayor at the primary election. From mayor to the state legislature, from the state legislature to lieutenant governor, from that to governor, to congressman, to United States senator, to the Vice Presidency—to the White House!

"It's a big dream," she reflected, "but only those who have the ability to dream big dreams ever amount to anything. Just as easy to dream big dreams as little ones—and Ansel P. Moody has buttressed on this community long enough. Elmer is right. He's a pawnbroker, not a banker, and a banker should be the big man in any community. He should know better than any man its needs, its aspirations and his duty toward it. When the time comes I'll tell Ansel P. Moody where he gets off. He'll sell his controlling interest in that bank to me at a fair price, or I'll start a new bank and run him and his competitor out of business in ten years."

With difficulty she repressed a cheer. "I'll open my bank with a hundred thousand dollars capital, fully paid up. I'll start with my own deposit of at least four hundred thousand dollars and I'll become a member of the Federal Reserve bank, which no banker in this town has sense enough to become. I'll take over every loan Ansel Moody has as it falls due. I'll cut the interest rate on those two bloodsuckers and I'll lend money on honesty, ability and industry; in the long run I'll consolidate the other two banks in this town with mine—I mean Elmer's and mine. Oh, Elmer darling, you're playing into my hand, and that means you'll wear out your life, not drag it out and rot it out! And nobody shall ever know who put up the money."

At their next meeting, after incalculating in Elmer such a sense of power as he had never known before, Nellie adroitly shifted the conversation to a subject which is never very far from pleasing to nine men out of ten, to wit, himself.

"Dearie," she charged suddenly, "do you know that suit you're wearing is beginning to look just a little bit shabby? I don't like to see my Elmer letting himself go like this. You should be the best dressed man in town—and usually you are. I'm afraid you've been trying too hard to save money to equip Elmer's place."

He squeezed her hand gratefully. "The idea of that business of my

own obsessed me, Nellie," he admitted. "I have been scripping more than usual lately. I wanted to get going—to be independent and make enough money to enable me to marry you and give you everything you desired."

"But darling—I would have married you on far less. I would have been a help to you, not a source of expense."

"I know it, old lovable. But you were doing as well in your job as I was doing in mine, and it isn't a particularly striking evidence of selfishness when a man asks a woman to give up financial independence to scrip and save and sacrifice with him. I didn't want you to do that. My mother had to do that all her life and it hurt me. I swore that when I married, my wife should never have to say to me, 'Elmer, dear, may I have a dollar and a half to pay the gas bill?' or 'Elmer, I'd like eight dollars to buy a new hat.'"

"Nellie, that sort of thing is disgraceful. I want you to have your own private checking account and I never want to know what you do with the money."

Nellie now squeezed his hand. "Never fear, Elmer, I'll have my own checking account and nobody shall ever know what I do with the money. I agree with you thoroughly there. But, Elmer, we're off our subject. I want you to go up to San Francisco and get yourself a complete wardrobe. You must take a vacation, Elmer."

"I shall not. On a vacation I'd be a nuisance. You'd be working hard just trying to assure yourself

that your wife was having a wonderful time—and I'm not ready to marry you yet, dear. Really, you must not bother yourself with a wife and her trunks and bags, not to mention your own."

"Sure you can't be persuaded to change your mind and marry me before I go, Nellie?"

"Elmer Clarke, I'm not even engaged to you—yet. Remember that, I have already explained to you why."

He surrendered. "You're a mean woman, but I love you, so I suppose all of my life I'll be giving you your own way about everything. The only comfort I'll draw out of that will be the knowledge that you're wiser than a tree full of owls and probably know more about everything than I do."

"Omit the compliments, Mr. Clarke, please. Are you going on that vacation?"

"Yes—after I've cleaned up Henry Tichenor in this school election. By the way, Nellie, I've made one new resolution since that lawyer, McPeake, wired me I was a millionaire. I've decided not to cook my own breakfast hereafter and to refrain from eating my luncheons and dinners in restaurants. I've engaged a smart gentleman of color to look after me and the dogs. His name is Jasper and he swings a mean skillet; he can bottle, drive a car and play the banjo."

"Good! Elmer, I think you ought to buy yourself another nice present. You've been good for ever so long and you deserve it. You'll want a new house, of course. If you intend to remain in Pilarcitos long enough to complete your term of office as chairman and member of the board of trustees of the Union high school. What do you want for your bungalow and lot?"

"Ten thousand dollars. Got a customer for me, Nellie?"

"Yes, but I'm afraid my customer cannot meet your terms. I know a party who might be induced to buy your house if you will accept two thousand dollars down, with a first mortgage for two years on the remainder at seven per cent."

"Sold!" The word popped out of Elmer's mouth in much the same manner he formerly employed when giving orders to his patron. "I suppose you'll want a commission, Nellie," he suggested with what Ansel Moody would have termed ill-concealed humorosity.

"Not from you," she replied breathlessly. They were lunching at the time in a booth at the Palace grill. Nellie glanced around, saw that for the moment they were un-

observed. "Kiss me," she commanded fiercely.

Elmer dutifully obeyed. "Now go forth and make your fight for school trustee," Nellie ordered. "See to it that you win. If you're defeated I'll cry."

(Continued Next Week)

Pioneers Meet In Clatskanie

Days of kerosene lights and oxen; days when St. Helens was a heavily timbered strip of land; the days when a wild party consisted of throwing hay in the box of a sled and enjoying a straw ride to a farm home, where the evening was spent in roasting apples in front of a fireplace and telling stories; and when there was a small town, Milton, on the present site of the Fir-Tex plant—all were recalled Saturday when Columbia County's Pioneer association met at the First Pres-

byterian church at Clatskanie for its first meeting of the year.

The morning session was called to order by Martin White, president, who stated the aim and purpose of the meeting, and the minutes of the previous meeting were read by Grant Watts, Scappoose, secretary-treasurer of the organization. New members were enrolled, bringing the membership up to 75 with many others waiting to join.

At noon the visitors, as guests of the Clatskanie Kiwanis club were given a chicken dinner, served in an efficient manner by the Boy Scouts. An address of welcome was made by Rev. Dorris, to which Judge W. J. Fullerton responded. Mrs. Blanch Bunts sang several old songs.

The principal speaker of the afternoon was W. J. Powell of Portland and formerly of Vernonia, who recalled much of the pioneer days on the Nehalem in his speech.

Other members were called upon to make speeches and "Auld Lang Syne" was thoroughly discussed. An interesting history of

the grants that make up Columbia county was told by Judge Fullerton, who also mentioned one Nelson Hoyt, who lived in a very pretentious style on what is now known as Hoyt Ridge, across the bay from Warren. Early history of the Nehalem valley was told by Judge D. W. Freeman of Clatskanie, a pioneer of the Ne-

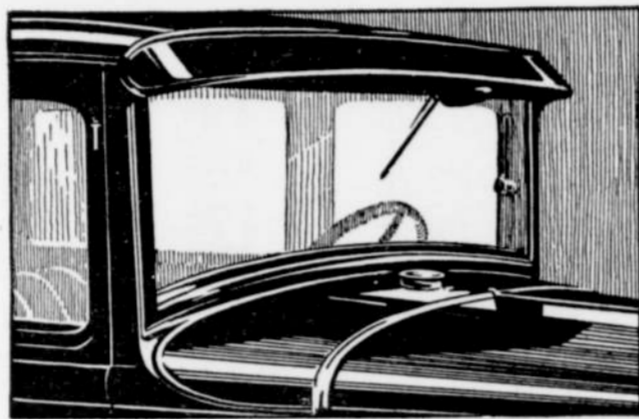
halem valley. Frank Peterson of Nehalem, Ira Parcher of Hudson, G. W. Perry of Houlton, Mrs. Grant Watts and Walter Carl, of Birkenfeld were others who gave interesting facts about the early "60's."

An old-time orchestra made up of piano, violin and guitar, played the old familiar songs of long ago.

Mr. and Mrs. Grant Jones and Arthur Quigley were the musicians.

Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Powell were made honorary members of the society, after which the meeting adjourned, subject to the call of the directors.—St. Helens Sentinel.

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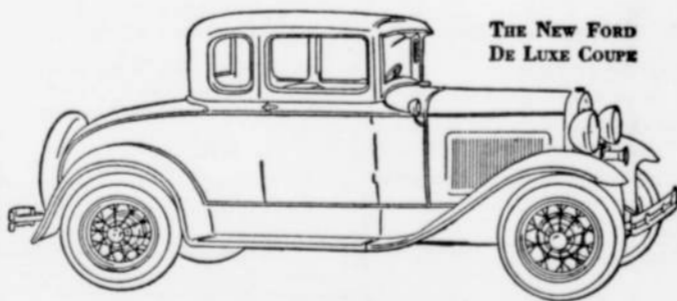


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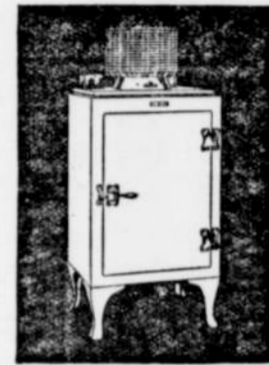
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FIVE MISTAKES

A man struck a match to see if the gasoline tank in his automobile was empty. It wasn't.

A man patted a strange bulldog on the head to see if it was affectionate. It wasn't.

A man speeded up to see if he could beat the train to the crossing. He couldn't.

A man touched an electric wire to see if it was charged. It was.

A man cut out his advertising to see if he could save money. He couldn't.

—Camas Post-Washougal Record.