

HOTELS SELL MUCH BAGGAGE

Trunks and Bags Left Unopened Go to the Highest Bidder at Semi-Annual Sale.

GAMBLE FOR THE BUYER

Often They Get Unlooked-for Valuables and Other Times They Get But Very Little.

Somebody is going to have a lot of fun buying pigs in pokes today, while others are apt to be keenly disappointed, says the New York Times. This is the day set for the sale of hotel baggage that has been accumulating in trunk rooms for the last six months or more, and for several days vans have been carting away various boxes and such things as pass under the head of travelers' luggage to an uptown auction room.

During the last few days the basements of at least a dozen New York hotels have been carefully gone over, and trunks and bags that had been in storage at least six months after their owners had quit the hotel without the formality of saying good-bye to the cashier were hauled out and sent to the place of sale, until the result indicated that something like 500 persons had skipped their bills at the dozen hotels interested during the last six months. Under their names on the ledgers are debits ranging from \$1.50 for a night's lodging to several hundred dollars for suites and weeks of board or checks cashed that came back marked "No funds."

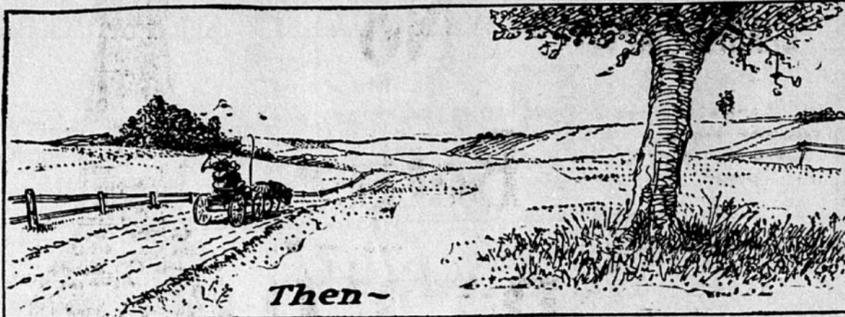
Some of the baggage in the auction room is of merely the "unclaimed" variety—owners really forget it—but it makes a comparatively small item. In the pile that was being sorted out yesterday at the auction room were handsome trunks, fine leather suit cases, cases apparently containing musical instruments, others that might hold typewriters, a Persian lamb coat and handsome overcoats, together with rough wooden boxes and shabby bags of all descriptions and even a little tin box. It is a condition of sale that no intending purchaser shall handle any of the packages before or open any on the premises after buying. The whole sale is blind. Whoever pays the highest price has his purchase taken away, and must gloat or mourn over it somewhere else.

"The thing is absolutely a gamble for the purchaser," said Floyd Grant, the auctioneer. "One is likely to get something really worth while or to have paid a dozen or more times what the article is worth. Verily, in this you cannot trust to appearances. We do not know what is in anything."

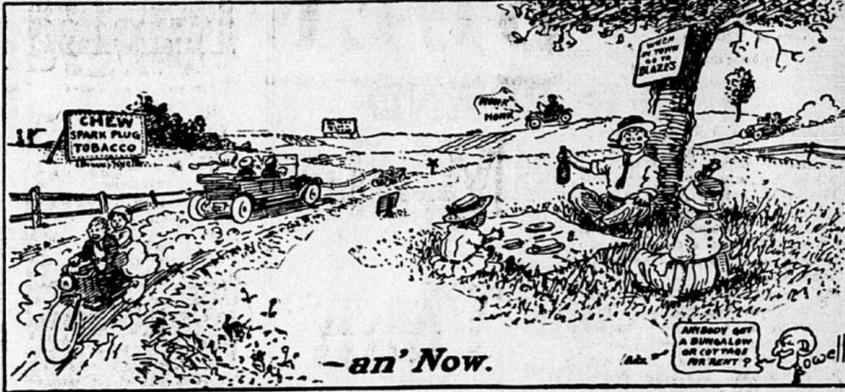
"At the last sale there was a little box that presumably was a jewel case whose owner had left it behind when she left the hotel an unpaid bill of \$480. When the box was put up a laugh went round. The first bid was \$1. The next was \$3. Mounting up by half dollars, the bid was finally \$7, from a man named O'Neill. He sold the jewels that were actually in the box for \$175.

"In the same lot was a big wardrobe trunk that was knocked down to an east side merchant for \$7. Immediately he repented of his bargain, and wanted to assure me that he had bid only \$6.50. I held him to his bid. The trunk seemed empty. But

That Unfrequented Road



Then~



~an' Now.

the next day a friend of his came up to see me and reported that the merchant upon opening the trunk had found therein a woman's dress. Pinned in one sleeve of the garment was a gold bracelet containing a diamond which the buyer immediately sold for \$360.

"Of course hotel people have been sued after sales more than once. Under the law as it is at present, if baggage has not been redeemed by the payment of a hotel bill six months after it is due, the hotel has the right to sell. But I can recall a case that happened several years ago, when an old chest came to us, and was sold at auction. Hardly had it gone, when two Irish women rushed in and showed a receipt for \$37 which they had just paid the management of the old Hotel Rossmore, from which the chest was sent to us. The chest was proved to have contained several hundred dollars' worth of old Irish lace, and a mistake had been made. It cost the management of the hotel \$500.

"A man paid \$17 for a trunk that looked as if it might really contain something valuable, and found when he opened it that it contained nothing but coal.

"Occasionally the sale of a trunk reveals that the man who skipped the hotel was a thief by trade. "I remember another trunk which a downtown merchant bid in at \$7, and then asserted he had bid only \$6.50. An Irishman immediately bid \$7, and I knocked it down to him. He came up to me the next day.

"I thought when I opened the trunk and found in the tray a couple of tennis rackets, a pair of boxing gloves, and two sweaters, that I had bought the baggage of some college boy," he said, "but when I took out the tray and found four bolts of new silk, five sofa pillows, and six Turkish rugs, I knew I had not."

"As I always investigate a case like that, I called up the manager of the Holland house, from which the trunk had come. After an investigation he told me that the trunk had been left there two years before by a dapper-looking man, who had ordered the trunk sent to the storeroom immediately upon arrival. After two days he had disappeared. Perhaps somebody had caught him."

Keokuk and the Auto

First Car Proved Sensation, Now One in Every Thirty-five is an Owner.

FOURTEEN years ago there was one automobile in Keokuk. Today one person in every thirty-five owns a car.

While there is some little dispute about the matter, it is believed that Dr. C. E. Ruth, for many years surgeon at St. Joseph's hospital, was the first automobile owner in Keokuk, being the proud possessor of a small locomobile capable of carrying two passengers when it would run. Frequently it refused to carry any. Shortly after buying the car but long enough thereafter to enable the doctor to gain much valuable experience in the operation of the same, he gave a lecture at a meeting of the Brotherhood of the Presbyterian church in which he told of the things that had happened to him and his car. The meeting was much heralded because of its uniqueness and the attendance was very large. What he told the brotherhood has since become the common everyday experience of 400 auto owners in the city.

A Homemade Car. Shortly after Dr. Ruth's car made its appearance on the streets of Keokuk Frank Knight, the electrician, brought out a homemade car which was not much on appearances but which never failed to run except up steep hills. Knight's car was not much of a hill climber but Keokuk's auto maker could always drive his machine on a level stretch or down hill. The car was a three-wheeled affair with a body like a large cracker box and a steering arrangement in the form of a long rod running from the front wheel like that of an old fashioned tricycle.

Very soon a number of other Keokukians bought cars, but for several years the approach of an automobile caused people to stop and gaze until the machine had passed. The early cars were not capable of much speed and were not to be compared with the fast roadsters of today. In a few years, however, people here began to buy touring cars. With the improvements that came, the purchasing of cars became more general until today nearly everyone who can afford it, owns a car.

Brings Farmer Closer. In the early days of the automobile and even until a few years ago horses were prone to frighten at the machine which threatened to supplant them. But today auto drivers remark that very few horses scare, so common has become the sight of a car, even to a horse.

It was perfectly natural for the garage to follow the automobile as an incident to it and today Keokuk maintains ten of them, that is ten garages where cars are repaired and accessories purchased. It is a falling of the auto driver to stop at every garage along the route when he is traveling, whether he needs anything or not. The automobile has brought the farmer closer to Keokuk. It has also brought the surrounding towns closer to Keokuk. And in the small towns and the country districts the ratio of the auto to the population is much higher than in the cities. For instance, in many small towns of Iowa one out of every six persons has a car, and every farmer who can afford a car regards it as a necessity. Today farmers are bringing their products to Keokuk in automobiles. This is especially true of those who bring in milk, as it is possible to bring the milk in before it gets warm and so deliver it in the best possible condition. Several days ago a farmer

near Bentley had a large force of men prepared to go to work in the field at 7:00 o'clock in the morning. He found himself without binder twine and the need for it was urgent. Without a car he would have had to lay off his men or keep them idle for at least a day. With a car he was able to leave Bentley at 4:00 o'clock in the morning and come to Keokuk to make his purchase, returning to the farm in time to start the men as per schedule.

Many Trails Marked. In order to aid the auto driver in his cross-country runs and on long trips on a Sunday, many trails have been marked which are easy guides. Three of them pass through Keokuk. The Triple Star is a local route running to Farmington and Milton in Iowa, and to Memphis and Kirksville in Missouri. The Waubesa is a trail from Indianapolis to Denver. The route marked out last year is known as the Red Ball, running from St. Louis to St. Paul. It is so named because of the peculiar marking. A red ball is painted in the center of a white square.

Despite the speed at which cars run there have been few accidents to Keokuk owners. Not a single one of any consequence is recalled although there have been a few very narrow escapes.

The other day a local owner was pointing out the fact that an old practice of the cowboy is being followed by auto tourists as a means of carrying water. The cowboy in making a trip across the plains or to a ranch fifty or more miles away, always carried with him a canvas bag filled with water. The water was cooled by surface evaporation. Today many tourists going through Keokuk have these large canvas bags suspended on one side of their car. The water is always cool enough to drink and the method of carrying it is very convenient.

While ordinarily the automobile is hard on roads, the farmers near Keokuk are beginning to take much better care of the roads. A Keokuk owner stated that many of the prosperous farmers are oiling the roads while not a few are dragging them. Oiling helps a great deal. It keeps down the dust and goes a long way in preventing washes in the roads.

JIM WARD WAS FIRST "RINGER"

After Victory He Didn't Want to Collect, but Hurried Away.

There have been many "ringers" in the history of sport, and this form of deception is by no means extinct. The methods have changed little since Jim Ward started the game of gulle away back in 1823. On July 1, 1823, Jim, who later became champion of England, set the stage for what was probably the first feat of the kind. He found it impossible to get a fight in London, and, as he was short of money, he cooked up a little scheme. Jim was an artist and something of an actor, and the plan he decided on was artistic. With a couple of companions he tramped to Bath, where the races were to begin on July 1. On the way they toggled themselves out in the regalia of simple rubes, and it was in this disguise that Jim reached Bath, then England's center of fashionable iniquity, on the first day of the race meet. It was the custom during the race meet at Bath for the

"toffs," or noble sports, to hang up a good purse for the local yokels to fight for, and it was this purse that attracted Jim to Bath. Jew, who called himself "Sawney Wilson," and who said he was a farm laborer, looked the part, and he had no trouble in getting a match with Joe Rickens, the Somerset champion. Joe was a town lad. He poked fun at the "rube" and threatened to eat him alive. The bogus countryman, after a few awkward moves, soon tore loose, and the crowd realized that they had been stung and that "Sawney" was not as green as he looked. Jim's friends had put up a lot of money on him at good odds, and this enraged the spectators. Ward had no sooner knocked out his opponent than the cry of "Lynch him!" went up, and Jim had to run for his life. Ward and his friends were glad to escape from the mob with their lives and didn't wait to collect the purse or their winnings.

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