

## SKYSCRAPERS

Let's —

Curb the overliberal installment selling of cars, the forcing of cars on dealers, the high-pressuring of sales.

Enforce no-parking rules on many carefully selected "express" streets in cities; discourage casual city driving.

Limit size and restrict routes of trucks and buses; tax them more.

Stop making cars of superspeed; slow down on model changes, to force obsolescence.

Set up stricter driving tests, with medical-certificate requirements; bar drivers under eighteen.

Close in harshly on the accident-prone driver and the drunken driver.

Increase punishment of all traffic violators; stiffen inspection of cars, forcing the junking of some of the 5,000,000 below-par vehicles in operation today; extend uniformity of motor-vehicle and highway rules; speed research of safety problems, particularly highway engineering.

Discourage utterly disproportionate space given free by newspapers to automobile trade news, making the auto industry a publicity pet.

Foster, with some of the auto and gas profits, a few cultural interests, with the idea of helping the motorist find a worth-while objective at the end of a drive — that he may not be merely a votary of the obscene god, MOTION.

## Skyscrapers

*In Babylon and Nineveh  
They had no towers like these!  
The Agate columns kiss the stars,  
The very Pleiades.  
The soaring turrets rise like dreams  
Against the age-old skies,  
A man-made vision filled with bliss  
And beautiful surprise.*

*Wild dreamers made them thus ascend,  
To shake the world anew,  
To pierce the pathway of the moon,  
And touch the distant blue.  
Each marble fane is like a shaft  
To point us to the sun;  
And even yet the lordly work  
Of man is never done.*

*New cities flash their dreams aloft  
In tireless desire.  
High move the shining parapets —  
High, and high, and higher.  
And Solomon with all his gold  
Knew no such dream as this;  
And Egypt never knew a town  
Like our metropolis!*

*Like pigmies stand the pyramids,  
And palaces of old  
Are like the sleep of weary kings  
Whose tale is long since told.  
These are the strong cries of strong men,  
Rising beside the sea. . . .  
Will they, in the far days to come,  
Ruins and dead dreams be?*

**Charles Hanson Towne**

# The 'Mentalist' Rackets

by **GEORGE B. ANDERSON**

**L**ISTEN, MR. GEORGE," a grimy auto mechanic said, "I lost this diamond ring I'm talking about last Saturday, and it was one my mother gave me before she died. If you'll tell me where I can find it, I'll be glad to pay you ten bucks." He was deadly serious. I had never seen the man before in my life.

This was in Waterloo, Iowa, where I was billed as "Scotty George, the man with the X-ray eyes." I was earning money to pay my way through college by driving a car through traffic while blindfolded, under the auspices of a newspaper engaged in an advertising promotion campaign.

My opening speech to the crowds never varied. "I frankly admit that what I do is a trick," I always informed them. "I claim no supernatural powers of any kind. All I have to say is that my trick is a good one and I challenge you to discover how I do it."

Despite this open disavowal of occult power, I never appeared in a city in which some person didn't try to force money on me for advice on some matter — from how to break a will to methods of disproving paternity. I had never solicited any "see" business and always turned down the offers, a bit bewildered at receiving them.

This time, however, I decided to have some fun. Through the practice of magic ever since I had been a kid, I knew a good deal about the mind-reading racket.

"I don't want your money," I told the mechanic, "but I'll be glad to help you. . . . You had this diamond ring last Saturday morning, didn't you?" (That was a safe statement, because he had said he lost it on Saturday.)

"Yeah," he agreed. "It wasn't until I got to work at the garage that I noticed it was gone. It was kind of loose for my finger, and I'd been meaning to get it shrunk or something."

I knew by this time that he had lost the ring

between the time he had arisen and the time he had gone to work. And I remembered reading that a mind reader's usual advice to a person who has lost a ring is to investigate the lavatory plumbing, since many rings are lost down the drainpipes.

I lapsed into what might have passed for a trance. "I see you washing your hands," I said. "The ring slips from your finger while your hands are soapy. It goes down the drainpipe. I can't quite see whether it's still in the joint under the basin or not, but you'd better look. If it isn't there, the chances are that you'll have a mighty hard time finding it."

He thanked me as if I had already restored his ring and tried to give me the ten-dollar bill he was holding. I refused to take it, and he fairly flew out of the alley from the stage entrance of the theater, where I was getting ready for a performance that was part of my stunt. I grinned and forgot about him.

When I'd finished my show, I got ready to go out for dinner, but was met backstage by the manager of the theater.

"Say," he said, "there's an awful crowd of people out in front trying to get to see you. Some bird told 'em you gave him the dope on where to find a diamond ring he'd lost, and they all want you to answer questions for 'em."

I took a peek. The mechanic had found his ring and had evidently rounded up all his relatives, friends, and casual acquaintances for the opportunity of a lifetime to have their problems solved. It took me half the night to get out of the theater without taking their money and answering their questions.

## THE SUCKERS' MONEY

**A**LMOST EVERYONE has seen alleged mind readers at moving-picture theaters and, more recently, in night clubs, and has been impressed by the convincing performances of the charlatans. Unless you happen to be one of the more