

THE AMERICAN HOUSE

By Virginia Chase

XX

WE girls had, naturally, never seen a comet, and we read everything about it that we could lay our hands on. We were not in the least superstitious. "It is a perfectly natural occurrence," my mother had assured us, and we believed her. Then one day in April some disturbing news came. EARTH TO PASS THROUGH THE COMET'S TAIL, the paper read, RESULT DEBATEABLE. The tail, it went on, was composed largely of gases. We would go through it at 2500 miles a minute at 9 o'clock on the evening of May 18. The earth had passed through a comet's tail before, it reminded us, once in 1819 and again in 1861, but those comets were smaller ones. This was Halley's. In a single month its tail had grown from 5,000,000 miles read wasn't designed to quiet them any. "Through the glowing appendage of Halley's comet, as poisonous as it is beautiful, the earth will plunge on May 18th, 1910," said Collier's Weekly. It was more than 20,000,000. It was still growing. . . .

A good many sensible people—not just country people, either—began to wonder if we might not be in for something. What they scientists hastened to reassure us. It was true, they said, that the tail did contain poisonous elements, but these were too thin to do any real damage. Most people took their word for it, but a few were already too aroused.

Lem Gott predicted the imminence of Doomsday. It would come, he warned, as of the heavens cracking. After Boshy heard that, if you as much as snapped a whip in the stable he would quake all over. . . .

It took more than the threat of Doomsday to scare Mrs. Gup-till. If the world was coming to an end, she guessed this was as good a time as any, she said. As for her, she wasn't going to sit

around until May 18 with her hands folded.

Julia, too, showed real bravado. She was interested in comets, and she hoped this one would come close enough so that she could get a good look, she said. She was going to take all the bottles she could find and fill them with gases when we passed through the tail. This was ridiculous, Sue confided to me. Being in the Academy, she naturally thought she knew all there was to know about science. "Those gases are purely hydrolic," she said, leaving me mystified, but impressed.

Still I didn't like the idea of gas. My father sometimes gave it in his office. It had a sickening smell. I had seen patients who had taken it resting upon his sofa. I knew how careful he was to turn it off at just the right instant. You couldn't turn off a comet's tail. . . .

At night the light from the street lamp shone in round and bright through the porthole. I had a hard time sleeping. . . .

My mother began to complain that I looked pining. "I'm going to mix you up some sulphur and molasses," she said. "It helped me as a girl, for all your father says."

There was no use in protesting. Sulphur and molasses had always been revolting to me. But this year it seemed to have a new taste. A taste like gas. . . .

ATTENDANCE at church had increased noticeably. The Blaisdells and the Haskells, who had cherished a feud for generations, ended it by talking over the back fence. Two of my father's least responsible creditors suggested making a settlement.

In his zeal to save others, Lem Gott had begun to paint warnings in appropriate and conspicuous places. YOUR HOUSE FOUNDED UPON A ROCK? he printed in red across one of the ledges along the shore. YOU ARE MAKING YOUR LAST

RUN stared out at you from the fowl fence at the ball ground. The comet would hit the earth, he told all who would listen. May 18 would be the last day any of us would live.

On the evening of the ninth a fog rolled in, a heavy fog that blotted out the sky. There would be no use in getting up before sunrise, people agreed. To some it was a disappointment. To me it was a real relief.

The fog hung on after that, burning off every day before noon.

On the 16th we had our first word from Cousin Victoria. She knew we were sorry for the way we had treated her, she said, and she was willing to accept our apology. She was distraught about the royal family. Then followed a quotation that Sue was proud to recognize as coming from Julius Caesar.

When beggars die, there are no comets seen; The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of kings.

A postscript added: "This may be the last letter you will ever have from me." Clearly, she felt herself, too, a special target.

"I'll certainly be thankful when the 18th is over," my mother sighed. "Such a to-do over nothing!"

On the 17th the fog lifted, and some claimed to have seen the comet then, in broad daylight, though no two, it seemed, had seen it in the same place. At night it would be bigger, brighter. Boshy's agitation grew. His sniffs quickened in tempo. "What kin we do if the comet aims square at us?" he asked Mr. Tapley.

"We might ban it," Mr. Tapley told him. "The way we did automobiles."

On the morning of the 18th my mother insisted on my taking an extra spoonful of sulphur and molasses. "I'm going to have your father give you a thorough going-over," she said, looking worried. "And beginning tonight you go to bed at 7."

She had forgotten! "Not tonight, Mama. Everyone is going to the hill tonight."

(To Be Continued)

Our Boarding House

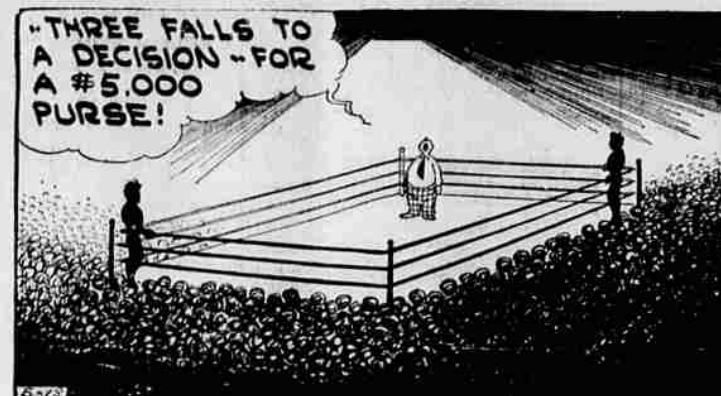
With Major Hoople

Out Our Way

J. K. Williams



Boots and Her Buddies



Freckles and His Friends



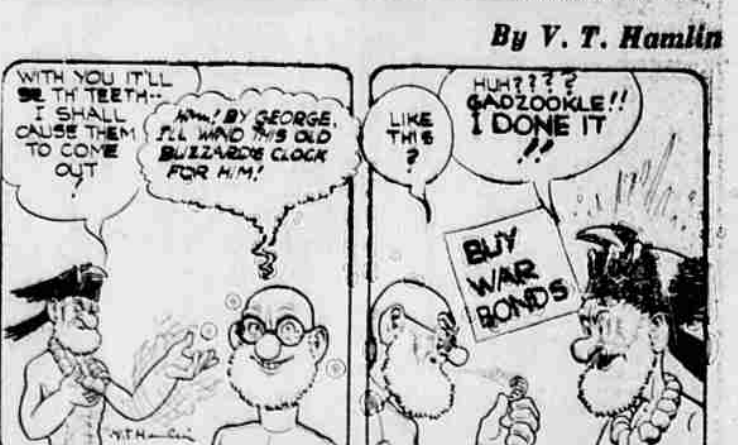
Red Ryder



Wash Tubbs



Alley Oop



Blue Ribbon Doily



5632

By MRS. ANNE CABOT

A blue ribbon winner in any language! The 21-inch centerpiece is crocheted in a striking combination of the popcorn stitch and the classical pineapple motif. Not hard to do, either!

To obtain complete crocheting instructions for the blue ribbon centerpiece (pattern No. 5632) send 15 cents in coin, plus 1 cent postage, your name, address and the pattern number to Anne Cabot, La Grande Evening Observer, 709 Mission St., San Francisco, Calif.

Washington Merry-Go-Round

(Continued from page four)

erals were so anxious to stop all shipments, they radioed U. S. vessels in the Black sea to turn back — until Truman countermanded their order.

City News In Brief

A minor collision between automobiles driven by Roberta Winters and Arthur Gruis, both of La Grande, on Fir street near Adams avenue, was reported to the police yesterday.

Henry David Huff, Greenville, Ill., and Louis De Velder, Tacoma, Wash., were arrested last midnight on charges of gambling on the street, and were released on \$15 bail each.

State College Aides Get Regular Status

CORVALLIS Ore., May 17 (UP)—Three younger men of the Oregon state college staff who have been serving on the administrative council under temporary appointments, are advanced to permanent positions, President A. L. Strand announced today.

The crayfish is not a fish. Its name is a corruption of its original French name, *cerevisse*.

Sports Frock



8643

By SUE BURNETT

A princess sports dress to set off your sun tan—and a pretty figure! Make the bolero in a color contrast for added style.

Pattern No. 8643 is designed for sizes 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 18. Size 12 dress requires 3 yards of 39 inch material; bolero, 1 1/4 yards of 35 or 39 inch fabric; ric-rac to trim, 4 yards.

For this pattern, send 20 cents, in coins, your name, address, size desired and the pattern number to Sue Burnett, La Grande Evening Observer, 709 Mission St., San Francisco, Calif.

Send for your copy of the new spring issue of Fashion—just off the press. Book full of smart, up-to-the-minute styles. 15 cents.

The so-called steam that billows forth in clouds from volcanoes is not steam at all, but a form of dry gas.

Hold Everything



"George is good at remembering faces!"

U. S. Legislator

HORIZONTAL	3 Above	17 Pictured	32 Frozen water
1 U. S. congressman	4 Rhode Island (ab.)	18 Railroad (ab.)	33 Aged
14 Covets	5 Obtain	19 Always	34 French marshal
15 Atomizer	6 Isaac's eldest son (Bib.)	20 Exist	35 Triple crown
16 Fish eggs	7 Bone	21 Crooked	36 Brother of a parent
17 Paving material	8 Tree of Java	22 Vases	37 Deputy
18 Always	9 Attempt	23 Exhibit	38 Shabby
19 Always	10 Louisiana (ab.)	24 Electrical unit	39 Electrical engineer (ab.)
20 Exist	11 Indian nurse	25 Call to excite attention	40 And (Latin)
21 Crooked	12 Roman emperor	26 Fish	41 Copied
22 Vases	13 Napoleon	27 He represents the — of California	42 Hat
23 Exhibit	14 Couple (ab.)	28 Station (ab.)	43 Turn about
24 Electrical unit	15 Otherwise	29 Hog	44 Musical note
25 Call to excite attention	16 Either	30 Feminine name	45 Passing fancy
26 Fish		31 French marshal	46 United States Navy (ab.)
27 He represents the — of California		32 Frozen water	47 Expressing
28 Station (ab.)		33 Aged	48 Beated
29 Hog		34 French marshal	49 Bull
30 Feminine name		35 Triple crown	50 Suit
31 French marshal		36 Brother of a parent	
32 Frozen water		37 Deputy	
33 Aged		38 Shabby	
34 French marshal		39 Electrical engineer (ab.)	
35 Triple crown		40 And (Latin)	
36 Brother of a parent		41 Copied	
37 Deputy		42 Hat	
38 Shabby		43 Turn about	
39 Electrical engineer (ab.)		44 Musical note	
40 And (Latin)		45 Passing fancy	
41 Copied		46 United States Navy (ab.)	
42 Hat		47 Expressing	
43 Turn about		48 Beated	
44 Musical note		49 Bull	
45 Passing fancy		50 Suit	
46 United States Navy (ab.)			
47 Expressing			
48 Beated			
49 Bull			
50 Suit			

VERB

1 Thuringian town

2 Enough (poet.)