

ESME OF PARIS by Esme Davis

Esme Davis Mair:
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I SPENT the first two years of my life shuttling between New York, California, and Hawaii, where my mother sought to regain her health. She had been seriously ill after I was born, and father never wanted her to return to the operatic stage. Her determination to do so, however, created a break between them that widened with the years, until they eventually became separated.

This situation was a great grief to my father and made him unhappy on my account, for I never had a home life in the sense that most people think of one. That is to say, I can not remember a single warmly familiar spot from which I could set out or to which I could return.

I was two years old when we sailed to Europe to join my grandmother, then at the height of her theatrical triumphs. My brother was sent to school in England while mother resumed her singing.

Mother and grandmother often told me about my first appearance on any stage. It happened during the year of 1908 in Turin, Italy. Mother was singing there in Puccini's operas in an effort to condition her voice for heavier roles after her long illness. The child used in the last act of "Madame Butterfly" to impersonate the baby was taken ill during the performance. Grandmother, a bound for punishment, offered my services as a solution to the dilemma.

I was, of course, too small to walk properly and used to do most of my traveling by crawling on the floor. In the last act of the opera, Madame Butterfly sets the child in the middle of the stage and gives him American and Japanese flags to play with, then retires behind a screen upstage to commit hara-kiri and sings the aria, "Piacere Idolo, Addio." This is the "punch" of the whole opera, and the audience is supposed to be filled with deep emotion. Although used to peculiar noises in theaters, the row mother was making behind the screen aroused my curiosity. I probably thought some one was murdering her and she needed help, so I turned my back on the footlights and started to crawl forward the screen on my hands and knees, showing to the audience a little pair of white buttocks.

It stopped the show.

I WAS five-and-a-half years old when we arrived in Russia.

I commenced ballet school almost at once, going to a school for children kept by an old French woman, Madame Verdun. I do not have any of the usual happy childhood recollections about the place but remember there was always a Russian priest in black robes sneaking in and out of doorways, and my grandmother slapped me almost every time she came to call for me, because it was so cold.



(Illustrated by George Searbo)
On the day of the ballet examination, I overdid a leap, lost my balance, and landed flat on my "tutu" in a sitting position amid a horrified silence.

and because I fought with most of the pupils, especially a boy phenomenon who played the piano and wore thick glasses. I don't remember much about it, but I think I must have done a good job on him, because they took me away after that to another school for a year, where I progressed to music and languages.

The Nelidova Ballet School held examinations in dancing which were decisive for professional children, and the weeks before them were filled with constant nagging and slappings from my grandmother, on the "spare the rod and spoil the child" principle, and rare moments with my mother when she deplored my hands. I have always had powerful hands, a handicap in ballet (no pun intended) but good for piano. I played extremely well for a child, and they told mother I could be a concert pianist. I learned the guitar from grandmother, the conchertina and banjo for fun. They overworked me at home, and I was always tired and cold.

There were long discussions about my appearance. Mother decided I had good feet and eyes, but grandmother thought me hopeless, on account of my Irish blood. The inferiority complex brought on by these criticisms nearly cost me my exam. In addition, there were arguments over my dress, a white "tutu" with rosebuds.

On the examination day they tweaked and poked at me for an hour before I danced, until I was completely worn out; then mother sat down with the teachers and some decrepit old gentlemen who were, I suppose, "balletomanes" looking for future Pavlovas. Everything I had learned went out of my head. I seldom cried as a

child but bottled up my emotions, which made matters worse. There is a movement in ballet called a "grande jetee," really very simple, needing only balance on arrival. Unfortunately I overdid it when I stopped on my toe, lost my balance, and landed flat on my "tutu" in a sitting position amid a horrified silence.

All the same they passed me, for I eventually recovered my composure and outdid the other pupils in a "Pizzicato" by Drigo, on my toes, which were always my best feature.

AFTER a performance of "Boris Godunov" in Moscow, mother became very ill with a sore throat that developed into quinsy. Grandmother gave up contracts to nurse her, and as the allowance my father could send was not enough for so much expense, we gradually became financially embarrassed. Princess Soltkoff, an old friend of mother's, took me to stay with her.

(To Be Continued)

Our Boarding House

With Major Hoople

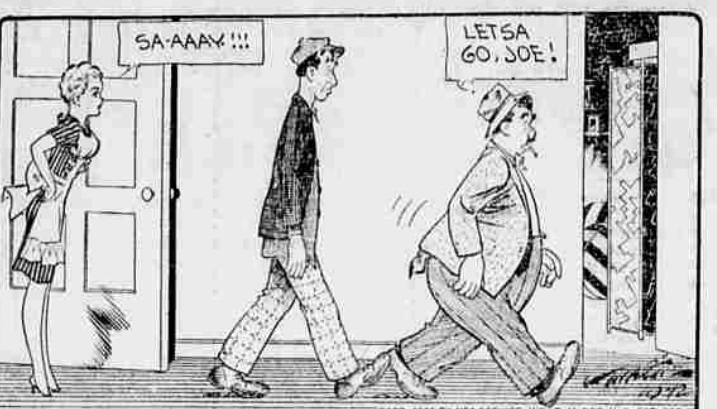
Out Our Way

J. R. Williams



Boots and Her Buddies

By Edgar Martin



Freckles and His Friends

Merrill Blosser



Betty!



By MRS. ANNE CABOT

Betty in her pretty checked blue and white play overalls over her crisp white sports blouse and sporting a gay handkerchief tied on her golden hair is a very nice doll indeed! Make the fifteen-inch body of cotton—embody the features on—use cotton yarn for the hair. A fine Christmas doll to place under the tree!

To obtain complete patterns for doll body, clothes for Betty, the doll (Pattern No. 5048) 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 Street, San Francisco, Calif.

Official Records

Water Turned Off Oct. 10:
Joe Southall, 601 C Avenue.

Water Turned On:
W. H. Marcum, 1306 Tenth Street; Mrs. Warren Groth, 1601 Alder Street.

Swiss people eat four times as much cheese as Americans.

Prices for White Clover Advance in Last Month

Prices to growers for white clover seed advanced about \$4 a hundredweight in Wisconsin and \$4 in Idaho during the month ending Sept. 15. On Sept. 15, Idaho growers were offered \$10 a hundred pounds for clean seed. This is \$26 higher than a year previous, Oregon State college reports.

Sales of white clover seed by growers in Wisconsin and Idaho have been faster than usual and by mid-September, 70 to 75 percent of the crop in these states had been sold. Usually only about two-thirds of the crop has moved by that date.

Movement of the 1945 white clover seed crop was late in starting, but by September 15, the percentage that had moved from growers' hands was only slightly less than usual for that date. On Sept. 15, a little over one-third of the crop had changed hands. Movement was slowest in Oregon and fastest in Illinois and Wisconsin.

Prices paid to growers for white clover seed declined 34 cents a hundredweight between Aug. 15 and Sept. 15. Prices in Oregon on the latter date averaged \$34.30 a hundredweight, 30 cents higher than a year previous. The average price for the United States was \$22 a hundredweight for clean seed, which was 10 cents less than a year earlier.

The early marketing season on clover crop seeds in Oregon is mainly over for this year. Most of the Australian winter peas and common vetch crops are reported already out of growers' hands. Shipments to eastern and southern distributing markets have been going forward in good volume in recent weeks.

Prices bid to growers and cash for clover for the principal field and cover crop seeds are reported unchanged from other recent weeks, except for a slightly weaker tendency on clover seed.

DEADLY DANCE

Native dancers of Timor, East Indian island, are blindfolded and leap about barefooted on a board strewn with 100 poisonous spikes, where the slightest error would result in death.

Two to Six



By SUE BURNETT

For the pre-school set, an adorable little dress and panties for every day to make up in colorful checked or flowered fabric. Trim with bright contrasting ric-rac. A bonnet is included in the pattern.

Pattern No. 8766 is designed for sizes 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 years. Size 3 dress requires 1 1/2 yards of 35 or 39-inch fabric; panties, 2 1/2 yards; bonnet, 3/4 yard.

For this pattern, send 20 cents, in COIN, your name, address, size desired, and the PATTERN NUMBER and Sue Burnett, La Grande Evening Observer, 709 Mission Street, 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.

Building Permits

George F. Hartigson, after and repair one-story frame dwelling, 1501 W Avenue, \$673.

Red Ryder



Wash Tubbs



Alley Oop

