

Alice Adams

BY BOOTH TARRINGTON

CHAPTER I

THE patient, an old-fashioned man, thought the nurse made a mistake in keeping both of the windows open, and her sprightly disregard of his protests added something to his hatred of her. Every evening he told her that anybody with ordinary gumption ought to realize that night air was bad for the human frame. "The human frame won't stand everything, Miss Perry," he warned her, resentfully. "Even a child, if it had just ordinary gumption, ought to know enough not to let the night air blow on sick people—yes, nor well people, either! Keep out of the night air, no matter how well you feel. That's what my mother used to tell me when I was a boy. 'Keep out of the night air, Virgil,' she'd say. 'Keep out of the night air.'"

"I expect probably her mother told her the same thing," the nurse suggested.

"Of course she did. My grandmother—"

"Oh, I guess your grandmother thought so, Mr. Adams! That was when all this flat central country was swampy and hadn't been drained off yet. I guess the truth must have been the swamp mosquitoes bit people and gave 'em malaria, especially before they began to put screens in their windows. Well, we get screens in these windows, and no mosquitoes are going to bite us; so just you be a good boy and rest your mind and go to sleep like you used to."

"Sleep?" he said. "Likely!"

"He thought the night air worst of all in April; he hadn't a doubt it would kill him, he declared. 'It's miraculous what the human frame will survive,' he admitted on the last evening of that month. 'But you and the doctor ought to both be taught, it won't stand too dang' much! You poison a man and poison and poison him with this April night air—'

"Can't poison you with much more of it," Miss Perry interrupted him, indignantly. "Tomorrow it'll be May night air, and I expect that'll be a lot better for you, don't you? Now let's just sober down and be a good boy and get some nice sound sleep. She gave him his medicine, and, having set the glass upon the center-table, returned to her cot, where, after a still interval, she snored faintly. Upon this, his expression became that of a man goaded out of overpowering weariness into irony.

"Sleep? Oh, certainly, thank you!" However, he did sleep intermittently, drowsed between times, and even dreamed; but, forgetting his dreams before he opened his eyes, and having some part of him all the while aware of his discomfort, he believed, as usual, that he lay awake the whole

night long. He was conscious of the city as a gamey, stinging creature, resting fitfully in the dark outside his windows. It lay all round about, in the damp cover of its night cloud of smoke, and tried to keep quiet for a few hours after midnight, but was too powerful a growing thing ever to lie altogether still. Even while it strove to sleep it muttered with digestions of the day before, and these already, merged with rumblings of the morrow. "Owl" ears, bringing in last passengers over distant trolley lines, now and then howled on a curve; far-away metallic strings could be heard from factories in the sooty suburbs on the plain outside the city; east, west and south, switch-engines chugged and snorted on sidings; and everywhere in the air there seemed to be a faint, voluminous hum as of innumerable wires trembling overhead to vibration of machinery underground.

In his youth Adams might have been less resentful of sounds such as these when they interfered with his night's sleep; even during an illness he might have taken some pride in them as proof of his citizenship in a "live town"; but at 55 he merely hated them because they kept him awake. They "pressed on his nerves," as he put it; and so did almost everything else, for that matter.

He heard the milk wagon drive into the cross street beneath his windows and stop at each house. The milkman carried his jars round to the "back porch," while the horse moved slowly ahead to the gate of the next customer and waited there. "He's gone into Pollocks," Adams thought, following this progress. "I hope it'll sour on 'em before breakfast. Delivered the Andersons. Now he's getting out oura. Listen to the darn brute! What's he care who wants to sleep?" His complaint was of the horse, who casually shifted weight with a clink of steel shoes on the worn brick pavement of the street, and then heartily shook himself in his harness, perhaps to dislodge a fly far ahead of its season. Light had just filmed the windows; and with that the first sparrow woke, chirped instantly and roused neighbors in the trees of the small yard, including a loud-voiced robin. Vociferations began irregularly, but were soon unanimous.

"Sleep? Dang likely now, ain't it?" Night sounds were becoming day sounds; the far-away hooting of freight engines seemed brisker than an hour ago in the dark. A cheerful whistler passed the house, even more careless of sleepers than the milkman's horse had been; then a group of colored workmen came by, and although it was impossible to be sure whether they were jocose, loose, aboriginal laughter preceded them afar, and beat on the air long after they had gone by.

To Be Continued Tomorrow

THEM DAYS IS GONE FOREVER—"When You and I Were Young"

By A. Posen



BRINGING UP FATHER

(Registered U. S. Patent Office)

By George McManus



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KRAZY KAT

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All Is Well



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Robbers Get Busy; Three Hauls Made; Operators Net \$137

The Columbia Hat Works, No. 347 1/2 Morrison street, reported to the police Sunday that the establishment had been entered during the night, and \$45 in cash taken from a money drawer.

Entrance was gained through the front door by means of a key. While absent from his room for a few moments, Herbert Gledeland, No. 25 Third street, left his purse on a dresser. When he returned, the purse, containing \$80 was stolen by a prowler, he reported to the police Sunday.

Thieves Saturday broke into the rear of the M. J. B. Cafeteria, No. 23 North Sixth street, and made off with about \$7 in cash from the register.

Diver Misses Aim; Hits Head on Float

An unsuccessful dive by George Watson, 20, No. 191 Russell street, landed the youth in the Emergency hospital Sunday afternoon with a broken nose and a number of painful cuts and bruises. Watson went swimming at Craig's boat house, at the east end of the Broadway bridge, and negotiated several dives from the top of the boat house into the river. His final dive fell short of his intentions and landed him on the float on which the boat house is built. The distance from the top of the float where he struck is about 10 feet.

SCHOOL OPENING DELAYED
Ashland, Aug. 28.—Local public schools will open the day after Labor day, being delayed because of plans for a big all-day celebration in Lithia park.

SCHOOL CHANGES MADE
Jefferson, Or., Aug. 28.—When Jefferson schools open September 25, changes will have been completed which will increase space and facilitate school work.

FALLS INTO MIXER
Kelso, Wash., Aug. 28.—J. S. Kennard, employe of the Pacific Bridge company, was severely injured when he fell into a concrete mixer at the Kelso bridge. One leg was broken.



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ABIE THE AGENT

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No Electricity Necessary With the Conversation



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JERRY ON THE JOB

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Breaking the News Gently



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Just Can't Lose



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