

Gambler's Throw

by Eustace L. Adams.

SYNOPSIS: Jerry Calhoun tries to start his airplane engine under the machine gun fire of gangsters who are carrying away his wife, Nancy. Stevens, a detective, holds the gang off. The gangsters have revolted from their leader, Ashwood, who has kidnapped Nancy. Emory has come with Jerry to rescue her.

Chapter 33
BEHIND THE BARRICADES

A GUST of flame belched crimson from the slowly revolving motor. Ah, she'd make it! No. Churning, churning, every second dragging itself into an infinity of time. Stevens' gun still barked. Another bullet and another raked the cabin. Again a ball of flaming gas ballooned from the exhaust stack. Then the engine roared, backfired, missed and suddenly burst into full-throated, rhythmic life, causing the plane to vibrate in every inch of her fabric.

Stevens' figure appeared in the doorway. In the darkness over his shoulder, guns stabbed the night with their vicious points of scarlet. Jerry, trembling with eagerness to push forward on the throttle, pushed the old man aside, turned back and fired a full clip of cartridges. Then carefully closing and latching the cabin door, the detective took his seat.

The great monoplane rolled forward over the hard-packed shell. Then she was free, an earth-borne monster no longer, but a joyous, throbbing, bird-like thing hurtling through the air.

Stevens' steady forefinger pointed slightly to the left. Jerry banked over to follow a faint red line of exhaust fire. As he straightened out again, he glanced down and backward toward the house. From a row of windows on the east end of the low building tiny pinpoints of flame flickered from the guns of the besiegers. From three sides came answering flashes.

The exhaust flames of the amphibian were clearly visible now, and Jerry knew that he was gaining, slowly but steadily, upon the northward-speeding plane. Stevens held his beloved machine gun. He squinted ahead at the fleeing plane.

"How long?" he inquired tersely. "I haven't any idea," confessed Jerry. "They don't know yet that we're following them. When they see us they'll give her full throttle. We're fairly evenly matched in speed. Maybe fifteen minutes. Maybe two hours. Have to wait till we see how much speed they have."

"Ashie, old bean, it won't be long now!" Emory Battles' smoke-bearded grin broke into a wide-mouthed grin as he rolled over on his side and looked at the man who shared the shelter of the up-ended living room table.

The cripple ducked behind the heavy shield just as it vibrated under the sharp smack of a bullet. His lined face was drawn with fatigue, but the dancing light in his blue eyes was undimmed as he returned the other's smile.

"One would think, my dilettante friend, that you looked forward with pleasure to dying." His drawing voice had lost nothing of its mocking brilliance. He reached for a cigarette from Emory's case. "From where I lie," he puffed, "it looks as though we would be able to hold them off about thirty more minutes at the longest, and then only if we are able to continue keeping them from passing to the rear of the house and surrounding us."

"They may all have snuck into the next thirty minutes!" retorted the other, squinting cautiously over the top for a brief glance toward the hangar which, in the first faint pastel tints of the dawn, looked strangely peaceful in comparison with the wrecked living room behind him. A bullet snapped by and he dropped his head unceremoniously. "You picked out some pretty fair sharpshooters when you organized your mob, Ashie," he declared ruefully.

"As ye sow, so shall ye—" pronounced a resonant voice from the center of the room.

"Please, please, Dr. Titherington!" interrupted the cripple. "Spare us, on a warm morning like this! If I hear just one more such quotation, I shall froth at the mouth and bite somebody!"

Alfred sat up behind the overturned couch.

The steward's face was ghastly pale. His left arm, roughly bandaged in torn sheeting, showed as a great splotch of crimson against the background of his white service jacket. A semi-circle of empty clips was mute evidence to the fact that he

had been a bulwark of strength during the long night's siege. Martin, as usual, was silent. Propped on one elbow behind a parapet of chairs at the northwest corner window, he fingered his automatic lovingly.

Emory, sipping his liquor slowly, gazed across the room at the strange, silent man with something like wonder in his eyes. Who could have thought that that taciturn, prosaic little real estate promoter would have had his bright moment of cold-blooded, death-defying courage? Two hours before, Emory had watched, amazed, as Martin had vaulted out of his window, sprinted across fifty feet of bullet-swept sand and retrieved an automatic dropped by a dead attacker.

"Tired of being shot at without being able to shoot back!" he had explained grimly to Emory, who had raced across the room, leaped out of the window, and whisked him back into the relative security of the barricades.

And Mallory. There was another study in psychology. He had burst out of his room cold-sober, and at the first massed attack upon the house he had been quietly efficient, firing steadily, accurately, as though shooting at clay pigeons on a range. Oh, yes, it had been a merry little night! Perhaps of them all, Dr. Titherington had been the outstanding hero. A man of peace, unable to have secured one of the all-too-few automatics had wanted it, the minister had stood sentry-go over the two corridors leading to the two rear wings to make sure that none of the gangsters had succeeded in slipping between the house and either bench for a flank attack. He had done his duty throughout the long night.

But most of all, it was the minister's tender watch over Hamilton which had inspired even the grudging admiration of the cynical Ashwood.

Still tied with the bonds that Stevens had wound round him, Hamilton lay in a coma from which he had emerged in wild delirium when the fighting had reached a crisis. Yet through it all, Dr. Titherington had soothed him with never-flagging patience, crawling over to him at frequent intervals to see if he still slept and if the barrage of furniture and mattresses still sheltered him from stray bullets.

"How much ammunition left?" called the cripple. "Alfred?"

"Only two clips, sir."

"Martin?"

"Four clips."

"Good, Mallory?"

"Three."

"And Battles has two. That makes fourteen. I have three myself. Seventeen in all. We'll have to go easy from now on. Don't shoot unless you are positive you can drop your man."

"Why don't Calhoun and Stevens come back?" grumbled Mallory. "With a plane and a machine-gun they could run the blighters of the island."

"Are you asking me riddles?" demanded Emory, irritated.

For the past three hours he had tormented himself with the same question. He had heard his monoplane take off after the amphibian. Something in the reckless surge of its engine had told him that Jerry was at the controls. Having seen Stevens run down the hall after Jerry, he assumed that the two were together in the plane. He knew that Nancy was not in the house. What had happened to her, he did not know. Nor did he know why Jerry had gone flying away in the night when his presence would have added so much to the strength of the besieged forces in the house.

It had not occurred to him to question Jerry's motives. Jerry's safety was the only thing that worried him.

But no, that reckless, screaming room of the monoplane had been with Jerry's hand on the stick. And once in the air, Jerry would be safe. If Von Richtofen's red-nosed circus hadn't been able to bring him down at St. Quentin, certainly he was in no danger now.

Emory, his eyes just over the chipped edge of the table, gazed steadily toward the hangar. Five men stood talking in the palm grove, just out of pistol range. As he watched them, curious, he saw two of them pick up a machine-gun and tripod and walk in a wide circle toward the easterly side of the house. Then, just within range, they mounted the gun and lay down in the sawgrass.

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Jerry's plane comes within firing range of the gangster's hydroplane, tomorrow, but "it's no use killing the girl," Stevens says.

Graves Jewelry Shop, one block north of postoffice. Phone 499-W.

TENANT FARMERS HIT BY HURRICANE

HOUSTON, Tex., Aug. 17.—(AP)—Tenant farmers were the principal sufferers of the hurricane which swept southern coastal Texas Saturday night and Sunday, taking at least 35 lives.

1000 persons were destitute. Emergency stations continued the treatment of the injured, estimated by station attendants variously from 200 up and in most cases requiring only first aid.

FAVORS HOOVER AS DRY'S FRIEND

WASHINGTON, Aug. 17.—(AP)—A telegram from Daniel A. Foling, chairman of the allied forces for prohibition, expressing belief that President Hoover's election would safeguard some of the gains made under the

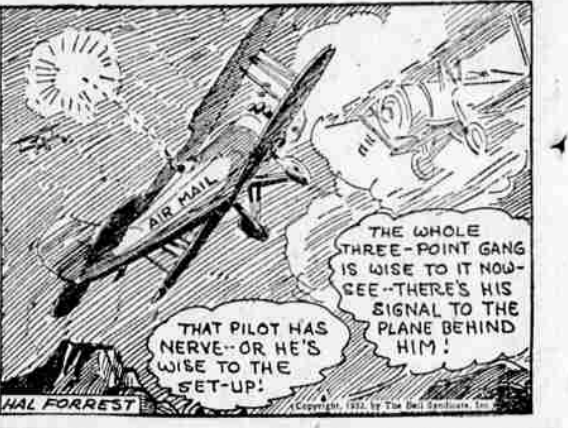
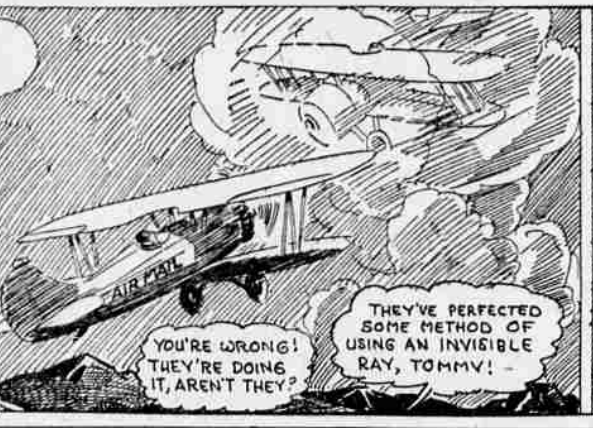
18th amendment" was made public today at the White House. "I march with you," the telegram concluded.

LEADING GROCERS MORE OPTIMISTIC

NEW YORK, Aug. 17.—(AP)—Paul S. Willis, president of the Associated Grocery Manufacturers of America, told a luncheon meeting of the association of manufacturers representative of New York today that a definite

improvement in business and a return of confidence and courage among business men are noticeable throughout the United States.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—A New Kind Of "Movie!"



BOUND TO WIN—Waiting For "Big Feet"



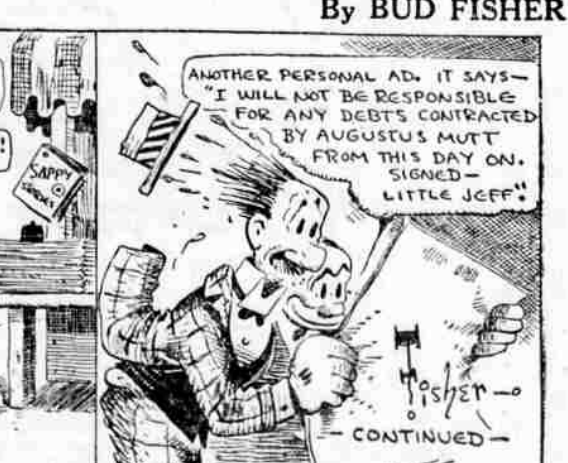
S'MATTER POP—He Calls For A Count



THE NEBBS—Ingratitude



MUTT AND JEFF—So That's The Way It Is!



LIFE LOSS HEAVY IN SEA DISASTERS

MARSEILLES, France, Aug. 17.—(AP)—Twenty-two men are feared to have drowned in the reported sinking of a fast dispatch boat in the air mail service to South America on Saturday.

The vessel was en route from Natal, Brazil, to Dakar, Senegal, when she ran into a storm.

LONDON, Aug. 17.—(AP)—A message to Lloyd's today from Tokyo said nineteen lives were lost when the steamer Hidemaru collided with the Nichikumaru on the inland sea this morning. The Nichikumaru sank shortly afterward.

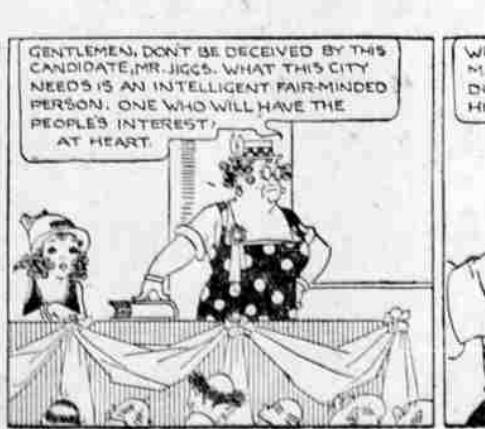
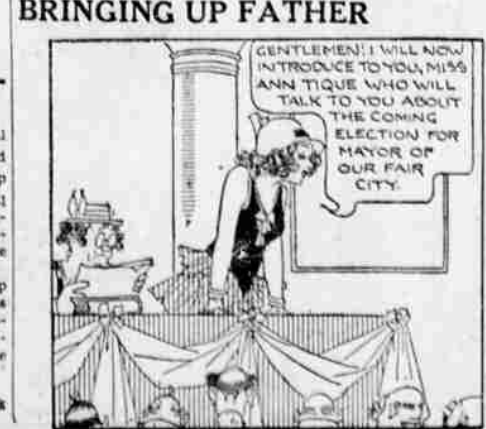
LICENSE BUYING NEAR '31 TOTAL

SALEM, Aug. 17.—(AP)—The total number of automobile licenses issued for the new year reached 157,294 up to Saturday night, not including mail orders not completed. It was announced by the secretary of state today. This is \$4,906 less than were issued at the same time a year ago.

Total receipts of license plates up to Friday night were \$4,107,804, as compared to \$5,404,141 at the corresponding date in 1931. License business was still good, the motor vehicle department said today.

Graves Jewelry Shop, one block north of postoffice. Phone 499-W.

BRINGING UP FATHER



By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST

By C. M. PAYNE

By EDWIN ALGER

By SOL HESS

By BUD FISHER

By George McManus