

Nothing Venture

by Patricia Wentworth

SYNOPSIS: Trying to fight down her growing conviction that Jervis has met with foul play, his wife Nan wears fruitlessly questions the cold and distant Mrs. Mellish. On the way to get information of Rosamund's career, the shifty girl who threw Jervis over in an attempt to cheat him of his fortune, Ferdinand Francis remarks to Nan that Rosamund's mysterious friend, Robert Leonard, has been away.

CHAPTER 33

NAN ATTACKS

INSTANTLY Nan flashed round on Ferdinand.

"When did Leonard go? Where has he been?"

"He went away on Tuesday."

"This is Thursday," said Nan. She paused. "Isn't it?"

"Yes, it's Thursday all right. It was Tuesday we lunched with the Tetterleys. Leonard had crooked his car, you remember. He got it going enough to take him into Croyston that evening. He ran it into Brown's garage for repairs, and he dined and slept at the hotel. He had breakfast there Wednesday morning very sharp at eight, and hired a man to take him out here in time to tend his incubators. He's got a watertight alibi, you see."

"No, I don't," said Nan. "If he was planning anything wicked, isn't that just what he'd do—go away and pretend he wasn't here?"

Ferdinand looked at her quickly sideways.

"I went to the George. He was playing billiards until half-past eleven. The chambermaid called him at seven. His car was in Brown's garage out of action—I went there and made sure of that."

Nan's lips made an unwontedly hard line. But nothing more was said until they reached the Tetterleys. Then F. F. looked quickly at her again, thought how pale she was, and said,

"Well, I'm not on in this scene, I guess. I'll put the car in the shade and wait."

Nan was shown into the drawing-room, a big formal room which Janet Tetterley used as little as possible. It was still furnished after her mother-in-law's taste, Basher having proved extraordinarily obstinate when pressed to get rid of an ebony grand piano, two ormolu cabinets, and a quantity of water-color paintings executed by the late Mrs. Tetterley in a frigid style.

Rosamund was standing at the far end of this room. She held a cigarette in her right hand. She was dressed in pale yellow linen. As Nan came towards her, she turned away to pick up a match-box. Rosamund's strong white hands were perfectly steady. She blew out her first mouthful of smoke before she spoke.

"Wanderer returned?" she said.

"No," said Nan.

Rosamund drew at her cigarette. "He's not here. Did you think he was?"

Nan said, "No," again in the same quiet voice.

Rosamund laughed.

"I haven't seen him, and if you'll take my advice, you'll stop hunting round after him. Good Lord, my dear! This is the twentieth century, and a man does occasionally go away for twenty-four hours without taking his whole family with him!"

"Yes," said Nan—"Ferdinand said that too."

"It's bound to be true if Ferdinand said it!" Her voice was insolent. Then suddenly she curbed it. "I know Jervis pretty well, and if you want my advice—which I don't suppose you do—I should say let sleeping dogs lie."

She had remained standing. A long window let in a brilliant panel of sunshine which slanted to her feet. Nan was standing too. She came a little nearer and said,

"Do you know where Jervis is?"

Rosamund's beautiful eyebrows rose.

"That's a little crude, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Nan. "I'm not worrying about being crude—I'm worrying about Jervis. If he's all right, he may be anywhere he likes, and he may be with anyone he likes. If you know where he is, will you tell me?"

"I've told you that I don't know."

"Yes," said Nan. "But you keep hinting that you do. I should be

very glad if you would stop hinting and say what you mean."

Rosamund gave a short laugh.

"I don't mean anything. If I'm to be quite candid, I think you're making a damned fuss. Men will go off on their own—and, knowing Jervis, I should say there'll be the devil to pay when he finds out that you've been sending the town-crier round after him."

"Yes," said Nan. She fixed her steady eyes on Rosamund. "You say men go off—but do they generally go in the middle of the night without any luggage?"

Something odd happened; but it happened so quickly that it would have been difficult to swear to. Nan had only an impression that Rosamund had begun to say something, and that before the words reached her lips the cigarette which she was holding slipped, sideways so that the red-hot tip burnt her finger. It was just an impression.

The cigarette slipped, and Rosamund said,

"Didn't he take any luggage?"

Then she went on without waiting for an answer. "That doesn't mean very much—does it?"

Nan said, "I don't know."

"Do you want me to do the 'ts' I don't mind if you don't."

"I would like you to say what you mean."

Rosamund laughed again.

"Perhaps he picked up what he wanted in New York."

"No," said Nan.

"You've been ringing them up?"

"Yes," said Nan.

Rosamund blew a smoke-ring.

"There is an alternative of course. If a man pays the rent of a flat, he very often keeps some things there."

"You don't seem to have a very high opinion of Jervis," said Nan.

Rosamund shrugged her shoulders.

"I don't expect him to be a plaster saint. If you do, I'm afraid you're going to get a good many jolts. If I had married him, I should have been quite philosophical about that sort of thing—but of course I never pretended to be in love with him." The stress on the "I" was of the slightest, but it was there.

Nan's color rose a little. She kept her voice quiet.

"You are trying to make me believe something that you don't believe yourself. I'm wondering why."

The ash fell from Rosamund's cigarette. It made a dusty patch on the fine primrose linen of her dress.

"Would you rather believe that he was drowned?"

The color in Nan's cheeks drained away. Her voice did not change.

"It's not a question of what either of us would rather believe—it's a question of the facts. I want to know what is true."

Rosamund stood with her hands behind her.

"You're very detached," she said.

"Well then, here are your facts. Twice this summer, while we were bathing together, Jervis had cramp pretty badly. The last time I had to help him in. I don't think he'd have got in if he'd been alone. Well—you would have it you know."

A little more color ebbed away.

Nan said,

"Is that true?"

"Certainly."

"Then the servants would know about it."

"If you think Jervis would be likely to go round telling people that sort of thing—"

"Did you tell anyone about it?"

"Why should I? I didn't particularly want to make Jervis wild with me just then."

"I see. Then nobody knew about this cramp but you?"

"And Jervis," said Rosamund.

"Yes, of course. Jervis would know if he had had cramp," said Nan.

She watched Rosamund's face, but it showed nothing. The sun dazzled behind her.

"You can't tell me anything else?"

"I'm afraid not. Ring me up if you hear anything."

"Yes," said Nan. "I'll ring you up when he gets back."

She said, "Good-bye, Rosamund," and turned and walked out of the room.

Two eager investigators, tomorrow, look into Robert Leonard's alibi.

our society and we will, undoubtedly, be asked to help again this year.

"Understanding that your Grange shoulders a great deal of this worthy work, we ask that when applicants living in your district approach our society that we may refer them back to you.

"Please do not misunderstand us; we are not trying to avoid giving assistance that is necessary. We are writing you this letter to avoid duplication of effort throughout the county.

"The Humane society has a limited quantity of feed at its disposal in the city of Medford and other points in the county where the Grange does not function.

"We will be happy to cooperate with you in any way and would appreciate a reply."

Many Purchase 1932 Auto Tags

The sheriff's office, since September 21, has issued 529 quarter year licenses to motorists of Jackson county with applications continuing at the rate of approximately 35 per day. Many of the applicants are hunters, and workers who have been employed the past six weeks in the fruit.

Albany—Reconstruction work completed on Albany Door Co. plant.

GLEEMEN START CONCERT PRACTICE

James Stevens, director of the Medford Gleemen, announced today that rehearsals for the Gleemen's concert, to be given on the evening of November 22, started last night with

the complete program arranged and a group of new numbers ready for preparation for the concert.

The program for the concert, according to present plans, will embrace an evening's entertainment of diversified choral work, with three outstanding numbers being prepared for presentation by Medford's male chorus. These include "Landsliding," by Grieg; "Liebesraum," by Liszt, and the Berellers' arrangement of Bachman's "Prelude in C-sharp minor."

HUSBAND'S ARREST BEGGARS FAMILY

The county court and Red Cross are seeking a solution of what to do with the wife and five children of Richard Morton, arrested last week,

for robbing and torturing an old man in Wasco county. Morton and two pals were taken to The Dalles last week for trial and face prison terms. The children range in age from four months to 14 years. They are in deep destitution, and have been living in a tent in the Ashland district.

Investigation by the county authorities shows that the roving propensities of the family have taken them all over America in the past two years. The family possessions consist of a dilapidated auto and a

few pieces of bedding. They have no funds for gasoline.

The county court has requested Wasco county to take care of the family.

Hawaiian Demo Shows Strength

HONOLULU, Oct. 5.—(AP)—Surprising strength of the Democratic nominee for delegate to congress from the normally Republican territory of Hawaii today marked nearly complete

returns from Saturday's primary. Lincoln L. McCandless, Democratic nominee, received 24,289 votes, and Victor S. K. Houston, Republican incumbent, 21,865. Each was opposed for nomination on his party's ticket.

BOSTON, Oct. 5.—(AP)—The Commercial Bulletin reported firm prices on the Boston wool market with "greatly increased activity" in eastern mills. The place goods market was reported as reassuring.

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Welcome to Old Miami!



BOUND TO WIN—Apologies



By EDWIN ALGER

S'MATTER POP—A Bet is A Bet



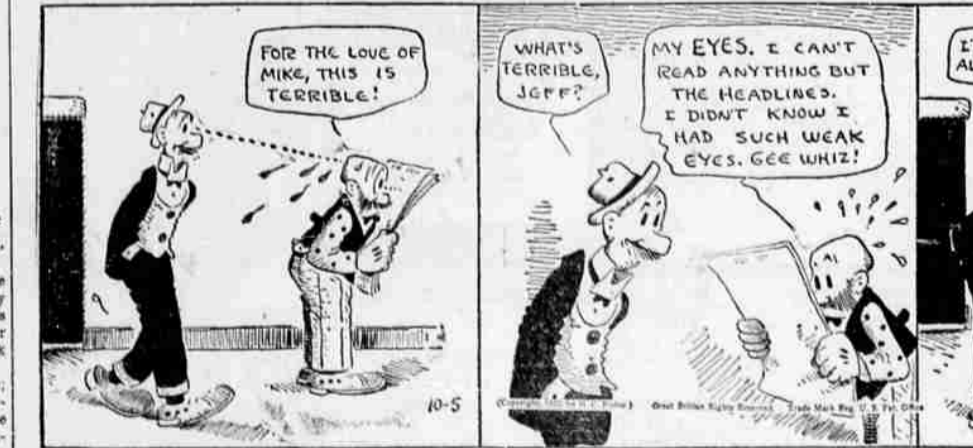
By C. M. PAYNE

THE NEBBS—Taxes



By SOL HESS

MUTT AND JEFF—And Mut's No Optician, At That



By BUD FISHER

BRINGING UP FATHER



By George McManus

HUMANE WORKERS ASK GRANGE AID IN FEEDING COWS

Letters, asking the cooperation of the Granges in a program to supply with feed, fowls and animals which contribute to family larders, have been mailed by the Jackson County Humane society to all sections of the county. Mrs. Sydney Richardson announced yesterday. Granges receiving the requests are: Wimer, Rogue River, Eagle Point, Bellview, Talent, Lake Creek, Phoenix, Sams Valley, Jacksonville, Applegate, Central Point and Rocky Ann.

The letter reads:

"The Jackson County Humane society has been appointed by the local state relief committee to assist in the care of cows, goats and chickens in want of feed upon which families are dependent for food this coming winter.

"In the past many problems of this character have been cared for by

our society and we will, undoubtedly, be asked to help again this year.

"Understanding that your Grange shoulders a great deal of this worthy work, we ask that when applicants living in your district approach our society that we may refer them back to you.

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