

The HIDDEN DOOR

BY FRANK L. PACKARD

SYNOPSIS: Reddy Turner, just had told Colin how the story of his sister's death in the hands of a mysterious criminal called the Mask. Colin is a writer of detective fiction, and is not surprised to know that Reddy expects to trace down and kill the Mask, who rules many criminal gangs through underlings who each know him as only one of his numerous aliases. Neither Colin nor Reddy is surprised when after a timid knock "Colonel Hargreaves" enters, for Colin's friends many down-and-out men in his quest for material. But Hargreaves is the Mask; he shoots down Reddy, and wounds Colin. Colin weakly drags himself to the telephone and calls the police.

Chapter Five THE POLICE ANGLE

DETECTIVE SERGEANT TIM MULVEY, who was one of those police "pals" of Colin to whom Reddy had referred, was in charge of the case. He sat now where Reddy Turner had sat nearly a month ago in the deep leather-upholstered lounging chair, facing Colin across the latter's desk. And again it was near midnight.

Colin's face, thin and drawn, showed the marks of a long illness. As a matter of fact he had hovered between life and death with the odds heavily against him for a matter of ten days. It was only that morning he had been discharged from the hospital—with very definite instruc-

all dead in both ears when any mention of the Mask was made. And yet the Mask exists and was certainly known by that name to some of those men.

"It is true that Reddy must have come pretty close to unearthing his quarry, otherwise no attention would have been paid to him. I am thoroughly convinced that all he said was literally true."

"It's too bad he hadn't spilled a little of it, then!" grunted Detective Sergeant Mulvey. "Not to the police, of course! No fear! The Reddys are all alike. But to you."

"Granted," agreed Colin. "But he didn't. I've told you everything Reddy said about him, and so far you—"

The telephone was ringing. Colin reached across the desk and picked up the receiver.

"Yes! Hello!" he said—and then his jaws clamped suddenly together. Over the wire came that unforgettable voice with its quaver and Southern drawl.

"Mr. Colin Hewitt?"

"Yes!" Colin bit off the word.

"Hargreaves speaking. Colonel by courtesy, sir. But perhaps you had already recognized my voice?"

"I had!" said Colin grimly. "Alias the Mask, I believe. Any name will

do." He glanced at Detective Sergeant Mulvey. At the mention of the Mask, the homicide bureau man had started up abruptly from his chair and had stepped to the edge of the desk.

"Sorry you haven't come around in person, but it's a pleasure to hear your voice once more."

"I doubted at one time, sir," drawled again, "if you ever would again. I had no intention of merely wounding you that night, but nevertheless I have called you up now to congratulate you on your return to health, sir."

"It is really too good of you," said Colin evenly.

"And also for another reason—to express the hope that your recovery will be permanent. I shot you because of the possibility that your friend Reddy might have unduly confided in you in respect of myself. Since then I have watched with interest the activities of the police. It is axiomatic that you would have confided in the police; but the actions of the police have been so ridiculous, that I am convinced you had nothing intimate to impart. It therefore gives me great pleasure to say that you have nothing more to fear from me."

"Again this is really too good of you," Colin said levelly.

"Provided," the voice drawled on, "that you do not meddle. I think, sir, that you would be much better advised to go away somewhere for your health rather than spend your time with Detective Sergeant Mulvey. You might be led into temptation—in which case I assure you, sir, you will not live 24 hours. I think that is all, except to ask you to convey my compliments to Detective Sergeant Mulvey, who, I am informed, is again with you tonight after the three hours, doomed from the outset to futility, which you spent together in the rogues' gallery at headquarters this afternoon. Good night."

There came a faint click from the other end of the wire. Colin faced Detective Sergeant Mulvey.

"The Mask—eh?" grunted the other.

"Yes."

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Colin, tomorrow, hunts up a bunch of skeleton keys.



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tions to go slow and take the utmost care of himself until he was back to normal again.

They were discussing the case. From the night of the murder the police had got nowhere.

"If you ask me"—Detective Sergeant Mulvey swung the stub of a thick cigar from one corner of his mouth to the other—"Reddy handed you a fairy tale. This bird ain't anything like that. When we get him you'll see he's nothing more than a dirty rat in a small way of business that keeps under cover from his own gang in order to save his own hide, and the gang falls for the mysterious unknown who yanks the strings, and eats it all up alive—the way your readers do."

"I don't agree with you," Colin replied bluntly. "Tim, he was so hot on the Mask's track that night that it cost him his life. Can't you let that sink in?"

"SURE, I can!" returned Detective Sergeant Mulvey gruffly. "It's the old, old story! To hell with the police! Reddy, on a lone hunt, was after the guy that bumped off his pal and killed his sister. Finally, just when he thinks that in another twenty-four hours or so he'll be pumping the man full of holes, the other gets him frst. That's all right! But it doesn't mean that this Mask game is the one and only! Reddy got excited when he stumbled on that Mask stuff, that's all."

"And again I disagree," returned Colin calmly. "Reddy wasn't the kind to get excited that way."

"Oh, well!"—Detective Sergeant Mulvey shrugged his big shoulders—"let that go! You'll see!"

"When?" inquired Colin blandly. The thrust went home.

"Damn it!" snapped Detective Sergeant Mulvey. "I don't know, do I? We're doing all we can. I'm not making any bones about it to you. So far the case is a total loss."

"Which rather goes to prove, doesn't it," Colin suggested quietly, "that there is at least some basis of fact in Reddy's assertion and that you are dealing with an unusual situation? You've had dozens of gangsters up for questioning, and they

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MOLLISON'S TRAVEL GOTHAM HERO PATH

NEW YORK, Aug. 2.—(AP) Behind screaming police sirens and under a

generous shower of confetti and ticker tape, Amy and James Mollison, England's famous flying couple, rode the heroes' route to city hall yesterday for an official reception and two of the city's gold medals.

Police estimated that 200,000 lined Broadway from the Battery to City Hall Park as the noisy parade passed up the canyon-like thoroughfare.

RE-EMPLOYMENT CHIEF SELECTED FOR OREGON

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2.—(AP)—The set-up of emergency reemploy-

ment directors for the 48 states was completed today with the appointment of Robert S. Quinby as director for Massachusetts; Mrs. Lettie Ware Meader, for Maine, and E. L. Merereau, for Oregon.

Merereau is from Portland, Oregon.

The appointments are for three months.

Wife Would Drop Torrence Junior

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 2.—(UP)—Ernest Torrence, Jr., son of the late film character actor, was sued for divorce today by Mrs. Lillorie Green Torrence, Beverly Hills socialite, who charged he told her she no longer charmed him.

Torrence left their home last May 26, she said, after she accused him of being rude to their guests at a party.

Tax delinquencies in South Dakota for five years, 1927 to 1931 inclusive, totaled more than \$16,000,000.

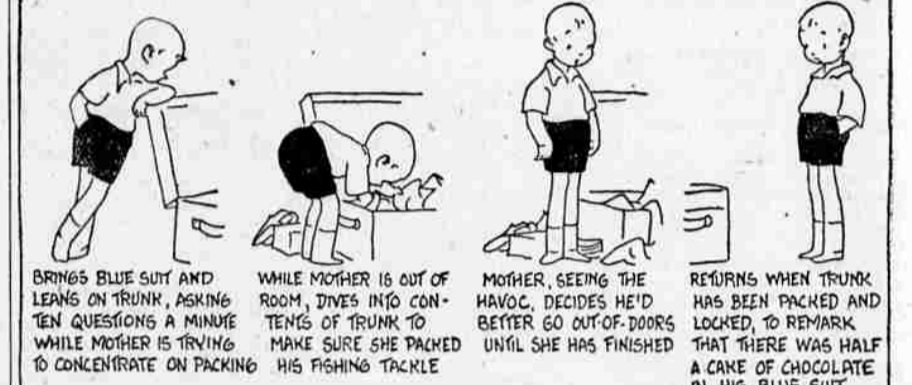
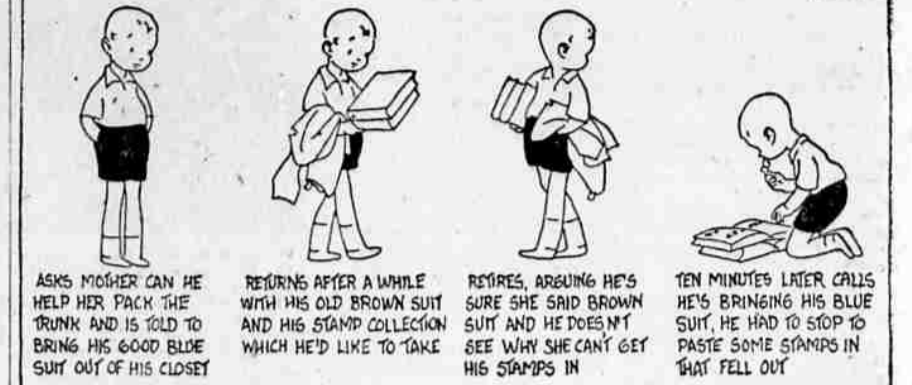
Florida is wet, topographically—it has 80,000 lakes.

S'MATTER POP—



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HELPING TO PACK



(Copyright, 1933, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.)

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Feminine Marksmanship!



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BOUND TO WIN—"A Lone Wolf!"



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THE NEBBS—The Parting Of The Ways



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BRINGING UP FATHER



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FIFTY GAIN JOBS BY NRA PLAN IN BAKER

BAKER, Aug. 2.—(AP)—Fifty additional persons are estimated to have been placed at work in Baker business establishments as a result of the decision of merchants at a general meeting Monday night to co-operate unanimously in the national recovery program. The average hours of operation will be 46 hours a week.

California game officials believe the Mt. Shasta hatchery containing 17,000,000 baby trout is the largest in the world.

There's No Guesswork in Tribune A. B. C. Circulation