

Outrageous Fortune

by Patricia Wentworth

SYNOPSIS: Caroline Leigh learns from Elmer Van Berg that the latter believes Jim Randall shot her husband, Elmer Van Berg, at the time the Van Berg emeralds were stolen. Then Caroline overhears a "sensation" in the housekeeper's room in which Caroline Russell, Mrs. Van Berg's housekeeper, describes the Blue Room at Hale Place in connection with the emeralds. Caroline goes to Hale Place, where Jim is hiding, trying to regain memory of the events of the last few weeks. The secret hiding place in the Blue Room is a genuine one—but empty, and Jim is not there.

Chapter 35 JIM'S BATTLE

Jim Randall had told Caroline that she was not to come again to Hale Place, but he did not really expect that she would obey him. When, therefore, he returned from a walk across his own dark fields at a little after ten o'clock, he did not lock the back door behind him, but left it just ajar.

He lighted one of the candles which Caroline had brought. He blew out the match and stepped back, and then there a voice spoke aloud in his mind: "Eight green stones—five windows like slits—no one knows where they are but me." Then the voice stopped. He was left staring at the candle flame with a most frightful feeling of apprehension. The words linked Elmer Van Berg's emeralds with the Blue Room.

The shock of the thought was tremendous. If the emeralds were here he must have brought them. If they were here, then he had shot Elmer Van Berg.

They couldn't be here. Jim took the candle and went upstairs to the Blue Room. He went up to the four-post bed and threw the candlelight upon the headpiece with its carving of the Tree of Knowledge. He twisted the bottom apple on the right-hand side; at the same time he pulled on the shield. It opened like a door. His hand fell, and the yellow candlelight shone into the cavity.

Jim stayed, staring. Here were the emeralds—here, in this secret place. He tried to stir his mind to thought, but nothing moved. The emeralds were in the secret place behind Ralph de Burgh's shield.

Without altering his position, he put out a hand, took hold of the gold chain, and pulled it out of the cupboard. It swung as he had seen it swing from Elmer Van Berg's hand—eight square green stones with pearls between them—"like a kid's green beads."

He had got as far as that, when the first sound reached him. As he half stood, half knelt at the bedside with the candle and burnt to its last inch on the white coverlet, he was in full view, not only of the door, but of the whole length of the passage between the door and the main corridor.

The man who had turned the corner a moment before had first started back and then come cautiously on. He could see the lighted panel of the door, and beyond it the bed head with the right hand pillar, and Jim half turned away, a knee upon the bed and his left hand just out of the picture. Another yard, and the hand was in view—the hand and what it was holding—the eight green stones, rimmed with gold and dripping with pearls. The low candle made black shadows everywhere.

At Jim's first movement the man charged him, snatching at the hand which held the chain. They came down together across the bed. The darkness came down too.

As he fell, Jim struck the jutting shield with his head. The chain was wrenched out of his grasp. He had the man by the shoulder with an awkward left-hand grip—a hard, wiry fellow with a twist on him like an acrobat. He was twisting with the acrobat. He was a little dazed with the suddenness and the blow to his head. With a violent effort he heaved over, and as he did so, the man wrenched aside and got his teeth into his left wrist. He bit deep, jerked backwards, and with a rip of cloth he was free. He must have been as quick on his feet as a cat, for in the same moment he was across the room and through the door.

Jim stumbled up, heard the sound of running feet in the passage, and gave chase. He had cut his forehead and the blood ran down into his eyes and bothered him. The man had the start of him, and this time

Jim was not sufficiently sure of himself to slide the banisters. As he came to the foot of the stairs, he heard the dull thud of the banister door which led to the kitchen wing. When he reached it, the wind was blowing to meet him down the long stone passage.

He dashed his hand across his eyes and ran at top speed down the passage and out of the open door. The headlong instinct of pursuit carried him across the yard and out of the gate. There his mind checked him. He stood still and listened. It was no use just blundering on in the dark. He'd got to listen, and he'd got to think. If the thief was a local man, he would take some side path or cut across the garden. If he was a stranger, he would probably stick to the drive.

Jim caught the sound of crushed gravel and began to run again. The fellow was sticking to the drive. That looked like a stranger. He wondered how he had got here. If he had a car or a motor-bike, he was as good as gone already. Remembering the wiggle-and-twist brand of light the thief had put up, Jim didn't think he had to do with a novice.

He had almost reached the gate, when he stopped suddenly and ran back again past the house along a gravel path which wound between shrubberies. He had taken a sudden decision. To catch a lighter, faster man with a twenty yard start and the darkness to help him offered no chances. In a rapid survey of the possibilities he had seen only one real chance.

There are three ways out of Hazelbury West—the main north road, the Ledington road, and the path across the fields to Hinton which was the nearest railway station. If you walked to the station, you took the field path, and the distance was four miles. If you drove, you followed the Ledington road, and it was six.

The path along which Jim was running came out upon the field path to Hinton, cutting the corner. If the thief was making for Hinton with the idea of catching the last train there, Jim had a reasonable chance of intercepting him. He hadn't gone north; Jim had heard those running footsteps go off to the left before he himself turned back.

As he ran, Jim wondered whether they had altered all the trains. Seven years is a long time to be away. There used to be a crawling local train that stopped at Hinton—the twelve-twenty-five—and arrived at Ledington about one. It didn't go any farther.

Jim kept a steady pace across the fields. The farther he went, the more of a wild goose chase did the whole thing appear. He had had a hunch, and he had followed it. Sometimes hunches turned out all right; sometimes they let you down. He began to feel gloomily certain that he was going to be let down flat.

He crossed a stile, and came in sight of the lights of Hinton station. As he did so, the church clock of Hinton St. Margaret chimed out the hour of twelve. If the train had not been altered, he had a quarter of an hour in hand, and a couple of hundred yards between him and the main road.

The field path ended in a gap with posts across it. Jim emerged, crossed the road, and began to walk down the incline which led to the station. It is a long incline.

The clock had only just struck twelve, but the train was coming in. It might now be anything from the eleven-fifty-five to the twelve-five, but it couldn't any longer be the twelve-fifteen.

He started to run, and as he did so, something black began to bob up and down ahead of him. It was another man, also running, and presumably with the same object. Jim put on all the pace he could, gained a little, and then saw the black figure draw away.

They would hold him at the wicket. If they held him, he'd be likely to miss the train. Would they hold him? No, he was through, with a hand thrust out as if he were showing a ticket.

He was across the platform and into one of the rear cars as the train began to move. Jim flung himself against the wicket, and saw the red tail-light slide off into the dark.

He had shot his bolt. (Copyright, 1933, J. B. Lippincott Co.) Jim finds, tomorrow, a serious situation.

Activities of Legion Auxiliary

By Mrs. Goodwin Humphrey
The meaning of a membership in the Auxiliary in its larger significance, is an opportunity to help

to aid in the development of our country and to stand guard over its principles and ideals. Your presence is greatly needed and your membership desired! A membership drive is to be held Tuesday, November 7th, beginning at 9 o'clock. Anyone who can, is asked to meet at the home of Mrs. O. L. Overmeyer on South Holly that morning and if possible to return there, where

lunch will be served and the drive continued in the afternoon. Mrs. J. Leach and Mrs. Overmeyer are chairmen of the membership committee. The Auxiliary is assisting with the Community Chest drive which is to be held November 7, 8 and 9. All members are asked to be ready to respond. No greater service can be rendered to the community!

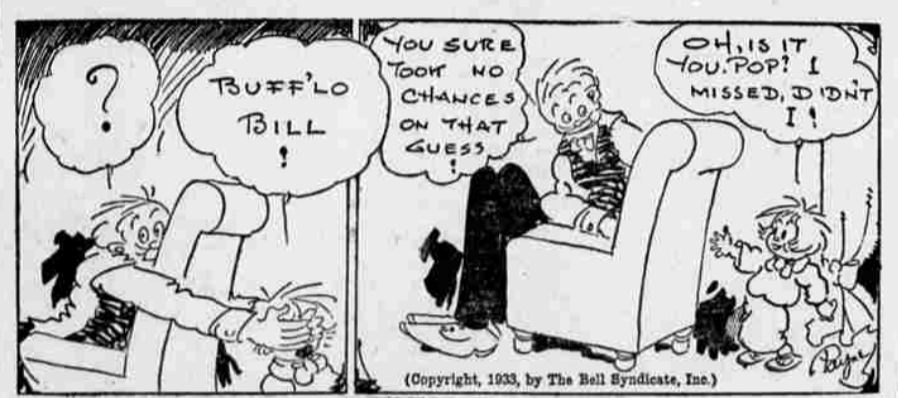
The Sewing club will hold the first meeting of the new year in the Sewing club rooms, Medford National Bank building. Much work is to be done and a pleasant evening is anticipated. Mrs. Ray Wright and Mrs. E. C. Kuntz, welfare chairmen, will be in charge. Mrs. Warren Butler, music chairman, announces the Singing club to be held at her home at 7:30 Monday, November 6. All interested in music are asked to be present.

Call Mrs. George Codding or Mrs. Cole Holmes for reservations for the Armistice day luncheon to be held at the First Methodist church at 12:30. A very entertaining program is being planned with Mrs. Belva Alken, chairman. Vesper services will be held the Sunday following Armistice day, Nov.

is at 4 o'clock, in the Presbyterian church. Rev. W. J. Howell will give the address. "During Dr. Emmens' absence in the east, Dr. Howard N. Bywater, eye, ear, nose, and throat surgeon, will be in his office at Grants Pass to attend anyone needing his services. Dr. Bywater is rated as one of the best men in his line on the coast."

S'MATTER POP—

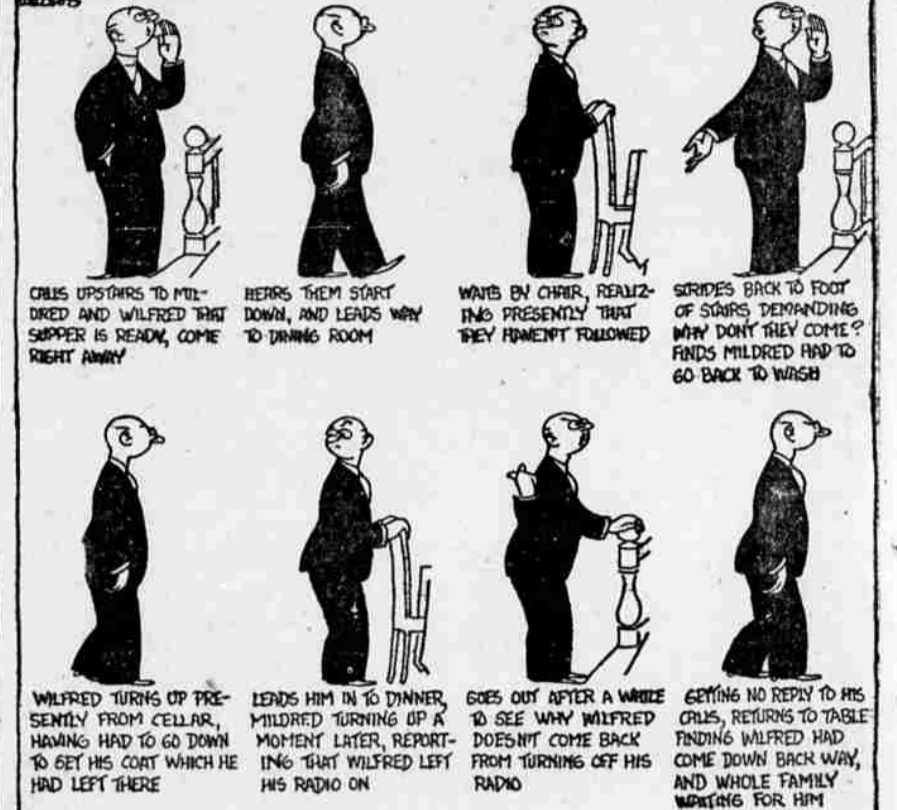
By C. M. PAYNE



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THE FAMILY ALBUM—MEALTIME

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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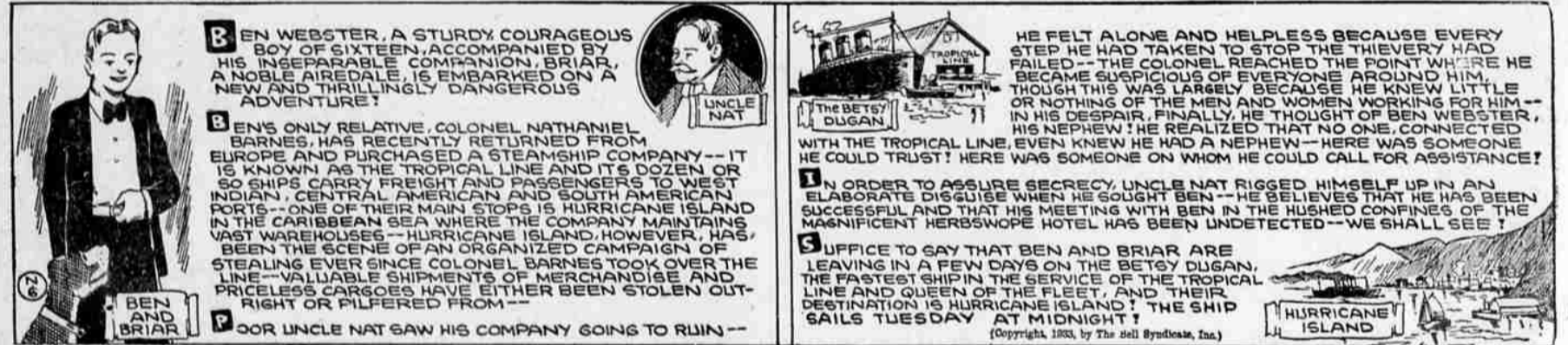
TAILSPIN TOMMY—Disturbing News From South America

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—Now, Go On With The Story

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—The Truth Hurts

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



The W. C. T. U.

By Mrs. Wm. H. Hill.

The regular meeting of the Women's Christian Temperance Union has been announced for Thursday afternoon at the Y. M. C. A. Reports of the state convention held at Portland will be given by Mrs. McCormack of Ashland and Misses Russell and Woods of the local union.

An interesting meeting is assured all.

SYLVIA SIDNEY IN 'JENNIE GERHARD'

Sylvia Sidney, girl of the sad, wistful eyes, reaches the heights of screen-dom in Theodore Dreiser's amazing chronicle of the life and loves of "Jennie Gerhardt," which opens at the Roxy theater today. The picture features Donald Cook, Mary Astor, H. B. Warner and Edward Arnold.

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