

BLOND GODDESS

A New Serial by Herbert Jensen

SYNOPSIS: Frank Grahame, the explorer, and Janice Kent, movie star, fall into a mysterious valley while escaping from a band of marauding savages in the interior of Yucatan. They cannot get out of the valley, and to their horror they find the Ahkin priest of the tribe to be insurmountable. To save the Ahkin, they find Bill Langton, also and Janice, the Ahkin's friend of Grahame who has been missing many months.

Chapter 23
LANGTON'S STORY

JANICE exclaimed in a choked voice, "He's hurt, Frank, oh, he's hurt!"

Langton muttered, "That happened weeks ago. I'm all right now. I got cracked up badly trying to get out of this valley. I line I'd made broke when I was halfway up the cliff. . . . Getting food was pretty hard for a few weeks. . . ."

Janice's eyes glistened. Langton smiled. "Don't feel sorry for me Miss Kent—wait 'til I show you my Crusoe bachelor quarters. I've got everything including running water. Too much running water, but I'm afraid not so many groceries as I'd like. . . ."

He chatted on, gaily, inconsequentially, as if he were admitting them to his house for an afternoon's visit. Frank could not take his eyes from the gangling emaciated figure. The few rags of clothes he had were soiled and torn and hung from him like pitiful tatters on a scarecrow. He suggested that they walk to his camp.

He ambled ahead with a grotesque limp, swinging his stone-tipped bludgeon with what was almost an air of gay insouciance. The other arm stood out at a pitiful angle.

The afternoon sun dipped beyond the western cliffs as they reached Langton's fire. The high-priest lay as they had seen him earlier in the afternoon, face immobile, eyes hateful.

Frank experienced a little crawling of the muscles of his back as the Ahkin's eyes rested upon him. Helpless as the man was nevertheless his glance seemed to have substance.

Frank felt the malevolent impact of his gaze. The Ahkin seemed to have a power for harm that was beyond the physical.

Langton poked the fire with a stick. Several hours had passed since they had found him at their camp across the stream. After showing them his "Crusoe quarters"—the small shack that stood before the entrance to an extensive cave, he had pressed them with questions of the outside world.

His mouths out of civilization, he had said, seemed like so many years. Frank had gossiped steadily, and his news, supplemented by what Janice could tell, seemed to bring back the side of Billy Langton's nature—the impudent, reckless charm—that the world had thought lost forever to it.

Langton listened with the complete absorption of a child with a fairy tale.

Once with a vast pentence he interrupted to ask them if they were hungry. He barely waited for their answer, but disappeared into the cave and brought out a woven basket of dried venison.

Janice and Frank ate ravenously. The Ahkin, when it was offered to him had waved his hand negatively, almost contemptuously. Nor did Langton eat any. "He's like I am," Langton grinned. "I'm so sick of the stuff myself I'd rather eat a bucket of spinach. . . . If I had a bucket of spinach."

FRANK glanced at him suspiciously. "Is that all you have?" He pointed at the basket. Langton chuckled behind his blond beard. "I got you. But you're wrong this time. . . . There's more in the cave. And more running around loose in the jungle.

"This place is sort of a wild game trap. Animals that don't fall off the cliffs float down the stream and land here. They can't get out." He stared with impassive reflection into the fire.

"I've done as well for food as could be expected. I've had enough, anyway. I made a rope of vines and cactus fiber. With it I could trap a deer when I wanted.

"I've even caught a turkey or two, and managed to net fish. The fish weren't very good. The trouble was—" Langton made a grimace. "—that the rope finally got me in trouble. "I made a long one, tied a rock to

It and practised slinging it. I got so I could throw it quite a distance. It occurred to me that if I could sling it up over the lip of the cliff it might catch on something and I could haul myself up by it.

"I tried it. After a while it fastened on something—I thought stoutly—and after testing it by climbing ten feet or so I decided to risk the entire climb. Well. . . . It let me down. . . ."

He pointed to his maimed arm. "I broke that, and dislocated my hip. I crawled back here. It was pretty bad for a while. I had some food but I couldn't hunt—I guess for weeks." He grinned again. "But my appetite wasn't what you'd call hearty, and I got by all right."

"What did you do for fire?" asked Janice.

"That was the least of my worries. I found a wood that burns forever, I think. The natives used it back in the city, and I had a few matches."

They sat and talked late into the night. The mosquitoes did not bother them. Langton claimed that it was because there was good drainage into a swiftly flowing stream, and therefore there could be no breeding places.

Langton's story was that he had been blown out of his courses by the hurricane and sighted no place to land until to his amazement he saw the great stone-slatted clearing near the pyramid.

Not only could he land there but it appeared designed for a later take-off. He had, then, no hesitation in landing.

"I'd been spoiled, I guess," he went on with a hint of apology in his smile. "When the natives surrounded me I thought that they composed a sort of jungle reception committee. They seemed to know who I was, too.

"I used to read stories about these people down here who made gods of blond men—you know lots of those old Spaniards were blond, which was one of the reasons they got by so well in the old days.

"Even when they came they found the natives had blond-gods—from the east—legends. The Spaniards took advantage of those legends.

"Maybe I thought I might do the same for a little while. I'm kid enough, I guess, to try feeling how it is to be a king. Yep," he continued, "I tried, but I didn't get away with it. I met the Ahkin here in a day or two and I began to wish that hurricane had blown me somewhere else.

"The high-priest isn't a bad sort, really. I think he's a remarkable fellow. He doesn't speak English—only Spanish—yes, that's right, just Spanish and his own language, but he can read your mind like a book.

"Don't tell me you don't believe in telepathy, Frank—this boy can give you some startling exhibition. Either that or he's a twin brother to Herman the Great. Anyway we got along fine when I'd ask him questions that he could answer with a yes or a no in Spanish—I know that much of the language, anyway.

"We got along fine, I say, until I was taken to the top of the pyramid to witness one of their little sunrise performances. They'd dressed me up quite trickily.

"They killed a poor devil on the sacrifice stone. . . . and a girl. I went a little haywire and in the fight came out second best.

"They put me in a stone room, and gave me to understand that my scrap on the pyramid top had elected me to take a more or less personal part in the next performance.

"They treated me all right though. They gave me some stuff from the ship, pop, chewing gum, and chocolate bars—" He grinned a little shamefacedly. "You know me, Frank. Frank used to tell me, Miss Kent, that all I needed on my crate was a peanut whistle to go into business.

"I wrote a note on a cablegram envelope, and scratched my story on the wall, high up. The envelope I put in a pop bottle and sealed it with chewing gum and a piece of rag from my shirt. When they took me to the pyramid top I carried the bottle with me.

"To cut a long story short, I tried to take the Ahkin with me—not because I had anything personally against him, but he is a dangerous lunatic and with him out of the way the vital statistics of this anarchy would take quite a drop for a good."

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Frank and Bill discuss etc. tomorrow.

HEIMWEHR CHIEF WITH DOLLFUSS AUSTRIANS TOLD

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VIENNA, Feb. 28.—(AP)—Prince Ernst von Starbemberg, leader of the victorious fascist Heimwehr movement, said today of Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss: "We stand or fall together."

Von Starbemberg made this declaration at his first official press reception. At his elbow was the federal press chief who customarily sits beside Chancellor Dollfuss at such functions.

The Heimwehr leader, however, quickly disposed of any suspicion that he was emerging as the sole dictator of Austria, by emphasizing repeatedly that he and Dollfuss are in full agreement and that the Heimwehr is absolutely convinced that Dollfuss will carry out the program of von Starbemberg and the Heimwehr.

The prince denied extra precautions were being taken along the frontier. "If it should become necessary to safeguard the frontier," he said, "Heimwehr troops would, of course, be rushed in that direction, but personally I do not anticipate this necessity."

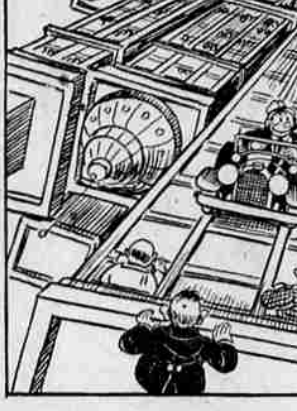
Call for Warrants.
SALEM, Feb. 28.—(AP)—The state treasurer today issued a call for warrants marked not paid for want of funds, date from December 16 to 20, inclusive, and amounting to \$103,782.

HOSPITAL MUST PAY FOR INJURY

SALEM, Ore., Feb. 28.—(AP)—The Corvallis General Hospital association must pay personal injury damages of \$9000 to Mrs. A. B. Hamilton, the Oregon supreme court ruled Tuesday in affirming Judge Earl C. LaTourette in an appeal from Benton county.

The hospital association lost the judgment case in the circuit court when plaintiff claimed injuries were sustained through bodily burns occasioned by the use of an electric heating pad while in the hospital. The hospital appealed, claiming it was a charitable institution and therefore not liable.

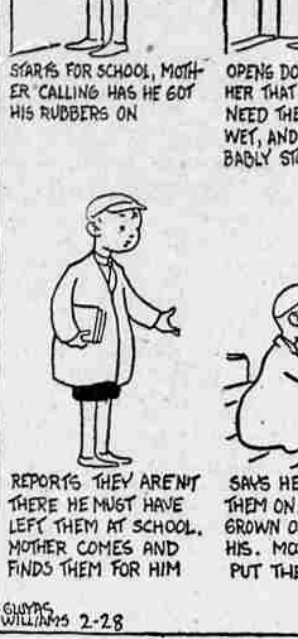
In the long opinion written by Justice J. O. Bailey it was held the hospital was not charitable but was operated for profit, and therefore liable for payment of judgment decreed in the lower court.



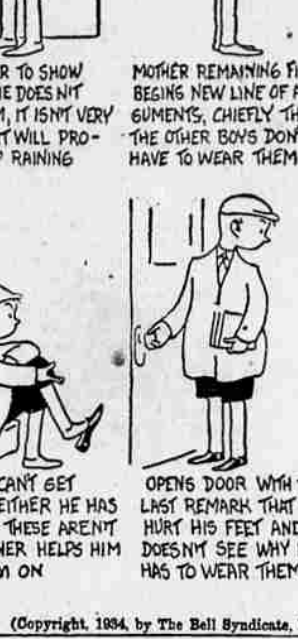
THE RUBBER BATTLE
By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



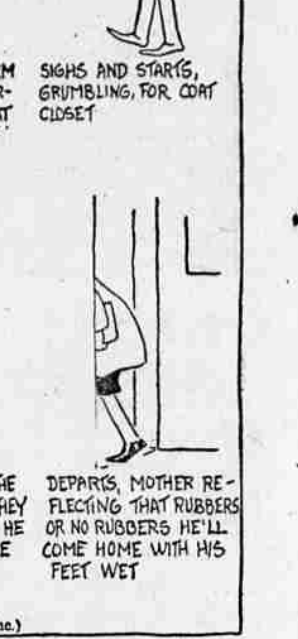
S'MATTER POP—
AND DO YOU KNOW I TOOK EIGHT OR NINE SITTINGS AND STILL DIDN'T GET A GOOD PICTURE



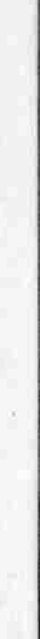
TAILSPIN TOMMY—The "Crash Pilot!"



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Shark Island



THE NEBB'S—I'm The Kid



JUSTICE COURTS OUT ON KNOX LAW CASES

SALEM, Ore., Feb. 28.—(AP)—Justice courts cannot impose fines or sentences under the terms of the state liquor control act, Attorney General J. H. VanWinkle held today. VanWinkle's opinion stated: "I find

nothing in the act which gives to the justice court concurrent jurisdiction with that of the circuit court for imposition of a fine or a jail sentence thereunder."

The opinion was requested by the district attorney of Columbia county. PORTLAND, Ore., Feb. 28.—(AP)—William Newland, 27, stabbed in a fight between a group of Philpino and white men here Sunday, died in a hospital today. He was stabbed in the left side.

BRINGING UP FATHER

