

# SPITE MARRIAGE

by Katharine Haviland Taylor

**SYNOPSIS:** The divorce that Bob Powers has demanded that Marsha get has been postponed because Bob's mother is dying. Bob is hurriedly closing up his store in Mexico; Marsha is caring for Mrs. Powers in New York. Marsha's love of the old lady leads her to forgive Bob's stubborn misunderstanding, which has disrupted their marriage. Mrs. Powers grows weaker day by day.

## Chapter 35 THE BLOW

IT WAS early in March that Bob planned his start. As the result of almost superhuman pressure, he found himself free to go two days before he had thought he could start and—packing!

Packing made him rather absurdly tremulous. Once and again he paused to stare blankly at the most familiar objects; a military brush, a comb, some such unromantic thing.

Then he would pull himself, with a hard jerk, from that which he scorned as "mooning," to go on . . . shirts, collars, he must not forget to open and to empty the bottom drawer that had turned to a safe during one week of hard rains. Less than six days of travel and he would see his mother, Marsha.

Bartholomew would open the door to him; perhaps his mother would wait his coming in the drawing room; perhaps Marsha would be in the hall?

Or perhaps because of his mother and the game they played for her, Marsha would meet him at the station. He hoped, fervently, that he wouldn't go to pieces to show her how much she still mattered, and to give her hint of the fact that she would always matter. He did not want to bother her in any way.

Young Todd, idle that day because of a touch of the fever that makes nomads cautious, wandered in to say, "Packing?"

Bob laughed. "Might think so," he responded, "but in reality, I'm trout fishing."

"Damned funny, aren't you?" questioned Todd. But he was not affronted. It was good to see old Bob coming back to his old self. Bob had been one of the most light-hearted of the crew before his marriage.

"Guess you'll hate to see your wife?" asked Todd.

"Great hardship," Bob agreed. Todd realized he had been wrong about it; he saw Bob's eyes brighten and a flush creep under his tan.

"Hate her, don't you?" ventured young Todd.

"Suppose you mind your business, you nifty brat," said Bob. He added, as he stepped on a bulging suitcase in order to close it, "And suppose you clear out. If Ling hadn't been full of hop, I'd have stationed him at the front door just in order to tell you that I was not at home. Is that clear?"

Todd admitted it was; he grinned, leaving. As he gained the open he saw Vicente disappearing into the gulch and he waited. "No one's little race," he murmured, as Vicente kicked his mule into following the twisting, rising path.

"Letters, you lop-eared, unwashed son of a razor back hog?" asked Todd, who tried to be polite, five minutes later.

VICENTE held forth a telegram, addressed to Bob. Todd hoped it did not contain bad news. "How fearful that would be!" he murmured, coming back to himself and to natural expression. He plucked at a hussling as he looked nervously toward Alexander's and Powers' shack, which Vicente had entered in his usual slow way.

Vicente came out. There was no stir from the shack; no slightest noise came from it to liven the jungle silence.

Todd moved, stealthily, toward the opened door. And this time a wish to help, not curiosity, took him. At the doorway, he looked in to decide that it must have been bad news, very bad news.

Powers was sitting, slumped by the table, head dropped upon his arms and shoulders moving. There was a lizard at his feet. It scurried through crushed papers, darted across the room; up the wall. Todd said a cramped, muted, "Powers!" but Bob didn't answer and Todd backed away.

Bob sat up, squared his shoulders, he never knew how much later. Then again he read the word that told him that the feeble flame in his mother's weary body had gone out; the message was signed, "Marsha Powers."

He would return now to arrange with Marsha Powers for their divorce, not to pretend for his mother with kissing Marsha as he met her. "I've been thinking too much of that," he said leadenly and aloud.

He realized then, as he stared at a calendar (the leaf two months old) that he had never once dreamed he would not see his mother again. Marsha had signed it "Love, Marsha Powers."

What an odd thing, a mind when shocked. It went on as it pleased; turning abruptly from one thought to another that seemed unrelated.

It had not—his falling to see his mother again—seemed possible. She had so looked forward to his coming, Marsha had written, because the doctor had felt she would live months, and probably beyond the stretch of that specified year.

And he would never see her again; his mother; a curious, flat fact it was, that numbed him. He had been whistling as Vicente came in, and thinking of Marsha. And then Vicente had come in to say something in his low-class Spanish of telegrams and Bob's heart had dropped. And only after a real effort could he open the wire.

"Absurd to feel so," he had reasoned at that moment. But it had not been "absurd to feel so." "Love, Marsha Powers" . . . she was, whatever else she was not, kind. She had been wonderful all through, and square . . . writing him of having had to speak with Geoffrey and of how she regretted it and that it would not happen again. The most doubting soul would have believed her; that line and her promise.

THEN came a dull, long interval in which he did the usual things that one does living. He ate; he responded to the sympathy of his crew. They were very kind, he reminded himself constantly, in order that he might remember to tell them so and to thank them . . . everything was so remote!

He slept a little that first night, to waken without remembering and to remember slowly; and that was pretty bad.

Then the next day they all saw him off from the nearest village and on a train that, the month before, had been held up by bandits who had a regard that was not too deep for human life.

Hard gripping hands . . . and the gang saying kind things about working under him. People generally were pretty kind, he realized, and that it did not now matter, and that nothing could.

After he crossed the border, his mind began to stretch and to grope toward the normal where the stricken suffer most acutely. He stared tragically from car windows, there, at some oaks and a tangle of undergrowth.

He would lose Marsha too, he realized. And not that he would hold her, or any woman, against her will. He was, he reasoned on, glad she was to find everything he had missed.

But would she, or could she, find anything with Tarleton? But he would not let himself think of that, he decided. Even well balanced, it did strange things to him; that wonder, with the thought of her loving Tarleton. Loving Tarleton, perhaps, as he, Bob, had early dreamed that she some day might come to love him.

How would she greet him? (He heard "First call for Dinner"; he must eat, wanting to or not; but he'd wait a time). Would she leave the house immediately or was he to suffer once more that combination of misery and happiness which, since that day, had risen from the knowledge that she was close, but beyond the reach of his arms, no matter how close.

Would she sleep in the next room, as she had? Or go forward to the lavender or the blue—guest room?

He hoped she would stay. It seemed to him that that would rather finish the affair for his mother. If she stayed no one could say, "It was only a week after the funeral that she went off; left him!" And so she would drag the little Victorian lady into the mess.

He realized as he neared New York, that he was afraid of the house, and all that its changed aspect would force upon him. He was so certain that it would be different that he was surprised by the presence of small fir trees, which had graced the brown stone steps for as many winters as he could remember.

He fumbled a bit with his keys and before he could find the right one the door was opened by Bartholomew, who, as his eyes brimmed, offered a choked greeting. Then Bob, raising his eyes, saw Marsha hurrying down the stair and toward him.

(Continued in K. Haviland-Taylor)

Tomorrow, Bob is swept off his feet.

# POOR FARM LANDS TO BE PURCHASED FOR VACATIONING

WASHINGTON, Aug. 13.—(AP)—The government is about to start a huge land-buying program so industrial workers can have better and cheaper vacations.

The national park service said today it is an important phase of the plan to retire poor land from agriculture. It calls for large recreational spots within easy reach of most of the major manufacturing cities.

The federal surplus relief corporation will spend about \$5,000,000 for the recreational centers. Agents of the park service are inspecting properties in many states and taking options where possible.

Specifically, officials said, the service is trying now to secure tracts in Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Virginia.

The locations are kept secret to prevent owners from kitting their prices. Pickers and packers' tally cards, in large or small quantities, ready for delivery at Job Department Mail Tribune, 28-30 N. Grape.

WINDOW GLASS—We sell window glass and will replace your broken windows reasonably. Trowbridge Cabinet Works.

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# LIGHTNING HITS PARK PICNICKERS

KANSAS CITY, Aug. 13.—(AP)—A bolt of lightning that struck among a group of picnickers at Swope park today killed Richard A. Sneed, 33, foreman of a maintenance crew for the Kansas City Power and Light company, which was giving the picnic.

Leo J. Arrin, 50, suffered a paralyzed left leg. Many of the 200 persons engaged in a nail-driving contest were shocked or dazed.

The storm brought .02 inch of rain to Kansas City. Light intermittent showers continued to fall early tonight. The temperature dropped from 104 degrees at the downtown weather office to 77 early tonight.

# BEEBE GOES 2,510 FT. NEATH WAVES

WASHINGTON, Aug. 13.—(AP)—Having already set a new deep sea diving record in his metal ball, Dr. William Beebe was quoted tonight by the National Geographic society as saying that perhaps early next week he planned to go a little deeper.

After telling of Dr. Beebe's descent to 2,510 feet today, the society added that a deeper descent would be made.

Phone 542 We'll haul away your refuse. City Sanitary Service.

# 1934 SETS MARK FOR HEAT, DROUTH

WASHINGTON, Aug. 13.—(AP)—The year 1934 is the driest and hottest on record, thus far.

The weather bureau says so and it has been keeping tab on precipitation and temperature for 70 years. The drouth has been aggravated by ailing heat.

"Nothing remotely approaching the severity of this combination appears in the annals of the weather bureau," J. B. Kinser, weather bureau meteorologist, said today.

# FLOOD SURVEY OF OREGON SLATED

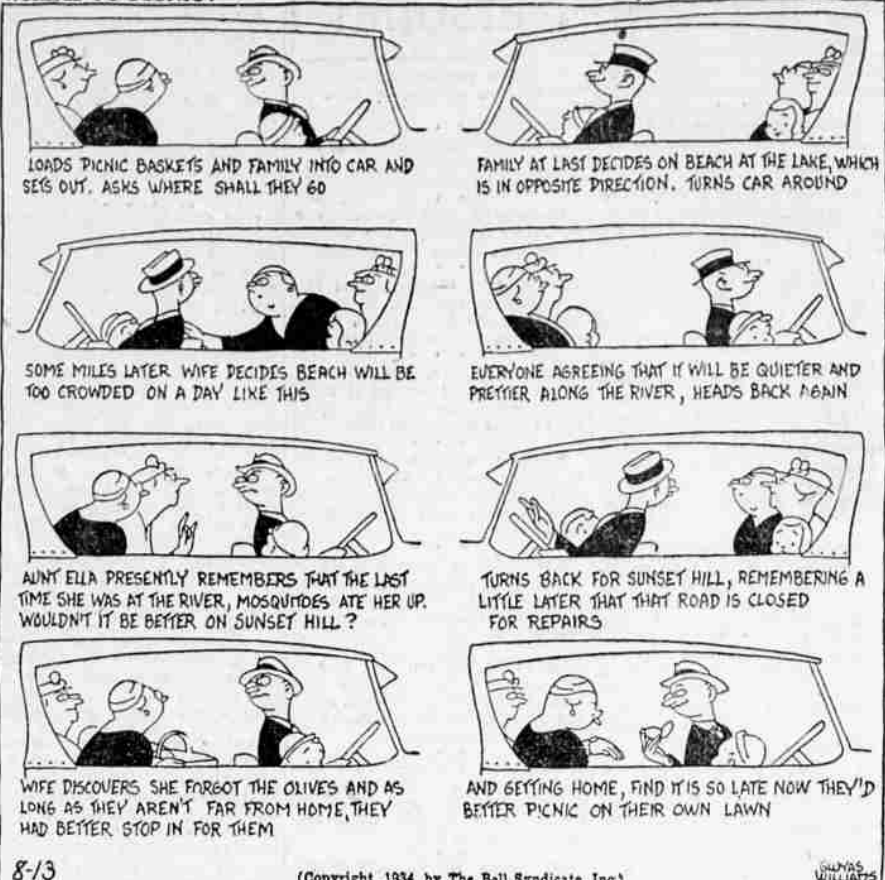
PORTLAND, Ore., Aug. 13.—(AP)—A request for information on which a preliminary survey of Oregon and Washington flood areas has been sent out by the office of the United States district engineer here, Captain S. L. Damon, revealed today.

The districts involved will be the lower Columbia, the Willamette valley and the Tualatin valley. Hearings on the flood control problem will be held in each of the districts at a later date, Captain Damon said.

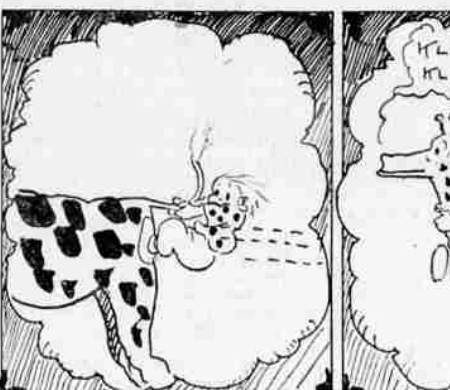
Pickers and packers' tally cards, in large or small quantities, ready for delivery at Job Department Mail Tribune, 28-30 N. Grape.

# WHERE TO PICNIC?

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



# S'MATTER POP—



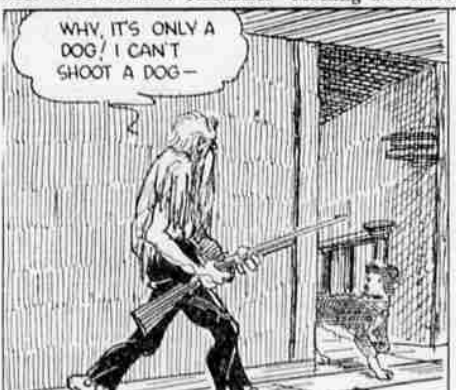
By C. M. Payne

# TAILSPIN TOMMY—The Inspector Is Shot!



By Hal Forrest

# BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Making Friends?



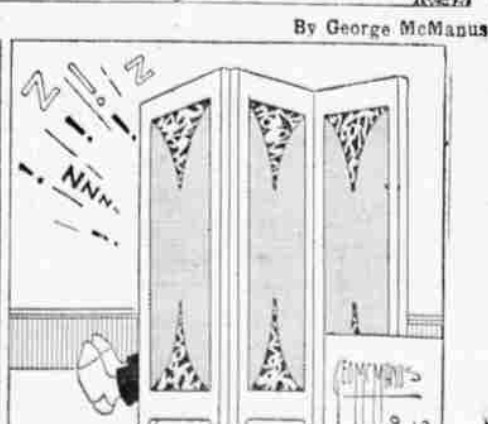
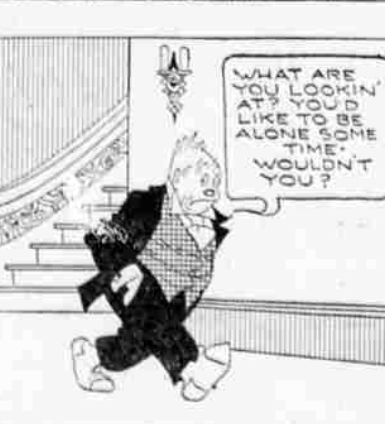
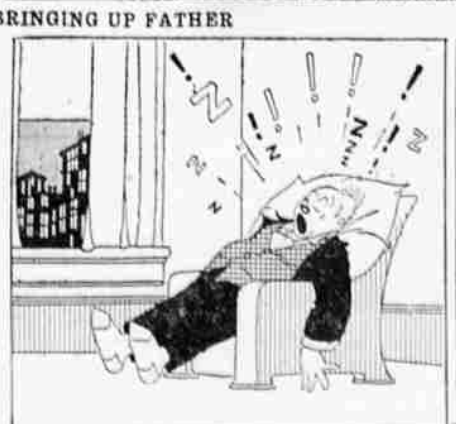
By EDWIN ALGER

# THE NEBBS—Life Is But an Empty Dream



By Sol Her

# BRINGING UP FATHER



By George McManus

Be-Group University  
SEATTLE, Aug. 13.—(AP)—Creation of the "University College" and general regrouping of the University of Washington academic divisions were announced today by President Leo Paul Sieg.

State Fall Fatal  
PORTLAND, Ore., Aug. 13.—(AP)—Mrs. Laura Van Loo, about 38, was killed early Sunday in a fall down a flight of stairs at a southwest Portland home.

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