

I did not kill Osborne

By VICTOR BRIDGES

CHAPTER 15
NEW ALLY

I HAD packed my bag and was in the act of fastening the clasp, when a tap at the knocker announced that Molly had returned. I heard Jerry open the front door, and emerging from my bedroom, I found them waiting for me in the hall.

Jerry picked up a couple of suitcases which were standing on the mat.

"Do you mind sitting behind and looking after the baggage, Nick?" he inquired.

"Are you referring to Molly?" I asked.

He grinned. "Molly says she'd prefer to come in front with me."

"I've never been driven by a baronet," explained Molly. "I rather want to know what it feels like."

We passed through the gate into the narrow lane outside, where a large car was blocking up the fairway. I kept a sharp look-out while we packed ourselves in and rounded the corner into the main road, but as far as I could see, no one appeared to be taking the least interest in our departure.

During the first hundred yards or so I glanced back once or twice through the small window behind me; then, satisfied that we were not being followed, I lighted a cigaret and ceased to trouble myself any further in the matter. After all, if they had the number of the car, it would be easy enough for them to discover the owner's name without trailing us openly through the streets of London.

It was just on twelve o'clock when we turned out of the crowded Strand into the courtyard of the Milan Hotel. The commissionaire on duty evidently recognized Jerry, for as he stepped forward to open the door, he touched his cap with a respectful smile of welcome.

"Haven't seen you for quite a time, sir."

"No, I've been leading the simple life," said Jerry. He gave instructions that the two suitcases should be taken inside, and making our way through the revolving door, we entered the lounge. Owing to the earliness of the hour it was still comparatively empty.

Jerry took me by the arm. "Shall I talk to 'em?" he suggested. "They know me pretty well here, and I'll make sure they give her a decent room and don't overcharge her."

"Right you are," I agreed. "I'll get a seat over there in the corner and order something to drink."

I strolled across to where I saw a comfortable looking settee, one-half of which was partly hidden behind a giant palm. There was the obvious chance that at any moment someone I knew might walk in, and I had no wish either to be stared at or congratulated.

Close to the place I was making for stood a small page-boy. As I reached my destination he started forward with the obvious intention of relieving me of my hat; then, pulling up short, he remained there as though glued to the spot, his blue eyes fixed upon me in a kind of incredulous astonishment. Somehow or other his face seemed vaguely familiar.

I RECKONED to him and, pulling myself together, he came up to where I was sitting.

"What's the matter?" I inquired. "You look as if you'd seen a ghost."

"He cringed violently," began Jerry, "but aren't you Mr. Trench?"

"That's so," I replied.

"You wouldn't remember me, sir. My name's Jimmy Fox. You—your name's on some things of mine down at the drawing-class in Battersea East May."

Directly he spoke it came back to me at once. A friend of mine called Francis, who was interested in a scheme for giving free art teaching to working-class lads, had asked me to drop in one evening and inspect some of their efforts. I had been particularly struck by the work of the smallest boy there, a dirty-faced, tangle-headed urchin who was obviously gifted with a streak of real talent.

Pleased by his keenness and intelligence I had presented him with

one of his to buy himself some paper and pencils. It was the same boy who was standing in front of me now, though in his tight-fitting uniform and with his smoothly brushed hair he looked so smart and clean that I had momentarily failed to recognize him.

"Of course I remember you now, Jimmy," I said. "It was those beautiful buttons of yours that put me off. Besides, you've grown such a lot since I last saw you."

He flushed again. "How long have you been here?" I asked.

"Two months, sir. Mr. Francis—he got me the job."

"Still keen about drawing?"

"Yes, sir—rather, sir! I don't get the chance to go to no classes now; have to do it at odd times when I ain't on duty."

"Well, I'm pleased you're keeping it up," I said. "I shall probably be here tomorrow, and if you like to bring some of your work with you I'll have a look at it."

His eyes brightened. "Will you really, sir? It's awfully kind of you."

He hesitated and then came a step nearer. "You won't be angry with me, sir, but—oh, sir—I was so glad to see as how you'd got off. I—I..."

"That's all right, Jimmy," I interrupted. "Very nice of you to worry about me. I handed him my hat."

"And then send along the waiter. And by the way," I added, "don't mention who I am to any of the others. I don't want to have the whole staff coming round and gawping at me."

"I shan't say a word, sir."

He hurried off, and after a brief interval, an impassive-looking funny fellow arrived to take my instructions. I gave him my order, and I was sitting unobtrusively in my corner waiting for it to materialize when I saw Molly and Jerry approaching from the reception office.

"It's all arranged," announced Jerry, as they came up. "I spoke to the manager and he's given her a nice room on the fourth floor. A pound a day for bed and breakfast. She'll lunch and dine with us."

Molly seated herself beside me. "I suppose it's all real," she said. "Just at present I feel as if I could hardly believe it."

GEORGE, who was sitting in front of my chair, looked up at me with his beautiful amber-colored eyes. Then, very solemnly, he presented me with a paw.

"I know what that means," I said. "You want me to take you for a walk."

He gave a gentle whine, and switched his tail softly to and fro.

"We must wait till master's ready," I explained. "He's washing himself at present, and it wouldn't be polite to go out and leave him behind."

As I spoke Dawson entered the room. He was carrying a folded paper on a silver tray, and his clean-shaven features wore their customary expression of slightly fatigued boredom.

"I thought you might like to see the Daily Mail, sir."

I released George's paw and took the paper. "Thank you, Dawson," I said. "Is there any news?"

"Nothing particular, sir, except that they've scratched the favorite for the Cesarewitch."

"I hoped you haven't backed it!" I inquired sympathetically.

"Not to any serious extent, sir." He retired to the door. "Sir Jerrild has finished his bath, sir. He asked me to say that he will be with you in a few minutes."

Left alone with George, I glanced carelessly through the principal headlines. As Dawson had said, nothing of any burning importance seemed to have occurred during the past twenty-four hours, and eventually, abandoning my search for information, I got up and sauntered across to the open window.

It was a pleasant look-out, especially to a man who had been cooped up for six weeks in Wandsworth Jail.

The trees in the Embankment Gardens were still in full leaf, and beyond their green tops, the river—a sheet of silver in the bright September sunshine—curved its way towards the distant arches of Waterloo Bridge.

Right in front of me a heavily laden barge was drifting along slowly with the tide. I watched it enviously, and I was just thinking how vastly I should enjoy a sniff of the sea myself, when the door opened and Jerry made his appearance.

He greeted me with a disarming smile.

THOUSAND STEPS SAVED DAILY BY MODERN KITCHEN

NEW YORK (UP)—A kitchen designed to save a housewife a thousand steps a day was awarded first prize in a national competition just held by The Architectural Forum.

Martin Etkind and Joseph Roberts, New York architects, made the winning design. It carries out faithfully the latest edict of domestic science experts that working surfaces in the ideal kitchen should be continuous along one or two sides of the room.

Over the continuous working surface are grouped all the cabinets in which utensils and other kitchen paraphernalia are stored. One corner of the room contains a lounge seat, a horse-shoe shaped, a stainless steel sink is part of the continuous working surface on one side of the room, and an electric dishwasher is part of the modern gadgetry.

A flat top electric range, with working surfaces at both sides on a level with the range top, is another feature.

There were 233 designs submitted in the competition. Second prize went to Don E. Hatch of the architectural firm of Hood and Poulthou, New York; third prize to Bergman S. Letzler, of Louisville, Ky.; fourth prize to Alfred N. Boell of New York; fifth prize to Charles G. Ramsey, Harold G. Sleeper, and J. Gilbert Werle of New York, and sixth prize to Herbert C. Hanson, Chicago.

ATTRACTIVENESS FIRST REQUISITE IN CLOTHES DESIGNED FOR WOMEN

NEW YORK (UP)—Women's clothes, far from being beautiful, are and always have been essentially attractive!

So says Tobe, international style authority and fashion merchandising counselor to over 100 of America's leading department stores and shops. The real point, according to Tobe, is that what counts with women is not beauty in clothes but attractiveness and the best dressed woman is the one whose clothes are smartest.

"Women talk about clothes being 'beautiful' and 'lovely,'" said Tobe, "but a little thought quickly establishes the fact that women's clothes are not beautiful and probably never have been. If you look through the advertisements of a newspaper or

magazine of five or six years ago, you laugh and say to yourself: 'How did we ever wear such awful looking things?' But at that past time you described those same dresses as 'beautiful' and 'lovely,' and laughed instead at the clothing of the decade before. And five years from now, you may be sure, we shall think the 'lovely' clothes of today are thoroughly unattractive!"

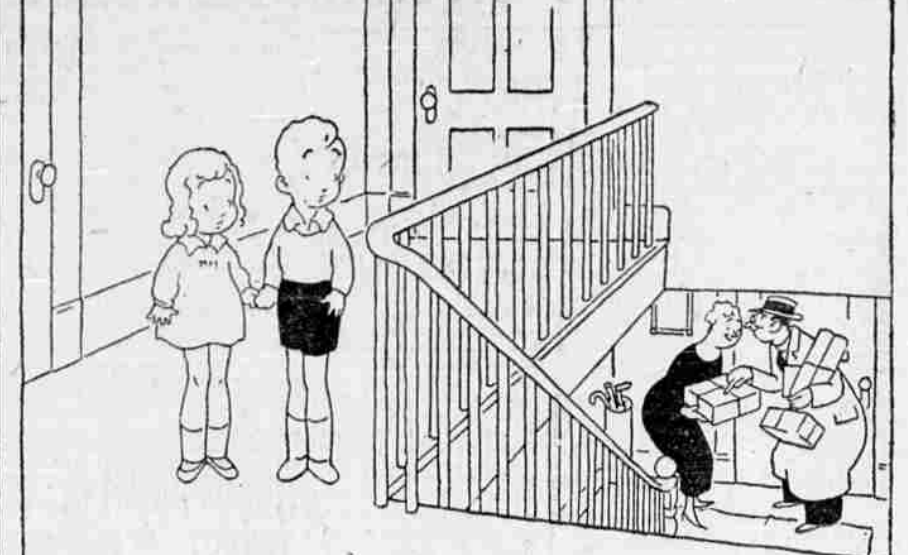
The acid test of beauty, according to this authority, is its ability to endure time. A painting by Leonardo da Vinci is as beautiful today as it was when that great artist painted it. So it is, she says, with all objects that are truly beautiful. They do not become less beautiful with the advance of time.

"The important thing to observe, is that 'beauty' is essentially an unimportant consideration in what women wear," explains Tobe. "What really counts is whether clothes are smart. That is the real standard."

The George Washington highway is laid along the banks of the canal Washington built through the Great Dismal swamp in Virginia and North Carolina.

CHRISTMAS TIME

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



THE ALMOST UNBEARABLE STRAIN OF NOT PEERING WHEN YOU'VE BEEN SENT UPSTAIRS WHEN DADDY COMES HOME WITH CHRISTMAS BUNDLES

GLUYAS WILLIAMS

SMATTER POP—



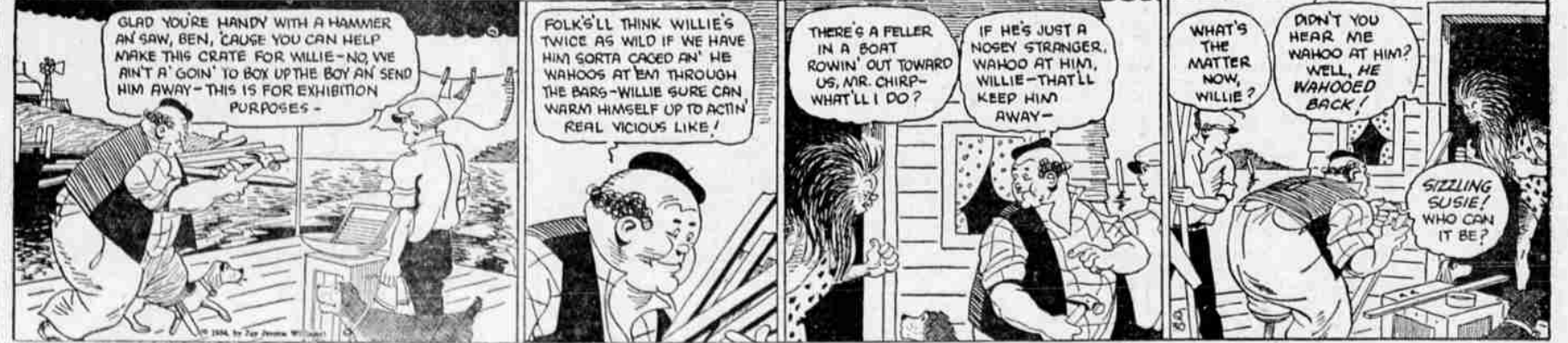
By C M Payne

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Inez Is Apprehensive



By Hal Forrest

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Wahoo for an Answer



By EDWIN ALGER

THE NEBBS—Rubbing It In



By Sol Hess

BRINGING UP FATHER



By George Mumford

OPTOMETRIST INVENTS FOOLPROOF LAUNCHING DEVICE FOR LIFEBOAT

WASHINGTON (UP)—Ocean disasters, resulting from inability to launch lifeboats, will no longer be a menace of the sea, in the opinion of Dr. Charles Hunt, Washington inventor and former optometrist, who recently has completed a lifeboat launching device which operates with speed and efficiency. It takes two men only one minute to hoist a Dr. Hunt equipped lifeboat over the side and swing it safely to the water from a listing ship. A boat with full crew was launched from a vessel traveling

15 knots an hour during a recent test in New York harbor.

A simultaneous release of both ends of the lifeboat from their davits eliminates the danger of spilling. One man can release the boat. Previously the danger was in the release of one end before the other and thus spilling the occupants into the water. This occurred in the Morro Castle disaster.

Certificates to Dr. Hunt from the coast guard attest the fact that they have found the new device to work with efficiency.

Dr. Hunt turned to the field of invention upon the advice of Thomas A. Edison. He worked with the "Wizard" for a short time and then his interest turned to marine safety.

Visits White House
WASHINGTON, Dec. 17.—(AP)—Mrs. Elizabeth Bronner Roosevelt of Philadelphia, former wife of the president's son, Ethel, is a guest at the White House with her small son, William Donner Roosevelt.