NEVER MIND THE LADY

by David Garth

SYNOPSIS: By accident Willett finds out that Allaire West is in Washington and gets off the New York train there with a girl he has met casually in Key West a private car the "Debutante II." Allaire and he have met for one hectic day in the tropics and neither has been able to forget the other since. Allaire, however, has the uncomfortable feeling that Terry has run out on her. And Terry is not in the best of moods, for he just has buried his father in his old home in Virginia.

Chapter 21

STOPOVER

KAY WEST'S rather vapid name of "Débutante II" for his private car had been a polite, nose-thumbing gesture of his own toward his wife. It was no secret that he had named the car after her.

Eleanor West had been a princess among débutantes in Washington's gay social and diplomatic circle. She had been possessed of a cultivated beauty and a finishing school vivacity, and when she reclaimed the position that had been hers before she married Raybrne West, she was older in years, not in values.

She still cultivated her beauty assiduously and the effervescent and innocuous vivacity bred of French governesses, exclusive finishing schools, and bachelor cotillions was still the foundation of her charm.

She blended the mode of life of two generations. She patronized the arts, gave elaborate balls, and led fashionable drives to provide starving Zulus with collar butons.

On the other hand, she held gay youthful cocktail soirées, skirmished provocatively with handsome young men, and followed occasional affairs to their logical conclusion.

"You won't enjoy it at all," Puff told Terry darkly as they had a bite of supper in a smart little restaurant near DuPont Circle. "You can have a lot more fun stringing along with me tonight. I have a swell party on. Lots of fun."

"This is just a stopover, Puff. I have business in New York, and all my luggage is in a hotel up there."

"What hotel?"

Willett didn't see what difference that made, but he told her.

"Well, we can have a lot of fun in New York, too. I know that town like the palm of my hand."

"I'm not looking for fun exactly."

"You never have, I think," said the girl. "High time you were getting on to yourself."

They went out on the sidewalk and called taxis. In the door of hers Puff paused.

"If you don't find Allaire," she said, "I live at the Mayflower, big boy." She smiled at him. "Call, come in person, or send out thought waves. We can have a lot of fun."

She was gone. Terry looked after her a moment. Pretty girl with dark hair seeming to endow her eyes with that violet color—and so what? Good luck to the lieutenant from Fort Myer whose saber had been junked by Congress. Then he climbed into his taxi and gave the address Puff had furnished him.

The West home was a stone mansion on Massachusetts Avenue with a courtyard guarded by a wall and two large black drawbridge-like doors, one labeled "In" and the other "Out."

Terry got out before the lighted portico and regarded the place curiously a moment. He never would have thought that girl had so much money. Funny world. Some people sweat all their lives and stayed broke, and others bought a gross of sea breezes and a deck chair every time the sun got too hot.

THE butler who answered the door looked a little surprised. It was that interlude before the dinner hour and this young man not only had no evening clothes, but there had been no word to expect him. He would see if Miss West was at home.

Willett came into a broad hall lit by great crystal chandeliers shining down on a parquet floor. He sat down in a chair and twirled his hat around aimlessly in his hands.

Then the butler returned and ushered him into a small reception room—a strange room for that cold mansion of stone and crystal.

There was a warm loungy air about it—the kind of place that reminded one of a corner of a smoking room on a luxurious ocean liner—the small sailing ship model on the mantelpiece, the dark rug, and an imperceptible feeling of vibration that emanated from the solid firmness of the furniture, the slow-ticking brass bound clock, and the regularly spaced dimmed lights supported by little rods of grilled iron from oaken walls.

"Miss West will receive you here, sir," said the butler.

"Thank you very much," said Willett politely.

He lit a cigaret, looked around him curiously, and decided this "being received" business was quite evidently an ornate function.

It seemed a long time before Allaire finally appeared. It was quite a time. Willett had started his third cigaret. But suddenly she was there!

She made him think of a slim shaft of silver as she stood on the threshold, an evening gown of something shimmering clinging closely about her. For a moment neither spoke. They looked at each other almost as if searching for something.

Silver is a cold color and so was an intangible current in the air—like a draught coming from some unknown place. Terry sensed that immediately. He had a crazy idea that he was being inspected like a prize bull. The girl made no move.

"Hello," he said, and grinned. "Surprised to see me?"

The girl nodded her head gracefully.

"I didn't believe it at first," she said calmly. "Of all people—the engineer. What are you doing in a civilized part of the world? Why, I'd rather imagined you'd be in darkest Africa by now."

"That's quite a distance from South America."

"Pretty far," she agreed. "to run."

SHE came into the room and extended a hand. A French diplomat would undoubtedly have kissed it; there was something of that in her manner. Willett held it, unresponsive, in his. Her dark eyes, capable of saying so much, seemed only politely expectant.

"Yes," she said, withdrawing her hand, "I had thought of you in darkest Africa in a pith helmet, slugging whiskey from a demijohn over your shoulder and romantically defying the jungle to put up a thirty-story grass hut for the Timbuctu Waist Garment Company, Incorporated. Do sit down."

Willet sat down. He felt vaguely disappointed—there was something vibrant and lively missing here. Surprise, he could have understood, but not this total lack of spontaneity.

"I ran across your trail today," he said finally. "Met your father on the Washington train."

"He often uses the 'Old Dominion,'" she acceded.

There was another silence. Well, that was that. Her father often used the "Old Dominion." Good thing that was settled.

"I thought I'd follow you up," he resumed.

"Did you? I'm very gratified, but—why?"

Why? Perfectly natural question of course, but this barrier of coolness was beginning to annoy him. She seemed a part of the cold reserved beauty of her home.

"I wanted to see you again. After all," he pointed out, with a brief-appearing smile, "you saved my life."

He'd had his life saved and saved lives himself five or six times in the course of his hectic racing existence. It hadn't been anything particular noteworthy until this girl had covered him.

She flushed slightly, but said nothing. Again he was disappointed.

"Did you get off all right?" he asked abruptly.

"Very well, thanks. Mr. Fox saw to it admirably."

"George is good at that kind of thing."

"I don't know what I would have done without him. He stood by wonderfully." She waved a hand to dismiss the subject. "Well, Mr. Willett, what lies before you now?"

He didn't answer immediately. He was trying to figure out this strange behavior.

"You know," he said slowly, "you act as though you'd seen me once in your life."

Allaire gave a surprised little laugh.

"How many times, exactly, have I seen you?"

"Once," said Willett. "It didn't make much impression on you."

"It was a most entertaining evening," she corrected.

Entertaining evening! It had been a vital evening in his life, that's what it had been. And she called it entertaining. She really was snooty!

A rich girl who had stepped off the sightseeing bus to take a little side excursion of her own and be vastly entertained while all the forces of life passed before her eyes in quick succession — lights, and shadows, and death.

He wasn't a chauffeur being interviewed for a position. He felt like that man Perry on the train had felt—seven kinds of a fool.

"Entertaining?" he repeated. "You may have thought it entertaining but I wasn't so damned amused."

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Terry is not pleased by what happens, tomorrow.

JOHNSON CRITICIZES ROOSEVELT MESSAGE

CHICAGO, Jan. 7.—(AP)—Gen. Hugh Johnson, former NRA chief, sharply criticized President Roosevelt's night message to congress today and warned against a "rabble rousing rift" which he said threatens to plunge the country into a grave crisis in the coming campaign.

Class conflict, he predicted, will result from the opposing alignments of big business and administration leaders unless an understanding is reached.

PHONE COMPANY SEEKS RATE CUT INJUNCTION

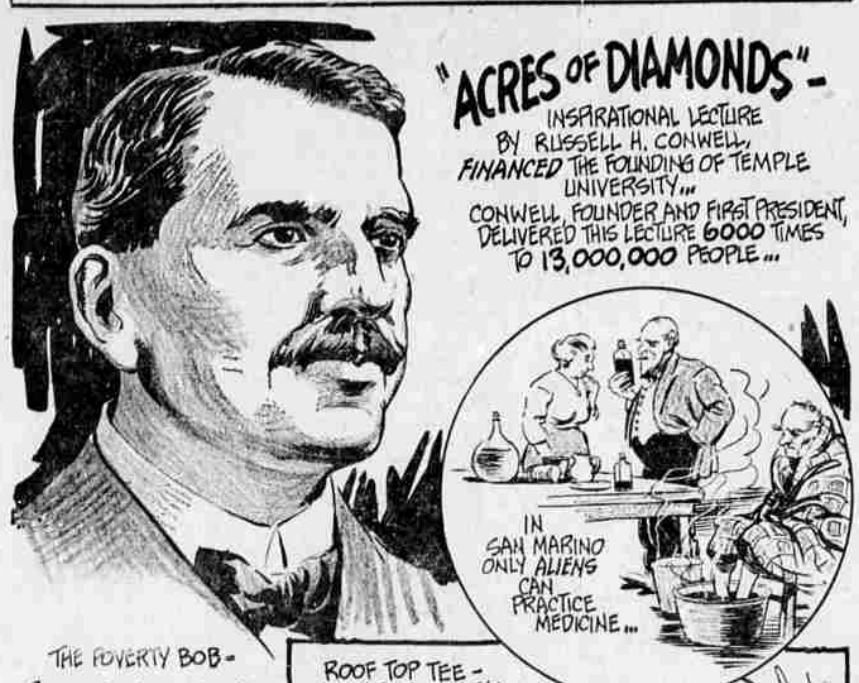
PORTLAND, Ore., Jan. 7.—(AP)—The Pacific Telephone & Telegraph company filed a petition in circuit court today to enjoin the state utilities commissioner from enforcing reductions in exchange telephone rates. A permanent injunction was requested.

Keenan Nominated

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7.—(AP)—President Roosevelt today nominated Joseph B. Keenan of Cleveland, Ohio, as assistant to Attorney General Cummings, a post which makes him third ranking official in the department of justice.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.



One of the strangest golf tees in the world is the 16th tee at the Idlewild Beach Golf club, Long Island, New York, where players climb to the top of the clubhouse to tee off. A covering of dirt overlays the roof, and a good stand of grass grows on the roof top tee.

From an ancient theory in government comes the unique prohibition of native physicians in the tiny country of San Marino—only foreigners are licensed to practice. In ancient times it was believed by governmental officials that physicians had some unknown power to learn state secrets. They reasoned that natives would be more interested in learning these secrets than foreigners, therefore it would be safer to have foreign doctors than native ones.

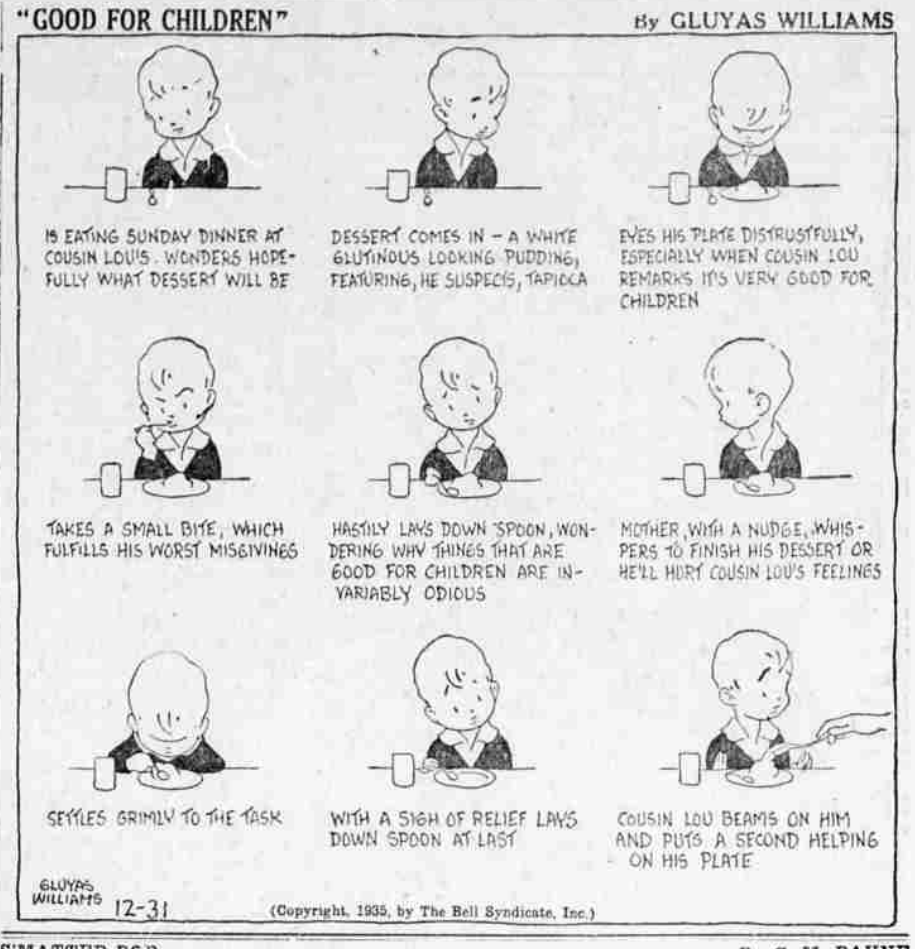
Russell H. Conwell, founder of Temple university and president of it for 37 years until his death in 1925, built his school on the proceeds of his lectures. His most famous was "Acres of Diamonds," an inspirational talk which he delivered 6000 times in 50 years to audiences that totaled more than 13,000,000 people. He earned $8,000,000 from this and his other lectures, and with the money built and directed the famous university.

Strange as it seems, the badge of style in metropolitan areas has also been the badge of poverty in certain rural European districts. Peasant girls in Holland, Germany, and some parts of France, have their hair bobbed so they can sell it to wig-makers. This practice, much more prevalent a few years ago than now, paid them well when women in style had to have additional strands of hair to supplement their natural hair. Today the theater and movies are the chief users of human hair wigs.

Tomorrow: "The Outlaw Hero."

"GOOD FOR CHILDREN"

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

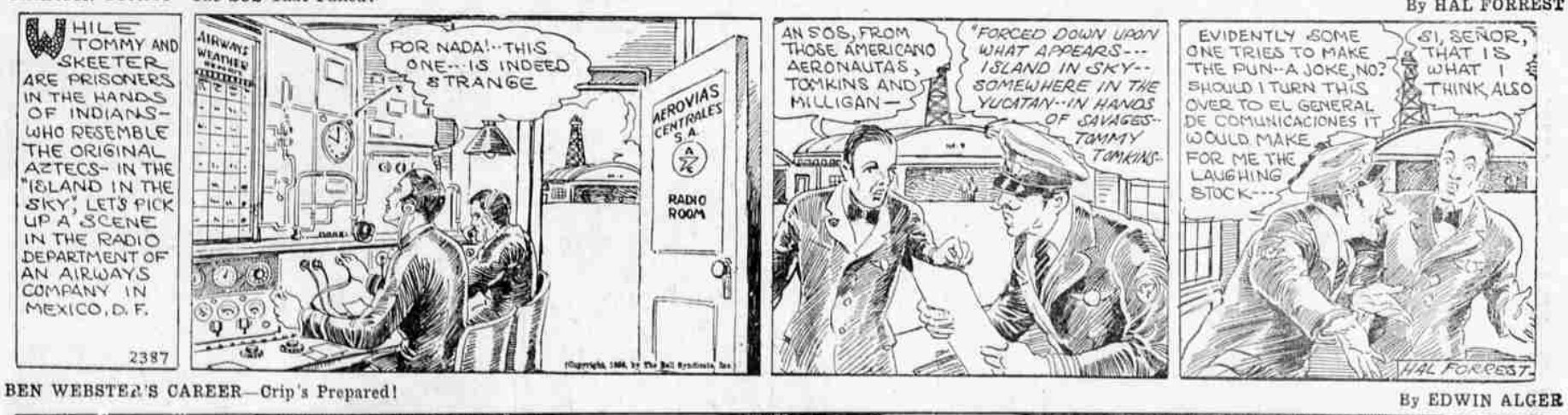


S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE

TAILSPIN TOMMY—The SOS That Failed!

By HAL FORREST



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Crip's Prepared!

By EDWIN ALGER

THE NEBBS—Revenge Is Sweet????

By SOL HESS

MOUNTED POLICE GET BEST TRAFFIC ORDER, CHICAGO CHIEF SAYS

CHICAGO (UP)—The man on horseback, the "forgotten man" in many metropolitan police departments, is maintained in Chicago because he commands most respect from motorists, according to Capt. David I. Flynn of the traffic division.

"Get a man on horseback out in the street and people instinctively slow up," the captain maintains.

That's why there are 98 mounted men in his division.

"And for restoring order in a riot," he said, "there is no substitute for a plunging, rearing horse in the hands of an expert rider. From the high elevation of his saddle a policeman intends to be obeyed, and no back talk.

"Say what you want to, there is nothing gives a man authority like a thousand pounds of horse-meat between his knees."

The blame for the gradual retreat of the mounted man lies with the machine age, according to Capt. Flynn. And he has one other complaint against the machine age too:

"There aren't many Irish farmers any more."

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