

THE BOOMERANG CLUE

BY AGATHA CHRISTIE

SYNOPSIS: Although neither is positive that the tanned and handsome chap Bobby Jones found dying at the foot of a cliff actually was murdered, but Bobby and Frankie are determined to investigate one Mr. Bassington-French, who appeared at the scene of the "crime" very opportunely. Besides somebody has tried to murder Bobby with an overcoat "murder" and he remembers that fact. Perhaps the two events interlock. Frankie must do the leg work since Bobby is still in the hospital.

Chapter 13

LORD MARCHINGTON

FRANKIE lost no time in getting to work. She attacked her father that same evening.

"Father," she said, "do you know any Bassington-Frenches?"

Lord Marchington, who was reading a political article, did not quite take in the question. "It's not the French so much as the Americans," he said severely. "All this tomfoolery and Conferences—wasting the nation's time and money—"

Frankie abstracted her mind until Lord Marchington, running like a railway train along an accustomed line, came as it were to a halt at a station.

"The Bassington-Frenches," repeated Frankie.

"What about 'em?" asked Lord Marchington.

Frankie didn't know what about them. She made a statement, knowing well enough that her father enjoyed contradicting.

"They're a Yorkshire family, aren't they?"

"Nonsense—Hampshire. There's the Shropshire branch, of course."

"Father," she asked, "do you know any Bassington-Frenches?"

"That's right," said Frankie. "He was making inquiries about various small properties with a view to purchase. He was obliged to return to town the next day so could not view many of the houses, but I understand he is in no great hurry. Since he left, one or two suitable properties have come into the market, and I have sent him on particulars but have had no reply."

"Did you write to London—or to the—country address?" inquired Frankie.

"Let me see now." He called to a junior clerk. "Frank, Mr. Bassington-French's address."

"Roger Bassington-French, Esq., Merroway Court, Stavertley, Hants," said the junior clerk glibly.

"Ah!" said Frankie. "Then it wasn't my Mr. Bassington-French. This must be his cousin. I thought it was odd his being here and not looking me up."

"Quite so—quite so," said Mr. Owen intelligently.

"Let me see, it must have been the Wednesday he came to see you."

"That's right. Just before six-thirty. We close at six-thirty. I remember particularly because it was the day when that sad accident happened. Man fell over the cliff. Mr. Bassington-French had actually stayed by the body till the police



and then there's the Irish lot. Which are your friends?"

"I'm not sure," said Frankie, accepting the implication of friendship with several unknown people.

"Not sure? What do you mean? You must be sure."

"People drift about so, nowadays," said Frankie.

"Drift—drift—that's about all they do. In my day we asked people. Then one knew where one was—follow said he was the Hampshire branch—very well, your grand mother married my second cousin it made a link."

"It must have been too sweet," said Frankie. "But there really isn't time for genealogical and geographical research nowadays."

"No—you've no time nowadays for anything but drinking poisonous cocktails." Lord Marchington gave a sudden yelp of pain as he moved his gouty leg which some free imbibing of the family port had not improved.

"Are they well off?" asked Frankie.

"The Bassington-Frenches? Couldn't say. The Shropshire lot have been hard hit, I believe. Death duties and one thing or another. One of the Hampshire ones married an heiress. An American woman."

"One of them was down here the other day," said Frankie. "Looking for a house, I believe."

"Funny idea. What should anyone want with a house down here?"

That, thought Frankie, was the question.

He looked quite upset when he came in here. Very sad tragedy, that, and high time something was done about that bit of path. The Town Council have been criticized very freely, I can tell you, Lady Frances. Most dangerous. Why we haven't had more accidents than we have, I can't imagine."

"Extraordinary," said Frankie.

She left the office in a thoughtful mood. As Bobby had prophesied, all Mr. Bassington-French's actions seemed clear and above-board. He was one of the Hampshire Bassington-Frenches, he had given his proper address, he had actually mentioned his part in the tragedy to the house agent.

Was it possible that, after all, Mr. Bassington-French was the completely innocent person he seemed?

Frankie had a qualm of doubt. Then she refuted it.

"No," she said to herself. "A man who wants to buy a little place would either get here earlier in the day, or else stay over the next day. You wouldn't go into a house agent's at six-thirty in the evening and go up to London the following day. Why make the journey at all? Why not write?"

No, she decided, Bassington-French was the guilty party.

Her next call was the police station.

Inspector Williams was an old acquaintance, having succeeded in tracking down a maid with a false reference who had absconded with some of Frankie's jewelry.

"Good afternoon, Inspector."

"Good afternoon, your ladyship. Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"Not as yet, but I'm thinking of holding up a bank soon because I'm getting so short of money."

The Inspector gave a rumbling laugh in acknowledgement of this witticism.

"As a matter of fact, I've come to ask questions out of sheer curiosity," said Frankie.

"Is that so, Lady Frances?"

"Now do tell me this, Inspector—that man who fell over the cliff didn't he? Somebody told me three!"

(Copyright 1935-36, Agatha Christie)

The Inspector, tomorrow, proves a willing source.

TOWNSEND PLAN HELD VISIONARY AND IMPOSSIBLE

NEW YORK, Feb. 18. — (AP) — The Townsend old age pension plan is described as "one of the most visionary and impossible schemes ever

presented for public acceptance" by the annual report of the Carnegie foundation for the advancement of teaching, published today.

"The Townsend bill—most hopeless and alluring of the proposals that have been put forward for old age pensions—originated with a well-meaning man whose intentions were good," comments the report.

It warns the net effect of the plan "would be to cut down the expenditures of the mass of the people by about the same amount that the expenditures of the beneficiaries were increased." The report adds:

"In no other civilized country, except in the United States, would it be possible for a wild and reckless measure, like the Townsend plan, to receive the support of the governor and legislature of a great state, or be offered in a bill before the national congress."

SALEM, Feb. 18. — (AP) — Ben R. Liffin, The Dalles publisher, filed his declaration with the secretary of state today of candidacy for the Oregon delegation to the Republican national convention from the state at large.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



Francis Scott Key was a lawyer and a poet but never a musician. He played no musical instrument, he was not a singer, and some students of his life have found evidence that he was tone deaf. He wrote the words for the "Star Spangled Banner," but the music came from an old English song.

Said "Demon" by the ancient Arabians, the star Algol shines brightly for 59 hours, then dims slightly to about one-third of its normal light, and regains full brilliance again in 10 hours, then shines brightly again for another 59 hours. This periodic variation of light occurs every 68 hours and 49 minutes.

Its variation of light was first recorded by Montanari in 1669, but the fact that its name means "demon" in Arabic suggests that the Arabians had also noticed and wondered at its strange behavior. The star remained a mystery unexplained for more than a century, until 1783, when Goodricke proposed the theory that it was caused by a dark sister star eclipsing the bright one. This was proven beyond reasonable doubt by H. C. Vogel.

Algol, which is 140 times as bright as our sun and four and a third times as heavy, has a dark companion star comparatively close to it—only 10,200,000 kilometers away. These two stars revolve about each other every 69 hours so that one eclipses the other. When the dark star comes in front of the bright star the light is cut down to about a third its normal brightness.

Tomorrow: The Unbroken Bank at Monte Carlo.

THE WORLD AT ITS WORST

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

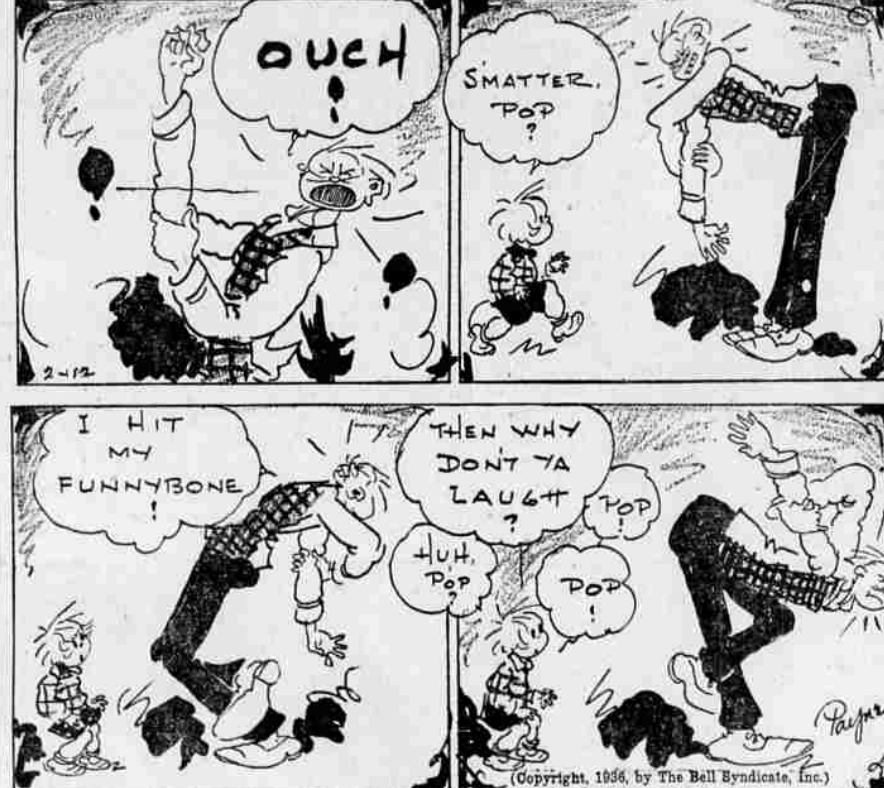


CRISIS IN FAMILY LIFE WHEN JUNIOR'S HEAVY SWEATER, WITHOUT WHICH HE MAY POSITIVELY NOT GO SKATING, IS FOUND TO BE IN THE SPARE ROOM WHERE A NAP IS BEING ENJOYED BY AUNT EFFIE, WHO MAY POSITIVELY NOT BE DISTURBED.

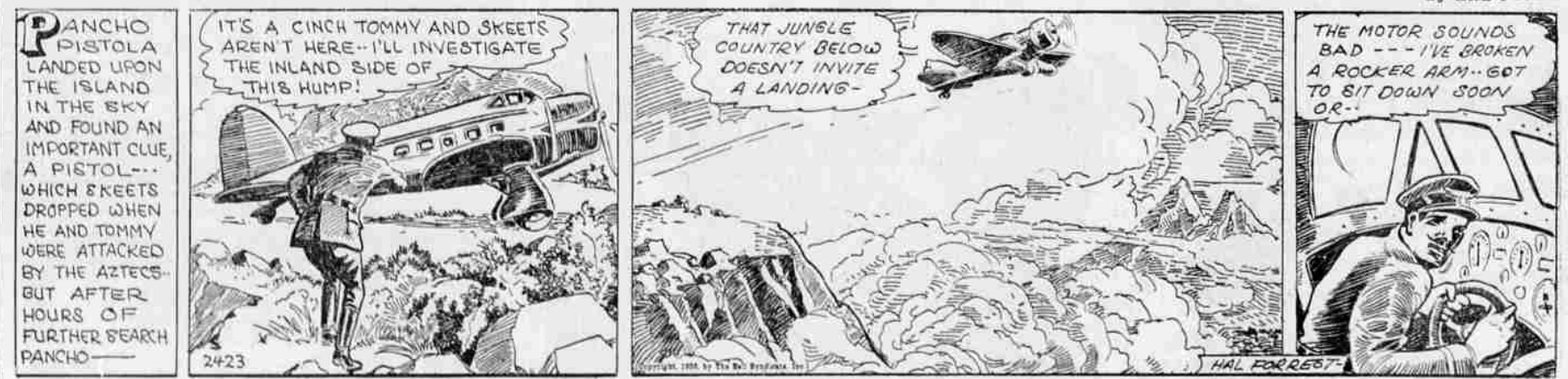
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SMATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



TAILSPIN TOMMY—Motor Trouble!



By HAL FORREST

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Jabez Thorpe's Fate!



By EDWIN ALGERP

THE NEBBS—In the Dog House



By SOL HERSP

TREATY REDUCES COST OF LIQUORS

OLYMPIA, Feb. 18. — (AP) — The state liquor control board today reduced prices of liquor on those brands affected by the reciprocal trade treaty with Canada, which reduced duties on liquor 50 per cent. Some reductions amounted to \$1.10 a quart.

The new price list issued today included the reductions made on several brands effective on January 1.

The board said the new prices on Canadian and imported Scotch liquors and blends were a direct result of the trade treaty.

Blend liquor, the board said, usually has for its base liquors imported from Canada.

The new price list, however, carried

some increases in the imported champagnes and rums.

The smallest decrease in price was five cents, an example being Kentucky Triumph, a domestic blend, the price also being reduced from 85 to 80 cents. Seagram's V. O. in the quart was cut from \$4.50 to \$3.40.

FOOD CONCESSION AT AUTO SHOW PROFITS

The Lady Lions report that the food concession, operated by their auxiliary in connection with the recent Lion Club Auto show at the Armory, proved very successful from all angles.

The booth was in charge of Mrs. Charles Pritchett and among those beside the Lady Lions who cooperated to make it a complete success were: Beck's Bakery, Buntin's Dairy, the Safeway Store, Woolworth's, Rogus River Meat company, and Valentine's Cafe, to whom the sincere thanks of the auxiliary was extended.