

THE WORLD WITH A FENCE

A New Novel by Marian Sims

Chapter 45

"YES," SHE SAID

CAROL was silent for so long that Blake's control forsook him again. He gripped her shoulders and made her look at him.

"Carol, I never thought you'd be a coward."

She broke down then and cried, and he forgot his scruples and pulled her to him and held her as tight as he dared.

She drew away at last and looked at him. "The reason I can't, Blake—not now—is because the thing was so perfect I didn't know people could feel that way. If I hadn't loved you as much as I did, I wouldn't have had so much to lose."

"Carol, you love me, don't you?"

"Yes, I always will."

"Then listen, I'm not going to crowd you against my will; I'm going to be here day in and day out, waiting and hoping for you to stretch out your hand. We couldn't marry, or even be together, for while, but knowing you were ready and willing would make life another thing. If I could feel that you were near me, and that you loved me and were going to belong to me I could even be happy waiting. I took her hands and held them tight. "Will you make me a promise?"

"If I can."

"You can. Promise me that the day you feel differently you'll tell me so. Will you promise that?"

"Yes..."

He leaned over and, kissed her hands, one at a time, and then looked long and straight into her eyes.

"My own darling..."

He got up quickly. He would have prolonged the talk if he had dared, but there were limits to his self-control. He left her without another word.

She sat motionless, with his words throbbing in her ears. Finally Cornelia came in, and she looked at her with a heavy hand.

"I hope you told him everything would be all right," she said bluntly.

"No, I couldn't do it..."

Cornelia made a quick incredulous sound, and stood and stared at her.

"You damned sentimental fool," she said brutally. "It would serve you right if you lost him."

JANUARY. Happy New Year, Miss Torrance! The same to you, Mrs. Martin...

"We're having a brawl Tuesday afternoon, Carol; I hope you can come..."

Happy New Year, Carol. Thanks, Freddie, the same to you...

...But New Years over happy? This time last year, for example: Mike and Annabel got married. Miss Torrance! And next year and the year after: what?

February. Won't you be my Valentine? Tea roses and delphinium, with no card at all. She buried her face in their fragrance and cried, knowing what was on the card he had not written.

In February, Porter Murray asked her to marry him, and astonishment made her momentarily alive. "Porter, my dear, why on earth..."

"I'm not your type at all." And Porter, with the magnificent egotism of the wife-hunting male: "Good Lord, you don't think I'd ask my type to spend the rest of my life with me, do you? That's only why I want you: you're not like anybody I know."

She refused him as gently as she could. "I'm sorry; I guess I'm destined for spinsterhood. One of these tall, middle-aged women who sit by themselves in tea-rooms, eating spinach and poached eggs and baked potatoes..."

He scoffed. "Don't make me laugh. If you don't object I'll keep on sticking around and see if I can't change your mind."

She did her work—after a fashion. The spontaneity and informality of her copy had become such a habit that no one—except perhaps Blake—would notice that the heart was missing. There was even a reprieve from unhappiness in work; a certain satisfaction in discovering that your brain could function in a rushed city.

But there were few conferences with Blake regarding the work. She found assignments and suggestions on her desk when she arrived in the morning, and she left the copy on his desk when he was out for lunch. When he came into the room to consult a member of the force she never dared to raise her eyes.

Apparently no one noticed it; anything Blake did was excusable and understandable in these days. Laura confided to her that he certainly was taking it hard, and that he ought to get away for a couple of weeks; Mrs. Martin had remarked in distress that he was apt to catch anything in his run-down condition. Carol murmured suitable words of concern and felt an intolerable ache in her heart.

March. Winter turned and plodded back northward, and spring was once more a whisper from afar, sensed rather than heard. She was the last to leave one Saturday, and she went to the window and stood looking at buildings tinted with a thin gold wash of sunlight.

The window was open and the air that brushed her face seemed to come from another place and another season. Strange that a breeze through an office window could be laden with the odor of daffodils in the rain...

SHE turned away from the window and went to get her hat and coat. Blake's door was open, and she saw him sitting motionless, staring at his desk. Without knowing what she did, she turned and walked into his office.

He got awkwardly to his feet, like a puppet, and stood and looked at her. She heard herself saying harshly: "It's late. Why haven't you been to lunch?"

The words astonished them both, and she smiled slightly.

"I was waiting for you to leave. I haven't left here before you half a dozen times since—in over two months."

She knew that it was no use. No matter what happened she could never get away from him; he was the other half of her self. She closed the door and stood with one hand behind her, clinging to the knob.

"I don't know why you're this way," she said, "because I'm not worth it. I'm afraid. Maybe I'll always be afraid. But I'm more afraid of living without you than I am of anything that could happen with you. Do you want me—even that way?"

He said: "I want you—any way. I lied when I told you I didn't." He said, almost angrily: "Come here!"

She came, astonished into obedience. He put his hands on her shoulders and gripped her so tightly that she winced.

"But you've got to help," he said bluntly. "I won't have you be a coward. You've got to turn your back on what happened and hold your head up. Will you?"

With his hands on her shoulders and his face close to hers it seemed easier. Alone in her apartment the dread would come back, but then—when the time came—she wouldn't be alone. She would have to remember that. And if you could not recapture easily, you could at least hope that the gods had had their revenge; that henceforth they might leave you in peace.

"Yes," she said.

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THE END

Navy Supply Base Aim For Oakland

WASHINGTON, Oct. 3.—(AP)—Admiral William H. Standley, chief of naval operations, said today the navy expected to ask congress in January to authorize development of a \$12,000,000 naval supply base at Oakland on San Francisco bay.

"It's primary purpose," he said, "would be to serve as a concentration point for supplies in time of war, with supply ships loading out of there in conjunction with the operations of the fleet at sea, whether in the Aleutians, off Honolulu or in the south seas."

Portland Making Rapid Recovery

PORTLAND, Oct. 3.—(AP)—Business statistics for September today revealed Portland making rapid strides toward full recovery. Bank clearings, building permits and shipping figures all showed vast improvement over preceding periods.

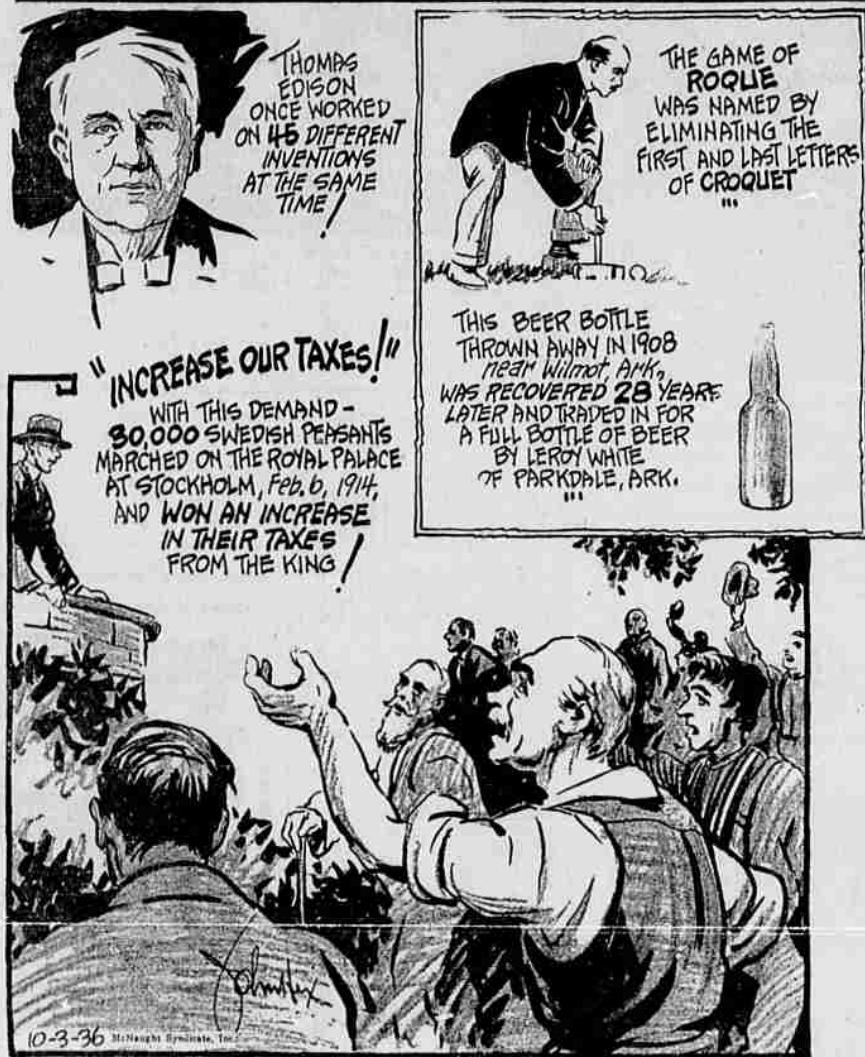
September clearings of \$141,803,879 were the highest since the same month six years ago. For the first nine months of this year clearings were \$1,061,872,106 as compared with \$636,239,791 for the first nine months of 1935.

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STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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With a war scare rampant throughout all Europe, and with great numbers of Russian troops concentrated in Finland within striking distance of Sweden, the majority of the Swedish populace became alarmed over the inadequacy of their army to cope with any sudden military emergency. So strong became their fears that on February 6, 1914, 30,000 of the country's peasantry marched on the Royal Palace at Stockholm and supplicated their king, Gustav V, to increase their taxes for the purpose of adding money to the nation's war chest.

Their request—possibly the most unusual a king has ever received from his subjects—was granted.

Sweden remained neutral throughout the ensuing World War but narrowly escaped being dragged into it several times on charges of violating her neutrality with regard to assisting Germany in relaying military messages.

SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

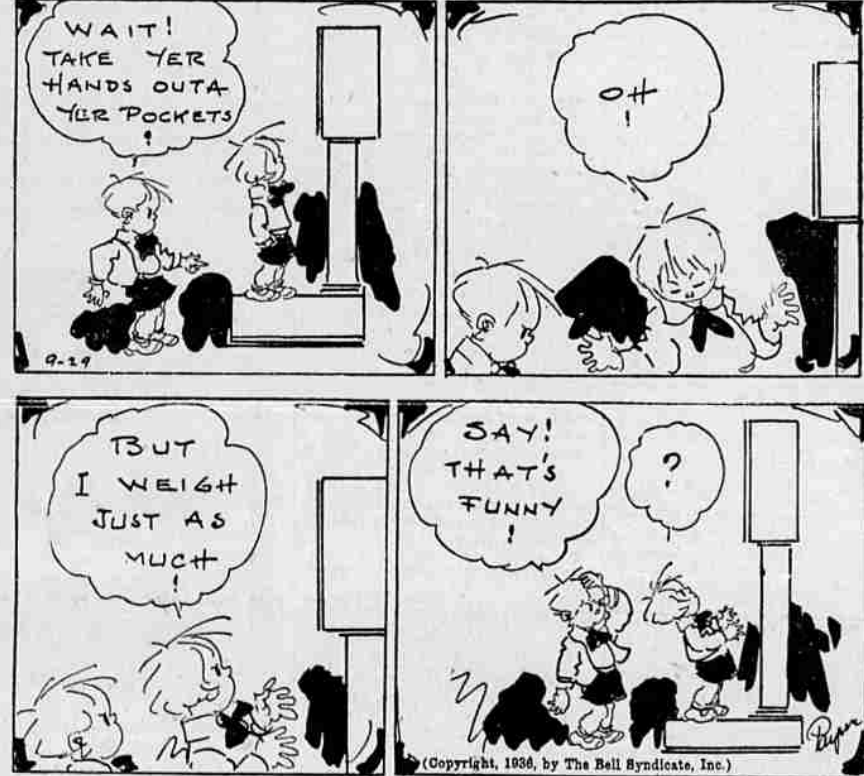
By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



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TAILSPIN TOMMY—The Inspector Favors Tommy's Plan!

By HAL FORREST



2620

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Percy Pretty

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBES—Home Sweet Home

By SOL HESS



HIGHWAY WORK IN SEVEN COUNTIES CONTRACTED FOR

PORTLAND, Oct. 3.—(AP)—Charges of mismanagement in the construction of the Wolf Creek route from Portland to the sea were heard before the state highway commission in session here yesterday.

The commission let the following new contracts to low bidders for projects in eleven counties.

The largest job was in Lane county. This was the 2.88 miles paving Junction City-Stuslaw Junction and Arvard-Eugene sections of the Junction City-Eugene stretch of the secondary highway. The low bid was submitted by Jacobson-Jensen company of Portland, at \$103,088.

Contracts were let on the following projects:

Baker—county—6000 cubic yard gravel pile for Haines-Baker section of the Old Oregon Trail, Schmeer, Williams & Gentlemen, Portland, \$8500.

Clatsop—59 mile grading. Quarta creek section Wolf Creek highway, Fred H. Slate, Multnomah, \$76,320.

Crook—2.43 miles grading and surfacing Ochoco Dam-Mill Creek section Ochoco highway, McNutt Brothers, Eugene, \$87,746.

William and Morrow—6000 cubic yard rock pile for Arlington rock production project on Columbia River and John Day highways, and 6000 yards gravel pile for Castle-Rock-Umatilla county line section Columbia River highway, Smith & Co., Willard, Wash., 16,440 (combined bid).

Harney—21.8 miles grading and treatise construction on Burns-Buchanan section Central Oregon highway, M. L. O'Neill (referred to engineer with power to award).

Lane—3.88 miles paving Junction City-Stuslaw Junction and Arvard-Eugene sections Junction City-Eugene section secondary highway, Jacobson-Jensen Co., Portland, \$103,088.

Linn—Calapooya river bridge on Pacific highway near Albany, Mountain States Construction company, \$23,734.

Marion—1.2 miles grading, 5.43 miles paving Pringle Creek-Hilabe School section Pacific highway, Harold Blake, Portland, \$187,091 (referred to engineer with power to award).

Sherman and Wasco—6.17 miles rock base and 7 miles surfacing Wilcox-Shaniko section Allowa lake highway, A. L. Milne, Portland, \$93,261.

Wallowa—6.14 grading Shelton Ranch-Flora Junction section Lewiston-Enterprise highway, Colonial Construction company, Spokane, \$73,656.

Held up pending further developments were awards on the following projects:

Grant—3.29 miles regrading, surfacing Stewart Bridge-Flat Creek section John Day highway.

Wallowa—4.28 miles regrading, surfacing Rock Creek-Wallowa section Wallowa Lake highway, and construction of bridges over Rock creek and Wallowa river near Wallowa.

New Bend Bank
BEND, Ore., Oct. 3.—(AP)—A second financial institution was operating in Bend today following the organization of the Bank of Bend. The new firm is the first to be chartered in Oregon for five years.

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