

The Boxwood Barrier

By BLANCHE SMITH FERGUSON

Chapter 44

Just One More Chance

IF JUDITH had been harassed and uncertain before she wrote to Reuben, she was swept into an avalanche of bewilderment now. Had she acted too hastily? Would Reuben be disgusted by her lack of restraint? Had she been too humble? Suppose he didn't answer? Suppose—

Then there was Gary to be reckoned with. Not that she had any illusions about Gary—the last one had died, struggling—but it had died. Gary would be furious because he was not to have his own way, but grieved?

She couldn't associate Gary with distress or deep grief with Gary unless the mishap was physical and purely personal to Gary; however, Gary must be reckoned with.

Time dragged like a snail—it flew on hummingbird wings. There were three days left until Christmas. There were two days. There was one day. It was Christmas Eve—no word from Reuben—no word!

Jim came down the hall, stood looking at the bravely bedecked pine. "The prettiest tree we've ever had. The kids will adore it."

"Yes," Judith agreed tonelessly. Jim shot his sister a quick appraising glance. "Want to go with me for crow's-foot? They—" he indicated the gilt framed "Goodies," "must be decorated. It's funny a man must die before he gets a wreath of living green." He turned away. "Want to come?"

Judith came down the ladder. "Wait 'til I get a coat."

Outside the world was softly gray, with sharp little gusts of wind and soft little flurries of snow. A day that seemed to proclaim the world was doing its best to make ready for the blessed peace that was to descend upon it at midnight.

Peace! There was none of it in Judith's heart. None in Jim's. Saying little they walked side by side across frozen fields; climbed a rail fence and entered a dim, stark wood. The path ran between hills. There was little wind here. A dry, woody smell. Dead rustling leaves.

"Don't you love it, Jim?" "The place? Better than anything, I guess."

She followed him across the little stream. Thin ice bordered its edges. On a sloping hillside, almost hidden by dead leaves, creeping cedar made a bright green carpet.

Ah—here was a tiny root of bitter-sweet—And suddenly, she was back three years. Was in Fordney's Church—the dearest, mustiest part of it—with Reuben. They were searching for bitter-sweet, pine cones, spruce tassels—anything that would relieve the drabness of their first Christmas in the despoiled little house in Casper Street. The afternoon had been warm, sultry. The ground soft. She had slipped in the red mud and Reuben had caught her, held her close.

"Eat Humble Pie"

JUDITH'S busy fingers tightened around the crow's-foot. If just once more she could hear the steady beat of Reuben's heart. Feel his arms—a protecting wall—

An unbidden tear trickled down her nose. Ashamed she brushed it away, looked up quickly to meet Jim's worried, dark eyes.

"You, too, Judy?" She nodded.

For a long moment they busied themselves with the evergreen; Jim said: "I've made ducks and drakes of my life."

"I've messed mine up, too, Jim." Another silence. Judith said hesitantly: "Debt again, Jim?"

"Debt again," bitterly. "Personal?"

"Not entirely. Gran is involved, too. My fault." His slim brown hands became suddenly idle. A shadow darkened his face. "I can't figure it out, yet. That stock deal looked sound as Gibraltar."

"They always do." "I've learned my lesson, Judy. If I could only have one more chance."

"One more chance!" She echoed it prayerfully. "I guess we miss heaven by just one chance."

Jim stuffed crow's-foot into the burlap bag. He avoided looking at his sister. He said: "It's Oliver's fault?"

"Mine." "Then eat humble pie, old dear. Make it up."

"I've tried. Too late." "I didn't guess. I was afraid maybe—it was Gary."

"It was—at first. I had a—sort of obsession for years. I'm cured." She wound a handful of the creepers into a bundle and stuffed it into the bag. "I'm home to stay, Jim. You'll have to help me raise the children."

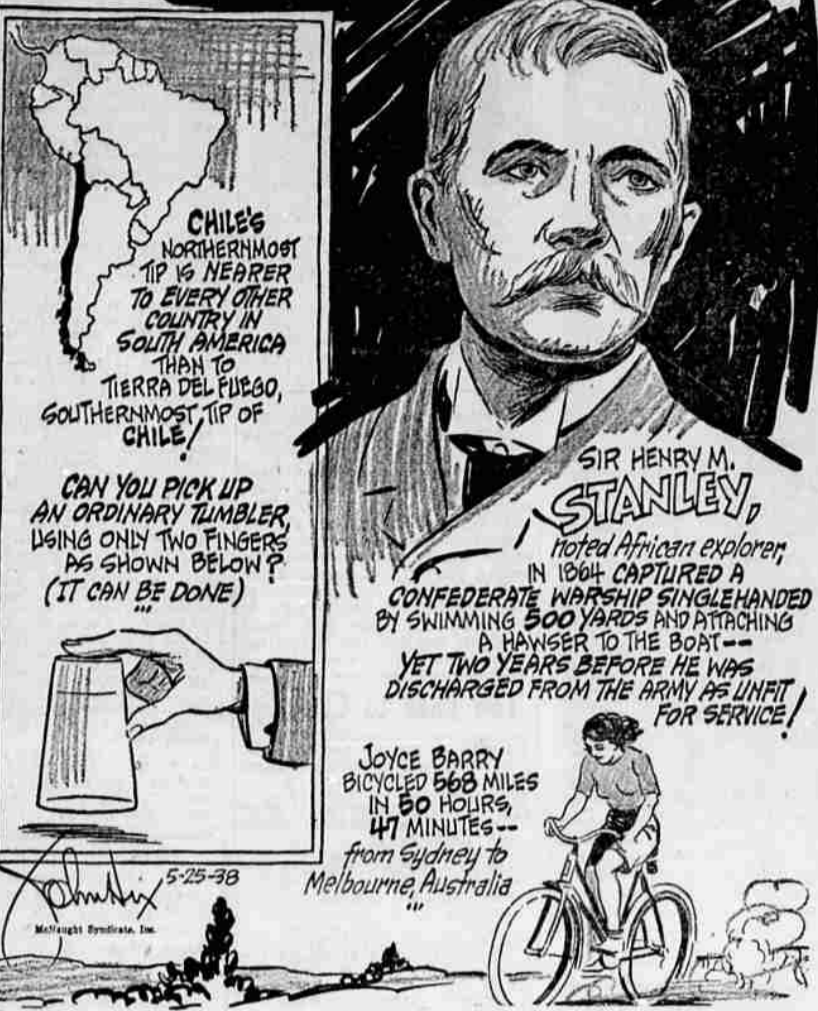
"You think I'm fit, Judy?" "I know you are."

"Gosh! I'd like to teach them to avoid my mistakes."

"Maybe we had to make them. Jim. We'll not shield the babies as we were shielded. We'll put responsibilities upon them."

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



Stanley in America Sir Henry M. Stanley, African explorer—every schoolboy has read of this man and his thrilling adventures on the Dark Continent. Just as thrilling is the story of Stanley in America, the story of a young man who found adventure wherever he wanted it. Although born in England, Stanley grew up amid the turbulent strife of America's Civil War decade. He was 16 years old when, in 1857, he was adopted by a New Orleans merchant. Living in the South for four years, he naturally sided with them in 1861 at the outbreak of the Civil War although, according to his memoirs, he did not feel particularly inflamed over the slavery issue. In 1862 Stanley was captured at the Battle of Shiloh and incarcerated in a Union prison camp near Chicago. There he contracted dysentery and malarial fever, so unsanitary were the prisoners' quarters. On June 4, 1862, Stanley was given his release on promise that he would enlist in the U. S. artillery service. Free, he traveled to Harpers Ferry, but was placed in a military hospital as soon as he arrived. Then on June 22, Stanley was discharged from the Union army as being unfit for service. After two years of "knocking about," Stanley re-enlisted with the federals, his health having improved. He served with several Union vessels as ship's writer, eventually becoming secretary to the admiral of the ironclad flagship, "Ticonderoga." During an engagement in which the Ticonderoga was under fire, he volunteered to swim 500 yards with a hawser, which he made fast to a confederate steamer. His audacious plan worked and the prize was successfully drawn from the harbor. For this amazing feat, Stanley was made an ensign on the Ticonderoga's quarter-deck. After the war Stanley traveled across the western plains of the United States and wrote vivid descriptions of the new country. In 1867 he was sent by the New York Herald to accompany the British forces in their expedition into Abyssinia. In 1871 he made his famous journey into Africa to find the lost Dr. David Livingstone. Tomorrow: Are tomatoes fruits or vegetables?

Missing Youngster Is Found Unharmed ENTERPRISE, May 25. — (AP) — Three-year-old David Collins, lost since Monday in the brush of a rugged mountain section, was found unharmed by searchers Tuesday. The youngster had taken shelter in a lonely cabin on Davis creek two miles from his parents' camp.

KIBBE EN ROUTE TO FISH IN MCKENZIE ROSEBURG, May 25. — (AP) — Accompanied by his wife, Guy Kibbee, the movie comedian, stopped in Roseburg for a short time this afternoon en route to the Sparks ranch on the McKenzie river, Lane county, where Mr. Kibbee plans to spend two or three weeks fishing. He stated that he also planned to fish on the Rogue and Umpqua rivers in the late summer. The first nail-making machine was invented in 1780 by Ezekiel Reed of Bridgewater, Mass.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Jerry Is Downcast!



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—The Full Name!

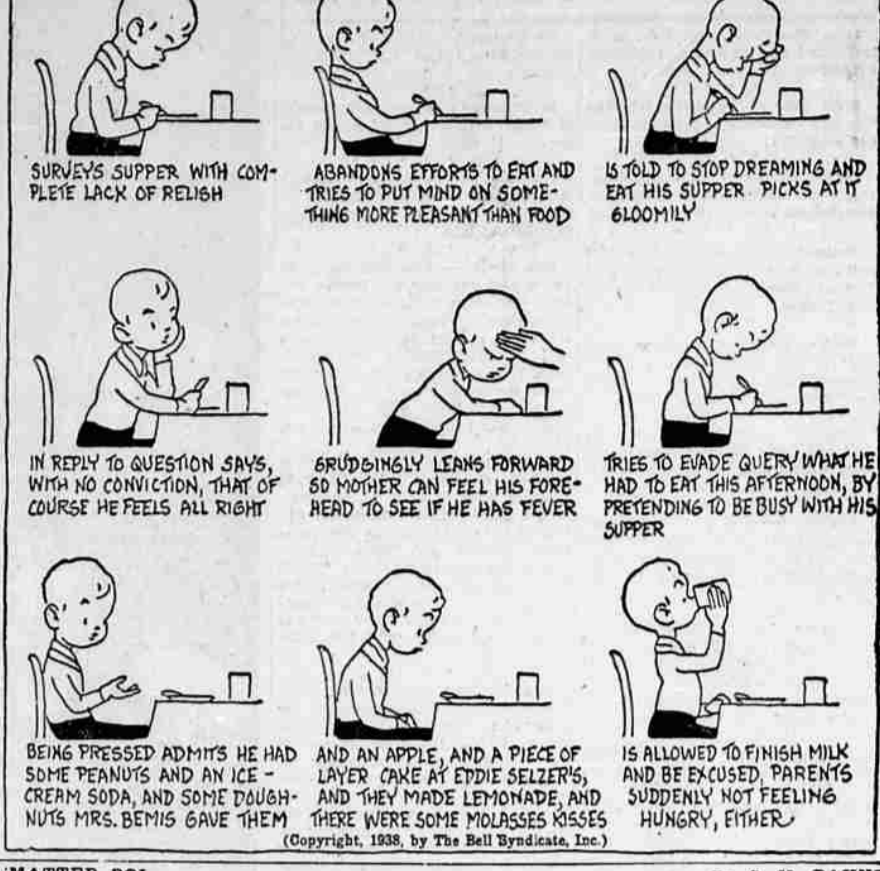


THE NEBBS—That's Different



NOT HUNGRY By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS 5-25



S' MATTER POI By C. M. PAYNE



By HAL FORREST

Mexican Uprising Causes No Worry

MEXICO CITY, May 25. — (AP) — A competent neutral military observer said today the Lazaro Cardenas government apparently was not "taking very seriously" General Saturnino Cedillo's uprising in San Luis Potosi. Defense ministry officials—the few not on vacation—showed only desultory interest in dispatches from the war zone, the source said, and were described as feeling President Cardenas was merely "playing safe" in concentrating six infantry battalions, seven cavalry regiments, 18 warplanes and assorted units of specialists in the state.

Autos Collide at C. P. GRANTS PASS, May 25. — (AP) — Mrs. H. V. Manning, Sacramento, was slightly injured Monday in an automobile collision near Central Point.

Use Mail Tribune Want Ads.

Roosevelt Address Over Hookup Friday

WASHINGTON, May 25. — (AP) — President Roosevelt will make a national-broadcast address Friday at commencement exercises of the Arthur Dale W. Va., high school. The White House said today the address, starting at 2 p. m., (eastern standard time), will last about 15 minutes. (It will be carried by NBC, CBS and Mutual.) Arthur Dale is the location of a big resettlement project, now under the farm security administration, in which Mrs. Roosevelt has taken a direct personal interest.

Control First Fire. ASTORIA, May 25. — (AP) — CCC workers controlled the season's first forest fire yesterday after it had swept over about 1000 acres of cutover land near Aptary, southwest of Clatskanie.

Closing time for Too Late to Classify Ads is 1:30 p. m.