

SERIAL STORY

INTERNE TROUBLE

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By Elinore Cowan Stone

CAST OF CHARACTERS
TRAN DEARBORN - a naive, student nurse. She ran into love and trouble when she met...

CHAPTER IX
SEVERAL evenings before, Tran had spent hours writing up a nursing care report.

Miss Armstrong had charge of this work. But to give added zest to it, the students' papers were occasionally read and commented upon by some of the members of the medical staff.

This was a particularly ticklish assignment because, this time, the commentator was to be the terrible Dr. Stephen Sargent.

When Tran had finished, she was tired. So tired that she felt she was entitled to a little innocent relaxation.

A delightful idea was beginning to take shape in her too fertile brain. She tapped her nose with her pen, giggled, drew paper to wards her, and began to write feverishly:

Patient: X.
Doctor: . . . She considered for a moment; then wrote with a flourish: Benchley.

Head nurse: Tranquility Dearborn.

Diagnosis: None.
Note: Although my patient was admitted to this hospital 10 years ago and has been constantly under observation, no comprehensive diagnosis to cover all his amazing symptoms has yet been arrived at.

However, as Dr. Osler has said, "It is sometimes more important to know what sort of patient has the disease than what sort of disease the patient has."

Color: White.
Sex: Male.
Age: Just right to be interesting.

Family: If married, he makes no boast of it.

Religion: From certain fervent expressions I have heard the patient use in moments of excitement, the most charitable conclusion is that he is deeply religious.

It is important that a nurse should state exactly what she observes—neither more nor less.

Profession: Surgeon.
Income: As to his income, I can only report that, in delirium, I have heard him refer to his income tax as "highway robbery."

A good nurse does not inject personal interpretations into a bedside record. (N.T., p. 125.)

Intelligence: His intelligence and professional skill are reported to be of high order. His operating technique is said to be so exacting that young nurses have been known to faint when informed that they were to assist him, and to run temperatures after helping at one of his operations.

Emotional Reactions: His emotional reactions are so varied and unusual as to afford an instructive study. . . . Our text asserts that a patient should be an interesting study to an alert nurse. The nurse who failed to find X interesting would be phlegmatic, indeed.

Personal Description: X is a tall, spare, blond man of the sanguine type which always looks as if it had just scrubbed its face, neck, and ears with a brush and green soap, and rinsed with ice water. His eyebrows are arrogant; his nose is one of the lofty kind which seem especially designed for snoring. His eyes, which are very blue, habitually wear what can only be described as a "be-damned-to-you" expression.

Manifestation of Symptoms: X is obviously a man who is accustomed to having his own way. An illustration of this observation follows:

SINCE our text instructs us that charts and reports bearing upon the patient's condition should be kept from his eyes, the nurse observed the usual procedure, when X's temperature was taken, of retiring to a distant light to

read the thermometer. Each time this happened, however, the patient fell into so dangerously excited a state because he was not permitted to read the thermometer himself that eventually it seemed wisest to allow him to do so. One must never unduly alarm a patient by seeming to hide the truth from him. (N.T., p. 137.)

When X discovered that the thermometer read at exactly normal, he seemed violently chagrined, and insisted that it must have been tampered with—that in his condition it should read at least four degrees higher.

Another of his eccentricities is that, in spite of tactful efforts to dissuade him, he persists in taking his own pulse at frequent intervals.

On one occasion he even demanded a sphygmomanometer for the purpose of taking his own blood pressure; but that time, his attention was successfully distracted by the appearance of his lunch tray, to which he at once gave his undivided attention, falling asleep immediately thereafter.

(Contents of tray: thick soup, large steak, mushrooms, mashed potatoes, peas, tomato salad, mince pie, cheese, and pot of coffee.)

Unfortunately the meal must have failed properly to digest, for very soon the patient was in the throes of what appeared to be a bad dream. He seemed to fancy himself to be in the operating room, for he cried out angrily, "Don't you know, you (expletive deleted) that dropping an instrument might be equivalent to murder? It's feather-brains like you—dancing all night and then coming into the operating room with the jitters—that make surgeons wish they were taxi drivers."

Treatment: . . . The nurse owes the patient not only professional skill, but all the personal qualities that go with gracious womanhood. (N.T., p. 198.) Think of the patient as of your brother, or any one dear to you and suffering. (p. 200.)

With the above dicta in mind, I have repeatedly tried to soothe the patient with little thoughtful attentions—such as reading aloud to him a beautiful and uplifting romance from the latest "Ladies Home Review." His reaction was disappointing, not to say alarming. After the first few sentences, X struggled to an upright position, his face livid and congested, and cried out in a strangled voice, "If you must read that slop, for God's sake (Refer to remarks about religion) go and do it where I can't hear you!"

THERE was a good deal more. When it was finished, Tran tucked it under her arm with the class report, intending to read it to Beula Tagg that night. Beula, however, was sleepy and indisposed to listen. Tran dropped it upon her desk, and for the time completely forgot about it.

Top Sarge entered the classroom on the appointed day with the glint of battle in his blue eyes. He plunged at once into a discussion of the pile of student reports before him—reading bits aloud and commenting in his curt, clipped accents.

As the hour drew to a close, Tran sat shivering between relief and disappointment that her report had not been one of those chosen. It was then that, with a glance at the clock, he took up a final paper.

"Now here," he said, "is an unusual document."

Tran gripped the seat of her chair. Was there something distinctly familiar looking about that paper?

"The case," Dr. Sargent was going on, "is not one that has come under my care."

Then it couldn't be her report. She had written about one of his own cases. . . . And yet—a hideous conviction turned everything black before Tran's eyes as he began to read.

(To Be Continued)

There's an ominous note in the invention of a folding porch for auto trailers. Watch it, Pa; before you know it you'll be mowing a portable lawn.

OUT OUR WAY

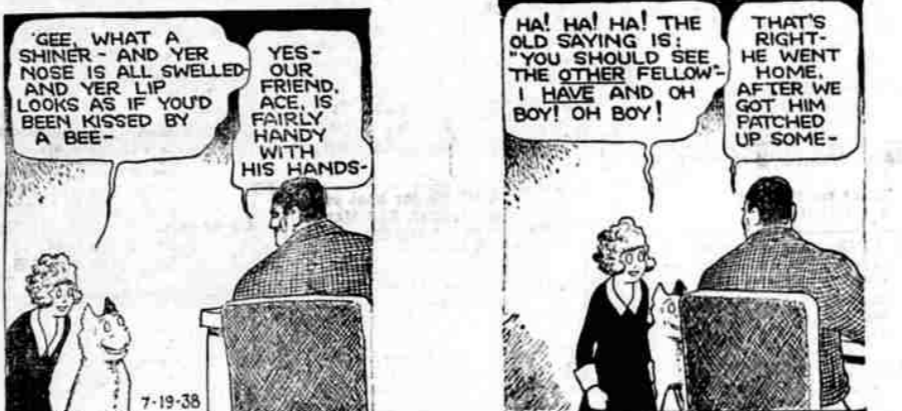
BY J. R. WILLIAMS OUR BOARDING HOUSE



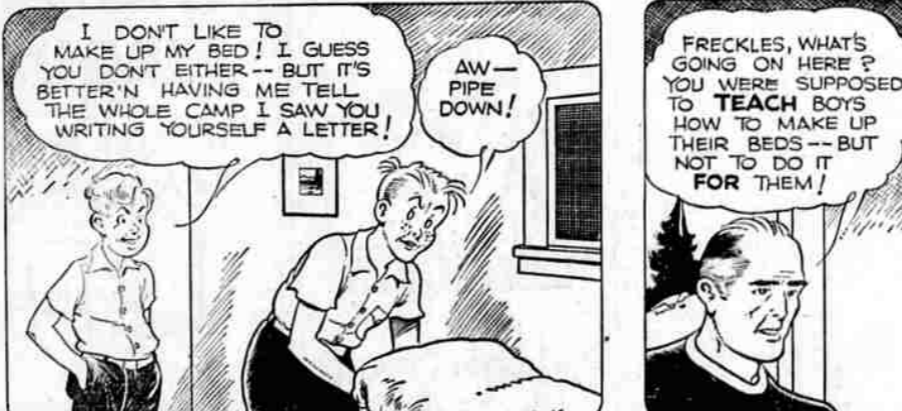
MYRA NORTH, SPECIAL NURSE



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



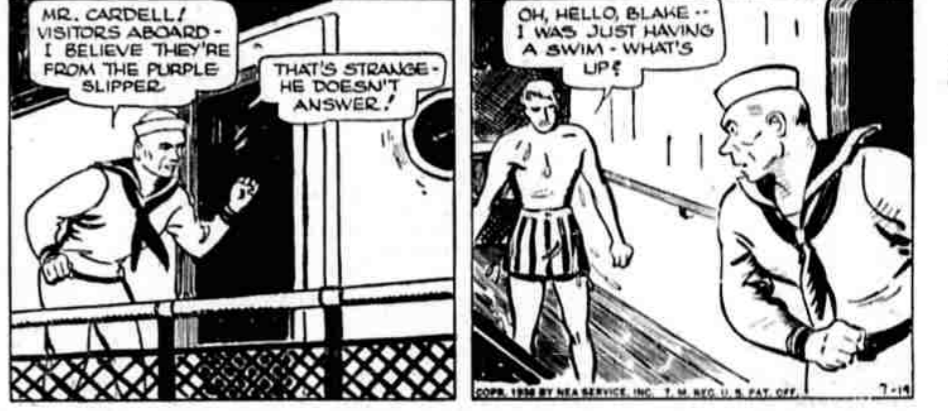
WASH TUBS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



BY THOMPSON AND COLL



BY HAROLD GRAY



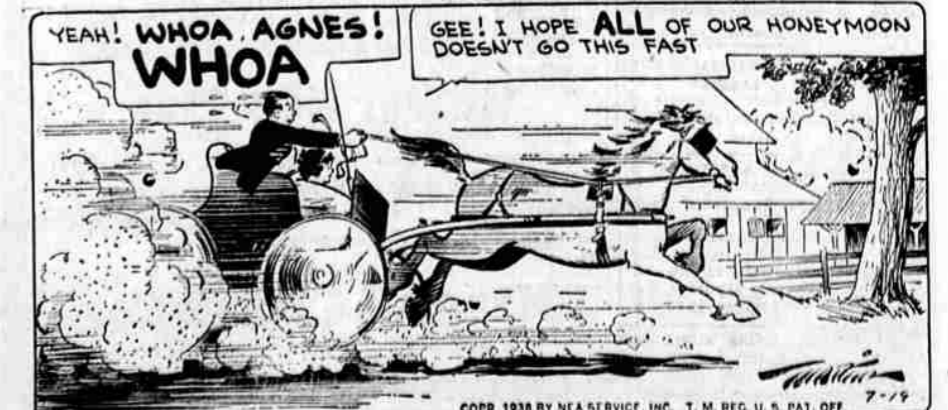
BY BLOSSER



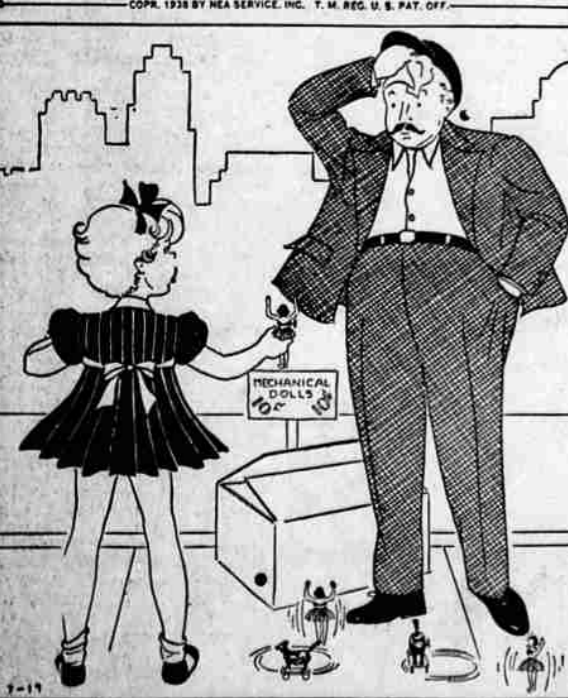
BY CRANE



BY MARTIN



FLAPPER FANNY By Sylvia



"Now, if I decide to return this within 10 days and get my money back, which corner will you be on?"