

● SERIAL STORY 'BLACKOUT' BY RUTH AYERS

YESTERDAY: At Lady Ponce-Townsend's exhibit, Mary hears two women discussing Carla Marchetta. They wonder why the outside of the young count who once loved Carla has never been explained. It was he, Mary recalls, who followed her on the Riviera. The women also remark about Vincent's attentions to Carla. Mary determines to solve the mystery of Carla but when she reaches home, she finds a message from Dr. O'Connell.

CHAPTER XVIII "YOU may go in, Mrs. Lenox." A starched, white nurse showed Mary into Dr. O'Connell's consulting room the next afternoon.

Mary had waited scarcely at all when the deep bass voice of Dr. O'Connell boomed:

"So this is Gilbert's wife. And how are you, my dear?"

Dr. O'Connell had a thick thatch of iron gray hair. A smile twinkled in eyes behind steel-bowed spectacles.

"Before I left the Base Hospital I was given this to deliver to you." He handed her a letter addressed in Gilbert's handwriting. Mary reached eagerly for the letter, aware anew of a feeling she could not name.

"Now let's have a look. Let's see about these facial nerves and see just how deep the damage has gone," Dr. O'Connell went on.

He tapped her face with light fingers. As if to put her at ease he kept up a flow of conversation.

"Your husband is doing a mighty fine job in France. It's the young medical men who are doing the real surgery at the front. That's why I came back. Here in England I can serve my country better by being on hand when the cases that are invalided home arrive. Ordinarily, it takes months to build up a seriously wounded man to the point where plastic surgery would be any good at all."

"It makes me proud to hear about Gilbert."

"You have every reason to be proud of him, my dear." He tilted her face under the strong white examining light and studied the injured cheek critically.

"You don't know how much this means to me," she said at length.

"Save your thanks until afterwards," he said gruffly. "It will be time enough when we see if the operation is successful."

"You mean there's a doubt?" she paled.

"Well, there's always a doubt. We never know in advance what the results will be. We can only hope. Here's what I want you to do. You'll be admitted to the hospital today. We'll operate tomorrow morning, if you agree."

WITH the dispatch which characterized Dr. O'Connell, Mary found herself a patient in a private room in the same hospital she had left only a few weeks earlier. She purposely waited until the gruelling routine of tests was over to read the letter from Gilbert. She had to be alone.

"My dear," she read, "Dr. O'Connell will bring you this message from me because I fear you have not received any of my letters. Service is uncertain and vastly slow in wartime."

"You will soon undergo this operation. When I trust you to Dr. O'Connell I'm leaving you in the best hands I know. You have my best wishes for all the luck in the world."

"This has to be brief because Dr. O'Connell is leaving immediately. But it carries sincere affection."

"Gilbert."

Mary leaned back on her pillow, the letter tight in her hand. So he had written!

The words she had just read brought back the first time she had ever seen his red head towering above others in the air raid shelter. Someday she would tell him all about it and, perhaps, by then she would have learned the mystery of Carla Marchetta's strange part in the events that had taken place since that night.

That Carla was engaged in a mysterious mission, she now firmly believed. Her own intuitive desire to uncover that activity had been cut short yesterday, by the summons from Dr. O'Connell. But she would endeavor to pry out the secret when she was well again.

The scratching of starched skirts grew louder as a nurse approached her bedside. The imperturbable British calm was, for once, upset, Mary noted.

"Another ship has been sunk," the nurse blurted out. "Nobody can make me believe these enemy subs are working blindly. There's a spy ring at work for certain."

Mary blanched, her eyes bor-

rified. "I beg your pardon, Mrs. Lenox. It was thoughtless of me. Dr. O'Connell wouldn't like it. It was only because I was so overwrought, I forgot myself. My brother was lost. . . . Now for the supper tray."

EARLY the next morning Mary found herself being lifted from her bed onto the blanket-covered hospital cart. This was the day! This was the day that would either restore her as Mary Carroll or send her into a permanent blackout.

Inside the operating room, she blinked at the glare. Without the tiniest jar, she slipped onto the operating table. She heard the sound of water as Dr. O'Connell and his assistants scrubbed for the operation.

"Take a deep breath," she could hear the nurse saying as the ether cone was clamped down on her nose and mouth. "Steady there. Steady. Steady."

A hand gripped her wrist as her pulse was being counted. She choked and tried to fight off the ether.

Down a well she tumbled. The well was deep and gray. There were faces on all sides. There was Vincent Gregg. There was the blue black face of Carla Marchetta, magnificent in plumes, rich furs and jewels. Lady Ponce-Townsend seemed to come into the scene. On one arm she had a pile of bedraggled garments. But she

also held a stack of pencil sketches.

Then there was the blond boy who had frightened her from the shadows of the Moravia's deck. And Gilbert Lenox. It must have been Gilbert Lenox who kept saying "Steady. Steady."

In her last breath of consciousness she had but one thought: Was she going to emerge from all this as the Mary Carroll she had been before? (To Be Continued)

Court Aids Her



Federal Courts came to the aid of pretty Chow Gum Sik, 20, in San Francisco, ordered immigration authorities to admit her to the United States after she proved to the court's satisfaction she had been born in China of American-born Chinese parents. She had been held on Angel Island 10 months.

OUT OUR WAY BY J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



WASH TUBBS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



ALLEY OOP



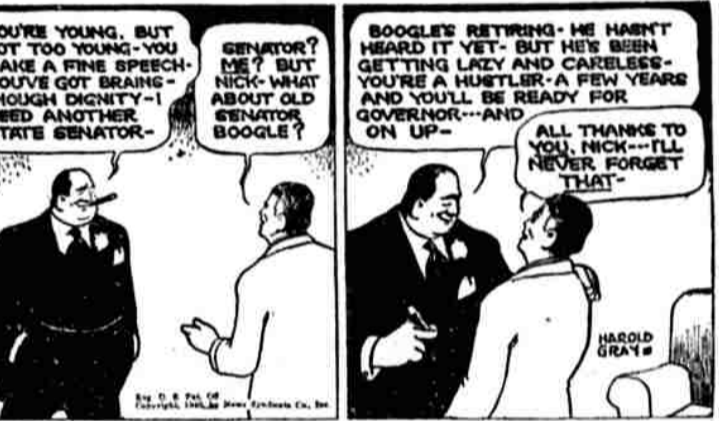
OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE



DOG DAYS AT HOOPLE MANOR



BY FRED HARMAN



BY HAROLD GRAY



BY BLOSSER



BY CRANE



BY MARTIN



BY V. T. HAMLIN

FLAPPER FANNY By Sylvia



"You want a new car. That's fine. You must think I can go out on the streets an' just pick up a good wooden box an' four wheels the same size."

BALL OF FIRE

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for horizontal and vertical words. Horizontal clues include: 1. Picture solar orb, 4. Its light our day, 13. Previous, 15. Pieces out, 16. Fine hemp, 17. Finale, 18. To revolve, 19. Half an em, 20. Fish, 21. Ghost, 22. High mountain, 24. Volume, 25. Beverage, 26. Pertaining to a part of the eye, 28. Money factory, 29. Immature insect, 30. Ages, 32. Foreigner, 33. Convent worker, 34. Musical note, 35. Golf device. Vertical clues include: 1. Spain, 2. Nettle rash, 3. Four plus five, 4. Credit, 5. Water scorpion, 6. Rind, 7. Wigwag, 8. Exists, 9. Ewer, 10. Palm lily, 11. To make a slave of, 12. Compass point, 14. Alleged force, 18. Bursts into splinters, 19. Competed with, 20. It is an luminous globe, 21. Writing tool, 22. Eagle's home, 23. The earth and revolve around it, 25. It is, 27. Valleys, 28. Priest's scarfs, 31. Act of fish migrating, 34. Long grass, 37. Self-esteem, 39. Genus of spes, 41. Tree, 42. Neither, 43. Grave, 44. Printer's measure, 45. Infant, 46. To weep, 48. Branch, 49. Laughter sound, 50. North, 51. Bone, 52. Transpose.

Crossword puzzle grid with a sun icon in the center.