

SERIAL STORY

This Could Be Your Story

BY MARGUERITE GAHAGAN

COPYRIGHT, 1940, NEA SERVICE, INC.

All characters, organizations and incidents of this serial are entirely fictitious.

YESTERDAY, Sue Mary kept a date with Nick, hoping to find out more of the facts behind the strike. Nick talks glibly for a while, then, as Sue Mary questions him, becomes evasive. He asks about the office, Vera, who is going to a gambling place with Clark. Nick suggests they go, too.

NICK AND VERA SET A TRAP

CHAPTER XIX

THE Bird Cage was crowded and noisy. Sue Mary had been afraid she would be conspicuous, since she wasn't wearing a formal, but about her people moved wearing all types of clothes: women in sports dresses, afternoon frocks, and breath-taking evening gowns adorned with orchids, gardenias, and jewels. She touched her own simple blue crepe, one of those she had bought only a short time ago, and jangled the bracelet at her wrist.

This would have been fun, a thrilling adventure, if only she weren't ever conscious of the real reason that brought them there. They stopped at the bar for a few moments while Nick looked the crowd over. Sue Mary's eyes opened wide at the crystal, the mirrors, the soft rose hangings, the modern chrome furniture, the amusing, sophisticated murals.

Then they walked through the other rooms where people crowded about tables and piles of money and chips were in evidence everywhere. It was in the last room—a smaller one with only a few people—that she saw Vera and Ross Clark, Jr.

Vera was beautiful. Regal, thought Sue Mary, remembering Bob's adjective. She wore a plain, heavy white jersey gown with a low-cut bodice that showed her tanned shoulders; her head was held high and her black braids worn like a coronet.

Any man would find it hard to ignore such beauty, Sue Mary admitted, but looking at young Clark she saw he was too far gone to see Vera or anyone else. He was swaying and the drink in his hand had spilled over the cuff of his coat. His face was flushed and his blond hair mussed. He was intent on the game and it was a simple matter for Vera to step back beside Nick.

They moved over to the window while Sue Mary turned to watch the play at the table. When she looked back she couldn't see them. She went over to the door and in the mirror saw them standing in the hall. Their voices came to her. She strained to listen.

"WELL, how much do you think he dropped?" Nick's voice was insistent.

"I haven't been able to keep count," Vera said a bit impatiently. "I'm not an adding machine. But my best guess is about \$5000."

Nick whistled softly. "That much? I wonder how he's going to pay off."

Vera murmured something and then Nick asked, "Well, have you suggested anything to him?"

"Yes. He was pretty desperate when he dropped the third grand. We went in the bar for a drink and I mentioned casually that he could sell some of his real estate and make that much or more. And then I managed to plant the idea of how good some of his property would be for an airport site."

She laughed. "He wasn't too drunk to get the idea. He pointed out that since he was a member of the committee named to select the site he couldn't very well sell his own land. I had to be careful, but I said something about using a friend as a front and so on and so on. I could see he was thinking about it."

"And then we came back here. If he keeps on losing he'll have to do something. He owes everyone in town, they say."

"Well, keep up the good work," Nick told her. "Do you think Sue Mary gets the pitch on this?"

"Sue Mary gripped her hot hands and turned back to the table. They mustn't know that she did understand. She must keep up this pretense of innocence."

She only wished she knew what to do. All the things she was learning spelled trouble, but how to use the information was still beyond her.

Obviously they meant to get young Ross Clark involved in the airport sale. By claiming his name they could have it reflected on old Governor Miller, for it was he who had appointed young Clark to the committee.

He and old Ross Clark had been law partners as young men, but he could never know that young Clark would be such a weak link in the chain. She could imagine the stories in the papers. The governor's appointment on the committee pulling a fast one to make money so that he could pay his gambling debts; using the taxpayers' money in a time of national crisis. That would certainly reflect on the old governor's suitability for a second term.

THE paper also told of more trouble at the Smithson factory. Handbills had been distributed when the morning shift went on; handbills advising the workers that their labor representatives were double-crossing them. Urg-

ing them to demand more of a voice in the bargaining. First fights had started and police had been called to augment the plant guards. Union and plant officials declared negotiating procedure could stand any investigating, and insisted satisfactory progress was being made. But a picket line appeared and the company indicated there might be a shut-down until peace could be restored.

Gull Plane officials made a statement that their schedule would be severely upset if materials didn't come through from the Smithson factory, and the papers pointed out that Gull Plane output was a vital factor in the new national defense program.

SUE MARY had a date with Joe that evening. "Well, it looks as though we're in for it," he told her grimly. "We all want to work. We all take our jobs seriously. We know the union won't let the company take advantage of these war-time emergencies, and we know we're working for the good of the country. Yet a certain bunch of half-wits are causing trouble enough to force the factory to close down."

"I was talking to some of the boys this noon, and none of us knows exactly why this business has started. And I took a look at that picket line. Some of the guys in it I swear I never saw before: long-haired guys, professional pickets. And by the way—I thought I saw that guy Nick."

"Nick?" Sue Mary's voice broke. "Nick—why should he be there? And I don't think you

would be able to recognize him anyway. You only saw him once."

"That's right—once when I took you home. He was leaving with that Natalie person. But I got a look at him, and I'm sure this was the same guy."

"I wouldn't be surprised anyway. He's the kind that starts trouble like this. A super-American working for the underprivileged."

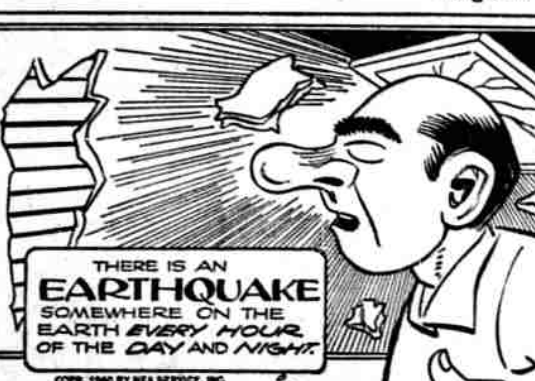
(To Be Continued)



TAX-HUNGRY—It's hard to believe, but Philip Woolf, a jeweler in Elizabeth, N. J., wants to pay more taxes. He wrote the assessor that his business has improved, that he'd be glad to pay more. The assessor thinks it can be arranged.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



THERE IS AN EARTHQUAKE SOMEWHERE ON THE EARTH EVERY HOUR OF THE DAY AND NIGHT.



AT THE ARIZONA STATE PRISON, REQUESTED OFFICIALS TO ADD VAULTING POLES TO THEIR ATHLETIC EQUIPMENT. THE REQUEST WAS NOT GRANTED.

ANSWER: Because the flowers upon which these nectar drinkers depend had not appeared.

SCIENTIST OF NOTE

HORIZONTAL

1, 7 Pictured English scientist.

11 To revolve.

12 Publicity.

13 Exclamation.

14 Pledge.

15 Morindin dye.

16 To soften leather.

17 Plural (abbr.).

18 Puffed.

20 Pair (abbr.).

21 To harmonize.

22 Pertaining to a thread.

23 He experimented in the field of —.

27 To regret.

29 Perfumes.

30 Point (abbr.).

31 Presses.

32 Rings.

33 Honey gatherer.

34 Small children.

35 Coagulated.

36 Chestnut covering.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

15 Partner.

16 Soul.

17 Round hammer.

18 Morsels.

19 He was a or author on spiritualism.

21 Valleys.

22 Evergreens.

23 After song.

24 Cheated.

25 Unoccupied person.

26 Opposed to ho.

28 To rub out.

30 To sprinkle with water.

32 Rabbit.

33 Act of burying.

35 Pertaining to a city.

36 Augurs.

38 Branches.

39 Mountain pass.

40 To skip.

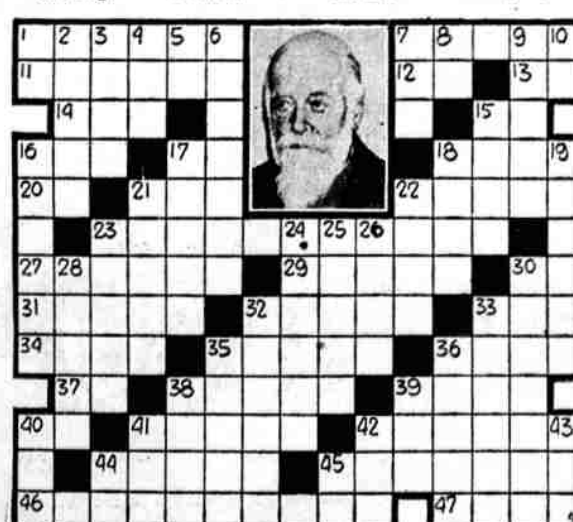
41 Thing.

42 Footlike part.

43 To mislead.

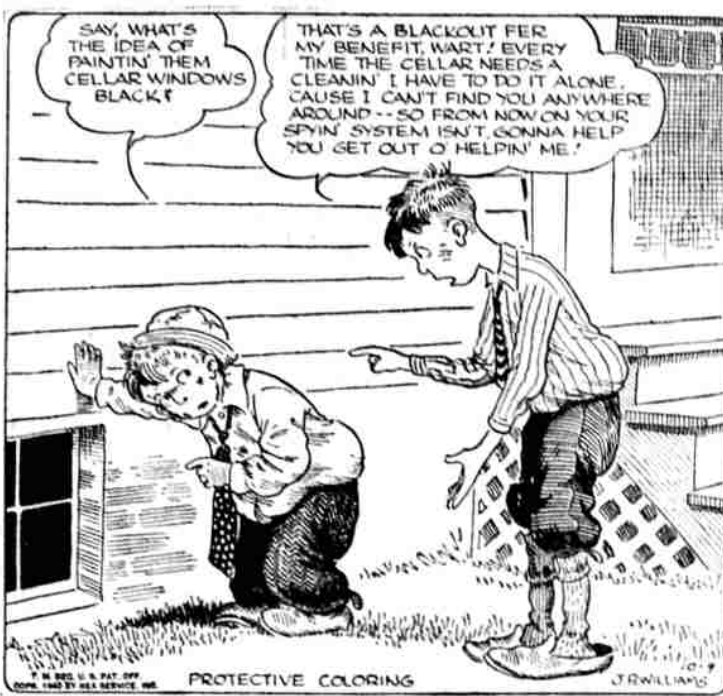
44 Railway (abbr.).

45 Right (abbr.).



OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



WASH TUBBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

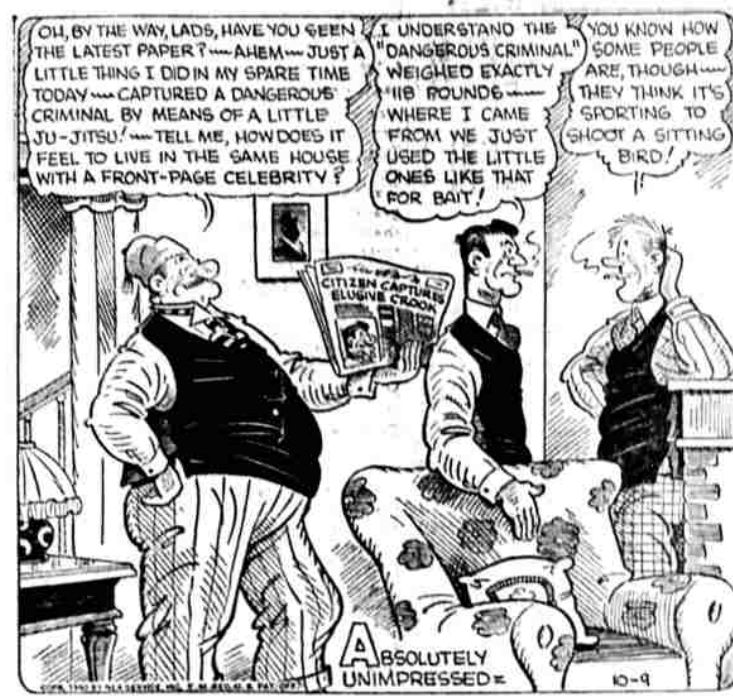


ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



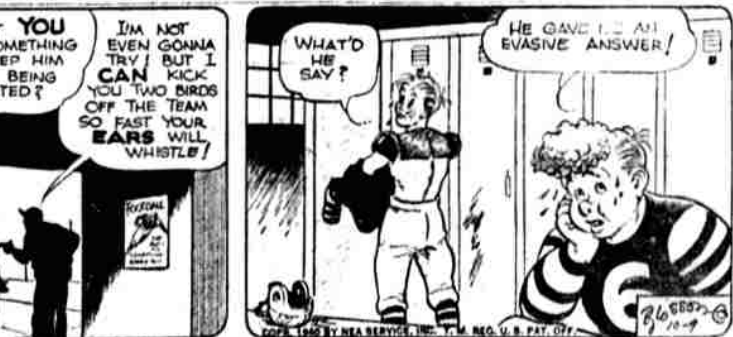
BY HAROLD GRAY



BY CRANE



BY BLOSSER



BY MARTIN



BY V. T. HAMLIN

