

SERIAL STORY
KINGS ROW

BY HENRY BELLAMANN

CURLY ABSCONDS

CHAPTER XXI
DRAKE walked across the lawn and stopped to straighten a row of sea shells that bordered a rectangular flower bed near the drive. It had been his Aunt Mammie's favorite spot. All of her pet plants flourished here. It was looking a little withered just now, but of course it was late September. He'd get the place fixed up—have the house painted and the lawn picketed fence taken down. There were really many repairs to be made. No wonder the house didn't rent. He had never looked at it closely before. It was dilapidated, that's what it was—downright dilapidated.

He heard the telephone ringing. He went slowly and indifferently toward the house. It was Mr. Wakefield calling. "Could you come down here to the bank for a few minutes?" "Why, certainly."

Half an hour later he faced Mr. Wakefield at the cashier's window. Mr. Wakefield came back and unlocked the heavy oak door. "You're overdrawn a little, you know."

"Overdrawn?"

"Yes. Let me see, I think about eighty dollars, or so, nothing to speak of."

"But—could I speak to Mr. Curley?"

"Mr. Curley's in Texas. Went down on business. I expect him back next week."

"But I thought I had more than a thousand dollars in my account!"

"How could you be that far off?"

Mr. Wakefield smiled again. "No. Sure enough, Mr. Wakefield. I haven't been spending any money—not much. And on the first of July there must have been about a thousand dollars put in."

"Well, well, I see, Drake. I guess Mr. Curley just overlooked it. But he's usually very punctilious, indeed."

"What about my account?"

"Well, we'll fix that up. It's just a matter of a few days. I can arrange that myself. You won't require the whole amount, of course?"

"No, certainly not."

"Mr. Curley ought to be back on Tuesday. I'll call you."

On the way back to his own window, Mr. Wakefield stopped to speak to Percy Davis. They chatted for a moment.

"Um," Mr. Wakefield grunted noncommittally, but there was a slightly troubled look in his eye. Mr. Curley was a reticent man, but he usually discussed such matters with someone. Mr. Wakefield tried to recall the terms of Rhodes Livingstone's will, but he was pretty sure that Curley had an absolute freedom in managing the estate.

All through the morning Mr. Wakefield was somewhat distracted. He always walked home to mid-day dinner, leaving the bank exactly at half-past twelve. Today he left fifteen minutes earlier.

When he returned, Mr. Wakefield waited on several customers. Then he called Percy Davis. Davis was a round-faced elderly man who had been in the Farmers Exchange for many years.

"Yes, sir, Mr. Wakefield."

"Come on back to the vault with me, Percy."

"Yes, sir."

They entered the vault.

"Which is Mr. Curley's box?"

"Right up there, Mr. Wakefield, that brown one."

"Has he another?"

"No, sir. He keeps all of his personal papers in there, and the three—no, four estates he's executor and trustee for."

"I see. Hand it down here to me a minute."

MR. WAKEFIELD took the box and hefted it.

"It's empty."

Davis stared, his little button mouth making a perfect O.

Mr. Wakefield spoke casually. "Percy."

"Yes, sir. Yes, sir."

"There's no use you and me trying to fool each other. We've got to face this in a few hours, anyhow. Might as well be now."

Percy sat down on the low ladder.

"Yes, sir. I guess so."

"Well. Unless I'm mightily mistaken the president of the Farmers Exchange has skipped out—probably with everything he could lay his hands on!"

THE Farmers Exchange scandal was the prevailing sensation for a month. There were all sorts of stories and rumors. The bald fact remained: James Cuthbert Curley, president of the Farmers Exchange Bank, had stolen money and run away. Presumably he had gone to Central or South America. Efforts were being made to find him but no one was particularly hopeful of success. Certain bank funds were missing. Stockholders would not lose anything, but the trust funds were gone. Drake McHugh was penniless. The house on Union street was his, and Mr. Wakefield arranged a mortgage so that Drake would have some funds to live on for a while.

No one guessed how bewildered Drake was by this ill fortune. He had simply never thought about money at all. He sold his horse and buggy, and began to look for a job. No one wanted him.

Kings Row watched. Like any pack of the wild they waited for the victim to falter. But they were at least temporarily disappointed. Drake looked a usual. He whistled as he walked. He was persistent in his search for work. He was offered a job at the livery

stable, but he hadn't come to that yet. He stayed on at the house on Union street. Only when he was inside of it with the doors closed did he show his deep disquiet.

He made Randy promise not to let Parris know. No use troubling Parris. It never occurred to him that Parris had money and he didn't. It was simply that he didn't want Parris bothered about this. Then, of course, he'd get it all fixed up somehow pretty soon. But Drake did not "fix things up." The winter passed, and he had no job. He tried for anything he thought he might be able to do. Everywhere the men he talked to were good-humored and jocular—sometimes a shade contemptuous. By spring he was becoming sensitive. He avoided mention of a job unless he was actually making application.

Then he began to pretend he wasn't looking for work.

He left the boardinghouse and cooked his own meals. At first he made a frightful mess of it, but later he improved. When Randy found out about it she came sometimes late in the evening and helped him. She put the rooms in order and taught him something about helping himself. By the end of the summer his cash was running alarmingly low.

Now he did his own washing, and dried the clothes in the kitchen so no one would know.

People said Drake McHugh was drinking.

"Yes, sir, I saw him staggering out of Fritz Bachman's luncheon room just last Saturday. Drunk as a fool."

Fritz Bachman's luncheon room.

which was patronized by railroad men, was also a convenient "blind tiger."

Somehow Drake found himself going rather often to Fritz Bachman's place. Sleep came with increasing difficulty. He had made it a habit to stop by the smelly little luncheon room when he left Randy's house at night. It was directly on the way home. He exchanged a few rough jokes with Fritz, gulped a glass of whisky, and went home. Randy knew nothing of this.

(To Be Continued)



FUN—Mischa, mascot of a Russian boat arrived at Seattle, repays crew's kindness in allowing him run of the ship.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson

A STREAM LOADED WITH SEDIMENT WILL FLOW FASTER THAN ONE THAT IS CLEAR!

THE SEDIMENT DEPRESSES THE TURBULENCE.

QUINING ODDS

COPIED BY NEA SERVICE, INC.

HONEYBEES, DURING THE TIME OF SWARMING, ARE FULL OF HONEY AND WHEN IN THIS CONDITION FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO USE THEIR STINGERS.

"THE THIRD HAND ON A WATCH IS THE SECOND HAND," SAYS DICK PEEKEMA, GRIDLEY, CALIF.

NEXT: Big jobs for little men.

STATESMAN

HORIZONTAL

1,4 Pictured statesman.

11 Kind of soup.

13 Year just begun.

15 Eccentric wheel.

16 Behold!

18 New (prefix).

19 Bird.

21 Pigment.

24 Pig pen.

26 On account (abbr.).

27 Many residents of his nation are of —ic origin.

28 Places to sit.

30 Accomplish.

32 Age.

33 Aperture.

34 Laughter sound.

38 Street (abbr.).

38 Symbol for lutecium.

39 Discover.

41 Egyptian (abbr.).

43 Symbol for selenium.

45 Turbine wheel.

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

VERTICAL

1 Leaps.

2 Measure of area.

3 Compass point.

5 Article.

6 Siamese measure.

7 Inspires reverence.

8 Hindu peasants.

9 You.

10 Arabian shrub.

11 Established.

12 Raise.

14 Wild.

15 String.

17 Upon.

20 Direction.

22 Adjective suffix.

23 Spoils.

25 Affirmative.

29 Everyone.

31 Residents of Euboea State.

35 Insect.

37 Half (prefix).

39 Without cost.

40 Period.

42 Vapor.

44 Nobleman.

46 Speed contests.

48 Small rock.

51 Resident of ancient Media.

53 Pronoun.

54 Short sleep.

55 Female sheep.

57 Debutante (abbr.).

59 Shelter.

63 Cerium (symbol).

64 South Carolina (abbr.).

66 Music note.

67 Near.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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21 22 23 24 25 26

27 28 29

30 31 32 33

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OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams

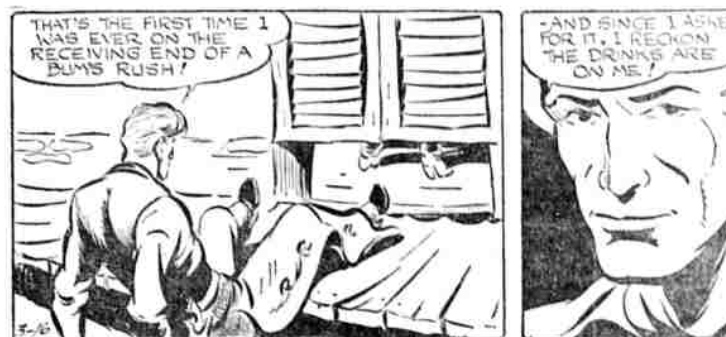


OUR BOARDING HOUSE, with Major Hoople



RED RYDER

By Fred Harman



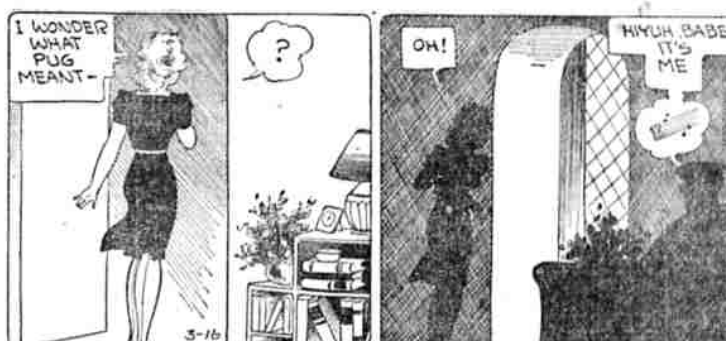
LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

By Harold Gray



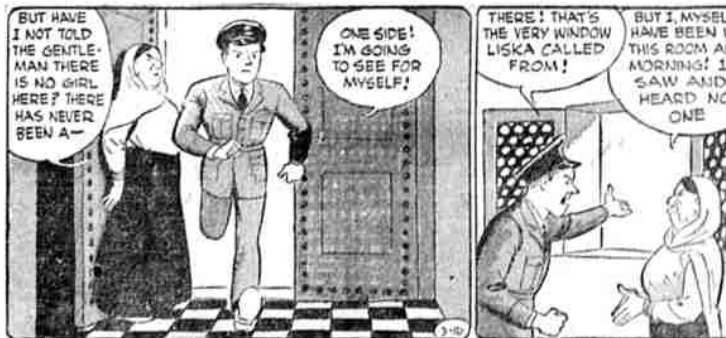
BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

By Martin



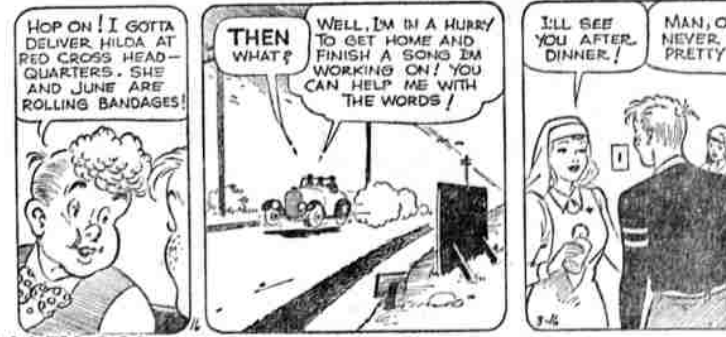
WASH TUBS

By Crane



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

By Blosser



ALLEY OOP

By V. T. Hamlin

