

• SERIAL STORY

FRANTIC FESTIVAL

BY EDMUND FANCOTT

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THE STORY: Myra Mack and Fay Hathorne, two Montreal girls, are invited to spend their Christmas vacation as guests of eccentric Ferdy Lorton, an artist who has a cottage in the Laurentian Mountains. One of the guests is Benny Brien, who accepts the invitation because it offers a hideaway for Beano McCluskey, a wrestler. Beano is in possession of a fortune in stolen jewels, and Benny plans to hide him by having him appear as Santa Claus in a Montreal department store.

NOT-SO-GOOD WILL

CHAPTER III

CHRISTMAS is a season of peace and good will to all men, a season of snow and Christmas cards, of stores brilliantly lighted and crowded with people and presents and gay wrappings and glittering tinsel and enough living replicas of Santa Claus to leave in the mind of the average child a pleasant confusion and a confirmation of that gentleman's miraculous ability to be everywhere at once.

Christmas is also the season of torture for those most noble of men whose fate it is to impersonate the gentleman who takes all of the praise but none of the blame for the festive season.

Of all the impersonators of Santa Claus Beano suffered most but bore it all most nobly. The immense relief of being temporarily free from the distracting influence of the police bathed his limited brain with a balm of peace. But Beano had no real love for children. In spite of his size and forbidding countenance in ordinary life he was one of those grown-ups that small boys feel are fair game. Under his disguise 99 per cent of the young customers who filed before him did so with awe and reverence but the other one per cent, disbelievers and saboteurs, took every opportunity to destroy his new-found peace of mind. After the third day they had succeeded completely.

The favorite technique was for the saboteurs to approach with the long line of waiting children, and then as Santa Claus bent over them to listen to their secret requests for Christmas, to slip a thread noose over a few strands of the low hanging beard and then trail the loop end away with them from the danger zone.

The saboteur would button-hole a meek-looking child and handing the end of the thread would order him to count three and pull hard and see what Santa Claus would bring him.

The youthful saboteur would be away in a trice, waiting to see what happened and to give a suitable horse laugh to add to the discomfiture of Santa Claus.

This trick upset Beano's faith in the younger generation and he counteracted by gently stroking off his beard after each child passed. But he discounted the ingenuity of youth and the end came quite quickly.

The climax came when one boy slipped a bent pin under him as he leaned forward to catch the whisper of a tiny tot. He patted the child affectionately and leaned back. Action and reaction were instantaneous. He gave a yelp of pain, and leaped to his feet, lifting one of them sharply to contact the seat of the pants of the offending boy.

Unfortunately it was the wrong boy, a boy who was under the adoring eye of an amazon of a mother. She charged like an elephant defending its young and her umbrella hit Beano between the eyes and sat him back upon the pin. His leap back to his feet was so sudden and accompanied by so fierce an expression that the mother was convinced he had returned to attack her. She screamed and defended herself by a swift attack with the umbrella.

Under other circumstances Beano might have turned the other cheek but he was at the breaking point and he turned his back instead and fled. He was a man of a singular simplicity of mind and it didn't occur to him to stop at the office and make explanations, particularly as the woman, lacking originality, had screamed after him, "Stop Thief, Stop Thief."

BEANO streamed through the store like a red comet with a rapidly widening trail of pursuers and he realized with horror that there was more than suspicion in the woman's accusation. The little suede leather bag of diamonds beat against his leg as he ran reminding him that once investigation began he might be forever lost. The thought added fleetness to his feet and a lack of gentleness in his removal of any opposition to his progress.

He gained upon the pursuit as the pursuit gained in numbers and confusion but any doubts he might have had about the wisdom of flight were finally dispelled by the necessity of disposing of a dignified and heroic floorwalker who attempted to interfere with the directness of his flight. He was compelled to dispose of the floorwalker by placing him over the notions counter without regard to his dignity or the inconvenience of scattering notions all over the floor.

A car was pulling away from the curb and with remarkable presence of mind Beano flung himself inside.

"Ha," said an unperturbed voice, "Christmas has come."

"Quick," said Beano. "The hospital."

"Punctured in two places," said Beano gasping for breath. "So it sounds," replied the young man. He was big and pleasant and wore the black beret of the armored corps.

He turned the car sharply, ignoring the traffic light, and sped up the hill. The car swept to a perfect landing on the steps of the hospital.

"Here's the hospital," said Lieutenant Benson. "Is this really an emergency call or would you like me to drive you back?"

"I'd hate to trouble you," said Beano. "But Benny Brien says to me when I left him, if anything goes wrong with your heart, he says, look up a specialist by the name of Ferdy in Union Avenue."

At the mention of this name the young man lifted his eyebrows. "Ferdy?" he said.

"Yes, dat's it."

"I knew he was an artist at his job and a wow with hearts but hardly in the direction you suggest."

Beano hesitated but only for a moment. "You know him?"

"Know him? Why I'm spending Christmas with him."

"Well now ain't the world small. So am I. What say we look him up?"

Lieutenant Benson relaxed. This was the natural thing to expect when one was a friend of Ferdy. He began to turn the car.

Beano snuggled down as much as his bulk would allow. "Mind if I tune in on the police radio. They get some interesting programs."

"Quite," said Lieutenant Benson.

son. He was beginning to feel reassured himself. If there was anything he hated it was a dull Christmas and he was beginning to feel that Ferdy would not let him down.

(To Be Continued)

Too many little blue boys are blowing their horn.

Owls have two pairs of eyelids.



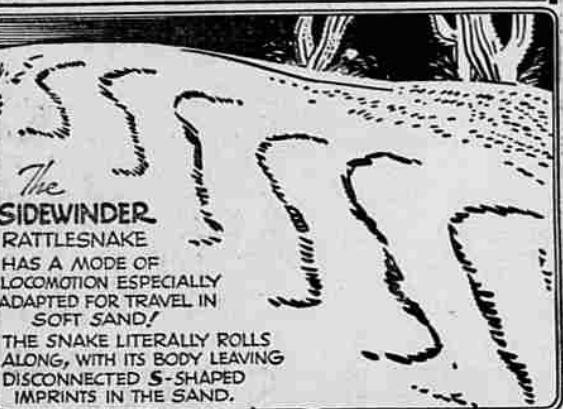
At SEARS... IT'S NOT THE IDLE RICH WHO CLIP THE COUPONS

No indeed! It's the regular folks who sometimes run short of money and like the convenience of Purchase Coupons in their purse. Get a bookful today and spend them like cash when you need them. Small down payment, usual carrying charge.

GET YOURS TODAY AT YOUR SEARS CREDIT OFFICE

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

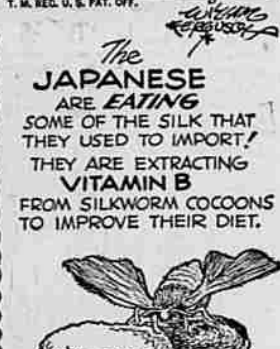
By William Ferguson



THE SIDERINDER RATTLESNAKE HAS A MAKE OF LOCOMOTION ESPECIALLY ADAPTED FOR TRAVEL IN SOFT SAND. THE SNAKE LITERALLY ROLLS ALONG, WITH ITS BODY LEAVING DISCONNECTED S-SHAPED IMPRINTS IN THE SAND.



ANSWER: New Guinea.



ANSWER: Beefsteak on the hoof.

SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER

HORIZONTAL

1,6 Pictured Spanish foreign minister, Gen. Francisco

12 Javanese skunk.

13 Before.

14 Withered.

16 To reward.

17 Compass point.

18 Those who dose.

20 Piebald.

21 Footed vase.

22 Dot again.

23 Grafted (her.).

24 Persian weight.

25 U.S.

26 Chinese measure.

27 Universal language.

28 Mass of butter.

30 Symbol for strontium.

31 Paid notice.

32 Bag (abbr.).

34 Road (abbr.).

35 Isaiah (abbr.).

Answer to Previous Puzzle

CLARA BARTON GO RIDER LUCITE RU EN DEBIT ETCHER WED ARROW OKAYS

ET O SR

WANEIS QARA BARTON

AR DON FE UR FORTY

REL NO

OS D

TROPE AFRIIT APT

REMOVE ERIEEO

IN RELIED CROSS

OT TRIFLE KEATS

37 Symbol for samarium.

39 Home of Abraham.

40 Ellis English (abbr.).

41 Colima.

43 Harvests.

45 Remunerate.

48 Small vessels for heating liquids.

49 Upper house of Congress.

51 French article.

52 City in Egypt.

53 Counter

storm-god.

6 Taunt.

7 Either.

8 Crimson.

9 Declare.

10 Require.

11 Pointed shafts.

12 Small candle.

15 Compound ether.

17 Chaos.

19 Mountain nymphs.

24 He is foreign minister of

(prefix).

54 Indian gunny cloth.

56 Has ascended.

57,58 He succeeded

28 Eldest.

32 Synovial sac.

33 Golf course.

34 Mend.

36 Realize.

37 One who spares.

38 Stone worker.

42 Aromatic herb.

44 Poker stake.

46 Singing voice.

47 Biblical pronoun.

48 Beige.

50 Greek letter.

55 Any.

56 Like.



Out Our Way By J. R. Williams



Red Ryder



Little Orphan Annie



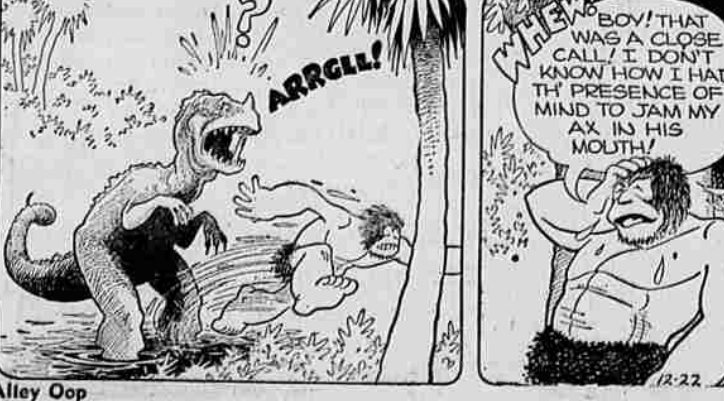
Freckles and His Friends



Wash Tubbs



Boots and Her Buddies



Alley Oop



Our Boarding House With Major Hoople



By Fred Harmon



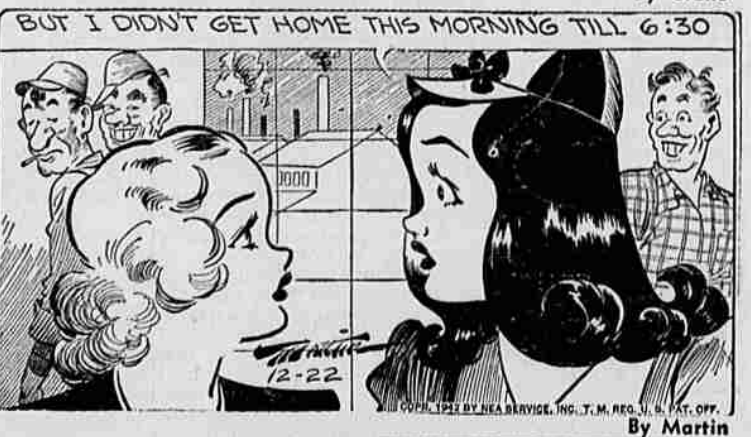
By Harold Gray



By Blosser



By Crane



By Martin



By V. T. Hamlin