

Darling Fool

By MABEL McELLIOTT

BEGIN HERE TODAY

MONNIE O'DARE loves DAN CARDIGAN, wealthy and handsome, who is out west with a party of friends, including the alien, SANDRA LAWRENCE. Sandra, pretending to be Monnie's friend, wants Dan for herself. His parents want him to marry Sandra and look down on Monnie because the O'Dares are poor. Monnie works in a drug store. MISS ANSTICE CORY, long a friend of the family, inherits \$50,000 and asks Monnie to go to Europe with her and her husband, hoping for news from Dan. At last a letter comes.

HOW GO ON WITH THE STORY CHAPTER XXIX

MONNIE turned the letter over in her hands before she opened it. The thick cream envelope, the bold black writing spoke to her eloquently of the writer. She smiled to herself, secretly, exultantly. Dan would explain now his long silence. She would know and be reassured.

She went into the house, ballooning to her mother who was in the dining room. Then she sped upstairs, eager to peruse the letter in solitude. Her heart was beating faster. It was almost as if Dan himself were in the room, waiting to speak to her—

"Dear Monnie," (he began) "I've been busy every minute of the time. This is a great country and great people and I like it. Rode 50 miles yesterday. We had a picnic up in the hills. Tonight we go to one of the dances at the next ranch. Everybody's so hospitable. Monnie, there's something I want to talk to you about when I get back. I think perhaps after all we'd better hold up our plans a bit—not go ahead with the January idea. There are reasons. I'll tell you more when I see you. Let me assure you that you are greatly missed—Dan."

She put the letter down on the dressing table gently. She looked at herself in the mirror, taking off her hat, brushing her crest of bright hair away from the sweep of her forehead.

"Why, then," she said to herself lightly, in a conversational voice, "There's no point—"

She broke off at the sound of Kay's footstep on the stairs. Quickly she hid the letter in the top drawer.

Kay came in, whistling softly. "Hello, didn't know you were here."

"I got off early, Kay!"

"What's up?" The younger sister stared, noting Monnie's brilliant eyes, the flush on her usually pale cheeks.

"I've decided."

"Decided what? Oh, for you mean—?"

Monnie nodded. "I'm going with Miss Anstice."

NOT to think, Monnie told herself, was the idea. Not ever to be still, to allow the biting, stinging memories to intrude. She laughed, and she was gay, brittle. Two weeks—in two weeks more she and Miss Anstice would be on their way. It was not soon enough—not nearly.

After a feverish night Monnie had written Dan a letter—a furious, impotent letter which she had later torn up. It was ridiculous to behave in this way. What did it matter? What did anything matter? She told herself she had known from the start that things would fall out this way. She was not surprised. Events had marched to their inevitable climax. Sandra had got her man—there was no other explanation.

If she stopped long enough to consider the situation she was overwhelmed with a sort of sick despair. She would not dwell on what might happen if any of the family fell ill while she was away. Kay's salary would help to carry them along. Bill, unusually garrulous for him, had called her aside.

"I'm glad you're going," he said. "Somebody in this family was about due for a break. Don't worry about money."

"What about Angle?" Monnie had to ask. "Is that—?"

Bill's face was blank. "We're coming right along," he told her easily. "Maybe in the spring she'll be free."

"You—you're crazy about her, aren't you?"

Bill looked faintly embarrassed. "Sure, Angle's a wonderful girl." But Monnie thought she caught, in his eyes, almost a touch of bewilderment. If Bill had given his promise to Angle, she reflected, why bother wouldn't drag it away again. She thought of the lines: "The men of my own stock, Bitter had they may be, But at least they feel the things I feel, They see the things I see."

She felt a surge of pride in her brother. Angle Gillen was a lucky girl.

Mrs. O'Dare said one night, "Monnie, I've a little money saved that I want you to have. I know Miss Anstice is going to pay you a small salary as a companion but you'll need a few nice things. This is a nest egg. You're to take it and buy some pretty new clothes."

She put a small roll of bills into the girl's hand, Monnie, counting them, found \$100.

"Is this the money Aunt Sybil left you?"

"Yes, I want you to have it."

"I can't. You need things more than I do—a winter coat—"

"Monnie!" There was a new note in her mother's quiet voice. "You're to have it. Do you hear? I want you to!"

THREE days more. Then two. At length the last night came. In spite of herself, in spite of all her frantic resolutions, the girl found she had been waiting unconsciously for some word from Dan. Perhaps he would hear she was going away. He might see the "Belvedere News" with the account of her plans. Surely someone would tell him, mention it casually in a letter. They would say, "I see Monica O'Dare is going abroad with Miss Cory."

Dan would be affronted by the idea. He would send her a wire.

But this was not last night she had not answered his letter, nor had she heard from him. "Get everything!" This from Kay, packing and sorting the underthings. "Wasn't it sweet of Gertrude to bring those snude gloves?" "Yes," Mrs. O'Dare sighed. "Gertrude's an awfully nice girl. I'm so fond of her."

"Mother, you can't choose Bill's wife for him. Don't you know that?" Kay said, smiling.

"Of course she does. Hasn't she proved it?" Monnie gave Kay a warning glance. "It is too bad about Gertrude and Bill. He used to like her a lot and I know she still cares about him."

"So does Angle," said Kay, bent on mischief.

"We know that." Her mother looked up from mending a slip of Monnie's. "Angle's a good little thing," said Mrs. O'Dare loyally. "Only—well it can't be helped now!"

"It's the ones with the dash that succeed," Kay murmured. "If Gertrude would give that mousetrap hair of hers a henna rinse and redder her fingernails—if she'd use eye shadow and lipstick she'd look a lot better. She's not bad looking only she gets herself up to look like Jane Austen."

"You tell her that some time, Miss Smarty," said Kay, who had come in noiselessly and stood grinning in the doorway.

"You belong in bed, young man," Kay told her brother loftily. "Believe I will tell her, now that you mention it."

"Children, children!"

"Aw, we weren't fighting. Mamma, only Kay thinks she knows it all." Mark put his freckled paw beside his mother's thin one.

"We'd better all get to bed," she told her brood. "We've got to get up early. Monnie's train leaves at 8:30."

THERE was a sharp rattle at the door and Mark blundered to open it. He returned in a moment bearing a square white forlorn box. Monnie's heart gave a great leap. Her thought, as always, was that it might be from Dan—Dan who was in far away Wyoming.

"Kid Estace's chauffeur," grinned Mark, "brought it."

Monnie, hiding her disappointment, cut the green tape and lifted from the crinkling paper a cluster of bronze and green orchids, delicate, exotic. Charles had scrawled on the card, "To wear on your going-away day. Good luck."

"They're much too grand for Belvedere," sighed Kay, enviously. "Keep 'em fresh till you get to New York. Charles must have wired to get them."

Monnie did not sleep much that night. When, toward dawn, she fell at last into a fitful slumber she was haunted by dreams in which Dan Cardigan, dressed in chaps and sheepskin, rode toward her, bearing a sheaf of giant orchids.

She felt someone tagging at the bed clothes and opened her eyes. "Wake up, laybones," Kay was smiling.

Monnie came back to life. It was the day she was to leave for New York with Miss Anstice. Tomorrow they would be sailing for England. She had to pinch herself to see if she were really alive.

An hour later, flushed, starry-eyed, the orchids pinned to the brown fur collar of her new hunter's green coat, she faced them all on the platform.

"Oh, I can't leave you!" Her mother patted her shoulder. "Non-sense. We'll get along all right."

"All aboard!" The bell began to toll. Miss Anstice, nervously excited, hopped up on the platform. She saw their faces through a blur.

"Good-by, good-by!" The train was moving.

"That," said Miss Anstice a moment later, "is the down train from the city. Wonder who's on it. Her curiosity excited, she peered out.

"Quite a crowd," murmured Miss Anstice. Monnie did not hear. Nor did she know that the tall young man shouldering his way along the platform they had just left was Dan Cardigan.

(To Be Continued)

CHICAGO, (AP)—The College Art association was told by Harold Stark, lecturer, that art must have the stigma of effeminacy and "cheap Bohemianism" removed to find a useful place in the daily life of schools and colleges.

"Art, long the 'sissy' of the college galaxy of gods, must be elevated," he said.

Flapper Fanny Says

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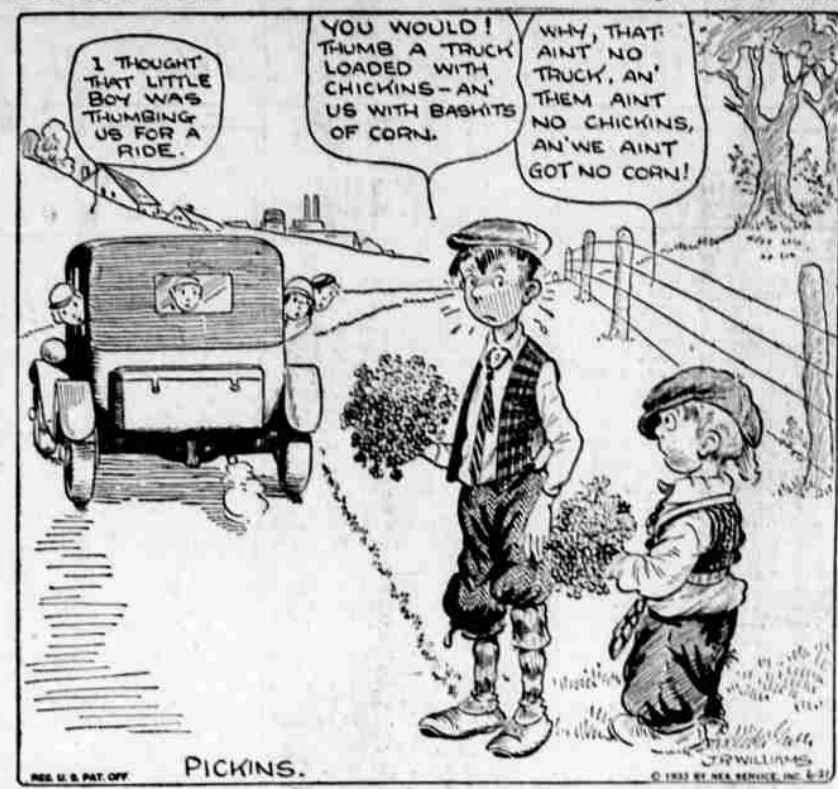
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OUT OUR WAY



SALESMAN SAM



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



WASH TUBBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



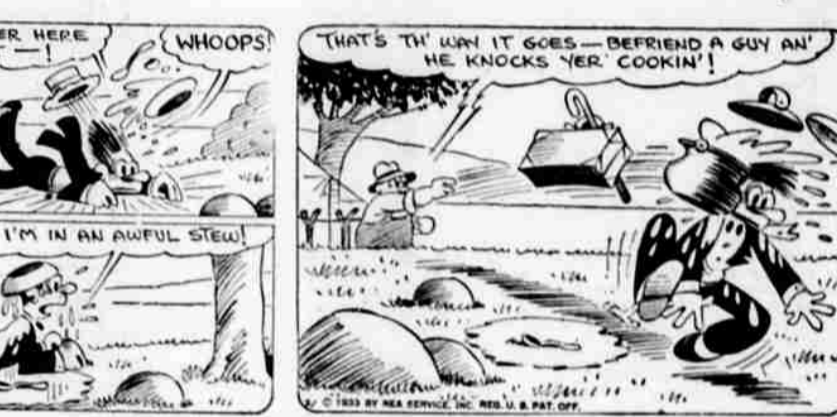
THE NEWFANGLES—MOM'N POP



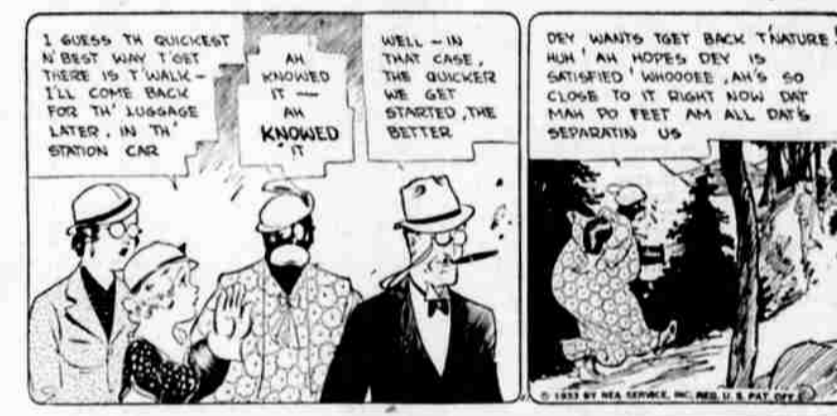
OUR BOARDING HOUSE



By Small



By Martin



By Crane



By Blosser



By Cowan

