

Darling Fool

By MABEL McELLIOTT

BEGIN HERE TODAY
MONNIE O'DARE, who has long been in love with DAN CARDIGAN, arrives home from Europe a master accident. Monnie had returned to marry ARTHUR MACKENZIE, rich, middle-aged New Yorker, in order to come back to Dan.

Before departing on the European trip Monnie believed Dan had killed her for SANDRA LAWRENCE, wealthy and socially prominent. Sandra, pretending to be Monnie's friend, had been trying to win him from her. She had even told him Monnie intended to marry CHARLES EUSTACE, another admirer.

Monnie hears of the accident shortly after she arrives home. She learns too that just before it occurred Dan and Sandra were married. Both at the hospital, though Sandra's injuries are not serious.

MR. CARDIGAN asks Monnie to come to the hospital because Dan is calling for her.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY
CHAPTER XIII

IT was night now. Outside on the street lamps were lighted, silver pears blooming suddenly in the early dusk. Inside the quiet hospital room nothing was changed. Quiet feet slipped to and fro. Someone helped Monnie to a low chair. She did not take her eyes from the face of the boy in the high, narrow bed. His eyes were closed now. There was an expression of deep contentment in his face.

"Anyhow he isn't in pain," she kept telling herself over and over, drugging herself with the thought, "Anyhow it's being made easy for him."

The famous specialist bustled in just after the lamps were lit. There was a hurried consultation. Nothing seemed to make any difference. The verdict was the same.

Monnie was conscious once during the long hours of Charles Eustace at her side.

"You must come away and get some rest," he urged softly. "This is doing no good. He doesn't know you're here."

She shook her head, gently stubborn. As if she would leave now! Why, she had given Dan her word!

Just before midnight he opened his eyes. It seemed to Monnie that he smiled at her. His mother, swaying on her feet, called his name. Dan closed his eyes. The eyes of his again and a little shudder shook him. That was all. It was as if he had smiled at them to say goodbye. The nurse led Mrs. Cardigan away and Monnie, dazed, found herself in the corridor. Charles' arm was about her. It wasn't true, she thought. Dan wasn't gone. Oh, there must be something someone could do! It was monstrous, unbelievable!

The shutting old man by her side was weeping frankly, like a child. Dan's father. He said, his features working painfully, "Thank you, Monnie. Thank you. You made it easier for him."

Then she was beside Charles in the car again. The same stars, the ones that had shone above her bright, were bright in the sky. A girl and boy, arms linked, went by in the street, laughing. The world was going on, quite as if nothing was wrong. Monnie felt something clutch at her throat. She wanted to say, "Charles, I'm afraid I'm going to be ill." But she never managed the words.

WHEN she awoke she was in her own bed. Her mother, anxious eyed, hovered over her with a cup of steaming liquid in one hand.

"Dr. Waterman says you're to drink this and you're not to talk," she told Monnie. The girl was obedient. She felt strangely exhausted, strangely limp. Through some sort of fog she was grateful to them all for taking care of her. They were kind—everyone was.

In the days that followed Monnie somehow picked up the threads of her life again. She was broken, she told herself. Nothing could really make her whole but she would do the best she could with what was left. She was so quiet, so submissive that she frightened them all.

When Mr. Vernon asked her to come back to her old work Monnie said she thought she'd better not. It would be dreadful, having all her old friends come in and pity her, sympathizing with her wordlessly, watching to see "how she was taking it." Besides Dr. Waterman told her he wanted her for his secretary, to take calls in the office and help with his Wednesday children's clinic. This work was really the first thing to claim her attention. Monnie flung herself into it with a passion of devotion. It was an anodyne for her pain. When she worked she forgot the past year, its fretting and disappointments and heartache, with her great loss at the top of the high hill.

Sandra she did not see again. A week after Dan's funeral Sandra had gone away, heavily veiled, with her father.

"She's married for life," Kay told Mrs. O'Dare, not without a certain grim satisfaction. "She's going to see a plastic surgeon in Vienna, Linda says, hoping he can fix her up. They say there's a bad scar across her forehead and one near the mouth."

Mrs. O'Dare shuddered. "Don't tell me about it."

KAY said, "Did you know they'd been drinking the night she and Dan ran off? Sandra wasn't but she saw to it that Dan had too much and then dared him to sleep. He was in one of his black moods and did it just to show off. He never really knew what happened."

"Does Monnie know that?"

"I think she does," Kay said. "Charles said he wanted to tell her. He said she should know about it. Charles says Dan never loved anyone but Monnie only he was too weak to come out and claim her in front of his family."

"Sometimes I think we were all wrong, discouraging Monnie about

Dan," sighed the mother. "I felt sure they were terribly unsuited and that she'd never be happy with him. But now—well, I don't know. It seems to me perhaps they should have taken their chances. Maybe Monnie's life is ruined. She has the most tenacious affections. She isn't like most girls nowadays."

"Meaning me?" Kay grinned. "Well, you know you do lead some of these boys rather a dance," said the mother, smiling.

Kay set a blue hat jauntily atilt on her bright curls. "They love to be treated that way," she said saucily. The postman's knock sounded and she flew to open the door.

"New York mail for Monnie," she said. "I hope it's something that will cheer her up. By the way, I've got to go to the Ladies' Aid Christmas sale before I stop at the office." And she was gone.

When Monnie came in for her luncheon she opened the big creamy envelope. There was a brief note from Arthur MacKenzie.

"Dearest Monnie (he had written), 'I've just heard the sad news from Miss Corey who wrote me from Paris. Please let me know if there is anything I can do. Are you well? What are your plans? Let me hear from you soon. Devotedly, Arthur MacKenzie.'"

Monnie remembered him gratefully. Here was a man who asked nothing of her—not love, not even friendship really, but who wanted to be kind. She wrote to him in this mood, opening her heart simply and honestly. The correspondence that followed was a heavy one. Monnie's little notes flew back and forth and almost every square, parchment colored envelope addressed in Mackenzie's bold handwriting was deposited in the letter-box for her.

JUST before Christmas there arrived at the O'Dare home what Mark excitedly described as "a bale of roses" from a city florist's shop. Charles Eustace, on the heels of the messenger boy, lifted his brows at the sight.

"They're from Mr. Mackenzie," Monnie stammered, rather at a loss before Charles' quizzical glance. Why was it lately that he had seemed so strange, almost cool to her? He was always nice to Kay, chaffing her in pleasant, brotherly fashion. With Monnie he seemed formal, almost distant, in his manner.

"Did you want—Kay's working late tonight," Monnie went on, still rather at a loss.

"I knew that," Charles laid his stick on the hall table and Monnie saw that he was in evening clothes. "I'm going on to the Willard's for dinner. They're giving a dance for Ellen."

So that was it, Monnie thought. Ellen Willard, the daughter of the new family who had taken the Lawrence's house, was a beauty as well as brilliant intellectually. She and Charles would be certain to hit it off well.

"I'm wishing you all a happy Christmas," Charles told her formally. He weighed his stick in his hand, giving the mammoth florist's box another quizzical glance.

"I knew Mackenzie in Monte Carlo," he said irreverently. "Nice fellow—very."

"Oh, he is," Monnie said with enthusiasm. And then felt rather foolish, thinking her tone sounded gushing. It was horrid of Charles to make her feel so! What was the matter with them both? Couldn't they be friends any more?

Her mother came in just then and the conversation took an easier trend, became general. Monnie had dreaded Christmas this year but somehow the spell of the old, familiar things, the scent of pine, the holly wreaths in all the windows, the children singing carols, took hold of her. She reproached herself for the pleasure she felt in it. Why, it must be wrong! Dan was gone. There was no Christmas for him this year. How could she go on without him, how find any pleasure in the season?

Perhaps that was what Charles meant when he looked at her so oddly. Perhaps he thought she was shallow and had no heart.

(To Be Continued)

Greek fire was an incendiary composition of asphalt, saltpeter, and sulphur, which was used by the Byzantine Greeks and which would burn on or under water.

Brown trout grows twice as large in New Zealand as in English waters, yet all of New Zealand's trout came from England, originally.

Flapper Fanny Says

"She's married for life," Kay told Mrs. O'Dare, not without a certain grim satisfaction. "She's going to see a plastic surgeon in Vienna, Linda says, hoping he can fix her up. They say there's a bad scar across her forehead and one near the mouth."

Mrs. O'Dare shuddered. "Don't tell me about it."

KAY said, "Did you know they'd been drinking the night she and Dan ran off? Sandra wasn't but she saw to it that Dan had too much and then dared him to sleep. He was in one of his black moods and did it just to show off. He never really knew what happened."

"Does Monnie know that?"

"I think she does," Kay said. "Charles said he wanted to tell her. He said she should know about it. Charles says Dan never loved anyone but Monnie only he was too weak to come out and claim her in front of his family."

"Sometimes I think we were all wrong, discouraging Monnie about

Even a light-headed girl may have quite a weigh about her.

OUT OUR WAY

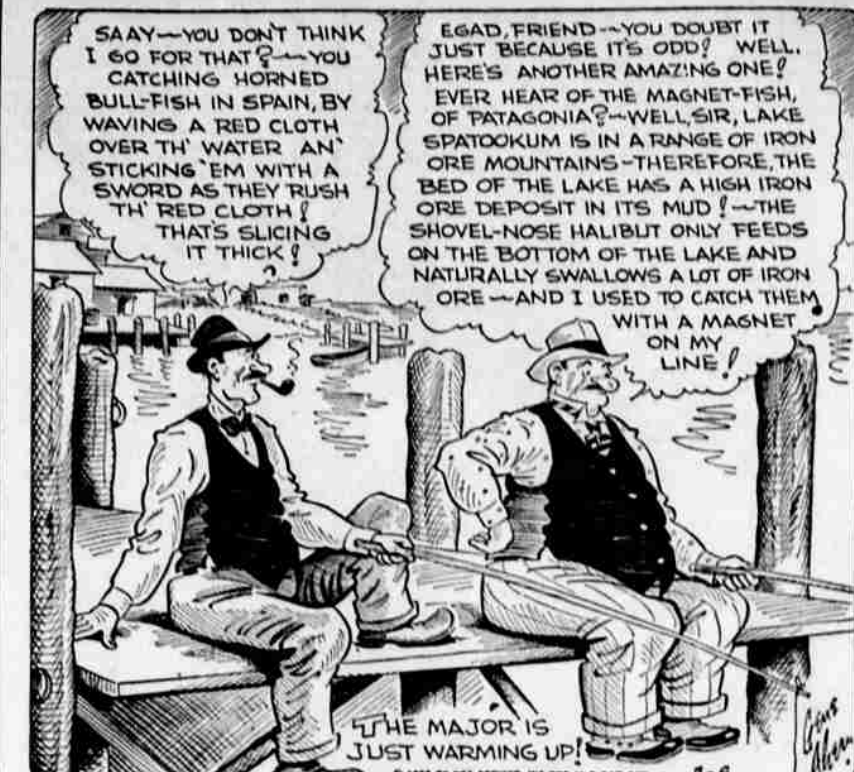
By J. R. Williams

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

By Ahern



WHY MOTHERS GET GRAY.



THE MAJOR IS JUST WARMING UP!

SALESMAN SAM

By Small



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

By Martin



WASH TUBBS

By Crane



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

By Blosser



THE NEWFANGLES--MOM'N POP

By Cowan

