

**MILLE. TOPAZ AND HER TRAINED CATS**

By LAURA M. MONTGOMERY

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"LOOK who's here!" caroled Belinda joyously, emptying the carpet sweeper into the paper box so casually that most of the gray, velvety-looking strips of dust floated down on the blond head of "that first-floor woman" who, too, was staring out at the lot back of their porches.

At what? Oh, you're a flat dweller, too! Well, in the center of the dingy lot divided by diagonal paths worn by the feet of the U. of C. students, stood a caravan wagon, dusty and wearing a singular air of aloofness.

A piebald horse had been unharmed and was tethered nearby, hunting hopefully for the sparse blades of grass that the aforesaid studious feet had spared. There were no windows in the caravan, only a narrow door of exclusive appearance at the top of the shallow step.

The children of the neighborhood gathered as if by magic. With ear-splitting cat-calls and shrieks for "Skinny" to show himself at once, they swarmed, teasing the old horse, and Harry, noting with the sharpness of a street gamblin the letter flap in the door, hurried up and stuck an impudent fist through.

Belinda watched, and when an agonized scream broke forth, she laughed aloud. A yellow, furry claw, had darted out through the letter flap and neatly scratched his homely face. No one expressed any regret as his le-puffed mother indignantly bore him upstairs where he consoled himself by riding his velocipede over the heads of the unfortunates living below.

The caravan perched silently. The meek horse drowsed, only rousing himself enough to gently kick at a child who blew a mouth-organ in his ear. The be-puffed lady called up the Hyde Park Police Station asking why caravans camped in her back yard.

The "third-floor" used her opera glasses, and discovered that the top of the wagon was a skylight slightly open. Small faces could be dimly discerned; horrid eyes glittered.

On the porches, kimonoed ladies scampered back and forth excitedly, and one woman actually heard the phone tinkle (the bell ringing in the first-floor flat) without hastening to take up the receiver and listen.

Belinda found an obscure notice in the Sunday paper saying a Moorish Princess was hiding in Chicago.

"That's her!" she shrieked. "They always say you're better hidden in a crowd."

Just then a black man dressed in yellow saaten, with his head swathed in a huge turban, sauntered down the steps of the wagon, mouthing fiercely and waving the children away. They withdrew to a safe distance, and made faces at him as he squatted on the lowest step and regarded them languidly.

Harry drew a little nearer and said impudently:

"Hello, fellow," and spat at him.

With a bound the darky sprang, drawing his bowie knife. (It might have been a bread knife, but it glittered wickedly.) Harry ran and his mother's acidulous tones floated out thinly:

"Oh, sweetheart, I wouldn't do that if I was you. Come upstairs."

"Sweetheart!" responded by breaking a milk Lottie, narrowly missing the baby's head on the first floor porch, and skinned out the alley way.

At the appearance of the yellow-clad figure, gossip ran high. Oh, if that secretive skylight were only thinner! Belinda graphically pictured the exquisite Moorish girl, her glowing red cheeks whitened by fear of the pursuing harem owner, her slender arms, weighted by clanking bracelets, lifted supplicatingly to the hideous image of Buddha squatting horridly in his shrine.

"But," objected Mrs. Jones, the landlady, practically "the darky would wear a disguise instead of those foreign looking clothes." She lowered her rasping voice, however, as the black man rolled the whites of his eyes in her direction.

"No," replied Belinda stubbornly, "he expects to escape detection by being obvious. Didn't you ever hear of 'The Furlined Letter'?" And Belinda never dreamed of the pained smile on the Poe statue as he turned on his quarter-sawn oak pedestal and eavesdropped.

"Well, I must get my roast in or thr'll be no dinner," sighed Mrs. Cronker straightening her frowzy cap. "The men have a easy time Sundays, all right, but a woman's work a-woogle wiggles—" her voice trailed back as untidily as the wispy hair straggled over her bony neck.

All day the caravan drew a crowd. The literary lady wrote a description dripping with adjectives, of the little Moorish Princess weeping on her pile of skins.

"It's a shame to tell on her," she thought briskly, "but I need the money." She enclosed her Press Correspondent Card and sealed the pink envelope nicely with some gold and pink sealing wax.

"You got to put up a front," she muttered, and moistened her finger to pinch the sealing wax stick back into a point. As she omitted to enclose any stamps, it is doubtful whether the flattered editor returned the Press

Card or not, but strangely enough, she is still waiting for her check, and wonders savagely what chance a woman has among business men, anyway. They wonder, too, sometimes.

The flat dwellers sorted out for short walks but always returned by way of the silent caravan.

Groups of girls in middy blouses and brief white skirts mingled with capped and gowned seniors; dainty frocks and white kid gloves rubbed elbows democratically with sweaters and tennis racquets; the University chimed pealed out gravely and musically; a Sabbath evening hush settled softly over the giggling groups, and long rays of violet and rose spread down, drenching the stately trees of Washington park into colorful beauty.

The last chime had died away. The black man drew out a silver Waterbury watch and looked at it. Yes, the chimes were right. Doffing his jewelled turban, he bowed low to the curious people, and twisted the long bar on the side of the caravan. Lo, it moved slowly and the whole side swung out.

The interior walls were lined with mirrors. Upon a tiger skin reclined a large, very large blond lady, resplendent in a scant frock made of golden sequins. The bodice was cut perilously low, and her curls floated out fluffily.

She bounced coquettishly to her feet and whistled a weird call. The tiger skin moved. A hundred yellow angora cats leaped out and mingled with the crowd. A spectacled professor caught one, and from the fluttering ribbon on its neck read:

STOP! LOOK! SEE!  
Come to the White City tonight and see Mademoiselle Topaz and her trained cats.

**Wedding Customs That Are Old as History**

In ancient northern Europe married pairs drank mead, a high-power wine made from fermented honey, for 30 days after the marriage ceremony. This came to be known as the "honey month." That is the origin of the word "honeymoon."

The bridegroom got his name from the custom of his having to wait at the table of his bride—taking the place of the regular servant, a groom. That famed institution, the big wedding cake, had a very practical origin. A French cook observed the custom of serving individual little cakes to the hundreds at a wedding would be more convenient if the others were concentrated into one mass.

The marriage ceremony in ancient days was often fantastic. There are primitive districts of the world that still preserve the system by which a man and woman were considered married as soon as they ate out of the same dish. Rice is thrown after the departing married pair because of its being the olden symbol of productivity.

Six hundred years ago in France, the writer records "it was considered a lucky thing to win the bride's garter and every one rushed for it at the conclusion of the ceremony."—Lillian Elchler, in "The Customs of Mankind."

**Tracing Origin of English Slang Term**

A professor was irreverently known among his students as "The Beak," because of the prominence of his nose. While that is usually the sense in which the word is used, yet it is frequently applied to a magistrate and its use in that sense is explained in several ways. Long ago, thieves' slang had "beak" for constable, in exactly the same sense of a "nosey-parker," the man whose business it was to find out just the things that he wasn't meant to find out. And from the policeman to the magistrate the change would be easy. Amongst other explanations, however, that have been offered is the fact that "beak" is a very old Saxon word which was the name of the gold collar once worn as an emblem of authority. Scholars interested in language have suggested that though we have long forgotten the original word, we have its corruption as standing for a magistrate.—Montreal Family Herald.

**Special Bank-Note Paper**

The manufacture of the paper from which Bank of England notes are made is surrounded by the greatest privacy. This paper has been made in the same factory, at Laverstoke, Hampshire, for over 200 years. It is prepared entirely by hand from specially selected rags and is washed and re-washed in spring water used for no other purpose. The formula of the ink used in printing the notes is known to only half a dozen people. The chief ingredient is charcoal obtained by smoke drying the wood of Rhenish vines. Each note costs the bank roughly a penny to produce, and the average period of circulation is two and a half months. About 60,000 of the notes are printed daily, while every year nearly 20,000,000 old notes are collected and destroyed.—Family Herald.

**Two-Ton Carpet**

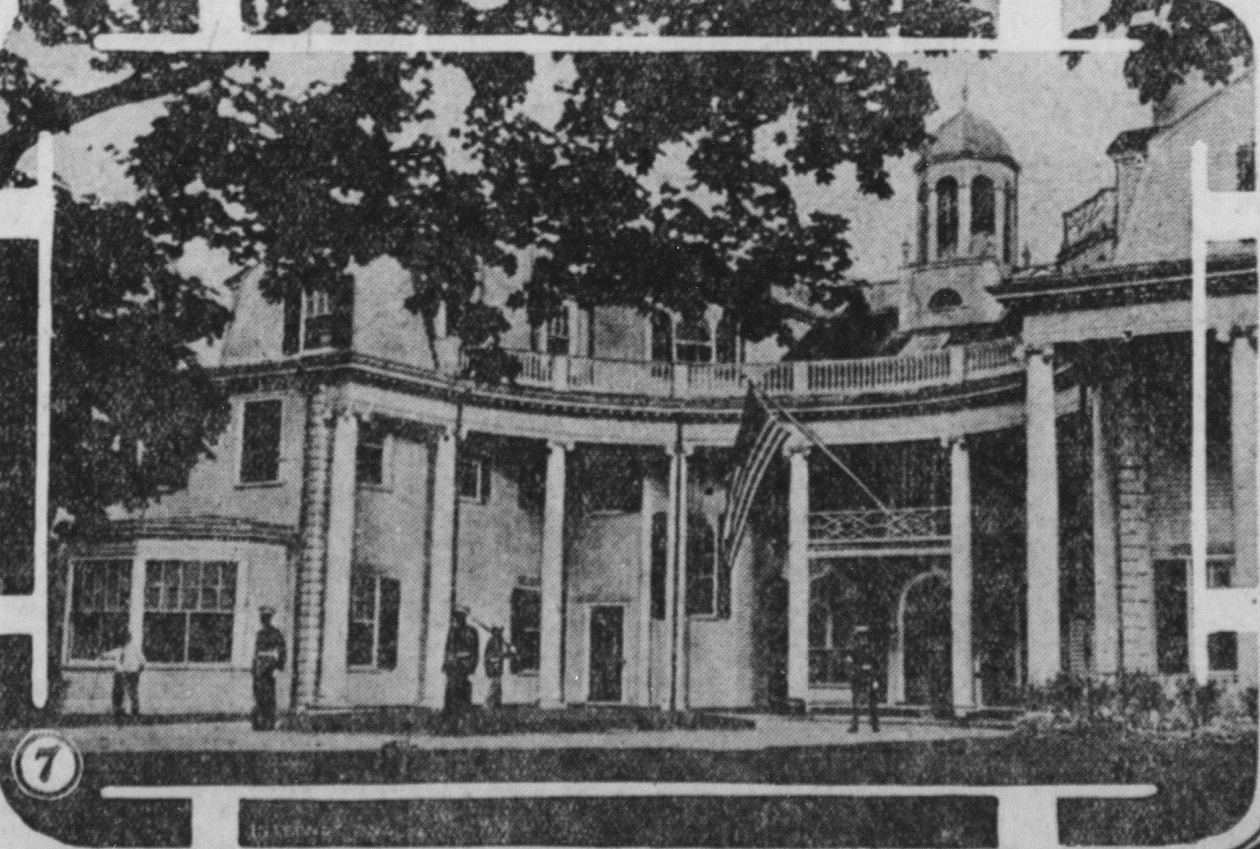
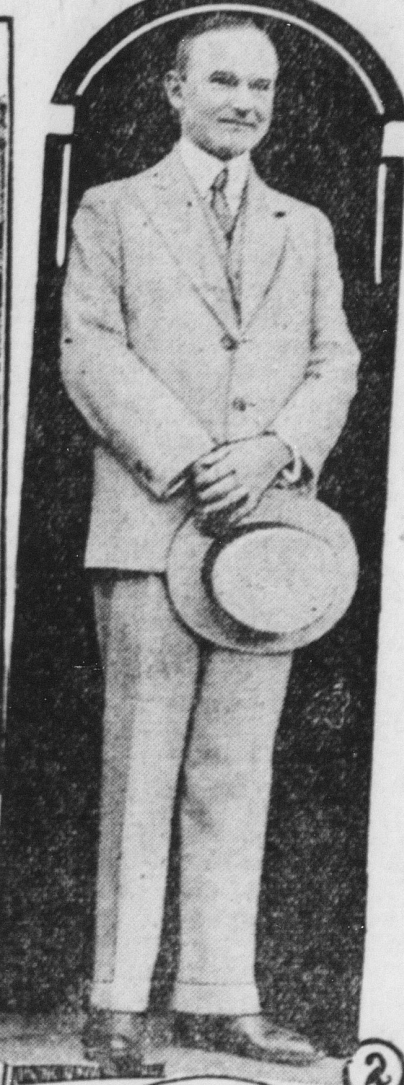
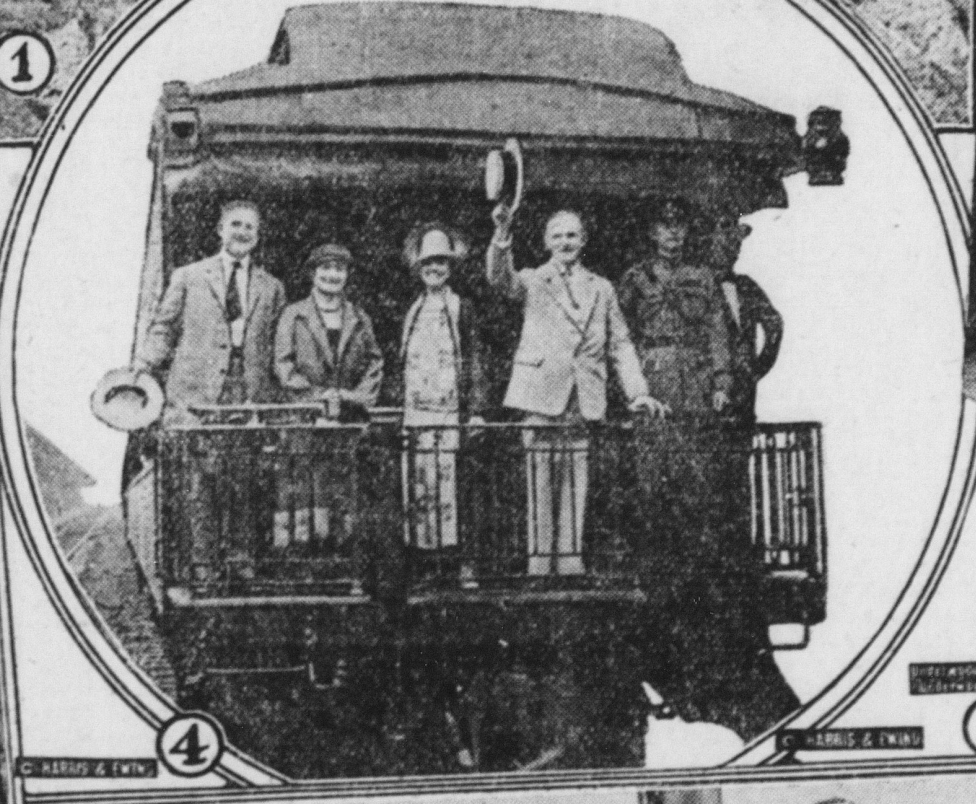
Spring cleaning at Windsor castle is a herculean task! The special dread of the royal spring cleaners is beating the two-ton carpet which covers the floor of the Waterloo chamber—the royal dining room during Ascot week, when the king and queen make Windsor their headquarters.

It takes 60 men to carry this massive "rug" downstairs to the lawns. Eighty feet long and 40 feet wide, it is the wonderful carpet which took the prisoners of Agra seven years to weave.—London Mail.



**SUMMER WHITE HOUSE**

**Coolidges in Vacation Residence at Swampscott, Mass.**



VACATION AT WHITE COURT

Every good American is pleased that the vacation days of President and Mrs. Coolidge are cast in pleasant surroundings. Washington is a bit warm in midsummer and the air of his native New England is presumably more to the President's comfort. The "Summer White House" is White Court, Swampscott, Mass. The photographs reproduced herewith give a good idea of the place. No. 1 gives a view of the mansion from the beach and No. 7 shows its more formal front. President Coolidge appears in vacation garb in No. 2, while No. 3 is the very latest "approved" photographic study of Mrs. Coolidge. No. 4 gives a glimpse of the presidential party en route: (Left to right) Everett Sanders, secretary, and Mrs. Sanders; Mrs. Coolidge and the President; Col. S. A. Cheney, White House military aid. No. 5 is a portrait of Lieut. Edgar Allan Poe, in command of a detachment of marines which guards the grounds; No. 6 shows their camp in the vicinity. President and Mrs. Coolidge and a party of guests on the Mayflower are pictured in



No. 8. Apparently the President is well fixed to suit himself as to his vacation pleasures. He may have quiet by remaining at home. Automobiles are ready to take him from home. The Mayflower is at his command. His friend, Frank W. Stearns, lives next door, at Red Gables. White Court can take care of any guests he may wish to invite. Swampscott, an old, old town, was originally a fishing village. Nowadays it has a population

of about 10,000, but is markedly noncommercial. Some parts of the shore are essentially summer residential districts. Most of the residents have business in Boston or Lynn. Salem, Marblehead and Nahant are all within a radius of four miles. Swampscott's name has no reference to a swamp; the original Indian word means, "At the rock which divides." Its 1,675 acres look on Massachusetts Bay and the Atlantic to the east and on Nahant Bay to the south.