

THE BLUEBOTTLE DIVIDENDS

By EARL DERR BIGGERS

Arthur Sabotky, a Polish, has thrown a bomb into the aristocratic and fashionable home of the Bluebottles...

THE Bluebottles do not take calmly an accusation of cowardice. That alone explained what followed. Out of the street the young firebrand actually dismissed my carriage...

"I've heard about Minerva's—er—hobby," said young Edward.



"I've heard about Minerva's—er—hobby," said young Edward.

"That," said I, by way of rebuke to Mr. Sabotky, as we entered the station, "is the man my niece is to marry."

Again he laughed his easy, offensive laugh.

"You're quite mistaken," he said, and somehow I felt that the young brute was right.

Saxton proved as tawdry, as cheap, as men, as un-New England a thing as I had ever seen. For three hours that while man dragged me down streets whose very shop-windows nauseated me...

"Here," he said, "your youth is strangled. It dies some dreary winter day between a dark seven in the morning and an equally dark five at night. Oh, of

course, the child labor laws are obeyed. But even so, they come here too young. And some," he added, "very narrowly escape being born here."

He dragged me again to the tenements—he seemed fascinated by those grimy stairs. Men jostled me from the sidewalks, children begged at my heels...

He led me at last to the railway station, and bought me a ticket back to town.

"You have seen," he said hopefully, "the town that yields you your wealth. It talked always in the idiom of the agitator on the platform..."

"Exactly what I should have said before coming," I answered hotly. "These people are used to nothing better. We offer them work at whatever we are able to pay—if it is inadequate, no one forces

them to take it. And even if they had the money to live better, many of them are too close to the animals to want to."

"Old arguments," said he. "They take your work because it is either that or starve completely. As for their not wanting to live better—it isn't true. They do want to live better, and they are going to. Either it will come about peaceably or—you never saw the people of a town like this marching red-eyed through the dawn, singing songs from European battlefields."

"I never want to," I replied. I was tired and hungry, footsore and angry. "If you brought me here to convert me to your doctrines, your plan has failed. I stand where I stood before I came. The only difference is the memory of a very unpleasant and uncomfortable day."

"I gave you that, at least," he said, but his face fell, and he, too, looked tired. "I see I might as well have argued with the iron fence round your mill. You are a bigoted, heartless old woman."

And he left me, as I would have chosen long ago.

On the way to the opera house Minerva asked me what had turned the scale. It seemed she had heard of my visit to Saxton. I told her of Priscilla Knowles. "Mr. Sabotky says," she replied, "that some people are made Socialists by the sight of the suffering of the poor, but that others, who are quite callous to that, are converted by the arrogance of the rich. You're one of the latter, Aunt Lucinda."

"Child," I cried, really horrified, "I trust your poor old aunt is a long way from being a—what you called her."

Minerva kissed me and laughed there in the darkness of the car.

"It was only joking, Aunt dear," she said.

We saw the last act of the opera. At least, Minerva and my friends did. My own eyes kept wandering to where Priscilla Knowles' jewels sparkled in the dusk of a nearby box. I wondered what she would say when she heard that the Saxton dividends were to be cut.

I had always wanted to rebuke ostentation. It is worse than wicked—it's vulgar.

THE END.

I went back to Boston alone—the same crowd, the same unvarying odors, the same far too intimate contact with the poorly groomed. My blood boiled. Old!

The following evening I took to the opera two old friends who have not been so fortunate in attaining this world's goods as I have. The opera offered was one that affords great instruction, if little entertainment. It is of such pieces that I approve most heartily.

It was between the acts that Priscilla Knowles came to my box. I have never liked her. Her husband is a heavy stockholder in our mill, and Priscilla loves to heap upon her person the fruits of her ancestor's thrift. She entered in a blaze of jewels and white shoulders.

"I have heard of Minerva's eccentricity," she said. "The child must be quite insane. Really, I am finding all this agitation most annoying."

"Now, it is not the place of a Knowles to criticize a Bluebottle, and I feel like telling her so."

"Henry says we must go slow—everything is so unsettled," she pouted. "I have had to give up the idea of a new limousine and get along with the old cars. And he wouldn't let me plan for Palm Beach at all, until I promised to get an impossibly cheap suite at the hotel. I think it's all very wrong. Of course, you and Roger won't listen to Minerva in her madness."

I looked at her. Diamonds and pearls and a gown that must have cost a thousand easily—and at Saxton \$3 a week. Yes, I looked at her weak, pretty, senseless head, and heard her rattle on. And suddenly I was climbing grimy stairs in Saxton, and bending over Sadie Solatka's ludicrous geranium.

"Whether we listen to Minerva or not," I said, "I feel that there is some justice in her stand."

Priscilla gave a little gasp and fluttered away. I left my two old friends in the box, and went out into the street. Parker was nowhere in sight, and I was forced to walk to Roger's house, for I had no money with me for carfare—and it is an open question whether I should have chosen so to travel if I had.

Roger and Prudence sat glum in the library. I soon learned the cause of their glumness. Minerva had secured a position in an office, paying \$3 a week. She was to begin work in the morning. "What will my friends say?" moaned Prudence.

That was not at all important, and I came at once to the point. I told Roger that I for one wanted to surrender to the child. I explained the matter of minimum wage hours—learned from Mr. Sabotky—and said that if we did not raise wages now it seemed we should be forced to later on.

Roger raged and bellowed and stamped the floor. "Do you realize the cut in our incomes?" he cried. Then he became the fact that even his own family had turned against him. And then all at once he crumpled and gave in. I felt rather sorry for him. He looked so dazed and broken and uncomprehending when he told me I might phone for Minerva.

She came, radiant, triumphant, and kissed her dutiful family all round. I persuaded her to change her gown and go with me back to the opera. We ordered the limousine.

"Hide in it while you can," said Roger bitterly.

On the way to the opera house Minerva asked me what had turned the scale. It seemed she had heard of my visit to Saxton. I told her of Priscilla Knowles. "Mr. Sabotky says," she replied, "that some people are made Socialists by the sight of the suffering of the poor, but that others, who are quite callous to that, are converted by the arrogance of the rich. You're one of the latter, Aunt Lucinda."

"Child," I cried, really horrified, "I trust your poor old aunt is a long way from being a—what you called her."

Minerva kissed me and laughed there in the darkness of the car.

"It was only joking, Aunt dear," she said.

We saw the last act of the opera. At least, Minerva and my friends did. My own eyes kept wandering to where Priscilla Knowles' jewels sparkled in the dusk of a nearby box. I wondered what she would say when she heard that the Saxton dividends were to be cut.

I had always wanted to rebuke ostentation. It is worse than wicked—it's vulgar.

THE END.

THE THRASHING OF THE EDITOR

By HENRY SYDNER HARRISON Will Begin in Monday's EVENING LEDGER

soon the air was filled with funny little sounds. "I guess that boy wanted a wireless machine or an airship," said Santa Claus, with a laugh.

Sure enough, the letter was from a Philadelphia boy and asked for a wireless instrument.

Madam—Oh, is that all? Well, I'll take all there is.—New York Sun.



"Waffles." Santa Claus' Cat.

Just at that moment, Catsup began to bark as another letter went flying into the box. "I'll bet that is from a little girl asking for a toy cat," said Santa Claus. He opened the letter and sure enough it was from a Philadelphia girl, this time, and she wanted a toy cat just like "Waffles."

"That must have been what Catsup was laughing at," said the Princess Kindword.

Then the jolly old fellow took them around the factory, while Sugar Plum took care of the automobile so well that he let it freeze all up.

Do You Know This?

1. Why have cats whiskers? (Three credits.) 2. Why have bees stings? (Three credits.) 3. Why does the fur of an animal become thicker in winter than in summer? (Five credits.) 4. What name of an animal can you make with these words: "PALE DOR"? (Five credits.)

SCRAPPLE

THE RETORT ELOQUENT



First Lady—Strike me then—I defy yer—strike me! Second Lady—Ugh! I wouldn't flatter yer by altering the shape of yer face."

Very Unreasonable



First Shop Assistant—What a tiresome customer that woman is! Second Assistant—Yes; she always knows what she wants, and she won't take anything else.

For King and Country



The One—Good heavens, Wiggin, what have you been doing to your head? The Other—Well, you see, dear boy, a man has to show some patriotic feeling these days, so I've been and had a military haircut.

USES OF A ZEPPELIN



SOCIAL BARRIERS BROKEN DOWN.

Guess Again, Pierre



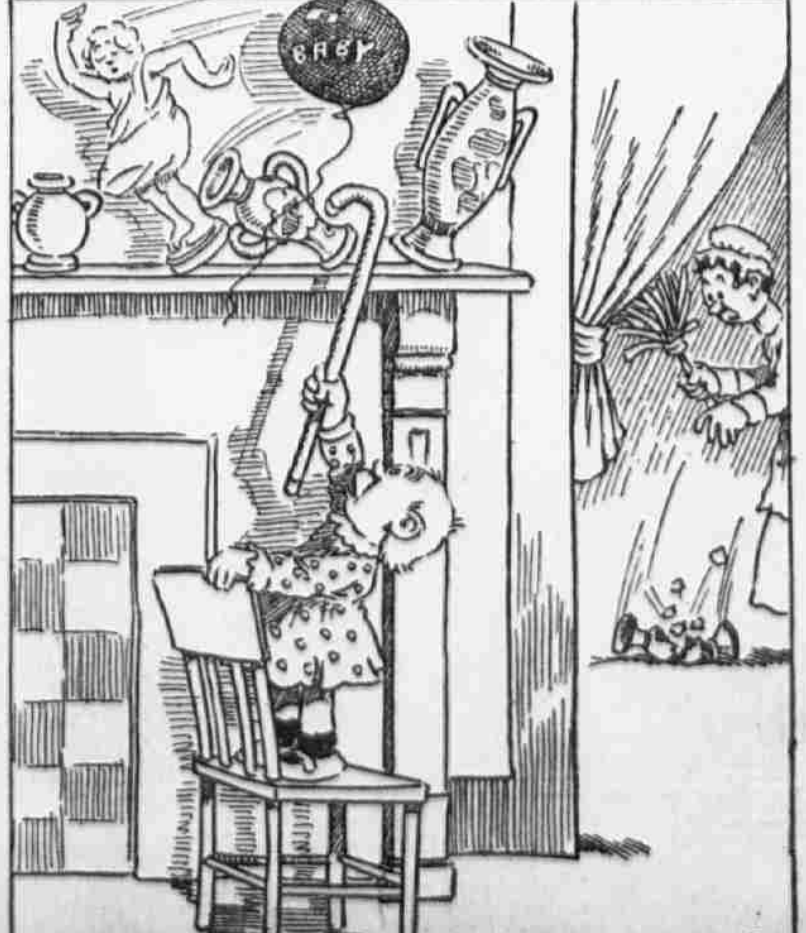
"So the Sosches have stolen your trousers?"

Extreme Caution



Bank Cashier—This check, madam, isn't filled in. Madam—Isn't what? Bank Cashier—It has your husband's name signed to it, but it does not state how much money you want. Madam—Oh, is that all? Well, I'll take all there is.—New York Sun.

—AND THE WORST IS YET TO COME



THE PADDED CELL



WIFE BRINGS IN HER CHRISTMAS LIST.

He Didn't Indulge



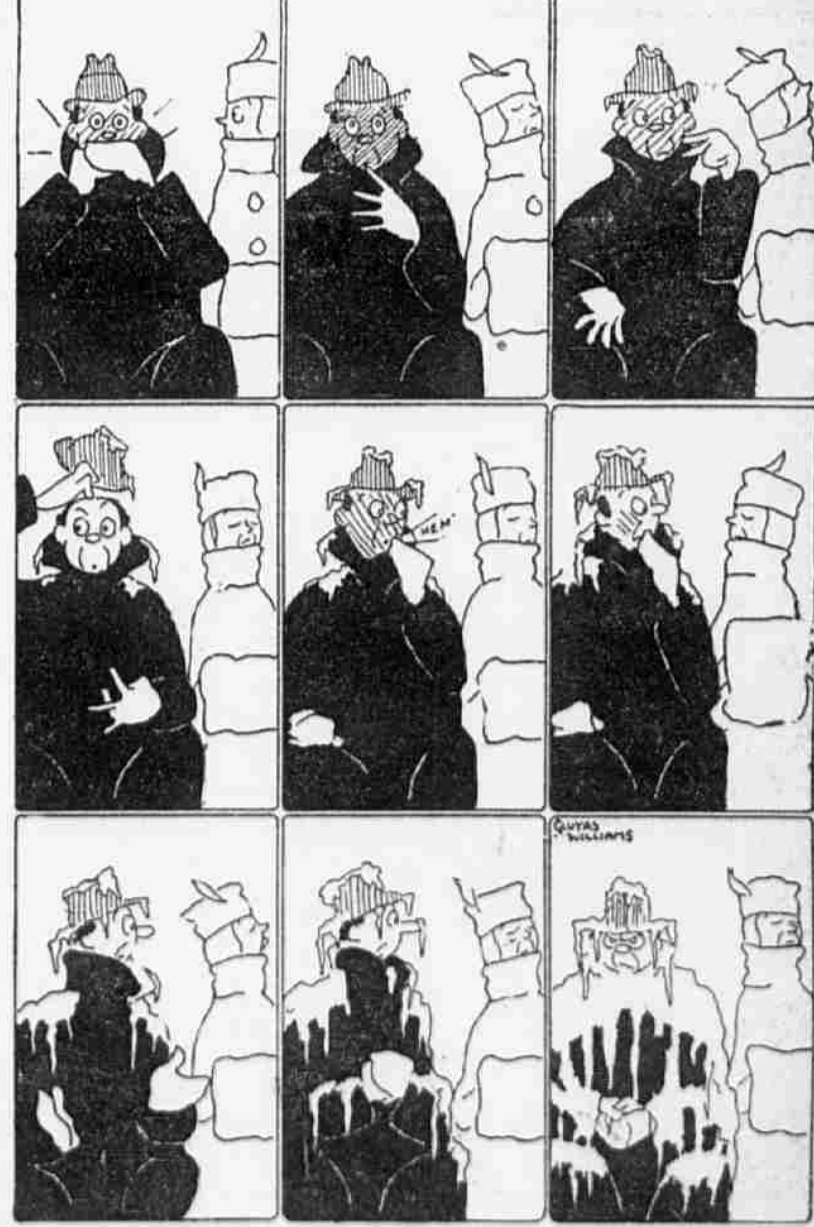
Brocke—Welsh rabbit always keeps me awake at night. Locke—It doesn't trouble me—it's the cuts that keep me awake. Brocke—Well, I never ate one.

England and Greece



HIS MASTER'S VOICE. (With apologies to the well-known advertisement.)

SONGS WITHOUT WORDS



Unfortunate experience of the man who said "Damn!" at the football game.

The Real Danger



Harold—I quite dread facing your father to ask him for your hand. Evelyn—You needn't dread facing him so much; it's when your back is turned to him that the greatest danger is to be apprehended!

According to Contract



Employer—William, just so down to the market and get some things for cook. William—I was employed to drive a car and not to run errands, sir. Employer—Well, then go down to the garage, and the car out and drive cook to the market.

A NEW DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN

FARMER SMITH'S RAINBOW CLUB

Dear Children—Did you ever think of this? There are only six days in the week—only six days in which I may talk to you. Only so much room for me to fill in the great EVENING LEDGER, and that is what makes it all the harder.

The fewer words you write, the harder it is for you. If you want your letters printed, make them short and to the point. Be brief!

Do not tell me fifteen ideas in one letter—give me one good idea. Tell me how you make money. This is the age of THRIFT. Tell me how you make and also how you SAVE money.

FARMER SMITH, Children's Editor, THE EVENING LEDGER.

The list of those who have joined Farmer Smith's Rainbow Club will be found on another page of this paper. Hunt for it. Is YOUR name there?

FARMER SMITH, The Children's Editor, The Evening Ledger, Philadelphia, Pa.

I wish to become a member of your Rainbow Club and agree to DO A LITTLE KINDNESS EACH AND EVERY DAY. SPREAD A LITTLE SUNSHINE ALL ALONG THE WAY.

NAME ..... Address ..... Age ..... School I attend .....

Great Doings in Toyland

"Bing-bong! Bing-bong!" The door bell rang in the toy factory and Mrs. Santa Claus smoothed the wrinkles out of her apron and sent Sugar Plum to the front door.

Catsup, the dog, went scampering along behind, barking so loud the chandelier rattled.

It was the Prince and Princess Kindword, who had come all the way from Cloudland, which is opposite the toy factory, only a few miles on the other side of the Lollypop River.

As soon as Mrs. Santa Claus heard who it was, she ran downstairs as fast as her wooden shoes would carry her and bowed very low as the Prince and Princess entered.

"How do you do?" asked Mrs. Santa Claus of the beautiful Princess as she made a bow and kissed the Princess' hand.

"We are very well," replied the Princess. "We have come to see the happy people make the toys for the dear children."

"Step right this way," said Mrs. Santa Claus. They entered an elevator and in a jiffy were on the floor where Santa Claus had his office.

"Well, upon my soul!" exclaimed the jolly old fellow when he caught sight of them. "It does my eyes good to see you."

"We are pleased to see you, too," answered the Princess.

"You must be careful and not get too near my mail box," said Santa Claus. "Sometimes a letter comes up from Philadelphia so fast that it almost carries me off my feet."

Sure enough, at that minute there came through a tube a letter going at about 60 miles an hour. It upset the box which was fixed to catch it and