SOWING SEEDS IN DANNY

By NELLIE L. McCLUNG

Author of "The Next of Kin," "Three Times and Out," etc.

Copyright, 1920, by Public Ledger Co.

THIS STARTS THE STORY

Mrs. J. Burton Francis, a woman with high ideals and more than the ordinary measure of the milk of human kindness coursing through her veins, notices that her washwoman, Mrs. Watson, is performing her labors in a sluggish manner, inquires about her health and about her numerous children, subjects her to some uplifting talk on motherhood, suggests books for her husband to read, and interests herself in the welfare of the family.

THE nomination day was drawing near, which had something to do with the date of Maudie Ducker's party. Mrs. Ducker told Maudie they must invite the czar and Pearl Watson, though, of course, she did not say the czar. She said Algernon Evans and that little Watson girl. Maudie, being a perfect little lady objected to Pearl Watson on account of her scanty wardrobe, and to the czar's moist little hands, but Mrs. Ducker, knowing that the czar's father was their long suit, stood firm.

Mr. Ducker had said to her that very morning, rubbing his hands and speaking in the conspirator's voice: "We must leave no stone unturned. This is the time of seedsowing, my dear. We must pull every wire."

The czar was a wire, therefore they proceeded to pull him. They did not know he was a live wire until later.

Pearl Watson's delight at being asked to a real party knew no bounds. Maudie need not have worried about Pearl's appearing at the feast without the festal robe. The dress that Camilla had made for her was just waiting for such an occasion to air its loveliness. Anything that was needed to complete her toilet was supplied by her kind-hearted mistress, the czar's mother.

But Mrs. Evans stood looking wistfully after her only son as Pearl wheeled him gaily down the walk.

He was beautifully dressed in the finest of mull and valenciennes; his carriage was the loveliest they could buy; Pearl in her neat hat and dress was a little nurse girl to be proud of. But Mrs. Evans's pretty face was troubled. She was thinking of the pretty baby pictures in the magazines, and Algernon was so—different! And his nose was—strange, too, and she had massaged it so carefully, too, and when, oh when, would he say "Daddy-dinger!"

But Algernon was not envious of any other baby's beauty that afternoon, nor worried about his nose either as he bumped up and down in his carriage in glad good humor, and delivered full-sized gurgling "goos" at every person he met, even throwing them along the street in the prodigality of his heart, as he waved his fat hands and thumped his heavy little heels.

Pearl held her head high and was very much the bodyguard as she lifted the weighty ruler to the ground. Mrs. Ducker ran down the steps and kissed the czar ostentatiously, pouring out such a volume of admiring and endearing epithets that Pearl stood in bewilderment, wondering why she had never heard of this before. Mrs. Ducker carried the czar into the house, Pearl following with one eye shut, which was her way of expressing perplexity.

Two little girls in very fluffy short skirts sat demurely in the hammock, keeping their dresses clean and wondering if there would be ice cream. Within doors Maudie worried out the "Java March" on the piano to a dozen or more patient listeners. On the lawn several little girls played croquet. There were no boys at the party. Wilford was going to have the boys—that is, the conservative boys—the next day. Mrs. Ducker did not believe in co-education. Boys are so rough, except Wilford. He had been so carefully brought up, he was not rough at all. He stood awkwardly by the gate watching the girls play croquet. He had been left without a station at his own request. Patsey Watson rode by on a dray wagon, dirty and jolly. Wilford called to him furtively, but Patsey was busy holding on and did not hear him. Wilford sighed heavily. Down at the tracks a freight train shunted and shuddered.

Not a boy was in sight. He knew why. The farmers were loading cattle cars.

Pearl went around to the side lawn where the girls were playing croquet, holding the czar's hand tightly.

"What are you playin'?" she asked.

They told her.

"Can you play it?" Mildred Bates asked.

"I guess I can," Pearl said modestly. "But I'm always too busy for games like that!"

"Maudie Ducker says you never play," Mildred Bates said with pity in her voice.

"Maudie Ducker is away off there," Pearl answered with dignity. "I have more fun in one day than Maudie Ducker'll ever have if she lives to be as old as Melchesidick, and it's not this frowsy standin' - round - doin' - nothin' that you kids call fun, either."

"Tell us about it, Pearl," they shouted eagerly. Pearl's stories had a charm.

"Well," Pearl began, "ye know I wash Mrs. Evans's dishes every day, and lovely ones they are, too, all pink and gold with dinky little ivy leaves crawlin' out over the edges of the cups. I play I am at the seashore and the tide is comin' in o'er and o'er the sand and 'round and 'round the land, far as eye can see—that's out of a book. I put all the dishes into the big dish-pan, and I pertend the tide is risin' on them, though it's just me pourin' on the water. The cups are the boys and the saucers are the girls, the plates are the fathers and mothers and the butter chips are the babies. Then I rush in to save them, but not until they cry 'Lord save us, we perish!' Of course, I yell it for them, good and loud too—people don't just squawk at a time like that—it often scares Mrs. Evans even yet. I save the babies first. I slush them around to clean them, but they never notice that, and I stand them up high and dry in the drip-pan. Then I go in after the girls, and they quiet down the babies in the drip-pan; and then the mothers I bring out, and the boys and the fathers. Sometimes some of the men make a dash out before the women, but you bet I lay them back in a hurry. Then I set the ocean back on the stove, and I rub the babies to get their blood circlin' again, and I get them all put to bed on the second shelf and they soon forget they were so near death's door."

Mary Ducker had finished the "Java March" and "Mary's Pet Waltz," and had joined the interested group on the lawn and now stood listening in dull wonder.

"I rub them all and shine them well," Pearl went on, "and get them all packed off home into the china cupboard, every man jack o' them singin' 'Are we yet alive and see each other's face?' Mrs. Evans sings it for them when she's there.

"Then I get the vegetable dishes and bowls and silverware and all that, and that's an excursion, and they're all drunk, not a sober man on board. They sing 'Sooper-up, old boys,' 'We won't go home till mornin'' and all that, and crash! a cry bursts from every soul on board. They have struck upon a rock and are going down! Water pours in at the gunnel (that's just me with more water and soap, you know), but I ain't sorry for them, for they're all old enough to know that 'wine is a mocker, strong drink is ragin', and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.' But when the crash comes and the swellin' waters burst in they get sober pret' quick and come rushin' up oh deck with pale faces to see what's wrong, and I've often seen a big bowl whirl 'round and 'round kind o' dizzy and say 'woe is me!' and sink to the bottom. Mrs. Evans told me that. Anyway, I do save them at last, when they see what whisky is doin' for them. I rub them all up and send them home. The steel knives—they're the worst of all. But though they're black and stained with sin, they're still our brothers, and so we give them the gold cure—that's the bath-brick, and they make a fresh start.

"When I sweep the floor I pretend I'm the army of the Lord that comes to clear the way from dust and sin, let the King of Glory in. Under the stove the hordes of sin are awful thick, they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil! But I say the 'sword of the Lord and of Gideon!' and let them have it! Sometimes I pertend I'm the woman that lost the piece of silver and I sweep the house diligently till I find it, and once Mrs. Evans did put ten cents in a corner just for fun for me, and I never know when she's going to do something like that."

Here Maudie Ducker, who had been listening with growing wonder, interrupted Pearl with the cry of "Oh, here's pa and Mr. Evans. They're going to take our pictures!"

The little girls were immediately roused out of the spell that Pearlie's story had put upon them, and began to group themselves under the trees, arranging their little skirts and frills.

The czar had toddled on his uncertain little fat legs around to the back door, for he had caught sight of a red head which he knew and liked very much. It belonged to Mary McSorley, the eldest of the McSorley family, who had brought over to Mrs. Ducker the extra two quarts of milk which Mrs. Ducker had ordered for the occasion.

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

DREAMLAND ADVENTURES

DOCTOR PEGGY

By DADDY

(Reddy Wood-Pecker tells Peggy that the birds have been made ill by Dr. Blue Bird and Dr. Blue Jay. She becomes small and starts for Birdland riding Hoppity-Hop, a rabbit. Johnny Bull, the dog, comes chasing the rabbit, and on his back is Billy Belgium.)

CHAPTER II

Johnny Bull's Sneeze

HOPPITY-HOP, the rabbit, didn't like dogs. He didn't like dogs because he knew that dogs liked to eat rabbits. So, when Reddy Wood-Pecker hinted that Johnny Bull was chasing them, Hoppity-Hop set off helter-skelter down the road. Peggy had to cling tight to his ears to keep from being thrown from his back.

"Hi! Hi! Go it, Johnny Bull. Catch that rabbit!" Billy urged the dog on with excited yells, not knowing that Peggy was riding the rabbit. Indeed, the rabbit was hopping so fast that it wasn't strange that he didn't see her.

"Hi! Hi! Go it, Johnny Bull," shouted Billy again. His yells made Johnny Bull go faster, but they scared Hoppity-Hop until he went twice as fast. The rabbit raced far ahead of the dog and darted among the bushes at the edge of Birdland. There he hid, panting and trembling.

"Don't be afraid of Johnny Bull. He is a slow poke and can't catch you," chuckled Peggy, who thought it very funny the way Johnny Bull made his clunky legs fly without covering half the ground that the rabbit did in his hops.

"I know he can't catch me, but he makes me nervous," squeaked the rabbit.

"Let's have some fun with him," cried Peggy. "You hop along just ahead of him, and when he tries to grab you I'll tickle his nose."

"But, supposing he does grab me, what then?" squeaked the rabbit, who wasn't willing to take any chances with Johnny Bull's sharp teeth.

"I'll not let him hurt you," promised Peggy. Hoppity-Hop didn't want Peggy to think him a coward, so, after she had broken off a long twig with which to tickle Johnny Bull's nose, the rabbit jumped out into the path of the dog.

"Woof! Now I've got you," sniffed Johnny Bull, and he went after Hoppity-Hop harder than ever. But Hoppity-Hop went flying down the path just one hop ahead of Johnny Bull's hungry jaws. Peggy was partly hidden by the leaves on the twig and Johnny Bull didn't know she was riding the rabbit.

"Grab the rabbit! Hi! Grab it!" yelled Billy. Johnny Bull reached out and reached out, but he just couldn't reach the rabbit. And then Peggy, hanging to the rabbit's ear with one hand, reached back with the twig until she could just touch Johnny Bull's nose. Johnny Bull sniffed and shook his head, but he couldn't get that annoying little twig away from his nose. It teased him and it tickled him, and finally Johnny Bull couldn't stand it a second longer—he suddenly gave a whopping big sneeze.

That sneeze caused a lot of trouble. Johnny Bull, as he gave it, was jumping across a little brook that ran through a bog. The sneeze caused Johnny to duck his head, and when he ducked his head he lost his balance, and down he plunked into the brook, rolling head over heels in the cold water. Billy flew off his back and landed flat in the mud.

Peggy laughed aloud. Johnny Bull and Billy looked so surprised and funny she couldn't help it. And even the rabbit laughed, twitching his whiskers so comically it made Peggy laugh even harder.

Johnny Bull was mad. So was Billy. But when they picked themselves out of the water and mud and saw who was laughing at them they forgot their mad feelings and grinned up at Peggy.

"You surely did fool us that time, Peggy," grunted Billy.

"Woof! Fooled by a rabbit, and I lose my breakfast besides," sniffed Johnny Bull. "That makes me sick!"

When Johnny Bull said he was sick, there was a rustling and flurry in the bushes, and out darted Blue Bird and Blue Jay.

"Sick! Sick! Who is sick? We're the doctors!" they screamed.

Then Peggy remembered what she had come to Birdland for—it was to rescue the sick birds from Dr. Blue Bird and Dr. Blue Jay.

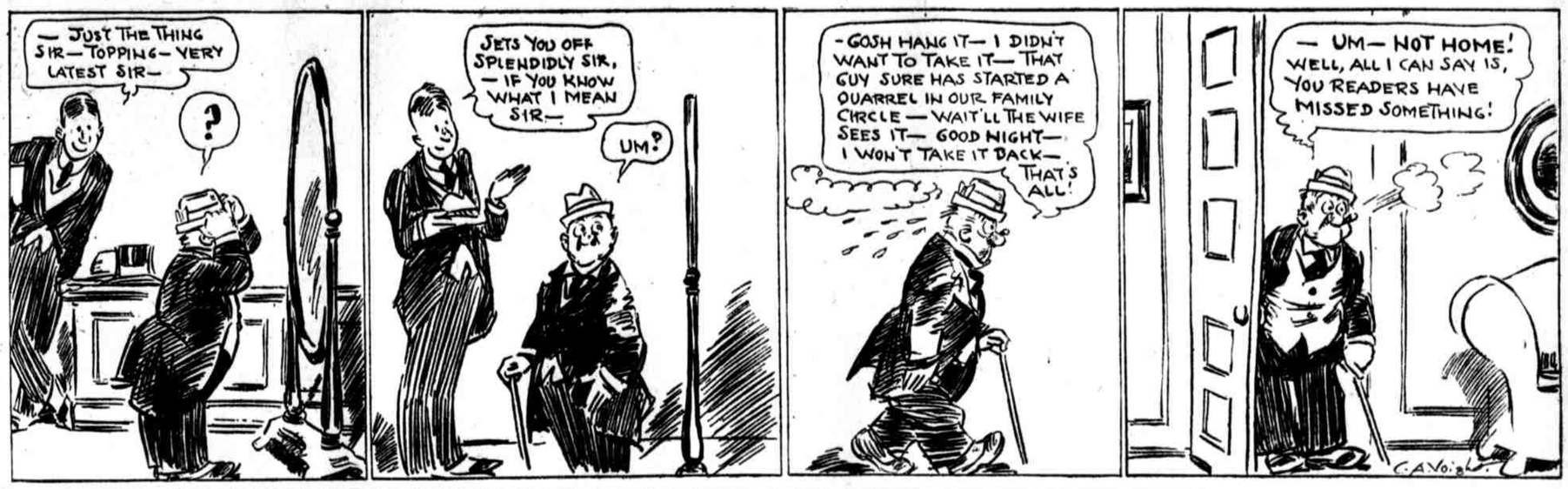
(Tomorrow will be told how Peggy and Billy find a hospital in the woods.)

THE GUMPS—Carp Cavair Closed at 37

By Sidney Smith

PETEY—Our Space Is Limited

By C. A. Voight

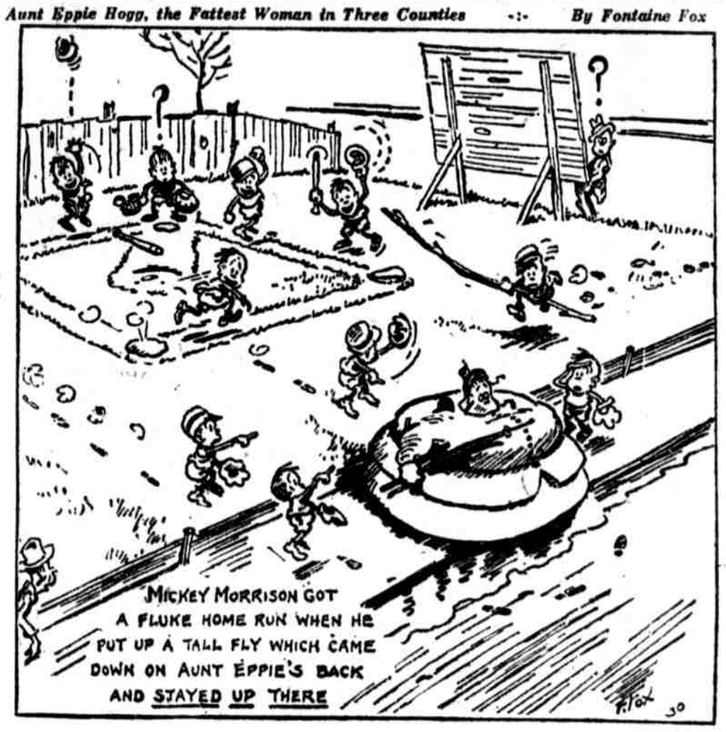


The Young Lady Across the Way

The young lady across the way says ever since she had the flu her mother has forced her to take compulsion of cod liver oil.

Aunt Eppie Hogg, the Fattest Woman in Three Counties

By Fontaine Fox



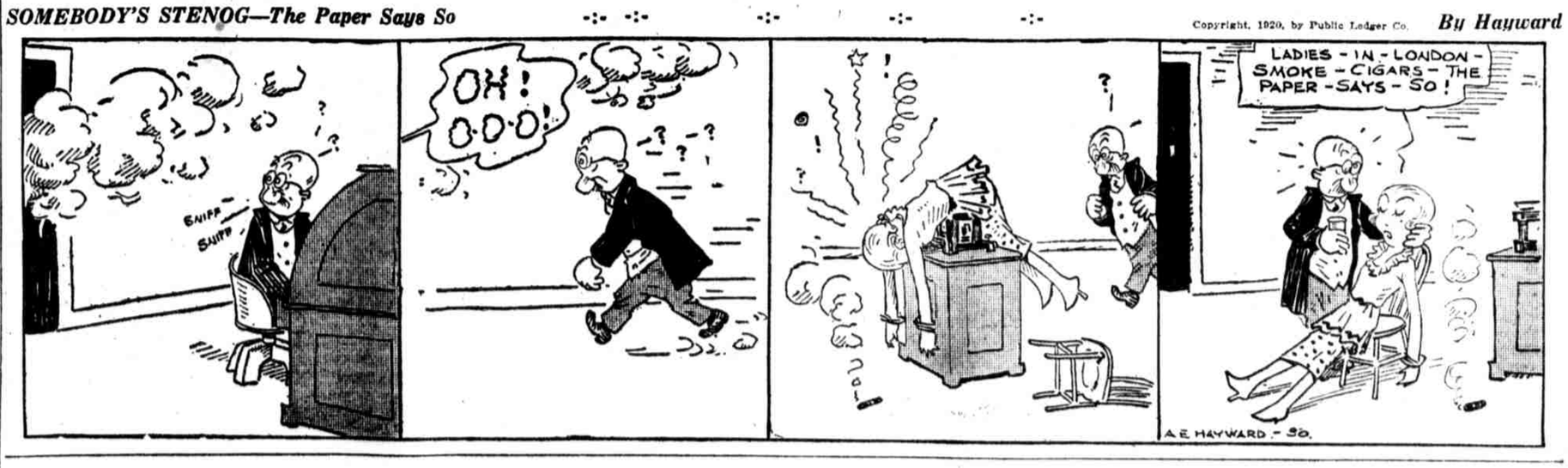
SCHOOL DAYS

By DWIG

SOMEBODY'S STENOG—The Paper Says So

Copyright, 1920, by Public Ledger Co.

By Hayward



"CAP" STUBBS—No Wonder He Was So Brave

By Edwina