

West Wind Drift

By GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON

THIS STARTS THE STORY

The steamship Dorante sailed from a South American port to the United States with 150 passengers. It was never seen again. Algernon Adams is supposed to have discovered the wreck and work under guard. Ruth Clinton, a passenger, recognizes him as a man who had danced with her at a party. She is supposed to have been the only one who survived. The boat springs a leak, a panic ensues and they take to the life boats, but re-enter the big ship and drift for days. Percival has proved invaluable to the captain; he has quelled a threatened mutiny among the steerage passengers. Both Miss Clinton and Madame Obocky, a beautiful young Russian, show marked interest in Percival. At a most critical point Adams is captured by the mutineers. An exploration party, headed by Percival, plants the Stars and Stripes on the island and prepares for a long stay. Every one is pressed into service and the work is done in the hands of Percival, Landover, a New York banker, makes trouble for him by refusing to take orders, and a slight is formed. Miss Clinton and the "Landover" side, with Madame Obocky aiding and abetting Percival in his endeavors.

THE example for every one else, and nothing suited him. The attention there were many of them at the start—no longer shook their heads as they went about their work and looked at the hopeless enterprise, for to their astonishment and gratification the "camp" was actually becoming a substantial reality. The small group of men who, for obvious reasons, had courted the favor of the captain, at the outset, now went out of their way to "stand in" with the amazingly popular man of the hour. He represented power, a road to achievement, he rode on the crest of the wave—and so they believed in him. Landover may have been a "New York" but the wizard of Trigger Island was a quite another person altogether—hence the very sensible defection. These gentlemen openly and adroitly opposed him on one occasion, however; it was when he proposed that the island should be named for the beloved captain. They insisted that it be called Percival Island. Failing in this, they advocated with great enthusiasm, but with no success, the application of Percival's name to almost every noticeable peculiarity of the island. They demanded that he be named Percival's "Penguin Rocks"; the Gate of the Winds; Top of the Channel; the Crackling Conings; the extreme easterly end of the island; Leapfrog River; Little Sandy and Big Sandy (the heads of the Crackling Conings); Gibraltair (the western end of the island); Anthony Falls; Michael's Island; Malone christened the turbulent little waterfall up in the hills. He liked the sound of the name, he was ashamed that he had so long reaped the benefit of the name, but he was completely thought belated vindication. Strange to say, no name was ever proposed by the "camp." Buck in the end of each and every member of the lost company lay the unvoiced belief—amounting to a certainty—that it was tempting fate to speak of this long row of cabins as anything more enduring than the "camp."

Notwithstanding his dominant personality and the remarkable capacity he had for real leadership, Percival was a simple, sensitive soul. He writes under the lash of conspicuous attention, and there was a good deal of it going on. The satiric Randolph Pitts, notwithstanding his unquenched admiration for the younger man, took an active part in denouncing what he was prone to allude to as Percival's political aspirations. It is only fair to state that Pitts' observations to a very small coterie of friends, chief among whom was the subject himself, were:

"You are the smartest politician I've ever encountered, and that's saying a good deal," he remarked one evening as he sat smoking with a half dozen companions in front of one of the completed huts. They were seated in a row, like so many birds, their tired backs against the "facade" of the cabin, their feet stretched out in front of them. "You're too deep for me, I don't see just what you're graft is, A. A. If there was a chance to graft, I'd say that it, but you could graft here for centuries and have nothing to show for it but fresh air. Even if you were to run for the office of king, or sultan or shah, you wouldn't get anything but votes—and you'd get about all of 'em, I'd say that for you. To be a man, the women would vote for you—especially if you were to run for sultan. What is your name?"

Percival smoked in silence, his gaze fixed on the moonlit line of trees across the field.

"And speaking of women, that reminds me," went on Pitts. "When does your lord and master intend to transplant our crop of ladies?"

"What's that, Pitts?" said Percival, good-naturedly.

"Ladies—what about 'em? When do they come ashore to occupy the mansions we have prepared for them?"

"Captain Trigger suggests next week."

"What's he got to do with it? Ain't you king?"

"He's got a lot to do with it, you blithering boob."

"Besides," drawled Peter Snipe, the novelist, picking doggedly at the calicoed ridges on one of his palms, "none of the women object to moving in the dark of the moon. They say it's sure to bring bad luck."

"There's quite a mixup about it," observed Plattner. "Part of 'em claim it's a good luck. Madame Obocky says she never had any good luck moving by the light of the moon, and Caroni-Amori says she doesn't blame her for feeling that way. Sort of cattish way of implying that the fair Olga could get along without any moon at all. Professional jealousy, I suppose."

"I was speaking of Miss Clinton about it today," remarked Michael Malone.

"What does she think about it?" from Percival.

"I don't know. She asked me what I thought about it."

"And what you tell her?"

"I told her I wasn't a woman, and that let me out. Being a man, I'm not entitled to a vote or an opinion, and I'm very much obliged to her if she'll not try to drag me into it—and to answer my question if you can. Whereupon she said she was in favor of moving by the light of the sun, and paying no attention at all to the moon. Which I thought was a very intelligent arrangement. You see, if they move in the daytime, the married old men won't know anything about it till it's too late and—"

"You're the first Irishman I've ever seen who wasn't superstitious, Mike," broke in Pitts, with enthusiasm. "It takes a great load off my mind. Now I can ask you why the devil you've never returned that sock-knife of mine. I thought you had some sort of superstition about it. A good many people—really bright and otherwise intelligent people—firmly believe it's bad luck to return anything that's been borrowed. I suppose I've owned fifty umbrellas in my time. The only man who ever returned one—but you know what happened without my telling you. He got caught in a sudden shower on his way home from my apartment after making a special trip to return it, and died some three years later of pneumonia. Sick two days, I heard. So, as long as you're not a bit superstitious about it, I'd thank you—"

"I'd have you know that I never keep anything I borrow—that is, never more than a day. It's against my principles. Don't ask me for your damned old knife, I lent it weeks ago to Soapy Shave."

"You did?" cried Pitts, incredulity and relief in his voice. "Much obliged, I haven't been able to look Soapy in the face for a month. Did he recognize it?"

"I think he did. He kissed it."

"Landover tried to borrow my lead pencil yesterday," remarked Plattner. "Finally offered to put up his letter of credit as security. I gave him the laugh. That lead pencil is worth more than all the letters of credit lumped together. He wanted to write a note. So I agreed to let him use it if he wouldn't take it out of my sight and on condition that he didn't write more than five or six lines. But when he made as if he was going to sharpen it, I threatened him with an ax. Can you beat that for waste of fulness? These low-down rich don't know the meaning of frugality. Why, if he hadn't scooped him, he might have whittled off five thousand dollars' worth of lead, just like that. I had to caution him about bearing down too hard while he was writing."

"What was he wanting to write a note for?" demanded Malone. "Has he lost his voice?"

"It was a note of apology. He says he never fails to write a note of apology when he's done something he's ashamed of, or intends to do that effect. Lifelong practice, he says."

"Who was he apologizing to?"

"That little suture, Miss Lake—the one with the coral ear-rings. You know, Mike, I saw you carrying a bucket of water for her yesterday."

"Her name isn't Lake," said Malone. "It's Hardwickly. And if you had your eyes open, you'd have seen me carrying one for her every day, so you would, my lad."

"The damned villain!" exploded Plattner. "He told me her name was Lake—word with only four letters—and she turns out to have—let me see—seven letters. That's pretty shifty work, I do. You can't trust these wretched rich. They'll do you any crack, if you don't keep your eyes peeled. Hornswoggled me out of seven letters."

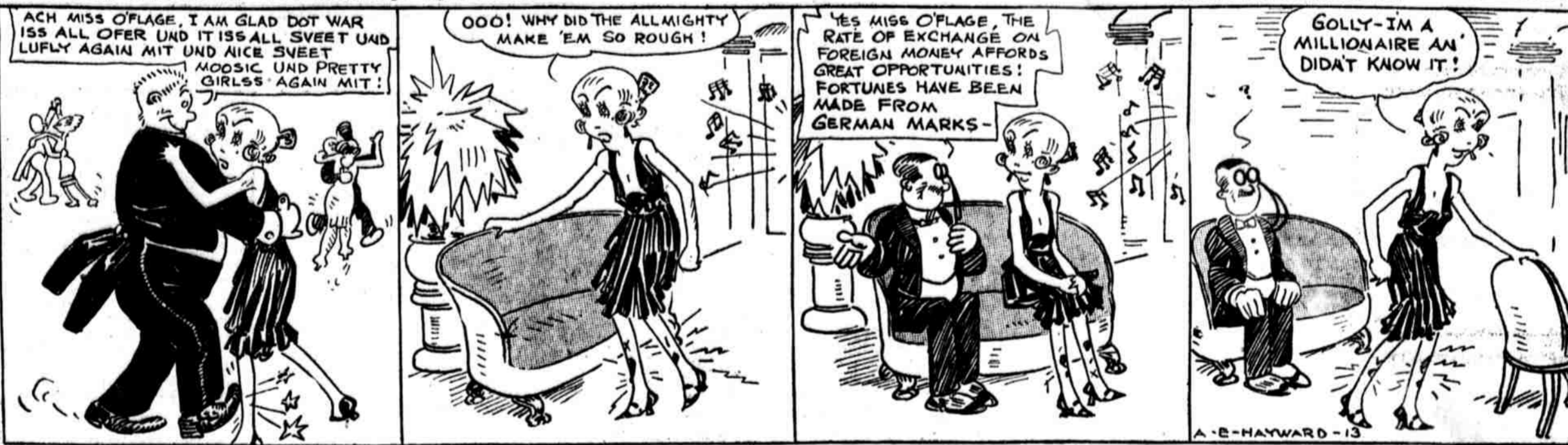
(CONTINUED MONDAY)

THE GUMPS—Ding-a-Ling! Ding! Ding!



By Sidney Smith

SOMEBODY'S STENOG—The Saturday Night Dance



By Hayward

AND HERE IT CONTINUES

HER aunt worked in what was known as the salvage corps. She was one of the clerks employed in checking out the cargo and other materials seized by the committee of ten, as the leaders in this singular enterprise were called. Captain Adams having protected against the dismantling of the vessel and the concealment of its cargo—which was as far as he could go—insured that he would abide by any satisfactory plan to salvage the property. He required an official receipt for every item removed, which every item removed was accounted for, with its condition and by responsible persons. The purser, Mr. Codes, and First Officer Mott recently had been on the operation, while the consignees were properly taken care of by Michael O'Mall's Madam, the lawyer, James K. Jones, the promoter, and Moses Block, the rubber importer. It is unnecessary to further enlarge upon the details of the situation. Suffice it to say, the transaction—if it may be so denoted—was managed with the utmost regularity and formality.

Elderly men and women were chosen for the clerical work which, in rather laborious and unglorious detail, was established a permanent observation and signal station. Near the top a sort of observation post and lantern was constructed by order of Captain Trigger, day and night, week in and week out, watches were kept similar to those maintained on board ship.

While the entire company, high and low, worked with a zeal that eventually resulted in a state of good-natured though intense rivalry in skill and accomplishment—while they were generally cheerful and courageous—there was a profound lack of confidence in the eyes of each and every one of them in the never-vanishing shadow of anxiety—an eternal unspoken question in the eyes of each and every one of them in the broadest smile revealed a touch of sadness. Over all, however, the prevailing spirit of kindness and generosity presided.

Calamity had softened the hearts in the same crucible that hardened the hands. The arrogance of the stroke melted into consideration for the weak; wisdom and culture of the lowly and rancor left the hearts of the lowly and the hearts of the departing insolence of the lofty; fellowship took root and threw in a new spirit of brotherhood. The heart of man was master here, the brain his humble servant.

Landover worked hard, doggedly. To all outward appearances he had resigned himself to the inevitable. He affected an air of camaraderie and good humor that deceived many. Down in his heart, however, he was bitterly rebellious. He despised these people as a class. In his estimation, all the creatures who worked for a living were branded with the obnoxious iron of a common stamp, even when they were of the lower classes, for they were, after a fashion, anarchists. His conception of anarchy was rather far-reaching; he believed in everything that was contrary to his notion of a satisfactory distribution of wealth and society, that every man who worked for a wage was at heart an enemy to law and order. He regarded the workingman as one whose hand is eternally against the employer, absolutely without honor, justice or reason, and a workingman who for self, always self—and to Landover that was anarchy.

The thought that people—men and women—of the lower classes possessed physical and mental qualities similar to those possessed by himself, even in modified form, was not only repugnant to him but incredible. They had none of the finer emotions, such as love, for all that he could not conceive of a laboring man loving his wife and children; it wasn't natural. He pictured the home-life of the lower classes as nothing short of indecent; there couldn't be anything fine or noble or enduring in the process of birth, existence and death as related to them. Nature took its course with them, and society was represented by the class to which he belonged—provided for the litters they cast behind the world. Upon Landover's father and grandfather and great-grandfather had been rich men before him.

He despised Captain Trigger for the simple reason that that faithful, gallant sailor was an employee of the company in which he was a director. He meant nothing to him that Captain Trigger meant to him that he meant to himself. He was a law unto himself aboard the Dorante.

For, when all was said and done, Captain Trigger worked just so hard for money per month and doubtless hated the men who paid him his wages. On board the Dorante he was the boss of all other vessels on which he chose to sail—the banker sat at the captain's table, but he did not consider that to be a distinction or an honor; it was his right as a matter of fact, he looked upon himself as the real head of the captain's table.

Half a dozen persons in all that comprised the Dorante's circle of acquaintances, of the rest, most of them were impossible, three-fourths of them were "anarchists," and of them were health notices—except an listeners. As for Percival, if that young man was not really and actually a law unto himself, he had all the instincts of one. In any case he was a "bum." Whenever Mr. Landover was at a loss for a word to express contempt for his fellow-man—and he was seldom at a loss—he called him a "bum."

The women on board were divided into three classes in Landover's worldly opinion: the kind you wouldn't marry (rare), the kind you wouldn't marry (rare), and the kind you wouldn't marry (rare). He put Obocky and Caroni-Amori in this latter class, and even went so far as to set up a "house of prostitution" as a term for the kind of "log-cabin" that he carried or dragged to the camp site, where they were subsequently hewn into shape for structural purposes by the more skillful hand-lers of ax and wedge and saw.

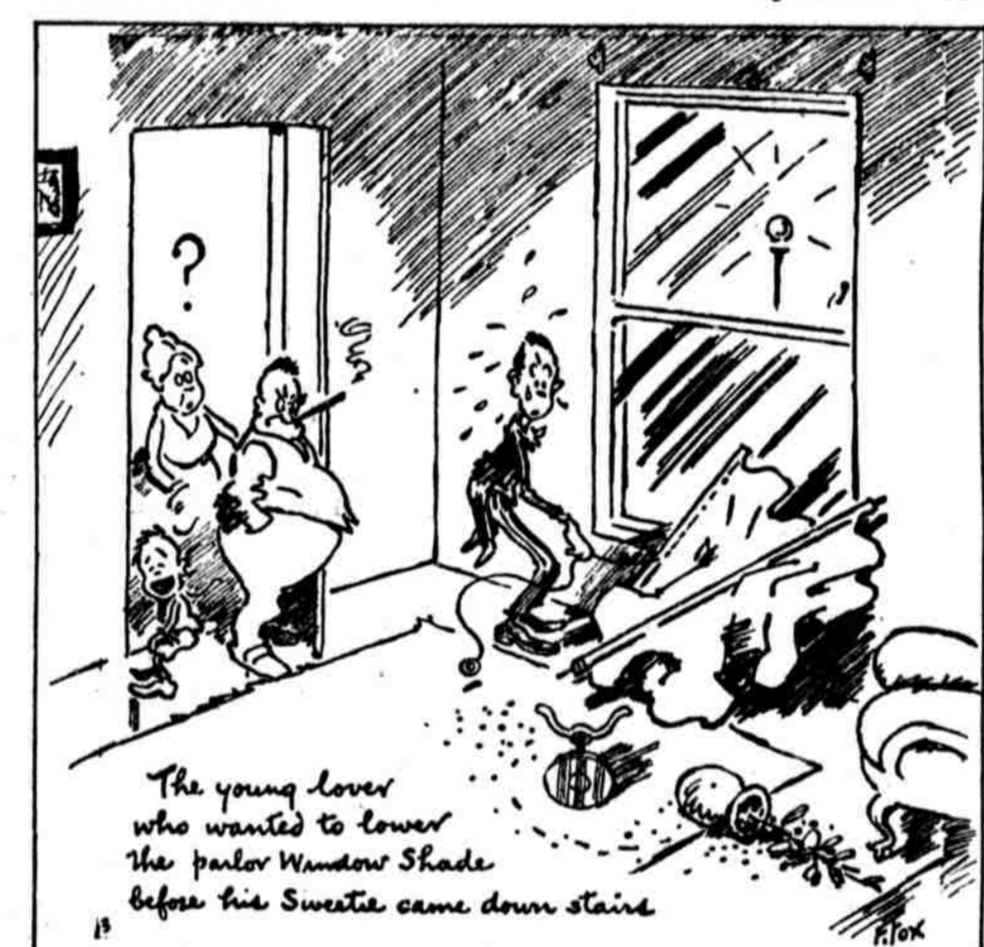
A certain man named Manuel Crust was the foreman of this gang. He was a swarthy, powerful "Portuguese" who was on his way to Rio to kill the pal who had run away with his wife. He had a long way to go to kill Sebastian Crust and live happily for ever afterward. His idea of future happiness was to sit pleasantly ruminating over the variety of deaths he had inflicted upon the loathsome Sebastian, inflicted upon the loathsome Sebastian took a strange fancy to Manuel Crust. He was drawn to him particularly by the rough things he said about Percival. He also liked the way in which he implied the philistine's notion that led him to share his very exorbitant cigars with the doughy foreman in his mind, had Mr. Abel Landover.

Percival was indefatigable. He sat

The Young Lady Across the Way



PATHETIC FIGURES



By FONTAINE FOX

SCHOOL DAYS



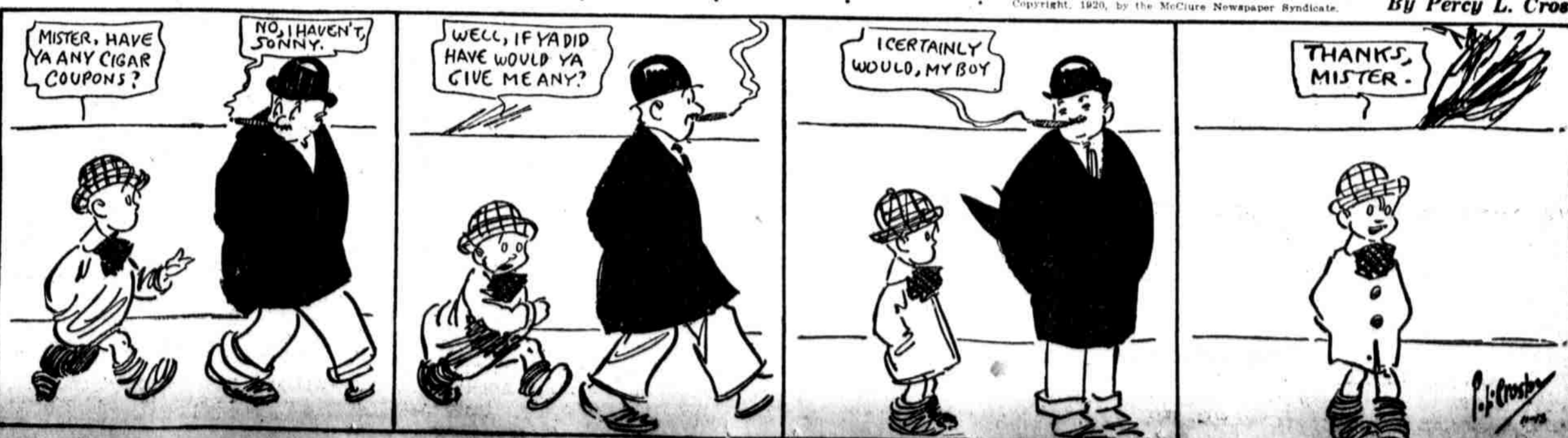
By DWIGHT

PETEY—The Fur Shortage



By C. A. Voight

THE CLANCY KIDS—Satisfied



By Percy L. Crosby