

By Sidney Smith

West Wind Drift

By GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON
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"OF COURSE, I may be wrong," said he magnanimously. "It may have been the result of an honest, uncontrollable impulse. But I doubt it."

"Men do queer, strange things when under the influence of a strong emotion," she said, a hopeful note in her voice.

"Yes. They are also capable of doing very base things. You don't for a moment suspect Percival of being a religious fanatic, do you?"

"Please don't sneer. And what, pray, has religion to do with it?"

"I dare say Morris Shine is again lamenting the absence of a motion-picture camera. He is always complaining about the chances he has missed to—"

"Stop!"

"Why, Ruth, dear, I—"

"I have no right to judge him, Mr. Landover."

"Are you defending him?"

"I don't believe he had the faintest notion that I am sure he did it because you call it. I am sure he did it because you call it. I am sure he did it because you call it."

"Just the same, I've heard you say over and over again that you wish Roosevelt were President now," she persisted.

"Why do you say that if you are so down on him?"

"I can wish that, my dear, and still not be an admirer of Mr. Roosevelt," he replied.

"But to return to Percival, isn't it quite plain to you that he was pointing like a schoolboy because he had not been asked to take part in today's exercises?"

"He was asked to take part in them, I asked him myself."

"He glanced at me sharply. 'You never told me you had asked him, Ruth.'"

"The night the crime was committed," he said briefly. "He was very nice about it. He promised to sing in the choir—and to help me with the decorations. After our unpleasant experience the next day, he had the sense to say 'act or kindness'—to reconsider his promise."

"Openly advertising the fact that he preferred to have no part in any entertainment you were arranging was Landover's comment. 'I don't believe it was because of any particular dislike of feeling on his part, my dear. In any case, the fact remains that he let you go ahead with the affair, and then, having the right in the middle of it he changes his cheap, melodramatic moving-picture act.'"

be both infectious and contagious. I rather fancy the amiable Oboosky has selected the former type of the prevailing malady. Doubtless, I believe, is the name it goes by."

"There was no mistaking the significance of her words. The implication was clear, even though the speaker's heaviest sarcasm. He had the satisfaction of seeing the color drain from her cheek. Her face being averted, he missed the swift flicker of pain that rushed to her eyes and, departing, took away with it the soft light that had glowed in them the instant before. He had touched a concealed cancer—the sensitive spot that had been the real cause of her sleepless, troubled nights—the thing she had refused in her pride to accept as the real source of discomfort."

"Down in her soul lay the poison of jealousy, a cruel and malignant influence that until now had been subdued by a mind stubbornly unwilling to recognize its existence."

"In the eagerness to supply herself with additional reasons for hating Percival, she had given her imagination a rather free rein in regard to his relations with Olga Oboosky. While she was without actual proof, she nevertheless tortured herself with suspicions that came along with the same thing. In fact, they had the desired effect in that they created a very positive sense of irritation, and she felt in the dead hour of night that the feeling that she had a right to be disgusted with him."

"And now, Landover, in his ill-arrangement, provided a very live, raw spot, and, facing him, cried out: 'Don't follow me! I do not want to hear another word. Stop! I can see by your eyes that you are ashamed—you want to apologize. I do not want to hear it. I am hurt—terribly hurt. Nothing you can say will help matters now, Mr. Landover.'"

"Just a second, Ruth," he cried, now thoroughly discomfited. "Give me a chance to explain. It was my mad, unreasoning love!"

"But, with an exclamation of sheer disgust, she put her fingers to her eyes and sped rapidly down the walk. He stood still, watching her until she entered the cabin door and closed it behind her. Then he completed the broken sentence, but not in the voice of humility nor with the words that he had intended to utter."

CHAPTER XXI
"Soapy" Shay, coming on the walk, distinctly heard what he said.

"What's the matter, Bill?" he inquired, pausing. "Did she throw the hooks into you?"

Landover glared at him balefully, and walked away.

"Soapy" rubbed his chin dubiously as he watched the retreating figure. "Pursing his thin lips, he turned his attention to an unoffending stump six or eight feet away and scowled at it vindictively. He was trying something over in his mind, and he was manifestly in a state of incision. Ruminating, he spoke aloud, perhaps for the benefit of his Portuguese farmhand who happened to be approaching from the opposite direction, the words that he had intended to utter before he was within hearing distance."

"Gee, he's getting to be so decent and democratic as any of us. Shows what association will do for a man. Two months ago he would have been too big and mighty to tell me to go to hell. If he keeps on at this rate, he'll be worth paying attention to in a couple of months more. Won't he, Bill?" This to the farmhand, who obligingly halted.

Mr. Shay made constant and impartial use of the name Bill. Except in a few very rare instances, he applied it to all males over the age of two, and he did not care who heard him. It was a simple, unassuming, and unassuming word, and he never was annoyed by verbal interruptions. At regular intervals he would insert a shrug of the shoulders and nod his head, or lift an eyebrow, or spread out his hands, or purse his lips—and he never smiled unless you did.

Perceiving that some sort of an answer was expected, "Soapy" interposed the shrug as affirmative, having a distinct advantage over "Bill," who hadn't the faintest idea which it was—until he needed to go a little deeper into the matter.

"Now, as I was saying, this Landover guy is up against something. Bill, she handed him something he didn't like. Right on the nose, too, if I'm any judge. 'What do you suppose it was, Bill?'"

"Bill" nodded his head very earnestly. "That's what I think," said "Soapy."

"That's what I think," said "Soapy." "Now, I know something about this Landover guy that she doesn't know. I suppose A. A. will give me an awful painning if I up and tell her what I saw that day. He seems to think it's a secret."

THE GUMPS—The Gumps Run Out of Thanks



COULD ANYBODY HAVE MORE TO BE THANKFUL FOR THAN WE HAVE TO-DAY? OUR LITTLE FAMILY GATHERED AROUND—ALL IN GOOD HEALTH—ABUNDANCE OF GOOD THINGS TO EAT—PERHAPS NOT ALL THE LUXURIES WE CRAVE BUT EVERYTHING TO MAKE US COMFORTABLE—WE CERTAINLY HAVE PLenty TO BE THANKFUL FOR—

THERE GOES THE POOR BELL— I'LL ANSWER IT—

SPECIAL DELIVERY LETTER SIR FROM AUSTRALIA

IT'S FROM UNCLE BIM— MY DEAR NEPHEW— ENCLOSED FIND CHECK FOR \$1,000— THIS IS TO HELP TO MAKE YOUR THANKSGIVING DINNER ONE— EXPECT TO BE WITH YOU FOR THE HOLIDAYS— LOVE TO ALL— UNCLE BIM—

HERE— HERE— NIX— NIX— GIVE ME THAT CHECK— THAT'S MINE NOW— I'LL GIVE YOU SOME OF IT—

HERE'S MY FUR COAT— OH YOU HUDSON SEAL!

SOMEBODY'S STENOG—Miss O'Flage Takes Mary Doodle to the Game



WHO DO YOU THINK WILL WIN, JACK? THEY SAY CASEY'S PLAYIN' UP BIG THIS YEAR AS THREE-QUARTER BACK OR SOMETHING!

GEE, LOOK! NOTHIN' IN HIS WAY BUT AIR, AN' THE WEATHERMAN SAID ONLY GENTLE WINDS TODAY!



A TOUCHDOWN SURE!

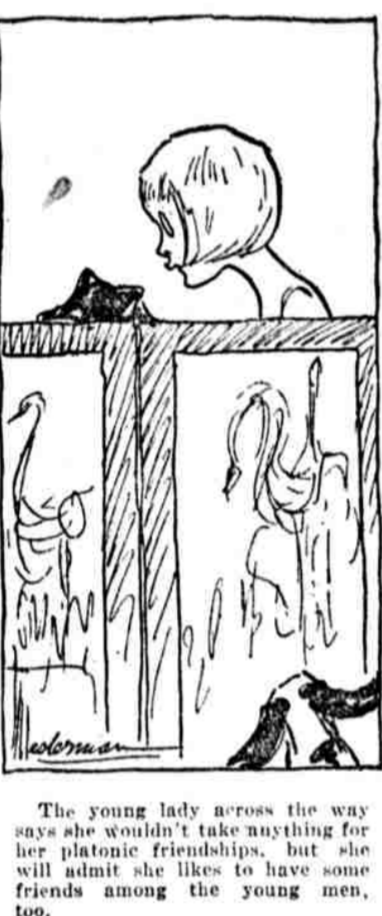


WASN'T IT GREAT? I NEVER SAW SUCH AN EXCITING GAME!

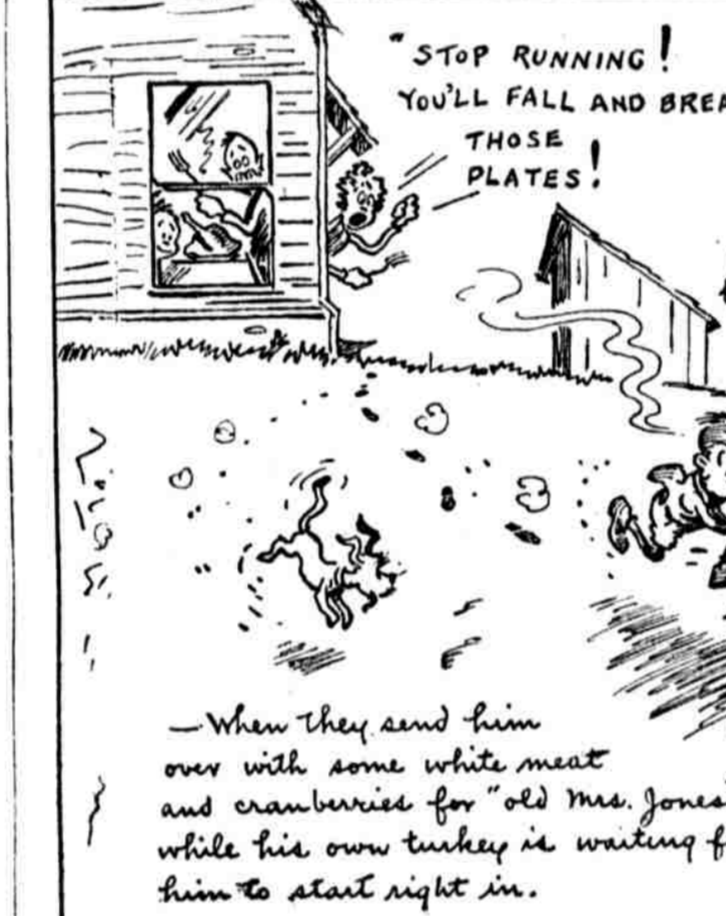
SOME EXCITING GAME IS RIGHT! WHAT DID YOU THINK OF IT, MISS DOODLE?



The Young Lady Across the Way



About the Only Time Jimmie Ever Hurries on an Errand



"STOP RUNNING! YOU'LL FALL AND BREAK THOSE PLATES!"

"When they send him over with some white meat and cranberries for 'old Mrs. Jones' while his own turkey is waiting for him to start right in."

SCHOOL DAYS



PETEY—And He Missed This One, Too



THE CLANCY KIDS—Just Like Kids



WHAT MAKES YOU CRY, SINNY?

BOO! HOO! YAH!

I FORGET!

THEN WHAT ARE YOU CRYING ABOUT?

'CAUSE I CAN'T REMEMBER!

THE CLANCY KIDS—Just Like Kids



PETEY—And He Missed This One, Too



SCHOOL DAYS



PETEY—And He Missed This One, Too



(CONTINUED TOMORROW)