

HOW MANY CARDS?

By ISABEL OSTRANDER

of "The Island of Iniquity," "Suspense," "Ashes to Ashes," etc. Copyright, 1921, by Robert M. McElroy & Co.

It, and rather than have it unmentioned, as it was bound to be if we hadn't so pompously discovered the identity of the murderer, he preferred to let sleeping dogs lie. "So do the rest of them, it seems," Wait, sir, Hill you hear. "McCarty's first glimpse of his interviewees with Douglas Waverly, Mrs. Kip, Miss Frost, the Fords and Nicholas Cutter, but when he had concluded the inspector shook his head and said: "Whatever reasons they may have for holding out on you as you suspect, Mac, it isn't because of a guilty knowledge of the murder. By your own showing the Fords, Cutters and Waverlys have established alibis which no possible circumstantial evidence could shake, and you haven't a thing to connect Mrs. Kip with the affair. You can take what that ex-chapman of hers said about her with a grain of salt; the old woman was mad enough at being sent packing to have sworn Mrs. Kip's life away. All I suggest, and what she could tell nothing incriminating. You'll find that Mrs. Kip's little mystery, whatever it may be, is her own affair."

"Which means that I haven't convinced you and you've taken the bit in your teeth again? I've no instructions for you, only suggestions; you know well that I have always given you your head in every case you've worked on with me since you resigned from active duty and I've never regretted it, especially the last instance, Mac. His face sobered. "Go ahead your own way and you can prove to me that I'm wrong I'll be only too glad to acknowledge it, but I tell you now that you haven't a chance. The guilty man— "Does that mean, sir, that you won't take in Hill right away?" McCartney interrupted quickly. "No. We can afford to wait a bit and I tell you we would do so to see if the woman tried to communicate with him; we might as well kill two birds with one stone and we've proof now that he was an accessory both before and after the fact. We'll give her two or three days to try to get in touch with him and I'll notify you, anyway, before we decide to arrest him."

"Thank you," McCartney picked up the pile of diamonds from the desk. "If you don't mind I'll be taking this along, and by the way, if you run across Mr. Douglas Waverly, take a look at his cigarette case; it'll be worth your while."

"The inspector started slightly. "You don't mean—? See here, Mac, has that observation of yours anything to do with the cigarette case we found on the supper table and that piece of a broken amber holder?" "Not that I know of, sir, but it's plain and slanted like this playing card here and there are nine diamonds stamped in it; nine real diamonds arranged just like the spots on this card."

"This time Inspector Druet's laughter was frank and hearty. "You've still got your eyes out for something dramatic, haven't you? We're not living in dime novel times, Mac, and that card doesn't mean anything. It might have been lying on the floor since the study for days; you say yourself that the house hasn't been kept any too orderly since Mrs. Creveling has been away. Hill may have trod it, it scattered with blood after he killed Creveling and slipped it under the table cover without thinking; a man is usually dazed after a crisis like that and apt to do a lot of meaningless things in a mechanical sort of way as the records of the department show. You'll find there's some such simple explanation of it and as for Waverly's cigarette case— I suppose it's no use to talk to you, though I don't see any more of diamonds wherever you look until Hill goes to trial."

"McCarty's expression did not change as he slipped the card into his pocket once more. "I'd like to see the rest of the pack this came from," he volunteered impudently. "Denny and I'll be getting on, then, sir. You'll hear from me if anything turns up."

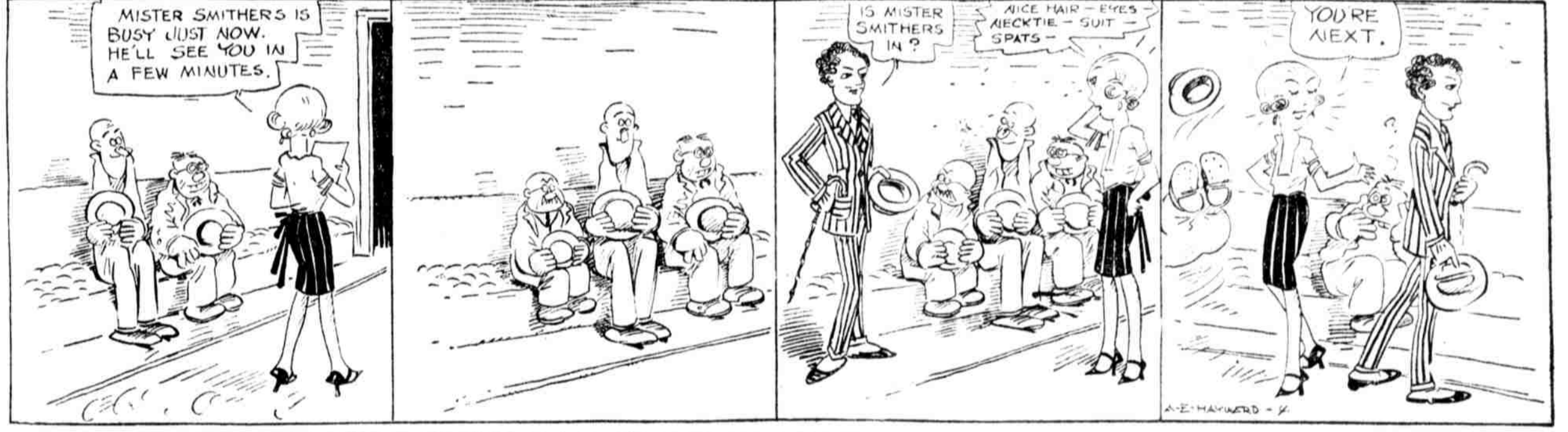
THE GUMPS—A Neck Shave Is a Haircut With Andy Now

By Sidney Smith



SOMEBODY'S STENOG—The Outer Office

By Hayward

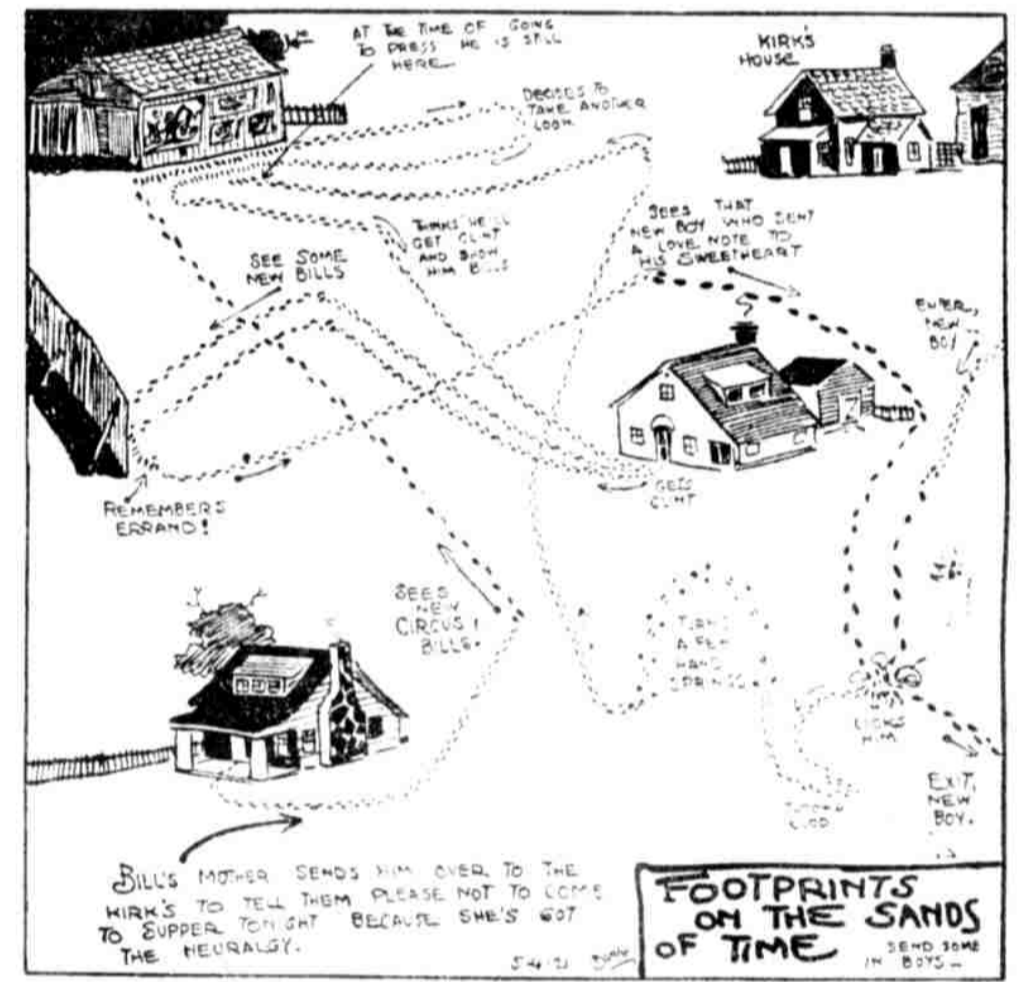


The Young Lady Across the Way

The Start of the Fiercest Hand-to-Hand Struggle the Neighborhood Had Ever Seen

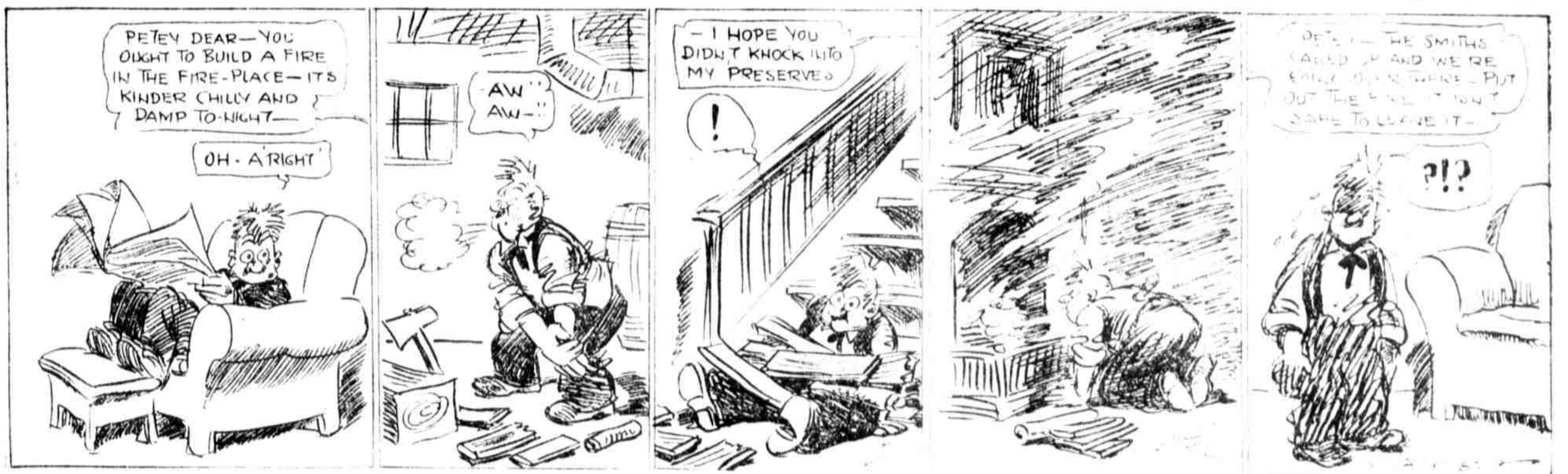
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CONTINUED TOMORROW