HOW MANY CARDS?

By ISABEL OSTRANDER

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"HILL," McCarty interrupted the story, "did that gun beside him belong to Mr. Creveling?"

The valet shook his head.

"I never saw it before, sir, and I didn't notice it particularly then. I was staring down at the place where his face had been, and I almost went crazy for a moment thinking of Ilsa and that her last chance had gone!"

"What did you do then?" McCarty asked. "Think carefully, Hill. Did you touch anything in the room? Did you see any playing cards or anything lying around?"

"I don't have to think!" the other responded. "I'll never forget that scene as long as I live! I didn't see any playing cards or anything except just Mr. Creveling's body and I wouldn't have soiled my hands by touching it for the world! I don't know how long I stood there with my brain whirling, but it couldn't have been more than a minute or two, and then I began to think fast. I saw I had two strings left to my bow, after all. One was to find the man that had been there and shot Creveling and hold what I knew over his head to make him help me as he could have if he knew Mrs. Creveling and had any influence [illegible] other was to get Mrs. Creveling [illegible] there together [illegible] I could and offer to [illegible] they'd set Ilsa free. I [illegible] stopped caring for her [illegible] hated him, in fact [illegible] she would want to [illegible] and notoriety before any [illegible] as Mr. Alexander would [illegible] glad enough that Creveling [illegible] so he could handle [illegible] himself!"

[illegible]

worthy announced with dignity. "'E says 'e'll be responsible to the authorities, sir."

"That's all right. I didn't come to see her," McCarty responded, adding slyly: "Surprised you, didn't it, Rollins, that arrest we made yesterday?"

"I am not surprised at anything the police does, sir," Rollins remarked. "From the way this case 'as been 'andled, it wouldn't amaze me if Sarah or me was to be took up next!"

McCarty chuckled.

"Then you don't think that Hill shot Mr. Creveling? No more do I, but orders are orders!—Is Mr. Alexander here?"

"Not yet, sir." Rollins unbent a trifle. "'E telephoned that 'e would be 'ere in an hour, and 'e must consult with Mrs. Creveling; 'e wouldn't take 'no' for an answer—"

The butler hesitated somewhat uncertainly and McCarty asked:

"Did he say what he wanted to see her about, Rollins?"

"Well, sir, 'e did mention something about that other gentleman that was called in, Mr. Terhune. 'E was so excited that I couldn't rightly make out what 'e meant but 'is language to me was most unusual; shocking, I'd call it, in a man of 'is years. I gathered that 'e didn't regard Mr. Terhune very highly and wanted 'im off the case."

McCarty nodded appreciatively.

"I shouldn't wonder. I'll wait here for Mr. Alexander." He seated himself in the nearest chair and ostentatiously pulling a newspaper from his coat pocket he spread its ample pages before him. Then as the butler still lingered he added: "Don't let me be keeping you from your work, Rollins."

The other opened his lips to speak but thought better of it and withdrew and retired to the pantry. McCarty waited for a few moments, then tossed his paper aside and crossing the hall with noiseless tread he gently closed the door through which Rollins had passed, and turning, crept up the main stairway.

There in the hall by Creveling's door, upon its stand of carved black wood stood a squat, bulging case upon which a grotesque dragon, a dull red and gold, appeared to be endlessly chasing his own tail. From behind the closed door leading to Mrs. Creveling's apartment across the hall came the murmur of feminine voices and McCarty wasted no time in admiration of the specimen of ancient art. Unceremoniously lifting the case off its stand he placed it on the rug and examined the small [illegible] of pinkish marble upon which it had rested. It moved slightly beneath his fingers, and pulling out his penknife he pried up one edge. There in a shallow recess beneath lay a thin packet of letters held together by a rubber band.

Two minutes later the case was back in its accustomed place and McCarty wore an expression upon his countenance not unlike that supposed to have been worn by the celebrated cat that ate the canary, as he was letting himself out at the front door.

CHAPTER XVIII
The Name in the Book

"IT'S a pity you could not have dropped in for me on your way down to headquarters," the Deputy observed [illegible] as that afternoon he stretched out his lanky form in McCarty's comfortable dilapidated armchair. "Well you know I was off duty until six this evening [illegible]

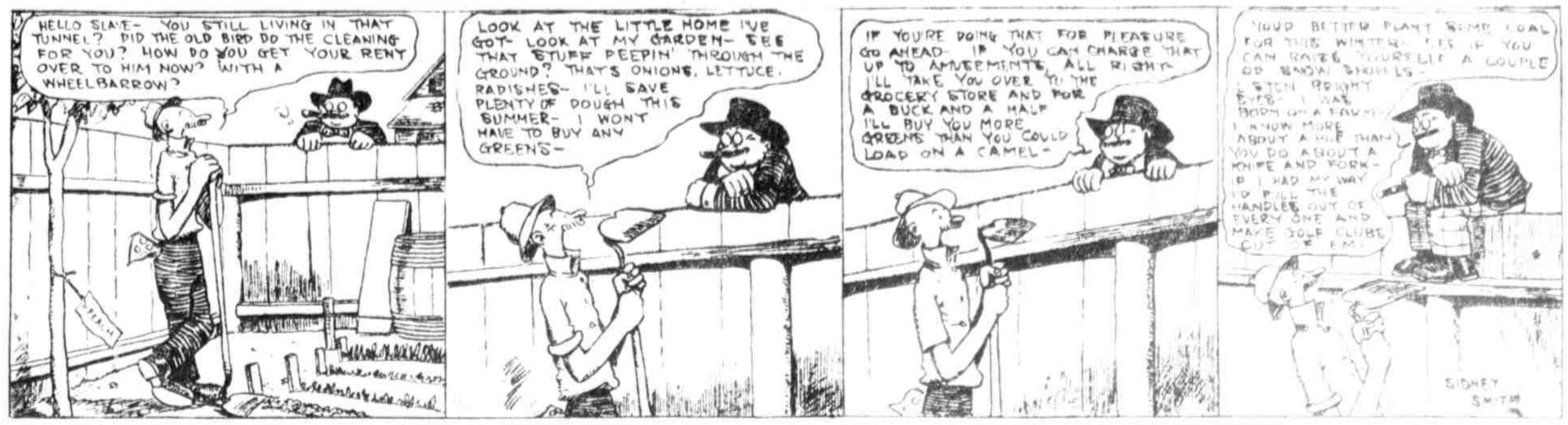
[illegible]

[illegible] might be wrong."

[illegible] that she is not to be disturbed, even by the police," that [illegible]

CONTINUED TOMORROW

THE GUMPS—The Man With the Hoe — By Sidney Smith

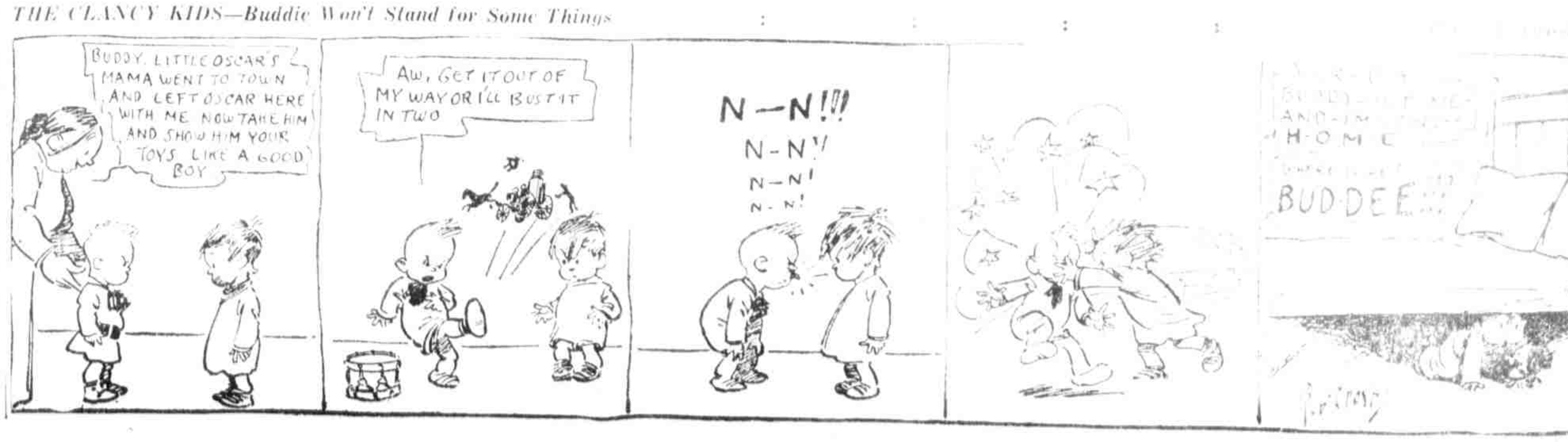


SOMEBODY'S STENOG—Two People on Their Way to the Office — By Hayward

The Young Lady Across the Way

For Fear of Spoiling the Side-Splitting Show — By Fontaine Fox

SCHOOL DAYS — By Dwig

PETEY—What Won't the Women Do Next? — By C. A. Voight

THE CLANCY KIDS—Buddie Won't Stand for Some Things