

By Sidney Smith

The Winds of the World

By RUBY M. AYRES

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THIS STARTS THE STORY.
Jill and Kathy (sisters) take care of their crippled brother. Kathy is engaged to marry Ralph Hilliard. She had pictured "love" as a warm blanket, but Hilliard is rich. Don't you see, Jill feels that Kathy will be a burden to her. She neglects her brother, who is a burden to her. Her proposals reveal her true selfishness. Her employer, a rich lawyer, marries her. The sisters now meet in society; Tallentyre, visiting at Kathy's house, meets Jill after a couple of days. He leaves her presence because she neglects her brother. He engages himself to the rich woman. He tells her that he has just been to see Kathy, and she told me the news. I must congratulate you, though I really thought you had been engaged for ever so long. He explained laughingly.

AND HERE IT CONTINUES.
"Oh, something is the matter, only you won't tell me!"
"My dear girl, don't be angry. You're worried about. Don't you know you're engaged to a man who will care for her; we all know it; and I'm sorry; but..." she laughed. "You know, and after the first little while you get used to it; so used to it, you don't mind."
Tallentyre sat very still, as if he had not heard; he knew that sympathy got him on the raw; it seemed so much like an approval of pity, and men hate to be pitied.
Presently he roused himself, he moved his arm so that her hand fell to the rest between them.
"You're very kind," he said lightly. "But this time you're wrong. There's nothing the matter; I'm quite happy, as happy as you can hope to be in this God-forsaken world."
The girl stopped and put an end to the conversation, and Tallentyre followed her into the house with a feeling of relief that the tete-a-tete drive was over.
His hostess, a well-preserved woman on the wrong side of forty, greeted him warmly.
"So kind of you to come; people are so scarce as a rule about making up to oblige. And, after all, it wouldn't matter if we had been a man and a woman as we're going to play faro after all. Yes, I know it's perfectly shocking," Mrs. Machen gave a little demonstration of pretended horror. "But really one must do something, and in one's own house, don't you know!"
She led the way across the room to where a group of people were laughing and talking rather noisily.
Tallentyre knew most of them; he sat down beside a girl with pale hair and pale eyes; she never expected him to talk, which was why he deliberately chose to sit beside her tonight.
He looked round the room for Jill, but she was not there.
He almost hoped that she would not come; he almost hoped—and then he heard her voice, and saw her coming into the room.
Since more the old sensation of uneasiness came over him; she was so marvellously changed; he could not believe that she was the same little dowdy-looking girl who had faded and faded in the stuffy office; who had been an angel when he took her out to tea.
He remembered her work-roughened hands, and the holes in the stockings the way she had tried to hide both from him.
The girl between them had been so small then that he could have bridged it with a word; he had widened into an impossible chasm.
He tasted the bitterness of utter defeat as he sat there and watched her. What at last she met his eyes she smiled and bowed in a little friendly way as if he were nothing more to her than any other man; as if he never had been anything more.
She did not avoid him; when presently they found themselves together she began to talk in the most natural way. "I've never played this dreadful game," she said laughingly. "I'm just coming to learn; it's a dreadful gamble, isn't it?"
"It's an absurd gamble," Tallentyre answered. "I hate it myself."
"Get you play!"
"Yes, I play—for the same reason that I do a great many other things."
"And that reason is?" she asked.
"My time."
"Poor man!"
Tallentyre set his teeth; he hated to hear her speak so flippantly; it brought home to him acutely what many miles they had traveled apart since that day when she sent him away from the little room in Acacia Terrace. Miles which he could never return to overtake her again; that would be there, stretching between them, until the end of her life or his! Presently they all went into another room, where a long, green-covered table spanned almost the entire length.
Jill's eyes sparkled a little; everything was new to her; lately she had enjoyed every moment of her life.
The first shock of Henry Sturge's tragic death had begun to pass away; she had never cared for him and she was young; but she always thought of him with grateful affection, for it had been his hand that had turned the golden key in the door of life and let her out of her prison.
She was given a seat opposite to Tallentyre's at the table; some one told her the rules of the game. "I've never played before," she confessed with a little excited laugh.
The knowledge that Tallentyre was watching her made her reckless; she said "If you begin to win so soon you'll end by losing," Mrs. Machen said sternly.
Jill glanced down at the money beside her.
"Am I winning?" she asked surprisedly; she had hardly noticed. When she counted her money she was amazed to find that it was nearly double the sum with which she had started.
"A born gambler," Mrs. Despard whispered to her neighbor. "It's fortunate that she's rich enough to be able to afford it."
She was very interested in Jill; she wondered if there would be any chance with her for her own impetuous brother; she determined to invite Jill to meet him at an early opportunity.
It was early morning before the party broke up; Mrs. Machen had lost heavily, and there was a frown on her fretful face.
She went over to Tallentyre.
"Oh, do you mind if I drive home with the Laytons? The naked nervousness; she did not look at him as she spoke.
Tallentyre said that he did not mind at all; the Laytons were rather vulgar people, nouveau riche, who had been trying for a long time to wedge themselves into the magic circle known as society. He knew quite well why Dora Machen wished to drive home with them; knew that she at last intended to yield to their persuasions and take

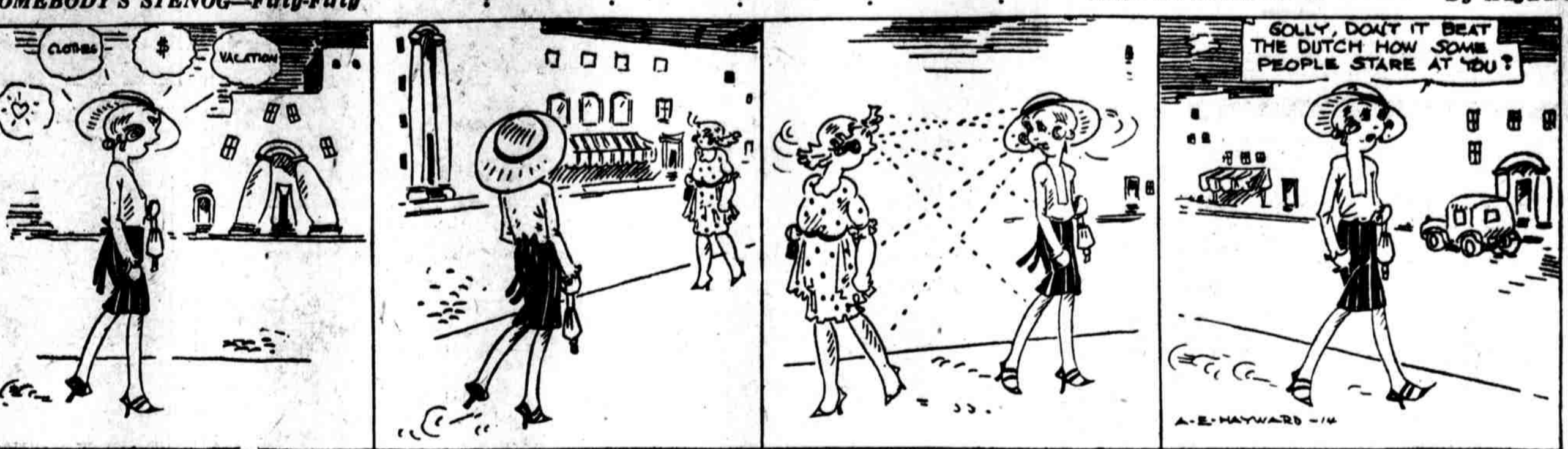
them under her wing for a consideration.
In spite of a large income, she was always hard up; money slipped through her fingers like sand; there was a little cynical smile in Tallentyre's eyes as he watched her go out of the room smiling down into Mrs. Layton's vulgar face.
He knew that Dora really hated the Laytons; he thought it extraordinary to what lengths a woman would go for money.
It gave him a shock to remember to what lengths he himself had gone; to remember that he was engaged to Elrica for the same reason.
Jill went away without saying good-night to him, and he walked home alone through the spring night.
The future stretched away long and uninviting; there seemed nothing to look forward to, nothing to hope for; and the fault was his own!
He had had chances, many of them, and thrown them away; he had held the greatest gift of all in his hand and allowed it to fall.
He could see Jill's face there before him as she glared at him, her cheeks flushed as she had looked when she took her winnings from the green-covered table; he had looked at her there gambling with the women of his set; he had the way the men looked at her and vied with each other for her favor. He let himself into his flat, and shut and locked the door; he turned on the light and flung himself into a chair with a feeling of utter weariness. To-night he stood outside the locked gates of what might have been, looking across the wall of eternal separation at the happiness which he had lost forever.

CHAPTER VI.
"I'm not such a fool as to go on crying for the moon for ever. The earth is quite good enough, if one only wipes the tears away and takes good care to keep the eyes looking downward."
A week passed away uneventfully. Tallentyre hardly knew how the days went; they were all so much alike in length and boredom.
He danced dutiful attendance on Elrica Hewing; escorted her to social functions which bored him unutterably; accepted congratulations with a smile and walked through his part faultlessly, in the same way in which an automatic figure moves and speaks correctly, but without conviction.
"I don't believe he'll ever marry her," Kathy told her husband again when the subject was under discussion.
"I feel so sorry for him—Ralph, can't you see how ill and unhappy he looks?"
Hilliard laughed.
"I'm afraid I can't." "You're imagining it all, little woman. Clig's a right old looker; he looks particularly pleased about anything; he always wears that bored expression."
But Kathy knew better; she was very sorry for Tallentyre, and tried to convey her sympathy to him in little ways when they met.
But Tallentyre hated sympathy; it was the one thing he could not stand; he had a morbid dread that people would know of the middle he had made of his life; he avoided all the houses where he knew there was a possibility of meeting Jill—if he saw her out driving, or in the park, he deliberately kept out of her way.
Sometimes he thought he would get married and so raise an insuperable barrier once and for all between them; many times the impulse came to him to ask Elrica to marry him at once, but something always seemed to hold him back.
"Why don't you get married and settle down?" Hilliard asked him one night when they met at the club. "There's nothing like a home of your own," he added with the superiority of one who has but recently got married himself.
Tallentyre laughed.
"I'm in no hurry and, after all—you're married a long time," he added cynically.
"Old pessimist!" Hilliard looked at him affectionately; they were very different, these two men, but a very real friendship existed between them none the less.
"Come round and have some dinner with us tonight," he said presently, in a friendly, formal, just ourselves, and the wife's sister.
"Mrs. Sturge?"
"Yes—Kathy seems to like her to be there now; and, of course, I have to humor her—though you know I never cared about Jill."
"I know... but I can't come, thanks all the same."
"Won't, if you like to put it that way? Ask me some other time."
"I'm sorry, because there's a man I rather wanted to meet. Jill picked him up somewhere—the Lord only knows where—and Kathy has asked him to dinner. The fellow seems rather a mystery. What I can make out, I should imagine he's a man in a top hat. I hear that he's seen everywhere with her."
"Really!" Tallentyre did not sound particularly interested; he lit another cigarette.
"Ridgen, his name is," Hilliard went on. "I met him once—very good-looking chap."
Tallentyre moved restlessly.
"You know she's got too thick with those Despards, too," Hilliard continued. "Rotten, gambling crowd they are. I felt inclined to give her a friendly tip when I first heard she'd been there, but you know what she's headstrong as they make 'em... so I didn't risk it." He shrugged his shoulders. "Anyhow, it's no concern of mine; she must please herself."
"Is Ridgen one of the Despard crowd?"
"I believe so—I know he is, in fact—my sister has spoken of meeting him there once or twice. Not that it's any recommendation to say you know the Despards—or my sister either, if it comes to that," he added cynically.
Tallentyre laughed.
"Brotherly candor! Aren't you a bit hard on Mrs. Machen?"
"She's such a butterfly," Hilliard said, with a touch of impatience. "You ought to have married her. You'd have kept her in order—she always liked you, I know."
"Rubbish!" said Tallentyre; he looked annoyed. He rose, stretching his arms wearily. "After all, I'll change my mind, if I may, and come along to dinner. I've nothing to do—I'm off duty tonight," he added with a wry little smile.
"Kathy will be delighted; I want you to have a look at Ridgen; I don't trust the fellow myself."
"I dare say you're prejudiced," Hilliard shrugged his shoulders.
"See you later, then," he said, and went away.
Tallentyre went back to his chair; he felt tired; it was very fatiguing trotting round at the heels of a smart woman all day, carrying her sunshade or her apron—following her in and out of shops and motorcars; standing still while she chatted and waiting about while she chose hats and silk petticoats.

THE GUMPS—Round Three—Andy Comes Up With a Smile



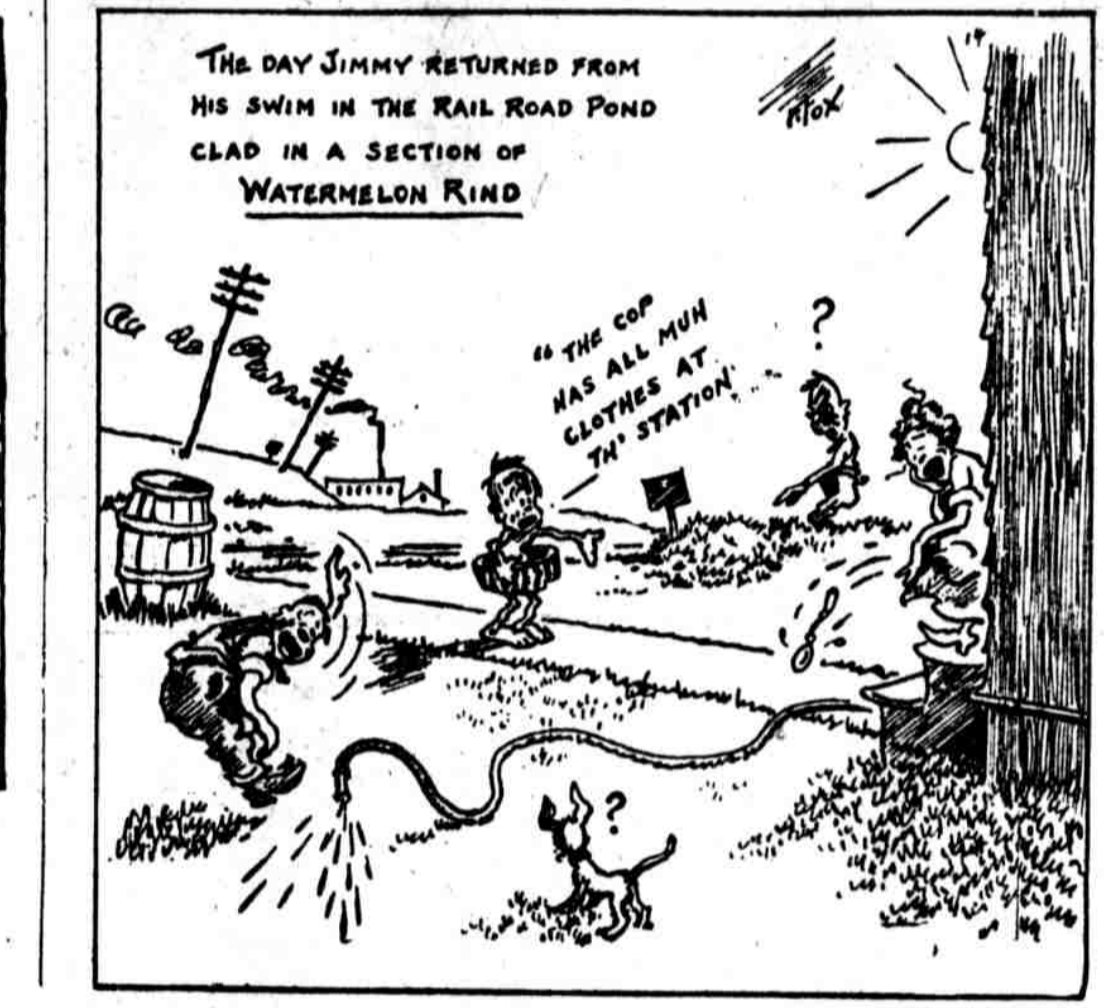
SOMEBODY'S STENOG—Fifty-Fifty



The Young Lady Across the Way



IT PUT THE FAMILY IN TOO GOOD A HUMOR TO LICK HIM—By FONTAINE FOX



SCHOOL DAYS



Continued from the previous page. The text continues the story of Jill and Kathy, their engagement to Ralph Hilliard, and Tallentyre's feelings. It includes the beginning of Chapter VI, where Tallentyre reflects on his life and the possibility of marriage. The text is cut off at the bottom of the page.

PETEY—Wise for Once



THE CLANCY KIDS—Maybe They Don't Bite



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CONTINUED TO MORROW