

A BACHELOR HUSBAND

By RUBY M. AYRES

Author of "Richard Chatterton," Etc.
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"MY CHEEKS burn so," she said shyly. She had never before been kissed as Feathers had kissed her. Her eyes fell on a photograph of Chris as she turned away. Chris at his handsomest and happiest, his eyes meeting hers with the old smiling carelessness, and she felt as if a cold hand had clutched her heart.

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In the
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TOMORROW

Heved him to be capable of so much feeling, and it drove home to him with brutal force the terrible tragedy upon the brink of which they now stood. It was not merely his own happiness, or Marie's that was involved, but that of his friend as well, for Feathers knew only spoken the simple truth when he said that he loved his wife. He had been slow to realize it perhaps, but now it came. Feathers knew him sufficiently well to know that it would be deep and lasting.

He braced himself for the thing which he knew was yet to come, and a terrible feeling of emity rose in his heart against this friend of his, who had never discovered that he loved Marie until the fact that he stood in great danger of losing her had been driven home to him.

Half an hour ago Feathers had told himself that he must give her up, but now he had forgotten that, and all his love and strength rose in defense of her. He was his— he would hold her against all the world.

Chris was pacing the room agitatedly, and after a moment he broke out again: "That isn't all—it isn't the worst of it. I've seen round, looking at Marie with haggard eyes. 'How would you feel,' he demanded hoarsely. 'If your own wife told you that she cared for another man?'"

There was a poignant silence, and as their eyes held one another the realization came home to Feathers with overwhelming shock, that in spite of everything he had heard, in spite of what Marie herself had told him, Chris still trusted him and believed in him.

He tried to find his voice, but it seemed to have deserted him, and as he cast despairing about for words, Chris turned away and flung himself down into a chair, his face buried in his hands.

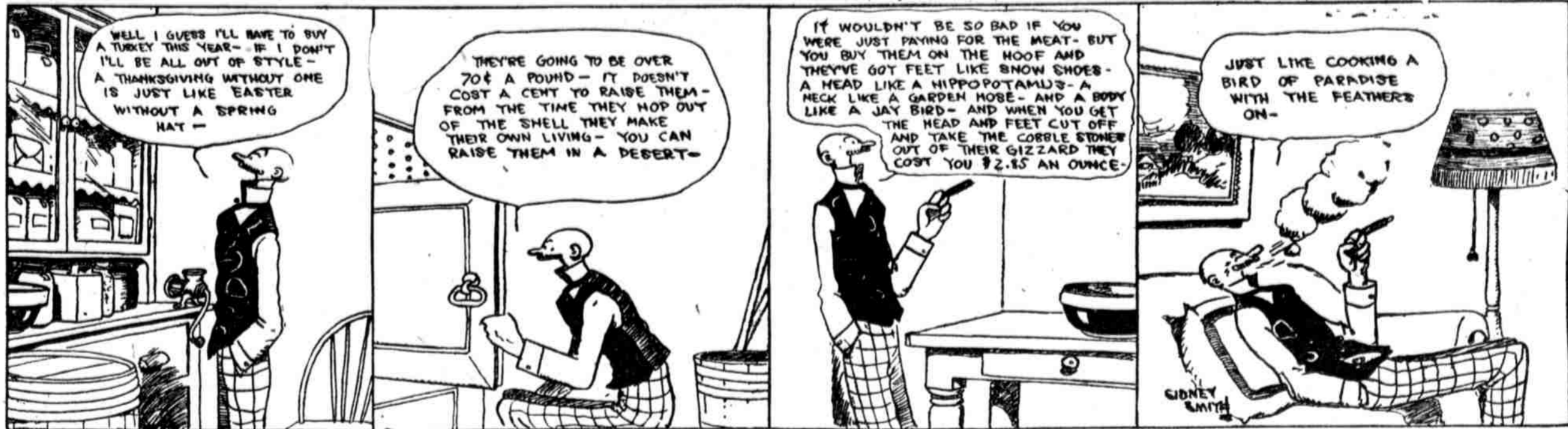
There was a long silence, then he said in a dreary, muffled voice: "It's only what I deserve, I know—but you can't go on. He was up again, pacing the room in a frenzy of impotence. Feathers watched him for a moment with beaten eyes, then he said jerkily: "You didn't—didn't care for her when you were married, Chris? I thought—wasn't it—just to get the money?"

Chris turned his haggard face. "To get what money?" he asked vaguely. Feathers tried to explain. "There was a long silence—that the money was left to your wife to your wife alone I mean, unless she consented to marry you, and that then..."

Chris stared at him in blank amazement. "What on earth do you mean? Of course it's the truth. Ask Miss Chester if you don't believe me—she's known about it all along. It was she who first suggested keeping it from Marie..."

THE GUMPS—Gobble! Gobble! Gobble!

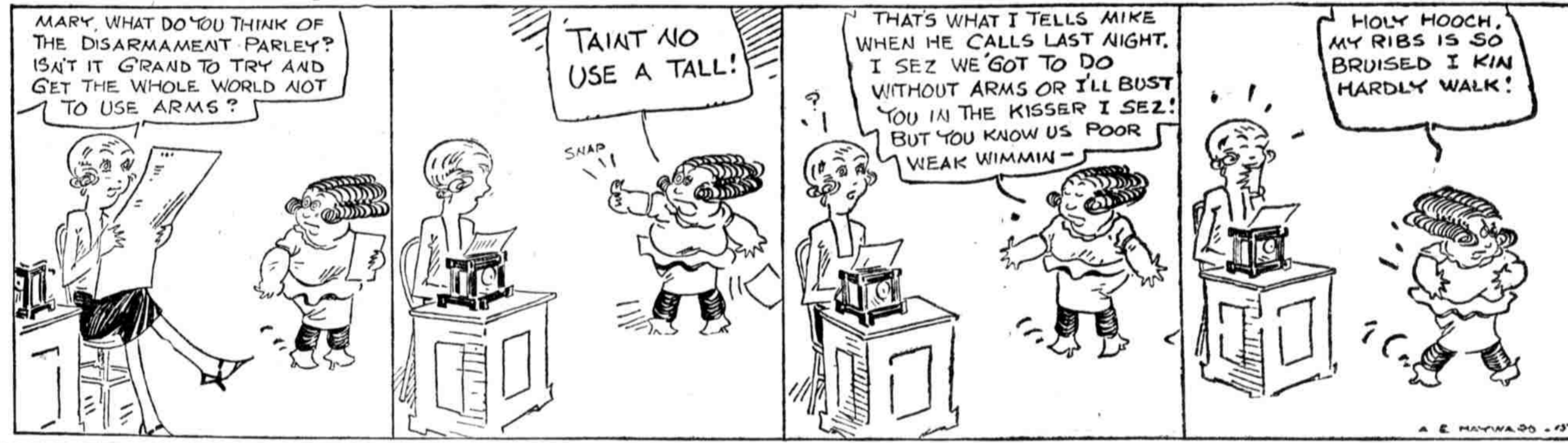
By Sidney Smith



SOMEBODY'S STENOG—Mary Believes It Can't Be Done

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By Hayward



The Young Lady Across the Way

THE TOONERVILLE TROLLEY

By FONTAINE FOX

SCHOOL DAYS

By DWIG



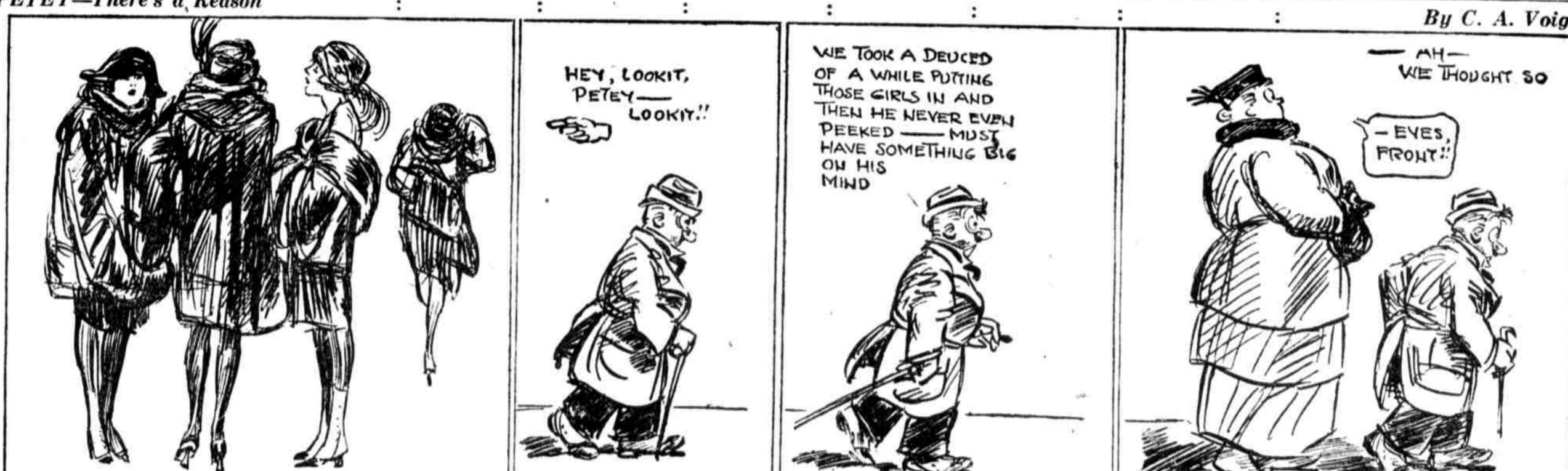
The young lady across the way says her brother says that nothing benefits a football team like a good setback and she always supposed the quarterback was the most important.

Feathers got up slowly and, walking across to Chris, put his hands heavily on his shoulders, looking at him with desperate eyes. "Is that the truth?" he asked hoarsely. "Will you swear that it's the truth?"

Chris stared at him in blank amazement. "I've got something to tell you," he said. "I'm telling you because you've always been my best friend."

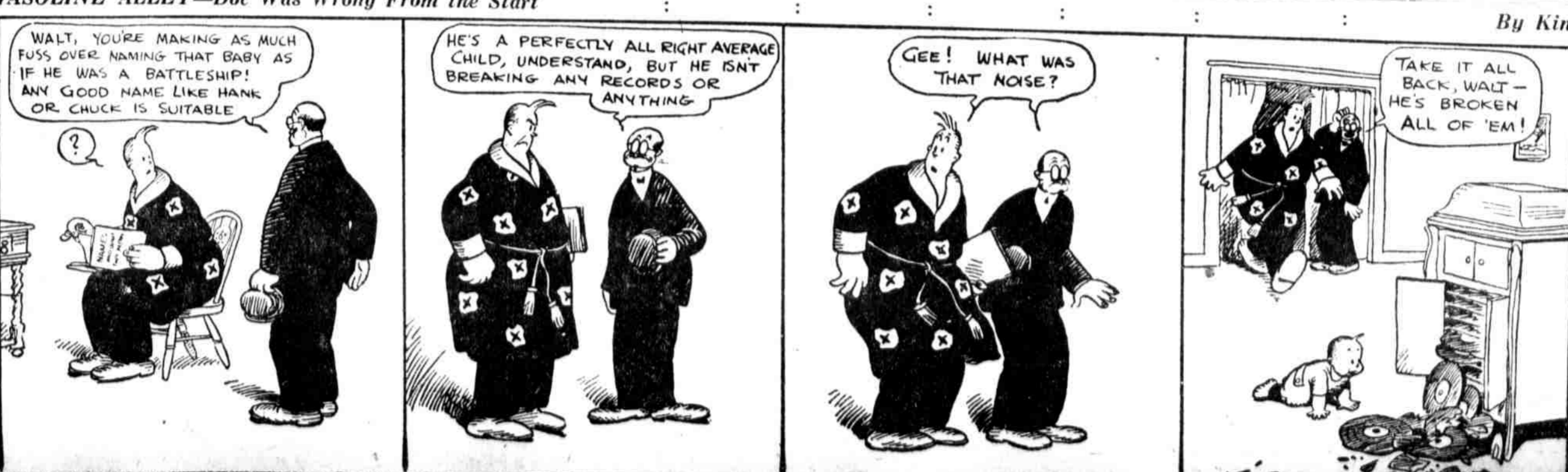
PETEY—There's a Reason

By C. A. Voight



GASOLINE ALLEY—Doc Was Wrong From the Start

By King



CHAPTER XXI
"I fought with my friend last night. And it was not with honest words. No steel sprang out to gleam and bite. No count with power, no words. There was a moment's silence, then Feathers went forward. The riotous blood in his veins had quieted and he felt a little cold and breathless. "Hello!" he said. "Hello! I thought I'd wait till you came in as they said you'd only just gone out." "Yes," he said. "I went down to the end of the road, that's all." He poured out two whiskies with a hand that shook badly, and pushed one across to Chris. "Have a drink?" Chris tasted it and made a wry face. "Lord! That's a strong dose," he said. He added more soda to it, but Feathers drank it with a gulp. "Well, how goes it?" he asked. He sat down on the other side of the table, so that his face was out of the light. The room to him seemed filled with Marie's presence, and he felt that he wondered Chris did not guess she had been here. Chris stood up, his shoulders against the mantelshelf. His haggard eyes met his friend's with haggard pain. "I've got something to tell you," he said. "I'm telling you because you've always been my best friend."