

By Sidney Smith

THE FORTUNE HUNTER

By RUBY M. AYRES

Author of "The Bachelor Husband," "The One Unwanted," etc. Copyright by Wheeler Syndicate, Inc.

THIS BEGINS THE STORY... Young ones pondering but out of the...

send for your goods and chattels, because you'll stay with us, of course...

He did not wait for a reply; he merely laughed and went out of the room.

The girl stood by the table, her eyes downcast, the sunset glow from the wide-open window all about her...

The Fortune Hunter looked at her helplessly; he had never felt at such a loss in his life.

"Oh, are you really—really glad to be here with me?"

The Fortune Hunter looked past her and swiftly round the room; glad to be in such comfort and luxury...

He looked down at her flushing face, read the thought in her eyes, and for a moment he hesitated.

She returned the kiss with soft eagerness, whispering brokenly as they drew apart again...

The Fortune Hunter flushed scarlet; an intolerable sense of shame seemed to choke him.

He had done many questionable things in his life, and felt little compunction.

But this—somehow this thing, which gave promise to be the greatest adventure of all, went sorely against the grain.

"It will have to end," he told himself grimly, as he stood and stared at the river.

He had taken many a kiss in his life and thought nothing of it, but this girl was different.

And a little breath of coolness swept through the heart of the Fortune Hunter as he thought of the bracken bending above him.

The whole thing was madness. Discovery was bound to come.

For an hour or two perhaps he might carry the situation with a high hand—long enough to get a good meal and fresh courage with which to face his wanderings—but there it would have to end.

He had meant no harm; he had been carried off his feet, and the girl herself was responsible for the mistake in the first place.

She ought to have had more sense; women were so sentimental.

The Fortune Hunter pulled himself together with an effort.

"It's all much more beautiful," he said stammeringly.

He turned and looked down at her. "But I can't stay here," he went on with a sort of rush.

Her eyes opened wide.

"Why uncle will just love to have you," she said.

"Poor dear! He's been so worried. He never thought you would really come at all; he always said that I was wasting my time."

But the Fortune Hunter, following more slowly, felt no such exaltation. Things were beginning to be a bit difficult to manage.

The Fortune Hunter was a shrewd man. He was the roving, eventful life he was proud to feel that he had not made a mistake in his summing up of a man or woman.

But he was not a shrewd man in the sense that he could explain to her, what excuse he could make to get out of the house and away before the fraud was discovered.

She seemed quite unconscious of his agitation. She went on eagerly: "And it's Tommy like what you thought he was? Poor Tommy, he's been longing for you to come. I've always read him bits of your letters, and since you said you had a bearskin for him he's talked about it every day. You have brought it, haven't you?"

The Fortune Hunter opened his mouth to speak, and shut it again with a little snap. There was a grim amusement in his blue eyes.

"Oh! he shall have his bearskin all right," he said after a moment, and he wondered how it was that if John Smith had known this girl so well and intimately he had never before met either her uncle or the boy Tommy.

It was obviously a situation from which to escape as soon as possible. The only wonder was that he had not already given himself hopelessly away.

Why, he did not even know the girl's surname, or the place from which he himself was supposed to have come.

He ran a nervous finger round the inside of his collar. He felt as if he could not breathe.

"Can't we go out in the garden?" he asked abruptly.

"This room is so hot—"

He knew it was not; the room was deliciously cool and with the soft river breeze, but it felt like a prison from which he longed to escape.

She led the way on to the lawn, and the Fortune Hunter followed; he glanced down at his ill-fitting suit and yawned.

"Will the neighbors be shocked?" he asked. Anne turned and laughed.

"No one can see us; this house is very secluded. See how lovely the trees are."

Her voice softened shyly. "John, those willows"—she pointed to a clump of graceful willows bending their branches down to the flowing river—"what do they remind you of? Aren't they like—"

THE GUMPS—'Twas the Night Before Christmas

HA! THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS AND UNCLE SAM HAS BENT THE GUMPS A LITTLE SHOPPING MONEY—

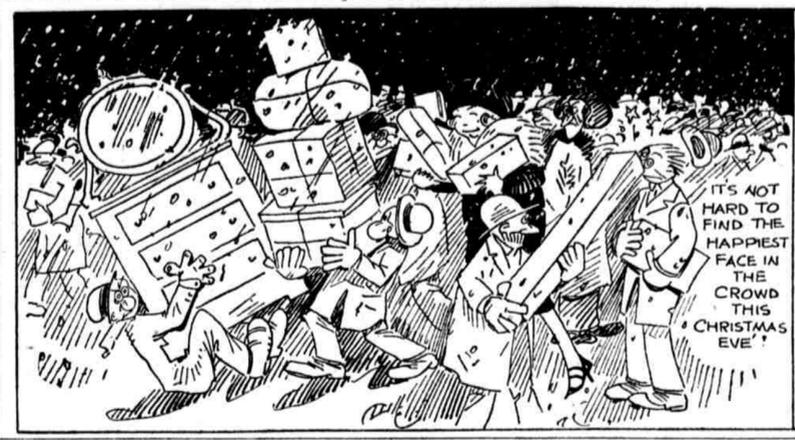
THE MODERN SANTA CLAUS—MR. GOOD FELLOW—THESE ARE THE DAYS THAT UNCLE SAM GLORIES IN—NOT ONLY DOES HE SEND PRESENTS TO THE GUMPS BUT HUNDREDS FEEL THE CHEERING TOUCH OF HIS BENEVOLENCE—



THE LINE-UP FOR CHRISTMAS—MINNIE, CHESTER, AND UNCLE SAM.

WHATEVER THEY MAY THINK OF MRS. ZANDER IT'S FORGOTTEN TODAY—THE HAPPY SPIRIT OF YULETIDE PERVADES THE GUMP HOME—THEY WISH THE WORLD A MERRY CHRISTMAS—

SOMEBODY'S STENOG—Wishing You a Happy Fourth of July



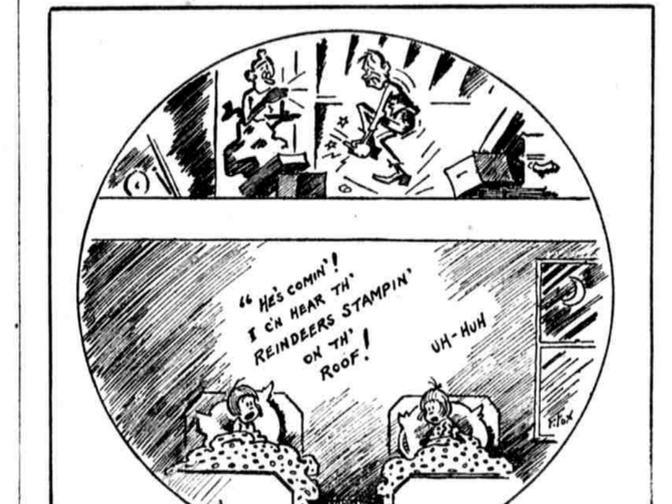
GEE! ALL CHOCOLATE COVERED NUTS! TO MANY DOODLE FROM THE BOSS! THE JOY OF 'VENUS' IS SUPREME. AMONG OTHER NICE THINGS SHE GOT A CARD FROM—



The Young Lady Across the Way



Dad Goes Up in the Attic After the Toys and Drops a Box on His Toe—By Fontaine Fox



SCHOOL DAYS—By DWIG



The young lady across the way says the United States, England and Japan are the three great naval powers...

He's coming! I can hear the reindeers stamping on the roof!

How'd you ever expect him to ever get down that chimney? He'll never do her!

It's all much more beautiful, he said stammeringly.

Why uncle will just love to have you, she said.

I dunno—but he done 'em last year and he'll do 'em this year.

Her eyes opened wide.

Poor dear! He's been so worried.

THE FAITH MEN

Can't we go out in the garden?

This room is so hot—

By C. A. Voight

PETEY—From the Heart



SEEMS TO ME WE OUGHTER TRY TO DO SOMETHING REAL CLEVER IN THE WAY OF A XMAS GREETING THIS YEAR—SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

SAY, MABEL, HOW ABOUT SOMETHING LIKE THIS—WE NEVER, THINK CLEVER THINGS TO SAY ON XMAS DAY, WITH HILLS OF BILLS UNABLE TO PAY.

FOR GOODNESS SAKE UNCLE PETEY—THAT'S TERRIBLE—AWFUL!!

I KNOW I JUST THOUGHT OF SOMETHING MUCH BETTER—SCREAMINGLY FUNNY—LET'S WISH EVERYBODY A MERRY JEWEL TIDE!!



GASOLINE ALLEY—Tit for Tat



LOOKS LIKE A REGULAR OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS. MOTHER, WITH SKEEZIX'S, YOUR AND MY STOCKINGS ALL HUNG IN A ROW!

THE SWEET LITTLE FELLOW OUGHT TO HAVE MY STOCKING—IT HOLDS MORE.

NOW MOTHER, YOU'RE TIRED YOU GO ON UP TO BED. I'M GOING TO SIT UP AND READ A FEW MINUTES.

THE DEAR SOUL! ALL I WANTED WAS A CHANCE TO FILL UP HER STOCKING!



CONTINUED TUESDAY

ONE HOUR LATER