THE FORTUNE HUNTER By RUBY M. AYRES Author of "The Bachelor Husband," "The One Unwanted," etc.

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THIS BEGINS THE STORY

AND HERE IT CONTINUES.

DON'T know what Tommy sees He called to Tommy as he crossed the hall: "I'll be back about 6-sorry to dash of like this; explain when T is that man." Anne had com-sined many times. "He repulses me, at Tommy seems to like him." The Fortune Hunter thought he

and portune Hunter thought he sold understand; there was something about Fernle which even he found at-tractive, in spite of his blunt, rude anners and sharp inquisitiveness. Cherry Lodge seemed Cherry Lodge seemed particularly Cherry Lodge seemed particularly bedy and deserted. Mr. Harding was ett, and there was hardly a sound is the house when the Fortune Hunter wat into the library and sat down to

and into the library and sat down to asset Irenie's letter. A diligent hunt through John Smith's apers upsteirs hay elicited the fact that her name was Irenie Claver, and that her name for the pust few months. It say rate, had been in San Francisco. There were many notes from her mong the dead man's luggage, mostly intellonate, some of them threatening, an or two rather pathetic.

At any rate there seemed no doubt At any rate there seemed no doubt that it had been a prearranged thing that she should follow John Smith to England, and that by doing so she had enried out his wishes quite as much as her own. And this seemed to the For-ime Hunter as if it was going to be the fence that would finally throw him. If had no mency with which to huy this woman, and he doubted that this woman, and he doubted that a would be bought,'even had he been

is a position to do so. The best he read hope for was to keep her away em Somerton and gain a little time

in and for half an hour he laboriously ade copies of his writing, fortunately a ordinary, sloping sort of hand, with peculiarities.

t o'clock and he knew he could not aford to miss it. If she were the ort of a woman he thought her, she would keep her word and come to Som-mos if she received no reply to her

Anne kept her room for dinner.

"Letter received: expect you here to lunch, or shall come down-Irenie." For a moment it seemed to him that this was the end of everything: for a moment his self-possession deserted him, and he could only sit motionless, the message falling from his nerveless hand. Tommy looked on curiously.

Tommy looked on curiously. "I say, what's up?" he asked at last. "Is it bad news?" The Fortune Hunter roused himself with an effort and rose. "No: at least I've got to go to London; do you know how the trains go? I want a fast one; it's urgent." He hardly knew what he was saying.

knew what he was saying. He picked up the telegram and went quickly back to the house. Tommy, struggling to keep up beside him, talk-ing all the time. "There's one at 12: it only stops once at Slough. You can catch that if you hurry. I say, is there any answer for the boy?" "No; tell him, will you? I must

The Fortune Hunter dashed off to

I come home." Home! He had used the word un-consciously; how dared he look upon this place as his home, and yet he knew that he did!

that be did! He reached the station breathless and hot, to find Fernie on the platform talking to the station master. The Fortune Hunter would have passed them, but Fernie stepped forward.

them, but Fernie stepped forward. "You need not have run so fast, Mr. Smith," he said in his aggravating way. "The train's ten minutes late today." "Oh, indeed." The Fortune Hunter took off his hat and wiped his hot face. "It's warm this morning." he said

"it's warm this morning," he said "it'll be warmer in town," old Fernie said bluntly, and then after a moment he added: "Are you coming back to Somerton, Mr. Smith?"

back to Somerton, Mr. Smith? The Fortune Hunter turned round slowly, the hot blood rushing painfully to his face. There had been an un-mistakable meaning in the slowly e spoken question, and he broke out sav-agely: "What the devil do you mean?" Events meaned his hands desreat. Fernie spread his hands deprecat-

ingly. "Only what I said. Are you coming back to Somerton? No harm in a ques-tion like that, surely."

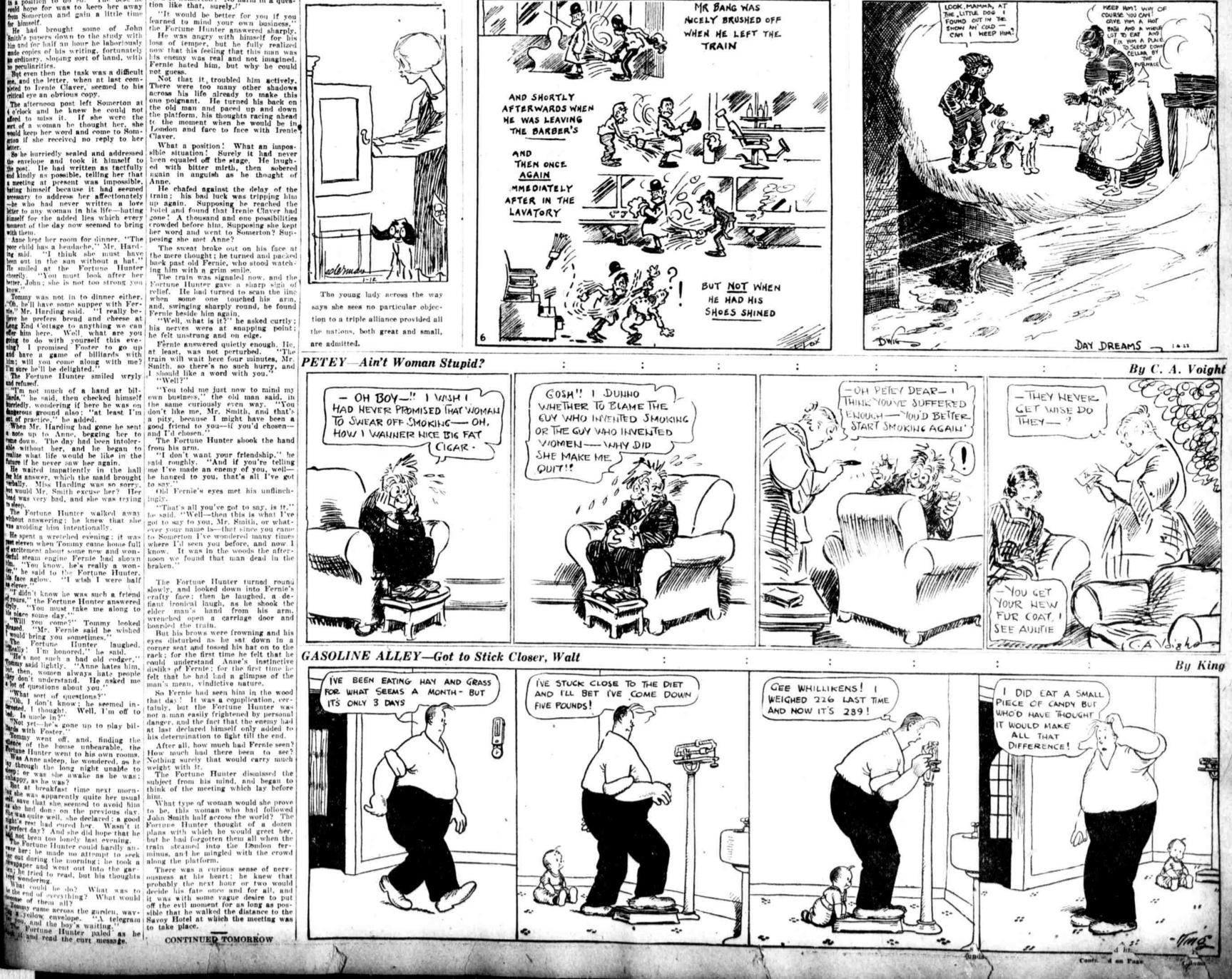


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By Sidney Smith

By DWIG

THE BARBER'S AND THEN ONCE AGAIN MMEDIATELY



Tommy was not in to dinner either. "Oh. he'll have some supper with Fer-ts," Mr. Harding said. "I really be-pre he prefers bread and cheese at The Fortune Hunter smiled wryly ud refused.

"Tm not much of a hand at bil-lards," he said, then checked himselt buriedly, wondering if here he was on ungerous ground also: "at least I'm st of practice." he added. "When Mr. Harding had gone he sent tade up to the same because I might have been a good friend to you---if you'd chosen--

webally. Miss Harding was so sorry, to say, but would Mr. Smith excuse her? Her Old head was very bad, and she was trying ingly.

The Fortune Hunter walked away he said. "Well-then this is what I've without answering; he knew that she got to say to you, Mr. Smith, or whatavoiding him intentionally. He spent a wretched evening : it was to Somerton I've wondered many times meleven when Tommy came home full where I'd seen you before, and now 1

Ince aglow. "I wish I were half elever."
T didn't know he was such a friend yours." the Fortune Hunter answered for "You must take me along to it place some day."
"Will you come?" Tommy looked would bring you sometimes."
The Fortune Hunter laughed.
Well, I'm honored." he said.
"He's not such a bad old codger."
Tommy said lightly. "Anne hates him, wit, then, women always hate people the of questions about you."
"What sort of questions?"
"Oh, I don't know: he seemed in-tested. I thought. Well. I'm off to be a bud to play billeries with Foster."
Tommy went off, and, finding the true of the house unbearable, the true hunter went to his own rooms. Was Anne alcep, he wondered, as he was a be away and a bar on the long night unable to topic to was she awake as he was."

the Anne asleep, he wondered, as he by through the long night unable to the in was she awake as he was; manappy, as he was? But at breakfast time next morn-