

The Vengeance of Henry Jarroman

Must the Woman Always Pay? By ROY VICKERS

ON THE day after the wedding, first, we told her you were on the Continent, that you bore her no ill will for her innocent deception, and that you wished her to continue in the possession of all you had given her. She agreed to this arrangement—for the time being, at any rate.

"Not a bit!" The issue was clear enough—I was to let Wilfred marry Nadia or give up the Camden fortune. I learned from that little interview of yours that you must have known from the first who Nadia really was; also that you knew I knew it.

"So far you have found the thread of the string you're pulling." Jarroman's tone was dry. "So far, let me go on. You will remember your next visit to Lady Doucester with Nadia to facilitate the marriage; Nadia wouldn't hear of your sacrifice. You made me go to her myself and beg her to let you have her. The reason I had to give her was that the man against whom you and she had been plying your wiles was my late cousin, John Camden. The man succeeded, as you know, Nadia gave way. But you had set me thinking, Mr. Jarroman—I did not know at the time, but you had set me thinking."

"Jarroman threw his cigarette into the fire, and the possibility," he said. "Lady Doucester's eyes snapped. 'You underestimated me. I am better at thinking than anything else in the world. I think badly, perhaps, but I think patiently. During all those days in which Nadia and I were dashing about, busy with her trousseau and her house, I was thinking about you. I was more suspicious than I care to remember. I said to myself, 'A man's life is ruined because society is of opinion that he committed a murder. He pays the usual penalty, and on his return to life he finds himself rich. He tells his lawyer to find his daughter for him, and she is brought to him by mistake the daughter of the man who ruined him because society is of opinion that he committed a murder. It is a strange mistake, an extraordinary turn of the wheel.' The thought must have known," cut in Jarroman. "I have had time for reflection lately, and I believe now that he, too, must have known all along. But what his motive could have been—"

"Don't interrupt me," Lady Doucester reproved him. She bent forward and looked at the fire with an expert hand, so that the light of the flames danced full upon Jarroman's face. "I told myself," she continued, "that it was possible for such a man as you—add to admit the daughter of your dear foe, to lavish luxury and affection upon her, to give up the chance of a retrial for her sake; in the language of my early days, to return good for evil. Twenty years' penitence might reasonably be expected to unbalance the steadiest brain! But once having embarked on this sentiment proceeding, it was not possible for such a man as yourself to let Nadia file the reports that were to be used in establishing her father's guilt."

The Whole Truth at Last
Jarroman's hand shaded his eyes. "So that when Theed announced to me that you had discovered the man who chose to call Nadia's impersonation—that, in your anger, you demanded not only full restitution on her part of every penny spent upon her, but also to return to me and my hand of the Camden fortune, my amazement was not so great as it might have been, for I had been presented an old problem in a more dangerous form. Dangerously because it struck at the roots of my existence. For I could not—I cannot, now or ever—repay to Nadia what I stole from her years and years ago."

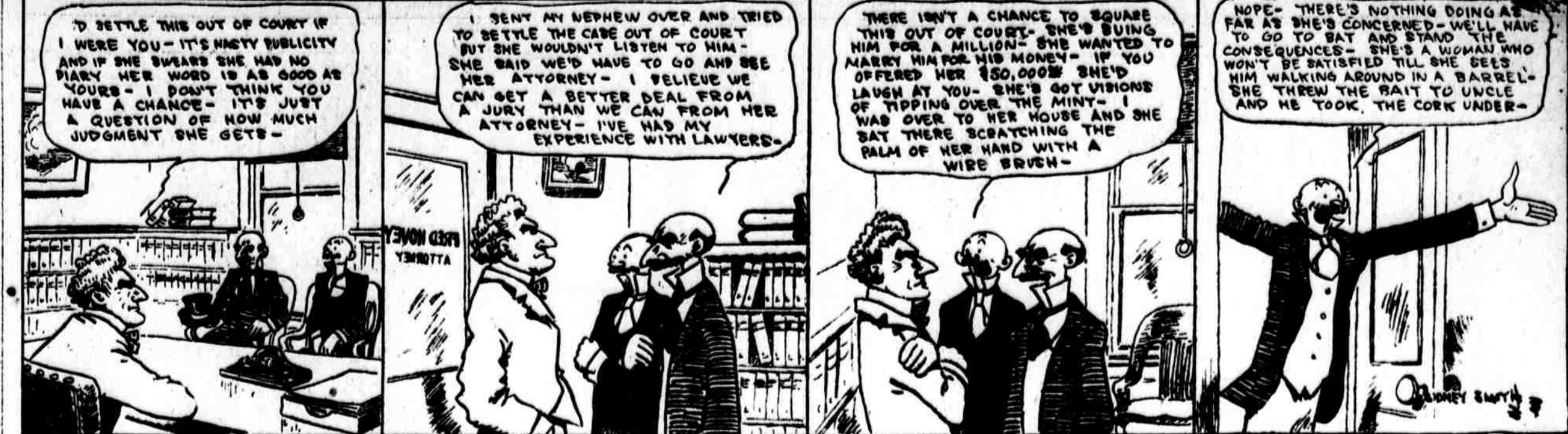
Lady Doucester hoped Jarroman would say something about the reports she had told him not to interrupt. She made a tiny grimace at his crouching figure, and went on: "I could not understand why you demanded that repayment of me. I could not understand why your attitude toward Nadia was so monstrous. You were not an excited fool, to believe that Nadia was an adventuress who had taken a big risk, unrepentant on the day she had seen through it. You were a man who had deliberately accepted another man's daughter as your own. But that other man was your enemy. And you had married Nadia, and you had waited till the day after her marriage to the man she loved to strike at her, and through her at Wilfred and me."

"There were the beads, Mr. Jarroman. I looked for the thread, and at last I found it." Lady Doucester's voice broke and she faltered. Jarroman had risen to his feet and was standing rigid, his face gray, his eyes kindled with that light that had escaped her understanding. "The involuntary she, too, rose. The words she wished to say were clamoring within her brain, but the clamoring of them was, strangely, an unsteady whisper. "That thread was hatred," Jarroman drew a difficult breath. "Yes, it was hatred," he repeated. "Yes, it was hatred—as surely as it now is—"

"The echoes of that unspoken word against the walls of the quiet room. Jarroman dropped his eyes and motioned Lady Doucester back to her chair. "Let me light you another cigarette, Lady Doucester," he said. Lady Doucester dropped back into her chair and then discovered she was smoking from head to foot. She waved aside the cigarette box which Jarroman was offering her. "No, thank you," she said. "I smoke too much as it is for my age and temperament; and I must get on with my confession. Cigarettes always make me dawdle. Please sit down again—I hate being towered over! People seem to tell nowadays."

Jarroman resumed his seat as Lady Doucester continued: "In that interview I had with him Theed suggested to me that, although I should be told of her true parentage and your knowledge of it, your instructions as to the legal proceedings should not be carried out. What Theed had to gain by this was not clear to me at the time, but his activities since then have been enlightening. He and I went down to Swallowbank next day. I found Nadia alone and broke the news to her. It made her miserable at

THE GUMPS—A Good Lawyer With a Tough Job



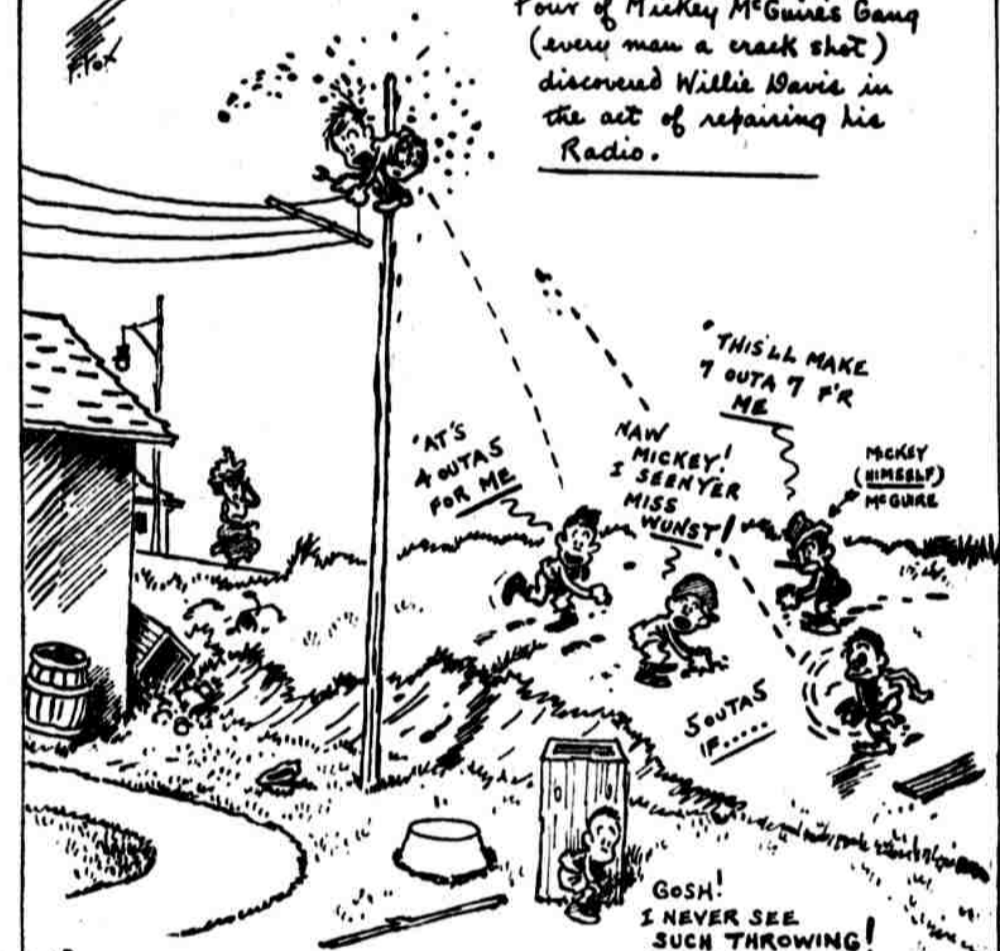
SOMEBODY'S STENOG—A Dark Future



The Young Lady Across the Way



NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS



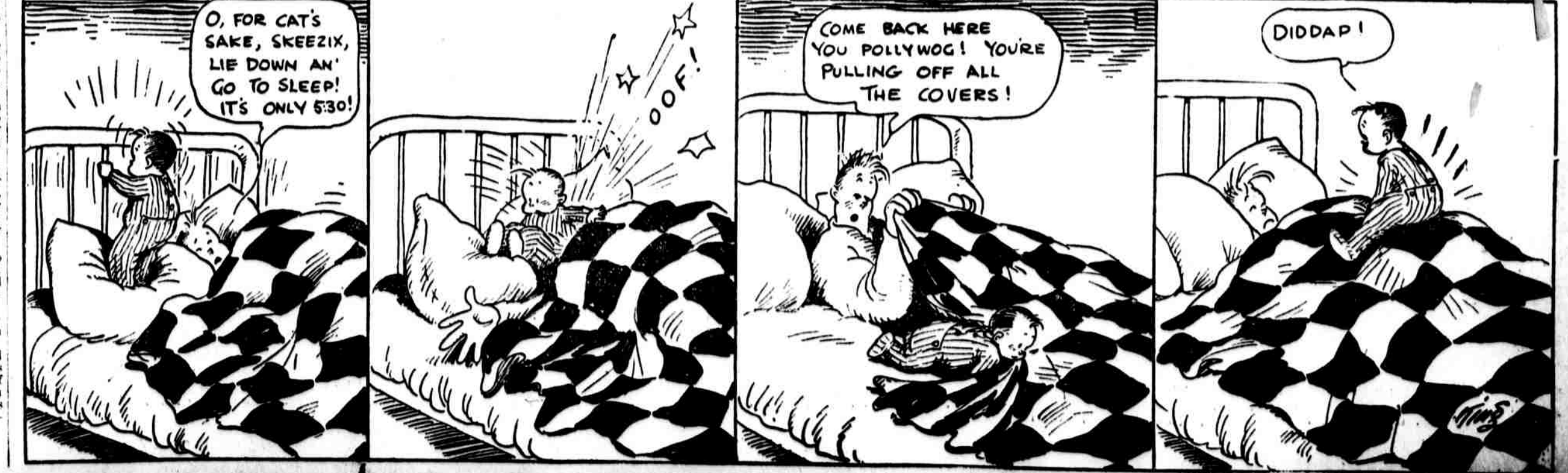
SCHOOL DAYS



PETEY—Aboard and Home



GASOLINE ALLEY—Walt's Little Early Riser



CONTINUED TOMORROW