

THE WORLD OUTSIDE

By HAROLD MacGRATH

Thrilling story of a fight for \$7,000,000 and a beautiful girl's love by the author of "The Man on the Box," "Luck of the Irish," etc.

THIS BEGINS THE STORY... THE ADVENTURER STARED INTO HIS WINE... "TAKE THE MERCHANT OF VENICE," SAID BANCROFT, DEFENSIVELY.

"NO, HE NEVER CONFIDED IN ME IN THE BEST. HE NEVER LAUGHED, HUNDED FUNES, OR SEEMED TO TAKE AN INTEREST IN THE ACTIONS GOING ON ABOUT HIM.

"DID HE EVER ANSWER THE BELL?" "NO, EITHER I OR MRS. HORNE ANSWERED THE BELL. HE HAD SIGNED THAT HE WANTED NOTHING TO DO WITH THE VILLAGERS, WHO CALLED HIM MISER, WHO FLIBBERTIGALLY HE WAS; FOR HE HAD THE MISER'S INSTINCTS OF FRUGALITY. I NEVER HATED HIM; AND NOW I FEEL SORRY FOR HIM. NOT A FRIEND IN THE WORLD, SO FAR AS I KNOW."

"THE ADVENTURER STARED INTO HIS WINE... "TAKE THE MERCHANT OF VENICE," SAID BANCROFT, DEFENSIVELY. "WHY DOES THE WORLD HATE HIM SO? THEY TOOK HIS MONEY, AND THEY TOOK HIS DAUGHTER. WHAT DID HE GET OUT OF THAT DEAL, THAT ALL SHOULD DETEST HIM?"

"THE ADVENTURER EMPLOYED HIS GLASS OF BURGUNDY AND REFILLED IT. HE LOOKED INQUIRINGLY AT BANCROFT, WHO PUSHED HIS GLASS TOWARD THE BOTTLE.

"HOW ABOUT THE TIME THEY STOLED YOU?" "SO YOU HEARD ABOUT THAT? IF I HEARD ANYTHING, IT WILL BE THIS TOWN AND ITS INHABITANTS, THOUGH I WISH NO HARM TO EITHER."

"AND YOU NEVER FELT THE DESIRE TO CLEAR OUT AND SEE WHAT THE WORLD WAS LIKE?" "THOUSANDS OF TIMES. BUT CAUTION ALWAYS HELD ME IN. SUPPOSING I FAILED, AND HAD TO COME SLINKING BACK? I HAD THE FEAR THAT I MIGHT BE MISER- LIKE THAT KEPT ME HERE. THAT SOUNDS LIKE TIMIDITY. PERHAPS IT IS. I AM NO JUDGE. BUT IT WILL BE SEEN THAT I WAS NOT FLEEING BY HEAVEN'S PATIENCE. I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A LITTLE ADVICE," CONCLUDED THE NARRATOR. "GO AWAY FOR A FEW MONTHS."

"WHY AS SOON AS THE WORLD LEARNS ABOUT YOUR RICHES, ALL MANNER OF MEDDLERS WILL BE MILLING IN YOUR HALLWAY. CROOKS IN FOREIGN CARS, CLARITY COMMITTEES, RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS, OIL PROMOTERS, BOOK AGENTS, FEMALE VAMPIRES, ORDINARY THUGS IN HOPES OF YOUR BEING FOOL ENOUGH TO KEEP LARGES OF YOU. THE OTHER PROSPECTS. AND YOU WOULD WAIT HIGH, FOR YOU WILL BE ON EVERY Sucker LIST IN THE COUNTRY. THERE WILL BE TEN THOUSAND INGENUOUS PLANS TO separate you from your money, and nine thousand of them within the law. YOU call the Great Adventure Company preposterous; wait until you see some of the other prospects. And you would fall for some of them. Why? Because you can afford to risk a few thousands out of curiosity. Go away, and inside of six months you will have been forgotten; some other millionaire's son will be the target. Go to New York—the New Bagdad—and take another game; learn something about human beings. Contact! All the learning there ever was is worthless without contact. What's in your head now? Lumber. Contact will turn it into polished citron."

"TO PRINT HIS PERSONALITY INDELIBLY upon this receptive mind, he believed he had accomplished his purpose. He got the boy out of these protected environs, where he could say come in or get out, where there was confidence and serenity. To go to town—the New York, where diffidence would jostle him on one side and confusion on the other. The boy had a pleasant, attractive face, singularly clear in the skin; steady, gray eyes. Some day, when these eyes began to observe and weigh humanity, they would be difficult to deceive. He would set up, too. So then to excite his imagination and lure him away from this stronghold. Bancroft. He felt expansively charitable toward the future, toward the past, toward this entertaining adventurer, the most interesting man he had ever met. There was a mischievous inclination to get the ten thousand, toss it beside the man's plate, and demand a contract, if only to see how he would comprehend that. But the wine which was urging him to make a fool of himself. He laughed.

"YOU ARE?" "WELL, NOTHING COULD BE FRANKER. I HAD PROPOSED THAT WE FORM A COMPANY, BUT EVIDENTLY YOU ARE STILL MOLLIFYING IT OVER."

"SIX MONTHS IN A WAR CAMP HAS TRAINED YOU TO SKEPTICISM," SAID THE ADVENTURER, WISELY SHIFTING THE SUBJECT. "QUEER THING. YOU MADE NO REAL FRIENDSHIPS AMONG THE BOYS. YOU WERE CRAZY TO MIX IN, BUT DIDN'T KNOW HOW. LUMBER; ALL YOU HAVE HADN'T TAUGHT YOU TO BE A MIKER. WHEN YOU WENT INTO TOWN—THE ONE GREAT YOUR CAMP—YOU WENT ALONE AND DIDN'T BRING AROUND THE PUBLIC LIBRARY. YOU THE POWERS THAT BE, OR SHOOT CRAPS OR CURSE AWAY BECAUSE YOUR BUDDIES FOUND OUT. THAT'S WHERE YOU COULD USE YOUR GLASS. BUT YOU NEVER PREACHED AND YOU NEVER ATTEMPTED. NOBODY LIKED YOU, BUT ALL RESPECTED YOU BECAUSE YOU

made a tip-top soldier by the time the year blew up. But you ought to thank your stars that you never got as far as Hoboken."

"I wanted to get into it. I was mad as hell. I went home and haunt at the villagers. You didn't want mud and death; you wanted glamour, the excitement of crossing the ocean of seeing foreign cities, the pretty girls, and all that. What's this? Real apple pie, as I live, with cinnamon."

"and a second piece, if you want it, sir," said Mrs. Horne, bustling out. "Would you like another bottle?" asked Bancroft, with his intent.

"Would you? No, young man, you could not get me drunk under four bottles, and by that time you would be under the table. I use my education, and it tells me, ware of strong drink, a little exhilarates now and then, but not hurt any one. But how few of us are strong enough to halt this side of the line? Would you like another bottle?"

"No," said Bancroft, readily admitting his failure, but free of chagrin. "What are you going to do with all this money?"

"Bancroft's hand went to his brow, his fingers into his thick brown hair. "I don't know. Spend some of it, give some away. I don't want to waste it; I want to do good with it, and I want to have a decent good time, too. But how and where to begin—that's what bewilders me. With an income of an income of a year, I should be very happy. But more than a quarter of a million, when a twenty-dollar bill still looks as big as all outdoors. If you had set your adventure at a million, I might have jumped at it."

"My mistake," said the other, dryly. "You can still offer it, however. You are a free agent. Your father's will was without bequests or conditions."

"I can spread it like a sailor, or go on accumulating it. Did you see the will?"

"No; but I was given a gist of it." "It's a literary curiosity; one of the shortest wills on record. Whenever I feel myself getting gray I take out my copy and read it. Here, read it yourself and tell me what you think of it."

He handed the envelope across the table. The adventurer stared at it rather stonily.

"Go on, read it," said Bancroft, impatiently. "It's worth reading."

This strange, the stranger drew the envelope toward him and extracted the instrument, and smoothed it out upon the tablecloth.

KNOW ALL BY THESE PRESENTS: Being hale and sound mentally, whatever my body may be, I leave to my son, Collingwood J. Bancroft, all my real and personal property, unconditionally, without let or hindrance. There will be no debts to pay, and I want to do good with the funds and properties. My son, if he so pleases, may dissipate it in as many months as he likes.

(Copy) SILAS BANCROFT. "No debts to pay," mused the adventurer, his roving glance touching the chairs, the books in the room beyond, the vase. He returned the will to its envelope.

"The Beginning of Adventure" "No bequests. Even Mrs. Horne, who has been housekeeping since I was a baby, received nothing. All mine—to ride to hell with, if I want to!"

"Bitterness? The wine had rent a corner of the reserve. The boy was bitter in his soul? So much the better. In New York, with this bitterness which was born of loneliness, and a thousand temptations at his elbow."

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Bancroft. "Do you want the truth; or, rather, do you want my honest opinion?"

"Yes." "Well, then, by the way he brought you up and the way he flings his fortune at your feet, I should say that I expected it to destroy you. I'll go further. Supposing you're not Silas Bancroft's son. What would be more exquisite than to bring you up more or less like a pauper and then to destroy you with too much money?"

"No; that won't do at all. I was born in this village; not the least mystery on that side. The mystery is why I was brought up like a pauper (to quote you) and given all this money in the end. That's the real problem."

"It was merely a coincidence. You asked me what I thought. I thought a clock beat out the hour. 'Nine' is a clock beat off. Got to make New York by midnight."

"No train until morning." "Oh, I have a car at the curb." The adventurer rose. "You won't dispose of the cellar?"

"No." "Nor the library?" "No. I'd hang on to that if I were as poor as Job's turkey. They made it possible for me to survive the apartment. And to this irony of a few months' pelletion of miser's son—those books, those daughters toward you instead of away from you. But remember the foolish crew who dropped his chesses."

"Not even the usual horse through memorial. I owe this village nothing." The promoter of adventures offered no comment, but proceeded into the library for his portfolio and thence into the hall for his hat and raincoat.

"The wind is dying down," he said, "but it is still raining hard." "Take along an umbrella. You can leave it at the hotel." "You'll trust me, then, with a bum-berehoot?"

"The two glasses of wine had exhilarated him. There never was an umbrella in this house worth more than fifty cents."

"All right, since you are willing to risk it. But bear in mind my advice about clearing out for the hospital; no offer of the hand; but Bancroft's thoughts were already busy elsewhere, so the rudeness passed unnoticed. He got the book on antiques and returned to the desk in the library. C. J. K. Paid Kennedy in full. Was there any connection between the publisher and the man his father had paid in full? If so, then it signified that this unknown man had once owned all the choice things in the house, the books and vases as well as the chairs. But why were they here if his father had paid Kennedy in full? Well, he had the publisher's name and address; and probably Snell would know something. He shut down upon these cogitations because they threatened to bewilder as well as oppress him, and studied the photograph of George Holman and read the synopsis of his truly remarkable adventures as promoted by the Great Adventure Company.

CONTINUED TOMORROW.

THE GUMPS—Touch and Go



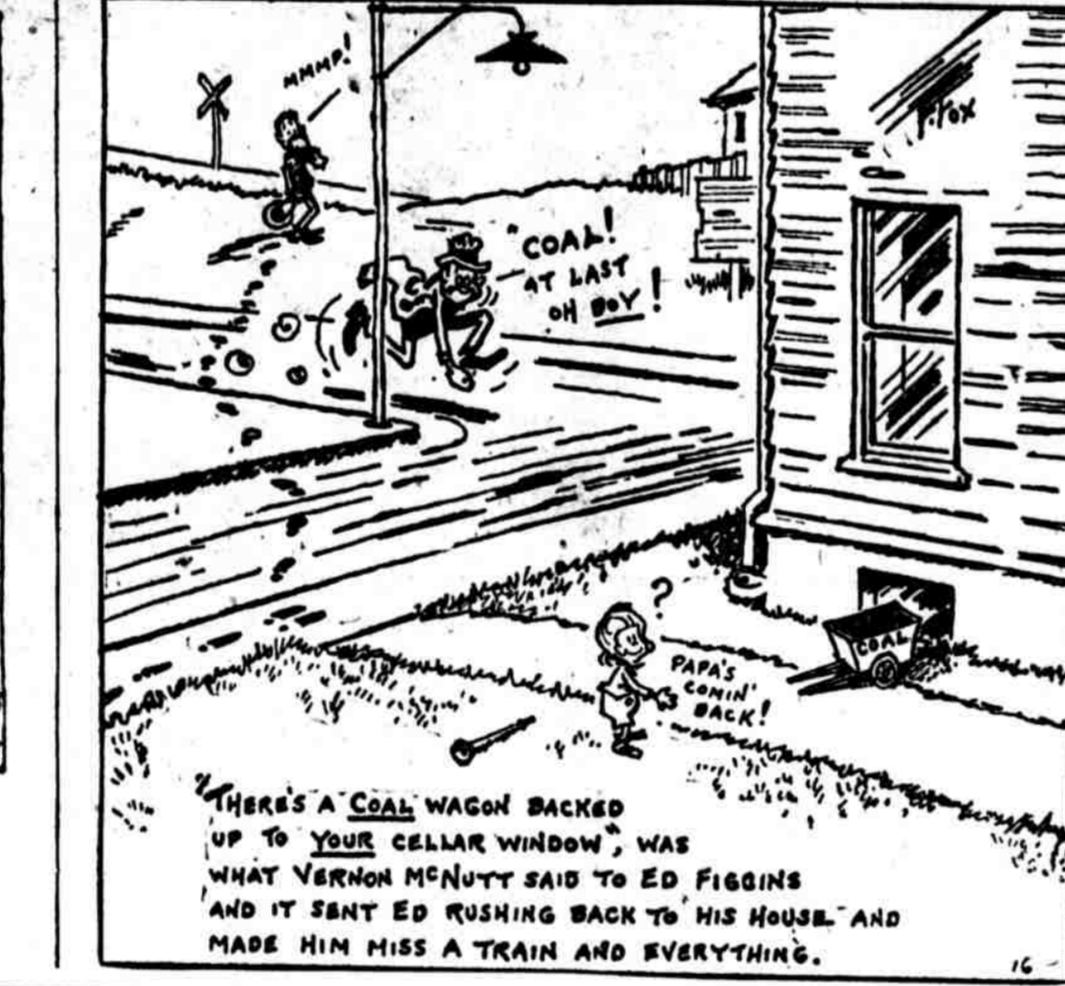
SOMEBODY'S STENOG—Too Bad, Cam!



The Young Lady Across the Way



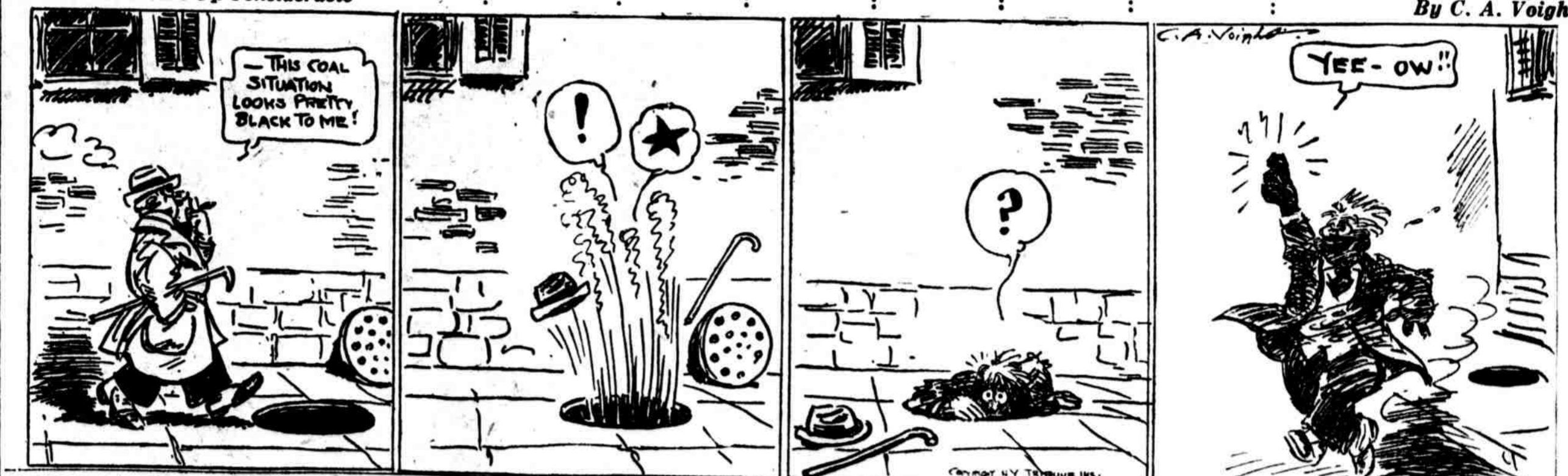
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