

The Subconscious Courtship

A modern woman's extraordinary scheme to keep her life from interfering with her life is told in this fascinating novel

By BERTA RUCK
Author of "The Wrong Mr. Wright," "The Arrant Rover," etc.
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WHO'S WHO IN THE STORY
CLOVER EPHINSTONE, charming young widow, who has inherited a business, has decided to spend her money, and has decided to marry a "husband for convenience," to find of "the harpist," a young man who is a "husband for convenience."

MAJOR HARRY CARMICHAEL, World War veteran, made a sensation as an engineer who invented a new way, to finance which he agreed to Clover's "strictly business" proposition.

ROSEMARY MEADOWS, Clover's sister, a pretty girl of the period.

MRS. MEADOWS, aunt, who has bewitched Clover in adversity and is beloved with fatherly affection.

BANDY, younger daughter, a girl of 15, who is a "husband for convenience."

TIM HOLT, big, good-natured chap, beautifully in love with Rosemary.

LIFE A Growing Strain
"There's nothing to fidget about!" I said she. good-humoredly. "Everything's going to go all right. Lovely food; the kind you get where the cook drinks just a little and the music is rather nice. Quite a happy thought rather than a new contract from the Apollo Hall. I heard her last Saturday; she's delicious. Notes like warm honey trickling rather slowly out of her mouth. I should think the kind of thing that would really melt your heart, after some time. I suppose that's the matter if I'm called away in the middle of dinner and leave the party for just a few minutes?"

"Called away? Why, are you expecting to see a message from the office, Mr. Wright—my manager—was to stay on there until midnight tonight?"

"Oh! No bother. I hope!"

"No bother?" returned Clover of Elphinstone Brothers, lifting her dark head above those shoulders.

"Something quite good, if it is the offer that I imagine it will be. Father and mother are going to have tonight, what with your business—and mine. And they are both coming off."

"How do you know?" he asked quickly. He was surprised, pleased that they were on these terms of companionship. In Paris, during the good honeymoon, she had also been companionable, quite as much as an old maid of ten girls whom he might have met over there for the first time with their people, and with whom he might have done a bit of sight-seeing.

They had discussed the shows, the fashions, the other people at the hotel; and Clover had admitted to "quite a little" of the coming party. The evening's tramps they had taken together in Fontainebleau or about Versailles. Then, when she returned to take up this odd double life in Great Britain, she had felt a little stiff, awkward, and a growing strain. But tonight apparently things had gone back to the Paris and holiday-time footing. She had spoken with almost misty ease about their aims and how these would prosper.

Quite eagerly he asked, "How do you know?"

"Oh! I just know," said she. "Your mood will get taken on all right."

Soothed by the prettiness of her speaking voice, stimulated by the fragrance and the beauty so near him, he leaned nearer. "It was awfully decent of you to say that," he told her, grateful as a small boy for encouragement. "Will you—do you mind saying it again?"

But the door opened. "Sir Algernon and Lady Cox," announced the manservant.

"All is not brass that glitters, but certainly Cox does glitter like hell!" had been said of him by men who had worked with him. It was true. His breath, when in uniform, glittered with those orders; in any case his hair glittered, his eyes, his teeth glittered, his monocle glittered; and his conversation glittered most of all. Especially did it glitter when he found himself in the presence of a woman as pretty as his hostess.

"Mrs. Carmichael? How very sweet of you to let us come like this tonight—delightful—I have been so looking forward to it. I turned all the glitter about him full on to Clover. Clover seemed to gleam back at him. Perhaps it was that bold, tiger's glare of hers, which, when she moved, gave her the glittering grace of a fish.

"General and Mrs. Hervey" were announced. Hervey, who had been called "The Plumber of the Empire" because he had been called in to stop up leaks of various kinds so often during the last twenty years of his history, had the composite face of a soldier, an artist, and a business man, with his brows over lightning-swift eyes; their first glance about reassured Carmichael, who had seen the Coxes, took in the red and white of Clover's beauty, Sir Algernon's glitter, and the general situation.

"Major O'Brien" was announced.

"Enter a much younger soldier, dark, good-looking, neat, intelligent, an aristocrat, the author of the most popular play to be produced that year."

"Doctor Mary Robertson."

(Also distinguished, also good to look upon with wonderful shoulders, eyes slight with human kindness, white teeth, the party complete. They went downstairs.

At the head of the staircase Carmichael heard Sir Algernon ask if he might be permitted a personal remark. "That very lovely frock of yours, Mrs. Carmichael; that most—that that looks! Now don't tell me it wasn't Chané!"

"How alarmingly knowledgeable of you," Clover returned easily. "Imagine your seeing that it was Chané!" she brought over by airplane this morning."

"No; chosen while we were in Paris. But I hope that quite soon all one's clothes will come over by airship."

"Ah! Of course! Airships—airships—you, of course, have to know all about—"

"They did."

"As so often happens when one has prepared for difficulties and a management of everything turns out to be absurdly easy as far as Carmichael was concerned. The great man, his guest, glittered forth affably.

"Your husband, Mrs. Carmichael, is a very clever man, if I may say so, as well as a most fortunate one—most fortunate. I suppose you heard of this invention of his even from his inception?"

"Indeed, yes," came the voice of Clover Carmichael. "If I were not so proud of it I should be—jealous of it, I think—"

Over the oysters, Carmichael heard her say this. He knew it represented the merest "lines" in the part she

THE GUMPS—Kidding on the Square



SOMEBODY'S STENOGRAPHER—Yessing Popper

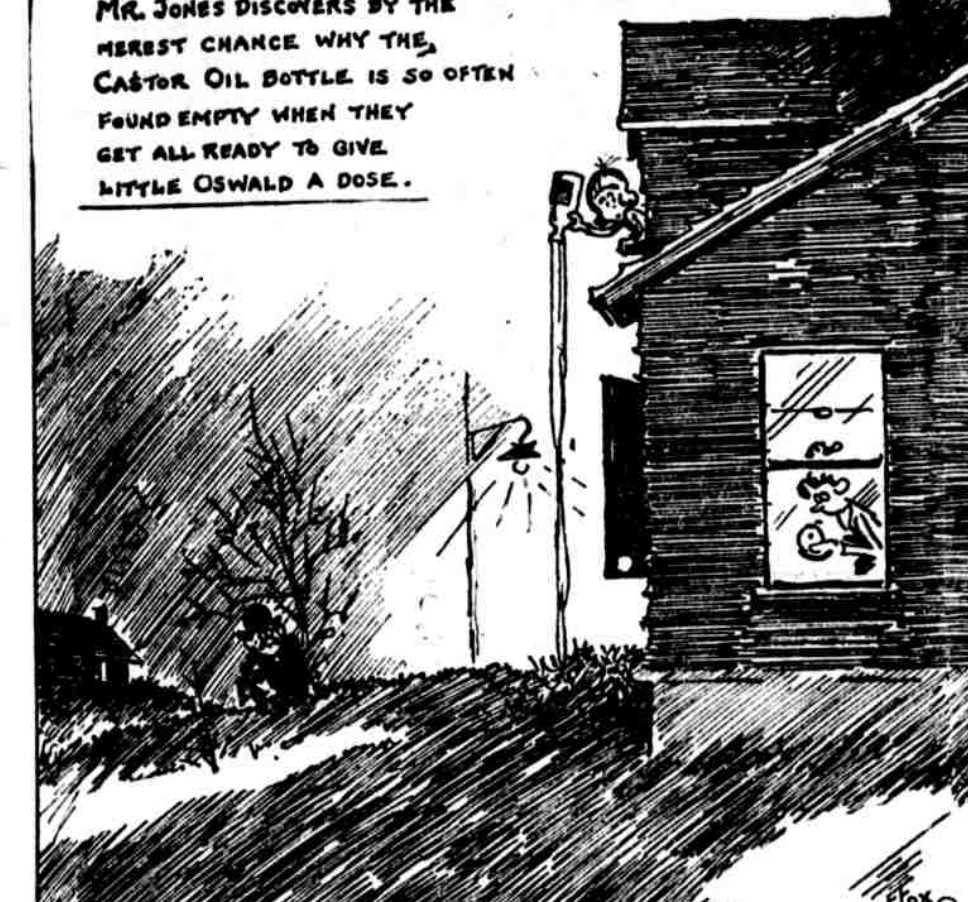


The Young Lady Across the Way

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

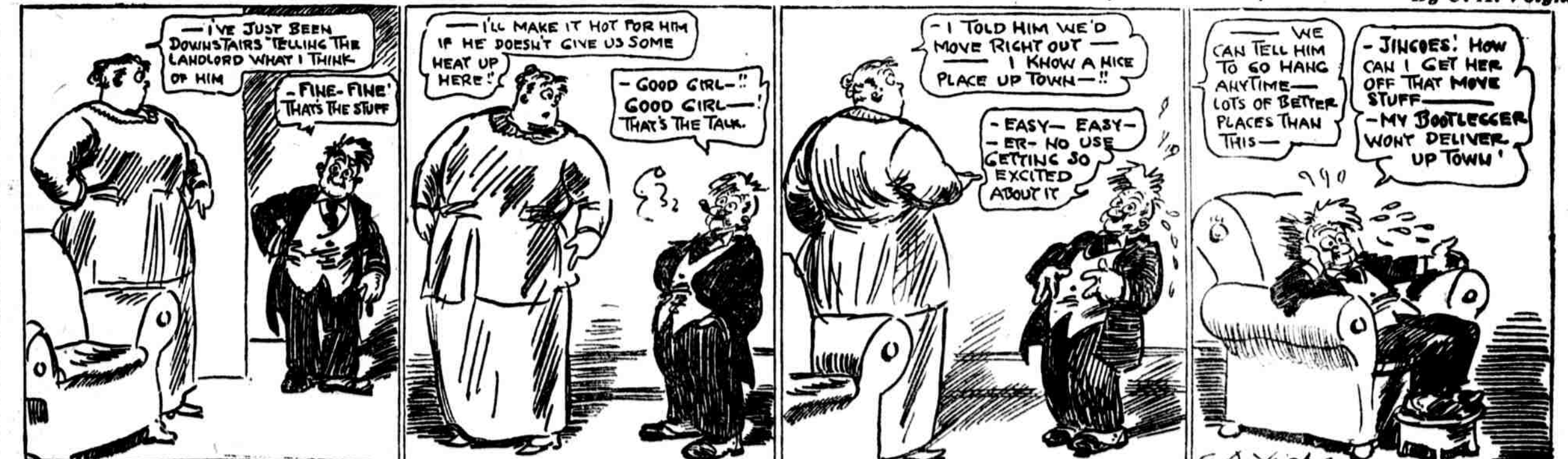
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SCHOOL DAYS



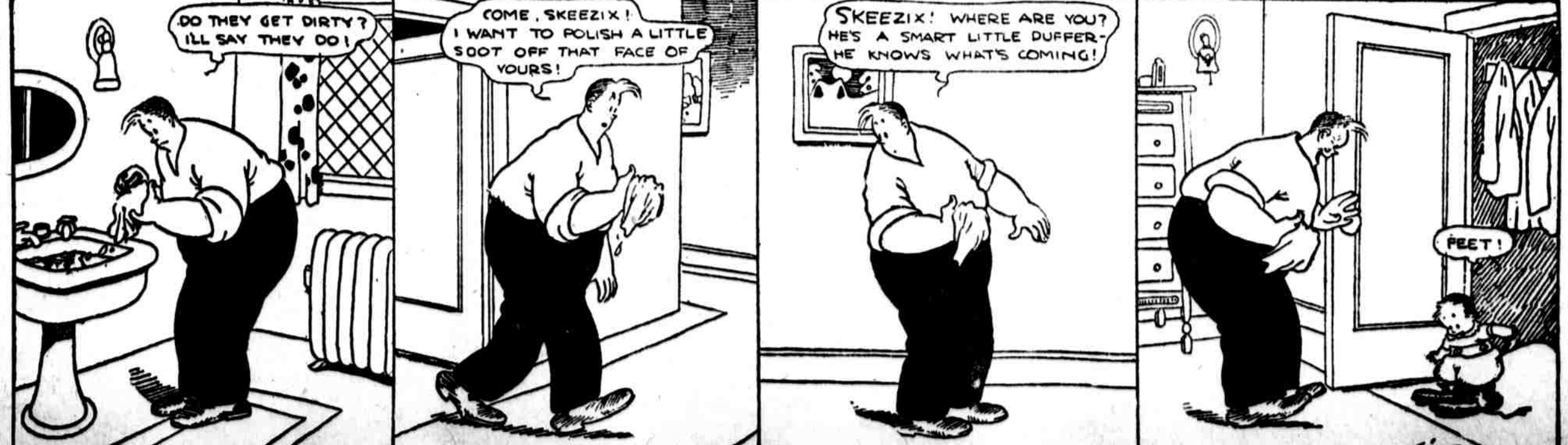
PETEY—A Serious Problem

By C. A. VOIGHT



GASOLINE ALLEY—Starting in to Fill 'Em

By KING



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CONTINUED TOMORROW