

Reading for Women and all the Family

Bringing Up Father

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By McManus

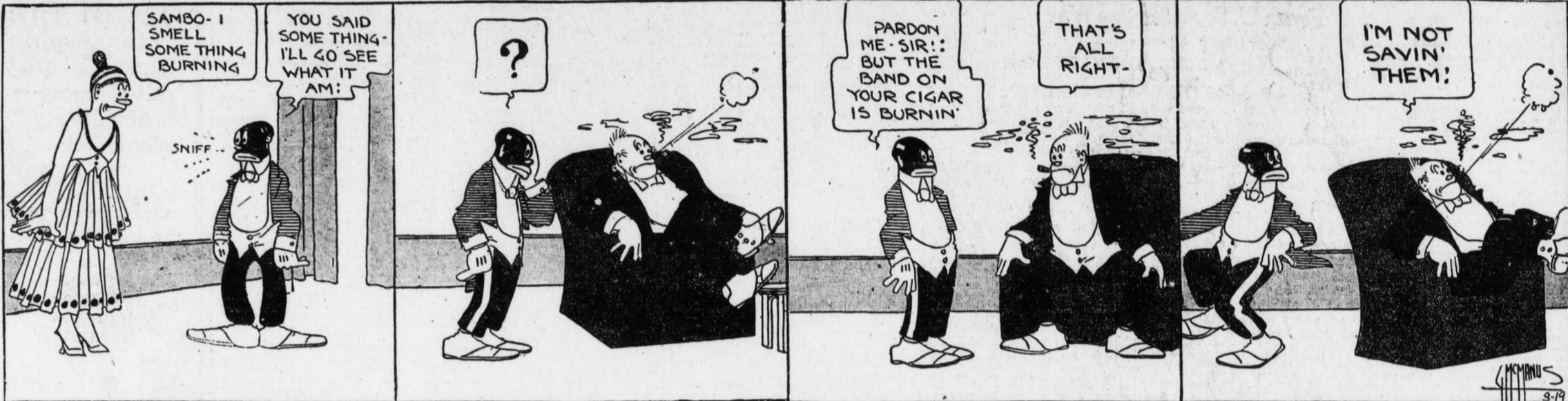
BIG TIMBER

By BERTRAND W. SINCLAIR

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Continued

The night frosts had crept through the single board walls of Stella's room and made its temperature akin to outdoors when the alarm awakened her at 6 in the morning. She shivered as she dressed. Katy John was helpfully devoid of any responsibility for seldom did Katy rise first to light the kitchen fire. Yet Stella resented each day's bleak beginning that she did the enforced necessity of the situation. The fact that she was enduring these things practically after compulsion was what galled. A cutting wind struck her lily as she crossed the few steps of open between cabin and kitchen. Above a cloud floated, no harbinger of falling rain. The cold stars twinkled over snow blurred forest, struck tiny beams from stumps that were now white capped pillars. A night swell from the outside waters beat its melancholy dirge on the frozen beach. And, as she always did at that hushed hour before dawn, she experienced a physical shrinking from those grim solitudes in which there was nothing warm and human



and kindly, nothing but vastness of space upon which silence lay like a smothering blanket, in which she, the human atom, was utterly negligible, a protesting mote in the inexorable wilderness. A light burned in the kitchen. She thanked her stars that this bitter cold morning she would not have to build a fire with freezing fingers while her teeth chattered, and she hurried into the warmth heralded by a spark belching stovepipe. But the Swish girl had not risen to the occasion. Instead Jack Fyfe sat with

his feet on the oven door, a cigar in one corner of his mouth. The kettle steamed. Her porridge pot bubbled ready for the meal. "Good morning," he greeted. "Mind my pre-empting your job?" "Not at all," she answered. "You can have it for keeps if you want." "Aren't you getting pretty sick of this sort of work, these more or less uncomfortable surroundings and the sort of people you have to come in contact with?" he asked pointedly. "I am," she returned as blunty, "but I think that's rather an impertinent question, Mr. Fyfe."

"You hate it," he said positively. "I know you do. I've seen your feeling many a time. I don't blame you. It's a rotten business with a girl of your tastes and bringing up. And I'm afraid you'll find it worse if this snow stays long. I know what a logging camp is when work stops and whisky creeps in and the boss lets go his hold."

"That may be true," she returned gloomily, "but I don't see why you should enumerate these disagreeable things for my benefit." "I'm going to show you a way out," he said softly. "I've been thinking it over for quite awhile. I want you to marry me."

Stella gasped. "Listen," he said peremptorily, leaning closer to her and lowering his voice. "I have an idea that you're going to say you don't love me. Lord, I know that. But you hate this. It grates against every inclination of yours like a file on steel. I wouldn't jar on you like that; wouldn't permit you to live in surroundings that would. That's the material side of it. Nobody can live on day dreams. I like you, Stella Benton, a whole lot more than I'd care to say right out loud. You and I together could make a home we'd be proud of. I want you, and you want to get away from this. It's natural. Marry me and play the game fair and I don't think you'll be sorry. I'm putting it as baldly as I can. You stand to win everything with nothing to lose but your domestic chains. The gleam of a smile lit up his features for a second. "Won't you take a chance?"

"No," she declared impulsively. "I won't be a party to any such cold blooded transaction." "You don't seem to understand me," he said soberly. "I don't want to hand out any sentiment, but it makes me sore to see you wasting

yourself on this sort of thing. If you must do it, why don't you do it for somebody who'll make it worth while? Because we don't marry with our heads in the fog is no reason we shouldn't get on fine. What are you going to do—stick here at this till you go crazy? You won't get away. You don't realize what a one idea, determined person this brother of yours is. He has just one object in life, and he'll use everything and everybody in sight to attain that object. He means to succeed, and he will. You're purely incidental. But he has that perverted, middle class family pride that will make him prevent you from getting out and trying your own wings. Nature never intended a woman like you to be a celibate, any more than I was so intended. And sooner or late you'll marry somebody if only to hop out of the fire into the frying pan."



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All's Well That Ends Well

He was determined to do his bit, and so he enlisted. Such a little, stocky, courageous fellow as he was, and he did cobbling for a living. It wasn't the easiest trade in the world, but he had built up his own business, and the same people came week after week with shoes to be repaired. He was proud of the fact that he worked extraordinarily well, too. "Put very thin soles on these, please," or "Give me a pair of shoes without putting on new soles?" were everyday occurrences with him. He liked to feel that what he made after week with shoes to be repaired. He was proud of the fact that he worked extraordinarily well, too. "Put very thin soles on these, please," or "Give me a pair of shoes without putting on new soles?" were everyday occurrences with him. He liked to feel that what he made after week with shoes to be repaired. He was proud of the fact that he worked extraordinarily well, too. "Put very thin soles on these, please," or "Give me a pair of shoes without putting on new soles?" were everyday occurrences with him.

at stake, but weighed in proportion with the fact of his going to war, the business was found wanting. He sold it to a rival, who had long coveted the location. Tony was shrewd and received a good price for his store. He deposited the sum with the rest of his earnings in the savings bank, and began to look about for a job. There was just one kind of a job that he wanted, that he would accept, and that was a job as baker. His friends thought him crazy. "I'm only too glad to be able to stay at home," said one. "Giving up your business," said another, "a business that it took you six years to build up."

Even if he had to go as a baker, the fact reminded that he was going. And the men higher up who heard the story smiled at the enthusiasm that the little Italian evinced. It was an apprentice baker. As luck would have it, Tony was taken. At last he was accepted; at last he was going with the others, with the colors.



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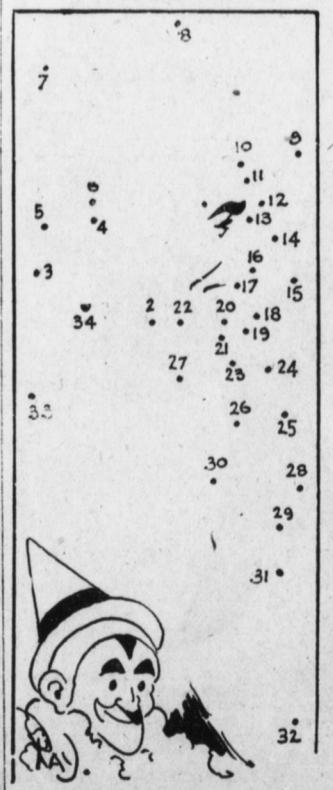
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