

Stella Dallas

By OLIVE HIGGINS PROUTY (Continued From Saturday.) Alfred Munn invited her to every

dance there was at the River club that spring. People began to envy. Women, she told Effie, began to talk. She knew of at least a dozen who would give their eye-teeth if Alfred Munn would ask them to dance with him. He really was as good as a

professional. He had asked her to be his partner in one of the new fancy dances last Saturday night. They had been the only two on the floor. Everybody else had sat around and stared, and applauded afterwards. Oh, she was really managing to make

quite a splash in Milhampton with Alfred Munn. At the Luncheon club she belonged to. The girls had discussed little else last Friday. Rosamond was simply green with jealousy. Stella could tell she was, because she acted so cool and offish. Lots of people were "jolly" her about him. She got it from all sides. Even that nice old tabby-cut, Mrs. Palmer had heard the talk. She had stopped her on the street one day and given her a little motherly advice. Too bad nobody ever invited

Ed to dinner, or to anything small or private. He would be so much more useful. She couldn't see why they didn't. But never mind, he was convenient just as he was, and oh, awfully kind! She was getting a little tired of him, she must confess.

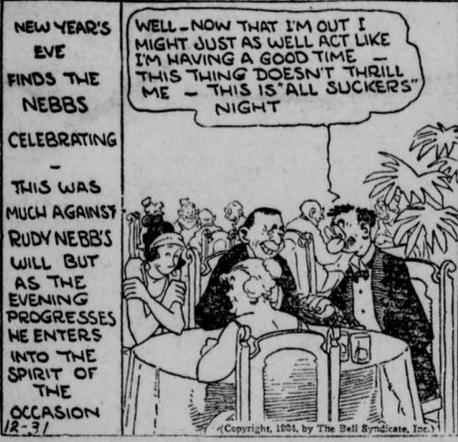
But then, she always did, when "the new" wore off, and "they got a little bluish" with it. "Why, of course," Stella exclaimed to that. "I want him to hear about it. I don't intend to give Stephen the satisfaction of thinking I had to go into seclusion the minute he cleared out. He had an idea I couldn't get along in this town without his telling me how to do it. He meant to use his importance to my position here as a kind of gun to point at me and make me do just as he wants, when we get together again. Good gracious, having a good time, being successful all her own way, is the only gun I've got to point at him, my dear."

It's possible to receive a bullet wound, even a fatal bullet wound, and be unaware of it, until you put your hand to the place where it tingles a little. You're surprised when your fingers come into contact with something warm and wet. You're shocked to see a red spot on your neck, and find them red! Laurel was the messenger who brought the first sign of red to Stella's horrified attention. Stella sent out a dozen invitations to a party for Laurel in June. All Laurel's schoolmates were having parties this year. Stella intended that Laurel's party should surpass them all. There would be a tall, tall donkey, and a peanut hunt, and a cobweb contest, and a Jack Horner pie, and creamed chicken, and ice cream and paper cups, and Laurel made the invitations on a Friday night. All day Saturday and Sunday she was full of the exhilarating consciousness that others were sharing the wonderful secret. When she started to school on Monday there was a sparkle beneath the calm gray surface of her eyes that made them look almost black—like the pools of meadow brooks in mid-morning sunshine. When Laurel came home at noon her eyes seemed to have faded like the pools when the sun is hidden behind clouds. Instead of the blackness and there was a grave, wondering, bewildered look in them.

THE NEBBS---

THE BIG NIGHT

Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess



Barney Google and Spark Plug

Barney's Tender Heart Is Deeply Touched

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck



BRINGING UP FATHER---

Registered U. S. Patent Office SEE JIGGS AND MAGGIE IN FULL PAGE OF COLORS IN THE SUNDAY BEE

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by McManus



HARRY ON THE JOB---

BUSINESS WITHOUT SENTIMENT

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban



The 1923 Retreat

By Briggs ABIE THE AGENT---

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield



stories are all based on. I'm not worried about whose article is for anything but just indecency has got to go. I like a little dinner and theater party just for fun's sake. Honestly, Effie, sometimes I think I'm the only one who's got a clean mind in this town." Stella took rooms for the season at a fashionable hotel on the coast of Maine that summer. She had never spent a summer at a hotel. It might prove diverting. She certainly needed something diverting, she thought. But whatever it proved, the arrow of direction pointed her out of Milhampton for a while. "I'll give the mud slingers in this town a rest for a month or two," she said to Effie. "By the end of the summer their mud will have all dried up. Of course, it would be rather nice if I could fall into some harmless, but showy little affair this summer, with some attractive gentleman or other, that would give the fashionable hotel. That would prove there wasn't anything serious in this Alfred Munn business. It would be rather nice, too, if some of the boys in town could hear that I was having a wonderful time this summer—being taken right into all sorts of inner circles, and possibilities in this summer hotel scheme of mine, Effie, my dear." Stella equipped Laurel with a dozen new frocks, replenished her own wardrobe, and, stoutly, set forth to new fields and untried country, in search of fresh laurels with which to cover up the dried and dead ones. That was the beginning of her summer hotel era. In the fall not even Effie was told, in detail, of the disheartening experiences of the first experiment. "You can drill forever for oil in some places, but unless oil is there, it won't do any good," Stella mused. "Next summer, I'll try the Cape—or the mountains possibly." Stella didn't go back to the detached house she returned from Maine. Instead, she took two rooms, and a bath in an apartment hotel that had lately been built in a residential section of Milhampton. The apartment hotel offered her more companionship than the detached house. There would at least be the necessity of getting out of the kitchen when you went down to meals. Besides, she could have people to dinner more safely. The invaluable Hedwig, whom Stephen had engaged six years ago, and taught and trained, had left to be married. Stella was afraid to trust a new servant with all the hard-and-fast rules. In an apartment hotel, all you had to do, if anything went wrong, was to shrug and say, "Oh, isn't the service in this place dreadful?" Moreover, there was social advantage. The King Arthur (that was the name of the new apartment hotel) was to be patronized by what Stella called "the right people." She needed all the advantages that she could get from close proximity to the right people. Alfred Munn had left Milhampton by the time Stella and Laurel returned from Maine. He had gone into another business in another city. Somebody else had taken over the horses. In time people would forget about Ed. Bullet wounds heal. Scars can be covered up, of course. It was a handicap not to have a husband if he was still in the land of the living; at least it was a handicap in Milhampton, Massachusetts. In California single married women were as plentiful as sunshine, and as welcome, Stella had heard—Oh, she did wish it had been in some place in California that she and Stephen had happened to put down their roots. But it couldn't be helped. It was only common sense, of course, to keep on growing in the same place, where they'd started. Stella appreciated her own limitations to the extent of realizing that it would be difficult, even in California, to win her way up alone to anything like the position that she had attained with Stephen in Milhampton. (Continued in The Morning Bee.)

CHAPTER X. It was several weeks before Stella knew how serious her bullet wound was. She was calm by that time. She could talk over its details with Effie McDevitt with perfect composure and with a touch of brusque humor, too. "Why," she said, "Ed bores me. He never gave me a thrill in his life. Oh, Milhampton makes me sick! Narrow-minded, evil-minded, nasty, faded, I think I'll tell you just how it was. I was down there in Boston, for two days, shopping, getting favors and things for Lillie's party. Naturally, when Ed suggested that he run down and take me to the theater in the evening, I was pleased to pieces. 'Wouldn't you be? I love the theater in Boston.' We didn't stay at the same hotel, though for the life of me I don't see why we shouldn't. There were a hundred or so other men staying there. Glory, how I hate all that winking and shoulder-shrugging stuff about hotels and bedrooms! When Ed suggested, after the theater, that he drop around and have breakfast with me, why, I said, 'Sure, Mike,' quick as a wink. It never entered my head but what that was all right. I didn't care if somebody from Milhampton did see me. Married woman like me! Breakfast! Right in a public dining room! What's there so horrible about that, I'd like to know! I didn't want anything of Ed but a little fun, and a little advertising. When Stephen wrote to me in that iceberg way of his and asked if I would like my freedom, so as to be able to marry Alfred Munn, I could have screamed! Marry Ed? Why, I'd commit suicide first. I don't want to marry Ed! I haven't anything but understanding of the human animal! A woman can have other reasons for liking a little attention than just the one the shady

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