

### BURGESS BEDTIME STORIES

By THORNTON W. BURGESS  
Jenny Wren Finds Danny and Nanny Meadow Mouse told, the story of how they had spent the winter in the

great manbird far down in the Sunny south. Peter said so. He said so over and over again. He could believe a great deal, but this was too much.

But Peter continued to shake his head. "Danny," said he, "I think you have been dreaming."

fore me, didn't you? How does seem to be back home?"

### THE NEBBS

KID GREGORY.

Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess



### Barney Google and Spark Plug

WHAT'S A CHINESE WALL TO BARNEY?

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



### JERRY ON THE JOB

ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban



### It Happens in the Best Regulated Hotels

By Briggs ABIE THE AGENT

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield



### CORDELIA THE MAGNIFICENT

By LEROY SCOTT. (Copyright, 1924.)

(Continued From Yesterday.)  
"My dear, if I've got to listen to much more, I believe I'll first close the window. It's getting chilly, and there's a draft, and the draft must be directly upon Esther's back."  
The window came down with a soft thud, and Cordelia heard no more.  
She recognized that her own immediate problem was to get back to the house unobserved. But the trial within might finish any moment, and start for the house. The safe course for her, if she would avoid all danger of discovery, was to remain where she was until the three had departed. So she stood in the unfolding arms of the spring bush, patiently waiting, fearing to breathe fully, waiting until the way was clear.

CHAPTER VIII.  
She stood a motionless dried among the branches for half an hour, until each stiffened leg had changed into a column of prickling anguish. But as last she heard the three leave the house, one after another. She waited on despite the torture of limbs that had gone to sleep, until finally she judged that her path was safe. She pulled the branches and attempted to step outward, only to have the paralyzed legs collapse and send her toppling to the soft earth.

For several moments she lay there, a helpless agonized cripple. That was an absurd anti-climax to such an adventure—her legs asleep—but the discomfort of that condition was a mild sensation compared to the dizzy she felt when, after yawning uningly across the lawn, she found that all the doors of the darkened house were locked. She had never thought of this contingency, so her first impulse was to rattle the door knob, and Mitchell after his return, had seen to his butler's duty of securing the house for the night. She was locked out! What should she do?  
Her legs still unsteady beneath her, she leaned against the door jamb, considering. She thought of ringing the bell; but, no, no, no, wouldn't that in some way lead the three to suspect that she had been eavesdropping upon them. She thought of sleeping in one of the guest-rooms out in the playhouse and returning to her own room when the servants opened the house in the morning; but this would not do either, for such a procedure might rouse just as much suspicion as ringing the bell. She was even thinking of getting out her car and driving into the city when— All the while that she had stood there thinking, she had been mechanically fumbling at the knob of the main door, unconsciously rattling it; and now, suddenly, the overhead porch light went on, and this body of hers had been so frantically thinking how to conceal was now no more a secret than a statue stalked against the sun. There was no surprise or other emotion in his face; it was that butler's face in which she had as yet seen no alteration.

"Pardon me for locking you out, Miss Marlowe," he said in his impersonal servant's voice—as unlike that cool, assured voice which had been coming to her through the open window. "I thought every one was in."  
She was afraid she had been caught. Also she felt very absurd. She had to attempt some explanation, since she had publicly announced two hours before that she was going to bed; but the only words she found in her mouth were those same words that had stumbled awkwardly forth that first time she had slipped from her room in the middle of the night and had encountered him.  
"I couldn't sleep, so I went out for a walk in the air."  
Her words sounded most uncon-

venient to her. He seemed to accept them.  
"There's nothing better for sleeplessness," Miss Marlowe, he said. "She stepped inside on her still uncertain legs. He closed the door.  
"It's rather late, and perhaps you are hungry. Shall I get you a little something?"  
"No, thank you, Mitchell. Good night."  
"Good night, Miss Marlowe." She started for the stairway. And then her tingling, unsteady legs buckled under her again, and the next moment she was sitting on the floor. Instantly he was on his knees beside her.  
"You're hurt—you're sick!" he cried.  
For the first time, before her, his butler's grave impersonality had left him. Face and voice were alive with quick concern. Even though Cordelia had just been listening to him when he had certainly talked like a butler, she was nevertheless startled by this swift transformation—by this glimpse of some one else.  
She tried to cover the absurdity of her posture on the floor with a little laugh; and in explanation she told a half truth.  
"I'm not sick or hurt. I got tired walking and sat down on the ground. My legs went to sleep that's all."  
She tried to struggle to her feet. That other person that Mitchell had been depicted as swiftly as he had come, and Mitchell was once more the butler.  
"Let me help you, Miss Marlowe," he said, slipping his hands beneath her arms.  
"Oh, I can make it all right." "You really need assistance," and he lifted her over his feet. "And I'd better help you to your room."  
She protested; but with his servant's formality he insisted. And so they went up the stairway, she clinging to the banister with one hand, and two hands beneath her shoulders with one arm across her back. There was no more attempt at familiarity in those hands than if they had been the hands of a traffic policeman helping a woman across a slippery street, or than if she had been a faltering lady of 80. But Cordelia was for some reason acutely conscious of the hands, not helping her too much, but alert for her to topple and strong as steel if she should need such support.

A Snave Good Night.  
"Thank you very much, Mitchell," she said at the door. "Good night."  
"Good night, Miss Marlowe." Presently she managed to get into bed, and she lay there excitedly thinking, trying to arrange in order the fragments she had discovered that night, and from the fragments trying to reconstruct the whole. This last she was unable to do, but four facts stood out, clear, indisputable.  
First, there was a real mystery here at Rolling Meadows.  
Second, that adopted French war orphan, Francois, was somehow involved in the mystery—perhaps was his heart.  
Third, Mitchell was the real master at Rolling Meadows. He had some secret hold over both Gladys and Esther, and through that secret he was able to demand money and get it. He was not merely the perfect butler; he was a man of education, he had talked like a man of the world. He had seemed to be what is usually termed a gentleman; perhaps fairly decent, perhaps very evil; but undeniably a gentleman. And with all this, he was undeniably a trained butler.  
Fourth, Gladys had implied that she had known Mitchell for only a year. From the overheard conversation it was clear she and Esther had known Mitchell for five years, and known him well; perhaps intimately—perhaps very intimately. That is they had known Mitchell from about the time they had gone to France.  
So much for the facts. The rest was conjecture. And what a world of conjecture Cordelia's mind traversed in swift excitement. Each question was in itself an unexplored continent.

Who was Mitchell really? What sort of a man was the real Mitchell? A semi-sound or a villain competent to conceive and manage a great scheme, and who was now managing it?  
What was the character of Mitchell's secret hold upon Gladys and Esther?  
Who was Francois—really?  
Could Mitchell be the father of the boy, as his light remarks in the playhouse might suggest? If so, that relationship might explain the boy's fondness for Mitchell. But, against this presumption, there were Gladys and Esther both claiming Francois as their adopted son.  
Could the explanation be that Mitchell had been secretly married, in France, to one of the two and that Francois was the son of that marriage? No—such a conjecture was plainly preposterous.

Gladys wanted to marry Jerry Plimpton, and the clever Mitchell must know of this matrimonial ambition. And as for Esther, the quiet, poised Esther did not behave in the least as if she had married Mitchell; and if there had been a marriage and there seemed no sane reason why such a person as Esther should hide both the marriage and her maternity.  
At 10:30 she was at the wheel of her roadster bound for the city. As explanation for the trip she had mentioned casually to Gladys that she had an appointment in town with her mother; that morning, and had protected herself by actually making an engagement by telephone to meet her mother at their Park avenue apartment at 12.  
At 10:30, throbbing with excitement over her achievement and also with suspense as to how Mr. Franklin would take her report, Cordelia was ushered into Franklin's office. The quality of professional reserve which had struck her on her first meeting as Mr. Franklin's outstanding characteristic vanished at sight of her.  
(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)