

CORDELIA THE MAGNIFICENT

By LEROY SCOTT. (Copyright, 1924.)

(Continued from Yesterday.)
"Isn't her reason plain enough? He was—was attentive to me. She wanted him for herself. She thought that driving him away from me would help her chances. And it most cer-

tainly will! It will send him straight into her arms."
"I assure you again that Miss Marlowe is not the person in question," he said soothingly. "And besides, the identity of my client does not affect in any way the real subject of this conference."
"My client requires, for his safety's sake, that his identity shall remain

unknown, that he shall in no wise personally appear in the matter. He has required, in case we finally come to terms, that all business be transacted through me and in my name."
"Very clever of Cordelia, I'm sure!" "I see. What sort of documents will be required?"
"Two will be sufficient. The first will be a letter from you to me, in

your handwriting. In this you will say that you have heard of my ability as a lawyer; you will say that your affairs are in a very tangled shape; you will say that, prompted by your belief in me, you would like me to undertake the handling of these affairs, and you will ask for an appointment to talk over this proposal. The second document will be a con-

tract, dated two days later than your letter, for my services for a period of years at a specified annual retainer, payable quarterly in advance."
"I suppose I'll have to agree to the documents. What will I have to pay?"
"My client has figured that you and a half, less of course your taxes. He will charge much less—for his

protection than the government charges for its protection. Sixty thousand a year for the retaining fee is the figure he fixed, which is about 4 per cent of your gross income—reasonable, he thought."
"Sixty thousand! It's monstrous!"
But Gladys nevertheless agreed and signed the papers, which were witnessed by the benign Kednor.

When Gladys had gone, he stood with check in hand, exulting. "This was the way to swing big things! There were a lot of clever lawyers in New York who were on the lookout for choice bits of business such as this; but not one of them, not the cleverest of the lot, could have turned this trick as cleverly as he! And he was safe—covered, underwritten, guaranteed, at every point!"
"Chuckling, he mailed the promised \$2,500 check to Cordelia."

CHAPTER XVI.

Mitchell was careful not to break through his butler demeanor to Cordelia again. Mr. Franklin assured her that Gladys had placed her personal affairs in his hands. She opened Franklin's letter with the \$2,500 check and felt that she had done well.

The following day Cordelia was over at Rolling Meadows; she congratulated Gladys upon entrusting her affairs to so able a man as Mr. Franklin.

"That must mean, Gladys," she ended, "that there'll soon be an end to Mitchell's bleeding you."
Gladys had been glaring since Cordelia's first word upon the subject. She now exploded.
"It means that I am being bled 10 times worse than ever!"
"Worse than ever? How?"
Cordelia's appearance of astonishment was altogether too much for Gladys. "How? You know how, damn you! You hypocrite! You crook! That's just what you are, a crook!"
Cordelia stiffened. A dangerous gleam flashed from her eyes.

"Gladys, you'll please explain exactly what you mean!"
But Gladys did not explain. Courage and anger left her with how much further Cordelia might go, if provoked.

Cordelia went away puzzled. Also incensed against Mitchell. A few days later Cordelia saw Mitchell when she had motored over with Jerry to Rolling Meadows to call on Francis. He was no longer a butler, but appeared a man of affairs. She remarked on this.

"Don't think you can deceive me by this story of having come into money! I know whose money it is you came into, and how you came into it by blackmail."
"Pardon me," he said, "if I seem to change the subject of conversation. My Franklin is my lawyer. How well do you know him—how far do you think you can trust him?"
"I'm my lawyer—that should be answer enough," she replied haughtily. "Then Gladys is lying. No one is extorting further money from me."
Against her will, Cordelia was convinced that Mitchell was speaking the truth.

"While we are on the subject of my blackmailing of Gladys, I want to give you the full truth about that matter."
"Including the mystery? First you'll find it a poor subject. First as to the blackmailing of Gladys, I plead guilty. I've made Gladys pay me \$2,000 a month all the time I was with her. I did it for her, you know. I had \$25,000 put away for his care. I did it because his father was the best friend I ever had. And as to why I became a butler—that's simple. I did it because I was broke."
Cordelia smiled at the imperturbable Mitchell.

"And these last few weeks there has been still another motive for playing the man of mystery, and exaggerating the part a bit. Really the biggest motive of all."
"What was that?"
"To excite your interest in me."
"What?"
"From the day I first saw you I've been interested in you. A cat may look at a king, you know, and a butler may look at a—I haven't the right tag to finish that sentence with. But I couldn't expect you to look at a butler. Half the things I've done since you came to Rolling Meadows, I did with the great purpose of puzzling you, making you curious. Am I honest?"
He flashed his bold, dancing, whimsical smile at her.

"If you feel I have not yet proposed to you in the proper set terms, please consider I have now formally done so."
"I'm going to the house," she exclaimed.

"Yes," he agreed pleasantly, "perhaps we had better be strolling back to Jerry."
Smiling with whimsical delight, he followed her out of the garden.

Meanwhile Mr. Plimpton grew jealous of Jerry Plimpton. He offered himself to her. She was surprised and troubled, and refused as well as she could.

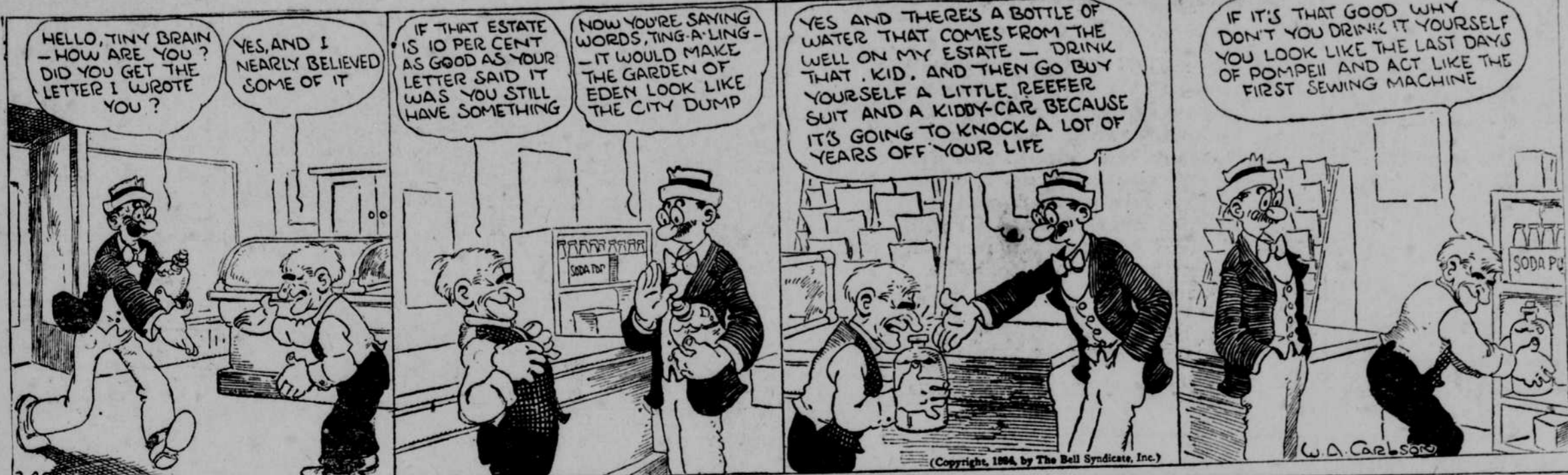
She was deeply moved; even thrilled. She would never accept him, of course, but here was a proposal that was an honor!
On the Sunday afternoon following

his proposal to Cordelia, Mr. Franklin motored out to Rolling Meadows. Mitchell was there, but down at the beach with Francis and another Stevens. So Franklin very easily managed a confidential session with Gladys.

"Miss Norworth," said Franklin, "I am going to speak openly; I am going to put all my cards face up upon the table. A situation has developed in which we have certain interests in common. I suggest that we join forces to help each other, and thereby help ourselves."
He had roused her to excited eagerness. "Yes, of course, if we can really help each other. What are the interests we have in common?"
"Two individuals. Mr. Plimpton and Miss Marlowe."
Instantly, her green eyes were glittering. "You should know how much interest I have in Cordelia Marlowe!"
"I suggested that we be frank, Miss Norworth. I am in love with Miss Marlowe, and I have very real hope that she will some day marry me."
"If Mr. Plimpton were eliminated, I could more easily attain my desire. If Miss Marlowe were eliminated, I am certain Mr. Plimpton would swing straight to you. If I marry Miss Marlowe, your problem is solved. It is solved if you marry Mr. Plimpton."
"I'll join you in anything to break it off! Tell Jerry Plimpton where and how she's getting that money, and I'll get it for you. And blackmail! Wouldn't he drop her quick when he learned that? And, say—! In the excitement of a fresh idea she gripped his hand. "You've got to work together, back each other up. Right here's where we fit in together. You know all about her getting that money from me, don't you? Why, you and I can go before those two and you can come right out and prove everything I say and make her admit my score. It's a new triumph for Cordelia. Thousands paid her tribute and to crown all Jerry proposed. They were to be married later in the fall. Cordelia wrote Mr. Franklin, and settled down to receive presents and congratulations."
"To Be Continued Tomorrow."

Burgess Bedtime Stories
By THORNTON W. BURGESS.
The Patience of Farmer Brown's Boy.
Patience is a virtue few cultivate as they should do. —Farmer Brown's Boy.
It was not very long ago that Peter Brown had disappeared. Now Peter Habbit saw him return. "Now I wonder," thought Peter, "what is bringing him back here again?" Peter didn't have to wait long to find out. Farmer Brown's Boy brought with him a bag, and from that bag he took water among the dead and broken down rushes and wild rice around the mouth of the Laughing Brook. He scattered a little on the shore.
Then for a while Farmer Brown's Boy was very busy. At first Peter couldn't understand what he was doing. He cut up a lot of bushes and stuck them upright in the sand just a little way back from the edge of the water. When he had fixed enough of these to suit him he brought an old log and put it behind them. Then he sat down on the old log and kept what it meant. Peter understood them. He had made a blind place, and he was going to wait there for Mr. and Mrs. Quack to come in. A hunter would have called that hiding place a blind.
But Mr. and Mrs. Quack were suspicious, very suspicious. You see they had suffered so much from men that the very sight of one of those two-legged creatures filled them with fear. Very sharp are the eyes of Mr. and Mrs. Quack. From the middle of the Big river they had seen Farmer Brown's Boy return. They had seen him build that blind, but, of course, they hadn't understood what it was. Then Farmer Brown's Boy disappeared.

THE NEBBS



HAVE A DRINK.

Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess

Barney Google and Spark Plug

Barney Evidently Has Decided on a Stopover.

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck

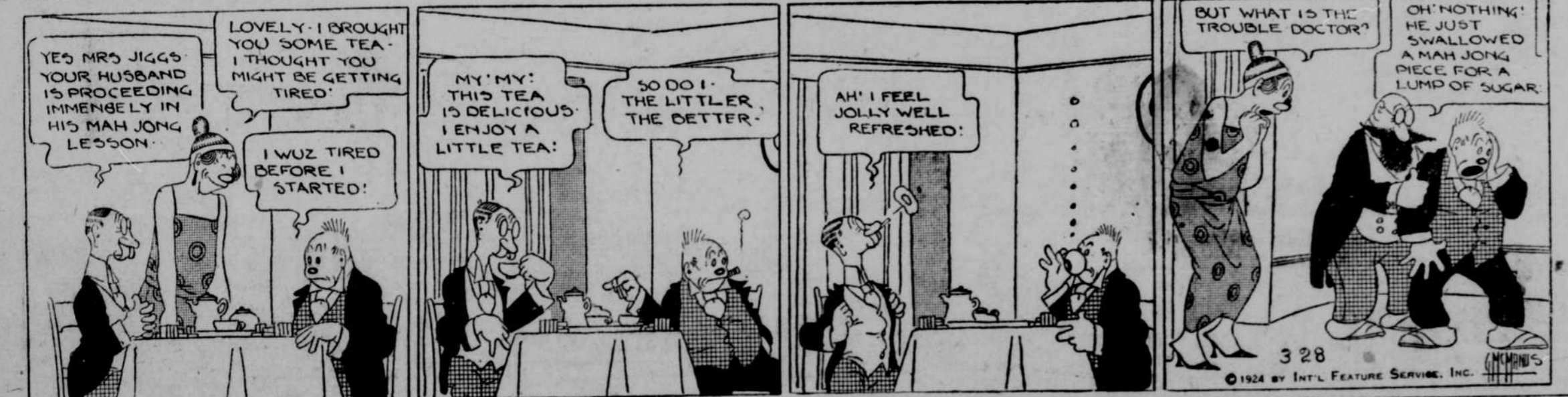


BRINGING UP FATHER

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

INFORMATION FREELY GIVEN

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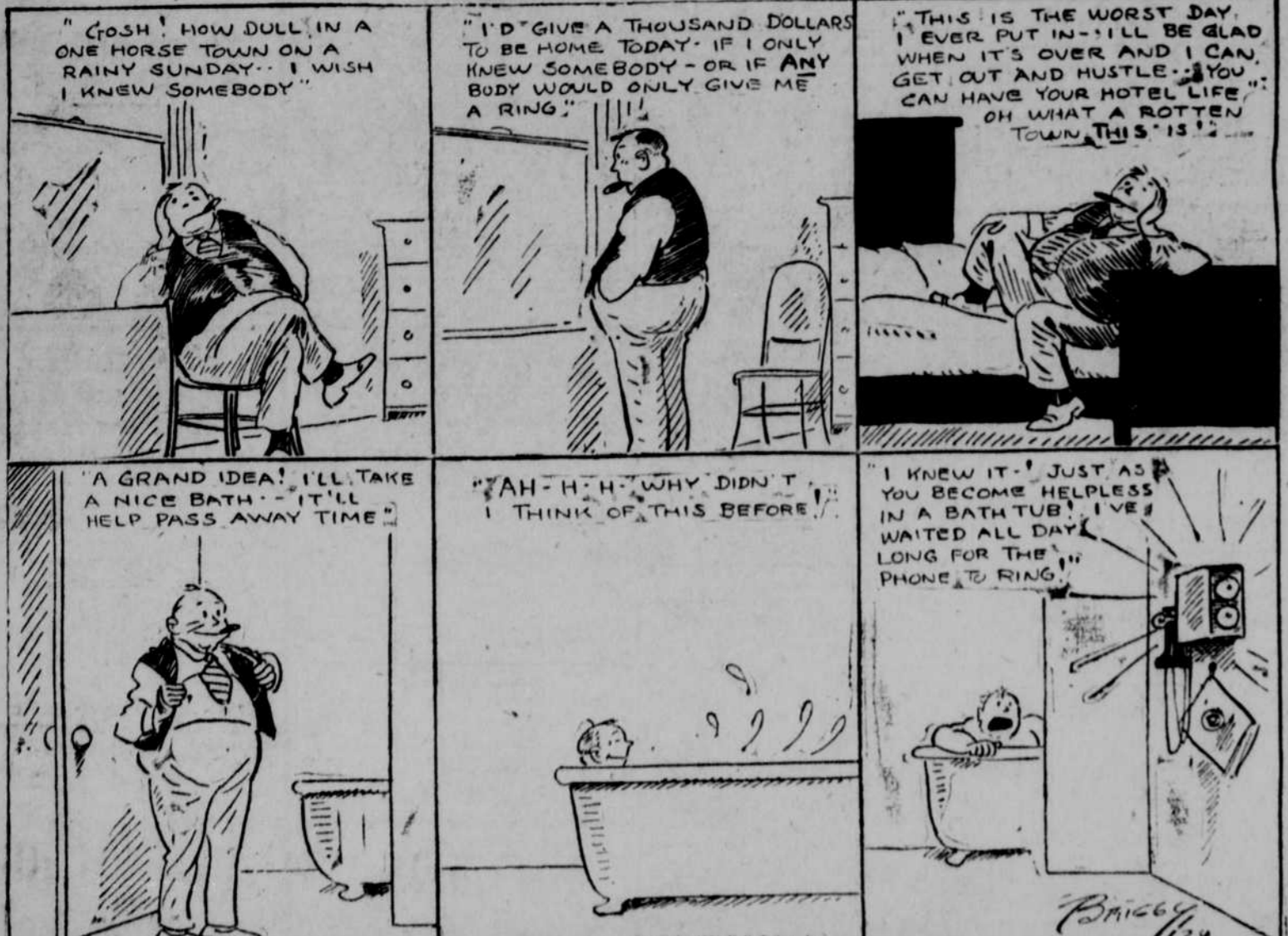


Oh, Man!

By Briggs

ABIE THE AGENT

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield



George Crook Corps Meet.
The George Crook Women's Relief corps will hold a meeting Friday, March 28, in Memorial hall, court house.