

The FLAMING JEWEL

by ROBERT W. CHAMBERS

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Alone in her step-father's camp in the Ondravicks, STATE TROOPER STORMONT on guard against the beautiful Eve Strayer, the nymph of the forests and the sole influence for good of the Flaming Jewel, came the call of the law. Under Eve's pillow was the gem of priceless worth, the Flaming Jewel, the jewel of the world.

COUNTESS OF ESTHONIA by the international thief, Quintana, was stolen in turn from Quintana by Mike Clinch.

And now, outside in the forest, men came with the intent to steal the jewel again. Under Eve's pillow was the gem of priceless worth, the Flaming Jewel, the jewel of the world.

Quintana had been captured and was bound.

"I can't stand it," she sobbed. "I'm too late!"

"I saw the money packet under my pillow and he snatched it and ran. Somehow I found your rifle and fired. I fired twice."

Her only bullet had torn his campaign hat from his head. But he did not tell her.

"Let me see your neck," he said, bending closer.

She bared her throat, making a soft, vague complaint like a hurt bird—lay there whimpering under her breath while he bathed the blood away with lint, sterilized the two cuts from his emergency packet, and bound them.

He was still bending low over her when her blue eyes unclosed on his.

"That is the second time I've tried to kill you," she whispered. "I thought it was Leverett *** I'd have died if I had killed you."

There was a silence.

"Lie very still," he said huskily. "I'll be back in a moment to rebandage your feet and make you comfortable for the night."

"I can't sleep," she repeated desolately. "Dad trusted his money to me and I've let Leverett rob me. How can I sleep?"

"I'll bring you something to make you sleep."

"I can't."

"I promise you will sleep. Lie still."

He rose, went away downstairs and out to the barn, where his campaign hat lay in the weeds, drilled through by a bullet.

There was something else lying there in the weeds—a flat, muddy, shoeless shape sprawling grotesquely in the foggy starlight.

"The packet!" he panted, "—quick, yeh dirty little cat, 'll break yeh head off yeh damn neck!"

She bit at the hand that he held crushed against her mouth. He lifted her bodily, flung her on to the bed, and, twisting sheet and quilt around her, swathed her to her throat.

Still controlling her violently distorted lips with his left hand and holding her so, one knee upon her, he reached back, unsheathed his hunting knife and pricked her throat till the blood spouted.

"Now, got ram yeh!" he whispered fiercely, "where's Mike's packet? Yell, and I'll hog-stick yeh for fair! Where is it, you dum thing?"

He took his left hand from her mouth. The distorted, scarlet lips writhed back, displaying her white teeth clenched.

"Where's Mike's bundle?" he repeated, hoarse with rage and fear.

"You rat!" she gasped.

At that he closed her mouth again, and again he pricked her with his knife cruelly. The blood welled up on the sheets.

"Now, by God!" he said in a ghastly voice, "answer or I'll hog-stick yeh next time! Where is it? Where's where?"

She only showed her teeth in answer. Her eyes flamed.

"Where! Quick! Got ding yeh, I'll shove this knife in behind your ear if you don't tell! Go on. Where is it? It's in this dump somers. I know it is—don't lie! You want that I should stick you good? That what you want—you dirty little dump-slut! Yell then, got ram yeh—I'll fix yeh like Quintana was almin' at—"

He slit the sheet downward from her imprisoned knees, seized one wounded foot and tried to slash the knife.

"I'll cut a couple toes off'n yeh," he snarled. "—I'll hamstring yeh fur keeps!"—struggling to mutilate her while she flung her helpless and entangled body from side to side and bit at the hand that was almost suffocating her.

He lifted the sheet downward from her imprisoned knees, seized one wounded foot and tried to slash the knife.

"As he seized it she screamed for the first time: "Jack! Jack Stormont!" and fairly hauled her helpless little body at Leverett, striking him full in the face with her head.

Half stunned, still clutching the knife, he tried to stab her in the stomach; but the armor of bedclothes turned the knife, although his violence dashed all breath out of her.

Sick with the agony of it, speechless, she still made the effort; and as he stumbled to his feet and turned to escape, she struggled upright, choking, blood running from the knife prick in her neck.

With the remnant of her strength and still writhing and gasping for breath, she tore herself from the sheets and blankets, reeled across the room to where Stormont's rifle stood, turreted in a cartridge, dragged herself to the window.

Dimly she saw a running figure in the night mist, flung the rifle across the window sill and fired. Then she fired again—or thought she did. There were two shots.

"Eve!" came Stormont's sharp cry, "what the devil are you trying to do to me?"

His cry terrified her; the rifle clattered to the floor.

The next instant he came running up the stairs, bare-headed, heavy pistol swinging, and halted, horrified at the sight of her.

"Eve! My God!" he whispered, taking her blood-wet body into his arms. "Go after Leverett!" she gasped. "He's robbed daddy. He's running away—out there—somewhere—"

"Where did he hurt you, Eve—my little Eve?"

"Oh, go! go!" she wailed. "I'm not hurt. He only pricked me with his knife. I'm not hurt, I tell you. Go after him! Take your pistol and follow him and kill him!"

"Oh!" she cried hysterically, twisting and sobbing in his arms, "don't lose time here with me! Don't stand here while he's running away with Dad's money!" And, "Oh—oh—oh!" she sobbed, collapsing in his arms and clinging to him convulsively as he carried her to her tumbling bed and laid her there.

"Dad's money was under my pillow," she wailed. "Leverett tried to make me tell where it was. I wouldn't and he hurt me—"

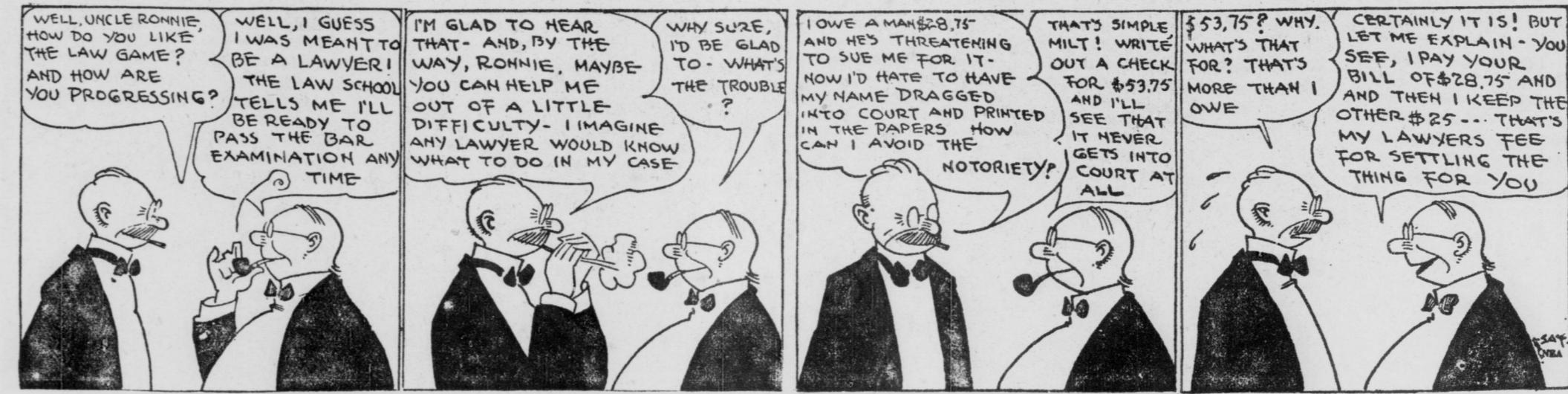
"How?"

The largest trans-Atlantic freight carrier of the Canadian Pacific Steamships Ltd. is the S. S. *Bosworth*, with a capacity of 352,000 bushels of wheat. It would take 274 steamships of the *Bosworth*'s capacity to carry the wheat crop of the prairie provinces across the ocean. Taking the *Bosworth*'s gross tonnage at about 6,500, this would mean a fleet of 5,844,000 gross tons, of the largest fleet in the world with the exception of the United States and the United Kingdom.

"How?"

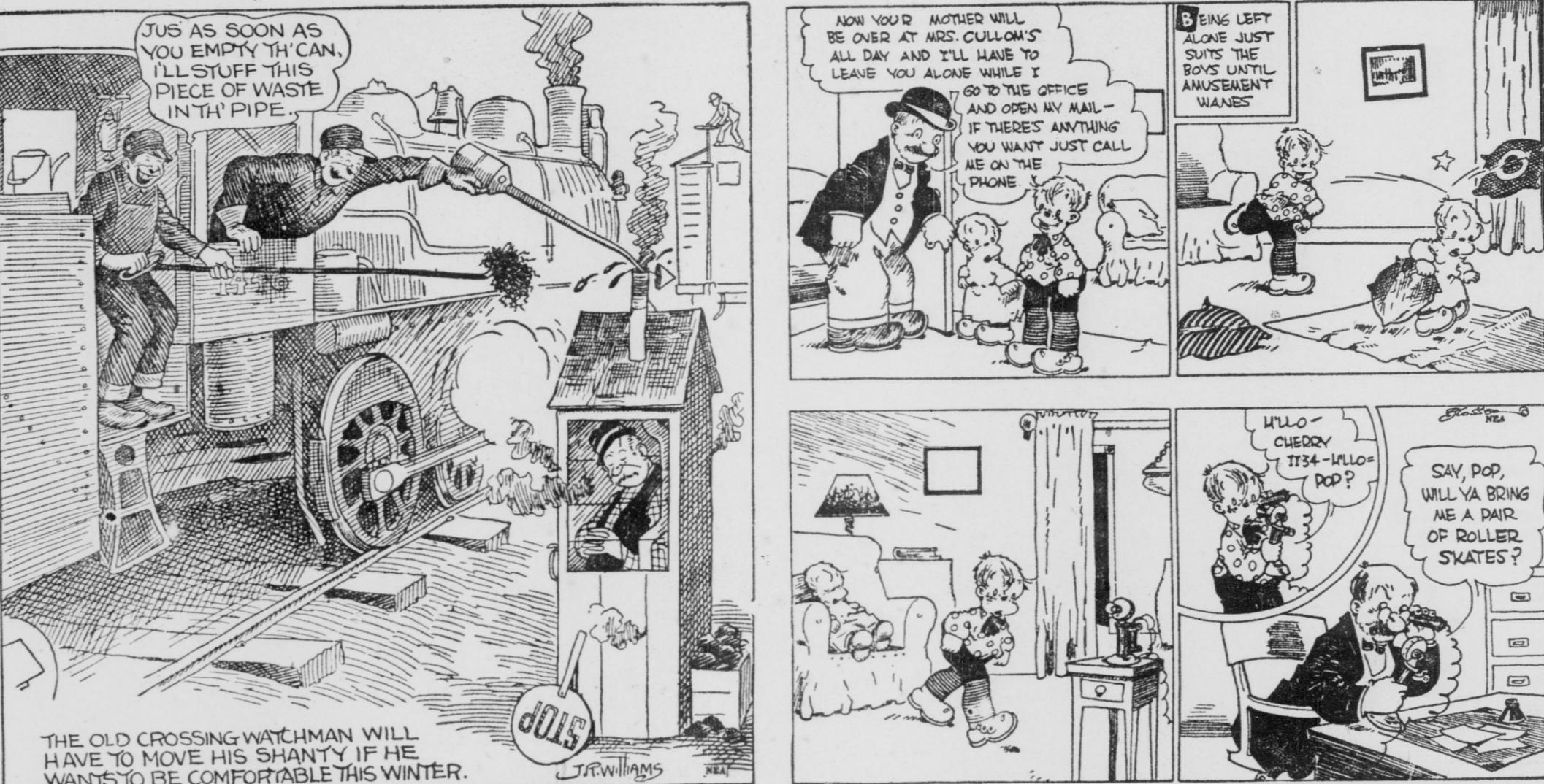
The Times Fun Family

THE BICKER FAMILY—Ronnie's Learning Fast—By SATTERFIELD



OUT OUR WAY—By WILLIAMS

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS—By BLOSSER



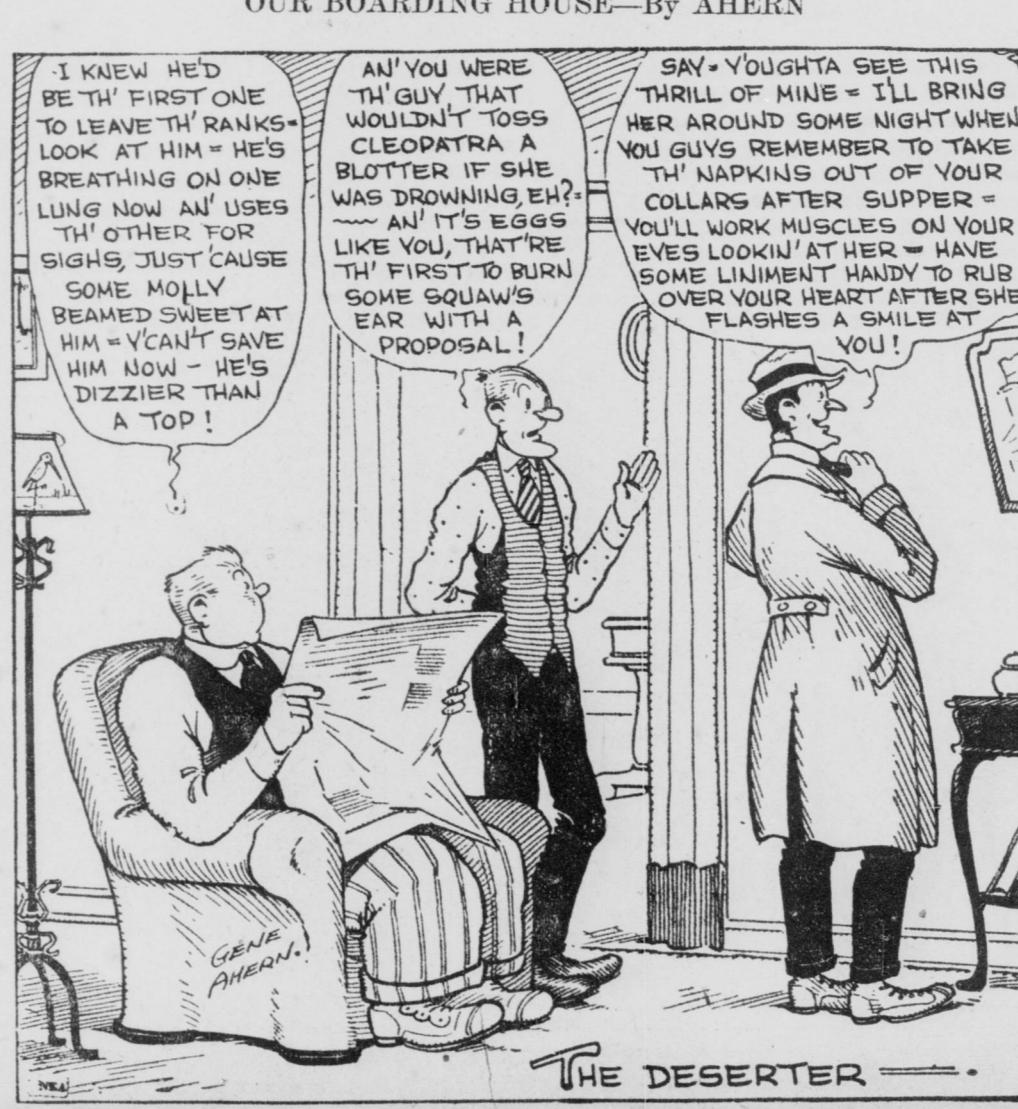
THEM DAYS IS GONE FOREVER—“My Man”—By AL POSEN



THE OLD HOME TOWN—By STANLEY



THE BANK WAS ROBBED LAST NIGHT—NO DOUBT THE SAFE BLOWERS KNEW MARSHAL OTEY WALKER WAS MISSING WHEN THEY PLANNED IT.



THE DESERTER