

A Hoosier Chronicle

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON

First Novel in the Times Series of Fiction Stories by Indiana Writers
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SYNOPSIS
SYLVIA GARRISON, 16-year-old grad daughter of PROFESSOR ANDREW KELTON, lecturer at Indiana University, comes down little of her life before making her home with others than that she was born in New York.

An unusual event of which Sylvia is not to know is the mysterious visit of a strange young man who delivers an unsigned letter to her, and who is staying an offer which he declines to accept.

Sylvia contemplates going to college and is in touch with MRS. JACKSON OWEN of Indianapolis, a military known by her servants as "Miss Sally," a wealthy widow who makes farming her business.

MARIAN BASSETT, Mrs. Owen's cultured and refined daughter and niece, who is attending a Miss Waring's School. Marian's mother,

MARY BORTON BASSETT, runs a prominent figure in the Federation.

ADRIAN MARTIN, a real estate man of the Navy, is her father and Rev. Wm. Ware of the Adirondack country, New York, old friends of Mrs. Owen and the professor.

The conversation wanders to Marian's father.

MORTON BASSETT, politician, and to ED THATCHER, his business associate.

DR. WAINLESS, president emeritus of Maud's College.

Professor Kelton fails in his attempt to borrow \$5,000 for Sylvia's college expenses.

TONY ADAMS, banker, and learns from him that his stock in the White River Canaries, of which Morton Bassett was one of the principal owners, which he intended to give as security, is valuable.

Mrs. Owen offers to help the professor find a place and to consider him his granddaughter's early years. She learns that he never saw his daughter Edna, alive after her proclaimed marriage.

Sylvia's very quiet, but I reckon she takes everything in. It's in her eyes that she's different.

"I should like to see Sylvia go high and far; I should like her to have every chance."

"All right, Andrew; let's do it. How much does a college course cost for a girl?"

"I didn't come here to interest you in the money side of it, Sally; I expected—"

"Answer my question, Andrew."

"I had expected to give her a four-year course for \$5,000. The actual tuition isn't so much; it's railroad fare, clothing and other expenses."

Mrs. Owen turned toward Kelton with a smile on her kind, shrewd face.

"Andrew, just to please me, I want you to let me be partners with you in this. My little Elizabeth would be a grown woman if she's lived; and because of her I like to help other people's little girls; you know I helped start Elizabeth House, a home for working girls—and I'm getting my money back on that a thousand times over. It's a pretty state of things if an old woman like me, without a chick of my own, and with no sense but horse sense, can't back a likely filly like your Sylvia. Well train her in all the paces, Andrew, and I hope one of us will live to see her strike the home stretch. Come into my office a minute," she said, rising and leading the way.

The appointments of her "office" were plain and substantial. A flat-topped desk stood in the middle of the room—a relic of the lamented Jackson Owen; in one corner was an old-fashioned iron safe in which she kept her account books. A print of Maud S. adorned one wall, and facing it across the room hung a lithograph of Thomas A. Hendricks.

"You've seen my picture gallery before, Andrew? Small but select. I knew both the lady and the gentleman," she finished, with one of her humorous quips. "I went to Cleveland in '85 to see Maud S. She ate up a mile in 2:08 1/4—the prettiest thing I ever saw. You know Bonner bought her as a 4-year-old—the same Bonner that owned the 'New York Ledger.' I used to read the 'Ledger' clear through, when Henry Ward Beecher and Fanny Fern wrote for it. None of these new magazines touch it. And you know Tom Hendricks? That's a good picture. Tom looked like a statesman anyhow, and that's more than most of 'em do."

She continued her efforts to divert his thoughts from the real matter at hand, summoning from the shadows all the Hoosier statesmen of the post-bellum period to aid her, and she purposely declared her admiration of several of these to provoke Kelton's ire.

"That's right, Andrew; jump on 'em," she laughed, as she drew from the desk a check book and began to write. When she had blotted and torn out the check she examined it carefully and placed it near him on the edge of her desk. "Now, Andrew Kelton, there's a check for \$6,000; we'll call that our educational fund. You furnish the girl; I put in the money. I only wish I had the girl to put into the business instead of the cash."

"But I don't need the money yet; I shan't need it till fall," he protested.

"That's all right. Fall's pretty close and you'll feel better if you have it. Your note? Look here, Andrew Kelton, if you mention that life insurance to me again, I'll cut you off acquaintance."

She dropped her check book into a drawer and swung round in her swivel chair until she faced him. "I don't want to open up that affair of Sylvia's mother again, but there's always the possibility that something may happen. You know Edna's dead, but there's always a chance that Sylvia's father may turn up. It's not likely; but there's no telling about such things; and it wouldn't be quite fair for you to leave her unprepared if it should happen."

"There's one more circumstance I haven't told you about. A letter was sent to me by a stranger, offering money for Sylvia's schooling. The whole thing was surrounded with the utmost secrecy."

"So? Then some one is watching Sylvia, keeping track of her, and must be kindly disposed from that. You never heard anything before?"

"Never. I was asked to send a verbal answer by the messenger who brought me the letter, accepting or declining the offer. I declined it."

"That was right. But there's no hiding anything in this world; you must have some idea where the offer came from."

"I haven't the slightest, not the remotest idea. The messenger was a stranger to me; from what Sylvia said he was a stranger at Montgomery and had never seen the college before."

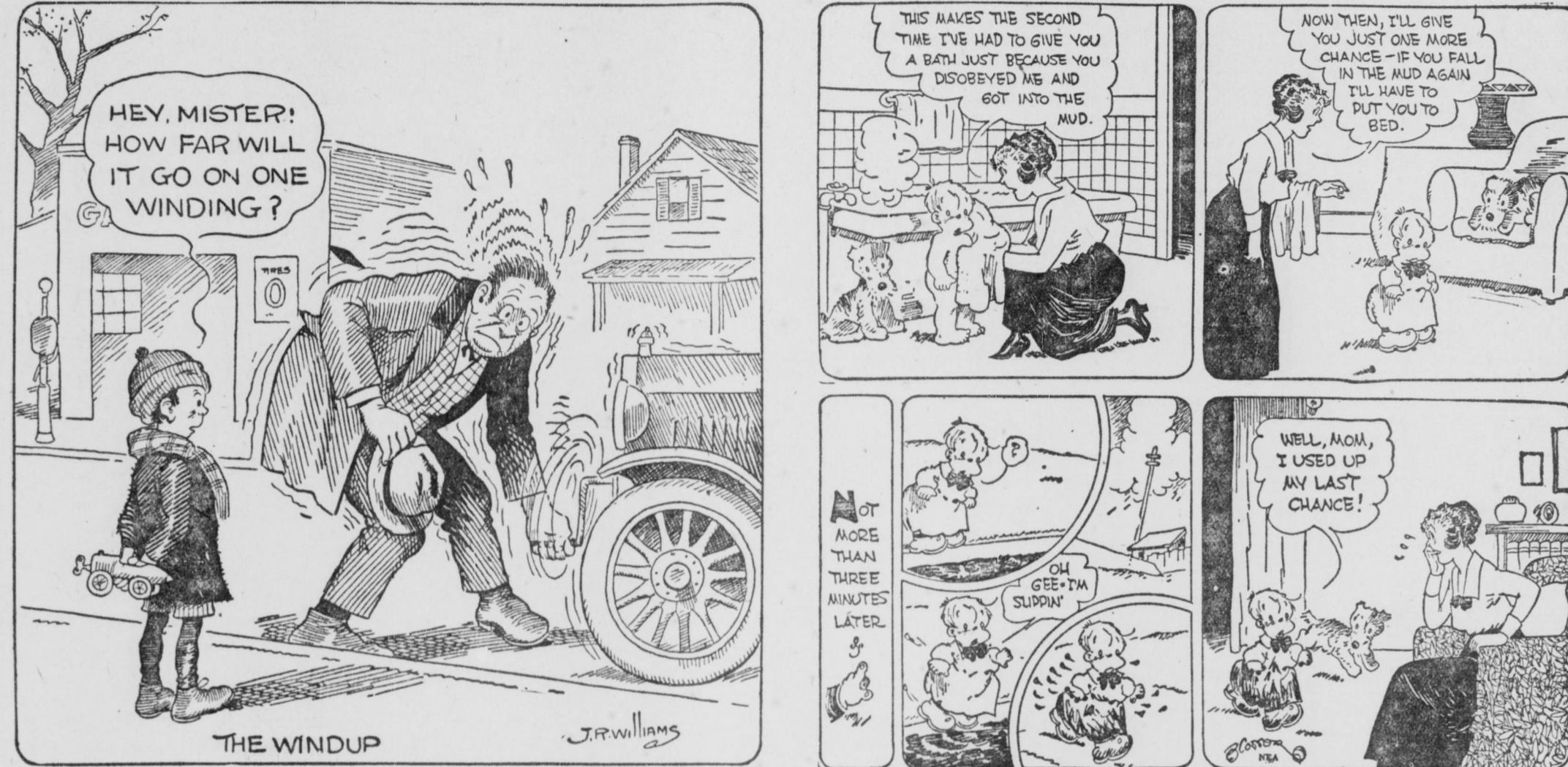
"It's queer; but you'd better try to forget it. Somebody's conscience is hurting. I reckon."

Kelton lingered to smoke a cigar in the open. He had enjoyed tonight an experience that he had not known in

DOINGS OF THE DUFFS—



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THEM DAYS IS GONE FOREVER—



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He indicated with a nod the one chair in the room and Harwood seated himself. Harwood drew a checkbook from his impeccably desk and wrote.
"Did the gentleman—whose name, by the way, you have forgotten?"
"Yes, sir; I have quite forgotten it," Harwood replied promptly.
Fitch smiled. His was a rare smile, but it was worth waiting for.
"What did the trip cost you?"
"I'm reading law."

He indicated with a nod the one chair in the room and Harwood seated himself.
"I found Professor Kelton without difficulty and presented the letter."
"Well?"
"No, it is the answer."
Fitch polished his eyeglasses with his handkerchief. He scrutinized Harwood carefully for a moment, then asked—
"Did the gentleman—whose name, by the way, you have forgotten?"
"Yes, sir; I have quite forgotten it," Harwood replied promptly.
Fitch smiled. His was a rare smile, but it was worth waiting for.
"What did the trip cost you?"
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"Is it possible? The other young stars in the office seem to be talking politics or reading newspapers most of the time. How do you manage to?"
"I do some work for the Courier from time to time."
"Ahl! You are careful not to let your legal studies get mixed with the newspaper work!"

"Yes, sir. They put me on meetings and other night assignments. As to the confidences of this office, you need have no fear of my—"
"I haven't, Mr. Harwood. Let me see. It was of you Professor Sumner wrote me last year; he's an old friend of mine. He's a great man—Sumner. I supposed you absorbed a good many of his ideas at New Haven."

"I hope I did, sir; I believe in most of them anyhow."
"So do I, Mr. Harwood."
Fitch pointed to a huge pile of manuscript on a table by the window. It was a stenographic transcript of testimony in a case which had been lost in the trial court and was now going up on appeal.

(To Be Continued)