

Alice of Old Vincennes

By Maurice Thompson

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BEGIN HERE
CAPT. LEONARD BELMONT and
LEUT. FITZGIBBON BEVERLEY were sent
from Kansas to the American Army during the Revolutionary
War, to take charge of the military affairs of
Vincennes on the Wabash.
ALICE, the foster daughter of
GASPARD ROUSSEAU, a Frenchman who had been
captured by the Indians, was a girl of
long hair, a desperate Indian, was dis-
pleased on seeing the new flag of free-
dom which she had placed over the block-
house.

Both Beverley and
PERE BERET, a Catholic priest, were re-
sued from drowning by Gaspard Rousseau
after Beverley had made a vain attempt
to save Beret, who had been thrown from
his boat by the Indians.
GO ON WITH THE STORY

"RING them to my house
immediately," M. Rousseau
ordered, as soon as
they were rescued to com-
plicity, and he shook himself as a
big, wet animal sometimes does, cov-
ering everybody near him with muddy
water. Then he led the way with
melodramatic strides.

In justice to historical accuracy,
there must be a trifling reform of what
appeared on the face of things to be
grandy true. Gaspard Rousseau
actually dragged Father Beret and
Lieutenant Beverley one at a time out
of the eddy water and up the steep
river bank. That was truly a great
feat, but the hero never explained.
When men arrived he was standing
between the collapsed forms, panting
and dripping. Doubtless he looked
just as if he had dropped them from
under his arms, and why shouldn't he
have the benefit of a slight impli-

"I've saved them both," he roared,
from which, of course, the ready
creole imagination inferred the ex-
treme of possible heroic performance.
"Bring them to my house immedi-
ately," and it was accordingly done.
The procession, headed by M. Rouss-
sillon, moved noisily, for the French
tongue must shake off what comes to
it on the thrill of every exciting
moment. The only silent Frenchman
is the dead one.

Father Beret was not only well-nigh
drowned, but seriously hurt. He lay
for a week on a bed in M. Rousseau's
house before he could sit up. Alice
hung over him night and day, scarce-
ly sleeping or eating until he was past
all danger. As for Beverley, he shook
off all the effects of his struggle in a
little while. Next day he was out, as
well and strong as ever, busy with the
affairs of his office. Nor was he
less nappy on account of what the
little adventure had cast into his ex-
perience. It is a good thing that one
has done an unselfish deed, and no
young man's heart repels the fresh-
ness of what comes to him when a
beautiful girl first enters his life.

Naturally enough Alice had some
thoughts of Beverley while she was
so attentively caring for Father Beret.
She had never before seen a man like
him, nor had she read of one. Com-
pared with Rene de Ronville, the best
youth of her acquaintance, he was in
every way superior; this was too evi-
dent for analysis; but referred to the
romantic standard taken out of the
novels she had read, he somehow
failed, and yet he loomed bravely in
her vision, not exactly a knight of
the class she had most admired, still
unquestionably a hero of large pro-
portions.

Beverley stepped in for a few min-
utes every day to see Father Beret,
involuntarily lengthening his visit by
a sliding ratio as he became better
acquainted. He began to enjoy the
priest's conversation, with its airy
worldly wisdom cropping up through
fervid religious sentiments and quaint
humor. Alice must have interested
him more than he was fully aware of,
for his eyes followed her, as she came
and went, with a curious criticism of
her half-savage costume and her
springy, dryad-like suppleness, which
reminded him of the shyest and the
gracefullest wild birds, and yet a
touch of refinement, the subtlest and
best, showed in all her ways. He
studied her, as he would have studied
a strange, showy and originally frag-
rant flower, or a bird of oddly attrac-
tive plumage. While she said little
to him or to any one else in his pres-
ence, he became aware of the willful-
ness and joyous lightness which

played on her nature's changeable sur-
face. He wondered at her influence
over Father Beret, whom she con-
trolled apparently without effort. But
in due time he began to feel a deeper
character, a broader intelligence,
behind her superficial savagery, and
he found that she really had no mean
smattering of books in the lighter vein.

A little thing happened which furth-
er opened his eyes and increased the
interest that her beauty and elemen-
tary charm of style aroused in him
gradually, apace with their advancing
acquaintance.

Father Beret had got well and re-
turned to his hut and his round of
spiritual duties; but Beverley came to
Rousseau place every day all the
same. For a wonder Madame Rouss-
sillon like him, and at most times held
the scolding side of her tongue when
he was present. Jenn, too, made
friendly advances whenever opportunity
afforded. Of course Alice gave
him just the frank cordiality of hos-
pitable welcome demanded by frontier
conditions. She scarcely knew whether
she liked him or not; but he had a
treasure of information from which
he was enriching her with liberal
carelessness day by day. The hun-
griest part of her mind was being
sumptuously banqueted at his ex-
pense. More intellectual greediness
drew her to him.

Naturally they soon threw off such
troubling formalities as at first rose
between them, and began to disclose
to each other their true character-
istics. Alice found in Beverley a
large target for the missiles of her
clever and tantalizing perversity. In
turn practiced a native dignity and
an acquired superiority of manner to
excellent effect. It was a meeting of
Greek with Greek in a new Arcadia.
To him here was Diana, strong,
strange, simple, even crude almost to
naturalness, yet admirably pure in
spirit and imbued with highest wom-
anly aspirations. To her Beverley
represented the great outside area of
life. He came to her from wonder-
land, beyond the wide circle of house-
less woods and prairies. He repre-
sented gorgeous cities, teeming parks
of fashion, boulevards, salons, halls
of social splendor, the theater, the
world of woman's dreams.

Now there is an antagonism, vague
yet powerful, generated between na-
tures thus cast together from the op-
posite poles of experience and educa-
tion; an antagonism practically equiv-
alent to the most vigorous attraction.
What one knows the other is but half
aware of; neither knowledge nor ig-
norance being mutual, there is a schi-
sm of exchange, from opposing
vantage grounds, followed by harm-
less snags of thunder. Culture and
refinement take on airs—it is the
deepest artificial instinct of enlighten-
ment to pose—in the presence of nat-
uralness, and there is a certain style
of ignorance which attitudinizes be-
fore the gate of knowledge. The re-
turn to nature has always been the
dream of the conventionalized soul,
while the simple Arcadian is forever
longing for the maddening honey of
sophistication.

Innate jealousies strike together like
flint and steel, dashing off sparks by
which nearly everything that life can
warm its core withal is kindled and
kept burning. What I envy in my
friend I store for my best use. I
thrust and parry, not to kill, but to
learn my adversary's superior feints
and guards. And this hint of sword
play leads back to what so greatly
surprised and puzzled Beverley one
day when he chanced to be examining
the pale of colecharders on the wall.

He took one down, and handling it
with the indescribable facility possible
to none save a practical swordsman,
remarked:
"There's a world of fascination in
these things; I like nothing better than
a bout at fencing. Does your father
practice the art?"
"I have no father, no mother," she
quickly said, "but good Papa Rouss-
sillon does like a little exercise with
the colechard."

"Well, I'm glad to hear it, I shall
ask to teach him a trick or two,"
Beverley responded in the lightest
mood. "When will he return from
the woods?"
"I can't tell you; he's very irregu-
lar in such matters," she said. "Ten,
with a smile half banter and half
challenge, she added: 'If you are
really dying for some exercise, you
shall not have to wait for him to
come home. I assure you, Monsieur
Beverley.'"

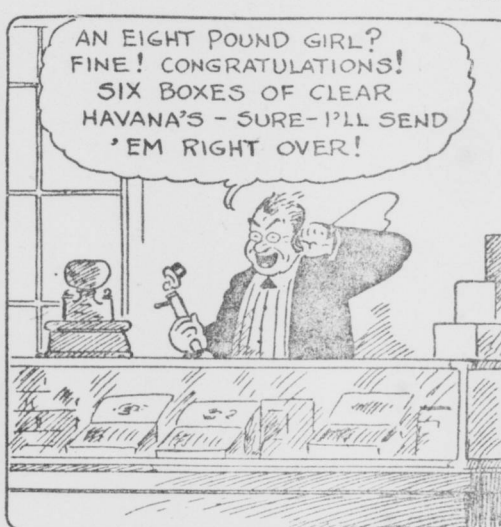
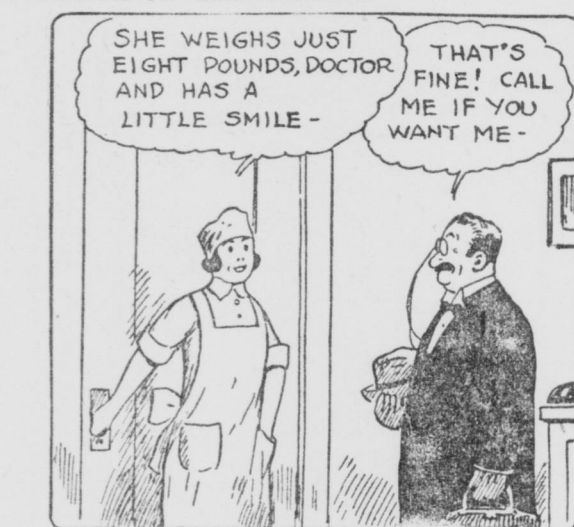
"Oh, it's Monsieur de Ronville, per-
haps, that you will offer up as a vic-
tim to my skill and address," he shyly
returned; for he was suspecting
that a love affair in some stage of
progress lay between her and Rene.

She blushed violently, but quickly
overcoming a combined rush of sur-
prise and anger, added with an em-
phasis as charming as it was unex-
pected.
"I myself am, perhaps, a sword-
man enough to satisfy the impudence
and vanity of Monsieur Beverley,
Lieutenant in the American Army."

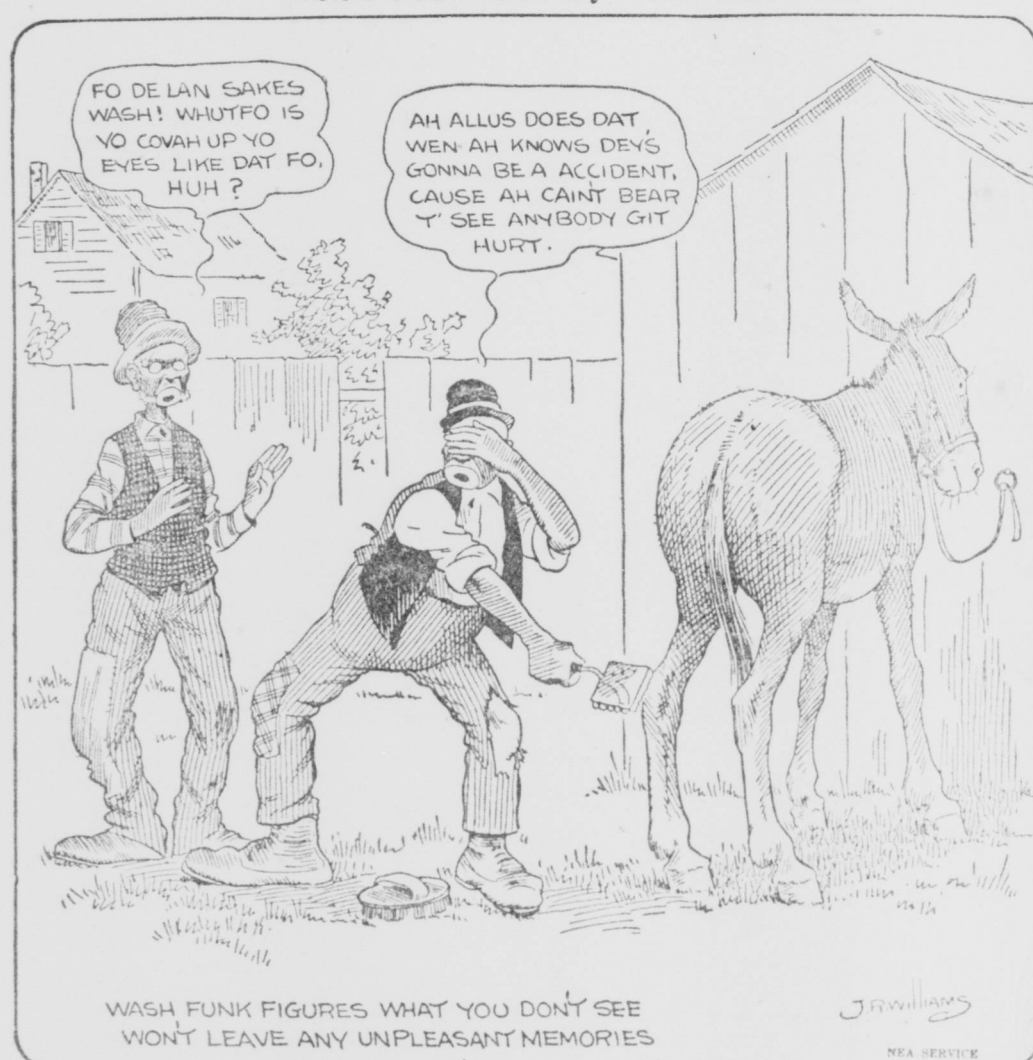
"Pardon me, Mademoiselle; forgive
me. I beg of you," he exclaimed, ear-
nestly modulating his voice to sincerest
beseechment; "I really did not mean
to be impudent, nor—"
Her vivacity cleared with a merry
laugh.
"No apologies, I command you," she
interposed. "We will have them after
I have taught you a fencing lesson."
From a shelf she drew down a pair
of foils and presenting the hilts, bade
him take his choice.
"There isn't any difference between
them that I know of," she said, and
then added archly: "but you will feel
better at last, when all is over and
the sting of defeat tingles through
you, if you are conscious of having
used every sensible precaution."

He looked straight into her eyes,
trying to catch what was in her
mind, but there was a bewildering
shower of glances across those gray,
pale-litened wells of mystery, from
which he could draw only a mis-
chievous smile-glint, direct, daring, ir-
resistible.

DOINGS OF THE DUFFS—



OUT OUR WAY—By WILLIAMS



THEM DAYS IS GONE FOREVER—



THE OLD HOME TOWN—By STANLEY



garden. Here she turned about and
faced him, poisoning her foil with a
fine grace.
"Are you ready?" she inquired.
He tried again to force a way into
the depths of her eyes with his; but
he might as well have attacked the
sun; so he stood in a confusion of
not very well defined feelings, unde-
cided, hesitating, half expecting that
there would be some laughable turn
to end the affair.

"Are you afraid, Monsieur Bever-
ley?" she demanded after a short wait-
ing in silence.
He laughed now and whipped the
air with his foil.
"You certainly are not in earnest!"
he said interrogatively. "Do you
really mean that you want to fence
with me?"
"If you think, because I'm only a
girl, you can easily beat me, try
it," she tauntingly replied, making a

level thrust toward his breast.
Quick as he flash he parried, and
then a merry clinking and twinkling
of steel blades kept time to their
sure movements. Instantly, by the
sure sense which is half-sight, half
feeling—the sense that guides the ex-
pert fencer's hand and wrist—Bever-
ley knew that he had probably more
than his match, and in ten
seconds his attack was met by a time
thrust in opposition which touched

him sharply.
Alice sprang far back, lowered her
point and laughed.
"Je vous salue, Monsieur Beverley!"
she cried, with childlike show of de-
light. "Did you feel the button?"
"Yes, I felt it," he said with frank
acknowledgment in his voice, "it was
cleverly done. Now give a chance to
redeem myself."

He began more carefully and found
that she, too, was on her best mettle,
but it was a short bout, as before.
Alice seemed to give him an easy
opening and he accepted it with a
thrust; then something happened that
he did not understand. The point of
his foil was somehow caught under
his opponent's hilt-guard while her
blade seemed to twist around his;
at the same time there was a wring
and a jerk, the like of which he had never
before felt, and he was disarmed, his
wrist and fingers aching with the

wrench they had received.
Of course the thing was not new;
he had been disarmed before; but her
trick of doing it was quite a mystery
to him, altogether different from any
that he had ever seen.
"Vous me pardonnez, Monsieur,"
she mockingly exclaimed, picking up
his weapon and offering the hilt to
him. "Here is your sword."
(To Be Continued.)

The News of the Day

—By ALLMAN

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS—By BLOSSER

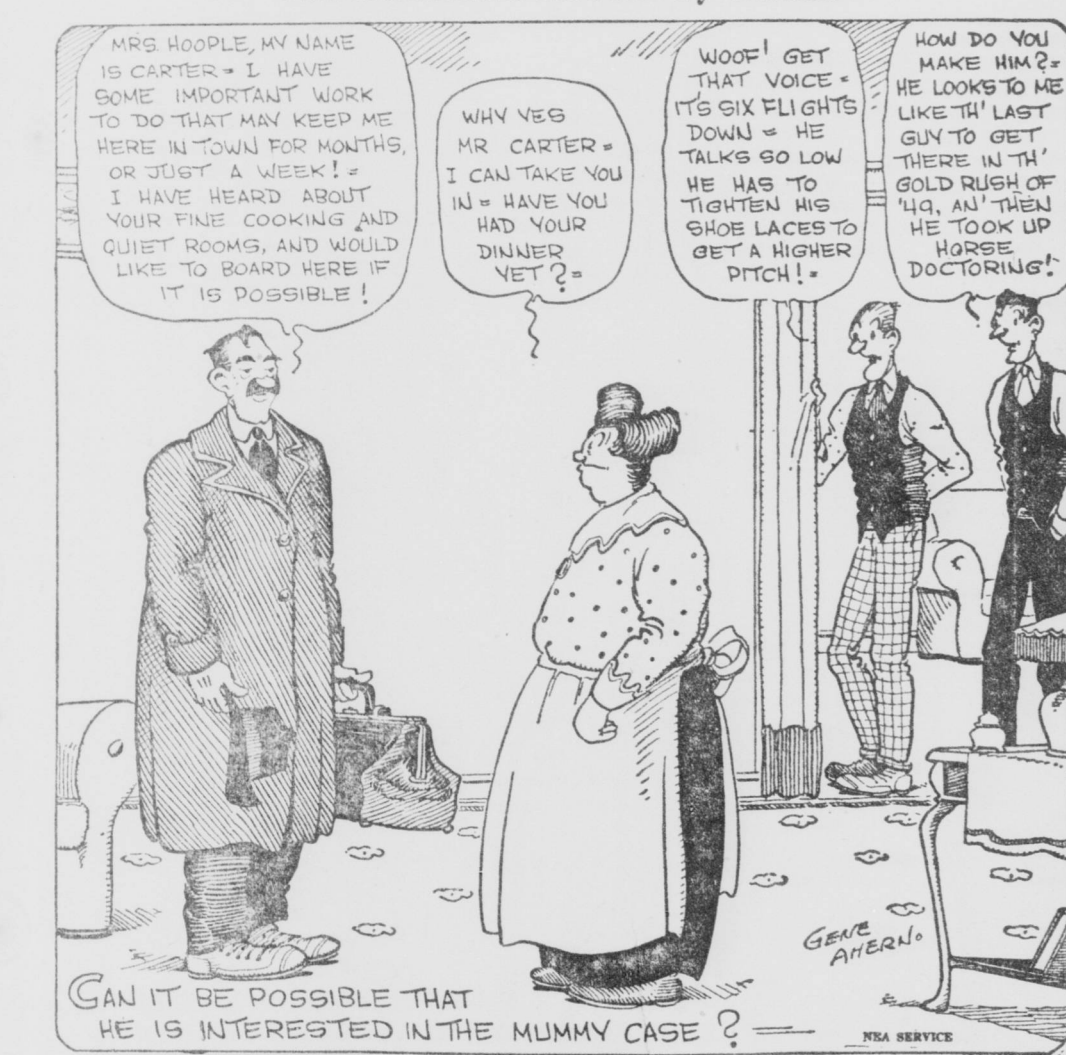


Handle This on Your Hurdy-Gurdy

—By AL POSEN



OUR BOARDING HOUSE—By AHERN



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Can it be possible that
he is interested in the mummy case?

How do you
make him?
He looks to me
like 'th' last
gun to get
there in 'th'
gold rush of
'49, an' then
he took up
horse
doctoring!

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