

Alice of Old Vincennes

By Maurice Thompson

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BEGIN HERE
ALICE, whom Frenchman of Vincennes, GASPARD ROUSSILLON, had taken from the Indians when she was a child, remained here for many years, and was the mother of her. A locket she had always worn bore a family crest and the name

LIEUT. FITZHUGH BEVERLEY, an American Army officer stationed at Vincennes during the Revolutionary War, had Alice, recognizing the name as that of an old Virginia family, and hoped some day to locate her people. Beverly was a man of garrison, the rebel, CAPTAIN HELM, was forced to surrender Vincennes to the English, but when the HAMILTON, then in command, saw the American flag Alice had taken down, it could not be found.

Adrienne's mother took advantage of the first opportunity to give Hamilton a stunning blow and began to flee.

An English corporal from an Irish

corporal under whom

BRINE DE RONVILLE, a Frenchman, was

working goaded him to kill the man and flee.

Adrienne's family, ANDRE BOURCIER, fearfully discussed the mated with Alice and on her way home was encountered by an Englishman

CAPTAIN FARNSWORTH, in a drunken mood.

FATHER BERET hurried to the spot, and when in the deepening gloom he saw Adrienne flinging herself violently this way and that, helplessly trying to escape from the clasp of a man, he did to perfection what a priest is supposed to be the least fitted to do. Indeed, considering his age and leaving his vocation out of the reckoning, his performance was amazing. It is not certain that the blow dealt upon Governor Hamilton's jaw by M. Roussillon was a stiffer one than that sent straight from the priest's shoulder right into the short ribs of Captain Farnsworth, who thereupon released a mighty grunt and doubled himself up.

Adrienne recognized her assailant at the first and used his name freely during the struggle. When Father Beret appeared she cried out to him— "Oh, Father—Father Beret! help me!"

When Farnsworth recovered from the breath-expelling shock of the jab in his side and got himself once more in a vertical position, both girl and priest were gone. He looked this way and that, rapidly becoming sober, and beginning to wonder how the thing could have happened so easily. His ribs felt as if they had been hit with a heavy hammer.

"By Jove!" he muttered all to himself, "the old prayer-singing heathen! By Jove!" And with this very brilliant and relevant observation he rubbed his sore side and went his way to the fort.

CHAPTER XI
WE hear much about the "days that tried men's souls"; but what about the souls of women in those same days? Sitting in the liberal geniality of the nineteenth century's sunset glow, we insist upon having our grumble at the times and the manners of our generation; but if we had to exchange places, perils and experiences with the people who lived in America through the last quarter of the eighteenth century, there would be good ground for despairing ultimatum. And if our men could not bear it, if it would try their souls too poignantly, let us imagine the effect upon our women. No, let us not imagine it; but rather let us give full credit to the heroic souls of the mothers and the maidens who did actually bear up in the center of that terrible struggle and unflinchingly help win for us not only freedom, but the vast empire which at this moment is at once the master of the world and the model toward which all the nations of the earth are slowly, but surely tending.

If Alice was an extraordinary girl, she was not aware of it; nor had she ever understood that her life was being shaped by extraordinary conditions. Of course it could not be plain to her that she knew more and felt more than the girls of her narrow acquaintance that her accomplishments were greater; that she nursed splendid dreams of which they could have no proper comprehension, but until now she had never even dimly realized that she was probably capable of being something more than a mere creole lass, the foster daughter of Gaspard Roussillon, trader in pelts and furs. Even her most romantic visions had never taken the form of personal desire, or ambition in its most nebulous stage; they had simply pleased her fresh and excited fancy and served to add the hardness and crudeness of her life—that was all.

Her experiences had been almost too terrible for belief, viewed at our distance from them: she had passed through scenes of incredible horror and suffering, but her nature had not been chilled, stunted or hardened. In body and in temper her development had been sound and beautiful. It was even thus that our great-grandmothers triumphed over adversity, hardships, indescribable danger. We cannot say that the strong, little, happy-hearted Alice of old Vincennes was the only one of her kind. Few of us who have inherited the faded portraits of our

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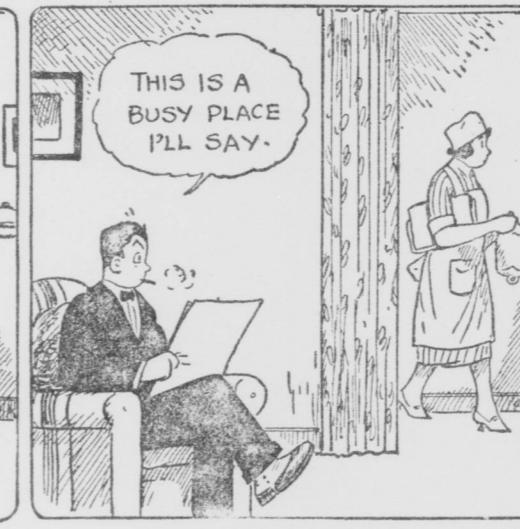
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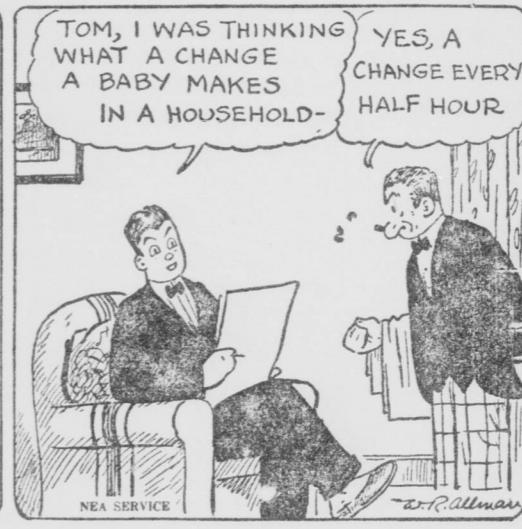
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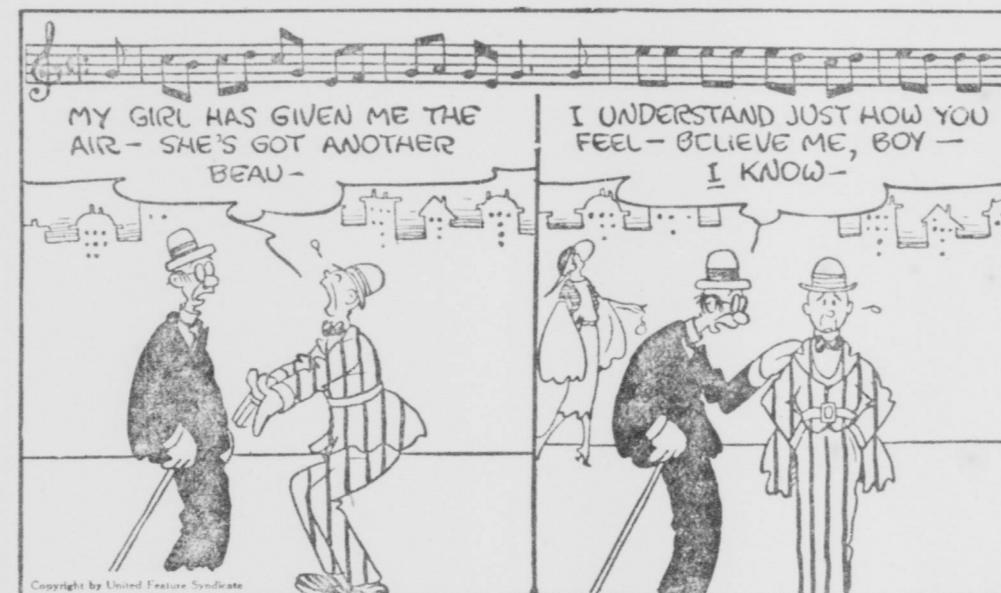


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