

## THE GREAT ELUSION

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Copyright, 1922, by E. Phillips Oppenheim  
Arrgt. NEA Service, Inc.

Two duffets begin between MICHAEL SAYER, noted criminal, and SIR NORMAN GREYES, once of Scotland Yard, when Sayers' beautiful housemaid, JANET, saves him from Sir Norman by shooting him in the leg and capturing him. Sayers falls in love with Janet and proposes marriage. Michael disowns himself and attends the wedding reception. Having stolen a pearl necklace, the gift of Sir Norman to his bride, Sayers returns them indirectly to Janet.

Michael buys from the divorced wife of a solicitor a manuscript, which he gives to the lady, forming a band with his confederate, the well-known Lord Kindersley. Sayers refuses to thoughts pounds in the new paper for the evidence for publication because he is in love with Beatrice Kindersley.

IT was toward the close of a dinner party at Kindersley Court, in Devonshire, where Janet and I were spending a fortnight, that our host suddenly directed the conversation to me.

"One has heard a great deal of your successes, Greyses, especially during your last few years at Scotland Yard. What do you count your greatest failure?"

"My inability to bring to justice the greatest criminal in Europe," I replied after a moment's hesitation. "I had him on my book for three years, but when I retired, he was still very much at large."

"What is his name?" Lord Kindersley asked with some interest.

I smiled.

"A name, with him, I suspect, is an affair of the moment. I have known him under a dozen different pseudonyms; but his real name is, I believe, Michael. He did me the honor to attend my wedding reception as Colonel Escombe."

I happened to meet the glance of Beatrice Kindersley as I looked across the table.

"But tell us about this man Michael!" Lord Kindersley intervened. "I remember, seven or eight years ago, hearing something about the duel between you fellows at Scotland Yard and a wonderfully led criminal gang. Where is the fellow now?"

I shook my head.



"GOD BLESS MY SOUL!" LORD KINDERSLEY EXCLAIMED. "HOW THE DEVIL DID YOU GET IN?"

"I shouldn't have the faintest idea where to look for him. If he comes into the limelight again, my friend Rimmington at Scotland Yard will certainly send for me."

"And you would join in the hunt?" our host persisted.

"You would do nothing of the sort," Janet intervened, looking across at me. "That is a promise."

I smiled back at her reassuringly. Prosperity and peace of mind had agreed with Janet. The dignity of widowhood sat well upon her. Her complexion seemed to have grown more creamy, her beautiful eyes softer, her carriage, always graceful, more assured. There was no woman in the county more admired than she—certainly no one less spoiled. I sometimes think that if she had had her way, she would never have wandered at all outside our little domain.

"There is just the one possibility," I remarked, "that I might not be able to evade the challenge. If I do not go after Michael, he may come after me."

It was precisely at this moment that the amazing event happened. We were a party of twelve at dinner, seated at a round table in the center of the large banqueting hall of Kindersley Court. The room was rather dimly lighted, except for the heavily shaded table lamps. The two footmen had left the room, presumably to fetch the coffee, and the butler standing behind Lord Kindersley's chair was the only servant in attendance.

## ASPIRIN

Say "Bayer" and Insist!



Unless you see the "Bayer Cross" on package or on tablets you are not getting the genuine Bayer product prescribed by physicians over twenty-three years and proved safe by millions for

Colds Headache Lumbargia  
Toothache Earache Rheumatism  
Neuralgia Pain, Pain  
Accept "Bayer Tablets of Aspirin" only. Each unbroken package contains proper directions. Handy boxes of twelve tablets cost few cents. Druggists also sell bottles of 24 and 100. Aspirin is the trade mark of Bayer Manufacture of Monocetac-acidester of Salicylicacid—Advertise me.

Suddenly every light in the place went out, and we were plunged into the most complete darkness.

"Never knew such a thing to happen before," our host declared in an annoyed tone. "Somebody must have been tinkering with the powerhouse. Fetch some candles, Searle."

The butler turned to grope his way toward the door, but he was not allowed to reach it. From various parts of the shadowy spaces on every side of us, little pin-points of fire blazed out and steadily approached, without sound or movement. One of them came to a standstill immediately behind Lord Kindersley's chair. Wielded by some unseen hand, the dazzling brilliancy of a high-powered electric torch was flashed round upon twelve amazed faces. Then strong voice broke the spellbound silence, a voice still and cold and perfectly modulated.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the intruder said, "there is no need for any particular alarm. This is, to use a slang phrase, a 'holdup.' We have automatic pistols, and I trust that you will realize the absurdity of resistance."

"God bless my soul!" Lord Kindersley exclaimed. "Where are all my servants? How the devil did you get in?"

"It is scarcely policy to let you into the secret of our methods," the same cold voice continued; "but I have no objection to telling you that we came in through the front door, that your servants are locked up and guarded in the servants' hall very much as you are, that your telephone wires are cut, your electric light supply is in our hands, and the judge-gates guarded. You ladies will kindly place all the jewelry you are wearing, upon the table in front of you. There must be no delay, please, or any attempt at concealment."

"What shall I do?" the woman next to me whispered hoarsely. "I am wearing my emeralds—Jack implored me not to—they are worth 20,000 pounds."

"You will have to do, as the others are doing," I told her. "The first act of this little drama must be played out according to orders."

She unclasped the necklace with trembling fingers, and the unseen figure behind Lord Kindersley's chair spoke again.

"Will it be Sir Norman Greyses who struts across the stage in the second act?" he asked mockingly.

"Then I knew who was there and I remembered that Michael had sworn to take my life when and how the opportunity offered. I was an easy mark for him, sitting there, but somehow the idea of an execution never had any terror for me—

"I may occupy the stage for a little time," I answered, feeling for my wine through the darkness. "But after all, it will be the third act that counts. Which will you choose. I wonder—Michael—the gallows at Wandsworth Gaol or the electric chair at Sing Sing?"

This, of course, was sheer bravado, a touch of melodrama of which I repented as soon as I had indulged in it. I heard the click of a weapon, and in the steady glare of that small circle of light I saw the flash upon its barrel as it drew level with my head. There was a silence as poignant as it was hysterical; then a cry from Janet rang through the room.

"A familiar voice, I fancy," Michael said coldly as he lowered his weapon. "You do well to intervene, dear lady. Some day or other I think that your husband will kill me or I him; but unless he hunts me with a posse of policemen, it will be when we are both armed and the odds are even."

"May I speak, please?" Beatrice Kindersley asked.

"I have put my rings and bracelets upon the table. I am wearing around my neck a miniature set with brilliants. It is not really very valuable, but it was left me by a relative. May I keep it?"

The light flashed for a moment upon the pendant which she seemed to be holding forward for examination, flashed on the little heap of her jewelry upon the table.

"Pray keep your miniature," the voice conceded. "Do me the further honor, if you will, of replacing your jewelry upon your fingers and wrists. We are not here to rob children of their baubles."

Beatrice's laugh was a most amazing thing. It was perfectly natural and full of amused enjoyment.

"I don't like the reflection upon my jewelry," she complained. "However, since you are so generous, I will accept your offer."

"Look here," Lord Kindersley broke out, finding a certain courage from his niece's complete composure, "is this a practical joke?"

"You will discover if it is a practical joke or not, if you attempt to leave your seat!" was the instant reply.

These fellows can't think they're going to get away with a thing like this," muttered Lord Harroden, the lord lieutenant of the county, from the other end of the table.

"Your Lordship is mistaken," was the confident reply from the unseen figure who was directing the proceedings. "I will lay you five to one in hundreds that we do, payment to be made through the personal column of the Times in thirty days' time."

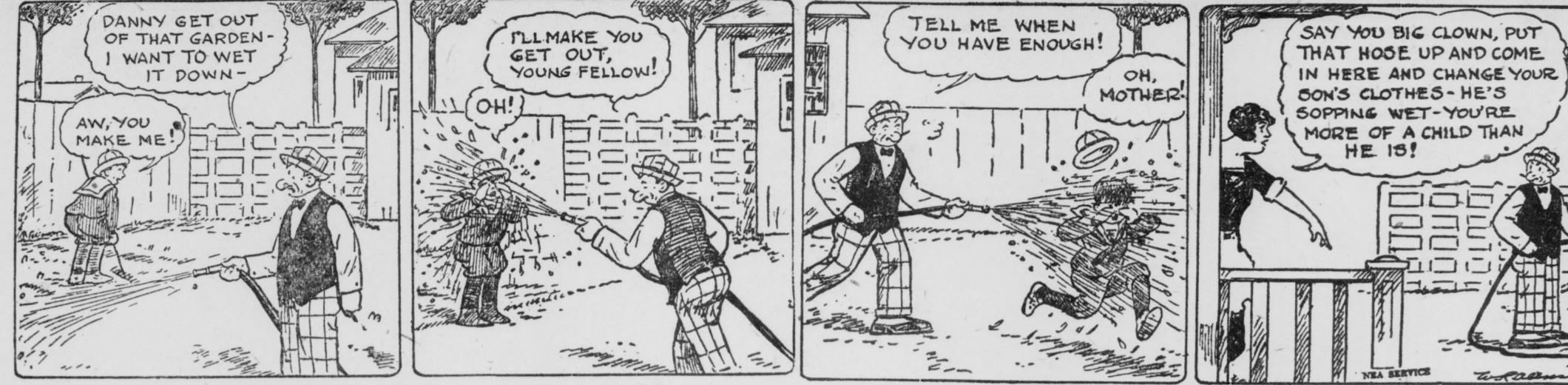
"Gad, he's a cool hand!" chuckled Anstruther, the master of hounds, who was seated next, but one to me. "I wish I could see his face for a moment."

"It would be your last if you did," he was promptly told.

"What if I strike a match?" a young man who was seated next to Kindersley inquired.

"I should put it out with one bullet and you with the next," Michael assured him grimly. "Now, ladies and gentlemen, we are going to our emancipation. Very nearly simultaneously we all started to our feet.

## DOINGS OF THE DUFFS—



## OUT OUR WAY—By WILLIAMS



## THEM DAYS IS GONE FOREVER—



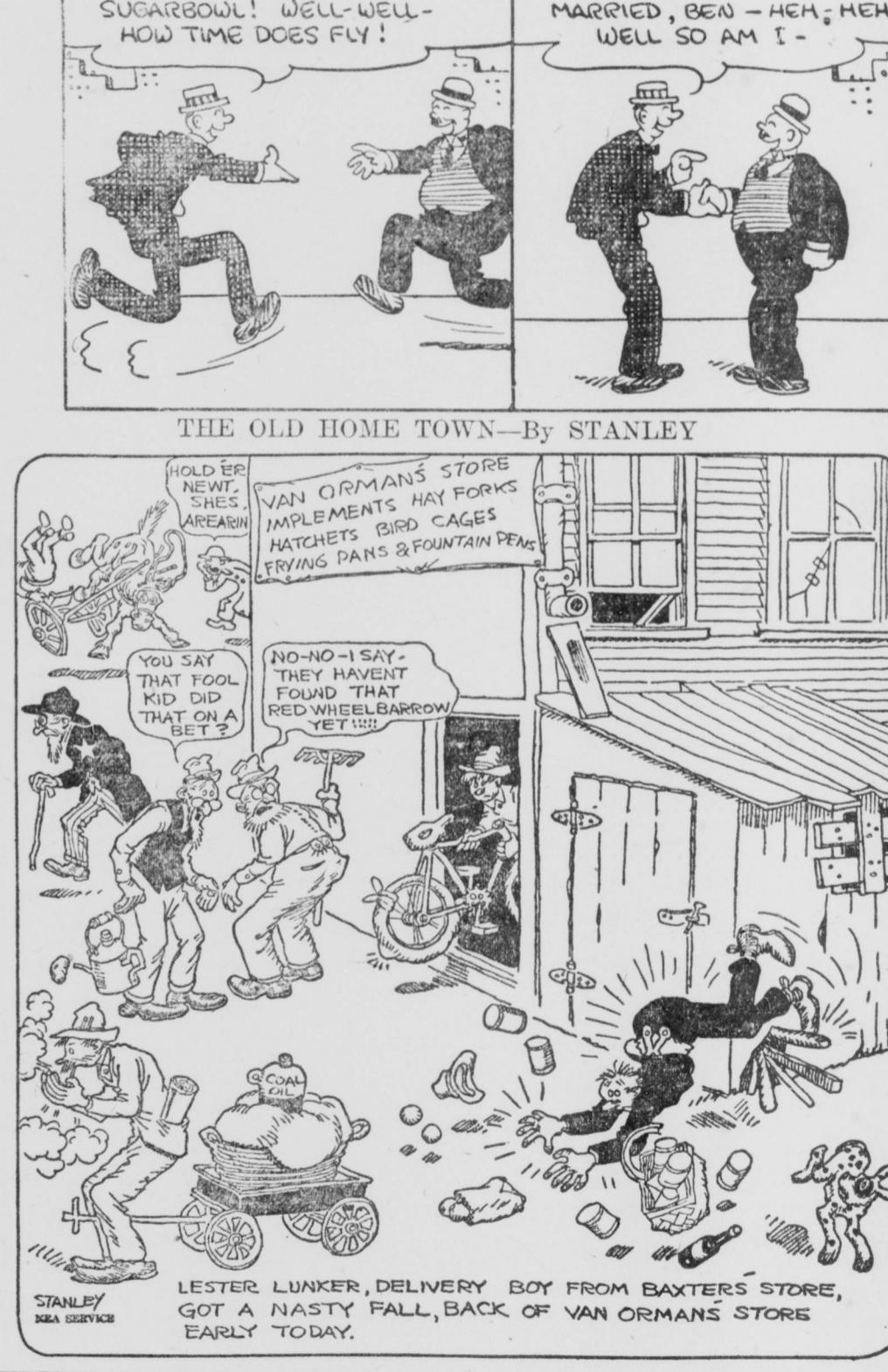
## Having Fun



## FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS—By BLOSSER



## Accomplish This on Your Alto



## PRIVACY OF HOME UPHELD BY COURT

UNIONTOWN, Penn., June 1.—That the Volstead act nor the laws of the Pennsylvania Commonwealth will

countenance the searching of a man's private home for evidence of the liquor law violation unless a properly executed search warrant has been issued is becoming more evident. Both Federal and State Courts have announced their rulings in no uncertain manner recently.

The latest decision on the question came from Judge Van Swearingen in the court here recently and is undoubtedly the most sweeping that has

been made in the State. All liquor obtained without a search warrant by the State Constabulary and officers of the law was taken illegally and must be returned to the owners.

The effect of Judge Van Swearingen's ruling is widespread, as it affects many thousands of gallons of wines, whisky and beer, Jamaica ginger and moonshine seized by the State Troopers in their country-wide raids made in the Connellsburg region at

Douglas, colored, 721 Ogden St., with a knife, police say. Donaldson escaped. His victim is in the city hospital where her condition is serious.

Two Purses Taken  
Mrs. Louise Moore, 1525 N. Meridian St., reports her home entered during the night and two beaded purses containing \$25 and some change missing. The purses were found in the back yard today.

