

# WHIRLWIND

BY ELEANOR EARLY

THIS HAS HAPPENED  
BYRLE THORNE, Boston society girl, concludes a whirlwind romance by marrying on a shipboard in Havana harbor—when she was only sixteen years old—five days—RICHARD EUSTIS, dangerous and handsome.  
With MABEL BLAKE, a social worker, Sybil left Boston for a trip to the States, to try to find a decision regarding CRAIG NEWELL, to whom she has been engaged for some months. Newell is a young and wealthy bachelor, but Sybil, years ago, fell desperately in love with a soldier, JOHN LAWRENCE. When Lawrence was reported missing in action Sybil took a solemn vow never to tell another man she loved him. It is to please her father, who was very ill, that she consented to marry Craig Newell. But when her father died, she began to question the wisdom of her promise. Then, after the marriage of her brother TAD to VALERIE REED, a frivolous and selfish girl, Sybil, utterly unable to tell Craig she was going to Cuba for a rest and peace of mind, Richard Eustis, a handsome and dangerous man, made wild love to her, but not until last night of the trip, when he told her to marry him. He tells her that he does not believe in marriage, and that it is a waste of time. He tells her that he will love her, but in order to have her, he would do anything on earth. On their wedding night, Sybil consents. Now go on with the story.

CHAPTER XVIII  
SYBIL drew her breath sharply. "Oh, Rich," she protested, "you don't want to drink any more tonight." "Why not, darling?" "Good-naturedly he coaxed. 'We'll just drop round to Sloppy Joe's. You've no idea how interesting it is, dear. Life in the raw—jockeys and gamblers and all their fancy ladies.' She shrugged distastefully, and her voice was cool and distant. "If you wish," she conceded icily, and they walked in silence down the gay promenade. The crowd at Joe's was loud and boisterous, so that Sybil drew back as they reached the corner. "Don't go in," she begged. "It's too noisy." But Richard, pleasantly expansive, would have his way. "Just one little drink, dear. You and I together." He pressed her arm persuasively. "Whoever heard of a honeymoon without a champagne cocktail?" But it was bacardi he ordered when they had found seats at the crowded bar. "Presidents!" he called, and turned again to Sybil. "I want you to try these, dear. They're the nicest things in Cuba." And when the bartender shook them up and set them forth, foaming icily, he ordered, "Mix us up another." "Richard Eustis, you said just one!" "Well, dearest, I don't get married every day. I guess you're going to let me celebrate tonight, aren't you? You'll like this drink, Sib. Here's happiness, sweetheart! ... Fill 'em up again, boy."

MABEL had left them after dinner. "I've some letters to write," she explained. "Oh, Mab, you're only trying to be tactful." "Stick around," Richard urged her good-naturedly. "The night's young yet." But she left them before 10 o'clock. Dinner had been served in their suite. Now it was after midnight. "Rich," Sybil implored, her voice close to tears, "you must come now." She clutched his arm, until, unsteadily, he gained his feet. "If you say I must," he conceded, "I s'pose I must. Sib, o' girl, I'd like mother 'll drink."

It was only a few minutes back to their hotel. "Now, darling," he suggested, as they reached the lobby, "you go ahead, and I'll be up in a few minutes." "You're not going to have anything else to drink, Richard," she demanded, and her voice was hard and sharp as he had never heard it before. "My God, Sybil, you talk like somebody's maiden aunt!"

He put his arm about her shoulders and laughed mockingly. "Only a nightcap, darling. It will make me feel better. I'll be right along." "You needn't bother," she interrupted him huskily, and holding her head high, rang savagely for the elevator. "Listen, sweetheart," he contrived to get to her. "I'm dreadfully sorry, but I've a splitting headache. That's the only reason I want a drink. Sybil, you don't think I want to get drunk tonight, do you? Why, darling, I've been dreaming about this."

"Here's the elevator," she interrupted, and stepped into the little gilded cage. "Twenty minutes later there was a gentle knock at her bedroom door. "The prodigal bridegroom!" cried a loud, glad voice, and Richard bent to kiss her. "Darling! You've been crying!" He kissed her soft, wet face. "Why, Sybil—Sybil—dear—you mustn't. Tears simply lacerate me."

He found his handkerchief, and tried to wipe them all away. Shuddering she turned from him. "Please," she implored, "go away." But he sat on the side of her bed, and stroked her forehead and hair. When she had grown quieter he put his arms about her. And so the night passed.

THE sun was streaming through the broad windows that front the Prado when Richard, tossing restlessly, opened his eyes and groaned. "Oh, my head!" Sybil, at the desk, turned and contemplated him remotely. "You look," she volunteered, "like the wrath of God," and bent again to the paper on which she wrote. Once the pen point stuck, and ink splattered on the whiteness of the Sevilla's crested stationery. She murmured detachedly, and then he heard her pen go scratchingly determinedly on. Scratch. Scratch. Like tacks ripping his brain apart.

He raised himself on one elbow and surveyed her uncertainly. "Please," he asked humbly, "pull that curtain, will you, Sybil? The sun's right in my eyes." She adjusted it, and with her back to the bed, told him, "I'm going out for breakfast with Mabel. You're not going to leave me like this!" "I'll ask the clerk to send someone up."

"But I'm a sick man, Sybil." He moaned with great fervor. "God, I'm sick!" "I am very sorry, Rich." He raised himself in bed. Put his head on his knees, and cradled his body with his arms, rocking back and forth. "I don't believe you know how rotten I feel, dear," he moaned. "I begged you not to drink last night," she reminded him coolly. "I know you did, darling."

"You—you were horrid to me!" Her voice broke on a sob. "Was I, Sib? Oh, Lord!" He broke off to resume his rocking. "What a head! Ring for some ice water, will you? And get me some more of that aspirin." Dutifully she rang, and dutifully poured the light little lid from the box of tablets. "Will two be enough?" she asked dispassionately, and when he had taken them, she started toward the door. "If you knew how sick I am you wouldn't walk out on me like this," he objected miserably. "Oh, yes I would. I know just what I'm doing."

"You're not angry, Sib?" "Angry? Oh, no," there was a world of scorn in her tone—"I'm awfully happy." "I'm sorry, dear. Honestly, I am." He tried to reach her hand. "It was a wretched thing to do."

SHE crossed the big room to the long mirror, powdered her nose from the vanity that hung about her neck, and touched her lips with a crimson stick. Poked a bit of hair up under the little pink hat she wore, and turned to look coldly at her husband. "I'll drop in later to see how you are."

"Sybil!" He jumped from the bed and held her by the shoulders. "I've told you I'm sorry. What else do you expect me to do? Shed a lot of crocodile tears and grovel at your feet? It isn't my fault that I'm sick, is it?" She shrugged with dainty disgust. "See here, Sib—you wouldn't go back on me the very day after we're married? Oh, Lord, darling—I'm crazy about you. You know I am. I can't tell you how sorry I am, sweetheart. I'm too sick to talk."

"Getting sick's nothing," she told him airily. "I'm not angry because you're sick. But getting drunk on your wedding night..." She pressed her handkerchief to her mouth, and sought the mirror again, to hide her tears. "It was beastly of me, darling." "Oh, Rich, you were horrid!" Suddenly she was in his arms—

cries, struggling, caressing. "Sybil—Sybil darling!" "Oh, Rich! Let me go."

"Do you still love me, Sib? Say you love me, dear."

"I—I don't know." He kissed her tears, and rocked her gently. Her hat fell to the floor, and he smoothed her hair tenderly. In an agony of self-reproach he castigated himself.

"I ought to get shot! Sib, don't cry, dear. You break my heart. To think I made you cry! What a thing I turned out to be! Finest little girl in the world. And I'm nothing but a big brute."

FINALLY she stopped him. Put her fingers over his mouth, and drew his head down. "All right, Richie boy. Give me a nice kiss, and we'll put you on probation."

In the mirror across the room Sybil glimpsed her red eyes, and shiny little nose. "See me!" she moaned, "all swollen and homely in front of my new husband."

"You're beautiful!" he contradicted, and kissed her tears away. "Oh, darling, I'm not fit to touch you—don't worthy to kiss your little feet."

She laughed at his humility. "When the devil was sick," she reminded him, "the devil a saint would be. When the devil was well, the devil a saint was he!" and, laughing, she sat on his knee, and ruffled his hair.

"You're not going to have breakfast with Mab?" he questioned her anxiously, like a child begging forgiveness. "No, darling. I'm going to have it with my loving husband."

"Sweetheart!" "And I'm going out now to buy a bouquet from that old flower woman over on the corner. See Rich—Isn't she precious? The one with the big checked apron and the long ear-rings. I'll get a bouquet for you and a corsage for me and some flowers for the table. And you be all bathed and shaved and everything by the time I get back. Hurry up now, or I might get mad again."

"Mrs. Legree!" "Do you feel better, dear?" "Better? I'm on top of the world!" Gaily he hummed a snatch of song—"Sitting on top of the world—"

"Good-by, darling. Hurry back!" When she had gone he crossed the room shakily and reached for the telephone. (To Be Continued)

(How does Richard act on probation? More honeymoon episodes in the next chapter.)



LOVES OLD SWEET SONG

By Williams



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

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FUCKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

By Williams



WASHINGTON TUBBS II

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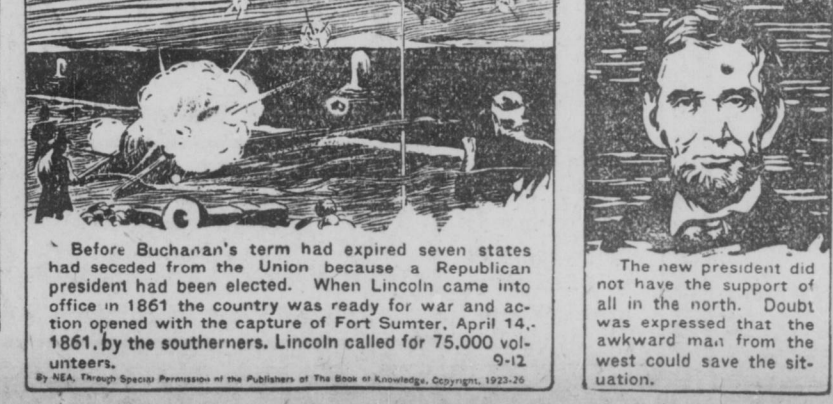
SALESMAN SAM

By Williams



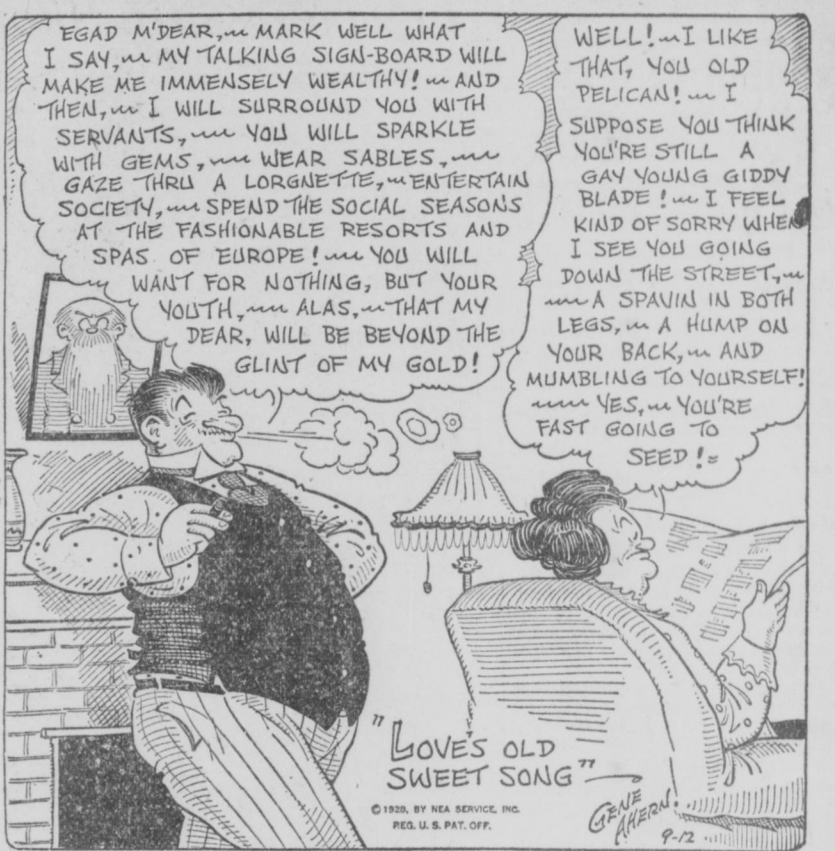
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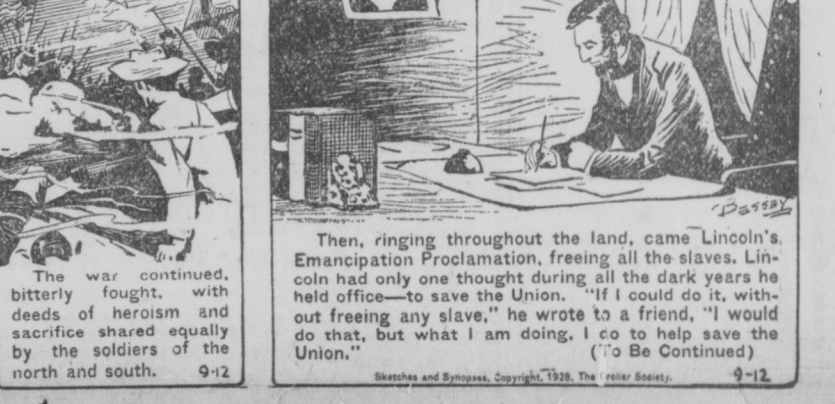
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