

SPOTLIGHT

BEGIN HERE TODAY

SHEILA SHAYNE, dancer, is discharged from a new play because MARION RANDOLPH, the star, is jealous of her. Sheila is working on a musical show soon to open.

DICK STANLEY, rich and socially prominent, asks her to give up this job and marry him. But Sheila refuses. Her idea of marriage is a home in some little town far from Broadway.

Sheila is friendly with JIM BLAINE, another actor in the company, who when she was discharged. When Jim offends Mrs. Randolph, she is fired. She then asks CRAIG ABBOTT, who is backing the show financially, to discharge Jim.

Abbott fired of Marion and her demands goes to see Jim and through him secures an introduction to Sheila. A few days later Sheila learns that Marion is out of the show.

Abbott takes her to tea and offers her the part Marion had. Sheila says she does not want it. Then Abbott asks her to marry him. Sheila refuses, knowing Abbott is not in love with her. A few days later the road company sets out on tour. Sheila becomes friendly with JAPPY, a clown.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE road tour of the "Heigh-Ho" company was proving successful. They visited small towns and larger ones. They found appreciative audiences and dull ones.

All things considered, however, the tour had been doing well. The show was making money. Few other road companies had as good a record. Sheila's specialty dances (there were four from first curtain until closing) always won repeated encores. She was a favorite with every audience and Fletcher, the company manager, had allowed her to have new costumes for the "May Day" number and the little dance in which the spotlight that shone on her varied from red to green to blue.

In one of the larger cities McKee, the comedian, surprised her. "I know a lot of people here," he said. "Played here in stock years ago. There's a Mrs. Raymond—one of the social celebrities—who is giving a charity dance."

"She asked me to come and bring along some one else from the company. I wonder if you'd be willing to go and do your 'May Day' number?"

"Why, of course. I'll be glad to." "Good. It's \$25 in your pocket," McKee explained. "Mrs. Raymond's a good sort and it's her charity—not ours."

Sheila nodded. "I can use the \$25," she said.

For two days she looked forward eagerly to the night of the charity dance. It was to be a glimpse, close at hand, of the life that to her seemed the most attractive in the world.

THE night came but it didn't, somehow, quite reach Sheila's expectations. In Mrs. Raymond's home she found herself in a different world. She was the same age as many of the girls she met there. She looked much as they did, dressed similarly.

She shared the same youthful dreams of romance, gaiety, adventure. But Sheila was an outsider in spite of all this. For some reason a barrier existed, shutting her off from these young people.

She didn't seem to get around it or climb over it. Sheila remained apart.

As she danced the "May Day" number, her feet weaving in and out in the complicated steps, she could hear whispered approval.

A polite patter of applause at the end clearly showed that the dance had been appreciated.

"Good work!" McKee whispered as Sheila took a seat again at his side. He was not performing. Sheila noticed with interest that here he was accepted as a guest.

Many people seemed to know him. He moved, easy and assured, among the others. Some of them called him "Ralph," shook hands and spoke of the days years before when he had played weekly at the local theater.

"Well, how'd you like it?" McKee asked the girl whether they drove back to the hotel. "Would you like to change places with any of those girls?"

Sheila hesitated. "It's an attractive life," she said. "I don't suppose they have many responsibilities. I guess they do just about as they please every day and never have to work."

"You should see them after a hard set of tennis." "That's not what I mean," McKee patted her arm. "I know it isn't," he said. "But you must remember there are two sides of the picture. Most of them would give their right eye to be behind the footlights. They envy you, Sheila."

The season rolled on. The play was a success and Sheila was winning recognition as a dancer. Newspaper criticisms of the play always mentioned her name.

Sometimes this praise was extravagant. It didn't make her more popular with other principals in the company, but the manager appreciated it.

McKee liked to see her receive good notices. He continued to invite her to suppers after the show, to show her little favors and give her advice from his long experience. These attentions were always impersonal. Often he talked about his wife and family. He never tried to make love to Sheila.

PRESENTLY the Samper Sisters arrived to join the troupe. Parts had been written into the show for them. It was felt that "Heigh-ho" needed some new material and the Sampers' act provided that.

The girls dressed exactly alike. They came on the stage with little shuffling steps crooning a song in close harmony that was unlike any other singing Sheila ever had heard. The Sampers were not particularly pretty girls, but they were rated clever. They danced and sang in unison, their voices blending like notes of a violin, their agile steps matching perfectly.

They had a dressing room which they all used. They ate together after the show. On pay days one of them always was to be seen scurrying to the postoffice to send money home, holding out only what the sisters would need for living expenses.

"How's your beau?" Tillie Samper asked Sheila one evening as they

walked in the wings for the leading lady's song to come to a close.

"Which one?"

"The one you loaned me one evening. Jim something-or-other. He's rich, isn't he?" Tillie spoke wistfully. With the exception of Clara, who was married to a vaudeville headliner, the Samper girls had been beau-less.

"Maybe. But he didn't earn his money."

Tillie nodded. "That's all right. Earning money isn't everything. I think men are afraid of girls who earn good salaries, Sheila."

"Maybe they are."

"That was another angle of the old argument. Home life or a profession for a girl? Sheila thought about it, but couldn't come to any decision."

She knew that for herself she wanted a home. She was making progress, however, as a dancer, gaining assurance and winning recognition. If she followed McKee's advice, returned to Broadway and landed a part there she might become a star.

What would that mean? Only that she was farther and farther away from the dream of her heart.

CHRISTMAS week brought the troupe to a large middlewestern city. The week passed almost exactly like any other with two exceptions. It meant seven days in one place instead of two or three brief engagements and it meant an extra matinee on Christmas day.

Business in the theater was not particularly good. People seemed to prefer to spend the holidays at home or in the homes of relatives and friends instead of going to the theater.

Suddenly Sheila discovered that she wanted to be back in New York. She wanted to feel the cold North river wind against her cheeks, to hear the bustle of Broadway traffic.

She wanted to look at shop windows, to see the twinkling lights in giant office buildings, to drive through Central park and to sit at cozy restaurant tables talking about plays and players with other troupers.

She wanted to see Dick Stanley, too. Now that the tour was drawing to a close, Sheila heard from Dick often. Yes, it would be fun to be back in New York and see Dick, and Jim Blaine, and Trevor Lane.

Sheila thought of Myrt and wondered how life was treating her. Alone one afternoon in her hotel room, she sat down and wrote Myrt a long, rambling letter.

The answer came back almost immediately. Myrt was well, married to George now, and very happy. They had moved into an apartment in the Bronx.

Sheila promised to come to see Sheila as soon as the company returned to New York and Sheila must come up and have dinner with Myrt and George.

Well, it was better for Myrt to be married. As the wife of a steady, substantial business man, her future would be settled and safe.

Myrt would make a go of it, too. She would buy cook books, shop for bargains, keep her home in order. Yes, she would make George a good wife.

The letter from Myrt increased Sheila's loneliness, made her even more anxious to return to New York.

The show played a series of stands in Indiana and Michigan. And then something happened which restored Sheila's affection for the road.

(To Be Continued)

Rabbit Born Earless

HOLLISTER, Cal., Jan. 30.—A rabbit, born without ears but perfectly normal in every other respect, has been sent by W. W. Whaley, rancher, to the University of California for study. Four other rabbits of the same little were normal.

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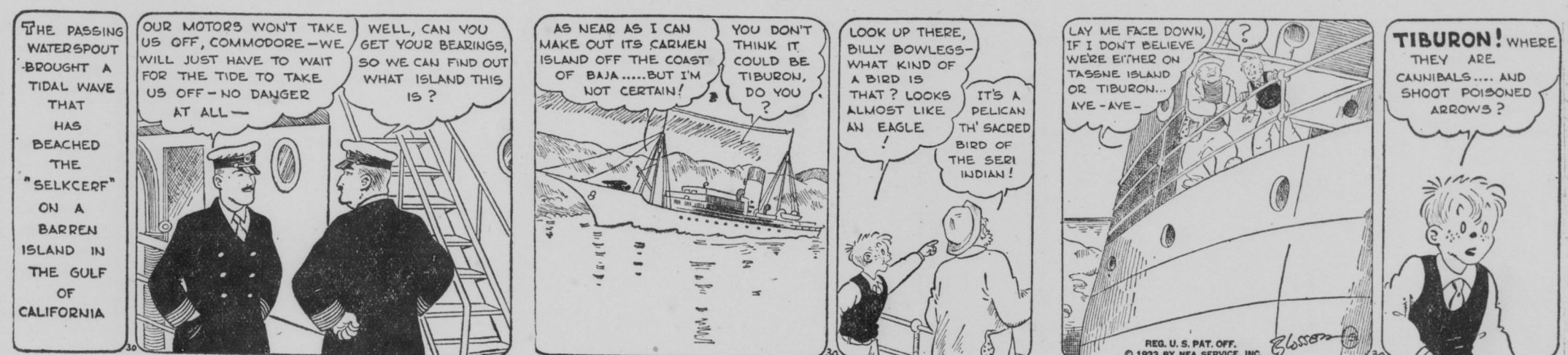
OUR BOARDING HOUSE

—By Ahern



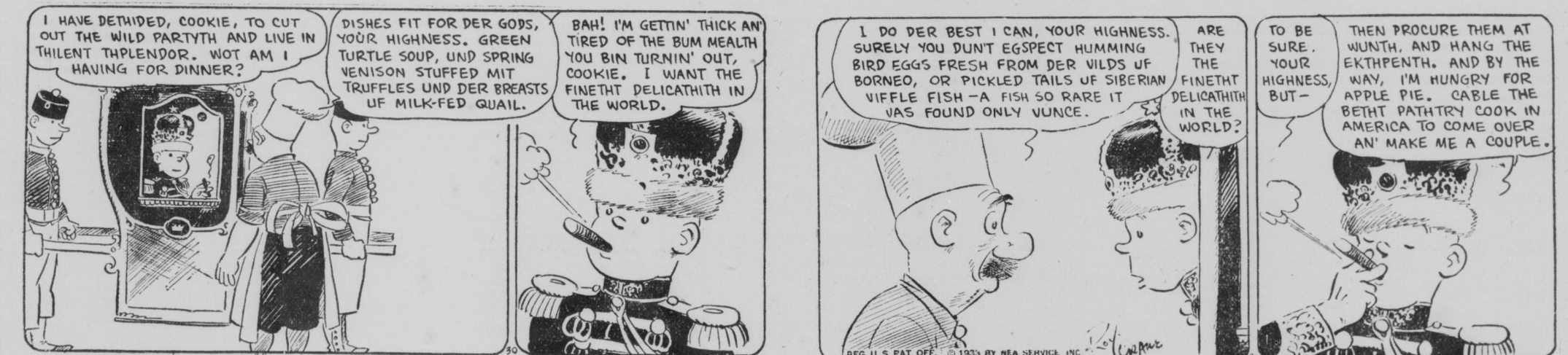
FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

—By Blosser



WASHINGTON TUBBS II

—By Crane



SALESMAN SAM

—By Small



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

—By Martin



TARZAN THE UNTAMED

—By Edgar Rice Burroughs



He guessed that in the village he would soon find her whom he sought. As though stalking a wary prey, Tarzan moved noiselessly about the palisade, listening and sniffing. From an overhanging tree he dropped into the village.

From hut to hut he went, searching. The warriors lay all about, in drunken stupor. At last, faintly, he found the delicate scent he sought, hanging over a small hut. No sound came from within.

A WORLD OF FLAVOR

WRIGHT'S

KEPT RIGHT IN CELLOPHANE