

Today's Short Story

## AFTER THE CONCERT

By Alma and Paul Ellerbe

IT was during a concert in the Metropolitan Opera House. One of those Sunday night performances when they give you a sort of musical combination salad composed of assorted choppings from operas.

Stephanie, a beginning music teacher, and Francis, a beginning doctor, often came to them, because neither she nor he had much money. They were both extremely fond of music, and these Sunday night affairs were inexpensive. Stephanie sat between two vacant seats. One of them was Francis and the other her aunt's, who had developed a headache and been unable to come. Francis was a lamb, about including her in things like this, and the little old lady was as fond of music as they were.

She was supposed to be chaperoning Stephanie here in New York, though they lived a couple of miles apart. Francis himself had no doubt attended by this time to the patient who had telephoned just as they started, and should be joining her now at any moment. It was rather an event for Francis to have a patient. It was still only a matter of weeks since he had acquired an office.

SOMEBODY was singing "Caro Nome," from "Rigoletto," and the worn cadences slipped through Stephanie's mind almost without registering; she had heard it too often. She thought, instead, about Francis. She thought they were as headed for marriage as a couple of homegoing horses for the barn. It was depressing. Each, from the other's point of view, was so entirely eligible; so nice; so suitable; so presentable. Did she love him? She wished she knew. She was fond of him and he loved her—which, of course, wasn't enough—not by a blamed sight. But there was no other reason in earth why not, so she supposed that unquestionably, eventually, they would. Yes, it was depressing. She certainly hadn't meant to get married like this. She had meant to get married romantically, adventurously, at the end of a whirlwind courtship. In spite of her knowledge of music, she was still pretty young—as, indeed, was Francis.

THE tripping cadences of "Caro Nome" having come to an end, she looked around her. It was the intermission. Audiences interested her. She began picking out of this one nice, suitable, presentable young men and comparing them with Francis—considerably, as a rule, to his advantage. Wondering, first about this one and then about that, if she had been in love with him, whether she could have been happy with him.

That was kind of daring and had a good bit of a kick in it. It also cheered her up greatly about Francis, making her realize anew how attractive he was. She had not, however, noticed the young man at the other end of the tenth row until an usher brought her a program with words penciled in its blank spaces. He explained that they were a young man's words and he had requested that she read them.

Then she noticed him attentively and met his eyes looking attentively at her. At that distance she rather liked him. Intelligent looking, forceful, an individual. Not run-of-the-mill. Not just like everybody else. There were so many nice young men in the world who were just like everybody else. At first she thought, naturally, that he must be some one she knew. And then she saw he wasn't, and froze him ever so slightly and read what he had written.

I HAVE met that girl in the row in front of you, two seats to your left, just once. You can look at her and see how nice she is." Stephanie looked; the girl was nice, "and that she'd never say anything in a thousand years you wanted to hear." Stephanie looked again and judged it to be true. "I was about to get up and go talk to her, when suddenly I thought: Why don't I go talk to that other girl, who would have something to say I'd want to hear? Just because I didn't happen to meet her that time at Bill Weatherbee's cocktail party? You were there, but nobody introduced us. Do you remember?" Stephanie remembered the cocktail party, but not the young man.

I decided that wasn't a good enough reason. If you agree with me (my name's Gilmer Parkinson, Jr.: Senior is a reputable coffee importer here in New York and I work for him) raise your hand to your hair, and I'll come on over. If you don't, just don't raise your hand to your hair, and I won't. I'll even apologize if you want me to—though I won't quite know what it's for."

"YOU know perfectly well what it's for," Stephanie said, when he had come on over and she had duly extracted the apology and he was sitting beside her in her aunt's place. "What you did was green and silly and bad manners. Besides, it was dangerous, because I might have bored you to death; or, what's far more serious, you might have bored me."

She could say it safely, because now that he was there, she could tell at a glance that he wasn't boring.

He laughed ungrudgingly. "True enough," he said, sitting there as if he had always known each other, emanating somehow his essential nice ness and sensibleness and trustworthiness. He was as easy to tell about as a dog—"true enough, but trite. It is impossible to live without running risks. It is impossible to have any fun without deliberately increasing them. Think of marriage, for instance."

"It's just what I was thinking of," Stephanie said soberly, and looked up, and there was Francis.

"Dr. Francis Bannister," she said. "—my oldest New York friend"; (she hadn't been in the city very long) "and Gilmer Parkinson, my newest."

AND when Francis had got him self settled, "I acquired him," she said, because she greatly wanted to see how Francis would take it, "through this," and showed Francis the other man's note.

Francis took it very badly. He was grumpy.

"I'er—I see," he said, handing back the scribbled-up program. "Quite like the Arabian Nights, isn't it? Quite romantic."

He sat, plainly, in the seat of the censor, and he disapproved. For the first time since he had known him, Francis forgot his manners. Francis something unfurled like a red danger flag inside

## OUR BOARDING HOUSE

—By Ahern

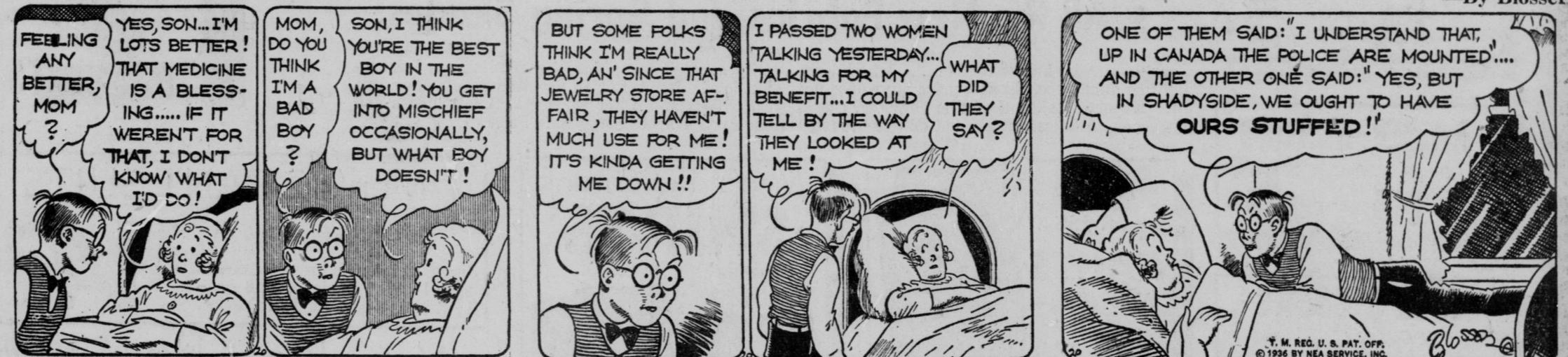


## OUT OUR WAY

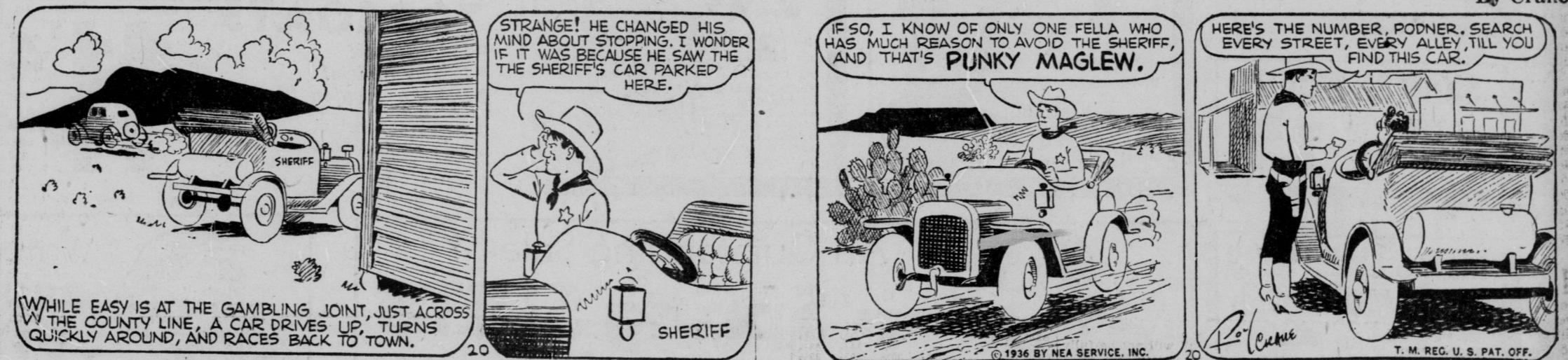
—By Williams



## FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



## WASHINGTON TUBBS II



## ALLEY OOP



## BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



## THE TARZAN TWINS



The appearance of the second elephant, which he believed to be Gudah's ally, gave Tarzan occasion to urge once more that the apes retreat. The two beasts, he knew, were unconquerable; and they would only be infuriated by the wounds which he and the apes could inflict.

But the sight of the fresh foe only kindled anew the flames of battle—fury that burned in the hearts of Makahtah and his warrior apes. "We kill—kill—kill!" they screamed, and their minds could harbor no other thought. "Tarzan help us kill Gudah! Kill! Kill! Kill!"

Once more Tarzan considered whether he should remain and fight with the apes, or flee and resume his search for the Tarzan Twins. In either case his honor would be blushed, for he owed a duty both to Dick and Doc and to the hairy friends of his jungle youth.

Seeking some means of solving his dilemma, he turned toward the other elephant which was sweeping with rolling gait toward the battlefield. The iron-nerved Jungle Lord was surprised, but now he could hardly suppress a gasp as he beheld the second beast nearby.

## UNION NAMES LEADERS

Workers Co-operative at Real Silk Chooses Officers.

Officers of the Workers Co-operative Union of Real Silk Hosiery Mills, formerly the Employees Mutual Benefit Association, were announced today.

They are: Isadore Krieger, president; Walter Roth, vice president; Clayton L. Rogers, secretary; Frank M. Smith, treasurer, and Forest Badders, treasurer.

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