

ABIE AN' SLATS



Serial Story

## 'Tambay Gold'

By Samuel Hopkins Adams

## CHAPTER FOUR

"YOU mean it right, I guess," I said to Judy's offer to help. "But—well, kind hearts are more coronets and all that, but they don't make a cook out of a society deb."

"I'm no deb," she said. "And I've got no illusions about cooking. My theory is I might be able to help with the dishes when there's a rush. It would give me something to do," she said.

I don't think she realized what a cry for help it was. "O.K., I said."

THE NOON R. D. brought a note from Angel Todd, enclosing two tickets for the game.

"Tell that little brown gipsy of yours she is coming peacefully or do I send the patrol wagon."

I showed her the note, but she just shook her head.

It was more to see Judy, I expect, than to pay his little bill that fetched Angel back next morning.

"What's this niece stuff, Mom?" "A stall," I told him. "Protection. Keep off the grass. Use no hooks. Beware the dog."

He shook his head. "That gal don't need any barbed wire fencing. Say, Mom, what's the matter with her, anyway? I tackled her again about the Rogues' Dance. Is there anything wrong with that?"

"Did she act like there was?"

"She didn't act like anything in the girl line that I ever was up against."

"Don't let it throw you, Big Boy. She's off the world, that's all."

THE SOUNDS of spade working inside the stockade caught his ear. "That must be that louse, Oliver, digging his Indians," he said.

"Where do you get that louse stuff?"

He grinned. "He'd like to give me the heave-ho out of school. He's sore because he thinks I elected his course for a snap."

"Did you?"

"Sure I did. It. It always was a snap till he came."

He listened again and his face got thoughtful. "Maybe it isn't Indians he's digging for at that."

"What else would it be?"

"I told you there was a gold strike back in the hills."

"This isn't the hills, by 50 good miles."

"No. But there might be a wash down the river."

HE HIT the road and I went back to my duty by my traveling pal. Up to now I had been keeping Dolf under cover, because I'd learned to go slow about springing him on the public. Folks have silly prejudices against skunks.

Nobody was in sight, so I slipped the leash and Dolf went out for a looksee. First he walked all around the grubwagon to make

sure that everything was jake, then he jogged over and sniffed at Loren Oliver's footprints and the stockade door, and finally he leaped across sand disappeared down toward the river bed.

A big old tree trunk stuck out into the stream, and a funny, squatly little man in a queer jacket and an outlandish red cap was fishing from it and talking pleasant and friendly to my pal who sat on the shore watching him. Pretty soon Redcap caught a small chub, took it off the hook, carried it in and offered it to Dolf. Dolf understood that all right.

When the man went out on his trail again, Dolf was followed.

"Well I'll be a thissenhat!" I said.

THE little man go up and made a jerky, foreign bow. I opened him up with some questions and he told me that he fished three days when he couldn't find any odd jobs to do. While we were getting acquainted, there was a heavy buzzing sound, far off and far up.

Well, it was nothing but the north-bound mail plane. But the little foreigner threw his hands in the air, and up the bank he went. He made a run for the stockade and swarmed right up over those high pallings like a squirrel.

The noise of the plane died away. Oliver opened the gate and walked out with his hand on the man's shoulder.

"You'll be all right now," he said.

The man went back to his tree where Dolf was waiting.

"Who is he?" I asked Oliver.

"They call him Old Swaby. He's a Slovener refugee."

"Crazy?"

"Only when an airplane comes over. He saw his wife and two children gunned to death by a passing aviator."

"Doc," I said. "I guess I've been

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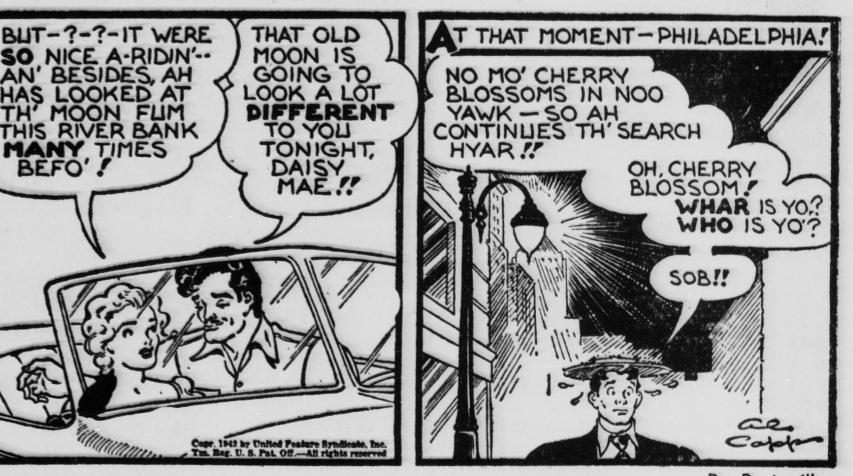
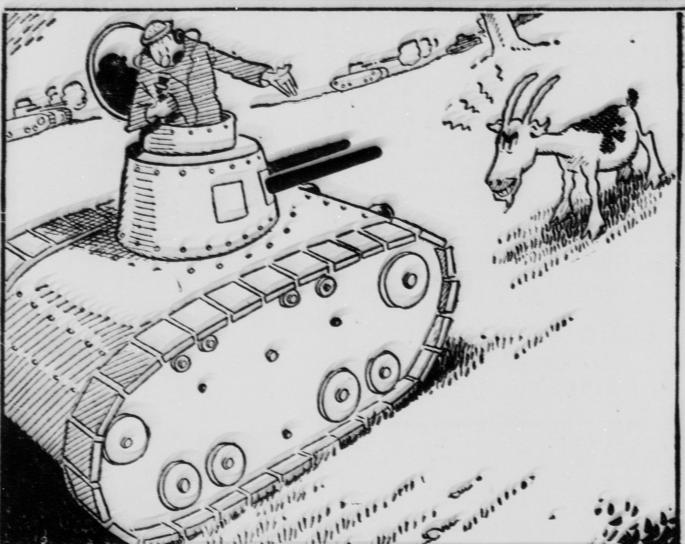
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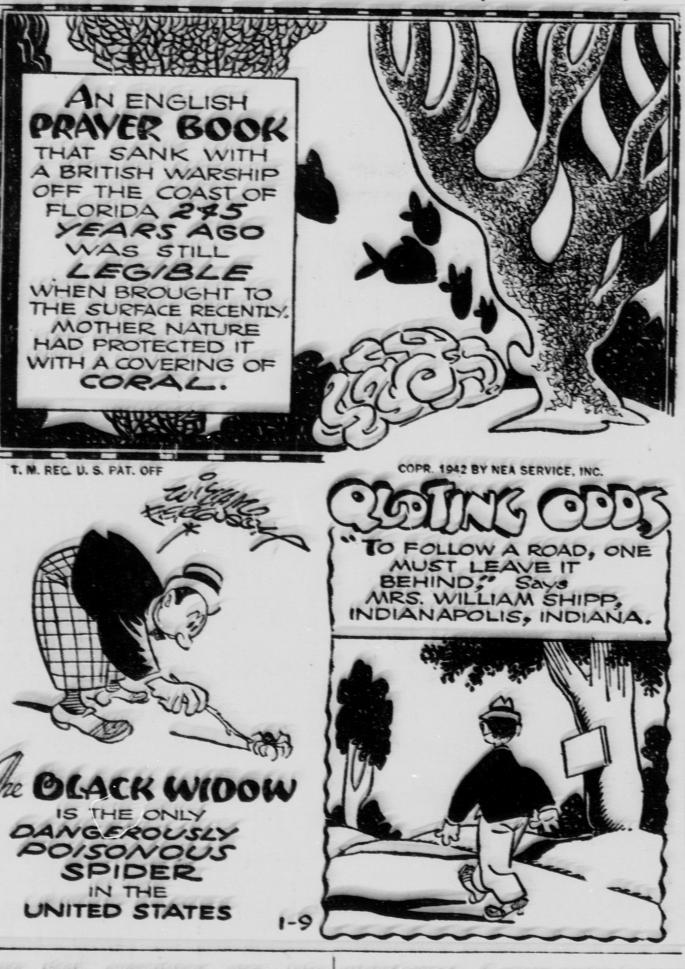
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