

ABBEY AN SLATS

By Reeburn Van Buren



Serial Story—

Kings Row

By Henry Bellman

CHARACTERS: Schoolmates in small town Kings Row are orphaned Parris Mitchell, desperately ill after overwork of childhood sweetheart Renee beats her, who has away; "all boy" Drake McHugh; tomboy Bandy Monaghan; beautiful Cassandra Tower who has doctor father, town mystery, takes her out of school after social snub from Gordon; Louise Gordon, leading physician's daughter; half-wit Benny Singer, brutal of schoolboy jokes. Other characters: Madame von Elm, French grandmother of Parris whom he adores; surgeon Dr. Gordon, whom Parris fears; lawyer Skelington.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RENEE WAS GONE. He knew he would never see her again. He felt his stomach shake, but his eyes were quite dry.

"Parris! My darling child—you mustn't. I'll try to send for Renee if you'll be very quiet and not worry."

He knew his grandmother could not. Never, never, never!

"What time is it?"

"Why—I don't know, child. Almost seven, I suppose."

"I mean—no, no—I mean what time this week?"

"Oh—it's Sunday."

"Goodness! Why, I got sick last Tuesday, didn't I?"

"Longer than that, dear. It's the middle of August."

"The middle—of—August?" He whispered the words. "Have I been—"

"You've been unconscious for weeks, Parris."

"What's the matter with me?"

"You've had fever."

He was silent for a few minutes. He turned his head very slowly on the pillow and looked out of the window. "When—when did she go away?"

"What? Oh! The Gyllinsons left just the day after you took sick."

"Why?"

"Well, even told me he had the offer of better wages and he'd have to go."

"Did Renee—did—?" He couldn't frame the question.

"I didn't see Renee, Parris. Anna said she came to the kitchen that morning. She thought Renee seemed very frightened—maybe because she heard you were so sick. She ran away again very quickly. I even made up his mind very suddenly. It seemed queer."

"Where did they go?"

"I don't know, dear. I don't think even told anyone. He packed up in a hurry and went off. I think down toward the Ozark Mountains, somewhere. Now don't talk any more. You'll be getting strong soon, now."

His convalescence was slow and tedious. Gradually he learned to take a few steps, and then to walk without leaning on Anna.

It was a long time before he could bring himself to go much as look toward the Gyllinson cottage. He wanted to lie down and cry when he thought of Renee and what had happened to her. He blamed himself. He could hear again her voice saying, "Maybe we'd better go back."

"I guess Uncle Henry could hitch up and take me to school next week, couldn't he?" Parris asked the question a bit diffidently one morning at breakfast. "I guess I couldn't walk that far yet?"

Madame folded her napkin carefully and placed it beside her plate. "You're not going to school this year, Parris."

"WHA-AT?" His eyes opened wide with astonishment.

"You won't be strong enough to start next week, and I have decided to get a tutor for you this winter. You can study at home."

"Oh, goodness!" The tone of his voice dropped a little. It was mixed with dismay. School was really not bad. He had been looking forward to seeing everybody again.

"Besides," Madame continued, "you need study in German and French; that you don't get at school."

"Oh, dear. I don't know—"

"I'll arrange at Aberdeen College to get a nice young man to come here and hear your lessons. Of course you can go on with your piano lessons if you want to."

It was settled. "All right."

It was not until Thurston St. George called on his grandmother one warm afternoon that Parris

FUNNY BUSINESS



"We'll have to make it snappy, madam! This is an ice cube—I lost my crystal ball!"

learned, from their conversation, the nature of his illness.

"So this is your grandson!" Massive Mr. St. George affected surprise. "I'd never have known you, boy. Been sick, I hear."

"Yes, sir."

"What's the matter?"

Madame interrupted hastily. "It seems to have been a spell of brain fever."

"Hm. That's not so good. Been studying too hard, sonny?"

"I—I don't think so, sir."

"Parris, ask Anna to make some lemonade."

The talk had run to other matters when he returned with glasses and a pitcher making a pleasant tinkle of ice.

"By the way, Marie, Mr. St. George was saying, 'I hear you've lost your overseer. Know old Tom Carr?'"

"Oh, yes. Big bushy head of white hair? I've seen him."

"Believe he'd be a good man for you."

"Well, I might talk to him."

"Tell you what. I'm riding out that way tomorrow. I'll send him around. I'd like to see him get a good place. Surely you remember the Carrs?"

"Don't recall them, Thurston."

"They came here from New York state. Had some money. Started off in his style—horse, carriage, everything. He tried trading in real estate. Lost it all. Wife went crazy—she's been in the asylum here twice, but he keeps her at home now and looks after her himself. He's a good man."

"Um—send him to see me."

"It'd be a mercy, ma'am, if you could take him. I heard she was a graduate of Vassar College back there, but she's crazy as a loon now. Got dropsy, too. Fat as an elephant."

"Dangerous, do you think? I wouldn't want to have—"

"Oh, no, no! Not at all. Just sits and stings. Too fat to move."

"Heavens. I'll be glad if I can help the poor man. What a life that must be!"

THE FIRES OF Indian summer burned on every hill, and the nostalgic odors of autumn filled the air. It was the most stirring of all seasons in this region.

One warmish day a crowd of boys swarmed down the hill after school, shouting the relief of their escape from the stuffy classrooms. It was Fulmer Green's "gang."

Fulmer Green had won through to undisputed leadership after two years of bullying fights and the commission of such minor depredations as gained him the admiration and adherence of his kind. His mother, ambitious for a better standing in Kings Row since they had moved "uptown," tried to break Fulmer's old associations. So far she was unsuccessful.

The boys swooped down the hill and passed through the tiny streets of Jinktown.

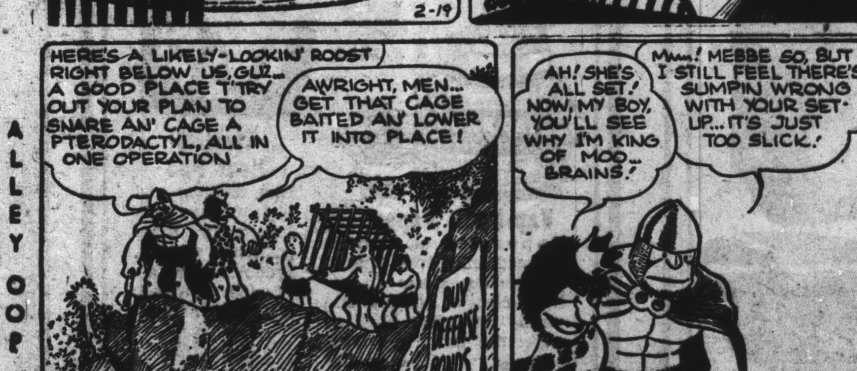
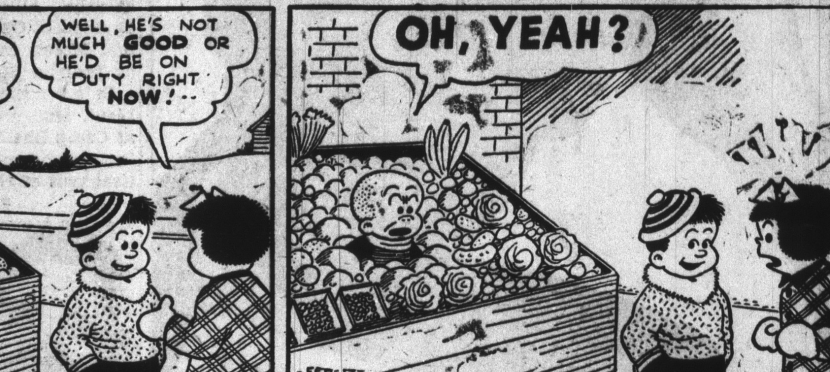
"Looky!" Fulmer Green pointed to the blue cottage at the end of the street. "That's where ol' crummy Ben lives." He picked up a rock and threw it in a long easy curve. It landed with a loud thump on the rotten shingles. The boys looked gleefully.

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With Major Hoople

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By Williams



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FEATURES

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