

# FAMILY TALK!

Story of a World Dictator

By H. C. WELLS  
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## LORD HORATIO

When Rud met the Popular Socialist Boss he hated him, he hated him immediately and without qualification. His intention of impressing him deeply winning his confidence, betraying and supplanting him, was replaced by a vehement desire to destroy him, annihilating him, completely and at once. Rud the political learner, at the mere sight of Lord Horatio, gave way to the more primitive Rud, Rud the vindictive destroyer.

He had expected to encounter a foolish figure, but he had not expected to encounter so exasperatingly vain and foolish a figure. He had thought he was bringing a considerable contribution to the Popular Socialist movement in the shape of his natural eloquence, rapid comprehension and gusty energy. He found Lord Horatio incapable of appreciating any gift but his own. Lord Horatio was seated before a great, ornamental, unbusinesslike desk with a large inkstand and impressive papers and accessories. He was posed as an eighteenth-century Whig gentleman. But he was smoking a cigarette and there was a small, aged, woman stenographer among the more monumental desk things. He was wearing a frogged purple velvet tuxedo and a white shirt collar was open to reveal his neck picturesquely. To his left was a large table bearing a litter of pamphlets, cutting, proofs, memorandum pads and even books, and looking over this barrier appeared the upper part of the face of a small, aged, woman stenographer, who had been taking down his Lordship's correspondence.

She rose to go at Rud's entry.

"No, no," said Lord Horatio, with a restraining gesture of an elegant hand, "we shan't be long."

He had given Rud the benefit of his profile the ruddy forelock the Corinthian nose, the rather underhung jaw. Now he half turned to face Rud. The expression of his eyes too close-set eyes was designed to convey hypnotic penetration.

"Well," he said with a certain condescension, "what do you want?"

## CHAPTER XVII

### LORD BOHUN

Lord Bohun, insolent behind his desk had made no sign that Rud should sit down. Rud had an impulse to seize a chair and plant himself, but there was no chair. His scowl intensified. He came up to the desk and stood over Bohun. He had the infuriating thought that he must look rather like an undergardener aping for a situation.

"The Popular Socialist program expresses very much what I feel," he said, "I'm prepared to throw in my lot with you. What are we going to do?"

"That means work."

"What else can it mean?"

"What can you do?"

"Speak."

"Have you been trained?"

"I've debated in the Union with certain success."

"But in the real world I said, have you been trained? Our speakers are trained men."

"If you mean the poor little list of pros and cons of yours—"

For once Rud was at a loss for words.

"Do you fancy you have a platform patronage?" said Lord Horatio. "I wonder. How tall are you?"

There was a pause. If Lord Horatio had not been so occupied with his own "patronage" he might have remarked the extreme malignity of the face before him.

"I'm two inches taller than Napoleon," said Rud.

"Remarkable! But for platform work you require more than a coincidence of that sort. You want a definite, commanding personality. Even I have had to study and drill myself. You have to dominate. Frankly I think you're too short. But there are really questions for Commander Hoggin. He is in control of all the training work. You ought not to have come to me. Who sent you up? Rogers? Oh! Rogers. . . I've no doubt Commander Hoggin can see you, but the first and last thing he'll do is to give you a discipline and obedience."

He turned the wonderful hypnotic gaze of the leader full upon the new adherent, but it did not have much effect on him.

"But do you know who I am?" said Rud. "Do you know what I can do?"

Hoggin must see to all that.

For a moment Rud was at a loss. He turned to go and then thought of something to say. "Why the hell don't you have chairs here for people to sit down?" he asked. "It's damned unwell."

He went toward the door.

"One moment, my boy," he heard behind him.

"Yes?"

"The Salute?"

Lord Horatio was standing up and looking very scandalized and stern and commanding. He had apparently not heard of the impossible sneeze about the chairs.

"How? Salute?"

Lord Horatio lifted his hand and Rud, reciprocating, Lord Horatio dropped his hand and so did Rud. Honors were equal. Then Rud slammed the door and found himself trembling and feeling sick.

Bohun stood for a time staring at the slammed door.

"We'll lick him into shape, Mrs. Crumb," he said. "We'll lick him into shape. Yes. . . By the way, did The Times print yesterday's letter? Who is it of the Times who makes all these needless difficulties about my letters? It gets worse and worse."

But his mind was on Rud.

"Who the devil was that, Mrs. Crumb? I've never seen him before."

"I'll get him documented, my lord. He joined up only last week."

"He's quite an untried man?"

"I'll get whatever dossier we have."

**RUD GETS SNUBBED**

Rud's second encounter with the Boss was if possible more exasperating than the first. Rud spent four days turning their first meeting over to his mind and by that time he was ready with an ultimatum. He made it without consulting his associates. He had learned that Lord Horatio was going to Liverpool for

generally much larger. Moreover that ruler might serve as a missile! If he thought of it.

Rud closed the door behind himself and stood quivering on the landing.

"Damn the idiot!" he said.

Lord Horatio stood very still at his desk, dilating and contracting his nostrils almost as though he was about breathing exercises. Anger illuminated him—the eyes of Mrs. Crumb.

"I was afraid," whispered Mrs. Crumb, all limp in her chair. "I was afraid—you might kill him."

"He's just wanting discipline," said Lord Horatio. "I'll break him in yet. I've dealt with tougher stuff than that. . . Have you ordered the car? Hotel? No. I'm staying with Lady Carboes."

**RUD TASTES DEFEAT**

Rud went out of the Purple House in a preoccupied manner. "O. K.?" asked Dred as he came downstairs.

"No," said Rud curtly. . . He felt he had made a mess of the whole affair. He ought to have consulted the B. M. G. before this second encounter with Bohun. He did not want to go back to Steenhold's flat to make premature explanations to him or any of them, and still less did he want to return to his dismal little apartment. He felt he could never make a tolerable story about this paralyzing quarrel. He would go for a walk. He would just walk. He would spend his anger in walking. It was a mild plan, and he was walking clear and clear after a while. He was walking northward and southward and for miles, first west until the sunset got into his eyes, and then northward and southward. He was walking and the Northern Heights. He sat for a long time in a tea-shop in Hounslow, brooding; he got a sausage—and—mashed in a little pub out toward Barnet. Afterwards he found a friendly wayside seat and sat on it for some time. Then his feet were getting very tired and his small change low, he established himself in a belated confectioner's shop at Highgate over a glass of soda and milk, and when that establishment closed he went home, refreshed himself with a wash and repaired at last to Camberne Square.

Saturday night in Steenhold's flat was not one of the B. M. G. nights, and none of the group was there. Instead there was an influx of unseasonal spirits, interested in the world of dramatic art and poetry and literary journalism. Many of the people were quite unknown to Rud, and Steenhold was plainly giving polite. "How goes it?" asked Steenhold.

"No ten," said Rud. "I'll have a drink and sit a bit and then go to bed."

He sat about ineffectively and he disliked the company very much. The talk splashed about his disreputable suitcases. He disliked them more and more. It loathes concentration. It fits from novelty to novelty. It must be fed by events and challenges and held to its objective by conflict. It puts world affairs on a level with any one of the minor arts. That night Rud had the complete conviction that things had slipped out of his hands altogether. He did not talk and they betrayed no desire to hear him talk; he felt that they were convinced they had heard all he had to say, and were taking new about other things, about their damned

little plays and pictures and novels and biographies and any old thing of that sort, beyond his peculiar range. His was effaced. He drank several mugs of beer and smoked more cigarettes than were good for him, he tried to intervene in two discussions he knew nothing about, and finally went home stiff and footsore to bed. (To be Continued)

**"White Christmas" For Maritimes**

HALIFAX, Dec. 23 (CP)—The Maritimes looked forward tonight to what is supposed to be the first general "white Christmas" in several years.

Prince Edward Island boasted of nine inches of snow, swept into drifts by a 20-mile breeze. Trains and buses were running behind schedule.

Snow flurries were general over Nova Scotia during the day and temperatures remained slightly below the freezing point with prospects of dropping further.

**YOUR FEET HURT?**

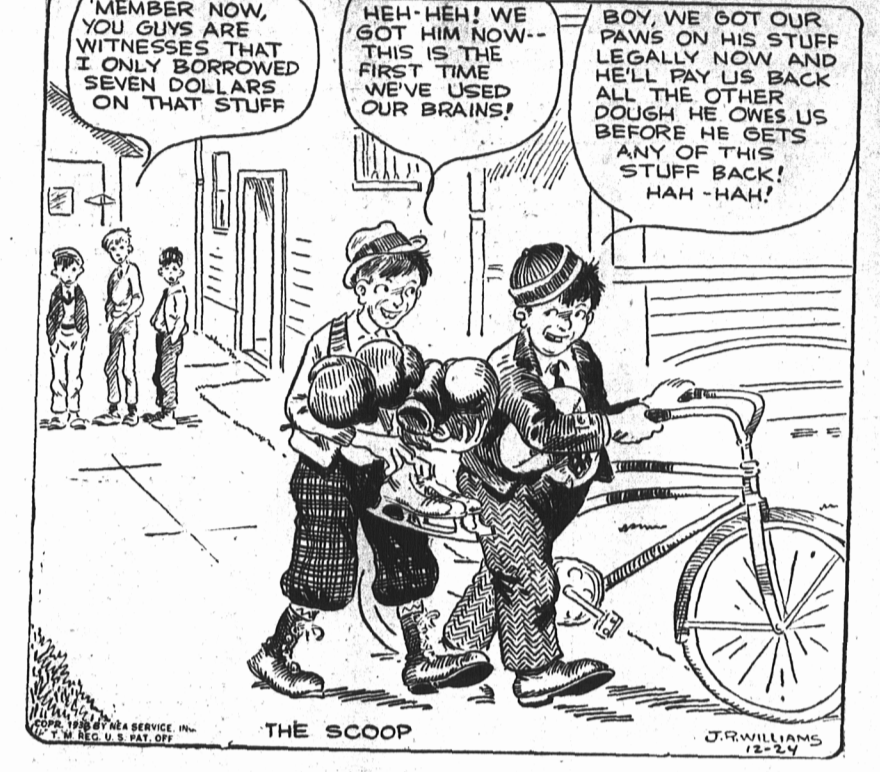
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## OUT OUR WAY

## OUR BOARDING HOUSE With Major Hoopie



## BRINGING UP FATHER

## By George McManu.



## Thimble Theatre, Starring POPEYE—Now Showing—"If It Drops It'll Be An 'Accident'."



## TIPPIE and "CAP" STUBS

## By Edwina



## TILLIE THE TOILER—THERE'S NO DISGUISHING TOUGH LUCK.

## By Westover



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