BURGESS BEDTIME STORIES

(By Thornton W. Burgess)

The perfect home is always neat;
No smallest detail incomplete.
Mrs. Hummer

A very busy person was tiny Mrs. Hummer. She is one who wastes no time when she has something to be done. She was building a home. Perhaps I shouldn't say building. It isn't just the word to describe such dainty work. You see that little nest, no bigger around than half a dollar, was being made of soft brown cotton from the stems of ferns. It is called fern cotton, though it really isn't cotton. Yes, sir, that little home was being made of cotton and silk. The finest kind of silk. The kind that Spiders and Caterpillars spin. It was with these silken threads that this nest was bound to the twig she had chosen after looking and looking in many trees to find the right place.

She had shaped her nest by sitting in it as she fashioned the walls, adding bit after bit of the cotton and turning around and around as she did so. Mrs. Robin shapes her nest in much the same manner.

Peter Rabbit came over every day to watch her. She paid no attention to him. She went right on about her business. He saw her dart from the base of one tree to another and he was puzzled. She seemed to be getting something from those trees, but what it was he couldn't see. Was she getting something to eat? The very first chance he had he asked her.

"Certainly not!" replied little Mrs. Hummer in her high squeaky voice. "What in the world would I be getting to eat from the bark of a tree?"

"I didn't know," confessed Peter "That is why I asked. If you are not getting something to eat, what are you getting?"

"That, Peter Rabbit, is no business whatever of yours," squeaked Mrs. Hummer and the squeak was sharp.

"I know it," replied Peter humbly.

"Then what did you ask me for?" squeaked the busy little bird without stopping her work.

"Because I wanted to know, and the best way to find out about things is to ask questions. Folks who never ask questions never learn much," said Peter.

"That is just curiosity," declared little Mrs. Hummer, and darted away.

When she returned Peter was sure she had something in the tip of that long bill of hers, but he couldn't see just what. She settled herself in the nest, leaned over for a moment and was very busy. What was she doing? Peter couldn't see. That nest was too far above him for him to see clearly. He stretched up as far as he could but still he couldn't see what Mrs. Hummer was about. "If you please what are you doing?" he asked.

"Minding my own business, Mr. Curiosity," little Mrs. Hummer squeaked.

"If no one was curious, no one would ever learn anything," declared Peter sagely. "That nest you are making is the loveliest nest I have ever seen. It really is. So how can I help being curious? No one else makes such a dainty little nest."

"Do you really think is is lovely?" asked little Mrs. Hummer, and somehow her voice didn't sound so squeaky.

Peter nodded. "I really do," said he.

"It will be lovelier still when I get it all shingled," said Mrs. Hummer.

"Shingled!" cried Peter, "I didn't know what you mean."

Little Mrs. Hummer chuckled. At least it sounded to Peter like a chuckle. "If you watch long enough, perhaps you'll find out," said she and darted away.

Peter sat up very straight, the better to watch. She flew straight over to the base of an oak tree. For a moment she buzzled around it. Then she came shooting back. She had something in her bill, but Peter couldn't tell what it was. She settled herself in her nest, leaned over and placed what she had brought on the outside. She was still shingling her nest.

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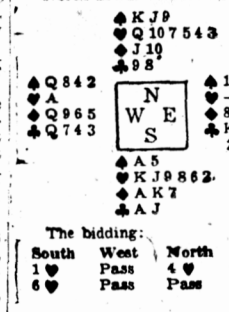
Contract Bridge

By Josephine Culbertson

LEADING AGAINST SLAMS

Opening leads are usually difficult — unless the leader is fortunate enough to have a K-Q-J, a Q-J-10, or something of the sort —but the difficulty grows when the selection must be made against a slam contract. Les's look at West's dilemma in the following case:

South dealer.
North-South vulnerable



The bidding:

South	West	North	East
1 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
6 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

North's triple raise was not, of course, a strong response — it was a shutout aimed only at game, and South was well aware of that fact. The opening bidder can carry on after such a raise only at his own risk. However, South's holding was so strong outside of the heart suit that he could not be blamed for leaping to the slam.

West, with almost indentical holdings in the three side suits, could scarcely make an intelligent choice among these suits. So, in the hope that a view of dummy might be helpful, he very logically put down the trump ace. Even after this exploratory measure, West still was on shaky ground, but at least he had something to go by. One thing was obvious: South must have the three missing aces, since he would not have depended on North's having an ace and thus would not have risked the slam only two aces in his own hand. That being so, West could see that a spade or a diamond shift was more dangerous than a shift to clubs. So West made that latter choice, and as a consequence, South went wrong. He could have made the hand by guessing to finesse spades, but his "hunch" was to take the diamond finesse instead, and that was his Waterloo.

It is often wise to follow West's example in this case and lay down a card that will produce a sight of dummy, even at the possible expense of losing a time unit.

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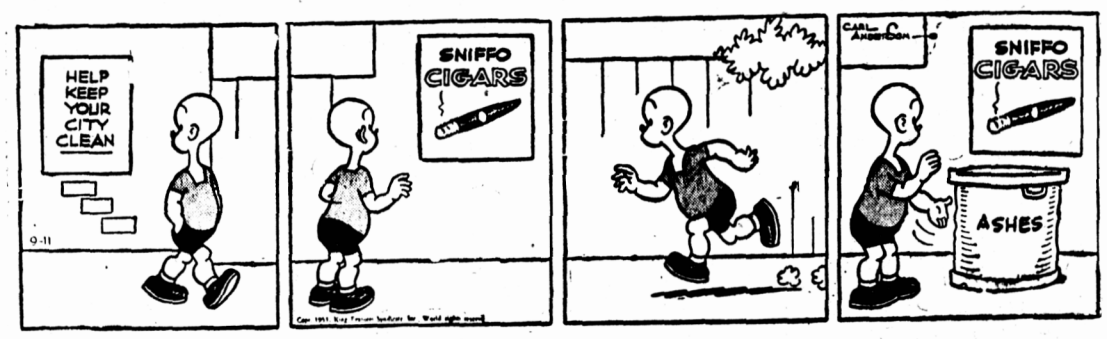
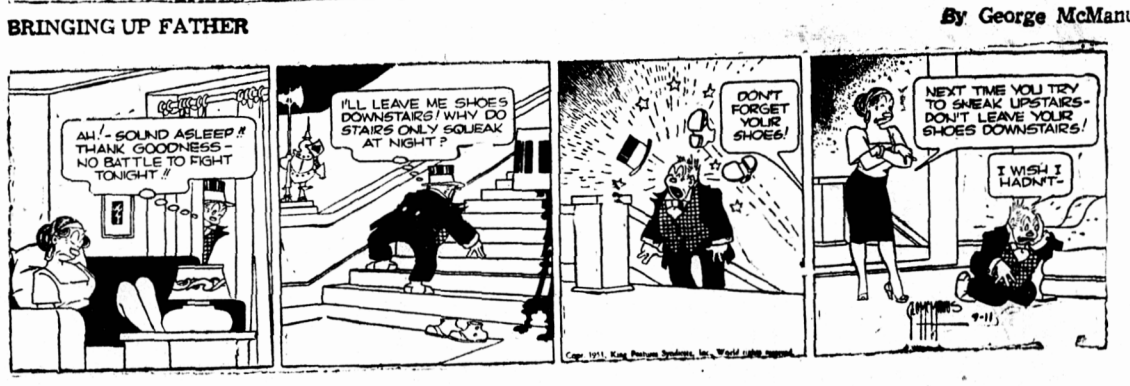
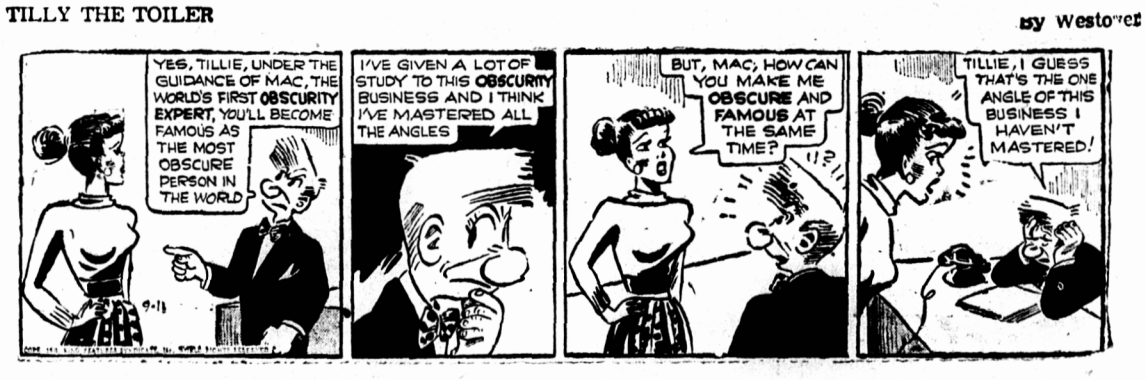


TIPPY AND "CAP" STUBS — By Edwina

BRINGING UP FATHER — By George McManus

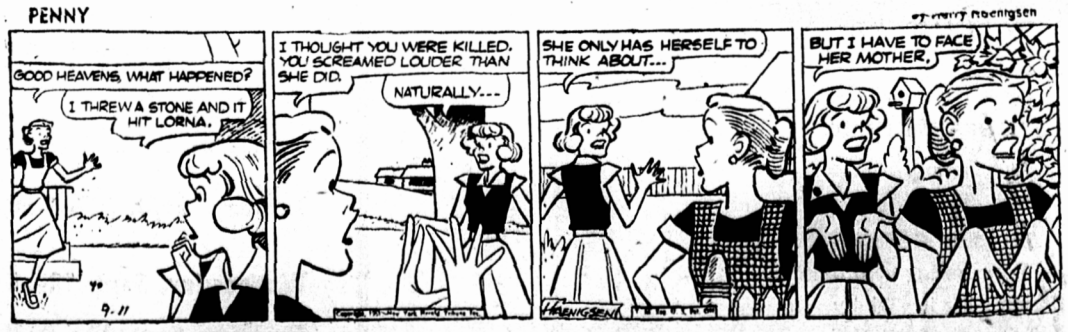


TILLY THE TOILER — By Westover



POGO — By WALT KELLY

PENNY — By Harry Haenigsen



LI'L ABNER — By Al Capp

RIP KIRBY — By Alex Raymond