

BURGESS BEDTIME STORIES

By Thornton W. Burgess

THE SOFTEST BED

A home is only what you make it. If built by love you won't forsake it. —Old Mother Nature.

"This is going to be one of the best homes I've ever made," said Nanny Meadowmouse. She was talking to Danny Meadowmouse. He was doing the looking on while she did the work.

"You're too fussy," squeaked Danny. "I'm not to be fussy," retorted Nanny. "No one can be too fussy in making a home." Then she turned her back on Danny and paid no more attention to him. She was too busy. She was working hard and working fast. She was building this new home in the center of a big clump of coarse, thick-growing grass. Because it was now late in the fall, the grass was no longer green; it was brown, and some of it broken down. The outer grasses of the clump were bent over all

around. A mouse could hide under it anywhere.

In the very center of the clump, Nanny had cut away the grass to make room for the snug little home she had cut away. She was weaving it into a globe, a small globe, and she was doing a very good job. Of course, all she had to weave with were her teeth and claws. That coarse grass of the clump was good for the outer walls. It probably would have suited some mice for the inner walls as well. But not Nanny. Perhaps she was fussy just as Danny had said. But there are times when fussiness is a very good thing.

Danny Meadowmouse had gone on about his business, which was nothing more important than getting something to eat and gossiping with other mice having nothing more important to do. Nanny went looking for something softer than that coarse grass with which to line the inside of that new home. She

intended to get some finer grasses. Being what Danny called fussy, she wasn't satisfied with the grasses she found at first. They were not fine enough. So she went farther than she had intended to, searching for some grasses that would suit her.

Now there were many trails cut through the grass all around that big clump. Some of them were new, some were old, some were very old. These were little used. It was on one of these seldom used paths that Nanny made a wonderful find. It was a mass of thistledown. You know how soft thistledown is. Chickoree, usually put off nesting until they can get thistledown to line their dainty little nest. It makes the softest kind of a downy nest for the baby birds. Nanny squealed right out loud when she found that lovely thistledown.

"This is going to be the finest home I've ever made," she confided to Danny a little later. "Our babies are going to have the softest, loveliest bed any babies ever had."

"You're too fussy," said Danny again. "You'll run your legs off getting that stuff, and the babies won't thank you. You didn't have any such bed when you were a baby and neither did I. What was good enough for you and me should be good enough for our babies."

Nanny Meadowmouse didn't even hear what Danny was saying. She was too busy. She didn't have time to talk, and she didn't have time to listen. She pushed Danny out of the doorway.

"If you can't help me get some of this soft stuff, the least you can do is to keep out of my way," squeaked Nanny.

After that Danny did keep out of her way. The truth is, he really wasn't interested at all. He just didn't consider it any of his business. He went off to join other fathers of his own kind who felt just as he did. Nanny didn't stop working until that new home was finished to suit her, and she was hard to suit. But when it was finished it really was something. That is, it was for Meadowmouse home. Nanny was proud of it. Truth to tell, Danny was proud of it too, but he didn't say so.

"No Meadowmouse ever had a better home than this," declared Nanny in a voice that was squeaker than ever. Now, I won't care what kind of weather we have. No, I won't care a bit. Whatever the weather the babies will be dry and warm. What more can any babies need?"

The home was finished none too soon. The very day after Nanny brought in the last mouthful of thistledown five babies were nesting in it.

Contract Bridge

By Josephine Cluvertson

TOO MUCH "SUIT-PREFERENCE"

The following hand illustrates one more misuse (or misinterpretation, rather) of the suit-preference signal.

South dealer. Neither side vulnerable.

♠ 9863
♥ A Q J 8 7 3 2
♦ 7
♣ 6

♠ 7 5 4 2
♥ 10 5
♦ A K J
♣ 10 4 2

♠ K J 10
♥ 9 8 4
♦ Q 9 8 3
♣ Q 8 3

♠ A Q
♥ K
♦ 6 5
♣ A K J 10 9 7 4 2

The bidding:
South 1♣ West 1♦ North 1♥ East 2♠
2♦ 5♦ 5♥ Pass
6♣ Pass Pass Pass

It is understandable that south looked upon his eight-card club suit as solid, but he nevertheless made a doubtful decision when he bid the slam. Obviously, he felt that with the enemy sacrificing so determinedly in diamonds, North figured to be very short in his suit, but North could have been void in clubs.

West made his natural opening lead, the king of diamonds, and when the dummy was spread East felt that it would be a very good idea to demand diamond continuation. So he followed suit with the queen. He was shocked, however, to see his partner make a prompt shift to spades, and more shocked when the declarer — who had realized, if West had not, what had been in East's mind when he signalled so emphatically — took a first-round finesse for the club queen and, a moment later, claimed the contract.

West defended his spade shift on the grounds that "East's high diamond had called for a shift to the higher-ranking side suit," and thus it must be presumed that if East had played a low diamond, West would have shifted to hearts! The question then arises: with West so single-minded in treating all signals as suit-preference plays, how could poor East get a continuation of diamonds which would force dummy's trump and thus make his club queen an absolutely sure trick, no matter how declarer maneuvered? The answer is, of course that with this type of partner, East couldn't protect himself; but if West had appreciated the simple come-on meaning of East's signal, it would have been a different story.

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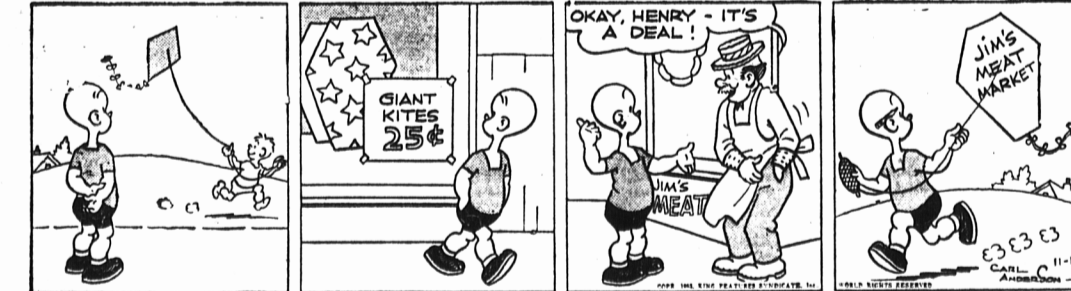
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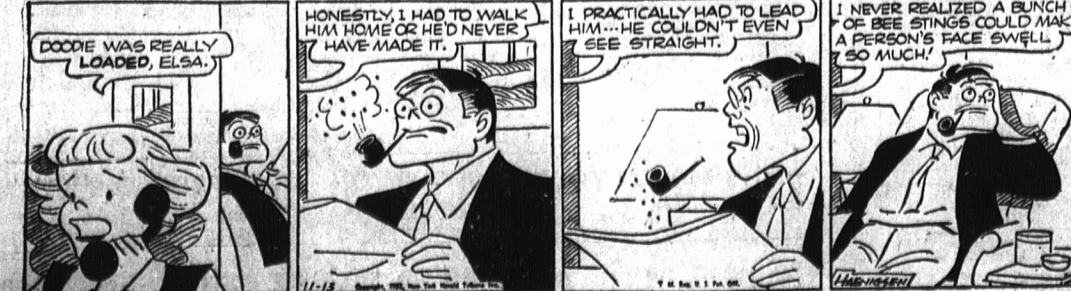


KING OF THE ROYAL MOUNTED



PENNY

By Harry Hoagensen

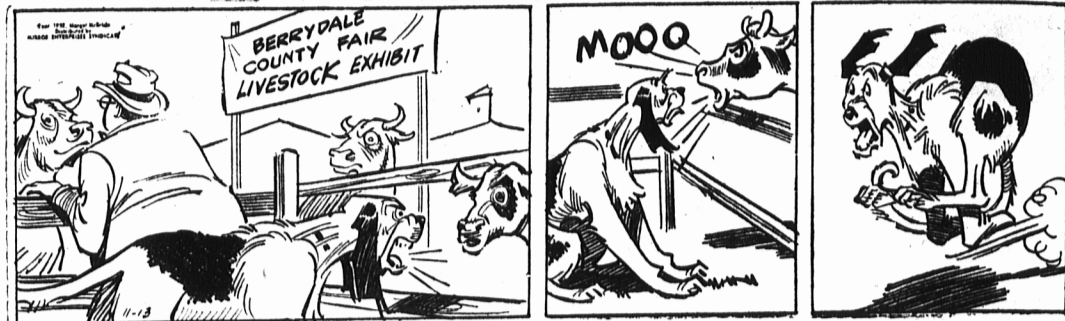


RIP KIRBY



Napoleon and Uncle Elby

By Cliff McBride



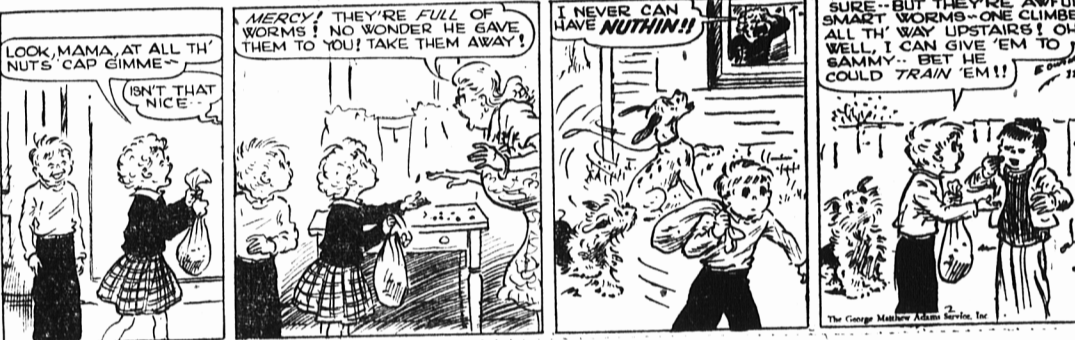
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POGO

By Walt Kelly



DOTTY DRIPPLE

By Ruford

