

JOURNAL MAGAZINE OF INTEREST FOR THE HOME

Triumphs of
M. Jonquilleby MELVILLE DAVISSON POST
© 1922 NEA Service, Inc.

THE THING ON THE HEARTH

Begin Here Today

Did some occult power of the Orient cause the mysterious and incredible tragedy which had removed from the world one of its greatest intelligences—the brain of RODMAN, who had started scientists with his paper on the manufacture of precious stones by synthetic chemistry?

Rodman was dead. His attendant, that strange Oriental from the Shan monastery in Asia, told a story weird and incredible. Finally M. JONQUELLE, greatest of French detectives, called to America and the Oriental rehearsed the story of what took place on the night when the man who could manufacture rubies and emeralds as cheaply as glass met his death.

Go on With the Story

CHAPTER III

THE Oriental was going on with a slow precise articulation as though he would thereby make a difficult matter clear.

"The night had fallen swiftly. It was incredibly silent. There was no sound in the Master's room, and no light except the flicker of the logs smoldering in the fireplace. The thin line of it appeared faintly along the sill of the door."

He paused.

"The fireplace, Excellency, is at the end of the great room, directly opposite this door into the hall, before which I always sat when the Master was within. The fireplace is of black marble with an immense black-marble hearth. And the gift which I had brought the Master stands on one side of the fire, on this marble hearth, as though it were a single andron."

The man turned back into the hall of his story.

"I knew by the vague sense of pressure that the devotion of the thing were again on the way. And I began to suffer in the spirit for the Master's safety. Interference, both by act and by the will, were denied me. But there is an anxiety of spirit, Excellency, that the uncertainty of an issue makes intolerable."

The man paused.

"The pressure continued—and the silence. It was nearly midnight. I could not distinguish any sound or motion of the Master, and in fear I crept over to the door and looked in through the crevice along the threshold."

"The Master sat by his table; he was straining forward, his hands gripping the arms of his chair. His eyes and every sense instinct of the man were concentrated on the fireplace. The red light of the embers was in the room. I could see him clearly, and the table beyond him with the calculations; but the fireplace seemed strangely out of perspective—it extended above me."

"My gift to the Master, not more than four hand-breaths in length, including the base, stood now like an immense bronze on an extended marble slab beside a gigantic fireplace. This effect of extension put the top of the fireplace and the enlarged andron, above its pedestal, out of my line of vision. Everything else in the chamber, holding its normal dimensions, was visible to me."

"I have said, Excellency, that my angle of vision along the crevice of the doorsill was sharply cut midway of this now enlarged fireplace. From the direction and lift of the Master's face, he was watching something above this line and directly over the pedestal of the andron. I watched, also, flattening my face against the sill, for the thing to appear."

"And it did appear."

"A naked foot became slowly visible, as though someone were descending with extreme care from the elevation of the andron to the great marble hearth, under this strange enlargement, now some distance below."

and with his finger touched the woman gently. The flesh under his finger yielded, and stooping over, he put the formula into the fire."

Like one who has come to the end of his story, the huge Oriental stopped. He remained for some moments silent. Then he continued in an even, monotonous voice:

"I got up from the floor then, and purified myself with water. And after that I went into an upper chamber, opened the window to the east, and sat down to write my report to the brotherhood. For the thing which I had been sent to do was finished."

He put his hand somewhere into the loose folds of his Oriental garment and brought out a roll of thin, vellum-like onion-skin, painted in Chinese characters. It was of immense length, but on account of the thinness of the vellum, the roll wound on a tiny cylinder of wood was not above two inches in thickness.

"Excellency," he said, "I have carefully concealed this report through the misfortunes that have attended me. It is not certain that I shall be able to deliver it. Will you give it for me to the Jeweler-merchant Venderdick, in Amsterdam? He will send it to Mahadai in Bombay, and it will go north with the caravans."

I put the scroll into my pocket and went out, for a motor-car had come into the park, and I knew that Jonquille had arrived.

I met Jonquille and the superintendent in the long corridor; they had been looking in at my interview through the elevated grating.

"Jonquille," I cried, "the judge was right to cut short the criminal trial and issue a lunacy warrant. This creature is the maddest lunatic in this whole asylum. The human mind is capable of any absurdity."

Jonquille looked at me with a queer, ironical smile.

"Perhaps," he shrugged, "there is some explanation in the report in your pocket, to the Monastic Head. It is only a theory, you know."

He smiled, showing his white, even teeth.

We went into the superintendent's room, and sat down by a smoldering fire of coals in the grate. I handed Jonquille the roll of vellum. It was in one of the Shan dialects. He read it aloud. With the addition of certain formal expressions, it contained precisely the Oriental's testimony before the court and no more.

"Ah!" he said in his curiously infected voice.

And he held the scroll out to the heat of the fire. The vellum baked slowly, and as it baked, the black Chinese characters faded out and faint blue ones began to appear.

Jonquille read the secret message in his emotionless drawl:

"The American is destroyed, and his accused work is destroyed with him. Send the news to Bangkok and west to Burma. The treasures of India are saved."

I cried out in astonishment.

"An assassin! He killed Rodman, simply by crushing him in his arms!"

Jonquille's drawl lengthened.

"It's Lal Gupta," he said, "the cleverest Oriental in the whole of Asia. The Jeweler-merchant sent him to watch Rodman, and to kill him if he was ever able to get his formulae worked out. They must have paid him an incredible sum."

"And that is why the creature attached himself to Rodman?" I said.

"Surely," replied Jonquille. "He brought that bronze-Romulus carrying off the Sabine woman—and staged the supernatural to work out his plan and to save his life. I knew the bronze as soon as I got my eye on it—old Franz Josef gave it as a present to Mahadai in Bombay for matching up some rubies."

I swore bitterly.

"And we took him for a lunatic!" "Ah, yes!" replied Jonquille. "What was it you said as I came in? The human mind is capable of any absurdity!"

Another M. Jonquille story, "The Fortune Teller," will begin in our next issue.

BOTH STYLES POPULAR



The 1922 model fur coat may be long or short, but it must be smart. Black caracul and kolinsky make the long one and moleskin and fox the short one pictured here. For early winter, the jacket with the hip band is most popular, but the longer model will have its inning later.

Mogadore Notes
About Town

By Kitchel Pixley

(Our Own Special Correspondent)

Mogadore, Dec. 1.—The Van Dusen-Porter wedding was pretty much all éclat, except that the Mastodon brass band forgot its sheet music for Mendelssohn's march and played an awful galop in G minor, instead.

Sock & Buskin Club plans to revive "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and wants me to ask your dramatic editor how many dogs it takes to chase Eliza across the ice.

The annual horse-shoe pitchin' tournament broke up in a row over some ther Zeb Stowe's last pitch was a "leaner" or a "ringer."

I heard Mrs. Bosworth raise the roof in Snyder's drug store, last night, because their postage stamps wasn't fresh.

What our fire ladders done to Joshua Simpkins while he was tryin' to mail a letter in a fire alarm box would have washed away the sins of Bill the Kaiser.

Mastodon Brass Band monthly concert is postponed. Ez Taylor, who coloratures the big base horn, is gettin' a hair-rip from too much strain and must be operated on.

The Peasley-Perths have been missin' from social circles over some time. I see the announcement of Peasley-Perth twins in your "Birth Notices." This always society's fears that they closed the windows and turned on the gas, havin' sold their Liberty bonds at 86.

First time this fall, they started a fire in the council chamber stove, last night. They didn't know the janitor had stuffed the chimney with paper, which made a nest for the cat and five kittens. Council adjourned sine die quick, without stoppin' to define the odor.

We noticed Mrs. Ursula Gritt hangin' out the family wash, Monday p.m. Squire Gritt is still laid up with the gout, it seems.

Unique Trimming

A unique trimming noticed on a large black velvet hat is two lilacs, one of black and the other of white feathers.

DRAWFUNNIES

Drawings by Bill Holman. Verses by Hal Cochran.

Draw in the missing lines and then color the picture.



This Scotchman is a happy lad,
And wee bit of a sport.
No matter what the fashions do,
His skirts are always short.

Model Men

District Visitor—"What a well-behaved little boy yours is, Mrs. Blobs."

Mrs. Blobs—"Yes, just like his father. My husband always gets a few weeks taken off his sentence for good conduct."—London Ideas.

Metal and Lace

The indubitable stiffness of metal cloth may be softened if the cloth is combined with chiffon, lace or embroidered net. Paris importations are showing such combinations in which the effect of the metal cloth is visibly enhanced.

DOINGS OF THE DUFFS

WILBUR IS ALWAYS COMPLAINING ABOUT BEING LATE AT THE OFFICE IN THE MORNING SO I BOUGHT THIS ALARM CLOCK TO HELP HIM GET UP.



Both Struck



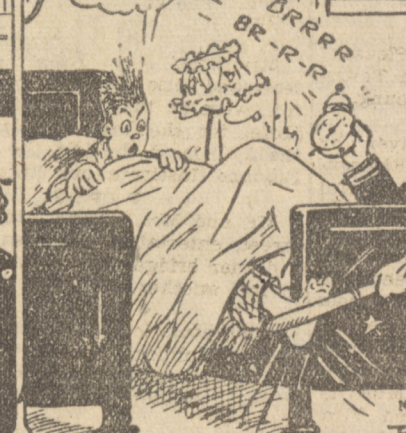
By ALLMAN



I WANT A KEY TO THE CORNER FLAT ON THE SECOND FLOOR—SOME- BODY THREW A CLOCK AT ME! AND HURRY UP ABOUT IT!



HELD!



IS THIS YOUR ALARM CLOCK?



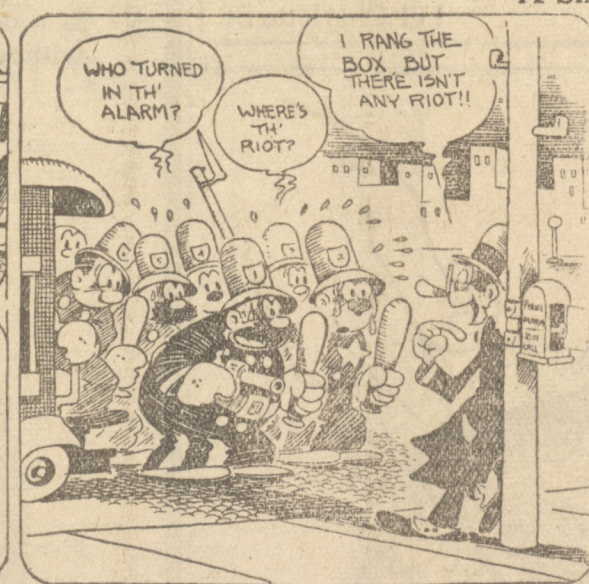
Daily Fashion Hint



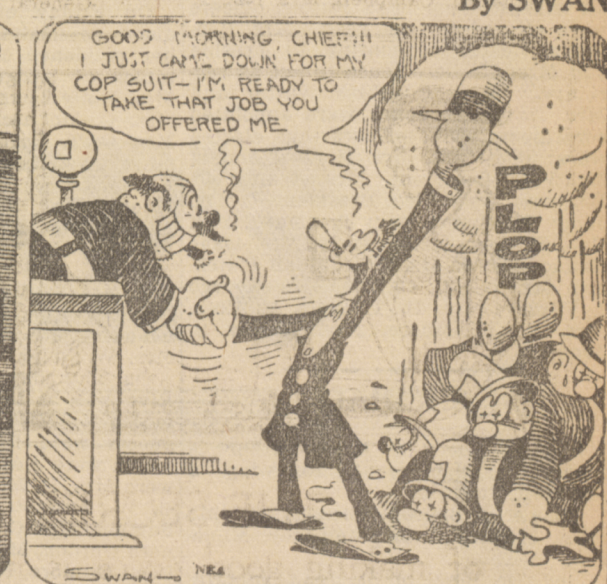
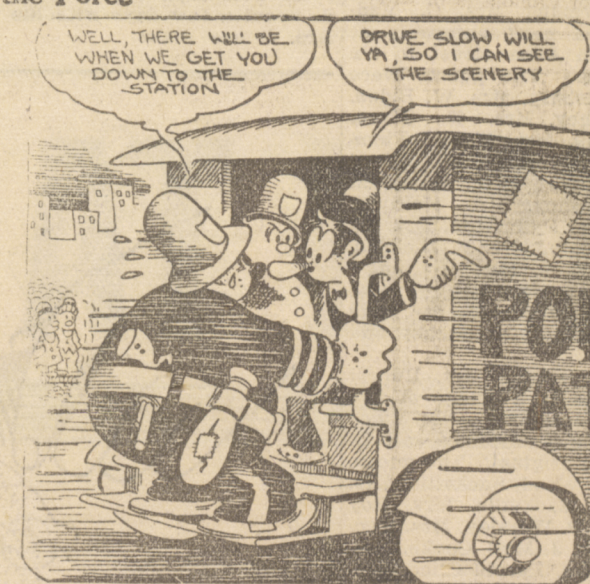
A MODEL FOR TRICOTINE

Novelty flat braid outlines the slashed front, fancy sleeves and becoming panel sections of this attractive dress for daytime wear. It is made of dark navy blue tricotine, the closing being in slot effect. If preferred, the sleeves may be terminated at the elbows and finished with deep cuffs. A turn-down collar finishes the neck. Medium size requires 3 1/4 yards 54-inch tricotine.

SALESMAN SAM

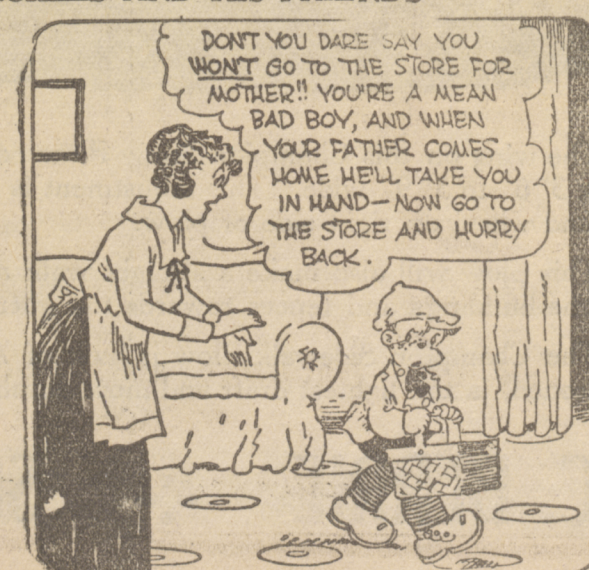


A Shock To the Force

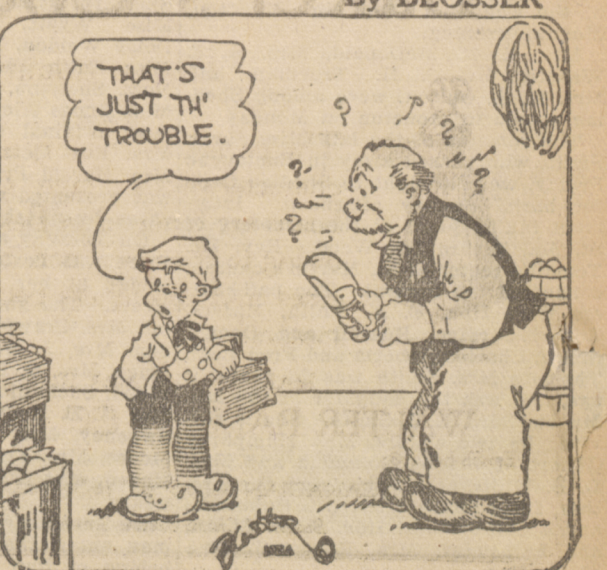


By SWAN

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



Freckles Knew He Was Bad



By BLOSSER