FAMOUS STORIES

Beowulf Saga Is Anonymous Tale of Valor

By ELIZABETH C. JAMES

AS A youth Beowulf had the reputation of being the bravest among his tribe. Swimming, fighting, and fishing in the open boats of the northmen gave sturdiness and valor to him and to his friends. When he was still young he became known as a chieftain warrior, partly because his father was king, but also because the warriors liked to follow him in battle.

Elizabeth James

There came a message one day from Hrothgar, Beowulf's uncle, whose kingdom lay just across the waters, in the land known today as Denmark The message begged that Beowulf and his warriors would come over and help rid the land of a fearful dragon, named Grendel.

At once Beowulf and a chosen group of his best men launched their boats and set out for the land of their kinsmen. On their arrival, Hrothgar gave a feast in the long mead hall. While this feasting and joy reigned, there sounded a roar. It was Grendel!

Battle to Death.

The monster seized a warrior with each hand, knocked the two together, and began to eat them for his supper. But the dragon was safely away before anything was done.

The next night Beowulf was ready. When Grendel approached, Beowulf met him and there ensued a terrible fight between the man and the dragon. Using his powerful and trusted sword Beowulf defended himself. Seizing the dragon's arm he pulled with all his strength and tore it from its socket. Howling with pain, Grendel fled.

Knowing that the monster would likely die from so dreadful a wound, there was great rejoicing in the mead hall. Until another roar resounded through the night. Grendel's mother, a fierce dragon, now came in fury to avenge the death of her son. She did not fight that night, so the next day Beowulf tracked her to her lair by the blood stains of Grendel. The trail led to the side of a black tarn.

A whole day it took him to reach the bottom of the waters. There he saw a vast cavern, in which he knew the dragons made their abode. Holding his sword ready, he called. Grendel's mother came forth, eager for battle. Long they fought, and Beowulf found that his mortal-made sword was impotent against this supernatural being. Looking around he saw a sword hanging on the wall of the cavern. Seizing it, he stabbed and killed the dragon.

Beowulf Triumphs.

Having killed the mother dragon he went into the cavern and found the body of Grendel, from which he cut the head to use as a trophy. Carrying this, he began his ascent to the surface of the lake, where he found his warriors mournful for their leader whom they feared dead.

When the king had become an old man, he heard of a vast horde of treasure which a fire drake had discovered; the treasure had been buried three centuries before by an earl. Coveting this treasure for his people, Beowulf determined to have it. Only one warrior out of the entire kingdom dared to follow his lord into such a battle.

Long and arduously Beowulf fought with this monster. The dragon charged once, and a second time, but Beowulf guarded himself. A third time the dragon hurled himself at his enemy and this time he fastened his fangs in the throat of the king. Rushing to the aid of his king, the faithful warrior thrust his sword into the side of the dragon and forced him to loosen his grip on Beowulf. Although the warrior's arm was burned, he stayed with the king. Beowulf recovered himself and plunged his knife into the coils of the fire drake, cutting him through.

Soon after the death of the dragon, the wound in the king's throat grew worse, with swelling and pain. There was a fever which grew hotter and hotter until the king knew that he was to die. He rewarded his faithful warrior by making him his successor, and he divided the treasure among his subjects. Reminding his people of the glory of their race, the hero died.

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RECORDED BY MONKS

No one knows who wrote the stories concerning the hero Beowulf. The poem as we have it today was recorded about the Eighth century, but the events which underlie the epic occurred about five centuries before that. By memory the legends came down through the generations. Perhaps the story tellers vied with each other in relating the most entertaining account of their hero; perhaps some of the stories were sung to dancing around camp fires.

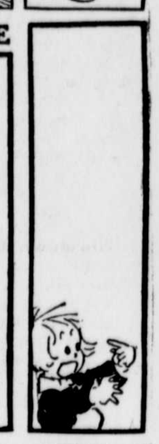
Fun for the Whole Family

THE FEATHERHEADS By Osborne

Impatient Patient

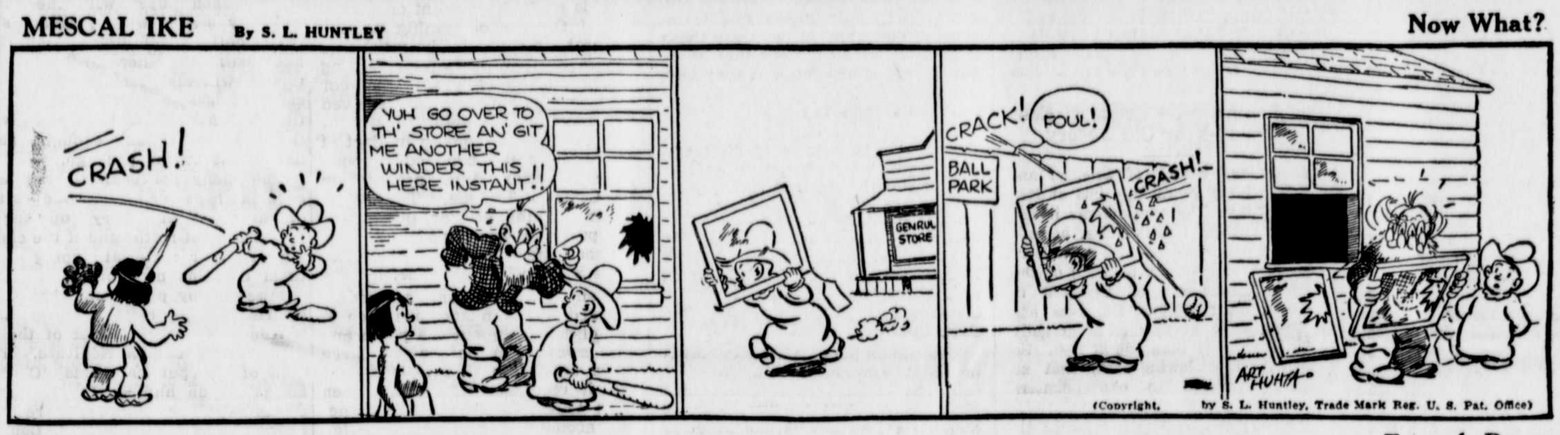
S'MATTER POP— Bronco-Bustin'? Nothing to It!

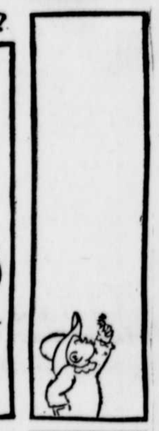
By C. M. PAYNE



MESCAL IKE By S. L. HUNTLEY

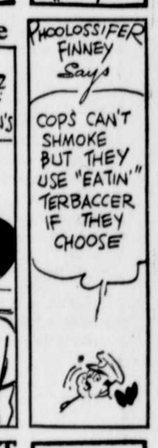
Now What?





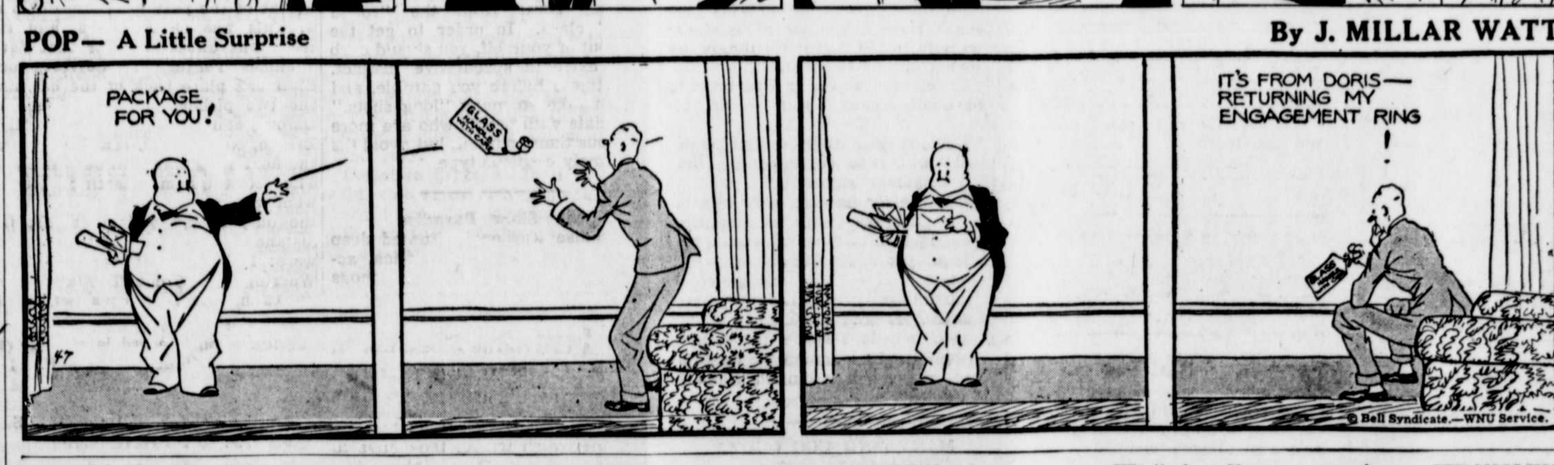
FINNEY OF THE FORCE By Ted O'Loughlin

Enough Rope

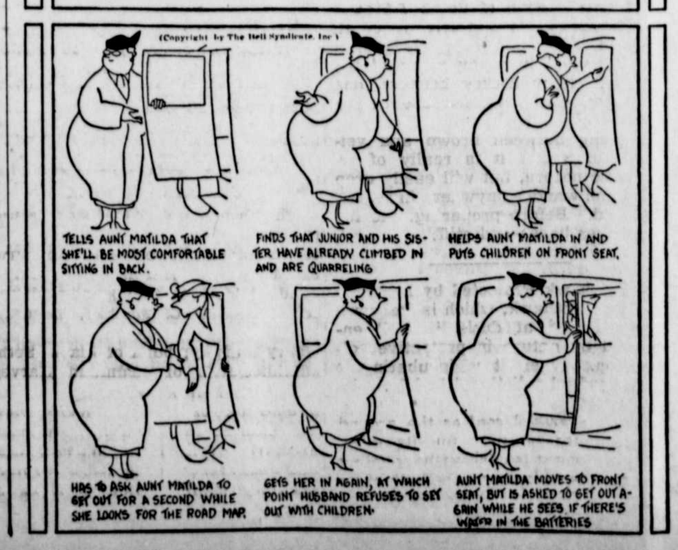


POP— A Little Surprise

By J. MILLAR WATT



SEATING ARRANGEMENTS By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



WORTH TRYING

"The trousers which I have washed for Mike," said his mother, "have shrunk so much that the poor child can hardly get them on."

"Well," replied her friend, "after looking over Mike I would suggest that it would be a good idea to wash him. Maybe he would shrink."

What's in a Name

Lady to Urchin—Never heard of the Ten Commandments? Good gracious! What's your name?

Urchin—Moses, mum.

Show Me

Wife—Are you sure you'll love me when I'm old and ugly?

Husband—Who says I don't?—Philadelphia Bulletin.

STRANGLING TRADE

Prisoner—Yes, sir, competition brought me here. The government came into my field and ruined me.

Visitor—Poor man! How was that?

Prisoner—I was a manufacturer of half-dollars.—Stray Stories Magazine.

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