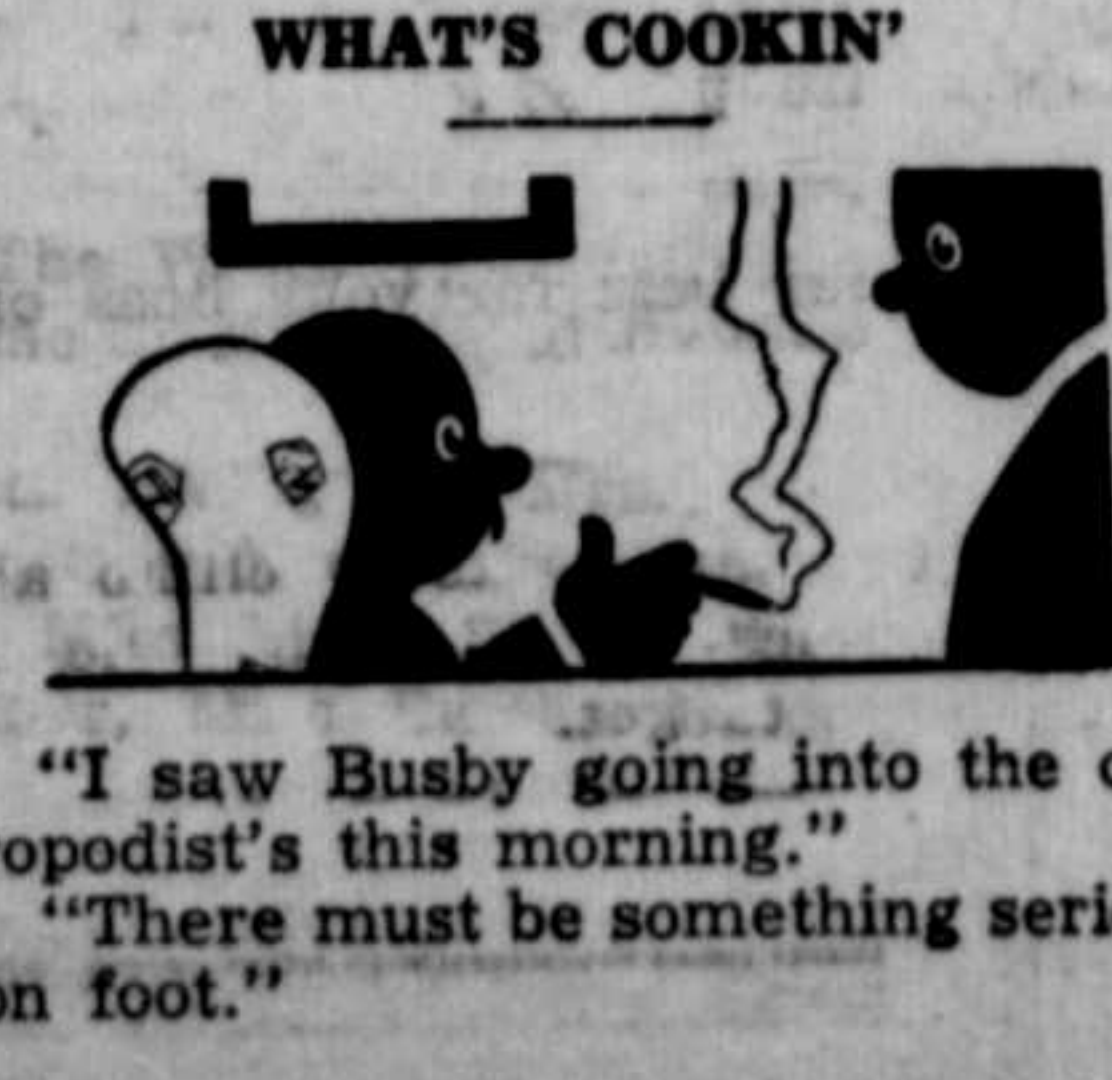
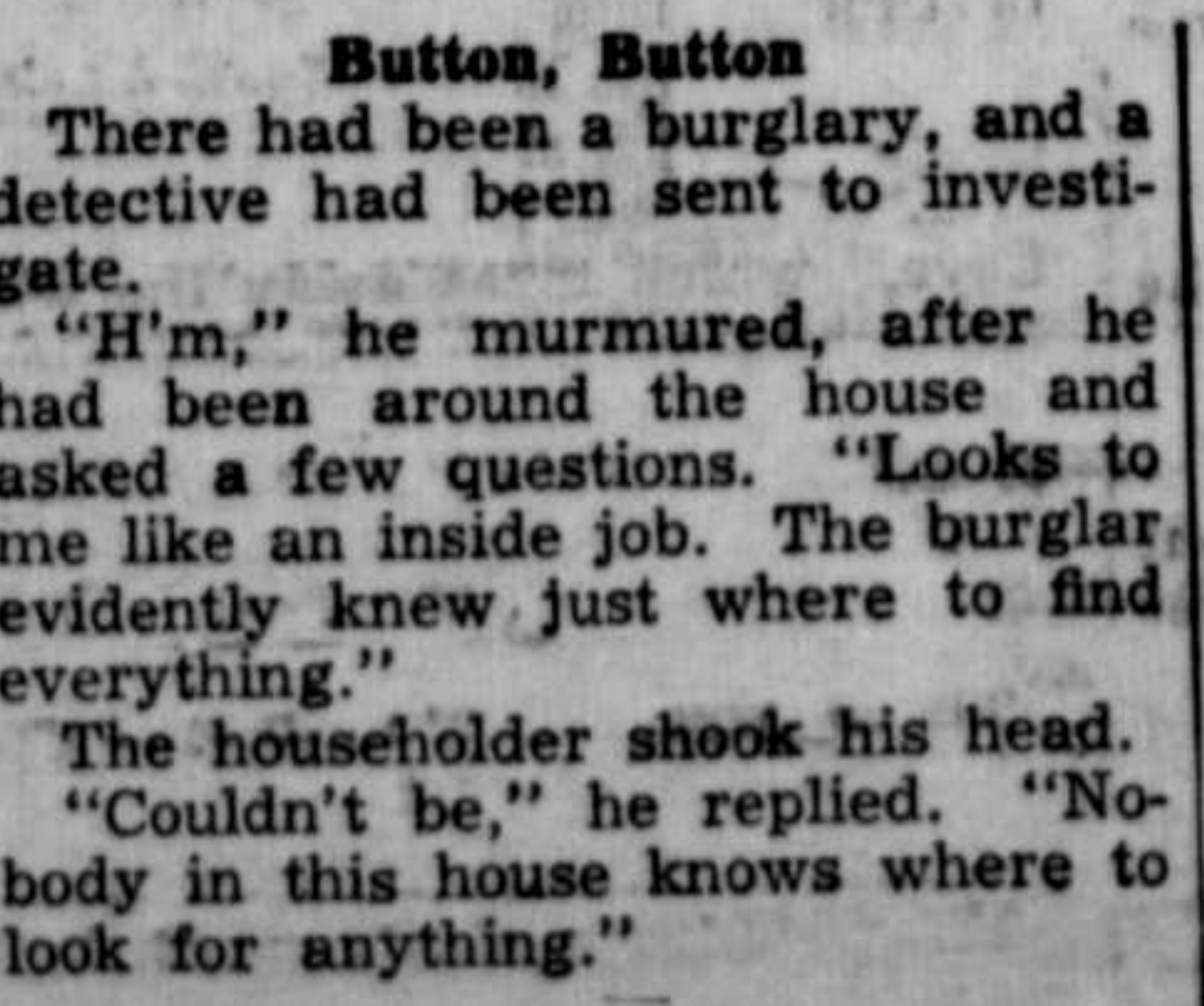
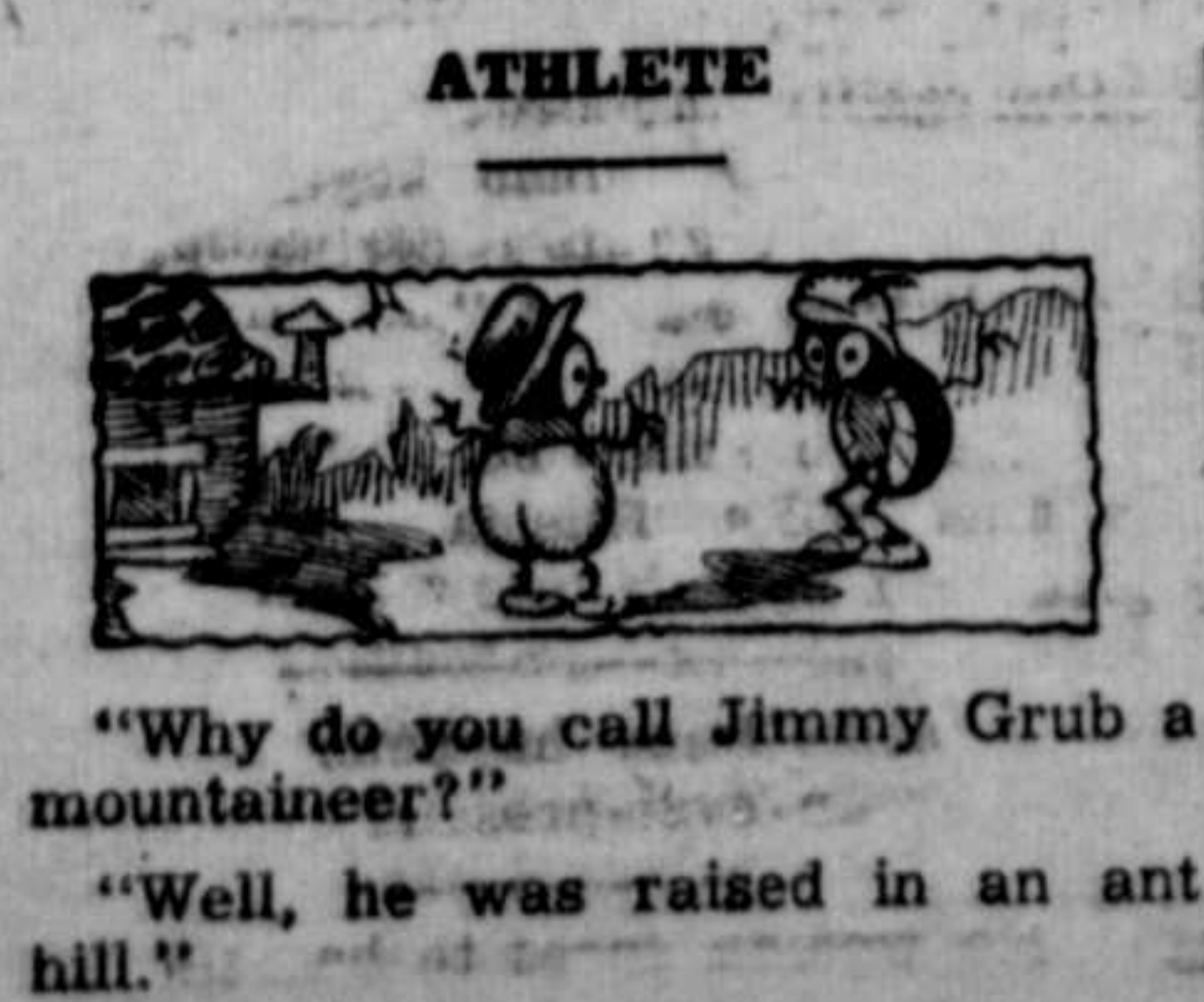
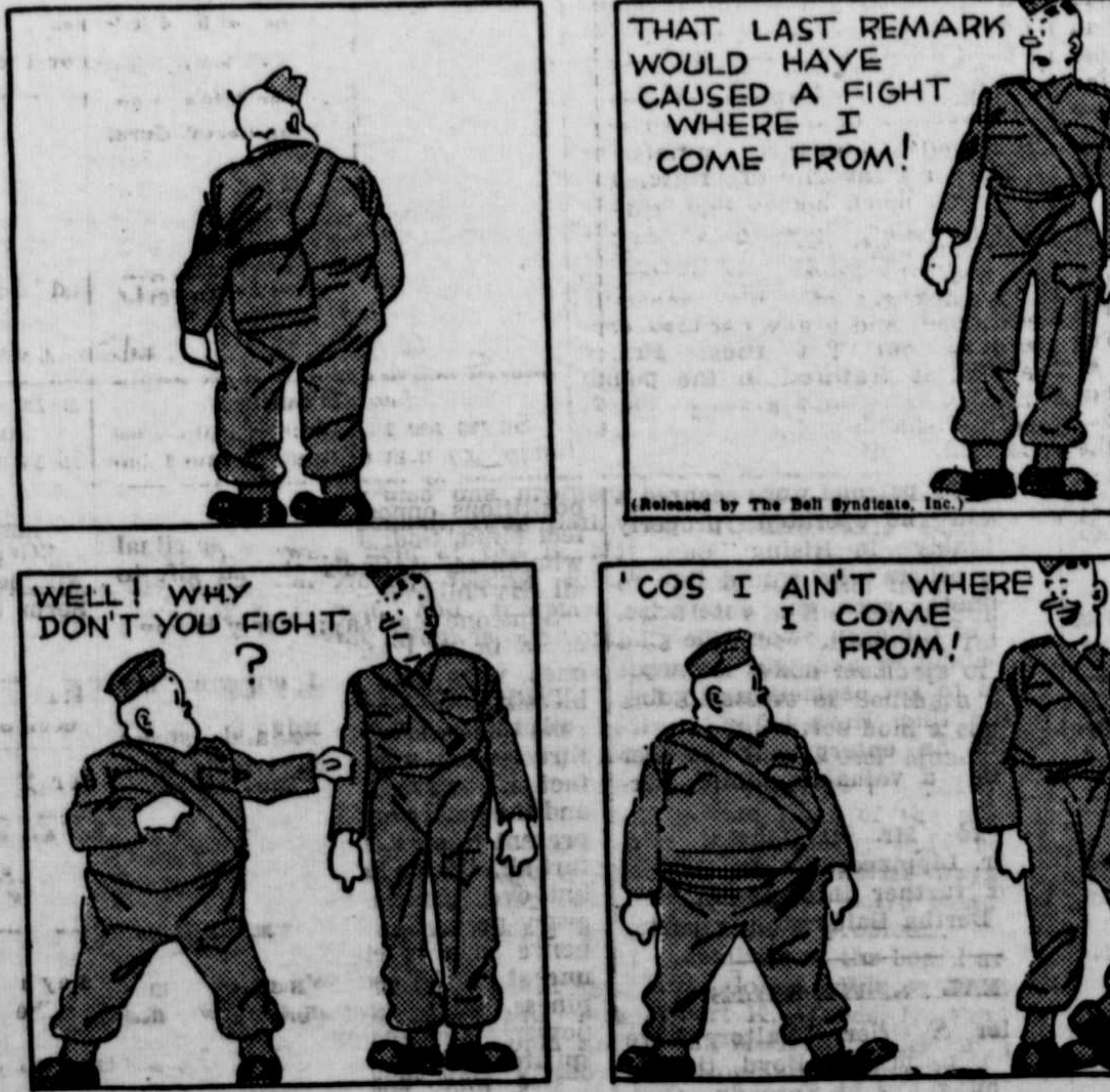
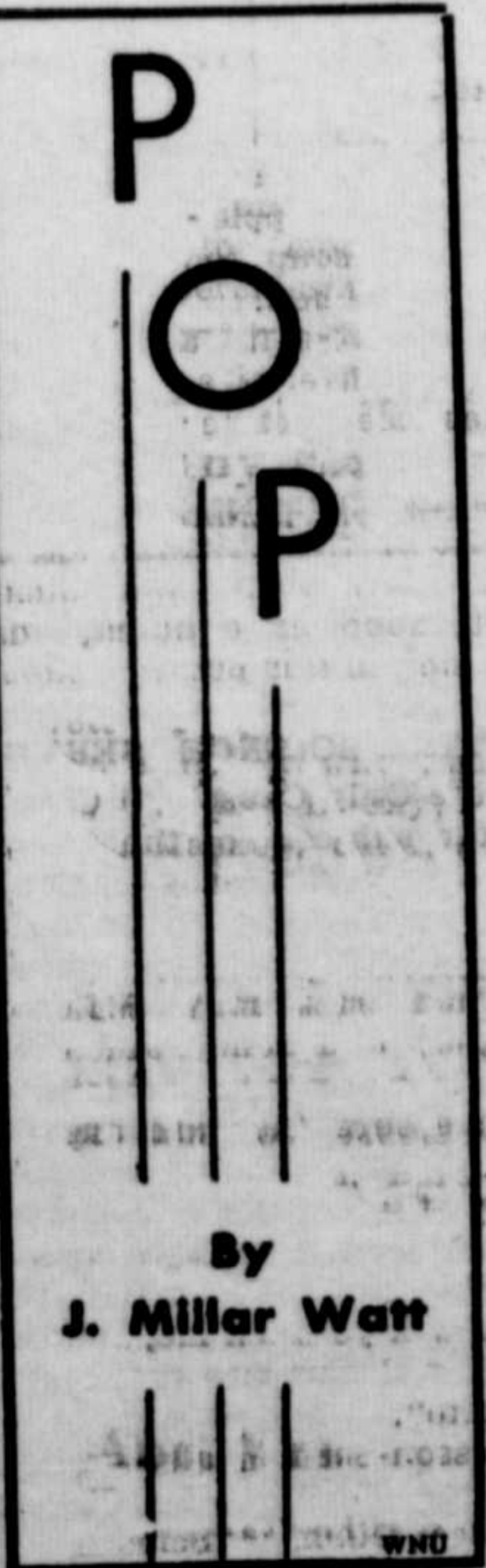


OUR COMIC SECTION



Kathleen Norris Says: Extravagance in Marriage Is a Pitfall

(Bell Syndicate—WNU Service.)



I wish you could see what my wife got for our baby. Perambulator, high chair, crib, bathinette, sterilizing outfit, blankets—the cost was \$200 more than our budget for the child allowed.

By KATHLEEN NORRIS

HOW many young wives would feel horrified and shocked if their husbands could be identified as the "Tired Tim" who writes me this letter? If you happen to be a young wife the letter may help you to see one of the pitfalls of modern marriage a little more clearly than you do.

I say modern marriage, because marriage used to be quite a different thing a hundred years ago. A girl was so glad to get a husband then that she practically idolized him. Families were large, having from eight to fifteen members. Dependent mothers and unmarried sisters lived with the young wife, and all together the women handled the tremendous burden of domestic duties.

They hung out long lines of wash; cleaned windows; fed chickens; cared for babies; started children off for school; wrestled with coal cake and bed quilts; took rugs out to the yard and beat them; put up fruit; nursed the sick, and in between other jobs wrote voluminous letters to dear old school friends.

It was natural in those days for the older women of the household to advise the younger, and to relieve the bride of too much household responsibility until she knew how to handle it.

But it's different today. Each bride launches out by herself. In the following letter one young husband explains just where his wife fails him.

YOU MAY HAVE TO PAY

If you are letting your husband worry about money—if you spend his hard-earned salary on beauty treatments, bridge prizes and clothes—if you fail to abide by the household budget you planned long before you were married—Then, says Kathleen Norris, you have failed in one of your most important duties as a wife. For no matter how pretty you may look, if your beauty shop bill is more than your husband can afford to pay, he won't be pleased. No matter how necessary that extra piece of furniture may be, if it costs more than it ought to, he'll probably hate the sight of it. In time you may be the one to pay—in heart-break and tears.

For she naturally values it highly. "Now don't think," the letter concludes, "that I am criticizing my wife. But I am working hard, pretty well burdened, and not satisfied to face a future which may be an indefinite repetition of this sort of thing. Can you make a suggestion that I can pass on to her in the hope that she will take a different attitude toward extravagance and bills?"

The trouble began many years ago, Tired Tim, when Bert was a little girl. Perhaps because she had no mother she evidently grew up feeling that she had only to want a thing to buy it, and that there was no relation between honest money and dishonest bills. Thousands of women much older than Bert have this failing, and thousands of mothers let their daughters go into marriage without a hint of the seriousness of this oversight.

The simple truth is, any woman who lets her husband worry about finances is a poor wife. This seems like a sweeping statement, but it is true. To be only a money spender, squandering his hard-won salary cheerfully on beauty parlors, frock shops, theaters, club lunches, bridge prizes, is to fail in your job, and more marriages go on the rocks because of this inexplicable stupidity than because of any other one thing.

It doesn't matter how fresh, groomed, curled or frocked you are, or how charming your house is, with the new hangings, the new china, the chromium chairs and the venetian blinds. If your husband is worrying about money, he hates it all.

Husbands Like Serenity.

For men, surprisingly, aren't fussy about furniture. They love comfortable old chairs, familiar lamps, "Dad's old desk" and "Mom's old spoons." They even get to like the dresses of yesterday; many a wife has been exasperated to answer, "I've had it three years," when an affectionate husband comments admiringly upon her costume.

What a husband likes is serenity at home, a woman content and busy, bills paid.

I remember one young wife who "fell madly in love" with the picture of a nude girl by a stream. It was in the "September Morn" era. The picture cost \$300. It was no prettier than the picture on the grocer's calendar that year, but she wanted it, and she had to have it. She paid installments on it for more than a year.

Her husband hated it, and friends made fun of it. She told them she was just storing it for Emily. Her husband, run down and anxious, died of pneumonia that winter, leaving an estate of something less than \$2,000. Almost one-tenth of that had to go for the picture. I hope she felt it was worth while.

Wife Had No Training.

"Bert is the most adorable girl in the world," writes Tired Tim, "but she never had any training, and money simply doesn't mean anything to her. We talked budget before we were married, and worked it out on paper, but she's never glanced at it nor given it a thought since.

"We've been married two years and have a baby, seven months old. I wish you could see what Bert got for the child. Perambulator, high chair, crib, bathinette, sterilizing outfit, blankets—it came to \$200 more than our budget for him had allowed. My salary is \$85 a week, but I carry insurance and contribute \$20 a month as rent for my mother, who has a pension; also pay \$97 for our house including taxes and amortization of debt, and about \$40 more monthly for refrigerator, stove and so on.

"These expenses will lessen as time goes on, but Bert already has found a larger place she likes better, where we will have a room for a maid. We now have only dinner help.

"Bert is hospitable, and nothing is too good for her friends. In planning menus she spares no expense. 'Let's have steaks again, and a mousse, and alligator pears,' she will say. Our friends are all better fixed financially than we are, and my wife likes to keep up with them.

Very Much in Debt.

"Last week my office boss told me that they had considered me for a promotion, but the fact that I was about \$2,300 in debt to doctor, hospital, dentist, florist, and so on, seemed to them a serious thing and they wanted an explanation. Foolishly, I told Bert this, and her answer was to appeal to her father for money, 'because Tim was being so mean.' The old man, very much worried, gave her a diamond ring of her mother's to pawn, and Bert ever since has been anxious to redeem it,

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