

—By BILLY DE BECK

THE PRESIDENT PATIENT

(Continued from Page Fourteen)
"Well, I never thought that I should see anything more of the Russian and his son, so you can imagine my amazement when, at the very same hour this morning, they both came marching into my consulting-room, just as they had done before.

"I feel that I owe you a great many apologies for my abrupt departure yesterday, doctor," said my patient.
"I confess that I was very much surprised at it," said I.
"Indeed, the fact is," he remarked, "that when I recover from these attacks my mind is always very clouded as to all that has gone before. I woke up in a strange room, as it seemed to me, and made my way out into the street in a sort of dazed way when you were absent."

"And I," said the son, "seeing my father pass the door of the waiting-room, naturally thought that the consultation had come to an end. It was not until we had reached home that I began to realize the true state of affairs."

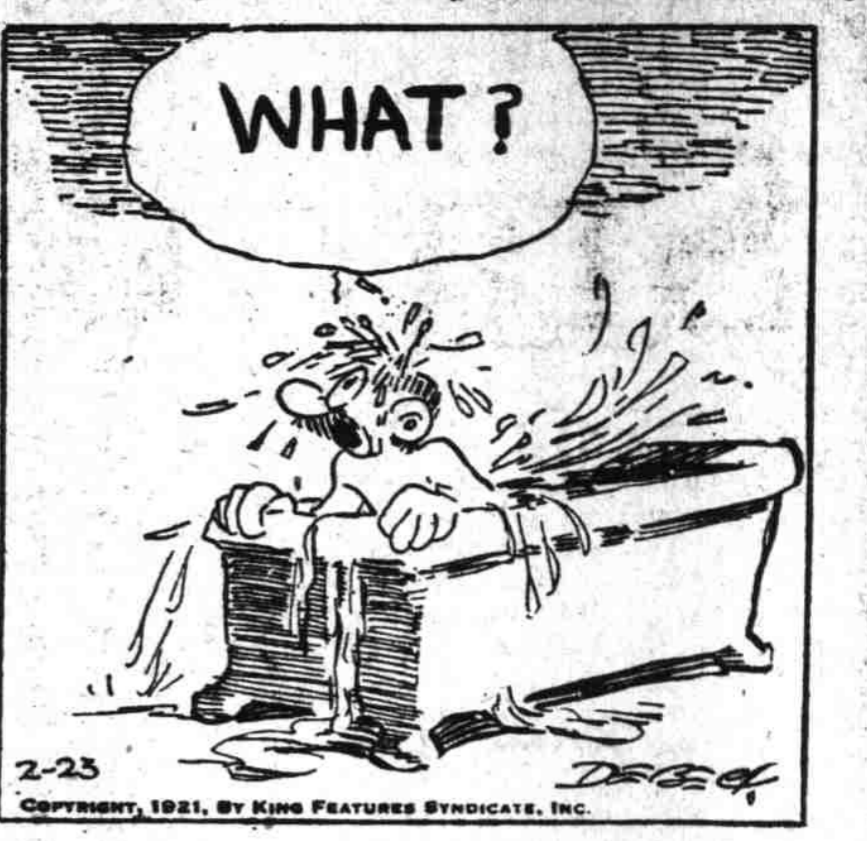
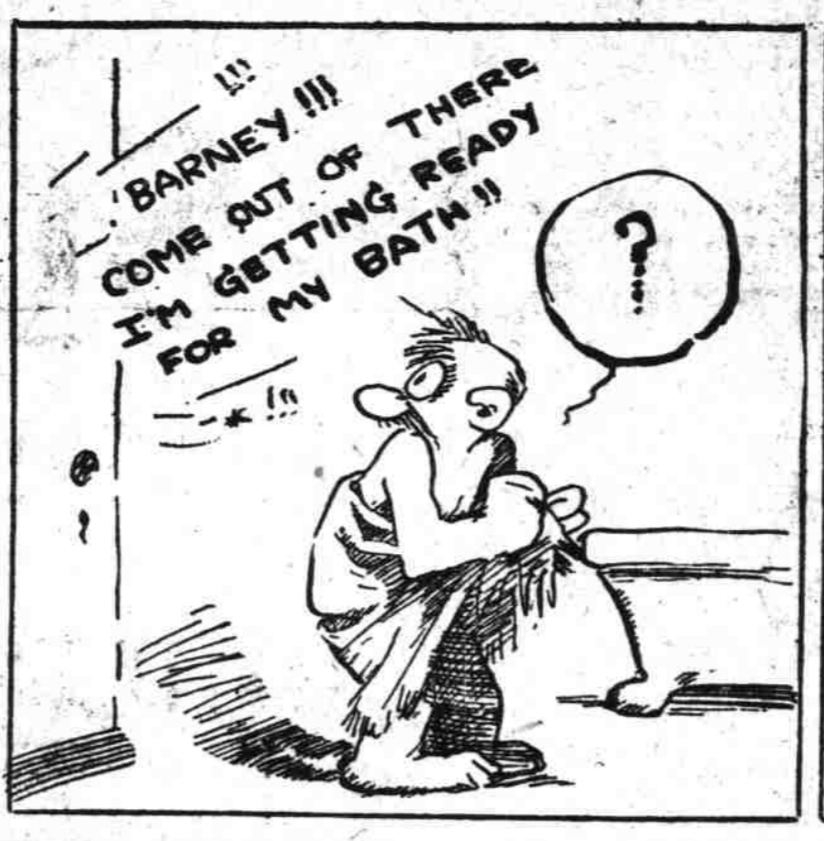
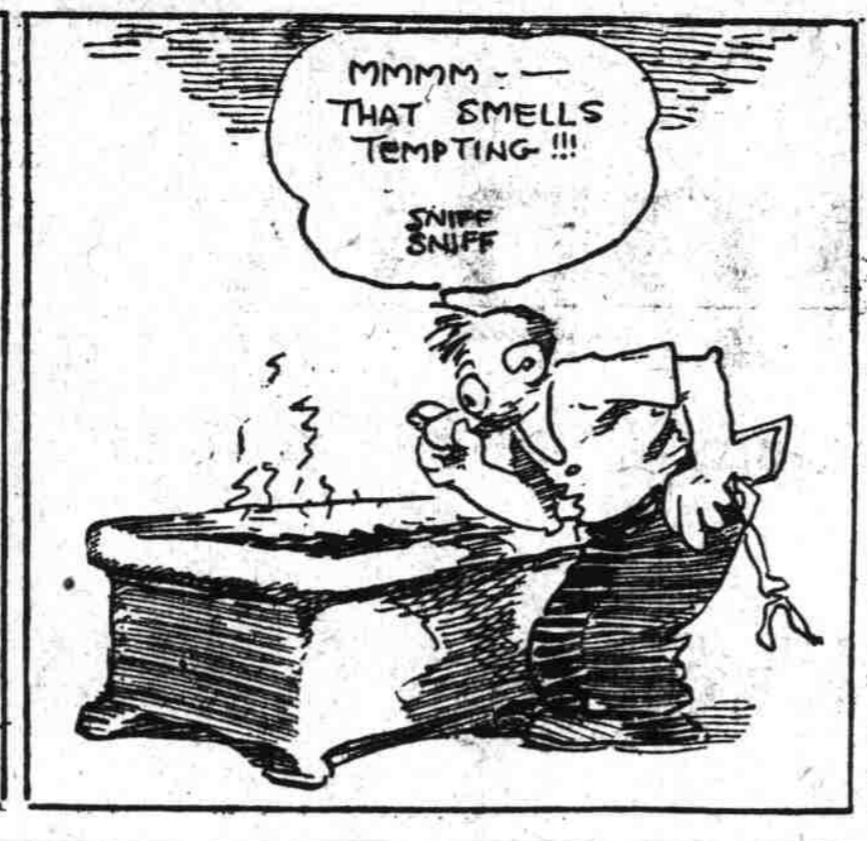
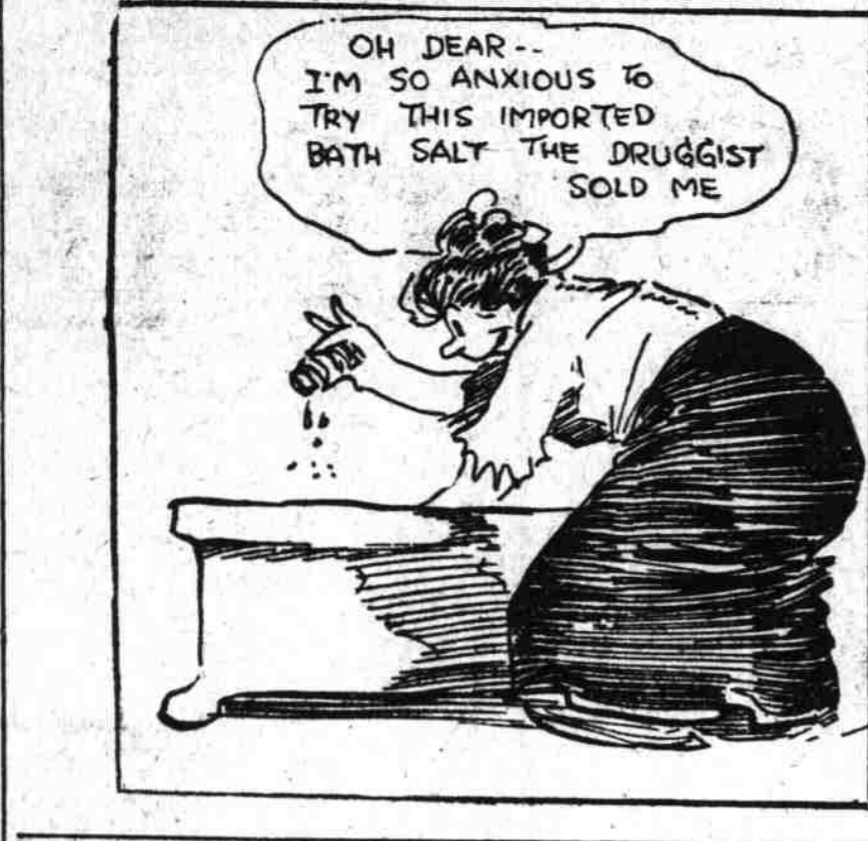
"Well," said I, laughing, "there is no harm done except that you puzzled me terribly so if you, sir, would kindly step into the waiting-room I shall be happy to continue our consultation which was brought to so abrupt an ending."

"For half an hour or so I discussed the old gentleman's symptoms with him, and then, having prescribed for him, I saw him go off upon the arm of his son."

"I have told you that Mr. Blessington generally chose this hour of the day for his exercise. He came in shortly afterwards and passed upstairs. An instant later I heard him running down, and he burst into my consulting-room like a man who is mad with anger."

"Who has been in my room?" he cried.
"No one," said I.
"Is a lie!" he yelled. "Come up and look!"

"I passed over the grossness of his language, as he seemed half out of his mind with fear. When I went upstairs with him he pointed to several footprints on the light carpet and said:
'"You mean to say those are mine?"



you for coming round. No one ever needed your advice more than I do. I suppose that Dr. Trevelyan has told you of this most unwarrantable intrusion into my rooms."

"Quite so," said Holmes. "Who are these two men, Mr. Blessington, and why do they wish to molest you?"

"Well, well," said the resident patient, in a nervous fashion, "of course it is hard to say that. You can hardly expect me to answer that, Mr. Holmes."

"Do you mean that you don't know?" "Come in here, if you please. Just have the kindness to step in here."

"He led the way into his bedroom, which was large and comfortably furnished. "You see that," said he pointing to a big black box at the end of his bed.

"I have never seen a very rich man, Mr. Holmes—never made but one investment in my life, as Dr. Trevelyan would tell you. But I don't believe I should ever trust a banker."

"With your permission," said he at last, "I should like to go upstairs and look into the matter."

"We both ascended, followed by the doctor. It was a dreadful sight which met us as we entered the bedroom door. I have spoken of the impression of fish-bones which this man Blessington conveyed. As he dangled from the hook it was exaggerated and intensified until he was scarce human in his appearance. The neck was drawn out like a plucked chicken, making the rest of him seem the more obese and unnatural by the contrast. He was clad only in his long night-dress, and his swollen ankles and ungainly feet protruded starkly from beneath it. Beside him stood a smart-looking police-inspector, who was taking notes in a pocketbook.

"Ah, Mr. Holmes," said he, heartily, "Good-morning, Lanner," answered Holmes; "you won't think me an intruder, I am sure. Have you heard of the events which led up to this affair?"

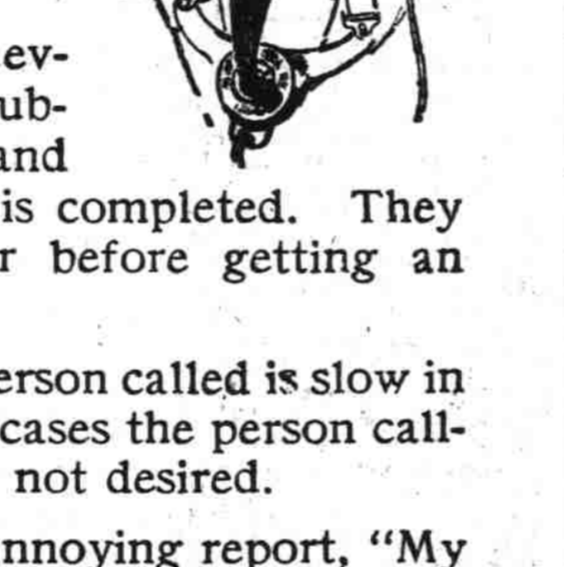
"Yes, I heard something of them." "Have you formed any opinion?" "As far as I can see, the man has been driven out of his senses by fright. The bed has been well slept in, you see. There's his impression, deep enough. It's about five in the morning, you know, that suicides are most common. That would be about his time for hanging himself. It seems to have been a very deliberate affair."

"I should say that he has been dead about three hours, judging by the rigidity of the muscles," said I. "Noticed anything peculiar about the room?" asked Holmes.

"Found a screw-driver and some screws on the wash-hand stand. Seems to have 'smoked heavily during the night, too. Here are four cigar-ends that I picked out of the fireplace."

"No, I have seen none." "His cigar-case, then?" "Yes, it was in his coat-pocket. Holmes opened it and smelled the single cigar which it contained. "Oh, this is an Havana, and these others are cigars of the peculiar sort which are imported by the Dutch from (Continued on Page Fifteen)

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