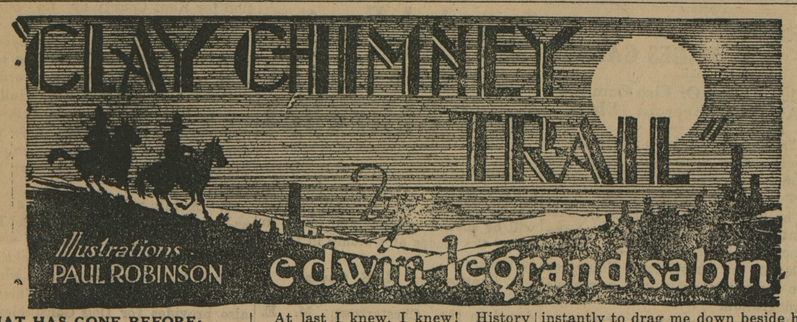
SMILE UP, FELLERS, EVERYTHING ELSE IS!! By A. B. CHAPIN



WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE:

Frank Beeson, from Albany, N. Y., reaches Benton, Wyoming, then —18 8—western terminus of the Pacific Railroad. He had been ordered by physicians to seek a climate "high and dry." He is robbed of most of his money in his hotel and loses his last twenty dollars at monte in "The Big Tent," a dance hall and gambling resort in the "roaring" town of Benton.

Edna Montoyo, companion of a gambler, is believed by Frank to have cajoled him purposely into the game. Broke, disconsolate over his discovery that "the lady of the blue eyes," as he calls her. is what she is, as he calls her, is what she is, and finally humiliated over his glaring "greenness," Frank repulses Edna when she begs him to go away with her, sobbingly telling him that she had made a mistake in letting him lose him money. He goes to take a job with

George Jenks, a teamster in a wagon train about to leave for Salt Lake City.

Capt. Adams, a Mormon, is in charge of the wagon train.

Rachel Adams, an attractive young woman, one of his wives, is in the train, as is

Daniel Adams, his loutish son. When Edna, who has shot, but not killed the gambler, Montoyo, comes a fugitive in "britches" to join the train, Daniel tells his father that she is seeking Jenks and Beeson. Capt. Adams shouts. "No hussy in men's garments shall go with the train."

Daniel, by a spectacular gun play foils Montoyo's attempt to take Edna back with him.

Under Jenks' and Edna's instruction Frank practices shooting—is told to "aim for his feet to hit his heart." This follows a clever exhibition of shooting by young Daniel, who is angered by Edna's interest in Beeson.

Daniel tries to bully Beeson. He is shot by the Easterner, and Beeson with Edna, flees into the night.

CHAPTER XII

Two Bullets Left

She and the rocks reeled together. That was my eyes, giddy with rush of blood, surging and hot.

"Never, never, never!" I was shouting.

"You sha'n't go, I sha'n't go. But wherever we go we'll go together. We'll stand them off. Then if they can take us, let 'em."

"Listen," she chided, her hand grasping my sleeve. "They would take me anyway—don't you see? After they had killed you. It would be the worse for both of us. No, Mr. Beeson, I have closed a good bargain for both of us. He is impatient. The money—you will need the money, and I shall not. Please turn your back and I'll get at my belt."

The chief was advancing accompanied by one warrior.

I could not deliver her tender body over to that painted swaggerer—any more than I could have delivered it over to Daniel himself.

At last I knew, I knew! History had written me a fool, but it should not write me a dastard.

We were together, and together we would always be, come weal or woe, life or death.

I leaped before her, answered the hail of the pausing chief.

"No," I shouted. "You go to hell!"

He understood. The phrase might have been familiar English to him.

I saw him stiffen in his saddle; he called loudly, and raised his rifle, threatening; with a gasp—a choked "Good-bye"—she darted by me. running on for the open and for him. In a stark blinding rage I levelled revolver and pulled trigger. The chief uttered a terrible cry, his rifle was tossed high, he bowed, swayed, downward, his comrade grabbed him, and they were racing back closely side by side and she was running back to me and the warriors were shrieking and brandishing their weapons and bullets spattered the rocks—all this while yet my hand shook to the recoil of the revolver and the smoke was still wafting from the poised muzzle.

What had I done? But done it was.

She arrived breathless, distraught, instantly to drag me down beside her from where I stood stupidly defiant.

"Keep out of sight," she panted. And—"Oh, why did you do it? Why did you? I think you killed him—they'll never forgive. They'll call it treachery! You're lost, lost!"

"But he sha'n't have you," I declared. "Let them kill me if they can. Till then you're mine. Mine! Don't you understand? I want you."

A burst of savage hoots renewed interrupted. "They're coming!" She knelt up, to peer; I peered. The Indians had deplored, leaving the chief lying upon the ground, their fierce countenances glaring at our asylum.

A glory glowed in her haggard face and shone from her brimming eyes.

"We will fight, we will fight!" she chanetd. "Ok, my man! Had you kissed me last night we would have known this longer. We have so little time." She turned from my lips. "Not now. They're coming. First fight; and at the end, then kiss me, please, and we'll go together."

Furious yells vibrated among our rocks. The Sioux all were in motion, except the prostrate chief. Straight onward they charged. at headlong gallop, to ride over us. It was enough to cow, but she spoke steadily.

"You must fire," she said. "Hurry! Fire once, maybe twice, to split them.

So I rose farther on my knees and fired once—and again.

It was a miracle. All swooped to right and to left as if the bullets had cleaved them apart in the center, pelting in bullet and nearly spent arrow.

She forced me down.

"Low, low," she warned. "You have fifteen shots left, for them; then, one for me, one for you. You understand?"

"I understand,' I replied. "And if I'm disabled—?"

She answered quietly.

"It will be the same. One for you, one for me!"

A double circle had been formed, to move in two directions. scudding ring reversed within scudding ring, the bowmen outremost. Around and 'round and 'round they galloped, yelling, gibing. taunting, shooting so malignantly that the air was in a constant hum and swish. The lead whined and smacked, the shafts streaked and clattered—

"You must stop some of those fiends from sneaking closer," she counseled. "See? They're trying us out."

I had been desperately saving the ammunition, to eke out this hour of mine with her. Every note from the revolver summoned the end a little nearer. But we had our game to play; and after all, the end was certain. So when the next painted ruffian bore down, I guessed shrewdly, arose and let him have it.

She cried out, clapping her hands. "Good! Good!"

The pony was sprawling and kicking; the rider had hurtled free, and went jumping and doding like a jackrabbit.

Now they all charged recklessly from the four sides; and I had to stand and fire, right, left, before, behind, emptying the gun once more ere they scattered and fled. Upon My Lady's shoulder a challenging oriflamme of scarlet.

"You're hurt!" I blurted, aghast.

"Not much. A scratch. How many left. Nine" She had been counting. "Seven for them."

We looked one upon the other, and smiled. We faced a future together,, at least; we were in accord.

The Sioux retired, mainly to sit dismounted in close circle, for a confab.

The Sioux had counciled. We waited. tense and watchful.

Then without even a premonitory shout a pony bolted for us. He bore two riders. They charged straight in, and suddenly the rear rider dropped to the ground, bounded briefly and dived headlong, worming into a little hollow of the sand.

He lay half concealed; the pony had wheeled to a shrill jubilant chorus; his remaining rider lashed him in retreat, leaving the first digging lustily with hand and knife.

That was the system: an approach by rushes. "We mustn't permit it," she breathed. "We must rout him out. Can you reach him?"

The tawny figure, prone upon the tawny sand, was just visible, lean and snakish, slightly oscillating, as it worked. And I took careful aim, and fired, and saw the spurt from the bullet.

"A little lower—" she pleaded. And I fired again.

She cried out joyfully. The snake had flopped from its hollow, plunged at full length aside; had started to crawl, writhing. A recruit took his place into the hollow; and the courier snatched the snake from the ground. The fellow in the foreground burrowed cleverly. I fired twice—we could not see that I had even inconvenienced him.

Suddenly, as I craned, the fellow fired again; he had discovered a niche in our rampart, for the ball fanned my cheek with the wings of a vicious wasp. On the instant I replied, snapping quick answer.

"I don't think you hit him," she said. "Let me try. I'll hold on the spot—he'll come up in the same place. head and shoulders. You'll have to tempt him."

And I edged further, and further, as if seeking for a mark, but with all my flesh a-prickle and my breath fast.

Abruptly it came—the snake's strike. stinging my face with the spatter of sandstone and hot lead; at the moment her Colt's bellowed into my ears.

"I got him!"

"Thank God," I rejoiced.

She had sunk back wearily.

"That is the last."

"Won't they try again, you think?"

"The last spare shot, I mean. We have only our two left. We must save those.'

The Sioux had quieted, and lolling upon the bare ground in the sun glare they chatted, laughed, rested, bue never for an instant were we dismissed from their eyes and thoughts.

"They will wait, too. They can afford it," she murmured. "It is cheaper for them than losing lives."

"If they knew we had only the two cartridges—?"

"Where will you shoot me, Frank?"

This bared the secret heart of me.

"No! No!" I begged. "Don't speak of that. It will be bad enough at the best."

"You will though," she soothed. "I'd rather have it from you. I think it should be through the temple. That's sure. But you won't wait to look, will you? You'll spare yourself that?"

This made me groan, craven, and wipe my hand across my forehead to brush away the frenzy.

Thirst and heat tortured unceasingly.

She broke with sudden passion of hoarse appeal.

"Why do we wait. Why not now?"

"We ought to wait," I stammered, miserable and pitying.

"Yes," she whispered, submissive, "I suppose we ought. One always does. But I am so tired. I think," she said, "that I will let my hair down. I shall go with my hair down. I have a right to, at last."

Whereupon she fell to loosening her hair and braiding it with hurried fingers.

Then after a time, I said:

"We'll not be much longer, dear.

"I hope not," said she. panting, her lips stiff, her eyes bright and feverish. "They'll rush us at sundown; maybe before.'

"I believe," said I, blurring the words, for my tongue was getting unmanageable, "they're making ready now."

She exclaimed and struggled and sat up and we both gazed. Out there the Sioux, in that world of their own, had aroused to energy. I fancied that they had palled of the inaction.

They delayed an instant, gesticulating.

"It will be soon," she whispered, touching my arm. "When they are half-way, don't fail. I trust you. Will you kiss me? That is only the once."

I kissed her; dry cracked lips met dry cracked lips. She laid herself down and cosed her eyes and smiled.

"I'm all right," she said. "And tired. I've worked so hard for only this. You mustn't look."

"And you must wait for me, somewhere," I entreated. Just a moment."

The Sioux charged, shrieking, hammering, lashing, all of one purpose: that, us; she, I; my life, her body; and quickly kneeling beside her (I was cool and firm and collected,) I felt her hand guide the revolver barrell.

But I did not look. She had forbidden, and I kept my eyes upon them, until they were half-way, and in exultation, I pulled the trigger, my hand already tensed to snatch and cock and deliver myself under their very grasp. That was a sweetness.

The hammer clicked. There had been no jar, no report.

The hammed had only clicked, I tell you, shocking me to the core! A missed cartridge? An empty chamber? Which? No matter. I should achieve for her, first; then, myself. I heard her gasp. Then I sensed another sound and with sight sharpened I saw. Rising I screeched and waved, as bizarre, no doubt, as aniy animated scarecrow.

It had been a trumpet note, and a cavalry guidon and a rank of bobbing figures had come galloping, galloping over an imperceptible swell.

"We're saved, the soldiers are here," I yelled as the Sioux fled, screaming.

She tottered up, clinging to me.

We were sitting close together when a lieutenant scrambled to us among the rocks; the troopers followed, curiously scanning.

His stubbled red face, dust-smeared, queried us keenly; so did his curt voice.

"Just in time?"

He brought curious news. Daniel had not died from my shot after all, but Montoyo the gambler had been lynched by Vigilantes.

It was six weeks later when we two rode into Benton, wondering.

Roaring Benton City had vanished. The iron tendrils of the Pacific Railway glistened, stretching westward into the sunset, and Benton had followed the lure, to Rawlins (as had been told us,) to Green River, to Bryan—likely now traveling fast, charging the mountain slopes of Utah. The restless dust had settled.

The Queen Hotel, the Big Tent, the saloons, gambling dens, dance halls, the station itself had subsided to this: a skeleton company of hacked and weazened posts, a fantastic outcrop of coldly blackened clay chimneys, a sprinkling of battered cans. The fevered populace who had ridden high upon the tide o frapid life had remained only as ghosts haunting a potter's field.

"It's all, all wiped out, like he is," she said. "But I wished to see."

"All, all is wiped out, dear heart" said I. "All of that. But heer are you and I."

Through star shine we cantered side by side eastward down the old, empty freighting road, for the railway station at Fort Steele.

THE END

Through star shine eve we cantered side by side down the old freighting road, eastward.

W. H. THAWLEY

PLUMBING and HEATING

Town and County Work Solicited

Will Go Anywhere

Phone 86

Chestertown, Maryland

A Long Felt Necessity

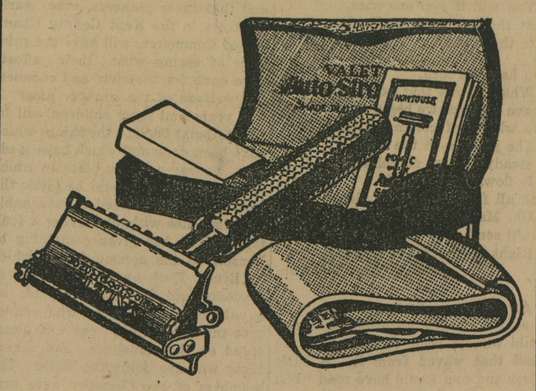
Having a new, finely equipped Ambulance, we offer its service to the public for hospitals, etc., night or day, at reasonable charges, according to distance.

Call Telephone Still Pond 3, Chestertown 306J.

B. R. Fellows,
Still Pond.

READ THE ENTERPRISE—KENT'S NEWSIEST PAPER

F-R-E-E!



AUTO STROP RAZOR

With Each NEW Subscription To THE ENTERPRISE

USE COUPON BELOW

THE ENTERPRISE:

Enclosed find $1.00 for one year's subscription to The Enterprise. Send paper and razor to.

.....

.....

Taking An Encore

—is the thing we like most in regard to our business. An encore is a "repeat" order—and repeat orders mean satisfied customers.

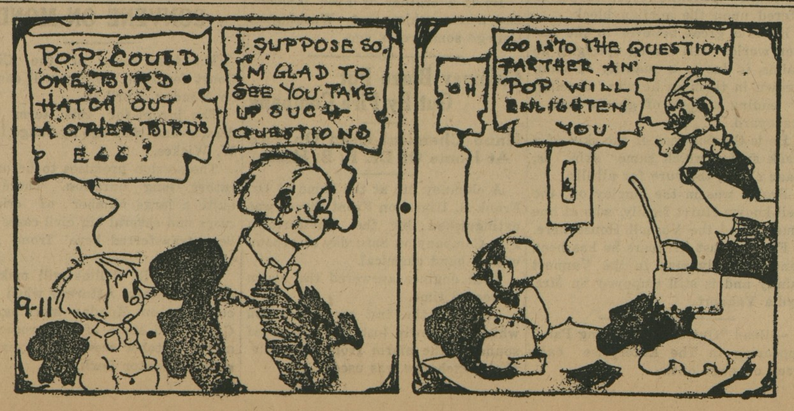
If you'll give us the opportunity to show you how we rebuild shoes—restoring all their shape and style—you too will join the ranks of those who regularly bring their shoes here for first-class repair work.

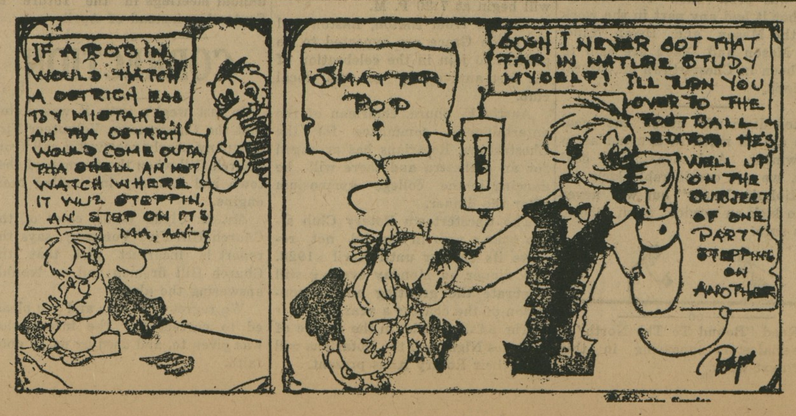
Men's Half Sole, Sewed and Rubber Heel $1.40
Men's Half Sole, Nailed and Rubber Heel $1.40
Men's Whole Sole and Rubber Heel $2.00
Ladies' Half Sole Sewed and Rubber Heel $1.20
Ladies' Half Sole, Nailed and Rubber Heel $1.10
Ladies' Whole Sole and Rubber Heel $2.20

J. Quartararo

ELECTRIC SHOE REPAIRING AND SHOE SHINE PARLOR

233 High St., Chestertown, Md.





©Maryland State Archives, msa_sc6000_36_1-0162.jpg