

"RIVAL WIVES"

(Continued From Page 35)

Little boy demanded petulantly. While she was getting them for him, he climbed with impish quickness into her chair and began to strike litters helter-skelter upon her beloved typewriter, spoiling the halfsheet of beautifully typed notes. For the next half hour she wrestled desperately with work, a small-boy's irritable demands, the telephone, which rang three times, and the swiftly rising tide of her anger.

"I'm going to tell him a thing or two if he fires me for it!" she stormed in her hot heart. "Letting his silly wife impose on me and turn me into a nursemaid! I won't put up with it another day!"

But when the buzzer sounded to summon her into his private office, her face cleared, became eager again. He had never needed her that she had not responded eagerly—"Say, Nan, I wondered if it had occurred to you that Margaret Fleming herself wrote those blackmailing letters?"

All her anger and resentment were forgotten for the moment. He was himself again—John Curtis Morgan, the greatest criminal lawyer in the state, and she was herself again—his efficient and valued secretary.

"OCCURRED to me?" Nan laughed joyously. "I've known it all along and was sure you'd feel it, too. Why, look—" And they were hard at it again, brown bobbed head close to silver-and-black, arguing, interrupting, contradicting each other in the blessed good-fellowship of work which was dearer than life to Nan Carroll.

SHE was so elated over the progress she and the lawyer had made in 15 minutes on the hitherto baffling case that not even the havoc which Curtis had wrought in the outer office could completely destroy her happiness. He had cut paper soldiers out of one of the carbon copies of the brief which it had taken her two hours to type and which would have to be done over; he had smeared paste over half the surface of her desk; had spilled ink on the thick tarpe rug which was her especial pride, and had finger-printed a great stack of John Curtis Morgan's, ankst envelopes.

Long before six o'clock her patience and her temp were almost exhausted. At half past five, when she was in the office occupied by young Blake and Evans, the clerk, the telephone rang. Before she could reach her desk to answer it Curtis had the receiver off the hook and was shrilling into it: "Hello, hello! This is Mr. Morgan's office!"

If he had not been John Curtis Morgan's adored son Nan might have slapped him; as it was, her tired brown eyes blazed at him as she snatched the instrument out of his hands.

"That you, Nan?" a man's compassionate voice came soothingly over the wire. "You don't have to tell me you're busy. I recognized the young hopeful's voice. But you're going to have dinner with me, remember."

"Oh, Willis, I can't!" Nan wailed. "I've got enough work to keep me busy till 10 o'clock at least, and I simply can't dawdle over dinner."

"You can and will," Willis Todd assured her. "Then I'll go to a movie to pass the time till you're through slaving. I'm not going to be cheated out of my date so easily, young woman. I've got a lot to say to you, Nan, honey, and you'd better make up your mind to listen."

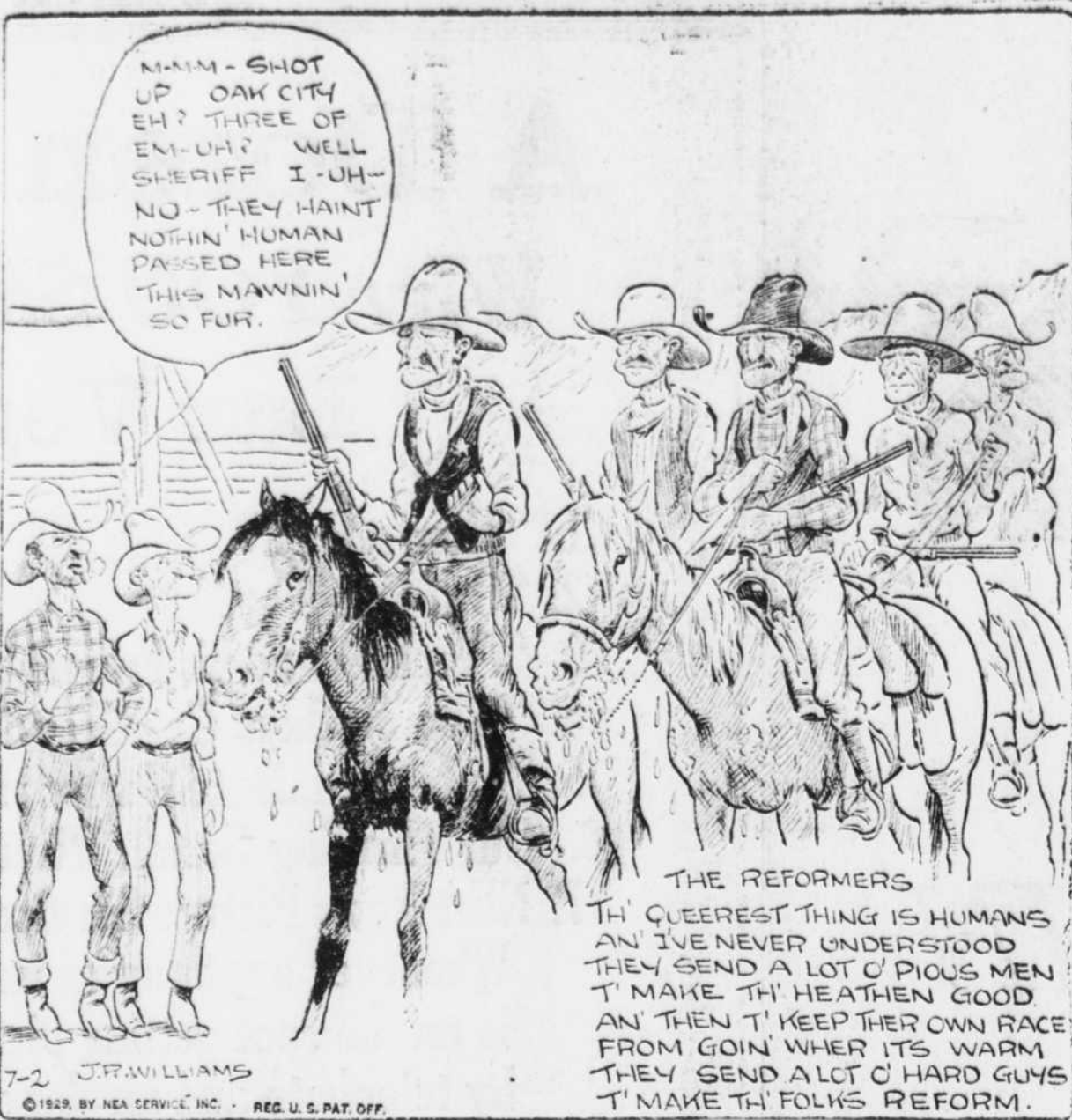
Amazement and amusement fought with fatigue in Nan's face as she hung up the receiver. So Willis Todd was suddenly becoming masterful! Funny, but sweet—

"Nana, I wanna bottle of ginger ale! I want it right now!" Curtis woke her from her reverie, his voice shrill and petulant.

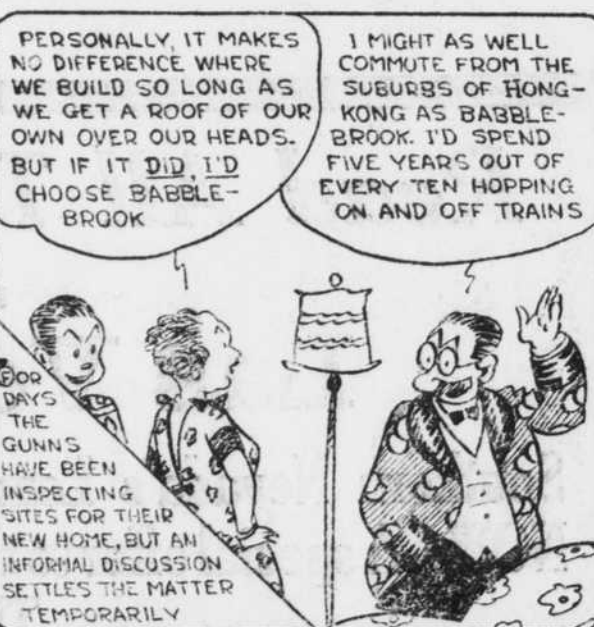
"Nana!" Nan repeated the hated perversion of her name with loathing. "Nursemaid Nana! Iris Morgan's servant!" If she listened to Willis Todd, she need never hear that degrading nickname again—

(To Be Continued)

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