Travelling By Air Mail Coast to Coast As a Letter

Paying Letter Rate Travels to California and Back and Enjoys Trip—Praises Air Pilots

NIGHT WORK NOT SO GOOD

Home for the holidays from a trip with the air mail to the Pacific Coast and back, Mrs. Waldo Cory Johnston has had a happy landing and is back with her husband and little son at The Orchards, Cooperstown, N.Y. She tells an absorbing story of her adventure. She had planned her usual autumn trip by train to visit her brother-in-law and sister, Dr. and Mrs. George W. Jean, at their Santa Barbara ranch. But her keen interest in aviation, increased by the experience of short flights near home, led her to decide on the air route. The tempting prospect of a noontime take-off here and dining the next night with relatives in California led to her change of plans. So she motored to New York, Mr. Johnston counted out something like the equivalent of the air rate for a pound of mail, multiplied it by his wife's weight, and the result went into the treasury of the National Air Transport Company here.

But let Mrs. Johnston tell her story:

"Then I got my tickets and signed some papers. One of these said that if at any time during the trip the mail taken on was very heavy the pilot had the right to land me at any field. I asked if that meant any cornfield a hundred miles from nowhere, and he said no. It meant any flying field, and they would refund my money and I could go on by train. That would have been a comedown, but luckily it did not happen! After that I bought a flying helmet and goggles, dined and had a good night's sleep. Nothing remains now but to telephone at 9.15 in the morning to see if the weather report was favorable. They said there was a ground fog, but they thought it would lift and for us to go down to Hadley Field, N.J. I met the pilot, Mr. Webster, and then tried on my parachute. It weighed a ton, and the man who fastened it on said that he had put one on Will Rogers and that he had nothing would ever induce him to jump, and that if anything happened like a sea certain he would go down with his ship.

Off, For California

"Putting on my parachute before I got into the ship ruined my hair for the benefit of the movie men, for it was the only time I had to do anything uncomfortable. Every other time they placed the 'chute on the seat in the cockpit, and it was a simple matter to get inland at way.

"By this time the mail was all in the motor warmed up, and with a final wave I was off for California. My pilot had provided me with an air map, but they are hard to make out and the only time I felt sure of our whereabouts was when we crossed a river or some big town. I scribbled a few notes as we flew along; we passed over Easton and over the Susquehanna between Sunbury and Northumberland, I am. The visibility was not very good; it was clear below but hazy in the distance and to the left a fog bank, with white cotton clouds poking up through it, overhung in a white extended for miles.

"We really never got away from it in that cloud. It entirely surrounded us again when we reached Cleveland we could not see Lake Erie, Cleveland or anything. It spoiled the end of the trip, as in the beginning it was beautiful. We flew on a level with the top of it; I should say about 2,500 feet up and by looking out and not down we seemed to be sailing on a calm grey sea with a few icebergs around us.

"We landed at Cleveland at 5, a new pilot, named Adams, and a new ship were waiting for us, and after just enough time to change the mail bags about ten minutes we were off for Chicago. I can assure you that when you send a letter by air mail it goes as fast as anything invented so far can take it. The outgoing ship is already roaring when the incoming one lands, and nobody picks any daisies along the way; we flew at 120 miles an hour all the way except when we struck a headwind at Cheyenne.

"Darkness was setting in as we left Cleveland. Night flying is not as thrilling as I thought. You cannot tell how high up you are. The beautiful thing about the night flying is watching the cities you pass. I felt as if I were in an enormous jewelry store where they had spread a piece of black velvet and diamond brooches for me to look at. That part of it was fascinating. No two cities have the same share. Chicago is like a giant airplane. Another interesting thing was the airway lighting system. We never were out of sight of a beacon for more than a few minutes, and as we flew over the emergency flying fields a big searchlight was turned on and the whole field outlined with the electric lights.

Into a Thunder Storm

"About twenty minutes before landing in Chicago we ran into a thunder storm. The motor made too much noise for me to hear the thunder, but the lightning flashed around us in a way that I did not care for very much, and the friendly beacon at Mayfield looked good. We landed at 8.15, in a pelting rain in a field covered with puddles. Two reporters and camera men were on hand—young, nice looking boys whom I couldn't turn down, so I told them the story of my life—from 1.30 that day. One of them wanted to take a picture of me in action, he said, and suggested my powdering my nose after the trip, but somehow I couldn't quite see myself in the morning paper that way, so we compromised on my wiping my goggles.

"I had had a gift of three sandwiches which I had eaten for luncheon, and I supposed there would be some way of getting a cup of coffee and a sandwich at some of the fields. But flying fields are all business and miles from town. The pilots evidently eat before they come on the field. I was not a bit hungry, but I knew I needed some breakfast, so I spoke to the manager of the Boeing Air Line which was to take me to Salt Lake City and he said he would telephone ahead. He did, for at Omaha I found a paper bag with sandwiches and bananas in the plane when we transferred. Nebraska people evidently like pickles, for I had three different kinds of sandwiches and they all had pickles. However, they tasted very good and as we flew over the prairies twinkling lights and the flashes from the beacons and an egg and pickle sandwich I thought to myself that variety is certainly the spice of life. We had spent more than an hour in Chicago. They seemed to be worried about the weather. It was 9.30 when I got into my compartment.

Asleep on Night Flight

"The rain had stopped, but we were still in the storm area and the air was rough as far as Iowa City, our next stop which we reached at midnight. Another ten minutes stop and off to Omaha with the same plane and pilot, a Mr. Lee this time. It had grown very cold, but the Boeing planes have a closed compartment for the passenger very comfortable, with leather seats and glass sides. The pilot had no protection at all, and in bad weather it must be frightfully cold.

"I slept off and on from Chicago to Cheyenne, and missed seeing the foothills. Mr. Lee told me worried him, as he was afraid he was going to have a hard time landing at Omaha. I remember seeing the lights get hazy, but then I must have dozed off, and only woke when the motor slowed down for our landing at Omaha. I asked Mr. Lee is he wasn't very cold, but he said he had been warned of a cold wave and had his furlined flying suit.

"They had a room all lighted up and warm for me, but as we were already running behind our schedule and the new pilot and plane were ready to start we were off again in five minutes, at about 2 o'clock. Soon I was thrilled at the beauty of a glorious sunrise over the prairies. I had to look back to enjoy it, as we were travelling due west. I tried taking pictures, but if they come out the beautiful colors in sky and prairie will be missing. We made Cheyenne at about 8 o'clock, and I found a thermos of hot coffee and more sandwiches waiting for me in the office. My pilot, Mr. Yeager, and I found we had many mutual friends in the air service, and we had a nice fifteen minutes before it was time to start again with another plane and Mr. Collison.

Lands on Emergency Field

"We had strong head winds from Omaha and were two hours behind schedule, but from Cheyenne on we had, in every sense, a high old time. Cheyenne itself is 6,000 feet above sea level, and immediately after leaving there we started over the Rockies. The ground was covered with snow, and as it was bright and sunny the mountain peaks were beautiful! I took pictures all along. In two hours we landed at our first emergency field, and my pilot seemed relieved to find me all right, as he said we were having a very rough trip. Our average altitude had been 9,500 feet. As the ground was covered with snow and an icy wind nearly blew my head off when I looked out, my compartment seemed good enough for me and I did not get out, although we were there more than a half hour refueling.

"Another two hours still over the mountains, and we landed at our second emergency station, about a mile from Granger, Wyo. There was no snow here, so I got out and I am glad I did, for I made the acquaintance of a remarkable family. Two roly-poly puppy dogs were the opening wedge, for the woman and children were shy. The woman was young and nice-looking and the four children were pictures of health and happiness. I have never seen a happier family, and, from a worldly point of view they had practically nothing. A three-room house covered with tar paper, set in the desert sand, its windows blowing in your eyes, your hair, in every kept anything clean.

"A mile away the Western town, with a station and two houses and stores, and not a blade of grass or a green thing anywhere. The puppies led me to the house, and in a few minutes the shyness were off. The mother was scrubbing the children's faces, had a pretty embroidered dress on a baby, and he was deposited on a blanket to roll around with the puppies, and the three other children were showing me, with great pride, their treasure in a catalogue, with illustrations of toys and clothes.

Acquaintances on the Plains

"By this time the ship was refueled and Mr. Collison came in. He picked up the baby and asked the father what he would take for him. 'Not a million dollars,' was the answer. They were intelligent looking and perfectly happy in their desert. It was a real lesson, and I shall never forget them. I am sending them a box with a few toys for the children and some home biscuits for the puppy dogs. I was talking of them afterward to Mr. Collison and he said there were many such families around here. He said he has a pet family, another emergency station and drops a box of toys for the children. He says, it does one's heart good to see such contentment, doesn't it? and I heartily agreed.

"Well, we were off again, still with the wind dead against us, and soon we were flying over a totally different type of scenery, the bare, brown, strangely shaped mountains of Utah. At 3.30 we came around through a gap and there on our right was the Great Salt Lake and the city in its beautiful setting of snow-capped mountains. We landed and were told that the Western Air Transport had no arrangements for night flying, and that as we were seven hours late the plane would not leave until 5 the next morning.

"I slept well till the telephone woke me at 4.15 a.m., and at 5 one of the flying field cars took me to a small cafe where I had some coffee and cereal, and then on to the flying field. It was still night and we did not take off for half an hour. Just as daylight began we took off in another Douglas plane like the ones the National Air Transport use, and I was glad to be in an open plane again. My pilot, Mr. James, told me that our highest altitude would be about 9,000 feet and that it might be pretty cold.

"Dawn came as we were passing Utah lake, surrounded by its snow-capped mountains, and the sun came up as we entered the desert. I have often heard of the beauties of the desert at sunrise and sunset, but I am sure that no one ever saw it under more ideal conditions. All the pastel shades would be needed to paint it, with the wonderful pinks on the distant mountains and the blue shadows on the desert. I won't wonder that artists have that faraway look in their eyes; they see things so much more beautiful than the rest of us.

Messages From the Pilot

"My pilot wrote me little notes pointing out the various points of interest. I have kept them all. He would rock the ship to attract my attention and hand me the notes. Here is the first one: 'Making good time. Practically no wind. Should arrive Los Angeles 11.45.' I believe the sky will be cloudless and atmosphere exceptionally clear from now on. Seems quite warm to me. There was snow, ice, winds not quite so cold and that on the ground here day before yesterday. We are making a little over 100 M.P.H., 5,500 feet above sea level and 200 feet above ground.'

"Another one read: 'Cross Utah-Nevada line, while you are reading this. Going over Mormon Range. We will have 9,000 feet. Cedar Breaks, Zion National Park and Bryce Canyon and other scenic points are fifty to seventy-five miles to the left. Arrive Las Vegas in one hour and ten minutes.'

"We were passing over the most beautiful scenery, very like the Grand Canyon formation. This was only a short distance away. It seemed only a few minutes since we left Salt Lake City, but it really was four hours, and soon we were slowing down and passing over the town of Las Vegas to the landing field. There again I came in contact with that friendliness which strikes me every time I come out West. Three happy-looking dogs ran to greet us and, while the ship was being refueled my pilot and I stood in the shade of the house and he told me about the man who ran the field and how all the stray dogs found a home there. After his work was done, he joined us and I saw at once why the dogs came and stayed. Such a big, wholesome type of man, with white teeth and the nicest smile, and when we were tucked into the plane once more he said: 'Are you coming back this way again, Mrs. Johnston? I certainly hope you do.' I wish we had a little more of that spirit in the East.

End of the Flight

"More notes from my pilot pointed out 'Death Valley in the distance,' 'Boulder Dam,' 'Barstow,' and then the last one: 'Sierra Madre Range on right. San Bernardino Mountains on left. Cajon Pass ahead. We will land twenty minutes after we pass those mountains. Snow-capped pile on left is Greyback. Perhaps you have heard of Big Bear Lake? That is where it is.'

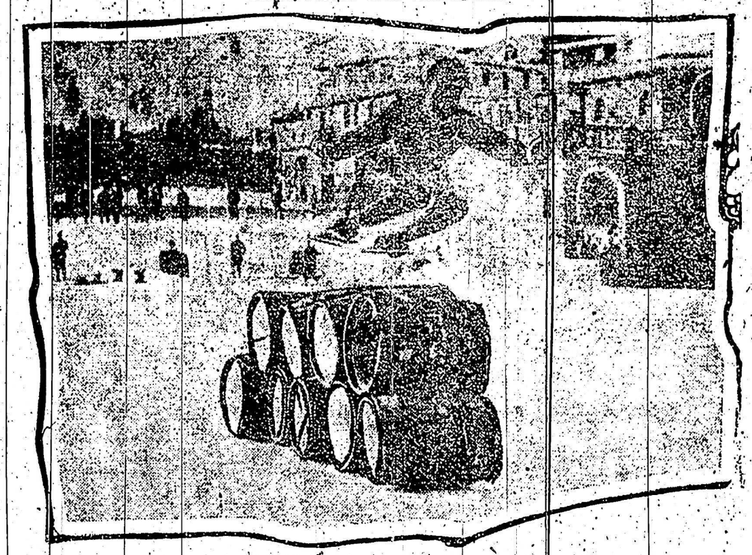
"Coming over the Cajon Pass and the Sierras was the most fearful part of it all and a perfect ending to a wonderful trip."

Her visit on the coast ended and Christmas not so far off, Mrs. Johnston thought of home and decided to come back by air and with the mail. She took off from Vail Field, Los Angeles, December 4, at 7.40 a.m. and was set down safely at Chicago at 5.45 the next morning, exactly on time. On the way she renewed pleasant acquaintance with some of the pilots on the Western flight and met others of the intrepid band that speed the mail through the skies. Graham, Allison and Myers and she has only praise for them all.

"My trip has ended," Mrs. Johnston concludes, "but I know I shall relive it many times. Nowadays when I drop an air mail letter into a box, like a flashback in a movie, a picture unfolds before my eyes. Once more I hear the roar of the 400-h.p. motor, feel the wind rushing by as we speed into the night at 135 miles an hour. Once more I see the quiet landing field suddenly shaken into life as the watchman in the tower signals the approach of the tiny green and red lights and the enormous flashlight sends its wide path of light over the field. Once again I see my pilot, tired with the strain of a 400-mile flight in the dark, sink back in his seat and then wearily lift himself and his parachute out of the plane and move into the office to write out his report.

"And when night comes and the wind whistles drearily through the trees and the cold penetrates even into our well-heated house I look out into the dark and a prayer rises in my heart that somehow the winter may not be quite so long and the snow and sleet not quite so cold and that those men who, smiling and uncomplaining, face such dangers and hardships to bring our mail through quickly may safely reach their destinations." N. Y. Herald-Tribune.

High, Wide and Handsome



TRY THIS ON YOUR SKATES

Paul Taylor, Canadian skating expert, with nine barrels, two stories high, sets a new record for combined height and length of a jump on skates at St. Moritz, Switzerland.

Foreign Legion Life Described

Englishman Says He Was Struck and Kicked by Officers

London, John Harvey, the young Englishman recently pardoned by the French Foreign Legion after being sentenced to eight years imprisonment for desertion, is quoted by The Evening Standard as saying that he now has no illusions about the Foreign Legion.

"Scenes which I am told are in Sen Geste only begin to tell you what the life is like," Harvey is quoted as saying. "The Foreign Legion is a fighting machine and it is made to fight. It fights everywhere France has any fighting to be done in her desert possessions and it suffers all the time.

"I have been struck by officers and have been kicked while lying down with my hands and feet in chains. I have crawled about the desert with a thirst that would almost break a man's heart; I witnessed scenes of such barbarity in French prisons that seem incredible. Now that they are behind me, do you wonder why I am so bitter about the Foreign Legion?"

Harvey was released unconditionally from the French Foreign Legion after the British Foreign Office intervened on his behalf.

Bennett J. Doty, the spectacular Mississippian, who also was pardoned from the Legion, after having been sentenced to eight years imprisonment for desertion, said upon his arrival in America that while the French Foreign Legion accorded him a "square deal" it was no young ladies' seminary.

NOT A COLLEGE MAN

Boss: Were you ever a college man?

Applicant: Sir, I've been a respectable, hard-working person all my life.

Their Job.

An amusing story was told recently by Mr. A. R. Cairns, the Metropolitan police magistrate.

It concerned a prisoner on trial for burglary, who was asked the usual question: "Guilty or not guilty?"

"Yes," responded the man in the dock.

"What's that?" asked the judge sharply.

"I was asked whether I was guilty or not guilty, and, of course, I am. I must be one of the two."

"But, which are you?"

"That, my lord," replied the prisoner, "is for the jury to decide."

"ROOM 40" YIELDS ITS [illegible]R SECRETS

How British Radio Decoders In[illegible] Learning U-Boat Locations [illegible] Fleet Would Iss[illegible]

By Cl[illegible]

London.—Now we know [illegible] can be told. A few months ago Sir Alfred Ewing, who has been Vice Chancellor of Edinburgh University since 1917, revealed to an Edinburgh audience what he described as the Admiralty's best-kept war secret. On the very day that the war began in 1914, he said, Admiral Sir Henry Oliver, then Director of Naval Intelligence, gave him a handful of German wireless messages picked up by the radio station on the roof of the Admiralty building in London and asked him what he could make of them. The result was the creation, under Sir Alfred's direction, of the secret deciphering staff, which occupied "Room 40" at the Admiralty and whose existence was kept so secret that it was always referred to simply as "Room 40."

Consider what the air was like during the war. There were no civilian messages. The air was used for war messages only and was so congested that no transmitting set was used at sea without the captain's permission. The average radio room at sea used to pick up about 400 messages a [illegible] sending perhaps three messages in the same period. Of these 400 messages about 60 per cent. used to be intercepted position and operating messages, the former being, for example, trawler 456 advising Devonport dockyard via Lands End that it was in position so much north and so much west, 10 miles from Eddystone Light, time group "1230"; and the latter being Davenport telling trawler 456 via Lands End to go and chase butterflies off Yanka Dula Light, time group "0432."

Messages of this sort always went to the communication room to be decoded, but only those involving positions near the ship or the ship's course need to be sent to the captain from the communication room. This was the common and continual character of the war zone.

Source of Warnings.

Of the remaining 40 per cent. of messages picked up by the average radio room at sea, 20 per cent. were war warnings broadcast in code at certain stated intervals by certain shore stations in Britain, France and Italy. Of these also only those which bore upon the ship's position or course were sent to the captain. These consisted almost entirely of the positions and cruising directions of enemy submarines. It was supposed during the war that they were obtained by the use of direction-finders that enabled two shore stations to get a fix on an enemy transmitting set and thus to determine its position at sea.

Sir Alfred points out that the Admiralty's use of directional wireless served in many cases as a convenient camouflage to conceal the real source of its war warnings. The real source, he says, was the actual deciphering of the reports and operation orders of enemy submarines, an unprecedented achievement and one that alone explains the volume and accuracy of the Admiralty's daily war warnings. These used to cover the entire war zone and only a small proportion of them would be of interest to any one ship or convoy, but the importance of that small proportion could be seen in the chart house of any ship at sea.

Of the remaining 20 per cent. of messages which the average radio room at sea would pick up, about [illegible] per cent. would be ships' "all's well," [illegible] per cent. would be S O S's and the rest reports of drifting mines. The word allo was originally an Admiralty code word meaning "submarine sighted." Broadcast by a ship or an convoy that was being attacked, it came into the radio about as fast as an S O S—the word allo followed [illegible] times, the position, the time [illegible] and the ship's name.

Enemy submarines worked on [illegible] d German Orders. [illegible]e Time the [illegible]n

[illegible] of 400 meters: [illegible] sages was merely a me[illegible] down to their wa[illegible] Operator could have do[illegible] sors had permit[illegible] have got young [illegible] bled letters of an enemy [illegible]

[illegible]fred Ewing now re[illegible] Admiralty set up receiving [illegible] the express purpose of [illegible]nemy messages and [illegible]m to "Room 40" in [illegible] decipherer, he says, [illegible] receiving stations were [illegible]ch the fleet signals, sub[illegible]ers and other wireless [illegible] the enemy were [illegible]ken in and from which [illegible]legraphed to the Admiralty [illegible]phered.

[illegible]sing the Submarines.

[illegible] work had passed, [illegible] as many as 2,000-400 [illegible]ages were often received [illegible]th in the course of a [illegible] this way a close [illegible] was kept on the German [illegible] information was obtained [illegible] of their prospective movements. [illegible] it was fortunate, the [illegible] knew on the day [illegible] of the Dogger Bank [illegible] were coming out, [illegible] they were chasing [illegible] were going. All this [illegible] was obtained from [illegible] deciphered German [illegible]h orders were given [illegible] headquarters, [illegible] It was one [illegible] Admiralty [illegible] meanwhile [illegible] of the Dogger Bank [illegible] in the Admiralty [illegible] every signal, following [illegible] from beginning to end [illegible] the battle [illegible] but in consequence [illegible] signalling orders by wireless [illegible] deciphered in the [illegible] indications of the [illegible]. From December [illegible] system of intercepting [illegible] enemy messages had [illegible] fully developed and [illegible]pher keys had been [illegible] the German fleet made [illegible] that were not known [illegible]rough the information [illegible] gave to the Admiralty [illegible] cipher signals.

[illegible]pted Zimmermann Offer

[illegible] intercepting naval [illegible] continued, "Room 40" [illegible] with much political [illegible] obtained position of Germany [illegible] to resort to wireless [illegible] frequent changes of [illegible] for confidential communication [illegible]h correspondents [illegible] many political messages [illegible] the notorious Zimmermann [illegible] which was intercepted [illegible] decoded in the [illegible] the Page Letters. [illegible] was then instrumental [illegible] of war. The Zimmermann [illegible] which revealed a conspiracy [illegible] to Mexico, of an alliance [illegible] the United States, was [illegible] in Room 40. It was [illegible] very confidentially [illegible] four to Mr. Page and through [illegible] Wilson, and was given to the [illegible]merican press. It was [illegible]sive in convincing [illegible] to the necessity of [illegible] on to the British Admiralty [illegible] a new and powerful [illegible] new weapon, namely, its [illegible] Wireless will [illegible] to be used by the navies [illegible] its only secrecy will [illegible] be the code. It was [illegible] answer to "Room 40" [illegible] cannot be deciphered [illegible] except the men who [illegible] it, is it possible to [illegible]de." N.Y. Times.

Good Advertising of a Good Thing

The Fruit Traders Federation [illegible] "London Times" tells us, is [illegible] to spend a further £40,000 [illegible] paper advertising this year [illegible] popularize fruit-eating throughout [illegible] British Isles. The signing of the advertising contract marks [illegible] fourth consecutive year of the "more fruit" campaign. Mr. [illegible] Boggon, the organizer of the campaign, stated recently at the [illegible] last three years advertising has [illegible] the eating of fruit from being a luxury into a national habit, and the Board of Trade returns show [illegible] over £5,000,000 more had been spent [illegible] consumption since the [illegible] paper advertisements first appeared. In the new campaign stress will be laid on the vitamin and "[illegible]" value of fresh fruit.

Less meat and more fruit—I mean better health for the nation.

"What is the cure for love at first sight?" "Second sight."

[illegible]imes Change

[illegible]own's White Dancing [illegible] Malays in Big Hats [illegible]issed By Visitor [illegible] of '80's

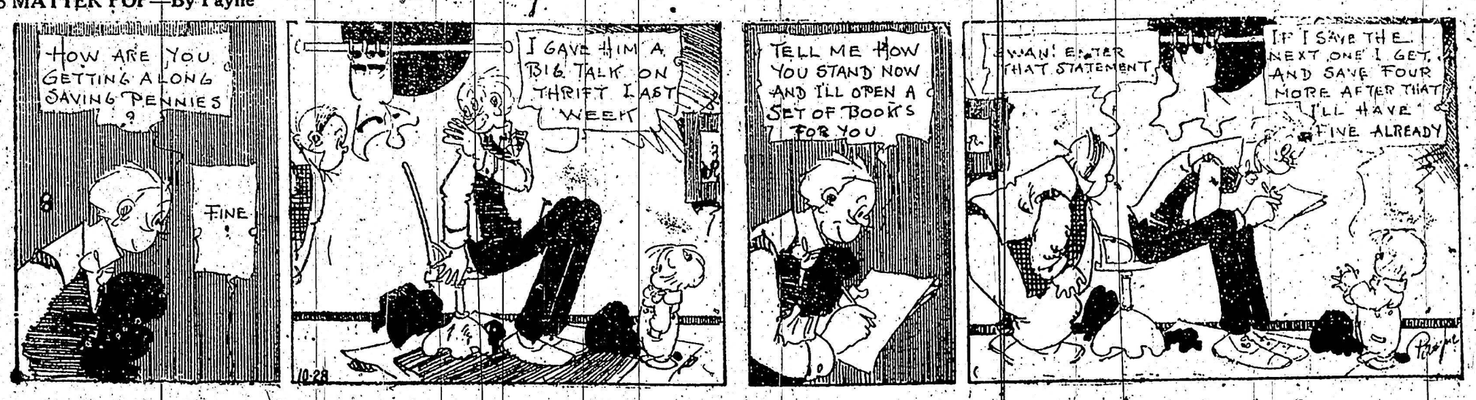
[illegible] Leonard Merrick, [illegible] novelist, who is on a [illegible] visit to South Africa, [illegible] Cape Town, that he had [illegible] attempted to write a [illegible] story."

[illegible]uld not like [illegible] contrasting with [illegible] authors [illegible] Mrs. [illegible] Mrs. [illegible] by writing [illegible]

Merrick knew Cape Town [illegible] ago. The place [illegible] to his [illegible] and beautiful [illegible] to be. The [illegible] is gone," he declared. [illegible] stores, white hats [illegible] with immense [illegible] have all vanished. My [illegible] from Paternoster along [illegible] leaf trees to Rondebosch [illegible] covered with houses [illegible] ugly houses. Such is the progress.

[illegible]day be difficult to prove the [illegible] of a town, but it is [illegible] many distinctive [illegible] have [illegible]ared. Cape Town once had a [illegible] individuality. To-day it has [illegible] excellent things that it lacked but its individuality has gone. [illegible]e Town is the noisiest city in [illegible]nion," Mr. Merrick declared, "noisier than big cities like Melbourne, Sydney, London and New [illegible]

[illegible] you are towards your wife as [illegible] before you married her?"

[illegible]tly. "Remember just how I [illegible] when I first fell in love with [illegible] used to hang over the fence in [illegible] of her house and gaze at her [illegible] on the curtain almost afraid [illegible]. And I feel just the same way [illegible]hen I get home late."

S'MATTER POP—By Payne