

The Free Press Short Story.

THE END OF THE RAINBOW

By E. A. GEE

"SEVEN thousand dollars," chorused Jeffrey Wilkins, "my mean just seven thousand dollars to most folks, but to us, Mum, it'll mean life, liberty, and—the end of the rainbow. It'll mean we can—"

"Better wait a minute, Son," smiled his mother gently. "In another breath you'll have our air castle all built and you'll have me worrying about which of our eight bedrooms I should take." Her face became serious. "If you think we should sell, Jeff," she continued, "we will sell. It does seem as though Providence has come—" Her voice broke.

"This is no time to weep," cried Jeffrey jubilantly. "Just think, we can move away from the railroad yards; we can get a cottage out where you can have the sunshine and the air you need; we can pay every bill we owe, including doctors' bills. Seven thousand dollars!" he murmured ecstatically. "We'll have to start a bank."

"And here's another thing," he went on joyously. "I can take that job in the dispatcher's office. It won't be so much to begin with, but it'll be leading me somewhere. This money will take those debts off our hands and leave us something over."

Before he slept that night Jeffrey reviewed the unhappy events of the past four years. He recalled vividly that black night when his father gave his life to save the passenger train of the Acme Railroad. The grateful railroad company had granted to the widow a long-term lease at a low rental of a strategic corner of the railway station at Hedron, and with high hopes the Wilkins had embarked on the business of selling fruits and magazines.

Jeffrey groaned when he thought of that first year. In order to permit him to finish his last year at High School, his mother had herself conducted the stand. She had hung on until he had graduated and had then suffered a general breakdown from which she had never fully recovered.

He thought of the years that had followed, of his frustrated hopes and plans. Hedron was a division point. All trains stopped there. The magazine stand should have been a gold mine, but it needed modernizing. It needed this, it needed that, and everything it needed required money. Every dollar that came to them had to go for medicines, food, and other wants more pressing than the modernization of the stand.

They had struggled on hopelessly, never quite daring to give up the lease they held. With each year their burden of debt had grown a bit heavier and with each year Jeffrey's hopes had grown a bit more faint.

His thoughts then reached the man, Clawson. Only that morning the man had appeared at the stand. He had introduced himself and then abruptly offered twenty-five hundred dollars for the stand, together with an assignment of the lease. Jeffrey was at first too astonished to speak and the man, misinterpreting his silence, kept raising his offer. The young man had no idea what the lease was worth but he did know its value should be far greater to some one with money to develop it properly than it had been to him. He also knew that the best way to learn how much it was worth to Clawson was to let the latter do the talking. He therefore wisely kept silent. At sixty-five hundred dollars, however, the man had stopped.

"If you don't want to sell," he had said angrily, and without giving Jeffrey a chance to speak, had stalked away.

Jeffrey, thinking the matter ended, had been heart-sick. Milne, the station master, agreed that sixty-five hundred was a fair price, and that Jeffrey should have accepted it. Unaccountably, then, the man had come back with an offer of seven thousand.

"That's as right as I'm going," he said roughly. "You can take it or leave it and if you take it you'll have to do it quick. I can't waste much more time on the matter."

"But," Jeffrey had demurred, "the lease belongs to my mother. The price is all right with me and I think she'll agree. I'll have to see her, though, and I suppose I'd better see a lawyer."

"I can give you until to-morrow noon," Clawson had replied. "Now the assignment of that lease will have to be approved at the head office of the Acme and that'll take quite a while. Have your lawyer draw up an agreement that will bind both your mother and me to this transaction for the time being. I'll put the money in escrow in your bank."

Jeffrey had done everything that had been asked of him. He had seen the lawyer, talked with his mother, and she had willingly signed the agreement. Only a few formalities now remained to be done before the whole matter would be settled.

He appeared at the stand earlier than usual the next morning. "John," he said to the old man who ran the stand at night, "we're selling out. But Clawson agreed to keep you on, so you won't suffer any by it."

"Clawson!" muttered old John Logan. "Ever since you told me last night, I've been thinking about that. I've heard it some place and I don't know just where. He had something to do with Hinkle, I think. Hinkle," he ex-

plained, "owns that string of magazine stands in the Continental stations. I wonder—"

An incoming train and a small rush of customers kept John from wondering any more just then, and a bit later he went off duty without having said anything further. It was not long after that that Hinkle, the division superintendent, approached the stand.

"Jeff," he said, "I've just heard that you've sold out and I want to tell you that you're about the luckiest lad this side of both poles. Listen!" he went on confidentially, without giving the young man a chance to explain that the bargain was not yet completed. "For years and years there's been talk of a merger of the Acme and the Continental Railroads. It's dragged on so long that nobody thought it would be out pretty soon now."

"But here's where your luck comes in," he continued. "The Acme crosses the Continental at Medford, five miles away. Medford is a Continental Division point. Yesterday afternoon it was decided, over my protest, to abandon Hedron as a division point in favor of Medford. Inside of three months Hedron will be a deserted village. Keep this under your hat, Jeff. It'll get out soon enough and when it does there'll be an old-fashioned riot."

Jeffrey was thunderstruck. He had never even remotely considered the possibility that Hedron might be abandoned as a division point. He became utterly heartsick as he saw what that would mean. The dozens of small businesses that grew up inevitably about any division point would be ruined; their own lease would become absolutely worthless just when Clawson was on the point of buying it. With a start he realized suddenly that Clawson undoubtedly did not yet know of this latest development. His mind was awfully with conflicting thoughts as the superintendent walked away. Almost on the latter's heels came Clawson.

"All set?" he asked shortly. Jeffrey stared at him dumbly. He had not yet had time to adjust himself to this catastrophe. Clawson repeated his question, this time more sharply, and Jeffrey mechanically produced the agreement, already signed by his mother. The man studied it for a moment, then he, too, signed it. "Now," he said, "we'll go over to the bank and finish the deal. I want to get it over with."

"Wait!" cried Jeffrey, agonizedly. "I've got to—"

"It's too late now," interrupted the other roughly. In a daze Jeffrey permitted himself to be led to the bank where the transaction was soon completed. Clawson accompanied him back to the magazine stand. "I hope you understand," he said patronizingly, "that you can't back out of this thing now. You're tied up tighter'n a drum and so am I. I won't want to back out but I'm afraid you will when Hinkle's man gets here this afternoon and offers ten thousand for your lease."

He laughed aloud at Jeffrey's bewilderment. "You see, sonny," he explained, "a little bird whispered in my ear that Hinkle was after this place so I just beat him to it. It's kind of tough on you, but there's nothing wrong about it. It's just a little business trick."

"That three thousand you lost," he smirked, "you can charge to experience. She's a swell teacher."

For hours after Clawson's departure Jeffrey was in a hopeless maze. In the end, however, he succeeded in convincing himself that matters had turned out just as they should have. Had not Claw-

son tried to put over a pretty shady deal? If he burned his fingers in the process he was getting on what he deserved. If some still small voice deep down inside Jeffrey kept insisting that there was something more to the proposition than just this, the arrival of the man from Hinkle's, early in the afternoon, helped him another bit. The man was surprised and disappointed to learn that Clawson had been ahead of him.

"This makes the second time he's done this," he said savagely. "He bribes somebody in our office to keep him posted on affairs like this. Now if I want this stand, and we do want it, we'll have to pay through the nose for it."

There was weeping and wailing in the station the next morning when the news spread that Hedron was to be abandoned; but Jeffrey was conscious only of relief. He and his mother were out from under. Shortly before noon Clawson appeared. He smiled ingratiatingly at Jeffrey.

"Well," he said breezily, "this rather changes things, doesn't it? Looks like we'll have to call everything off, after all."

"It doesn't look that way to me," replied Jeffrey firmly.

"But it can't fair for you—" began the man.

"You're a fine guy to talk to me about being fair," snapped Jeffrey.

"But you can't take seven thousand dollars from me," sputtered Clawson wildly, "for something that's worthless."

"I didn't make you buy it," said Jeffrey. "You got what you asked for. Just like you told me yesterday, it may be a little tough on you but there's nothing wrong about it. This is only another of those little business tricks."

"And," he continued relentlessly, "you can charge off that seven thousand to experience. She's a swell teacher."

Clawson argued, pleaded and wept but Jeffrey stood firm. Something that the man said at the end, however, bothered him. "I thought," said Clawson bitterly, "you were too dumb to be anything but honest. And here you turn out to be nothing but a first-class slicker. Why, you're no better than I am."

Although this came with but poor grace from Clawson, it put Jeffrey's conscience to work again. The young man spent a miserable afternoon and in desperation he finally put his problem before several of his friends in the station. All of them advised him not to cancel the agreement. He shuddered when he thought of the consequences of cancelling it. He and his mother would still be saddled with an awful load of debts.

When old John came on duty that night, Jeffrey prepared to go home. He found himself wondering all at once just how he would explain the matter to his mother. Sooner or later he would have to tell her. He realized with a start that he knew what her answer to the problem would be.

"Jeff," she would say gently, "no matter what this man tried to do to you, we can't benefit by his misfortune. We must cancel that agreement."

Suddenly Jeffrey knew what his answer, too, must be. He walked firmly to a telephone, called Clawson and told him the deal was off.

It was three days later. Clawson had been released from his contract and Jeffrey had listened silently to many jibes and jeers at his quibbling action. Of all his friends in the station only Hinkle, the superintendent, had commended him. Hinkle now came to him. "Jeff," he said, a smile hovering about his lips, "the good we do comes back to us sooner or later. The plan to abandon Hedron as a division point has been given up. I've taken the liberty of phoning that information to Hinkle for you. His man will be here to see you this afternoon."

**SURE, HE'S MARRIED!**

Merchant: "There goes a married man."

Stranger: "How do you know?"

Man: "He used to buy a three-pound box of candy twice a week, and now he only buys 10 cents worth of peppermints once a week."

SLATS' DIARY BY OLIVER N. WARREN

Sunday: Yung Mister & Mistra Jones who has been married but 2 yrs cum to are house after supper & soon Mistra Jones sat Ma how long had she been married to Pa. 20 yrs sed Ma & the visitor sed that a offis long time to live with the same man. Ma sed well he aint the same man he was when I married him. We all laft. Xcept Pa.

Monday: I herd sumboddie say sum thing about the cold gray don of the morning after. If they are rich a thing this are it to me. Back to skool. & for a offis long time. This fine wether.

Tuesday: Sum of the kids gob to laffing in the class this a.m. & the teacher sed are you laffing at me & when they sed no she sed what else is they in the skool to laff at? Bilsters sen sum thing funny about him & laffed out & that made us all laff. & Bilsters gob his ero pulled.

Wednesday: A new kid in skool was a braggan that his leg had been broke 3 times in the same place & Juko give him same good advice. Juko sed if I was you I woodent put my laff in that place no more.

Thursday: We was a arguen about rowing in the class & the teacher sed it is rong if we seek it. I kid sed then he done rong by rubben sum quib on his sisters lip alk & onley beca her bow kickt his dog recent.

Friday: A bunch of tuff looken guys in a old ford car stop & sat are city martial do we have any spede ornamentals hear & the cafter sed no & the faster youse guys get outen hear the better it will be for all consard. They was no more queschens & aners.

Saturday: I sleep late this a.m. & wood of sleep sum more if it wasent for the hot blasted furnace in the basement, & which I called a dad blasted furnace when I got down there & no boddie could here me say it.

USED OIL WASTED

"Is there much money used in politics?"

"Comparatively little," answered Senator Sorghum. "But there is a scandalous amount of it wasted."

DON'T TREAT CONSTIPATION LIGHTLY

Poor Health May Be the Price of Neglect

Too many people dismiss common constipation as a matter of no great consequence. Yet this condition causes discomfort, and may lead to headaches and loss of appetite. When it is allowed to continue, it may lower your resistance, and so increase your chances of catching a serious illness.

Common constipation often develops when you eat meals that lack sufficient "bulk." Your system fails to get needed internal exercise. Fortunately, today, you have a generous source of effective "bulk" in Kellogg's ALL-BRAN.

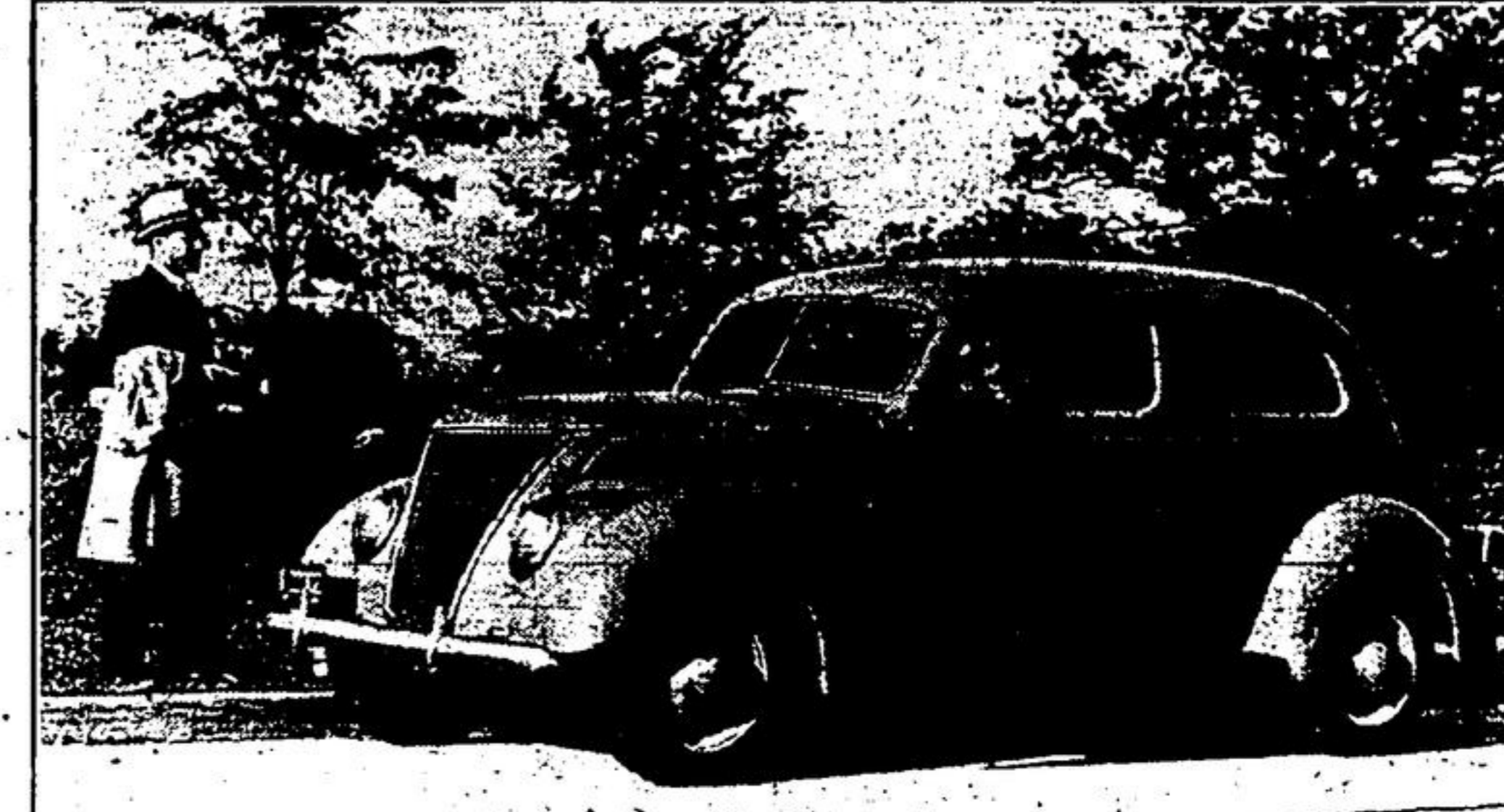
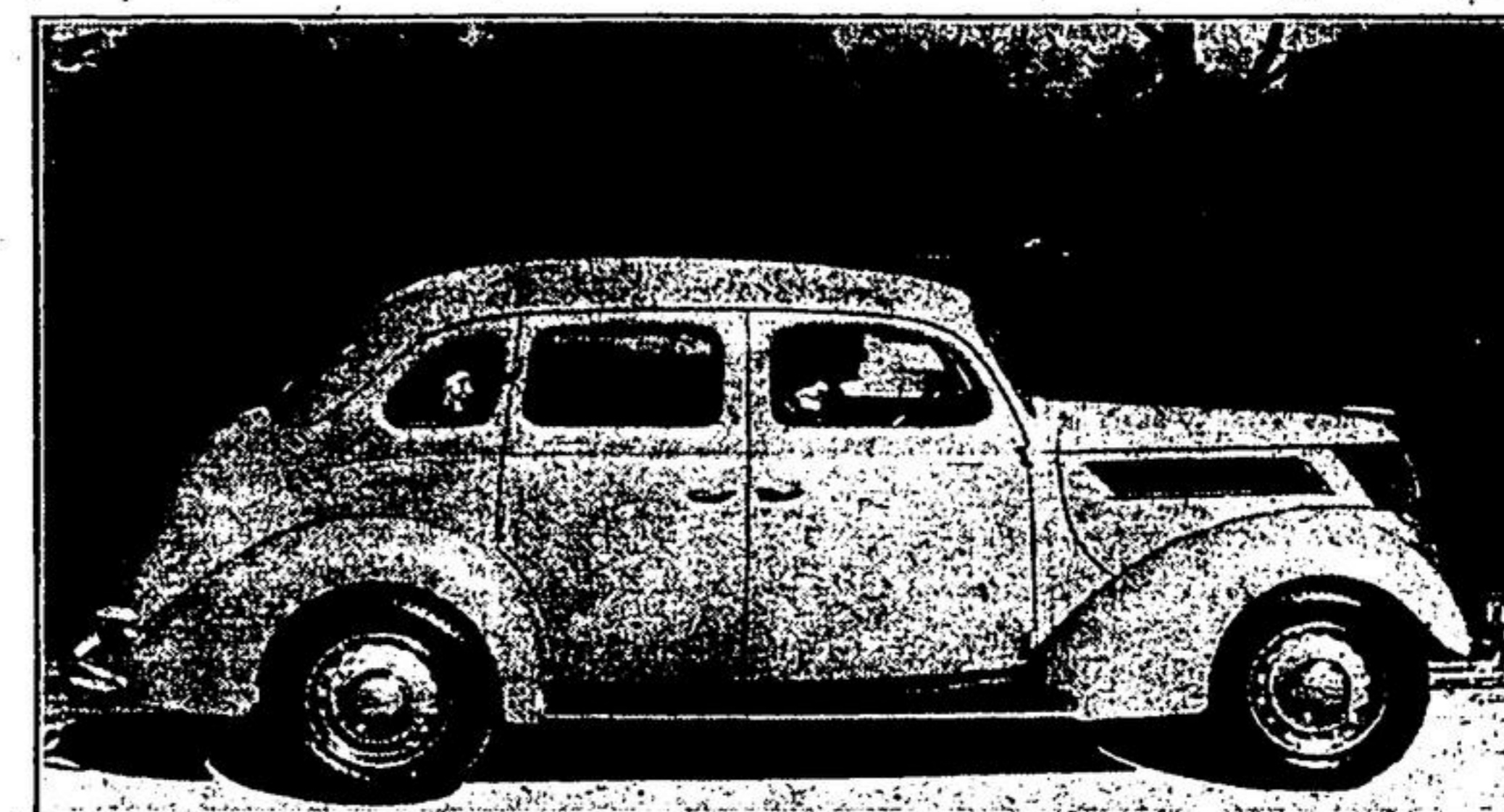
Within the body, the "bulk" in ALL-BRAN absorbs moisture, and forms a soft mass, which gently cleanses the system. This natural laxative food also supplies vitamin B and contains iron.

Serve ALL-BRAN as a cereal, with milk or cream, or cook into muffins, breads, etc. Two tablespoonfuls daily are usually sufficient. Stubborn cases may require ALL-BRAN often. If not relieved this way, consult your doctor.

ALL-BRAN is guaranteed by the Kellogg Company as an effective laxative food for constipation. Sold by all grocers. Made by Kellogg in London, Ontario.

\*Constipation due to insufficient "bulk"

New 1937 Ford V-8s Announced



Two of the most popular body types in the entire Ford V-8 line are the de luxe Fordor touring sedan (above) and the Tudor sedan (below). The new 1937 Fordor touring sedan is a family car especially suitable for touring. It boasts a roomy built-in trunk. The Tudor sedan has a new full "drop" form wherever practicable, combine to give what those who previewed it declare to be the most beautiful Ford yet produced. The Fordor touring sedan is a family car especially suitable for touring. It boasts a roomy built-in trunk. The Tudor sedan has a new full width front seat, with divided tilting seat back. Two engine sizes are available, the famous 85 horsepower V-8 engine and a new 60 horsepower V-8 engine. Mechanical improvements include new all-steel body, with steel top; "easy-action safety" brakes and new "finger-tip" steering.

If You Expect to Sell, You Must Advertise

**SPECIAL FOR CHRISTMAS BAKING**

**CRISCO** The Digestible Shortening 1-lb tin 22c

Fry's Pure COCOA 3 1/2-lb tin 19c

Green Giant PEAS 2 17-oz cans 29c

Aurial PEACHES 2 16-oz cans 27c

Burford PEARS 2 No. 2 tins 19c

Pure Black PEPPER 1/2-lb 10c

Seedless RAISINS 1 lb. 11c

NEW DATES Pitted 2 lbs. 25c

Finger Ruffles BISCUITS 2 lbs. 29c

A delicious finger of biscuit and mallow, smothered in coconut and daintily barred with milk chocolate.

CHRISTIE'S BISCUIT WEEK

FIG ROLLS 1 lb. 14c

SULTANA BISCUITS 1 lb. 28c

DAINTY SODAS 1 lb. 17c

Maple Leaf LARD 1-lb. 14c

**National CHEESE Week**

Aylmer Tomato CATSUP 1/2-gal 9c

Red River CEREAL 1/2-gal 22c

Our Best Peanut BUTTER 2 lbs. 27c

Old Fashioned Mint HUMBUGS 1 lb. 15c

Leung's Melrose Chocolates 1 lb. 25c

Crown or Beehive Corn SYRUP 3-lb. pail 37c

Crossed Fish, Norwegian Sardines 2 tins 25c

Fancy Pink SALMON 1 lb. 10c

Sifted SALT 1/2-gal 5c

Powdered Soap OXYDOL 1/2-gal 19c

Comfort SOAP 5-lb. 18c

Infant's Delight SOAP 3 cakes 14c

OUR OWN OLD OUR BEST NEW VELVEETA or CHATEAU KRAFT CANADIAN 1 lb. 21c 1 lb. 18c 1/2-lb. 15c 1 lb. 25c

MACARONI or SPAGHETTI 1 lb. 5c

FRESH COFFEE 1 lb. 19c & 31c

GOLDEN TIP TEA 1/2-lb. pkg. 33c

Lyons TEA 1/2-lb. pkg. 29c

**P & G SOAP 10 bars 33c**

STORE CLOSSES SATURDAY NIGHT—10.30 P. M. Free Delivery PHONE 158

**ONIONS** 10 lbs. Nice Size Sound and Dry 13c

**ORANGES** Florida, Sweet, Juicy Good Size, per dozen 25c

**Sweet Potatoes** 6 Finest Southern lbs. for 19c

**CELERY** STALKS Jumbo Size, each 5c

**GRAPES** 2 EMPEROR lbs. for 25c

**Bananas** Golden Yellow Large Size, per dozen 25c

**Grapefruit** 4 Good Size Marsh Seedless 15c

**LETTUCE** 2 Crisp Heads for 13c

**POTATOES** Good Cookers per peck 25c

**CARROLL'S LIMITED**