

THE TALE OF THE NEAR SLAYING OF RAGTIME

All ye who value a pet begonia at \$3.50 are offered food for thought by the episode in which figure the "Queen of Sheba," the young man she called "Steady Company" and the old gentleman she called the "Grouch Next Door."

The "Queen of Sheba," as she was known to the "Grouch Next Door," is a young person with blue eyes, flat-heeled shoes and a Medici.

A Medici, as was told the magistrate to whom she went for justice, is a new frilly collar pointing up behind the ears like an A and pointing down in front like a V. One might as well wear old-style high heels this month as to have no Medici.

The "Grouch Next Door," when knotty points of law had been unraveled and certain compromises met, settled \$3.50 for a pet begonia which was found to be no good after it was sat upon.

The "Grouch Next Door" had not sat upon the begonia. The begonia had been sat upon by the "Steady Company."

Nine-thirty p. m.: Behind a hanging porch screen the "Queen of Sheba" was giving a porch party to her steady company. That young man was giving an informal recital on his guitar, while in an upstairs room vain attempts to sleep were being made by the "Grouch Next Door."

The young man, having laid aside his funny hat, rendered "Silver Threads Among the Gold," "Every Day I Love You Just a Little Bit More," "Snooky Ookums" and "San Francisco Bound." The girl asked what he thought of the works of Robert W. Chambers. As for herself, she said she didn't know much about literature, but she knew what she liked.

At 11 p. m. the "Grouch Next Door" felt sure the father of the "Queen of Sheba" would tramp out heavily, tell

her to cut it short and ring down the curtain. But, instead, when her father came, he offered the young guitarist a cigar, said he thought it might rain, and went to bed after commenting favorably on the batting of a Mr. Cobb.

"Ragtime Soldier Man" followed "Dublin Bay." The man who was trying to sleep counted 27 times that the girl-conversationist said, "I should worry!"

Then, a crash. The screen came tumbling down. The girl screamed. The cat jumped through the window netting, and the guitar player stood up so quickly that he lost his balance and sat down again on the begonia.

The "Grouch Next Door," standing in his window, had thrown through the screen a book as big as a dictionary.

"And the cat was so scared," explained the indignant girl to the judge, "it hasn't come back yet."

