

I, THE KING

By WAYLAND WELLS WILLIAMS.

(Copyright, 1924.)

(Continued from Yesterday.)

Kit lay on one elbow, half seeing, half hearing in a sort of super-consciousness. Now for the first time since he had landed he ceased feeling astray and bewildered. He felt at home. He felt alive and happy—in a new and intoxicating sense. The magic of the South, that mysterious, hitherto withheld thing, was on him at last. It meant, now that he knew it, ease and safety and warmth, yes, but something much more than these. It glowed with human affection; it hinted of stars and the open sea and great soft darknesses; it was in tune with the flame of life and the calmness of death. It stood sponsor to man for the irresistible forces of the universe. "Look on me!" it rippled in its waters, sang in its music, sighed in its winds; "look on me, pale prisoner of a man-made world, and know what sanctity, what beauty and what peace the Power who made you intended! Regret nothing; remember nothing; only look, and know! Listen, and know! Dream, and know!"

Oh, yes, he would look, listen and dream. There was nothing else; there was no true life but in surrender to this divine and final sense. To strive, worry, despair, feel lost—foolish. Foolish, nothing was ever lost. To accept what came, to smile at everything, to return at last to that dim place whence one first issued—that was all.

Illogical irritation pricked him; if they wanted him to be king they might at least look at him. . . .

Slowly Kit sank back on his elbow. The dance led to its climax and fell into deafening silence; the springing Kak returning to his place. Kit did not bother to look at him; it was still Kak's move. Kak might be drunk, they might be drunk; Kit knew somehow that it did not matter. This was a real move, a coup d'etat. These people would think the same in the gray light of tomorrow when the fire and music and passion of tonight.

The word Kak had used was ueva. Kit knew that; it was rendered in his dictionary simply as "King." It meant only one thing—a magnificent thing. A Thing To Be Done. Opportunity. Would he use it?

Of course. The ruoio went on, but Kit scarcely heeded it. He was alive again—still! The Magic was there, but as a background, an illuminating radiance. Something To Do. Well, if it actually came to him he would do his utmost, God helping him. Leadership. Power. Responsibility.

The ruoio ended at last and the circle broke up. Kit was heavy with dreaming and mangling; he was dazed and sleepy, but he knew as he got up that he, who had sat down there little Kit Newell, lost on a desert island, arose chosen and acclaimed King of Nairava.

III.

As he lay dreaming in the quickening music a strange thing happened. With a shout Kakawia suddenly rose and leaped into the arena. "Nuel shall be our king!" he bellowed, picking up the rhythm of the dance. "He will fight for us against the uakana! Nuel shall be our king! He will lead us against the uakana!" The solo actors stood mute and dumbfounded; most of the chorus stopped singing and beating, though enough continued to maintain the rhythm. Gradually face after face lit up, hands moved again, voices took up the refrain. The soloists responded, in a moment the whole crowd was shouting lustily: "Nuel shall be our king! He will lead us against the uakana!"

Kit sat up quickly, very angry, glancing toward Masson. But Masson was too far gone in mangling to know what was going on, or care. But Kak, he was the villain, the traitor! Oh, he would give it to Kak, later! In an agony of embarrassment he looked around the circle of frenetic faces. Few were on him; they were nearly all fixed on Kakawia. An

IV.

The physical scene was actual enough. He noted certain details; a naked child a-straddle over a fat woman's shoulder, dead with sleep; a boy who had drunk too much, being led by the curious effect of fright on the under side of palm leaves. He strolled down to the water's edge, watched the Nairavians embark in their canoes and grinning at them. He returned up the beach to the Nairavians not yet dispersed, standing about in groups, talking. He knew what they were talking about.

He forgot them in the presence of a disgusting sight. The islanders, with a very few exceptions, were sober, though elated. Not so Masson. He lay where he had lain all the evening, drunkenly grasping at the person of a native girl, grunting obscenely at her. The girl seemed willing to suffer his embraces, but was prevented by Sadie, who kept pulling her away, vituperating, her wrath of white flowers awry over one ear. Presently Masson, roused by their voices and the laughter of the crowd, half rose, gave a lunge at Sadie that knocked her flat and a grasp at the other girl that caught only at her rivi. This gave way, unground and fell, leaving her naked and screaming before the populace. Masson made another lunge at her, pulling her down and rolling over on the ground with her. Sadie sat nursing a bruised elbow, howling.

All went on only the space of time necessary for Kit to walk ten yards. He strode up and gave Masson a vigorous kick behind. "Get up!" he ordered. "Let go of that girl! Masson let go and hunched himself up, snarling. The two girls stared dumbly. A dead silence fell on the crowd. Kit took an empty coconut shell, filled it in the lagoon and dashed the water in Masson's face. The sailor spluttered, swore, coughed, asked what 'hell . . .

"Get up. Pull yourself together," said Kit.

"Say!" said Masson in a foolish plaintive squeak. "I guess I got a right—"

"You've no right to make a—" Kit's speech became unquotable from there on. It was the kind of language that Masson was thoroughly familiar with. At the end he heaved himself to his feet and staggered off somewhere, alone. Kit went on to bed.

V.

The next afternoon Kak appeared at the Residenc in company with four aged and important chiefs, and quite simply asked Kit if he would be King of Nairava. He also hinted that it might be a good thing if he opened that arsenal quickly.

There was little to Magle about it. The details of the office, the moldy walls, the battered furniture, the faces of the chiefs, with their wrinkled and frequently diseased skin, stood out sharp and clear in the light of three p. m. Yes, he would accept, since it was their desire, and do his best. But one thing; he would not open that arsenal till it became absolutely necessary. He wasn't going into this thing for the pleasure of killing. Was that understood?

With regretful nods the elders assented. It was no bad. They had all seen his cavalier treatment of Masson the night before, and it had finally convinced them that this man was a real man. If he could do that to a white and an equal, what could he not do to Tengui, given firearms? However, if he thought he could prevail without these, let him try.

Kit, the oldest and most vocal of the chiefs, a little wizened, tooth-

less dotard with the complexion of a nutmeg grater, made a long, eloquent and incredibly dull speech of final agreement. Before he had finished it Etera came in to say that a canoe of Tenguians was about to land. Kit suspected the crafty Kakawia of having seen them enter the north end of the lagoon, and

hurry the deputation to him first. They walked impressively down to the lagoon beach. Kit in the middle, and found a group of perhaps twenty Tenguians standing about, armed, but only with rather comic-opera-looking spears. They were indistinguishable in appearance and speech from the Nairavians; they had the same general

physique, the same occasional inclination to slant eyes and yellowish skins, the same guttural inflections of voice. In the middle of the group stood a short, stocky man of perhaps 50, whose jolly pot-belly and snub nose contrasted curiously with an alert and crafty look about the eyes. Him Kak indicated to Kit.

"This is Ongong, King of Tengui. Ongong, this foreigner is King of Nairava. His name is Nuel." The visitors raised their right hands, palm outward, in a form of salutation which the Germans had made current. "We greet you, Nuel, King of Nairava," said Ongong pleasantly enough. "I, Ongong, King of

Tengui, greet you as a friend and brother." He offered his hand, European fashion. Kit shook it.

They repaired to the manaba, squatted about in a circle and talked. Oh, how they talked! The strangers offered presents: bonita hooks, fish lines, even, most priceless of all, a hatchet, rusty but serviceable. "Are we going to give them anything in return?" Kit inquired in a whisper of Kakawia. "Not now," came the cautious answer; "wait."

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

PRESIDENT COOLIDGE SAYS: If knowledge be wrongly used, civilization commits suicide.

THE NEBBS

NOW THE COUNTRY'S SAFE.

Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Heas (Copyright 1924)



Barney Google and Spark Plug

Now Barney Can Chatter to His Heart's Content.

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck (Copyright 1924)



BRINGING UP FATHER

Registered U. S. Patent Office SEE JIGGS AND MAGGIE IN FULL PAGE OF COLORS IN THE SUNDAY BEE

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by McManus (Copyright 1924)



JERRY ON THE JOB

WAIT FOR A RECOUNT.

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban (Copyright 1924)



By O. O. McINTYRE

New York, Nov. 3.—He is one of the cheerful society vagabonds. New York has many of them—well bred parasites who live on the generosity of friends. This one is a king of the species. He has spent a fortune of his own and that of three wives.

A large part of his time is spent dodging process servers and yet to the casual observer he lives a life of luxurious ease. He has the manners of an aristocrat and the general appearance of the hardened roue of the bachelor clubs.

He is tall, dark and has a tightly waved mustache. His eyes are fox like the shift and his parchment like skin is filled with tiny wrinkles. His dress is impeccable. Morning, afternoon and evening he is always correctly and appropriately groomed.

The other night in a cafe I heard a head waiter—the famous Theodore incidentally—say with no show at concealment: "M'sieu is an unwelcome guest here until he settles for past favors." There was a quick stage villain laugh.

And he and his beautifully gowned escort turned and left for some other high spot where credit was not so strained. Most of these parasites have had every advantage in life. Their tutoring began with the first lisp. And the best colleges were opened to them.

This one spent many years of amusing uselessness in Paris, London, Cairo and Monte Carlo. He has never given any thought to anyone save himself. Only aid of his friends has kept him from the prison cell for many picadillos.

New York countenances them. Anywhere else they would be kicked out of respectable society and be forced to prove themselves of worth before they could ever return. But this one has the halo of an old family and New York snobbery respects it.

Winsted, Conn.—that haven of three-legged chicks, dog-headed rats, tree climbing cows and walking fish—believes it has suffered from the famous Winsted liar who sent out ridiculous dispatches to various metropolitan newspapers and which were printed because of their sheer creative audacity. It is a beautiful little city and its residents feel it was bound subject to jest long enough. It is said a movement is being started to suppress this kind of objectionable publicity. But in today's papers I noticed a dispatch from Winsted that a Kangaroo calf chased her frightened cow motor through the Main Street and caused one town drunkard to take the pledge for life.

I love the poetic soul of a Fifth avenue mannikin whose husband sued her male domestic employer for what was still quaintly known as "heart balm." She was talking to the reporter in defense of the marvelous modiste and as the reporter crossed his heart to die she said this: "There were times when just for a moment I'd forget I was working for \$40 a week. Arrayed in this glorious creations my employer would say, 'Marvelous! Wonderful!' At such a time I was the bride of the Sun King, holding my court at Versailles. You understand that feeling, don't you?"

It always struck me the best hick story of New York was on George Ade tells of the visitor from back yonder who took in Wall street and had unconsciously blocked traffic while gazing aloft at a flock of pigeons hovering around a skyscraper. A burly fellow in an elevator starter's uniform pulled him to the sidewalk to demand what he was doing. "Counting pigeons," replied the Hoosier.

"Don't you know that ain't allowed? It's going to cost you \$1 apiece. How many did you count?"

"Eight," slyly answered the Hoosier and triumphantly paid the bill. He had counted 12.

(Copyright, 1924.)

Oh, Man!

By Briggs ABIE THE AGENT

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield They're All the Same.

