

# I, THE KING

By WAYLAND WELLS WILLIAMS.  
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(Continued from Yesterday.)

It took a good deal of time and patience to argue down this sort of thing, but he made progress. Kit was weak on experience of sociology and law, but he had the sense to use the Council's own weapon against them, the power of boredom. Point after point he won from them by the sheer force of reiterated statement. First murder, then rape, destroying trees, arson, fouling fish nets, adultery—the Code Nuel gradually took shape. Imprisonment was revived, the old German jail renovated and a jailer installed. People were tried for offenses, acquitted or convicted according to sound principles, imprisoned (in a few cases)—actually banishing in obedience to justice as he saw it. The neat mind functioned.

One thing worried him from the very first, and he knew no rest till he had righted it. There were two springs on the island, both on the thickest part, near the main village; and their waters were kept fresh by fresh water, merely a tabu on washing in the common supply. The Council were impervious to this logic, as they were to the references he made to Nattuvu's and the smaller villages' comparative freedom from yaws; all they could see was an infringement of liberty.

The King was guilty of playing politics. He had observed that the two Nativian chiefs and one Nativian, representatives of sprinless districts, were inclined to be amused at the thought of more fortunate ones being partially deprived of their natural blessing. He talked with them privately, got them talking for him and finally won a majority for the measure. The coping was built, the tabu launched, and within a few weeks yaws actually showed a decrease.

"We have with us today," said Kit in grim triumph, "the Surgeon General Gorgas of the South Seas."

A man of the lower class died, leaving a widow, one Ue (Blossom), and two young children. Kit found that he was expected to adopt them all. It came in very neatly, as they could live in the stockade and keep house for him, thus relieving Aitaki's wife of the burden. Ue was not unwilling to receive her new possessor.

## New York --Day by Day--

By O. O. McINTYRE.  
New York, Nov. 10.—I spent an evening recently in New York with a group of cowboys as the guest of my friend Tex Austin. Here were real and hardy riders of the purple sage—bronk busters, calf ropers, steer wrestlers and kings of the lariat. More than any men I know the cow-punchers link America of the past with the present. They are as genuine, unspoiled and sturdy as our virgin forests. There is not an ounce of four flush in the whole outfit. After living in New York many years you appreciate this.

Even their names smack of the pristine purity of the plains—Nowater Slim, California Frank, Scout Maish, Buff Brady, Hank Durnell, Soapy Williams, Red Sublett and Del Blech-sner. After the silk battling verbiage of the Manhattanese you warm to the cowboy's drawing "Howdy."

He is the rough and ready adventurer of the first water. He pays his own expenses and entry fee to every rodeo without receiving a cent of guarantee and relies only on his own skill to win the prizes. He exhausts the fury of a bucking horse as nonchalantly as he smokes a cigaret.

The cowboy is smugly indifferent to the wonders of the metropolis. Many of them come here to the Madison Square Garden. They eat at the chuck-wagon. The world of horses and steers satisfies.

After the great arena had been cleared and all lights save two small incandescents were extinguished I gazed through the building with Austin. A shadowy figure on horseback was galloping about.

"He's moonlightin' a bronk," said Austin. At the hour when Broadway was being whipped into its aerated pleasure froth there was something tremendously impressive to me in that lonely cowboy galloping about a deserted, ghostly building in the very heart of America's pleasure ground.

The cowboy's lingo is also interesting to the tenderfoot. When he is thrown from a bronk or wild steer, he calls it "eating gravel." The word "Broncho" is from the Mexican word for "mean." It has been shortened to "brank" in cowboy parlance.

The easterner regards polo as one of his most dangerous sports. It is polite bean-bag compared to the cowboy's sport of bull-dogging a steer. If there is anything more daring than the cowboy's leap from a horse going lickety split to the horns of a steer, then twisting the animal to the ground with a wrestling hold I have never seen it.

My own experiences with horses have been altogether unsatisfactory. When I am on one I am always reminded of the cartoon of the man on a horse who was asked: "Where are you going?" "How do I know?" he replied. "Ask the horse."

In another relation, but Kit forbore, without difficulty. She was a somewhat faded Blossom of thirty-five, an age at which South Sea women do not retain much allure. Kakoriva laughed heartily at the comedy; Kit chided him. Did he not hold the woman and her children in the sacred trust of Lord Chancellor?

Aitaki had from the first favored Kit with a multitude of suggestions. He was a foolish, useless, bothering man, without half the initiative or capacity of his son, but Kit could not but listen to some of his pleas. In the old days under German rule, his had been a prominent and powerful position on the island, quite overshadowing that of the king. He had kept church and kept school, and the Resident had seen to it that the people went. That had changed with the Germans' departure; school was completely dead, and the only hint Kit had received of religion was an occasional sound of hymn-singing.

Aboriginal superstition had rears in their place; there were grave-watching and witch rites and stories of vampire-like apparitions; all most deplorable.

He revived both institutions promptly. School was rather a gay affair; it took place after breakfast, in the cool of the morning, and was attended by any one who cared to go between the ages of one and one hundred. The scholars were separated according to sex and read from small filthy paper-bound Bibles and readers in Gilbertese, chiefly in concert. They had "number work," incredibly sketchy on a scribbled blackboard.

Kit at one session saw Aitaki add seven and eight as fourteen, fifteen and seventeen, and was inclined to sympathize with the pupils' attitude toward the man's teaching qualifications. When he could give the time he took over the session himself, and then there was more attention and vigor.

On Sunday's the same crowd gathered in the same place for divine worship. The islanders decked themselves out in all the finery they had, though it was neither much nor fine. The women wore holokus if they had them, no matter how ragged and filthy, and invariably hats Aitaki was formal not to say ritualistic, on that point. After one horrified glance at the first congregation Kit announced that hereafter flower wreaths would be deemed sufficient covering, and Aitaki subsequently gave him a hot hour of protest. It was all like this; all form, no matter. The congregation yawned and slept voluptuously; babies screamed, girls tittered; boys rough-housed. Kit did his best to infuse a spark of life into the ceremonies; as soon as he got sufficient control of the language he preached sermons. He coached himself diligently in a Gilbertese Bible and worked hard to make valid to his people some few principles of Christian ethics, giving theology and dogma a wide berth. At first the people, impressed, attended scrupulously; then as the novelty wore off they would succumb, and the exercises became duels between Nuel and Morpheus. When he saw any one drop off Kit would drop his argument, point and yell; the offender's neighbors, shouting with laughter, would poke him awake, and soon he was laughing as loudly and merrily as the rest.

"Shut up, now," the king-priest would order wearily. "Don't laugh in church. I won't have laughing in church; I do it Kirilo hates that. Yit! Bessel are the pure in heart. . . . His voice labored on; the dim rafters brooded; the motley crowd stifled their yawns and furtively stretched their conized muscles. Fans fopped in the breathless heat; flies buzzed; through the open sides of the building drifted the inextinguishable whisper of surf.

"We have with us today," Kit noted, "the Archbishop of Titipu."

Once he took the trouble to write down a list of the offices comprising that of the king. They were: Commander-in-chief, Presiding Officer of the Council, Lord Chancellor, Chief Justice, Attorney General, Minister of Health, Minister of Public Works, Minister of Education, Archbishop.

A Puh-Bah in the flesh. And the joke of it was that his exercises of these offices was not merely nominal; he had actually performed their functions. Imperfectly, no doubt, and on a tiny scale, but he had performed them.

This was in August. He had not stopped to reflect before, but the fact was that the Thing To Be Done was, in a measure, done. The hopes and oaths of his accession were being fulfilled and redeemed. The inevitable happened; he began to feel pleased with himself.

"Oh, God!" he prayed, "Don't let me get stuck up over this! Just because these people do what I say."

and take my word on everything from England to obstetrics, don't let me get a swelled head! Don't let me be like Turquinus Superbus! Keep me a good fellow, Lord—I've simply got to be a good fellow. . . . It was hard. His loneliness and his very safety made it harder. For the first week or two he had half

believed that the Nashua might call on the chance of finding him; she could not have been far away when he left her. Then that hope died, and the roaring empty ocean, laughing unceasingly, day after day, seemed to kill all faith in other relief. Then his security; Tongulu was perfectly quiet, and the anxiety that

would have kept him alert and humble was missing. The one remaining danger of the arsenal was solved by a ridiculously simple method that he kicked himself for not having thought of at once; he transferred the padlock from the tool box of the dory to the unbroken hasp of the iron door, then oiled and buried both key and file.

The thing he privately thought of as "Turquinism" cropped out in curious little ways. He recognized it, he criticized it; but his loneliness and responsibility, by a perfectly comprehensible process of thought, demanded that a certain minimum of it be respected. Damn it, he owed some things to himself!

There was the matter of signing the documents which the neat mind decreed should memorialize each act and law. In his first expansive moment he had signed them "Christopher R." "Christopher the King," or whatever had suited the fancy of the moment. His act of accession to Tongulu he had signed "Christopher R. I."

This presently came to appear absurd and undignified, yet he could not bring himself to use his ordinary signature; a king was a king. He presently compromised on "Nuel R." to his subjects he was universally known as Nuel, and no other name was really appropriate. (To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

## THE NEBBS



## Barney Google and Spark Plug



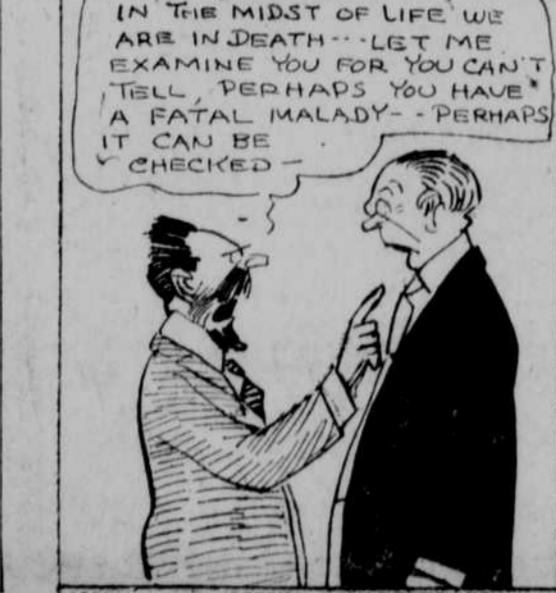
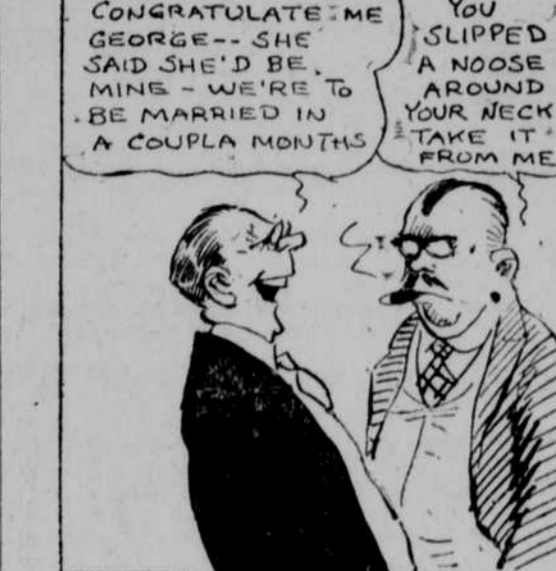
## BRINGING UP FATHER



## JERRY ON THE JOB



## Somebody is Always Taking the Joy Out of Life



## ABIE THE AGENT

By Briggs Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hersfield  
Just a Friendly Evening.

