

JO ELLEN

By ALEXANDER BLACK.

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(Continued From Saturday.)

The incident having occurred on a Friday, two intervening days assisted the processes of cooling and healing. On Monday the school agreed to ignore outward recognition of the calamity to personal relations. Miss Pascoe's pale eyes found a way of avoiding all others. Her head bent a little lower than usual over her manual and ruled paper, and there was an access of stiffness before her typewriter. She had been an earnest student from her first day. Often she spent most of the lunch hour recess in practice; at other times she gave this interval to a book. She always carried reading of some sort. Jo Ellen guessed she was twenty, and hopelessly disagreeable.

One afternoon in September, when Jo Ellen had gone with Clara Dawes to a motion picture theater, she saw Miss Pascoe walking with a middle-aged man on crutches. They moved slowly on a crowded sidewalk. It was evident that the man was very weak. Jo Ellen watched for the permitted half minute, the slow pace of the pair. What an exasperating imprisonment to be shackled to such a way beside an infirmity! She was sorry for the gray girl who worked as frantically as when went home to take up this burden.

When she met Miss Pascoe face to face on the following day Jo Ellen said, "Good morning! Miss Pascoe refused to respond. To Jo Ellen there was a peculiar sadness in her silence. The silence was startling broken a week later, when such a thing had begun to seem quite unthinkable. It chanced that the two were left alone at the close of school. Jo Ellen had set herself to finish, at all hazards, a piece of transcription, and it was as amazing as some violent shatter of the room to know that the figure of Miss Pascoe stood beside her desk, and to hear the colorless voice say, "I was a fool."

Jo Ellen looked up quickly, and saw the gray face set in what might have seemed under any other circumstances to be defiant.

There was a strained interval in which Jo Ellen arose and waited. "Miss Baum told me the truth—several days ago—about your trying to fix the machine. I suppose you didn't think it was worth while to mention a thing like that to anyone who could spill over as I did. But I don't quite like... I can't let you go on thinking that I'm a beast. I'm not

nice, but I'm not a beast. I've had a lot of trouble..."

"Let's forget it," said Jo Ellen.

Miss Pascoe looked at Jo Ellen as if she were trying to fancy a matter like forgetting. There was a little tremor in her lips, then a hardening of their lines. She made a gesture that might have meant quite if it could have been read.

"I don't think I could quite do that," she said. "It isn't true when we say that, is it? But I would like you will stop thinking of me as a beast, won't you?"

"I didn't mean it," protested Jo Ellen. "And I don't think it. I've only felt sorry."

"Sorry for me?" Miss Pascoe became rigid again.

"Sorry I let myself..."

"You'll let me be sorry you've had trouble."

Miss Pascoe turned away, then turned back. The tears gave an odd pathos to the grimness of her face. "I won't begin vapping about my troubles," she said. "I'll tell you when the time came the troubles were told. Her father was near the end of his savings that made it possible for them to piece out with the pension, or half pay, from the people he had worked for—forty years. It was incurable, the affair of the foot. And his general health was bad. As soon as she could equip herself she was going to work. That would save them from separation. It would be terrible if he had to go to some charitable place. There were things his daughter could do for him that no one else would understand. Jo Ellen listened with a sympathy which Miss Pascoe accepted at last with a gratefulness of which she gave many strange signs. Jo Ellen found the gratefulness and the resulting friendship as peculiar as the rest of her. They had many talks.

The great event in early October was the visit from the fat man.

XI.

The fat man came promptly to the point.

"I never flourish around," he said to Mrs. Miffing. "Always get straight down to brass tacks. My name's J. Trupp. You'll remember I was in here before. Now I'm ready to talk business. With your permission and co-operation—which I shall compensate, if that is business, you see, I'm perfectly frank with you—I would like to engage the services of a girl I saw here—assuming, of course, that she is still here. I never forget a name—Miss Ellen Revere. Red hair."

"I really don't understand you," exclaimed Mrs. Miffing. "I really don't."

The fat man paused in the midst of the process of mopping his neck, which seemed to be chronically damp.

"Now, do you know," he said. "I should have thought that I had been exceptionally explicit. Honest injun, do you mean to say I haven't been as plain as daylight?"

"I don't understand," Mrs. Miffing returned, with a quite sincere stare. "how you could choose a stenographer in the manner—"

"Ah! You think I'm eccentric—or maybe something worse. Well, may be I am. But I'll tell you something I tried the efficiency method of scientific selection. Sounds good. I know a man who picks his people by the reports of a handwriting expert. Bright idea for all I know. There are tests of the most profound character. Anyway, you can read the diplomas, cross-examine the girl, drag in her parents, ask her what dreams she has. I suppose you would send her to phrenologist for a confidential report. When you are all through you can land the poorest imitation of an honest-to-God secretary outside of an asylum. I tell you, I've tried being scientific. I've tried letting my wife pick 'em, and I don't mind remarking that my wife has an extraordinarily keen judgment of human beings. But the one she picked for me was the most perfect specimen of the female boob that ever used up carbon paper. No sir! I tried it, and found that it works. I get an impression—as I think I told you—an impression. I had an impression about the Jewish girl I saw now. She's the goods. My wife didn't like her at first. Now she admits—anyway, she says she's improved wonderfully. I tell you when you get 'em right they do improve. And my impression's what I go by. No questions, except, maybe, are they engaged to be married. I think this Jewish girl fooled me. She's going to be married next week. Maybe the Jews have short engagements. I don't know. Anyway, off she goes next Friday. Wants me to come to her wedding. My wife thinks that would be a little too soon. Anyway, I want a new one. And I had the impression that the girl with the red hair—"

"She isn't through with her work," declared Mrs. Miffing.

"My dear lady, anything she hasn't

learned in two months under your instruction—"

"It can't be done in two months."

"I'll take her up where you leave off. What does it is the influence of personality—personality. I round them out, develop them. Of course, they've got to know the chicken tracks and a little about the machine. Not too much. They get high flown with too much training. What they want is plain practice on the job. I guess you'd say I was an easy boss. But I'm a good trainer."

"This girl's only seventeen," protested Mrs. Miffing.

"My dear lady, age means nothing at all. The worst numbskull I ever had was forty-two. A fact. Why that woman—"

"You'd better speak to the girl herself. I suppose I can't prevent you—"

"Now you're talking," exclaimed Mr. Trupp. "Now we're getting down to it."

"Her future is her affair. If she's willing to cut off her own training—"

"And begin a new training—going right on. She's had great luck, beginning with you—"

Mrs. Miffing went to call Jo Ellen. "Here's a man wants to offer you a position. You're not ready for any position. But he's a freak and wants you anyway. You'll have to decide for yourself."

This was said just outside the classroom. It was accompanied by no count of the antecedent circumstances. Mrs. Miffing's annoyance had been softened, but it survived. She evidently felt that precipitation would be unfavorable as possible to Mr. Trupp, whose propositions had a first effect of appalling Jo Ellen. (To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

THE NEBBS



THE FRESH GUY.



Barney Google and Spark Plug



Barney Has a Winning Way With Himself.



BRINGING UP FATHER



NO DIFFERENCE OF OPINION HERE.



JERRY ON THE JOB



ABIE THE AGENT



That Guiltiest Feeling



ABIE THE AGENT



New York --Day by Day--

By O. O. MINTYRE.

New York, July 14.—A page from the diary of a modern Samuel Pepys: Early up and to the Waldorf where came Robert Edgren, Hugh Fullerton and Gene Byrne, much talk of golf and so to breakfast.

Through the town in a walking heat and to play tennis with my cousin Josephine and was badly trounced but merry withal. Home and worked at my journal and read some English reviews of my book.

In the afternoon with Aubrey Eads and Peggy Hoyt to the races and a great display of fashion and I saw young Vincent Astor and his lady and many others.

Dinner at home and Will Gibson, art editor, came and took some pictures and we did a lot of foolery and high jinking and so with him for a beaker of cold milk and to bed.

The harmonica is supplanting the ukelele in popularity. Flappers are carrying them to afternoon and nightly revels. Chorus girls are mastering the instrument and three revues have harmonica bands. The champ harmonica expert of the town is an East Side boy of 10.

Chaps who are daily patrons of the turf wear the most picturesque clothes of all New Yorkers. There are pearl derbies, flaming red Ascot ties, checkered vests, and, of course, the jaunty slung binoculars over the shoulder. They seem sufficed with a worldly wisdom and there is a quick and racy tang to their talk. Each face is an enigma—they may win or lose big sums but you can never tell it by their expressions.

An abandoned old garage on Sullivan street has become a popular night haunt of the moment. It seats 50 and is lighted by lamps. An expert accordionist furnishes the only dance music and two Apache dancers hurl one another about the room as a special attraction. It smacks of the left bank of the Seine and the cover charge is \$5.

Down at Atlantic City the other day I recognized in a tattered chair-roller along the boardwalk a man who was once an essayer of the Apache dance. His name was in lights on Broadway. He told me his story. A young girl he married became his dancing partner and in hurrying about with the fierce abandon of the Apache he caused an injury from which she later died. He took to drink, roamed the world and eventually became one of the chair-rollers.

The chair-rollers is, I believe, the nearest we have to the beach-comber in America. Very few are steady workers. They make enough to buy a little food and enough illicit whisky to help them forget. You see scores of them trudging along, heads down and evidently trying to avoid recognition among thousands who stroll along.

Despite its rush and hurry there are moments in New York that reveal the neighborliness of Main street. An aged woman was trying to cross a crowded corner. She made several starts but became frightened. A big limousine drew up near her and a man stepped out and escorted her into the car. She was on her way to a point 30 blocks away and he, due to traffic impediment, missed a train that was to take him to an important conference in Chicago.

Perhaps there would be more of this sort of neighborliness if there were less suspicions among New Yorkers. My effort to pull a Sir Galahad resulted in the flaming blush recently. I stepped quickly out of the way to permit a lady to move into a revolving door. The door caught her in a vise-like grip, she screamed and her escort gave me the best 100 per cent glare I've had since I stepped on Gloria Swanson's train in a picture studio.

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