

JO ELLEN

By ALEXANDER BLACK.

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(Continued From Yesterday.)

Whenever you looked at the thing it was astonishing, astonishing enough to keep your face hot and quivery. Anybody coming home and seeing you would know that something astonishing had happened, and expect you to tell all about it, and that would be as hard as rehearsing in the movies. You couldn't make anybody understand how you could listen to him at all if you even thought he might be a crook. And they wouldn't know how he looked, and about the eyes, or the voice, or the other things. Really there were two of them, perhaps there were two of him in other ways.

There was only one of Marty. Did the two of Stan Lamar mean that one of them was not real?

Jo Ellen wondered if there were two of herself. Did Stan Lamar go away thinking there were two of her? If it was the one of her he met in the Simms house and afterward in the boat who "got" him, how different was he from the other? Was he really the same on both days? Was the difference in what happened to you?

She went out to Emma Traub's remark—about a crook's woman. Was a man only one kind to his woman? There was another thing. Emma evidently didn't mean wife. Woman and wife. Why was a good deal easier to understand. Woman was a lot more complicated. There was a simple way you got to be wife. "His woman." That was rather startling. Suppose those actors were looking at—say, they haven't made an I. W. W. of you out there, have they?

"Don't talk nonsense. New York's just slow. Full of ruts, and meek people crawling in them. I tell you, it's about the meekest burg—the only real men I've seen are the traffic cops!"

"All Irish," said Bogert.

"Be thankful for that," his mother retorted.

Bogert clenched a fist. "Damn good actors, when they have a director." "You say that as if you were mighty wise. Being directed's exactly what they do. Like, anyway, they're keeping the punch."

"Oh, quit your scuffling," appealed Jo Ellen's mother.

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"If I must say it, Ben, things you make always seem wobbly."

"I don't pretend to be a professional," snorted Bogert.

"I'd say you had a rather sketchy style, that's all. You're probably all right on your proper job or they wouldn't be so looney to have you back."

"On my proper job," said Bogert. "I'm a wonder."

It chanced that the Monday morning which saw Bogert off at 8 o'clock upon his old itinerary brought Grand mother Bogert's announcement of her intention to stay in New York. Since both Jo Ellen and her mother were astonished, it became evident that they had not taken seriously the expressions of debate which had been dropped from time to time.

"Heaven knows the town's no attraction," said Bogert. "A horrible mixup. No idea about itself. Most idiotic climate in the world. But there seems to be a chance of something rather good in a business way."

"Great," cried Josephine. "Reverend. You'll stay and grow up with the country!"

"None of your sarcasms," grinned Martha. "I've got twenty years of bustle in me. Maybe thirty."

Jo Ellen added her squeal of excitement. "There are terrible temptations here, Grandma!"

"You be quiet!" snapped the grandmother. "See that you mind your steps when you get to work."

"We'll face the old town together," ventured Jo Ellen. It was another experimental observation, accompanied by scrutiny of her mother. Nothing unpleasant happened.

When it had actually begun, Jo Ellen's business school enterprise had less of novelty than she had expected. It was, after all, but another sort of going to school, and since she was able to enter before the end of August the separation from the old Broadway schoolhouse brought no spectacular moment. Yet there was a pronounced effort of going forth. The old school lay across lots. The new held a prophecy of downtown and noisy vistas of adventure, where life was different. It escaped being another Broadway school by a short turn from the corner. The look of it left situation to seem unimportant, for it was but a floor in a shabby building given over largely to apartments. Jo Ellen stepped off her train at One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street, where you see Riverside Drive making its steel straddle of the crostown

I am led to believe that next to criminals writers have the greatest difficulty in sleeping. I only know two who are not sleepless supplicants of Morpheus. The criminals say it is his conscience and the writer usually points to the fact that every man who has achieved in literature and art has been more or less neurotic. He will point to Tolstoy, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Musset, Verlaine, Wagner, Beethoven ad infinitum. My own experience has been different. Sleep comes easily and there are never in somnolent moments except twice a year when I awaken with a scream. It is always the same nightmare. I am walking up Second street in Galipolis, O. It is Easter Sunday and I am the mott of a sartorial drama. But I glance into drawn curtained window of Harry Frank's clothing store and discover I have neglected my trousers and underthings. Across in the park are the members of the ladies' guild holding a basket picnic.

I know a man also who conceals sleep by counting sheep and riding a beam. He achieves his desire invariably as the last sheep goes over he decides to follow and trips—and lands kerplump out of bed on the floor.

Two of the friends have the gift of sleep in a remarkable manner. They are Joseph A. Moore, financial manager for W. R. Hearst, and Will Hogz, the Texas oil man. Each is a big executive and works at top speed, but at any time they feel so disposed they can bury themselves in sleep for 10 or 15 minutes and awaken refreshed.

Incidentally I long to read the account of an electrocution that does not contain "the prisoner slept well and ate a hearty breakfast." This may be true, but I doubt it. If I were going to the electric chair—cries of "Speed the day!"—I think I would spend the last hours trying to get the knocks out of my knees for the final march. Fright invariably gives my knees a gelatine effect.

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thoroughfare to the Hudson, and where you have the escalator to mitigate the height of the airway that becomes the subway.

The business school was managed by a Mrs. Milling. There was a shadowy Mr. Milling, a meager man with a husky voice who had the effect of belonging elsewhere, and who only appeared long enough to be admonished not to forget something. Mrs. Milling was assisted in the teaching by a young woman named Crowe. Miss Crowe usually had a cold. At the beginning she acknowledged one of those summer colds that hold on

at times was almost beautiful, but which could make you feel inferior. She was neat enough, but it was painful to see her trim her finger nails with a large pair of shears.

Jo Ellen was sure she would never like shorthand. Its precisions were perplexing. The little strokes had

a pattering tightness that made her feel the need to climb over the desk and do a cartwheel. Too—dee—chay—day. It was maddening. And they had to learn just so. It was as if your hand were put in a vise. When you thought they leaned right, Miss Crowe said they didn't. The way they should lean, as illustrated by the hand of Miss Crowe that was not engaged with the handkerchief, was really no different at all, but you had to pretend that it was and go on. Too—dee—chay—day—day—day—day. Months of this, perhaps, with not a word yet about business. (To be continued tomorrow.)

VI.

Perhaps the grandmother was largely responsible for this feeling of being older, which outlasted the night, and other nights; and Jo Ellen found that there could be something not altogether comfortable about it. It took of a sort of weight, but also it kept asking you, asking you, tremendously. Grandmother was to have stayed two weeks, but postponed her going. She went downtown to give New York a look-over. Incidentally, she had met some of the people known to her by business correspondence. New York was pretty old-fashioned in some ways, yet odder, it was less old-fashioned in fashion than in other things. She admitted that in-jazzing up hats they gave the coast a hard run. Some dealer had thought she might be very useful in handling western buyers, and his advances were under consideration.

"Lord knows, I think it's an awful town," said Mrs. Bogert. "If they get a live man from the coast to run it."

Uncle Ben suggested that the place was full of men from the coast.

"Let them put one of them in to run it—and catch him before he's spoiled."

"You seem to think—" Uncle Ben ventured.

"You're spoiled," declared his mother. "They've got you filled down. I'll bet in your job you're as meek as a movie actor."

Uncle Ben bristled. "Ah! but don't you see, that's my organization. That's the way things are put over. Suppose those actors were looking at—say, they haven't made an I. W. W. of you out there, have they?"

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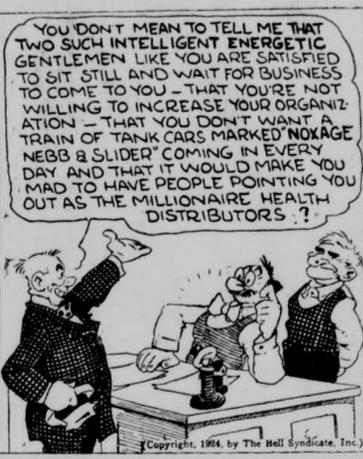
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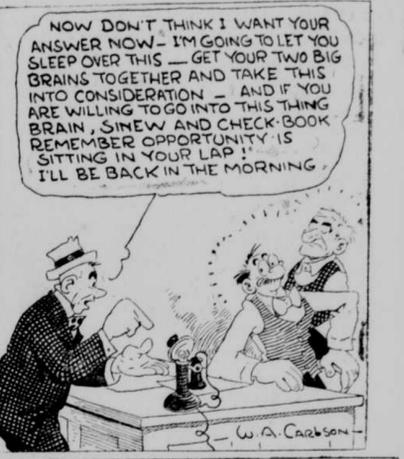
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BRINGING UP FATHER



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JERRY ON THE JOB



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Ain't It a Grand and Glorious Feeling



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