

# JO ELLEN

By ALEXANDER BLACK. Copyright, 1924.

(Continued From Yesterday.)

Sacrifice! Sacrifice of what? This was never to be discovered. When Cameron said, "It'll knock their eyes out," and Eberly said, "That'll go over," she couldn't be sure that they were thinking of the same sort of thing. Cameron said to her one day, "The sickest feeling, sister, is when you wait for the laugh and it doesn't come." Evidently, then, the things that were expected to go over sometimes didn't. The disappointments of the artists and the business people seemed, after all, to be much alike and to have the same cause. They all waited for the laugh. It was the public that laughed last.

There was an interest that transcended the theater, and, as the months moved, this interest touched Jo Ellen with an increasing emphasis. The emotions of the war stirred the theater as they stirred its audiences. Jo Ellen heard and saw a great deal of the war work by theater people. Eberly was on several committees, in whose activities Jo Ellen was now and again called upon to represent him. She was a member in her own name on other committees. She was drawn into the work of a group of women who concerned themselves in the relief of family distresses brought on by the war. She found that she was not alone in discovering the irrelevancy of theater or conviction in the presence of individual disaster. Then she found that having war was very simple, but that living with humanity while a war was going on was full of complexities that had a misery of their own.

was actually only a trickiness, sometimes an amazingly involved ingenuity of self-interest. Was it a lack of conscience that had induced her never to mention Stan at home? Her not mentioning him an indication that her conscience, or whatever took the place of that, knew there would be disapproval? Her argument with her mother was that her mother would catch the name, as Jo Ellen had, and would act in the light of the traditions. Her mother wouldn't know how cautious she was and how safely, at arm's length, she kept the hazard. Her mother wouldn't know of any possible injustice in a tradition. She wouldn't know that the meetings were securely formal. Jo Ellen had told her mother about Marty, but rather as if that had been an asking only, as if the answer still fluttered and had not yet alighted. Her way of conveying this impression to her mother had the effect upon herself of saying that the answer awaited verification, as though the document of devotion was still to be signed. If the implication of promise was actual, there, it was exacted under the address of a crisis that was in so many cases making the world a liar.

Finally, she mentioned to her mother a meeting with Stan at the office. The mother was very brief. "A bad case," she said. "After a pause, to which she gave no color, Jo Ellen asked: "What did he do?" "Do? I don't know. But they were always in trouble about him. He was a wild one. Ran away once or twice, I understand."

"I guess he has settled down," said Jo Ellen quietly.

Mrs. Rewer was outraged. "I once heard somebody say, about another man, that he might settle down without ever being able to settle up."

So that it would be an uphill matter to make Stan excusable. At that particular time Jo Ellen could say to herself that making him plausible was not a thing she had any wish to do; that she was even glad of the barrier. But there were other times when she felt accused and guilty; not so guilty in what she might manage not to tell, as in the loose way she considered that conscience. Again, after some cynical cyclone of talk at the office, when a group that belonged very much to raw Broadway was shattering codes and giving a comic disbevelment to honest things, she felt as if she had forgotten to be grown up. She was no longer a child, even if she still slept in the garden of innocence, or that might look like a garden of innocence if you didn't talk too much to Lot Mallin, or Emma Traub, or didn't inquire too deeply about Myrtle Fleck, for example.

Postponing—that was what she was doing; even after Armistice day and the almost concurrent letter that told her that she was even glad, but would be on his feet again in a little while. At the last, and quite without regard to Marty, she would break off meetings with Stan. She knew precisely how she should say the thing that was to be said. Her formula was so fixed and unflinching that she twice went to a matinee with him, and danced with him at a relief festival in which the business and art of the stage accomplished an almost hysterical alliance.

A few days after the dance she encountered him while out on a rehearsal. Suddenly he was standing beside her in the shadow of a stage drop in front of which, picked out sharply by the flare of a stand-light, a cast was working. It seemed that at first she could see the effect of the glitter of his eyes and the only shot into her mind as symbolizing her thrilling distrust. The distrust was always as real as if it had a volume of evidence to back it up. And the thrill was real. Life evidently arranged things in that fashion.

On her way out he was beside her in a dark passage. He contrived to halt her in talk. A thin shaft of light struck across her face. She could scarcely see him at all.

"It isn't fair," he said in a low tone that quite missed his managed level. "That you should hold me off always. A man gets desperate."

"If you're a desperate character," began Jo Ellen.

Then he seized her, by a strategy he might have meditated in detail, and kissed her on the lips.

"You stupid fool!" she cried angrily, with a rather unfeminine fling of her arm that thrust him thudding against the bricks of the passage. As sudden as either gesture was the change he saw and heard while his lips parted to speak. Her anger was as if thrust aside.

"We'll call this the last of it," she added coolly. "I ought to have been able to say that long ago. I'm glad the business is done with."

"Ellen! I'm damned sorry—" and Jo Ellen plunged through the black door way into the lighter space that led to the lobby.

III.

It was beginning to snow. Absurd-

ly, the snow made her think of Marty in the hospital. By now she would be out of the hospital and perhaps on his way home. Anyhow, he was not being snowed on in a trench. She wished she were eager for him, wholly eager for anyone. Probably there was such a thing as an unquestioning eagerness, an utterly hungering wish that was quite through with thinking. It would be wonderful always to know just what you wanted. Of course, there would remain, after you got the getting of what you wanted. But it would be like knowing where you were going.

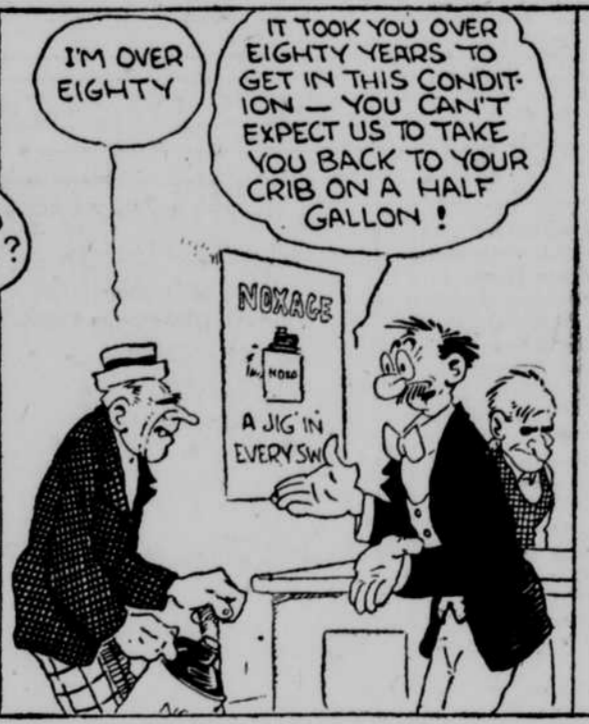
She didn't really want Marty the way she ought to want him if... And then it was a crisp Sunday morning in February, when shoes screeched in the luwood paths, and Billy, who had been investigating allegations about what the ice was doing in the Harlem, burst in with the news that a certain soldier was coming. It was Marty, tanned, grinning over the collar of his army overcoat—and limping. Perhaps the limp was really slight, but it had an effect for which you could not be prepared.

The limp was not as of being crippled; it was simply as of being marked. It was, indeed, not unbecoming in the swing it gave to his eager stride. Yet it became to Jo Ellen the dominant note in the picture of his coming, of his hurrying up the steps as if a limp meant nothing at all.

Something in the dissonance gave Jo Ellen a catch in the throat, and held her where she could watch him through the window without running to the door as her mother did. It carried a thrill.

She knew that she would marry him. (To Be Continued Monday.)

## THE NEBBS



## JUST A MOMENT, PLEASE.

Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess

## Barney Google and Spark Plug



## Barney's Going to Organize a Tank Corps.

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck

## BRINGING UP FATHER



## JERRY ON THE JOB



## THESE ARE NO TIME WASTERS

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban

In those after days when Jo Ellen had so much time to look back upon it, that period of the war seemed to be marked, as by varicolored splashes on a calendar, by meetings with Stan Lamar and letters from Marty Simms. The letters were lovely letters, frank and fulsomely assuming all betrothal privileges. Their censored vagueness left Marty at a disadvantage in the matter of news. Tales of experience must be confined chiefly to amusements, or to excitements that did not trace any intelligible passage of the huge real drama which for so long had reigned the horizon of the world. When you would have cared to know about some mighty assault, it was a bit flat to get some joke about a canteen. He liked to repeat "When I get back. And there were instances of a quivering fervency in speaking of the high place, or of some trivial incident at the Hill. Once he placed for a lock of her hair. This she ignored, after contemplating for a long time an imaginary picture of the circumstances in which he would unfold such a gift. She fancied a girl with black hair, or even blonde hair, might have found acquiescence easier.

It astounded her that Stan should give no sign of any suspicion as to Marty's claims. He knew she received letters from him. She had quoted one of them at a time when she thought Stan had begun to have a confident manner. But if he had a suspicion he never betrayed it. He acted as if nothing mattered but his moment. Some turn of a play set her to thinking about conscience, and the difference between conscience and mere shrewdness. It was a difference she found it hard to figure out. Had she a conscience? The play said that women really had very little, that what passed with them for conscience

## New York - Day by Day

By O. O. MINTYRE.

New York, July 26.—Dutch Ed Horgan has gone the way of the East Side gangster. He died as he lived—by the gun. They found him pistolotted through the head in an alleyway in the rear of Blue Nose Murphy's soft drink parlor on Avenue A.

Like all his ilk, Dutch Ed had the idea he had enough power to violate the gangster's code. He "squawked" on a pal. That always means violent death. Big Jack Zelik, Louis the Lump, Twist McGuire and a score of others have died in the same manner.

When word goes out through the mysterious channels that a gangster has squealed the kate is polished and the alibi framed. Many times the killer is selected by drawing lots. He takes with him his "passer" to whom he passes the gun after the fatal shot is fired.

Dutch Ed with the odd moniker was a little Italian—a "blood"—in the East Side jargon. He wore dazzling clothes, much jewelry and was fond of the ladies. He was graduated from the Hudson Dusters to a leadership that meant power on Avenue A.

He organized a system of tribute from small tradesmen. When they refused to buy tickets to some Saturday night ball or clam bake they were the victims of black-jacking or store raids. The gangster rules by terror.

Most gangsters begin careers on corner corners. They have an inherent hatred for the corner cop. Ability to use their fists gives them high standing but to lead in a foray known as "ganging the cop" usually results in leadership.

The bravest of all the gangsters was Young Johnny Spanish. He weighed about 150 pounds and was a bundle of misdirected energy. When he went out on shootings he primed himself with drugs. He died in the same manner as Dutch Ed.

The contributors of Franklin P. Adams' column on the World have completed the following insoninnac song to the tune of "Give My Regards to Broadway":

Give Myra Hess to Broadway  
Remember me to Harold Ross;  
Tallulah Bankhead at 42d street  
Siegfried Sassoon be here.  
Tell them of how Blanche Yurka  
Tom Mingle with the old time throng.  
Give Myra Hamilton old Broadway,  
And say that I'll be there Ray Long.

One of the interesting sights of New York is to stand at the Battery seawall and watch sea gulls swoop gracefully out to meet the incoming liners. They can spot the vessels before they are sighted with binoculars. They know that, following custom, they will be well fed by the liner cooks.

The hundred or so river craft too, that may be viewed at the Battery will stir the imagination. There are vessels sailing all flags—coastwise steamers, now and then a full rigged clipper, sloop acova, tug pushing floats that bear whole trains of freight cars, ferryboats, huge liners and river steamers painted white.

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## Wonder What a Marathon Runner Thinks About.



## ABIE THE AGENT

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield



Majority Rules.