

JO ELLEN

By ALEXANDER BLACK.

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(Continued from yesterday.)

"But it didn't begin here—it began there," said his father. "The history of it makes a difference."

This seemed to irritate Marty. "The history of it's in my back," he said. "Something or other was nearly broken. This has made it worse—or finished it." He added desperately.

"Nonsense," returned the father. "Finished? You're young. They'll shake you together again. Maybe an osteopath..."

There was a distressing quantity of futile speculation, and whatever anybody thought or said always ended in a look from Marty to Jo Ellen. Jo Ellen believed that her mother-in-law looked at her in a kind of fury, as if to say: "If Marty hadn't married a red-headed girl who lived in Inwood, and hadn't ridden in a car to Nineteenth street, and hadn't leaped upstairs with a suitcase, and hadn't stumbled on the top steps, all would have been well with him. It might be that nothing of this sort was in her mind. But her look certainly said, as the very least, that he had been right enough until he did get married."

Jo Ellen's mother was the quietest of the group. She spent most of her time in obscure ministrations. She went over the supplies in the kitchen and noted how the pantry shelves repeated the technic of her own. There would be a time when she thought Jo Ellen would never make a housekeeper. Afterward it appeared that Jo Ellen wasn't incapable of housekeeping. She only disliked it, which was a different matter. If things came to the worst she would have to be both nurse and housekeeper for a little while—until something could be done. It would be a dreadful plunge. By way of a honeymoon it would be grotesque. A honeymoon, Mrs. Rogert's face grew hot in a humiliated indignation. Perhaps in her way she was as indignant as Mrs. Simms, but there was no real parallel. She was not indignant at Marty. Her resentment was against circumstances. She had but one daughter. It was a pity that that daughter couldn't have had the anticipated happy interval, whatever might come to her later on. Assuming that a honeymoon was delusive, it was a delusion the two adventurers were entitled to. If a dream interval weren't part of the bargain, who would want to make the bargain at all? Of course, there were horrible honeymoons, even when no one tumbled. Every woman heard about them. The whole business of marriage was a gamble, naturally. But there were times when you could see a little way along the road with perfect certainty. You thought you could. Without special disaster Marty and Jo Ellen would have made

a good start. They were friends to begin with, and you couldn't begin with anything better than friendship. Jo Ellen was the sort that played the game. She would play the game now, whatever it was to be. What was it to be? It might be a trial to the mother of the bride...

Grandmother Rogert came in the afternoon.

"If I knew you were going to have enough of them in the morning," she said. "Thought I'd look in after you had figured out the worst. Perhaps I never told you that both your grandfather and I were battered up in a lousy ride on our wedding trip. You know, nobody's supposed to have any real sense on a honeymoon, and operating without sense sort of stacks the cards against you anyway. How's the bridegroom feeling?"

Bravado for Grandmother Rogert. And she may have been misled by the bravado of Jo Ellen. When she had talked with Marty alone, all would be quieted. She, too, made more than one appraisal of Jo Ellen. But she was not to be permanently subdued.

"Well, boy," she said to Marty, "I'm not fool enough to tell you to remember that you have been a soldier and that this is your cross. None of that rot from mamma. If I had been in your boots and this had happened to me, I wouldn't thank anybody to yap around me on the subject of war. I'd have something at anybody who snivelled on that key. Better forget that and get down to this."

"Sure thing," said Marty.

"Better consider what's left and begin there."

"There's a good deal left," added Marty cheerfully. He always felt the infection of Mrs. Rogert. "They didn't smash your head and heart. And you've two good hands. I'm just taking it at the worst. You don't know they won't put you on your feet. Lord, I've seen a fellow play football when he was a lad, had been consigned to a wheel chair for keeps."

"Father's going to send me a wheel chair," said Marty.

"He's rather quick about it. How does he know you're going to need a wheel chair?"

"Even if I do pull out I may need it for a while."

The effect of this may not have caught Marty, but Jo Ellen saw her grandmother wince.

"Don't you get ready to be—" she almost said "cripple"—"an invalid. Nothing like that. You look to me the size of a man. Keep your courage. Sounds preachy, but an old fellow's foot ball was a lad, had been consigned to a wheel chair for keeps."

Jo Ellen thought that her grandmother found the job of being buoyant and inspirational a little harder than she had expected. Little hard, not in pain. He was neither gloomy nor confident. There was no evident occasion for rebuke, and it seemed difficult to reach the right sort of compromise. You couldn't soothe a person who looked as well as Marty did.

Mrs. Rogert was persuaded to stay for supper.

"It seems foolish," she said. "You can't be prepared for visitors."

"But I am," said Jo Ellen. "Uncle Ben must have bought out the delicatessen store. He came back with both arms loaded. Speaking of load, your arms, you ought to have seen him carrying Marty."

"He's a horse," said his mother. "I wouldn't say he'd be much of a buyer. He isn't safe in a delicatessen. Wants to buy anything that's a bright red."

The supper went off very well in the matter of talk. Mrs. Rogert ate little, and she noticed that Jo Ellen's liveliness was not accompanied by anything at all eager in the way of appetite. Marty was served from a tray. He was particularly enthusiastic about the bologna and potato salad.

"After the doctors have had a chance at me tomorrow," said Marty, "I'm not going to stay shelved like this."

"Of course not," said Mrs. Rogert. At the door and beyond, when Jo Ellen and her grandmother said good night, there was a mute pause that was very hard for both.

With an arm around the strong, young shoulders, Mrs. Rogert muttered, "I can't say it, Ellen, but you know, don't you?"

"Yes, I know."

Marty could hear the clink of the dishes in the kitchen—all the little sounds that meant Jo Ellen's housewifely benediction upon one day and the preparation for the next. Company had put an extraordinary tax on the elementary appointments of the new home. There were many unexpected derangements.

"I'll bet you're tired," said Marty when Jo Ellen came in sight.

"Not a bit," said Jo Ellen.

"You haven't kissed me once today."

He reached up as she bent over him.

"No sleeping on sofas tonight!"

"No."

She could hear him swallow and become aware of a new piteous look in his eyes.

"Well," he said presently, "it's been a livelier day than we expected, hasn't it?"

"Rather."

"They were all mighty kind. But I'm glad... I'm glad we're just by ourselves again."

"Yes."

"We'll fight it out together."

"Together."

"You'll try not to feel that I've

spoiled everything?"

"You mustn't worry about that."

"Like on the high place... To gether."

Then Marty added, "I'll be glad to have that wheel chair."

"IX."

The coming of the wheel chair

seemed to mark the place where certain hopes come to an end.

Jo Ellen might have chosen to fix the point more precisely as at the moment when she saw Dr. Parker's face after that half hour beside Marty. In company with the consulting specialist. Nothing was to be judged

from the sleek, hard specialist. But Dr. Parker's face was more barometric. Jo Ellen knew this face very well. She thought of it as full of pride, or anything like that. Jo Ellen was not on any account to become ambitious in the matter of lifting.

that Marty might just as well be up and about so far as he was able to navigate, and that he mustn't be depressed, or anything like that. Jo Ellen was not on any account to become ambitious in the matter of lifting.

THE NEBBS



WHO'S LYING NOW?



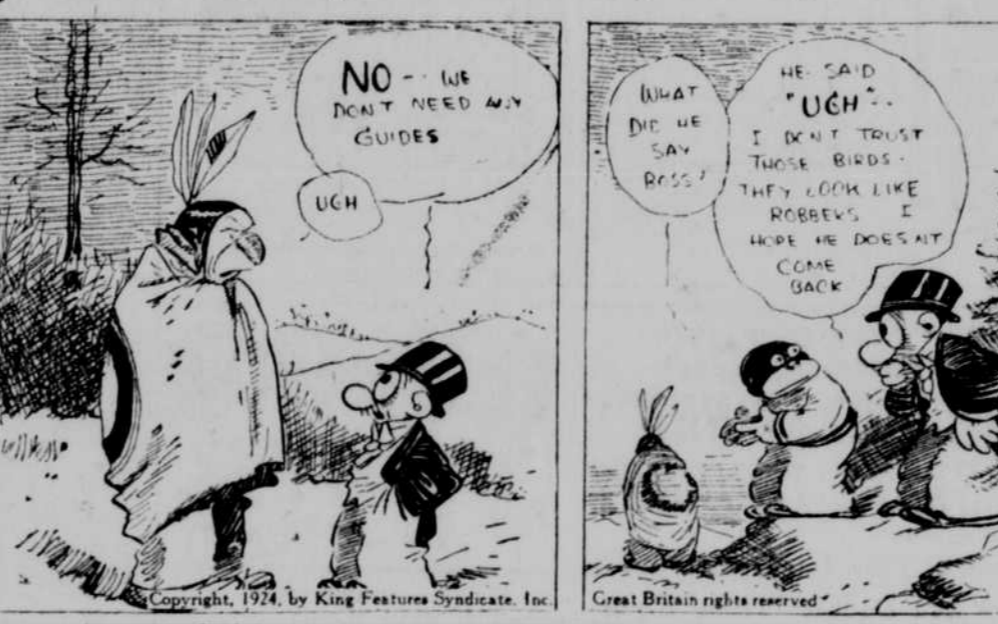
Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess

Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess

Barney Google and Spark Plug



Barney Ought to Have Brought Along a Safe.



Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck

BRINGING UP FATHER



MIGHT HAVE BEEN WORSE



Drawn for The Omaha Bee by McManus

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New York -- Day by Day --

By O. O. MINTYRE.

New York, July 31.—The old and broken-down actor is Broadway's most tragic figure. His home is the skylit room in the theatrical boarding house. Each morning he stops at the mail box in the hall to look for the letter from a producer that never comes.

Then off to some hole in the wall for coffee and rolls. In the outer rooms of the theatrical agencies he sits for hours—watching the barred door, waiting and hoping. His clothes have been brushed threadbare and his runover shoes are spotless.

He has a shabby gentility that only the actor seems to achieve. At night he backs in the electrical glory of the world that once was his. New York holds him in its clutch. The only way he will ever leave it is to go trouping.

He accepts no man's charity. Ask him to dine and he'll say he has just dined—even though he may have a box of crackers under his arm to take to his room. Not even defeat will quench his ego. He is always the best in the business.

His optimism in face of the hopeless future he knows is his touching. There are at least 500 of these rare old types living on the fringe of the Rialto. One producer tells of one of them who has been to his office every week day for more than two years.

In most cases these actors clutched at stardom and missed. They rarely rose above some inconspicuous part—a butler or the like. Yet they are seldom touched by jealousy. They have seen men and women all around them reach stellar roles. They glory in the success that never touched them. There is one old fellow who drops in now and then to chat with me. Invariably when he departs he is on his way to his tailor, although he has worn the same suit for several years.

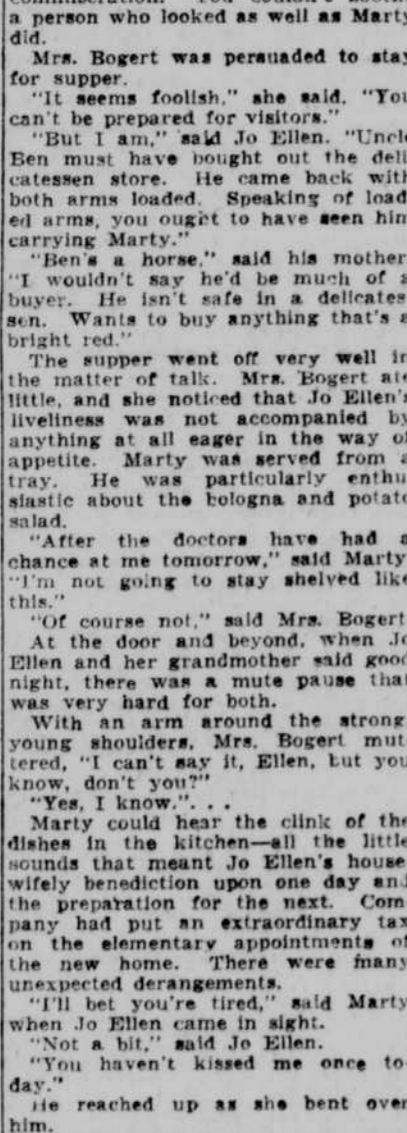
The silk hat slumped in popularity during the war, and while it is still being worn, there has not been a complete come back. There is one spot in New York, however, where the silk hat never dies. That is Tammany hall. No Tammany function was ever complete without silk hats. They are worn at all funerals and receptions in which Tammany takes part.

The last time I wore a silk hat was at a wedding. I did all my stuff before the mirror in advance, and finally got it at what I thought was a jaunty Regent street angle but misplaced it getting into a taxicab. I don't believe anything can make one feel so self-conscious as dropping a silk hat on the sidewalk. Three innocent bystanders reached for mine and at least six laughed.

I enjoyed a brief nap in my chair after writing the above paragraph. Upon reading it one can easily understand how sleep was induced. But be that as it may—I had a dream of losing my hat out of a skyscraper window and in rushing for it I toppled downward. I came back to consciousness on the floor.

Another time I went to sleep at the copy desk of a newspaper. The managing editor stroked by and saw me. When I awakened I received this curt note from him: "An editorial desk is the one spot in the world where a man should stay awake. If you feel you are not equal to this I shall be pleased to accept your resignation." The same managing editor quit journalism to study medicine and after graduation was sent to Africa to study sleeping sickness. He has been eminently successful and I have always felt I was the inspiration for his career.

JERRY ON THE JOB



Movie of a Man With a Midnight Hunger.



ABIE THE AGENT



By Briggs

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield

Efficiency at All Times.