JO ELLEN

By ALEXANDER BLACK.

(Continued From Yesterday.)

Arnold Pearson and Ben Bogert had helped with the moving. Arnold took the responsibility of Marty quite to himself. His first notion was that he should wheel Marty the whole way. It would be a stunt.

"We'd get a lot of fun out of it," he said.

But counsel prevailed against such an adventure. The cab appeared as more practical. There was a story in the cab journey, on the evening before the day of the moving van. They had been bumped by a giant truck that utterly wrecked the cab without, it seemed, doing worse than astonish the two who were inside. Transferring Marty to another cab, in particular getting him free of the wrecked one, was lively material for narrative.

When Jo Ellen entered her changed home Marty was sitting expectantly at a window that opened upon the southern sky. The rooms were blazingly bright compared with the Nineteenth street flat, despite the stuffy curtains and lowered shades.

There was the luxurious smell of a prepared dinner. Simms senior required a good deal of steak and onions. These proclaimed themselves.

"We waited the limit," said Mrs. Simms when she saw Jo Ellen. "Father isn't much on waiting for meals."

"You're just in time," Marty announced.

XI.

Jo Ellen scurried to the completion of any unfinished details at the table.

"You might carry in those potatoes," and Mrs. Simms, after a last critical jab at the steak, indicated with a fork the dish in the open gas oven.

The dinner dishes being disposed of, Marty displayed the ingenious runway his father had called the carpenter to build, by which the wheel chair could slip over the sill and step at the main roof door. The sky was overcast, but the panorama of the bay and rivers swung awesomely. At sundown a scarlet streak over New Jersey cut through the purple of the sky. The parapet was like the bulwarks of a ship that sailed through misty splendors. From the north rolled the wave lines of Manhattan, in enormous slaty swirls, breaking here at the south into a surf of roofs whose spray glittered against the clouds, the whole fixed as in some cataleptic crisis of a dream. The spectacle hurried Jo Ellen's breath. She embarked anew. . . .

There were many things to be done on this first evening, for there was the reconciling of the furniture of two households—the elemental outfit of the newlyweds, and the parental accumulations with their sanctioned ugliness. Of mere space there was plenty, for the apartment seemed to have an extraordinary multiplication of rooms, some of them occupied only by barrels and left-overs. Yet placing anything appeared to challenge something else. Even in what had been Marty's room, which was now to be his and Jo Ellen's, there were delicate questions. His mother thought the bed already there was better than their new one. Jo Ellen did not think so, but Marty had agreed with his mother before the time came for Jo Ellen's opinion, and Jo Ellen decided to evade debate. Marty liked his old bureau. There was, however, room for the new dresser also, so that this could be reserved for Jo Ellen.

Before each decision Marty hovered in a flushed excitement, his eyes moving apprehensively from Jo Ellen to his mother. His mother was very sparing of words, but Jo Ellen found that her silence could sometimes push harder than anything said. You always knew what she favored or didn't favor.

Father Simms had no opinions on furniture beyond the special stuffed leather chair he sat in. After finishing two evening papers and most of a large black cigar, he asked amiably whether there was anything he could shove around by way of experiment, remarking, at the same time, that one of the men would be up in the morning to make final disposition of the heavier stuff as the critics might elect. At nine o'clock he went off to a political club that often engaged the second half of his evening.

"Isn't this a great view?" cried Marty at their bedroom window.

"Wonderful," Jo Ellen admitted.

He held her hand while they peered toward the bay, then placing an arm about her hips. Her waist was high from his position in the chair.

"I'd bet big money you're going to like it here."

Evidently he might be thinking mostly about the view. She couldn't be sure. Meanwhile the elements of their first home were scattered. You might say that their first home was quite rubbed out. He seemed to be vastly impressed by the recovery of his old bureau. There were other texts for elation.

"Do you know," he said, "I'm going to restring the old fiddle, and have the piano tuned."

He noticed that she did not respond quickly, and opened his lips with a questioning sign, then thought better of comment. He would not ask her to get the fiddle strings; but he should have them.

"I'm going to help Pop with his books," he added.

"That's fine," said Jo Ellen. There could be no doubt of her satisfaction. This at least had gone over big. He elaborated the idea of helping his father, as if to follow up a good impression; yet he soon discovered by oblique scrutiny, that she was probably not hearing him.

"Guess you feel a little strange here, this first night," he said.

She turned away from the window to busy herself again.

"Funny thing"—she spoke from the region of her dresser—"I was just thinking of Myrtle Fleck."

"Cooling off in the Wayward."

"Locked up like a criminal."

"Do you mean she really oughtn't to be there?"

"I mean I'm awfully sorry."

Marty grunted. It was a sound strangely suggestive of some sound his mother made. "She's just a little tart. You're foolish to be sorry for her."

Jo Ellen turned with a frown and the touch of color under the eyes that usually halted him.

"I'm sorry for anybody who's locked up."

"O, well"—he reached down to pull off the slippers from his limp feet—"they'll probably be sorry and get her out." He seemed to have a fresh thought, with his head bent over, and looked up quickly. "That's why you're sorry for me, isn't it?"

"We're both sort of locked up."

"Not you!" He was holding a slipper and staring. "Not you. You're free. I'm the one. You don't appreciate being free. That's what I think sometimes. You don't appreciate it. Suppose your legs—"

"I don't think we ought to quarrel on our first night in this house." Jo Ellen spoke with a desperate quiet.

"Who's quarreling? I'm just telling you how you are—that it's me that's locked up."

"I know."

"Locked up. And you can get away. Get away to mix with a crowd that doesn't think of people like me—a crowd that's changing you—"

Jo Ellen caught him by the shoulder. "If you don't want to change me you'd better—"

They both heard the sound at the partly open door. Mrs. Simms stood at the sill.

"Are you two wrangling?"

Marty's face took on an expression of fright.

"Wrangling! O no! We were only—only discussing something. That's all."

"I see." Mrs. Simms' voice struck Jo Ellen as clammy. It trailed off as if to express apology, or as if it were in passing.

The interruption reduced Marty to dumbness. The look of fear was slow to fade out.

On the following day Jo Ellen was able to leave the office at five o'clock, and reached the roof early enough to join her mother-in-law in the preparation of the dinner. Her assistance seemed to be taken for granted, and to give great satisfaction to Marty. The picture of wife and mother busied in the evocation of a meal impressed him as beautiful. It was the birthday of Simms senior, and the father brought forth a bottle of rye whisky from the house stock to which he was constantly making sacramental additions. Marty's eyes glistened at sight of the bottle. Simms cordially reviewed the group as he commented on the superior quality of the liquor—the real imported stuff such as you couldn't expect from the ordinary bootleggers. Simms took his own drink neat. Marty concocted a highball in which there was a strong infusion. Mrs. Simms accepted a slender allowance. When Simms lifted his eyebrows at Jo Ellen and made a gesture with the bottle, Marty interjected an assurance that Jo Ellen never tasted liquor.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

Fetching little handkerchiefs have a pocket for a tiny powderpuff.

New York
--Day by Day--

By O. O. McINTYRE.

New York, Aug. 13.—The yap wagon barkers finally landed me. I never pass their Broadway stands unnoticed. Their passengers are recruited from those who wear suspenders, vest pocket toothbrush, barrel cuffs and shoestring ties.

I had left a restaurant in Times Square and was standing on the curb thumbing my arm pits when a vaselined youth sidled up to me: "Going right out, Mister! Fast car to Chinatown and the Bowery!" Then in an insinuating whisper: "See the wicked side of a great city!"

I paid my dollar and sat among the patient women "decoys" who knit until the sightseeing tour starts, then they alight and wait for its return. Hokum is the barker's credo. He gives a rasping glamor to a prosiac tour as he buttonholes visitors from Hinky Dink, Kan., and Big Pump, Neb.

One hour after I purchased my ticket the "grand tour" started. The barker became the megaphone cicerone and sat up front. As we swung down lower Broadway he said: "We are leaving the Great White Way. Each light represents a broken heart." His voice was loud and xylophonic.

On Fourteenth street he pointed out Tammany Hall with: "That's the place where they make presidents, senators and govenors." His Bowery knowledge is like the vicar's egg, a bit rotten in spots. He pointed out McGuirk's Suicide Hall five blocks before we came to it.

"The Bowery," he said, "is the home of thugs and thieves. Not a day goes by without a series of murders. It is the wickedest place in the world." The Bowery has fewer murders, black jacking and thieving than any other section of the city—otherwise he was the precisionist.

The "opium den" in Chinatown was a prop affair, no doubt, maintained by the sightseeing agency. Sprawled out one of the bunks was a thin fellow, his face painted a gastly yellow. He was dreamily puffing a long pipe which contained, no doubt, bulldurham.

When I told the yap wagon barker I thought I would return to the midtown by subway he said: "All right do so at your own risk." He was so in earnest about it that he almost had me walking in the middle of the street—looking back every fifth step.

The trouble with the men who ballyhoo for sightseeing tours is they regard every fare as a "sucker." As a matter of fact the passenger enjoys a long and comfortable ride at the cheapest price in town outside of the subway and elevated. New York sophisticates may attribute dull mindedness to those who are patrons of the rubberneck carts but I know no better way to enjoy a trip to the Bowery, Chinatown or Coney Island. Even if you do not believe the barker he is amusing.

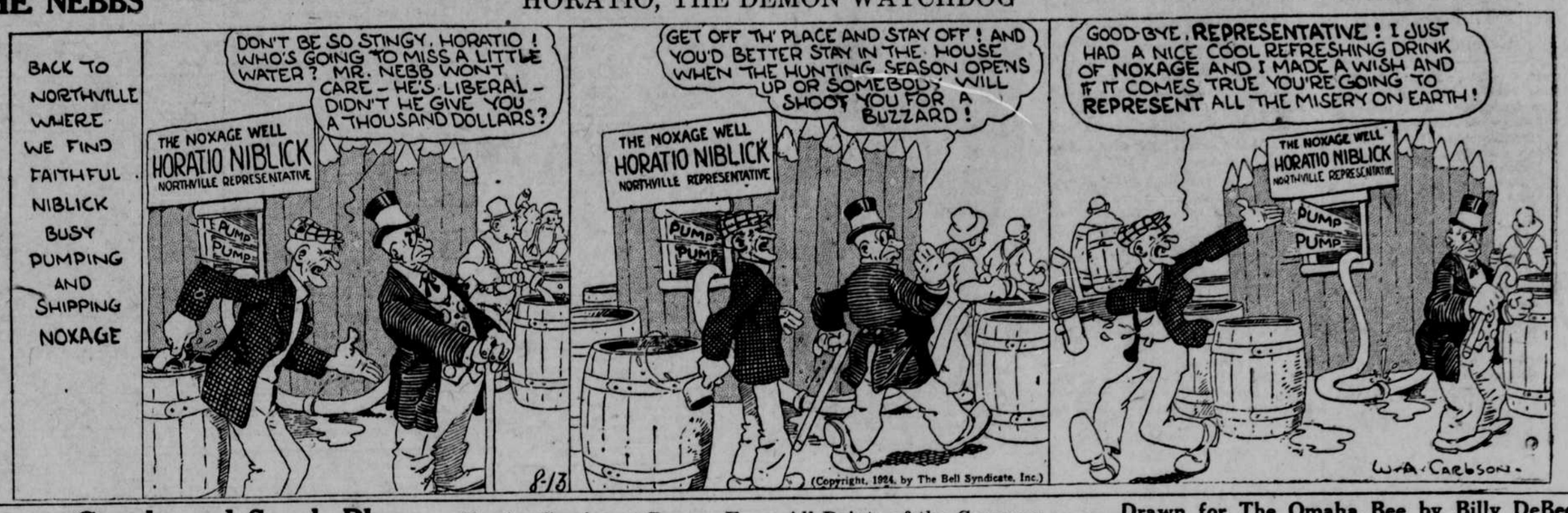
The man who is considered the most expert turf writer in New York has never wagered a penny on the ponies. He is a native of Kentucky and learned early to admire fine horse flesh. He has picked out the highest average of winners in town and statisticians have figured out that a $10 bet a day for any month in the year on almost any race would have made a small fortune. The expert says that once he became a turf gambler his judgment might win for a while," he said, but in the end I would lose." And he adds: "No one has ever successfully beat the ponies. It can't be done." It can't be done."

The Algonquin remains the haunt of the young intellectuals. They are there every noonday wisecracking about the whence of the how or the newer economics in Hither India. The young lady intellectuals have their lorgnettes to lift at the circular hair cut.

THE NEBBS

HORATIO, THE DEMON WATCHDOG

Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess



Barney Google and Spark Plug

They're Coming at Barney From All Points of the Compass.

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck

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