I, THE KING

By WAYLAND WELLS WILLIAMS.

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(Continued from Saturday.)

"When did you shave?" remarked Mary.

He stood up, laughing. "I'll do it now, before dinner." He threw off his coat, waistcoat and shirt and went into the bathroom, whistling.

"Don't," came Mary's voice after an interval. "You keep getting a half a tone out, and it's awful."

He stopped whistling. The razor plowed into his cheek.

IV.

They enjoyed England so much that they left only two weeks for shopping in Paris before they sailed for home. They landed early in September, and immediately set out on the work of doing over the house.

Kit had anticipated only a little papering and painting, but he saw Mary's point. The place was frowsty, out-of-date, provincial; she wanted it modern and nice, and she should have it so. They surrendered it to the decorators, and moved to a hotel.

When they moved back, six weeks later, he refused to regret a dollar or a fidget of it. Mary had known best. The hall, the dull dark old hall, was a thing of beauty in light walls and shimmery green hangings and glass lights; the dining room was pure Chippendale, with a complete new set of furniture; the library on the second floor, the usual sitting room, was delicious in bright chintzes against somber Italian backgrounds. The drawing room on the ground floor was another affair; to his surprise Mary had retained all the old rosewood "set" and had even supplemented it with ottomans and pier-glasses of its period. She had the walls stenciled with panels and scroll-work, and the result was a perfect creation of 1850, the only concessions to modernity being the hardwood floor and the furniture coverings, a smart stripe of light and dark mulberry.

"You see," Mary explained, "people's drawing rooms are always a joke, and I intend to make ours a real one. If any one laughs at it, the laugh will be on them." By way of capping the jest she brought down from the attic a few old handsomely bound books, Baxter's "Saints' Rest" and N. P. Willis' "American Scenery," and piled them on the largest rosewood table, at exact right angles to each other.

They began going about and entertaining, on a small scale. But they almost always took their guests out in the evening, and even for dinner Mary preferred a restaurant.

"Of course, we have the bother of taking our drinks with us, but it's safer, on the whole. I'm not sure enough of myself to swing things in a great empty house. As for having our dance there, I won't hear of it. The only way to give a dance in your own house is to engage a caterer and music for a certain evening, and then call up people on the morning of that day and tell them it's very small and casual. Otherwise they won't come. I'm not experienced enough to do that yet, so we'll just have to engage a ballroom and send out cards."

Kit wondered at her knowledge, but she appeared to be right. Every one's idea was to get away from home, even friends' homes. He suggested that it might be too early to give a dance anyway, as few of his mother's friends had yet called on Mary, but he was informed that it didn't matter. People no longer called; it was sufficient to take his mother's old list and ask every one who had not died.

"I haven't asked Aunt Emmy, and I haven't asked the policeman on the beat. I do wish you'd trust me. We won't have a dance at all if you don't want to, but if we have one we're going to do it properly. I know you wonder how I know what's proper, but I do, and you'll find out that I'm right, if you wait."

The event justified her. Probably a good many of his mother's old friends sniffed at invitations from a lady they had not called on, and made up their minds not to call, then and there. But their children accepted, and if they were not asked got themselves asked, or came anyway. The dance was not large, but it was full of spirit and dash, and survived the usual exodus to the cafes till well after three. It made Mary famous, in a small but desirable way. Thereafter her engagements piled up.

She gave herself over to two things, society and music. It was odd how faithful she remained to the latter; often before breakfast and always for an hour or two in the morning she was pounding away in the drawing room. She said she enjoyed her music much more now than she had for years, but she talked very little about it.

This was all very well, but it was a pursuit he could not share with her. Her daytime engagements were chiefly female affairs, and the only way he could really see her was to go out with her in the evening. From breakfast to dinner he was thrown entirely on his own resources.

V.

As the autumn wore away in idleness he began chewing his nails again. And it was not the absence of business possibilities that bothered him.

Len Thomson had found a rich benefactor who wanted him to run an outdoor boys' boarding school in California according to certain not wholly undeasonable theories. He had to get some one to go in with him, and was anxious for Kit to try the job.

"You'll do the mental part and I the physical," he explained. "Of course, I'll do some teaching, and you'll coach baseball, but that'll be our general division. It seems to me we'd make a pretty good combination, and we'd get no end of fun out of it. A ranch, producing most of what we eat, twenty miles from a railroad. No neighbors to speak of. Why, it would be like running a small kingdom."

Kit wanted to say that he had run a much larger kingdom entirely single-handed, and the prospect had little glamor for him. But his verbal objection was on other grounds.

"Thanks, Len, but I don't see myself drubbing Vergil into young boneheads, and still less do I see being an uplifting and purifying influence on their mucky little morals. Boys bore me. Teaching the young idea how to shoot isn't my calling. And how do you suppose Mary would like it?"

"Well enough, I should think. She'd be a perfect little queen among us all."

"I had two perfect little queens on Niarava," said Kit, "and they were perfect because they never attempted to interfere with me in any way. Mary's the most perfect woman in the world, but I don't see her in that galley."

"She'd be glad to go, if you made up your mind it was the thing for you," said Len, disappointed. "And I can't help feeling it is the thing for you. I thought the responsibility would appeal to you."

"Why?" said Kit quickly.

"Well, it certainly used to. You were never so happy as when you were bossing somebody around, and you did it well, too. That's why you got on so well with your people on the island."

There was no answering this. The fine fabric of past aspirations and deeds was crumbling about his ears. He mourned and yearned for it; but the dominant thought in his mind was that after governing a kingdom he wanted something better than half managing a boys' boarding school.

Jen Cobb became the main protagonist for another opportunity. Two or three wits and bright spirits of Kit's time at Yale had got hold of some money from somewhere and were going to start a weekly paper. They discovered that the term "liberal" had no exact political significance in America, and determined to give it one. The enlightened impartiality of that sheet was going to be the most remarkable product of modern times. They wanted Kit's brain to help them, and were not averse to using some of his capital.

"I don't understand you at all," Jen said after some conversation on the matter. "In the old days you accepted a person for his brains, and let the rest go. You don't deny that Jim Driver and Harry Feldmann have brains—"

"No," interrupted Kit, "I only say that they both have cross-eyes. Run a paper with two cross-eyed men, two?—why, the idea's preposterous. They must find another, or be trepanned."

"Trepanning isn't that, it's making a hole in your head. The foolish thing is that in college you used to call yourself a liberal, and see things eye to eye with Jim Driver—"

"Not that! I never saw like the Maze at Hampton Court!"

"You're damned amusing," said Jen witheringly. Then he changed, and went on: "Dear man, don't you see I'm worried about you? Has life got nothing more in store for you? Are you just going to drop out, die, at twenty-five?"

"Apparently," said Kit bitterly. "I don't know what's got into me. To you it must seem like plain naughtiness, but it's not all that. The bottom seems to have dropped out of things. This liberal affair is just about the sort of thing I was thinking of last spring."

"You don't," said Jen carefully, "think you're getting a little—ah, swelled-headed, do you? I mean—"

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

New York --Day by Day--

By O. O. M'INTYRE.

New York, Nov. 30.—A page from the diary of a modern Samuel Pepys: Up early and had breakfast with my mother-in-law, and she made hash as fine as ever I ate. And I was holpen thrice. Afterward to romp awhile with my dog Billy, a droll little Boston.

Home and at my stint but so much ringing of the telephone I gave it up and set out with Billy DeBuck, the jinner, and stopped in to see Jack Lait, who recently had a taste of being a managing editor, and found he had no time for triflers.

In the evening to the dinner to David Belasco at the Green Room club and he made a brave speech albeit I have always thought him too much the poseur. Later to walk to my tavern with S. J. Kaufman and so to bed.

The Cheese club is composed of a group of Broadway wits. Its membership consists mostly of press agents and second string dramatic men. There are no dues and once or twice a month they get together for a kidding match. Now Broadway has a similar organization in The Moron club. The motto is "More Fun For Imbeciles." The club is growing fast and there is actually talk of building a clubhouse.

The Winter Garden has come back into its own. The runways where barelegged girls flitted down among the audience have been restored and smoking, for two years banned, is now permitted.

H. B. Culver is a New York lawyer who for years has made a hobby of building a flotilla of miniature ships—the collection of which was recently on exhibition. One of the models cost more than $25,000. Bob Davis, the magazine editor, makes a hobby of collecting miniature elephants. He is said to have the largest collection in America.

A famous dramatic critic is now resting in Ludlow street jail for the non-payment of alimony. He expects to be there until the flowers bloom in the spring tra-la. But he has not wasted lagging hours. He has always wanted to write a novel but never found time. Where he had plenty of leisure he drafted a synopsis and received $6,000 advance and expects to finish it by the time he departs.

They are asking on Broadway: Where have the old-timers gone? They have scattered to the four winds. Returning travelers tell of seeing them along the Paris boulevards, along the Strand and even in far away Shanghai mourning for the dead days that are gone and will return no more. Wilson Maizer, the gayest raconteur the street ever knew, is selling bricks in Florida. Jay O'Brien is basking in the sunshine of southern France. Zed Kiley is a cabaret king of Montmartre. So is Harry Pilcer. Dick Donovan caters to the epicurean taste of Shanghai. Now and then they come back and shed a few salty tears for departed glories and take the next boat back. Broadway is another street. Those who know say it will never return to its old-time zip and dash. Gaiety hids itself away from the lights.

The other evening I sat in a cafe where Chas. M. Schwab was dining at one table and Will Hays at another. But the cynosure of all eyes was a vampish looking creature who had just achieved the first pages for being named corespondent in a celebrated divorce. Such is fame!

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THE NEBBS

LEND ME YOUR EAR.

Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess

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Barney Google and Spark Plug

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck

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BRINGING UP FATHER

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SEE JIGGS AND MAGGIE IN FULL PAGE OF COLORS IN THE SUNDAY BEE

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JERRY ON THE JOB

THERE'S A CATCH IN IT.

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban

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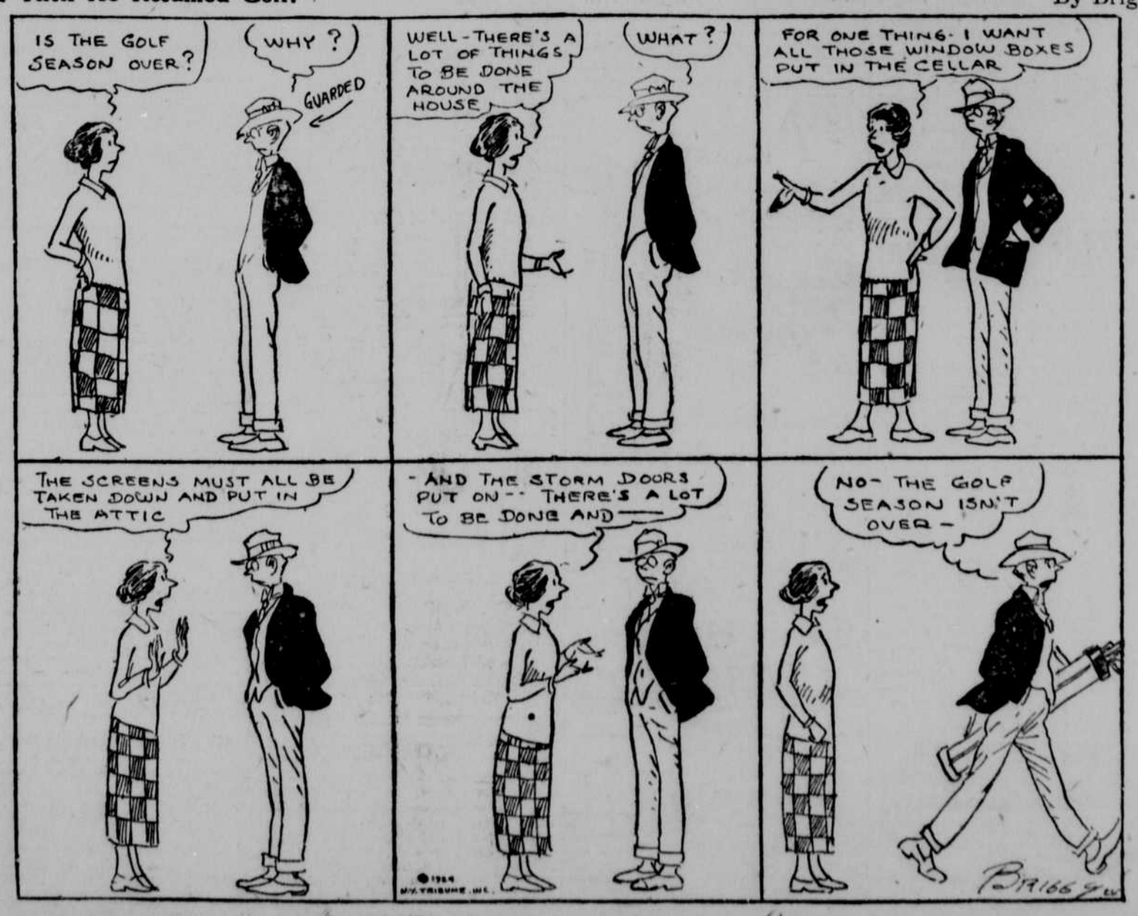
And Then He Resumed Golf.

By Briggs



ABIE THE AGENT

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield

Logic to That.