

I, THE KING

By WAYLAND WELLS WILLIAMS.

(Copyright, 1924.)

(Continued from Yesterday.)

"Oh, VI," he said with easy pity, "she's got trouble of her own, poor VI. You heard about her shop? Well, she set up an establishment, a millinery thing of sorts, in Bond street last autumn. Tiny little two-by-four place, most awfully smart. There was a regular sign over the door—"The Vicountess Models, robes"—the small fits and all. Every one laughed and went in and ordered a chemise or something, and then forgot about it. Well, she had a dishonest assistant, and of course poor VI herself never knew a half crown from a florin, and the long and the short of it is the whole thing went to pot. She lost horribly by it, nearly everything she had, and she wasn't really off considering. She's in despair, and is out for an American millionaire. 'I'm desperate!' she goes about saying. 'I'm going to spend my last cent on a passage to America, and I'll take the first millionaire I can get. Any one—a coal heaver, if he's got the cash!' Poor VI."

Kit sat with his hands in his pockets, speechless. So VI was coming over. He would see her.

The room felt cold; he shivered. But he was going to see VI. And he knew that he wasn't going to look for a job—yet.

CHAPTER XV.

Next morning he sat biting his nails in his study, and the thought of Jack kept coming to him. It made him intensely miserable. What would he not give for half an hour of Jack's freshness and youth amid the olivaceous and boyishness of his present life?

On a sudden impulse he went to a bookstore and took out a certain volume, a very familiar one, Matthew Arnold's poems. He opened it at the first leaf, on which was his name in his own handwriting, crossed out, and under that a long inscription:

New Kittle
from
Cheltenham Bold
Christmas, 1913.

The bright boy, having seen Matthew Arnold's name in a newspaper or somewhere, conceived a desire to drink of that Pierian Flood, proposed to gratify in the form of a Christmas gift; but the impulsive youth, having far too large an allowance and too small a pocket, had not the money. He had then and there procured himself this volume. This parthenogenetic act I, hating, have this day undone, excoriated and nullified by giving to the same New Kittle the sum of one Bean and threescore Small Potatoes (\$1.60), such being the market price of the book, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged by him.

which act of grace These Verses become my gift to him. Quod felix faustumque sit.—J. C.

Jack had scrawled that one evening in the following January, apparently having only just discovered that Christmas had occurred. Kit remembered how he looked as he wrote it sitting with his knees hunched up in his chair, biting a pipe stem and smiling scornfully to himself. It was so like Jack, superabundant, awkward, puppy-like; but at the same time full of vitality and nice feeling.

He turned on and read snatches here and there. A real poet, Arnold; that early taste of his had been sound. But now he read as he might have read his own epitaph, with pity, perhaps, and a musing wonder, but no emotion.

All at once his eye fell on certain lines:

Yes! in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us
And blown by shoresless water wild,
We mortal millions live alone . . .

But when the moon their hollows
lights,
And they are swept by balms of
spring,
And in the glens, on starry nights,
The nightingales divinely sing;
And lovely notes from shore to shore
Across the sounds and channels
pour—

Oh! then a longing like despair
is to their farthest caverns sent;
For surely once, they feel, we were
Parts of a single continent!
Now round us spreads the water
plain—
Oh, might our margins meet again!

So pertinent this was to his own case that it made him groan. He knew, if man ever knew, how it felt to be on an island. First on Naivara, physically, geographically isolated, that longing like despair had wrung him; and now in his own home, among his own friends, in the very presence of his beloved wife, he knew it again. He knew it in a spiritual sense only, but all the more rending and mordant for that. Hard it was to be lonely out there, but how much more tragic to be lonely among friends—separated from those he loved and could touch by that shoreless watery wild dividing mind from mind. Tragic, hopeless. . .

Then recollection: a human being was not like geography. It was a person's own fault, if he could not find his continent. Yes, his fault. And then, turning over the pages, he came on this:

But in the world I learnt, what there
Thou too wilt surely one day prove.
That will, that energy, though rare,
Are yet far, far less rare than love.

There it was. It took will and energy to find one's continent, and even these, though commoner far than the gift of love, he lacked. He had had them, and lost them—wasted, destroyed! Oh, was there no end to weakness and pain?

In a burst of anger he flung the book across the room. He sat staring at it a moment, then slowly went over and picked it up. An absurd vision came to him of Mrs. Ebbamith pulling the prayer book out of the fire. . . There the book lay in his hand, unscorched, unharmed, except for a new looseness in its back. Again it became lost youth incarnate, irrevocable.

Oh, Jack, that the sweetness of those days should ever taste so bitter! Oh, Mary, that the wonders of love and marriage should, through his own inadequacy, remain so far from him! He sat back in his chair and groaned again. Lonely, lost, helpless, admit forever on that "unplumbed, salt, estranging sea" of human weakness, across whose devious currents even now, faintly, maddeningly, the nightingales divinely sang. . .

New York

--Day by Day--

By O. O. MINTYRE

New York, Dec. 5.—In a fashionable strip of countryside near New York there is a fine colonial home with kennels, garage and terraced lawn. There are five servants aside from the master, mistress and three children.

The home is a tribute to the interior decorator's art and there are several paintings with a purchase price running into five figures. Recently I spent an afternoon in the home. The owner is a man I knew only as a head waiter.

He has bowed and scraped at my approach just as he has to thousands of others who have visited the place where he is overlord of table reservations. And yet here he was living in a manner few of us ever expect to achieve.

My interest in him followed a talk one day with one of the highest priced car specialists in New York. At a little dinner party he told me of an operation he had performed on the wife of the head waiter. A few weeks after the operation he was called late at night on the phone.

It was the head waiter. His wife was restless and he was worried. "Can't you run out and see her?" he asked the specialist. He was told there was no way for him to get there at that hour of night—and rather jokingly added "unless you send a special train for me."

"I'll do it at once," he declared, and in an hour the specialist was riding there in a special train. He had spent several hundred dollars as usually as one buys a cigar just to be satisfied that all was well with his wife.

One wonders if in his genuflections at the cafe door he does not conceal the grin at bright young show-offs who airily tender the \$10 and \$20 bill and trot home to hall bedrooms.

A chance punch on the nose sent a prominent movie star to fame and fortune. He was for many years an extra. They tried him in a more prominent part but his nose wouldn't film. He became discouraged and took a drink. One night he was in a cafe when a row started and lurching over to the group, peered over the shoulder to see what the trouble was and wham—a misdirected blow landed on his nose. Reset, it was o. k. for film purposes.

A cowboy from Arizona writes me that on their bunkhouse wall is a clipping of an article I had written about shuddering at the bawling of calves receiving the hot branding iron on a Texas ranch. Over the article in chalk is scrawled "O' Violet!" He adds with sarcasm: "I suppose a man who wears a wrist watch and spats would hesitate in killing a chicken." He's right, I would.

I am not, however, without certain fancies. Yesterday I left a cafe without tipping the hat check boy. Cloths may not be indicative of daring anyway. A Britisher who has bagged many lions in Africa and was among the first to brave the dangers of Chilkoot pass in Alaska sports a monocle.

Thirty English actors and actresses are either being starred or essay leading roles in as many Broadway plays. In England only one American girl appears to be making any noticeable success. She is Tallulah Bankhead in a mystery melodrama.

I finally met the man with whom I exchange friendly greetings in an office building across from my window. It develops he was born and raised 13 miles from the town on the Ohio river where I spent much of my boyhood.

excuse for that, in your mind just plain cussedness?"

Jen's eyes, gray-blue and insignificant, briefly acquired a rather lovely for you. Whatever is the matter, and I've no idea what it is. I know it's hell for you. But I thought six months might have changed your attitude toward the school proposition."

"They haven't, a particle. I have less Messianic impulse toward boys than I ever had, if possible. You and Len are ridiculous. You think of me as nosing around saying, 'Oh, dear, I've no one to feel responsible for! Give me some one to guide and comfort quick! Lord! I tell you, I fairly hate the idea of those boys, and they'd hate me the minute they saw me.'"

"They'd have a right to, if you did."

"Oh," said Kit, "every one has that right. Including myself. . ."

They were in Kit's study, on a misty afternoon. Jen filled a pipe, lighted it and said: "Kit, isn't that it, perhaps? Hate generally?"

"What are you talking about?"

"The uselessness and ugliness of hate. Why hate any one, even your self? Why hate hypothetical little boys? After all, we're nothing but a bunch of nitwits, even the best of us. You're no worse than the average."

"Well, why not go out and try it? Have a little of the—of what Jack

used to call the m. of h. k. Go out and face those kids—realize they're young and helpless and like yourself generally, and see if you can't . . . you know?"

"You'll bring in 'moral purpose' in a minute," said Kit blithely.

(To Be Continued Monday.)

THE NEBBS

OH WELL, THAT'S DIFFERENT.

Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Heas (Copyright 1924)



Barney Google and Spark Plug

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck (Copyright 1924)



BRINGING UP FATHER

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by McManus (Copyright 1924)



JERRY ON THE JOB

HE MUST BE WRONG

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban (Copyright 1924)



The First Sunday in Church After the Golf Season

By Briggs ABIE THE AGENT

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield (Copyright 1924)

