

I, THE KING

By WAYLAND WELLS WILLIAMS.

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(Continued from Saturday.)

Jen's eyes gave a certain gleam. "And suppose I did?"

"I might," he polio.—I tell you, it's a use. Just because I've nothing to do I won't set up to save the world. I've got some honest left, at least, and self-respect, and I don't do a thing that I hate so that the world can sit around and say "How noble." When I do that, my name is mud."

This was paper-mache, as he well knew; there was no cause for indignation and he was refusing to join Jen because he preferred New York to California. And Jen knew it also. He got up, and his eyes met Kit's terribly.

"Did you ever stop to think?" he asked, "what your name actually is? And what it means?" Then he walked out of the room and the house.

III.

One morning early in June the expected happened. He chanced to be breakfasting with Mary, and she handed him a missive which she found in her mail. It consisted of a small white card on which was engraved in script

The Viscountess fled— and under that, added in pencil, the simple legend "Hotel Plaza."

A council of war ensued. It was clear that VI was throwing herself on them in time of need. Mary was a little caustic, failing to see quite why the mercy of casual American acquaintances should be preferred to that of friends nearer home. But on second thoughts she decided to be kind; to call on VI, try to find her a millionaire. Perhaps, she added, she could find a secret affection for two small ffs, and remarked (Kit could not but admire her honesty) that Viscountesses looked, "precisely like her," however they looked at home.

Kit went out for the day hoping (1) that he would never see VI fled again as long as he lived; (2) that he would find her installed in the best bedroom when he came in. The latter wish was granted. Mary informed him that VI was in the house, and also using her (Mary's) maid, not having one of her own more. Probably nothing could have given Kit a more vivid idea of her poverty.

The three spent the evening alone in the house, the gaieties of the season having considerably waned. VI had left off mourning and appeared in an exceedingly smart little frock of robin's-egg and mauve. She was old so brave, and laughed, just audibly, as she announced that she only had six hundred pounds a year to her name. There was a good deal of hilarious but semi-serious discussion of prospects, named by men bachelors and widowers were men-

you'll be pretty safe. That takes us till Monday, the fourteenth, with only next Monday to Thursday to bother about. Can't you go away for those days?"

"There's Cora's wedding, Wednesday."

"Yes, but that'll be easy. Stay on at the Clarke's till Wednesday morning, discarded, approved. Dinner when Mary went to the piano and the two others sat side by side on a brocade and rosewood sofa. VI looked like a very young girl as she lay back and listened, and in point of fact she was only twenty-five.

"Oh, this is too angelic of you!" she breathed, her eyebrows flying into their incredible arch. "Seraphs, both of you. You don't know what I've been through. Appalling!"

"Not the money, you know," she said, quickly drawing it away again. "I could stand being poor. 'Twas the people—the way they laughed, Fields! It was funny to them, 'parently. Why? I ask you, why? Is there something so screamingly amusing in poor wretched little VI fled being ruined? 'S not mind you, as if I'd ever put on side . . ."

She proceeded on a sweet and staccato straitening of the British upper classes, the new rich, the government, taxes, Germany and the entire science of economics; again at a bound became personal again.

"And so, Kit, angel, I thought of you. You see, you have hearts in America. Always felt that with Americans, always, Darlings."

Kit said he was glad she was pleased.

Violet hesitated, fingering a chain of pearls and sapphires from which depended her eyeglass. "Kit, seraph. This—about Tibby. It's true, is it?"

"Quite. They're to be married next week."

Violet closed her eyes and sighed sadly. Nothing could express the depth of her resignation or her lack of bitterness.

"Kit, I feel—I feel I must tell you. You understand. But you mustn't blame Tibby—no, 'twas fate. Oh, fate's an appalling thing. Kit, Kit, you lucky beggar! Never been disappointed, have you?"

"Well, perhaps not in that particular way."

Violet closed her eyes once more, shivering. "You see, he'd promised to meet me at Sturton—the Lemmings—and . . . see? And he didn't come. Simply didn't come. Not a word. Not one. I cried—Heaven! But you won't blame Tibby, now? Promise?"

Kit promised, with a fairly easy conscience.

"That's right," said VI, apparently immensely relieved, and gave a little flop toward him. Her hand fell lightly on his thigh. "You're rather a dear. Oh," she breathed, just audibly, "what Heaven this is. Heaven! Friends. Real friends, at last."

She was so absurd an infantile sprawling there with closed eyes, that she appealed to him. He bent his head quickly and kissed her.

Then things became different, as her eyes opened wide in reproach, which was superfluous, and warning, which was discordant. "Kit, angel! Mary!" She glanced toward the piano.

Mary had not seen them, being turned away, but if she had it would not have mattered in the least. He had kissed VI as he might have kissed a puppy, or at least in the focal sort of way that a man can kiss a woman in his wife's presence. VI did not see that, and was merely anxious that Mary should not have seen. That made it bad.

He knew it was bad, but as he turned to look at her in regret and surprise he suddenly found that he wanted to kiss her again, and not in any way that one could possibly want to kiss a puppy. And that made it infinitely worse. He shuddered, and got up.

IV.

Let that night he did what he supposed was a most difficult thing, though it did not seem so. He supposed that was because it was Mary who had first enlightened him on his feeling toward VI. He came into their bedroom and said:

"See here, Mary, I'm afraid of that woman. It's better to have it out. I'm afraid of her."

Mary turned as she sat brushing her long black hair. "Who? VI?"

"Yes. She's . . . queer. I can't have her round here. I can't be responsible if she stays."

Mary paused. "What do you want me to do about it?"

"Get her out of the house, as quickly as possible."

"But I've just got her into it, with your consent."

"Yes, I know, it'll be difficult. Now let's see. Tomorrow we go to Tuxedo, the Clarke's, and VI will just have to stay here alone. I told her that. From Monday till Thursday we'll be here again, and then we go to the Blaynes' at Glencove—by the way, there's a small house there that might do for us. I thought we could take VI there—in fact I wrote and asked Julia Blayne if we might. There'll be a lot of people round, and VI'll have to work for her millionaire, so

strands with a sense of incompleteness, of waiting.

"The week after that," went on Mary, "the week of the fourteenth, we go to Newport, and undoubtedly I can get VI asked there, too, and you can stay away on business. Then after that—oh, your Commencement comes along then, doesn't it?"

"Yes. The yacht will be ready, and I thought we might use her."

"Well, then, I don't see but what it'll be pretty easy for as much as three weeks. It really only leaves next Wednesday and the week-end at Glencove . . ."

Amazing woman. There was no more hysteria about this than about

the planning of a bridge hand. He got up. "I'm—I'm glad you see it this way, Mary."

"I don't see any other way to see it," said Mary.

Fifteen minutes later she was asleep in the bed, next his; he could hear her regular breathing. Asleep! He knew little about women. But he was sure that in Mary's position— really an appalling position to place a wife in—Onaull would have made considerably more disturbance, and even Naotia a little more. VI certainly would have, also Maud Hurlington. Assuming that they loved him, of course . . .

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

THE NEBBIS



A POOR RICH KID.

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

Barney Google and Spark Plug

Anyhow, Barney's Heart Is in the Right Place.

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



BRINGING UP FATHER

Registered U. S. Patent Office SEE JIGGS AND MAGGIE IN FULL PAGE OF COLORS IN THE SUNDAY BEE

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by McManus (Copyright 1924)



JERRY ON THE JOB

OBEYING THE RULES.

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban (Copyright 1924)



New York --Day by Day--

By O. O. MINTYRE

New York, Dec. 7.—A page from the diary of a modern Samuel Pepys: Up early and drove to Great Neck with "Tad," the cartoonist, the merriest solemn-faced fellow I know, and "Bugs" Baer there with Eddie Foy's son, Edlin.

At we talked of plays, wars and books and then fell to eating some hot mush covered with thick cream and ate until we were in misery, so up to "Tad's" sleeping porch to sleep a while, like gluttonish dogs.

Back home on the tram and fell in with Hazard Short, the stage director, and we played at matching pennies until we thundered into the station.

In the evening with A. M. Andrews and Karl Kitcher and our fair ladies to a review. And I laughed so uproariously at Jimmy Salvo that all were embarrassed. So home late and to bed.

A gentleman in evening clothes with an alcoholic list attempted to step from a fast moving Broadway surface car in the middle of the block. He turned a couple of somersaults, skidded on his side and landed in a ridiculous posture near the gutter. The car stopped and the motorman rushed back with pad to get his name and call an ambulance. The gentleman arose with much dignity and, waving him away, said: "S'all right, I always get off that way."

Last nights of plays are proving as popular as first nights. Broadway calls it "clowning the show." Unbridled license is given players. They do what they please and despite the fact that means "At Liberty" for them, they burlesque the whole performance. Broadway is flocking to this sort of thing and seats for last nights sell as high as those for premieres. At one the other night there was a knock at a side door, the butler opened it and across the stage an actor fell the canvas wall and stopped through. It was supposed to be a serious moment of the play and the audience howled. Later the telephone rang. The actor answering it inquired: "Where are you?" There was a wait and a piping voice in the orchestra pit said: "Here I am?" He had taken the trap drummer's seat.

Down at police headquarters there is a room called "the mumble room." It is a part of the third degree. Prisoners who are being pressed to confess serious crimes are placed there. There is an arrangement whereby all during the torturous hours of the night he hears the mumble and wall of voices.

A scurrying red cap at the Grand Central kicked a wallet that sent a sheaf of gold back notes to the winds. He stopped, picked them up and found there was more than \$700. He turned it over to the station master and the loser called and claimed them. To add to his chagrin it was recovered the same night by a man who found his money in one who told three heavy suitcases from the train for which he gave a five cent tip. The porter refused to take a \$20 reward. "I think you need your money more than I," he said.

The Waldorf is the last of the big hotels to sacrifice its wide open lobby spaces to small shops. The change is now being made. The Baltimore is doing the same thing. The hotels now being built have postage stamp lockers no longer than the average writing room of 20 years ago.

(Copyright, 1924.)

The Magic Lantern

WHAT WE WANTED MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE IN THE WORLD (AND FINALLY GOT IT) WAS A MAGIC LANTERN... IT CONTAINED MORE THRILLS THEN, THAN A MOVIE CAMERA CONTAINS NOW.



ABIE THE AGENT

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hersfield (Copyright 1924)

