

I, THE KING

By WAYLAND WELLS WILLIAMS.
(Copyright, 1924.)

(Continued from Yesterday.)
And they, together with a dim little boy memory of loud whirling machines, formed all his knowledge of his new kingdom. But it was enough to send the blood racing through every last capillary of him, his mind flitting with eagerness and wonder. "Oh, gosh!" he thought formlessly, as a car rumbled to a stop and he stepped forward. "Oh, gosh, gosh!"

VI.
He had to go to New York, and was not able to reach the Arsinoe till Friday at lunch time. He had telegraphed ahead, and found the launch waiting for him near the station. The harbor smelt cool and fresh after the hot train.

Mary was sitting under the awning aft, and VI, and two or three others. "You're pretty late," said Mary. "We've finished lunch, but Stokes has saved something for you. You'd better go right down."

"Yes," said Kit, "I'm hungry. Hello, people, see you all here?"
"As he sat eating he saw VI's head in the doorway. "Kit, angel! What on earth?" She flopped gently into the room, fingering her pearls.
"Earth, what?" said Kit, and laughed, with his mouth full. "Was it possible that this child, this absurd, transparent creature, had ever meant anything to him either for danger or joy?"

"Poor angel," breathed VI, bending over. "And did they give you a nice luncheon-punchy?"
"Why, it's about as nice as a nice left-over luncheon-punchy are," allowed Kit. "Have a bit of cold lamb?"
VI gave a slight shudder. "No, thanks. But shall I sit down, and talk to you while you eat?"
"Why, yes, if you like," said Kit, as a schoolboy might have said it. He looked at her, and something must have come into his mind, for VI all at once became stiff and straight, or as nearly so as her physique permitted. Her eyes glittered back at him for one moment, and her hands went up to her pearls again.

"Oh," she said, on a high staccato little note, utterly English, utterly VI. Then she turned and went out.

So that was that.
Presently Mary came in to say that they were going ashore, as they had some things to do before the race, and she would send the launch back for him. "But see here," said Kit, "can't you stay? I've got to talk to you. Frantically important."

"Not now, I'm afraid."
"But it's much more important than any race!"

She smiled. "I'm sorry, dear, but one can't ignore guests. Later."
She was off, but her smile was all with him. It was like . . . like the outside of the gates of paradise, beautiful and closed.

He joined her later on the observation train, and they saw the race together. He thought it was rather a flutter in a hencoop, but diverting in its way. They scrambled back to the Arsinoe, and the business of preparing for dinner began; afterward they were going to dance at the Griswold.

"But see here," said Kit, "I simply must talk to you. I can't sleep to-night till I've talked to you."
"After dinner," said Mary, rapidly winding her hair. "We can send them off, and join them later."
Kit looked at her as she stood before her glass in her peignoir, and all he could think of was an absurd line

of poetry: "My mother bids me bind my hair and lace my bodice blue." Little she knew for what, poor child. Poor brave untroubled Mary.

VII.
They sat alone at last, facing each other over the saloon-table. The place was bright with chintz and shaded lights. Kit had chosen it because it was more businesslike than the deck with its vistas of dreamy water. Mary smoked a cigaret, holding it aloft, her elbow propped on her other hand, regarding her husband with a calm, slightly austere receptivity, like a business man. Kit stared at her.

"Well, dear," said Mary. "You're so good and kind. That makes it harder—and it's so hard, anyway."
"Yes. It generally is."
"Well," he began, pulling himself together. "I can best describe what has happened as a sort of coup d'etat in the Secret Kingdom. I've never told you about that—it seemed absurd; but I've always thought of a person's self as a sort of kingdom. The old government of mine was rotten, and it fell. A new one's taken its place, and I have hopes that it'll do better."

"I suppose you've known," he went on, "that I've been in a pretty bad way lately?" She nodded. "It's been worse, I think, than even I realized. It was a sort of death in life—no damnation in life. To see yourself grow to like the things you hate, and have the things you like, and not be able to lift a finger to stop yourself."

"All that came to a head in New Haven."
"He sketched briefly the events of the thirty-six hours. Then he came to the matter of the safety pin, but after a moment's hesitation decided that it sounded too fanciful and merely said that he had decided to take over Uncle Jeff's factory."
"I got to Dimechurch Tuesday, and we talked most of that night and the next day. Then Wednesday evening I went to New York, to see what was possible in exact terms. I think I see my way pretty well now. I take over all Uncle Jeff's stock—he wanted to keep hold of it till it began to go up, but that wouldn't do. I must be all in it if I'm in it at all. So I'm taking over the whole of it, at 54."

"And the residency, I suppose?"
"Nothing of the kind. I'm going to put on a pair of overalls next Monday morning and begin unloading brass plates from freight cars. I think that about the most menial work there is, bar sweeping floors. And still be there another, for two years. Uncle Jeff says one, but I think more. And then, when I know each job, and the state of mind of job, something executive."
"Well, that's all easy; now comes the difficult part to explain. In the first place, the transfer is to be kept secret. I'm using a dummy buyer. Do you know that? I've been having foremen know that I was masquerading under them. My young prince in disguise—all that. The apprenticeship must be as honest as I can make it."
"To make you see the whole thing I'll have to go a good deal deeper into my character than is interesting; however, I can't say that I'm unimpaired, but I privately think I am. Every one does. Well, my unusualness, if it exists, lies in . . . in reaching happiness chiefly through a feeling of usefulness and importance to other people. Even if it means sacrifice of safety and comfort—in fact, mostly through the sacrifice of those things."

"Several times in my life I've had a choice to make between comfort and responsibility. Once was in Nairava, when it was a question of killing that sailor for the sake of peace. I did it, though I knew it might mean court-martial and all sorts of unpleasantness, let alone moral scruples. The court-martial never came—I think chiefly because I told them in Washington exactly how it was, and left it to them to proceed if they liked. As for the moral scruples, they haven't bothered much . . . Why? It might be immoral, standing as I did, to let him live."
"Another time was about Jack. Another time was way back in the Blues, when I'd been made a corporal, and told a rummy little kid to put his gun away."
"The last time was last Tuesday morning . . . It's extraordinary about Dimechurch. It's always been a possibility, ever since I was a mere kid. I never liked the idea, because it was commercial, and mere commercialism never attracted me. It doesn't now. But then neither does the idea of being the Industrial Savior of the country. You mustn't make any mistake about that. I have no convictions about the Dignity of Labor. I'm not posing as the Workman's Friend."

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"Several years ago 'Bud' Fisher, the cartoonist, was employed on a New York morning newspaper. He received a bigger offer from another paper and asked to be released from his contract, but was refused. Several days later he was in the art room and an Efficient Eustace came snooping in to see what was going on. 'Bud' was smoking a cigaret. 'Smoking is not permitted here,' said the efficiency expert. 'What will happen if I smoke?' asked the cartoonist. 'You will be dismissed.' 'Fine. I'll be here at 2 o'clock with three packages of cigarets, to be lighted, one after another, and if you'll fire me, I'll have \$10,000 in cash to hand over to you.' Fisher was there—but the efficiency expert was not.

THE NEBBES

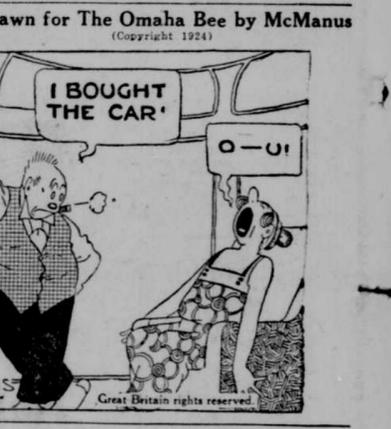
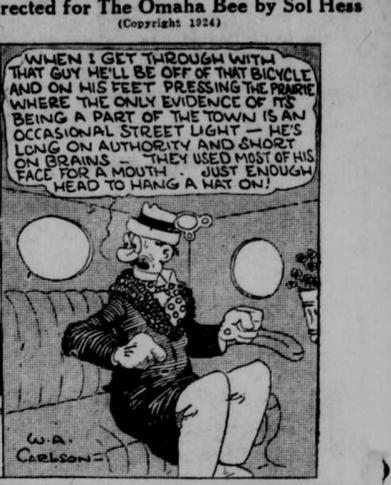
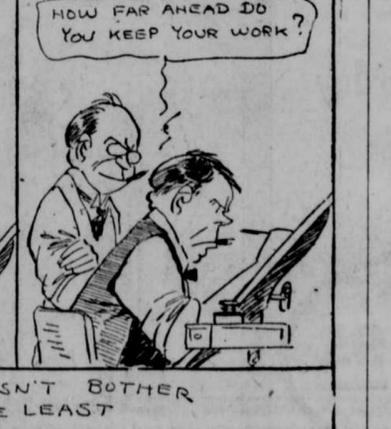
STEP ON IT, ROLLINS, I HAVE AN IMPORTANT ENGAGEMENT AND I'M LATE NOW. LET'S SEE WHAT THIS WAGON'S GOT - TURN HER LOOSE A BIT

PULL OVER TO THE CURB, BARNEY OLDFIELD, THE RACE IS OVER - WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? - DE FIRE DEPARTMENT RACIN' TROUGH DE STREETS FORTY MILES AN HOUR??

WELL - WHY ALL THE NOISE? YOU AINT CHEERING FOR SOME FOOT-BALL TEAM - EXERCISE YOUR FINGERS AND GIVE YOUR LUNGS A REST - WHO CARES?

WER ONE OF THEM GUYS DAT TINK DAT A BIG CAR AND SOME DOUGH GIVES YOU ALL DE RIGHT IN DE WOULD WELL, I'LL BE IN COURT MORNING AND WHEN I GET TROUGH TALKIN' TO DE JUDGE WELLS, I'LL KNOW YOU NO RELATION OF MINE!

WHEN I GET TROUGH WITH THAT GUY HE'LL BE OFF OF THAT BICYCLE AND ON HIS FEET PRESSING THE PRAIRIE WHERE THE ONLY EVIDENCE OF HIS BEING A PART OF THE TOWN IS AN OCCASIONAL STREET LIGHT - HE'S LONG ON AUTHORITY AND SHORT ON BRAINS - THEY USED MOST OF HIS FACE FOR A MOUTH - JUST ENOUGH HEAD TO HANG A WAT ON!



LAW VS. DRAG.

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

Barney Google and Spark Plug

THAT'S THE WAY IT FELT TO BARNEY.

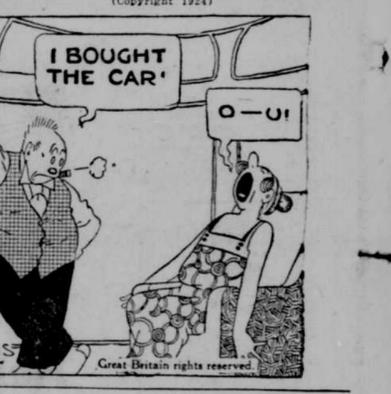
Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck
(Copyright 1924)



BRINGING UP FATHER

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

THE WINNERS LOSE

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban
(Copyright 1924)



There's at Least One in Every Office

ABIE THE AGENT

By Briggs
He Lays Down the Law.
Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hersfield

