

"THE GOLDEN BED"

By WALLACE IRWIN.

Produced as a Paramount Picture by Cecile B. DeMille From a Screen Adaptation by Jeanie Macpherson. (Copyright, 1924.)

The christening party came along under the tender green trees of Prince's avenue. There were three vicarinas, royalistic in appearance; blue-black coachmen held the reins in white gloved hands while thoroughbred hackneys stepped high as if to meet the requirements of a state occasion; silver harness jingled after the best traditions of the day; Benjamin Harrison—God rest his solid republican bones—was offending the South with a tariff unpleasantly protective. The dignified splendor of that turnout attracted attention to which it was obviously indifferent. For the Peakes were driving from their fine old house in Inness street to All Souls church where, both as Christians and as ancestor worshippers, they owed an important visit. But more important still, from the angle of life at which we view this story, was the reaction on a certain small boy who had seen a heavy market basket in front of his bare toes and was giving himself up utterly to a dream of human greatness.

"What folks is those?" asked Admah Holt, as he asked questions at a lanky negro boy of eleven. The boy opened his mouth to a gummy grin.

"Whuh you come from?"

"Great the River," replied Admah, quite without resentment at the colored boy's tone.

"A reckon ye come a long ways. How come you don't know Peakes when you see 'em?"

"Judge Peakes," interposed a stout negress, evidently possessor of the lanky boy. It was said in the voice of an old-time Viennese mentioning Hapsburgs.

"Gosh!" Admah's round eyes were focussed on the church door into which the gay procession was now passing. "All that fuss 'bout a Peake baby," the negress informed him in a chiding tone. "Flora Lee Peake is de name she'll be christened by holy sanctum of de church. De fat gelsman 'er' passin' in wif de cane is Judge Peake. Mrs. Judge Peake is gone in ahaid."

"It must cost right smart o' money, hain't a church and all." A speculative light, which was already in the day, would brighten Admah's sallow face, began to kindle and to burn.

America in those days was still pastoral—or so it looks to us in retrospect. True, we were already in the grip of that mad goddess, Elektra, who makes foul magic by wire and cable, over land and over sea. But in our modern arrogance we miss yesterday's inventions and missing links in the evolutionary chain; witness the high bicycle which bred again and became a "safety," only to evolve into a four-wheeled monster with a gas tank in its belly and a potential speed of twenty miles an hour! Eight-

een ninety-one was not simple exactly. Neither is the Chinese rice paddy with its man-turned waterwheel, great-great-grandfather of the six hundred horsepower turbine.

Eighteen ninety-one! Good gracious, we hadn't even had our Spanish War and the delightful sip of foreign blood! We were still in the feudal age, divided mostly between the Gommers who didn't keep a horse, and the Uncomomers who did.

Under the last rating the Holtzes were Uncomomers. How the high nose of Southern society, which knew not the name of Holtz, would have curled at the thought. Indeed, in that State where the Horse goes forth like the Centaur with gilded hoofs and the right-of-way into a king's presence, the Holtz quadruped was no horse at all. He was something that had escaped the poundkeeper's attention, a creature unworthy to work in Spain with his mulatto brother, the mule. His name was John. His coat was shabby, his eyes dull. His life work was to haul the milk of five consumptive cows from the Holtz's scraggly holding and sleep at night while the cans were loaded on the river ferry. On the rare occasions when Ma Holtz could afford the luxury of murdering one of her little suburban hoes, John was taken to market. Jo Holtz, the elder of two surviving children, dreaming aimlessly on the seat, slack reins between slack fingers.

Honestly then insists that the Holtzes, even though they did originate on the wrong side of the wide yellow River, kept their horse and drove their own carriage. John, commonplace in character as he was, awoke one morning in his latter years to find that he had become Destiny, a horse and named Destiny, perhaps, but it was behind his swollen knees and mangy tail that a stern-faced woman with her two dishevelled brats drove slowly across the iron bridge.

Admah Holtz sat on top of the family treasure, objects anomalous as the faithful John himself. Against an arm of the green plush rocker he braced an elbow; he remembered the weeks when Pa Holtz, forsook his work at the quarry, complaining that the stone dust cut his lungs. Ma nagged and quoted Scripture; Pa drank and quoted Ingersoll. Admah, from those days when he was cradled in a soapbox, knew Pa as an evil liver.

Secretly he was on Pa's side. The free-thinking, stone-cutter, much older than his wife, had been one of those old-time printers who read and digested the galleys they set. In the quarries he dressed stone with the air of a philosopher, the monotonous thump of his mallet giving cadence to his thoughts. Besides being an infidel he was something of a socialist—but the latter tendency was only imperfectly expressed, never practiced. He despised the vulgar aversion to the basis upon which Ma and Pa quarreled oftenest.

At the age of eight Admah Holtz employed an English far more urban than that of his mother or Jo, who was anaemic, pimply and unambitious. Admah was no purist, but his conversation was remarkably free from the rustic drawl of a rural people who have met and interbred on the neutral border of two uncongenial States.

So on the morning they crossed the bridge, drawn by old John.

"Admah!" The wagon came so suddenly to a stop that the shy dreamer fell to his rightful place, level with the front seat.

"Yes, Ma."

"Is the gravestone ridin' good?"

He peered over an edge of the pile to see six inches of handsome marble slab projecting beyond the tail board. This mortuary relic, which once had marked the grave of a fallen pioneer, had served its time as a doorstone on the Holtz farm. Later Pa Holtz employed the tools of his trade, smoothed away every trace of its old inscription, polished it and handed it over to Ma as a convenient slab upon whose hard, cold surface doughnuts could be rolled and home-made peppermints cooled to the proper consistency. Like John the horse, this unmarked headstone had its share in the game which Ma Holtz was playing with Fate.

"It looks all right to me," decided Admah, after a moment's inspection. "Geo ap." This from Ma Holtz, together with a whack from a willow switch across old John's shabby flank. The wagon jolted on. Below the

Falls the boy could see a yellowish gargle of water, slow and dangerous. They found Pa Holtz there four days after he disappeared. Everybody had thought it a good thing for Ma; he had been a druggist and a drunkard and a free thinker. But Admah had always been a little on Pa's side. Corn whisky never made him cross. He stood a lot of hammering, just like the surface of a rock quarry that resists silently, then comes down with a crash.

Admah looked down at the gurgling water below the Falls. His eyes filled with tears, as they always did when he thought of Pa for a long time. And this was strange, because Pa had

been a bad man, a neglectful husband and an indifferent father.

Ma Holtz had scarcely set Pa's green rocker opposite the voiceless melodeon in the parlor when she laid the gravestone over a kitchen table and began making peppermint drops for the strange people whom she had so suddenly adopted to be her own.

Jo, whom she called her "good boy" because he lacked sufficient initiative to take him far in mischief, she chose to be her assistant. Admah she appointed salesman.

A feature of Dutch Hill, second only to the Soap Factory, was the Car Barn. Here a troupe of jolly rovers, who in the languors of Spring

changed greasy blue coats to denim shirts, stabled their mules at night, and by day rumbled along the tracks in small yellow bobtail cabs, grandfathers of the fabled Toonerville Trolley. Eddie Stek, wise in the world's ways, told remarkable stories of these car conductors who, according to Eddie, were piratical by instinct and

wealthy to a man. Eddie himself had witnessed their evil deeds one day when he hid in a sycamore grove at the lonely end of the line; there he had seen a buccanier in blue denim take down the glass money box and shake a handful of nickels into his brown straw hat.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

THE NEBBS

PLEASE BE MERCIFUL.

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



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

Barney Google and Spark Plug

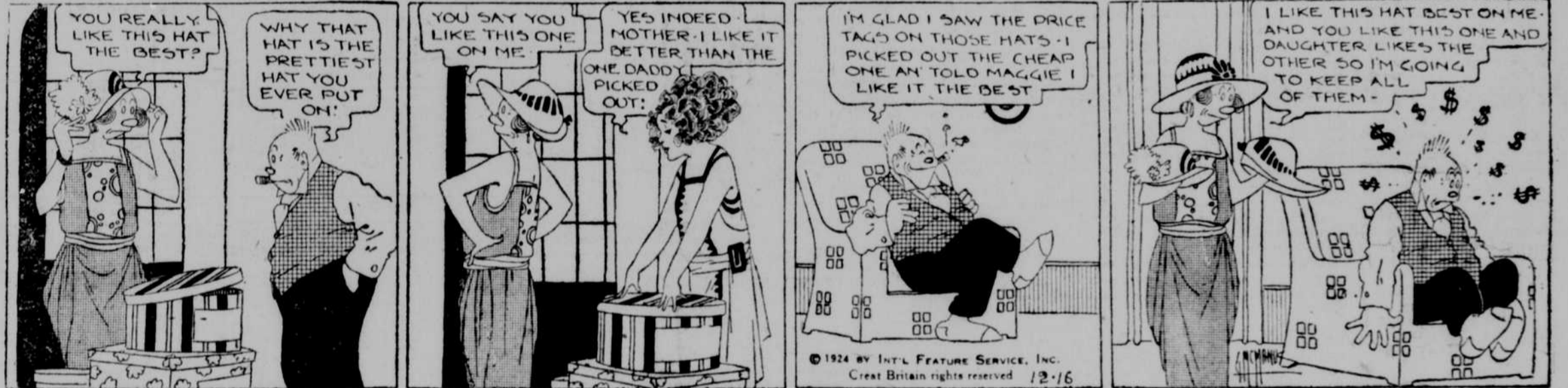


Drawn for The Omaha Bee by McManus (Copyright 1924)

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 Hoban (Copyright 1924)



JERRY ON THE JOB

LOOKS LIKE A COLD WINTER.

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hersfield (Copyright 1924)



By Briggs ABIE THE AGENT

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hersfield

New York - Day by Day -

By O. O. MINTYRE.

New York, Dec. 15.—The most expensive jail in America and probably the worst in the Ludlow St. Jail—home of the famous "Alimony club." Husbands who refuse to pay wives alimony could be boarded at the finest hotel in town cheaper than in the Ludlow.

Prisoners in the Eveslee Eden are nearly always men of money. They do pratee much as they please even to attending the Broadway theaters with friendly keepers. Ludlow is a shabby building hemmed in by beetling and rickety tenements.

The jail was built by Boss Tweed in 1861 and as an ironic touch he spent his last days in it for his participation in municipal graft. Ever since a sort of curse has hung over old Ludlow. It has been the target for a hundred papers.

Why it has not been torn down remains a mystery. The site is worth more than \$300,000. The upkeep costs about \$50,000 a year. Never at one time are there more than a dozen prisoners there. To minister to these are a warden and his deputy, eleven keepers, three cleaners, two engineers, two cooks, a physician, a matron with assistant and a laundress.

It used to be that men whose matrimonial barks went on the rocks and were hauled down by courts for big alimony could go to Ludlow and stay six months and a future payments were wiped out. But the law is changed. Those who won't pay alimony can be returned there indefinitely.

For a man with money Ludlow is a fine place for a rest. He has the freedom of the big yard. He can order all the delicacies of the season, smoke the best cigars, read all the newspapers and listen to books and even be entertained by the radio.

He also has the satisfaction of knowing he is saving his weekly alimony. The old jail is so much of a joke that it is always the topic of travesty in revues and it has been ridiculed in hundreds of song lyrics and newspaper stories.

Several theatrical producers are waging war on theatrical dancing schools. It is the custom of many of them to give prospective pupils the idea they can be placed in any school they like, if they take the full course of instruction. As a matter of fact the number of dancers selected from these schools by producers is comparatively nil. There are at least 40 of these schools now operating on the fringe of the Rialto district. A few are sincere but most are not.

An apartment hotel for bachelors tried the European system of collecting tips for three months and then abandoned it because of dissatisfaction. The plan was to add 10 per cent of the amount of the weekly bill to be distributed among the servants. It was found, however that those who gave a few gratuities on the side got the best service and other patrons complained.

They tell of a man leaving a place near the custom house taking an envelope from his pocket and looking at something therein. Then he swooned. He had achieved a good passport picture.

The famous Fratellini—the clown brothers of the Cirque Medrano in Paris—are coming to America soon. Each one of the brothers has children who are being taught the art of mime. The great-grandfathers before them were clowns.

(Copyright, 1924.)

Oh, Man!

