

THE GOLDEN BED

By WALLACE IRWIN.

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

(Continued From Saturday)

"Tessa, Kurren!"

By now Admah had reached the point of intoxication where one imagines a being singled out by Bacchus to be immune from alcoholic poisoning. Cool and sober, in his own estimation, he felt through the evening streets, philosophizing on the things that made him sick. Grand Avenue had turned itself into a little shabby Broadway, electric light signs blinking on and off or twisting round like illuminated garter snakes. All across the face of a movie palace a scarecrow in a riding boot was guiding her fiery mustang in a gap from cliff to cliff. Goofer's Radio Store was going full blast; something with a pop and a twang in it was sounding, in passing, like, "Ba-a-a-y, I got the twitzy-titzy hoola-bla-a-a!"

An Electrical Wizard had devoted his great mind to inventing those ear-splitting and eye-tweeters and brain-adders. Well, they would people up, kept the poor old world from sticking in the mud. This last night he had been advertising in good time, advertising, if he hadn't advertised, where would he be today? Where would he be? With a jerk of the head he came to a sharp corner and came to sufficiently to ask himself: "Where was he now? His wife gone, his credit gone. What was it Flora Lee had said about his hands? She didn't like them to touch her. And that damned Frenchman—Sav—what was it—Savarac. . . . What sort of hands had he? Had Admah been like some terrible ape to her, annoying her with his big, strong hands, or had he learned to smile like a doll? Like a doll? Like an angel? Something so shining, so far above him that he was flattered when she looked down at him to let him know that she felt his worship. . . .

God! Why hadn't he killed O'Neill the first time he saw him leering at her over a glass-topped table? . . .

The Ford stopped suddenly beside a deserted dock.

Between its gentle banks the River stole away, calm and melancholy but with a sheet of stars in canoes and rafts; like parasites that dwell on leaves that had been swirled against that bank to fasten on the living. His hands are craved and to devour. Men had multiplied the River's banks to an ugly pattern of civilization and cities had polluted its waters; yet under the stars all looked down on the pier, lonely and depressed, he could feel the divinity of the stream, its power and its glory. He had been the River's child indeed. His first memory was a ride behind old John down to the ferry wharf on the other bank. . . .

The other bank. . . . Just by that span of waters had his life been changed; he could faint lights in the trees and imagine that they came from the settlement where he was born. He might have remained to improve the soil and to marry one of the neighbors' girls. Would he have been happier? Pa Holtz hadn't been happy. Men who drink alone out of

stone jugs and deny God—possibly for very fear of God's wrath—weren't happy. No, that wasn't the solution. Forward a wharf downstream the little River Ferry was plying her way. An ugly thing by daylight, under the quiet stars she was a royal barge, lit for a festival. Her mast light twinkled daintly on high like the jeweled tip of a wand. Presently she bumped the wharf and began the noisy business of disgorging passengers. Roustabouts shouted, crates banged, hogsheads bumped, a woman cried along the plank. My the klop-klop-klop of a solitary horse, it might have been the sound of Old John's poor tired hoofs, blundering along his no more knowledge of life, meaning than dwell in Admah Holtz that night of his undoing.

The fight ain't over, not by a long shot, he decided, and brought his hat down on the plank. My the liquor's dyin' in me, and I reckon that's a good thing. I'll go back to town and get a room at the Hamilton. I've got a thing or two to say out in meeting tomorrow. I'll put a crimp in the Judas Iscariot club. Too bad, though, that Atterbury saw me comin' out of the Pickwick that way. But he can't do a thing without me. His hands are craved and to just where. And Flora Lee—pshaw, she's had a tantrum, she'll be back. But I'm going to shoot that man dead.

He had half scrambled to his feet and would have arisen had not an every aspect of the water, directly under the pier caught his eye and fascinated him with superstitious conjectures. Under the stars it seemed animate, like a drowning man, tattered and gray-haired, beating himself to death against the rough timber. Admah had opened his dry mouth to call when he saw the true cause of his alarm. Just a wave from the ferry boat, striking the piles. . . .

But it had given him a start, and with it an awful thought had come. Pa Holtz hadn't fallen into the river, just by accident, because he was drunk. He'd been drunk all right, but the preacher who preached the sermon and the neighbors who had come to shake Ma by the hand hadn't told or right. Admah saw it clearly now; the steep bank with the eddy current and Pa Holtz, smoking his pipe, waiting for darkness. That's the way to clean the slate—when you can't make head or tail of the figures, just rub 'em out. Fascinated by this easy thought Admah crawled on all fours to the very edge of the wharf and poised there an instant like a gargoyle. . . .

"Hey, mister!"

The challenge, thin and drawing, brought him nervously upright. Something twisted and shaggy like a scarecrow approached him through the darkness. . . .

"Mister, ef ye ain't keertful ye're liable to drop off," persisted the thin voice, which sounded as though it came from a body without lungs. . . .

"I reckon so," agreed Admah, guiltily. "Where do you get your liquor?" asked Admah thickly. He recognized the man as one of the water rats who spend their summer in leaky huts along the flats and are flooded out with the river-rise in spring. . . .

"Ain't tellin'." The water rat blinking his little oozy eyes in Admah's face. . . .

They plunged ahead through a sort of alcoholic fog. Through coal yards, past warehouses, up one alley, down another, round, ridiculous white-washed corners that smell of open sewage; it was as though a corpse had arisen to guide Admah into some unclean mischief or to show him another troll-dance as Peter Gunt witnessed when he threw away his soul. At last the water rat stopped and put his hand on Admah's arm, causing him to wince away. Suddenly he realized how Flora Lee must have felt when he touched her. He was aware of a crooked door with light shining through its warped top, Rap-rap, and a terrifying voice spat out, "Who there?"

"Jes Zeb, Molly. Me an' a feller."

The door opened cautiously and a fat, evil old woman stood framed in sooty light against a background of discordant sounds, a hushed growling, as though her den contained wild beasts that had been beaten and scared.

"Come awn in an' s'het the do', she commanded, her face like a bloody. . . .

"Take it away! Over there!" He pointed to a vacant table in a remote corner. The scarecrow, creaking out a series of sounds that might have been either thanks or curses, vanished into the jumble. . . .

Admah laughed and took a drink that blazed his way down his gullet. The room seemed to be full of chuckles, tortured, dizzy, knowing chuckles. Old Gray Label, which Moll had proclaimed as rare, was common enough. There was a bottle on every table, and around each faces grimaced, dodered, blinked. Now and then one of the animals would let out a howl, to be suppressed by a smart from his keeper. Two negroes wavered, fuzzily outlined like some badly printed engraving. Admah had taken a chair; then lazily he began to realize that half the men in the room were negroes. . . . He saw a large hairy mole on the woman's goiter, her neck as she leaned down to slam a bottle on the table, mouthing something that sounded like, "Reel ole Gray Label, mister. Not much of that stuff left!"

Two tumblers, which she had been concealing under her apron, came down beside the bottle. . . .

"He'll keep you company," she explained with a ghostly smile toward the specter named Zeb. Then, her attention turned to a quartet at the other end of the room, "Ise, you nig-gahs; I tole you oncet an' I ain't g'int tell you agin'."

Already Zeb had reached hungrily for the bottle. He poured his drink and blew full to the brim and was raising it to his hairy lips when Admah spurned him like a bloody. . . .

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Presently he stopped rattling, thrust back his head and slid under the table. Nobody noticed it. A fight had started in another corner. A back door opened quietly and some body was thrown out. To Admah it was all a picture, or a scrap of some fascinating nightmare to which he had bound himself by drinking with the Bad People. . . .

Hurray! He didn't mind the liquor, after the second gulp. This was the life, thought he. None of your high-toned clubs with critical eyes peering out to count your drinks and decide you weren't quite a gentleman? What had it ever brought to Admah Holtz except headaches and heart-aches and cheap compliments from people who stuck out their tongues behind his back? But he'd show 'em again. What time was it? He found his watch and studied the dial, but couldn't quite make out. Anyhow, it was getting late and he ought to go home. Wouldn't do to go into the Annual Meeting with rum on his breath. Atterbury would be there, Atterbury, the stiff-backed, clammy old fool. Never you mind, some day Admah Holtz would be sitting in Atterbury's chair up in the Principal's Building. . . .

The room was going round and round. . . . Wicked, interesting faces. . . . Scraps of song like rags torn from cheap garments. . . . Walpurgis Night when corpses of hanged men came up from the ground to dance with varlocks, trolls, vampires, night hags and those soul-sick, unclassified devils with swollen bodies, pig snouts and the scaly legs of unclean birds. . . .

This was the life. . . . The change-ling who appeared where Admah Holtz had sat arose boisterously and addressed his companion devils. He wanted all men to be free and equal, or something like that. . . . No snobs or high-toned swells to sneer in your face, but just good fellows. . . .

"Shut up or git out!" old Moll was bawling at him, having swum into his ken out of nothingness. . . .

"I reckon I'll git out," agreed Admah in an instant of quiet. As the sky shows momentarily through a storm's blackness he looked through his drunkenness and saw clear light shapes began to move slowly. . . .

Moll gave him a shove from behind and he stumbled on the infernal steps leading to the exit. She helped him up, and an instant later he was out in the alley, a sudden wind blowing across his face. He clutched at a post to save himself from another fall; then out of the shadows black shapes began to move slowly, stealthily they closed in. Was it part of his wicked dream? A great hand gripped his shoulder. It was all so dreadfully quiet. Admah had opened his mouth to shout, but no sound came. He struck out blindly, felt his knuckles cracking against flesh and bone. Then they were on him and he went down and was blotted out. . . .

How hard and hot the pillow felt against his ear! Without opening his eyes he turned over, clicked his furry tongue and reached for the thermos bottle which always stood on

his bed's table. But the table wasn't there. He coughed, careering his forehead which seemed to beat with a thousand hammers, making a noise like the T. & P. shops going full blast. The T. & P. . . .

He opened one eye and looked painfully across the room. Queer. Everything was turned around. He didn't remember that funny little door in his bedroom, or that dog-eared art calendar, showing a bold-eyed virgin with a white kitten. And what had happened to the walls? They had been unaccountably covered with some smudgy looking paper that had cracked in places. He opened both eyes and tried to sit up, but sick ness overcame him. . . .

Then he sought methodically to retrace his steps, much as the lost huntsman counts the trees, hoping thereby to recover his trail. In the first place, this wasn't any room he had ever been in before. Nor any room in the Hamilton. He began to remember jumbled noises in a terrible place up an alley; a negro man had been preaching about Jonah; an old woman with a goiter had sold him something she called whisky—Old Gray Label. On the way home some body, or something, had jumped at him out of the dark. . . .

What time was it? Painfully turning his head he described a wisted pile of bills, his knife and some small change on a cracked marble bureau. No sign of his watch. . . .

"Hey!" he moaned, closing his eyes. "What's the game here? Hey?"

From somewhere a door opened, footsteps reproached. . . .

"Well, t'kin' a brace, Ad?" asked

a pleasant voice with a pronounced Yankee accent. "Here, try this broom, old son." A blue sleeve with a strip, so bold that it hurt the invalid's eyes, was passed across the bed and a white hand, luxuriously ringed, held a fizzy glass, Admah drank thirstily, and dozed again. Then he awoke and sat bolt upright. The details of his past life were passing before him. But he was recognizable as Elmer Hemingway, usher, lunchwagon promoter, socialist and gentleman adventurer. . . .

"What the—?" began Admah pleasantly. "That's just what I says last night, I ginned Elmer. I come down the alley with my hand on my mind but my eyes, was passed across the bed and a white hand, luxuriously ringed, held a fizzy glass, Admah drank thirstily, and dozed again. Then he awoke and sat bolt upright. The details of his past life were passing before him. But he was recognizable as Elmer Hemingway, usher, lunchwagon promoter, socialist and gentleman adventurer. . . .

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Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess (Copyright 1925)

New York --Day by Day--

By O. O. MINTYRE.

New York, Feb. 8.—A page from the diary of a modern Samuel Pepys: Early out and to breakfast with Mrs. Porter and we ate but little in our zeal to think out a silly word for a crossword puzzle. A pity, too, for he paid the check. . . .

Home where came a box of avocados from R. Reeder in Miami and I at my stint until William Boyd, the play actor, dropped in to talk of this that and the other. . . .

In the late afternoon to walk with my wife and to see a brave picture in a gallery and I was for buying it, which would have made me more than bankrupt. . . .

To dinner with Bill Edgington and Levin Cobb came down from the floor above and later came Earl Carroll and all in high humor at a story Cobb told about a mule skinner. So home and to bed. . . .

Along Broadway she is known as "Rubberneck Rose." She is one of the many colorless creatures who sit in the lantern-hung sight seeing wagons as a decoy for other passengers. She sits for hours knitting or reading a book and when the "man wagon" fills she steps out and waits for it to come back for the next load. . . .

"Rubberneck Rose" is paid \$3 a day. Never does she feel the romance of exploring the Bowery, Chinatown and Coney Island. Some they say have interesting pasts. One a former chorus girl toast of the town. Another a dancer of repute. . . .

It is the drabest of all occupations in Flash alley. They hear the barker megaphone: "Fast car going right out! See the wickedness of Chinatown, the slums of the Bowery! Fast car going right out!" And "Rubberneck Rose" only hears and goes nowhere. . . .

There are about 50 "Rubberneck Roses" on Broadway and side streets. They seem to be dreadfully worried with life—the most jaded of all those who fill the world of Broadway. . . .

This special delivery letter pops on my desk as I write. It is unsigned and reads: "Who cares what you think about New York? You are the outstanding joke of the literary world, a pig-headed country lout who thinks wearing spats and a cane make a gentleman. Nobody will remember you a week after the Fool Killer does his duty." . . .

The anonymous gentleman is right in every particular save the "pig-headed." I resent that. Those who know me best say the head is of solid ivory. . . .

Columbia students have a rollicking time on the subway travestying yells of their school. One goes: Baseball! Football! Swimming in de tanks! . . .

We've got money, but we keep it in de banks. Collected Colch. O. O. H. And here is another: Hooray! Hooray! Ve von! Ve von! Ve lost? Ve cheated!

It is a shocking thing to observe that Vivian Burnett, the author's son, and the original of the famous character of Little Lord Fauntleroy, is bald-headed. Mr. Burnett is a devoted patron of the Broadway theater.

Somebody Is Always Taking the Joy Out of Life

HA HA HA HA! GREAT! BELIEVE ME THIS SHOW IS A HIT - I DON'T KNOW WHEN I'VE SEEN SUCH GOOD ENTERTAINMENT

I'VE SEEN SOME CLEVER SHOWS BUT THAT ONE LAST NIGHT WAS A CORNER - NOW I'LL SEE WHAT THE CRITICS HAVE TO SAY - UNDOUBTEDLY A SUCCESS

"THE FIRST ACT WAS STUPID - THE SECOND ACT A CRIME - THE THIRD WAS INSANITY - THE MANAGEMENT SHOULD BE ARRESTED FOR PLAYING A JOKE ON THE UNSUSPECTING PUBLIC"

IF YOU WANT TO GET PROMOTED TO AN ENGINEER - I GOTTA TAKE AN EXAM TO SEE IF YOU'RE SMART ENOUGH TO HOLD DOWN THE JOB

ASK ME

NOB SUPPOSE YOU'RE DRIVING A LOCOMOTIVE OVER A BRIDGE AT 60 MILES AN HOUR -

WELL THE OLD LOCOMOTIVE WOPS OFF THE BRIDGE AND DIVES INTO THE LAKE -

YEAR?

I GOT THAT.

WHAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU DO?

I ASK TO GET TRANSFERRED TO INDOOR WORK

VERY GOOD

THE ONLY PERSON HE FOOLED WITH THE SMALL-POX SCARE WAS HIS WIFE FANNY

YESTERDAY RUDY GOT UP EARLY AND WASHED THE SPOTS OFF HIS FACE

OH, RUDY, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO THE OFFICE? YOU'D BETTER STAY HOME A FEW DAYS - YOU MIGHT HAVE A RELAPSE

NO, SWEET-HEART, I CAN'T AFFORD TO LIE IN BED - MY BUSINESS NEEDS ME AND I'LL GO IF I HAVE TO DRAG ONE LEG AFTER THE OTHER! I'M FULL OF AMBITION - I SIMPLY CAN'T LIE IN BED WHEN THERE'S WORK TO BE DONE

I NEVER FELT BETTER PHYSICALLY IN MY LIFE AND IT'S A SHAME TO FOOL SUCH A TRUSTING, LOVING WIFE - I TRIED TO FOOL HER BROTHER BUT I COULDN'T - HE'S GOT SUCH A SLOW WORKING MIND THAT IF YOU WANT TO FOOL HIM ON THE FIRST OF APRIL YOU'VE GOT TO START NEW YEAR'S DAY

POOR RUDY - HE LOOKS AWFUL BUT HE JUST WON'T GIVE UP - I WISH I COULD ERNIE HAD HALF OF HIS AMBITION I'M AFRAID ERNIE WILL NEVER AMOUNT TO MUCH UNLESS THEY START OPENING BUSINESS HOUSES AT NOON

BRINGING UP FATHER

THIS QUARREL BETWEEN MAGGIE AND DAUGHTER IS GETTING ON ME NERVES - I WISH THEY'D SPEAK UP MAKE UP

AH, THAT'S MAGGIE'S VOICE I KNEW SHE'D BE SMART AN' GIVE IN

I'M SORRY WILL YOU FORGIVE ME DEAR?

IT WAS ALL MY FAULT - IT'S ALL TOO SILLY FOR WORDS

DO COME OVER AND BRING YOUR HUSBAND - I WANT TO APOLOGIZE TO YOU

RATS!

JERRY ON THE JOB

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WHAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU DO?

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VERY GOOD

THIS GUY KNOWS THE ANSWERS

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WELL THE OLD LOCOMOTIVE WOPS OFF THE BRIDGE AND DIVES INTO THE LAKE -

YEAR?

I GOT THAT.

WHAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU DO?

I ASK TO GET TRANSFERRED TO INDOOR WORK

VERY GOOD

ABIE THE AGENT

NOO, I'M TREPPED - HERE COMES THAT PHOOY MINSK - I HEAR HE'S LOOKING FOR ME!

CAN YOU LOAN ME A HUNDRED DOLLARS, ABE?

THAT'S HEAVY MONEY, MINSK - WELL, COME TO MY OFFICE AND WE'LL TALK IT OVER!!

IF YOU'LL GIVE ME THE HUNDRED DOLLARS, I'M PRETTY SURE I'LL NEVER HAVE TO BORROW AGAIN!!

I SUPPOSE YOU NEED THIS FOR SOMETHING IMPORTANT!

YES, I FIGURED OUT THAT AT MY AGE, IT'S TIME I STARTED A BANK ACCOUNT!!

THE NEBBES

RUDY - WELL! WELL! WELL!

BRINGING UP FATHER

JERRY ON THE JOB

THIS GUY KNOWS THE ANSWERS

ABIE THE AGENT

THE NEBBES

RUDY - WELL! WELL! WELL!

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