

"THE GOLDEN BED"

By WALLACE IRWIN. Produced as a Paramount Picture by Cecile B. DeMille From a Screen Adaptation by Jeanie McPherson. (Copyright, 1924)

(Continued from Yesterday.) A cold rain was blowing up from the river on one of the monotonous evenings when he strolled home from supper at a cafeteria—he had given up eating with Jo's family. Up in his room he lit the gas, took off his shoes and undressed the Evening Democrat's pink sporting edition—the gossip of scores and records held his attention without causing him to think. With a sort of vacant elation he traced his pipe between his teeth and his feet against the bed. "Tat-tat-tat! The door panel shook with persistent little blows which he identified as Myrtle's. Since he had turned the key against just such an importunate assault, he sat perfectly still and drew, "Well?"

"Speaks in the store?" he thought she said, but it was not until her loose heels had tapped their way down the stairs that he had pieced the sounds together and decided that she had been trying to say: "Miss Peake's in the store."

He took his time about putting on his shoes, brushing his hair and finding the best soiled collar in his bureau drawer. He even thought of stopping to shave, but abandoned so elaborate a plan. He couldn't leave Margaret long in the company of Jo and Myrtle.

He found her standing alone by the door, who were nesting many motions over a hot chocolate for a new customer. Margaret's back was turned at first; then he saw her troubled face.

"Admah, I've got something to tell you," she began just as though they met and talked every day, as they used to do. "I know there's been great trouble, Admah. But at a time like this you've got to forget a lot of things. Only—"

"Is it about Flora Lee?" he asked thickly. She nodded. "Yes. She's very ill. I don't think she'll—"

"Where is she?" was his first natural question. "At our old house—on Inness Street."

"On Inness Street?" "Somebody rang me up this afternoon and said she was there. I've called in Charlie Furness, and he's doing all he can. But she scarcely knows anybody. She seems to think—"

"Come on," he growled and followed her through the rain to her sprightly little car. The kale had taken possession of the town, sweeping pedestrians from the streets, disputing the approach of every wheeled thing that splashed

could of knocked me down with a feather when I seen who it was. Some square birds blow in here once in a while, Miss Peake—not that this ain't a respectable boardin' house—but never before have I saw a real lady like that, at that time of night, askin' to be let in.

"I thought at first she'd made a mistake. But she ought to know the house, oughtn't she? Course I let 'er in. I ast 'er what she wanted, for she was wet to the skin, and she didn't so much as gimme the time of day. Walks up the stairs, proud as a duchess, and went straight into the best front room—you know, that round one—and when I looks in she had went to bed."

"It was all right, I had Minnie take off 'er clothes and put on one of 'er nighties. But I don't reckon on the Duchess—excuse me, I mean Mrs. Holt—knowed a thing that was goin' on. 'Til she dicked vamps, tho'ly. 'Til she saw 'em took that party befo'. A bad cold after a big party in a low dress. It's lung fever. She was hot as fire when I touched 'er, 'er head, 'er neck, 'er face. 'Til she shored some queer things when they're that way. But it did give me a start, 'er founch up to that bedroom jest like it belonged to her. 'Til she—"

"Hush!" commanded Margaret. The door of the Oval Chamber was open a crack, and through the aperture she could hear the heavy breathing of a distempred lungs. Somewhere in the background ad-

Admah Holt hovered, a bent and clumsy shadow; there was an alertness in him, too, as if he were crouching for a spring. For Admah Margaret Peake was not there. Even in the face of his closing tragedy she felt that and experienced a pang to know that she counted for so little that she could be an unconsidered witness like the walls and the windows of the decaying room.

From a stark wall fixture, which she remembered, had been concealed under one of Flora Lee's Venetian scones, an unshaded bulb cast its frank light on the bare ugliness of the Oval Chamber. Beside an infamous brass bed crouched Admah Holt, groping tenderly for one of the paper-thin hands which rested on a mussed cotton quilt. On her pillow Flora Lee struggled desperately for breath. Her face was waxen, framed in the lovely hair which clustered about her head, gliding the drab pillowcase. She had lost her beauty, that was true. . . . But Margaret wondered. Did Admah, who had never seen her as she was, still think her beautiful? Probably, for there was adoration in his eyes, and his voice was very gentle as he called her name, time after time.

Her head was motionless, but her lips had curved to a mysterious smile. Then there was a long, agonizing silence. Huddled beside the rickety bed that seemed an offense to her loved and pampered body, Admah mumbled incoherent things.

"When will the doctor be back?" whispered Margaret to the colored girl Minnie when she came stopping by. "He says pretty soon," replied Minnie, giggling softly with embarrassment.

Then Margaret returned to her corner and waited. What a room! Vandal hands had defaced it so that nothing but its shape remained to show where loveliness had been. The walls were stripped of their brocade and recovered with a gaudy rose-patterned paper, already streaked and soiled. A square of carpet, too dusty to reveal its original design, ran cat-cornered under the brass bed. A sheet-iron gas stove, smelling villainously, had thrust its pipe through a zinc-covered hole where Flora Lee's dark little mantelpiece with its bluish pilasters and flowery panels had once supported fragile ornaments of spandrels.

Span glances. . . . Margaret gazed at the little panting creature on the bed and wondered if she would ever rouse and speak to Admah. She had called for him that afternoon. Margaret wondered why, and wished that she could have saved him this agony.

Why was the doctor gone so long? Or was it long? Then she felt an aching in her throat, as if a great arch had arisen there. She was going to cry. Was it for her sister with whom she had romped up and down those halls? Her sister, who by some animal instinct, had returned to die in the only earthly spot she

had ever loved? Or was it for Admah Holt, whom she longed to lift up and strengthen? Out of her reverie she heard him calling again. "Flora! It's me, honey. Don't you know me, honey?"

The dying woman heard. Unexpectedly she opened her eyes, wide and dilated. She turned her head and gave him a smile so soft that it seemed to color her cheeks and re-soften her beauty.

"Oh," she drawled sleepily, as if she had just been awakened in the morning. "I'm mighty glad—so glad, Darlin'—Darlin'—"

"I'm here, my sweet," he whispered, caressing her little hands. "And—and I sort of thought you'd left me—"

Minutes passed, and at last he came out, the look of exaltation still upon him. Yet tears were streaming down his cheeks. "She didn't say another word," he

whispered. "But she's let me know. You heard her. She didn't want me to quit her—wanted me to love her. She couldn't have talked that way—"

"Not unless she loved you," replied Margaret.

And with that precious lie she saved him. For in Flora Lee's delicious words her sister had read quite a different meaning from that which had cheered poor Admah's heart. It was not to him that those endearments had been spoken, but to the worthless man who had played with her and gone his way, her stolen jewels in his pocket.

"And I sort of thought she forgave me, didn't you, Margaret?" he asked brokenly.

"For what, my dear? For what?" she cried, and gathered his poor, misguided head to her breast.

Outside the King's pavilion crouched the young David, dozing and waiting as he leaned upon his harp, content with the knowledge of a song that was to blow rich dreams back into a vacant mind. Inside the heavy curtains a stark form loomed, a shadow blacker than the blackness, eyes smouldering dully below the great smile in his furled lips. This St. Paul, fighting for the spirits that had swooned on all but gone.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

THE NEBBS



LOVE ME AND THE DOUGH IS MINE.



Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess



New York --Day by Day--

O. O. MINYRE. New York, Feb. 10.—One of the most impressive phases of New York's poverty is its buoyancy. Poverty as a rule sinks to voiceless despair, but here it seems to be doing a kind of color and noise. It shrieks and is blatant.

London's East End is comparable to New York's East Side. But in London the streets are empty and the homes are depressingly cheerless. The people you see seem shabby and sleek. And they sink along in a beaten, despondent manner.

The East Side is always ringing with shouts and laughter. Children romp with as gay abandon as may be found anywhere. Hurdy gurdies are jangling. The keepers of tiny shops seem well fed and opulent. There is a community spirit of friendliness.

The most solemn note of all is the Jew with the long whiskers, trousers hanging about his feet, small derby clasped over his ears and hands clasped tightly across his back. He walks along looking only at the ground and dreams.

The reason of course, is that in London they have little hope of rising above the dreariness. In America they are filled with hope. They have seen thousands go from pushcarts to ownerships of big stores uptown. From tenement homes to Riverside Drive apartments.

There is more to amuse on the East Side than any other haven of squalor in the world. There are moving picture shows to every block. Cheap dance halls. Public swimming pools and playgrounds. Coffee houses and cafes with good music.

There are public libraries and free schools of all kinds. Sweet shops are disappearing and no worker feels he is harassed to some job. There is always another job waiting for him just around the corner.

BRINGING UP FATHER



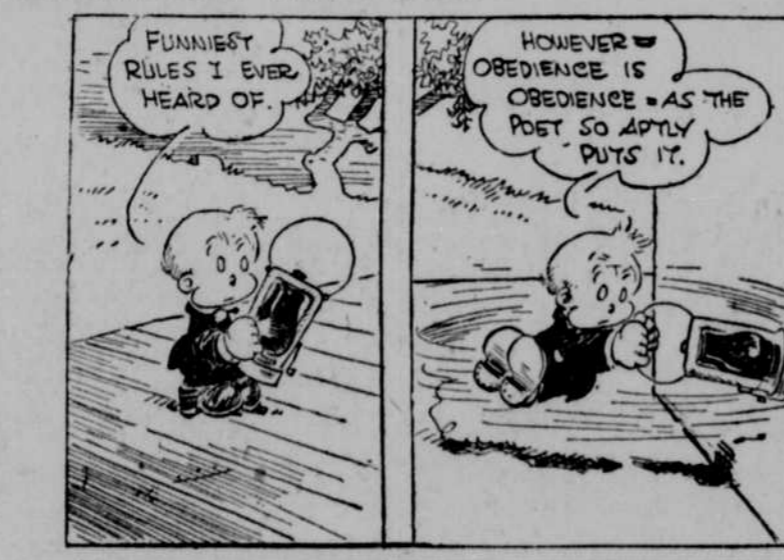
JERRY ON THE JOB



IT ALL SEEMS SO SILLY



There's at Least One in Every Office



By Briggs ABIE THE AGENT



Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield



While you were having that fine blizzard up here -



According to Percentage.



Did you read about the cashier of the Acme National Bank running away with fifty thousand dollars in currency??

