

BIGFOOT JOE

And Others

Figments of Fancy, Written
Hand-set in Type, &
Printed, by

H BEDFORD-JONES

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Done At Lakeport

MCMXX

To The KING

Most Gracious Sovereign,

I beg leave to approach Your Royal Person with an humble Offering, glean'd from long acquaintance with Your Majesty's subjects. A Work, which owes it's Rise, it's Progress, and Completion to this Source, is hence with all Humility proffered to Your Sacred Majesty. That Providence may long preserve the blessings of Your Reign to this Profession and Nation, is the constant prayer of,

May it please Your Majesty,

Your Majesty's most humble and devoted
Servant and Subject,

H. BEDFORD-JONES

To HUMBUG, Rex et Imperator.

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BIGFOOT JOE

In a town of the north there dwelt three men apart from their fellows. One of these men was a Philosopher, one was a Poet, and one was a Painter. These lived and wrought, while all the folk looked up to them from afar off. There was a halfbreed called Bigfoot Joe who hewed in a lumber camp, so that the folk knew nothing of him.

The Philosopher penned a mystical work on the philosophy of the woods, and he grew known in the world. The Poet wrote stanzas filled with the music of the pines and cedars, and his verse brought high wage. The Painter limned a single hemlock, instinct with the breath of the lonely forest; and it found fame. But, deep in the woods, trees crashed down and the unknown lumberjack lopped off their branches.

Now it so happened that a certain Great Author, having heard of the famous Three, journeyed across the seas to visit them; for he was an unwearied seeker after the truth that is in life.

The Artists, receiving him as a brother, expounded to him the philosophy and rhythm and tonal harmony of Nature; but the Great Author warmed himself in their steam-heated studios and said little.

One day the Artists took the distinguished guest on a visit to the woods. They came to camp in time to lunch with the jacks, and the visitor was seated next Bigfoot Joe. Naturally observant, he noted that the halfbreed, coming from the woods bare-headed, flung an expressive glance at the thick furs of the Philosopher.

During their meal the Painter apologized for the coarse fare --- the beans and bread, the creamless coffee; but the halfbreed gorged hugely, and drank his molasses-sweet coffee with gusto. The Poet was disgusted by the table manners of the jacks, for a bread-fight arose amid jests and curses; but the halfbreed deftly caught a crust and devoured it.

Later, the visitors went to the woods and watched the work. Presently they came to

Bigfoot Joe; the others would have passed on but the Great Author paused and spoke.

"B'jou," replied the halfbreed, wiping his brow and staring at the stranger.

"Is the work hard?"

"It is my work -- I am strong, me! You little man, wear four eyes." His gaze swept in contempt over the visitor. "Dis tree, she's be my brudder; she's be tall, strong like me. 'Bon!' she's say. 'You good lumberjack, you Joe!'" And his axe bit a deep chord of assent from the heart of the pine.

The Great Author perceived that here was a philosopher, who drew from the woods his one rule: "Work! You are here; so it is evident that you were to be a lumberjack -- but be careful to be a good lumberjack!"

The halfbreed was a poet, for he could read the secret heart of the woods and make response from his own. He was a painter, whose brush was the axe; with that brush he limned greet canvases, whose truth all woodsmen loved instantly.

The Philosopher groped after his soul, the Painter strove to express his soul, and the Poet tried to clothe his soul in words. The halfbreed, caring nothing about soul, struck fire from the spirit of the Great Author, who knew

what a plain thing the soul really is; this, in fact, was why he was a Great Author.

And so. when he had returned again to his own country, the Great Author neglected to write about the famous Artists. Instead, he penned a wonderful tale about a halfbreed Indian, and the world cried out in rapture.

But the three Artists bitterly termed him an ignorant fakir.

From the "Sonnet" of Felix Arvers

Within my soul there lies a secret, thieved
Eternally from Love, that knows no sleep.
All innocent is she whose name lies deep
Enshrined upon my heart, nor has she grieved
With love's kind sorrow; naught have I achieved
Though alway at her side. Thus shall I keep
My secret, while I live. How might I reap
Rewards unsought, when none can be received?

For she, to whom God gave a soul so tender,
Goes calmly on her way, and will not hear
The murmured homage Love would gladly render;
So pure is she, so quiet and austere!
Scanning my lines, "Who can this angel be?"
She smiling asks --- and fails herself to see.

THE
CLEAR
WORD

THE CLEAR WORD

There has been a good deal of mysticism in the public prints lately --- emanations from Point Loma, perhaps; subtle propaganda.

They are interesting, these men with the wide eyes. They write about a multitude of things; they are masters of glowing phrases, golden wordings, witchery of thought.

Eternally invincible are they, being very nebulous and vague. So lofty are their ideals and visions that never by any chance can they be brought down to concrete wordings. Fixed in the abstract, they leave to their readers the interpretation of these sacred thought-gems.

Fine fluidity rounds the paragraphs, and a wizardry of poeticism gilds the pages, until any central idea is lost in dazzled wonder at the pyrotechnics. The type of writing is intoxicating but not tonic. It is impressionistic and

owns a very vague sense of philology; "vers libre" is a case in point. Art or music may legally convey impressions, but the business of words is to convey thought; each word in the language is an historical entity. When words are so cleverly conjoined as to present only an impression. something is amiss.

Our mystics have some central thought, spread it across scores of pages, and lose it; they are style et praeterea nihil. They won't play to the gallery, preferring the circle. As a matter of fact, they have no hope of ever reaching the gallery.

It is the great mass of our fiction magazines that reflect the gallery, the vox populi. Magazinedom is aligned in favor of the story related with an artful simplicity --- the clear word!

The clear word; that is the thing! The forthright, honest word, signifying something foursquare and definite! When Snorri quilled that great chronicle, the Heimskringla, his words fitted like a mosaic; he left us a perfect example of the clear word.

A work of literature creates a character, then evolves it through the stress of exterior circumstances. The magazine story takes its character ready-made, evolving a plot through

the stress of that character upon exterior circumstances. If we regard this as cheapening of a noble art, and decidedly *infra dig.*, then recollect how our grandsires applied like terms to Dumas and other masters.

The past twenty years have here evolved a type of magazine that serenely ignores the ranting of the Elder Brethren. It has created a writer as peculiar to this country as is the *feuilletoniste* to France. These magazines of fiction have filled a gap; and they have been eagerly acclaimed by the reading public.

This reading public, not being confined to the New England states but being comprised largely of *hoi polloi*, does not want character studies. It wants a well-ordered, wholly false and often absurd plot-scheme, progressing in a straight line instead of by zigzag dashes, as in life; but it demands that this plot-scheme be plausible, intricate and fascinating.

A new fiction magazine makes its curtsy by deploring these facts and apologetically devotes its pages only to the highest forms of writing. Stuff! Why cringe to the Elder Brethren? An editor interprets the wishes of the public; he is not to suit his own whims, but to make money for the owners.

The public knows what it wants, and will

pay to get it. The mystics may become the oracles of new cults, may set about remaking their own petty worlds after their hearts' desires; but they cannot make a living by the quill. Even the music critics have come from their misty pinnacles.

Simplicity has cash value. That is why the magazines pay such excellent prices for the clear word --- which is the hardest of all to write.

LA CATHEDRALE ENGLOUTIE

Bells far and fine
Lost evermore
To the blue sky,
Yet still implore
And bid us fly
The citted roar,
To seek God's shrine
And hold divine
The rich, deep things
That men decry.
A bell that rings
And echoes o'er
On angels' wings;
Sweetly it sings ---
"All life is thine!
Give God an hour
And feel His power
Steal far and fine
Like bells across
The city's dress --- "

**THE
NAKED
MAN**

THE NAKED MAN

A section of the Argonne wood is feebly lighted by distant star shells . Over the mechanical and human wreckage eddies the vapor of poison gas ; yet the two men sitting against the ruined gun-emplacement wear no masks , and seem not to feel the gas . One is a husky chap , a marine ; his left foot , gone above the ankle , is replaced by an ineffectual tourniquet . The other is a conscript ; across his breast is a wide gash of bubbling red .

Nearby lies a German , bayonet-gashed , who from time to time opens his eyes . At his knee lies an empty U. S. A. canteen .

The Marine : You were a damn' fool to give him that bottle ! Not that it matters to us , only —

The Conscript , smiling : You gave him yours first !

The Marine: Sure; I figured yours 'ud do us, but we should worry now! Say, Fritzie learned somethin' about fightin' today, huh?

The Conscript: I feel like writing a poem about it; only I'll never write it, of course ---

The Marine: Cut the comedy, bo! Say, the way you knifed this guy was one swell bit o' work! After he ploughed you up, too!

The poet-conscript shivers. The German opens his eyes wide and looks at them.

The German: Listen --- the music! Can you hear it? The Brunhilde motif; it is the valkyr coming for me ---

His eyes close again, his head droops.

The Marine: Plumb nuts; I bet he ain't et a square meal in a year! Say, what d'you figure on seein' next, bo?

The Conscript, blankly: Eh?

The Marine: Why, we don't swallow no bull about fightin' for democracy and goin' to heaven; everybody except the home folks is wise to that bunk. But where do we land on the other side, hey? Fightin' Heinie won't ticket us to the pearly gates, will it?

The Conscript, gazing at the curling trees in the mist: Search me! Religion never bothered me much; and just now I'm sorry.

The Marine: Sorry, hell! Cut out the

regrets . If you hadn't give that guy your canteen we might ha' lasted till morning .

The Conscript : If you hadn't crawled to help prop him up , your tourniquet might not have given way ---

Suddenly startled , both men turn their heads . Before them appears the figure of a man , nearly naked , an open wound in his side ; he is regarding them attentively .

The Marine : Hullo ! Where in hell did you come from --- front lines ? Sit down and take it easy ; no Croy Rouge nor nothin' here to hurry you . Got it bad ?

The Conscript : Here's an extra first-aid packet --- better stop the bleeding .

The naked man moves closer , but refuses the proffered packet .

The Naked Man : Thank you , brother , but it would do me no good .

The Marine : I guess you're right there . Bayonet , hey ? Jabbed up an' got you .

The Naked Man : I've come from inside the German lines .

The Conscript : Captured and got away , eh ? Stripped off your uniform ---

The Marine : What's your division ? I bet Liggett's corp's been catchin' hell !

The Naked Man : I am unattached .

The Marine, feebly tossing out his mask: Take this; it can't help me, but there's gas around.

The Naked Man: Thanks, brother, but I hardly think it would help me, either.

The naked man moves, to show them his wounded feet. He opens his hands; and the conscript breaks into a bitter cry.

The Conscript: By God! Crucified you, like they did to the Canucks!

The Marine, pityingly: Aw, hell!

The German soldier opens his eyes, staring about in vacant wonder.

The German: To whom are you talking? There is no one here. Ach, the Valkyr song! It is drawing nearer --

The naked man throws him a glance of stern pity. Then he turns and extends his hand to the conscript.

The Naked Man: Come! I'll help you --

The Conscript, smiling: No use, pard! You chase along -- we're here for keeps.

The Naked Man: Take my hand and get up! I've come to take you home.

The Marine, laughing harshly: Home!

With a faint shrug, the conscript touches the extended hand, grips it, and rises. In his face dawns amazed incredulity.

The Conscript: Good lord! I believe I can walk after all!

The naked man turns and holds out his hand to the marine in silent command.

The Marine, roughly: Aw, don't be a fool --- can't you see I only got one foot? You guys chase along ---

The Naked Man: I tell you, come! Put an arm around my neck; we'll do very well. Take my hand and get up!

Compelled, the marine obeys. Into his bronzed face leaps surprise as he rises. After getting one arm about his helper's neck, he pauses suddenly.

The Marine: Look here, you ain't in no shape to stand us both ---

The Naked Man: Be quiet, brother! We are going home, and you need not doubt my strength. Come, let us go.

They start away, the marine moving by awkward hops, but moving. The conscript holds to the arm of the naked man, throwing him sidelong glances of frightened surmise --- and at length checks himself abruptly.

The Conscript: I don't know if I'm out of my head --- no, no! It's an impossibility. I'm afraid even to think of it ---

The naked man smiles. Behind them the

German once more opens his eyes and looks about in wonder.

The German: Where are they gone? No one is here -- they were talking, yet I see no one. I can see no one!

The naked man casts over his shoulder a look of ineffable sorrow. From him comes a murmur.

The Naked Man: No, you can see no one. You cannot even see ME! And that, as you shall come to know, is hell.

LES DEUX CORTEGES

Within the church two companies are met.

The one is sad and bears an infant's bier,
A woman following; slow steals the tear
On her pale cheek, where grief his mark has set.

The other, a baptism. Protecting arm

Held close, a nurse upbears the precious mite;
Comes the young mother, whose proud looks invite
Praise and allegiance to her baby's charm.

They christen, they absolve; the chapels clear.

Then the two women, crossing in the aisle,
Exchange a single glance at joining there;

And --- wondrous mystery to inspire a prayer ---
The young wife weeps in gazing on the bier,
The mourner throws the newborn child a smile!

**ONE
NIGHT
AT
HEALY'S**

ONE NIGHT AT HEALY'S

We recall many a charming tale, done in the most Lamb-like of accents, regarding the rare and curious old volumes picked up at the farthing stalls. Le Gallienne has reminiscenced most delightfully and incredibly in this fashion, as have others; but I, for one, long ago decided that these degenerate days never witnessed such discoveries as those recorded in *le temps jadis*.

Many and many an hour have I spent delving along dusty shelves in grimy shops, or by the less alluring ways of the spick-and-span, rebound and furbished, dustless and listed Olde Book Shoppe whose displays are priced at their weight in carets. In both have I been disappointed. Many a catalog have I pored over, only to decide that all catalogs are supplied from publishers' remainders.

One concludes that the old book trade is a thing of the past, at least so far as we none too affluent consumers are concerned. The dealers know too much about their wares and are too eager after excess profits. They fatten upon the rich manufacturer who seeks scholarly polish, or the scholar who has inherited the price of gratification. If they find an Elzevir, however mean, they placard it at a rare price, and await the victim who thinks that all Elzevirs are treasures.

Once, indeed, I found a little shop in New Orleans, off the tourist lanes, where I encountered over a score of delightful volumes in French, filled with hand-tinted plates, at some very low figure. Alas! I had just been entrapped in Royal street and had but little money left. I bought a number of the sweet tooled-morocco volumes at some little sacrifice, and went my way. Later, in funds, I returned for the remainder of the set, only to find that a famous playwright had discovered the treasure — and all were vanished.

With this exception, luck was seldom mine. Old book shops were many, bargains few. From city to city it was the same old story; until, upon a cold and foggy night in San Francisco, I chanced to pass the forbid-

ding and grimy portal of a shop kept by one Healy.

I merely sniffed and turned to catch a jitney; I had come from a survey of certain downtown shops and felt that I had no more time to waste. Then I saw the proprietor, sitting in an easy-chair in his window, which framed dull old spectacles within a luxuriant and mighty fringe of reddish-grey whiskers. Fascinated, I turned again. Once more to try my luck! Hopeless though I knew it to be, I would still essay the impossible --- and I entered.

Truth to tell, my entry was compelled less by hope than by that curious spectacle in the window. In the doorway I came to a pause, aghast before a dim array of shelves which at some prior day had been assorted, but were now jumbled and heaped in a most erratic madness of confusion.

The fringed old gentleman in the easy chair was reading one of his own books; and this was an excellent sign. He barely vouchsafed a grunt to my greeting, directed me to switch on the lamps and help myself, then resumed his book and a huge pipe.

As directed, I turned on the lights and began my explorations. Already the mystic

alchemy of this stage-setting held me gripped in a pleasant excitation, a glowing confidence that here awaited unguessed treasure-trove!

Mirabile dictu! At the very first turn I pulled down a glorious big volume, newly bound in half morocco, which proved to be no other than Dr. Shaw's Travels in Barbary.

Every map, every letter and engraving and page was perfect, even the paper was as chastely unblemished as when struck off the press of Oxford University in the days of the first George. The press-work, like that of the first folio of Beaumont & Fletcher, was a delight to the eye; abounding in Arabic, old-style Greek, Hebrew and less-remembered tongues, it was all as nobly executed as if it had been drawn by hand and lithographed.

A price was penciled on the flyleaf; it would scarcely have amounted to taxicab fare home. I sighed over the high insolence that prompts dealers to face their customers with the prices these wares fetched twenty or fifty years ago; then I turned to the fringed divinity with tremulous query.

"Everything marked plain," he made response, without raising his eyes from the book in his lap.

Ye gods and little bookworms --- the

dream had come true! Or was it a chance find — perhaps some lure to catch unwary feet?

No matter; within five minutes dinner was forgotten, all responsibilities put aside, and I was hooked fast. Those unordered shelves held everything from Russian novels to French scientific treatises, and Americana ran riot.

Imagine a copy of Verelius, that rare edition of saga-chants, for fifty cents; and, no less expensive, a spanking fine copy of Mme. de Grandfort's execrated work on the Louisiana Creoles, serene in its dingy binding of ante-bellum days! Here was the sort of place hitherto found only in romancers' tales!

And a little old French handbook for gardeners, with quaintly tinted plates; or a first edition of Palgrave, or a historical work from the library of the Garde Royale Hussars!

Then the discovery of Ripperda's memoirs — Ripperda, that fine Hollander who became a Spaniard, wearing the collar of the Golden Fleece and ruling all the wide realms of Spain, then passed into Morocco and ruled that land as pasha — Ripperda, who took new religions or families at will, but ruled always until the gout fetched him to a devout

Christian end --- here was the crowning find!

I staggered home that night freighted with treasure. A few days later I returned, with the intent of further search and seizure; but this time I did not enter. I only turned mournfully from the doorway, above which flaunted the dire announcement:

THIS PLACE HAS CHANGED HANDS

With a Branch of Semper-virens

Unto the end that age to age shall know
The perfect love which Ronsard gave in fee,
How your warm beauty laid cold reason low
And held in fetters all his liberty;
Unto the end that age to age shall see
How your sweet face shrined in his life was lying,
How in his heart you dwelt eternally ---
I bring to you this flowered branch, undying,
Which knows no frost to sere its radiant spring!
When you are dead I shall revive you, chaste
And lovely; such the tribute that I bring,
Who in your service find all bliss embraced!
Like Laura, loved of Petrarch, you will live ---
At least, while books immortal life can give!

THE
LITTLE
VISITORS

THE LITTLE VISITORS

It was lately my good fortune --- and I so term it advisedly --- to entertain a budding Bolshevik in my midst.

He was an excellent young man and a fellow writer, who had been discharged as an officer of the nation's armed forces. Not knowing him intimately, I invited him, with his brother, to spend a part of the summer in a cottage which I maintained as an office.

In due time the twain arrived and were heartily welcomed, They were made quite at home in my studio, which was furnished to my own fancy with books, rugs, tools of the trade, rare and curious objects from foreign parts, and, what occasioned much interest, an amount of correspondence filed away.

- 1 This final title has been altered since the printing of the Table of Contents.

The young gentlemen made themselves very much at home, and, in the course of a few days' intimacy, confessed to a boyishly intense sympathy with the Bolsheviki. They reveled in a white-collar abstinence, oblivious that the hated uniforms were vastly more becoming than their present garb, and took a keen delight in tearing to shreds the integrity of the press and the administration. One must admit that the latter was rather silly; but to think the press of the world in a vast conspiracy of lies against Lenine et al., savored too much of a de Quincy phantasy.

Political creeds, of course, could not mar the pleasure of the visit. But in course of time it gradually dawned upon me that my guests were rather exacting in their way of taking things for granted.

They acquired a happy faculty of letting me run their errands, or of utilizing my services as chauffeur. The only argument against this was its matter-of-course air. I presume that the Bolsheviki, like the Arabs, feel any expression of gratitude to be unworthy them.

Still, this was but a small cavil against great writers -- men of genius who had accomplished high things in their profession and

were attaining a worthy place in literature !

It was with some misgivings, however, that I observed certain very odd tendencies ; such as , for example , plying the gentle arts of Munchausen upon the despised caste of editors .

When one delicately hinted that this might hardly be considered as strictly ethical, the notion was greeted with roars of scornful laughter . Ethics were individual things entirely , much beneath the consideration of free artists . And what was an editor compared with one who wrote literature ? Less than the dust !

However , the suggestion that it was the editor who wrote the checks , proved to be sobering -- amazingly sobering .

The days wore breezily on , with much writing and earnest endeavor , and much discussion of why no man in the writing game today deserved the place he held ; that is , no man at the top . One or two had some facility ; a little plot , perhaps , a gift of words , a lilt to paragraphs -- but this was "all they had ." The heroic dead , happily , possessed virtues .

There began to be a Bolshevik atmosphere about the place , a vague and unsatis-

fied air of much begun and little finished. Oddly enough, my friends were working on anti-red propaganda; excellent work, too, if it did come but slowly. Curious how antipathy to white collars seems to involve in its anathema all forms of hard labor!

The visitors found the country lonely. One evening I dropped in unexpectedly at the office, and my presence seemed to excite an odd embarrassment. It developed that my friends were giving a party, so of course I at once withdrew gracefully.

Some time later, a young man about town informed me, grinningly, that their letters I got from editors were suttinly rich! Upon inquiry I found that my guests kindly elucidated the art of writing, to their local acquaintance, by means of my correspondence.

Nor did they deny the matter. They were so puzzled at my objections that anger could not exist; since I did object, of course it would occur no more. In the face of so charming a simplicity, what could the ruffled course of hospitality do but resume the even tenor of its way?

But little things, as is their habit, in time grow onerous. Around the books, the

rare and curious objects, the writing tools, climbed filth and squalor unbelievable. In despair, seeking the kindest way out of the impasse, I was summoned away for a month or so. Not without some misgivings -- quite justified by events.

When I returned to the office, I found that my guests had departed. So had many of my books and things. In their stead remained castoff raiment and much misplaced matter.

I have now adopted the firm rule of invariably inquiring into the politics of a friend before erecting him into the status of a guest.

Sonnet au Lecteur

I hailed you, reader, after ancient wont,
Crying "Bonjour!" upon my first fair page;
Closes my book in type of gloomier font ---
For we are come into a perilous age.
Gone are the golden days of merry wage,
Of nymphs and laughing gods, of kings who smiled,
Of sober men who jeered me for a child,
Of merry fools who jeered me for a sage.
In factioned strife our troubled time is veiled,
Our poets sing, with politics inflamed;
Yet shall I not be counted to have failed
If you, who read me, read me once again!
And if two words my wisdom may contain,
Let them be Joy and Folly, unashamed!

HERE ENDS THE BOOK
BIGFOOT JOE & OTHERS
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From The Same Press

Verse

**FIGS & THISTLES
FRUIT BEFORE SUMMER
GATHERED VERSE
CORN WINE & OIL**

Prose

**THE MYTH WAWATAM
L'ARBRE CROCHE MISSION
SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO**