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"I AM BY FAR THE SICKEST MAN ABOARD THIS SHIP"—Page 9

OUT O' LUCK

*BILTMORE OSWALD VERY
MUCH AT SEA*

BY

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Author of "Biltmore Oswald"

WITH 31 ILLUSTRATIONS IN BLACK-AND-WHITE

BY

RICHARD DORGAN

("Dick Dorgan") ✓

U. S. N. R. F.



NEW YORK

FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

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Reprinted from
THE BROADSIDE
A JOURNAL FOR
THE NAVAL RESERVE FORCE



JUN 20 1919

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To
ELIZA
THE LADY WHO SAW
ME THROUGH

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OUT O' LUCK

Biltmore Oswald Very Much at Sea

SEPT. 7th.—My first impression of the ship was not a reassuring one. As I regarded the tall, slim masts, with a lookout or crow's-nest forward that somehow reminded me of an eggcup, a nervous sensation made itself manifest and enlarged in the pit of my stomach. The very idea of there existing a bare possibility of my being forced to ascend one of those masts in a pitching sea and ensconce myself in the crow's-nest made the bitter, sweat-washed memory of the coal pile back at camp seem sweet. As I stood gazing at the vessel that was destined to bear me out upon the turbulent seas of the high adventure, I considered how unlike the sensations of the heroes of all the sea novels I had ever read were mine. The scent of tar, which is guaranteed in all the best sellers to send a thrill through the stalwart young adventurer, served only to cast a gloomy and nauseating foreboding of future complications over my rather meager frame. The bustle and hurry on the dock, so dear to the valiant hearts of the youthful mariners, confused my addled brain to a point bordering closely on idiocy. The ship seemed to be altogether too large. There would be many decks to holystone—too many, I decided. Furthermore, there would be much bright work to brighten. I pictured long days of ceaseless toil and nights of extreme danger during which the ship would play leap-frog with a series of submarines stretching away into the mist.

"Well, thank God, it ain't a Submarine Provoker at any rate," said Tim in a relieved voice.

"Too big," breathed Tony, "thata ship he much too big. Whata you think, Bilta?"

"Well, it could be smaller," said I, "but she looks safe."

"Wonder when they issue the life preservers," said the Spider in a dispirited voice. "I'd sort of like to put mine on before we went aboard."

A member of the guns' crew, one of the hardest looking white men I have ever seen, unfortunately overheard this last remark, and almost barked. I thought for a moment that he was going to bite the Spider, but he seemed to think better of it.

"You fellers ain't agoin' ter git no life preservers," said he, regarding our unheroic group through eyes that had recently looked on something other than water. "We drown such guys as you for the good of the service."

"How's your head, buddy?" says I all of a sudden, prompted by some mad impulse. He looked at me with extreme earnestness for a moment before he spoke, and when he did speak all he said was, "I'm going to remember you;" but that was quite enough for me. My first enemy! Tim threw a protecting arm around my shoulder and at the same time faced my avowed foe.

"Don't worry about that guy," says Tim, "if he's got anything to do with the guns I'm glad that I took out insurance."

"Oh, is that so?" says the sailor snappily.

"What a hot answer!" jeered the Spider. "He's got a good line of stuff, that guy."

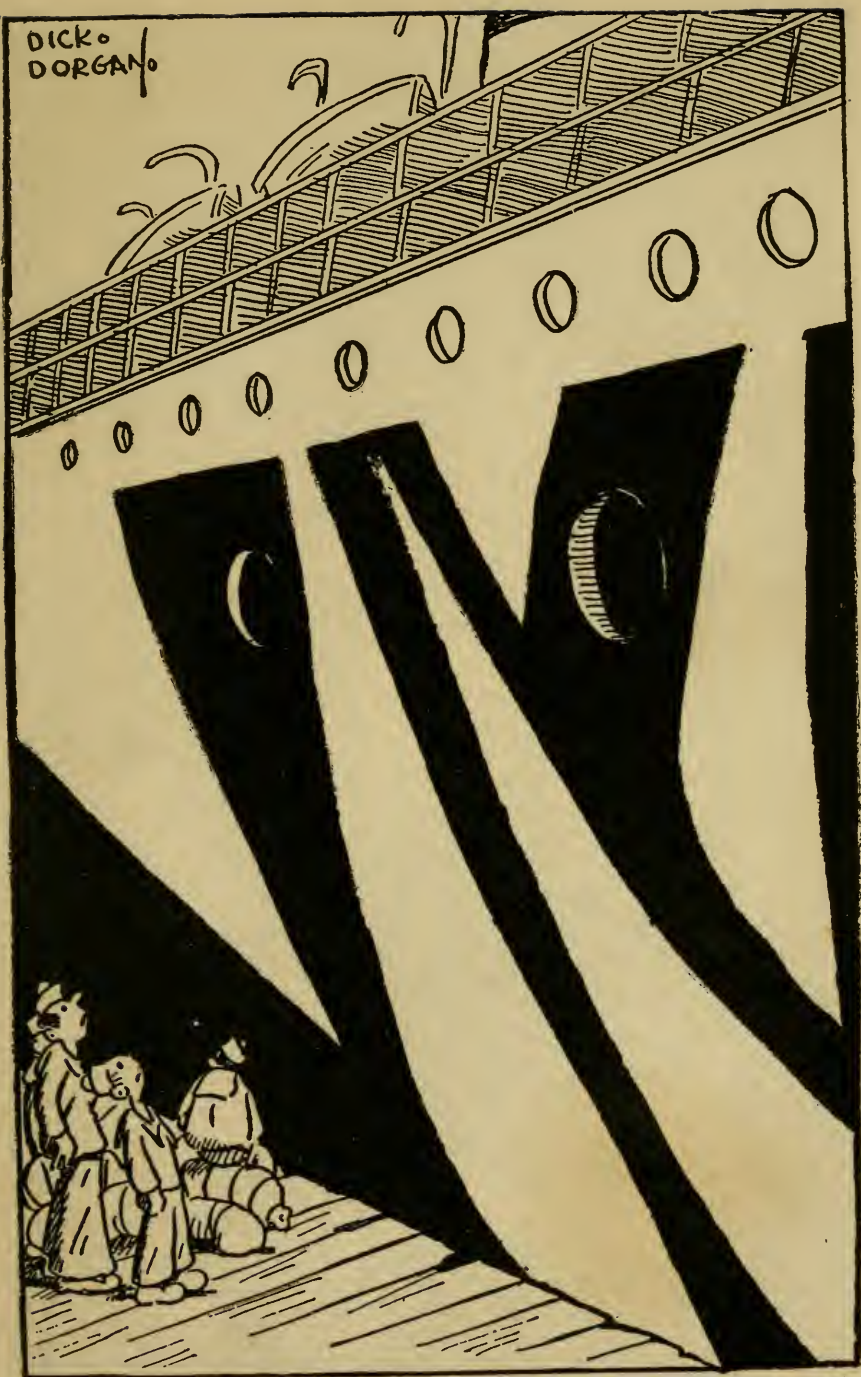
"You think so, do you?" says the other, moving closer to us.

I expected the worst. He would at least break one of my arms. I wondered if sailors rated a wound mark for getting injured under such circumstances, but at that moment a diversion occurred in the form of a weather-beaten Chief.

"Grab your gear and get aboard, lads," he said in a hearty voice. "Step lively now. Up with them outfits."

Accordingly we shouldered our bags and hammocks and started for the ship. It was a great moment. At last we

DICKO
DORGANO



“WELL, THANK GOD, IT AIN'T A SUBMARINE PROVOKER’”—Page 1



were going to be sailors, but for the life of me I couldn't figure out on which side of the ship we were entering. The excitement had caused me to forget all the knowledge I had so laboriously gained at camp.

And then a terrible thing occurred. I can scarcely bring myself to write these lines. But I must be truthful, or else the record of my life in the Navy would be of little value. Anyway, no one is going to see these pages, so possibly it doesn't matter. How can I describe the horrible incident. It wasn't my fault, I swear it. The blame lies with the guy that belonged to the guns' crew. He "remembered" me with a vengeance. He said he would, and he was as good as his word. It came to pass this way or after this manner, for it all happened so suddenly that I have only a confused impression of the details. As usual I was among the stragglers, and finding it very difficult going. The plank was steep and my outfit extremely heavy. There were a few men behind me, and at my side I saw to my horror the guns' crew guy. He was observing my efforts with a malevolent grin. And then it happened—this fearful thing. I had just reached the steepest pitch of the gang-plank and was about to step aboard, when suddenly I felt myself pushed violently backward. Something became entangled in my legs, and I completely lost my balance. As my hammock and bag flew from my grasp I uttered a low, despairing cry and tumbled over backwards. Down the gang-plank I rolled with incredible speed, gathering momentum at every foot. Vague thoughts flashed across my mind in the course of my frantic evolutions. "Where is the bottom?" I wondered. "If Polly could only see me now," came into my mind, and through it all I was fervently cursing my enemy. He had pushed me. I knew it. Furthermore, to make my ruin complete, he had tripped me. This I also knew. My flight was becoming more rapid every moment. I seemed to be hurtling through interminable leagues of space. Vaguely I remember encountering several pairs of legs on the way. The legs instantly disap-

peared and violent swearing broke out in my wake. Suddenly I brought up against something other than sailor legs. These legs seemed to be invested with all the slim, blue dignity of an officer. They, too, disappeared, and a body fell heavily upon me. My flight was over. I was lying on the dock at the foot of the gang-plank. Dreamily I opened my eyes and stared into those of an incensed junior lieutenant. He was lying hardly five inches from me. Gravity is no respecter of gold braid.

"A thousand damns!" screamed the infuriated officer, trying to rise. He was unable to, owing to the fact that I was on one of his legs.

"A thousand pardons," I moaned as he unceremoniously rolled me over.

At that moment I felt a heavy hand on my collar and I was violently placed on my feet. The Chief was glaring into my face. A low cheer arose from those on the ship.

"You simple-faced lubber," grated the Chief, "you almost ruined our lieutenant."

"I have apologized to him," I replied, "but he wouldn't accept it."

"Out of my sight!" roared the officer.

I hastily looked for my bag and hammock, feeling a strong desire to withdraw not only from his sight but from the eyes of the world. The bag and hammock were nowhere to be seen. They had vanished in thin air. Several men were pointing to the water between the ship and the dock from which arose the most astounding volume of oaths I have ever heard. Peering over the dock I beheld my bag and hammock floating around in the water. A sailor was also floundering around in the oily substance, and there were several overturned buckets of paint on a nearby scow.

"Who dropped that hammock?" yelled the man in the water. "Just tell me who done it and I'll cut his heart out."

I moved quickly back from the edge of the pier.

"We'll show him to you later on!" yelled several voices

DICK •
DORGAN •



"TONY DANGLED A PIECE OF FAT BEFORE OUR STRICKEN EYES"—Page 9

from the ship as I stood by helplessly and watched my bag and hammock, together with the enraged ship's painter, fished from the water.

"Get aboard," said the Chief, and I marched up the gang-plank with thousands of eyes upon me. My outfit was presented to me with elaborate courtesy, the whole ship's crew taking part in the ceremony. It was twice as heavy as before, and Tim had to help me carry it. As I turned away the Chief stopped me.

"The mere fact that you are aboard this ship," he said in a loud voice so that all might hear, "is sufficient reason to give comfort to the enemy, and for that reason alone you deserve to be shot. Get below!" I got. Thus have I once more sprung into fame. Everyone on the ship knows me. I have been overwhelmed with jests and questions. The ship's painter is still looking for me. My outfit is in terrible shape. I hope a submarine gets me soon. Life is a great deal too much.

SEPT. 9th.—The Spider was the first to go. Merely looking at him made me feel nervous. His face was slowly taking on a soft, greenish tint, but he said nothing. How long could he last I wondered. Finally I could restrain myself no longer.

"You're getting sick, Spider, aren't you?" I asked him.

"Getting!" gasped the Spider as he rose unsteadily to his feet. "I've already got," and he dashed away, but I was close on his heels. Tim brought up the rear. Tony seems not to mind it. I can't write any more. I wish the ship's painter would find me and put me out of my misery.

SEPT. 10th.—Impossible to write. Unable to eat, unable to sleep. Great suffering and endless toil. How much longer will it last. Tony dangled a piece of fat before our stricken eyes this morning and we all three rose as one and went elsewhere. Many others are sick, but I am by far the sickest man not only aboard this ship, but aboard any ship afloat. I must go.

SEPT. 12th.—The worst is over, but misfortune still hangs like a black pall over my head.

"Get up in the chains," said the Quartermaster to me last night, "I got to try some of you guys out to see how you cast the lead."

Grabbing my Blue Jacket's Manual I made my way limply forward. Here I placed myself in the so-called chains and carefully untied the lead from the rail.

"Heave!" cried the Quartermaster from the darkness behind me. I hove.

"Catch it!" he shouted, and I caught the line.

"Where is it at?" he demanded.

"Wait a minute," says I.

"What for?" says he.

"I'm looking for the place."

"What place?" he asks.

"Where it tells about the lead," I replied. By the dim light I could hardly make out what the book said.

"By the marks and deeps $3\frac{1}{2}$," I cried, taking a chance.

"What!" came a surprised voice from the darkness, "By the what?"

"Oh, well," says I, "I'll try again."

"You'd better," growls the Quartermaster.

This time I gave the lead a mighty heave and felt the line flying through my hand.

"Stop her!" cried the Quartermaster, but it was too late. I had lost control of the line and the last foot of it slipped through my grasp.

"What she read?" demanded the Quartermaster.

Silence from the chains. I was afraid to answer. Crouching there in the darkness I stared ahead at the broad, dim ocean, and contemplated my fate. I had lost the lead. How could I tell him?

"Are you still there?" called the man who was destined to slay me as soon as he learned the horrid truth.

I came slowly back to him.

"Well?" says he.

"I lost the lead," says I.

"Lost it," says he, "why it was secured to the rail."

"I know," says I, "but I undid it. You see, I thought that was the thing to do, so I just . . ." My voice trailed away across the starless night.

"Gord!" breathed the Quartermaster, "you've gone and lost our lead." There was silence. The ship panted swiftly through the night. "Some war!" thought I miserably.

"Come aft," says the Quartermaster in a quiet voice. It was altogether too quiet. When the storm broke it would be all the more violent for having been controlled. He took me up to the Master-at-Arms.

"He lost the lead," said the Quartermaster to the Jimmy-legs. The bald simplicity of the statement made my crime appear even more appalling.

"Lost the lead!" said the Jimmy-legs in an incredulous voice. "That ain't never been done before on this ship."

"He did it," said the Quartermaster.

"Impossible!" replied the Master-at-Arms.

"Not for this guy," said the Quartermaster.

"First he almost ruins our junior lieutenant, and then he goes and loses our lead," says the Legs, as if to himself. "He shouldn't be allowed at large."

"How about the galley?" suggested the Quartermaster. The suggestion was accepted. All day I have been washing dishes at angles varying between 20° and 75° . The Jimmy-legs has told everyone to observe my actions closely. He fears, he says, for the safety of the ship.

The ship's painter has just thrust his head through the door and looked at me a long time. "So that's the guy," he said as he withdrew.

"Yes," replied the Master-at-Arms, "he lost the lead."

"Gord!" said the painter. "What a sailor!"

SEPT. 14th.—The destroyers picked us up a while back and I breathed a sigh of relief. We are bound for some unnamed French port, at which we are to dock some time

soon. Tim has been going around with a French-English conversation book. From time to time he mutters "Je vous aime" and "une jolie fille." He seems to place a great deal of importance on these two phrases. The Spider has learned how to say "de vin," which he earnestly believes flows freely at all French ports. Today during a few spare moments I came upon a magazine that would have delighted mother. It was filled with underwear advertisements. It seems from these advertisements that anyone to wear a suit of underwear must either belong to a country club or own at least two high-powered motors. It is evidently remarkable stuff, for as soon as it is put on the wearer immediately begins to play leap-frog, golf or tennis with some other fortunate gentleman similarly clad, or else large, jolly families, all wearing these miraculous garments begin to wrestle with each other or to hold an impromptu track meet. From the illustrations, no one but the very pick of supermen and women are ever sufficiently interested in underwear to the extent of having their photographs taken when clad in it. Now I guess I have worn more kinds of underwear than most people, and I have never felt like any of these remarkable people apparently feel. It would do my heart good to see for once an underwear advertisement showing a broken old man and a couple of fleshless, anti-athletic young men like myself, all seemingly unhappy, clad in the vaunted product. Napoleon wore underwear, I am told on good but intimate authority, yet I feel sure he hardly looked imposing in it. But all this has nothing to do with dodging tinfish in mid-ocean. I must return to the mop. Leisure begets idle thoughts.

SEPT. 15th.—The Quartermaster in a sudden burst of confidence has just given me to understand that my hungry eyes shall soon feast on the sight of land. I almost broke down upon the reception of the news.

(Later) The Quartermaster for once spoke the truth. We made out the blue coast of France several hours back.

This so delighted me that in a burst of gratitude I gave Tony my wrist watch. Several planes are now circling around us. I wonder how sick an aviator can get? I should say, considerable. There is little envy in me for that sort of a pastime. We are now entering some kind of a harbor. It seems to speak French. There are no signs urging the perplexed visitor to drink this special brand of water and live forever.

SEPT. 16th. *At an Unnamed French Port.*—Owing to a delay in something or other we were granted a certain amount of liberty. I have just returned aboard. What a time we had!

Tim, with his two French phrases; Tony and the Spider, loudly calling for "de vin," went ashore with me. For some time we wandered around the streets looking at the queer signs. Tim became very dispirited because of the noticeable absence of "les jolie filles" as he called them. Presently he brought us up before a place that looked like a cross between a refreshment shop and a fish market.

"I guess this is where they dance on the tables," said Tim, still clinging to his dream. The guns' crew were there before us, and had spread themselves over the place in heroic attitudes. They seemed to recognize me as I entered, and several ironical remarks were tossed my way.

"Sure," said one of them, "that's the guy that lost the lead—some sailor, what?" and all of them laughed coarsely.

Without paying any attention we sat down at a long table at which several Frenchmen were carrying on an animated conversation by hands and shoulders and eyebrows and forks and plates and everything, in short, that was movable. They were all excited and enthusiastic about the recent victories. Suddenly one of them, in an uncontrollable outburst of patriotism, leaned across the table and kissed Tim on either cheek.

"Mon frère," he exclaimed as he did so. Tim pushed

him back in his seat with undue violence. The Frenchman looked at him in surprise.

"You must let him kiss you, Tim," I told him. "It's the custom."

"Custom bosh!" said Tim in his most brutal voice, looking reproachfully at the Frenchman.

"M'appellez-vous bosh?" cried that gentleman, his eyes gleaming.

"Wee, wee," cried Tim, not knowing what the Frenchman had said.

"Sacré nom de nom!" screamed the Frenchman, leaping up and overturning the table.

"Il m'appel bosh," he cried, pointing to Tim.

"It is all a terrible mistake," I tried to shout above the uproar, but my voice could not be heard. The guns' crew sided with the Frenchman and a frightful scene took place. Tables were overturned, the store seemed to settle on its foundation, and plates went crashing to the floor. In the fury of the mêlée I remember seeing a cup bounce off Tim's large red head. He apparently did not notice it. Standing on one of the guns' crew he was waving a chair in the face of another. Slowly we retreated to the door. Someone had kicked me in the stomach. I suspected my original enemy, and emptied a bottle of vinegar on his head, which had somehow gotten tangled up with my feet.

"Kick him," cried Tim, pointing to the head, but I couldn't bring myself to do it, although I felt like it. For no apparent reason a Frenchman was standing on a table in the corner singing the "Marseillaise" at the top of his voice. The odds were too great for us, and, realizing this, Tim called to us to cut and run. This we did in a whole-hearted manner. Down the narrow street of the little French town we sped with its whole populace streaming after us.

"Tuez-les! Tuez-les!" we could hear the Frenchman screaming, "Il m'appel bosh!"

"You should have let him kiss you," breathed the Spider as we rounded a corner and broke for the open country.



DICK
DORGAN



"WE WERE ACCOMPANIED TO THE SHIP AMID FLAGS AND AN ADMIRING
POPULACE"—Page 17

"I ain't agoing to let no man kiss me," said Tim in a stubborn voice. "Jolie fille, yes, but furrin' men, no."

"You gotta let 'em kiss you," panted Tony, "that whatta they do."

"I don't got to let them kiss me," cried Tim getting excited, "I ain't agoin' to do it."

"You should have ought of done it," said the Spider, "and we wouldn't have been in this mess."

The shouts were dying out in the distance. We were outstripping our pursuers, although we could still faintly hear the Frenchman entreating the world to "Tuez-les."

"What's that mean?" asked Tim.

"He's asking them to kill us," I replied, remembering my scanty freshman French.

"Gord!" said Tim, "what people! He was wanting to kiss me ten minutes ago."

We were by this time some distance from the town, and gradually cracking beneath the strain.

"We musn't be far from the front now," said the Spider wearily. "Let's stop this side of the Rhine."

So we rested by the roadside. On the way back the Frenchman, who had learned that Tim had not intentionally called him a Boche, met us in the middle of the street and embraced us affectionately. We were accompanied to the ship amid flags and an admiring populace. My stomach is still a little tender, however. I do wish that guns' crew guy would stop remembering me.

SEPT. 17th. (Under way once more.)—This morning we left this port still unnamed and cleared away for the American coast which I devoutly trust I shall soon see. One observes very little of the war in this line of work. So far my experiences have been purely personal. This morning I was cleaning brass as if the future tranquillity of my soul depended on the power of my elbows. So bright did I polish the brass that I was enabled to observe in it the reflection of the ship's painter standing behind me with a

large, flat stick, evidently made especially for my enjoyment, raised high in the air and on the point of descending with great force upon my unprotected person. I sprang aside just in time to avoid an unpleasant contact. The ship's painter went away like a thwarted leopard and I gave the brass an extra shine out of sheer gratitude.

SEPT. 25th (at sea).—"How often can a guy get seasick?" I asked the Quartermaster this morning between a lull in my labors. The Quartermaster spat reflectively over the lea side rail and gave due consideration to the question before committing himself.

"Well," says he, "there's some what get seasick perpetually and then there are those what only gets seasick intermittently or just every now and then."

"I must belong to both classes," says I in a cheerless voice.

"How's that?" asks the Quartermaster.

"Well," says I, "you see, I'm always seasick, perpetually, as you said, but intermittently I get more seasick and on special occasions I can get even still more seasick."

"What," says the Quartermaster, "you mean to say that you're seasick now on this glassy sea?"

"I mean to say," says I, "that I have been seasick every minute since I left the station and that ten years from now the mere thought of what you seem fit to term a glassy sea will be sufficient cause for a hasty exit from any company, no matter how entertaining."

"Why, this ain't no seat at all," replies the Quartermaster, scornfully, "just a mere easy-running ground swell."

He gazed to windward for a moment and scanned an unintelligent expanse of stupid gray sky with a discerning eye.

"Just wait," says he, as if he were promising me a stick of candy, "just you wait until six bells and I'll show you what a real sea is."

"Something rough, eh?" says I, as the ship pitched shiveringly down the side of a valley of dark green, concentrated oneryness and sent me sprawling across the deck.



"I SPRANG ASIDE JUST IN TIME TO AVOID AN UNPLEASANT CONTACT"—



“WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?”—Page 21

"Yes," says he, "something rough, something very rough—not calm like it is now."

"Well, I ain't agoin' to wait," says I, "I don't have to," and I made my way feebly aft to a place of seclusion, and here among other things, I prayed for peace. Then I proceeded to hide myself behind a hammock rack and wait for six bells. The storm was punctual to the minute, if anything a little before hand. Storms never have good taste anyway, and they never leave one. Well, that ship did everything but gallop. It waltzed, it fox-trotted, it performed several very elaborate Oriental muscle dances and a couple of buck and wings. I did all of these things with it. The first lurch sent me spinning across the deck to the end of the compartment; the second one carried me back with a resounding bang; the third conveyed me through the door and among the legs of the executive officer.

"What are you doing here?" asked the officer in an injured tone.

"Suffering," I replied, digging my nails into the deck.

"Don't you like it in the Navy?" he asked as I tried to rise.

"No, sir," says I, "I don't like it at all in the Navy, sir," and then, carried away by an irresistible impulse of curiosity, I added, "Do you, sir?"

The officer smiled on me with kindly eyes. "I love it, my boy," he said. "I enjoy it; it's my life."

"Oh, God!" I breathed as another wave hit the ship and sent me sliding from the officer's sight, "those are the guys that have press-agented the Navy and kidded poor innocent people like me into believing it a romantic sport."

"Where you going?" says Tim, as he caught me sliding past him.

"Going," says I, "I'm going to vote for Mr. McAdoo if he ever runs for office. He builds tunnels under rivers and things and perhaps he might run one across the ocean."

Later this evening the Quartermaster spoke to me apologetically.

"Sorry, Buddy," says he, "but I was wrong about that storm. Thought we were going to have one, but it must have got shunted off somewhere along the line."

"What!" I screamed, "you mean to say this isn't a storm?"

"Certainly not," says he, "this isn't even a blow."

For the first time since I joined the Navy I cried. He did not see me, for no tears ran down my face, but my soul was drenched with them.

"Not even a blow," I repeated in a heart-broken voice as I staggered back to my compartment. What a war!

SEPT. 26th.—At four bells this afternoon the stern gun began barking furiously and Tony came dashing into our compartment, utterly demented.

"Submarine, he come!" he shouted, throwing everything around in wild disorder. "Submarine, he come!" he repeated, and with that he dropped an armful of whites, seized his guitar and rushed up on deck. Of course we all were close behind him, his temperamental nature having completely upset all our instructions.

"Submarine, he come," Tony frantically informed the world as he cleared the hatch. We clustered around him and looked eagerly seaward.

"What the hell yer doin' here?" shouted the Quartermaster, spying us standing near the hatch. "Are you going to serenade the old man?"

"Submarine, he——" started Tony, but he never finished.

"Submarine me eye," cried the Quartermaster, "you poor simple lubbers, you calf-eyed, lily-livered, clay-footed spawn of satan, you swabs, don't you know that this is only practice?"

"Then the submarine, he doesn't come?" asked the Spider, deliberately.

"No, he doesn't," snapped the Quartermaster.

Upon receiving this information the Spider, with the same disinterested ease of manner, turned and kicked Tony down



"THE POOR MISGUIDED ITALIAN FELL AMID A VOLLEY OF IMPRECATIONS"

—Page 25

the hatch. The poor misguided Italian fell amid a volley of imprecations and jingling notes as his guitar bounced along the steps.

"You were wrong, Tony," said Tim later, "it isn't 'submarine, *he* come,' but 'submarine, *she* come.' All submarines are *shes*. As soon as you get intimate with one you're sunk, get me?"

Whereupon started an argument about submarines and women which lasted until lights. We all agreed that both were equally lawless and that both had the ability to make the bravest man feel uncomfortable in their presence.

SEPT. 27th.—Last night I dreamed that I was just about to kiss Polly, when suddenly there appeared upon her upper lip a huge bristling, upturned mustache and I woke up with a shriek.

"Damn the Kaiser!" I muttered.

There was silence for a moment and then way down in the darkness at the end of the compartment I heard somebody say in a low voice, "Damn Ludendorf!"

Again there was silence, and again it was broken by a subdued voice in another part of the darkness muttering, "Damn the Crown Prince."

"Damn it all!" whispered some one, and with that the Master-at-arms damned us. Then there was silence, save for snores which in the Navy is considered the same thing.

SEPT. 28th.—Now that they've published my first diary in regular book form I might just as well tell of a terrible thing that happened. I took some of the books along with me on this trip and wrote fitting little sentiments in each one of them for my respective friends. Thinking it would be a sweet little attention I inscribed in the one intended for the Executive Officer the following words: "With the sincere respects of the author," and in the one intended for a friend of mine in camp I wrote: "To a loose-talking old party of unsound morals from Biltmore Oswald." I won't

say what I wrote in Polly's. This morning I was called into the Executive's stateroom.

"Ah," thinks I to myself, as I made my way thither, "he probably intends to recommend me for a commission on the mere strength of my book." However, when I saw him there was something in his expression that made me instantly reverse my opinion. He was sitting by a table, and on this table was a copy of Biltmore Oswald, and on this copy rested a large, tanned, seafaring hand which clutched convulsively upon my child as I entered.

"Yes, sir," says I.

"Your name Oswald?" says he.

"Yes, sir," says I.

"Did ye send me this book?" says he.

"Yes, sir," says I for the third time.

"Did ye write this in it?" he continues, holding up the book to me.

"Yes, sir," says I, "but not for you, sir, honest to God, sir——"

"That will do," he snapped. Then, adjusting his spectacles on his nose, he proceeded to read in a portentous voice: "To a loose-talking old party of unsound morals, from Biltmore Oswald."

He looked over his glasses at me and even he seemed to be awed by the horror of the situation.

"Not for you, sir," I managed to gasp, "honest——"

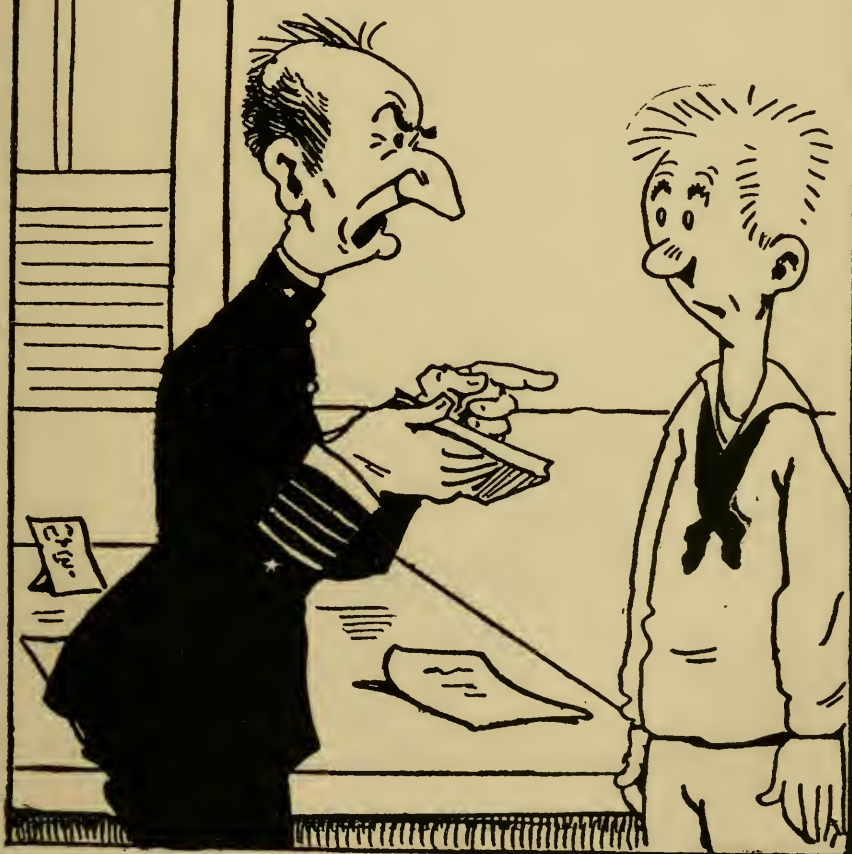
"That will do," says he, and there was a pause. Finally I heard him speaking.

"To begin with," says he, "you must have been feeble-minded to have ever written such a book, and further than that—you must have been utterly mad to have written such a thing about me, an officer of the United States Navy in it. What have you got to say for yourself?"

"I didn't mean——" I began.

"That will do," said he in a voice that sounded as if he had listened to a lengthy explanation with infinite patience.

DICKO
DORGANO



“WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ME? WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MY MORALS?”—Page 29

DICK.
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"THE 'EXEC' SAID THAT YOU WERE A 'WICKED OLD MAN' AND FOR ME
TO KEEP AWAY FROM YOU'—Page 31

I was almost frantic by this time.

He opened the book again and I thought he was going to begin to read it all over in that same grim voice, but all I heard was such broken snatches as "loose-talking," pause, "unsound morals," longer pause, and then "general court-martial." Suddenly his face became very red and he sprang to his feet and shook the offending book which I heartily wished I had never written, under my shrinking nose.

"What do you know about me?" he shouted. "What do you know about my morals?"

"Nothing, sir," says I, "nothing——"

"You do," he shouted back to me, "you do. Has that lying old boatswain's mate been talking to you? What did he say, eh?"

"Nothing at all, sir," says I, "honest, sir——"

"That will do," says he, striding up and down the cabin; "The slandering old devil," he muttered; "the old liar."

At this moment the skipper entered the room and hope departed from my heart.

"What's wrong?" asks the skipper of the infuriated officer.

"Wrong!" says the officer, "wrong! Read this," he says, holding out the book in a shaking hand. "Written by this miserable sailor."

The skipper read it through and handed it back.

"I have never read in fewer words a more accurate characterization," he remarked in a calm voice. "It is nothing short of genius."

"I know, sir," I broke in, not wishing to contradict the skipper, "it might be true, but honestly it's all a mistake——"

"There's no mistake about it," continues the skipper, as if he had not heard me, "it's all true, every word of it."

"It's all that old lying Murphy's fault," said the Executive Officer, in a complaining voice; "every ship I get on with him he blackens my character."

"He knows too much," says the Captain in an insinuating voice.

"And not about me alone," replies the Exec. with equal insinuation.

"Oh," says the Captain, "I dare say you fancy Murphy could blacken my character?"

The Executive Officer turned away to hide an obviously sarcastic smile. "Oh, no," says he, "not Murphy nor any other man."

"Right," says the Captain; "above reproach—open like a book—white like a lily—my character."

"How about Yokohama?" says the Exec. sudden like.

"That will do," says the Captain, and both of them seemed to remember my presence for the first time.

"Well, young man, what have you to say?" asked the Captain, frowning. When I had finished telling my story about the books getting mixed up the Executive Officer still seemed to be a little suspicious.

"You can't prefer charges," said the skipper; "every officer knows it's true. No court-martial would convict him."

"But isn't an old officer faithful in his duty going to have some protection?" expostulated the Exec.

"Virtue and a clean conscience are a man's only shield and buckler," said the skipper as he left the room.

We were alone together once more, but not for long.

"You swear it's true what you've just told me?" he said, and I swore by some several known and unknown species of gods.

"All right," says he, "you can go, but bring back the right book this time."

As I was leaving I stopped in the doorway for a moment.

"Can I ask Murphy about Yokohama?" says I.

He leveled a pair of inscrutable eyes on me.

"Keep away from that wicked old man," says he, "but if you do go near him confine your questions to the Captain; leave me out of it, ye understand?"

I did.

SEPT. 29th.—“The Exec. said that you were a ‘wicked old man’ and for me to keep away from you,” I remarked to the white-haired old boatswain’s mate this evening.

“He did, eh?” said the old fellow, glaring at me from under his eyebrows.

“Yes,” says I, “and he said that you were an ‘old liar’ and a ‘slandering old devil,’” I continued cheerfully.

“Ah, he did, eh?” repeated the aged person. “He said that, did he?”

“‘A wicked old man,’” I repeated, “‘an old liar,’ and lots more that I don’t remember right now.”

“Now look here, young feller,” began the boatswain’s mate, pointing his equally venerable pipe at me, “now just you look here—I knew that man when he was nothing but a midshipman, and I have followed him around the world several times since, and for a more characterless, desperate acting, misbehaving man, you’d have to look somewhere other than in this world. Now I can remember once in Lisbon——” And all this evening I have been learning things about the Navy and several of its officers. What days the old days must have been! What good old days! Not like these.

SEPT. 30th.—This day I found out what a windsail was. It is not at all a difficult thing to do. All you have to do is to fall down it, and if you come through alive your reputation is eternally made. I was already quite well known on this ship before but now I’m notorious.

“There goes the guy wot fell down the windsail,” they say as I pass by.

“Yeah,” says another, “an’ wot lost the lead.”

“An’ almost killed our ship’s painter,” adds a third.

“Not to speak of laming our navigator by his clumsy falling and sprawling,” puts in still another member of the company unwilling that one item of my long list of misdeeds should pass unremarked.

“Some sailor,” they chime in a sarcastic chorus, “Wot a

guy," and I hasten on my way with bitterness in my heart. But all this has nothing to do with my quick road to fame via the windsail. And, after all, there is nothing to tell save that I fell down the thing. It wasn't at all what I thought it, neither are many other things. My inglorious career of trial and error in the Navy has taught me at least that much. Nothing is what you think it, not even liberty. Sometimes things are more so, sometimes less, but never true to form. That's life and largely stomach. Lots of the world's best poetry has come from a bad stomach and, of course, vice versa. Some of the finest murders of our times had their inception originally in a badly setting breakfast; divorces, marriages, fires and labor troubles—bad stomachs every time. If your food disagrees with you, you get married; if it continues to disagree you get unmarried, and if these expedients fail to work you get religion, dyspepsia or buried. There's no getting away from your stomach. I've tried it; I know. It sometimes gets away from you, but you can never get away from it. Ever since I set foot upon this St. Vitus stricken ship I've been trying to get away from my stomach, what little there is of it, but it's been right with me all the time and it's been bad. I've never known my stomach to be so bad. It's been terrible. Upset and all that; boxing the compass, doing the flips, standing on its ear and falling downstairs. Well, these are revolutionary times and every stomach is an out and out Bolshevik (popular conception). No stable government. No diplomatic exchange. No rest. Anarchy and torment from wave to wave. I never realized the sea could be so rough when I used to take my sweetie, that beautiful woman, out in a canoe on the lake, but maybe that was the reason. If sailors had their sweeties with them maybe they'd never get seasick. This is a good idea, but the Navy Department wouldn't like it, I guess. Much better to have them in every port; rich ones with automobiles and lots of food on the table and a floor that doesn't wiggle and a nice, big sofa in front of a swell fire and a couple of electric

lights burning somewhere down in the cellar—oh, boy, this small man's navy is making a polygamist of me, if that's the right word. I don't know that it is, because mother never let such words in the front door at home, never any further than that. She always said that her husband was as bad as she knew him to be and if he was any worse than that she'd have to hand it to him. She did—on numerous occasions. But then again this has nothing to do with the windsail I fell down. Well, that's all I did. Just fell down it. Lit on the back of my neck and stayed there for some time. I have read of people falling down the windsail, but I never knew they did it in real life. They do though, at least I do. But that doesn't matter, for I can do anything—wrong.

NOTE.—For those who are unfamiliar with the windsail, and certainly there must be some, I might mention that it is a large, compact canvas tube with an open flare at the head, lots of wind inside, and a hole at the deck end through which the wind and unfortunate people like myself pass swiftly down into the interior of the ship. Well, that's a windsail, and I'm the "guy wot fell down it." That's who I am and will be ever more even if I should chance to meet, which I hope I don't, any member of this crew twenty years from now in any part of this world of ours.

OCT. 1st.—Without word or warning we steamed up the Narrows to-day. If I had known yesterday that we were so close to home I would have jumped overboard and tried to swim it. We rate liberty to-morrow. Tony is already beginning to apply large quantities of horrid smelling oil to his hair. He claims to have a little pig that loves it. If so she must always have a cold in her head.

OCT. 2nd.—New York, a large city on the Hudson River, chiefly given over to coming and going. I have been here before, but I never thought that I'd ever get back again. The tall buildings are quite tall, the fine hotels are just that, there are many people on the streets and many streets for

them to be on, but I don't see why they are on the streets, for if I was in civilian clothes I'd be in a café, and if I ever got into a café I'd never get back again to the street, and I'd be glad of it—for awhile. New York has a nice subway that gets quite excited around 42d street and loses its head and everybody loses their tempers, but this is all right, for it serves many a commuter with an excuse for getting home late for dinner, or not getting home at all, or getting home too much so, and all that.

There are lots of nice canteens for sailors and soldiers in New York City, and in one of these canteens I found a grasshopper. How he had gotten there I don't know, but nevertheless there he was a-grasshoppering around in the most approved style, and most of the ladies were up on the tables getting their nice white canvas shoes all dirty in the soldiers' and sailors' soup, and if Coles Phillips, the ankle artist, had been there with his pad and pencil, he would have been able to get enough material to supply an advertising agency with a campaign extending over several years.

Well, however that may be, I stalked this grasshopper from foot to soup, cornered him in a pile of baked beans, and eventually brought the grim pursuit to an end on the outskirts of some ham and eggs. No one would help me. They were all too busy looking at the ladies.

"It isn't a rat," I explained to the ladies between hops.

"No," cried a sailor promptly, "but he's just as dangerous."

So the ladies stayed where they were, which was evidently where most everybody thought they should be.

After I had caught this grasshopper I didn't know what to do with it. It is hardly an animal that you can reconcile to captivity. Everywhere you put it it hops. You can't put it out and tell it to be still, and you can't threaten it with punishment as you would a dog, and still you can't kill it, particularly when on a visit to New York, as was evidently this grasshopper.

"Take it outside!" several ladies cried in chorus, and so I

gathered up my bundle in one hand and caging the grasshopper in the other I left amid cheers. But Fifth Avenue is no place for a grasshopper—not a live grasshopper. It's all right for a dead grasshopper or a despondent grasshopper, but a live, cheerful active grasshopper should never go on Fifth Avenue. It's very bad hopping there. I put the old battler down, but nearly had heart failure because the very first hop sent him under the uplifted foot of a heavy pedestrian. Hoppers are not good navigators. Too reckless. With a loud yell I pushed the gentleman from off my unusual protégé.

"You nearly spoiled my grasshopper," I explained to him.

From the man's expression I knew there was no doubt in his mind about my being balmy.

"Grasshopper," he ejaculated, "humbug!"

"In a sense, yes," I answered; "but this one isn't a humbug, it's *some* bug. You just ought to see him hop."

When we looked to find him he was no longer there, and the old guy thought I'd been kidding him.

"No more of your tricks," he said, and passed on, leaving me groping around the feet of New York for a weak-minded grasshopper.

"Pardon me, sir," I said suddenly to an English officer, "but you are about to step on my favorite grasshopper," and I scooped the greatly interrupted insect out from under his high polished boot.

"Grasshopper," said the officer severely. "Grasshopper. Shouldn't be here. Not regular. Country the place for grasshoppers. Hang it all, it isn't right. Bad taste. Not cricket."

"Oh, no," says I, misunderstanding him; "it's a grasshopper all right, not a cricket."

"No place for it," said the officer briefly. "It's not regular. All wrong."

"Not for our grasshoppers," I replied. "You see, sir, American grasshoppers are altogether different from English grasshoppers. They are brought up differently; more lib-

erty, and all that. Frequently they spend weeks at a time in the city."

"Fancy that," replied the officer, much perplexed, "but it's all wrong. Not right. City no place for it. Good-bye."

And he, too, passed down the street, leaving me with this grasshopper to dispose of. It seemed to have come into my life permanently. Suddenly I had a bright idea.

"Why not take it over to the park back of the Library and let it go? There it can find everything that any reasonable grasshopper should expect. Lots of grass and plenty of room for hopping."

I carried this move into effect, and just on the other side of Fifth Avenue—other, meaning the side opposite the one I had just left—I encountered an elderly naval officer and was forced to salute him. There was a bundle in my left hand and a grasshopper in my right, but I did my best.

"Young man," said the officer blocking my progress, "are you shaking your fist at me?"

"No, sir," says I.

"Well what's the matter with your hand?" he asked in a suspicious voice.

"I got a grasshopper in it," I replied very simply and unaffectedly.

For a long time he gazed searchingly in my face as if trying to read my mind. I could see that he received my information with the greatest distrust. Presently curiosity overcame his dignity.

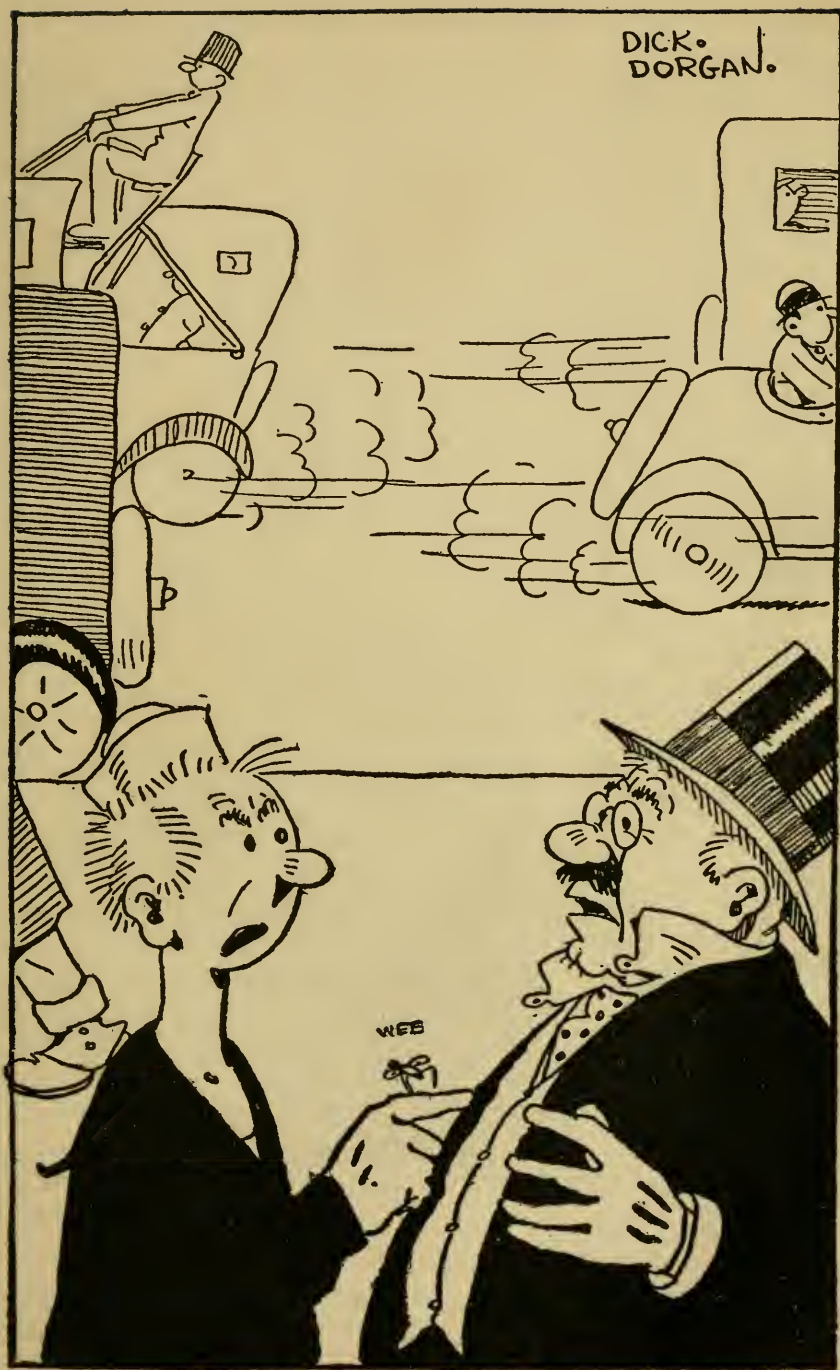
"Let's see it," says he.

I held my hand up and let him peek through the fingers through which the beady eyes of the grasshopper peered out upon the world with great discontent.

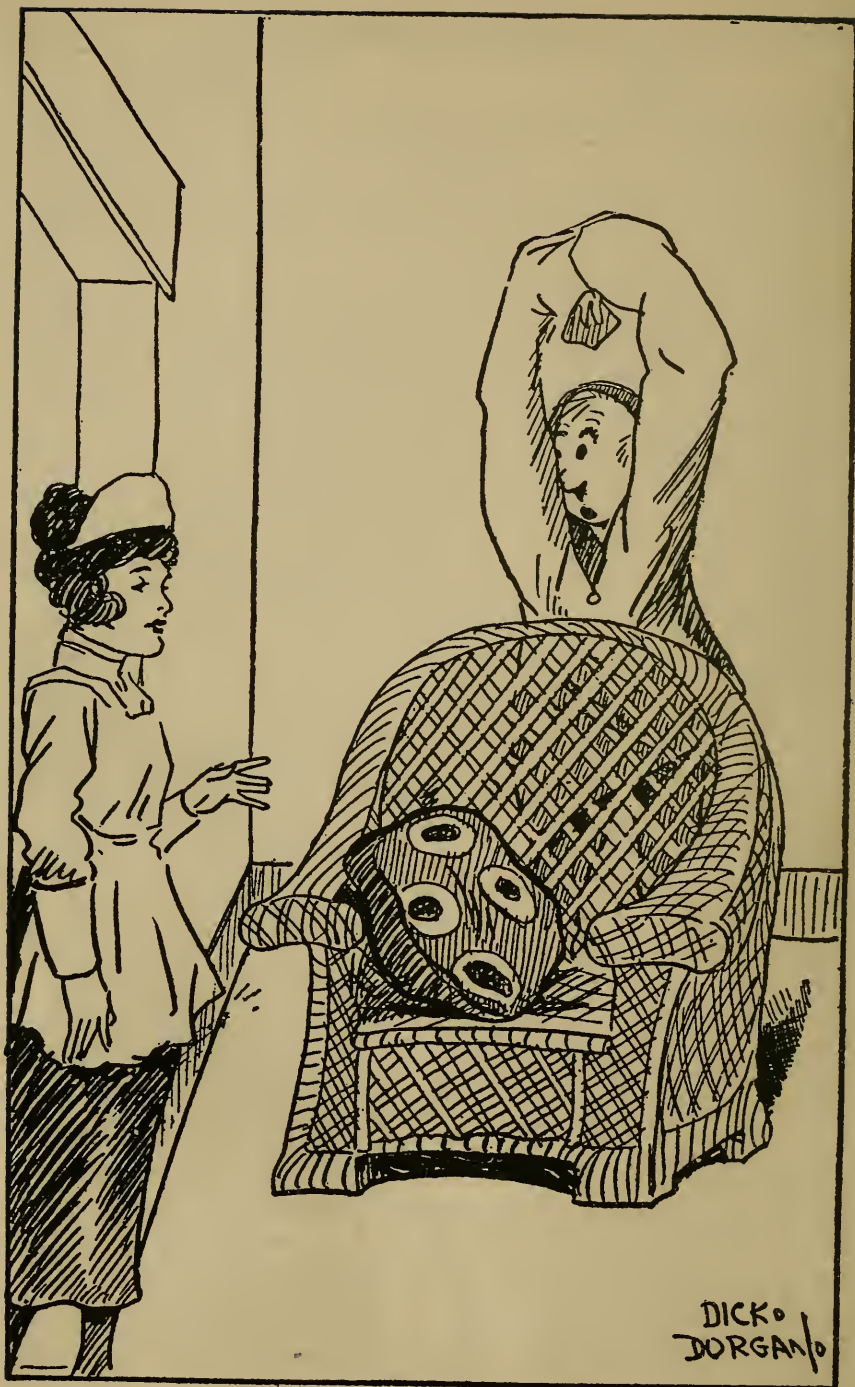
"See it!" says I excitedly. "See it!"

And with this remark the poor benighted insect made one leap for freedom and landed upon the officer's breast. For a moment it looked like an assault. I pounced upon the

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"'YOU NEARLY SPOILED MY GRASSHOPPER'"—Page 35



“‘WHAT’S SO BLOOMING WONDERFUL ABOUT THIS,’ SAYS I, EDGING BEHIND
AN OPEN WORK CHAIR”—Page 42

grasshopper, and consequently had to pounce upon the officer, and nearly tore his campaign stripes off.

"Got him," says I triumphantly.

The officer regained his balance and regarded me darkly.

"Keep him," he says, and hutchels away.

So I kept him until I got into the park, and here I launched him forth to freedom with much ceremony.

"Good hopping, old sport," says I as I tossed him to the grass.

But, strange to relate, he didn't hop. All he did was to sit there and curl his whiskers at me for all the world like a mad photographer I once knew. I couldn't drag myself away from the spot until I saw him hop. I feared he had gone sick on me. The moral responsibility of having a grasshopper on one's hands is something tremendous. And as I stood gazing down into the grass a crowd gathered around me and also gazed down into the grass. Of course the crowd didn't see the grasshopper, but it earnestly hoped to see something, so it added unto itself and gazed. Then suddenly the thing happened. It hopped.

"See," says I proudly, "he will do it again."

"What?" asked an old man.

"Who?" cried some one.

"What'll he do again?" another one called out.

"Stand back, lemme see!" a fourth one shouted.

"Watch," I commanded. "Watch close."

Again the grasshopper proved himself worthy of his name and race by hopping.

"What did I tell you?" I said as I walked away; "he did it, and if you watch carefully he'll do it again. In fact," I added, to heighten the mystery, "that's all he can do."

The crowd was still gazing as I departed. It is the nature of crowds to gaze, and it is the nature of grasshoppers to hop, and I for one would not want it a bit different. "As it is, so it is," say I.

OCT. 3rd.—Met Gladys to-day and took her to tea.

Score by innings:

5 P.M.	5.15 P.M.	5.45	6 P.M.
Tea	Lemonade	Ice Cream	Cakes
Sandwiches	Cakes	Coffee	Almonds
French Pastry	Sandwiches	Cakes	Salad

6.15	Grand total
Demi Tasse	
Cakes	
Cakes	\$9.85

That girl has the most fluent appetite I ever encountered. And the strange thing about it is that it seems to do her good. Even her dog Dippy who is no slouch at eating hands her the palm when it comes to a contest.

Oct. 9th.—Numerous important and painful things have happened to me, but I am still quite vague about them all. I remember sitting in a friend's apartment on my last liberty feeling very hot and doing some particularly fancy coughing, and then I remember some one getting up suddenly and looking at me in a peculiar, frightened way, then I coughed again, laughed rather foolishly and it seems I was then put to bed. From that time on, life assumed a cubist expression. I recall vividly oranges, a kind lady reading to me while I traced a map of the western front from the cracks in the plaster on the ceiling. There seemed to be a certain quantity of broth and milk and a long procession of glittering thermometers somehow connected to a doctor with a pointed beard, a great deal of unnecessary heat circulating around my anatomy and always a splendid accompaniment of coughing. At one time I remember mother came swooning into the room and delivered an impassioned dissertation on underwear, her favorite subject; and then Polly, my sweetie, arrived and sat down beside me like a thwarted nun and gave me to understand that she would cheerfully sign a guarantee to forgive me all my past and future sins if I would only get well, and then she went away

just as I was telling her about the sad case of a broken-down elephant suffering from nervous prostration that had come to me in the dark hours of the previous night and sat heavily on my chest. She left, but I continued the story; and the funny part of it was that I believed it, at least they say I did.

Then one morning the doctor came and after listening eagerly to the animated conversation of my lungs, asked me how I would like to go to a hospital.

"Don't be silly," says I, "I'm very busy and I've a lot of things to do."

"Get ready," says he, giving my left side an extra jab for good luck, "get ready if you can, for the ambulance will be here in fifteen minutes."

He departed and I arose more or less horrified and messed heatedly around in a world of infinite space and no security until a man in white suddenly appeared to me with a little book in his hands and began to ply me with purely rudimentary questions.

"What's your name?" he asked in a bored voice.

"It doesn't matter about the name," I replied, "I won't be answering to it long."

"Perhaps not," he agreed cheerfully, "but this is official."

After that we departed the spot and I saw it no more. I had to climb down six flights of stairs and they taxed me greatly. I progressed with stately elaboration, considering which landing would be the best to go to sleep on. The man in white kept looking at me with an impatient scowl, but made no effort to help me.

"Sorry, old chap," I said, to keep you from your pinochle, "but only one boiler is working at present." The street was lined with expectant and morbidly interested people.

"Wot cher got, mister?" one worthy asked.

"Fits," I answered, "with a deadly complication of bubonic plague. While I have been speaking I have given off exactly 7,895,372 extremely nosey germs. You have gotten many of them."

After this I staggered to the ambulance and fell within. At the hospital I was greeted by a flock of nurses who conveyed me to my room.

"Get undressed, sonny," said one of them while the rest crowded cheerfully around the door.

"All right," says I, waiting for her to leave.

"All right," says she, not leaving.

"All right," says I, rather unhappily.

"Start in," says she in a business-like voice.

"You promise to marry me," says I, taking off my shoes.

"Oh," she says as light dawned upon her, "you want me to go."

"Well, it would be easier," I admitted, and she withdrew.

I had just gotten down to my shirt, when the door burst open and all the nurses in the world stood without regarding me anxiously.

"Atta, boy," called one of them in tones of encouragement.

"You're doing fine," cried another.

"What's so blooming wonderful about this?" says I, edging behind an open-work chair. "I have undressed myself for a long time now—ever since Bridget left."

"Go to it," says one of them, and I was forthwith bundled into bed, at which moment I drew a complete blank.

OCT. 12th.—Much better. I permitted Polly to kiss my hand this evening. It was interestingly thin. Mother has been shopping for a particularly thick brand of underwear all afternoon against my departure. I told her to interview Admiral Peary, who knew all about such things. She took his name down and said she'd look him up in the telephone book immediately. I have had a crisis and everything, but I'm not going to die for quite some time, I'm told. That's nice.

OCT. 13th.—Complications. The playful little pleurisy has me in its clutches. It's one of those things that has to be felt and not described. No sleep, no rest. Constant

misery. I asked the doctor if he was sure that I wasn't going to die and when he said "Yes" I almost cried.

"Well, well, how are you feeling now?" asked the nurse this morning as she swooped cheerfully into the room. I had sat up all night with a hot water bottle and burned myself in several places which were so intimate that I could hardly indulge in the comfort of complaining about them.

"Well," says I, wearily, "after all the agony I've been through the least you could do would be to come across with a little petting."

"You don't deserve to get well after that," says the nurse, leaving the room with false dignity.

OCT. 17th.—Out of pain. Wonder how Fogerty is. Hope he hasn't caught the "flu." Any one wishing to verify the size and quantity of my illness needs only to look at my chart. The fever page looks like a sketch of the Andes Mountain range. Polly has just left. She's a beautiful woman but a trifle too resolute.

OCT. 18th.—I almost cried when I left the hospital this afternoon. I'd sort of gotten used to the place and the life of an invalid. I thanked every one profusely, including the elevator boy and told them that they had saved my life. They admitted it, and I guess they did. The lady whose apartment I used to get sick in had a hand in it, too. She was first to the front and got all the good coughing, and was eternally compromised in the eyes of two school-teachers who lived in the next flat.

OCT. 19th.—Reported aboard today. No sympathy. Why do they always say "The good ship so and so"? I see nothing good about a ship except the gangplank and "Lay aft, liberty party!"

OCT. 23rd.—(In the general direction of France) Sick, that's all; just plain sick.

OCT. 26th.—(Leaving the war) For full information reread entry of Oct. 23rd.

Nov. 2nd.—(Near New York—maybe) The remarks of Oct. 23rd and 26th still hold good.

Nov. 5th.—(New York) "Lay aft, liberty party!" The Boatswain has just uttered those magic words. I find no trouble in "laying aft." It's the best thing I do. Now I shall proceed to let Polly admire me make away with a pair of plutocratic steaks.

Nov. 12th.—Well, it's over; all, all over, and I haven't any wound stripes on my arm. What an inglorious part I have played in the war. I have fallen down and gotten sick and made mistakes and boxed the compass and done endless useless things, but haven't even seen a periscope. How I will have to lie to my grandchildren. I can now understand why poor, dear grandfather lies so abundantly about his leg that got caught in a folding bed. He feels morally obligated to posterity to tell about his heroic exploits in war. I'll have to go through with it, too.

Last night was not a pretty night. People kissed me. Everywhere I went I was kissed just as resoundingly as if I had been the greatest hero. But they were never the right people. I suspected them of having been rebuffed by other sailors stronger than I. One very pretty girl kissed me, however, and Polly almost bit her. After this we soon went home, Polly abusing me all the way.

"Why didn't you stop her?" she asked bitterly.

"I was too tired, Polly," I replied. "You see for yourself, dear, I can't help being what I am."

"If I thought you could," said Polly, "I'd have no respect for you."

I chewed on this remark for quite some time. There's a lot more in it than meets the eye. Women are that way.

Nov. 14th.—The old camp has been blighted by a swarm of very new and bright assistant paymasters. Today I visited it and found the woods full of them. Everywhere I went they were looking for their orders. "More paymasters than pay," mused I, looking bitterly at an approach-

ing swarm. As they passed me I saluted them gravely and they returned my salute with gratitude.

The place is quite changed. I found any number of Chiefs doing sentry duty. I guess the Ensigns are manning the drags, but I did not actually see this. Everything is being done to make it easy and comfortable for the ordinary seaman.

Mr. Fogerty, my old dog, was moderately glad to see me. He was talking things over with Chief Larry near a very imposing coal pile. Fogerty is very anxious to be mustered out and get back into civil life. He has a couple of families over at City Island to support, not to mention a few down at New Rochelle and White Plains. He has traveled far in his day, has Fogerty, and never have I met a dog that so glories in his past indiscretion.

Nov. 16th.—(Looking backward) He was sitting on the tool box of an automobile with his feet on the running board, and strange to relate he was sitting in his stocking feet. Placed carefully beside him were his large, expressive, nobbed-nosed, navy shoes. Through the long slits of the city fell the vast night, clamorous with the voices of people, the honking of horns which sounded like a large flock of disturbed geese passing southward through the night, and from the river came the deep, vibrating notes of a host of craft forming a sort of monotonous background of sound for the shriller noise arising from the multitude. The world moved through the streets of New York like an undulating, sombre colored ribbon. There were no single pedestrians. There was no room for the solitary traveler. Humanity, as if drawn by some vast magnet in the hands of an irresponsible god, was squeezed and moulded into a solid river of life, flowing and pouring confusedly wherever an opening was presented. It was a flow of sound and unbridled triumphant rejoicing. Never in the history of the world had there been such a river. For four years the people that went to compose this mass had been held subdued

and in leash, fear ridden, wracked by doubts and hitherto unknown bitterness, and now, on this night, the war was over and the phantom that had hung like a shadow for so long over their drab, every-day lives was being chased back into the night on the wings of a great noise. Here was the brutality of happiness divorced from all the cloying niceties of so called civilization, expressive and true in its sheer vulgarity and freedom. Here the numerous proprieties enforced by modern society were shown up in their true light as flimsy bits of drapery which man immediately discards in the face of any strong emotion. The next day the papers wrote indignant editorials on the coarseness and immorality of the celebration, a fact which proved that even in the face of evidence the editors still believe they can control the hearts of men with the same ease and precision with which type is run into the columns of their papers. Men read these editorials ironically and went their way rejoicing. Long after they were forgotten this great night would spring up in their thought as a particularly pleasant and thrilling memory, and they would tell their grandchildren about it in a discreetly abridged version.

As I read over these lines I have written I am wondering whether I am starting a novel or writing a diary. Certainly they sound novelesque. I think I might even show them to Polly, that beautiful and gracious creature, as sarcastic as she is sweet, which means some sarcasm at times. Yes, I might even show them to her, so pleased am I with them, if only to convince her that my literary leanings are really not literary flounderings, as she takes so much pleasure in assuring me every time I read her a poem composed to her eyes and in her honor.

In the meantime, I am leaving a certain party sitting quietly in his stocking feet on the tool box of an automobile.

"Sit down," said the certain party, seemingly oblivious to all the turbulent masses seething around him.

"Sit down," he repeated, "me dogs hurt."

"Corns?" said I, sinking wearily to the running board of the deserted car.

"Bunions," said the sailor moodily. "Terrible painful after being stepped on."

"I can well imagine," I replied, sympathetically.

"No you can't," said the sailor in an injured voice as though I was depreciating his pain. "No you can't," he repeated, "unless you've ever had 'em. Have yer?" he added looking at me with much interest.

"No," I answered reluctantly, "but I know all about them. We had a cook once named Nora and she had them all the time."

"I guess she didn't have 'em any worse than mine," he replied jealously.

"Oh, no," said I, "certainly not. I guess you've got the worst attack of bunions a fellow ever had."

"Sure," said he, "you've said something."

We were quiet for awhile, busy with our own thoughts. Mine were largely composed of Polly, whom I had just taken home and faithfully promised to go to bed and keep off the streets where the women insisted, despite my modest protestations, upon kissing me, and here I was, breaking my promise, sitting in the middle of Times Square with a sailor afflicted of bunions while all the world swarmed round our feet.

"Now I knew a guy," began the sailor, "as thought himself taken with bunions. In fact, he claimed to have had the worst—"

And thus started a long discussion on the nature and habits of the domestic bunion with which I will not trouble the reader. For my part, I had very little to give to this discussion and consequently was forced to listen to a lengthy dissertation from the sailor, whose knowledge of the subject seemed well nigh inexhaustible. Thus, calmly in the face of one of the largest, noisiest and most spontaneous celebrations ever known in the history of such events we

sat and talked bunions, which perhaps, after all, is about as good a thing to do as any in such circumstances.

After he had succeeded in convincing me that he was a person deserving of the utmost solicitude, he became quite cheerful and immediately forgetting his great affliction he put on his shoes and we proceeded to talk of the sea and ships as all real sailors do when they are thrown in each other's company.

"Troopship, eh," he replied in response to my answer. "You're lucky. All I've been doing is snooping around the coast along with a lot of excitable furriners what went loco every time a submarine was even so much as mentioned. I got boiled on one of them southern islands once an' almost lost me ship. What a night! Worse than this. Much broader."

With this he thrust his arm into the after part of the automobile and produced, much to my surprise, a pair of golf clubs.

"See what they got in this machine," he said, looking curiously at the sticks. "I guess they must be carpenters or mechanics or something, although I didn't ever see any of these instruments used in those trades. What do you think they are?"

"Why, they are golf sticks," I replied amazed at his ignorance.

"What are golf," he asked looking at me innocently.

"Golf," I answered. "Oh, golf is a sort of a game indulged in by the so-called upper classes and practically the entire population of Scotland and the Union League Club."

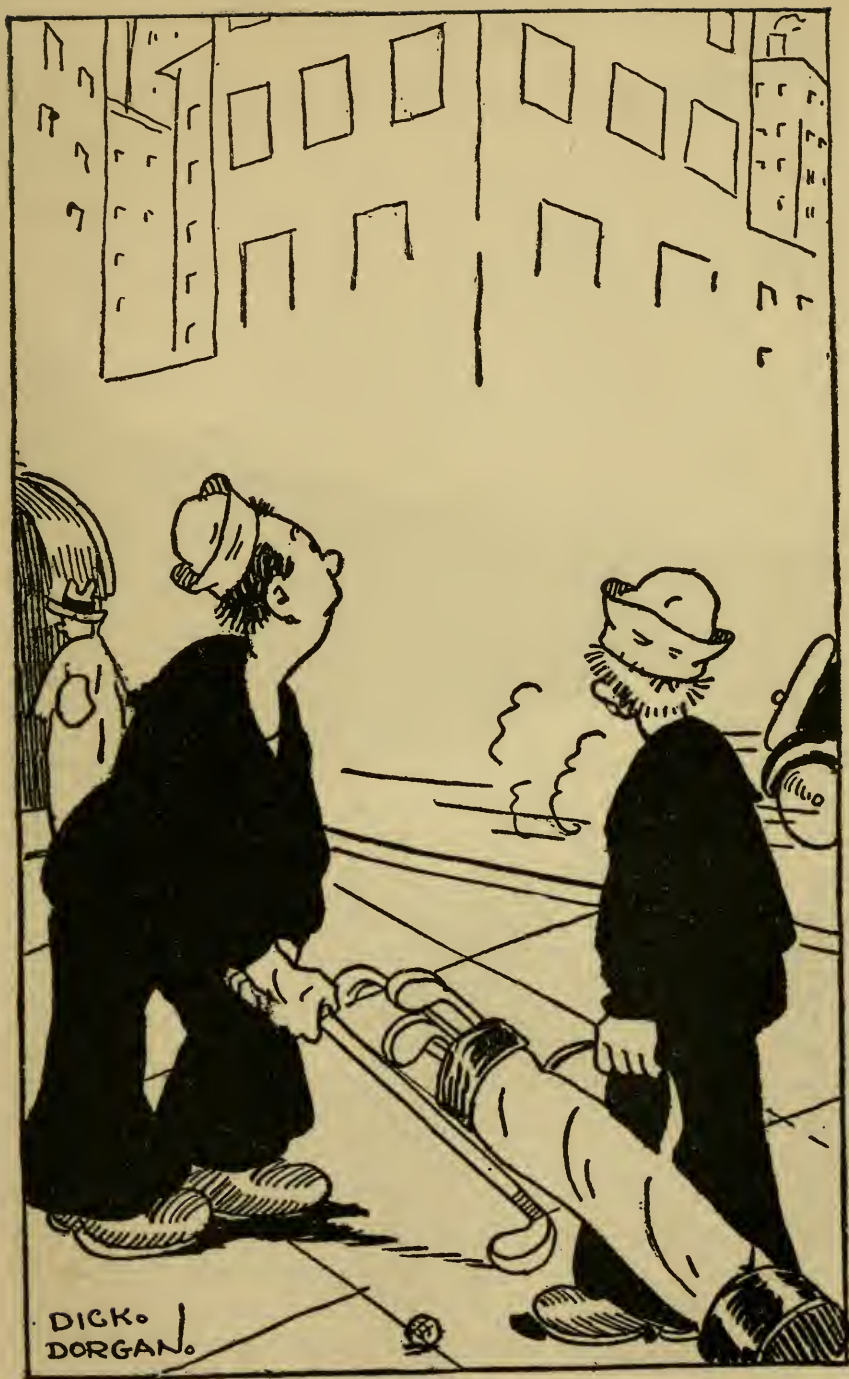
"Oh, sure, I heard of it," he replied and reaching back into the automobile once more he produced a thermos bottle.

"Oh, look," he exclaimed, his eyes growing large, "whatta ye guess is in here?"

"Don't know," I replied. "Take a chance and open it."

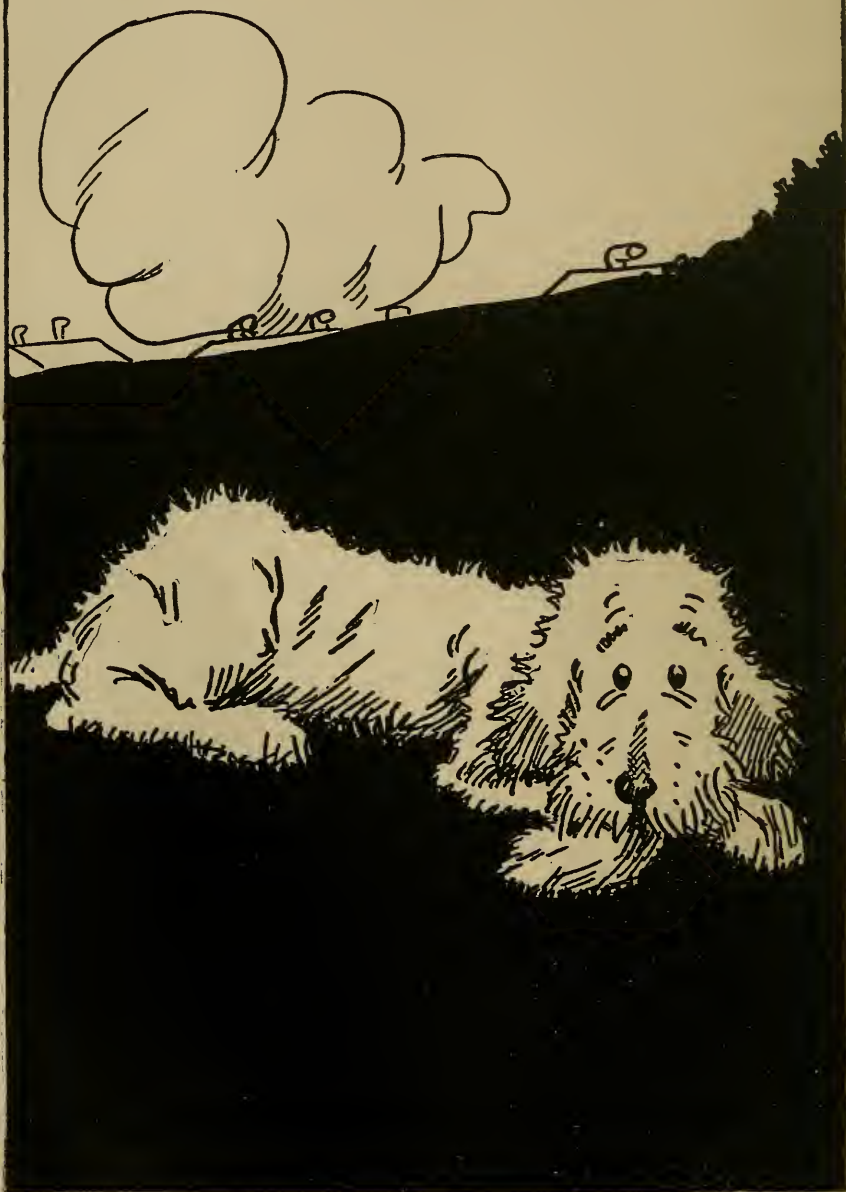
He opened it and proceeded to sniff suspiciously.

"There's something in it," he whispered, his eyes dancing.



"SEE THAT WINDOW OVER THERE?"—Page 51

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"IT SEEMS THAT MR. FOGERTY'S SWEETIE HAS GIVEN HIM THE GO BY"—

"Taste it," I answered, hardly able to restrain my excitement.

He tasted it and handed the bottle to me.

"Whatta ye think it is?" he said.

"I don't exactly know," I said, smacking my lips, "but let's not inquire. As long as we don't know what we are drinking we can't be blamed for drinking it, see?"

He looked at me and smiled.

"You're some wise guy all right," said he. "No wonder you get along so well in the navy."

I shuddered at this remark.

"Don't feel so cold now, does it?" he said presently, after the mysterious bottle had exchanged hands numerous times.

"No," says I, "I believe it's actually gotten warmer."

"Sure it's getting warmer all the time," he replied and reached for the bottle.

After we had taken a couple of more tugs at the halyards we found that we were against the bottom and we further found that the running board of the automobile was no longer large enough to hold us. In fact, the whole night seemed a little cramped for our exuberant spirits.

"Let's play golf," suggested my friend.

"All right," I agreed readily, "but we've got to find a golf ball."

"What's this?" he asked, producing one.

"That's the little thing," I replied, and together we set off in search of a place in which to play our game.

Right in the middle of the street we found such a place. Owing to some unfinished street mending the people were unable to crowd on to this small spot and so we had just sufficient room for a swing.

"What do you do?" says he.

"I'll show you," says I, as I carefully set the ball and addressed it with the utmost politeness.

"See that window over there," I said, pointing to the second story of a clothing shop across the street. "The one

all lighted up with the figure of a guy wearing the latest 'varsity cut 1919' model in it?"

"Yeah," said he, still puzzled.

"Well, concentrate your attention on me and that window. I'm an old hand at this game."

With this I set myself, raised the club and brought it down with a resounding whack upon the ball. It was one of the cleanest, most powerful strokes I have ever made. It would have found the green on any course in the world. My only regret is that the window was in the way. But the window was in the way. We could not follow the course of the ball, but we had no difficulty in locating it. There was a sudden, soul satisfying shattering of glass and instantly thereafter the gentleman in the "varsity cut" clothes became very much disturbed. His hat tilted over his in-offensive wax nose and his out-board arm swung crazily. Numerous people gazed up at the window, but no one seemed to know or care from which direction the missile had come.

"Lord," breathed my friend, "what a wallop!"

He ran back of the automobile and returned with another ball.

"Let me try," he pleaded.

"Go to it," I said, giving him a few instructions and feeling highly delighted over the success of my last shot.

"Don't worry about the window; they're all insured."

His first half a dozen swings missed the ball completely and only succeeding in arousing his ill temper and putting more power in his arms. Suddenly he hit it. The departed spirit of some great golf champion must have guided his stroke.

"Listen!" he gasped, as the sound of breaking glass fell pleasantly upon the night.

The figure of an Egyptian king, sitting in envious admiration before the figure of an upstanding young gentleman clad proudly in another style of "varsity cut" clothes,

suddenly crumbled up on his throne and seemed to lose all interest in the object of his admiration.

This was too much for my friend. He almost broke down from joy. He embraced me and danced around like the not infrequently referred-to wild Indian.

"What a game!" he kept repeating. "What a game! I'm going to buy me a lot of them funny little golf balls and play it all me life."

We returned to the automobile with the clubs, but the car had disappeared completely, and the spot thereof knew it no more. From that time on this sailor man and I wandered around the town in each other's company, getting kisses and refreshments whenever the opportunity presented itself, which it did with a certain degree of frequency. I must confess that for the time being I had completely forgotten Polly and, furthermore, may it be set down to my everlasting shame that I reported aboard with my hat tied on with some woman's automobile scarf and a golf stick in my hand.

On my way to the ship I encountered an old woman standing miserably on a corner in the dim, early morning light. In one hand was a bucket, in the other she held a mop.

"It's all over, mother," I cried. "It's all over."

But she merely stared before her.

"It's all over," I repeated, thinking to arouse the old lady. "The war is over."

For a moment she continued to stare in that same dull way into nothingness, then she turned on me with a slow, crooked smile, and one thin, bony hand sought her eyes. She bowed her head, and for some reason I felt sure there were tears beneath that withered old hand.

"It's all over," I repeated softly to myself, and for the first time the full, ironical significance of what I had been shouting to the lonely old woman became clear to me, and with that knowledge the joy of the past night grew sour in my throat.

Nov. 18th.—Well, it's all over with me. Tim, Tony, the Spider and myself have been detached from the ship and ordered to report back to Pelham. How will I ever be able to stand that place after having enjoyed the freedom of the seas. We're to be released, I understand, but a certain amount of vagueness is attached to this point. Already the Spider has begun to sandpaper his fingers. He says that the rough work he has been doing while in the Navy has completely ruined his hands for safe cracking. His fingers fairly itch to get back on a good tough combination. Yesterday he relieved Tim of all his loose change and handed it back to him later, saying he was merely getting back into practice, and this morning he passed among the ship's company, distributing little tokens he had removed from certain of its members during the last trip. From all sides he was greeted with expressions of admiration on the part of those he had so honored. After the ceremony he returned to us feeling both proud and reassured. We treat him now in a friendly manner, but are a trifle distant at the same time. The Spider has a habit of stealing our money and then asking us to loan it to him. This we are necessarily forced to do, under the circumstances.

It is now time for us to shove off. I have said good-bye to friend and enemy alike. Even the ship's painter smiled when I apologized to him for the last time for having dropped my hammock on him and knocking him off the scow. The Quartermaster forgave me for losing the lead, and everybody seemed to be happy and relieved to see me go. I experienced a similar feeling myself, and when I came on deck and looked down the channel at a long, restive expanse of putty-colored water it was with a sensation of great thankfulness that I shouldered my bag and hammock and left the ship upon which I had served with a degree of uselessness hitherto unachieved by any sailor in any navy.

Nov. 19th.—(Back at Pelham.)

"My God! Are you back again?" said an apparently horror-stricken officer, as I stood before the mast on the charge of having a dirty bag.

"Yes, sir," I replied, cheerfully. "And I had earnestly hoped never to see your face again, sir."

For a moment we stood gazing reflectively at each other. Then a broad, friendly smile made its appearance on the officer's face, lending to it a hitherto unsuspected human expression.

"Well, what did you do to the ship you were on?" he asked.

"Practically everything, sir," I replied, modestly. "In fact, it is claimed that I almost ruined it."

"Not at all unlikely, if you ran true to form," he answered, still smiling.

"I did, sir," I said. "I ran true to form, and in some instances surpassed myself."

"Good!" said the officer, approvingly. "And now you're going up for a shoot."

There was hardly any answer to this remark that I could well make. However, my face assumed a sort of smeared expression, and the more smeared my expression became the more cheerful grew the officer.

"Well, it's hardly the way to welcome you back from the sea, I'll admit," began the officer. "Perhaps your bag got soiled, so to speak, in the process of transportation."

He looked at me and smiled strangely.

"It did, sir," I replied, without turning a hair. "It was very dusty coming up."

"All right," says he. "Under the circumstances it's excusable, but remember, regulations are regulations in the future."

To my dying day I'll remember that sentence. Years from now I expect to wake up in bed repeating it to myself. And with this I departed the spot.

Nov. 23rd.—More hitherto family-free sailors are discovering unsuspected families and dependents than I ever knew existed before. Every day some sailor breaks down on my breast and sobs over the great suffering and deprivation of an aged parent and seventeen brothers and sisters caused by his absence from home. I myself am trying to rake up a couple of perfectly helpless dependents, but I'm having a tough time of it. I know one aged bar-keep who more or less depended upon me in his declining years, but somehow I haven't the nerve to write him into my application, although I'm sure the old gentleman deserves having some one to look after him. However, I'm afraid I'm not that person, because in all likelihood I will need a great deal of looking after once I'm mustered out of the service, but that has nothing to do with my diary.

DEC. 1st.—Nothing to report save that this is another month and my tapes are still dirty! Steps must be taken or I'll be going to the mat with my P. O. for the seventeen hundred time since my first jab. My spirit remains unbroken, however. I exult in my ignorance and glory in my mistakes.

DEC. 2nd.—(Holiday for some reason I haven't troubled to enquire about.) Chicken, corn, pumpkin pie and trimmings. I saved the neck for Mr. Fogerty. The poor, simple-souled dog had hardly the heart to eat it. There are enough lovesick sailors in camp as it is without the dogs getting the complaint. It seems that Mr. Fogerty's sweetie over in City Island has given him the go by. He's not the first to meet such a fate in that quarter, I'll tell the world.

The smoking lamp was lighted all day and consequently I was very popular with the "Spider" and his two companions, Tony and Tim, on the strength of a shipment of fags that mother left with me at the time of her last incursion on the privacy of the camp. There was little drilling to-day, but what there was was enough. Spent most of the afternoon in washing my tapes, sewing on buttons,

scrubbing my bag and providing my friends with matches to enable them to light the cigarettes they had borrowed from me.

DEC. 3rd.—Took an unnecessarily long walk with an unnecessarily heavy gun to an unnecessarily stupid place, then the reel was reversed and we proceeded back to camp, astounding the populace by our unnecessarily intricate formations. I have never been able to master the company square for the same reason, I reckon, that I was always a bum at ring-around-a-rosie in my childish days. Kissing games I could play, but no one would ever play them with me. "What's the use," they used to say. "You're too willing." I will admit it was more of an arrangement than a game when I took part in them.

DEC. 4th.—Rose early and went to the mat with the Master-at-arms. He said I lashed my hammock like a dowdy woman laced. I hardly consider this a very nice thing to say and would not put it down here were it not that I want to show the low order of the man's conversational attainments. I told him that I was unable to appreciate the full purport of his remarks for the reason that all my sweeties were trimly stayed fore and aft and sailed before the wind. My remark, however, did not prevent me from relashing my hammock and doing it over again. I could not help thinking of what the Jimmy-legs had said about, it, however, and kept laughing to myself at the idea. I now call my hammock "My Sloppy Old Jane." Such simple things amuse us isolated sailors.

DEC. 5th.—Tony, Tim, the Spider and I have taken to calling each other "Shipmates" around the barracks. It breaks the Jimmy-legs' heart, as he has never been to sea.

DEC. 6th.—An orderly almost kissed me this morning, but thank God, was able to suppress his burning desires at the sight of my repellent face.

"A lady is calling you on the wire," he said jealously.

"My dear," I said, not wishing to get in wrong with him. "I'm sure there must be some mistake. I have no interests outside of camp."

He departed, relieved, but I answered the call in my quiet, unassuming way. It was from Polly, my permanent sweet; the beautiful woman I hope to make my jailer.

"Biltmore, dear," she said, just like that, "I'm just crazy to announce our engagement, and I want you to ask the Captain if you can get off soon and come down to the affair. Maybe he'd come too, do you think so, dear?"

"Well, hon," says I, for once bold, "he's awfully busy now, but I'm sure he'd love to come if he could."

You see, I'd told the poor girl, as sailors do, that the skipper and myself were awfully clubby and that he recognized me as the most dependable man on the station and that we often played croquet together on the lawn of the officers' club. In fact, I had to tell her lots of things in order to induce her to become permanent instead of promissory. All men do under the circumstances—and all women, too, for that matter. As a rule both sides know the other is lying, but they respect each other for their ability and consideration. A man that won't lie to the woman he loves, loves truth more than the woman and women can't stand that. However, my observations are dropping to a low moral plane which is not good for those who are not rugged at heart and ragged at ethics.

"But you will come, won't you, Biltmore?" she continues, pulling the dear stuff again. "The party wouldn't be complete without you."

"You mean the calamity," says I.

Then she wanted to make arrangements for next Saturday and I let her because she seemed so happy and excited about it all.

"Where shall I meet you?" she says. "We must have tea all by ourselves first."

I thought for a moment, for the presence of gold lace

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"THE BEAUTIFUL WOMAN I HOPE TO MAKE MY JAILER"—Page 59



"MY EYE, WHAT A WALK! SHE DID EVERYTHING BUT LOOP-THE-LOOP"

hanging furtively around in the background made me a little anxious.

"You'd better stay home, sweetie," I said, "there are too many young Ensigns sticking about here for me to give locations. I don't put anything past them."

With this I hung up and walked past several of the above mentioned race of people, who eyed me with venom. I must keep Polly away from the Ensigns at all cost. No matter how white your tapes are, gold lace has the edge.

DEC. 7th.—A personal and unconditional triumph in the grim, continuous battle between myself and my superiors.

Early in the afternoon we were told to go out on the parade ground and brush up a bit on our semaphore. "Brush up!" thinks I to myself. "How are you going to brush up when there ain't anything to brush. The ship that depended on me for signalling would remain deaf and dumb." I thought this, but to myself. The only letter I felt sure about was A and I didn't remember quite whether it was optional which hand you used.

With the utmost confidence, however, I took my flags and proceeded to the middle of the parade ground where I hid myself behind the huge figure of Tim and began to wave my arms about in an aimless manner. Aside from becoming a trifle tired I was getting away fine until a C. P. O. hotchels up to me and stands observing my movements with horrified, dilated eyes. This made me so nervous, that my arms began swinging around convulsively at a tremendous speed. I looked like a gaudy, but conscientious electric fan. Perspiration streamed down my face and neck, and still he watched. His expression gave way from horror to amazement and from that to fury.

"Time!" he shouted suddenly. "Time! Stop what you're doing, whatever it may be."

I threw myself into low and gradually slowed down to a neutral.

"What," asked the Chief with much deliberation, "what in the world do you think you've been doing?"

"Semaphoring, Chief," says I promptly.

"Ah," says the Chief, drawing a deep breath preparatory to a long burst of eloquence, insult and invective. "So that's what you've been doing. Well, I've been observing you closely for more than half an hour and although the semaphore system is so arranged that it is almost impossible for a man not to make a letter in the natural evolution of his arms, you seem to have been able to achieve this truly remarkable, well nigh unbelievable feat. How did you ever do it? Do you know one letter, even one?"

"I can spell words," I said proudly, but lyingly, "great long words."

"Spell one," said the Chief briefly.

"All right," says I.

"What's the word?" he asks.

"Oh, no," says I, cagey-like. "I ain't agoing to tell you the word. You just watch."

At this point I gave Tim the wink and he stood by to assist. Thereupon I began to wave my arms around frantically.

"What's that?" I asks the Chief after coming to a stop with a particularly catching flourish.

"Nothing," says the Chief. "Absolutely nothing."

"Wrong," says I snappily. "What is it, Tim?"

"Our little home," says Tim.

"Right," says I. "Now, Chief, I'll send you another one."

This time I did some really startling evolutions and added several elaborate extra wiggles.

"Get that, Chief?" says I.

"No, nor nobody else," says the Chief.

"Wrong," says I. "What is it, Tim?"

"The camp we love," says Tim.

"Right," says I. "Watch me close, Chief, I'll send you another one."

By this time quite a crowd of sailors had gathered around

to observe the circus. Among them I saw the rat-like "Spider's" eyes gleaming forth.

"What's that, Buddy," I cried to him after I had finished my contortions.

"Sweetie," cried the Spider promptly.

"Right," I shouted. "See, Chief, anybody seems to be able to read my signals. Try this."

Here I went through some mystifying passes before the man's perplexed eyes and came to an abrupt finish.

"What's that?" I shouted to the crowd.

"Great, big, blue eyes," some one replied.

"Right," says I, with finality, before anyone else had a chance to guess. The poor Chief's amazement was really pathetic. He turned away a broken man.

"Oh, go to hell the all of yers," he muttered. "Get out of my sight. Period's over. Into your barracks."

We left him in the middle of the parade ground in a crumpled condition. He was passing his hands over his dazed eyes. Later in the day we caught sight of him reading signals sent by another Chief. He was evidently convincing himself that he wasn't crazy. He turned around and saw me—but not for long.

DEC. 8th.—The favor of the gods was withdrawn from me to-day. Probably as a result of my yesterday's success. Failed to catch a 43 hours' liberty. Been washing windows. I can see the Chief's fine hand in this.

DEC. 9th.—Special war extra: Mr. Fogerty has the cooties. He has no pride. I am crushed.

What with scratching Mr. Fogerty and scrubbing my whites I have had scant time for availing myself of the solace of intellectual recreation derived from writing my diary. The depraved dog approaches me and gazes into my eyes in such a miserable and pathetic manner that I cannot withhold the craved for assistance. What a virile race the cooties must be! What families! What diligence! What fun!

DEC. 10th.—The trench dog Fogerty seems now to consider his unsavory visitation as being a mark of special honor. He passed one of our most aristocratic goats to-day without even so much as flopping an ear. As a matter of fact, Fogerty is a well born dog himself and displayed all the characteristics of a careful and gentle rearing when I first knew him. I am sure he must have come from a home of culture and refinement. Now look at him—fleas, late hours and the primrose road.

The "Spider" has just come off of guard duty. There were a lot of stray visitors up to-day and they evidently came too near the fence. He showed me a fake silver cigarette case half full of fags, one gold cuff link, a stick pin and an exemption card. I have made him promise to send the exemption card home to the rightful owner. The cigarettes we smoked and then gave Tim the case as a joint token of our great respect and devotion. We told him that we had sent to New York in order to get it. The poor dub was really quite touched about it, as, no doubt, was its original owner. The "Spider" told me in strict confidence that he frequently had picked up (or out) a great deal more at parades and six-day bicycle races. Between that and showing up the safe manufacturers I decided he must have eked out an existence.

DEC. 11th.—"Good-bye my fancy," as old Walt said, or was it "farewell." Anyway it doesn't matter. How can I speak of poets after what has happened. It is all off with Polly. I am a co-respondent—almost. It will all come out in the paper soon, I dare say. What will people say?

I have drunk deep of the waters of jazz in the course of my turbulent career and "shimmied" my share of miles around the clock. Frankly I admit that I have had my full quota of sweeties in the past and earnestly look forward to more in the future. In spite of which I have struggled manfully to retain that purity of character for which I was noted at the age of three. It is lost now. Already the headlines seem to be staring me in the face, crisp and clear.

BILTMORE OSWALD, THE WORLD'S STUPID-
EST SAILOR, FOUND WITH THE WIFE OF
PROMINENT BOOKMAKER

YOUTHFUL BLUEJACKET CLAIMS NEVER HAVING KNOWN
MODEL BEFORE

I can see it all now. Tony takes it as a huge joke. Tim says I did not go far enough. Polly says I went altogether too far, and the unscrupulous "Spider" only regrets not being able to sell me one of those diamonds he gained ill possession of through the biting process in his dark civilian days. I couldn't help it and I told Polly so, but she refused to listen to reason.

"In every port," she kept repeating almost to herself, "and on every corner," this more emphatically. And nothing I can say seems to do any good. Women will forgive anything but another woman's good looks and a man's bad dancing. I am very bitter about women. When Polly told me that I was nothing more nor less than a low-minded, brawling sailorman I turned on her and said:

"A man is as bad as the occasion demands, but the woman creates the occasion," which I thought was a pretty good comeback on the spur of the moment, but instead of crushing Polly, she merely retorted that a man's whole life was devoted to hanging around waiting for that occasion. You can see just how briskly we milled it up.

It all happened so quickly and so innocently. There I was standing by the road waiting bashfully for some one to come by in a nice comfortable automobile and pick me up and carry me along to New York to see my permanent sweetie, who doesn't seem to be quite so permanent now, when all of a sudden a plush looking motor draws up by me and a woman I scarcely looked at asks me to step in. What could be more natural than to comply with so gra-

cious a request? I asked Polly this and she said "anything." Of course, I didn't realize that the lady was a great, big, beautiful woman, naturally forward with men, particularly sailors, and a little dangerous. As soon as I saw how pretty she was I slid quickly over to the opposite corner which seemed to be just what she was waiting for me to do, because she had me where she wanted me with all avenues of retreat cut off. When she put her head on my shoulder and called me a cute little thing, what was I to do? I couldn't scream or call out the guard, and no gentleman can push a woman's head off his shoulder as if it were a bag of potatoes, and anyway she was an extremely nice looking woman. One had to be kind to her. It was the only thing to do. So, in this brotherly manner I went rolling along toward New York trying to make this lady as comfortable as possible. It was "Louise and Billy" from the start. She was an exceptionally swift worker. Once in the city she swore that she just couldn't let me go. Nothing would content her but that we go to tea together and as I had still a couple of hours before meeting Polly I reluctantly consented. Gasoline is high nowadays and I had shared quite a lot of this fair woman's. Going to tea with her was the least I could do. But I didn't plan on going to the exact spot where I was to meet Polly. Nevertheless this was just where we went—swell hotel with a twilight tea room. One of those places where one feels at least compromised after having sat in it with a woman for a couple of hours. My protests were of no avail. She merely turned her eyes on me and I felt like a brute for having interposed an objection. But I hadn't counted on her walk. This was the most surprising thing. It began at the feet and progressed by slow, undulating stages along her rakish frame until it terminated at her shoulders. My eye, what a walk! She did everything but loop-the-loop. Dimly I recalled having seen modifications of it before, but never in my most flapperish days had I seen anything so exaggerated as this. At any moment I expected an out of town

buyer to rush up and say that he'd take a couple of dozen of model m-243. Casting a frightened look down the street, I hastened after her into the portals of the hotel. By the time we entered the tea room I was so fascinated by that walk, so hypnotized, as it were, that I began, in spite of every effort to resist, to imitate it, following along in her tracks very much in the same manner as a trained collie dog does on the stage. Putting one foot directly before the other, overlapping them a trifle if possible, and wiggling all wiggable parts, we swept under full steam into that fatal tea room, intriguing and intimate under the soft glow of its dim little blobs of light. A regular Emile Zola sort of a dump. As luck would have it we ran smack into a brace of Ensigns hopefully drinking tea in the shadows. The poor chaps almost lost an eye. Gladly would I have exchanged places with them if only to be allowed to sweat quietly in a corner and collect my sadly shattered morale. It is my belief that one of them deliberately tripped me as I passed by, but I might be wrong. The room was impenetrably dark. My statuesque vamp came to in the middle of the room and after much uncalled for undulating picked out a clubby little table in a particularly sombre corner, wiggled herself into it and proceeded to hold my hand as if she was afraid of losing me, which she had every justification of being. I have never met a more unfortunately affectionate woman. Force of habit, I fancy, or probably just natural good will. As I sat there I thought bitterly to myself that I knew of exactly 16,999 sailors that would be glad to go on report to change places with me and I envied each and every one of them. However, it was a little better when she was sitting. She couldn't wiggle so much although she managed to toss in a series of snake-like evolutions from time to time. I swore by all my gods in Harlem that I would never walk out of the place in the wake of that woman. Not that I had any personal objections to it, but I knew that I would be a marked man if I did, and then there was Polly. At the

thought of Polly I fairly sickened. I would have drowned myself in the tea cup if my nose hadn't been so long.

"Lady, all I asked for was a hitch," I said huskily.

"I can never let you go," she whispered tragically across the oppressive gloom, and my God, I believed her!

"So kind," I muttered with lame politeness. "I don't deserve it."

"We were made for each other," she thrilled back—a remark that struck me as being quite unreasonable and without any logical foundation in fact. It terrified me. In my desperate imagination I could see myself trailing this woman through life, the both of us vamping like a couple of licorice sticks on a hot day, with an infuriated Polly on every corner.

For a long time I had been unpleasantly aware of a couple of gleaming eyes glaring steadily at us from across the waste of darkness and there seemed to be something unfriendly in the way they gleamed; in fact, after watching them furtively for some time I decided that they were decidedly hostile.

"And to think," says my captor, sighing deeply as she snuggled up close to me and unlimbered her head on my shrinking shoulder once more. "And to think," she repeated, "that I am married."

Appalled silence.

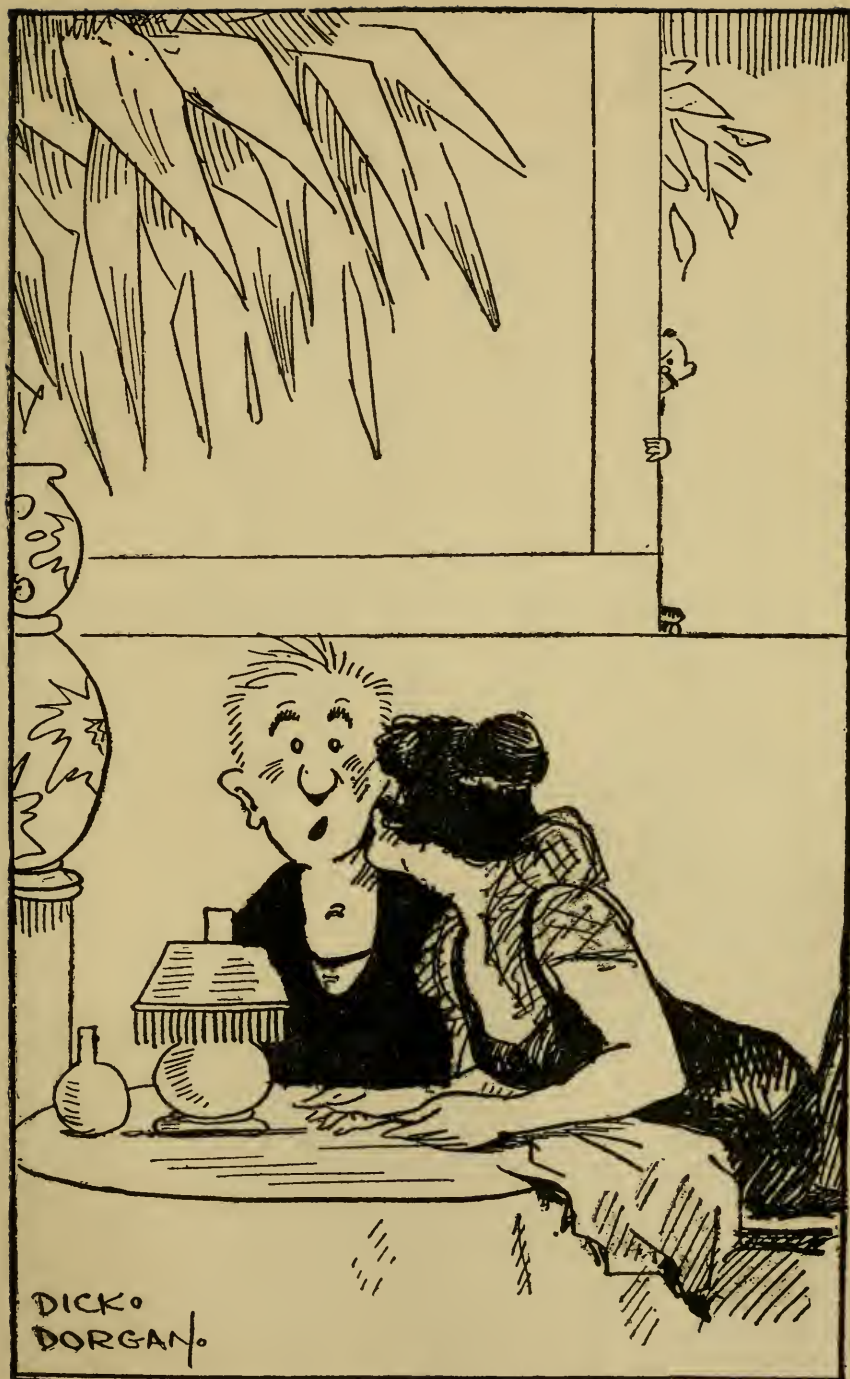
"But it doesn't matter," she added dreamily, "nothing matters."

"But it does matter," I almost screamed. "A great many things matter—I—I'm deeply engaged myself."

"You must break it to her gently," she murmured, kissing my neck—a sailor's most undefended spot.

"Break it to her gently," I began, and then my voice failed me—the eyes were approaching us through the darkness, they were growing larger all the time.

"It's Jack! My husband!" screamed the woman suddenly, and all the world grew still. Nothing could have been



"'YOU MUST BREAK IT TO HER GENTLY,' SHE MURMURED, KISSING MY
NECK"—Page 68

DICK.
DORGAN.



“AREN'T THERE ANY OTHER BEDS SAVE MINE BETWEEN HERE AND THE SOUTH?”—Page 79

more horrible. I found myself almost falling into those wild, fire-touched eyes.

"A poor sailor defending his country. Shake hands with him Jack. Show your patriotism," whispered Louise with trembling assurance.

Jack proceeded to show his patriotism by uttering a howl of fury and snatching the cloth clean off the table. There was a smashing of china, general commotion and above it all I heard Jack's voice:

"Git outter here," he was shouting. "Git outter here this minute or I'll baste yer one."

I looked up and saw Polly standing in the doorway. She was pale, but she had nothing on me. A ghost would have appeared tanned in comparison. There was Polly in real life standing in the doorway—oh, the horror of it!

Jack was leading the woman out of the room. She apparently had forgotten that we had been made for each other and that she could never let me go."

"Yes, Jack," she whispered timidly, forgetting to wiggle.

At the door Jack turned his huge figure around and pointed a threatening finger at me as I cowered behind an orange colored lamp.

"I'm coming back to git you," said Jack as he vanished. Perhaps he did. I don't know. It took me three blocks before I caught up with Polly and when I did she threatened to give me over to the police for flirting with her. Think of it! Such words from my future wife. Flirt with her. One might as well have flirted with a python. I followed her in distracted silence. Words were of no avail. She dismissed me bitterly.

"Kissing your neck in a restaurant," she snapped. "Go out and find another sweetie to take pity on you—you—you bean pole."

Bean pole were the words she used. Now, don't I have the darndest luck? I've lost my permanent sweetie. She called me a bean pole.

DEC. 17th.—No word from Polly. I have sunk to the level of my dog. I am distracted, a broken reed, a crippled bean pole. There is no health in me. I will seek the solitudes with Fogerty and his cooties. A P. O. approaches. I fly. Bean pole! The bitterness of it.

DEC. 18th.—For once Fortune smiled on me. The whole crowd of us standing by having been granted furloughs, and not one of the men refused to accept. Mother insists on sending me for a good rest to some swell hotel in Lakewood. Later she is going to bring father, grandfather and Polly down with her to join me. In the meantime I expect to wander quietly around an expensive, gold-plated hotel and behave myself. I don't know that I enjoy the prospects, but anyway it will be a change from shipboard and camp life. Probably I shall adventure with an adventuress, or air with an heiress. Who can tell? I can't, but at least I can hope.

DEC. 19th.—The most extraordinary thing happened to me today; before breakfast at that. It's bad enough, I find, to have extraordinary things happen to me after luncheon or even later in the evening, but to start the day with a localized but hardly self-contained riot is almost too much of a vulgar display of the fate that seems to brood over my pure young life.

This is one of those gold-tipped, twin-six hotels at which I am stopping—very much in the nature of a bad watch—in which one must spend practically one's entire life and several fortunes in order to be able to find one's ways around the halls with any small degree of success. Like many of those foxy little tricks in arithmetic which used to keep me out of God's pure sunshine in the days of my rapidly receding youth, the corridors of this cut glass seat of dyspepsia divide and multiply into infinity.

Morning found me without much difficulty in bed, and, remembering my mother's advice to take a bath whenever I could get it, I sprang from my hop and proceeded, with

full equipment and a bathrobe, to wander down the labyrinthian passages in a hazy, but hopeful frame of mind, in search of some receptacle in which I could immerse my body and thus gain that cleanliness which we are given to believe obtains for us a certain large amount of godliness. The fruits of my labors were a bewildered mind and a pair of weary legs. "Upstairs, downstairs, in my lady's chamber," as the sweet jingle goes, had I been, and still had succeeded in finding nothing remotely resembling a bathroom. Presently coming around a turn in the vast hall about two miles off I faintly made out the figure of a bellboy bearing down in his jaunty bellboyish manner in my direction. Consequently I seated myself on a pair of stairs and patiently waited the ten minutes it required for this brave spirit to wend his way from the point at which I had first sighted him to my languid presence.

"O, intrepid traveler of endless spaces," says I, giving my bathrobe a dramatic hitch, "save me from a life of solitary wandering around these trackless wastes and lead me to the nearest bathroom before these my whiskers impede my progress and my weary limbs grow feeble in decay."

Of course no bellboy likes to be addressed in this manner before breakfast and I cannot find it in me to blame the bellboy, but nevertheless he came to and asked me in eloquent Canarsie English what was the nature of my business.

"Take me, if you still love God and hate the devil, to the nearest bathroom by the shortest route with the minimum of delay," that's what I told him.

"Sure," says he, with assurance, and together we set off on our pilgrimage.

After a quarter of an hour devoted to diligent search I began to lose the confidence this youth had hitherto inspired in me.

"It seems," I said, "that I am a little less lonely than before I met you, but am still in the same unbathed condition and although I feel sure I would grow to like you

better the more I know you, I still believe it would be much pleasanter to do our walking out in the bracing fresh air. This, of course, is a mere suggestion which conveys at the same time a strong but perfectly friendly suspicion of your ability to find anything in the nature of a bathroom."

"I've only been here three months, boss," replies the bellboy in answer to my mild remark, "and I haven't gotten quite settled down to this dump myself."

I stopped the bellboy and shook his hand.

"I have been unjust," I replied. "I have been guilty of gross injustice. No man who has not taken a course in navigation and dwelt in these sacred precincts for at least four score years and ten could ever hope to have anything other than the vaguest knowledge of his whereabouts. Together we are lost. Together we must find our way out. If worst comes to worst and we must starve, let us face our sad and respective fates like men."

Thus encouraging the young man, we proceeded to grope our way along the gallery until after interminable traveling we came upon a very old man sitting in the darkness on a trunk. Probably a victim of the halls, thought I to myself. Some unfortunate person who like myself in his early youth set out from his bed to find a bathroom in this accursed hotel.

"Old man," I said, "if it needs must be that we share our fate with you, be so kind as to share your trunk with us upon which we can die together at some closely future date. When our parched bones are at last found it is my earnest hope that the finders in decency will erect a monument to commemorate the valor, daring and fortitude of the three unhappy individuals who in the recklessness of their youth once considered it possible to take a bath in a public hotel—not that I know of any private ones," I added after due deliberation.

"It's a bath you're after wanting?" questioned the old man in a melancholy voice.

"Almost after wanting," I replied, nodding my head hopelessly.

"Why, it's a bathroom door you're blinking at way down yonder at the end of the hall," says he greatly surprised.

For a long time I gazed at the door for which I had searched so courageously.

"It's too far," I replied at last.

"It's not at all," answered the man.

"Then why don't you bathe there?" I asked.

"Oh, I can't bathe there," replied the man, "I'm the porter."

"Well," I said, after having considered the proposition in all its unappealing aspects, "if this young man will bell-boy me on one side and if you will porter me on the other perhaps together we might stagger far enough to be able to crawl the remaining distance."

"Come along," said the old man, "we'll take you there," and the two of them began leading me down the hall. We had not proceeded far on our way before we met a young lady in riding breeches and the rest of the stuff that goes with it. She was a pretty young lady to whom my heart went out, but seeing me thus under guard she evidently thought that I was either very sick or else dangerously insane. As a matter of fact I looked both.

At the door of the bathroom I shook hands with both of my rescuers, urging them not to forget me if they saw me no more and begging the old man to guide from his vast experience the young man to some point of safety. With friendly words they left me and I bathed myself much in the same manner as other human animals who are forced to confine their ablutions to so small a space as a tub.

Arising later from this with my eyes full of soap and my heart full of confidence, greatly refreshed from the benign influences of lots of cold water, I collected my razor, toilet water, tooth brush and other well advertised and familiar implements of culture and once again launched myself into the perilous mazes of the passageways, this time in the direction of my room. The return trip was surprisingly short and successful. Even with my eyes still dim

with soap I was able to recognize my door at once, and it was with a sigh of profound relief that I entered my room and began to arrange my shaving things tastefully upon my dresser, humming the while a bit of a cheerful song.

"Oh Gawd," I heard someone breathe back of me.

Ah, thought I, the maid. I failed to notice her because of the soap, no doubt.

"It's all right," I answered without troubling to turn around, "you may return at some later time. I shall soon be dressed."

"What?" went on this voice, this time taking on a quality of horror. "What—what—what—"

Even then I failed to turn around. My attention was arrested by a silver-backed mirror which I was weighing absent-mindedly in my hand. In doing this I became vaguely aware of the fact that I had never in the entire course of my misspent days possessed such a thing as a silver-backed mirror. Still I failed to connect this fact in any way with the voice behind me. All men after bathing as a rule are cheerfully preoccupied with petty details and I was no exception. At that moment all I cared much about doing was to put on one sock and to continue to hum my little song. However, the unexpected presence of the mirror was a fact to be considered. I raised the mirror and gazed into it. In doing this I was enabled to catch over my shoulder the reflection of my bed and also the reflection of someone in my bed. This someone was a woman. This was apparent. It had long hair and the nose, which was all that I could see, had cold cream on it, an unmistakable sign.

My preoccupation left me immediately. I became unnerved. Panic took possession of me. I turned around as if on a spring.

"Where did you come from?" I gasped.

"From the South," said a startled voice from the bed.

For a moment I pondered over the answer. I had apparently surprised the truth out of her.

"Well, I wish you had stayed there," I replied bitterly. "Aren't there any other beds save mine between here and the South?"

"This is my bed," came the voice defiantly from beneath the blankets, "and if you don't leave this room instantly I shall begin to scream."

I looked around the room. She was apparently right. It did not appear to be my room. Whether it was her room or not I wasn't certain. I wasn't interested. I was convinced it wasn't my room. That was enough. With nerveless fingers I began gathering up the toilet articles I had so tastefully arranged on the dresser.

"A terrible mistake," I muttered thickly. "You must permit me to apologize. I must apologize. I shall never be through apologizing."

"If you're not through apologizing and out of this room in ten seconds I shall begin to scream," said the bed.

"I hurry, I flee, I depart," I whispered reaching for the door knob.

"Stop!" commanded the bed tragically.

"What is it?" I replied with an equal amount of tragedy in my voice.

"If you open that door one inch I shall scream," continued the bed.

"Your scream seems to go both ways," I remarked over my shoulder.

"Open the door and I scream," came the voice.

"But, madam," I expostulated, "I'm not Houdini. I can't under the force of the most pressing circumstances possibly worm myself through the keyhole."

This time the voice spoke more clearly, more rapidly; there was fear in it—positive terror.

"My husband," it said, "will be here at any moment. He always comes up for a moment after breakfast. He is probably walking down the hall at this instant. He will not believe me and he will kill you. You must get under

the bed. Quick, quick, under the bed! For God's sake, under the bed! There will be a tragedy."

"It will be more than a tragedy," I managed to gasp. "It will be a total loss."

"The bed, the bed, under it!" she urged.

"Does he, too, come from the South?" I asked.

"Yes," she answered, "from the South."

"Probably believes in the 'unwritten law,'" I muttered, beginning in the anguish of my soul to prance around the room.

"I hear his step!" she cried. "Avoid a murder and get under that bed."

My presence of mind left me. I had seen too many Keystone comedies, however, to permit myself to get under the bed.

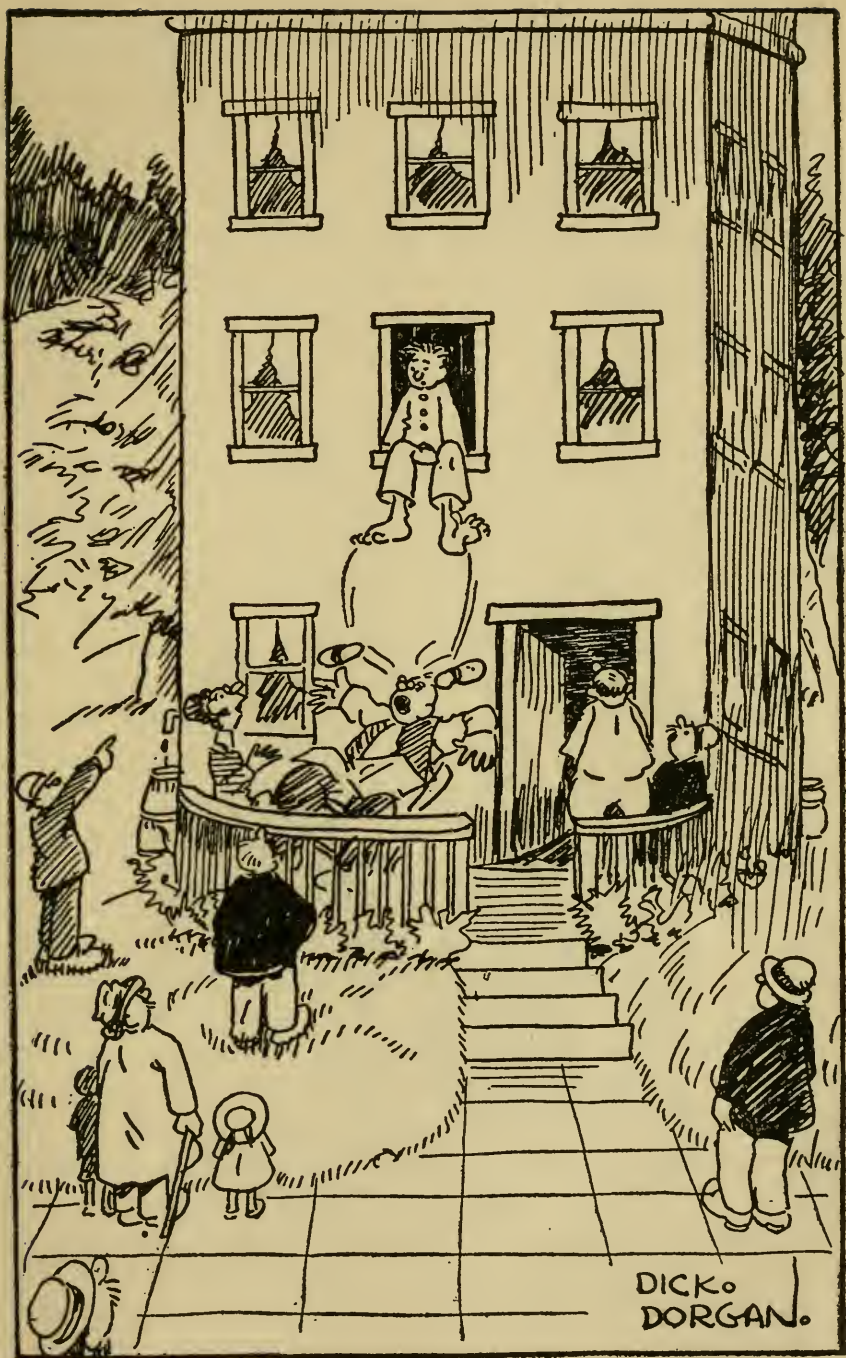
"Cleanliness is not next to godliness," I remember thinking at that terrible moment, "it is next to madness."

An idea seized me. I remembered a friend of mine who in a similar position had escaped detection by sitting on the ledge of the window sill.

"Pull the shade down after me!" I cried, opening the window and climbing through.

The shade and the window came down with a snap, I heard a door open, a heavy tread in the room behind me, and I found myself sitting in God's bright sunlight gazing down on the main thoroughfare of the town and one of the most popular of the hotel's many sun porches.

Already I was attracting attention. Several embattled dowagers were gazing up at me. They had not yet come to the believing stage. With bejeweled hands they rubbed their eyes. It was horrible. One of my slippers fell heavily through the New York Times held above the nose of a fat old man of unmistakably conservative leanings. He spluttered and glared up at me. I did my best even at that moment to smile a polite smile of apology down upon the old gentleman. Several people had stopped on the street and were pointing up at me. An automobile party came



"I REALIZED THAT MY POSITION WAS NOT AN ENVIABLE ONE"—Page 81



“‘CERTAINLY,’ I REPLIED, ‘CERTAINLY, LITTLE BELL BOY, AND PERHAPS YOU MIGHT LIKE THE FUNNY TROUSERS ALSO!’”—Page 87

to a dead stop and traffic began to pile up behind it. Several people ran out on the porch with their morning papers grasped in their hands, and through the bright, sweet air of this day rode in upon this scene the girl I had encountered in the hall. She stopped in the driveway and looked up. Her eyes met mine and she smiled. For a moment all was forgotten, even Polly. I smiled back in my imbecile way. The voices in the room behind me were growing louder and more excited.

I cannot go on. I am far too unnerved to write into my diary the subsequent events which took place on this ghastly day. It is too horrible to dwell on. I must have rest. I shall take it.

(Later).—I realized that my position was not an enviable one. To sit in one's pajamas on the extreme edge of a window sill, particularly if the window happens to be closed behind one, is not a position likely to arouse the envy of the average beholder. Some bird might enjoy it, but very few men. When I say I was not happy on my lofty pinnacle I am saying it merely because I have no adequate way of expressing how extremely unhappy I was. At any moment I feared I would follow my slipper down upon the billowy paunch of the convalescent stand-patter below me. If I did I felt sure that I would rebound into eternity, probably ending my wretched days on the chilly obscurity of some isolated star. I do not know whether it was because of my unusual appearance before the general public of that quiet town or because of the hour that the High School suddenly disgorged its brood. The result was the same. Several hundred youths piled out into the street below me and proceeded to hoot and jeer at me with all the detached cruelty of a savage race. The old gentleman was shaking his fist at me. Rage rendered him inarticulate, and I remember thinking at the time that it would be a blessing to humanity if it could be arranged always to keep him angry. The girl on the horse was still regarding me with amused eyes. Presently the horse itself raised its head

and gazed up at me. I seemed to detect an expression of annoyance in his patient countenance. This is not right, he was evidently thinking to himself. If men take to conducting themselves in this strange manner what is a horse to expect? If this practice grows popular it will be extremely difficult for a horse to distinguish men from wild birds.

I felt sorry for the horse. In spite of the insecurity of my position I took a chance and waved down to the old gentleman. This gesture of good will succeeded in increasing his rage to the bursting point. I followed my friendly wave with an ingratiating smile. The good man choked and hurried off to the bar. The orchestra, finding itself bereft of an audience, had abandoned its music and followed the entire personnel of the establishment to the porch. One man, as if fearing I was not already sufficiently conspicuous, pointed to me with the long bow of his fiddle. From all sides came the excited twittering of women, the disturbed voices of men and the delighted cries of boys. Behind me, in the room, the angry exclamations of the husband mingled themselves with the pleading tones of the wife. Suddenly the window went up with a bang and with great speed I disappeared before the astounding eyes of the assembled throng as a powerful arm seized me around my middle and deposited me without further ceremony upon the floor. In a position such as I found myself it was well-nigh impossible to draw upon one's dignity. This man was saying unpleasant things to me and about me. I hardly understood what they were. The events of the morning had so beclouded my faculties that a numbing lassitude had overcome my brain. A man can stand only so much desperation, after which he finds his spirit plunged into a profound indifference. It was because of this strange mental condition that I found myself tracing the pattern in the rug with absorbed interest while this wild man fumed and raged above my bowed head and called upon every god south of the Mason-Dixon line to bear him witness that he

intended to have my blood. His wife seemed to be so distracted that she was unable to decide whether to get under the bed or in it. For some minutes a cold object had been annoying my shrinking flesh. I had been brushing this object away petulantly objecting to the interruption in my intriguing pursuit of tracing the rug's intricate diagrams. Presently I looked up in annoyance, and discovered that the object I had so carelessly been brushing aside was nothing less than a well-developed 48 Colt revolver. This discovery in no way served to bring back my good spirits; neither did it make the room any more comfortable. I immediately lost all interest in the rug. A revolver has a way of holding the eye. This one held mine. In fact, it claimed my entire attention.

"What do you mean by coming into my wife's room?" grated the man.

"I only wanted to take a bath," I answered in a dull voice, addressing myself directly to the gun.

"What?" he howled. "You wanted to take a bath in my wife's room?"

"Not particularly in your wife's room," I replied, "but in any room. Just a bath, that was all I wanted."

"Liar!" shouted the man. "Home breaker."

"Sir," I said, and this time with feeling, "I have never been in a less homelike place."

"How long has this been going on?" he demanded, making little, cold rings on my neck with the gun.

"For years and years," I muttered in a low voice.

"O, no, oh, no," came the agonized voice of the wife who had at length decided to get behind the trunk. "My God; don't say that!"

"Ha!" cried the husband, in triumph. "He admits it. He confesses. I am dishonored."

"Is that the only gun you have?" I asked suddenly.

"No," he said, "there is still another."

"Then why do you all the time keep showing it to me?" I continued. "I believe you."

"You are in love with my wife," said the man, as if reading the lines from a book, "and one of us must die."

"Sir," I replied, completely forgetting my chivalry, "not only am I not in love with your wife, but I don't even fancy her."

"Shoot him, James," came an indignant voice from the trunk. "He's insulting me."

"That sounds love-like, doesn't it?" said I, bitterly, to James.

"Lies! Lies! Lies!" cried James. "You love her."

"I don't."

"You do."

"Don't."

"This is ridiculous."

"It is."

"It must be settled."

He hurried over to the bureau and returned with another gun.

"This is the way we shall settle it," he said, displaying the gun in all its splendor. "A duel."

"You mean shooting at each other?" I gasped.

"To the end," he replied.

"I won't do it," I replied with finality.

"Then I'll shoot you down like a dog in cold blood," he answered.

"Don't talk that way," I cried, "about blood and shooting down and all that. I don't like it."

He cocked one of the guns.

"Do you agree?" he said.

It seemed to me that the end of the gun was already smoking.

"How about a game of ping-pong?" I suggested desperately. "They have a dandy table here."

"Have you any friends in the hotel?" he asked, stepping back and leveling the gun. The trunk seemed to be having a convulsion.

"Don't do it!" I cried. "Don't do it. I don't want to be shot!"

"Then do you agree to a duel?" he said, lowering the gun.

"Sure," said I, greatly relieved, "let's have a flock of them."

"Very well, then," he said, "we shall arrange it now. You have no friends. Neither have I. We must use two of the bellboys as seconds. I shall talk with them and arrange everything. To-morrow at daybreak you shall be called. Good day, suh."

At the door I stopped.

"Say," said I entreatingly, "won't you cut out all this Kentucky Colonel stuff and be reasonable?"

"It is arranged," said he, closing the door.

Half way down the hall I turned back, remembering I had left my shaving things.

"What!" he cried, when I had knocked and the door was opened to me. "Back again? Have you no shame? Shall I shoot you now?"

"No, don't shoot me now," I said, in a tired voice, "shoot me to-morrow. Just reach me out my shaving things now so that I can be all pretty."

Somehow I got back to my room. Every door along the long halls presented itself to me as a possible duel. I stood outside my own room for fully fifteen minutes nerv-ing myself to take the chance. At last I closed my eyes and entered. I was safe. All the day I stayed in my room. A bellboy brought me my meals, my slipper and a request from the management please not to sit on the window sill any more. Evidently they think that I was doing it through preference. And to-morrow I die. Well, thank God, at any rate I had my bath. There is probably some comfort in this but I have not as yet been able to find it.

DEC. 21st (After the duel).—I don't at all object to duels; in fact, I rather fancy them—when they are all over. Here I sit, a man who has both shot and been shot at; a

man who has stood gallantly on the field of honor in order to defend his sacred rights to take a bath; a man who has proved his courage and magnanimity in a moment of great danger, and yet here I am, healthy and unscratched and sharing a dark secret with the man who only this morning was thirsting for my blood.

For the sake of posterity, personal or otherwise, I shall proceed to relate a few of the high lights of this singular affair.

At five o'clock a bellboy presented himself before me and said in a solemn voice:

"It is time, sir."

"Time for what?" says I.

"For the dool, sir," says he. "Will you have a bath, sir?"

"Little bellboy," says I, turning over on my side, "if you love Charlie Chaplin and ever hope to sit in the bleachers at a world series again, don't, don't for the love of all you hold sacred in your bellboy's soul mention bath to me. I have taken my last bath in this world. To that spot whither I am about to wend my way it is my hope that there will be no spirit tubs in which the shades that dwell in that place will be forced to immerse their spirit bodies. However, convention is strong and I can only with the greatest difficulty imagine a British ghost having anything like a contented time of it if he should happen to be deprived of his morning tub."

During the course of this speech, which left the bellboy in a perplexed frame of mind, I had taken the occasion to arise and prepare myself for my undertaker.

"It's going to be in the Cathedral Pines," whispered the boy gleefully to me as we picked our way through the woods a few minutes later.

"Is it?" I said unenthusiastically, falling into a hidden brook. "It is a name that conveys a certain morbid significance to my mind at this moment."

"Aw, he might not actually kill you," put in the boy cheerfully.

"Little boy," says I, "don't you think you might make a man's last moments on earth a trifle less ghastly if you should choose to discuss topics more remote to the business at hand?"

Of course I received no answer to this.

"But if he does," continued this budding young materialist, "might I have that navy jumper you're wearing? My girl has been after me to get her one."

"Certainly," I replied, "certainly, little bellboy, and perhaps you might like the funny trousers, also?"

"Sure," said he, "sure I would. You're all right, mister."

"Thank you, little bellboy, for those kind words, the first I've heard for many days. But perhaps you will refrain from undressing me until after the funeral services? I should hate to make my deparature in my underwear."

"Certainly," said the bellboy, "I'll get 'em after it's all over."

"This, then, must indeed be a pleasant day for you?" I suggested as we crawled up a bank made unnecessarily slippery by pine needles.

"Aw, I ain't never seen a dool before," said the bellboy. "It will be different."

"The eternal quest of youth," said I to myself, and aloud, "Yes, won't it? Quite. The difference between ham and eggs and easing the way for daisies."

By this time we had reached the spot from which I was to take my sudden departure from the land of the Blue Jacket's Manual. My foeman was prancing briskly around in the early morning sunlight. Apparently a duel to him was the same as a Bronx cocktail had at one time been to me, something to toss off with a smile of anticipation of more to come. A cow was thrusting her head through some nearby trees. I felt like kissing her farewell. She followed our movements with dreamy imaginings. In my mind, which always becomes dazed in the presence of danger and tailor bills, I wondered if she had been out in the woods all night. The songs of the birds hurt me. I was

too soon to lose them. Even the smell of the pine-touched morning air annoyed me. I liked it too much.

"Good morning," I said to my adversary, hoping to make friends with him at that late date. "Have you had your breakfast?"

"No, suh," he replied, haughtily, "I shall get that latuh."

"Let's go back and get it now," I suggested.

"You will not be hungry long," he answered, busying himself with the guns. When I had last seen those guns they had been large. Now they looked tremendous. A new bellboy approached and handed me one. Then followed a joint conversation between the bellboys, who were playing the enviable rôle of seconds, and the principals. One bellboy wanted to start (or better, end) the thing by saying: "One for the money, two for the show, three to get ready and four to go."

I objected to this on the grounds of childhood memories the ritual evoked and also because I disliked the word "go" as being a little too pertinent to the situation.

At last we made him memorize the simple imperatives, "Ready! Aim! Fire!" These also jarred on my nerves, but I felt that I could stand them. It was also decided that each man should have one and only one shot. This was also my suggestion. My adversary accepted merely because as he declared, "I never need more than one, suh."

I replied to this by saying that that was one more than I needed.

We took our positions at forty-five paces apart. I had been forced to fight desperately for the extra five paces. The seconds took up their positions and I stood regarding my sponsor in spirit land. He was not a bad looking chap. For the first time the realization that by some off chance I might be responsible for letting daylight into his anatomy occurred to me. It was most unpleasant. However, he looked so fearless and assured that I felt how little I had to worry about on that score.

"All right," he snapped out to the bell-boy.

"Get ready," said the bellboy.

"Wait," I shouted. "Wait!"

"What's the matter?" demanded the man.

"I can't lift my arm," I cried.

"What?" said the man.

"I can't lift my arm," I repeated. "I can't do it. We'll have to shoot lying down."

"If you don't raise your arm right now I'll shoot you down on the spot," gritted the man.

I raised my arm.

"Get ready!" started the boy once more.

I lowered my gun.

"Bellboy," I said, "you're not saying it right. You musn't say 'Get ready;' you must say merely 'Ready.' Am I not right, sir?" I continued, addressing my foe.

"Yes," he said, shortly.

"Why say it at all?" I suggested, hoping he might be reasonable.

"He must say it," breathed the man.

"See," I said turning to the bellboy. "What did I tell you? You've gotta say it, only say it right."

"Get ready!" cried the bellboy.

I lowered my gun once more.

"That bellboy is simply impossible," I said. "I've never had such service in my life. If this keeps up I'm going to call the whole blamed duel off."

The man was furious. I thought he was going to slay me without further conversation on the subject.

"Bellboy," he cried, at last getting control of himself. "For Gawd sake, say it right!"

Once more we braced ourselves.

"Get ready!" stammered the bewildered boy, losing all presence of mind at this great moment.

"What did I tell you?" I said disgustedly. "What did I tell you? He can't say it. He's spoiled the duel for me. Absolutely ruined it."

"You say it," cried the man to the other bellboy; "and if you don't say it right I'll shoot you down."

"Ready!" said the other bellboy proudly. "Aim!"

"Half a moment," I interrupted politely.

"Well, what is it now?" demanded the man.

"Not until after the funeral," I said to the bellboy. "Remember!"

"Sure, sir," he replied, and in the next breath, "Ready!"

We raised our guns.

"Aim!" he shouted.

"Promise?" I cried.

"Sure," said he.

"I'll run you a race?" I called out in desperation to my foe, but there was no stopping the murderous progress of that boy's words.

"Fire!" he called out in a relieved voice.

There was one sharp report. A bullet hurried by my left ear. Both bellboys were disappearing at great speed through the trees. I turned around and noticed that the cow was sinking slowly to the ground, bow first.

"Fair mark, shoot," said my foe, baring his chest to me.

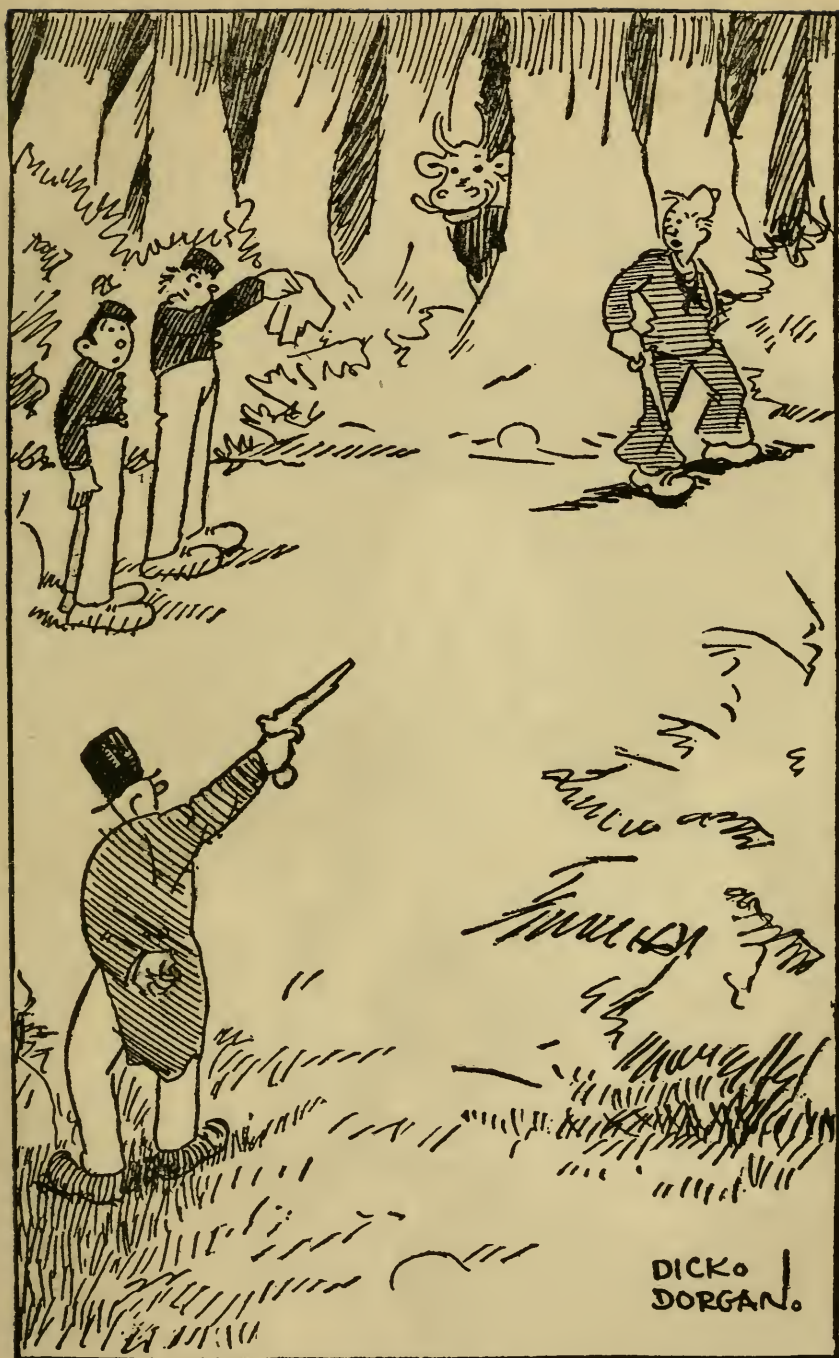
"Look what you done," I replied, in my excitement forgetting to shoot him. "Look what you done," I continued. "You've gone and killed that cow."

"Shoot!" cried the man.

Forgetting completely about him I hurried over and gazed down into the large, suffering eyes of the innocent bystander. She was in great pain and dying slowly, as I might have been had the bullet found its mark. Poor cow. I could not stand to hear it breathing. Suddenly I thought of the gun hanging forgotten in my hand. With this gun I hastened the departing life of the animal. It was my only shot and it did the work.

"Now," I said briefly, turning to the man. "We'd both better run like hell."

Together we fled through the woods after the intrepid bellboys.





"MR. FOGERTY IS A PAPA. HE HAS SEVEN BABIES, ALL DOGS"—Page 96

"Aren't you going to shoot me?" gasped my unsuccessful enemy.

"No," I managed to get out as we dashed along. "I've spent my bullet on something more deserving."

"But you ought to shoot me," replied the man with conviction.

"Just the same," I answered, "I ain't agoing to do it."

We ran steadily and swiftly for a great time. At last we halted by a sort of subconscious mutual consent.

"What do you reckon the farmer would do to us if he caught us?" panted the man.

"He'd arrest us and make us pay and at the present high cost of living I guess we'd never stop paying," I replied with conviction.

"I didn't mean to kill the cow," said the man musing over my words.

"Thanks for the compliment," I replied shortly.

He looked at me and smiled. How I had prayed to see that smile on his face during the past 24 hours. Now it no longer mattered.

"You're a funny person," he said to me at last. "I've never met any one like you before."

"You almost lost the opportunity," I reminded him.

"Funny," he continued. "Rather help a dying cow than kill your man."

"The cow was easier to hit," I replied. "And she needed a lift."

He swallowed hard and looked down at the ground.

"I reckon," he said. "I reckon I was wrong about it all and I want to ap—"

"Have you had breakfast?" I interrupted.

"No," he replied.

"Well, come on, let's have it," said I. And together we set off through the woods.

DEC. 22nd.—The pine woods down here are gradually getting to my head. After the affair of the duel, I imme-

diately sought the comfort and the solitude of the trees in order to allow my ruined nerves an opportunity to spring back to normal. While sitting in the sun-splashed tranquillity of a dense undergrowth, numerous poetic thoughts flashed through my mind. So as my frequently-referred-to posterity may have the benefit of these great thoughts I have entered them, for the sake of permanency, into this, my diary. The first poem is entitled:

THE ENIGMA.

*Whither does the plumber wend?
He hath a water pipe to mend.
Yet, whyfore doth the plumber sit
And never seem to think of it?*

Admittedly this is an outpouring of the soul which would be very difficult to connect with a pine forest, yet it is in such a spot that fancy took me unawares. The second poem is more reasonable, but no less beautiful. It is called:

TO A BIRD.

*I never heard
A more absurd
Arrangement than a mocking bird.
Why Does he always scream and shout it?
Something should be done about it.*

This last poem, of course, has more depth and philosophy than the first one, and also possesses the great virtue of being constructive. And one must be constructive, mustn't one?—if only for the sake of being, as it were, constructive.

The third poem has an element of tragedy and bitterness of life. One can see at a glance that it came from a man who has suffered pitifully in this world. I read it to a bell-boy the other night and the poor, emotional slob could hardly restrain his feelings. No one knows better than I what it

means to feel deeply, particularly over my own poetry, and so, of course, I readily sympathized with him. As a matter of fact, there is something in it that gets you. I call it simply:

HOPE.

*Amelia Jane at twelve-fifteen
Arose and sought her limousine,
And fell upon her fickle head—
I hope to God Amelia's dead.*

This, too, is an expression of profound knowledge and intercourse with life as it is and not as we would wish it.

Unfortunately for the enrichment of literature, the conception of further gems of poesy was rudely interrupted by a loud and sudden bang somewhere very close to my woodland nook, and all the shot propelled by all the powder belonging to all the Du Ponts in Delaware came tearing along in my direction. Quantities of dead leaves were ripped off the trees around me and numerous birds flew away uttering loud cries of protest in which I joined with fervor.

Presently there was one who appeared to me through the bushes. He was wearing a strange arrangement of hunting tweeds and was maintaining with no little difficulty and facial contortions a monocle in his starboard lamp.

"Oh, I say," says he, "you carnt sit here, old chap. This is a game preserve, ye know."

In as calm a voice as possible I assured him that I had lost all desire to remain longer in that vicinity.

"Hang it all," he continued, breaking out into a loud and unusual sounding laugh, "I bally nearly plugged you, ye know." Merriment overcame him.

"Yes," says I, inanely, "yes, indeed. Didn't you just. Bally nearly plugged me. Funny, what? Ha! Ha!"

He wiped his eyes on a silk handkerchief and began searching around in the bushes.

"I say, old dog," says he, waxing intimate on the ground

of nearly having killed me, "you didn't see any birds drop around here, did you?"

"May I ask you a question in return?" I asked him in my politest voice.

"Surely, old—"

"Make it hound this time," I suggested.

He blinked at me a moment while digesting the suggestion. At last he smiled his silly smile.

"Surely, old hound," says he, "surely. What's your question?"

"Why don't you go back to England?" said I, shortly, as I disappeared into the bushes.

"Harf a minute," I heard him crying after me, "Harf a minute," but I did not wait for further words with him. I have been too frequently shot at in the past few days.

DEC. 23rd.—I received this morning the following cryptic telegram:

"Mr. Fogerty is a father again seven times. Signed,
"SPIDER."

To this startling communication I sent immediately the following reply:

"Congratulate Mr. Fogerty for me. Take all necessary steps to see that Mrs. Fogerty is well provided for at my expense. Signed,
BILTMORE."

Although I was in no wise obligated to that depraved dog, I could not permit myself to see his family suffer, which they certainly would if he had anything to do with it. Later in the evening I received this letter from my wop shipmate Tony:

"DEAR BILTA: That dog you call Meester Fogerty ess a papa. He has seven babies, all dogs. All the day he act strange. He walks unhappily up and down before the

barracks S-11. He no eat. He no sleep. He no go away. He justa walk, walk, walk, all the day. I bring heem food. He looks at it. Too sad. Kicks it over. At about seven bells a sailor comes outta the barracks and calls to Meester Fogerty. They enter. I follow. Fogerty is led up to the heat pipes were lays a mama dog with seven babies. Meester Fogerty looks at them. He looks at me. He is proud. He has much pride and growls deep in hees throat and bites Murphy the jimmy-legs. Then he stalk outta the room and is seen no more. He is heard of later in the near-by village. He has placed himself at the head of a large body of dogs. They bully around the town and will not come home. Meester Fogerty he celebrates. Your dog is not nice. TONY."

Thus wrote the poor Italian, describing as well as possible an episode that is becoming only too frequent in Mr. Fogerty's life. If the government should send allotments to all of Mr. Fogerty's families, a special department would have to be created in order to carry on the business. However, I cannot help but be pleased at Mr. Fogerty having been a father so near home. I am afraid he will be insufferable for many days.

DEC. 24th.—In this hotel it is very difficult to distinguish the difference between a sun porch and a parlor. They sort of run into one another. But there is a difference. In the sun porch one is supposed to look convalescent, whereas in the parlor or lounges one is supposed to look dyspeptic. I have found this out, for in the latter place numerous large, brocaded dowagers foregather after meals and battle valiantly with this dread enemy of mankind. That they suffer greatly is apparent from the bitter way in which they regard all those whose cheerful faces show they are not its victims. They would love to use tooth-picks, I know, but they are paying so much for their rooms that they can't bear to lower their batting average.

I walked around the lake this morning and fell in it. It's a nice lake to walk around, but not a nice one to fall into. One disturbs too many sleeping turtles recumbent on the rocks.

Most all of the visitors at this place come to the lake to talk business. I have been able to pick up no end of information regarding stocks and bonds, cloaks and suits and buttons and buttonholes. This is well. The good gentlemen show such a rugged indifference to the beauties of nature. This, I suppose, is progress. Soon we shall have stock tickers established at proper intervals along our most picturesque walks and rustic settings in order to allow any business man who might chance by an opportunity to purchase the fruits of the earth at which he refuses to look. Yet people tell us that we all want something more in life than this. We do. We want something more than seventy-five cents, which is more than I have in my pocket. And when we get it we find that it has gotten us. Making money is, on occasions, perhaps, excusable, but talking about it is at all times criminal. Hence no more of this trite philosophy. The reason I'm so cracked on the subject of money is that I have so little of it. In fact, I gave my last quarter to the porter who struggled in with my suitcase upon arriving. Since then I've been trying to get a little vicarious enjoyment by watching the bell-hops steal a drag behind the water cooler. I've been without fags for so long that the nicotine is wearing off my fingers. Yesterday I borrowed a smoke from one of these said boys on the pretext of having left my cigarette case in my room. I nursed the butt till midnight. It looks as if mother has done me in. She's equally as bad as numerous paymasters I have met who have been attacked by the yellow-slip fever.

DEC. 25th.—To-day, while walking, I came upon a kitten leaping alone in the road miles from habitation. I approached the small creature and considered it in all its touseled aspects. It was not the offspring of a wild cat.

This was apparent. Consequently I knew that it would eventually perish in the woods. So I took this cat in my arms and proceeded in search of a refuge for it. After traversing a great distance I came to the home of a farmer, and, going up to the farmer, I addressed him in a polite voice.

"Farmer," I said, "I have here with me a homeless cat. Will you take it in?"

And the farmer said, "We already have some cats."

So I left the farmer, and after traversing a great distance, I came upon the house of another farmer, and, going up to the hired girl of the farmer's wife, I said:

"Hired girl of the farmer's wife, I have here with me a homeless cat. Will you take it in?"

And the maiden replied, "We have some cats."

So I left that place and continued many leagues on my way until I came to the dwelling of a third farmer, where in the yard was a maiden throwing water over the body of a dog possessed of fleas, and, going up to the maiden, I said:

"Maiden throwing water over the body of a dog possessed of fleas, I have here with me a homeless cat. Will you take it in?"

And the maid replied, "Sire, we have some cats."

So I quitted the spot and continued on my way a great distance until I came to the gates of a rich dealer in stocks, whereat there was a woman either blowing or washing the nose of a large brass lion, and, approaching the woman, I said:

"Woman ministering to the needs of a large brass lion, I have here with me a homeless cat. Will you take it in?"

And the woman answered, "We have some cats."

And I spoke again and said, "Woman cleansing the body of a lion wrought in brass, do cats only grow in the plural in this place?"

And the woman answered, "It seems so."

So I departed from that place and walked a long time on my way until I came to a great hospital, wherein there

dwelt a host of wounded soldiers from over the water, and here there was a Red Cross nurse, and to this nurse I went up and said:

"Red Cross nurse, I have here with me a homeless cat. Will you take it in?"

And the Red Cross nurse smiled and took the cat and I departed.

When it was later in the day I passed this great hospital for wounded soldiers and I saw a soldier with one leg and with this soldier was a small cat with which the soldier seemed greatly pleased.

So I rejoiced in my heart that there was a place in the scheme of things for a small cat, and left the spot highly edified and feeling not a little boy-scoutish.

I have just learned that today is Christmas. This is a nice thing to know, although I hardly see what use I am going to make of the information. I might sing a couple of carols to my waitress with a certain degree of safety inasmuch as the good woman is evidently deaf.

DEC. 26th.—At last I have met her, the girl in the riding breeches, the girl who observed me in all my glory sitting on the edge of a window sill. But this time she was not clad in riding breeches, but in full-dress, full of vacancies, that is, in which she looked equally attractive. It came about in this manner. Her father fell asleep. That explains it. He fell asleep before the fire in the main lobby directly after having strained the strength of his pearl shirt studs by the amount of food he had somehow managed to cram under them. The orchestra, at some distance, was playing a particularly jazzy shiver and this naturally brought my attention to the gleaming young lady sitting beside the snoring old man.

As I was looking at her I noticed a strange thing. The left shoulder of the young lady gave a slight but ever so eloquent hitch. This intriguing movement was then repeated by the right shoulder, bare and polished beneath

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“‘MAIDEN, I HAVE HERE WITH ME A HOMELESS CAT’”—Page 99



"THE LEFT SHOULDER OF THE YOUNG LADY GAVE A SLIGHT, BUT EVER SO
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the bright glow of the lights. With much less grace, but with equally as much expression, I proceeded to do a little hitching of my own shoulders. Thus, in all solemnity, we sat hitching at one another until at last I nodded my head in the direction of the ball room. Still without smiling, the young lady arose and departed quietly to the place where the music was, and I followed her. Silently she took my arm and with profound gravity we embarked upon a sea of jazz, from which we presently emerged still in a condition of mute but mutual enjoyment.

Without a word I led her to a secluded, palm-clustered recess in one of the numerous sun parlors, where together we sat in silence and gazed upon the gaudy visage of a moth-eaten moon. She dropped her fan. I picked it up.

"Thank you," say she.

"Don't mention it," says I.

She dropped her handkerchief, and this, too, I retrieved.

"Oh, thank you very much," says she.

"You're cordially welcome, I'm sure," says I.

Then she laughed. She laughed like a Bacardi cocktail tastes. Pleasantly. Something one cannot get enough of. One never does until one gets too much. When she had finished, we spoke. We spoke plenty. We told each other our right names, where we lived, the books we liked, the plays we had seen, what we thought of the hotel, the people, the scenery and the food. We spoke of the summer time and declared we like it best, although she held out for skating. We spoke of other hotels and other places and other people. In fact, we spoke very much in the same manner as all young people speak and always have spoken from the time that the first couple met in the first hotel. Then we became silent, which was dangerous, so she took me to her father, to whom I was properly introduced, as if that made any difference. To my pleasant salutation he replied grumpily:

"Knew it all the time. Knew it all the time. Wasn't asleep. Go away."

And we went. The upshot of it all is that I must rise at an early hour tomorrow morning and go riding with this fair party. I didn't lie much about it. All I said was that I could ride. I can't, but I might have gone so far as to say that I had been brought up in the saddle. I regard the morrow with suspicion and skepticism. I have never been on a horse, have stayed as far away from them as possible, and now I am actually going to mount one. Great guns, were women put into the world only to make fools of men?

DEC. 27th.—I looked upon the horse as a murderer might look upon his jury. He gazed back at me and frowned. From that minute we were mortal enemies. I have never seen such marked hostility in any creature's eyes.

"Good morning," says my fair and slim young friend, buttoning her gloves as she approached me. "A fine day for a ride."

"Don't you think it's going to rain?" I asked, wistfully.

"Oh, no," says she. "It will clear up presently."

She took a step toward her horse, but I stopped her.

"Say, don't you think my horse looks sick?" I asked.

"No," says she, "he's well enough."

"I wouldn't like to ride him if he's sick," I replied, at which point the horse turned around and blew heavily in my face. I startled back horrified.

"Oh, you'll find him mettlesome enough," she assured me, "I picked him out myself for you. He's the worst in the stable."

"My family won't thank you," I muttered.

"There's nothing like a mettlesome horse," she added.

"To shoot," says I, under my breath.

"Well, let's go," says she, all impatience.

"Sure," says I, dropping the bridle with alacrity. "Where shall we go?"

"Riding, silly," says she, laughing.

That laugh of hers had lost for me much of its fizz. It

had sounded better on the previous evening. Today it was ghastly.

"Oh," I says, "I thought you meant to go away somewhere."

"Well!" says she, stamping her foot.

"Well, what?" says I, a little blankly.

"Well!" she replied.

Still I didn't savvy.

"All right," says she, huffily, "I'll get on myself." And she did.

"It's more than I can do," says I, looking with great misgiving at the murderous beast.

"Do you want me to help you?" she asks scornfully from her secure perch.

"I do," says I, with more truth than pride.

"Well, I won't," says she.

I approached the horse warily and he frowned down at me over his long nose and consequently I de-approached him. That is, I moved away with as much dignity as possible under the spell of a great fear.

"Well, well, come on," cried my intrepid Amazon.

"I'd rather sleep with a wildcat than get on that horse," I declared.

"Shall I leave you?" demanded the girl.

"Alone with that horse? Never!" I cried, and once more approached him. He pivoted around head on and regarded me with his goggle eyes, a trifle crossed.

"My horse has goat blood in him," says I to the girl. She refused to loosen up with a suggestion. Then suddenly I had a wise flash. Leading the brute up to the steps of the verandah I sprang upon him with a prayer to God in my heart and a sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach. I say I sprang upon this horse, but in truth I didn't. I only sprang partly upon him. The other part dangled artistically along the sleepy street of that rural town. Already my companion had ceased to be my companion. She

was merely a memory. John Gilpin was a jockey in comparison with me. At last she caught up with me.

"What shall I do with my sailor trousers?" I demanded. "They flap."

"Tuck 'em up," says she, in her horsey voice.

"And show my garters?" I cried.

"Sure," says she.

"Jade," says I, and for the time being further conversation ceased because of the Pavaloish proclivities of my mount. At last he began to show his better nature and eventually became almost reasonable, but never ridable.

"Great stuff!" said I to the girl, drawing my first faint breath of relief.

"It's the only thing," she replied.

"For a suicide, yes," I added.

Every bird on every limb, and there were many of both, seemed to be twittering at us. I felt sure they were kidding me. One old crow, who in his misogynistic manner, held himself aloof from the rest of his tribe, gazed gloomily at me from a distant limb, then flew away, making a horrid noise.

"Your cheeks are pale," the young lady took the pains to inform me.

"It affects some athletes that way," I told her, at which she laughed in a peculiarly irritating way that all women have and a great deal too many use.

"What's to keep this horse from turning around and biting my leg?" I asked, suddenly appalled by this terrifying thought.

"Nothing," says she.

"God!" says I.

"Well, come on, then," says she, "let's race."

Protest was in vain. I had no choice. Mine was a mettlesome horse. There is no denying it. If anyone ever does I feel sure I will strangle him or her on the spot. No sooner had my companion's horse set out than we parted company for the second time that morning.

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DORGAN.



" " SAY, DON'T YOU THINK THAT MY HORSE LOOKS SICK? " " —Page 104

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DORGAN



"'LET'S SWAP HORSES,' I CRIED, AS I PASSED HER COMPARATIVELY MILD-MANNERED MOUNT"—Page 109

"Let's swap horses," I cried, as I passed her comparatively mild-mannered mount. But her reply was lost to me. For sheer speed nothing could beat that horse. An automobile may cover more ground in less time, but not any faster. The road seemed to curl up behind us and the clouds above tumbled and collapsed through space. Then, as suddenly as it had started, it stopped. That is, the horse stopped. I didn't. I continued a few yards further on my nose. The horse, apparently satisfied with his sorry achievement, continued on his mad progress, and I made no attempt to follow him. When he at last disappeared from view I felt much better and arose from the road. On a nearby fence I seated myself and prepared to await the arrival of my fair friend. My knowledge of receiving a sarcastic greeting in no way offset my relief in having got rid of that terrible horse. At last she appeared.

"Where's your horse?" says she, briefly.

"What horse?" I asked, absently.

"Why, the horse you were riding so badly?" she answers.

"Oh, that horse," says I, brightening up, "why that horse lost interest in me about fifteen minutes ago. I think he has some friends down the road."

"Are you interested enough to look for him?" she asks.

"Yes," says I, "with a gun."

As we were a long way from the hotel it was decided that I should get up behind the girl and that we ride homeward in this clubby manner until we reached civilization, at which point, it was further decided, I was to debark and make my way to the hotel on foot. A groom was to be sent out after the horse possessed of the devil.

"It's not necessary to hug me," said the girl, after we had progressed some distance in this fashion.

"I know," I explained, "but it's a great deal more pleasant."

"You seem to know how to hug a girl a great deal better than you do how to ride a horse," she replied, caustically.

"I do," said I, "I like it better."

She made no reply to this, so perhaps she did, too.

"Tell me," she said, after a little while, "was that the first time you had ever been on a horse?"

"This is the second," I admitted.

"Well, you stayed on him much longer than most of the men I've taken out," answered this strange creature.

"It was not through preference," I assured her.

"He's the worst horse in seven counties," she continued. "No one ever fools with him any more—stop that at once and don't do it again!"

But I couldn't stop. I was too grateful. At the spot decided upon, I dismounted, and looked up at her.

"Will you ride tomorrow?" she asked, with an unusually arresting smile.

"My dear," I answered, "this is, or was, our last ride together. I understand Browning better now than I have ever done before."

"But it's not our last dance?" she continued, turning full current on her smile.

"No," I replied, limping wearily down the road after her. And it wasn't. She held me to it that very night in spite of all the pains and aches that were torturing my racked body.

Somehow I can't keep from liking that girl. May Polly forgive me. May she never need to. May she never know. This is the universal prayer of all men and most women.

"Won't you sit out a dance?" she asked me.

"Dearie," I replied, "I'll stand it with you, but after this morning's ride I fear my sitting days are over."

DEC. 28th.—It's all up with me now. Polly and mother arrived this morning. Some old scandal monger, unknown to me, but to whom I was not unknown, evidently tipped them off about me and my new sweetie. Polly's first words were sufficient to dispel the hopes to which I had desperately clung that she was still in ignorance.

"Ah," says she, regarding my blank face with battle-brewing eye, "I see you didn't expect us."

Muttering a few cheerless words, I kissed mother.

"Well?" says Polly.

Then I kissed her, too. She didn't want it. In the bullying spirit of womanhood, she was merely demanding her rights. I kissed her quickly, but not quick enough. The other girl, clad in an extremely fanciful skating costume, was just passing by. It was horrible. My soul sweated in every pore. She stopped for merely a moment, but it was one moment too many.

"Is that the woman?" hissed Polly. Women can hiss. In spite of all statements to the contrary, I know that it's possible. I've heard them. This hiss was particularly snakish.

"What woman?" I mumbled dully.

Polly took me by the arm and led me away.

"We are to be married," says she, and I have never heard more deadly determination of purpose expressed in anyone's voice. "We are to be married," she continued, giving me time to take it in, "one month from today."

"At what time?" I asked, knowing that something was required of me.

"At 9 o'clock," says Polly.

"Splendid!" says I, in a dead voice. "Ripping!"

(Later)—The storm has broken in all its fury. For the first time in my life I wish I were at sea. They have met and practically insulted each other. A barroom fight is mild in comparison with the sweetness of two contending women. I managed with a skill born of desperation to see the other girl alone. In my wildness I admitted that I loved her. She told me that she was going to marry me or break my neck. She could do it, too. Here I am, the most sat upon sailor in the service, over whom two women are fighting to see which one will have the pleasure of making me the most miserable. It is more than I deserve, perhaps, and at the same time it is more than I require. As

I was sitting on my bed a moment ago, holding my head in my hands, the other girl came quietly in, slipped me a small, swift hunk of a kiss and tiptoed out. There were no words spoken. That is evidently her way of clinching the bargain, and, by the way, I feel now I think she has done it. Dinner with Polly and mother is going to be a crisp affair. Why did I ever leave the sea?

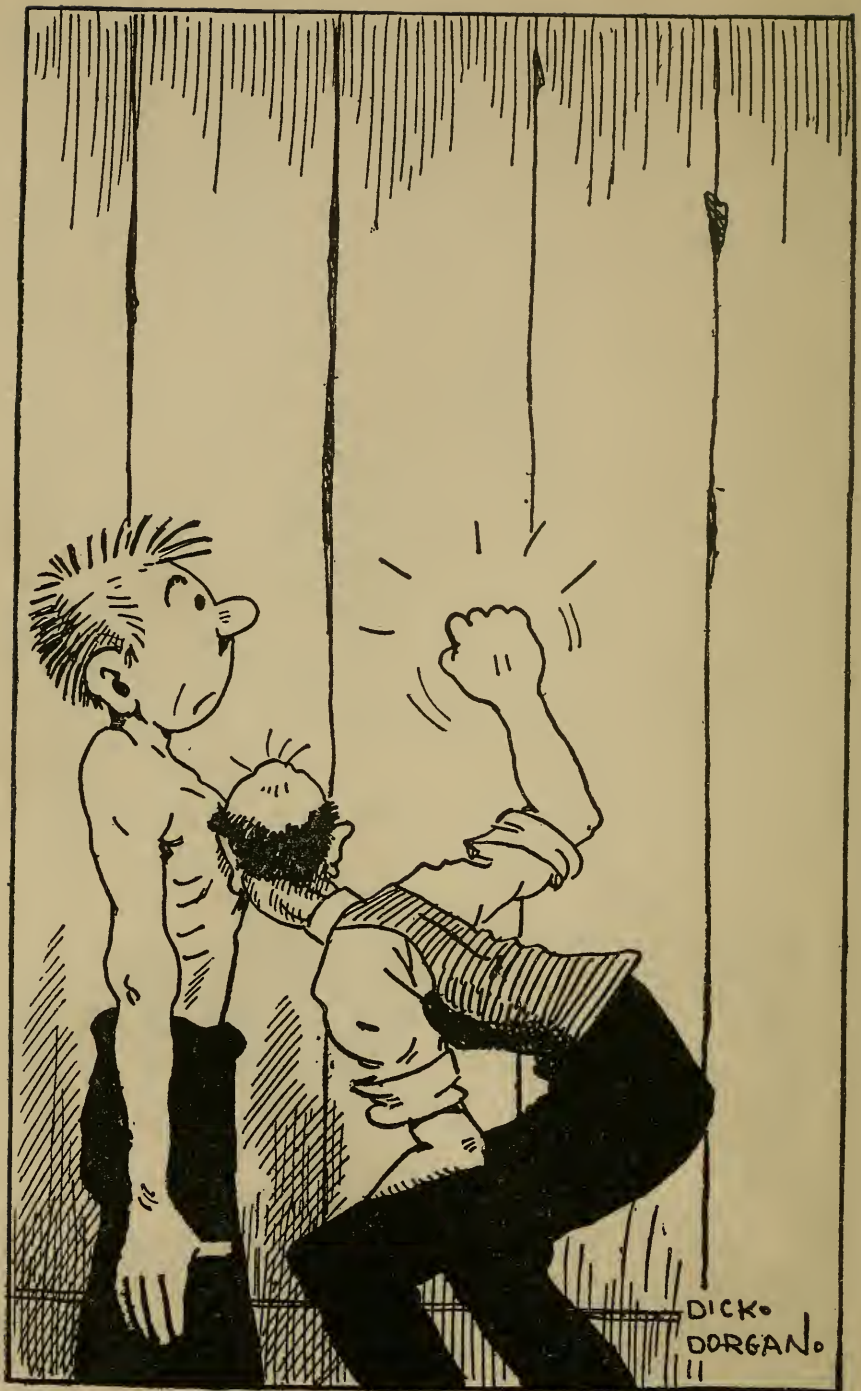
DEC. 29th.—Saved! Providence in the guise of a telegram intervened in my behalf and drew me out of the vortex of what was rapidly developing into a tragedy. I am no sounder of heart, but I am farther away from the scene of the accident. The telegram instructed me to report at once to camp and stand by for the mysterious process of releasing! I left them flat. I think I must have invented this train I'm on. No one knew there was such a train, but I caught it—sort of wished it into being. I'm now on my way to New York and from that point to camp. Behind me in the rapidly receding distance are two women. They must meet and talk. I fear the worst. If they ever come to the point of swapping stories, God help the good name I bear. It might not be right to love two women at once, but, by gad, it's rational.

JAN. 3rd.—(Back at camp) Not for long am I here, I hope. Some of my friends have waited so long, however, to hear their names called out on the release muster that their characters as well as countenances have utterly changed. I am slowly cracking under the strain myself. During the last three days which have elapsed since I arrived in camp I have attended nine different musters with hope and confidence in my heart, only to have a mighty crimp thrown into both.

As soon as I struck the station I hurried right up to the officer and said:

"Here I am, sir, when do I go?" And the things he said to me made me completely forget both of my bellicose sweeties. It seems that you don't walk right in and then





"AT FIRST I THOUGHT THAT HE WAS GETTING INTO COMMUNICATION WITH
MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER"—Page 116

walk right out again. Not at all. The word "stand-by" has really an actual meaning. It means just that. You stand-by for hours and you stand-by for days. One man has lost seventeen pounds in his efforts to hear his name called.

JAN. 4th.—Still out o' luck. The officer who reads the muster out roll does not seem to be able to pronounce my name. I am haggard. This morning we assembled on the parade ground and listened to the list being read. I had to be led away when Tim's, Tony's and the Spider's names were called out all in a row. I am alone now. My ship-mates have gone. Why speak of the parting? Some one has made off with my hammock and I am told that no one can leave the station without turning in his outfit at the gear hut. A moment ago I caught myself laughing hysterically at a tree, then all of a sudden I burst out singing:

*My name is Biltmore Oswald,
But the officer, he don't care.*

Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad. That's what is happening to me. One cold letter from Polly. Two warm ones from the girl. As David once said, "Feed me with apples, I am sick of love." He could have said less at greater length. I must search for a hammock—I don't care whose.

JAN. 5th.—It has happened. The first pop out of the box. Mounting the platform, the officer, a seagoing looking body of a man, called out my name in a loud voice, but my answer was still louder. So loud, in fact, that when the echoes of my triumphant "Here, sir!" had died out in the distance, a profound silence fell upon the camp. One could have heard the thrice proverbial pin crash to earth. Sailors have an unpleasant habit of glaring. The eyes of the multitude were upon me. There was envy in every eye. Then in a quiet voice the officer repeated my name

and I responded with a subdued "Here, sir." He smiled and told me to fall out.

From that spot, together with my kind, I was taken to the medical office. Here I was examined. Standing before the doctor I looked him searchingly in the eyes. What was he going to do to me? My whole fate remained between him and a still unstolen hammock.

"Have they looked at your feet?" he snapped out.

"Have who looked at my feet, sir?" I asked.

"The men in the other room," he replied.

"I didn't know that the men in the other room wanted to look at my feet, sir," I answered, humbly.

"They don't," said he, "but they have to."

I returned to the men in the other room.

"I understand that you want to look at my feet," I said, politely.

"Dear me, yes," said one of them—the funny one, "we're just crazy to look at your feet. Let's see 'em."

I showed them my feet. They gazed at them without any particular show of either interest or admiration, marked something on a card and sent me back to the doctor. This good gentleman then began to make passes at my body, all of which I successfully dodged.

"Stand still, can't you?" says he. "I want to sound you."

I stood still and was sounded—vigorously. Then he began to listen to me and his ear tickled.

"Don't do that!" he cried, irritably. "Don't fidget. Don't budge."

Once more I came to rest with a great show of self-control. Suddenly he stopped and began tapping on the wall. This was a new game. I didn't know what was expected of me. At first I thought he might perhaps be a spiritualist and was getting into communication with my great-grandfather to find out if there had ever been any sickness in the family. I relinquished this thought in favor of the Morse code. He was evidently trying me out on this, and so at his next tap I took a chance and called out "A."

DICKO
DORGAN.



"‘GOOD-BYE, FOGERTY,’ SAYS I, ‘BE GOOD TO YOUR FAMILIES’"—Page 120

DICK
DORGAN



"NOW I MUST HASTEN TO SOW SOME JAZZ-WEEDS"—Page 120

After this came several more taps and one loud tap which caused me to answer "C."

He tapped some more and I took a shot in the dark with "X."

"What are you doing?" he cried, giving the wall a re-sounding bang. "I'm not here to listen to your letters."

"Oh, I thought you were trying me out in the Morse code," says I.

"No," says he, "I want those guys on the other side to keep quiet. I can't hear your heart."

With this he bent down and listened vigorously.

"Can't do it," he said at last, "can't hear it. Mustn't let you out until I hear your heart. Apparently it's not beating."

He called another doctor over and asked him to listen to my heart. This gentleman listened attentively for a great while.

"Can't hear a thing," says he at last.

Both of the doctors looked at me and both muttered "Strange," and one of them asked me if I wanted a chair. The noise in the other rooms was growing louder all the time. Running to the door I thrust my head into the room and shouted:

"For God's sake, men, pipe down a minute or I'll have to re-enlist!"

The silence of amazement fell upon the room and I returned to the doctors.

"Now listen," I said, "and listen good."

"Ah," said the doctor, "I hear it. There it goes. Splendid! You pass."

And I did—quickly.

(Later)—The pay office was long, but easy. I received forty-five seeds. This so delighted me that I tried to shake hands with the Paymaster, but he shut the window on my hand.

I stole a hammock and turned it in. It happened to be my

own hammock. The last man in camp is going to be out of luck. The station is evidently short just one hammock.

On my way to the gate I met Mr. Fogerty staggering along in his insolent manner.

"Good-bye, Fogerty," I said, taking him by his funny old paw, "I'm going now. Be good to your families."

He gazed into my eyes for a moment, glanced at my sea bag, and took in the situation. He seemed to realize he was losing his best meal ticket, for his long red tongue suddenly protruded and he subjected my eye to an affectionate side swipe. He then followed me to the gate where I now am, waiting for a jitney. A sailor I never saw before just shook my hand vigorously and said, "Good-by, good luck, God bless you."

"Glad to have met you," I replied, and the simple-hearted soul beat it down the road with his bag on his shoulder.

Before me lies Polly and the girl. Which shall it be? I know not. Let the future decide. All I know is that I am just one jump from a pair of trousers that don't flap at the ends. Farewell, Fogerty; I shall see you again.

Now I must hasten to sow some jazz-weeds.

THE END

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