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THAT'S ME ALL OVER, MABLE



B. B.



BILL.

"That's me all
over, Mable"

BY

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WITH 25 ILLUSTRATIONS IN BLACK-AND-WHITE BY

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“Thats Me All Over, Mable”

Dere Mable:

I take my pen in hand to tell you what do you think I done now? I left the infantry an gone back into the artillery. The Captin hated to let me go. He said the Artillery Colonel was a friend of his. I guess thats why he finally said all right. It wasnt that I was scared of the infantry. I guess you know that I aint scared of anything that walks on two legs except the measles. The artillerys really more dangerous than the infantry cause you stand in one place so they can get a good line on you while in the infantry your running round all the time.

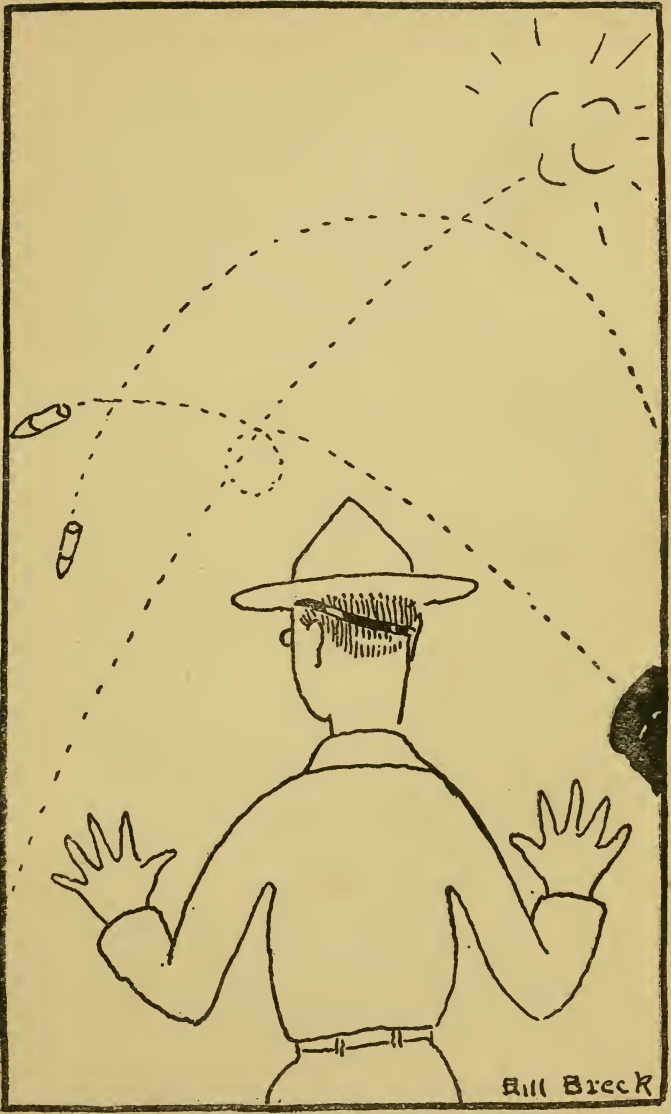
Seein the Captin was so jealous of me I thought a fello with brains would have more chance over here. I tried to transfer as an officer but the Captin said I better go over as a private and as soon as they saw what kind of a fello I was theyd fix me all right. He seemed to wake up a little

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when he saw I was goin. Im going to put in my applicashun for an officer as soon as I get a chance.

I didnt go back to the same battery I was in before cause youll remember that the Captin and I didnt get along very well. Couldnt seem to agree on nothin. I thought it would be pleasanter for me an him to if I went to another battery.

It almost seemed like they was waitin for me cause the day after I came over they hitched up the horses and drove the cannons out to the range. Its kind of hard to explain to a girl like you what a range is. The only way I can explain it is that it aint nothin like a range. There aint nothin here but mountins and we can fire all we want without hittin nothin but the mountins and once in a while maybe one of the mountin ears. But they say there so tough they dont mind it a bit. Thats a funny thing about artillery, Mable. The object seems to be not to hit nothin. The day we got out here I heard the Captin say "Well Im glad were way out in a place like this where we don't run no danger of hittin nothin." All I said was "I like to see a fello careful Captin, but if thats all your worryin about you needent have taken so much trouble." The longer I know Captins the less I understand them.



"WE CAN FIRE ALL WE WANT WITHOUT HITTING NOTHIN"



This is the rainy season. The south is a wonderful country for wether cause everything is divided off so well. There is three seasons. The cold season, the hot season and the rainy season. Thats what makes the place so good. It would be awful tiresome if you was always freezin to death, or always soaked or always bakein. Now you get four months of each. It makes a change for a fello.

Theyve put me on the speshul detail. The speshul detail, Mable, is a bunch of fellos what knows more than any one else in the camp. I sit on a hill all day with a little telephone in a lunch box and take messages. They got an awful system of sending messages in the artillery. Ill be sittin there thinkin of you an waitin for lunch and somebody says “Hello” an I says “Hello” just like a regular fone. And then they say “Heres a message from mmmmmmmmm.” Its always the same fello. I dont know who he is. And then they say “Tell Captin mmmmmmmmm to mmmmmmmmm at once. Please repeat.” And then I repeat and whoever it is says “No, No” and you dont here any more. I guess its some kind of a code they have. I dont believe the Captin is on to it cause you ought to have heard what he said the other day. I guess he

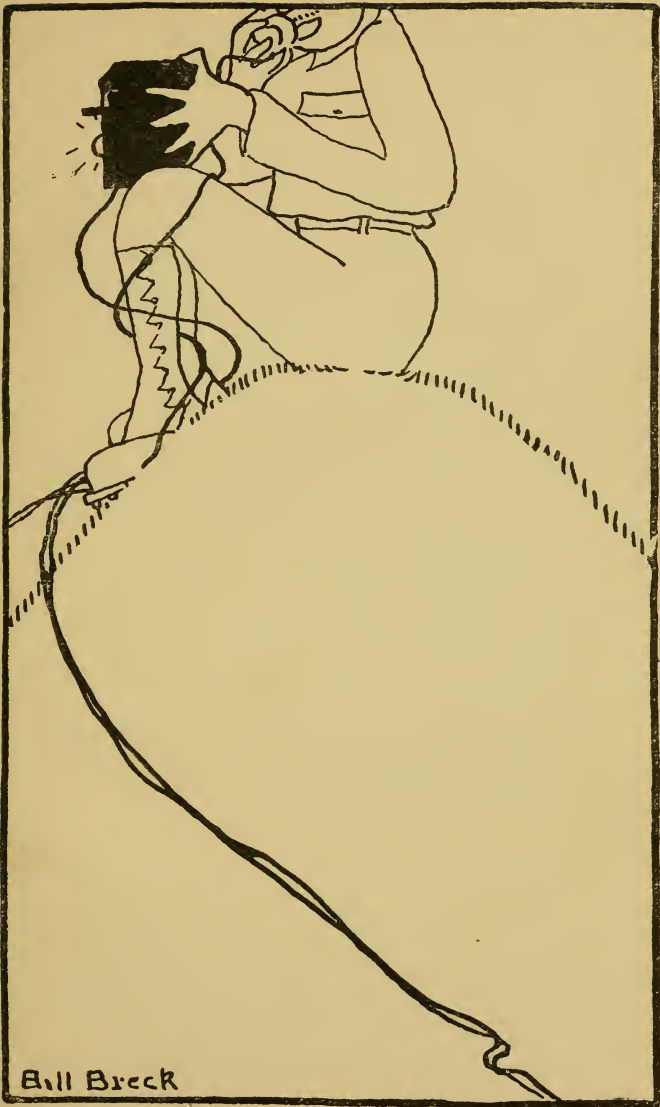
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was talkin about the fello on the other end. I never heard your father do better.

Its awful dangerous work cause where I sit aint more than half a mile from the shells. If they ever put a curve on one of them its good night Willie. I aint scared of course. I just menshuned it sos you wouldnt worry. Ill tell you more about the telefone the next time. I may know more about it myself then.

Yours till they curve one

Bill.



"I SIT ON A HILL ALL DAY"



Dere Mable:

Were still up at the artillery range shootin. I dont know what at. Im beginnin to think nobody else does ether. Our guns is pointed right at some woods. Weve been shootin at those woods now for a week and havnt hit them yet. We always seem to go over them. Theres a fello stands behind the guns and yells things all day like it was a poker game. "Up five, up ten." The whole thing seems like an awful waste of time to me. Im goin to suggest that we tie a couple of horses to a tree and shoot at them. The fellos would take more interest in there work if there was some reward. It wouldnt bother the horses much if we cant hit the woods I guess, eh Mable? They can use my horse. If Im willin to take a chance he ought to be.

A fello told me the other day that these torpetoes what we shoot cost as high as twenty dollars apiece. I dont believe that though or theyd be a law against it. I guess he was talking about the guns. Im going to take a couple of torpetoes back to camp and see how much the audience de-

6 "THATS ME ALL OVER, MABLE"

partment will give me for them. Thrifty. Thats me all over, Mable.

The mountin ears come over and watch us. I guess the moonshining business must be lax this time of year. A moonshiner makes whisky out of corn. Angus MacKenzie tried to make some by soaking a couple of ears in a bucket for almost a week. It didn't taste like much though an made us kind of sick. I guess you have to have a still like these fellos have. They call it a still, Mable, cause they have to use it on the quiet.

The mountin ears are awful fierce with big adams apples and round hair cuts when they have any. They have family foods. I guess they got the idea from the movies, Mable. For instance the Turners live on the one side of the mountin and the Howards on the other. That makes them sore so they shoot each other. Accordin to the stories they only shoot each other when they are goin to church. From the looks of them I guess they made that rule to save amunishun.

Angus an I went out last Sunday looking for a still. We thought we had one once and watched it most all day but it turned out to be just a little shack where they sell fig newtons and lemon pop to the fellos. You cant fool Angus.

The more I see of the army, Mable, the more I



"A BUNCH LYIN UNDER THE TREES"

think its an awful bluff. I heard a lot of talk when I first came up about a gun park. I thought it would be a nice place to go Sundays and have some fun. I asked the Captin if there was a lake where a fello could get a canoo and have a little paddle. He said no but they had a fine collecshun of animals. I didnt see nothin of no park when we came up. I spent a whole Sunday afternoon lookin for it. One day I asked the sargent where it was while we were unhitchin. He said we were in it then. It isnt nothin but a big field without a blade of grass or a tree and just the guns in the middle. I told him if he thought this was a park he ought to see Weewillo Park home. I guess you ought to know, Mable, I paid your way in often enough.

Its like those picturs you see stuck around Main Street about men wanted for the army. Theres always one fello playin tunes on a bugle, an a couple of fellos playin Old Maid on a table. An off in the corner theres always a bunch lyin under the trees like the High School tennis team having there pictur taken. Now that isnt the kind of thing we do at all, Mable. If the top sargent ever found us like that hed swallo his whistle.

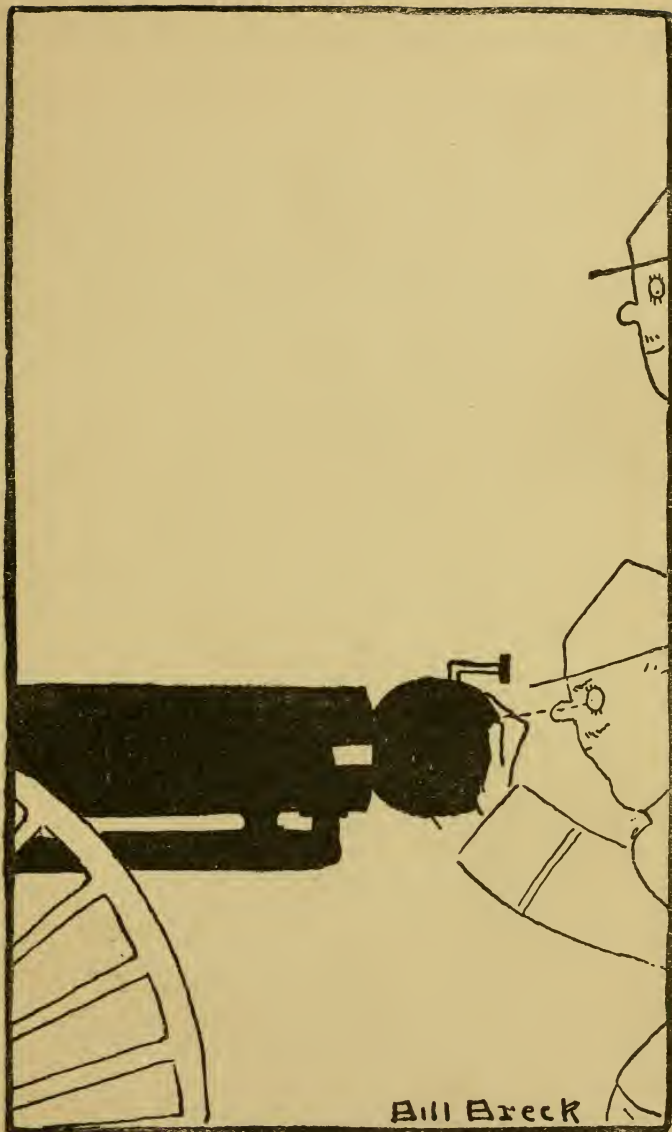
I had a run in with the Captin last week, Mable. I cant seem to get along with Captins. High strung. Thats me all over. Every week we

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have an inspecshun and I have to clean the whole gun myself. They send the whole bunch down but I guess its just to hand me things. Like nurses in an operation. It aint much fun I tell you. When the Major came around next day he opened the little door in the back of the gun and I guess he saw how many parts there was to keep clean cause he says "My, what an awful bore." The Major is all right, Mable. He likes a fello to have a little fun once in a while. I guess he aint never been a Captin. I says "Yes, Major, it certainly is, an nobody knows it better than me cause I cleaned the whole thing myself." He says "Well if you dont do somethin about it next week then you wont have nobody to blame but yourself."

I took the hint right off and when it came time to clean guns for the next inspecshun I got a horse and rode over to town and took a bath. I told the Captin afterwards what the Major had told me but I dont think he would care if General Perishing had asked me home to dinner. Its what *he* wants. To tell the truth I think he was sore cause I got a bath an he didnt.

Thats a funny thing about the army. If theres a speck of dirt on the old guns or the horses everyone gets an awful ballin out. But if a fello



Bill Breck

"MY, WHAT AN AWFUL BORE"



takes a little time to wash hisself youd think he done a crime.

Well I got to quit now. Im goin on what Angus MacKenzie calls a still hunt. Thats a skotch joke.

I think when the wars over Ill marry you an be a mountin ear. They dont seem to have nothin to do but stand round with there hands in there pockets and watch us work. Thats a nice life.
yours till then

Bill.

Dere Mable:

Spring is come. The buds is stickin out on the trees. Pieces of tacksicabs is stickin up through the mud on the roads. Yesterday I caught a fly. It makes a fello feel romantic somehow or other. Some of em shines there shoes and rites home oftener. Some has even had there picturs taken. Max Glucos was so sure spring was here that he got usin the Sibly stove for a laundry bag. Then we had a cold night and Angus MacKenzie thought it was kindling. Max an Angus aint speakin now. Not that that matters much though cause they never said much when they did talk.

It kind of makes me restless Mable when I think of you and Main St. and the fello with the long hair in Billings and Stover what used to make us up Sundays. An I get lonesome for Maple st. with you an me sittin at one end of the piazza pretendin we was listenin to your father readin the newspaper out loud. If I ever get old, Mable, dont let me read the newspaper out loud. An do you remember how still wed have to sit sos the hammok wouldnt squak after eleven o'clock or your fatherd stick his head out the door



"THE FELLO WITH THE LONG HAIR"



an say that if I didn't have a home you did? An how wed go canooing at Weewillo park Saturday nights and stay out till the fello that hired the boats out went to sleep. I was always a good spender. You know that, but thrifty. Thats me all over, Mable.

I was comin back to camp the other night and a guard stopped me and says “Who goes there?” an I says without thinkin “Me an Mable every Saturday night.” Thats the way I am now.

Max Glucos says poetry. Spring hits him that way. Some gets hay fever, some rash and others poetry. He says one thing that starts “In the spring a young mans fancy vests and socks come into view.” He says a fello named Burns wrote it. Angus says Burns was a hot skotch. But I guess you wouldnt understand that.

Were going to have a divishun show. Of course every body in the divishun isnt goin to be in it. A lot of them has to be detailed to watch it. They asked me what I could do and I said most anything but Id like to say a piece called Gungadien. Its a piece I came across in a book by a fello I never heard of so I didnt think any of the fellos would know it. They told me to report at the mess shack an theyd fix me up. When I went they told me I was electrician cause anybody could recite pieces but they had to have

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a fello with a bean on him to be electrician. They told me they was goin to hold me for an emergency. If the show went rotten an everybody got throwin things then theyd send me out.

Fellos is funny, Mable. Most of em when you ask em say they cant do nothin. Then if they think they aint goin to be urged they say there rotten but theyll have a try at it. Then when they get down rehersin they get so pleased with themselves they dont want to quit an give nobody else a chance. Its part of the electricians job to get them away when they get through. One fello plays a ukaylaly and sings Howareyou songs. He thinks there so sad that he almost cries every time. We think so too but it makes us mad instead.

Thank your mother for the spring tonic she sent me. Its funny that a bottle of medicine was the first thing that ever came through the post office without bein in pieces. I cant say much for the taste. I guess thats why it got by the post office so well. Your mother rote me to take it regular cause it put iron in my blood. Angus says we got enough stuff to lug around now without ballisting our insides with iron. After he tasted it he said that if he had to have iron in his blood hed rather swallo a couple of nails and

Bill Breck



"HE THINKS THERE SO SAD THAT HE ALMOST CRIES"



let them dissolve inside him than take them pre-digested.

Dont send me no more nitted things, Mable. Its gettin hotter every day. Next winter well be in France. Its nice and warm there all the time. Besides Paris is a pretty fair sized town. I can run in any time and get what ever I want. Give my regards to your father. I hope his liver is workin again. I dont suppose he is by any chance.

yours regardless

Bill.

Dere Mable:

I got arrested for a week up at the artillery range. That aint a disgrace like bein arrested in the city though. Down here some of the nicest fellos does it. There aint no jale. I just live in a different tent. I guess they couldnt think of any place worse to live in than a tent. Im in with a good crowd. It makes a nice change from drillin. I got arrested for my watch bein slow. That shows how strict they are in the army.

While we was firin at the range the other day I was sittin on a hill with the fone takin messages from another hill. I was thinkin of you an gettin kind of dopy when some one says over the fone "This is the General." I says "How do you do sir." Curteus. Thats me all over, Mable. I guess he didnt here me though. He says "Were going to syncopate our watches." That was a new one on me Mable. I was goin to tell him that mine didnt need it. Its the one your father gave me an its been runnin in ragtime ever since I got it.

Then he says "When I say check its ten fifty five (10.55)." I thought he was exceedin his

authority but I didnt say nothin an when he said check I just passed it over. He waited a minute and then he says "When I say check its ten fifty seven (10.57)." It struck me that I might have worked that out myself but I didnt say nothin. Then he says after a minute. "When I say check its ten fifty nine (10.59)." Then just to save him trouble I says "I got a watch myself sir. And as a matter of fact your five minutes fast." I guess I was slow. But as I say bein in arrest aint no disgrace like bein in the city.

Im going to ask the Captin to let me off this telefone job. Whenever they dont know who to let out on they let out on the telefone man. What they want is a mind reader not a fello with brains. The other day the Captin says "Lay this spool of wire up that hill." He handed me a thing that looked like a trolly cable and weighed about as much. Then he went home to read the paper till I came back and told him it was done. Thats the way with Captins. When I got it all done they go and say to the Major "I laid the wire up the hill." An the Major says "That was a good job, Captin. You must be tired. Have a cigar." But I never say nothin. Thats me all over, Mable.

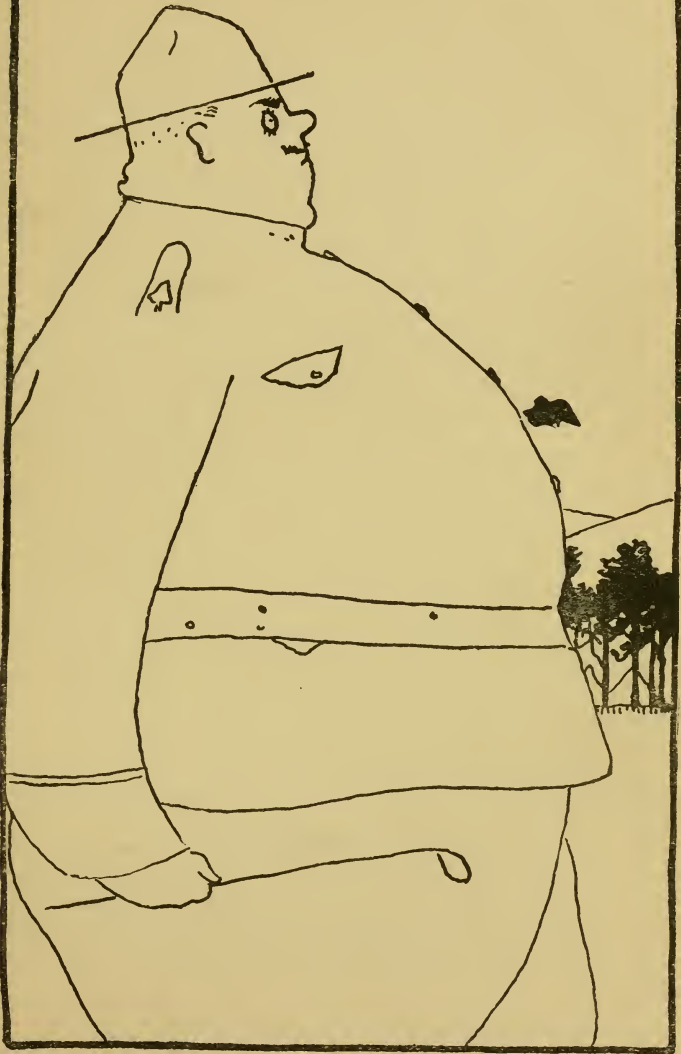
I took the wire like he said and laid it under a bush on top of the hill sos nobody could swipe it.

When I came down I showed him where it was on a little pictur I drew him. An to here him talk youd think hed never asked me to take it up the hill at all.

Yesterday we was firin into the middle of a field where there wasnt a livin thing to hit as far as I could see. If the Captin had to pay for these torpetoes I bet hed be more careful of them. He was awful excited though. He came up an gave me a lot of numbers to fone to his battery. He didn't say what to do with them an nothin happened. That got him sore. It aways does. Captins thinks you ought to know what to do without tellin you. He started to take it out on me bein the nearest. He says "Get somethin off quick. Hurry up. Get somethin off quick." So just to humor him I took off my shirt as he hadnt specified. You cant do nothin right for a man like that though.

Im learnin a lot about cannons an there habits. There like horses. When you first get them there wild. The Captin told me that every other battery but his was awfully wild. He has trouble with his though cause the other day they telephoned up that theyed just broken one of his guns. I guess he likes em better wild cause he got awful sore. But you couldnt do anything right for the Captin.

Bill B'reck



"THEY GET AWFUL FAT, OF COURSE"



You ought to see the Major, Mable. A major is a fello that only comes round once a week. They get awful fat of course. Ours is taller in bed than he is standin up. I guess he is the kind of thing they have in mind when they say "not to be taken into the front line trenches."

Im goin to send you one of the torpetoes they shoot out of the guns. There lyin all over the lot. As far as I can see there just as good as new. The Captin said not to touch any of em case they mightent have exploded and was liable to go off when you handled them. I asked them where they was goin to but he couldnt see a joke if you hit him with it. Im not takin no chances though Mable. I always carry a hammer and I pound each one of them good before I pick em up.

Im beginning to think all this stuff about the mountin ears bein wild is a lot of fake. I been out with Angus MacKenzie three times huntin stills an the nearest thing we found to one was a fello what sold Bevo. An they dont seem to be very wild. They come round and get our dirty wash every day or two and the only wild thing is me when they bring it back. They all seem to be mixed up on the shavin regulashuns. They all shave there necks and let there wiskers grow.

Well, Mable, pretty soon well be coming back from the range an goin into town again. I been

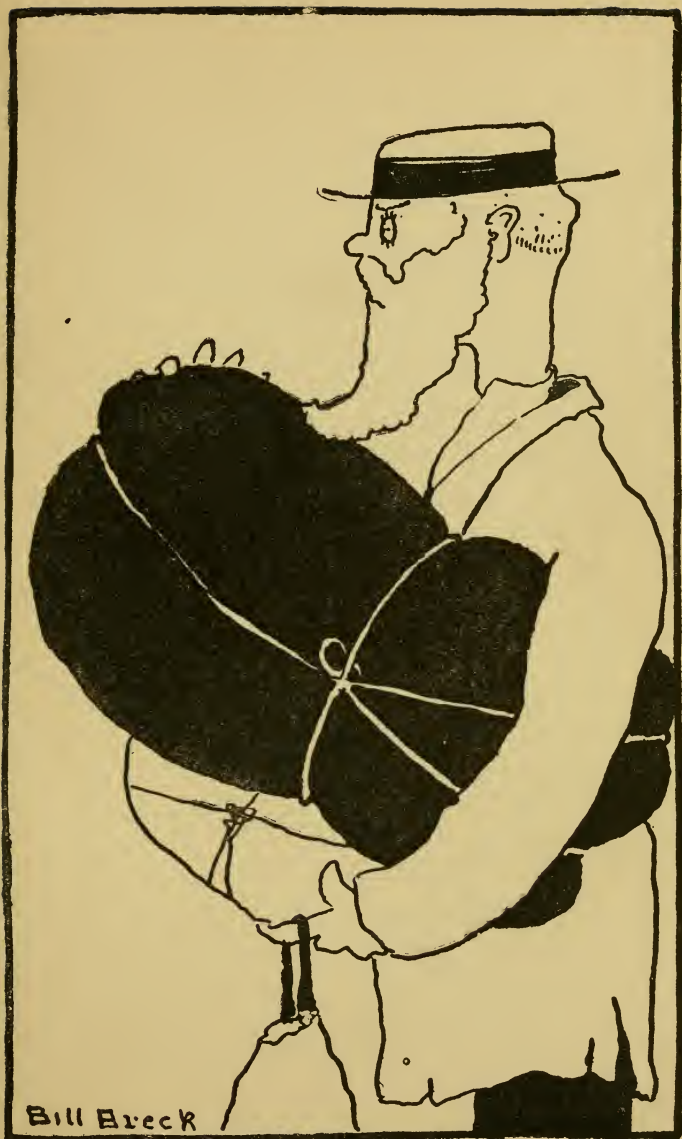
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away so long I bet William S. Hart has grown a beard. When you rite I wish youd look up and see when lent is sos I could give up a little somethin. The way a fello loses track of national holidays down here is awful.

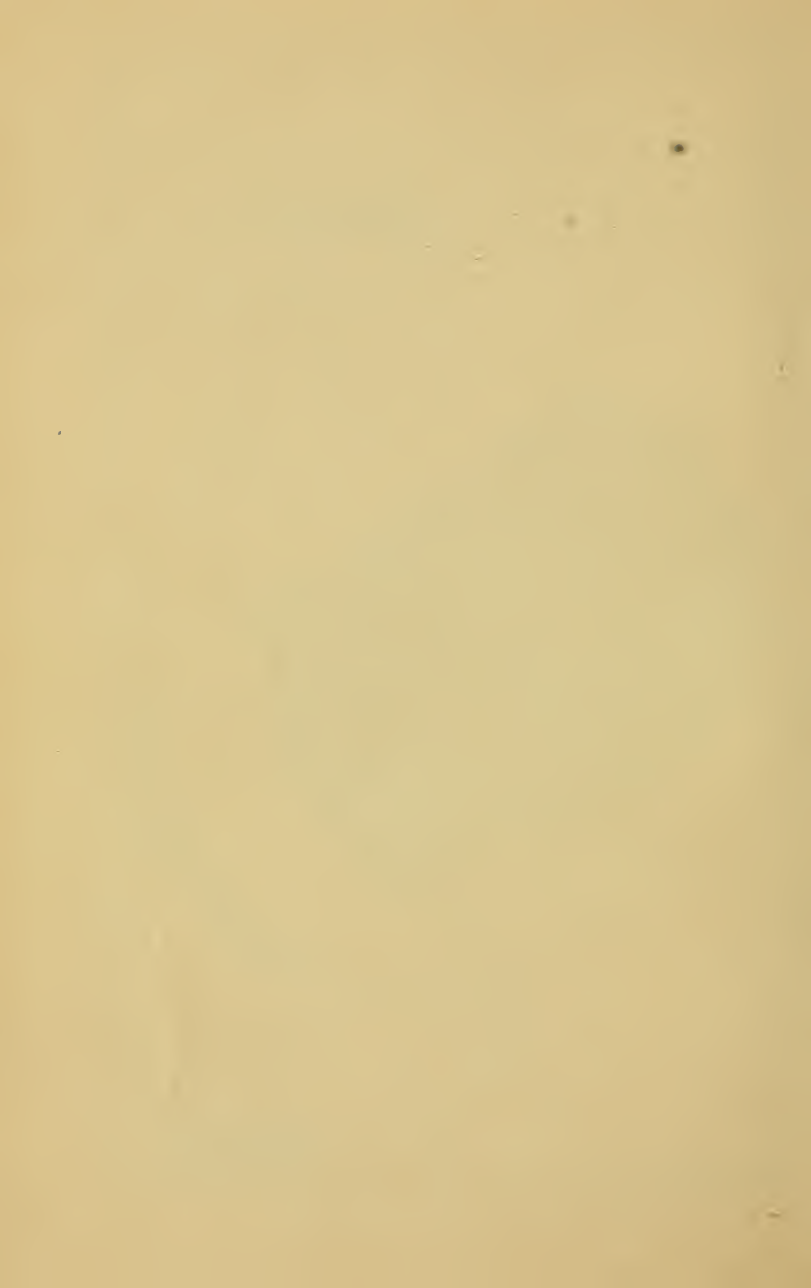
Give my regards to your mother and as far as Im concerned to your father to.

Yours till better times

Bill.



"THEY COME AND GET OUR DIRTY WASH"



Dere Mable:

I aint arrested no more. Im back to work again. I aint worrying though cause if things keeps on the way there goin Ill be arrested again pretty soon. I know now why they call it arrest. No drill or nothin. All a fello has to do all day is go around with a pick and shovel and dig.

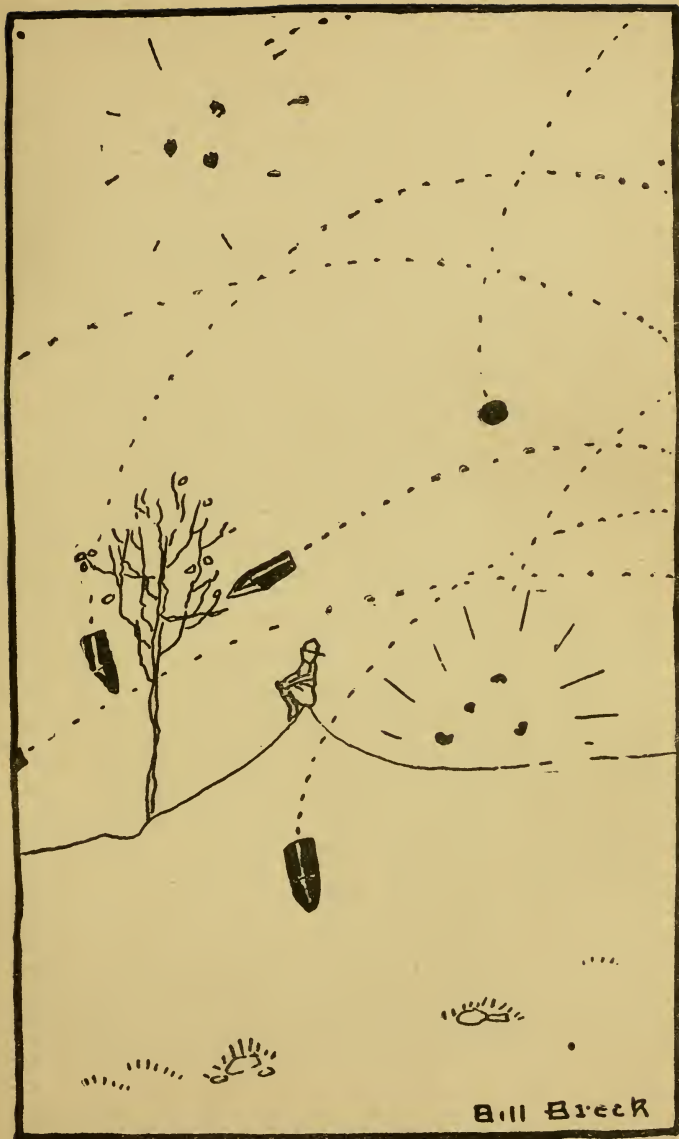
Were still firin away at the range but we havnt hit it yet. If they keep firin amunishun around much longer they wont have nothin left to fire at the Germans but the guns. Eh Mable? Thats the kind of thing Im always sayin in line. Keeps the fellos from gettin depressed.

I learned one thing about artillery. It aint as dangerous as I thought. They fire at what they call a target but it aint like any target I ever saw. It aint got circles round it or nothin. Every time they shoot they make a little dot on a piece of paper to show where the torpeto hit. The idea seems to be to hit all around the target but never to land one on top of it. If I was out there Id make a bee line for the target and sit tight till it was all over. Then someone says "The center of impact hit the target clean as a whissle." And

they all seem awful pleased. From all I've seen if the Germans will only land me on the head with a center of impact I wont feel Ive got any kick coming.

I was out with Angus MacKenzie on a still hunt an an autymobile came along what belonged to a fello what had two sons in the army. I could tell cause it had a flag on the front with two stars on it. It stopped in front of us. The fello what owned it belonged to the cavalry cause he had a yello hat cord on. He leaned out and says "Dont you see that flag?" I says "yes, sir, I was just simpathizing with em." That kind of went home I guess cause he got red an says "You report this thing to your battery commander immediately." So when I got home I told him that a fello what owned a big car had two sons in the army. I had to call him out from mess to tell him an he says what the this that and the other did he care. If you do what your told you get in trouble and if you dont you do to.

The Captins gone to Fort Silly now to learn somethin. I just told Angus MacKenzie I thought hed get more at Fort Levenworth. But thats a tecknickle joke, Mable. Of course you wont get it. I guess the Lieutenant thought he was in the audience department or somethin cause right away after the Captin left he came down and



Bill Breck

"IT AINT AS DANGEROUS AS I THOUGHT"



said now he was goin to make a battery out of us. I told him I knew where there was a good dry cell just above New York. That fello wouldnt laff though, Mable, if Joe Miller hisself told him a joke. All he thinks of is smoothin out horses.

The feelin between me and the horses seems to grow worse every day, Mable. I think my horse has got me mixed up with somebody else. I never did nothin to him except bring him down some of my breakfast one morning. The sargent is always tellin me to pick up his feet. I tell him theres no call for that. He seems to be able to do it pretty well all by hisself. He has em in the air most of the time when Im around.

He kept pesterin me though till the other day I thought Id show him I could do it. I put his front foot through the spokes of a wheel and tied it then grabbed the back one and gave an awful heave. Its a way Ive worked out for handlin bad horses. I figured hed have to be pretty good to stan on one leg and kick me with the other. But when he found he couldnt kick me he lay down on top of me. Mean, Ill tell the world.

Now the stable sargent says I hurt the horse. Thats stable sargents all over. If the horse had bit my head off hed have thought it was an awful

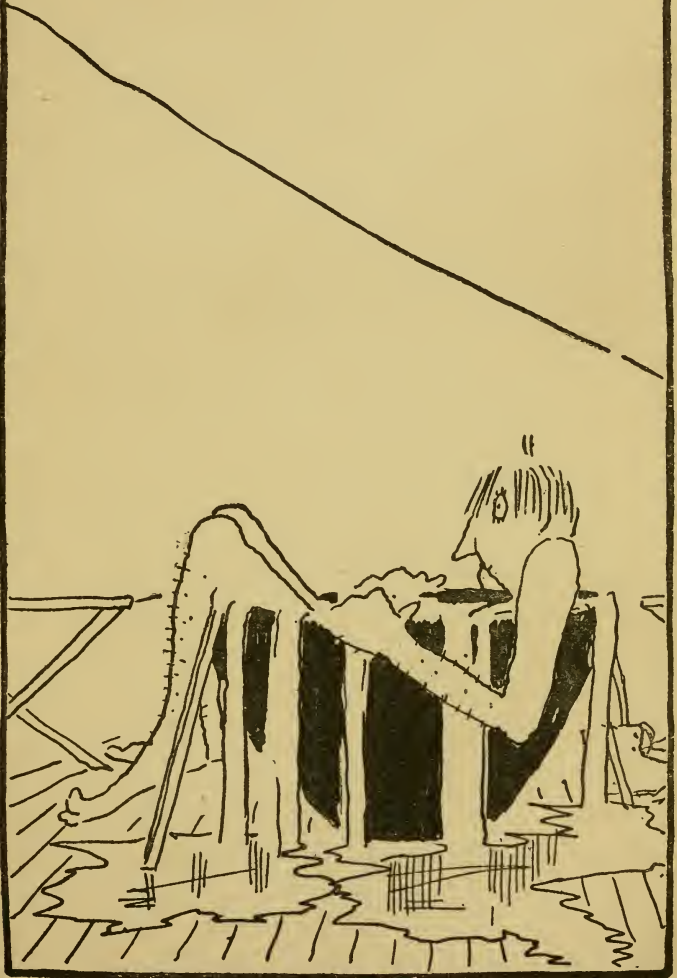
joke. All I say is that Im not as strong as a horse even if I did win a lot of cups at high school an if I can stand on to legs a horse can to only hes to lazy.

Max Glucos and Angus and me goes over to see the mountin ear what sells Bevo once in a while. Were tryin to catch him some day when hes wild. He aint been wild so far ceptin one day when we forgot to pay him. Angus says they only get wild certain times of the year. Angus wont drink Bevo. He says it look_s the same and tastes the same but it aint got the same influence with him.

The mountin ears hate niggers. This one has been tryin to get us to go on what he calls a coon hunt ever since we been up here. Were goin with him this week. They hunt them at night. I suppose thats so you cant see them so well. He takes the dogs sos they can smell the coon. I guess the mountin ears got a cold. The coon climbs a tree, then you cut the tree down and then the coon of course has to come down to. I wonder what they do with them when they get them. It seems foolish to go to all that trouble when you can find a dozen of them in every little house you come to.

Angus has got a rubber bath tub sent him. He thinks its great cause you can fold it so small it

Bill Breck



"ANGUS LIKES IT CAUSE HE CAN SIT DOWN IN IT"



goes in your pocket. Who wants to carry a bath tub in there pockets? I guess its a skotch custom. Perhaps they take it out while there waiting for a street car and take a bath. Angus likes it cause he can sit down in it. When he does it fits him like it was tailor made. All the rest of the bath slides off him onto the floor or into my shoes.

Well Mable I got to quit now and help out one of the sargents what has a job cleanin some harness. Hes a nice fello and he asked me to come down about two hours ago. I guess Ill go down now and see if there through. Willin. Thats me all over.

yours patrioticaly

Bill.

Dere Mable:

Its so foggy that we cant fire at the range. I dont see what difference that makes though. I havnt seen nothin since we started but a bunch of trees in front of the guns. Im goin to rite you a letter if the top sargent dont remember that he aint put me on no detail. We leave the guns out all night. Just sos well have somethin more to guard I guess. Were supposed to take turns guarding. As far as I can make 'out that means me and the rest of the battery altercate every other night. I suppose they think some of the mountin ears is goin to take one of the guns and go drivin with it. Angus MacKenzie, the skotch fello, says they have to guard em sos they wont go off. That sounds kind of silly to me though, Mable.

I been raisin a mustash. That is I was till yesterday when I cut it off while I was shavin and thinkin of you. I was sorry cause it was comin good. You could see it as plain as day with the naked eye. (Thats just an expreshun, Mable.) In a couple of places I could catch hold of it. They say nothin grows very good down here,

Bill Breck



"IF THE TOP SARGENT DONT REMEMBER"



though, but cotton. I guess Ill wait until I get to France.

The Lieutenant told us today that when we got over there wed all have to read meters. I cant see what thats got to do with artillery. That used to be Max Glucoses business though. Hes teaching me how. He thinks maybe if we study theyll make us meter spechulists. Spechulists dont have to get up so early. Angus says he thinks they put meters on the gas shells. That shows how systumatic they are.

And they say there goin to give us Infield rifles. I think they got it mixed up with base ball. It seems as though when you join the artillery you join everything else at the same time. I suppose the next thing theyll do is learn us a little navi-gashun.

Ive started savin again Mable for the little white house with the green blinds. Last month I saved a dollar eighty six (\$1.86). That with five dollars (\$5) I borrowed from Joe Loomis makes almost seven (\$7) dollars. I aint the kind of a fello thats always bothering his girl with money matters. I believe in keepin business out of the home. Close. Thats me all over, Mable. But in the bigger things I think you ought to know how we stand.

We may have to go at the house kind of

gradual. Buy the blinds first say. But theys one thing about it. Ive been ruffing it so long in the army that there aint no kind of hardship thatll bother me.

The mountin ears has funny customs, Mable, and yello dogs without any stummucks. Angus an I was out ridin last Sunday lookin for a still an got cold. We stopped at a cabin an a fello came out with a round hair cut an says "Howdy boys, wont ye light an strip?" Angus says that he didnt have no figger for that but wed come in an get warm. Eh Mable?

Once in a while when we cant eat what the cook gives us which is most of the time we go down the road to a mountin ears wife what makes pan cakes. She always carries a kid under her arm like an over coat. It looks as if the kids head was on the stove most of the time. Angus says she greases the griddle with it. I dont know about that, but the mountin ears is awful tough people.

Me an some of the other fellos went to a mountin ears party in a little town near here the other night. There was a lot of girls there with funny noses. When they saw us they all ran in a corner and laffed at us. That made me kind of sore cause we hadnt invited ourselves but been ast. The lady that ast us said the girls had there



"SHE ALWAYS CARRIES A KID UNDER HER ARM"



old close on and was ready for anything. We played old maid till half past nine. Then the lady what ast us brought in a bowl of apples and our hats. She said the girls was all nice and they couldnt galyvant round all night and get talked about.

The Lieutenant told us that in a couple of weeks the whole artillery brigade is comin up an there goin to have a garage fire. I told him if he knew about it so far ahead that there wasnt no excuse for such a thing. Though I should think that would be all a garage would be good for around here. You cant tell the Lieutenant nothin though since the Captin went to Fort Silly to learn something and left him in charge of the battery. I think the authority has gone to his head. Angus says its gone where its least crowded.

I read the other day, Mable, that there makin the cups rough on the bottom now so youll think theres sugar in them. They cant fool me though. Quick. Thats me all over.

Dont feel you got to stop nittin me things just because I cant use them now. You cant tell when well have another winter. Besides it gives you somethin to think about when you sittin talkin.

Im sending you a new piece on the phoney-graph that I got in the ten cent store. Its called “look out Germany, I am comin.” It gives you

28 "THATS ME ALL OVER, MABLE"

an idea of the way I feel. I got to stop now an
go an see some fellos in another battery. I just
herd the top sargent blow his whissle.

yours till I rite again

Bill.

Dere Mable:

I would have rote you before this only the fellos in my tent is too tite to buy any paper. It wouldnt take much, though, to tell you what I been doin. If I ever rote a book about my adventures same as that fellow Empty what rote the book called "Over the top and go to Hell" it would run in competeshun with the Manual of Inferior Guard. Im gettin so I can only sleep four hours at a time. The only trouble is that it works the other way. When I do happen to miss a day not bein on guard I have to go to sleep after I work for two hours. Of course that interferes with the drill skedule, Mable, but you cant explain nothing to a top sargent.

I overslept the other mornin. I didn't here the horn. I dont see how they expect a fello to here the horn if hes a sleep. If he herd it hed be awake. I got out before they started firin anyway. I had to go without breakfast to do it. I wasnt goin to complain about that, though. Soldierin every minit. Thats me all over, Mable. The Lieutenant got awful sore. I guess he was mad cause hed got up earlier than he had to. He said

he was goin to prefer charges and asked me what I had to say. I told him every man to his taste and if he was askin my opinion Id prefer to go back to bed. Awful excitable fello, the Lieutenant.

I saw a letter on the tops desk yesterday about the meddles a fello can get now. Theys all kinds of different ones. Somes from Congress and somes from the Ward Apartment. Im goin to rite my congressman as soon as I finish this letter and get a bunch of them. Of course I wouldnt wear them till I do somethin pretty good but I figure out that itll take so long to get em over there that it would be better to get em now and take em over with me.

Im goin to tell the congressman to that as far as Im concerned Id like to go to France as soon as I can. Its gettin nice and warm now for travelin. I want to see the Champs Eliza. Thats a street in Paris that was named after Queen Elizabeth. But thats history, Mable, I dont suppose you understand. They tell me its even better lookin than Broadway or Fortysecond (42nd) street.

I saw in the Sarahcuse papers that they thought the artillery was goin there to expand. If I expand any more, Mable, Im going to bust my belt. I dont know why it is. I dont eat nothin outside



"I DONT EAT NOTHIN OUTSIDE OF MEAL HOURS EXCEPTIN A FEW PIES"



of meal hours exceptin a few pies and the like but I get fatter and fatter. I never think of eatin when Im not hungry like some fellos. A fello what does that is makin a pig out of hisself I think.

Angus MacKenzie, the skotch fello, was out guardin the guns with me the other night. He went to sleep on an aunt hill. I guess the aunts thought he was a new mountin or somethin cause they was all standin on him the next mornin. To look at the sunrise I says, eh Mable? Angus didnt seem to care though. He says Napoleun had the same thing happen to him and was always tellin how an army traveled on his stummick, Nepoleun, Mable, is the fello that Washington licked. They named that three colored ice cream after him.

All day long while were firin, Mable, a fello from Brigade headquarters stands near the guns and looks through a big glass with horns on it. I guess hes to lazy to hold it hisself so he brings out camera legs and puts them under it. He looks through the glass and seems to see a lot of numbers that he tells to a fello what stands beside him. I dont see where he sees them. I looked through the glass the other day while he was eatin lunch and I couldnt see a thing except the side of the hill. Then he came back and

looked through it and read off a string of them. The fello beside him rites down everything he says. I looked over his shoulder the other day. It looked more like a Jewish curse to me than anything else.

The Lieutenant came down the other day and told us to get all shined up cause the Sanitary inspector was comin out to look us over. I thought hed be all dressed up in white with white tennis shoes like fancy bakers and sanitary barber shops. He wasnt though. He just had on a regular uniform. I didnt think he was speshully sanitary. It may have been sunburn though. I couldnt tell from where I stood.

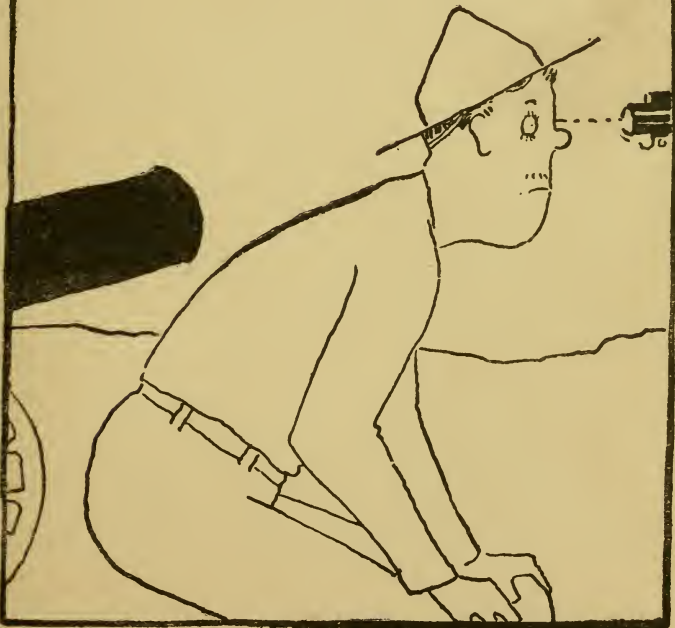
He had a fello with him they said was from the audience department. I know now why they call it the audience department. All they do is come round and watch us work. Thats a branch I didnt know about till after Id joined this.

Well, Mable, I got to quit now and go and look at the Guard rooster to see if I answer sick call tomorrow mornin. They say the Germans is raisin the dickins. I wish theyd hurry up and get me over there.

yours eternally,
in haste

Bill.

Bill Breck



"I COULDNT SEE A THING EXCEPT THE SIDE OF THE HILL"



Dere Mable:

I thought Id rite you and let you know they wasnt nothing particular to say. Theyve called off the firin for a few days till they can get some more amunishun. If theyd only scatter a few Germans out there it wouldnt be such an awful waste. Ive fired so much now I guess I could fire anything. Tell your mother the first thing Im going to do when I get home is fire the cook. Same old card, eh Mable?

Its nice and warm here now. We havnt used the Sibly stove for a week exceptin to keep our dirty wash in. An old nigger comes round once a week and takes it out. I cant figger that nigger out, Mable. From the looks of the wash he brings back he thinks I only got one leg and from the looks of the bill he hands me he thinks Im a sentaped. Angus says hes not all there hisself. Thats why he loses so much.

We had a boxing fight the other night. The Lieutenant says they increase the moral. I dont think they do the non coms no good though when they see the wallop some of the fellos in their squad has got. Joe Loomis has been talkin so

much about how he could lick the whole divishun with one hand behind his back that we got him to go in. I put some money on him at his advice.

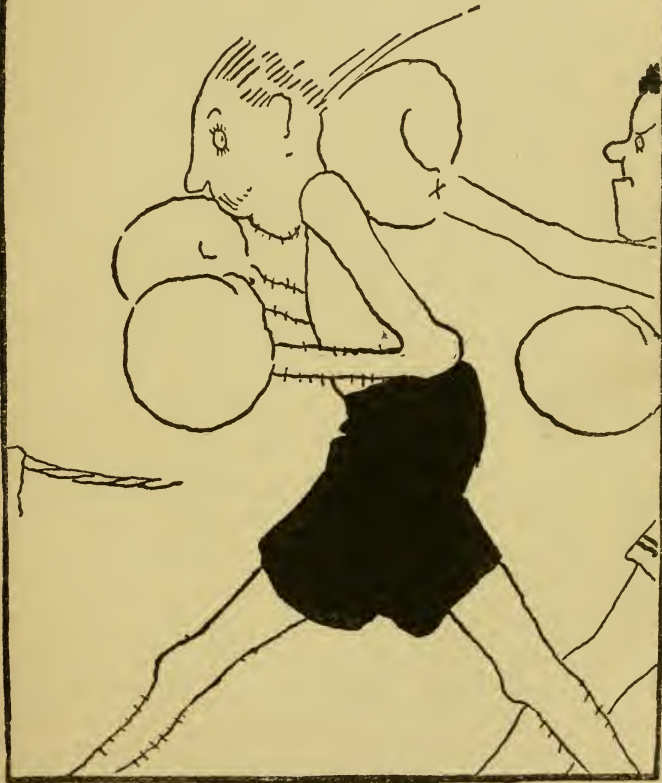
I guess he made his mistake in not tyin his hand. Somebody told me he was fast. He was. He outran the other fello all the way. Angus says they ought to make speshul fighting rings with banked corners sos fighters could make better time.

Joe thinks he won yet. He says if he hadnt slipped and fell out of the ring on his elbow hed have nocked that fellos head offen his shoulders so hard it would have hurt somebody. Im glad I borrowed the money I bet on him. It might have been a total loss.

Im going to ask the Lieutenant to make me a bugler, Mable, sos I can find where buglers go between meals. Nobody ever sees a bugler except at mess and on payday. Ive asked a lot of fellos but nobody knows what becomes of them. I wouldnt want to be a bugler all the time. Its two much strain on a fellos face. As soon as I find out where they go Ill transfer back as a fighter.

I went into town the other night, Mable, and went to a dinner that me and a lot of other fellos was ast to. I sat next to a lady what didnt seem to have much on but a lot of jewels as far as I

Bill Bieck



"HE OUTRAN THE OTHER FELLO"



could see. Of course she was sittin at the table, Mable. I looked the other way all the time I was talkin to her cause I didnt want to embarass her. I was going to offer her my coat but I didnt see why I should take cold if she wanted to.

We didnt talk much. Once she looked at me for a long time and then says “You know, Mr. Smith, every time I take a hot bath I feel very guilty.” All I said was “Because youre not shar- ing it with somebody I suppose.” Then we didnt talk much again.

There was a lady across the table with turtle- hide eye glasses what was collectin things for the sufferin in the Palacestein. I asked her why she didnt put an add in the paper askin everybody to send in there old brown derbies. Nobody got it though. I was the only one at the whole table that a got a laugh out of it.

Angus MacKenzie, the skotch fello was there. He says he likes that kind of a party. He is always full of get up and go from the minute he gets there.

I never saw so many dying relatives in my life as is comin by telegram every day. Have you got an epidemic or somethin up north, Mable? It seems as if everybody I know had been home at least once to help his grandmother die. None of em seem to care much for their relatives,

though, from the way they act when there startin home to watch them pass away. I asked the Lieutenant for a furlo. He wouldnt give it to me. Got it in for me just like the Captin did. I wish youd telegraph him that you died quietly and couldnt I come up for the funeral "on or about" the middle of the month.

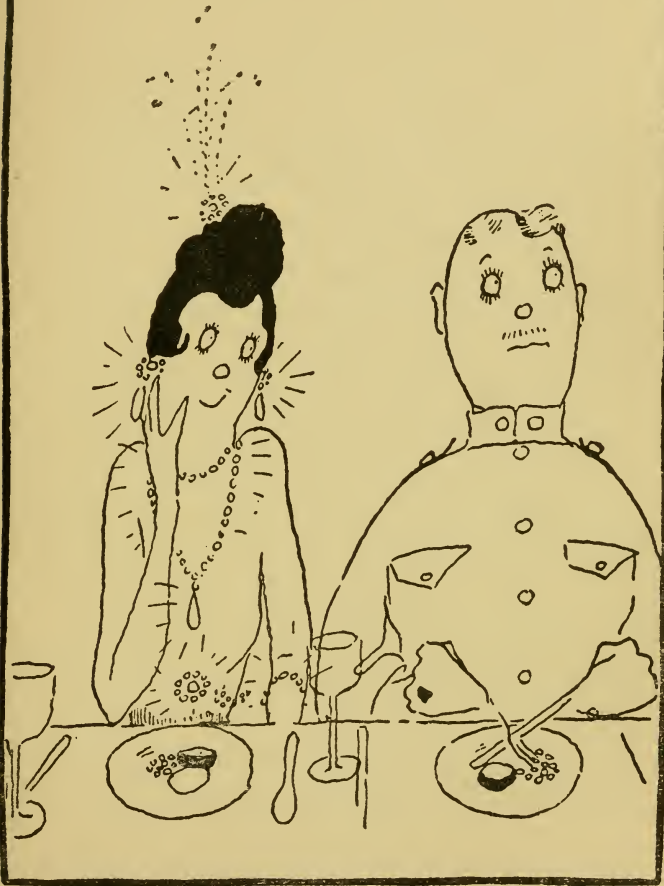
While we was firin at the range the other day a couple of fellos rode out by the targets lookin for shells. It was the first time wed seen anything worth while firin at. Everybody was right on there toes. I guess the Lieutenant didnt see em though cause he had us cease firin. Dopy. Thats the way he is all the time. I dont see how were ever going to learn nothin if we dont cease our opportunities.

I dont guess theres any use in my askin you if your havin a good time. I dont see how you could be under the circumstances. Just make the best of it Mable and as soon as me and the rest of the fellos can get things straightened out Ill come back and paint the canoe again.

until then

yours faithfully

Bill.



"I SAT NEXT TO A LADY WHAT DIDNT SEEM TO HAVE MUCH ON BUT A LOT OF JEWELS"



Dere Mable:

I am bustin into societie up here at the range. This needent make no difference between you and me though. There aint nothing stuck up about me but my hair. Thats all right so long as its good and wet. Last Sunday while I was takin a bath in a little town near here the minister ast me to dinner. Not while I was in the tub, of course, Mable. Just after. He ast Joe Loomis to. He had to really cause he was with me. Hes not a regular minister. Hes got a lot of money and pointed shoes an is down in the moun-tins for cronik azmuth. Awful highbrow, Mable. Dont know who Ring Lardner is and changes the needle after every record.

The minister has two daughters, both girls, and a wife. One of the girls is good looking and the other is more like youd expect. I guess shes a pillo of the church. Joe was ast for her while I amused the good looker. Anybody but Joe could have seen that. Not him. He kept buttin in an makin an ass of hisself.

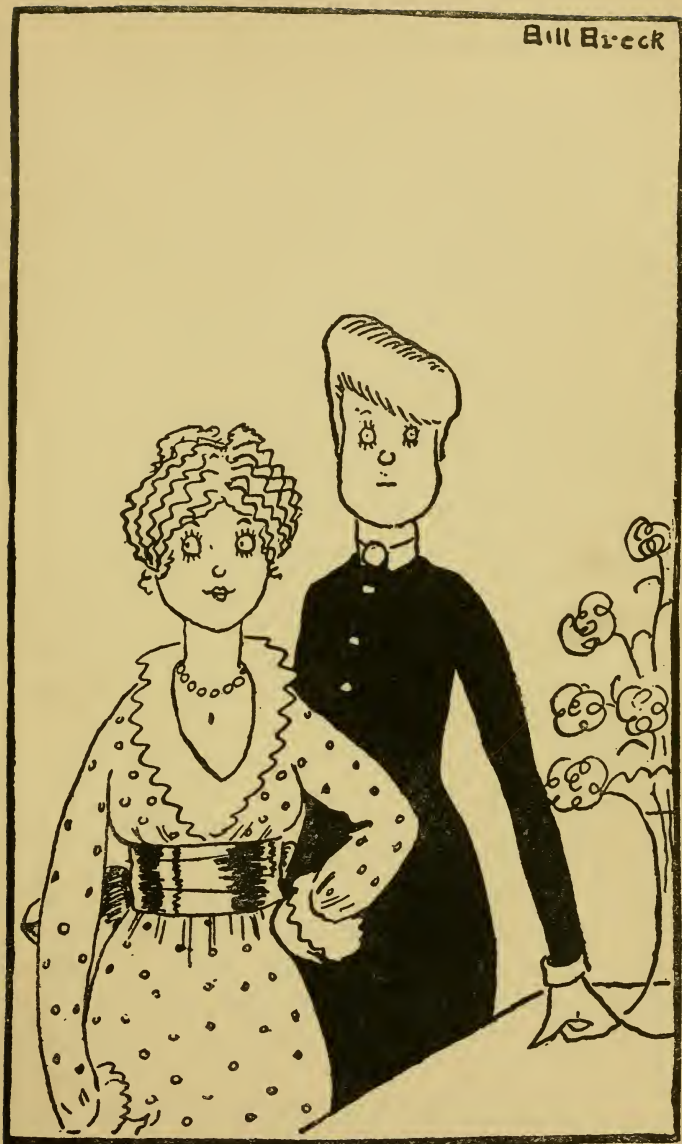
We was ast for dinner at hapast one. Joe thought it would be politer not to run in an eat an

run out like it was a canteen so we went a little early. About noon. They played highbrow pieces on the phoneygraph. The kind that has only one tune on them an cost so much that everybody has to lissen. Joe dont know nothin about music of course. Right while K. Russo was havin an awful time he says if theyll speed it up he like to have a little dance.

The minit we sat down to dinner Joe started tellin one of his stories about how he almost got killed one time. They was all waitin for him to shut up sos the minister could say grace before the soup got all cold. Joe thought they were listenen to him. Thats somethin that aint ever happened to him before. He kept draggin it out and draggin it out. The only thing that finally stopped him was that he forgot the point. Then the minister put his nose in his soup and began sayin grace. Joe thought he was talkin to him and kept askin "Hows that and what say" all the time he was prayin.

I aint never goin out with that fello no more. I guess thats safe cause he wont never be ast. All the time durin dinner he kept sayin, "My gawd I hate to make such a hog of myself." Then the minister would look like hed lost some money and my girl would giggle. The ministers wife passed him some stuff she said was real old

Bill Breck



"THE MINISTER HAS TWO DAUGHTERS—BOTH GIRLS"



spider corn cake. Joe said he didnt care how old it was. Since hed been in the army hed got sos he could eat anything. Then he thought a while an says he guessed it must have been a relief to the spiders to get rid of them. Nobody said nothin. Just to show his poyse Joe took his fork out of his mouth and speered four pieces of bread across the table.

He was all for keepin the same plate through dinner and gettin up an helpin. Said he knew what it was like to be in the kitchen on Sunday. They forgot the coffee till dinner was over. They didn't like to waste it I guess bein war times so the ministers wife ast us if wed like to go into the drawin room an have it. Joe said he wasnt much at drawin but My gawd if he sat round makin a hog of hisself any longer theyd have to give it to him in a bed room.

They gave us coffee in egg cups. Seein I wasnt payin for it I didnt guess it was my place to say nothin. Manners. Thats me all over, Mable. We got talkin about one thing and another. I was tellin them about the war and when it was goin to end. Joe was sittin on the sofa with the other daughter pickin the sole of his shoe. I felt sorry for him cause I knew hed be lookin at fotygraphs pretty soon if he didnt buck up.

The ministers wife asked me what I thought of wimmins sufrage. I said I thought it was a good thing but you couldnt tell. Thats the beauty of always keepin read up on these things. If you happen to get outside the army for a little while and meet some inteligent people you can talk on pretty near anything. Then she turned to Joe and ast how he felt. Joe jumped like somebody sprung out at him an says "A little sick to my stummick thanks but thatll be all right as soon as things set a bit."

The good lookin one said she thought our officers was awful cute. I guess she never seen our Lieutenant. She said she just couldnt resist them. I says, quick without thinkin it up "Of course, its against the law to resist an officer." That got them all laffin an they forgot Joe for a little while.

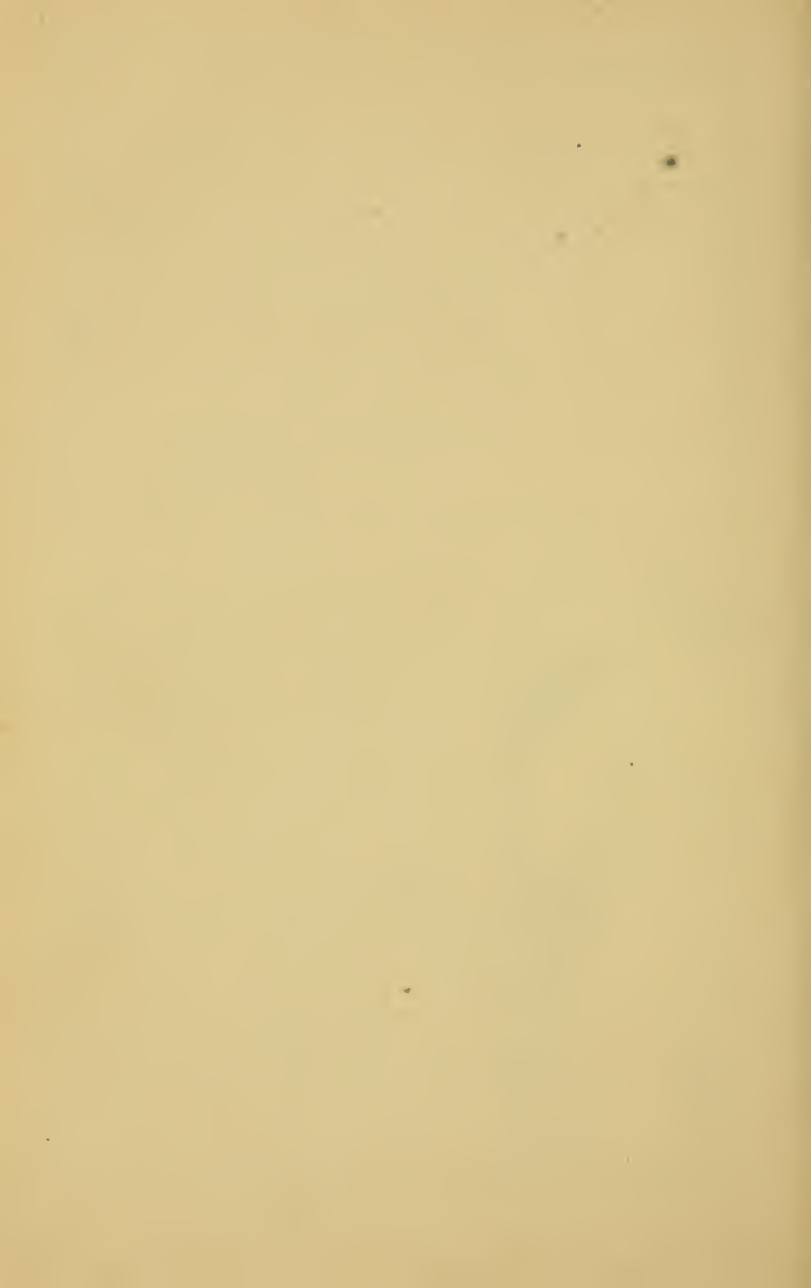
Both the daughters sang a duette. Joe says that was the best thing about it. They got through twice as quick. We got laffin so hard that I says I guess wed have to go sos to be in time for mess. Then Joe got awful polite and backed over a rubber plant an says "My gawd excuse me." He wont never be ast again.

Ive been wonderin for a long time, Mable, why the audience officers all wear spurs. They dont ever ride a horse of course. I ast Angus MacKenzie, the skotch fello, the other day and

Bill Breck



"THEY GAVE US COFFEE IN EGG CUPS"



he says its to keep there feet from slidin off the desk. Aint that a funny custom?

I guess were goin to begin shootin again pretty soon. The Lieutenant says the artillery is goin to have a Brigade problem and the infantry is comin up from camp for it. I guess well all take a lot more interest in the shootin if theres some-
thin worth while to fire at

yours in spite of better things

Bill.

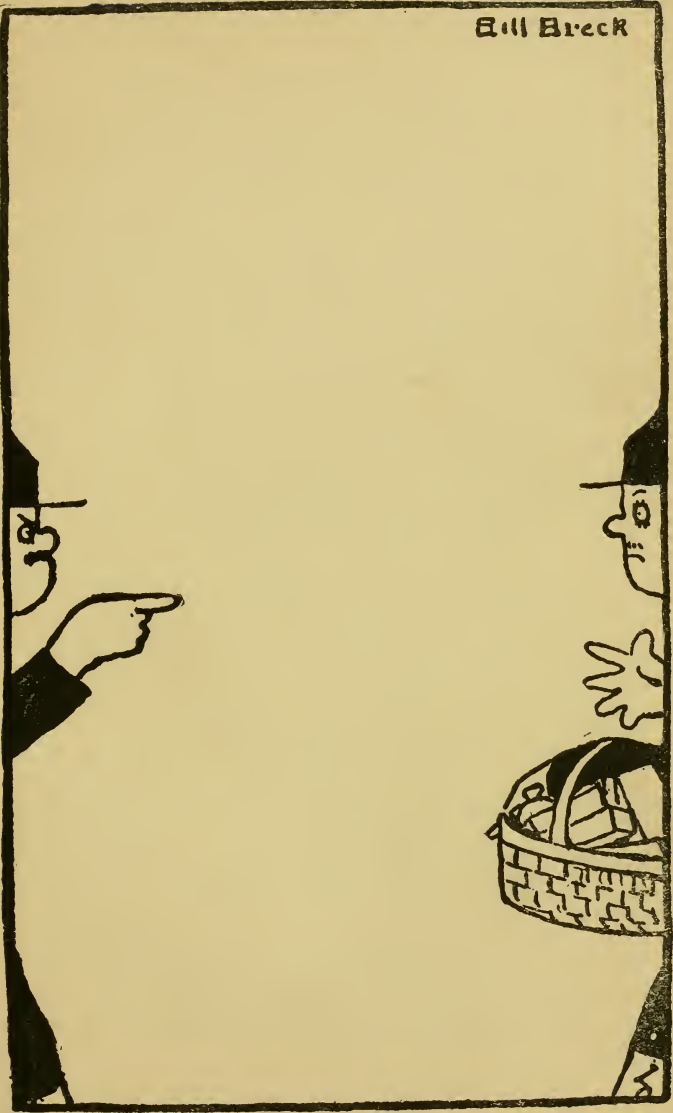
P.S. Joe Loomis just got a letter that smelt and what do you suppose, Mable? It was from the goodlookin daughter askin him to come over to dinner next Sunday all alone. I guess there not as high brow as I thought.

Dere Mable:

Were back from shootin at the range. We ended up by firin at the infantry. That was what they was talkin about when they said there was goin to be a garage fire. Thats the army all over, Mable. Tecknickle. The firin was a total failure, Mable. We fired at the range for three months an never hit it. That aint surprisin cause I never see nothin except some trees in front of the guns and we always fired over those. When they finally got wise and put some infantry out there for us to fire at we missed them absolutely. Fired everythin in front of them.

Dont say nothin about this cause it might get into the papers and cheer up the Kizer. Its all the Captins falt. I guess he thought he had an Aunty Air Kraft battery. That fello comes from Far Rockaway and he lives in the last house.

The last mornin we fired the Lieutenant says I was battery agent. It seemed kind of silly to me to bother about sellin stuff while we was firin but thats the Lieutenant. He got away before I could ask him what I was to sell. I bought a lot of pop and crackers and stuff and tried to sell em to the



"THE FIRST SARGENT WOULDNT LET ME"



fellos, while they was firin. The first sargent wouldnt let me. I told him I was battery agent but not him. That fello wont have to wear no steel helmet when he gets to France. I ate it all myself.

If the Lieutenant is goin to keep me as battery agent now were back Im goin to ask him if I cant rig up a little office. I wouldnt be surprised if they had me up in Washington pretty soon. Lots of the fellos say they ought to send me somewhere. Im ritin up to N. Y. where theres a place where they make sofa pillos with fellos goin over the top on em and gold rings with your girls name on em free for a dollar twenty (\$1.20).

The last week on the range we lived in pup tents. A pup tent Mable is like the roof of a dog house without the house. They call em pup tents cause no one but a very young dog would be fool enough to sleep under one. There made out of a couple of pieces of stuff like what you make porus nit underclothes out of. You button em together if theres any buttons. It dont make much difference as far as keepin the rain out is concerned. The only thing they do to the rain is to strain it.

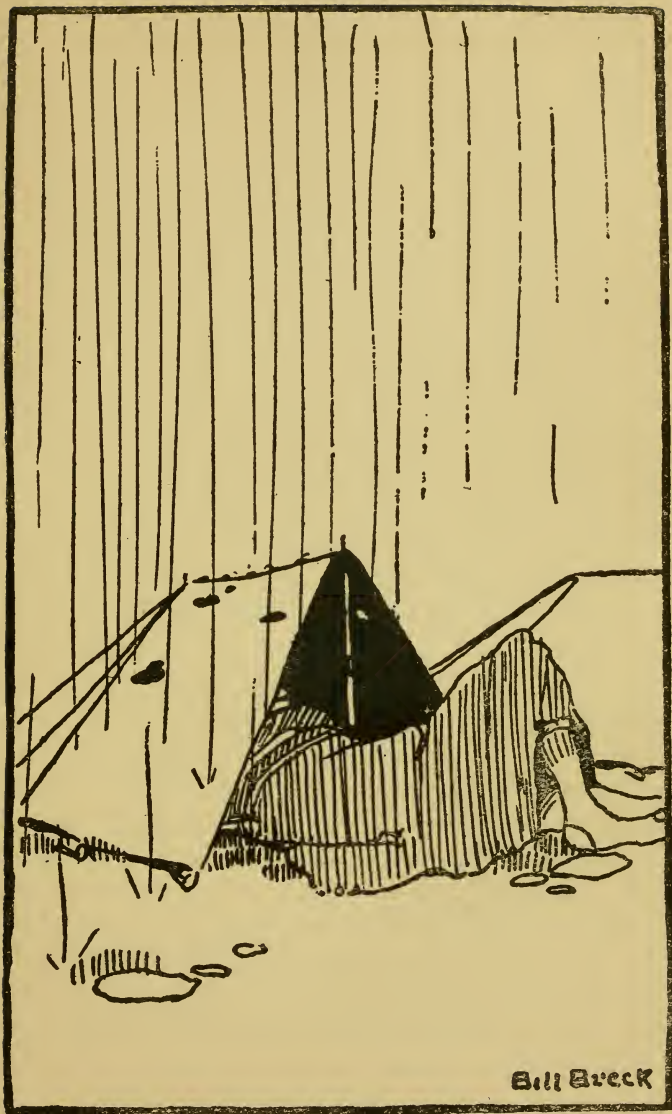
I guess these pup tents we got is an old issue what was wished on us by the Japaneze army. When an ordinary sized fello lies down in one

(and thats all you can do in em) hes out doors from the nees down. The Major came round Sunday night. I guess he made a mistake and thought it was Saturday. Theres a rule that Majors only come round on Saturday cause they bother the men. The Major says "I guess well blow taps an hour early tonight cause the men is all in." An I says back right out loud "There aint anybody goin to get all in these things, you big overgrown boob," only he happened to be away down the street and didnt hear me. It didnt make no difference to me though. I said it anyway. High spirited. Thats me all over, Mable.

Angos MacKenzie, the skotch fello, says that these is skotch pup tents. The skotch he says dont ever wear nothin below the nees. I guess Angus aint a pure skot though cause I heard him and Joe Loomis arguin this mornin cause Angus had swiped Joes horse blanket to wrap round his legs.

It rained for three days before we left. You could have squoze water out of my pistol, Mable. They say a fello is two thirds water anyway. I bet I was 99 and ninety nine 100 per cent pure, eh Mable?

Monday mornin we hiked back to camp. They got us up so early I thought they was blowin taps. The Lieutenant was awful sore. I guess a drop



"THE ONLY THING THEY DO TO THE RAIN IS TO STRAIN IT"



of water came through his tent somewhere during the night and lit on him. He looks at me and says “As you were, Smith.” All I says was “Ill never be again, Lieutenant.”

They made me a driver the last minit on the hike comin home. I guess there breakin me in to every place sos they can let the rest of the battery home on furlo and let me do all the work, from the looks of it. They showed me two horses hitched to the gun and told me they was mine. Right away I seen that the right hand horse was all hitched up and there wasnt nobody there to ride him. So when the sargent says he was all ready I says “No we aint. I aint goin till the fello what rides this horse is here. Theres enough favorites being played in the battery now.”

That showed the Lieutenant where I stood. He said the fello what usually drove the horse was on speshul duty coilin up firin lines. When he put it that way I agreed to lead the right hand horse in to camp. Angus says they call the right hand horse the off horse because the fello what rides him is always off doin somethin else. He aint the only fello whats off round here though. I can tell you that, Mable.

Theres a roomor around here that were going to Honey Lulu. Joe Loomis has sent for his

46 "THATS ME ALL OVER, MABLE"

Ukaylaly. Angus says hes orderin a grass cutter to take with him sos he can make hisself one of those grass suits over there. I guess the next time I rite it will be from there.

yours till then

Bill.

Dere Mable:

I guess I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth though up to now I thought Id swallowed it. I told you Id make you happy some day. Now Im going to. Im comin home on a furlo.

I always wished theyd kristened me somethin besides Smith till now. Theres a fello named Patrick Smith what lives two tents down with a red nose and hair that hangs down under his hat. His mother rote the Captin an said she was dyin. She said she didnt expect to live more than forty-eight (48) hours or however long it took for her son to get home.

The Captin thought it was me. He called me up an says "Smith your mother is sinkin rapidly." I couldnt believe that though cause she woudnt never go near any place where they was water. Then he read me the letter. I knew right away it was Patrick Smith's mother cause he was figurin last week on the most likely one to kill off sos he could get home.

I never let on though. Quick. Thats me all over, Mable. I says "Gee, thats to bad" like I was all broke up. And then I said "Shes the

only mother I ever had Captin." I said it so sad that I almost got myself cryin. An the Cap-
tin says "Well Smith, you been workin pretty
hard an need a change. Ill give you a ten day
furlo to go home to the funeral." Nice fello
the Captin when you get to know him.

Im comin up Mable just as soon as I can bor-
row enough close and the like. It seemed to me
when I used to lay out my stuff for inspeckshun
Saturday mornins that I had enough junk to equip
the draft army. I just been lookin over my stuff
to find somethin to wear home. It makes a fello
feel half nakid.

Im going to borrow the money to buy my rail-
road ticket so you see the trip aint going to cost
me a cent. I bet youll be glad to have someone
round who aint skared to change a quarter once
in a while.

Its kind of hard to get a suitcase. Theres
only one in the battery. The fello what owns it
says its made the trip north 25 times. From the
looks of it hes modest. Else the last fello tied
it to the end of the train and let it drag all the
way. I guess I can fix it with rope though.

Then Joe Loomis has a uniform that he paid
fifteen dollars (\$15) for. It looks like an offi-
cers unless you wear it in the rain. Joes in the
guard house so Im going to take it an not say

nothin. I guess Joe'd do the same for a pal. Besides he aint got no kick comin cause theres a rule that we cant speak to prisoners.

Joe got put in the guard house for burnin down the stable tent where they keep the horses serial. He was sittin in the stable tent while he was on stable guard catchin a smoke. Stable guard is a kind of night bell hop and chamber maid to the horses. He heard the Officer of the Day comin and stuck his cigaret but in an oat bag. Then the whole thing burnt down. Angus MacKenzie says thats what he gets for hidin his light under a bushel Thats a skotch joke though. I guess you wouldnt get it.

Angus is lendin me a pair of spiral puttys. A spiral putty is a flannel bandage what you wind round your leg sos nobody cant see that the buttons is offen your trouser legs. The fello what made em must have had queer legs cause when you get to the top there aint no place to fasten them. I guess they were built for fellos that was goin to stand still. As soon as you move they unwind and drag in the dust till a horse steps on one of them. Then you do em up again.

I started savin thrift stamps. I got pretty near two books full. Angus says its got it all over United Segar cupons. When you get enough you get some dandy things. I wrote the premium de-

partment at Wash. D. C. for one of their catalogs. I want to get a mandolin as soon as I get enough. Joe Loomis is savin for a Ukaylaly. I hope it takes more stamps than he can ever save.

Were getting some new draft men now. Between you an me there an awful dum bunch. They dont know the difference between squads right and fall in. I dont see how fellos can live as long as they have an not know these simple things.

A few of them is Jewish fellos from New York. All they think about is how they can get some post cards of the camp and sell em to the fellos. A couple of them sold there equipment the minit they was issued it. Angus says one of them was on guard the other night and a fello came a long. He stopped him and says "Halt, whose there?" an the fellow says "Friend." An he says "Advance, friend, an give the discount." Youd hardly believe that, Mable. But bein a girl I suppose you would, not knowin nothin about the military.

So I aint goin to rite you no more cause theres no sense ridin up on the train with my own letters. I got a lower bunk all hired. Im goin to have it made up before we leave the station an I aint goin to get up till we pull into Philopolis. If the fello in the upper bunk aint got sense enough to stay in bed he can sit on the edge of the bunk and

Bill Breek



"I JUST FOUND YOUR PICTUR AT THE BOTTOM OF MY BARRACK BAG"



whistle for all I care. An the lord help the porter if he calls me cause he aint no first sargent an Id just as soon tell him so. Frank. Thats me all over, Mable.

I suppose your father and mother will be tickled to see me. Theyll think Im comin home to marry you. I guess you know I would if I had time. Besides I dont believe in gettin married before the war cause like as not Ill be killed. I dont want you to worry though or nothin like that. Youd be in a nice mess then though with your fathers liver on your hands an no visibul means of support.

I got to stop now an borrow some money to come home on. I think Pat Smiths got some. Hed be awful sore if he knew I was goin home on his furlo.

I just found your pictur at the bottom of my barrack bag. It gave me an awful shock first. Then I remembered that my hob-nailed shoes had been sittin on it. I wouldnt care though even if you did look like that. Sense before beauty. Thats me all over, Mable.

yours till I see you

Bill.

Dere Mable:

This is the last time Ill take my pen in hand to rite for some time. I aint allowed to tell you why.

This letters got to be awful short cause I aint allowed to say nothin. Theres so many spize round listenin that I aint even allowed to tell you that we got our orders an were goin to F——e. Were goin to fight the G——s.

I aint even allowed to tell you how were goin except that its by boat. Even thats awful confidenshul. If the spize heard about it theyd probably blow up all the boats sos to make sure of gettin the right one.

Angus says the top sargents got orders to take us right into the front line trenches. I guess there goin to try an finish this thing up right away. I guess Ill probably get killed pretty quick. Ill feel a lot better if I know your not worryin an thinkin of me lyin mortaly wounded in a shell hole as I probably shall be.

An so now I cant come home on my furlo, Mable. I knew the Captin had a string tied to it somewhere. If theres any way of gettin into

heaven that fello will slip through or Im mistaken. Of course I wanted to see you but on the other hand I saved a lot of money. Just as soon as I get mortally wounded Im going to rite a book about my sensashuns an then come back an lecture about it. I guess I wont be gone long.

Well, Mable, there finally wakin up to themselves. I guess the war wont last much longer now. Or me either, eh Mable? Some day when one of those big G————n shells lands on my napsack Ill be able to really rite you an say "Thats me all over, Mable." Please dont worry about me.

Yours till you here the worst

Bill.

Dere Mable:

I take up my pen to rite you. From the way I feel I dont think Ill be takin things up much longer. Im on a boat now. They say we are goin to France but we been goin two days now and I aint seen no land yet. Joe Loomis thinks that theres German proper gander in it. He says that they got us out here and there goin to keep us goin round and round till the wars over.

It seems kind of silly to rite you cause I cant mail this till I get to France. It wont be no use then cause by the looks of things now Ill probably be flirting with a couple of mermaids in Davy Jones Lock Up long before that. Thats a naughty call joke though, Mable. You wouldnt understand it.

As far as I can find out there sending the whole army over on this ship. Most of them sleeps in the room with me from the noise. They got it fixed up cozy like an opium den or a morgue. There piled up three high and the only thing that stops them there is the roof.

Were on a German boat. I bet it makes them sore Mable to see one of there own boats bringin

over fellos like me. The Germans is peculiar people. They got sines all over the boat. On some of the doors upstairs they got Herren painted. Youd never catch an American boat carryin fish right on the passenger floor. On some of the other doors they got sines what says Bad. I guess they run out of these before they came to the place where I sleep. It dont seem reasonable to let fish have a room with mahogony doors and a fello with two legs sleepin where I do. Some of the rooms has Damen rote on them. Joe Loomis what lives on the canvas above me says thats the only German he ever agreed with.

I aint been really sick yet. I aint give up hopes though. Angus MacKenzie, the skotch fello, got so worried because he felt all right that he went up to see the doctor this mornin.

I cant rite much cause the Captin told us the centsor would read our letters. I dont know who he is. I guess hes a German. Of course hell read em if we dont seal em.

I guess well get blown up before we go much further. I dont want you to worry though. I just menshun it. You got enough on your hands with your father in bed with his liver again and me not around to cheer you up.

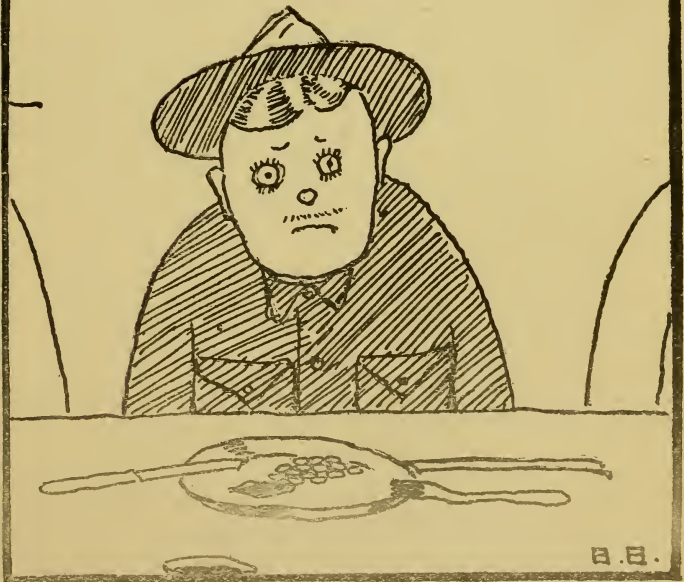
Yours to the last bubble *Bill.*

Dere Mable:

Were all balled up. There aint no doubt now that its German Proper Gander workin. We been runnin three days now and no sign of land yet. I wouldnt be surprised if we woke up some mornin in Chickawgo or some other place on the Specific coast. I aint sick yet. I dont seem to need as much food as I used to, though.

Im gettin on to this naughty call stuff fast. Quick. Thats me all over, Mable. Theres a few things about the boat though that I dont know yet. For instance they got pipes comin out of the deck all over like Sibly stoves upside down. I thought they was for rubbish. I was just remarkin to Joe Loomis how neat they was to have such things. We was makin a point of pickin up everything we saw and firin it down them. Then one of the ships officers came along and you'd ought to have herd him. Youd have thought we was tryin to blow up the old tug, instead of keepin it clean for him. He said the funnels was for carryin fresh air to the mens quarters. I says I guessed the one that carried

B.B.



"I DONT SEEM TO NEED AS MUCH FOOD AS I USED TO"



air down to our quarters got clogged before we started.

They close all the windows every night. Angus MacKenzie, the skotch fello, says that sos the Germans wont fire torpetoes through the windows and land on our beds. Thats a jokin way he has of speakin of the pieces of canvas we sleep on.

Were havin a race with another boat. Its awful close. We been racin now ever since we started and neither of us has gained yet. I here the engineers has a bet of five dollars on who gets in first. I dont know who can be on the other boat cause we got the whole army on ours.

Well, Mable, I got to quit now cause were liable to be sub-marined and blown to pieces any minit. I want to get this off before we sink.

Dont worry about me.

Yours till I touch bottom

Bill.

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Dere Mable

Not feelin well today so am sendin
this instead of ritin. Aint seasick. Just
somethin the matter with my stummick. Angus
MacKenzie, skotch fello says thats me all
over, Mable. I says its all over with me.
Bright and funny to the last. Eh, Mable.
Guess we'll all be sunk soon now. Itll be
a change to have somethin goin down. I
cant say any more cause this is costin me
1 dollar (\$1) a word. Wouldnt have said
this much but I borrowed the money from Joe
Loomis. Hed have spent it for somethin
foolish anyhow.

Yours through all ups and downs

Bill

Dere Mable:

No land yet. If wed been goin in a straight line wed have passed N. Y. twice by this time, I suppose theyll keep us goin round in circles like this till the wars over. Joe Loomis says its three thousand (3000) miles across. Thats silly though. It aint as far as that from N. Y. to Chickawgo.

My room is way down stairs in the sub cellar. All there is between me and the bottom of the sea is the floor. If theyd stuck me down any further it wouldnt have been such a long drop at that. Each fello has a little blue padded straight jacket to wear while hes sinkin. There awful heavy. I guess there to keep us warm while were drownin. Joe Loomis says there to pull us down quick sos we dont suffer. The Captin says today that when we sink all men gets into rowboats and the officers hang on to rafts. Theres somethin wrong somewhere. I been lookin over the rowboats to see whats the matter with them.

They got a lot of skotch fellos on board. I dont know where they came from. Joe Loomis says they aint pure cause they dont wear ribbons

on their bonnets and do wear pants. But he aint got no call to talk about pure skots.

We all got issued tin hats before we left. I guess theyll give us sheet iron underclose next. It takes a long time to wear a tin hat without hurtin yourself. If you move quick it slides down over your eyes and bursts you in the nose. Thats why they charge in a walk I guess. They got muskito nettin inside sos it wont hurt your head. If you take that out it makes a good wash basin or a mess kit. Joe Loomis and Angus got arguin yesterday, Joe claimin that they was no good and Angus claimin that you couldnt hurt a guy what had one on. Angus got so sore he bet a quarter. To decide it Joe put on his hat and let Angus hit him on the bean with a piece of lead pipe. Joe always was lucky. He won the quarter and now hes livin on A deck where the hospital is. An the Dr. says he aint got a chance of dyin which is more than most of us can say. I guess theyll sink us today. I got to quit now.

Yours till the third time down,

Bill.

Dere Mable:

Were in the same place we was yesterday. Id know it now with my eyes shut. It looks like we was movin but Joe Loomis says thats just the water goin past the boats. A fello told me we was in the Gulf stream. If we are its some creek cause you cant see no banks.

We been on four days now. Im beginnin to feel like the Ainshunt Mourner. We lie round on the floor of one of the lower piazzas all day and read books from the library. Most of them is about the lives of fellos whats dead. That aint right for a bunch what expects to be with em any minit.

Once a day we go up on one of the upper piazzas to exercise. A fello might as well try to swing indiun clubs on the five o'clock subway. The only exercise you can do without knockin off the head of the fello next to you is eyes right and eyes left.

The Captin is always talkin about goin below. Seein how we all may any minit, it aint no time for jokin about it. He says to me yesterday "Smith, fix me up a list of spaces for all my men down

below." Aint that the Captin all over, Mable? He wont be satisfied till he has em all tagged and numbered and doing squads east and west in Davy Jones Lock Up.

Joe Loomis has his girls pictur pasted on the back of his tin lookin glass. He lies on his bunk all day gapin at it. Some fellos make awful asses of themselves about there girls. Angus Mac-Kenzie, the skotch fello, had the mirror shavin the other day. It swung round while he wasnt lookin and when he looked in it again he got an awful start.

They havnt sunk us yet. I guess there just foolin with us. Perhaps it will happen today. Dont worry though.

Yours till you here otherwise

Bill.

.B B.



"JOE LOOMIS"



Dere Mable:

I feel the same way the Knights of Columbus must have felt when they was discoverin North America. Just sailin round in circles and wishin they had never left N. Y. Were goin through an awful bumpy part of the ocean now. Joe Loomis says theres a lot of traffic through here and these big boats cuts it all up. Thats how ignorant that fello is, Mable. Its gettin colder all the time to. I wouldnt be surprised if we had got turned north by mistake and would land up in Labordoor or somethin.

One of the boat officers is called the Executioner Officer. Every day most he comes round and says its half an hour earlier than it is. Thats the way those fellos use there awthority. Nobody dasnt contradict them. I guess thats the way these boats make records so often, Mable. When they see they aint goin to make a record they just shove the clock back. Id go over in nothin if I was the Captin and get it over with quick. I wish I could have made contracks like that when I was home. If a fello came to me and says "Your contrack is up today" Id just look

at him and say "You must be mistaken. This is yesterday." Joe Loomis has it figured out that if we keep on losing time well get there last winter.

Angus MacKenzie, the skotch fello, says theres no danger in that though, cause if they ever find themselves workin back towards last pay day theyll go ahead for a while.

Angus says that every time they set us back half an hour the government skins every man out of pretty near a nickul. It aint the money, Mable. A nickul never meant nothin to me one way or the other as you ought to know better than any one. Isnt it a cheap way to Whooverize though?

Joe says that if it keeps on bein as cold as this he aint goin to get off when they sink us. He says he rather stay down in the bedrooms and be drowned than get all wet with that ice water and then have a cold for the rest of the war.

Well, Mable, I got to quit now. A fighter needs a lot of sleep.

Yours till the war ends

Bill.

Dere Mable:

Somebodys rockin the boat. Its been rollin round somethin awful all mornin. Theres always some fool like that in every crowd. I aint said nothin but me and Angus MacKenzie, the skotch fello, is watchin. When we catch him you bet well give him whats what.

While we was snoopin round we just discovered somethin awful. All the life rafts what the officers ride on when we sink is full of holes. The water would come right through. As soon as we find the fello whats rockin the boat were goin to tell the Captin. Angus says perhaps hell make us officers or let us sleep late or somethin. A fello told me they threw these rafts over the side when the ship was sinkin. As far as I can see if a fello is lucky enough to get off the old tub they fling one of these on his bean. Im going to wear my tin hat you bet.

They got a bunch of ropes hangin with knots on them along the sides from the top floor down to the water. A fello told me they was to climb down when all the rowboats was gone. Some fellos is in an awful hurry to get drowned. If

there bound to crown me with a seaweed wreath
 Im goin to keep em waitin as long as I can. The
 fello what hung em must have had arms like a
 munkey cause there hangin about six feet from
 the side.

These Germans must have been awful tanks,
 Mable. They got one whole floor they call
 saloon deck. Of course the saloons is gone now.
 When they made the ship over they had to get
 rid of all the luxuries to make room. They got
 the bars out of the saloons and the officers eat
 there.

A fello came down stairs the other night and
 told us about the war. He said we was all comin
 over to fight to make the world safe for the
 Democrats. If thats the case Mable your father
 must be an ailin enemy.

Well, Mable, they tell us that if we aint sunk
 pretty soon were goin to get there. I guess then
 I wont be able to rite you for a few days cause
 itll take me a little while to get settled in the
 trenches and get my dug out fixed up nice. I
 hope they give us a part of the line near the sta-
 tion cause I dont like those troop trains.

Yours till I write again

Bill.

Dere Mable:

I thought the fishes would be buildin nests in my ears long before I rote this. What do you suppose has happened? I wont ever be able to look you in the face again. Were right near land and aint so much as seen a Perrysköpe. An here I been runnin round in my Drownin Jacket for seven days like a fello wearin his shroud down to his office a week before he dies. I hope you aint bragged too much about it or theyll have the laugh on you. I feel kind of cheap but you really cant blame me. I took these other fellos word for it.

I aint the only goat thats been wearin my Drowning Jacket round though. They all had to and most of them slept in them. The tailor what designed these must have been a boiler maker once. If there vests there too short an if there coats where is the sleeves? They got a hump runnin down the backbone. I know now how a horse feels when he tries to roll over. Besides the Jackets, they made us carry round a tin bottle of water on a string all the time. I suppose if

there was not enough water to drown us all we could empty out these.

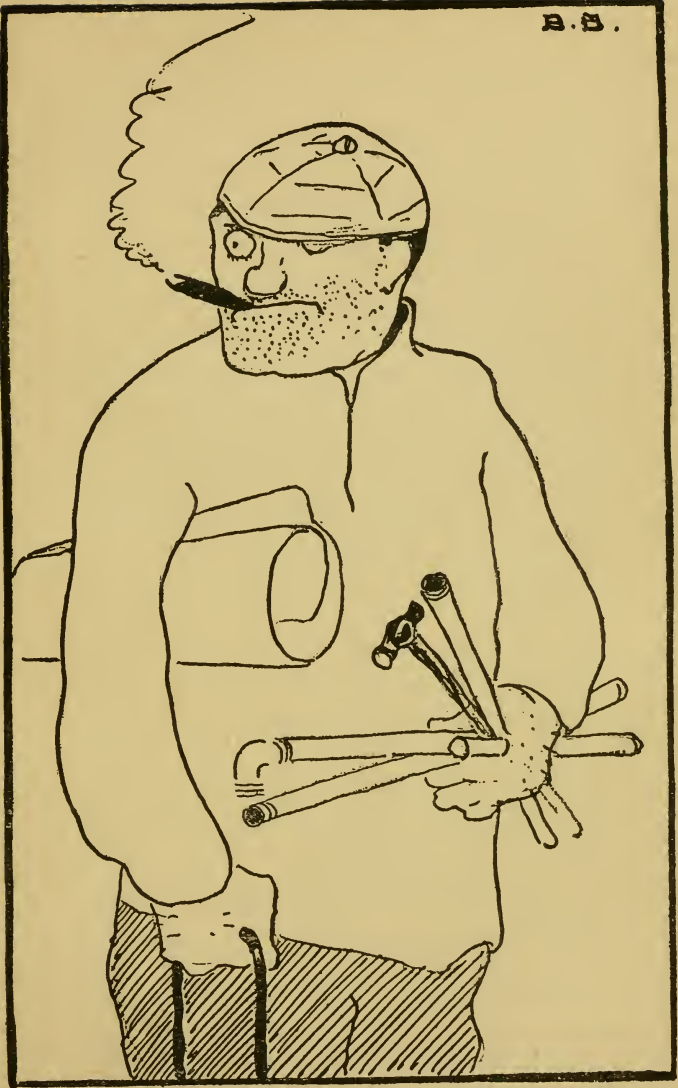
Were just a few miles off shore, but I cant tell you just where. This is partly because I dont know. Joe Loomis says were comin into London, but Angus MacKenzie, the skotch fello, says it aint London. He thinks its Paris. I dont think so though cause if it was youd see the Ethel Tower.

You want to be careful when you address letters to me. If you address me too plain there liable to get to me and you cant tell who might be lookin. About all you can say on the address as far as I can find out is Bill Smith, A. E. F., which means Am Expecting Flowers.

I got to quit now cause were gettin near shore and the Sanitary Officer ast me to help him sweep out the boat when the other fellos is gone. Of course I said I would. Obligin. Thats me all over, Mable. As soon as I get ashore Im going to buy one of them John Brown belts you here so much about. I dont know when Ill be able to write to you again cause I understand theres a battle on now so I guess Ill be pretty busy for some time to come.

Yours till I rite again,

Bill.



"THE TAILOR MUST HAVE BEEN A BOILER MAKER ONCE"



MABLE TO BILL

Dearest William:

Your letter received and contents noted. Through Spiritual Channels you have been with me ever since the momentous day we parted, and all I can say is, "May God in His infinite mercy watch over and take care of you, until you have been delivered safely into my arms."

Ever Thine,

Mable.

P.S.—*Bill:*

Am going round with a new swell John and he writ this fer me. Itll make the fellos think Im a swell dame when you show it to them. Tear off this p. s. part. What's the matter, are you broke? You dont put no more stamps on your letters. Rite again.

Yours as long as you stay away,

Mable.



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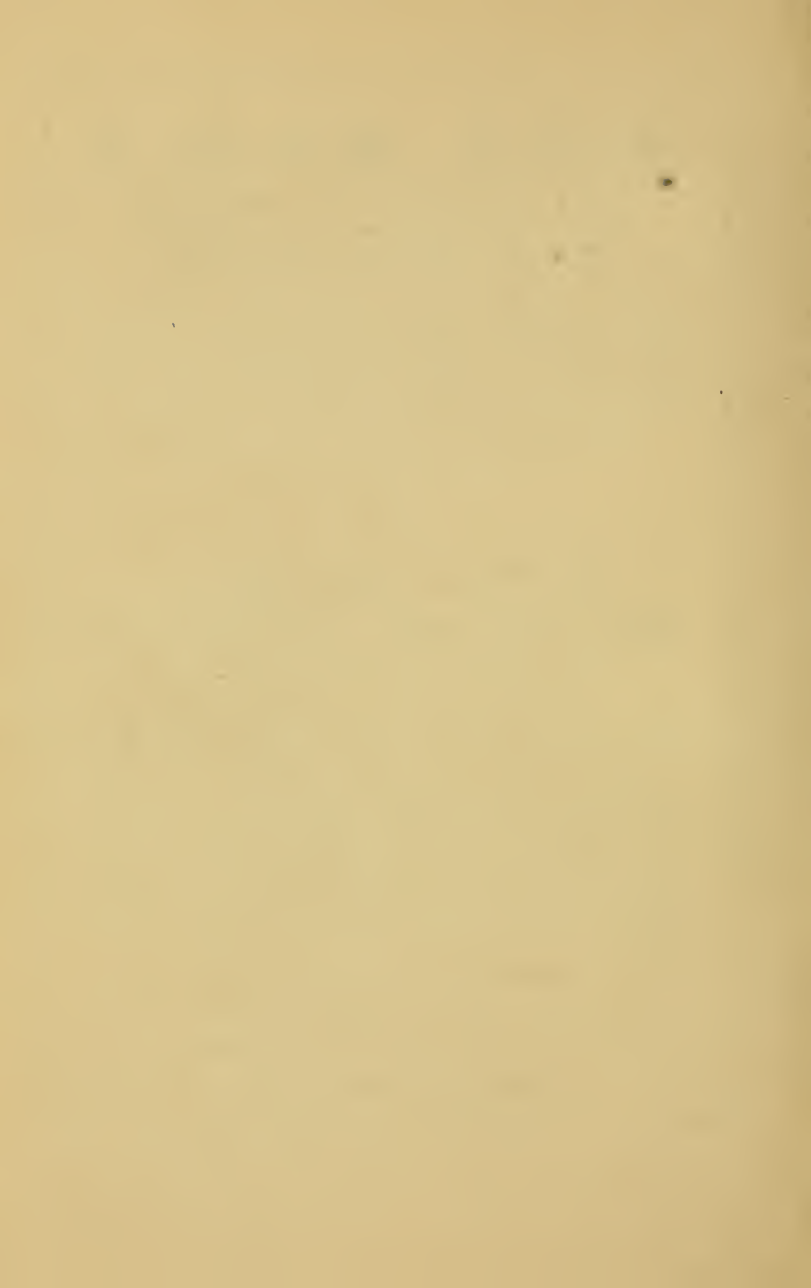
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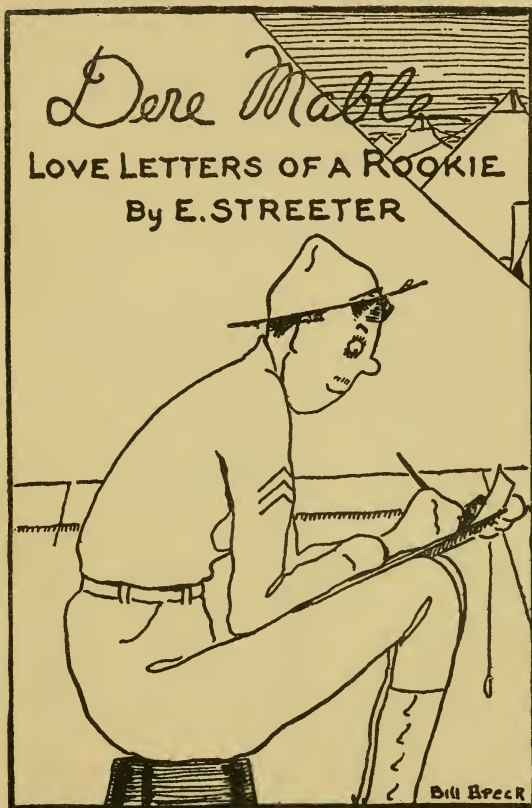
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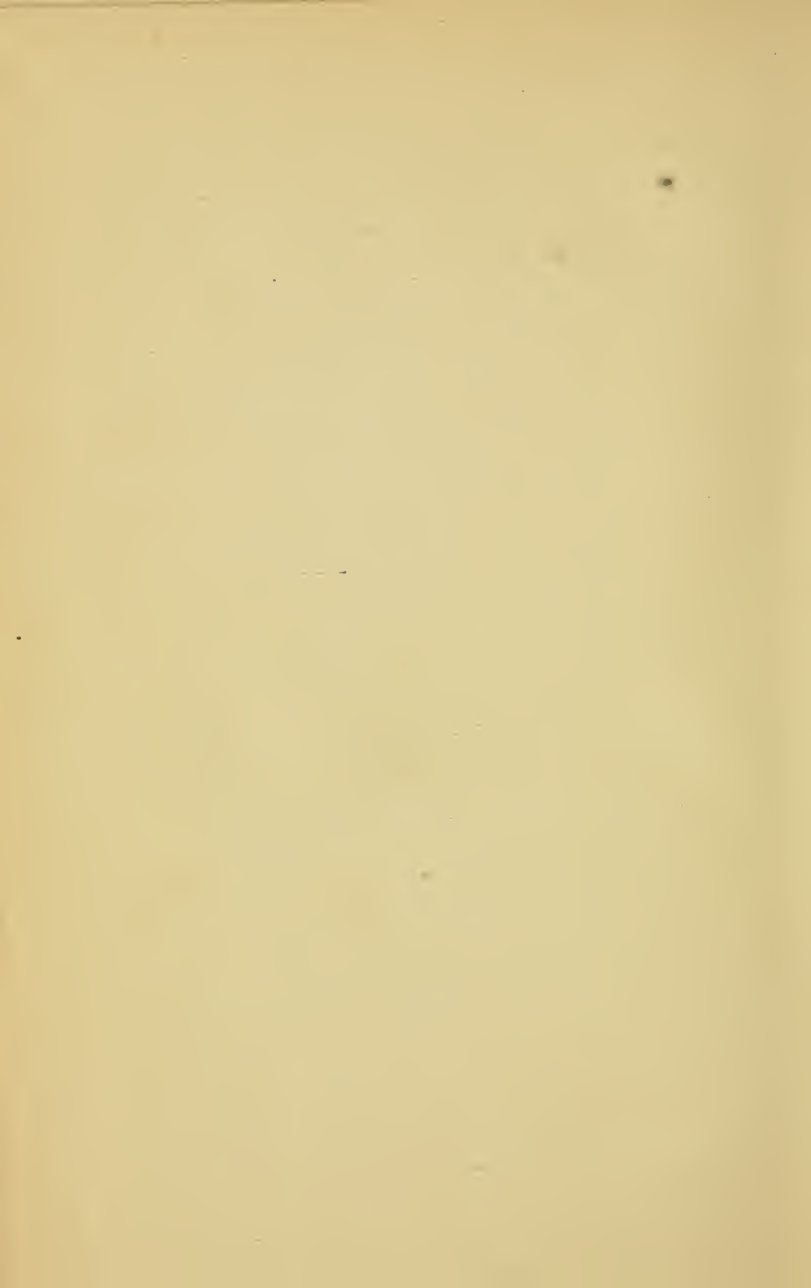


“Do you enlist for foreign service?” he snapped.
“Sure,” I replied, “it will all be foreign to me.”
(Illustration from “Bittmore Oswald.”)



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