



Whether Common or Not

By WILL M. MAUPIN.

Locating the Blame

Each morn he perched before the bar
 And gulped his liquor down,
 And 'twixt each drink he'd say, "I think
 The fates upon me frown."
 He'd say Dame Fortune passed him by
 And made him good jobs lose;
 He blamed each day that slipped away—
 But he never blamed the booze.

From off the cool, enticing stein
 He'd blow the creamy foam,
 And 'twixt each daught he cursed the "graft"
 That robbed the kids at home.
 "My kids in rags, my wife forlorn,"
 He sighed' midst many a tear,
 "And I could name the trusts to blame"—
 But he never blamed the beer.

"Here's to you, pal!" he would exclaim
 Some seven times an hour,
 And 'twixt each drink he'd say, "I think
 The trusts are sure in power.
 They rob our children of their grub,
 Their shoes are torn and thin;
 The trust's to blame for all our shame"—
 But he never blamed the gin.

"The trusts have got us by the throat,"
 Full of I've heard him say;
 "They reign in state while we must wait
 Their pleasure every day."
 He blamed them for his rotten luck,
 He blamed them low and high;
 With glass held tight he blamed them right—
 But he never blamed the rye.

At home his wife and little ones
 In hunger, rags and tears,
 Knew well the cause of all things was
 The bourbon, gin and beers.
 They knew just where to lay the blame
 For lack of food and shoes;
 For lack of clothes and hunger's woes—
 And they just blamed the booze.

A Cheerful Letter

Moorland, Ia., July 10.—Friend Bill: I see on page 12 of The Commoner where you try to tickle us old codgers under the chin, trying to draw us out of our contented seclusion. O, lawsy, Bill! How you would like to be a boy again. Let's look over the past a bit and see if it's really worth while being a boy. Do you want to know my favorite song? Well, your Uncle Joe will tell you what his favorite is, and how and where he first heard it. Your reminders of the old-time Fourth of July resurrected it all today when I was reading of those old times of long ago. Yes, indeed, I remember the desire to be a tenor drummer; and I got there, too. More than once I came in on the evening of the Fourth with fingers blistered from wetting that calfskin. Lawsy, how I liked to do it! And how I'd like to do it again! The good old fife and drum—say, Bill, your Uncle Joe has played his share of drum music alongside the brass horns, but it's all no good alongside the stirring martial music of the old days. Say, Bill, you haven't any

business working us old bald or gray-headed men up to any such pitch. Cripes Maria, you've got me yoked up on the wrong side. I wouldn't care a rap, though, if I knew anything about writing. (Wait till I light my pipe.) Mother has just asked: "Pap, what's up; you look excited?" And I says: "Ma, you just lay it all to Bill. Here he's gone and stirred me up, and all just to see me play the part of a boy again." But, Billiam, you have clean forgotten to mention the big hoop-skirts and shaker bonnets which were a part of the togs belonging to the women folks in the old days. And you didn't tell how we all went down to the swimming hole on the evening of the Third to really take a for-sure bath before we donned our best duds on the morning of the Fourth. This time, you mind, we took along some soap—got it out'n mother's barrel. But say, Bill, I was going to tell you about songs, wasn't I? Well, I got the cart ahead of the horse, but I don't give a rap about that, as it's all good going. In those old days we had some real good songs; good enough for anybody. One was "My Willie's on the Dark Blue Sea." How we would make that old school house ring! I'll mention only one more—the best your Uncle Joe ever heard. It was "Joe Bowers." The first time I heard that song I was the happiest boy alive. It was sung in ol' Dan Rice's circus at St. Louis in 1860. But that part cuts no ice here. This is what does cut the ice, however. I was on the show grounds without the price. Rags and old iron were long since all sold. Old Dan had a trick of his own—he would gather up all of the boys and take them in to see the show. He took a bunch of us in through the rear end of the tent, some twenty of us, and seated us all in a row on the ground where we could see it all. Said he: "Sit down, boys and be good." That little turn put Dan Rice uppermost in my mind. I thought him the best man in the world, and I haven't changed my mind on that score from that day to this. It was then that the clown sung "Joe Bowers," and I'd walk twenty miles any day to cast a friendly rock on ol' Dan Rice's grave. May God be as good to ol' Dan as ol' Dan was to us boys. Tell me, where do Dan's bones lie? A man as good as Dan Rice will never kick up any row in heaven. Now, Bill, I'd like ternal well to tell you what happened to your Uncle Joe away back fifty years ago when the Prince of Wales visited St. Louis, but I'll not do it now. Maybe I've said more than I ought. Say, friend Bill, let's go fishing! They are pulling just as hard as they did when you and I were boys—but maybe not quite so often. Come on, Bill!

J. J. BLUNK.

(I'll tell you later where Dan Rice is buried; I don't know now. I never saw Dan Rice, but I can remember Yankee Robinson, and how he used to send complimentary tickets to all the preachers in the towns where he pitched his tents. I remember that because father was a preacher—and he used the tickets, too. Mighty glad I stirred you up, Uncle Joe. Get the bait can filled; I'm liable to be over there 'most any old time. Get out the old drum, too. I can't toot a fife, but I can wristle on my fingers as good as I could forty years ago—and I was some whistler then, too. Old hoop skirts! I can just remember them—but I'm not going to write

you a letter now. Here's hoping your old pipe keeps going for many years to come.—W. M. M.)

Squelched

"I see," remarked the boarder who inclined to statistics, "that the prune crop this year will be—"
 "Mr. Adderly," interrupted the landlady, "I've not had time to add up the prune crop figures, but I have here a little column of figures which reveals the fact that you have not paid—"
 At this point, however, the statistical boarder discovered that he was already late at the office.

Useless

Each morning he rose and he waited
 To see if his ship would come in;
 He looked for the sails or the funnels
 Through glasses—befogged by
 cheap gin.
 All day he stood 'round while waiting
 To welcome his ship from afar,
 Forgetful that long since the vessel
 Lay wrecked on a well polished bar.

Your Funniest Story

What is the funniest story you ever heard? We want to know, so write it out and send it in. Some of these days pretty soon, when the big boss is not watching, we are going to steal a couple of pages of The Commoner and print a lot of them. Come on with your stories.

Meteorological

"Gee, but it's getting dry in this section."
 "Oh, I don't know. I just had a little business with Jimpson and he soaked me proper."

Brain Leaks

The prize for the race is at the end of the course.
 The right made by might usually gets left in the end.
 Good time to save up money for the winter's coal bills.
 The older we get the harder it is to make a train without worrying.
 The temperature may be greatly modified by keeping mentally cool.
 We are very apt to dub as crank the man who has ideas differing from our own.
 Honesty is the best policy, but the honesty that has its source in policy is dishonesty.

A lot of people who think they are "live wires" are really not connected up with anything.
 We always feel near to nature while browsing in the juicy heart of a luscious watermelon.
 This is the season of the year when the city man is not so enthusiastic about "getting back to the land."
 Honestly now, if you think your name is in the paper don't you keep right on hunting until you find it?
 About the time the strong man is boasting loudest of his strength something happens to make him holler for help.

It seems that when Johnson knocked Jeffries over the ropes he also knocked prize fighting in this country out of existence.
 A great many men who deplore the tendency to teach children idleness are more interested in the possible profits than in the welfare of the children.

A GRADUAL REDUCTION

An old gentleman accustomed to walk around St. James Park every day, was once asked by a friend if he still took his usual walk.
 "No, sir," replied the old man, "I can not do as much now. I can not get around the park. I only go half way around and back again."—Housekeeper.



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