

Beasley's Christmas Party

By BOOTH TARKINGTON

BEASLEY

SYNOPSIS—Newcomer in a small town, a young newspaper man, who tells the story, is amazed by the unaccountable actions of a man who, from the window of a fine house, apparently has converse with invisible personages, particularly mentioning one "Simplicioria." Next morning he discovers his strange neighbor is the Hon. David Beasley, prominent politician, and universally respected. With Miss Apperthwaite, he is an unseen witness of a purely imaginary jumping contest between Beasley and a "Bill Hammerley." Miss Apperthwaite appears deeply concerned.

III.

I do not know why it should have astonished me to find that Miss Apperthwaite was a teacher of mathematics except that (to my inexperienced eye) she didn't look it. She looked more like Charlotte Corday!

I had the pleasure of seeing her opposite me at lunch the next day (when Mr. Dowden kept me occupied with Spencerville politics, obviously from fear that I would break out again), but no stroll in the yard with her rewarded me afterward, as I dimly hoped, for she disappeared before I left the table, and I did not see her again for a fortnight. On week-days she did not return to the house for lunch, my only meal at Mrs. Apperthwaite's (I dined at a restaurant near the Despatch office), and she was out of town for a little visit, her mother informed us, over the following Saturday and Sunday. She was not altogether out of my thoughts, however—indeed, she almost divided them with the Honorable David Beasley.

A better view which I was afforded of this gentleman did not lessen my interest in him; increased it rather; it also served to make the extraordinary diodes of which he had been the virtuoso and I the audience more than ever profoundly inexplicable. My glimpse of him in the lighted doorway had given me the vaguest impression of his appearance, but one afternoon—a few days after my interview with Miss Apperthwaite—I was starting for the office and met him full-face-on as he was turning in at his gate. I took as careful notice of him as I could without conspicuously glaring.

There was something remarkably "taking," as we say, about this man—something easy and genial and guzzling and careless. He was the kind of person you like to meet on the street; whose cheerful passing sends you on feeling indefinitely a little gayer than you did. He was tall, thin—even gaunt, perhaps—and his face was long, rather pale, and shrewd and gentle; something in its oddity not unreminding of the late Sol Smith Russell. His hat was tilted back a little, the slightest bit to one side, and the sparse, brownish hair above his high forehead was going to be gray before long. He looked about forty.

The truth is, I had expected to see a cousin german to Don Quixote; I had thought to detect signs and gleams of wildness, however slight—something a little "off." One glance of that kindly and humorous eye told me such expectation had been nonsense. Odd he might have been—Gad-zooks! he looked it—but "queer?" Never. The fact that Miss Apperthwaite could picture such a man as this "sitting and sitting and sitting" himself into any form of mania or madness whatever spoke loudly of her own imagination, indeed! The key to "Simplicioria" was to be sought under some other mat.

As I began to know some of my co-laborers on the Despatch, and to pick up acquaintances, here and there, about town, I sometimes made Mr. Beasley the subject of inquiry. Everybody knew him. "Oh, yes, I know Dave Beasley!" would come the reply, nearly always with a chuckling sort of laugh. I gathered that he had a name for "easy-going" which amounted to eccentricity. It was said that what the ward-healers and camp-followers got out of him in campaign times made the political manager's cry. He was the first and readiest prey for every fraud and swindler that came to Wainwright, I heard, and yet, in spite of this and his hatred of "speech-making" ("He's as silent as Grant!" said one informant), he had a large practice, and was one of the most successful lawyers in the state.

One story they told of him (or, as they were apt to put it, "on" him) was repeated so often that I saw it had become one of the town's traditions. One bitter evening in February, they related, he was approached upon the

street by a ragged, whining and shivering old reprobate, notorious for the various ingenuities by which he had worn out the patience of the charity organizations. He asked Beasley for a dime. Beasley had no money in his pockets, but gave the man his overcoat, went home without any himself, and spent six weeks in bed with a bad case of pneumonia as the direct result. His beneficiary sold the overcoat, and invested the proceeds in a five-days' spree, in the closing scenes of which a couple of brickbats were hurled to high, spectacular effect. One he sent through a jeweler's show window in an attempt to intimidate some wholly imaginary pursuers, the other he projected at a perfectly actual policeman who was endeavoring to soothe him. The victim of Beasley's charity and the officer were then borne to the hospital in company.

It was due in part to recollections of this legend and others of a similar character that people laughed when they said, "Oh, yes, I know Dave Beasley."

Altogether, I should say, Beasley was about the most popular man in Wainwright. I could discover nowhere anything, however, to shed the faintest light upon the mystery of Bill Hammerley and Simplicioria. It was not until the Sunday of Miss Apperthwaite's absence that the revelation came.

That afternoon I went to call upon the widow of a second-cousin of mine; she lived in a cottage not far from Mrs. Apperthwaite's, upon the same street. I found her sitting on a pleas-



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ant veranda, with boxes of flowering plants along the railing, though Indian summer was now close upon departure. She was rocking meditatively, and held a finger in a morocco volume, apparently of verse, though I suspected she had been better entertained in the observation of the people and vehicles decorously passing along the sunlit thoroughfare within her view.

We exchanged inevitable questions and news of mutual relatives; I had told her how I liked my work and what I thought of Wainwright, and she was congratulating me upon having found so pleasant a place to live as Mrs. Apperthwaite's, when she interrupted herself to smile and nod a cordial greeting to two gentlemen driving by. They waved their hats to her gayly, then leaned back comfortably against the cushions—and if ever two men were obviously and incontestably on the best of terms with each other, these two were. They were David Beasley and Mr. Dowden.

"I do wish," said my cousin, resuming her rocking—"I do wish dear David Beasley would get a new car of some kind; that old model of his is a disgrace! I suppose you haven't met him? Of course, living at Mrs. Apperthwaite's, you wouldn't be apt to."

"But what is he doing with Mr. Dowden?" I asked. She lifted her eyebrows. "Why—taking him for a drive, I suppose."

"No, I mean—how do they happen to be together?"
"Why shouldn't they be? They're old friends—"
"They are!" And, in answer to her look of surprise, I explained that I had begun to speak of Beasley at Mrs. Apperthwaite's, and described the abruptness with which Dowden had changed the subject.

"I see," my cousin nodded, comprehendingly. "That's simple enough. George Dowden didn't want you to talk of Beasley there. I suppose it may have been a little embarrassing for everybody—especially if Ann Apperthwaite heard you."

"Ann? That's Miss Apperthwaite? Yes; I was speaking directly to her. Why shouldn't she have heard me? She talked of him herself a little later—and at some length, too."

"She did!" My cousin stopped rocking, and fixed me with her glittering eye. "Well, of all!"
"Is it so surprising?"

The lady gave her boat to the waves again. "Ann Apperthwaite thinks about him still!" she said, with something like vindictiveness. "I've always suspected it. She thought you were new to the place and didn't know anything about it all, or anybody to mention it to. That's it!"

"I'm still new to the place," I urged, "and still don't know anything about it all."
"They used to be engaged," was her succinct and emphatic answer. "Oh, oh!" I cried. "I was an innocent, wasn't I?"

"I'm glad she does think of him," said my cousin. "It serves her right. I only hope he won't find it out, because he's a poor, faithful creature; he'd jump at the chance to take her back—and she doesn't deserve him."
"How long has it been," I asked, "since they used to be engaged?"

"Oh, a good while—five or six years ago, I think—maybe more; time skips along. Ann Apperthwaite's no chicken, you know." (Such was the lady's expression.) "They got engaged just after she came home from college, and of all the idiotically romantic girls—"
"But she's a teacher," I interrupted, "of mathematics."
"Yes," she nodded wisely. "I always thought that explained it: the romance is a reaction from the algebra. I never knew a person connected with mathematics or astronomy or statistics, or any of those exact things, who didn't have a crazy streak in 'em somewhere. They've got to blow off steam and be foolish to make up for putting in so much of their time at hard sense. But don't you think that I dislike Ann Apperthwaite. She's always been one of my best friends; that's why I feel at liberty to abuse her—and I always will abuse her when I think how she treated poor David Beasley."

"How did she treat him?"
"Threw him over out of a clear sky one night, that's all. Just sent him home and broke his heart; that is, it would have been broken if he'd had any kind of disposition except the one the Lord blessed him with—just all optimism and cheerfulness and make-the-best-of-it-ness! He's never cared for anybody else, and I guess he never will."

"What did she do it for?"
"Nothing!" My cousin shot the indignant word from her lips. "Nothing in the wide world!"

"But there must have been—"
"Listen to me," she interrupted, "and tell me if you ever heard anything queer in your life. They'd been engaged—Heaven knows how long—over two years; probably nearer three—and always she kept putting it off; wouldn't begin to get ready, wouldn't set a day for the wedding. Then Mr. Apperthwaite died, and left her and her mother stranded high and dry with nothing to live on. David had everything in the world to give her—and still she wouldn't! And then, one day, she came up here and told me she'd broken it off. Said she couldn't stand it to be engaged to David Beasley another minute!"

"But why?"
"Because"—my cousin's tone was shrill with her despair of expressing the satire she would have put into it—"because, she said he was a man of no imagination!"

"She still says so," I remarked, thoughtfully.
"Then it's time she got a little imagination herself!" snapped my companion. "David Beasley's the quietest man God has made, but everybody knows what he is! There are some rare people in this world that aren't all talk; there are some still rarer ones that scarcely ever talk at all—and David Beasley's one of them. I don't know whether it's because he can't talk, or if he can and hates to; I only thank the Lord he's put a few like that into this talky world! David Beasley's smile is better than acres of other people's talk. My Providence! Wouldn't anybody, just to look at him, know that he does better than talk? He thinks! The trouble with Ann Apperthwaite was that she was too young to see it. She was so full of novels and poetry and dreaminess and highfalutin nonsense she couldn't see anything as it really was. She'd study her mirror, and see such a heroine of romance there that she just couldn't bear to have a fiance who hadn't any chance of turning out to be the crown-prince of Kenosha in disguise! At the very least, to suit her he'd have had to wear a 'well-trimmed Vandyske' and soothe her in the gloaming, or read 'On a Balcony' to her by a red lamp."

"Well, sir, Dave's got something at home to keep him busy enough, these days, I expect."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

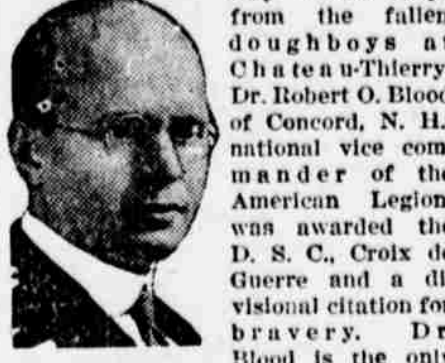
The American Legion

(Copy for This Department Supplied by the American Legion News Service.)

DR. BLOOD WON ARMY HONORS

National Vice Commander of Legion, Only New Hampshire Physician Who Was Decorated.

Advancing with the first wave of infantry and establishing his first-aid dressing station only a few steps from the fallen doughboys at Chateau-Thierry, Dr. Robert O. Blood of Concord, N. H., national vice commander of the American Legion, was awarded the D. S. C., Croix de Guerre and a divisional citation for bravery. Dr. Blood is the only New Hampshire doughboy at physician who was decorated. He rose from first lieutenant to major during his World War service.



Dr. R. O. Blood, New Hampshire doughboy at physician who was decorated. He rose from first lieutenant to major during his World War service.

Placed on active service August 7, 1918, Dr. Blood sailed for France in September with the One Hundred Fourth Field Hospital attached to the Twenty-sixth division. He was transferred to the One Hundred Third Machine Gun Battalion and later to the One Hundred Third Infantry, serving on the Chemin des Dames with the latter organization early in 1918. As battalion medical officer, Dr. Blood was with the One Hundred Third Infantry when it drove the Germans from Belleau Woods to Trugny.

Later Dr. Blood was sent to Base Hospital No. 9 at Chateaux, to the American Red Cross Military Hospital at Paris, and then returned to the Twenty-sixth division near Verdun, acting as divisional orthopedic surgeon.

Dr. Blood organized the Concord Legion post and commanded it for two years and one-half, with such success that it became the largest post in New Hampshire. He has served on the state executive committee and has been department commander and national executive committeeman since January 1, 1922.

ELECT LEGION MAN GOVERNOR

James G. Scragham, Leader in Fight for Adjusted Compensation, Victorious in Nevada.

James G. Scragham, a leader in the American Legion's fight for adjusted compensation and a former national vice commander, has been elected governor of Nevada.

Born in Lexington, Ky., in 1880, Mr. Scragham was graduated from Kentucky State university in 1900, and received a degree in mechanical engineering in 1903. He was a professor of mechanical engineering until 1914, when he was made dean of the Engineering college of the University of Nevada. He was named state engineer of Nevada in 1917.

Commissioned a major of artillery in December, 1917, Mr. Scragham was assigned as production engineer in the ordnance department at Washington. He served on various special assignments connected with artillery production until after the signing of the armistice.

Mr. Scragham is a member of Darrell Dunkle Post No. 1 of the Legion at Reno, Nev., and served as state commander from May until August, 1920. He was a member of the national executive committee and was chairman of a special committee that drew up the Legion's plan for adjusted compensation which was later embodied in the Fordney bill.

LEGION SHOWS RAISE FUNDS

Carnivals and Other Entertainments Produce Revenue to Aid Sick and Wounded Men.

From one end of the country to the other summer means the open season on field days, carnivals and tent shows. All of these attractions have their booties and probably the most universal of all the booties in all the shows have been those conducted by posts of the American Legion and the Legion Auxiliary. With 11,000 Legion posts, most of which have auxiliary units, in nearly every community in the country it couldn't well be otherwise.

A booth conducted by the Auxiliary to Broadshill post of Buffalo, N. Y., at a recent community field day in that place, closed within a few hours after being opened—sold out to the last drop of pink lemonade and ounce of candy. The proceeds from the sale of the drinks and eatables went into the Auxiliary's fund for helping sick and wounded ex-service men, the place where most of the auxiliary funds go.

PORT OF MISSING MEN

American Legion Post No. 65, Superior, Wis., is attempting to find Bernard O'Connell, 2002 Pennsylvania avenue, Superior, who disappeared 15 months ago. The Legion reports that his mother is ill. She last heard from her son May 8, 1921, from New Orleans. He was a seaman, but at that time was on strike. He expected to leave New Orleans for New York, and then travel by way of Detroit to Superior. As he had between \$300 and \$400 when last heard from, it is feared by his mother that he has met with foul play. O'Connell is twenty-six, five feet four inches tall, weighs 145 pounds, has blue eyes, light brown hair, ruddy complexion. One personal characteristic is a birthmark on the upper forearm.



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ROBERT E. STANLEY, C-26232, until recently vocational trainer at Reno, Nevada; missing from Reno for several weeks. Fear is felt that he has committed suicide. Any information should be transmitted to the Co-operation section, United States Veterans' bureau, San Francisco, Cal.

WILBER ELLIS REGISTER, C-24844, formerly seaman, United States navy, attached to U. S. Isabel. Last known address, Denver, Colo. Communicate with Mrs. W. H. Hundley, 120 Dock street, Wilmington, N. C.

CAPTAIN CHARLES H. JONES, Medical corps, last known address, United States Veterans' Bureau hospital, Fort Bayard, New Mexico, April, 1920, where he was a patient. Communicate with Mrs. Alice Dodson, 34 North Davidson street, Indianapolis, Ind.

VAN BUREN LAMB, JR., disappeared from home in Hartford, Conn., June 7, 1922. Description: twenty-three years of age, six feet tall, light complexioned, brown eyes, light hair and Roman nose; was in naval service on U. S. S. Princess Matoka as Pharm. M. third class. Communicate with William J. Lane, adjutant, New Haven post, No. 47, 17 Church street, New Haven, Conn.

FRANK MALINA, formerly sergeant, Battery B, Company Four, field artillery, discharged from Camp Stanley, Texas, December 14, 1919. Has not been heard from since. Communicate with M. J. Evanshaw, 1146 Fifth street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

LAUREN G. HIGBY, formerly sergeant, U. S. Fifth Sanitary train. Description: six feet four and one-half inches, large blue eyes, straight light hair, weight 220 pounds. Not heard from since transferred to Evacuation Hospital No. 49, Army of Occupation, Coblenz, Communicate with Mildred H. Heron, The American Red Cross, 301 North Ottawa street, Joliet Ill.

WALTER MOHR, 5 feet 6 inches, dark red hair, blue eyes, 155 pounds, one finger on right hand deformed, thirty-four years old, somewhat round-shouldered. Last heard from in North Dakota. Communicate with Louis Mohr, 711 Tenth street, Sioux City, Iowa.

EARL RAYMOND HALBERT, private, Quartermaster corps, Fort Mason, Cal. Discharged from service December 20, 1918. Not heard from since. Description: Twenty-five years of age, dark brown hair, blue eyes, medium height, slightly heavy set. Communicate with mother, Mrs. Cora Thacker, Conway, Mo.

EDWARD G. RONNIGEN, who enlisted from Fillmore county, Minnesota, emergency address, Jessie, N. D. will find it to his advantage to communicate with S. G. Bergsath, Peterson, Minn.

JOHN T. BRADFORD, formerly of One hundred and Forty-fourth Infantry. Assigned to air service at Love field, Dallas, Tex. Description: Six feet two inches, brown hair and eyes, weight about 140 pounds, dark olive complexion. Communicate with wife, Mrs. Nell C. Bradford, 400 North Akard street, Dallas, Tex.

CLARENCE RAYMOND POWERS, C-28174, with Canadian forces. Met death in logging camp near Hoquiam, Wash., and Hoquiam post, No. 18, American Legion, Hoquiam, Wash., is desirous of hearing from his relatives. Last known address was brother, John Powers, 523 Arch street, Philadelphia, Pa.

CECIL T. LAVENDER, 6 feet 1 inch tall, brown hair and eyes, weight about 150 pounds, 38 years old, wounded in France. Last heard from at Bakersfield, Cal. Communicate with brother, William Irving Lavender, Box 96, Lancaster, Tex.

FREDERICK PASCH, member of Thirteenth post, No. 513, American Legion, Brooklyn, N. Y. Disappeared from home with Clarence W. Bratten, adjutant, Thirteenth post, No. 513, American Legion, 357 Summer avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y.

JOHN GIACOMA, private first-class, S-254697, Company G, Twenty-third engineers. Italian by birth, 5 feet 3 1/2 inches in height, blue eyes, dark brown hair and ruddy complexion. Missing from his home at Globe, Ariz.; \$500 reward for information concerning his whereabouts. Communicate with C. C. Falves, acting post adjutant, Henry Berry post, No. 4, American Legion, Globe, Ariz.

VIRGIL M'CLAIN—C. A. Blakesley, United States Veterans' Hospital 7, Dawson Springs, Ky., is trying to find his "buddy," Virgil McClain of Toledo, O., on business of vital importance. McClain is described as twenty-three, weighs 150 pounds, is 5 feet 5 inches tall. Has been missing a year.

Doctor Scott Makes Denial.

A statement denying that he had characterized the American Legion as "a dying organization," was made by Dr. Hugh Scott, executive of the United States Veterans' bureau. Doctor Scott was quoted in dispatches from New Orleans on October 19, to the effect that he regarding President Harding's veto of the adjusted compensation bill as the death blow of the Legion. His denial was made through the executive headquarters of the Oklahoma department of the Legion and was issued over the signature of Leon H. Brown, state adjutant.

Daddy's Evening Fairy Tale

By MARY GRAHAM BONNER

FAIRYLAND NEW YEAR

"Happy New Year," said the Queen of the Fairies.

"Happy New Year," shouted all the little Fairies.

"Happy New Year," said Witty Witch.

"Happy New Year," said old Mr. Giant.

"Happy New Year," said Billie Brownie.

"Happy New Year," said Bennie Brownie.

"Happy New Year," said Edie Elf.

"Happy New Year," said the other Elves and Brownies, and the Oaf family and the Bogies family and Ollie Oaf all shouted:

"Happy New Year to everybody!"

"Happy New Year," said Peter Gnome and the other Gnomes all sang this song:

Happy New Year, we all say,
On this the new year's very first day,
We hope the year'll be bright and gay,
With happiness going every way,
Happy New Year, we all say,
On this the new year's very first day!

"You see," said Peter Gnome, "it is so nice for happiness to go everywhere and not to just a few places.

"So that is our biggest wish—that happiness will get all around, into little nooks and corners and little dark places and will carry cheer in plenty.

"I'd like to give Happiness a marketing basket as big as the world and cram it full of merriment, and joy and cheer and all those nice things."

"We'll do what we can for you, Peter Gnome, to make your wish come true," said the Fairy Wondrous Secrets.

"I'll speak to the little workers and they will wrap up packages such as you suggest—more than ever will they wrap up," she added.

The Fairy Wondrous Secrets wore her favorite costume of a bright red shawl and a funny old shiny black skirt with enormous pockets in it.

"And the Dreamland King told me he'd not even take a day off on the first of the year but would begin at once to do all he could to help us," she said.

"He's sitting on the edge of Sleepy Mountain—his favorite mountain now.

"But he'll be all ready in a very short time.

"He's sitting in his Sleepy Time Cloud easy chair and he is looking through his spyglass to see just what work the Sandman is doing.

"He says there is still the same rule about traveling to Dreamland."

"What is the rule?" asked Effie Elf.

"No one can enter Dreamland," said the Fairy Wondrous Secrets, "without a smile.

"You know you have to pay as you enter—and your payment is a smile. Sometimes those who are entering may not even know they're smiling—but they are really smiling or they wouldn't be entering."

"Well, I must get at my packages and tie them up with ribbons and have them in readiness."

So Fairy Wondrous Secrets rushed off, but all the other little creatures of Fairyland went after her.

"We have nothing to do this evening—it's a free evening for us and we have nothing to do until tomorrow comes—except to enjoy ourselves," they said.

"May we not come and help you with an extra supply for the Dreamland King tonight?"

"We'd like to send our New Year wishes, too."

So the people of Fairyland helped the Fairy Wondrous Secrets and they sent beautiful Dreamland presents and Dreamland adventures all inclosed in gorgeous castles and palaces, too.

And with the Dreamland presents they sent wishes for New Year happiness which would follow the dreamers about wherever they went!

Figuring Ahead.

Margaret Ellen has been invited out to Sunday dinner. The meal was being served and the host viewing the platter of chicken decided a "drumstick" would be a suitable piece for the four-year-old miss. Margaret Ellen heroically attacked her portion and in due course of events calmly looked up and said: "Uncle, when I got through with this bone I think I would like some meat."

Perfect Equality.

Father—Why is it that you are always at the bottom of the class?
Johnny—it doesn't make any difference, daddy; they teach the same thing at both ends.—Mutual.

