

THE BALLAD OF THE SAUCY KITT



Once I was shipped as engineer upon the Saucy Kitty,
As good a tug as ever swam to seaward from the city.
We pounded down the Hook one day, an oily swell a-rolling—
One of those heavy, soggy days, with all the bell buoys tolling.
"There's weather in the south," says I. "You bet," says Bill Maguire,
"And if we get a sailing ship, we'll make her pay our hire."
We squattered down the sliding seas, and spluttered in the trough,
Until the Jersey shore abeam lay 15 sea miles off.
And there we hailed a Spanish brig with spars as tall as thunder,
And she was freighted to the decks and rolling gunwales under.
"Now, bully boys," says Bill Maguire, "the weather's coming quick,
And if we take that brig we'll have a job to make us slick."
We rounded to beneath her stern and, "Hey!" says Cap Maguire,
"D'ye want a tow? You'll need it soon. Speak quick, for I'm a flyer!"
The Spanish captain stroked his beard and looked while we stood ready.
"How much," says he, "Two hundred straight," says Bill, "and rising steady."
"Senior, you jest!" the captain said. Bill threw his wheel hard down.
"Three hundred dollars now," says he "and more before you drown."
"No, no!" the Spanish captain cried. But Bill Maguire thundered,
"Look south! For every minute now, I'll charge another hundred!"
The captain looked and leaped astern. "I'll pay you for your towing!"
But Cap Maguire twirled his wheel and said: "Still more you're owing,
I'll charge you seven hundred now to pay me for my waiting;
You haven't got a minute left, for here the squall comes skating!"
"Done!" cried the Spaniard, black with rage, both his dark eyes a-kinde,
"I only hope you tow one-half as well as you can swindle!"
We'd barely got the vessel fast and swung her to the hawser
Before the weather hit us straight and how the squall did yaw her!
We headed in the smother blind. We'd scarce come out a-drippin'
Before again we'd bury deep in green that came a-ripping!
Maguire signaled for full speed; then down the tube he bellers:
"Now, if you bust that hawser we lose seven hundred dollars!"
We rolled to right, we rolled to left, each roll looked like our last,
But in the reeling pilot house Maguire held her fast.
We couldn't see the brig astern. The air was thick as night,
And only the tense hawser told that we still had her tight.
We rolled to right, we rolled to left; we drowned from bow to stern,
With heart in mouth I braced myself and watched my engines turn;
And each time the propeller raced, I thought: "This is her last!"
But every time Maguire turned and held her to the blast.
Now, if you've seen that Jersey shore hit by a gale from seaward,
You'll need no sworn certificate to tell you death's to leeward.
So when Maguire down the tube said: "Jim, she's losing steady!"
I saw that devil of a beach as if we'd struck already.
I saw its wicked, tawny glint, where, deep in tons of water,
It waited for the crested sea to bring us to the slaughter.
"We can't hold on," my helper said (his breath came in short catches),
"If we don't cast that Spaniard off, we'll go ashore as matches."
"My engines can't do any more," I yelled up to Maguire,
"And we are taking seas aboard that sure will drown our fire!
No man will blame you if you cast a ship off in this weather!"
"We'll hold the brig," Maguire said, "or go ashore together!"
We rolled to starboard and to port, we rolled from left to right
Once as we wallowed, from my post the beach was plain in sight.
We came so close that I could see the white foam on the strand
As every grayback rolled ashore and pounded on the land.
Then Maguire down the tube: "You're holding to her fine!
Now keep your engines steady, man, and don't you bust that line!"
"She's almost in the breakers," said my helper. "Now we're done!
When will that madman at the wheel cast off his line and run?"
But Bill's voice down the tube sang cheerily, "You bet!
If we can keep her as she is, we'll hold that Spaniard yet!"
Ridge after ridge of crested sea tried to twist us around
And roll us as a foundered wreck toward the Jersey ground.
Stroke after stroke the black squall beat to turn her nose and twist
Us headlong in the trough where we would vanish like a mist.
Turn after turn my engines made! I nursed them all I knew;
Straight with her nose to open sea Maguire held her true.
He held her true for seven hours, all of a steady squall,
And we were just outside the line of breakers—that was all,
When the black storm flapped at last and left us where we shook,
To flounder on the tossing sea and crawl inside the Hook.
No word came from the rolling brig, until we reached smooth water
And took our hawser and steamed 'round to lie beneath her quarter.
The Spanish captain then leaned down, bearded and tall and grave:
"Senior, the tugboat captain, your pardon I must crave.
A thief of the sea I thought you when this little trip began,
But I stand in port on my rescued ship to say that you are a man!"
—Boston Herald.



Fashion Always Supreme.

The excavations which Dr. Evans has been making in Crete reveal that the woman of fashion in 1600 B. C. favored the hour-glass waist and figure,

and probably the Grecian figure was regarded as a barbarism. Barbaric figures, however sensible, can never hope to compete with those of fashion's dictators.



TICKLE GRASS

BY
BYRON WILLIAMS

"Yip."

Joy is not kept in a strong-box!
Pleasure knows little of self!
Living and loving and being
Spring from one's natural self!

Peace is not found in amassing
Gems in a cavern of gloom!
Peace is in showing the weary
Nooks full of roses in bloom!

Dollars weigh not in the balance;
Woe is not lifted by gold!
Search thine own heart for its gladness—
Here is the answer—Behold!

Finding Jimmie.

She was a wan little woman with the embers of dying hope in the flame of her cheeks, the hectic flame that told a story of the black camel kneeling at her gate! Her clothing was drabbed and thin, like the frame that supported it, and her shoes were sloppy and run over at the side and heel. To add to the sadness of aspect, at her angular breast, lay a fretting babe, sharing her deplorable squalor of poverty and want!

One of those strange and pitiable bits of suffering humanity that are tossed up to the public gaze by an unkind fate, she rapped tremblingly at the door of the poor supervisor and asked for help to Winchell.

"Just enough to help me back where Jimmie is, please, sir! It's only such a little way—and I am too tired to walk!"

"Jimmie? Jimmie, he's my boy! We left him when we went out West to make our fortune in the mines at Dark Hills; left him with some neighbors who were good to him. He was not well and we feared he could not make the trip.

"Yes, we had bad luck in the Hills. Father," swallowing, and wiping away a tear, "father died, Minnie died and, and," with a sob in her voice, "the expenses seem to take all there was left! There wasn't anything for me to do there and I started back to Jimmie! Oh, sir, if you only can help us to Winchell, I'm sure the Lord will send His choicest blessings to you for your kindness!"

Captain Brooks of the Winchell police department, dozing over his desk, was awakened by the sharp telephone bell.

"Ello!"

"Police department—yes.

"What's that? Patrol to the cemetery? Here, come off! You quit your monkeyshines with the police department or you'll git—What's that? It's Hanson? Patrol to the cemetery gate? Yes! Meet the wagon there? All right!"

Clang went the electric button! On the floor came the clatter of horses' feet, the quick "Git up!" the rumble of wheels, and the captain leaned back in his chair and pondered! In his long service he had had many calls, but this was the first for a patrol wagon to dash at full speed to the city of the dead!

"Grave robbers, I s'pose," he muttered; "the dirty thieves!"

There upon the new made grave of little Jim they found a wailing babe and beside it, face downward, a broken-hearted, shattered piece of earthly clay. The body was motionless in that strange fascination we call death, but the spirit winged its way on high to welcome Jim!

Memories.

At the Big Bend, in the deepest "hole" in the Cedar, there dwelt a monstrous pickerel. All the boys knew of him and kept their distance when in bathing a few rods lower down the stream. This king fish was a whale among fins! He swished about in the liquid depths as confident in his strength as a giant in a village of pigmies. Fishermen, renowned of rod and reel, came for miles to angle

for this old veteran—and he bit with avidity, snapping their minnows with determination and skill like the old cannibal that he was! And then came the fun. A lashing of water, a leap into the air, a crash under the boat—and freedom! In his wake he left broken fish-lines, twisted poles and—swearing anglers! When I said good-bye for the stern realities of life, the big pickerel was still monarch of the "hole" at the Big Bend. Some day I am going back, back to the zephyr-kissed country, back to the high-banks and the willows, back to the Big Bend, to catch that fish! There have been big fins in the water where I have fished since then, but none so worthy of my rod and reel. Some day, Ah yes, some day, I'm going back!

There were eight of us, typical, happy lads, and our camp was in Waterman's woods along the sinuous river. Snuggled in a cove, amid the wild cherries, the chipmunks and the singing birds, we made our temporary abode in tents. Our table was supplied from the river, from the wood—and from the go-cart that came daily from our several homes! Occasionally we had squirrel, fried brown and crisp! Ah, delectable dish!

One day six of the eight went fishing. We arrived home late to find the remaining two had been hunting and had prepared a feast of squirrel. They had found a village of the frisking beauties, young and tender, and, vandal-like, the guns had done their duty well! We were hungry and "fell to" with greedy haste! How good the squirrel tasted! Yes, we would have another, thank you! At last the dish was depleted!

Then up rose one of the two villainous chefs and apprised us with shriek and shout that we had eaten gophers! Common field gophers! They had snared them while we were absent and cooked them fit for epicures! We gagged and went away into the darkness, six of us, to run our fingers down our throats! It was a sad ending for a regal fast—but boys will be boys, even to the limit!

Underneath the little white school-house built on the hillside, was a cave-like cellar, and within that cellar was a bogie man! The janitor told me about it when first I passed that way, a youngster in kilts! At night I ran past the bogie man's abode; by day I peered curiously yet warily in at the window to catch a sight of his bogie-ship!

When I had grown older, I refused to believe the bogie story and laughed at it, but in the meantime, other bogies had arisen! These, one by one, gave way before experience. In their stead came other bogies, not to be scouted at until disproven! Life is filled with imaginings, grave, frightful hobgoblins that worry and despoil our happiness. Could we disarm them promptly upon their appearance, how much brighter this world would be!

A boy had a dog for sale. He had paid a quarter for the pup and had found the ownership onerous. He wanted to dispose of the canine, but at a profit. I argued! I was willing to give the twenty-five cents, but no more. Then I remembered a tobacco box the cigar man had given me, a mere bauble, but gaily painted! I proposed exchanging the quarter and the box for the dog! The offer was accepted with avidity!

Men are like the boy. A mere nothing with a bit of paint or a gaudy feather attached to it, has influenced many a trade. Man has a weak spot always. Frequently we can touch it with a bit of fantasy, or tickle it with a feather. Moral—Study your customer!

Some interpret it this way: "Work for the night is coming—when it takes good money to buy good cheer—er, we mean, good beer!"

An over polite man usually has an ax to grind.