

NOTHING WAS TOO GOOD FOR HIM

BY HOWARD FIELDING

Bill Doyle, gunner's mate from the Raleigh, strayed into the office of J. Bolton Melnor, broker, on Nassau street near Wall. The tar was looking for his friend Tom Grady, who had formerly worked in that place.

The building had been remodeled and improved to the extent that none of the old tenants could afford to live in it, but with a sailor's instinct for locality Bill had found the exact spot where Tom Grady once worked.

Bill saw that the channel buoys had been shifted, and he came in with only enough steam to give him steerage way. He would have put about hastily had not Melnor chanced to get an eye on him.

Melnor is a patriot. The champagne that he has drunk to the health of Uncle Sam and the confusion of all Spaniards would float a small gunboat. He seized Bill by the hand, pulled him into the private office and two minutes later had insisted upon taking the search for Tom Grady entirely into his own hands.

While the investigation was making two young gentlemen named Stratton and Reeves called upon Melnor and were duly presented to Bill, whereupon Messrs. Stratton and Reeves swore in the name of all the gods at once that they were proud to take the hand of Gunner's Mate Doyle of the Raleigh.

It was not a soft hand, by the way, but it was a clean one, and Doyle from top to toe—or keel to truck, if you prefer the phrase—was a neat, natty young sailor.

"Mr. Doyle's going to dinner with us tonight," said Melnor. "Allen's been called away. There's a vacant chair."

"Out of sight!" exclaimed Stratton and Reeves.

Doyle turned very red. In his heart he wanted to go. He had taken a sailor's strong and sudden liking for Melnor, and he knew that in his company he should see great things. Yet he was afraid—a queer word to use in connection with Bill Doyle.

"I better not," he said. "I've got no place in your party. I'd be a 1 pounder shell in the 6 inch gun. I wouldn't fit."

"Any one of Dewey's men," said Melnor, with vast impressiveness, "is big enough to fit any place that will hold him."

"If I could see Tom Grady first," said Doyle, hesitating.

"Won't tomorrow do?" asked Melnor.

"Well, I don't know," said Doyle, and he rubbed his head thoughtfully.

He could not tell these men why he was so anxious to see Tom Grady. It

was, in fact, a matter of money. Doyle wanted to borrow \$15, the balance of \$20 that would be required to secure a private room in a hospital for his widowed sister's little boy. The youngster had a bad cut from broken glass, and it was not healing. The doctor had said that a week in the hospital would be worth a month at home, but the little fellow had seen a "ward" once and was afraid of it. A private room would cost \$20.

Immediately after reaching New York Doyle had spent all his savings and all he could raise to get his sister out of a quagmire of debt. That is why he could raise but \$5 toward the \$20. In this emergency he had bethought him of his old friend Tom Grady, a thrifty fellow, who earned little, but saved much. Bill was particularly anxious to get the money on the next day, for the \$20 room at the hospital might be taken any time, and the other good ones cost more.

The sailor could not mention such matters to these Wall street men. They might think that he wanted them to help him out. He made them understand, however, that finding Grady was very important.

Upon hearing this, Melnor called a trusted clerk.

"Jim," said he, "I want you to find Tom Grady, who used to work for a tailor in this building. I want the address by 10 o'clock tomorrow. Don't let anything stop you. You'll probably need some of Waller's sleuths"—Waller being the head of a private detective agency. "Here's some money to pay the freight."

He handed Jim a pad of paper that he had torn off a pad. Doyle saw \$200 written on it in blue pencil.

The idea of spending \$200 to find a man for the purpose of borrowing \$15 from him made the sailor feel a faintness in his solar plexus.

"It ain't right for me to let you do this," he began, but Melnor would not hear a word. He had a gently commanding way which fitted exactly to the sailor's trained obedience. From that moment Gunner's Mate Doyle was as completely under the sway of Melnor as if he had been the admiral.

Two electric cabs took the party up town, Doyle riding with Melnor to the building where he had his rooms. Reeves and Stratton were to be there at 7. The rooms appeared to Doyle as



HE SET A CORNER OF THE ENVELOPE ALIGHT.

the most luxurious abode ever inhabited by any mortal creature. He was a young man of quick perceptions, and in a flash there came to him an education in the art of living. He became conscious of a new kind of envy.

Melnor's man made a large supply of champagne cocktail, a delicacy never before presented to the palate of Bill Doyle. He had the misfortune to like it exceedingly. The quantity which he swallowed under the pressure of Melnor's hospitality did not disturb his head, but it upset all his notions about drinking. He had never liked liquor, and beer had appealed to him merely as a good thing on a hot day, but he fancied that champagne cocktail might be acceptable at all times and seasons.

It will not be worth while to describe the dinner for eight. When Doyle learned that the other four were to be ladies connected with the theatrical profession, he had visions of wild revelry such as he had sometimes read about in the newspapers. As a matter of fact, the dinner was as decorous as it might have been anywhere that he could imagine.

Still there was plenty of fun. Everybody did or said something clever—everybody except Bill, whose native wit deserted him because he was all the time trying to be like the others. Yet they strove to make him think that he was very clever indeed, and sometimes, slightly assisted by the champagne, they nearly succeeded.

The pretty girl who would have smiled upon Allen smiled radiantly upon Bill, and by 9 o'clock his heart was like a red-hot coal. Yet he told himself that he was having the time of his life and that it was great good fortune to be with such people and to get a peep into another and a brighter sphere.

He learned that Reeves was not a New Yorker, but a speculator from Chicago, who had recently made himself famous by losing a vast sum of money. Reeves did not seem to be worrying about his misfortune, and therefore Bill, who had ideas about fortune-telling, decided that he must be a truly great man.

These facts were communicated to Bill by Miss Maynard, the young woman who was making such havoc with his affections. She was continually enlightening him on matters pertaining to important people, all of whom seemed to be the intimate friends of Melnor and his guests. Bill judged that he must accidentally have fallen into one of the most distinguished companies in the metropolis.

He began to take a tremendous interest in wealth and luxury, subjects to which he had previously given only the vaguest consideration. If this girl had talked to him about the irrigation of the Great American desert, he would never have been able to see a grain of sand thereafter without emotion.

The dinner lasted till half past 9 o'clock, when the party went to a theater, arriving when the performance was more than half over, which seemed to Bill a singular extravagance even for these fortunate people. After the theater some one suggested that they should go and get something to eat. Bill was not accustomed to draw his rations quite so often, but he made no objection. He did not care where they went so long as he went with them.

This supper was even more delightful to Bill than the dinner. He was less conscious of his own awkwardness, and he had almost entirely accustomed himself to the idea that somebody else was paying for everything. This had strongly oppressed him at first, for Bill had always had a

magnificent liberality; but, as he afterward expressed it, with \$5 in his pocket in that crowd he "simply had to be a bum."

There was one incident of the supper which impressed Bill particularly. Mr. Reeves received a note, and the boy who brought it said he had been on the trail since 6 o'clock.

As Reeves took the envelope in his hand the eyes of the young woman beside him fell upon it. Bill saw her face suddenly flush.

"That's from Millie Leavitt!" she cried.

"You are mistaken, my friend," replied Reeves gently, and he made a movement as if to put the note into his pocket unopened.

The girl snatched it out of his hand and sprang up. Bill's common sense told him that this scene was half jest, yet he viewed it with awful attention as a revelation of the innermost parts of high life.

"It's from Millie, and I'm going to read it," exclaimed the girl, and she tore an end of the envelope.

"I beg you not to do so," said Reeves. "It is not from a woman."

The girl wavered. Evidently her sense of honor would not permit her to read the note, yet her jealousy demanded something.

"If I can't read it," she said, "neither shall you. I'll burn it."

"If you cannot take my word for it," said Reeves gently, "you may do what pleases you."

She seized a burning taper which had been put upon the table for the convenience of the gentlemen, who were smoking, and set a corner of the envelope alight. Reeves did not move a muscle.

Suddenly the girl clutched the burning paper in her hand, extinguishing the flame, and then she threw the envelope down in front of Reeves.

"Thank you," said he, and was again about to pocket the note when the girl, with tears in her eyes, whispered, "Please let me read it, Johnny."

He nodded, and she pounced upon the letter like a kitten. The next instant she screamed so loudly that the hero of Manila and all the others except Reeves sprang up in alarm.

The envelope contained five Bank of England notes of £100 each—charred on the edges—and this communication:

Dear John—Here are the proceeds of the sale of the last of your bonds—in English money, as you requested. If this doesn't pull you through, I'll be hanged if I see how you're going to get out at all! Yet come to me, old man, if anything goes wrong, and I will do my best. Faithfully yours, DONALD PATRICK.

The girl read it aloud, and then she put her head in her arms on the table and shed copious tears—real ones too.

And Bill Doyle had a new idea of calmness and courage. Reeves, the stock gambler, had displaced all the naval heroes in history.

When the supper was over, the gunner's mate took his fair partner home in a cab. On the Broadway corner of the street where she lived stood a young man with roses which he had been offering for sale in the all night restaurants. Bill bought the stock for \$3, despite the protests of his companion, who promised to keep them and did for almost two days.

She said good night to Bill very prettily at her door. He returned to the cab like one in a dream.

"I'm to take you anywhere you want to go," said the cabman.

"I'll walk," replied Bill, who had not the courage to give the location of the tenement where his sister lived.

He plodded slowly home, and every step gave him a singular sensation of walking down hill.

The next morning he called at Melnor's office, vaguely hoping that there would be another dinner party. Melnor was not there, but he left a note for Bill saying that he regretted having to inform him that Tom Grady was

dead. The note was very kind and polite, but it did not mention any more dinner parties.

So that was the end. Nothing in New York was too good for Bill, and this is what he had got:

In his brain a vision of wealth and luxury and a troublesome new idea of life.

In his stomach a craving for terrapin and champagne cocktails.

In his heart a hopeless and absurd passion for a girl who was not what he thought she was and would not have been a good mate for him even if she had been.

In his soul a new ideal of character and conduct founded upon an exhibition of foolishness by a born gambler.

These things had cost him \$3, which had nominally purchased roses. He was just so much poorer in pocket, though something like a hundred had been spent upon him in the last few hours.

The only thing he had gained was the knowledge that Tom Grady was dead.

THE PERPLEXING INITIALS.

To the Uninitiated They Are Apt to Be Somewhat Confusing.

"I just arrived in Washington today. In fact, I am a stranger in the capital," he said to a citizen on Pennsylvania avenue.

"Yes?" answered the citizen interrogatively, at the same time putting his hand on his watch chain and conjuring up pictures of piles of gold bricks and wads of the imitation "long green" lying around loose on the asphalt.

"Yes, I never saw such tall buildings before," he continued, with a wave of the hand toward the postoffice and The Star building. "I come down from the mountains," he added explanatorily. "You don't mind my asking you a few questions about something which has worried me mightily?"

"Not a bit of it, my friend. We are only too glad to be of service to strangers. Drive ahead."

"Well, it's these perplexing Virginia rail fence initials. I suppose you people who live here understand 'em, but I'll be goldarned if the stranger within your gates comprehends what they mean. Is it a fair assumption that 'U. S. A.' and 'U. S. N.' mean, or stand for, the United States army and navy respectively?"

"Well, does 'U. S. M. C.' stand for United States member of congress or United States metallic carriage?"

"United States marine corps."

"Oh, the marines of ancient equine affiliations and Boston food, eh? Well, well! I just passed two young officers in uniform who had the letters 'U. S. N. R. D. C.' and 'U. S. N. G. D. C.' in gilt letters on their cut-off coat collars. I don't dare to even think what those young chaps represent. What is it?"

"Oh, they were officers in the naval reserve and the national guard of the District of Columbia."

"Well, does that wagon there with the letters 'U. S. S. H.' painted on its side belong to the government hospital for sailors?"

"Not much. That floors every new man that comes to town. Those letters stand for the United States Soldiers' home."

"And there is another wagon, Mr. Hanna's private carriage, for it has 'G. O. P.' painted on its sides. They say up my way he is the head and front of the 'grand old party.'"

"Grand old party" nothing!" cried the citizen indignantly. "That wagon belongs to the government printing office."

"Oh, that's easy—just United States senate document room and house of representatives document room."

"Well, if I hadn't been told I'd said those letters stood for United States steamship Dainger Rose and the other for 'Humble Roger's Daughter Ruth.' Many thanks for your information."

"Don't mention it."—Washington Star.

Dangerous Etiquette.

Old world privilege and restriction reign supreme in Spain, where there is a law that no subject shall touch the person of the king or queen.

Alfonso XIII nearly suffered a severe fall from this rule in his childhood. An aunt of his made him a present of a swing. When he used it for the first time, the motion frightened him, and he began to cry, whereupon a lackey lifted him quietly out of it and so, no doubt, preserved him from falling.

The breach of etiquette, however, was flagrant and dreadful. The queen was obliged to punish it by dismissing the man from his post. At the same time she showed her real feelings on the subject by appointing him immediately to another and better place in the royal household.

In another case a queen of Spain nearly lost her life in a dreadful way owing to this peculiar rule. She had been thrown when out riding, and her foot catching in the stirrup, she was dragged. Her escort would not risk interference, and she would have been dashed to pieces but for the heroic interposition of a young man who stopped the horse and released her from her dangerous position.

As soon as they saw she was safe her escort turned to arrest the traitor who had dared to touch the queen's foot, but he was not to be seen. Knowing well the penalty he had incurred, he made off at once, fed for his life and did not stop until he had crossed the frontier.

She Rode Free.

A woman who had come out of the west, where she had been a cow girl on a ranch, was boarding a car in this city recently. She had just placed her foot upon the step and was preparing to take another step to the upper platform when, with a furious "Step lively!" the conductor pulled the strap. The car jerked forward, and the western woman awoke back for a minute, then just caught herself in time to prevent a bad fall upon the cobbles.

She confronted the conductor with angry eyes—eyes that had looked undimmed into those of mighty horned monsters of the prairies.

"What do you mean by starting the car before I was on it?" she asked.

"Can't wait all day for you, lady," the conductor snarled. "Just step inside there."

In a moment the western woman, with a backward golf sweep of the arm, lunged for the conductor's head. He dodged. The blow sent his hat spinning back into the track. The woman entered the car and sat down. She was flushed, but dignified. While the other women passengers were rather startled, they all knew just how she felt. Then the car stopped, while the

conductor went back for his hat. The western woman rode free that time.—New York Sun.

Lost Hat Stories.

The London Globe has been collecting a series of lost hat stories, of which the following are specimens:

A father and son were standing at the entrance to Old Chain pier at Brighton when the dear little boy tumbled into the dancing waves. A bystander, accosted as he was, plunged into the sea and, buffeting the waves with lusty sinews, succeeded at last in setting the dripping child at his father's feet. "And what has ye done w' his hat?" said papa.

A correspondent sent the following narrative: A festive bluejacket was seen from a ship in Malta harbor dancing on the top of the parapet wall at Fort Ricasoli. First his hat blew over, and then, leaning over to look for it, he lost his balance and fell after it—a sheer drop of 30 feet or more. The surgeon on duty was landed with a party to bring off the remains for identification. They found them crawling about on hands and knees and inquired if he was seriously hurt. "Hurt he blowed!" was his reply. "Where's my hat?"

Bridge Builders' Fight.

Bridge building is a pertious business, and no insurance company will take any risk on the lives of superstructure workers. There is one horrible sensation known to superstructure workers. It is something like stage fright.

"I know once," said one of them, "when I wasn't up more than 140 feet, a sudden feeling came over me that I couldn't get down. I looked down, and there was a swift tide swirling around the edges of the piers. It seemed to me I should surely be killed. I clasped both arms around the beam on which I was working and lay there, just clinging to it, for 20 minutes. Luckily for me, the foreman, who was near me, saw what was the matter and had sense enough not to speak to me. If he had, I know I should certainly have fallen off."

In a gruff voice, he growled at me: 'Say, git out o' there! I want to put a rivet there.' And I, obedient to an instinct of duty, found myself moving along. The feeling passed away as I did move and didn't come back."

"When I was in Peru building bridges," said an engineer, "I did not lose my head at work, but I more than once woke up during the night hanging to the sides of the bed in desperation of fear to keep from falling in a nightmare."—Boston Herald.

All Fools' Day.

The custom of playing pranks on April fools' day probably had its origin in France, the first nation to begin the new year Jan. 1 instead of March 25. Before the change April 1 was the day when the merrymaking of the New Year's celebration culminated in the paying of gifts and visits in return for those already bestowed. When the reformed calendar in 1564 made the 1st of January the beginning of the new year, April 1 was the time for pretended gifts and visits of mock ceremony to make fools of those who had forgotten the change in dates.

The Romans had a holiday similar in character to this, although not coming at the same time of year, the saturnalia, and in Hindustan the feast of the Huli, on March 31, has for its chief diversion the sending of people on fruitless errands.

In Scotland they have a trick for April fools' day which never grows stale. If a fellow can be found simple enough to undertake it, he is given a note to carry to a certain person. He reads it and says it is not for him, but that he is to go to—naming another man—and from there he is sent to another and so on until the bearer grows tired or sees a light. The note contains the lines:

This is the first of April;
Hunt the gawk another mile.

His Motive.

"I will ask you now," the attorney for the prosecution said to the witness, "if the defendant in this case confessed to you his motive in shooting the deceased?"

"Hold on!" interposed the attorney for the defense. "I object."

"I only want to find out whether—"

"I object!" Legal wrangle of half an hour.

"The witness may answer," ruled the judge.

"Now, then, sir, I will ask you again. Did or did not the prisoner confess to you his motive in shooting the deceased?"

"He did."

"What was it?"

"He wanted to kill him."—Chicago Tribune.

The Real Puzzle of Life.

Fidella—Fidella, doesn't the great mystery of our being fill you with awe and wonder?

Fidella—Well, to tell you the honest truth, Fidella, what to wear bothers me more than anything else.—Indianapolis Journal.

No Woman May Reign.

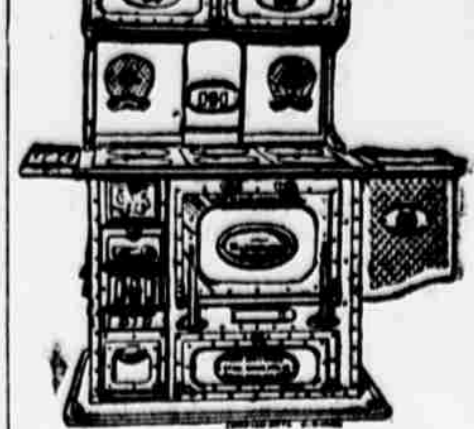
The question has been asked why none of the daughters of the czar may be a successor to the throne on which the great Catherine proved her capacity. The exclusion rests only on an edict of the Emperor Paul, the son of Catherine the Great, issued to discredit his mother's memory.

France has as many as 45,000 families, with 130,000 individuals, claiming a title of nobility; but, as a matter of fact, only about 450 families can prove their claim to descent from a noble family in feudal times.

Philosophy teaches us how easy it is for any man to forget his troubles, provided he is so fortunate as to be somebody else.

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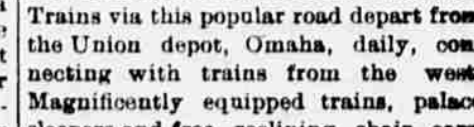
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