

Consul Skiddy's Dilemma

By LLOYD OSBOURNE

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Things had been dull in Apia before the arrival of Capt. Satterlee in the Southern Belle. Not business alone—which was, of course, only to be expected, what with the war being just over and the Kanakas driven to eat their coconuts instead of selling them to traders in the form of copra—but, socially speaking, the little capital of the Samoan group had been next door to dead.

Possibly this long spell of monotony contributed to Capt. Satterlee's pronounced and instant success. The topsails of the Southern Belle had hardly more than appeared over the horizon when people began to wake up and realize that stagnation had too long held them in its thrall. Satterlee was not at all the ordinary kind of a man to which the beach (as Apia always alluded to itself) was more than well acquainted. Gin had no attractions for Capt. Satterlee, nor did he surround himself with dusky admirers. He played a straight social game and lived up to the rules, even to party calls, and finger bowls on his cabin table. He was a tall, thin American of about 45, with floor-walker manners, grayish muttonchop whiskers and a roving eye. The general verdict of Apia was that he was "very superior." His superiority was apparent in his gentlemanly baldness, his openwork socks, his well-turned references to current events, his kindly and indulgent attitude toward all things Samoan. He deplored the rivalry of the three contending nationalities—German, English and American—whose official representatives quarreled fiercely among themselves and mismanaged the affairs of this unfortunate little South Sea kingdom and whose unofficial representatives sold guns and cartridges indiscriminately to the warring native factions. Satterlee let it be inferred that the role of peacemaker had informally settled upon himself.

"In a little place everybody ought to pull together," he would say, his bland tolerance falling like balm from heaven, and he would clinch the remark by passing round 40-cent cigars. The Southern Belle was a showy little vessel of about 90 tons, with the usual trade room in the after part of the ship, where the captain himself would wait on you behind a counter and sell you anything from a bottle of trade scent to a keg of dynamite. He never was so charming as when engaged in this exchange of commodities for coin, and it accorded so pleasantly with his evident superiority that the purchaser had a pleasant sense of doing business with a gentleman.

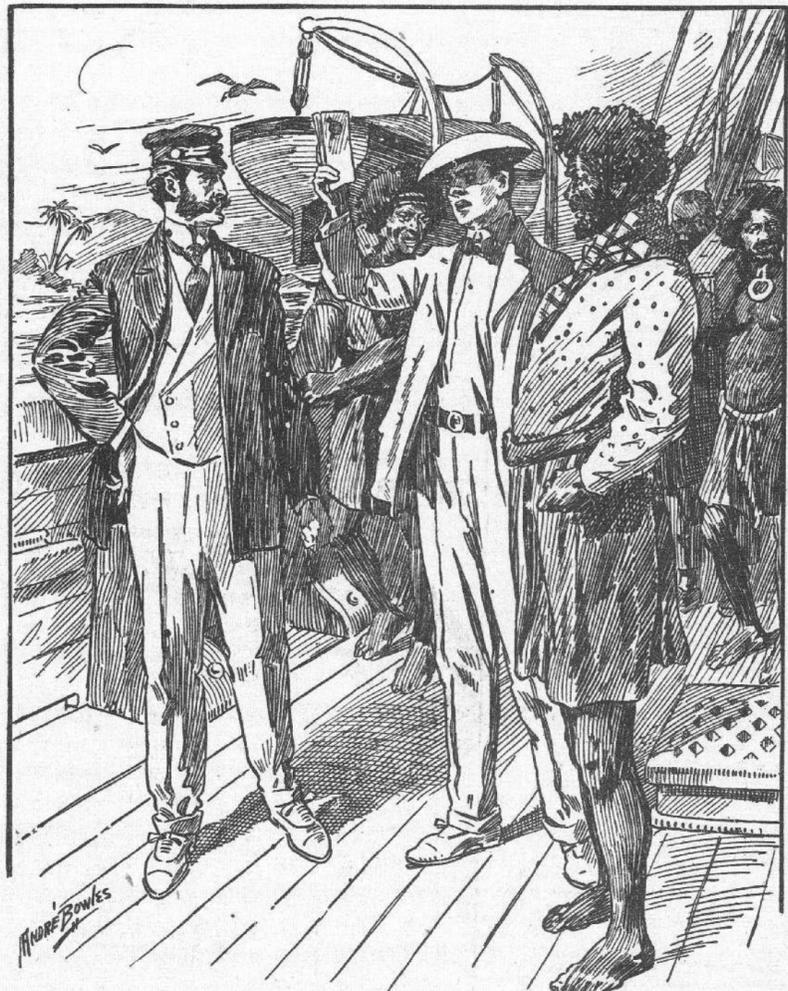
"Of course I might run her as a yacht and play the heavy swell," he would remark. "But, candidly, I like this kind of thing; it puts me on a level with the others, you know; and then it's handy for buying supplies and keeping one in touch with the people." With this he would give you such a warning smile and perhaps throw in free a handful of fishhooks, or a packet of safety matches, or a toothbrush. Indeed, apart from this invariable prodigality, his scale of prices was ridiculously low, and if you were a lady you could buy out the ship at half price. As for young Skiddy, the American consul, the bars in his case were lowered even more, and he was just asked to help himself; which young Skiddy did, though sparingly. Capt. Satterlee took an immense fancy to this youthful representative of their common country, and treated him with an engaging mixture of respect and paternalism; and Skiddy, not to be behindhand, and dazzled, besides, by his elder's marked regard and friendship, threw wide the consular door and constantly pressed on Satterlee the hospitality of a cot on the back veranda.

The little consul had never known such a man; he had never heard such talk; he had never before realized the extent and splendor of the world. Sitting in the cabin of the Southern Belle, often far into the night, he would give rapt attention to this extraordinary being who had done everything and seen everything. Paris, London, Constantinople, New York, all were as familiar to Satterlee as the palm of his hand, and he had the story-telling gift that can throw a glamor over the humblest incident. It is a sad commentary on human nature that it is so easily deceived. A blunt tongue, an attractive manner, a few hundred dollars thrown carelessly about, and presto! you have the counterfeit of a Cecil Rhodes. We are not only willing to take people at their own valuation, but are ever ready to multiply that valuation by ten. Obtrude romance—rich, stirring romance—into the lives of commonplace people and they instantly lose their heads. Romance, more than cupidity, is what attracts the gold-brick investor.

Of course Satterlee was a poser, a fraud, a liar; the highest type of liar; the day-dreaming, well-read, genuinely inventive, highly imaginative, long-fingert-for-its-own-sake liar. But to Skiddy every word was gospel truth. He never doubted the captain's instant. Life grew richer to him, stranger and more wonderful. It was like a personal distinction—a medal, or the thanks of congress—that Satterlee should thus have singled him out. His gratitude was unbounded. He felt both humble and elated. His cup was brimming over. As the time began to draw near for the monthly mail from San Francisco Satterlee got restless and talked regretfully of leaving. He gave a great P. O. C. bargain day on board the Southern Belle, where sandwiches and bottled beer were served at all corners and goods changed hands at astonishing prices; coal oil at one seventy-five a case; hundred-pound kegs of beef at

four dollars; turkey-red cotton at six cents a yard; square face at 30 cents a bottle, and similar cuts in all the standard commodities. There was no custom house in those days and you were free to carry everything ashore unchallenged. A matter of 80 tons must have been landed all round the beach; and the panglosses at the gangway, the crush and jostle in the trade room, and the steady hoisting out of fresh merchandise from the main hold made a very passable South Sea imitation of a New York department store. At any rate there was the same loss of temper, the same harassed expression on the faces of the purchasers, and the same difficulty in getting change. As like as not you had to take it—the change—in the form of Jews' harps, screw eyes, or anything small and handy that happened to be near by. It was the most lightning performance Apia had ever witnessed, and the captain carried it off in a brisk, smiling way, as though it was the best joke in the world and he was only doing it all for fun.

Unfortunate captain! Unhappy day!



"I ARREST YOU IN THE NAME OF THE UNITED STATES."

tiny that brought in the mail cutter two days ahead of schedule! Thrice unlucky popularity that found them basking in the sunshine of woman's favor instead of on thy four-inch deck! The pilot signaled the mail; Skiddy put forth in his consular boat, intercepting the cutter in the pass and receiving (on his head) his own especial government bag. The proximity of the Southern Belle and the likelihood of Satterlee being at home caused Skiddy to board the ship and open the bag on her quarterdeck. One stout, blue and important-looking letter and one important-looking letter and one important-looking letter and—

There were no white men in the crew of the Southern Belle. They were all Rotumah boys, with the exception of Ah Foy, the Chinese cook. This amiable individual was singing over his pots and pans when he was suddenly startled by the apparition of Skiddy at the gally door. The little consul was deathly pale and there was something fierce and authoritative in his look.

"Come out of here," he said abruptly. "I want to talk to you!"

The Chinaman followed him aft. He had a pretty good idea of what was coming. That was why he was sewn up with \$200 in hard cash together with a twenty-dollar bill under his left heel. He began to cry and in five minutes had blurted out the whole thing. Self-preservation is the first law, and he had, besides, some dim conception of state's evidence. Skiddy made the conception clearer and promised him immunity if he would make a clean breast of it. This the Chinaman forthwith did in his laborious pigeon. A good part of it was incomprehensible, but he established certain main facts and confirmed the stout, blue, important-looking letter. As Satterlee came off on a shore boat, pulling like mad, and then darted up the ladder in a sweat of apprehension, he was met at the top by Skiddy—not Skiddy his friend, but Skiddy the arm of the law. Skiddy the retributive, Skiddy the world's avenger, with

Senko, his towering cox, standing square behind him. "John Forster," he said, "alias Satterlee, I arrest you in the name of the United States, on the charge of having committed the crime of barrrary, and warn you that anything you say now may be hereafter used against you."

It was a horrible thing to say—to be forced to say—and no sense of public duty could make it less than detestable. Skiddy almost whispered out the words. The brutality of them appalled him. Remember, this was his friend, his hero, the man whose intimacy an hour before had been everything to him. Satterlee gave him a quick, blank, panic look, and then, with a pitiful bravado, took a step forward with an attempted return to his usual confident air. He professed to be dumfounded at the accusation; he was the victim of a dreadful mistake; he tried, with a ghastly smile, to reassert his old dominion calling Skiddy "old man" and "old chap" in a shaky, fawning voice, and wanting to take him below "to talk it over." But the little consul was adamant. The law must take its course. He was sorry, terribly sorry, but as an officer of the United States he had to do his duty.

Satterlee preceded him into the boat. The consul followed and took the yoke lines. They were both dejected, and neither dared to meet the other's eyes. It was a mournful pull ashore, and tragic in the retrospect. A silence lay between them as heavy as lead. The crew, conscious of the captain's humiliation, though they knew not the cause, felt also constrained to a deep solemnity. Yes, a funeral pull, and it was a relief to everyone when at last they grounded in the shingle off the consulate.

terlee, the cherished, the entertained, the eagerly sought after—Satterlee, had been discovered to be a pirate! The Southern Belle was no Southern Belle at all, but the James H. Peabody! He had shipped the cargo, putting in a thousand dollars of his own to lull Mr. Crawford's suspicions, and then had marooned the captain and mate on Ebon Island and levanted with the ship! Heavens! What cackle, what excitement, what a furious flow of beer in every saloon along the beach! It was rumored that the great bargain day sales might be canceled; that the goods might have to be returned; that not a penny of compensation would be paid to the unlucky purchasers. Then what a rubbing off of marks took place, what a breaking up of tell-tale cases, what a soaking off of tags! The whole 80 tons disappeared like magic, and you could not find a soul who would even confess to a packet of pins!

The trial took place in the large room of the consulate. The big front doors stood open to the sea, where a mile away the breakers tossed and tumbled on the barrier reef. The back door was kept shut to keep out the meaner noises of domesticity, but at intervals in the course of the trial you could hear the deliberate grinding of the consular coffee; the chasing of consular chickens; the counting of the consular price; shrill arguments over the price of fish—a grotesque juxtaposition that seemed to make a mockery of the whole proceedings.

On the reassembling of the court on the morning of the third day little Skiddy, from the majesty of the dais, summed up the case at length. It covered nine sheets of foolscap and had cost him hours of agonizing toil. Beginning with a general rhetorical statement about the "policy of na-

(as they could do nothing else) to be as polite as possible to the American consul. But jails? Oh, no, they couldn't oblige Skiddy with a new jail! He was welcome to what they had, but it wasn't in reason that he could expect anything better. Skiddy said it was a bog pen. The president retorted that the king's allowance was eight months in arrears and that the western end of the island was still in rebellion. Jails cost money, and they had no money. Skiddy declared it was an outrage and asked them if they approved of putting a white man into a bare stockade, with none of the commonest conveniences or decencies of life? They were both shocked at the suggestion. The pride of race is very strong in barbarous countries. A white man is still a white man, even if he has committed all the crimes in the calendar. The chief justice very seriously pointed out that it would disgrace them all to confine Satterlee in the stockade and force him to mix with the dregs of the native population. Surely Mr. Skiddy could not consider such a thing for a moment. Mr. Skiddy wanted to know, then, what the deuce he was to do? The chief justice benignly shook his head. He had no answer to that question. The president murmured suavely that perhaps next year, with an increased hut tax, and the suppression of the rebellion, the government might see its way to—

"Next year!" roared Skiddy. "I want to know what I'm to do now!"

Skiddy flung himself out lest his anger should get the best of him. He went and had another look at the jail and liked it even less than before. Fought! It was disgusting! It would kill a white man in a week! It would be nothing less than murder to put Satterlee into it. He returned to the consulate to talk over the matter with the trusty Scanlons.

Would they consider a monthly arrangement on a reduced charge, giving Satterlee the best room in their cottage and pledging themselves that he should never quit the confines of their three-acre coconut patch? The half-caste brothers felt in joyfully with the suggestion, and their first wild proposals were beaten down to \$40 a month for custodianship and \$15 for the room and the transport of Satterlee's food from the International hotel—\$55 in all. Thirty dollars a month for the hotel raised the grand total to \$85. Skiddy wondered ruefully whether Washington would ever endorse this arrangement, but in his desperation he couldn't see that he had any other choice. He would simply make Washington endorse it. It was with great relief that he saw the captain's departure from a corner of his bedroom window and felt that, for the moment, at least, he had a welcome respite from all his perplexities.

He put a captain and crew on board the James H. Peabody, and packed her back to San Francisco, at the same time apprising the state department by mail, and begging that a telegraphic answer might be sent him in respect to Satterlee's imprisonment and the expense it had necessarily entailed. He calculated that the telegram would catch an outgoing man-of-war that was shortly due. The consular salary was \$200 a month, and if the \$85 for Satterlee was disallowed the sum was indubitably bound to sink to \$115. Deducting a further fifty which little Skiddy was in the habit of remitting to his mother, a widow in narrow circumstances, and behold his income reduced to sixty-five a month! It was hardly surprising, therefore, that Skiddy waited on pins and needles for the department's reply.

In the course of weeks it came: "Skiddy U S consul apia samoa satterlee case the department authorizes charge for food, but none for custody or lodging, bronson assistant secretary."

This was a staggering blow. It definitely placed his salary at \$95. He sat down and wrote a stinging letter to the department, inclosing snapshots of the jail, the prisoners, the huts and other things that cannot be described here. It evolved an acrimonious reply, in which he was bidden to be more respectful. He was at liberty (the dispatch continued), if he thought it advisable as an act of private charity, to maintain the convict Satterlee in a comfortable cottage, but the department insisted that it should be at his (Skiddy's) expense. The department itself advocated the jail. If the situation were as disgraceful as he described it ought not the onus be put on the Samoan government and thus place the department in a position "to make strong representations through the usual diplomatic channels?"

"But in the meantime what would happen to Satterlee?" returned the consul in official language across 6,000 miles of sea and land.

"You are referred to the previous dispatch," retorted the department.

"But it will kill him," said Skiddy, again crossing an ocean and a continent.

"If the convict Satterlee should become ill you are at liberty to send him to the hospital."

"Yes, but there isn't any hospital," said Skiddy.

"The department cannot withdraw from the position it took up, nor the principle it laid down in dispatch No. 214 B."

Thus the duel went on, while Skiddy cut down his cigars, sold his riding horse and generally economized. A regret stole over him that he hadn't sentenced Satterlee to a shorter term and he looked up the consular instructions to see what pardoning powers he possessed. On this point the little book was dumb. Not so the department, however, to whom a hint on the subject provoked the reply, "that by so doing you would vitiate your previous action and impugn the finding of the consular court. The department would view with grave displeasure, etc., etc."

Satterlee soon made himself very much at home in the Scanlon prison. His winning personality never showed to better advantage than in those days of his eclipse. He dandied the Scanlon offspring on his knee; helped the women with their household tasks; played checkers with the burly brothers. He was prodigiously respected. He gathered in the Scanlon hearts,

even to uncles and second cousins. You would have taken him for a patriarch in the bosom of a family of which he was the joy and pride. He received the best half-caste society on his front porch and dispensed Scanlon hospitality with a lavish hand. These untutored souls had no proper conception of barrrary. They couldn't see any crime in running away with a schooner. They pitied the captain as a bold spirit who had met with undeserved misfortunes. The Samoan



A Scanlon Brother Stood for the United States Government.

has ever a sympathetic hand for the fallen mighty, and the hand is never empty of a gift.

On Sundays Skiddy paid the captain a periodical visit. He would bring the latest papers, if there were any, or a novel or two from his scanty stock. Their original friendship had died a violent death, but a new one had gradually risen on the ashes of the old.

Satterlee and he took long walks into the mountains, invariably accompanied by a Scanlon brother to give an official aspect to the excursion. It maintained the fast-disappearing principle that Satterlee was a convict and under vigilant guard. It served to take away the appearance, besides (which they might otherwise have presented), of two friends spending a happy day together in the country. A Scanlon brother stood for the United States government and the majesty of the law, and propriety demanded his presence as peremptorily as a chaperon for a young lady. A Scanlon brother could be useful, too, in climbing coconut trees, rubbing corks together when the matches were lost, and in hiding them to noble waterfalls far hidden in the forest.

In this manner nearly a whole year passed, which, for the little consul, represented an unavoidable monthly outlay of \$55. He got somewhat used to it, as everybody gets somewhat used to everything; but he could not resist certain recurring intervals of depression when he contrasted his present circumstances with his by-gone glory. Fifty-five dollars a month made a big hole in a consular income and he would gaze down that ten-year vista with a sinking heart. But relief was closer at hand than he had ever dared to hope. From the department, No, but from Satterlee himself.

The news was brought to little Skiddy early one morning. Alfred Scanlon, with an air of gloom, deprecatingly coughed his way into the bedroom and handed the consul a letter. It was written on pale pink note-paper, of the kind Samoans like best, with two lavender birds embossed in the corner. It was from Satterlee. The letter ran thus:

"Dear Friend: When this reaches you I shall be far to sea. My excuse for so long subsisting on your bounty must be laid to my ignorance, which was only illuminated two days ago by accident. I had no idea that you were paying for me out of your own private purse, or that my ease and comfort were obtained at so heavy a cost to yourself. Regretfully I bring our pleasant relations to an end, impelled, I assure you, by the promptings of a heartfelt friendship. I loved the simple people among whom my lot was cast and looked forward, at the termination of my sentence, to end the balance of my days peacefully among them. The world, seen from so great a distance, and from within so sweet a nest, frightened me, old stager that I am. God knows I have never seen but its ugliest side and return to it with profound depression. Kindly explain my abrupt departure to the Scanlons, and if you would do me a last favor buy a little rocking-horse that there is an Edward's store, price three dollars, and present it in my name to my infant goddaughter, Apell Scanlon. To them all kindly express my warmest and sincerest gratitude; and for yourself, dear friend, the best, the truest, the kindest of men, accept the warm grasp of my hand at parting. Ever yours,

"JOHN SATTERLEE."

"It must have been the Hamburg bark that sailed last night," quavered Scanlon.

Of course Skiddy blew that Scanlon up. He wiped the floor with him. He roared at him till the great hulking creature shook like jelly and his round black eyes suffused with tears. He swore him out then and there, and made him dictate a statement, which was signed in the presence of the cook. This accomplished Alfred was indignantly dismissed, while the consul went out on the back veranda and sat there in his pajamas to think the matter over.

That night the consul had champagne at dinner, and drank a silent toast:

"Good luck to him, poor old devil!"

"Act Well Your Part."

The question: "Why we exist?" has no answer. As we happen to be here it is a part of the scheme "to act well your part and do your best."

Change in Old Adagio. "Money makes the mare go," says the Philosopher of Folly, "but it takes a fortune for an automobile."

MERIT IN CHICORY

U. S. Government Interested in the Use of the Root.

It long ago was discovered that the addition of a small proportion of chicory to coffee gave the combination the same taste and flavor as are found in the expensive product mixture selling up to several dollars per pound. This fact has been recognized by American consumers, and only recently has this fact been recognized by American consumers. Now the government is interested in the merits and uses of chicory. Recently in Bulletin 18, U. S. Department of Agriculture, page 12, the government says: "With the exception of only one case where chicory was found to have a harmful effect on the coffee, it is supposed in the single exception referred to, an inferior grade of chicory was used for the high grade. In all these trials the purity of the chicory was undoubted, it having been sent by a prominent chicory firm for analysis and experiment."

"Analysis of both the raw and the prepared chicory has failed to reveal the presence of any positively harmful substance. Neither the National nor the State Dispensaries condemn its use." "Chicory," says the former, "is thought to increase the appetite, promote the digestion and stimulate the liver."

"In France and Germany use is made of chicory for medicinal purposes. In ordinary medicine on account of its being agreeable to the stomach it is used to follow the excessive use of strict coffee, and since remarkable symptoms follow the use of chicory, either beverage affects different temperaments in different ways and in favor of greater individual himself to choose chicory, coffee or a mixture. The very general use of chicory for the last one hundred and fifty years, and the proportions which its cultivation have assumed, indicate that it is beneficial and agreeable to at least some constitutions."

SHOCK. George—Something is preying on my mind. Mrs. Sharp—Ah, "something" merely wanted a light lunch, I presume.

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