

AN HONORABLE DISCHARGE

By ARTHUR HENRY

Perry Saunders, 19 years old, is convinced that the end of the world is at hand when he looks at the postmaster's stamp on the envelope addressed to Harry Wright. Anxious to end it, he writes Perry Saunders, a year later, while on the front lines, Bessie and her mother come to see him.

AND then into the storm of words that followed came a strong, deep voice that brought an instantaneous calm and every eye looked in expectant silence toward the round, genial face of Major Moore, the ladies and gentlemen of the staff, fat legs.

"What's the disturbance?" he asked, smiling upon the ladies and shooting a quick glance of aversion toward the captain.

"This soldier," began the captain, but he was interrupted by Mrs. Moore.

"Well, sir," said she, answering the major's smile, "we're from Perry's home town and we haven't seen him for a year." She smiled with a broader and broader smile into the beaming face of the major. They were standing in the heavy meeting room, and suddenly Mrs. Moore winked, and looking quickly at Perry and Bessie, she turned to Mrs. Moore, raised her eyebrows in inquiry. Mrs. Moore nodded and the major said:

"Leave for the day," he said abruptly and with a glance of silent anger at the captain he turned and toddled off.

Perry dropped the envelope to the ground and explained to the ladies that he was free.

There are people who would have been pleased by such a victory, but Mrs. Moore did not give a moment's thought to it. Her mind was set upon the immediate discharge of Perry from the army, and she was not to be turned aside by the granting of a holiday.

Perry and Bessie, however, were happy and young and can make two happy days on thoughtless days. But all the while they were spreading the cloth under a tree in the grove on the hill where the band was playing, and watching the corners down with roast chicken, peas and pickle jars Mrs. Moore was chaf-

ing at the thought that Perry could not take off his uniform, pack his trunk and go back to Moore Centre that evening with them.

Perry's mother was dead, and his father, angry because of his enlistment, had never written to him. But Mrs. Moore was convinced that he had only to appear to be welcomed by the lonely man. Perry's grandfather had built a grist mill by the creek that runs through Moore Centre, and Perry's father had created an extensive business by grinding up sweet corn and marketing it in five-pound bags labeled Rhode Island Johnny Cake Meal. The business had grown until all the land around Moore Centre was devoted to the growing of sweet corn and the whole community was prosperous. Mr. Saunders was about to build an addition to his mill, and in Mrs. Moore's opinion all this offered a better prospect to young Perry than parading around a fort with the ladies and gentlemen of the staff. He was, however, wistfully agreed, but there was no hope for him now, he said, until his time was up. He must serve for two years more unless he was incapacitated through some serious sickness or an accident.

He could not be sad, however, with Bessie there, and he was happily conscious of the fact that Mrs. Moore had left them presently saying that she would see the major about it.

For a long time the lovers sat close together, against the tree, their hands clasped, listening in silent, dreaming rapture to the melodies of the band.

Then Mrs. Moore returned, flushed and disappointed, but with some vague hope for the major, who had listened to her with great sympathy, and who she was sure would try and find some excuse for letting the boy go home.

It was not until the boat that bore Bessie and her mother away had disappeared around the projecting arm of the mainland that Perry realized what a waste of life the next two years would be, and how desperate he was.

During the days that followed Perry considered various ways of giving a hand to fate. While chopping wood he might

cause the axe to slip, or he might fall from the ladder while removing birds' nests from the eaves. He might even feel sickness and the major might befriend him. He would have ventured on this if the major had shown an amiable sign of sympathy as they encountered, but a singular change had come over the manner of the commander. Suddenly from a sunny, frank and genial man he had grown to be sombre and morose. No one knew the reason except the major's wife and Captain Tooting, and they kept the matter secret. Nothing very serious had happened, but the major's wife was pretty, young and foolish, and the captain vain and idle and of the sort that think any woman will be his for the asking. He was offensive, but had not offended in a way that could be reckoned with, and the major, who loved his wife and trusted her, was unhappy because he could not apply his boot to that smooth, round and conspicuous portion of the captain of which he was most vain.

One day Perry, hopeless and dejected, was standing guard on the wharf, and the captain in a new, tight-fitting pair of trousers was standing in careless exhibition with his back exposed to the incoming boat. He liked to be there to be seen, but wished to appear indifferent. The boat, as usual, thrust its nose to the dock, was fastened for a moment and the gates were opened. As usual there were no passengers for the fort, and the gates were about to be closed when a setter pup dashed off between them, eluding the grasping hands of the gatekeeper. In reckless abandon the pup galloped across the dock, his ears flopping, his eyes shining with joyous adventure, and with a glad yelp he leaped and planted his large, mud-covered paws on the captain where his trousers were the tightest. Frightened by the unexpected result, he dodged and sped in a frantic zigzag course. Of course no sentry should permit a dog to enter the fort unattended. If then and Perry, roused to the sudden emergency, gave chase. The pup turned and scented once a friend, imagined it was a game. He dashed about

in clumsy circles, attacking, retreating, but eluding the one hand sweeping the air for his capture. Perry swung the gun from his shoulder with the idea of laying it down, but at the same moment the pup ran between his legs and he stumbled. The captain seeing the gun pointing toward him turned his back, there was an explosion and the bullet hitting one of the muddy marks a glancing blow, cut a stinging gash in the flesh and buried itself in a grassy bank some twenty yards away.

The discharge of the gun was a great surprise to Perry, and yet it was true, as he distinctly saw the captain before the gun went off and that his eyes were fixed as if hypnotized on the exact spot where the ball struck. It seemed to him that it was the most conspicuous object in the landscape, flitting the horizon as it were, and he admitted also that he was sure the gun was going off several seconds before it did. But he denied all intention of firing. The captain was most insistent with humiliation and rage, and demanded nothing less than that the culprit should spend six months in the guardhouse suspended from his rafters by his hind legs.

During the trial Mrs. Moore and Bessie fairly haunted the fort and were frequent guests of the major at dinner. On the very day of the shooting all his former kindness and good humor returned, and he assured Mrs. Moore that there was no cause for alarm.

Of course it was a clumsy thing for a soldier to do, and out of consideration for the captain's sense of outrage, Perry Saunders was discharged from further service and sent home to marry and make a fortune.

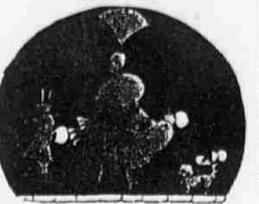
Captain Tooting, at first appeared, was later incensed when he heard that the major's parting gift to the lovers was the setter pup, wearing a silver collar on which was inscribed

THANKS
PRESENTED TO PRIVATE SAUNDERS
BY
HIS MAJOR
IN MEMORY OF AN
HONORABLE DISCHARGE

SCRAPPLE



Hard Luck



Safety First



THE PADDED CELL

HER DEAR BARBARIAN

By JOHN LUTHER LONG

VARDOG, in his gay and foolish way—and you are to be told in a moment just how foolish his friends thought many of his ways—Vardog had taught Momo-san to call him dear Barbarian—because his name was so impossible—as well as their intimate things. Now, this Miss Peach didn't in the least know what the word meant, except that it made Vardog more happy, which she liked tremendously, since, by reflex, it made her more happy. Of course, she knew that he was a barbarian from across the West sea, because he had those amazing purple eyes, that prominent nose and the yellow hair which all barbarians had—according to the books. But one thing the Young Ladies Old Book of Decorum had not taught her about barbarians: that they could be so gentle, so gay, and make her life so happy. In the course of a woman, such a thing is unknown between Japanese and women.

Now, back for that word about the goodness of Vardog.

It had taken, it was admitted; he was a man and a gentleman; clubbable; by the verdict of the clubs, but he swore that he wouldn't do a thing all his life but be happy. Manifestly that is no profession for a man. Yet Vardog insisted that, in the final analysis, happiness is what we are all seeking—even though the pain and weariness which nearly always lie in the way of it. But Vardog wanted happiness without the pain and weariness. And he decided finally that it could not be had on these terms in the United States of America. Perhaps somewhere in the

East, where it is always afternoon, and lotus eating is still fashionable!

"Vardog," said his savage friend, Simplifying, "I believe that your whole theory of happiness is secretly founded on love!"

"Love!" laughed Vardog. "Nonsense!"

"Love!" denounced Simplifying, with, almost, hatred. "And a man ought to be ashamed of that sort of thing. The whole idea is feminine. Men don't love and get married nowadays. Nor women, either, for that matter. The feminist idea of free communion isn't half bad. Why don't you marry Miss Pennington, if you must expect to give a hand to love her. She'll have you, I believe, and she's rich, good looking, aristocratic—"

"And a suffragette!" laughed Vardog again. "In heaven's name, stop your marching up to the polls and casting your ballot with your wife on your arm—when you cast a ballot!"

"And I hope you always do," said Simplifying, with patriotic severity.

"Sometimes—I always do," nodded Vardog. "I am going to Japan to see what kind of women they have there. I want one that's all for me. I've heard that there are still some in the East who read—just what I do—happiness. Not the vote—or an office—or newspapering."

"And then I suppose," said Simplifying sarcastically, "that you'll be all for her?"

"Certainly," smiled Vardog. "That is fair. I'll bring her back here to show you how happy I am—and how foolish you are."

And that was the reason both for Vardog's folly—and Japan.

Back still, to say that there was almost no halt in Vardog's march toward happiness. Matter-of-fact, stern, masculine Mrs. Verrill was in Japan. And Vardog and his errand there had been prognosticated to her.

"So," she said sweetly, "knowing that

your quest for happiness includes a woman, I naturally turned to the loveliest one in Japan: Dalmyzo Izami's daughter, 'Come! I brought a motorcar over. But the atmosphere will be better preserved by a kuruma."

And after a bewildering jolt of a half-hour in the baby carriage, between ferret temples, government cement roads, Vardog found himself on the other side of a small lacquered table on the floor, opposite Miss Peach, who, in a way which would not permit him to profane with sugar or cream.

"Quite right," sighed Vardog to Mrs. Verrill.

"What?" asked she.

"That affidavit of yours about the loveliest lady in the land."

"Momo-san speaks English—and understands it!" warned Mrs. Verrill.

"Me," asked Miss Peach, "you mean me loveliest lady in Japan?"

"Mrs. Verrill said so," stammered Vardog.

"An—an not you?"

"The note of disappointment was evident."

"I never had seen you, you know," Vardog went fatuously on.

"But you see me today. My'able 'Nex' time have beautiful gelsa mag' for you. More beautiful as me. Dress all in red. Long hair—pink—perfume. This—say you, come again—soon?"

"Mrs. Verrill was tapping her foot. That was a dangerous way to take with Vardog.

"Yes," he said, taking Miss Peach's hand in his. "Very soon. And keep this as a pledge of fealty till I come again!"

He kissed her hand.

"Thass foanny," said Miss Peach, in utter ignorance of the meaning of it. "How I can keep it!"

"And, water-soldier or none," Vardog went on terribly, "please think sometimes about the possibility of marrying me!"

"Mr. Vardog!" chided Mrs. Verrill.

"Possibly? Marry you? That I dunno, but I'll oblige you."

"That's the way to oblige me," shouted Vardog, happy as a boy now; "marry me!"

Miss Peach laughed as happily. The spirits of happy Vardog were infectious—and strange! They carried her along to mystic bounds of joy!

"Ani you got other name as Vardog?" asked Mrs. Peach. "Can't say those."

"Hepburn—first name—" Vardog informed her.

"Hep—Just had."

"By Jove, that's so! We don't care, in the Land of the Brave and the Home of the Free, what confounded names we fasten upon our posterity. Why, they sound like swearing in your pretty mouth. Look here—Barbarian—that's good enough for me when you name today. My'able 'Lig' those," nodded Momo-san, "account you not barbarian? Nise!"

"Delicious reason!" said Vardog.

"Other name?" asked Mrs. Momo.

"Lig those," thought Vardog; "let it be something—"

"Anything!" cheered Momo-san. "Japan have many name he lig—all kind."

"The girl tried it, innocently.

"Lig those," she said.

"And, for a change, now and then, dearest Barbarian," Vardog went on with impudence.

"Lig those year more better," nodded the girl. "Dear, dearest Barbarian!"

"Great!" joyed Vardog, and of the severe Mrs. Verrill he asked, in the fashion of Momo-san, "What you thing?"

"I think," said Mrs. Verrill, "that this disgraceful performance had better end. I am waiting, sir."

"Good-by, dear Momo-san," said Vardog.

"Good night, dear, dearest Barbarian," said Miss Peach. "Don't forget come soon's you kin!"

Vardog made the little baby carriage an inferno for Mrs. Verrill on her way home. He chattered of everything she didn't want to hear without cessation. He was intimate, humorous, superbly joyous. He asked her what she thought of the crops. She answered that she knew nothing about farming. Did she like President Wilson's income tax? Her husband in America attended to those things. And so on.

"Mr. Vardog," she said at last, "I am not a child—and I see through you. I am sorry for you."

"Thank you for your sympathy in my deep dejection," laughed Vardog. "I suppose you have made a hit with that ignorant, innocent, trusting girl!"

"Do you think so?" asked Vardog, lost to all but the fact.

"Undoubtedly. What do you care, in another Lieutenant Pinkerton affair, what trouble follows your departure? Fortunately, Motomari will make the next hit."

"Is he—he is," Vardog asked, instantly in the delirium, "such a formidable lover?"

"He's a dead shot," answered Mrs. Verrill grimly.

"Oh!" laughed Vardog. "I can hit a barndoor at 10 paces myself."

"Simplifying put it up to me to save you," the lady exclaimed. "Well, I've tried."

"And failed! I release you from all responsibility," said Vardog, "and I wash my hands of you!"

"And I wash my hands of you!"

"Thank you. Was Pontius Pilate a married person?"

"Well, what good is it to me now, when I've no new job or night watchman an' sleep in the day time?"

those. "Xapet those are jealousness? Don't get in Japan. More tea? An' rice-cake?"

"Tea and rice cake!" Vardog turned savagely upon Mrs. Verrill. "Who is this water-soldier, Lord Moto?" he demanded.

"Her prenatal fiance," answered Mrs. Verrill.

"Oh, I see!" said Vardog, hotly. "You wanted to cure me! Well, you've done it—not! I'm going to marry this girl!"

"Sawry mag' you that cross," pleaded Miss Peach.

"You make me cross! You're an angel!" cried the now militant Vardog.

"Angel?" wondered the girl.

"Don't they have 'em in your heaven?"

"Not angel!" said Momo-san. "Jus' foolish little girl allig me."

"That's a good deal better!" cried Vardog. "Me," asked Miss Peach, "you mean me loveliest lady in Japan?"

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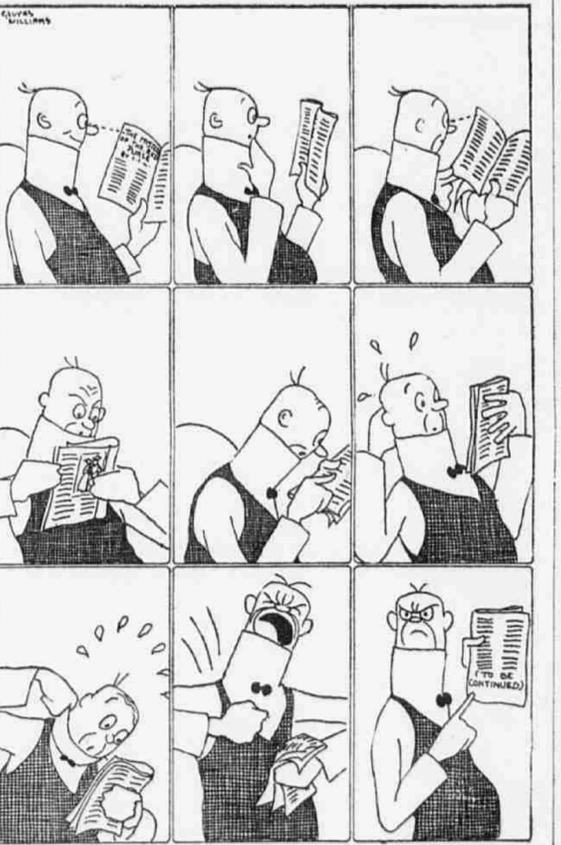
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FATHER READS AN EXCITING STORY IN A MAGAZINE



Qualified



Manager—What qualifications have you for the position of night watchman? Rastus—Why, sah, ah wakes up at de slightest noise, ah does!

'Tis a Bad Name

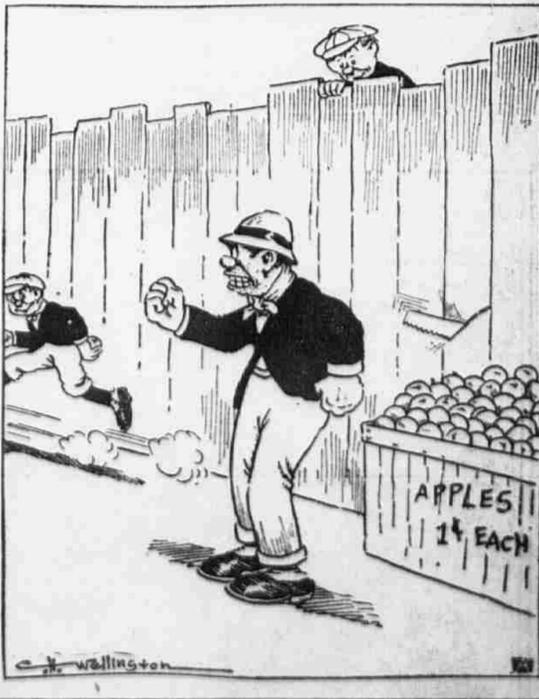


Aunt Sarah (reading the police court news)—Well, well! If I had 50 children I'd never name one of them Alas. It seems as if they're sure to go wrong.

Very Lazy



—AND THE WORST IS YET TO COME



Irish Explanation

Gentleman (riding on jaunting car which is just passing a large mansion) to driver—Who lives there, Pat?

"Och, shure, it's Mr. O'Flaherty—but he's dead."

"And what did he die of, Pat?"

"Faith, thin, he died of a Tuesday."

"And how long has he been dead?"

"Shure, yer honor, if he'd lived till tomorrow he'd have been dead a fortnight."

What's the Difference

Doctor Parkhurst at a dinner in New York said of Sabbath observance: "There are too many of us who are like the Hemptstead woman."

"This woman said to her little boy the other day: 'You mustn't roll your hoop in the front garden, dear. It's Sunday. Do roll it in the back garden.'"

"'Isn't it Sunday in the back garden, too, mamma?' the little boy asked."

FARMER SMITH'S RAINBOW CLUB

GOOD-NIGHT TALKS

Dear Children—I have just thought of something for you to do which will make a lot of people happy. I want you this Christmas to remember the Firemen, Policemen and the Letter Carriers.

Your editor wants you to know that these people are your good friends, and you must not forget them at Christmas time.

I am going to put the letters in with directions just what to do.

KIND POLICEMAN:

Thank you for shielding me from harm during 1915. I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

If you have any children, kiss them for me.

Your little friend,

Sign your name and hand the above to the first Policeman you meet. Don't hunt all over for one. If, for any reason, you CAN'T find a Policeman, mail your Christmas Message to the Station House nearest your home. YOU OUGHT TO KNOW WHERE IT IS.

DEAR FIREMAN:

Thank you for watching over me. I hope you never have to come and see me, but I love you just the same.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

If you have any children, kiss them for me.

Your little friend,

On your way to school take the above to the Fire House nearest your home. YOU OUGHT TO KNOW WHERE IT IS.

Of course, the Letter Carrier will come to see you, and won't he be surprised to get this lovely note from you?

DEAR KIND LETTER CARRIER:

Thank you for all the steps you have taken for me during 1915. I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Kiss your babies for me, and if you haven't any, put a kiss here (***) for ME!

Your little friend,

Of course, dear Little Friends, you may do this on December 24 or any time next week, but we must BE PREPARED.

This is another wonderful thing which has started in PHILADELPHIA. Won't the people of the United States be surprised when they hear that the children of Philadelphia sent Christmas letters to their Policemen, Firemen and Letter Carriers? Do your part to make it a success.

It is wonderful to be able to do a kindness in this world—DO YOUR PART FOR IT WILL MAKE YOU HAPPY. Lovingly,

FARMER SMITH,
Children's Editor, Evening Ledger.

Our Postoffice Box

Only N-I-N-E more days till CHRISTMAS! I know that without counting; at least, I know that Christmas is very near, for every morning the postman brings in wonderful gifts. They are just wrapped up in white envelopes, but they are the biggest, loveliest, DOMINIC FALCONI, presents that—I was going to say, that money can buy.

Dear Rainbows, money cannot buy the very least of these gifts. Do you know what they are? They are the little kind acts of the boys and girls who are living up to their Rainbow pledge! I wish you could come down and see them. Well, never mind, we'll have a display room right here in our own small corner!

Kind act one, given by Leonard Bitterman, West Montgomery avenue.—"One day an old man came by and asked me for something. It was very cold, and I felt sorry for him. I thought of my Rainbow promise, and gave him a nickel."

Kind act two, given by Grace Yard, Atlantic City.—"I am doing more for others than I have ever done before. I am trying to help the poor needy people of Atlantic City."

Kind act three, given by Dominic Falconi, South 8th street.—"I have collected some nice books for the boys who would like to have those kind of presents at Christmas."

The display room will be open early tomorrow evening. Don't forget to come in.



Do You Know This?

1. Fill in the dots in the square so that you have four words, reading one under the other.

H O M E
O . . .
M . . .
E . . .

(Six credits.)

2. What is the first thing a man sets in his garden? (Five credits.)

3. What sentence can you form from the letters of the following name, CHARLES DICKENS? (Five credits.)

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)