

melancholy and one of gladness consists mainly in the position of the outer angles of the mouth. The putting into practice of the maxim not to let the sad lines dominate the countenance, but to insist on keeping the others there as far as possible, means much for the correction of internal feelings of depression and discouragement that may be badly interfering with the flow of nerve impulses from the brain to the body."

And, speaking specifically of the effect of hearty laughter on digestion and circulation, he adds:

"There is no doubt that the exercise for the diaphragm afforded by hearty laughing, with the stimulation of the intra-abdominal circulation consequent upon vigorous diaphragmatic movements, is an important element in producing a healthy state of the important organs of the human economy contained within the abdominal cavity.

"Doctor Abrams, in his book, 'The Blues, Causes and Cure,' attributes this disturbing condition of depression, so familiar to those who have much to do with nervous patients, to a disordered blood and nerve circulation in the splanchnic [the abdominal] area, and calls it, scientifically, splanchnic neurasthenia.

"This undoubtedly sums up an important element in the causation of a great many depressive conditions. Most of them are banished by frequent laughter, which, with its exercise of the diaphragm, tends to stimulate splanchnic blood-vessels and nerves."

Bearing facts like these in mind, can it longer be doubted that people make a great mistake when they deliberately restrain every impulse they may have to laugh? What they then are doing is to deny themselves an unailing means of

respite from the strain of thinking and the strain of living. And by refusing to laugh they also refuse to make use of a wonderful mechanism intended to help them think and live better.

Still further, if everybody followed their example, this world would be a distinctly unpleasant place in which to

students of the subject—notably the eminent French thinker Bergson—are so impressed by its social helpfulness as almost to lose sight of its value as regards the physiological effects it has on the one who laughs. Bergson's view, to state it in a few words, is that the main purpose of laughter is to act as a social corrective.

mate understanding of one another. Their laughter quickens their sense of human solidarity; it educates them to sympathize more truly with their associates. This function laughter retains through all ages of life. Every man who laughs with and at his friends, in unmalicious "jolly-ing," knows full well, at least subconsciously, that his laughter and theirs helps to cement the seal of friendship. In social intercourse of every sort, in the business of the market-place as in the hour of leisure, laughter has a smoothing, easing influence.

### LAUGH

There's a scientific reason why you should.

If you get one good laugh out of this magazine a week you have lengthened your life.

"Yon Cassius," said Cæsar, "hath a lean and hungry look. He thinks too much. Such men are dangerous."

Beware of the man who never laughs. Do not let him marry your daughter.

The chances are he will die young and leave her and the children for you to support.

If you've got out of the habit of laughing, it won't be long until you'll get out of the habit of living.

Germans have a horror of the man who can

### LAUGH

live. For laughter, besides being of the greatest importance to every individual, is in addition an indispensable social lubricant and adjuster.

#### Social Value of Laughter

THE social helpfulness of laughter is, indeed, hardly secondary to its helpfulness to the individual. Some philosophic

We laugh, he says, at the mechanical, the stupid, the artificial in ourselves and in our fellows, in order to correct these blemishes in us and in them.

This undoubtedly is true. Laughter does have the value of a social corrective. But it is of still greater value as a developer of social sympathy. When children laugh while they play, they are unconsciously coming to a closer, more inti-

#### Big Pay for Laugh Makers

AND, most fortunately, notwithstanding the efforts of those who would have mankind forgo the habit of laughter, there is warrant for the belief that this good habit can never be successfully attacked. I said in the beginning that there never was a time when men had greater need of laughter than to-day. Signs are not lacking that the people of to-day instinctively appreciate this.

More than ever before, laugh-makers are in demand—as witness, for example, the fabulous sums earned by Charlie Chaplin and Bud Fisher. No newspaper would feel complete without its humorous paragraphs, if not its comic supplement. Theatrical managers and the makers of moving-picture plays compete feverishly in the production of laughter-enticing comedies and farces.

In all this the foes of laughter see only evidence that ours is a frivolous, degenerate age. In reality, it is evidence that ours is one of the wisest of ages—an age too wise to be cheated out of its splendid aid to successful living, the birthright of laughter.

# The Valor of Ignorance

By EARL DERR BIGGERS

Illustrations by Frank Snapp

OLIVER WINTERSLIP bought his neckties—beg pardon, his cravats—at August's in Cambridge. For any one who knows Cambridge and August's that is a complete characterization. For the benefit of others it may be added that each cravat cost him four dollars, which was exactly four dollars more than he had ever earned in his life. There you have him.

He was one of the great unemployed, was Oliver. If that suggests to you those who stand in the bread line forget it. The idea is preposterous—Oliver was a Winterslip.

He belonged to the unemployed of the low racing cars, the Newport tennis-courts. True, there had once been a movement afoot to put him to work. It cropped up a year after his graduation from Harvard. His father called him into the library of the quiet house on Beacon Street, Boston, and informed him that on the morrow he would enter the employ of Winterslip & Winterslip, stocks and bonds.

AIDED by an alarm clock borrowed from the butler, Oliver actually made the effort. In less than a week his father realized that in introducing Oliver and the office he had hung a millstone about his firm's neck. He arranged to have Oliver's name shifted from the waiting list to active membership in two good clubs—it wouldn't do to have him hanging round the house—and then invited his son to resign from stocks and bonds. Since he was not to receive a salary at first, Oliver withdrew without suffering the humiliation of having silver cross his palm. In business, as in all things, he retained his amateur standing.

So there began for Oliver a period of sportive leisure. Golf, tennis, automobiles filled his thoughts. In time motor-cars became too common to please him, and, hearing of a man at Scituate who taught flying, he bought him an aeroplane.

At the beginning of winter, a year ago,



"It's for France, you know."

Oliver was torn, as usual, between the beckoning pleasures of Florida and California. For a time he considered flipping a coin; but he finally determined to solve the problem by visiting each in turn. As he sat at breakfast one morning in December, enjoying the peace of mind following this decision, a letter with the legend "Opened by Censor" stared up at him from the pile beside his plate.

He picked it up. The postmark was Paris, the handwriting that of his friend Ben Coolidge, who had played next to him on a scrub football team. Oliver smiled; he liked Coolidge.

For the love of Mike [Coolidge began, in that admirable diction encouraged by the Harvard English Department], where are you? The war will be over the first thing you know, and you'll have missed all the fun. All the fellows are here. We're having a bully time. Bill Tucker's in the Foreign Legion; so is Dud Perry. I got turned down, so I'm driving an ambulance. But you—say, you know how to manage an aeroplane. Do you realize what that means over here now? You can have anything you want. Pull strings, fix it with the French ambassador, and come on in—the water's fine. We're expecting you.

Oliver's breath came quickly as he read. Reaching the end of the letter, he rose from the table and paced the floor. Before him opened a vista of thrills, of excitement, beside which Florida tennis was child's play. Why hadn't he thought of it himself?

It was because he thought so little—but he didn't know that. He had apprehended the existence of a war. For a time he had read about it faithfully; it had been like a football game, with the teams swaying back and forth across the muddy field. Then it had settled down to the trenches, with paltry five-yard gains, and Oliver had become one of the great unthinking army whom it bored.

But now—what a chance! How lucky that he had learned to manage an aeroplane.

He went into the library. His mother