The Story .....of Dick.

J. P. M., in New York Post: The longest month, so I then thought that I ever lived through, was the June of 1863. We do not measure time, as we do space, altogether by what is in it, but, sometimes, by what is beyond it. There was nothing in that June but work in the trenches, with Vicksburg just beyond us, impenetrable but inevitable, like eternity on the other side of time.

The city was completely invested. A great nine-mile, fan-shaped, subterranean camp spread out to the east of the city almost to the foot of the second line of bluffs. We were measuring our advance by spadefuls, and in the wearing monotony of that underground existence we had the keen sense of moles. When we pressed our ears down on the bottom of the trench, we could hear the throb of the countermining picks, like a great watch smothered. The ditch was an enormous megaphone that imparted secrets to us from the bowels of the earth in whispers, and we grew quick to interpret them. "What's that?" one would ask, as we stopped shoveling to listen to a pulsation with a new rhythm in it. Then some one would answer, "It's a brigade keeping step."

All the episodes that had startled and stung us into desperation or hope had now stopped. Porter's guns had always come to us from the river with a hurrah boom in them, as if they had said: "We are here yet, burrowers, hold fast," and even the sorties and assaults, that had failed so dismally, were to us very much like applause to actors who are playing a hum-drum part. Dick Barton used to say that the gunboats in the Yazoo were as good as summer thunder.

But all that was done now. The army had got through barking and "scrapping," and was hanging on to the throat of Vicksburg silently like a bulldog. Those were weeks stretched out to incalculable lengths by toilsome expectation, with blistered hands and stiff backs and sore bodies, irritated by sand, for there were no lavatories during the siege. We consoled ourselves with fever dreams of the cool, swirling Mississippi, at the foot of that baked and besieguered city, and promised ourselves paradisiacal cleansings and all the dolphin tumults of urchins, when once we had dug our way to its sandy reaches. If you have never been in the trenches you cannot understand how an environment that is only a parallelogram fringed with sudden death, drives all the faculties in upon the centres, and makes a man do the most incomprehensible things to keep from becoming insane. The impossibility of seeing the whole scheme of operations always raises a suspicion of the futility of the work. We had already dug two enormous canals early in the campaign, but the river fell, and they were abandoned. We had been digging pretty much ever since. Often, when I threw myself down to get an hour's sleep, the work of the shovel went on automatically in my brain, and I found myself counting the spadefuls up into the millions, it seemed. Measureless banks of earth stretched out behind me, and illimitable lines to be dug reached out to infinity ahead of me.

In such conditions the common soldier falls into one bad habit of relief. It is to growl unreasonably. The more unreasonable, the more relief. It is probably the natural protest of individuality, which is very strong in an American, and which in war finds itself tethered and hobbled. We fell into a kind of brotherhood of bitterness and blasphemy, that really did not mean anything more than that we had no ground-plan. So we cheered each other with complaints and sweeping reproaches and horribly irreverent predictions that Grant, having got us in between Pemberton and Joe Johnston, intended to keep on digging like rats till we were all gobbled. I think back now to the impossible and unprintable oaths that some of us garnished our portentous speeches with, and it seems as if irreverence had been stretched to new limits of audacity with a hopeful fear that it would bring about some kind of miraculous interference. For diversions, we tossed our hard-tack up like pennies, the stamped side being the head, and made bets and gambled away some of our pay before we received it, or we pitched hard-tack like quoits, and then wiped it off and ate it afterwards. For awhile there was a little thrill in putting a fatigue cap on a gun and holding it above the embankment to get a bullet in it from the rebel sharpshooters. But even that failed us when the rebels fell short of percussion caps, and I think we really missed the sharp thud of their bullets as they struck the earth. They were the pins that we stuck into ourselves to assure us we were alive.

It was in the trenches that I got intimately acquainted with Dick Barlow, the only man that never growled. He was a sapling kind of fellow, making a shallow observer like Sergeant O'Brien say, "Nature set out to make a woman, and changed her mind when it was too late." A small-boned, white-skinned, blue-eyed chap, who did not dare to let his hair grow because it was too curly and silky. But he was as full of real bravery as a tomato is full of seed. He came from Ohio. We found him out on the night of the 22d of May, when our assault had failed, and our wounded lay all that night in the starlight between our lines and the enemy's parapet, because there had been some bungling about a flag of truce, and we had to swear through our clenched teeth and hold our hands over our ears as the groans and prayers and calls for water of our poor fellows almost within reach made the slow hours maddening. Dick couldn't stand it at all. He rubbed some of the soil over his face, took our canteens, and crawled out over the lunette. We couldn't see him after that, but whenever there was a rifle shot all suffered a little extra wince. He got back all right, and he had emptied the canteens. He wouldn't talk about it, but there was a new expression in his face, something like that you see in the hospital after a man has undergone an operation.

Afterwards, when our first parallel was within seventy-five feet of the rebel lines, Dick would sing war songs with a clear tenor voice and we gave him a rough kind of chorus. There was one favorite of his, set to the old camp-meeting tune, "The Happy Land of Canaan," and I think he used to make up the verses to suit himself. One of them ran like this:

"The Johnnies soon will find
That we Yanks can go it blind,
And stay a year or two without complaint;
So to dig is our delight
Every day and every night
Till we meet you in the Happy Land of Canaan."

One night when we were bellowing it at the top of our lungs, it broke out on the other side of the line, and the whole rebel parapet took up the tune. There we were, with our hands on each other's throats, but clasping voices. It tickled Dick enormously, and he said, "Let's try 'em on 'Auld Lang Syne.'"

"You can shoot everything out of a man," said Dick, "except his old associations."

I had to have a tender feeling for that fellow, and wondered why I hadn't met that kind of man somewhere else. We built some castles in that trench. There were a lot of things that we could do when the "cruel war was over." Such is the folly of picking up a sentiment in the ranks. It is a good deal like those fellows, who, as soon as they get into a camp, begin to set out flowers around their tents. If there is a disturbance, such things only make matters look worse, and a trench is the last place in the world in which to plant lilies of the valley. But all the same, I worked up a genuine affection for Dick. I noticed the peculiar look in his face when we got our letters and none ever came for him, and one day when I asked him about it, he only said, "Oh, it will come some day." Then I worked it all out in my mind. It was the old story. He must have quarrelled with her and then rushed foolishly into the ranks. How easy it is to weave these cobwebs when you have not anything else to think about.

One still night in the latter part of June, when Dick was on the picket line, he heard a voice husky but distinct say "Hello Yank." He put his hands trumpet-fashion to his mouth and guardedly answered, "Hello Johnny." Then he listened.

The voice was not sixty feet away. "Got any tobacker?"

"Heaps," says Dick.

"Gimme a pipe full and I'll give you some news."

"All right—crawl over."

"Square?"

"Honor bright."

Then after awhile, a lank figure in butternut with a haggard face dragged itself to the edge of our line and poked its nose over the bank of earth, holding out a hand into which Dick put a tobacco pouch, merely saying, "What is your news?"

"Wait till I get a whiff," said the fellow. He filled a corn-cob pipe, took the match that Dick offered him, lit it, and gave himself, with an absurd concentration of enjoyment, to a preliminary smoke. When he had allayed his tobacco hunger, he said: "Say, Yank, we ben't auch d—— furriners as we tried to make out. I allow this is a pipe o' peace." To which Dick replied, "I wish it was, old man."

"Well, I'm tellin' you, we're dead licked by hunger. Got nothin' but our consciences to fight on."

Whereupon Dick whips out a couple of hard-tack biscuit and shoves them at the fellow, who snaps at them like a hungry hound.

"We uns on the rifle line allowed it wasn't much use pickin' each other off any longer, seein' as how the jig's up. It's a waste of caps."

"What's the matter with my capturing you," says Dick, "and sending you to the rear, where you can get a square meal? A day or two wouldn't make much difference to anything but a man's stomach."

"That's where you're dead wrong, Yank. It'd kind o' take the stuffin' out of a man's honor. If you don't mind, I'll take another hunk of that baccy with me and slide back. We'll all be in one camp before the week's out, mind I tell you."

This bit of news freshened up our rifle pit enormously. It had the air of being true and confidential. It was passed down the line from mouth to mouth, and grew into a general conviction that a change was likely to occur at any moment. On nobody was the effect so decided as upon Dick, who evinced a new elation, and I could then see how great a strain the month had been upon him. We were like torpid animals when they first smell the spring from their borrows. All we knew was that we were going to break loose and get somewhere where there was water. The promise of it actually gave a kind of ripple to Dick's new cheerfulness.

Well, things do not turn out as you plan them in war. I suppose you think that Dick turned out to be a woman, and that was the reason I fell in love with him. Pshaw! Let me tell you how it was.

On the afternoon of the 30th, a big mail came in from the Yazoo, quite bulging an ambulance. I was in the rear at the quartermaster's tent when it came, and got our company's bundle to distribute. Among the letters was one for Dick, a small, square envelope, springy and padlike, as if it had something soft in it, may be a lock of hair. The superscription was in a free, delicate, woman's back-hand, and the postmark was Marietta, Ohio. It gave me quite a little start. I put it in my shirt-pocket tenderly, to enjoy the extra luxury of giving it to Dick myself. I was quite sure that there was some kind of romance that was going to round itself up properly in that letter, and I went about among the cursing men at the wagons as if I had a kind of sacred missive in my shirt.

There was a good deal of confusion in the camps that afternoon. Some kind of a premonition of the end, without definite knowledge, seemed to have spread everywhere and taken the edge of discipline off. Everybody was asking, "Have you heard anything?" But there wasn't anything to hear. A dead, hot hush had come down between the armies now that they were almost breathing into each other's faces. I suppose it was one of those cases where the truth gets into the air without bothering with facts.

It was night before I got on the track of Dick's small bare feet in the trenches and followed them along our last parallel to the extreme right of the line. I noticed the relaxed state of things as I went on. It was certain that there would be no more inspection of the lines. I wondered what Dick was doing so far down on the right, and somebody said that some d—d fools had been firing down there, and he had gone down to see what it was. I thought that was odd, but I was chiefly thinking about the luxury of his surprise when I pulled out that square letter and gave it to him.

I came on him at last alone, leaning over the cool embankment with his arms stretched out on the earth where the bank tapered down towards a finish. I began to whistle "Auld Lang Syne" chirpingly as I came up, as an intimation. But he was dreaming about the girl whose letter I had in my pocket.

"Say, old fellow, I've got something for you. Things are all right in the front and I guess they're all right in the rear. Look at this. What's the matter with you?"

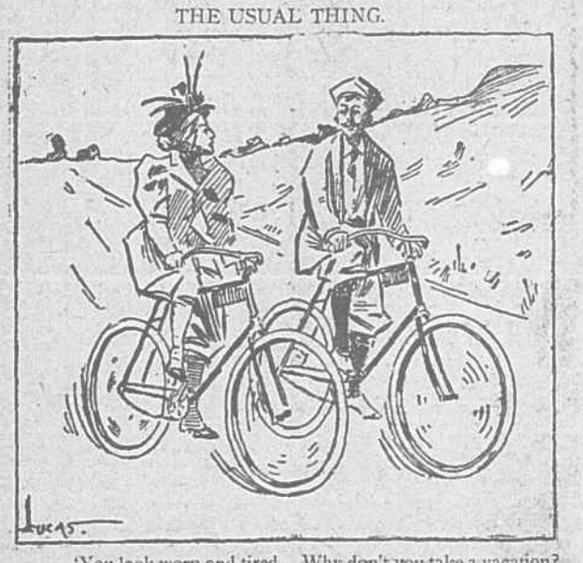
He held on to the bank. Then I noticed that one leg of his blue trousers was pulled up as if he had slid down and it had caught in the earth, exposing his thin, white leg. I caught hold of his arm gently. Only one touch, and then my grasp tightened on him spasmodically as I caught the falling figure and pulled it round. There was a purple spot in his forehead, just at the white line that his fatigue cap made. But what a face! The blood had drenched it and matted itself in the corners of his staring blue eyes and coagulated blackly over his half-open mouth. He must have been dead an hour. Both hands were full of the earth that his fingers had tightened on. We had to pry them open with a bayonet.

I laid him down in the trench and looked at the square envelope, trying to comprehend the break in the logic of events. Then I looked across at the shimmering hot sky above the city, and in the imbecility of the moment I cried: "O, war, war, if you had only known, you would not have done this."

That letter went back. I never knew what was in it. I did not want to know. I had dabbled it with blood. I couldn't help it. If the woman who sent it ever received it, she must have wondered at the rough heel mark upon it. That was where I stamped the war mark of my mad impulse upon it.

Vicksburg surrendered on the Fourth of July. What did I care at the time? It seemed to me that they were making an absurd fuss over it. Dick wasn't there, and what is a mere surrender?

THE USUAL THING.



'You look worn and tired. Why don't you take a vacation?
"I just got back from one."

AN ANIMAL.

Mrs. A.—Why does he treat your husband? He's a veterinary doctor.
Mrs. B.—Well, my husband is a brute.

TRUE.

He—What did you think of the electric ballet?
She—Quite shocking.

AMONG A LOT OF LETTERS

Was one That the Editor Was not Permitted to Answer.

Detroit Free Press: Wilkins had lately joined the staff of a well known newspaper, and was writing a series of "Bachelor Dreams" that had caused a continuous string of inquiring letters to flow into the editor's office.

"There's no doubt about it, Wilkins," remarked the editor, "you've made a hit! Here are six letters in this mail, asking twice as many questions about the author of your articles. Here's a serious case of heart palpitation of which you are the cause," said he, holding up a letter. "This young lady wants your picture."

"Well, she can't have it," said Wilkins, nonchalantly as he watched the smoke curled into a graceful wreach about a face that was always before him in imagination. "I gave my last one to a policeman last night. He wanted it to stop a thief."

"And here's another from an old man, who says that his chief joy in living is to watch the paper for your 'bachelor dreams.' So you see, Wilkins, my boy, you are of some use in the world."

"That remark might be some consolation," drawled Wilkins, "if I didn't have to hang it up on the same nail with the fact that you so seldom tell the truth about me."

"Well, here's another," went on the editor. "It's from a little town in Norway—evidently a tourist—for there seems to be a New York address. There has probably been some romance in that girl's life. The things you say seem to make a remarkable impression on her. She wants to know your name and something about your life. It's a beautiful letter. Read it. What shall I tell her?" said he, as he handed it over. "Shall I inclose your affection, and tell her you're a victim of unrequited love?"

"No said he gravely, as he suddenly turned to leave the room, "I'll answer that letter myself."

BUNCOED BY A NAME.

The Busy man was Patriotic Rather Than Religious.

Detroit Free Press: He was looking lank and lean; he wore a threadbare suit of black and under one arm he carried a volume; under the other there was an umbrella which had seen better days. He entered so quietly that Dodson, who was busy at his desk, did not hear him.

"I have here——" he began softly.

Dodson wheeled in his chair and took in the situation. "I don't care what you have!" he roared. "Don't you see that sign, 'Peddlers and Book Agents Not Wanted,' or are you blind?"

"The life of Samson——" continued the agent with an apologetic smile.

"Why didn't you say so before?" said Dodson, subsiding.

"In one volume, price $1 50," continued the long, thin man in black.

"I'll take it," said Dodson, shortly. "Good day, sir."

A few minutes later a friend of Dodson's happened in and picked up the volume.

"Hello, old man," said he, as he looked it over. "I didn't know you went in for Biblical subjects."

"I don't see the joke," answered Dodson testily. "I believe that in times like these every patriotic American citizen should familiarize himself with the lives of our prominent men who are at the front making history for this glorious country. We neglect these things too long. I propose to keep up with the times."

"You will have to hurry, if you do," answered his friend drily. "This particular Samson without the p has been dead for three thousand years."

GHOUL-LIKE REVENGE.

Fearful Because it is Worked on the Rising Generation.

Washington Star: His eleven-year-old daughter was practicing the piano in the parlor. His nine-year-old son was practicing the violin in the back room up stairs. His eight-year-old daughter was practicing the violin in the front room up stairs. He himself sat twiddling his thumbs in the sitting room. He didn't look so mean as his remarks to the friend who happened in upon him showed him to be.

"Love music, don't you?" said the friend.

"Not much, I don't," replied the father of the family.

"Huh? What's your idea, then, in starting all three of the kids off in music so early in the game?"

"Revenge," said the father of the family.

"Revenge? What the dickens are you talking about?"

"Revenge. 'Sins of the fathers,' you know. I'm engaged in hitting back at *my immediate progenitors through my children.* Pretty mean, isn't it? Certainly it's mean! But I swore a solemn oath when my people began putting it on me from the tender age of seven that I'd get hunk with some one for it, and that's what I'm doing right now.

"You see, when I was a kid there wasn't any more music in me than there is in a hoot owl. I couldn't even whistle through my teeth. I couldn't tell the difference between a gospel hymn and the 'Sailor's Hornpipe,' and I'm not much better down to the present moment of speaking. But my father, who had had a fiddle for thirty years without being able to saw three tunes on it, was bound that I should be a violinist, and my mother, who knew her two seminary commencement pieces by heart, was equally bound that I should be a pianist.

"I was the first kid in the bunch, you see, and so I got it in the neck. My father started me at the violin, and my mother started me on the piano. Between 'em I was about as miserable a small boy as traipsed around the continent. I was naturally an out-of-doors, shinny-playing, creek-swimming sort of a young one, but the music-practicing crowded this all out of me. It was practice, practice, practice all the time. I had to practice the fiddle an hour before going to school in the morning. I had to practice the piano half an hour when I returned from school for something to eat at noon. When I got home from school at the finish of the afternoon session—and I got warmed good and proper if I didn't return on time to a dot—I had to practice both the piano and the violin for a couple of hours before supper.

"The boys would all be out in front whistling for me, but I'd have to go right on practicing just the same. If I'd sneak over to the front window to tell 'em I couldn't come out, my mother would notice the momentary suspension of the practicing, and she'd come after me. After supper my father would review me on my violin work for half an hour, and my mother would pass upon my piano development for another half an hour. Then I was permitted to go out to the vacant lot and play with the other kids for awhile, but usually, when I came in, I'd find my father sawing away on his fiddle, and he'd corral me and make me play duets with him until I'd topple over with sleepiness. They simply couldn't pound any music whatsoever into me, though. This used to please me a great deal. It pleases me yet.

"After a while I had a regular violin teacher and a regular piano teacher, and I had to practice harder than before but I never learned anything about music. It wasn't in me. For five solid years I was glued to a piano stool and to a violin music rack, and at the end of that time I was an out-and-out duffer at both instruments. Moreover, I had to lick a boy every day for guying me because I had to stay in and practice so much.

"I finally ran away from home to my grandmother's place, about eight hundred miles away, and firmly declined to return home until I had my folks' promise that the music was to be cut out. While I was away from home the piano teacher and the violin teacher had formed themselves into a committee of two and informed my people in a neat little speech, that they wouldn't be able to teach me anything about music in ten thousand years, and, so when I went back home, I was given a show for my white alley. But the sufferings I experienced during those five practicing years were surely something fierce."

"Well," put in the visitor, "I should think that the dose you had would prompt you to let your own young ones alone, unless they are natural musicians."

"Natural musicians? There isn't a bar of music in the whole three of them. My wife thinks they're all geniuses, but there isn't one of them that can hum "Yankee Doodle" without mixing it up with "There'll Be a Hot Time." And as for going light on them, never! I like to sit here and listen to 'em scrape and bang. I stay in of nights just to hear 'em. I particularly enjoy it when the two teachers, violin and piano, are here. The kids can have anything they want that's within my means—but they've got to learn music. It'll sort of even up the game for me, you see.

"My piano daughter is playing 'Monastery Bells,' you'll notice. D'je ever hear anything so atrocious? Well, I had to practice that piece for two hours a day for months when I was a young one. Hear that boy murdering the 'Miserere' from 'Il Trovatore'? I had to practice that until I fell kerflop to the floor from exhaustion. Moreover, I like to make my neighbors suffer. I like to get my neighbors in here by strategy and then have the three kids play for them all at once. Let me bring 'em in now. What, are you going so soon? Let me——"

Her Criticism.

Chicago News: They were evidently from St. Louis and had come to Chicago on their wedding tour. While taking in the sights they wandered into the art museum, and, pausing before a reproduction of the Venus of Milo, the bride remarked:

"They must think people who come in here are awfully ignorant."

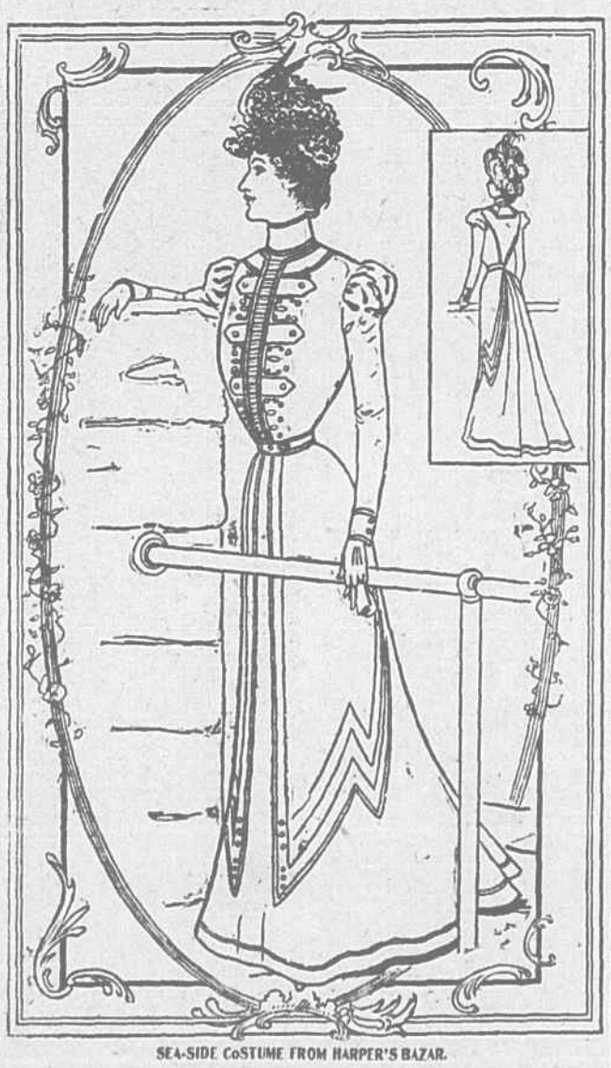
"Why so, dearie?" asked the other half.

"Why so?" she exclaimed, with an air of superior intelligence. "Get on to that sign, 'Hands off,' hanging on that thing, just as if any fool didn't know they were."

A Brave Soldier Girl.

She was decked with soldier buttons,
She was clad in army blue,
And she wore a martial emblem
On her natty sailor, too.

But alas! a little spider
Crept across this maiden's hand,
And with all her warlike trappings
She screamed to beat the band.
—New York Herald.



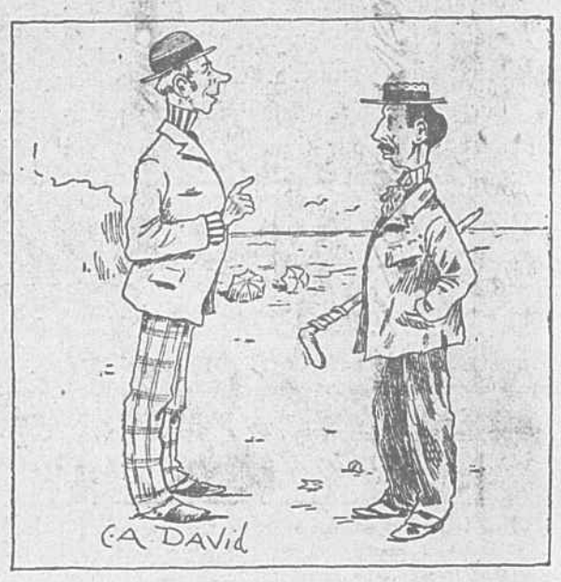
SEA-SIDE COSTUME FROM HARPER'S BAZAR.

The Parisian fad this year is to go to extremes in watering-place costumes, some of which are made in the most elaborate style, bedounced and befrilled to a degree that none but an eye-witness would credit, while on the other hand there are walking costumes simple to the verge of austerity. The seaside costume illustrated herewith—taken from Harper's Bazar—is of the latter character. It is made of dark blue veilling mounted over black silk. The skirt is of the attached flounce variety, with tiny folds of black satin outlining the front and the top of the flounce. The waist is smoothly fitted with no trace of a blouse. The narrow cross-tucked vest of white taffeta is bordered with buttoned tabs and small black satin scrolls. The band collar, which is of the highest choker type, and the narrow belt are both made of the dress material with tiny black satin border line

DRAMA IN ATLANTA

First—(before the overture) Where does the orchestra sit?
Second—Under the stage.
First—Why is that?
Second—Purely a matter of safety.

FIXING PIPES, ROOFS, ETC.



Howsoe—What are you calling your country place?
Comsoe—Judging from what it cost me last year, I think I'll call it, "The Plumber's Paradise."

AN ENTERPRISING GENTLEMAN.

Tooter—Where is Sprightly, nowadays?
Sooter—He's selling building lots in the suburbs of Santiago.

ENJOY YOURSELVES.

Tom—My father left me a cool million.
Doctor—You seem to be having a warm time spending it.