

AN HONORABLE DISCHARGE

By ARTHUR HENRY

UNTIL his eighteenth year Perry Saunders had known nothing of the world outside of Moore Centre, the little New England village of his birth, and on a certain night in June when Bessie Moore, the daughter of the postmaster, had told him that she was engaged to marry Wright, the blacksmith's son, this world had been enough for him.

A group of maple trees, for the melodies they played reminded him of the summer nights at home when these same songs were sung on Bessie Moore's veranda, and the sight of the officers' wives and daughters gathered on their porches to listen, filled him with homesickness.

When the boat arrived it was his duty to stand by the gate, very stiff, and to look forbidding, so that spies from foreign countries intending to land would think better of it, and as there were always children aboard, it was hoped that the sight of him would imbue them with a sense of their nation's greatness and the majesty of its army.



It was Bessie Moore and her mother.

had fallen and brought him nothing but uneventful monotony and the loss of a second great illusion.

It seemed to him that at 19 he was already an old, worn-out man for whom life was already lost and glory an empty name.

In spite of his despair he had enlisted with valor and would have given his life for his country gladly. For six weeks he had lived in a constant fever of expectation and willingness for the sacrifice, and then it occurred to him that it had been a hundred years since the coast he guarded had been attacked and then, suddenly weary of the dull monotony of his duty, it seemed that during the entire hundred years he had been stupidly pacing under the burning sun with a heavy gun on his shoulder.

As he stood for a moment at the dock looking absent across the bay he saw the white ferryboat approaching. The blue water parted in white-edged ripples and the sun flashed from the horns of a launch that had just landed on the deck. It was Friday afternoon, and the band from Fort Crow was coming to favor the married inhabitants of Fort Fiddle with the weekly concert.

The very thought of this oppressed Saunders with melancholy. He seldom opened the soldiers who sat upon the grass preceding the band as it played under

officers bought fresh meat to supplement the provisions from the commissary, and some of them patronized the baker occasionally. There was Captain Tooting, for instance, who was a bachelor, and very fond of cinnamon buns.

These arrivals and departures usually constituted the traffic of the day, except when the officers' wives went to the mainline to buy groceries or a soldier was off on leave.

This, however, was Friday afternoon, and the boat now entering the slip had brought the band.

Private Saunders braced his aching shoulder to the weight of his gun, and wearily brought his wilted form to a rigid position as the uniformed musicians trooped past, and then suddenly his heavy eyes opened wide, his breath was suspended, his body became alert and his whole being expressed the sentry startled by an unexpected apparition of a foe.

Just behind the last straggling members of the band, following them from the ferry, came a middle-aged, portly lady whose motherly face smiled sweetly on Saunders from the depths of a sunbonnet, and with her was a slender girl in a dimity dress sprinkled with violets. Her face was turned from him, but he knew the roguish profile with its full, sweet lips and turned-up nose and the curling wisps of amber-tinted hair that framed her

little pink ears, her white forehead and her cheeks so soft and rosy.

It was Bessie Moore and her mother. They carried between them a large picnic basket covered neatly with a snowy tablecloth. The sight of the basket made Saunders' mouth water and the vision of the smiling face of Mrs. Moore and the half-turned profile of Bessie brought moisture to his eyes. He stood there, to all appearance the formidable guardian of his nation's coast, but inwardly only a homesick boy of 19 struggling with a sudden impulse to sit upon the ground and weep.

"Well, Perry Saunders," said Mrs. Moore, moving to where he stood transfixed and taking Bessie with her, still clinging to the basket handle. "How stiff you look—bend down, if you can, and let me kiss you."

"But—but," stammered Saunders, his eyes fixed on the girl. "I—I—I thought—Oh, Bessie—aren't you married yet?"

Then Bessie dropped the basket handle and reached out toward him with both her hands, her blue eyes full of light and her face both serious and sweet.

"That was a mistake, Perry—I knew it as soon as you were gone." "We thought sure you would come back," said Mrs. Moore, reproachfully. "And then I was afraid you did not care."

"Nonsense," said her mother. "I told you all along how it was." Turning to Saunders she added, laughing good-naturedly, "I made her come with me at last. She was so unhappy."

Saunders, holding both of Bessie's hands in one of his while he clasped his gun butt with the other, could say nothing. He was choking with emotion and gazing with the staring eyes and open mouth of an idiot at Bessie.

Suddenly a sharp command startled them. It was the angry voice of Captain Tooting—the bachelor who was fond of buns—rebuking Saunders.

"That a common soldier should be found at his post gossiping and holding a lady's hand, to Captain Tooting, an unspeakable offense. It was not only an outrage against discipline, but an infringement on the privileges of an officer. Never having seen a battle, he seized every opportunity of this kind to prove himself a fierce and fearless man in action. He was a tall man with broad shoulders, a wasplike waist, a beautifully rounded buttock and very shapely legs. He was careful that the fit of his uniform should reveal his charms of person, and he believed himself to be at once a beautiful and a heroic sight.

It was characteristic of him that his reprimand of Saunders was more vigorous because of the presence of the ladies. They were not so much Saunders' friends as they were his own audience. He had no doubt that if he should send this private to the guardhouse the ladies would look upon him with admiring awe.

He was therefore overcome by a kind of horrified surprise when Mrs. Moore interrupted him and said with calm assurance:

"There—there—Mr.—don't waste your breath. We've come to take this young man home with us."

"The captain gazed at her stupefied. "Come, Perry," she continued, turning her back on the officer. "Put down that ridiculous gun and show us a nice, shady place where we can eat."

"Madam," shouted the captain. "Sir!" cried Mrs. Moore, turning on him quickly. "Don't scream at me!"

"This soldier has enlisted for three years," stormed the captain. "Three fiddlersicks," interrupted Mrs. Moore. "He got a foolish notion into his head—"

"Silence!" shouted the captain. "See here," cried Mrs. Moore. "If you know what us folks at Moore Centre think of you soldiers—"

"Mamma," whispered Bessie frantically. "You'll get Perry into trouble." "Go to the guardhouse!" screamed the captain.

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

SCRAPPLE

HUMORS OF A REMOUNT DEPOT



LONG-DISTANCE GROOMING.

Well Qualified



"My husband was a confirmed smoker when I married him a year ago, but today he never touches the weed."

"Good. To break off a lifetime habit like that requires a pretty strong will."

"Well, that's what I've got."

Two Halves



Smithson—My half-brother is engaged to my wife's half-sister. Jitson—When will they be made one?

Diplomacy



The Special (compelled to make an embarrassing arrest): Look here, old chap. If you'll come quietly I'll give you half a crown.

Too Dangerous



Jimmie—Mamma, mayn't I go out? The boys say there's a comet to be seen. Mamma—Well, yes; but don't go too near it.

ANGELINA—FROM DIFFERENT VIEW POINTS



—Daily Sketch.

THE PADDED CELL



OH I SAW TERESA TODAY!

IS THAT SO? ISN'T SHE A DEAR! I SAW HER LAST WEEK—SHE HAD ON THE SAME DRESS—MAMA TOLD ME SHE PAINTS—NOT THAT I'D SAY ANYTHING AGAINST TERESA—BUT I HEAR SHE TREATS JOE HORRID—BUT—DON'T FORGET TO GIVE HER MY LOVE!

DID IT EVER HAPPEN TO YOU?



AND THE WORST IS YET TO COME



—AND THE WORST IS YET TO COME



Very True



He—I have a splendid car for music. She—Yes, but you don't sing with your ear!

FARMER SMITH'S RAINBOW CLUB

GOOD-NIGHT TALKS

There is one thing which you must remember, and that is—this is YOUR CLUB. Write and tell me what you like about it and also what you do not like about it. I mean, offer suggestions.

We have now about 500 members and we must get 1000 before Christmas. I know you are busy with your Christmas shopping, and that is all the more reason why I appreciate what you have already done.

I am so glad the buttons please you. Before you try to get other members to see you understand what the Club means to YOU. Read the pledge—think what a grand thing it is to have 500 boys and girls all trying to do a little kindness and spread a little sunshine each and every day!

Aren't you happy? You need not look out of your own home to find some one to make happy. Kiss mother—kiss father, just one time extra each day. Help mother and don't NEGLECT daddy.

You do not have to look in China or California for some one to make happy. LOOK RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE. Make your teacher happy by knowing your lessons and spread a little sunshine in the classroom by smiling. Remember, 1000 members by Christmas!

FARMER SMITH, Children's Editor, EVENING LEDGER.

FARMER SMITH, The Children's Editor, The Evening Ledger, Philadelphia, Pa.

I wish to become a member of your Rainbow Club and agree to DO A LITTLE KINDNESS EACH AND EVERY DAY. SPREAD A LITTLE SUNSHINE ALL ALONG THE WAY.

Name Address Age School I attend.....

Your Workroom

Dear Rainbow Club—Last Christmas I made my father a wallet to keep his money in. I made it like this. I went to a leather findings store and bought a piece of leather eight inches long and six inches wide. The leather was thin and easy to fold. I took a dollar bill and put it in the center of the piece of leather; then I took my pocketknife and cut the leather down each side to fit the dollar bill. I didn't cut it all the way, I left a square of leather at each opposite end so that there would be something to hold the bill in place. These square flaps fold over the money and you then fold the whole wallet just as you would a letter. I have a burnt wood set and I made a little border around the edge and burnt my father's initials on the outside where they would show when the wallet was closed. I am sending a drawing of the wallet.

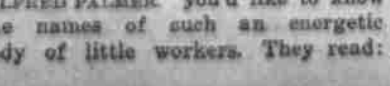
ANTONIO DI SANTO, Carpenter street.

Do You Know This?

- 1. This typewriter is stubborn and refuses to copy all of this little poem for me. What words has the typewriter omitted? If I saw a mouse I'd run in the If he followed Away I'd (Five credits.) 2. What musical instrument makes you think of fishing? (Five credits.) 3. Why shouldn't we tell secrets in a cornfield? (Five credits.)

Our Postoffice Box

A big important-looking envelope flew into our office the other day, and what do you suppose was in it? The names of FORTY-TWO little girls and boys all from one class in school! They are the Second Year A scholars of the William Cullen Bryant School. Maybe ALFRED PALMER you'd like to know the names of such an energetic body of little workers. They read:



ALFRED PALMER