

There's No Base Like Home

By H. C. WITWER

Ed Harmon, who admits he has Douglas Fairbanks' looks, tells Friend Joe about life in the movies in the following letter. Statements from H. C. Witwer's latest success will be printed daily.

On the Banks of the Hudson Far Away. Joe and I, Joe—well, Joseph, of course, and all that sort of rot, as we remark in London, I am the happiest guy in the world not counting Lenox versus because my family-in-the-law has pulled up the stakes and departed for Europe and I am once more the reigning monarch in my own home. My charmin' wife's league of relations, including the wien (is dog) found that a few rays of Harmony Hall was about all they could take and they come in to leave makes a delightful story full of human interest and the etc. which would be worthy of the typewriter of a Billows Givens will endeavor to tell you the thing in my own inimitable way, because Joe, this is the last letter you will get from me for a long space of time. In the last two years I have wrote you more letters than the State Department and instead of treatin' them in condescension you have gone to work and had them printed so's all the world can see them and read what my most intimately doin's and the like.

Also, Joe, what are we on the subject, who is this Arthur William & Brown which you have allowed to draw imaginary pictures of me and Jeanne and my baby. Where does that guy get off to leave out the dimple in my chin and how much Jack is you and this Brown party splittin' for these letters of mine, hey? It looks like to me as if I am being trimmed all around and made to look like if you only had brains enough to let me know you had to have pictures to go with my letters, why I could of showed all of them at a price which I feel certain would be lower than you must of bid for callin' 'em a stranger.

You may not be aware of the facts that I am looked on as something of the painter, my so-called Joe, and they is at least a dozen corpses of artists' blood coursing through my veins. My first cousin Jules, which means I mean wash brush in his day and my uncle made his livin' by bein' handy with a piece of chalk, of course he did most of his drawin' on the sides of freight cars and he was down on the payroll under the headin' of a "checker," but he would of no doubt made a name for himself if it wasn't for the scarcity of models for the pictorial stuff he drawed. The majority of his works, Joe, was called "36 X 48 Sealed," O. K. and it is hard to get models to pose for that, hey?

But to get back to the point, Joe, I have taken the liberty of drawin' a illustration for this letter to show, viz. my wife's family leavin' Harmony Hall to go back to those dear France. This is a ring-side sketch, Joe, and what it might be a trifle rough in spots, you must remember that I had but two scart

weeks to devote to it and toward the end I had to depend entirely on memory. You ought to be able to get this Arthur William & Brown to retouch it up a little and if you can use it I will let you have it for exactly what the materials I used cost me. I can have this done in olive oil or the watery colors whichever you prefer at a slightly additional cost and whilst the paintin' may be a little rough, as I say, you can see that the talent is there.

Well, Joe, here is the paintin'. You can see from my drawin' that it would only be a matter of a few days of hard studee, Joe, before I would be able to make these guys like Arthur William & Brown, Rubs Goldberg and this promisee recruit, Mike the Angel, look like a mere novice but why should I take the bread and butter out of their mouths? I believe a man should stick to his own game and live and let live, hey Joe?

But to get away from the arts for a second, I will tell you about the reign of terror which I had to put up with at my home during the epidemic of my mother's relations and also how the scourge spread out by the simple use of diplomacy. I used to think a diplomat was a rich guy which the President sent to South America so's to get the best out of our shot, but now I know different since I tried my hand at diplomatin' myself. A diplomat, Joe, is a guy which let us take for the example, he is at a ball and he sees a woman great which from her looks would be safe anywhere and he turns to his mate and says, "What a terrible looking that dame is, hey?" and she says, "That's my sister!" Well, the average guy would be dumfounded, Joe, but the diplomat lets forth a pleasantly smile and says, "Pardon me, old man—I thought she was my wife." Thus easin' the strains of a delicate situation.

Well, Jeanne and me went down to the pier and welcomed her family after they got through attendin' the informal reception which the customs guys give them and then they all piled into the car. First they was a kismet, hee and hee, and then they all piled into the car. First they was a kismet, hee and hee, and then they all piled into the car. First they was a kismet, hee and hee, and then they all piled into the car.

I devoted my time on the trip up, Joe, to thinkin' of ways and means to get rid of my charmin' bride's relatives without havin' to face no jury as a result of my endeavors, but I guess bein' in the movies has deadened my allowance of brains and by the time we reached the portals of my home I was still in what is known as a quandry. I

had plenty of time, though, to look over the layout and I see the followin': First, my wife's father is a aged man which must of made a solemn vow in childhood that he would never und'r no circumstances allow a razor to be plied over his chin and up to the time I met him he had successfully resisted all attempts to wean him away from his oath; second, my mother-in-law has evidently fell in love with Patty Arbuckle's figure and is determined to duplicate it come what may; third, my brother-in-law is filled with the idea that the subject of the war has been let drop too quick and therefore he wears a uney-eyed to remind the innocent bystander of it and not content with that he is all decorated with medals like Sousa's Band or the etc. and fourth, my sister-in-law is one of the prettiest girls you, me or anybody else ever seen—outside of Jeanne.

As for chien (ie dog), the less said the better. It is what is known to the grade as a French poodle, Joe, and apart from that it is the wildest looking animal I ever seen in my life since the time I got gassed and delirious. Well, we finally arrived at the mansion and first we have a sight-seein' trip over Harmony Hall with Jeanne as lecturer and me as deputy guide. As a result of the jaunt around the place I seen two rooms I never knowed we had before and then comes blow number one. The minute I come to the room, my mother-in-law presented me with one terrible look and then commences to holler murder at my mother-in-law. I am holdin' the child. To the accompaniment of some shoulder shakin' and some "Yeh, yeh, yeh" I am still bollin' with the honest rage I happen to glance around and see my brother-in-law grabbin' off a handful of some imported Turkish cigarettes (adv) which come to me by the via of a Xmas present from Steve Eiler, the last of the bartenders.

Joe, by this time I am the logical

candidate for the straight jacket and Jeanne is payin' the same amount of attention to me that a elephant lavishes on a flea. Then comes the last straw which bust the camel's hump. My sister-in-law, which has been devotin' the majority of her time to pettin' the chien, grants me the boon of a critical gaze and then turns to Jeanne and tears off a couple yards of Frinch. This translated to me practically immediately. Joe, and the gist of the thing is that I have got to take Toto, le chien, out for a stroll.

Before I know what I am doin' Jeanne has thrown my fur's coat around me and pushed me out into the snow with this infernal chien on a string and the instructions not to come back for a hour. I am so practically mad that I would of ben willin' to take on a mountain lion at catchweights and make the lion to the first couple falls.

I drag this chien hither and yon off in the still night and the first time it started to bark I growled at it so ferociously that it quit cold and devoted itself to whinnin' and tryin' to hide in the snow. Well, Joe, I am walkin' along keepin' my lonely vigil, as Hauslet was often heard to remark, and thinkin' of my cruel fate when I all bump into another guy which is likewise at the one end of a chain that has a dog at the other end. Of course from that I can immediately see that he is a husband, Joe, and we both size each other up without sayin' nothin', but each hopin' the other would break up the dog. Well, Joe, I am walkin' along keepin' my lonely vigil, as Hauslet was often heard to remark, and thinkin' of my cruel fate when I all bump into another guy which is likewise at the one end of a chain that has a dog at the other end.

Used of bein' a governess for a dog and when I bring this beagle in this event I'm gonna declare myself. Either me or the frankfurter goes! Ain I right or wrong?

Well, Joe, that was just what I was lookin' for and in another minute me and this guy is as thick as glue on account of our havin' the common bond of bein' exercise boys for a couple dogs. Marie, the imported maid, meets me at the door. I am pale and cool, Joe, with the most deadly calm. I remember feelin' the same way the first time we went up to the front a couple years ago. Come what may I have made up my mind that the league of relations must go! I immediately adopt my second Lieutenant's manner.

"Send Mrs. Harmon here at once—snap into it!" I bark at Marie. She gimme a startled look and beat it. Joe, I have made up my mind just what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna hurl Jeanne's family out in the snow for a starter and then—

one searchin' look and then, Joe, she bestows a chastity salute on my forehead, standin' on her toes and with her face very flushed and the like.

"Edouard," she says, at'll with her arms around me and why not. "I have the delightful surprise for you. I am fud up with them delightfully surprises of yours and this last one you pulled will do me for some time. Now that family of yours has—"

"They leave on the very next steamer," says Jeanne. "They will not stay here now because—because—Edouard, you will never guess. I can't stand no more suspense." "Viola!" says Jeanne, with a single "they have just learn of this—what you call prohibition and—well they cannot have those wine with the dinner, then poor—they go back to France! Next ce pea!" Joe, I come near swoonin' with simple joy. Three rousin' cheers for prohibition, hey?

Joe, Jeanne gets colors that the bow never sees. She reaches up and puts her mouth close to my ear. "Joe, you big stiff—why don't you wed! Hey—get this—I'm gonna be another father!" Yours Truly, ED. HARMON (I hope it's a girl Joe because that will just make up the set).

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