

From Baseball to Boches

By H. C. WITWER.

By Special Arrangement With Collier's Weekly

Dear Joe: Well, we are out rollin' around in the deep blue now, Joe, and so far everything has been elegant. We're plowin' along with nothin' to look at but all the water in the world. When I go out on deck and gaze around I can realize how Noah must of felt. The trip has been kinda dull, because we ain't seen a sign of a U-boat or even as much as hit a mine, but I understand things is liable to pick up when we get in the war zone, and they's a good chance of some excitement, so we're all tryin' to bear up until then.

I ain't been seasick a bit—that is, not very. But a lot of these guys is wishin' they was some way of goin' across outside of on a boat, 'cause we snaked away from the Land of the Free a whole lot different, Joe, than the soldiers leaves for the front in novels and plays. They was no bands playin' and no weepin' and cheerin' mob to wish us the best. They wasn't nobody at the dock but a couple of coppers, and we couldn't even tell 'em who we was, 'cause we hadda keep our sight till we got out on the ocean. Some of the boys felt kinda bad about that, but I guess it can't be helped. If them German spies knowed we was goin' across, they would no doubt date us up with a U-boat somewhere on the ocean. We got so much on our mind, we busy on the way over that the blues or nothin' gets a chance to hang around us. The first thing in the mornin' we get settin' up exercises right out on the decks. You gotta take off everything but your lingerie down to your waist and go to it. Every muscle in a buy's body gets a chance to limber up: "One, two, three, four—one, two, three, four!" sings the corporal, and us doughboys moves arms, legs and everything like the whole 2,500 of us was one man. After about a half hour of that with the air off of the ocean blowin' all over you, you feel you'd be willin' to fight the German army all by yourself in the middle of Berlin! Also, you get an appetite that would make a Belgian refugee quit.

Then the guys which ain't standin' in the trip as well as our ship falls out for the doc to look 'em over, and the rest of us goes down and packs away a breakfast fit for a king (if they's any kings left). They ain't nobody in the world can eat as much as a doughboy when he's in midseas form, which is always. Then comes the drill. Every body puts on one of them trick life preservers and double-quick to his boat. Each one of them boats is supposed to hold forty-eight doughboys if they're good and thin. Joe, if them boats can hold forty-eight guys at one sittin', I can stop the war! Every man is supposed to go to a certain place and sit in a certain seat, and I'll betcha a ticket speculator would make a million the first five minutes, sellin' front rows if anything happens.

The first day we come up for the drill they was a lot of kiddin' and joshin' about it. Then the lieutenant which is in charge of our lifeboat come along. This guy's old man has got two dollars for every fish in the ocean, and if I told you his name you'd think I had fell off the wagon again. He's a new kind of a college boy, Joe. He come from Harvard, looks like a middleweight champ, and is tougher than any doughboy on the ship. Also, he's an ace, and we would row our lifeboat from here to Hades if he asked us.

Well, he come up while we're laughin' and kiddin' about the drill, and he says this: "Attention! I want you men to listen very carefully to what I'm going to say, because I'm only going over this once. There is very little chance of anything happening that would cause us to take to the lifeboats in earnest—but it might! If anything does happen, the signal will be five sharp blasts on the ship's whistle. You will proceed to this deck with your life preservers on and take your best stations in an orderly manner. Upon my command, the men assigned to

the cars will board, the men assigned to lowering the boats will take their positions, and the others will take their seats in the boat. There is to be no pushing and shoving, no running, and, above all, absolute silence from the time you leave your bunks until you enter the lifeboats!" He stops and, drawin' his gun, breaks it and shows us a handful of bullets. "I want you all to see that my revolver is loaded with ball cartridges," he says, stickin' out his jaw, "and the first man that allows as much as a murmur to escape him will be shot down instantly!"

Joe, that was no more laughin' and joshin' about lifeboat drill from then on! I think the civilian passengers goin' through the drill the other day, and they was two things I wanna tell you about. One of them handed me a laugh, and the other gimme a pain in the chest somewhere around where a guy's heart is. The first was a big fat guy comin' up on deck with a life-preserver. He had invented a sea lion in the thing, and if the ship had sunk then we would all of died laughin'. The second was a pocket in the suit for every nickel Rockefeller's got, and he carried water, brandy, cigars, biscuits, writin' paper, magazines, money, and—well, Joe, in fact, he was fitted up better than the ship was, and some guy asked him if he could buy a room and bath on him in case we got hit by a U-boat only two days to laugh this bird out that suit, and from then on he come up without nothin' to protect him but two life preservers.

The other thing I seen was also durin' the passengers' lifeboat drill. That was a little baby girl about four years old and as pretty as Walter Johnson's inshoot. She was goin' over with her pale little mother to see her dad, which had got wounded in the Canadian army. Here comes that little bunch of peaches and cream up on deck with a life preserver on higher than she was and takes her place by a boat. Everybody went nutty over her, and she's smilin' on all comers.

Joe, it was both the cutest and saddest thing I ever seen in my life. I'magin' thinkin' that little darlin' baby might be in the water any minute strugglin' for her life on account of them German hellhounds sippin' us to death.

"Well," I says to myself, "if the guys in America that don't wanna scrap could see that little baby just as she is now, life preserver and all, they'd be an army raised overnight that would lick Germany in one afternoon! If that's the kind of birds we're gonna fight, I wish I had got in this thing the mornin' it started!"

And all the other doughboys feel the same way about it! Joe, the little kid comes and hollers down over the rail to us every day, and we can hardly wait till we get to France and get at them bums. Her name's Gladys, Joe, and today she throwed me down a cake, and, believe me, if them Germans hit this ship I ain't gonna get off of it till I see that kid and her mother is safe and sound in a lifeboat. Not even is Lieutenant makes good and takes a shot at me!

We're in the war zone to-night, and if we ever get out of it my next letter will be from France. Yours truly, ED HARMON. (Formerly the sensation of baseball). (Next installment in an Early Issue.)

To Keep Your Skin Free From Hairs

(Beauty Topics)

If you are willing to spend a few minutes time in your room using a delatone paste, you can easily banish any ugly, hairy growth without discomfort or injury. The paste is made by mixing some water with a little powdered delatone. This is then spread over the hairy surface and after about 2 minutes rubbed off and the skin washed. You will not be disappointed with this treatment, providing you get real delatone.

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