

Private Wilson, U. S. A.

How a Roisterer Made Good When Given a Chance.

By EDGAR ALLEN FORBES
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Scene, Fort McKinley, on the Pasig river just above Manila; post No. 3, on the river road.

Private Sam Simpson, late of Keokuk county, Ia., on the job. Time, somewhere between midnight and 2 a. m.

Sentinel Simpson, tall and lank, paces his lonely post thoughtfully. Suddenly the voice of one singing is wafted on the breeze. "That's Slug Wilson's voice, and he's as full as a tick!" mused Simpson, a surmise correct in both particulars.

Slug was originally from Frisco, where he once drew thundering applause, but a meager salary, as the versatile comedian of a stock company. As the applause and the wages subsided he drifted into the picturesque Barbary coast, playing all night music halls in summer and loafing the rest of the year.

As he approached nearer and nearer to the ragged edge the alluring literature of the recruiting officer caught his eye. They were filling out the ranks of the Thirtieth infantry at the Presidio under orders from the Philippines, and Wilson decided that he would look well among those present.

After a few months in Manila he transferred to the Philippine scouts to break the monotony. He broke it rapidly and in a short time had risen to "noncom" rank. Then the lure of the white lights came back, and he transferred again to the Thirtieth.

Slug was now returning to Fort McKinley five hours late. Instead of being depressed by that stern military fact Wilson caroled blithely on the still night air. The chanson was rudely interrupted by the sharp voice of Simpson.

"Halt!" it said, omitting the rest of the formula as superfluous.

Private Wilson halted and came to attention. Then he solemnly saluted the sentry on post No. 3. Then he gave him the left hand salute.

"Ah," said Wilson, "tis a brave soldier lad! How handsome he looks in his suit of blue! How I regret that I have but one life to give for my country!"

This being the sentry's first experience with Slug in an official capacity he assumed that the delinquent was under arrest. "As a matter of routine he turned in the call:

"Corporal of the guard, post No. 3? Now, Private Simpson was not standing with his rifle at "charge bayonets."



SIMPSON GAVE THE DRUNKEN MAN A SHOVE THAT DEFLECTED THE WEAPON.

like the sentries on the stage. His gun was at "port"—across his body, with the muzzle over the left shoulder.

Slug bent his knee and planted his right foot in Simpson's stomach. The sentry went double and careened backward, dropping his gun.

Wilson seized the rifle, rolled the gaping sentinel on his face and sat down on his shoulder blades.

The corporal of the guard came along at a brisk walk, peering through the darkness for the man on post No. 3.

"Halt!" called Slug.

The corporal halted and dropped his gun to attention mechanically.

"About face!" commanded the voice in the darkness.

"What the deuce?" the corporal was about to inquire when Slug rose unsteadily to his feet.

"Ha! Another of the invaders!" he exclaimed dramatically. "Through him goes the Igorrote spear, the spear that knows no brother." And he hurried the sentinel's rifle, bayonet to the front, as though it were a spear.

Simpson saw the movement in time to give the drunken man a shove that sent the weapon wide of its mark.

Then the two guards clinched with Wilson, but the issue hung in the balance.

"The guard! No. 3—double time!" called the corporal in the direction of post No. 2.

When the detail came the exhausted sentries were hanging grimly to their man. Slug was forced to his feet, his elbows drawn back so that a rifle barrel could be thrust through the triangles, and told to march.

"It is only Wilson on a tear," the corporal reported to the officer of the guard.

"Put him away, then," commanded the lieutenant.

Slug saluted the officer with much ceremony and would fain have had further speech with him, but the corporal hustled him inside, where the men of the next relief were catching little naps.

The corporal threw a blanket into the corner and invited Wilson to get busy and use it.

And the corporal went out.

Next morning with the toe of his regulation shoe the corporal of the guard prods Wilson roughly and bids the brave dreamer awake. Slug rubs his swollen eyelids and rolls his tongue around in his dry mouth.

"What am I in for?" he asked.

"Don't you remember?" asked the corporal sternly.

"Not a thing this side of the Escoita."

"Well, you're in bad. You came back loaded, assaulted the sentry, tried to throw a bayonet through the corporal of the third relief and raised hob generally."

Slug settled back in deep thought. That meant court martial and dishonorable discharge, to say the least.

In the corner stood a rifle with a cartridge belt hung across it. Slug's eye took it all in.

With the muzzle under his chin and his toe against the trigger the court martial would be quite superfluous.

That seemed the most cheerful way out of it.

He threw open the mechanism, inserted a load and sat down on the floor, meaning business. But—what about the old lady?

How would she live when his pay stopped? For there would be no pension. He was trying to figure this out when the owner of the gun suddenly returned for it. Slug mechanically handed it over and then happened to think again.

"Hold on a minute!" he called.

"Now what?" demanded the guard.

Wilson took the rifle, gave the mechanism a wrench and took out the load. Then he handed it back to the astonished soldier.

"How in thunder did that load get in there?"

"Pell down the barrel, I suppose," said Wilson carelessly.

The guard gave him another look and went out to warn the corporal to keep an eye on Wilson and not leave any rifles lying around. Just then Slug appeared in the doorway and asked to be sent under guard to his captain's quarters.

The captain gave him a stern reception.

"What do you want here?" he demanded.

"I'm not asking for myself, captain," and Wilson met the forbidding frown squarely. "I'm in bad, and it's my own fault. As far as I am concerned, I was just about to blow my old head off."

"Why didn't you?" asked the captain sarcastically.

"I happened to think about the old lady. It's my pay that keeps her going."

"I thought the whisky shops were kept going with your pay," answered the officer shortly.

"The postoffice knows where most of my pay goes every month. The drinks come free, and that's why I get overloaded."

"You ought to know better."

"I do, but you know what a place Manila is, captain."

"It isn't very lively, but that doesn't help matters. You'll have to face the music, Wilson."

"Facing the music is all right for me, but I want to keep the old lady from having to face it."

"What do you want me to do?" asked the officer shortly.

"I want you to head off this court martial and have me transferred back to the constabulary," said Wilson boldly.

"Why should I do that?"

"Because every man in this company knows you've got a heart in you," and the defendant's voice had the ring in it. "Listen, captain! You know that before I came back to this town my record was as straight as a string."

"I don't blame it on the town."

"I don't mean it that way. I mean that I am all right as a soldier except when I'm drunk, and that don't happen anywhere else."

"I'll admit that you had a good record in the constabulary." The officer now began to pace the room in deep thought.

"Yes, and I'll make a better one if you'll send me back. It's the one chance I've got, captain. If you turn me down it's going to be bad for the old lady."

"I'll think it over, Wilson." And the interview closed.

When Slug had returned to the guardhouse the captain called one of his men and sent him to the postoffice with a memorandum. The answer said that Private Wilson had been sending money orders with unvarying regularity to a Mrs. James Wilson of San Francisco.

"I'll ask the colonel to give him a chance," said the captain impulsively.

Wilson of the constabulary spent

three joyful months chasing all over the map of Luzon on the trail of notorious disturbers of the public peace. He developed a positive mania for running down the worst characters, and no man in the service earned so many medals.

The secret was simple. Wilson's merry-making profession made friends for him in dozens of Filipino villages, and now and then one of them whispered something into his ear at night that sent him on the trail the next day.

And it was this record that made him Corporal Wilson and sent him to join Lieutenant Kelly in the Lake Lano district, where a lawless band had terrorized the whole country.

And it was to Slug, not to Kelly, that the whistler came. The Moro guerrillas were in a certain stockaded village at the top of a precipitous hill. Within less than an hour, guided by a native, Kelly was on the way with his small force.

Before the first glimmer of dawn they were at the foot of the hill, and the lieutenant sized it up doubtfully. He felt reluctant to call for the sacrifice that would come from a direct charge up that steep slope.

Then Wilson ran his hand down in his trousers pocket and pulled out a tin



WILSON HANDED THE RIFLE BACK TO THE ASTONISHED SOLDIER.

box of muzzles and shook them significantly at the lieutenant's ear. Slipping off his shoes, he began to creep softly up the hill, hands and knees, the men being equipped with loaded carbines and bayonets.

It was a long wait for the sign of blazing fire, but would indicate Wilson's success as an incendiary—and instead of a migration came the wild cries of the Moros. Kelly's heart sank within him.

But not Slug's. He had almost reached the stockade when a yeeping cry betrayed him. Instead of rushing back down the hill he rushed the other way and ignited one of the huts.

Then he backed off in the darkness and began to shoot as fast as the Moros came between him and the blaze that had instantly spread beyond control.

Kelly's men came joyfully up the hill, and the Moros poured out with their villainous bolos. For ten minutes it was cut and clash and jab and shoot and yell, with the lurid hilltop as a background.

It looked to Kelly like a finished job, but he ordered everybody to reload before advancing. Slug sat down on a rock to caress his toe and pull out a thorn that he had stepped upon, when a startling apparition appeared. Not ten feet away, bounding high into the air and coming down with a yell, was a forlorn hope of three Moros, swinging their bolos in great circles.

There was no time to guard, but the lieutenant's shot caught one of them in the air and a Tagalog scout received a second on fired bayonet. But the third landed squarely on the officer, keeled him over and swung his keen blade for the death blow.

Slug rushed him and grasped the arm, but the Moro swiftly transferred the bolo to the other hand, swished it through the air—and Corporal Wilson's right hand was hanging by a strip of tendon. Before the bolo could rise again the lieutenant's sword swept noiselessly against the left side of the Moro's neck and stopped only when it had cut through and beyond the esophagus.

In defiance of all the articles of war Sergeant Wilson (late of the constabulary) sat in the captain's quarters and smoked Manila cigars with him as a brother officer and in plain view of the rank and file.

"I don't care much about the medal, captain, but it'll tickle the old lady. It's the retirement on half pay that disability incurred in the line of duty that interests me." Wilson rose and extended his left hand.

"Goodby, sergeant. Tell your mother we are all proud of you."

"Not on your life. I'll tell her about you and the chance you gave me when I was down. And if the Lord ain't good to you it'll be because the Widow Wilson has no influence up there!"

"Where are you going now?"

"As straight to the transport Thomas as these legs can carry me. I am going to get out of this town before I get drunk again and spoil it all!"

PUBLICITY MEN

BUSY IN CAPITAL

Committee Considers Reopening of North Pole Controversy.

SCATTER MUCH LITERATURE

Representative Moore of Pennsylvania Opposes Efforts of These Men to Have Congress Consider Dr. Cook's and Harry Thaw's Cases—Friends of Both Busy in Their Behalf.

Washington.—That press agents for Dr. Cook, who maintains that he discovered the north pole, and Harry Thaw, the slayer of Stanford White, have been active recently in disseminating literature among members of congress has been asserted on the floor of the house by Representative J. Hampton Moore of Pennsylvania. Who these agents are Mr. Moore has been unable to discover. Neither has he been able to learn by whom they are being paid.

It was during the discussion of the naval appropriations that Mr. Moore called attention to the fact that, although congress settled the north pole question when it passed an act recognizing Robert E. Peary as its discoverer, friends of Dr. Cook had been able to convince the house committee on education that another congressional investigation of the matter should be undertaken.

Referring to the work of the press agent in behalf of Dr. Cook, Mr. Moore said:

"After four years his supporters have got to work, and congress is asked to undo its own act. The commit-



DR. FREDERICK A. COOK

tee on education has before it now a joint resolution which proposes to establish the priority of the discovery of the north pole and the region contiguous thereto. The old contention is to be reopened at our expense—for the benefit of whom? I will read the resolution:

"Whereas, The discovery of the north pole and the region contiguous thereto, involves questions of historic, scientific and geographic, economic, educational and commercial importance;

"Therefore, be it resolved, That the priority of discovery of the north pole and the region contiguous thereto be established and declared by congress, in order that the lands discovered by American explorers in the far north may be described and designated as territory of the United States and so set forth in the maps prepared and distributed by the United States government."

Mr. Moore called attention to the fact that members of congress have been receiving messages from Dr. Cook and have been favored with copies of his book.

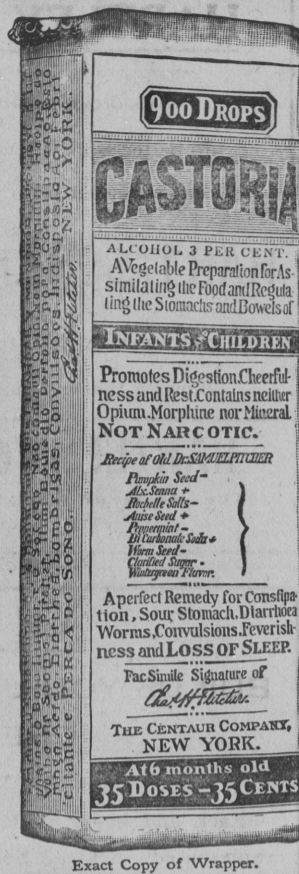
"But the limit has been reached when the committee on education begins to take the statement of a stenographer as to the doctor's dictation for the magazines from his hotel retreat at Newburg-on-the-Hudson. The amount of mail matter that comes to us every morning from people who get the idea that they are the real and only uplifters of the country is amazing. We are bombarded with vaporiings along with good sense, but we ought to be able to distinguish the work of those who are shrewd enough to employ the services of press agents to inspire us with misinformation."

Mr. Moore then turned his attention to the press agent working in behalf of Harry Thaw.

"We have got to deal with certain people who live upon their wits," he said, "just the same as if they were 'passing it' to us on the street. Here is the latest message bearing the earmarks of the publicity artist. It is coming in from glibbie writers who do not know they are adding the publicity game: I believe that Harry K. Thaw has been persecuted enough and should be given his liberty at once and restored to his family and beg you, sir, to use your influence in congress to pass a law in accordance with the constitution."

Use of Wireless Forbidden.

Berlin.—The German authorities have forbidden the use of wireless apparatus by merchant ships in German waters except in case of distress.



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Greene came into possession of the chicken when he was married, about seventeen years ago, and the children have grown up with it. Mr. Greene says that the chicken was as good as a watchdog. When a stranger entered the yard it would fly at him noisily. The children gave the chicken a funeral.

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Ever notice how closely life insurance examiners look for symptoms of kidney diseases? They do so because weakened kidneys lead to many forms of dreadful life-shortening afflictions. If you have any symptoms like pain in your back, frequent scanty or painful action, tired feeling, aches and pains, get Foley's Kidney Pills today. Sold everywhere.

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FRANK J. CHENEY.
Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence, this 6th day of December, A. D. 1886.

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