

P H L O T S A M



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\*\*\*PHLOTSAM#8-PHECONOMOU-436W20THST-NEWYORKCITY-FAPAMAKING#80-AUGUST1957\*\*\*

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PARTURIUNT MONTES -- and, as always, NASCETUR RIDICULOUS MUS  
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S P I N D R I F T ~ ~ ~

THIS IS A PHLOTSAM without beginning and without end. A PHlotsam all middle -- muddled. An owlish young man on the bus the other day turned to his companion and solemnly said: "E-lew-cid-ate." Which is a very good idea, once you get used to it.

Now fanzine beginnings and endings, like sandwich tops and bottoms -- which are almost the same thing, only the other way around -- should be neat and tidy, crisp and fresh, trimmed-crust-ed if you're a Grennell (a most extraordinary thing to be!), or, if you're a Danner, even golden-toasted. So encased, even a muddled middle is appetizing -- and some of the most delectable middles, it must be admitted, are the most horrendously muddled. Like tuna salad with chopped egg, and maybe even olives, although I've never tried that, for instance. I'm timidly daring, or perhaps even daringly timorous, gustatorily speaking. (And doesn't "gustatorily speaking" sound beautifully round?)

Just to send grammarians, and people with delicate psyches, screaming into the night, let me say that, at this point, when I should be zipping up the satin gown on my brain child, leaving just an extra pat, tug, yank and perfume spray to be applied before our quarterly grand ball, I have been able to assemble no more than a mess of viscera, without trace of any skeleton, let alone skin to clothe the poor creature in. As for the satins and laces -- my only consolation is that my nude will be much nuder than the most uninhibited Rotsler Girl.

My only slim hope lies in a couple of -- well, I won't say "fairy god-fathers" for fear of causing misunderstanding, or even scandal -- but the equivalent, named Cox and Morse, who just might yet send PHlotzie (and doesn't that title sound just too appropriately -- disheveled?) a decency-preserving literary barrel to wear to the ball. Not, of course, proper beginnings or endings, but, if they arrive in time, some lovely cabbage leaves to wrap my muddled middle in and call it stuffed.

Middled mutaphors, anyone?

NOTE TO MY NON-FAPAN PUBLIC: Attached to the rear of this and very likely wagging it, you'll find PHlotsam #7. A violent attack of FAFIA which struck without warning the day after I shipped my Fapa copies of #7 off to Eney, sent me ripping about the country, so submerged with mundanities that I just fought my way up for air this week -- to be confronted by an accusing pile of dusty, neglected, cross-stacked, limp pages of your unstapled, unassembled, unmailed PHlotsams. So who wants to be forever crastinating, anyway?

HEARTFELT THANKS to all of you who have been devoting so much time to developing the positive conviction that the Economous will never leave West 20th Street. Talked to Boyd Raeburn the other day and he said, "Everyone's absolutely certain you'll NEVER move to Milwaukee." I thanked him, blinking back my tears of gratitude. Keep it up now, people -- please don't weaken

at this point -- your incredulity is WORKING!

SO THIS MORNING'S MAIL disgorged a luscious cabbage leaf, in form of another installment of Bill Morse's Song Of The Open Road, entitled this time "THE REST OF THE WAY," which sequel finally takes him to the announced destination of his first installment, "BACK WHERE I STARTED FROM," if you follow me -- or Morse -- take your choice.

Which brings up a number of points and comments. Bill says he meant "Member of Parliament" and not "Military Police" in referring to his childhood desire to be an "M.P." That's what I thought he meant to begin with, but thought I'd pass it along. It fills up space -- like lettuce which I, for one, can do without, but it's always tossed in to save on the chicken.

In the second paragraph of Bill's article this time, there's a sentence which will probably be as puzzling to the rest of you as it was to me. And I quote: "I hadn't found out what 'A Melodrama With Oleo' was, but no doubt I'll meet someone some day who can explain." Now, unless my memory is worse than I suspect, none of us had any inkling that Bill was even wondering what "A Melodrama With Oleo" was. Did you? Thinking this over, I began to have the awfully guilty feeling that I am responsible for this communication breakdown. You see, Bill's copy of Phlotsam -- the one with his article in it -- was one of that dusty, unassembled, unmailed, etc. heap that gibbers at me this very moment from the sideboard. As Bill has been having typewriter woes, and his manuscript was literally that -- handwritten -- he probably has no duplicate and is not quite certain which, among his multitudinous adventures, he's already related to us. Because, darn it, you didn't tell us anything about "A Melodrama With Oleo," Bill. Next issue, eh? Make those Chicago Con-Men shove over a little to make room for it.

Scrounging around in my mental file of tentative wisps of perhaps-knowledge ("perhaps-knowledge" is all that fluff of dust-kittens wafting about the numerous unused storage bins and catch-alls of my mind -- those vague impressions of the meaning of unfamiliar things or words that I all too often mistake for facts, like last issue being almost positive that "etymology" referred to studying bugs when the dictionary says it's "ento" while "ety" refers to words. Sometimes, to me, the deceptive dust-kittens remain much more attractive than the real thing. I'm still in rebellion against the grown-up authoritarianism that robbed me of a word dear to my childhood heart -- the title of a movie which my mother adamantly refused to permit me to see because it was too adult. On those wonderful dramatic posters showing Joan Crawford (or was it Garbo?) in the slinkiest of gowns, my unreliable eyes emblazoned the title "INSPIRATION." Eventually, after constant correction, I was forced to accept the ugly, lopped-off, unphonetic, correct, "Inspiration." I wuz robbed! Hammm, I see I need to close that parenthesis up there. Well, if I must, I will, although it doesn't seem to make much sense to do so after all this Phyllisoprattling. That first sentence, though, will just have to hang there, like an Indian rope, while I start all over again with a new paragraph even.)

Obvious, isn't it, that I'm composing on stencil? For the first time. Put up with me, if I promise it'll be the last, eh?

To get back... Scrounging around in my mental dust-bins, I have an idea

that "Oleo" meant vaudeville in the old days. Thus "A Melodrama With Oleo" would probably mean that delightful entertainment, the movie (or play) with the variegated on-stage bonus, that television killed. Which is another thing I hold against the Idiot Box. Does that clarify things any, Bill?

Morse is no little disappointed because, while in San Francisco's Chinatown, he was not knifed by "an opium smoking yellow-devil." I haven't visited San Francisco, but New York has a very considerable Chinatown of its own, and -- Oh, disillusionment! -- Mott and Pell Streets are the oriental heart of what is just about the most prosaic, law-abiding, respectable neighborhood in the city. Over and over I've read, "There is no Delinquency in Chinatown;" "There is no Crime in Chinatown" -- or if there is, it is handled by the upstanding citizens themselves, without aid of occidental police agencies. Which, I suppose, is all to the good and should be commended. Women are no longer spirited away to a FWTB in clouds of drug-laden fumes and the long-nailed yellow hand clutching a slender dagger has apparently gone the way of the pigtail. But, for one nurtured on -- and still an unapologetic fan of -- Sax Rohmer, this is a deplorable state of affairs, but so, I think, is much of what is named Progress.

Is Soho also so drab these days? (I was tempted to say, "Is Soho also so so-so?" but desisted.)

Come to think of it, I have heard about one variety of crime flourishing in Chinatown today. But nothing picturesque -- just that boring type of racketeering of interest only to the Immigration Service, who are jumping like jackrabbits about it. As I remember, it goes something like this: Seems the Chinese quota is so small as to be almost nonexistent. But the sons of native-born Chinese are permitted to enter this country -- and therein lies the loophole, and a lucrative racket. It is the custom for many Chinese males to return to China at maturity, to find a bride, marry and impregnate the gal, and then return here alone to work an 18-hour day, live on a pittance and pile up a stake to enable them to live like mandarins in the Old Country during their old age. From time to time, they whoosh briefly back to the family to beget another offspring. It is obviously impossible for the Immigration Service to keep track of said distant offspring, yet they have the legal right to enter this country. Thus, a large number of the Mott and Pell street inhabitants have been making a comfy mitful by importing "sons" at a substantial so much per head. The U. S. authorities are well aware that these gentlemen are astonishingly prolific, but as lawfully wedded husbands, who's to say them nay -- even if some of the "sons" are remarkably close to poppa's age? Proof -- ah that's the rub.

The Federal Pooch-Bhahs are much concerned about possible wholesale importation of Chinese Communists in guise of "sons" -- but I think most of the American Public, me included, would be much more alert to the menace of the Yellow-Peril if it contained a hint of old-fashioned opium dens.

THE ADDAMSESQUE ILLUSTRATION on the front cover was lifted from a recent ad in the NEWS. Copy went thusly: "WANTED -- The Most Beautiful 'Ghoul' In the World. Can You Look Like This Girl? Apply in Person Tuesday, May 21, 10:00 A.M., at Nola Studios, 1657 Broadway, 4th floor. This is not a gag.

... a minimum 4 weeks' contract awarded the winner." I was sorely tempted to try myself, being possessed of all the qualifications, but my best shroud was at the cleaner's. But that's life for you -- there are so many things I'm sorely tempted to do -- and don't.

YOU MEET THE MOST INTERESTING PEOPLE TRAVELLING. On one short 12-hour trip to Maine via night bus a few weeks ago, I enjoyed the company of A) an Indian (Bombay-type), B) Jean, Andy & Very Young, with Larry Stark tossed in for bonus, C) a crazy, mixed-up, transcontinental-truck-driver-poet-artist, whose Destiny I may have shoved a bit.

Arthur saw me off at the 34th Street Greyhound station, and while waiting for the gates to open we got into conversation with four Indians, three of whom were seeing the fourth off for Boston. When we got on the bus, he very politely asked if he might join me and I gleefully assented, assured of an interesting trip.

He was a talkative chap from a wealthy Bombay family, a graduate of Benares University on the banks of the Ganges, studying engineering at MIT. During the 6½ hour trip, I absorbed a wealth of fascinating Indian lore, including the origin of Bhuddism; philosophy in great gobs, such as the desirability and possibility of reconciliation, and eventual blending, of the Eastern "nomena-based," and Western "phenomena-based" cultures, with full explanation of same which I'll not repeat here because a) I haven't time, and b) it's not nearly as clear to me now as it was then, tho I think I could think it through if I tried; the Indian industrial revolution; caste marks, which are not that at all, but have a long and quite confusing history having nothing to do with caste; saris versus dresses; the origin of, and reasons for, Indian vegetarianism -- a sentimentalist philosophy based on the idea that any form of life may possess understanding and emotion, and the destruction of such could result in fear and/or heartbreak, besides being morally wrong. This philosophy was even extended to include eggs, as it was evolved before the realization that most eggs are infertile. Such thinking is rejected today, although vegetarianism is widely practiced in varying degrees, because of inherited antipathy toward flesh and eggs. My companion admitted that he had been unable to bring himself to try them, although considering them in no way taboo, and regretted his lack of courage.

I also learned about the modern figurative form of suttee still common among Indian widows. His sister is a prime example of this tragic thinking and cannot be shaken from her views despite the modern logic of all her family and friends. She is an attractive, 32-year-old doctor, widowed five years, in a position offering a wide choice of intelligent, eligible men. However, she refuses to consider remarriage, ever, as it is her belief that the spirit of her deceased husband hovers near her through life, and that to take another man would be shameful infidelity.

There was much more, including surprising statements regarding his personal experience with, and practice of, Indian mysticism, which shook my credulity, but which I was unable to entirely discount because of his forthright, matter-of-fact modernity and obvious intelligence. Who knows?

Around eleven, I found myself in Boston confronted with a boring, two-hour wait. So I decided to phone and say hello to the Youngs. They immed-

ately brightened the dismal vista by insisting on rushing in from Cambridge to join me in my vigil. Half an hour later, they swooped into the Terminal Restaurant, complete with Susan and bottle, and Larry Stark. Meanwhile I had been innocently amusing myself. I waited at a table for six, and presently several people sat at my table to have coffee and. When they left I collected about six cups and saucers which I proceeded to line up in a row, just so I could show the Youngs how nervously and impatiently I'd been awaiting their coming. That was fine, if senseless, until the porter came to clear off the table. The poor fellow, an Italia happy-poppa type, couldn't understand a word of English. He wanted to be pleasant to the crazy lady but his job was to clear the table and why would she let him take off all the dishes, glasses, ashtrays and mop up all nice, but get so possessive about all those dirty cups and saucers? I would, speaking slowly and distinctly, try to explain it was a JOKE, that he should LEAVE them. He would listen attentively smiling and nodding, then grab for the crockery, at which I would hurl myself upon my treasures, protecting them with outstretched arms, shaking my head wildly and enunciating "No! No!" Finally, his face a mixture of alarm and puzzlement, he pushed his wagon off to another table where he stood puttering, eyeing me surreptitiously, waiting for his chance to seize his dishes. But I was ever alert, and he daren't approach. When the Young's and Larry arrived, I sprung my thin little joke, then, satisfied with the impression it created -- Jean even gasped, "Oh, NO!" -- I motioned the porter to clear away, which he did with alacrity, stumbling over his apron in his mad dash for the kitchen.

The remaining hour and a half flitted like minutes while we chattered, looked at snapshots, deplored lack of a mimeo to emit a one-shot, and rescued cups of coffee, glasses of water, ash trays, glasses of lemonade and sugar bowls from Susan who found everything on the table of the most intense desirability, with the exception of her bottle of milk placed squarely in front of her avid little hands. Susan is a true descendent of night-people, as bright-eyed and bushy-tailed when my bus pulled out around 1 A.M. as when her parents joggled her out on this midnight excursion.

While we waited for the bus to load, a youngish, rather unkempt, beery, unshaven man, who had heard me question the porter, asked me if I was going to Lewiston, Maine. When I answered that I was, he seized my heavy suitcase which I had intended to check, and clambered with it aboard the bus. I raised rather apprehensive eyebrows at the Youngs and Larry, who just stood there laughing -- a bit maliciously, I think. So half-resigned to a dreary fate because I'm an easy going type, and determined to be really rude if it became necessary, I got aboard where the questionable young man was standing up and waving me to the seat beside him. While I think it's necessary to retain a bit of wariness with strangers, I'll not judge quite so harshly, so quickly, again. He turned out to be a delightful, gentlemanly and interesting companion, and the last half of the trip as pleasant as the first.

Once we got underway, a few life-savers, which I usually tote about in my bag, took care of the alcoholic emanations from his "couple of quick beers." His unprepossessing appearance, of which he was acutely self-conscious (telling me that some woman had made a nasty comment to the driver about letting "such bums" on the bus), was due to his having just completed a four-day -- and night -- drive from Oregon to Boston, with just cat-naps by the side of the road.

This fellow was a maladjusted, trans-continental driver of those great highway behemoths. In his late 30s, unmarried because of a terror of the marital state, due, he said, to his observation of the miserable state of "practically all" his fellow drivers, who, to a man, seemed to be afflicted either with the type virago who met her mate with a poised fry pan, demanding to know how he spent his time in El Paso over the week-end, or the type who greeted him after an 18-straight-hour drive, all dolled up, with demand that he spruce up immediately to visit the aunts. He hated the road and the trucks, the strange towns and loneliness, yet loved the money and developed the restless urge to "go" whenever he stayed put for a few days.

He was a nature lover, and devoted to the poetry of Robert Service -- particularly his nature poems about the northern woods. Staring at the roof of the bus, he quoted these poems by the dozen in a low voice as we rolled along surrounded by sleeping people. His paintings had taken exhibition prizes, and it was his dream to join some monastery of a contemplative order and devote his life to painting the poems of Robert Service. Or even, at first, to retire to some cabin in the woods where he could paint all day and develop his talent. He was intensely bitter at himself for lacking the courage to quit his job and just go off and paint, but found himself always back on the road, just dreaming his dreams, despite having no ties or obligations to hold him from his desires. If they were truly desires. He was contemptuous of himself for letting his years slide so, and afraid of making the try because of his feeling that he might not stick it out, that the restlessness would get the better of him, or that his talent might be less than he believed, which, he thought, would make him lose his self-respect entirely. So he never dared put himself to the test. Obviously, he sought encouragement, so I encouraged. By the time we arrived in Lewiston, just at sunrise, he had made up his mind to phone his boss on Monday and quit on the spot. He was about to become a painter.

I've often wondered, and probably always will. But, sadly, I doubt it.

NO REVIEWS THIS TIME. The date is August 4th, the deadline is next Saturday, and I emerged from the clutches of an extended Fafia just about a week or so ago to set about Doing Something For Fapa. I had experienced a few vague inner promptings earlier, not enough to set off any activity, but just sufficient to get a letter off to Morse, reminding him that he'd mentioned doing another article for PHlotsam. As I had anticipated, receipt of his material needled me into beseeching myself at the typer and Getting With It. But by then it was far too late to think about reviewing any 600-plus-page mailing.

Not that I could have done anything about the nice leisurely type of reviewing I so enjoy, even if the urge had been there. Not this last quarter. Not only was our personal life popping like Chinatown on New Year's Day, but my beautiful mother decided to permanently decamp from Maine's snowy winters, sold her home and household effects, packed her business and treasured Lares and Penates, and headed toward Southern California in the Mercury, trailing showers of exclamatory postcards. All this to-do necessitated trips to Maine by me, to lend hands and shower her with unneeded advice. She is now dubiously ensconced in the 110° heat of the desert near Palm Springs, watching, she says, fat lizards acrawl on the sand outside her window. But, if she stays put, I'll have a capital excuse for visiting Cal.

AUNTIE PHLOTZIE'S RECIPE NOOKE

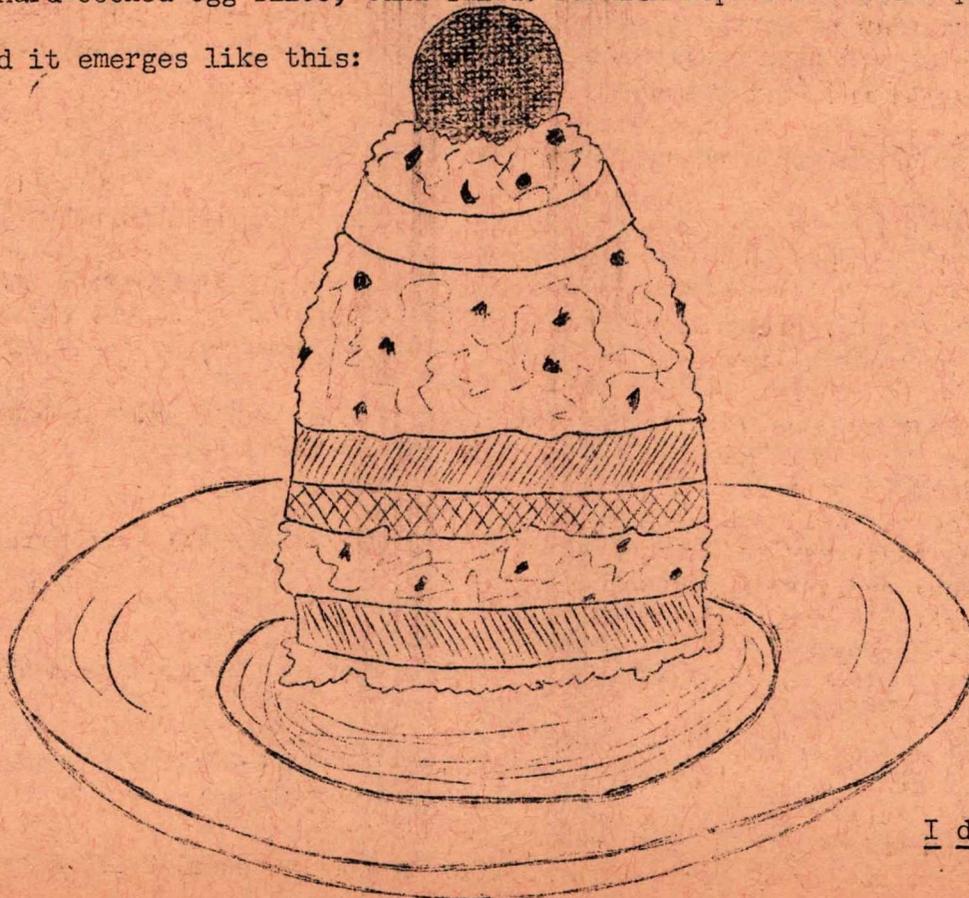
Abashed -- that's what I am. Somewhere back along there I mentioned that I'm "timidly daring" in my eating habits. Actually, I've always inwardly prided myself on being quite adventurous about the matter -- after all, I've rather enjoyed stuffed derma and have developed such a taste for yogurt, through association with a Roumanian husband, that I make 2-quart bowlsful for summer suppers -- but I added the "timidly" because I admittedly do shudder back from such exotic delicacies as French Fried Grasshoppers, Rattlesnake Paté, and like products, all available at my corner supermarket, which, being operated by canny businessmen, does not customarily stock merchandise not in demand. To my chagrin, I'm now forced to conclude that I must have a Prosaic Palate. In my discussion of middles (muddled) I cast about for the unlikeliest food combination I could think of at the moment, and came up with tuna and chopped olives.

What-ho! The recipe column in tonight's NEWS -- which caters to the mass taste of 2,000,000 of New York's horde -- featured nothing less than a "TUNA-OLIVE SKYSCRAPER," complete with illustration to justify the title. This concoction is constructed thuswise:

Cut 1/2 cup ripe olives into medium-sized pieces. Drain 7 oz. can tuna and combine with olives, 1/2 cup chopped celery, 1/4 cup chopped cucumber, 2 green onions, finely cut, 1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce, 1/4 cup mayonnaise, 2 tablespoons commercial sour cream -- salt and lemon juice to taste.

For each serving arrange pyramid fashion in this order on half hamburger bun: tomato slice, tuna salad, green pepper ring, second tomato slice, tuna salad, hard-cooked egg slice, tuna salad. Garnish top with whole ripe olive.

And it emerges like this:



I dare ya!

YE QUAINTE OLDE FANTASTIC FICTION REPRINT DEPARTMENT

The following is an episode from the book MANUSCRIPTS FROM THE DIARY OF A PHYSICIAN, an anonymously written series which had previously appeared in Lloyd's PENNY SUNDAY TIMES. (Does this periodical still exist -- and is it still a "Penny?" Ron? Mal? Bill?) As the book was published in 1844, I'm assuming this tale is now in the public domain and I'm reasonably safe from charges of piracy, prosecution and/or reprisals. So on to --

MR. AUGUSTUS BROWN'S METAMORPHOSES;

OR

The Nervous Gentleman

The most troublesome patient which a medical man can possibly have is a nervous, fidgetty, hypochondriacal gentleman, and were it not that such patients are rather profitable, the members of the medical profession would raise a great outcry upon the subject, and nerves and nervousness would be rated bores instead of being attended to with great gravity and prescribed for with great regularity, the ordinary "medicine" given consisting usually of bread pills rolled in magnesia, and effervescing draughts, ad libitum, according to the strength of the patient's credulity and purse. I am a retired physician now, so I can afford to be a little candid now and then.

Nearly twenty years ago, there lived in Bloomsbury-square one of my best patients, by name Mr. Augustus Brown.

Mr. Brown was a gentleman of competent independence, and of a literary and virtuoso turn of mind. At about forty years of age he began to study medicine a little, and to take care of his health a great deal. He bought medical books, prowled about the wards of hospitals, and made himself as unhappy as any comfortable, middle-aged, single gentleman could wish to be.

When I was first called to attend him, I found him lying on his back on the sofa; the room was darkened, and he was groaning in an extremity of anguish. I turned to his housekeeper, who had marshalled me in, and said, "What is the matter with Mr. Brown?"

He heard me, and called out, "What is the matter? Oh! Oh! Oh!"

I said to him, "I am sorry to find you so indisposed, sir."

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" was his only answer.

"Perhaps," I said, "you will be so good as to describe your symptoms."

After a few preparatory groans, he commenced -- "I -- oh! oh! -- ah! You'll scarcely believe it, but look at my leg, down by my ankle, I mean. Oh! oh! oh! -- horrible, horrible."

I cast my eyes down to his ankle, and, to my surprise, saw that it was tied fast by a silk handkerchief to the leg of the sofa.

"What is this for?" I said.

"You may well ask -- oh! oh!"

"Whatever may be the matter with your ankle, I shall undo this most unsurgical and very improper bandage."

"Wretch!" he cried, "would you destroy me?"

"Destroy you?"

"Yes. What dependance have I if I am not tied -- what hold upon the world have I?"

"What do you mean?" said I.

"Listen, Doctor," he said, -- "I am too light!"

"Too light? -- Pray, sir, explain yourself."

"You know why a balloon goes up?"

"Why, surely -- because it is lighter than an equal bulk of air."

"Very good."

"Well -- but, sir, how does that --"

"Apply to me, you would say, Doctor?"

"Exactly."

"This way. I am lighter than an equal bulk of air; and if I was not tied down, whiff I should go up -- up -- up! Oh! it's dreadful! -- oh! oh! oh! ah!"

He always put in the ah! as if he had been suddenly seized with some dreadful pain, and it really had a most comical effect. I now saw through the case in a moment, and I said, --

"Are you sure you are not mistaken?"

"Mistaken?" he cried. "You ought to know better. A friend of mine told me you were a very clever man."

"Suppose, now," I said, "you were to allow me to undo this handkerchief?"

"Up I should go!" he roared; "Were the window open, out I should sail."

"Indeed?" I said.

"Yes," he continued; "I have a very slight hold upon the earth. For some days I found myself getting lighter, until at last you see I am forced to tie myself down, -- oh! oh! ah!"

"Suppose I hold your collar," said I, "while the handkerchief is removed."

"I don't mind," he replied, "just to convince you."

I therefore held his collar and unbound the handkerchief.

"There, you see," he said, "look at my leg." And he poked his leg up as high as he could.

"But you could put it down," said I.

"No, no."

"Oh, yes you could. There, you see, I've let go your collar."

"But I'm holding on, you perceive, and it's no little exertion. I begin to think you don't understand my case."

"Oh, yes, I do," said I; "you must have a course of preponderating pills."

"What!" he cried, suddenly dropping his leg. "Preponderating pills! -- I never heard of them." And he bolted suddenly upright.

"Dear me, Mr. Brown," I said, "you are better."

"No, I ain't -- oh! oh! ah!"

"Well, I can remedy your disease by the preponderating pill."

"You can? They will increase my density, I suppose, by contracting the -- the absorbents, and so on?"

"Exactly."

"Astonishing! My dear sir, you are the only medical man that ever understood my case; and last year when I was gradually vitriifying --"

"Gradually what!"

"Turning into a kind of porcelain --"

"Oh!"

"Well, I went to Abernethy, and what do you think he did? -- the fool?" I shook my head. "Why, he told me to squat down like a Chinese, and try and have some odd colours burnt into me, so that by the time I was finished, I should be a respectable mandarin for an old China closet."

"Indeed."

"Yes; and when I remonstrated he actually turned me out! oh! oh! ah!"

I flattered myself that I had made a great hit in Mr. Augustus Brown's case, by my mention of preponderating pills, and I was only astonished at the amount of his credulity upon the subject. I sent him some extremely mild pills, composed of a common harmless drug, and waited the result with some degree of patience and a considerable degree of expectation.

In a few days a message came to me to go to Mr. Brown immediately, for

that he feared he was sinking fast.

"Sinking fast?" said I.

"Yes, sir."

"Is he so weak?"

"Weak, sir?"

"Yes; you say he is sinking --"

"Oh, it's cos he's too heavy!"

"Too what?"

"Too heavy, sir."

"Ridiculous!"

"Master says, sir, as he's got so heavy, he's forced to be on the ground floor."

"Tell him I'll be with him immediately."

The boy, who had come from Mr. Brown's departed, and I felt myself thoroughly posed by this second extraordinary fancy of Mr. Augustus Brown.

"So much," thought I, "for my extreme cleverness in inventing preponderating pills."

I, however, lost no time in going to my most eccentric patient. I found him in the kitchen, lying on his back, in the middle of the floor, and, as usual, groaning.

"Oh -- ah!" he cried, when he saw me, "you are come. Oh! oh! ah!"

"Yes," I said, with difficulty repressing a smile; "I am sorry to hear you are not quite well, Mr. Brown."

"Quite well! Oh! oh! ah!"

"What is the matter now, sir?"

"Oh, doctor, those preponderating pills. Oh! oh! ah!"

"What of them, sir?"

"They are too powerful. Much too strong, sir, -- awfully strong. They have driven me to the other extreme."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, you know how dreadfully light I was; you had, you recollect, to hold me from shooting out of the window."

"Hem!" said I.

"Well, do you know," he continued, "I'm now altogether as dreadfully dense and heavy. You see, I'm forced to be on a ground floor, or else I should go through the boards. Oh! oh! ah!"

"You must leave off the pills," said I.

"Ah, that's all very well, doctor; but you see the mischief is done. Here's a weight." So saying, up went his leg, and down again with a heavy dab. "What do you think of my case now?" he said. "Here's a dreadful situation to be placed in. Heavier than lead -- horrible, -- horrible! If I once begin, from my extreme weight, to break through the crust of the earth, where shall I stop? Oh! oh! ah!"

"It's rather a serious case," said I; "but there are remedies."

"Remedies! You bring me new life."

"Yes, you must take some anti-ponderous draughts, and be careful of your diet."

"My diet? What must I eat?"

"Mutton, principally."

"Very good. Oh, doctor, you are a clever practitioner. I find you understand my case. You are the only medical man who ever took a sensible view of my terrible constitution. Oh! oh! ah!"

"Now," thought I, as I made up a draught of distilled water with some vegetable colouring matter, for Mr. Augustus Brown; "now I think I have managed this troublesome patient pretty well."

Alas! how vain are human anticipations. Just three nights after, I

was rung up in the middle of my first sleep so violently, that I thought for a moment that the house must be on fire. I popped my head out of the window and asked, "Who's there?"

"He," was the reply; a very usual one, by the way, under such circumstances.

"Who's me?" said I, with a laudable contempt at the moment for grammar.

"Please, sir, Mr. Brown's boy."

"Well, what's the matter?"

"Oh! please, sir, master's very uncommon bad."

"Indeed? Is he light or heavy this time?"

"Oh, that's gone off, sir."

"What," cried I, "some new freak?"

"Please, sir, yes. Master says as you must come directly, cos he's a going to be merrymopussed."

"Merry -- what?"

"Merrymopussed -- that's what he called it, sir."

"Just try and explain yourself, will you, my boy?"

"Why, sir, I thinks as he means he's a going to be turned into some-thing else."

"Oh! metamorphosed."

"Something like that, sir, or some other wild animal."

"Tell your master, I'll be with him soon."

The boy departed, and with great vexation, which even the prospect of my fee could not subdue, I put on my clothes and sallied out to see Mr. Brown's metamorphoses.

"What could have put such a thing into his head?" said I to myself; "at least my medicine is innocent this time."

When I arrived at Bloomsbury-square, I found the whole house in confusion, and I was at once shown into the drawing-room, where sat Mr. Brown in a night-gown and slippers, "Good night, Mr. Brown," said I.

He only replied by a wave of his hand toward a seat. I sat down and said, "Well, sir, you are looking very well."

He shook his head, "Doctor, oh, -- oh, -- ah!"

"Well, sir?"

"You have done it at last,"

"Done what?"

"Me, sir, me -- Augustus Brown, Esq."

"As how, sir?"

"What directions did you give me when you were here last?"

"Directions? I told you to take the pills I would send to you, and to attend to your diet."

"But what did you tell me to eat?"

"Mutton."

"Ah!"

"Well, Mr. Brown, what of all that?"

"Well, doctor, I have eaten mutton. I have taken mutton for breakfast, mutton for luncheon, mutton for dinner, mutton for tea, and, d--n it, sir, I took mutton for supper."

I could not, for my life, suppress a smile, and it put Mr. Brown quite in a rage.

"So," he cried, "you laugh do you?"

"Nay, my good sir --"

"Don't good sir me, -- you laughed, sir."

"Very well."

"Oh, it's very well, is it? Well, doctor, what do you suppose has been

the result of all this mutton, eh, sir? I wait your answer."

"A great demand for sheep," said I, smiling.

"Don't smile," he cried.

"Well, then, seriously speaking, Mr. Brown, I don't apprehend any particular result."

"But I do."

"So I presume. But may I ask what, Mr. Brown?"

"You may. Ma--a--a--a."

"What?"

"Ma--a--a--a."

"Are you mad or joking?"

"Neither, doctor; but I've eaten so much mutton, that you see, as a natural result, I am in process of becoming a sheep."

"Oh, ridiculous!"

"Ma--a--a--a," he replied.

"Sir!"

"Ma--a--a--a."

"Let me tell you once for all --"

"Ma--a--a--a."

"You are the unhappy victim --"

"I know it. Ma--a--a--a."

"Of self delusion."

"Ma-- eh?"

"Self delusion, I repeat, Mr. Brown."

"What, sir!"

"You are a nervous hypochondriac, sir."

"I am no such thing, sir."

"You are, Mr. Brown. Your complaints are all delusions, -- the creatures of your own fancy."

"You don't understand my case, sir."

"Perfectly I do."

"You are a fool!"

I smiled.

"An idiot, sir. Delusion, indeed! Ma--a--a--a. Oh! Oh! Ah!"

I laughed outright.

"Leave my house, ignoramus," he roared.

"With pleasure," said I, taking my hat.

Thus ended my first connexion with Mr. Augustus Brown, the nervous gentleman, whom, however, I attended for years after that.

-oOo-

THERE NOW, wasn't that a treat? If the demand is overwhelming, I'll be tickled to publish lots more such tidbits from my ancient books. Or even if it isn't, maybe. They're space-consuming, and what in the world else can you do with such books? -- "THE MONK," for example:

"All the refearches of the marquis de las Cifternas proved vain. Agnes was loft to him for ever. Defpair produced fo violent an effect upon his conftitution, that the confequence was a long, fevere illnefs. This prevented him from vifiting Elvira, and fhe being ignorant of the caufe of his neglect, it gave her no trifling uneafinefs. His fifter's death.....

Wouldn't you like to learn what happened to the marquis and his Agnes? Perhaps I will publish all three volumes (with the original fpelling) in serial form for Fapa. Perhaps. It was all very upsetting, I affure you.

# THE REST OF THE WAY

by

## BILL MORSE

This part of the trip will have to be short and sharp or I'll never get it to PHlotz in time. Part One seemed to read rather jerkily, (don't be so unnecessarily modest, Bill - ph) but I plead extenuating circumstances: it is being handwritten, which takes up a deceptively large space on any paper when compared with typescript. Forward (I guess).

I saw no sign of a deputation to speed me on my way with good wishes, parties, or martial music when I left L.A. I'd spent an hour the night before with a California road map, and knew pretty well which way I wanted to go, and which way to get there. Paid the man at the desk, grabbed my bag, said a mental farewell to all the sleeping inhabitants of the hotel, and got going. I hadn't found out what "A Melodrama With Oleo" was, but no doubt I'll meet someone some day who can explain.

Travelling was still easy. Santa Monica to Santa Barbara with an old-ish couple in a small car, quite thrilled at the fact that "We've never given anyone a lift like this before." To Paso Robles with a Mexican trucker, from there to Oakland with a USAF major ("Recalled from furlough after three days, godammit"). At Oakland I ratted. I spent two bits to get a bus across the Bay Bridge to San Francisco.

Walking up Market Street, I saw two young soldiers trying to make up their minds whether they should pick up a couple of young females who were trying to make up their minds whether to pick up the two young soldiers. There was a look of wicked anticipation in the boys' eyes which was counter-balanced by the commercial speculation in the girls'. I grinned happily to myself, but have wondered at odd times how both sides made out. No doubt everything was arranged to everyone's more-or-less satisfaction and a good time was had by all.

I can't remember whether it was the Yale Hotel in Salt Lake City and the Howard in San Francisco, or vice versa. Not that it made a great deal of difference.

In the morning, I strolled around Fisherman's Wharf (no sign of Di-Maggio, it being still the Ball season) and Chinatown, where I was not knifed by an opium smoking yellow-devil who had trouble sorting out his Hs and his Rs. Only the fact that I had (and still have) a strong aversion to being knifed by anyone would compensate me for that disappointment. Maybe the fact that the Isle of Alcatraz is visible from almost all the east side of the city has something to do with the general good-behavior of the residents. I can't judge on that, but I was amused when I took a trip round the Bay on a pleasure boat and saw the enormous signs all around the island. "Keep Off," they said. I wonder how many of the inmates wish they could obey that order?

We also saw the Golden Gate Bridge, momentarily, when the mist lifted for a fraction of time. The boat-crew must have a man always looking for such moments, because it was announced over the broadcast system in time for us all to run and goggle at it before the mist closed in again.

Owing to the aforementioned (last mailing) dollar shortage, I was away the next day, walking across the bridge and averting my eyes from both Alcatraz and the San Quentin district.

First lift took me to Petaluma. He was quite a character, as wrinkled as J. P. Morgan I., but a few years younger -- 65-ish, as near as I could guess -- with a thick thatch of white hair.

"I'm off to see m' girl friend," he said.

I chuckled obligingly and looked expectant.

"Don't believe me, huh?"

I did my best to look as if every word of his could only be the truth, the whole truth, etc.

"It's a fact, Son. Along about five years back my wife said to me, 'John -- you're not going to have it any more. At your age it's not right, and at my age it's not proper. We sleep apart from now on. It's not decent, the way you behave to me.'

"Well, Son, that really hit me. I'm telling you, it really hit me. I just didn't know what to do. I'm a man, dammit, an' I want a woman now and then and what the hell's a wife for, when you think about it?"

Try as I might, I couldn't answer that one. Not to him, I couldn't. I was too fascinated to stop the flow.

"Yup, Son, that's the way I look at it. A man needs a woman all his lovin' life, and if she says no, it's time he looked around for another. So-o-o-o, when the wife went off visiting her sick sister, I went into Petaluma to get some bits for the house, and stopped in a place for a coffee and met one of the wife's old school friends and told her all about it, how it was with me.

"Well, Son, this girl here, this old friend of my wife, she looks at me for a bit, then she starts talking.

"'John,' she says, 'you ain't getting no younger, and no more am I. We've neither of us much hope of going out and finding someone new. Why don't you come and spend the night at my place. You might find it worth staying for as long as Anna is away.'

"Yup. That's what she said. And that's what I did, and I'm still doing. Anna don't know a thing about it, an' I don't think she'd care, as long as she's left alone. I ain't asking for no divorce or no separation (women cost more to get rid of than to get, don't they now?) so I just go off to Petaluma two-three times a week and stay the night. Anna's happy -- happy as she's ever likely to be, being what she is -- Inga's happy as she

has ever been in her life, and she told me so. And ME -- well now Son, I ask you, wouldn't you be happy if you were me?"

I was lost in awe and admiration. For the rest of the trip we both rode company with our thoughts. If that is what California does for a man, one can understand the rate at which the population of the state increases.

At Petaluma I left him. I'd barely shut the car door when a truck pulled up.

"Hey there! going north?" And north I went. All the way to Eureka, through most of the Redwood Forest, all through the night. We stopped at one place, a few miles past the well-advertised House-In-A-Tree, for the driver to snatch a couple of hours of sleep, after he had dozed off twice at the wheel.

Now, I've only a faint recollection of actual position, but toward the end of the trip, we came suddenly out of the thickness of the forest, and we must have been at a fair altitude, and there ahead and a little to the left below us lay Eureka. There was moonlight shining on a winding river and the beckoning lights of the town and as a frame for the picture were the enormous Redwoods. It's a pity we had no time to spare, for a camera would have required a good 30 minute exposure to record that picture. However, it stays quite firmly in my memory, although we only paused for about half a minute. Just long enough for Robbie and me both to see and appreciate, and we were off down and into the place. I left him there with many thanks and pushed on.

Klamath, Crystal City, Grant's Pass, Roseburg, Eugene. Must have passed within a mile or so of McCain and neither of us knew of it or of each other. To within ten miles of Portland in company with two business-women bound for a Legionnaires conference on the coast.

Portland, Vancouver, Chekalis by Jeep. A young (very young) couple just back from honeymooning. They dropped me at a cafe just outside Chekalis. It was dark and wet as I walked along, and a large black car flashed past and turned round the corner ahead, then stopped. The door opened and the front passenger swung his legs out. I assumed he was about to leave, and walked on.

"Hey!," came an aggrieved voice. "Don't you want a lift?"

How could I refuse? All the way to Seattle. All those Actifen and GMCarr, and not a solitary telepathic communication.

Bellingham, Blaine.

Canada. Visits to friends in Vancouver, then heading back East, dog-tired through not having slept since Roseburg. Hope, (B.C.) was a lovely place, or what I saw of it was. Beside the Frazer and well within the Rockies. I hope to show Maria sometime. Regardless of what the inner of the town may be, the outer surroundings are beautiful.

Revelstoke, the start of the Big Bend Highway, a 160-odd mile detour around mountains (through which the CPR runs). In thirty-six hours, only

two cars came along, and neither was going far down the highway. Crisis in my trip, because I was down to four bits with some 5 or 6 hundred miles to go.

I went up to the railroad depot for a wash and a badly needed shave, then came out to watch proceedings in the freight yard with a critical and appreciative eye. One of the switchmen came along and we got to talking about the difficulties of travel. It all seemed very easy, to him.

"We're making up a mixed freight right now, for Field and Golden. You better not hang around here -- the Bull is a s.o.b. for riders -- just loves to pick 'em off. Get outside the town, just around that bend a half mile up, and hang around. I'll see the leading truck is open. Be seeing ya!"

He didn't wait for thanks, and I didn't wait for the Bull. I hung around half a mile away, according to orders. Hung around for about two hours and then I heard the whistling and the ringing of something big coming along, slowly and heavily.

When the engine rounded the corner, both the crew were looking out. I could see a wide open door to the front truck, and stepped forward, giving the crew a wink. They both winked back and, as I jumped aboard the truck there was a root-y-toot-toot from the whistle and the regulator was opened wide. I was away. Ah, sleep! It's a blessed thing.

Field, Golden, changed to another freight to Calgary. Had a coffee and got a lift the rest of the way to Edmonton, where I took a street car to the Airfield area and a bus the rest of the way. People, I noticed, were looking at me rather oddly, and one or two were whispering. I couldn't figure it out until I was back in camp and went for a wash before calling in the canteen for a coffee. Then I saw my face and neck and shirt and remembered that those C.P.R. trucks had carried coal before they carried me. I was filthy. It explained all the curious stares and one or two of the more cryptic remarks of the driver of the car from Calgary.

I wasn't worried. I had travelled some 4200 miles altogether, seen some lovely country, and met more friendly people in that time than in any five years previously in my life. I was, all by myself, a 100% walking Anglo-American Mutual Admiration Society and it would be true to say that I have never recovered.

\* \* \* \* \*

Next mailing comes the tale of the Chicago Con-men. There just wasn't room for it this time. It is quite a thing, and told me a lot, not just about Chi, but also about me. ... Bill Morse

\* \* \* \* \*

HEAR YE! There is probably an announcement in the current BIRDSMITH that Bill Morse is a father. PHlotz, however, has scooped Maria on the subject. When asked how she felt, she replied: "Thank God that creature's out of there at last!" He (Geoffrey Douglas Morse) weighed in at 8 lbs. 9 $\frac{1}{4}$  oz., distributed over 20 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches, so her comment is understandable. BRAVO! .phe

KEY to "FAN ON SAFARI"

- 1 -- Faaaaan locating radar
- 2 -- Receiving set -- particularly sensitive to party impulses
- 3 -- Tells which way wind is blowing
- 4 -- Official badge
- 5 -- Stuff being kept under hat
- 6 -- Large hole in head
- 7 -- Ear-to-ground device
- 8 -- Extendable neck
- 9 -- Divining rod for preliminary survey
- 10 - Motivation -- variable (but not too)
- 11 - Ball for keeping eye on
- 12 - Rose colored, or bloodshot, glasses
- 13 - Nose for liquor
- 14 - Permanent grin and/or grimace
- 15 - Chin for leading with
- 16 - For putting to wheel to make things "Go"
- 17 - Harness for settling into at NFFF or other such strategy meetings
- 18 - 10-foot pole for not touching SerCon projects with (Also may be used for beating bushes)
- 19 - Working tools
- 20 - Implement for spade work
- 21 - Driver for keeping up that old drive
- 22 - Brassie for dealing with high pro-type brass
- 23 - Spoon for getting out of traps
- 24 - Irons for keeping in fire
- 25 - Spare balls for keeping on
- 26 - Arm for putting on guys
- 27 - Zap Gun
- 28 - Tranquilizer pills
- 28 - Blackjack for use on teddy-boys and bird-dogs
- 30 - Other shirt - change of drawers - stencils
- 31 - Discarded white feather -- Anything goes
- 32 - Yo-yo for promoting clean, American-type entertainment
- 33 - Special suit-protecting slit for inserting knives
- 34 - Hair of the Blog
- 35 - Red carpet and/or prayer rug
- 36 - Old shoe for being common as
- 37 - Spare leg for when none to stand on
- 38 - Artificial foot for sticking in door of "closed-door parties"
- 39 - Ace up sleeve
- 40 - Cuff for putting it on
- 41 - Kid gloves for Delicate Deals
- 42 - Copy of "How To Use Friends To Influence Femme Fans"
- 43 - Notebook for collecting interlineations
- 44 - Asbestos for building fire under
- 45 - Key to any situation
- 46 - Sextant for keeping on straight & narrow
- 47 - Bowling, Eight, Crystal, or ball for getting on
- 48 - Little barrel for putting people over lightly
- 49 - First base -- assures getting on it
- 50 - Second base for if at first you don't succeed -- also party seat
- 51 - Bird to give stay-at-homers

(Credit for this idea belongs to a guy named Eldon Frye -- wish it were mine)



