

My First Christmas Eve Dance

WRITTEN BY A JACK TAR



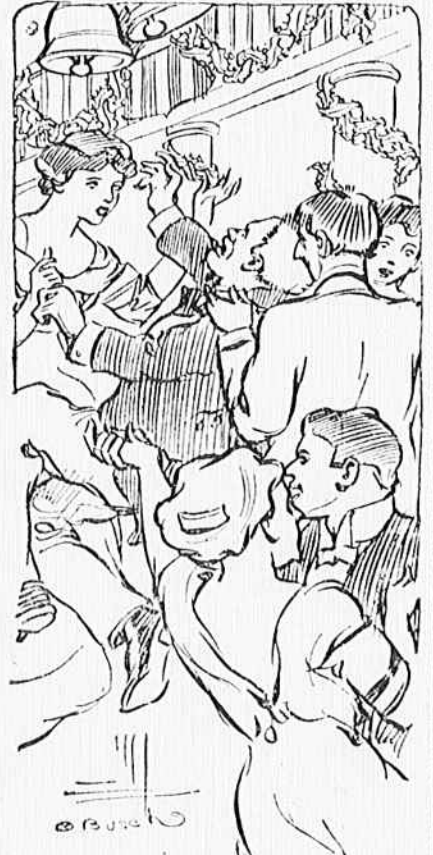
WHEN me and my shipmate, Bill Bolthead, was takin' a little cruise ashore last year we each got a pretty, sweet scented note with R. S. V. P. at the bottom, requestin' "the pleasure of your company" at a dance on Christmas eve. Bill, who is well up in these things, told me them letters meant "Reply Sharp; Very Pressin'." So we wrote our replies sharp, hancecept in "the very pressin' invitation."

Well, Christmas eve came round, and Bill and me rigged ourselves out in our best shore goin' togs and set sail for the dance. On reportin' ourselves we was mustered in a big cabin like a battleship's gun room, all tilted up with holly and mistletoe, and with the deck polished instead of holy stoned, and so slippery that I nearly pitched on to my bowsprit as I went through the hatchway.

"Vast heavin', Bill," I sez, comin' to an anchor; "this is worse than crossin' the bay in a gale of wind," but Bill he kept forin' ahead, as cool as a middy in command of a dispatch boat, so I slipped my cable and went on full speed in his wake, sweatin' like a marine recruit goin' into haction for the first time. We was nearly the last aboard, for the cabin was pretty full, the men lookin' like restaurang waiters and the ladies all as smart as a cruiser squadron in rainbow rig.

Presently a fussy little chap, who I took to be the commodore, but who Bill said was the M. Sea man, though he didn't look as if he knowed much about the sea, came up and gave us both a pretty card with sailin' orders on, which Bill called a program. Then he passed the word to clear for haction, and a band on the quarterdeck aft struck up and the dauncin' began.

As I was leavin' against the bul'warks the M. Sea man came up and



"I NEARLY PITCHED ON TO MY BOWSPRIT," said somethin' what I couldn't catch, so I said, "Aye, aye, sir!" and before I knowed it he had hantrojuiced me to the smartest Al clipper built little craft I ever turned my searchlights on, and somehow the next minute her sweet little figurehead was close to mine, and I made fast around her amidships and steamed into haction.

"This is a polker, not an 'olmpike," she said presently in a voice as sweet as the boat's whistle pipin' at grog time, so I axed her parling and navigated accordin'. Well, we boxed the compass about twice, when some one ran foul of my starboard bow and threw me on my beam ends. My consort was so consarned and bore a hand so prettily to haul' me up that I quite forgot to say what I was goin' to to the lubber. Next time I was goin' to dance with her again, but she told me she was engaged. "Hindeed!" sez I as 'nugly as a bulldog. Then a red-headed swab took her in tow, and the band strikin' up the "Keel Row" there was the two of 'em a-scaperin' away just like old Mac, our second engineer, when he has had what he calls "a wee drap" on pay nights.

Soon after I see her sittin' fannin' herself, while the red-headed chap was a-carryin' on shameful with a girl in pink, so I tacked towards her and told her what I thought of the swab she was engaged to and offered to bash in his headlights. I thought she would never stop laughin' as she told me she didn't even know him and was only engaged to him for the dance. And then I felt better.

Well, to cut the yarn short, at eight bells I conveyed her down to the ward room to mess, and after that we hove to in a conservative full of palms and flowers and smellin' like a tropical island, and then—well, after a very hot engagement, in which I had to bring both broadsides into haction, my pretty prize hauled down her flag, and a few months later we signaled for a sky plot, and I towed her safe into port.—London Tit-Bits.

MUCH VALUE IN DISCONTENT

Writer Finds Fault With the Celebrated Advice That Was Given by Benjamin Franklin.

"Don't keep your expenses down to your income. Bring your income up to your expenses. If you manage to live on what you make, you will never be spurred to better performances." This is the advice given by a San Franciscan who has made good. And why not? It seems heresy, but it is not, when you come to think it over. Take the clerk on \$1,200 or \$1,800 a year. If he is one of those carefully restrained men, keeping not only his expenses but his wants well within his meager income, he will rei n a clerk all his life; die with that same income in his old age. The man who has wants beyond his income to gratify, if he has any merit in him, will hustle to bring in the dollars that he needs. Maybe he does not actually wish to live on a better scale than he is living, but wishes to save for investment or for a rainy day. He must lift his revenue or live a hand-to-mouth existence, or run into debt beyond his ability to pay. He becomes ambitious and more industrious, more ingenious, an abler man all round. They say that contentment is better than riches, but contentment is a brake on progress. It is the discontented men who bestir themselves to get what they hanker for, and usually get it.—A. H. D., in the San Francisco News-Letter.

ANIMAL THAT NEVER DRINKS

Not a Drop Ever Passes the Brazilian Porcupine's Lips—Lives on Bark and Leaves.

An animal that never drinks has arrived in London. Undoubtedly it is the first and only one, and all London is rushing to see it. Naturally such a curiosity is confined in the zoo.

"Wot a hun'appy beast it is! No wonder its bristles stick out like that," remarks a man who has just drawn the back of his hand across his mouth.

"E do look drier than me Sunday 'at," assented his companion.

Temperance advocates use the newcomer to point a moral and adorn a tale. "Behold the lesson that he teacheth! Never a drop passes his lips. Would that there were men in London that could say as much!"

It remains to be seen whether this Brazilian tree porcupine will take to drink now that he has been separated from his South American habitat and brought to the gloomy and chill purities of London. If he does demand drink, what will he choose? Maybe some of the curious visitors will surreptitiously ply him with a little ale or gin or some other London beverage to see its effect upon an animal that has never had a drop of anything to drink.

In his native Brazil this animal feeds upon the bark and leaves of trees, and the natives are very fond of its flesh. It has a prehensile tail, which serves as a fifth hand.

Fire Worshipers.
The Parsees of Bombay are called the "fire worshipers" of the east because they hold in great reverence the fire they brought with them from Persia and have never allowed it to become extinguished in their temples; and because they worship the sun as the author of life.

The Parsees have always held aloof from other people and are famed for their commercial ability. As a consequence of this ability they are the wealthiest, most cultured and influential class in Bombay. So numerous are they that Bombay has been called the "city of Parsees."

The religion of the Parsees is one of the ancient religions of the world, and was the religion of Persia when that country was second in power of the four great empires of the world—Babylonia, Persia, Greece, Rome.

In a great many particulars the religion of the Parsees comes nearer to Christianity than any other Oriental faith.

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