

"HANDS UP!"

A Night of Thrills Ends With "Love's Old Sweet Song."

By William Freeman

It began, as thrillers sometimes do, as a sort of joke. I was reading in the library after dinner, when Martin Compton, from next door but three, came round to the back of the house and tapped at the French windows. When I let him in, he said: "Cheerio! Where's everybody?"

I told him that Uncle Christopher was being the guest of honor at a scientific luncheon in town. Gladys, the maid, had gone to the talks with the chauffeur she's going to marry as soon as he gets a job; and Mrs. Fleet, the housekeeper, was asleep in the kitchen.

"Admitted and found correct," said Martin. "I can hear the old girl's snoring. Look here, young Phil, there's no sense in staying indoors. What about having a spot of whoopee on our own?"

"What about it?" I said. "It's nearly nine already, and all the show will be as good as over before we can get there."

"Not at Urbanston they won't," said Martin, and unfolded a newspaper. It was a copy of the "Urbanston Advertiser and Home Counties Gazette."

"Read that," said Martin, pointing to a paragraph.

The paragraph stated that the Grand Inaugural Opening Ceremony of the Urbanston Palais de Danse, the newest and best equipped of its kind in England, would take place that night. Evening or fancy dress. Hundreds of distinguished people had promised to be present, including a buffet supper. Tickets, including a buffet supper, were fifteen shillings each.

"You can wear that cowboy rig-out you sported last Christmas," said Martin. "And I'll find something among the paper's props. (Martin's father is a magazine artist, and when Martin isn't at Oxford, he's being made to pose as the athletic young hero, or the thin-tipped villain.)" "I'll come back and collect you as soon as I've changed."

I looked promising enough, so I scribbled a note telling Mrs. Fleet, and then went upstairs and routed out the Wild West costume. I covered up the most spectacular part with a mackintosh and went downstairs to find Martin waiting. He was wearing a fawn raincoat turned up at the collar, so that I couldn't see what he had on underneath. But his hat looked like a chauffeur's.

"We can get a bus at the corner," he said.

It was fine and clear, with all the stars there ever were twinkling overhead. One of those nights when little romantic thrills run up and down your spine. We rumbled through crowded streets till we came to a terrific barack of a place, all floodlighted and flagged.

"Ere yare gents," said the conductor. "The new Pally de Danse!"

We got down.

Martin bought tickets at the box-office, and when we shed our hats and things—he took mine with him—we went into the main hall. Martin said—and I don't doubt him—that it was Kronstein's biggest yet. Everyone knows Sir Adolf Kronstein's theory—that the more you give the man in the street for his money, the more money there is for you.

The word "super" had been badly overworked, but it really belonged here. Great white-and-gold columns held up a roof through which the liveliest streams of color poured, to change and vanish on the polished floor below. Huge mirrors played tricks with the walls, so that sometimes there didn't seem to be any definite boundaries to the place.

But the visitors themselves were the most exciting of all. If, like Sir Adolf, you're a self-made millionaire, with thousands of people always hoping you'll show them how you did it, it isn't difficult to collect distinguished people for your entertainments, especially if you give the right kind of supper.

Martin and I, as we edged our way through the crowd, were constantly bumping into people whose photos you see in the weekly papers.

There were two bands, both desperately slick and noisy. Couples danced when they felt like it, and stopped and watched the other dancers when they didn't. There was a permanent crowd about six deep at the buffet.

If there was one thing that wasn't super, it was the ventilation. I'd just got to the point of deciding that if the place got much hotter I should go over sideways like a wilting candle, when a man with a rosette in his buttonhole—the chief M.C.—stepped into the middle of the room and blew a whistle. The band pulled up short in the middle of a fox-trot, and the dancers stopped dancing and the talkers talking.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the rosetted man, when he could make himself heard, "I have the honor to announce that his Highness Prince Frederick of Luxembourg has arrived, and in company with Sir Adolf Kronstein, will shortly make an inspection of the hall and the costumes. Will you be good enough to range yourselves in a double line to receive him?"

Royalty was to be present, after all. The huge gilt doors at the far end swung open, and Sir Adolf and his Highness came in. There was a dark man with them, apparently an aide-de-camp or secretary. He prince was big and sleek, with a square chin. He carried himself almost truculently. Sir Adolf, plump and short and bald, looked very unroyal beside him.

The gilt doors closed behind them. The prince's glance down the double line. We noticed that he was smiling. "Like a chap who's just heard a first-class joke, and isn't sure whether he ought to pass it on," as Martin said afterwards. The crowd tried not to watch him too obviously.

Suddenly he spoke.

"Ladies and gentlemen, it's mighty good of you to bunch up like this for a total stranger, and believe me, I appreciate the honour."

"Why, he talks like an American," I whispered to Martin. But he wasn't there; he had slipped behind a pillar. The prince went on:

"Sure, I like the look of you so much that I'm going to treat you rightaway as personal friends. Honest to goodness, I am!" He jerked out the sentences, grinning as he spoke. "And you're going to assist to that proposition by holding your hands—both hands—above your silly heads. Up with 'em, unless you want my partner here to plump some pep into you."

All eyes turned to the dark man. He had produced a revolver, and was holding it within an inch or so of Sir Adolf's back. Sir Adolf's face had gone a pasty white. Up to that moment I fancy he had been telling himself that the prince was being eccentric in rather bad taste; but that Royalty was Royalty, and he couldn't very well be interrupted.

Sir Adolf put up his arms with the rest.

The prince produced from his pocket a bag—the kind carried by auctioneer's clerks, but made of black silk.

"I reckon we needn't delay you more than twenty minutes, if you're slick about it," he said, and began a progress down the line.

The dark man, preceded by Sir Adolf as a kind of hostage, followed closely.

Between them the two collected every ring, watch, brooch, purse, cigarette-case worth collecting. And they could tell by a single glance whether it was worth it or wasn't. Several imposing necklaces and brooches were handed back with a snappy "Keep it for the next Christmas-tree!"

There was no active opposition. The ordinary palais-de-danse visitor can't argue effectively with a man whose eyes seem to be in fifty places at once, and who is backed up by another man carrying a six-shooter.

I was watching them come nearer and nearer. I was almost at the end of the line, when I heard Martin's voice behind me mumbling: "When he gets opposite, faint."

"Faint?" I whispered.

"Yes, collapse. Don't turn your head, you ass. Just flop, same as you did in the charades last year. Can do."

I nodded.

And when the prince was level I did my best—sort of gurgling sound, hands wadded convulsively, knees sagging; totter forward, recovery, totter backwards, crash! blurring into him as I went down.

At the same instant Martin stepped from behind his pillar and struck over my dead body, so to speak. His fist caught the dark man a frightful whack on the jaw. He spun round and dropped amid a chorus of screams and gasps. The prince himself was the only person who stood stiff and still and silent. For Martin had produced a pistol, a queer-shaped flat one.

"Sorry and all that," he said; "but it's your jolly old Highness' turn to do physical jerks. Stick 'em up!"

The prince did as he was told.

"Keep 'em there for the present!" said Martin, and to me: "No need to pick daisies any longer, Phil."

I got on my feet, feeling self-conscious and rather an idiot. Martin picked up the dark man's revolver, examined it, and grinned. The dark man himself was now awake, and feeling his jaw tenderly.

"Blank cartridges," said Martin. "I thought so. You hadn't the pluck to do the job thoroughly."

"Say, officer," said the prince, almost humbly, "how did you get here?"

"That," said Martin, "you'll find out later. Here come the local police. You'll go quiet, I suppose?"

"Yep!" said the prince. And in due course went.

It was nearly twelve before we left the Palais de Danse. Sir Adolf sent us back in his own Daimler. He was so grateful that, as Martin said, if we hadn't been careful he'd have made us a present of it, with chauffeur complete.

On the way home we discussed the prince and his partner—naturally.

"Seven years ago," said Martin. "The little portions," said Martin. "The Inspector at the station told me he was practically certain they were a couple which have been spoofing half the hotels in France and Belgium, after making New York too hot to hold 'em."

"How soon did you guess he wasn't a prince?" I asked.

"Almost as soon as I saw him. His dress suit was baggy at the knees and bulgy at the pockets, and he wore the wrong kind of collar. The fact that I happened to be wearing an American policeman's outfit, complete with pistol, was a slab of sheer luck, of course. The only thing I was afraid of was that he'd spot me too soon. You played up like a brick."

"Oh, rot!" I said.

"But you did. I say, Phil, we've been in a good many jolly larks together, haven't we?"

"Well?" I said. For some silly reason my heart had started to thud.

"What I mean is, we've known one another so long that it wouldn't surprise anyone enormously if you and I—if we decided we—er—got—er—"

"Engaged?" I said.

"That's what I was driving at," said Martin. "Old girl, how does the idea strike you?"

"All O.K. by me," I said, trying to be casual and modern and unromantic, and then went and spilt it all by starting to cry.

But Martin—Well, it was all O.K. by the time the car stopped.—London "Answers."



Little Reggie declares in no uncertain tones that it is mealtime, so Touser is right there with the milk bottle. Buggy, baby and dog are all English products.

Chant of the Box Cars

Consigned for lading, marked for repairs. We hustle about the world's affairs. Like the roadbeds, having our ups and downs. We rock through meadows, we clank through towns. In a thousand, thousand obscure parades. We glide down valleys, we climb long grades. Through fields that smell of the fresh-turned sod. Through the tasseled corn and the golden rod. The cattle lift their heads as we pass; The sheep gaze up from their crooked-crooked grass. Shunted, side-tracked, laden again. Fulfilling the service required of men. Under cloudy or blue-spread skies. We go with our loads of merchandise; While the roadbed roars and the whistles call. And the signalling lanterns rise and fall!

—By Harry Kemp in The N.Y. Sun.

Where Fat is Fashionable

Slimness is a thing of beauty to the Canadian girl. But the women of West Africa must be fat if they wish to attract. The stouter the black mammy becomes the more fashionable is her figure.

Consequently, her meals are somewhat prolonged affairs. They usually consist of yams, ground into a pulp, which is called "fou-fou," rice, and bananas. And to assist the process of putting on weight, she takes as little exercise as possible.

There is a certain tribe in Nigeria where girls about to be married, and who wish to appear at their best, are sent to what is called "the fattening house."

Here they are fed at short intervals on all sorts of luxuries—chicken, eggs, soups, and so on. They stay in the place for several weeks, stuffing fat all they are worth, and taking care to move as little as possible.

When the happy bridegroom comes to claim his bride at the end of the fattening process he finds her so tremendously fat that she is unable to rise from her seat. He is a very proud man as he makes arrangements for this huge mountain of flesh to be carried to his home.

Once the dusky belles are married and resume their normal life they lose much of this unnatural fatness. Nevertheless, they do their best never to get below a certain weight.

It is the plump girl who gets all the admiration from the opposite sex. The thin girl is passed by unnoticed.

The Canadian girl nibbling dry biscuits and sipping orangejuice because fashion decrees that she must be slim, and the West African maiden gorging until it is unsafe to swallow another mouthful, because she is expected to be fat, are both slaves of fashion, and "sisters under their skin."

In the Bright Blue Water

All that has been written about the beauty of the South Sea Islands is no exaggeration. In some shallow water near the dock I found several hours of enjoyment watching the strange marine life. There were spiny sea urchins, from little greenish purple ones, the size and shape of a chestnut burr to large black ones, that looked like a crouched-up porcupine. The hundreds of rain-colored fish, the size of pet goldfish, did not seem to mind them in the least. Little, bright, sapphire-blue fish, bright yellow ones with long streaming tails; black and white striped ones, shaped like a pumpkin seed with fan tails; some were like greenish-colored darning needles, nearly invisible in the bright blue water. Each tiny fish was more strangely shaped and more beautifully colored than the last. Some had immense heads and tiny bodies while others had big bodies with heads and tails so much alike that movement only could differentiate them. There was ruby, lavender, emerald—in short, every imaginable color—inlaid on a background of blue water and brown rocks covered with a bright green algae on which the fish were feeding.

Several of us took a trip around the island in an up-to-date taxi. The tall coconut palms, the beautiful scarlet hibiscus flowers, and the dense tropical vegetation that covers the sides of the island's high cloud-enveloped summit, were most beautiful.—From "A Boy Scout With Byrd," by Paul Siple.

The Swan Goes Visiting

The village of Wellesbourne, where the Deweses and the Granvilles lived, bordered upon the park of the Lucy family, whose deer are forever associated with the early life of Shakespeare. Miss Seward was thrilled with this contact with Shakespearean scenes; though winter was not the most favorable time to enjoy them.

The properties were well maintained by Mr. Dewes's brother, Mr. Granville, and his wife and children. Christmas entertainments, courtesies exchanged with congenial neighbors, card parties, home concerts, reading aloud, and exalted conversation "spiced the wintry hours of the day and night on smooth and rapid pinions."

In the years which were now to come, such visits as these to the Dewes family were to count among the chief pleasures which Miss Seward enjoyed. She was received with flattering ardor, and entertained and flattered as an honored guest. Her opinions were listened to with deference; her remarkable conversational powers were stimulated and praised. Her lovely voice made her the centre of attention when she was called upon to read and recite. Her vivacity, her store of information, her quick retort and apt quotation, and her readiness to listen and admire, made her arrival welcome and her departure regretted.—Margaret Ashmun, in "The Singing Swan: An Account of Anna Seward."

Preventing Tooth Decay

Recent theories of biologists and dentists, chiefly in England, hold that tooth decay is caused by bad diet instead of by unclean teeth, were challenged by Dr. H. E. Friessell, dean of the Dental School of the University of Pittsburgh, and Dr. J. J. Enright of the Mellon Institute before a recent meeting of dental specialists in Pittsburgh. For nine years the two institutions have been making a joint investigation of why teeth decay. The chief cause, they believe, is the presence around the teeth of living bacteria apparently identical with the bacteria that makes milk turn.

Steps

It is not enough to take steps which may some day lead to a goal; each step must itself be a goal and a step likewise.

Colombia Gets 600-Mile Circuit

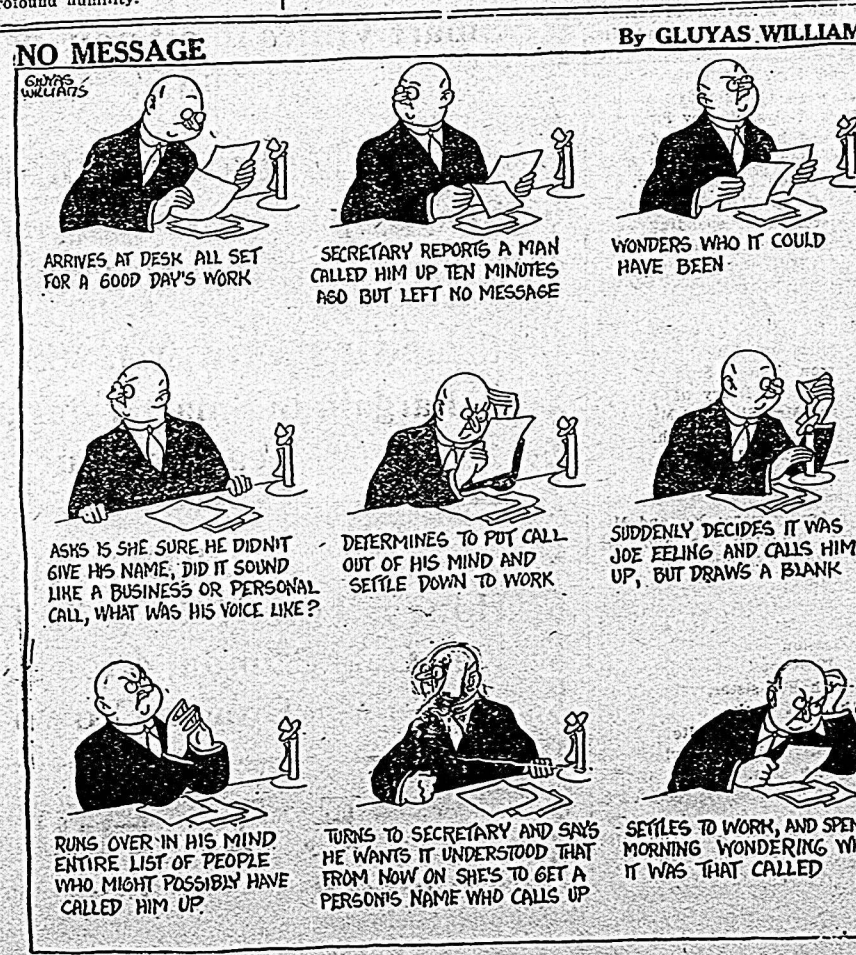
A 600-mile telephone line was opened recently in Colombia, South America, connecting Buenaventura, the west coast port of entry, and north west coast cities, with Bogota, the nation's capital, according to Telephone Topics. The line cost \$1,500,000 and is the first and only means of direct communication between the west coast coffee section of the country and the capital. The building of this line will further the country's development, as the impenetrable range of mountains which divides Colombia has made it impossible, except at excessive cost, to build a highway or railway connecting the two sections.

Up and Doing

Not enjoyment and not sorrow is our destined end or way; But to act that each to-morrow Finds us further than to-day. We must not lie, we must not flatter; We must be true, we must not strive; We must be weary, still pursuing; Learn to labor and to wait.

—Longfellow.

NO MESSAGE



ARRIVES AT DESK ALL SET FOR A GOOD DAY'S WORK. SECRETARY REPORTS A MAN CALLED HIM UP TEN MINUTES AGO BUT LEFT NO MESSAGE. WONDERS WHO IT COULD HAVE BEEN. ASKS IS SHE SURE HE DIDN'T GIVE HIS NAME, DID IT SOUND LIKE A BUSINESS OR PERSONAL CALL, WHAT WAS HIS VOICE LIKE? DETERMINES TO PUT CALL OUT OF HIS MIND AND SETTLE DOWN TO WORK. SUDDENLY DECIDES IT WAS JOE FEELING AND CALLS HIM UP, BUT DRAWS A BLANK. RINGS OVER IN HIS MIND ENTIRE LIST OF PEOPLE WHO MIGHT POSSIBLY HAVE CALLED HIM UP. TURNS TO SECRETARY AND SAYS HE WANTS IT UNDERSTOOD THAT FROM NOW ON SHE'S TO GET A PERSON'S NAME WHO CALLS UP. SETTLES TO WORK, AND SPENDS MORNING WONDERING WHO IT WAS THAT CALLED.

Country Greeting

Coming home from a meeting, some of us were agreeing that our country town was a delightful place to live in. It was a beautiful evening in the late autumn, with a touch of frost in the air; hills clear against the sky; gardens ablaze with Montbretias, Michaelmas Daisies, Chrysanthemums and a faint, delicious smell of burning leaves in the air.

When you meet a friend in our country town, instead of saying: "How are you?" she is much more likely to say: "How's your garden?" Such a nice greeting, and one that conjures up all sorts of visions.

A garden, small or large, is always a joy and an interest. Even in winter we get much pleasure in sitting before the fire, reading seedsmen's catalogues and dreaming dreams of what our garden will be like in the summer. We look at the bowl of crocuses, which we arranged with such joy; at the honesty with its creamy, gray shades. I can remember with what interest I looked at the flower of honesty for the first time, for I was brought up in a town, and had never seen it at its flowering stage. Then there are the bags of lavender, making linen cupboard and drawers fragrant, the pot-pourri, made from an old recipe. This year I put pot-pourri in my bowl of everlasting and it was a great improvement, as it took away the dried smell. Have you ever made a herb bag? Fill a muslin bag with the leaves of lavender, verbena, rosemary and bay, and let it soak in your bath for a few minutes, squeezing it well. It is both fragrant and refreshing.

Then, in winter, how interesting it is to feed the birds! I never knew how much birds drink, till I got an old stone quern which gets filled with rain water. Now I can understand how they must suffer from thirst in winter, when everything is frozen over. The tits are the most amusing and we hang strings of nuts, chop bones and a tit bell for them. I wonder if tits

often come into the house, I have had them come in and take nuts off my bed. First the nuts were put on the window sill, then on a chair, and finally on the bed. We always have a box of seed for the chaffinches and an apple, impaled on a nail, is much appreciated by blackbirds and thrushes.

Whenever January comes in, we watch for the first snowdrop. They are called "Fair maids of February" and are most plentiful then, but I know gardens where they are out at the very beginning of January. These come the acornites, looking like little loops, and behold, next day they are out! Next the crocuses, making such lovely patches of color, and then the catkins in their gray fur coats and yellow overalls.—A delicious description of them, and I don't know who wrote it. But, loveliest of all, to my mind, are the daffodils. The name comes from an old word "Afofyde," meaning "that which cometh early."

I always feel so much in sympathy with Herrick when he sings: "Fair daffodils, we wept to see you haste away so soon."

One day in summer I saw something attached to a stalk in a vase of sweet peas, and found it was a gray-green bag of spider's eggs. The mother spider sometimes sat on it, and sometimes on the flowers. We went away from home and when we came back, there were a lot of little spiders running about, but the mother had disappeared.

By talking of sweet peas, I seem to have got round to summer and so completed the year. Summer does not seem complete without sweet peas, and I never tire of the beautiful word picture which Keats gives of them:

"Here are sweet peas, on tiptoes for a flight, With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white. And taper fingers, catching at all things, To bind them all about with tiny rings."

Higher Education

By L. P. Jacks in "The Education of the Whole Man"

No long ago I paid a visit to a great factory where hundreds of young women are employed. I remarked on their ease and dexterity and cheerfulness. "We have a school of physical culture attached to the mill," said the manager, "and we teach them to walk in our evening classes. The interesting thing is," he added, "that when we have taught them to walk and to carry themselves easily they begin asking for other things. Some want to sing, some want to dance and some want books, and three of them have been writing poetry. I expect we shall end up by becoming a little university."

Our vision of education as an episodic process conducted by professional drudges, whose dull humming goes on inside the walls of a school or a college, should be expanded into the idea of it as a great romance, the summary adventure of our age, the central concern of every citizen, lifelong in its duration, universal in its scope, addressed throughout to the making of whole men, and having nothing less for its object than to convert the totality of knowledge into human skill, and bring it to bear on the pursuit of social activity.

My own education was sadly defective as an education of the "whole man." It was divided into what are called "subjects"—just uncorrelated chapters of knowledge, parcels of book-lore and hear-say, tied up with string, and pitched into our mind as into a basket. There was one set of operators who trained our minds in the class-rooms, and another set who trained our bodies in the gymnasium. And there was a third gentleman, called "the chaplain," who was supposed to train our characters and look after our souls. But there was no unity of aim. The mind department, the body department, the character department, the soul department were at sixes and sevens. In all this piecemeal procedure one thing was consistently lost sight of—the whole boy, who is mind, body, character and soul all in one.

At a meeting called to protect our beautiful countryside from the invasion of ugliness now threatening it—factories, jerry-building, hideous advertisements and such-like—I heard a speaker make a profound remark. "You will never keep your beautiful England," he said, "until you get a beautiful people to live in it." By "a beautiful people" he meant simply a people whose bodies had been liberally educated to correspond with a liberal education of the mind, and to support it at every point the eye trained to see beauty and to value it, the ear trained to hear harmony and to resent discord, the hand trained to fine craftsmanship, the whole man, mind and body together, to creative activity.

It is vanity to attempt to graft an AI culture of the mind on a CS culture of the body, or, as a foreign critic once expressed it, "to train the minds of the young men in your lecture-rooms as though you meant to them to become clergymen and to train their bodies in the football field as though you meant to become policemen." The coeducation of mind and body would recognize that mind and body would be defined alone in terms of sound sleep, good digestion, muscular strength and animal spirits, but demands in addition an organization, an economy, a self-control not to be attained without careful training, and beyond all that, the development of the finer aptitudes for self-expression in creative forms. The human body is naturally skill-hungry, and until that hunger is satisfied it will be ill at ease, craving for something it has not got and seeking its satisfactions in external excitements which eventually exhaust its vitality.

Revenge

Revenge is ever a hypocrite, rage at least, struck with the naked sword; but revenge, stealthy and patient, conceals the weapon of the assassin.