

The Free Press Short Story

"THE IRISH BOGTROTTER"

T. S. STRIBLING

In the hot gasoline-scented air of the hangar, a knot of red-legged soldiers jeered in French...

"It's about their hydroplanes," explained an onlooker in rapid French...

The young American drew out his watch. "They haven't time to fight," he advised...

"Would you stop an affair of honor for a flight, friend?" cried one of the short French soldiers in a shocked voice...

"The safety of France first," declared Martin, holding up his hand and replying...

"Ah! The French soldiers thought it over. It is true."

Both fighters hesitated. Patrick Meagher, one of the first aviation instructors imported by the French government...

Martin followed the trim Frenchman into the hangar. The soldiers divided impartially into two squads...

Meagher stretched his arms above his head. "It's the heat," he soothed...

"He bragged because he could get 'T'agle up first," pursued Oriet, with French irrepressibility...

"He's going three times as fast as the camels and horses," concluded Martin...

Oriet stared blankly ahead and said nothing. A volley from the long Arab rifles sounded louder than ever...

"They gave the water a final pat then 'le Faucon' sailed upward like a huge flying fish...

As Oriet sent 'le Faucon' aloft in great circles, the map grew broader and less detailed...

Oriet jerked off Khaki blouse, kicked off shoes and the next instant, to Martin's utter amazement, dove headlong into the lake...

GOOD SHOES FOR YOUNG AND OLD "Correctly Fitted" B. D. RACHLIN, Acton

A thin line of railway stretched through flat greens and browns that represented lush jungle-covered hills...

A great exhilaration filled Martin. He was delightedly cool now, and as the motor climbed the air, he had a physical lightness of feeling...

The quarrel between Oriet and Meagher, his own difficulty in getting cables to his newspaper, his lack of recent stirring news, a sarcastic letter from the editor...

Oriet, likewise, had responded to the thrill of flying. He laughed. "About our machines—that's all!"

"What aroused his temper?" Oriet throttled down to make talking easier. "I must have made him mad by quoting a mathematical formula for lift..."

Martin laughed and looked toward the serrated horizon of the Atlas range. "Where's Meagher now?"

Oriet peered over the side of the cockpit for a moment. "Down yonder," he nodded at something white moving far below 'le Faucon' as it sped along...

"Can't the Arab snipers reach him?" "They do not shoot often. He is higher than he looks, anyway."

Presently Oriet shut off power entirely and the monoplane sliced through the high air with a whistling sound. Below them the hostile country lay like a great convalescent saucer...

"Down the lake rushed 'le Faucon' with the men packed down like three canned sardines. Oriet gave the hydroplane full speed and tipped up her...

Oriet glanced down anxiously. "Wonder what they are doing to Meagher?" "Why, they're chasing him," cried Martin...

"Camels," supplemented Oriet. "You see their blankets from the air." "Chasing him like ants after a butterfly," cried the reporter; "and Meagher's headed for the lake!"

"He is!" cried the Frenchman in sharp surprise. "Something's happened to him!"

"He's going three times as fast as the camels and horses," concluded Martin. "Leave them in a walk!"

Oriet answered by tipping the monoplane downward. The air rushed upward in a gale. The antlike cavalry below grew larger. The scudding biplane became more defined...

Oriet pushed forward his stick. 'Le Faucon' took a steeper bank and darted at the crippled biplane like a striking kingfisher. To Martin the surface of the lake seemed to darken. From the rear, the reporter heard the sharp spitting of rifles...

Martin sat in the bobbing ship, staring. Oriet caught 'T'agle's pontoon, swung aboard, and clambered quickly to the motor where Meagher already worked...

"Jigger her, man, jiggle her!" thundered Meagher. "Ye can't rise square like that!"

"We've got to go back," snapped Oriet, looking white as the end of the lake, not a hundred yards distant. "Start over!"

"Lemme have it!" he belated. Oriet glanced quickly at the Irishman. "If you will," he shouted anxiously.

Meagher grabbed the control in great relief, gave 'le Faucon' a quick turn that sent the end of the hydroplane under the water with the noise of a cataract...

"If you'll let me out!" shouted Martin, clinging to the rail, "maybe they would let me get to a cable. I'm not a combatant!"

"What, man," shouted the Celt. "Do ye think I am? It's all or none with us." The squads on both sides of the lake were taking careful aim at the crazily spinning hydroplane...

"Le Faucon" swooped down the lake with the noise and the speed of a sea lion. The exhaust of her motor had risen to a high, vibrant roar. They were within the last hundred yards of shore...

"The water beneath them was a blur of whitish green. They were running over ten inches of water weed. Next instant Meagher tipped up the elevators of the hydroplane. The rushing hiss of the water faded away."

"They flashed over the white rim making straight for the sand bank. A pickering sensation knotted the muscles of Martin's chest and stomach. Every sinew in his crouching form strained as though to help lift the hydroplane. Suddenly 'le Faucon' veered, taking the contour of the sand slope like a tip tilted swallow. A thorny cactus scratched the bottom of one pontoon from end to end. From down the lake came a faint popping of rifles. 'Le Faucon' climbed up a fish hawk overburdened with a salmon. Martin, who had been holding his breath under a vague impression that...

he was lighter that way, now exhaled guardedly as he leaped forward. "To the cable station, Pat!" he yelled in the Irishman's ear.

Oriet, too, bent over, thrust an impulsive arm about the Celt's great shoulders. "Mon ami," he began with an emotional catch in his voice. "You have saved my honor, and 'le Faucon.' I must apologize!"

Meagher grinned, in the best of spirits. "Ah, sure now, don't bother about me bad temper. 'Twas the heat. I'm not forgettin' you came down to get me. And say, I meant no harm when I called ye a Frinchman."

BEWARE—THE LAW It has frequently been suggested that every drunk driving conviction should result in suspension of license. How many does it surprise to learn that every drunk driving conviction does result in suspension not only of driver's licenses, but also of motor vehicle permits and markers? These statements were made by Hon. T. B. McQueen, K.C., Ontario's Minister of Highways.

Of thirty-two thousand suspension orders issued in the last seven years, twenty-six thousand have required the surrender or confiscation of markers, as well as drivers' licenses. Some 25,000 drivers have been refused licenses, because of their failure to satisfy examiners of their ability, at least on first examination.

Licenses and permits and markers also are suspended in every case of drunk driving and also in cases of reckless driving and speeding resulting in accidents. Licenses are frequently suspended in reckless driving cases whether or not accident results.

Hundreds of licenses have been cancelled because of information that a driver has become unfit because of mental illness, injury, or various physical defects, such as poor vision, nervous breakdown, epilepsy, heart condition or paralysis.

Hundreds of licenses have been suspended because of operating records which show that drivers have frequently been convicted of minor offences or been involved in minor accidents, or have been the subject of repeated complaints of dangerous driving.

These facts have been published before. Recently, however, they have been forgotten, if one can judge by the avalanche of misleading information which was released from what should have been authoritative sources, charged the Minister of Highways.

The realization of these facts will be far more conducive to safe driving than any impression that the Department of Highways is adopting an apathetic attitude towards those whose driving is dangerous.—Picton Times.

SCOTT'S SCRAP-BOOK By R. J. SCOTT

KNOWN AS IRISH GAIL, WHOSE PROFILE HAS BEEN ON THE UNITED STATES FIVE-CENT PIECE, THE "BUFFALO NICKEL" IS TO BE SUPPLANTED WITH ONE PORTRAYING JEFFERSON.

Curious St. Helena, whose portrait is on the one-cent postage stamp, is shown in his nose—causing an error in the printing.

Prehistoric Bones Found in Ontario

Gigantic, ancient bones recovered from swampland near Norwich, Ontario, are believed to prove conclusively that huge prehistoric monsters roamed Ontario millions of years ago. A large leg bone, two pelvic bones and a pair of petrified tusks, believed to belong to a Dinoceros, a carnivorous mammal which weighed nearly 20 tons, were found. Terry, a six-week-old puppy, is shown examining what is believed to be one of the pelvic bones.

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