

The Winner



STAN HALL, M.P.P.

Returned for a second term in the June 4th Provincial elections, Stan Hall, Streetsville district farmer was the successful Progressive-Conservative candidate in Halton.

Don't Worry, Ma

By ELLIS K. BALDWIN
McCleure Syndicate—WNU Features.

SERGEANT JIMMY GRAHAM sat slouched over the writing table in the Post Exchange gnawing at the end of his fountain pen. He had written letters as much as his mother loved to receive them. It wasn't so hard at first but now he was running out of things to say. The only piece of news he could think of was something you couldn't put down on paper. The commanding officer had given strict orders about that.

Jim's nostrils twitched. The memory of the spicy aroma in his mother's kitchen took him across the miles to Burtonville. She was standing beside the stove with a long spoon stirring a batch of apple butter the day he broke the news.

"Enlsted? Jim, that's fine," she said firmly, pushing back a strand of graying hair which clung moistly to her flushed cheek. "The Grahams have all been good soldiers," she sang out as she cut a thick slice of fresh bread and loaded it generously with the delicious brown concoction.

He had noticed her fingers tremble ever so slightly when she handed it to him. Jim came from a family of fighting men, right back to Great-Grandfather Ebenezer who carried a musket in 1812, she reminded him, as if he didn't know it. He knew too they had all returned. Every one of them except his own father.

That accounted for Ma's trembling fingers. "Put a Graham in a cage with man-eating tigers and nothing but his bare fists and he'd battle his way out somehow," she'd often said proudly. But when she read



The memory of spicy aroma in his mother's kitchen.

headlines about shipwrecks and sinkings Jim saw the color drain quickly from her face.

Jim's sister wrote him, "Ma took on something awful after you left. She's not afraid you can't handle yourself at the front. I guess you know what she does fear."

His letters arrived home steadily at first. When he was assigned to the job of instructor and it looked as if he would stay on this side for the duration, Ma grew calmer.

The letters, he knew, meant a great deal. Ma read them to almost anyone who would listen. She always said: "A good son writes regular."

Jim's pen scratched methodically across the paper. He put in a paragraph about the weather and, remembering regulations, crossed it out. His next was dated four days later. He looked around at the other guys writing relatives and sweethearts. He envied the way they kept the words flowing. "They're going at it like a final examination and as if they knew all the answers," Jim told himself.

Fascinated, he watched the sandy-haired corporal beside him. He had a nose upturned like a teakettle snout. Unconsciously Jim chewed his tongue as he wrote. "What you telling them, Corporal?" he asked.

"Here, have a look." A sly gleam lighted the corporal's eyes. Jim read a few lines and laughed aloud. It was perfect. The description of the screwball fellow who worked in the big kitchen was better than a candid photo. "Mind if I copy a little? Ma would get a laugh out of this."

Writing was easier after that. Jim swapped with other fellows. The letter marked the seventeenth was a cinch. He found a movie magazine on the reading table. It reviewed the film he'd seen at the camp theater the night before. Only as he copied the plot he kept thinking of the time his mother took him to the Bijou in Burtonville. She had bought his first long pants that day.

His wrist ached now. There were no more, but he was sitting across the room next to the schedule board. He saw the entire board didn't lack variety," he thought. "Everything from radio stars. Kate ... The bones in his burning coals when Don't worry about me. ... re treating me grand."

Quickly he addressed six envelopes. Then he folded his relatives and tucked them in. A moment later he was grinning happily beside the Post Exchange counter, licking the flaps. To the man there he said: "Can you space these so she'll get one about every four days?"

Once he was across, he knew, Ma wouldn't worry, because she realized when a Graham finally got into camp he could take care of himself.

Hooper

By SMITH WHITLAND
McCleure Syndicate—WNU Features.

AS THE bus drew near camp Chris began to worry; wonder and worry. What would actors with whom he had worked think if they knew that he, Stumpy Chris, was now earning coffee and cakes entertaining soldiers? He remembered the words of his agent:

"Are you sure that you want to do this, Chris? You're just hitting the big time now and off you go on a wild-goose chase. Making the army camps is all right for some stunts but you're different. You'll be taking a big cut in salary. Stick with me and I'll get you thirty weeks of the best time. What are you going to do when the USO closes this performance?"

"Don't worry, Gus," Chris answered, "I'll mail you the 10 per cent as usual; it won't be quite the money that you've been getting from me for the last couple of years, though."

"I don't want any commission on a deal like this," Gus replied heatedly. "If you are set on joining this camp show unit, I donate my share to patriotism."

Thus Chris had joined "Gals, Guys, Gags and Fun," latest production of USO Camp Shows, Inc. Sure, he knew that guys like him were getting their heads shot off overseas and he was still hoofing. So what? He hadn't asked for his draft deferment.

These were the things troubling Stumpy Chris as the bus pulled up to the entrance. Corporal Piney of the Special Services office was waiting at the post gate to meet and direct the troupe to the hospital. So it was to be a hospital this time? What a pleasant thought!

"Special Services sent me down here to see that none of you ham and egggers shows up lost, strayed or stolen," the corporal said.

"You talk as if you've been in show business yourself, Corporal," Chris addressed the newcomer. "Ever play a split week in Des Moines?"

"Yeah, I used to do a pretty fair magic turn," Corporal Piney replied. "You're Stumpy Chris, aren't you? We shared the bill in Des Moines a couple of years ago; remember? Some jump for me, huh; magician to soldier."

"Right, Corporal," Chris said, "sure I'm Stumpy Chris. How does your uniform fit by now?"

"Pretty good. This army life doesn't do a fellow any harm. Guess that they won't get you for a while yet."

"No," Chris answered disgustedly. "You know these draft boards; they stick a guy who wants in the army in 4-F and put someone who'd give an eyetooth to stay out of it in 1-A. Mine's 4-F."

"Oh, well, you're doing your part," the corporal said in an understanding tone. "We need USO shows here; can't get enough of them for the boys. Say, it looks like we're almost to the hospital."

Glancing from a window of the bus, Chris noticed that a large building with a red cross painted the length of the roof had come into view. "Is that the recreation hall?" he asked.

Corporal Piney nodded. "They got a stage to work on?" Again the corporal nodded.

Entering the building, Chris and his company were informed by a cheerful Red Cross Gray Lady that they would have fifteen minutes until curtain time. Upon further inquiry, Chris found that the building contained no dressing rooms. He wondered just what the army expected of a person anyway. What a life!

Fifteen minutes later, to the second, the audience began to file in. Dressed in bathrobes and pajamas they presented a rather bedraggled appearance. These fellows had seen plenty. What would they think of a 4-F civilian dancer?

Chris waited impatiently while the Carter twins finished amid a series of long-drawn-out whistles. It was tough to follow a sister team. Well, at least he could thank his lucky stars that he didn't follow the animal act.

"There's your cue, Chris," Stumpy Chris made his way to the center of the stage. They were stuck with him now. They'd have to like it.

"Say! That guy certainly has a lot of the ball!" a tall soldier, arm outstretched, exclaimed to Corporal Piney who was standing at his side. "Can't be that? Here I am with a broken wing feeling sorry for myself, and a one-legged guy comes out and goes through a terrific dance routine. I should complain, ha!"

"A lot of the ball!" the corporal replied enthusiastically. "That's an understatement! He's tops. I ought to know; I worked with him before the army got me."

Later, reflecting upon the evening, Stumpy Chris' head was ached. Yes, they were just like the youngsters he had known in France. This was another war but they hadn't changed. Maybe he'd have only one good leg; he could show the best of the 1-A's things about clog dancing.

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