

The Bos'n of "The Gull"

Written for The Western Home Monthly By C. Lewis Rotherham

IF this story has an old time flavor it is because the events herein related occurred many years ago. The world has changed since then, and in nothing more than in that which pertains to the sea. In the days of which I write the sailing vessel still held its own, and the picturesque "white wings" swelled to the freshening breeze. It was the time of the creaking windlass, of the sailor's chantie and of hemp and tar; the age of Drake and Frobisher and their stalwart supporters, to whom England owes so much. It was in these days of the old sea dogs that one, William Drew, was bos'n of the Gull which lay at anchor in the harbor of S— on the Devonshire coast. But William was not aboard that night. The Gull was due to sail on the morrow and the greater part of the crew were ashore, making the most of the

"Fair and foul," he replied, half bitterly.

She looked at him with questioning eyes and he answered the look.

"Fair for the going of the ship, but foul in that it takes me away again."

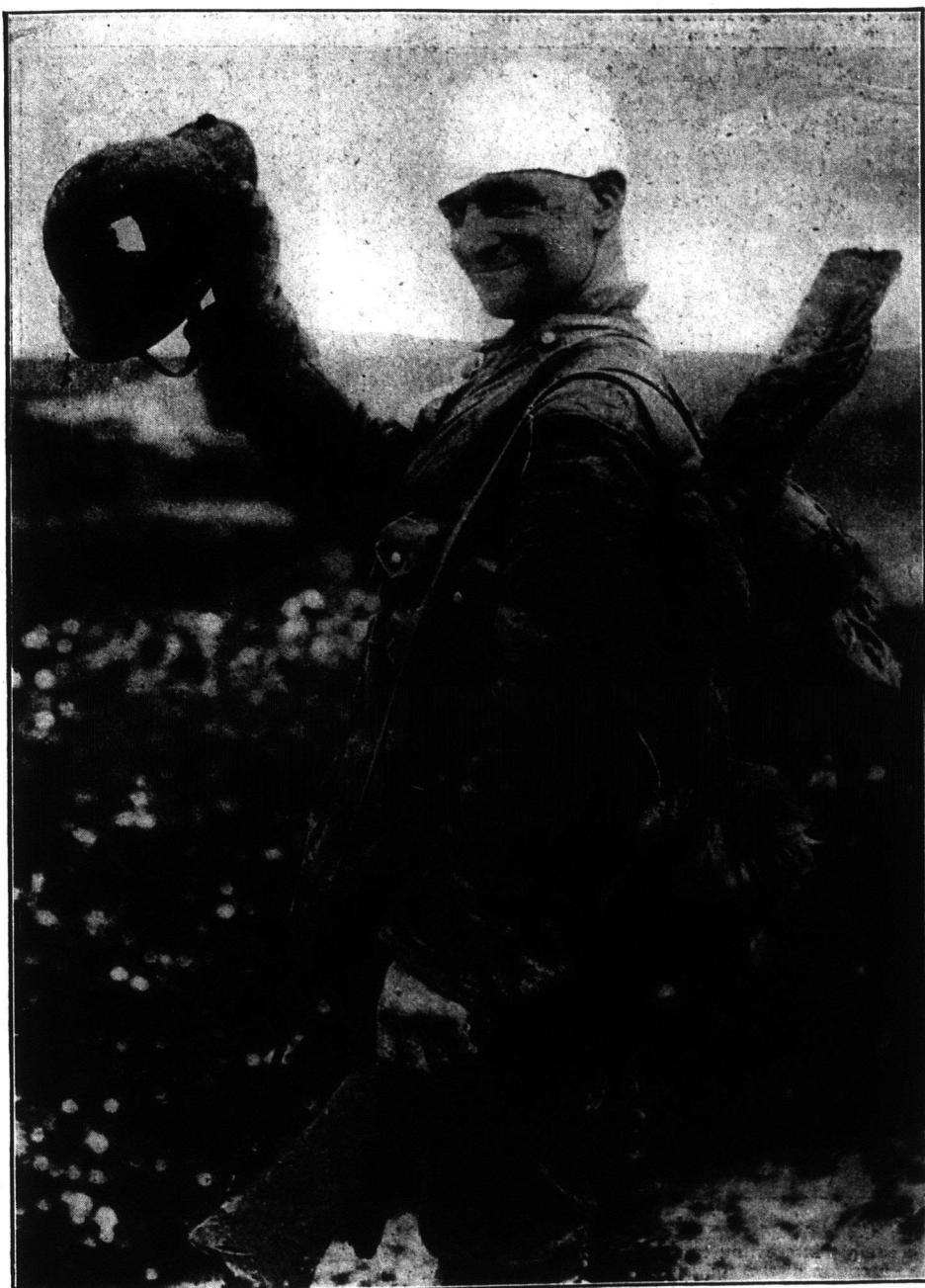
A smile flickered to her face. She was glad that he was loath to go. His quick eye caught it, and he bent, suddenly, toward her.

"Is it aught to you, Susy, that I feel like that?"

The color mounted to her cheek, and her lips trembled, but her eyes were steady, and she did not pretend to misunderstand him.

"I am sorry you are going, Will," she said.

The words were spoken quietly, but she had never called him Will before, always William, and her eyes spoke more than her words. He thought he read in



So that all may see what saved his life, this British "Tommy" on his way to the hospital is exhibiting his steel helmet. A piece of shrapnel has torn a hole through it, and has wounded him in the head. Had it not been for the helmet, he might have lost his life.

time before a long voyage. Some lounged on the sea front and talked with their friends, others had gone to the white cottages of the sailor's quarter that rose in irregular terraces on the slope of the hill, but William and a companion had gone far to the east where the sea wall ceased and the road narrowed to a path that wound among the broken rocks and rugged boulders below the cliff. Here they were soon hidden by a turn in the path. William's companion was a girl, young and attractive, but simply dressed. Her head was bare, and her fair hair, ruffled and fluffed by the wind, till it surrounded her face like a halo. At least so William thought, as he looked at her, and his heart swelled within him, and he longed to take her in his arms and kiss her, but as yet he had not spoken a word of love.

The tide turns at four in the morning, Susy, he said.

"Yes," she said, simply, "and should the wind hold as it is it will be fair going for you."

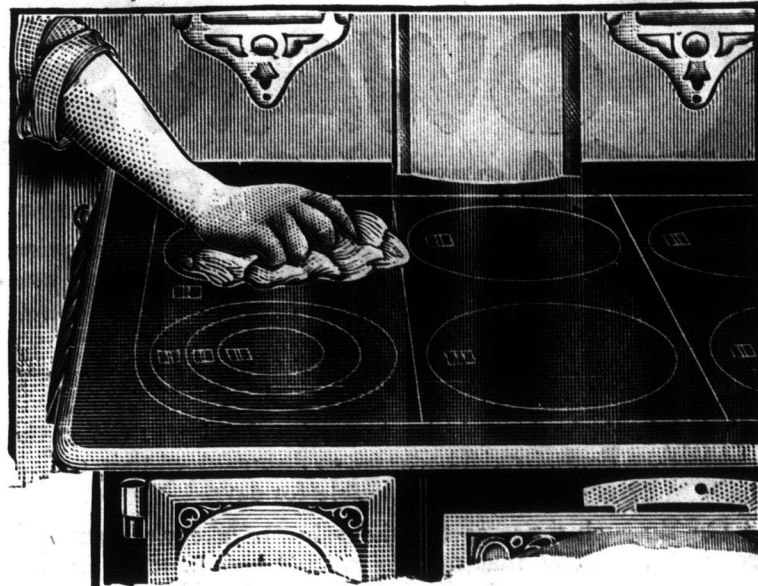
them the answer to his hopes and longings, and, forgetful of all else, caught her hand and drew her to him.

"Susy!" he cried, passionately, "is it to be!—to be!—now—and for ever."

Still her eyes were steady, but they shone with a light there was no mistaking.

"Yes," she said softly, "Now and forever." And so they plighted their troth.

But as they walked back in the twilight a cloud spread over the sky of their happiness. Susy was one of a family of four children and dwelt with her parents in a substantial stone house standing between that part of the town where the seafaring portion of the inhabitants lived and the rest of it. It seemed a connecting link between the actual toilers of the sea and those who, by trade and occupations of the land, were associated with them. And Susy's father, Johnathan Guest, held a like position. At first himself a sailor he had risen to be owner of craft, brigs and schooners not a few, and dispensing with middlemen had dealt with inland merchants, and built up for himself



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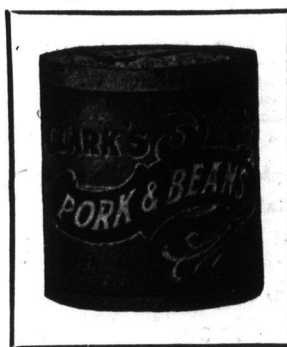
Just wipe it down occasionally with a cloth, less than a minute, and it will be always sweet and clean.

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