

"Jimmy."

It's just 9.25 by the clock over the mantelpiece. The noisy outfit in the corner are in the midst of deciding the nation's welfare.

"You're crazier than seven thousand tanks if you think this show's goin' to be over by Christmas—"

The speaker's voice halts abruptly, and hands reach out for half-emptied glasses, for the old familiar hail comes from the short figure in the doorway.

"Now then, gentlemen, come along!"

His tone is pleading, but there is a twinkle in his rather watery blue eyes as he trots into the room. None who have watched that trot will ever forget it, for it has hastened first-aid to more he-sized thirsts, than anything else in London. Those bandy legs have helped assuage a legion of the unquenchable.

"Please, gentlemen, I ask you!"

This time the voice is insistent, almost belligerent; but as he swings toward the bar, he calls out over his shoulders to the corner gathering:—

"How many was it last time? Three scotches and two bronxes? All right, Coley, bring e'm along fast. This is the last one."

And while he is waiting for the last round to be placed on the part where he ducks under occasionally, he is hailed by one of the guests, who moves confidentially over toward a table that has just been deserted. It doesn't require second sight to discover what is about to occur, for the guest is taking the cap off a fountain-pen, and as the bandy legs trot toward the quiet table, the old coat tails are flipped up, and a hand reaches into the well-known rear pocket,

where the equally well-known and jingling coin of the Realm reposes.

"Make it for five pounds," are the words that come from the corner, and the lucre is soon transferred. A hasty pencil notation on a rather white cuff follows, and the familiar figure trots back for the drinks.

He takes the proffered ten-shilling note, wads it into the left-front trousers pocket, and then flips up the coat-tail again for the change which is handed over slightly wet with gin and things.

"Now, gentlemen, please! I've gotta get 'ome to the wife."

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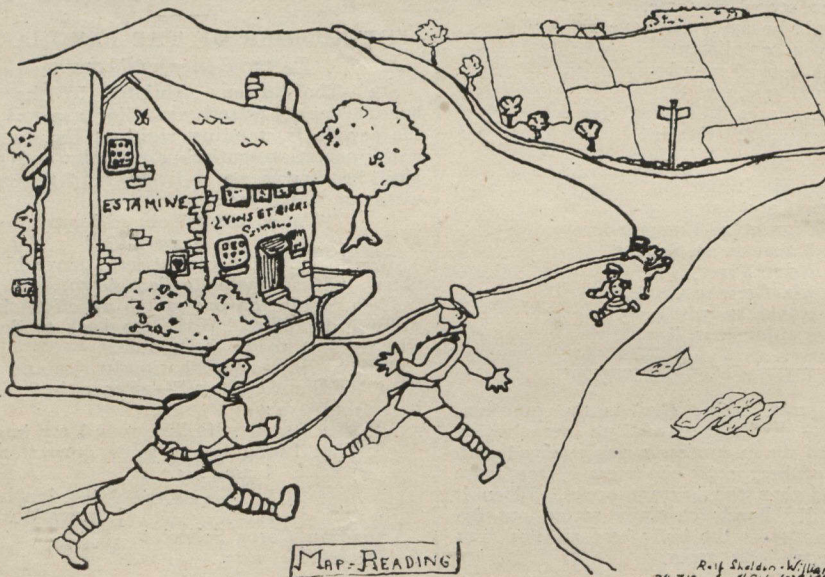
The scene changes. It is 12.30, and the "open at 12.30" sign is just being removed from the inside of the door.

"Bring me a collins, Jimmy," gurgles one of the shut-eye crew.

The bandy legs trot fast at this hour, for they seem to understand that the need is great. But just after the first tip is slipped into the moist palm, the legs halt. The tip doesn't go into the pocket at the near-right. The first tip always is slipped into the watch-pocket between the buttons at the top of the trousers. The good-humoured eyes of this genius at first-aid take on a different look, for this first tip is laid aside for the baby.

And there is the peculiar side to our friend and banker. Not one of us can think of him as a fond but stern parent of a large and well-regulated family. For some reason or other the picture can't be made clear. But it's a fact, and the family is the joy and pride of Jimmy. So when you hear the old call at 9.29 the next time, don't be so irritable; and, if possible, remember what's behind the plaintive insistence in the voice that says:

gentlemen, come along, please!"



MAP-READING

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