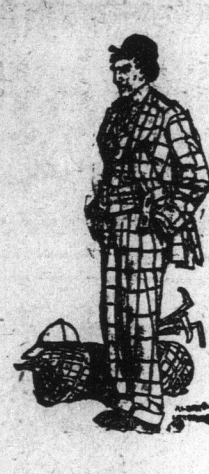




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hard to his name. Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby were eager to go down and call on the "folks from home." After the prolonged boycott which had been hanging over them they were pinning for white society. Mr. Willoughby put on his long black coat and Mrs. Willoughby got out her

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HAD TO GO AND SEE WILLOUGHBY

I am undertaking a trip to foreign parts. I have had two objects in view: (a) To strengthen and more closely cement our friendly relations with foreign Powers—I to furnish the cement.

(b) To reform things in general over here.

I found that there was no opening for a real reformer in the U. S. A., inasmuch as the magazines were upstating municipal rings, cornering the Beef Trust and camping on the trail of every corporation that seemed to be making money. I said: "If I wish to make a ten strike as a reformer I must seek new fields."

So I decided to flit through Europe and spend all this time I could spare from dodging table d'hôte dinners to bolstering up and regulating the consular service.

In writing today about the happy experience of an American consul I am following the advice of a friend who urged me to send some letters back home.

"Don't put in too much about your travels," he said, "people have read about European travel until they know Munich better than they do Montana. Whenever the opportunity presents itself write something entirely irrelevant—something that has nothing to do with anything particular. The less you say about foreign countries the better you will please your readers, and if you can arrange to write a series of letters in which no reference is made to either Europe or Africa who knows but what you will score a hit?"

With no desire to boast of my accomplishments, I feel that up to date I have followed instructions rather closely. If any dates, statistics or useful information have crept into these communications it is through oversight and not by intention.

In writing from Paris the natural impulse is to describe Napoleon's tomb and tell how the Champs Elysees runs right out to the Arc de Triomphe, and then cuts through the Bois de Boulogne. Fearing that this subject matter has been touched upon by other visitors, I shall disregard Paris and go straight to my task of reforming the consular service.

To begin with, usually the American consul is all right in his place, but his place is at home. Overpaid, possibly, but he does his best to carry his \$500 per annum. If he kept all the money that he handled in the course of a year he couldn't be a really successful grafter. He finds himself plumped down in a strange country. About the time that he begins to learn the language and has saved up enough money to buy evening clothes he is recalled and goes back home with a "dress suit" on his hands. Take the case of Mr. Eben Willoughby, of Michigan. It is a simple narrative, but it will give you a line on the shortcomings of our consular service, and it will carry its own moral.

"Old Man" Willoughby, as he was known at home, owned and edited a successful daily paper on the outskirts of Michigan pine belt. He was a wheel horse in the party and for forty years had supported the caucus nominees. The aspiring politician who wished to go to Congress had to go and see Willoughby with his hat in his hand. He helped to make and unmake United States Senators and was consulted regarding appointments. But he never had asked anything for himself. His two boys went to college at Ann Harbor, and when the younger came home with his degree and began to take a hand in running the paper Mr. Willoughby found himself, for the first time in his life, relieved of wearing responsibilities. He

was well fixed financially, and still, in the prime of life—not due to retire permanently, but ready to take it easy. For years he had nursed a vague desire to travel beyond the limits of his native land. Mrs. Willoughby, who in the home circle was known as "Ma," was a devotee of the Chaumant Circle, and she, too, had an ambition born of much reading to pack up and go somewhere. The family doctor said that a visit to some milder climate, far from the rigors of northern winter, would be a positive benefit to her.

So Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby began to study the atlas. One of the sons suggested to "Old Man" Willoughby that he could take a trip to an attractive southern country at the minimum expense by securing an appointment as consul. And, of course, apart from the financial advantage, there would be the glory of representing a great nation and hoisting the flag over a benighted foreign population. The suggestion appealed very strongly to Mr. Willoughby. He wrote to the Congressman and the Senator and wanted to know if there was a vacancy—salary no object, but he would like to go into a mild and agreeable climate where he could pick cocoanuts.

His friends at Washington simply overturned the State Department in their eagerness to give him what he wanted. They discovered that there was somewhere on the map a city called Gallivancia. It was down by the southern seas—the abode of a perpetual summer and already enjoying a preliminary boom as a resort. The acting consul had been a British subject. The pay was so small that no enterprising American had wanted the job. "United States consul at Gallivancia" reverberated pleasantly in the imagination of

Mr. Willoughby. He told his friends at Washington to go after the place, and in less than no time his daily paper announced that he had "accepted" the appointment.

The politicians represented to the State Department that Mr. Willoughby was a sturdy patriot of unimpeachable character and growth, and all of which was true. They might have added that he would be just as much at home in Gallivancia as a polar bear would be on India's coral strand.

The news of his appointment gave one section of Michigan the trembles for several days, and the Willoughby family was bathed in a new importance. Mrs. Willoughby was given a formal farewell by the ladies of the congregation assembled in the church parlors. Mr. Willoughby was presented with a jeweled badge by the members of his lodge and the band serenaded him the night before he went away.

He and "Ma" stood on the back platform and gazed with misty eyes at the flutter of handkerchiefs on the station platform until the train swung around a curve and they found themselves headed straight for Gallivancia and glory. Both of them felt a little heart-schy and dubious, but it was too late to back out. At New York they boarded a ship and after several days of unalloyed misery they landed at Gallivancia.

Now, Gallivancia is the make-believe capital of a runt of an island having no commercial or other importance. No matter where an island may be dropped down, some nation must grab it and hold it for fear that some other

nation will take charge of it and pay the expenses. [That is why Gallivancia had governor general and a colonel in command, and the Right Honorable Skipper of the gunboat and a judge and a cluster of foreign consuls. The men had a club at which whiskey and water could be obtained, unless the bottle happened to be empty. The women exchanged calls and gave formal dinners and drove about in rickety little victorias with terrified natives in livery perched upon the box. The lines of social precedence were closely drawn. At a dinner party the wife of the governor preceded the wife of the military commander who, in turn, quipped it over the wife of the gunboat who looked down upon the wife of the magistrate, and so on. The women smoked cigarettes and gambled at bridge, while every man who had won a medal at a shooting match pinned it on his coat when he went to a ball. It was a third-rate copy of court life, but these small dignities went through the motions and got a lot of fun out of it in one way and another. If we cannot afford a social position that is real ivory the next best thing is to get one that is celluloid. It had all the intricate vices of a true nobility without the bona fide titles to back them up and give the glamour.]

Into this nest of pretentious, cere-monious, strutting little mortals came "Old Man" Willoughby and "Ma" Willoughby, of Michigan. Of the outward form and artificialities of a Europeanized aristocratic society they were most profoundly ignorant. Mr. Willoughby did not even own a "dress suit." When he got a clean shave and put on a string tie and backed into a "Prince Albert" coat he felt that he had made a very large concession to the mere fripperies of life. And "Ma" had her own ideas about low-necked gowns!

Can you see Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby in Gallivancia? Can you understand what have been the attitude of these gold-braid peewees toward an old fashioned apple pie couple from the tall timber?

Mind you, I am not poking fun at the Willoughbys. In the opinion of every real American a man of the Willoughby type is worth a tall tree. But of these two by four titles, the Willoughbys were good people—the kind of people one likes to meet in Michigan.

When the ladies of the foreign colony came to call on "Ma" and said "Dyuh mei" and looked at her through their lorgnettes, she was like a staid old Plymouth Rock hen who suddenly finds herself among the birds of paradise. She told Mr. Willoughby that it was the queerest lot he had "women folks" she had ever seen, and although she didn't like to talk about people until she knew her ground, some of them didn't seem any more respectable than the law allowed. Poor Mrs. Willoughby! She did not know it was good form for a woman to smoke and drink, but had form for her to be interested in her husband. She tried to apply a Michigan training to Gallivancia conditions, and the two didn't seem to jibe.

If Mrs. Willoughby amused the women, Mr. Willoughby more than amused the men. He upset them and left them gasping.

The acting consul had used a small office adjoining his own place of business on the water front. Mr. Willoughby called on the former consul and found him to be a dignified Britisher of the gloomy and reticent sort, with a moustache shaped like a horse-shoe. The dethroned official was courteous, but not cordial. He was saying goodbye to some easy money, and the situation was not one calculated to promote good cheer. Mrs. Willoughby's action in coming down and pulling the consulate from underneath him seemed to him unfriendly. However, he formally turned over to Mr. Willoughby

a table, four chairs, several account books and a letterpress, all being the property of the United States of America. Mr. Willoughby had rented a house on the hill overlooking the town and decided to plant the consulate in the front room of his residence. Inasmuch as the consul had a business caller about once a month, there was no need of maintaining two establishments. Already he had taken into his employ and his warmest personal friendship a native named Francisco. This name seemed formal and hard to remember, so Mr. Willoughby rechristened him "Jim." He liked this native in spite of his color because he was the only man in Gallivancia who seemed to be pervaded by the simple spirit of democracy. Mr. Willoughby said that the others put on too many "damages" whatever that may mean.

If U. S. Consul Willoughby's standing in Gallivancia was at all subject to doubt, that doubt vanished on the day when he and "Jim" came down to move the office effects to the house on the hill.

Mr. Willoughby did something that day which convulsed Gallivancia as it never had been convulsed before—not even when a neighboring volcano blew off. For days afterward the official set, the men at the little club and the women pouring tea at each other, talked of nothing else. Many would not believe when they first heard it, but there were witnesses—reliable witnesses—who saw the whole thing and were called upon time and time again to testify regarding the most extraordinary performance of the United States consul. Other consuls may come and

go and the years spin their weary lengths and the obliterating drift of time may hide some of the lesser events in the history of Gallivancia, but that city will tell the story of "Old Man" Willoughby, of Michigan.

What are you supposing he did? No effort of the imagination can carry you within hailing distance of the horrible truth, so let the suspense be maintained. Mr. Willoughby, with his own hands, helped to move the furniture from the old consulate up to his new residence. He put the table on top of the trunk, balanced it carefully and carried it through the open streets of Gallivancia. An official, a representative of a great power, performing cheap manual labor!

Words are altogether inadequate to describe the degree of obloquy which Mr. Willoughby earned for himself by this unbecoming exhibition. In Gallivancia it was not considered quite the proper thing to indulge in mental effort and for any one of a "consul" to be of the lowest social order to perform physical labor was almost inconceivable. The new consul was set down as either a harmless imbecile or an altogether new specimen of barbarian. In either case he was not a fit associate for well bred gentlemen, and Gallivancia proceeded to ignore him and "Ma."

That is, they pretended to ignore them, but as a matter of fact they watched them at a distance and heard daily reports of their familiarities with servants, their fondness for outlandish American cookery and other eccentricities. It was all vastly divergent to the tiny aristocrats of Gallivancia, but it was pretty hard on Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby—homesick, hungry for spiritual chicken and garden truck, and yet ashamed to pick up and go home so soon after all those elaborate goodbys.

One morning Mr. Willoughby walked out the veranda of his hillside cottage and looked across the harbor and saw something that smote him with an overpowering joy. A great cruiser, the Stars and Stripes, had steamed through the narrow entrance and was bearing down to an anchorage. "Come here, mother!" he shouted. "Come here, if you want to see something that's good for sore eyes!"

Mrs. Willoughby came running, and nearly careened with happiness. There it was, an American war vessel, with real Yankees on board—boys from home; boys who had been in the garden to believe that a man's character and his abilities give him a worth which cannot be altered by putting a mere



WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE HE DID?