

THE JOYS(?) OF BLIGHTY

By Pte. George T. Booth

It was Pte. Bellfields second night in "Blighty," (He had been lucky enough to get ten days' leave) and he was strolling down the Strand with that "Back in Blighty air" when he met her—in the usual way. Certainly she was a pretty little thing. Gleaming white skin, dark eyes, red lips smiling provokingly and asking to be kissed. (You know the kind I mean—the baby-doll girl.)

No! she had no engagement for the evening. Would she care to go to a Theatre? Well, it was not "correct" to go to a Theatre with a stranger, but there was a play at "His Majesty's," she would just love to see. So they went to the Theatre. After the Theatre—Supper. Jove! what a jolly little supper it was too. Here he noticed for the first time how daintily and smartly she was dressed, also that she had a tantalizing little trick of causing a dimple to appear in her left cheek. By this time they were calling each other by their christian names, Jack and Vi. Oh yes! for such a short time they had got on together swimmingly. Jack told her of his home in Canada and how lonely he felt here in England when he saw other fellows walking out with their girls. This candid confession so touched Vi's tender little heart that she called him "Poor old boy." Oh! fatal words. Jack saw visions of a little grey home, a loving wife and dear little children, and the longer he gazed at Vi. the more apparent became the visions. He was brought to earth again by Vi. reminding him that it was getting late. Before he helped her into the taxi she allowed him to kiss her and call her "Dear little girl," and in answer to his ardent request promised to meet him on the morrow. Of what happened during the next few minutes Jack has but a vague conception. He saw the taxi and a fluttering handkerchief disappear round a corner. Then a heavy hand fell upon his shoulder and a gruff voice roared in his ear—"What game are you playing with my wife, eh? D— you, I'll teach you to fool with my wife." Poor Jack gasped and stared at his big assailant then tried to explain, but it was of no avail. When he picked himself up out of the gutter the angry husband had disappeared. Jack passed his hand slowly across his damaged eyes and murmured "Poor old boy," then staggered away into the night—a sorry but wiser man. He had had his first lesson in love.