

THE FURLOUGH THAT WENT FLOOEY

Everybody Out in New York, Even the
Lights on Broadway, Says Private
Whoozis, Just Back.

Well, Banty, I'm back again, like that guy of Kipling's said—you know the guy in the billycock hat. New York? Oh, I don't know. It seems different, somehow. I was fit to murder a couple of colonels in order to get that furlough. I got it. I'm back to stay this time. Bring on your German army. Shoot the works.

I don't know how you guys with folks up in the big town feel about it, but somehow or other New York has lost something for me—you know, doesn't seem to be the same burg that it was the day we marched down Fifth avenue on our way to the troop trains.

I sort of figured on dropping in at the club rooms that the Lexington Avenue bunch fixed up a couple of years ago and telling the fellows all about the army. Sort of felt that I was going to knock 'em dead. Get me?

And I doped it out going up in the train to call up a few of the girls and drop in on a few old friends—a couple of the bunch around the old neighborhood. And, of course, I had it fixed to breeze into the office and give the razz to the boys and shake hands with the boss.

I was the cat's mitts, as I doped it out, and my neck was going to be crooked for a month from having people fall upon it in wild welcomes. You know how a guy in O. D.'s used to get the glad eye last June and July.

Well, I'll tell you, I'm satisfied. I want to go back to New York again—after the war is over. I've had mine.

As soon as I hit the Pennsylvania Station I rang up Gladys. Sort of felt as though I'd like to have the kid look me over. Nothing doing. Moved down to Bay Ridge section. The boy on the other end of the wire didn't know exactly where. I tried Jeanette and got her on the wire. All wrong; all wrong! Glad to hear my voice and all that sort of thing, but she was sorry but she hadn't a night open for a month—knitting, working at bazaars and all that. Might drop in some afternoon for a few minutes. Her mother'd be glad to see me, too.

Same with two or three other Janes I used to fuss around with. Glad I called up and was well and all that sort of thing but no enthusiasm.

I blew over to the office. You see my folks have sort of dwindled away to a couple of aunts who live out in Grand Rapids or somewhere. I hall-roomed it in New York, but I had a bunch of friends and I figured



"Here, why don't you salute me; can't you see I'm an officer?"
"Yezzir, but you see you don't belong to our gang!"

that it was just like home to see them again and that things were the same as when I left.

They had a new head office boy at the shop. Didn't know me. Said Jimmy had enlisted in the Regulars. The old man was in, but busy. He came to the door of his office and slapped me on the shoulder and then blew back to his desk. Grouch Pennell, the head clerk, was still there, but that about let the shop out. Baldy had enlisted in the navy. The draft got Harvey Black and Smitty and Larry Hager and five or six others. Bill Henry was in the flying corps and Nelly Black had taken up nursing so she could go with the Red Cross people.

I beat it. A lot of older men held down the jobs. They looked at me. That's about all.

Well, Banty, I ran up to Harry Hill's beanery for my dinner. Fred, the guy who used to wait on me was gone. Harry said he'd been drafted and was out in Yaphank. Strangers—that's all I met everywhere. Tried Mike Fogarty's gin mill. Thought I'd have a bottle of pop and give Bert, the big bartender down near the cashier end of the bar, the glad hand. Banty, I was as welcome as a Congressional Investigation.

Mike had sold out. Bert had joined the Marines. The new owner welcomes soldiers just like the Italians do the Austrians. Out, Banty, out for mine. Me for the club rooms.

Closed! With the exception of Heavy McBride, who has flat feet, Shrimp Wallace, who can't make the weight; Charlie Hogan, who has four kids and a wife, and Squint Bacon, who got a rough deal on his eyes, the whole bunch were in just like me—out in Yaphank, down at Wrightstown or Fort Meade or in the navy or the Marines or something.

Well, Banty, there you have the works. It made me sort of low in the mind. Got to me hard. Everywhere it was the same. It was coming on evening, too.

I beat it for the old boarding house over on St. Nicholas avenue. Yep, Mrs. Brown was still running the place. The first thing that I saw as I approached the joint was a service flag with two stars. She told me about them—her two sons, Jake and Homer—in like me.

Banty, she made me have supper with her and then we sat down in the old parlor and talked. Great old dame, the missus. Never saw her like that before. She cried a little

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