

The Thrill That Cured Him

The Story of a Marine Who Chased a Thrill Halfway Round the World and Found it at Home

By Courtney Ryley Cooper



The Marine



The Thrill

who was looking upon something that suddenly had failed of its significance. And then —

We stood looking toward the pine-fringed mound of Blanc Mont Ridge, where he had made his wonderful drive. It was a different Major Mike that day. Everywhere was something to remind him of the gray dawn of early October; everywhere something to make him laugh and chat and recount little incidents of the battle. But with it all came the constant refrain:

"Thirty hours more! Then I'll be on my way to Germany—and maybe those orders will be there—orders home!"

MAJOR MIKE and I parted in Paris. Then we met again, unexpectedly, on the boat at Brest. He had orders home! "Homeward bound" was all he said. But he beamed. He was a different man. He had a deeper something than the usual joy of a man freed at last from the rain and chill of France and bound for a land where the sun shines, where there are conveniences and friends and the creature comforts of home. When we were nearing America curiosity led to questions.

"Mike," I asked, "what *is* your story?"

The peculiar little smile that was always present on Major Mike's lips broadened. "Mine?" he countered. "I'd hardly call it a story. I'm just a cured man. I'm going home to the remedy."

"You were a casualty then?"

"Well, yes, in a way." He laughed this time. "Psychologically, not physically. The best I could get was a machine-gun bullet through an overcoat sleeve. Didn't even touch my skin." Then he turned upon me suddenly with a queer glint in his eyes. "Did you ever have a disease known as the lure of adventure?"

"A slight attack."

"I had it in all its forms, malignant, acute and catching. That's why I'm hurrying home to meet the cure. I've never seen it yet."

"The cure?"

"Yes."

Major Mike chuckled. Then for a long time he looked out at the waves, finally to raise his watch and stare at it in the moonlight.

"Twenty hours more!" he said. "I wonder —" then he paused. "I guess it's just something that gets into a fellow's blood, this love for a thrill, like the measles or spring fever. Anyway, I had it. I used to live up in Rochester, New York, when I was a kid, and I liked it. Then, all at once, I began longing for something I couldn't understand. I wanted movement, travel, life, danger! I went away."

"I wasn't much more than a good-sized boy and I had seen the canal boats going and coming. I followed them and worked on them. Then I got to New York. Here would be adventures. But instead, there was only work, and noise, and men doing the same things over and over again, and street cars, and crowded walks, and people living the same sort of life that they lived in Rochester, only on a bigger scale."

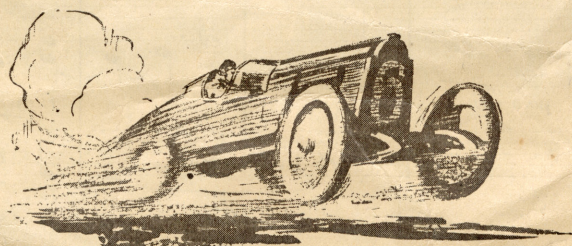
THEN I heard of Death Valley. A gold rush was on out there then. I went there. I went about longing for the big thrill, but even Death Valley could not furnish it. Then came the automobile and I tried racing for a while—until I awoke to the fact that even this did not have a thrill.

"Back East again I went, and tried the newspaper game for a while. I had heard stories of the exciting life of a reporter. It was dull and tame. Then the Marine Corps called, with promises of life in far countries, strange sights, queer adventures. I enlisted. For several years I tramped the drill fields and sweated on the rifle range, I fought 'spicks' in the banana republics, and went through the trouble at Vera Cruz. There were lots of men who were having enough adventures to last them a lifetime—but I guess my ideals were wrong some way. I began to think that I wouldn't know an adventure if I met it."

"Here and there I went at the call of the Corps, going a little higher in rank all the time, until finally I came back to Washington, where I had started from. Then I married." He said it very quietly, very simply, the way a man says something that is close to his heart, the way a man talks when he really loves the woman who is his wife. "But even then I wasn't cured of the lure of adventure. I mean the hunting of adventure. Then came France."

"Did she want you to go?"

"Who? My wife?" He smiled. "She's a soldier!" That was answer enough. The Major picked up again the trail of the quest of adventure: "I thought maybe I'd get



a thrill out of the submarines going over. But we saw none. But six weeks later —" He swung suddenly around and looked straight at me. "Isn't it funny now," he asked earnestly, "how some things will hit you? I got a cablegram in camp. I knew what it was about before I opened it. But my hands trembled, and my heart seemed to stop beating, and the blood in my veins got cold. I tore open the envelope like a man with frozen hands—and it was summer. Then I tried to read, but everything was blurred and dancing, and it was a minute before I could make it out, my hands shook so. The cablegram said: 'A girl. I have named her Jean.'"

Major George Kent Shuler, otherwise Major Mike, laughed softly.

"There was my thrill, right at home, after I had chased it halfway around the world. And from then on I had a different view of things. I didn't want the adventure now, simply for the love of that thing alone. I wanted it in a different way. I wanted to do something worth while in the doing of it—something big for my baby and for her mother."

"Understand? Something that I could talk about to her if I lived to get home, and look at her and realize that she was all mine. See? Something that she could be proud that her daddy had done."

"I didn't know what it was going to be. Most of those things are lucky. Nearly every man's brave enough if you catch him at the right minute. And when a man's got a real inspiration, something really big to work for, if he's half a man I tell you that there isn't anything that can stop him!"

He chuckled.

"They say I used to talk in my sleep to the baby and her mother. Guess I did. I was thinking of them all the time anyway. And I was hoping all that time for the big chance. I wanted to see them and be with them. But I wouldn't have gone home then if I could. I would have given everything I had just to feel that little baby's hand wrapped around my finger or to have seen her laughing up at me from her crib—but I would have walked through a barrage before I would have missed my opportunity for the big chance."

WE DIDN'T take off our shoes in the Belleau Wood scrap for thirty days. Things were pretty bad, but I couldn't count that. We had it pretty tough at Soissons, and the shells slapped pretty close to me at St.-Mihiel. But still my chance didn't come. Then, in October, we went up against Blanc Mont Ridge. I had plenty of good scouts and they brought me back the exact positions. When the artillery fire started for the advance of my battalion—well, I've got to confess it—I took out a little picture that my wife had sent me of her and the baby, and looked pretty hard at it. I said to it: "Baby's daddy is going up against the big chance now."

"And I went."

"Luck was with me. The artillery worked like a clock. Every man advanced his position to the inch. Not one of them faltered—not once—not even when the shells were breaking hardly twenty feet in front of them as they followed the barrage up the hill. And when that barrage lifted, there they were, right at the mouths of the dugouts, yelling for the boche to surrender. Not a shot was fired. We'd been too quick for them even to get up their machine guns. We had Blanc Mont Ridge and I had a feeling in my heart

MAJOR MIKE and I were "doing" the battlefields. I was on orders from Washington, Major Mike from headquarters of the Second Division, up in Germany. Mike, incidentally, isn't his real name. It was George Kent Shuler. "Mike" had stuck to him as a nickname.

Major Mike had seen all in which the Marines had figured, from the frenzied day in June, 1918, when the Marines had been thrown into the line from La Voie du Châtel across the Paris-Metz road in the Château-Thierry sector, on through the great concentration of troops at Villers-Cotterets, and the battle that followed in the Soissons sector when the first crash of the Allied offensive surged against the German lines. Major Mike had bounced into a fox hole in the battle of St.-Mihiel. He had lived in a stone heap in the Champagne. He had seen the crossing of the Meuse on the morning of Armistice Day, and he had made the march into Germany. Major Mike was a "medal man." Even the French poilus saluted him as we walked along the narrow, cobblestoned streets of Château-Thierry.

A tiny red ribbon on Major Mike's breast told the story of those marks of deference, the red ribbon of the Médaille de Légion de Honneur, flanked by an American Distinguished Service Medal on one side and a Croix de Guerre, with two palms, on the other. They meant that Major Mike had done something more than ordinary—greatly more than ordinary. They had told me in Paris what it was. It was Major Mike who had captured the pinnacle of Blanc Mont Ridge, that deceptive, long-reaching hump in the hills twenty miles due east of Rheims, that for four years had been drenched with the blood of those who sought to retake it from the boche, and which, like some tremendous thorn, had thrust itself at the very vitals of the defense of the whole Rheims sector. And yet, Major Mike had done it all without a casualty, without a direct rifle shot being fired, and had bagged four German officers, two hundred and thirty-four men, eighty-five German machine guns and fifty trench mortars—to say nothing of helping to draw from the Cambrai and St.-Quentin sectors the German divisions, which weakened the boche support and aided the British offensive that swept forward like a tidal wave in the final days of the war.

WE WALKED the stretches of Belleau Wood, while the camera men took their distances and gauged the degrees of light. To me there was romance in every broken twig, in every shell-torn tree. But Major Mike was anything but interested.

"Guess we'd better take a shot over in that direction," he said casually to the photographers. "It was pretty hot over in there. That's where they dropped most of their shells. Gosh!"—and he turned to me boyishly—"my orders are liable to come in most any day up in Germany—orders home."

I smiled.

"Then this trip ought to be just the thing for you. One last look at the battlefields you fought over and —"

But there came a queer expression on Major Mike's face. "Oh, I don't know. Orders home. That's what I'm looking for," he answered.

It was the same sort of thing wherever we went, whether Verdun, St.-Mihiel, or on the Meuse. He was not a man who had a revulsion against the thought of battle. He didn't want to forget the days and nights in those cramped holes, the splutter of machine guns or the long streams of smoke going to the rear. It was a different attitude. I could not comprehend it. But it was the attitude of a man

THE GREAT POEM OF THE WAR

In Flanders Fields

By Lieut. Col. John D. McCrae

Set to Music by Josef Hofmann

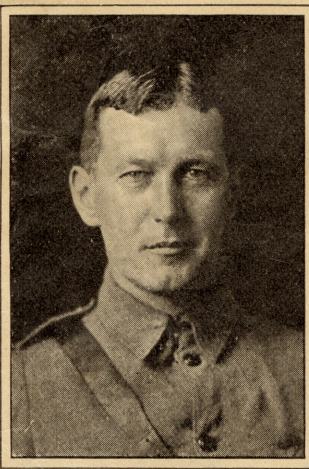
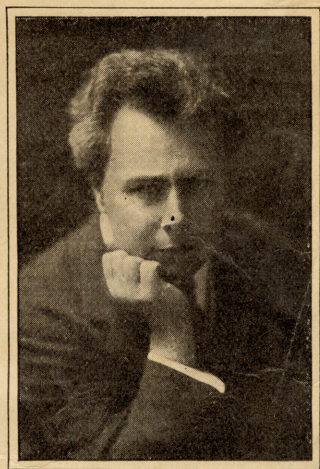


PHOTO. BY NOTMAN
Lieut. Col. McCrae



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Josef Hofmann

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Con moto

Piano *p Rubato*

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

Voice. *p semplice*

In Flan - ders fields the pop - pies blow be - tween the cross-es, row on row, That mark our place; and

a tempo

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

V piu animato e crescendo

in the sky The larks, still brave-ly sing - ing, fly, Scarce heard a - midst the guns be - low.

mf mp

mf mp sf p espr.

piu animato e cresc.

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

pp

l'istesso tempo

a tempo

piu animato

rit.

mf

rit.

pp

l'istesso tempo

rit.

a tempo

piu animato

mf

p

mf

Senza pedale

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

p

poco rit.

a tempo

pp

Loved and were loved, and now we lie In Flan - ders fields.

p

mf

poco rit.

a tempo

rit.

ritenente

rit.

a tempo

mf

Ped. * Ped. * *pp* Ped. * Ped. *

Sign V indicates where to breathe.

pp *Rubato* *sf* *un poco agitato e piu mosso* *mf* *f* *mp* *mp* *p* *mf* *p rit.* *pp*

* Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

Poco a poco piu agitato e cresc.

Take up our quar - rel with the foe! To you from fail - ing

a tempo *poco a poco piu agitato e cresc.* *mf*

* Ped. *

f cresc. *ff* *f* *Appassionato*

hands we throw The torch. Be yours to hold it high! If ye break faith with us who

tenuto f cresc. *ten.* *ten.* *ff* *f* *f*

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

rit. mp *p* *pp*

die We shall not sleep,

mf *Espressivo p* *mf* *rit.* *pp a tempo*

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

p *rit.* *pp* *a tempo ma molto tranquillo* *pp*

though pop - pies grow In Flan - ders fields. We shall not sleep, though pop - pies

pp *p* *rit.* *a tempo ma molto tranquillo* *pp* *p*

* Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

morendo e molto rit. *ppp*

grow In Flan - ders fields, In Flan - ders fields.

p *morendo e molto rit.* *a tempo pp* *pp dim.* *ppp*

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

Sweet Sally Magee

By John A. Moroso

HE WAS a beauty kid, Danny Malone. The old stock phrase of the ladies, "handsome as a Greek god," fitted him from the top of his tangled, curly blond mop to his trim heels, although probably none of his girl friends had seen a Greek god or even a photograph of one, while few—quite possibly not a single one of them—had ever even met anyone who claimed to have had an introduction to a Grecian in the deity line. But that doesn't matter. If a high-brow, writing for the newspapers, say, had described Danny as being as handsome as a Hindu holy man (generally supposed to be all skin and bones and prohibited by his religion from going to a barber, even of a Saturday night), the girls of the old Ninth Ward of Manhattan Island would have repeated it in turn in a clear and sharp whisper behind his back, so close behind it that he would have had to put corks in his ears to keep from hearing it.

"Lookit!" Agnes Veronica Reilley was talking, between dances, to one of her girl friends at the dance of the Hudson Street Social and Democratic Club. "If Danny Malone was to walk in this ballroom right now I think I'd swoon."

"Swoon?" drawled Mary Maddigan, of the sky-blue eyes. "You'd be gettin' off light. I think I'd just leap up in the air, hit the floor and have a fit. It would be the greenhouse for me with the bugs. He's as handsome as Apollinaris."

"And just to think"—there was a dramatic hollowness to Agnes' voice as she uttered the thoughts that arose in her—"a poor little shrimp, with a small nose trying to climb up to her forehead and one eye that ain't exactly straight, a poor little bit of a hat trimmer like Sally Magee cops him, medals and all!"

"Is he out of the hospital?"
"Not yet."
"Was he beat up much?"
"No; he's got all four. Some of that mustard stuff got him when his mask was hanging up in a village five miles behind the ringside."

SALLY MAGEE took many an expensive half-day off from the wholesale millinery establishment where she worked at twelve dollars a week before she managed to get into the United States Naval Hospital in Brooklyn; for she knew nothing about visiting hours, nor did she know what ward her "fellow" was in, or even how serious a case his was.

Worse still, Brooklyn was a foreign land to her, and once out of sight of the old bridge, her spirit began to weaken.

Sands Street, through which she made her way toward the navy yard, was rough enough; but it did not have that bright and gay elementary pugnaciousness of Hudson Street, where the boys would start a general fight with a smile on their lips, their hair tossing in the wind of combat and collision; where they used pistols and fists with equal ease, but never the knife, and where at a shout of alarm they forgot their enmity and darted like deer in all directions while the oncoming policeman clattered up, blowing his whistle for help. In Sands Street there were plenty of fights, but they used bricks, bats, knives and profanity mostly, wore horrible clothes and gouged and bit each other in a manner unscientific and positively disgusting. It was no street for an honest working girl without at least four escorts.

But one beautiful spring day, homely as she was with her tilted little nose and the cast in her eye, plain of dress and frail, with not even a speck of powder or paint on her face or a single strand of the artificial to her black hair, she caught a friendly glance from the "devil dog" who was on sentry duty at the great stone entrance to the hospital.

"**W**AITIN' on someone, honey?" he asked, his gun on his shoulder, his magnificent blue uniform, with red stripes down the trousers, shining in the afternoon sun.

"Waiting? You said it," Sally replied, and the ready tears filled her eyes.

The marine saw them and saw the twitch of her lip; noticed, too, the neatness, but poverty, of her waist and plain black skirt. It may have been that he also saw, as she involuntarily lifted her little hands, that her fingers were worn and scarred. "A marine?" he asked, dropping his rifle to port arms across his great chest, just as if she had been a general or a top sergeant or something like that.

"Yes, sir."
"Did he promise to meet you?"
"No, sir. I can't get no word from him."

"Oh!" The marine shouldered arms again and did a turn between the stone pillars, thinking over this thing. Sometimes a soldier must be careful about the girl waiting outside for him. "You married to him?" the sentry asked as he made a slow turn in front of her.

"No, sir; but I'm his sweetheart; he's my beau."
"Don't he answer your letters?"
"No, sir. The gas got him. Maybe he can't."
"His mother will know how bad he is."
"He ain't got any folks—only me."
"What's his name?" The marine, with one glance at Sally's upturned face, knew she was telling the truth.
"Danny Malone."

"Gee!" The sentry was a red-headed "devil dog" and as helpless in a real dramatic moment in life as a child would be. "Gee!" he repeated. Then he asked: "What's your name, girlie?"
"Sally Magee."

SOMETHING of the May sunshine seemed to steal into Sally's eyes and a bit of it into her tired heart. This was the most consideration she had got in four trips through impolite Sands Street, Brooklyn, U. S. A. Veronica Reilley and Mary Maddigan had warned her against trying to get to Danny, telling her that she would be lost in an impenetrable forest of rubber plants or knocked down and mangled by a baby carriage, and she had begun to expect the worst—until the sentry cried "Gee!"

"Where did he get the gas?" the marine inquired cautiously.

"In the Boys Below," Sally informed him. "And he got medals. The papers printed his picture and said he was a Greek god."

"In Belleau Wood," repeated the "devil dog." "And they keepin' you standin' out here all this time! Halt; who goes there? Friend. Advance, friend, with the countersign!"

THE LONELY CHILD

BY ANNA SPENCER TWITCHELL

I HEARD them say, "Ain't she the oddest child?"—
My aunt that's took me, an' a neighbor; then
They shook their heads an' sighed an' sort of smiled
At one another; then they sighed again.

The neighbor said: "She'll be a trial, too,
An' she's extremely plain, you must allow."
What is "extremely plain"?—I wish I knew,
An' what is being "a trial" anyhow?

When mother died they said I must not grieve;
God needed her, they said, with Him in heaven;
But oh, it's hard when mothers has to leave
Their little girls like me, that isn't seven!

I guess my aunt would love me if she could;
But she has never had a child, an' she
Can't know to do the things a mother would,
To smooth my hair an' kiss an' cuddle me.

I want so much to please her an' obey,
An' when she speaks I always jump an' run;
But though I try so hard, 'most every day
She has to scold me for some thing I've done.

Sometimes up in my little room at night
I take my doll in bed, an' she an' I—
When auntie goes an' takes away the light—
We just hug up together there an' cry.

God seems so big an' awful far away!
But I an' Isabella folds our hands,
An' if we can't just 'member all to say,
I guess God an' my mother understands.

PHOTO BY ALICE AUSTIN

Beat it in and go in that door to the right." He spun out all this in a wonderful jargon, joking the military formalities as only an old fighter with Irish in every drop of his blood could do it.

BUT Sally Magee got the big point of it all. She could enter this place where her Danny lay. She could get a few yards nearer to her "fellow," the man she loved and had loved for three years, and who loved her, despite his beauty of face and body, his magnificent courage that had made a great French general go to the field hospital and kiss him and hang medals on him, and even General Pershing sit beside his cot and hold his hand after giving him the Cross. She became dizzy and leaned up against one of the great stone pillars at the entrance, the steady hum of the river craft just beyond the hospital sounding as a choir of angels singing for her the hosannas that had come rising to and filling her simple heart.

"Beat it, kid!" The "devil dog," speaking her language, woke her up. "And say," he added, "if there's any trouble—if they don't get you right—just stick around here at the gate until five-thirty. I'll be off then and on my way to see my own girl."

There were old women crying bitterly and children tugging at their skirts, whimpering in sympathy with their mothers, in the corridor of the hospital office, when an orderly asked Sally whom she wanted to see. He, too, had tasted of hell and glory in Belleau Wood, for he wore the red stripes down his trousers, and a German bayonet had given him the only acceptable American accolade down his right cheek, from the corner of the eye to the point of his jaw.

"I want to see Danny Malone," she managed to stammer, and she cuddled to him instinctively.

THE orderly took her to a room where a woman nurse received her kindly, but with the firmness of Von Hindenburg sending forth the third gray wave in close formation.

"What ward is he in?" asked the nurse.
"I dunno."

"What happened to him? How was he hurt?"
"The gas got him."

"Just a moment, dear." The nurse picked up a telephone and when she dropped the receiver again, turned to Sally with a little shadow playing in her face. "I'm sorry, but he can't see you. And I can't send you up."

"What's the matter?" asked Sally, dropping in a chair. "Is he bad?"

The nurse's hand took one of the tired, little flowerlike, petal hands of the milliner. "He isn't so bad, dear, but the head nurse of the ward says not to let anyone come up."

Sally crumpled up like a weakling sweet pea in the middle of a drought.

"Come back to-morrow," the nurse suggested, patting her thin shoulders.

"But I'm always coming back. I gotta see him, ma'am; I gotta see him. I'll die if I can't see him for a minute. He's my 'fellow,' and the Red Cross sent me letters from him when he was laid up in France, but since he come back not a word have I got."

"But I can't disobey orders, dear," returned the nurse on office duty among the sorrowful women and children. "Besides, the head nurse of his ward is very particular. She is the rich Miss Spencer, who gave such fine service in France, and her word is almost law with us. Come back to-morrow, won't you?"

BEYOND the sky line of Manhattan, long and serrated like the jaw of a shark, the sun was seeking its bed in the Jersey hills and the western world beyond when Sally's sentry came through the gate, spick and span, on his way to his girl, the globe, anchor and laurel wreath on his cap glistening in the dusk of the street. As she ran to meet him a splendid limousine honked them out of its path as it swung from the highway and passed between the stone pillars.

"How about it?" asked the marine. Sally shook her head. "What'd they say in the office?"

"To-morrow—maybe."
"But what's the trouble, kid?" he demanded, a little petulantly. "I know Danny Malone; almost everybody in this hospital knows him. He's a famous guy, he is. Why, there's a fellow in the ward wrote a song to cheer him up. He's one of these musical fellows who enlisted soon as there was trouble in sight."

He took her arm and drew her a little to one side as a number of nurses passed out. The night switch was coming on, and the electric light over the entrance of the hospital office blazed forth suddenly as a young woman left the door and the chauffeur of the limousine touched his cap.

"Pipe the swell wren," whispered Sally's sentry. "That's Miss Spencer. She's going off duty."

Sally looked and beheld in profile a face as beautiful as any she had ever seen in picture or in life. The young woman's full lips were parted and the spandrels of her delicate nose were slightly dilated as she paused to drink in the fresh air sweeping from the river. Under a modish toque wisps of pale hair caressed her smooth cheeks and temples. She fastened the clasp of a fur piece about her throat, entered the automobile and was off for home through the distant exit gate.

"**S**OME nurse!" the marine commented. He did not see how pale was the face of the homely little milliner, nor did he notice how her hands trembled.

"Is she nursin' my Danny?" Sally managed to ask.

"Ever since he was put on the transport at Brest," her sentry replied. "You see, girlie, the mustard gas cut into his eyes pretty bad, and they still got the bandages on. I was in the next bed to him getting my lungs fixed up after a dose of that same stuff until last week, when they let me get back on the job. She's been giving a lot of time to Danny, but Danny has never seen her. One time she began to teach him how to see with his hands, making him feel her forehead, her cheeks and lips —"

"Don't!" The little milliner fell against the marine.

The hot tears fairly burned his big hands as he lifted her face and asked: "What's the matter, kid?"

She did not answer.

"But, say, you got it wrong," he told her. "Danny ain't going to stay blind. I was on duty in the ward yesterday, and the surgeon looked him over and began humming a little tune as he left him. He always does that when he's certain he's pulled another one of us out of the dark. And I heard him say that the bandages would be off in two days. That means to-morrow, girlie."

"Then he'll see her face to-morrow?" Sally clutched her stalwart friend's arm. "Could you help me get in to-morrow before they take off the bandage? Could you?"

"I might at that," the marine replied. "I'm on orderly duty in his ward to-morrow and the surgeon is a prince."