

THE DRUNK

Hatless, coatless, penniless, such is he—
The drunk, who, at the peep of dawn, in vain
Doth try to pluck him from this horrid med'ley
Of hellish snakes and crimson tinted rain.
The terrifying scenes of dreadful things
Each other chase and caper through his mind,
Then come again. His voice in terror rings,
As they persue their never ending grind.
In fitful dreams, at last he finds release;
The endless train has ceased its fiendish course.
His troubled mind that eve again at peace,
He seeks once more escape from his remourse.
For him, no cares in this wide world will be;
For he'll be drown'd in drunken ecstasy.

—A BURGE '49

I WAS CARELESS

The ship was at anchor in the harbor of St. Georges in the beautiful island of Bermuda. It was a sunny day in the month of September, when the weather does not have the extreme heat of the summer months. The clean air gave the crew a touch of careless happiness that seemed to telegraph itself from one to another. Our evolutions were completed, to the satisfaction of everyone aboard, and we were due to sail the next day to more familiar ports.

In the afternoon around two-thirty we received a message stating that we would undergo a complete inspection, both ship and ship's company, to be conducted by Captain Adam, the port Commander. This message meant work, and plenty of it; the ship had to be cleaned from top to bottom, everything would have to be spotless and in top-notch working order. Still the thoughts of having completed our evolutions and of heading home in the morning made us start work with enthusiasm. Each member of the crew was assigned to a particular work, and all began with much vigor.

I was assigned to the gunner's stores, and as work went merrily on, we talked and joked about what we would do when we reached our next port of call. One of my best chums was scrubbing the bulkheads in the flats outside my door and I was teasing him about the girl friend in Halifax; at the time I was cleaning a forty-five gunner revolver,

and had found a shell that should not have been laying around the gunner's stores. I concluded that it must belong to the quartermaster so I went and inspected his gun. No—his magazine was complete—four shells. Shrugging my shoulders I started back to work, clicking the hammer of the gun as I went. On the way I met a member of the crew; I aimed the gun at him and pulled the trigger. There were two or three clicks as the hammer found empty holes. He told me to be careful, that it was an empty gun that killed a man. I said, "This gun isn't empty," and at that moment slipped the shell into the empty magazine and showed him the gun to give him a scare. I point the gun away from him and pulled the trigger again. The shell was three holes from the hammer but, by a strange quirk of fate, this time the magazine moved three holes. There was a resounding crash as the gun barked in my hand; the recoil made the gun jump, for I was holding it loosely, expecting another click. I was surprised, and then shocked as I saw my best chum, who had been paying no attention to us, grasp his stomach and topple against the bulkhead. He gasped, "I'm shot." I dropped the gun and ran to him. As I pulled open his clothes, the blood gushed out in a heavy flow, covering both of us. I was shocked almost to numbness for a few moments; then I picked him up and carried him to "sick bay". There the "Tiffie" gave a hand and we stretched him on a bed. The blood was still flowing from the wound but he had not lost consciousness. He kept telling me not to worry, that everything was alright. The "Tiffie" began to prepare the bandages and told me to place my thumb in the hole to stop the blood; my chum turned white and gritted his teeth against the pain, but he managed a smile of reassurance now and then. We found the bullet had entered the groin and came out through his back, near the hip, without striking a bone. The "Tiffie" bandaged the wound and had everything fixed up when the doctor arrived from ashore. After inspecting the wound the medico assured us that everything was satisfactory. MacHardy, the wounded man, didn't want him to go ashore in Bermuda, so the Captain received permission to take him with us to Halifax. (He did get to see his girl friend.)

This was the result of a very careless act on my part, but I can assure you that I never again played cowboy with a revolver that still held even one shell in its magazine.

—C. MacDONALD '50