

TROLLEY FOLLY

paid the whole blamed court a compliment by the way he retired.

Frenchy's lawyer began to holler, but the judge cut him quick. "Sit down, Mr. Satterlee," says he. "Unless you can prove your client is dead, the court will pursue the course indicated by the learned counsel for defense."

"Selah!" says Satterlee. "I'm down. Set 'em up in the other alley."

III

THE MASCOT OF THE GRAYS

A BASE-BALL GAME AND THE SUBSEQUENT PROCEEDINGS

"WHY, yes!" said Mr. Perkins, "I'll tell you all about it, if you've got the time to spare. I was managing the Grays—that was the club from the west side of the river, you know—and we thought ourselves the prettiest things that ever played base-ball in Dakota; for a while. And then we had hard luck. Our fancy pitcher was an ex-soldier named Fitzeben; a well-built, pale, handsome fellow, with lots of style, and no heart. As long as things were coming his way, he could put up a game of base-ball that would make a man forget his religion; but if they began to find him on the other side, Fitz would go to slops on the run. First-base was this man

TROLLEY FOLLY.

Falk you was speaking about. There was a Hoodoo playing second. 'Hindoo?' Yes, that's it. You've got it. He'd come a long ways to our town. Nice, pleasant little man he was, too, with a name that would have made him an overcoat and a pair of pants, and then something left for the babies—'Damerjoodeljubberjubberchah,' or words to that effect. The boys called him 'Jub,' so it didn't matter so much about that."

Mr. Perkins stopped to crook his elbow, as they say in the vernacular, and stood a while in silence, as the tears of ecstasy gathered in his eyes.

"Whoo, Jimmy!" said he, "there ought to go a damper with that whisky—it's almost *too* good with the full draft on. Blast your seltzer! Give me water. I like my whisky and my water straight, just as God made 'em. Well, I was telling you about our outfit. One of our fellows was crooked

MASCOT OF THE GRAYS

as a ram's horn—Jim Burke, that played short. Darn his buttons! He couldn't keep his hands off other people's property to save his neck. And gall!—say, that man was nothing but one big gall with a thin wrapper of meat around it. One day old Solomon, that had the clothing store, comes to me oozing trouble.

"'Misder Berkints,' says he, 'dere ain't nubuddy vich dakes more pleasure in der pall-blaying as I do. If you vant ten tollar or dwenty tollar vor der club, vy, dake id! dake id! I gif it midout some vords, but I ain't going to stand such monkey-doodle peenesses.'

"'What's the matter now, Sol?'

"'Vot ees der madder? I tell you vat ees der madder. Dot feller Burke, he goom by der store, unt he valk off mid a case. A case! Mein Gott! A whole case of zusbenders, und gollar-puttons, unt so fort! I find him

TROLLEY FOLLY

in Gurley's blace, puddin' it oop vor der drinks. I don't vant to sboil der pall-blaying, bud dot feller ort to bin in chail.'

"I went with him, and we hunted brother Burke up. I read him the riot act, but he was brassy.

"'Why, he give me the case!' says he.

"'Gif you der case!' yells old Solomon, 'I! Vich ees me? Dis shentleman right here?' tapping himself on the chest. 'I gif you dot case? Gott! Mein frendt! You talk like a sausage!'

"There was no use of my trying to keep my face straight. Talking like a sausage hit me on the funny-bone, and I had to holler.

"But as soon as I could get my face shut, I went for Burke bald-headed. I told him I'd knock fourteen different styles of doctrine in him if he didn't behave better.

"There's where that big stiff Falk and I came together for the first time.

MASCOT OF THE GRAYS

"'What have you got to do with it?' says he. 'No harm done if he cleaned the d—d Jew out entirely.' Well, now mostly I hate a Jew as well as the next man, but old Sol was a free spender. He'd put up for anything that was going, and, Jew or no Jew, it made me hot to hear Falk talk like that. More especially as his tone wasn't any too pleasant.

"'Who the devil are you talking to,' says I, 'me, or the hired man? I want you to understand I'm running this thing, pardner!'

"'Little chance anybody has to forget it,' he says with a big jarring laugh. Don't you know that dirty, sneering laugh he had?

"Well, I was some warm. First off, I thought I would walk away and not make any trouble; then I thought to myself, 'Here, I fought Jack Dempsey sixteen rounds the last time I appeared in the ring, and I reckon I'm not going to let any big swaggering stiff of a Dutchman get away with any such a crack

TROLLEY FOLLY.

as that! Those fellers didn't know about my being a profesh. I changed my name when I quit, after Dempsey licked me, and I never was much of a hand to talk.

"So without any words, I drove a right-hander into Mr. Falk's Adam's apple. You'll hear this and that place spoken of as a tender spot, but when you want to settle a man quick and thorough, jam him in the Adam's apple. Falk must have weighed a hundred pounds more than I did, but he went down like a load of bricks. I wasn't taking any chances with such odds in weight against me. To be sure, I had the science, but the only science I ever saw that was worth a cuss in a street fight is to hit the other man early and often, and with all the enthusiasm you can bring to bear. Falk laid on his back, very thoughtful, wondering where he was going to get his next breath of air from. A crack in the

MASCOT OF THE GRAYS

Adam's apple does a good many things at the same time: It stops your wind; gives you a pain in the head; a ringing in your ears; a cramp in the stomach, and a looseness in the joints, all at once. I realized that Mr. Falk wouldn't be in condition to do business for some time, and as I was right in the spirit of the thing, now that I'd got started, I thought I might as well head Burke up, too.

"I cut him on the end of his Irish nose, and stood it up in the air like the stack of an old wood-burner. Then I whaled him in the butt of the jaw for keeps.

"He fell all over Solomon, and down they went together.

"'Don'd you mindt me, Mr. Berkints,' says old Sol, as he scrambled after his hat; 'Id's all righd. Dot's for der zusbenders; gif him a vew vor der gollar-puttons.' He was a funny motzer, that Solomon. It broke me

TROLLEY FOLLY

up so the fight all went out of me. But I up-ended Burke and gave him a medicine talk.

“‘I’ve been too easy with you fellers, and I see it,’ says I. ‘From this on, however, there won’t be any complaint on that score. You’ll feel like a lost heathen god in the wilderness, if you try any more playing horse with me; I think that blasted stubborn Dutchman is beyond reason—perhaps I’ll have to really hurt him yet—but I think there’s reason in *you*, and you’d better use it, unless you want me to spread you all over the fair face of nature.’

“You see, the citizens of the town had been liberal in coming through for the ball team, and naturally they took the greatest pride in it. We were like soldiers going out to fight. Every time we went away from home to play, the town saw us off with the band, and welcomed us back with the same—winner or

MASCOT OF THE GRAYS

loser. Now, I was the manager, and of course, everybody looked to me to see that things were run right; consequently, when fellers cut up like Burke and Falk, it wasn’t to be stood.

“Well, Burke said he’d give the matter his careful consideration.

“‘All right, see that you do,’ says I. ‘Now screw your nut home, and put your face in a sling till you look better. We don’t want any such picture of hard times as you are on the ball field.’

“When Falk got so he could understand language, I gave him a few passages of the strongest conversation I had on tap.

“He listened, to be sure, and didn’t give me any slack; but it was a sullen kind of listening—just that he was afraid to do different, that’s all.

“I forgot to tell you that these two fellers was really hired to play ball. The superin-

TROLLEY FOLLY

tendent of the division gave them a job in the shops, and we paid 'em extra. Falk, he was a painter; and I wish you could see the blue, green and yaller ruin he made of a passenger car. The boss painter wasn't onto the game, and took the supe's talk in earnest, therefore he starts Falk out single-handed to paint the car. The boss painter was a quiet man usually, but when he saw that work of art, he let go of some expressions that would have done credit to a steamboat rooster. More, he heaved a can of red paint on brother Falk, and swore he'd kill him too dead to skin, if he dared put foot in the shop again. This boss painter was a sandy little man, even if he wasn't as big as a pint of cider, and had been leaded so many times that he shook like a quaking asp. The supe had to argue with him loud and long before he'd hear of Falk's coming back.

"Burke went into the round-house, where

MASCOT OF THE GRAYS

all the fellers were more or less sports, and understood the play.

"Not square to hire 'em? Well, it wasn't exactly, but the crowd across the river taught us the game—they did it first.

"Well, now I'll tell you how we came by the Injun—the mascot. He was an old feller—the Lord only knows how old—who used to hang around the station selling Injun trinkets to the passengers. He had a stick with notches cut into it to tell how old he was, but the boys used to get the stick and cut more notches when his nibs wasn't looking, until Methusalom was a suckling kid alongside of that record. 'Me so old—huh,' the Injun used to say, and hand the stick to the passengers. They'd be full of interest until they counted up to four or five hundred, when they would smile in a sickly way, and go about their business, feeling that they had been taken in shameful, and much regretting

TROLLEY FOLLY

the quarter, or whatever chicken-feed it was they contributed to old Bloody-Ripping-Thunder's support. No, 'Bloody-Ripping-Thunder' probably wasn't his name; but that's what young Solomon christened him.

"Young Solomon was nephew to the old feller, and his pardner in the clothing store. He was a great sport. A darned decent young lad. It was his idea that we needed a mascot. We sure did need something about that time, for if there was anything in Dakota that hadn't beaten us, it was only because they didn't know our address.

"Ike Solomon takes Rip—that's short for the aforesaid Injun—into his store one day, a bent, white-haired old man, clad in a dirty blanket, moccasins, and a hat that looked as if it had come off the rag heap, and he works a miracle with him. He wouldn't let nary one of us inside until he'd carried out his plans.

MASCOT OF THE GRAYS

"When we did go in, there stood as spruce a young gent of a hundred or so as ever you see. That Injun had on a cheap but decent light hand-me-down suit, b'iled shirt and paper collar, red necktie, canvas shoes—mighty small they were; he had feet like a lady—pocket-handkercher with red border sticking out of his pocket, cane in his hand, a white plug hat on his head and a pair of specs on his nose. We were simply dumfounded; that's the only word for it. The old cuss carried himself pretty well. Darned if you'd find a white man of his years that had as much style to him. And proud! Well, that don't give you any idea of it. He strutted around like a squint-eyed girl that's just hooked a feller.

"When he started off down the street to give the folks a benefit, we had our laugh out.

"Into every store of the place goes Mr. Rip. Walks up and down and says 'Huh!'

TROLLEY FOLLY.

After he thinks the folks have had a fair show to take in his glory, 'Huh!' says he again, and tries next door. The whole town was worked up over it. The fellers would shake him by the hand, bowing and scraping and giving him all sorts of steers.

"Well, we had our mascot now, so there was no particular reason why we shouldn't try to get somebody's scalp.

"We sent a challenge to the Maroons, which they accepted, too quick. The game was to be played on our grounds, and with the eyes of our friends on us, you bet we meant to do our little best; but luck was against us. Our second base, the Hoodoo, had got snake bit. Rattler struck him in the right hand. He had a mighty close squeak for his life. The right field, Doctor Andis, the nicest gentleman that ever wore shoes, was coming down with the fever that carried him off.

"To crown all, just when I should have

MASCOT OF THE GRAYS

been rustling around the liveliest, I had one of my headaches—the worst I ever had. Lord! For three days I couldn't see, and then a fool of a man told me whisky was good for it, and I took his advice. When the drink started my heart up, darned if I didn't think the top of my head was coming off. I ought to have been in bed the day of the game, but of course that wasn't to be thought of.

"Well, the boys were nervous, and I was sick, and though I tried my best to put a good foot forward, I'm afraid I didn't help matters any.

"Everybody and his grandmother turned out. The town knocked off business altogether. The weather was fine for ball, with this exception, the wind blew strong up-field. That was dead against *us*, though it helped their pitcher mightily, as he was weak on curves, and pitching into the wind added

TROLLEY FOLLY

at least a foot to his range. With our man, Fitzeben, it was different; he had a tremendous knack on curves; blamed if he couldn't almost send a ball around a tree, and the extra twist threw him off his reckoning so badly that he lost all command of the ball, and finally got so rattled that we had to put another man in, in the fifth inning. They were slaughtering us then—the score was fifteen to two. We picked up a little after that, and in the ninth it looked as if we might tie them, if we had barrels of good luck.

“Falk went to bat. I cautioned him to wait for his chance; but you know what a grand-stand player he was; he had the gallery in his eye all the time. He was a big, fine looking feller, in a way, but stuck on his shape beyond all reason; so, instead of taking it easy, he swipes at everything that came, keeping up a running fire of brag all the time that made everybody very tired.

MASCOT OF THE GRAYS

“Just before the last ball crossed the plate, he gave the folks to understand that he was going to belt the cover off it, and the remains would land down by the river. He made a fierce pass at it; missed it a mile, caught his toe and waltzed off on his ear. He got a dirty fall and everybody was glad of it. We all laughed ‘Haw! Haw!’ just as loud as we could. Falk got up, boiling mad. He looked at us as if he'd like to eat us raw; but there wasn't any one round there he felt safe to make trouble with, until his eyes fell on old Ripping-Thunder, sitting up straight in his new clothes and specs and plug hat and cane, and laughing as fine as anybody. Then that big Dutchman did the cowardliest thing I ever saw; he walks up and smashes poor Rip in the face, just as hard as he could drive. ‘Now laugh! you d—d Injun!’ says he. There was a riot in a minute, and I had to keep the fellers off of Falk, though

TROLLEY FOLLY

the Lord knows my mind was different! The other captain refused to play the game out. He didn't want any truck with such people, he said, and, while our boys were crying hot, we couldn't do a thing but let 'em go.

"I picked up old Rip and asked him if he was hurt. He tried to smile—although his mouth looked like an accident to a balloon, where that big lubber hit him—and told me no, not hurt.

"But his eyes were on Falk all the time, following every move he made. I tell you what, my son, never you hit an Injun un-awares. No matter how old or helpless he may seem, it ain't safe. An Injun's not out of it till he's dead, and then it's just as well to be careful. I know one buck that lashed the trigger of his rifle to his arm with his dying hands, and blew a hole like a railroad tunnel through the feller that tried to take his gun away from him, as well as changing

MASCOT OF THE GRAYS

the appearance of the next man behind, which was me; you can see the mark running back from my eyebrow. I'll tell you about that skirmish sometime. It was the liveliest I ever got into. Well, the Injun's eyes were a little bleary from age before, but they were bright enough now. I know I thought it won't be well for you, brother Falk, if the old man gets a crack at you; but being so disgusted with the way things come out, and sick besides, I didn't pay much attention.

"The next day was prairie-chicken day. Fifteenth of August the law's up, ain't it? I can remember the day all right, but I'm never quite sure of the date—and all of the fellers turned out in force to reduce the visible supply of chicken; me and my friend Stevens among the rest. We got a later start than most of the boys, and it must have been ten or after before we reached McMillan's flat, where we were going to do our shoot-

TROLLEY FOLLY

ing. We drove around here and there, but we never flushed a feather.

“‘Now, Jay,’ says Stevens, ‘let’s cut for old man Simon’s shack; there is likely to be some birds in his wheat stubble.’ So off we went. We were sailing down the little sharp coulée which opens on Simon bottom when we heard a gun-shot to the right, and not far off.

“‘Hello!’ says Stevens, ‘there’s a fellow in luck; we’ll give him a lift if he’s got more than he can handle.’

“‘Sounded more like a rifle to me, Steve,’ says I.

“‘Well, let’s investigate anyhow—what the blazes is that?’ For just then riz up a wild howl, ‘Don’t shoot! Don’t shoot!’ it says.

“‘I could swear that that was the voice of that sweet gentleman, Mr. Falk,’ says I. ‘Tie up, and we’ll creep to the top of the bank and see what’s going on; if Falk’s in trouble,

MASCOT OF THE GRAYS

I wouldn’t miss it for anything.’ We made our sneak and looked down. Beneath us was a sort of big pot-hole, say forty foot across. On one side was brother Falk, his face as serious as though he was playing a rubber with the gent that always wins, but stepping it high, wide, and frolicsome. Gee! what pigeon wings and didoes he cut! And the reason of it sat on the other side of the pot-hole watching him—Brother Ripping-Thunder, with a rifle in his hand, enjoying himself much, and smiling as good as the damaged condition of his mouth would allow.

“‘Hunh!’ says he, ‘that’s plenty dance—now stand on head.’

“‘I can’t!’ says Falk, ‘I don’t know how!’

“‘Learn!’ says the Injun, ‘now good time.’

“Falk started to make some objections, but old Rip raised the rifle, and Falk, with a wild, despairing cuss, up-ended himself. He

TROLLEY FOLLY

was a big man, as I've told you, and when he keeled over he come down so hard it jarred the earth.

"'Wakstashonee!' cries Rip, 'that worst I ever see! Got to do better, or I shoot anyhow!'

"So up goes Falk, and down he comes, and up he goes and down he comes, in all kinds of shapes and styles till Steve and me, we had to jam our handkerchers in our mouths for fear we'd snort out loud and spoil the game.

"'Holy sufferin'!' says Steve, 'but ain't he just everlastingly run up against the worst of it this heat! We couldn't have wished no better if we tried, Jay!'

"Well, I should say that there wasn't a piece as big as a quarter on Falk that wasn't black and blue when at last he seemed to get the knack of it, and held himself up in a wobbly sort of way.

MASCOT OF THE GRAYS

"'There,' says Rip, 'that's more like business. Just keep feet still—I going to shoot heels off boots.'

"Falk hollered murder.

"Old Rip shook his head. 'You make such noise I get rattled and shoot hole through foot,' he complained. Falk shut up like a clam.

"'Here we go fresh!' says Rip. 'Now don't move feet.'

"Blam! And the right heel zipped into space. Blim! And away went the left one.

"'Good shooting for old man!' says Rip. 'Now you rest. Bimeby we have some more fun.'

"You should have seen Falk's face as he sat there resting, with the pleasant future in his mind. He wasn't happy, and he showed it. As soon as he got his wind he tried to bribe Rip, but it didn't go. He promised him money and ponies and whisky and tobacco,

TROLLEY FOLLY

and everything under the sun. Rip simply shook his head. 'Don't want!' says he. 'Having plenty good time now. Don't talk any more. Want think what do next.'

"So there they sat, and whenever Rip looked at a place, Falk, he looked too, for he had a large interest in the matter, and it was pretty medium hard to figure out what was passing through Rip's head.

"There was a mud-puddle with about six inches of water and six foot of mud at the end of the pot-hole. Rip took that in very earnest.

"'Hunh,' says he, 'you rested now!'

"'No, I ain't!' cries Falk, with the sweat starting out all over him. 'I ain't rested a little bit. Now, just wait a minute—honest, I'm all played out!'

"'No ask question—tell you about it. I say rested, you *rested*,' answers Rip, in a tone of voice that wasn't to be argued with. Falk

MASCOT OF THE GRAYS

knuckled. 'For God's sake! What's it going to be now?' he asked.

"'You *fish*,' says Rip. 'Plenty dam big fat fish, you!' He pointed to the puddle. 'Now swim!'

"I may have mentioned that Falk was stuck on his appearance? Well, he was—powerful. So when it came to wallowing around in a mud-puddle with his brand new hunting clothes on, he beefed for fair. Moses! How he cussed!

"Then old Rip raised the rifle again, and there was a bad light in his old eyes. I can't give you no idea of the satisfaction he expressed as he simply repeated the one word, 'swim!'

"Brother Falk ground his teeth till the slivers flew; Rip moved his forefinger. That was enough. Into the mud, ker-sock! goes Falk, and the slime splashed a rod around.

"All this time the Injun had been sort of

TROLLEY FOLLY

quiet and sneering, but now he entered into the spirit of the thing. He capered like a school-boy. 'Leelah ouashtay!' He hollered. 'Swim, fish! Kick, fat fish! Kick! Make hand go! Make head go! Make foot go! Wyupee! Chantay meatow leelah ouashtayda!' Then he took to spanking Falk with the butt of the rifle. It was 'a animated scene,' as the poet says. You don't often get a chance to see a two-hundred-and-twenty pound bully lying on his stomach in a mud-puddle swimming for dear life, so Steve and me made the most of it.

"There was Falk hooking mud like a raving maniac—fountains and geysers and water-spouts of mud—while Rip pranced around him, war-whooping and yelling, and laying it on to him with the rifle-butt until each crack sounded like a pistol-shot. It seldom falls to the lot of man or boy to get such a thorough, heartfelt, soul-searching spanking

MASCOT OF THE GRAYS

as that ugly Dutchman received. My! I could feel every swat clear down to my toes, and there isn't a shadow of doubt in my mind that Falk did too.

"And that Injun looked so comical flying around in his high hat and specs and new clothes and canvas shoes! It was a sight to make a horse laugh. By and by Steve couldn't stand it and he roared right out. That stopped the *matinée*. Rip looked up at us and grinned. 'I got openers, this pot,' says he, tapping the rifle. 'Play nice game with friend—stand up, big, fat fish.'

"Well, we had a conniption fit when Falk made himself perpendicular. He *was* a sight! If there ever a man lived whose name ought to be Mud, 'twas Falk. His hair was full of it; his face was gobbed with it, and drops of it fell off the end of his trickling Dutch *muss-tash*. To say nothing of them nice new clothes! Steve hollered, and I hol-

TROLLEY FOLLY

lered, and the Injun hollered. We *more'n* hollered; we rocked on our heels and laid back our ears and screeched—Falk looking from one to the other, oozing slough-juice at every vein, and wishing he had been buried young.

"At last he kind of whimpers out, 'Well, what are you going to do with me now?'

"'Kika-lap!' says Rip, 'fly.'

"And Falk flew, like a little bird; up the side of the pot-hole, over the coulée and across the prairie—vanished, vamoosed, faded, gone for ever. He didn't even stop to pack his clothes. The first train out was soon enough for him.

"So now you say he's fallen into a bushel of money, and has a fine house, and drives his trotters in New York? Well! By gum! But this *is* a strange world! Why couldn't some decent man have gotten the rocks? I tell you what we ought to do; we ought to

MASCOT OF THE GRAYS

take a nice photograph of that pot-hole, of which the general features are impressed on his memory perfect enough not to need no label, I guess, and send it on to him with the compliments of Bloody-Ripping-Thunder, for him to hang as the principal ornament in his art gallery! Old Falk a millionaire! Well, wouldn't that cramp you! I've got to have something to take the taste of that out of my mouth. Yes, the same, Jimmy, with plain water on the side. Well, here's luck, young feller, even to old Falk!"