

Time Immaculate

Mona, Anglesey, Wales, is a tiny globe of dust harassing the rough eye of the Irish Sea. Rock ridden and treeless, where the waves break on the sudden shore, leap high, in hide-and-seek with those across to the other shore. Of all air stations, I would draw my lot for such a corner. A dingy mission hut my home, set at one edge of the isle with briefing rooms, mess and class-rooms thrown at inconvenient remote distances thereabouts.

"Today, I've been here a week, seven days nearer my reprieve from this living hell of eternal rain and fog and mud. I've never seen the sun cast forth one ray over this barren waste, and yet they claim I can learn to fly in all this. I'm on tonight's flying detail, it's my first night flight here. I bet they fly us too, even though it has been misting all day with lazy clouds sagging overhead like the springs on my bed."

Well, they did fly us too. I went to mess, managed a cup of tea, only surveying the other materials they called food. Just seeing it shivered my spine.

Until I got to the briefing, everything seemed a haze—but I imagine I caught the bus with several others, drew my 'Mae West', parachute, compasses and color certificates then took my place with my crew. All my mind seemed to say was, "This can't last forever."

I suddenly realized I must hurry to get all the briefing, so I settled in, to checking courses with the Bomb Aimer, items of procedure with the Pilot, and pleaded with the W. A. G. to use the radio for navigation tonight, rather than listening to "hot live." The Pilot jabbed my arm and murmured, "They're sure to scrub tonight."

Then the weather briefing began—clouds, thin layer—tops 3,500 feet—base 2000 feet, mist below, clear above, clouds broken over the sea, and a full moon. I laughed quietly to myself in a cursing way and thought, "Yes—Hell of a lot you know about it down here, or care either as long as we get those hours in. You would make the whole damn

trip over the sea tonight with all that soup floating around. What if something happened out there in the mist—sure all it ever means to you is a list of names 'gone for a Burton'."

I stumbled out with the others in the mad rush, and began searching the taxi strip for our kite, 'Socrates.' Shortly, I located it and entered that inferno of thunder, meeting the usual stench of gas fumes, mingled with the odor of some previous occupant, who was an unfortunate victim of airsickness.

After arranging charts and instruments, I sat back and gazed out the window at the dim moving lights of other craft, weaving in ahead and behind us, to position for take-off. Soon we were being drawn by the thin steel blade, faster and faster down the runway. Suddenly our nose lifted skyward, we were airborne. I recorded the time and smiled with content as we slipped loose the chains of gravity, and soared through the misty nothingness. I watched the altimeter and muttered, "1000 feet—2000 feet still mist and cloud, the black nowhere all around. 3000 feet—seems a bit lighter, surely the Met. Office couldn't be right for a change. 3500 feet—no cloud, save an endless carpet of woolly whiteness below, caressed by the mellow gleam of the yawning moon." At height, 4000 feet, over Base, I called the course and E. T. A. through the intercom to the Pilot.

The aircraft turned on course, noting the time I pulled myself up, opened the astro-dome and projected my head up partly into the rushing air, breathing deeply the sweet aroma, which could only come from some celestial garden in paradise. I was carried away in dreams, my mind filled with ease, my heart was light and from somewhere out in that blue a voice seemed to be saying in such excitement, it filled the whole air.

"Stay—come along my path of dreams, above those weary ways—up—up—to where the misty sails drift on into infinite space—come,

THE DREAMER

The water roared menacingly, and was terrible in its rushing power. Bare rock bravely tried to shoulder it aside but water poured over it to come crashing in magnificent boiling foam two hundred feet below. Trees on the cliff edge stirred lazily in the warm summer afternoon breeze, and were wraith-like in the mist of spray, while the bushes were the bright clear green that spoke of perpetual water.

Thenan was standing down stream regarding the fall intently, his face lifted to the sun and his sparse grey hair ruffled and damp from the wet wind. His soft white hand wiped the sweat from a forehead slowly flushing from sunburn, but his stare did not alter.

He didn't see the tree-clad cliff and broken boulder-strewn valley, and he had no eye for the bright leafy foliage, no ear for the incessant hum of flies. The falls' unbroken roar was a muted murmur in his ears.

He saw a river flowing serenely down the valley. He saw shining white concrete buildings on the cliff top, neat and orderly in their rows, their stacks stretching to the sky. The great dam at their sprawling feet was new. It glistened in the sun and the mournful moan of the trains above it was his symphony of man's triumph over the wild.

He could see the clean buildings of the industry's workers nestling in the valley, could hear the calls of players and the click of golf balls as they sped over land reclaimed from the torrid. Children's cries as they played came to his ears, also the voices of their mothers calling them to their meals.

The mournful howl of the freight pulling out of the factory yard became, suddenly the vicious buzz-zz of an attacking mosquito. In a trice the softly flowing river dissolved into the mighty roar of raging water as he slapped viciously.

With a sigh he surveyed the desolate scene and wearily turned, shouldering his rods. Wiping the sweat from his eyes he turned and trudged back along the path he had come, just another unsuccessful fisherman going back to his dull routine job.

Let us skip along the Milky Way to gather roses from the sunset hues, violets from the dusky purple sky, buttercups in the moonbeams. We'll dream along that Snowy Way until we can hear the trembling strains of harps, the Angelic Hosts—even unto the Thorns of Heavenly Grace, reach out and clasp the very Hand of God.

"Why are you veiled in mists infinity, always dark in tomorrows space of time, never sharing the lucid toasts in tune with life. Always vainly endeavoring to scale the walls of human dignity, never content with the joy of your own simplicity."

"Why return, knowing that all your tomorrows will be as all your yesterdays—one grave struggle. Now that you are free, descend not from space to cast your soul and body again to that auction of life, to be bid to naught, scaled to wantonness and shackled to hopelessness, a monument to despair."

Another voice was calling, "Hey! Chum are you going to navigate this crate or not?" Jarred from my reverie I took the radio report the W. A. G. was handing me, answering, "Yes—yes." For the remainder of the flight I could still hear that voice above the roar of the engines. It was as though I was being torn between two worlds.

DAGGER TONGUES.

The best way to make and keep friends is to throw the spotlight on their virtues and draw the curtain over their shortcomings.

We all have plenty of imperfections and probably it is just as well that we don't know about them. So there is plenty of reason for making allowance for the things we do not like among others, and to remember the good points and forget the bad.

It takes lots of self-control to refrain from speaking out of turn at times, but it certainly pays in the long run.

Remember when the wrong thing is once said, it is gone for good and you can't bring it back any more than you can reverse a radio wave and shoot it back into the microphone.

A good many of the heart aches in this old world can be charged up to words that never should have been spoken—ill chosen, cruel, words that found their mark like daggers. Yes, even evil tongues create much mischief and breed much hatred.

The Japs have an ancient proverb which reads: "The tongue is but three inches long but it can kill a man six feet high."

It certainly pays to be tolerant.

PROCRASTINATION

If you have a job to do—then do it right away—Tomorrow is a long way off—we only have To-day—The present time is ours to use, and spend as best we can—and every hour is precious in this little human span... We put things off, and then we find we've left it just too late—and then, it's more than likely that we'll put the blame on Fate—we never can recapture that odd moment that we lost—There's no time like the present, as we find out—to our cost... "I'll leave it till tomorrow"—That's a fatal thing to say—Don't give the clock the laugh on you—just do that job—To-day.

Ever hear about the hotel maid in Toronto who, when the travelling man asked to borrow the hotel alarm clock, told him that sometimes it would fail to go off, and if it did, just to give the button a little push and the bell would ring all right.

—Or Sambo, who when his mulo lay down on the road for a nap, threatened to drive right over over him if he didn't get up at once.

One's position in the estimate of his friends depends not so much on what he thinks as what he says.



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