

# RAINY AFTERNOON

## THE WOMAN-HATER.

I suppose it was only to be expected that the Waacs would upset things when they joined us. After all, we were an old-established permanent camp, with our own pleasant ways of doing things, ways which we realised would be altered. We resigned ourselves to the fact that swimming without costumes was one pastime that would cease, that our abuse of the sergeant (when the sergeant wasn't there) would lose much of its effect if the best of the language was left out; but we took it all as the fortunes of war.

That is, all except one man. Johnny was an Irishman, with all the temperament that implies. He believed that a woman's place was in the home, and no d— Waac was going to alter him. He told them so; but with a woman's intuition he was left severely alone by all the Waacs. He would not play games with them, objected mutteringly when he had to march in the same squad with them, managed to be excused church parade because the Waacs attended; and as the days passed retired ever deeper into a shell of scorn whenever he found himself near them.

Then SHE came. With the exception of Johnny the camp vied with one another in telling her how nice she was. Johnny avoided her as he did all the other Waacs. Except, of course, at mealtimes, for that was one place where Johnny had to be in the same place as the Waacs. But he used to eat his meals quickly and in silence, and leave the table as soon as he could.

Then the blow fell. At dinner one night SHE looked along the table at the silent Johnny and smiled sweetly. "Come and sit by me, Johnny," she said softly.

Johnny went white and then red. He stammered, tried to speak, and broke out in a cold sweat. He reached for the salt and poured it in his tea, sprinkled sugar on his vegetables, tried to spear a potato with his knife, then forgot where his mouth was and tried to put it in his ear. He undid the buttons on his tunic, and did them up again three times before he lost the dazed look in his eye.

Then he got up, walked down the room and sat beside her.

Johnny thinks the Waacs are a decided asset to the place.

—L.W.R.

A certain Staff-Sergeant once heard an extremely deplorable word, And being devoid Of invention, employed It whenever a mishap occurred.

"We can't possibly go on the bull-ring to-day," said Lieutenant Hickson plaintively, "so we will proceed to the recreation hut. I will talk to the men about China."

"Yes, sir," said Sergeant-Major Pebble. "March off, sir?"

"March off," said Lieutenant Hickson.

We marched off, blessing the rain, because we were on a week's "rest" between two intensive courses of gunnery instruction, and nothing is quite so exhausting as a period of "rest" in the Army. "Rest" consists of drill, P.T., route marches, parades and the revision of all those things we have happily forgotten since our first months in camp. To listen to Lieutenant Hickson losing himself in the interior of China was perhaps not an ideal way of spending the morning, but it was a darned sight better than the bull-ring.

We were within a few yards of the rec. hut when "B" Company, led by Lieutenant Hollow, rounded the cook-house, evidently also bound for the rec. hut.

"Hurry our men along, Sergeant Major Pebble," said Lieutenant Hickson, "or 'B' Company will bag the hall."

"'C' Company," bellowed Sergeant Major Pebble, "Double march!"

Both companies arrived at the door together and halted, glaring at one another.

"I beg your pardon, Lieutenant Hollow," said Lieutenant Hickson, with assumed politeness, "but I am lecturing to 'C' Company on China, and I am afraid I shall require the rec. hut."

"I am extremely sorry, Lieutenant Hickson," said Lieutenant Hollow, with a forced smile, "but I am saying a few words to 'B' Company about Gas."

There was an ominous pause, and then Lieutenant Hickson laughed breezily.

"We musn't keep the men standing about in this rain," he said. "I have thought of an excellent solution. Your men can join us and hear my lecture on China."

Lieutenant Hollow shook his head. "I gave them a lecture on China last week," he said, "and so they know everything about China and the Chinese now. It would be a waste of time for them. But I shall be delighted if your men will join mine for my lecture on Gas."

Lieutenant Hickson turned to Sergeant Major Pebble.

"How long is it since I told my men about Gas?" he asked.

"Six weeks, at least," said Sergeant Major Pebble, dutifully, "and you covered all the ground very thoroughly, Sir."

The rain was pelting down by this time and as none of us had ground sheets, we were shuffling and mumbling. At last, the two officers, after borrowing a coin from Corporal Mays, tossed up for the use of the hut, and we won. We filed gleefully in, and found the place already occupied by "A" Company, to whom Captain Crumble was lecturing on "Some Interesting Facts about Trajectories."

"We'll have to use the little room off the Y.M.C.A.," said Lieutenant Hickson gloomily.

"March off, Sir?" said Sergeant Major Pebble.

"March off," said Lieutenant Hickson.

We found Lieutenant Hollow and his men in possession of the little room off the Y.M.C.A. We trudged through the slush to the old armoury to find Captain Woodbine talking to "D" Company on "Customs of the East African Negroes." We trotted briskly to the room off the Q store to discover Lieutenant Wanders discussing Hand Grenades with the new recruits. Finally, the miniature range, our last hope, was occupied by Captain Denham lecturing to HQ about "Care of the Feet."

We spent the rest of the afternoon in the field pretending we were Germans in Russia making a strategic withdrawal to extremely unprepared positions. Not a man in "C" Company now thinks a rainy afternoon anything like the asset he once did.

My sister and I don't talk about that. We get it crooned over the radio.

A LONGER  
LASTING  
SHINE IN  
HALF THE  
TIME WITH



**KIWI**  
Dark Tan Oxblood Polish