

INTO THE MILL AND OUT

BEING THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF SELLEDEM OUT OUT LAYTE, RELATED BY S. O. L. HIMSELF.

To continue Punk Bailey's tale where I dropped it last week:

I sure was having a regulation good time for the first ten days I spent on 'The Sunny Isle,' but after that—Wow. But there I am miles ahead of my tale already. After I landed the furlough I grabbed my old hand-trunk by the handle and made a dash to the pier of the Nippon Steamship Company. I knew there was a barge docked there and about due to pull out. My luck was with me, boys, and I made it and without doing the old 'movie' gag of hopping the ship as she pulled out.

We had a slight blow on the way over and for a little bit I kinda thought I'd lost my sea-legs for my grub-bag began to feel somewhat strange but I weathered it all right and when we tied up at Yokohama I was feeling fit as a fiddle.

As I said, things ran along in great style for about ten days and it was on Monday morning when I came to my senses in Tokio or rather in a little town about ten miles outside of the city and I scouted around until I came to a little Tayen-ho, sort of a Jap restaurant, where I had a bit to eat and met a sailor from the destroyer Pocahontas, who was ashore on a few days' leave. He was reading the English edition of one of the Tokio papers and I sat down on a cushion near his and began chatting with him. I saw the deck-scrubber glance at my collar ornaments kinda sharp and then he passed the paper over to me, pointing out one of the articles, with a "Your outfit, ain't it?"

"For the love o' Pete and dirty bolos," I says as I read the lines. "The old regiment pulling out and me not notified?" That was before the days of crabby censors, and it told how the old —th was ordered back to the States. Now, you can tell the world that I did some quick thinking and I doped it out after a minute or so, that if I could make Tokio and naail an afternoon train for the coast I'd grab a boat that would come mighty close to getting me to the Islands on time. The old kid in blue across from me says, "Why don't yer give this new electric line a try-out, buddie; it oughter help you a bit." I yelps, "Yes, by golly I'll take the chance," and dashed for the street.

They had just put in a little jerk line between this town and the city and I was just nuts enough to try it, in preference to the old and slower 'rickshaws. Well, I had covered about two miles of the distance and were going at the reckless speed of ten miles when we struck a curve or rather we didn't strike it and with a lurch the car left the track and rolled down a steep bank and sowie! up against a tree. The car stopped right

there but I didn't and kept right on going through a window on down the hill and brought up in a swamp with my head against a rock.

The next I knew I woke up in an old shanty and upon trying to move discovered that I was tied hand and foot. I twisted my head around and who did I see but a hard-boiled egg with six months' growth of whiskers on his map and the rottenest smelling pipe I ever run up against stuck between his teeth. He was a new one on me, all right. "What's the big idea, kid?" I pipes out.

The fossil turns around, looks hard at me, takes the incinerator out of his face and replied, "Yer come to, eh? And old Punky don't recognize his old pal." That put me away for a little bit and then I thinks kinda steady for a bit and I get a happy thought, "You ain't Rocky Hill?" I remarked. Not a sound for a minute or so as a cloud that smells like burning rubber goes sailing towards the roof.

"The same," he says. "The same."

"Well, I'll be darned," I returned. "And what the deuce are you doing in this hole and why am I trussed up like this?"

Let me explain, this same Hill had been missing from our company since about two weeks after we landed in the Islands and never a word had we heard o' him. He had been mixed up in a scrape with a Jap girl and a native. The Spic had tried to knife him one night on guard and Rocky got him with the bayonet square in the stomach, then getting scared 'cause he thought what they could do to him for murder, had deserted on the spot.

I gave him the dope on how the Corporal of the guard picked the man up a couple o' minutes afterward and shoved him in the sick-bay and how he came around and got out a couple o' months later. That sure tickled old Rocky, so he cut my ropes and we have a great talk about the boys we both knew so well. He tells me that he kinda thought I'd come to run him in but when I explained it to him the whole deal was fake. We gets together and doctors up my uniform for she sure was some ripped up and muddy. Hill was hungry for the old life again and says he was willin' to take what he had coming to him just to get back under Old Glory again and give up the dog's life he'd been leading, hidden away in the swamp, buried away from the eyes of his countrymen.

I told him how the old outfit was leaving and that I thought we'd both be out of luck but still he was game so out we set for Tokio. He was on to all the little paths so it wasn't long before we were out on the main road and luck was with us for an empty 'rickshaw was coming our way and we got in and finally to the city.

To cut a long story short, at Yokohama we found another lad from the regiment who disproved the newspaper tale for it wasn't our outfit that was leaving but another and a slight m' take had been made in the figures.

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