

# ALL AT SEA

There was a slight argument of the type which never reaches a satisfactory conclusion.

The argument was really much to do about nothing. It had something to do with the sun, the blackout as announced with monotonous regularity from the Ship's Orderly Room, and the direction the ship was going. Harry never knew what the discussion was about, so he could not add very much intelligent interest to it. These topics, as I say, were irretrievably mixed, round pegs in square holes, and you can't mix chalk with cheese. Bertie Wooster was adamant about that. Anyway the argument got more and more involved as more and more people joined the little coterie at the ship's rail and gaze into the swirling depths below. Everyone was throwing spanners into the Works. In fact the argument Never had a Chance. It was sabotaged from the Outset. How could we keep a straight face and an active brain, which the argument seemed to compel, when George said, Aywah, bread is like the Sun, it Rises in the Yeast and Sets in the Vest. George was never much good at spelling. At this Stage I must confess I couldn't follow the Drift of Things.

Shorty confused the issue by reminding his Audience of the day when he strangled six Germans with his Bare Hands in the Olive Groves Outside Sfax. The Army Authorities had done him dirty in NOT giving him a Dog's Leg. I was very quick at the Uptake and knew he meant a stripe.

George drew heavily on his Fund of Knowledge by making the Profound Observation that you can't tell how far EAST or WEST you were going by the Daily changing of Blackout Hours. He Mumbled something about Tempus Fugit and that East was East and West was West and never the Twain shall Meet. He said it was a racket which ought to be exposed. It was a trap for Fools. These Days a Man didn't Know where he stood or what day of the Week it was. We were Clay in the Potter's Hands. With the Paper Shortage, Calendars were unreliable.

Shorty said it Didn't Matter, Nothing Mattered so long as we got there and a bloke could get his grub. Harry piped up and said that the Army made a bloke Turn Back the Clock but who was going to Pay for the Time so callously Lost. It was a Clear Case of Fraud. Shorty seemed to know about this aspect of the Matter. He said he knew a man who knew a Man who told him that in Fiji a bloke could stand on a piece of Ground quite innocently and Yet Not Know where he Stood. On one piece of Ground it was Saturday and by walking a Few Yards it was Sunday. George mumbled something about Time Meridians and Shorty said it was rather a good Caberet in Cairo where there was plenty of High Kicking.

I interposed at this juncture and observed that it would be handy avoiding a Church Service since a Man could always Walk Back a few Yards.

Tony Troop Deck Something or Other said that was why the Yanks were doing so well in the Aleutians since they could issue the Same Communique Twice on the Same Day. Shorty said he suspected as much. Everyone seems to be Mixed these Days. It must be the inclement Weather. I agreed since I do remember vaguely whilst on Furlough going to a Beer Party on a Friday Night and Two Days slipped By without My Knowing It. The Rot set in Years Ago. The Lamentable Falling Off in the Rightness of Things even Affected Men in High Places. The Composer who wrote the Song 'When It's Night Time In Italy it's Wednesday Over Here,' and 'Johnny Get Your Gun, Get Your Gun.'

We had not stood by the Rail very Long when the Man-who-was-a-Gunnery-Instructor back in Kiwiland said that for every mile we travelled we rose a Foot. Remarkable. We must be going Uphill. George drew Arcs and Things on his packet of Fags and Announced Solemnly that we would have to climb 13,000 feet before we are Out of the Morass. By this time we were all in the Slough of Despondency... We retired to the bowels of the ship to Enquire about the Shape of Things to Come.

F.W.S.