

LOVE IDYLL—contd.

"Come closer," she said, and I obeyed.

She placed her hands on my shoulders and drew me closer. Her long-lashed eyes had a dreamy look. Her soft, red lips slightly parted, and she whispered, "Kiss me please."

What would you have done? Well so did I. "To blazes with the troopship, I don't care if it does go without me," I thought.

I seemed to come out of a kind of anæsthetic to feel her gently but firmly pushing me away. "No more of this now," she said, "Perhaps later." There was a promise in her eyes as she spoke.

I reached for my drink. Hell, I needed it.

"Will you fetch that big box?" she asked, "I must show you something." She opened it when I brought it over, and I was in for another surprise. It contained two perfectly made artificial legs complete with stockings and shoes.

"Help me, and I will show you how I am learning to walk. Someday I will be able to dance again," she added eagerly.

I was only too willing to help with the straps and buckles which adjusted the limbs. She took several slow but nevertheless graceful steps across the room. "See," she said.

When I tell you she looked marvellous standing there I don't exaggerate. The sight of her made me want to kill every murdering Jap who dared lift one finger against such beauty as this.

Anna said, "I wear them a little longer every day. I had my practice this morning, so you must help me off with them now."

The straps were finally undone and the first limb was ready to be removed. I pulled gently at first with no result. I pulled a little harder, then harder still.

You see I have always been pretty good at pulling legs. I'm still trying.

SORRY CHAPS.

THE COMMON SPUD

Consider the vagaries in the life of the common spud. Remember those which we planted so fondly in the vegetable garden. Some of these have names reminiscent of racehorses, such as Maori Chief, Robin Adair, Aram Banner, Royal Salute. Others are more personal in application such as Sweet Dakota, Cliff's Kidney. In the pot these spuds are all the same and our good wives are able to bake, boil, roast, or fry them for the sake of variety. The grower takes more relish in the eating because he has seen them

through the difficult weeks of their infancy. The women who are touchy on the matter of their waist line can never work up any enthusiasm about them because of their fattening properties. But would they weaken if confronted with the Ship's menu disguising the humble spud under such extravagant titles as Macaire, Lyonnaise, Duchesse. The Ship's repertoire does not finish here, however. I repeat a few additional ones which have been encountered. Dauphine, Paysanne, Chateau and Parmentier; not forgetting Saute, Croquette, Puree, I have mentioned only fourteen different ways of dishing up this versatile dish. Since coming on board we have had potatoes done seventeen different ways. Nor have we who eat in the Warrant and Officers Mess double banked, yet on the Soup. In fact the chef has proved himself to be insuperable. There is a fullsome choice of succulent and nourishing soup. Would you prefer a Creme something or other, such as Creme Jackson, Americaine, du Barry, Tyrolienne? Or a consomme something or other, Vermicelli, Chiffonade, Xavier? These impressive titles dwarf into insignificance when we come across such soups as Pish Pash, Bonvalet, Garbure, Flamande, Mulligatawny, Celestine, Chiffonade.

Now consider the ballast part of the meal. You are presented with a choice of Sheep's Kidneys, Maitre d'hotel, Medallions Sicilienne.

Old Boundary Bill says that they are dishing out medals for the Sicily campaign, as the Menu says so. Pappaya, this suggests an infant recognising his father after furlough, or some native jargon of the South Seas. Perhaps some third Division man knows the answer to this one. The Russians have been introduced to the Menu as it is fitting in these days of Allies. Kromeski Russe. Then we have Cassolets Bergere, Minced Collops, Frittered Bringal, Bouchees Reine, Remoulade Sauce, Veal cutlets Milannaise, Stewed Lamb Jardiniere.

Old Bill says that this is something to do with a lamb raised by the gardener.

Those who mess in C4, and elsewhere in the bowels of the ship, needn't worry, for the same fish they are getting is presented to the Upper House as Cod Fillets au Four, or Blue Cod Nicoise, and what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, and the humble spud has eyes to see through it all.....

F.W.S.