The Guardian Angel

A COMPLETE NOVELETTE

By Octavus Roy Cohen

The Guardian Angel yawned mightily, stretched luxuriously seaed himself on the edge of a fleecy cloud and gazed idly down upon the ship-dotted harbor.

This particular harbor was a pet spot to the Guardian Angel when business was dull elsewhere. The harbor was lined with massive piers, alongside of which were moored palatial liners, rustily dilapidated tramps, rakish schooners, and last, but by no means least, the squat, ugly fighting ships of the navy.

It was on one of these—the U. S. S. Springfield—that the gaze of the Guardian Angel was bent. The giant cruiser lay just off the navy yard, her gray form rising grimly from the sun-kissed waves; her big guns glinting viciously in their turrets, decks swabbed to surpassing whiteness, her brasswork rivaling the day itself in brilliancy.

A figure stood alone on the Springfield apart from its fellows. The Guardian Angel bent a speculative eye upon it. It suddenly, toppled overboard, splashed into the river, struggled frantically for a moment, sank, reappeared, and—the Guardian Angel got busy.

A second figuer, catapulting from the leadman's platform, shot clear of the ship and cleaved the water with knife-like precision. A bugle sounded shrilly. The "Man overboard!" signal fluttered at the halyard, and the crew rushed to its appoined formation.

The struggle in the watter was brief and businesslike. The second figure grasped the first by the back of his jumper, clutched at the lifeline, and in a very short space of time both figures were back on the ship, and the Guardian Angel smiled a satisfied smile as he settled back more comfortably on the edge of his cloud.

"A poor rookie," soliloquized the Angel. "A poor, green, half-baked, milk-and-water rookie. Oh, well, I suppose I might as well help him a bit—having nothing else to do."

The Guardian Angel vanished.

The rookie stuck a dripping head into the odoriferous galley, coughed slightly to attract the attention of the cook, and spoke in a voice as watery as his clothes.

"Please, sir, may I dry my clothes in the kitchen?"

"The what-a-at?" roared the culinary emperor.

"The kitchen."

"Wow!" screamed the irascible cook. "Let you in my galley? Why you dried-up, pink-cheeked, skinny deckswab you! Wh'daya think I'm runnin' aboard this craft a Chink laundry?"

"N-n-n-no, sir. But you see——"

"Sure I see. An' it ain't nothin' much to see either. It's a bloomin' pity they didn't let you sink 'stead of fishin' you out!" Cookie was growing excited. "Why, you poor in-significant-i-cant, cock-eyed, bow-legged son-of-a-gun! Get t' 'ell out o' my galley or I'll heave you overboard again; you hear me, you rubber-boot?"

The rookie only made bad matters worse.

"Please, sir," he advised in a mild, shaky little tremolo, "you hadn't ought to get mad. I didn't mean any harm, sir; only wanting to dry my clothes."

"Mad!" the cook laughed wildly, waving his arms and thereby tumbling a bucket of spuds . Oh, my Gawd! I'll show you who is mad. What d'ye think you are, anyhow, you——" And cookie poured forth a stream of naval Billingsgate that crackled in the fetid air of the galley like a wireless spark run amuck.

The rookie remembered the better part of valor and crawfished hastily out of the galley, amid the fanfare of jeers from the seamen, who had listened grinningly and appreciatively to the cook's electrically personal remarks.

"Mama's own ickle boy!" taunted one. "Do um want to dry um clothes?"

"Is um get wetted all over?"

"Ickle sing get treated so badly on the naughty ship!"

The rookie stared at the group in terror. They were jeering, grinning, ruthless lot. Even a big bluff master-at-arms whose part profanity had been semihuman, took a hand in the verbal assault.

"Wouldn't that make you sick?" he demanded. "Just look at the boob. He ought to be home in bed 'stead of on a battle-ship. Lordy, what are we coming to?"

"Slipped overboard," chuckled the quartermaster. "An'y' just ought to of heard him hollerin' for help."

"Oh, f'r the old navy," chimed in the ancient sailmaker's mate. "He needs keel haulin', that's what. It's the only way to cure the namby pamby kind. Why I remember wunst on th' old Monongahela——"

"Aw! save it, Sails. We'll listen to that on Sunday."

The abashed rookie backed away from the crowd and sidled across the deck in the general direction of the midshipman's hatch.

"Hey, you!" bellowed a bull-like coxswain; "where d'ye think y'r headed?"

The rookie answered politely: "Down stairs, sir; to dry my clothes."

A shout of derision rose heavenward. "Down-stairs!" groaned the coxswain.

"Down-stairs! Listen to it, would ye? But you ain't bound 'down-stairs,' rookie. Y'r bound to get a deck-swab an' swab up that track of water you just lef. Shake a leg!"

"Yes, sir. Of course, sir." The rookie walked apologetically forward into the eyes of the ship, where he beside himself in the ardurous and thankless task of wringing out his clothes under the eyes and lashing tongues of his hypercritical shipmates. It mattered not when or where he turned, there was always some one to proffer sarcastic advice. "Don't go too near the edge, sonny, you might fall in again and get all wet. Don't tootsie think him might catch cold?" Does um want a hot water bottle?"

Eventually he secured a swab—an old one—and returned to his appointed task of swabbing the tracks left by his dripping uniform. Cockswain bullied him through the job, much to the delight of the bystanders. And finally, the task finished, he sought solace in self-communion while his tormentors gathered in the forecastle head, while the master-at-arms discoursed sagely to the assemblage.

"An' did you hear him talkin' about sir'down-stairs' for 'below,' and 'Yes, sir' for 'Aye, aye'? An' six weeks he's been aboard now. He just ain't got a sailor's head on them pink shoulders of his."

"Huh," laughed the cockswain.

"You ought to hear him at mess. Why only this morning he says, 'Will you please pass the butter?" An when Blake there sings out, "Put a jib on th' grease!' he looked surprised an' flustered like."

"I got an idea."

They crowded about him, for cookie was notorious for two accomplishments—the awe inspiring flow of profanity ever at his tongue's end and his fertile brain.

"Shoot, cookie; what is it?"

"Tonight when we gets ashore an' starts up River street, we'll lay for him. We can scare the very devil out of him an' yank him down to the dago's place."

"Good."

"But what'll we do then?"

Cookie struck an attitude patterned generally after the accepted posture of one G. Washington navigating the Delaware.

"Match him against a wop!"

"A-a-a-a-ah!" An inhalation of general admiration wafted upward to the beams of the overhead deck. Gee, what a swell idea."

"He'll fight, of course. He'll have to. An' maybe he'll get some of that namby-pamby stuff knocked out of him; an', anyway, we'll see has he got any guts."

"Why not here on board," objected the quartermaster. It'd be more fun.'

"Yah! An' get jacked up before the mast for hazin' a rookie. Nope it's gotta be done ashore."

"But," interjected the practical master-at-arms, "s-pose he won't let you take him down to th' dago's place He's a good-sized kid. S'pose he puts up a fight?"

Cookie roared with laughter. "Good-sized be hanged. We'll pick three—say, you an' Blake an' me. A fat chance he'd have, I don't think He'll come with us meek as a lamb—an' we'll hunt for the other down to it' dago's."

"Is it square?"

"Square!" bellowed the cook. "Why ain't it square? Answer me that. We ain't gonna do nothin' 'ceptin' match him against some one of his own size.'

The dissenter, discovering himself to be a very puny minority, subsided. The cockswain hailed the object of their conspiracy.

"Avast there rookie!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Swab that deck some more."

The rookie did as bidden, and eventually satisfied his taskmaker. After which he thankfully replaced the swab, went below to the bag-room and prayed devoutly that he might never again slip overboard.

"Now, let me see," murmured the thoroughly interested Guardian Angel thoughtfully. "Let me see." He pondered a moment, and then: "Got it!" he cried exultantly.

The blanket of night had already enfolded the navy yard when the liberty party of the U. S. S. Springfield checked out. The moon had not yet risen, and the few stars in the heaven imparted no light to the dingy streets diverging from the vicinity of the navy yard.

The liberty party checked out slowly and by dint of intensive strategy on the part of the three conspirators, the rookie was the last to leave the ship. From their vantage point on shore they watched him head up River Street, the one street leading directly from the navy yard; and the cook chuckled.

"It's twenty to nothin'," he sibilated, "that he's bound for Ah Wong's an' a bowl of chop suey. He's right passionate about that Chink hash. He'll cut through th' alley——"

River Street reminds one of Riverside Drive—it is unlike that fashionable thoroughfare. It is dark and poorly paved, and flanked on either side by somber rows of squalid, red-brick tenements. At each corner a sputtering arc-light battles noisly to dissemble the Stygian gloom, but with faint success.

In the middle of the street, on the right, a noisome alley, empties into the main thoroughfare. At the intersection of alley and street the city has placed an old-fashioned gas-lamp; but the denizens of River Street cannot remember when historic lamp has burned, and so it is that the meeting point of street and alley is naturally dark; and on this particular night went itself several better.

The waylaying trio knew the one weakness of the rookie's gastronomic department. Inevitable as shore-leave his first stop was at Ah Wong's for a dish of succulent chop suey, that Chinese dish which is not at all Chinese and never eaten by a Chinaman, and therefore of great appeal to the occidental palate. There were two routes from the navy yard to Ah Wong's—one to the end of River Street and around three tortuous blocks; the other, and the only direct way, lay up River Street to the alley and through that alley to the gilt-andred porals of Ah Wong's. So they waited in the darkets spot in the dark alley for their man.

The slim figure clad in dress blues, swung lightly up River Street, paused uncertainly at the mouth of the alley, and swung by that route toward Ah Wong's. The three in the fastness of the alley darkness flattened themselves against the wall, grinning in anticipatory glee.

"Here he comes now," whispered the cook.

"Sure?" questioned the master-at-arms in a subilant whisper.

"The last man," nodded the cook affirmatively. "It's him all right."

The figure approached the oppointed spot unsuspectingly. The muscles of the conspirators tensed. Cookie gave the signal.

"Now!" he shireked in a high falsetto. "Grab him!"

The lone figure jerked up with an exclamation of surprise. He leaped backward until his shoulders were against the wall on the opposite side of the alley. He laughed shrilly. The attackers closed in.

The master-at-arms dived viciously for the legs; a regular football tackle, at which he was expert, being an on the team of the U. S. S. Springfield. The prospective victim sidestepped nimbly, circled with surprising agility, and a big fist crashed with trained precisio nagainst the side of the cook's jaw.

The cook paused uncertainly, the look of utter surprise which flashed to his face being wasted in the impenetrable blackness. Meanwhile the master-at-arms had tackled—with little success—the red-brick wall. The cook sagged in the middle and dropped like an empty flour sack. Blake closed in, whooping like a madman.

"Paste 'im!" he yelled. "He ain't gonna let us take him!"

The master-at-arms scrambled to his feet, paused in dazed uncertainty for a second, visualized the figure of their antagonist in the bloom, and started bravely for him. He had not witnessed the blow that felled the cook.

The dancing figure of the man in dress-blues sped down the alley for perhaps a score of yards, the master-at-arms and the redoubtable Blake in close pursuit. Of a sudden he turned. He first caught the master-at-arms fairly in the midriff, full weight of bone and muscle, expertly directed behind it. The stricken man was conscious for a fleeting instant—conscious of the fear that the fist intended traveling through his stomach until it snapped the backbone. He grunted in pain and sank slowly to the bosom of Mother Earth—clothed as it was with dirty cobblestones.

Blake was both a valiant man and a good boxer. He squared off and the two men sparred briefly. Blake stepped in to have his head snapped back by a straight left jab. He tried it again only to have the performance repeated. Blake began to realize that the man opposite—whatever else he might be—was certainly a trained boxer. And the jabs hurt. Only the man on the receiving end of the jab fusillade knows how much they hurt.

Blake proceeded with greater caution—but he proceeded. The other sprang in with lightning-like quickness; the left jabbed Blake's head back on his shoulders. With marvelous speed the blow was repeated and then before Blake recovered his balance, his opponent stepped in and crossed his right to the jaw, and Blake journeyed peacefully to a temporary residence in the land of flowers and sunshine and streets of gold and radiant angels.

The victor laughed shortly, surveyed the fruits of victory, and strolled slowly—insolently almost—up the street. He paused at the entrance of Ah Wong's and inspected his right thumb.

"Sprained!" he muttered angrily. Then he stumped up the steps for his dish of chop suey.

It was perhaps ten minutes later that the master-at-arms convinced himself that his breathing apparatus had not been permanently paralyzed and five minutes after that he had succeeded in getting cookine and Blake propped against the wall. The master-at-arms rose to heights of sarcasm.

"O, no," he gasped, "he ain't got a chance, he ain't!"

"Lordy," breathed Blake enviously. "What a punch that kid does pack!"

The cook said just one work by way of correction.

"Unpack, you mean!"

It was the following morning that the cook, nursing several contusions, cornered the master-at-arms, who was busy ditto.

"By golly!" sighed cookie, I'll show him I'm a man even if I ain't a fighter."

Before the eyes of those who had derided the young chap on the previous day he made the amends honorable. He sidled up to the rookie and extended his hand.

"Say," he growled, "I'm here to say that whenever you have any duds to dry, you can just heave 'em into my galley; see? I got an extra line triced up in there.

The rookie shook hands weakly, trembling from sheer surprise.

"Thanks," he mumbled awkwardly.

"'Ss all right," murmered the cook, rolling away. "S all right." Then to himself: "Chee! you wouldn't think he could do it!"

A few minutes late at mess, the rookie quavered a timid question to the master-at-arms, who fidgeted nervously at his left:

"Will you please, sir, pass the butter?"

That worthy nodded hastily.

"Sure! Sure!" his bull-like voice bellowed the length of the table. "Hey, you! Pass the butter up here. Whatcha wanna do—starve this end of th' table?"

At that moment a sailor garbed in dress-blues, whose cap bore an inscription other than that of U. S. S Springfield, sat alone in the reading room of the Naval Y. M. C. A. experimentally wiggling an iodine-painted thumb.

"What's the trouble?" inquired a solicitous and admiring clerk.

The middleweight champion of the Atlantic fleet, on furlough, raised his head and shrugged his shoulders.

"Aw, nothin' much," he answered, as he gave his thumb another painful wiggle. "Nothin' at all."

The Guardian Angel yawned mightily, stretched luxuriously, seated himself comfortably on the edge of his favorite fleecy cloud, and gazed affectionately at the ship-dotted harbor beneath.

"That," murmered the Angel contentedly, "is what I call a pretty fair job!"

History of the Salvation Army in America

By Commandant Emma Westbrook

By Commandant Emma Westbrook.

One of the seven original Salvation Army Lassies, who came to the United States from England and started the work of the Army on the American continent.

The first time the Salvation Army appeared in America was in a Bowery Theatre, where we were unwittingly "booked" in conjunction with "Uncle Tom's Cabin." The manager of the theatre charged an admission of 25 cents to see Eliza cross the ice and hear the martial religious songs of the seven Salvation Army lassies and their commander, George Railton.

We landed in New York on March 10, 1880. We immediately began looking for a place to hold our meetings. Harry Hill, who was proprietor of a theatre on the bowery offered us the use of his theatre for two hours, two nights a week. The first time we held services was a Sunday evening. When the curtain went up we beheld an audience of men with silk hats, and cane and women dressed in silks. We thought it rather strange, because most of our audiences in England had been of the poorer sort. We afterward learned that they did not come so much to see us as to see "Uncle Tom's Cabin", which could not be played on Sunday night, without giving the play the atmosphere of a sacred concert. When Commissioner George Railton, who was in charge of the band of seven Salvation Army lassies found out how he had been tricked into advertising the theatrical performance, he complained to the manager, who offered him a share of the receipts of the night. Commissioner Railton refused to take any of the money however.

During our services at the theatre that night, some man in the audience saw our plight and being in sympathy with our cause got up and offered a prayer that we might get a hall in which to hold our meetings. His prayer was answered, because in a few days we were offered the use of the old Hudson River hall.

It was in this hall that we actually began getting converts to our cause, and bringing men and women back to a life of clean living from the gutters of degradation.

I remember the first convert of the Salvation Army in this country. He was "Ash Barrel Jimmy", a noted character around the Bowery in the 70's. His right name was James Kemp, and he was a typical Bowery bum.

Shortly after we began work in New York City, Jimmy was arrested by the police for being drunk and disorderly. He was taken to the Police Court where he was a familiar figure. The judge looked at him and said: "Jimmy, I see that sending you away does not reform you. I am going to give you your choice between going to the workhouse or the Salvation Army; which do you take?"

"I'll take the Salvation Army, judge" he answered.

"Allright", the judge said, "Get out of here and make sure that you go to the Salvation Army."

When the judge told Jimmy where we could be found, he said he did not have carfare. The judge gave him a dime and told him to get up to us as quick as possible.

But, Jimmy ran true to type and had got only a few blocks from the courthouse when he went into a barroom and spent the dime for whiskey He manged to get several drinks, and then remembered his promise to the judge. He boarded a street car, and after a fight with the conductor because he did not have the fare was thrown off. However, he managed to get to our place in the evening just as we were beginning services. A policeman stopped him at the door with the remark that no drunks were admitted. Commander Railton overheard him and rushing to the door told the policeman, that everyone was welcome at our services, regardless of race, creed or condition, and that a man in Jimmy's condition needed the Salvation Army more than others Jimmy came in and sat through the services and at its conclusion, confessed penitence and knelt at the rail. We prayed with him and he promised to reform.

And he did too. He died a few years ago, a member of the Salvation Army, and one of its staunchest apostles.

Our second convert was Louis Pertain, who still is a member of the Salvation Army, stationed with a corps in Brooklyn.

Louie, as he is affectionately called by all the older members of the Salvation Army, also came to us in an intoxicated condition, although not sentenced by the Police Court. He was impressed with our work and professed a desire to reform and join the Salvation Army. Commissioner Railton, however, did not believe that he would hold to his promise in his condition, so we locked him up in the hall and let him sleep it off. We returned several hours afterward with food for him and found him sober.

We prayed with him for some time, and he again promised to reform and lead a better life. And he did, too.

Up to the time we came to America the Salvation Army wore no uniform uniform, which is the same as wear today, but instead of the bonnets which we now wear, we wore the plain sailor hats, which is also still part of the army uniform. I shall never forget the evening before we sailed. They had a big meeting for us in Liverpool, and at the end of the service the General prayed for the success of our efforts in the foreign land. He ended the prayer with these words: "Oh, Lord, if these women are not right, drown them on the way over, drown them, drown them!"

None of us were drowned.

Another thing that I distinctly remember was the first time we were arrested. We had been holding services on a street corner downtown in New York City, when a gang of hoodlums began to hoot us. The crowd swelled and the hooting increased, but we kept right on. After about half an hour several policemen appeared and scattered the crowd, then they came to us and asked us to follow them. I thought they were very kind and that they are seeking to protect us from the crowd and escorting us back to our hall. Instead they took us to the station house where we were charged with disturbing the peace and some other equally ridiculous offence. We did not have to stay in the station house very long because some one bailed us out.

When I think of the enormous rents that are being paid in New York and elsewhere, I look back to those days with a great deal of interest. We paid $83.35 a month rent for Hudson River Hall. It would cost more than that a week now to rent an office in that section of New York.

While, officially, we started the Salvation Arm in the United States, it was actually started by a family named Shirley who were members of the Army in England. They came to Philadelphia where they obtained a position in the mills in the Kensington district of that city, about a year before we came to America.

They wrote to England to General Booth, and asked him to send some of the Army to this country and start the work here. The General wrote them that he did not have the officers to spare, but would do so in a few months. He told them to start services themselves, which they did.

and before we sailed, Mrs. General Booth said we should have some sort of a uniform. They then designed the

One of the daughters, Miss Eliza Shirley, a captain in the army in England, is still living, the widow of Adjutant Symonds. She and her parents and sisters began the work in the United States on a Sunday afternoon in October, 1879, by holding services on the street corner at Oxford street and Germantown avenue. Within a few weeks they had obtained the use of an old chair factory nearby, where they held meetings during the week and on Sundays. There were no chairs in the hall, the roof leaked and the place was in a general state of bad repair. However, they kept on and when we visited them in 1880 they had a substantial following.

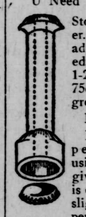
Shortly after we located in New York, Commissioner Railton left to establish posts in other cities, leaving me in charge of the work in New York. It was hard work, but somehow or another, I always managed to have the $83.35 for the rent the first of every month.

A great change has taken place in the hearts and minds of the American people regarding the Salvation Army in the last forty years. When I first came here from England, we were the objects of ridicule, and a mark for all the loose mud and rotten tomatoes within reach. Today members of the Salvation Army are treated with respect everywhere they go.

This come about I believe, because the people have seen that we are in earnest about our work, that we don't mind ridicule; that they cannot scare us into seclusion, and lastly but most important they see the amount of good work we are doing and have done for the poor, the downtrodden and the fallen.

"It's all right to love our neighbors," says the henpecked husband, "provided our wives don't object."

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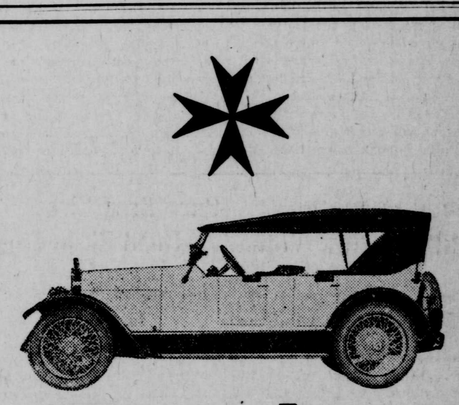
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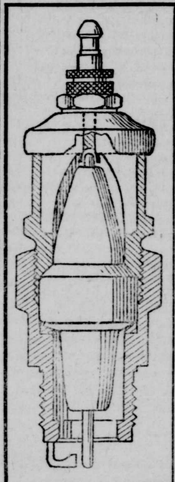
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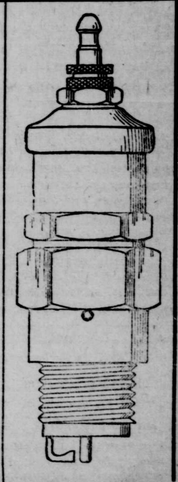
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