

The Pioneer

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Big Bill

A Story of Free Language
And Hard Punches.

Kitty Favors Ring Bambinos.

BY JAMES McNITT



BILL SMITH,
Pukwana,
North Dakota.

You blankety-blank stop
What's the idea of going out
there and getting into
trouble right away stop
Write particulars stop.

Pat Duffy,
Blackstone Hotel,
New York, N. Y.

Pat Duffy,
Blackstone Hotel,
New York, N. Y.
Dear Mr. Duffy:

You got the particulars all wrong.
That's the way the papers had it, but let
me tell you, don't believe all you read in
the newspapers. And don't act so
snappy. You may of made me what I
am today, but when you found me, you
was eating in the cheapest restaurants in
New York. Remember, I'm Bill Smith,
the greatest middleweight in this section
of the universe, and only kept from being
champ because the champ himself won't
fight me. Well, here's my story:

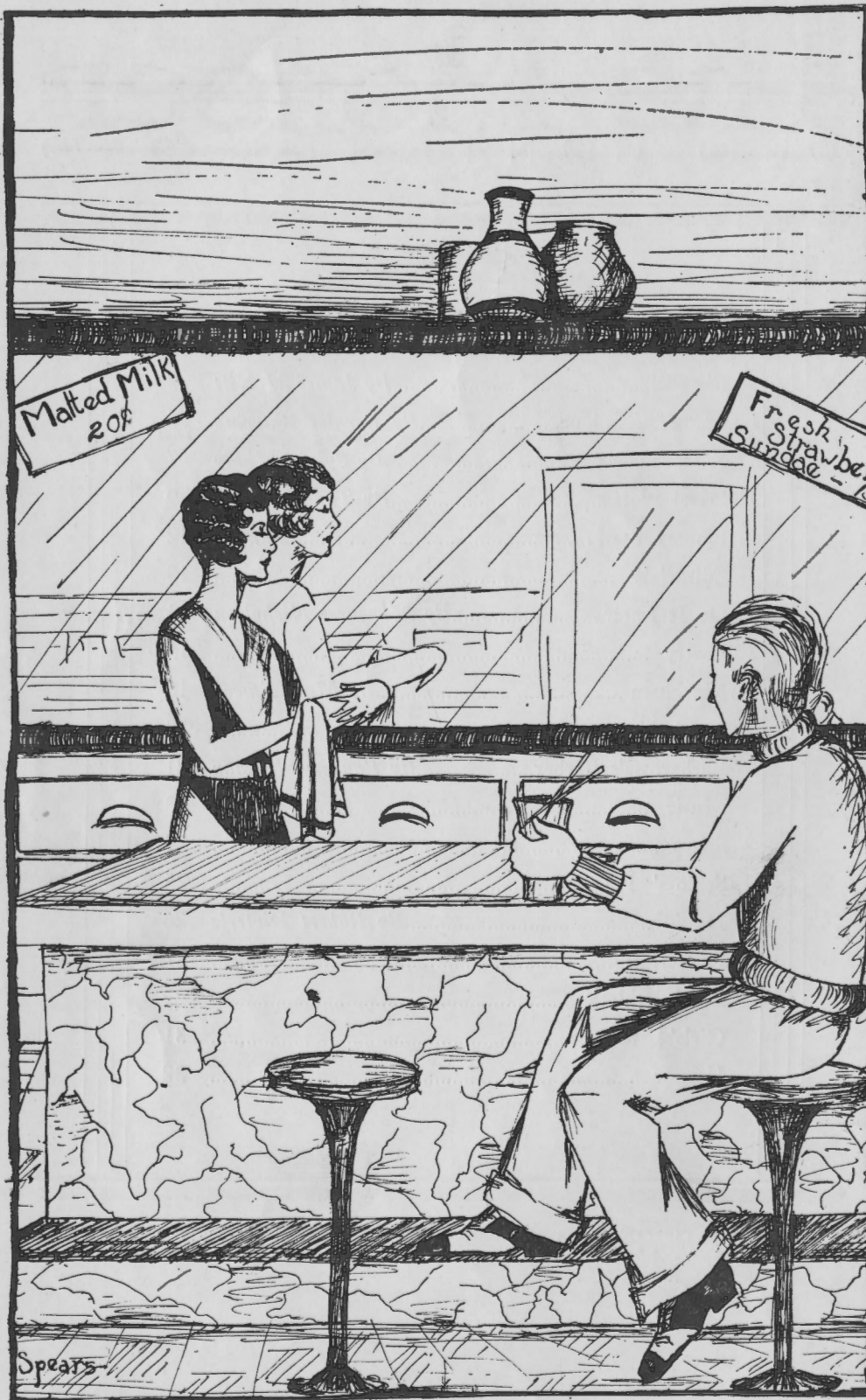
I'll begin when Bill Smith, alias Big
Bill Bailey, the Dakota Demon, alias me,
got leave from a good-for-nothing mana-
ger named Pat Duffy to go back to his

home town. I'm from Pukwana, North
Dakota and proud of it. When I got
off the train, the whole town was waiting
for me. George Walcott's Seven-Piece
Cornet Band was playing, "Hail the
Conquering Hero Comes," and every-
body was cheering.

That night I had to give a speech at a
banquet of the Pukwana Business Men's
Association. It was two or three days
before the town settled down to normal
again. Ma and Pa kept telling me how
proud the town was of me.

Well, one day I dropped into Doc's
drug store for a sundae. I blinked.
There, behind the counter, was a com-
bination of all the best points of Cleo-
patra, Helen of Troy and Clara Bow.
She was just taking the money for a
purchase and immediately turned to me.
"What is it for you?"

I was so stunned that I asked for
strawberry, a flavor I detest. I soon
gained self-confidence, though, and by
the time she had my sundae ready, my
personality was working on all four cyl-
inders. We were soon well acquainted.
She said her name was Kitty Cortland
and, no, she hadn't been here very long,
and, yes, she knew her eyes were beauti-
ful and, no, she never went out nights
—much.





Before I went out, I had found out everything about her but who was her favorite funny paper character and what was the middle name of her great grandfather on her mother's side of the family.

I was so wrapped up in my thoughts about Kitty that I accidentally bumped into a big gazabo that was running loose on the streets. I handed him a polite, "Pardon Me," but he gives me a dirty look and snarls, "Why doncha look where yer goin'?" His face was vaguely familiar, but I didn't recognize him. It didn't make any difference anyhow; if I had known him, I wouldn't have liked him. He turned in at Doc's place, which didn't make me exactly happy.

I found out later that he was a boxer, too, who was barnstorming the country. He was going to fight a couple exhibition bouts at the Armory that night, so I bought a ticket for Kitty and myself. When I returned to the drug store, I found I was too late; O'Meara had given her a ticket for a seat near his corner.

At the fight that night I found that my seat was near that of Kitty. By an exchange of tickets, I succeeded in getting the one next to her. When the announcer climbed into the ring, there was a frown on his face. "L—ay—adies and gentlemen. We have with us tonight the famous One-Round O'Meara. He was supposed to fight two local boys, but they backed out at the last minute. We will offer fifty dollars to anyone who can stay three rounds with O'Meara."

I accepted at once. The sneer on his face and the memory of the afternoon's incident made me want to knock his block off. I know I promised you not to fight while I was out here; to keep in condition for my battle with Joe Patterson, the Rocky Mountain Gorilla. All right, I apologize.

Well, anyway, a farmer lad offered to fight in the second battle. Somewhere they dug up some ring outfits for us.

In the first two rounds we were fairly even, even if I hate to admit it. Just before the third round began, I saw him lean over and wink at Kitty. Boy howdy, you could fairly hear my blood boil! In that round, I knocked him down exactly nine (9) times. He's the only man I ever saw who could stand it. Maybe, if I'd had another round—but I didn't.

We went into our respective rooms. After a shower and a brisk rub-down, I dressed and took my place next to Kitty at the ringside. One-Round was just entering the ring. The crowd handed him the royal razzberry, and how! He was scowling and casting dirty looks in my general direction. When the first gong sounded, he pounced from his corner and fell on the farmer like an unleashed tiger. It was a crime the way he tore his opponent to pieces. And it was barbarian cruelty for him to let down a little when he had the farmer hanging on the ropes; every time the simple rustic got up from the resin, O'Meara pushed him back down. Not hard enough to knock him out, you understand; just enough to keep him going down or coming up all the time.

The boy was feeling it, too. When he arose from the canvas, he tried to stagger away, but One-Round followed him and mercilessly cut him down. At the beginning of the second round, the farmer struck O'Meara accidentally with a wild swing. Dazed our dear, little friend a little, but he retaliated with a left that floored the agriculturist harder than usual. At the count of nine, the latter arose and staggered toward where Kitty and I were sitting. One-Round put all he had in one blow and lifted the tiller of the soil directly into our laps. Then, leaning over the ropes, he sneered, "Take him, you lousy — — —." I omit his vile epithets for fear of shocking your tender senses, my dear manager. I



wouldn't take names like that from anybody. Uttering a low growl, I started to get up! Kitty held me down, begging me not to make a fool of myself. O'Meara yelled something about hiding behind a woman's skirts. Did my blood boil? Check and double check! With difficulty, I withheld myself. I escorted Kitty home, then returned and stationed myself near the exit. When O'Meara appeared, I quietly led him to the middle of the street and calmly proceeded to revenge myself in a nice, dignified way.

From the latest hospital reports, the list of injuries includes one dislocated shoulder, three broken ribs and minor damages such as a fractured proboscis, a badly discolored eye and assorted bruises.

He threatened to sue me, but finally gave it up. There wasn't a chance of his

getting damages in a town where everyone who is eligible for jury service is a personal friend of mine. I am in fine condition. Will be home next week, so get my Shakespeare's Works ready. I'll have to go in training for my next fight.

Yours without malice,

Bill Smith.

(Big Bill Bailey, the Dakota Demon) P. S.: I just found out that One-Round O'Meara is none other than Joe Patterson, the Rocky Mountain Gorilla, who I am supposed to fight September 20th. The match will have to be cancelled as he is in no shape to fight for some time. Get me a match with the champ.

P. S. again: Kitty Cortland is now Mrs. Bill Smith. Congratulations cheerfully accepted.

THE SPINDLE-LEGGED CHAIR



ELP! Oh, ouch!"

"Why, why, what was that?" I exclaimed as I sprang from the little spindle-legged chair with a start.

"Don't you know any better than to sit on a genuine antique chair? The idea! I don't suppose you realize what I have been through, or that I am a noble by birth. Why I was made to order! For years I held the most honorable place in the big white mansion. Then, oh dear, I hate to think of it! Until the war, I led a peaceful life and then—well, I started my travels.

"I was packed into an old wagon with lots of other furniture. It was there that I became such a good friend of the library table, for you see, I was crowded up tight against him. Because it was so sad, I shall never forget our parting. You see, the old library table lost a leg (the fault of those dusty old negroes) and so they took him away in a junk wagon. When my wagon stopped, I was jerked roughly and carried into a dark, gloomy

looking second hand shop. Pushing my way back in the darkest corner of the room, the moving man left me to the care of the gray-bearded, bald-headed, toothless old man, who never gave me a glance.

"As my experience there was so dreadful, I will just skip over it. I must have been there for years and years as two or three men, who were young when they came there and old when they left, had control of the shop. One day a young girl came in and, after looking about her, came over and stood by me. 'What a beautiful antique,' she said. 'Oh, so I'm an antique, am I?' I thought to myself. The next thing that I knew, I was carried away by a strong young man and put into one of those contraptions, that I learned later was an automobile.

"Then I was brought here. At first I wasn't happy because all of this Grand Rapids furniture was so stuck up. We are good friends, now, though, and I would be quite happy if people like you wouldn't come and sit on me."

—HELEN ROSENBERG.