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Appreciations of Richard Harding Davis

by Various Authors of Some Repute

January, 1995 [Etext #406]

Project Gutenberg Etext "Appreciations of Richard Harding Davis"

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R. H. D.

BY GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

"And they rise to their feet as He passes by, gentlemen unafraid."

He was almost too good to be true. In addition, the gods loved him, and so he had to die young. Some people think that a man of fifty-two is middle-aged. But if R. H. D. had lived to be a hundred, he would never have grown old. It is not generally known that the name of his other brother was Peter Pan.

Within the year we have played at pirates together, at the taking of sperm whales; and we have ransacked the Westchester Hills for gunsites against the Mexican invasion. And we have made lists of guns, and medicines, and tinned things, in case we should ever happen to go elephant-shooting in Africa. But we weren't going to hurt the elephants. Once R. H. D. shot a hippopotamus and he was always ashamed and sorry. I think he never killed anything else. He wasn't that kind of a sportsman. Of hunting, as of many other things, he has said the last word. Do you remember the Happy Hunting Ground in "The Bar Sinister"?--"where nobody hunts us, and there is nothing to hunt."

Experienced persons tell us that a manhunt is the most exciting of all sports. R. H. D. hunted men in Cuba. He hunted for wounded men who were out in front of the trenches and still under fire, and found some of them and brought them in. The Rough Riders didn't make him an honorary member of their regiment just because he was charming and a faithful friend, but largely because they were a lot of daredevils and he was another.

To hear him talk you wouldn't have thought that he had ever done a brave thing in his life. He talked a great deal, and he talked even better than he wrote (at his best he wrote like an angel), but I have dusted every corner of my memory and cannot recall any story of his in which he played a heroic or successful part. Always he was running at top speed, or hiding behind a tree, or lying face down in a foot of water (for hours!) so as not to be seen. Always he was getting the worst of it. But about the other fellows he told the whole truth with lightning flashes of wit and character building and admiration or contempt. Until the invention of moving pictures the world had nothing in the least like his talk.

His eye had photographed, his mind had developed and prepared the slides, his words sent the light through them, and lo and behold, they were reproduced on the screen of your own mind, exact in drawing and color. With the written word or the spoken word he was the greatest recorder and reporter of things that he had seen of any man, perhaps, that ever lived. The history of the last thirty years, its manners and customs and its leading events and inventions, cannot be written truthfully without reference to the records which he has left, to his special articles and to his letters. Read over again the Queen's Jubilee, the Czar's Coronation, the March of the Germans through Brussels, and see for yourself if I speak too zealously, even for a friend, to whom, now that R. H. D. is dead, the world can never be the same again.

But I did not set out to estimate his genius. That matter will come in due time before the unerring tribunal of posterity.

One secret of Mr. Roosevelt's hold upon those who come into contact with him is his energy. Retaining enough for his own use (he uses a good deal, because every day he does the work of five or six men), he distributes the inexhaustible remainder among those who most need it. Men go to him tired and discouraged, he sends them away glad to be alive, still gladder that he is alive, and ready to fight the devil himself in a good cause. Upon his friends R. H. D. had the same effect. And it was not only in proximity that he could distribute energy, but from afar, by letter and cable. He had some intuitive way of knowing just when you were slipping into a slough of laziness and discouragement. And at such times he either appeared suddenly upon the scene, or there came a boy on a bicycle, with a yellow envelope and a book to sign, or the postman in his buggy, or the telephone rang and from the receiver there poured into you affection and encouragement.

But the great times, of course, were when he came in person, and the temperature of the house, which a moment before had been too hot or too cold, became just right, and a sense of cheerfulness and well-being invaded the hearts of the master and the mistress and of the servants in the house and in the yard. And the older daughter ran to him, and the baby, who had been fretting because nobody would give her a double-barrelled shotgun, climbed upon his knee and forgot all about the disappointments of this uncompromising world.

He was touchingly sweet with children. I think he was a little afraid of them. He was afraid perhaps that they wouldn't find out how much he loved them. But when they showed him that they trusted him, and, unsolicited, climbed upon him and laid their cheeks against his, then the loveliest expression came over his face, and you knew that the great heart, which the other day ceased to beat, throbbed with an

exquisite bliss, akin to anguish.

One of the happiest days I remember was when I and mine received a telegram saying that he had a baby of his own. And I thank God that little Miss Hope is too young to know what an appalling loss she has suffered. . . .

Perhaps he stayed to dine. Then perhaps the older daughter was allowed to sit up an extra half-hour so that she could wait on the table (and though I say it, that shouldn't, she could do this beautifully, with dignity and without giggling), and perhaps the dinner was good, or R. H. D. thought it was, and in that event he must abandon his place and storm the kitchen to tell the cook all about it. Perhaps the gardener was taking life easy on the kitchen porch. He, too, came in for praise. R. H. D. had never seen our Japanese iris so beautiful; as for his, they wouldn't grow at all. It wasn't the iris, it was the man behind the iris. And then back he would come to us, with a wonderful story of his adventures in the pantry on his way to the kitchen, and leaving behind him a cook to whom there had been issued a new lease of life, and a gardener who blushed and smiled in the darkness under the Actinidia vines.

It was in our little house at Aiken, in South Carolina, that he was with us most and we learned to know him best, and that he and I became dependent upon each other in many ways.

Events, into which I shall not go, had made his life very difficult and complicated. And he who had given so much friendship to so many people needed a little friendship in return, and perhaps, too, he needed for a time to live in a house whose master and mistress loved each other, and where there were children. Before he came that first year our house had no name. Now it is called "Let's Pretend."

Now the chimney in the living-room draws, but in those first days of the built-over house it didn't. At least, it didn't draw all the time, but we pretended that it did, and with much pretense came faith. From the fireplace that smoked to the serious things of life we extended our pretendings, until real troubles went down before them--down and out.

It was one of Aiken's very best winters, and the earliest spring I ever lived anywhere. R. H. D. came shortly after Christmas. The spiraeas were in bloom, and the monthly roses; you could always find a sweet violet or two somewhere in the yard; here and there splotches of deep pink against gray cabin walls proved that precocious peach-trees were in bloom. It never rained. At night it was cold enough for fires. In the middle of the day it was hot. The wind never blew, and every morning we had a four for tennis and every afternoon we rode in the woods. And every night we sat in front of the fire

(that didn't smoke because of pretending) and talked until the next morning. He was one of those rarely gifted men who find their chiefest pleasure not in looking backward or forward, but in what is going on at the moment. Weeks did not have to pass before it was forced upon his knowledge that Tuesday, the fourteenth (let us say), had been a good Tuesday. He knew it the moment he waked at 7 A. M. and perceived the Tuesday sunshine making patterns of bright light upon the floor. The sunshine rejoiced him and the knowledge that even before breakfast there was vouchsafed to him a whole hour of life. That day began with attentions to his physical well-being. There were exercises, conducted with great vigor and rejoicing, followed by a tub, artesian cold, and a loud and joyous singing of ballads.

At fifty R. H. D. might have posed to some Praxiteles and, copied in marble, gone down the ages as "statue of a young athlete." He stood six feet and over, straight as a Sioux chief, a noble and leonine head carried by a splendid torso. His skin was as fine and clean as a child's. He weighed nearly two hundred pounds and had no fat on him. He was the weight-throwing rather than the running type of athlete, but so tenaciously had he clung to the suppleness of his adolescent days that he could stand stiff-legged and lay his hands flat upon the floor.

The singing over, silence reigned. But if you had listened at his door you must have heard a pen going, swiftly and boldly. He was hard at work, doing unto others what others had done unto him. You were a stranger to him; some magazine had accepted a story that you had written and published it. R. H. D. had found something to like and admire in that story (very little perhaps), and it was his duty and pleasure to tell you so. If he had liked the story very much he would send you instead of a note a telegram. Or it might be that you had drawn a picture, or, as a cub reporter, had shown golden promise in a half-column of unsigned print; R. H. D. would find you out, and find time to praise you and help you. So it was that when he emerged from his room at sharp eight o'clock, he was wide-awake and happy and hungry, and whistled and double-shuffled with his feet, out of excessive energy, and carried in his hands a whole sheaf of notes and letters and telegrams.

Breakfast with him was not the usual American breakfast, a sullen, dyspeptic gathering of persons who only the night before had rejoiced in each other's society. With him it was the time when the mind is, or ought to be, at its best, the body at its freshest and hungriest. Discussions of the latest plays and novels, the doings and undoings of statesmen, laughter and sentiment--to him, at breakfast, these things were as important as sausages and thick cream.

Breakfast over, there was no dawdling and putting off of the day's work (else how, at eleven sharp, could tennis be played with a free conscience?). Loving, as he did, everything connected with a newspaper, he would now pass by those on the hall-table with never so much as a wistful glance, and hurry to his workroom.

He wrote sitting down. He wrote standing up. And, almost you may say, he wrote walking up and down. Some people, accustomed to the delicious ease and clarity of his style, imagine that he wrote very easily. He did and he didn't. Letters, easy, clear, to the point, and gorgeously human, flowed from him without let or hindrance. That masterpiece of corresponding, "The German March through Brussels," was probably written almost as fast as he could talk (next to Phillips Brooks he was the fastest talker I ever heard), but when it came to fiction he had no facility at all. Perhaps I should say that he held in contempt any facility that he may have had. It was owing to his incomparable energy and Joblike patience that he ever gave us any fiction at all. Every phrase in his fiction was, of all the myriad phrases he could think of, the fittest in his relentless judgment to survive. Phrases, paragraphs, pages, whole stories even, were written over and over again. He worked upon a principle of elimination. If he wished to describe an automobile turning in at a gate, he made first a long and elaborate description from which there was omitted no detail which the most observant pair of eyes in Christendom had ever noted with reference to just such a turning. Thereupon he would begin a process of omitting one by one those details which he had been at such pains to recall; and after each omission he would ask himself: "Does the picture remain?" If it did not, he restored the detail which he had just omitted, and experimented with the sacrifice of some other, and so on, and so on, until after Herculean labor there remained for the reader one of those, swiftly flashed, ice-clear pictures (complete in every detail) with which his tales and romances are so delightfully and continuously adorned.

But it is quarter to eleven, and, this being a time of holiday, R. H. D. emerges from his workroom happy to think that he has placed one hundred and seven words between himself and the wolf who hangs about every writer's door. He isn't satisfied with those hundred and seven words. He never was in the least satisfied with anything that he wrote, but he has searched his mind and his conscience and he believes that under the circumstances they are the very best that he can do. Anyway, they can stand in their present order until--after lunch.

A sign of his youth was the fact that to the day of his death he had denied himself the luxury and slothfulness of habits. I have never seen him smoke automatically as most men do. He

had too much respect for his own powers of enjoyment and for the sensibilities, perhaps, of the best Havana tobacco. At a time of his own deliberate choosing, often after many hours of hankering and renunciation, he smoked his cigar. He smoked it with delight, with a sense of being rewarded, and he used all the smoke there was in it.

He dearly loved the best food, the best champagne, and the best Scotch whiskey. But these things were friends to him, and not enemies. He had toward food and drink the Continental attitude; namely, that quality is far more important than quantity; and he got his exhilaration from the fact that he was drinking champagne and not from the champagne. Perhaps I shall do well to say that on questions of right and wrong he had a will of iron. All his life he moved resolutely in whichever direction his conscience pointed; and, although that ever present and never obtrusive conscience of his made mistakes of judgment now and then, as must all consciences, I think it can never once have tricked him into any action that was impure or unclean. Some critics maintain that the heroes and heroines of his books are impossibly pure and innocent young people. R. H. D. never called upon his characters for any trait of virtue, or renunciation, or self-mastery of which his own life could not furnish examples.

Fortunately, he did not have for his friends the same conscience that he had for himself. His great gift of eyesight and observation failed him in his judgments upon his friends. If only you loved him, you could get your biggest failures of conduct somewhat more than forgiven, without any trouble at all. And of your molehill virtues he made splendid mountains. He only interfered with you when he was afraid that you were going to hurt some one else whom he also loved. Once I had a telegram from him which urged me for heaven's sake not to forget that the next day was my wife's birthday. Whether I had forgotten it or not is my own private affair. And when I declared that I had read a story which I liked very, very much and was going to write to the author to tell him so, he always kept at me till the letter was written.

Have I said that he had no habits? Every day, when he was away from her, he wrote a letter to his mother, and no swift scrawl at that, for, no matter how crowded and eventful the day, he wrote her the best letter that he could write. That was the only habit he had. He was a slave to it.

Once I saw R. H. D. greet his old mother after an absence. They threw their arms about each other and rocked to and fro for a long time. And it hadn't been a long absence at that. No ocean had been between them; her heart had not been in her mouth with the thought that he was under fire, or about to become a victim of jungle fever. He had only been away upon a

little expedition, a mere matter of digging for buried treasure. We had found the treasure, part of it a chipmunk's skull and a broken arrowhead, and R. H. D. had been absent from his mother for nearly two hours and a half.

I set about this article with the knowledge that I must fail to give more than a few hints of what he was like. There isn't much more space at my command, and there were so many sides to him that to touch upon them all would fill a volume. There were the patriotism and the Americanism, as much a part of him as the marrow of his bones, and from which sprang all those brilliant headlong letters to the newspapers: those trenchant assaults upon evil-doers in public office, those quixotic efforts to redress wrongs, and those simple and dexterous exposures of this and that, from an absolutely unexpected point of view. He was a quickener of the public conscience. That people are beginning to think tolerantly of preparedness, that a nation which at one time looked yellow as a dandelion is beginning to turn Red, White, and Blue is owing in some measure to him.

R. H. D. thought that war was unspeakably terrible. He thought that peace at the price which our country has been forced to pay for it was infinitely worse. And he was one of those who have gradually taught this country to see the matter in the same way.

I must come to a close now, and I have hardly scratched the surface of my subject. And that is a failure which I feel keenly but which was inevitable. As R. H. D. himself used to say of those deplorable "personal interviews" which appear in the newspapers, and in which the important person interviewed is made by the cub reporter to say things which he never said, or thought, or dreamed of--"You can't expect a fifteen-dollar-a-week brain to describe a thousand-dollar-a-week brain."

There is, however, one question which I should attempt to answer. No two men are alike. In what one salient thing did R. H. D. differ from other men--differ in his personal character and in the character of his work? And that question I can answer off-hand, without taking thought, and be sure that I am right.

An analysis of his works, a study of that book which the Recording Angel keeps will show one dominant characteristic to which even his brilliancy, his clarity of style, his excellent mechanism as a writer are subordinate; and to which, as a man, even his sense of duty, his powers of affection, of forgiveness, of loving-kindness are subordinate, too; and that characteristic is cleanliness. The biggest force for cleanliness that was in the world has gone out of the world--gone to that Happy Hunting Ground where "Nobody hunts

us and there is nothing to hunt."

BY BOOTH TARKINGTON

To the college boy of the early nineties Richard Harding Davis was the "beau ideal of jeunesse doree," a sophisticated heart of gold. He was of that college boy's own age, but already an editor--already publishing books! His stalwart good looks were as familiar to us as were those of our own football captain; we knew his face as we knew the face of the President of the United States, but we infinitely preferred Davis's. When the Waldorf was wondrously completed, and we cut an exam. in Cuneiform Inscriptions for an excursion to see the world at lunch in its new magnificence, and Richard Harding Davis came into the Palm Room--then, oh, then, our day was radiant! That was the top of our fortune: we could never have hoped for so much. Of all the great people of every continent, this was the one we most desired to see.

The boys of those days left college to work, to raise families, to grow grizzled; but the glamour remained about Davis; HE never grew grizzled. Youth was his great quality.

All his writing has the liveliness of springtime; it stirs with an unsuppressible gayety, and it has the attraction which companionship with him had: there is never enough. He could be sharp; he could write angrily and witheringly; but even when he was fiercest he was buoyant, and when his words were hot they were not scalding but rather of a dry, clean indignation with things which he believed could, if they would, be better. He never saw evil but as temporary.

Following him through his books, whether he wrote of home or carried his kind, stout heart far, far afield, we see an American writing to Americans. He often told us about things abroad in terms of New York; and we have all been to New York, so he made for us the pictures he wished us to see. And when he did not thus use New York for his colors he found other means as familiar to us and as suggestive; he always made us SEE. What claims our thanks in equal measure, he knew our kind of curiosity so well that he never failed to make us see what we were most anxious to see. He knew where our dark spots were, cleared up the field of vision, and left us unconfused. This discernment of our needs, and this power of enlightening and pleasuring his reader, sprang from seeds native in him. They were, as we say, gifts; for he always had them but did not make them. He was a national figure at twenty-three. He KNEW HOW, before he began.

Youth called to youth: all ages read him, but the young men

and young women have turned to him ever since his precocious fame made him their idol. They got many things from him, but above all they live with a happier bravery because of him. Reading the man beneath the print, they found their prophet and gladly perceived that a prophet is not always cowed and bearded, but may be a gallant young gentleman. This one called merrily to them in his manly voice; and they followed him. He bade them see that pain is negligible, that fear is a joke, and that the world is poignantly interesting, joyously lovable.

They will always follow him.

THE FIRST GLIMPSE OF DAVIS BY CHARLES DANA GIBSON

Dick was twenty-four years old when he came into the smoking-room of the Victoria Hotel, in London, after midnight one July night--he was dressed as a Thames boatman.

He had been rowing up and down the river since sundown, looking for color. He had evidently peopled every dark corner with a pirate, and every floating object had meant something to him. He had adventure written all over him. It was the first time I had ever seen him, and I had never heard of him. I can't now recall another figure in that smoke-filled room. I don't remember who introduced us--over twenty-seven years have passed since that night. But I can see Dick now dressed in a rough brown suit, a soft hat, with a handkerchief about his neck, a splendid, healthy, clean-minded, gifted boy at play. And so he always remained.

His going out of this world seemed like a boy interrupted in a game he loved. And how well and fairly he played it! Surely no one deserved success more than Dick. And it is a consolation to know he had more than fifty years of just what he wanted. He had health, a great talent, and personal charm. There never was a more loyal or unselfish friend. There wasn't an atom of envy in him. He had unbounded mental and physical courage, and with it all he was sensitive and sometimes shy. He often tried to conceal these last two qualities, but never succeeded in doing so from those of us who were privileged really to know and love him.

His life was filled with just the sort of adventure he liked the best. No one ever saw more wars in so many different places or got more out of them. And it took the largest war in all history to wear out that stout heart.

We shall miss him.

BY E. L. BURLINGAME

One of the most attractive and inspiring things about Richard Harding Davis was the simple, almost matter-of-course way in which he put into practice his views of life--in which he acted, and in fact WAS, what he believed. With most of us, to have opinions as to what is the right thing to do is at the best to worry a good deal as to whether we are doing it; at the worst to be conscious of doubts as to whether it is a sufficient code, or perhaps whether it isn't beyond us. Davis seemed to have neither of these wasters of strength. He had certain simple, clean, manly convictions as to how a man should act; apparently quite without self-consciousness in this respect, whatever little mannerisms or points of pride he may have had in others--fewer than most men of his success and fastidiousness--he went ahead and did accordingly, untormented by any alternatives or casuistries, which for him did not seem to exist. He was so genuinely straightforward that he could not sophisticate even himself, as almost every man occasionally does under temptation. He, at least, never needed to be told

"Go put your creed into your deed
Nor speak with double tongue."

It is so impossible not to think first of the man, as the testimony of every one who knew him shows, that those who have long had occasion to watch and follow his work, not merely with enjoyment but somewhat critically, may well look upon any detailed discussion of it as something to be kept till later. But there is more to be said than to recall the unfailing zest of it, the extraordinary freshness of eye, the indomitable youthfulness and health of spirit--all the qualities that we associate with Davis himself. It was serious work in a sense that only the more thoughtful of its critics had begun of late to comprehend. It had not inspired a body of disciples like Kipling's, but it had helped to clear the air and to give a new proof of the vitality of certain ideals--even of a few of the simpler ones now outmoded in current masterpieces; and it was at its best far truer in an artistic sense than it was the fashion of its easy critics to allow. Whether Davis could or would have written a novel of the higher rank is a useless question now; he himself, who was a critic of his own work without illusions or affectation, used to say that he could

not; but it is certain that in the early part of "Captain Macklin" he displayed a power really Thackerayan in kind.

Of his descriptive writing there need be no fear of speaking with extravagance; he had made himself, especially in his later work, through long practice and his inborn instinct for the significant and the fresh aspect, quite the best of all contemporary correspondents and reporters; and his rivals in the past could be easily numbered.

BY AUGUSTUS THOMAS

One spring afternoon in 1889 a member brought into the Lambs Club house--then on Twenty-sixth Street--as a guest Mr. Richard Harding Davis. I had not clearly caught the careless introduction, and, answering my question, Mr. Davis repeated the surname. He did not pronounce it as would a Middle Westerner like myself, but more as a citizen of London might. To spell his pronunciation Dyvis is to burlesque it slightly, but that is as near as it can be given phonetically. Several other words containing _a_ long a were sounded by him in the same way, and to my ear the rest of his speech had a related eccentricity. I am told that other men educated in certain Philadelphia schools have a similar diction, but at that time many of Mr. Davis's new acquaintances thought the manner was an affectation. I mention the peculiarity, which after years convinced me was as native to him as was the color of his eyes, because I am sure that it was a barrier between him and some persons who met him only casually.

At that time he was a reporter on a Philadelphia newspaper, and in appearance was what he continued to be until his death, an unassertive but self-respecting, level-eyed, clean-toothed, and wholesome athlete.

The reporter developed rapidly into the more serious workman, and amongst the graver business was that of war correspondent.

I have known fraternally several war correspondents--Dick Davis, Fred Remington, John Fox, Caspar Whitney, and others--and it seems to me that, while differing one from another as average men differ, they had in common a kind of veteran superiority to trivial surprise, a tolerant world wisdom that mere newspaper work in other departments does not bring. At any rate, and however acquired, Dick Davis had the quality. And with that seasoned calm he kept and cultivated the reporter sense. He had insight--the faculty of going back of appearances. He saw the potential salients in occurrences and easily separated them from the commonplace--and the

commonplace itself when it was informed by a spirit that made it helpful did not mislead him by its plainness.

That is another war-correspondent quality. He saw when adherence to duty approached the heroic. He knew the degree of pressure that gave it test conditions and he had an unadulterated, plain, bread-and-water appreciation of it.

I think that fact shows in his stories. He liked enthusiastically to write of men doing men's work and doing it man fashion with full-blooded optimism.

At his very best he was in heart and mind a boy grown tall. He had a boy's undisciplined indifference to great personages not inconsistent with his admiration of their medals. By temperament he was impulsive and partisan, and if he was your friend you were right until you were obviously very wrong. But he liked "good form," and had adopted the Englishman's code of "things no fellow could do"--therefore his impulsiveness was without offense and his partisanship was not quarrelsome.

In the circumstance of this story of "Soldiers of Fortune" he could himself have been either Clay or Stuart and he had the humor of MacWilliams.

In the clash between Clay and Stuart, when Clay asks the younger man if the poster smirching Stuart's relation to Madame Alvarez is true, it is Davis talking through both men, and when, standing alone, Clay lifts his hat and addresses the statue of General Bolivar, it is Davis at his best.

Modern criticism has driven the soliloquy from the theatre, but modern criticism in that respect is immature and wrong. The soliloquy exists. Any one observing the number of business men who, talking aloud to themselves, walk Fifth Avenue any evening may prove it. For Davis the soliloquy was not courageous; it was simply true. And that was a place for it.

When "Soldiers of Fortune" was printed it had a quick and a deserved popularity. It was cheerily North American in its viewpoint of the sub-tropical republics and was very up to date. The outdoor American girl was not so established at that time, and the Davis report of her was refreshing. Robert Clay was unconsciously Dick Davis himself as he would have tried to do--Captain Stuart was the English officer that Davis had met the world over, or, closer still, he was the better side of such men which the attractive wholesomeness of Davis would draw out. Alice and King were the half-spoiled New Yorkers as he knew them at the dinner-parties.

At a manager's suggestion Dick made a play of the book. It

was his first attempt for the theatre and lacked somewhat the skill that he developed later in his admirable "Dictator." I was called in by the manager as an older carpenter and craftsman to make another dramatic version. Dick and I were already friends and he already liked plays that I had done, but that alone could not account for the heartiness with which he turned over to me his material and eliminated himself. Only his unspoiled simplicity and utter absence of envy could do that. Only native modesty could explain the absence of the usual author pride and sensitiveness. The play was immediately successful. It would have been a dull hack, indeed, who could have spoiled such excellent stage material as the novel furnished, but his generosity saw genius in the dramatic extension of the types he had furnished and in the welding of additions. Even after enthusiasm had had time enough to cool, he sent me a first copy of the Playgoers' edition of the novel, printed in 1902, with the inscription:

TO AUGUSTUS THOMAS:

Gratefully, Admiringly, Sincerely.

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS.

And then, as if feeling the formality of the names, he wrote below:

DEAR GUS,

If you liked this book only one-fifth as much as I like your play, I would be content to rest on that and spare the public any others. So for the sake of the public try to like it.

DICK.

In 1914 a motion-picture company arranged to make a feature film of the play, and Dick and I went with their outfit to Santiago de Cuba, where, twenty years earlier, he had found the inspiration for his story and out of which city and its environs he had fashioned his supposititious republic of Olancho. On that trip he was the idol of the company. With the men in the smoking-room of the steamer there were the numberless playful stories, in the rough, of the experiences on all five continents and seven seas that were the backgrounds of his published tales.

At Santiago, if an official was to be persuaded to consent to some unprecedented seizure of the streets, or a diplomat invoked for the assistance of the Army or the Navy, it was the experience and good judgment of Dick Davis that controlled the task. In the field there were his helpful suggestions of work

and make-up to the actors, and on the boat and train and in hotel and camp the lady members met in him an easy courtesy and understanding at once fraternal and impersonal.

That picture enterprise he has described in an article, entitled "Breaking into the Movies," which was printed in Scribner's Magazine.

The element that he could not put into the account, and which is particularly pertinent to this page, is the author of "Soldiers of Fortune" as he revealed himself to me both with intention and unconsciously in the presence of the familiar scenes.

For three weeks, with the exception of one or two occasions when some local dignitary captured the revisiting lion, he and I spent our evenings together at a cafe table overlooking "the great square," which he sketches so deftly in its atmosphere when Clay and the Langhams and Stuart dine there: "At one end of the plaza the President's band was playing native waltzes that came throbbing through the trees and beating softly above the rustling skirts and clinking spurs of the señoritas and officers sweeping by in two opposite circles around the edges of the tessellated pavements. Above the palms around the square arose the dim, white facade of the Cathedral, with the bronze statue of Anduella the liberator of Olancho, who answered with his upraised arm and cocked hat the cheers of an imaginary populace."

Twenty years had gone by since Dick had received the impression that wrote those lines, and now sometimes after dinner half a long cigar would burn out as he mused over the picture and the dreams that had gone between. From one long silence he said: "I think I'll come back here this winter and bring Mrs. Davis with me--stay a couple of months." What a fine compliment to a wife to have the thought of her and that plan emerge from that deep and romantic background!

And again, later, apropos of nothing but what one guessed from the dreamer's expressive face, he said: "I had remembered it as so much larger"--indicating the square--"until I saw it again when we came down with the army." A tolerant smile--he might have explained that it is always so on revisiting scenes that have impressed us deeply in our earlier days, but he let the smile do that. One of his charms as companion was that restful ability not to talk if you knew it, too.

The picture people began their film with a showing of the "mountains which jutted out into the ocean and suggested roughly the five knuckles of a giant's hand clenched and lying flat upon the surface of the water." That formation of the sea wall is just outside of Santiago. "The waves tunneled their way easily enough until they ran up against those five

mountains and then they had to fall back." How natural for one of us to be unimpressed by such a feature of the landscape, and yet how characteristic of Dick Davis to see the elemental fight that it recorded and get the hint for the whole of the engineering struggle that is so much of his book!

We went over those mountains together, where two decades before he had planted his banner of romance. We visited the mines and the railroads, and everywhere found some superintendent or foreman or engineer who remembered Davis. He had guessed at nothing. Everywhere he had overlaid the facts with adventure and with beauty, but he had been on sure footing all the time. His prototype of MacWilliams was dead. Together we visited the wooden cross with which the miners had marked his grave.

One is tempted to go choosing through his book again and rob its surprises by reminiscence--but I refrain. Yet it is only justice to point out that for "Soldiers of Fortune," as for the "Men of Zanzibar," "Three Gringos in Venezuela," "The King's Jackal," "Ranson's Folly," and his other books, he got his structure and his color at first hand. He was a writer and not a rewriter. And another thing we must note in his writing is his cleanliness. It is safe stuff to give to a young fellow who likes to take off his hat and dilate his nostrils and feel the wind in his face. Like water at the source, it is undefiled.

DAVIS AND THE ROUGH RIDERS

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

I knew Richard Harding Davis for many years, and I was among the number who were immediately drawn to him by the power and originality of "Gallegher," the story which first made his reputation.

My intimate association with him, however, was while he was with my regiment in Cuba, He joined us immediately after landing, and was not merely present at but took part in the fighting. For example, at the Guasimas fight it was he, I think, with his field-glasses, who first placed the trench from which the Spaniards were firing at the right wing of the regiment, which right wing I, at that time, commanded. We were then able to make out the trench, opened fire on it, and drove out the Spaniards.

He was indomitably cheerful under hardships and difficulties and entirely indifferent to his own personal safety or

comfort. He so won the esteem and regard of the regiment that he was one of the three men we made honorary members of the regiment's association. We gave him the same medal worn by our own members.

He was as good an American as ever lived and his heart flamed against cruelty and injustice. His writings form a text-book of Americanism which all our people would do well to read at the present time.

BY IRVIN S. COBB

Almost the first letter I received after I undertook to make a living by writing for magazines was signed with the name of Richard Harding Davis. I barely knew him; practically we were strangers; but if he had been my own brother he could not have written more generously or more kindly than he did write in that letter. He, a famous writer, had gone out of his way to speak words of encouragement to me, an unknown writer; had taken the time and the pains out of a busy life to cheer a beginner in the field where he had had so great a measure of success.

When I came to know him better, I found out that such acts as these were characteristic of Richard Harding Davis. The world knew him as one of the most vivid and versatile and picturesque writers that our country has produced in the last half-century, but his friends knew him as one of the kindest and gentlest and most honest and most unselfish of men--a real human being, firm in his convictions, steadfast in his affections, loyal to the ideals by which he held, but tolerant always in his estimates of others.

He may or may not have been a born writer; sometimes I doubt whether there is such a thing as a born writer. But this much I do know--he was a born gentleman if ever there was one.

As a writer his place is assured. But always I shall think of him as he was in his private life--a typical American, a lovable companion, and a man to the tips of his fingers.

BY JOHN FOX, JR.

During the twenty years that I knew him Richard Harding Davis was always going to some far-off land. He was just back from

a trip somewhere when I first saw him in his rooms in New York, rifle in hand, in his sock feet and with his traps in confusion about him. He was youth incarnate--ruddy, joyous, vigorous, adventurous, self-confident youth--and, in all the years since, that first picture of him has suffered no change with me. He was so intensely alive that I cannot think of him as dead--and I do not. He is just away on another of those trips and it really seems queer that I shall not hear him tell about it.

We were together as correspondents in the Spanish War and in the Russo-Japanese War we were together again; and so there is hardly any angle from which I have not had the chance to know him. No man was ever more misunderstood by those who did not know him or better understood by those who knew him well, for he carried nothing in the back of his head--no card that was not face up on the table. Every thought, idea, purpose, principle within him was for the world to read and to those who could not know how rigidly he matched his inner and outer life he was almost unbelievable. He was exacting in friendship because his standard was high and because he gave what he asked; and if he told you of a fault he told you first of a virtue that made the fault seem small indeed. But he told you and expected you to tell him.

Naturally, the indirection of the Japanese was incomprehensible to him. He was not good at picking up strange tongues, and the Japanese equivalent for the Saxon monosyllable for what the Japanese was to him he never learned. For only one other word did he have more use and I believe it was the only one he knew, "hyaku--hurry!" Over there I was in constant fear for him because of his knight-errantry and his candor. Once he came near being involved in a duel because of his quixotic championship of a woman whom he barely knew, and disliked, and whose absent husband he did not know at all. And more than once I looked for a Japanese to draw his two-handed ancestral sword when Dick bluntly demanded a reconciliation of his yea of yesterday with his nay of today. Nine months passed and we never heard the whistle of bullet or shell. Dick called himself a "cherry-blossom correspondent," and when our ship left those shores each knew that the other went to his state-room and in bitter chagrin and disappointment wept quite childishly.

Of course, he was courageous--absurdly so--and, in spite of his high-strung temperament, always calm and cool. At El Paso hill, the day after the fight, the rest of us scurried for tree-trunks when a few bullets whistled near; but Dick stalked out in the open and with his field-glasses searched for the supposed sharpshooters in the trees. Lying under a bomb-proof when the Fourth of July bombardment started, I saw Dick going unhurriedly down the hill for his glasses, which he had left in Colonel Roosevelt's tent, and unhurriedly going back up to

the trenches again. Under the circumstances I should have been content with my naked eye. A bullet thudded close to where Dick lay with a soldier.

"That hit you?" asked Dick. The soldier grunted "No," looked sidewise at Dick, and muttered an oath of surprise. Dick had not taken his glasses from his eyes. I saw him writhing on the ground with sciatica during that campaign, like a snake, but pulling his twisted figure straight and his tortured face into a smile if a soldier or stranger passed.

He was easily the first reporter of his time--perhaps of all time. Out of any incident or situation he could pick the most details that would interest the most people and put them in a way that was pleasing to the most people; and always, it seemed, he had the extraordinary good judgment or the extraordinary good luck to be just where the most interesting thing was taking place. Gouverneur Morris has written the last word about Richard Harding Davis, and he, as every one must, laid final stress on the clean body, clean heart, and clean mind of the man. R. H. D. never wrote a line that cannot be given to his little daughter when she is old enough to read, and I never heard a word pass his lips that his own mother could not hear. There are many women in the world like the women in his books. There are a few men like the men, and of these Dick himself was one.

BY FINLEY PETER DUNNE

In the articles about Mr. Davis that have appeared since his death, the personality of the man seems to overshadow the merit of the author. In dealing with the individual the writers overlook the fact that we have lost one of the best of our story-tellers. This is but natural. He was a very vivid kind of person. He had thousands of friends in all parts of the world, and a properly proportionate number of enemies, and those who knew him were less interested in the books than in the man himself--the generous, romantic, sensitive individual whose character and characteristics made him a conspicuous figure everywhere he went--and he went everywhere. His books were sold in great numbers, but it might be said in terms of the trade that his personality had a larger circulation than his literature. He probably knew more waiters, generals, actors, and princes than any man who ever lived, and the people he knew best are not the people who read books. They write them or are a part of them. Besides, if you knew Richard Davis you knew his books. He translated himself literally, and no expurgation was needed to make the translation suitable for the most innocent eyes. He was the

identical chivalrous young American or Englishman who strides through his pages in battalions to romantic death or romantic marriage. Every one speaks of the extraordinary youthfulness of his mind, which was still fresh at an age when most men find avarice or golf a substitute for former pastimes. He not only refused to grow old himself, he refused to write about old age. There are a few elderly people in his books, but they are vague and shadowy. They serve to emphasize the brightness of youth, and are quickly blown away when the time for action arrives. But if he numbered his friends and acquaintances by the thousands there are other thousands in this country who have read his books, and they know, even better than those who were acquainted with him personally, how good a friend they have lost. I happened to read again the other day the little collection of stories--his first, I think--which commences with "Gallegher" and includes "The Other Woman" and one or more of the Van Bibber tales. His first stories were not his best. He increased in skill and was stronger at the finish than at the start. But "Gallegher" is a fine story, and is written in that eager, breathless manner which was all his own, and which always reminds me of a boy who has hurried home to tell of some wonderful thing he has seen. Of course it is improbable. Most good stories are and practically all readable books of history. No old newspaper man can believe that there ever existed such a "copy boy" as Gallegher, or that a murderer with a finger missing from one hand could escape detection even in a remote country village. Greed would have urged the constable to haul to the calaboose every stranger who wore gloves. But he managed to attach so many accurate details of description to the romance that it leaves as definite an impression of realism as any of Mr. Howells's purposely realistic stories. The scene in the newspaper office, the picture of the prize-fight, the mixture of toughs and swells, the spectators in their short gray overcoats with pearl buttons (like most good story-tellers he was strong on the tailoring touch), the talk of cabmen and policemen, the swiftness of the way the story is told, as if he were in a hurry to let his reader know something he had actually seen--create such an impression of truth that when the reader finishes he finds himself picturing Gallegher on the witness-stand at the murder trial receiving the thanks of the judge. And he wonders what became of this precocious infant, and whether he was rewarded in time by receiving the hand of the sister of the sporting editor in marriage.

To give the appearance of truth to the truth is the despair of writers, but Mr. Davis had the faculty of giving the appearance of the truth to situations that in human experience could hardly exist. The same quality that showed in his tales made him the most readable of war correspondents. He went to all the wars of his youth and middle age filled with visions of glorious action. Where other correspondents saw and reported evil-smelling camps, ghastly wounds, unthinkable suffering,

blunders, good luck and bad luck, or treated the subject with a mathematical precision that would have given Clausewitz a headache, Davis saw and reported it first of all as a romance, and then filled in the story with human details, so that the reader came away with an impression that all these heroic deeds were performed by people just like the reader himself, which was exactly the truth.

It is a pity that the brutality of the German staff officers and the stupidity of the French and English prevented him from seeing the actual fighting in Flanders and Picardy. The scene is an ugly one, a wallow of blood and mire. But so probably were Agincourt and Crecy when you come to think of it, and Davis, you may be sure, would have illuminated the foul battle-field with a reflection of the glory which must exist in the breasts of the soldiers.

The fact is, he was the owner of a most enviable pair of eyes, which reported to him only what was pleasant and encouraging. A man is blessed or cursed by what his eyes see. To some people the world of men is a confused and undecipherable puzzle. To Mr. Davis it was a simple and pleasant pattern--good and bad, honest and dishonest, kind and cruel, with the good, the honest, and the kind rewarded; the bad, the dishonest, and the cruel punished; where the heroes are modest, the brave generous, the women lovely, the bus-drivers humorous; where the Prodigal returns to dine in a borrowed dinner-jacket at Delmonico's with his father, and where always the Young Man marries the Girl. And this is the world as much as Balzac's is the world, if it is the world as you see it.

BY WINSTON CHURCHILL

On that day when I read of Mr. Davis's sudden death there came back to me a vivid memory of another day, some eighteen years ago, when I first met him, shortly after the publication of my first novel. I was paying an over-Sunday visit to Marion, that quaint waterside resort where Mr. Davis lived for many years, and with which his name is associated. On the Monday morning, as the stage started out for the station, a young man came running after it, caught it, and sat down in the only empty place--beside me. He was Richard Harding Davis. I recognized him, nor shall I forget that peculiar thrill I experienced at finding myself in actual, physical contact with an author. And that this author should be none other than the creator of Gallegher, prepossessing, vigorous, rather than a dry and elderly recluse, made my excitement the keener. It happened also, after entering the smoking-car, that the remaining vacant seat was at my side, and here Mr. Davis

established himself. He looked at me, he asked if my name was Winston Churchill, he said he had read my book. How he guessed my identity I did not discover. But the recollection of our talk, the strong impression I then received of Mr. Davis's vitality and personality, the liking I conceived for him--these have neither changed nor faded with the years, and I recall with gratitude to-day the kindness, the sense of fellowship always so strong in him that impelled him to speak as he did. A month before he died, when I met him on the train going to Mt. Kisco, he had not changed. His enthusiasms, his vigor, his fine passions, his fondness for his friends, these, nor the joy he found in the pursuit of his profession, had not faded. And there come to me now, as I think of him filled with life, flashes from his writings that have moved me, and move me indescribably still. "Le Style," as Rolland remarks, "c'est l'ame." It was so in Mr. Davis's case. He had the rare faculty of stirring by a phrase the imaginations of men, of including in a phrase a picture, an event--a cataclysm. Such a phrase was that in which he described the entry of German hosts into Brussels. He was not a man, when enlisted in a cause, to count the cost to himself. Many causes will miss him, and many friends, and many admirers, yet his personality remains with us forever, in his work.

BY LEONARD WOOD

The death of Richard Harding Davis was a real loss to the movement for preparedness. Mr. Davis had an extensive experience as a military observer, and thoroughly appreciated the need of a general training system like that of Australia or Switzerland and of thorough organization of our industrial resources in order to establish a condition of reasonable preparedness in this country. A few days before his death he came to Governor's Island for the purpose of ascertaining in what line of work he could be most useful in building up sound public opinion in favor of such preparedness as would give us a real peace-insurance. His mind was bent on devoting his energies and abilities to the work of public education on this vitally important subject, and few men were better qualified to do so, for he had served as a military observer in many campaigns.

Throughout the Cuban campaign he was attached to the headquarters of my regiment in Cuba as a military observer. He was with the advanced party at the opening of the fight at Las Guasimas, and was distinguished throughout the fight by coolness and good conduct. He also participated in the battle of San Juan and the siege of Santiago, and as an observer was always where duty called him. He was a delightful companion, cheerful, resourceful, and thoughtful of the interests and

wishes of others. His reports of the campaign were valuable and among the best and most accurate.

The Plattsburg movement took very strong hold of him. He saw in this a great instrument for building up a sound knowledge concerning our military history and policy, also a very practical way of training men for the duties of junior officers. He realized fully that we should need in case of war tens of thousands of officers with our newly raised troops, and that it would be utterly impossible to prepare them in the hurry and confusion of the onrush of modern war. His heart was filled with a desire to serve his country to the best of his ability. His recent experience in Europe pointed out to him the absolute madness of longer disregarding the need of doing those things which reasonable preparedness dictates, the things which cannot be accomplished after trouble is upon us. He had in mind at the time of his death a series of articles to be written especially to build up interest in universal military training through conveying to our people an understanding of what organization as it exists to-day means, and how vitally important it is for our people to do in time of peace those things which modern war does not permit done once it is under way.

Davis was a loyal friend, a thoroughgoing American devoted to the best interests of his country, courageous, sympathetic, and true. His loss has been a very real one to all of us who knew and appreciated him, and in his death the cause of preparedness has lost an able worker and the country a devoted and loyal citizen.

WITH DAVIS IN VERA CRUZ, BRUSSELS, AND SALONIKA

BY JOHN T. McCUTCHEON

In common with many others who have been with Richard Harding Davis as correspondents, I find it difficult to realize that he has covered his last story and that he will not be seen again with the men who follow the war game, rushing to distant places upon which the spotlight of news interest suddenly centres.

It seems a sort of bitter irony that he who had covered so many big events of world importance in the past twenty years should be abruptly torn away in the midst of the greatest event of them all, while the story is still unfinished and its outcome undetermined. If there is a compensating thought, it ties in the reflection that he had a life of almost unparalleled fulness, crowded to the brim, up to the last

moment, with those experiences and achievements which he particularly aspired to have. He left while the tide was at its flood, and while he still held supreme his place as the best reporter in his country. He escaped the bitterness of seeing the ebb set in, when the youth to which he clung had slipped away, and when he would have to sit impatient in the audience, while younger men were in the thick of great, world-stirring dramas on the stage.

This would have been a real tragedy in "Dick" Davis's case, for, while his body would have aged, it is doubtful if his spirit ever would have lost its youthful freshness or boyish enthusiasm.

It was my privilege to see a good deal of Davis in the last two years.

He arrived in Vera Cruz among the first of the sixty or seventy correspondents who flocked to that news centre when the situation was so full of sensational possibilities. It was a time when the American newspaper-reading public was eager for thrills, and the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the correspondents in Vera Cruz were tried to the uttermost to supply the demand.

In the face of the fiercest competition it fell to Davis's lot to land the biggest story of those days of marking time. The story "broke" when it became known that Davis, Medill McCormick, and Frederick Palmer had gone through the Mexican lines in an effort to reach Mexico City. Davis and McCormick, with letters to the Brazilian and British ministers, got through and reached the capital on the strength of those letters, but Palmer, having only an American passport, was turned back.

After an ominous silence, which furnished American newspapers with a lively period of suspense, the two men returned safely with wonderful stories of their experiences while under arrest in the hands of the Mexican authorities. McCormick, in recently speaking of Davis at that time, said that, "as a correspondent in difficult and dangerous situations, he was incomparable--cheerful, ingenious, and undiscouraged. When the time came to choose between safety and leaving his companion he stuck by his fellow captive even though, as they both said, a firing-squad and a blank wall were by no means a remote possibility." This Mexico City adventure was a spectacular achievement which gave Davis and McCormick a distinction which no other correspondents of all the ambitious and able corps had managed to attain.

Davis usually "hunted" alone. He depended entirely upon his own ingenuity and wonderful instinct for news situations. He had the energy and enthusiasm of a beginner, with the

experience and training of a veteran. His interest in things remained as keen as though he had not been years at a game which often leaves a man jaded and blase. His acquaintanceship in the American army and navy was wide, and for this reason, as well as for the prestige which his fame and position as a national character gave him, he found it easy to establish valuable connections in the channels from which news emanates. And yet, in spite of the fact that he was "on his own" instead of having a working partnership with other men, he was generous in helping at times when he was able to do so. Davis was a conspicuous figure in Vera Cruz, as he inevitably had been in all such situations. Wherever he went he was pointed out. His distinction of appearance, together with a distinction in dress, which, whether from habit or policy, was a valuable asset in his work, made him a marked man. He dressed and looked the "war correspondent," such a one as he would describe in one of his stories. He fulfilled the popular ideal of what a member of that fascinating profession should look like. His code of life and habits was as fixed as that of the Briton who takes his habits and customs and games and tea wherever he goes, no matter how benighted or remote the spot may be.

He was just as loyal to his code as is the Briton. He carried his bath-tub, his immaculate linen, his evening clothes, his war equipment--in which he had the pride of a connoisseur--wherever he went, and, what is more, he had the courage to use the evening clothes at times when their use was conspicuous. He was the only man who wore a dinner coat in Vera Cruz, and each night, at his particular table in the crowded "Portales," at the Hotel Diligencia, he was to be seen, as fresh and clean as though he were in a New York or London restaurant.

Each day he was up early to take the train out to the "gap," across which came arrivals from Mexico City. Sometimes a good "story" would come down, as when the long-heralded and long-expected arrival of Consul Silliman gave a first-page "feature" to all the American papers.

In the afternoon he would play water polo over at the navy aviation camp, and always at a certain time of the day his "striker" would bring him his horse and for an hour or more he would ride out along the beach roads within the American lines.

After the first few days it was difficult to extract real thrills from the Vera Cruz situation, but we used to ride out to El Tejar with the cavalry patrol and imagine that we might be fired on at some point in the long ride through unoccupied territory; or else go out to the "front," at Legarto, where a little American force occupied a sun-baked row of freight-cars, surrounded by malarial swamps. From the top of the

railroad water-tank we could look across to the Mexican outposts a mile or so away. It was not very exciting, and what thrills we got lay chiefly in our imagination.

Before my acquaintanceship with Davis at Vera Cruz I had not known him well. Our trails didn't cross while I was in Japan in the Japanese-Russian War, and in the Transvaal I missed him by a few days, but in Vera Cruz I had many enjoyable opportunities of becoming well acquainted with him.

The privilege was a pleasant one, for it served to dispel a preconceived and not an entirely favorable impression of his character. For years I had heard stories about Richard Harding Davis--stories which emphasized an egotism and self-assertiveness which, if they ever existed, had happily ceased to be obtrusive by the time I got to know him.

He was a different Davis from the Davis whom I had expected to find; and I can imagine no more charming and delightful companion than he was in Vera Cruz. There was no evidence of those qualities which I feared to find, and his attitude was one of unflinching kindness, considerateness, and generosity.

In the many talks I had with him I was always struck by his evident devotion to a fixed code of personal conduct. In his writings he was the interpreter of chivalrous, well-bred youth, and his heroes were young, clean-thinking college men, heroic big-game hunters, war correspondents, and idealized men about town, who always did the noble thing, disdaining the unworthy in act or motive. It seemed to me that he was modelling his own life, perhaps unconsciously, after the favored types which his imagination had created for his stories. In a certain sense he was living a life of make believe, wherein he was the hero of the story, and in which he was bound by his ideals always to act as he would have the hero of his story act. It was a quality which only one could have who had preserved a fresh youthfulness of outlook in spite of the hardening processes of maturity.

His power of observation was extraordinarily keen, and he not only had the rare gift of sensing the vital elements of a situation, but also had, to an unrivalled degree, the ability to describe them vividly. I don't know how many of those men at Vera Cruz tried to describe the kaleidoscopic life of the city during the American occupation, but I know that Davis's story was far and away the most faithful and satisfying picture. The story was photographic, even to the sounds and smells.

The last I saw of him in Vera Cruz was when, on the Utah, he steamed past the flagship Wyoming, upon which I was quartered, and started for New York. The Battenberg cup race had just been rowed, and the Utah and Florida crews had

tied. As the Utah was sailing immediately after the race, there was no time in which to row off the tie. So it was decided that the names of both ships should be engraved on the cup, and that the Florida crew should defend the title against a challenging crew from the British Admiral Craddock's flagship.

By the end of June, the public interest in Vera Cruz had waned, and the corps of correspondents dwindled until there were only a few left.

Frederick Palmer and I went up to join Carranza and Villa, and on the 26th of July we were in Monterey waiting to start with the triumphal march of Carranza's army toward Mexico City. There was no sign of serious trouble, abroad. That night ominous telegrams came, and at ten o'clock on the following morning we were on a train headed for the States.

Palmer and Davis caught the Lusitania, sailing August 4 from New York, and I followed on the Saint Paul, leaving three days later. On the 17th of August I reached Brussels, and it seemed the most natural thing in the world to find Davis already there. He was at the Palace Hotel, where a number of American and English correspondents were quartered.

Things moved quickly. On the 19th Irvin Cobb, Will Irwin, Arno Dosch, and I were caught between the Belgian and German lines in Louvain; our retreat to Brussels was cut, and for three days, while the vast German army moved through the city, we were detained. Then, the army having passed, we were allowed to go back to the capital.

In the meantime Davis was in Brussels. The Germans reached the outskirts of the city on the morning of the 20th, and the correspondents who had remained in Brussels were feverishly writing despatches describing the imminent fall of the city. One of them, Harry Hansen, of the Chicago Daily News, tells the following story, which I give in his words: "While we were writing," says Hansen, "Richard Harding Davis walked into the writing-room of the Palace Hotel with a bunch of manuscript in his hand. With an amused expression he surveyed the three correspondents filling white paper.

"'I say, men,' said Davis, 'do you know when the next train leaves?'

"'There is one at three o'clock,' said a correspondent, looking up.

"'That looks like our only chance to get a story out,' said Davis. 'Well, we'll trust to that.'

"The story was the German invasion of Brussels, and the train

mentioned was considered the forlorn hope of the correspondents to connect with the outside world--that is, every correspondent thought it to be the OTHER man's hope. Secretly each had prepared to outwit the other, and secretly Davis had already sent his story to Ostend. He meant to emulate Archibald Forbes, who despatched a courier with his real manuscript, and next day publicly dropped a bulky package in the mail-bag. "Davis had sensed the news in the occupation of Brussels long before it happened. With dawn he went out to the Louvain road, where the German army stood, prepared to smash the capital if negotiations failed. His observant eye took in all the details. Before noon he had written a comprehensive sketch of the occupation, and when word was received that it was under way, he trusted his copy to an old Flemish woman, who spoke not a word of English, and saw her safely on board the train that pulled out under Belgian auspices for Ostend."

With passes which the German commandant in Brussels gave us the correspondents immediately started out to see how far those passes would carry us. A number of us left on the afternoon of August 23 for Waterloo, where it was expected that the great clash between the German and the Anglo-French forces would occur. We had planned to be back the same evening, and went prepared only for an afternoon's drive in a couple of hired street carriages. It was seven weeks before we again saw Brussels. On the following day (August 24) Davis started for Mons. He wore the khaki uniform which he had worn in many campaigns. Across his breast was a narrow bar of silk ribbon indicating the campaigns in which he had served as a correspondent. He so much resembled a British officer that he was arrested as a British derelict and was informed that he would be shot at once.

He escaped only by offering to walk to Brand Whitlock, in Brussels, reporting to each officer he met on the way. His plan was approved, and as a hostage on parole he appeared before the American minister, who quickly established his identity as an American of good standing, to the satisfaction of the Germans.

In the following few months our trails were widely separated. I read of his arrest by German officers on the road to Mons; later I read the story of his departure from Brussels by train to Holland--a trip which carried him through Louvain while the town still was burning; and still later I read that he was with the few lucky men who were in Rheims during one of the early bombardments that damaged the cathedral. By amazing luck, combined with a natural news sense which drew him instinctively to critical places at the psychological moment, he had been a witness of the two most widely featured stories of the early weeks of the war.

Arrested by the Germans in Belgium, and later by the French in France, he was convinced that the restrictions on correspondents were too great to permit of good work.

So he left the European war zone with the widely quoted remark: "The day of the war correspondent is over."

And yet I was not surprised when, one evening, late in November of last year, he suddenly walked into the room in Salonika where William G. Shepherd, of the United Press, "Jimmy Hare," the veteran war photographer, and I had established ourselves several weeks before.

The hotel was jammed, and the city, with a normal capacity of about one hundred and seventy-five thousand, was struggling to accommodate at least a hundred thousand more. There was not a room to be had in any of the better hotels, and for several days we lodged Davis in our room, a vast chamber which formerly had been the main dining-room of the establishment, and which now was converted into a bedroom. There was room for a dozen men, if necessary, and whenever stranded Americans arrived and could find no hotel accommodations we simply rigged up emergency cots for their temporary use.

The weather in Salonika at this time, late November, was penetratingly cold. In the mornings the steam coils struggled feebly to dispel the chill in the room.

Early in the morning after Davis had arrived, we were aroused by the sound of violent splashing, accompanied by shuddering gasps, and we looked out from the snug warmth of our beds to see Davis standing in his portable bath-tub and drenching himself with ice-cold water. As an exhibition of courageous devotion to an established custom of life it was admirable, but I'm not sure that it was prudent.

For some reason, perhaps a defective circulation or a weakened heart, his system failed to react from these cold-water baths. All through the days he complained of feeling chilled. He never seemed to get thoroughly warmed, and of us all he was the one who suffered most keenly from the cold. It was all the more surprising, for his appearance was always that of a man in the pink of athletic fitness--ruddy-faced, clear-eyed, and full of tireless energy.

On one occasion we returned from the French front in Serbia to Salonika in a box car lighted only by candles, bitterly cold, and frightfully exhausting. We were seven hours in travelling fifty-five miles, and we arrived at our destination at three o'clock in the morning. Several of the men contracted desperate colds, which clung to them for weeks. Davis was chilled through, and said that of all the cold he had ever experienced that which swept across the Maeedonian plain from

the Balkan highlands was the most penetrating. Even his heavy clothing could not afford him adequate protection.

When he was settled in his own room in our hotel he installed an oil-stove which burned beside him as he sat at his desk and wrote his stories. The room was like an oven, but even then he still complained of the cold.

When he left he gave us the stove, and when we left, some time later, it was presented to one of our doctor friends out in a British hospital, where I'm sure it is doing its best to thaw the Balkan chill out of sick and wounded soldiers.

Davis was always up early, and his energy and interest were as keen as a boy's. We had our meals together, sometimes in the crowded and rather smart Bastasini's, but more often in the maelstrom of humanity that nightly packed the Olympos Palace restaurant. Davis, Shepherd, Hare, and I, with sometimes Mr. and Mrs. John Bass, made up these parties, which, for a period of about two weeks or so, were the most enjoyable daily events of our lives.

Under the glaring lights of the restaurant, and surrounded by British, French, Greek, and Serbian officers, German, Austrian, and Bulgarian civilians, with a sprinkling of American, English, and Scotch nurses and doctors, packed so solidly in the huge, high-ceilinged room that the waiters could barely pick their way among the tables, we hung for hours over our dinners, and left only when the landlord and his Austrian wife counted the day's receipts and paid the waiters at the end of the evening.

One could not imagine a more charming and delightful companion than Davis during these days. While he always asserted that he could not make a speech, and was terrified at the thought of standing up at a banquet-table, yet, sitting at a dinner-table with a few friends who were only too eager to listen rather than to talk, his stories, covering personal experiences in all parts of the world, were intensely vivid, with that remarkable "holding" quality of description which characterizes his writings.

He brought his own bread--a coarse, brown sort, which he preferred to the better white bread--and with it he ate great quantities of butter. As we sat down at the table his first demand was for "Mastika," a peculiar Greek drink distilled from mastic gum, and his second demand invariably was "Du beurre!" with the "r's" as silent as the stars; and if it failed to come at once the waiter was made to feel the enormity of his tardiness.

The reminiscences ranged from his early newspaper days in Philadelphia, and skipping from Manchuria to Cuba and Central

America, to his early Sun days under Arthur Brisbane; they ranged through an endless variety of personal experiences which very nearly covered the whole course of American history in the past twenty years.

Perhaps to him it was pleasant to go over his remarkable adventures, but it could not have been half as pleasant as it was to hear them, told as they were with a keenness of description and brilliancy of humorous comment that made them gems of narrative.

At times, in our work, we all tried our hands at describing the Salonika of those early days of the Allied occupation, for it was really what one widely travelled British officer called it--"the most amazingly interesting situation I've ever seen"--but Davis's description was far and away the best, just as his description of Vera Cruz was the best, and his wonderful story of the entry of the German army into Brussels was matchless as one of the great pieces of reporting in the present war.

In thinking of Davis, I shall always remember him for the delightful qualities which he showed in Salonika. He was unfailingly considerate and thoughtful. Through his narratives one could see the pride which he took in the width and breadth of his personal relation to the great events of the past twenty years. His vast scope of experiences and equally wide acquaintanceship with the big figures of our time, were amazing, and it was equally amazing that one of such a rich and interesting history could tell his stories in such a simple way that the personal element was never obtrusive.

When he left Salonika he endeavored to obtain permission from the British staff to visit Moudros, but, failing in this, he booked his passage on a crowded little Greek steamer, where the only obtainable accommodation was a lounge in the dining-saloon. We gave him a farewell dinner, at which the American consul and his family, with all the other Americans then in Salonika, were present, and after the dinner we rowed out to his ship and saw him very uncomfortably installed for his voyage.

He came down the sea ladder and waved his hand as we rowed away. That was the last I saw of Richard Harding Davis.

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