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The "low down" on Floridy

Joshuway Whipple

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"Low-Down"
ON
Floridy

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By
JOSHUWAY WHIPPLE

THE "LOW-DOWN"
ON FLORIDA.

The "Low-Down" on Florida

By JOSHUWAY WHIPPLE, pseud



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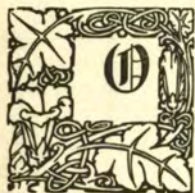
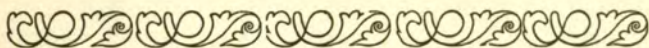
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The "Low-Down" on Floridy



ONE night last fall as my wife Mandy an' me was a-settin' by the fire tryin' to keep our shins warm as well as the rest o' our mortal frames, I felt the sperrit movin' in me to speak out an' tell Mandy what had been in the back o' my head fer

some time past.

"Mandy," I says, startin' off gentle-like, "I guess we'd better pack up our duds an' take a little trip to Floridy to see whatall this here 'boom' is about that the papers is so full of. Less git ready an' start Monday mornin.'"

I knowed that would fetch her. It shore did fetch her. Mandy riz right up in her seat, as strait as a arrer, an' went to broadcastin', doin' her own announcin' as she went.

"Josh Whipple!" she cried out in axe scents wild, "whutever is wrong with you? Are you goin' plum crazy here in your old age? What with musketers, malarial, yeller fever, yeller janders, nuralgy, swamps, snakes, an' ally-gaters, they tell me anybody is takin' his life in his hand to go anywheres near the place."

"Cam yourself, Mandy," I says, "you been swal-

lerin' some o' this ant-eye proppygander that's been dispensed by them Northern bankers, plumbers-unions, coal barruns, coal-shovel an' snow-shovel many-facturess an' other mallyfacters of great wealth. Them fellers up there hain't got no more use fer Floridy than bootleggers has fer theoligy. An' why? Because it hurts their bizness. That's the big why in all ant-eye proppygander. Floridy is gittin' so popular, an' so many folks is goin' down there an' likin' the looks of it well enuf to pay out money for lots to build on that the Northern bankers is in a cold swet, an' spendin' sleepless nights plannin' how to stop their nabers from drawin' good money out o' the banks to invest in Floridy. So much money has been drawn out that the bankers is hard up fer ready cash to invest in Floridy fer No. 1. An' that's what worrises 'em. They kin talk about "4 percent an' safety," but hit ain't stoppin' the cockeyed world from doin' some squintin' on its own account. As Abraham Linkun said "you kin prop a goose part o' the time but you can't propagander ferever."

"Well," says Mandy, "if you're set on goin' an' must go er bust, I reckon I'll have to go along, too, to look after you an' keep you outer trouble. They tell me there's lots o' wild goin's on down there an' the folks ain't more'n half civvyalized, goin' in swimmin' in Januwery an' Febbiwery an' not wearin' no more close than the law allows. If you're goin' I'm shore goin' too, an' you kin count on that."

"Why, shore, Mandy," I says, "I want you to go an' see the sights in Floridy. I been readin' all I could find about it fer a good while an' readin' betwixt the lines, too, an' I don't believe ha'f of the

wild stories they're gittin' out agin Floridy. Somebody is jellus, somewheres, you kin jest bet on that. If things was as bad in Floridy as some of these investy-gaters paint 'em, you coudn't hold nothin' but thirty-third degree moe-rons down thar. Talk about ally-gaters—why a ally-gater is a gentleman an' a skollar besides some of these investy-gaters. Nobody ever herd of a ally-gater lyin', 'ceptin' ter lie 'round in the mud somewheres. But a investy-gater, he will lie ennywhere, in the hotel-lobbies, on the trains, in auty-mobeels an' Ford flivvers, sittin' er standin', even in the newspapers if he kin git some good money from a Cindy-Kate fer doin' it. Some of these Cindy-Kate's is pow'ful agin Floridy an' will pay enny amount for good, strong statty-sticks to prove ther case an' you no it's said that 'you kin prove ennything by statty-sticks,' and some of these so-called investy-gaters kin play on statty-sticks the same as a hired man playin' on a plate o' biscuits, an' you 'member how that last hired man we had could make 'em vanish; like the poet said about the 'snow-flake in the river, one minute here then gone ferever.' "

"Yes," says Mandy, "I oughter 'member him for I cooked enuf biscuits fer him nearly to pave the road from here to county line. But let him rest. What I want to know is: what's the main attrakshun in Floridy? What makes so many folks want to crowd in down there all to wunst?"

"Why, ole lady," I says, "hit's the climit, mostly. Folks 'way up in the North would give most ennything fer a little climit about this time o'year. Not that they ain't got climit enough but hit's the wrong kind. What climit they have up there hain't no re-

specter of persons. Hit ain't got no more regard fer hevvy underclose than Floridy climit has fer B. V. D.'s—an' not as much. Folks up there go 'round with blue noses and blue sperrits, chilblains, an' colds in the head until they're nigh crazy an' would almost welkum deeth if hit warn't for fearin' the sudden' change o' climit, not havin' no asbestus underware handy. Then all of a suddint word begins to percolate through all them frozent regions thet there's 'rest spite an' knee penthy' fer 'em if they'll just jurney to the Land o' Flowers. And, by gum! them horny headed sons o'toil had been grievin' about their bitter lot fer so many jennyrashuns up there, shovellin' snow an' stokin' the furnace thet they jest desperit-like begin ter believe ther was somethin' to it. But them folks is cawshus. Some of 'em up thar is Scotch, an' the rail-roads wasn't givin' no free tickets right then. So they rummy nated an' pondered a nother generation or two until finally Hank Ford come along with a copy of the Unborn Independent in one hand an' a Blue Prince of a Minny Ture autymo-beel in the other. Fire flashed from his eyes, his mane flew high in the wind, an' with a rore that back-fired its way through the yuniverse he told the hamstrung world sum what as follers: 'Your day of deliverance is nigh at hand. I shall build a alleged car fer every man, woman, child, trained animal and moe-ron on the face of the known globe.' Havin' got this off his chest or some other one of his spare parts the splendid vision faded an' was next heard from at Deetroit where his forges are now runnin' day an' night carryin' out his omnus threat. But all jokin' aside, Mandy, ef it hadn't ben fer Ford on the one han'

an' chilblains on both feet the conjeeled North would-
n't never have gotten to Floridy like they have."

"How'll we go, if we do go?" asts Mandy, an' I
cud see she was gittin' interested an' was beginnin'
to want to go as much as ennybody, me included.

"Well, all things considered," I says, "I think we'd
better go on the train. The Ford is still in good
shape an' would prob'ly make the trip an' back a
thousand times or more an' still be as good as a new
one, but I hain't as young as I wunst was an' I kinder
hanker to take a good ride on one o' them sleepin'
cars an' I bleeve you'll enjoy it better, too, an' the
rail-road 'tends to findin' a place to park them things
an' we'll be rid o' that newsense."

"Suits me all right," says Mandy, "an' I bleeve
it will be the best way to go, all things considered."

So that was that, an' as it was gettin' late Mandy
an' me begin to turn in, or "re-tire," as the city folks
says, and after insertin' our feet an' then our frames
betwixt the icy sheets we was soon fast asleep, or to
put it in poettic language, we was soon "locked in
the arms of Morphine."

Well, to make a long story short, "come Monday
mornin'," as the movies would say, which, by granny,
hit usually does wunst a week, an' all was hustle an'
bustle an' tussel an' muscle gettin' ready to get to
the depo' an' get started on our more-mentous voyage.
We had a time of it, shore. Mandy had to perswade
her feet to take up their residents in a new pair o'
shoes, an' I had to rivet on a new hard-biled collar,
but we finally got incarserrated an' by that time our
hired man had poured several gallons o' bilin' water
on the Ford carburetter an' the thing begin to spit

like a bunch o' Tom cats holdin' a social an' in we jumped before the thing got out o' the noshun an' was soon at the depo'.

I went in to git our tickets an' told the depo' agent that we wanted to go to Floridy. "What place?" he said. "Why bless your soul," I says, "we hain't decided on no pertickler place only we want to see Floridy an' want to ride on one o' them sleepin' cars."

"Have you any reservashuns?" he asts.

Now I didn't no whether he ment mental reservashuns or what kind. So I says: "What kind o' reservashuns do you mean?"

"Why, reservashuns for a birth," he says.

Well, that stumped me.

"Man," I says, "we're too old to think of birth now. My wife's too old an' I'm the wrong jinder myself. We only had one son an' he was a grown boy an' is sleepin' over yonder in France."

As I said this I glanced around at Mandy an' she looked like she was plumb shocked an' about to cry. That got me hot an' if that feller hadn't been inside of that cage-work I bleeve I'd a broke the old umbrella over his head.

But he sort o' come to his senses then an' says: "Pardon me, friend, I meant had you put in an order to reserve a place for you and your good lady to sleep."

That sounded better an' I felt like there was a mistake somewhere an' that the young feller was meanin' no harm.

"Nosir," I says, "we just make up our minds to go a few days ago an' hadn't said nothin' about it to nobody 'ceptin our hired man."

"Well," he says, "I guess you'd better get a ticket to Jacksonville an' then decide when you get there which way you to want to travel the State. I can only give you an upper in the sleeper as everything else is full an' it's a wonder that isn't, too."

So I says, "all right, fix us up to ride to Jacksonville with bed an' board included."

He got busy then an' fixed up a whole handful o' tickets an' named the price. I paid him but hit shorely set me back, for it seemed like I could o' bought a pretty good bed, with mattress, springs, pillars, quilts an' all throwed in for the price. But I had a right good roll on my hip an' had my check book in my satchel fer I was determined Mandy an' me should have one nice trip afore we died no matter what it cost. An' I had a sneakin' notion of buyin' a little lot down there if everything looked good an' safe.

Well, that train arrove purty soon, an' we climbed on. I had rode some few times on the train an' so had Mandy, but we hadn't never been on nothin' like a Pullman coach before. Man, hit was sumpshus! The seats was broad an' comfortable an' Mandy an' me had a good time a-sittin' there lookin' out the winder an' watchin' the landscape pass goin' in the opposite direckshun at a turrible rate. That train didn't hesitate excep' fer good size towns an' not long then.

Finally, about 3 o'clock, the train stopped at what seem to be a college town, at least there was a crowd o' young fellers standin' bunched together givin' some kind o' yells like savages drunk on cocain, or gin, or a mixtry o' both. They had banners an' was wavin' 'em to beat the band and havin' a big time in general.

I stuck my head up as fer as I could to get a good look at 'em, an' one of 'em spied me an' hollered: "Look, who's here! Reubin come to town! 'Wo, haw, he come back to the town of Hackensack, with his little bunch of whiskers on his chin.'"

By this time the whole crowd had moved up an' was givin' me the grins.

"Young feller," I says, loud enuf for all of 'em to hear an' the folks inside the coach, too, "the doctors claim that fish is a fine brane food. I'd like to advise you to eat a couple o' whales."

By that time the train was startin' off, but I could see him standin' there, with his bull-dog pipe an' frat pin, his chief deckorashuns, an' a-turnin' red 'roun' the gills while his cum-patriots was raggin' him proper. An' there was plenty o' smiles an' twinklin' eyes inside the coach as we pulled away on down the road fer Floridy.

Oh, well, thinks I to myself, hit ain't the fault o' the colleges. They have to take what's sent 'em an' work on it the best they kin. Saw-mills has to saw through all kinds o' timber, knots, rotten places, peckerwood holes, buried nails an' what not, an' it's the same way with the colleges an' universities. They do the best they kin with the material they have. Some o' our best Presidents from Woodrow Wilson on down was college men but they was good material afore they ever saw a college. This present generation o' boys, with their balloon-tread, low-pressure pants goin' through life bare-headed with the hot sun addlin' their branes—or the hollow place made fer branes—wisdom is as fur from most of 'em as the East is from the West, an' the Bible says that's some piece away. Hit

makes me think over the old sayin': "The young folks thinks the old folks 're fools, but the old folks *knows* the young folks 're fools."

'Bout this time Mandy begin to squirm a little so I asts her what is the matter.

"These new shoes is hurtin' my feet somethin' awful," she says, "An' I don't know how I'm to stand 'em."

"Well," I says, "I herd a orryter speakin' wunst and he brought in somethin' to the effect that 'Hell hath no fury like a woman's corns,' so maybe that's the kind o' fury that's workin' on your feet."

"Now, Joshuway," says Mandy, "I don't like to hear you speak such words, even ef they was spoke by a orryter."

She allus called me Joshuway in full when she was shocked.

"I reckon we're 'bout even Steven," I says, "fer this re-inforced concrete collar is about to cut my thote. This high-life bizness o' bein' dressed up every day in the week is hard on us ole country folks, but wunst in a life-time—we kin surely stand that."

Along about dark a choclate-skin feller in white come through the car hollerin': "Dinner is served in the rear."

Hit shore was late fer dinner an' Mandy said she reckoned the cook must a'bin sick, as it was nigh supper time fer us. Folks begin to move out towards the back so we got up an' follered. I didn't keer what they called it jes so they was some good groceries an' vittles to eat.

An' they shore had enuf. We had enuf knives, forks, spoons an' other acksessories around our plates

to last a man a week when he is doin' the dish-washin' an' his wife's away from home.

They handed us a list of what they had on hand.

I ast the waiter if we had to go the whole route. He says, no, we could jest select what we wanted. But bless my soul if I could make heads or tails of all that truck. So I says: "Jes' bring us a good supper, fer my stummick feels like hit's all caved in."

He tuck my word fer it an' put a supply of stuff in front of us thet was a joy to behold. Mandy an' me went after that grub jes' like a ole maid sayin' "yes" to her first proposer.

"Mandy," I says, jes to tease her a little, "ole Dock Washburn told you to relacks at meal time an' take yer time an' eat slowly, an' here ye are eatin' about sixty miles a hour!"

"Yes, an' he told you to cut down on your rashuns an diet yourself," she says, "an' here you are eatin' like the Prodigal Son when he got back from the fur country an' was bein' helped to fatted calf."

"Well," I says, "hit's all in a life time so let's eat, drink and be merry fer tomorrer the ally-gaters may git us."

We finally had put away all the nurrishment we could comfortably hold so we got up to go back to our places ahead.

The waiter stopped me, however, an' said the bill warn't paid. I told him I thought the meals was all throwed in, but he says nosir, they was extry.

Well, I paid him an' let me tell you, they shore ain't throwin' nothin' at the birds. At that rate I'll have to write a check 'fore long, says I to myself.

We went back an' rested then fer it was purty nigh

time to begin to think about where they was goin' to put us to sleep. We both was curious about how they changed that nice car into a bunk-room an' was wonderin' if they had a curtain to hang across the middle o' the car with the feminine jinder on one side an' the masculine jinder on the other.

But we soon found out diffrunt from that.

I ast the conductor when an' where we could go to bed. He said he'd send the porter. So the porter come an' let down a piece of the cielin' an' fixed it with braces an' curtains an' all sorts of contrapshuns. I was wonderin' how in tarnashun we could manage to git up thar, for I didn't feel like acrobatticks at my age an' on a full stummick, an' I shore didn't want Mandy to be "skinnin' the cat" right there in full view of a mixed audience.

But them pullman folks is shore thoughtful. They brung in a step-ladder an' up we climbed easy as pie an' got in our bunk with mighty little trubble. But wunst inside hit was mighty close quarters an' we was all in each other's way about undressin.' There warn't much elbcw room fer one much less two and we had quite a tussel to extract ourselves from our close but we finally got off enuf to be comfortable. I felt better as soon as I got my coller off, an' Mandy heaved a 4-horse power sigh o' relief when she got off her shoes.

But that was new sleepin' arrangements to us and I can't say that we got much sleep that night. The train was thumpin' an' bumpin' an' clackin' an' hackin' all night an' about all we got out of it was restin' in a recum bent position—with the axcent on the bent, —excep' to doze off fer a few winks wunst in a while.

They had some champeen snorers in that coach, too. They made me think of the poet's words: "Sleep an' the world sleeps with you, snore, an' you sleep alone." I don't know of ennything more agonizin' than to be sleepy as a owl an' have to stay awake an' lissen to a high-powered snore an' be in mortal dread all the time that the proud owner of it will throw hissself in reverse gear, swaller his Adam's apple, an' choke to deth before a vetinary kin git to him.

I riz up wunst, an' peeked over the parapet, feelin' sort o' guilty not knowing what sort of a negly jay I might see, but all was green curtains everywhere with only a few dim lights an' the coach shore looked diffrunt from what it had when we got on.

We finally fell into a trubbled sleep when 'twas nearly time to git up. Then the porter come along an' waked us up an' we got busy tryin' to git our things back on. We got enuf on an' climbed down the stair steps when he brung 'em, an' by the time we had washed up we was drawin' in close to Jacksonville.

"Now, Mandy," I says, "we must step lively and plan which way to go from here an' git started, fer I'm thinkin' we're goin' to see a eye-full an' have a bizzy, dizzy time of it."

Well, we stepped out on the ground an' got into the depo' an' I'll say they was a immense crowd of folks a'millin' around in that place. An' such a place it was, too! Why all the corn an' oats in Carter county could 'a' been put in there with room ter spare.

"The weather shorely has moderated since we left home," says Mandy.

"Why, child," I says, "hit ain't the weather, hit's the climit. Just wait till we're further down in the State, and you'll see a bigger diffrence still. This Floridy is where they say that 'summer spends the winter.'"

Mandy says she can't see how come nature is so partial to the Floridy folks.

"Well," I says, "they ain't no law agin anybody's becomin' Floridy folks ef they want to, and frum the crowded condition o' the depo' hit 'pears like the whole world is realizin' that the way is open and the old locked gates o' ignorance an' prejudis has been smashed into kindlin' wood. Floridy is like a big thum' o' the United States a'stickin' down into the water an' sayin': 'come on in, the water's fine.' An' the hand an' body is believin' what the thum' has to say about it, an' the legs is movin' in this direckshun as fast as they kin put feet to the groun'.

We got us some breakfast there in a calf in the depo' an' then I went up to one o' them inflammation winders an' ast fer inflammation as to which way to go.

The inflammation man seemed to have the right name—he was sort o' inflammatory, that is to say, cross. But I reckon he has to answer so many questions an' him leadin' such a seddenterry life that his liver gits all clogged up an' that makes him bilyus.

But he did open up his heart enuf to say that I might take the East Coast Railroad to Pam Beech then ride the busses to Miammy an' around an' then work over towards the west coast, look hit over, then work back up through the central part o' the State "to Jacks."

"Where is Jack's place?" I ast him.

"Everybody calls Jacksonville 'Jax,' down here," he says "for short."

I told him I thought thet was plumb disrespeckful to a place thet could afford such a swell depo' as thet. But he only give a bilyus kind of a smile an' lapsed back into a condition of semmy-sensibility. He looked like he was born lazy an' had had a relapse. So I left him an' went back to Mandy who was a-sittin' there on one o' them seats admirin' the depo' and the crowd o' folks.

Mandy said she had heard some o' the wimmen in the sleeper talkin' about a town by the name of Oleander an' sayin' it was such a fine town an' she wanted us to go by there. So I went back an' ast one o' the other inflammation fellers about how to get there. He said he reckoned I meant Orlando. Anyway, I bought our tickets to that place an' we was soon a'-ridin' again but on a day-coach this time.

The further we rode the better we liked it an' everybody seemed in a good yumer like they was goin' to a corn-shuckin' er a quiltin' party. Mandy said she was shore likin' Floridy so fur.

I saw a young gal across the isle a sittin' there with her nees crossed a'showin' a neat pair o' stockings' an' what I mean, she was showin' 'em, regardless.

"Mandy," I says, easy like, "that gal over thar ought to go on the stage. Leastways she has two perfectly good reasons fer goin'."

"What reasons do you think she has fer goin' on any stage?" says Mandy.

"Why, her reasons is in full view," I says, "and can't be overlooked, though they may be looked over."

"You jes shut up, Joshuway Whipple," she says, indignantly-like, "keep yer eyes on the scenery outside an' let these brazen huzzies alone."

An' she looked plum shocked at me fer my innocent jokin'.

Well, I got Mandy's indignation quieted finally an' we had a plessant trip on down the road to Orlander.

We got there about 2 o'clock in the evenin' and say! that is a purty town an' a good solid lookin' town, too. "Ef Floridy is a mush-room growth," I says to Mandy, "as some of the knockers wrote, the affliction shorely hain't hit Orlander, yit. Hit's solid as the rock o' Ji-bralter."

They had lakes enuf in that town to butify a whole county. An' some of 'em was mighty purty, too, an' the folks seemed crazy to live on a lake front lot, an' I couldn't blame 'em. An' they said that was the way all over the State, everybody wanted to live frontin' on a lake or the oshun or the gulf. But they wasn't but jest so much water frontin' lots so folks paid like smoke fer 'em an' them that couldn't get 'em took the best they could get an' so the movement kep' backin' back an' backin' back off'n the water until they was buyin' lots anywheres they could get 'em an' derned glad to get any atall, jes so hit was in Floridy.

I come mighty nigh buyin' a lot in Orlander, but Mandy says wait till we see some more o' the State an' then we'll know better how to decide. I told her I thought the town would be hard to beat an' she agreed but said wait an' less see some more, that Orlander wouldn't run away nowheres an' we could come back to it later.

We spent the night at a swell hotel there an' Mandy said hit looked like a lot o' people was out o' work or shore had a plenty of loafin' time fer it seemed that somebody was a-settin' around all the time in the lobby.

We went to set down in one o' them sofas an' bless my time, hit skeered both of us, fer we sunk down nighly to our arm pits. I never set on such a soft, mushy piece o' furniture in my life. I thought I was back home in the hay mow.

Then they registered us jest-like we was goin' to vote, an' then put us in one o' them elevators. An' hit was the elevatener's thing I ever got on. Hit seemed like my pants was pullin' off, we riz so suddint.

They put us in a room on the 8th floor and it was nice enuf fer a emperor. And we shore did sleep that night for we was wore out an' had put in the night before listenin' to the varied assortment o' bugle calls put on by the snorer's brigade.

Next day we got our breakfast in a calf an' then looked around the city some more and found out that we could ride most any direction on the busses so we decided we'd ride thataway awhile.

We got on one an' lit out further south aimin' to git to Miammy sooner or later an' see all they was on the way. We passed through a good many purty towns and just before we come to one of 'em I ast a young lady sittin' by me what town we was comin' to now.

"Kiss me," she says.

"Ma'am?" I says in astonishment.

"Kiss me," she says, again.

"I shore would an' hug you, too," I says, "ef my wife warn't along."

Mandy had not been lookin' nor hearin' what was said. I had to say somethin' gallant-like, under the circumstances.

But to tell you the truth I wouldn't a-kissed that gal on a bet unless I was ready to take on a case of lead-pizenin' or painter's colic. She was covered with paint like a new battle-ship. Only her nose an' that stuck out like a tomb-stone, hit was so covered with white powder.

Sufferin' snakes, says I to myself, that must be some o' that "vener of civilization" we read so much about. But ef it is civvy shore puts on some heavy ones. Hit shorely wants to 'save the surface an' save all' in her case. I wisht I had a few shares in the Paint Trust, bought afore the styles come over from the dennizens o' Paris.

An' I wondered who the wimmin folks thought was fooled by sich truck. Ef a woman is purty she don't need hit an' ef she haint hit's 'confusion worse confounded' to mop that war-path deckorashun all over her fizzy-ignominy.

As I was ruminatin' on "how frail we mortals be" (an' how mortal the "frails" be) an' watchin' the beauties of nature, my eye lit on a big sign sayin' "This is Kissimmee," an' soforth, an' I saw what the gal had meant an' I turned to ast her pardon but she had moved to another seat an' was lookin' very forbiddin'.

This here "Kiss-me" town was a nice, purty one, too. I reckon the folks was so glad they was livin'

there that it throwed 'em into a eckstatic mood an' they jest wanted to hug an' kiss the whole world an' probly that was how come they give it such a name. But that's better'n namin' it "Kick-me" or "Cuss-me" or "Knock-me" like some o' the little towns back up towards home oughter be named, where everybody knows everybody else's bizness and his bank-standin' an' is jellus an' envyus an' hopin' the other feller will bust wide open. Down here in Floridy, I thinks, seems like everybody is friendly an' wants everybody to do well, git along all right an' be happy, an' that's a mighty nice frame o' mind fer a State to be in.

Well, we passed through lots o' fine towns an' fine orange an' grape-fruit groves with the trees jest about to break all to smash with the weight o' the golden frute. Hit was a sight to see an' Mandy an' me was shore feelin' happier over our trip evry minnit.

"Hit beats creation," I says to her, "how long this country has been neglected. Why I read somewheres that a feller named Pouncin' Lion come over here several hundred years ago a'huntin' fer a spring o' water to drink outer that would give him such a kick that he'd feel like a youngster the balance of his days or make him last forever, not needin' no monkey gland operations ner nuthin'. But hit 'pears to me he slip-ped up on that. This here air we are wrapped up in was all he needed to drink in an' bathe in an' we kin bathe in it all day an' not have to put on no bathin' suit, neither. Why, I feel about 15 years younger a'ready since comin' to Floridy. I jest feel like shoutin': 'Glory hallie luyer,' an' 'E pluribus onion-skins, sick simper tyranious, junyus pluneyus irre-

sipelas annimossity' all to wunst an makin' the welkin ring, I feel so good!"

"You better wait till we git out o' this town," says Mandy, "an' in the country agin or the Welkins might ring fer the poleece an' the mental experts to hold a see-ants over yer an' that would shore put a crimp in our tower."

But I could see Mandy was enjoyin' evry minnit of our tower an' was feelin' more spry, too, since her blood had thawed out an' got ter circulatin' better in the milder climit of Floridy. I begin to wish we had come ter Floridy long years ago.

An' I thought o' all the stiff-jinted, half-petrified folks back up thar hibernatin' in the States to the North, 'specially the bankers, fer them feller's blood is cold as a frog's even in July, an' instead o' swettin' like the common run o' folks they exudes ice-sickles from evry pore, 'specially when someone wants to touch 'em for a loan. The guv'ment ought to require 'em all to go down near the equater in mid-summer an' git melted up good an' limber. Hit would speed up bizness by makin' 'em len' money freer to the folks as needs it. Them as don't need it has always had axe-sess to it, I've noticed, an' can tear off a huge piece o' currency whenever they want to. But sich is life.

Well, we went on down the road through town after town, an' all nature a-smilin' at us frum evry tree an' bush an' flower. Nothin' to do but set back an' enjoy life.

There's a feller named Hain has got a whole city named after him. Ef he owns it all he sure is well fixed, I told Mandy.

Then there's another place called Bab's son's park. I don't know who Bab is but his son ought not to fret with all that land in his hands, though he may not be of age yet an' not able to throw hit away like a lot o' the young folks does when they git their hooks on their dad's hard earnin's.

We finally come to a place called See Bring. I told Mandy it was a plenty to see but they didn't need to bring nothin' more there, Nature had brung 'em enuf and they oughtn't to be hoggish an' ast for more.

I can't discribe these towns an' places. They was all fine, only some was finer. All of 'em had plenty o' fellers in nee britches an' heavy wool socks on, the socks extenin' north to wher the britches quit off. They was real estate agents, we was told, but why they all thought the real estate bizness required 'em to dress up like boys, I don't know. Some of 'em looked old enuf to have gran'children an' looked like their face had wore out two or three bodies.

We got a snack there in a calf an' then got on the train an' went on to Pam Beech. We had to stay all night in West Pam Beech an' managed to find a room in a private house.

Next mornin' we went over by bus to the real Pam Beech to see 'em bathin' in the oshun an' to take a look at "Millionaire's Row" we had heard so much about. Some o' them millionaires must have powerful big families or they's lookin' fer lots o' company. I never seen such whalin' big houses in my life. They must 'a' cost a pile o' money from the outside looks. We didn't get to see any of 'em on the inside as nobody come out to ast any of us in. They was awful

in their grand-dure an' I felt like we was imposin' on their good nature to ride along there betwixt them an' the oshun.

The oshun was the biggest piece o' water we had ever laid eyes on. Why they was water enuf there to bathe the universe in every day without waitin' fer Sattiday. An' they was a pile o' folks a-cavortin' around there, some in the water, some half in an' half out, an' some jest killin' time layin' 'round on the beech an' gittin' all dirtied up with sand. They was all shapes an' sizes, some with what might be called the "form divine" and some so fur from it as to deserve to be called the "form diabolick." They was "perfect thirty-sixes," and others that was nigh 56 or 66, an' skinny ones that hardly had any "visible means of support"—no reasons fer goin' on the stage, 'tennyrate.

Mandy was plumb shocked at the scanty amount o' close an' the reckless amount o' human flesh that was exposed there that day. She said cloth shorely must be high in that part o' Floridy unless salt water was bad to shrink 'em up.

I told her I reckoned they started thataway fer folks all over the world was said to be gittin' wilder an' wilder every day in the year.

We soon got enuf o' bein' "innocent bystanders" and went back over across the lake to West Pam Beech.

Mandy said her head was a-akin' some, so I told her I'd go in a drug-store somewhere an' git her a azmarine tablet.

Ole Doc Washburn had told me that to take one azmarine tablet wunst in a while wouldn't hurt nobody

'lessn they had a weak heart. And Mandy didn't have head-akes very often. I guess it was the glare o' the sunlight over there on the beech an' gittin' shocked at the expo-say o' light an' dark meat she had seen.

I went into what the signs on the winder alledged was a drug store but I soon sasshayed out o' there. It might 'a' been a drug store in its infancy but hit had sadly degennerrated in old age.

Hit was full o' the scent o' cookin, sand-witches, "hot dogs," an' so forth, with a crowd o' "drug store cowboys," as I've heard 'em called, an' a fonygraff a-grindin' out a hideous din o' this jazz stuff that appeals so strong to all the modern moe-rons.

There was even one feller a-settin there at the sody-fountain eatin' roast beef an' gravy.

I had had a sly notion o' tryin' a drink o' this here "Koky-Koly"—'thout lettin' Mandy know it—but "aw-aw," I says to myself, "let me outer here. I thought I was in a drug-store, 'stead of a calf!"

In such a inferno as that I was afeared Mandy's azmarine might turn out to be a pizen tablet an' I didn't have no hankerin' to be qualifyin' as a widder so I left out o' there to hunt up a drug store that had more dignity an' hadn't gone back on hits raisin'.

Calfs is all right to eat in, I thinks to myself, but what does anybody want to board in a drug-store for when they's calfs an' hotels all around on every side?

An' as fer this jazz "music," falsely so-called, hit ain't nothin' but keepin' time, er rithum, run to seed an' my old Ford, with the motor runnin' smooth, makes a sweeter rithum than all the jazz-hounds beat-in' on all the tin-cans an' wash-pots on top the globe. The "heathing in his blindness, bowin' down to wood

an' stone" could do as well with his tom-toms an' ink-can-tashuns sentrys ago.

Old Doc Washburn used to say that "that fellow, Jazz, ought to be indited fer assault and battery: assault on decent sensibilities and battery on the year drums." I think he ought, too, an' be found guilty, hung, gilloteened, electrokuted, drawn an' quartered an' then biled in ile an' his homestid laid off. Outside o' that I don't wish him no harm.

Well, I found a good drug store not far away an' got some azmarine tablets. Mandy took one an' got rid o' her headake in a little while.

While we was gittin' some dinner in a nice restarunt a feller come in an' ast us to go by bus a free triper ter a place called "Hollywood" an' reccummed it to be the finest place in Floridy. So Mandy an' me decided we'd take him up an' go with his crowd. So purty soon we was a'sittin' back in a big "Hollywood" 'bus an' rollin' down the Dixie hiway toward "Hollywood" an' Miammy.

Now let me tell you that "Hollywood" was *some place!* They said it warn't but 3 years old an' already they was nigh five thousand folks livin' there and more wantin' to come, to say nothin' o' thousands o' others jest loafin' around enjoyin' the place.

An' they was all kinds o' enjoyment to be had at "Hollywood." Some was swimmin', wadin' an' splashin', others was playin' this new-fangled game o' "knock the ball an' then chase it," or golluf, as they called it; others was fishin', er dancin', er boatin', er ridin' horses an' autymobeels, er havin' a good time any way they saw fit.

They had hotels there big as the depo' in Jacksonville an' crowded from cellar to attick with folks.

They took us a ride through the whole plantation, canals an' all, an' showed us how they took swampy-low-layin' land an' throwed sand up on it with the "sand-suckers" an' made good solid lots that was in a short time dry an' firm an' fit to build on. They was lots o' wonderful sights to see around "Hollywood" an' we enjoyed every minnit. They shore treated us nice an' even offered to sell us a lot an' let us come there to live. We thanked 'em hearty an' shore appreshiated it but Mandy was afeard the ocean might git up an' out o' hits banks an' wash our house away. I believe she liked the middle part o' the State around Orlander the best so fur, an' I felt sort o' the same way, though fer pure fun an' sport an' pleasure resort stuff "Hollywood" seem like couldn't be beat. But we felt like a few lakes would be water enuf fer most anybody, 'specially a old couple who had lived three miles from the nearest creek all our lives.

We took a bus fer Miammy next mornin' and went on down the Dixie hiway which was gettin' more an' more congested all the time and Mandy was gettin' more an' more nervious fer them cars passed "zip, zip, zip," an' tarnashun close, an' hit looked like we was bound to have a reck sooner or later. But we managed to pass one anuther safely somehow, an' finally come to Miammy after awhile.

And that place is shore hog-wild with folks all in each other's way an' movin' about so feverish that you can't tell whether you're goin' or comin' or havin' a Welsh-rabbit night-mare.

They have to use streets there to go only one direck-

shun in. Ef anybody tried to go the yuther way he would soon be holdin' a lily in his hand, with no more premyums to pay on his insurance.

We had a hard time findin' a place to stay but finally got a room at a moderate size hotel an' was glad to get in outer the jam an' rest quiet awhile.

I left Mandy a-restin' in our room an' went out to look around a little. I went into one o' them real estate offices jest to see how they did bizness an' they was shore bizzy in there. Seemed like folks was anxious to buy an' didn't need no persuadin' a-tall.

I got interested 'fore I knowed it in hearin' 'em talk about a new oshun-front subdivision they was puttin' on sale an' which was sellin' like hot cakes right an' left. They only ast one-fourth down an' the balance on easy terms so I says to myself "here's yer chance, land must be gittin' sence hereabouts an' lots is bound ter rise." So I contractted fer a oshun front lot at a purty good price but I had the fever, too, an' bleaved I could git a profit inside o' a year an' maybe sooner.

I went back to the hotel ter git my check-book an' make the first payment or "binder" as they called it.

When I told Mandy what I had done she was plumb agrivated.

"Now, Joshuway Whipple," she says, "'pears like you are going tee-totally wild down here in Floridy. At our time o'life hit don't behoove us to throw money away reckless. We've got enuf to take care o' us the rest o' our days ef we go easy an' don't lose nothin' but we shore can't afford to git careless an' throw hit at the birds."

"Now, Mandy," I rejines, "cam yourself an' don't

git oneasy too soon. I ain't reskin' nuthin' but a ten per cent binder on this lot an' that gives me thirty days to examine it an' ef hit ain't all right an' satisfactory I can git my money back, so they ain't no big danger in the bargin."

But Mandy was not much molly-fide. She was a'feared I'd git the frenzid finance an' lose evry sent we had. But I felt safe and had no notion o' goin' too fur.

I went back an' drewed a check on the bank back home an' turned hit over to them fellers. I knowed when that check got back to the bank at home the casheer would take the blind staggers an' think I'd lost my reason, but I couldn't help it. I had experunced Floridy an' he hadn't done nuthin' but read the theory o' Floridy published by the Cindy Kates, an' there's a world o' diffrence betwixt theory on the one hand an' practis an experunce on the other.

"Now," I says, to the young feller in nee britches an' heavy socks, "as soon as my wife an' me can git us a snack we want to go out an' see our lot."

"Yessir, Mr. Whipple," he says, "I'll be glad to run you out in my car and show you over it. It's goin' to be some o' the swellest stuff around this great an' growin' city."

So Mandy an' me got out an' found a good restrunt or calf an' et us a good dinner.

We went back to our hotel an' rested awhile to let our dinner settle.

After restin' an' relaxatin' awhile we went to the real-estate office an' our salesman was there ready fer us an' we got aboard his car. He opened his throttle an' we vanished from there at a high rate o' speed.

Seems that instead o' tryin' to warn you to hold back an' not go too rapid they want you to make time or take the consequences. And the consequences was liable to be fatal if you went slow fer you'd be plumb outer style an' somebody would run into you an' knock you into Kingdom Come 'thout meanin' a bit o' harm by it.

We whizzed through them streets at a turrible rate. I was skeered an' Mandy was plain terry-fide.

The salesman said somethin' about the "heavy traffick." I looked all around but couldn't see nobody traffickin' anywheres. There warn't no place to traffick—nothin' on all sides but cars a'rippin' an' a zippin' an' wild-eyed folks tryin' to dodge 'em.

As we rode on the salesman said: "You know, Mr. Whipple, these lots are not all finished yet and you'll have to do a little visualizing at present. But that's where your biggest profit comes in—buying an undeveloped lot and seeing it reach the improved and perfected stage."

Well, thinks I to myself, you're late sayin' anything about that. But I didn't let on that I was surprised er nuthin', and we rode on in good sperrits.

Finally, we come to the place and the salesman stopped his car an' we got out an' walked on till we got to the edge o' the water.

"Now, Mr. Whipple," he says, "the best lots, or what will be the best lots, are out of sight at present."

Well, I'd always heard high-class stuff spoke of as bein' "out o' sight," so that seemed all right, so far.

"Your lot is out there about where you see that third wave coming in," he says, "you'll have to vis-

ualize and look ahead and see what a splendid lot you're goin' to have there in a short time."

Well, I was visualizin' with both eyes an' lookin' ahead, too, but couldn't see nothin' but water. Mandy couldn't nuther, an' said so. She had begin to git nervous an' blue, an' her eyes begin to look a little damp, like they was gittin' too much of a breeze from off'n my lot out there. She was thinkin' I had sunk good money in the briny deep an' would never see daylight on it agin.

"Our dredges and 'sand-suckers' will start here tomorrow," spoke up the salesman agin, "and begin to throw sand in there at a rapid rate and before you'd believe it there'll be some beautiful ocean-front lots all along there. You'll be glad you had the vision and foresight, Mr. Whipple, to seize such an opportunity and buy here, for we'll make you a mighty valuable lot in a short time. You ought to come out tomorrow and see the pumps at work filling in your lot."

But I told him nosir, I hadn't bought the lot with them understandins' an' bleeved I'd druther keep it just as it was an' not do a thing to it at present.

I had a sort uv a notion that I could come out on it better thataway than by lettin' it be worked with.

"Nosir," I said "jest let it stay thataway. "I think I'll jest hold it as it is an' carry out my payments accordin' to the contract. I might want to anker a boat out thar sometimes an' fish. So I'll jest keep it like that. It's a good oshun-front lot, with good oshun back, bottom an' sides. I like it all right in its present shape."

He looked kind o' funny an' even looked oneasy-like but tried to joke an' laugh it off.

We went back to the car an' got in an' went flyin' back to the city.

I got him to let us out at our hotel an' as we got out he says somethin' about takin' us out in the mornin' to see the dredges work on those butiful-to-be lots.

"Young man," I says "you have been mighty clever an' nice to my ole lady an' me an we appreshiate your kindness an' curtesy, an' thank you for it. But I ain't foolin' about that lot—I want it left undisturbed, in its prime evil buty."

Again he looked sort o' oneasy like he thought I was kiddin' him an' didn't know what to make of it.

We went to our room an' it warn't half a' hour 'till one o' the higher-up fellers in the company was knock-in' at the door.

He was lookin' mighty plesunt an' smiley, an' ast if we was enjoyin' our stay in Miammy, an' so forth. We told him we hadn't done nothin' but enjoy our time ever since we hit Floridy.

Mandy spoke up an' said she was afeared I had made a mighty poor bargain buyin' a lot when they wasn't a dry grain o' dirt to be seen an' the bottom too deep for mortal vision. He said that was perfeckly all right, that the company would fix that part of it an' in 6 weeks we could start a house there.

But I told him like I'd told the other feller—that I didn't want the peaceful repose o' that lot disturbed an' couldn't think o' havin' it all messed up with muddy sand when at present hit was so clean an' fresh lookin'.

Well, he argyfied a while, but I was as firm as Adam's aunt.

He finally took his leave but not so smilin' as when he come in.

"Mr. Whipple," he says, as he went out, "I think you are making a great mistake and I hope you will reconsider the matter and let us know by two o'clock this afternoon." But I told him I had studied out the matter in full an' didn't see no reason to change.

We et a snack in a nice calf an' then went back an' took a good nap an' rested our bones.

The fatal zero hour o' two o'clock come but I didn't wiggle a toe in the way o' goin' to the real estate office.

Mandy was plumb worrit, but I told her to be cam an' hold her pertater, I thought all would wind up all right in the end an' to try to trust ole Joshuway an' set steady in the boat.

"I ain't in no boat," she says, "but we'll shore need one ef we ever intend to visit our lot."

"Now, don't be dissatisfied with yore lot in life," I says, jokin' her.

"It ain't my lot in life," she rejines, "its the one in Miammy, er rather in the deep blue sea."

I couldn't say much to peacify her so I kep quite an' laid there like I was asleep.

'Bout three o'clock somebody knocked on our door. We riz up an' I went to open the door an' there stood a very imposin' strustructure in the way of a human bein'. He was a big piece o' proto-plazzum without a doubt an' seemed like he was tryin' to look as big as all out doors.

"Is this Mr. Whipple?" he says, an' I said, "yes-sir, this is me."

He says: "Mr. Whipple, I am Mr. Ketchum, President of the Phantom Beach Development Company, and I understand that you have contracted for one of our ocean-front lots which are destined to be among the finest lots on the entire east coast of Florida."

I told him I was the guilty party an' he said then that he understood that I objected to havin' my lot developed an' put in a perfected condition.

I told him my lot was all right so fur as I could see an' was highly developed in nature's wonderful way an' about as perfect as they ever got to be. Also that I objected to havin' it muddied up an' covered with the trash an' refuse from the bottom o' the oshun.

He looked perfectly astonished at my statement an' said he did not understand my vue-point an' that all those lots had to be dredged in an' filled, an' his company would leave it in perfect condition for build-in' as soon as the water all drained off.

I told him I hadn't bought on them conditions an' couldn't hear to it atall.

He glared at me a little an' looked like he took me fer a 50-50 mixtry o' idyut an' crook.

Finally, he says, in a very quiet tone o'voice: "Your taking that position would hold up our work and keep us from developing our property and that would cause us to forfeit all our sales on the property and ruin our company completely." An' he was gittin' a little wrought up over it, too, I thought.

"Mr. Ketchum," I says in a cool but friendly tone o' voice, "I shore don't want to interfere with your company's plans but I jest can't have my lot monkey-ed with. Hit suits me to a 't' an' I must ast you to let it remain 'in stature quo which,' as the lawyers say."

He begin to look dee-jected-like.

He studied awhile an' then he says: "Mr. Whipple, what will you take for your lot just as it stands?"

I thinks to myself: "that lot ain't really standin', hit's ebbin' an' flowin' twicet a day."

But out loud I says: "Well, Mr. Ketchum, I hadn't considered sellin' it atall fer I prize it as a mighty fine lot in a fine location."

He clinched his teeth jest like a small boy bein' invited to partake of a big spoonful o' castor ile.

"I'll give you five thousand dollars for your contract!" he finally lets out from betwixt his Oliver-chilled teeth.

"I'll take twenty!" I passes back to him, in tones o' softest silk.

Up he jumps, grabs his hat off'n the table, an' says: "I'll be back in a few minutes," an' lights out fer the ellivater place mutterin' somethin' that made me think o' one o' our Vice-Presidents.

In ten minutes he was back with two lawyers at his heels. They had a release contrack already drawed up an' ast me to sign it.

I told 'em I would "for value received" an' he planks down twenty good-lookin', perfectly respectable one thousand dollar bills.

I signed, an' so did Mandy,' an then both lawyers signed as witnesses. They seemed to be anxious to make it good an' safe—"hog-tight an' bull-strong," as the wire-fence folks say.

They took their departure without sayin' "good-bye," "far-well," "till we meet agin," "olive-oil," "off Weederseen" or any o' them kind partin' expresshuns.

Mandy couldn't hardly take it in an' her eyes stood out like you could brush em' off with a stick.

"Joshuway, do you reckon that was fair an' square?" she says.

"Why, Mandy Whipple," I says, "do you see anything wrong about that bargin? I paid what they ast me, or contractked to do it, an' they only paid what I ast them. An' I could 'a' made 'em pay fifty thousand without a doubt but didn't want to be a hog, so I let 'em off merciful-like. More'n that—they sold me a Phantom lot o' land but I sold them a real-honest-to-goodness lot o' water."

We handled them bills with lovin' care an' admirin' eyes for quite awhile. I told Mandy we could buy us several good lots o' solid stuff around Orlander or at "Hollywood," an' let it lay an' increase in value while we put in some more time romancin' around.

So we finally tucked them twenty bills away betwixt the mattresses fer safety 'till we could bank 'em tomorrow an' we had our supper sent to our room. I mean we *stayed by* that money 'till next mornin' an' then helped one o' them nearly-bustin' banks by swel- lin' their deposits that much more.

Next thing we done was to accept a invitation to ride out to see what was represented to be one o' the very swellest developments in the whole State. An' I'll say there warn't no misrepresentashun in that statement, as we soon found out.

The name o' this plantation was "Coral Gables," an' it was close by Miammy.

"Well," I says to Mandy, "Floridy shore is a gran' State fer it seems like the further you go the finer it gits. Hit puts me in mind o' that him they sing

sometimes at church back home: 'The half ain't never been told,' fer the good hain't half been told 'bout Floridy. On the other hand the bad half has been not only fully an' freely told but hits been enlarged on an' magnified until a half-witted feller with one eye out an' 'stigmatism in the other could see the falseness of it ef he'd only come down an' do his own examinin'."

Mandy said Floridy was good enuf fer any human mortal that warn't sproutin' wings.

The further we rode through the "Coral Gables" plantation an' the more we saw of the arrangements there the more we admired an' wondered at 'em. That was shorely a wonderful place an' how they ever studied up such a plan fer a place like that has got me stood.

Mandy said hit was "a dream." "Please don't wake me up, then," I says. "Let me have as long a nap as possible."

We wouldn't a-missed that trip fer a pile o' money an' was sorry when the big 'bus turned back to leave. But we was wantin' to go on with our tower an' see some more o' the rest of the State.

We went back to Miammy an' rested awhile in our room at the hotel.

I had got hold of a good map of Floridy so we took that an' fell to studyin' whichaway we should travel. We decided we'd try to get over on the west side an' see some o' that fer awhile.

On inquirin' around I found out that about the shortest way was to go back to West Pam Beech an' across to Fort Myers an' then on up the coast. We had decided we'd beat on back towards Orlander,

make that our headquarters, an' circulate out from there whenever the notion struck us.

So we rode the train back to West Pam Beech an' spent the night there. Next mornin' we went by bus across to a place called Canal Point an' got on a gaso-line launch there an' went across a lake they call "Lake Oaky-choky." An' that's some lake, too, believe me! Why it looks like the oshun's twin brother when you are out there where you can't see the land nowheres.

An' they told us that a million an' a half dollars worth o' fish was caught an' shipped out o' that lake every year, that the lake was 50 miles long, by 30 miles wide an' not only the largest lake in Floridy but next to the biggest inland lake in the United States.

Mandy an' me had studied jografy in our young days but seem like we didn't remember all these wonderful facks er else the ancesters o' the Cindy Kates had had a hand in publishin' the jografy books even back in them days an' had covered up everything that looked favorable.

Anyway, hit looked like Floridy had waited a mighty long time fer Uncle Sam's folks ter 'preciate her. But now, I thinks, she's comin' inter her own at last an' all Haydees can't stop her

We got off the boat at a place they called "Clewiston," an' things was a-movin there, I'll give my affydavy to that!

That place is bound to make a city fer there's not only lots o' sport an' pleasure stuff—like fishin', an' swimmin', an' bathin', an' boatin', an' huntin', an' et celery—but hits bein' built fer the workin' man an'

his folks—his dog, Ford car, an' mother-in-law throwed in, (though some of 'em might prefer to have her throwed in the lake.)

But leavin' off jokin', "Clewiston" is on the map to stay, an' it's goin' ter git bigger mighty fast.

They told us that a bunch o' Chicago capitalists went there an' bought up thousands o' acres in that Everglade soil—rich as cream an' black as tar—ter raise sugar-cane fer a 17 million dollar refinery, usin' the mashed "pummy" to make a kind o' stuff they call "Cellar-tecks" in a eight million dollar plant built fer that purpose.

So these Chicago millionaires had to scratch ther heds an' plan where to put all them folks that would work in these varus an' sun-dried plants, so they laid off a town-sight an' called hit "Clewiston." An' they was pavin' streets an' doin' about purty lively.

An' another thing—a steel fabricatin' plant that had run fer 3 jennyration in one family in New Jersey had tore up an' moved hitself down there to "Clewiston."

An' I told Mandy ef that family had gumpshun enuf to run that mill 3 jennyration without goin' broke an' bustin' wide open they had gumpshun enuf to know a good place to locate when they moved to Floridy.

Hit's the only steel plant in the State so far, but they'll be more soon, fer they's too much sky-scraper steel bein' used not to have 'em.

"Clewiston" is shore one buty spot by nature an' them money-bag folks from Chicago is doin' all they kin to make it one o' the purtiest spots in Floridy, with a pay-roll added on.

That place shore made a claim on my attenshun an' if we live I aim to put in some time lookin' it over every winter. There's lots o' pleasure resort stuff in Floridy but this town is goin' ter be a combination fer rich folks an' workin' folks, too—a sort o' race horse an' big Perchuron combined, corned beef an' cabbage on one hand an' cake an' ice cream on the other.

Well, we finally broke away from there an' come on out by Henry Ford, Tom Edison an' Firestone's hangin' out place at La Belle an' on to Fort Myers. An' that town is there with the goods, too! Them streets lined off with stately pam trees don't hurt your eyes a little bit. That town looks good enuf ter eat. Seems like Floridy is jest chock full o' purty places an' the man that can't see the buties o' nature in that State hain't got a soul as big as a nat's nee-cap.

Mandy an' me looked the town over considerable an' spent the night there. In the hotel we heard talk of a small place named Naples down below there on the Gulf an' folks said it was goin' to be one wonderful development. But wonderful developments war-n't nothin' new seemed like to us fer the whole bloom-in' State didn't have "nothin' else but," as these flapper-gals say.

Mandy said she'd like ter see Naples while that close by. She said the Eye-talians had a town by that name that she'd always heard was a buty an' drawed lots o' United States folks thet didn't do nothin' but tower the world.

So next mornin' we jumped a 'bus an' went down thataway to look Naples over. And while they ain't

much of a town there now nature has done put her O. K. on the location an' done her very blame best to start 'em off right. There ain't no swamp stuff there to drain an' fill in, but all high an' dry right down to the beech. An' the beech is said to be one o' the purttest anywheres, an' I don't doubt it. That beech is hard an' smooth as glass and autymobeels can shore burn the gas there an' make time ef they want to.

The more we seen of the West Coast the better we liked it. But we didn't stay long at Naples. We come on back up by Fort Myers an' took in Sarry Sody, which was said to be boomed up by the Ringlin' Brothers of circuss faim. And they're shore puttin' on a many-ringed circuss there in the way of a town. That town is buildin' so fast that nobody kin keep up with it an' in the hotel lobbies they don't talk in sums o' less than a hundred thousand an' on up as high as the human mind kin reach.

We come on up to Tampa and that's some post office, too, I'll tell the world. That town an' Miammy an' Jacksonville don't look like they're sufferin' from mal-nutrishun to me an' would do credit to any o' the green-eyed States up North that's so et up with jellusy agin Floridy.

Some feller named Gander had built a bridge acrost the bay to Saint Peter's burg that was many miles long an' folks was swappin' back an' forth to beat the band. I don't know who that feller Gander is ner where he lives but he shore had sense. I don't think he is any kin to propper Gander an' shorely not to old aunt-I Propper Gander fer he had showed he

warn't no more oneasy ner afeared o' Floridy than a child is of his mammy an' daddy.

That Tampa is some sea-port place, too, and seem to be as busy with all kinds o' industry as a dog with a peck o' fleas on him. An' they made enuf fine see-gars there ter stock all the politicians in the United States when they start out on a vote-gettin' contest, a-slappin backs, shakin' hands an' kissin' babies.

We took a fine trip acrost that Gander bridge an' looked over the sights o' Saint Peters burg. Saint Peter was some founder ef he founded that burg. An' ast me ef them inhabitants are pleased with their munissypality! Why they don't even like fer anybody to call the name of any other place in Floridy ner anywhere else, fer that matter. You didn't have to prove that their town was the best—by golly, they admitted it. I don't believe any of 'em ever left town to stay all night ef they could help it. Stacks of 'em jest set there all day on them green benches an' let fatty regenerashun go ahead an' work on 'em. Didn't seem ter give a kitty, jest so they was in Saint Peter's burg. Well, they was sure partial to the home-place an' I reckon that's the way ter be.

Hit reminded me o' the story o' the Irishman who kep' hollerin' "Hooraw fer Ireland! Hooraw fer Ireland!" until a Englishman near by got tired o' hearin' it an' said: "Aw, Hooraw fer H—l." "That's right," says the Irishman, "everybody fer his own country! Hooraw fer Ireland."

Them Saint Peter's town folks shore had the Irishman's sperrit—they spoke up fer the homeland.

We spent the night there an' next mornin' come back over the Gander bridge an' on out by 'bus to

Lakeland an' that's another fine an' butiful town with a plenty of them lakes slung around promiscus-like. Mandy said that town made her think of Orlander, with so many nice lakes.

An' lakes weren't all they had. They had sky-scrapers an' was figurin' on buildin' more, an' had twenty-six churches, an' plenty o' schools, an' a College, an' goodness knows whatall. That's a fine town, too, (so's not to be out o' style) an' Mandy an' me liked it finest kind. They give free concerts in the park by a fine band, too, an' we set there an' enjoyed the music fer it was high-class stuff an' no jazz agony to give you the year-ake.

Lakeland is in Polk county an' that's one amazin' fine county fer sittrus fruits an' many other producks. Land an' lots seemed more reasonable, too, than on the coasts but hit won't stay that cheap long fer it's in that "ridge section" an' jest as soon as folks get enuf splashin' water an' playin' down on the coast they'll crowd in on the middle o' the State an' prices will jump out o' sight fer that's good stuff, an' folks as gets acquainted with it wunst can't never forgit it, or stay away long.

We stayed there a day an' while there we run over to Winter-Haven, an' took it in. An' that's a swell place, too, only small yet but growin' like the wild. We went up on top of a hotel there an' feasted our eyes on some scenery that was too purty fer words. My! but it was a grand view from up there, an' Mandy couldn't say a word. We jest stood there like two pieces o' stationary an' gazed at all them crystal lakes, an' the woods, an' the orange groves stretchin' out fer miles an' miles. That was a sight fit fer a king!

That afternoon we got a 'bus for Orlander an' lit out fer our "first love."

We passed through that Kissme town once more an' there it was, as pretty as ever with that affeckshunate name still hangin' to it. An' that feller, Hain, was there on the road with his fine town, too, only a little bigger in the few days we'd been away jest like all of 'em was by that time. You see 'em one day an' next week they're a size or so bigger an' so it goes with 'em—never content ter quit buildin' but pressin' on ter larger an' higher things.

We arrove back at Orlander an' Mandy heaved a big sigh o' relief.

"Less rest awhile now, Josh," she said, "an' git our barins."

I told her I thought we'd had our barins all the while, an' roller-barins at that, seein' as how we'd rolled around on our tower.

We had to stay at our swell hotel agin' that night an' they was right there with the sumpshus accommodations the same as ever. But next day we hunted up a couple o' rooms with a private family an' settled down to quiet livin'.

I told Mandy: "Ole lady, I feel like we ought ter invest a little o' that coin we gethered in off'n that Phantom Beech lot so's 'twill be growin' some. But it's hard to say where to put it. I'd like a lot or two here in Orlander, one at Kissme, one at that feller, Hain's city, one at See Bring, one at "Hollywood," one at "Coral Gables," one at West Pafn Beech, one at "Clewiston," one at Fort Myers, one at Naples, one at Sary Sody, one at Tampa, one at Saint Peter's burg, one at Lakeland, one at Winter Haven—out-

side o' that I guess I don't want no Floridy real estate—not 'till we make another tower, anyway."

"Well, Joshuway Whipple," says Mandy, "I guess you're old enuf fer your wants not to hurt you. An' you'll shorely have to lower yer sights fer we ain't in the millionaire class yet an' can't buy out the State. I only wish we could, fer then we'd give out lots with a liberal hand an' let every family in the United States have one and be glad to do it."

Bless her old heart! Hit was as big as a ham, an' full o' kind feelin's as her hands was with horley-places from house work back on the farm.

"Mandy, old girl," I says, "we shore can't stock the whole country with Floridy lot-owners—not yit. But I'll tell you what we maybe kin do later: we might buy up a small sized track o' farmin' land near one o' these good towns an' found a home fer old folks who hain't nobody to take keer o' them, an' make their last years happy an' peaceful."

That struck Mandy plumb right an' glad tears come in her eyes.

"May the good Lord help us to do that very thing!" she says, an' we talked on an' planned some as to how we'd carry it out. We was a childless old couple, our son was sleepin' in France for the U. S. A., an' we knowed this projeck would suit him all right over yonder on the shinin' shore. So we was happy with our new plans an' put in considerable time workin' 'em up.

What with these plans an' seein' the buty spots aroun' Orlander we had some mighty happy days an' planned to pick out the land somewheres an' to run around another little tower to see some more that we

hadn't seen for we kept on hearin' about new towns and developments all the time and decided we hadn't hardly started ter see Floridy, after all.

About that time I got a letter from our hired man back home that made it look like I'd better run up on a little bizness matter fer a few days. So as we was well situated in a nice family I left Mandy there with them till I could run up home an' back.

I had a lonesome trip by myself an' had lots o' time to study an' think as I rode up an' back.

An' I was mainly thinkin' o' Floridy an' how she was comin' outer the kinks. From the train I could see a lot of Floridy that looked mighty quiet an' deserted-like, but I says to myself: "That'll all be improved before many more years. There's too many countless thousands o' folks headin' this way fer this Floridy movement to ever quit off. Floridy's jest started. Hits like the ads. o' Bon Ammy Soap: 'Hit ain't scratched yit.' An' that's the gospel!"

An' ef Floridy is a false alarm somebody ought to let the millionaires on to the secret or they'll sink a lot o' good hard cash an' never see daylight on it agin.

An' I'm proud fer Floridy. I'm a Southern man myself, an' I glory in Floridy's awakenin'. It will be a blessin' to the whole South an' the rest o' the United States, too. So I says, an' reverent, too: "God bless Floridy!"

My bank casheer happened to be at the depo' when I got home. Among other brite things he ast me: "When do you think the Florida movement will stop, Mr. Whipple?"

"When Niaggary Falls," I says. Somebody else ast me: "Josh, when will the bubble bust?"

"Don't know," I says, "I didn't see none where I was."

The day I come back to the depo' to start back to jine Mandy our State Senator was there an' ast me ef Floridy was really makin' progress.

"Three hundred millions was spent on improvements last year," I says; "I reckon that's progressin' some."

"When do you think the peak will be reached?" he then ast me.

"Senator," I says, summonin' up the best English I could on short notice, "the sale of lots will probably cool off—some o' these days—but Floridy is a gold mine just recently discovered and the real, honest-to-goodness development of it will reach its 'peak' jest at the identical moment when the whole United States slows down and quits!"

As the train pulled out I sticks my head outer the winder, waves my hat, an' hollers:

"Hooraw fer Floridy."

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