

A Yank by Any Name

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*The little wop from
Bleecker Street had a
tough time understand-
ing the difference be-
tween the New World
and the Old*

A FIVE-TON truck roared and rattled as the driver slowly picked his way through crowded Bleecker Street, Manhattan, homeward bound in the chill autumn twilight after a day spent in delivering freight at the water front. Hovering close behind the big truck came a taxicab whose driver kept the machine figuratively crouched for the first chance to shoot ahead. Absent-mindedly watching all this commotion a boy, perhaps fifteen years of age, sat perched on a fire hydrant.

"Look," said the young woman in the taxicab, addressing her escort, "look at that boy. I wonder what he's doing here. He isn't an Italian."

Giuseppe Silvano looked at her and smiled. While he had not heard her words, he recognized the look and gestures so well that it was not necessary to hear in order to know what she said. Such remarks were no longer new to him. Blue eyes and curly blond hair, he had learned long ago in the public schools, always made people wonder how his name happened to be Giuseppe. Even his teachers translated the name and called him Joseph, while to the boys and girls he was Joe.

An opening appeared, and the taxicab leaped into it and disappeared. Joe had recognized the young woman and her escort as patrons of his father's restaurant, the Restaurant Liguria, named after a territorial division of Italy.

They were probably on their way to the restaurant at that very moment.

Joe never went into the dining-room during meal hours, but he had often peeked through the curtains to watch his big brother, Enrico, wait on the customers.

A short, muscular young man, with wind-reddened cheeks and sparkling, expectant blue eyes, appeared in the doorway across the street. Joe disentangled himself from the fire hydrant and darted through the traffic.

"Hello, Tim," he said. "On duty to-night?"

"No."

"Then why the corduroy pants and the big gloves?"

"I'm not going out. And I'm too tired to change yet. Thought I'd drift into a movie. Come along?"

"Sure. I want to ask you something."

"All right, Joe, shoot." Tim was smiling because Joe nearly always wanted to ask questions.

"It's about this thing, this what you call spirit of America," Joe began. "I don't understand it exactly. The teacher says we must have it. How do you know when you've got it?"

"Well, I'll tell you, Joe"—and then Tim scratched his head—"it's like this: in the old country everything is like the old country while over here it's all different. It's like in this country. That's what she means."

"Yes, Tim, I know it's all different; I can see that by watching my mother and father. But what is this spirit of America? She says we have got to get the spirit of America too. The rest of it is easy; anybody can brush his teeth and shine his shoes and all that kind of stuff. I do all that. But what is it that is in your spirit and then you have got the Spirit of America? That's what I want to know."

"Oh, I see what you want. Well, you can get the idea from this: you know about the war that started in Europe last summer?"

"Yes."

"You noticed how they all hopped in, frothing at the mouth?"

"Yes."

"WELL, that's the spirit of the old country, while in this country we would tell them to go chase themselves, take it down the alley, hire Madison Square Garden or some other place. We're busy."

"Yes, I know that, Tim. But there is a thing that is called the spirit of America that works all the time, war or no war."

Tim hitched his belt, cleared his throat, and took a new start: "Well, now, I'll tell you," he said, with woeful lack of originality, "it's like this: in the old country when two people are going to do anything they talk their heads off the first hundred years and then leave the job for their grandchildren; maybe they do it and maybe they don't. But mostly it's all talk, and finally they get in a row. But in this country when somebody is going to do something he goes to a contractor and says: 'How much will it cost?' And the contrac-

tor says: 'One million dollars.' And then he says: 'Is that all? Well, get started before midnight.' So the contractor goes out and herds up a gang of wops—"

Joe blushed and Tim stopped abruptly. Placing his hand on the boy's shoulder, he said: "I'm sorry, Joe. You don't look like one, and I never can remember. Now, be a good kid and let's forget it. You're all right, Joe. I don't give a damn what place you came from."

"I came from right here," Joe said, trying to choke his resentment. "I was born right around the corner upstairs over the restaurant. I guess I'm more American than you are, Tim. Isn't Sullivan an Irish name?"

"It may have been once upon a time, Joe," was the prompt reply, "but it's American now. There were Sullivans in George Washington's army."

"That's the way with you Irish," Joe countered, grinning. "You step off the

boat one day and start calling Italians foreigners the next."

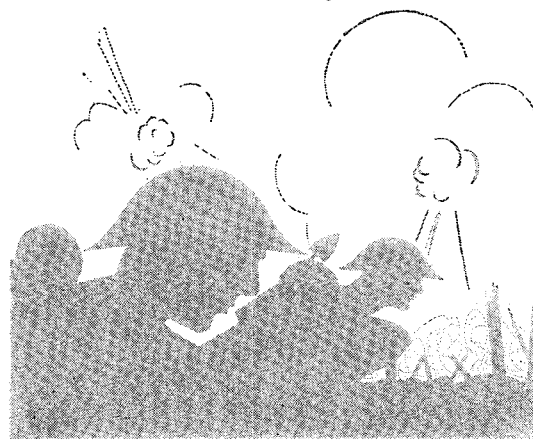
"Boat me eye!" Tim exclaimed. "Do you hear any accent in my talk?"

"No"—reluctantly.

"Well, the reason is that I was born



Joe sat on the fire hydrant, watching all the commotion of Bleecker Street



in Pennsylvania. Near Pittsburgh. Get me, Joe? Near Pittsburgh. That's the kind of a foreigner I am."

They went to see a Wild West movie, and at ten o'clock decided to call it a day and go to bed. When they parted Joe watched Tim with vast admiration as he disappeared in the hallway leading to his room on the fourth floor.

Joe was very proud of this friendship, for not only had Tim reached the venerable age of twenty-three, but he was the owner of a motorcycle and had a job and lived all by himself. There was romance, too, in that job, though the nature of it was not very clear to Joe. Tim referred to himself as a "trouble-shooter." This mysterious term identified him in Joe's mind with the noble, chivalric cowboys of the films.

There was a telephone on the little table close to Tim's bed, and more than once he had been summoned in the dark, stormy hours of winter nights to leap into the saddle of his motorcycle and dash through the streets, making a noise that suggested to Joe the charge up San Juan Hill as gaudily pictured in an ancient book he owned.

The trouble that Tim "shot" had something to do with telephone or telegraph wires, or perhaps both. On his motorcycle he carried a grimy little box; in it Joe had seen wire cutters, pliers and spools of tape, but he liked to believe that it also contained bowie knives and deadly automatic pistols together with hundreds of rounds of cartridges. Tim was a very romantic figure to Joe and beyond question he had this thing that is called spirit of America. If only he would disclose it!

Arriving at his own home, Joe went first to the hydrant and filled a glass with water.

"How many times have I told you?" queried his father, Carlo Silvano. "Do you want to make yourself sick?"

Joe winked at his mother and grinned. Then he lifted the glass high and addressing his father said, "Salute!" before drinking.

Carlo grunted and resumed reading his paper. This was an ancient argument from which time had extracted all rancor, leaving only a private family joke. Being a native of Italy, Carlo knew that water is not a very safe drink. Doesn't it come out of the ground? Of course it does. And isn't the ground full of dirt? Of course.

Therefore a sane person with proper regard for the health of his family would make a proper wine—a wine with a low percentage of alcohol, and this he would dilute copiously with pure bottled water. Then one had a drink that was germless and palatable for child or man.

But a great many allowances were made for Joe because he was born

in this country. For instance, other members of the family made no comment when he called a dollar a dollar instead of a dollaro. They noticed also that he seldom used the word "automobile," but spoke of well-known cars as though he had been personally introduced to them. It seemed to the family that there was sometimes a slight American accent in his Italian speech, but on the other hand they were pleased to know that his English was generally regarded as without accent of any kind.

Very often, too, they had occasion to be proud of Giuseppe. For instance, that day the school-teacher called and found the family eating an early dinner. Giovanni, the eldest son, who was a truck driver, and never seemed quite able to get all the grease off his arms,

plexity as a routine detail of long-distance calls.

THAT night Joe perched himself on the fire hydrant again, waiting for Tim and eager to ask questions.

"Well, Joe, what's on your mind now?" was Tim's greeting as the boy hurried across the street.

"Do you remember a long time ago," Joe began, "I asked you about this thing, this spirit of America?"

"Yes, Joe, I remember. Didn't I tell you all about it?"

"No, Tim. You told me some things about it, but not all. In school when the teacher asked I said, 'It is to love our great country and uphold her sacred honor.' And that was all right."

"Of course it was all right," Tim in-

He is the oldest, you know, and remembers the old country. He says that if Italy should get into the war he would go back because he would think it was his duty. Enrico half agrees with him and is willing to look after the restaurant and send them money even if Mamma and Papa and Giovanni should all three go back. Enrico won't go, but still he half agrees with them. Mario, he is the one next to me, he feels as I do that we have nothing to do with the old country. Our home is here.

"I want to amount to something, Tim. As it is now, I'm half and half or maybe three fourths and one fourth. I want to go all the way. In June I graduate from high school; then I want a job. What kind of a job do I want, Tim? I

don't know. Because I want to do something that is mixed up with this spirit of America, and I am not exactly sure what it is. Now do you understand?"

"Sure," Tim replied. "I get you, Joe. It's easy enough to understand about the spirit of America. Perfectly simple. Listen, now, and I'll put you wise. The big thing in this country is that the trains have got to go through, the wires must be kept open, business has got to go on. No matter whether it snows or rains or hails or freezes, business has got to go on. I know because that's my job. I'm a trouble-shooter. It's the greatest game ever invented. 'Wire down on No. 87,' says the chief, and if it isn't up in ten seconds there's hell to pay because President Wilson might be wanting to tell the rest of the world where to get off."

"Then there's milk trains—ever hear of babies starving to death in this country because the milk didn't come through? You bet your life you don't. Because why? Because it comes through, that's why. Well, that's the spirit of America. Up and at 'em, day and night, winter and summer. Never take 'no' for an answer and don't give up the ship. Get me?"

"I knew you could tell me!" Joe exclaimed. "So that's it!" And then after a moment spent in pondering the wonder of it he mused: "Of course that's it. That's how it is in peace time. In war, of course, any boob can see what it is. Well, that makes it simple. Tim, would there be any chance for me to get a job where I could learn trouble-shooting?"

"Sure. I'll take you to the chief whenever you're ready to go."

"That'll be the day after I graduate, Tim."

PAPA CARLO and Mamma Amelita had gone back across the Atlantic. They were now living in their native village not far from Genoa. Italy had entered the World War, and Giovanni Silvano had kept his (Continued on page 26)



"The darn fool didn't run. He's out there in all that hell trouble-shooting"

had to beat a hasty retreat. Papa Carlo had neglected to put on his shirt because he was going down into the restaurant kitchen in a few minutes, anyway.

BUT Giuseppe was, as usual, entirely in order and handled the rôle of host to perfection. When Miss Simmons cut her spaghetti into one-inch lengths Giuseppe not only did the same but signaled his mother to do it also.

And so Giuseppe came off a hero. Nor was that the only time.

Being a hero, however, is not a comfortable rôle at best, and if one is far from sure that he has done anything heroic then its delights dwindle to approximately none at all. For instance, one day Joe received praise enough to turn the head of any boy merely because he had succeeded in putting through a long-distance telephone call without the slightest difficulty. His father regarded a mild stroke of apo-

rupted. "That's it exactly. You've got it, Joe. You see, you join the army. That's what it is."

"No, Tim. You don't join the army. That's what they do in the old country; they get pushed in. Anyway, there's no reason to join the army now. What I want to know is this: what is the spirit of America when you don't have to join the army? Look how it is with me. My mother and my father are Italians; they always will be no matter where they live. They are good citizens, I know, but they are Italians, and some day they will go back. They talk about it even now, and they say that probably they will never be able to go back, that everything they have is in this country, but I think differently. I think they will go back."

"Many of the old folks do go back. But I don't want to go back; I never have been there at all. And my brothers won't go back, unless maybe Giovanni.

It's a Gift

By
**GRANTLAND
RICE**

*Most athletes are made.
A few are born—and
these are the royalty of
sport. Here are three of
the blue-bloods*

NOW and then a genius comes along in sport, and when he reports you can tell at one glance that a master has arrived. He has something more than mere technical skill, ability, courage, speed, power or form. He is one apart, born to greatness in a certain game, requiring little of the drudgery that most competitors have to endure before they battle their way to the peak.

Over twenty years ago the New York Yankees, under the leadership of Clark Griffith, added a ball player from the Pacific Coast to their staff. I saw him in one of his first games with the Yanks. After about two plays I realized, as everyone else did, that a genius had come along to overshadow stars who had built up fame through long experience.

In one of the early plays of the game, with a runner on second, someone attempted to sacrifice by pushing a bunt toward first. There was a streak from first, a one-handed pick-up, a perfect throw to third base—and the runner was nailed by a yard.

Only a Hal Chase could have made it in just that flash of class and style. One of the great stars of all time had reached the scene.

Lean, wiry, loose-jointed, apparently made of elastic, Chase had the most remarkable coördination of mind and muscle that baseball has ever known. He outthought most of his fellow players, and to the quickest sort of brain he added lightning motion in the way of execution. And this was all carried along with a dash and style that no ordinary mortal could hope to reach.

Even with certain deficiencies (apart from his ability as a ball player) that developed later, Chase is still named as the most brilliant first baseman that ever played. He was a ball-playing meteor for many years, and yet he was just as brilliant the day he landed as he was later on.

Chase had a quickness of hand that was uncanny. He could make the average sleight-of-hand expert look like a dummy. He could go after a ground ball over rough territory, and, as it took a sudden unexpected hop, scoop it up so that the play looked as simple and smooth as if the grounder had never left its path.

Chase is one sample of sporting genius. And there are only a few.

Genius Doesn't Wait on Time

I RECALL another. In the amateur golf championship of the United States, held at Merion in 1916, there was a 14-year-old-boy who hailed from

*When Bobby Jones was
but fourteen years old he
had the swing of a master*



*Oosterbaan plays all kinds
of ball (including football)*

Atlanta. His name was Bobby Jones. He was almost as round then as the ball with which he played, and his head wasn't very far from the turf.

He had the swing of a master. There was no wasted effort, no kink of any sort, no lunging or lashing. Here was almost perfect smoothness, compact footwork, a splendid body turn, or pivot, every move not only correctly made but also accompanied by symmetry and rhythm which come only as a gift from destiny. Minus that indefinable knack, twenty years of hard practice could never have given Bobby Jones that beauty of rhythm which was even more remarkable than his scoring.

He was 2 up on Robert A. Gardner, then champion, at the end of 18 holes, and only four remarkable recovery shots in succession by Gardner that afternoon pulled him through.

At the age of 20 the same Jones had

won seven national championships of the United States and Great Britain. Which shows how swiftly genius travels since it doesn't have to wait on the drudgery of the years.

It might be stated here that genius with all its power can't defy the rules of training, escape all drudgery, and still keep winning. It merely places its possessor out in front before his time.

Bennie of the Triple Crown

ANOTHER athletic genius completed his college career a few weeks ago. The opening game of the 1925 football season was 22 minutes along when a Michigan coach stopped in front of a group of substitutes. "You," he leveled a finger, "try left end."

The boy "tried." And how!

"Oosterbaan, the Muskegon high-school star," said a press association reports, "dumps the first play of his collegiate career three yards behind the line of scrimmage." There was something really prophetic in that "career."

Eight minutes later, when the first half ended, Big Bennie Oosterbaan had flashed brilliantly across the Michigan horizon of athletic luminaries. The first pass thrown him was high and far to one side. Bennie leaped with a hand outstretched. Then, to the amazement of everyone, he pulled the ball down and tucked it under his arm. After which, as his feet crashed against the ground, he stiff-armed a tackler into oblivion—and the stands went wild. Big Bennie was All-America from the first play.

When the 1925 season ended Bennie had scored more touchdowns than any halfback in the Western Conference, and every one of his scores came after a completed forward pass.

The following year he was marked for special attention from the enemy. But he continued his meteoric career, and except in the Navy game, in which he was watched every minute, he was the same old terror. And again he made the All-America. A year later (last fall) Oosterbaan was probably the outstanding national choice on all personal, private, semipublic and official All-America teams.

During Bennie's junior year in high school he played basketball with Muskegon and was picked as the All-America prep-school center. In his junior year in college he threw more field baskets than any other player in the Big Ten, and he was picked as All-Conference forward by the coaches and writers alike. This past winter he was more brilliant than ever, the dynamic cog in Michigan's offense.

When spring rolled around during Bennie's sophomore year he decided to try baseball, though he had played little before. Other stars can be developed in college, but few baseball players ever win a college letter who have not played steadily from boyhood. He finally broke into the line-up, playing right field and batting ninth. Next year Bennie improved rapidly: his extra base hits were a big part in Michigan's championship race. This year he was installed as the cleanup man in fourth place, and his terrific clouting has been a vital factor in giving Michigan another championship.

One afternoon he went into the box for a few innings. His showing was so good that he has since been used in several games as a pitcher. He lacks the finished grace of a major-league twirler, but has a blinding fast ball.

The outstanding football player of the year, the outstanding Big Ten basketball player of the year and one of the greatest in the nation, the outstanding slugger on a championship baseball team and a pitcher when needed, Oosterbaan ranks as one of the finest all-round athletes of all time.



*Hal Chase, greatest baseball
stylist, was great from the first*

Keystone

Wide
World