



CRECY

ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

*Over against us flowers of France
Cinched the saddle and couched the lance,
Shed the blue-and-golden cloaks,
Steel-naked sat like straight young oaks;
The silver men of trumpets told
Their highborn tales of blue and gold.*

*Under the lilies of great France
Good cause had man and horse to prance!
Thewed of the best the world can yield
Of choicest meats and fruits of field;
The cream of the earth had reared them up,
Story and glory and golden cup!*

*We set our teeth along our jaws
And chose the arrow free of flaws,
Smoothed our russet jerkins down,
And tried the yewbow with a frown.
The arrow on the string we laid
To still the song our temples made.*



*We were only Englishmen
Mucked with mire of the fen,
Crookt of knee from treading on
The rolling furrows from the dawn,
Thickset from wrestling stone and tree,
Knuckled as the blackthorns be.*

*We had no trumpets to sing our worth,
But all the red lusts of the earth,
Hedgerose, red oak, corn, and briar
Filled us with the strength of fire,
And love of children, larks, and ale,
And blue-eyed wives sang like a gale.*

*A sudden all the lances leant
As if a gale a forest bent,
Helm to helm and knee to knee
They came upon us like the sea.
The sunset on their glory burned,
The hills to thunder din they churned.*

*Side by side without a break,
Their beauty make a man's heart ache!
Kingly horses, kingly men,
A sight beyond our mortal ken,
They swept at us all heart and fire . . .
It made us hold our heads the higher.*



*We saw the flutings on their gear
As we drew the bowstrings to the ear
And lunged and leapt with wolfish
yell
To give our shafts the sting of bell,
And up our arrows swarmed together,
Tip to tip and feather to feather,*

*The shadow of their sighing flight
 Fell across the ebbing light,
 Then the sun came out again,
 And they went down like slanting
 rain
 Falling in long lines of gold
 Upon the kingly wave that rolled.*

*Clash and clangor, squealing shock!
 Sickened men and horses rock,
 Heels for heads come staggering,
 Then down they go with splintering
 Of lances broken off like straw
 Where dusty men and horses paw.*

*Over and under the clawing arms
 Clutch and saw at the wood that harms
 The marrow and blood in the pith of
 them,
 Visors are wearing the clothyard
 stem,
 Knights reel drunken with ashstruck
 brains,
 The glory of silver is dimmed with
 stains.*

*Towering on us now we see
 The spume and the wrath of their
 agony,
 Horses and men that pant for pain,
 Mad with the yearning to quench
 our rain
 With hoof and point and biting blade
 For wrath of the ruin our arrows made.*



*Up comes the earth to smash our eyes,
Steel! and bell! . . . shrill dying cries!
Dust in our teeth, and the world grows black . . .
Fangs of lightning along the back.
Over and over they ride like thunder
Breaking our bones and skin asunder.*

*But our lust for life like trodden wheat
Springs as they ride from under their feet;
Many a yeoman grovels and groans,
A lance out through his shoulder bones,
Yet each knight wears at his breastplate's rim
A shaft that bites the breath from him!*

*Like a sunset cloud they melt away;
And the evening is on us cold and gray . . .
Their pride is a tale the winds can tell,
Their story and glory like ashes fell.
Here the broken blossoms lie,
The lilies of France have drooped to die.*



THE MORON LABORATORIES, INC.

LAWTON MACKALL

AND here in this room," I said with pardonable pride, "are the very dumbest of the dumb. To play jackstraws would give any one of these five men and women a headache."

"Splendid!" said my new client, Mr. Bingus, the film magnate.

"This is our Newspaper Comic Testing Department. Watch a moment while I show you how perfectly they react."

I clapped my hands to arouse the subjects to attention; then held up before them an enlargement of a comic strip depicting Barney Bloolie saying "I should worry" and subsequently being bumped on the head.

All five morons showed positive signs of interest. Their lips moved as they spelled out the lettering. Two faces formed expressions evidently purporting to be grins. One actually uttered the words, "Gee, that's good!"

"Convincing, eh?" I said triumphantly. "Any comic strip that gets by this crew can be rated sure-fire."

"And you use this bunch for only that one sort of test?"

"That's all. Our psychologists show them a couple of miles of comics a day."

"I hadn't realized there were that many being ground out."

"Oh yes — even a few more. But we get all the really important ones. Since our service proved itself invaluable to the press of the country, all the leading newspaper syndicates have put their comics into our hands for daily O. K. We check on everything. Our psychologists note the effect on the morons of every single item and are quick to detect details that disturb dumbness. Thus our reports are full of invaluable suggestions such as: 'Make the feet larger, with spats, and fingers more uniform, and eyes closer together; those drawn here are too much of a departure from the standardized kind.' Or, 'Artist has forgotten to put perspiration drops flying from Uncle Sam's forehead.' Or, 'Artist is guilty of using grammar and even punctuation in conversation balloons; might offend some.'

"So you see our service insures the newspapers against any