

"Lizzy entered the plant quietly, and pulled the switch," said Marmaduke



'Lights Out'

► IT'S ALWAYS ENCOURAGING to find so many letters for, or about, Marmaduke Surfaceblow in our mail.

Says one admirer, "Our shift engineers didn't read anything before, but they now read and talk about Marmy's latest yarn. Some of them have even got the habit of going through Powza pretty thoroughly since Marmy joined up."

"Marmy has forgotten more about plant operation and maintenance than I'll ever learn, and I sure learn a lot from his stories," writes another.

"I may be too busy to read most magazines that come into our plant, but I always find time to see what Marmaduke has to say, soon as Power arrives," says a third.

With these comments buzzing around in my bonnet, I went up to the old consulting engineer's office above O'Houlihan's Machine Shop & Engine Works. But the door was locked, so I headed for Bedlam's Bent-Propeller Bar down the street.

There was Marmaduke Surfaceblow, Esquire, consulting engineer extraordinary, all 6 feet 4 inches of him, at his usual end of the crowded bar. He must have made a killing on a consulting deal, or, more likely, had put a few

dollars on the right horse. For atop his dome, at a rakish angle, was a brand new gray bowler. As for his suit, it looked like the latest hand-tailored creation, imported from Bond Street, London. And he sported a new checkered vest, loud enough to rile a bull. And those pearl gray spots—Wow! Even his heavy silver watch chain dangling from his vest seemed to sparkle more than usual.

There was no question about it. Here was a man of the world—an engineer whose dignified presence, at any gathering, commanded instant respect.

As usual he was aloof, gazing intently at the bottle of Sandpaper Gin before him—paying no attention to us ordinary mortals. Many of us, no doubt, had gathered only to hear his words of wisdom when and if he were in the mood to sound off.

What was he thinking about as he gazed at his bottle? Who knows? Perhaps a new slant on Einstein's theory of relativity—or a practical way to harness the sun's vast energy.

Then without warning, he suddenly got a strange hold on his bottle, worked up at least 29.5 inches of vacuum on his cargo pump, and ballasted the bottle's entire contents into his double bottoms.

Venting off the highly volatile fumes, he snorted in his foghorn voice: "BUGS WATER ON SHIRKING RESPONSIBILITY! I'll tell you about a woman who kept one good engineer from going to the dogs."

The noisy place became silent. Our hero turned majestically toward his audience. With thumbs hooked into the armpits of his flashy vest, he blasted away in his foghorn voice.

"Back in 1932, I was in Troeddyban, Glamorganshire, England, paying a visit to my old limey shipmate, Jock Renshaw. Jock was chief engineer, shift engineer, maintenance man and janitor at the small municipal powerhouse."

"The village fathers brought Jock ten years before when they scrapped their old steam plant for two new diesel engines. So after years aboard steam and diesel, Jock had dropped his anchor to become a landlubber. Being chief of the local powerhouse, Jock was really a big fish in a small pond. After a few years he got to know those engines so well he could tell from the slightest change in running noise or rhythm exactly what needed attention."

"He might be mowing the lawn of his power plant—or of his cottage next door, which went with the job—when he'd stop and listen. Then he'd calmly walk into the plant. After a little while he'd be out puffing away on his pipe again, and start mowing."

"Jock was hard as cast iron, same as when we were shipmates. He boasted

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JACK FROST



at 406° F.



MAGNIFIED fifty times, the calcium carbonate scale in the photo above might easily be mistaken for a frosted window pane. It was formed at 250 p.s.i. in one of the Nalco Laboratories' test boilers as a part of the continuing Nalco research program, aimed at keeping such scales out of your power plant equipment.

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