

Tinnon Joiner

A COSTLY DOSE

In the spring of '43 or '44 I developed a painful disorder in my intestinal tract. The doctors at home suspected I had an obstruction in that region. They buttermilked and bariumed me from all ~~from all points of the compass,~~ <sup>to make</sup> but according to the fluoroscope they were never able ~~the~~ the two streams meet. They took that as a pretty sure sign that their surmise was right. So after a hard day of punching, pounding, and pumping they sent me to a doctor in Nashville, a specialist in such disorders.

That individual turned an army of specialists and interns on me. And for the next few days I was pinched, punched, poked, pelted, prodded, pummelèd, pictured, and portrayed, until I hardly knew who I was. I couldn't think of a word beginning with p that meant fluoroscoped, so I used portrayed.

One morning about mid-week an orderly came down and wheeled me up to the xray room. This was my second trip to that quarter. The xray man took my picture again, claiming the first picture wasn't clear. He then stepped into a side room and put the picture under a light.

"Well, I'll be d---d," I heard him say.

You see, he had just discovered that I didn't have but one lung

Then with the former routine punishment of p's---pumping, poking, punching he dismissed me. I stepped outside and climbed back into the wheelchair, expecting the orderly to return soon; but it so happened he was off on a chore that kept him some time. Finally becoming tired of waiting for him, I climbed out of the chair and started playing orderly to myself. I pushed the chair over to the elevator. The operator look at me as if he thought I was an escape from an asylum. I rolled the chair onto the elevator and climbed back in. I immediately became the focal point for all eyes on the elevator. At my floor I climbed out, pushed the chair out and started to my room, with the intention of giving my roommates a laugh. At a point about halfway down the aisle the head nurse spied me and exclaimed, "Well, what do you know about that? A patient pushing his own chair." Her remark focused all eyes on me and set everybody in the aisle eying and laughing at me. I'm not certain yet whether they were laughing at what I'd done or at my ugly mug. Most probable it was both.

The next morning the head nurse came around with two glasses---one filled with mineral oil and one with castor oil---each holding a little less than a quart---so it seemed to me just then. She looked at me kind of sympathetically and said "Take" and I took.

Some two hours later she returned and asked, "Did you get your money's worth?" and thereby taught me an elegant expression for an inelegant thought. Under the circumstances I couldn't have said anything but yes without lying.

The next morning the doctor dismissed me and told me to go home and take a big dose of castor oil now and then. As I left

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the hospital, I couldn't help but moan a little. "Well," I  
said, "I ~~rode~~<sup>drove</sup> a hundred and fifty miles, took a lot of punish-  
ment, and paid out a hundred dollars, all for a dose of castor  
oil, I could have bought back home for a few cents. Truly a fool  
and his money are soon parted."