

# Liberty 5¢



*El Gilchrist*

**Why Breen  
Resigned from the  
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**BY ADELA  
ROGERS ST. JOHNS**

***Why Matsuoka Hates The United States***

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# ED LIKES TO BE BESIDE THE SEASIDE

BY  
WALTER BROOKS

Illustrated by Charles LaSalle

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*He's in again! A sidesplitting tale of the talking horse and his most hilariously successful masquerade*

This Wilbur Pope would have been a lot happier I guess if he hadn't had such a beautiful wife. Not that I suppose he'd have swapped her for a homely one if you could have convinced him of it. But most of the neighbors out around Mt. Kisco were in love with her and so the number of people who dropped in for cocktails on Saturdays and Sundays you wouldn't believe. This kind of competition keeps a man on his toes and Mr. Pope was the kind of man who likes to drop back on his heels weekends and relax.

Ed thought it was a crying shame. Ed was Mr. Pope's horse. I know that as a rule animals don't talk but Ed did. Ed said that after a hard week in town Mr. Pope ought to be able to drop back on his heels. Only if it was me he said I wouldn't drop on my own heels—I'd drop on some of those heels that are drinking up your good liquor. Take this guy they call Laddie—Mr. Laidlaw to you horse said Mr. Pope. That's right said Ed twit me with my parentage. Well thank heavens I'm a horse if this Laddie is a human. What's the guy got Wilbur that they all bow down and mumble when he shows up? Money said Mr. Pope—money and a swell big house down on the Cape that they all want to be invited to. Yeah? said Ed and I gather he's invited you and the missis for ten days? Mr. Pope said he had.

Look Wilbur said Ed it ain't any of my business but you've always spent your vacations right here in Mt. Kisco and we've always had a good time haven't we? You know what these big houses are—all glitter and pomp and servants giving you the down-the-nose when you drop ashes on the floor. That ain't for you. And another thing he said you know how all that stuff goes to a woman's head and already your wife is giving this Laddie boy some pretty cozy looks. You know I won't tolerate any criticism of Carlotta Ed said Mr. Pope coldly. O K O K said Ed. So I suppose you're going then? Mr. Pope just sighed. So Ed sighed too to show sympathy which he didn't feel much of because he thought Mr. Pope was a sap to put up with it. I guess Ed had never been in love. Hand me my saddle he said and let's crawl over to Barney's for some beer. So they did. And after the third bottle Mr. Pope said Anyway Ed I promise I won't go to the Cape unless I take you along.

Now Ed was the kind of horse that when you looked at him you were reminded of milk wagons rather than of pink coats and Mrs. Pope was ashamed of him. And so maybe he wouldn't have got to the Cape after all if Mr. Laidlaw hadn't backed Mr. Pope up. Sure let him bring the horse along Carlotta he said. We haven't any horses now so there's lots of stable room. And if he likes exploring back roads so much there's miles of them where you hardly ever meet a car. Mr. Laidlaw seldom addressed Mr. Pope directly but talked to Mrs. Pope about him. As if you was her half-witted child said Ed. Why don't you sock him one in the

gobbler Wilb? It would make a swell headline. Laidlaw Laid Low. Prominent advertising executive plugs playboy. O shut up Ed said Mr. Pope.

So Ed traveled down to the Cape in a boxcar. Mrs. Pope wanted Mr. Pope to hire a man to go with him but Mr. Pope said no he'd rather take care of Ed himself. So when they cantered up the drive of the Laidlaw home after twenty-four hours en route they were neither of them looking their best. They cantered right into the middle of a luncheon party on the terrace.

My heaven Laddie bury the silver! said some one It's Mosby's guerrillas! And some one began to sing John Peel. But Mrs. Pope who had driven down the day before jumped up and she and Mr. Laidlaw hustled Mr. Pope into the house. So when he'd had a bath and a change he came out and was introduced. Most of the party seemed to be neighbors but there were some house guests—a couple named Cameron who quarreled a lot and a languid girl named Lily something. And then there was Mr. Laidlaw's mother who was formidable as several bushels of inherited bonds could make her and believe me that is pretty formidable. She looked at Mr. Pope as one might look at a doubtful oyster. Of course that makes you feel like a doubtful oyster and Mr. Pope did and acted like one too. They couldn't get anything out of him about his trip down and so by and by they got tired of making fun of him and talked of something else.

The something else was a sea serpent that some local fishermen claimed to have seen. According to all accounts it had a sort of dragon head on a long neck that stuck up out of the water and a long snakelike body—usually submerged. One man had mistaken the head for a buoy and tried to moor to it one night and the head had bitten a big piece out of the gunwale. Then it had swum away hissing. Mr. Laidlaw said he guessed it was just the natives having their usual fun with the summer people but Lily said it was queer then that their descriptions all agreed so exactly. I know said Mr. Laidlaw. Big expressionless dull eyes and a green mane. The conventional sea serpent of all old sailors' yarns. The real one is quite different. They've got one up at Yale—a 42-foot giant squid with eight arms and two 30-foot tentacles—Goodness Laddie stop it! said Mrs. Pope. You know how I love sea bathing. You'll scare me so I shan't go near the water. Well hang your clothes on a hickory limb said Mr. Cameron and we won't complain.

Well they talked about the serpent for a while but when it came to go swimming nobody seemed scared that he might join them. They dressed in the house and walked down through the garden and across some dunes to the Laidlaw beach and there were chairs and parasols and a little pavilion containing food and assorted firewater. They threw off their robes and dashed into the water with glad cries and Mr. Pope dashed in after them only without the glad cries. He didn't like swimming much because water always got in his ears and roared. Lily who was startling in a bathing suit that so closely matched the color of her skin as to be practically invisible seemed to have decided that he needed encouraging. She had shaken off her languor with her clothes but Mr. Pope having spent the previous night in a boxcar was not feeling vivacious. He apologized for his dullness and excused himself and went ashore. As he started Lily dove and caught him by the ankles and upset him. And he got water in his ears.

He dropped down beside Mrs. Laidlaw who somehow managed to look formal even in a beach chair. Your wife is very pretty said Mrs. Laidlaw. Mr. Pope supposed it was a compliment and wondered how she managed to make it sound like a snub. He said he guessed she was. Mrs. Laidlaw didn't say anything more and the next thing Mr. Pope knew he was waking up. He blinked at the sea and saw the bathers far out and he blinked at Mrs. Laidlaw

who was apparently not enough aware of him to know that he'd been asleep. And then he got up and went into the little pavilion and had a giant drink of Bourbon and felt better.

But he still didn't feel enough better to tackle Mrs. Laidlaw again and so he thought he'd go get dressed and then call on Ed in his new quarters. Ed would appreciate a slug of that Bourbon he thought. So he slid the bottle under his robe and started out and tripped over a rug and the bottle fell into the sand and when he went to pick it up there was Mrs. Laidlaw looking at him. You don't need to take that whisky with you Mr. Pope she said. Just ring for anything you want when you get to the house. Mr. Pope felt his ears getting hot and he said O I was just—I mean the brottle didn't bake—I mean—I quite understand said Mrs. Laidlaw and she gave him the doubtful oyster look again only this time there wasn't any doubt. And Mr. Pope put the bottle back and went.


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Well gosh it didn't look as if Mr. Pope was going to have much fun. He dressed and waited around in his room until Mrs. Pope came back from the beach and then he said Look Carlotta do we really have to stay here ten days? These people get me down. They make me feel as if I were in trade or something. Mrs. Pope said he was too sensitive. Sure I am said Mr. Pope. That's part of my charm. Look Carlotta he said if you're so hipped on sea bathing—Hipped! exclaimed Mrs. Pope I do wish you wouldn't use such obsolete terms. O K said Mr. Pope if we can't talk about it we can't talk about it. Guess I'll take Ed for a stroll before dinner.

Well the days went by like a dream—one of those dreams you have after a heavy late supper. They were spent mostly on the beach and in the tepid water for it was very hot and in the evenings Mr. Pope had to admit that it was pleasant to splash about and cool off. His first unfortunate entrance on Ed had evidently decided the other guests that he was negligible so they didn't bother him much. Mr. Pope didn't mind. It left him free to take long rides on Ed.

There was a cove full of fishing boats a mile or so from the house and sometimes he would ride down there and talk with the fishermen. The fishermen didn't seem to think there was anything funny about Ed and they were delighted with the way he could take a bottle of beer in his teeth and tip up his head and let it gurgle down his throat. They had a theory about the sea serpent too. One of them showed Mr. Pope a clipping from a two-year-old paper about a sea serpent scare on the Breton coast. We sort of figure he said that it's the same critter. Probably all the shooting over there got on his nerves and he's come here for a spell of quiet.

On the fourth day Ed and Mr. Pope had come back from the cove along the beach and were about to go up to the stables by a sandy roadway that turned in a hundred yards east of the pavilion. Nobody was on the beach. Wait a minute said Mr. Pope and he dismounted and walked over to the pavilion and got the Bourbon. Then he and Ed sat down behind a dune and Mr. Pope pulled the cork. This is the life! said Ed. You know Wilb if we could contact that sea serpent and get him to patrol this beach we'd have the whole place to ourselves every day. I wonder if we could coax him up here. What do you suppose he likes to eat? Probably horse said Mr. Pope. Pooh said Ed I don't go in for self-depreciation as you know but nobody eats horse if he can get anything else. O-o he said peering out from behind the dune. Look who's here.



After a minute Ed said  
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What's going on out  
there? Mr. Pope looked.

ILLUSTRATOR  
CHARLES LA SALLE

After a minute Ed said Hey for cat's sake Wilb. What's going on out there? Mr. Pope looked.

Mrs. Pope and Mr. Laidlaw had come down the path in their bathing suits and were splashing into the water. After a minute Ed said Hey for cat's sake Wilb what's going on out there? Mr. Pope looked. O nothing he said. Laddie's teaching her to float I guess. Ed gave a grunt. Looks more like he was teaching her to wrassle he said. He turned and looked at Mr. Pope. You sure Wilb she ain't kind of drifting away from you? he said. O quit worrying about Carlotta Ed said Mr. Pope. Carlotta knows what she's about. That's what I mean mumbled Ed and Mr. Pope said sharply What's that? I said A beautiful scene said Ed hastily. Referring to the blue empyrean and the bounding billows and what not. Let's go back Wilb I'm sleepy.

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So when Ed had been stabled and unsaddled Mr. Pope went around to the terrace and sat and watched the fog blur the garden shrubbery. Everybody else was indoors. And he'd been there about fifteen minutes when a shout came from the beach and then Mrs. Pope's voice screaming Help! Wilbur!

Mr. Pope did the commuter's sprint down the path. He couldn't see anything when he got to the beach but there was a lot of splashing out in the fog and in a minute Mrs. Pope and Mr. Laidlaw came prancing through the shallows. Mrs. Pope flung herself into his arms. O Wilbur! she gasped, the sea—the serpent! It's out there! Nonsense! said Mr. Pope trying to hold her off. Quit it Carlotta—you're ruining my clothes. What's all this Laddie? he asked looking at Mr. Laidlaw over her shoulder.

My heaven it's true said Mr. Laidlaw speaking directly to Mr. Pope for the first time. He seemed even more scared than Mrs. Pope and his teeth were chattering. It's just as they described it—the dragon head and long neck and so on. And those terrible eyes! He shuddered. Nonsense! said Mr. Pope again because he couldn't think of anything else. It isn't nonsense said Mrs. Pope. I guess if you'd seen it—O listen she said it's making that noise again. Through the fog came a queer low whimpering giggle and then a splash. H'm said Mr. Pope. Something out there all right. But I don't know what we can do about it. Get in the house Carlotta. And you too Laddie—you look all in. Mr. Laidlaw tried to pull himself together. I suppose you think I'm a frightful coward Pope he said challengingly. Since I don't know what you saw how can I say? said Mr. Pope. Come on. Inside.

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There was a lot of talk and kidding but they stuck to their story. Next day Ed said So the old serpent came in and hissed at our two pretties yesterday eh? How'd you hear about it? Mr. Pope asked and Ed said O backstairs talk. You know Wilb the keyhole to listen at if you go in for such things is the kitchen one—not the parlor one. Boy do the servants collect the dirt! I don't care to hear it said Mr. Pope firmly. I know darn well you wouldn't said Ed so I'm not going to tell you. He snickered. D'you know Mrs. Laidlaw wears balbriggan union suits? Mr. Pope grinned slightly but he said Not interested. Who would be? said Ed.

Well that afternoon was the hottest yet and Lily and the Camerons and Mr. Pope said they were going to swim anyway serpent or no serpent. So they did. Mrs. Pope and Mr. Laidlaw were finally shamed into going in and they romped around in the ripples for a while under the cold eye of Mrs. Laidlaw but gradually ventured farther out. The sea serpent didn't show up.

So that evening was too hot to do anything but just loll around so they all did except of course Mrs. Laidlaw who belonged to the earlier generation which does not loll. Mr. Pope



wondered if long underwear was the reason why the earlier generation disliked lolling. It was probably too stiff. Maybe it itched. Thinking about it made him still hotter and at last he said My it's hot.

Well I suppose you think this wasn't much of a remark but it was the first unsolicited one he had made since he had been in the house. It was like baby's first sentence. They all stared at him. And after a minute Mr. Cameron said Why don't we go for a swim? Mrs. Pope said O! and looked at Mr. Laidlaw who said a little stiffly I suppose you all think we have been kidding you about the serpent I assure you there's something—*something* out there and I'd rather be a lot more hot and uncomfortable than I am than to see it again. Hallucination said Mr. Cameron. It was *not!* said Mrs. Pope. I saw it too. Collective hallucination said Mr. Cameron. When people are *en rapport* you know they see the same things. Goodness said Lily you must have been *en grand rapport* to have a sea serpent appear to you. But of course you two are! she said and her eyes flickered towards Mr. Pope.

Mr. Pope didn't like the undercurrent in this talk and he said shortly Well I'm going in anyway. Mrs. Pope started to protest but Lily and the Camerons got up and said they'd get ready and Mrs. Laidlaw said she'd join them on the beach. And you will go to look after me Laddie she said. Mr. Laidlaw shrugged and said Yes mother and Mrs. Pope said Well I'll get into my bathing suit anyway.

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It was one of those hot dark blue nights and the water was still and tepid and Lily and the Camerons and Mr. Pope waded right out into water deep enough to swim in which in those regions is quite a wade. Lily insisted on Mr. Pope keeping his arm around her because she said otherwise she couldn't keep her feet and Mr. Pope said that was all right but how was he to keep his head then? and this bit of persiflage so encouraged Lily that she kissed him. Mr. Pope liked this all right and he looked back to see if Mrs. Pope was safe but even though the night was clear the starshine on the water was deceptive and he couldn't see her. He couldn't even see the Camerons who were only a little way ahead of him.

Hey Laddie you and Carlotta come out here called Mr. Cameron. O come on! added Mrs. Cameron. There isn't any serpent around—I guess it isn't his night to hiss. I have to stay with mother shouted Mr. Laidlaw.

Mrs. Laidlaw's voice came clearly over the water. You have to do nothing of the kind she said. Dear me Laddie are you really afraid of this mythical creature of yours? Well—said Mr. Laidlaw doubtfully. 'Fraidy cat! said Lily. Really Laddie! said Mrs. Laidlaw. Well—come on Carlotta said Mr. Laidlaw and Mr. Pope heard them splashing towards him. Then he heard Mr. Cameron say to his wife in a low voice He really is scared of the damned thing! and Mrs. Cameron murmured Nonsense it's just an excuse to stay away from us with the girl friend.

Well they all swam around for a while and played various games—most of which seemed to involve ducking Mr. Pope so that he got water in his ears again. Mr. Laidlaw seemed rather on edge and he kept peering into the surrounding darkness and once when there was a loud splash not far from them he said nervously Listen! what's that? But Lily said Look Laddie this is an ocean we're in. What would be queer would be if you *didn't* hear splashes. And Mrs. Pope said You know Laddie maybe that thing really was some kind of a hoax. I think you— And then she stopped. For from very close by came some even louder splashes and a kind of tremulous giggling. And as they turned to that direction something came towards them out of the night.

Lily's scream was the loudest but Mr. Laidlaw's was the most despairing. As Mr. Pope joined the frantic rush for shore he had a glimpse of a dragonlike head on a neck perhaps two feet of which rose above the water. There was also a mane of what looked like seaweed and a very nasty expression. But halfway to the beach Mr. Pope heard a cry behind him. Wilbur! Wilbur! Wait for me!

He stopped swimming. Hey Laddie—Cameron! he called. Wait for Carlotta. She can't keep up. For Mrs. Pope wasn't much of a swimmer. But neither of the men paid any attention. You darned rats! he said and then turned back. All right old girl he called. Take it easy. And he caught the sobbing Mrs. Pope by the arm and pulled her to her feet. You'll make better time walking he said. Put your hand on my shoulder. He glanced once behind him. The monster was following but slowly. Behind the head he caught the steady star reflection on a sleek body. Take it easy he said He's not coming.

On the beach Lily and the Camerons were standing looking out into the darkness and ready at a moment's notice to dive into the path to the house. Mrs. Laidlaw had got to her feet and was shaking her son. I don't care if it was a battleship she said sternly. This is the Laidlaw beach. You shouldn't desert a guest.

Mr. Pope wrapped a robe around his trembling wife. Go up to the house he said. I'll be up presently. I've got an idea. And he turned and walked back into the sea. Pope! For heaven's sake! said Mr. Cameron and Lily said We're all safe Wilbur. Don't be a fool. But Mr. Pope waded steadily out towards the uncanny giggling sound.

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Presently the head loomed up. It turned as he came closer and the big teeth smiled. Hi Wilb said Ed cautiously. Meet the Terror of the Deep. How'm I doing? You've scared us all half to death you fool said Mr. Pope. For heaven's sake go on back to the stable. If they find out they'll think I arranged this and that would be just dandy. And I wish you'd stop that giggling. Can't help it said Ed. There's some little fishes that keep pecking at me and they tickle. But lookit Wilbur. You don't realize what I've done for you. You been kind of a dope all the time you've been here and I've made you a hero. Like the Bible says thou hast bound Leviathan with a hook. And you didn't even have a hook—you did it with your bare hands. Look. I'll thrash around and scream and then you go back and tell 'em you strangled me. You can take some of this seaweed back to prove it. Looks real pretty in my mane don't it? though I had a hell of a time winding it in.

Mr. Pope thought a minute. I can't tell 'em of course he said. But I guess we'll do without the strangling act. Go on back. I'll think of something. O. K. said Ed. Maybe you'd better not say anything at that. Just be kind of modest and pull a blush on 'em. Strong silent man. Let Laddie boy do the explaining. Boy did he pull the plug on himself when he won that race to the beach! O go on back to the stable said Mr. Pope. Sure boss said Ed I hear and I obey. But let me give 'em a little scream first. And before Mr. Pope could stop him he screamed.

Mr. Pope had never heard a horse scream before. He knew it was supposed to be a pretty terrible sound but it was a lot more so than he had imagined. He looked at Ed and although the horse grinned at him Mr. Pope felt suddenly scared of him. He wanted to get back on dry land. He turned quickly and started wading inshore.

Only Mrs. Pope and Mrs. Laidlaw were on the beach. O Wilbur! said Mrs. Pope and clung to him. Take it easy said Mr. Pope. Everything is under control. Mr. Pope said Mrs. Laidlaw I have to apologize for my son. He has been guilty of a serious breach of hospitality for the first duty of a host is to protect his guests. O please said Mr. Pope. It wasn't—well anybody'd have

been scared. I want to go home Wilbur said Mrs. Pope. I thought you— She shuddered. And Laddie wouldn't go to help you she said. He told me it was useless—you were foolhardy and there wasn't anything he could do. O I hate him!

Mrs. Laidlaw looked at Mr. Pope for a moment. I think perhaps it would be better if you did go she said. You'll have to drive most of the night. But I will have a responsible man bring your horse on. And speaking of horses Mr. Pope have you ever heard a horse scream? Mr. Pope frowned. Yes he said. Once. I have several times said Mrs. Laidlaw and it is horrible—and unmistakable. So aside from the apology I offer for my son I offer you one for myself. When you rode up that first day I misjudged you completely. You are a very clever man. Under happier circumstances I should have enjoyed talking with you.

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Well said Mr. Pope I think I owe you an apology too though just how to frame it—Mrs. Laidlaw shook her head. People of wealth are not necessarily fools Mr. Pope she said. And I think you've done a good enough job of framing. Good night and good-by she said and turned and went up the path.

What's she talking about? said Mrs. Pope as they followed slowly. You were so brave Wilbur—but why does she think you're clever? Just a minority opinion said Mr. Pope. Forget it and let's go pack. That is if you really want to go? You bet I want to go said Mrs. Pope and I never want to see that Laddie again.

They were close to the house now and through the open window Mr. Pope could see the bathing party standing in the hall. What's that? he said. This water in my ears—I can't hear you. I say repeated Mrs. Pope in a loud voice that I never want to see that coward Laddie again. Mr. Pope said O.

THE END

[The end of *Ed Likes to be Beside the Seaside* by Walter Rollin Brooks]