



LIFE is made up, not of great sacrifices or duties, but of little things, in which smiles and kindnesses and small obligations, given habitually, are what win, and preserve the heart and secure comfort.

—Sir Humphry Davy

Saved by Shabbiness

IN the memorable year, 1861, when the first great excitement of the opening of the Civil war swept over the country like an irresistible tidal wave, I was caught in the current, though at college, and with nearly all my class, enlisted among the first volunteers. My health not being very robust, instead of receiving orders for field service, I was commissioned to fill a place in a disbursement office.

One day I was summoned into the presence of my commanding officer and told I was to accompany Captain McKay to a certain city for money to pay the troops. The sum was one hundred and sixty thousand dollars. We were given particular directions as to our going and coming. The distance was so great we were obliged to stay over night on the route. A large city was selected and we were advised as to the hotel.

When we reached our destination, Captain McKay produced an old black bag for our precious burden. It was an ordinary old worn-out bag—such a one as an officer might have used until the gloss was gone and the edges were white. There was no air of ancient respectability about it. Since it was new, much time must have elapsed and heavy wear must have been its portion, judging from the heavy patches which were not of the same kind of shiny black leather as the primitive article.

The captain carried the bag and I watched the captain. When the numbers travelling admitted of it, I took a seat just behind him; otherwise we sat together.

I rather enjoyed hearing the comments of our fellow travellers on the captain and his bag. One young lady said to her companion: "Oh that nice-looking captain has a wife, she ought to be ashamed of herself for allowing her husband to carry such a furious-looking old bag."

A couple of lads returning from school took the seat vacated by the ladies and after they were settled, they commenced to look about them and one said to the other: "What's that fellow's rank?"

"Which one?" asked his companion. "The one with the bag?" After studying some time, he replied, "Brevet-colonel, I believe."

"Brevet-jack-a-napes" exclaimed the first boy. "I believe he's a low-downer, something like an 'orderly' or an 'adjutant.'"

"No sir-re, sir; he's a 'brevet' of some kind. Didn't we have the explanation of 'brevet' the other day in class as a commission which entitled an officer to rank above his pay? Now that fellow ranks above his pay, which accounts for his uniform's being fresh

class. But his pay does not allow him to have other nice things—like bags and things."

Aside from remarks, we met with no adventure and reached the hotel where we were to spend the night about nine in the evening. We had determined to avoid exciting remarks by making unnecessary requirements about a room, so simply asking for a room in the quiet part of the hotel where we could sleep in the morning, we were shown to one of a suite. We realized we had made a mistake in this particular when we were alone and commenced to make plans for barricading, as the room had three doors to be looked after.

"Now what will we do to the windows?" asked Captain McKay, as we stood in our shirt sleeves, all heated from our exertions of moving a heavy mahogany bedstead without rollers in front of one door, a marble-topped washstand in front of another and a marble-topped bureau (also without casters) in front of the third.

I considered myself something of a genius about a house so I replied cheerfully: "I think I can fix the windows all right."

I took the chairs and the towel rack, some empty paste-board boxes found in the closet and a bamboo whatnot and erected a pyramid between the windows. My idea was to construct an easily moved something so that anyone trying to enter by the window would give premonitory symptoms by a grand overthrow. The pyramid not being high enough, I brought one of the window shades. An unfortunate thought for I lamed my thumb and skinned several fingers trying to get the shades down. But at length we stood in admiring silence before a pyramid that at its base took in both windows and at its summit, by the aid of the rolled up shades placed like an "A" to form an angle, reached nearly to the top of the room. We felt safe and retired for the night.

I was awakened by thinking a detachment of artillery and an avalanche from the Matterhorn were attempting to enter our windows at the same time. I gave a leap from the bed to ascertain what was the matter, when I found myself all enveloped in window shades (they having selected that pleasing moment to unwind after having rapped me awake).

Captain McKay assured me that I made use of various strong expressions as I struggled to free myself. Not to do this, as I believe, we could discover no trace of any attempt having been made to enter our rooms by the windows, but sundry movements about overhead led us to believe our pyramid had received its overthrow from jars from that quarter.

"Morn, waked by the circling hours, with rosy hand" had scarcely unbarred the gates of light when I felt something most vigorous about a "rosy hand" take hold of my shoulder and opening my eyes, I saw the Captain's face pale and distracted in front of mine and heard him say in a voice trembling with emotion: "The bag is gone."

"It cannot be," I cried springing up in a frenzy of fear, but diligent search could not reveal its hiding place. There stood the heavy mahogany bed before one door, the washstand and bureau before the other two, undisturbed. The dust on the window ledges and sash seemed to prove that no one, not even the chambermaid, had interfered with them for some time.

"Let us get dressed and notify the authorities of our loss," cried the captain in a hoarse whisper.

Both of us started to obey this suggestion and made such speed as we could, considering our oft-repeated tendencies to stop and search in probable and improbable nooks for the lost. I saw Captain McKay pulling out the drawer in the bamboo whatnot, large enough to hold a writing pad and a few pencils, while I drew with a boot half pulled on to search the top shelf in the closet.

"I have looked there six times," the Captain called out, "shall be forever disgraced," he added with a groan.

"And our brave boys, what will they do for their pay?" said feebly—my imbecility showing itself in my allusion to such a painful view of the subject when the Captain was so overcome.

"Do you think I shall allow them to lose a cent," he added rather fiercely. "No, sir, I have one thousand dollars in the bank and I'll use every bit of my pay and forgo my pension too."

Rap-a-tap-tap, came a summons to open the door, before which the heavy mahogany bed stood as an impenebtrable fortification. I, with foot number one on one and the other two half on and the captain, with one arm in his vest, hastened to remove the obstruction with as little noise as possible, feeling we would rather not have it known how much we had barricaded. Several more raps came before we were ready but at length we opened the door and in the dimness of a dark morning, we saw a hall boy with a jug of water in one hand.

I took the water while the captain said in an excellent tone: "Boy, run down quickly and tell the hotel clerk to come up here. Why don't you start," he asked impatiently.

"Yes, I'm going, mister, but first let me ask you if this is yours?" At that he held up his other hand and there we beheld the old, shabby, but inestimably precious bag.

The Captain nearly swooned with joy while I had the presence of mind to tell the boy not to send up the clerk and to give him a sum of money that made him whistle all the way down the hall. The boy explained that he picked up the bag just outside the door. Then we remembered when the lock of the door had proved refractory, the captain had set it there but neither of us had noticed that it was not picked up again. Blessed be the shabbiness we agreed if it could accomplish the remarkable feat of one hundred and six thousand dollars in the hallway of a hotel so many hours.

When the Captain and I had sufficiently recovered from falling on each other's necks and weeping tears of joy over the recovery of our treasure, the Captain said: "I can trust you not to tell this, I am sure, for if you do and it is known to the general's ears, it would mean the loss of my commission."

That is the reason I have waited this long before giving the public this episode of the war.

Growing Bulbs Indoors

Among the best of the bulbs for house culture are the Roman hyacinths. In a small box or a five-inch flower pot plant two or three bulbs. Use garden soil in which should be mixed a little sharp sand. Place the



Bulbs Planted Too Shallow.

top of the bulbs about half an inch below the surface. Press the soil firmly fair around the bulbs. Water them well once so as to moisten all the soil in the pot or box. The tops of the bulbs should be just below the surface of the soil when potted. Place the pot or box in a cool place, either out of doors or in the cellar, and cover it with about two inches of coal ashes, sand, or light soil. If put in a cool, damp place they will require no more water until they are taken out. If they are put out of doors, some extra covering of leaves or straw should be given to prevent them being frozen too severely. Keep them in this cool, dark position for five or six weeks, or longer, until the bulbs have rotted well, when they can be brought into the window.

Water must be given now whenever the soil appears dry. Keep the soil always moist, but not soddened, until they have done flowering. If potted in October and covered as described, they should be in flower in January. Roman Hyacinths are of little use to grow the second year, although if kept dry when they have done flowering, they will sometimes flower again the following season, if reported in autumn.

Dutch Hyacinths, narcissi and tulips are also excellent bulbs for house culture, although greater care is required

Bring to Light at This Stage.

with tulips than with the others. Treat them as recommended for Roman Hyacinths but plant the bulbs about two as deeply in the soil. They will be two or three weeks later in flowering.

CHINESE SACRED LILIES

Dutch Hyacinths can be grown in glasses made specially for the pur-