

"Stop That Foolishness"

"That last big snowstorm brought me within touch of an old comrade," said the retired army officer. "I am living out in Jersey for the present with my daughter and her husband and there I found this old soldier friend of mine, thanks to the snow. It was rather an odd circumstance.

"I was sitting in the bay window on the second floor watching the snowflakes and puffing my after-breakfast cigar. The flakes became fewer and presently ceased. Then I heard the clatter of shovels and the shovel brigade deployed through the street. While I was watching them, glancing across the street, I noticed a man busily at work clearing a path from a house set back quite a distance from the street.

"It struck me as I watched this shoveller that he had a pretty large contract on his hands. The path he had to make to the sidewalk was long and the sidewalk space was considerable. He was a solidly built chap and he kept right at his work as if he meant business. But he wasn't very young; I could see his white hair below the cap he wore and when he took it off once in a while to mop his head there was a generous bald spot.

"Too bad an old man like that has to get out in this snow and do such back-breaking work," I mused, thinking what a time I would have with my rheumatism after a half hour's session with a snowbank.

"But the next moment I had come to the conclusion that the man wasn't shovelling for money. He was too well dressed and he had an easy, prosperous air about him that you never find over an empty stomach. He would stop every now and then to straighten up, feeling his way gradually to the perpendicular and exploring his back with his hands. Then he would throw his head back and sniff the clear air.

"Then I began to realize there was something about this solid citizen who shovelled his own snow that was faintly familiar. He had certain odd motions that I felt were not new to me. He put his back on to the shovel when he plunged it into the snow and as he tossed the load off he gave an indescribable flip to the handle. But when, after every third or fourth shoveful, he would turn the shovel over and with the back of it go 'pat, pat, pat' along the top of the little heap of upturned snow he had just made, I began to feel sure there was only one man in the world who did that odd little trick in just that way and that I had seen him do it nearly forty years ago.

"I went into the Civil War with a Massachusetts regiment. I was a lieutenant to begin with and I came out a major with a colonel's brevet, although I had to begin at the lieutenant again when I joined the regulars in '66. In my company in the Massachusetts regiment was a fellow named Hooper—Tom Hooper.

"He was a natty little chap who always contrived to look slick and clean, even when his shoes had no soles to speak of and his curly black hair felt its way through the holes in his rain-rotted cap. He was as precise and methodical as a down-country district schoolteacher, although he took what was coming and didn't squirm.

"We did a lot of digging early in the war. 'When in doubt dig,' was the maxim the boys put into the mouths of our commanding officers, and as there was any amount of doubt floating about headquarters we fellows down the line had to do a tremendous amount of digging. Trenches! We made enough of them to have carried us into Richmond, if they had only been dug in a straight line and due south.

"Walking up and down behind my company I got to know the chaps who shovelled to the best advantage as well as those who shirked and particularly I got to know Tom Hooper's peculiarities with the shovel. Do you remember Fair Oaks? No? Well, one part of our line of earthworks ran through the yard of a farmhouse. I remember as if it were yesterday that there was a clump of flower bushes of some sort in that yard.

"Tom Hooper had to dig among those bushes, and he had to do his own shovelling to suit him as he did everything else. Forward would go that back of his as the shovel hit in and every time the earth fell from the blade came that jaunty little flip, a sort of half salute to the approaching foe. Then there was the 'pat, pat, pat,' the final touch of an over-conscientious workman.

"The other boys got on to it, for you could hear it for some little distance up and down the line. On it was a sound entirely different from

all the other scrapings and grindings, gruntings and puffings. They got to singing derisively, 'patty cake, patty cake,' and all that, but it didn't bother Tom.

"That day we were halted suddenly. The Johnnies were coming down on us in a hurry. The shovels were peddled out and at it we went, some of us digging our own graves. For two or three minutes before we got orders to cease digging the bullets were spanging and spitting through the leaves and into the tree trunks behind us and some got mighty cautious how they did their shovelling. It was wonderful how careful we were to unload our shovels without putting our heads above the bank we had raised.

"But there was Tom Hooper sticking in it just as if he were digging a drain in his father's back yard at home. He hung to it after nearly every one else had stopped, until the order came along to cease shovelling and start firing.

"I happened to be coming up from behind the line just then and I saw Hooper start back to throw his shovel in the heap, then pause, turn back and going up to the trench, begin smoothing off the top of his section of the embankment. This was too much for me; the strain was hard enough anyway, although it wasn't our first battle by a jugful.

"'Hooper,' I bawled out, 'stop that damn foolishness; cease shovelling!' Already he had a hole through his shovel and when he was down in the trench I noticed a red mark along one cheek.

"Of course Hooper never heard the last of that business. It followed him all the way to Appomattox and when we got back to Boston and the people gave us a big supper in a large hall as a sort of farewell, Hooper, who could always eat a square meal when it was set before him, got a round-up that set the whole hall in a roar, for there wasn't a man in the regiment who didn't know the story. While Tom was putting away the eatables at a great rate some one with a foghorn voice shouted out: 'Hooper, stop that damn foolishness; cease shovelling!'

"All this and a good deal more of the same sort came back to me as I watched that old fellow shovelling and patting the snow until I couldn't contain myself any longer.

"'Mary,' I asked my daughter, 'who is that man across the street there digging snow? What's his name?'

"'Mr. Hooper, father,' said she. 'He always cleans his paths himself. He won't hear of any one else doing it. It does trouble Mrs. Hooper so much; she's so afraid of what people will say, and him so rich. She has tried every way she can think of to stop him, but he's just as obstinate as can be.'

"Once Mrs. Hooper told him that she'd think he would feel mean depriving hungry men from earning a square meal, but all he said was that he'd give her \$1 every time he cleaned the paths and she could put it in the poor box, and he does that every time.

"That settled it. I donned my rubbers and out I went through the drifts, making straight across the street for Tom Hooper. When I had got about half way I called out as loud as I dared, 'Hooper, stop that damn foolishness; cease shovelling!'

"Up he came from his shovelling with a jerk and wheeling around, looked at me. Then his red face began to crinkle and wrinkle into a grin. He said afterward that my voice across the snow-gave him the queerest feeling he ever had in his life. For a moment he thought he had taken leave of his senses and was wandering in his mind. He got over it, though, and presently he said:

"'Lieutenant, for the last twenty years I've thought you saved my life the day you called me off that trench. Now I know your feet must be wet after tramping through the snow, so I'll save your life; come in the house and have a drink.'"

"New York Sun.

Is Little Discussed.
Peking, March 23.—There is little discussion among the diplomats in the Chinese capital of the Franco-Russian declaration; and this declaration is generally regarded as making for peace.

The Chinese newspapers are emphasizing the humiliation of China, saying she is treated by the powers as though she were incompetent to defend her own interests and that she is placed upon a level with Korea.

The Chinese foreign office is preparing to send independent ministers to establish legations in Italy, Austria

and Spain. The Chinese ministers to Great Britain, Russia and the United States have been heretofore respectively accredited to those nations.

The dowager empress has appointed Wua Mu Lui to be president of the imperial university, to succeed Rev. W. A. P. Martin, who was recently relieved of the presidency of that institution. Wua Mu Lui is a progressive and learned official.

The African Elephant.

An educated African lectured on "The Elephant" at Sierra Leone a short time ago. One of the weekly newspapers reported the talk.

The lecturer did not approve of some of the personal habits of the African elephant. He said the animal delights to wallow in the mud, invariably utilizing every puddle adapted for his large corposity. This is the explanation of the African elephant's besmeared and untidy appearance.

Then the lecturer told the old familiar anecdotes of the animal's sagacity, which have been current for many years in countries where the elephant lives for exhibition purposes only. Finally the speaker told one incident in his own experience which gave a flavor of originality to the discourse.

"About fifteen years ago," he said, "I was inland on the Liberian frontier trying to do missionary work among the natives who dwell in the forests of Mendi. The story I had to tell did not seem to interest them at all. Very few would listen to me more than two minutes at a time.

"My audiences were very small and generally disappeared before I had finished my remarks. I could not stay long in the country, for I had gone there merely to look over the field, and I decided that before I left I would do something or other to collect a crowd and hold them while I said what I had to say.

"So one day I took my rifle and went out into a thicket, where I found a large elephant browsing. I was fortunate enough to kill the animal at the first shot. The natives were fond of elephant steaks, and I decided to use my prize as an attraction for a missionary service.

"I put a guard over the body, as the natives might otherwise help themselves to the meat uninvited.

Then I sent word all through the forest that in three days I should give a talk to the people, and after I had finished I should distribute the meat among them.

"This attractive advertisement had the desired effect. At the appointed time about two hundred persons assembled at the spot where the carcass lay. Every one carried a basket and a knife for carving up the animal and carrying the meat away. They were after meat, and regarded the forthcoming talk merely as a necessary evil.

"I never addressed a more inattentive audience. It was disheartening, but I was bound to have my say. I took my stand on the body of the animal, where I could look over the whole crowd. There I stood till I had talked about half an hour.

"Everybody else was talking too. The hum of conversation was undaunting. If any one looked in my direction it was not at me but at the mountain of flesh on which I stood.

"Some of the crowd utilized the time to sharpen their knives. I exorted with all the fervor and ability at my command, but for all I could see I might as well have talked to the empty air.

"To the evident relief of everybody my discourse, like all things else, finally came to an end. I had no sooner jumped from my somewhat elevated platform than the body of the deceased elephant was surrounded by natives and the carving process began.

"I and my men prevented any one from taking more than his fair share of meat. In a half hour there was not much left but the skeleton. Each took his departure without so much as thanking me for the treat. I presume they thought they had paid pretty high for their feast by being compelled to stay through my sermon before getting their reward.

"That was the end of my missionary labors among the Mendi."—New York Sun.

Encounter With Moros
Manila, March 23.—Brig. Gen. Geo. W. Davis, stationed at Zamboanga, Island of Mindanao, reports that a detachment of the signal corps consisting of seventeen men has been attacked by 200 Moros near Parapan, Mindanao. One of the signal corps were killed. The Moros captured the transportation of the detachment, including four pack mules.

The United States transport Buford has arrived here. She has on board a detachment of the Twenty-fifth Infantry, a squadron of the Eleventh Cavalry and fifty pack mules.

Asks for a Man-of-War.
Port au Prince, Hayti, March 23.—Leon Gabriel, who claimed to be a citizen of France, and who was executed yesterday, after having fired a shot from a revolver at Gen. Camcau, chief of police, was formerly an aide de camp of ex-President Legitime. On this fact the Haytian government based the claim that Gabriel was a Haytian and not a citizen of France. The French minister here maintains that Gabriel was a citizen of France. He regularly registered here at the French legation. He left seven children.

As a result of the execution of Gabriel, the French minister has requested that a French man-of-war be sent here, and is awaiting a reply from Paris. Quiet prevails here.

Passenger Train Wrecked.
Charlottesville, Va., March 23.—Passenger train No. 38, north bound on the Southern railroad, was wrecked by a landslide at Cotterville, sixteen miles south of here, at 8:15 o'clock this morning. The train was forty minutes late and running at an unusual rate of speed. The engine was ditched and six coaches completely destroyed by fire. The loss of mail was the greatest in the history of Southern railroading.

Nicholas Lowen, a Pullman porter, and an unknown trainman killed.

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