

Algernon Does His Bit

Written for The Western Home Monthly by Edith G. Bayne

PUT out your tongue," said the doctor. "H'm—just as I thought. Liver. Now, young man, come this way. I want to sound you."

"I say, doctor, you don't think—"

"Strip."

(Business of stripping.)

"Hold still. What are you shivering for?"

He spoke in his usual brisk, somewhat testy tones and continued to move the bally stethoscope about over the upper portion of my anatomy, bending a listening ear and giving vent only to grunts and monosyllabic exclamations. Finally he lifted his head and fixed a severe glance on me.

"Exactly as I suspected young sir!" he remarked.

"What—how—"

"You have valvular trouble."

"My word!" I exclaimed in affright.

cough by cutting out this smoking of coffin-nails, go to bed at ten o'clock, omit the last two courses at dinner, and get right up on the top seat of the water-wagon."

"Is it as bad as all that, doc?"

He pretended not to hear.

"I would strongly suggest a change of climate too—say Canada."

"Canada!" I cried, blankly.

"Yes, Canada."

"I say, it's a deucedly cold place to send a chap—"

"Just what you require. Climate there is bracing. Get right out there and lead the simple life for a year."

"Most difficult proposition, by Jove."

I murmured.

He smiled rather kindly upon me.

"Never did a day's work in your life, did you?"

"I admit the soft impeachment, doc."

"Well, try my prescription. It will be



Two British signallers found a little French child abandoned or forgotten in the flight from the Germans. They took it with them into a barn, where they placed it for warmth and safety between them. In the night a German bomb from an aeroplane fell on the barn, killing both men, but the child was found in the morning peacefully asleep and unharmed.

"And not only that," he went on. "You have parietal symptoms—"

"Good Gad!"

"—and incipient diabetes—"

"Great Scott!"

"—due to lack of exercise; also tic-doloureux in a slight form, and a touch of very nearly everything except housemaid's knee. I suspect angina pectoris, but am not certain—"

He paused as he saw me drop weakly into a chair, but continued again, relentlessly:

"—and if you do not call a halt directly, my young man, I shall not answer for the consequences."

"But doc—"

"Enlist? Tut-tut. Never take you. Never in the world."

I groaned.

Take a long breath. --- now whereabouts does that hurt? Another

"Aha!" and he smiled with cold-blooded professional satisfaction. "Now my best advice to you, my lad, is to go to work at something out-of-doors—say farming—at once, to immediately slough off this flabbiness of muscle; stop the

hard at first, I have not the slightest doubt, but after six months of life in Canada you will be a different man. Then we'll begin to talk about enlisting. There isn't another doctor who would not agree with my finding. Your system is in a greatly debilitated state and you wouldn't survive the ordinary hardships of trench life for more than a few days, in your present condition even if you could find a medical man foolish enough to pass you. Know anyone out in Canada?"

"Only Billy Smith."

"Who's he?"

"Oh, an old pal of mine who lived near us at Ballingham-on-Sea some years ago. He's been in Canada some time now—on a ranch in or near a place called Alberta."

"I should fancy that would be quite all right," said the good old physician, who knew just about as much regarding Canada, geographically, as I did myself at that time. "I have heard of Alberta—a few hours' run from Montreal I believe. The very thing . . . This way out my lad."

So that is how it came about that instead of going to fight for King and

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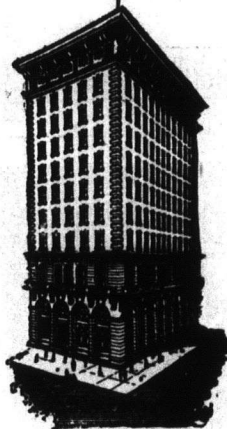
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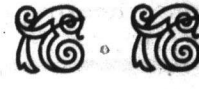
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