

been abroad must be flitting back to their abodes in the churchyard—or elsewhere. Constable Jones was not very clear on this ghostly point, but he knew a cold drizzle was beating in his face, adding to his discomfort and annoyance. He drew his cape closer about his broad shoulders, uttered an ejaculation scarcely parliamentary, and glanced around at the pools that gathered in the ruts of uneven ground and were now beginning to shine in the misty half-light.

"**B**EASTLY mornin'," he muttered, as he threw open the shutter of the lantern at his belt to get a clearer view. His eyes involuntarily followed the yellow beam, and fell upon a dark object some few yards away, lying near a thicket on the rough ground of the Common. He strode over to examine it.

"Funny—I didn't see that when I passed before! But, I might a took it fer a shadder, or bush, in the dark."

He flashed his light upon a tweed bundle, and applied a large foot to straighten it out. A very white face came into view.

"Mercy on us," he exclaimed, hastily drawing back in momentary horror; then bending to examine the object again, he felt for the heart, and experienced a sense of relief to find it beating.

Lifting himself up, he stared down at the limp form, while his slow brain puzzled over it. Then his brow cleared, and he laughed.

"Fancy me gittin' skeered like that," he apologized to the inanimate surroundings, "an' over a plain drunk too," he added disgustedly, stirring the prostrate heap more vigorously with his foot.

"Now then, guv'nor—move on there," he exhorted. "This 'ere ground ain't let out for sleepin' on—not just yet," he added jocosely.

The object thus abjured, stirred feebly, and lifted heavy lids; the eyes looked glassy and uncomprehending.

Constable Jones, reassured by these signs of returning consciousness, laid a large and firm hand upon the prostrate figure, and hoisted it on to unsteady feet, where it tottered dizzily.

"Drunk as a lord," he ejaculated, as he assisted the swaying figure to maintain its equilibrium.

"It's enough to give yer rheumatiz fer life, it is straight, a-lyin' on that wet ground. Dear! dear! you gents!" This after a comprehensive glance over the unsteady man.

Evidently he expected a tip from the inebriate, but none was forthcoming. He waited hopefully, then grew sternly official.

"Wot's yer nyme?" A long silence. He looked into the dazed face of the man he was holding up, and lost his temper.

"Dang it man—if yer won't answer, I'll take yer to the station." Still silence.

"Where d'ye live? — answer straight now, before I get yer locked up."

He enforced this command with a rough shake, which nearly resulted in the disastrous downfall of both. The glassy eyes looked vacantly into the irritated constable's red face.

"Of all the h'aggravators!" he exclaimed crossly, flashing his lantern once more over the man and round the spot on which they stood, thus bringing to light a battered bowler, muddy and wet, lying in a pool of water near by.

Then he suddenly blew his whistle. As he relaxed his hold, the captive subsided to a sitting position on the wet ground, his legs sprawled out in front.

Constable Jones regarded him disgustfully.

"Ought to be ashamed of yerself—you did—a man o' your age—gittin' in such a state. Yer looks a reg'lar bad lot." Then he blew his whistle again.

Presently was heard the sound of a heavy man running. In a couple of minutes the runner came to a stop before the constable, panting and blowing noisily.

"Wot's up, Bill?" he asked anxiously.

"'Ere's a cove wot I can't make nothin' on," explained Jones, pointing an accusing thumb at the sitting

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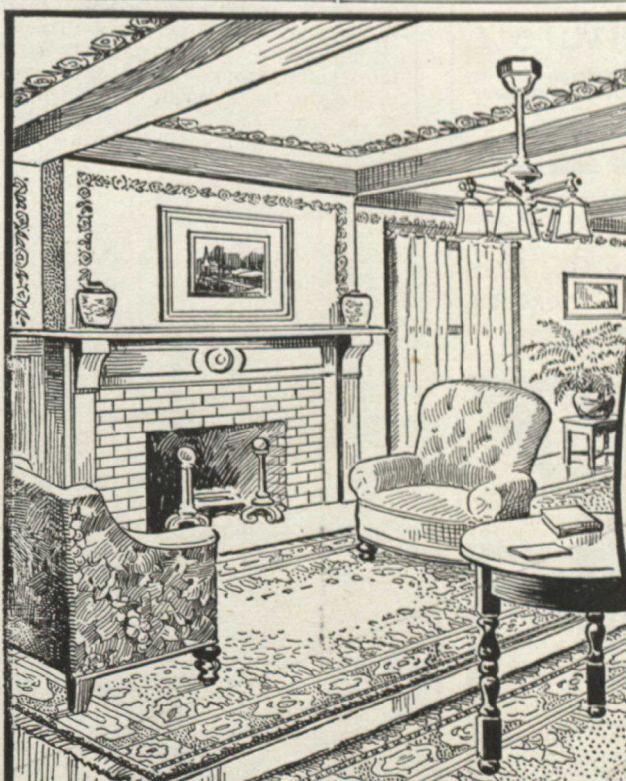
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