

COMRADES.

Captain Jasper Wilkinson a rich, eccentric bachelor awoke with a vivid impression that something dreadful had just happened; he sat up and stared wildly about him. The window was in its usual place and the furniture of the room had not changed its position since last night; across the street in the clear light of the morning the buildings stood undisturbed, evidently it had not been an earthquake nor a fire.

But what was the meaning of that sore, lacerated feeling in his throat and that severe pain which seemed to be in his stomach? Ah! he felt in his mouth—they were not there. He snatched up the pillows—they were not there! He had swallowed his teeth!

Weak and faint he lay back trying to think what to do.

Something a dentist had said jokingly years before flashed through his mind with prophetic significance:

"That's the smallest plate I ever made, Mr. Wilkinson. Look out you don't swallow it some day."

"What an ignominious death!" he thought. "To swallow one's teeth! It would be enough to bring a blush to the cheeks of one's nieces and nephews for years to come. Oh! if I had only been shot when I was in the army, how much more glorious and honorable it would have been! To die for one's country a blessed privilege! But still while there is life there is hope; possibly I may recover."

He pressed a button.
"Telephone for Dr. Gilbert Vaughan to come at once," he commanded the astonished servant.

With troubled brow and haggard eyes Dr. Gilbert Vaughan sat in his private office poring over his assets and liabilities. The latter seemed to be so much in excess of the former that he laid his poor dazed head down on the desk in despair. There had been a time when prosperity had smiled on the clever young surgeon, under whose skilled hand many a brilliant and successful operation had been performed. Overwork caused him to resort to stimulants, and stimulants gradually assumed the mastery. His associates knew, and even the public surmised, that he could not be relied upon as in former times. His practice had diminished to a shadow of itself, while his expenses had increased. Loss of money at the gaming-table and the cost of the drug which he now took in large doses had rendered his financial condition alarming. Ruin, insolvency, stared him in the face.

When the telephone rang, the dissipated physician clutched the re-

ceiver as a drowning man grasps at a straw.

"Poor old Wilkie," he said as he rang off. "I suppose he never had a doctor before in his life and now he wants his old chum to look after him. It is a lucky thing for me that he doesn't know. I'll get enough out of this to keep things going awhile longer. The old fellow has become as rich as Croesus I hear."

Half an hour later he was bending over the friend of his youth.

"I have no doubt that is what has happened," he was saying in that familiar voice which brought visions of boyhood days to the mind of his patient. "But don't be alarmed at all. By the x-rays we can easily find out where the plate is located and a very simple operation will remove it."

An ambulance soon conveyed the suffering man to the hospital where he was hurried to the operating-room.

Shortly afterwards, an elderly woman with wild eyes and dishevelled hair rushed up the hospital steps. In the vestibule she encountered a professional gentleman.

"Are you a doctor?"

"Yes."

"Then help me. My master is here and they are going to operate on him. I've been his housekeeper fifteen years. He thought he swallowed his teeth, but here they are; I found them when I moved his bed to sweep under it."

In the operating-room preparations were going on apace. White-robed

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A SECTION IN THE MAILING ROOM (Fourth Floor).

nurses flitted round the patient who was on the operating-table. The anesthetic had been administered and the keen-edged instruments were ready. As the surgeon took the glittering knife in his trembling hand, the housekeeper, with Dr. Pentland, whom she had met in the vestibule, burst into the room.

"Stop!" she cried, holding up the false teeth. "Look! He didn't swallow them."

Astonished and guilty, Dr. Vaughan laid down the instrument and left the room. After a careful examination Dr. Pentland found that Captain Wilkinson was suffering from pneumonia and sore throat. With the best medical attendance and skilful nursing he quite recovered his former health in a few weeks.

Good people who visited him during his convalescence, advised him to "put Vaughan through for it."

"That's what I intend to do," Captain Wilkinson would answer with a twinkle in his eye. "I'll put him through for it."

"For why should I punish him?" he thought. "It is morphine that has dragged him down. It has clouded his intellect, befogged his moral perceptions, made him less than a man. No boy ever despised meanness more than Gilbert Vaughan and no youth was more upright and manly. If any power on earth can restore his real self, it shall be done."

So it was not through the law-courts he put him, but through an institute where the morbid craving for narcotic stimulants was eradicated.

Dr. Gilbert Vaughan is an old man now, an eminent and honored member of his profession. He often passes pleasant visit to the comrade of his youth, who with Christ-like forgiveness and love, reclaimed him from ruin.

HANNAH M. SWEET.