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## TOOTON'S,

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### The Alcoholic Experience of Patient No. 24.

(Courtesy of Cassell's Magazine.)

December 3. I had no overcoat; that had been left in my room. My gloves had been left in my room. I had no overcoat; that had been left in my room. My gloves had been left in my room.

My feelings were hurt. I was sure that I was worth thinking about. Why, even the people in the street, strangers to whom I had not so much as spoken, were interested in me. A weak impulse to cry came over me.

No! I knew that I must not let myself be carried away. I must hold myself steady, because I had to see this thing through!

It seemed ages, though it was seconds, since I had seated myself in the doctor's room. Suddenly I knew that I could stand it no longer. A numbness was creeping from the back of my neck upwards towards the crown of my head.

Horror of Delirium Tremens. "Oh, yes, I am!" I gasped. I was pleased now in spite of my fear of that creeping numbness, because I knew that I was going to prove myself right and the doctor wrong. And I did.

"Mutt and Jeff" - A cartoon strip showing a man in a top hat and a woman in a dress. The man is holding a small object and looking at it with interest. The woman is looking at him with a concerned expression.

blue spiders with large, mournful eyes, red-rimmed and dry. I closed my eyes again, for once more unconsciousness saved me.

I was in a lonely house with dim corridors leading in all directions from the room where I stood, shivering with fright. There was no sound until I moved, when a rustling and scraping began in the corners of the room.

The light faded and in the blackness left there grew a face. Such a face! It was large and pale and round, and the eyes were closed as in death. It drew nearer and the flesh melted away and left a naked skull.

I was in other places and saw other strange things. I am trying to forget them. But do not say that all this did not truly happen, for I was there, and I know!

I seemed to be waking to a dream of reality. I knew that I was once more conscious of what we call life, though it seemed less vividly real than the weird, phantasmal life I had been living—for an eternity. I was in great physical pain; but physical pain was a relief. I lay with my eyes closed, a little more than half-conscious. The maddened current of my mind cleared slowly.

"Do You Want a Drink?" I glanced about the room, with its double row of cots. Some of the cots were empty, others bore recumbent figures like my own.

Then voices sounded outside. They drew nearer. The door slipped open and the doctor walked in, calmly impassive. He walked up and down the narrow space between the two rows of cots, glancing quickly from side to side. He saw that I was awake, and stopped by my cot, grasping my wrist between his thumb and index finger.

"You can thank your lucky stars for a good opportunity," he said. "It would kill a Christian! Do you want a drink?"

"Did I want a drink? My heart gave a wild jump. 'Doctor,' I said, 'if a soul were negotiable I would trade mine for a look at a drink!'"

perhaps, last night. "A touch!" "That was nothing," smiled the nurse. "You slept and your heart's all right. If the patient can sleep and take nourishment he'll generally come through."

All day I dozed and lay wakeful by turns. Sometimes I awoke before the nurse came in on her rounds, sometimes I opened my eyes to find her standing by my bed with her inevitable spoonful of pills and the grateful glass of whisky—though this grew smaller and smaller as time passed.

"Alcoholic Depression." "At seven in the evening the night nurse came in. She, too, was smiling and cheerful. It was undeniably helpful this sanguine humour, and yet—it struck me as incongruous.

"That's all until to-morrow," said the night nurse. "Sleep well!"

At four in the morning—the obdurate of one's vitality—I sat bolt upright in bed and opened my eyes. It seemed my heart had stopped beating. In a moment it fluttered spasmodically and went back to its regular rhythm. I drew a long breath. I lay down quite cautiously, for a nervous chill crept along my spine like a cold snake.

The doctor returned, bearing two small glasses. I reached forth a trembling hand to take the one he proffered. Then both hands, lest I should spill a drop of the precious liquid that was more to me, at that moment, than life itself, the whisky warmed my tortured nerves to a species of beatitude. I sank back on the pillow with a deep sigh of relief.

"Drink this now," said the doctor, extending the second glass; "it will make you sleep. It will be up to you!"

It was a bitter, yellowish draught that I swallowed. It seemed very soothing. I had no wish now, nor any care. I dozed off on a broad, still sea, and reached the shores of rest. I woke this time in a quiet room. A white-gowned, white-capped nurse stood by the bed, holding a tray on which were two small glasses and pills and capsules of divers shapes and sizes. The nurse gave me some pills, and I swallowed them.

"This is the beginning of the treatment," she said cheerfully. "What treatment?" I asked. "The treatment that makes men out of horrible examples," she answered brightly.

longer, but I'm not sure." The nurse laughed again. "You'll get no more whisky," she said. "From now on it's medicine and sleep and food. And your own nerve, if you've got any left!"

"My heart sank. 'No more drinks!' That was the one outstanding fact of the nurse's speech. I thought of the dreary time ahead. I recalled suddenly what the doctor had warned me of: this was to be my fighting day.

"The nurse gave me the medicine and a draught of ice-water. Then she took my pulse and temperature and examined my eyes closely. 'You're much better,' was her verdict.

"I feel like the devil, then," I said. "My head's burning up, my stomach's on fire, my back aches, my feet are frozen. And I hate myself. If I had a drink I think I could live a little longer, but I'm not sure."

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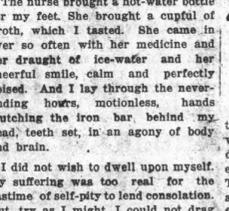
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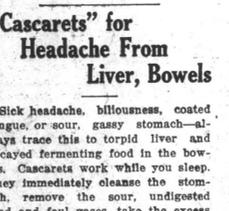
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—By Bud Fleck