

THE SECRET OF PRO-MOTION.

By Yesitdown.

(I.)

"It was like this," began the newly-made Staff-Sergeant, "many a man has ambition to achieve great things in the world, but how many men have the personality, endurance, and perseverance to realise their ambitions? Now I think my rise to fame has been absolutely unique, having only joined the empty empty battalion eighteen months ago, and coming to the Record Office two weeks after my arrival in England, and in that very short period rising to the dizzy heights of Staff-Sergeant, to my way of thinking—and also to my people's—is nothing short of marvellous. When you consider the fact that Napoleon was two years in the ranks before being made a corporal accentuates the fact more so.

"Now I live with a fellow from Central Section, who often bemoans the fact to me, that though he has been in the office for over three years, he is still in the position where he started—a buck private. 'I've worked conscientiously all this time,' he remarked the other day; 'never made a mistake, and never been crimed, and my only recognition has been a good conduct and a gold stripe.'"

"Why don't you Pelmanise?" I asked. "If I could rattle off the three books of Euclid by heart, knew every language, and had LL.D., M.D., and every other 'D' letter after my name, it wouldn't gain me a Lance-Jack stripe," he replied.

Now this set me thinking. What was it that was lacking in this fellow that I possessed? And when I was on duty Tuesday night I sat and thought again, because that's all I could do. Though I was Superintending Clerk in charge, all these funny words that they put on the cables was like Greek to me, and when I queried a peculiar word I noticed on the cable, i.e., something like "Nicotine," or "Dicoryne," and suggested I thought it was spelt wrong, the clerk got quite peeved and told me, "That if the covering on my head was made in proportion to my brain, I could use a walnut shell for a skull"; and so I sat back in my chair and thought again—this time not of the Record Office, but of the much talked of fancy dress ball. What shall I do as—of course, it must be something becoming to my rank. Already I have three stripes and a crown sewn on my overcoat, tunic, shirt, under-shirt, and pyjamas, so the character I would represent was too much tax on my brain for one evening, and I decided to think about it to-morrow.

Next afternoon I visited Morris Angel's to get a suggestion and perhaps a costume. I was shown Romeo's, Charlie

Chaplin's, Indians, Dope Fiends, and Cowboys' rig-outs galore.

"These are all right for nonentities," I remarked to Mr. Angel, "but I want something worthy of a celebrity"; and I turned the shop inside out, but all to no avail. Then somebody by the side of me remarked: "Why don't you go as you are, and represent a Regimental Pet. We had a goat in our battalion that we made a Staff-Sergeant; you would certainly get the prize for originality."

I shall never speak to that rude fellow again. Then an idea struck me: why not go as Achilles. Of course, just the very thing. A girdle for my loins, a shield and a sword. I would really be IT; and without any more delay I went to Clarkson's, and procured the necessary implements of warfare.

(II.)

In the cloak room of the Cannon St. Hotel there was a great deal of bustle and excitement. Everybody seemed to want to be somebody else for one night only. Charles I. was resurrected in the person of a well known corporal, and handsome Romeo was there in all his glory. All the worries and cares were forgotten for the time being, and happiness reigned supreme. Even the cloak room attendant wore a happy smile as well as his other clothes; anyway, his clothes were his own—that's more than some of the dress suits were that were knocking around, and when I strolled in to don my shield and sword I heard the band strike up the first waltz, and with the haunting refrain of the "Lilac Domino" wafting through the cloak room door, I attired myself in the disguise of Achilles.

It doesn't take one very long to dress in a loin girdle and pair of sandals, and at the third fox-trot I entered the ball room. Gazing at the enraptured throng of happy dancers it seemed that I was peeping into another world. Could that man dressed up there to represent a "Franciscian Friar" really be a full-blow lieutenant? What an infringement on the dignity of his rank!

Nobody could mistake me for anything but what I really was, though I did have my chest and arms bare, as I had taken good care to have the three stripes and crown painted just above the elbow, and approaching a dear young thing who was made up to represent a baby doll, I requested the pleasure of a dance, to which she acquiesced.

"You really look quite good as Robinson Crusoe," she remarked to me.

"Robinson Crusoe!" I ejaculated. "It's apparent to me your education has been sadly neglected. You have probably never heard of Achilles—the man who never told a lie.

"Oh, yes I have," she retorted. "Achilles was the man whose only vulnerable spot on his body was his heel, but I never knew he wore three stripes and a crown."

I didn't quite know the meaning of the word "vulnerable," so refused to discuss the subject any further.

At last, the great march past commenced, and I marched behind a most ridiculous person in the form of Charlie Chaplin. I can't see anything funny in him; in fact, I think his antics decidedly mundane. However, that's beside the point. When the judge asked the M.C. what I was supposed to represent, not knowing any better he replied "A Clown," and that's the reason I didn't get first prize, although I was certainly the most original and cleverest person there.

No, I didn't get first prize; in fact, my room-mate had that honour, and when we got home that night we fell to discussing things in general.

"Now what do you attribute success to?" he again asked.

"The secret of success, my boy," I again repeated, "is merit, perseverance, and endurance. That is to say, you must know the difference between a record sheet and a waste paper basket; and also if a man is 'struck off strength' of one battalion, he should be 'taken on strength' of another battalion. Simple, isn't it?"

"So that's the secret, is it?" he replied. Well, you can take it from me, Bob, the old-time philosophers were all wrong; there is no such thing as the secret of success. There is no secret about it in this office; it's just plain unadulterated, bull-headed luck."

A.M.S. BRANCH.

DINNER AND SMOKER.

On Wednesday evening, March the 5th, the Military Staff of the A.M.S. Branch enjoyed an excellent Dinner, which was followed by a bright and merry smoking concert.

Amongst the guests were Major D. H. Sinclair, of this office; and Lieutenants Sprange, D.C.M., and Davy, of A.M.S. Branch, Headquarters C.M.F. oc C.

Having done justice to a splendid menu, and Major Sinclair having accepted an invitation to take the chair, the programme was proceeded with, the numerous items thereon being contributed by S.-Sgt. Menzies, S.-Sgt. Blatch, Corporals Paterson, Huckstep, Cranston, Privates Defieux, and Stone, who were ably accompanied by Pte. Stone, assisted by Cpl. Cranston. The several items rendered by "Dick" Defieux caused a remark to be passed by one of the guests to the effect that Mr. C. B. Cochran had not roped in all the talent in London, and should Pte. Defieux ever come to his notice, the A.M.S. Branch would lose one of its most popular members.

Speeches by the guests and others of the staff brought a most enjoyable evening to a close, on the success of which the committee are to be congratulated.