

A PAWN IN THE GAME

(Being the Pathetic Story of a Soldier's Return)

When I left the Granville, after completing a course at massage and electric treatment, I promised to write and narrate the events of importance appertaining to my returning to the place from whence I came.

As soon as I had reported myself to the institution, it being Saturday, and I financially embarrassed as usual I availed myself of shank's pony and made a bee line to see Rachael, whom I had not seen for such a long long time. You know how I used to rave to you of her charms and how I doted on her.

Arriving at my destination I found the place had not altered much, though the three brass balls which hang over the shop proclaiming the nature of her father's business were badly dented. On inquiring of a policeman I was informed one of the lady customers not being satisfied over a business transaction, which necessitated the changing hands of two flat-irons and a frying-pan, aimed these articles at the emblems of a noble profession, nearly putting Mrs. Ikenstein, (Rachael's Mother) out of business; for the good lady happened at the time to be sitting at the "vindy" window soliloquising on the price of potatoes and the redeeming qualities displayed by the ladies of Whitechapel on a Saturday night.

Rachael gazed on me approvingly where once she turned away with haughty mein.

She looked charming in an economical dress trimmed with valuable lace. How well I knew the lace for had I not presented it to her when I said farewell on my departure for Ramsgate, and "pledged" her to be true and Romeo-like exclaimed.

Parting is such sweet sorrow

My watch is in the hock shop

But I'll get it out tomorrow.

Now I'll tell you on the quiet, I bought the costly lace off a barrow in the Whitechapel Road and told her I had bought it in Oxford Street at Selfridges. My thoughts went back to the Ramsgate dugouts, but I brushed them aside, not the dugouts but my guilty thoughts, and summoning courage stimulated by the fact I had not the price of the first instalment on a free lunch, I concluded it was up to me to get busy, so bade her sit by my side on the sofa. Oh! what bliss. I was in another world and visions of a "pub" well supplied with all kinds of good beer and I sitting in an easy chair with a fat cigar and a quart pot at my elbow. Suddenly the silence was broken by a shrill female voice which floated up the stairs "say guvner, can't yer make it three bob" which recalled me to my senses sufficiently for me to re-