

leave important matters undecided!" Naturally the young official was dismayed by so dark a prediction, nothing less than a death-warrant. Within twenty-four hours he was having difficulty with his respiration, and was seized with an acute pain in the region of the heart. He took to his bed with the feeling that he should never arise from it. During the night he became so much worse that his servant sent for the doctor. "What on earth have you been doing to yourself?" demanded the doctor. "There were no indications of this sort when I saw you yesterday." "It is my heart, I suppose," weakly answered the patient. "Your heart!" repeated the doctor. "Your heart was all right yesterday. My lungs, then?" "What is the matter with you, man? You do not seem to have been drinking." "Your letter," gasped the patient, "you said I had only a few weeks to live." "Are you crazy?" said the doctor. "I wrote you to take a few weeks' vacation in the hills, and you would be all right." For reply the patient drew the letter from under the bedclothes and gave it to the doctor. "Heavens!" cried that gentleman, as he glanced at it. "This was meant for another man. My assistant misplaced the letters." The young man at once sat up in bed and made a rapid recovery. And what of the patient for whom the direful prognosis was intended? Delighted with the report that a sojourn in the hills would set him right, he started at once, and five years later was alive and in fair health.

At the Military Manoeuvres in Ireland.

The compensation officers were busy all day with claims, some of them quite preposterous, from the inhabitants. However, as evening fell all work was done, and the usual cheery party gathered round the mess table in the umpire's camp. There was no sitting up late, for all were fairly tired, and there was an early start next day. In the stillness of the night a voice was heard, apparently that of an Irish farmer, inquiring, "If ye please, sor, are you the compensation officer?" "What do you want?" replied that worthy, from inside his tent and apparently from his bed, in very gruff tones. "If ye please, sir, I want to see you about some compensation for me hay."

"Oh, come tomorrow, and I'll settle."

"If ye please, sor, I'll after seeking ye for the whole evening. Me name's Murphy, sor, and me farm is ten miles distant, et cetera, et cetera, ad lib."

"Oh, go away and don't bother me now."

"But, sor, I've a letter from the officer of the artillery, et cetera."

Badgered and worried, the compensation officer got out of his bed and unlocked the door of his tent, emerging into the moonlight to be greeted with a view-halloo from the pseudo-complainant, who turned out to be that admirable mimic, the camp commandant.

Then in the moonlight the sentries saw two flying figures, pursuing and pursued. The first was in the ordinary uniform of the British officer, and his countenance was triumphant; the second was clothed in pyjamas, and his countenance indicated a desire for blood. Round the tents they ran like the Greeks and Trojans, till finally they disappeared into the mess tent, whence sound of laughter arose, followed by the opening of soda water bottles.—From "An Umpire at Irish Manoeuvres," by Colonel G. K. Scott Moncrieff, C. B., C. I. E.

A Tale of the Rifle Butts.

Some time ago a squad of recruits were assembled at the range of the Robin Hood Rifles, preparatory to their introductory class-firing. They had received from the drill-sergeant (a native of the Emerald Isle) the order: "With ball cartridge—load!" but just as the first man brought his rifle to the "present," the danger-signal was hoisted, and the marker issued from his mantlet, with pail and brush, to re-whiten the target.

"Danger! Cease firing," cried the sergeant, at the same time falling to the rear to light his pipe. Just then, bang! went one of the rifles; the frightened marker dropped pail and brush, fell flat in front of the target.

"Whirloo!" roared the sergeant, leaping round and flinging his pipe away, then—spying the prostrate marker—"Och murder! The man's kilt, kilt entirely. Are you alive, marker?"

"Yes," howled the marker, as he cautiously raised his head, "but that fool's no business to be."

"Who fired that shot?" demanded the sergeant.

"I did," answered the man on the left; but you needn't make a fuss, sergeant. It was only a blank cartridge, just to steady my nerves!"

The sergeant tried to swear, but failed.

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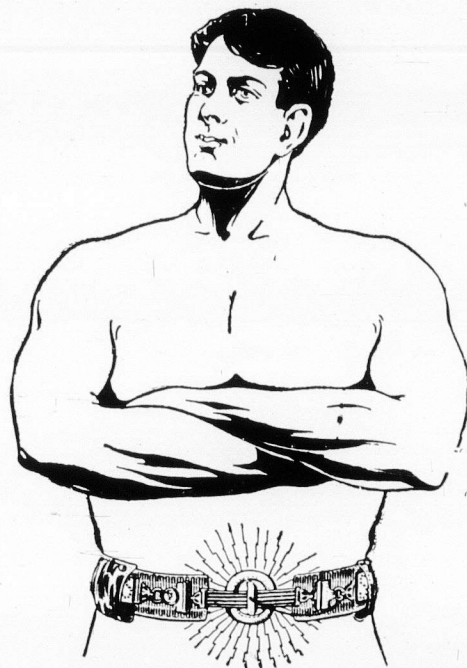
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