

Mr. Chubb.

Mr. Chubb of Peckham, London, S. E. lay on the ground all crumpled up with his leg twisted like a note of interrogation. He was wondering whether he was dead or alive.

On the whole, Mr. Chubb rather believed himself to be dead. He had a vague recollection of a lone, dreary march under a blistering sun, of an extraordinary feeling of emptiness; traces of much laughing and firing, and rubbing forward again.

After that things became slightly mixed. Something hit him in the leg. It didn't hurt, you know, but it made him very angry, because he was very busy shooting boars. So he had to sit down, or lie down; and that's about all to be remembered.

Yes, Mr. Chubb felt tolerably comfortable. He was now a dead man and was surprised at his own indifference. Somehow his thoughts turned to Peckham, and he remembered certain bank holidays spent on the Rye. Mr. Chubb chuckled at the mere thought of it. He had been most surprisingly drunk that day. Not that being drunk was an unusual occurrence but this was a special affair. It was a kind of red-letter day, and had ended in a really delightful fight with a man from the country, whose wife had called Mrs. Chubb a "woman."

It was too funny for words—so Mr. Chubb thought, as he lay there in a heap. A policeman arrived on the scene and requested the pleasure of his company as far as the station, and Mr. Chubb, being exuberantly happy, knocked him down, and proceeded to jump on him. Finally he required four constables to persuade him to visit their official residence; and Mr. Chubb clearly recollected singing "It's a great big shame" the whole way, followed by an appreciative and admiring crowd.

Lord what a day it was. And what glorious times he had before this "adjective" silly war broke out, and he was "adjective" silly fool enough to enlist for it.

Just then Mr. Chubb felt a splash of rain on his face. Also he noticed that the atmosphere was cold; and he concluded from this that he was not dead, but very much alive.

He turned the motion over in his mind for some time. It was rather amusing, this being alive. There might still be time for some more fun.

On the whole, he might as well get up and find out where the other "blokes" were.

So Mr. Chubb proceeded to rise. Then he made a discovery. His right leg was up to his own expressive phrase—"all over the shop." He was no more able to stand, or even sit up, than he was able to fly, or see back, and "saw" load and shoot.

Presently he heard a half-suppressed groan.

"Ugh!" said Mr. Chubb hoarsely. "Oo's that sighing?"

"It's only me," said a faint voice. "And you're only me when 'tis at home!" said Mr. Chubb.

"I'm Field, of the Horse Artillery," said the faint voice.

"Never heard of you," said Mr. Chubb dryly.

"Who art you?" said Field of the Horse Artillery.

"Me?" said Mr. Chubb. "Well, I'm Chubb of Peckham, at present serving with her glorious majesty's booming rifle brigade. Where are you?"

"In the stomach," said Mr. Chubb was silent for a minute, and then he said in a somewhat gentler voice:

"Frisky had, ain't it, matey?"

"Right leg, I'm about done for," said the voice, very faintly, indeed.

"Garn!" said Mr. Chubb, promptly. "You ain't done for—not by a long way! Cheer up!"

"Where are you hit?" said the voice.

"Right leg," said Mr. Chubb, in a tone of deep disgust. "Still, I s'pose I ought not to grumble. It don't hurt when I keep still—at least, notbing to speak of."

There was silence for a few minutes; and then Field of the Horse Artillery whispered:

"Did you say you come from Peckham?"

"Yes, No. 14 Angel Terrace, Queen's Road." "I know Peckham," said the faint voice.

"Lovely place, ain't it?" murmured Mr. Chubb, sarcastically. "Wonderful sea breeze you get all the way up from the Elephant. And the view you gets from the giddy 'ights of Camberwell is enough to turn your head."

"I believe I know you," said the voice, huskily.

"Know me?" echoed Mr. Chubb, doubtfully. "That don't say much for the company you keep. What are you—a cop?"

"Before I joined I used to hold a temperance notice every Sunday on the Rye," said the faint voice, very faintly, indeed. "I'm afraid I'm too bad to talk."

"Don't trouble to talk, matey, if it hurts you," said Mr. Chubb, faintly.

"You leave it to me, Bosler. I reckon you're done your share of jawing."

II.

There was a moment's silence, for Mr. Chubb was in some pain, and he alluded to it in an undertone, with a wealth and variety of adjectives which would have delighted the angels of Angel Terrace.

"Now, for you belt a temperance sputter?" he said, genially. "Wonder you hadn't more sense. I remembers you. You're a little clogg—sandy 'air and big mouth. I suppose you checked the temperance dodge when you joined the army?"

"No," said the weak voice, obediently speaking with a great effort. "But I'd give anything for a drink of brandy now."

"No," said Mr. Chubb, firmly. "I could manage a little drop myself—or even a pot of four-

ty, he added then helpfully, smacking his lips at the notion.

Again the conversation flagged. Field of the Horse Artillery being too weak to talk, and Mr. Chubb of Peckham being very busy turning over an idea in his mind.

"You'll excuse me," he said presently. "But ah! you the bloke that 'elped my missus and the kids when I was pinched?"

"Some friends of mine sent money to them," said the faint voice, in a husky whisper.

"Lathum!" murmured Mr. Chubb. "What a rum thing I should meet you here! So it was you sent 'em some money every week? Well, I'm dashed!"

Mr. Chubb was so taken up with that remarkable coincidence that, after careful thought, he uttered: "Well, I'm jiggered!"

Ten another idea struck him, and with much difficulty he got out a small metal flask, in which he always carried a small supply of spirituous refreshment.

"It ain't likely there's a drop left," he muttered. "I never do leave much behind."

But on being shaken the flask gave up a slight splash, and then there was perhaps a tablespoonful of brandy in it. This was almost more surprising than meeting an unknown friend, and Mr. Chubb's remarks cannot be recorded with propriety.

"Don't be so slow to be so slow to answer the stopper, and pour the contents down his over-thirsty throat, but something made him hesitate.

"I say, matey," he said gruffly, "I've found a drop of brandy in my flask. Could you manage to crawl over 'ere for it?"

There was no answer. Field of the Horse Artillery couldn't even murmur "No."

"Lor, said Mr. Chubb indignantly, as he addressed a third person: "What's the good of talking silly? This poor bloke can't move 'and or foot!"

"I reckon you'd better drink it yourself, Mr. Chubb," he added, in a doubtful, voluble, and all-around looking way.

"Well, no, thanks," he added regretfully. "I think I'll give it to that little sandy chap. You see, he's been a sort of 'ol to me, unbeknownst like."

So with a sigh he handed the flask to the most exasperating agony. Mr. Chubb of Peckham proceeded to drag himself along the ground as best he could.

The pain was intense, and, although he was not a highly strung individual, the perspiration broke out on his face and head, and he clenched his teeth in a resolute determination not to cry out.

In the meantime, Field of the Horse Artillery, who was rather recovered consciousness, and was vaguely aware that something was happening.

"What are you doing?" he groaned. "I've got to give you a nip of 'brandy," said Mr. Chubb, in a steady voice.

"Oh, I shall be glad of it!" murmured the other. "But don't you trouble if it hurts you."

"Urra me!" said Mr. Chubb, in a tone of deep misery. "Urra me? 'Oo said anything about 'urting?"

Then he lay flat on his stomach and the sleeve of his jacket to stop himself from grinning. He was only a few feet from his comrade, but it seemed like so many miles.

"It takes a long time when your leg is bad, doesn't it?" said the other man, sympathetically.

"Well, I ain't exactly in racing condition," said Mr. Chubb. "But don't you worry, I shall be there before Christmas."

Ten minutes later he could just manage to reach Field of the Horse Artillery with his outstretched arm.

"Here you are, matey," he said, "Flinlah it up."

"Have you had some yourself?" murmured the other, doubtfully.

"What do you think?" said Mr. Chubb gruffly. "Did you ever know me lose a chance?"

So Field of the Horse Artillery swallowed the tablespoonful of brandy, and Mr. Chubb smacked his lips at the thought of the drink which he had not had.

"That's better," said Field. "I'm awfully grateful to you!"

"Don't mention it," said Mr. Chubb. "Seems queer you should give me brandy, when I've so often warned you to keep clear of it."

"I feel another man already," said Field. "Glad of that," said Mr. Chubb briefly.

He was beginning to feel curiously drowsy, and although moment ago he had been in some pain, now he was now trembling with cold.

"I wonder when the ambulance will come," said Field of the Horse Artillery, almost cheerfully, for he felt so warm.

"Don't know, I'm sure," muttered Mr. Chubb. "But I shall go straight 'ome to the missus in the mornin'."

Mr. Chubb was wandering in his head.

Proving a Proverb.

"Fine feathers do not make fine birds," said Bartlett, in a manner to convey his opinion that that settled the whole matter beyond any possible dispute.

"What nonsense!" cried Lathum. "they do, and all the proverbs in the world cannot prove the contrary. Proverbs are usually misleading, to say the least, and yet people accept them as truth just because they have a common place. Facial resemblance alters them with an air of authority."

"But, sir, suppose," Bartlett remarked, with ungrammatical good humor.

"For the moment, sir," Lathum admitted, "but I'd just as lief take my turn at it. If I were to make a proverb, not to express my idea of the truth, I'd come out flat-footed, without any metaphor, and proclaim that clothes make the gentleman."

"But you don't believe it?" "Yes, sir," Lathum.

There was a lull of protests, for among the dozen or so debaters, Lathum was a minority of one. It was the Stay-at-home club, after dinner.

At last, however, an invitation to membership in the Stay-at-home club implied, wealthy young men who had never done a stroke of remunerative work.

They were all good Americans, and Lathum, an extremely aristocratic fellow, at all events, so the views seemed to them. Perhaps if they had understood them better, opinions might have changed.

"I'd like to see Bartlett, to put that proverb of yours to the test. You wouldn't say, for example, that if your valet put on your clothes he would thereby become your equal as a gentleman?"

I would," declared Lathum, who was a stout, broad fellow, "provided the clothes fitted him. I must say that equality isn't in the discussion, but I'll let that go, for the general principle is the same. My valet is trained to do anything and everything. He is a gentleman in disguise, or I'd turn him off. He is honest, or he would have cleared out long ago with my valuables. He speaks as good English as many a gentleman I've met."

The men were not convinced that good clothes would make this valet anything but a menial, and after some fruitless arguing Bartlett returned to the attack with renewed vigor.

"If your proverb is true," he said, "the reverse should be true. Suppose you were to put on a menial's livery, would you be a valet, or would you still be the gentleman that you understand?"

"I don't know whether I should be a valet," Lathum replied, "for that takes special training, but I should not be a gentleman any longer. Of that I am certain."

It would be interesting to prove that," murmured Bartlett, thoughtfully. "My footman left me to-day, and I haven't yet selected his successor. Why not take his place for one evening, and see if the livery makes you anything but a gentleman. Come on! I'll pay you a hundred dollars that you can't stand the test."

Lathum colored and nodded uneasily. "I'd be obliged by lots of people," he said, "and that would be pleasant."

"Well," suggested Bartlett, becoming deeply interested, "you can give yourself a real test. You'll have to wear that livery for years. Few would recognize you with a smooth face. Shave all but short lips and try it. Come—have you the courage of your convictions?"

The question aroused all Lathum's stubbornness.

"I have," he answered promptly, "and I'll take your wager on the understanding that no one outside those present are to be informed of what is going on."

"Sure!" cried Bartlett. "For if you didn't keep it private the test wouldn't be fair."

There was a deal of rallery at Lathum's expense during the rest of the evening, but he kept it manfully, and expressed perfect confidence that he would win Bartlett's hundred. Next morning, therefore, he sent for a barber to remove his beard, and then he looked at himself in a glass with a shudder of apprehension. Smooth lips and cheeks seemed to be no disguise whatever. To his own eyes he appeared dreadfully familiar, but he comforted himself with the thought that there was a difference that would be made by clothes, and took him to Bartlett's residence to don the footman's livery and assume that functional place.

"Facial resemblance is not so common," he reflected. Sydney Lathum, but they'll never suspect that the footman is anything but what he seems to be.

Bartlett was ready for him, and when Lathum had put on the livery and stood waiting for orders.

"For the rest of to-day," said Bartlett, "you are James. I am going to drive up the avenue. Lathum followed him to the stable and climbed to the footman's seat behind him. There he sat bolt upright and motionless while Bartlett drove along the familiar street, and was gaily with various conversing fashionable folk to the well-shaded or to the parks for their morning airing. Many of them were acquaintances of both young men and Bartlett was half the time lifting his eyebrows at the manner of recognition. Apparently no one saw the menial on the rear seat. Lathum began to feel easier. It seemed to him as if this failure of his friends to so much as look at him went far to prove his theory.

After a turn through the park Bartlett drove downtown to the shopping district and there the amateur footman's troubles began in earnest. Bartlett, by a multitude of errands to do in the stores more frequented by

the fashion-able crowd while he was behind the scenes, returned to the car in full view of the ever-changing multitude. He saw many a lady who would have done him the honor to be in any other costume, but, though he had painful memories of a acquaintance, he approached not one of them as a man in a glance. Once Bartlett pulled up at the curb and begged an elderly man into a long conversation about nothing, while "James" watched in spite, for the elderly man was the father of the girl Lathum was engaged to marry. The prospective father-in-law paid no attention to the footman and after they had gone on, Lathum remarked:

"It seems to me that was unbecomingly."

"A good footman," returned Bartlett, "does not comment upon his master's conduct."

"But, sir, you must see 'James' sitting in the car, and he's looking at you again after that, and he's at the house of Lathum's fiancée. Bartlett calmly went in to make a call while 'James' kept company with the horse. He said very many things to Bartlett, who took pains to admit that he hadn't had such a good time for years, to which Lathum ventured to respond. "Nevertheless, I think I am proving my proverb and winning."

"Frankly, old fellow, I think you are," said Bartlett, "but the day isn't done yet."

All the afternoon they drove around town, and in spite of the numerous services that Lathum had to perform, he never betrayed himself, and he was recognized only by the clubmen who were met from time to time. This was doubtless by prearrangement, for Bartlett frequently consulted his watch and changed his course as if he had an engagement somewhere at a definite hour. It was always after some circumstance that they would come upon a group of the clubmen, who would nod to him, and he would make shy remarks about his "servant."

Lathum won their admiration by the heroic way he stood the lather, never retorting, or even seeming to hear.

The sun was just setting when Bartlett pulled up at a front street, near a hotel on upper Broadway. The clubmen were there, and after the usual chaffing directed at "James," they all went into the barroom. Lathum, of course, remained at the horse's head, and the clubmen were so noisily over and rejoiced in his victory. The men, having had their refreshment, came out and lingered in the doorway, reluctant to disperse and so refused to leave until Lathum had gone. While they stood there a plainly dressed woman came along. She had a little girl by the hand. A drunken loafer, reeling by, accosted her, much to her annoyance and, when he persisted in directing his remarks to her alarm, Lathum darted quickly to the fellow's side, caught him by the collar, yanked him away from the woman, and gave him such a vigorous kick that he went staggering half way across the street, and he was watching the doorway were immensely interested. Sure that he had never returned to poster the woman, Lathum returned to the door, and he turned to see her. Up to him then walked the woman.

"Thank you, sir," said she, gratefully; "you are a gentleman if ever there was one."

The assertion, overheard by the men in the doorway, set them into an uncontrollable roar of laughter. The woman turned upon them in amazement.

"He's much more of a gentleman," she cried indignantly, "than you well dressed men who ought to know better."

They did their best to check their laughter, for they perceived that the woman supposed that they were making fun of her, and she had a superior air altogether, and she hurried away protesting to the little girl that the man in servant's uniform was unmistakably a gentleman because his conduct proved it.

"That, of course, was the end of the test. Lathum was inclined to deny that he had lost. "That woman is no judge," he argued; "she doesn't know a gentleman," but the other fellows shook their heads.

"She recognized the mark of a gentleman in spite of your clothes and you'd better settle, old fellow," they said. And Lathum decided to do so. His stubbornness, which stood him in good stead during the trying day, inclined him to hold to his story, but he found no little satisfaction in the fact that the episode raised him higher in the esteem of his friends than he had ever been before.

The sculptors are now very busy on the interior of the new dome of the basilica of Montmartre, Paris. Hammer and chisel seem to have no rest, for M. Robaut de Flourey says there are 400 strokes a minute nearly all day.

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