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How Jack Hart Won His Company.

(By E. C. Rundle Woolcock, Author of 'The Bible Punchers,' 'Two Artillerymen,' Etc.)

The sun almost rained down heat on the soldiers as they turned out into the square for 'squad drill,' and grumbles were many and

night, when some men had returned to barracks with the news that Jack Hart, the hero of the canteen, had gone religious! They had turned in with him to a meeting, just for a lark; but they found the lark didn't sing at all. 'It was just touch-and-go with Jack; and got the straight tip, he thought, and on my honor, if he didn't stand up to be prayed for—

ting their faces dead against God and the right, willingly become the devil's tools themselves, and act as Satan's recruiting-sergeants, by doing their utmost to ruin their comrades, and never repent?

But the fun did not come off. Jack Hart entered the room very late, and 'lights out' sounded whilst he stood hesitating as to whether he should show his colors, and stick to them now or not; and until he did hold up the colors, the men felt they could take no action. So Hart prayed in his cot that night, and felt like a coward when he overheard his comrades muttering, 'Knew he wouldn't dare.' 'Pooh! he's ashamed of his colors.' 'Well, I didn't think he'd show the white feather, anyhow.'

Private Hart lay awake for some time, thinking, and thinking hard, too. Supposing he did take his stand openly in sight of his comrades, would he be able to remain on the ground? could he live up to it? Under ordinary circumstances he was not a coward, but he knew he was one now, although it was not persecution he dreaded so much as the fear that he should retreat, or be beaten back. He was not a talkative fellow, but he could sing and joke, and was a good hand at cricket. His position amongst his comrades was secure; they liked him and they liked his voice; he was always willing to 'give them a song.' Must he give all this up? could he do so? Could he not just quietly go on living up to it, saying nothing and doing nothing to draw their attention until he felt more certain of his footing? Satan, having gained a point the night before, was not going to retreat, and



KIRKHAM SEIZED HART'S LEGS AND PULLED HIM PROSTRATE.

various as, obeying the orders—'Right-turn—two—left-turn—two—right-about-turn—two—three,' and so on, which were roared at them by the N.C.O., the men went through the turnings. They hated the whole business of drill; they always felt they were, in reality, machines, not men, when they were ordered about in this 'tommy-rot' style. If they could only get out of England and do something for the old country's honor, fight some battle, or show the 'heathens' what stuff they were made of, then soldiering would be all right—but this everlasting drill. Oh! bother that sergeant! they'd like to make him remember he didn't always wear a bit of gold lace, and to call back to his memory the days when he was going through the turnings; perhaps he'd be a bit less hard then. And what was the good of it, after all?

Private Jack Hart was perhaps the only man on the square who was not grumbling inwardly, and he had other things to occupy his mind. Only yesterday he had really turned to the right-about and set his face heavenwards. One verse kept beating itself into his brain, mixing itself up with the words of the sergeant's orders, 'The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.'

He wanted to know God, he wanted to do exploits, but he felt perfectly certain he never should do either the one or the other. As for knowing God, he meant to try very hard towards that end. But exploits!—that was quite another matter. He felt he should never get beyond the drill in the army of the King of kings; it would be always right-turn—left-turn, etc., to end in 'squad front'—nothing to show for it all.

There had been a regular sensation last

prayed for, mind you—in front of all of us! So we left him and came off.'

'Right you were!' one or two men said at



'I SAY, HART, WHO'S YOUR CAPTAIN?'

once, and they set about preparing for Jack's reception. When he came back from the meeting, No. 4 barrack-room meant to have a good time, and Private Jack Hart was to 'get it hot'; they meant 'to knock it out of him,' regardless of the fact that men reap as they sow. Surely if any deserve a future life of misery, those do who, not content with set-

Hart never recognized the Tempter urging him to extreme caution when he resolved to be careful.

Reveille sounded! Now, when the men's eyes were on him, Jack felt weaker than ever; 'he could pray without being seen, couldn't he?' The thought no sooner entered his brain than he acted upon it. One or two of his