

gan a number of travelling men, most of whom had not seen each other for years. After the ordinary salutations they parted to meet that night in the room of one of them, to talk over old times and renew old acquaintances. So, after supper, the party in question convened as agreed upon in the morning, and after ordering up enough liquid refreshments to float the furniture, settled down to have a good night of it.

In the "gang" there happened to be a real jolly fellow and a great joker, but, unfortunately for him, he could not stand up under much "booze" so long about midnight poor Jim, for this was his name, sank off his chair into insensibility. His companions, seeing his condition, and most of them, on former occasions, having served as targets for his practical fun, agreed to pay up some of the old scores in his own coin. Scattering in every direction they soon returned, each laden with some instrument of torture, with which they intended to "do" poor Jim. One had several thin, narrow boards; another a great roll of linen bandages; another a lot of sticking plaster; another a bottle of arnica, and so on. They lifted the poor fellow and laid him on the bed. Gently removing his coat, they rolled back his shirt sleeves, and placing one of the boards above and another below his arm, they bandaged them there in the most approved style, saturating the bandages with arnica. Then cutting great strips of court plaster they pasted them over one eye and away back on the side of his head. Then tying his head up in cloths all blotched over with red ink, they

got to work to bring him to. This they did in short order, with the aid of a little ice-water and camphor. Then they all gathered around him, and at the first sign of life one of them leaned over him and asked in an anxious voice, "Do you think he will live?" At this the victim's eye flew open and he attempted to get up. One of the party put his hand on his shoulder and cried:

"For Heaven's sake, Jim, don't move or you may kill yourself."

"Jim, are you in much pain? Where were you hurt most?"

"Hurt. I don't hurt anywhere. What the devil is the matter with you fellows?" he belated, trying to get up again.

"Don't try to get up!" cried several, shoving him back. "Don't you remember what has happened? Look at your arm."

Poor Jim looked down at his arm and then reached up and felt his head.

"Boys," said he, looking at the scared faces around him, "what has happened?"

Then one of the number told him that he had a terrible fight with a noted bully of the town, and had pretty nearly killed him, but in doing it he had been handled rather roughly himself, and had fallen and broken his arm. He looked at his arm and then around him, and then wanted a looking-glass to see himself, but they coaxed him to wait until morning. It seemed to do him a world of good to know that he had "done" the other fellow, and he kept asking:—

"He is worse hurt than I am, is he?"

"Don't your arm hurt you?" asks one.

"Why, it is broken in three places."

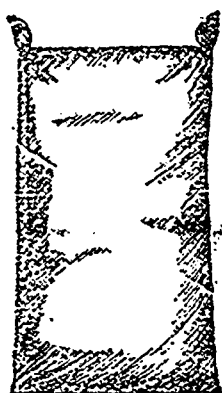
"Yes," says Jim, "it does begin to hurt me, but it is my head that pains me the most. What did he hit me with? He must have hit me a terrible blow in the eye, too, for I can't see a blamed thing. It isn't out, is it?" (anxiously.)

They kept the poor fellow in bed for two days, during which time they had a strange commercial traveller personate a doctor, who asked his patient all sorts of questions and had him describe all sorts of pains and aches, and drew out of him all sorts of admissions that were gloatingly treasured up by his listening companions. On the morning of the third day, the doctor said he might go down stairs if he would promise not to talk too much. By this time every one in town knew what was going on, and there was a tremendous crowd in the office to see him. When he appeared on the stairs the crowd cheered, and the poor fellow took off his hat and was almost affected to tears. Everybody wanted to shake hands with him and congratulate him on his success and expressed hopes of his speedy recovery. It was a treat to see how carefully he guarded his arm from being jarred, and the face he would make when some one would jostle against him.

Along about nine o'clock that evening they told him it was all a joke, and that there was nothing the matter with him. At first he was perfectly dumbfounded. But when he once comprehended what it all meant, he, unlike most men, entered into the whole affair with the greatest gusto, and was the central figure in the celebration that followed. Of course Jim had to make a speech, which he did, with credit to himself and colleagues.

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