

drank, worked, and slept. That was my way so far as concerns keeping the body machine going, sir.

"But now things were shifted around end for end. From picking and choosing to find something to suit my palate, I came to fairly abhor my food. There it was ready for me. I needed it, desired it, and loathed it, all at once, if you can understand that, sir."

The writer said he could understand it without exertion, as he had once been in that same fix himself.

"All right," continued the Captain, "then I won't have to use so many words to make my story plain. After I did get something down it began to punish me as though eating were against the law. There would come pains and a tightness across my chest as though the food had got lodged half way down. Then a feeling of emptiness, a kind of gnawing, craving feeling, which was there just the same whether I ate or not. Presently my skin and eyes began to turn yellow as a buttercup, and my sight grew dim, as though I was walking in a Scotch mist. Every once in a while something so sour and nasty would come up in my mouth that it made me disgusted and sick. It was sour and bit like an acid.

"By this time I was so low-spirited and discouraged that I gave up work and made a business of trying to get cured. As for eating, I could take nothing but slops. Then the flesh went off me like a snowbank melting under a warm sun in spring, and I hadn't hardly strength to walk from one side of the room to the other. The doctor said I had Windy Rheumatism, and he tried for three months to cure me, but for all his medicines I got worse."

Having paused to relight his pipe the Captain blew out a mouthful of smoke and continued:—

"After a little while my ankles began to puff up and swell and my stomach too. My

stomach swelled till it looked like I was carrying a bag of meal under my clothes."

[Comment by the writer: Captain Wadhams is naturally a medium-sized man, with no tendency to corpulence, and he could scarcely have taken so suddenly to piling on the flesh he had just lost. His complaint had reached the dropsical stage, a very dangerous stage to arrive at.]

"By now," the Captain went on, "I was as yellow all over as a new sovereign. This was jaundice, they said—the bile dammed back in the blood and showing through the skin."

"That was probably because the liver didn't work properly," said the listener, drawing on his stock of medical knowledge.

"So they told me afterwards," responded Captain Wadhams, "but *what made the liver go on strike?* That the doctor couldn't tell me. I was now so much frightened that I went to Guy's Hospital, in London, and was admitted as an indoor patient. They put me in Stevens' Ward, bed 23. Here I was seen by several doctors, and when I asked what it was that ailed me they said, '*That is what we are trying to find out.*' I was in such agony that they gave me narcotics to dull the pain, and at last decided to resort to surgical means—'tapping,' we often call it—to rid me of the water, I was so terribly bloated.

"When they at last got ready to operate on me I thought perhaps I might not come out of it alive, and I said to the doctors, '*I leave my life in your hands. If the Lord sees fit to take me I must submit to His will.*'"

"After the operation was over and several quarts of water had been taken from me, I felt relieved for the time being of the pressure, but not of the other symptoms I have described. The water soon accumulated again, sir, as you may suppose, and I had to go through two more operations.

"Seeing that no good was likely to come of staying in the hospital, I made up my

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