

CAP'N ERI

By JOSEPH C. LINCOLN

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(Continued.)

They both laughed, and Mrs. Snow was about to answer when she was interrupted.

"Eri," said a weak voice. "Eri," the captain started, turned sharply and saw the sick man watching him, his eyes fixed and unwavering.

"Eri," said John Baxter again, "come here."

Mrs. Snow hurried to her patient, but the latter impatiently bade her let him alone.

"Not you," he said. "I want Eri." Captain Eri stooped down beside the bed.

"What is it, John?" he asked. "Eri," spoke God called you to break man's law and keep his, what would you do?"

The captain glanced anxiously at the housekeeper. Then he said soothingly: "Oh, that's all right, John. Don't worry 'bout that. You and me settled that long ago. How are you feelin' now?"

"I know, I know," with the monotony of persistence of those whose minds are wandering—and then clearly once more, "Eri, I've been called."

"Sh-h! That's all right, John; that's all right. Don't you want Mrs. Snow to fix your pills? Praps you'd lay a little easier, then. Now, Mrs. Snow, if you'll just turn it while I lift him so; that's better now, ain't it, shipmate, hey?"

But the sick man muttered an unintelligible something, and relapsed once more into the half-dozed, half-stupor that was his usual state.

Captain Eri sighed in relief. "That was queer, wa'n't it?" he observed.

"He's had two or three of those spells in the last day or two," was the answer.

The captain wondered what his friend might have said during those "spells," but he was afraid to inquire. Instead he asked, "What did the doctor say when he was here this mornin'?"

"Nothin' very hopeful. I asked him plain what he thought of the case, and he answered just as plain. He said Cap'n Baxter had failed dreadful in the last week, and that he wouldn't be 'prised if he dropped off most any time. Then again he said he might live for months."

"I never saw him so restless afore," commented Captain Eri anxiously.

"He was so last night."

"Did Elsie see him?"

"No, I was alone here, and she was asleep in the next room. I got up and shut the door."

The captain glanced kindly at the housekeeper, but the fact was plain and inescapable. He shifted uneasily, and then said: "Elsie's late, tonight, ain't she? I wonder what's keepin' her."

"School work, I s'pose. She's workin' harder'n she ought to, I think."

"Fire!"

The word was shouted, and the room rang with it. John Baxter, whose weakness had hitherto been so great that he could not turn himself in bed, was leaning on his elbow and pointing with outstretched finger to the open stove door.

"Fire!" he shouted again. "It's burnin'! It's burnin'! It's wipin' the plague spot from the earth. I hear you, Lord! I'm old, but I hear you, and your servant's ready. Where will it be tomorrow? Gone! Burnt up! And the ways of the wicked shan't prevail."

They forced him back on the pillow, but he fought them fiercely for a moment or two. After they thought they had quieted him he broke out again, talking rapidly and clearly.

"I hear the call, Lord," he said. "I thank thee for showin' it to me in your book. And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles, with fire. With fire! With fire!"

"Sh-h! There, there, John! Don't talk so," entreated the captain.

"Where's the kerosene?" continued the old man. "An' the shavin's. It's dark here, in the corner. Ah, ha! Ah, ha! 'And all their goodly castles with fire!' Now, Web Saunders, you wicked man! Now! Burn! I've done it, Lord! I've done it!"

"Hush!" almost shouted the agitated Captain Eri. "Hush, John! Be still!"

"There, there, Cap'n Baxter," said Mrs. Snow soothingly, laying her hand on the sick man's forehead. Somehow the touch seemed to quiet him. His eyes lost their fire and he muttered absently that he was tired. Then the eyes closed and he lay still, breathing heavily.

"Land of love!" exclaimed the captain. "That was awful. Hadn't I better go for the doctor?"

"I don't think so, unless he gets worse. He had jest such a turn, as I told you, last night."

"Did he talk like he did jest now?"

"Jest the same."

"Bout the same things?"

"Yes."

The captain gasped. "Then you knew?" he said.

"That he set the billiard room afire? Yes. I've always rather suspected that he did, and last night, of course, made me sure of it."

"Well, well! You haven't said nothin' 'bout it to anybody?"

"Of course not."

"No; course you haven't. You must excuse me—I'm kind of upset, I guess. Dear, dear! Did you think I knew it?"

"I sort of guessed that you did."

"Well, I did. I've known it ever since that night he was found. He had his coat on when I found him, and 'twas all burnt, and there was an empty kerosene bottle in his pocket. I hid the coat and threw the bottle away and turned him so he was facin' toward the saloon 'stead of from it. And I lied when I told the doctor that he was jest as he felt. There, the nurse's out! Now, what do you think of me?"

"Think? I think you did exactly right."

"You do?"

"I sartinly do."

"Well, I sartinly do. I've been over that thing time and time again, and I've felt like I was sort of a freem myself sometimes. I've heard folks layin' it to just one and then the other and callin' that Web did it himself to get the insurance, and all the time I've known who really did do it and haven't said anything. I jest couldn't. You see, John and me's been brothers all most. But I didn't s'pose anybody else would see it the same way."

"Cap'n Eri, do you s'pose I blame you for tryin' to keep your best friend out of trouble that he got into by bein'—well—out of his head. Why, land of mercy! He ain't no more to be held responsible than a baby. You did what I'd have done if I'd been in your place, and I respect you for it."

The captain's voice shook as he answered:

"Marthy Snow," he said, "you're the kind of woman that I'd like to have had for a sister."

It was perhaps a half hour later when Captain Eri started for the schoolhouse to bring Elsie home. John Baxter had not wakened and Mrs. Snow said she was not afraid to remain alone with him. The three had turned to a light rain and the captain carried an umbrella. It was dark by this time and when he came in sight of the schoolhouse he saw a light in the window.

One of the scholars—a by no means brilliant one, whose principal educational achievement was the frequency with which he succeeded in being "kept after school"—was seated on the fence, doing his best to whistle it to pieces with a new jackknife.

"Hello, sonny!" said the captain. "Miss Preston gone yet?"

"No, she ain't," replied the boy, continuing to whistle. "She's up there. Mr. Saunders is there too."

"Saunders? Web Saunders?"

"Yup. I see him go in there a little while ago."

Captain Eri started toward the schoolhouse at a rapid pace, then he suddenly stopped, and then he suddenly walked on again. All at once he dropped his umbrella and struck one hand into the palm of the other with a smack.

When he reached the door he leaned the umbrella in the corner and walked up the stairs very softly indeed.

CHAPTER XVI.

THAT enterprising business man, Mr. Web Saunders, opened the door of his renovated saloon at the morning.

Later than usual the next morning. It was common report about the village that Mr. Saunders occasionally sampled the contents of some of the "original packages" which, bearing the name and address of a Boston wholesale liquor dealer, came to him by express at irregular intervals. It was also reported, probably by unreliable total abstainers, that during these "sampling" seasons his temper was not of the best.

The forenoon trade at the billiard room was never very lively, and this forenoon was no exception. At half past 11 the man of business was dozing in a chair by the stove, and the "watchdog," having found it chilly outside and venturing in, was dozing near him. The bell attached to the door rang vigorously, and the man awoke with a start. The visitor was Captain Eri.

Now, the captain was perhaps the last person whom the proprietor of the billiard room expected to see, but a stranger never would have guessed it. In fact, the stranger might reasonably have supposed that the visitor was Mr. Saunders' dearest friend and that his call was a pleasure long looked forward to.

"Why, cap'n?" exclaimed Web. "How are you? But her there! I'm glad to see you lookin' so well. Well, I s'pose Squealer the other day, s't, Squealer, I never see a man hold his age like Cap'n Hedge; I'll be blessed if he looks a day over forty. I says. Take off your coat, won't you?"

"Web," said Captain Eri, "jest down a minute. I want to talk to you."

"Why, sure!" exclaimed the genial man of business, pulling up another chair. "Have a cigar, won't you? You don't come to see me very often, and I feel'st though we ought to celebrate Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, I guess not, thank you," was the answer. "I'll smoke my pipe, if it's all the same to you."

Mr. Saunders didn't mind in the least, but thought he would have a cigar himself. So he lit one and smoked it in silence as the captain filled his pipe. Web knew that this was something more than an ordinary social visit. Captain Eri's call at the billiard room was few and far between. The captain, for his part, knew what his companion was thinking, and the pair watched each other through the smoke of the pipe drawn well, and the captain's blue cloud whirling toward the ceiling. Then he asked suddenly:

"Web, how much money has Elsie Preston paid you altogether?"

Mr. Saunders started the least bit and his small eyes narrowed a trifle. But the innocent surprise in his reply was a treat to hear.

"Elsie? Paid me?" he asked.

"Yes. How much has she paid you?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"Yes, you do. She's been payin' you money reg'lar for meed a month. I want to know how much it is."

"Now, Cap'n Hedge, I don't know what you're talkin' about. Nobody's paid me a cent except them Elsie Preston. That's the schoolteacher, ain't it?"

"Web, you're a liar, and always was, but you needn't lie to me this mornin' 'cause it won't be healthy. I don't feel like hearin' it. You understand that, do you?"

Mr. Saunders thought it time to bluster a little. He rose to his feet threateningly.

"Cap'n Hedge," he said, "no man 'll call me a liar."

"There's a precious few that calls you anything else."

"You're an old man, or I'd—"

"Never you mind how old I am. A minute ago you said I didn't look more'n forty; maybe I don't feel any older either."

"If that Preston girl has told you any—"

"She hasn't told me anything. She doesn't know that I know anything. But I do know. I was in the entry upstairs at the schoolhouse for about ten minutes last night."

Mr. Saunders' start was perceptible this time. He stood for a moment without speaking. Then he jerked the chair around, threw himself into it, and said cautiously, "Well, what of it?"

"I come up from the house to get Elsie home 'cause 'twas rainin'."

I was told you was with her, and I thought there was somethin' crooked goin' on; fact is, I had a suspicion that 'twas. So when I got up to the door I didn't go in right away. I jest stood outside."

"Listenin', hey! Spyin'!"

"Yup. I don't think much of folks that listens, g'n'rally speakin', but there's times when I b'lieve in it. When I'm foolin' with a snake I'd jest as soon hit him from behind as in front. I didn't hear much, but I heard enough to let me know that you'd been takin' money from that girl right along. And I think I know why."

"You do, hey?"

"Yup."

Then Mr. Saunders asked the question that a bigger rascal than he had asked some years before. He leaned back in his chair and took a puff at his cigar and said sneeringly, "Well, what are you goin' to do 'bout it?"

"I'm goin' to stop it, and I'm goin' to make you give the money back. How much has she paid you?"

"The captain rose to his feet. Mr. Saunders sprang up also and reached for the coal shovel, evidently expecting to assault his fear was groundless. Captain Eri merely took up his coat."

"Maybe it ain't none of my business," he said. "I ain't a s'lectman nor sheriff. But there's such things in town, and praps they'll be interested. Seems to me that I've heard that black-mill' has got folks into state's prison afore now."

"Is that so? Never heard that folks that set fire to other people's property got there, did you? Yes, and folks that hope 'em gets there too some times. Who was it hid a cat a spell ago?"

It was Captain Eri's turn to start. He hesitated a moment, tossed the pea jacket back on the settee and set out once more. Mr. Saunders watched him, grinning triumphantly.

"Well!" he said with a sneer. "A cat, you say?"

"Yes, a cat. Maybe you know who hid it. I can guess, myself. That cat was burned some. How do you s'pose it got burned? And, say, who used to wear a big white hat round these dignify? Ah, ha! Who did?"

"That's what I don't! And where do you think I found it? Why, right at that hat, did you?"

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The Reason Why We Feel Tired

The system is overloaded with poisonous waste matter.

This may be the result of over-exertion or of derangements which are corrected by the use of Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills.

You expect to be tired when you have been working hard, for the activities of the muscles or the brain cause a breaking down of cells, or burning up, we might say, and after a while the system becomes clogged with this waste matter or ashes and you get tired.

But you are often tired when you have not been working hard and in this case the conditions are much the same but the presence of the poisonous waste matter is due to the derangements of the excretory organs—the liver, kidneys and bowels.

Besides feelings of fatigue there is likely to be aching of the limbs, headache, pains in the small of the back and feelings of dizziness and weakness.

The filtering and excretory systems being clogged digestion is interfered with, appetite fails and you feel generally miserable, out of sorts and irritable.

Under such circumstances you cannot possibly do better than use Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills; they have a direct, specific and combined action on the liver, kidneys and bowels, effect prompt action and a thorough cleansing of the excretory system and restore healthful digestion.

There is no medicine of more frequent or effective use in the family than Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills. They have no equal as a cure for constipation, biliousness, liver troubles and kidney derangements. One pill a dose, 25 cents a box, at all dealers or Edmondson, Bates & Co., Toronto.

Too Decolored.

Jesse Lewisohn, at the splendid "bal masque" given in New York by Jackson Gouraud, praised the houlou houlou dancing of Addison Mizner.

"But it is," said Mr. Lewisohn, "just a little bit—in a word, it resembles the dinner gown of a Brookline debutante."

"So this is your daughter's coming-out dinner, is it?" a friend said to the debutante's father.

The stern old man replied, and if I hadn't put my foot down on that dressmaker she'd have been out even further than she is."

If a woman is unwilling to take in washing and scrubbing to support the amily she has no business to marry a man to reform him.

The Real Liver Pill.—A torpid liver means a disordered system, mental depression, lassitude and in the end, if care be not taken, a chronic state of debility. The very best medicine to arouse the liver to healthy action is Dr. Chase's Vegetable Liver Pills. They are compounded of purely vegetable substances of careful selection and no other pills have their fine qualities. These pills relieve of pain and they are agreeable to the most sensitive stomach.

She-Fred, do you believe that Lee is mightier than the sword?

He-Well, you never saw anybody cut a check with a sword, did you?—From Illustrated Bits.

Winard's Liniment Cures Burns, etc.

Teacher—Now, Willie, how many months have twenty-eight days?

Willie—All of them, and some have three days over.—Boston Transcript.

Repeat it:—"Shiloh's Cure will always cure my coughs and colds."

Howell—Did you have double pneumonia?

Powell—I guess so; the doctor charged me twice as much as I thought he would.—Harper's Weekly.

THE TREASURE OF HEALTH FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Disease attacks the little ones through the digestive organs. Baby's Own Tablets are the best thing in the world for all stomach and bowel troubles of babies and young children. They act quickly and gently and are absolutely safe to give any child. Mrs. S. E. Green, Danville, Ont., says:

"I would not be without Baby's Own Tablets in the house, for I think they are an invaluable medicine for all little ones. Sold by medicine dealers or by mail at 25 cents a box from The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont."

The Russian revolutionaries have absolutely no mercy on those who betray them. It is well known that in the year 1903 a traitor caught at Odessa was bricked up alive in a cellar.

Regular, a French spy in the pay of the Russian police, for a long time eluded the vengeance of the revolutionaries. But they caught him at last, and that just at the moment when he fancied himself safe. His body was found in his cabin on a ship, which never gets above one hundred and twenty fathoms. He had been suffocated by fumes of sulphured hydrogen. How this was done was never discovered.

Provident.

"Don't you think May is perfectly reckless in the way she gets divorces?"

"Oh, no," replied the second actress, dabbling in a little more paint. "She never gets divorces—her one husband until she has another under contract"—Philadelphia Ledger.

Cupid on a Railway Platform.

There is a charming story told concerning the manner in which she Duke of Portland, who recently celebrated his 51st birthday, first met his wife. It is to the effect that the duchess—who before her marriage was Miss Dallas York—was on a railway station platform, and the duke (who was waiting for the same train) was so struck with her beauty that he fell in love with her at first sight, and promptly secured an introduction.

Whatever the truth, there may be some ground in the duke's story. It is a well-known fact that the duke preferred to marry for love. Amongst the many splendid jewels possessed by the duchess is a set of diamond horses, which have been given to her from time to time by the duke on the occasions of his success on the turf.

The duke has very strong opinions, which he expresses most frankly, on the absolute necessity of racing in the development of building almshouses and schools, and Welbeck Abbey is a model estate, in so far as it is entirely self-contained and self-providing. It contains workshops of every description, from a model dairy to a fire brigade.

W. N. U. No. 736.

HISTORY FROM A STAR.

Priest Astronomer Who Has Learned the Age of the Pyramids.

It has remained for a priest of the Catholic church in America to settle for all time the mooted question of the age of the great pyramids of Egypt.

The priest is Rev. Father Guiche-teau of the French Catholic Church of St. Vincent de Paul in West Twenty-third street, New York, and the figures at which he has arrived after most elaborate and intricate calculations show that the pyramids were built about 8,300 years before the birth of Christ.

Father Guiche-teau's computation is based on the position of the polar star. In one of the great pyramids is a long, narrow passageway, or tunnel, slanting upward at an angle that made it obvious the builders had in mind but one thing—astronomical observation.

The one bright particular star that attracted the attention of the people of the earth at the time the pyramids were constructed was the polar star, which moves but one degree in every two centuries. It was doubtless to observe the polar star that the long inclined tunnel in the pyramid was made.