

of Dave's grubby little shirt and trousers was not asking the time nor for a hoyp'ny, but was murmuring shyly:—"I soy, mawster, put me up atop," at the same time slapping the post on either side with two grubby little fat hands, it would unbend and comply, telling Dave to hold on tight, and never asking no questions how ever the child was to be got off of it when the time came. Because people are that selfish and inconsiderate.

The difficulty of getting down off of it all by himself, without a friendly supporting hand in the waistband of his trousers, was connected with the form of this post's head. It was not a disused twenty-four pounder with a shot in its muzzle, as so many posts are, but a real architectural post, cast from a pattern at the foundry. Its capital expanded at the top, and its projecting rim made its negotiation difficult to climbers, if small; hard to get round from below, and perilous to leave hold of all of a sudden-like, in order to grasp the shaft in descent. But then, it was this very expansion that provided a seat for Dave, which the other sort of post would hardly have afforded.

How did Simeon Stylites manage to scrat on? One prefers to think that an angel put him on his column, carrying him somewhat as one carries a cat; and called for him to be taken down at convenient intervals by appointment. The mind revolts at the idea that he really never came down, quite never! But then, when the starving man is on at the Aquarium, we—that is to say, the humane public—are apt to give way to mere maudlin sentimentalism, and hope he is cheating. And when a person at a Music Hall folds backwards and locks through his legs at us forwards, we always hope he feels no strain—nothing but a great and justifiable professional pride. It is not a pleasant feeling that any of these good people are suffering on our behalf. However, in the case of Simeon Stylites there was a mixture of motives, no doubt.

Dave Wardle was too young to have motives, and had none, unless the desire to surprise and impress Dolly had weight with him. But he had the longing on him which that young gentleman in the poem expressed by writing the Latin for *taller* on a flag; and to gratify it had scaled the dustbin as the merest infant. It was an Alpine record. But the iron post was no mere Matterhorn. It was like Peter Bot's Mountain; and once you was up, there you were, and no getting down!

The occasional phrases for which I am indebted to Aunt M'riar which have crept into the text recently—not, as I think.