

and flashing his torch into every dark corner or cupboard where, mayhap, some recalcitrant speck of dust might be still hiding. But the fierce white light of the torch only showed thorough cleanliness. The Colonel smiled and nodded his head and the Sergeant Major led on, his hopes rising, although they were now descending the innumerable stone steps that lead to the thousand and one dungeons beneath the Cliff Hospital. The little army passed solemnly through hundreds of swing doors, the Colonel searching every nook and cranny in the carpenter's shop and the Quartermaster's stores to see if by chance he could discover some little shaving or grain of sugar that had dug itself in defying the orderly's broom. But no, the place was spotless and they began to ascend the stone steps leading up to the Recreation Room. But now all fear and dread had passed from the Sergeant Major. He had himself seen the Recreation Room that very morning, and only a few hours ago at that.

His mind still dwelling on the pleasurable sensation of winning his bet he mechanically opened the swing doors leading into the Recreation Room and as mechanically "shunned" the few occupants. The Colonel took a prefatory look; "M—m" he began; then as, seeing he meant to continue, "very good," the Sergeant Major turned to lead on, the Colonel suddenly stopped, then advanced quickly up to the chair that still stood surrounded by the circle of lesser seats as they had been placed by the Lance-Corporal that very morning.

The Colonel at first stopped, then suddenly tilted the centre chair sideways and pointed wrathfully with his torch at a knobbly piece of something sticking on the under side of the seat.

"What is that!" he demanded.

There was a terrific silence as the S.M., aided by three officers, examined the substance minutely.

"Gum—chewing gum," was the verdict of the Orderly Officer.

The Colonel turned disgustedly away.

"The whole hospital is in a filthy disgusting state" he answered. "Chewing gum stuck under the chairs—filthy, ugh, disgusting. Put that into my report." So the inspection ended.

CHAPTER 3.—THE RECKONING.

It was a wet and stormy night as a lone heavily coated man wended his way towards the red curtained bar parlour of the Pig and Trumpet Public House. He hardly returned the greeting of the lady of the house and pushed his way unceremoniously into the parlour. There was only one other man in the room. He was sitting toasting his legs before a seacoal fire.

"Hello boy," he ejaculated, "it's a devil of a night."

The new comer, throwing off his heavy coat, took out a small purse and extracting two one pound notes flung them onto the little table drawn up before the red fire—"Take your filthy lucre" he said.