

have escaped unhurt. Our greatest trouble has been the running away of the Russians; our greatest admiration the way in which the Cossacks rescue the wounded. Galloping over the field, guiding his horse to his fallen comrade, the big black-capped cavalryman stoops from the saddle and tenderly lifts his friend, swinging him up before him almost without drawing rein.

On 26th September he wrote:—'To celebrate the recent victory I fastened your little flag to a ten-foot pole and stuck it up in camp. I was called away for something, and when I returned the flag was gone. I raced around and around like a madman; I could not, would not, lose that flag, my treasure for months. I saw it in the hands of a little Chinese boy, snatched it from him, and gave him a slap that sent him home crying at the top of his voice. "What's the matter?" called out one of my friends. "I gave that flag to the little fellow; I did not know you cared for it." Sorry and ashamed, I followed the boy home to a tiny farmhouse, apologizing to his father, gave the little boy a Japanese coin, which pleased the father so much he soon came into camp with a basket of vegetables for me. Then wasn't I sorry I had lost my temper? but I did not forget to put my flag carefully away in my knapsack, where no other boy, big or little, could get my treasure.'

On 8th December.—'From 24th November to 7th December I was on the fighting line, with no rest day or night. Coming back to camp my first request was for mail. Your three large envelopes I opened first. From one came a right-hand glove, from another a left-hand glove, and from the third the ear-caps and the letter. Such things are not for common soldiers, and the tears would come while I read. I never heard of Christmas before, but on that day, with a clean heart and clean hands, I'll put on your gifts, and thank God for my mother's love. My friends have laughed when I said your prayers saved me, dear mother, but now they believe in you and your God, even as I do. I have given up drinking and smoking for your sake, and am trying to be a worthy son of such a mother.'

The copy of Matthew's Gospel which I sent him in the first letter has been his constant companion, and in a letter dated 14th January he says:—'When I am discouraged I take out your little Bible and read the first eleven verses of the fifth Chapter, and I am comforted. I have learned all the places you have marked. This morning everything is white with snow, and the mercury thirty below zero. We fear General Winter more than the Russians, though they are only four hundred meters away.'

In every letter comes a little Japanese poem. One of the earlier ones is as follows:—

'Pillowing my head in the ashes of the camp fire,
I look up at the silvery moon and think of spring.'

Another:—

'Under the peaceful moon
I nightly vigil keep,
Watching with sleepless eyes
The lonely bivouac fires
Round which the Russians sleep.'

Sample Copies.

Any subscriber who would like to have specimen copies of the 'Northern Messenger' sent to friends can send the names with addresses and we will be pleased to supply them, free of cost.

The Night Watch.

'Rap, rap, rap.'

There was a winning, cheery confidence about the knock, but Mr. Quentin frowned. Saturday was always crowded. There were troubles of its own and the ravel edges of the week all whipped in upon them.

The 'Come in,' was curt; but Ike came in and beamed.

He had a ragged hat swinging respectfully at his side, and he bowed a tangled head. Both were out of the common. The rare belonging was his smile. Not that it was artistic, being much too big for the size of his face, but there was a glow of soul behind. Under this Mr. Quentin's frown hesitated.

'You're Mr. Quentin, the manager?' inquired Ike.

'Yes.'

'Well, I heard 'bout the stealin'.'

'What have you heard of the stealing?'

'Oh, nothin' new; but say'—this in pleasant comradeship—'how 'bout us havin' a night watch?'

'We might,' assented Mr. Quentin.

'Save the lead, an' ketch the feller that's after it,' said Ike.

'Yes-s.' The admission was tentative. Mr. Quentin was a very considerate man.

But there was no hesitation about Ike. He took an eager step forward and offered himself with a little wave of the hands and a new curling up of the mouth corners that stirred irresistible reflection in the face of the manager.

'I'd have been in before,' continued the candidate, 'but jes' now heard 'bout the place needin' me.' The need was evidently a joyous possession and had no shadow of doubt upon it.

Mr. Quentin leaned back in his chair and considered how best to deal with such a case.

'Well, you see,' he hinted, 'usually a night watch is a man, a grown man.'

Ike nodded his red head.

'We'll be gettin' out of the ruts,' he suggested beamingly, and joined in when Mr. Quentin began to laugh.

'What is your name?' came next.

'Ike Malone. Jes' come to the mines last week.'

'And your present business?'

'Well, you see, it ain't jes' a man's business, my present ain't.' Ike made the admission with a solemn courage in his eyes. 'But mother had to be helped so'—his voice lowered confidently—'so—at present it's washin'. I wash an' mother irons. You wouldn't let that make agin' me, sir?'

'Not at all, not at all.'

'The washin' o' days is why I want the night watch.'

'I see. The objection is your inches.'

'Inches?'

'You're young, you see.'

'Sure I'm gettin' the better of that every day, sir,' said Ike the undaunted. 'An' I'm lucky, sir.'

'Lucky, eh?' There was a touch of kindly sarcasm in the tone and in the manager's glance as it went over him from the tangled fiery head down past the ragged shirt and trousers to the shoes. They might in some far past have had a right to their name, those shoes; but it was a strain on courtesy now.

'Sures as a rabbit's foot,' said Ike about the luck.

'Didn't I get big enough to help 'fore father died? Ain't I strong as a mule? Didn't I think of this watch business my own self? Ain't I got a gun an' a—say, Mr. Quentin, I

clean forgot—Grit's waitin' outside, an' he might, if he was put upon, he might give a bite, sir.'

'We'll have him in,' assented Mr. Quentin.

So Grit came in and drew up beside his master.

'H's rather yellin',' admitted the master reluctantly, 'but he's got a jaw.'

'I should judge so by his eye,' Mr. Quentin remarked dryly. 'He is part, I suppose, of the watch?'

'Grit an' Company,' said Ike.

'Well,' said Mr. Quentin, 'you may stay in the furnace to-night if you like.'

And Ike repeated his wide undaunted smile. Usually the furnace had been left to itself of nights, considered safe enough with a big lock and barred windows; but in the last week a dozen pigs of lead had disappeared. Now this was a small matter in money, but the idea of a thief about was exceedingly uncomfortable. The company looked solemn and requested their manager to 'investigate.' He felt that way himself, but there was not a ghost of a clew to begin at. The slag about the old building showed no tracks, locks and bars were secure, and among all the miners there was not one from whom suspicion would not roll away like water from a duck's back. The absurdity of the theft was another point of mystery. Aside from the awkwardness of handling a dozen pigs of lead there was the difficulty of selling them.

'Who could sell them,' mused Mr. Quentin, 'without immediate suspicion?' He was still upon the question when the men began to file in for their week's pay.

Rough, steady fellows they were. He took a keen glance at each and thought of the water and the duck's back.

He was locking the safe when one came in alone, late.

'Ah, Mitchel, what detained you?'

Mitchel held out a bandaged arm.

'It's not so much of a bite, sir,' he explained, shamefacedly, 'but me sister-in-law was that worried I had to let her fuss over it a bit, sir. I'd gone by with a plate of cake me wife was sendin' her, an' in came her boy with his dorg.'

'A yellow dog?' inquired Mr. Quentin.

'A yellin' dorg, sir,' said Mitchel, 'an' he'd be a dead dorg by rights.'

'The boy, I suppose,' and Mr. Quentin smiled, 'got in the way of his being a dead dog?'

'He did that,' laughed Mitchel. 'Sure he's a broth of a boy.'

Mr. Quentin felt his heart warm and ashamed within him. Here he had been thinking how this man who could muster a generous laugh over a dog bite was one of the carters that took the lead to the station and might easier than another dispose of an extra dozen pigs. Moreover he had seen him turn an eager eye toward the safe door, and set it in his mind against him!

He hurried to give him his pay and a cordial good-night.

'Take care of yourself,' he said.

'It's take care of the dorg, I'm thinkin', sir,' laughed Mitchel.

This reminder of his watch decided him to go by the furnace on his way home.

Meantime Grit and Company had gone jubilantly to their post; but at the door there came a pause. Grit wagged his tail and looked questions.

'I forgot to ask for the key,' explained Ike, 'an' it'll look mighty young, Grit, to go this time o' night an' say "I forgot the key."'

Grit expressed earnest sympathy.

'There's no way but to watch outside,' said