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Jim's Mother
 By Irene Lewis.

"You can wait here," the head nurse had said, as she showed me into the visitors' room. "I can't give you any definite report before 2 o'clock or later, but you'd better be ready to come up any time."

That was all I could get her to tell me, except that the case was difficult. They had telegraphed me to be on hand, for things were likely to take a bad turn almost any moment.

I sat down automatically on a settle that rested against the wall nearest the door. I supposed I was alone until I looked around. Then I noticed that there was some one in the opposite corner—an old lady, a little over 60 I should say, with snowy white hair, a pair of sharp black eyes and a face full of fine wrinkles. She was sitting in an arm chair, and her shoulders and head were bent forward.

Suddenly there were footsteps in the hallway outside. They seemed to be coming near. Our eyes met; then for the first time with a shock that was almost physical. But the steps passed by and the room was quiet again. I got up from the settle and crossed the room to where the old lady sat. I felt as though I must speak, for the silence was growing unbearable. "I wish I could do something for you," I said in a mechanical manner.

"You're very kind, ma'am," she said, "but there's nothin' can be done at such a time."

Somewhere in the distance we heard a muffled scream. "That ain't him," she remarked. "He wouldn't make a noise like that even if they killed him."

"Your son," I asked. "Yes," she answered proudly, "my boy, Jim."

"Appendicitis?" She nodded her head. "Jim ain't never been sick before in his life. He's allus been well and strong."

"How old is he?" "Twenty-four the 10th of next month. He's an awful good boy, ma'am, and smart, too."

"Look-a-here, ma'am——" It was the old lady's voice that recalled me. "I never asked you who you was waitin' for. Who is it of yours?"

"My husband," I replied.

"Pendicitis?"

"Yes. It came on suddenly while he was travelling."

"Is he as young as you be?"

"Just 26."

"You been married long?"

"Almost two years."

"Oh, well, you've lots of time ahead of ye yet," she observed maternally.

"Have you been here long?" I asked.

"Ever since 4 o'clock this afternoon," she replied. "Even hours! Yes, and it seems like so many years."

Just then we heard the sound of footsteps in the corridor again. I clutched the edge of the settle and tried to prepare myself for the blow that might come. An instant later the door opened and the nurse stepped in. She went over to the old lady. "Mrs. Warren," she said quickly, "I have very bad news for you. Your son——"

"He's dead then?"

"It happened very suddenly. In a little while I will come back for you and take you to the room if you care to go."

I can remember each of those words as if it were yesterday. She turned away and hurried out of the room and we were left alone again—Jim's mother and I. She had crumpled over into her chair, and her face seemed for a moment to have lost all expression. I went to her and took one of her hands in both of mine and held it for a long time.

"He's dead, ma'am," she said, "my boy, my Jim."

"Can't I do anything for you?" I asked aimlessly. I thought I heard steps again in the distance, and my heart seemed to stand still.

"No, thank ye, ma'am," she replied in the tone of one long schooled to conceal her feelings. The door opened and the nurse came in again. She stepped up to me and said, "The critical time has passed and your husband is doing very well. If you will call at 4 o'clock to-morrow you may have a chance to see him for a moment." Then she turned to Jim's mother. "Shall we go up now?" she asked gently.

I sank into a chair overcome by the message I had received. Nothing looked real that I saw about me. I seemed to be amid the painted details of a picture. I saw the old lady looking at me intently as if she wanted to speak to me again. Probably the nurse noticed it, too, for she stepped out and waited for her in the hall. Then Jim's mother came up to me and put her hand on my shoulder. "You didn't need him like I needed my boy," she said, in the same matter-of-fact tone, "but I s'pose things was to turn out that way." She started to go, hesitated, and then came back. "But I don't blame you, ma'am," she added, "and even if I do wish it could have been the other, that's only because I can't help it, ye see, bein' as I was Jim's mother."

INDIANS AS CUSTOMERS.

More Particular About Their Clothing Than Their Food.

Mrs. J. I. White is from Porter, I. T., where her husband runs a store. Porter is a brand new town, and is now in the boom state. There are a great many Indians about Porter, and they are the store's best customers.

When Mr. White went to the Territory, he supposed the Indians would demand as low priced goods as it is possible to sell, but found out that the redskins were not just as he sized them up. The Indians want the sportiest things on the market. They turn up their noses at cheap clothes, and want loud colors and costly garbs. When Christmas came it was natural to suppose that the Indians would also want costly sweets as well as costly clothes, and Mr. White was surprised to find that the Indians passed up the high priced candies and bought the cheapest kind possible. The most they could get for the money was the kind they wanted. The Indians argued that they ate the candy and no one saw it, but with the clothing it was different, as every one saw the clothes they wore. The red man is much more particular what he puts on his back than what he puts in his stomach.—Emporia (Kan.) Gazette.

Axes Were Whiskey Kegs.

An entirely new scheme of whiskey peddling has just been discovered in the Indian Territory, and it seems to have been going on for months. The officers of the district northwest of Hebert have known for some time that whiskey was being sold to various parties, but not until yesterday were the peddlers caught. They had travelled around the country in an old wagon drawn by a poor span of Indian ponies and were, presumably, buying eggs and poultry. They would sell small bottles of liquor to farmers and Indians through the neighborhood, and \$1 a pint was the usual price. The officers discovered that both axes of the old wagon were iron and very large. These axes were hollow and would hold about four gallons each. The peddlers would remove a small bolt and insert a pump and draw the desired amount of whiskey.

One of the peddlers admits having sold whiskey in this way for five months, and has made enough money to buy a farm in Texas. He says he will serve his time in jail and then buy a farm.—Topeka Capital.

The Paradise of Convicts.

Spain's criminal settlement in the Zafarina islands is said to be quite a paradise of convicts. Their liberty is restricted only so far that they must not leave the islands and must return at night to prison unless they obtain leave of absence for the night. At 6 o'clock in the morning the convicts leave the prison. Some do a little work, but the majority go straight to the various wineries and hostleries, where they pass the day drinking, singing, and occasionally breaking the monotony of life with a little knife—for each respectable prisoner carries his "faca" (knife) day and night with him. This idyllic state of things appears less strange if one considers that the prison wardens—the "capataces"—are the liquor sellers of the islands, and that a good deal of illicit trading is carried on in these places of resort, the prisoners buying revolvers, ammunition, house-breakers' tools and similar articles.

Odd Remarks of Doomed Men.

In the New Zealand Medical Journal appears this story: On walking to the scaffold in solemn procession a criminal once called to the governor of the prison: "Just oblige me, guv'nor, by telling me the day of the week." "Monday," answered the surprised governor. "Monday," exclaimed the prisoner in disgusted tones; "well, this ere's a fine way of beginnin' a week, ain't it?" And he marched on with dissatisfaction imprinted on every line of his face.

On another occasion an officious hangman whispered as he placed the white cap on his victim's head: "If there's anything you'd like to ask me, I'll be pleased to answer." The victim craned his neck forward and said in an equally low, but very much more anxious voice: "You might tell me—is this scaffold safe?"

A Town Without Town Officers.

Spokogee, a town in the western part of the Creek nation, is the only town of 1,000 population in the territory that has no town officers. The people there say they have no need of officers, and do not want any. They pay no taxes, and whenever they want any public improvement they call a meeting of citizens and raise the money. A deputy United States Marshal is located there, and is all that is needed to keep the peace. There is not a gambler or gambling house in the town, and the people will not permit them. They needed a schoolhouse, so the people got together and built a good two-story building for that purpose.—Fort Worth Record.

The Korean Bridegroom.

In some parts of Korea and among some Korean families it is the custom for bridegrooms to dwell under the roofs of their fathers-in-law until the first son has been born and attained to years of manhood. Should any Korean, however, stay in the house of his bride's people for more than three days after his wedding, he is compelled to remain for an entire year.

VIRTUE OF MADSTONES.

Of Some Use Because Absorbent—Clay Makes a Good One.

Physicians are often asked whether there really is any virtue in what are called madstones. One of them, writing in the Medical Brief, declares that these stones are of value, but that they would be of more value if their limitations were understood.

"There is no particular variety of stone or substance which may be designated exclusively as the madstone," he says. "I have seen many of them, so called, and no two were of exactly the same composition, geologically considered."

"Madstones act on the same principle that a blotting paper does when absorbing ink, and there is nothing that makes a better one than baked pipeclay. A new clay pipe, procurable for one cent at nearly any store where tobacco is sold, can not be excelled by any madstone, no matter how great its reputation."

"The action can be clearly demonstrated by placing a common dry red brick in contact with the margin of a puddle of water and noticing what capillary attraction will accomplish. Therefore, to be efficient, the only necessity is for the stone to be porous, and have strong adhesive and absorbent qualities. Nothing mysterious about it."

"I have seen several that appear to be concretions, either vesical, renal or biliary, and were found in the bladder, kidney or liver of some animal—those taken from the deer, supposed to be the best."

"When a person is bitten by a reptile or dog supposed to be mad and the porous stone applied to the wound, the blotting paper action begins, and the blood, saliva from the mouth of the animal and whatever poison these fluids contain will naturally, by capillary attraction, be absorbed by and into the substance applied, no matter what name you may give it."

"The saying that if a stone sticks to the wound is poisonous, and if it does not take hold there is no venom present is untrue. If the stone is clean and dry it will adhere when moisture is within reach till it becomes saturated."

"For instance, a new red brick will absorb one pint of water. After the venom has been taken into the circulation the madstone is worthless, but as the victim is usually filled with whiskey or alcohol at the same time the stone is being used the spirits may counteract the effect of the poison."

"I know of a stone which has a wide reputation, and makes a good living for the family owning it. They never let it go out of their sight, and when the victim can not be taken to the stone one member of the family can be hired to take the stone to the victim. In addition to travelling expenses they charge \$5 for the application and \$2 extra for each hour that the stone sticks."

"This stone is busy a large part of the time. Not long since the stone held to a man's leg for over one hundred hours, yet the man died. His life could have been saved if dependence had not been placed entirely in the stone."

What the Bet Cost Him.

During Washington's administration he was seen daily at his room adjoining the Senate chamber, and often was found there before the Senate was organized.

On one occasion prior to the arrival of the President, Governor Morris and some other Senators were standing together talking about the unaffected and majestic air of Washington. One of the company remarked that there was no man living who could take a liberty with him.

"I will bet that I can do that with impunity," said Morris. The bet was taken, and soon afterward Washington appeared and paused to exchange a few words with somebody. While the President was thus engaged, Morris stepped up and in a jocular manner familiarly tapped him on the shoulder and said, "Good morning, old fellow!"

The President turned and merely looked him in the face, without a word. All the bold effrontery fell from Morris, and he stepped back in evident discomfort. Turning to the other Senators, he said: "Gentlemen, you have won your bet. I will never take such a liberty again."

Spectacles Demoralizing.

A certain Somerset vicar made himself notorious by the vigor with which in the seventeenth century, he inveighed against the use of the newly invented optic glasses, since they perverted vision and made all things appear in an unnatural and therefore a false light. Microscopes and telescopes, with their array of lenses he declared to be imposters, since a man could not see so well with two pair of spectacles as with one. Some asserted it to be sinful to assist the eyes, which were adapted by Providence to the capacity of the individual, whether good, bad or indifferent. "It was argued that society at large would become demoralized by the use of spectacles; the would give one man an unfair advantage over his fellow, and every man an unfair advantage over every woman, who could not be expected on aesthetic and intellectual grounds to adopt the practice."

Snow and Rain

The first man to whom it ever occurred to find out how much rain was represented by a given fall of snow was Alexander Brice of Kirknewton, who in March, 1765, made a simple experiment with the contents of a stone jug driven face downward into over six inches of snow. What he learned was that a greater or less degree of cold, or of wind, when the snow falls, and its "lying a longer or shorter time on the ground," will occasion a difference in the weight and in the quantity of water produced; "but if," he added, "I may trust to the above trials, which I endeavored to perform with care, snow, newly fallen, with a moderate gale of wind, freezing cold, will produce a quantity of water equal to one-tenth part of its bulk." So that a fall of snow of 10 inches represents a rainfall of one inch.—London Chronicle.

CLEVER MAIL ROBBERIES.

Big Chances Taken by Man Who Tamper With Britain's Post Bags.

Some years ago an enterprising and elaborate mail robbery was attempted on the Great Western Railway, but was only partially successful, says P. T. O. The robbers had conceived the double masterpiece of robbing on the same night both the up and down mail, and in their efforts curiously overreached themselves. The up mail left Plymouth at 6:35 and Exeter at 9, arriving at Bridgewater at 10:30, there being no stop between Bridgewater and Bristol. At the latter place the mail bags were found to have been tampered with, being cut open and some of the contents removed. The down mail left London at 8:55, and when it arrived at Bridgewater it was found that the mail bags in that train also had been tampered with. By a curious coincidence the same two clerks—postoffice clerks—travelled with the down mail from Bristol to Bridgewater as with the up mail from Bridgewater to Bristol, and therefore knew of the other robbery. It happened that a director was travelling in the former, and when the two robberies were reported to him he concluded that the robbers were still on the train, and at once ordered the doors of all carriages to be fastened and nobody allowed to depart. This being done, a system of searching and overhauling of passengers was commenced, when, sure enough, the robbers, two in number, were found in a first-class carriage.

Another such robbery of a remarkable character was that of the mail which left Cannon street station on the night of April 8, 1886. The bag containing the registered letters, which included a package of 100-rouble notes, was placed inside another bag which held ordinary letters and packages. The van had doors each side, was divided in the middle, being secured outside by a hasp and pin, and on the inside by a bolt. It was also lighted by two lamps, but was not in charge of anybody. There was no stop between London and Dover, and after a delay of but a minute at the latter place the bags were put on trolleys and run alongside the mailboat Louise Marie. The boat arrived at Ostend at 3 in the morning of April 9, the mails were transferred to a postoffice van, being sealed with leaden seals both by the custom house and railway officials. At Cologne the bags were transferred to another post van, and so, via Hannover and Elberfeld, Berlin was eventually reached. Then a surprising thing was discovered. The bag containing the registered letters had been tampered with! A slit had clearly been made in the bag and sewn up again.

This daring robbery had a curious sequel. Shortly afterward a man presented some of the rouble notes which had been stolen to the firm in London who had posted them. When he was questioned as to how he became possessed of them he made evasive replies, so he was taken into custody. He was subsequently put upon his trial, charged with being in possession of stolen property. The trial was interesting from several points of view. The defense, for instance, questioned the jurisdiction of the court, maintaining that the robbery was committed on the high seas, but the prosecution demonstrated to the satisfaction of the court that the robbery was undoubtedly committed near Chislehurst. After a lengthy trial the prisoner was found guilty and sentenced to eight years' penal servitude.

Japanese English.

"Zineka" Mink Soap is comprehended the most useful ichthyolum for the skin therefore it has a great effectual point for the face, freckles on the face, and the skin-diseases. This soap is specially made with the good trial for the materials and it will be used long because it is very hard. If you once use it, it has the peculiarity of imparting its desirable Violet and noblest odor of Musk to other objects, and at least for the five days it may be used to scent clothing, gloves, towel, handkerchief, summer-garment, and bed. Also, if you always used, it has a great economic, effective point, not to be used perfumes, artificial musks, waters, etc. It's style is no adornment and the materials are made with great attention, therefore it is far superior than foreign made and its price is very lower.—Japan Mail.

N-Rays and Digestion.

That the processes of digestion, as well as mental and muscular activity, seem to cause the emission of N-rays, is the conclusion reached by M. Lambert, in France, after a series of interesting experiments. He believes that these curious rays are concerned in the digestion of albumenoid matter. In his experiments on digestion, M. Lambert placed a small quantity of fibrin in tubes containing in one case activated pancreatic juice, and in another a five per cent. solution of hydrochloric acid. From these tubes the N-rays were emitted, and were detected not only by producing increased luminescence of a phosphorescent screen, but also photographically, thus removing the subjective element from the experiment. As a result of these experiments, M. Lambert believes that in the course of digestion the fibrin undergoes strains which acts to produce N-rays, just as various other bodies under tension or strain, as was shown by M. Blondlot.—Harper's Weekly.

The Watchmen of Turkey.

According to a recent writer, the watchman in a Turkish city has a very medieval time of it. "At night lantern in hand, he explores the black chasms of the streets. Packs of dogs hang around him, baying like wolves. Their teeth flash and snap, for they do not perceive the atmosphere of the faithful. Should the wind put out his spark of light they would surely devour him. The watchman challenges, and holds his rifle ready. Mysterious houses with barricaded doors hang their stories over his head. As he marvels at their beauty one leg plunges knee deep into a manhole in the middle of the street."

A Valuable Almanac.

There is in the British museum an ancient almanac said to be the most valuable curio of its kind in the world. It is made of papyrus, and the writing on it is in red ink. Its age is estimated at about 2,400 years.

BLACKMAIL IN MANCHURIA.

Pollite Form Used by the Russian Officials.

A story which illustrates the methods of Russian officials is told by a traveler recently returned from the far East. In an important town in Siberia there is a solitary member of the Anglo-Saxon race who has established a successful business, despite the restrictions imposed upon him. Periodically, however, he is reminded that he is there only on sufferance by the receipt of a letter from the all-powerful governor, which reads something like this: "Dear Sir: It is proposed to raise a monument to the beloved memory of the late Emperor, and, knowing how deeply interested you are in all that affects the people amongst whom you live, I have ventured to put down your name for 1,000 roubles. Please remit the amount as early as possible." At one time the monument is to an Emperor, another time to a national poet, or a historian, or a General. Needless to say, the proposals never get beyond the committee. The demands are simply a polite form of blackmail, of which the merchant is well aware, but they must be met, otherwise he would not be allowed to remain in the place.—Leslie's Weekly.

How a Japanese Count Died.

Rear Admiral Ingles recalls the death of the great Count Saigo as an instructive example of the habit of mind of the Japanese. The count was in insurrection against his emperor in 1873 and was nearly in the toils and he knew it. So in his stronghold he employed his leisure time in playing chess with his immediate friends. Reports kept coming in from the outposts, each one more disheartening than the last. But the count still went on playing chess, while the utmost good humor and pleasant rally continued among the whole party. Yet another messenger from the outposts came in, which left no doubt as to the situation. Still the count and his companions went on playing. "Your move, sir," were the words that broke the absorption of the moment. Then when there was a pause in the game at which he could rise without being discourteous to his guests the count got up and said: "Gentlemen, now it is time." He directed some one to send for his swordbearer. The man advanced and immediately received his orders. A few seconds later Count Saigo's body and head had been separated at one heavy blow.

Great Things in Little Things.

Velpeau, the eminent French surgeon, successfully performed a perilous operation on a little child five years old. The mother, overjoyed, called at the surgeon's office and said to him: "Monsieur, my son is saved, and I really know not how to express my gratitude. Allow me, however, to present you this pocketbook embroidered by my own hands."

"Madame," replied Velpeau, in a somewhat bitter tone, "my art is not merely a matter of feeling; my life has its necessities like yours, and sentiment must give way to these requirements. Allow me, therefore, to decline your charming little present, and, if agreeable to you, to request a more substantial remuneration."

"But, monsieur, what remuneration do you desire? Fix the fee yourself."

"Five thousand francs, madame."

The lady very quietly opened the pocketbook, which contained ten one thousand franc notes, counted out five, and, politely handing them to Velpeau, retired.—Short Stories.

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