

An Old Hero's Story

By F. A. MITCHEL

An old Prussian, a veteran of the Franco-Prussian war, who had been in America long enough to speak English as he would if it were French, told me this story over a glass of French wine raised in California:

It was in the beginning of the war when as Prussia had not yet conquered the French people and we do not think they will ever see country and dictate terms of peace in Paris. I was with General de Ferris, who commanded a brigade near the frontier. We have as railroad and as locomotives and as cars, but when as Prussians cross the border all as employees of the road run away.

In the evening just before sunset an officer rode up to the camp of the Ninth regiment of his line and said: "Any of you men locomotive engineers?"

I have been locomotive engineer before I enlisted in the army, so I shake my hand in the air. The officer he took notice and he call for me to come to him. I go with him to General de Ferris's headquarters, and as general ask me how much I know about locomotives, and after I tell him he say to me:

"I send a thousand men to see other terminal of the railroad at once. Here is one company here and the captain telegraph sat as Prussians are coming to occupy the high ground here, but we have a thousand men he can hold out till General Basaine send a large force. It is sixty miles to go, and you must take the train here in less than an hour. But you get here before as Prussians you may save France. They are six or seven miles from the place and march on foot.

I say, "Yes, general, I take as men here in one hour if as locomotive will pull it so fast as that."

It was very dark when we start. The moon only little crescent, nearly gone down. We run from north to south, the same way as the border line between France and Prussia. We do not know if as Prussians had advanced so far as the railroad. But they had say they into the train, say try to throw it off the track, say do all say can to keep us from going on.

My engine very good engine, one of the best of sets kind. I run sixty miles an hour, sometimes more, sometimes less. When I come to see curves I slow down little bit, but make set up when I have a straight road before me. A few Prussian cavalrymen, as advance of the railroad, and say put obstructions on the track. Suddenly I look ahead and see a tree felled on the rails. I reverse, see shut my eyes to wait for the smash. But does not come, only a little bump.

When an engineer runs into the dark night he feels like Columbus when he sail into the dark ocean. I never know when I round a curve, but I run into a big rock or some other obstruction that kill me and wreck the train behind me. I see specter all the time. Suddenly a great black something seem to spring up on the track right before me. I reverse, but before I come to a full stop I see that it see nothing but a little bug which had fly on the glass before as headlight.

All at once I hear a cracking above the noise of the train, and bullets whistling through the cab. Some Prussian horsemen fire their carbines at us. But say do little damage, nothing but break my right arm. So I cannot hold the throttle with two arms. But what for I want two arms when one will do as well, except for sudden reverse, and by that time I come within about ten miles of the end of the journey? Never mind, I call as fireman, who come and look over my shoulder.

So Prussians were by that time very near the point we wish to reach, and we both approach at an acute angle. Zey hear the rattle of our train, and we hear sets hurra. By that we have to stop to take away the men scouts put on the track, and while we make no sound we hear zee tramp at double quick. Zee hear a gun, and I think we too late. Zee Prussians must be attacking the post. But I go on, and pretty soon I come to a little earthwork our men had thrown up beside the railroad and see that they have a gun there and have dropped a shell into the Prussian advance.

In a few minutes we reach our point. I whistle down the brakes, so train stop, and our men jump out and run up to the top of the hill, where the French have work two, three days on the fortifications.

Zat was the end of my work. I get surgeon to fix my arm and am ready with my musket to receive the Prussians when they come. Zey have twice as many men as we, but we have very strong position and no trouble to hold out till Marshal Basaine send large force.

When I get back to my command my general be throw his arms about me and hug me like a bear. He say to me: "You have done great service. You shall be a captain; you shall have a medal. I will report what you have done to the emperor."

Pouf! What was it all worth? Zee Prussians march right on to Paris, and after the capitulation our people pay big ransom to get set out, besides giving our beautiful provinces Alsace and Lorraine. - Some day when we get strong we take set back. But what good set do me? I'm too old now to fight, and by that time I sleep under a sod.

Modern Seaman.

The new ship has transformed the sailor with itself. He works among a subtle and intricate network of machinery. His brain is quickened by the effort to understand the new forces and appliances that he controls. He is drawn no longer from the lower strata of the population of our ports, but in increasing proportions from the ranks of skilled mechanics. The electricians and machinists, who are the aristocracy of the crew, bring with them the notions which prevail among the aristocracy of labor out of uniform. They possess more reading and more science than did nine out of ten of the officers in the old days. They have a respect for themselves and their class, which has revolutionized the morals and manners of the modern warship. The gradual reform of the service regulations has sought to keep pace with this transformation, and officers have been educated in a wholly new conception of their relationship to their men. The bullying and hectoring which was the rule of the sea in the old days is today the rare exception. Instinct and "good form" condemn that kind of thing as severely as the regulations.—Nation.

How An Ant Went as Big as a Man.

An ant can carry a grain of corn ten times the weight of its body, while a man or horse can carry loads only about equal to its bodily weight. It is not a fact, however, that the ant is greatly superior in strength. If an ant should grow to twice its original size, still retaining its geometrical and biological structure, its volume, and accordingly the weight of its body, would increase eightfold. Although the muscles grow to twice their original dimensions, the increase in length does not increase the strength, which is proportional to their cross section, and the ant would only be four times as strong as before. As it now carries but five times its weight, however, it is relatively only half as strong. It is calculated that the same ant developed to the size of a man would only be able to carry one one-hundredth of its own weight instead of ten times its own weight.

Thrashing Wheat in Cyprus.

The ancient Roman tribulum, as used for thrashing, may still be seen in the island of Cyprus. It is a board about six feet long and two feet wide, studded with sharp edged flakes of flint. In use it is dragged by oxen or donkeys over the corn spread out on the hard earthen thrashing floor, separating the grain and at the same time bruising and chopping up the straw. Thrashing time is enjoyed alike by children and animals, the former riding on the primitive implement and the latter gorging themselves with a hearty meal. For in Cyprus the Biblical command, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," is still faithfully observed. Although the government orders to thrash by machines at nominal cost, the conservative Cypriote prefers the old method. He says that the animals will not eat machine chaffed straw, and straw they must eat, for there is no hay in Cyprus.—Wide World Magazine.

First Fictitious King.

The "Tale of Two Brothers," written 2,200 years ago by the Theban scribe Khamun, librarian of the palace to King Menephtah, the supposed Pharaoh of the Exodus, is the oldest work of fiction extant. The tale was written apparently for the entertainment of the crown prince, who subsequently reigned as Sed II. His name appears in two places on the manuscript, probably the only surviving autograph signatures of an Egyptian king.

This piece of antique fiction, written on nineteen sheets of papyrus in a bold hieratic hand, was purchased in Italy by Mme. d'Orbigny, who sold it in 1867 to the authorities of the British Museum, where it is now known as the D'Orbigny papyrus.

The Master's Voice.

"We have come," said the chairman of the committee, "to ask you to take this nomination. The city needs a man like you—strong, brave, self-made, self-reliant, owning no master, fearing no man."

The great man was visibly touched: "I'll not deny," said he, "that your kind words have shaken my resolution. I trust that if elected, I may justify your confidence and prove that I am indeed strong, brave, self-reliant; that I own no master and fear no man. Suppose you wait a minute till I see if my wife will let me accept?"—New York Times.

Course and Fins.

The finer the nature the more flaws will it show through the clearness of it. The best things are seldomest seen in their best form. The wild grass grows well and strongly one year with another, but the wheat is by reason of its greater nobleness liable to a bitter blight.

Trademarked.

"If my little brother Willie ever gets lost we can easily find him," said small Elmo.

"How, pray?" queried the visitor.

"He's got a strawberry trademark on his right arm," was the reply.—Chicago News.

Health Receipts.

One time a man asked the poet Longfellow how to be healthy, and this is the answer he received: Joy, temperance and repose. Slam the door on the doctor's nose.

Lieutenant.

The word "lieutenant" means, literally, "holding the place." Thus a lieutenant colonel holds the place of a colonel.

Little Jim

By M. QUAD

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There were five of us and a boy in the far western stage coach as it rolled over the rough roads in Dakota. We had been together for four days. We called the boy Jim because he father did. We had twenty miles to go to reach the terminus, and the hour was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon when the coach came to a sudden halt as it rolled uphill. Next moment the driver called to us:

"All you fellows what don't want your heads blown off had better get down and line up. We've been stopped by a road agent!"

It seemed scarcely when you read it, but to get down and submit to be robbed was the worst thing to do under the circumstances. Little Jim was not a bit frightened. The boy had lined up beside his father. As the road agent looked down into his face the lad cried out:

"Why, it's Mr. Felton—Mr. Felton! Mr. Felton, I'm awfully glad to see you! Where've you been this long time?"

"So it's you, Jimmy?" laughed the robber as he held out his hands for a shake. "Well, you've been growing since I saw you last. It's a wonder you know me at first sight."

"Oh, I used to like you so well I couldn't forget your face," replied the boy. "Are there robbers around, Mr. Felton?" With gentle hand the man pushed the boy into line and then stepped back a pace or two. As he did so his face grew very sober, and I saw a flash in his black eyes I did not like. His voice was low and steady, as he slowly said:

"I'm much obliged for your promptness in climbing down and lining up, and I think I'll let you off this time. The four of you may get back into the stage and go on."

The colonel took his son by the hand and attempted to enter the stage with us, but the robber motioned him back.

At our disappearance the man turned on Colonel Weston and pointed to the hillside on the right and said:

"Move on that way, Jimmy, give me your hand and I'll help you along."

The white faced colonel entered the pine and held a straight course up the hill. Behind him came the robber and his son. The boy had been full of curiosity at first, but presently he was awed and frightened by the look cast upon his father. Two of three years before he and Mr. Felton had been great friends. Mr. Felton had been manager for his father. One day there had been a bitter quarrel, pistols had been drawn, the sheriff had rushed in, and Mr. Felton had had to escape arrest. He remembered his father calling the fugitive a thief and of men being sent out to hunt him down. All this came back to him as they followed the father up the rough way, and, though he knew nothing of man's vengeance, there was a feeling of dread in his soul. Now and then the robber ordered the colonel to the right or left, but these were the only words spoken until they finally reached a rude camp high among the bowlders. Even then nothing was said for a long five minutes. Each sat down to rest. They did not look at each other. By and by the robber half turned to look the colonel in the face and said:

"I've waited for this for two years. I could neither die nor go away until I had killed you."

"It will be murder—cold blooded murder!" replied the colonel as he folded his arms.

"If it was murder a hundred times over I'd do it. Do you suppose I can forget Rose Harper? Who separated us? Who maligned me? Who wrecked my life and sent her to a suicide's grave? Who drove me to be a fugitive from justice on a false charge? I'd kill you if a thousand men surrounded me!"

"Take the boy away first," said the colonel, with a touch of entreaty in his voice.

"Yes, that will be proper," answered Felton. "Come, Jimmy, let's take a walk."

The boy crossed over to his father in a puzzled way, and the father lifted him up and kissed him. When he put him down he said to him:

"Run along, Jimmy. If you don't find me here when you come back Mr. Felton will take care of you."

"Oh, yes! Mr. Felton will take care of me and see that I get home," replied the lad. "I'm awfully glad to see him."

The lad started for his walk, whistling as he went, and his father stood erect with folded arms and faced the outlaw and death. He closed his eyes, and his lips moved. Presently he heard the click of a pistol and drew in his breath. Thus for a long minute, and then the man opened his eyes.—Mr. Felton sat with his hands over his face. When he dropped them there were tears in his eyes.

"I can't do it. Little Jim would know it some day. When he comes back he'll take him and go down to the road. It's only three miles to Cedarville."

With that he walked off and was out of sight in a moment. When little Jim returned he found his father sitting as he had left him and gazing into the woods.

"What is it, father?" he asked.

"What's the matter with you, and where is Mr. Felton?"

The man rose up slowly, took the boy's hand in his, and without a word in answer he led the way down to the stage trail.

And His Obedience.

Fear the Great was once traveling through a part of Finland when he met a very fat man, who told him that he was going to St. Petersburg.

"What for?" asked the great.

"To consult a doctor about being so fat, which has become very oppressive."

"Do you know any doctor there?"

"No."

"Then I will give you a man to my friend, Prince Mouschiloff, and he will introduce you to one of the emperor's physicians."

The traveler went to the prince's house with a note. The answer was not delayed. The next day, the hands and feet, the poor man was dragged on a cart to the mine.

Two years after Fear the Great was visiting the mines. He had forgotten the incident of the fat man, when suddenly a miner threw down his pick, rushed up to him and fell at his feet, crying:

"Green, green, what is it I have done?"

Fear looked at him, astonished, until he remembered the story.

"Oh, so that is you!" he said. "I hope you are pleased with me. Stand up. How thin and slight you have become! Oh, and remember that work is the best cure for your complaint!"

How Do You Laugh? Inducement can be indicated as strongly by the manner in which a person laughs as by the tone of the speaking voice.

If some people could hear the tone they use while laughing they would deem themselves to perpetual sadness.

A real hearty laugh is like a tonic to the system. It not only does the person good who enjoys it, but it does every one good who hears it.

Of such a laugh there is no criticism. But there are people who do not enjoy laughing, but who laugh in a forced and artificial manner, and generally at the most impossible moments.

An affected laugh by either a man or a woman is a counterfeit of the true feelings. There is no sympathy to laugh loudly, the heartiest laugh is the softest in tone.

Remember, when laughter is natural it is irresistible and beautiful, and when it is forced it falls like rapping brass upon refined ears.—Philadelphia Telegraph.

Brasil's Name. Long before the Portuguese colonized the coast of Brazil adventurous Bristol merchants had equipped expeditions in a vain search for the supposed island of Brasylia. Who gave Brasil her present name is unknown to fame—the early Portuguese called it Terra da Vera Cruz—but whoever baptized the country took the name from the West Indies. For many years before the discovery of Brasil merchants had brought from the east for the use of dyers a wood which yielded a beautiful red color—brasil or brasylia. The West Indies have trees of the same sort, but Brasil contains them in more abundance than any other country. So that Brasil wood is not called so after the country. The country is named so because of its red dye trees.—London Chronicle.

Travels of Roots. Roots travel amazing distances in search of their requirements. A timber merchant, excavating for a sewer in England, found an elm root one and a quarter inches in diameter and sixty-three feet long, running through a bed of sandstone from the tree to the nearest water.

The aggregate length of root thrown out by some plants is almost incredible. A cucumber will, within its short life of about half a year, throw out from ten to fifteen miles of roots.

Corner roots will go straight down to a depth of six to nine feet in search of moisture, and cotswort, one of the most powerful and persistent weeds, sends its suckers down to an even greater depth.—London Stray Stories.

Lost the Point. The Teacher—Now, children, listen to this: Thomas Campbell, the famous poet, once walked six miles to a printing office to have a comma in one of his poems changed to a semi-colon. Why did he take all that trouble? He said he didn't have a no bellyphone.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Publicity. "It's a bad thing to talk about your neighbors."

"That's right," replied the man who is all business. "Publicity is worth something these days. I shouldn't think of talking about anybody except at advertising rates."—Washington Star.

Another Recipe. Aspiring Novelist—Ah, sir, I am highly flattered, I'm sure, to hear that you take my book to bed with you and read it there! Acquaintance—Yes, I have been troubled with insomnia for a long time, and I find one of your pages much better than any medicine.

A Sure Point. "The world-will-recognize-me-after-I-am-dead," said the gloomy artist.

"I beg of you," exclaimed the distinguished Latin-American; "let us not start any more of these complicated arguments about recognition!"—Washington Star.

The Secret Incentive. When I read history and am impressed with any great deed I feel as if I should like to see the woman who is concealed behind it as its secret incentive.—Heinrich Heine.

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