"His Bit"

By EVA ROSSITER MANDEVILLE.

"Yes, you shall have your breakfast, my poor man, but it won't be very sumptuous."

"Boiled potatoes with their skins on, lots of salt, corn bread, fresh milk!" observed the early morning visitor of Abner Wells, peering through the open window at the kitchen table. "Viands—not victuals!—Fit for a king!"

"You are welcome to what there is, friend," said old Abner and led the way into his kitchen. "Times are new up to the old, neatness since I've got half-crippled with the rheumatism. My two sons used to keep the place trim and neat, but they went to the city, and I miss their help."

"You won't miss mine soon as I fill up on this gorgeous fare," pledged Dick Marston, roustabout and wanderer. He ate with the satisfaction of a hungry man. "Now then to pay for the meal," he spoke finally, arising with briskness. "Hold on, though—I must check off yesterday first."

"What are you doing that for?" curiously inquired Abner as his visitor, with the stump of a pencil, checked off the day previous on a small pocket calendar.

"Sixty first day of perfect sobriety," explained Dick. "You see, I used to drink heavy. I'm cutting it out."

"Blessed thing!" approved Abner. "I hope you'll make it sixty one years."

"I know my poor shiftless life don't count for much," observed Dick quite mournfully, "but I propose to die sober. Here you are!" and he started in picking up the dishes. He washed, dried them and set them in apple-pie order in the cupboard. He swept up the rooms. Then he was outside, brisk and diligent.

"Why, you've paid for a week's board!" cried Abner, as he came out of the house at noon to find a heap of cord wood sawed, cut and piled neatly. "Dinner's ready, and I've cooked a chicken."

"Oh, this is just paradise!" chuckled Dick, with a smack of the lips. "I say, we couldn't make some arrangements to keep it up, could we?"

His brisk, bright ways captivated the old man. Neither exactly comprehended how it came about, but at the end of a week Dick was still a guest of old Abner Wells. They took a great fancy to one another and they exchanged confidences, mutually forgetting the story of their lives.

"You're like a father to me," declared Dick feelingly.

"You're the right kind of a son," chirped his host.

Dick worked about the little place with willingness and diligence. Somehow, with odd jobs in the village and what the garden produced, they managed to make ends meet.

About a month had gone by when one day, as they were turning a corner in the town, they came upon a group at the edge of the sidewalk. At the curb an automobile had drawn up. In its front seat was a pompous, loudly dressed man. In the rear seat were two young men, evidently his sons. One was a cripple, and had a pair of crutches at his side. The other was a marvel of healthfulness in appearance.

The autocratic-looking father had evidently been delivering a harangue to the crowd. He espied Abner.

"Hey! I want to speak to you," he hailed, and Abner stepped forward. "I'm raising money for the Red Cross," announced John Burton, magnate, and he waved a sheet of paper. "I'm down for a hundred dollars.—Come, do your bit, neighbor."

"I have no money," explained Abner.

"Oh, come now! You can certainly spare ten dollars."

"I can't, Mr. Burton," replied Abner. "I told you last week that my two sons in the city have—er—changed their positions, and cannot send me any more money to help me along."

"I advise you to donate!" almost hissed John Burton between his teeth, and Dick noticed that his companion shuddered at the veiled threat conveyed by words and manner. He himself stepped forward brave as a lion.

"This old man has done his bit already, sir," he announced boldly. "He has given his two sons to the army—that's what he means when he says they have changed their positions."

John Burton flushed up. It was a thrust direct for neither of his own sons had aspired to the honor of serving their country. The able Ned Burton had been exempted for some trivial cause by the exemption board the week previous and the magnate shifted uneasily as he realized how it had been brought about.

"Mr. Burton holds a mortgage on the old farm," explained Abner, as he and Dick resumed their way. "It is not a fair one, and he squeezed me pretty hard. When the old mortgage came due and I couldn't pay it, he threatened to foreclose it if I didn't make a new one for double the amount."

"Oh, he did, eh?" muttered Dick reflectively. "I think I'll look this precious patriot up a bit."

He was lying behind a hedge resting one noon, when two professional-looking men paused beyond his covert. They were two physicians, and comprised the military examining board of the district. They were quarreling over the division of a certain sum of money. As they passed on, Dick Marston jumped to his feet with vigor.

"So that's the way it is, is it?" he muttered. "I think I've got my cue."

One hour later he was ushered into the luxurious library of Mr. John Burton. The latter regarded his shabby caller dubiously.

"Oh! you're the tramp Wells is keeping," he sneered. "I suppose he has sent you to beg off on the payment of his interest."

"He hasn't," retorted Dick audaciously. "I've come on my own initiative to get not only a receipt for that interest but a cancellation of the entire mortgage."

"You—what?" fairly howled Burton.

"What I said. That or I'll expose you."

"You insolent ruffian!"

"Hold on there," ordered Dick, "or I'll do what I threaten at once. You have robbed old Abner Wells, you bribed the doctors here to exempt that cowardly son of yours. No, then I demand a receipt in full for Mr. Wells. I demand, further, the sum of one thousand dollars cash to keep him till his boys come back—or I'll show you up for the bogus patriot you are."

John Burton sat petrified. He was trapped in a close net—realized it.

"It's a cheap offer," proceeded Dick coolly. "Moreover I'll let your well son get fine credit and honor. I'll let it appear that, disappointed at his exemption he has nobly offered to finance certain relations of mine while I go to the front, his substitute his representative, so to speak."

Four months later Abner Wells, never fully understanding the apparent munificence of John Burton, received a letter from his two sons in the trenches, which ended:

"We narrowly escaped destruction last week, and there's a strange end to the incident. The whole company were unawares of a foe sneaking upon us, when a daring young fellow from another regiment came scaling the hill, yelling out a warning. He fell, pierced by a dozen bullets, but he saved us. He died last night in the hospital, and he left word with the nurse to seek out Ben and Harvey Wells, ourselves, and ask us to signal a note he had dictated to you. I choose the note. Can you throw any light on this queer affair?"

And Abner Wells, tax-collector of peaceful Glenville, read the rudely scrawled words:

"Dear old father—the only one I ever knew and loved—for your sake, I have done my bit."

And the weak, death-wavering signature was—Dick Marston!

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ONLY A FEW.

Cholly—I suppose your sister has a great many admirers?

Johnny—Yes; but she's only engaged three of 'em.

Disorganized Chinese Mails.

Before 1915 a letter was as safe in the Chinese mails as it was anywhere in the world, and only the older resident who knows China can appreciate what it means to have had nearly 700,000,000 pieces of mail matter carried by the Chinese post that year against one-sixth that amount eight years before. This year postal employees are stealing letters for the stamps and throwing the contents into the wastebasket. I have heard complaints from a dozen people that the mail service is not only slower than it was in 1915, but is no longer safe.—Christian Herald.

Burglars' Wartime Profits.

New York burglars are in their heydey since the war has caused high prices of silks, woolens and other goods in which they deal. The Burglary Insurance Underwriters' association announces that burglars have procured more than $1,000,000 worth of loot since the war began. Servant girls have been found who touch their fingers and thumbs with a new skin preparation and thus fool the Bertillon clerks. Burglars of the ordinary variety have been found hauling their loot through the busy streets in daylight hours, using borrowed vans.

HOW ARMY STOOD FIRST SHELL FIRE

Meets Roar and Shrapnel Whistles Like Veterans.

MEN SHOWED GREAT NERVE

American Engineers Endure Ordeal of High Explosives With All the Cool Nerve of Experienced Regulars—Corespondent Tells of Coolness of Sammies in Their First Trying Situation Under Fire.

(Passed by Censor, for Publication in America Only.)

"How did they face it?" was the question put to the commanding officer of the first battalion of American troops to come under shell fire.

"How would Americans face it?" he snapped back wrathfully.

Yet the question was a fair one. Seasoned British officers say they still feel nervous under shell fire.

"Young troops just out, when they get their first taste of it, sometimes feel pretty sick for a while, and show it. It's quite natural." So spoke an English officer who himself has lived under German shell fire so terrific that it was heard clear across the channel.

Showed Great Nerve.

The fact then that these young American engineers endured their first ordeal of high explosives with all the cool nerve of experienced regulars is worthy of mention.

A personal experience will indicate in a very mild way the kind of surprise and strain which successive batches of Sammies are now undergoing.

You are walking along a road cheerfully joking about the weight of your tin hat, or about the uncanny feeling which comes from knowing that in some observation post behind the twisting white lines on the ridge opposite a German officer is watching you with his telescope. Back of you hidden British guns are cracking methodically.

It is a "quiet day" along the front. Your attitude is that of an idle spectator watching some vast, slow-moving natural phenomenon. That human lives are involved in the spectacle hardly occurs to you, much less that your own is concerned in the drama.

Entire Party Stops.

Suddenly, with nerve shattering unexpectedness, the roaring wall of an approaching shell stops the whole party.

Every fiber in your body vibrates harshly in throw of the key set by the shell.

You feel like a trapped animal.

There is a wicked [illegible] in the air and a [illegible] roar, shell fragments whizzing about your ears, and the road behind you is wrapped in a heavy pall of black smoke and dust.

Before you are conscious of safety from that shell, another is shrieking in the air toward you, and still a third is on its way.

"Damn it, they're after us," says the officer in charge of the party. "Scatter out in the field each side of the road! And if the shell is coming very close, throw yourself flat on the ground quick! Take to a shell hole only if there's one near. You only have a second or two!"

Every shell seems shrieking at you. The sky seems hard, the atmosphere tense, the fields crudely shelterless, and every shell hole a mocking omen of what's going to happen to you next. To the tune of the first shell or two you inwardly make a last will and testament. Then you manage to adjust yourself mentally to the situation, and move on again noting where the shells explode and analyzing your own feelings.

Do It All Mentally.

You do all that mentally. But nervously you are high strung to the breaking point.

The nerve strain comes out when the party finally reaches the veritable heaven—a trench. Knees are universally weak. Everybody sits down awkwardly in the mud. Faces are flushed, foreheads perspiring, and you use two or three matches to light one cigarette, which promptly you toss aside after a disinterested puff or two.

That is roughly what the first experience has been like to each individual Sammy. The terrific nervous tension is inevitable.

It is under just such nervous tension that these young American engineers, fresh from shop benches and office desks, have been quietly keeping at work day after day here with all the coolness of old-time soldiers.

RANCH WAS CHEAP

One Containing 500 Acres Brought Only $2.

Five hundred acres of land on Cottonwood creek, near Red Bluff, Cal., known as the old Elmore place, were sold the other day under execution by the sheriff to D. D. Dodson, editor of the Red Bluff Sentinel, for $2. Dodson was witnessing the sale and jokingly bid $2. The bid was not raised, and the property was proclaimed sold. The original owners have one year in which to redeem, and no doubt will. The ranch is assessed at $8 per acre.

Father and Son in Double Wedding.

Clyde C. Byers, forty-five years old, and his son, Vance, were married in a double ceremony recently at Grand Haven, Mich. Miss Jeannette Williams became the father's bride and Miss Margaret Reading was wedded to the son. [illegible] Ben C.

ONLY AMERICAN WHO EVER ARRESTED QUEEN

Capt. Paul Smith has the distinction of being the only American to ever arrest a queen.

On January 16, 1895, Captain Smith, a sergeant in the army of the provisional government of Hawaii under the direction of President Sanford B. Dole, arrested Queen Lilliuokalani, lately deceased, and held her prisoner in Iolani palace for eight months, during which time she was tried and convicted of treason and sentenced to pay a fine of $5,000 and serve five years at hard labor. After a year in prison she was given a full pardon.

Captain Smith served with the American army in the Philippines, receiving several medals and honorable mention for bravery.

RED CROSS HELPING FARMERS OF FRANCE

Like Veritable Pioneers They Are Returning to Their Devastated Lands.

The following cablegram, from the Paris headquarters of the American Red Cross, shows what the American Red Cross is doing to assist the farmers of France who, like veritable pioneers, are returning to their devasted lands.

"Red Cross workers who have just returned from the devastated region say that they passed no building covered by a roof. In some places numbers of farmers, born and raised on this land, like their fathers for generations before them, have come back to their ruined houses to begin anew.

"Repair work has been begun at three places where the Red Cross helps farmers to roof at least one room and to give it windows and a door. One man, formerly prosperous, asked for such assistance because, of his comfortable farmhouse and outbuildings, only one stable still stands. He asked the Red Cross to help fix the roof of his stable that he might bring his family back and recommence tilling his land which is unusually fertile.

"This man said: 'It is hard to have to begin all over. We shall be grateful for your co-operation as this land is all we have left. All the same it is good to be back.'

"This is the spirit of all returned farmers of the devastated regions. To give these courageous, indomitable people the chance of winning back again their own land, rebuilding their houses and, like a second race of pioneers reconquering their own country, is one thing the Red Cross is trying to do."

BEAR BREAKS LOOSE

Pet Was Killed After Defeat of Man Wrestling.

"Steve" the big bear who had for many months been a pet of the firemen at Tacoma, and known to many persons throughout the Northwest, recently broke the big iron chain that had held him captive and started out to see the sights.

Several persons were attacked by the bear, but none seriously hurt.

One of the clerks at the Northern Pacific headquarters ventured too near and Steve took him on for a wrestling match. Standing on his hind feet, the bear was almost as tall as the man, and gave a demonstration of how a bear can rough a person. The man finally escaped into a nearby building.

The bear was later shot and killed.

Kaiser Owns Liberty Loan Bond.

The kaiser owns a Liberty Loan bond, purchased for him by Gustavus Remak, Jr., Philadelphia attorney. Remak was closing up a German estate and found $60 due the imperial German government. He placed $50 in a Liberty bond, to be used against its owner.

"NUMBER ONE"

By ALICIA CHALLONER.

(Copyright, 1917, Western Newspaper Union.)

"You won't feel offended, or—or scold me will you, Mr. Ward?"

A culprit, fair enough to be irresistible to the most hardened anchorite, pleaded with dewy eyes and soulful face. They stood at the gate of the home of Winifred Sumter. There had been a bonds party and somehow Albion Ward had lingered and Winifred had encouraged him.

All through the afternoon she had devoted herself to his company. She had done so purposely. To this man she felt that she and her family owed more than they could repay. Albion Ward never dreamed that they were aware of facts in the career of Ned Sumter, brother and son, which he supposed to be a buried secret between Ned and himself.

Those two had been college chums. Ned Sumter had got into a scrape that meant not only expulsion at the most critical juncture of his college career, but public disgrace. Albion Ward had stepped into the breach. He had money and he spent it lavishly to clear Ned. He took the blame Ned should have suffered.

"You will stay quiescent," declared Albion in his impassive but determined way, "or I'll wreck the future of half the class, by implicating all who were mixed up in the miserable horse play business of blowing up the founder's monument on the campus. What are graduating honors to me? I'm a broken, worthless fellow, a wreck from drink and will be worse as time goes on. It's born in me and I can't resist it. Take the lesson this ugly escapade has taught you, Ned, and keep to the road called 'Straight' after this."

What Winifred Sumter hinted at was no fiction. Young, brilliant, the favorite and heir of an indulgent uncle, a curse rested over him as it had over his father before him. He was no sot, but no restrictions could prevent him from getting liquor when one of his drinking spells was on him.

It had come about that Ned had insisted upon his going home with him one vacation. Those were two weeks to be remembered. For the first time in his life Albion Ward felt the sway of a spirit so pure, so gentle, so friendly, nay, more, loving, that he seemed transplanted into a new sphere. Then one night in a neighboring town a great storm came up. The village tavern offered its hospitality and its temptation. Shutting himself up in a room all by himself and well supplied with the fiery liquid, he, Albion Ward, for a whole week was lost to friends.

"I'm not fit to even look at your sister, much less impose my wretched society upon her," declared Albion sullenly, to Winifred's brother.

"At least say goodby to her," appealed Ned. "She knows of your fall from grace, as others do, but she is full of sorrow, more than that, pity for you. Old friend, can't you brace up for her sake?" So Albion consented to bid adieu to Winifred, and it was as his brief call was ended that she placed a trembling hand on his arm with the words:

"You won't feel offended, or—or scold me, will you, Mr. Ward?" and he had bowed his head and clenched his hands hard to endure the shame he experienced.

"Miss Sumter," he said huskily, "I am unworthy of your interest. If I ever do anything worth while it will be through the memory of this holy hour. You must not think of me. I—I will try to overcome—goodby."

He was gone, and the next day Winifred sank like a stricken dove when her brother entered her presence with the exciting intelligence:

"Ward is No. 1. He was the first to sign the honor roll of volunteers and don't cry or worry, mother, Winifred, for he showed me my duty and I joined, too."

And a few months later, in a lonely spot at the front in far away France, No. 1 and No. 2 crouched in a cave-like indentation of a high hill as a deafening crash was followed by a shower of shattered rock and earth around them.

They had been chosen to undertake a secret important mission.

Just approaching a part of the rugged ledge along which they had crept foot by foot, suddenly from the plain below where a great field piece was operated by the enemy, a shell came hurtling towards them. It landed so close that the rock splinters penetrated their uniform in a dozen places. Ned was partially stunned, Albion dragged him into the cave-like shelter. There came a second shell. It landed directly at the entrance to their retreat. "Don't waste time," directed Albion in feverish haste. "They have the range. You can make the fifty yards in safety between the shells. Run for your life when I give the word."

Bewildered, as he was dragged from cover, protesting, as his comrade gave him a vigorous push one way and himself darted the other, Ned groaned as a hissing shell struck the face of the rock and a great blast obliterated No. 1 amid the heaping debris.

"It is the end for poor Albion!" he moaned, as he reached camp in safety. But lo! it was only the beginning, for they found the fearless hero hours later, battered, wounded, insensible. The camp was ringing with his daring exploit for weeks. They carried him triumphantly on their shoulders when he was invalided and sent home, where Winifred possessed herself of the hand that was not in a sling and her tears fell upon it.

HOUSEWIFE WARNED NOT TO OVERSTOCK

Excessive Buying Laid to Pro-German Propaganda by the Food Administration.

Three successive buying drives on salt, laundry blue and matches, by housewives throughout the eastern part of the country, are the result of the latest efforts of pro-German propagandists. This is the belief of the United States food administration after its attention has been called to a temporary embarrassment on the part of retailers caused by unusually large purchases of the above commodities by women in various localities. These excessive buying campaigns have started from rumors of a threatened shortage in the three articles, and have caused the panicky housewives to stock up with them in sufficient quantities to last their families for more than a year.

The food administration announces that there is no actual shortage in either salt, matches or laundry blue; that the national stock is as large as ever with no possibility of a shortage with a normal demand on the part of the consumer, and that rumors of any such shortage can be attributed only to German agents wishing to upset the even course of trade and spread dissatisfaction with war conditions. It is pointed out that a temporary shortage in a particular locality may be caused at any time if the people in that locality make twenty or thirty times their normal purchases.

The drive on salt in the present instance, seems to have begun in New York city, and spread as far as Boston and Washington, where many storekeepers absolutely sold out of the commodity in a couple of days. Immediately following the excessive purchases of salt, came the case of laundry blue. The third wave of big buying has been centered on matches and its origin has been traced to Jersey City.

The fact that the buying drives have come in successive waves points to organized effort, and it is the belief of the food administration that false rumors concerning other commodities may be expected. It therefore warns the housewife to disregard any such reports and not to overstock, since such procedure works actual harm and may cause real shortage for a time in particular localities.

FRENCH MAY MARVEL AT 'MILLIONAIRE' TROOPS

"Rich Men's Regiments" Famed for Big Incomes Possessed by the Personnel

The American soldier is generally known in foreign lands by the trail of coin which he leaves in his wake. With this reputation already before him, what the natives of other lands will think when certain American outfits arrive "in their midst" is now a matter of conjecture with officers whose particular concern is these regiments.

The organizations referred to are a product of the war. They are known as "rich men's regiments," and are worthy of the name.

These units have already made a reputation for themselves, not as spendthrifts, but for the big incomes possessed by the personnel.

For instance, a certain engineer regiment at Camp Meade is made up principally of graduates of colleges and technical institutions. About 65 per cent of the enlisted men gave up incomes of from $5,000 a year upward to serve for $30 per month.

Another regiment of engineers at a camp near Washington is composed of men of high technical attainments, whose civilian incomes outrange those of some officers. Some of the officers of the technical branches were big consulting engineers whose incomes ran to five figures.

In a big southern training camp is, or was, a squadron of crack National Guard cavalry, whose members were big business men and rich men's sons. One of these units distinguished itself on the border when some of its "buck privates" went in for high-power motor cars. One such squadron, now changed to field artillery, has in its ranks and among the officers some of the wealthiest business men of Washington.

These men are not reckless spenders, but are every inch soldiers, and intend to prove it on the other side.

CRUTCH FOR DOG

Leg Broken, He Gets Along Fine With Aid of Crutch.

A dog that walks with a crutch is in one of the hospital cells of the Spokane Humane society's home. The dog is no trained trickster and has never appeared on the stage. But it was crutch or painless death for him and he chose the crutch. The dog is named Dawn and was formerly owned by J. B. Rowan, the I. W. W. leader. Two weeks ago Dawn got in the way of a big automobile. In the mixup he suffered a broken front leg close to the shoulder.

"The dog is almost human in the use of the crutch," said J. E. Rudersdorf, manager of the humane society. "Never has he attempted to tear the bandages away and he uses the crutch with a skill that makes one believe that he is an old hand at the game."