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terin' an' cursin' an' gruntin' to beat the band. And inside of another six or seven seconds there was seventy or eighty more bombs went into 'The Gap,' while we lay flat again, to miss the back throw of splinters. There was maybe half a dozen Boches who hadn't got down into the trench, and they started bolting back for their lives. Our O.C. picked off three with a rifle, I was told, but he reckoned some must have got back to their lines, and accordin' we was ordered back to our trench at the double. Sure enough the Boches was plasterin' 'The Gap' with whizz-bangs an' pip-squeaks inside of a few minutes. They don't seem to mind killin' their own people. So if any of those Boches survived our bombs, which I don't see how they could, they muster got it in the neck from their own a'tillery.

We buried the lot as we cut the new trench behind 'The Gap,' an' I believe there was about sixty of 'em. I never saw nothin' about it in the papers, but I reckon that raid was a failure all right. I wonder what Fritz called it!"

THE JOY OF VICTORY.

What made his victory sweet to him?
His neighbours' praises and their cheers?

Not so. The struggle black and grim,
The failures of his empty years,
The old hopes that had come and gone,
The oft-remembered bump and fall
That stopped him as he journeyed on,
And he had won in spite of all.

What was it made his victory sweet,
The gold and glamour of success?
Not so. 'Twas yesterday's defeat,
It was a bygone year's distress,
That he had stood on failure's coast
With joy, at last he could recall,
This was the thought that cheered him
most,
That he had won in spite of all.

When the very youthful Tennyson attempted an elegy upon his grandmother, said to be his first verse attempt, his grandfather, who guessed wrongly, pressed 10 shillings into the boy's hand, remarking: "This is the first money you have earned by your poetry, my boy, and believe me it will be the last."

The Nuisance and The Fool.

(By F. D. Grierson.)

I.

"'E's a—nuisance, that's wot 'e is!"

That was the opinion entertained by No. 7 Squad of Corporal Edward Parsons, and especially cherished by Private Henry Wilks, popularly known as "Winks," from a habit of rapidly blinking his left eye when excited.

The corporal has first seriously pitted himself against the world in the capacity of an office boy in the office of a merchant who dealt with many quarters of the world, buying and selling anything from tea and rice to a hydraulic lift. The youthful Parsons licked stamps and affixed them to envelopes with a precision which characterised everything he did, and by the time he was twenty he had mounted a stool vacated by a clerk who found that his responsibilities there prevented his giving proper attention to the racing columns of the newspapers, and who, therefore, resigned—with the full consent (and encouragement) of his employer.

When Berlin threw off the hypocritical mask of friendship which had so painfully contorted the features of her diplomats, Mr. Parsons (also with the encouragement of his employer) enlisted in Britain's New Army. To say that he entered a new world would be to utter a platitude. His ignorance of matters military was profound. To him, anything that fired a projectile was a "gun" and a "pair of ducks" suggested to his mind a succulent meal rather than the useful nether garment supplied to protect his uniform trousers from the dirt inseparable from the performance of various domestic duties of the camp.

But Private Parsons brought to his new duties the same determination, the same methodical care and the same intelligence which in civil life had promoted him from "Parsons" to "Mister Parsons," and gradually musketry mysteries and dilemmas of drill lost their terrors for him. A

conscientious attention to his duties earned him the respect of a company-sergeant-major, whose faith in human nature had been impaired by lengthy service with the militia, and one day the astonished company beheld the erstwhile recruit with a stripe upon his arm.

"It's — favouritism; that's wot it is," said Winks, bitterly. "Look at me. Served in the militia, I did, before that there kid was wearin' trowsis. An' 'ere I am, a perishin' private, and '6, 'e, mark you, is a bloomin' non-commissioned lance-jack!"

Mr. Wilks, whose remarks were received sympathetically by the remainder of No. 7 Squad, omitted to mention that he had severed his connection with the militia in consequence of a disagreement with a sergeant in the course of which he emphasised his argument with the buckle of a belt.

When Lance-Corporal Parsons was promoted to full corporal it became his painful duty to step heavily on some of Wink's pet theories, such as that unpunctual attendance at parade is a mere bagatelle, and that uncleaned buttons are really evidence of zeal in the discharge of more important duties.

"'E's a — nuisance," repeated Winks, who had just been "warned" by Corporal Parsons for fatigue duty. Winks had so far managed, with the willingness of an old soldier, to escape conviction for his numerous, if minor, wanderings from the path of duty, but Nemesis was upon his track. On this occasion he "forgot" what he had been detailed for, and was promptly charged with "neglecting to comply with" an order given by the conscientious Corporal Parsons.

The company commander heard the evidence and quickly sized Winks up. "Had much trouble with this man, corporal?" he asked.

"No, sir," replied Corporal Parsons, surprisingly. "He is an excellent soldier, sir, when he likes. Means well, sir, only he makes mistakes."

"Cautioned," said the company commander curtly. "Right turn! Quick march!" said the sergeant-major loudly. "Well, I'm —" said Private Wilks under his breath.

"Wot did you do it for, corporal?"

he asked subsequently. "Because," answered the youthful diplomat, "you are a good soldier, why, it's men like you—old soldiers and real tough ones—we want. You put the backbone into us and make the youngsters sit up and notice!"

Winks gasped, then straightened his back. He looked round, there was no one in sight. "Put it there," he said, holding out his hand. And Parsons put it.

II.

The rush had been short and sharp—and costly—though successful.

"Where's Parsons?" asked someone, and a voice replied, "Out there. He's got it pretty bad, I'm afraid."

"Stop that man," cried an officer, but Winks was over the parapet and out in "No Man's Land."

"He's a fool, of course," said the company commander, "but I wish we'd some more fools like him. I remember when I thought him a perfect waster, but for some reason or other he suddenly pulled himself together, and now there's not a better man in the company. Well, he'll never get back alive, that's certain!"

Meanwhile Winks, heedless of bullet, bomb or Very light, was frantically searching, searching, searching. It seemed a hopeless task, but it is the unexpected that happens. Just as he was giving up hope he heard a moan. Stooping, he made out with difficulty the features of the corporal, who lay shot through the body but still conscious. Tenderly he raised him and retraced his steps, stumbling painfully, ever careful to interpose his own body between his comrade and the enemy. At last the trench is reached and willing hands receive his burden.

Placed in a rough bed place in the dug out, the corporal asks faintly for the man who saved his life, and Winks kneels awkwardly beside him. The wounded man gives him a look that brings a lump into his throat, and holds out his hand.

"Put it there!" he whispers. And Winks puts it.

Clarence: "Why don't you keep some'ing for a rainy day?" Clara: "Don't be silly, dear. Haven't I the prettiest raincoat and umbrella you ever saw?"