

give it away. Cure him. He's a good sort."

The Kid hummed gently:

"That I may die and not disgrace his ancient chivalry."

"Did the senator drink hard, Murphy, when he was trading in politics in that sweet land you're so fond of—the ward?"

"Why, sure, sir, they all did," said Spud, "but he took it like a man."

"And his father, I suppose," said the Kid grimly, "took it like a man, and his and this poor devil is the result. Murphy, my lad, when you say your prayers or tell your beads or whatever you do, pray that drinking may again become fashionable—in the interests of Lieutenant Owen. And in the meantime, before he wakes and gets the blues, you had better corral his cartridges."

"I done that," said Spud, "though it might be better that way too."

"No, Murphy," said the Kid. "That would be a bad expose. Soldiers must all other people with bullets, but should scrupulously respect their own persons."

The Kid respected Private Spud's anxiety to save the unhappy lieutenant from dismissal. He watched over Owen's "attack of malaria" personally, so that even that critical outbreak of the maniac passed unnoticed by the adjutant or men. In a week Owen was back with the troop, grayer and thinner, quieter and graver than ever, but with the same nervous courteseness which made his troopers as also his comrades regard him with a pitying liking.

The little doctor and Owen had a long private talk, and it is to be supposed the Kid dabbled in nostra outside the regular pharmacy of the facility, for he and Owen took together four weeks' leave of absence, and the doctor brought the lieutenant back to Spud looking better than ever he had since the craving had burst upon him.

"Take him, Murphy," said the Kid confidently, "and you can let him have the run of the pistol cartridges."

"The blessing of the ward is on ye," said Spud, with great joy, and thereafter permitted himself to mingle as freely as in former days with the troop, to take his regular break at the post trader's and to discuss the glories of the ward and of the Owen family as magniloquently as before. Again the old saloon keeper received a letter from his son, which he showed to the senator, and again was the old lawmaker's heart borne up within him, as he dreamed of glory—real glory, not of the political order, whose hollowness he knew—for his boy.

For war was in the air, the Maine went down, and then war came.

That was six months after the Kid had brought Owen back to duty. During the last three of these the soul of Murphy had been possessed with doubt. Something was wrong with his charge. Just what he could not say. It was not the old trouble—nor once had the unwholy thirst consumed the officer—that seemed indeed to have left him through the little doctor's radical cure, whatever it may have been. A something of alteration was in the eye and step of the lieutenant. Now he was listless; he took no part in social gatherings; he avoided any more duty than was absolutely necessary.

Before, when not incapacitated by his vice, he had been a burning student, indefatigable in helping his troop to star rank in the regiment. Books no longer interested him nor drills. He cared not whether his men were marksmen or sharpshooters. Spud took heart of grace and wrote to the Kid, who had been sent to another station, and the Kid replied, a little anxiously, but hopefully.

"In changing his inherent nature in one direction," said he, "it is possible that other traits may have been weakened, but it is probable he will be his busy self again in time. So long as the great object was attained by my cure I really don't care much about the rest."

But Spud did. The troop was crazy with delight at getting the route for Cuba. Owen disguised his own feelings from every one, but not from the watchful attendant.

"Hully gee," Spud moaned, "he—he don't want to go!"

The dog robber raged, and it is to be feared that when in attendance on his master in the seclusion of the latter's quarters, things passed which had better fitted the long gone days when they were only big boy and little boy on the block, and Spud had forced the child to fight or be thrashed. It resulted in Owen's thrusting aside his listlessness for a time and moving around with some enthusiasm in the preparations for departure. The dog robber, however, was grievously embittered in heart as he watched the lieutenant's condition.

"By gee," said he, "I asked him to cure him of drink, but not to take all the spirit out of him. What'll I A coward's worse than 'other thing."

Then it came about that on a very hot day in the afternoon a ship strange in those waters crept closely in to the Cuban coast. She steamed slowly along, her bulwarks lined with watchful armed men, whose wide, gray campaign hats topped her sides. The silver beach stretched, a shining ribbon, along the edge of the sea, and great clouds of surf sparkled in the sun as the waves broke on the coral reefs a little out from the shore. The land within lay a garden of the gods, as green, as fruitful, to all seeming as peaceful. A net of jungle, of trailing, thorny vines and tropical bush, with bamboos and banyans and clumps of cocoa palms, reached back from the beach, rising gently until some miles inland the dark ridges of the hills loomed in the horizon.

No sound came from the land, no foe showed himself as the ship drifted gently in and then lay still some hundreds of yards from shore. Swiftly from her sides two longboats were

lowered, and each was filled with men with carbine, ammunition belt and pistol.

"Lieutenant Pauks will take charge of boat No. 1, Lieutenant Owen of No. 2," said the commanding officer. "You have your instructions, gentlemen. Good luck to you. In an hour or two I shall expect you back with the information and the scouts."

Boat No. 1 was lying ready and impatient when Mr. Pauks swung himself in the stern.

"Give way, men," said he. "See if we can't beat the other boat ashore. Now then," he added to the Cuban at the tiller, "look out for the reef. I'd as soon get there dry as wet."

"Where is No. 2?" a soldier queried as they shot forward.

"Lieutenant Owen," said the commanding officer impatiently, "what is the matter? Your men are all in the boat."

A voice from the stern of the boat spoke up gently, sedate and respectful as need be, yet with a curious note in it.

"The things is all with me, Lieutenant. There's nothin left behind," it said.

Owen started at Spud's rebuke, a rebuke only to his ears, and in his turn swung over and seated himself in the stern close to his attendant.

"Give way," he said, but there was no jolly appeal to his squad to beat the others. The men looked fretful as they noted the start the others had.

"Them fellows have the luck," one growled. "They will be first ashore."

Spud had a corner of his eye on Owen's face. In the crowded small boat their shoulders touched. The officer's face was gray, his form trembled.

"This is black ruin," thought Spud; "black ruin and disgrace for him and the ward. If I—if I dared!"

He watched the men furtively. One man nudged another, and both looked at Owen and sneered. Spud ground his teeth and marked them for future slaughter.

"They know; they see it," he inwardly groaned, "and we'll be eternally disgraced. Oh, Sammy, Sammy, if only I could give ye a jolly good hidin to wake ye up!"

He slipped a hand to a hip pocket and half drew something from it, but shoved it back again with great distress of face.

"What's to be done? D—n the kid doctor! Shall I burst the cure or—Oh, this is the devil sure!"

The other boat was drawing away ahead, for their officer was cheering the oarsmen on. He waved from his place in the stern a hand to Owen and cried back gayly, "You're not in it, Owen!"

The men looked at Owen. He made no response. There was a certain honor in being first to set foot on the shore, but the soldiers saw disgustfully that their officer did not desire it. Danger was there, and he—he funk'd it. That was the sudden thought that sprang to each man's mind, and they looked blackly on him.

Spud moved in the boat, standing up so that he hid the lieutenant while he stooped on some pretense. He held out a black bottle and whispered angrily:

"Drink, Sammy, drink, and God forgive us both!"

The lieutenant looked at him in sudden horror. It was as though one's guardian angel, who had watched for long, should abandon his task and assume a demon's form.

"You—you want me to?"

"Drink and say nothin," said poor Spud, "for 'if fightin's to be done that kid doctor's ruined ye for it. Drink!"

And he drank quickly and deeply. He handed the bottle back to Spud, who slipped it away. In a minute Owen's face flushed, and his eye brightened. He stood up and spoke to the men and bade the rowers pull. He was more like himself, and their faces brightened.

"Pull boys," he said, "and we'll beat those fellows for all their start. Murphy," he whispered as he sat down again, "give me that bottle."

Spud moaned, but the first step was taken. He passed it over, and again the officer drank, and this time he kept the flask. Over the blue waters they skimmed. The reef was near.

"Two to one in V's we beat you, Owen!" sang Pauks.

"Done. Give way, men!" Owen cried, and the men laughed. Spud brightened up. The poison was working. He knew what the doctor would say, but bade the morrow begone! Enough to live bravely through the day. At the reef a false turn at the tiller capsized Pauks' boat, and Owen gained and passed them. They cleared the surf. They ran high on the white shore. They formed as skirmishers 20 yards apart and plunged into the jungle without waiting for the other boat.

These were almost immediately after them, however, yet Owen had time to stop and in the shelter of a bush gulp down another drink. The blood dashed through his veins. Blood filled his eyes. He was a new man from the listless craven an hour ago. Danger, certain fighting, was before him, and he knew and welcomed it. Spud was by him and was astonished. If the doctor had been there, the Kid could have told the dog robber that his master had been returned nervously to a boyish condition, and the liquor would act on him as it would on a boy who had never touched it before. But Spud was almost scared, so red were Owen's cheeks, so full of vivacity his manner as he led his men, now following him with cheerful amazement. In the jungle the two boat loads joined and completed a skirmish line of some 50 men. They panted onward. Crash! From in front of them came a sudden volley.

"Down!" yelled Pauks. "Down and steady! Return the fire lying!"

Down they went, and the Spanish bullets flew over their heads. They fired back at the puffs of smoke, but Owen stood up, waving his sword.

Fauks was his senior and called out to him:

"Owen, they are in force and must be in rifle pits. We should draw back to the boats for further orders until the snubcat shells them out. What do you say?"

Owen was hidden from view for a moment. When he appeared again, he had finished the fateful bottle and thrown it and discretion away.

"Nonsense!" he cried. "They are onely Spaniards anyway. At them, boys! Cease firing! Forward! Double time! Commence firing!"

The men obeyed, cheering, and gained 20 yards by the rush, when they went down again and peppered away.

Again Owen commanded, and again they rushed. Now they gained a rise and saw ahead of them a little way—saw the mounds of a row of rifle pits.

"Owen!" yelled Pauks. "It is madness to take them with our force. They must be shelld."

A blistering volley of Mauser bullets streamed from behind the earthworks and drowned Owen's reply. The men, lying down, escaped injury, and at once Owen's voice was again at them in a frenzy:

"Curse 'em! Forward! Commence firing!"

Pauks was overborne. The spirit of Owen had permeated the men. They were laughing and swearing and cheering and making a grand series of rushes, with every now and again a gap of more than the ordered 20 yards in the line. The daring thing had its immediate effect. A Spaniard bounced up from back of the rifle pits and dashed into the farther jungle. Another and



The dog robber was felled by the saber, another followed. Owen saw what his men's cool fire had done and their steady advance against greatly entrenched odds. Pauks could not control the men. They were laughingly cheering Owen as they loaded and fired. Some one sang out:

"He's all right!" "Who's all right?" "Owen!"

"Oh, the sidewalks of New York! That there should be so much devilment in a pint of whisky!"

The Spaniards were flustered evidently. Such work was unexpected. A strip of nearly clear ground some 60 yards broad separated the demoniacal Americans from them, and the Spanish fire faltered and flickered. It was too late to go back. Pauks was borne away by the excitement.

"Now, boys, forward! Charge!" Owen yelled, and the men, with a wild yell, rose and followed him. The Spaniards broke and scrambled any way at all out of their pits and ran. Owen was away ahead of his men. Half way across a Mauser bullet struck him, but he plunged on with a crazy cry. Spud was after like another bullet. The lieutenant rushed ahead blindly. One officer of the Spaniards, mad with rage, was defending the trench almost by himself. At him Owen ran, pistol and sword in hand. His foot slipped, and he fell at the officer's feet, who, madly furious, raised a cavalry saber to dispatch his foe. Spud saw and gasped, "God forgive me, his life will be on my head!"

The dog robber ran forward at the charge and was felled by the saber, falling back upon Owen. In a moment more it was all over, and the Americans held the position.

Pauks was bewildered. "It was madness," said he; "but, by jings, it was glorious! Are you hurt, Owen?"

Owen looked up mistily. He was bleeding from a bad wound in the shoulder and was sick. The effects of the poison were passing off.

"I don't know," he said. "What—what has happened?"

"You're stunned, old man," said Pauks, "but, I say, I didn't think you had it in you. That was fine. Do you know this man saved your life? I saw it all. He ran clean in and caught the saber. Let's look. It's your servant, isn't it?"

Owen looked, and Murphy feebly opened his eyes and looked back at his old pet of the block. The dog robber glanced round with a faint grin of triumph.

"The old ward breeds men," he said, "and don't—don't none of ye guys forget it."

Owen took his hand.

"Is it bad, Spud?" he whispered.

"It's taps," Murphy whispered back, with a squeeze of the hand. "Is ye hurt much?"

"I guess so. I think my shoulder's smashed all to pieces."

"Then it's all right—all right," said Spud faintly. "Ye'll leave the army with heaps of glory—retired for wounds and—and—they can't say ye was a coward, Sammy. The ward will bust itself with shoutin'."

"But you, Spud!" cried Owen in great distress.

"That's all right," said Spud, now very feebly. "Tell my old man to set 'em up for the gang. They won't forget me, Sammy!"

"Yes."

"See the kid doctor again and—get another—of—them—cures. I—thought—the—ward—of—ye, Sammy."

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