JOCK'S TERMS

A Tale of the Malta Hospitals.

By ALBERT G. MACKINNON.

PART I.—(Cont'd.)

"I dinna ken whether I shud tell it tae ye or no, but as I hae gane sae far, I may as weel gang the haill length. I telt a lee aince. It didna seem a big thing at the time, but it had awfu' consequences. It sent as guid a mon as ever breathed to the dogs. It slipped aff my lips a'maist afore I kent. Ye see, I was in love wi' Janet Fraser, an' I was verra jealous o' Sandy M'Gibb, especially as I saw he was takin' her fancy. Ae day she an' I were thegither, an' oor talk turned tae Sandy. 'I'm hearin',' I said verra jauntily, "that he's tryin' to break aff wi' that Glesca' girl to marry yer money.' She looked at me startled an' innocent like. 'Ye maun be mista'en,' was a' she said; but her falterin' tone let me see that my words had ta'en effect. 'Mista'en!" I laughed. 'Weel, ye can read the proof wi' yer ain eyes.' I happened to hae a letter in my pocket frae a freen' in Glesca inquirin' aboot Sandy. The de'il aye has a tool ready to pit intil a mon's haund. My freen' wanted to [illegible] aboot Sandy's bank accoont, as he [illegible] bill ootstaundin'. He enclosed [illegible] letter, in which there were [illegible] wull settle the accoont [illegible] comin' intil some [illegible] threatens me [illegible] my contract, [illegible] There,' I [illegible] can [illegible]

[illegible] been cairried [illegible] I kent this, but it suited my purpose no to explain it at the moment, wi' the result that Janet Fraser believed what I said. She left me in great anger at Sandy, an' by some ill-luck he chose that verra nicht to gang an' ask her to be his wife. What she said I didna hear, but it maun hae been pretty stingin', for the next day he was a changed mon. He selt his saw-mill, an' left the pairish. 'Roderick,' he said tae me the last time I saw him, 'I'm gaun tae the dogs,' an' if report be true, he didna tak' lang aboot it."

"Ay, ye've got summat on yer conscience," remarked Jock gravely. "Was the lee ever fund oot?"

"That it was, but ower late to undo the wrang, though no to punish the culprit. Janet made inquiries, an' unbeknown tae me wrote tae me freen' in Glesca; an' when I went in my turn to propose tae her, we ocht to hae heard her words. I didna wunner then that Sandy had fled, an' when I left her door that nicht I kent there was nae livin' for me in the same pairish. I left tae as sune as I cud, an' I've never been back since. I cudna face her for warlds. I wud raither chairge a hundred Bulgar trenches than gang hame. Weel, I thocht it a' ower that nicht as I lay there, an', mon, my wounds were naethin' tae the pain at my hairt. It maun hae been aboot ane o'clock when I heard a low ca' again, juist as the nicht afore. This time it was nearer me. I tried to answer, but words stuck in my throat, though I managed to mak' some kind o' a soond. Then the ca' cam' nearer still, an' sune I saw a mon crawlin' alang on his haunds an' knees tae me.

" 'Whist! Quiet!' he whispered. 'There are Bulgars aboot.'

"His words startled me, no because o' what they said, but on accoont o' their accent. Was I dreamin' or wanderin' in my mind? The voice was that o' Sandy M'Gibb, the mon I had been thinkin' aboot, an' that I hadna seen since he had gane tae the dogs.

" 'Sandy, is that you?' I gasped.

" 'Ay, Roderick, it's me,' he answered. 'I didna expect to find you here. It mak's me a' the mair gled that I didna turn back. Last nicht I heard yer ca' an' tried to find ye, but had to gang back owin' to a patrol o' Bulgars juist aheid o' me. There are some o' them gaun aboot the nicht, sae we maun be gey carefu'.'

" 'It's guid o' ye, Sandy, to risk yer life for me as ye hae done,' I replied, wi' remorse in my hairt.

" 'My life's no muckle worth, Roderick boy,' he whispered. 'I hae made a bad mess o' it. I touched bottom, an' that's gey far doun. Then the ca' o' King an' country fanned the last spark o' guid left in me. I felt there was ae thing I cud dae wi' my muddled life, an' that was to gie it for ithers. The chaps say I hae been gey reckless wi' it, but then they dinna ken the reason. Ye'll be the fourth mon I'll hae brocht in since oor stunt, an' yet somehoo, mon, it disna ease the conscience.'

" 'Ye're troubled that wey tae,' I said. 'Sae am I.'

" 'Weel, this is no a place to discuss it. I maun get ye back if I can,' he replied. 'We canna staund [illegible] or we'll be seen. I'll hae to drag ye in, since ye canna dae onythin' wi' yer legs.'

"He untied his puttees, made a rope of them, passed it under my airms, an' then ower his ain shouthers, an' still crawlin', began to haul me alang. I helped as much as I cud wi' my haunds, but the agony o' thae moments beats a'. Every nerve in my body seemed to be a bayonet stickin' intil me; yet it was naethin' tae what I was sufferin' in my hairt. Here was I bein' saved by the mon I had ruined. At last I cud staund it nae langer, an' when he halted to tak a rest I said, 'Sandy, I hae somethin' to tell ye. Ye're heapin' coals o' fire on my heid, an' it's causin' me mair pain than my wounds. I dinna deserve to be saved by you.'

"He was gey tired an' had to listen. Sae I made a clean briest o' my sin, an' telt him a' aboot my lee to Janet Fraser, that had caused her refusal, an' that had started him on the track o' ruin. He said naethin', but I saw his feelin's were workin' hard. I ended by beggin' his forgi'eness, though I acknowledged I had nae richt or claim. Efter I had feenished, it was a lang time afore he spoke. Then he said in a voice as hard as iron, 'Ye hae tempted me the nicht mair than I hae ever been tempted afore. I made up my mind to leave ye here to dee like a dog, the vile cratur that ye are; but efter a' I hae risked to get ye in, I'm no gaun to gie up at the last. Sae come alang. I'll save yer life, but dinna ye ever ask me again to forgi'e ye, for I'll no dae it—na, never!'

"Wi' that he started to pull me on, an' then he seemed to hae the strength o' a Samson. He had nae regaird for my wounds, an' though I cried oot for pain, he didna stop. I suppose he was ragin' sae in his mind that he got a' else. I believe if the puttees broken he wud hae left me; but held, an' sae we reached the [illegible]. He had to staund up there to [illegible] ower, an' juist at that moment the risin' moon peeped through a cloud an' showed us up, an' next instant a sniper fired an' hit him. We were baith cairried doun the line. The last I heard o' him was that he was daein' weel, an' had been ta'en tae Malta also. Noo it's an awfu' thing to be unforgi'en, an' that's what I'm feelin' the noo."

Roderick Macpherson ended his tale with a groan of misery that seemed to rise from the very depths of his soul.

"I'm gled ye hae telt me a' this," said Jock. "Maybe I'll find Sandy, an' bring him to anither frame o' mind."

"If ye cud do that!" said Roderick, as his eyes shone for a moment with joy. Then he shook his head, and added, "It's nae use. I ken Sandy, an' he said, 'Na, never!' "

(To be continued.)

Brains Will Win the Prize.

Canadian farming has reached a point where brains, more than any factor, and more so now than at any other time, are going to pay the biggest premium in agriculture. By brains I don't mean scholarly training particularly, but rather sound sense and good business judgment as a foundation, and a capacity for progressing from learned facts and experience, whether one's own experience or that of others. The cost of producing farm commodities is on a rising scale. Labor, materials, everything entering into the running of a farming business are at unheard-of prices. The prices the farmer receives for his goods are keeping pace in some cases; in others they are not.

In all cases, farming is on a new plane economically, and to cope with high costs of production, so as to come off with a profit and not a loss, will require wits and shrewd management. It means that poor farming will be less and less profitable. It means that headwork will be more and more profitable. It means that the man who has brains, and will use them, can beat the corn game, for instance, at the start by using better seed, and thereby assuring the increase in yield needed to make its production pay a profit. The live-stock man can play to a surer thing by quitting his scrub stock lottery and taking to pure-breds. He can still further cut the corners and assure his profit by studying feeding rations, and by substituting the cheaper feeds for the expensive ones.

I believe we're going to profit by the high cost of producing. If the year 1920 doesn't see an increased practice of thrift and good farming on Canadian farms, I'll miss a guess. It takes a period of stress to bring our wits into play—a necessity to Mother Invention. The next season will seek out and reward brains. You'll be able to find them in that way.—J. R.

Legs and Necks.

Naturalists assure us that, with a few exceptions, there is a marked equality between the lengths of the necks and of the legs of both birds and quadrupeds. Whether they be long or whether they be short is determined, it seems, chiefly by the manner in which the animal feeds.

Crocodiles, lizards and fish have virtually no necks. Fowls that feed in the water also offer an example of this correspondence between the members, with the exception of swans and geese.

The first postage stamp was printed in Great Britain in 1840; it was black in color.

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CROP AND TRADE CONDITIONS THROUGHOUT THE DOMINION

Bank of Montreal Annual Meeting.

Complete Reports Submitted on Conditions in the Various Provinces of the Dominion at Annual Meeting of the Bank of Montreal Will Be of Special Interest to Mercantile and Farming Communities.

At the Annual Meeting of the Bank of Montreal complete reports were submitted by the Superintendents of the Bank, dealing with trade and farming conditions in the various provinces of the Dominion. These reports cover the particular operations carried out in the various sections of the country and on this account become of very special interest to the mercantile and farming communities desirous of keeping in touch with the important developments that are occurring throughout Canada. Our Superintendent reports as follows:

Ontario.

Manufacturing in Ontario has been limited only by shortage of supplies and disturbances in labor. Government credits for goods sold to Europe have stimulated manufacturing, and domestic demands have been insistent. New industries have been started, and a number of successful manufacturing concerns in the United States have been making enquiries with the intention of locating in Ontario.

Ontario farmers have been steadily bettering their position in recent years, installing modern equipment and improving their modes of living. The past year has been one of fair crops and high prices. A wet spring was followed by an exceptionally dry summer, and grain crops, with the exception of fall wheat, fell below the average. Root crops were good; corn and tomatoes were a record yield: the season was poor for all fruit except grapes. Cheese production showed a falling off. There is a shortage of hogs; sheep raising is on the increase. The cattle situation is somewhat unsettled, owing to the limited amount of feed available for carrying through the winter.

The production of lumber has been seriously reduced owing to shortage of labor. 1919 has been an excellent marketing year, with heavy sales to Great Britain and the United States, and a steady domestic demand for all classes of lumber. Prices have been unusually high, there is no accumulation of stocks on hand, and notwithstanding the scarcity of labor and increased costs of operating, the year has been a successful one. Pulp and paper have been in large and increasing demand, with soaring prices for the latter.

Mining production during the year has been curtailed. The demand for nickel fell off after the Armistice; strikes lessened the silver output. Both these situations are improving and larger production has taken place at the gold mines.

Both wholesalers and retailers report it easy to sell goods. Credits are shortened and bad debts negligible.

Larger expenditures were generally made by municipalities this year in an effort to overtake works postponed during the war.

Population shows a general increase, with a tendency to drift to urban and manufacturing centres.

There has been a continued extension in hydro-electric power during the past year, and works at Nipigon and Chippewa, as well as at other places less important, will within the next two years add very largely to the available power for manufacturing and other purposes throughout Ontario.

Generally speaking, the year has been one of great activity throughout the Province.

Prairie Provinces.

During part of the past season extensive areas in Saskatchewan and Alberta experienced, in common with the North-Western States, severe drought and loss of crops, but owing to good yields in other areas and to high prices, the value of grains raised exceeded that of the year 1915, when the largest crops in the history of the West was produced.

Failure of pasture and hay in certain districts caused anxiety to ranchers, and while autumn rains brought relief, the scarcity and high price of feed for winter use forced the sale of some unfinished cattle at prices adversely attacked by worse conditions in the United States.

The West on the whole has had a prosperous year, exceptions being the districts in which crops were lost through drought.

British Columbia.

Grain crops were affected by drought, and were below the average. Fruit and vegetables have been good crops with prices ruling high. More attention is being given to agriculture, and farmers and growers generally have had a profitable season.

Wholesale trade has been good and retail trade active.

The population has increased, and further immigration is expected during the coming year.

Conditions throughout the province on the whole are better than they have been for some years, and prospects appear good for continued business activity into the new year.

Woman's Sphere

A Unique Party.

"What kind of a time did you have at Elizabeth's last night?" asked Mary's mother.

"Just the jolliest kind of a time imaginable! Betty is so original. She never does things like anybody else. You know, she and Edith Carlson gave this party together, and we were all consumed with curiosity from the moment we received our invitations. You recall how the envelope was sealed with a cat cut from black paper, and two black cats decorated the head of the sheet on which the note of invitation was written? Just the wording of it led us to expect one of Betty's unique affairs. Don't you remember, it read, "Two black cats invite you to spend the evening of December tenth at The Elms, 203 High Street." The girls showed me some of the notes of acceptance they received, and they were quite as original as the invitation. Clark Leeson wrote:

"I'm glad to find I'm in good grace
With two black cats about this place;
And since I find I'm on their slate,
I'll meet them on the given date.

"Did they carry out the idea throughout the evening, Mary?"

"Indeed they did. During the half-hour while the guests were assembling, envelopes containing pictures of cats sliced in irregular sections were handed us, and we worked together in little groups of two and threes to place them correctly. This broke the ice, and prevented any stiffness at the beginning. Soon after the last arrival we were each given a card about six inches square, decorated with two black cats, and containing a list of twenty short definitions describing some word the first syllable of which was 'cat.' Let me get mine and see if you can guess any better than I did."

Mary ran from the room and quickly returned with the card from which she read, "A waterfall."

"Cataract," replied her mother promptly. "That is easy."

"They made the first easy to encourage us, I guess. They are not all so simple. Let me read you several from the list just to show you what they were like: 'An unconscious state,' 'A calamity,' 'An ancient burial place,' 'A beam at a ship's end.' No one had over seventeen of the twenty correct, but we had lots of fun figuring them out. If we had been allowed to consult the dictionary we might all have done much better. We were allowed twenty minutes in which to make our attempt, and then Betty read the correct answers and we checked ours. A pretty calendar with a picture of kittens on it was the first prize, while a copy of the 'Black Cat Magazine,' tied with black ribbon, was the consolation.

"Tables were now brought in, and for two hours progressive games followed. See our score cards?" and she dangled from her finger a cat about four inches high cut from black cardboard, with eyes, mouth, and whiskers drawn in with white ink.

"It must have been a lot of work for somebody," said Mary's mother.

"Oh, the girls worked together getting things ready, and they said it was great fun. The plan was carried out in the dining room, too. The cloth and napkins were decorated with black cats, and the cookies served with the ice cream were cut in the shape of cats. I don't see where they found so many different shapes, but there seemed to be no two alike.

"After supper we did one more stunt: Betty and Edith gave to each of us a large sheet of drawing paper and a stick of charcoal, and told us to illustrate the jingle we found on the back of our sheet. Mine was:

"Pussy cat, pussy cat, where have you been?
I've been to London to visit the queen.

"In a few minutes the girls collected our sketches and exhibited them one at a time, asking the audience to guess what Mother Goose or nursery rhyme the drawing was supposed to represent. If the sketch was so impossible that no one could guess it, the artist was compelled to rise and recite his verse. Some of them were very cleverly done, especially:

"Heigh diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon.
"Ding, dong, bell, pussy's in the well.

"It certainly closed one of the jolliest evenings we've had this year," and Mary leaned back in her chair with a sigh of satisfaction.

Light for the Short Days.

It is a rather strange thing that with tremendous improvement along every other line of agricultural activity the provision of good modern lighting systems should have been so long in coming. Until the last three or four years the great majority of farm homes still got along with the old kerosene lantern for barn and yard work and with the lamp for the house.

In the house these lamps were not very satisfactory at best. Cleaning and filling them took a lot of someone's time, and unless there were a number of them used, it was usually a matter of those nearest the lamp getting the light and those farthest away getting along without it. There had to be lamps to carry upstairs at bed time, one for each room. And these meant more cleaning and filling, considerable inconvenience, and an ever-present fire hazard. To be sure, they were a lot better than the candles and tallow dips of the generation before, but they left a lot to be desired, too.

In the barn it was a more serious matter. A lantern was the poorest kind of a makeshift. Large open passageways and open lofts without any papered walls to reflect the light made the lantern a mere point of light, the rays from which seemed to be immediately absorbed in the darkness. It was a case of holding the lantern close to the work in hand in order to see at all. The lantern had to be picked up and carried from job to job, and this made a man one-handed and consumed a lot of extra time. Finally in the barn the fire hazard was immeasurably greater than in the house. A lantern balanced unstably on a straw-covered floor had an excellent chance of being upset. And once turned over, the burning liquid kerosene had every chance for destruction.

What a difference there is now in many country homes. Instead of the coal oil lamp lighting just the centre of the living room, carried from room to room when light was needed, and cleaned and filled every day, we find elegant electric fixtures. On the living room table is a reading lamp with a shade that softens the bright rays of the electric bulbs, but allows them to reach the farthest corners of the room. Bracket lights on the walls and a special lamp on the piano give plenty of extra light whenever it is needed. Simpler but just as effective fixtures are in all the other rooms of the house, upstairs as well as down, in the hallways and basement and on the porches. Hall lights can be turned on from upstairs or down, and veranda lights are controlled from inside the house.

In the barn the old lantern is known no more. Electric lamps are strung everywhere they will do the most good and the switches are conveniently located. No more carrying lanterns or worrying about fire.

The farm of to-day is enjoying just as complete electrical service as the city home; because electricity on the farm affords power as well as light. Pumps, washing machines, separators, churns and a wide variety of other light power appliances are run to-day with small electric motors at a great saving of both time and labor.

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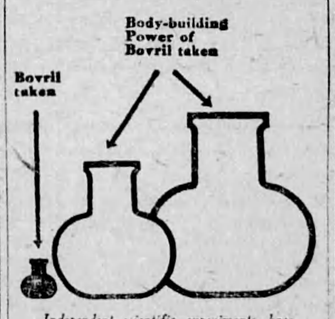

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