AT THE POST OF DUTY

OR, THE WATERMAN'S SONS.

CHAP. VIII.—(Continued).

"The fact was," said Corney, "that we had had a fearful time of it that winter—blowin' great guns an' snow nearly every night; an' what wi' heat at the fires an' cowld i' the streets, an' hot water pourin' on us at wan minit an' freezin' on us the next, a'most every man Jack of us was coughin' an' sneezin', and watherin' so bad at our eyes an' noses that I do belave if we'd held 'em over the suction-pipes we might ha' filled the ingins without throublin' the mains at all. So the doctor he said, says he, 'Lads, I'll send ye a bottle o' stuff as 'll put ye right.' An' sure enough down comes the bottle that night when we was smokin' our pipes just afther roll-call. It turned out to be the best medicine ever was. 'Musha!' says I, 'here's the top o' the marnin' to ye, boys!' Baxmore he smacks his lips when he tastes it, opens his eyes, tosses off the glass, and holds it out for another. 'Howld on, fair play!' cried Jack Williams, so we all had a glass round. It was just like lemonade or ginger-beer, it was. So we sat down an' smoked our pipes over it, an' spun yarns an' sung songs; in fact, we made a jollification of it, an' when we got up to turn in there warn't a drop left i' the bottle!

"'You better go to the doctor for another bottle,' says Moxey, as he went out.

"'I will,' says I; 'I'll go i' the marnin'.'

"Sure enough away I goes i' the marnin' to Doctor Offey. 'Doctor,' says I, holdin' out the bottle, 'we all think our colds are much the better o' this here medicine, an' I comed, av ye please, for another o' the same.'

"Musha! but ye should ha' seen the rage he goes off into. 'Finished it all!' says he. 'Every dhrop,' doctor,' says I, 'at wan sittin'.' At that he stamped an' swore at me, an' ordered me away as if I'd bin a poor relation, an' says he, 'I'll send a bottle to-night as'll cure ye!' Sure enough he did. The second bottle could have pisoned a rat. It lasted us all six months, an' I do behave to find the most of it in the cupboard at this minit av ye look."

"Come, time," said Frank, while he gave vent to a laugh, at the remembrance of this incident. "I'm going down your way and will give you a convoy. We can take a look in at the gymnastics as we pass, if you choose."

"All right, Blazes, come along!" So saying they left the station, and set off at a brisk pace in the direction of the City.

CHAPTER IX.

As the brothers drew near to the busy region of the city which lies to the north of London Bridge, Frank turned aside into one of the narrow streets that diverge from the main thoroughfare.

"Where are ye goin'?" inquired Willie.

"There was a fire here last night," said Frank; "I want to have a look at the damage."

"A fire!" exclaimed Willie. "Why, Blazes, it strikes me there's more fires than usual last night in London."

"Only two, lad."

"Only two! How many would you have?" asked Willie, with a laugh.

"Don't you know," said Frank, "that we have about four fires every night? Sometimes more, some-times fewer. Of course, we don't all of us turn out to them; but some of the brigade turn out to that number, on an average, every night in the year."

"Are ye jokin', Frank?"

"Indeed I am not. I wish with all my heart I could say that I was joking. It's a fact, boy. You know I have not been long in the force, yet I've gone to as many as six fires in one night, and we often go to two or three. The one we are going to see the remains of just now was too far from us for our engine to turn out; but we got the call to send a man on, and I was sent. When I arrived and reported myself to Mr. Braidwood, the two top floors were burnt out, and the fire was nearly got under. There were three engines, and the men were up on the window-sills of the second floor, with the branches playin' on the last of the flames, while the men of the salvage corps were getting the furniture out of the first floor. Conductor Brown was there with his escape, and had saved a whole family from the top floor, just before I arrived. He had been changed from his old station at the west end that very day. He's a wonderful fellow that conductor! Many a life he has saved; but indeed, the same may be said of most of the men in the force, especially the old hands.—Here we are, lad. This is the house."

Frank stopped, as he spoke, in front of a ruined tenement; or rather, in front of the gap which was now strewn with the charred and blackened debris of what had once been a house. The street in which it stood was a narrow mean one, inhabited by a poor, and, to judge from appearance, a dissipated class. The remains of the house were guarded by policemen, while a gang of men were engaged in digging among the ruins, which still smoked a little here and there.

"What are they diggin' for?" asked Willie.

"I fear they are looking for dead bodies. The house was let out to lodgers, and swarmed with people. At first it was thought that all were saved; but just before I was ordered home, after the fire was got under, some one said that an old man and his grandchild were missing. I suppose they're looking for them now."

On inquiring of a policeman, however, Frank learned that the remains of the old man and his grandchild had already been found, and that they were searching for the bodies of others who were missing.

A little beyond the spot where the fire had occurred, a crowd was gathered round a man who stood on a chair haranguing them, with apparently considerable effect, for ever and anon his observations were received with cries of "Hear, hear," and laughter. Going along the middle of the narrow street, in order to avoid the stalls of the old-clothes'-shops and pawnbrokers, as well as the risk of contact with their wares, Frank and Willie elbowed their way through the crowd to within a few yards of the speaker.

"What is he?" inquired Frank of a rather dissipated elderly woman.

"He's a clown, or a hacrobat, or somethink of that sort, in one of the theaters or music-halls. He's bin burnt out of his 'ome last night, an's selling off all he's been able to save by hauction."

"Come now, ladies an' gents," cried the clown, taking up a rather seedy looking great coat, which he held aloft with one hand, and pointed to it with the other, "Who's agoin' to bid for this 'ere garment—bina hextra superfine, double-drilled, kershimere great coat, fresh from the looms o' Tuskany — at least it was fresh from 'em ten years ago (that was when my father was Lord Mayor of London), an' it's bin renewing its youth (the coat, not the Lord Mayor) ever since. It's more glossy, I do assure you, ladies, and of a brightest about the elbows an' the seams o' the back. Who bids for this 'ere venerable garment? Six bob? Come now, don't all bid at once. Who said six bob?"

No reply being made to this except a laugh, the clown (who by the way, wore a similarly glossy great coat, with a hat to match) protest-ed that his ears must have deceived him, or his imagination had been whispering hopeful things — which was not unlikely, for his imagination was a very powerful one—when he noticed Frank's tall figure among the crowd.

"Come now, fireman, this is the very hartic le you wants. You comed out to buy it, I know, an' 'ere it is, by a strange coincidence, ready-made to hand. What d'ye bid? Six bob? Or say five. I know you've got a wife an' a large family o' young firemen to keep, so I'll let it go cheap. P'raps it's too small for you; but that's easy put right. You've only got to slit it up behind to the neck, which is a infallible cure for a tight fit, an' you can let down the cuffs, which is double, an' if it's short you can cut off the collar, an' sew it on to the skirts. It's water-proof, too, and fire-proof, patent asbestos. W'en it's dirty, you've got nothin' to do but to walk into the fire, an' it'll come out noo. W'en it's thoroughly wet on the houtside, turn it inside hout, an' there you are, to all appearance, as dry as bone. What! you won't have it at any price? Well, now, I'll tempt you. I'll make it two bob."

"Say one," cried a baker, who had been listening to this, with a broad grin on his floury countenance.

"Ladies and gents," cried the clown, drawing himself up with dignity; "there's an individual in this his hands, who is uncertain as to his means of escape, in the event of his return by the stair being cut off, will be too much concerned about crowd—I beg pardon, this assemblage as asks me to say 'one.' I do say 'one,' an' I say it with melancholy feelin's as to the liberality of my species. One bob! A feller man as has bin burnt hout of 'is 'ome an' needs ready money to keep 'im from starvation, offers his best great coat — a hextra superfine, double-drilled (or milled, I forget w'ich) kershimere, from the looms o' Tuskany—for one bob!"

"One-and-six," muttered an old-clothesman, with a black cotton sack on his shoulder.

"One-an'-six," echoed the clown with animation; "one-an'-six bid; one-an'-six. Who said one-an'-seven? Was it the gent with the red nose?—No, one-an'-six; goin' at the ridiculously low figure of one-an'-six — gone! as the old 'ooman said when her cat died o' appleplexy. Here you 'are; hand over the money. I can't knock it down to you, 'cause I haven't a hauctioneer's hammer. Besides, it's agin my principles. I've never knocked nothin' down, not even a skittle, since I joined the Peace Society.

"Now, ladies an' gents, the next thing I've got to hoffer is a harm-chair. Hand up the harm-chair, Jim."

A very antique piece of furniture was handed up by a little boy, whom Willie recognized as the little boy who had once conversed with him in front of the chocolate shop in Holborn Hill.

"Thank you, my son," said the clown, taking the chair with one hand, and patting the boy's head with the other; "this, ladies and gents," he added, in a parenthetical tone, "is my son; he's bin burnt hout of 'ouse an' 'ome too! Now, then, who bids for the old harm-chair? — the very identical harm-chair that the song was written about. In the embrace o' this 'ere chair has sat for generations past the family o' the Cattleys — that's my name, ladies and gents, at your service. Here sat my great-great-grandfather, who was used to say that his great-grandfather sat in it too. Here sat his son, and his son's son — the Lord Mayor as was—and his son, my father, ladies and gents, who died in it besides, and whose son now hoffers it to the 'ighest bidder. You'll observe its antiquity, ladies an' gents. That's its beauty. It's what I may call, in the language of the haristocracy, a hartic le of virtoo, w'ich means that it's a hartic le as is surrounded by virtuous memories in connection with the defunct. Now, then, say five bob for the hold harm-chair!"

While the clown was endeavoring to get the chair disposed of, Willie pushed his way to the side of Jim Cattley.

"I say, youngster, would you like a cup o' chocolate?" began Willie, by way of recalling to the boy their former meeting.

Jim, whose face wore a sad and dispirited look, turned angrily and said, "Come, I don't want none o' your sauce!"

"It ain't sauce I'm talkin' of, it's chocolate," retorted Willie. "But, come, Jim, I don't want to brother ye. I'm sorry to see you an' yer dad in sitch a fix. Have you lost much?"

"It's not what we've lost that troubles us," said John, softened by Willie's sympathetic tone more than by his words; "but sister Ziza is took bad, an' she's a fairy at Drury Lane, an' takin' her down the fire-escape has well-nigh killed her, an' we've got sitch a cold damp cellar of a place to put her in that I don't think she'll get better at all; anyhow, she'll lose her engagement, for she can't make two speeches an' go up in a silver cloud among blue fire with the 'flooenzer, an' 'er 'air all but singed off 'er 'ead."

Jim almost whimpered at this point, and Willie, quitting his side abruptly, went back to Frank (who was still standing an amused auditor of the clown), and demanded a shilling.

"What for, lad?"

"Never you mind, Blazes; but give me the bob, an' I'll pay you back before the week's out."

Frank gave him a shilling, with which he at once returned to Jim, and thrusting it into his hand, said

"There, Jim, your dad's hard up just now. Go you an' get physic with that for the fairy. Them 'flooenzers is ticklish to play with. Where d'ye stop?"

"Well, you are a queer 'un; thank'ee all the same," said Jim, pocketing the shilling. "We've got a sort o' cellar just two doors east o' the burnt 'ouse. Why?"

"'Cause I'll come an' see you, Jim. I'd like to see a live fairy in plain clo'se, with her wings off—"

The rest of the sentence was cut short by the clown, who, having disposed of the old arm-chair to a chimney-sweep, ordered Jim to "and up another hartic le." At the same moment Frank touched Willie on the shoulder and said: "Let's go, lad; I'll be late, I fear, for the gymnastics."

At the period of which we write the then Chief of the London Fire Brigade, Mr. Braidwood, had introduced a system of gymnastic training among the firemen, which he had found from experience to be a most useful exercise to fit the men for the arduous work they had to perform. Before going to London to take command of and reorganize the brigade which then went by the name of the London Fire Engine Establishment, and was in a very unsatisfactory condition, Mr. Braidwood had, for a long period, been chief of the Edinburgh Fire Brigade, which he had brought to a state of great efficiency. Taking the requirements and conditions of the service into consideration, he had come to the conclusion that the best men for the work in that city were masons, house carpenters, slaters, and such like; but these men, when at their ordinary employments, being accustomed to bring only certain muscles into full play, were found to have a degree of stiffness in their general movements, which prevented them from performing their duty as firemen with that ease and celerity which are so desirable. To obviate this evil he instituted the gymnastic exercises, which, by bringing all the muscles of the body into action, and by increasing the development of the frame generally, rendered the men lithe and supple, and in every way more fit for the performance of duties in which their lives frequently depended on their promptitude and vigor.

In addition to these advantages, it was found that those exercises gave the men confidence when placed in certain situations of danger. "For example," writes Mr. Braidwood, "a fireman untrained in gymnastics, in the third or fourth floor of a burning house, with the branch in his own safety, to render much service, and will certainly not be half so efficient as the experienced gymnast who, with a hatchet and 50 feet of rope at his waist, and a window near him, feels himself in comparative security, knowing that he has the means and the power of lowering himself easily and safely into the street," — a knowledge which not only gives him confidence, but enables him to give his undistracted attention to the exigencies of the fire.

It was to attend this gymnastic class that Frank now turned aside, and proposed to bid Willie good-by; but Willie begged to be taken into the room. Frank complied, and the boy soon found himself in an apartment fitted up with all the appliances of a gymnasium, where a number of powerful young men were leaping, vaulting, climbing, and in other ways improving their physical powers. Frank joined them, and for a long time Willie stood in rapt and envious contemplation of the busy scene.

At first he could not avoid feeling that there seemed a good deal more of play than business in their doings; but his admiration of the scene deepened when he remembered the bold acts of the firemen at Beverly Square, and recognized some of the faces of the men who had been on duty there, and reflected that these very men, who seemed thus to be playing themselves, would on that very night, in all probability, be called upon to exert these powers sternly and seriously, yet coolly, in the midst of scenes of terror and confusion, and in the face of imminent personal danger.

Brooding over these things, Willie, having at length torn himself away, hastened on his pilgrimage to London Bridge.

(To Be Continued).

ELECTRIC TRAINS.

Electric trains have now superseded steam-driven trains on the Mersey Railway, which is the first line in Great Britain to undergo this change. This line is five miles in length, consisting partly of a tunnel under the river. The system in operation is similar to that which will be used on the London District Railway, the track being fitted with two insulated rails, one for the feed and one for the return. Almost the whole of the old locomotive staff has been retained, as drivers of electric trains or in other capacities, and at the old rate of wages.

OATS AND BEANS.

The growing of oats and beans in the same field increases the activity of the nitrogen-gathering bacteria. This is thought to be due to the fact that oats remove nitrates from the soil. In some German experiments the yield of oats when sown with peas was greater than when sown alone.

Mr. Howell—"What's all that screaming in the parlor?" Mrs. Howell—"Carrie is singing till Charlie comes, just to kill time." Mr. Howell—"Time seems to die hard."

"I am afraid, madam," said a gentleman who was looking for apartments, "that the house is too near the station to be pleasant." "It is a little noisy," assented the landlady; "but from the front veranda one has such a fine view of people who miss the trains," she added, with an air of triumph.

"Young man," said [illegible] ent, with the accent [illegible] "do you intend [illegible] night holding [illegible] and looking [illegible] like a sick calf?" "What do you in[illegible]en?" "Well, I had [illegible] you did us the ki[illegible] I would put my arm [illegible] waist, and if she did not ob[illegible] too forcibly I might risk [illegible]

FOR FARMERS

Seasonable and Profitable Hints for the Busy Tiller of the Soil.

THE FARMER'S PROFIT.

There are hundreds of farmers have become wealthy, yet they handled very little money, and had difficulty in meeting their ligations. There is one la[illegible] count which they do not draw and the deposits accumulate years, and that is the spil. A[illegible]er can take a poor farm, wor[illegible] add manure and receive [illegible] over expenses, but by doing so year his farm will become mo[illegible]tile, and also increase in valu[illegible] ten more years the farm wi[illegible] worth five times the original and it represents just as mo[illegible] fit as though the farmer had [illegible]ed the money. All farms are [illegible] certain extent, banks of d[illegible] where the profits of the farm [illegible] accumulate.

A farmer owning a $1,500 [illegible] will borrow $3,000 to build a [illegible] and house. Then his trouble [illegible] with the mortgage and the [illegible] and ends with the sheriff and foreclosure. Moral: It is no[illegible] mortgage that causes the dow[illegible] HE MUST KEEP OUT OF [illegible]

A farmer will balance and re[illegible] the rations of his live-stock poultry, preventing them from eating good foods, or, eating foods, thus bringing them to a state of perfection; but the farmer will feed himself any [illegible] likes, and when he finds himself run down," he will go right [illegible] stuff injurious rations into him.

There are seasons of the year it is difficult to cut all expens[illegible] if the farmer will avoid entail[illegible] on himself unnecessary expense will have performed for himself important service. It is not o[illegible] place to claim that the farm[illegible] as frequently a subject for im[illegible]ment as the stock.

Better breed of animals are [illegible] upon the farm. Better [illegible] and ers; new systems of farming [illegible] and farms become more [illegible] Buying a cow is a greater ris[illegible] buying a horse, yet some [illegible] who will not trust themselves judging horses when buying, [illegible] out and take up fresh cows [illegible] any one who has them to sell. [illegible] farmer who will breed fo[illegible] cows, and keep his calves, ma[illegible]agine that it does not pay, [illegible] he will avoid buying worthless [illegible] he will discover that he can m[illegible] profit on fewer cows and also [illegible] less labor to perform in so d[illegible] Nothing can constitute good [illegible]ing that has not good judgme[illegible] its foundation.

SHEEP AND ANGORA GOATS

are of great help to the farmer, devour the weeds and do not ch[illegible] anything for the work. On other hand, they pay the farme[illegible] the privilege of pulling weeds, turn the weeds into meat [illegible] juicy and crisp. When they co[illegible] weeds they take out some o[illegible] nitrogen, a little of the phosph[illegible] and potash to supply their needs, and the residue they put over the land to stimulate growth of the crops that are yet [illegible] be sown.

The correct plan for general [illegible]ing is to raise feed, and the an[illegible] to eat it. After this raise any[illegible] which a careful study of the ma[illegible] indicates can be sold at a profit [illegible] this latter department, good, s[illegible] judgment and all the informa[illegible] available is demanded. Every f[illegible]er who pursues this system in[illegible]ously and intelligently will pro[illegible] When foods are fed on the farm [illegible] sold in some other form, the [illegible]able elements of fertility are re[illegible]ed at home; and as long as this [illegible] done the farm may be cultivated [illegible] its highest limit of capacity and becomes more valuable every yea[illegible] its owner.

COOL THE MILK.

The importance of thorough a[illegible]tion and rapid cooling of milk [illegible] it is drawn is shown by a coun[illegible] the bacteria or germs in it under [illegible] microscope. In milk which cont[illegible] 975 bacteria when drawn, and [illegible] at 39 degrees, they multiplied [illegible] times, or a little more than do[illegible] in three hours, 2½ times in [illegible] hours and five times in one hour. But when the [illegible] degrees in the [illegible] they had mul[illegible] plied four [illegible] 290 times, and [illegible] times. In every [illegible] there would be [illegible] nature, 3[illegible] pool milk [illegible] teria are the [illegible] large proportion [illegible] strange that [illegible] put away [illegible] room. It [illegible] the temperature [illegible] water, [illegible] trees, the [illegible] teria in [illegible] time all the [illegible] n.

MILK.

There seems [illegible] season at [illegible] are a [illegible] [illegible] milk [illegible] It may be [illegible] best [illegible] little [illegible] milk [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]