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WHEN BOYS WERE MEN.

BY JOHN HABBERTON.

Author of "Helen's Babies," "George Washington," Etc.

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CHAPTER IX—CONTINUED.

The camp was soon quiet. Soldiers in the field fell asleep quickly after the evening meal and pipe, and our prisoners were all dozing by 8 o'clock. As I was not a smoker and was on duty I remained wide awake and, pacing to and fro in the road, spent much time in thinking how dreadful it would be to have to fight so good natured, harmless a set of men as the gray clad fellows slumbering near me. Then I put in some time being sorry for the families whose heads were so far from home. What would become of the Frost farm, I wondered, and how miserable would be the family if my father instead of his son was in the army?

Pretty soon the tenor of my thoughts was changed by a drop of water which struck me in the face. It was quickly followed by another and then by several. I was not long in getting far enough out of my brown study to discover that it was raining. I soon had my india rubber blanket over my shoulders and was wondering why the prisoners had not brought their own with them from their saddles—most of the sleeping figures were wrapped in blankets or quilts. It seemed too bad, even if they were rebels, that the poor fellows should be soaked by a cold November rain. Perhaps I could send two or three of the guard, who were not on post, to get them. I consulted



We engaged some of the captives in conversation.

Hamilton, who shook one of the sleepers and politely repeated the suggestion. The man was slow in waking and slower still in comprehending, but at last he said:

"What? Them gum cloths? Gosh! We ain't got none. Some of the army that druv you uns from round Richmond when McClellan was thar has got some that you uns left, but we uns wasnt't thar."

"Oh, I see. I beg your pardon. May I ask what you do when you're caught in the rain while on duty?"

"Do?" said the man, with a mighty yawn. "Why, git wet, I reckon."

Then the prisoner lay down and fell asleep again, though by that time the rain was falling furiously. As for Hamilton and me, we agreed that a so-called nation that didn't provide its soldiers with rubber blankets would soon be on its last legs and that the said legs would be rheumatic.

The camp was soon in commotion, most of it verbal and shockingly profane. The men in the newer companies had not yet learned how to keep dry in a shower. The rubber blanket is so narrow that for it to be under a man and over him, too, the owner must lie as straight as a ramrod. There were individual outbreaks throughout the entire night as men woke to find their knees soaked. To make matters worse for the guard, the rain put out the fires, so there was no light. Hamilton



He handed me a dirty wad of newspaper.

ton and I took turns in pacing to and fro in front of the prisoners, counting the barely visible figures each time we passed them. The guards were as unhappy as a lot of picnickers caught in a thunderstorm, and sleepy besides. The horses huddled together as best they could, the road became ankle deep in mud, and the entire situation was as gloomy, uncomfortable and detest-

able as our worst enemies could have wished. The only living beings who did not seem in the least disturbed were the prisoners.

As for myself, I think I lost my senses several times during that dreadful night. Only 48 hours before, the job of loading the revolvers had robbed me of an entire night of rest. Now I was doomed to another. I had to tramp the muddy road to keep myself awake, but my head dropped asleep once in awhile on its own account, and with wide open eyes I beheld many strange visions in the darkness and imagined many things ridiculous and impossible. It seemed that the night never would end, and my gratitude was unspokeable when at early dawn we were ordered to feed, mount and resume our march. I tried to feel happy when the prisoners were placed in charge of a new guard and my sense of responsibility ended, but soon I found that sleepiness on horseback was more dreadful than on foot. No sooner would I drop into a doze than I would rouse with a start from an awful sensation of falling from my horse. Everybody was cross, particularly the smokers, for all the fires were out, and few men carried matches.

Then it was that our captain leaped suddenly and securely into the affections of his men. Passing the word for smokers to fill their pipes, he tore a long, narrow strip from his handkerchief, moistened it the least bit, lit one end with a match, lighted his own pipe and then gave the smoldering rag to the first sergeant, from whom it passed down the entire troop. After the pipes were fairly started there was no more grumbling, except from nonsmokers.

How I wished myself a smoker! Often when in earlier days I had asked schoolmates why they took to smoking I was told, among other excuses, that a few whiffs of smoke would stop the craving of hunger when a fellow chanced to be playing truant for a day or off hunting or fishing and having too good luck to get home at mealtime. Well, had I learned smoking, the third day of our scout would have been a good time to test its remedial virtues, for my hunger was so intense that it drove everything else from my mind, and the memory of the bacon and hock-cake of the night before almost made me scream with rage. It seemed to me the government was mean, despicable and standing in its own light to give me as three days' ration some food which I had eaten during the first 24 hours. If only I had brought that lump of fat pork which had seemed so loathsome when it was dealt me! I actually longed for that bit of adipose tissue, longed until I saw it on the ground just where I had tossed it, saw it as distinctly as if it were really before my eyes.

Really, when we halted about noon my hunger had made me mean spirited enough to go deliberately in search of my friendly enemy who owned the bacon and frying pan. Fortunately for the poor fellow, he was eating his last bit of food apparently, for his haversack was inside out and lying by the fire to dry. He recognized me, and as the guard allowed me to speak to him he said:

"It seems too bad to waste the little fat that's left in the skillet, don't it? Wonder if thar ain't an ear of corn in that field that we could roast?"

"It's all too hard," said I, shaking my head sadly as I remembered my search of the day before.

"The harder the better," said he. "I never was more willing to be convinced. In a single minute I was back from the field with several ears. The Johnny selected the hardest, shelled it in his pan, shook it a little while before he put it over the fire, then parched it until it was a deep brown and poured it upon the top of his hot to cool. Not a bit of the bacon fat remained in the pan, but each grain of corn was as glossy as if varnished.

"Thar!" said he, after a moment or two, as he poured a full half of the corn into a big hunk and passed it to me. "Just list' yourself outside that an' see if you wasn't wrong thinkin' the corn too hard."

Bless that rebel! I do believe that parched corn saved my life. I resolved never to go on a scout again without a little trying pan in one of my saddle-bags and a lot of shelled corn in the other. But what was half an ear of corn to a raging hunger like mine? It was too late to parch more, for the call to mount had sounded. As I hurried down the road to rejoin my company I met a veteran of the older troop on which I had been billeted when first I reached the regimental camp, and he hailed me kindly with:

"Well, young feller, how does scoutin' agree with you?"

"Well enough," I replied, "if I wasn't almost starvin'."

"It always strikes greenhorns that way," he replied. "Now, I ain't a bit sharp set. Say, mebber a piece of pork would help you out. Here."

About the middle of the afternoon a general buzz of satisfaction ran along the column. We were passing one of our picket stations, which meant that we were within an hour or two of our camp. When finally the march was ended, my horse was so glad to get into his stall and be relieved of bridle, saddle and blanket that he gleefully kicked the empty air for several minutes. Several minutes later his owner, lying on the bare floor of his tent, his head pillowed on the rain soaked blanket, was slumbering as sweetly as if his couch were of down, and the ugly ejaculations of the weary men who struggled in one by one were so many loving lullabies.

CHAPTER X.
WINTER QUARTERS.

OUR first scout did not differ much in duration, accidents and results from scores which followed it. Go out whatever road we might, we were always sure to find the Johnnies doing business at the same old stand and unwilling to be interfered with. We always could reach them in a day's march, consume another day in passing along their entire front and still another in returning to camp. They seldom returned our attentions in force, probably because they had not a large enough force to feel safe when far from home. Besides, they could learn all they liked about our post and its camps, for every farmer and planter in the county was a source of information to them. We never got into a big engagement. It wasn't our business, except when we were accompanied by a large force of infantry and artillery, to worry the Confederacy by making believe that the "on to Richmond" movement of the Potomac army was to be made from our direction. When we went alone, the enemy did not worry much, for they had a broad, deep stream along their entire front. They could quickly take up the planking of the only bridge within ten miles, so they exchanged shot and shells with us across the river with the calm confidence of the card player who holds all the trumps.

Our colonel had been quite right in saying that the first scout was worth more to us than a month of drill. The men learned to sit in their saddles and not to be afraid of their horses, so we were able to begin mounted drill in good shape and progress rapidly. Man ranks lower than his horse in all good cavalry regiments, so it was not until we had completed the stables that our own winter quarters were begun. By this time, however, we learned, to our delight, that we were too valuable to consume our time in common labor. A number of the "contrabands" (fugitive slaves) who had made our post a place of refuge were sent into the woods to cut trees and split shingles, and just before Christmas each company had a great log house, about 15 feet by 50, for its winter home. A small contribution from each man enabled us to put up a stove, which tempered the winter air, and one new member, who had always lived in the tenement house district in New York, said he never before had known so comfortable a home.

Killing time in the winter season was almost as hard as killing the enemy, for there was such an appalling lot of time ahead of us. Some men played cards all day, except while eating and sleeping; others read incessantly; still others did nothing but smoke. Some seemed to spend much of their time writing. I liked to observe these, for they had more heart in their faces for the time being, and as I knew some of the people to whom the letters were going I amused myself by imagining the scenes when the letters were received.

But it troubled me much that Hamilton and Brainerd were writing so persistently to my cousin May. I did not see the letters, but I heard of them through my home correspondence. I knew that Brainerd, who visibly worshipped May's portrait sometimes when he supposed I was not looking, and probably hundreds of other times, was not the sort of man to change his regard for any one, much less for a sweet girl. Some one had seen in Hamilton's hands a portrait of May. I did not know that he brought one from Summerton. I was also troubled by his manner toward Brainerd. It was not ugly, but it contained a suggestion of condescension not unmix'd with contempt, and I fancied Brainerd noticed it.

Still, what could I do in such a matter? May was no fonder of counsel than very young women in general, nor was she less averse to admiration in large quantities. I could not imagine her in love with any one, for she and I had been rough and tumble playmates, and I knew only the tomboy and fun loving side of her nature. After much thought over the rivals and their respective chances, I could only hope, for the sake of peace, that she would not give the slightest encouragement to either, but would be won by some other worthy Summerton youth. I believed that both Brainerd and Hamilton were mainly gone to recover from any sorrow occasioned by the loss of something, no matter how precious, that was not their own and had not ever been promised to them.

Our special comforts were not confined to shelter and rest. Two or three of the married men knew something about cooking, and so did one man who had been a logger in Maine; so the company cook was coaxed, bullied and flattered until he learned to do something besides merely boil the several raw materials dealt him. A ration of cornmeal would sometimes be served as fried hasty pudding and again as "crackling bread"—corn bread containing tiny dice of fat pork which had been fried thoroughly and drained of grease. Remnants of a dinner of salt beef and potatoes would reappear next

morning as corned beef hash. Boiled rice, modified only by cheap molasses, was about as unpopular as castor oil, but with a little coffee, which would not be missed, we could trade with a native for enough milk and eggs to make that once detested rice so popular that there always was some man offering his supper portion of bread for half of some other man's rice.

Finally Hamilton, who felt that as commissary sergeant it was his duty to study up on cookery, electrified us one day by announcing that on the following Sunday there would be a dessert of plum pudding. Up to that time about half of the men had called Hamilton "stuck up." Worse still, many had called attention to the fact that never once in our many skirmishes and fights had Hamilton been under fire. Brainerd had combated this story for the honor of Summerton, but one day he, too, learned that Hamilton had a picture of his cousin May. That silenced him. But the mention of plum pudding caused the rumbler to recant, Mick McTwyne going so far as to borrow a pipe of tobacco from Phil. Our gustatory anticipations were marred only by Hamilton's statement that the pudding would be made entirely from army rations.

"Where will he get the raisins?" asked one family man.

"And the suet?" said another.

"And the flavoring?" suggested a third.

"Does the quartermaster issue pudding bags?" another wanted to know. Nevertheless the pudding was an absolute success. The flour came from the commissary stock; finely chopped fat pork, well soaked, answered for suet; dried apples, partly boiled and then candied in boiling sirup made from sugar, took the place of raisins. The sauce looked as if it were only sirup of sugar, some of which had been caramelized to give it special flavor and color. There rose from the sauce, however, an odor which caused Mick McTwyne to utter an ecstatic "Whoorrrr" and Cloyne to ask:

"Is brandy an army ration, Phil?"

"Yes," said Hamilton—"that is, 'tis a hospital ration, and I got half a pint from the hospital steward by promising a small pudding in exchange for the sick, you know."

"There's just one thing I want to ask," mumbled an ex-truck driver through a mouthful of hot pudding. "Does the government issue pudding bags?"

"The quartermaster issues cotton drawers," Phil replied, "and you'll learn, if you choose to ask, that he charged two new pairs to my personal clothing account this morning. The puddings were boiled in the legs of them."

"Be hivin'," said Mick McTwyne, with an approving shoulder slap that nearly knocked our enterprising commissary sergeant into the cook's fire, "the likes of yez never was born, and the fust money the paymaster gives me yez shall git that drunk wid me that yez won't know yer mout' from a hole in the ground!"

"Thanks, sergeant," said Hamilton, rubbing his shoulder. "I assure you that you're the first man who ever was thoughtful enough to make me so handsome an offer."

But a grander feast was enjoyed one cool evening after Phil had announced late in the afternoon that there would be pancakes for supper and asked that each man would take knife and fork as well as plate when he went for rations. Hamilton had found some soda and cream of tartar in the village. He made the batter in a half barrel, and his griddles were an odd collection of frying pans, plowshares, flattened sides of camp kettles the bottoms of which had rusted or burned through, a stove lid and some tin plates. As we hurried to the cookhouse when the bugle blew supper call we saw all these irons on a glowing mass of coals and the cook lifting large cakes from them with a wooden turner made from a barrel stave, while Phil himself, with a huge bit of fat pork on a stick in one hand and a great cup in the other, was greasing the pan and pouring more batter. As the cook placed a huge cake and a spoonful of sugar on each plate Hamilton said that if we would be patient and stand around as we ate each could get a fresh cake every two or three minutes.

"Ah!" "Um!" "My!" "Oh!" "Golly!" "Gosh!" were some of the expressions that went up around that fire while the men began their supper, some using spoons instead of knives and forks. Oftener heard, however, was, "This reminds me of home," or "Doesn't it remind you of home?" Had I ever before been asked to name our national dish I would have hesitated between pie and pork and beans, but since that great evening I have believed that in a competitive contest the pancake would receive more votes than beans and pie combined, besides being pre-eminent among eatables as "the tie that binds," "a touch of nature" and more of that sort of thing. As we ate those cakes everybody began to talk of home. Even big Pat Callahan became so absorbed in home reminiscences that he forgot to curse the government for not giving us butter to eat on our cakes.

But nobody, no matter how full of home memories, stopped eating that he might talk. The first issue disappeared from the plates in a minute, and two or three men who apparently hadn't any homes to think of returned so frequently for more that we agreed to form a circle, each man to receive a cake and some sugar as he passed the cook's table. It was an odd spectacle, apparently, to me of other companies—that company of about 80 men marching slowly in a circle and eating as they walked. But we were not at all concerned about our appearance just then. We were having a private cake walk in which each and every man "took the cake." Our officers heard of it from their servants, and the captain came down to look on.

"Won't you try one, captain?" asked Hamilton, offering a clean plate and fork. The captain accepted, tasted, exclaimed "Gracious!" and said no more until he had finished the cake. Then he remarked as he stepped into a gap in the line:

"Just let me see how it feels to tramp around in a circle a little while."

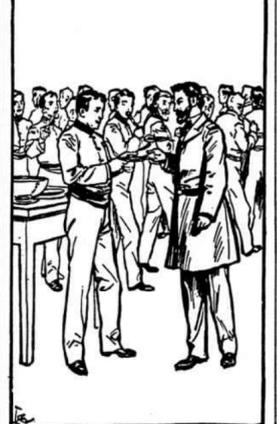
He didn't lay aside his plate and fork either, but twice took his turn—and cake—like the commonest of his men, believing, evidently, that the pancake, like love, levels all ranks. When he departed, it was to bring the colonel over to see the fun and also to see a company which was well fed. My place in the circling line brought me near enough to the two officers to hear the captain tell the colonel how admirably Phil managed the company commissariat. A minute or two later the couple passed through the line, and the captain astonished us by saying:

"Sergeant Hamilton, can you spare a sample cake for the colonel?"

Any other man in the company would have felt awkward at coming face to face with his colonel while holding a pan greaser in one hand and a cake turner in the other, but Hamilton succeeded in throwing his implements into one hand and in saluting; then, with another salute, he passed a plate to the colonel, and all the while he looked as manly and self possessed as if he were just entering one of Summerton's best parlors. I did wish my cousin May might see him just then. A moment later I was glad for Brainerd's sake that she couldn't. The colonel went through the motions of tasting the cake. It would have been undignified for him to eat all of it, though every man knew he was dying to. Then in his clearest dress parade voice he said:

"Sergeant Hamilton, I will make you lieutenant as soon as a vacancy occurs. A man who knows how to feed soldiers well has in him the stuff of which good officers are made."

Hamilton again saluted, but with the air of a man to whom lieutenantcies were offered daily. The remainder of



"Won't you try one, captain?"

the company were so profoundly impressed that no one but the cook, who hoped to be Hamilton's successor as commissary sergeant, had the sense to propose three cheers for the colonel.

But the prospective lieutenant did not leave his pans. It took an hour of time to fry and deal out that half barrel of batter. Besides, Phil was teaching the cook. Finally the supply was exhausted. Hamilton threw his greaser into the fire, turned the tub upside down and sat upon it to rest.

Suddenly one man exclaimed:

"Well, by thunder! The cakes were so good that we've forgotten all about our coffee!"

"Thanks! That's a bigger compliment than the colonel's," said Hamilton, raising his hat. He was right too. The coffee cups were filled and emptied, and we went slowly back to the quarters in little groups instead of singly and in haste, as was usual in cool weather. There were not as much scuffling, swearing and horseplay as we generally had between supper and tattoo. The quarters were quiet—so quiet that we were almost startled when Mick McTwyne's grating voice and thick brogue were heard in an attempt to sing. The words were merely "Thra-lah-lah," but the music, in spite of some eccentric sharps and flats, was finally recognized as that of "Home, Sweet Home." Some one hummed the bass, another fellow helped Mick along with the air, others dropped in, singly or two or three together, on various notes and bars, and when the last note was touched it seemed as though every voice was in it. Then Brainerd started us all off again, with all the words and notes distinctly enunciated.

The effect was not what I would have expected. Everybody looked serious. Some men fixed their eyes on the ground; others looked at the shingles overhead as if trying to pierce them and see the stars; more than one fellow drew his hat over his eyes, and a married man sitting on a bottom bunk suddenly turned and buried his face in the pillow. As for me, though my gaze was fixed on the little black stove in the center of the room, I saw our house at Summerton, my father and mother, little Ned and Cousin May, the dog Rover, the horses, cows, pigs and chickens, my room and everything on its walls. I felt my face twitching, so, to keep from betraying my feelings, I hastily began looking about the room again, but I was a second too late—I couldn't see anything distinctly.

And all this merely because of a supper of pancakes!

TO BE CONTINUED.

Miscellaneous Reading.

OLD-TIME NAVAL FEUD.

Conflict of Officers Which Led to the Death of Commodore Decatur.

In 1807, a certain commodore, in command of a United States frigate, left Norfolk with insufficient means of defence; and was met by an English vessel, which subjected him to the injury and humiliation of having his ship searched and several men taken from it—claimed as British deserters.

After the war was over, this man, Commodore Barron, who had, in his time, been an efficient officer, asked for a restoration to rank. Commodore Decatur, who had been a member of the courtmartial that passed upon the case, opposed this strenuously, and the matter might have rested here had not some meddling friends carried to Barron the words which the officer had used with some more grievous words, which he had not. Barron, who then lived at Hampton, Va., wrote Decatur, asking if he had really said that he, Decatur, "could insult" him, Barron, "with impunity."

The other wrote back, denying that he had said this, but putting in their place some grievous words, almost as bad.

One word brought on another and "friends" of both parties were not lacking to add to the grievous words written to those that they had heard spoken. By June, 1819, the feud had progressed so far that Commodore Barron wrote Commodore Decatur: "I am also informed that you have tauntingly and boastfully observed that you would cheerfully meet me in the field, and hoped I would yet act like a man."

Decatur, who could write a peculiarly trenchant and stinging letter, answered this communication from Barron, tartly reviewing the case, taunted the other with being largely the cause of the war of 1812, and then remaining in Europe instead of taking part in the conflict, and then added that he had never said anything about their meeting in the field, except that, if challenged, he would accept. He stated that he disapproved of duelling, and took pains to say the ungracious words, "I should be much better pleased to have nothing to do with you. * * * From your manner of proceeding, it appears to me that you have come to the determination to fight some one, and that you have selected me for the purpose; and I must take leave to observe that your object could have been better attained had you made this decision during the late war, when your fighting might have benefitted your country as well as yourself."

So the words went on accumulating, until, on January 10, 1820, Barron challenged Decatur, and on the 24th, he accepted.

On the 22d of the following March the tiny but momentous battle was fought on the historic old duelling ground of Bladensburg, on the old stage road between Washington and Baltimore. The weapons were pistols and the distance was the murderous one of eight paces, in order to compensate for the fact that Barron was near-sighted.

"Nothing can induce me to take the life of Barron," Decatur had said, when he received the challenge. And Barron afterwards made remarks which showed that he also entered the duel with greatest reluctance. Before the firing Barron said to Decatur, "Sir, I hope, on meeting in another world, we shall be better friends than in this." Decatur answered: "I have never been your enemy, sir." These words, while they showed that neither was implacably angry, were no doubt spoken with metallic politeness and made no headway toward a settlement of the difficulty.

Both fired at the same second and fell. Lying upon the ground, their heads not more than ten feet apart, with their own blood staining the earth around them, they became reconciled.

"Let us make friends while we are yet on earth," said Barron, "for no doubt we shall both soon die." Decatur responded with equally kind words and Barron rejoined with the fervent added remark: "Would to God you had said this much yesterday!" But the soft answers were given too late to be of use in this world.

Decatur died that night and Barron was a long time in recovering. To the end of his life he had cause to regret the grievous words which he had spoken, and which were partly the means of his becoming the murderer of his one-time friend and comrade in arms.—Everywhere.

HELD BY A SNAPPING TURTLE.

A Frightened Negro Who Got Release Only When His Trousers Gave Way.

A Negro whose name could not be ascertained, had a narrow escape from painful injury during the unloading of the steamer Kitty Knight, at the Light street wharf of the Sassafras River line yesterday afternoon, but gained quite a lot of valuable experience concerning the handling of snapping turtles.

It was while the wharf was crowded with commission men and agents and the excitement attendant upon the unloading of several score of cattle was at its height, that the bystanders were startled at the loud and continuous screaming of some one in their rear. Turning they beheld a big, swarthy Negro vainly endeavoring to climb over the side of his wagon, which was backed up against the wharf, and in the bottom of which his foot and leg seemed to be caught. Suddenly there was a rip and a tear, a portion of the man's trousers leg gave way and he dropped to the ground.

By this time the crowd had gathered nearer the wagon, in which they beheld, lying on his back, frantically waving his webbed feet and angrily shouting out his head at intervals, an immense snapping turtle. In the reptile's

mouth there was a square piece of cloth which matched the color of the pantaloons the Negro wore. The trouble was explained.

The Negro, in loading his wagon, had gone too near the turtle, which, angry over treatment it had received, grabbed the first thing within its reach upon which to wreak its vengeance. The jaws came together with a snap, missing the Negro, but catching the clothing.

The threatening look in the little eyes frightened the man, who turned as he felt something grab his nether garments, and he shrieked and attempted to get away. The cloth could not stand the tug of war and gave way.—Baltimore Herald.

DIPLOMATIC SECRETS.

How They Are Guarded in Transmission Between Officials.

It says much for the integrity of government officials that all knowledge of our recent important treaty with Japan was successfully withheld from foreign nations until the compact had been actually sealed, but the great care exercised in guarding a diplomatic secret renders a premature announcement very rare indeed. No government secret, when first born, is ever committed to paper, except on the rare occasions when minutes of a cabinet meeting are taken and forwarded to the sovereign. As a rule, our ministers meet and transact business without any one being the wiser, for no official of any kind is allowed to be present.

Once the government has decided upon an important piece of foreign policy, it has to be transmitted to our representative abroad, and for the first time the secret is put in writing in the form of unintelligible cipher, the key to which is always in the hands of our ambassador. The men who draw up these intricate cipher codes are reliable officials specially employed by the government, and they often obtain from \$500 to \$700 for a single code. The dispatch having been prepared, it is given into the care of a king's messenger, who wears attached to his person a bag fitted with only two keys—one in the possession of the foreign office and the other retained by our ambassador, who must unlock the bag himself, or instruct the secretary to do so upon the messenger's arrival.

The journey between this country and abroad is a risky one, because the messenger is beset with spies, and, although he travels incognito and well armed, there is always the chance of his being set upon and robbed. To avoid this, when an important dispatch is being carried, he is shadowed by two detectives throughout the journey, so that they can instantly come to his assistance, if necessary. When traveling by rail he engages a special compartment, and if called upon to do so he will have to lose his life before sacrificing the dispatch. In return he receives a salary of \$400 a year, in addition to \$1 a day when traveling and all expenses found, but before being employed he has to be nominated by an official filling an important place under the government who will hold himself responsible for his being a reliable man and not a foreign agent. Sometimes, to avoid danger, the courier carries with him the special sanction of international law, whereby every country through which he passes becomes responsible for his safety.—London Tit Bits.

THE NEW JACKSONVILLE.

A Fresh City Built Before the Ruins of the Old Have Ceased to Smoulder.

Before the fire that destroyed a great part of the city of Jacksonville, Fla., has ceased to burn, the city has practically been rebuilt. This statement not only describes a building operation remarkable for its rapid execution, but also covers an incident unique in the experience of firemen.

Jacksonville was almost wiped out by fire on May 3 of last year. An area of 443 acres, comprising 148 blocks, was swept by the flames and property worth at least \$15,000,000 was destroyed.

The work of rebuilding on a better and more substantial scale was started within a week and has gone on with rapidly unprecedented in southern building operations and now the city is in far better shape than it was before the fire.

About three weeks ago the clearing up of the last ruins was begun. The laborers doing the work removed three or four inches of the mass of brick and stone on top and then found to their surprise that underneath the ruins were still hot.

Smoke began to rise out of the hole they had dug and the farther down they went the hotter became the ruins and the thicker the smoke. At last a mass of red hot coals was found, which sprang into flames when the air reached it.

It had been necessary several times within the year for the fire department to soak this part of the ruins with water, but it had been thought for several months that the fire must be out at last.

Alongside new Jacksonville had already sprung into existence. Six months after the destruction of the city a new one already covered the greater part of the site.

Within eleven months more than 2,000 buildings were erected, fifty of them aggregating in cost \$2,000,000. And the new Jacksonville is immeasurably superior to the old.—New York Sun.

GROWTH OF HABIT.—A correspondent of The Lancet tells a story in reference to the rapid growth of the habit of tipping which may be developing in unsuspecting subjects. Two elderly ladies, he says, were surprised by a visitor in the act of drinking neat brandy. Upon expressing some surprise they said that brandy had been recommended to them as a capital preventive against cholera and they first took it with water, and then they took it without water, and now they took it like water.

28 Blindness is on the increase in the United States. Forty years ago, but four in 10,000 were blind, but now the ratio has increased 100 per cent.