

MY BROTHER'S SUBSTITUTE

A Secret Known to Two Men, but Not to Their Wives

By F. A. MITCHEL

Jim and I are twins. We don't look as much alike as we did when we were young, because Jim's hair has grown much grayer than mine and I've a scar on my left cheek. But up to thirty the members of our own family sometimes had trouble telling us apart.

There was a breakdown in the family when Jim and I were eighteen years old. Father died without leaving anything, and Jim and I had to hustle. I found a situation in one concern and Jim in another. Later I was sent away to establish a branch of the business in another city, while Jim remained where he was. I hadn't seen him for two years when I heard that he was ill and in a hospital. The news was too much for my ability to remain away from him longer, so I fixed things up in my business for an absence, took a train and on arrival went from the station direct to the hospital.

Jim had a private room, and I was shown to it by an attendant. I found him in bed, but instead of showing effects of an illness I couldn't see but that he looked as well as ever. He was mighty glad to see me, as I was to see him. I asked him to tell me about himself and how it was that he appeared so well and yet confined to his bed. He gave me one of those frightened looks intended to impose silence. Then, pulling me down toward him, he whispered in my ear:

"I want to get out of this. Your coming is a godsend. Get off your clothes in a hurry and tumble into bed. I'm going to put them on and make my way out. Nobody will know the difference between you and me."

He looked so anxious and eager that I immediately began to hustle off my clothes, and as fast as I got out of them Jim got into them. As soon as I was in bed and Jim was dressed I said, "Now tell me about it."

But Jim gave me another frightened look, as much as to say that he couldn't think of doing so, and was about to go when I clutched his coat and said:

"For heaven's sake, don't leave me this way! Tell me how long I'm to stay here anyway."

"I don't dare take the time. If my nurse should find us both here it would prevent my getting out in your place. She's liable to come in any minute."

"Well, one thing you must do—attend to my business for me—that is, if I'm to be kept here any length of time."

"All right; I'll do it," he said. And before I could get another word out of him he was gone.

He hadn't have been in such a hurry, as it turned out, for his nurse didn't come in for half an hour. At the end of that time the door opened, and a very pretty specimen of femininity entered. She was dressed in a nurse's uniform of spotless white. This was very becoming to her complexion, which had a lot of red in it. Then, too, her eyes and hair were dark, and the contrast with her dress and cap was charming.

She came up to my bed, looked down upon me sympathetically—lovingly, it seemed to me—placed her hand on my forehead—a warm, soft one—and said:

"I really must report that you are ready to be discharged. The house surgeon will find this out pretty soon, and I'll get myself into trouble."

Here was a pretty go. Jim had departed without giving me the slightest hint what part to play. The only thing I could do was to be noncommittal and learn as much of the situation as I could. It looked as though Jim had been making love to his nurse, had recovered and, in order to remain in the light of her presence, had lingered in the hospital longer than was necessary. But how to reconcile this with his desire to escape without her knowing he had gone I hadn't even an inkling. The safest thing I could think of to say was:

"Do you really think so?"

"I certainly do. Indeed, I see no reason for continuing this deception any longer, though it has been a delightful experience. You know that I love you and I have perfect confidence in the love you have both shown and have expressed for me. We can meet as often as my duties will permit until we can be married."

This was the principal part of it, and if it hadn't been for Jim's desire to substitute me for himself would have been all I cared to know. Though I was puzzled, my role was much easier to play than before. I concluded to angle for time.

I based my first definite remark on the probability that my inferences were correct—namely, that Jim had had an affair of the heart with his nurse and prolonged his stay beyond his recovery. Besides this, the situation was pleasing to me, and I didn't mind acting on the same idea.

"The period I have passed here in your care," I said, "has been the happiest in my life. I simply can't bear to end it."

"It must end some time."

"Give me another day. Tomorrow I will try to make up my mind to leave you."

A pained expression at the prospective parting passed over her face. She

bent down and, placing her pink lips on mine, gave me a delicious kiss. It seemed that all the joys in the world were concentrated in those few moments. Then, saying that she would go and bring my noon meal, she left me.

Never in my life have I been placed in such a quandary. My own dear twin brother had left me to personate himself with a woman he loved and who loved him. I didn't know whether I was acting both dishonorably and unbrotherly to him or not. He had not confided the truth to me. He had expected that the girl would mistake me for him, but had the position in which this mistake would place her and me occurred to him? Probably not. He was in such a hurry that it was likely he hadn't thought of this. I was terrified at receiving caresses that were intended for him. It was as dishonorable to the girl as to Jim. What was I to do?

The thing I did—the next thing—was to eat the dinner she brought me, all the while the love-light in her eyes beaming down upon me. After I had finished and she had removed the tray she told me that she had reported me to be so much better that she had more time to devote to other patients, but she would come in to see me between her attentions to them. During one of her absences I thought the matter over and came to the following conclusion: I must go on playing Jim's part, whatever it was, for I could not do otherwise without giving him away, and how serious this would be to him I did not know. I had been placed in a position for which I was in no way responsible. My conscience was clear, and I didn't see how it could be clouded. I would act the part of a responsive lover.

I managed to put off my departure as a discharged patient for two weeks. How I succeeded in doing it I don't know, unless it was by the connivance of the girl who dreaded to part with me as much as I dreaded to part with her. At the end of these two weeks I am ashamed to confess that I was ready to fight to the death my own flesh and blood, my own twin brother, for the love of the girl in whose affections I had taken his place. I excused myself by encouraging a suspicion in my mind that he had treated her shamefully and that I was justified in securing her for myself. At any rate, I would never give her up to him or any one else.

But what next? When this query popped into my head I was seized with a sudden desire to get out of the hospital, and Jim and I went for an explanation. Then, whatever it was, I would tell him that, having placed me in a position to make love to his girl, he should not complain that I had won her from him. Had I won her from him? Did she love him or me, or both of us?

Feeling that if I lay thinking upon this brain and heart racking problem I should go mad, I threw off the covers and jumped out of bed. I was in Jim's clothes in a twinkling and when my nurse entered again I was ready for my departure.

She stood looking at me, surprised. I folded her in my arms, showered kisses on her face—particularly her lips—then dashed away without a word of explanation as to my sudden departure.

In an hour I was with Jim.

"Why did you put me in this position and why have I heard nothing from you since?" I asked impatiently.

"Does she love me still—I mean you?"

"She loves me—me. I say—not you at all."

"Thank God."

"What do you mean?"

"Subside, Bob, and I'll tell you all about it. I dared not write you—I mean myself—for fear of giving away the whole situation. I went to the hospital engaged to be married. I hadn't had time to inform you of my engagement before I was taken ill. Immediately after our betrothal my fiancée sailed on a European trip. The hospital girl took a fancy to me at once and showered such attentions on me that I couldn't help reciprocating. I very weakly suffered myself to be drawn into an affair of the heart. I assure you I didn't realize how deeply involved I had become before I committed betrothal bigamy."

"In your appearance I saw a loophole. I took advantage of it, and from what you tell me all has turned out fortunately."

"Jim, you ought to be ashamed of yourself—to win a girl's affections and then run away from her."

"To have my own brother to dishonorably take her away from me. It seems to me that's the pot calling the kettle black."

"Call it squared," I said, seizing Jim's hand.

I was happy in knowing that I could claim our girl, but I was puzzled to know whether I should do so as Jim or myself. He and I talked the matter over and decided that after becoming formally engaged I should introduce Jim to my fiancée as my twin brother whom she had never met. This plan worked admirably. After the introduction I twitted my betrothed, saying:

"I presume, sweetheart, that since Jim and I are twins you would as lief marry one of us as the other."

"H'm," she replied deprecatingly. "I would know you apart in the dark."

I dare say this is the only case where-in two brothers who had occasion to quarrel over the same girl blessed each other instead. But the secret is between Jim and me. Neither of our wives has an inkling of it. Should Jim tell his wife how nearly he came being carried away by propinquity during a period of physical weakness there would be trouble at home. If I were to tell my wife of the trick by which one lover was substituted for another she would be furious.

"Her Resentment. Alice—It's mean of you to tell people that when Jack kissed me I didn't resent it. Maud—I didn't, dear. On the contrary, I said that when he kissed you on the cheek you held it up against him for quite awhile.—Boston Transcript.

"Our Language. "Now you know you're all wrong about that." "Oh, yes; if you say so, I reckon I'm all wrong, all right."—Chicago Tribune.

Watch the beginnings. Great floods have come through little leaks.

RECKLESS SPORT.

Rock Rolling Feats of Mark Twain In His Boyhood Days.

A BAD SCARE ENDED THE FUN

The Final Prank on Holliday's Hill Was in a Fair Way of Ending in a Tragedy When the Danger Was, by a Bit of Good Luck, Narrowly Averted.

Writing on "Mark Twain" in Harper's Magazine, Albert Bigelow Paine recounts some of the scrapes of the youthful Sam Clemens. Sam was a recognized ringleader among his playmates, and one of the pranks they played nearly had a fatal termination.

"One of their Sunday pastimes was to climb Holliday's hill and roll down big stones to frighten the people who were driving to church. Holliday's hill above the road was steep. A stone, once started, would go plunging and leaping down and bound across the road with the deadly swiftness of a twelve inch shell. The boys would get a stone poised, then wait until they saw a team approaching and, calculating the distance, would give it a start. Dropping down behind the bushes, they would watch the dramatic effect upon the churchgoers as the great missile shot across the road a few yards before them.

"This was Homeric sport, but they carried it too far. Stones that had a habit of getting loose so numerous on Sundays, and so rarely on other days invited suspicion, and the 'patterrollers'—river patrol, a kind of police of those days—were put on the watch. So the boys found other diversions until the patterrollers did not watch any more. Then they planned a grand coup that should eclipse anything before attempted in the stone rolling line.

"A rock about the size of an omnibus was lying up there in a good position to go downhill, once started. They decided it would be a glorious thing to see that great boulder go smashing down a hundred yards or so in front of some unsuspecting and peaceful minded churchgoer. Quarrymen were getting out rock not far away and left their picks and shovels over Sundays. The boys borrowed these and went to work to undermine the big stone. It was a heavier job than they had counted on, but they worked faithfully Sunday after Sunday. If their parents had wanted them to work like that they would have thought they were being killed.

"Finally one Sunday while they were digging it suddenly got loose and started down. They were not quite ready for it. Nobody was coming but an old colored man in a cart, so it was going to be wasted. It was not quite wasted, however. They had planned for a thrilling result, and there was thrill enough while it lasted. In the first place, the stone nearly caught Will Rowen when it started. John Briggs had just that moment quit digging and handed Will the pick. Will was about to step into the excavation when Sam Clemens, who was already there, leaped out with a yell:

"Look out, boys; she's coming!"

"She came. The huge stone kept to the ground at first, then, gathering a wild momentum, it went bounding into the air. About halfway down the hill it struck a tree several inches thick and cut it clean off. This turned its course a little, and the negro in the cart, who heard the noise, saw it come crashing in his direction and made a wild effort to whip up his horse. It was also headed toward a cooper shop across the road.

"The boys watched it with growing interest. It made longer leaps with every bound, and whenever it struck the fragments and dust would fly. They were certain it would demolish the negro and destroy the cooper shop. The shop was empty, it being Sunday, but the rest of the catastrophe would invite close investigation and results. It was making mighty leaps now, and the negro had managed to get directly in its path. They stood holding their breath, their mouths open.

"Then suddenly—they could hardly believe their eyes—the boulder struck a projection a distance above the road and, with a mighty bound, sailed clear over the negro and his mule and landed in the soft dirt beyond, only a fragment striking the shop, damaging but not wrecking it. Half buried in the ground, that boulder lay there for nearly forty years. Then it was blasted for milling purposes. It was the last rock the boys ever rolled down. They began to suspect that the sport was not altogether safe.

"Lime-light and the center of the stage was a passion of Sam Clemens' boyhood, a love of the spectacular that never wholly died. It seems almost a pity that in those old far-off, barefoot days he could not have looked down the years to a time when, with the world at his feet, venerable Oxford should clothe him in a scarlet gown."

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SUMMONS.

In the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon, For Multnomah County.—The Foot-Titus Machinery House, a Corporation, plaintiff, vs. A. K. Carlson, defendant.

To A. K. Carlson, the above-named defendant:

In the name of the State of Oregon: You are hereby summoned and required to appear and answer the complaint filed against you in the above entitled action, on or before the expiration of six weeks from the date of the first publication of this summons, to-wit: on or before February 10th, A. D. 1912, and, if you fail to so appear and answer, for want thereof the plaintiff will take judgment against you for the sum of Eleven Hundred and Forty-Six and 23/100 Dollars and for the further sum of One Hundred and Fifty Dollars attorney's fee, and for the plaintiff's costs and disbursements herein; and also for the sale of certain attached property belonging to you, to-wit: 34 shares of the capital stock of the Foot-Titus Machinery House, an Oregon Corporation, which property has been duly attached in this action.

This summons is published pursuant to an order of the Hon. W. N. Gatens, Judge of the above entitled court, which order is dated December 27th, A. D. 1911. The date of the first publication hereof is December 30th, A. D. 1911, and the date of the last publication hereof is February 10th, A. D. 1912.

J. M. HADDOCK, Attorney for Plaintiff.

Date of first publication, December 30th, A. D. 1911.

Date of last publication, February 10th, A. D. 1912.

Ed Lewis, who rejoices under the misnomer of "orator" for the I. W. W., with a voice like a foghorn, stood on the streets the other night and spewed forth anathemas against Portland clergymen, not one of whom has ever harmed, or attempted to. He heaped ridicule upon the Christian religion. He even spoke of Christ as "the first

Baltimore's police chief would punish pickpockets by amputating their fingers, one at a time for each offense. Such a plan will never become popular with the light-fingered gentry, anyway.

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