

Light Freights

By W. W. JACOBS

Hard Labor

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Police Constable C 49 paced slowly up Wapping High street in the cool of the evening. The warehouses were closed and the street almost denuded of traffic. He addressed a short and stern warning to a couple of youths struggling on the narrow pavement and pointed out—with the toe of his boot—the undersirability of the curbstone as a seat to a small maiden of five. With his white gloves in his hand he swung slowly along, monarch of all he surveyed.

His complacency and the air with which he stroked his red mustache and side-whiskers were insufferable. Mr. Charles Pinner, ship's fireman, whose bosom friend C 49 had pinched, to use Mr. Pinner's own expressive phrase, a week before for causing a crowd to collect, eyed the exhibition with sneering wrath. The injustice of locking up Mr. Johnson, because a crowd of people whom he didn't know from Adam persisted in obstructing the pathway had reduced Mr. Pinner to the verge of madness. For a time he kept behind C 49 and contented himself with insulting but inaudible remarks upon the color of his whiskers.

The constable turned up a little alley-way between two small pieces of waste ground, concerning the desirability and value of which as building sites a notice board was lurid with adjectives. Mr. Pinner was still behind; he was a man who believed in taking what life could offer him at the moment, and something whispered to him that if he lived a hundred years he would never have such another chance of bonneting that red-whiskered policeman. There were two or three small houses at the end of the alley, but the only other living person in it was a boy of ten. He looked to be the sort of boy who might be trusted to smile approval on Mr. Pinner's contemplated performance.

C 49's first thought was that a chimney had fallen, and his one idea was to catch it in the act. He made a desperate grab even before pushing his helmet up, and caught Mr. Pinner by the arm.

"Leggo," said that gentleman, struggling.

"Ho," said C 49, crimson with wrath, as he pushed his helmet up. "Now you come along o' me, my lad."

Mr. Pinner, regretting the natural impulse which had led to his undoing, wrenched himself free and staggered against the fence which surrounded the waste ground. Then he ducked sideways, and as C 49 renewed his invitation, coupled with a warning concerning the futility of resistance, struck him full and square on the temple.

The constable went down as though he had been shot. His helmet rolled off as he fell, and his head struck the pavement. Mr. Pinner, his taste for bonneting policemen all gone, passed the admiring small boy at the double, and then, turning the corner rapidly, slackened his pace to something less conspicuous.

He reached his home, a small house in a narrow turning off Cable street, safely, and, throwing himself into a chair, breathed heavily, while his wife, whose curiosity at seeing him home at that early hour would not be denied, pilled him with questions.

Mr. Pinner, still intent on footsteps, grumbled something beneath his breath, and the baby being awakened out of its first sleep and brought downstairs, they contemplated each other for some time with offensive curiosity.

Until next morning Mr. Pinner's odd reasons for his presence sufficed, but when he sat still after breakfast and showed clearly his intention to remain, his wife insisted upon others less insulting to her intelligence. Mr. Pinner, prefacing his remarks with an allusion to a life-long abhorrence of red whiskers, made a clean breast of it.

"It served him right," said his wife, judicially, "but it'll be six months for you if they nab you, Charlie. You'll 'ave to make up your mind to a quiet spell indoors with me and baby till the ship sails."

Mr. Pinner looked at his son and heir disparagingly, and emitted a groan. "He 'ad no witnesses," he remarked, "except a boy, that is, and 'e didn't look the sort to be fond o' policemen."

"You can't tell by looks," replied his wife, in whose brain a little plan to turn this escapade to good account was slowly maturing. "You mustn't get nabbed for my sake."

"I won't get nabbed for my own sake," rejoined Mr. Pinner, explicitly. "I wonder whether it's got into the papers?"

"Sure to," said his wife, shaking her head.

"Go and buy one and see," said the fireman, glancing at the baby. "I'll look after it, but don't be long."

His wife went out and got a paper, and Mr. Pinner, who was unable to read, watched her anxiously as she looked through it. It was evident, at length, that his prowess of the previous evening had escaped being immortalized in print, and his spirits rose.

"I don't s'pose he was much 'urt," he said. "I dare say he wouldn't like to tell 'em at the station he'd been knocked down. Some of 'em don't. I'll just keep my eyes open when I'm out."

"I don't think you ought to go out," said his wife.

She picked up a paper again, and regarded him furtively. Then she bent over it, and slowly scanned the pages, until a sudden horrified gasp drove the roses from Mr. Pinner's cheek and prepared him for the worst.

"Wot is it?" he stammered.

Mrs. Pinner folded the paper back and, motioning him to silence, read as follows:

"A violent assault was committed last night on a policeman down at Wapping, who was knocked down by seafaring man until he got concussion of the brain. The injured constable states that he can identify the man that attacked him, and has given a full description of him at the police station, where search is now being made for him. The public houses are being watched."

"Ho, are they?" commented Mr. Pinner, much annoyed. "Ho, indeed."

"That's all," said his wife, putting down the paper.

"All!" echoed the indignant fireman. "Ow much more do you want? I'm in a nice 'ole, I don't think. Seems to me I might as well be in quod as 'ere."

"You don't know when you're well off," retorted his wife.

Mr. Pinner sighed, and moved aimlessly about the room; then he resumed his chair, and, shaking his head slowly, lit his pipe.

"You'll be quite safe indoors," said his wife, whose plan was now per-



Believed in Taking What Life Could Offer Him.

fect. "The only thing is, people 'll wonder what you're staying indoors all day for."

Mr. Pinner took his pipe out of his mouth and stared at her blankly.

"Seems to me you want a reason for staying indoors," she pursued.

"Well, I've got one, ain't I?" said the injured man.

"Yes, but you can't tell them that," said his wife. "You want a reason everybody can understand and keep 'em from talking."

"Yes, all very fine for you to talk," said Mr. Pinner; "if you could think of a reason it 'ud be more sensible."

Mrs. Pinner, who had got several ready, assumed an air of deep thoughtfulness, and softly scratched her cheek with her needle.

"Whitewash the kitchen ceiling," she said, suddenly.

"Ow long would that take?" demanded her lord, who was not fond of whitewashing.

"Then you could put a bit of paper in this room," continued Mrs. Pinner, "and put them shelves in the corner what you said you'd do. That would take some time."

"It would," agreed Mr. Pinner, eying her disagreeably.

"And I was thinking," said his wife, "if I got a sugar box from the grocer's and two pairs o' wheels you could make the baby a nice little perambulator."

"Seems to me—" began the astonished Mr. Pinner.

"While you're doing those things I'll try and think of some more," interrupted his wife.

The baby was crying, the breakfast things were not washed, and there were several other hindrances to journalistic work.

Mr. Pinner said that all wall papers were alike to him, and indulged in dreary speculations as to where the money was to come from. Mrs. Pinner, who knew that they were saving fast owing to his enforced seclusion, smiled at his misgivings.

He papered the room that day after a few choice observations on the price of wall paper, and expressed his opinion that in a properly governed country the birth of red-whiskered policemen would be rendered an impossibility. To the compliments of his workmanship bestowed by the gratified Mrs. Pinner he turned a deaf ear.

There was nothing in the paper next morning, Mrs. Pinner's invention being somewhat fatigued, but she promptly quelled her husband's joy by suggesting that the police authorities were lying low in the hope of lulling him into a sense of false security. "Wait till I've seen the paper," she protested.

"Wot's the good of seeing the paper?" replied Mr. Pinner. "We know as 'e's in bed, and it seems to me while 'e's in bed is my time to be out. I shall keep a look-out. Besides, I've just 'ad an idea; I'm going to shave my mustache off. I ought to ha' thought of it before."

He went upstairs, leaving his wife wringing her hands below. So far from the red policeman being in bed, she was only too well aware that he was on duty in the district, with every faculty strained to the utmost to avenge the outrage of which he had been the victim. It became necessary to save her husband at all costs, and while he was busy upstairs with a razor, she slipped out and bought a paper.

He had just come down by the time she returned, and turned to confront her with a conscious grin; but at the sight of her face the smile vanished from his own, and he stood waiting nervously for ill news.

"Oh, dear," moaned his wife.

"What's the matter?" said Mr. Pinner, anxiously.

Mrs. Pinner supported herself by the table and shook her head despondently.

"'Ave they found me out?" demanded Mr. Pinner.

"Dead!" repeated her husband, starting violently.

Mrs. Pinner, with a little sniff, took up the paper and read slowly, interrupted only by the broken ejaculations of her husband. She read:

"The unfortunate policeman who was assaulted the other day down at Wapping passed away peacefully yesterday evening in the arms of his wife and family. The ruffian is believed to be at sea."

"I wish 'e was," said Mr. Pinner, mournfully. "I wish 'e was anywhere but 'ere. The idea o' making a delikht man like that a policeman. Why, I 'ardly touched 'im."

"Promise me you won't go out," said his wife, tearfully.

"Out?" said Mr. Pinner, energetically; "out? D'ye think I'm mad, or wot? I'm going to stay 'ere till the ship sails, then I'm going down in a cab. Wot d'ye think I want to go out for?"

"It's the drink as made you do it," said his wife.

"I'll never touch a drop agin," affirmed Mr. Pinner, shivering.

His pipe had lost its flavor, and he sat pondering in silence until the absolute necessity of finding more reasons for his continued presence in the house occurred to him. Mrs. Pinner agreed with the idea, and together they drew up a list of improvements which would occupy every minute of his spare time.

He worked so feverishly that he became a byword in the mouths of the other lodgers, and the only moments of security and happiness he knew were when he was working in the bedroom with the door locked. Mr. Smith attributed it to disease, and for one panic-stricken hour discussed with Hawk the possibility of its being infectious.

Slowly the days passed until at length there were only two left, and he was in such a nervous and overwrought state that Mrs. Pinner was almost as anxious as he was for the date of departure. To comfort him she read a paragraph from the paper to the effect that the police had given up the search in despair. Mr. Pinner shook his head at this, and said it was a trap to get him out. He also, with a view of defeating the ends of justice, set to work upon a hood for the perambulator.

He was employed on this when his wife went out to do a little shopping. The house when she returned was quiet, and there were no signs of anything unusual having occurred; but when she entered the room she started back with a cry at the sight which met her eyes. Mr. Pinner was in a crouching attitude on the sofa, his face buried in the cushion, while one leg waved spasmodically in the air.

"Charlie," she cried; "Charlie." There was a hollow groan from the cushion in reply.

"What's the matter?" she cried, in alarm. "What's the matter?"

"I've seen it," said Mr. Pinner, in trembling tones. "I've seen a ghost. I was just peeping out of the window behind the blind when it went by."

"Nonsense," said his wife.

"His ghost," said Mr. Pinner, regaining a more natural attitude and shivering violently, "red whiskers, white gloves and all. It's doing a beat up and down this street. I shall go mad. It's been by twice."

"Magnation," said his wife, aghast at this state of affairs.

"I'm afraid of its coming for me," said Mr. Pinner, staring wildly. "Every



"Dead!" Repeated Her Husband.

minut I expect to see it with its white face stuck up agin the window-pane staring in at me."

"You mustn't 'ave such fancies," said his wife.

"I see it as plain as I see you," persisted the trembling fireman. "It was prancing up and down in just the same stuck-up way as it did when it was alive."

"I'll draw the blind down," said his wife.

She crossed over to the window, and was about to lower the blind when she suddenly drew back with an involuntary exclamation.

"Can you see it?" cried her husband.

"No," said Mrs. Pinner, recovering herself. "Shut your eyes."

The fireman sprang to his feet. "Keep back," said his wife, "don't look."

"I must," said the fireman.

His wife threw herself upon him, but he pushed her out of the way and rushed to the window. Then his jaw dropped and he murmured incoherently, for the ghost of the red policeman was plainly visible. Its lofty carriage of the head and pendulum-like swing of the arms were gone, and it was struggling in a most fleshly manner to lead a recalcitrant costermonger to the station. In the intervals of the wrestling bout it blew loudly upon a whistle.

"Wonderful," said Mrs. Pinner, nervously. "Lifelike, I call it."

The fireman watched the crowd pass up the road, and then he turned and regarded her.

"Would you like to hear what I call it?" he thundered.

"Not before the baby, Charlie," quavered Mrs. Pinner, drawing back.

The fireman regarded her silently, and his demeanor was so alarming that she grabbed Charles Augustus Pinner suddenly from his cradle and held him in front of her.

"You've kep' me here," said Mr. Pinner, in a voice which trembled with self-pity, "for near three week. For three weeks I've wasted my time, my little spare time, and my money in making perambulators and whitewashing and papering, and all sorts of things. I've been the larfing stock o' this house, and I've been worked like a convict. Wot 'ave you got to say for yourself?"

"Wot do you mean?" inquired Mrs. Pinner, recovering herself. "I ain't to blame for what's in the paper, am I? How was I to know that the policeman as died wasn't your policeman?"

Mr. Pinner eyed her closely, but she met his gaze with eyes honest and clear as those of a child. Then, realizing that he was wasting precious time, he picked up his cap, and as C 49 turned the corner with his prize, set off in the opposite direction to spend in the usual manner the brief remnant of the leave which remained to him.

FORT LEE MONUMENT

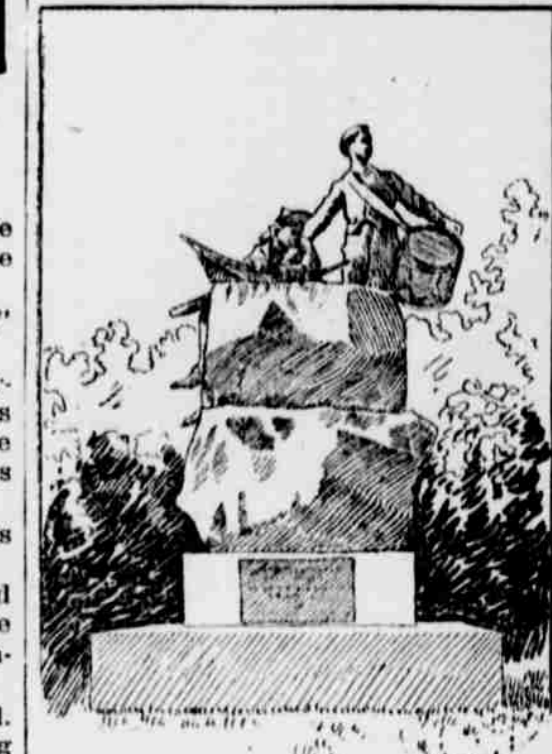
UNVEILED ON SITE OF REVOLUTIONARY DEFENSE.

Marks Vantage Point Whence Continental Soldiers Watched British Operations in New York.

New York.—The Fort Lee Revolutionary Monument association gained its desired end the other day when the monument erected to commemorate the important events which took place near Fort Lee in the war of 1776 was unveiled. The association was organized October 22, 1902, and in the winter of 1902-'03, through its efforts, an appropriation was obtained from the legislature of \$1,000 as the nucleus of a fund for a monument. To this amount the legislature added at the following session \$5,000.

Steps had been taken by the association to obtain the only suitable site, which was in the outer works of the old fortifications, and after three years a title to this property was gained through condemnation proceedings. A competition for a suitable design was held in October, 1906, in which many sculptors entered. The design offered by Carl E. Tefft of New York, who designed the fountain in the Bronx Zoological park, New York, was chosen by the association, and later approved by the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, which commission was made custodian of the funds.

The design represents two of Gen. Washington's soldiers, a continental and a drummer boy, scaling the Palisades at Fort Lee. The figures are cast in bronze, and are seven and one-half feet high, mounted on a pedestal ten feet in height, quarried from the native trap rock of the Palisades. The statue is erected on a three-foot terrace, bringing the total height to about



Fort Lee Battle Monument.

20 feet. Elaborate plans were made by the association for the exercises which marked the formal recognition by the state of New Jersey of this historical landmark.

On behalf of the state, the principal address was made by Gov. Fort. Other prominent persons, representing the national government, the state of New York and all the principal revolutionary societies, took part in the ceremonies.

The monument is in a park, and stands on a point where the original outer works of the old fort were situated. The monument will also mark what is said to be the original camp occupied by Gen. Lee as his headquarters and the site where Morgan's Virginia riflemen were encamped. The fort played an important part in the movements of the revolutionary army, but no battle of importance was fought there.

Many persons believe that the old fort and camp at Fort Lee were on the Palisades bluff, overlooking the Hudson river, but this is not the fact. The monument cannot be seen from the Hudson river. It was to guard a ravine leading up the Palisades that the fort was erected, and it was situated inland for strategical reasons.

Fort Lee is full of traditional revolutionary history. The ruins of the stone huts which were used by Morgan's men in their stay at Fort Lee are still to be seen, and the Fort Lee association will take steps to preserve them. In these huts the hardy and determined patriots, with constitutions that defied weather and hardships, slept in the cold nights of October and November, 1776. Another reminder of the period is the old stone bake oven found on the premises of the Belvidere hotel, and which for years has been properly labeled and protected. It was in this stone oven that bread for the revolutionary soldiers was baked.

Importing Norwegian Sardines. Norwegian sardines are entering the United States to the value of nearly \$800,000 a year, a more than threefold increase in only two years.