

TWO OF A KIND

By GEORGE E. STREETER

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He sat in front of the post office every working day throughout the year. No one seemed to know his real name, but the townspeople called him Armless John, and being otherwise remarkable for a peculiar kind of stammer, he was for some years the object of pity. Around his neck he wore a sign bearing the following rather ambiguous appeal:

KIND FRIENDS
Please help a POOR man
WILLING but UNABLE
to work with a LARGE FAMILY.

According to his own statements he had lost his arms in a variety of ways; the juvenile population had been informed that sharks—or bears—had eaten his lost arms; to very old and simple-minded ladies it was “fire-damp,” or “on the railway,” or just “cannibals.” He had also “fallen from the mast-head,” “dropped out of a balloon,” and “got caught in an elevator.” Sometimes his loss had occurred while “fighting in Cuba,” or engaged in “blasting rocks in California.” In fact, of “moving accidents,” Armless John was a long way ahead of Othello.

His memory being somewhat treacherous, he sometimes had to listen to this kind of remark:

“Why! you told me last month that you lost your arms in Peru—now you say it was in Australia; you must either be lying, or had a lot of arms to start with.”

To all such personal and unkind observations, the stammering beggar would reply somewhat like this:

“Wa-wa-wasn’t I in-sen-sible at the ti-ti-ti at the time? How’d d’ye s-s-spose?” (He had a habit of breaking off like that.) “But I lost ‘em, you b-b-bet.”

A man of perhaps fifty years of age, shabbily dressed, stopped one morning in front of Armless John.

“Nice morning,” said the stranger. “Fi-fi-fine, sir,” agreed John.

“Yours is a bad case, my friend,” rejoined the other.

“T-t-terrible, sir.”

“How did you lose your arms?”

“Gun p-p-powder explosion at Mel-mel-bourne.”

“Australia?”

The beggar shook his head. “That’s my native place,” added the stranger.

“I don’t mean there. Mel-mel-bourne in Kentucky is the p-p-place, all right.”

“You’re a liar, Phillips. Do you know Sling Sling?” asked the man.

“Never there,” answered John, now looking for the first time in the other man’s face.

“Yes, you were, my friend. You and I spent about five years there. What an old fraud you are! How do you manage to dispose of your arms like that?”

John was speechless, as well as stammerless, though still apparently armless.

“I hope ye won’t squeal on me, Tom?” he remarked.

“That all depends. Have you got a large family, as the sign says?” inquired Tom.

“There’s six of us altogether, including the dogs.”

“Well, you’ll have to pay me so much a week, and I won’t say a word,” replied the other.

“There ain’t enough comin’ in to do that,” said John dolefully.

“Something must be done,” remarked Tom. “I haven’t got work, and I can’t get any.”

“Suppose you come up to the house tonight, and we’ll talk things over. Go away now, Tom, do; see you to-night.”

The stranger moved away slowly, remarking to an old lady about to drop a coin in the little tin mug: “That’s a bad case, mum; the poor fellow lost his arms fallin’ off the roof of a church.”

“Did he, indeed?” sympathetically said the lady. “I always give him a trifle when I pass, but I thought he lost his arms in battle.”

The ex-convicts were holding a midnight session.

“We thought out a scheme, Tom, which will pay us both, and we’ll be independent of each other. Suppose you go and stand at the library, and be a blind man. There isn’t such a fellow in the place. Every day one of the children can bring your dinner down to you, and also lead you home at night. I’m sure you’ll make more than I do.”

“Don’t suit me,” answered Tom. “I ain’t a-going to keep my eyes shut all day. I think I’d better be a one-armed sailor, suffering from a shark-bite.”

“That’ll never do,” said John. “I’m in the shark business at times, you know. The blind dodge is the only one any good, so far as I can see. I believe there’s a fortune in being a Poor Blind Man.”

“I can’t see it,” answered the doubtless Thomas.

“You’re not supposed to see anything,” replied John, with a laugh, which the other did not relish.

In a few days there appeared a to-

tally sightless man in town, carrying a small, simple sign—

PITY THE BLIND

His first day was very wearisome, but Tom got through it all right, and had a good many coins as a result. He did well, and very soon the receipts of Armless John fell off.

“Tom’s simply ruining my business,” said John to his wife one evening. “All day long old women come to me, and speak of the ‘poor blind man’ who lost his sight through reading a Bible with too close print. I wish some thin’d happen to him.”

Strange as it may seem, but within a week, while the little girl was handing something to eat to the blind man, Towser, the dog, caught Tom by the leg and caused that victim of close biblical study not only to shout and use sundry passages not found in any volume, but also led him to open his eyes, in the presence of a wondering and sarcastic crowd, including an officer of the law, who at once took charge of the sham Bartimeus, and introduced him next day to the magistrate.

“Charge of vagrancy, your honor. Been pretendin’ to be blind, your honor, but I’ve been suspecting him for days. Yesterday a dog bit him, and he opened his eyes, and when he saw me he started to run away, your honor?”

“Whose dog was it?” asked the judge, detecting the possibility of another case.

“Belonged to a little girl, your honor; daughter of that no-armed man,” replied the officer.

The judge lectured Tom and imposed a sentence of three months in jail, and warned him that should the dog bite, the owner, “that poor cripple,” would have remedy against him at civil law.

“That poor cripple,” as you call him,” said Tom, “has got arms.”

“This is strange,” said the judge. “Constable, inquire into this, and if you find the prisoner’s story true, bring that other fraud before me tomorrow.”

Constable Flynn “inquired” into the matter, and found that Armless John, Mrs. Armless John, and family had left town the previous evening, shortly after the arrest of Thomas.

Now, gentle reader: This tale offers the following for the consideration of a gullible and patient people:

1. Fakers are takers—but take ‘em easy.
2. Beware of the Dog—and the POOR BLIND MAN.
3. Be sure your FRIENDS will find you out.
4. The “far-seeing” public is, oh, so blind.
5. Help others out—of town.

HELPED BURGLAR TO ESCAPE

Four-Year-Old Miss Is Regretting That She Was So Polite to Her Visitor.

Burglars always have been the pet aversion of Margaret Bearsey of Omaha, eight years of age. She admits she is just scared to death of a burglar.

When it was too hot to play Margaret slipped into her nightie and crept up on the lounge in the guest room to rest.

Looking up from the wallpaper sample book with which she was amusing herself Margaret beheld a strange man standing by the dresser. He wore a workman’s black cap and carried some electric-light cords.

“Oh,” he said pleasantly, “I’m the electric-light man. I’ve come to inspect the lights and I got sort of mixed up in the rooms.”

“I’ll show you the way,” volunteered Margaret, and she jumped up, slipped on a tiny kimono and escorted the electric-light man all through the upstairs. Now the police are looking for the man with a black cap and two electric light cords and Margaret’s family call her “the burglar’s pal.”

An Indian Santa.

The jolly Old Saint Nick of white children did not visit the Indian reservation in central New York this year. In his stead there was a real Indian Santa with a headdress of feathers and other garments worn by Indians when Santa first came to America. He was trimmed with corn tassels and in place of a whip, which to the Indian children means cruelty, he carried a corn stalk to drive his team.

None of the little red babies on the bleak reservation were forgotten. He left them arrows, snow snakes, corn bread stuffed with fruit, cookies shaped like pine trees and chipmunks and a kind of sausage made from the livers of wild animals. Honey made up for the lack of sugar. Syracuse churches, the Indian Welfare Society and other allied organizations were active in preparing this Christmas.

Stirred Up a Pudding.

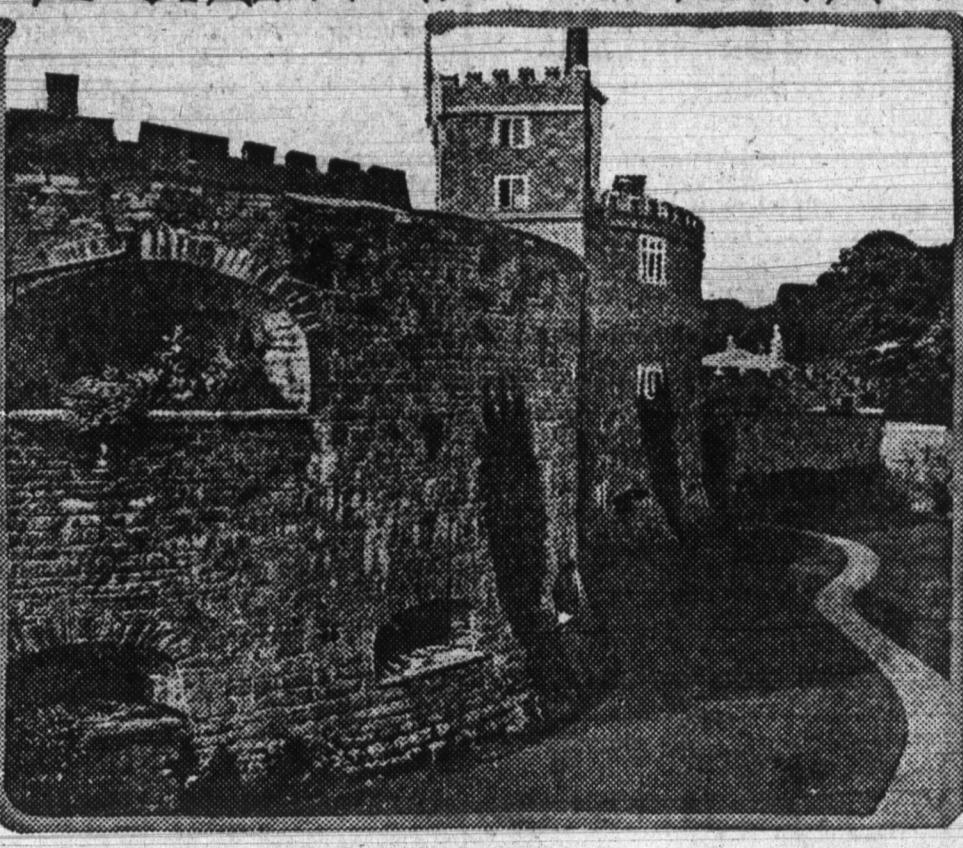
One Sunday some friends of ours were spending the day with us. While I was preparing dinner the woman came into the kitchen and asked me if there was anything she could do to help me. I told her she could stir up a chocolate pudding. She fixed it and when it came time for our dessert my husband, who is always saying things he hadn’t ought to, remarked: “Edith, this is the poorest pudding I ever knew you to make”—Exchange.

Tact.

I suppose my biscuits are not like the ones your mother used to make.”

“Of course, they are not, my dear. You are fit to eat.”

Walmer Castle



Walmer Castle.

MONG the numerous historical structures which the British cherish because in them, they feel, is visibly incorporated the prestige of England, not the least picturesque and interesting is Walmer castle, on the coast of Kent, the official home of the lord warden of the Cinque ports.

The lord warden is an older and more picturesque monument than Walmer castle. The office of lord warden is far more ancient than his dwelling. About that office are gathered the earliest activities out of which the British navy grew, writes Martin Conway in *Country Life*.

The present functions of the lord warden may not be of any executive value as contributing to national defense, but, as long as there is a lord warden living at Walmer, the small beginnings of the navy in a remote past remain visibly memorialized. Such a memorial is more efficient than any pile of stone that the ingenuity of man could raise.

Nothing more vividly brings the past into the present or enforces on living men the amount of their indebtedness to those from whom they descend than a living ceremonial recurrently performed in accordance with an ancient and unbroken tradition.

No one knows when the lord warden was founded or by what earliest stages it came into being. Necessity enforced the defense of the southeastern coast of England, and to that end the small maritime forces of the little ports along it had to be co-ordinated. The original five ports were Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover and Sandwich; to these others were added, as well as inland localities which had to contribute financial aid. Ultimately the jurisdiction extended round the coast from Seaford in Sussex to near Margate in Kent.

Importance of the Cinque Ports.

Throughout the Middle Ages down to the time of Henry VII the Cinque ports thus enlarged and organized had to furnish the crown with nearly all the ships and men needed for naval purposes. The oldest existing charter dates from Edward I, but it refers to older documents as far back as the time of Edward the Confessor. Duties and corresponding privileges went on accumulating. Such an organization could not exist without a head, but his office was of correspondingly gradual growth. At one time it was an office of great power and importance. It was generally coupled with the governorship of Dover castle. The lord warden was admiral of the ports. He had his court of chancery at Dover. He still retains the duty of appointing the judge of the admiralty court of the Cinque ports as well as the justices of the peace in the same areas; but his most important functions have become decorative, monumental and picturesque, not, however, as aforesaid, unimportant.

The maritime activity which led to the discovery of America and the beginnings of a world commerce necessarily made a great change in British naval affairs. Local levies of ships and sailors were bound to be replaced sooner or later by something in the nature of a national navy. The change is already apparent in the days of Henry VIII, and from that time the importance of the Cinque ports as the nation’s naval base declined and with it the power of the lord warden. It is noteworthy that the erection of Walmer castle dates from this period. It was built in the reign of Henry VIII along with other castles round the coast, such as the neighboring Deal and Sandown and the remote Lindisfarne on Holy Island in Northumberland. Previously the coast had been protected by a succession of earthworks, the Great and Little Bulwarks, for instance, within the parish of Walmer. They had embrasures for guns, and were connected by communication trenches.

Built by Henry VIII.

The Kentish castles built by Henry VIII were completed about 1540 and placed under the control of the lord warden. The following description of them is compressed from Elgin: In the center is the keep—a circular tower containing a bomb-proof magazine for ammunition. It is surrounded by bastions with fifty-two port-holes below, commanding the encompassing moat. Tunnels or chimneys were contrived to carry off the smoke of the guns. There were larger embrasures

for cannon near the upper part of the bastions. The entrance from the landward side was by a drawbridge and strong machicolated gateway. Within each castle was a well. The bastion walls were 20 feet thick below and 11 feet above.

Their architect was probably one Steven von Haschenberg. The garrison of Walmer consisted of a captain, lieutenant, two porters, ten gunners and four soldiers.

Less than a century later we read of Walmer castle as much decayed and threatened by the sea at high tides; moreover, rain drives into the rooms and powder houses, the gate is decayed with loose stones hanging over,” and so forth. It was presumably patched up. During the Civil war the castles changed hands more than once. Walmer was besieged by Parliament troops in 1648, and held out for a month before surrendering. It was “much spoiled with the grenades,” but the repairs were only estimated to cost £300. The castles continued to be of military importance throughout the seventeenth century.

Additions by Lord Warden.

The first lord warden to make Walmer castle his residence was the duke of Dorset, appointed in 1708 and again in 1727. About 1730 he made various alterations and additions to the old structure to provide the necessary accommodation for a household; further considerable additions were made by Mr. Pitt, the earl of Liverpool, and Earl Granville. Apart from certain chambers belonging to the original military work and since merely adapted to the uses of domestic service, the oldest parts of the existing mansion are the chambers built by the duke of Dorset. Buck’s view, dated 1735, shows the general aspect of this building. It is raised over the central mass of the castle and follows the outlines of its walls. There is nothing remarkable about the architecture or the decoration of the rooms. A small central hall, a long passage leading through it, with others branching off as convenience dictated—these are the elements of the plan. The plain stone wall is pierced by oblong sash-windows and the crest of the wall is battlemented.

The duke of Dorset’s additions were mainly on the sea front, which remains much as he left it. I believe the drawing-room was his a pleasant, sunny chamber—but Lord Granville added to it. Mr. Pitt built the rooms over the southern rampart. Finally, in 1863, Lord Granville added a story containing thirteen rooms over the gatehouse. He also built the tower. The stone employed came from the demolition of Sandown castle. He added to the drawing-room, as an alcove, the little room in which it is asserted that Nelson and Pitt used to confer.

There is nothing stately or impressive about the aspect of the interior, but the irregularity of the plan adds to the effect of domestic comfort and privacy which pervades the house. One can easily understand how successive families have become attached to it. Externally there are several quite impressive points of view, chiefly those which command the massive and precipitous walls rising from the moat. One of the walls, pulled down on the occasion of Queen Victoria’s visit to make a new dining-room, was soon afterward rebuilt. Talleyrand when he visited Walmer insisted on sleeping in Pitt’s room.

Camel-Hair Belting.

Belting used on machinery in the Russian petroleum fields is made of camel’s hair, which is said to resist greases better than rubber, cotton, or leather.

Poor Worm!

Heck—My wife contradicts me continually.

Peck—My wife acts as if my ideas weren’t worth discussing. Boston Transcript.

Disappearing.

I notice a great deal of majesty and glory have gone from our outlook on the world just now.

Yes; a lot of second lieutenants have been mustered out.”

Changed Positions.

“Alas! feet are no longer on the rail.”

“Perhaps not, but tongues are.”

Adopt Tea Gown for Home Wear

Women are adopting the handsome tea gown as a dinner dress for home wear. So very beautiful are these tea gowns that in some cases it is difficult to distinguish them not only from informal evening dresses but from formal ones as well, writes a fashion correspondent.

There was a time, not far distant, when we considered a negligee as a delicate affair always in pale colorings, which made it impractical to wear anywhere but in one’s own room. Now most of the models, except those for very intimate wear, are in the rich, dark colorings of the Orient, in gay, colorful tones of beautiful brocades and velvets such as those that are used in the most dignified gowns and evening wraps.

Made Into Evening Dresses.

Many women buy these wonderful tea gowns, and with a few changes here and there convert them into evening dresses. They are not quite as expensive as the former and may be a little more individual. This type of garment takes its inspiration from the dress of women in Eastern lands; most of them are from the costumes of Japan or those of Egypt. Our informal robes, which make no pretense of being dresses, are plainly of Japanese origin. They are selected for their usefulness, at the same time endeavoring to get as much of beauty as possible along with utility. The handsome ones, even of these plain robes, are very expensive, and the best thing to do is to make them your

mix, the cloth comes out in two tones. The sleeves, which are long and tight, wrinkling on the arm from the elbow to the wrist, are made in three sections connected by cordings, which goes in rows about the arm. Weight is at the bottom of the sleeve and continues all the way up it and down the side seams of the gown to hold the drapery of the sleeve in place.

Elaborate Trimming Used.

The negligee is one article of dress in which we may allow ourselves much latitude in the matter of ornamentation, for while some of these handsome gowns have no trimming, others are very elaborately trimmed. One of velvet, made on