

THE BREAKING-OUT OF CLAB PETERS

BY HUGH PENDEXTER

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"CLAB PETERS has broke out agin," impressively announced Mose Skillins to the little group of loungers on the post-office steps.

Several eyebrows were mildly elevated, but the announcement was not productive of the stir of interest usually aroused by a news-item in rural Maine. The speaker, who had paused in pleasant expectancy, looked about him in mild surprise. Then, as two of his hearers refused to drop their chuckling conversation, he repeated, in a reckless attempt to stimulate attention, "I say, Clab has broke out." But the fire was gone from his voice now.

"Yas," drawled Zach Huff, over his weather-beaten shoulder; "so his brother, Truman, was a tellin' several days ago. Yas, fellers, ten cents fer the pipe, an' he threw in a pound-package of genooine terbacker, pure an'—"

"Then ye knew about it?" demanded Mr. Skillins, who would not retreat unless honored by a pursuit. This obtrusion caused Mr. Huff's grizzled face to crinkle in impatience, and as he turned to reply, Mose, now content at being noticed, slumped to the bottom step and slowly carved a long shaving from the plank.

"We usually know what's goin' on in our own post," observed Mr. Huff sarcastically, holding his head on one side to squint along his pipe, while pretending to ignore the presence of the newcomer and speaking as one would address the world in general, or state a truism, just to test his own voice. "We can gin'rally tell what is happenin' in th' Ezra Durgin Post, G. A. R., without waitin' fer a non-combatant from Pigeon Ridge ter come over an' tell us."

"Ye see, Mose," soothed the postmaster, whose salary was contingent on the number of stamps sold, and who did not wish to drive the scanty patronage of Pigeon Ridge to the neighboring town, "this happens every year. Lawd! I begin ter feel the chill comin' a week ago, when Clab passed me without speakin'."

"It's jest his pesky stubbornness," spoke up a freckled man, whose broad mouth was always working convulsively, as if he were perpetually on the edge of saying things. "Now, he—"

"Jest look at his brother, Truman, at the head of the company every Decoration Day," interrupted another, whose stiff leg, extending from the lower step and causing the occasional passer-by to make a détour, bespoke war's alarms, or rheumatism. "There he is, a carryin' the flag, an' we're all proud of him. Now, why can't Clab surrender an' march with us like his brother? What's the government payin' us old soldiers pensions fer if we didn't wallop the South?"

"It's all his—" began the freckled man eagerly.

"Wal," broke in the postmaster heavily, while his thick under lip grew pendulous over the ragged streamer of a whisker, "ye must remember Clab Peters fit fer the South. Truman was fer the North. Clab won't never take no part in the day's doin's at all. Lawd, fellers! Ter think he won't even go to the grange hall an' enjoy the baked-bean supper! No, sirree! Sayin' ter me a week ago, jest before he broke out, that he's licked all right, but ain't got no call ter help us mourn fer the fellers that walloped him. So I guess he'll never take no part in the day, except ter fire a salute over his father's grave. As old Cap'en

Peters fit in the Mexican War, both boys feel as if they had somethin' in common in his grave."

"Oh, we know all about that," sniffed Mr. Huff, displeased that the Pigeon Ridge man should succeed in shifting the conversation, "an' we've all seen Clab marchin' about four hundred feet behind the precession, ridin' a farm-hoss, as if he was defyin' the whole United States governingment. That ain't nothin' new. But now ye've ben sot on discussin' it, I'll say fer one he didn't ought ter be allowed ter wear his old gray uniform on that day. If he wants ter have a little precession all of his own, all right. But he didn't ought ter be allowed to wear that hostile uniform. No, sirree!" Pleased at giving a new impetus and turn to the observations, the speaker leaned back and threw one leg decisively over its patched mate.

"I know, Zach," conciliated the postmaster gently, giving his surly neighbor a friendly pat on the shoulder, "but did ye know he told the post he'd march with 'em under sartain conditions?"

Mr. Huff stiffened and dropped one boot heavily. It was a disagreeable pill to swallow, especially with the open-mouthed Mr. Skillins present. But curiosity was too rampant to be downed, and after shaving off the edge of the step and eying the sliver sternly and observing he undoubtedly *had* heard of it, being a not inconsequential member of the post, he blew upon the knife-blade and wiped it, and demanded, "Wal, what is this great secret?"

"Why," bubbled the postmaster, sinking to a sitting posture and irritating his thin whisker to wag to all points of the compass, "he said he'd march if they'd let him carry the flag that was captured from the Confed'rits by our boys in the Wilderness."

"By Judas! That's what I call brass!" cried Mr. Skillins hotly, resenting the insult to the post, just as if he had never scurried across the Canadian border contemporarily with the enforcement of the draft.

"Seems as if I have heard something about it," said Mr. Huff lazily, again crossing his legs. "Wasn't interested an' didn't pay no attention. But I guess we fit too hard fer that rag ter have one of

the 'riginal owners parade it in our precession."

"It's jest his pesky—" began the freckled man excitedly.

"Hush!" warned the postmaster uneasily. "Here comes his brother. Don't let him know I said anything. Guess I'd better go in an' make up the mail. Kimley was mad last time he had ter wait, an' I wan't more'n a hour late at that."

II

TRUMAN PETERS, short and square, with a face as hard and grained as the native granite, drew slowly up and instinctively sensed the subject under discussion. It had been thus for many years. At first he had not minded it and had half believed that his townsmen's gossiping rebukes were deserved. But as the lines deepened in his face he came to desert the crowd and stand in silent sympathy beside his brother.

"Talkin' about Clab?" he challenged, biting a straw and fixing his deep-set, gray eyes on Mr. Skillins.

"Zach was sayin' as how he'd broke out agin," replied Mr. Skillins weakly, shifting his pale eyes until they became absorbed in contemplating the weather-worn sign over the blacksmith's shop across the road.

Mr. Huff frowned and hastened to explain: "The postmaster was sayin' he'd broke out. News ter me."

"Wal, he has; jest as he has fer years," defied Truman, thrusting forward his strong jaw. "What of it?"

"Oh, nothin'," shivered Mr. Skillins.

But Mr. Huff had not served through four years of fighting to retreat at the first gun, and although not hungering for any words with his questioner, slowly averred: "Why, there ain't nothin' of it. Only, when a man breaks out like Clab does, year after year, an' names as a price fer knucklin' under that he be allowed ter carry his derved old flag in our precession, I say he's got a lot of brass—that's all."

Truman's eyes glinted, but he began, almost gently: "My brother fit fer the South. He thought a heap of that flag. His company, the Black Hoss Cavalry, was stove all ter pieces by the Fire Zouaves, an' that flag was lost when they was tryin' ter back out, an' our boys got it

an' we have it now. When he come North ter make his home with me on th' old place an' found we had it, he nat'rally wanted ter carry it. I told him I'd see him dead fust, an' since then he's marched alone, only meetin' me at the buryin'-ground, where we fire a salute over father's grave. 'This has happened ever since he come North, an' can't be helped. Only, this year he asked fer the second time ter carry the flag. I told him he couldn't."

Then the speaker's voice changed and the straw was spat out as he added in a bass growl: "But if I know of any more promiscus talkin' about my brother, there's goin' ter be another war mighty quick. D'ye hear?"

All heard; all were appreciative, and even Mr. Huff was silent.

As Truman turned from the group and with hands clasped behind his broad back slowly made for home, his soul revolted from this bitter chapter of the Civil War, which would not, he believed, end except in death. To-morrow was Decoration Day, when the past year's good-will between him and his brother would be brushed aside and each would meet the other's gaze sternly and in silence. He would have had it otherwise, but his brother's make-up was not complacent, and by the very nature of the rupture a compromise was precluded. Truman could never allow a man in gray to carry the captured rebel flag, while Clab was final in his refusal to march under the colors that had numbered him with the vanquished.

So each Decoration Day had seen the little tragedy repeated and the brothers for twenty-four hours completely estranged. The metamorphosis in Clab's usually genial nature began for others about seven days before the procession formed, and was graduated from a pre-occupied reserve to a cold, calm gaze that repelled recognition.

How clearly it all came back to him of the square shoulders as he plodded along, unconscious of the warm spring day's benediction! He could only see his mother pressing one hand to her breast as with the other she placed the home-made flag in his eager, youthful grasp. He remembered how every cross-road had contributed its quota of young men,

all silently falling in behind him and his flag in the march to the front.

Then came the picture of his mother's agonized face as the intelligence was received that Clab, for several years living in the South, had "broke out" and had joined his fortunes with the Confederacy. He shuddered as he again felt the old chill of fear that had always assailed him when going into battle, when he always anticipated his brother's presence among the immediate enemy.

It seemed miraculous that they could have fought each other in that mad dash, when the Black Horse Cavalry shot the life out of the Weldon railroad-raiders, without sensing each other's proximity. It was a boon of the good God to the shrinking mother at home, that neither had fallen by the other's hand.

"Why can't he surrender in spirit, after all these years?" mumbled Truman. It seemed to him that his father's sleep would be sweeter if the volley over his ashes could be fired by brothers united, standing shoulder to shoulder on the same side of the grave.

But it could not be, he sighed, as on entering the yard he beheld Clab, who, unlike himself, was tall of stature, busily currying the horse that was to carry him on the morrow.

"Clab," he cried, as one seeking to soften a child, "why can't ye quit it an' march beside me ter-morrer?"

Clab dropped his brush and straightened slowly. His eyes at first looked wistful from under their time-streaked thatch, but as they caught the glint of the sun on the gilt braid about the G. A. R. slouched hat they hardened, and he returned: "I'll quit every day in the year but on this one. I've said on what terms I would march beside ye—on the terms of a equal—you carryin' yer own flag, an' me a carryin' mine. But ye ain't satisfied with that, Truman. Ye want ter rub it in. No; it can't be. It cuts me sore, but when this day creeps along I'm jolted back ter them other times, when I had only ter turn ter see a wave of young, brave faces behind me. I can't quit 'em.

"God!" he cried with passionate earnestness as he dragged one corded hand across his eyes and forgot his brother's presence, "who'll mark their graves ter-morrer? Who can tell where their dust

is tucked away? An' be I ter fergit 'em an' their deaths? No, no! One day in the year fer rememberin' of 'em all. Jest one day. Some time, mebbe, an' somehow," and his voice sank low as he again faced his brother, "some day, Truman, mebbe, we can discover a neutral flag an' march side by side."

"Clab," pleaded the other hoarsely, approaching and placing one hand almost timidly on the strong shoulder, "can't we call it quits ter-night an' march tergether ter-morrer? Remember, we've crawled a long way on the road, an' any Decoration Day may be our last. Can't we hitch up tergether jest once before we pass out?"

The tall form of the other shook with suppressed emotion, and he found his brother's hand blindly, and was wringing it mightily, when his eyes again caught the gilt braid, and his mouth slowly closed in a straight line.

"No," he muttered, dropping his hand heavily; "it ain't writ that we can. Whenever I feel like meltin' I catch sight of that braid, an' it reminds me of boys who wore gray an' liked ter hear the bands play 'Dixie.' I went down there, ye know, when I was a younker, ter live a while with uncle. From the first I was made ter feel welcome, an' I grew up one of 'em. I can't change my heart, even if I have lost my colors. Git over, Jim."

"Well, Clab, I've done my best," said Truman Peters slowly, turning to enter the house.

"Ye've done your whole duty," affirmed Clab over his shoulder. "But neither of us can change our natures."

III

AFTER Truman had entered the house Clab gave the horse a few final strokes and then paused to think it all over. He was not embittered against the North, he assured himself. He had surrendered unreservedly.

He could not explain his emotions to his neighbors, nor could they understand him if he did. Where he was actuated solely by a desire to remain loyal to the memory of his dead comrades, his neighbors interpreted his withdrawal on the one day as being incited by a never-dying hostility. If they would only permit

him to carry his old flag his conscience would be at rest and he could pay sincere homage to the dead on both sides of Mason's line. But they would never understand.

He gave it all up with a deep intake of breath that was meant for a sigh, and after sending the horse stumbling to a stall, he repaired to the house. He entered by the shed-door, thus avoiding his brother and niece, and by a rear stairway gained the attic. It was here that he was accustomed to lay out his old war-uniform in anticipation of Decoration Day. He had eaten his supper early and alone, and would meet with his brother no more until the next day was done.

He regretted even this brief isolation, and commented aloud upon it while impatiently searching for his sash. He wondered if his brother would appeal to him ever again. If it had not been for the dead boys in gray, how gladly he would have responded to that generous advance! He appreciated it the more from realizing how obdurate was Truman's nature.

And yet the sash could not be found. The low-sinking sun now withdrew all aid except a few murky, dust-riddled beams that played uncertainly on a dim array of ancient trunks and boxes. These he dragged, one after the other, to the only window and hurriedly littered the floor with their contents.

Among the odds and ends of discarded wearing apparel he found several old fashion-patterns which he recognized as having belonged to his mother's wardrobe. His heart softened mightily as with awkward gentleness he held these up. How strongly the faded finery spoke of her as she appeared when he left home! That was several years before her last great trial came. She was then young and strong, and he realized, as never before, how she must have grieved when she learned that her two boys were opposed.

He knew his sash could not be in that particular trunk, and yet his rough hands were led to continue removing the articles, one by one. Each was fraught with pathos, and each caused him to wince in anguish. He forgot that he was old and grizzled. He thought of himself only as a beardless boy, still de-

pendent on a mother's love; and it came to him that she, young and fresh, even then was at his elbow, smiling with infinite love to behold him thus remembering.

He could not regret his course and the cause he fought for. It had been a sincere error. Nor did she now, as she stood by his side, regret it, he told himself. He had been as true to conscience as had his brother. And now he knew his mother, and, at the eleventh hour, appreciated the mighty love that had ever throbbled in her heart for him.

More finery, a flat parcel and the last. The shadows were very thick now, and he had to hold it up to the window to make it out. It was a home-made flag, resembling very closely the one Truman would so proudly carry on the morrow. Why two?

Clab's heart told him even as he found a brittle sheet of paper within its folds. And so she had made two flags and given only one. What ultimate secret sorrow this old piece of bunting conveyed to his heart! Bowing his head on the coarse fabric, Clab gave way just as he might have done so many years ago.

Then he knew that she must be smiling in her gentle pity and waiting for him to smile. The window now let in no more light, but a flaring match brought briefly before his gaze the faint, delicate chirography of a woman's hand, and as the flame spluttered and died he read, "Two flags for my two boys."

IV

"KINDLY fall back an' give more room fer the precession. Don't clutter up the road. Stand back, there, you!" cried Mose Skillins, as a dozen children threatened to block the narrow village street.

The boys ran wildly about from the meager brass band to the thin line of Civil War veterans, now stiffly drawn up on the schoolhouse-green and refusing to recognize the proud gaze of relatives or the low-voiced salutations of neighbors.

The little girls, painfully arrayed in over-starched petticoats, stumbled along in the wake of flushed matrons, who in turn were heavily laden with wreaths and

flowers. And on the board sidewalk stalked the Pigeon Hill man, who, being refused admittance to the short line of veterans, was permitted to play a little part in the exercises because of the glamour of some secret-society regalia with which he was adorned.

"He's with us as a representative of the civil element," the postmaster had observed.

"Fall back, there," repeated Mr. Skillins hoarsely as the flapping ends of much ribbon, radiating from a huge bouquet of geraniums and cedar, filled both his eyes and caused him to believe that his line of vision was intercepted by an unprecedented crush of humanity. "Fall back there, I say!"

"Ye sartainly know how to handle a crowd, Mose," remarked the admiring postmaster.

"I ought ter," replied Mr. Skillins complacently. "Drew out in chalk on my barn-door last night a diagram of jest what would be done ter-day. I planned it jest—"

But the rest was lost as a horn gave a preliminary toot and the snare-drum purred and the bass crashed, and the survivors of the old company, in limping fours, swung out into the dusty road, led by Truman Peters, carrying the home-made flag.

"Ye ought ter take a breathin'-spell, Mose," warned the postmaster compassionately.

"Yas, I ought ter. No, I can't, jest now. Here comes the rebel!" cried Mr. Skillins, as the lonely, pathetic figure of Clab Peters turned the corner some hundreds of feet away.

"Sets his hoss well," conciliated the postmaster, as the farm-nag, catching something of his rider's martial bearing, forgot plows and harrows and almost minced his steps as his hoofs threw up the dust in little jets.

"By Judas!" ejaculated Mr. Skillins, waving his bouquet like a red lantern. "Stop him, or when Zach an' Truman see him there'll be trouble. He's carryin' the flag."

"Wait a minute," gasped the postmaster, pulling Mr. Skillins back as he propelled himself to the edge of the walk. "Lawd! It's—it's *our* flag! It's *our'n*, I tell ye."

And the old man, sitting easily erect, but with head bowed a bit, wearing his faded gray uniform, looked neither to right nor left in passing; but the flag-staff he supported in one stirrup flew the Stars and Stripes.

V

"He's knuckled under," cried the man with the stiff leg. "Clab Peters has knuckled under!"

"I tell ye—" began the freckled man excitedly.

"Say, fellers," whispered the postmaster; "it's his mother's flag. She made it—she made two of 'em. It's jest like the one Truman Peters is carryin'. Lawd! I remember now! They used ter say she made two, an'—an' this one was never called fer. Hark! The boys have seed him."

A cheer was raised by the dusty patch of blue down the road, but was quickly stilled by Zach Huff's uplifted hand. And as the company marched on, with stony gaze fixed dead ahead, followed by

the solitary spot of gray, the villagers with less decorum, headed by Mr. Skillins, kicked up the dirt in an energetic pursuit. Then the van was concealed by a curve, where the road turned abruptly into the cemetery.

As the crowd approached this, and just as Clab reined to the right, the gruff voice of Zach Huff rang out, audible to all:

"Attention, squad. Salute!"

And as Mr. Skillins and his contingent panted into view they beheld the twice-conquered veteran riding between two lines of men in blue, while as many rows of gnarled hands were stiffly raised in deep respect.

The spectators also saw the marchers fall in behind as Clab reached the entrance and then follow him to his father's grave; and the salute for the first time was fired from the same side of the mound. And when the line returned the two flags were carried side by side, with Mr. Skillins leading a sleepy farm-horse in the middle distance.

THE REVERSAL

I DWELT in a land of mimicry quaint,
Where people were fashioned of pasteboard and paint,
And soldiers of tin heard the bugle's complaint

In glittering row.

For I was a king in a kingdom of toys,
My realm was a corner, my valor was noise,
My riches were tinsel—but legion my joys,
A long time ago!

Now army and bugle are tarnished and battered,
My flags and my gossamer pennons are tattered,
My kingdom has passed and my subjects are scattered
'Mid cobwebs and dust;
But I would be king in that kingdom again
And draw up an army with royal disdain,
In spite of old Time and his ravages vain
Of molder and rust.

So I fancied myself in the long time ago,
In the same little corner that I used to know,
With the same tiny soldiers of tin in a row,
And I was the king.

The king? Why, if kingship the heart can control,
If even its presence can master the soul,
Compelling a tear of affection to roll—
My kingdom was king!

William F. McCormack

BUSINESS IS IMPROVING AND SECURITIES ARE ADVANCING

BY FRANK A. MUNSEY

I HAVE written so long an article under another caption for this issue of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE that I shall say little here about the business outlook, which is certainly getting brighter and brighter every day. My main purpose is to show you by the following tables how handsome an advance stocks and bonds have made since my first financial article was written. I then advised the purchase of securities which were ridiculously low—even below bargain prices. In each succeeding issue of THE MUNSEY, from January on, I have pointed out the opportunity to buy good securities at a price much below their value. And to-day even, notwithstanding the greater cost of these stocks and bonds, they are still bargains.

This advance in the stock market pretty accurately reflects the general improvement in business. That this improvement would come should have been clear to every one. It certainly was not, however, for such pessimism I have never seen as enshrouded this town and extended well over the entire country. But a markedly different tone has come about. Every one is looking more cheery and is really beginning to fancy that America won't go to the demnition bow-wows, after all.

I regret that the promised inventory of the United States Steel Corporation has not yet come in. But it is in course of preparation, and will be published as soon as we get it.

These tables show the prices of some leading securities on November 23 of last year, the date on which the January MUNSEY went to press. They also show the prices of the same securities on March 25, our closing date for this issue. The final column gives the net change during the intervening four months. It will be seen that the whole list has scored a substantial advance, with two exceptions due to special reasons. In the case of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad there has been doubt as to the maintenance of the company's dividend-rate, and the stocks and bonds of the Western Union Telegraph Company have been depreciated by the declaration of two quarterly dividends in stock, instead of cash.

RAILROAD STOCKS

	Highest Price in 1906		Highest Price in 1907		Closing Price Nov. 23, 1907		Closing Price Mar. 25, 1908		Change Since Nov. 23
Atchison	110½	..	108¼	..	70¾	..	75¼	..	+ 5
Baltimore and Ohio.....	125½	..	122	..	78¾	..	83¼	..	+ 4¾
Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul.....	199¾	..	157½	..	97¾	..	119¾	..	+22¾
Chicago and Northwestern	240	..	205	..	131	..	149	..	+18
Delaware and Hudson	234¾	..	227½	..	131	..	156½	..	+25½
Great Northern	348	..	189¾	..	113¾	..	124¼	..	+10¾
Illinois Central	184½	..	172	..	118	..	126	..	+ 8
Louisville and Nashville.....	156½	..	145½	..	88	..	100	..	+12
New York Central.....	156¼	..	134¾	..	94½	..	98¾	..	+ 4¾
New York, New Haven and Hartford..	204¾	..	189	..	135	..	134	..	- 1
Norfolk and Western.....	97¾	..	92¼	..	62¼	..	64¾	..	+ 2¾