

## *The Detective's Story*

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### How a Chicago Policeman Wooed and Won His Bride in Days of Yore

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Chicago Times.

The lieutenant had called the roll of incoming policemen, the second platoon had marched away in the night to stand its six hours' watch over the fortunes of the city, and quiet once more resumed its reign at Madison street station. Uncle Ben sat at his desk scratching away, with the methodical precision born of twenty years' experience, at the record of some crime whose perpetrator was behind the bars; Jo, the turnkey, lounged about with his everlasting pipe and his eternal good nature, allowing that the night was "too darned hot for any use," and a half-dozen or so roundsmen, off duty and tired, were scattered in various attitudes around the office indulging in a social smoke before seeking the rest they so much needed and had so well earned. To this little glimpse, not of Arcadia but of latent power and law-born force, there entered a Times reporter and a detective who, in connection with his "partner," has earned an enviable reputation for courage, sagacity and success. The two were discussing the various phases of criminal life which a great city like Chicago can hold up to the public gaze and horror, and the man of paper was lamenting the prospect that the dawning Sunday would not yield anything sensational enough to be worthy of an extended "write up."

"Now, look here," responded the detective, "it seems to me as though your readers had had a feast of blood for the past week. To begin with, there was the Silver Leaf Grove tragedy, and the list closed not two hours ago with that damnable razor-cutting affray you witnessed. If you cared for it I could give you something just as interesting and a great deal more romantic than all these brutal rows put together."

"What's it about?" was the query.

"About that man over there," and the speaker pointed to a stalwart Saxon in the uniform of the force, whose tawny mustache and close-chopped hair set off to advantage a face molded in the lines of command.

"Now, you wouldn't think," continued the detective, "that that man had gone through siege, and march, and battle, and starvation and imprisonment to get his wife, would you? But [it's] just through a combination of all these circumstances that he chances today to be happily married and the father of a family."

The loungers about the great bare room had gathered nearer during the conversation, and now the chorused entreaty was, "Tell us the story, Ed."

"Well, boys, I don't exactly know as I have a right to show up a man's private affairs in this way,

but, as it's a yarn of the war that more than one of you can appreciate from actual experience. I'll give it to you. To begin with, I don't think there's one here but what was heard of the Thirty-sixth Illinois volunteers—that good old regiment which lost more soldiers in battle and less from disease than any other regiment in the service. Well, along in the last days of 1862 the Thirty-sixth found itself a part and parcel of the fight at Stone river. I don't think, by the way, that any one event of the war contained more discomfort, hardship and loss than that same fight. On the third day after the skirmishing had begun our boys lay right alongside the Forty-second Indiana, in which command our friend Blank there—yonder—had a warm personal friend. When we got to the front and the bullets began to whistle and the guns to bang, the Thirty-sixth was moved over out of the way, to give Phil Sheridan a chance at the rebs. As they went tearing along through the hell of smoke and the rain of lead, Blank chanced on his Hoosier friend, flat on the ground and gasping his last. He got out of the ranks and stopped a moment. 'My dear boy,' he said, 'can I do anything for you?' 'No,' came the feeble reply. 'I've got my route for the other shore. Yet, if you'd make a dying man's mind more at rest than it now is.'

“So there on that awful battle-field, Blank knelt down, took the address of a sister, murmured a short prayer, and before arising closed his comrade's eyes in death. Then he went in again savager than ever, and no man in the army experienced a fiercer delight than he when the battered Confederates fled the field.

“Well, he wrote to that sister, and detailed the story of her brother's death. A reply reached him, and a regular correspondence followed. But you know the ups and downs of a soldier's life. In the fall, September I think, came the Chickamauga affair. The 36th went in with a flag inscribed 'Pea Ridge,' 'Perryville,' 'Stone River,' and they brought it out riddled with balls and haloed with glory. They had an inspiration for fighting, too, that day. Sheridan was there, and McCook, and Lytle, who was killed, and who, by the way, wrote that stirring poem about Cleopatra which begins,

I am dying, Egypt, dying.

Well, Blank happened to be among the unlucky ones. A ball laid him flat, and when he came to, he was a prisoner. You can't get him to talk much about it, but during his sixteen months at Andersonville he doubtless suffered all a man can suffer and live. His friends thought him dead; the lady to whom he had been writing thought him dead, too; so when he was exchanged and got a furlough, he concluded to keep up the delusion a little longer. He went over to Indiana, to the quiet place where his dead friend's sister lived, and one day called incognito at her father's residence on some excuse or other. He was ushered into the parlor, met the lady, and began a conversation while waiting for the old gentleman to appear. Soon the girl looked at him curiously; then she sprang to her feet and cried, 'You can't deceive me. We thought you dead, but I'm sure you are the friend who was with my brother in his last hour.' You see his style of writing and talking were about the same, and it gave him away. In due time the two were engaged, and, after the war, married. So there you have a bit out of the life of a Chicago policeman.”

And, lighting a cigar, the detective walked away to bed.

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