"'No you don't,' sez I.—Page 19.
Soldiers Three

A collection of Stories setting forth certain passages in the lives and adventures of privates Terence Mulvaney, Stanley Ortheris, and John Learoyd

By Rudyard Kipling

Chicago and New York Rand, McNally & Company
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SOLDIERS THREE.

THE THREE MUSKETEERS.

An' when the war began, we chased the bold Afghan,
An' we made the bloomin' Ghazi for to flee, boys O!
An' we marched into Kabul, and we tuk the Balar 'Issar
An' we taught 'em to respec' the British Soldier.
—Barrack Room Ballad.

Mulvaney, Ortheris and Learoyd are Privates in B Company of a Line Regiment, and personal friends of mine. Collectively I think, but am not certain, they are the worst men in the regiment so far as genial black guardism goes.

They told me this story, the other day, in the Umballa Refreshment Room while we were waiting for an up-train. I supplied the beer. The tale was cheap at a gallon and a half.

Of course you know Lord Benira Trig. He is a Duke, or an Earl, or something unofficial; also a Peer; also a Globe-trotter. On all three counts, as Ortheris says, "'e didn't deserve no consideration." He was out here for three months collecting materials for a book on "Our Eastern Impedimenta," and quartering himself upon everybody, like a Cossack in evening-dress.

His particular vice—because he was a Radical, I suppose—was having garrisons turned out for his inspection. He would then dine with the Officer Commanding, and insult him, across the Mess table, about the appearance of the troops. That was Benira's way.
He turned out troops once too often. He came to Helanthami Cantonment on a Tuesday. He wished to go shopping in the bazaars on Wednesday, and he “desired” the troops to be turned out on a Thursday. On—a—Thursday! The Officer Commanding could not well refuse; for Benira was a Lord. There was an indignation-meeting of subalterns in the Mess Room, to call the Colonel pet names.

“But the rale dimonstrashin,” said Mulvaney, “was in B Comp’ny barrick; we three headin’ it.”

Mulvaney climbed on to the refreshment-bar, settled himself comfortably by the beer, and went on:—“Whin the row was at ut’s foinest an’ B Comp’ny was fur goin’ out to murther this man Thrigg on the p’rade-groun’, Learoyd here takes up his helmut an’ sez—fwhat was ut ye said?”

“Ah said,” said Learoyd, “gie us t’ brass. Tak oop a subscripshun, lads, for to put off t’ p’rade, an’ if t’ p’rade’s not put off, ah’ll gie t’ brass back agean. Thot’s wot ah said. All B Coomp’ny knawed me. Ah took oop a big subscripshun—fower rupees eight annas ’twas—an’ ah went oot to turn t’ job over. Mulvaney an’ Orth’ris coom with me.”

“We three raises the Divil in couples gin’rally,” explained Mulvaney.

Here Ortheris interrupted. “’Ave you read the papers?” said he.

“Sometimes,” I said.

“We ’ad read the papers, an’ we put hup a faked decoity, a—a sedukshun.”

“Abdukshin, ye cockney,” said Mulvaney.

“Abdukshun or sedukshun—no great odds. Any ’ow, we arrange to taik an’ put Mister Benhira out o’ the way till Thursday was hover, or ’e too busy to rux ’isself about
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p'raids. Hi was the man wot said:—'We'll make a few rupees o' the business.'"

"We hild a Council av War," continued Mulvaney "walkin' roun' by the Artill'ry Lines. I was Prisidint, Learoyd was Minister av Finance, an' little Orth'ris here was——"

"A bloomin' Bismarck! Hi made the 'ole show pay."

"This interferin' bit av a Benira man," said Mulvaney "did the thrick for us himself; for, on me sowl, we hadn't a notion av what was to come afther the next minut. He was shoppin' in the bazar on fut. 'Twas dhrawin' dusk thin, an' we stud watchin' the little man hoppin' in an' out av the shops, thryin to injuce the naygurs to mallum his bat. Prisintly, he sthrols up, his arrums full av thruck, an' he sez in a consiquinshal way, shticking out his little belly:—'Me good men,' sez he, 'have ye seen the Kernel's b'roosh? 'B'roosh?' says Learoyd. 'There's no b'roosh here—nobbut a hekka.' 'Fwhat's that?' sez Thrigg. Learoyd shows him wan down the sthreet, an' he sez:—'How thruly Orientil! I will ride on a hekka.' I saw thin that our Rigimintal Saint was for givin' Thrigg over to us neck an' brisket. I pursued a hekka, an' I sez to the dhriver-divil, I sez—'Ye black limb, there's a Sahib comin' for this hekka. He wants to go jildi to the Pad-sahi Jhil'—'twas about tu moiles away—, to shoot snipe —chirria. 'You dhrive Jehannum ke marfik, mallum? 'Tis no manner av faider bukkin' to the Sahib, bekaze he doesn't samjao your bat. Av he bolos anything, just you choop and chel. Dekker? Go arsty for the first arder-mile from cantonmints. Then chel, Shaitan ke marfik, an' the chooper you choops an' the jilder you chels the better kooshy will that Sahib be; an' here's a rupee for ye.'"

"The hekka-man knew there was somethin' out av the
common in the air. He grinned and sez:—'Bote achee! I goin’ damn fast.' I prayed that the Kernel’s b’roosh wudn’t arrive till me darlin’ Benira by the grace av God was under weigh. The little man puts his thruck into the hekka an’ scuttles in like a fat guinea-pig; niver offerin’ us the price of a dhrink for our services in helpin’ him home. ‘He’s off to the Padsahi jhil,’ sez I to the others.”

Ortheris took up the tale:—

“Jist then, little Buldoo kim up, ’oo was the son of one of the Artillery Saises—’e would ’av made a ’evinly newspaper-boy in London, bein’ sharp and fly to all manner o’ games. ’E ’ad bin watchin’ us puttin’ Mister Behira into ’s temporary baroush, an’ ’e sez:—‘What ’ave you been a doin’ of, Sahibs?’ sez ’e. Learoyd ’e caught ’im by the ear an’ ’e sez—”

“Ah says,” went on Learoyd: “‘Young mon, that mon’s gooin’ to have’t goons out o’ Thursday—kul—an’ that’s more work for you, young mon. Now, sitha, tak a tat an’ a lookri, an’ ride tha domdest to t’ Padsahi Jhil. Cotch thot there hekka, and tell t’ driver iv your lingo thot you’ve coom to tak’ his place. T’ Sahib doesn’t speak t’ bat, an’ he’s a little mon. Drive t’ hekka into t’ Padsahi Jhil into t’ watter. Leave t’ Sahib theer an’ roon hoam; an’ here’s a rupee for tha.”

Then Mulvaney and Ortheris spoke together in alternate fragments: Mulvaney leading [You must pick out the two speakers as best you can.]:—“He was a knowin’ little divil was Bhuldoo,—’e sez bote achee an’ cuts—wid a wink in his oi—but Hi sez there’s money to be made— an’ I want to see the end av the campaign—so Hi says we’ll double hout to the Padsahi Jhil—and save the little man from bein’ dacoited by the murtherin’ Bhuldoo—an’ turn hup like reskoors in a Ryle Victoria Theayter Melodrama—so we doubled for the jhil, an’ prisintly there was
the divil of a hurroosh behind us an’ three bhoys on grass-cuts’ tats come by, pounding along for the dear life—s’elp me Bob, hif Buldoo ’adn’t raised a regular harmy of decoits—to do the job in shtile. An’ we ran, an’ they ran, shplittin’ with laughin’, till we gets near the jhil—and ’ears sounds of distress floatin’ molloncally on the heaven-in’ hair.” [Ortheris was growing poetical under the influence of the beer. The duet recommenced; Mulvaney leading again.]

“Thin we heard Bhuldoo, the dacoit, shoutin’ to the hekka man an’ wan of the young divils brought his lakri down on top av the hekka-cover, an’ Benira Thrigg inside howled ‘Murther an’ Death.’ Buldoo takes the reins and dhrives like mad for the jhil, havin’ dispersed the hekka-driver—’oo cum up to us an’ e sez, sezie:—‘That Sahib’s nigh gawbry with funk! Wot devil’s work ’ave you led me into?’ ‘Hall right,’ sez we, ‘you puckrow that there pony an’ come along. This Sahib’s been decoited, an’ we’re going to resky ’im!’ Says the driver: ‘Decoits! Wot decoits? That’s Buldoo the budmash’—’Bhuldoo be shot!’ sez we. ‘’Tis a woid dissolute Pathan frum the hills. There’s about eight av ’im coercin’ the Sahib. You remimber that an’ you’ll get another rupee’! Then we heard the whop-whop-whop av the hekka turnin’ over, an’ a splash av water an’ the voice av Benira Thrigg callin’ upon God to forgive his sins—an’ Buldoo an’ ’is friends squotterin’ in the water like boys in the Serpentine.”

Here the Three Musketeers retired simultaneously into the beer.

“Well? What came next?” said I.

“Fwhat nex’? answered Mulvaney, wiping his mouth. “Wud you let threeould sodger-bhoys lave the ornamint av the House av Lords to be dhrowned an’ dacoited in a
jhil? We formed line av quarther-column an' we desinded upon the inimy. For the better part av tin minutes you could not hear yerself spake. The tattoo was screamint' in chune wid Benira Thrigg an' Bhuldoos's army, an' the shticks was whistlin' roun' the hekka, an' Orth'ris was beatin' the hekka-cover wid his fistes, an' Learoyd yellin'—'Look out for their knives!' an' me cuttin' into the dark, right an' lef', dishpersin' army corps av Pathans. Holy Mother av Moses! 'twas more disp'rit than Ahmid Kheyl wid Maiwund thrown in. Aftter a while Bhuldo an' his bhoys flees. Have ye iver seen a rale live Lord thryin' to hide his nobility undher a fut an' a half av brown jhil wather? 'Tis the livin' image av a bhist's mus-sick wid the shivers. It tuk toime to pershuade me frind Benira he was not disimbowilled: an' more toime to get out the hekka. The dhriver come up aftter the battle, swearin' he tuk a hand in repulsin' the inimy. Benira was sick wid the fear. We escorted him back, very slow, to cantonnments, for that an' the chill to soak into him. It suk! Glory be to the Rigimintil Saint, but it suk to the marrow av Lord Benira Thrigg!"

Here Ortheris, slowly, with immense pride:—"'E sez: —'You har my noble preservers,' sez 'e. 'You har a honor to the British Harmy,' sez 'e. With that 'e de-scribes the hawful band of decoits wot set on 'im. There was about forty of 'em an' 'e was hoverpowered by num-bers, so 'e was; but 'e never lost 'is presence of mind, so 'e didn't. 'E guv the hekka-driver five rupees for 'is noble hassistance, an' 'e said 'e would see to us after 'e 'ad spoken to the Kernul. For we was a honor to the Regi-ment, we was."

"An' we three," said Mulvaney, with a seraphic smile, "have dhrawn the par-ti-cu-lar attinshin av Bobs Baha-
dur more than wanst. But he's a rale good little man is Bobs. Go on, Orth'ris, me son."

"Then we leaves 'im at the Kernul's 'ouse, werry sick, an' we cuts over to B Comp'ny barrick an' we sez we 'ave saved Benira from a bloody doom, an' the chances was agin there bein' p'raid on Thursday. About ten minutes later come three envelicks, one for each of us. S'elp me Bob, if the old bloke 'adn't guv us a fiver apiece—sixty-four dibs in the bazaar. On Thursday 'e was in 'orspital recoverin' from 's sanguinary encounter with a gang of Pathans, an' B Comp'ny was drinkin' 'emselves inter clink by squads. So there never was no Thursday p'raid. But the Kernul, when 'e 'eard of our galliant conduct, 'e sez: —'Hi know there's been some devilry somewheres,' sez 'e, 'but hi can't bring it 'ome to you three.'"

"An' my privit imprisshin is," said Mulvaney, getting off the bar and turning his glass upside down, "that, av they had known they wudn't have brought ut home. 'Tis flyin' in the face, firstly av Nature, second, av the Rig'lations, an' third, the will av Terence Mulvaney, to hold p'rades av Thursdays."

"Good, ma son!" said Learoyd; "but young mon, what's t' notebook for?"

"Let be," said Mulvaney; "this time next month we're in the Sherapis. 'Tis immortal fame the gentleman's goin' to give us. But kape it dhark till we're out av the range av me little frind Bobs Bahadur."

And I have obeyed Mulvaney's order.
THE GOD FROM THE MACHINE.

Hit a man an' help a woman, an' ye can't be far wrong any ways.
—Maxims of Private Mulvaney.

The Inexpressibles gave a ball. They borrowed a seven-pounder from the Gunners, and wreathed it with laurels, and made the dancing-floor plate-glass, and provided a supper, the like of which had never been eaten before, and set two sentries at the door of the room to hold the trays and program cards. My friend, Private Mulvaney, was one of the sentries, because he was the tallest man in the regiment. When the dance was fairly started the sentries were released, and Private Mulvaney fled to curry favor with the mess sergeant in charge of the supper. Whether the mess sergeant gave or Mulvaney took, I cannot say. All that I am certain of is that, at supper-time, I found Mulvaney with Private Ortheris, two thirds of a ham, a loaf of bread, half a paté de foie gras, and two magnums of champagne, sitting on the roof of my carriage. As I came up I heard him saying:

“Praise be a danst doesn’t come as often as ord’ly-room, or, by this an’ that, Orth’ris, me son, I wud be the dishgrace av the rig’mint instid av the brightest jool in uts crown.”

“Hand the colonel’s pet noosince,” said Ortheris, who was a Londoner. “But wot makes you curse your rations? This ’ere fizzy stuff’s good enough.”

“Stuff, ye oncivilized pagin! ’Tis champagne we’re dhrinkin’ now. ’Tisn’t that I am set ag’in. ’Tis the quare stuff wid the little bits av black leather in it. I misdoubt I will be distressin’ly sick wid it in the mornin’. Fwhat is ut?”
“Goose liver,” I said, climbing on the top of the carriage, for I knew that it was better to sit out with Mulvaney than to dance many dances.

“Goose liver, is ut?” said Mulvaney. “Faith, I’m thinkin’ thim that makes it wud do betther to cut up the colonel. He carries a power av liver undher his right arrum whin the days are warm an’ the nights chill. He wud give thim tons an’ tons av liver. ’Tis he sez so. ‘I’m all liver to-day,’ sez he; an’ wid that he ordhers me ten days C. B. for as moild a dhrink as iver a good sodger tuk betune his teeth.”

“That was when ’e wanted for to wash ’isself in the fort ditch,” Ortheris explained. “Said there was too much beer in the barrack water-butts for a God-fearing man. You was lucky in gittin’ orf with wot you did, Mulvaney.”

“You say so? Now I’m pershuaded I was cruel hard trated, seein’ fwhat I’ve done for the likes av him in the days whin my eyes were wider opin than they are now. Man alive, for the colonel to whip me on the peg in that way! Me that have saved the repitation av a ten times better man than him! ’Twas ne-farious, an’ that manes a power av evil!”

“Never mind the nefariousness,” I said. “Whose reputation did you save?”

“More’s the pity, ’twasn’t my own, but I tuk more trouble wid ut than av ut was. ’Twas just my way, messin’ wid fwhat was no business av mine. Hear now!” He settled himself at ease on the top of the carriage. “I’ll tell you all about ut. Av coorse I will name no names, for there’s wan that’s an orf’cer’s lady now, that was in ut, and no more will I name places, for a man is thracked by a place.”
"Eyah!" said Ortheris, lazily, "but this is a mixed story wot's comin'."

"Wanst upon a time, as the childer-books say, I was a recruity."

"Was you, though?" said Ortheris; "now that's extrordinary!"

"Orth'ris," said Mulvaney, "av you opin thim lips av yours again, I will, savin' your presince, sorr, take you by the slack av your trousers an' heave you."

"I'm mum," said Ortheris. "Wot 'appened when you was a recruity?"

"I was a betther recruity than you iver was or will be, but that's neither here nor there. Thin I became a man, an' the divil of a man I was fifteen years ago. They called me Buck Mulvaney in thim days, an', begad, I tuk a woman's eye. I did that! Ortheris, ye scrub, fwhat are ye sniggerin' at? Do you misdoubt me?"

"Devil a doubt!" said Ortheris; "but I've 'eard summat like that before."

Mulvaney dismissed the impertinence with a lofty wave of his hand and continued:

"An' the orf'cers av the rig'mint I was in in thim days was orf'cers—gran' men, wid a manner on 'em, an' a way wid 'em such as is not made these days—all but wan—wan o' the capt'ns. A bad dhrill, a wake voice, an' a limp leg—thim three things are the signs av a bad man. You bear that in your hid, Orth'ris, me son.

"An' the colonel av the rig'mint had a daughter—wan av thim lamb-like, bleatin', pick-me-up-an'-carry-me-or-I'll-die gurls such as was made for the natural prey av men like the capt'n who was iverlastin' payin' coort to her, though the colonel he said time an' over, 'Kape out av the brute's way, my dear.' But he niver had the heart
for to send her away from the throuble, bein' as he was a widower, an' she their wan child."

"Stop a minute, Mulvaney," said I; "how in the world did you come to know these things?"

"How did I come?" said Mulvaney, with a scornful grunt; "becase I'm turned durin' the quane's pleasure to a lump av wood, lookin' out straight forinst me, wid a—a—candelabrum in my hand, for you to pick your cards out av, must I not see nor feel? Av coorse I du! Up my back, an' in my boots, an' in the short hair av the neck—that's where I kape my eyes whin I'm on duty an' the reg'lar wans are fixed. Know! Take my word for it, sorr, ivrything an' a great dale more is known in a rig'mint; or fwhat wud be the use av a mess sargint, or a sargint's wife doin' wet-nurse to the major's baby? To reshume. He was a bad dhrill, was this capt'n—a rotten bad dhrill—an' whin first I ran me eye over him, I sez to myself: 'My militia bantam!' I sez, 'my cock av a Gosport dunghill'—'twas from Portsmouth he came to us—'there's combs to be cut,' sez I, 'an' by the grace av God, 'tis Terence Mulvaney will cut thim.'

"So he wint menowderin', and minanderin', an' blandandering roun' an' about the colonel's daughter, an' she, poor innocint, lookin' at him like a comm'ssariat bullock looks at the comp'ny cook. He'd a dirty little scrub av a black mustache, an' he twisted an' turned ivry wurrd he used as av he found ut too sweet for to spit out. Eyah! He was a tricky man an' a liar by natur'. Some are born so. He was wan. I knew he was over his belt in money borrowed from natives; besides a lot av other mathers which, in regard to your presince, sorr, I will oblitherate. A little av fwhat I knew, the colonel knew, for he wud have none av him, an' that, I'm thinkin', by fwhat happened afterwards, the capt'n knew.
"Wan day, bein' mortal idle, or they wud never ha' thried ut, the rig'mint gave amshure theatricals—orf'cers an' orf'cers' ladies. You've seen the likes time an' ag'in, sorr, an' poor fun 'tis for them that sit in the back row an' stamp wid their boots for the honor av the rig'mint. I was told off for to shif' the scenes, haulin' up this an' draggin' down that. Light work ut was, wid lashins av beer and the gurl that dhressed the orf'cers' ladies.... but she died in Aggra twelve years gone, an' my tongue's gettin' the betther av me. They was actin' a play thing called 'Sweethearts,' which you may ha' heard av, an' the colonel's daughter she was a lady's-maid. The capt'n was a boy called Broom—Spread Broom was his name in the play. Thin I saw—ut come out in the actin'—fwhat I niver saw before, an' that was that he was no gentleman. They was too much together, thin two, a-whisperin' behind the scenes I shifted, an' some av what they said I heard; for I was death—blue death an' ivy—on the comb-cuttin'. He was iverlastin'ly oppressing her to fall in wid some sneakin' schame av his, an' she was thryin' to stand out against him, but not as though she was set in her will. I wonder now in thim days that my ears did not grow a yard on me head wid list'nin'. But I looked straight forinst me, an' hauled up this an' dragged down that, such as was my duty, an' the orf'cers' ladies sez one to another, thinkin' I was out av listen-reach: 'Fwhat an obligin' young man is this Corp'ril Mulvaney!' I was a corp'ril then. I was rejuced afterward, but, no matther, I was a corp'ril wanst. "Well, this 'Sweethearts' business wint on like most amshure theatricals, an' barrin' fwhat I suspicioned, 'twasn't till the dhress-rehearsal that I saw for certain that thim two—he the blackguard, an' she no wiser than she should ha' been—had put up an evasion."
"A what?" said I.

"E-vasion! Fwhat you lorruds an' ladies call an elopement. E-vasion I calls it, bekaze, exceptin' whin 'tis right an' natural an' proper, 'tis wrong an' dhirty to steal a man's wan child not knowin' her own mind. There was a sargint in the comm'ssariat who set my face upon e-vasions. I'll tell you about that——"

"Stick to the bloomin' captains, Mulvaney," said Ortheris; "comm'ssariat sargints is low."

Mulvaney accepted the emendation and went on:

"Now, I knew that the colonel was no fool, any more than me, for I was hild the smartest man in the rig'mint, an' the colonel was the best orf'cer commandin' in Asia; so fwhat he said an' I said was a mortal truth. We knew that the capt'n was bad, but, for reasons which I have already oblitherated, I knew more than me colonel. I wud ha' rolled out his face wid the butt av me gun before permittin' av him to steal the gurl. Saints knew av he wud ha' married her, and av he didn't she would be in great tormint, an' the divil av what you, sorr, call a 'scandal.' But I never sthruck, niver raised me hand on my shuperior orf'cer; and that was a merricle now I come to considher it."

"Mulvaney, the dawn's risin'," said Ortheris, "an' we're no nearer 'ome than we was at the beginnin'. Lend me your pouch. Mine's all dust."

Mulvaney pitched his pouch across, and he filled his pipe afresh.

"So the dhress-rehearsal came to an end, an', bekaze I was curious, I stayed behind whin the scene-shiftin' was ended, an' I shud ha' been in barricks, lyin' as flat as a toad under a painted cottage thing. They was talkin' in whispers, an' she was shiverin' an' gaspin' like a fresh-hukked fish. 'Are you sure you've got the hang av the
maneuvers?" sez he, or wurds to that effec,' as the coort-martial sez. 'Sure as death,' sez she, 'but I misdoubt 'tis cruel hard on my father.' 'Damn your father,' sez he, or any ways 'twas fwhat he thought, 'the arrangement is as clear as mud. Jungi will drive the carri'ge afther all's over, an' you come to the station, cool an' aisy, in time for the two-o'clock thrain, where I'll be wid your kit.' 'Faith,' thinks I to myself, 'thin there's a ayah in the business tu!' "A powerful bad thing is a ayah. Don't you niver have any thruck wid wan. Thin he began sootherin' her, an' all the orf'cers an' orf'cers' ladies left, an' they put out the lights. To explain the theory av the flight, as they say at muskthry, you must understand that afther this 'Sweethearts'" nonsinse was ended, there was another little bit av a play called 'Couples'—some kind av couple or another. The gurl was actin' in this, but not the man. I suspicioned he'd go to the station wid the gurl's kit at the end av the first piece. 'Twas the kit that flustered me, for I knew for a capt'n to go trapesing about the im- pire wid the Lord knew what av a truso on his arrum was nefarious, an' wud be worse than easin' the flag; so far as the talk atherward wint."

"'Old on, Mulvaney. Wot's truso?" said Ortheris.

"You're an oncivilized man, me son. Whin a gurl's married, all her kit an' 'coutrements are truso, which manes weddin'-portion. An' 'tis the same whin she's runnin' away, even wid the biggest blackguard on the arrmy list.

"So I made my plan av campaign. The colonel's house was a good two miles away. 'Dennis,' sez I to my color-sargint, 'av you love me lend me your kyart, for me heart is bruk an' me feet is sore wid trampin' to and from this foolishness at the Gaff.' An' Dennis lent ut, wid a
rampin', stampin' red stallion in the shafts. Whin they was all settled down to their 'Sweethearts' for the first scene, which was a long wan, I slips outside and into the kyart. Mother av Hivin! but I made that horse walk, an' we came into the colonel's compound as the divil wint through Athlone—in standin' leps. There was no one there except the servants, an' I wint round to the back an' found the girl's ayah.

"'Ye black brazen Jezebel,' sez I, 'sellin' your mas- ther's honor for five rupees—pack up all the Miss Sahib's kit an' look slippy! Capt'n Sahib's order,' sez I; 'going to the station we are,' I sez, an' wid that I laid my finger to my nose an' looked the schamin' sinner I was.

"'Bote acchy,' says she; so I knew she was in the business, an' I piled up all the sweet talk I'd iver learned in the bazaars on to this she-bullock, an' prayed av her to put all the quick she knew into the thing. While she packed, I stud outside an' sweated, for I was wanted for to shif' the second scene. I tell you, a young gurl's e-vasion manes as much baggage as a rig'mint on the line av march! 'Saints help Dennis's springs,' thinks I, as I bundled the stuff into the thrap, 'for I'll have no mercy!'

"'I'm comin' too,' says the ayah.

"'No, you don't,' sez I, 'later—pechy! You baito where you are. I'll pechy come an' bring you sart, along with me, you maraudin'’—niver mind fwhat I called her.

"Thin I wint for the Gaff, an' by the special ordher av Providence, for I was doin' a good work you will onder- sthand, Dennis's springs hild toight. 'Now, whin the capt'n goes for that kit,' thinks I, 'he'll be throubled.' At the end av 'Sweethearts' off the capt'n runs in his kyart to the colonel's house, an' I sits down on the steps and laughs. Wanst an' again I slipped in to see how the little piece was goin', an' whin ut was near endin' I
stepped out all among the carriages an’ sings out very softly, ‘Jungi!’ Wid that a carr’ge began to move, an’ I waved to the dhriver. ‘Hitherao!’ sez I, and he hitheraoed till I judged he was at proper distance, an’ thin I tuk him, fair an’ square betune the eyes, all I knew for good or bad, an’ he dhropped wid a guggle like the canteen beer-engine whin ut’s runnin’ low. Thin I ran to the kyart an’ tuk out all the kit an’ piled it into the carri’ge, the sweat runnin’ down my face in dhrops. ‘Go home,’ sez I to the sais; ‘you’ll find a man close here. Very sick he is. Take him away, an’ av you iver say wan wurr’d about fwhat you’ve dekkoed, I’ll marrow you till your own wife won’t sumjao who your are!’ Thin I heard the stampin’ av feet at the ind av the play, an’ I ran in to let down the curtain. Whin they all came out the gurl thried to hide herself behind wan av the pillars, an’ sez ‘Jungi’ in a voice that wudn’t ha’ scared a hare. I run over to Jungi’s carri’ge an’ tuk up the lousy old horse-blanket on the box, wrapped my head an’ the rest av me in ut, an’ dhrove up to where she was.

“‘Miss Sahib,’ sez I; ‘going to the station. Captain Sahib’s order!’ an’ widout a sign she jumped in all among her own kit.

“I laid to an’ dhruv lik steam to the colonel’s house before the colonel was there, an’ she screamed an’ I thought she was goin’ off. Out comes the ayah, saying all sorts av things about the capt’n havin’ come for the kit an’ gone to the station.

“‘Take out the luggage, you divil,’ sez I, ‘or I’ll mur-ther you!’

“The lights av the thraps people comin’ from the Gaff was showin’ acrost the parade-ground, an’ by this an’ that, the way thim two women worked at the bundles an’ thrunks was a caution! I was dyin’ to help, but, seein’ I
didn't want to be known, I sat wid the blanket roun' me an' coughed an thanked the saints there was no moon that night.

"Whin all was in the house again, I niver asked for bukshish but dhruv tremenjus in the opp'site way from the other carri'ge an' put out my lights. Presintly, I saw a naygur man wallowin' in the road. I slipped down before I got to him, for I suspicioned Providence was wid me all through that night. 'Twas Jungi, his nose smashed in flat, all dumb sick as you please. Dennis's man must have tilted him out av the thrap. Whin he came to, 'Hutt!' sez I, but he began to howl.

"You black lump av dirt,' I sez, 'is this the way you dhrive your gharri? That tikka has been owin' an' fere-owin' all over the bloomin' country this whole bloomin' night, an' you as mut-walla as Davey's sow. Get up, you hog!' sez I, louder, for I heard the wheels av a thrap in the dark; 'get up an' light your lamps, or you'll be run into!' This was on the road to the railway station.

"'Fwhat the divil's this?' sez the capt'n's voice in the dhark, an' I could judge he was in a lather av rage.

"'Gharri dhriver here, dhrunk, sorr,' sez I; 'I've found his gharri sthayin' about cantonmints, an' now I've found him.'

"'Oh!' sez the capt'n; 'fwhat's his name?' I stooped down an' pretended to listen.

"'He sez his name's Jungi, sorr,' sez I.

"'Hould my harse,' sez the capt'n to his man, an' wid that he gets down wid the whip an' lays into Jungi, just mad wid rage an' swearin' like the scut he was.

"I thought, after awhile, he wud kill the man, so I sez, 'Stop, sir, or you'll murdher him!' That dhrew all his fire on me, an' he cursed me into blazes, an' out again. I stud to attenshin an' saluted: 'Sorr,' sez I, 'av ivry
man in this wurruld had his rights, I’m thinkin’ that more than wan wud be beaten to a shakin’ jelly for this night’s work—that never came off at all, sorr, as you see?’ ‘Now,’ thinks I to myself, ‘Terence Mulvaney, you’ve cut your own throat, for he’ll strike, an’ you’ll knock him down for the good av his sowl an’ your own iverlastin’ dishgrace!’

“But the capt’n never said a single wurrd. He choked where he stud, an’ thin he wint into his thrap widout say- in’ good-night, an’ I wint back to barricks.”

“And then?” said Ortheris and I together.

“That was all,” said Mulvaney; “niver another wurrd did I hear av the whole thing. All I know was that there was no e-vasion, an’ that was fwhat I wanted. Now, I put ut to you, sorr, is ten days’ C. B. a fit an’ a proper tratement for a man who has behaved as me?”

“Well, any’ow,” said Ortheris, “’tweren’t this ’ere colonel’s daughter, an’ you was blazin’ copped when you tried to wash in the fort ditch.”

“That,” said Mulvaney, finishing the champagne, “is a shuparfluous an’ impert’nint observation.”
PRIVATE LEAROYD'S STORY.

And he told a tale.—Chronicles of Guatama Buddha.

Far from the haunts of company officers who insist upon kit-inspections, far from keen-nosed sergeants who sniff the pipe stuffed into the bedding-roll, two miles from the tumult of the barracks, lies the Trap. It is an old well, shadowed by a twisted pipal-tree and fenced with high grass. Here, in the years gone by, did Private Ortheris establish his depot and menagerie for such possessions, living and dead, as could not safely be introduced to the barrack-room. Here were gathered Houdin pullets, and fox-terriers of undoubted pedigree and more than doubtful ownership, for Ortheris was an inveterate poacher and pre-eminent among a regiment of neat-handed dog-stealers.

Never again will the long lazy evenings return wherein Ortheris, whistling softly, moved surgeon-wise among the captives of his craft at the bottom of the well; when Learoyd sat in the niche, giving sage counsel on the management of "tykes," and Mulvaney, from the crook of the overhanging pipal, waved his enormous boots in benediction above our heads, delighting us with tales of love and war, and strange experiences of cities and men.

Ortheris—landed at last in the "little stuff bird-shop" for which your soul longed; Learoyd—back again in the smoky, stone-ribbed north, amid the clang of the Bradford looms; Mulvaney—grizzled, tender, and very wise Ulysses, sweltering on the earth-work of a Central India line—judge if I have forgotten old days in the Trap!
Orth'ris as allus thinks he knaws more than other foaks, said she wasn't a real laady, but nobbyt a Hewrasian. I don't gainsay as her culler was a bit doosky like. But she was a laady. Why, she rode iv a carriage, an' good 'osses, too, an' her 'air was that oiled as you could see your faice in it, an' she wore di'mond rings an' a goold chain, an' silk an' satin dresses as mun 'a' cost a deal, for it isn't a cheap shop as keeps enough o' one pattern to fit a figure like hers. Her name was Mrs. De Sussa, an' t' waay I coom to be acquainted wi' her was along of our colonel's laady's dog Rip.

I've seen a vast o' dogs, but Rip was t' prettiest picter of a cliver fox-tarrier 'at iver I set eyes on. He could do owt you like but speeak, an' t' colonel's laady set more store by him than if he had been a Christian. She hed bairns of her awn, but they was i' England, and Rip seemed to get all t' coodlin' an' pettin' as belonged to a bairn by good right.

But Rip were a bit on a rover, an' hed a habit o' breakin' out o' barricks like, and trottin' round t' plaice as if he were t' cantonment magistrate coom round inspectin'. The colonel leathers him once or twice, but Rip didn't care, an' kept on gooin' his rounds, wi' his taail a-waggin' as if he were flag-signalin' to t' world at large 'at he was "gettin' on nicely, thank yo', and how's yo'sen?" An' then t' colonel, as was noa sort of a hand wi' a dog, tees himoop. A real clipper of a dog, an' it's noa wonder yon laady, Mrs. De Sussa, should tek a fancy tiv him. Theer's one of t' Ten Commandments says yo' maun't cuvet your neebor's ox nor his jackass, but it doesn't say nowt about his tarrier-dogs, an' happen that's t' reason why Mrs. De Sussa cuveted Rip, thou' she went to church reg'lar along wi' her husband, who was so mich darker 'at if he hedn't such a good coaat tiv his back yo' might
ha' called him a black man, and nut tell a lee nawther. They said he addled his brass i' jute, an' he'd a rare lot on it.

Well, you seen, when they teed Rip up, t' poor awd lad didn't enjoy very good 'elth. So t' colonel's laady sends for me as 'ad a naame for bein' knowledgeable about a dog, an' axes what's ailin' wi' him.

"Why," says I, "he's getten t' mopes, an' what he wants is his libbaty an' coompany like t' rest on us; wal happen a rat or two 'ud liven him oop. It's low, mum," says I, "is rats, but it's t' nature of a dog; an' soa's cuttin' round an' meetin' another dog or two an' passin' t' time o' day, an' hevvin' a bit of a turn-up wi' him like a Christian."

So she says her dog maunt niver fight an' noa Christians iver fought.

"Then what's a soldier for?" says I; an' I explains to her t' contrairy qualities of a dog, 'at, when yo' coom to think on't, is one o' t' curusest things as is. For they larn to behave theirsens like gentlemen born, fit for t' fost o' coompany—they tell me t' widdy herself is fond of a good dog and knaws one when she sees it as well as onnybody: then on t' other hand a-tewin' round after cats an' gettin' mixed oop i' all manner o' blackguardly street rows, an' killin' rats, an' fightin' like divils.

T' colonel's laady says: "Well, Learoyd, I doan't agree wi' you, but you're right in a way o' speakin', an' I should like yo' to tek Rip out a-walkin' wi' you sometimes; but yo' maunt let him fight, nor chase cats, nor do nowt 'orrid:" an' them was her very wo'ds.

Soa Rip an' me goes out a-walkin' o' evenin's, he bein' a dog as did credit tiv a man, an' I catches a lot o' rats an' we hed a bit of a match on in an awd dry swimmin'-bath at back o' t' cantonments, an' it was none so long afore he was as bright as a button again. He hed a way
o' flyin' at them big yaller pariah dogs as if he was a harrow offan a bow, an' though his weight were nowt, he tuk 'em so suddint-like they rolled over like skittles in a halley, an' when they coot he stretched after 'em as if he were rabbit-runnin'. Saame with cats when he cud get t' cat agaate o' runnin'.

One evenin', him an' me was trespassin' ovver a compound wall after one of them mongooses 'at he'd started, an' we was busy grubbin' round a prickle-bush, an' when we looks up there was Mrs. De Sussa wi' a parasel ovver her shoulder, a-watchin' us. "Oh, my!" she sings out; "there's that lovelee dog! Would he let me stroke him, Mister Soldier?"

"Ay, he would, mum," sez I, "for he's fond o' laady's coompany. Coom here, Rip, an' speeak to this kind laady." An' Rip, seein' 'at t' moongoose hed getten clean awaay, cooms up like t' gentleman he was, nivver a hauport shy nor okkord.

"Oh, you beautiful—you prettee dog!" she says, clippin' an' chantin' her speech in a way them sooart has o' their awn; "I would like a dog like you. You are so verree lovelee—so awfulee prettee," an' all thot sort o' talk, 'at a dog o' sense mebbe thinks nowt on, tho' he bides it by reason o' his breedin'.

An' then I meks him joomp ovver my swagger-cane, an' shek hands, an' beg, an' lie dead, an' a lot o' them tricks as laadies teaches dogs, though I doan't hand with it mysen, for it's makin' a fool o' a good dog to do such like.

An' at lung length it cooms out 'at she'd been thravin' sheep's eyes, as t' sayin' is, at Rip for many a day. Yo' see, her childer was grown up, an' she'd nowt mich to do, an' were allus fond of a dog. Soa she axes me if I'd tek somethin' to dhrink. An' we goes into t' drawn-room
wheer her 'usband was a-settin'. They meks a gurt fuss ovver t' dog an' I has a bottle o' aale an' he gave me a handful o' cigars.

Soa I coomed away, but t' awd lass sings out: "Oh, Mister Soldier! please coom again and bring that prettee dog."

I didn't let on to t' colonel's laady about Mrs. De Sussa, and Rip, he says nowt nawther; an' I gooes again, an' ivry time there was a good dhrink an' a handful o' good smooaks. An' I telled t' awd lass a heeap more about Rip than I'd ever heaired; how he tuk t' fost prize at Lunnnon dog-show and cost thotty-three pounds fower shillin' from t' man as bred him; 'at his own brother was t' proputty o' t' Prince o' Wailes, an' 'at he had a pedigree as long as a dook's. An' she lapped it all oop an' were niver tired o' admirin' him. But when t' awd lass took to givin' me money an' I seed 'at she were gettin' fair fond about t' dog, I began to suspicion summat. Onnybody may give a soldier t' price of a pint in a friendly way an' theer's no 'arm done, but when it cooms to five rupees slipt into your hand, sly like, why, it's what t' 'lectioneerin' fellows calls bribery an' corruption. Specially when Mrs. De Sussa threwed hints how t' cold weather would soon be ovver an' she was goin' to Munsooree Pahar, an' we was goin' to Rawalpindi, an' she would niver see Rip any more onless somebody she knowed on would be kind tiv her.

Soa I tells Mulvaney an' Ortheris all t' taale thro', beginnin' to end.

"'Tis larceny that wicked ould laady manes," says t' Irishman, "'tis felony she is sejuicin' ye into, my friend Learoyd, but I'll purfect your innocince. I'll save ye from the wicked wiles av that wealthy ould woman, an' I'll go wid ye this evenin' and spake to her the wurrds av truth and honesty. But Jock," says he, waggin' his
heead, "'twas not like ye to kape all that good dhrink an' thim fine cigars to yerself, while Orth'ris here an' me have been prowlin' round with throats as dry as lime-kilns, and nothin' to smoke but canteen plug. 'Twas a dhirty thrick to play on a comrade, for why should you, Learoyd, be balancin' yourself on the butt av a satin chair, as if Terence Mulvaney was not the aquil av anybody who thrades in jute!"

"Let alone me," sticks in Orth'ris; "but that's like life. Them wot's really fitted to decorate society get no show, while a blunderin' Yorkshireman like you——"

"Nay," says I, "it's none o' t' blunderin' Yorkshireman she wants, it's Rip. He's t' gentleman this journey."

Soa t' next day, Mulvaney an' Rip an' me goes to Mrs. De Sussa's, an' t' Irishman bein' a strainger she wor a bit shy at fost. But you've heead Mulvaney talk, an' yo' may believe as he fairly bewitched t' awd lass wal she let out 'at she wanted to tek Rip away wi' her to Munsooree Pahar. Then Mulvaney changes his tune an' axes her solemn-like if she'd thought o' t' consequences o' gettin' two poor but honest soldiers sent t' Andamning Islands. Mrs. De Sussa began to cry, so Mulvaney turns round oppen t' other tack and smooths her down, allowin' 'at Rip ud be a vast better off in t' hills than down i' Bengal, and 'twas a pity he shouldn't go wheer he was so well be-liked. And soa he went on, backin' an' fillin' an' workin' up t' awd lass wal she felt as if her life warn't worth nowt if she didn't hev t' dog.

Then all of a suddint he says: "But ye shall have him, marm, for I've a feelin' heart, not like this cowld-blooded Yorkshireman; but 'twill cost ye not a penny less than three hundher rupees."

"Don't you's believe him, mum," says I; "t' colonel's laady wouldn't tek five hundred for him."
"Who said she would?" says Mulvaney; "it's not buyin' him I mane, but for the sake o' this kind, good laady, I'll do what I never dreamt to do in my life. I'll stale him!"

"Don't say steal," says Mrs. De Sussa; "he shall have the happiest home. Dogs often get lost, you know, and then they stray, an' he likes me, and I like him as I niver liked a dog yet, an' I must hev him. If I got him at t' last minute I could carry him off to Munsooree Pahar and nobody would niver knaw."

Now an' again Mulvaney looked acrost at me, an' though I could mak nowt o' what he was after, I conclud-ed to take his leead.

"Well, mum," I says, "I never thowt to coom down to dog-steealin', but if my comrade sees how it could be done to oblige a laady like yo'sen, I'm nut t' man to hod back, tho' it's a bad business, I'm thinkin', an' three hun-dred rupees is a poor set-off again t' chance of them Damning Islands as Mulvaney talks on."

"I'll mek it three fifty," says Mrs. De Sussa; "only let me hev t' dog!"

So we let her persuade us, an' she teks Rip's measure theer an' then, an' sent to Hamilton's to order a silver collar again t' time when he was to be her awn, which was to be t' day she set off for Munsooree Pahar.

"Sitha, Mulvaney," says I, when we was outside, "you're niver goin' to let her hev Rip!"

"An' would ye disappoint a poor ould woman?" says he; "she shall have a Rip."

"An' wheer's he to come through?" says I.

"Learoyd, my man," he sings out, "you're a pretty man av your inches an' a good comrade, but your head is made av duff. Isn't our friend Orth'ris a taxidermist, an' a rale artist wid his nimble white fingers! An' what's a
taxidermist but a man who can thrate skins? Do ye mind
the white dog that belongs to the canteen sargint, bad
cess to him—he that’s lost half his time an’ snarlin’ the
rest? He shall be lost for good now; an’ do ye mind
that he’s the very spit in shape an’ size av the colonel’s,
barrin’ that his tail is an inch too long, an’ he has none
av the color that diversifies the rale Rip, and his timper
is that av his masther an’ worse. But fwhat is an inch on
a dog’s tail? An’ fwhat to a professional like Orth’ris is
a few ring-straked shpots av black, brown, an’ white?
Nothin’ at all, at all.”

Then we meets Orth’ris, an’ that little man, bein’ sharp
as a needle, seed his way through t’ business in a minute.
An’ he went to work a-practisin’ ‘air-dyes the very next
day, beginnin’ on some white rabbits he had, an’ then he
drored all Rip’s markin’s on t’ back of a white com-
missariat bullock, so as to get his ’and in an’ be sure of
his colors; shadin’ off brown into black as nateral as life.
If Rip had a fault it was too mich markin’, but it was
straingely reg’lar, an’ Orth’ris settled himself to make a
fost-rate job on it when he got haud o’ t’ canteen sargint’s
dog. Theer niver was sich a dog at thot for bad temper,
an’ it did nut get no better when his tail had to be fettled
an inch an’ a half shorter. But they may talk o’ theer
Royal Academies as they like, I niver seed a bit o’ ani-
mal paintin’ to beat t’ copy as Orth’ris made of Rip’s
marks, wal t’ picter itself was snarlin’ all t’ time an’ tryin’
to get at Rip standin’ theer to be copied as good as goold.

Orth’ris allus hed as mich conceit on himsen as would
lift a balloon, an’ he wor so pleased wi’ his sham Rip he
wor for tekking him to Mrs. De Sussa before she went
away. But Mulvaney an’ me stopped thot, knowin’
Orth’ris’s work, though niver so cliver, was nobbut skin-
deep. An’ at last Mrs. De Sussa fixed t’ day for startin’
to Munsooree Pahar. We was to tek Rip to t' stayshun i' a basket an' hand him ovver just when they was ready to start, an' then she'd give us t' brass—as was agreed upon.

'An' my wo'd! It were high time she were off, for them 'air-dyes upon t' cur's back took a vast of paintin' to keep t' reet culler, tho' Orth'ris spent a matter of seven rupees six annas i' t' best drooggist shops i' Calcutta.

An' t' canteen sergeant was lookin' for 'is dog every-wheer; an', wi' bein' tied up, t' beast's timper got waur nor ever.

It wor i' t' evenin' when t' train started thro' Howrah, an' we 'elped Mrs. De Sussa wi' about sixty boxes, an' then we gave her t' basket. Orth'ris, for pride av his work, axed us to let him coom along wi' us, an' he couldn't help liftin' t' lid an' showin' t' cur as he lay coiled oop.

"Oh!" says t' awd lass; "the beautee! How sweet he looks!" An' just then t' beauty snarled an' showed his teeth, so Mulvaney shuts down t' lid and says: "Ye'll be careful, marm, whin you tek him out. He's disaccustomed to traveling by t' railway, an' he'll be sure to want his rale mistress an' his friend Learoyd, so ye'll make allowance for his feelings at fost."

She would do all thot an' more for the dear, good Rip, an' she would nut oppen t' basket till they were miles away, for fear anybody should recognize him, an' we were real good and kind soldier-men, we were, an' she honds me a bundle o' notes, an' then cooms up a few of her relations an' friends to say good-bye—not more than seventy-five there wasn't—an' we cuts away.

What coom to t' three hundred and fifty rupees? Thot's what I can scarcelins tell you, but we melted it. It was share an' share alike, for Mulvaney said: "If Learoyd got hold of Mrs. De Sussa first, sure 'twas I that remim-
bered the sargint's dog just in the nick av time, an' Orth'-ris was the artist av Janius that made a work av art out av that ugly piece av ill-nature. Yet, by way av a thank-offerin' that I was not led into felony by that wicked ould woman, I'll send a thrifle to Father Victor for the poor people he's always beggin' for."

But me an' Orth'ris, he bein' cockney an' I bein' pretty far north, did nut see it i' t' saame way. We'd getten t' brass, an' we meanted to keep it. An' soa we did—for a short time.

Noa, noa, we niver heead a wod more o' t' awd lass. Our rig'mint went to Pindi, an' t' canteen sargint he got himself another tyke insteead o' t' one 'at got lost so reg'lar, an' was lost for good at last.
THE BIG DRUNK DRAFT.

We're goin' 'ome, we're goin' 'ome—
    Our ship is at the shore,
An' you mus' pack your 'aversack,
    For we won't come back no more.
Ho, don't you grieve for me,
    My lovely Mary Ann,
For I'll marry you yet on a fourp'ny bit,
    As a time-expired ma-a-an!
—Barrack-room Ballad.

An awful thing has happened! My friend, Private Mulvaney, who went home in the "Serapis," time-expired, not very long ago, has come back to India as a civilian! It was all Dinah Shadd's fault. She could not stand the poky little lodgings, and she missed her servant Abdullah more than words can tell. The fact was that the Mulvaney's had been out here too long, and had lost touch of England.

Mulvaney knew a contractor on one of the new Central India lines, and wrote to him for some sort of work. The contractor said that if Mulvaney could pay the passage he would give him command of a gang of coolies for old sake's sake. The pay was eighty-five rupees a month, and Dinah Shadd said that if Terence did not accept she would make his life a "basted purgathory." Therefore the Mulvaney's came out as "civilians," which was a great and terrible fall; though Mulvaney tried to disguise it, by saying that he was "ker'nel on the railway line, an' a consequinshal man."

He wrote me an invitation, on a tool-indent form, to visit him; and I came down to the funny little "construc-
tion" bungalow at the side of the line. Dinah Shadd had planted pease about and about, and nature had spread all manner of green stuff round the place. There was no change in Mulvaney except the change of raiment, which was deplorable, but could not be helped. He was standing upon his trolly, haranguing a gang-man, and his shoulders were as well drilled, and his big, thick chin was as clean-shaven as ever.

"I'm a civilian, now," said Mulvaney. "Cud you tell that I was iver a martial man? Don't answer, sorr, ay you're strainin' betune a complimint an' a lie. There's no houldin' Dinah Shadd now she got a house av her own. Go inside, an' dhrink tay out av chiny in the drrrrrawin'-room, an' thin we'll dhrink like Christians under the tree here. Scut, ye naygur-folk! There's a sahib come to call on me, an' that's more than he'll iver do for you onless you run! Get out, a' go on pilin' up the earth, quick, till sundown."

When we three were comfortably settled under the big sisham in front of the bungalow, and the first rush of questions and answers about Privates Ortheris and Learyd and old times and places had died away, Mulvaney said, reflectively: "Glory be there's no p'rade to-morrow, an' no Hun-headed corp'ril-bhoy to give you his lip. An' yit I don't know. 'Tis harrd to be something ye niver were an' niver meant to be, an' all the ould days shut up along wid your papers. Eyah! I'm growin' rusty, an' 'tis the will av God that a man mustn't serve his quane for time an' all."

He helped himself to a fresh peg, and sighed furiously. "Let your beard grow, Mulvaney," said I, "and then you won't be troubled with those notions. You'll be a real civilian."

Dinah Shadd had confided to me in the drawing-room
her desire to coax Mulvaney into letting his beard grow. “’Twas so civilian-like,” said poor Dinah, who hated her husband’s hankering for his old life.

“Dinah Shadd, you’re a dishgrace to an honust, clane-scraped man!” said Mulvaney, without replying to me. “Grow a beard on your own chin, darlint, and lave my razors alone. They’re all that stand betune me and dis-ris-pect-ability. Av I didn’t shave, I wud be torminted wid an outrajis thurrst; for there’s nothin’ so dhryin’ to the throat as a big billy-goat beard waggin’ undher the chin. Ye wudn’t have me dhrink always, Dinah Shadd? By the same token, you’re kapin me crool dhry now. Let me look at that whisky.”

The whisky was lent and returned, but Dinah Shadd, who had been just as eager as her husband in asking after old friends, rent me with:

“I take shame for you, sorr, comin’ down here—though the saints know you’re as welkim as the daylight whin you do come—an’ upsettin’ Terence’s head wid your nonsense about—about fwhat’s much better forgotten. He bein’ a civilian now, an’ you niver was aught else. Can you not let the arrmy rest? ’Tis not good for Terence.”

I took refuge by Mulvaney, for Dinah Shadd has a temper of her own.

“Let be—let be,” said Mulvaney. “’Tis only wanst in a way I can talk about the ould days.” Then to me: “Ye say Dhrumshticks is well, an’ his lady tu? I niver knew how I liked the gray garron till I was shut av him an’ Asia.” (”Dhrumshticks” was the nickname of the colonel commanding Mulvaney’s old regiment.) “Will you be seein’ him again? You will. Thin tell him”—Mulvaney’s eyes began to twinkle—“tell him wid Privit—”
“Mister, Terence,” interrupted Dinah Shadd.

“Now the divil an’ all his angels an’ the firmament av hiven fly away wid the ‘Mister,’ an’ the sin av makin’ me swear be on your confession, Dinah Shadd! Privit, I tell ye. Wid Privit Mulvaney’s best obedience, that but for me the last time-expired wud be still pullin’ hair on their way to the sea.”

He threw himself back in the chair, chuckled, and was silent.

“Mrs. Mulvaney,” I said, “please take up the whisky, and don’t let him have it until he has told the story.”

Dinah Shadd dexterously whipped the bottle away, saying at the same time, “’Tis nothing to be proud av,” and thus captured by the enemy, Mulvaney spake:

“’Twas on Chuseday week. I was behaderin’ round wid the gangs on the ‘bankmint—I’ve taught the hoppers how to kape step an’ stop screechin’—whin a head-gangman comes up to me, wid about two inches av shirt-tail hanging round his neck an’ a disthressful light in his oi. ‘Sahib,’ sez he, ‘there’s a reg’mint an’ a half av soldiers up at the junction, knockin’ red cinders out av ivrything an’ ivrybody! They thried to hang me in my cloth,’ he sez, ‘an’ there will be murder an’ ruin an’ rape in the place before nightfall! They say they’re comin’ down here to wake us up. What will we do wid our women-folk?’

“’Fetch my throlly!’ sez I; ‘my heart’s sick in my ribs for a wink at anything wid the quane’s uniform on ut. Fetch my throlly, an’ six av the jildiest men, and run me up in shtyle.’”

“He tuk his best coat,” said Dinah Shadd reproachfully.

“’Twas to do honor to the widdy. I cud ha’ done no less, Dinah Shadd. You and your digreshins interfere
wid the coorse av the narrative. Have you iver consid-
hered fwhat I wud look like wid me head shaved as
well as my chin? You bear that in your mind, Dinah
darlin'.

"I was throllied up six miles, all to get a shquint at
that draf'. I knew 'twas a spring draf' goin' home, for
there's no rig'mint hereabouts more's the pity."

"Praise the Virgin!" murmured Dinah Shadd. But
Mulvaney did not hear.

"Whin I was about three-quarters av a mile off the
rest-camp, powtherin' along fit to burrst, I heard the
noise av the men, an', on my sowl, sorr, I cud catch the
voice av Peg Barney bellowin' like a bison wid the
bellyache. You remimber Peg Barney that was in D
Comp'ny—a red, hairy scraun, wid a scar on his jaw?
Peg Barney that cleared out the Blue Lights' Jubilee
meeting wid the cook-room mop last year?

"Thin I knew ut was a draf' of the ould rig'mint, an'
I was conshumed wid sorrow for the bhoy that was in
charge. We was harrd scrapin's at any time. Did I
iver tell you how Horker Kelley went into clink nakid
as Phoebus Apollonius, wid the shirts av the corp'ril
an' file undher his arrum? An' he was a moild man! But
I'm digreshin'. 'Tis a shame both to the rig'mints and
the arrmy sendin' down little orf'cer bhoys wid a draf'
av strong men mad wid liquor an' the chanst av gettin'
shut av India, an' niver a punishment that's fit to be
given right down an' away from cantonmints to the dock!
'Tis this nonsince. Whin I am servin' my time, I'm
undher the articles av war, an' can be whipped on the
peg for thim. But whin I've served my time, I'm a
Reserve man, an' the articles av war haven't any hould
on me. An orf'cer can't do anythin' to a time-expired
sav'in' confinin' him to barricks. 'Tis a wise rig'lation,
bekaze a time-expired does not have any barricks; bein’ on the move all the time. 'Tis a Solomon av a rig’lation, is that. I wud like to be inthroduced to the man who secreted ut. 'Tis easier to get colts from a Kibbereen horse-fair into Galway than to take a bad draf’ over ten miles av country. Consiquintly that rig’lation for fear that the men wud be hurt by the little orf’cer bhoy. No matther. The nearer my throlly came to the rest-camp, the woilder was the shine, an’ the louder was the voice av Peg Barney. ‘'Tis good I am here,’ thinks I to myself, ‘for Peg alone is empoymint to two or three.’ He bein’, I well knew, as copped as a dhrover.

"Faith, that rest-camp was a sight! The tent-ropes was all skew-nosed, an’ the pegs looked as dhrunk as the men—fifty av thim—the scourin’s, an’ rinsin’s, an’ divil’s lavin’s av the ould rig’mint. I tell you, sorr, they were dhrunker than any men you’ve ever seen in your mortial life. How does a draf’ get dhrunk? How does a frog get fat? They suk ut in through their shkins.

"There was Peg Barney sittin’ on the groun’ in his shirt—wan shoe off an’ wan shoe on—whackin’ a tent-peg over the head wid his boot, an’ singin’ fit to wake the dead. 'Twas no clane song that he sung, though. 'Twas the ‘Divil’s Mass.’"

"What’s that?” I asked.

"Whin a bad egg is shut av the arrmy, he sings the ‘Divil’s Mass’ for a good riddance; an’ that manes swearin’ at ivrything from the commandher-in-chief down to the room-corp’ril, such as you niver in your days heard. Some men can swear so as to make green turf crack! Have you iver heard the curse in an Orange lodge? The ‘Divil’s Mass’ is ten times worse, an’ Peg Barney was singin’ ut, whackin’ the tent-peg on the head wid his boot for each man that he cursed. A powerful
big voice had Peg Barney, an’ a hard swearer he was
whin sober. I stood forninst him, an’ ’twas not me oi
alone that cud tell Peg was dhrunk as a coot.

‘Good-mornin’, Peg,’ I sez, whin he dhrew breath
afther cursin’ the adj’tint-gen’ral; ‘I’ve put on my best
ccoat to see you, Peg Barney,’ sez I.

‘Thin take ut off again,’ sez Peg Barney, latherin’
away wid the boot; ‘take ut off an’ dance, ye lousy
civilian!’

‘Wid that he begins cursin’ ould Dhrumshticks, being
so full he clean misremimbers the brigade-major an’ the
judge advokit gen’ral.

‘Do you not know me, Peg?’ sez I, though me blood
was hot in me wid being called a civilian.”

“An’ him a decent married man!” wailed Dinah Shadd.

‘I do not,’ sez Peg, ‘but dhrunk or sober I’ll tear the
hide off your back wid a shovel whin I’ve stopped
singin’’

‘Say you so, Peg Barney?’ sez I. ‘’Tis clear as mud
you’ve forgotten me. I’ll assist your autobiography.’
Wid that I stretched Peg Barney, boot an’ all, an’ wint
into the camp. An awful sight ut was!

‘Where’s the orf’cer in charge av the detachment?’
sez I to Scrub Greene—the manest little worm that ever
walked.

‘There’s no orf’cer, ye ould cook,’ sez Scrub; ‘we’re
a bloomin’ republic.’

‘Are you that?’ sez I; ‘thin I’m O’Connell the Dict-
tator, an’ by this you will larn to kape a civil tongue in
your rag-box.’

‘Wid that I stretched Scrub Greene an’ wint to the
orf’cer’s tent. ’Twas a new little bhoy—not wan I’d iver
seen before. He was sittin’ in his tent, purtendin’ not to
’ave ear av the racket.
"I saluted—but for the life av me I mint to shake hands whin I went in. 'Twas the sword hangin' on the tent-pole changed my will.

"'Can't I help, sorr?' sez I; 'tis a strong man's job they've given you, an' you'll be wantin' help by sundown.' He was a bhoy wid bowils, that child, an' a rale gintelman.

"'Sit down,' sez he.

"'Not before my orf'cer,' sez I; an' I tould him fwhat my service was.

"'I've heard av you,' sez he. 'You tuk the town av Lungtungpen nakid.'

"'Faith,' thinks I, 'that's honor an' glory;' for 'twas Lift'nint Brazenose did that job. 'I'm wid ye, sorr,' sez I, 'if I'm av use. They shud niver ha' sent you down wid the draf'. Savin' your presince, sorr,' I sez, 'tis only Lift'nint Hackerston in the ould rig'mint can manage a home draf'.

"'I've niver had charge of men like this before,' sez he, playin' wid the pens on the table; 'an' I see by the rig'lations—'

"'Shut your oi' to the rig'lations, sorr,' I sez, 'till the throoper's into blue wather. By the rig'lations you've got to tuck thim up for the night, or they'll be runnin' foul av my coolies an' makin' a shiverarium half through the country. Can you trust your non-coms, sorr?'

"'Yes,' sez he.

"'Good,' sez I; 'there'll be throuble before the night. Are you marchin', sorr?'

"'To the next station,' sez he.

"'Better still,' sez I; there'll be big throuble.'

"'Can't be too hard on a home draf', sez he; 'the great thing is to get thim in-ship.'

"'Faith, you've larnt the half av your lesson, sorr,' sez
I, 'but av you shtick to the rig'lations you'll niver get thim in-ship at all, at all. Or there won't be a rag av kit betune thim whin you do.'

"'Twas a dear little orf'cer bhoy, an' by way av kapin' his heart up, I tould him fwhat I saw wanst in a draf' in Egypt."

"What was that, Mulvaney?" said I. "Sivin-an'-fifty men sittin' on the bank av a canal, laughin' at a poor little squidgereen av an orf'cer that they'd made wade into the slush an' pitch the things out av the boats for their lord high mightinesses. That made the orf'cer bhoy woid wid indignation.

"'Soft an' aisy, sorr,' sez I; 'you've niver had your draf' in hand since you left cantonmints. Wait till the night, an' your work will be ready to you. Wid your permission, sorr, I will investigate the camp, an' talk to my ould frinds. 'Tis no manner av use thryin' to shtop the divilmint now.'

"Wid that I wint out into the camp an' inthrojuced mysilf to ivry man sober enough to remimber me. I was some wan in the ould days, an' the bhoys was glad to see me—all excpt Peg Barney, wid a eye like a tomato five days in the bazaar, an' a nose to correspon'. They come round me an' shuk me, an' I tould thim I was in privit employ wid an income av me own, an' a drrrawin'-room fit to bate the quane's; an' wid me lies an' me shtories an' nonsince gin'rally I kept 'em quiet in wan way an' another, knockin' roun' the camp. 'Twas bad even thin whin I was the Angil av Peace.

"I talked to me ould non-coms—they was sober—an' betune me an' thim we wore the draf' over into their tents at the proper time. The little orf'cer bhoy he comes round, decint an' civil-spoken as might be.

"'Rough quarters, men,' sez he, 'but you can't look
to be as comfortable as in barricks. We must make the best av things. I've shut my eyes to a dale av dog's trick to-day, an' now there must be no more avut.'

"'No more we will. Come an' have a dhrink, me son,' sez Peg Barney, staggerin' where he stud. Me little orf'cer bhoy kep' his timper.

"'You're a sulky swine, you are,' sez Peg Barney, an' at that the men in the tent began to laugh.

"I tould you me orf'cer bhoy had bowils. He cut Peg Barney as near as might be on the oi that I'd squashed whin we first met. Peg wint spinnin' acrost the tent.

"'Peg him out, sorr,' sez I, in a wishper.

"'Peg him out!' sez me orf'cer bhoy, up loud, just as if 'twas battalion p'rade, an' he pickin' his wurrds from the sargint.

"The non-coms tuk Peg Barney—a howlin' handful he was—an' in three minuts he was pegged out—chin down, tight-dhrawn—on his stummick, a peg to each arm an' leg, swearin' fit to turn a naygur white.

"I tuk a peg an' jammed ut into his ugly jaw. 'Bite on that, Peg Barney,' I sez; 'the night is settin' frosty, an' you'll be wantin' divarsion before the mornin'. But for the rig'lations you'd be bitin' on a bullet now at the thriangles, Peg Barney,' sez I.

"All the draf' was out av their tents watchin' Barney bein' pegged.

"'Tis ag'in' the rig'lations! He strook him!' screeches out Scrub Greene, who was always a lawyer; an' some of the men tuk up the shoutin'.

"'Peg out that man!' sez me orf'cer bhoy, niver losin' his timper; an' the non-coms wint in and pegged out Scrub Greene by the side av Peg Barney.

"I could see that the draf' was comin' roun'. The men stud not knowin' fwhat to do.
"'Get to your tents!' sez me orf'cer bhoy. 'Sargint, put a sintry over these two men.'

"The men wint back into the tents like jackals, an' the rest av the night there was no noise at all excipt the stip av the sintry over the two, an' Scrub Greene blubberin' like a child. 'Twas a chilly night, an' faith ut sobered Peg Barney.

"Just before revelly, me orf'cer bhoy comes out an' sez: 'Loose those men an' send thim to their tents!' Scrub Greene wint away widout a word, but Peg Barney, stiff wid the cowld, stud like a sheep, thryin' to make his orf'cer understhand he was sorry for playin' the goat.

"There was no tucker in the draf' whin ut fell in for the march, an' divil a wurrd about 'illegality' could I hear.

"I wint to the ould color sargint and I sez, 'Let me die in glory,' sez I. 'I've seen a man this day!'

"'A man he is,' sez ould Hother; 'the draf's as sick as a herrin'. They'll all go down to the sea like lambs. That bhoy has the bowils av a cantonmint av gin'rals.'

"'Amin,' sez I, 'an' good luck go wid him, wheriver he be, by land or by say. Let me know how the draf' gets clear.'

"'An' do you know how they did? That bhoy, so I was tould by letter from Bombay, bullydamned 'em down to the dock, till they cudn't call their sowls their own. From the time they left me oi till they was 'tween decks, not wan av thim was more than dacintly dhrunk. An', by the holy articles av war, whin they wint aboard they cheered him till they cudn't spake, an' that, m'ark you, has not come about wid a draf' in the mim'ry av livin' man! You look to that little orf'cer bhoy. He has bowils. 'Tis not ivry child that wud chuck the rig'lations to Flanders an' stretch Peg Barney on a wink from a
brokin an' dilapidated ould carkiss like mesilf. I'd be proud to serve—"

"Terence, you're a civilian," said Dinah Shadd, warn-

ingly.

"So I am—so I am. Is ut likely I wud forget ut? But he was a gran' bhoy, all the same, an' I'm only a mudtip-

per wid a hod on my shoulthers. The whisky's in the heel av your hand, sorr. Wid your good lave we'll dhrink to the ould rig'mint—three fingers—standin' up!"

And we drank.
THE SOLID MULDOON.

Did you see John Malone, wid his shinin', brand new hat? Did ye see how he walked like a grand aristocrat? There was flags an' banners wavin' high, an' dhress and shtyle were shown, But the best av all the company was Misther John Malone. —John Malone.

This befell in the old days, and, as my friend Private Mulvaney was specially careful to make clear, the Unre-generate.

There had been a royal dog-fight in the ravine at the back of the rifle-butts, between Learoyd's Jock and Ortheris's Blue Rot—both mongrel Rampur hounds, chiefly ribs and teeth. It lasted for twenty happy, howling minutes, and then Blue Rot collapsed and Ortheris paid Learoyd three rupees, and we were all very thirsty. A dog-fight is a most heating entertainment, quite apart from the shouting; because Rampurs fight over a couple of acres of ground. Later, when the sound of belt-badges clinking against the necks of beer-bottles had died away, conversation drifted from dog to man fights of all kinds. Humans resemble red-deer in some re-spects. Any talk of fighting seems to wake up a sort of imp in their breasts, and they bell one to the other, exactly like challenging bucks. This is noticeable even in men who consider themselves superior to privates of the line; it shows the refining influence of civilization and the march of progress.

Tale provoked tale, and each tale more beer. Even dreamy Learoyd's eyes began to brighten, and he unbur- dened himself of a long history in which a trip to Mal-
ham Cove, a girl at Pateley Brigg, a ganger, himself and a pair of clogs were mixed in drawling tangle.

"An' so Ah coot's yead oppen from t' chin to t' hair an' he was abed for t' matter o' a month," concluded Learoyd, pensively.

Mulvaney came out of a reverie—he was lying down—and flourished his heels in the air. "You're a man, Learoyd," said he, critically, "but you've only fought wid men, an' that's an ivry-day expayrience; but I've stud up to a ghost, an' that was not an ivry-day expayrience."

"No?" said Ortheris, throwing a cork at him. "You git up an' address the 'ouse—you an' yer expayriences. Is it a bigger one nor usual?"

"'Twas the livin' trut'!" answered Mulvaney, stretching out a huge arm and catching Ortheris by the collar. "Now where are ye, me son? Will ye take the wurrud av the Lorrd out av my mout another time?" He shook him to emphasize the question.

"No, somethin' else, though," said Ortheris, making a dash at Mulvaney's pipe, capturing it, and holding it at arm's-length; "I'll chuck it acrost the ditch if you don't let me go!"

"You maraudin' hathen! 'Tis the only cutty I iver loved. Handle her tinder or I'll chuck you acrost the nullah. If that poipe was bruk—— Ah! Give her back to me, sorr!"

Ortheris had passed the treasure to my hand. It was an absolutely perfect clay, as shiny as the black ball at pool. I took it reverently, but I was firm.

"Will you tell us about the ghost-fight if I do?" I said.

"Is ut the shtory that's troublin' you? Av course I will. I mint to all along. I was only gettin' at ut my
own way, as Popp Doggle said when they found him thring to ram a cartridge down the muzzle. Orth'ris, fall away!"

He released the little Londoner, took back his pipe, filled it, and his eyes twinkled. He has the most eloquent eyes of any one that I know.

"Did I iver tell you," he began, "that I was wanst the divil av a man?"

"You did," said Learoyd, with a childish gravity that made Ortheris yell with laughter, for Mulvaney was always impressing upon us his merits in the old days.

"Did I iver tell you," Mulvaney continued, calmly, "that I was wanst more av a divil than I am now?"

"Mer—ria! You don't mean it?" said Ortheris.

"Whin I was corp'ril—I was rejuced aftherwards—but, as I say, whin I was corp'ril, I was a divil of a man."

He was silent for nearly a minute, while his mind rummaged among old memories and his eye glowed. He bit upon the pipe-stem and charged into his tale.

"Eyah! They was great times. I'm ould now; me hide's wore off in patches; sinthry-go has disconceited me, an' I'm a married man tu. But I've had my day, I've had my day, an' nothin' can take away the taste av that! Oh, my time past, whin I put me fut through ivry livin' wan av the Tin Commandmints between revelly and lights out, blew the froth off a pewter, wiped me mustache wid the back av me hand, an' slept on ut all as quiet as a little child! But ut's over—ut's over, an' 'twill niver come back to me; not though I prayed for a week av Sundays. Was there any wan in the ould rig'mint to touch Corp'ril Terence Mulvaney whin that same was turned out for sedukshin? I niver met him. Ivry woman that was not a witch was worth the runnin'
afther in those days, an' ivry man was my dearest frind or—I had stripped to him an' we knew which was the betther av the tu.

"Whin I was corp'ril I wud not ha' changed wid the colonel—no, nor yet the commander-in-chief. I wud be a sargint. There was nothin' I wud not be! Mother av Hivin, look at me! Fwhat am I now? But no matther! I must get to the other ghosts—not the wans in my ould head.

"We was quartered in a big cantonmint—'tis no manner av use namin' names, for ut might give the barricks disreputation—an' I was the imperor av the earth to my own mind, an' wan or tu women thought the same. Small blame to thim. Afther we had lain there a year, Bragin, the color sargint av E Comp'ny, wint an' took a wife that was lady's-maid to some big lady in the station. She's dead now, is Annie Bragin—died in childbed at Kirpa Tal, or ut may ha' been Almorah—seven—nine years gone, an' Bragin he married ag'in. But she was a pretty woman whin Bragin introjuced her to con-tonmint society. She had eyes like the brown av a buttherfly's wing whin the sun catches ut, an' a waist no thicker than my arm, an' a little sof' button av a mouth I wud ha' gone through all Asia bristlin' wid bay'nits to get the kiss av. An' her hair was as long as the tail av the colonel's charger—forgive me mintionin' that blunderin' baste in the same mouthful with Annie Bragin—but 'twas all shpun gold, an' time was whin a lock av ut was more than di'monds to me. There was niver pretty woman yet, an' I've had thruck wid a few, cud open the door to Annie Bragin.

"'Twas in the Carth'lic chapel I saw her first, me oi rolling round as usual to see fwhat was to be seen. 'You're too good for Bragin, my love,' thinks I to me-
soldiers three.

silf, 'but that's a mistake I can put straight, or my name is not Terence Mulvaney.'

"Now take my wurrd for ut, you Orth'ris there an' Learoyd, an' kape out av the married quarters—as I did not. No good iver comes av ut, an' there's always the chance av your bein' found wid your face in the dirt, a long picket in the back av your head, an' your hands playing the fifes on the tread av another man's doorstep. 'Twas so we found O'Hara, he that Rafferty killed six years gone, when he wint to his death wid his hair oiled, whistlin' 'Billy O'Rourke' betune his teeth. Kape out av the married quarters, I say, as I did not. 'Tis on-wholesim, 'tis dangerous, an' 'tis ivrything else that's bad, but—Oh, my sowl, 'tis swate while ut lasts!

"I was always hanging' about there whin I was off duty an' Bragin wasn't, but niver a sweet word beyon' ordinar' did I get from Annie Bragin. ' 'Tis the pers-varsity av the sect,' sez I to mesilf, an' gave my cap another cock on my head an' straightened my back—'twas the back av a dhrum-major in those days—an' wint off as tho' I did not care, wid all the women in the married quarters laughin'. I was pershuaded—most bhoys are, I'm thinkin'—that no woman born av woman cud stand against me av I hild up me little finger. I had reason for thinkin' that way—till I met Annie Bragin.

"Time an' ag' in whin I was blanhandherin' in the dusk a man wud go past me as quiet as a cat. 'That's quare,' thinks I, 'for I am, or I should be, the only man in these parts. Now what divilment can Annie be up to?' Thin I called myself a blayguard for thinkin' such things; but I thought thim all the same. An' that, mark you, is the way av a man.

"Wan evenin' I said: 'Mrs. Bragin, manin' no disrespect to you, who is that corp'ril man'—I had seen the
stripes though I cud niver get sight av his face—'who is that corp’ril man that comes in always whin I’m goin’ away?'

"'Mother av God!' sez she, turnin’ as white as my belt; 'have you seen him, too?'

"'Seen him!' sez I; 'av coorse I have. Did ye want me not to see him, for’—we were standin’ talkin’ in the dhark, outside the veranda av Bragin’s quarters—'you’d betther tell me to shut me eyes. Onless I’m mistaken, he’s come now.'

"An’, sure enough, the corp’ril man was walkin’ to us, hangin’ his head down as though he was ashamed av himself.

"'Good-night, Mrs. Bragin,' sez I, very cool; "'tis not for me to interfere wid your a-moors; but you might manage these things wid more dacincy. I'm off to canteen,' I sez.

"I turned on my heel an’ wint away, swearin’ I wud give that man a dhressin’ that wud shtop him messin’ about the married quarters for a month an’ a week. I had not tuk ten paces before Annie Bragin was hangin’ on to my arm, an’ I cud feel that she was shakin’ all over.

"'Stay wid me, Mister Mulvaney,' sez she; 'you’re flesh an’ blood, at the least—are ye not?'

"'I’m all that,’ sez I, an’ my anger wint away in a flash. 'Will I want to be asked twice, Annie?'

"Wid that I slipped my arm round her waist, for, begad, I fancied she had surrrendered at discretion, an’ the honors av war were mine.

"'Fwhat nonsince is this?’ sez she, dhrawin’ herself up on the tips av her dear little toes. 'Wid the mother’s milk not dhry on your impident mouth? Let go!’ she sez.

"'Did ye not say just now that I was flesh and blood?'
sez I. 'I have not changed since,' sez I; an' I kep' my arm where ut was.

"'Your arms to yoursif!' sez she, an' her eyes sparkild. 

"'Sure, 'tis only human nature,' sez I; an' I kep' my arm where ut was.

"'Nature or no nature,' sez she, 'you take your arm away or I'll tell Bragin, an' he'll alter the nature av your head. Fwhat d'you take me for?' she sez.

"'A woman,' sez I; 'the prettiest in barricks.'

"'A wife,' sez she; 'the straightest in cantonmints!'

"Wid that I dropped my arm, fell back tu paces, an' saluted, for I saw that she mint fwhat she said."

"Then you know something that some men would give a good deal to be certain of. How could you tell?" I demanded, in the interests of science.

"Watch the hand," said Mulvaney; "av she shuts her hand tight, thumb down over the knuckle, take up your hat an' go. You'll only make a fool av yourself av you shtay. But av the hand lies opin on the lap, or av you see her thryin' to shut ut, an' she can't—go on! She's not past reasonin' wid."

"Well, as I was sayin', I fell back, saluted, an' was goin' away.

"'Shtay wid me,' she sez. 'Look! He's comin' again.'

"She pointed to the veranda, an' by the hight av impart'nince, the corp'ril man was comin' out av Bragin's quarters.

"'He's done that these five evenin's past,' sez Annie Bragin. 'Oh, fwhat will I do?'

"'He'll not do ut again,' sez I, for I was fightin' mad.

"Kape away from a man that has been a thrifle crossed in love till the fever's died down. He rages like a brute baste.

"I wint up to the man in the veranda, manin', as sure
as I sit, to knock the life out av him. He slipped into the open. 'Fwhat are you doin' philanderin' about here, ye scum av the gutter?' sez I, polite, to give him his warnin', for I wanted him ready.

"He niver lifted his head, but sez, all mournful an' melancolius, as if he thought I wud be sorry for him: 'I can't find her,' sez he.

"'My troth,' sez I, 'you've lived too long—you an' your seekin's an' findin's in a dacint married woman's quarters! Hould up your head, ye frozen thief av Genesis,' sez I, 'an' you'll find all you want an' more!'

"But he niver hild up, an' I let go from the shoulder to where the hair is short over the eyebrows.

"'That'll do your business,' sez I, but it nearly did mine instid. I put my body-weight behind the blow, but I hit nothing at all, an' near put my shoulther out. The corp'ril man was not there, an' Annie Bragin, who had been watchin' from the veranda, throws up her heels, an' carries on like a cock whin his neck's wrung by the dhrummer-boy. I wint back to her, for a livin' woman, an' a woman like Annie Bragin, is more than a p'radergroun' full av ghosts. I'd never seen a woman faint before, an' I stud like a shtruck calf, askin' her whether she was dead, an' prayin' her for the love av me, an' the love av her husband, an' the love av the Virgin, to opin her blessed eyes again, an' callin' mesilf all the names undher the canopy av hivin for plaguin' her wid my miserable a-moors whin I ought to ha' stud betune her an' this corp'ril man that had lost the number av his mess.

"I misremimber fwhat nonsince I said, but I was not so far gone that I cud not hear a fut on the dirt outside. 'Twas Bragin comin' in, an' by the same token Annie was comin' to. I jumped to the far end av the veranda an' looked as if butter wudn't melt in my mouth. But Mrs.
Quinn, the quarter-master's wife that was, had tould Bragin about my hangin' round Annie.

"I'm not pleased wid you, Mulvaney,' sez Bragin, unbucklin' his sword, for he had been on duty.

"That's bad hearin'," I sez, an' I knew that the pickets were dhiven in. 'What for, sargint?' sez I.

"'Come outside,' sez he, 'an' I'll show you why.'

"'I'm willin',' I sez; 'but my stripes are none so ould that I can afford to lose thim. Tell me now, who do I go out wid?' sez I.

"He was a quick man an' a just, an' saw fwhat I wud be afther. 'Wid Mrs. Bragin's husband,' sez he. He might ha' known by me askin' that favor that I had done him no wrong.

"We wint to the back av the arsenal an' I stripped to him, an' for ten minutes 'twas all I cud do to prevent him killin' himself against my fistes. He was mad as a dumb dog—just frothing wid rage; but he had no chanst wid me in reach, or learnin', or anything else.

"'Will ye hear reason?' sez I, whin his first wind was runnin' out.

"'Not whoile I can see,' sez he. Wid that I gave him both, one after the other, smash through the low gyard that he'd been taught whin he was a boy, an' the eyebrow shut down on the cheek-bone like the wing av a sick crow.

"'Will you hear reason now, ye brave man?' sez I.

"'Not whoile I can speak,' sez he, staggerin' up blind as a stump. I was loath to do ut, but I wint round an' swung into the jaw side-on an' shifted ut a half pace to the lef'.

"'Will ye hear reason now?' sez I; 'I can't keep my timper much longer, an' 'tis like I will hurt you.'

"'Not whoile I can stand,' he mumbles out av one cor-
ner av his mouth. So I closed an' threw him—blind, dumb, an' sick, an' jammed the jaw straight.

"'You're an ould fool, Mister Bragin,' sez I.

"'You're a young thief,' sez he, 'an' you've bruk my heart, you an' Annie betune you!'

"Thin he began cryin' like a child as he lay. I was sorry as I had niver been before. 'Tis an awful thing to see a strong man cry.

"'I'll swear on the cross!' sez I.

"'I care for none av your oaths,' sez he.

"'Come back to your quarters,' sez I, 'an' if you don't believe the livin', begad, you shall listen to the dead,' I sez.

"I hoisted him an' tuk him back to his quarters. 'Mrs. Bragin,' sez I, 'here's a man that you can cure quicker than me.'

"'You've shamed me before my wife,' he whimpers.

"'Have I so?' sez I. 'By the look on Mrs. Bragin's face I think I'm in for a dhressin'-down worse than I gave you.'

"'An' I was! Annie Bragin was woild wid indignation. There was not a name that a dacint woman cud use that was not given my way. I've had my colonel walk roun' me like a cooper roun' a cask for fifteen minuts in ord'ly-room bekaze I wint into the corner shop an unstrapped lewnatic, but all that I iver tuk from his rasp av a tongue was ginger-pop to fwhat Annie tould me. An' that, mark you, is the way av a woman.

"Whin ut was done for want av breath, an' Annie was bendin' over her husband, I sez: 'Tis all thrue, an' I'm a blayguard an' you're an honest woman; but will you tell him of wan service that I did you?'

"As I finished speakin' the corp'r'il man came up to
the veranda, an’ Annie Bragin shquealed. The moon was up, an’ we cud see his face.

"I can’t find her," sez the corp’ril man, an’ wint out like the puff av a candle.

"Saints stand betune us an’ evil!" sez Bragin, crossin’ himself; ‘that’s Flahy av the Tyrone Rig’mint.’

"Who was he?" I sez, ‘for he has given me a dale av fightin’ this day.’

"Bragin tould us that Flahy was a corp’ril who lost his wife av cholera in those quarters three years gone, an’ wint mad, an’ ‘walked’ afther they buried him, huntin’ for her.

"Well," sez I to Bragin, ‘he’s been hookin’ out av purgathory to kape company wid Mrs. Bragin ivry evenin’ for the last fortnight. You may tell Mrs. Quinn, wid my love, for I know that she’s been talkin’ to you, an’ you’ve been listenin’, that she ought to ondherstand the differ ‘twixt a man an’ a ghost. She’s had three husbands,’ sez I, ‘an’ you’ve got a wife too good for you. Instid av which you lave her to be boddered by ghosts an’—an’ all manner av evil spirruts. I’ll niver go talkin’ in the way av politeness to a man’s wife again. Good-night to you both,’ sez I, an’ wid that I wint away, havin’ fought wid woman, man, and divil all in the heart av an hour. By the same token I gave Father Victor wan rupee to say a mass for Flahy’s soul, me havin’ discom-moded him by shticking my fist into his systim.’

"Your ideas of politeness seem rather large, Mulvaney,” I said.

"That’s as you look at ut," said Mulvaney, calmly; “Annie Bragin niver cared for me. For all that, I did not want to leave anything behin’ me that Bragin could take hould av to be angry wid her about—whin an honust wurrd cud ha’ cleared all up. There’s nothing
like opin-speakin'. Orth'ris, ye scut, let me put me oi to that bottle, for my throat's as dhry as whin I thought I wud get a kiss from Annie Bragin. An' that's fourteen years gone! Eyah! Cork's own city an' the blue sky above ut—an' the times that was—the times that was!
WITH THE MAIN GUARD.

Der jungere Uhlanen
Sit round mit open mouth
While Breitmann tell dem stdories
Of fightin' in the South;
Und gif dem moral lessons,
How before der battle pops,
Take a little prayer to Himmel
Und a goot long drink of Schnapps.
—Hans Breitmann's Ballads.

"Mary, Mother av Mercy, fwhat the divil possist us to take an' kape this melancolius counthry? Answer me that, sorr."

It was Mulvaney who was speaking. The hour was one o'clock of a stifling hot June night, and the place was the main gate of Fort Amara, most desolate and least desirable of all fortresses in India. What I was doing there at that hour is a question which only concerns McGrath, the sergeant of the guard, and the men on the gate.

"Slape," said Mulvaney, "is a shuparfluous necessity. This gyard'll shïay lively till relieved." He himself was stripped to the waist; Learoyd on the next bedstead was dripping from the skinful of water which Ortheris, arrayed only in white trousers, had just sluiced over his shoulders; and a fourth private was muttering uneasily as he dozed open-mouthed in the glare of the great guard-lantern. The heat under the bricked archway was terrifying.

"The worrst night that iver I remimber. Eyah! Is all hell loose this tide?" said Mulvaney. A puff of burn-
ing wind lashed through the wicket-gate like a wave of the sea, and Ortheris swore.

“Are ye more heasy, Jock?” he said to Learoyd. “Put yer ’ead between your legs. It’ll go orf in a minute.”

“Ah don’t care. Ah would not care, but ma heart is plaayin’ tivvy-tivvy on ma ribs. Let me die! Oh, leave me die!” groaned the huge Yorkshire man, who was feeling the heat acutely, being of fleshly build.

The sleeper under the lantern roused for a moment and raised himself on his elbow. “Die and be damned then!” he said. “I’m damned and I can’t die!”

“Who’s that?” I whispered, for the voice was new to me.

“Gentleman born,” said Mulvaney; “Corp’ril wan year, sargint nex’. Red-hot on his c’mission, but dhrinks like a fish. He’ll be gone before the cowld weather’s here. So!”

He slipped his boot, and with the naked toe just touched the trigger of his Martini. Ortheris misunderstood the movement, and the next instant the Irishman’s rifle was dashed aside, while Ortheris stood before him, his eyes blazing with reproof.

“You!” said Ortheris. “My Gawd, you! If it was you, wot would we do?”

“Kape quiet, little man,” said Mulvaney, putting him aside, but very gently; “’tis not me, nor will ut be me whoile Dinah Shadd’s here. I was but showin’ someth ing.”

Learoyd, bowed on his bedstead, groaned, and the gentleman ranker sighed in his sleep. Ortheris took Mulvaney’s tendered pouch, and we three smoked gravely for a space while the dust-devils danced on the glacis and scoured the red-hot plain without.

“Pop?” said Ortheris, wiping his forehead.
“Don’t tantalize wid talkin’ av dhrink, or I’ll shtuff you into your own breech-lock an’ fire you off!” grunted Mulvaney.

Ortheris chuckled, and from a niche in the veranda produced six bottles of gingerade.

“Where did ye get ut, ye Machiavel?” said Mulvaney. “’Tis no bazaar pop.”

‘Ow do Hi know wot the orf’cers drink?” answered Ortheris. “Arst the mess-man.”

“Ye’ll have a disthrict coort-martial settin’ on ye yet, me son,” said Mulvaney, “but”—he opened a bottle—“I will not report ye this time. Fwhat’s in the mess-kid is mint for the belly, as they say, ’specially whin that mate is dhrink. Here’s luck! A bloody war or a—no, we’ve got the sickly season. War, thin!”—he waved the innocent “pop” to the four quarters of heaven. “Bloody war! north, east, south, an’ west! Jock, ye quakin’ hayrick, come an’ dhrink.”

But Learoyd, half mad with the fear of death presaged in the swelling veins of his neck, was imploring his Maker to strike him dead, and fighting for more air between his prayers. A second time Ortheris drenched the quivering body with water, and the giant revived.

“An’ Ah divn’t see thot a mon is i’ fettle for gooin’ on to live; an’ Ah divn’t see thot there is owt for t’ livin’ for. Hear now, lads; Ah’m tired—tired. There’s nob— but watter i’ ma bones. Let me die!”

The hollow of the arch gave back Learoyd’s broken whisper in a bass boom. Mulvaney looked at me hopelessly, but I remembered how the madness of despair had once fallen upon Ortheris, that weary, weary afternoon on the banks of the Khemi River, and how it had been exorcised by the skillful magician Mulvaney.

“Talk, Terence!” I said, “or we shall have Learoyd
slinging loose, and he'll be worse than Ortheris was. Talk! He'll answer to your voice."

Almost before Ortheris had deftly thrown all the rifles of the guard on Mulvaney's bedstead, the Irishman's voice was uplifted as that of one in the middle of a story, and, turning to me, he said:

"In barricks or out of it, as you say, sorr, an Oirish rig'mint is the divil an' more. 'Tis only fit for a young man wid eddicated fisteses. Oh, the crame av disruption is an Oirish rig'mint, an' rippin', tearin', ragin' scatterers in the field av war! My first rig'mint was Oirish—Faynians an' rebils to the heart av their marrow was they, an' so they fought for the widdy betther than most, bein' contrairy—Oirish. They was the Black Tyrone. You've heard av thim, sorr?"

Heard of them! I knew the Black Tyrone for the choicest collection of unmitigated blackguards, dog-stealers, robbers of hen-roosts, assaulters of innocent citizens, and recklessly daring heroes in the Army List. Half Europe and half Asia has had cause to know the Black Tyrone—good luck be with their tattered colors as glory has ever been!

"They was hot pickils an' ginger! I cut a man's head tu deep wid my belt in the days av my youth, an', afther some circumstances which I will obliterate, I came to the ould rig'mint, bearin' the character av a man wid hands an' feet. But, as I was goin' to tell you, I fell acrost the Black Tyrone ag'in wan day whin we wanted thim powerful bad. Orth'ris, me son, fwhat was the name av that place where they sint wan comp'ny av us an' wan av the Tyrone roun' a hill an' down again, all for to tache the Paythans something they'd niver learned before? Afther Ghuzni 'twas."
“Don’t know what the bloomin’ Paythans called it. We called it Silver’s Theayter. You know that, sure!”

“Silver’s Theayter—so ’twas. A gut betune two hills, as black as a bucket, an’ as thin as a gurl’s waist. There was overmany Paythans for our convaynience in the gut, an’ begad they called themselves a reserve—bein’ impident by natur! Our Scotchies an’ lashins av Gurkys was poundin’ into some Paythan rig’mints, I think ’twas. Scotchies an’ Gurkys are twins bekaze they’re so on-like, an’ they get dhrunk together whin God plases. Well, as I was sayin’, they sint wan comp’ny av the Ould an’ wan av the Tyrone to double up the hill an’ clan out the Paythan reserve. Orf’cers was scarce in thim days, fwhat wid dysintry an’ not takin’ care av thimselves, an’ we was sint out wid only wan orf’cer for the comp’ny; but he was a man that had his feet beneath him, an’ all his teeth in their sockuts.”

“Who was he?” I asked.

“Captain O’Neil—Old Crook—Cruik-na-bulleen—him that I tould ye that tale av whin he was in Burmah. Hah! He was a man. The Tyrone tuk a little orf’cer bhoy, but divil a bit was he in command, as I’ll demon-strate presintly. We an’ they came over the brow av the hill, wan on each side av the gut, an’ there was that on-dacint reserve waitin’ down below like rats in a pit.

“’Howld on, men,’ sez Crook, who tuk a mother’s care av us always. ‘Rowl some rocks on thim by way av visitin’-kyards.’ We hadn’t rowled more than twinty bowlders, an’ the Paythans was beginnin’ to swear tre-menjus, whin the little orf’cer bhoy av the Tyrone shqueaks out acrost the valley: ‘Fwhat the devil an’ all are you doin’, shpoilin’ the fun for my men? Do ye not see they’ll stand?’

“‘Faith, that’s a rare pluckt wan!’ sez Crook. ‘Niver
mind the rocks, men. Come along down an' take tay wid thim!

"'There's damned little sugar in ut!' sez my rear-rank man; but Crook heard.

"'Have ye not all got spoons?' he sez, laughin', an' down we wint as fast as we cud. Learoyd bein' sick at the base, he, av coorse, was not there."

"Thot's a lie!" said Learoyd, dragging his bedstead nearer. "Ah gotten thot theer, an' you know it, Mulvaney." He threw up his arms, and from the right arm-pit ran, diagonally through the fell of his chest, a thin white line terminating near the fourth left rib.

"My mind's goin'," said Mulvaney, the unabashed. "Ye were there. Fwhat was I thinkin' of? 'Twas another man, av coorse. Well, you'll remember thin, Jock, how we an' the Tyrone met wid a bang at the bottom an' got jammed past all movin' among the Paythans."

"Ow! It wos a tight 'ole. Hi was squeeged till I thought I'd bloomin' well bust," said Ortheris, rubbing his stomach meditatively.

"'Twas no place for a little man, but wan little man"—Mulvaney put his hand on Ortheris's shoulder—"saved the life av me. There we shtuck, for devil a bit did the Paythans flinch, an' divil a bit dare we; our business bein' to clear 'em out. An' the most exthryordinar' thing av all was that we an' they just rushed into each other's arrums, an' there was no firing for a long time. Nothin' but knife an' bay'nit when we cud get our hands free; that was not often. We was breast on to thim, an' the Tyrone was yelpin' behind av us in a way I didn't see the lean av at first. But I knew later, an' so did the Paythans.

"'Knee to knee!' sings out Crook, wid a laugh whin the rush av our comin' into the gut shtopped, an' he was
huggin' a hairy great Paythan, neither bein' able to do anything to the other, tho' both was wishful.

"'Breast to breast!' he says, as the Tyrone was pushin' us forward closer an' closer.

"'An' hand over back!' sez a sargint that was behin'. I saw a sword lick out past Crook's ear like a snake's tongue, an' the Paythan was tuk in the apple av his throat like a pig at Dromeen fair.

"'Thank ye, Brother Inner Guard,' sez Crook, cool as a cucumber widout salt. 'I wanted that room.' An' he wint forward by the thickness av a man's body, havin' turned the Paythan undher him. The man bit the heel off Crook's boot in his death-bite.

"'Push, men!' sez Crook. 'Push, ye paper-backed beggars!' he sez. 'Am I to pull ye through?' So we pushed, an' we kicked, an' we swung, an' we swore, an' the grass bein' slippery, our heels wouldn't bite, an' God help the front-rank man that wint down that day!"

"'Ave you ever bin in the pit hentrance o' the Vic. on a thick night?" interrupted Ortheris. "It was worse nor that, for they was goin' one way, an' we wouldn't 'ave it. Leastaways, Hi 'adn't much to say."

"Faith, me son, ye said ut, thin. I kep' the little man betune my knees as long as I cud, but he was pokin' roun' wid his bay'nit blindin' an' stiippin' feroush. The devil of a man is Orth'ris in a ruction—aren't ye?" said Mulvaney.

"Don't make game!" said the cockney. "I knowed I wasn't no good then, but I guv 'em compot from the lef' flank when we opened out. No!" he said, bringing down his hand with a thump on the bedstead, "a bay'nit ain't no good to a little man—might as well 'ave a bloom-in' fishin'-rod! I 'ate a clawin', maulin' mess, but gimme a breech that's wore out a bit, an' hamminition one year
in store, to let the powder kiss the bullet, an' put me somewheres where I ain't trod on by 'ulkin swine like you, an' s'elp me Gawd, I could bowl you over five times outer seven at height 'undred. Would yer try, you lumberin' Hirishman?"

"No, ye wasp. I've seen ye do ut. I say there's nothin' better than the bay'nit, wid a long reach, a double twist av ye can, an' a slow recover."

"Dom the bay'nit," said Learoyd, who had been listening intently. "Look a-here!" He picked up a rifle an inch below the foresight with an underhanded action, and used it exactly as a man would use a dagger.

"Sitha," said he, softly, "thot's better than owt, for a mon can bash t' faace wi' thot, an', if he divn't, he can breeak t' forearm o' t' gaard. 'Tis not i' t' books, though. Gie me t' butt."

"Each does ut his own way, like makin' love," said Mulvaney, quietly; 'the butt or the bay'nit or the bullet accordin' to the natur' av the man. Well, as I was sayin', we shtuck there breathin' in each other's faces an' swearin' powerful, Orth'ris cursin' the mother that bore him bekaze he was not three inches taller.

"Prisintly he sez: 'Duck, ye lump, an' I can get at a man over your shouldher!'"

"'You'll blow me head off,' I sez, throwin' my arm clear; 'go through under my arm-pit, ye blood-thirsty little scut,' sez I, 'but don't shtick me or I'll wring your ears round.'"

"Fwhat was ut ye gave the Paythan man forninst me, him that cut at me whin I cudn't move hand or foot? Hot or cowld was ut?"

"Cold," said Ortheris, "up an' under the rib-jint. 'E come down flat. Best for you 'e did."

"Thruie, my son! This jam thing that I'm talkin'
about lasted for five minutes good, an' thin we got our arms clear an' wint in. I misremember exactly fwhat I did, but I didn't want Dinah to be a widdy at the Depot. Thin, after some promishkuous hackin' we shtuck again, an' the Tyrone behin' was callin' us dogs an' cowards an' all manner av names; we barrin' their way.

"'Fwhat ails the Tyrone?' thinks I; 'they've the mak-in's av a most convenient fight here.'

"A man behind me sez beseechful an' in a whisper: 'Let me get at thim! For the love av Mary give me room beside ye, ye tall man!'

"'An' who are you that's so anxious to be kilt?' sez I, widout turnin' my head, for the long knives was dancin' in front like the sun on Donegal Bay whin ut's rough.

"'We've seen our dead,' he sez, squeezin' into me; 'our dead that was men two days gone! An' me that was his cousin by blood could not bring Tim Coulan off! Let me get on,' he sez, 'let me get to thim or I'll run ye through the back!'"

"'My troth,' thinks I, 'if the Tyrone have seen their dead, God help the Paythans this day;' An' thin I knew why the Oirish was ragin' behind us as they was.

'I gave room to the man, an' he ran forward wid the Haymakers' Lift on his bay'nit an' swung a Paythan clear off his feet by the belly-band av the brute, an' the iron bruk at the lockin'-ring.

"'Tim Coulan 'll slapeaisy to-night,' sez he wid a grin; an' the next minut his head was in two halves and he wint down grinnin' by sections.

"The Tyrone was pushin' an' pushin' in, an' our men was swearin' at thim, an' Crook was workin' away in front av us all, his sword-arm swing'in like a pump-handle an' his revolver spittin' like a cat. But the
strange thing av ut was the quiet that lay upon. 'Twas like a fight in a drame—except for thim that was dead.

"Whin I gave room to the Oirishman I was expinded an' forlorn in my inside. 'Tis a way I have, savin' your prisince, sorr, in action. 'Let me out, bhoys,' sez I, backin' in among thim. 'I'm goin' to be onwell!' Faith they gave me room at the wurrud, though they would not ha' given room for all hell wid the chill off. When I got clear, I was, savin' your prisince, sorr, outragis sick bekaze I had dhrunk heavy that day.

"Well an' far out av harm was a sargint av the Tyrone sittin' on the little orf'cer bhoy who had stopped Crook from rowlin' the rocks. Oh, he was a beautiful bhoy, an' the long black curses was sliding out av his innocent mouth like mornin'-jew from a rose!

"'Fwhat have you got there?' sez I to the sargint.

"'Wan av her majesty's bantams wid his spurs up,' sez he. 'He's goin' to coort-martial me.'

"'Let me go!' sez the little orf'cer bhoy. 'Let me go and command my men!' mainin' thereby the Black Tyrone, which was beyond any command—ay, even av they had made the divil a field-orf'cer.

"'His father howlds my mother's cow-feed in Clonmel,' sez the man that was sittin' on him. 'Will I go back to his mother an' tell her that I've let him throw himself away? Lie still, ye little pinch av dynamite, an' coort-martial me afterwards.'

"'Good,' sez I; "'tis the likes av him makes the likes av the commandher-in-chief, but we must presarve thim. Fwhat d' you want to do, sorr?' sez I, very politeful.

"'Kill the beggars—kill the beggars!' he shqueaks; his big blue eyes fairly brimmin' wid tears.

"'An' how'll ye do that?' sez I. 'You've shquibbed off your revolver like a child wid a cracker; you can
make no play wid that fine large sword av yours; an' your hand's shakin' like an asp on a leaf. Lie still and grow,' sez I.

"'Get back to your comp'ny,' sez he; 'you're insolent!'

"'All in good time,' sez I, 'but I'll have a dhrink first.'

"Just thin Crook comes up, blue an' white all over where he wasn't red.

"'Wather!' sez he; 'I'm dead wid drouch! Oh, but it's a gran' day!'

"He dhrank half a skinful, and the rest he tilts into his chest, an' it fair hissed on the hairy hide av him. He sees the little orf'cer bhoy undher the sargint.

"'Fwhat's yonder?' sez he.

"'Mutiny, sor,' sez the sargint, an' the orf'cer bhoy begins pleadin' pitiful to Crook to be let go; but divil a bit wud Crook budge.

"'Kape him there,' he sez, "'tis no child's work this day. By the same token,' sez he, 'I'll confiscate that iligant nickel-plated scent-sprinkler av yours, for my own has been vomitin' dishgraceful!'

"The fork av his hand was black wid the back-spit av the machine. So he tuk the orf'cer bhoy's revolver. Ye may look, sor, but, by my faith, there's a dale more done in the field than iver gets into field ordhers!

"'Come on, Mulvaney,' sez Crook; 'is this a coort-martial?' The two av us wint back together into the mess an' the Paythans were still standin' up. They was not too impart'nint though, for the Tyrone was callin' wan to another to remimber Tim Coulan.

"Crook stopped outside av the strife an' looked anxious, his eyes rowlin' round'.
"'Fwhat is ut, sorr?' sez I; 'can I get ye anything?' ‘Where's a bugler?' sez he.

'I wint into the crowd—our men was dhrawin' breath behin' the Tyrone who was fightin' like sowls in tormint—an' prisintly I came acrost little Frehan, our bugler bhoys, pokin' roun' among the best wid a rifle an' bay'-nit.

"'Is amusin' yoursilf fwhat you're paid for, ye limb?' sez I, catchin' him by the scruff. 'Come out av that an' attind to your duty,' I sez; but the bhoy was not pleased. ‘'I've got wan,' sez he, grinnin', 'big as you, Mulvaney, an' fair half as ugly. Let me go get another.'

"I was dishpleased at the personability av that remark, so I tucks him under my arm an' carries him to Crook, who was watchin' how the fight wint. Crook cuffs him till the bhoy cries, an' thin sez nothin' for a whoile.

"The Paythans began to flicker onaisy, an' our men roared. 'Opin ordher! Double!' sez Crook. 'Blow, child, blow for the honor av the British arrmy!'

"That bhoy blew like a typhoon, an' the Tyrone an' we opined out as the Paythans broke, an' I saw that fwhat had gone before wud be kissin' an' huggin' to fwhat was to come. We'd dhruv thim into a broad part av the gut whin they gave, and thin we opined out an' fair danced down the valley, dhrivin' thim before us. Oh, 'twas love-ly, an' stiddy, too! There was the sargints on the flanks av what was left av us, kapin' touch, an' the fire was runnin' from flank to flank, an' the Paythans was dhroppin'. We opined out wid the widenin' av the valley, an' whin the valley narrowed we closed again like the shhticks on a lady's fan, an' at the far ind av the gut where they thried to stand, we fair blew them off their feet, for we had expinded very little ammunition by reason av the knife work."
"Hi used thirty rounds goin' down that valley," said Ortheris, "an' it was gentleman's work. Might 'a' done it in a white 'andkerchief an' pink silk stockin's, that part. Hi was on in that piece."

"You could ha' heard the Tyrone yellin' a mile away," said Mulvaney, "an' 'twas all their sargints cud do to get thim off. They was mad—mad—mad! Crook sits down in the quiet that fell whin we had gone down the valley, an' covers his face wid his hands. Prisintly we all came back again accordin' to our natures and dispo-sishins, for they, mark you, show through the hide av a man in that hour.

"'Bhoys! bhoys!' sez Crook to himself. 'I misdoubt we could ha' engaged at long range an' saved betther men than me.' He looked at our dead an' said no more."

"'Captain dear,' sez a man av the Tyrone comin' up wid his mouth bigger than iver his mother kissed ut, spittin' blood like a whale; 'captain dear,' sez he, 'if wan or two in the sthalls have been discommoded, the gal-lery have enjoyed the performinces av a Roshus.'

"Thin I knew that man for the Dublin dock-rat he was—wan av the bhoys that made the lessee av Silver's Theater gray before his time wid tearin' out the bowils av the benches an' t'rowin' thim into the pit. So I passed the wurrud that I knew when I was in the Ty-rone an' we lay in Dublin. 'I don't know who 'twas,' I whispers, 'an' I don't care, but any ways I'll knock the face av you, Tim Kelley.'

"'Eyah!' sez the man, 'was you there, too? We'll call ut Silver's Theater.' Half the Tyrone, knowin' the ould place, tuk ut up: so we called ut Silver's Theater.

"The little orf'cer bhoy av the Tyrone was thrimblin' an' cryin'. He had no heart for the coort martials that he talked so big upon. 'Ye'll do well later,' sez Crook,
very quiet, 'for not bein' allowed to kill yourself for amusemint.'

"'I'm a dishgraced man!' sez the little orf'cer bhoy.

"'Put me undher arrest, sorr, if you will, but, by my sowl, I'd do ut again sooner than face your mother wid you dead,' sez the sargint that had sat on his head, standin' to attention an' salutin'. But the young wan only cried as tho' his little heart was breakin'.

"Thin another man av the Tyrone came up, wid the fog av fightin' on him."

"The what, Mulvaney?"

"Fog av fightin'. You know, sorr, that, like makin' love, ut takes each man diff'rint. Now, I can't help bein' powerful sick whin I'm in action. Orth'ris, here, niver stops swearin' from ind to ind, an' the only time that Learoyd opins his mouth to sing is whin he is messin' wid other people's heads; for he's a dhirty fighter is Jock Learoyd. Recruities sometime cry, an' sometime they don't know fwhat they do, an' sometime they are all for cuttin' throats, an' such like dirtiness; but some men get heavy-dead-dhrunk on the fightin'. This man was. He was staggerin', an' his eyes were half shut, an' we cud hear him dhraw breath twinty yards away. He sees the little orf'cer bhoy, an' comes up, talkin' thick an' drowsy to himsilf. 'Blood the young whelp!' he sez; 'blood the young whelp;' an' wid that he threw up his arms, shpun roun', an' dropped at our feet, dead as a Paythan, an' there was niver sign or scratch on him. They said 'twas his heart was rotten, but oh, 'twas a quare thing to see!

"Thin we wint to bury our dead, for we wud not lave them to the Paythans, an' in movin' among the haythen we nearly lost that little orf'cer bhoy. He was for givin' wan divil wather and layin' himaisy against a rock. 'Be
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careful, sorr,' sez I; ‘a wounded Paythan’s worse than a live wan.’ My troth, before the words was out of my mouth, the man on the ground fires at the orf’cer bhoy lanin’ over him, an’ I saw the helmit fly. I dropped the butt on the face av the man an’ tuk his pistol. The little orf’cer bhoy turned very white, for the hair av half his head was singed away.

‘I tould you so, sorr!’ sez I; an’ ather that, whin he wanted to help a Paythan I stud wid the muzzle contagious to the ear. They dare not do anythin’ but curse. The Tyrone was growlin’ like dogs over a bone that has been taken away too soon, for they had seen their dead an’ they wanted to kill ivry sowl on the ground. Crook tould thim that he’d blow the hide off any man that misconducted himself; but, seeing that ut was the first time the Tyrone had iver seen their dead, I do not wondher they were on the sharp. ’Tis a shameful sight! Whin I first saw ut I wud niver ha’ given quarter to any man north of the Khaibar—no, nor woman either, for the women used to come out ather dhark—Auggrh!

“Well, evenshually we buried our dead an’ tuk away our wounded, an’ come over the brow av the hills to see the Scotchies an’ the Gurkys taking tay with the Paythans in bucketsfuls. We were a gang av dissolute ruffians, for the blood had caked the dust, an’ the sweat had cut the cake, an’ our bay’nts was hangin’ like butcher’s steels betune ur legs, an’ most av us were marked one way or another.

‘A staff orf’cer man, clean as a new rifle, rides up an’ sez: ‘What damned scarecrows are you?’

“A company av her majesty’s Black Tyrone, an’ wan av the ould rig’mint,’ sez Crook very quiet, givin’ our visitors the flure as ’twas.
‘Oh!’ sez the staff orf’cer; ‘did you dislodge that reserve?’

‘No!’ sez Crook, an’ the Tyrone laughed.

‘Thin fwhat the divil have ye done?’

‘Disthroyed ut,’ sez Crook, an’ he took us on, but not before Toomey that was in the Tyrone sez aloud, his voice somewhere in his stummick: ‘Fwhat in the name av misfortune does this parrit widout a tail mane by shtoppin’ the road av his betthers?’

‘The staff orf’cer wint blue, and Toomey makes him pink by changin’ to the voice av a minowderin’ woman an’ sayin’: ‘Come an’ kiss me, major dear, for me hus-band’s at the wars an’ I’m all alone at the depot.’

‘The staff orf’cer wint away, an’ I cud see Crook’s shoulthers shakin’.

‘His corp’ril checks Toomey. ‘Lave me alone,’ sez Toomey, widout a wink. ‘I was his bâtman before he was married an’ he knows fwhat I mane, av you don’t. There’s nothin’ like livin’ in the hight av society.’ D’you remember that, Orth’ris!”

“Hi do, Toomey, ’e died in ’orspital, next week it was, ’cause I bought ’arf his kit; an’ I remember after that —”

“Guarrd, turn out!”

The relief had come; it was four o’clock. “I’ll catch a kyart for you, sorr,” said Mulvaney, diving hastily into his accouterments. “Come up to the top av the fort an’ we’ll pershue our invistigations into McGrath’s shtable.” The relieved guard strolled round the main bastion on its way to the swimming-bath, and Learoyd grew almost talkative. Ortheris looked into the fort ditch and across the plain. “Ho! it’s weary waitin’ for Ma-ary!” he hummed; “but I’d like to kill some more
bloomin' Paythans before my time's up. War! Bloody war! North, east, south, and west."

"Amen," said Learoyd, slowly.

"Fwhat's here?" said Mulvaney, checking at a blur of white by the foot of the old sentry box. He stooped and touched it. "It's Norah—Norah McTaggart! Why, Nonie darlin', fwhat are ye doin' out av your mother's bed at this time?"

The two-year-old child of Sergeant McTaggart must have wandered for a breath of cool air to the very verge of the parapet of the fort ditch. Her tiny night-shift was gathered into a wisp round her neck and she moaned in her sleep. "See there!" said Mulvaney; "poor lamb! Look at the heat-rash on the innocent skin av her. 'Tis hard—crool hard even for us. Fwhat must it be for these? Wake up, Nonie, your mother will be woild about you. Begad, the child might ha' fallen into the ditch!"

He picked her up in the growing light, and set her on his shoulder, and her fair curls touched the grizzled stubble of his temples. Ortheris and Learoyd followed snapping their fingers, while Norah smiled at them a sleepy smile. Then caroled Mulvaney, clear as a lark, dancing the baby on his arm:

"If any young man should marry you,
Say nothin' about the joke;
That iver ye slep' in a sinthry box,
Wrapped up in a soldier's cloak."

"Though, on my sowl, Nonie," he said, gravely, "there was not much cloak about you. Niver mind, you won't dhress like this ten years to come. Kiss your friends an' run along to your mother."

Nonie, set down close to the married quarters, nodded with the quiet obedience of the soldier's child, but, ere
she pattered off over the flagged path, held up her lips to be kissed by the three musketeers. Ortheris wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and swore sentimentally; Learoyd turned pink; and the two walked away together. The Yorkshireman lifted up his voice and gave in thunder the chorus of "The Sentry Box," while Ortheris piped at his side.

"'Bin to a bloomin' sing-song, you two?" said the artilleryman, who was taking his cartridge down to the Morning Gun. "You're overmerry for these dashed days."

"I bid ye take care o' the brat, said he,
For it comes of a noble race,"

bellowed Learoyd. The voices died out in the swimming-bath.

"Oh, Terence!" I said, dropping into Mulvaney's speech, when we were alone, "it's you that have the tongue!"

He looked at me wearily; his eyes were sunk in his head and his face was drawn and white. "Eyah!" said he; "I've blandandhered thim through the night somehow, but can thim that helps others help thimselves? Answer me that, sorr!"

And over the bastions of Fort Amara broke the pitiless day.
IN THE MATTER OF A PRIVATE.

Hurrah! hurrah! a soldier's life for me!
Shout, boys, shout! for it makes you jolly and free.
—The Ramrod Corps.

People who have seen, state that one of the quaintest spectacles of human frailty is an outbreak of hysteric in a girl's school. It starts without warning, generally on a hot afternoon, among the elder pupils. A girl giggles till the giggle gets beyond control. Then she throws up her head, and cries: "Honk, honk, honk," like a wild goose, and tears mix with the laughter. If the mistress be wise, she will say something severe at this point to check matters. If she be tender-hearted, and send for a drink of water, the chances are largely in favor of another girl laughing at the afflicted one and herself collapsing. Thus the trouble spreads, and may end in half of what answers to the lower sixth of a boys' school rocking and whooping together. Given a week of warm weather, two stately promenades per diem, a heavy mutton and rice meal in the middle of the day, a certain amount of nagging from the teachers, and a few other things, some really amazing effects can be secured. At least, this is what folk say who have had experience.

Now, the mother superior of a convent and the colonel of a British infantry regiment would be justly shocked at any comparison being made between their respective charges. But it is a fact that, under certain circumstances, Thomas in bulk can be worked up into ditthering, rippling hysteria. He does not weep, but he shows his trouble unmistakably, and the consequences
get into the newspapers, and all the good and virtuous people who hardly know a Martini from a Snider say: "Take away the brute's ammunition!"

Thomas isn't a brute, and his business, which is to look after the virtuous people, demands that he shall have his ammunition to his hand. He doesn't wear silk stockings, and he really ought to be supplied with a new adjective to help him to express his opinions: but, for all that, he is a great man. If you call him "the heroic defender of the national honor" one day, and "a brutal and licentious soldiery" the next, you naturally bewilder him, and he looks upon you with suspicion. There is nobody to speak for Thomas except people who have theories to work off on him; and nobody understands Thomas except Thomas, and he does not know what is the matter with himself.

That is the prologue. This is the story:

Corporal Slane was engaged to be married to Miss Jhansi McKenna, whose history is well known in the regiment and elsewhere. He had secured his colonel's leave, and, being popular with the men, every arrangement had been made to give the wedding what Private Ortheris called "eeklar." It fell in the heart of the hot weather, and, after the wedding, Slane was going up to the hills with the bride. None the less, Slane's grievance was that the affair would be only a hired carriage wedding, and he felt that the "eeklar" of that was meager. Miss McKenna did not care so much. The sergeant's wife was helping her to make her wedding-dress, and she was very busy. Slane was, just then, the only moderately contented man in barracks. All the rest were more or less miserable.

And they had so much to make them happy, too! All their work was over at eight in the morning, and for the
rest of the day they could lie on their backs and smoke canteen plug and swear at the punkah-coolies. They enjoyed a fine, full flesh meal in the middle of the day, and then threw themselves down on their cots and sweated and slept till it was cool enough to go out with their “towny,” whose vocabulary contained less than six hundred words, and the adjective, and whose views on every conceivable question they had heard many months before.

There was the canteen of course, and there was the temperance-room with the second-hand papers in it; but a man of any profession can not read for eight hours a day in a temperature of ninety-six or ninety-eight degrees in the shade, running up sometimes to one hundred and three degrees at midnight. Very few men, even though they get a pannikin of flat, stale, muddy beer and hide it under their cots, can continue drinking for six hours a day. One man tried, but he died, and nearly the whole regiment went to his funeral because it gave them something to do. It was too early for the modified excitement of fever or cholera. The men could only wait and wait and wait, and watch the shadow of the barrack creeping across the blinding white dust. That was a gay life!

They lounged about cantonments—it was too hot for any sort of game, and almost too hot for vice—and fuddled themselves in the evening, and filled themselves to distension with the healthy nitrogenous food provided for them, and the more they stoked the less exercise they took and more explosive they grew. Then the tempers began to wear away, and men fell a-brooding over insults real or imaginary. They had nothing else to think of. The tone of the “repartees” changed, and instead of saying, light-heartedly, “I’ll knock your silly face in,” men grew laboriously polite and hinted that the canton-
ments were not big enough for themselves and their enemy, and that there would be more space for one of the two in a place which it is not polite to mention.

It may have been the devil who arranged the thing, but the fact of the case is that Losson had for a long time been worrying Simmons in an aimless way. It gave him occupation. The two men had their cots side by side, and would sometimes spend a long afternoon swearing at each other; but Simmons was afraid of Losson and dared not challenge him to a fight. He thought over the words in the hot still nights, and half the hate he felt toward Losson he vented on the wretched punkah-coolie.

Losson bought a parrot in the bazaar, and put it into a little cage, and lowered the cage into the cool darkness of a well, and sat on the well-curb, shouting bad language down to the parrot. He taught it to say: "Simmons, ye so-oor," which means swine, and several other things entirely unfit for publication. He was a big gross man, and he shook like a jelly when the parrot caught the sentence correctly. Simmons, however, shook with rage, for all the room were laughing at him—the parrot was such a disreputable puff of green feathers and looked so human when it chattered. Losson used to sit, swinging his fat legs, on the side of the cot, and ask the parrot what it thought of Simmons. The parrot would answer: "Simmons, ye so-oor." "Good boy," Losson used to say, scratching the parrot's head; "ye 'ear that, Sim?" And Simmons used to turn over on his stomach and make answer: "I 'ear. Take 'eed you don't 'ear something one of these days."

In the restless nights, after he had been asleep all day, fits of blind rage came upon Simmons and held him till he trembled all over, while he thought in how many dif-
ferent ways he would slay Losson. Sometimes he would picture himself trampling the life out of the man, with heavy ammunition boots, and at others smashing in his face with the butt, and at others jumping on his shoulders and dragging the head back till the neck-bone cracked. Then his mouth would feel hot and fevered, and he would reach out for another sup of the beer in the pannikin.

But the fancy that came to him most frequently and stayed with him longest was one connected with the great roll of fat under Losson's right ear. He noticed it first on a moonlight night, and thereafter it was always before his eyes. It was a fascinating roll of fat. A man could get his hand upon it and tear away one side of the neck; or he could place the muzzle of a rifle on it and blow away all the head in a flash. Losson had no right to be sleek and contented and well-to-do, when he, Simmons, was the butt of the room. Some day, perhaps, he would show those who laughed at the "Simmons, ye so-oor" joke, that he was as good as the rest, and held a man's life in the crook of his forefinger. When Losson snored, Simmons hated him more bitterly than ever. Why should Losson be able to sleep when Simmons had to stay awake hour after hour, tossing and turning on the tapes, with the dull pain gnawing into his right side and his head throbbing and aching after canteen? He thought over this for many nights, and the world became unprofitable to him. He even blunted his naturally fine appetite with beer and tobacco; and all the while the parrot talked at and made a mock of him.

The heat continued and the tempers wore away more quickly than before. A sergeant's wife died of heat-apoplexy in the night, and the rumor ran abroad that it was
cholera. Men rejoiced openly, hoping that it would spread and send them into camp. But that was a false alarm.

It was late on a Tuesday evening, and the men were waiting in the deep double verandas for "last posts," when Simmons went to the box at the foot of his bed, took out his pipe, and slammed the lid down with a bang that echoed through the deserted barrack like the crack of a rifle. Ordinarily speaking, the men would have taken no notice; but their nerves were fretted to fiddle-strings. They jumped up and three or four clattered into the barrack-room only to find Simmons kneeling by his box.

"Ow! It's you, is it?" they said, and laughed foolishly; "we thought 'twas——"

Simmons rose slowly. If the accident had so shaken his fellows, what would not the reality do?"

"You thought it was—did you? And what makes you think?" he said, lashing himself into madness as he went on; "to hell with your thinking, ye dirty spies."

"Simmons, ye so-oor," chuckled the parrot in the veranda, sleepily, recognizing a well-known voice. And that was absolutely all.

The tension snapped. Simmons fell back on the armrack deliberately—the men were at the far end of the room—and took out his rifle and packet of ammunition. "Don't go playing the goat, Sim!" said Losson; "put it down," but there was a quaver in his voice. Another man stooped, slipped his boot and hurled it at Simmons's head. The prompt answer was a shot which, fired at random, found its billet in Losson's throat. Losson fell forward without a word, and the others scattered.

"You thought it was!" yelled Simmons. "You're drivin' me to it! I tell you you're drivin' me to it! Get
up, Losson, an' don't lie shammin' there—you an' your blasted parrit that druv me to it!"

But there was an unaffected reality about Losson's pose that showed Simmons what he had done. The men were still clamoring in the veranda. Simmons appropriated two more packets of ammunition and ran into the moonlight, muttering: "I'll make a night of it. Thirty roun's, an' the last for myself. Take you that, you dogs!"

He dropped on one knee and fired into the brown of the men in the veranda, but the bullet flew high, and landed in the brickwork with a vicious "phwit" that made some of the younger men turn pale. It is, as musketry theorists observe, one thing to fire and another to be fired at.

Then the instinct of the chase flared up. The news spread from barrack to barrack, and the men doubled out intent on the capture of Simmons, the wild beast, who was heading for the cavalry parade-ground, stopping now and again to send back a shot and a curse in the direction of his pursuers.

"I'll learn you to spy on me!" he shouted "I'll learn you to give me dorg's names! Come on, the 'ole lot o' you! Colonel John Anthony Deever, C. B.!”—he turned toward the infantry mess and shook his rifle—"you think yourself the devil of a man—but I tell you that if you put your ugly old carcass outside o' that door, I'll make you the poorest-lookin' man in the army. Come out, Colonel John Anthony Deever, C. B.! Come out and see me practiss on the rainge. I'm the crack shot of the 'ole bloomin 'battalion." In proof of which statement Simmons fired at the lighted windows of the mess-house.

"Private Simmons, E Comp'ny, on the cavalry p'rade-
ground, sir, with thirty rounds,” said a sergeant, breathlessly, to the colonel. “Shootin’ right and lef’, sir. Shot Private Losson. What’s to be done, sir?”

Colonel John Anthony Deever, C. B., sallied out, only to be saluted by a spurt of dust at his feet.

“Pull up!” said the second in command; “I don’t want my step in that way, colonel. He’s as dangerous as a mad dog!”

“Shoot him like one, then,” said the colonel, bitterly, “if he won’t take his chance. My regiment, too! If it had been the Towheads I could have understood.”

Private Simmons had occupied a strong position near a well on the edge of the parade-ground, and was defying the regiment to come on. The regiment was not anxious to comply with the request, for there is small honor in being shot by a fellow-private. Only Corporal Slane, rifle in hand, threw himself down on the ground, and wormed his way toward the well.

“Don’t shoot,” said he to the men round him; “like as not you’ll ’it me. I’ll catch the beggar, livin’!”

Simmons ceased shooting for awhile, and the noise of trap-wheels could be heard across the plain. Major Oldyne, commanding the horse battery, was coming back from a dinner in the civil lines; was driving after his usual custom—that is to say, as fast as the horse could go.

“A orf’cer! A blooming spangled orf’cer!” shrieked Simmons; “I’ll make a scarecrow of that orf’cer!” The trap stopped.

“What’s this?” demanded the major of gunners. “You there, drop your rifle!”

“Why, it’s Jerry Blazes! I ain’t got no quarrel with you, Jerry Blazes. Pass friend’, an’ all’s well!”

But Jerry Blazes had not the faintest intention of passing a dangerous murderer. He was, as his adoring bat-
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battery swore long and fervently, without knowledge of fear, and they were surely the best judges, for Jerry Blazes, it was notorious, had done his possible to kill a man each time the battery went out.

He walked toward Simmons, with the intention of rushing him, and knocking him down.

"Don't make me do it, sir," said Simmons. "I ain't got nothing ag'in you. Ah! you would?"—the major broke into a run—"Take that then!"

The major dropped with a bullet through his shoulder, and Simmons stood over him. He had lost the satisfaction of killing Losson in the desired way; but here was a helpless body to his hand. Should he slip in another cartridge, and blow off the head, or with the butt smash in the white face? He stopped to consider, and a cry went up from the far side of the parade-ground: "He's killed Jerry Blazes!" But in the shelter of the well-pillars Simmons was safe, except when he stepped out to fire. "I'll blow yer 'andsome 'ead off, Jerry Blazes," said Simmons, reflectively; "six an' three is nine an' one is ten, an' that leaves me another nineteen, an' one for myself." He tugged at the string of the second packet of ammunition. Corporal Slane crawled out of the shadow of a bank into the moonlight.

"I see you!" said Simmons; "come a bit furder on an' I'll do for you."

"I'm comin'," said Corporal Slane, briefly; "you done a bad day's work, Sim. Come out 'ere an' come back with me."

"Come to——" laughed Simmons, sending a cartridge home with his thumb. "Not before I've settlled you an' Jerry Blazes."

The corporal was lying at full length in the dust of the parade-ground, a rifle under him. Some of the less cau-
tious men in the distance shouted: "Shoot 'im! Shoot 'im, Slane!"

"You move 'and or foot, Slane," said Simmons, "an' I'll kick Jerry Blazes's 'ead in, and shoot you after."

"I ain't movin'," said the corporal, raising his head; "you daren't 'it a man on 'is legs. Let go o' Jerry Blazes an' come out o' that with your fists. Come an' 'it me. You daren't, you bloomin' dog-shooter!"

"I dare!"

"You lie, you man-sticker. You sneakin', sheeny butcher, you lie! See there!" Slane kicked the rifle away, and stood up in the peril of his life. "Come on, now!"

The temptation was more than Simmons could resist, for the corporal in his white clothes offered a perfect mark.

"Don't misname me," shouted Simmons, firing as he spoke. The shot missed, and the shooter, blind with rage, threw his rifle down and rushed at Slane from the protection of the well. Within striking distance, he kicked savagely at Slane's stomach, but the weedy corporal knew something of Simmons's weakness, and knew, too, the deadly guard for that kick. Bowing forward and drawing up his right leg till the heel of the right foot was set some three inches above the inside of the left knee-cap, he met the blow standing on one leg—exactly as Gonds stand when they meditate—and ready for the fall that would follow. There was an oath, the corporal fell over to his own left as shinbone met shinbone, and the private collapsed, his right leg broken an inch above the ankle.

"Pity you don't know that guard, Sim," said Slane, spitting out the dust as he rose. Then raising his voice: "Come an' take him orf. I've bruk 'is leg!" This was
not strictly true, for the private had accomplished his own downfall, since it is the special merit of that legguard that the harder the kick the greater the kicker's discomfiture.

Slane walked to Jerry Blazes and hung over him with exaggerated solicitude, while Simmons, weeping with pain, was carried away. "'Ope you ain't 'urt badly, sir," said Slane. The major had fainted, and there was an ugly, ragged hole through the top of his arm. Slane knelt down and murmured: "S'elp me, I believe 'e's dead. Well, if that ain't my blooming luck all over!"

But the major was destined to lead his battery afield for many a long day with unshaken nerve. He was removed, and nursed and petted into convalescence, while the battery discussed the wisdom of capturing Simmons and blowing him from a gun. They idolized their major, and his reappearance on parade resulted in a scene nowhere provided for in the army regulations.

Great, too, was the glory that fell to Slane's share. The gunners would have made him drunk thrice a day for at least a fortnight. Even the colonel of his own regiment complimented him upon his coolness, and the local paper called him a hero. Which things did not puff him up. When the major proffered him money and thanks, the virtuous corporal took the one and put aside the other. But he had a request to make and prefaced it with many a "Beg y' pardon, sir." Could the major see his way to letting the Slane-McKenna wedding be adorned by the presence of four battery horses to pull a hired barouche? The major could, and so could the battery. Excessively so. It was a gorgeous wedding.

* * * * *

"Wot did I do it for?" said Corporal Slane. "For the 'orses o' course. Jhansi ain't a beauty to look at, but
I wasn’t goin’ to ‘ave a hired turnout. Jerry Blazes? If I ’adn’t ’a’ wanted something, Sim might ha’ blowed Jerry Blazes’ blooming ’ead into Hirish stew for aught I’d ’a’ cared.”

And they hanged Private Simmons—hanged him as high as Haman in hollow square of the regiment; and the colonel said it was drink; and the chaplain was sure it was the devil; and Simmons fancied it was both, but he didn’t know, and only hoped his fate would be a warn-ing to his companions; and half a dozen “intelligent publicists” wrote six beautiful leading articles on “The Prevalence of Crime in the Army.”

But not a soul thought of comparing the “bloody-minded Simmons” to the squawking, gap-ing school-girl with which this story opens.

That would have been too absurd!
BLACK JACK.

To the wake av Tim O'Hara
Came company,
All St. Patrick's Alley
Was there to see.
—The Wake of Tim O'Hara.

There is a writer called Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson, who makes most delicate inlay-work in black and white, and files out to the fraction of a hair. He has written a story about a suicide club, wherein men gambled for death, because other amusements did not bite sufficiently. My friend Private Mulvaney knows nothing about Mr. Stevenson, but he once assisted informally at a meeting of almost such a club as that gentleman has described; and his words are true.

As the Three Musketeers share their silver, tobacco, and liquor together, as they protect each other in barracks or camp, and as they rejoice together over the joy of one, so do they divide their sorrows. When Ortheris's irrepressible tongue has brought him into cells for a season, or Learoyd has run amuck through his kit and accouterments, or Mulvaney has indulged in strong waters, and under their influence reproved his commanding officer, you can see the trouble in the faces of the untouched twain. And the rest of the regiment know that comment or jest is unsafe. Generally the three avoid orderly-room and the corner shop that follows, leaving both to the young bloods who have not sown their wild oats; but there are occasions. . . . For instance, Ortheris was sitting on the draw-bridge of the main gate of Fort Amara, with his hands in his pockets
and his pipe, bowl down, in his mouth. Learoyd was lying at full length on the turf of the glacis, kicking his heels in the air, and I came round the corner and asked for Mulvaney.

Ortheris spat into the ditch and shook his head. "No good seein' 'im now," said Ortheris; "'e's a bloomin' camel. Listen."

I heard on the flags of the veranda opposite to the cells, which are close to the guard-room, a measured step that I could have identified in the tramp of an army. There were twenty paces crescendo, a pause, and then twenty diminuendo.

"That's 'im," said Ortheris; "my Gawd, that's 'im! All for a bloomin' button you could see your face in an' a bit o' lip that a bloomin' harkangel would 'a' guv back."

Mulvaney was doing pack-drill—was compelled, that is to say, to walk up and down for certain hours in full marching order, with rifle, bayonet, ammunition, knapsack, and overcoat. And his offense was being dirty on parade! I nearly fell into the fort ditch with astonishment and wrath, for Mulvaney is the smartest man that ever mounted guard, and would as soon think of turning out uncleanly as of dispensing with his trousers.

"Who was the sergeant that checked him?" I asked.

"Mullins, o' course," said Ortheris. "There ain't no other man would whip 'im on the peg so. But Mullins ain't a man. 'E's a dirty little pig-scraper, that's wot 'e is."

"What did Mulvaney say? He's not the make of man to take that quietly."

"Said! Bin better for 'im if 'e'd shut 'is mouth. Lord, 'ow we laughed! 'Sargint,' 'e sez, 'ye say I'm dirty. Well,' sez 'e, 'when your wife lets you blow your own
He turned toward the infantry mess and shook his rifle.—Page 81.
nose for yourself, perhaps you'll know wot dirt is. You're himperfectly eddicated, sargint,' sez 'e, an' then we fell in. But after p'rade, 'e was up an' Mullins was swearin' 'imself black in the face at ord'ly-room that Mulvaney 'ad called 'im a swine an' Lord knows wot all. You know Mullins. 'E'll 'ave 'is 'ead broke in one o' these days. 'E's too big a bloomin' liar for ord'nary consumption. 'Three hours' can an' kit,' sez the colonel: 'not for bein' dirty on p'rade, but for 'avin' said somethin' to Mullins, tho' I do not believe,' sez 'e, 'you said wot 'e said you said.' An' Mulvaney fell away sayin' nothing'. You know 'e never speaks to the colonel for fear o' gettin' 'imself fresh copped."

Mullins, a very young and very much married ser-geant, whose manners were partly the result of innate depravity and partly of imperfectly digested board school, came over the bridge, and most rudely asked Ortheris what he was doing.

"Me?" said Ortheris. "Ow! I'm waiting for my c'mission. 'Seed it comin' along yit?"

Mullins turned purple and passed on. There was the sound of a gentle chuckle from the glacis where Learoyd lay.

"'E expects to get his c'mission some day," explained Ortheris; "Gawd 'elp the mess that 'ave to put their 'ands into the same kiddy as 'im! Wot time d'you make it, sir? Fower! Mulvaney 'll be out in 'arf an hour. You don't want to buy a dorg, sir, do you? A pup you can trust—'arf Rampore by the colonel's grey'ound."

"Ortheris," I answered, sternly, for I knew what was in his mind, "do you mean to say that——"

"I didn't mean to arx money o' you, any'ow," said Ortheris; "Id 'a' sold you the dorg good an' cheap, but—but—I know Mulvaney 'll want somethin' after we've
walked 'im orf, an' I ain't got nothin', nor 'e 'asn't neither. I'd sooner sell you the dorg, sir. 'S trewth I would!"

A shadow fell on the draw-bridge, and Ortheris began to rise into the air, lifted by a huge hand upon his collar.

"Onything but t' braass," said Learoyd, quietly, as he held the Londoner over the ditch. "Onything but t' braass, Orth'ris, ma son! Ah've got one rupee eight annas of ma own." He showed two coins, and replaced Ortheris on the draw-bridge rail.

"Very good," I said; "where are you going to?"

"Goin' to walk 'im orf wen 'e comes out—two miles or three or fower," said Ortheris.

The footsteps within ceased. I heard the dull thud of a knapsack falling on a bedstead, followed by the rattle of arms. Ten minutes later, Mulvaney, faultlessly attired, his lips compressed and his face as black as a thunder-storm, stalked into the sunshine on the draw-bridge. Learoyd and Ortheris sprung from my side and closed in upon him, both leaning toward as horses lean upon the pole. In an instant they had disappeared down the sunken road to the cantonments, and I was left alone. Mulvaney had not seen fit to recognize me; wherefore, I felt that his trouble must be heavy upon him.

I climbed one of the bastions and watched the figures of the Three Musketeers grow smaller and smaller across the plain. They were walking as fast as they could put foot to the ground, and their heads were bowed. They fetched a great compass round the parade-ground, skirted the cavalry lines, and vanished in the belt of trees that fringes the low land by the river.

I followed slowly, and sighted them—dusty, sweating, but still keeping up their long, swinging tramp—on the
river-bank. They crashed through the forest reserve, headed toward the bridge of boats, and presently established themselves on the bow of one of the pontoons. I rode cautiously till I saw three puffs of white smoke rise and die out in the clear evening air, and knew that peace had come again. At the bridge-head they waved me forward with gestures of welcome.

"Tie up your 'orse," shouted Ortheris, "an' come on, sir. We're all goin' 'ome in this 'ere bloomin' boat."

From the bridge-head to the forest officers' bungalow is but a step. The mess-man was there, and would see that a man held my horse. Did the sahib require aught else—a peg, or beer? Ritchie Sahib had left half a dozen bottles of the latter, but since the sahib was a friend of Ritchie Sahib, and, he, the mess-man, was a poor man—

I gave my order quietly, and returned to the bridge. Mulvaney had taken off his boots, and was dabbling his toes in the water; Learoyd was lying on his back on the pontoon; and Ortheris was pretending to row with a big bamboo.

"I'm an ould fool," said Mulvaney, reflectively, "dhraggin' you two out here bekaze I was undher the black dog—sulkin' like a child. Me that was soldierin' when Mullins, an' be damned to him, was shquealin' on a counterpin for foive shillin's a week, an' that not paid! Bhoys, I've took you foive miles out av natural pevarsity. Phew!"

"Wot's the odds as long as you're 'appy?" said Ortheris, applying himself afresh to the bamboo. "As well 'ere as anywhere else."

Learoyd held up a rupee and an eight anna bit, and shook his head sorrowfully. "Five miles from t' canteen, all along o' Mulvaney's blaasted pride."

"I know ut," said Mulvaney, penitently. "Why will
ye come wid me? An' yet I wud be mortal sorry if ye did not—any time—though I am ould enough to know betther. But I will do penance. I will take a drhink av wather.”

Ortheris squeaked shrilly. The butler of the forest bungalow was standing near the railings with a basket, uncertain how to clamber down to the pontoon.

“Might 'a' know'd you'd 'a' got liquor out o' bloomin' desert, sir,” said Ortheris, gracefully, to me. Then to the mess-man: “Easy with them there bottles. They’re worth their weight in gold. Jock, ye long-armed beggar, get out o' that an' hike 'em down.”

Learoyd had the basket on the pontoon in an instant, and the Three Musketeers gathered round it with dry lips. They drank my health in due and ancient form, and thereafter tobacco tasted sweeter than ever. They absorbed all the beer, and disposed themselves in picturesque attitudes to admire the setting sun—no man speaking for awhile.

Mulvaney’s head dropped upon his chest, and we thought that he was asleep.

“What on earth did you come so far for?” I whispered to Ortheris.

“To walk 'im orf, o' course. When 'e's been checked we allus walks 'im orf. 'E ain't fit to be spoke to those times—nor 'e ain't fit to leave alone neither. So we takes 'im till 'e is.”

Mulvaney raised his head, and stared straight into the sunset. “I had my rifle,” said he, dreamily, “an' I had my bay'nit, an' Mullins came round the corner, an' he looked in my face an' grinned dishpiteful. ‘You can’t blow your own nose,’ sez he. Now, I can not tell fwhat Mullins's expayrience may ha' been, but, Mother av God, he was nearer to his death that minut’ than I have
iver been to mine—and that's less than the thicknuss av a hair!"

"Yes," said Ortheris, calmly, "you'd look fine with all your buttons took orf, an' the band in front o' you, walkin' roun' slow time. We're both front-rank men, me an' Jock, when the rig'ment's in hollow square. Bloomin' fine you'd look. 'The Lord giveth an' the Lord taketh awai— Heasy with that there drop! Blessed be the naime o' the Lord!'" He gulped in a quaint and suggestive fashion.

"Mullins! Wot's Mullins?" said Learoyd, slowly. "Ah'd take a coomp'ny o' Mullinses—ma hand behind me. Sitha, Mulvaney, dunnat be a fool."

"You were not checked for fwhat you did not do, an' made a mock av ather. 'Twas for less than that the Tyrone wud ha' sent O'Hara to hell, instid av lettin' him go by his own choosin', whin Rafferty shot him," retorted Mulvaney.

"And who stopped the Tyrone from doing it?" I asked.

"That ould fool who's sorry he didn't stick the pig Mullins." His head dropped again. When he raised it he shivered and put his hand on the shoulders of his two companions.

"Ye've walked the divil out av me, bhoys," said he.

Ortheris shot out the red-hot dottel of his pipe on the back of the hairy fist. "They say 'ell's 'otter than that," said he, as Mulvaney swore aloud. "You be warned so. Look yonder!"—he pointed across the river to a ruined temple—"Me an' you an' 'im"—he indicated me by a jerk of his head—"was there one day when Hi made a bloomin' show o' myself. You an' 'im stopped me doin' such—an' Hi was on'y wishful for to desert. You are makin' a bigger bloomin' show o' yourself now."

"Don't mind him, Mulvaney," I said; "Dinah Shadd
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won't let you hang yourself yet awhile, and you don't intend to try it either. Let's hear about the Tyrone and O'Hara. Rafferty shot him for fooling with his wife. What happened before that?"

"There's no fool like an ould fool. You know you can do anythin' wid me whin I'm talkin'. Did I say I wud like to cut Mullins's liver out? I deny the imputashin, for fear that Orth'ris here wud report me—Ah! You wud tip me into the river, wud you? Sit quiet, little man. Any ways, Mullins is not worth the trouble av an extra p'rade, an' I will trate him wid outrajis contimpt. The Tyrone an' O'Hara! O'Hara an' the Tyrone, begad! Ould days are hard to bring back into the mouth, but they're always inside the head."

Followed a long pause.

"O'Hara was a divil. Though I saved him, for the honor av the rig'mint, from his death that time, I say it now. He was a divil—a long, bould, black-haired divil."

"Which way?" asked Ortheris.

"Women."

"Then I know another."

"Not more than in reason, if you mane me, ye warped walkin'-shtick. I have been young, an' for why should I not have tuk what I cud? Did I iver, whin I was corp'ril, use the rise av my rank—wan step an' that taken away, more's the sorrow an' the fault av me!—to prosecute a nefarious inthrigue, as O'Hara did? Did I, whin I was corp'ril, lay my spite upon a man an' make his life a dog's life from day to day? Did I lie, as O'Hara lied, till the young wans in the Tyrone turned white wid the fear av the judgment av God killin' thim all in a lump, as ut killed the woman at Devizes? I did not! I have sinned my sins an' I have made my confesshin, an' Father Victor knows the worst av me. O'Hara was tuk, before he
cud spake, on Rafferty's door-step, an' no man knows the worst av him. But this much I know!

"The Tyrone was recruited any fashion in the ould days. A draf' from Connemara—a draf' from Portsmouth—a draf' from Kerry, an' that was a blazin' bad draf'—here, there and everywhere—but the large av thim was Oirish—Black Oirish. Now there are Oirish an' Oirish. The good are good as the best, but the bad are wurrst than the wurrst. 'Tis this way. They clog together in pieces as fast as thieves, an' no wan knows fwhat they will do till wan turns informer an' the gang is bruk. But ut begins again, a day later, meetin' in holes an' corners an' swearin' bloody oaths an' shtickin' a man in the back an' runnin' away, an' thin waitin' for the blood-money on the reward papers—to see if it's worth enough. Those are the Black Oirish, an' 'tis they that bring dishgrace upon the name av Oireland, an' thim I wud kill—as I nearly killed wan wanst.

"But to reshume. My room—'twas before I was married—was wid twelve av the scum av the earth—the pickin's av the gutter—mane men that wud neither laugh nor talk nor yet get dhrunk as a man shud. They thried some av their dog's thricks on me, but I dhrew a line round my cot, an' the man that thransgressed ut wint into hospital for three days good.

"O'Hara had put his spite on the room—he was my color sargint—an' nothin' cud we do to plaze him. I was younger than I am now, an' I tuk what I got in the way av dressing down and punishmint-dhrill wid my tongue in my cheek. But it was diff'rint wid the others, an' why I can not say, except that some men are borrun mane an' go to dhirty murdher where a fist is more than enough. Afther a whoile, they changed their chune to
me an' was desp'rit frien'ly—all twelve av thim cursin' O'Hara in chorus.

"'Eyah,' sez I, 'O'Hara's a divil and I'm not for de-nyin' ut, but is he the only man in the wurruld? Let him go. He'll get tired av findin' our kit foul an' our 'counterments onproperly kep'."

"'We will not let him go,' sez they.

"'Thin take him,' sez I, 'an' a dashed poor yield you will get for your throuble.'

"'Is he not misconductin' himself wid Slimmy's wife?' sez another.

"'She's common to the rig'mint,' sez I. 'Fwhat has made ye this partic'lar on a suddint?'

"'Has he not put his spite on the roomful av us? Can we do anythin' that he will not check us for?' sez another.

"'That's thrue,' sez I.

"'Will ye not help us to do aught,' sez another—'a big bould man like you?'

"'I will break his head upon his shoulthers av he puts hand on me,' sez I. 'I will give him the lie av he says that I'm dhirty, an' I wud not mind duckin' him in the artillery troughs if ut was not that I'm thryin' for my shtripes.'

"'Is that all ye will do?' sez another. 'Have ye no more spunk than that, ye blood-dhrawn calf?'

"'Blood-dhrawn I may be,' says I, gettin' back to my cot an' makin' my line round ut; 'but ye know that the man who comes acrost this mark will be more blood-dhrawn than me. No man gives me the name in my mouth,' I sez. 'Ondersthand, I will have no part wid you in anythin' ye do, nor will I raise my fist to my shuperior. Is any wan comin' on?' sez I.

"'They made no move, tho' I gave thim full time, but
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stud growlin' an' snarlin' together at wan ind av the room. I tuck up my cap and wint out to canteen, thinkin' no little av mesilf, an' there I grew most ondantly dhunk in my legs. My head was all reasonable.

"'Houligan,' I sez to a man in E Comp'ny that was by way av bein' a frind av mine; 'I'm overtuk from the belt down. Do you give me the touch av your shoul-ther to presarve my formation an' march me acrost the ground into the high grass. I'll sleep ut off there,' sez I; an' Houligan—he's dead now, but good he was while he lasted—walked wid me, givin' me the touch whin I wint wide, ontil we came to the high grass, an' my faith, the sky an' the earth was fair rowlin' undher me. I made for where the grass was thickust, an' there I slep' off my liquor wid an aisy conscience. I did not desire to come on books too frequint; my characther havin' been shotless for the good half av a year.

"'Whin I roused, the dhrink was dyin' out in me, an' I felt as though a she-cat had littered in my mouth. I had not learned to hould my liquor wid comfort in thim days. 'Tis little betther I am now. 'I will get Houligan to pour a bucket over my head,' thinks I, an' wud ha' risen, but I heard some wan say: 'Mulvaney can take the blame av ut for the backslidin' hound he is.'

"'Oho!' sez I, an' my head rang like a guard-room gong 'fwhat is the blame that this young man must take to oblige Tim Vulmea?' For 'twas Tim Vulmea that shpoke. I turned on my belly an' crawled through the grass, a bit at a time, to where the spache came from. There was the twelve av my room sittin' down in a little patch, the dhry grass wavin' above their heads an' the sin av black murdher in their hearts. I put the stuff aside to get clear view.

"'Fwhat's that?' sez wan man, jumpin' up.
"'A dog,' says Vulmea. 'You're a nice hand to this job! As I said, Mulvaney will take the blame—av ut comes to a pinch.'

"'Tis hard to swear a man's life away,' sez a young wan.

"'Thank ye for that,' thinks I. 'Now, fwhat the divil are you paragins conthrivin' against me?'

"'Tis as easy as dhrinkin' your quart,' sez Vulmea. 'At seven or thereon, O'Hara will come acrost to the married quarters, goin' to call on Slimmy's wife, the swine! Wan av us'll pass the wurrd to the room an' we shtart the divil an' all av a shine—laughin' an' crackin' on an' t'rowin' our boots about. Thin O'Hara will come to give us the ordher to be quiet, the more by token bekaze the room-lamp will be knocked over in the larkin'. He will take the straight road to the ind door where there's the lamp in the veranda, an' that'll bring him clear against the light as he sthands. He will not be able to look into the dhark. Wan av us will loose off, an' a close shot ut will be, an' shame to the man that misses. 'Twill be Mulvaney's rifle, she that is at the head av the rack—there's no mistakin' that long-shtocked, cross-eyed bitch even in the dhark.'

"The thief misnamed my ould firin'piece out av jealousy—I was pershuaded av that—an' ut made me more angry than all.

"But Vulmea goes on: 'O'Hara will dhrop, an' by the time the light's lit again, there'll be some six av us on the chest av Mulvaney, cryin' murdher an' rape. Mulvaney's cot is near the ind door, an' the shmokin' rifle will be lyin' undher him whin we've knocked him over. We know, an' all the rig'mint knows, that Mulvaney has given O'Hara more lip than any man av us. Will there be any doubt at the coort-martial? Wud twelve honust sodger-
bhoys swear away the life av a dear, quiet, swate-timpered man such as is Mulvaney—wid his line av pipe-clay roun' his cot, threatenin' us wid murdher av we overshtepped ut, as we can truthful testify?

"'Mary, Mother av Mercy!' thinks I to myself; 'it is this to have an unruly mimer an' fistes fit to use! Oh, the sneakin' hounds!"

"The big dhrops ran down my face, for I was wake wid the liquor an' had not the full av my wits about me. I laid shtill an' heard thim workin' themselves up to swear my life by tellin' tales av ivry time I had put my mark on wan or another; an' my faith, they was few that was not so dishtinguished. 'Twas all in the way av fair fight, though, for niver did I raise my hand excipt whin they had provoked me to ut.

"'Tis all well,' sez wan av thim, 'but who's to do this shootin'?'

"'Fwhat matther?' sez Vulmea. 'Tis Mulvaney will do that—at the coort-martial.'

"'He will so,' sez the man, 'but whose hand is put to the trigger—in the room?'

"'Who'll do ut?' sez Vulmea, lookin' round, but divil a man answered. They began to dishpute till Kiss, that was always playing' Shpoil Five, sez: 'Thry the kyards!' Wid that he opined his jackut an' tuk out the greasy palammers, an' they all fell in wid the notion.

"'Deal on!' sez Vulmea, wid a big rattlin' oath, 'an' the Black Curse av Shielygh come to the man that will not do his duty as the kyards say. Amin!'

"'Black Jack is the masther,' sez Kiss, dealin'. Black Jack, sorr, I shud expaytiate to you, is the ace of shpades which from time immimorial has been intimately connected wid battle, murdher an' suddin death.

"Wanst Kiss dealt an' there was no sign, but the men
was whiote wid the workin's av their sowls. Twice Kiss dealt, an' there was a gray shine on their cheeks like the mess av an egg. Three times Kiss dealt an' they was blue. 'Have ye not lost him?' sez Vulmea, wipin' the sweat on him. 'Let's ha' done quick!' 'Quick ut is,' sez Kiss, t'rowin' him the kyard; an' ut fell face up on his knee—Black Jack!

'Thin they all cackled wid laughin'. 'Duty thrippence,' sez wan av thim, 'an' damned cheap at that price!' But I cud see they all dhrew a little away from Vulmea an' lef' him sittin' playin' wid the kyard. Vulmea sez no word for awhoile but licked his lips—cat-ways. Thin he threw up his head an' made the men swear by ivry oath known an' unknown to stand by him not alone in the room, but at the coort-martial that was to set on me! He tould off five av the biggest to stretch me on my cot whin the shot was fired, an' another man he tould off to put out the light, an' yet another to load my rifle. He wud not do that himself; an' that was quare, for 'twas but a little thing.

'Thin they swore over again that they wud not be-thray wan another, an' crep out av the grass in diff'rint ways, two by two. A mercy ut was that they did not come on me. I was sick wid fear in the pit av my stum-mick, sick, sick, sick! Afther they was all gone, I wint back to the canteen an' called for a quart to put a thought in me. Vulmea was there, dhrinkin' heavy, an' politeful to me beyond reason. 'Fwhat will I do—fwhat will I do?' thinks I to mesilf whin Vulmea wint away.

'Prisantly the arm'rer sargint comes in stiffin' an' crackin' on, not pleased wid any wan, bekaze the Martini-Henri bein' new to the rig'mint in those days we used to play the mischief wid her arrangemints. 'Twas a long time before I cud get out av the way av thryin'
to pull back the back-sight an' turnin' her over afther firin'—as if she was a Snider.

"'Fwhat tailor-men do they give me to work wid?' sez the arm'rer sargint. 'Here's Hogan, his nose flat as a table, laid by for a week, an' ivry comp'ny sendin' their arrums in knocked to small shivreens.

"'Fwhat's wrong wid Hogan, sargint?' sez I.

"'Wrong!' sez the arm'rer sargint; 'I showed him, as though I had been his mother, the way av shtrippin' a 'Tini, an' he shtrup her clawne an' aisy. I towld him to but he did not put in the pin av the fallin'-block, an' av show how the dirt hung on the groovin'. He did that, but he did not put in the pin av the fallin'-block, an' av coorse whin he fired he was strook by the block jumpin' clear. Well for him 'twas but a blank—a full charge wud ha' cut his oi out.'

"I looked a trifle wiser than a boiled sheep's head. 'How's that, sargint?' sez I.

"'This way, ye blundherin' man, an' don't you be doin' ut,' sez he. Wid that he shows me a Waster action—the breech av her all cut away to show the inside—an' so plazed was he to grumble that he demonstrated fwhat Hogan had done twice over. An' that comes av not knowin' the wepping you're purvided wid,' sez he.

"'Thank ye, sargint,' sez I; 'I will come to you again for further information.'

"'Ye will not,' sez he. 'Kape your clanin'-rod away from the breech-pin or you will get into throuble.'

"I wint outside an' I could ha' danced wid delight for the grandeur av ut. 'They will load my rifle, good luck to thim, whoile I'm away,' thinks I, and back I wint to the canteen to give them their clear chanst.

"The canteen was filling wid men at the ind av the day. I made a feign to be far gone in dhrink, an', wan by wan,
all my roomful came in wid Vulmea. I wint away, walkin' thick and heavy, but not so thick an' heavy that any wan cud ha' tuk me. Sure and throu there was a kyartridge gone from my pouch an' lyin' snug in my rifle. I was hot wid rage against thim all, and I worried the bullet out wid my teeth as fast as I cud, the room bein' empty. Then I tuk my boot an' the clanin'-rod and knocked out the pin av the fallin'-block. Oh, 'twas music when that pin rowled on the flure! I put ut into my pouch an' stuck a dab av dirt on the holes in the plate, puttin' the fallin'-block back. 'That'll do your business, Vulmea,' sez I, lyin' easy on the cot. 'Come an' sit on my chest the whole room av you, an' I will take you to my bosom for the biggest divils that iver cheated halter.' I wud have no mercy on Vulmea. His oi or his life—little I cared!

"At dusk they came back, the twelve av thim, an' they had all been dhrinkin'. I was shammin' sleep on the cot. Wan man wint outside on the veranda. Whin he whistled they began to rage roun' the room an' carry on tremenus. But I niver want to hear men laugh as they did—skylarkin' too! 'Twas like mad jackals.

"'Shtop that blasted noise!' sez O'Hara in the dark, an' pop goes the room lamp. I cud hear O'Hara runnin' up an' the rattlin' av my rifle in the rack an' the men breathin' heavy as they stud roun' my cot. I cud see O'Hara in the light av the veranda lamp, an' thin I heard the crack of my rifle. She cried loud, poor darlint, bein' mishandled. Next minut five men were houldin' me down. 'Go easy,' I sez; 'fwhat's ut all about?'

"Thin Vulmea, on the flure, raised a howl you cud hear from wan ind av contonmints to the other. 'I'm dead, I'm butchered, I'm blind!' sez he. 'Saints have mercy on my sinful sowl! Sind for Father Constant!
Oh, sind for Father Constant an’ let me go clean!’ By that I knew he was not so dead as I cud ha’ wished.

“O’Hara picks up the lamp in the veranda wid a hand as stiddy as a rest. ‘Fwhat damned dog’s thrick is this av yours?’ sez he, and turns the light on Tim Vulmea that was shwimmin’ in blood from top to toe. The fallin’-block had sprung free behin’ a full charge av powther—good care I tuk to bite down the brass after takin’ out the bullet that there might be somethin’ to give ut full worth—an’ had cut Tim from the lip to the corner av the right eye, lavin’ the eyelid in tatthers, an’ so up an’ along by the forehead to the hair. ’Twas more av a rakin’ plow, if you will onderstand, than a clean cut; an’ niver did I see a man bleed as Vulmea did. The dhrink an’ the stew that he was in pumped the blood strong. The minut the men sittin’ on my chest heard O’Hara spakin’ they scatthered each wan to his cot, an’ cried out very politeful: ‘Fwhat is ut, sargint?’

“‘Fwhat is ut!’ sez O’Hara, shakin’ Tim. ‘Well an’ good do you know fwhat ut is, ye skulkin’ ditch-lurkin’ dogs! Get a doolie, an’ take this whimperin’ scut away. There will be more heard av ut than any av you will care for.’

“Vulmea sat up rockin’ his head in his hand an’ moanin’ for Father Constant.

“‘Be done!’ sez O’Hara, dhraggin’ him up by the hair. ‘You’re none so dead that you can not go fifteen years for thryin’ to shoot me.’

“‘I did not,’ sez Vulmea; ‘I was shootin’ mesilf.’

“‘That’s quare,’ sez O’Hara, ‘for the front av my jackut is black wid your powther.’ He tuk up the rifle that was still warm an’ began to laugh. ‘I’ll make your life hell to you,’ sez he, ‘for attempted murdher an’ kapin’ your rifle onproperly. You’ll be hanged first an’
thin put undher stoppages for four fifteen. The rifle's done for,' sez he.

"'Why, 'tis my rifle!' sez I, comin' up to look; 'Vulmea, ye divil, fwhat were you doin' wid her—answer me that?'

"'Lave me alone,' sez Vulmea 'I'm dyin'!

"'I'll wait till you're betther,' sez I, 'an' thin we two will talk ut out umbrageous.'

"O'Hara pitched Tim into the doolie, none too tinder, but all the bhoys kep' by their cots, which was not the sign av innocint men. I was huntin' ivrywhere for my fallin'-block, but not findin' út at all. I niver found it.

"'Now fwhat will I do?' sez O'Hara, swinging the veranda light in his hand an' lookin' down the room. I had hate and contimpt av O'Hara an' I have now, dead tho' he is, but, for all that, will I say he was a brave man. He is baskin' in purgathory this tide, but I wish he cud hear that, whin he stud lookin' down the room an' the bhoys shivered before the oi av him, I knew him for a brave man an' I liked him so.

"'Fwhat will I do?' sez O'Hara ag'in, an' we heard the voice av a woman low an' sof' in the veranda. 'Twas Slimmy's wife, come over at the shot, sittin' on wan av the benches an' scarce able to walk.

"'Oh, Denny—Denny dear,' sez she, 'have they kilt you?'

"O'Hara looked down the room again an' showed his teeth to the gum. Then he spat on the flure.

"'You're not worth út,' sez he. 'Light that lamp, ye dogs,' an' wid that he turned away, an' I saw him walkin' off wid Slimmy's wife; she thryin' to wipe off the powther-black on the front av his jackut wid her handkerchief. 'A brave man you are,' thinks I—'a brave man an' a bad woman.'
"No wan said a word for a time. They was all ashamed, past spache.

"'What d'you think he will do?' sez wan av thim at last. 'He knows we're all in ut.'

"'Are we so?' sez I from my cot. 'The man that sez that to me will be hurt. I do not know,' sez I, 'what onderhand divilmint you have conthrivered, but by what I've seen I know that you can not commit murdher wid another's rifle—such shakin' cowards you are. I'm goin' to slape,' I sez, 'an' you can blow my head off whoile I lay.' I did not slape, though, for a long time. Can ye wonder?

"Next morn the news was through all the rig'mint, an' there was nothin' that the men did not tell. O'Hara reports, fair an' easy, that Vulmea was come to grief through tamperin' wid his rifle in barricks, all for to show the mechanism. An' by my sowl, he had the impart'nince to say that he was on the shpot at the time an' cud certify that ut was an accidint! You might ha' knocked my roomful down wid a straw whin they heard that. 'Twas lucky for thim that the bhoys were always thryin' to find out how the new rifle was made, an' a lot av thim had come up for easin' the pull by shtickin' bits av glass an' such in the part av the lock that showed near the thrigger. The first issues of the 'Tinis was not covered in, an' I mesilf have eased the pull av mine time an' ag'in. A light pull is ten points on the range to me.

"'I will not have this foolishness!' sez the colonel. 'I will twist the tail off Vulmea!' sez he; but whin he saw him, all tied up an' groanin' in hospital, he changed his mind. 'Make him an early convalescint,' sez he to the doctor, an' Vulmea was made so for a warnin'. His big bloody bandages an' face puckered up to wan side did
more to kape the bhoys from messin' wid the insides av their rifles than any punishment.

"O'Hara gave no reason for fwhat he'd said, an' all my roomful were too glad to inquire tho' he put his spite upon him more wearin' than before. Wan day, however, he tuk me apart very polite, for he cud be that at the choosin'.

"'You're a good sodger, tho' you're a damned insolint man,' sez he.

"'Fair words, sargint,' sez I, 'or I may be insolint ag' in.'

"'Tis not like you,' sez he, 'to lave your rifle in the rack widout the breech-pin, for widout the breech-pin she was whin Vulmea fired. I should ha' found the break av ut in the eyes av the holes, else,' he sez.

"'Sargint,' sez I, 'fwhat wud your life ha' been worth av the breech-pin had been in place, for, on my sowl, my life wud be worth just as much to me av I towld you whether ut was or was not. Be thankful the bullet was not there,' I sez.

"'That's thrue,' sez he, pullin' his mustache; 'but I do not believe that you, for all your lip, was in that busi-ness.'

"'Sargint,' sez I, 'I cud hammer the life out av a man in ten minuts wid my fistes if that man dishpleased me; for I am a good sodger, an' I will be threated as such, an' whole my fistes are my own they're strong enough for all work I have to do. They do not fly back towards me!' sez I, lookin' him betune the eyes.

"'You're a good man,' sez he, lookin' me betune the eyes—an' oh, he was a gran' built man to see—'you're a good man,' he sez, 'an' I cud wish, for the pure frolic av ut, that I was not a sargint, or that you were not a
privit; an' you will think me no coward whin I say this thing:'

"'I do not,' sez I. 'I saw you whin Vulmea mishandled the rifle. But, sargint,' I sez. 'take the wurrd from me now, spakin' as man to man wid the shtripes off, tho' 'tis little right I have to talk, me being fwhat I am by natur'. This time ye tuk no harm, an' next time ye may not, but, in the ind, so sure as Slimmy's wife came into the veranda, so sure will ye take harm—an' bad harm. Have thought, sargint,' sez I. 'Is ut worth ut?'

"'Ye're a bowld man,' sez he, breathin' harrd. 'A very bowld man. But I am a bowld man tu. Do you go your way, Privit Mulvaney, an' I will go mine.'

"We had no further spache thin or afther, but, wan by another, he drafted the twelve av my room out into other rooms an' got thim spread among the comp'nies, for they was not a good breed to live together, an' the comp'ny orf'cers saw ut. They wud ha' shot me in the night av they had known fwhat I knew; but that they did not.

"An', in the ind, as I said, O'Hara met his death from Rafferty for foolin' wid his wife. He wint his own way too well—Eyah, too well! Shtraight to that affair, wid-out turnin' to the right or to the lef', he wint, an' may the Lord have mercy on his sowl. Amin!"

"'Ear! 'Ear!' said Ortheris, pointing the moral with a wave of his pipe. "'An' this is 'im 'oo would be a bloomin' Vulmea all for the sake of Mullins an' a bloomin' button! Mullins never went after a woman in his life. Mrs. Mullins she saw 'im one day—"

"Ortheris," I said, hastily, for the romances of Private Ortheris are slightly too daring for publication, "look at the sun. It's a quarter past six!"

"Oh, Lord! Three quarters of an hour for five an' a 'arf miles! We'll 'ave to run like Jimmy O."
The Three Musketeers clambered on to the bridge, and departed hastily in the direction of the cantonment road. When I overtook them I offered them two stirrups and a tail, which they accepted enthusiastically. Ortheris held the tail, and in this manner we trotted steadily through the shadows by an unfrequented road.

At the turn into the cantonments we heard carriage wheels. It was the colonel's barouche, and in it sat the colonel's wife and daughter. I caught a suppressed chuckle, and my beast sprung forward with a lighter step.

The Three Musketeers had vanished into the night.
L’ENVOI.

And they were stronger hands than mine
That digged the Ruby from the earth—
More cunning brains that made it worth
The large desire of a King;
And bolder hearts that through the brine
Went down the Perfect Pearl to bring.

Lo, I have wrought in common clay
Rude figures of a rough-hewn race;
For Pearls strew not the market-place
In this my town of banishment,
Where with the shifting dust I play
And eat the bread of Discontent.

Yet is there life in that I make—
Oh, Thou who knowest, turn and see,
As Thou hast power over me,
So have I power over these,
Because I wrought them for Thy sake,
And breathed in them mine agonies.

Small mirth was in the making. Now
I lift the cloth that cloaks the clay,
And, wearied, at Thy feet I lay
My wares ere I go forth to sell.
The long bazaar will praise—but Thou—
Heart of my heart, have I done well?
ONLY A SUBALTERN.

... Not only to enforce by command but to encourage by example the energetic discharge of duty and the steady endurance of the difficulties and privations inseparable from Military Service. —Bengal Army Regulations.

They made Bobby Wick pass an examination at Sandhurst. He was a gentleman before he was gazetted, so, when the empress announced that "Gentleman-Cadet Robert Hanna Wick" was posted as second lieutenant to the Tyneside Tail Twisters at Krab Bokhar, he became an officer and a gentleman, which is an enviable thing; and there was joy in the house of Wick where Mamma Wick and all the little Wicks fell upon their knees and offered incense to Bobby by virtue of his achievements.

Papa Wick had been a commissioner in his day, holding authority over three millions of men in the Chota-Buldana Division, building great works for the good of the land, and doing his best to make two blades of grass grow where there was but one before. Of course nobody knew anything about this in the little English village where he was just "old Mr. Wick" and had forgotten that he was a Companion of the Order of the Star of India.

He patted Bobby on the shoulder and said: "Well done, my boy!"

There followed, while the uniform was being prepared, an interval of pure delight, during which Bobby took brevet-rank as a "man" at the women-swamped tennis parties and tea-fights of the village, and, I dare say, had his joining-time been extended, would have fallen in
love with several girls at once. Little country villages at home are very full of nice girls, because all the young men come out here to make their fortunes.

"India," said Papa Wick, "is the place. I've had thirty years of it, and, begad, I'd like to go back again. When you join the Tail Twisters you'll be among friends, if every one hasn't forgotten Wick of Chota-Buldana, and a lot of people will be kind to you for our sakes. The men will tell you more about outfit than I can; but remember this. Stick to your regiment, Bobby—stick to your regiment. You'll see men all round you going into the staff corps, and doing every possible sort of duty but regimental, and you may be tempted to follow suit. Now so long as you keep within your allowance—and I haven't stinted you there—stick to the line—the whole line and nothing but the line. Be careful how you back another young fool's bill, and if you fall in love with a woman twenty years older than yourself, don't tell me about it, that's all."

With these counsels, and many others equally valuable, did Papa Wick fortify Bobby ere that last awful night at Portsmouth when the officers' quarters held more inmates than were provided for by the regulations, and the libertymen of the ships fell foul of the drafts for India, and the battle raged long and loud from the dockyard gates even to the slums of Longport, while the drabs of Fratton came down and scratched the faces of the queen's officers.

Bobby Wick, with an ugly bruise on his freckled nose, a sick and shaky detachment to maneuver in-ship and the comfort of fifty scornful females to attend to, had no time to feel homesick till the "Malabar" reached mid-channel, when he combined his emotions with a little guard-visiting and a great deal of nausea.
The Tail Twisters were a most particular regiment. Those who knew them least said that they were eaten up with "side." But their reserve and their internal arrangements generally were merely protective diplomacy. Some five years before, the colonel commanding had looked into the fourteen fearless eyes of seven plump and juicy subalterns who had all applied to enter the staff corps, and had asked them why the three stars should he, a colonel of the line, command a dashed nursery for double-dashed bottle-suckers who put on condemned tin Spurs and rode qualified mokes at the hiatused heads of forsaken black regiments. He was a rude man and a terrible. Wherefore the remnant took measures (with the half-butt as an engine of public opinion) till the rumor went abroad that young men who used the Tail Twisters as a crutch to the staff corps had many and varied trials to endure. However, a regiment had just as much right to its own secrets as a woman.

When Bobby came up from Deolali and took his place among the Tail Twisters, it was gently but firmly borne in upon him that the regiment was his father and his mother and his indissolubly wedded wife, and that there was no crime under the canopy of heaven blacker than that of bringing shame on the regiment, which was the best-shooting, best-drilled, best set-up, bravest, most illustrious, and in all respects most desirable regiment within the compass of the seven seas. He was taught the legends of the mess plate, from the great grinning golden gods that had come out of the Summer Palace in Pekin to the silver-mounted markhor-horn snuff-mull presented by the last C. O. (he who spake to the seven subalterns). And every one of those legends told him of battles fought at long odds, without fear as without support; of hospitality catholic as an Arab's; of friend-
ships deep as the sea and steady as the fighting-line; of honor won by hard roads for honor’s sake; and of instant and unquestioning devotion to the regiment—the regiment that claims the lives of all and lives forever.

More than once, too, he came officially into contact with the regimental colors, which looked like the lining of a bricklayer’s hat on the end of a chewed stick. Bobby did not kneel and worship them, because British subalterns are not constructed in that manner. Indeed, he condemned them for their weight at the very moment that they were filling with awe and other more noble sentiments.

But best of all was the occasion when he moved with the Tail Twisters in review order at the breaking of a November day. Allowing for duty-men and sick, the regiment was one thousand and eighty strong, and Bobby belonged to them; for was he not a subaltern of the line—the whole line, and nothing but the line—as the tramp of two thousand one hundred and sixty sturdy ammunition boots attested? He would not have changed places with Deighton of the horse battery, whirling by in a pillar of cloud to a chorus of “Strong right! Strong left!” or Hogan-Yale of the White Hussars, leading his squadron for all it was worth, with the price of horseshoes thrown in; or “Tick” Boileau, trying to live up to his fierce blue and gold turban while the wasps of the Bengal Cavalry stretched to a gallop in the wake of the long, lolloping Walers of the White Hussars.

They fought through the clear cool day, and Bobby felt a little thrill run down his spine when he heard the tinkle-tinkle-tinkle of the empty cartridge-cases hopping from the breech-blocks after the roar of the volleys; for he knew that he should live to hear that sound in action.

The review ended in a glorious chase across the plain
—batteries thundering after cavalry to the huge disgust of the White Hussars, and the Tyneside Tail Twisters hunting a Sikh regiment, till the lean lathy Singhns pant ed with exhaustion. Bobby was dusty and dripping long before noon, but his enthusiasm was merely focused—not diminished.

He returned to sit at the feet of Revere, his "skipper"—that is to say, the captain of his company, and to be instructed in the dark art and mystery of managing men, which is a very large part of the profession of arms.

"If you haven't a taste that way," said Revere between his puffs of his cheroot, "you'll never be able to get the hang of it, but remember, Bobby, 't isn't the best drill, though drill is nearly everything, that hauls a regiment through hell and out on the other side. It's the man who knows how to handle men—goat-men, swine-men, dog-men, and so on."

"Dormer, for instance," said Bobby, "I think he comes under the head of fool-men. He mopes like a sick owl."

"That's where you make your mistake, my son. Dormer isn't a fool yet, but he's a dashed dirty soldier, and his room corporal makes fun of his socks before kit-inspection. Dormer, being two thirds pure brute, goes into a corner and growls."

"How do you know?" said Bobby, admiringly.

"Because a company commander has to know these things—because if he does not know, he may have crime—ay, murder—brewing under his very nose and yet not see that it's there. Dormer is being badgered out of his mind—big as he is—and he hasn't intellect enough to resent it. He's taken to quiet boozing. Bobby, when the butt of a room goes on the drink, or takes
to moping by himself, measures are necessary to yank him out of himself."

"What measures? Man can't run round coddling his men forever."

"No. The men would precious soon show him that he was not wanted. You've got to—"

Here the color-sergeant entered with some papers; Bobby reflected for awhile as Revere looked through the company forms.

"Does Dormer do anything, sergeant?" Bobby asked with the air of one continuing an interrupted conversation.

"No, sir. Does 'is dooty like a hortomato," said the sergeant, who delighted in long words. "A dirty soldier, and 'e's under full stoppages for new kit. It's covered with scales, sir."

"Scales? What scales?"

"Fish scales, sir. 'E's always pokin' in the mud by the river an' a-cleanin' them muchly fish with 'is thumbs." Revere was still absorbed in the company papers, and the sergeant, who was grimly fond of Bobby, continued: "'E generally goes down there when 'e's got 'is skinful, beggin' your pardon, sir, an' they do say that the more lush—in-he-briated 'e is, the more fish 'e catches. They call him the Looney Fishmonger in the comp'ny, sir."

Revere signed the last paper and the sergeant retreated.

"It's a filthy amusement," sighed Bobby to himself. Then aloud to Revere: "Are you really worried about Dormer?"

"A little. You see he's never mad enough to send to hospital, or drunk enough to run in, but at any minute he may flare up, brooding and sulking as he does. He
resents any interest being shown in him, and the only time I took him out shooting he all but shot me by accident."

"I fish," said Bobby, with a wry face. "I hire a country boat and go down the river from Thursday to Sunday, and the amiable Dormer goes with me—if you can spare us both."

"You blazing young fool!" said Revere, but his heart was full of much more pleasant words.

Bobby, the captain of a dhoni, with Private Dormer for mate, dropped down the river on Thursday morning—the private at the bow, the subaltern at the helm. The private glared uneasily at the subaltern, who respected the reserve of the private.

After six hours, Dormer paced to the stern, saluted, and said: "Beg y' pardon, sir, but was you ever on the Durh'm Canal?"

"No," said Bobby Wick. "Come and have some tiffin."

They eat in silence. As the evening fell, Private Dormer broke forth, speaking to himself:

"Hi was on the Durh'm Canal, jes' such a night, come next week twelvemonth, a-trailin' of my toes in the water." He smoked and said no more till bedtime.

The witchery of the dawn turned the gray river-reaches to purple, gold, and opal; and it was as though the lumbering dhoni crept across the splendors of a new heaven.

Private Dormer popped his head out of his blanket and gazed at the glory below and around.

"Well, damn my eyes!" said Private Dormer in an awed whisper. "This 'ere is like a bloomin' gallantry-show!" For the rest of the day he was dumb, but
achieved an ensanguined filthiness through the cleaning of big fish.

The boat returned on Saturday evening. Dormer had been struggling with speech since noon. As the lines and luggage were being disembarked, he found tongue.

"Beg y' pardon, sir," he said, "but would you—would you min' shakin' 'ands with me, sir?"

"Of course not," said Bobby, and he shook accordingly. Dormer returned to barracks and Bobby to mess.

"He wanted a little quiet and some fishing, I think," said Bobby. "My aunt, but he's a filthy sort of animal! Have you ever seen him clean 'em muchly fish with 'is thumbs?"

"Anyhow," said Revere three weeks later, "he's doing his best to keep his things clean."

When the spring died, Bobby joined in the general scramble for Hill leave, and to his surprise and delight secured three months.

"As good a boy as I want," said Revere, the admiring skipper.

"The best of the batch," said the adjutant to the colonel. "Keep back that young skrimshanker Porkiss, sir, and let Revere make him sit up."

So Bobby departed joyously to Simla Pahar with a tin box of gorgeous raiment.

"Son of Wick—old Wick, of Chota-Buldana? Ask him to dinner, dear," said the aged men.

"What a nice boy!" said the matrons and the maids.

"First-class place, Simla. Oh, ri-ipping!" said Bobby Wick, and ordered new cord breeches on the strength of it.

"We're in a bad way," wrote Revere to Bobby at the end of two months. "Since you left, the regiment has
taken to fever and is fairly rotten with it—two hundred in hospital, about a hundred in cells—drinking to keep off fever—and the companies on parade fifteen file strong at the outside. There's rather more sickness in the out-villages than I care for, but then I'm so blistered with prickly-heat that I'm ready to hang myself. What's the yarn about your mashing a Miss Haverley up there? Not serious, I hope? You're overyoung to hang millstones round your neck, and the colonel will turf you out of that in double-quick time if you attempt it."

It was not the colonel that brought Bobby out of Simla, but a much more to be respected commandant. The sickness in the out-villages spread, the bazaar was put out of bounds, and then came the news that the Tail Twisters must go into camp. The message flashed to the Hill stations: "Cholera—Leave stopped—Officers recalled." Alas, for the white gloves in the neatly soldered boxes, the rides and the dances and picnics that were to be, the love half spoken, and the debt unpaid! Without demur and without question, fast as tongue could fly or pony gallop, back to their regiments and their batteries, as though they were hastening to their weddings, fled the subalterns.

Bobby received his mandate on returning from a dance at Viceregal Lodge, where he had— But only the Haverley girl knows what Bobby had said or how many waltzes he had claimed for the next ball. Six in the morning saw Bobby at the Tonga Office in the drenching rain, the whirl of the last waltz still in his ears, and an intoxication due neither to wine nor waltzing in his brain.

"Good man!" shouted Deighton of the horse battery through the mists. "Whar you raise dat tonga? I'm coming with you. Ow! But I've a head and half. I
didn't sit out all night. They say the battery's awful bad,” and he hummed dolorously:

Leave the what at the what's-its-name,
Leave the flock without shelter,
Leave the corpse uninterred,
Leave the bride at the altar!

“My faith! It'll be more bally corpse than bride, though, this journey. Jump in, Bobby. Chalo Coach-wan!”

On the Umballa platform waited a detachment of officers discussing the latest news from the stricken cantonment, and it was here that Bobby learned the real condition of the Tail Twisters.

“They went into camp,” said an elderly major recalled from the whist-tables at Mussoorie to a sickly native regiment, “they went into camp with two hundred and ten sick in carts. Two hundred and ten fever cases only, and the balance looking like so many ghosts with sore eyes. A Madras regiment could have walked through 'em!”

“But they were as fit as bedamned when I left them!” said Bobby.

“Then you'd better make them as fit as bedamned when you rejoin,” said the major, brutally.

Bobby pressed his forehead against the rain-splashed window-pane as the train lumbered across the sodden Doab, and prayed for the health of the Tyneside Tail Twisters. Naini Tal had sent down her contingent with all speed; the lathering ponies of the Dalhousie Road staggered into Pathankot, taxed to the full stretch of their strength; while from cloudy Darjiling the Calcutta mail whirled up the last straggler of the little army that was to fight a fight, in which was neither medal
nor honor for the winning, against an enemy none other than "the sickness that destroyeth in the noonday."

And as each man reported himself, he said: "This is a bad business," and went about his own forthwith, for every regiment and battery in the cantonment was under canvas, the sickness bearing them company.

Bobby fought his way through the rain to the Tail Twisters' temporary mess, and Revere could have fallen on the boy's neck for the joy of seeing that ugly, wholesome phiz once more.

"Keep 'em amused and interested," said Revere. "They went on the drink, poor fools, after the first two cases, and there was no improvement. Oh, it's good to have you back, Bobby! Porkiss is a—never mind."

Deighton came over from the artillery camp to attend a dreary mess dinner, and contributed to the general gloom by nearly weeping over the condition of his beloved battery. Porkiss so far forgot himself as to insinuate that the presence of the officers could do no earthly good, and that the best thing would be to send the entire regiment into hospital and "let the doctors look after them." Porkiss was demoralized with fear, nor was his peace of mind restored when Revere said, coldly:

"Oh! The sooner you go out the better, if that's your way of thinking. Any public school could send us fifty good men in your place, but it takes time, time, Porkiss, and money, and a certain amount of trouble, to make a regiment. 'S'pose you're the person we go into camp for, eh?"

Whereupon Porkiss was overtaken with a great and chilly fear which a drenching in the rain did not allay, and, two days later, quitted this world for another where, men do fondly hope, allowances are made for the weak-
ness of the flesh. The regimental sergeant-major looked wearily across the sergeants' mess tent when the news was announced.

"There goes the worst of them," he said. "It'll take the best, and then, please God, it'll stop." The sergeants were silent till one said: "It couldn't be him!" and all knew of whom Travis was thinking.

Bobby Wick stormed through the tents of his company, rallying, rebuking, mildly, as is consistent with the regulations, chaffing the faint-hearted; hauling the sound into the watery sunlight when there was a break in the weather, and bidding them be of good cheer for their trouble was nearly at an end; scuttling on his dun pony round the outskirts of the camp and heading back men who, with the innate perversity of British soldiers, were always wandering into infected villages, or drinking deeply from rain-flooded marshes; comforting the panic-stricken with rude speech, and more than once tending the dying who had no friends—the men without "townies;" organizing, with banjos and burned cork, sing-songs which should allow the talent of the regiment full play; and generally, as he explained, "playing the giddy garden goat all round."

"You're worth half a dozen of us, Bobby," said his skipper in a moment of enthusiasm. "How the devil do you keep it up?"

Bobby made no answer, but had Revere looked into the breast-pocket of his coat he might have seen there a sheaf of badly written letters which perhaps accounted for the power that possessed the boy. A letter came to Bobby every other day. The spelling was not above reproach, but the sentiments must have been most satisfactory, for on receipt Bobby's eyes softened marvelously, and he was wont to fall into a tender abstraction for
awhile ere, shaking his cropped head, he charged into his work anew.

By what power he drew after him the hearts of the roughest, and the Tail Twisters counted in their ranks some rough diamonds indeed, was a mystery to both skipper and C. O., who learned from the regimental chaplain that Bobby was considerably more in request in the hospital tents than the Reverend John Emery.

"The men seem fond of you. Are you in the hospitals much?" said the colonel, who did his daily round and ordered the men to get well with a grimness that did not cover his bitter grief.

"A little sir," said Bobby.

"Shouldn't go there too often if I were you. They say it's not contagious, but there's no use in running unnecessary risks. We can't afford to have you down, y'know."

Six days later, it was with the utmost difficulty that the post-runner plashed his way out to the camp with the mail-bags, for the rain was falling in torrents. Bobby received a letter, bore it off to his tent, and, the programme for the next week's sing-song being satisfactorily disposed of, sat down to answer it. For an hour the unhandy pen toiled over the paper, and where sentiment rose to more than normal tide-level, Bobby Wick stuck out his tongue and breathed heavily. He was not used to letter-writing.

"Beg y' pardon, sir," said a voice at the tent door; "but Dormer's 'orrld bad, sir, an' they've taken him orf, sir."

"Damn Private Dormer and you too!" said Bobby Wick, running the blotter over the half-finished letter. "Tell him I'll come in the morning."
"'E's awful bad, sir," said the voice, hesitantly. There was an undecided squelching of heavy boots.

"Well?" said Bobby, impatiently.

"Excusin' 'imself before'and for takin' the liberty, 'e says it would be a comfort for to assist 'im, sir, if—"

"Tattoo lao! Here, come in out of the rain till I'm ready. What blasted nuisances you are! That's brandy. Drink some. You want it. Hang on to my stirrup and tell me if I go too fast."

Strengthened by a four-finger "nip," which he absorbed without a wink, the hospital orderly kept up with the slipping, mud-stained, and very disgusted pony as it shambled to the hospital tent.

Private Dormer was certainly "'orrid bad." He had all but reached the stage of collapse and was not pleasant to look upon.

"What's this, Dormer?" said Bobby, bending over the man. "You're not going out this time. You've got to come fishing with me once or twice more yet."

The blue lips parted and in the ghost of a whisper said: "Beg y' pardon, sir, disturbin' of you now, but would you min' 'oldin' my 'and, sir?"

Bobby sat on the side of the bed, and the icy cold hand closed on his own like a vise, forcing a lady's ring which was on the little finger deep into the flesh. Bobby set his lips and waited, the water dripping from the hem of his trousers. An hour passed and the grasp of the hand did not relax, nor did the expression of the drawn face change. Bobby with infinite craft lighted himself a che-root with the left hand, his right arm was numbed to the elbow, and resigned himself to a night of pain.

Dawn showed a very white-faced subaltern sitting on the side of a sick man's cot, and a doctor in the door-way using language unfit for publication.
“Have you been here all night, you young ass?” said the doctor.

“There or thereabouts,” said Bobby, ruefully. “He’s frozen on to me.”

Dormer’s mouth shut with a click. He turned his head and sighed. The clinging hand opened, and Bobby’s arm fell useless at his side.

“He’ll do,” said the doctor, quietly. “It must have been a toss-up all through the night. Think you’re to be congratulated on this case.”

“Oh, bosh!” said Bobby. “I thought the man had gone out long ago—only—only I didn’t care to take my hand away. Rub my arm down, there’s a good chap. What a grip the brute has! I’m chilled to the marrow!” He passed out of the tent shivering.

Private Dormer was allowed to celebrate his repulse of death by strong waters. Four days later, he sat on the side of his cot and said to the patients, mildly: “I’d a’ liken to ’a’ spoken to ’im—so I should.”

But at that time Bobby was reading yet another letter—he had the most persistent correspondent of any man in camp—and was even then about to write that the sickness had abated, and in another week at the outside would be gone. He did not intend to say that the chill of a sick man’s hand seemed to have struck into the heart whose capacities for affection he dwelt on at such length. He did intend to inclose the illustrated programme of the forthcoming sing-song whereof he was not a little proud. He also intended to write on many other matters which do not concern us, and doubtless would have done so but for the slight feverish headache which made him dull and unresponsive at mess.

“You are overdoing it, Bobby,” said his skipper; “’might give the rest of us credit of doing a little work.
You go on as if you were the whole mess rolled into one. Take it easy."

"I will," said Bobby. "I'm feeling done up, somehow." Revere looked at him anxiously and said nothing. There was a flickering of lanterns about the camp that night, and a rumor that brought men out of their cots to the tent doors, a paddling of the naked feet of doolie-bearers and the rush of a galloping horse.

"'Wot's up?" asked twenty tents; and through twenty tents ran the answer: "Wick, 'e's down."

They brought the news to Revere and he groaned. "Any one but Bobby and I shouldn't have cared! The sergeant-major was right."

"Not going out this journey," gasped Bobby, as he was lifted from the doolie. "Not going out this journey." Then with an air of supreme conviction: "I can't, you see."

"Not if I can do anything!" said the surgeon-major, who had hastened over from the mess where he had been dining.

He and the regimental surgeon fought together with death for the life of Bobby Wick. Their ministrations were interrupted by a hairy apparition in a blue-gray dressing-gown who stared in round-eyed horror at the bed and cried: "Ow, my Gawd! It can't be 'im!" until an indignant hospital orderly whisked him away.

If care of man and desire to live could have done aught, Bobby would have been saved. As it was, he made a fight of three days, and the surgeon-major's brow uncreased. "We'll save him yet," he said; and the surgeon, who, though he ranked with the captain, had a very youthful heart, went out upon the word and pranced joyously in the mud.
“Not going out this journey,” whispered Bobby Wick, gallantly, at the end of the third day.

“Bravo!” said the surgeon-major. “That’s the way to look at it, Bobby.”

As evening fell a gray shade gathered round Bobby’s mouth, and he turned his face to the tent wall wearily. The surgeon-major frowned.

“I’m awfully tired,” said Bobby, very faintly. “What’s the use of bothering me with medicine? I—don’t—want it. Let me alone.”

The desire for life had departed, and Bobby was content to drift away on the easy tide of death.

“It’s no good,” said the surgeon-major. “He doesn’t want to live. He’s meeting it, poor child.” And he blew his nose.

Half a mile away the regimental band was playing the overture to the sing-song, for the men had been told that Bobby was out of danger. The clash of the brass and the wail of the horns reached Bobby’s ears.

“Is there a single joy or pain,
That I should never kno—ow?
You do not love me, ’tis in vain,
Bid me good-bye and go!”

An expression of hopeless irritation crossed the boy’s face, and he tried to shake his head.

The surgeon-major bent down: “What is it, Bobby?”

“Not that waltz,” muttered Bobby. “That’s our own—our very ownest own. . . . Mummy dear.”

With this oracular sentence he sunk into the stupor that gave place to death early next morning.

Revere, his eyes red at the rims and his nose very white, went into Bobby’s tent to write a letter to Papa Wick, which should bow the white head of the ex-commissioner of Chota-Buldana in the keenest sorrow of his
life. Bobby's little store of papers lay in confusion on the table, and among them a half-finished letter. The last sentence ran: "So you see, darling, there is really no fear, because as long as I know you care for me and I care for you, nothing can touch me."

Revere stayed in the tent for an hour. When he came out, his eyes were redder than ever.

* * * * * * *

Private Conklin sat on a turned-down bucket, and listened to a not unfamiliar tune. Private Conklin was a convalescent and should have been tenderly treated.

"Ho!" said Private Conklin. "There's another bloomin' orf'cer da—ed."

The bucket shot from under him, and his eyes filled with a smithyful of sparks. A tall man in a blue-gray bed-gown was regarding him with deep disfavor.

"You ought to take shame for yourself, Conky! Orf'cer? Bloomin' orf'cer? I'll learn you to misname the likes of 'im. Hangel! Bloomin' hangel! That's wot 'e is!"

And the hospital orderly was so satisfied with the justice of the punishment that he did not even order Private Dormer back to his cot.
WATCHES OF THE NIGHT.

What is in the Brahmin’s books that is in the Brahmin’s heart. Neither you nor I knew there was so much evil in the world.

—Hindu Proverb.

This began in a practical joke; but it has gone far enough now, and is getting serious.

Platte, the Subaltern, being poor, had a Waterbury watch and a plain leather guard.

The Colonel had a Waterbury watch also, and for guard, the lip-strap of a curb-chain. Lip-straps make the best watch guards. They are strong and short. Between a lip-strap and an ordinary leather guard there is no great difference; between one Waterbury watch and another none at all. Everyone in the station knew the Colonel’s lip-strap. He was not a horsey man, but he liked people to believe he had been one once; and he wove fantastic stories of the hunting-bridle to which this particular lip-strap had belonged. Otherwise he was painfully religious.

Platte and the Colonel were dressing at the Club—both late for their engagements, and both in a hurry. That was Kismet. The two watches were on a shelf below the looking-glass—guards hanging down. That was carelessness. Platte changed first, snatched a watch, looked in the glass, settled his tie, and ran. Forty seconds later, the Colonel did exactly the same thing; each man taking the other’s watch.

You may have noticed that many religious people are deeply suspicious. They seem—for purely religious purposes, of course—to know more about iniquity than the
Unregenerate. Perhaps they were specially bad before they became converted! At any rate, in the imputation of things evil, and in putting the worst construction on things innocent, a certain type of good people may be trusted to surpass all others. The Colonel and his Wife were of that type. But the Colonel's Wife was the worst. She manufactured the Station scandal, and—talked to her ayah! Nothing more need be said. The Colonel's Wife broke up the Laplace's home. The Colonel's Wife stopped the Ferris-Haughtrey engagement. The Colonel's Wife induced young Buxton to keep his wife down in the Plains through the first year of the marriage. Whereby little Mrs. Buxton died, and the baby with her. These things will be remembered against the Colonel's Wife so long as there is a regiment in the country.

But to come back to the Colonel and Platte. They went their several ways from the dressing-room. The Colonel dined with two Chaplains, while Platte went to a bachelor-party, and whist to follow.

Mark how things happen! If Platte's sais had put the new saddle-pad on the mare, the butts of the territs would not have worked through the worn leather and the old pad into the mare's withers, when she was coming home at two o'clock in the morning. She would not have reared, bolted, fallen into a ditch, upset the cart, and sent Platte flying over an aloe-hedge on to Mrs. Larkyn's well-kept lawn; and this tale would never have been written. But the mare did all these things, and while Platte was rolling over and over on the turf, like a shot rabbit, the watch and guard flew from his waistcoat—as an infantry Major's sword hops out of the scabbard when they are firing a feu de joie—and rolled and rolled in the moonlight, till it stopped under a window.
Platte stuffed his handkerchief under the pad, put the cart straight, and went home.

Mark again how Kismet works! This would not happen once in a hundred years. Towards the end of his dinner with the two Chaplains, the Colonel let out his waistcoat and leaned over the table to look at some Mission Reports. The bar of the watch-guard worked through the buttonhole, and the watch—Platte's watch—slid quietly on to the carpet. Where the bearer found it next morning and kept it.

Then the Colonel went home to the wife of his bosom; but the driver of the carriage was drunk and lost his way. So the Colonel returned at an unseemly hour and his excuses were not accepted. If the Colonel's Wife had been an ordinary "vessel of wrath appointed for destruction," she would have known that when a man stays away on purpose, his excuse is always sound and original. The very baldness of the Colonel's explanation proved its truth.

See once more the workings of Kismet! The Colonel's watch which came with Platte hurriedly on to Mrs. Larkyn's lawn, chose to stop just under Mrs. Larkyn's window, where she saw it early in the morning, recognized it, and picked it up. She had heard the crash of Platte's cart at two o'clock that morning, and his voice calling the mare names. She knew Platte and liked him. That day she showed him the watch and heard his story. He put his head on one side, winked and said:—"How disgusting! Shocking old man! With his religious training, too! I should send the watch to the Colonel's Wife and ask for explanations."

Mrs. Larkyn thought for a minute of the Laplaces—whom she had known when Laplace and his wife be-
lieved in each other—and answered:—"I will send it. I think it will do her good. But, remember, we must never tell her the truth."

Platte guessed that his own watch was in the Colonel's possession, and thought that the return of the lip-strapped Waterbury with a soothing note from Mrs. Larkyn, would merely create a small trouble for a few minutes. Mrs. Larkyn knew better. She knew that any poison dropped would find good holding-ground in the heart of the Colonel's Wife.

The packet, and a note containing a few remarks on the Colonel's calling-hours, were sent over to the Colonel's Wife, who wept in her own room and took counsel with herself.

If there was one woman under Heaven whom the Colonel's Wife hated with holy fervor, it was Mrs. Larkyn. Mrs. Larkyn was a frivolous lady, and called the Colonel's Wife "old cat." The Colonel's Wife said that somebody in Revelations was remarkably like Mrs. Larkyn. She mentioned other Scripture people as well. From the Old Testament. [But the Colonel's Wife was the only person who cared or dared to say anything against Mrs. Larkyn. Everyone else accepted her as an amusing, honest little body.] Wherefore, to believe that her husband had been shedding watches under that "Thing's" window at ungodly hours, coupled with the fact of his late arrival on the previous night, was . . . .

At this point she rose up and sought her husband. He denied everything except the ownership of the watch. She besought him, for his Soul's sake to speak the truth. He denied afresh, with two bad words. Then a stony silence held the Colonel's Wife, while a man could draw his breath five times.
The speech that followed is no affair of mine or yours. It was made up of wifely and womanly jealousy; knowledge of old age and sunk cheeks; deep mistrust born of the text that says even little babies’ hearts are as bad as they make them; rancorous hatred of Mrs. Larkyn, and the tenets of the creed of the Colonel’s Wife’s upbringing.

Over and above all, was the damning lip-strapped Waterbury, ticking away in the palm of her shaking, withered hand. At that hour, I think, the Colonel’s Wife realized a little of the restless suspicion she had injected into old Laplace’s mind, a little of poor Miss Haughtrey’s misery, and some of the canker that ate into Buxton’s heart as he watched his wife dying before his eyes. The Colonel stammered and tried to explain. Then he remembered that his watch had disappeared; and the mystery grew greater. The Colonel’s Wife talked and prayed by turns till she was tired, and went away to devise means for “chastening the stubborn heart of her husband.” Which, translated, means, in our slang, “tail-twisting.”

You see, being deeply impressed with the doctrine of Original Sin, she could not believe in the face of appearances. She knew too much, and jumped to the wildest conclusions.

But it was good for her. It spoilt her life, as she had spoilt the life of the Laplaces. She had lost her faith in the Colonel, and—here the creed-suspicion came in—he might, she argued, have erred many times, before a merciful Providence, at the hands of so unworthy an instrument as Mrs. Larkyn, had established his guilt. He was a bad, wicked, gray-haired profligate. This may sound too sudden a revulsion for a long-wedded wife; but it is a venerable fact that, if a man or woman makes a
practice of, and takes a delight in, believing and spreading evil of people indifferent to him or her, he or she will end in believing evil of folk very near and dear. You may think, also, that the mere incident of the watch was too small and trivial to raise this misunderstanding. It is another aged fact that, in life as well as racing, all the worst accidents happen at little ditches and cut-down fences. In the same way, you sometimes see a woman who would have made a Joan of Arc in another century and climate, threshing herself to pieces over all the mean worry of housekeeping. But that is another story.

Her belief only made the Colonel's Wife more wretched, because it insisted so strongly on the villainy of men. Remembering what she had done, it was pleasant to watch her unhappiness, and the penny-farthing attempts she made to hide it from the Station. But the Station knew and laughed heartlessly; for they had heard the story of the watch, with much dramatic gesture, from Mrs. Larkyn's lips.

Once or twice Platte said to Mrs. Larkyn, seeing that the Colonel had not cleared himself:—"This thing has gone far enough. I move we tell the Colonel's Wife how it happened." Mrs. Larkyn shut her lips and shook her head, and vowed that the Colonel's Wife must bear her punishment as best she could. Now Mrs. Larkyn was a frivolous woman, in whom none would have suspected deep hate. So Platte took no action, and came to believe gradually, from the Colonel's silence, that the Colonel must have "run off the line" somewhere that night, and, therefore, preferred to stand sentence on the lesser count of rambling into other people's compounds out of calling-hours. Platte forgot about the watch business after a while, and moved down-country with his regiment. Mrs.
Larkyn went home when her husband's tour of Indian service expired. She never forgot.

But Platte was quite right when he said that the joke had gone too far. The mistrust and the tragedy of it—which we outsiders cannot see and do not believe in—are killing the Colonel's Wife, and are making the Colonel wretched. If either of them read this story, they can depend upon its being a fairly true account of the case, and can "kiss and make friends."

Shakespeare alludes to the pleasure of watching an engineer being shelled by his own Battery. Now this shows that poets should not write about what they do not understand. Anyone could have told him that Sappers and Gunners are perfectly different branches of the Service. But, if you correct the sentence, and substitute Gunner for Sapper, the moral comes just the same.
THE CONVERSION OF AURELIAN McGOGGIN.

Ride with an idle whip, ride with an unused heel.
But, once in a way, there will come a day
When the colt must be taught to feel
The lash that falls, and the curb that galls, and the sting of the rowelled steel.

—Life's Handicap.

This is not a tale exactly. It is a Tract; and I am immensely proud of it. Making a Tract is a Feat.

Every man is entitled to his own religious opinions; but no man—least of all a junior—has a right to thrust these down other men's throats. The Government sends out weird Civilians now and again; But McGoggin was the queerest exported for a long time. He was clever—brilliantly clever—but his cleverness worked the wrong way. Instead of keeping to the study of the vernaculars, he had read some books written by a man called Comte, I think, and a man called Spencer, and a Professor Clifford. [You will find these books in the Library.] They deal with people's insides from the point of view of men who have no stomachs. There was no order against his reading them; but his Mamma should have smacked him. They fermented in his head, and he came out to India with a rarefied religion over and above his work. It was not much of a creed. It only proved that men had no souls, and there was no God and no hereafter, and that you must worry along somehow for the good of Humanity.

One of its minor tenets seemed to be that the one thing more sinful than giving an order was obeying it. At least,
that was what McGoggin said; but I suspect he had misread his primers.

I do not say a word against this creed. It was made up in Town where there is nothing but machinery and asphalte and building—all shut in by the fog. Naturally, a man grows to think that there is no one higher than himself, and that the Metropolitan Board of Works made everything. But in this country, where you really see humanity—raw, brown, naked humanity—with nothing between it and the blazing sky, and only the used-up, over-handled earth underfoot, the notion somehow dies away, and most folk come back to simpler theories. Life in India is not long enough to waste in proving that there is no one in particular at the head of affairs. For this reason. The Deputy is above the Assistant, the Commissioner above the Deputy, the Lieutenant-Governor above the Commissioner, and the Viceroy above all four, under the orders of the Secretary of State, who is responsible to the Empress. If the Empress be not responsible to her Maker—if there is no Maker for her to be responsible to—the entire system of Our administration must be wrong. Which is manifestly impossible. At Home men are to be excused. They are stalled up a good deal and get intellectually "beany." When you take a gross, "beany" horse to exercise, he slavers and slobbers over the bit till you can't see the horns. But the bit is there just the same. Men do not get "beany" in India. The climate and the work are against playing bricks with words.

If McGoggin had kept his creed, with the capital letters and the ending in "isms," to himself, no one would have cared; but his grandfathers on both sides had been Wesleyan preachers, and the preaching strain came out
in his mind. He wanted everyone at the Club to see that they had no souls too, and to help him to eliminate his Creator. As a good many men told him, he undoubtedly had no soul, because he was so young; but it did not follow that his seniors were equally undeveloped; and, whether there was another world or not, a man still wanted to read his papers in this. "But that is not the point—that is not the point!" Aurelian used to say. Then men threw sofa-cushions at him and told him to go to any particular place he might believe in. They christened him the "Blastoderm,"—he said he came from a family of that name somewhere, in the pre-historic ages,—and, by insult and laughter strove to choke him dumb, for he was an unmitigated nuisance at the Club; besides being an offense to the older men. His Deputy Commissioner, who was working on the Frontier when Aurelian was rolling on a bed-quilt, told him that, for a clever boy, Aurelian was a very big idiot. And, you know, if he had gone on with his work, he would have been caught up to the Secretariat in a few years. He was just the type that goes there—all head, no physique and a hundred theories. Not a soul was interested in McGoggin's soul. He might have had two, or none, or somebody else's. His business was to obey orders and keep abreast of his files instead of devastating the Club with "isms."

He worked brilliantly, but he could not accept any order without trying to better it. That was the fault of his creed. It made men too responsible and left too much to their honor. You can sometimes ride an old horse in a halter; but never a colt. McGoggin took more trouble over his cases than any of the men of his year. He may have fancied that thirty page judgments on fifty-rupee cases—both sides perjured to the gullet—advanced
the cause of Humanity. At any rate, he worked too much, and worried and fretted over the rebukes he received, and lectured away on his ridiculous creed out of office, till the Doctor had to warn him that he was overdoing it. No man can toil eighteen annas in the rupee in June without suffering. But McGoggin was still intellectually "beany" and proud of himself and his powers, and he would take no hint. He worked nine hours a day steadily.

"Very well," said the doctor, "you'll break down because you are over-engined for your beam." McGoggin was a little chap.

One day, the collapse came—as dramatically as if it had been meant to embellish a Tract.

It was just before the Rains. We were sitting in the verandah in the dead, hot, close air, gasping and praying that the black-blue clouds would let down and bring the cool. Very, very far away, there was a faint whisper, which was the roar of the Rains breaking over the river. One of the men heard it, got out of his chair, listened, and said, naturally enough:—"Thank God!"

Then the Blastoderm turned in his place and said:—

"Why? I assure you it's only the result of perfectly natural causes—atmospheric phenomena of the simplest kind. Why you should, therefore, return thanks to a Being who never did exist—who is only a figment—"

"Blastoderm," grunted the man in the next chair, "dry up, and throw me over the 'Pioneer.' We know all about your figments." The Blastoderm reached out to the table, took up one paper, and jumped as if something had stung him. Then he handed the paper over.

"As I was saying," he went on slowly and with an
effort—"due to perfectly natural causes—perfectly natural causes. I mean—"

"Hi! Blastoderm, you've given me the 'Calcutta Mercantile Advertiser.'"

The dust got up in little whorls, while the tree-tops rocked and the kites whistled. But no one was looking at the coming of the Rains. We were all staring at the Blastoderm who had risen from his chair and was fighting with his speech. Then he said, still more slowly:


"Blastoderm's drunk," said one man. But the Blastoderm was not drunk. He looked at us in a dazed sort of way, and began motioning with his hands in the half light as the clouds closed overhead. Then—with a scream:

"What is it?—Can't—reserve—attainable — market—obscure—"

But his speech seemed to freeze in him, and—just as the lightning shot two tongues that cut the whole sky into three pieces and the rain fell in quivering sheets—the Blastoderm was struck dumb. He stood pawing and champing like a hard-held horse, and his eyes were full of terror.

The Doctor came over in three minutes, and heard the story. "It's aphasia," he said. "Take him to his room. I knew the smash would come." We carried the Blastoderm across in the pouring rain to his quarters, and the doctor gave him bromide of potassium to make him sleep.

Then the Doctor came back to us and told us that aphasia was like all the arrears of "Punjab Head" falling
in a lump; and that only once before—in the case of a sepoy—had he met with so complete a case. I myself have seen mild aphasia in an overworked man, but this sudden dumbness was uncanny—though, as the Blastoderm himself might have said, due to "perfectly natural causes."

"He'll have to take leave after this," said the Doctor; "He won't be fit for work for another three months. No; it isn't insanity or anything like it. It's only complete loss of control over the speech and memory. I fancy it will keep the Blastoderm quiet, though."

Two days later, the Blastoderm found his tongue again. The first question he asked was:—"what was it?" The Doctor enlightened him. "But I can't understand it!" said the Blastoderm; "I'm quite sane; but I can't be sure of my mind, it seems—my own memory—can I?"

"Go up into the Hills for three months, and don't think about it," said the Doctor.

"But I can't understand it," repeated the Blastoderm; "It was my own mind and memory."

"I can't help it," said the Doctor, "there are a good many things you can't understand; and, by the time you have put in my length of service, you'll know exactly how much a man dare call his own in this world."

The stroke cowed the Blastoderm. He could not understand it. He went into the Hills in fear and trembling, wondering whether he would be permitted to reach the end of any sentence he began.

This gave him a wholesome feeling of mistrust. The legitimate explanation, that he had been overworking himself, failed to satisfy him. Something had wiped his lips of speech, as a mother wipes the milky lips of her child, and he was afraid—horribly afraid.
So the Club had rest when he returned; and if ever you come across Aurelian McGoggin laying down the law on things Human—he doesn't seem to know as much as he used to about things Divine—put your forefinger on your lip for a moment, and see what happens.

Don't blame me if he throws a glass at your head!
THE TAKING OF LUNGTUNG PEN.

So we loosed a bloomin' volley,
An' we made the beggars cut,
An' when our pouch was emptied out,
We used the bloomin' butt,
Ho! My!
Don't yer come anigh,
When Tommy is a playin' with the baynit an' the butt.
—Barrack Room Ballad.

My friend Private Mulvaney told me this, sitting on the parapet of the road to Dagshai, when we were hunting butterflies together. He had theories about the Army, and colored clay pipes perfectly. He said that the young soldier is the best to work with, "on account av the surpassing innocine av the child."

"Now, listen!" said Mulvaney, throwing himself full length on the wall in the sun. "I'm a born scutt av the barrick-room! The Army's mate an' dhrink to me, be-kaze I'm wan av the few that can't quit ut. I've put in sivineteen years, an' the pipeclay's in the marrow av me. Av I cud have kept out av wan big dhrink a month, I wud have been a Hon'ry Lift'nint by this time—a nuisance to my betthers, a laughin'-shtock to my equils, an' a curse to meself. Bein' fwhat I am, I'm Privit Mulvaney, wid no good-conduc' pay an' a devourin' thirst. Always barrin' me little frind Bobs Bahadur, I know as much about the Army as most men."

I said something here.

"Wolseley be shot! Betune you an' me an' that butterfly net, he's a ramblin', incoherint sort av a divil, wid
wan oi on the Quane an' the Coort, an' the other on his blessed self—everlastin'ly playing Saysar an' Alexandriin' rowled into a lump. Now Bobs is a sensible little man. Wid Bobs an' a few three-year-olds, I'd swape any army av the earth into a jhairun, an' throw it away afterwards. Faith, I'm not jokin'! 'Tis the bhoys—the raw bhoys—that don't know fwhat a bullet manes, an' wudn't care av they did—that dhu the work. They're crammed wid bull-mate till they fairly ramps wid good livin'; and thin, av they don't fight, they blow each other's hids off. 'Tis the trut' I'm tellin' you. They shud be kept on dal-bhat an' kijri in the hot weather; but there'd be a mut'ny av 'twas done.

"Did ye iver hear how Privit Mulvaney tuk the town av Lungtungpen? I thought not! 'Twas the Lift'nint got the credit; but 'twas me planned the schame. A little before I was inviladed from Burma, me an' four an' twenty young wans undher a Lift'nint Brazenose, was ruinin' our dijeshins thryin' to catch dacoits. An' such double-ended divils I never knew! 'Tis only a dah an' a Snider that makes a dacoit. Widout thim, he's a paceful cultivator, an' felony for to shoot. We hunted, an' we hunted, an' tuk fever an' elephints now an' again; but no dacoits. Evenshually, we puckarowed wan man. 'Trate him tinderly,' sez the Lift'nint. So I tuk him away into the jungle, wid the Burmese Interprut'r an' my clanin'-rod. Sez I to the man:—'My paceful squireen,' sez I, 'you shquot on your hunkers an' demonstrate to my frind here, where your frinds are whin they're at home?' Wid that I introjuced him to the clanin'-rod, and he comminst to jabber; the Interprut'r interprutin' in betweenes, an' me helpin' the Intiligince Departmint wid my clanin'-rod whin the man misremimbered.
“Prisintly, I learnt that, acrost the river, about nine miles away, was a town just dhrippin’ wid dahs, an’ bohs an’ arrows, an’ dacoits, an’ elephints, an’ jingles. ‘Good,’ sez I. ‘This office will now close!’

“That night I wint to the Lift’nint an’ communicates my information. I never thought much of Lift’nint Brazenose till that night. He was shtiff wid books an’ the-ouries, an’ all manner av thrimmin’s no manner av use. ‘Town did ye say?’ sez he. ‘Accordin’ to the the-ouries av War, we shud wait for reinforceemints.’ ‘Faith!’ thinks I, ‘we’d better dig our graves thin,’ for the nearest throops was up to their shtocks in the marshes out Mimbu way. ‘But,’ says the Lift’nint, ‘since ’tis a speshil case, I’ll make an excepshin. We’ll visit this Lungtungpen tonight.’

“The bhoys was fairly woild wid deloight whin I tould ’em; an’ by this an’ that, they wint through the jungle like buck-rabbits. About midnight we come to the shtrame which I had forgot to minshin to my orficer. I was on, ahead, wid four bhoys, an’ I thought that the Lift’nint might want to the-ourize. ‘Shtrip, bhoys!’ sez I. ‘Shtrip to the buff, an’ shwim in where glory waits!’ ‘But I can’t shwim!’ sez two av thim. ‘To think I should live to hear that from a bhoy wid a board-school eduka-shin!’ sez I. ‘Take a lump av thimber, an’ me an’ Conolly here will ferry ye over, ye young ladies!’

“We got an ould tree-trunk, an’ pushed off wid the kits an’ the rifles on it. The night was chokin’ dhark, an’ just as we was fairly embarked, I heard the Lift’nint behind av me callin’ out. ‘There’s a bit av a nullah here, Sorr,’ sez I, ‘but I can feel the bottom already.’ So I cud, for I was not a yard from the bank.

“‘Bit av a nullah! Bit av an eshtuary!’ sez the Lift’-
nint. 'Go on, ye mad Irishman! Shtrip blioys!' I heard him laugh; an' the boys begun shtrippin' an' rollin' a log into the wather to put their kits on. So me an' Conolly shtruck out through the warm wather wid our log, an' the rest come on behind.

"That shtrame was miles woide! Orth'ris, on the rear-rank log, whispers we had got into the Thames below Sheerness by mistake. 'Kape on shwimmin' ye little blayguard,' sez I, 'an' don't go pokin' your dirty jokes at the Irriwaddy.' 'Silence, men!' sings out the Lift'nint. So we shwum on into the black dhark, wid our chests on the logs, trustin' in the Saints an' the luck av the British Army.

"Evenshually, we hit ground—a bit av sand—an' a man. I put my heel on the back av him. He skreeched an' ran.

" 'Now we've done it!' sez Lift'nint Brazenose. 'Where the Divil is Lungtungpen?' There was about a minute and a half to wait. The bhoys laid a hould av their rifles an' some thried to put their belts on; we was marchin' wid fixed baynits av coorse. Thin we knew where Lungtungpen was; for we had hit the river-wall av it in the dhark, an' the whole town blazed wid thim messin' jingles an' Sniders like a cat's back on a frosty night. They was firin' all ways at wanst; but over our hids into the shtrame.

" 'Have you got your rifles?' sez Brazenose. 'Got 'em!' sez Orth'ris, 'I've got that thief Mulvaney's for all my back-pay, an' she'll kick my heart sick wid that blunderin' long shtock av hers.' 'Go on!' yells Brazenose, whippin' his sword out. 'Go on an' take the town! An' the Lord have mercy on our sowls!'

"Thin the bhoys gave wan divastatin' howl, an' pranced
into the dhark, feelin' for the town, an' blindin' an' stiffin' like Cavalry Ridin' Masters whin the grass pricked their bare legs. I hammered wid the butt at some bamboo thing that felt wake, an' the rest come an' hammered contagious, while the jingles was jingling, an' feroshus yells from inside was shplittin' our ears. We was too close under the wall for thim to hurt us.

"Evenshually, the thing, whatever ut was, bruk; an' the six and twinty av us tumbled, wan aither the other, naked as we were borrhun, into the town of Luntungpen. There was a melly av a sumpshus kind for a whoiile; but whether they tuk us, all white an' wet, for a new breed av divil, or a new kind av dacoit, I don't know. They ran as though we was both, an' we wint into thim, baynit an' butt, shriekin' wid laughin'. There was torches in the shtreets, an' I saw little Orth'ris rubbin' his showlther ivry time he loosed my long-shtock Martini; an' Brazenose walkin' into the gang wid his sword, like Diarmid av the Golden Collar—barring he hadn't a stitch av clothin' on him. We diskivered elephints wid decoits under their bellies, an', what wid wan thing an' another, we was busy till mornin' takin' possession av the town of Luntungpen.

"Thin we halted an' formed up, the wimmen howlin' in the houses an' Lift'nint Brazenose blushin' pink in the light av the mornin' sun. 'Twas the most ondasint p'rade I iver tuk a hand in. Foive and twenty privits an' a orficer av the line in review ordher, an' not as much as wud dust a fife betune 'em all in the way of clothin'! Eight av us had their belts an' pouches on; but the rest had gone in wid a handful av cartridges an' the skin God gave him. They was as nakid as Vanus.

" 'Number off from the right!' sez the Lift'nint. 'Odd
numbers fall out to dress; even numbers pathrol the town till relieved by the dressing party.' Let me tell you, pathrollin' a town wid nothing on is an expayrience. I pathrolled for tin minutes, an' begad, before 'twas over, I blushed. The women laughed so. I niver blushed before or since; but I blushed all over my carkiss thin. Orth'ris didn't pathrol. He sez only:—'Portsmith Barricks an' the 'Ard av a Sunday!' Thin he lay down an' rowled anyways wid laughin'.

"When we was all dhressed, we counted the dead—sivinty-foive dacoits besides wounded. We tuk five elephints, a hunder' an' sivinty Sniders, two hunder' dahs, and a lot av other burglarious thruck. Not a man av us was hurt—excep' may be the Lift’nint, an' he from the shock to his dasincy.

"The Headman av Lungtungpen, who surrender’d himself, asked the Interprut’r:—'Av the English fight like that wid their clo’es off, what in the wurruld do they do wid their clo’es on?' Orth’ris began rowlin’ his eyes an' crackin’ his fingers an 'dancin' a step-dance for to impress the Headman. He ran to his house; an’ we spint the rest av the day carryin’ the Lift’nint on our showlthers round the town, an’ playin’ wid the Burmese babies—fat, little, brown little divils, as pretty as pictures.

"Whin I was inviladed for the dysent’ry to India, I sez to the Lift’nint:—'Sorr,' sez I, 'you’ve the makin’s in you av a great man; but, av you’ll let an ould sodger spake, you’re too fond of the-ourisin',’ He shuk hands wid me and sez:—'Hit high, hit low, there's no plasin' you, Mulvaney. You've seen me waltzin' through Lungtungpen like a Red Injin widout the war-paint, an' you say I'm too fond av the-ourisin'? 'Sorr,' sez I, for I loved the bhoy; 'I wud waltz wid you in that condishin through Hell, an'
so wud the rest av the men! Thin I wint downshtrame in the flat an’ left him my blessin’. May the Saints carry ut where ut shud go, for he was a fine upstandin’ young orficer.

“To reshume! Fwhat I’ve said jist shows the use av three-year-olds. Wud fifty seasoned sodgers have taken Lungtungpen in the dhark that way? No! They’d know the risk av fever an’ chill. Let alone the shootin’. Two hundher’ might have done ut. But the three-year-olds know little an’ care less; an’ where there’s no fear, there’s no danger. Catch thim young, feed thim high, an’ by the honor av that great, little man Bobs, behind a good orficer ’tisn’t only dacoits they’d smash wid their clo’es off—’tis Con-ti-nental Ar-r-r-mies! They tuk Lung-tungpen nakid; an’ they’d take St. Pethersburg in their dhrawers! Begad, they would that!

“Here’s your pipe, Sorr! Shmoke her tenderly wid honey-dew, afther letting the reek av the Canteen plug die away. But ’tis no good, thanks to you all the same, fillin’ my pouch wid your chopped bhoosa. Canteen baccy’s like the Army. It shpoils a man’s taste for moilder things.”

So saying, Mulvaney took up his butterfly-net, and re-turned to barracks.
THE ROUT OF THE WHITE HUSSARS.

It was not in the open fight
We threw away the sword,
But in the lonely watching
In the darkness by the ford.
The waters lapped, the night-wind blew,
Full-armed the Fear was born and grew,
And we were flying ere we knew
From panic in the night.

—Beoni Bar.

Some people hold that an English Cavalry regiment cannot run. This is a mistake. I have seen four hundred and thirty-seven sabers flying over the face of the country in abject terror—have seen the best Regiment that ever drew bridle wiped off the Army List for the space of two hours. If you repeat this tale to the White Hussars they will, in all probability, treat you severely. They are not proud of the incident.

You may know the White Hussars by their "side," which is greater than that of all the Cavalry Regiments on the roster. If this is not a sufficient mark, you may know them by their old brandy. It has been sixty years in the Mess and is worth going far to taste. Ask for the "McGaire" old brandy, and see that you get it. If the Mess Sergeant thinks that you are uneducated, and that the genuine article will be lost on you, he will treat you accordingly. He is a good man. But, when you are at Mess, you must never talk to your hosts about forced marches or long-distance rides. The Mess are very sen-
sitive; and, if they think that you are laughing at them, will tell you so.

As the White Hussars say, it was all the Colonel's fault. He was a new man, and he ought never to have taken the Command. He said that the Regiment was not smart enough. This to the White Hussars, who knew that they could walk round any Horse and through any Guns, and over any Foot on the face of the earth! That insult was the first cause of offense.

Then the Colonel cast the Drum-Horse—the Drum-Horse of the White Hussars! Perhaps you do not see what an unspeakable crime he had committed. I will try to make it clear. The soul of the Regiment lives in the Drum-Horse who carries the silver kettle-drums. He is nearly always a big piebald Waler. That is a point of honor; and a Regiment will spend anything you please on a piebald. He is beyond the ordinary laws of casting. His work is very light, and he only manoeuvres at a foot-pace. Wherefore so long as he can step out and look handsome, his wellbeing is assured. He knows more about the Regiment than the Adjutant, and could not make a mistake if he tried.

The Drum-Horse of the White Hussars was only eighteen years old, and perfectly equal to his duties. He had at least six years' more work in him, and carried himself with all the pomp and dignity of a Drum-Major of the Guards. The Regiment had paid Rs.1200 for him.

But the Colonel said that he must go, and he was cast in due form and replaced by a washy, bay beast, as ugly as a mule, with a ewe-neck, rat-tail, and cow-hocks. The Drummer detested that animal, and the best of the Band-horses put back their ears and showed the whites of their
eyes at the very sight of him. They knew him for an upstart and no gentleman. I fancy that the Colonel's ideas of smartness extended to the Band, and that he wanted to make it take part in the regular parade movements. A Cavalry Band is a sacred thing. It only turns out for Commanding Officers' parades, and the Band Master is one degree more important than the Colonel. He is a High Priest and the "Keel Row" is his holy song. The "Keel Row" is the Cavalry Trot; and the man who has never heard that tune rising, high and shrill, above the rattle of the Regiment going past the saluting-base, has something yet to hear and understand.

When the Colonel cast the Drum-Horse of the White Hussars, there was nearly a mutiny.

The officers were angry, the Regiment were furious, and the Bandsmen swore—like troopers. The Drum-Horse was going to be put up to auction—public auction—to be bought, perhaps, by a Parsee and put into a cart! It was worse than exposing the inner life of the Regiment to the whole world, or selling the Mess Plate to a Jew—a Black Jew.

The Colonel was a mean man and a bully. He knew what the Regiment thought about his action; and, when the troopers offered to buy the Drum-Horse, he said that their offer was mutinous and forbidden by the Regulations.

But one of the Subalterns—Hogan-Yale, an Irishman—bought the Drum-Horse for Rs.160 at the sale, and the Colonel was wroth. Yale professed repentance—he was unnaturally submissive—and said that, as he had only made the purchase to save the horse from possible ill-treatment and starvation, he would now shoot him and
end the business. This appeared to soothe the Colonel, for he wanted the Drum-Horse disposed of. He felt that he had made a mistake, and could not of course acknowledge it. Meantime, the presence of the Drum-Horse was an annoyance to him.

Yale took to himself a glass of the old brandy, three cheroots, and his friend Martyn; and they all left the Mess together. Yale and Martyn conferred for two hours in Yale’s quarters; but only the bull-terrier who keeps watch over Yale’s boot-trees knows what they said. A horse, hooded and sheeted to his ears, left Yale’s stables and was taken, very unwillingly, into the Civil Lines. Yale’s groom went with him. Two men broke into the Regimental Theater and took several paint-pots and some large scenery-brushes. Then night fell over the Cantonments, and there was a noise as of a horse kicking his loose box to pieces in Yale’s stables. Yale had a big, old, white Waler trap-horse.

The next day was a Thursday, and the men, hearing that Yale was going to shoot the Drum-Horse in the evening, determined to give the beast a regular regimental funeral—a finer one than they would have given the Colonel had he died just then. They got a bullock-cart and some sacking, and mounds and mounds of roses, and the body, under sacking, was carried out to the place where the anthrax cases were cremated; two-thirds of the Regiment following. There was no Band, but they all sang “The Place where the old Horse died” as something respectful and appropriate to the occasion. When the corpse was dumped into the grave and the men began throwing down armfuls of roses to cover it, the Farrier-Sergeant ripped out an oath and said aloud “Why,
And on his back, very stiff and soldierly, sat a bareheaded skeleton.—Page 148.
it ain’t the Drum-Horse any more than it’s me!” The Troop Sergeant-Majors asked him whether he had left his head in the Canteen. The Farrier-Sergeant said that he knew the Drum-Horse’s feet as well as he knew his own; but he was silenced when he saw the regimental number burnt in on the poor stiff, upturned near-fore.

Thus was the Drum-Horse of the White Hussars buried; the Farrier-Sergeant grumbling. The sacking that covered the corpse was smeared in places with black paint; and the Farrier-Sergeant drew attention to this fact. But the Troop-Sergeant-Major of E Troop kicked him severely on the shin, and told him that he was undoubtedly drunk.

On the Monday following the burial, the Colonel sought revenge on the White Hussars. Unfortunately, being at that time temporarily in Command of the Station, he ordered a Brigade field-day. He said that he wished to make the Regiment “sweat for their damned insolence,” and he carried out his notion thoroughly. That Monday was one of the hardest days in the memory of the White Hussars. They were thrown against a skeleton-enemy, and pushed forward, and withdrawn, and dismounted, and “scientifically handled” in every possible fashion over dusty country, till they sweated profusely. Their only amusement came late in the day when they fell upon the battery of Horse Artillery and chased it for two miles. This was a personal question, and most of the troopers had money on the event; the Gunners saying openly that they had the legs of the White Hussars. They were wrong. A march-past concluded the campaign, and when the Regiment got back to their
Lines, the men were coated with dirt from spur to chin-strap.

The White Hussars have one great and peculiar privilege. They won it at Fontenoy, I think.

Many Regiments possess special rights such as wearing collars with undress uniform, or a bow of riband between the shoulders, or red and white roses in their helmets on certain days of the year. Some rights are connected with regimental saints, and some with regimental successes. All are valued highly; but none so highly as the right of the White Hussars to have the Band playing when their horses are being watered in the Lines. Only one tune is played, and that tune never varies. I don't know its real name, but the White Hussars call it, "Take me to London again." It sounds very pretty. The Regiment would sooner be struck off the roster than forego their distinction.

After the "dismiss" was sounded, the officers rode off home to prepare for stables; and the men filed into the lines riding easy. That is to say, they opened their tight buttons, shifted their helmets, and began to joke or to swear as the humor took them; the more careful slipping off and easing girths and curbs. A good trooper values his mount exactly as much as he values himself, and believes, or should believe, that the two together are irresistible where women or men, girls or guns, are concerned.

Then the Orderly-Officer gave the order, "Water horses," and the Regiment loafed off to the squadron troughs which were in rear of the stables and between these and the barracks. There were four huge troughs, one for each squadron, arranged en echelon, so that the
SOLDIERS THREE.

whole Regiment could water in ten minutes if it liked. But it lingered for seventeen, as a rule, while the Band played.

The Band struck up as the squadrons filed off to the troughs, and the men slipped their feet out of the stirrups and chaffed each other. The sun was just setting in a big, hot bed of red cloud, and the road to the Civil Lines seemed to run straight into the sun’s eye. There was a little dot on the road. It grew and grew till it showed as a horse, with a sort of gridiron-thing on his back. The red cloud glared through the bars of the grid-iron. Some of the troopers shaded their eyes with their hands and said—"What the mischief ’as that there ’orse got on ’im?"

In another minute they heard a neigh that every soul—horse and man—in the Regiment knew, and saw, heading straight towards the Band, the dead Drum-Horse of the White Hussars!

On his withers banged and bumped the kettle-drums draped in crape, and on his back, very stiff and soldierly, sat a bareheaded skeleton.

The Band stopped playing, and, for a moment, there was a hush.

Then some one in E Troop—men said it was the Troop-Sergeant-Major—swung his horse round and yelled. No one can account exactly for what happened afterwards; but it seems that, at least, one man in each troop set an example of panic, and the rest followed like sheep. The horses that had barely put their muzzles into the troughs reared and capered; but as soon as the Band broke, which it did when the ghost of the Drum-Horse was about a furlong distant, all hooves followed suit, and the clatter
of the stampede—quite different from the orderly throb and roar of a movement on parade, or the rough horse-play of watering in camp—made them only more terrified. They felt that the men on their backs were afraid of something. When horses once know that, all is over except the butchery.

Troop after troop turned from the troughs and ran—anywhere and everywhere—like spilt quicksilver. It was a most extraordinary spectacle, for men and horses were in all stages of easiness, and the carbine-buckets flopping against their sides urged the horses on. Men were shouting and cursing, and trying to pull clear of the Band which was being chased by the Drum-Horse whose rider had fallen forward and seemed to be spurring for a wager.

The Colonel had gone over to the Mess for a drink. Most of the officers were with him, and the Subaltern of the Day was preparing to go down to the lines, and receive the watering reports from the Troop-Sergeant-Majors. When "Take me to London again" stopped, after twenty bars, every one in the mess said, "What on earth has happened?" A minute later, they heard unmilitary noises, and saw, far across the plain, the White Hussars, scattered and broken, and flying.

The Colonel was speechless with rage, for he thought that the Regiment had risen against him or was unanimously drunk. The Band, a disorganized mob, tore past, and at its heels labored the Drum-Horse—the dead and buried Drum-Horse—with the jolting, clattering skeleton. Hogan-Yale whispered softly to Martyn—"No wire will stand that treatment," and the Band, which had doubled like a hare, came back again. But the rest of
the Regiment was gone, was rioting all over the Province, for the dusk had shut in and each man was howling to his neighbor that the Drum-Horse was on his flank. Troop-horses are far too tenderly treated as a rule. They can, on emergencies, do a great deal, even with seventeen stone on their backs. As the troopers found out.

How long this panic lasted I cannot say. I believe that when the moon rose the men saw they had nothing to fear, and, by twos and threes and half troops, crept back into Cantonments very much ashamed of themselves. Meantime, the Drum-Horse, disgusted at his treatment by old friends, pulled up, wheeled round, and trotted up to the Mess verandah-steps for bread. No one liked to run; but no one cared to go forward till the Colonel made a movement and laid hold of the skeleton's foot. The Band had halted some distance away, and now came back slowly. The Colonel called it, individually and collectively, every evil name that occurred to him at the time; for he had set his hand on the bosom of the Drum-Horse and found flesh and blood. Then he beat the kettle-drums with his clenched fist, and discovered that they were but made of silvered paper and bamboo. Next, still swearing, he tried to drag the skeleton out of the saddle, but found that it had been wired into the cantle. The sight of the Colonel, with his arms round the skeleton's pelvis and his knee in the old Drum-Horse's stomach, was striking. Not to say amusing. He worried the thing off in a minute or two, and threw it down on the ground, saying to the Band—'Here, you curs, that's what you're afraid of.' The skeleton did not look pretty in the twilight. The Band-Sergeant seemed
to recognize it for he began to chuckle and choke. "Shall I take it away, sir?" said the Band-Sergeant "Yes," said the Colonel, "take it to Hell, and ride there yourselves!"

The Band-Sergeant saluted, hoisted the skeleton across his saddle-bow, and led off to the stables. Then the Colonel began to make inquiries for the rest of the Regiment, and the language he used was wonderful. He would disband the Regiment—he would court-martial every soul in it—he would not command such a set of rabble, and so on, and so on. As the men dropped in, his language grew wilder, until at last it exceeded the utmost limits of free speech allowed even to a Colonel of Horse.

Martyn took Hogan-Yale aside and suggested compulsory retirement from the Service as a necessity when all was discovered. Martyn was the weaker man of the two. Hogan-Yale put up his eyebrows and remarked, firstly, that he was the son of a Lord, and, secondly, that he was as innocent as the babe unborn of the theatrical resurrection of the Drum-Horse.

"My instructions," said Yale, with a singularly sweet smile, "were that the Drum-Horse should be sent back as impressively as possible. I ask you, am I responsible if a mule-headed friend sends him back in such a manner as to disturb the peace of mind of a regiment of Her Majesty's Cavalry?"

Martyn said, "You are a great man, and will in time become a General; but I'd give my chance of a troop to be safe out of this affair."

Providence saved Martyn and Hogan-Yale. The Second-in-Command led the Colonel away to the little curtained alcove wherein the Subalterns of the White Hus-
sars were accustomed to play poker of nights; and there, after many oaths on the Colonel's part, they talked together in low tones. I fancy that the Second-in-Command must have represented the scare as the work of some trooper whom it would be hopeless to detect; and I know that he dwelt upon the sin and the shame of making a public laughing-stock of the scare.

"They will call us," said the Second-in-Command, who had really a fine imagination—"they will call us the 'Fly-by-Nights;' they will call us the 'Ghost Hunters;' they will nickname us from one end of the Army List to the other. All the explanation in the world won't make outsiders understand that the officers were away when the panic began. For the honor of the Regiment and for your own sake keep this thing quiet."

The Colonel was so exhausted with anger that soothing him down was not so difficult as might be imagined. He was made to see, gently and by degrees, that it was obviously impossible to court-martial the whole Regiment and equally impossible to proceed against any subaltern who, in his belief, had any concern in the hoax.

"But the beast's alive! He's never been shot at all!" shouted the Colonel. "It's flat flagrant disobedience! I've known a man broke for less—dam sight less. They're mocking me, I tell you, Mutman! They're mocking me!"

Once more, the Second-in-Command set himself to soothe the Colonel, and wrestled with him for half an hour. At the end of that time the Regimental Sergeant-Major reported himself. The situation was rather novel to him; but he was not a man to be put out by circumstances. He saluted and said, "Regiment all come back,
Sir.” Then, to propitiate the Colonel—"An' none of the 'orses any worse, Sir."

The Colonel only snorted and answered—"You'd better tuck the men into their cots, then, and see that they don't wake up and cry in the night." The Sergeant withdrew.

His little stroke of humor pleased the Colonel, and, further, he felt slightly ashamed of the language he had been using. The Second-in-Command worried him again, and the two sat talking far into the night.

Next day but one, there was a Commanding Officer's parade, and the Colonel harangued the White Hussars vigorously. The pith of his speech was that, since the Drum-Horse in his old age had proved himself capable of cutting up the whole Regiment, he should return to his post of pride at the head of the Band, but the Regiment were a set of ruffians with bad consciences.

The White Hussars shouted, and threw everything movable about them into the air, and when the parade was over, they cheered the Colonel till they couldn't speak. No cheers were put up for Lieutenant Hogan-Yale, who smiled very sweetly in the background.

Said the Second-in-Command to the Colonel, unofficially—

"These little things ensure popularity, and do not the least affect discipline."

"But I went back on my word," said the Colonel.

"Never mind," said the Second-in-Command. "The White Hussars will follow you anywhere from to-day. Regiments are just like women. They will do anything for trinketry."

A week later Hogan-Yale received an extraordinary
letter from some one who signed himself "Secretary, Charity and Zeal, 3709, E. C.," and asked for "the return of our skeleton which we have reason to believe is in your possession."

"Who the deuce is this lunatic who trades in bones?" said Hogan-Yale.

"Beg your pardon, Sir," said the Band-Sergeant, "but the skeleton is with me, an' I'll return it if you'll pay the carriage into the Civil Lines. There's a coffin with it, Sir."

Hogan-Yale smiled and handed two rupees to the Band-Sergeant, saying, "Write the date on the skull, will you?"

If you doubt this story, and know where to go, you can see the date on the skeleton. But don't mention the matter to the White Hussars.

I happen to know something about it, because I prepared the Drum-Horse for his resurrection. He did not take kindly to the skeleton at all.
VENUS ANNODOMINI.

And the years went on, as the years must do;
But our great Diana was always new—
Fresh, and blooming, and blonde, and fair,
With azure eyes and with aureate hair;
And all the folk, as they came or went,
Offered her praise to her heart’s content.

—Diana of Ephesus.

She had nothing to do with Number Eighteen in the Braccio Nuovo of the Vatican, between Visconti’s Ceres and the God of the Nile. She was purely an Indian deity—an Anglo-Indian deity, that is to say—and we called her the Venus Annodomini, to distinguish her from other Annodominis of the same everlasting order. There was a legend among the Hills that she had once been young; but no living man was prepared to come forward and say boldly that the legend was true. Men rode up to Simla, and stayed, and went away and made their name and did their life’s work, and returned again to find the Venus Annodomini exactly as they had left her. She was as immutable as the Hills. But not quite so green. All that a girl of eighteen could do in the way of riding, walking, dancing, picnicking and over-exertion generally, the Venus Annodomini did, and showed no sign of fatigue or trace of weariness. Besides perpetual youth, she had discovered, men said, the secret of perpetual health; and her fame spread about the land. From a mere woman, she grew to be an institution, insomuch that no young man could be said to be properly
formed, who had not, at some time or another, worshipped at the shrine of the Venus Annodomini. There was no one like her, though there were many imitations. Six years in her eyes were no more than six months to ordinary women; and ten made less visible impression on her than does a week's fever on an ordinary woman. Everyone adored her, and in return she was pleasant and courteous to nearly every one. Youth had been a habit of hers for so long, that she could not part with it—never realized, in fact, the necessity of parting with it—and took for her more chosen associates young people.

Among the worshippers of the Venus Annodomini was young Gayerson. "Very Young Gayerson" he was called to distinguish him from his father "Young" Gayerson, a Bengal Civilian, who affected the customs—as he had the heart—of youth. "Very Young" Gayerson was not content to worship placidly and for form's sake, as the other young men did, or to accept a ride or a dance, or a talk from the Venus Annodomini in a properly humble and thankful spirit. He was exacting, and, therefore, the Venus Annodomini repressed him. He worried himself nearly sick in a futile sort of way over her; and his devotion and earnestness made him appear either shy or boisterous or rude, as his mood might vary, by the side of the older men, who, with him, bowed before the Venus Annodomini. She was sorry for him. He reminded her of a lad who, three-and-twenty years ago, had professed a boundless devotion for her, and for whom in return she had felt something more than a week's weakness. But that lad had fallen away and married another woman less than a year after he had worshipped her; and the Venus Annodomini had almost—not quite—forgotten his name. "Very Young" Gayerson had the same big
blue eyes and the same way of pouting his underlip when he was excited or troubled. But the Venus Annodomini checked him sternly none the less. Too much zeal was a thing that she did not approve of; preferring instead, a tempered and sober tenderness.

“Very Young” Gayerson was miserable, and took no trouble to conceal his wretchedness. He was in the Army—a Line regiment I think, but am not certain—and, since his face was a looking-glass and his forehead an open book, by reason of his innocence, his brothers-in-arms made his life a burden to him and embittered his naturally sweet disposition. No one except “Very Young” Gayerson, and he never told his views, knew how old “Very Young” Gayerson believed the Venus Annodomini to be. Perhaps he thought her five-and-twenty, or perhaps she told him that she was this age. “Very Young” Gayerson would have forded the Indus in flood to carry her lightest word, and had implicit faith in her. Every one liked him, and every one was sorry when they saw him so bound a slave of the Venus Annodomini. Every one, too, admitted that it was not her fault; for the Venus Annodomini differed from Mrs. Hauksbee and Mrs. Reiver in this particular—she never moved a finger to attract any one; but, like Ninon de L’Enclos, all men were attracted to her. One could admire and respect Mrs. Hauksbee, despise and avoid Mrs. Reiver, but one was forced to adore the Venus Annodomini.

“Very Young” Gayerson’s papa held a Division or a Collectorate or something administrative in a particularly unpleasant part of Bengal—full of Babus who edited newspapers proving that “Young” Gayerson was a “Nero” and a “Scylla” and a “Charybdis;” and, in ad-
dition to the Babus, there was a good deal of dysentery and cholera abroad for nine months of the year. “Young” Gayerson—he was about five-and-forty—rather liked Babus, they amused him, but he objected to dysentery, and when he could get away, went to Darjiling for the most part. This particular season he fancied that he would come up to Simla and see his boy. The boy was not altogether pleased. He told the Venus Annodomini that his father was coming up, and she flushed a little and said that she should be delighted to make his acquaintance. Then she looked long and thoughtfully at “Very Young” Gayerson, because she was very, very sorry for him, and he was a very, very big idiot.

“My daughter is coming out in a fortnight, Mr. Gayerson,” she said.

“Your what?” said he.

“Daughter,” said the Venus Annodomini. “She’s been out for a year at Home already, and I want her to see a little of India. She is nineteen and a very sensible nice girl I believe.”

“Very Young” Gayerson, who was a short twenty-two years old, nearly fell out of his chair with astonishment; for he had persisted in believing, against all belief, in the youth of the Venus Annodomini. She, with her back to the curtained window, watched the effect of her sentences and smiled.

“Very Young” Gayerson’s papa came up twelve days later, and had not been in Simla four-and-twenty hours, before two men, old acquaintances of his, had told him how “Very Young” Gayerson had been conducting himself.

“Young” Gayerson laughed a good deal, and inquired who the Venus Annodomini might be. Which proves
that he had been living in Bengal where nobody knows anything except the rate of Exchange. Then he said boys will be boys, and spoke to his son about the matter. "Very Young" Gayerson said that he felt wretched and unhappy; and "Young" Gayerson said that he repented of having helped to bring a fool into the world. He suggested that his son had better cut his leave short and go down to his duties. This led to an unfilial answer, and relations were strained, until "Young" Gayerson demanded that they should call on the Venus Annodomini. "Very Young" Gayerson went with his papa, feeling, somehow, uncomfortable and small.

The Venus Annodomini received them graciously and "Young" Gayerson said, "By Jove! It's Kitty!" "Very Young" Gayerson would have listened for an explanation, if his time had not been taken up with trying to talk to a large, handsome, quiet, well-dressed girl—introduced to him by the Venus Annodomini as her daughter. She was far older in manner, style, and repose than "Very Young" Gayerson; and, as he realized this thing, he felt sick.

Presently, he heard the Venus Annodomini saying, "Do you know that your son is one of my most devoted admirers?"

"I don't wonder," said "Young" Gayerson. Here he raised his voice, "He follows his father's footsteps. Didn't I worship the ground you trod on, ever so long ago, Kitty—and you haven't changed since then. How strange it all seems!"

"Very Young" Gayerson said nothing. His conversation with the daughter of the Venus Annodomini was, through the rest of the call, fragmentary and disjointed.
"At five to-morrow then," said the Venus Annodomini. "And mind you are punctual."

"At five punctually," said "Young" Gayerson. "You can lend your old father a horse I daresay, youngster, can’t you? I’m going for a ride to-morrow afternoon."

"Certainly," said "Very Young" Gayerson. "I am going down to-morrow morning. My ponies are at your service, Sir."

The Venus Annodomini looked at him across the half-light of the room, and her big gray eyes filled with moisture. She rose and shook hands with him.

"Good-bye, Tom," whispered the Venus Annodomini.
THE DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT.

Jain 'Ardin' was a Sarjint's wife,
    A Sarjint's wife was she.
She married of 'im in Orldershort
    An' comed acrost the sea.
(Chorus) 'Ave you never 'eard tell o' Jain 'Ardin'?
    Jain 'Ardin'?
    Jain 'Ardin'?
    Jain 'Ardin'?
    'Ave you never 'eard tell o' Jain 'Ardin'?
The pride o' the Companee?
    —Old Barrack-Room Ballad.

"A Gentleman who doesn't know the Circasian Circle
ought not to stand up for it—puttin' everybody out."
That was what Miss McKenna said, and the Sergeant
who was my vis-a-vis looked the same thing. I was
afraid of Miss McKenna. She was six feet high, all yel-
low freckles and red hair, and was simply clad in white
satin shoes, a pink muslin dress, an apple-green stuff
sash, and black silk gloves, with yellow roses in her hair.
Wherefore I fled from Miss McKenna and sought my
friend, Private Mulvaney, who was at the cant—refresh-
ment-table.

"So you've been dancin' with little Jhansi McKenna,
Sorr—she that's goin' to marry Corp'ril Slane? Whin
you next conversh wid your lorruds an' your ladies,
tell thim you've danced wid little Jhansi. 'Tis a thing
to be proud av."

But I wasn't proud. I was humble. I saw a story in
Private Mulvaney's eye; and besides, if he stayed too
long at the bar, he would, I knew, qualify for more pack-
drill. Now to meet an esteemed friend doing pack-drill
outside the guard-room is embarrassing, especially if you happen to be walking with his Commanding Officer.

"Come on to the parade-ground, Mulvaney, it's cooler there, and tell me about Miss McKenna. What is she, and who is she, and why is she called 'Jhansi'?

"D'ye mane to say you've niver heard av Ould Pummeloe's daughter? An' you thinkin' you know things! I'm wid ye in a minut' whin me poipe's lit."

We came out under the stars. Mulvaney sat down on one of the artillery bridges, and began in the usual way: his pipe between his teeth, his big hands clasped and dropped between his knees, and his cap well on the back of his head—

"Whin Mrs. Mulvaney, that is, was Miss Shad that was, you were a dale younger than you are now, an' the Army was dif'rint in sev'ril e-senshuls. Bhoys have no call for to marry nowadays, an' that's why the Army has so few rale, good, honust, swearin', strapagin', tender-hearted, heavy-futted wives as ut used to have whin I was a Corp'ril. I was rejuced afterwards—but no matther—I was a Corp'ril wanst. In thim times, a man lived an' died wid his regiment; an' by natur', he married whin he was a man. Whin I was Corp'ril—Mother av Hivin, how the regiment has died an' been borrun since that day! —my Color-Sar'jint was Ould McKenna, an' a married man tu. An' his woife—his first woife, for he married three times, did McKenna—was Bridget McKenna, from Portarlington, like mesilf. I've misremembered fwhat her first name was; but in B Comp'ny we called her 'Ould Pummeloe,' by reason av her figure, which was entirely cir-cum-fe-renshill. Like the big dhrum! Now that woman—God rock her sowl to rest in glory!—was for everlastin' havin' childher; an' McKenna, whin the fifth or sixth come squallin' on to the musther-roll, swore
he wud number thim off in future. But Ould Pumme-loe she prayed av him to christen them after the names av the stations they was borrin in. So there was Colaba McKenna, an’ Muttra McKenna, an’ a whole Presidincy av other McKennas, an’ little Jhansi, dancin’ over yonder. Whin the childher wasn’t bornin’, they was dying; for av our childher die like sheep in these days, they died like flies thin. I lost me own little Shad—but no matther. ’Tis long ago, and Mrs. Mulvaney niver had another.

“I’m digresshin. Wan divil’s hot summer, there come an order from some mad ijjit, whose name I misremem-ber, for the rigimint to go up-country. Maybe they wanted to know how the new rail carried throops. They knew! On me sowl, they knew before they was done! Old Pummeloe had just buried Muttra McKenna; an’, the season bein’ onwholesim, only little Jhansi McKenna, who was four years ould thin, was left on hand.

“Five children gone in fourteen months. ’Twas harrd, wasn’t ut?

“So we wint up to our new station in that blazin’ heat—may the curse av Saint Lawrence conshume the man who gave the ordher! Will I iver forget that move? They gave us two wake thrains to the rigimint; an’ we was eight hundher’ and sivinty strong. There was A, B, C, an’ D Companies in the secon’ thrain, wid twelve women, no orficers’ ladies, an’ thirteen childher. We was to go six hundher’ miles, an’ railways was new in thim days. Whin we had been a night in the belly av the thrain—the men ragin’ in their shirts an’ dhrinkin’ anything they cud find, an’ eatin’ bad fruit-stuff whin they cud, for we cudn’t stop ’em—I was a Corp’ril thin—the cholera bruk out wid the dawnin’ av the day.

“Pray to the Saints, you may niver see cholera in a throop-thrain! ’Tis like the judgmint av God hittin’ down
from the nakid sky! We run into a rest-camp—as ut might have been Ludianny, but not by any means so comfortable. The Orficer Commandin' sent a telegrapt up the line, three hundher' mile up, askin' for help. Faith, we wanted ut, for ivry sowl av the followers ran for the dear life as soon as the thrain stopped; an' by the time that telegrapt was writ, there wasn't a naygur in the station except the telegrapt-clerk—an' he only bekaze he was held down to his chair by the scruff av his sneakin' black neck. Thin the day began wid the noise in the carr'ges, an' the rattle av the men on the platform fallin' over, arms an' all, as they stud for to answer the Comp'ny muster-roll before goin' over to the camp. 'Tisn't for me to say what like the cholera was like. May be the Doctor cud ha' tould, av he hadn't dropped on to the platform from the door av a carriage where we was takin' out the dead. He died wid the rest. Some bhoys had died in the night. We tuk out siven, and twenty more was sick'enin' as we tuk thim. The women was huddled up anyways, screamin' wid fear.

"Sez the Commandin' Orficer, whose name I misremember, 'Take the women over to that tope av trees yonder. Get thim out av the camp. 'Tis no place for thim.'

"Ould Pummeloe was sittin' on her beddin'-rowl thryin' to kape little Jhansi quiet. 'Go off to that tope!' sez the Orficer. 'Go out av the men's way!'

"'Be damned av I do!' sez Ould Pummeloe, an' little Jhansi, squattin' by her mother's side, squeaks out, 'Be damned av I do,' tu. Thin Ould Pummeloe turns to the women an' she sez, 'Are ye goin' to let the bhoys die while you're picnickin', ye sluts?' sez she. 'Tis wather they want. Come on an' help.'

"Wid that, she turns up her sleeves an' sets out for
a well behind the rest-camp—little Jhansi trottin' behind wid a lotah an' string, an' the other women followin' like lambs, wid horse-buckets and cookin' pots. Whin all the things was full, Ould Pummeloe marches back into camp—'twas like a battlefield wid all the gory missin'—at the hid av the rigimint av women.

"'McKenna, me man!' she sez, with a voice on her like grand-roun's challenge, 'tell the bhoys to be quiet. Ould Pummeloe's comin' to look after thim—wid free dhrinks.'

"Thin we cheered, an' the cheerin' in the lines was louder than the noise av the poor divils wid the sickness on thim. But not much.

"You see, we was a new an' raw rigimint in those days, an' we cud make neither head nor tail av the sickness; an' so we was useless. The men was goin' roun' an' about like dumb sheep, waitin' for the nex' man to fall over, an' sayin' undher their spache, 'Fwhat is ut? In the name av God, fwhat is ut?' 'Twas horrible. But through ut all, up an' down, an' down an' up, wint Ould Pummeloe an' little Jhansi—all we cud see av the baby, undher a dead man's helmut wid the chin-strap swingin' about her little stummick—up an' down wid the wather an' fwhat brandy there was.

"Now an' thin Ould Pummeloe, the tears runnin' down her fat, red face, sez, 'Me bhoys, me poor, dead, darlin' bhoys!' But, for the most, she was thryin' to put heart into the men an' kape thim stiddy; and little Jhansi was tellin' thim all they wud be 'betther in the mornin'. 'Twas a thrick she'd picked up from hearin' Ould Pummeloe whin Muttra was burnin' out wid wid fever. In the mornin'! 'Twas the iverlastin' mornin' at St. Pether's Gate was the mornin' for seven-an'-twenty good men; and twenty more was sick to the death in that bitter,
burnin' sun. But the women worked like angels, as I've said, an' the men like devils, till two doctors come down from above, and we was rescued.

"But, just before that, Ould Pummeloe, on her knees over a b'hy in my squad—right-cot man to me he was in the barrick—tellin' him the worrud av the Church that niver failed a man yet, sez, 'Hould me up, b'hyos! I'm feelin' bloody sick!' 'Twas the sun, not the cholera, did ut. She misremembered she was only wearin' her ould black bonnet, an' she died wid 'McKenna, me man,' houldin' her up, an' the b'hyos howled whin they buried her.

"That night a big wind blew, an' blew, an' blew, an' blew the tents flat. But it blew the cholera away an' niver another case there was all the while we was waitin' —ten days in quarintin'. Av you will belave me, the thrack av the sickness in the camp was for all the worruld the thrack av a man walkin' four times in a figure-av-eight through the tents. They say 'tis the Wandherin' Jew takes the cholera wid him. I believe ut.

"An' that," said Mulvaney illogically, "is the cause why little Jhansi McKenna is fwhat she is. She was brought up by the Quartermaster Sergeant's wife whin McKenna died, but she b'longs to B Comp'ny; and this tale I'm tellin' you—wid a proper appreciashin av Jhansi McKenna—I've belted into ivry recruity av the Comp'ny as he was drafted. 'Faith, 'twas me belted Corp'r'l Slane into askin' the girl!"

"Not really?"

"Man, I did! She's no beauty to look at, but she's Ould Pummeloe's daughter, an' 'tis my juty to provide for her. Just before Slane got his promotion I sez to him, 'Slane,' sez I, 'to-morrow 'twill be insubordinashin av me to chastise you; but, by the sowl av Ould Pumme-
loe, who is now in glory, av you don't give me your wurrud to ask Jhansi McKenna at wanst, I'll peel the flesh off yer bones wid a brass huk to-night. 'Tis a dish-grace to B Comp'ny she's been single so long!' sez I. Was I goin' to let a three-year-ould preshume to discourse wid me—my will bein' set? No! Slane wint an' asked her. He's a good bhoy is Slane. Wan av these days he'll get into the Com'ssariat an' dhrive a buggy wid his—savin's. So I provided for Ould Pummeloe's daughter; an' now you go along an' dance ag'in wid her."

And I did.
I felt a respect for Miss Jhansi McKenna; and I went to her wedding later on.
Perhaps I will tell you about that one of these days.
THE MADNESS OF PRIVATE ORTHERIS.

Oh! Where would I be when my froat was dry?
Oh! Where would I be when the bullets fly?
Oh! Where would I be when I come to die?

Why,
Somewheres anigh my chum.
If 'e's liquor 'e'll give me some,
If I'm dyin' 'e'll 'old my 'ead,
An' e'll write 'em 'Ome when I'm dead.—
Gawd send us a trusty chum!

—Barrack Room Ballad.

My friends Mulvaney and Ortheris had gone on a shooting-expedition for one day. Learoyd was still in hospital, recovering from fever picked up in Burma. They sent me an invitation to join them, and were genuinely pained when I brought beer—almost enough beer to satisfy two Privates of the Line....and Me.

"'Twasn't for that we bid you welkim, Sorr," said Mulvaney, sulkily. "'Twas for the pleasure av your com'-ny."

Ortheris came to the rescue with—"Well, 'e won't be none the worse for bringin' liquor with 'im. We ain't a file o' Dooks. We're bloomin' Tommies, ye cantankris Hirishman; an' 'eres your very good 'ealth!"

We shot all the forenoon, and killed two pariah-dogs, four green parrots, sitting, one kite by the burning-ghaut, one snake flying, one mud-turtle, and eight crows. Game was plentiful. Then we sat down to tiffin—"bull-mate an' bran-bread," Mulvaney called it—by the side of the river, and took pot shots at the crocodiles in the in-
tervals of cutting up the food with our only pocket-knife. Then we drank up all the beer, and threw the bottles into the water and fired at them. After that, we eased belts and stretched ourselves on the warm sand and smoked. We were too lazy to continue shooting.

Ortheris heaved a big sigh, as he lay on his stomach with his head between his fists. Then he swore quietly into the blue sky.

"Fwhat's that for?" said Mulvaney. "Have ye not drunk enough?"

"Tott'nim Court Road, an' a gal I fancied there. Wot's the good of sodgerin'?"

"Orth'ris, me son," said Mulvaney hastily, "'tis more than likely you've got throuble in your inside wid the beer. I feel that way mesilf whin my liver gets rusty."

Ortheris went on slowly, not heeding the interruption—

"I'm a Tommy—a bloomin', eight-anna, dog-stealin' Tommy, with a number instead of a decent name. Wot's the good o' me? If I 'ad a stayed at 'Ome, I might a married that gal and a kep' a little shorp in the 'Am-mersmith 'Igh.—'S. Orth'ris, Prac-ti-cal Taxi-der-mist.' With a stuff' fox, like they 'as in the Haylesbury Dairies, in the winder, an' a little case of blue and yaller glass-heyes, an' a little wife to call 'shorp!' 'shorp!' when the door-bell rung. As it his, I'm on'y a Tommy—a Bloom-in', Gawd-forsaken, Beer-swillin' Tommy. 'Rest on your harms—'versed Stan' at—hease; 'Shun. 'Verse—harms. Right an' lef'—tarrn. Slow—march. 'Alt—front. Rest on your harms—'versed. With blank-cartridge—load.' An' that's the end o' me." He was quoting fragments from Funeral Parties' Orders.

"Stop ut!" shouted Mulvaney. "Whin you've fired
into nothin' as often as me, over a better man than your-
silf, you will not make a mock av thim orders. 'Tis worse than whistlin' the Dead March in barricks. An' you full as a tick, an' the sun cool, an' all an' all! I take shame for you. You're no better than a Pagin—you an' your firin'-parties an' your glass-eyes. Won't you stop ut, Sorr?"

What could I do? Could I tell Ortheris anything that he did not know of the pleasures of his life? I was not a Chaplain nor a Subaltern, and Ortheris had a right to speak as he thought fit.

"Let him run Mulvaney," I said. "It's the beer."

"No! 'Tisn't the beer," said Mulvaney. "I know fwhat's comin'. He's tuk this way now an' agin, an' it's bad—it's bad—for I'm fond av the bhoy."

Indeed, Mulvaney seemed needlessly anxious; but I knew that he looked after Ortheris in a fatherly way.

"Let me talk, let me talk," said Ortheris dreamily. "D'you stop your parrit screamin' of a 'ot day, when the cage is a-cookin' 'is pore little pink toes orf, Mulvaney?"

"Pink toes! D'ye mane to say you've pink toes undher your bullswools, ye blandanderin',"—Mulvaney gathered himself together for a terrific denunciation—"school-misthress! Pink toes! How much Bass wid the label did that ravin' child dhrink?"

"'Tain't Bass," said Ortheris. "It's a bitterer beer nor that. It's 'ome-sickness!"

"Hark to him! An' he goin' Home in the Sherapis in the inside av four months!"

"I don't care. It's all one to me. 'Ow d'you know I ain't 'fraid o' dyin' 'fore I gets my discharge paipers?" He recommenced, in a sing-song voice, the Orders.

I had never seen this side of Ortheris' character be-
fore, but evidently Mulvaney had, and attached serious importance to it. While Ortheris babbled, with his head on his arms, Mulvaney whispered to me—

"He’s always tuk this way whin he’s been checked overmuch by the childher they make Sarjints nowadays. That an’ havin’ nothin’ to do. I can’t make ut out anyways."

"Well, what does it matter? Let him talk himself through."

Ortheris began singing a parody of “The Ramrod Corps,” full of cheerful allusions to battle, murder, and sudden death. He looked out across the river as he sang; and his face was quite strange to me. Mulvaney caught me by the elbow to ensure attention.

"Matther? It matthers everything! ’Tis some sort av fit that’s on him. I’ve seen ut. ’Twill hould him all this night, an’ in the middle av it he’ll get out av his cot an’ go rakin’ in the rack for his ’coutremints. Thin he’ll come over to me an’ say, ‘I’m goin’ to Bombay. Answer for me in the mornin’,’ Thin me an’ him will fight as we’ve done before—him to go an’ me to hould him—
an’ so we’ll both come on the books for disturbin’ in barricks. I’ve belted him, an’ I’ve bruk his head, an’ I’ve talked to him, but ’tis no manner av use whin the fit’s on him. He’s as good a bhoy as ever stepped whin his mind’s clear. I know fwhat’s comin’, though, this night in barricks. Lord send he doesn’t loose on me whin I rise to knock him down. ’Tis that that’s in my mind day an’ night."

This put the case in a much less pleasant light, and fully accounted for Mulvaney’s anxiety. He seemed to be trying to coax Ortheris out of the fit; for he shouted down the bank where the boy was lying—
“Listen now, you wid the ‘pore pink toes’ an’ the glass eyes! Did you shwim the Irriwaddy at night, behin’ me, as a bhoy shud; or were you hidin’ under a bed, as you was at Ahmid Kheyl?”

This was at once a gross insult and a direct lie, and Mulvaney meant it to bring on a fight. But Ortheris seemed shut up in some sort of trance. He answered slowly, without a sign of irritation, in the same cadenced voice as he had used for his firing-party orders—

“Hi swum the Irriwaddy in the night, as you know, for to take the town of Lungtungpen, nakid an’ without fear. Hand where I was at Ahmed Kheyl you know, and four bloomin’ Pathans know too. But that was sum-mat to do, an’ I didn’t think o’ dyin’. Now I’m sick to go ’Ome—go ’Ome—go ’Ome! No, I ain’t mammy-sick, because my uncle brung me up, but I’m sick for London again; sick for the sounds of ’er, an’ the sights of ’er, and the stinks of ’er; orange-peel and hasphalte an’ gas comin’ in over Vaux’all Bridge. Sick for the rail go-in’ down to Box ’Ill, with your gal on your knee an’ a new clay pipe in your face. That, an’ the Stran’ lights where you knows ev’ry one, an’ the Copper that takes you up is a old friend that tuk you up before, when you was a little, smitchy boy lying loose ‘tween the Temple an’ the Dark Harches. No bloomin’ guard-mountin’, no bloomin’ rotten-stone, nor khaki, an’ yourself your own master with a gal to take an’ see the Humaners practicin’ a-hookin’ dead corpses out of the Serpentine o’ Sundays. An’ I lef’ all that for to serve the Widder beyond the seas, where there ain’t no women and there ain’t no liquor worth ’avin’, and there ain’t nothin’ to see, nor do, nor say, nor feel, nor think. Lord love you, Stanley Orth’ris, but you’re a bigger bloomin’ fool than
the rest o' the regiment and Mulvaney wired together! There's the Widder sittin' at 'Ome with a gold crownd on 'er 'ead; and 'ere am Hi, Stanley Orth'ris, the Widder's property, a rottin' fool!"

His voice rose at the end of the sentence, and he wound up with a six-shot Anglo-Vernacular oath. Mulvaney said nothing, but looked at me as if he expected that I could bring peace to poor Ortheris' troubled brain.

I remembered once at Rawal Pindi having seen a man, nearly mad with drink, sobered by being made a fool of. Some regiments may know what I mean. I hoped that we might slake off Ortheris in the same way, though he was perfectly sober. So I said—

"What the use of grousing there, and speaking against The Widow?"

"I didn't!" said Ortheris. "S'elp me, Gawd, I never said a word agin 'er, an' I wouldn't—not if I was to desert this minute!"

Here was my opening: "Well, you meant to, anyhow. What's the use of cracking-on for nothing? Would you slip it now if you got the chance?"

"On'y try me!" said Ortheris, jumping to his feet as if he had been stung.

Mulvaney jumped too. "Fwhat are you going to do?" said he.

"Help Ortheris down to Bombay or Karachi, whichever he likes. You can report that he separated from you before tiffin, and left his gun on the bank here!"

"I'm to report that—am I?" said Mulvaney slowly. "Very well. If Orth'ris manes to desert now, and will desert now, an' you, Sorr, who have been a frind to me an' to him, will help him to ut, I, Terence Mulvaney, on my oath which I've never bruk yet, will report as you
say. But—" here he stepped up to Ortheris, and shook the stock of the fowling-piece in his face—"your fists help you, Stanley Orth'ris, if ever I come across you agin!"

"I don't care!" said Ortheris. "I'm sick o' this dorg's life. Give me a chanst. Don't play with me. Le' me go!"

"Strip," said I, "and change with me, and then I'll tell you what to do."

I hoped that the absurdity of this would check Ortheris; but he had kicked off his ammunition-boots and got rid of his tunic almost before I had loosed my shirt-collar. Mulvaney gripped me by the arm—

"The fit's on him: the fit's workin' on him still! By my Honor and Sowl, we shall be accessiry to a desar-tion yet. Only, twenty-eight days, as you say, Sorr, or fifty-six, but think o' the shame—the black shame to him an' me!" I had never seen Mulvaney so excited.

But Ortheris was quite calm, and, as soon as he had exchanged clothes with me, and I stood up a Private of the Line, he said shortly, "Now! Come on. What nex'? D'ye mean fair. What must I do to get out o' this 'ere a-Hell?"

I told him that, if he would wait for two or three hours near the river, I would ride into the Station and come back with one hundred rupees. He would, with that money in his pocket, walk to the nearest side-station on the line, about five miles away, and would there take a first-class ticket for Karachi. Knowing that he had no money on him when he went out shooting, his regiment would not immediately wire to the seaports, but would hunt for him in the native villages near the river. Further no one would think of seeking a deserter in a first-class
carriage. At Karachi, he was to buy white clothes and ship, if he could, on a cargo-steamer.

Here he broke in. If I helped him to Karachi, he would arrange all the rest. Then I ordered him to wait where he was until it was dark enough for me to ride into the station without my dress being noticed. Now God in His wisdom has made the heart of the British Soldier, who is very often an unlicked ruffian, as soft as the heart of a little child, in order that he may believe in and follow his officers into tight and nasty places. He does not so readily come to believe in a "civilian," but, when he does, he believes implicitly and like a dog. I had had the honor of the friendship of Private Ortheris, at intervals, for more than three years, and we had dealt with each other as man by man. Consequently, he considered that all my words were true, and not spoken lightly.

Mulvaney and I left him in the high grass near the river-bank, and went away, still keeping to the high grass, towards my horse. The shirt scratched me horribly.

We waited nearly two hours for the dusk to fall and allow me to ride off. We spoke of Ortheris in whispers, and strained our ears to catch any sound from the spot where we had left him. But we heard nothing except the wind in the plume-grass.

"I've bruk his head," said Mulvaney earnestly, "time an' agin. I've nearly kilt him wid the belt, an' yet I can't knock him fits out av his soft head. No! An' he's not soft, for he's reasonable an' likely by natur'. Fwhat is ut? Is ut his breedin' which is nothin', or his edukashin which he niver got? You that think ye know things, answer me that."

But I found no answer. I was wondering how long Ortheris, in the bank of the river, would hold out, and
whether I should be forced to help him desert, as I had given my word.

Just as the dusk shut down and, with a very heavy heart, I was beginning to saddle up my horse, we heard wild shouts from the river.

The devils had departed from Private Stanley Ortheris, No 22639, B Company. The loneliness, the dusk, and the waiting had driven them out as I had hoped. We set off at the double and found him plunging about wildly through the grass, with his coat off—my coat off, I mean. He was calling for us like a madman.

When we reached him he dripping with perspiration, and trembling like a startled horse. We had great difficulty in soothing him. He complained that he was in civilian kit, and wanted to tear my clothes off his body. I ordered him to strip, and we made a second exchange as quickly as possible.

The rasp of his own "grayback" shirt and the squeak of his boots seemed to bring him to himself. He put his hands before his eyes and said—

"Wot was it? I ain't mad, I ain't sunstrook, an' I've bin an' gone an' said, an' bin an' gone an' done.... Wot 'ave I bin an' done!"

"Fwhat have you done?" said Mulvaney. "You've disgraced yourself—though that's no matter. You've disgraced B Comp'ny, an' worst av all, you've disgraced Me! Me that taught you how for to walk abroad like a man—whin you was a dhirty little, fish-backed little, whimperin' little recruity. As you are now, Stanley Orth'ris!"

Ortheris said nothing for a while. Then he unslung his belt, heavy with the badges of half a dozen regi-
ments that his own had lain with, and handed it over to Mulvaney.

"I'm too little for to mill you, Mulvaney," said he, "an' you've strook me before; but you can take an' cut me in two with this 'ere if you like."

Mulvaney turned to me.

"Lave me to talk to him, Sorr," said Mulvaney.

I left, and on my way home thought a good deal over Ortheris in particular, and my friend Private Thomas Atkins whom I love, in general.

But I could not come to any conclusion of any kind whatever.
THE COURTING OF DINAH SHADD.

What did the colonel’s lady think?
   Nobody never knew.
Somebody asked the sergeant’s wife
   An’ she told ’em true.
When you git to a man in the case
   They’re like a row o’ pins,
For the colonel’s lady an’ Judy O’Grady
   Are sisters under their skins.
   —Barrack Room Ballad.

All day I had followed at the heels of a pursuing army,
engaged on one of the finest battles that ever camp of exercise beheld. Thirty thousand troops had by the wisdom of the government of India been turned loose over a few thousand square miles of country to practice in peace what they would never attempt in war. Consequently cavalry charged unshaken infantry at the trot; infantry captured artillery by frontal attacks, delivered in line of quarter columns; and mounted infantry skirmished up to the wheels of an armored train, which carried nothing more deadly than a twenty-five-pounder Armstrong, two Nordenfeldts, and a few score volunteers, all cased in three-eighths-inch boiler-plate. Yet it was a very life-like camp. Operations did not cease at sundown; nobody knew the country, and nobody was to spare man or horse. There was unending cavalry scouting, and almost unending forced work over broken ground.

The Army of the South had finally pierced the center of the Army of the North, and was pouring through the gap, hot foot, to capture a city of strategic importance.
Its front extended fanwise, the sticks being represented by regiments strung out along the line of route backward to the divisional transport columns, and all the lumber that trails behind an army on the move. On its right the broken left of the Army of the North was flying in mass, chased by the Southern horse and hammered by the Southern guns, till these had been pushed far beyond the limits of their last support. Then the flying Army of the North sat down to rest, while the elated commandant of the pursuing force telegraphed that he held it in check and observation.

Unluckily he did not observe that three miles to his right flank a flying column of Northern horse, with a detachment of Ghoorkhas and British troops, had been pushed round as fast as the falling light allowed, to cut across the entire rear of the Southern Army, to break, as it were, all the ribs of the fan where they converged, by striking at the transport reserve, ammunition, and artillery supplies. Their instructions were to go in, avoiding a few scouts who might not have been drawn off by the pursuit, and create sufficient excitement to impress the Southern Army with the wisdom of guarding their own flank and rear before they captured cities. It was a pretty maneuver, neatly carried out.

Speaking for the second division of the Southern Army, our first intimation of it was at twilight, when the artillery were laboring in deep sand, most of the escort were trying to help them out, and the main body of the infantry had gone on. A Noah’s ark of elephants, camels, and the mixed menagerie of an Indian transport train bubbled and squealed behind the guns, when there appeared from nowhere in particular British infantry to the extent of three companies, who sprung to the heads of the
gun horses, and brought all to a stand-still amid oaths and cheers.

"How's that, umpire?" said the major commanding the attack, and with one voice the drivers and limber gunners answered, "Hout!" while the colonel of artillery sputtered.

"All your scouts are charging our main body," said the major. "Your flanks are unprotected for two miles. I think we've broken the back of this division. And listen! there go the Ghoorkhas!"

A weak fire broke from the rear guard more than a mile away, and was answered by cheerful howlings. The Ghoorkhas, who should have swung clear of the second division, had stepped on its tail in the dark, but, drawing off, hastened to reach the next line, which lay almost parallel to us, five or six miles away.

Our column swayed and surged irresolutely—three batteries, the divisional ammunition reserve, the baggage, and a section of hospital and bearer corps. The commandant ruefully promised to report himself "cut up" to the nearest umpire, and commending his cavalry and all other cavalry to the care of Eblis, toiled on to resume touch with the rest of the division.

"We'll bivouac here to-night," said the major. "I have a notion that the Ghoorkhas will get caught. They may want us to reform on. Stand easy till the transport gets away."

A hand caught my beast's bridle and led him out of the choking dust; a larger hand deftly canted me out of the saddle, and two of the hugest hands in the world received me sliding. Pleasant is the lot of the special correspondent who falls into such hands as those of Privates Mulvaney, Ortheris, and Learoyd.

"An' that's all right," said the Irishman, calmly. "We
thought we'd find you somewheres here by. Is there anything of yours in the transport? Orth'ris 'll fetch ut out."

Ortheris did "fetch ut out" from under the trunk of an elephant, in the shape of a servant and an animal, both laden with medical comforts. The little man's eyes sparkled.

"If the brutil an' licentious soldiery av these parts gets sight av the thruck," said Mulvaney, making practiced investigation, "they'll loot ev'rything. They're bein' fed on iron-filin's an' dog biscuit these days, but glory's no compensation for a bellyache. Praise be, we're here to protect you, sorr. Beer, sausage, bread (soft, an' that's a cur'osity), soup in a tin; whisky by the smell av ut, an' fowls. Mother av Moses, but ye take the field like a confectioner! 'Tis scand'lus."

"'Ere's a orficer," said Ortheris, significantly. "When the sergent's done lushin', the privit may clean the pot."

I bundled several things into Mulvaney's haversack before the major's hand fell on my shoulder, and he said, tenderly: "Requisitioned for the queen's service. Wolseley was quite wrong about special correspondents. They are the best friends of the soldier. Come an' take pot-luck with us to-night."

And so it happened amid laughter and shoutings that my well-considered commissariat melted away to reappear on the mess-table, which was a water-proof sheet spread on the ground. The flying column had taken three days' rations with it, and there be few things nastier than government rations—especially when government is experimenting with German toys. Erbswurst, tinned beef, of surpassing tinniness, compressed vegetables, and meat biscuits may be nourishing, but what Thomas Atkins wants is bulk in his inside. The major, assisted by
his brother officers, purchased goats for the camp, and so made the experiment of no effect. Long before the fatigue-party sent to collect brushwood had returned, the men were settled down by their valises, kettles and pots had appeared from the surrounding country, and were dangling over fires as the kid and the compressed vegetables bubbled together; there rose a cheerful clinking of mess tins, outrageous demands for "a little more stuffin' with that there liver wing," and gust on gust of chaff as pointed as a bayonet and as delicate as a gun-butt.

"The boys are in good temper," said the major. "They'll be singing presently. Well, a night like this is enough to keep them happy."

Over our heads burned the wonderful Indian stars, which are not all pricked in on one plane, but preserving an orderly perspective, draw the eye through the velvet darkness of the void up to the barred doors of heaven itself. The earth was a gray shadow more unreal than the sky. We could hear her breathing lightly in the pauses between the howling of the jackals, the movement of the wind in the tamarisks, and the fitful mutter of musketry fire leagues away to the left. A native woman in some unseen hut began to sing, the mail train thundered past on its way to Delhi, and a roosting crow cawed drowsily. Then there was a belt-loosening silence about the fires, and the even breathing of the crowded earth took up the story.

The men, full fed, turned to tobacco and song—their officers with them. Happy is the subaltern who can win the approval of the musical critics in his regiment, and is honored among the more intricate step dancers. By him, as by him who plays cricket craftily, will Thomas Atkins stand in time of need when he will let a better officer go on alone. The ruined tombs of forgotten Mussulman

"Youth's daring spirit, manhood's fire,
Firm hand and eagle eye
Must he acquire who would aspire
To see the gray boar die."

To-day, of all those jovial thieves who appropriated my commissariat, and lay and laughed round that water-proof sheet, not one remains. They went to camps that were not of exercise and battles without umpires. Burma, the Soudan, and the frontier fever and fight took them in their time.

I drifted across to the men's fires in search of Mulvaney whom I found strategically greasing his feet by the blaze. There is nothing particularly lovely in the sight of a private thus engaged after a long day's march, but when you reflect on the exact proportion of the "might, majesty, dominion, and power" of the British Empire that stands on those feet, you take an interest in the proceedings.

"There's a blister—bad luck to ut!—on the heel," said Mulvaney. "I can't touch ut. Prick ut out, little man."

Ortheris produced his housewife, eased the trouble with a needle, stabbed Mulvaney in the calf with the same weapon, and was incontinently kicked into the fire.

"I've bruk the best av my toes over you, ye grinnin' child av disruption!" said Mulvaney, sitting cross-legged and nursing his feet; then, seeing me: "Oh, ut's you, sorr! Be welkim, an' take that maraudin' scutt's place. Jock, hold him down on the cindhers for a bit."

But Ortheris escaped and went elsewhere as I took
possession of the hollow he had scraped for himself and lined with his great-coat. Learoyd, on the other side of the fire, grinned affably, and in a minute fell asleep.

"There's the height av politeness for you," said Mulvaney, lighting his pipe with a flaming branch. "But Jock's eaten half a box av your sardines at wan gulp, an' I think the tin too. What's the best wid you, sorr; an' how did you happen to be on the losin' side this day when we captured you?"

"The Army of the South is winning all along the line," I said.

"Then that line's the hangman's rope, savin' your presence. You'll learn to-morrow how we rethreeted to dhraw thim on before we made thim trouble, an' that's what a woman does. By the same tokin, we'll be attacked before the dawnin', an' ut would be betther not to slip your boots. How do I know that? By the light av pure reason. Here are three companies av us ever so far inside av the enemy's flank, an' a crowd av roarin', t'arin', an' squealin' cavalry gone on just to turn out the whole nest av thim. Av course the enemy will pursue by brigades like as not, an' then we'll have to run for ut. Mark my words. I am av the opinion av Polonius whin he said, 'Don't fight vid ivry scutt for the pure joy av fightin'; but if you do, knock the nose av him first an' frequent!' We ought to ha' gone on an' helped the Ghoorkhas."

"But what do you know about Polonius?" I demanded. This was a new side of Mulvaney's character.

"All that Shakespeare ever wrote, an' a dale more than the gallery shouted," said the man of war, carefully lacing his boots. "Did I not tell you av Silver's Theater in Dublin whin I was younger than I am now an' a patron av the drama? Ould Silver wud never pay actor, man or woman, their just dues, an' by consequence his comp'nis
was collapsible at the last minut'. Then the bhoys would clamor to take a part, an' oft as not ould Silver made them pay for the fun. Faith, I've seen Hamlut played wid a new black eye, an' the queen as full as a cornucopia. I remember wanst Hogin, that 'listed in the Black Tyrone an' was shot in South Africa, he sejuced ould Silver into givin' him Hamlut's part instid av me, that had a fine fancy for rhetoric in those days. Av course I wint into the gallery an' began to fill the pit wid other people's hats, an' I passed the time av day to Hogin walkin' through Denmark like a hamstrung mule wid a pall on his back. 'Hamlut,' sez I, 'there's a hole in your heel. Pull up your shtockins, Hamlut,' sez I. 'Hamlut, Hamlut, for the love av decency dhrap that skull, an' pull up your shtockins.' The whole house begun to tell him that. He stopped his soliloquishms mid between. 'My shtockins may be comin' down or they may not,' sez he, screwin' his eye into the gallery, for well he knew who I was; 'but after the performance is over me an' the Ghost 'll trample the guts out av you, Terence, wid your ass's bray.' An' that's how I come to know about Hamlut. Eyah! Those days, those days! Did you iver have onendin' developmint an' nothin' to pay for it in your life, sorr?"

"Never without having to pay," I said.

"That's thrue. 'Tis mane, whin you considher on ut; but ut's the same wid horse or fut. A headache if you dhrink, an' a bellyache if you eat too much, an' a heart-ache to kape all down. Faith, the beast only gets the colic, an' he's the lucky man."

He dropped his head and stared into the fire, fingering his mustache the while. From the far side of the bivouac the voice of Corbet-Nolan, senior subaltern of B Company, uplifted itself in an ancient and much-appreciated
song of sentiment, the men moaning melodiously behind him:

"The north wind blew coldly, she drooped from that hour,  
My own little Kathleen, my sweet little Kathleen,  
Kathleen, my Kathleen, Kathleen O'Moore!"

with forty-five o’s in the last word. Even at that distance you might have cut the soft South Irish accent with a shovel.

"For all we take we must pay; but the price is cruel high," murmured Mulvaney when the chorus had ceased.

"What's the trouble?" I said, gently, for I knew that he was a man of an inextinguishable sorrow.

"Hear now," said he. "Ye know what I am now. I know what I mint to be at the beginnin' av my service. I've tould you time an' again, an' what I have not, Dinah Shadd has. An' what am I? Oh, Mary Mother av Hiven! an' ould dhrunken, untrustable baste av a privit that has seen the regiment change out from colonel to drummer-boy, not wanst or twicet, but scores av times! Ay, scores! An' me not so near gettin' promotion as in the furst. An' me livin' on an' kapin' clear o' Clink not by my own good conduct, but the kindness av some oflicer —bhoy young enough to be son to me! Do I not know ut? Can I not tell whin I'm passed over at p'rade, tho' I'm rockin' full av liquor an' ready to fall all in wan piece, such as even a suckin' child might see, bekaze, 'Oh, 'tis only ould Mulvaney!' An' whin I'm let off in the ord'ly-room, through some thrick av the tongue an' a ready an-swer an' the ould man's mercy, is ut smilin' I feel whin I fall away an' go back to Dinah Shadd, thryin' to carry ut all off as a joke? Not I. 'Tis hell to me—dumb hell through ut all; an' the next time whin the fit comes I will be as bad again. Good cause the reg'ment has to
know me for the best soldier in ut. Better cause have I to know mesilf for the worst man. I'm only fit to tache the new drafts what I'll never learn myself; an' I am sure as tho' I heard ut, that the minut wan av these pink-eyed recruities gets away from my 'Mind ye, now,' an' 'Listen to this, Jim, bhoy,' sure I am that the sergint houlds me up to him for a warnin'. So I tache, as they say at musketery instruction, by direct an' ricochet fire. Lord be good to me! for I have stud some trouble."

"Lie down and go to sleep," said I, not being able to comfort or advise. "You're the best man in the regiment, and, next to Ortheris, the biggest fool. Lie down, and wait till we're attacked. What force will they turn out? Guns, think you?"

"Thry that wid your lorrds an' ladies, twistin' an' turnin' the talk, tho' you mint ut well. Ye cud say nothin' to help me; an' yet ye never knew what cause I had to be what I am."

"Begin at the beginning and go on to the end," I said, royally. "But rake up the fire a bit first." I passed Ortheris's bayonet for a poker.

"That shows how little you know what to do," said Mulvaney, putting it aside. "Fire takes all the heart out av the steel, an' the next time, may be, that our little man is fightin' for his life his brad-awl 'll break, an' so you'll 'ave killed him, manin' no more than to kape yourself warm. 'Tis a recruitie's thrick that. Pass the cl'amin'-rod, sorr."

I snuggled down, abashed, and after an interval the low, even voice of Mulvaney began.
II.

"Did I ever tell you how Dinah Shadd came to be wife av mine?"

I dissembled a burning anxiety that I had felt for some months—ever since Dinah Shadd, the strong, the patient, and the infinitely tender, had, of her own good love and free-will, washed a shirt for me, moving in a barren land where washing was not.

"I can't remember," I said, casually. "Was it before or after you made love to Annie Bragin, and got no satisfaction?"

The story of Annie Bragin is written in another place. It is one of the many episodes in Mulvaney's checkered career.

"Before—before—long before was that business av Annie Bragin an' the corp'ril's ghost. Never woman was the worse for me whin I had married Dinah. There's a time for all things, an' I know how to kape all things in place—barrin' the dhrink, that kapes me in my place, wid no hope av comin' to be aught else."

"Begin at the beginning," I insisted. "Mrs. Mulvaney told me that you married her when you were quartered in Krab Bokhar barracks."

"An' the same is a cess-pit," said Mulvaney, piously. "She spoke thrue, did Dinah. 'Twas this way. Talkin' av that, have ye iver fallen in love, sorr?"

I preserved the silence of the damned. Mulvaney continued:

"Thin I will assume that ye have not. I did. In the days av my youth, as I have more than wanst tould you, I was a man that filled the eye an' delighted the sowl av women. Niver man was hated as I have been. Niver
man was loved as I—no, not within half a day's march av ut. For the first five years av my service, whin I was what I wud give my sowl to be now, I tuk whatever was widin my reach an' digested ut, an' that's more than most men can say. Dhrink I tuk, an' ut did me no harm. By the hollow av hiven, I could play wid four women at wanst, an' kape thim from findin' out anything about the other three, and smile like a full-blown marigold through ut all. Dick Coulhan, of the battery we'll have down on us to-night, could dhrive his team no better than I mine; an' I hild the worser cattle. An' so I lived an' so I was happy, till afther that business wid Annie Bragin—she that turned me off as cool as a meat-safe, an' taught me where I stud in the mind av an honest woman. 'Twas no sweet dose to take.

"Afther that I sickened awhile, an' tuk thought to my reg'mental work, conceiting mesilf I wud study an' be a sargint, an' a major-gineral twinty minutes afther that. But on top o' my ambitiousness there was an empty place in my sowl, an' me own opinion av mesilf cud not fill ut. Sez I to mesilf: 'Terence, you're a great man an' the best set up in the reg'ment. Go on an' get promotion.' Sez mesilf to me, 'What for?' Sez I to mesilf, 'For the glory av ut.' Sez mesilf to me, 'Will that fill these two strong arrums av yours, Terence?' 'Go to the devil,' sez I to mesilf. 'Go to the married lines,' sez mesilf to me. 'Tis the same thing,' sez I to mesilf. 'Av you're the same man, ut is,' sez mesilf to me. An' wid that I considhered on ut a long while. Did you iver feel that way, sorr?"

I snored gently, knowing that if Mulvaney were uninterupted he would go on. The clamor from the bivouac fires beat up to the stars as the rival singers of the companies were pitted against each other.

"So I felt that way, an' a bad time ut was. Wanst,
bein' a fool, I went into the married lines, more for the sake av spakin' to our ould color-sergint Shadd than for any thruck wid wimmen-folk. I was a corp'ril then—re-juced afterwards; but a corp'ril then. I've got a photo- graft av mesilf to prove ut. 'You'll take a cup av tay wid us?' sez he. 'I will that,' I sez; 'tho' tay is not my diversion.' 'Twud be better for you if ut were,' sez ould Mother Shadd. An' she had ought to know, for Shadd, in the ind av his service, dhrank bung-full each night.

"Wid that I tuk off my gloves—there was pipe-clay in thim so that they stud alone—an' pulled up my chair, lookin' round at the china ornamints an' bits av things in the Shadds' quarters. They were things that belonged to a woman, an' no camp kit, here to-day an' dishipated next. 'You're comfortable in this place, sergint,' sez I. 'Tis the wife that did ut, boy,' sez he, pointin' the stem av his pipe to ould Mother Shadd, an' she smacked the top av his bald head apon the compliment. 'That manes you want money,' sez she.

"An' thin—an' thin whin the kettle was to be filled, Dinah came in—my Dinah—her sleeves rowled up to the elbow, an' her hair in a gowlden glory over her forehead, the big blue eyes beneath twinklin' like stars on a frosty night, an' the tread of her two feet lighter than waste paper from the colonel's basket in ord'ly-room when ut's emptied. Bein' but a shlip av a girl, she went pink at seein' me, an' I twisted me mustache an' looked at a picture forninst the wall. Never show a woman that ye care the snap av a finger for her, an' begad she'll come bleatin' to your boot heels."

"I suppose that's why you followed Annie Bragin till everybody in the married quarters laughed at you," said I, remembering that unhallowed wooing, and casting off the disguise of drowsiness.
"I'm layin' down the gin'ral theory av the attack," said Mulvaney, driving his foot into the dying fire. "If you read the 'Soldier's Pocket-Book,' which never any soldier reads, you'll see that there are exceptions. When Dinah was out av the door (an' 'twas as tho' the sunlight had gone too), 'Mother av Hiven, sergint!' sez I, 'but is that your daughter?' 'I've believed that way these eighteen years,' sez ould Shadd, his eyes twinklin'. 'But Mrs. Shadd has her own opinion, like ivry other woman.' 'Tis wid yours this time, for a mericle,' sez Mother Shadd. 'Then why, in the name av fortune, did I never see her before?' sez I. 'Bekase you've been thraipsin' round the married women these three years past. She was a bit av a child till last year, an' she shot up wid the spring,' sez ould Mother Shadd. 'I'll thraipse no more,' sez I. 'D'you mane that?' sez ould Mother Shadd, lookin' at me sideways, like a hen looks at a hawk whin the chickens are runnin' free. 'Thry me, an' tell,' sez I. Wid that I pulled on my gloves, dhrank off the tea, an' wint out av the house as stiff as at gen'ral p'rade, for well I knew that Dinah Shadd's eyes were in the small av my back out av the scullery window. Faith, that was the only time I mourned I was not a cav'lyman, for the sake av the spurs to jingle.

"I wint out to think, an' I did a powerful lot av thinkin', but ut all came round to that shlip av a girl in the botted blue dhress, wid the blue eyes an' the sparkil in them. Thin I kept off canteen, an' I kept to the married quarthers or near by on the chanst av meetin' Dinah. Did I meet her? Oh, my time past, did I not, wid a lump in my throat as big as my valise, an' my heart goin' like a farrier's forge on a Saturday mornin'? 'Twas 'Good-day to ye, Miss Dinah,' an' 'Good-day t'you, cor-p'ril,' for a week or two, an' divil a bit further could I get,
bekaze av the respict I had to that girl that I cud ha’ bro-
ken betune finger an’ thumb.”

Here I giggled as I recalled the gigantic figure of Di-
nah Shadd when she handed me my shirt.

“Ye may laugh,” grunted Mulvaney. “But I’m speak-
in’ the trut’, an’ ’tis you that are in fault. Dinah was a
girl that wud ha’ taken the imperiousness out av the
Duchess av Clonmel in those days. Flower hand, foot av
shod air, an’ the eyes av the mornin’ she had. That is
my wife to-day—ould Dinah, an’ never aught else than
Dinah Shadd to me.

’Twas after three weeks standin’ off an’ on, an’ niver
makin’ headway excipt through the eyes, that a little
drummer-boy grinned in me face whin I had admonished
him wid the buckle av my belt for riotin’ all over the
place. ‘An’ I’m not the only wan that doesn’t kape to
barricks,’ sez he. I tuk him by the scruff av his neck—
my heart was hung on a hair-thrigger those days, you will
understand—an’, ‘Out wid ut,’ sez I, ‘or I’ll lave no bone
av you unbruk.’ ‘Speak to Dempsey,’ sez he, howlin’.
‘Dempsey which,’ sez I, ‘ye unwashed limb av Satan?’ ‘Of
the Bobtailed Dhragoons,’ sez he. ‘He’s seen her home
from her aunt’s house in the civil lines four times this
fortnight.’ ‘Child,’ sez I, dhroppin’ him, ‘your tongue’s
stronger than your body. Go to your quarters. I’m
sorry I dhressed you down.’

“At that I went four ways to wanst huntin’ Dempsey.
I was mad to think that wid all my airs among women
I shud ha’ been ch’ated by a basin-faced fool av a cav’ry-
man not fit to trust on a mule thrunk. Presintly I found
him in our lines—the Bobtails was quartered next us—an’
a tallowy, top-heavy son av a she-mule he was, wid his big
brass spurs an’ his plastrons on his epigastons an’ all.
But he niver flinched a hair.
"'A word wid you, Dempsey,' sez I. 'You've walked wid Dinah Shadd four times this fortnight gone.'

"'What's that to you?' sez he. 'I'll walk forty times more, an' forty on top av that, 'e shovel-futted clod-breakin' infantry lance-corp'ril.'

"'Before I could gyard he had his gloved fist home on me cheek, an' down I went full sprawl. 'Will that content you?' sez he, blowin' on his knuckles for all the world like a Scots Grays orf'cer. 'Content?' sez I. 'For your own sake, man, take off your spurs, peel your jackut, and onglave. 'Tis the beginnin' av the overture. Stand up!

"He stud all he knew, but he niver peeled his jackut, an' his shoulders had no fair play. I was fightin' for Dinah Shadd an' that cut on me cheek. What hope had he forninst me? 'Stand up!' sez I, time an' again, when he was beginnin' to quarter the ground an' gyard high an' go large. 'This isn't riding-school,' sez I. 'Oh, man, stand up, an' let me get at ye!' But whin I saw he wud be runnin' about, I grup his shtock in me left an' his waist-belt in me right an' swung him clear to me right front, head undher, he hammerin' me nose till the wind was knocked out av him on the bare ground. 'Stand up,' sez I, 'or I'll kick your head into your chest.' An' I wud ha' done ut, too, so ragin' mad I was.

"'Me collar-bone's bruk,' sez he. 'Help me back to lines. I'll walk wid her no more.' So I helped him back."

"And was his collar-bone broken?' I asked, for I fancied that only Learoyd could neatly accomplish that terrible throw.

"He pitched on his left shoulder-point. It was. Next day the news was in both barricks; an' whin I met Dinah Shadd wid a cheek like all the reg'mintal tailors' samples, there was no 'Good-mornin', corp-ril,' or aught else. 'An'
what I have done, Miss Shadd,' sez I, very bould, plantin' mesilf forninst her, 'that ye should not pass the time of day?"

"'Ye've half killed rough-rider Dempsey,' sez she, her dear blue eyes fillin' up.

"'May be,' sez I. 'Was he a friend av yours that saw ye home four times in a fortnight?'

"'Yes,' sez she, very bould; but her mouth was down at the corners. 'An'—an' what's that to you?'

"'Ask Dempsey,' sez I, purtendin' to go away.

"'Did you fight for me then, ye silly man?' she sez, tho' she knew ut all along.

"'Who else?' sez I; an' I tuk wan pace to the front.

"'I wasn't worth ut,' sez she, fingerin' her apron.

"'That's for me to say,' sez I. 'Shall I say ut?'

"'Yes,' sez she, in a saint's whisper; an' at that I explained mesilf; an' she tould me that ivry man that is a man, an' many that is a woman, hears wanst in his life.

"'But what made ye cry at startin', Dinah darlin'?" sez I.

"'Your—your bloody cheek,' sez she, duckin' her little head down on my sash (I was duty for the day), an' whimperin' like a sorrowful angel.

"Now a man cud take that two ways. I tuk ut as pleased me best, an' my first kiss wid ut. Mother av Innocence! but I kissed her on the tip av the nose an' undher the eye, an' a girl that lets a kiss come tumbleways like that has never been kissed before. Take note av that, sorr. Thin we wint, hand in hand, to ould Mother Shadd like two little childher, an' she said it was no bad thing; an' ould Shadd nodded behind his pipe, an' Dinah ran away to her own room. That day I throd on rollin' clouds. All earth was too small to hould me. Begad, I cud ha' picked the sun out av the sky for a live coal to me pipe, so mag-
nificant I was. But I tuk recruits at squad drill, an’ began with general battalion advance whin I shud ha’ been balance-steppin’ ’em. Eyah! that day! that day!”

A very long pause. “Well?” said I.

“It was all wrong,” said Mulvaney, with an enormous sigh. “An’ sure I know that ev’ry bit av ut was me own foolishness. That night I tuk may be the half av three pints—not enough to turn the hair of a man in his natural sines. But I was more than half dhrunk wid pure joy, an’ that canteen beer was so much whisky to me. I can’t tell how ut came about, but bekase I had no thought for any wan except Dinah, bekase I hadn’t slipped her little white arms from me neck five minutes, bekase the breath av her kiss was not gone from my mouth, I must go through the married lines on me way to quarthers, an’ I must stay talkin’ to a red-headed Mullengar heifer av a girl, Judy Sheehy, that was daughter to Mother Sheehy, the wife av Nick Sheehy, the canteen sergint—the black curse av Shielygh be on the whole brood that are above groun’ this day!

“‘An’ what are ye houldin’ your head that high for, corp’ril?’ sez Judy. ‘Come in an’ thry a cup av tay,’ she sez, standin’ in the door-way.

“Bein’ an onbustable fool, an’ thinkin’ av anythin’ but tay, I wint.

“‘Mother’s at canteen,’ sez Judy, smoothin’ the hair av hers that was lik red snakes, an’ lookin’ at me corner-ways out av her green cat’s eyes. ‘Ye will not mind, corp’ril?’

“I can endure,” sez I. ‘Ould Mother Sheehy bein’ no divarsion av mine, nor her daughter too.’ Judy fetched the tea-things an’ put thim on the table, leanin’ over me very close to get them square. I dhrew back, thinkin’ of Dinah.
"'Is ut afraid you are av a girl alone?' sez Judy.
"'No,' sez I. 'Why should I be?'
"'That rests wid the girl,' sez Judy, dhravin' her chair next to mine.
"'Thin there let ut rest,' sez I; an' thinkin' I'd been a trifle onpolite, I sez, 'The tay's not quite sweet enough for me taste. Put your little finger in the cup, Judy; 'twill make ut nectar.'
"'What's nectar?' sez she.
"'Somin' very sweet,' sez I; an' for the sinful life av me I cud not help lookin' at her out av the corner av my eye, as I was used to look at a woman.
"'Go on wid ye, corp'ril,' sez she. 'You're a flirt.'
"'On me sowl I'm not,' sez I.
"'Then you're a cruel handsome man, an' that's worse,' sez she, heavin' big sighs an' lookin' crossways.
"'You know your own mind,' sez I.
"'Twud be better for me if I did not,' she sez.
"'There's a dale to be said on both sides av that,' sez I, unthinkin'.
"'Say your own part av ut, then, Terence darlin',' sez she; 'for begad I'm thinkin' I've said too much or too little for an honest girl;' an' wid that she put her arms round me neck an' kissed me.
"'There's no more to be said afther that,' sez I, kissin' her back again. Oh, the mane scutt that I was, my head ringin' wid Dinah Shadd! How does ut come about, sorr, that whin a man has put the comether on wan woman he's sure bound to put ut on another? 'Tis the same thing at musketry. Wan day ev'ry shot goes wide or into the bank, an' the next—lay high, lay low, sight or snap—ye can't get off the bull's-eye for ten shots runnin'."

"That only happens to a man who has had a good deal of experience; he does it without thinking," I replied.
"Thankin' you for the complimint, sorr, ut may be so; 
but I'm doubtin' whether you mint ut for a complimint. 
Hear, now. I sat there wid Judy on my knee, tellin' me 
all manner av nonsinse, an' only sayin' 'yes' an' 'no,' 
when I'd much better ha' kept tongue betune teeth. 
An' that was not an hour afther I had left Dinah. 
What I was thinkin' av I cannot say. 

"Presently, quiet as a cat, ould Mother Sheehy came in 
velvet-dhrunk. She had her daughter's red hair, but 
'twas bald in patches, an' I cud see in her wicked ould 
face, clear as lightnin', what Judy wud be twenty year to 
come. I was for jumpin' up, but Judy niver moved. 

" 'Terence has promust, mother,' sez she, an' the cowld 
sweat bruk out all over me. 

"Ould Mother Sheehy sat down of a heap, an' began 
playin' wid the cups. 'Thin you're a well-matched pair,' 
she sez, very thick; 'for he's the biggest rogue that iver 
spoiled the queen's shoe-leather, an—' 

" 'I'm off, Judy,' sez I. 'Ye should not talk nonsinse 
to your mother. Get her to bed, girl.' 

" 'Nonsinse?' sez the ould woman, prickin' up her ears 
like a cat, an' grippin' the table-edge. ' 'Twill be the 
most nonsinsical nonsinse for you, ye grinnin' badger, if 
nonsinse 'tis. Git clear, you. I'm goin' to bed.' 

"I ran out into the dhark, me head in a stew an' me 
heart sick, but I had sinse enough to see that I'd brought 
utt all on mesilf. 'It's this to pass the time av day to a 
panjandhrum of hell-cats,' sez I. 'What I've said an' what 
I've not said do not matther. Judy an' her dam will 
hould me for a promust man, an' Dinah will give me the 
go, an' I desarve ut. I will go an' get dhrunk,' sez I, 
'an' forgit about ut, for 'tis plain I'm not a marryin' man.' 

"On me way to canteen I ran against Lascelles, color-
sergint that was, av E Comp'ny—a hard, hard man, wid
a tormint av a wife. 'You've the head of a drowned man on your shoulders,' sez he, 'an' you're goin' where you'll get a worse wan. Come back,' sez he. 'Let me go,' sez I. 'I've thrown me luck over the wall wid me own hand.' 'Then that's not the way to get ut back again,' sez he. 'Have out wid your throuble, ye fool-bhoy.' An' I tould him how the matther was.

"He sucked in his lower lip. 'You've been thrapped,' sez he. 'Ju Sheehy wud be the betther for a man's name to hers as soon as she can. An' ye thought ye'd put the comether on her. That's the naturil vanity av the baste. Terence, you're a big born fool, but you're not bad enough to marry into that comp'ny. If you said anythin', an' for all your protestations I'm sure you did—or did not, which is worse—eat ut all. Lie like the father av all lies, but come out av ut free av Judy. Do I not know what ut is to marry a woman that was the very spit av Judy when she was young? I'm gettin' ould, an' I've larnt patience; but you, Terence, you'd raise hand on Judy an' kill her in a year. Never mind if Dinah gives you the go; you've desarved ut. Never mind if the whole reg'mint laughs at you all day. Get shut av Judy an' her mother. They can't dhrag you to church, but if they do, they'll dhrag you to hell. Go back to your quarthers an' lie down,' sez he. Thin, over his shoulder, 'You must have done with thim.'

"Nixt day I wint to see Dinah; but there was no tucker in me as I walked. I knew the throuble wud come soon enough widout any handlin' av mine, an' I dreaded ut sore.

"I heard Judy callin' me, but I hild straight on to the Shadds' quarthers, an' Dinah wud ha' kissed me, but I hild her back.

"'Whin all's said, darlin',' sez I, 'you can give ut me
if you will, tho' I misdoubt 'twill be so easy to come by thin.'

"I had scarce begun to put the explanation into shape before Judy an' her mother came to the door. I think there was a veranda, but I'm forgettin'.

"'Will ye not step in?' sez Dinah, pretty and polite, though the Shadds had no dealin's with the Sheehys. Old Mother Shadd looked up quick, an' she was the fust to see the throuble, for Dinah was her daughter.

"'I'm pressed for time to-day,' sez Judy, as bould as brass; 'an' I've only come for Terence—my promust man. 'Tis strange to find him here the day after the day.'

"Dinah looked at me as though I had hit her, an' I answered straight.

"'There was some nonsinse last night at the Sheehys' quarrters, an' Judy's carryin' on the joke, darlin',' sez I.

"'At the Sheehys' quarrters?' sez Dinah, very slow; an' Judy cut in wid:

"'He was there from nine till tin, Dinah Shadd, an' the betther half av that time I was sittin' on his knee, Dinah Shadd. Ye may look an' ye may look an' ye may look me up an' down, but ye won't look away that Terence is my promust man. Terence darlin', 'tis time for us to be comin' home.'

"Dinah Shadd never said word to Judy. 'Ye left me at half past eight,' she sez to me, 'an' I never thought that ye'd leave me for Judy, promises or no promises. Go back wid her, you that have to be fetched by a girl! I'm done with you,' sez she; and she ran into her own room, her mother followin'. So I was alone with those two women, and at liberty to spake me sintiments.

"'Judy Sheehy,' sez I, 'if you made a fool av me betune the lights, you shall not do ut in the day. I never promised you words or lines.'
"‘You lie,’ sez ould Mother Sheehy; ‘an’ may ut choke you where you stand!’ She was far gone in dhrink.

"‘An’ tho’ ut choked me where I stud I’d not change,’ sez I. ‘Go home, Judy. I take shame for a decent girl like you dhraggin’ your mother out bareheaded on this errand. Here, now, and have ut for an answer. I gave me word to Dinah Shadd yesterday, an’ more blame to me I was with you last night talkin’ nonsinse, but nothin’ more. You’ve chosen to thry to hould me on ut. I will not be held thereby for anythin’ in the world. Is that enough?’

"Judy wint pink all over. ‘An’ I wish you joy av the perjury,’ sez she. ‘You’ve lost a woman that would ha’ wore her hand to the bone for your pleasure; an’ deed, Terence, ye were not thrapped. . . .’ Lascelles must ha’ spoken plain to her. ‘I am such as Dinah is—’deed I am! Ye’ve lost a fool av a girl that’ll never look at you again, an’ ye’ve lost what ye niver had—your common honesty. If you manage your men as you manage your love-makin’, small wonther they call you the worst corp’ril in the comp’ny. Come away, mother,’ sez she.

"But divil a fut would the ould woman budge! ‘D’you hould by that?’ sez she, peerin’ up under her thick gray eyebrows.

"‘Ay, an’ wud,’ said I, ‘tho’ Dinah gave me the go twinty times. I’ll have no thruck with you or yours,’ sez I. ‘Take your child away, ye shameless woman.’

"‘An’ am I shameless?’ sez she, bringin’ her hands up above her head. ‘Thin what are you, ye lyin’, schamin’, weak-kneed dhirty-souled son of a sutler? Am I shameless? Who put the open shame on me an’ my child that we shud go beggin’ through the lines in daylight for the broken word of a man? Double portion of my shame be on you, Terence Mulvaney, that think yourself so strong!"
By Mary and the saints, by blood and water, an' by ivry sorrow that came into the world since the beginnin', the black blight fall on you and yours, so that you may niver be free from pain for another when ut's not your own! May your heart bleed in your breast drop by drop wid all your friends laughin' at the bleedin'! Strong you think yourself? May your strength be a curse to you to dhrive you into the divil's hands against your own will! Clear-eyed you are? May your eyes see clear ivry step av the dark path you take till the hot cindhers av hell put thim out! May the ragin' dry thirst in my own ould bones go to you that you shall never pass bottle full nor glass empty! God preserve the light av your understandin' to you, my jewel av a bhoys, that ye may niver forget what you mint to be an' do, when you're wallowin' in the muck! May ye see the betther and follow the worse as long as there's breath in your body! an' may ye die quick in a strange land watchin' your death before ut takes you an' onable to stir hand or foot!

"I heard a scufflin' in the room behind and thin Dinah Shadd's hand dhropped into mine like a rose-leaf into a muddy road.

"'The half av that I'll take,' sez she, 'an' more too, if I can. Go home, ye silly-talkin' woman—go home an' confess.'

"'Come away! Come away!' sez Judy, pullin' her mother by the shawl. 'Twas none av Terence's fault. For the love av Mary stop the talkin'!

"'An' you!' said ould Mother Sheehy, spinnin' round forninst Dinah. 'Will ye take the half av that man's load? Stand off from him, Dinah Shadd, before he takes you down too—you that look to be a quarthermaster-sergint's wife in five years. Ye look too high, child. Ye shall wash for the quarthermaster-sergint, whin he pl'ases
to give you the job out av charity; but a privit's wife ye shall be to the end, an' niver a joy but wan, that shall go from you like the tide from a rock. The pain of bearin' ye shall know, but niver the pleasure of givin' the breast; an' you shall put away a man-child into the common ground wid niver a priest to say a prayer over him, an' on that man-child ye shall think ivry day av your life. Think long, Dinah Shadd, for you'll niver have another tho' you pray till your knees are bleedin'. The mothers av children shall mock you behind your back whin you're wring-in' over the wash-tub. You shall know what ut is to take a dhrunken husband home an' see him go to the gyard-room. Will that pl'ase you, Dinah Shadd, that won't be seen talkin' to my daughter? You shall talk to worse than Judy before all's over. The sergints' wives shall look down on you, contemptuous daughter av a sergint, an' you shall cover ut all up wid a smilin' face whin your heart's burstin'. Stand off him, Dinah Shadd, for I've put the black curse of Shielygh upon him, an' his own mouth shall make ut good.'

"She pitched forward on her head an' began foamin' at the mouth." Dinah Shadd ran out wid water, an' Judy dragged the ould woman into the veranda till she sat up. "'T'm old an' forlore,' she sez, tremblin' an' cryin', 'an' 'tis like I say a dale more than I mane.'

"'When you're able to walk—go,' says ould Mother Shadd. 'This house has no place for the likes av you, that have cursed my daughter.'

"'Eyah!' said the ould woman. 'Hard words break no bones, an' Dinah Shadd 'll kape the love av her husband till my bones are green corn. Judy darlin', I misremember what I came here for. Can you lend us the bottom av a tay-cup av tay, Mrs. Shadd?"
"But Judy dragged her off, cryin' as tho' her heart wud break. An' Dinah Shadd an' I, in ten minutes we had forgot ut all."

"Then why do you remember it now?" said I.

"Is ut like I'd forgit? Ivry word that wicked ould woman spoke fell throu in my life afterwards; an' I cud ha' stud ut all—stud ut all, except fwhen little Shadd was born. That was on the line av march three months afther the regiment was taken with cholera. We were betune Umballa an' Kalka thin, an' I was on picket. When I came off, the women showed me the child, an' ut turned on ut's side an' died as I looked. We buried him by the road, an' Father Victor was a day's march behind wid the heavy baggage, so the comp'ny captain read a prayer. An' since then I've been a childless man, an' all else that ould Mother Sheehy put upon me an' Dinah Shadd. What do you think, sorr?"

I thought a good deal, but it seemed better then to reach out for Mulvaney's hand. This demonstration nearly cost me the use of three fingers. Whatever he knows of his weaknesses, Mulvaney is entirely ignorant of his strength.

"But what do you think?" he insisted, as I was straightenin' out the crushed member.

My reply was drowned in yells and outcries from the next fire, where ten men were shouting for "Orth'ris!" "Privit Orth'ris!" "Mistah Or-ther-ris!" "Deah boy!" "Cap'n Orth'ris!" "Field-Marshah Orth'ris!" "Stanley, you penn'orth o' pop, come 'ere to your own comp'ny!" And the cockney, who had been delighting another audience with recondite and Rabelaisian yarns, was shot down among his admirers by the major force.

"You've crumpled my dress-shirt 'orrid," said he; "an' I sha'n't sing no more to this 'ere bloomin' drawin'-room."
SOLDIERS THREE.

Learoyd, roused by the confusion, uncoiled himself, crept behind Ortheris, and raised him aloft on his shoulders.

“Sing, ye bloomin’ hummin’-bird!” said he; and Ortheris, beating time on Learoyd’s skull, delivered himself, in the raucous voice of the Ratcliffe Highway, of the following chaste and touching ditty:

“My girl she give me the go onceet
   When I was a London lad,
   An’ I went on the drink for a fortnight,
   An’ then I went to the bad.
The queen she give me a shillin’,
   To fight for ’er over the seas;
But guv’ment built me a fever-trap,
   An’ Injia give me disease.

Chorus.—“Ho! don’t you ’eed what a girl says,
   An’ don’t you go for the beer;
But I was an ass when I was at grass,
   An’ that is why I’m ’ere.

I fired a shot at an Afghan;
   The begger ’e fired again;
An’ I lay on my bed with a ’ole in my ’ead,
   An’ missed the next campaign!
I up with my gun at a Burman
   Who carried bloomin’ dah,
But the cartridge stuck an’ the bay’nit bruk,
   An’ all I got was the scar.

Chorus.—“Ho! don’t you aim at a Afghan
   When you stand on the sky-line clear;
An’ don’t you go for a Burman
   If none o’ your friends is near.

“I served my time for a corp’ral,
   An’ wetted my stripes with pop,
For I went on the bend with a intimate friend,
   An’ finished the night in the Shop.
I served my time for a sergeant;  
The colonel 'e sez 'No!  
The most you'll be is a full C. B.;'*  
An'—very next night 'twas so.

Chorus.—"Ho! don't you go for a corp'ral,  
Unless your 'ead is clear;  
But I was an ass when I was at grass,  
An' that is why I'm 'ere.

"I've tasted the luck o' the army  
In barrack an' camp an' clink,  
An' I lost my tip through the bloomin' trip  
Along o' the women an' drink.  
I'm down at the heel o' my service,  
An' when I am laid on the shelf,  
My very wust friend from beginning to end,  
By the blood of a mouse, was myself.

Chorus.—"Ho! don't you 'eed what a girl says,  
An' don't you go for the beer;  
But I was an ass when I was at grass,  
An' that is why I'm 'ere.

"Ay, listen to our little man now, singin' an' shoutin'  
as tho' trouble had never touched him!  D'you remember  
when he went mad with the homesickness?" said Mulvaney,  
recalling a never-to-be-forgotten season when Ortheris  
waded through the deep waters of affliction and  
behaved abominably.  "But he's talkin' the bitter truth,  
tho'.  Eyah!

'My very worst friend from beginning to end,  
By the blood of a mouse, was mesilf.'

Harkout!" he continued, jumping to his feet.  "What  
did I tell you, sorr?"

F'tl sp'tl! wh'tl! went the rifles of the picket in the  

*Confined to barracks.
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darkness, and we heard their feet rushing toward us as Ortheris tumbled past me and into his great-coat. It is an impressive thing, even in peace, to see an armed camp spring to life with clatter of accouterments, click of Martini levers, and blood-curdling speculations as to the fate of missing boots. "Pickets dhriven in," said Mulvaney, staring like a buck at bay into the soft, clinging gloom. "Stand by an' kape close to us. If 'tis cav'ry, they may blundher into the fires."

Tr—ra—ra! ta—ra—la! sung the thrice-blessed bugle, and the rush to form square began. There is much rest and peace in the heart of a square if you arrive in time, and are not trodden upon too frequently. The smell of leather belts, fatigue uniform, and packed humanity is comforting.

A dull grumble, that seemed to come from every point of the compass at once, struck our listening ears, and little thrills of excitement ran down the faces of the square. Those who write so learnedly about judging distance by sound should hear cavalry on the move at night. A high-pitched yell on the left told us that the disturbers were friends—the cavalry of the attack, who had missed their direction in the darkness, and were feeling blindly for some sort of support and camping-ground. The difficulty explained, they jingled on.

"Double pickets out there; by your arms lie down and sleep the rest," said the major, and the square melted away as the men scrambled for their places by the fires.

When I woke I saw Mulvaney, the night-dew gemming his mustache, leaning on his rifle at picket, lonely as Prometheus on his rock, with I know not what vultures tearing his liver.
THE MAN WHO WAS.

The Earth gave up her dead that tide,
Into our camp he came,
And said his say, and went his way,
And left our hearts aflame.

Keep tally—on the gun-butt score
The vengeance we must take,
When God shall bring full reckoning,
For our dead comrade's sake.

—Ballad.

Let it be clearly understood that the Russian is a delightful person till he tucks his shirt in. As an Oriental he is charming. It is only when he insists upon being treated as the most easterly of Western peoples, instead of the most westerly of Easterns, that he becomes a racial anomaly extremely difficult to handle. The host never knows which side of his nature is going to turn up next.

Dirkovitch was a Russian—a Russian of the Russians, as he said—who appeared to get his bread by serving the Czar as an officer in a Cossack regiment, and corresponding for a Russian newspaper with a name that was never twice the same. He was a handsome young Oriental, with a taste for wandering through unexplored portions of the earth, and he arrived in India from nowhere in particular. At least no living man could ascertain whether it was by way of Balkh, Budukhshon, Chitral, Beloochistan, Nepal, or anywhere else. The Indian government, being in an unusually affable mood, gave orders that he was to be civilly treated, and shown everything that was to be
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seen; so he drifted, talking bad English and worse French, from one city to another till he forgathered with her majesty's White Hussars in the city of Peshawur, which stands at the mouth of that narrow sword-cut in the hills that men call the Khyber Pass. He was undoubtedly an officer, and he was decorated, after the manner of the Russians, with little enameled crosses, and he could talk, and (though this has nothing to do with his merits) he had been given up as a hopeless task or case by the Black Tyrones, who, individually and collectively, with hot whisky and honey, mulled brandy and mixed spirits of all kinds, had striven in all hospitality to make him drunk. And when the Black Tyrones, who are exclusively Irish, fail to disturb the peace of head of a foreigner, that foreigner is certain to be a superior man. This was the argument of the Black Tyrones, but they were ever an unruly and self-opiniated regiment, and they allowed junior subalterns of four years' service to choose their wines. The spirits were always purchased by the colonel and a committee of majors. And a regiment that would so behave may be respected but can not be loved.

The White Hussars were as conscientious in choosing their wine as in charging the enemy. There was a brandy that had been purchased by a cultured colonel a few years after the battle of Waterloo. It has been maturing ever since, and it was a marvelous brandy at the purchasing. The memory of that liquor would cause men to weep as they lay dying in the teak forests of Upper Burma or the slime of the Irrawaddy. And there was a port which was notable; and there was a champagne of an obscure brand, which always came to mess without any labels, because the White Hussars wished none to know where the source of supply might be found. The officer on whose
head the champagne-choosing lay was forbidden the use of tobacco for six weeks previous to sampling.

This particularity of detail was necessary to emphasize the fact that that champagne, that port, and, above all, that brandy—the green and yellow and white liqueurs did not count—was placed at the absolute disposition of Dirkovitch, and he enjoyed himself hugely—even more than among the Black Tyrones.

But he remained distressingly European through it all. The White Hussars were—"My dear true friends," "Fellow-soldiers glorious," and "Brothers inseparable." He would unburden himself by the hour on the glorious future that awaited the combined arms of England and Russia when their hearts and their territories should run side by side, and the great mission of civilizing Asia should begin. That was unsatisfactory, because Asia is not going to be civilized after the methods of the West. There is too much Asia, and she is too old. You can not reform a lady of many lovers, and Asia has been insatiable in her flirtations aforetime. She will never attend Sunday-school, or learn to vote save with swords for tickets.

Dirkovitch knew this as well as any one else, but it suited him to talk special-corrrespondently and to make himself as genial as he could. Now and then he volunteered a little, a very little, information about his own Sotnia of Cossacks, left apparently to look after themselves somewhere at the back of beyond. He had done rough work in Central Asia, and had seen rather more help-yourself fighting than most men of his years. But he was careful never to betray his superiority, and more than careful to praise on all occasions the appearance, drill, uniform, and organization of her majesty's White Hussars. And, indeed, they were a regiment to be admired. When Mrs. Durgan, widow of the late Sir John Durgan, arrived in
their station, and after a short time had been proposed to by every single man at mess, she put the public sentiment very neatly when she explained that they were all so nice that unless she could marry them all, including the colonel and some majors who were already married, she was not going to content herself with one of them. Wherefore she wedded a little man in a rifle regiment—being by nature contradictious—and the White Hussars were going to wear crape on their arms, but compromised by attending the wedding in full force, and lining the aisle with utterable reproach. She had jilted them all—from Basset-Holmer, the senior captain, to Little Mildred, the last subaltern, and he could have given her four thousand a year and a title. He was a viscount, and on his arrival the mess had said he had better go into the Guards, because they were all sons of large grocers and small clothiers in the Hussars, but Mildred begged very hard to be allowed to stay, and behaved so prettily that he was forgiven, and became a man, which is much more important than being any sort of viscount.

The only persons who did not share the general regard for the White Hussars were a few thousand gentlemen of Jewish extraction who lived across the border, and answered to the name of Pathan. They had only met the regiment officially, and for something less than twenty minutes, but the interview, which was complicated with many casualties, had filled them with prejudice. They even called the White Hussars "children of the devil," and sons of persons whom it would be perfectly impossible to meet in decent society. Yet they were not above making their aversion fill their money-belts. The regiment possessed carbines, beautiful Martini-Henri carbines, that would cob a bullet into an enemy's camp at one thousand yards, and were even handier than the long
rifle. Therefore they were coveted all along the border, and since demand inevitably breeds supply, they were supplied at the risk of life and limb for exactly their weight in coined silver—seven and one half pounds of rupees, or sixteen pounds and a few shillings each, reckoning the rupee at par. They were stolen at night by snaky-haired thieves that crawled on their stomachs under the nose of the sentries; they disappeared mysteriously from arm-racks; and in the hot weather, when all the doors and windows were open, they vanished like puffs of their own smoke. The border people desired them first for their own family vendettas, and then for contingencies. But in the long cold nights of the Northern Indian winter they were stolen most extensively. The traffic of murder was liveliest among the hills at that season, and prices ruled high. The regimental guards were first doubled and then trebled. A trooper does not much care if he loses a weapon—government must make it good—but he deeply resents the loss of his sleep. The regiment grew very angry, and one night-thief who managed to limp away bears the visible marks of their anger upon him to this hour. That incident stopped the burglaries for a time, and the guards were reduced accordingly, and the regiment devoted itself to polo with unexpected results, for it beat by two goals to one that very terrible polo corps the Lushkar Light Horse, though the latter had four ponies apiece for a short hours’ fight, as well as a native officer who played like a lambent flame across the ground.

Then they gave a dinner to celebrate the event. The Lushkar team came, and Dirkovitch came, in the fullest full uniform of a Cossack officer, which is as full as a dressing gown, and was introduced to the Lushkars, and opened his eyes as he regarded them. They were lighter men than the Hussars, and they carried themselves with
the swing that is the peculiar right of the Punjab frontier force and all irregular horse. Like everything else in the service, it has to be learned; but, unlike many things, it is never forgotten, and remains on the body till death.

The great beam-roofed mess-room of the White Hussars was a sight to be remembered. All the mess-plate was on the long table—the same table that had served up the bodies of five dead officers in a forgotten fight long and long ago—the dingy, battered standards faced the door of entrance, clumps of winter roses lay between the silver candlesticks, the portraits of eminent officers deceased looked down on their successors from between the heads of sambhur, nilghai, maikhor, and, pride of all the mess, two grinning snow-leopards that had cost Basset-Holmer four months' leave that he might have spent in England instead of on the road to Thibet, and the daily risk of his life on ledge, snow-slide, and glassy grass-slope.

The servants, in spotless white muslin and the crest of their regiments on the brow of their turbans, waited behind their masters, who were clad in the scarlet and gold of the White Hussars and the cream and silver of the Lushkar Light Horse. Dirkovitch's dull green uniform was the only dark spot at the board, but his big onyx eyes made up for it. He was fraternizing effusively with the captain of the Lushkar team, who was wondering how many of Dirkovitch's Cossacks his own long, lathy down-countrymen could account for in a fair charge. But one does not speak of these things openly.

The talk rose higher and higher, and the regimental band played between the courses, as is the immemorial custom, till all tongues ceased for a moment with the removal of the dinner-slips and the First Toast of Obligation, when the colonel, rising, said, "Mr. Vice, the
Queen,” and Little Mildred from the bottom of the table answered “The Queen, God bless her!” and the big spurs clanked as the big men heaved themselves up and drank the queen, upon whose pay they were falsely supposed to pay their mess-bills. That sacrament of the mess never grows old, and never ceases to bring a lump into the throat of the listener wherever he be, by land or by sea. Dirkovitch rose with his “brothers glorious,” but he could not understand. No one but an officer can understand what the toast means; and the bulk have more sentiment than comprehension. It all comes to the same in the end, as the enemy said when he was wriggling on a lance-point. Immediately after the little silence that follows on the ceremony there entered the native officer who had played for the Lushkar team. He could not of course eat with the alien, but he came in at dessert, all six feet of him, with the blue-and-silver turban atop, and the big black top-boots below. The mess rose joyously as he thrust forward the hilt of his saber, in token of fealty, for the colonel of the White Hussars to touch, and dropped into a vacant chair amid shouts of “Rung ho! Hira Singh!” (which being translated means “Go in and win!”) “Did I whack you over the knee, old man?” “Ressaidar Sahib, what the devil made you play that kicking pig of a pony in the last ten minutes?” “Shabash, Ressaidar Sahib!” Then the voice of the colonel, “The health of Ressaidar Hira Singh!”

After the shouting had died away Hira Singh rose to reply, for he was the cadet of a royal house, the son of a king’s son, and knew what was due on these occasions. Thus he spoke in the vernacular:

“Colonel Sahib and officers of this regiment, much honor have you done me. This will I remember. We came down from afar to play you; but we were beaten.”
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(“No fault of yours, Ressaidar Sahib. Played on our own ground, y’ know. Your ponies were cramped from the railway. Don’t apologize.”) “Therefore perhaps we will come again if it be so ordained.” ("Hear! Hear, hear, indeed! Bravo! Hsh!") “Then we will play you afresh” (“Happy to meet you”), “till there are left no feet upon our ponies. Thus far for sport.” He dropped one hand on his sword-hilt and his eye wandered to Dirkovitch lolling back in his chair. “But if by the will of God there arises any other game which is not the polo game, then be assured, Colonel Sahib and officers, that we shall play it out side by side, though they”—again his eye sought Dirkovitch—“though they, I say, have fifty ponies to our one horse.” And with a deep-mouthed Rungho! that rang like a musket-butt on flag-stones, he sat down amid shoutings.

Dirkovitch, who had devoted himself steadily to the brandy—the terrible brandy aforementioned—did not understand, nor did the expurgated translations offered to him at all convey the point. Decidedly the native officer’s was the speech of the evening, and the clamor might have continued to the dawn had it not been broken by the noise of a shot without that sent every man feeling at his defenseless left side. It is notable that Dirkovitch “reached back,” after the American fashion—a gesture that set the captain of the Lushkar team wondering how Cossack officers were armed at mess. Then there was a scuffle, and a yell of pain.

“Carbine stealing again!” said the adjutant, calmly sinking back in his chair. “This comes of reducing the guards. I hope the sentries have killed him.”

The feet of armed men pounded on the veranda flags, and it sounded as though something was being dragged.

“Why don’t they put him in the cells till the morn-
"See if they've damaged him, sergeant."

The mess-sergeant fled out into the darkness, and returned with two troopers and a corporal, all very much perplexed.

"Caught a man stealin' carbines, sir," said the corporal. "Leastways 'e was crawlin' toward the barricks, sir, past the main-road sentries; an' the sentry 'e says, sir—"

The limp heap of rags upheld by the three men groaned. Never was seen so destitute and demoralized an Afghan. He was turbanless, shoeless, caked with dirt, and all but dead with rough handling. Hira Singh started slightly at the sound of the man's pain. Dir-kovitch took another liquor glass of brandy.

"What does the sentry say?" said the colonel.

"Sez he speaks English, sir," said the corporal.

"So you brought him into mess instead of handing him over to the sergeant! If he spoke all the tongues of the Pentecost you've no business—"

Again the bundle groaned and muttered. Little Mildred had risen from his place to inspect. He jumped back as though he had been shot.

"Perhaps it would be better, sir, to send the men away," said he to the colonel, for he was a much-privileged subalatern. He put his arms round the rag-bound horror as he spoke, and dropped him into a chair. It may not have been explained that the littleness of Mildred lay in his being six feet four, and big in proportion. The corporal, seeing that an officer was disposed to look after the capture, and that the colonel's eye was beginning to blaze, promptly removed himself and his men. The mess was left alone with the carbine thief, who laid his head on the table and wept bitterly, hopelessly, and inconsolably, as little children weep.
Hira Singh leaped to his feet with a long-drawn vernacular. "Colonel Sahib," said he, "that man is no Afghan, for they weep ‘Ai! Ai!’ Nor is he of Hindustan, for they weep ‘Oh! Oh!’ He weeps after the fashion of the white men, who say, ‘Ow! Ow!’"

"Now where the dickens did you get that knowledge, Hira Singh?" said the captain of the Lushkar team.

"Hear him!" said Hira Singh, simply, pointing at the crumpled figure that wept as though it would never cease.

"He said, ‘My God!’" said little Mildred. "I heard him say it."

The colonel and the mess-room looked at the man in silence. It is a horrible thing to hear a man cry. A woman can sob from the top of her palate, or her lips, or anywhere else, but a man cries from his diaphragm, and it rends him to pieces. Also, the exhibition causes the throat of the on-looker to close at the top.

"Poor devil!" said the colonel, coughing tremendously. "We ought to send him to hospital. He’s been man-handled."

Now the adjutant loved his rifles. They were to him as his grandchildren—the men standing in the first place.

He grunted rebelliously: "I can understand an Afghan stealing, because he’s made that way. But I can’t understand his crying. That makes it worse."

The brandy must have affected Dirkovitch, for he lay back in his chair and stared at the ceiling. There was nothing special in the ceiling beyond a shadow as of a huge black coffin. Owing to some peculiarity in the construction of the mess-room this shadow was always thrown when the candles were lighted. It never disturbed the digestion of the White Hussars. They were, in fact, rather proud of it.

"Is he going to cry all night?" said the colonel, "or
are we supposed to sit up with Little Mildred’s guest until he feels better?”

The man in the chair threw up his head and stared at the mess. Outside, the wheels of the first of those bidden to the festivities crunched the roadway.

“Oh, my God!” said the man in the chair, and every soul in the mess rose to his feet. Then the Lushikar captain did a deed for which he ought to have been given the Victoria Cross—distinguished gallantry in a fight against overwhelming curiosity. He picked up his team with his eyes as the hostess picks up the ladies at the opportune moment, and pausing only by the colonel’s chair to say, “This isn’t our affair, you know, sir,” led the team into the veranda and the gardens. Hira Singh was the last, and he looked at Dirkovitch as he moved. But Dirkovitch had departed into a brandy paradise of his own. His lips moved without sound, and he was studying the coffin on the ceiling:

“White—white all over,” said Basset-Holmer, the adjutant. “What a pernicious renegade he must be! I wonder where he came from?”

The colonel shook the man gently by the arm, and “Who are you?” said he.

There was no answer. The man stared round the messroom and smiled in the colonel’s face. Little Mildred, who was always more of a woman than a man till “Boot and saddle” was sounded, repeated the question in a voice that would have drawn confidences from a geyser. The man only smiled. Dirkovitch, at the far end of the table, slid gently from his chair to the floor. No son of Adam, in this present imperfect world, can mix the Hussars’ champagne with the Hussars’ brandy by five and eight glasses of each without remembering the pit whence he has been digged and descending thither. The band
began to play the tune with which the White Hussars, from the date of their formation, preface all their functions. They would sooner be disbanded than abandon that tune. It is a part of their system. The man straightened himself in his chair and drummed on the table with his fingers.

"I don't see why we should entertain lunatics," said the colonel; "call a guard and send him off to the cells. We'll look into the business in the morning. Give him a glass of wine first, though."

Little Mildred filled a sherry glass with the brandy and thrust it over to the man. He drank, and the tune rose louder, and he straightened himself yet more. Then he put out his long-taloned hands to a piece of plate opposite and fingered it lovingly. There was a mystery connected with that piece of plate in the shape of a spring, which converted what was a seven-branched candlestick, three springs each side and one in the middle, into a sort of wheel-spoke candelabrum. He found the spring, pressed it, and laughed weakly. He rose from his chair and inspected a picture on the wall, then moved on to another picture, the mess watching him without a word. When he came to the mantel-piece he shook his head and seemed distressed. A piece of plate representing a mounted hussar in full uniform caught his eye. He pointed to it, and then to the mantel-piece, with inquiry in his eyes.

"What is it—oh, what is it?" said Little Mildred. Then, as a mother might speak to a child, "That is a horse—yes, a horse."

Very slowly came the answer, in a thick, passionless guttural: "Yes, I—have seen. But—where is the horse?"

You could have heard the hearts of the mess beating as the men drew back to give the stranger full room in
his wanderings. There was no question of calling the guard.

Again he spoke, very slowly, "Where is our horse?"

There is no saying what happened after that. There is but one horse in the White Hussars, and his portrait hangs outside the door of the mess-room. He is the piebald drum-horse, the king of the regimental band, that served the regiment for seven-and-thirty years, and in the end was shot for old age. Half the mess tore the thing down from its place and thrust it into the man's hands. He placed it above the mantel-piece; it clattered on the ledge, as his poor hands dropped it, and he staggered toward the bottom of the table, falling into Mildred's chair. The band began to play the "River of Years" waltz, and the laughter from the gardens came into the tobacco-scented mess-room. But nobody, even the youngest, was thinking of waltzes. They all spoke to one another something after this fashion: "The drum-horse hasn't hung over the mantel-piece since '67." "How does he know?" "Mildred, go and speak to him again." "Colonel, what are you going to do?" "Oh, dry up, and give the poor devil a chance to pull himself together!" "It isn't possible, any how. The man's a lunatic."

Little Mildred stood at the colonel's side talking into his ear. "Will you be good enough to take your seats, please, gentlemen?" he said, and the mess dropped into the chairs.

Only Dirkovitch's seat, next to little Mildred's, was blank, and Little Mildred himself had found Hira Singh's place. The wide-eyed mess-sergeant filled the glasses in dead silence. Once more the colonel rose, but his hand shook, and the port spilled on the table as he looked straight at the man in Little Mildred's chair and said,
hoarsely, "Mr. Vice, the Queen." There was a little pause, but the man sprung to his feet and answered, without hesitation, "The Queen, God bless her!" and as he emptied the thin glass he snapped the shank between his fingers.

Long and long ago, when the Empress of India was a young woman, and there were no unclean ideals in the land, it was the custom in a few messes to drink the queen's toast in broken glass, to the huge delight of the mess contractors. The custom is now dead, because there is nothing to break anything for, except now and again the word of a government, and that has been broken already.

"That settles it," said the colonel, with a gasp. "He's not a sergeant. What in the world is he?"

The entire mess echoed the word, and the volley of questions would have scared any man. Small wonder that the ragged, filthy invader could only smile and shake his head.

From under the table, calm and smiling urbanely, rose Dirkovitch, who had been roused from healthful slumber by feet upon his body. By the side of the man he rose, and the man shrieked and groveled at his feet. It was a horrible sight, coming so swiftly upon the pride and glory of the toast that had brought the strayed wits together.

Dirkovitch made no offer to raise him, but Little Mildred heaved him up in an instant. It is not good that a gentleman who can answer to the queen's toast should lie at the feet of a subaltern of Cossacks.

The hasty action tore the wretch's upper clothing nearly to the waist, and his body was seamed with dry black scars. There is only one weapon in the world that cuts in parallel lines, and it is neither the cane nor the cat. Dirkovitch saw the marks, and the pupils of his eyes di-
lated—also, his face changed. He said something that sounded like "Shto ve takete;" and the man, fawning, answered "Chetyre."

"What's that?" said everybody together.

"His number. That is number four, you know." Dirkovitch spoke very thickly.

"What has a queen's officer to do with a qualified number?" said the colonel, and there rose an unpleasant growl round the table.

"How can I tell?" said the affable Oriental, with a sweet smile. "He is a—how you have it?—escape—run-away, from over there."

He nodded toward the darkness of the night.

"Speak to him, if he'll answer you, and speak to him gently," said Little Mildred, settling the man in a chair. It seemed most improper to all present that Dirkovitch should sip brandy as he talked in purring, spitting Russian to the creature who answered so feebly and with such evident dread. But since Dirkovitch appeared to understand, no man said a word. They breathed heavily, leaning forward, in the long gaps of the conversation. The next time that they have no engagements on hand the White Hussars intend to go to St. Petersburg and learn Russian.

"He does not know how many years ago," said Dirkovitch, facing the mess, "but he says it was very long ago, in a war. I think that there was an accident. He says he was of this glorious and distinguished regiment in the war."

"The rolls! The rolls! Holmer, get the rolls!" said Little Mildred, and the adjutant dashed off bareheaded to the orderly-room where the rolls of the regiment were kept. He returned just in time to hear Dirkovitch conclude, "Therefore I am most sorry to say there was an
accident, which would have been reparable if he had apologized to that our colonel, which he had insulted."

Another growl, which the colonel tried to beat down. The mess was in no mood to weigh insults to Russian colonels just then.

"He does not remember, but I think that there was an accident, and so he was not exchanged among the prisoners, but he was sent to another place—how do you say?—the country. So, he says, he came here. He does not know how he came. Eh? He was at Chepany"—the man caught the word, nodded, and shivered—"at Zhigansk and Irkutsk. I can not understand how he escaped. He says, too, that he was in the forests for many years, but how many years he has forgotten—that with many things. It was an accident; done because he did not apologize to that our colonel. Ah!"

Instead of echoing Dirkovitch's sigh of regret, it is sad to record that the White Hussars livelily exhibited unchristian delight and other emotions, hardly restrained by their sense of hospitality. Holmer flung the frayed and yellow regimental rolls on the table, and the men flung themselves atop of these.

"Steady! Fifty-six—fifty-five—fifty-four," said Holmer. "Here we are. 'Lieutenant Austin Limmason—missing.' That was before Sebastopol. What an infernal shame! Insulted one of their colonels, and was quietly shipped off. Thirty years of his life wiped out."

"But he never apologized. Said he'd see him—first," chorused the mess.

"Poor devil! I suppose he never had the chance afterward. How did he come here?" said the colonel.

The dingy heap in the chair could give no answer.

"Do you know who you are?"

It laughed weakly.
"Do you know that you are Limmason—Lieutenant Limmason, of the White Hussars?"

Swift as a shot came the answer, in a slightly surprised tone, "Yes, I'm Limmason, of course." The light died out in his eyes, and he collapsed afresh, watching every motion of Dirkovitch with terror. A flight from Siberia may fix a few elementary facts in the mind, but it does not lead to continuity of thought. The man could not explain how, like a homing-pigeon, he had found his way to his own old mess again. Of what he had suffered or seen he knew nothing. He cringed before Dirkovitch as instinctively as he had pressed the spring of the candlestick, sought the picture of the drum-horse, and answered to the queen's toast. The rest was a blank that the dreaded Russian tongue could only in part remove. His head bowed on his breast, and he giggled and cowered alternately.

The devil that lived in the brandy prompted Dirkovitch at this extremely inopportune moment to make a speech. He rose, swaying slightly, gripped the table-edge, while his eyes glowed like opals, and began:

"Fellow soldiers glorious—true friends and hospitable. It was an accident, and deplorable—most deplorable." Here he smiled sweetly all round the mess. "But you will think of this little, little thing. So little, is it not? The czar! Posh! I slap my fingers—I snap my fingers at him. Do I believe in him? No! But the Slav who has done nothing, him I believe. Seventy—how much?—millions that have done nothing—not one thing. Napoleon was an episode." He banged a hand on the table. "Hear you, old peoples, we have done nothing in the world—out here. All our work is to do; and it shall be done, old peoples. Get away!" He waved his hand imperiously, and pointed to the man. "You see him. He
is not good to see. He was just one little, oh, so little—accident, that no one remembered. Now he is That. So will you be, brother soldiers so brave—so will you be. But you will never come back. You will all go where he is gone, or”—he pointed to the great coffin shadow on the ceiling, and muttering, “Seventy millions—get away, you old people,” fell asleep.

“Sweet and to the point,” said Little Mildred. “What’s the use of getting wrath? Let’s make the poor devil comfortable.”

But that was a matter suddenly and swiftly taken from the loving hands of the White Hussars. The lieutenant had returned only to go away again three days later, when the wail of the “Dead March” and the tramp of the squadrons told the wondering station, that saw no gap in the table, an officer of the regiment had resigned his new-found commission.

And Dirkovitch—bland, supple, and always genial—went away too by a night train. Little Mildred and another saw him off, for he was the guest of the mess, and even had he smitten the colonel with the open hand the law of the mess allowed no relaxation of hospitality.

“Good-bye, Dirkovitch, and a pleasant journey,” said Little Mildred.

“Au revoir, my true friends,” said the Russian.

“Indeed! But we thought you were going home?”

“Yes; but I will come again. My friends, is that road shut?” He pointed to where the north star burned over the Khyber Pass.

“By Jove! I forgot. Of course. Happy to meet you, old man, any time you like. Got everything you want—cheroots, ice, bedding? That’s all right. Well, au revoir, Dirkovitch.”
“Um,” said the other man, as the tail-lights of the train grew small. “Of—all—the—unmitigated—”

Little Mildred answered nothing, but watched the north star, and hummed a selection from a recent burlesque that had much delighted the White Hussars. It ran:

“I'm sorry for Mister Bluebeard,
I'm sorry to cause him pain,
But a terrible spree there's sure to be
When he comes back again.”
WITHOUT BENEFIT OF CLERGY.

Before my Spring I garnered Autumn's gain,
Out of her time my field was white with grain,
The year gave up her secrets to my woe.
Forced and deflowered each sick season lay,
In mystery of increase and decay;
I saw the sunset ere men saw the day,
Who am too wise in that I should not know.

—Bitter Waters.

I.

"But if it be a girl?"
"Lord of my life, it can not be! I have prayed for so many nights, and sent gifts to Sheikh Badl's shrine so often, that I know God will give us a son—a man-child that shall grow into a man. Think of this and be glad. My mother shall be his mother till I can take him again, and the mullah of the Pattan Mosque shall cast his nativity—God send he be born in an auspicious hour!—and then, and then thou wilt never weary of me, thy slave."
"Since when hast thou been a slave, my queen?"
"Since the beginning—till this mercy came to me. How could I be sure of thy love when I knew that I had been bought with silver?"
"Nay, that was the dowry. I paid it to thy mother."
"And she has buried it, and sits upon it all day long like a hen. What talk is yours of dowry? I was bought as though I had been a Lucknow dancing-girl instead of a child."
"Art thou sorry for the sale?"
"I have sorrowed; but to-day I am glad. Thou wilt never cease to love me now? Answer, my king."
“Never—never. No.”

“Not even though the mem-log—the white women of thy own blood—love thee? And remember, I have watched them driving in the evening; they are very fair.”

“I have seen fire-balloons by the hundred, I have seen the moon, and—then I saw no more fire-balloons.”

Ameera clapped her hands and laughed. “Very good talk,” she said. Then, with an assumption of great stateliness, “It is enough. Thou hast my permission to depart—if thou wilt.”

The man did not move. He was sitting on a low red-lacquered couch in a room furnished only with a blue-and-white floor-cloth, some rugs, and a very complete collection of native cushions. At his feet sat a woman of sixteen, and she was all but all the world in his eyes. By every rule and law she should have been otherwise, for he was an Englishman, and she a Mussulman’s daughter, bought two years before from her mother, who, being left without money, would have sold Ameera, shrieking, to the Prince of Darkness, if the price had been sufficient.

It was a contract entered into with a light heart. But even before the girl had reached her bloom she came to fill the greater portion of John Holden’s life. For her and the withered hag her mother he had taken a little house overlooking the great red-walled city, and found, when the marigolds had sprung up by the well in the court-yard, and Ameera had established herself according to her own ideas of comfort, and her mother had ceased grumbling at the inadequacy of the cooking-places, the distance from the daily market, and matters of housekeeping in general, that the house was to him his home. Any one could enter his bachelor’s bungalow by day or night, and the life that he led there was an unlovely one. In the house in the city his feet only could pass beyond
the outer court-yard to the women's rooms; and when the big wooden gate was bolted behind him he was king in his own territory, with Ameera for queen. And there was going to be added to this kingdom a third person, whose arrival Holden felt inclined to resent. It interfered with his perfect happiness. It disarranged the orderly peace of the house that was his own. But Ameera was wild with delight at the thought of it, and her mother not less so. The love of a man, and particularly a white man, was at the best an inconstant affair, but it might, both women argued, be held fast by a baby's hands. "And then," Ameera would always say—"then he will never care for the white mem-log. I hate them all—I hate them all."

"He will go back to his own people in time," said the mother, "but, by the blessing of God, that time is yet afar off."

Holden sat silent on the couch, thinking of the future, and his thoughts were not pleasant. The drawbacks of a double life are manifold. The government, with singular care, had ordered him out of the station for a fortnight on special duty in the place of a man who was watching by the bedside of a sick wife. The verbal notification of the transfer had been edged by a cheerful remark that Holden ought to think himself lucky in being a bachelor and a free man. He came to break the news to Ameera.

"It is not good," she said, slowly, "but it is not all bad. There is my mother here, and no harm will come to me—unless, indeed, I die of pure joy. Go thou to thy work, and think no troublesome thoughts. When the days are done I believe—nay, I am sure. And—and then I shall lay him in thy arms, and thou wilt love me forever. The train goes to-night—at midnight, is it not? Go now, and do not let thy heart be heavy by cause of me. But thou will not delay in returning! Thou wilt not stay on
the road to talk to the bold white mem-log! Come back to me swiftly, my life!"

As he left the court-yard to reach his horse, that was tethered to the gate-post, Holden spoke to the white-haired old watchman who guarded the house, and bade him under certain contingencies dispatch the filled-up telegraph form that Holden gave him. It was all that could be done, and, with the sensations of a man who has attended his own funeral, Holden went away by the night mail to his exile. Every hour of the day he dreaded the arrival of the telegram, and every hour of the night he pictured to himself the death of Ameera. In consequence, his work for the state was not of first-rate quality, nor was his temper toward his colleagues of the most amiable. The fortnight ended without a sign from his home, and, torn to pieces by his anxieties, Holden returned to be swallowed up for two precious hours by a dinner at the club, wherein he heard, as a man hears in a swoon, voices telling him how execrably he had performed the other man's duties, and how he had endeared himself to all his associates. Then he fled on horseback through the night with his heart in his mouth. There was no answer at first to his blows on the gate, and he had just wheeled his horse round to kick it when Pir Khan appeared with a lantern and held his stirrup.

"Has aught occurred?" said Holden.

"The news does not come from my mouth, Protector of the Poor, but—" He held out his shaking hand, as befitted the bearer of good news who is entitled to a reward.

Holden hurried through the court-yard. A light burned in the upper room. His horse neighed in the gate-way, and he heard a pin-pointed wail that sent all the blood
into the apple of his throat. It was a new voice, but it did not prove that Ameera was alive.

"Who is there?" he called up the narrow brick staircase.

There was a cry of delight from Ameera, and then the voice of her mother, tremulous with old age and pride, "We be two women and—the—man—thy son."

On the threshold of the room Holden stepped on a naked dagger that was laid there to avert ill-luck, and it broke at the hilt under his impatient heel.

"God is great!" cooed Ameera in the half light. "Thou hast taken his misfortunes on thy head."

"Ay, but how is it with thee, life of my life? Old woman, how is it with her?"

"She has forgotten her sufferings for joy that the child is born. There is no harm; but speak softly," said the mother.

"It only needed thy presence to make me all well," said Ameera. "My king, thou hast been very long away. What gifts hast thou for me? Ah! ah! It is I that bring gifts this time. Look, my life, look! Was there ever such a babe? Nay, I am too weak even to clear my arm from him."

"Rest then, and do not talk. I am here, baccheri" (little woman).

"Well said, for there is a bong and a heel-rope (peecharee) between us now that nothing can break. Look—canst thou see in this light? He is without spot or blemish. Never was such a man-child. Ya illah! he shall be a pundit—no, a trooper of the queen. And, my life, dost thou love me as well as ever, though I am faint and sick and worn? Answer truly."

"Yea. I love as I have loved, with all my soul. Lie still, pearl, and rest."
"Then do not go. Sit by my side here—so. Mother, the lord of this house needs a cushion. Bring it." There was an almost imperceptible movement on the part of the new life that lay in the hollow of Ameera's arm. "Aho!" she said, her voice breaking with love. "The babe is a champion from his birth. He is kicking me in the side with mighty kicks. Was there ever such a babe? And he is ours to us—thine and mine. Put thy hand on his head but carefully, for he is very young, and men are unskilled in such matters."

Very cautiously Holden touched with the tips of his fingers the downy head.

"He is of the Faith," said Ameera; "for, lying here in the night-watches, I whispered the Call to Prayer and the Profession of Faith into his ears. And it is most marvelous that he was born upon a Friday, as I was born. Be careful of him, my love; but he can almost grip with his hands."

Holden found one helpless little hand that closed feebly on his finger. And the clutch ran through his limbs till it settled about his heart. Till then his sole thought had been for Ameera. He began to realize that there was some one else in the world, but he could not feel that it was a veritable son with a soul. He sat down to think, and Ameera dozed lightly.

"Get hence, sahib," said her mother, under her breath. "It is not good that she should find you here on waking. She must be still."

"I go," said Holden, submissively. "Here be rupees. See that my baba gets fat and finds all that he needs."

The chink of the silver roused Ameera. "I am his mother, and no hireling." she said, weakly. "Shall I look to him more or less for the sake of money? Mother, give it back. I have borne my lord a son."
The deep sleep of weakness came upon her almost before the sentence was completed. Holden went down to the court-yard very softly, with his heart at ease. Pir Khan, the old watchman, was chuckling with delight.

"This house is now complete," he said, and without further comment thrust into Holden's hands the hilt of a saber worn many years ago, when Pir Khan served the queen in the police. The bleat of a tethered goat came from the well-curb.

"There be two," said Pir Khan—"two goats of the best. I bought them, and they cost much money; and since there is no birth-party assembled, their flesh will be all mine. Strike craftily, sahib. 'Tis an ill-balanced saber at the best. Wait till they raise their heads from cropping the marigolds."

"And why?" said Holden, bewildered.

"For the birth sacrifice. What else? Otherwise the child, being unguarded from fate, may die. The Protector of the Poor knows the fitting words to be said."

Holden had learned them once, with little thought that he would ever say them in earnest. The touch of the cold saber-hilt in his palm turned suddenly to the clinging grip of the child upstairs—the child that was his own son—and a dread of loss filled him.

"Strike!" said Pir Khan. "Never life came into the world but life was paid for it. See, the goats have raised their heads. Now! With a drawing cut!"

Hardly knowing what he did, Holden cut twice as he muttered the Mohammedan prayer that runs, "Almighty! In place of this my son I offer life for life, blood for blood, head for head, bone for bone, hair for hair, skin for skin." The waiting horse snorted and bounded in his pickets at the smell of the raw blood that spurted over Holden's riding-boots.
"Well smitten!" said Pir Khan, wiping the saber. "A swordsman was lost in thee. Go with a light heart, heaven born. I am thy servant, and the servant of thy son. May the Presence live a thousand years, and—the flesh of the goats is all mine?"

Pir Khan drew back richer by a month's pay. Holden swung himself into the saddle, and rode off through the low-hanging wood smoke of the evening. He was full of riotous exultation, alternating with a vast vague tenderness directed toward no particular object, that made him choke as he bent over the neck of his uneasy horse. "I never felt like this in my life," he thought. "I'll go to the club and pull myself together."

A game of pool was beginning, and the room was full of men. Holden entered, eager to get to the light and the company of his fellows, singing, at the top of his voice:

"'In Baltimore a-walking, a lady I did meet.'"

"Did you?" said the club secretary from his corner. "Did she happen to tell you that your boots were wringing wet? Great goodness, man, it's blood!"

"Bosh!" said Holden, picking his cue from the rack. "May I cut in? It's dew. I've been riding through high crops. My faith! my boots are in a mess, though!

"'And if it be a girl, she shall wear a wedding-ring;
And if it be a boy, he shall fight for his king;
With his dirk, and his cap, and his little jacket blue,
He shall walk the quarter-deck—'

"Yellow on blue—green next player," said the marker, monotonously.

"'He shall walk the quarter-deck'—am I green, marker?—'he shall walk the quarter-deck'—ouch—that's a bad shot!—'as his daddy used to do!'"
"I don't see that you have anything to crow about," said a zealous junior civilian, acidly. "The government is not exactly pleased with your work when you relieved Sanders."

"Does that mean wigging from head-quarters?" said Holden, with an abstracted smile. "I think I can stand it."

The talk beat up round the ever-fresh subject of each man's work, and steadied Holden till it was time to go to his dark, empty bungalow, where his butler received him as one who knew all his affairs. Holden remained awake for the greater part of the night, and his dreams were pleasant ones.

II.

"How old is he now?"

"Ya illah! What a man's question. He is all but six weeks old; and on this night I go up to the house-top with thee, my life, to count the stars. For that is auspicious. And he was born on a Friday, under the sign of the sun, and it has been told to me that he will outlive us both and get well. Can we wish for aught better, beloved?"

"There is nothing better. Let us go up to the roof, and thou shalt count the stars—but a few only, for the sky is heavy with cloud."

"The winter rains are late, and may be they come out of season. Come, before all the stars are hid. I have put on my richest jewels."

"Thou hast forgotten the best of all."

"Ai! Ours. He comes also. He has never yet seen the skies."

Ameera climbed the narrow staircase that led to the flat
roof. The child, placid and unwinking, lay in the hollow of her right arm, gorgeous in silver-fringed muslin, with a small skull-cap on his head. Ameera wore all that she valued most. The diamond nose-stud that takes the place of the Western patch in drawing attention to the curve of the nostril, the gold ornament in the center of the forehead studded with tallow-drop emeralds and flawed rubies, the heavy circlet of beaten gold that was fastened round her neck by the softness of the pure metal, and the chinking curb-patterned silver anklets hanging low over the rosy ankle-bone. She was dressed in jade-green muslin, as beffitted a daughter of the Faith, and from shoulder to elbow and elbow to wrist ran bracelets of silver tied with floss silk, frail glass bangles slipped over the wrist in proof of the slenderness of the hand, and certain heavy gold bracelets that had no part in her country's ornaments, but since they were Holden's gift, and fastened with a cunning European snap, delighted her immensely.

They sat down by the low white parapet of the roof, overlooking the city and its lights.

"They are happy down there," said Ameera. "But I do not think that they are as happy as we. Nor do I think the white mem-log are as happy. And thou?"

"I know they are not."

"How dost thou know?"

"They give their children over to the nurses."

"I have never seen that," said Ameera, with a sigh; "nor do I wish to see. Ah!"—she dropped her head on Holden's shoulder—"I have counted forty stars, and I am tired. Look at the child, love of my life. He is counting, too."

The baby was staring with round eyes at the dark of the heavens. Ameera placed him in Holden's arms, and he lay there without a cry.
“What shall we call him among ourselves?” she said. “Look! Art thou ever tired of looking? He carries thy very eyes! But the mouth—”

“Is thine, most dear. Who should know better than I?”

“Tis such a feeble mouth. Oh, so small! And yet it holds my heart between its lips. Give him to me now. He has been too long away.”

“Nay, let him lie; he has not yet begun to cry.”

“When he cries thou wilt give him back, eh? What a man of mankind thou art! If he cried, he were only the dearer to me. But, my life, what little name shall we give him?”

The small body lay close to Holden’s heart. It was utterly helpless and very soft. He scarcely dared to breathe for fear of crushing it. The caged green parrot, that is regarded as a sort of guardian spirit in most native households, moved on its perch and fluttered a drowsy wing.

“There is the answer,” said Holden. “Mian Mittu has spoken. He shall be the parrot. When he is ready he will talk mightily and run about. Mian Mittu is the parrot in thy—in the Mussulman tongue, is it not?”

“Why put me so far off?” said Ameera, fretfully. “Let it be like unto some English name—but not wholly. For he is mine.”

“Then call him Tota, for that is likest English.”

“Ay, Tota! and that is still the parrot. Forgive me, my lord, for a minute ago; but, in truth, he is too little to wear all the weight of Mian Mittu for name. He shall be Tota—our Tota to us. Hearest thou, oh, small one? Littlest, thou art Tota.”

She touched the child’s cheek, and he, waking, wailed, and it was necessary to return him to his mother, who
soothed him with the wonderful rhyme of "Aré koko, Ja ré koko!" which says:

"Oh, crow! Go crow! Baby's sleeping sound,
And the wild plums grow in the jungle, only a penny a pound.
Only a penny a pound, Baba—only a penny a pound."

Reassured many times as to the price of those plums, Tota cuddled himself down to sleep. The two sleek white well-bullocks in the court-yard were steadily chewing the cud of their evening meal; old Pir Khan squatted at the head of Holden's horse, his police saber across his knees, pulling drowsily at a big water-pipe that croaked like a bull-frog in a pond. Ameera's mother sat spinning in the lower veranda, and the wooden gate was shut and barred. The music of a marriage procession came to the roof above the gentle hum of the city, and a string of flying-foxes crossed the face of the low moon.

"I have prayed," said Ameera, after a long pause, with her chin in her hand—"I have prayed for two things. First, that I may die in thy stead, if thy death is demanded; and, in the second, that I may die in the place of the child. I have prayed to the Prophet and to Beebee Miriam.* Thinkest thou either will hear?"

"From thy lips who would not hear the lightest word?"
"I asked for straight talk, and thou hast given me sweet talk. Will my prayers be heard?"
"How can I say? God is very good."
"Of that I am not sure. Listen now. When I die or the child dies, what is thy fate? Living, thou wilt return to the bold white mem-log, for kind calls to kind."
"Not always."
"With a woman, no. With a man it is otherwise.

* The Virgin Mary.
Thou wilt in this life, later on, go back to thine own folk. That I could almost endure, for I should be dead. But in thy very death thou wilt be taken away to a strange place and a paradise that I do not know."

"Will it be paradise?"

"Surely; for what God would harm thee? But we two—I and the child—shall be elsewhere, and we can not come to thee, nor canst thou come to us. In the old days, before the child was born, I did not think of these things; but now I think of them perpetually. It is very hard talk."

"It will fall as it will fall. To-morrow we do not know, but to-day and love we know well. Surely we are happy now."

"So happy that it were well to make our happiness assured. And thy Beebee Miriam should listen to me; for she is also a woman. But then she would envy me—It is not seemly for men to worship a woman."

Holden laughed aloud at Ameera's little spasm of jealousy.

"Is it not seemly? Why didst thou not turn me from worship of thee, then?"

"Thou a worshiper! And of me! My king, for all thy sweet words, well I know that I am thy servant and thy slave, and the dust under thy feet. And I would not have it otherwise. See!"

Before Holden could prevent her she stooped forward and touched his feet; recovering herself with a little laugh, she hugged Tota closer to her bosom. Then, almost savagely:

"Is it true that the bold white mem-log live for three times the length of my life? Is it true that they make their marriages not before they are old women?"

"They marry as do others—when they are women."
"That I know, but they wed when they are twenty-five. Is that true?"
"That is true."
"Ya illah! At twenty-five! Who would of his own will take a wife even of eighteen? She is a woman—aging every hour. Twenty-five! I shall be an old woman at that age, and— Those mem-log remain young forever. How I hate them!"
"What have they to do with us?"
"I can not tell. I know only that there may now be alive on this earth a woman ten years older than I who may come to thee and take thy love ten years after I am an old woman, gray-headed, and the nurse of Tota's son. That is unjust and evil. They should die too."
"Now, for all thy years, thou art a child, and shalt be picked up and carried down the staircase."
"Tota! Have a care for Tota, my lord! Thou, at least, art as foolish as any babe!" Ameera tucked Tota out of harm's way in the hollow of her neck, and was carried down-stairs, laughing, in Holden's arms, while Tota opened his eyes and smiled, after the manner of the lesser angels.

He was a silent infant, and almost before Holden could realize that he was in the world, developed into a small gold-colored godling and unquestioned despot of the house overlooking the city. Those were months of absolute happiness to Holden and Ameera—happiness withdrawn from the world, shut in behind the wooden gate that Pir Khan guarded. By day Holden did his work, with an immense pity for such as were not so fortunate as himself, and a sympathy for small children that amazed and amused many mothers at the little station gatherings. At nightfall he returned to Ameera—Ameera full of the wondrous doings of Tota: how he had been seen to clap
his hands together and move his fingers with intention and purpose, which was manifestly a miracle; how, later, he had of his own initiative crawled out of his low bedstead on to the floor, and swayed on both feet for the space of three breaths.

"And they were long breaths, for my heart stood still with delight," said Ameera.

Then he took the beasts into his councils—the well-bullocks, the little gray squirrels, the mongoose that lived in a hole near the well, and especially Mian Mittu, the parrot, whose tail he grievously pulled, and Mian Mittu screamed till Ameera and Holden arrived.

"Oh, villain! Child of strength! This to thy brother on the house-top! Tobah, tobah! Fy! fy! But I know a charm to make him wise as Suleiman and Aflatoun.* Now look," said Ameera. She drew from an embroidered bag a handful of almonds. "See! we count seven. In the name of God!"

She placed Mian Mittu, very angry and rumpled, on the top of his cage, and seating herself between the babe and the bird, cracked and peeled an almond less white than her teeth. "This is a true charm, my life; and do not laugh. See! I give the parrot one half, and Tota the other."

Mian Mittu, with careful beak, took his share from between Ameera's lips, and she kissed the other half into the mouth of the child, who ate it slowly, with wondering eyes. "This I will do each day at seven, and without doubt he who is ours will be a bold speaker and wise. Eh, Tota, what wilt thou be when thou art a man and I am gray-headed?" Tota tucked his fat legs into adorable creases. He could crawl, but he was not going to waste

* Solomon and Plato.
the spring of his youth in idle speech. He wanted Mian Mittu's tail to tweak.

When he was advanced to the dignity of a silver belt—which, with a magic square engraved on silver and hung round his neck, made up the greater part of his clothing—he staggered on a perilous journey down the garden to Pir Khan, and proffered him all his jewels in exchange for one little ride on Holden's horse. He had seen his mother's mother chaffering with peddlers in the veranda. Pir Khan wept, set the untried feet on his own gray head in sign of fealty, and brought the bold adventurer to his mother's arms, vowing that Tota would be a leader of men ere his beard was grown.

One hot evening, while he sat on the roof between his father and mother, watching the never-ending warfare of the kites that the city boys flew, he demanded a kite of his own, with Pir Khan to fly it, because he had a fear of dealing with anything larger than himself; and when Holden called him a "spark," he rose to his feet and answered slowly, in defense of his new-found individuality: "Hum 'park nahin hai. Hum admi hai." (I am no spark, but a man.)

The protest made Holden choke, and devote himself very seriously to a consideration of Tota's future.

He need hardly have taken the trouble. The delight of that life was too perfect to endure. Therefore it was taken away, as many things are taken away in India, suddenly and without warning. The little lord of the house, as Pir Khan called him, grew sorrowful and complained of pains, who had never known the meaning of pain. Ameera, wild with terror, watched him through the night, and in the dawning of the second day the life was shaken out of him by fever—the seasonal autumn fever. It seemed altogether impossible that he could die, and
Ortheris suddenly rose to his knees, his rifle at his shoulder.—Page 247.
neither Ameera nor Holden at first believed the evidence of the body on the bedstead. Then Ameera beat her head against the wall, and would have flung herself down the well in the garden, had Holden not restrained her by main force.

One mercy only was granted to Holden. He rode to his office in broad daylight, and found waiting him an unusually heavy mail that demanded concentrated attention and hard work. He was not, however, alive to this kindness of the gods.

III.

The first shock of a bullet is no more than a brisk pinch. The wrecked body does not send in its protest to the soul till ten or fifteen seconds later. Then comes thirst, throbbing, and agony, and a ridiculous amount of screaming. Holden realized his pain slowly, exactly as he had realized his happiness, and with the same imperious necessity for hiding all trace of it. In the beginning he only felt that there had been a loss, and that Ameera needed comforting where she sat with her head on her knees, shivering as Mian Mittu, from the house-top, called "Tota! Tota! Tota!" Later all his world and the daily life of it rose up to hurt him. It was an outrage that any one of the children at the band-stand in the evening should be alive and clamorous when his own child lay dead. It was more than mere pain when one of them touched him, and stories told by overjoyed fathers of their children's latest performances cut him to the quick. He could not declare his pain. He had neither help, comfort, nor sympathy, and Ameera, at the end of each weary day, would lead him through the hell of self-questioning reproach which is reserved for those who have lost a
child, and believe that with a little—just a little more care—it might have been saved. There are not many hells worse than this, but he knows one who has sat down temperately to consider whether he is or is not responsible for the death of his wife.

"Perhaps," Ameera would say, "I did not take sufficient heed. Did I, or did I not? The sun on the roof that day when he played so long alone, and I was—ahi! braiding my hair—it may be that the sun then bred the fever. If I had warned him from the sun he might have lived. But, oh, my life, say that I am guiltless! Thou knowest that I loved him as I love thee! Say that there is no blame on me, or I shall die—I shall die!"

"There is no blame. Before God, none. It was written, and how could we do aught to save? What has been, has been. Let it go, beloved."

"He was all my heart to me. How can I let the thought go when my arm tells me every night that he is not here? Ahi! ahi! Oh, Tota, come back to me—come back again and let us be all together as it was before!"

"Peace! peace! For thine own sake, and for mine also, if thou lovest me, rest."

"But this I know thou dost not care; and how shouldst thou? The white men have hearts of stone and souls of iron. Oh, that I had married a man of mine own people—though he beat me—and had never eaten the bread of an alien!"

"Am I an alien, mother of my son?"

"What else, sahib? . . . Oh, forgive me—forgive! The death has driven me mad. Thou art the life of my heart, and the light of my eyes, and the breath of my life, and—and I have put thee from me, though it was but for a moment. If thou goest away, to whom shall I look for
help? Do not be angry. Indeed, it was the pain that spoke, and not thy slave."

"I know—I know. We be two who were three. The greater need, therefore, that we should be one."

They were sitting on the roof as of custom. The night was a warm one in early spring, and sheet-lightning was dancing on the horizon to a broken tune played by far-off thunder. Ameera settled herself in Holden’s arms.

"The dry earth is lowing like a cow for the rain, and I—I am afraid. It was not like this when we counted the stars. But thou lovest me as much as before, though a bond is taken away? Answer."

"I love more, because a new bond has come out of the sorrow that we have eaten together; and that thou knowest."

"Yea, I know," said Ameera, in a very small whisper. "But it is good to hear thee say so, my life, who art so strong to help. I will be a child no more, but a woman and an aid to thee. Listen. Give me my sitar, and I will sing bravely."

She took the light silver-studded sitar, and began a song of the great hero Rajá Rasalu. The hand failed on the strings, the tune halted, checked, and at a low note turned off to the poor little nursery rhyme about the wicked crow:

"'And the wild plums grow in the jungle—
Only a penny pound.
Only penny a pound, Baba—only—'

Then came the tears and the piteous rebellion against fate, till she slept, moaning a little in her sleep, with the right arm thrown clear of the body, as though it protected something that was not there.

It was after this night that life became a little easier for
Holden. The ever-present pain of loss drove him into his work, and the work repaid him by filling up his mind for eight or nine hours a day. Ameera sat alone in the house and brooded, but grew happier when she understood that Holden was more at ease, according to the custom of women. They touched happiness again, but this time with caution.

"It was because we loved Tota that he died. The jealousy of God was upon us," said Ameera. "I have hung up a large black jar before our window to turn the Evil Eye from us, and we must make no protestations of delight, but go softly underneath the stars, lest God find us out. Is that not good talk, worthless one?"

She had shifted the accent of the word that means "beloved," in proof of the sincerity of her purpose. But the kiss that followed the new christening was a thing that any deity might have envied. They went about hence-forward saying, "It is naught—it is naught," and hoping that all the Powers heard.

The Powers were busy on other things. They had allowed thirty million people four years of plenty, wherein men fed well and the crops were certain and the birth-rate rose year by year; the districts reported a purely agricultural population varying from nine hundred to two thousand to the square mile of the overburdened earth. It was time to make room. And the member of the Lower Tooting, wandering about India in top-hat and frock-coat, talked largely of the benefits of British rule, and suggested as the one thing needful the establishment of a duly qualified electoral system and a general bestowal of the franchise. His long-suffering hosts smiled and made him welcome, and when he paused to admire, with pretty picked words, the blossom of the blood-red dhak-
tree, that had flowered untimely for a sign of the sickness that was coming; they smiled more than ever.

It was the deputy commissioner of Kot-Kumharsen, staying at the club for a day, who lightly told a tale that made Holden's blood run cold as he overheard the end.

"He won't bother any one any more. Never saw a man so astonished in my life. By Jove! I thought he meant to ask a question in the house about it. Fellow-passenger in his ship—dined next him—bowled over by cholera, and died in eighteen hours. You needn't laugh, you fellows. The member for Lower Tooting is awfully angry about it; but he's more scared. I think he's going to take his enlightened self out of India."

"I'd give a good deal if he were knocked over. It might keep a few vestry-men of his kidney to their parish. But what's this about cholera? It's full early for anything of that kind," said a warden of an unprofitable salt-lick.

"Dun'no," said the deputy commissioner, reflectively. "We've got locusts with us. There's sporadic cholera all along the north—at least, we're calling it sporadic for decency's sake. The spring crops are short in five districts, and nobody seems to know where the winter rains are. It's nearly March now. I don't want to scare anybody, but it seems to me that Nature's going to audit her accounts with a big red pencil this summer."

"Just when I wanted to take leave, too!" said a voice across the room.

"There won't be much leave this year, but there ought to be a great deal of promotion. I've come in to persuade the government to put my pet canal on the list of famine-relief works. It's an ill wind that blows no good. I shall get that canal finished at last."
"Is it the old program, then," said Holden—"famine, fever, and cholera?"

"Oh, no! Only local scarcity and an unusual prevalence of seasonal sickness. You'll find it all in the reports, if you live till next year. You're a lucky chap. You haven't got a wife to put out of harm's way. The hill-stations ought to be full of women this year."

"I think you're inclined to exaggerate the talk in the bazaars," said a young civilian in the secretariat. "Now I have observed—"

"I dare say you have," said the deputy commissioner, "but you've a great deal more to observe, my son. In the meantime I wish to observe to you—" And he drew him aside to discuss the construction of the canal that was so dear to his heart.

Holden went to his bungalow, and began to understand that he was not alone in the world, and also that he was afraid for the sake of another, which is the most soul-satisfying fear known to man.

Two months later, as the deputy had foretold, Nature began to audit her accounts with a red pencil. On the heels of the spring reapings came a cry for bread, and the government, which had decreed that no man should die of want, sent wheat. Then came the cholera from all four quarters of the compass. It struck a pilgrim gathering of half a million at a sacred shrine. Many died at the feet of their god; the others broke, and ran over the face of the land, carrying the pestilence with them. It smote a walled city, and killed two hundred a day. The people crowded the trains, hanging on to the foot-boards and squatting on the roofs of the carriages; and the cholera followed them, for at each station they dragged out the dead and the dying on the platforms reeking of lime-wash and carbolic acid. They died by the road-side, and the
horses of the Englishmen shied at the corpses in the grass. The rains did not come, and the earth turned to iron lest man should escape by hiding in her. The English sent their wives away to the Hills, and went about their work, coming forward as they were bidden to fill the gaps in the fighting line. Holden, sick with fear of losing his chiefest treasure on earth, had done his best to persuade Ameera to go away with her mother to the Himalayas.

"Why should I go?" said she one evening on the roof.

"There is sickness, and the people are dying, and all the white mem-log have gone."

"All of them?"

"All—unless, perhaps, there remain some old scald-head who vexes her husband's heart by running risk of death."

"Nay; who stays is my sister, and thou must not abuse her, for I will be a scald-head too. I am glad all the bold white mem-log are gone."

"Do I speak to a woman or a babe? Go to the Hills, and I will see to it that thou goest like a queen's daughter. Think, child. In a red-lacquered bullock-cart, veiled and curtained, with brass peacocks upon the pole and red-cloth hangings. I will send two orderlies for guard, and—"

"Peace! Thou art the babe in speaking thus. What use are those toys to me? He would have patted the bullocks and played with the housings. For his sake, perhaps—thou hast made me very English—I might have gone. Now, I will not. Let the mem-log run."

"Their husbands are sending them, beloved."

"Very good talk. Since when hast thou been my husband to tell me what to do? I have but borne thee a son. Thou art only all the desire of my soul to me. How shall
I depart when I know that if evil befall thee by the breadth of so much as my littlest finger-nail—is that not small?—I should be aware of it though I were in Paradise. And here, this summer thou mayest die—ai, janee, die!—and in dying they might call to tend thee a white woman, and she would rob me in the last of thy love."

"But love is not born in a moment, or on a death-bed."

"What doest thou know of love, stone-heart? She would take thy thanks at least, and, by God and the Prophet and Beebee Miriam, the mother of thy Prophet, that I will never endure. My lord and my love, let there be no more foolish talk of going away. Where thou art, I am. It is enough." She put an arm round his neck and a hand on his mouth.

There are not many happinesses so complete as those that are snatched under the shadow of the sword. They sat together and laughed, calling each other openly by every pet name that could move the wrath of the gods. The city below them was locked up in its own torments. Sulphur fires blazed in the streets; the conches in the Hindu temples screamed and bellowed, for the gods were inattentive in those days. There was a service in the great Mohammedan shrine, and the call to prayer from the minarets was almost unceasing. They heard the wailing in the houses of the dead, and once the shriek of a mother who had lost a child and was calling for its return. In the gray dawn they saw the dead borne out through the city gates, each litter with its own little knot of mourners. Wherefore they kissed each other and shivered.

It was a red and heavy audit, for the land was very sick, and needed a little breathing-space ere the torrent of cheap life should flood it anew. The children of immature fathers and undeveloped mothers made no re-
istance. They were cowed and sat still, waiting till the sword should be sheathed in November, if it were so willed. There were gaps among the English, but the gaps were filled. The work of superintending famine relief, cholera-sheds, medicine distribution, and what little sanitation was possible went forward because it was so ordered.

Holden had been told to hold himself in readiness to move to replace the next man who should fall. There were twelve hours in each day when he could not see Ameera; and she might die in three. He was considering what his pain would be if he could not see her for three months, or if she died out of his sight. He was absolutely certain that her death would be demanded—so certain that, when he looked up from the telegram and saw Pir Khan breathless in the door-way, he laughed aloud, "And?" said he.

"When there is a cry in the night and the spirit flutters into the throat, who has a charm that will restore? Come swiftly, heaven-born. It is the black cholera."

Holden galloped to his home. The sky was heavy with clouds, for the long-deferred rains were at hand, and the heat was stifling. Ameera's mother met him in the courtyard, whimpering, "She is dying. She is nursing herself into death. She is all but dead. What shall I do, sahib?"

Ameera was lying in the room in which Tota had been born. She made no sign when Holden entered, because the human soul is a very lonely thing, and when it is getting ready to go away hides itself in a misty border-land where the living may not follow. The black cholera does its work quietly and without explanation. Ameera was being thrust out of life as though the Angel of Death had himself put his hand upon her. The quick breathing
seemed to show that she was either afraid or in pain, but neither eyes nor mouth gave any answer to Holden's kisses. There was nothing to be said or done. Holden could only wait and suffer. The first drops of the rain began to fall on the roof, and he could hear shouts of joy in the parched city.

The soul came back a little, and the lips moved. Holden bent down to listen. "Keep nothing of mine," said Ameera. "Take no hair from my head. She would make thee burn it later on. That flame I should feel. Lower! Stoop lower! Remember only that I was thine and bore thee a son. Though thou wed a white woman to-morrow, the pleasure of taking in thy arms thy first son is taken from thee forever. Remember me when thy son is born—the one that shall carry thy name before all men. His misfortunes be on my head. I bear witness—I bear witness"—the lips were forming the words on his ear—"that there is no god but—thee, beloved."

Then she died. Holden sat still, and thought of any kind was taken from him till he heard Ameera's mother lift the curtain.

"Is she dead, sahib?"
"She is dead."

"Then I will mourn, and afterward take an inventory of the furniture in this house; for that will be mine. The sahib does not mean to resume it? It is so little, so very little, sahib, and I am an old woman. I would like to lie softly."

"For the mercy of God, be silent awhile! Go out and mourn where I can not hear."

"Sahib, she will be buried in four hours."

"I know the custom. I shall go ere she is taken away. That matter is in thy hands. Look to it that the bed—on which—on which—she lies—"
"Aha! That beautiful red-lacquered bed. I have long desired—"

"—That the bed is left here untouched for my disposal. All else in the house is thine. Hire a cart, take everything, go hence, and before sunrise let there be nothing in this house but that which I have ordered thee to respect."

"I am an old woman. I would stay at least for the days of mourning, and the rains have just broken. Whither shall I go?"

"What is that to me? My order is that there is a going. The house-gear is worth a thousand rupees, and my orderly shall bring thee a hundred rupees to-night."

"That is very little. Think of the cart-hire."

"It shall be nothing unless thou goest, and with speed. Oh, woman, get hence, and leave me to my dead!"

The mother shuffled down the staircase, and in her anxiety to take stock of the house-fittings forgot to mourn. Holden stayed by Ameera’s side, and the rain roared on the roof. He could not think connectedly by reason of the noise, though he made attempts to do so. Then four sheeted ghosts glided dripping into the room and stared at him through their veils. They were the washers of the dead. Holden left the room, and went out to his horse. He had come in a dead, stifling calm, through ankle-deep dust. He found the court-yard a rain-lashed pond alive with frogs, a torrent of yellow water ran under the gate, and a roaring wind drove the bolts of the rain like buckshot against the mud walls. Pir Khan was shivering in his little hut by the gate, and the horse was stamping uneasily in the water.

"I have been told the sahib’s order," said he. "It is well. This house is now desolate. I go also, for my monkey face would be a reminder of that which has been.
Concerning the bed, I will bring that to thy house yonder in the morning. But remember, sahib, it will be to thee as a knife turned in a green wound. I go upon a pilgrimage and I will take no money. I have grown fat in the protection of the presence, whose sorrow is my sorrow. For the last time I hold his stirrup."

He touched Holden's foot with both hands, and the horse sprung out into the road, where the creaking bamboos were whipping the sky and all the frogs were chuckling. Holden could not see for the rain in his face. He put his hands before his eyes and muttered: "Oh, you brute! You utter brute!"

The news of his trouble was already in his bungalow. He read the knowledge in his butler's eyes when Ahmed Khan brought in food, and for the first and last time in his life laid a hand upon his master's shoulder, saying: "Eat, sahib, eat. Meat is good against sorrow. I also have known. Moreover, the shadows come and go, sahib. The shadows come and go. These be curried eggs."

Holden could neither eat nor sleep. The heavens sent down eight inches of rain in that night and scoured the earth clean. The waters tore down walls, broke roads, and washed open the shallow graves in the Mohammedan burying-ground. All next day it rained, and Holden sat still in his house considering his sorrow. On the morning of the third day he received a telegram which said only: "Ricketts, Myndonie. Dying. Holden. Relieve. Immediate." Then he thought that before he departed he would look at the house wherein he had been master and lord. There was a break in the weather. The rank earth steamed with vapor, and Holden was vermilion from head to heel with the prickly-heat born of sultry moisture.
He found that the rains had torn down the mud pillars of the gate-way, and the heavy wooden gate that had guarded his life hung drunkenly from one hinge. There was grass three inches high in the court-yard; Pir Khan’s lodge was empty and the sodden thatch sagged between the beams. A gray squirrel was in possession of the veranda, as if the house had been untenanted for thirty years instead of three days. Ameera’s mother had removed everything except some mildewed matting. The tick-tick of the little scorpions as they hurried across the floor was the only sound in the house. Ameera’s room and that other one where Tota had lived were heavy with mildew; and the narrow staircase leading to the roof was streaked and stained with rain-borne mud. Holden saw all these things, and came out again to meet in the road Durga Dass, his landlord—portly, affable, clothed in white muslin, and driving a C-spring buggy. He was overlooking his property, to see how the roofs withstood the stress of the first rains.

“I have heard,” said he, “you will not take this place any more, sahib?”

“What are you going to do with it?”

“Perhaps I shall let it again.”

“Then I will keep it on while I am away.”

Durga Dass was silent for some time. “You shall not take it on, sahib,” he said. “When I was a young man I also— But to-day I am a member of the municipality. Ho! ho! No. When the birds have gone, what need to keep the nest? I will have it pulled down; the timber will sell for something always. It shall be pulled down, and the municipality shall make a road across, as they desire, from the burning ghat to the city wall. So that no man may say where this house stood.”
ON GREENHOW HILL.

To Love's low voice she lent a careless ear;
Her hand within his rosy fingers lay,
A chilling weight. She would not turn or hear;
But with averted face went on her way.
But when pale Death, all featureless and grim,
Lifted his bony hand, and beckoning
Held out his cypress-wreath, she followed him,
And Love was left forlorn and wondering,
That she who for his bidding would not stay,
At Death's first whisper rose and went away.

—Rivals.

"Ohé, ahmed din! Shafiz Ullah ahoo! Bahadur Khan, where are you? Come out of the tents, as I have done, and fight against the English. Don't kill your own kin! Come out to me!"

The deserter from a native corps was crawling round the outskirts of the camp, firing at intervals, and shouting invitations to his old comrades. Misled by the rain and the darkness, he came to the English wing of the camp, and with his yelping and rifle practice disturbed the men. They had been making roads all day, and were tired.

Ortheris was sleeping at Learoyd's feet. "Wot's all that?" he said, thickly. Learoyd snored, and a Snider bullet ripped its way through the tent wall. The men swore. "It's that bloomin' deserter from the Aurangabadis," said Ortheris. "Git up, some one, an' tell 'im 'e's come to the wrong shop."

"Go to sleep, little man," said Mulvaney, who was
steaming nearest the door. "I can't arise an' expaytiate with him. 'Tis rainin' entrenchin' tools outside."

"'Tain't because you bloomin' can't. It's 'cause you bloomin' won't, ye long, limp, lousy, lazy beggar, you. 'Ark to 'im 'owlin'!"

"Wot's the good of argifying? Put a bullet into the swine! 'E's keepin' us awake!" said another voice.

A subaltern shouted angrily, and a dripping sentry whined from the darkness:

"'Tain't no good, sir. I can't see 'im. 'E's 'idin' somewhere down 'ill."

Ortheris tumbled out of his blanket. "Shall I try to get 'im, sir?" said he.

"No," was the answer; "lie down. I won't have the whole camp shooting all round the clock. Tell him to go and pot his friends."

Ortheris considered for a moment. Then, putting his head under the tent wall, he called, as a 'bus conductor calls in a block, "'Igher up, there! 'Igher up!"

The men laughed, and the laughter was carried down wind to the deserter, who, hearing that he had made a mistake, went off to worry his own regiment half a mile away. He was received with shots, for the Aurangabadis were very angry with him for disgracing their colors.

"An' that's all right," said Ortheris, withdrawing his head as he heard the hiccough of the Sniders in the distance. "S'elp me Gawd, tho', that man's not fit to live—messin' with my beauty sleep this way."

"Go out and shoot him in the morning, then," said the subaltern, incautiously. "Silence in the tents now. Get your rest, men."

Ortheris lay down with a happy little sigh, and in two minutes there was no sound except the rain on the canvas and the all-embracing and elemental snoring of Learoyd.
The camp lay on a bare ridge of the Himalayas, and for a week had been waiting for a flying column to make connection. The nightly rounds of the deserter and his friends had become a nuisance.

In the morning the men dried themselves in hot sunshine and cleared their grimy accouterments. The native regiment was to take its turn of road-making that day while the old regiment loafed.

"I'm goin' to lay for a shot at that man," said Ortheris, when he had finished washing out his rifle. "'E comes up the water-course every evenin' about five o'clock. If we go and lie out on the north 'ill a bit this afternoon we'll get 'im."

"You're a blood-thirsty little mosquito," said Mulvaney, blowing blue clouds into the air. "But I suppose I will have to come wid you. Fwhere's Jock?"

"Gone out with the Mixed Pickles, 'cause 'e thinks 'issel a bloomin' marksman," said Ortheris, with scorn.

The "Mixed Pickles" were a detachment of picked shots, generally employed in clearing spurs of hills when the enemy were too impertinent. This taught the young officers how to handle men, and did not do the enemy much harm. Mulvaney and Ortheris strolled out of camp, and passed the Aurangabadis going to their road-making.

"You've got to sweat to-day," said Ortheris, genially. "We're going to get your man. You didn't knock 'im out last night by any chance, any of you?"

"No. The pig went away mocking us. I had one shot at him," said a private. "He's my cousin, and I ought to have cleared our dishonor. But good-luck to you."

They went cautiously to the north hill, Ortheris leading, because, as he explained, "this is a long-range show, and I've got to do it." His was an almost passionate de-
votion to his rifle, whom, by barrack-room report, he was supposed to kiss every night before turning in. Charges and scuffles he held in contempt, and when they were inevitable, slipped between Mulvaney and Learoyd, bidding them to fight for his skin as well as their own. They never failed him. He trotted along, questing like a hound on a broken trail, through the wood of the north hill. At last he was satisfied, and threw himself down on the soft pine-needle slope that commanded a clear view of the water-course and a brown, bare hill-side beyond it. The trees made a scented darkness in which an army corps could have hidden from the sun-glare without.

"'Ere's the tail o' the wood," said Ortheris. "'E's got to come up the water-course, 'cause it gives 'im cover. We'll lay 'ere. 'Tain't not arf so bloomin' dusty neither."

He buried his nose in a clump of scentless white violets. No one had come to tell the flowers that the season of their strength was long past, and they had bloomed merrily in the twilight of the pines.

"This is something like," he said, luxuriously. "Wot a 'evinly clear drop for a bullet acrost. How much d' you make it, Mulvaney?"

"Seven hunder. May be a trifle less, bekase the air's so thin."

Wop! wop! wop! went a volley of musketry on the rear face of the north hill.

"Curse them Mixed Pickles firin' at nothin'! They'll scare arf the country."

"Thry a sightin' shot in the middle of the row," said Mulvaney, the man of many wiles. "There's a red rock yonder he'll be sure to pass. Quick!"

Ortheris ran his sight up to six hundred yards and fired. The bullet threw up a feather of dust by a clump of gentians at the base of the rock.
“Good enough!” said Ortheris, snapping the scale down. “You snick your sights to mine or a little lower. You’re always firin’ high. But remember, first shot to me. Oh, Lordy! but it’s a lovely afternoon.”

The noise of the firing grew louder, and there was a tramping of men in the wood. The two lay very quiet, for they knew that the British soldier is desperately prone to fire at anything that moves or calls. Then Learoyd appeared, his tunic ripped across the breast by a bullet, looking ashamed of himself. He flung down on the pine-needles, breathing in snorts.

“One o’ them damned gardeners o’ th’ Pickles,” said he, fingerling the rent. “Firin’ to th’ right flank, when he knowed I was there. If I knew who he was I’d ‘a’ rippen the hide offan him. Look at ma tunic!”

“That’s the spishil trustability av a marksman. Train him to hit a fly wid a stiddy rest at seven hunder, an’ he loose on anythin’ he sees or hears up to th’ mile. You’re well out av that fancy-firin’ gang, Jock. Stay here.”

“Bin firin’ at the bloomin’ wind in the bloomin’reetops,” said Ortheris, with a chuckle. “I’ll show you some firin’ later on.”

They wallowed in the pine-needles, and the sun warmed them where they lay. The Mixed Pickles ceased firing, and returned to camp, and left the wood to a few scared apes. The water-course lifted up its voice in silence, and talked foolishly to the rocks. Now and again the dull thump of a blasting charge three miles away told that the Áurangabadis were in difficulties with their road-making. The men smiled as they listened and lay still, soaking in the warm leisure. Presently Learoyd, between the whiffs of his pipe:

“Seems queer—about ’im yonder—desertin’ at all.”

“’E’ll be a bloomin’ side queerer when I’ve done with
"im," said Ortheris. They were talking in whispers, for the stillness of the wood and the desire of slaughter lay heavy upon them.

"I make no doubt he had his reasons for desertin'; but, my faith! I make less doubt ivry man has good reasons for killin' him," said Mulvaney.

"Happen there was a lass tewed up wi' it. Men do more than more for th'sake of a lass."

"They make most av us 'list. They've no manner av right to make us desert."

"Ah; they make us 'list, or their fathers do," said Learoyd, softly, his helmet over his eyes.

Ortheris's brows contracted savagely. He was watching the valley. "If it's a girl I'll shoot the beggar twice over, an' second time for bein' a fool. You're blasted sentimental all of a sudden. Thinkin' o' your last near shave?"

"Nay, lad; ah was but thinkin' o' what had happened."

"An' fwhat has happened, ye lumberin' child av calamity, that you're lowing like a cow-calf at the back av the pasture, an' suggestin' invidious excuses for the man Stanley's goin' to kill. Ye'll have to wait another hour yet, little man. Spit it out, Jock, an' bellow melojus to the moon. It takes an earthquake or a bullet graze to fetch aught out av you. Discourse, Don Juan! The a-moors of Lotharius Learoyd. Stanley, kape a rowlin' rig'mental eye on the valley."

"It's along o' yon hill there," said Learoyd, watching the bare sub-Himalayan spur that reminded him of his Yorkshire moors. He was speaking more to himself than his fellows. "Ay," said he: "Rumbolds Moor stands up ower Skipton town, an' Greenhow Hill stands up ower Pately Brig. I reckon you've never heeard tell o' Greenhow Hill, but yon bit o' bare stuff if there was nobbut a white
road windin' is like ut, strangely like. Moors an' moors—moors wi' never a tree for shelter, an' gray houses wi' flag-stone rooves, and pewits cryin', an' a windhover goin' to and fro just like these kites. And cold! a wind that cuts you like a knife. You could tell Greenhow Hill folk by the red-apple color o' their cheeks an' nose tips, and their blue eyes, driven into pin-points by the wind. Miners mostly, burrowin' for lead i' th' hill-sides, followin' the trail of th' ore vein same as a field-rat. It was the roughest minin' I ever seen. Yo'd come on a bit o' creakin' wood windlass like a well-head, an' you was let down i' th' bight of a rope, fendin' yoursen off the side wi' one hand, carryin' a candle stuck in a lump o' clay with t'other, an' clickin' hold of a rope with t'other hand."

"An' that's three of them," said Mulvaney. "Must be a good climate in those parts."

Learoyd took no heed.

"An' then yo' came to a level, where you crept on your hands and knees through a mile o' windin' drift, an' you come out into a cave-place as big as Leeds Town-hall, with an engine pumpin' water from workin's 'at went deeper still. It's a queer country, let alone minin', for the hill is full of those natural caves, an' the rivers an' the becks drops into what they call pot-holes, an' come out again miles away."

"Wot was you doin' there?" said Ortheris.

"I was a young chap then, an' mostly went wi' osses, leadin' coal and lead ore; but at th' time I'm tellin' on I was drivin' the wagon team i' the big sumph. I didn't belong to that country-side by rights. I went there because of a little difference at home, an' at fust I took up wi' a rough lot. One night we'd been drinkin', an' I must ha' hed more than I could stand, or happen th' ale was none so good. Though i' them days, by for th' ale I never
seed bad ale.” He flung his arms over his head, and gripped a vast handful of white violets. “Nah,” said he, “I never seed the ale I could not drink, the bacca I could not smoke, nor the lass I could not kiss. Well, we mun have a race home, the lot on us. I lost all th’ others an’ when I was climbin’ ower one of them walls built o’ loose stones, I comes down into the ditch, stones and all, an’ broke my arm. Not as I knawed much about it, for I fell on th’ back of my head, an’ was knocked stupid like. An’ when I come to my sen’ it were mornin’, an’ I were lyin’ on the settle i’ Jesse Roantree’s house-place, an’ ’Liza Roantree was settin’ sewin’. I ached all ower, and my mouth were like a lime-kiln. She gave me a drink out of a china mug wi’ gold letters—‘A Present from Leeds’—as I looked at many and many a time at after. ‘You’re to lie still while Doctor Warbottom comes, because your arm’s broken, and father has sent a lad to fetch him. He found yo’ when he was goin’ to work, an’ carried you here on his back,’ sez she. ‘Oa!’ sez I; an’ I shet my eyes, for I felt ashamed o’ my sen’. ‘Father’s gone to his work these three hours, an’ he said he’d tell ’em to get somebody to drive the tram.’ The clock ticked an’ a bee comed in the house, an’ they rung i’ my head like mill wheels. An’ she give me another drink an’ settled the pillow. ‘Eh, but yo’re young to be getten drunk an’ such like, but yo’ won’t do it again, will yo’?’ ‘Noa,’ sez I, ‘I wouldn’t if she’d not but stop they mill-wheels clatter-in’.”

“Faith, it’s a good thing to be nursed by a woman when you’re sick!” said Mulvaney. “Dir’ cheap at the price av twenty broken heads.”

Ortheris turned to frown across the valley. He had not been nursed by many women in his life.

“An’ then Doctor Warbottom comes ridin’ up, an’
Jesse Roantree along with 'im. He was a high-larned doctor, but he talked wi' poor folk same as theirsens. 'What's ta bin agaate on naa?' he sings out. 'Brekkin' tha thick head?' An' he felt me all over. 'That's none broken. Tha' nobbut knocked a bit sillier than ordinary, an' that's daaft eneaf.' An' soa he went on, callin' me all the names he could think on, but settin' my arm, wi' Jesse's help, as careful as could be. 'Yo' mun let the big oaf bide here a bit, Jesse,' he says, when he hed strapped me up an' given me a dose o' physic; 'an' you an' 'Liza will tend him, though he's scarcelins worth the trouble. An' tha'll lose tha' work,' sez he, 'an' tha'll be upon th' Sick Club for a couple o' months an' more. Doesn't tha think tha's a fool?''

"But whin was a young man, high or low, the other av a fool, I'd like to know?" said Mulvaney. "Sure, folly's the only safe way to wisdom, for I've thried it."

"Wisdom!" grinned Ortheris, scanning his comrades with uplifted chin. "You're bloomin' Solomons, you two, ain't you?"

Learoyd went calmly on, with a steady eye like an ox chewing the cud. "And that was how I comed to know 'Liza Roantree. There's some tunes as she used to sing—aw, she were always singin'—that fetches Greenhow Hill before my eyes as fair as yon brow across there. And she would learn me to sing bass, an' I was to go to th' chapel wi' 'em, where Jesse and she led the singin', th' old man playin' the fiddle. He was a strange chap, old Jesse, fair mad wi' music, an' he made me promise to learn the big fiddle when my arm was better. It belonged to him, and it stood up in a big case alongside o' th' eight-day clock, but Willie Satterthwaite, as played it in the chapel, had getten deaf as a door-post, and it vexed Jesse, as he had to
rap him ower his head wi' th' fiddle-stick to make him give ower sawin' at th' right time.

"But there was a black drop in it all, an' it was a man in a black coat that brought it. When th' Primitive Methodist preacher came to Greenhow, he would always stop wi' Jesse Roantree, an' he laid hold of me from th' beginning. It seemed I wor a soul to be saved, and he meaned to do it. At th' same time I jealously 'at he were keen o' savin' 'Liza Roantree's soul as well, and I could ha' killed him many a time. An' this went on till one day I broke out, an' borrowed th' brass for a drink from 'Liza. After fower days I come back, wi' my tail between my legs, just to see 'Liza again. But Jesse were at home an' th' preacher—th' Reverend Amos Barraclough. 'Liza said naught, but a bit o' red come into her face as were white o' a regular thing. Says Jesse, tryin' his best to be civil: 'Nay, lad, it's like this. You've getten to choose which way it's goin' to be. I'll ha' nobody across ma doo- step, as goes a-drinkin', an' borrows my lass's money to spend i' their drink. Ho'd tha tongue, 'Liza,' sez he, when she wanted to put in a word 'at I were welcome to th' brass, and she were none afraid that I wouldn't pay it back. Then the reverend cuts in, seein' as Jesse were losin' his temper, an' they fair beat me among them. But it were 'Liza, as looked an' said naught, as did more than either o' their tongues, an' soa I concluded to get converted."

"Fwhat!" shouted Mulvaney. Then, checking himself, he said, softly: "Let be! Let be! Sure the Blessed Virgin is the mother of all religion an' most women; an' there's a dale of piety in a girl if the men would only let it stay there. I'd ha' been converted myself under the circumstances."
“Nay, but,” pursued Learoyd, with a blush, “I meant it.”

Ortheris laughed as loudly as he dared, having regard to his business at the time.

“Ay, Ortheris, you may laugh, but you didn’t know yon preacher Barraclough—a little white-faced chap wi’ a voice as ’ud wile a bird off an a bush, an’ a way o’ layin’ hold o’ folks as made them think they’d never had a live man for a friend before. You never saw him, an’—you never seed ’Liza Roantree—never seed ’Liza Roantree.... Happen it was as much ’Liza as th’ preacher an’ her father, but any ways they all meanted it, an’ I was fair shamed o’ mysen, an’ so I become what they called a changed character. An’ when I think on, it’s hard to believe as yon chap goin’ to prayer-meetin’s, chapel, and class-meetings were me. But I never had naught to say for mysen, though there was a deal o’ shoutin’, and old Sammy Strother, as were almost clemmed to death and doubled up wi’ the rheumatics, would sing out, ‘Joyful! joyful!’ an’ at it were better to go up to heaven in a coal-basket than down to hell i’ a coach an’ six. An’ he would put his poor old claw on my shoulder, sayin’: ‘Doesn’t tha feel it, tha great lump? Doesn’t tha feel it? An’ sometimes I thought I did, an’ then again I thought I didn’t an’ how was that?”

“The iverlastin’ nature av mankind,” said Mulvaney. “An’, furthermore, I misdoubt you were built for the Primitive Methodians. They’re a new corps any ways. I hold by the ould Church, for she’s the mother of them all—ay, an’ the father, too. I like her bekaze she’s most remarkable regimental in her fittings. I may die in Honolulu, Nova Zambra, or Cape Cayenne, but wherever I die, me bein’ fwhat I am, an’ a priest handy, I go under the same orders an’ the same words an’ the same unction
as tho' the pope himself come down from the dome av St. Peter's to see me off. There's neither high nor low, nor broad nor deep, nor betwixt nor between with her, an' that's what I like. But mark you, she's no manner av Church for a wake man, bekaze she takes the body and the soul av him, onless he has his proper work to do. I remember when my father died that was three months comin' to his grave; begad he'd ha' sold the shebeen above our heads for ten minutes' quittance of purgathory. An' he did all he could. That's why I say it takes a strong man to deal with the ould Church, an' for that reason you'll find so many women go there. An' that same's a conundrum."

"Wot's the use o' worrittin' 'bout these things?" said Ortheris. "You're bound to find all out quicker nor you want to, any'ow." He jerked the cartridge out of the breech-block into the palm of his hand. "'Ere's my chaplain," he said, and made the venomous black-headed bullet bow like a marionette. "'E's goin' to teach a man all about which is which, an' wot's true, after all, before sundown. But wot 'appened after that, Jock?"

"There was one thing they boggled at, an' almost shut th' gate i' my face for, an' that were my dog Blast, th' only one saved out o' a litter o' pups as was blowed up when a keg o' minin'-powder loosed off in th' storekeeper's hut. They liked his name no better than his business, which was fightin' every dog he comed across; a rare good dog, wi' spots o' black an' pink on his face, one ear gone, an' lame o' one side wi' being driven in a basket through an iron roof, a matter of half a mile.

"They said I mun give him up 'cause he were worldly and low; and would I let mysen be shut out of heaven for the sake of a dog? 'Nay,' says I, 'if th' door isn't wide enough for th' pair on us, we'll stop outside for we'll
none be parted.’ And th’ preacher spoke up for Blast, as had a likin’ for him from th’ first—I reckon that was why I come to like th’ preacher—and wouldn’t hear o’ changin’ his name to Bless, as some o’ them wanted. So th’ pair on us became reg’lar chapel members. But it’s hard for a young chap o’ my build to cut traces from the world, th’ flesh, an’ the devil all uv a heap. Yet I stuck to it for a long time, while th’ lads as used to stand about th’ town end an’ lean ower th’ bridge, spittin’ into th’ beck o’ a Sunday, would call after me, ‘Sitha, Learoyd, when’s ta bean to preach, ’cause we’re comin’ to hear tha?’ ‘Ho’d tha jaw. He hasn’t getten th’ white choaker on ta morn,’ another lad would say, and I had to double my fists hard i’ th’ bottom of my Sunday coat, and say to mysen, ‘If ’twere Monday and I warn’t a member o’ the Primitive Methodists, I’d leather all th’ lot o’ yond’. That was th’ hardest of all—to know that I could fight and I mustn’t fight.”

Sympathetic grunts from Mulvaney.

“So what wi’ singin’, practicin’, and class-meetin’s, and th’ big fiddle, as he made me take between my knees, I spent a deal o’ time i’ Jesse Roantree’s house-place. But often as I was there, th’ preacher fared to me to go oftener, and both th’ old an’ th’ young woman were pleased to have him. He lived i’ Pately Brigg, as were a goodish step off, but he come. He come all th’ same. I liked him as well or better as any man I’d ever seen i’ one way, and yet I hated him wi’ all my heart i’ t’other, and we watched each other like cat and mouse, but civil as you please, for I was on my best behavior, and he was that fair and open that I was bound to be fair wi’ him. Rare good company he was, if I hadn’t wanted to wring his cliver little neck half o’ the time. Often and often when
he was goin' from Jesse's I'd set him a bit on the road."

"See 'im 'ome, you mean?" said Ortheris.

"Ay. It's a way we have i' Yorkshire o' seein' friends off. Yon was a friend as I didn't want to come back, and he didn't want me to come back neither, and so we'd walk together toward Pately, and then he'd set me back again, and there we'd be wal two o'clock i' the mornin' settin' each other to an' fro like a blasted pair o' pendulums twixt hill and valley, long after th' light had gone out i' 'Liza's window, as both on us had been looking at, pre-tending to watch the moon."

"Ah!" broke in Mulvaney, "ye'd no chanst against the maraudin' psalm-singer. They'll take the airs an' the graces instid av the man nine times out av ten, an' they only find the blunder later—the wimmen."

"That's just where yo're wrong," said Learoyd, reddening under the freckled tan of his cheek. "I was th' first wi' 'Liza, an' yo'd think that were enough. But th' parson were a steady-gaited sort o' chap, and Jesse were strong o' his side, and all th' women i' th' congregation dinned it to 'Liza 'at she were fair fond to take up wi' a wastrel ne'er-do-weel like me, as was scarcelins respectable and a fighting dog at his heels. It was all very well for her to be doing me good and saving my soul, but she must mind as she didn't do herself harm. They talk o' rich folk bein' stuck up an' genteel, but for cast-iron pride o' respectability there's naught like poor chapel folk. It's as cold as th' wind o' Greenhow Hill—ay, and colder, for 'twill never change. And now I come to think on it, one at strangest things I know is 'at they couldn't abide th' thought o' soldiering. There's a vast o' fightin' i' th' Bible, and there's a deal of Methodist's i' th' army; but to hear chapel folk talk yo'd think that soldierin' were next door, an' t'other side, to hangin'. I' their meetin'
all their talk is o' fightin'. When Sammy Strother were stuck for summat to say i' his prayers, he'd sing out, 'The sword o' th' Lord and o' Gideon.' They were allus at it about puttin' on th' whole armor o' righteousness, an' fightin' th' good fight o' faith. And then, atop o' t all, they held a prayer-meetin' ower a young chap as wanted to 'list, and nearly deafened him, till he picked up his hat and fair ran away. An' they'd tell tales in th' Sunday-school o' bad lads as had been thumped and brayed for bird-nesting o' Sundays and playin' truant o' week-days, and how they took to wrestlin', dog-fightin', rabbit-runnin', and drinkin', till at last, as if 'twere a hepitaph on a grave-stone, they damned him across th' moors wi', an' then he went an' 'listed for a soldier, an' they'd all fetch a deep breath, an' throw up their eyes like a hen drinkin'."

"Fwhy is it?" said Mulvaney, bringing down his hand on his thigh with a crack. "In the name av God, fwhy is it? I've seen it, tu. They cheat an' they swindle an' they lie an' they slander, an' fifty things fifty times worse; but the last an' the worst by their reckonin' is to serve the widdy honest. It's like the talk av childer—seein' things all round."

"Plucky lot of fightin' good fights of whatsername they'd do if we didn't see they had a quiet place to fight in. And such fightin' as theirs is! 'Cats on the tiles. T'other callin' to which to come on. I'd give a month's pay to get some o' them broad-backed beggars in London sweatin' through a day's road-makin' an' a night's rain. They'd carry on a deal afterward—same as we're supposed to carry on. I've bin turned out of a measly arf-license pub down Lambeth way, full o' greasy kebmen, 'fore now," said Ortheris, with an oath.
“May be you were dhrunk,” said Mulvaney, soothingly.

“Worse nor that. The Forders were drunk. I was wearin’ the queen’s uniform.”

“I’d no particular thought to be a soldier i’ them days,” said Learoyd, still keeping his eye on the bare hill opposite, “but this sort o’ talk put it i’ my head. They was so good, th’ chapel folk, that they tumbled ower t’other side. But I stuck to it for ’Liza’s sake, specially as she was learning me to sing the bass part in a hororororio as Jesse were getting up. She sung like a throstle hersen, and we had practicin’s night after night for a matter of three months.”

“I know what a hororororio is,” said Ortheris, pertly. “It’s a sort of chaplain’s sing-song—words all out of the Bible, and hullabaloojah choruses.”

“Most Greenhow Hill folks played some instrument or t’other, an’ they all sung so you might have heard them miles away, and they were so pleased wi’ the noise they made they didn’t fair to want anybody to listen. The preacher sung high seconds when he wasn’t playin’ the flute, an’ they set me, as hadn’t got far with big fiddle, again Willie Satterthwaite, to jog his elbow when he had to get a’ gate playin’. Old Jesse was happy if ever a man was, for he were th’ conductor an’ th’ first fiddle an’ th’ leadin’ singer, beatin’ time wi’ his fiddle-stick, till at times he’d rap with it on the table, and cry out, ‘Now, you mun all stop: it’s my turn.’ And he’d face round to his front, fair sweatin’ wi’ pride, to sing the tenor solos. But he were grandest i’ th’ choruses, waggin’ his head, flingin’ his arms round like a windmill, and singin’ hisself black in the face. A rare singer were Jesse.

“Yo’ see, I was not o’ much account wi’ ’em all exceptin’ to Eliza Roantree, and I had a deal o’ time settin’
quiet at meetin's and horotorio practices to hearken their talk, and if it were strange to me at beginnin', it got stranger still at after, when I was shut on it, and could study what it meant.

"Just after th' horotorios come off, 'Liza, as had allus been weakly like, was took very bad. I walked Doctor Warbottom's horse up and down a deal of times while he were inside, where they wouldn't let me go, though I fair ached to see her.

"'She'll be better i' noo, lad—better i' noo,' he used to say. 'Tha mun ha' patience.' Then they said if I was quiet I might go in, and th' Reverend Amos Barraclough used to read to her lyin' propped up among th' pillows. Then she began to mend a bit, and they let me carry her on to th' settle, and when it got warm again she went about same as afore. Th' preacher and me and Blast was a deal together i' them days, and i' one way we was rare good comrades. But I could ha' stretched him time and again wi' a good will. I mind one day he said he would like to go down into th' bowels o' th' earth, and see how th' Lord had builded th' frame-work o' th' everlastin' hills. He was one o' them chaps as had a gift o' sayin' things. They rolled off the tip o' his clever tongue, same as Mulvaney here, as would ha' made a rare good preacher if he had nobbut given his mind to it. I lent him a suit o' miner's kit as almost buried th' little man, an' his white face down i' th' coat-collar an' hat flap looked like the face o' a boggart, an' he cowered down i' th' bottom o' the wagon. I was drivin' a tram as led up a bit o' an incline up to th' cave where the engine was pumpin', and where th' ore was brought up an' put into th' wagons as went down o' themselves, me puttin' th' brake on an' th' horses a-trottin' after. Long as it was daylight we were good friends, but when we got fair into
th' dark, an' could nobbut see th' day shinin' at the hole like a lamp at a street end, I feeled downright wicked. My religion dropped all away from me when I looked back at him as were always comin' between me an' Eliza. The talk was at they were to be wed when she got better, an' I couldn't get her to say yes or nay to it. He began to sing a hymn in his thin voice, and I came out wi' a chorus that was all cussin' an' swearin' at my horses, an' I began to know how I hated him. He were such a little chap, too. I could drop him wi' one hand down Garstang's copper hole—a place where th' beck slithered ower th' edge on a rock, an' fell wi' a bit of a whisper into a pit as rope i' Greenhow could plump.”

Again Learoyd rooted up the innocent violets. “Ay, he should see th' bowels o' th' earth an' never aught else. I could take him a mile or two along th' drift, an' leave him wi' his candle doused to cry hallelujah wi' none to hear him and say amen. I was to lead him down th' ladder way to th' drift where Jesse Roantree was workin', and why shouldn't he slip on th' ladder, wi' my feet on his fingers till they loosed grip, an' I put him down wi' my heel. If I went fust down th' ladder I could click hold on him and chuck him over my head, so as he should go squishin' down the shaft, breakin' his bones at ev'ry timberin' as Bill Appleton did when he was fresh, an' hadn't a bone left when he wrought to th' bottom. Niver a blasted leg to walk from Pately. Niver an arm to put round 'Liza Roantree's waist. Niver no more—niver no more.”

The thick lips curled back over the yellow teeth, and that flushed face was not pretty to look upon. Mulvaney nodded sympathy, and Ortheris, moved by his comrade's passion, brought up the rifle to his shoulder, and searched the hill-side for his quarry, muttering ribaldry about a
sparrow, a spout, and a thunder-storm. The voice of the watercourse supplied the necessary small talk till Learoyd picked up his story.

"But it's none so easy to kill a man like yon. When I'd given up my horses to th' lad as took my place an' I was showin' th' preacher th' workin's, shoutin' into his ear across th' clang o' th' pumpin' engines, I saw he was afraid o' naught; an' when the lamp-light showed his black eyes, I could feel as he was masterin' me again. I were no better nor Blast chained up short an' growlin' i' the depths of him while a strange dog went safe past.

"'Th'art a coward an' a fool,' I said to mysen; an' I wrestled i' my mind again' him till, when we come to Garstang's copper hole, I laid hold o' the preacher an' lifted him up over my head an' held him into the darkest on it. 'Now, lad,' I says, 'it's to be one or t'other on us—thee or me—for 'Liza Roantree. Why, isn't thee afraid for thysen?' I says, for he were still i' my arms as a sack. 'Nay; I'm but afraid for thee, my poor lad, as knows naught,' says he. I set him down on th' edge, an' th' beck run stiller, an' there was no more buzzin' in my head like when th' bee come through th' window o' Jesse's house. 'What dost tha mean?' says I.

"'I've often thought as thou ought to know,' says he, 'but 'twas hard to tell thee, 'Liza Roantree's for neither on us, nor for nobody o' this earth. Doctor Warbottom says—and he knows her, an' her mother before her—that she is in a decline, an' she can not live six months longer. He's known it for a many a day. Steady, John! Steady!' says he. An' that weak little man pulled me further back an' set me again' him, an' talked it all over quiet an' still, me turnin' a bunch o' candles in my hand, an' countin' them ower and ower again as I listened. A deal on it were th' regular preachin' talk, but there was a vast
lot as made me begin to think as he were more o' a man than I'd ever given him credit for till I were cut as deep for him as I were for mysen.

"Six candles we had, an' we crawled an' climbed all that day while they lasted, an' I said to mysen, 'Liza Roantree hasn't six months to live.' An' when we came into th' daylight again we were like dead men to look at, an' Blast come behind us without so much as waggin' his tail. When I saw 'Liza again she looked at me a minute an' says, 'Who's telled tha? For I see tha knows.' An' she tried to smile as she kissed me, an' I fair broke down.

"You see I was a young chap i' them days, an' had seen naught o' life, let alone death, as is allus a-waitin'. She telled me as Doctor Warbottom said as Greenhow air was too keen, an' they were goin' to Bradford, to Jesse's brother David, as worked i' a mill, and I mun hold up like a man an' a Christian, an' she'd pray for me well, an' they went away, an' the preacher that came back end o' th' year were appointed to another circuit, as they call it, an' I were left alone on Greenhow Hill.

"I tried, an' I tried hard, to stick to th' chapel, but 'tweren't th' same thing at after. I hadn't 'Liza's voice to follow i' th' singin', nor her eyes a-shinin' acrost their heads. An' i' th' class-meetin's they said as I mun have some experiences to tell, an' I hadn't a word to say for mysen.

"Blast an' me moped a good deal, an' happen we didn't behave ourselves overwell, for they dropped us, an' wondered however they'd come to take us up. I can't tell how we got through th' time, while i' th' winter I gave up my job an' went to Bradford. Old Jesse were at th' door o' th' house, in a long street o' little houses. He'd been sendin' th' children 'way as were clatterin' their clogs in th' causeway, for she were asleep.
"'Is it thee?' he says; 'but you're not to see her. I'll none have her wakened for a nowt like thee. She's goin' fast, and she mun go in peace. Thou'lt never be good for naught, i' th' world, an' as long as thou lives thou'lt never play the big fiddle. Get away, lad, get away!' So he shut the door softly i' my face.

"Nobody never made Jesse my master, but it seemed to me he was about right, an' I went away into the town an' knocked up against a recruiting sergeant. The old tales o' th' chapel folk came buzzin' into my head. I was to get away, an' this were th' regular road for the likes o' me. I 'listed there an' then, took th' widow's shillin', an' had a bunch o' ribbons pinned i' my hat.

"But next day I found my way to David Roantree's door, an' Jesse came to open it. Says he, 'Thou's come back again wi' th' devil's colors flyin'—thy true colors, as I always telled thee.'

"But I begged an' prayed of him to let me see her nobbut to say good-bye, till a woman calls down th' stairway—she say, 'John Learoyd's to come up.' Th' old man shifts aside in a flash, an' lays his hand on my arm, quite gentle like. 'But thou'lt be quiet, John,' says he, 'for she's rare an' weak. Thou wast allus a good lad.'

"Her eyes were all alive wi' light, and her hair was thick on the pillow round her, but her cheeks were thin—thin to frighten a man that's strong. 'Nay, father, yo' mayn't say th' devil's colors. Them ribbons is pretty.' An' she held out her hands for th' hat, an' she put all straight as a woman will wi' ribbons. 'Nay, but what they're pretty,' she says. 'Eh, but I'd ha' liked to se thee i' thy red coat, John, for thou was allus my own lad—my very own lad, an' none else.'

"She lifted up her arms, an' they come round my neck i' a gentle grip, an' they slacked away, an' she seemed
fainting. ‘Now yo’ mun get away, lad,’ says Jesse, an’ I picked up my hat an’ I came down-stairs.

‘Th’ recruiting sergeant were waitin’ for me at th’ corner public-house. ‘Yo’ve seen your sweetheart?’ says he. ‘Yes, I’ve seen her,’ says I. ‘Well, we’ll have a quart now, an’ you’ll do your best to forget her,’ says he, bein’ one o’ them smart, bustlin’ chaps. ‘Ay, sergeant,’ says I. ‘Forget her.’ An’ I’ve been forgettin’ her ever since.”

He threw away the wilted clump of white violets as he spoke. Ortheris suddenly rose to his knees, his rifle at his shoulder, and peered across the valley in the clear afternoon light. His chin cuddled the stock, and there was a twitching of the muscles of the right cheek as he sighted; Private Stanley Ortheris was engaged on his business. A speck of white crawled up the water-course.

“See that beggar? Got ’im.”

Seven hundred yards away, and a full two hundred down the hill-side, the deserter of the Aurangabadis pitched forward, rolled down a red rock, and lay very still, with his face in a clump of blue gentians, while a big raven flapped out of the pine wood to make investigation.

“That’s a clean shot, little man,” said Mulvaney.

Learoyd thoughtfully watched the smoke clear away. “Happen there was a lass tewed up wi’ him, too,” said he.

Ortheris did not reply. He was staring across the valley, with the smile of the artist who looks on the completed work.

For he saw that it was good.
THE INCARNATION OF KRISHNA MULVANEY.

Wohl auf, my bully cavaliers
We ride to church to-day,
The man that hasn't got a horse
Must steal one straight away.

Be reverent, men, remember
This is a gottes haus.
Du, Conrad, cut along der aisle
And schenck der whiskey aus.

—Hans Brietmann's Ride to Church.

Once upon a time, and very far from this land, lived three men who loved each other so greatly that neither man nor woman could come between them. They were in no sense refined, nor to be admitted to the outer door-mats of decent folk, because they happened to be private soldiers in her majesty's army; and private soldiers of that employ have small time for self-culture. Their duty is to keep themselves and their accouterments specklessly clean, to refrain from getting drunk more often than is necessary to obey their superiors, and to pray for a war. All these things my friends accomplished; and of their own motion threw in some fighting work for which the army regulations did not call. Their fate sent them to serve in India, which is not a golden country, though poets have sung otherwise. There men die with great swiftness, and those who live suffer many and curious things. I do not think that my friends concerned themselves much with the social or political aspects of the East. They attended a not unimportant war on the northern frontier, another one on our western boundary,
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and a third in Upper Burma. Then their regiment sat still to recruit, and the boundless monotony of cantonment life was their portion. They were drilled morning and evening on the same dusty parade-ground. They wandered up and down the same stretch of dusty white road. attended the same church and same grog-shop, and slept in the same lime-washed barn of a barrick for two long years. There was Mulvaney, the father in the craft, who had served with various regiments from Bermuda to Halifax, old in war, scarred, reckless, resourceful, and in his pious hours an unequaled soldier. To him turned for help and comfort six and a half feet of slow-moving, heavy-footed Yorkshireman, born on the wolds, bred in the dales, and educated chiefly among the carriers’ carts at the back of York railway station. His name was Learoyd, and his chief virtue an unmitgated patience which helped him to win fights. How Ortheris, a fox-terrier of a cockney, ever came to be one of the trio, is a mystery which even to-day I can not explain. “There was always three av us,” Mulvaney used to say. “An’ by the grace av God, so long as our service lasts, three av us they’ll always be. ’Tis betther so.”

They desired no companionship beyond their own, and evil it was for any man of the regiment who attempted dispute with them. Physical argument was out of the question as regarded Mulvaney and the Yorkshireman; and assault on Ortheris meant a combined attack from these twain—a business which no five men were anxious to have on their hands. Therefore they flourished, sharing their drinks, their tobacco, and their money; good luck and evil; battle and the chances of death; life and the chances of happiness from Calicut in southern, to Peshawur in northern India. Though no merit of my own it was my good fortune to be in a measure admitted
to their friendship—frankly by Mulvaney from the beginning, sullenly and with reluctance by Learoyd, and suspiciously by Ortheris, who held to it that no man not in the army could fraternize with a red-coat. "Like to like," said he. "I'm a bloomin' sodger—he's a bloomin' civilian. 'Tain't natural—that's all."

But that was not all. They thawed progressively, and in the thawing told me more of their lives and adventures than I am likely to find room for here.

Omitting all else, this tale begins with the Lamentable Thirst that was at the beginning of First Causes. Never was such a thirst—Mulvaney told me so. They kicked against their compulsory virtue, but the attempt was only successful in the case of Ortheris. He, whose talents were many, went forth into the highways and stole a dog from a "civilian"—videlicet, some one, he knew not who, not in the army. Now that civilian was but newly connected by marriage with the colonel of the regiment, and outcry was made from quarters least anticipated by Ortheris, and in the end, he was forced, lest a worse thing should happen, to dispose at ridiculously unremunerative rates of as promising a small terrier as ever graced one end of a leading-string. The purchase money was barely sufficient for one small outbreak which led him to the guard-room. He escaped, however, with nothing worse than a severe reprimand and a few hours of punishment drill. Not for nothing had he acquired the reputation of being "the best soldier of his inches" in the regiment. Mulvaney had taught personal cleanliness and efficiency as the first articles of his companions' creed. "A dherty man," he was used to say, in the speech of his kind, "goes to clink for a weakness in the knees, an' is coort-martialed for a pair av socks missin'; but a clane man, such as is an ornament to his service—a man whose buttons are gold,
whose coat is wax upon him, an' whose 'couterments are widout a speck—that man may, spakin' in reason, do fwhat he likes an' dhrink from day to devil. That's the pride av bein' dacint."

We sat together upon a day, in the shade of a ravine far from the barracks, where a water-course used to run in rainy weather. Behind us was the scrub jungle, in which jackals, peacocks, the gray wolves of the Northwestern Provinces, and occasionally a tiger estrayed from Central India, were supposed to dwell. In front lay the cantonment, glaring white under a glaring sun, and on either side ran the broad road that led to Delhi.

It was the scrub that suggested to my mind the wisdom of Mulvaney taking a day's leave and going upon a shooting-tour. The peacock is a holy bird throughout India, and whoso slays one is in danger of being mobbed by the nearest villagers; but on the last occasion that Mulvaney had gone forth he had contrived, without in the least offending local religious susceptibilities, to return with six beautiful peacock skins which he sold to profit. It seemed just possible then—

"But fwhat manner av use is ut to me goin' out wid-out a dhrink? The ground's powdher-dhry under-foot, an' ut gets unto the throat fit to kill," wailed Mulvaney, looking at me reproachfully. "An' a peacock is not a bird you can catch the tail av onless ye run. Can a man run on wather—an' jungle-wather too?"

Ortheris had considered the question in all its bearings. He spoke, chewing his pipe-stem meditatively the while:

"'Go forth, return in glory,
To Clusium's royal 'ome:
An' round these bloomin' temples 'ang
The bloomin' shields o' Rome.'"
You better go. You ain't like to shoot yourself—not while there's a chanst of liquor. Me an' Learoyd 'll stay at 'ome an' keep shop—case o' anythin' turnin' up. But you go out with a gas-pipe gun an' ketch the little peacockses or somethin'. You kin get one day's leave easy as winkin'. Go along an' get it, an' get peacockses or somethin'.

"Jock?" said Mulvaney, turning to Learoyd, who was half asleep under the shadow of the bank. He roused slowly.

"Sitha, Mulvaney, go," said he.

And Mulvaney went; cursing his allies with Irish fluency and barrack-room point.

"Take note," said he, when he had won his holiday, and appeared dressed in his roughest clothes with the only other regimental fowling piece in his hand—"take note, Jock, an' you, Orth'ris, I am goin' in the face av my own will—all for to please you. I misdoubt anythin' will come av permiscuous huntin' after peacockses in a deso-lit lan'; an' I know that I will lie down an' die wid thirrst. Me catch peacockses for you, ye lazy scutts—an' be sacrificed by the peasanthry—Ugh!"

He waved a huge paw and went away.

At twilight, long before the appointed hour, he returned empty-handed, much begrimed with dirt.

"Peacockses?" queried Ortheris, from the safe rest of a barrack-room table whereon he was smoking cross-legged, Learoyd fast asleep on a bench.

"Jock," said Mulvaney without answering, as he stirred up the sleeper. "Jock, can ye fight? Will ye fight?"

Very slowly the meaning of the words communicated itself to the half-roused man. He understood—and again—what might these things mean? Mulvaney was shaking him savagely. Meantime the men in the room
howled with delight. There was war in the confederacy at last—war and the breaking of bonds.

Barrack-room etiquette is stringent. On the direct challenge must follow the direct reply. This is more binding than the ties of tried friendship. Once again Mulvaney repeated the question. Learoyd answered by the only means in his power, and so swiftly that the Irishman had barely time to avoid the blow. The laughter around increased. Learoyd looked bewilderedly at his friend—himself as greatly bewildered. Ortheris dropped from the table because his world was falling.

“Come outside,” said Mulvaney, and as the occupants of the barrack-room prepared joyously to follow, he turned and said furiously: “There will be no fight this night—onless any wan av you is wishful to assist. The man that does, follows on.”

No man moved. The three passed out into the moonlight, Learoyd fumbling with the buttons of his coat. The parade-ground was deserted except for the scurrying jackals. Mulvaney’s impetuous rush carried his companions far into the open ere Learoyd attempted to turn round and continue the discussion.

“Be still now. ’Twas my fault for beginnin’ things in the middle av an end, Jock. I should ha’ comminst wid an explanation: but Jock, dear, on your sowl are ye fit, think you, for the finest fight that iver was—betther than fightin’ me? Considher before ye answer.”

More than ever puzzled, Learoyd turned round two or three times, felt an arm, kicked tentatively, and answered, “Ah’m fit.” He was accustomed to fight blindly at the bidding of the superior mind.

They sat them down, the men looking on from afar, and Mulvaney untangled himself in mighty words.

“Followin’ your fools’ scheme I wint out into the
thrackless desert beyond the barracks. An’ there I met a pious Hindu dhrivin’ a bullock-kyart. I tuk ut for granted he wud be delighted for to convoy me a piece, an’ I jumped in—”

“You long, lazy, black-haired swine,” drawled Ortheris, who would have done the same thing under similar circumstances.

“'Twas the height av policy. That naygur-man dhruv miles an’ miles—as far as the new railway line they’re buildin’ now back av the Tavi River. ‘'Tis a kyart for dhirt only,’ says he now an’ again timoreously, to get me out av ut. ‘Dhirt I am,’ sez I, ‘an’ the dhryest that you iver kyarted. Dhrive on, me son, an’ glory be wid you.’ At that I wint to slape, an’ took no heed till he pulled up on the embankment av the line where the coolies were pilin’ mud. There was a matther av two thousand coolies on that line—you remimber that. Prisintly a bell rang, an’ they throops off to a big pay-shed. ‘Where’s the white man in charge?’ sez I to my kyart-dhriver. ‘In the shed,’ sez he, ‘engaged on a raffle.’ ‘A fwhat?’ sez I. ‘Raffle,’ sez he. ‘You take ticket. He take money, You get nothin’.’ ‘Oho!’ sez I, ‘that’s fwhat the shuperior an’ cultivated man calls a raffle, me misbeguided child av darkness an’ sin. Lead on to that raffle, though fwhat the mischief ’tis doin’ so far away from ut’s home—which is the charity-bazaar at Christmas, an’ the colonel’s wife grinnin’ behind the tea-table—is more than I know.’ Wid that I wint to the shed an’ found ’twas pay-day among the coolies. Their wages was on a table forninst a big, fine, red buck av a man—sivun fut high, four fut wide, an’ three fut thick, wid a fist on him like a corn-sack. He was payin’ the coolies fair an’ easy, but he wud ask each man if he wud raffle that month, an’ each man sez, ‘Yes,’ av course. Thin he wud deduct from their wages ac-
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cordin'. Whin all was paid, he filled an ould cigar-box full av gun-wads an' scathered ut among the coolies. They did not take much joy av that performance, an' small wondher. A man close to me picks up a black gun-wad an' sings out, 'I have ut.' 'Good may ut do you,' sez I. The coolie wint forward to this big, fine, red man, who threw a cloth off of the most sumpshus, jooled, enameled, an' variously bediviled sedan-chair I iver saw.'

"Sedan-chair! Put your 'ead in a bag. That was a palanquin. Don't yer know a palanquin when you see it?" said Ortheris, with great scorn.

"I chuse to call ut sedan-chair, an' chair ut shall be, little man," continued the Irishman. "'Twas a most amazin' chair—all lined wid pink silk an' fitted wid red silk curtains. 'Here ut is,' sez the red man. 'Here ut is,' sez the coolie, an' he grinned weakly-ways. 'Is ut any use to you?' sez the red man. 'No,' sez the coolie; 'I'd like to make a presint av ut to you.' 'I am graciously pleased to accept that same' sez the red man; an' at that all the coolies cried aloud in fwhat was mint for cheerful notes, an' wint back to their diggin', lavin me alone in the shed. The red man saw me, an' his face grew blue on his big, fat neck. 'Fwhat d'you want here?' sez he. 'Standin'-room an' no more,' sez I, 'onless it may be fwhat ye niver had, an' that's manners, ye rafflin' ruffian,' for I was not going' to have the service throd upon. 'Out of this,' sez he. 'I'm in charge av this section av construction.' 'I'm in charge av mesilf,' sez I, 'an' it's like I will stay awhile. D'ye raffle much in these parts?" 'Fwhat's that to you?' sez he. 'Nothin,' sez I, 'but a great dale to you, for begad I'm thinkin' you get the full half av you revenue from that sedan-chair. It ut always raffled so?' I sez, an' wid that I wint to a coolie to ask questions. Bhôys, that man's name is Dearsley, an' he's
been rafflin' that ould sedan-chair monthly this matter av nine months. Ivry coolie on the section takes a ticket—or he gives 'em the go—wanst a month on pay-day. Ivry coolie that wins ut gives ut back to him, for 'tis too big to carry away, an' he'd sack the man that thried to sell ut. That Dearsley has been makin' the rowlin' wealth av Roshus by nefarious rafflin'. Think av the burnin' shame to the sufferin' coolie-man that the army in Injia are bound to protect an' nourish in their bosom! Two thousand coolies defrauded wanst a month!"

"Dom t' coolies. Hast gotten t' cheer, man?" said Learoyd.

"Hould on. Havin' onearthed this amazin' an' stupen-jus fraud committed by the man Dearsley, I hild a council av war; he thryin' all the time to sejuce me into a fight wid opprobrious language. That sedan-chair niver belonged by right to any foreman av coolies. 'Tis a king's chair or a quane's. There's gold on ut an' silk an' all manner of trapesemints. Bhoys, 'tis not for me to countenance any sort av wrong-doin'—me bein' the ould man—but—any way he has had ut nine months, an' he dare not make throuble av ut was taken from him. Five miles away, or ut may be six—"

There was a long pause, and the jackals howled merrily. Learoyd bared one arm, and contemplated it in the moonlight. Then he nodded partly to himself and partly to his friends. Ortheris wriggled with suppressed emotion.

"I thought ye wud see the reasonableness av ut," said Mulvaney. "I made bould to say as much to the man be-fore. He was for a direct front attack—fut, horse, an' guns—an' all for nothin', seein' that I had no thransport to convey the machine away. 'I will not argue wid you,' sez I, 'this day, but subsequintly, Mister Dearsley, me
rafflin jool, we talk ut out lengthways. 'Tis no good pol-
icy to swindle the naygur av his hard-earned emolumints,
an' by presint informashin'—'twas the kyart-man that
tould me—'ye've been perpethrating that same for nine
months. But I'm a just man,' sez I, 'an' overlookin' the
presumpshin that yondher settee wid the gilt top was not
come by honust'—at that he turned sky-green, so I knew
things was more thrue than tellable—'not come by hon-
ust, I'm willin' to compound the felony for this month's
winnin's.'"

"Ah! Ho!" from Learoyd and Ortheris.

"That man Dearsley's rushin' on his fate," continued
Mulvaney, solemnly wagging his head. "All hell had no
name bad enough for me that tide. Faith, he called me a
robber! Me! that was savin' him from continuum' in his
evil ways widout a remonstrince—an' to a man av con-
sience a remonstrince may change the chune av his life.
'Tis not for me to argue,' sez I, 'fwhatever ye are, Mister
Dearsley, but by my hand I'll take away the temptation
for you that lies in that sedan-chair.' You will have to
fight me for ut,' sez he, 'for well I know you will never
dare make report to any one.' 'Fight I will,' sez I, 'but
not this day, for I'm rejuced for want av nourishment.'
'Ye're an ould bould hand,' sez he, sizin' me up an' down;
'an' a jool av a fight we will have. Eat now an' dhrink,
an' go your way.' Wid that he gave me some hump
an' whisky—good whisky—an' we talked av this an' that
the while. 'It goes hard on me now,' sez I wipin' my
mouth, 'to confiscate that piece of furniture, but justice is
justice.' 'Ye've not got ut yet,' sez he; 'there's the fight
between.' 'There is,' sez I, 'an' a good fight. Ye shall
have the pick av the best quality in my regimint for the
dinner you have given this day.' Thin I came hot-foot
to you two. Hould your tongue, the both. 'Tis this
way. To-morrow we three will go there an’ he shall have his pick betune me an’ Jock. Jock’s a deceivin’ fighter, for he is all fat to the eye, an’ he moves slow. Now I’m all beef to the look, an’ I move quick. By my reckonin’ the Dearsley man won’t take me; so me an’ Orth’ris ’ll see fair play. Jock, I tell you, ’twill be big fightin’—whipped, wid the cream above the jam. After the business ’twill take a good three av us—Jock ’ll be very hurt—to take away that sedan-chair.”

“Palanquin.” This from Ortheris.

“Fwhatsoever ut is, we must have ut. ’Tis the only sell-in’ piece av property widin reach that we can get so cheap. An’ fwhat’s a fight, after all? He has robbed the naygur-man, dishonust. We rob him honust for the sake av the whisky he gave me.”

“But wot’ll we do with the bloomin’ harticle when we’ve got it? Them palanquins are as big as ’ouses, an’ uncommon ’ard to sell, as McCleary said when ye stole the sentry-box from the Curragh.”

“Who’s goin’ to do t’ fightin’?” said Learoyd, and Ortheris subsided. The three returned to barracks without a word. Mulvaney’s last argument clinched the matter. This palanquin was property, vendible and to be attained in the simplest and least embarrassing fashion. It would eventually become beer. Great was Mulvaney.

Next afternoon a procession of three formed itself and disappeared into the scrub in the direction of the new railway line. Learoyd alone was without care, for Mulvaney dived darkly into the future and little Ortheris feared the unknown. What befell at that interview in the lonely pay-shed by the side of the half-built embankment only a few hundred coolies know, and their tale is a confusing one, running thus:

“We were at work. Three men in red coats came. They
saw the sahib—Dearsley Sahib. They made oration, and noticeably the small man among the red coats. Dearsley Sahib also made oration, and used many very strong words. Upon this talk they departed together to an open space, and there the fat man in the red coat fought with Dearsley Sahib after the custom of white men—with his hands, making no noise, and never at all pulling Dearsley Sahib’s hair. Such of us as were not afraid beheld these things for just so long a time as a man needs to cook the midday meal. The small man in the red coat had possessed himself of Dearsley Sahib’s watch. No, he did not steal that watch. He held it in his hand, and at certain seasons made outcry, and the twain ceased their combat, which was like the combat of young bulls in spring. Both men were soon all red, but Dearsley Sahib was much more red than the other. Seeing this, and fearing for his life—because we greatly loved him—some fifty of us made shift to rush upon the red-coats. But a certain man—very black as to the hair, and in no way to be confused with the small man, or the fat man who fought—that man, we affirm, ran upon us, and of us he embraced some ten or fifty in both arms, and beat our heads together, so that our livers turned to water, and we ran away. It is not good to interfere in the fightings of white men. After that Dearsley Sahib fell and did not rise, these men jumped upon his stomach and despoiled him of all his money, and attempted to fire the pay-shed, and departed. Is it true that Dearsley Sahib makes no complaint of these latter things having been done? We were senseless with fear, and do not at all remember. There was no palanquin near the pay-shed. What do we know about palanquins? Is it true that Dearsley Sahib does not return to his place, on account of his sickness, for ten days? This is the fault of those bad men in the
red coats, who should be severely punished; for Dearsley Sahib is both our father and mother, and we love him much. Yet, if Dearsley Sahib does not return to this place at all, we will speak the truth. There was a palanquin, for the upkeep of which we were forced to pay nine-tenths of our monthly wage. On such mulctings Dearsley Sahib allowed us to make obeisance to him before the palanquin. What could we do? We were poor men. He took a full half of our wages. Will the government repay us those moneys? Those three men in red coats bore the palanquin upon their shoulders and departed. All the money that Dearsley Sahib had taken from us was in the cushions of that palanquin. Therefore they stole it. Thousands of rupees were there—all our money. It was our bank-box, to fill which we cheerfully contributed to Dearsley Sahib three-sevenths of our monthly wage. Why does the white man look upon us with the eye of disfavor? Before God, there was a palanquin, and now there is no palanquin; and if they send the police here to make inquisition, we can only say that there never has been any palanquin. Why should a palanquin be near these works? We are poor men, and we know nothing."

Such is the simplest version of the simplest story connected with the descent upon Dearsley. From the lips of the coolies I received it. Dearsley himself was in no condition to say anything and Mulvaney preserved a massive silence, broken only by the occasional licking of the lips. He had seen a fight so gorgeous that even his power of speech was taken from him. I respected that reserve until, three days after the affair, I discovered in a disused stable in my quarters a palanquin of unchastened splendor—evidently in past days the litter of a queen. The pole whereby it swung between the shoulders of the
bearers was rich with the painted papier maché of Cashmere. The shoulder-pads were of yellow silk. The panels of the litter itself were ablaze with the loves of all the gods and goddesses of the Hindu Pantheon—lacquer on cedar. The cedar sliding-doors were fitted with hasps of translucent Jaipur enamel, and ran in grooves shod with silver. The cushions were of brocaded Delhi silk, and the curtains, which once hid any glimpse of the beauty of the king's palace, were stiff with gold. Closer investigation showed that the entire fabric was everywhere rubbed and discolored by time and wear; but even thus it was sufficiently gorgeous to deserve housing on the threshold of a royal zenana. I found no fault with it, except that it was in my stable. Then, trying to lift it by the silver-shod shoulder-pole, I laughed. The road from Dearsley's payshed to the cantonment was a narrow and uneven one, and, traversed by three very inexperienced palanquin-bearers, one of whom was sorely battered about the head, must have been a path of torment. Still I did not quite recognize the right of the three musketeers to turn me into a "fence" for stolen property.

"I'm askin' you to warehouse ut," said Mulvaney when he was brought to consider the question. "There's no steal in ut. Dearsley tould us we cud have ut if we fought. Jock fought—an', oh, sorr, when the throuble was at uts finest an' Jock was bleedin' like a stuck pig, and little Orth'ris was shquealin' on one leg cliewin' big bites out av Dearsley's watch, I wud ha' given my place at the fight to have had you see wan round. He tuk Jock, as I suspicioned he would, an' Jock was deceptive. Nine roun's they were even matched, an' at the tenth—About that palanquin now. There's not the least throuble in the world, or we wud not ha' brought ut here. You will ondherstand that the queen—God bless her!—does not
reckon for a privit soldier to kape elephints an' palanquins an' sich in barricks. After we had dhragged ut down from Dearsley's through that cruel scrub that near broke Orth'ris's heart, we set ut in the ravine for a night; an' a thief av a porcupine an' a civet cat av a jackal roosted in ut, as well we knew in the mornin'. I put ut to you sor, is an elegant palanquin, fit for the princess, the natural abidin'-place av all the vermin in cantonmints? We brought ut to you, after dhrark, and put ut in your shtable. Do not let your conscience prick. Think av the rejoicin' men in the pay-shed yonder—lookin' at Dearsley wid his head tied up in a towel—an' well knowin' that they can dhraw their pay ivry month widout stoppages for riffles. Indirectly, sor, you have rescued from an on-principled son of a night-hawk the peasanthry av a nu-merous village. An', besides, will I let that sedan-chair rot on our hands? Not I. 'Tis not every day a piece av pure joolry comes into the market. There's not a king widin these forty miles”—he waved his hand round the dusty horizon—“not a king wud not be glad to buy ut. Some day meself, whin I have leisure, I'll take ut up along the road an' dishpose av ut.”

“How?” said I, for I knew the man was capable of any-thing.

“Get into ut, av coarse, and keep wan eye open through the curtains. Whin I see a likely man av the native pers-suasion, I will descind blushin' from my canopy and say: ‘Buy a palanquin, ye black scutt?’ I will have to hire four men to carry me first, though; and that's impossible till next pay-day.”

Curiously enough, Learoyd, who had fought for the prize, and in winning secured the highest pleasure life had to offer him, was altogether disposed to undervalue it, while Ortheris openly said that it would be better to
break the thing up. Dearsley, he argued, might be a many-sided man, capable, despite his magnificent fighting qualities, of setting in motion the machinery of the civil law—a thing much abhorred by the soldier. Under any circumstances their fun had come and passed; the next pay-day was close at hand, when there would be beer for all. Wherefore longer conserve the painted palanquin?

"A first-class rifle shot, an' a good little man av your inches you are," said Mulvaney. "But you niver had a head worth a soft-boiled egg. 'Tis me has to lie awake av nights schamin' an' plottin' for the three av us. Orth'ris, me son, 'tis no matther av a few gallons av beer—no, nor twenty gallons—but tubs an' vats an' firkins in that sedan-chair. Who ut was, an' what ut was, an' how ut got there, we do not know; but I know in my bones that you an' me an' Jock wid his sprained thumb will get a fortune thereby. Lave me alone, an' let me think."

Meantime the palanquin stayed in my stall, the key of which was in Mulvaney's hands.

Pay-day came, and with it beer. It was not in experience to hope that Mulvaney, dried by four weeks' drought, would avoid excess. Next morning he and the palanquin had disappeared. He had taken the precaution of getting three days' leave "to see a friend on the railway," and the colonel, well knowing that the seasonal outburst was near, and hoping it would spend its force beyond the limits of his jurisdiction, cheerfully gave him all he demanded. At this point his history, as recorded in the mess-room, stopped.

Ortheris carried it not much further. "No, 'e wasn't drunk," said the little man, loyally, "the liquor was no more than feelin' its way round inside of 'im; but 'e went an' filled that ole bloomin' palanquin with bottles, 'fore 'e went off. He's gone an' 'ired six men to carry 'im, an' I
'ad to 'elp 'im into 'is nupshal couch, 'cause 'e wouldn't 'ear reason. 'E's gone off in 'is shirt an' trouies, swearin' tremenjus—gone down the road in the palanquin, wavin' 'is legs out o' windy."

"Yes," said I "but where?"

"Now you arx me a question. 'E said 'e was goin' to sell that palanquin, but from observations what happened when I was stuffin' 'im through the door, I fancy 'e's gone to the new embankment to mock at Dearsley. Soon as Jock's off duty I'm goin' there to see if 'e's safe—not Mulvaney, but t'other man. My saints, but I pity 'im as 'elps Terence out 'of the palanquin when 'e's once fair drunk!"

"He'll come back without harm," I said.

"'Corse 'e will. On'y question is, what 'll 'e be doin' on the road. Killin' Dearsley, like as not. 'E shouldn't 'a' gone without Jock or me."

Re-enforced by Learoyd, Ortheris sought the foreman of the coolie gang. Dearsley's head was still embellished with towels. Mulvaney, drunk or sober, would have struck no man in that condition, and Dearsley indignantly denied that he would have taken advantage of the intoxicated brave.

"I had my pick o' you two," he explained to Learoyd, "and you got my palanquin—not before I'd made my profit on it. Why'd I do harm when everything's settled? Your man did come here—drunk as Davy's sow on a frosty night—came a-purpose to mock me—stuck his head out o' the door an' called me a crucified hodman. I made him drunker, an' sent him along. But I never touched him."

To these things Learoyd, slow to perceive the evidences of sincerity, answered only, "If owt comes to Mulvaney 'long 'o you, I'll gripple you, clouts or no clouts on
your ugly head, an' I'll draw t' throat twisty-ways, man. See there now."

The embassy removed itself, and Dearsley, the battered, laughed alone over his supper that evening.

Three days passed—a fourth and a fifth. The week drew to a close and Mulvaney did not return. He, his royal palanquin, and his six attendants had vanished into air. A very large and very tipsy soldier, his feet sticking out of the litter of a reigning princess, is not a thing to travel along the ways without comment. Yet no man of all the country round had seen any such wonder. He was, and he was not; and Learoyd suggested the immediate smashment of Dearsley as a sacrifice to his ghost. Ortheris insisted that all was well, and in the light of past experience his hopes seemed reasonable.

"When Mulvaney goes up the road," said he, "'e's like to go a very long ways up, specially, when 'e's so blue drunk as 'e is now. But what gits me is 'is not bein' 'eared of pullin' wool off the niggers somewheres about. That don't look good. The drink must ha' died out in 'im by this, unless 'e's broke a bank, an' then—Why don't 'e come back? 'E didn't ought to ha' gone off without us."

Even Ortheris's heart sunk at the end of the seventh day, for half the regiment were out scouring the countryside, and Learoyd had been forced to fight two men who hinted openly that Mulvaney had deserted. To do him justice, the colonel laughed at the notion, even when it was put forward by his much-trusted adjutant.

"Mulvaney would as soon think of deserting as you would," said he. "No, he's either fallen into a mischief among the villagers—and yet that isn't likely, for he'd blarney himself out of the Pit; or else he is engaged on urgent private affairs—some stupendous devilment that
we shall hear of at mess after it has been the round of the barrack-rooms. The worst of it is that I shall have to give him twenty-eight days' confinement at least for being absent without leave, just when I most want him to lick the new batch of recruits into shape. I never knew a man who could put a polish on young soldiers as quickly as Mulvaney can. How does he do it?"

"With blarney and the buckle-end of a belt, sir," said the adjutant. "He is worth a couple of non-commissioned officers when we are dealing with an Irish draft, and the London lads seem to adore him. The worst of it is that if he goes to the cells the other two are neither to hold nor to bind till he comes out again. I believe Ortheris preaches mutiny on those occasions, and I know that the mere presence of Learoyd mourning for Mulvaney kills all the cheerfulness of his room. The sergeant tells me that he allows no man to laugh when he feels unhappy. They are a queer gang."

"For all that, I wish we had a few more of them. I like a well-conducted regiment, but these pasty-faced, shifty-eyed, mealy-mouthed young slouchers from the depot worry me sometimes with their offensive virtue. They don't seem to have backbone enough to do anything but play cards and prowl round the married quarters. I believe I'd forgive that old villain on the spot if he turned up with any sort of explanation that I could in decency accept."

"Not likely to be much difficulty about that, sir," said the adjutant. "Mulvaney's explanations are only one degree less wonderful than his performances. They say that when he was in the Black Tyrone, before he came to us, he was discovered on the banks of the Liffey trying to sell his colonel's charger to a Donegal dealer as a perfect lady's hack. Shackbolt commanded the Tyrone then."
“Shackbolt must have had apoplexy at the thought of his ramping war-horse answering to that description. He used to buy unbacked devils, and tame them by some pet theory of starvation. What did Mulvaney say?”

“That he was a member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, anxious to 'sell the poor baste where he would get something to fill out his dimples.' Shackbolt laughed, but I fancy that was why Mulvaney exchanged to ours.”

“I wish he were back,” said the colonel; “for I like him and believe he likes me.”

That evening, to cheer our souls, Learoyd, Ortheris, and I went into the waste to smoke out a porcupine. All the dogs attended, but even their clamor—and they began to discuss the shortcomings of porcupines before they left cantonments—could not take us out of ourselves. A large, low moon turned the tops of the plume grass to silver, and the stunted camel thorn bushes and sour tamarisks into the likenesses of trooping devils. The smell of the sun had not left the earth, and little aimless winds blowing across the rose gardens to the southward brought the scent of dried roses and water. Our fire once started, and the dogs craftily disposed to wait the dash of the porcupine, we climbed to the top of a rain-scarred hillock of earth, and looked across the scrub seamed with cattle paths, white with the long grass, and dotted with spots of level pond-bottom, where the snipe would gather in winter.

“This,” said Ortheris, with a sigh, as he took in the unkempt desolation of it all, “this is sanguinary. This is unusual sanguinary. Sort o' mad country. Like a grate when the fire's put out by the sun.” He shaded his eyes against the moonlight. “An' there's a loony dancin' in
the middle of it all. Quite right. I'd dance too if I wasn't so downheart."

There pranced a portent in the face of the moon—a huge and ragged spirit of the waste, that flapped its wings from afar. It had risen out of the earth; it was coming toward us, and its outline was never twice the same. The toga, table-cloth, or dressing-gown, whatever the creature wore, took a hundred shapes. Once it stopped on a neighboring mound and flung all its legs and arms to the winds.

"My, but that scarecrow 'as got 'em bad!" said Ortheris. "Seems like if 'e comes any furder we'll 'ave to argify with 'im."

Learoyd raised himself from the dirt as a bull clears his flanks of the wallow. And as the bull bellows, so he, after a short minute at gaze, gave tongue to the stars.

"MULVAANEY! MULVAANEY! A hoo!"

Then we yelled all together, and the figure dipped into the hollow, till, with a crash of rending grass, the lost one strode up to the light of the fire, and disappeared to the waist in a wave of joyous dogs. Then Learoyd and Ortheris gave greeting, bass and falsetto together, both swallowing a lump in the throat.

"You damned fool!" said they, and severally pounded him with their fists.

"Go easy!" he answered, wrapping a huge arm round each. "I would have you to know that I am a god, to be treated as such—tho', by my faith, I fancy I've got to go to the guard-room just like a privit soldier."

The latter part of the sentence destroyed the suspicions raised by the former. Any one would have been justified in regarding Mulvaney as mad. He was hatless and shoeless, and his shirt and trousers were dropping off him. But he wore one wondrous garment—a gigantic cloak
that fell from collar-bone to heel—of pale pink silk, wrought all over in cunningest needle-work of hands long since dead, with the loves of the Hindu gods. The monstrous figures leaped in and out of the light of the fire as he settled the folds round him.

Otheris handled the stuff respectfully for a moment while I was trying to remember where I had seen it before. Then he screamed, "What 'ave you done with the palanquin? You're wearin' the linen."

"I am," said the Irishman, "an' by the same token the 'broidery is scrapin' my hide off. I've lived in this sump-shus counterpane for four days. Me son, I begin to ond-herstand why the naygur is no use. Widout me boots, an' me troussies like an open-work stocking on a gyurl's leg at a dance, I begin to feel like a naygur-man—all fearful and timorous. Give me a pipe an' I'll tell on."

He lighted a pipe, resumed his grip of his two friends, and rocked to and fro in a gale of laughter.

"Mulvaney," said Ortheris, sternly, "'tain't no time for laughin'. You've given Jock an' me more trouble than you're worth. You 'ave been absent without leave, and you'll go into cells for that; an' you 'ave come back disgustin'ly dressed an' most improper in the linen' o' that bloomin' palanquin. Instid of which you laugh. An' we thought you was dead all the time."

"Bhoys," said the culprit, still shaking gently, "whin I've done my tale you may cry if you like, an' little Orth'-ris here can thrample my inside out. Ha' done an' listen. My performances have been stupenjus; my luck has been the blessed luck av the British army—an' there's no better than that. I went out dhrunk an' dhrinkin' in the palanquin, and I have come back a pink god. Did any of you go to Dearsley afther my time was up? He was at the bottom of ut all."
“Ah said so,” murmured Learoyd. “To-morrow ah’ll smash t’ face in upon his heead.”

“Ye will not. Dearsley’s a jool av a man. Aither Ortheris had put me into the palanquin an’ the six bearer-men were gruntin’ down the road, I tuk thought to mock Dearsley for that fight. So I tould thim, ‘Go to th’ embankmint,’ and there, bein’ most amazin’ full, I shtuck my head out av the concern an’ passed compliments wid Dearsley. I must ha’ miscalled him outrageous, for whin I am that way the power av the tongue comes on me. I can bare remimber tellin’ him that his mouth opened end-ways like the mouth of a skate, which was thrue afther Learoyd had handled ut; an’ I clear remimber his takin’ no manner nor matter av offense, but givin’ me a big drink of beer. ’Twas the beer that did the thrick, for I crawled back into the palanquin, steppin’ on me right ear wid me left foot, an’ thin I slept like the dead. Wanst I half roused, an’ begad the noise in my head was tremenjus—roarin’ and rattlin’ an’ poundin’, such as was quite new to me. ‘Mother av Mercy,’ thinks I, ‘fwhat a concertina I will have on my shoulders whin I wake!’ An’ wid that I curls myself up to sleep before ut should get hould on me. Bhoys, that noise was not dhrink, ’twas the rattle av a thrain!”

There followed an impressive pause.

“Yes, he had put me on a thrain—put me, palanquin an’ all, an’ six black assassins av his own coolies that was in his nefarious confidence, on the flat av a ballast-thruck, and we were rowlin’ an’ bowlin’ along to Benares. Glory be that I did not wake up thin an’ introjuce myself to the coolies. As I was sayin’, I slept for the better part av a day an’ a night. But remimber you, that that man Dearsley had packed me off on wan av his material-
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thrains to Benares, all for to make me overstay me leave an’ get me into the cells.”

The explanation was an eminently rational one. Benares was at least ten hours by rail from the cantonments, and nothing in the world could have saved Mulvaney from arrest as a deserter had he appeared there in the apparel of his orgies. Dearsley had not forgotten to take revenge. Learoyd, drawing back a little, began to place soft blows over selected portions of Mulvaney’s body. His thoughts were away on the embankment, and they mediated evil for Dearsley. Mulvaney continued:

“Whin I was full awake the palanquin was set down in a street, I suspicioned, for I cud hear people passin’ an’ talkin’. But I knew well I was far from home. There is a queer smell upon our cantonments—smell av dried earth and brick-kilns wid whiffs av a cavalry stable-litter. This place smelt marigold flowers an’ bad water, an’ wanst somethin’ alive came an’ blew heavy with his muzzle at the chink av the shutter. ‘It’s in a village I am, thinks I to myself, ‘an’ the parochial buffalo is investigatin’ the palanquin.’ But any ways I had no desire to move. Only lie still whin you’re in foreign parts an’ the standin’ luck av the British army will carry ye through. That is an epigram. I made ut.

“Thin a lot av whisperin’ divils surrounded the palanquin. ‘Take ut up,’ says wan man. ‘But who’ll pay us?’ says another. ‘The Maharanee’s minister, av course,’ sez the man. ‘Oho!’ sez I to myself. ‘I’m a quane in me own right, wid a minister to pay me expenses. I’ll be an emperor if I lie still long enough. But this is no village I’ve struck.’ I lay quiet, but I gummed me right eye to a crack av the shutters, an’ I saw that the whole street was crammed wid palanquins an’ horses an’ a sprinklin’ av naked priests, all yellow powder an’ tigers’ tails. But I
may tell you, Orth’ris, an’ you, Learoyd, that av all the palanquins ours was the most imperial an’ magnificent. Now a palanquin means a native lady all the world over, except whin a soldier av the quane happens to be takin’ a ride. ‘Women an’ priests!’ sez I. ‘Your father’s son is in the right pew this time, Terence. There will be proceedin’s.’ Six black divils in pink muslin tuk up the palanquin, an’ oh! but the rowlin’ an’ the rockin’ made me sick. Thin we got fair jammed among the palanquins—not more than fifty av them—an’ we grated an’ bumped like Queenstown potato-smacks in a runnin’ tide. I cud hear the women gigglin’ and squirkin’ in their palanquins, but mine was the royal equipage. They made way for ut, an’, begad, the pink muslin men o’ mine were howlin’, ‘Room for the Maharanee av Gokral-Seetarun.’ Do you know aught of the lady, sor?”

“Yes,” said I. “She is a very estimable old queen of the Central Indian States, and they say she is fat. How on earth could she go to Benares without all the city knowing her palanquin?”

‘Twas the eternal foolishness av the naygur-man. They saw the palanquin lying loneful an’ forlornsome, an’ the beauty av ut, after Dearsley’s men had dhropped ut and gone away, an’ they gave ut the best name that occurred to thim. Quite right, too. For aught we know the ould lady was traveling incog.—like me. I’m glad to hear she’s fat. I was no light weight myself, an’ my men were mortal anxious to dhrop me under a great big archway promiscuously ornamented wid the most improper carvin’s an’ cuttin’s I iver saw. Begad! they made me blush—like a—like maharanee.”

“The temple of Prithi-Devi,” I murmured, remembering the monstrous horrors of that sculptured archway at Benares.
"Pretty Devilskins, savin' your presence, sorr. There was nothin' pretty about ut, except me! 'Twas all half dhark, an' whin the coolies left they shut a big black gate behind av us, an' half a company av fat yellow priests began pullyhaulin' the palanquins into a dharker place yet—a big stone hall full av pillars an' gods an' incense, an' all manner av similar thruck. The gate disconcerted me, for I perceived I wud have to go forward to get out, my retreat bein' cut off. By the same token a good priest makes a bad palanquin-coolie. Begad! they nearly turned me inside out draggin' the palanquin to the temple. Now the disposishin av the forces inside was this way. The Maharanee av Gokral-Seetarun—that was me—lay by the favor av Providence on the far left flank behind the dhark av a pillar carved with elephants' heads. The remainder av the palanquins was in a big half circle facing in to the biggest, fattest, an' most amazin' she-god that iver I dreamed av. Her head ran up into the black above us, an' her feet stuck out in the light av a little fire av melted butter that a priest was feedin' out av a butter-dish. Thin a man began to sing an' play on somethin' back in the dark, an' 'twas a queer song. Ut made my hair lift on the back av me neck. Thin the doors av all the palanquins slid back, an' the women bundled out. I saw what I'll never see agin. 'Twas more glorious than transformations at a pantomime, for they was in pink an' blue an' silver an' red an' grass-green, wid di'monds an' im-ralds an' great red rubies all over thim. But that was the least part av the glory. Oh, bhoys, they were more lovely than the like av any loveliness in hiven; ay, their little bare feet were better than the white hands av a lord's lady, an' their mouths were like puckered roses, an' their eyes were bigger an' dharker than the eyes av any livin' women
I've seen. Ye may laugh, but I'm speakin' truth. I never saw the like, an' never I will again."

"Seeing that in all probability you were watching the wives and daughters of most of the kings of India, the chances are that you won't," I said, for it was dawning on me that Mulvaney had stumbled upon a big queens' praying at Benares.

"I niver will," he said, mournfully. "That sight doesn't come twist to any man. It made me ashamed to watch. A fat priest knocked at my door. I didn't think he'd have the insolence to disturb the Maharanee av Gokral-Seetarun, so I lay still. 'The old cow's asleep,' sez he to another. 'Let her be,' sez that. 'Twill be long before she has a calf!' I might ha' known before he spoke that all a woman prays for in Injia—an' for matter o' that in England, too—is childher. That made me more sorry I'd come, me bein', as you well know, a childless man."

He was silent for a moment, thinking of his little son, dead many years ago.

"They prayed, an' the butter-fires blazed up an' the incense turned everything blue, an' between that an' the fires the women looked as tho' they were all ablaze an' twinklin'. They took hold av the she-god's knees, they cried out an' they threw themselves about, an' that world-without-end-amen music was dhrivin' thim mad. Mother av Hiven! how they cried, an' the ould she-god grinnin' above them all so scornful! The dhrink was dyin' out in me fast, an' I was thinkin' harder than the thoughts wud go through my head—thinkin' how to get out an' all manner of nonsense as well. The women were rockin' in rows, their di'mond belts clickin', an' the tears runnin' out be-tune their hands, an' the lights were goin' lower and dharker. Thin there was a blaze like lightnin' from the roof, an' that showed me the inside av the palanquin, an'"
at the end where my foot was stood the livin' spit an' image o' myself worked on the linin'. This man here, it was."

He hunted in the folds of his pink cloak, ran a hand under one, and thrust into the fire-light a foot-long embroidered presentment of the great god Krishna, playing on a flute. The heavy jowl, the staring eye, and the blue-black mustache of the god made up a far-off resemblance to Mulvaney.

The blaze was gone in a wink, but the whole schame came to me thin. I believe I was mad too. I slid the off shutter open an' rowled out into the dhark behind the elephant-head pillar, tucked up my troussies to my knees, slipped off my boots an' tuk a general hould av all the pink linin' av the palanquin. Glory be, ut ripped out like a woman's dhriss whin you tread on ut at a sergeant's ball, an' a bottle came with ut. I tuk the bottle an' the next minut I was out av the dhark av the pillar, the pink linin' wrapped round me most graceful, the music thun-derin' like kettle-drums, an' a cowld draft blowin' round my bare legs. By this hand that did ut, I was Krishna tootlin' on the flute—the god that the rig'mental chaplain talks about. A sweet sight I must ha' looked. I knew my eyes were big, and my face was wax-white, an' at the worst I must ha' looked like a ghost. But they took me for the livin' god. The music stopped, and the women were dead dumb, an' I crooked my legs like a shepherd on a china basin, an' I did the ghost-waggle with my feet as I had done ut at the rig'mental theater many times, an' I slid acrost the width av that temple in front av the she-god tootlin' on the beer bottle."

"Wot did you toot?" demanded Ortheris the practical.

"Me? Oh!" Mulvaney sprung up, suitin the action
to the word, and sliding gravely in front of us, a dilapidated but imposing deity in the half light. "I sung:

"'Only say
You'll be Mrs. Brallaghan,
Don't say nay,
Charmin' Judy Callaghan.'

I didn't know me own voice when I sung. An' oh! 'twas pitiful to see the women. The darlin's were down on their faces. Whin I passed the last wan I cud see her poor little fingers workin' one in another as if she wanted to touch my feet. So I dhrew the tail av this pink overcoat over her head for the greater honor, an' I slid into the dhark on the other side av the temple, and fetched up in the arms av a big fat priest. All I wanted was to get away clear. So I tuk him by his greasy throat an' shut the speech out av him. 'Out!' sez I. 'Which way, ye fat heathen?' 'Oh!' sez he. 'Man,' sez I. 'White man, soldier man, common soldier man. Where in the name av confusion is the back door?' The women in the temple were still on their faces an' a young priest was holdin' out his arms above their heads.

"'This way,' sez my fat friend, duckin' behind a big bull-god an' divin' into a passage. Thin I remimbered that I must ha' made the miraculous reputation av that temple for the next fifty years. 'Not so fast,' I sez, an' I held out both my hands wid a wink. That ould thief smiled like a father. I tuk him by the back av the neck in case he should be wishful to put a knife into me unbe-knownst, an' I ran him up an' down the passage twice to collect his sensibilities! 'Be quiet,' sez he, in English! 'Now you talk sense,' I sez. 'Fwhat 'll you give me for the use av that mostiligant palanquin I have no time to take away?' 'Don't tell,' sez he. 'Is ut like?' sez I. 'But
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ye might give me my railway fare. I'm far from my home an' I've done you a service.' Bhoys 'tis a good thing to be a priest. The ould man niver throubled himself to d'hraw from a bank. As I will prove to you subsequint, he philandered all round the slack av his clothes an' began dribblin' ten-rupee notes, old gold mohurs, and rupees into my hand till I could hould no more."

"You lie!" said Ortheris. "You're mad or sunstrook. A native don't give coin unless you cut it out o' im. 'Tain't nature."

"Thin my lie an' my sunstroke is concealed under that lump av sod yonder," retorted Mulvaney unruffled, nodding across the scrub. "An' there's a dale more in nature than your squidgy little legs have iver taken you to, Orth'ris, me son. Four hundred an' thirty-four rupees by my reckonin', an' a big fat gold necklace that I took from him as a remimbrancer, was our share in that business."

"An' 'e give it you for love?" said Ortheris.

"We were alone in that passage. May be I was a trifle too pressin', but considher fwhat I had done for the good av the temple and the iverlastin' joy av those women. 'Twas cheap at the price. I wud ha' taken more if I cud ha' found ut. I turned the ould man upside down at the last, but he was milked dhry. Thin he opened a door in another passage, an' I found myslf up to my knees in Benares river-water, an' bad smellin' ut is. More by token I had come out on the river-line close to the burnin' ghat and contagious to a cracklin' corpse. This was in the heart av the night, for I had been four hours in the temple. There was a crowd av boats tied up, so I tuk wan an' wint across the river. Thin I came home acrost country, lyin' up by day."

"How on earth did you manage?" I said.

"How did Sir Frederick Roberts get from Cabul to
Candahar? He marched an' he niver tould how near he was to breakin' down. That's why he is fwhat he is. An' now—" Mulvaney yawned portentously. "Now I will go an' give myself up for absince widout leave. It's eight-an'-twenty days, an' the rough end of the colonel's tongue in orderly-room, any way you look at ut. But 'tis cheap at the price."

"Mulvaney," said I, softly, "if there happens to be any sort of excuse that the colonel can in any way accept, I have a notion that you'll get nothing more than the dressing-gown. The new recruits are in, and—"

"Not a word more, sorr. Is ut excuses the ould man wants? 'Tis not my way, but he shall have thim. I'll tell him I was engaged in financial operations connected wid a church," and he flapped his way to cantonments and the cells, singing lustily:

"So they sent a corp'ril's file,  
And they put me in the gyard-room  
For conduck unbecomin' of a soldier."

And when he was lost in the haze of the moonlight we could hear the refrain:

"Bang upon the big drum, bash upon the cymbals,  
As we go marchin' along, boys oh!  
For although in this campaign  
There's no whisky nor champagne,  
We'll keep our spirits goin' with a song, boys!"

Therewith he surrendered himself to the joyful and almost weeping guard, and was made much of by his fellows. But to the colonel he said that he had been smitten with sunstroke and had lain insensible on a villager's cot for untold hours, and between laughter and good will the affair was smoothed over, so that he could next day teach
the new recruits how to "Fear God, Honor the Queen, Shoot Straight, and Keep Clean."

There is no further space to record the digging up of the spoils, or the triumphal visit of the three to Dearsley, who feared for his life, but was most royally treated instead, and under that influence told how the palanquin had come into his possession. But that is another story.

THE END.
Harwich Port Library Association

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