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SOLDIERS THREE

A COLLECTION OF STORIES

Setting forth Certain Passages in the Lives and Ad-
ventures of Privates

TERENCE MULVANEY, STANLEY ORTHERIS,
AND JOHN LEAROYD

BY

RUDYARD KIPLING

"We be Soldiers Three—
Pardonnez moi, je vous en pris"



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE GOD FROM THE MACHINE	7
PRIVATE LEAROYD'S STORY	22
THE BIG DRUNK DRAF'	36
THE SOLID MULDOON	52
WITH THE MAIN GUARD	68
IN THE MATTER OF A PRIVATE	93
BLACK JACK	109
ONLY A SUBALTERN	141

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PREFACE

THIS small book contains, for the most part, the further adventures of my esteemed friends and sometime allies, Privates Mulvaney, Ortheris, and Learoyd, who have already been introduced to the public. Those anxious to know how the three most cruelly maltreated a member of Parliament; how Ortheris went mad for a space; how Mulvaney and some friends took the town of Lungtungpen; and how little Jhansi McKenna helped the regiment when it was smitten with cholera, must refer to a book called "Plain Tales from the Hills." I would have reprinted the four stories in this place, but Dinah Shadd says that "tearin' the tripe's out av a book wid a pictur' on the back, all to make Terence proud past reasonin'," is wasteful, and Mulvaney himself says that he prefers to have his fame "dish-persed most notoriously in sev'ril volumes." I can only hope that his desire will be gratified.

RUDYARD KIPLING.



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 programme 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 can not say. All that I am certain of is that, at suppertime, 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 ar-rum 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

The God From the Machine 9

'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' fw'hat 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 fw'hat 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 ’ap-pened 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 tthings 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, bleat-in’, 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’ pay-

The God From the Machine 11

in' 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; "bekase I'm turned durin' the quane's pleasure to a lump av wood, lookin' out straight forninst me, wid a — a — candelabbrum 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, ivry-thing 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 of a Gosport dung-hill' — '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’ blandandhering roun’ an’ about the colonel’s daughter, an’ she, poor innocent, lookin’ at him like a comm’ssariat bullock looks at the comp’ny cook. He’d a dhirty little scrub av a black mustache, an’ he twisted an’ turned ivry wurrd he used as ave 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 aftherwards, 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’ agin, 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 better av me. They was actin’ a play thing called ‘Sweethearts,’

The God From the Machine 13

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, thim 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 combcuttin'. 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 forninst 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 rejuiced atherward, 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 blommin' 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 my gun before permittin' av him to steal the gurl. Saints knew av he wud ha' married her, and av he didn't she wud be in great tormint, an' the divil av what you, sorr, call a 'scandal.' But I niver sthrucc, niver raised me hand on my shuperior orf'cer; an' that was a merricle now I come to considher it."

"Mulvaney, the dawn's risin'," said Or-

The God From the Machine 15

theris, "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 manewvers?' sez he, or wurds to that efec', 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 or'cers an' or'cers' ladies left, an' they put out the lights. To explain the theory av the flight, as they sat at muskthry, you must understand that afther this 'Sweethearts' nonsense was ended, there was another lit-

tle 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 impire 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 aftherward 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' 'cou-trements are *truso*, which manes weddin'-portion. An' 'tis the same whin she's runnin' away, even wid the biggest black-guard on the army 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

The God From the Machine 17

colonel's compound as the divil wint through Athlone — in standin' leps. There was no one there excipt the servints, an' I wint round to the back an' found the girl's ayah.

“ ‘Ye black brazen Jezebel,’ sez I, ‘sellin’ your mather’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 mauridin’ — niver mind fwat 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 ondersthand, Dennis's springs hild toight. 'Now, whin the capt'n goes for that kit,' thinks I, 'he'll be throubled.' At the end av 'Sweet-hearts' 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, an' 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 carr'ige, 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 wurrd about fwhat you've *dekkocd*, I'll marrow you till your own wife won't *sumjao* who you 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 carr'ige an'

The God From the Machine 19

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 like 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 murther 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 carr’ige 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' fereowin' 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* sthrayin' 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, afther awhile, he wud kill the man, so I sez, 'Stop, sir, or you'll murder 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

The God From the Machine 21

I, 'av ivry man in this wurruld had his rights, I'm thinking 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 sthrike, 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 wurd. He choked where he stud, an' thin he wint into his thrap widout sayin' good-night, an' I wint back to barricks."

"And then?" said Ortheris and I together.

"That was all," said Mulvaney; "niver another wurd 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' imper-t'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 nobbut 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 speak, 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' coddlin' and 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 him oop. 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 o' t' Ten Commandments says yo' maun't cuvvet 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 cuvveted 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 coat 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 gotten t' mopes, an' what he wants is libbaty an' coompany like t' rest on us; wal happens 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' meeting 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 manners 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 gooes 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' over 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 over 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' speak to this kind laady." An'

Rip, seein' 'at t' moongoose hed gotten clean awaay, cooms up like t' gentleman he was, nivver a hauporth shy nor okkord.

"Oh, you beautiful — you prettee dog!" she says, clippin' an' chantin' her speech in a way them soart has o' their awn; "I would like a dog like you. You are so verree lovelee — so awfullee 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 teeaches dogs, though I doan't haud 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 thrawin' 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 lady about Mrs. De Sussa, and Rip, he says nowt naw-

ther; 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 heep more about Rip than I'd ever heeared; how he tuk t' fost prize at Lunnon dog-show and cost thotty-three pounds fower shillin' from t' man as bred him; 'at his own brother was t' propputty 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 purtect your innocince. I'll save ye from the wicked wiles av that wealthy ould wo-

man, an' I'll go wid ye this evenin' and spake to her the wurrds ave truth an' 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 limekilns, 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 Terrence 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 fust. But you've heard 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 beliked. 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 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 make nowt o'

what he was after, I concluded to take his leead.

"Well, mum," I says, "I never thowt to coom down to dog-stealin', but if my comrade sees how it could be done to oblige a laady like yo'sen, I'm nut t' man to hođ back, tho' it's a bad business, I'm thinkin', an' three hundred 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 divarsifies the rale Rip, an' his timper is that av his mather 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-practicin' 'air-dyes the very next day, beginnin' on some white rabbits he had, an' then he drored all Rip's mark-in's on t' back of a white commissariat 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 as thot for bad temper, an' it did nut get no better when his tail hed 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' animal 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 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 everywheer; 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 ye 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 remimbered 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 meant to keep it. An' soa we did — for a short time.

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

THE BIG DRUNK DRAF'

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 could 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 conse-quinshal man."

He wrote me an invitation, on a tool-indent form, to visit him; and I came down to the funny little "construction" 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, av you're strainin' betune a compliment an' a lie. There's no houldin' Dinah Shadd now she's got a house av her own. Go inside, an' dhrink tay out av chiny in the drrrrawin'-room, an' thin we'll dhrink like Christians undher 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 unless you run! Get out, an' 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 Leary and old times and places had died away, Mulvaney said, reflectively: "Glory be there's no p'rade to-morrow, an' no bun-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 honest, 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 thurst; 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 army 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 'bank-mint—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 considhered fwhat I wud look like wid me head shaved as well as my chin? You bear that in your mind, Dinah darlin'.

"I was throlled 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 hereabout, 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 bhoys 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 Phœbus Apollonius, wid the shirts av the corp'ril an' file undher his arrum? An' he was a moild man! But I'm digresh-in'. 'Tis a shame both to the rig'mints and the army 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 savin' confin-in' 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.

Consequently 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 employmint 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 mortal 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 rid-dance; 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 coat 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 Dhrum-shticks, being so full he clean misremembers 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 bein' 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 as-

sist 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 Dictator, 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 gintleman.

"'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 squid-gereen 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 woild 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’ inthrojuiced 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 excipt 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 av ut.’

“‘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 whisper.

“‘Peg him out!’ sez me orf’cer bhoy, up loud, just as if ’twas battalion p’rade, an’ he pickin’ his wurds from the sargint.

“The non-coms tuk Peg Barney — a howlin’ handful he was — an’ in three min-uts 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 understand he was sorry for playin' the goat.

"There was no tucker in the draf' whin ut fell in for the march, an' divil a wurd 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'ral.'

"'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, mark 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, warningly.

"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 mudtipper 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 Unregenerate.

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 respects. 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 unburdened himself of a long history in which a trip to Malham Cove, a girl at Pateley Brigg, a ganger, himself and a pair of clogs were mixed in drawing 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 Lorr'd 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 whin they found him thrying 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 rejuiced 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 eyes 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 child-bed 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 inthrojuced her to cantonmint 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 mesilf, '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 onwholesim, 'tis dangerous, an' 'tis ivrything else that's bad, but — Oh, my sowl, 'tis swate while ut lasts!

"I was always hangin' 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 pervarsity 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 persuaded — 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 blanhanderin' 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. Unless 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 and 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 surrendered 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,’ I sez; an’ I kep’ my arm where ut was.

“‘Your arms to yoursilf!’ 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 nen 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 hought 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 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 shoulder 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-bhoy. I wint back to her, for a livin' woman, an' a woman like Annie Bragin, is more than a p'rade-groun' full av ghosts. I'd never seen a woman faint before, an' I stud like a shtuck calf, askin' her whether she was dead, an' prayin' her for the love av me, an' the love of 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 dhriven 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 went 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 corner 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 be-tune you!’

“Thin he began cryin’ like a child as he lay. I was sorry as I had niver been be-

fore. '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 minutes 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 throe, 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’ril 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 of 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' discommoded 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 malancolius 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 sthay 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 remember. Eyah! Is all hell loose this tide?" said Mulvaney. A puff of burning 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 playin' 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!"

"Whc'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' something."

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 glaxis and scoured the red-hot plain without.

"Pop?" said Ortheris, wiping his forehead.

"Don't tantalize wid talkin' av dhrink, or I'll sthuff you into your own breech-block 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 or'cers drink?" answered Ortheris. "Arst the mess-man."

“Ye’ll have a disthricht coort-martial settin’ on ye yet, me son,” said Mulvaney, “but”—he opened a bottle—“I will not report ye this time. F’what’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’ fetle 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 nobbut 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 fist-esses. Oh, the crame av disruption is an Oirish rig’mint, an’ rippin’, tearin’, ragin’ scattherers 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 better than most, bein’ contrary — 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 oblitherate, 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? After Ghuzni 'twas."

"Don't know what the bloomin' Paythans called it. We called it Silver's Theayter. You know that, sure!"

"Silver's Theater — 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 thimselves 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 be-kaze they're so onlike, an' they get dhrunk together whin God plazes. Well, as I was sayin', they sint wan comp'ny av the Ould an' wan av the Tyrone to double up the hill an' clane out the Paythan reserve. Or'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 com-

p'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 — Cruikna-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 dimonstrate presintly. We an' they came over the brow av the hill, wan on each side av the gut, an' there was that ondacint 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 tremenjus, 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 knaw it, Mulvaney." He threw up his arms, and from the right armpit 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 remimber 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 squeegeed 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 divil 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.

“‘And 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, and 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' stiffin' feroshus. 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 bloomin' 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 ave 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 man can bash t' face wi' thot, an', if he divn't, he can breek 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 armpit, ye bloodthirsty 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 cowl'd, was ut?"

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

"Thru, 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 misremimber 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 bar-rin' their way.

“‘Fwhat ails the Tyrone?’ thinks I; ‘they’ve the makin’s av a most convanient 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, and 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 slape aisy to-night," sez he wid a grin; an' the next minut his head was in two halves and he wint down grin-nin' 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 swingin' 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 presince, 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 innocint 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 aftherwards.’

“‘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 insolint!’

“ ‘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 drouth! 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 boy undher the sargint.

“ ‘Fwhat’s yonder?’ sez he.

“ ‘Mutiny, sorr,’ 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 confishcate 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, sorr, 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' roun'.

"'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 come acrost little Frehan, our bugler bhoy, 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 personality 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 army!'

"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, an' thim we opined out an' fair danced down the valley, dhrivin' thim before us. On, 'twas lovely, 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 sthicks on a lady's fan, an' at the bar 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 he had gone down the valley, an' covers his face wid his hands. Prisintly we all came back again accordin' to our natures and disposishins, 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 gallery 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 Tyrone, 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 fighting’ 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 fwat 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 dhrav 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' him aisy against a rock. 'Be 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 boy turned very white, for the hair av half his head was singed away.

"'I tould you so, sorr!' sez I; an' afther 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 ivery sowl on the ground. Crook tould them 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 afther 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 baynits was hangin' like butcher's steels 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?’

“‘Desthroyed 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 husband’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 batman before he was married an’ he knows fwhat I mane, av you don’t. There’s nothin’ like livin’ in the hoight av society.’ D’you remimber 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 stopped 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 innocint 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 soul, 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 hysterics in a girls' 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 dittherring, 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 peo-

ple 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 cantonments 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 different 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.

In the Matter of a Private 99

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 arm-rack 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 stopped, 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;

In the Matter of a Private 103

"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 shouting 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, frien', an' all's well!"

But Jerry Blazes had not the faintest intention of passing a dangerous murderer. He was, as his adoring 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 agin 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

In the Matter of a Private 105

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 further 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 settled 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 cautious 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 fistes. 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 kneecap, 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 shinebone, 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 leg-guard 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," 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 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 warning 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, gaping 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 drawbridge 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 in 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 kind of man to take that quietly."

"Said! Bin better for 'im if 'ed shut 'is mouth. Lord, 'ow we laughed! 'Sargint,' 'e sez, 'ye say I'm dirty. 'Well,' sez he, 'when your wife lets you blow your own 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' nothin'. You know 'e never speaks to the colonel for fear o' gettin' 'imself fresh copped."

Mullins, a very young and very much married sergeant, 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 glaxis where Learoyd lay.

"'E expects to get his c'mission some day," exclaimed 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; "I'd '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. Mul-

vaney 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 Musketiers 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 messman 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 pevar-sity. 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

better. But I will do penance. I will take a dhrink 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 of the Lord!'" He gulped in a quaint and suggestive fashion.

"Mullins! Wot's Mullins?" said Leary, slowly. "Ah'd take a comp'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 aafter. '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 dottle 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 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 extry 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 women 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 iverywhere — 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 wurst than the wurst. 'Tis this way. They clog together in pieces as fast as thieves, an' no wan knows fwat 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, excipt 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 denyin’ 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 for us?’ sez another.

“‘That’s throe,’ 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. ‘Onderstand, 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 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 ondacintly dh drunk 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 shoulther 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, ontill 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 frequent; my character havin' been shpotless 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 murder 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 harrd 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 wurd 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 mysilf; ‘it is this to have an unruly mumber 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 and 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 distinguished. ’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 playin’ 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 masher,’ 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’ sudden death.

“ Wanst Kiss dealt an’ there was no sign, but the men was whoite 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 bethray 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 stummick — sick, sick, sick! Aftther 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.

“Prisintly 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, and he shtrup her clane an' aisy. I towld him to put her to again an' fire a blank into the blow-pit to 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 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 dimonstrated 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 fillin' wid men at the ind av the day. I made 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 throe, 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 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 whishtled they began to rage roun' the room an' carry on tremenjus. 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 av 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 cantonmints 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 afther 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 tatters, an' so up an' along by the forehead to the hair. 'Twas more av a rakin' plow, if you will ondherstand, 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 scattered 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 better,’ 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 innocent men. I was huntin’ ivrywhere for my fallin’-block, but not findin’ ut at all. I niver found ut.

“‘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 purgatory 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 ut,' 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.

" 'Fwhat 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, 'fwhat onderhand divilmint you have conthived, but by what I've seen I know that you can not commit murdher wid another man'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 grass 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 convalescent,’ 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 thim 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 insolent 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, pulling his mustache; 'but I do not believe that you, for all your lip, was in that business.'

" 'Sargint,' sez I, 'I cud hammer the life out av a man in ten minuts wid my fistes if that man dishpleasd me; for I am a good sodger, an' I will be threated as such, an' whoile 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 wñin 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'

hard. '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, widout 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 bloom-in' 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 liberty-men of the ships fell foul of the drafts for India, and the battle raged long and loud from the dock-yard 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 midchannel, 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 be-

fore, 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 Peking 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 friendships 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 horse-shoes 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, lolling 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 Singhs panted 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 hor-tomato," said the sergeant, who delighted in long words. "A dirty soldier, an '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 company 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 fish-

ing, I think," said Bobby. "My aunt, but he's a filthy sort of animal! Have you ever seen him clean 'them 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—ip—ping!" 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 over-young to hang mill-stones 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 Coachwan!*”

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 hetlah 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. ’Spose 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 weakness 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, chafing the faint-hearted; hauling the sound into the watery sunlight when there was a break in the weather, and bidding them to 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 'orrid 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, hesitatingly. 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 cheroot 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 subal-

tern 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 know?
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.

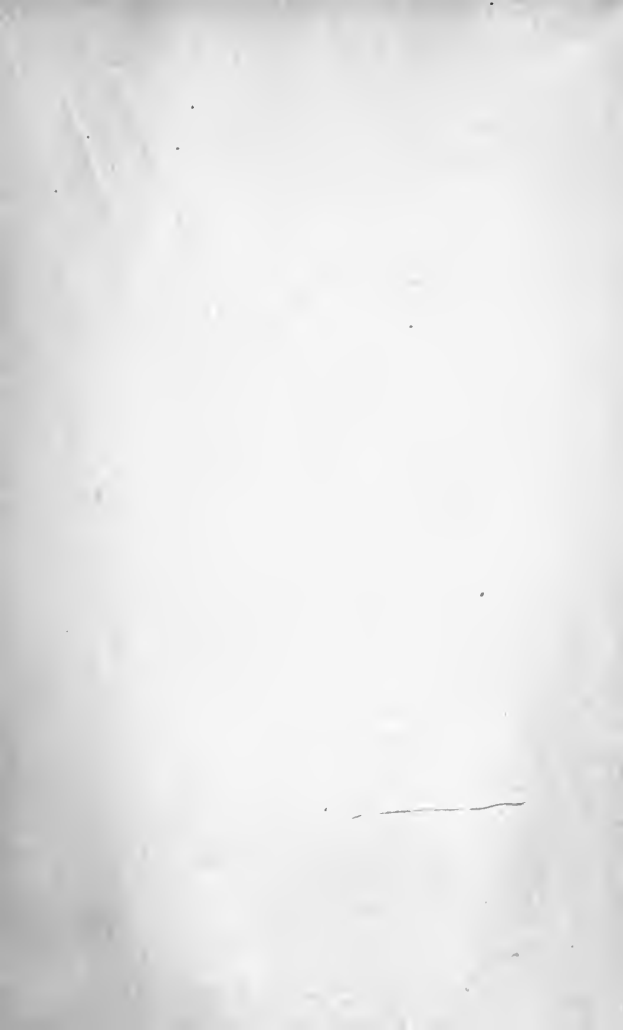
"Ho!" said Private Conklin. "There's another bloomin' orf'cer da—ed."

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.

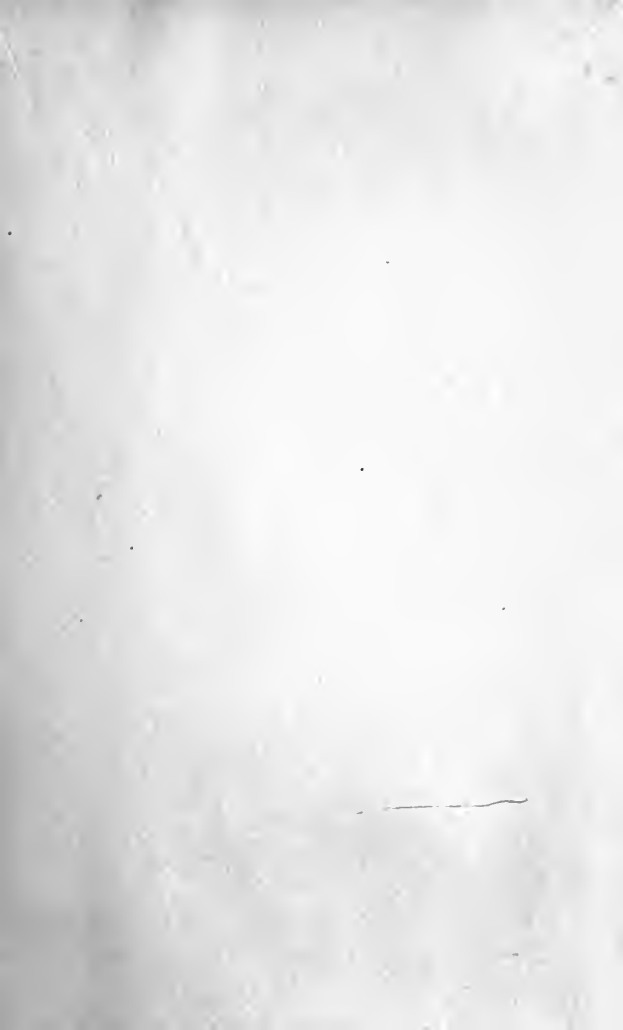
"You ought to take shame for yourself, Conky! Orf'cer? Bloomin' orf'cer? I'll learn you to misname the likes of 'im. Hangel! Bloomin' hangel! That's wot 'e is!"

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.











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