

















*If he gets loose, he darts through an ambulance or climbs a tree, without compunction. But he seldom gets loose (Page 24)*



# THE ARMY MULE

AND OTHER WAR SKETCHES

BY  
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Past Commander Loyal Legion Commandery of Minnesota  
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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
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## CONTENTS

	PAGE.
I. THE ARMY MULE . . . . .	1
II. THE SUTLER . . . . .	91
III. THE SHELTER TENT . . . . .	140
IV. DRESS PARADE . . . . .	179
V. THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY . . . . .	218

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
If he gets loose, he darts through an ambulance or climbs a tree, without compunction. But he seldom gets loose	
<i>Frontispiece</i>	
The quenchless, marvelous mule emerges from the mire and clay, with a whooping-cough wheeze . . . .	63
But likeliest from safe shelter of some commodious, commanding stump, observing the struggle with a rural Sunday morning cheerfulness . . . . .	135
Blessed is the voluptuousness of reverie, blessed and cheap as an expectant clothier's greeting, while he pauses ecstatically for an appropriate smile . . . .	162
No two companies have been drilled alike; no three consecutive soldiers perform the same antic at the same time . . . . .	212
The veterans quietly gathered in the voluntary and involuntary honors . . . . One state points with pride to her nine soldier governors, and of seven presidents elected since the close of the war, six were ex-soldiers . . . . .	230

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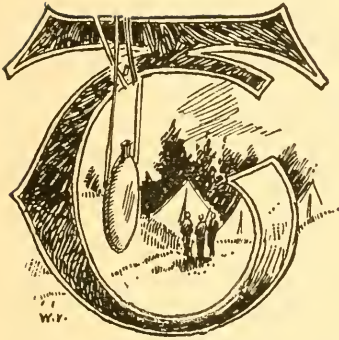
I hail thee Brother—spite of the fool's scorn!  
And fain would take thee with me, in the dell  
Of peace and mild Equality to dwell,  
Where Toil shall call the charmer Health his bride,  
And Laughter tickle Plenty's ribless side!  
How thou wouldst toss thy heels in gamesome play,  
And frisk about, as lamb or kitten gay!  
Yea! and more musically sweet to me  
Thy dissonant harsh bray of joy would be,  
Than warbled melodies that soothe to rest  
The aching of pale Fashion's vacant breast!

—COLERIDGE.



## THE ARMY MULE

### I



HE longevity of the Mule is proverbial. He lives on and on, until his origin becomes a .musty myth, and age erects a tumor on his brow which betokens superb development of spirituality. The endurance of a hallucination is perhaps greater still. Our civil war closed more than thirty years ago. The Mules employed in the army are mostly dead—not so the hallucinations. These still linger, picturesque but fatiguing. There still survives in every northern town and village at least one man who habitually asserts, who is willing to verify by affidavit, worst of all, who stead-

## THE ARMY MULE

fastly believes, that he put down the rebellion.

The Mules are not supposed to have understood the war, and consequently can not be expected to hold themselves responsible for its results. But the man of distorted perspective, who measures the circumference of the universe by the diameter of his own egotism, shrinks from no exaltation and shirks no responsibility. He is festooned with self-complacency, wearing always a fourteenth century smile of content.

Controversy is welcome to him, as the advent of a bloomer woman to a social purity club. He relishes argument and he loves to boast. He can readily maintain that his side was eternally right and the other side infernally wrong in the war, for that fact is beginning to be somewhat widely accepted. To establish his own feats is somewhat more difficult, whether he sing like Miriam or howl like Jeremiah in narrating them. But he will cheerfully spend a week in marching one of his deeds past a given point, and skeptics soon discover that it is cheaper to feed him than to fight him. He may be



## THE ARMY MULE

an ex-major-general, or possibly an ex-teamster. Sometimes he is an ex-corporal, mellow as those autumnal days when the golden glory of the sassafras vies with the persimmon's gaudy crimson. Oftenest perhaps he is an ex-captain, for does not every war evolve the greatest captain of the age as its ultimate hero? He may now pass for a respectable citizen, with houses to let and money to burn, who rashly trusts to his imagination when his memory is out of focus, and lets the bloody chasm go on yawning for more gore.

More likely, however, he carries his real estate as well as his religion in his wife's name, fully persuaded that a rolling stone gathers no moss but grinds exceeding fine, razors and tomahawks included. In any event he is a mighty talker before the crowd, bristling with home thrusts that give out a sizzling sound and an odor of roast owl. He is a Chimborazo of noise with an ant-hill of achievement to back it; a miracle of linked hallucinations ludicrously elongated; an extinct incandescent carbon belching black

## THE ARMY MULE

smoke. His sole claim to mention in connection with the useful, unpretentious Mule, is the purely accidental circumstance of their simultaneous military service. He has no other title to consideration in this important historical episode.

He is not a typical old soldier, and must not be so classified. He is an exception. When tests are to be applied he can always prove an alibi. His mouth was put on soft and spread; the flush on his nose was acquired at a great expenditure of time and money. He comes to the front in his community, sage of the flannel lip and velvet eye, in accordance with a known law that not always the ablest men are heard, but always the ablest to be heard. He comes to the front with the persistence of a pardoned anarchist, and the flawless joy of a yearling who has maxed in math.

Meantime it is one of the everlasting verities that in hands of men "entirely" great, the calligraph is mightier than the bludgeon. Shall calligraphs stand dumb and the story of days when God shook the nation until her

## THE ARMY MULE

lakes foamed over their pebbly shores and her rivers gurgled with bloody ebullition remain unwrit, in fear of probing blow-holes in the record of some grand snark in the concatenated order of hoo hoos? Shall posterity be given over to moral mushiness, lest some village Goliath of Gath, prone to such nightly exhilaration of spirits as ends in losing the combination of adjacent streets, get shrunken into shreds of paper-rag, brain-web and vapor?

Historians of the war have minutely narrated its grand events—events which rising generations are already reproaching themselves for coming too late to engage in, being relegated to their own nerveless annals penciled on the segment of a film. Most classes of participants in these events have been heard from. Either in plain narrative or wrathful controversy they have ventured an enormous consumption of time and eternity. Whether their anger be a dynamite shell or a soap-bubble, its vocalization is uniformly terrific. The generals and the majors; the teamsters and the staff; even the drafted

## THE ARMY MULE

men and substitutes, unstable as the heroine who vowed at first that she would never consent, and then relented—all these have spoken or can speak for themselves. Majestically muscled around the mouth, staunchly nerved in the cheek, they need no rhetorical proxy. Since history has accepted most of their averments, they modestly consider themselves endorsed.

There are other classes of participants who must be spoken for—their merits have not yet become the theme of tropical, topical songs. The speechless toilers of the conflict, half horse, half devil, half donkey, stand high on the list of those who should not be forgotten. We may fling flash-lights of inspection all around the black horizon of war and find no greater faithfulness, not even in Israel.

Under the cadence of march, murmur of camp, clangor of battle and reverberating pæans of victory, rumbles the ground tone of all war's harmonies, the deep contra basso of a melodious bray, reminding us that justice remains yet to be done to the instrument which made campaigns successful and battles

## THE ARMY MULE

possible. It is an instrument to which due credit has never been given, yet which is infinitely more credit-worthy than many of the boasters, "ablest to be heard," who make the cackle of their villages noxious to mankind.

That instrument is the Army Mule! Let him who hath ears to hear lend them now to a belated attempt at vindication. Let the man of prejudice disinfect his mind and listen. It is naught, saith the buyer, then goeth his way and boasteth; but an *ad valorem* tax on dudes has never been made to yield any revenue.

The name of the original inventor of the Mule is lost in the immemorial mists. Although, as hereinbefore intimated, his longevity is a chestnut as old as the Morse alphabet, or older, his nativity is still a conundrum. No Mule's teeth, with or without gold filling, glisten among shells of the pliocene period. No Mule elevates his afterdeck in the granitic formations. None of his petrified footprints are discernible in those ante-glacial basins where Afric's sunny fountains

## THE ARMY MULE

now sprinkle her shirtless swarms. Hence, although he possibly antedates all living apostles of lady suffrage, he is presumably not a pre-Adamite. Perhaps his first discoverer was "that Anah" who, to his astonishment, "found Mules in the wilderness," where donkeys had been browsing, etc. See Genesis xxxvi, 24. It is not permissible to go behind the returns. What we know is that he was introduced to the American people by anticipation, that is to say, through his paternal ancestor, by G. Washington, Esq., of Mount Vernon in Virginia.

Much sarcasm, variegated as Paris green jealousy and red precipitate wrath could dye it, has been expended on this delicate matter of the Mule's paternal ancestry. Among other spiteful things it has been averred that like certain party organizations he has no more ground for pride of descent than he has for hope of posterity. Let us promptly concede the validity of the averment. Argue not with one steeped in kerosene and other fire-waters; matters look ominous when a disputant opens the discussion with foam on

## THE ARMY MULE

his teeth and noises in his nostril. Fill blanks as to name of party by majority vote of those present, and let the proceedings proceed.

It is doubtless true that the speechless, unspeakable Mule, seldom troubles himself about his heirs, executors or administrators. Why should he? He is a monstrosity, physical and metaphysical; the *ne plus ultra*, the "nothing beyond" of his species. Besides, he has little of value to bequeath; he is a disinherited prodigal, with champagne tastes and a root beer revenue, digesting his diet of wild oats; his assets would scarcely overbalance those of a disbanded Uncle Tom troupe—one blood hound, one death-bed, and two cakes of imitation ice. Moreover, truth to tell, he is probably in no special haste to die. This amiable weakness is shared by certain of our own race.

A hypercritical Boston lady, mistress of the mysteries of nine idioms and five kinds of angel cake, was heard to declare that she would rather not die at all than be buried anywhere outside Mount Auburn.

The speechless, discredited Mule, born old,

## THE ARMY MULE

wise and fuzzy, has little to thank his paternal ancestors for, save phenomenal ears that not even a lion's skin can hide, as witness Æsop, and a phenomenal voice that no lion's roar can drown. Both these heritages were pre-ordained for grand service in an epoch when war should gnash loud her iron fangs, and shake her crest of bristling bayonets. Vouchsafe unto the male line gratitude for little else. But as for the female line, who knows? Possibly it runs back to "Araby the blest," where horse pedigrees are cherished like a Connecticut coffee pot, until they fade into genealogical perspectives. Such perspectives, for example, as make the fine art of heraldic blazonry, frescoing and retouching precious to the British nobility—some of whom, by the way, have much less cause than the nameless, unblamable Mule, to canonize the low-neck and short-sleeve branch of their lineage.

Although we do not know precisely who invented the Mule, it must be obvious that he is not a historical tenderfoot. He is not a mere ephemeral product of the county fair



## THE ARMY MULE

season, when alleged acrobats with leaky balloons monopolize the casualty columns. Neither is he one of those picturesque gubernatorial giraffes of the populist era, who come unwanted and go unwept.

Notwithstanding the fact that he is necessarily renewed with each generation, he belongs to an old family—one, in fact, fairly rancid with antiquity. He was the unconsidered drudge of the hoariest ancients, in those days when the average human heart could be readily split up for floor tiles. He had been promoted thence to the rank of mail carrier as long ago as when Mordecai the Jew “sent letters by riders on Mules” from Babylon, after the king had turned the rascals out with a promptness that compelled the admiration of every taxpayer.

He was bestridden by sprigs of royalty as long ago as when Absalom the lengthy-locked rode under the boughs of a great oak, wherein his hair became entangled, “and the Mule that was under him went away,”—thus sayeth the Scriptures! Un-speakable Mule, fraught with immeasurable

## THE ARMY MULE

destinies! Had he stood until great David's shear-bearers could come up and cut loose the best-beloved, the whole current of Israel's history might have changed, saving vast research to the modern sensational divine working a heresy advertisement for all there is in it. Solomon, next-beloved, might never have reigned; his superfluous seven hundred wives and his indispensable three hundred concubines, with their lissome, lightsome round of free hand riots, internal and interminable, might never have been accumulated; neither seen the sparkle of his three thousand proverbs, nor heard the ripple of his songs a thousand and five.

It is thus manifest that although this interesting hybrid is virtually an afterthought, he is not one of those later-day improvements in a chronic state of apology. This is authentic. It is also reassuring to such typical, representative citizens weighing three hundred pounds each as still have misgivings. Had the speechless unspeakable Mule been simply an unperfected modern invention in the rough, his hair not yet dry, his effectiveness and

## THE ARMY MULE

hope of glory would have been greatly lessened. The surviving boasters "ablest to be heard" now on grassy village streets, with two million major-generals, colonels, first sergeants and other soldiers, might never have been able to suppress the most causeless and wicked rebellion ever waged by an army of barefooted chevaliers, fed on corn meal, sporadic acid and gunpowder, always in light marching order. N. B. They were always in hard fighting order likewise, since by an eternal law increment of bile is superinduced by shrinkage of commissariat.

Almost any mediocre can compile a mass of information from the cyclopedia. Even the vague enthusiast who goes through the world wearing an air of crushed strawberry resignation on his face and shaking hands with one finger can do that. But it is not the desideratum in a matter of this sort.

People prefer to see things step out with stereoscopic rotundity. Like the juvenile Lochinvar, they stay not for stone and stop not for air brakes. They demand the decentralization of apothegms. They desire

## THE ARMY MULE

sculpture from a chisel that, ignoring down and dimple, cuts thought and carves breath from the marble, without risk of challenge for implied bias. In the absence of stone-cutters, let a cyclopedia furnish from its cold-storage vaults some preliminary fundamentals. If they be plain, ascertainable, intelligible statements of fact, clothed in tights as it were, devoid of frills and amplifications, so much the better—and briefer! I quote:

“The Mule seems to excel both its ancestral species in natural intelligence. It is remarkable for its powers of muscular endurance. Its sure-footedness particularly adapts it to mountainous countries. It has been common from very ancient times in many parts of the East, and is much used, also, in most of the countries around the Mediterranean Sea, and in the mountainous parts of South America. Great care is bestowed on the breeding of Mules in Spain and Italy, and those of particular districts are highly esteemed. In ancient times the sons of kings rode on Mules, and they were yoked in chariots. They are still used to draw the car-

## THE ARMY MULE

riages of Italian cardinals and other ecclesiastical dignitaries."

And more to the same effect.

We respectfully submit that here is a well-butressed certificate of character which fully justified the government in assigning to this useful equine mulatto the important function he performed in putting down the rebellion.

The average American Mule has not the soft fur, fine as dressed seal-skin and smooth as coffin varnish, nor the rich shades of coloring, worn by his pampered kinfolk of Spain or Cyprus or Smyrna. As to skin, he was, habitually, neither soft nor shining, he was simply tough. As to color, his muzzle was always whitish, as if fresh from a meal-tub, but otherwise he was more various than delectable, sometimes yellow, sometimes dun, sometimes sorrel, but oftenest darkly, deeply, beautifully bay. Second cousin to the New Mexican burro, but happily guiltless of any traceable relationship to the disreputable Texas mustang, his aspect was liable to be as one-sided as a Louisiana riot—seventeen

## THE ARMY MULE

negroes killed and one white man slightly wounded.

But texture and color apart, the harmless, unspeakable servitor of our march and camp was doubtless peer of any the effete monarchies of Europe or the East can boast. He had no overplus of style about him, but he was reliable, he was sincere, his muscularity was conceded by all. His facial angle was a convex curve, which somewhat impaired his beauty, but not his utility. Some knew him who did not love him; few named him except to praise after a reasonable acquaintance. His air of innocent gravity was sometimes mistaken for stupidity—most inexcusable and fatal error! He could look as imbecile as a rustic fop playing "Glory Hallelujah" on an accordeon. He could look as guileless as the youth who murdered his own father and mother and then begged the judge to have mercy on a poor orphan. He could look as soulful as a law clerk summing up to a jury of one with his arm around it. He could look as sober as though his whole intellect were grinding on the plus and minus of some

## THE ARMY MULE

unsolved problem, like that for example which the Book of Mormon and Mohammed's Koran and Clark's Commentaries, with all their attention to detail, have neglected, whether Aaron's golden calf was a Holstein or a Jersey.

Sleepy or asleep he may have seemed, but let some small darkey imp of mischief tweak his patient ear, then note how swiftly that magnetic hoof will lift the tweaker to a pearly seat amidst the celestial cherubim—direct and speedy circuit of nerve-telephone here manifest, without the intervention of any dilatory central office. His drooping lids were thus but the token of a measureless content, which craved not the mere bric-a-brac and gumdrops of existence. But it was liable to shift its specific gravity, if any misfit perfume came between the wind and his nobility, and explode in a sudden touch-and-go style, rocket-like, trigger-like, flashing.

He could smile like a heavenly blessing. His expressive yawn was widely eminent; without it no Mule was genuine. His bray, opening clear and sonorous, like the report of

## THE ARMY MULE

a judiciary committee, rapidly shaded off into a succession of disembodied shrieks and disemboweled groans, that sent thrills of suicidal delirium through all the encircling camps. No further seek his general merits to disclose. They developed constantly on the sensitive plate of our regard, and we have waited long for somebody to take off a blue-print of his ground plan and front elevation. The possessor of many virtues, poor but honest, with a large circulation but small political influence, sagacious and serene he stood, thick of head, tough of hide, hard of heel, the proffered hero of the expressive army shibboleth, "Here's your Mule."

The plutonic, speechless quadruped, Mule. like the platonic featherless biped, man, after being inspected on the hoof, was obliged to graduate through the three military degrees of Recruit, Soldier and Veteran.

We all remember those recruiting days; those first companies of picked men, mostly picked before they were ripe; when the fray was curtained behind song and hurrah, the cataract obscured by the rainbow. Who can



## THE ARMY MULE

forget the wrathful buzz and ferment, the wild tossing and writhing and moaning of an aroused people; the fierce uprising; the keen razor-edge of fervor. Then the enrolling and drilling and marching and evolving in the moonlit squares and streets; the nocturnal visitations, with fife and drum, to the verandas of oratorical patriots for a "night-cap" of glowing speech, alternated with raids on suspected disloyalists to demand the prompt uphoisting of the star spangled banner. Saxon and Norman and Dane were we, or Celt or Teuton in birth or descent, but all of us then crystallized in the alembic of patriotism into the first generation of unadulterated Americans.

To the blasphemous challenge of secession, our young men, fully advised of the exceeding preciousness of life and yet thoroughly instructed how to dare and die, hurled back deathless daring and defiance. Their eyes, fixed on their idealized leaders, shining like white statues amid the black wreckage of rebellion, they marched into the flaming vortex

## THE ARMY MULE

with new, strange implements in their hands and "hot unutterabilities in their hearts."

These were the boys of '61, the raw recruits of the dawning conflict. With them went the memory of the girls they left behind them, many of whom were afterwards lost in the shuffle. But the memory, then infinitely sweet, was hourly refreshed by a contemplation of the tangible Testament and pin-cushion. With them went the toe-ache of tight boots, earthly, sensual, devilish, and a flushed consciousness, even when drilling in the awkward squad, that the eyes of the universe were upon them. With them also, or following them, or mayhap meeting them in the dreamy borderland of Kentucky or Missouri to which he is fortuitously indigenious, went the harmless, necessary Mule.

He was a child of wrath, with a throat for melody spacious as the funnel of a cyclone; with dexter and sinister ears of renown; with eyes foxy but sad, and saddest when he sang. He carried with him the appetite of a Chipewa maiden clad in cavalry trowsers and a tentfly; also an inherited capacity to stand

## THE ARMY MULE

indefinitely on one foot and kick vehemently with all the others. He was reliable as grandfather's clock and prompt as the railway mail service. He was under a recognizance to support the constitution of the United States, and stamp out the Confederacy to the best of his ability.

He was a raw recruit likewise. When men were beating the wrong way their plowshares into swords, he was out of a job on a dull labor market and could the better be spared. How much of the issues and principles at stake his comprehensive intelligence intelligently comprehended will perhaps never be known. He did not attend crowded war meetings in country school-houses and waste his rhetoric on the fetid air. It may fairly be surmised, however, that he knew better than any northern croaker the futility of trying to repossess our surrendered fortresses with writs of replevin; knew better than any southern fire-eater the folly of attempting to build up a republic with a live negro wriggling under the corner-stone; knew and would gladly have proclaimed, that no lapse of slip-shod

## THE ARMY MULE

years, no hoariness of unchallenged usage, no deftest hammerings of forensic sophistry can ever fashion a vested right out of a ragged wrong.

At all events, whether wittingly or willingly or neither, he became as potent a factor in the situation militant as when Samson slew a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of one of his remote ancestors. He wheeled into line useful, ubiquitous, proud as a deceased Connemarran with a solid silver door-plate on his pearl-plush casket, blazoning his immortal virtues—also quite numerous. A total of 450,000 mules and 650,000 horses served in the various armies. In 1864, the forces actually in the field required for artillery, cavalry and trains one-half as many animals as there were soldiers.

As a recruit, the Mule soon became an object of usurious rates of interest and concentrated curiosity. He was a drawing card, a veritable bargain counter or church scandal in his tractile powers. His fame had preceded him, and his name was a potent talisman for conjuring ecstatic assemblages. His

## THE ARMY MULE

name pronounced, the sensation seekers gathered, as in the manipulation of complicated governmental machinery congress touches the button, and the department clerks do the rest, subject to approval of the salary and allowance division. Haled in, unhaltered, from amid the frisking bluegrass felicities of his pasture primeval, with his tail full of burs and his gaze full of vinegar, the details of his primary instruction were, as a rule, full of activity and enthusiasm.

In mischievous impulse he is fertile as those human scalps which raise hair enough for home consumption, and send a surplus to market twice a year. His venturesome instructors are wise if they make their testamentary dispositions in advance, and provide abundant bandages and plasters, with blank coupons or certified checks attached to provide for extra dividends. One out-thrust of his right front foot has been known to reduce a newly uniformed soldier to a state of nudity from his napless crown to his callous sole, with incidental contusions of flesh and abrasions of cuticle too hideous for contemplation

## THE ARMY MULE

Enmeshed in surreptitious cordage, the speechless, untamed quadruped is thrown to the cold, cold ground, where, for a time, he writhes and struggles, a *cheveaux-de-frise* of black, gyrating hoofs. If he gets loose, he darts through an ambulance or climbs a tree without compunction. But he seldom gets loose. When his first wild anger has been measurably spent and the mercury in him has gone down to the bulb, five or six bow-legged hirelings of the quartermaster's bureau, with waffle-iron cast of countenance born of small-pox, simultaneously proceed to administer disjointed sections of harness to the exterior of that noble form.

Puck might girdle the earth for forty cents, but he could earn forty dollars in girthing a cadet Mule. With each contact of strap or buckle the white of his eye gleams poisonously and his outraged epidermis gives a sudden convulsive shudder, like a fine lady's bare shoulder vitalized by a mosquito-bite. But he is helpless and supine as a fat alderman after a banquet, lying stomach upwards and feebly gesticulating with his heels. With the final

## THE ARMY MULE

linking together of the detached tackle into one engirdling gearage, the first step in his humiliation is completed, and the pantings of his suppressed fury mingle with the chokings of his self-contempt. From that hour he is a changed Mule. Man delights him not, nor small boys either. Straps leave invisible, indelible marks of servitude, as a blow from a parent leaves a scar on the soul of the child. Harnessed and humiliated, abased and abashed, the higher regions of pride and independence wherein he has pranced with all the lofty grace of a thoroughbred, know him no more forever. Mirabeau had swallowed all formulas. The Mule recruit has swallowed all traditions, foretaste of much else, good and bad, he will be obliged to swallow,—but the bridle-bit, of all fabricated things, alas! he can not swallow.

In this clinging, clanking harness-toggery cribbed and confined, he is led out to where five shamefaced fellow-martyrs wait to endure with him the culminating indignity. The Mule units are now to be transmuted into a Mule team, for the glory of Yankee Doodle,

## THE ARMY MULE

and an entirely novel programme of acrobatic marvels is to be enacted.

No sooner have the predestined six been, with infinite patience and circumspection, aligned and coupled and to the monstrous vehicle deftly attached, than down they all go in a heap, a rolling, plunging mass of offensive partisanship, in one dusty burial blent. Entangled, prostrate, writhing like a coil of rattlesnakes; each eager nose, and active heel, and tufted tail, points all ways at once, like a mariner's needle in a thunder-storm. In this tumbling, tearing glomer a philosopher might presciently discern the symbol and essence of anarchy, the spirit of centrifugality, the revolt against *status quo*, the protest of energetic natures against human government, or self-government, or any other government.

It may confidently be averred that from all vital chaos a new lathed and plastered order is ever shaping itself and emerging; this is as certain as that everybody is greater than anybody, and that discipline is always brought forth by a Cæsarian operation from anarchy.



## THE ARMY MULE

So from this sour animal effervescence of insurrection miraculously unravels at last, scathless and satisfied, a melancholy sextette of curbed and baffled penitents. They are awkward, divergent, unassimilated, to begin with, and must be pounded and kicked and cursed into homogeneity later on, but they are uproariously recalcitrant thenceforth never more.

The Mule recruit has thus rapidly developed into the Mule soldier. He has been summarily mustered in, with a rope around his lower lip rasping it to rawness, but without any very searching inquiries as to his uncertain age, his wholly immaterial sex, his superfluous name, or his complicated social status.

He has been blacksmithed as to hoof (much against his will), and veterinaried as to shoulder. He must now march forth in the name of the Union and emancipation, but must first be introduced to his commander—and so must you, my beloved. Ye who have blushes to blush for your species, prepare to blush them now, and then proceed to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.

## THE ARMY MULE

The army teamster may be safely diagnosed as a chronic malady of war times. With such rare and radiant exceptions as the immortal nominee of the Seattle caucus, who carried a hare-lip and a pure heart, he was a pestilent metaplastm. He was a product of heterogeneous aggregation and the survival of misfits. His status was fixed in earliest infancy; when he was vaccinated, the doctor is suspected of having thrown away the child and saved the virus capsule. He professed no patriotism; he pretended to no bravery; he cherished no martial ambitions. He had no desire to fight. There was no need of an order to show cause why a temporary injunction should not issue restraining him from carnage.

When his slim sweetheart, the dove-eyed, flat-chested maiden at Onion creek, a stuttering siren to be courted only on the installment plan, sent him to the field, it was with full assurance that he was not lost to her forever—not he! The corn-fed, lank Delilah shrewdly guessed that her prudent wooer would listen to battle's dissonant thunders from posts of distant security, and

## THE ARMY MULE

come back unshot, unsabred, but covered with vicarious glory, which he did. Heaven is merciful to the idiotic and kind to the cautious. His previous occupations had varied from cord-wood carpentry to slaughter-house surgery, and he had always been disposed to shed perspiration with extreme diffidence. He was mostly red-headed. He had been addicted to excess of raw spirits, tobacco and other abominations—loving these, his enemies, with a fine, magnanimous, scriptural discrimination. He may be relied on to fill a drunkard's grave some day, probably without even asking the drunkard's permission; such are his knavish proclivities. His eye was aglare with hate, every glance a stab. His occasional smile ran through all the gamut of grins, from the smirk of conceit to the simper of toadyism. He had a torpid liver and was no trustee of beauty. His physical development was surprising; even an Englishman never saw anything equal to it—outside of England. He was strong as the Kansas zephyr that carried an anvil ten miles and came back next morning after the hammer.

## THE ARMY MULE

Freckles were his trade-mark and profanity was the staunch, infallible test of his identity. Huge quadrilateral oaths, shingled with brimstone and fringed with fire, were the soft relaxations of his happier hours. Blue, blistering maledictions, flecked with white foam, marked the approach of his paroxysmal frenzies, and no postponement on account of the weather.

Cruelty uncloaked and unleavened, lumpy and rocky, was the energizing motor of his existence. Before he gets three strides into his gait, his antiphlogistic treatment always insures a dispersion of the Mule's vitality into the extremities—hence those kicks. His vocabulary was a slimy ooze of the gutter, with its wailing stench. His breath was the whiff of loose-corked, all-night gin shops, stale and stifling. His typical caress to the Mule was a blow on the bone of the nose with a neck yoke that settled the animal on his haunches. With a heart false as a weather bulletin, more selfish than a petroleum trust, and colder than a funeral with plenty of money and no God in it, his advent might

## THE ARMY MULE

readily portend that direful apocalyptic sequence: Death on the pale horse and hell not far behind. He was generally hare-lipped.

To the tender mercies of this losel vile were committed by the decrees of inscrutable fate the career and destiny of the speechless, undecipherable Mule, who was often simultaneously off his feed and on to his driver. He may have been an unattractive, non-magnetic quadruped, a ragged hammerhead, with a wall eye and an amputated ear; with yellow, irregular teeth and a surplus of lip. But his redeeming features were sure to be disclosed in the end. The current acceptation of the normal order of things in civil life was no criterion here; there would be scant toleration for the methodical youth who indorsed his sweetheart's first love-letter "Exhibit A."

Ordinarily, when man, a little lower than the angels, bestrides a Mule unquestionably possessed of the devil, he starts on a basalt road to perdition, safe to arrive. Swift as a commuter's kiss at the ferry gang-plank might be expected the direful finale. But in this zigzag of military contradictions things are

## THE ARMY MULE

reversed. The man and the beast have changed places. The semi-seraph and brevet horse have been subjected to a mysterious transformation of functions, and gravitation working t'other way lifts things skyward, as it were. The man sinks; the animal soars—thrusting his jaw out sidewise in a satisfied yawn, secure in the serenity of his asininity.

By sin pneumonia came into the world, and the docile aboriginal, with dilapidated undergarments, or none, became a shining mark. The honest, intelligent Mule restores an equilibrium of virtue lost through his depraved and dissolute driver. The virtues of the Mule atone for the vices of the man. He raises the average of merit and sum total of achievement, so that credit for their joint share in the grand climacteric will be as enduring as the solemn temples, the great globe itself.

Man approximated to the Mule ideal of gentility when he began to suspect that the entire system of army team discipline rested on a false basis. But that suspicion had not dawned at the close of the war for the suppression of the rebellion—if, indeed, it has

## THE ARMY MULE

yet dawned. The platform of the Mule millennial: Six quarts of oats at a feed; a blanket; two curry-combs of assorted fineness; no spurs; no whip; no cursing—this was a dim vision of futurity; alluring but delusive as the seductive rustle of grain in a tin pan, with the ensnaring halter deftly hidden.

Fortunately for the Mule his epidermis was thick and tough, a non-conductor of pain, as it were; fortunately for his flagitious tormentor, likewise for other glowing lights of genus human, he was speechless. If the Mule could talk! What new aspects would be given to war-memoirs; what side-gleams would be thrown on historic events; what showers and floods of reinforcement would be added to the gurgling, vasty streams of patriotic reminiscence. He had his opinions on the conduct of the war, and on the character of the warriors, also the teamsters; but those opinions remain unrecorded and to all intents and purposes unexpressed. He reserved them, which would be deliciously sweet of him,

## THE ARMY MULE

don't you know, if it had not been involuntary and unavoidable.

Out in Oregon, apples grow to the diameter of Daniel Webster's skull, though with diluted flavor and contradictory aromas, it is claimed; but the inefficiently tutored Shoshone nevertheless affects his *dejeuner* of decayed salmon whose aroma is indisputable and widely permeative. Arizona, latitude some hundreds of feet below the sea level, offers a splendid climate in exceptionally large quantities, where the insidious and terrible tubercle is unknown; but some of her citizens are accused of entertaining loose opinions as to the strict enforcement of law, and low, coarse views of the editorial function.

At Spuyten-Duyvel-on-Hudson, the local four hundred, exploiting the astrakhan hair and chinchilla whiskers inherited from a fused Iroquois and Rotterdam ancestry, can only be coaxed into activity by an elaborate expenditure of stimulants; then, however, they will very cheerfully pump you full of sententious legendary lore while you wait. In Rhode



## THE ARMY MULE

Island, walk under the mistletoe with a young lady and tradition will do the rest. In Chicago, hand an attractive widow out of a cable car, and gossips will supply all necessary additional ingredients for a five-column sensation. Thus every locality has its advantages and its drawbacks, its vexations and its compensations. By parallel lines of illustration it may be demonstrated that what the Mule lacks in volubility he fully makes up in sagaciousness.

The capacity of this observant, discriminating animal to sit in judgment on the character of his stridulous driver can scarcely be subject to reasonable question. The judicial cast of intellect is so universally associated with solemnity of visage that the terms become substantially interconvertible, like the principles of a polished politician. When the Army Mule lowers his head and lifts his eyebrows and searches profoundly through his stable litter with his deliberative hoof, the rich trolley-line tenor of his tuneful meditations were worth a royal largess to read, assimilate and store away for reference.

## THE ARMY MULE

The animated dialogue between a truckman and a cab driver in a New York street blockade is said to embody linguistic traits and miracles of lexicography peculiar to the atmosphere of that latitude. The murmurings of a town that is stricken with paralysis at the first intimations of a whisky famine, are marvelously intense and realistic. But the Army Mule's honest and unbiased opinion as to the true character of the army teamster, translated from his equi-asinine vernacular, and rendered into the anglo-effervescent jargon of the bivouac, would rattle like a regimental long-roll and yield aroma rivaling the effluvium of a lime-kiln. His reprobate tormentor, with no perceptible circulation of blood above the ears, presents multiplied testimonials of having long been habitually fed on aqua-fortis, hell-broth and ratsbane. Yet he reveals a cruel coldness that would freeze the milk in a mother's wasted breast or the marrow in her infant's fleshless bones. Hideous as is his chimpanzee conformation of countenance inherited from root-eating ancestors, it only indexes his whole physical structure—a sour

## THE ARMY MULE

aggregation of compost, vitalized by a fetid protoplasm. Within his Nova Zembla skull the pulpy and mysterious growth called brain lies fusty and fumid, steeped in the vapidness of its own purulence.

Offspring of the exiled offal and offscourings of civilization, he grew up in the back settlements untaught, untrained, unkempt, unchristened—not even vaccinated or manicured; and the unwholesomeness of his exhalations vie with the complexities of his vocabulary. The bath-room knows him never, nor tooth-brush ever. To night-shirt, napkin, finger-bowl and fine stationery he is as utterly alien as the remotest autocrat of Congo's jungles. The Indian has now become about as bad as the white man can make him. But it is the firm opinion of the Army Mule that there are lower depths. Somewhere between the Indian's level and that bottomless perdition, where the arches of Tophet redden in the glow of its quenchless flame, there is a midway plaisance tableland, reserved transcendent in its horrors for the ruminating promenades of the teamster terrific. Some-

## THE ARMY MULE

what lower than the Indian; a little higher than satan and his imps—not much—there is the plane of character assigned with ghoulish gladness to the hare-lipped caliph of the wagon train, by one best fitted, through intimate, hourly association, to measure his moral girth and estimate his mental altitude. There let him roam and range. In years triumphant of the war era, now fast vanishing into the vague and misty past, he had his jubilant day. This bog-spawn of humanity, with his ashes-of-marigold face and his unthatched upper teeth, with his three-cornered hot temper that scorned life's amenities; this slouchy man with moist nostrils and an affliction in his left hip, who at one time hoped to sometime shine as chambermaid to a livery stable but failed, has run his course.

What a child is taught in the abstract he is liable to practice in the concrete, as his subjectivity develops into objectivity, his sentiment into devilment. The Mule driver's unamiable childhood was punctuated with copious threats that the goblins of desperation would get him if he didn't watch out. The events of his

## THE ARMY MULE

pseudo war experience fully verified this dreadful prophecy's prophetic inspiration. The goblins got him and energized him, until his fury often bade fair to shred the Mule into his by-products of kip-leather, trousers buttons and mucilage.

Under such inauspicious guidance and control, the army Mule, luckily pachydermatous, proceeds to the theater of his sanguinary exploits. The rich girl is often in danger of falsifying her accounts by crediting to her personality the charms of her cash. But the cashless, unsusceptible Mule stands in no peril of such baleful self-deception. Lowest in rank of created beings assigned a part in the drama, fame held to him no prismatic rewards for excess of zeal.

He was not built for a general range of cynosure business; homeliness was his heritage from the day he was foaled. He was unpoetic as a miss receiving her beau in the parlor with her two younger brothers sitting in the seat of the scornful hard by. He was unartistic as a Montana hurricane kite—an iron shutter with a tail made of log-chains. He

## THE ARMY MULE

was unsymmetric as a court dwarf with scythesnath spine and a dome on his shoulder. Hence for the splendid immortality of sculpture he was ludicrously inapt. And if painting deigned to give him grudging space it was ever in the burlesque of cartoonage or the dim littleness of background.

His lucky half-brother, the showy, exaggerated horse, in all classes, from the pampered ex-trotter with his slim neck and his record, to the bloated muldoon of the belt-line, jaded but defiant, was an easy victor in the suit Neigh *versus* Bray. To him might come sweet visions of promotion in the life that is and artistic apotheosis in a glad hereafter. But to the speechless, unapproachable Mule, with periodical reactions in the hind leg, and hight merely "nigh" or "off" in the vernacular, promotion never came. Cogitating to himself with soulful grunts, he could only talk through his head-stall.

Even the sutler's horse, intoed, sway-backed and wheezy, who had habitually worn a ragged calfskin over his rump as he stood on frosty nights before the war, tied to a rail

## THE ARMY MULE

fence while his owner talked politics in the village grocery, claimed superiority. The picturesque talisman U. S. upon his shoulder was the only badge of honor permitted to the Army Mule, save when the whip-lash had cut out a slice of his skin as a souvenir. But even this significant lettering was often so inexpertly executed as to serve no decorative purpose whatever. It was infinitely less effective than a bran mash to poultice his internal pains, or a roached mane to command external admiration. With one foot over the trace and both eyes blinking, the last state of that Mule was worse than the first. To him all alleged or attempted adornments were superfluous and unsatisfying.

Here then was the sine of an arc which did not recognize equality in the cosine of its supplement. The sorriest horse, though just released from the duty of transporting miscellaneous triturations of real estate in a dump-cart, with his alimentary system painfully void of toothsome internal decoration, out-ranked the smoothest, softest Mule, whether young or aged, black or sorrel, dun or gray.

## THE ARMY MULE

Nevertheless the explanation of the fact that a rat-tailed cat-hammed Mule weighing five hundred and thirty pounds, saw-backed, shark-toothed, and knobby with protruding bones from throat-latch to crupper, could draw heavier loads than a round robust Norman-Percheron horse weighing a ton, remains to this day unknown, unguessable. Invidious comparison is gross violation of consanguinity equal to marrying one's widow's sister. The checked, banged and bitted high steppers of Fairmount park, dear to the heart of placid quakers because their nerves can endure the strain of "Curfew Shall Not Toll Tonight," or equivalent atrocities, will not be involved therein; their pinked tennis-tan harness, silver trimmed, with monograms at the joints and red stitches in the tug, constitute a perpetual, effectual bar. There was one glory of horse and another glory of mule, but no mule differed from another mule in glory, by any palpable percentage. They had little regard for the affinity of a somewhat common maternity. But whether rearing, plunging, kicking, rolling in the mire or pawing at the



## THE ARMY MULE

clouds, they were all equal. They met upon the level and parted on the square.

The war-horse of the late unpleasantness has been chiseled and painted in many attitudes—especially that of unsupported suspension in the atmosphere, with extended nose and carefully adjusted legs. Sheridan's horse, propelled down the wild, disheveled turnpike by "a terrible oath" at the rate of five (5) miles per stanza, hangs to the canvas in a posture unnatural as that of some artillery steed swung by the breeching from a tree after a caisson explosion. The war-horse has been sufficiently pictured and carved. But he still lacks his literary limner. Almost the sole description of him now accessible is that left by the versatile Orpheus C. Kerr. There is embodied an analysis of that celebrated Gothic steed presented to this Orpheus by his maiden aunt and endeared to the saline affections of the mackerel brigade by several amiable idiosyncrasies. Of whom it is written:

"The beast is fourteen hands high, fourteen hands long, and his sagacious head is

## THE ARMY MULE

shaped like an old-fashioned pickax. Viewed from the rear his style of architecture is Gothic, and has a gable end to which his tail is attached. His eyes are two pearls set in mahogany, and before he lost his sight were said to be brilliant." And more to the same effect, intimating a diet of shoe pegs for oats and saw-dust for millstuffs, save in the rare occasions when he could set his inflexible teeth into a hay bale with unadulterated joy.

Now, shall such of our children's children as through poverty or other crime may be debarred admission to war cycloramas be condemned to surfeit their hunger for knowledge as to the conflict's equestrian features with job lots of descriptive pinxit like this? Is the war charger to be cut off thus with no extra allowance for training or pedigree? Are nice distinctions of gait, between the single-foot trot and the rack, which are manifestly matters of original brain power and painful culture, modified of course by heredity, to be studiously ignored? In short, is the horse to be thus dismissed into obliquity, so to speak? If so, what conclusions will posterity deduce

## THE ARMY MULE

as to the anatomical development of the speechless inferior Mule? If an animal of fair social position and tenacious of his rank is to be thus lightly disposed of, what can we claim for one of no rank whatever, with only the snap of his teeth and the whisk of his tail to attract attention? The case is critical.

When the kicker in politics dies he stays dead a long time; when an opportunity passes it may never recur. Opportunities for writing correct history are slipping by month after month, year after year. The aged, surviving Mule gets nervous as in the teething period of his suffering colthood, while our expert historians move off toward the horizon, clothed in linen ulsters and vain regrets. We have essays galore on the immorality of trotting and the iniquity of pools. We have treatises enough on overhead check reins and the cruelty of the cable slot. But this is a condition, not a theory, which now reproaches us. Soon it will be too late. If the agitation started here shall finally result in loosening some corset strings of prejudice and fixing the neglected, necessary Mule in his true orbit,

## THE ARMY MULE

all will be well. The opportunities of a grateful country for upholstering his stomach with the finest and greenest her pastures proffer, will soon be gone forever. If we can now succeed in calculating his right ascension and declination, and stamping him on the chart indelibly, we may pass from recreation to refreshment in full assurance of a duty well performed.

Then let us agitate! The winner of the sinful and expensive Derby must not forever flaunt his exclusive title to consideration. The piebald circus favorite shall no longer monopolize the fondness of our rising youth. The praiseworthy Mule, hot and foamy perhaps, stung with gad-flies, thirsty, dusty and cross, but patriotic and persevering amid all, shall have his long delayed due.

The soldier Mule is in harness, fated to accomplish marvels in the sweet ultimate, if his longevity holds out; his neo-pagan steersman, with hare-lip, a hepatized conscience, a peroxide complexion and a solitaire front tooth cut bias, is in the saddle; all being thus in readiness the war can now begin. If the

## THE ARMY MULE

speechless miserable Mule shall unfortunately escape sorosis of the heart, hermitage of the lungs, and percolation by germicide decoctions, so as to live long enough, he will become a veteran. But that is anticipation. The near, dear day will arrive soon enough—alas!

Harnessed and mounted, cursed, cudgeled and spurred he starts on his weary pilgrimage. His emotions are more complex and profound than those with which a young woman receives her first information that there are spring styles in trousers as well as in gowns. For him no primrose paths of dalliance open beckoning; they fade incoherently into the dim bedraggled, with no stretch of white satin ribbons to restrain feminine curiosity.

He travels from Ohio to the gulf, but not in a palace car nor on a deadhead ticket. Far otherwise. He goes out for an extended starring tour in the provinces and assists in presenting a magnificent drama, but only evokes volleys of powerful and prolonged hisses from the guys of the gallery. He brings up the rear of the most gigantic and

## THE ARMY MULE

jubilant salvation army since salvation was revealed, but he is not conceited. He is full of suppressed merit as an egg is of omelet, yet bashful as the kerchiefless caller who toys with the doily in nervous embarrassment while the seconds swell into centuries. He officiates in the conveyance of breadstuffs, otherwise hard-tack, mouldy and fungous, left over from the Mexican war, and fit only for slumgullion; of meats with the odor of a sewer-gas eruption; of black molasses, a sulphuret of glucose, sour as the tartrate of acrimony.

Also desiccated sundries obsolete as a rutabaga turnip, class of '56, or a weather guess from an anti-bilious almanac for '49, or the lottery wheel of a fair fakir in the early thirties. Likewise commissary whisky, vintage of lye, lime and fusel; decanted of all disgusts; confectioned for the scum of slums. But none of these have terror or temptation for him; he knoweth his master's feed box. A brave, bright, meritorious Mule is he, with a spring in his heel and healing in his springs.

He blots himself out of the green landscape

## THE ARMY MULE

of his youth, the asphodel meadows of peace that lie athwart the rustic tavern with its soft soap, communistic towel and brown sugar. He marches on, marshaled in double column closed in mass, to slaughters that will all the multitudinous creeks incarnadine, and fears not. He steps forth with countenance severe as that of the sterilized milk speculator whose investment has soured, but heart warm as the modest, efficacious fritter, dear to the breakfast relish of Hoosier schoolboys when the frost is on the melon and the fodder's in the stalk. He starts out in the morning eager as if something of great value were hanging just in front of him, with a town supervisor reaching for it and a creditor's meeting in the annex; he trudges along all day with the testy and sub-acid humor of a Pullman conductor, softened by a thousand patriotic reflections; he comes in at night on right by file into line, crisp and beautiful as a sarsaparilla lithograph.

Toil has no fears; he does not care a cigarette for it. After the long day's exertion, with no nutriment but raw fog for breakfast and roasted south wind for dinner, with no

## THE ARMY MULE

encouragement but polyglot epithets from a hare-lipped miracle of mendacity, and frequent usufruct of hissing whip-lash to his quaking flanks and skinned sides, he does not despair. One is foolish to waste time trying to throw five aces with four dice, and the usual rustic system of studying games of hazard has similar elements of weakness; but there is no weakness about the character of the seasoned, unchangeable Mule. If a glossary of battles could be transcribed from the quartermasters' reports of "actions" where Mules were lost, it would make a fearful and wonderful record. But no premonitions of battle trouble him now. With a good hearty roll in the dust and its diatonic accompaniment of snorts, groans and grunts, he rises refreshed. Then he kicks a few times for practice with the agility of an antiquated drum-stick from the black crook ballet, and lies down to rest, superfluous but happy. All the visible universe is action and motion, from the slow dissolving mountain of granite, to the fleeting, flitting cloud of vapor that scuds across the sky.

But the Mule sleeps, noiseless and motion-



## THE ARMY MULE

less. Into that steep, deep sleep what dreams might creep! But no! No visions of tomorrow's big load and high check now vex his royal ribs. No colic phantoms disturb his illusion of combing his fetlocks in golden stubble—fit function for his underrated merits. No nightmares come hurling cold hailstones at his sinless head or murdering "Sweet Marie" in Z minor around his protesting ears. So he awakens invigorated and steps out into the purple dawn of next day, fresh as the cold oaken bucket that dangles no longer in the moss-covered well, and chipper as Sancho Panza's Dapple—oh! speechless, incredible Mule!

Were not comparisons odious we might unreservedly affirm that he was fully capable of the zeal displayed by one of our major-generals who, on or about August 29, 1862, rushed toward the sound of John Pope's cannon at a hold-the-fort-for-I-am-coming velocity of six miles a day. We may furthermore safely claim for him devotion at least equal to that displayed by another major-general, coincidentally negatively pregnant, who drank

## THE ARMY MULE

from the same canteen and simultaneously telegraphed to Pope from Alexandria, proposing to reinforce him with every wagon in camp if he would send back cavalry for an escort!

There is a period in every battle when the bravest soldier would donate liberally to the missionary cause for trustworthy assurance of scathless emergence. The most valourous among us are at times conciliatory and pacific as an intimidated husband just emerging from a domestic cyclone cellar. Human nature is not perpetually keyed up to the Marco Bozarris pitch. Marvel not then that the astute Lincoln, when informed that a general and forty Mules had been captured by the enemy, put on that far-away, lodge-of-sorrow look and plaintively remarked: "I am sorry to lose the Mules." Generals, brave to the point of recklessness and beyond it, could be made as easily as bonanza Christians, who join the church by typewriter and are baptized by telegraph—but Mules had a specific, ascertainable value.

The Army Mule's market value or cost to

## THE ARMY MULE

the government ranged from one hundred and fifteen to one hundred and fifty dollars. This price was established when he was first brought in and exhibited to all intents and purposes as an article of merchandise. He was then largely occupied in attempting to conceal exclusive knowledge of certain secluded green pastures; winking slyly to himself in the excess of his cunning, all unaware of the multiplex miseries stored away for him in the immediate future. The price was generally satisfactory, for the service sighed for him. But the Mule did not receive the money. Far from it! A part of it went to his loyal owner, so called. We all knew him. He was suave as a Scotchman who has adopted the manners and customs of civilization. He was cheerful as the radiant old circuit rider who preaches to a mixed congregation in a boom suburb, from a text found in lot 3, block 12, of Timothy's second subdivision. In every crisis he was first to stay at home and readiest to volunteer his moral support in putting down insurrection.

After selling a string of Mules he would

## THE ARMY MULE

walk the streets for a week filled with rum and gladness, bragging in his balmy periods over the keenness of his sharpness. The remainder of the purchase price, as was currently suspected, went into the pockets of the purchasing quartermaster, clothed in white samite, mystic, plunderful — popular only within restricted areas. None of it went to the Mule. A woman never looks well in a fault-finding habit; a man never looks well when detected in prevarication; therefore let us tell the truth: None of it went to the Mule!

Parenthetically we may remark that this type of financial injustice has been perpetuated, until the hind quarters of the speechless, unspeakable survivors would be excusable for rising in their might to protest emphatically. If the shoe fits spike it, says the farrier; if the conscience twinges one or more of us here present, it is perhaps not yet too late to reform. Nearly a thousand men, mostly teamsters, buglers and hospital stewarts, toothless but terrible, have been pensioned since the war for lameness caused by the kick of a Mule's hoof iron, while no Mule has been

## THE ARMY MULE

pensioned for lameness, spavin, ring-bone, wind-gall or glanders—no, not one. The speechless, rheumatic Mule, in all his army moods and tenses, acquired no stiffness of the joints materially differing from the old civil-service, barnyard variety.

Why then differentiate? Punched by the wagon-tongue or tripped by the trace chains, when the breeching was fractured on a down grade, the exposures to rupture or fracture were incessant, with no experts in attendance to splice the splints. These are facts which no profuseness of classic allusion to pearly brooks and flowery meads can obscure, when the sour cream of his experience curdles in his soul. In gushing eras of reconciliation large populations seemed extremely bent on pushing things to the whimpering point; the people who were wrong were with surprising unanimity almost ready to forgive the people who were right and kiss again with cheers.

In those days the widow of Stonewall Jackson was gallantly escorted through Boston Common by General Benjamin F. Butler, Governor of Massachusetts. And she proclaimed

## THE ARMY MULE

with tears in her voice and patriotism in her heart, that she found in this star-eyed hero an elegant gentleman as well as an orthodox believer—then immediately applied for a patent on her discovery. (Some men, like happy dreams, are too good to be true). Surely the day of jubilee had come. But even at that time undying animosities and misconceptions prevented an award of due credit to the crippled, superannuated Army Mules. Little wonder that so ungrateful an epoch was mostly given over to hybridizing chrysanthemums and breeding chappies.

And the end is not yet. "Loyal" owners, seedy and snuffy, are still collecting exaggerated pay from a long enduring government for unnumbered myriads of mythical Mules alleged to have been confiscated. The bronzed Kickapoo matron with soiled fingers, straining maple syrup through the family heirloom blanket for the St. Louis market in the forests of southern Iowa, has almost ceased to be a picturesque, typical feature of our civilization. But the war claimant still lingers, multiplying his lost Mules periodically, as the years glide

## THE ARMY MULE

by,—while the just claims of the unquestionably loyal Mule himself are neglected with studious shamelessness. Many persons are said to think that this is not just, but we may perhaps be pardoned for the remark that it is a long time between thinks.

Take notice, however, that not all Mules can establish unquestioned loyalty. Some of them yielded to the strain on their principles and went over to the enemy, like a rural dupe who is so charmed with the accomplishments of the shell-game adept that he resolves to embark in that line of business himself. Loyalty and treason were largely matters of education and environment. Even the rival little liver pills are quite the same in their essential, fundamental ingredients; one is aloes, rhubarb and antimony, while the other is antimony, aloes and rhubarb; either is equally offensive to a refined and cultured mucous membrane, and both are warranted to go through by moonlight, errors and omissions excepted.

A veracious war writer has recorded that in May, 1865, the Confederate army con-

## THE ARMY MULE

sisted of Kirby Smith, four Mules and a base drum, moving rapidly toward Texas. The general's proudest hope then was that he might be allowed to eke out his future anonymous existence in the solitudes of Mexico; the chattels were joint and several assets, like a plug of tobacco in the hands of a threshing crew. In war the defeated faction must accept the quartermaster's brand, "Inspected and Condemned," without a murmur, even as in politics he is four times disarmed who lets his barrel burst. These bonnie blue Mules could be readily classed as disfranchised and denationalized. They would clearly come within the fourteenth amendment unless they have been amnestied by the statute of limitations.

At any rate, the vivid historic pageant ranks next in interest to Saul of Tarsus riding the Mule's father into Damascus, where he proceeded to mulch the nursery stock of a new faith and dig a few grubs out of the roots. The boy with a big apple in his mouth, that he can neither spit out nor chew nor swallow, is a distressing spectacle; the



## THE ARMY MULE

twentieth century southerner apologizing for his deluded secessionist ancestor will command a broad clientage of respectful sympathy.

The Army Mule's strategic value was recognized throughout the whole corrugated surface of the Kenesaw region, and everywhere else within the lines of active operation. It was tersely expressed by General George H. Thomas when he said: "The fate of an army sometimes depends on a linch-pin." Poetry without a motif is held by experts to be deficient in verve; an army without a train long as the exordium of a professional spell-binder was supposed to be impossible. The science of electrocution is in its infancy, but the death-dealing corset has been industriously slaughterous for three or four generations.

Erroneous solutions of the transportation problem are responsible for much needless sacrifice of life and treasure. The army train was a baffling understudy. Six patient, faithful Mules were attached to each creaking big blue wagon, with a high, white canvas cover. Thirteen wagons were, during the first

## THE ARMY MULE

two years of the war, allotted to a regiment of infantry; six to a battery of artillery. Such campaigning emulated the luxuriousness of a hundred-acre corn-field where every ear-muff is made of silk. (P. S. It was subsequently abandoned.) One hundred teams occupy a mile of road. Thus an army of seventy-five thousand men are followed when marching by a wagon-train eighteen miles long, hauled by Mules.

A broken linch-pin or king-bolt or hame-strap near the front of this lumbering procession would bring the whole succedent line promptly to a halt. Strategy at once impinges against a nonplus. The campaign comes to a dead stand with a dull thud. The florid, inductive teamster, with a hare-lip, is pondering profoundly the subjectiveness of dinnerlessness. He is a hectic, hungry, hairy man, with whiskers on his wrists; in addition he is deliberate. He repairs the damage very deliberately. He refreshes himself, meanwhile, with snatches of ancient melody, rescued from the deluge with Shem and Ham. Also with frequent volleys of Enfield curses

## THE ARMY MULE

and Gatling blows, discharged at his speechless, unoffending Mules. Luridity of impiety is a *sine qua non*.

The mild, ethereal wickedness of that fossilized beechnut relating to the dam by a mill site, pales its ineffective glow. It is usually the dictate of wisdom to leave a wild-eyed cannibal in undisturbed possession of his war-path; equally so to be very sparing of sneers at another man's joss. Consequently the driver's amiable diversion is seldom interfered with. When all damages are repaired the procession moves on.

Then begins again the long lumbering creak, to continue in melancholy monotony until another linch-pin breaks or buckle parts asunder. Eighteen miles of tortured wagons roll on and on; white-arched, weighty; relics of a thorny, stormy past, yet pregnant with an illimitable future. They bristle with tent-poles, trail tangled tent ropes far behind, and exude knapsacks, haversacks, canteens, drums and drum majors at every pore. They are festooned around and beneath with clinging mess pans, pendulous camp kettles, and the

## THE ARMY MULE

like differentiation of iron-mongery. If the weather is fine this creak and grind and rumble goes on and on, with monotonous, mechanical steadiness, subject to accidents as aforesaid, until the tuneful, sagacious Mule sings the long roll, as he instinctively scents approach to the preordained place of encampment, when welcome night draws nigh.

This is the poetry of transportation, jolly as a cake-walk, comfortable as a smoking jacket, easy as reducing the labor question to an exact science by the acceptance of a generous salary as walking delegate. But when rains descend and floods come, the scenery shifts; wagons, muleteers and quadrupeds are indiscriminately plunged into diluvial quagmires, fathomless as air and shoreless as the gulf-stream. Then the liquified turnpike spreads over the valleys and yellow cascades roar down the defenseless ruts.

Then the climax of helpless wretchedness arrives, always fatefully tumbling on the articulated anatomy of a hapless, cadaverous Mule. Beneath him even chilled-steel agony can not go. He gathers in all its multiplex



*The quenchless, marvelous mule emerges from the mire and clay, with a whooping-cough wheeze (Page 63)*



## THE ARMY MULE

horrors, computed on the Utah plural family plan. He would win a Columbian Exposition medal for the most picturesque collection of miseries—picturesque, variegated and altogether astonishing. They overwhelm him like a bather submerged in sea waves twenty feet high, each weighing a thousand tons, half brine and half sledge-hammer.

No man can adequately realize what magnificent folly he is capable of until he sees his own old love-letters set forth in the cold, cruel print of some hideous newspaper. No man can fully appreciate the faithfulness of our devoted animal co-workers until he sees a crucial test applied. The quenchless, marvelous Mule emerges from the mire and clay, with a whooping-cough wheeze, driven to preternatural exertions by redoubled curses and quadrupled scourgings.

His step is quick, short and grasping. The spirit inherited from some remote Hambletonian antetype flames in his nostrils. He rings a fire alarm, hoists the grand hailing sign of distress, and defiantly dashes his toe-calks through to hard pan. He rushes down the

## THE ARMY MULE

high bluff, over the muddy flat, across the cold stream, up the steep bank—lashed, lathered and spurred. With a whisk of his tail that scatters bullets of mud he springs to the tremendous task. His body is squat to the earth at times, but his ears always point starward. Every muscle hisses with the heat of the strain and every nerve is burning; his whole frame quivers and smokes as he bursts into supremest effort and brings his freightage to the goal, or dies in his tracks, a speechless, unsung martyr to the cause. No burial, no monument, no obituary.

To the Army Mule in camp, if anywhere, rest, rations and felicity should come. A surplus of excitement is injurious to the nerves, but life wholly without an atmosphere is in peril from suffocation. Rest is alleged to be the only unfailing antidote to Dr. Bright's widely advertised kidney complaint. Camp is recreation in army service as courting is the play spell of the soul. The farmers in politics, dedicated to a maximum of talk and a minimum of toil, need no proclamation from the governor bidding them hold



## THE ARMY MULE

a fast from work in order to enjoy a feast of discussion.

The free-lunch rounder, with pretzel crumbs on his mustache, loves above all things to sit easy at his inn. Even the emancipated lady prays earnestly for deliverance from the fatigues of the conservative, innocent, purely platonic schottische. Consequently no blame can justly attach to the worn and worried Mule for standing ever in readiness to fall in with propositions for honorable repose. Beautiful are his anticipations of a good time in camp; beautiful as a statue of hammered brass, and as hollow. The hollowness results from the fact that no reckoning was made of the hare-lipped despot at the other end of the picket rope

Ten pounds of grain and thirty pounds of hay is the daily allowance. Some pie-plant professor of an agricultural institute, with a marked-down set of artificial eyebrows hung at oblique angles to his nose, long ago figured it out on strict mathematical principles of animal economy. The court records it and the law doth give it. Thrice happy is

## THE ARMY MULE

the beast that gets it; happy, but rarer than Indians with side whiskers and ideality. Straw, stalks, tent pins and cracker boxes are his more reliable provender. These are reinforced with stray bites now and then, when he can chew himself loose, from a private's laundered and lively underwear drying on a limb, or from the cold shoulder of a corporal of the guard.

In the sweet, serene night watches, when slumber's chain had manacled us, roving Mules may have rubbed noses while hatching a bleak and dark conspiracy to massacre the brigade and plunder the forage train. But it came to naught; possibly for lack of leadership. There was no relief for the oppressed, defrauded Mule. No satiating food for him, savory as Lyonnaise potato softly tintured with onion. No lollipop confectionery for him, melting in the mouth like painted butter. Empty is the nosebag, even as to plebeian oats; empty as the wit of irreverent soldiers who josh the chaplain and gibe at the Mule.

An agricultural inquirer once wrote to Hor-

## THE ARMY MULE

ace Greeley asking if guano was good to put on potatoes. The busy editor replied that it might do for men whose taste had been vitiated by tobacco and rum, but for his own eating he preferred gravy. This was the cranberry tart retort of the illustrious journalist, with a tough undercrust of misconception, it is true. The condiments for the Army Mule's camp banquet were not of the spice spicity. He has clear memories of a voracity which created wide vacuum in sundry green-swards, and played havoc with corn cribs manifold. The voracity remains, but the swards and cribs are far, far away.

At spasmodic intervals a sympathetic warrior, having burned all the top rails of an informally confiscated fence, will toss the juicy and edible bottom rail to the pleading, omnivorous Mule, residuary legatee of camp-fires. This is good average food in times of interne-cine strife, when so simple an article as pie is a precious prerogative. But such well-flavored morsels are too uncertain for standard sustenance. For shockingly protracted periods, he stands unfed, neglected, receiving all sug-

## THE ARMY MULE

gestions with a squeal and a kick, while the zephyrs disinfect his fur. Pending which, stark, grim skeletons of all the barked and branchless trees within stretch of his tether attest the final result of an attempt to adjust his Minnesota appetite to his Andersonville rations. If watered twice a week he may vote himself lucky; he has not even the surfeit of a teetotaler's wassail, where water flows like wine "A Mule feels chilly in July," says the Talmud; if his temperature depends on the supply of internal fuel, there is limited space for astonishment.

Meanwhile an unsanctified teamster, with red hair and hare-lip, blushing with innocence until his whiskers singe in the heat, enjoys the encampment episode to the uttermost. In Constantinople public opinion is gauged by the prevalence of nocturnal conflagrations, and the number of hanged bakers decorating the street corners next morning. But in camp there is no concentrated public opinion sufficiently intense to mete out due retribution to the profligate castigator of the fodderless, thirsty Mule. He sleeps on ample bedding

## THE ARMY MULE

of good sweet hay, and has large store of gerymandered corn to exchange for toothsome luxuries. His tobacco is of the costliest brand and he defiantly blows the froth of numerous beers from his blasphemous lips. He carries a full purse and a steady nerve; also a bomb-proof conscience void of offense. Bad medicine, he!

The jocundities of life in camp we may gather *ad nauseam* from the romances of some of the professors of freehand drawing who enlisted as army correspondents; but for purposes of authentic history these narratives are worthless as second-hand champagne corks. The jocularities referred to have no interest to the solemn, imperturbable Mule save when he is an object of their malevolence. Then they are more interesting than enjoyable. The swell imbecile carries an umbrella under his arm through crowded streets until its tip is garnished with the eye of some unfortunate fellow wayfarer; the man who loses the eye fails to see the point of—the joke.

The Mule is not much of a joker himself; but as a victim of practical jokes, fine, funny or

## THE ARMY MULE

chestnutty, he has become widely celebrated. His resentment of these preposterous hilarities, all of which are on the *passé* social code of roller rinks, has caused much of the reputation for waspy temper which now attaches to him with the tenacity of a bachelor girl to the state of single blissfulness. Temper changes with status, as was ascertained by the enthusiast who originally named his *fiancée* Revenge because she was sweet, but now that she is his wife calls her Delay because she is dangerous.

The city man who would own a farm should have a good income well assured elsewhere, for it will certainly be needed. The foolhardy individual who proposes to play tricks on a mule should be well buttressed with sound accident policies. Beware the irritated quadruped! Look not into the red mouth of a wild Numidian lion; touch not the royal Bengal tiger's remotest whisker-tip; avoid the little black bull with an eye like a razor's edge; make no experiments with the terminal facilities of the speechless, inscrutable Mule!

His ways are past finding out; his kicks are

## THE ARMY MULE

incalculable, inexplicable, incomprehensible. He sometimes allows patience to pile up in ridges on his neck, while the battalions of wrath are debouching from all quarters into his hoof. Then the eruption breaks out with torpedo suddenness and with an energy of fury that rivals the deafening roar which smites the aggregated ear of the magnificent metropolis, when fire invades the wholesale district.

Blessed is the nation whose annals are uneventful—America is safe with fifteen million children in the public schools and three thousand citizens to one soldier. Happy is the bride whom the sun shines on whether matriculated at Ognotz or merely captivated at Topeka. Joyous to the weary mechanic the picnic of his labor holiday, with its lemonade, its orations, and its other things that lull to peaceful slumber. Halcyon to the Army Mule are monotonous days in camp, when they bring surcease of torment as well as toil; red-lettered if therewithal be brought, by rare concatenation, such plethora of long forage as drowns vicissitude in bright beatitude. In

## THE ARMY MULE

that case he rounds out radiantly and within the cycle of a very few days develops beyond recognition. His protrusions disappear like the vanishing lines of a mineral lode. His rumps accumulate fat and his girth expands with a facility that is amazing. His eye takes on a new gleam and his bray acquires a fresh intonation.

Moreover, he is speedily transformed into a bold aristocrat. He cultivates style and assumes airs of conscious superiority equal to the contemptuous sniff of a Fifth avenue dog who has smelled some chance passer-by two or three grades below par. His future may be uncertain as a Spaniard's veracity or a Frenchman's paternity; but he lives in the glad and glowing present, with the nonchalance of a Russian official hunting for fragments of the czar by torchlight, after a popular demonstration.

Of the Mule in battle, lean is the record's exploitation. There is little danger that his renown in that line will ever be subversive of our liberties and other luxuries. Right is forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the



## THE ARMY MULE

make, as of old. But the placid, benevolent Mule never takes up arms against either party—our quartermaster's returns of uncounted thousands "lost in action" to the contrary notwithstanding. It even seems difficult to secure credit for such service as he actually rendered. His occasional sporadic work in artillery teams is wholly forgotten. His frequent spurts to the flaming front with ammunition wagons is entirely ignored.

A common, peaceful explosion of powder magazines at home not only shatters all the windows in the neighborhood, but also shatters the faith of people for miles around in the doctrine of resurrection of the body. So the peaceful nature of the Mule is fatal to any accumulation of reputation bubbles, where bayonets bristle and saltpeter burns. Were he ten times the tin-clad child of havoc that he is, the florid, hare-lipped arbiter of his destinies would see to it carefully that, barring accidents, his opportunities for responding to long rolls should be few.

The Chicago socialists tendered an olive branch to the police made of gas-pipe and

## THE ARMY MULE

charged with nitroglycerine in a highly persuasive state of concentration. But when the red and riotous fume of the bomb-throwers' breath permeated the haymarket like a pestilence, no army Mule mingled with the medley of frowzy trousers. No more do we hear of him at Shiloh or Champion Hill or Cedar Creek.

For offensive purposes the Mule was, in general, harmless as a United States frigate or a divinity student at a bean-bag festival, or the ghost of a goose, white, downy and clamorous. The valedictorian of the last class at the Keeley cure, permeated with a variety of virtuous joint and several resolutions, could scarcely be more docile. Even the reproachful Confederate smokehouse could not shake its gory padlock at the stainless, unimpeachable Mule—although he carried a jimmy equal to most emergencies, he could, as a rule, readily establish an alibi. When fodder is really in the shock, and frost is ready to be cleft from pumpkins with a snow-plow, then such free tubers as have been produced in sweet charity's name on the Pingree plan

## THE ARMY MULE

should be harvested without procrastination; delays are perilous at that season of the year. The evil effects of the shock, however, can be minimized, by feeding the fodder, in advance, to the harmless, appreciative Mule. Forewarned is four times armed, or more.

Non-combatants and impedimenta compose the rear of an army when it is in action. Here assemble great drinkers of alcohol, and vast eaters, who measurably justify Germany's subsequent discrimination against the American hog—all of whom let concealment like a chinch-bug prey on their damaged cheeks, their necks, meanwhile, being given over to the ravages of the army flea. Here in secure serenity mobilize numerous excellent subjects for the romantic young woman who yearns for a lovely debauchee to reform. Here congregate cooks, commissaries and sutlers—this last with a sage-brush tinge of disappointment in his aspect, and a Jenness-Miller cut of trousers on his limbs. Here recreate skulkers who simulate heroes, and sneaks in the garbage of soldiers, all cumberers of the ground, like a prophet gone to seed in his

## THE ARMY MULE

own country. Here gather men of Trilby feet and mighty thirst, who are riotous with repartee, but intensely hostile to all manner of soft beverage; also cowards, inveterate as the upward tendency of tartar emetic; moreover, quartermasters' clerks, spouting blood-thirstiness like a congressional candidate, or some other gas well; likewise, here in the rear, are mule wagons, mule pack trains, mule teams, mule drivers and Mules.

When retreating or outflanked the order is varied and rear becomes front instanter. Then unthinkable confusion reigns. A financial catastrophe brought on by forty-cent wheat and ten-cent statesmanship looking at facts through a long-distance binocle, is bad enough. An explosion of the swear tank for a thought distillery in the higher realms of journalism is even worse, if possible. But when a Mule dam breaks, the thundering reverberation of its tumultuous hoofs is a resonant forecast of pandemonium rampant. Vain and futile then all ardent aspiration for such quiet as ensues when the wicked cease from borrowing and the female elocutionist soars and bores no more!

## THE ARMY MULE

Our cavalry out-posts were broken doses of soothing syrup for the nervous flanks of the infantry, and often stampeded the front line by their too precipitate retrogression.

A stampede of Mule teams to the rear had all the *spirituel* features and picturesque complications of an arrangement of tariff schedules on the principle of local option. Attempts at control were hopeless as piloting a national campaign when the American voter is on the rampage. It was a chaotic conglomeration of convulsive uproar, sufficient to whirl down any hope of glory with a sickening slump. The gentleman from out of town, who, in spite of conspicuous warning, blows out the gas, makes his exit from sublunary strife in enviable quietude. No such privileges are extended to the end man of a Mule rush. In exclusive social circles, the dress may be a dream, and the bill a nightmare, but in the mixed companionship we are contemplating, this impromptu display is a veritable delirium tremens of undelineated horror.

Frederick the Great shouted to a fleeing battle-straggler, "Wretch, wouldst thou live

## THE ARMY MULE

forever?" and paralyzed him. The unabashed army teamster, with a sliced upper lip and hair æsthetically matching his sorrel Mule, sprinting along the broad highway of wrath, pitched downward at an angle of forty-five degrees toward perdition, would have admitted the soft impeachment, and pursued his flight, lashing, blaspheming. He may have been, at home, as consistent a Baptist as ever yoked a steer, but for this occasion all rules are suspended by unanimous consent, and precedent tumbles headlong. The coincidence of a florid girl and a pale horse is always exasperating, at least to the girl; a hurried retreat in the presence of a menacing enemy, naturally exasperates to full pitch of desperation the belligerent boss of the nimble, obedient Mule.

In numberless miscellaneous episodes of a military sphere, the Army Mule was marked high as to deportment. Though of somewhat irregular character, even verging at times on the diabolical, he emulated the standards of the officer and the gentleman. We can afford to mix a little sentiment with

## THE ARMY MULE

our matter of fact. We can afford to drop a tear when the object is worth it. We can afford a note of eulogy under like circumstances, even to an Arizona cayuse fattened on bunch-grass to the rotundity of a prickly pear.

Yes, certainly, business thrift is commendable, but when it comes to crossing the lightning-bug with the honey-bee so that the latter can work at night, we draw the line. Sentiment aside, there is a measure of truth in the averment that the Army Mule and the army bean put down the rebellion. The dancing diplomat, with his twisted comprehensions and his addled complacencies may not appreciate it. Such an one, having never associated with the speechless, unspeakable Mule, nor, indeed, had any legitimate business transactions with him, may possibly still assert that the lion is king of beasts. Far from it! The lion will serve as a freak, children half price; but for steady days' works, for genuine *aplomb* and musical dexterity of wide longitudinal range, the courteous, dignified Mule was pre-eminently peerless.

To hospital and guard-house, Siamese bug-

## THE ARMY MULE

bears of honorable service, he was a stranger. It was never necessary to detail a fatigue squad to police his ears. The worthy chaplain, fresh from green pastures of civil life, where he fed the juicy lambs and clubbed the tough old rams of the flock, found no occasion for reproof to the silent, orthodox Mule.

No venial dereliction ever subjected him to stoppage of pay or reduction to the ranks, even when the fodder that he longed for never came. No court-martial, reeking with pungent odors of staple and fancy sutlers' goods, ever met to arbitrate his predestinated destiny. You might tie his tail like a pretzel, or pound his bray in a mortar, yet would not his serenity depart from him. The proneness of his voice apparatus to go off at half cock unfitted him for crooked works of strategy—he could never be relied on either to “lie” in wait or “steal” on an enemy. How gratefully he turns with a maple-sap thaw in his aspect, when his neck has been stripped of the blistering harness; how joyously his eager nostrils sniff the forage from afar. Oh! grateful, melodious Mule!



## THE ARMY MULE

A zoological riddle, offspring of amalgam and miscegen as unclassifiable as a severe case of Debs aggravated by symptoms of Coxey and Altgeld, he had, nevertheless too much animal self-respect to ever incur censure for getting humanly drunk. While the giddy whirl of current events whirls even more giddily, let us remember that virtue in his favor.

Man's frailty darkens many a sad, sad story—sad as a volume of the Congressional Record; the Army Mule's frailties were few, his conquests many. He was amiable after all; even General Butler, the most illustrious heavenly twin of war times, conceded that much. His temper was by no means of the cactus order, generally speaking. He chooses grudges with rare discrimination; it is always safe to suspect the man that a Mule hates. Patient in toil; silent in suffering; cogent and cautious as the rule in Shelly's case; serene amid direst confusion and alarm; heedless of ancient sarcasms decaying or petrified, he was in no sense a grumbler, and in no unpardonable sense a kicker. His hours of feed were unstable as the advertising rates of a

## THE ARMY MULE

poor but honest journalist, yet he was lighter of heart than a newly married gent rushing the oil can to a corner grocery.

If to his straight enduring back a mountain howitzer was sometimes strapped and fired without unslinging, he accepted the indignity, went to grass with the recoil, and rose for the next inning, unruffled as an expert witness emerging from the labyrinth of a hypothetical question—oh! dimless, unknowable Mule!

A retired tobacconist adopted for the motto of a fresh coat of arms to be emblazoned on his carriage panels: "*Quid Rides?*" Why do you laugh? After a Saint Petersburg assassination episode it is comparatively immaterial whether you call the widow czarina or imperatritza. In these peaceful days, Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg, translated into the jingling speech of Chinamen, and even into the jabbering Japanese, which rivals the contortions of the kinetoscope, opens a new evangel to their narcotic, Oriental souls. Sherman's marvelous retreat from Atlanta to Savannah is studied by the strategists of deepest Afgahnistan; alleged busts of John

## THE ARMY MULE

A. Logan are worshiped as idols in innermost Kamchatka, and spicy narratives we told to credulous marines are the basis of classic fiction on the Congo.

Hence nothing is frivolous that lends an added array to the most luminous chapter of contemporary history—of any history. While in the matter of beer, the foreigner unquestionably pays the tax, or most of it, yet as between natives, white-colored may lose and black may win; 'tis hard to tell. Make no mistake as to the intrinsic, historic importance of the forgotten, unforgetting Mule!

The empty skeptic may come forth with fire in his eye and boiled egg on his whiskers seeking to overwhelm us with the gorgeousness of his gush or the sumptuousness of his gall. To empty skeptics, or shallow scoffers, these simple annals of a lowly career may seem fruitless as that famous sour apple tree that failed to yield its promised harvest; hopeless as the perpetual revolutions of a bob-tailed dog chasing the vacant space where the tail should be; tasteless as fried smelts; thankless as opening a mint sauce to the free coinage

## THE ARMY MULE

of lamb. The chappie fellows who flutter at functions and titter at teas may scoff or scorn. But the eye of calm philosophy ought to beam kindly on a faithful effort to weave unconsidered trifles of truth into a wreath of earned, though meager and belated justice, so that even the wayfaring man, though full, need score no errors.

The speechless, unquenchable Mule was a real factor in those events we love to commemorate. It is asserted that only one man now survives who helped whip Lee at Gettysburg, and then marched triumphantly with Grant into conquered Vicksburg next day. But the Army Mule did both, and more! He went out with the mob of pinfeather volunteers, who spent their first callow days principally in vociferous "swearing in," and their sappy nights at discordant drills in patriotic minstrelsy.

With less recognition than even the barnstormers' encore of addled carrot and frumescient cabbage, he helped wet-nurse our infant regiments when they were just getting able to sit up and gaze vacantly around.

## THE ARMY MULE

With a prodigious faculty in his heels for putting strange faces in heaven, he held himself in commendable subjection while incipient legions evolved themselves out of chaos. He passed on, beaten with many stripes, to that multitudinous aggregation called an army, where human atoms, swarming and wriggling to the music of brass bands, like agile mites in a nugget of archaic cheese, united to give him the frigid shake with a glad hand. The girl, photographed for her lover with her veil down, that his sister might not recognize the likeness, was a miracle of modest artifice; thrice proficient in meritorious cunning, the unassuming, artful Mule.

Unequally yoked in servitude to a cowboy taskmaster, unlovable as the venerable Smallweed's brimstone, blackbeetle helpmeet, also redheaded, harelipped and stuffed with nitric nine-cornered blasphemy, he plodded painfully on. Stark and indurate like an Adirondack meadow enameled with trap rock, he plodded rigidly on. Anhungered and athirst, with no credit at the sutler's, on he plodded, through hot, white clouds of drastic turnpike

## THE ARMY MULE

dust, or red and hideous depths of gummy mud, dragging incredible burdens of those indispensable supplies that smooth war's wrinkled front and quell its clamoring emptiness. When he diffidently claimed his share of such supplies, he was given the marble heart or the dry and dreadful laugh—yea, the juiceless, mechanical laugh, with daggers in it.

Oh! liberty, what humbugs are nurtured in thy name! Prodded and flayed until his staggering knees, his welt-fretted haunches and his bloody nostrils placarded his agony, the Army Mule accepted the wideopen policy of his castigator and crunched his barmecide feasts, lacerated and scarified, hoping the brighter day.

Like the intoxicating bewilderment of a reception ball, decorated with roses, lilies, smilax, palms and electric illumination, come back to us those grateful reminiscences, crowded with apparitions of the maligned, mellifluous Mule. Leashed and shackled, foodless in the drizzly, sleety camp, when our quarrel with destiny was an octave higher

## THE ARMY MULE

than usual, his cheerful night cries, welcome as suicides to a coroner, exorcised the blue devils of our dolorous solitude.

While fumes of our priceless coffee floated pleasantly pungent like the cedar aroma of a moth closet, the tuneful echoes of those night cries floated also—Mule answering unto Mule in fond, fraternal recognition. Baptized with fire, adjacent or remote, even if only with its rumors and reflections, the pattering skirmish shots of distant action, he at length became a veritable veteran. Like a thrice-rejected suitor finally made happy, he had been well shaken before taken. And now, a warrior bold, seasoned to war's alarms, he could, upon occasion, thirst or seem to thirst for gore, with all the mad ferocity of a sheep smitten with hydrophobia, or a camel charged with nitroglycerine. Duplicating the awkwardness of man's debut into polite society delayed until past the meridian of life, this ardor of the mettled, military Mule, if late, was touchingly conspicuous.

Marching triumphant home, kneesprung but irrepressible, his large, luxuriant ears

## THE ARMY MULE

were tremulous with the hysterical emotions of the hour, and his double-turreted voice was loudest in the wild acclaim of victory. Long years he lived, it may be, wearing on knightly shoulder a proud insignia of his service, the indellible brand of honor, which no humility of avocation could degrade nor purse-proud aristocracy of money bags, the basest known on earth, condemn with impunity. And when the end comes, as come it must, even to the longevous Mule, then speechless and unspeakable at last and eternally, the flag under which he toiled might be put to worse uses than that of covering his emaciated frame as it is trundled off to the glue-factory.

I mean no disrespect to the flag.

That flag is our flag! Man has always and everywhere sought in bannered blazonries the symbol of a sovereign power. Everywhere and in all times some emblem of a might which confessed no mightier has led embattled hosts to triumph, and taught heroic spirits how sweet it is to die. The banner



## THE ARMY MULE

becomes the crystallization of the nation's life, and the embodiment of her glory, until fighting beneath it is patriotism, dying for it is immortality, and treachery to it is the blackest of crimes. Our flag of beauty and renown, descending to us from stainless sires by a shining pathway, pure as that down which the holy grail slipped from the opening heavens, won a new lustre in the hands of our generation. Overlapping each other in the crowding profusion of their golden legends, every stripe of our banner is weighty with its battle roll, even as each silver star burns the prime jewel in a crown of valorous achievement.

Donelson and Shiloh and Vicksburg; Nashville, and Murfreesboro, and Kenesaw; Winchester and South Mountain and Antietam; Gettysburg and the Wilderness and Appomattox—these and five hundred more. How the deathless names gild the resplendent folds of the proud ensign of liberty! Flag of the continent, rivers and seas; flag of a reunited country; flag of the glorious past and of the

## THE ARMY MULE

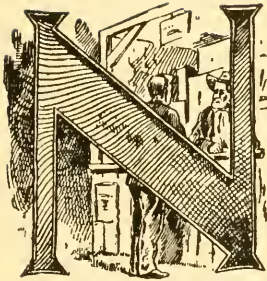
dimless future; flag of freedom; flag of the world!

Washed in the blood of the brave and the blooming.  
Snatched from the altars of insolent foes ;  
Burning with star-fires, but never consuming,  
Flash its broad ribbons of lily and rose.

Let us never cease to cherish the remembrance of the days when we followed it and fought for it. Among the soft, delicious echoes of those days which float booming across the ocean of memory will sometimes come, whether we greet it kindly or coldly, a sunny recollection of the seductive wink, the tuneful bray and the electric kick of the Army Mule.

## THE SUTLER

### II



NOW the time has arrived when this matter of the Sutler should be brought into its true alignment. His status should be differentiated and embalmed in due longitudinal sections of small pica. It should be finally settled whether he was the reincarnation of a seventeen-year locust, or only a pansy blossom, with lips all mute like a thinking star in the back row of a ballet. An excess of incertitude also prevails as to his rank and historic area. This latter at least should be staked out and cross-sectioned for the annals that portray scenes when heroes' heels were on the shore of Maryland, my Maryland;

## THE SUTLER

which annals are expected to go shimmering down festive centuries clothed in the perennial freshness of St. Shamrock's day in the morning.

The Sutler was born, not made. That is to say, his tendencies were ingrained, perhaps hereditary, even in cases where his selection was nepotic or accidental. Once he was purer than beautiful snow, it may be, but even then he was a Sutler in embryo. And when the beautiful snow was gone; when gentle spring had sprung and the croak of the crocus was heard in the land; when the premature robin, wearing a sore throat and lung-pads, came with hoarse notes whistling of peace when there was no peace, because Sumter had surrendered—then Sutlers blossomed out with the peach trees, to bear miscellaneous fruitage later on.

Army service gave technical nomenclature to many familiar avocations and characteristics. Smoked halibut by any other designation would be a thirst-provoker just the same. But some of these military titles were very effective disguises. The ecclesiastical

## THE SUTLER

monitor, from spur to plume a star of sanctimony, was called the chaplain. The pharmaceutical tenderloin, with a razor edge to his voice at sick-call ceremonies, was called a surgeon. The district messenger boy was called an adjutant, and could upon occasion play a notable poker game with the able assistance of his sleeve. The hearse thronged with blood-curdling Lady Macbeth suggestions was called an ambulance, and its driver, sure of dry lodgings, ranged high up in the Four Hundred. The speechless indispensable instrument of transportation, which performed most of the work and received none of the pay or glory, was called a mule, with various picturesque prefixes. The sergeant-major, noted for vast acrobatic ability and imposing length of leg, was called—everywhere. The colonel was often called a —— fool; the quartermaster was usually called a —— rascal; and the real rascal was sometimes known as the Sutler. The blanks represent profanity, which I abhor.

Before those subsequent halcyon days when it had been demonstrated by experience that

## THE SUTLER

the beneficent and plenteous sweet potato supplied the precise nutritive elements best calculated to evolve serene contentment and epicurean bliss; while yet each soldier was a voluble and self-satisfied critic of tactics, strategy, logistics, finance and diplomacy—then a Sutler's supplies were deemed absolutely essential to the successful prosecution of war. But even then a measurable discernment prevailed. Positive subtle, comparative and superlative Sutler, was an acceptable etymologic formula in many varieties of North American broken English. That was a period famous for the wild coinage of phraseological vacuums into available linguistic currency, and for the mad massacre of innocent idioms. If this formula is incorrect it should be promptly amended by some of the back-easty opinion architects who now lead public sentiment with a stub-pointed pen, in long-distance controversies with hired prevaricators of a capitalistic press out in Idaho, such as write their articles on birch bark and wear a coat only on legal holidays. We can not always trust the future, especially at our age.

## THE SUTLER

Corrections should be made now—the able editors need not all speak simultaneously.

The Sutler kept, or at least tried to keep, alleged articles of vertu for sale to the “boys,” so-called, meaning the soldiers. With warm hearts, cold feet, flexible stomachs, bashful consciences, and a perpetual feeling of weariness in the mouth, these “boys” constantly environed him from zenith to nadir and return. Selling was hard as teaching silver-tongued statesmen that cleanliness and godliness are contiguous. Keeping was harder than selling, and getting pay was hardest of all. Thus beset with hardships his lot rivaled in cheerlessness that of the scratcher in politics, with a wasp-waisted brain, a protuberant rectitude, a self-lubricating egotism, and exactly the minimum of soul that serves in lieu of salt to save his carcass from decay. What with shortage and leakage and stealage by pretended friends, often self-convicted like a young man with an indentation of corset steel in his cuffs, on the one hand, and imminent risk of capture by an alert enemy on the other hand, the Sut-

## THE SUTLER

ler's stock in trade was rather more uncertain than the salivary aim of a sociable Virginian.

The causes, incidents and results of the war in which he was a stockholder with personal liability, though not a managing director, were momentous to him as to all mankind, including such as still gnash their teeth over him and revile his memory. It was a turning point in the progress of a race; the culmination of a long series of political events; the breaking down of an extended line of political compromises futile as an attempt to combine finance with faro; the upheaval of a mountainous aggregation of suppressed political forces; the explosion of a mighty reservoir of hidden political combustibles; and in its attendant events, as well as its remote consequences, it was as tremendous a revolution as any which freights the records of human destiny. This must be remembered to the Sutler's credit as he drifts off into the subsequently.

It was a vast army. Why, its brass buttons alone weighed over a thousand tons! No Sutler was ever drafted into that army.



## THE SUTLER

Hence no Sutler ever hired a substitute and afterward suffered reproach for failure to weave immortelles around his sarcophagus. He could not wait for the draft; the last thing he desired was a substitute. He wanted to go himself. He volunteered early and often, with visible alacrity and enthusiasm. He frequently tumbled over himself in his eagerness to move the previous question, and blasphemed his own folly with plunging-shot fierceness a little later. As the aborigine exchangeth wampum for small-pox, silk hat and delirium tremens, so the sanguine Sutler often parted with peace of mind for very inadequate consideration. Rosy were his dreams of rolling, gloating wealth; cruel his awakening to the paralyzing verity. Frailty, thy name is fortune! Only an expert can distinguish between an asset and a liability.

Acquit him in advance of hypocrisy and thus clarify the record. Money was his avowed objective, the richly upholstered goal of his solicitude,—money, even if merely accumulated for division among the lawyers retained to break a will, as too frequently event-

## THE SUTLER

uates. For him one crowded shower of glorious gold was worth a whole aurora borealis of golden glory, earned at thirteen dollars a month and half rations. Others might fight battles or write ballads for his country; he was content to peddle its "Thomas and Jeremiah" fluid in flat tin cans, surreptitious, villainous, and expensive. Others might stand like Sheridan at Stone's river, holding his division amidst a cyclone of shotted flame; he only asked a front seat at the payable. Others might manage the finances of a nation and temper wind to shorn shams; he only petitioned that Sutler's checks be made full legal tender in his military division. Others might yearn or pretend to yearn for bleeding wounds and storied busts; sufficient unto him was two hundred per cent. profit on cove oysters of antiquity. Like a fashionable belle, his heart was always in the right place—the market place. Honor and fame from no such conditions rise.

Pardonable then was his wrath when edibles and potables disappeared unpaid for into parts unknown save to the Latin tongue,

## THE SUTLER

whence they could be recovered only by the gentle persuasion of a stomach pump. Thus the yellow coinage of his rapt preliminary visions faded incomprehensibly into nothingness. Thus he emulated the survivors of a cholera epidemic who only hear in happy dreams the footsteps of return. Give him air! He had cause for chagrin equal to that of the Senegambian colony with a new coon in town and no heat hot enough to roast a 'possum. He had a right to grow apoplectic with fury and devastate the camp like a commercial maelstrom or a political avalanche. He righteously resented; he piously protested. He were a craven else, and the heir and ancestor of cravens. Do you laugh at him? So did Sarah laugh at the angels, but they laughed last

That the Sutler's gallantry in action was specially exemplified in a "charge," is a chestnut bald and hoary with unchallenged longevity. It is one of those remarks that vegetate through a sequence of drowsy centuries, to reappear during each spring season of chronology with a masterful reach that

## THE SUTLER

brushes cobwebs from the skies and topples chimneys down. Representative war-humorists who ride astride the whistling winds, spurting effluent sluices of word-wash, and typical war orators sorely afflicted with engorgement of vocabulary, combine to exploit this moldy scintillation, joint product of brain sweat and elbow unguent. They talk through their chapeaux. Every man is a quotation from his forefathers. Every pun is a quotation from paleocrystic cerebration. As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is misprint witticism to the properly instructed intelligence. It is wicked to laugh at a bishop; it is criminal to laugh at jokeless jocularity. He who can separate eloquence from the gastric gases and distinguish between the sharps and flats of *facetia*, suppressing his intellectual impatience at the unbridled linguistic solecism, may pertinently ask: Wherefore not? To charge was human, but to collect was sublime; always difficult, often impossible. The credit a Sutler was obliged to give was often as long as a plea in chancery. He was the old man not

## THE SUTLER

afraid of eternity; and the prospective extended term of payment, if happily payment should ever come at all, was a prime element in adjusting margins of profit. His sole competitor in this line of making a charge is said to be the modern plumber—he of the slow step and quick respiration redolent of raw onions—he of the small tenderness and large bill. But that is a chestnut musty as the other. Boycott both of them! Only a man of most stomachful and gunpowder instincts, a warrior and a blood-quaffer from aforetime, could long survive the rueful infliction of either.

Although war without a Sutler would have been a barren ideality, worse than politics without the negro, or the free coiner, or the prohibitionist not taxed, yet even with him there was a not infrequent flaw in its felicities. The fact may even at this late day be duly verified by numerous surviving old soldiers, that when he was wanted he was seldom there, and when he was there he seldom had what was wanted. Milk for babes; skim milk for pigs and calves; buttermilk for dys-

## THE SUTLER

peptic opulence. Beverages more pungent, searching and responsive were in demand at the Sutler's tent. He trafficked within complex circumscriptions; always threatened with craft and rapacity; always perspiring with fear like the marble statues in Rome at the approach of Hannibal; always liable to be welcomed with bloody hands to an inhospitable calamity. No country cross-roads grocer's assortment was his, reeking with pestiferous perfume of salt fish and sauerkraut; filling the air with a duchess of limburger reminiscence, which was liable to cause the effigy of freedom on her mountain height to experience a very tired feeling. The etiquette of war and the eternal laws of military necessity governed his movements and halts, his stations and stock, his buying and selling. None of the syrupy sweetness and languid trickle of spring poetry voiced his experiences, tempting to practices incompatible with the professions of one who desires to lead an earnest life. The list of his permissibles embraced a varied miscellany of *non-desiderata*, vast as the outfit of the greatest show on this or any

## THE SUTLER

other earth. The catalogue of contraband exhibited numberless objects of universal allurements. Peradventure his lockers held six gross of pale pills for pink people (no buyer); meantime his patrons clamored for cheese, cheese, when there was no cheese; not a microbe. Marvel not that wrath accumulated and men bewailed—some men never do get through teething.

Thus the irony of his fortune was more bitter than the jollity of a wake, with the corpse lying in state next door. While popular articles were quickly sold or stolen, the residuary stuff, howling abominations which none would buy or steal, lingered flyblown or fermenting. They were satirized and flouted by the dullest varlets in the regiment, who were notably afflicted with Ananias-and-Sapphira paresis, and to whom life's solemnest solemnities were a grimace and a grin. 'Tis ever thus, for human nature has been the same since the earliest ages began developing a monogram mania, when the sons of the stars first fascinated the daughters of men. Every true and honorable mob always holds

## THE SUTLER

in scornful contempt each simplest symbol of constituted authority, especially when constituted by itself. Even so, all genuine soldiers felt obliged to flee and jeer at everything hidden or concealed in that cavern of despair wherein our hero reigned. They gave him the marble heart in the loud three-em dash newspaper style of emphasis. They swore by the dorsal fins of a planked white fish that he was a paroxysmal, flamboyant fraud, and showered on him weird variations of the standard oriental malediction; may his countenance be inverted diagonal-wise, and donkeys browse on his grandmother's grave! They floated him to perdition hourly on the brimstone vapors of their anathema, and soon beckoned him back again in the renaissance of their whetted appetite. Then he assumed a fictitious importance, sufficient indeed in more recent times to have almost entitled him to arrive at a New York hotel.

Probably no Sutler's stock was ever submitted to the critical and crucial operation of an inventory, presided over by an expert accountant's freshly laundered mustache, and



## THE SUTLER

cold, cruel, thin-lipped smile. The variety of such an inventory would be as attractive as that of the village landlord's menu—ram, lamb, sheep and mutton. Its metaphysics would be unique as a bi-metallic understudy; its mathematics only less recondite than a census of the baccilli encysted in the buzzard's beak on a standard dollar, mintage of 'eighty-one. An exhaustive attempt, at the present day, to remedy this omission would certainly involve serious risk of undue spiritual exhilaration and intellectual intoxication. But a partial list, achieved at any specified stage of a vigorous campaign, would have read something like this:

Wooden combs and Mexican spurs.

Gutta-percha bivalves (cove).

Pretzels—prophetic of the hard, hard times which marked an era of Hoke Smith and Dink Botts statesmanship.

Effete cigars, bunch-grass filling, wrapped in genuine Havana onion leaves at Wethersfield, in the state of Connecticut.

Plug tobacco advanced in ossification.

Smoking ditto, premonitory of asbestos;

## THE SUTLER

infinite in capacity for provocation; imitating in incombustibility the sullen defiance of a dead, cold epigram.

Epsom salts.

Smoked herring, also salt.

Gingerbread, composted chiefly of sawdust, coal slack, tar, syrup and chopped feed.

Joke books, solemn as the summersault of the trick elephant in his dotage.

Cookies, tough enough to be handed down as heirlooms to the Weary Waggleses of futurity.

Rancid sardines, to be swallowed fin and scale, head and tail.

Pistol cartridges, watch keys, jack-knives, pills, and lead pencils conspicuous chiefly for brittleness.

Bologna sausages of the conglomerate era, petrified; like our glorious Union, invincible and indivisible.

Engine-turned pickles, submerged in carbolic acid and frosted with vitriol crystals; positively antiscorbutic.

Incohesive tooth-brushes cut loose from their base of supplies.

## THE SUTLER

Long clay pipes after the form æsthetically affected by the honest Hollander, bibulous, amphibious and narcotic.

Dry figs and wormy raisins, savory as the juice of hard tack or tent-pin syrup.

Anonymous liquid perdition in sneaking disguises, which, judged by its taste, was a cheap grade of *spiritus strychniti*, but judged by its price was molten pearl diluted with dissolved diamond.

Sundries, etc., etc.

Supposed necessaries of luxurious military existence some of these, more or less urgent even when subsisting on the enemy. In that case the conversion by assimilation of Confederate provender into Yankee bone and sinew was a delicious, romantic, patriotic, praiseworthy function. The patriots rather enjoyed this process, but they welcomed assistance from the foregoing catalogue.

Many articles were purchasable only in those *post-pay-day* periods when the center of financial gravity had been shifted by the exigencies of chuck-a-luck and old sledge from many pockets to one. It is an eminent-

## THE SUTLER

ly usable list, resources permitting. Few of the impracticable inutilities of dollar stores or charity bazaars lift here their suspected forms, requiring us to exhaust all statutory and common-law remedies against conspiracy to do great bodily harm. Few of the frabbles are seen which adorn and dignify the dress-suit breakfast given by smirking domestic snobs to a titled foreign fraud, unintelligible as a Blavatsky theosophist. Yet even these, to the insatiate askers of the bivouac, would never quite suffice. Do what he could, the Sutler was ever fated to get himself disliked. A boy is a series of accidents at best. Some of the recruits in their haste to enlist forgot to provide themselves with a girl to leave behind. Those persons, unnerved by the bewildering entanglements of Hardee's tactics, and with no restorative compensations, were never satisfied. They were iron-jawed steam-talkers of calamity, perpetually assailing the walls of rebellion with huge explosions of wrath, and the flaps of the Sutler's tent with the roar of their grumbling. Deafening was their clamor for some absent staple to which

## THE SUTLER

distance lent the deceptive enchantment of a dining-car menu; deep their dismay that it was not held perennially on tap. Providence, assisted by timely hints from the wagon master, sometimes brought the supply trains within speaking distance by flag signal. But no discoverable influence ever succeeded in keeping a Sutler's stock up to high-water mark of gustatory demand. And all was in the ultimate cooked down to dire alternative of buy (or steal) and have, or do without and gnaw a file and swear.

As a rule the radiant and responsive Sutler embarked on his voyage militant with more or less capital and credit to back up the spirit of acquisitiveness which possessed him with all its quenchless inflammation. They were either his own, or that of the silent partner who procured his appointment, mayhap a modest and mouse-colored statesman from the remote suburbs, but whose identity was a secret between himself and high heaven. Both capital and credit were prone to evanescence equal to that of the pungent delicacy called quinine, sole sworn antidote to innu-

## THE SUTLER

merable gastric plagues. They oozed as oozed insurgent hopes when Vicksburg fell, and the Confederacy, like the vail of Solomon's temple, was rent in twain. A balance sheet after one year's multiplication of tribulation, if the victim managed to survive that long, would usually disclose, on the one side, liabilities to the full extent of capital plus credit as aforesaid, the latter perhaps pitted with very large small-pox scars. On the other side was an array of dubious assets, embracing chiefly a tattered tent, a shattered wagon and a battered team, five hundred pounds of scorned sundries, sour and fusty, together with a fat ledger-full of "charges" against the killed, wounded and missing, who by a mysterious fatality had been his largest if not his only patrons. Hence this vexation that made him say things innocent youth should not be permitted to hear. Hence those tears, scalding even the nickel-steel armor of his cheeks. Therefore those sobs, soulful as if wrung from the viscera of a sixteen-dollar melodeon. Who hath hoarseness of voice? The tearful penitent afflicted with

## THE SUTLER

mouth-gout and knee-failure on the morning after a debauch; he speaks in muffled tones suggestive of a chastening headache. Who hath redness of eyes? Surely he that tarry-eth long over a Sutler's trial balance, consecrated to the apotheosis of infinitesimals.

The Sutler was subject to a military discipline varying from the fierce precision of a Springfield rifle to the grotesque, picturesque and variegated eccentricities of an Austrian musket. He ranked a trifle lower than a mule, but a fraction higher than a corporal. In that principally, if mislaid or lost in action, he did not need to be officially accounted for in the returns like a mule, and would have slightly better prospects than a corporal of posthumous mutilation as to cognomen in the telegrams. The law recognized him and orders shielded him. That was theory. The veterans jeered at him as at the inexpressibly uncouth antics of the drafted raw disciple; everybody kicked and cursed and plundered him. That was practice. The difference was palpable as a headlight scarfpin; startling as the butcher's bill after a charge on

## THE SUTLER

repeating rifle pits; significant as the evolution of a human female form divine from cow-skin frock and burlap leggins of semi-savagery to high-shouldered polka-dot robings of advanced civilization—further exalted with a laudable ambition to improve the breed of pug puppies.

The Sutler had no status on parade, review or inspection. In the small tinkle and smear of preparatory smatter which preluded these symbolic mummeries, grewsome as tableaux of Chicago option matrimony (three years with the privilege of five), he was totally ignored. He was out of date like the hot biscuit of our ancestors with its yellow saleratus pungency—an auriferous bichloride of alkali. He was forgotten; full satisfaction guaranteed. When the long wavy or waveless tangent of bayonets, rustless or rusty as the case might be, stood forth aligned by a tempestuous adjutant with gestures mysterious and masonic, the unobtrusive Sutler, clothed in clouds of invisibility, affronted no tenderness of occult proprieties by any tangible revelation. He was out of sight, like the costumes of Tyrolean



## THE SUTLER

peasantry, variegated with macaroni braidings. He was absent, conferring perhaps with some ragged Haggard from Coxeyville; terms private and no questions asked. When ambidextrous battalions broke by right of companies to the rear into column, and, emulating the conscious mastery of a Sampson hiving his mellifluous swarm in the lion's lordly breast, swept past the statuesque chief of review with resistless swing and strides invincible, he marched not! He sat in seclusion like the stage manager of a bicycle tournament; he rested in abeyance, scorched with scorn and broiling on hot epithets, in the stratified attitude of a listener trying to hear himself cogitate; he waited patiently, vibrating from gay to grave, from saucy to sincere; he lingered; no presents, no flowers. When the reckless inspector snapped hammers and jingled rammers and squinted inquisitively into muskets' murderous mouths, our friend the Sutler, profoundly versed in the preciousness of cautiousness, was nowhere seen. There was no hayseed in his brain; there were no flies on his intellect. With just enough body,

## THE SUTLER

perhaps, to serve as pretext for a soul to stay on earth, his great head was crowded from pit to dome with prudence. He had read of premature explosions and was satisfied; he had no wish to be wounded by an accidental discharge of his duty; to him eyesight was a poem and each finger a benediction; he was brave to recklessness, but even his minor members were precious; he blew into no muzzles, for safety is sweeter than fame; children half price.

The most startling of all war reminiscences perhaps was that revealed in far northern Michigan more than twenty years after Lee's surrender. A party of skaters built huge bonfires on thick ice and finally thawed out an imprisoned echo of bellum days, which cried impressively with the broad, plaintive, querulous, rebel accent of long ago: "All we want is to be let alone!" This current Confederate shibboleth expressed the luminous Sutler's abiding desire. Even when brass music stormed the camp as with whiffs of canister and grape, deluging all ears in torrents of harmonious discord, he failed to materialize, Suspicious of invidious comparison with the

## THE SUTLER

bluff drum major's majestic gorgeousness, he relieved the strain by withdrawing the infectious pestilence of his overshadowing personality. He vanished like a beautiful dream; relatives might call and learn something to their advantage. There were different opinions as to his whereabouts—but then it is difference of opinion that supports pool rooms as well as church choirs. Concord and discord were alike unheeded. The drum's glum rumble; the mighty trombone's round, re-echoed roar; the feeble fierceness of cracked clarionet; the hissing tortures of the tormented horn tuned to the shrieks of lacerated souls; the witchbroth symphony from eye of newt and nose of frog and bar of gospel hymn that drips in blistering spirals out of tone-shattering fifes; the ghastly ground-swell's undertone that floats this fumid wreckage of assassinated sound upon its bleeding bosom—all these and other aggravated vibratory horrors searched for him vainly in the nooks and corners of a disgusted atmosphere. He was gone; front seats reserved for friends of the family.

## THE SUTLER

Hence when, if ever, the Sutler shall be monumentalized in imperishable staff, it will be in none of those attitudes spectacular. An attitude of watchfulness, of expectancy, of expostulation, or of despair like one in last stages of the Baconian theory, were nearest truth to nature. The flashing outbreaks of his fiery mind, the sorrows of his overloaded heart, no carven stone or molded bronze can portray to skeptical contemporaries, or transmit to an undeserving, unbelieving posterity.

If the post of danger is the post of real honor, the Sutler has been scandalously overlooked in all awards. His assigned position at the rear during an advance, and in front during a retreat, fatally exposed him to depredations of the mixed society indigenous thereto. Encompassed with perils, a floating Atlantis mislaid in a cannibal archipelago, his only resource was rat-eyed vigilance and brass-breasted audacity. A recital of his exploits in defending the citadel wherein his precious perishables lay would shine with the story of Farragut lashed to a mast, or Hooker bombarding rainbows, a veritable torch-light

## THE SUTLER

procession down the dark avenues of history. Painting him in gaudy hues would be as unæsthetic as offering green goggles to a Delsarte club. But a mild touch of eulogy, a harmless ginger-pop effervescence of panegyric, may supposedly be ventured before we throw him on the tender mercies of posterity. Would Sir Patrick's famed toast to the "bloody 69th"—"The last in the field and the first to leave it; equal to none!"—pass muster? If so, who will begrudge? None, we defiantly aver, unless it be some surviving marauder, overloaded with bias and twisted with prejudice until his withers are wrung, who once wore a half-shaved head for Sutler-burglary, then trod the brambly path of humiliation out of camp to the tune of "Rogue's March," while sad breezes sighed through rents in his respectability.

What a magnificent army that was, in which we served—one of the grandest in numerical strength, by far the grandest in its intelligence, its achievements and its inspiration, whereof the world holds record.

Ninus of Assyria, 2200 B. C., led against

## THE SUTLER

the Bactrians a force of 1,700,000 foot, 200,000 horse, and 16,000 chariots armed with scythes.

Cyrus besieged Babylon with 600,000 foot and 120,000 horse.

Italy, a little before Hannibal's time, was able to send into the field nearly 1,000,000 men. Yet Hannibal, during his campaign in Italy and Spain, plundered 400 towns and destroyed 300,000 people.

When Xerxes arrived at Thermopylæ his force by land and sea aggregated 2,641,610, according to Herodotus, a weighty worthy man, and worth his weight in sesterces.

January 1, 1861, the army of the United States consisted of nineteen regiments of all arms, numbering, present and absent, 16,402 officers and men. From April 1, 1861, to April 28, 1865, a monthly average of 56,000 men, a large army in itself, was recruited, equipped and supplied for the volunteer forces. At the last-named date 1,034,064 volunteers, after four years' casualties of war, were actually in the service. From first to last 2,678,967 men were mustered in, constituting 1,668

## THE SUTLER

regiments of infantry, 232 of cavalry and 52 of artillery—total 1,952 regiments. In three months, from May 7th to August 7th, 1865, a total of 640,806 troops were mustered out of service and restored to the ranks of productive citizenship. The cost of the war to the United States government has been measured in money at \$3,963,159,751.15. The states in rebellion aggregated an area of 733,144 square miles, with 12,572 miles of navigable rivers, 2,523 miles of sea coast and 7,031 miles of inland boundary.

With these facts for a basis we may, if courageous, institute comparisons with the great events of history. Courage is essential. A page of fulminating statistics is as dangerous to the unwary as a loaded gun-boat floating with the current, cocked, capped and aimed below the water line. In a village ignorant of the science of the division of labor, one may get his child christened by the same artist who repaired his boots. In certain localities one may revel, so to speak, in the enjoyments of a broad phase of humor, based on fried onions, carbolized tar and commodi-

## THE SUTLER

ties of that sort, or of a broad plane of sociability, based on plug tobacco, pint flasks and discussion of dog pedigrees. But in the higher realms of statistics, and other like researches, success depends upon the cultivation of devoted courage, courageous fortitude, and a subtle intellectuality intricate as the distorted diagram on the face of a moss agate.

Fenimore Cooper depicts the army Sutler of the Revolutionary contest as a woman; habitually Irish; rubicund, snuffy, blasphemous and addicted to gin—in brief an object of charity, socially and pecuniarily. She can be fitted out, without violence to probability, with an eye like a cross-section of hard boiled egg, and the shallow retreating brow of an ibex; also with cotton in her ears. Her clothing might easily have been fished out at random from a box of contributions to hail-storm sufferers. Her coquettish, curly locks were doubtless of oakum texture and solferino tinge. This much is conjectural, for when we read on and learn that she was the camp washerwoman we abandon the pursuit forth-



## THE SUTLER

with. Like flowers that bloom in the Japanese spring, she has nothing to do with the case. She vanishes like a congressman (before the czar era) constructively absent when a quorum is to be burst. The Sutler of our more refined war period was of the man masculine. No woman could have filled this requisition, even in those days of Brigham Young's multi-wife propaganda. No woman could have fought the good fight and kept the stock in such a crisis, even with her trousseau reduced to a calico basis. Where languorous lilies fill the eye with beauty, let the gentler sex abide. A woman in our Sutler's sphere would have been more useless than the horse that sustains superannuated relations to a fire department. She would have been more expensive than the funeral of a deceased statesman charged to the contingent fund; more dangerous than a damp basement. During twenty centuries, while among men the glorious Roman has degenerated into the monkey-tamer, woman, on the contrary, has greatly advanced. And the advanced woman has apparently come to stay. The ethereal creature who succumbed

## THE SUTLER

to tight lacing has vanished. A stronger, sterner class succeed. The manly miss comes forward, and her demands are something sumptuous. Nothing less than the mandarin's full yellow jacket and peacock feather will suffice. But the most fluent champion of uplifted femininity never dared to rise with a whirl to claim this dizzy pre-eminence of a Sutlership. The cut of her garments may be virile and chic, still she aspired not so high. The bravest of meat-stall heroines, with slaughter-house eyes and leaf-lard complexion, may declaim suffrage syllogisms with the witchery of a South Missouri angel, and her young man may tear his hair in angry anguish at the thought, but Sutlerships transcend the ambition of both.

Of the man masculine was our Sutler. Not a woman. Neither a dude. No gallon of gall in a plaid suit, owed for, could have endured, for one short seething, scorching month, these multiplex ordeals of catastrophe. At the current quadrennial round-up of aspirants, when the internal revenue bung-smeller parades his political scars, the dude is some-

## THE SUTLER

times seen—in the Sutler's tent never. He would have suffered all the agonies of a bullock threatened with corn-cob strangulation, and no compensatory convictions. It were better to be staked out in the legislative vestibule as custodian of cuspidors. We have been generous in extending the elective franchise to naturalized citizens and all who declare their intention to become such—probably too generous. We have encouraged foreign nations to work off their damaged and unsalable goods on us, in the immigrant line, as in other lines. But we have never been cruel. We have pitied the sorrows of our rich young man. We have certainly never been cruel enough to expose our helpless, inferior fellow-creatures, those curled darlings of dandydom, to vicissitudes like that of the Sutlership. That were an infamy fit to make the green goods gouge and the gold brick trick eminently respectable by comparison. Dudes have their function. So have train-boys and other calamities. So have rose sherbet and chewing gum; so have lambrequins and doilies. But not in war time.

## THE SUTLER

Neither they nor any other gin-fizz effervescence of intangible ephemera. Their fate in such surroundings would be sad as that of the tough but meritorious army mule, who survived all war's perils, and thirty years later shattered his hind leg, from hoof to hip, on the chin of a traveling highwines apostle from Louisville. There was absolutely no place for the dude in our army life. The velvet of his voice would speedily roughen. One week of hard bread would ruin his teeth; one day's rasp of the wind would utterly devastate his complexion. The rural visitor who begins his city experiences by being piloted to a bunco bank, and ends them by being piloted to a pawn-shop, would encounter no more swift, inglorious career. The horrors of the zero season are intensified when the man with a cold in his head insists on discussing financial issues with us at every turn. The inconveniences of army life were pronounced enough, as it was, without the further infliction of the dreadful dude, in Sutler's trains or elsewhere. Nay, verily! This small erratum of nature, this insectiverous insignificance, had no place

## THE SUTLER

or function there. Heredity endowed him with an intellect requiring a three months' vacation four times a year, and fate left him to the full enjoyment thereof. Fortunately for the credit of this nation the rebellion was efficiently and sufficiently suppressed without his infinitesimal assistance.

It is a sad and significant fact that the navy had no Sutlers. The sailors and marines missed the picturesque inspiration of his ministering service; the exuberant and perennial freshness of his presence; the sounding brass of his tickling symbols. Our surviving web-footed compatriots modestly demand that due recognition be accorded their important branch of the belligerent forces. In making and enforcing claims to our attention, their honest clamor fills the sea-coast air, from Greenland's icy icebergs to Charleston's shifting sands. And they have right. Did not each base of our supplies rest on a waterway patrolled by gunboats? Were not all our armies named from streams along which their fraternal tin-clads trolleyed and thundered? Was not brave Jack always ready,

## THE SUTLER

manning the yards, when we fell back for reinforcements, and the like, to receive us with three cheers and a Dartmouth yell? Did not the Monitor, that grand old frigate, without a sail, a mast, a rope, a stem, a stern, a yard-arm or a bowsprit, steam straight into the core of our hearts, and ram her chilled steel nostrils far and away into the realms of historic muse?

The naval veteran of to-day, working his chin industriously to keep his teeth tight and vigorously dodging as best he may the wiles of the world, the flesh and the politicians, complains at times that scant allusion crops out in war reunions to episodes wherein he figures lustrously. Here let full justice be freely done. For Farragut and Foote and Porter, for Dupont, Dahlgren, and a hundred more, and all their thousands of devoted, daring shipmates, let honors thicken with the passing years, and glories brighten as the centuries roll on! The same glad impulse burned within their breasts; the same great triumphs gilded their endeavor. Their manners and methods differed widely from

## THE SUTLER

ours, but in aim and motive we are one. It is their good fortune never to have known how much they lost in having not the solace of the Sutler. It was not their fault.

The young recruit, christened Zephaniah, was not responsible therefor, because he experienced his origin at a period when he was powerless to direct results. If good people would only learn to vote as they pray, it might possibly be different. But let even a marine run up against a brace game in Dead Man's Gulch, and permanent enlightenment is liable to eventuate. And when the atmosphere of our homes grows mephitic with the odor of satanic journalism, we may perhaps awaken to the danger of cultivating depravities that are calculated to stimulate a boom in the brimstone market.

Connecticut produced a learned pig which could read; New York, not to be outdone, exhibits some educated donkeys that can write, that can even edit newspapers, have done it, have been caught in the very act, and, alas, seem inclined to boast of it. When such things can be, and overcome us like a sum-

## THE SUTLER

mer sunshade, why marvel that the navy had no Sutler? If a shattered and battered son of the sea comes forward now and then to bask in the glow of that comradeship we so fondly cherish, let us bid him jolly welcome. In that long period which elapsed between the dates when President Jefferson Davis was captured in confidential costume and President Grover Cleveland escaped from the congressional trocha, our people were steadily but very slowly growing to an appreciation of their numerous blessings. During this period many a stranded ex-sailor found himself filled with the vague unrest of a rural legislator who for the first time carries a railroad pass in his pocket. The yearning for travel was irresistible. He has thus projected himself into the sphere of our observation as far inland as Indianapolis or Omaha. If we have not seized the opportunity to thank him for Hampton Roads, and Mobile Bay, and Fort Saint Phillip and Pittsburg Landing and Fort Fisher, for New Orleans and Pensacola and Galveston, we have ignored a binding obliga-



## THE SUTLER

tion and neglected a golden opportunity. Let us ignore, neglect no longer.

We yield him full measure of credit. We regret more than words can express that he never enjoyed the felicity of having a Sutler. If one were accessible he should be introduced to him, even now!

The impression which seems to be somewhat currently prevalent, in circles usually well informed on financial topics, that many of the largest fortunes of our present era were founded on the war-profits of army Sutlers, is manifestly erroneous. It is at all times easier to get poor in a minute than rich in a month, according to one of the wise saws of the transcendental orientals. The wealthy widow who has wasted her substance in riotous trolley parties can verify it. Fortunes have originated in the profits of army contracts, judiciously invested in well-slanted real estate at Pittsburg or Cincinnati. Their inheritors have perhaps reached congress where they speak speeches prescribed for them by a scrivener. Upon the condemned horses of the thrifty quartermaster, or sunken cargoes

## THE SUTLER

of costly oats duly accounted for by economical commissaries, mysteriously materializing later in tangible cash, large estates have been based. They were mostly dissipated thereafter by extensive land-purchases in remote regions notable chiefly for a particularly brazen sky and a specially mean annual temperature, where the prairie dog yelps to his or her mate as the case may be, sole disturbers of all the dismal silence in nature's vast immensity.

Even the sumptuous pay of the pampered and envied private soldiers, the magnificent stipend of thirteen dollars a month equal to an average of at least six dollars in the precious gold of that period, was sometimes duly hoarded at compound interest. This, with occasional mining stock speculations on the side, may have rolled up in the course of a generation to that standard of affluence which glitters with hope of dowry to dudes or alimony to divorce lawyers. Believe it ye who can; assert it ye who dare. It would not be incredible. The first kiss, alas! often leads to more.

Balder fictions have found credence at the

## THE SUTLER

chrysanthemum club, where the lack luster eye of the effete plunger gazes into the gurgling optic of the breadstuff debauchee, and where harvesting a royal flush is the leading industry. Wilder improbabilities were widely swallowed before the Russian Israelites landed on our coast and introduced their rich nut-brown flavor to the ward caucus, together with the corrugated spirituality of a bethel-vocalist and the vulcanized nerve of a Tammany leader. Statements like those might pass current in village drug stores, where streams of limpid, scented crystal burst forth from marbled iron fountains at five cents per burst. Rumors equally incredible have floated around unchallenged at *recherché* receptions given by Mrs. Olof Swenson, of the James River Valley, S. D., to the local colonial dames. Notwithstanding all this, such allegations as these, with due, determined effort, might be made to harmonize with possibility like a red cart with a sorrel mule.

But no properly fertilized intellect can ever germinate a supposition that the rudiments of even one contemporaneous million were laid

## THE SUTLER

in the career of a Sutler. A hundred shillings invested in trade will give a man meat and wine; in acres it will give him cabbage and salt, wrote another astute Arabian—or mayhap the same. But the Sutler trade is a valid and visible exception, verified by experience, costly as an Indian outbreak and conclusive as the rebound of a London free-trade banquet in the wilds of West Virginia.

Poets of every class have license to festoon life's oasis, *et cetera*, with platitudes and illogical assertions. But historians, like the undersigned, must deal in fragments of the eternal verity. Even the strawberry roan versifier of Zanesville, shouting through a hole in his headgear, would burst his organ of ideality in the effort to imagine heirs for the Sutler. He never gave them kingdoms or dollars. They can not shake their crimped bangs at him and say he eats pie with a knife, and absorbs soup with emphasis from the end of a spoon. They can not give him the cold and gurgling laugh—he never cultivated them beyond the radius of their capacity, and endowed them with wealth beyond their powers

## THE SUTLER

of assimilation. In all the wide, wild stretch of liars from Ananias to Zola, none will be found bold enough to assert it.

If the descendants of the Sutler are snobs and sneaks and shams, social swells and moral lepers, with breath sweetly perfumed and hearts bitter as Peruvian bark tempered with aloes, they owe no part of their equivocal character or position to the influence of wealth derived from him, for he had none. Thus by his lack of lucre to bequeath, he has avoided many horrible and torturing responsibilities. For a man who has been ruined by a woman there is no law and no judge. The inheritor of lightly won riches enters the race for success in life with a handicap weighty as the breech of a disabled columbiad.

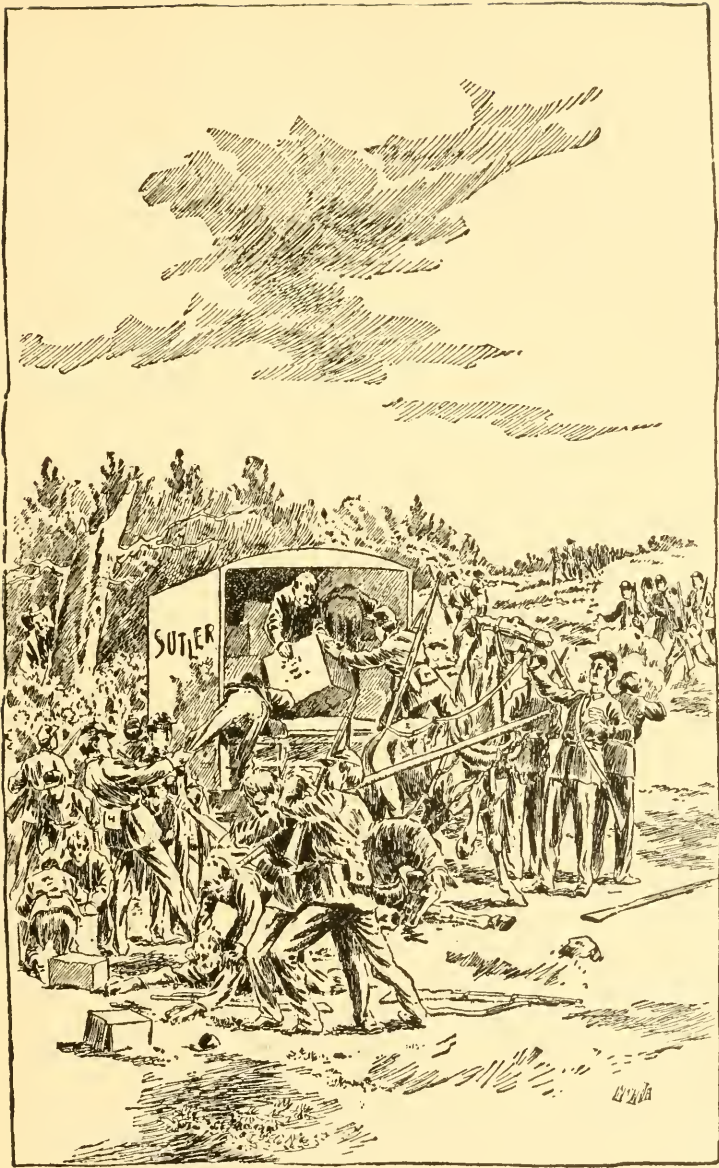
Gaze not upon the red rectification of the illicit still; quaff sparingly the purple vintage of the Iowa drug store; yield not to temptation at the stage of a game where the jack-pot boils over; drop not your precious cash into the open palm of financial enthusiasts whose soaring souls see cloudbursts of wealth in ev-

## THE SUTLER

ery fleece of floating vapor; yield no credence to the millionaire who boasts of his large inheritance from a Sutler's profits.

As a rallying point in battle, rivaling redans, redoubts and parapets, rifle-pits, abatis and *chevaux-de-frise*, the Sutler's wagon has been apostrophized in many bursts of eloquence at reunion banquets where wit and wine flow sparkling like the dew. When thrust out between contending armies by design or accident, that modest vehicle became a glittering prize worth fighting for and risking amputations for, beside which even the old flag paled for a space its ineffectual splurge.

Friends, comrades who had lived together in the little shelter tent, slept under the same blanket, divided the scanty ration and drank from the same canteen, rallied around its doubtful treasures with all the swift energy of a benzine explosion. Foes, hungry as sawtooth sharks, assailed and reassailed it, the rich fruition of their whetted desires. Where was the hilarious Sutler then with his bluegrass fertility of resource? Neither in that beleaguered thesaurus nor even entrenched



. . . But likeliest from safe shelter of some commodious,  
commanding stump, observing the struggle with a rural Sunday  
morning cheerfulness (Page 135)





## THE SUTLER

beneath it, you may confidently affirm, but likeliest from safe shelter of some commodious, commanding stump, observing the struggle with a rural Sunday morning cheerfulness. Like George Eliot's hero, he is lord of the moment's change and can charge it with his soul.

The rich man unlearned in logic hires logic in form of a lawyer to prove anything it is profitable to have proven. So a Sutler, destitute of arms, knows that his armed compatriots will rescue his appetizing goods from the enemy's most ferocious onslaughts, howbeit but to be skinned and skimmed by themselves next moment before his horror-smitten face, with comments recordable only in violation of several salubrious enactments for the suppression of blasphemy,

Perhaps tradition has been too caustic or too facetious in its treatment of the unarmed soldiers who honored us with their comradeship — the chaplain, the surgeon and the Sutler. Of the army preacher, who filled his sacred office worthily as many did, let due and reverent acknowledgment be made, in

## THE SUTLER

grateful memory of benignant functions purely administered; "the gowned goslings, who were goslings before they were gowned," let us in mercy and in pity commit to the tenderness of eternal silence. The typical army doctor was skillful, devoted, brave and self-sacrificing; at the front amid the blaze and storm of battle; in the rear wrestling with festering wounds or wasting fevers and contagions; everywhere his welcome, hopeful features beamed in gracious blessing on us at our sorest need, and each of us who lives to-day can name the surgeon to whom that life is due. Even the Sutler, of whom we have been treating subjectively and perhaps too unceremoniously herein, when reduced to his objective individual status, has often supplied material for illustrating the highest grade of patriotic heroism. The Sutlership was an agency not devoid of utility, not without the noblest possibilities, by no means unworthy of honor. Let no poet of the war, sitting in the refreshment of the foliage of his phrases and sipping the coolness of the gases of his gall, dare ignore

## THE SUTLER

these patent, blatant truths of history. Or if he do, let him be doubly and trebly ware! It is certain that enough scattered, incontrovertible, granite bowlders of fact lie snugly imbedded in the conglomerate of fancy, to roll forward at the final round-up and everlastingly necropolize him.

Where is the Sutler now? Vanished from our ken and beyond all cavil non-existent.

History has few parallels to this absolute obliteration of a species. The bronzed old admiral emeritus is still extant, with tar on his heel and salt in his eyebrows. Generals in active service thread the German's mazes, agile as when in slim-waisted cadet days they paced flirtation walk, in all the pomp and circumstance of glorious gray. The retired list, infallible patent of longevity, lifts high its proud engrossment of venerable colonels and brigadiers, spattered at times with ill-flavored congressional epithets and blown about by every breeze of statesmanship, but yielding still its liberal monthly stipend; there too the Sutler's brief, broad, brambly service is unrecognized. The village boaster boast-

## THE SUTLER

eth still his grand exploits as the sunset of life crowns a mystical bore. But no Sutler is here or there discerned.

Our pension rolls bear names scarce short a million, but his holds there no objurated blazonry. Myriads of veterans luxuriate in soldiers' homes, but in none of them does he, lingering and voluble, saturated with *vis inertia*, shoulder a crutch and tell how money never is but always to be won. When hale campaigners meet at non-intoxicating suppers where the cheers are not inebriated, and point to themselves with pride (who dare gainsay their right?), his place is but a yawning vacancy. River pilots of the war era, St. Vitus stricken from dodging guerrilla buckshot, have coveted the Grand Army badge; sons of sanitary heroes and of honorable women not a few have pleaded for the Loyal Legion's perquisites vicarious; but no residual Sutler, nor the lineal progeny thereof, draws drafts like these on honor's ample funds. Hence there is no Sutler left, q. e. d. He never got left—the good die young.

Seek ye his obituary in the thin cold rec-

## THE SUTLER

ords of the alms-house. Find his flat or sunken resting place in crowded silences of Potter's fields and be therewith content. He has passed in his "checks." He lives now only as a fond and fragrant memory.

## THE SHELTER TENT

### III



USTROUS among war's unfading reminiscences shines the contour of the Shelter Tent. It lingers in memory, unique and delectable, dissimilar but equivalent to our ideal of

those fringed silken pavilions wherein apoplectic despots of the orient air their scandalous magnificence amid the frockless squalor of their cringing hordes.

The Shelter Tent was a supplement to the original scheme for putting down the rebellion—a fact, as it were, *dehors* the record. Only after Bull Run and Shiloh and Antietam and Iuka was the government nerved to the point of requiring its soldiery to shoulder

## THE SHELTER TENT

their houses like mollusks, and thus relieve the tuneful, uncomplaining mule of a sore responsibility.

This was an innovation whose dam was Necessity, and whose sire was held to be some emissary of Satan, with an unearned increment of prestige in the counsels of Halleck, general-in-chief, so-called. It was evolved as the molecule evolves protoplasm and from a plastic cell developeth primordial germs. Versatile scorners, voluble as advocates of artesian irrigation, promptly scheduled its pedigree for generations up and down. Minutest of constructed residences for living humanity, save perhaps the half-credible tub of tough Diogenes, it won a way into our reluctant liking that vindicates its title to consideration among the factors of ultimate victory. You may pay the doctor to diagnose and also to prescribe, but you must subsidize the pharmacist before relief is possible.

Most portable of mundane mansions, its very littleness relieved the situation of numberless infelicities,—specifically, of servitude

## THE SHELTER TENT

to servants, whether apple-cheeked daughters of Denmark, or saddle-colored Cantonese with eyes cut bias and a Pacific Mail subsidy lingo not on speaking terms with veracity. Likewise other infelicities which relegate house-keeping to the level of a cantharides blister, and which make court corridors ring with the battle-cry for freedom shouted by luckless suitors who married in haste to repent at Sioux Falls.

The Shelter Tent of the war for the Union, so waged, as aforementioned, is said to have been a French device. We shall introduce no evidence in rebuttal. It was unquestionably steeped to the hem in martial economics. It was calculated to rob a miser of all that life holds dear. The force of dire frugality could no step farther go. In the multitude of counselors there is distraction, for existence, like a court-house, is full of trials. But all agree on this question of economy. We lead the world, but the French lead us in these little every-day parsimonies. It was cheap but grand. Beecher once asserted that flowers are the grandest things God ever made



## THE SHELTER TENT

without putting an immortal soul into them. Beecher had evidently at that time never treated his optic nerve to a vision of the useful, unobtrusive Shelter Tent.

Woven of white cotton spun to fascine rigidity, sometimes gutta-perchaed to counter-scarp imperviousness, its flat measurement but squared an average soldier's stature. When the whirl of recoil developed into a torrent of flight, it was scarcely classed with *impedimenta*.

A weed is said to be only a plant whose uses have not yet been discerned. This square of cotton was to the unsophisticated military discernment first a weed, then a spear, then a full-grown corn in the ear—yea, verily! shelled and in the sack, distilled and in the cut-glass decanter, with accessories duly accessible.

Styled "tent" in the sardonic nomenclature of our nomadic days, it was in sober verity a wrap, a cape, a kirtle or a poncho, which only by connected duplication and reduplication came within the pale of that sonorous title. Only ten men are permitted to

## THE SHELTER TENT

exist on earth at once competent to read and understand Plato. Thus precious is equilibrium in a world where the fragment of a donkey jaw has slain thousands. Fewer doubtless would divine at first blush how a square of cotton fabric, set down one side with buttons and holes to match cut opposite. could suffice for each warrior's allotment of habitation in embryo. Still fewer would devise, until Necessity, doting maternal ancestor of rarest constructive genius, came to compel, the forms and structures of abode that lay susceptible within that so innocent appearing segment of a textile web, white, friendly and tractable. Thus history goes on, dancing through the airy nothingness of experiment, dainty as a harebell, graceful as a fawn.

Of what the Shelter Tent had and had not, commended curiosity makes now minute interrogation. It had neither veranda nor portico; if offenses must come, woe to them whereby. No latticed porchway tempted humming birds to linger in its honeysuckle haunts. The bay-window that biteth like a serpent and stingeth like a cactus when the

## THE SHELTER TENT

bill comes in, was conspicuously non-existent. Its architectural flippancies were few indeed. No fluted town hall pillars nor St. Gauden's blush-promoting statuary decorated its blameless exterior, either for botch or betterment. No black closets fanged with sharp hooks and breathing pestilent mustiness, lurked in its dreadful depths, threatening to precipitate a ministerial crisis around the conjugal hearth.

The man of far western enterprise, who goes forth with nothing but a few ounces of salt in one hand and a halter in the other to a career of sudden and certain prosperity, would sneer at a plan for his rustic villa of content so void of all embellishment. The rampant eastern egotist, saturated with profound, uncanny mysticism, would echo the supercilious sentiment.

Guiltless of tapestry, even of paper tattooed into isosceles triangles or fretted with pea-fowl tintages, were its walls. Nay, vetoed were walls indeed, save when some mad riot of sumptuousness inspired an imitation of "society"—that medley of metaphysics and flirtations, of fashion, vanity, jealousy, altru-

## THE SHELTER TENT

ism, rheumatism and gastronomy which is principally intent on beating tom-toms and dodging jim-jams. Then, hoisted above its normal altitude, like sliding roof of clover rick, a rough joinery of boards or logs or turf, breasted it up four-square to all the gusts of Boreas and the moral agencies of southern Arkansaw.

No door-plate shimmered, purporting, in gothic undecipherables gnarly as Pharaoh's lean kine, to name the occupant. Good cause, forsooth; none better! No door, on which a faintest shimmer could be hung, graced the wide frontal vacancy. Who entered here, though his brow were tall and his spirit strong, left his *bon-ton* behind. Style, root of much heart-break and hen-peck, was smitten as by the stony paw of a sphinx. Fit symbols of existence in this pretenseless home were the broken column and the gates ajar.

Destitute also was the Shelter Tent of the pompous excrescence of chimneys, and their accessories,—of the parlor mantel, laden with sea-shells and aconite pellets,—of the stove in the guest chamber, voluble in prophecies of

## THE SHELTER TENT

smokeless combustion, unhopeful as the courting of a grass-widow with an inchoate right of dower to forty acres of swamp land in a school section,—of the hanging book-shelf, heavy with dull fiction and smeared with poetical syrup. No chimney was there to witness the woes of perplexed Santa Claus. No chimney was there to gaze with wide-eyed wonder on the tragedy which ensues when Uncle Reuben blows out the gas. No chimney was there, with open gusty grate, more dreary than the lignite desolation of the bad lands.

Minus likewise were chandeliers, with their brazen sheen,—mementos of dismal experience with colicky infants at paregoric time,—mementos of sweltering social hilarity, when perspiration is unconfined and heels smite corns on toes that groan again,—mementos of genteel functions, where pink and purple ice cream circulates at par, and French-plate diamonds flash on palpitating bosoms perilously exposed to the weather.

Chandeliers were extinct and non-existent. Candles stuck in bayonets sufficed. There was

## THE SHELTER TENT

light enough for a nightly prosecution of the poker industry and for overproduction of the chestnut crop. And even after taps, when utter darkness reigned, there was no danger of bumping one's head against the upper berth.

No walls of partition parceled off the Shelter Tent into spaces conventionalized to peculiar functions. Aristocracy of exclusion and seclusion there were none, but broad and limpid democracy of exposure to all curiousness, though searching as croton oil. Hence drawing-room, boudoir and kitchen, oratory, refectory, and lavatory were all in one. But only in alternation, since the contracted area precluded simultaneousness as well as latitudinarianism. There was no disgraceful scramble for the apartment with southern exposure and all modern conveniences. There was little risk of bringing a blush of modesty to the veteran's bronzed and massive cheek. Partitions would have been useless as a pop factory in the bluegrass region. Each tenant was the peer in imperturbability of a male divorcee in Connecticut, digging clams to earn alimony.

## THE SHELTER TENT

Area was not its boast. A well equipped farm on the Little Missouri is said to consist of a due allowance of sunny sky, a pair of bob-sleds and a gopher hole. There naturally prevail the financial views which demand a currency based on pig-iron, short-ribs, hoop-poles and wheat screenings.

No lightning-rod adorned its frowning pediment, lank and fatiguing reminder of Ben Franklin,—thrifty printer,—and his kite, such as never was before in air or tree; also of the glib and evanescent vendor whose monopoly of all fascinations was only equaled by his absolute prostration of all moral attributes. That convoluted metallic insufficiency thrust not its aluminum barb above the crest of this domicile, like a reed shaken by the wind, mute witness to each passer of the owner's sweet credulity.

Trifling in weight, as was each segment of the Shelter Tent, unappreciable addition to individual burden, and willingly borne for the increased facility and certainty of bivouac, the aggregate relief to the department of transportation was like shriving a bad man's

## THE SHELTER TENT

conscience of crime or lifting a fear from a coward's soul. The reduction of regimental trains from thirteen wagons to three was as efficient in ultimate results as the withdrawal of guards from confederate poultry-coops and the obliteration of zouave jackets; possibly more so.

The Shelter Tent was the after-glow of an understudy, so to speak, but it was a potent helper in the grand tragedy. It came into war annals greeted with a welcome warm as that vouchsafed on election night to the missing precinct that brings the necessary majority. This welcome was tendered when use brought due appreciation of its value, not earlier. Its original introduction was as sensational as when John Barleycorn comes to town, and brings his blizzard with him. Its first arrival met with jeers; with hot reviling; with barkings imitative of indignant dog, or brayings as of disgusted donkey; with cursings such as tear the curser's lungs to ragged tatters; with mellowing miracles of profanest speech, horizonless trans-continental sentences of words hurled endlong, overthwart, each



## THE SHELTER TENT

word a stab or blister; with mutiny and riot ludicrous to recall. But all in vain. Reeking language, that put immortal souls in peril, availed nothing.

The Shelter Tent came for use, and it came to stay. Orders were imperative and discipline was supreme. Jeering, barking, braying, cursing, rioting were as futile as the purr of a Vassar kitten at the advent of a long-haired æsthete, wearing an air of discontent and a coat with efflorescent elbows.

It was prescribed and issued. The average visitor to Washington is welcomed to his nation's proud capital with loud acclaim by the hack fiend and the hotel runner, both Afro-American. The Shelter Tent was welcomed with corresponding warmth, as aforesaid, when its utility began to materialize. Out into the pink and pearl of morning sunshine, or into a sour, dreary, morning drizzle, step from it the tentmates of a night's camp. They were proud as the Jerseyman who boasts his descent "from the family of Smith-Smiths, connected by a syphon." They were free from the proverbial

## THE SHELTER TENT

weary, next-morning-condition of civil life, for sleep profound had knitted up the raveled stocking heel of care. Each carried a moiety of homestead folded in the knapsack strapped to his stalwart form, and stepped out with a sublime song of triumph on his lips and in his heart. Each carried his own house. He also laughed at his own jokes with a loud tenor tone. Marvel of more than this marvelous facility of home-shifting was our inimitable volunteer. He bore constantly also his year's wardrobe and his week's provender, toothsome (though less tender) as planked whitefish from the cold and classic Assiniboin. Likewise, his drink, his tools tonorial, manicurial and dentifric, such as fate vouchsafed and regulations permitted. In addition he bore his bed, his financial capital and surplus, his arsenal of projectiles, his weapons of offense, his instruments of torture, and his implements of toil. Strength considered, no pack-horse carried a weightier lading, and yet the soldier was denied the dull, dumb creature's exemption from rational accountability.

## THE SHELTER TENT

Thus freighted with belligerent melange the mobilized veteran marches all day, with his thinking bayonet at his side, his logical musket on his shoulder, and his profane vocabulary held in measurable subjection, the nominative agreeing with the verb occasionally by accident.

On through hot and bitter limestone dust that blanches all his cuticle, then reddens eyes and nose and mouth with unsanctified inflammation. On through floundering quagmires of yellow mud that settles into slush, then slumps into slime; vivid parallel to the moral collapse of a white-souled commissary warmed by beams of opportunity and trodden by hoofs of temptation.

On through heat excruciating or cold unendurable; through rain, sleet, hail,—storm's dread alternations of discomfort,—all the lengthening day, his trousers shrinking to knee-pants as he trudges along. On, footsore and halting, each nerve a roadway for pain's burning steps, each bone racked with rheumatic twinges, until night brings the limp-

## THE SHELTER TENT

ing turnpike tourist to a welcome resting-place.

The bivouac then, and full-orbed glory of the Shelter Tent! Matchless for adaptation, it is pitched as soon as ranks are broken. The landscape whitens with swift magic like a Monday's clothes-line billowy with confidential raiment. The tentmates join the sundered segments, and with sticks or stalks or poles, or, lacking these, with bayonet and gun and ramrod, lift the flexile sheet to the required angle, and lo! their dwelling stands confessed; no spectacular monstrosity, but compact, cleanly and stylish as a salad dressed in oil.

Hasty, most hasty, also of formalities and frills devoid, the varied events which there-upon eventuate. The search for wood and water, energetic as the pace of reckless engineer, who goes by the meeting point at a mile and a half a minute calling for more steam. The ablutions, rich in doleful reminiscence of rare and radiant days at home when the brow was wiped with cabbage leaves or cotton waste; vivid with memories

## THE SHELTER TENT

of the printing-house towel that hangs by the door.

The cooking simple and savory; the cook with a look of far-away Georgia in his face, across whose peaceful breast salt waves of trouble roll, but from whose humble lips no back-talk comes. The mastication, almost as irritating as classical music, save as spiced with time-honored facetiæ wrested from some wrecked parthenon; long-distance jokes that would bore easily through an inch plank and kill at random.

Drinking straight and plain from the flat but priceless old canteen, out of whose limpid depths, with a gurgling capacity of one miner's inch per second, are drawn exhaustless liquid refreshments that shame the isles of Greece, the hills of Spain, the purple heaven of Rome,—in dreams thou livest on! Above all, post-prandial exercise of dry dish-washery with a chip, exuding bicarbonate of turnpike dust; one touch of water makes the whole camp grin.

Then comes, with briefest interlude for rest, or recreation, or knocking out spot after spot

## THE SHELTER TENT

of the decalogue on the sly, swift preparation for the few, short hours of nocturnal repose; profound as a policeman with clues to a stabbing mystery; dreamless as some cold-sliced fragment of the long ago, sitting passionless through chasing, racing ages. Tentmates are nervous with the fatigues of march and nettlesome as bibulous companions in civil life, who quarrel about trifles slight as hair; then settle their quarrels over a round of the rosy; and finally quarrel afresh as to who shall liquidate for the liquor.

The night may be moonlit, starry, glum as a ghoul, dark as black bullocks of Galloway, or terrible with thunder-bursts and drenching rains and blowing of great guns. Valor is an indeterminate essence; at times the essence will ooze; much depends on the status; few men are supremely valorous in the dark.

Plato considered that woman was intended to do the same things as man, only not so well. It is currently suspected, however, that women can fight better than their brothers in that grewsome darkest hour which just precedes the dawn, when so many attacks

## THE SHELTER TENT

are planned which mostly fail. Exceptions should possibly be noted in favor of the emancipated female trotting out of her class; specially against the timid man who has been dragged all night over loose stones, at the tail of a wild nightmare.

Sleep comes at last, and the camp sounds lull, not startle; peaceful, innocent, harmless as the fresh-laid humorist pleading for a little more civilization among the higher classes. Soporific is the sentry's slow, reluctant Amsterdam tramp, as he strides, bemoiled by the long day's detritus, wrapped mostly in the wailing winds; also the electric interurban symphony of snorings manifold, which care not one coreless clam what nationality stands guard to-night; the weird signals of the fond melodious mule struggling with ankylosis of thoracic articulation, and betimes bursting into an effort that saturates seven cubic miles of atmosphere with familiar mule music in seventeen seconds; the melancholy squeak of a belated sutler's wagon, grinding out its assent to the maxim that a linch-pin in time saves an axle; the hoot of a discontented owl

## THE SHELTER TENT

in branches not remote; the howl of expostulatory cur in distant farm-yard; the intercepted shriek of far off poultry, prey of some army prowler who strews the ground with severed heads and hot red spurts of gore.

Soporific is all this medley of celluloid resonance; softer than the first symptoms of velvety resistance on a youth's lip; smoother than the etiquette of a square meal at a round-table; provocative all of serenest, soundest sleep, until joyless reveille shall come, summoning from iridescent dreams to another day of inglorious unromantic toiling—double column at half distance and then double distance on half rations.

Through long, drowsy summer afternoons comes luscious *deshabille* of relaxation, born of an assured half-week's unthreatened encampment serenity. Then the *recherché* loungers in the Shelter Tent, clinking their useless double-eagles together with capitalistic nonchalance, revel in tutti-frutti visions of banished splendors and foresworn delights. Those bright single-gold-standard days haunt us still, with the persistence of a sixty winter damsel



## THE SHELTER TENT

in her frosty bloom. The cribbed and confined quarters expand into peopled vistas of epicurean magnificence, elusive and deceptive as a tax on dinner pails. Therein the mirage of gorgeous furnishings alternates or mingles with the phantasm of delicate potables, with a bewildering miscellaneousness that recalls Agassiz's dictum on the impossibility of reconciling American stratifications.

Throw physic to the dogs—they need thinning out anyhow, but preserve your hallucinations; four generations of gentility are required to produce a boy without freckles. P. S. Give the negro a chance! Eighty generations barely sufficed to evolve a white man capable of inventing the postage stamp. Just four hundred years were occupied by the whites in conquering the Indians, with the powerful aid of rum, gunpowder and Indian agents.

As we remarked, the furnishings of these visions were extremely gorgeous. Cashmere, Bokarra and Khivan rugs bespread the marqueterie floors. Also, delicate the potables. Ragouts, chow-chow, dinde glacé,

## THE SHELTER TENT

truffles, soquille, sorbot, terrapin, sauterne, cognac and extra dry cover the beckoning tables; nectar, nectar everywhere and every drop imbibable. Imported, perhaps, through Signor Sp. Frumenti, of Genoa.

Behold priceless bijoux of Louis Quinze,—buhl, Sèvres, Limoges, Dalton, and Royal Vienna; treasures of ormolu and ivory, and Carrara; wonders of faience and Satsuma; quaint carvings from Padua, Tokio, Delhi and Antwerp, in ebony or sandal or teak or immemorial oak! All for ornament rather than utility, like the ears of a mule which have been stationed too far in front for wings, and too high up for fly-scars. Here are poems in brass, anthems in eternal bronze, pastorals in Dresden, mythologies in the grinning idols of Cathay, miracles in Gobelins and Daubisson; relics of the by-flown, fly-blown past, before the great, red dragon of Wall street had been hatched and hated.

There are scimiters and falchions from the days of Lionheart, inwrought with golden arabesque by fezzed wizards in Teheran. There are poniards, it may be, reviving proud,

## THE SHELTER TENT

glad, gladiatorial days, when men were muscled like the brawny, aged hen. They fought with bloody bludgeons long and well; or with sharp rapier carved the lion's liver from his agile frame, while smiling beauty munched the Roman caramel and saw with tearless lid the brave ones sink beneath hard blows more deadly than the modern pie.

Here swing hangings more valued than jewels; silk woven in the caliphs' harems; yellowing marvels of Chantilly; glowing glories of Corot and Daubigny, Gérôme, Vibert, Meissonier, Millais or Rembrandt—unequaled as to flesh tints; superior even to most chromos.

Ah, yes! Roast venison, fried chicken, stuffed oysters, broiled lobster, sausage with sauerkraut, beefsteak and onions on the half shell. The mills of the cooks grind slowly, but they grind, even though their recipes be less intelligible than the personal recollections of a giraffe.

All these things float and allure and dazzle and tempt in the soaring fancy of the dilettante militant, who is lifted from a deep

## THE SHELTER TENT

dark Hamlet melancholy to semi-celestial altitudes. But a drum-tap or a horse- neigh brings him down with a dull thud to the cramped coarse environment where he is tethered like an uneasy Indian restricted to a mental reservation. Blessed is the voluptuousness of reverie; blessed and cheap as an expectant clothier's greeting, while he pauses ecstatically for an appropriate smile; blessed and safe as flirting by telephone with a centripetal divinity at the exchange, sweet-voiced, invisible and anonymous; blessed but unsatisfying as a tariff reform bill stuffed with local concessions.

From roseate fantasy to grim realism is a tumble sharp and sudden to the dreamer in the Shelter Tent.

His ormolu and bijoutry consist of a deformed pocket mirror and a foreshortened pipe black as bombazine grief. His floor is honest old earth, rugless, plankless, naked as a marble Venus and cold as New England culture.

His decorated couch of down and carved mahogany, ebony inlaid, is superseded by a



. . . Blessed is the voluptuousness of reverie, blessed and cheap as an expectant clothier's greeting, while he pauses ecstatically for an appropriate smile (Page 162)



## THE SHELTER TENT

blanket and six fence-rails—rails quilled with keen splinters like the frightful porcupine; blanket harboring fecund colonies of that fraternal insect whose tentacles are inextricably entangled with every shuddering recollection of army vicissitudes; inescapable, inexpungable, yet nameless here forever more.

His dresser of polished green malachite, silver-trimmed, shrinks to a surreptitious cracker-box hiding certain confiscated edibles for which some adjacent smoke-house holds a yawning vacancy, while Rachel weeps for her turkeys and refuses to be comforted because they were shot.

In the said cracker-box, like a jewel in a toad's tooth, we may also find all that can legitimately represent in fact the figments of our hero's appetizing hallucinations, the customary ration of his daily gulp and growl. Here is hard, hard bread, stamped B. C., so dry that age can not wither it nor bicuspid masticate; acrid and bellicose pork, premonitory of thirst and tapeworm, rich in albuminates, but utterly poverty-stricken as to savor, odor and social status. Here is

## THE SHELTER TENT

raw beef from the east rump of a most attenuated anatomy, doubtful as the welcome of an uninvited visitor; sufficient unto the soup is the toughness thereof, no less.

The uses of venerable and ubiquitous hard-tack were as numerous as they were suggestive. Its presence in all emergencies was one of the mysteries of the eternal law of supply and demand, one of the grand consummations and compensations of the art of war. In its natural state it was dry, flinty, tasteless and juiceless, but stored as full of nutriment as a serenade of musty eggs and flagrant onions is stuffed with archaic perfumes. Smashed into chiplets with a hammer, moistened to pulpiness in cold water, fried in pork fat and served hot, it was dubbed "slumgullion." Pounded to gritty dust, reduced to thick dough with warm water, seasoned with salt and pepper and baked in thick cakes, it became fit ambrosia for the sages of the ages and was known as "Son-of-a-gun." Burned to a crisp, boiled in water, and eaten with a spoon it was as thoroughly disguised as odor-



## THE SHELTER TENT

less whisky or smokeless tobacco, in the sou-briquet " gum chowder."

In combination with green apple fricasse, chicken stews, fresh pig roasts, and other sequestered interludes of commissariat anomalous, it grew toothsome, ingenious, diversified. It was withal as acceptable to the muscular appetites of voracious young warriors as was a drafted man's certificate of exemption based on intermittent cramps in the stomach and a devout devoted mother-in-law dependent on him for support.

Here are the small white beans, anhydrous, true angel food, beloved of cherubim, immortalized in song, theme of interminable romance, most potent, grave and carbo-hydrate provender, seductive as a jack-pot, and satisfying as a high-church wedding service to a middlings purifier heiress; here, also, the indispensable coffee, and sugar wherewith it shall be confectioned, twin relics of homeland, sole reminder of hearthstones *ante bellum*. Here is rice, nourishing to Buddha and Confucius, redolent of joss-house and bungalow,

## THE SHELTER TENT

chief of staff of the life of languid anthropophagi.

Here are desiccated vegetables; culmination of humiliation to nostril and stomach; a cross between counter-irritant and disinfectant; plausible as an argument for free raw material. Likewise concentrated milk, Queen Anne style; acidulated in the thunder-storms of centuries; more mysterious than the doctrine of dynamics to a colored youth gorged with clandestine watermelon. Also "rations" of soap of a retiring early disposition; facing a condition, not a theory; compost of refuse alkaline and oleagenous, but with soaring spirit of the army mule stowed in a steamer's hold until he soaks the air with sounds of remonstrance, kicks the rivets from the boiler and goes aloft with the explosion.

Moreover, all the frugal condiments and seasonings which, like timely words in a hot dispute, act chemically and precipitate the sediment—all these made lawful by the Articles of War and acts thereto amendatory. All these this shaky, unassuming cracker-box, chief of the snuggery's appointments,

## THE SHELTER TENT

foremost in furnishing the Shelter Tent, doth garner and conceal with more than sealing-wax fidelity. Upon it rest the empty haversack, the dry canteen, the waist belt, bayonet scabbard, gunsling, and like *et cetera* of unused accoutrement, terrible to the turbulent classes, sharing their owner's earned and relished respite.

These aforesaid articles, together with a valuable collection of narrow escapes, constituted his tabulated assets, including capital, surplus and undivided profits. By reason of wealth he would not have been like the camel debarred from threading the needle's eye. But he was happy, nevertheless; happy as the free laborers who proudly wear untaxed overalls woven in foreign parts, and socks from the isles of the sea.

The Shelter Tent was not immortal, at least in the concrete. Neither was its occupant, howsoever swollen in the pride of his heart and other viscera over the sacredness of his cause and the splendor of his triumph. If immortality is to be achieved for the tent, the pen of history or the still small penetrating

## THE SHELTER TENT

voice of tradition must be detailed for that duty. The Bengal tiger must not mew like inferior families of the felidæ, but here were a theme worthy the stanchest bard that glooms beneath the shining stars.

The texture of the Shelter Tent, though rivaling a corrugated copper casket as moisture proof, was far from indestructible. Worn to windowed raggedness was its final aspect, slashed, punched, shot-holed, and abraded, but faithful and useful to the end. Scorched also it may be, begrimed and soiled, march-stained and battle-singed, linked to its primal whiteness only as the vestal virgin of the Cuthead Sioux tepee is to her star-eyed Athenian prototype.

No matter. The cause in which its beauty and strength were expended was richly worth this, and all the infinitely more precious cost. We rejoice to believe that the events we commemorate were the ushering in of a millennial epoch in human history. We stand, as it were, wrapped still in obscurities, when a moonless night studded with glints of silver wears toward its end and the horizon of the favored

## THE SHELTER TENT

east flushes with first promise of approaching day. Vague outlines of distant summits marshal themselves against the brightening azure, and soon flashes of crimson and purple playfully chase each other up to the silent zenith. Shafts of unutterable splendor begin to shoot through all the pulsing atmosphere, thrilling awakened nature with reviving life, a harbinger of coming glory.

And when earth has been clothed with magnificence for his royal appearing, the sun himself wheels up from the nether deep, thus heralded and attended with all due pomp of an unchallenged majesty. His affluent beams pour in molten cascades down the revealed gorges; they gild and glorify clustered pinnacles; they awake into sparkling greenness the pine-clad slopes, and flame into burning scarlet on banks of hidden bloom. Then rising higher with the mists of morning still enrobing him, while hymning echoes of aroused animation fill the air, he proudly, grandly marches up the sky—more grandly than any monarch who ever trod the world's stately palaces and commanded the homage

## THE SHELTER TENT

of a prostrate throng. Even thus we fondly believe our dawning will brighten into perfect day.

Even thus the sun of our consummated civilization will rise and shine. The hues that beautify and not the heat that withers will be in his glow. And on dissolving storm clouds of a bitter bloody past, he will paint the rainbow of an abiding pledge, that government of the people, for the people, by the people shall not perish from the earth.

The war for the Union, with all its majestic pageantry, is a thing of the distant past. But its events have plucked the shining years they gilded, even from this wondrous century, and molded them into a beacon for ages yet to come. Let veterans rejoice in their honorable relation to those events, and cherish with pride their sacred recollections. Among these recollections is that of the contracted habitation, grander in its humility than a palace imperial, which domiciled a patriotism that was stainless and a heroism that was sublime, the useful, modest, unappreciated Shelter Tent. It went with the heroes of the

## THE SHELTER TENT

war for the Union, through all their vivid experiences, as they marched and camped and fought and conquered. They were the heroes of the war, the heroes of the age.

They marched through deep wildernesses and across rough mountain ranges; through stony paths that grilled their ankle bones, and freezing creeks that chilled their shoulder blades with a glacial emulsion; through fruiting farmsteads with broad avenues of maple, beech and oak; through beckoning orchards reddened for the clutch of hungry hands.

They marched through burning sands or stifling limedust white as shredded alkali; through shoreless mud, black, yellow, red or gray, tough, tender, slushy or plastic, but always tenacious as Arabic gums.

They marched through settlements of frowning, hostile, alienated countrymen, with a dagger in each frown and a stab in every stare, toward the embattled hosts of a rebellious confederacy fiercely armed for the conflict against right and light. They marched through ignorance and barbarism and instruments of cruel bondage; through the snap

## THE SHELTER TENT

of the lash and the sizz of the branding iron; through writhing iniquities and paths piled high with iron chains; through city streets and country roads; through horrid prison pens, o'er bloody battle-fields, past pyramids of skulls,—up to the shining heights of fame.

They camped in cottonfield and canebroke; in groves of magnolia and myrtle; in still forests where jack-pots were juicy; in flowering suburbs where sweet hams blossomed in the smoke-house and fat turkeys ripened in the open air; on the levees of murmuring rivers and the shores of the tossing sea.

They camped on plantations and left them desolate, where their devouring camp-fires and their patriotic appetites wrought piteous ruin through wide landscapes of fertile plenteousness.

They camped in shelter tents of micro-cosmic cut and altruistic design; in huts composite, whereof logs, brush, mud, boards and straw in varying proportions furnish the picturesque materials; or, tentless, hutless, houseless, lay exposed to visits from alleged pearly dew and so-called crystal raindrops,



## THE SHELTER TENT

winked at all through the long night-watches by the shimmering stars.

They camped in barracks grimed with the smoke and smear of previous occupants, who departing left behind them sociable swarms of their closest friends, ready to extend from every crack and crevice an incisive welcome; in bastioned forts, constantly exposed to imminent explosions from burrowing enemies, hilarious in undiscoverable tunnels far below. They camped with controversial comrades loaded on all topics from justification by faith to the cremation of garbage; with comrades wearing periodically the outward and visible signs of an inward and spirituous exhilaration, to whom all paths of glory lead but to the grass, and whose nocturnal slumbers yield a resonance with terror-smiting combination of college yell and Indian war-whoop.

They camped unwelcome amid prejudices and hatreds inveterate; amid revilings incessant and intense; exposed to sneers in which the curled lip of beauty impinged against a nose sniffing with scorn; but they camped to

## THE SHELTER TENT

stay, and they dispensed with welcome, as with other comforts and luxuries multifold. The swelling chorus of their war songs rent the sky, like the long, loud shout of jubilee which rises when sundry millions of citizens, who have not dined regularly under a revenue tariff regime, have tardily come to their senses, and voted for three square meals a day.

Their morning drum-beat belted the continent from the Atlantic to the Rocky mountains with one continuous strain of joyous reveille. Their evening dress parades were a spectacular divertisement, impressing on daily thronging thousands enlarged views of the power and dignity of invincible America.

Their bugle calls ring through the air to-day awakening in our hearts echoes tuneful as the song of triumph on the lips of cherubim.

They fought the aged, ancient mildews of a hideous past, and fused one whole new, glad, golden century of effort and aspiration into a short four years of matchless achievement. They fought against grievous error for the

## THE SHELTER TENT

eternal truth, with a snow-bird-on-ice coolness, a Scotch-Irish firmness and the zeal of a cuckoo congressionalist.

On land and sea they fought the battles of humanity and posterity and an immeasurable destiny. They fought giants who out-bun-ioned Bunyan, and antedated Dante—veritable giants of the pit, with thorny tongues and blazing eyes, welded Apollyon and megaltherium. They fought against bayonets and bullets; against grape and shell; against howitzers and columbiads; against turrets and torpedoes; against sabres and carbines perversely aimed at their most vulnerable points; against breast-works and rifle-pits bristling with sharpened steel. They fought across enfiladed valleys hissing with hot deathbolts and red with volcanic wrath; up rugged hillsides crested with flames of hell.

They overcame armed rebellion and won a glorious peace. They conquered those who tore down the flag, and they lifted it to a peerless exaltation, where earth's admiring peoples may draw inspiration from its radiant splendor.

## THE SHELTER TENT

They gained a victory so consummate, so complete, so irrevocable, so incontestable, that they condoned rebellion, and cordially welcomed back the culprits to a share in governing the nation they had fought to destroy. They conquered slavery with its multiples of horror. They conquered ignorance and hatred and oppression, and opened all the land to the sunbeams of modern enlightenment.

They conquered navies and armies, generals and admirals, seaports and citadels and capitals, senates and cabinets and presidents.

They conquered deathless fame for their grand pantheon of heroes, and garlands dewy with the freshness of a fadeless love for unnamed millions who wore the loyal blue.

They conquered the hearts of generations yet to come, to whom their suffering and sacrifice have given the priceless heritage of noble deeds and an undivided country.

They conquered states, and built around the regenerated nation a rampart of freedom, so high, so strong, so steadfast, that it may proudly bid defiance to a hostile world.

Grand as was their heroism, noble as were

## THE SHELTER TENT

their deeds, the Union soldiers have little patience with the rhetoric of war-boasters which have caused nearly as much suffering throughout the country in recent years as the melodies of "After the Ball is Over," or "Over the Garden Wall." Some of this rhetoric is over-ripe, like the new school of fiction, in other cases it pumps beautiful incidents from a deep capacious imagination, painfully void of veracity. But at any rate no untoward vauntings proceed from this unconsidered trifle of that epoch, neglected proletariat of tabernacles belligerent, the fleeced and flouted Shelter Tent.

To historians with the lenses of judgment in correct focus, its functions in the splendid totality of achievement were by no means unimportant, although hitherto almost wholly unacknowledged. A war-scarred relic of it now, even if covering Carlyle's "most shriveled, wind-dried, dyspeptic, chill-shivering individual, a professor of life-weariness" (a tramp), would be more thrilling to the eye and heart of patriotism than a dozen shining granite monuments raised to commemorate

## THE SHELTER TENT

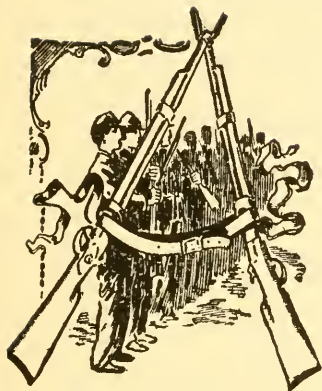
forgiven but unforgettable rebellion. This is the reason for these tears.

Tattered and blackened but serviceable still, type of much else whereon we might perhaps with gain philosophize, the humble but priceless Shelter Tent was borne to the rendezvous by glad warriors returning in triumph, and legally mustered out. The war was ended; its work was done. No further seek its usufruct to discern. Its career was as tame as a typewritten love-letter. The receipt of a depot quartermaster was its sole and all-sufficient obituary.

Vanished from the receding perspective of our experience is the Shelter Tent—vanished from sight, but precious in memory forever. With it went the golden age of the republic; with it went our comradeship of trial and danger. After it came the new heaven and new earth to our redeemed, regenerated country. It has gone. And already, for more than half the soldiery of the grand army of the Union, it has been replaced by that low, green canopy whose curtain never outward swings.

## DRESS PARADE

### IV



NY scheme of war which omits the stately ceremonial of Dress Parade from among its essential elements is scandalously unsymmetric. The military science is of pre-classical

antiquity, its roots shattering the sarcophagi of Cadmus, and Darius, and Ptolemy, and Tubal Cain—penetrating even the caves of the troglodyte and the gravel-beds of the trilobite and the saurians. Ripening ages have at last disclosed the imperative demand of a frequent assembly and orderly arrangement of troops for show and inspection just as the evolution of a parson requires the cultivation of orthography, etymology, surplice and orthodoxy.

## DRESS PARADE

The problem as to who put down the rebellion, hitherto more recondite than that of the precession of the equinoxes or of the invention of the kindergarten, and infinitely provocative of type-written rhetoric, has at last been solved! It was the boy in blue, his mother, and the girl he left behind him. Only the first had or could have the right to vote; the others had the higher right to be excused from voting. But all were in the conflict, and each furnished a demonstrable quota of heroic endeavor which crystallized into grand achievement. The first did the fighting; the second did the praying; the third supplied the inspiration.

The first effort of a regiment at observance of the tactical symposium termed Dress Parade marked an era in its annals which was always thereafter recurred to with prickling sensations at the roots of the hair and a revolving propensity in the pit of the stomach. How it was ever accomplished, endured, and survived was a mystery fathomless as the craft of a Christianized and deodorized savage.

The component parts of this approaching



## DRESS PARADE

cosmorama may, with profit, be inspected separately.

The enlisted recruit, only a fortnight removed from the fresh milk and feather beds of home, is already jaundice-smitten, until the white of his eye shows quite golden-rod-dish and sun-flowery. In his aspect we discern the wisdom of one who is seventeen years old for the first time, and duly appreciates the fact. In his liver, quinine is already wrestling with calomel for the supremacy, even as in his soul remembered moral precepts are already summoned to mount guard against the wiles of sin. He is sugared o'er with the pale cast of virtue—stern in his rectitude as the senator who has never betrayed a trust. His black eyes duly sparkle in æsthetic harmony with his curly, coaly hair, as he warbles new-fledged patriotic melodies with fervid sincerity. And he views the imminence of experience in human carnage with the blind insouciance of a political party that is being led through a slaughter-house to an open grave.

If by inscrutable preordination the chev-

## DRESS PARADE

rons of a corporal or sergeant decorate his flapping sleeves, the agonies of his self-consciousness are unutterably intensified. His picturesque, variegated and altogether incomprehensible strut, is positively unique. His awkwardness spreads and sprouts and amplifies and ramifies. To witness his embarrassment is enough to break the heart of an orphan. His tendency to do the right thing at the wrong time and wrong thing at all times may be predicted with the precision of an exact science.

His responsibilities are enormous; his perplexities are terrible; his woes are innumerable; he is dejected, afflicted, tormented. He is helpless as a lawyer hurling maxims of abstract justice ruthlessly in the face of evidence. He is a non-commissioned officer. That is to say: an unquoted quota; an unenumerated numeral; a non-existent existence; not an officer at all!

The lieutenants, with authority varying inversely as the square of their bumptiousness, are loud in their pretensions as the howl of a defeated candidate who has fallen outside his

## DRESS PARADE

breastworks. Mrs. Solomon in all her several hundred glories was not elaborated like one of these. Invincible Chicago, with the biggest and tallest Masonic temple in the world, by thunder, is not so proud. The triumphant statesman who has evolved a barley schedule that will put the robber barons of western Iowa to open shame, is no more inflated. The congressman who has exposed a rival's political armor-plate, honeycombed with blowholes, is less exultant. State linked to state, in goodly fate, in mart and mint and mine; in rolling plain of golden grain or toss of plummy pine—none of these could fabricate a more colossal national glorification than these imposing subalterns, with ravenous tools of butchery girt on their semi-erect forms, and fiercely fretful lest the rebellion should be suppressed before they could debouch upon the ensanguined scenery.

The captain is big with the fate of empire. He has dwelt upon the agonizing spectacle of his beloved country bleeding at every vein, not to mention the carotid and celluloid arteries, *et cetera*, until he has accumulated an

## DRESS PARADE

amount of frenzy which only blood of a highly oxygenized quality and in most generous libations can ever expect to satisfy. The candidate with a separate and distinct set of views on all crucial questions for each county in his district may pass muster on the civil arena, but this centurion is vehemently in earnest. He has supped on a thousand horrors—remember the number.

His eye is one gleaming chrysolite. His lips are pink and luminous, dripping phosphorescent formulas in characterizing the assailants of the flag. His mustache bristles with fury like the rays of an arc lamp shooting pulsations of glow into unresisting darkness. His nose sniffs battles from afar and threatens direful death in each resounding sneeze. His brow is knit into knots of perplexity by chasing tactic combinations which canter at will through the vasty thought-clefts of his gray matter, foreboding a fatty degeneration thereof. His fervid soul thirsts for the hour when he shall lead his eager men to regions where bounteous crops of glory are harvested semi-monthly from valor's

## DRESS PARADE

fertile fields. No pent up Schenectady contracts his grand ambition. But his torch is illuminative, not strictly conflagrational, after all.

The major and lieutenant-colonel blush bright crimson with the burden of unwonted dignities. These bucolic ex-potentates from outlying precincts, cross-road lawyers, perhaps, of the pig-replevin, breachy-steer class, are limp supernumeraries in all this busy ebullition. Marvel not that they mutter unprintable ideas as they pass along. Each has now a clawing consciousness of his approximation to the infinitely little—the cube root of nothing. Each has squandered sixty dollars, the savings of a lifetime, in the purchase of the prescribed habiliments.

Now both find themselves eclipsed by a colored sport among the on-lookers, who displays a loud check suit and screaming scarlet necktie, enameled white shoes with black tips, and tall white hat swathed in a broad black band. Suppressed and quenched they stand, half-daft, with a glimmering recognition of their own marvelous inutility; nerve-

## DRESS PARADE

less as the ecclesiastical victim of Christmas generosity who has seventeen turkeys, in various stages of decomposition, lying on his back porch.

But the colonel! Great son of Mars, swathed in fire and thunder! Every sublime and momentous prerogative of this illustrious occasion finds its prescriptive focus in his person. Lucifer, son of the morning—he will rise to the occasion or break a nerve in the effort! Lifted by approved, unchallenged primacy above all mediocre surroundings, he stands wrapped in the rampant amplitude of his own perpendicularity. His dignity is frigid as the icicles on the fateful blizzard's beard in those frosty northwest winters when the coyote ceases yelping and the gopher is at rest. His serenity can calmly smile at Satan's wrath and force a frowning fraud. He speaks an imitation West Point idiom with the Tippecanoe accent, and his voice rivals in resonance the venturous wild-fowl honking high in air. His mental endowments have never been enervated by book gluttony and lesson bibbing. He is no patent process

## DRESS PARADE

product of enlightened educational methods. He is a symmetrical outgrowth, so accepted and recognized by all, including himself.

Physically and intellectually he looms and glooms and towers. On him all glances are centered; toward him all thoughts are stretched; for him all hearts palpitate. Hector arming for the siege of Troy was boy's play in comparison. The embryo soldiery regard him with pride; admiring citizens look on him with poorly concealed reverence. He has already trimmed his corns to fit a major-general's shoes. Consequently his shoulders stiffen with pardonable arrogance; his gaze flashes soul-satisfaction in radiant smileful beams, and the ginger is hot in his mouth.

These are the ingredients out of which, in the alembic of his genius, the adjutant, perspiring like a wedding guest come to celebrate the climax of a happy disaster, must fuse a Dress Parade. His task is difficult as that of teaching a war ship how to swim. These are the bristling units, which, when he swings his commands around and over them, will submit their centripetence to his awe-

## DRESS PARADE

compelling centrifugence. They are flexible as a rubber currency, that can be expanded and inflated at will, if handled with care. But in the end they will stand approximately aligned, ready to skip on light bombastic toe, to wheel and whirl, to march or halt, to strike or slay.

Let not the drum major, gaudy as a calico cat, and his melodious cohort, be forgotten. This cohort may be composed of small boys executing Yankee Doodle with variations on snare drums and whistling sticks, or of fluffy adults, agitating the atmosphere with resonant trombone and shrieking piccolo. That is largely a matter of natural selection,—that is to say, of accident. But it is always obtrusive as a mourning costume expressly designed to advertise a quenchless woe and save expenses generally. And it is always marshaled by a fierce brobdingnag mounting a tall bear-skin shako, and twirling a nickel-plated besom staff with the dapper legerdemain of a sword-swallower.

This so-called “band” is as imperative in the saturnalia of Dress Parade as a demijohn in



## DRESS PARADE

an Iowa closet. In that province water that contains only 32,000 microbes to the cubic inch has been scientifically approved as a beverage—provided just enough brandy is added to take the cruelty out of the water. Without the band, parade would be a piebald abstraction, unthinkablest of impossibles. With it obstacles vanish and everything bursts into buoyant feasibleness and stem-winding accuracy, wrapped in the indwelling beatitude of conscious grandeur.

Music hath charms to smooth the savage breast. The reason why I can not tell. In truth, strange to say, there are many other mysteries connected with our mental operations and inspirational impulses which are equally insoluble. The processes and boundaries of emotion in the soul of a Wyoming senator, when her back hair comes down in the midst of an eloquent peroration, are inscrutable and unfathomable. The bill for an act entitled an act to amend an act is likely then to lose its place on the calendar. But as a rule, the processes and boundaries of thought are immutably conditional. Its for-

## DRESS PARADE

mulas were petrified in Aristotle, for man, with all his amazing progress in science and inventions, still abides a little lower than the angels, his goods never quite up to sample. The intellect pauses at a distance from ultimate truth, dimly gleaming through the hush of a large gloom, and painfully cries for external help.

Explosions often result from suddenly injecting thought into a vacant mind. Some syllogisms are fallacious as a decoy watermelon stuffed with paris green. The imagination may roam uncurbed through infinite realms, but reason is horizoned by an adjacent pale over which it can neither leap nor soar. Beyond this boundary philosophy can not direct man's tottering steps; further his unblazed path will lead into the vagaries and discords and peopled torments of lunacy, unless he permits faith to begin where reason ends. When a venerable pundit, formulating huge installments of lexicography, assures you that he knows it all, be careful where you repeat the statement. Tell it not in Gath; tell it to the marines—but break it gently,

## DRESS PARADE

cautiously, or by the beard of the prophet you will find small credence.

Necessary as it has been, dominant as it has been, military talent is, after all, one of the lower forms of genius. It is not conversant with the highest or the richest intellectual pursuits. It may exist to perfection deficient in profound and liberal thinking, in imagination and taste, in the noblest energies and inspirations of life.

Hugo says that at Waterloo each square was a volcano attacked by a thunder-cloud; the lava fought with the lightning. Their employment demands none of the finer fibers of intellect or loftier aspirations of the soul. Even the "business" statesman of well recognized shrewdness and well advertised piety, entrusted with cabinet portfolios on the theory that public office is a private usufruct, is likely to tread the higher realms of intelligence with more certain footsteps than the Wellingtons or Jubal Earlys of bellicose notability. And Susan B. Anthony insists to this day that the little affair between her younger brother Mark Antony and Cleopatra has been

## DRESS PARADE

grossly exaggerated for base political purposes.

Parade differs from review as camp differs from campaign. The one is solemnity, the other is vivacity. Positive parade, comparative review, superlative battle, are the three degrees of comparison in war's activities. They are respectively tableau, melodrama and tragedy of systematic warfare. As ivory must germinate in the elephant's trunk before poker chips can materialize, so parade and review must antedate the battle agony.

Parade discloses the proficiency of a command in decorum, alignment and manual of arms. Review and inspection test its skill in evolution, as well as in equipment, accoutrement, care of weapons and general efficiency. Battle brings out all the qualities which drills, parades, reviews and inspections have developed or exhibited. During parades and reviews the officers come to the front; in battle they go to the rear. This accounts for the seeming mystery that so many still survive to tell the tale, and to tell it in such bewildering variety.

## DRESS PARADE

Daily Dress Parade being enjoined explicitly by regulations, becomes per force a vested right of citizen observers, and the periodic irritant of lethargic soldiery. But its first dainty freshness, before a state of lethargy has supervened and suppurated, threatens the maddening frenzy that drowns all sorrow in ginger ale. Its occurrence then brings whimsical complications equal to that of sweetening a whisky ring with a sugar trust; mad alternations of hope, elation, trepidation and horror; a synthesis like few!

That two and two make five is a mathematical preposterousness; that early experiments in Dress Parade should be a success is a military ditto, with extra emphasis on the antepenultimate. Let the heathen rage and the plutocrats imagine a vain thing! Here is a seriousness of facetiousness that would discourage a comedy star in full apogee.

As the fateful hour draws near, dim premonitions of coming diversions rapidly multiply. Dress Parade is about to materialize, and the air is electric with expectancy, as when Corbett recognizes the belligerence

## DRESS PARADE

of Persimmons, hires a typewriter, and opens hostilities in due form. Indications of the advent of an event worthy the delicate touch of Bjornstene Bjeminison's poetic fancy, are discerned. Matrons and maidens cluster and flutter and twitter athwart the designated color line. The matrons are superb, and the maidens are about to become historic—they are the girls who are to get left behind.

Accompanying them are their attendant male civilians, disgruntled as an oldest son who has ceased to be the only child by a large majority. They feel like a bunch of shop-worn lower-case ciphers just ready to be edited into the hell-box. They are keenly self-conscious of total eclipse in this martial splendor's plethoric incandescence. The rippling tee-hee of maidenly merriment rasps roughly on their ears, provoking wrath in the collar. Their cheerfulness matches that of a quarter of beef on its journey from dissecting table to chill-room.

Along company streets, redolent with intoxicating fumes of bean soup and loyalty up to date, manifest signs of preparation obtrude.

## DRESS PARADE

According to the accepted congressional code, nothing succeeds like success, when one is successful in succeeding himself. Even the demagogues, who love the people in stump speeches at ten dollars per speech, sometimes achieve success of that kind.

A genuine military success requires painstaking method, as these premonitions indicate. There are glimpses of toilet, glimmers of gun barrel, suggestions of ablution, flashes of bayonet. There are dashes of shoe-polishing and hair-brushery—mad wrestle with a Paderewski growth of foliage, here and there. A tent fly lifts and the process of creating a contemptuous curl of mustache greets the penetrating vision. Bright steel rammers gleam in the glare of the giddy avenue. Advance individuals, nervously premature in completed canonicals, appear; then squads, groups, platoons—entire companies. Other things may be late and worms may chew them, but the scythe and hour-glass are always on time. So is Dress Parade.

Companies are aligned and files are counted off. Sergeants, surcharged with a rude,

## DRESS PARADE

luminous unshaken faith in the republic, tumble stumblingly into their positions. Corporals, sensitive as the bulb of nerve fiber at the end of a cat's whisker, are given the merry hand with a marble heart.

The captain, already disliked by the enemies he has made, flings himself to the perilous front. Ranks are right faced and levant longitudinally, at a modified gallopade, toward the aforementioned color line. Here, after miscellaneous entanglements, unequaled since cable and trolley emancipated the mule from tram car servitude, a measurable coherence is secured. The companies form by some sort of incomprehensible intuition of incidence, on four or five alleged "guides." These stand with inverted muskets and quaking knees, a soft spot in the head and a hot spot in the cheek, robust delineations of despairing imbecility. Their terrors are tremendous, reminding one of that sweetly solemn village hour, when curfew rings and small boys hunt their haunts.

The colonel is now suddenly disclosed. He has dropped, unseen, presumably from



## DRESS PARADE

the propitious heavens, into his allotted station, some forty paces in front of the center. At any rate, he is there. And if I had a hundred dollars—as I had once, though I may never look upon its like again—I would wager it all that he wishes he were somewhere (anywhere) else.

He is one of those lingering men whose minds go off with a wet fuse. Like one dazed, he gazes amazed; and a gaze at him is worth the whole cost of admission. He wears a little bunch of whiskers on his chin, and his nose has the rising inflection. His warlike air and attitude are prophecies of the day when Greece shall give Turkey a basting. He poses statuesque, with folded arms, head aslant, one hip elevated and both legs trembling. His make-up rivals that of a special Chinese envoy with the yellowest of jackets and peacockiest of tails. He carries a frown over the bridge of his nose that portends deep concealment of valuable information as to his own consequence, unknown to the world at large. That frown, however, is only borrowed for the occasion; at heart he is hum-

## DRESS PARADE

ble as the Chicago aristocrat who has squandered the price of a car of pork in the purchase of a bogus Venus. He poses, with arms folded *a la* Bonaparte over his Napoleonic stomach. He poses like the last erect relic of a forest, colossal, leafless, lifeless and sublime. He looks proud as the weary mechanic greeted on his front porch at eve by a shining galaxy of posterity. He has a right to be proud; he is the colonel. Bring forth the royal diadem and make him a present of it.

Meanwhile the adjutant is not idle. Far otherwise. His duties are complicated as the new quadruplex telegraphic system for the transmission of string-fiend fakes. He imitates the gyrations of a cyclone funnel in his delirious attempts to frame one geometric tangent out of ten miscellaneous arcs, with unassimilable *radii*. His processes resemble a lurid, revolving nightmare of St. Valentine's day in the morning. He foams and fumes; he shouts and signals; he gesticulates; he genuflects; he perambulates. He pleads for correct formation as pallid Maryland corn fields plead for rain and fertilizers. His voice

## DRESS PARADE

is softened by the sweet, feathery fluff on his upper lip, but it reaches far. His perplexities equal those of the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among hotel runners. But as in the cruel abattoir the fated bullock glances at the sticker's cold, callous, calculating eye and bows to the inevitable, so the willing, though awkward, soldiery yield at last to the adjutant's persistent insistence. He finally establishes a distant resemblance to the shortest space between two given markers. The markers introvert their marks and fall into desuetude—and the mummery is duly inaugurated.

First the music must sound off. It is of the class that has functional relations with insomnia. Sad was the unlucky Kansas farmer who lost his wife and his best yoke of steers, all in the same week. Sad is the beatified spirit of the deceased alderman when he finds that the streets of heaven are already paved and there can be no rake-off. Sad is the fond wife, rummaging her husband's pockets, when she discovers through her tears that the coins are copper. But sadder than any,

## DRESS PARADE

saddest of all, are they who by direful fortune are condemned to the slow torture of listening to a moulting military band. Yet it is an inescapable adjunct of Dress Parade.

Now the rear rank must "open order," a strategic maneuver performed with a ludicrous multiplication of blunders, appalling to the articles of war and fatal to the flintiest risibles. Each witness wears the face of one who drinketh vinegar unawares. More calisthenics by the adjutant. More heaving of anchors and straining at cables and hoisting on beam ends along the phalanx line. For the jolly mariners of the prairie, fresh from the delights of home, with its pealing bells and magic spells and appetizing smells, are trying to box the compass of spectacular punctilio, with odds dead against them in generous installments. Their timidity gives one a pain; their temerity makes one tender to the touch of sarcasm. Marvel not that our infant industries require protection while they are teething.

Then follow, in startling, swift succession, certain decisive events, decisive as the mys-

## DRESS PARADE

tic, matrimonial rite which makes two mortals immortal.

The adjutant faces toward the left flank, shoulders his tinsel pink iron, and sets his teeth firmly, almost defiantly.

He starts forward in an energetic amble, a melancholy glitter weltering in his optic, and his features bathed in gloom whose darkness might be bottled up and sold for Tyrian dye.

He trots trippingly down to the axis of oscillation; wheels suddenly to the right; charges madly on the perplexed, expectant colonel standing promiscuous as aforesaid; thinks better of it halfway, and halts suddenly

He whirls entirely around at imminent risk of summersaulting.

He explodes vociferously: "Shltr-r-r Hr-r-rms! Pr-r-rsnt Hr-r-rms!"

That is all, but that is enough. The result is astonishing as the Rhode Island tenderfoot's first experiment with Montana wrath; but on the whole it is satisfactory. This is a free country, even when poverty stands with one ear at the telephone waiting for the stately

## DRESS PARADE

steppings of an advance agent of prosperity. This is a free country, where the Italian may drink wine if he likes, even though the Norwegian may prefer alcohol. This is a free country, where, in the bright lexicon of sage brush statesmanship, there is no such word as surrender. This is a free country, where once in four years the voters may, if they see fit, commit all their political Jonahs to a school of whales with broad throats and stout stomachs. This is a free country, all the way from sterile Vermont to California, land of rose-bloom and gold dust, where striped candy ripens every month on the woodbine and new oranges can be dug before Easter. This is a free country, and each soldier on his own terms, in his own good time, obeys the adjutant's command. In the aggregate, every movement in the manual of arms, and many more, are attempted; in the ultimate, the entire battalion gets there.

But the methods and fashions in which nine hundred fire-arms are supposititiously tendered to all whom it may concern, are of bewildering midway plaisance variety. They are void of

## DRESS PARADE

monotony, like a symposium on the cause and cure of panics. The absolute negation of simultaneousness is an abiding charm. Variety is spice; better thirty days of Texas than a palace in Cathay. When St. Louis contributes melted snow of a very dark color to swell old Mississippi's limpid tide, a waiting delta down in the gulf reaps the predestinated benefit.

The adjutant, reckless of addled brain tissue, wrenched spinal marrow and sprained leg-ligaments, whirls once more. His heels come down with a recoil that would jar the rivets from an iron-clad. Patience! noble adjutant (and gentle reader), the prancings and rotatings approach a terminal. We near a period such as that when the last cork has been popped at a wine supper and the bill must be settled. Grudge not the details that gild the gliding moments as they go. He whirls, and, with smart salute of naked saber pointed toward the deathless stars, confronts his commander. It is a moment big with fate. We are reminded of the memorable occasion when

## DRESS PARADE

Cleopatra clasped the asp and perished dramatically.

The adjutant confronts the colonel and salutes him to the best of his feeble ability. Poor human utterance is inadequate at such an hour, but he manages to stammer in propitiatory tone: "Sir! the parade is formed!" Then, circling softly to right and rear of the rising splendor, he subsides, succumbs, and is henceforth lack-lustrous in this spangled pageantry. His part has been performed, and, whisper it gently to the sighing zephyrs, his future function is merely to stand at attention, like patience on a pedestal, grinning at grief.

For a moment or more the silence is painfully intense. You can hear hearts beat like the ticking of French clocks made in Rotterdam by a Swede. In the recesses of each chest, "boots and saddles" is sounded at frequent intervals. But outward silence reigns, as when a young woman, purple with throbbing timidity and expectant bashfulness, stands before her lover, uncertain whether he will lisp his love, or switch off to a side track and



## DRESS PARADE

discuss the January thaw. Silence is golden and toothsome and restful. But it can not last forever. It breaks.

It breaks like a monetary stringency tapped with clearing-house certificates. The colonel now looms, the crowning pride of all this display. Behold, ye gathered multitude of non-combatives. Behold and tremble! His sword of sharpness, gift from admiring neighbors over at Goslin's lane, unsheathed after valorous struggles, swings clumsily to a perpendicular. Excalibur's fit prototype, as emblem of authority and fruitful of coming slaughters, is revealed. Hear, oh! post-office, and give ear, all ye blacksmith shops. Great Mars, his son, has sway. Mock him not! Madness that way lies, or worse. Cheer and the crowd cheers with you; laugh and you laugh in the guard-house. Such being the case, nobody cares to laugh. Napoleon called attention to the fact that forty centuries were perched on the pyramids to umpire one of his fights. More centuries than that are here to see and note.

And the colonel proceeds to make a few

## DRESS PARADE

remarks. He is in a remarkful mood, but his style is dry and sententious. He is not one of those authors who swell the bowels of their books with empty wind. His remarks are meaningful. At home he was chief in the rosebud garden of oratory, but it is not his cue, on the present occasion, to get into a wrestling match with reckless word-trippers. He does all the talking himself. Spherical, sonorous vocables, the well-conned phrases of command, roll out upon the quivering air, and smite the multitudinous ear of this battalion with a startling sense of impotency. The multitudinous arm reaches out in nervous effort at obedience. But on divergent lines the effort doth its energy expend, and the results are simply marvelous. Melodramatic entanglements and perplexities tread on each other's heels, like candidates for patrimony at the obsequies of a plutocrat. Errors grotesque as hippogriffs impinge on errors plaintive as threnodies in minor E.

A woman of the impressionist school, who cooks in a chafing dish, and prescribes reform ball costumes of high-neck gown, long

## DRESS PARADE

sleeves and mittens, is very appropriately registered from Boston. A school girl in the same city wrote in her composition: "The boy thinks himself smart because he can wade where it is deep, but God made the dry land for every living thing, and rested on the seventh day." No calligraph below the regulation Boston standard will suffice fully to portray the errors and horrors of this Dress Parade.

The evolutions of Darwinism are therefore presumably to be intelligently apprehended only by the Boston transcendentalist, nourished on mackerel salted to the *n*th power, and wearing a baked bean in his vermiform appendix. The evolutions and involutions of a maiden effort at Dress Parade are incomprehensible as the ravings of a salaried jaw-smith in a labor strike, who has burst into a profuse state of prevarication as the rosy beer-froth mantles his sublime cheek. True wisdom is best exemplified by a turtle withdrawn into his casemate; even the overestimated he-goat is less occult and dignified.

The popular platform at Vassar is a free coin-

## DRESS PARADE

age of ice cream, 16 to 1, and a currency based on unsecured bonds of wedlock that have defaulted their dividends would be unanimously spurned. On the western frontier a presentable university can be set up with one bottle of sulphuric acid, a four-foot telescope and two ball bats. In some portions of the south a professor who boasts a bicycle kyphosis, writes polysyllabic profundities in long-waisted chirography, and combs his hair like John C. Calhoun, is impreguably intrenched.

Thus do educational standards pulsate and palpitate in different sections of our beloved country. In China, where the grasshopper is a burden and mice are legal tender, it is not so. The tests for a civil service examination of candidates for concubine to the emperor are alike in all the provinces. The Chicago board of trade operator, who rises with the lark at 8:45 A. M., and five drinks later is ready for business, scorns the effeminate chap-pie who had his dog's tongue split in order to crease his pants. But in Chicago, where even the Goddess of Liberty frequently requires a chaperone after dark, such things

## DRESS PARADE

will happen in spite of the most stringent police regulations. Besides which they are mostly incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial. These evolutions and involutions of Dress Parade are to be wrought out by an incipient soldiery, which three months hence will be seeking the hen and ham of glory at the red mouth of smoke house and chicken coop, lucky also not to be subject to rigid inspection by a state entomologist. Now they are intangible as the man in the moon, ineffable as the man in the honeymoon.

Evolutions sometimes go backward. On the present occasion there is no restriction—everything goes, as the young woman said when he drifted slowly out of her life on a lumber raft. The evolutions are meritorious in design and multifarious in execution; likewise in the manual of arms. The flabbergasted novices stand inextricable, like some brittle Rosamond tangled in silken skeins to the queen's taste. You may bray a crank in the mortar, but his wheels will still whirl. When the irreclaimable faddist bestrides his foible, give him due latitude. When the ambient

## DRESS PARADE

air is full of ozone and things of that sort, look out for thunder-storms.

When the 'prentice musketeer shoulders his arquebus and intimates a design to charge bayonet, stand from under promptly. Delays are dangerous. Iscariot with his twelve pieces of discredited coin folded in his turban figured as a tight-rope dancer on the occasion of his very last appearance on any stage.

Tasteless and intangible was the kiss that was prematurely discharged in midair and never, never came. Even the joys of courtship suffer a temporary eclipse when Johnnie is found behind the sofa. Exasperating to a like degree is the humorous episode at which we dare not laugh, yet can not die. It is alleged that rural homes decorated with chromographic mottoes are largely responsible for the overcrowded state of the paresis wards in our asylums. How much of the phenomenal hereditary predisposition to recklessness which characterized the next generation after the war was attributable to the enforced repression of risibles at Dress Parade may never be definitely ascertained. This much

## DRESS PARADE

we know: When the safety valve is strapped down, boilers are in danger. She who kindles fire with gasoline, and penetrates the undiscovered country by that illuminated route, leaves few to pity and none to praise. But the victim of an over-fermentation of merriment has sympathizers numerous as the fashions of grandfather's hat.

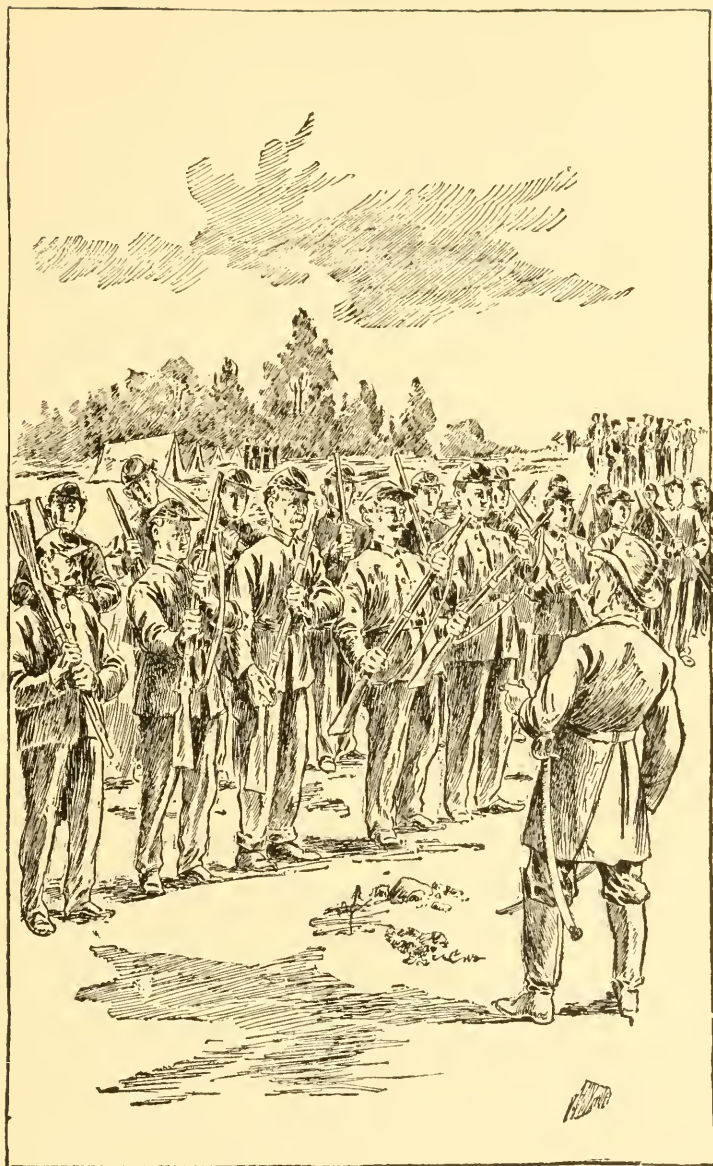
When the young recruit, twenty per cent. pork, thirty per cent. beans, forty per cent. patriotism and ten per cent. soldier, stands up to be exhibited, and a score of his best girls, each compounded in five equal parts of beauty and brightness, grace, gush and giggle, gaze in ravenous, enraptured solicitude on the dreadful performance, with their steel walls of restraint riveted tightly around them, —well, the consequences are to be unquestionably counted in as a part of the general havoc of war.

Meantime Dress Parade goes on. The evolutions and involutions continue to revolve, until the tired recruits are threatened with serious affection in the yellow pine district of the lumber region. The manual of arms

## DRESS PARADE

goes through all its ascensions and declensions, its conjugations and calamities. He who would follow all its ramifications must have a head on him like the learned pig. Arms are presented, shouldered, ordered, right-shifted, trailed and held apart. Bayonets are charged and fixed and clattered until their gleam threatens to scream. No such confusion has prevailed since Lot's wife was transformed into chloride of sodium. One third of the commands are unintelligible; another third are incapable of execution according to tactics; no two companies have been drilled alike; no three consecutive soldiers perform the same antic at the same time. No movement is attempted that does not yield mixtures of grief, drollery and exasperation, sufficing for the most miscellaneous requirement. Meritorious attributes sometimes crop out in unexpected places—many a man conceals a bruised and bleeding heart beneath a porous plaster. Humor and drollery develop. Still the routine goes on, nominally monotonous, but in reality miraculously diversified.





. . . ' No two companies have been drilled alike; no three consecutive soldiers perform the same antic at the same time (Page 212)



## DRESS PARADE

Arms are trailed, right-shouldered, presented, ordered; bayonets are fixed, unfixed, or transfixed; rammers are sprung and imaginary cartridges are subjected to supposititious mastication. Over and over again, in bewildering diversity of succession, are the orders inaccurately given and confusedly executed, until the colonel's martial rage is seemingly appeased. Man wants but little here below, while woman wants many things and wants them all marked down. Both man and woman ought to find in this notable performance a maximum of *quantum suf.*

The perfunctory reading of orders; the reports of first sergeants; the grand spectacular advance of the officers, might each inspire a modern society poem, printed on linen paper with ink worth a dollar a pound. The final dismissal of parade; the departure of companies to their respective quarters—these are mere routine. They are essential, perhaps, but dull, tasteless, flameless as unleavened sanctimony. It is vanity and vexation to be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth, if there is nothing in the spoon.

## DRESS PARADE

Throughout its bellicose career, when occasion permits, the regiment renews its daily practice of this imposing observance. Leaf by leaf the roses fall; day by day the snare-drums call. But practice makes perfect. Within a twelvemonth after muster-in the alert, alive and agile volunteers will have become so facile in their exercise that every motion is pivotal and simultaneous—a thousand with a single joint who hear and move as one. The veteran reverts to his plebe camp experiences even as the aged grandsire recalls the sorrowful coffee and sad biscuit of early matrimonial days. The halo of romance encircles them still!

Every man to his trade, cries the bigamous cobbler, with shell-bark resonance, and tenaciously sticks to his last. Every crank to his whim, every fool to his folly, says common-sense, with some slight conscientious twinges. When uncle Silas comes from South Squam, and, for the first time, confronts the dizzy delights of a gay metropolis, there is danger in the air. Look not upon Monte Carlo when it is red; shun humbugs as you

## DRESS PARADE

would shun a land title based on love and affection. The events we commemorate happened, to all intents and purposes, on a different planet from that now occupying our orbit.

If ever a Dress Parade of hobbies, a review of sham or an inspection of human nature could be displayed, there are grounds for a suspicion that serious complications would ensue. They would equal the ferment from an accidental mixture of gin, gingerbread and sauerkraut, prime standard products of the early Knickerbockers and first exports from New Amsterdam. Bulwer says: "Beware of the poor devil who is always railing at coaches and four; book him as a man to be bribed."

More than thirty years ago, for the last time in the volunteer army of the Union, the welcome call, "Parade is dismissed," rang along the attenuated line of some lingering battalion, and it dissolved into history. Parades, marches and battles were finished. But victory was assured; its results are em-

## DRESS PARADE

bedded and embalmed in the nation's splendid destiny.

It is an inspiring thought that this destiny opens broad and bright before us, and we need only be faithful to our trust to ensure a realization of the fondest dreams of the heroes, saints and martyrs of the olden time. Unrolled around us lies a continent, clothed with verdure as with a garment, heavy with its stores of hoarded wealth, all reserved for us in virgin purity and freshness since earth's creation morn. Our race is inheritor of the best blood, the best energies, the best principles, the best talent, that have illumined and vivified the human family through all its glorious past.

Here, then, if we and our descendants are true, in this enlarged and beautified Eden, are to be evolved all the grand possibilities of humanity. Here increasing prosperity is to bring increased virtue; increasing intelligence, increased power; increasing culture, increased happiness; increasing freedom, increased nobility. Here the swarming millions yet to be, molded by free institutions

## DRESS PARADE

and universal education into a refined and homogeneous race, multiplying their material comforts by now undreamed-of physical appliances, adorning their homes until each family shall dwell, self-centered, in a world of beauty as in a shining sphere of crystal, and warming in the sunshine of God's presence as they grow in moral stature nearer to His throne,—here the coming millions will advance to the millennial fruition promised as the goal of earthly hope and effort.

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

### V



HERE were no giants in those days that tried men's souls and stored their bodies with unpensionable ailments. Giants, mostly apocryphal, fought battles single-handed in periods of antiquity now remote and malodorous. The last samples perished some centuries ago, painfully regretted. Their spears were rust, their clubs were dust, their souls were with the saints (we trust) long prior to 1861.

The men who put down the slaveholders' rebellion were mostly boys. It is estimated that the soldiers of the Union averaged only nineteen years old when the roar of that first cannon broke on Sumter's walls and echoed



## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

down the aisles of time, besides shattering a large invoice of miscellaneous crockery. No such burden ever before fell on the youth of any era; no such imperial manhood was ever before developed in a single generation. Greece molded countless heroes of her own, and has thrust her hand into every mass of mortal clay that has been fashioned into beauty or power or glory since the days of the demigods. But Greece can boast no more perfect heroism than that which made our golden age illustrious, conspicuous, lurid as a trolley car in a thunder-storm, for all ensuing ages.

The recruit of 1861 was of the human various species so dear to the articulating frenzy of Mr. Venus. He was intensely human yet various as life's multiform phases in this splendid hemisphere. He was a farm boy, perhaps, fresh from the white sheets, and fried chicken, and sweet cream, and angel cake of his ancestral roof, with no experience more thrilling than that of the local press and pulpit arising as the voice of one man to celebrate the production of some abnormal cucumber; he went to town to see the parade,

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

and, vowing he would ne'er enlist, enlisted. He was a store clerk, skilled in pounds, pints and prints, with a thin top dressing of Latin, and a silvery Minnehaha gush of gaiety in every motion. He was a student with columns of logarithms in his head and a theodolite in his stomach; conscientious as a jurymen sworn to bring in a verdict according to the law and the lawyers' speeches. He was a mechanic, swart and grim, with steps so energized with mobility that when he walked the pavements rolled and rocked beneath him like waves of the sea.

There were howling swells in that period, but he was not of them. Reared in the bland atmosphere of plowshares and pruning-hooks, he had no taste for the big orgies in which they reveled. He was not a fast young man, nor did the fast young men, as a rule, make good soldiers, or soldiers at all. Their furore was not the inspiring sentiment of a war for liberty. Their recklessness was not bravery; their wild natures accepted no yoke of discipline. These fast young men traveled rapidly, because their road was all down

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

grade. They were the same then as now, the same yesterday, to-day and next century—worthless and fruitless, first, last and forever. Each successive five years brings a new generation of them, as the novices of five years previous, worn out and burned out by dissipation, disappear over the divide and enter that sulphurous enclosure, that stockade of horrors, where the fires of torment are fed with their festering tissues, and the towers of tophet re-echo the shrieks of their tortured souls. These howling swells, these fast young men, these debauched, debased and dissolute youths, these devotees of the world, the flesh and the flowing bowl, had no part or lot in the sacrifices of that heroic era.

The average boy of '61 was of pure metal and exalted worth. The glint of his eye reflected the stars of the flag, and a prophecy of Appomattox was written on his brow. Into the white chambers of his soul only such things could enter as affiliated with the guests already cherished there—his mother, his sister, his sweetheart and his God.

In the alembic of stern discipline and re-

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

lentless strife he and his comrades were fused into that homogeneous, glorious host who, on five hundred crimson fields from Wilson's Creek to Bentonville, at a salary of thirteen munificent dollars a month in depreciated greenbacks, put the love of life's joys behind them and, throwing their souls into their bayonets, rushed to the flaming front, careless of wounds or death if only they might help to final victory.

What we call 1861 was not a year. It was history changing front; a cycle dying, an era born. Ignorance was still shaking himself by the hand pompously, after the manner of his species, and saying to himself: "Go to! I am lord of the bailiwick as aforetime; I will bind and stack and thresh as of hoariest yore." But knowledge was looming; information was coming to the front with a sea-faring hitch to his trousers as one who had traveled far; even the professional reformer, who talks dialectics while his wife toils sixteen hours a day to nourish his soaring soul, found auditors. But knowledge did not loom to an adequate altitude or permeate to a suf-

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

ficient degree of prevalence. Else had no Southron dared promise himself to whip the people who had invented and built up and managed the great material enterprises of the nation—or desired to whip them. Ignorance fluttered around recklessly until he singed his ostentatious whiskers in the flames of the pit; yea, more,—until he was blistered to the eyebrows with scorplings of the everlasting bonfire. Where ignorance is bliss, politics degenerates into irredeemable idiocy and ineffable slush; the campaign of mutual delusion goes on and on, the whole day long, the whole summer through, the whole year round; the oracle is an imitation statesman, whose head was cast in a heroic mold, but the jelly didn't "jellify;" his clientage is the adult male population of an infested village, whose howling need is a dog-killery. Under such leadership popular illumination is a slothful, discouraging process. The modest, uncultivated mule is liable at times to reverse the accepted formula, and put his best foot backward. The half-savage conductors of an orthodox

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

Afro-American cremation in Texas typify an equally marked social retrogression.

It is, as a rule, futile to preach predestination to people who are not in the four hundred, but a general movement for the dissemination of knowledge is effective in tearing away ignorance, as the rich soil of Iowa is ripped up the back with a gang plow. With a due allowance of school-houses in the south forty years ago, the slaveholders' rebellion would have been impossible, just as in the prosperous, progressive American republic of to-day with ten million depositors in her banks and twenty million children in her schools, a successful assault on intelligence and prosperity would be impossible. Ignorance, as we have stated, fluttered recklessly near the scorchings of the bonfire. Whereupon knowledge achieved a popularity unprecedented since our first ancestress risked for its acquisition the fairest prospects of her distant and inconceivably multitudinous posterity.

During ten years next succeeding the war, its loyal survivors were habitually called, half

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

in affection, half in honor: "Our Boys in Blue." Even those who had hated their cause and mourned their success conceded the fitness of a sobriquet which exalted their uniform to the dignity of a moral attribute, and tinged their classification with the hue of their trousers. It was Plato who said: "The brave shall be crowned. He shall wed the fair. He shall be honored at the sacrifice and the banquet." This was the era of the wedding, the barbecue, the "present arms" to a phalanx of angels—as was eminently fitting.

The women of '61 were not the wailing watchers and tearful lint-scrappers of a too current tradition. They were soulful, heart-strong heroines, the swordless soldiers of the Union. Lint-scraping and bandage winding were minor episodes. Their work was many sided as a prism, with every angle reflecting a radiant intensity. And all the ladders of grace that led from bloodiest battle-fields straight to the bending heavens, were built up, round by round, from the piety and devotion of intrepid womanhood.

The Boys in Blue were rapidly and happily

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

and most appropriately mated to the noble girls they left behind them. One of Napoleon's marshals exclaimed when dying: "I have dreamed a beautiful dream." To the Boy in Blue, suffused with blushes as the compliments rained on him, both war and peace were chrysanthemum visions, soft, rosy and spicy. The compliments were well earned and welcome; welcome and wholesome as a thoughtful surgeon's timely prescription in the cold drizzle of a night march, when he proffered his flask with: "Gentlemen, you need a tonic; leave a drop for me!" Even the chastened copperhead hissed no expostulation; he simply folded his Nessus shirt around him and lay down in baffled schemes, his only punishment being an enforced allegiance to the proudest flag and grandest country the world has ever seen.

When ten years more had lent distinction and distance to receding perspectives, the title changed to "Our Gallant Veterans." The asperity of opposition had softened; the respect of friends had deepened. There was tenderness in the accent which pronounced



## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

the words and in the sentiment which inspired them. All recognized that wherever a surviving soldier stood, there was a sentinel of liberty. The Veterans came to the front in every sphere of activity, with the nerve that stakes a royal flush against a marble synagogue. They performed their full share of every-day work, and they rose to high positions in the state. They generously divided the honors, even turning out early in the morning to give the devil his dews. This was comparatively easy, as the exposure of the crime of 1873 had not then upset nearly everything, nor had the new woman come, constantly provoking controversies with the antagonistic sex.

The Veterans moved on the savage borderland and conquered it. They transferred sandy deserts into radiant farmsteads, festooned with clematis and enameled with gladiolus. Hated by men with stinging consciences or none, they retaliated never—or hardly ever. Though poor they were not discouraged; sockless, they were not ashamed. When bedizzened with frontier fringes, even Doctor Mary Walker with all her trousers

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

was not arrayed like one of them. Many of them went south, where they were greeted with black looks from white men and white smiles from black men; a few remained there and outgrew both. Gleefully as the beefsteak sings on the gridiron, the ring of their axes sounded through northern forests; their hearts and heads were solid to the innermost core, like the stumps they left behind them. Broad prairies in the west blossomed with their chinchilla moustaches and their alfalfa whiskers. They opened mines, subdued vast wildernesses, tunneled mountains for railways and syphoned them for irrigation. They equipoised some of that surplus gravity which has at times caused the country to tip up on its eastern edge. They did not wear toothpick shoes, lemon-colored or otherwise; these they left to the weak and vicious elements of an effete civilization.

With the army shoe, the army bean, the army mule, and the unfailing army nerve, they marched on to new and noble conquests. They organized commonwealths; founded cities; edited newspapers; captured judge-

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

ships, governorships, senatorships, the presidency, administering the multiform functions to their own eternal honor and with benefit to all. Officeholding had charms for them recondite as the link between beans and blue-stockings, inscrutable as the dynamics of a cucumber which has concealed its aggressiveness until 3 a. m. Should the demon of filibuster raise his crest from opposition benches in any one of a score of legislative assemblies, you might readily count a full quorum of them, each busily tying knots with his tongue which no agility of his teeth could undo, each kindly instructing novices how to work a tennis racket or advising experts how to extract honey from Celtic ground-apples. Their arguments might be loose in the joints like a plaisance camel, but they unerringly arrived at an available conclusion. The feeble but sage members of a swell chappie clique might pronounce them insufferable as to style, but they went on capturing and conquering things by instinctive predilection and force of habit. They experienced little exhilaration from the efferves-

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

cence of hired rapture and purchased adulation; their financial views habitually had the ring of two metals; their accomplishments might stop short of the mandolin and their scholarship shy at an ablative absolute. But they reached the goal, on the average, and "Get there Eli!" was their practical rendition of the motto "Excelsior."

Of seven presidents elected since the close of the war, six were ex-soldiers. Minnesota points with pride to her nine soldier governors. The Veterans quietly gathered in the voluntary and involuntary honors of their admiring countrymen, while the chief function of their traducers seems to have been to crop thistles, grow ears and bray.

The surviving Veterans of the Union army were neither drones in the busy hive of national development, nor a burden on the benevolence of their fellow-citizens. Ninety-five per cent. of them made a success in the civil battles of life—doing men's part honorably, industriously, heroically in the work of the world. Only five per cent. were failures, less than three per cent. ever be-



*The veterans quietly gathered in the voluntary and involuntary honors . . . . One state points with pride to her nine soldier governors, and of seven presidents elected since the close of the war, six were ex-soldiers (Page 230)*



## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

came wholly dependent on public charity for support.

An appalling phalanx of apparitions at times menaced the peace of nervous taxpayers over prospective drafts on their plethoric resources. A cat may kick at a king. Men gifted with wind and lungs, men with well-shaved voice and neatly-modulated nose, have proclaimed a shuddering dread of future difficulty in preparing for wholesale care of the thriftless ex-soldier. But those unsophisticated suspects went on ruthlessly, recklessly, paying their own full share of the taxes and manifestly bent on relentlessly taking care of themselves. The identical persons who in the honey-dew days of the "Boys in Blue" had gaily floated in geysers of taffy, constantly sprayed with cascades of gush, were, ten years later, the objects of fathomless solicitude on the part of contemporaries who feared that universal pauperism would engulf them. Vain was the dread; bootless the solicitude. In the aggregate, the discharged Veterans contributed in taxes more than the sum total of their army pay, and by

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

their own productive labor added more to the wealth of the nation than the entire cost of the war. And at any time within the last thirty years there might have been found in all our prisons a larger per capita proportion of former church dignitaries and bank officers than of honorably discharged soldiers of the Union. The typical Veteran was neither a tramp nor a bum. He was a thrifty, self-respecting, patriotic citizen. At the plow, the anvil, the lathe; on the engine, the mail car, the ship; in the lumbering camp, the harvest field, the counting-room, the factory; at the bar, on the bench, in the pulpit—everywhere in spheres of useful, successful effort, he wrought faithfully, ardently, triumphantly.

Even where the Veterans never went, their influence penetrated and vivified and fructified. Their aromatic, anæsthetic codfish, their mackerel stuffed with savor and salinity, have carried freedom's tidings to Borneo's wilds. A Grand Army post annually observes memorial day in distant Honolulu. Ireland and Poland, lanced spots of a huge European



## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

suppuration, have felt the pulsations of our victory. And on the dim frontiers of far-off Argentina, sweet girl graduates of Minnesota's normal schools, daughters of Veterans, turbaned with haloes and aproned with the flag, are unfolding the mysteries of orthography, chirography, cube roots, and syllogisms, to rejoicing grandchildren of authentic Patagonian cannibals. Whether as a Daniel come to judgment or a Jonah come to grief, the "Gallant Veteran" adorned his era—an era that is past.

The third decade brought peculiar revelations and some characteristic iconoclasm, wrought by the most gothic of vandals known to human kind. The deeds of the Boy in Blue and the Gallant Veteran have been told and retold in verses so musical that they might almost be punched with holes and performed on self-playing pianos, automatically, as it were. But the terms are obsolete, and the current period has brought its special designation, tremulous as a phrase from De Senectute, and redolent of lean and slippered Pantaloon—"The Old Soldier." It came

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

in the days when colored cartoons were growing on the country like a bad habit, and it came to stay. Whether applied in honor and tenderness, or in derision and mockery, who can tell?

This epithet tells a truth, though perhaps emanating from indecent exposure of intellect in a brain whose convolutions are more crooked than the ram's horn that triturated the defenses of Jericho. It tells a truth, though more cruel than that sweeping massacre when the patriarch Cain came within one of slaying all the youth in Asia, or than the edict which collared and cuffed a dilapidated Coxey in the shadow of the capitol's proud dome.

Whether we like it or not, it has elements of permanence,—that euphony which is the kernel of fact; that levity which is the soul of wit; that pointedness which is the test of endurance. It has manifestly come to abide. When the lady lacteal artist lactealizes the sober, circumspect cow, the product is harmless as the process and participants; no spirituous or vinous venom from that nourishing fountain e'er exudes. When the lion eats a

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

lamb the lamb becomes lion; when the lamb eats a lion the results can be better imagined than depicted. When the commonweal tourist falls weary, he wins consolation from a rehearsal of "Bunions' Pilgrim's Progress, or the Trials of a Trail," and rises refreshed.

When the ex-soldier feels rheumatic twinges clutching at his nerves like an eagle's beak, resistance were vain as kicking at a thunderbolt in crocheted slippers. He is still vigorous, considering all that he has gone through—and all that has gone through him! But he is not invulnerable; some of his elasticity is as deceptive as the hospitality of an alleged park dotted all over with warnings to keep off the grass. He may profitably display that charity which covers a multitude of sarcasms, and serenely accept the inevitable as a companion piece to tariff reduction, civil-service reform, lectures on advanced domesticity by the emancipated female whose family lives on canned goods, and other copyrighted jokes. Yes; the Boys in Blue have donned the Gray. They are no longer young; they will

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

never be younger; they are "Old Soldiers" now, and will be to the end.

Meanwhile they exist as an active element in society, none the less interested and observant because of their phenomenal experience. A subtle, half-forgotten aroma of school-boy Latin permeates the back parlors of their minds, but the grand beacon-lights of world history flush all the front windows with a ruddy glow. They lag, superfluous it may be, like lingering aborigines who are chewing salt pork, sandwiched with bread of idleness, out in the bad lands; but they will not linger long. The ribald glee of the society sharp, boasting an æsthetic eclat acquired at Christmas free lunches and other luxurious functions, probes to no sore spots. Honesty is probably the best policy when the amount involved is small, but it is the best principle, always and everywhere. Those who practice it look upon themselves with the pleased astonishment of a man who has made a verified prediction. Those who ignore it look upon themselves with a cold diagonal Japanese stare of non-recognition—while still the wonder

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

grows that average-sized consciences can stand so many blows.

The Old Soldier can afford to be honest and admit the hideous imputation of adolescence. Yes! Eleven hundred times, yes. It were safer as well as honester to admit, than to join issue and challenge proof. Should he deny it, any unprejudiced tribunal would summarily rule out all evidence for the defense and refuse to note an exception. Only two generations lie between the shirt-sleeves of the money-making ancestor and the patched pants of his impoverished great-grand-son; only two generations ago, Astor was chasing the festive mink and Vanderbilt was sculling the shapeless scow. Hence life is too short to be frittered away in vain regrets and useless denials. The Boys in Blue have all grown Gray.

The sensations of a dizzy man when the floor rises up around him, while east and west come together with a crash, are an antidote to his precedent fairest visions of the heavenly. There are said to be tenors before whose singing the larks are struck

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

dumb and take to the woods, while the whole landscape melts into one golden chalice of liquid melody.

But time, the enchantress, with all her benefactions, all her favor, all her consideration, has wrought no miracle of perpetual youth for the Boys in Blue or the gallant Veterans. The free coinage of silver has gone on among their plenteous locks, whether auburn, black or brown, unmindful of the edict of 1873. Dyes are futile; pigments are in vain; bleaches are superfluous. The process goes on; sure, steady, inevitable, inexorable.

The Old Soldier pleads guilty to those who take toll of yellow meal and neglect the weightier matters of the law. But he does not yet apologize for persistent existence. They who resent his longevity as an economic affront, contradicting all mortuary tables, whist formulas and crap combinations, must abide the result, even though it create an ice gorge in Ohio politics. He braves the feeble wrath of the political dilettante, with a daily surplus of brains (fried in crumbs), principally solicitous to provide

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

mermaids with divided skirts and get dried insects on the free list. He fully indorses Horace Greeley's theory that snobs are the poorest breed of horned cattle on earth. He does not even excuse himself to the frosty orators of the alumni platform, educated beyond the limits of their intellect, who assume to stand high in the councils of their creator, but neglected to bring their souls with them when they condescended to be born.

The Rhode Island colonists defiantly proclaimed, in the midst of a witch burning era, "There are no witches on this earth, nor devils—excepting Massachusetts ministers, and such as they." Men with paunches and other signs of wealth, men with white neck-gear and other signs of piety, men with binoculars and other signs of culture, men with unclassifiable crania and faces unfit for publication, have snubbed and jeered the Old Soldier, but he still survives. An unsullied Americanism vindicates itself always against the world. When the royal United States Berkshire came in competition with the pauper hog of foreign climes, his victory was de-

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

cisive; he now reigns triumphant, even in Westphalia, the home of ham!

Stock exchange piousness, on affectionate terms with itself, and clear, calm, introspective natures, stuffed with binomial theorems, may sneer at compassion and gratitude; are not small potatoes the raw material of a dignity that is born of starch? The county seat molder of public opinion who can manage to keep three jumps ahead of the sheriff, and pay for his boiler plate editorial C. O. D., vies with the New York newspaper syndicate backed by indefinite millions of Chicago beef money, in delicate sarcasm. Go to the mule, thou dizzard, and learn of him! From that speechless, untranslatable functionary valuable information may be extracted wholly novel to thy groveling consciousness; amongst much else surely this, that gratefulness is mate to saintliness. Even in the late James brothers' section of darkest America, this is accepted orthodoxism. The statesman with pickarel brow and muscalonge integument may join the ecclesiastical mignonette and journalistic geranium in proclaiming threatened peril to



## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

the republic from the fulfillment of a moiety of her despairing pledge to provide for the disabled. The oblique expostulations of professed friends are less endurable than the open malice of enemies. The one-story man with a gravel roof has no conception of sky-parlors. Let the untranslatable functionary rise up and bray responding echoes in fit, sufficient answer.

They jest at scars who never sniffed saltpetre. They mock at wounds who never confronted a foe more tangible than a Baconian cryptogam. But the Old Soldier has learned to contemplate with philosophic tolerance the weak and wicked sides of human nature—the Christian science side, the Tammany tiger side, for example. Bluffs were unknown in his heartsome, wholesome youth; nor were jockeys subsidized to give their backers tips. Undreamed-of was the soft, seductive game of flim-flam. No one then suggested a law for the protection of innocent, elderly congressmen from the wiles of the seminary miss. The Veteran can pity those who hate him, and defy the gurgling giggle of his scorners

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

—in the words of Sam Johnson, “he remembers who kicked him last.” He who smote with the sword of the Lord and of Abraham safely ignores an effervescence of mouth-vapor. Let those who surrendered to the idols of the uncircumcised and now seek to expunge their records, find merciful oblivion if they can. He tenders no apologies for his motives and invokes no forgetfulness of his deeds. Like the backwoods preacher entangled in an unmanageable sentence, he may have lost his nominative case, but he is bound for the kingdom of heaven.

The Old Soldier, entrenched in his philosophy as in a bastioned citadel, rejoices in a redeemed country strong enough to regard with forbearance the foibles of quondam foes. The men who looked bravely into his eyes across the frowning ramparts of Vicksburg, or who, fed on raw corn and persimmons, fluttered their heroic rags for a year between him and beckoning Richmond, only ten miles distant, have been welcomed, as with “sweet, reluctant, amorous delay” they returned to enjoy the privileges and even to accept the honors

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

of the rich citizenship he fought to restore to them. He sees them squeezing pure olive oil and genuine creamery butter out of honest old cottonseed. He puts his own traditional pride of supremacy in the matter of basswood hams and white oak nutmegs resolutely behind him, and hails them proudly as right worthy fellow-yankees and brethren beloved. Whatever, if anything, the present may withhold of universal consent to the sacredness of his cause or the completeness of his triumph, he exultantly leaves to time, to God and to history.

The Old Soldier claims no undue meed of praise. Standing in the limpid incandescence of a momentous epoch, his pardonable pride has only degenerated into boastfulness on rare and radiant village greens, where self-delusion finds a fertile soil fenced with applauding auditors. It was his fortune to have contributed to the preservation of the Union, the emancipation of the slave and the regeneration of the country. But save and except as aforesaid, he makes no pretense of

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

having done it all. He had mighty and Almighty help.

Sometimes the credit for emancipation is ascribed to the heroic agitators, who, before the appeal to projectiles, had long demanded unconditional abolition. It is error to award the palm of this splendid consummation to any class of men. Slavery perished because its death-doom had been sounded on the celestial chimes; because the nineteenth century had come; because the flying engine and the speaking wire had come; because the steel pen and the postage-stamp had come; because the free school, the newspaper and the open Bible had come; because Wilberforce, and Garrison, and Harriet Stowe had come; because Lincoln, and Seward, and Stanton had come; because Grant, and Sherman, and Sheridan had come; because two million gallant boys in blue had come; because the great and terrible day of the Lord had come, and not all the powers of evil could longer buttress and bulwark the crowning iniquity of the universe. Give to all the potent factors a full measure of the award. But let

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

the rapture of self-eulogy never eclipse vital historic truth. Slavery succumbed, not more to military force than to the eternal verities. And rebellion surrendered not alone to Grant and his legions, but also to the loyal men and women who stood behind them, and to the churches and colleges, the mills and mines and storehouses, the homes and herds and harvests of the mighty North.

They fell, who lifted up a hand  
And bade the sun in heaven stand!  
They smote and fell, who set the bars  
Against the progress of the stars,  
And stayed the march of motherland!

They stood, who saw the future come  
On through the fight's delirium!  
They smote and stood, who held the hope  
Of nations on that slippery slope  
Amid the cheers of Christendom.

In adversity's hard school the Old Soldier learned transcendent lessons of human brotherhood such as no other school could have taught him, dilute the tincture, water the stock, or inflate the currency of educational methods how we may. Escaping from cruel

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

prison pens, where there was no one to love nor to caress, and with no light to direct but that sun of the sleepless, melancholy star, his hand reached out into the darkness searching for a guide; it was grasped by another hand, warm, loyal and true; the hand of a man and a brother; a black hand indeed, but it was all the same in the dark.

He learned respect for authority and order, scorning the malcontents, who, hornet-like, always stand sting-end uppermost, stinging their friends to show their independence, their enemies to show their impartiality, and each other to keep in practice; unwholesome whether in conjunction or apogee; a bundle of tinder and rockets, on a raft of smoke-storm, with sparks wildly flying; each a flask for brittleness, whether decipherable into a nursing bottle or a sulphuric carboy. He learned to value his country as more precious for his personal sacrifice, stimulating his just demand that America shall henceforth be reserved for such as are or wish to be Americans; for those to whom her institutions are a birthright or those who bring due apprecia-

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

tion of her blessings; shaking from her skirts the imported vermin of the slums; spurning back from her shores the redhanded apostles of anarchy, who dream of freedom in the death of law, and search for thrift in robbery and violence.

The Old Soldier is something of a politician. He loves to help save the country again and again, on every convenient occasion. Soon after each and every quadrennial interchange of governmental figure-heads, the whole population is prepared to admit that we have narrowly escaped a vast hemispherical catastrophe. Even when the election has only been carried by a constitutional majority of three—two Winchesters and a shot-gun—the escape is just as grateful. For the campaign torch may then be extinguished; the paroxysm of hysterics illuminated by an aurora borealis vex and vaunt no more. The shout of the torch-bearer, screaming himself into grippe and pneumonia, is quenched. The heeler and the howler are alike silent—they have folded their tepees like Arabs and fled in wild dismay. The

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

candidate no longer inhales the whiff of whisky sours or clasps hands chiefly notable as rich feeding ground for microbes. The precinct chairman, reveling in his labor of lucre, bow-legged but full of enthusiasm, has subsided. The able editor, a man of ice and iron, carrying around a head heavily weighted with unpublished matter, can gaze down the flamboyant vista of his victorious career and take a needed rest.

The orator, whose seductive notes were rainbows melting into song, can now sadly meditate on blind-stagger luck in politics; the senatorial aspirant can proceed to gather in votes on a rising market; the triumphant boss can accept from his Chicago admirers the finest banquet their slaughterhouses yield; the average honest partisan can rejoice in the temporary submergence of that specifically, super-righteous element, the "saving five per cent." of voters, who usually keep the country from going to destruction, by serenely, sweetly, holding the balance of power.

When the alleged campaign of lungs, lar-



## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

ceny and lunacy is thus ended, the windweavers and phrase-coiners are dumb, and the country has escaped from the desperate situation of one whose incurable disease is attacked by an infallible remedy. Herr Most, with a string of transatlantic gutterals foaming from his lips, and Herr Altgeld brandishing his gold-clause lease before our blinking eyes, enter into the very sinew and substance of our recurring nightmares. We scorn them, and our scorn bites—usually. But this time it falls harmless as one of Chauncey Depew's periodical four-track, block-signal presidential booms. The nightmare raves and ravages until the ballots come down like an avalanche and smother it—ballots called "snowflakes" in the old chestnut, but now each six inches wide, thirty-two inches long and many-hued that wayfarers need not err.

We accept the result with a smile that is childlike and grand. The country is safe—again. In fact we begin to suspect that the nightmare was, after all, the fond, familiar flea-bite of antiquity. At any rate, the country is safe again—safe as a fire risk on crude

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

asbestos stored in a vacant lot. And then the resonance of Wyoming's new, bewitching and lady-like female electoral vote splits fame's brazen trumpet into hair-pins carrying the assurance that henceforth presidents are liable to be nominated by intuition and elected by instinct. Then, also, the men who helped to save it once if not oftener—before, and are still willing diffidently to confess the fact, rejoice with others at the latest victory. We have recently been told in a magazine article, written by the meditative son of a confederate sire, that the rebellion was put down chiefly by its own pestiferous, irredeemable paper currency. This startling political warning may well be subjected to searching cross-examination. The Old Soldier of the Union neither affirms nor denies. He is content with his limited measure of pardonable pride in some of the features of that old, old story of daring and devotion and sacrifice in the days when the country was saved once before—in the days of the deeds that shaped up a country worth saving again, worthy of being saved

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

again and again, as many times as need be, by the generations yet to come.

The Old Soldier is satisfied to have borne an honorable, though inconspicuous, part on the winning side and the right side of a contest fraught with such tremendous consequences. In the vast sum total of effort, achievement and sacrifice, no man other than the favored and gifted two or three ultimate leaders did more than an infinitesimal share. The shares of glory are proportionally minute—even our U. S. colonial dame cuts but a sorry figure in contrast with the daughter of seventeen revolutions from Venezuela. Thus the up-to-date woman is coldly antedated! The Old Soldier claims no undue meed of praise.

From corps commander to the man who bore a musket, individuals earned but a fragmentary fraction of the full plentitude of honor. Comrades of the flag were they, and all are equal now. He invites suspicion and ridicule who struts to the front, while his hatband plays a sweet symphonic tribute to his valor. No genuine Old Soldier attempts to

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

Weyerize his record. An occasional harmless effervescence of exaggeration is charitably overlooked, but all are comrades and equals. They only rank in priority of encomium who went up in chariots of fire, through sulphurous battle-clouds, to advanced lines in the battalions of the blessed.

Together they marched and camped and fought and conquered. Dying, they sealed their sacrifice with martyrdom. Surviving, they proved their willingness to die, and lived to clasp with joy the sweetness of restored affection, pride and hope.

They died amid the battle clangors of five hundred crimson fields; they died in hospitals where nerves were highways for the steps of fever's scorching feet; they died in dismal prison pens, unshorn, unsheltered, hungering, thirsting, desolate, despairing; they died, four hundred thousand of them died, in the bloom of their beautiful youth, that the slave might be unshackled, freedom apotheosized, the nation saved.

They lived—a million of them live to-day. They lived to do men's work in building up

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

the land their valor sanctified. They lived to witness development and prosperity beyond the stretches of their fondest dream. They lived to see a prospective disintegration of the too solid south, her trusted leaders standing with reluctant feet where politics and finance meet. They lived to see South Carolina, cradle of secession, thoroughly reformed by an application of bi-chloride of Tillmanism for the drink habit, and the entire Southern social system thoroughly rejuvenated by an invasion of graceful young Sophomores from Vassar, each with a cogent thesis on the remedy for punctured tires. They have lived to see the sun of Appomattox flood the planet with its warming, brightening beams. They have lived to know that the war's immortal hero, touring around the earth, penetrated no regions so remote that his fame had not preceded him, and visited no populations too ignorant to comprehend the significance of his victories. They have lived to read that in mud-hovels in the deepest heart of Africa, in thatched huts on the banks of the Ganges, in cabins buried among Siberian snows, portraits

## THE BOYS IN BLUE GROWN GRAY

of Lincoln are found, venerated by benighted peoples as the saint of a new dispensation. They have lived to see the horizon strewn with wrecks of stricken dynasties—crowns crumbling, thrones trembling, the whole filmy remainder of hoary despotisms shriveling like a gossamer scroll. They have lived to see the flag of our republic floating resplendent in the zenith, as a token that the Union lives, and that liberty reigneth forever.

THE END.

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JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY'S STORIES OF THE  
HUMORIST, EDGAR WILSON NYE  
(BILL NYE)

BY

RUSSEL M. SEEDS



**JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY'S STORIES OF THE  
HUMORIST, EDGAR WILSON NYE  
(BILL NYE)**

*(Russel M. Seeds' Interview with James Whitcomb Riley in the  
Indianapolis News.)*

One morning James Whitcomb Riley dug up from the pile of recent books Bill Nye's post-humorous work, "A Guest at the Ludlow and Other Stories." It was not the first time he had seen it. Indeed, he has given more care and attention to the bringing out of this last work of his dead friend than he usually does to the mechanical and business details of his own books, and he had read and reread everything in it before it was given to the public. Yet he spent nearly an hour in loving examination of the volume, reading again with thorough enjoyment a number of the sketches.

The friendship that existed between the poet and the gentle humorist was one of those remarkable bonds of sympathy that few men are fortunate enough to find in life, and those who do seldom find it more than once. The same keen sense of the ridiculous, the same shyness of humor in conversation, the same gentleness of spirit and the same tender anxiety to lighten each other's cares, welded this bond of sympathy that lasted to the death of the one and will remain through life a happy memory to the other.

"These stories are more like him than any he ever

## RILEY'S STORIES OF "BILL NYE"

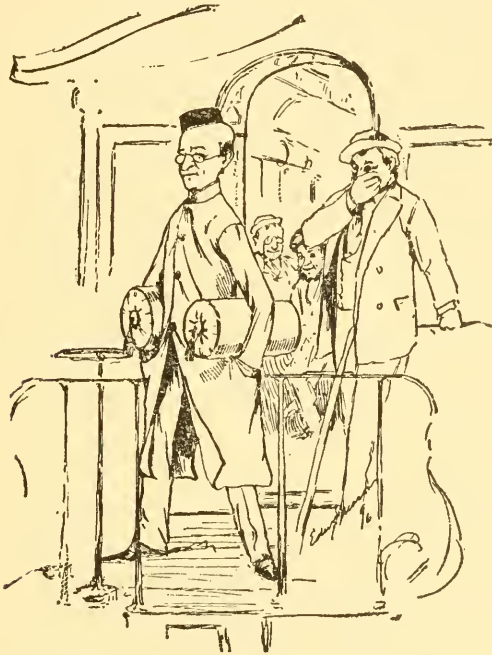
published while alive," said Mr. Riley, sauntering over to the desk of the literary editor and exhibiting the volume. They breathe the spirit of Nye in almost every line. Just listen to this." And in his inimitable way he read an extract from the volume.

"The quaintness and whimsicality of Mr. Nye's humor," said Mr. Riley, as he closed the little volume gently and held it in his lap, "was the notable thing about him. It was unaccountable upon any particular theory. It just seemed natural for his mind to work at that gait. He recognized the matter-of-fact view others took of the general propositions of life, and sympathized with it, but he did so with a native tendency to surprise and astound that ordinary state of mind and vision. He could say a ridiculous thing or perpetuate a ridiculous act with a face like a Sphinx, knowing full well that those who saw or heard would look to his face for some confirmation of their suspicion that it was time to laugh. They had to make up their minds about it unaided by him, however, for they never found any trace of levity in his countenance. As he would say, he did his laughing 'elsewhere.'

"One day in midwinter the train stopped at a way station in the West, and he had five minutes to wait. Mr. Nye's roving eye had discovered that the plush-leather pillows of the sofa in the smoking compartment of the car we were riding in were unattached. Without a word he picked up the leather cylinders and placed one under each arm, with the tassels to the front. He was an invalid in looks as well as in strength, and when he appeared upon the platform thus equipped the astounded natives watched him with silent, sympathetic curiosity as he strode up and down, apparently seizing

## RILEY'S STORIES OF "BILL NYE"

the opportunity for a little much-needed exercise. The rest of us had to hide to keep from exploding, but he was utterly oblivious to the stares and comments until he returned to the car. No explanation was vouchsafed, and the primitive inhabitants of that town are proba-



EXERCISING AT THE RAILWAY STA-  
TION.

bly still wondering what horrible malady compelled that invalid to wear those outlandish cushions.

"A favorite amusement with him was the reading of imaginary signs at the stations when we were traveling. When the train would stop and that hush would come over the car, with half the people wondering

## RILEY'S STORIES OF "BILL NYE"

who their fellow-passengers were and the other half viewing the little grocery on the one side, or the station, restaurant or bill-board on the other, Mr. Nye would break forth and begin to read the bill-board aloud: 'Soda water, crackers—highest prices paid for hides and tallow—also ice cream, golden syrup and feathers.' The passengers across the aisle would perk their ears, then rise and come, craning their necks, to find the words he was reading from the bill-board, or finally some old fellow would come up to the seat and declare that he could not find where it said that. In a quiet way this would tickle Nye beyond measure—away down in the deeps of his sad-pathetic spirit.

"His conferences with the train boys have often nearly given me convulsions. When the boy handed him a book Nye would ask with great interest what it was about, and listen patiently to all the boy knew of its contents. 'Let's see it,' and he would open the book and read aloud, in a monotonous sing-song, a lot of purest nonsense drawn from his imagination. It was done so seriously that the boy's eyes would begin to hang out as the reading went on. Finally Nye would shut the book up with a snap, losing the place, and hand it back to the boy with a puzzled air, as if he did not understand why the young man had lied so about its contents. We could find that boy for an hour afterwards searching diligently the pages of that book to find where that stuff was printed.

"Nye's method of 'stringing' people," said Mr. Riley, "was entertaining always, but never cruel and never earned him the resentment of the people who were the victims of it. One of the most artistic cases of this sort I recall was the way he got revenge on a Chicago

## RILEY'S STORIES OF "BILL NYE"

tailor. The tailor did not know him when he went to order his suit, but he did know from his style that he was from the country. He told Mr. Nye just what kind of a suit he wanted, selected the cloth and measured him with the assurance that this was a beautiful fast color and would wear like iron. It should be put up handsomely. When Nye paid him for the suit and asked that it be shipped to a way station in Iowa the tailor was sure that he was right in the mental measurement he had taken of his customer. The suit arrived, neatly lined with farmer's satin and Nye put it on. Day by day its bright blue grew lighter and lighter, until, when we arrived in Chicago, six weeks later, it was a kind of a dingy dun color. Nye remarked as the train pulled in that his first duty in that city would be to go around and interview that merchant-liar; and we went. He shambled back to the rear end of the shop, where he found the man who sold him the garments. He shook hands with him cordially, said he was glad to renew the pleasant acquaintance and asked if he knew what had caused the suit to change its beautiful color, at the same time turning up the lapel of the coat and showing the striking contrast between the original and the present color of the cloth.

"'Why, man!' cried the tailor, bristling with defensive indignation, 'what in the world have you been doing to that suit?'

"'Well,' replied Nye, in a tone of the meekest apology, 'you did not warn me and I suppose it was my fault and I ought to have known better. But since you insist, I'll tell you frankly what I did: I put it on and wore it right out in the sun!'

## RILEY'S STORIES OF "BILL NYE"

"The tailor saw the point and insisted upon making another suit out of cloth that was really good and would not accept pay for it.

"Mr. Nye's sudden comments made in the midst of a lecture were often the means of bringing the house



CONVICTING THE TAILOR.

to its feet. He knew better than anybody his lack of physical ability to fill a large hall with his voice and he strained every nerve to meet it. Any extraordinary commotion in the hall discomposed him and he would wait until it subsided. It was not a pleasant thing for him to hear a voice from the back of the hall calling 'louder.' Upon such occasions he had a habit of turning the laugh upon his tormentor by elevating his



## RILEY'S STORIES OF "BILL NYE"

voice, looking puzzled and asking what that remark was he had just heard.

"I remember one occasion in particular when we had a remarkably large hall, crowded to the walls. The entrance was at the further end of the hall, opposite the platform. Mr. Nye, as usual, opened the evening, very fearful of his ability to reach the whole throng. He had barely got started when the doors opened and a great fellow about six feet and two inches tall entered with two ladies and immediately fell into an altercation with an usher about his seats. Nye paused and the altercation could be heard all over the house, with this fellow arraigning the usher in a very loud voice. Finally it died down a bit and Nye resumed, but he was interrupted by the man, who held up his hand and cried, 'Hold on, there, I have paid for seats for this lecture and propose to hear all of it.'

"Nye replied with great composure: 'In view of the great size of the hall,' said he, 'I was about to congratulate the audience upon the foresight of the managers in securing a speaker for each end.'

"The house howled with delight and the applause beat back upon the obstreperous interrupter with such force that it drove him from the hall. After this episode Nye was always a great favorite in that city and was recalled there many times.

"Mr. Nye was a fatalist—not a complaining one, but a fatalist no less, and with considerable occasion. He was pursued by a spirit of the perverse. Unexpected, trying things were always happening that seemed especially in line to test his patience. Indeed, I was sometimes jealous of him, for these things seemed to

## RILEY'S STORIES OF "BILL NYE"

occur with greater force and persistence to him than to me.

"I had frequently remarked upon the persistent recurrence of the number thirteen with me during one of our trips in the South, but this was one supersti-



A CLOSE SHAVE.

tion at which Nye scoffed. He told me that at the next hotel we struck if I objected to being 'incarcerated' in No. 13 he would risk it once. And not long after I found myself registered for that fatal number; whereupon I promptly informed Mr. Nye that I should hold him to his promise. I remember I had a handful of mail I was very anxious to see, but I would not

## RILEY'S STORIES OF "BILL NYE"

open it until I had got another room. Nye declared he wanted to first size up the room he had been assigned to, and went on down the hall with the landlord. He soon returned with the remark that he could not lose much and walked into the thirteen room and set his grip down, returning to where I waited in the hall outside. He had not more than got out of the door when the heavy transom fell with a crash. He was convinced that that transom had been waiting for him for years.

"Mr. Nye was an invalid, but again, as it would seem, it was the perversity of fate that made the public unwilling to believe that a humorist could ever be ill or have any reasonable excuse for breaking an engagement. He never got the benefit of the excuses made for others when they failed to appear or to write according to expectation.

"One awful winter he was compelled to quit work in the middle of the season here and go South for his health and to escape the rigors of this climate. That was the winter that quit right in the middle of its business here and struck for the South, where they had the coldest weather they had ever known prior to Mr. Nye's advent. And there, though he was nearly dead, his syndicate letters had to go on just the same; and in fancy I can see that heroic, almost dying man on the flat of his back, writing laboriously upon a scratch-pad, with the wind blowing the rag carpet on the floor up in billows. He suffered all the hardship of rigorous winter in summer quarters.

"And while thus ill word reached him of the sudden death of his father in Wisconsin, so far away that even if he had been able to make the journey it would have

## RILEY'S STORIES OF "BILL NYE"

been a physical impossibility for him to have reached his father's house before the burial. It was a peculiarly hard blow to him, for they had been friends and chums, as well as father and son. Yet by the time the news reached him his father had been buried.

"To the last this perverse fate denied to him and his wife that one pleasure that married couples usually enjoy if they have nothing else—a wedding journey. He was very poor to begin with, but of a sanguine temperament, and at the time of his marriage good-naturedly informed his bride fully of his circumstances. She, a brave woman and worthy partner, probably foresaw the force of the man and his coming recognition in time; at any rate she had great faith in him, and very cheerfully accepted the situation. Their wedding journey, denied them in the beginning by their poverty, was deferred from one cause and another for years, so long that they came to refer to it as to be taken upon the marriage of their eldest child, when the two couples could take the journey together.

"But Nye was yet an invalid, and one year when California had been prescribed for him, we had made a line of engagements toward the Pacific slope after the regular season. It had been arranged that Mrs. Nye was to meet us in Kansas City and the trip from there to the coast was to be the long-deferred wedding journey. He had built great hopes upon this prospect, and in the pleasure of anticipation had devised a dozen little schemes for the surprise and entertainment of his wife, who had already left their home, on Staten Island, to join us. She had left their four children in care of her niece, a very worthy young woman, and

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## RILEY'S STORIES OF "BILL NYE"

was somewhere on her way to Kansas City when we arrived there.

"Nye had expected to find her there, but instead he was confronted with a telegram from his Staten Island physician stating that all four of the children had been stricken with scarlet fever. Through the influence of the physician, who was a great friend of Nye, they had not been removed to the hospital, as the regulations required, but had been permitted to remain at home, with the house quarantined. During the next few hours prior to Mrs. Nye's arrival, and in all agony of suspense and apprehension, Mr. Nye busied himself with canceling all further lecture dates, and when Mrs. Nye finally arrived he broke to her the painful news of their children's illness, and took the next train back East, not knowing if their little ones would be alive to greet them when they came.

"Arriving home after that terrible journey, they found the children so ill that they could not be told of the arrival of the father and mother; and Nye, with his heart breaking, sat downstairs and wrote to the children he was not permitted to see in their rooms above, long and happy letters from California, telling them what jolly lovely times their mother and father were having in the land of flowers.

"And, therefore," said Mr. Riley, in conclusion, again fondly referring to the volume, "I am especially rejoiced to see my old comrade at his best in this last published utterance, and the book itself so befittingly presented—so handsome and so dignified a volume, that I am certain a sight of it could but have been highly gratifying to the gentle humorist himself."

RUSSEL M. SEEDS.

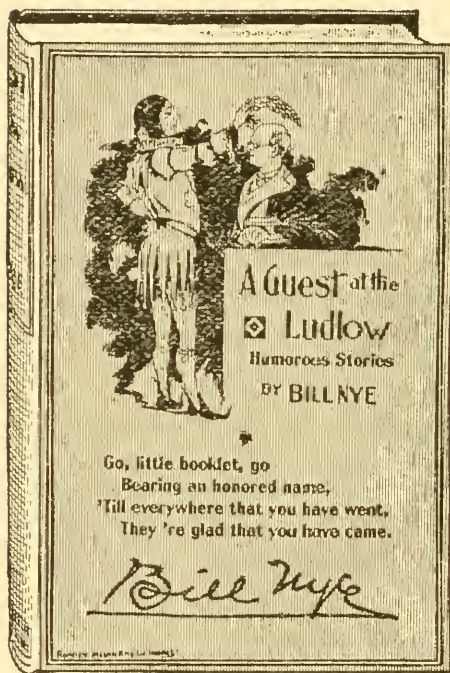
# A Guest at the Ludlow

BY EDGAR WILSON NYE

[BILL NYE]

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name,  
'Till everywhere that you  
have went,  
They're glad that you  
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