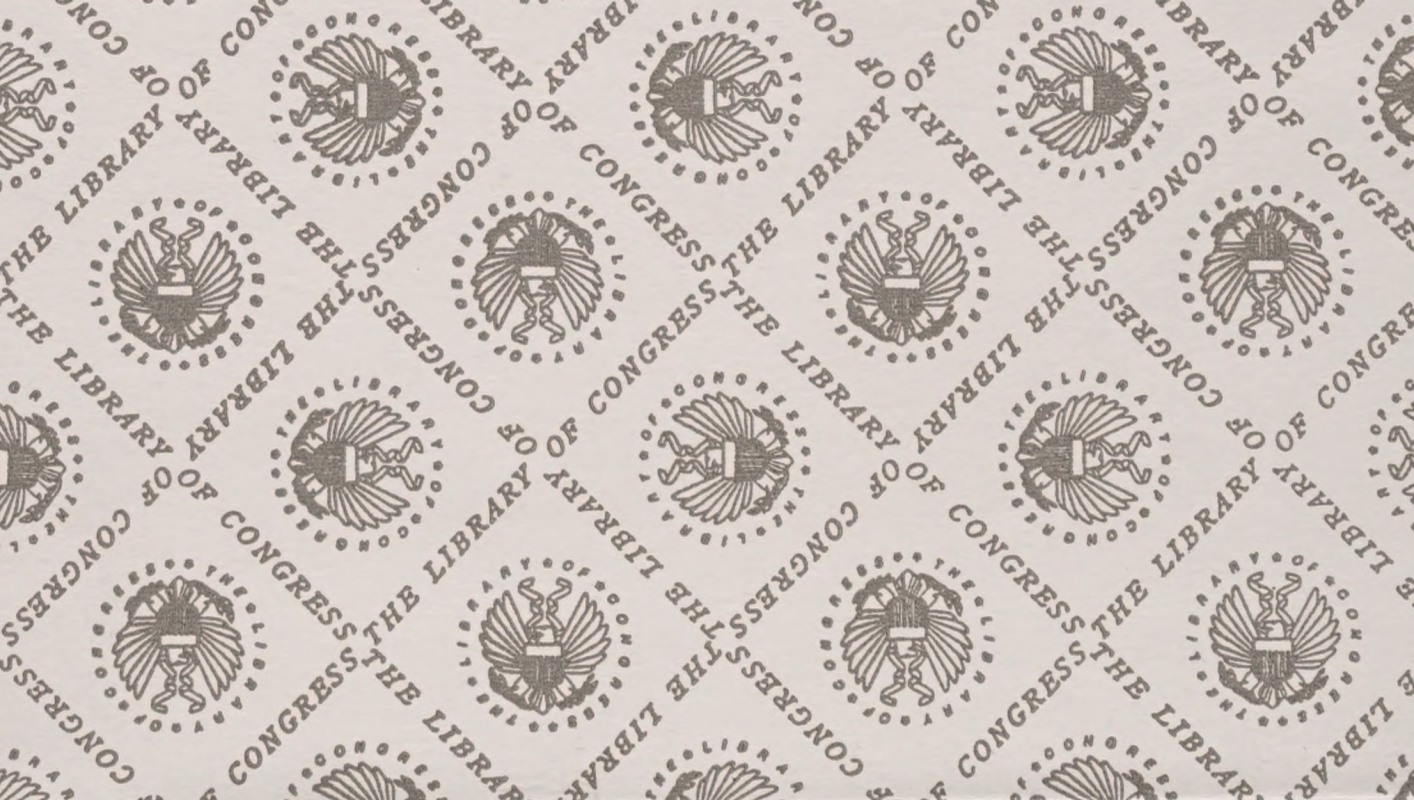
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MINE OWN PEOPLE

BY

RUDYARD KIPLING

WITH A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION
BY HENRY JAMES

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INTRODUCTION

It would be difficult to answer the general question whether the books of the world grow, as they multiply, as much better as one might suppose they ought, with such a lesson of wasteful experiment spread perpetually behind them. There is no doubt, however, that in one direction we profit largely by this education: whether or not we have become wiser to fashion, we have certainly become keener to enjoy. We have acquired the sense of a particular quality which is precious beyond all others — so precious as to make us wonder where, at such a rate, our posterity will look for it, and how they will pay for it. After tasting many essences we find freshness the sweetest of all. We yearn for it, we watch for it and lie in wait for it, and when we catch it on the wing (it flits by so fast) we celebrate our capture with extravagance. We feel that after so much has come and gone it is more and more of a feat and a *tour de force* to be fresh. The

tormenting part of the phenomenon is that, in any particular key, it can happen but once — by a sad failure of the law that inculcates the repetition of goodness. It is terribly a matter of accident; emulation and imitation have a fatal effect upon it. It is easy to see, therefore, what importance the epicure may attach to the brief moment of its bloom. While that lasts we all are epicures.

This helps to explain, I think, the unmistakable intensity of the general relish for Mr. Rudyard Kipling. His bloom lasts, from month to month, almost surprisingly — by which I mean that he has not worn out even by active exercise the particular property that made us all so precipitately drop everything else to attend to him. He has many others which he will doubtless always keep; but a part of the potency attaching to his freshness, what makes it as exciting as a drawing of lots, is our instinctive conviction that he can not, in the nature of things, keep that; so that our enjoyment of him, so long as the miracle is still wrought, has both the charm of confidence and the charm of suspense. And then there is the further charm, with Mr. Kipling, that this same freshness is such a very strange affair of its kind — so mixed and various and cynical, and, in certain lights, so contradictory of itself. The

extreme recentness of his inspiration is as enviable as the tale is startling that his productions tell of his being at home, domesticated and initiated, in this wicked and weary world. At times he strikes us as shockingly precocious, at others as serenely wise. On the whole, he presents himself as a strangely clever youth who has stolen the formidable mask of maturity and rushes about, making people jump with the deep sounds, the sportive exaggerations of tone, that issue from its painted lips. He has this mark of a real vocation, that different spectators may like him — must like him, I should almost say — for different things; and this refinement of attraction, that to those who reflect even upon their pleasures he has as much to say as to those who never reflect upon anything. Indeed there is a certain amount of room for surprise in the fact that, being so much the sort of figure that the hardened critic likes to meet, he should also be the sort of figure that inspires the multitude with confidence — for a complicated air is, in general, the last thing that does this.

By the critic who likes to meet such a bristling adventurer as Mr. Kipling I mean of course the critic for whom the happy accident of character, whatever form it may take, is more of a bribe to interest than the promise of some character cherished in

theory — the appearance of justifying some foregone conclusion as to what a writer or a book "ought," in the Ruskinian sense, to be; the critic, in a word, who has, *à priori*, no rule for a literary production but that it shall have genuine life. Such a critic (he gets much more out of his opportunities, I think, than the other sort) likes a writer exactly in proportion as he is a challenge, an appeal to interpretation, intelligence, ingenuity, to what is elastic in the critical mind — in proportion indeed as he may be a negation of things familiar and taken for granted. He feels in this case how much more play and sensation there is for himself.

Mr. Kipling, then, has the character that furnishes plenty of play and of vicarious experience — that makes any perceptive reader foresee a rare luxury. He has the great merit of being a compact and convenient illustration of the surest source of interest in any painter of life — that of having an identity as marked as a window-frame. He is one of the illustrations, taken near at hand, that help to clear up the vexed question in the novel or the tale, of kinds, camps, schools, distinctions, the right way and the wrong way; so very positively does he contribute to the showing that there are just as many kinds, as many ways, as many forms and degrees

of the "right," as there are personal points in view. It is the blessing of the art he practices that it is made up of experience conditioned, infinitely, in this personal way — the sum of the feeling of life as reproduced by innumerable natures; natures that feel through all their differences, testify through their diversities. These differences, which make the identity, are of the individual; they form the channel by which life flows through him, and how much he is able to give us of life — in other words, how much he appeals to us — depends on whether they form it solidly.

This hardness of the conduit, cemented with a rare assurance, is perhaps the most striking idiosyncrasy of Mr. Kipling; and what makes it more remarkable is that accident of his extreme youth which, if we talk about him at all, we can not affect to ignore. I can not pretend to give a biography or a chronology of the author of "Soldiers Three," but I can not overlook the general, the importunate fact that, confidently as he has caught the trick and habit of this sophisticated world, he has not been long of it. His extreme youth is indeed what I may call his window-bar — the support on which he somewhat rowdily leans while he looks down at the human scene with his pipe in his teeth; just as his other conditions (to mention only some of

them), are his prodigious facility, which is only less remarkable than his stiff selection; his unabashed temperament, his flexible talent, his smoking-room manner, his familiar friendship with India — established so rapidly, and so completely under his control; his delight in battle, his "cheek" about women — and indeed about men and about everything; his determination not to be duped, his "imperial" fiber, his love of the inside view, the private soldier and the primitive man. I must add further to this list of attractions the remarkable way in which he makes us aware that he has been put up to the whole thing directly by life (miraculously, in his teens), and not by the communications of others. These elements, and many more, constitute a singularly robust little literary character (our use of the diminutive is altogether a note of endearment and enjoyment) which, if it has the rattle of high spirits and is in no degree apologetic or shrinking, yet offers a very liberal pledge in the way of good faith and immediate performance. Mr. Kipling's performance comes off before the more circumspect have time to decide whether they like him or not, and if you have seen it once you will be sure to return to the show. He makes us prick up our ears to the good news that in the smoking-room too there may be artists; and indeed

to an intimation still more refined — that the latest development of the modern also may be, most successfully, for the canny artist to put his victim off his guard by imitating the amateur (superficially, of course) to the life.

These, then, are some of the reasons why Mr. Kipling may be dear to the analyst as well as, M. Renan says, to the simple. The simple may like him because he is wonderful about India, and India has not been "done;" while there is plenty left for the morbid reader in the surprises of his skill and the *fioriture* of his form, which are so oddly independent of any distinctive literary note in him, any bookish association. It is as one of the morbid that the writer of these remarks (which doubtless only too shamefully betray his character) exposes himself as most consentingly under the spell. The freshness arising from a subject that — by a good fortune I do not mean to underestimate — has never been "done," is after all less of an affair to build upon than the freshness residing in the temper of the artist. Happy indeed is Mr. Kipling, who can command so much of both kinds. It is still as one of the morbid, no doubt — that is, as one of those who are capable of sitting up all night for a new impression of talent, of scouring the trodden field for one little spot of green —

that I find our young author quite most curious in his air, and not only in his air, but in his evidently very real sense, of knowing his way about life. Curious in the highest degree and well worth attention is such an idiosyncrasy as this in a young Anglo-Saxon. We meet it with familiar frequency in the budding talents of France, and it startles and haunts us for an hour. After an hour, however, the mystery is apt to fade, for we find that the wondrous initiation is not in the least general, is only exceedingly special, and is, even with this limitation, very often rather conventional. In a word, it is with the ladies that the young Frenchman takes his ease, and more particularly with ladies selected expressly to make this attitude convincing. When *they* have let him off, the dimnesses too often encompass him. But for Mr. Kipling there are no dimnesses anywhere, and if the ladies are indeed violently distinct they are not only strong notes in a universal loudness. This loudness fills the ears of Mr. Kipling's admirers (it lacks sweetness, no doubt, for those who are not of the number), and there is really only one strain that is absent from it — the voice, as it were, of the civilized man; in whom I of course also include the civilized woman. But this is an element that for the present

one does not miss — every other note is so articulate and direct.

It is a part of the satisfaction the author gives us that he can make us speculate as to whether he will be able to complete his picture altogether (this is as far as we presume to go in meddling with the question of his future) without bringing in the complicated soul. On the day he does so, if he handles it with anything like the cleverness he has already shown, the expectation of his friends will take a great bound. Meanwhile, at any rate, we have Mulvaney, and Mulvaney is after all tolerably complicated. He is only a six-foot saturated Irish private, but he is a considerable pledge of more to come. Hasn't he, for that matter, the tongue of a hoarse siren, and hasn't he also mysteries and infinitudes almost Carlylese? Since I am speaking of him I may as well say that, as an evocation, he has probably led captive those of Mr. Kipling's readers who have most given up resistance. He is a piece of portraiture of the largest, vividest kind, growing and growing on the painter's hands without ever outgrowing them. I can't help regarding him, in a certain sense, as Mr. Kipling's tutelary deity — a landmark in the direction in which it is open to him to look furthest. If the author will only go as far in this direction as Mulvaney is capable of taking him

(and the inimitable Irishman is, like Voltaire's Habakkuk, *capable de tout*), he may still discover a treasure and find a reward for the services he has rendered the winner of Dinah Shadd. I hasten to add that the truly appreciative reader should surely have no quarrel with the primitive element in Mr. Kipling's subject-matter, or with what, for want of a better name, I may call his love of low life. What is that but essentially a part of his freshness? And for what part of his freshness are we exactly more thankful than for just this smart jostle that he gives the old stupid superstition that the amiability of a story-teller is the amiability of the people he represents — that their vulgarity, or depravity, or gentility, or fatuity are tantamount to the same qualities in the painter itself? A blow from which, apparently, it will not easily recover is dealt this infantine philosophy by Mr. Howells when, with the most distinguished dexterity and all the detachment of a master, he handles some of the clumsiest, crudest, most human things in life — answering surely thereby the play-goers in the sixpenny gallery who howl at the representative of the villain when he comes before the curtain.

Nothing is more refreshing than this active, disinterested sense of the real; it is doubtless the quality for the want of more

of which our English and American fiction has turned so wofully stale. We are ridden by the old conventionalities of type and small proprieties of observance — by the foolish baby-formula (to put it sketchily) of the picture and the subject. Mr. Kipling has all the air of being disposed to lift the whole business off the nursery carpet, and of being perhaps even more able than he is disposed. One must hasten of course to parenthesize that there is not, intrinsically, a bit more luminosity in treating of low life and of primitive man than of those whom civilization has kneaded to a finer paste: the only luminosity in either case is in the intelligence with which the thing is done. But it so happens that, among ourselves, the frank, capable outlook, when turned upon the vulgar majority, the coarse, receding edges of the social perspective, borrows a charm from being new; such a charm as, for instance, repetition has already despoiled it of among the French — the hapless French who pay the penalty as well as enjoy the glow of living intellectually so much faster than we. It is the most inexorable part of our fate that we grow tired of everything, and of course in due time we may grow tired even of what explorers shall come back to tell us about the great grimy condition, or, with unprecedented items and details, about the

gray middle state which darkens into it. But the explorers, bless them! may have a long day before that; it is early to trouble about reactions, so that we must give them the benefit of every presumption. We are thankful for any boldness and any sharp curiosity, and that is why we are thankful for Mr. Kipling's general spirit and for most of his excursions.

Many of these, certainly, are into a region not to be designated as superficially dim, though indeed the author always reminds us that India is above all the land of mystery. A large part of his high spirits, and of ours, comes doubtless from the amusement of such vivid, heterogeneous material, from the irresistible magic of scorching suns, subject empires, uncanny religions, uneasy garrisons and smothered-up women — from heat and color and danger and dust. India is a portentous image, and we are duly awed by the familiarities it undergoes at Mr. Kipling's hand and by the fine impunity, the sort of fortune that favors the brave, of *his* want of awe. An abject humility is not his strong point, but he gives us something instead of it — vividness and drollery, the vision and the thrill of many things, the misery and strangeness of most, the personal sense of a hundred queer contacts and risks. And then in the absence of respect he has

plenty of knowledge, and if knowledge should fail him he would have plenty of invention. Moreover, if invention should ever fail him, he would still have the lyric string and the patriotic chord, on which he plays admirably; so that it may be said he is a man of resources. What he gives us, above all, is the feeling of the English manner and the English blood in conditions they have made at once so much and so little their own; with manifestations grotesque enough in some of his satiric sketches and deeply impressive in some of his anecdotes of individual responsibility.

His Indian impressions divide themselves into three groups, one of which, I think, very much outshines the others. First to be mentioned are the tales of native life, curious glimpses of custom and superstition, dusky matters not beholden of the many, for which the author has a remarkable *flair*. Then comes the social, the Anglo-Indian episode, the study of administrative and military types, and of the wonderful rattling, riding ladies who, at Simla and more desperate stations, look out for husbands and lovers; often, it would seem, and husbands and lovers of others. The most brilliant group is devoted wholly to the common soldier, and of this series it appears to me that too much good is hardly to be said. Here Mr.

Kipling, with all his off-handedness, is a master; for we are held not so much by the greater or less oddity of the particular yarn — sometimes it is scarcely a yarn at all, but something much less artificial — as by the robust attitude of the narrator, who never arranges or glosses or falsifies, but makes straight for the common and the characteristic. I have mentioned the great esteem in which I hold Mulvaney — surely a charming man and one qualified to adorn a higher sphere. Mulvaney is a creation to be proud of, and his two comrades stand as firm on their legs. In spite of Mulvaney's social possibilities, they are all three finished brutes; but it is precisely in the finish that we delight. Whatever Mr. Kipling may relate about them forever will encounter readers equally fascinated and unable fully to justify their faith.

Are not those literary pleasures after all the most intense which are the most perverse and whimsical, and even indefensible? There is a logic in them somewhere, but it often lies below the plummet of criticism. The spell may be weak in a writer who has every reasonable and regular claim, and it may be irresistible in one who presents himself with a style corresponding to a bad hat. A good hat is better than a bad one, but a conjurer may wear either.

Many a reader will never be able to say what secret human force lays its hand upon him when Private Ortheris, having sworn "quietly into the blue sky," goes mad with homesickness by the yellow river and raves for the basest sights and sounds of London. I can scarcely tell why I think "The Courting of Dinah Shadd" a masterpiece (though, indeed, I can make a shrewd guess at one of the reasons), nor would it be worth while perhaps to attempt to defend the same pretension in regard to "On Greenhow Hill"—much less to trouble the tolerant reader of these remarks with a statement of how many more performances in the nature of "The End of the Passage" (quite admitting even that they might not represent Mr. Kipling at his best) I am conscious of a latent relish for. One might as well admit while one is about it that one has wept profusely over "The Drums of the Fore and Aft," the history of the "Dutch courage" of two dreadful dirty little boys, who, in the face of Afghans scarcely more dreadful, saved the reputation of their regiment and perished, the least mawkishly in the world, in a squalor of battle incomparably expressed. People who know how peaceful they are themselves and have no bloodshed to reproach themselves with needn't scruple to mention the glamour that Mr. Kipling's intense mil-

itarism has for them, and how astonishing and contagious they find it, in spite of the unromantic complexion of it — the way it bristles with all sorts of uglinesses and technicalities. Perhaps that is why I go all the way even with "The Gadsbys" — the Gadsbys were so connected (uncomfortably, it is true) with the army. There is fearful fighting — or a fearful danger of it — in "The Man Who Would be King:" is that the reason we are deeply affected by this extraordinary tale? It is one of them, doubtless, for Mr. Kipling has many reasons, after all, on his side, though they don't equally call aloud to be uttered.

One more of them, at any rate, I must add to these unsystematized remarks — it is the one I spoke of a shrewd guess at in alluding to "The Courting of Dinah Shadd." The talent that produces such a tale is a talent eminently in harmony with the short story, and the short story is, on our side of the Channel and of the Atlantic, a mine which will take a great deal of working. Admirable is the clearness with which Mr. Kipling perceives this — perceives what innumerable chances it gives, chances of touching life in a thousand different places, taking it up in innumerable pieces, each a specimen and an illustration. In a word, he appreciates the episode, and there are signs to show that this shrewd-

ness will, in general, have long innings. It will find the detachable, compressible "case" and admirable, flexible form; the cultivation of which may well add to the mistrust already entertained by Mr. Kipling, if his manner does not betray him, for what is clumsy and tasteless in the time-honored practice of the "plot." It will fortify him in the conviction that the vivid picture has a greater communicative value than the Chinese puzzle. There is little enough "plot" in such a perfect little piece of hard representation as "The End of the Passage," to cite again only the most salient of twenty examples.

But I am speaking of our author's future, which is the luxury that I meant to forbid myself — precisely because the subject is so tempting. There is nothing in the world (for the prophet) so charming as to prophesy, and as there is nothing so inconclusive the tendency should be repressed in proportion as the opportunity is good. There is a certain want of courtesy to a peculiarly contemporaneous present even in speculating, with a dozen differential precautions, on the question of what will become in the later hours of the day of a talent that has got up so early. Mr. Kipling's actual performance is like a tremendous walk before breakfast, making one welcome the idea of the meal, but consider with some alarm

the hours still to be traversed. Yet if his breakfast is all to come, the indications are that he will be more active than ever after he has had it. Among these indications are the unflagging character of his pace and the excellent form, as they say in athletic circles, in which he gets over the ground. We don't detect him stumbling; on the contrary, he steps out quite as briskly as at first, and still more firmly. There is something zealous and craftsman-like in him which shows that he feels both joy and responsibility. A whimsical, wanton reader, haunted by a recollection of all the good things he has seen spoiled; by a sense of the miserable, or, at any rate, the inferior, in so many continuations and endings, is almost capable of perverting poetic justice to the idea that it would be even positively well for so surprising a producer to remain simply the fortunate, suggestive, unconfirmed and unqualified representative of what he has actually done. We can always refer to that.

HENRY JAMES.

BIMI

THE orang-outang in the big iron cage lashed to the sheep-pen began the discussion. The night was stiflingly hot, and as Hans Breitmann and I passed him, dragging our bedding to the fore-peak of the steamer, he roused himself and chattered obscenely. He had been caught somewhere in the Malayan Archipelago, and was going to England to be exhibited at a shilling a head. For four days he had struggled, yelled, and wrenched at the heavy iron bars of his prison without ceasing, and had nearly slain a Lascar incautious enough to come within reach of the great hairy paw.

"It would be well for you, mine friend, if you was a liddle seasick," said Hans Breitmann, pausing by the cage. "You haf too much Ego in your Cosmos."

The orang-outang's arm slid out negligently from between the bars. No one would have believed that it would make a sudden snake-like rush at the German's

breast. The thin silk of the sleeping-suit tore out: Hans stepped back unconcernedly, to pluck a banana from a bunch hanging close to one of the boats.

"Too much Ego," said he, peeling the fruit and offering it to the caged devil, who was rending the silk to tatters.

Then we laid out our bedding in the bows, among the sleeping Lascars, to catch any breeze that the pace of the ship might give us. The sea was like smoky oil, except where it turned to fire under our forefoot and whirled back into the dark in smears of dull flame. There was a thunder-storm some miles away: we could see the glimmer of the lightning. The ship's cow, distressed by the heat and the smell of the ape-beast in the cage, lowed unhappily from time to time in exactly the same key as the lookout man at the bows answered the hourly call from the bridge. The trampling tune of the engines was very distinct, and the jarring of the ash-lift, as it was tipped into the sea, hurt the procession of hushed noise. Hans lay down by my side and lighted a good-night cigar. This was naturally the beginning of conversation. He owned a voice as soothing as the wash of the sea, and stores of experiences as vast as the sea itself; for his business in life was to wander up and down the world, collecting orchids and wild beasts and eth-

nological specimens for German and American dealers. I watched the glowing end of his cigar wax and wane in the gloom, as the sentences rose and fell, till I was nearly asleep. The orang-outang, troubled by some dream of the forests of his freedom, began to yell like a soul in purgatory, and to wrench madly at the bars of the cage.

"If he was out now dere would not be much of us left, hereabouts," said Hans lazily. "He screams good. See, now, how I shall tame him when he stops himself."

There was a pause in the outcry, and from Hans' mouth came an imitation of a snake's hiss, so perfect that I almost sprung to my feet. The sustained murderous sound ran along the deck, and the wrenching at the bars ceased. The orang-outang was quaking in an ecstasy of pure terror.

"Dot stop him," said Hans. "I learned dot trick in Mogoung Tanjong when I was collecting liddle monkeys for some peoples in Berlin. Efery one in der world is afraid of der monkeys — except der snake. So I blay snake against monkey, and he keep quite still. Dere was too much Ego in his Cosmos. Dot is der soul-custom of monkeys. Are you asleep, or will you listen, and I will tell a dale dot you shall not pelief?"

"There's no tale in the wide world that I can't believe," I said.

"If you have learned pelief you haf learned somedings. Now I shall try your pelief. Good! When I was collecting dose liddle monkeys — it was in '79 or '80, und I was in der islands of der Archipelago — over dere in der dark"— he pointed southward to New Guinea generally — "Mein Gott! I would sooner collect life red devils than liddle monkeys. When dey do not bite off your thumbs dey are always dying from nostalgia — home-sick — for dey haf der imperfect soul, which is mid-way arrested in defelopment — und too much Ego. I was dere for nearly a year, und dere I found a man dot was called Bertran. He was a Frenchman, und he was a goot man — naturalist to the bone. Dey said he was an escaped convict, but he was a naturalist, und dot was enough for me. He would call all her life beasts from der forest, und dey would come. I said he was St. Francis of Assisi in a new dransmigration produced, und he laughed und said he haf never preach to der fishes. He sold them for tripang — *bêche-de-mer*.

"Und dot man, who was king of beasts-tamer men, he had in der house shush such anoder as dot devil-animal in der cage — a great orang-outang dot thought he was a man. He haf found him when he was

a child — der orang-outang — und he was child and brother and opera comique all round to Bertran. He had his room in dot house — not a cage, but a room — mit a bed and sheets, and he would go to bed and get up in der morning and smoke his cigar und eat his dinner mit Bertran, und walk mit him hand-in-hand, which was most horrible. Herr Gott! I haf seen dot beast throw himself back in his chair and laugh when Bertran haf made fun of me. He was *not* a beast; he was a man, and he talked to Bertran, und Bertran comprehended, for I have seen dem. Und he was always politeful to me except when I talk too long to Bertran und say noddings at all to him. Den he would pull me away — dis great, dark devil, mit his enormous paws — shush as if I was a child. He was not a beast, he was a man. Dis I saw pefore I know him three months, und Bertran he haf saw the same; and Bimi, der orang-outang, haf understood us both, mit his cigar between his big-dog teeth und der blue gum.

"I was dere a year, dere und at der oder islands — somedimes for monkeys and somedimes for butterflies und orchits. One time Bertran say to me dot he will be married, because he haf found a girl dot was goot, and he inquire if this marrying idea was right. I would not say, pecause it

was not me dot was going to be married. Den he go off courting der girl — she was a half-caste French girl — very pretty. Haf you got a new light for my cigar? Oof! Very pretty. Only I say: 'Haf you thought of Bimi? If he pulls me away when I talk to you, what will he do to your wife? He will pull her in pieces. If I was you, Bertran, I would gif my wife for wedding present der stuff figure of Bimi.' By dot time I had learned somedings about der monkey peoples. 'Shoot him?' says Bertran. 'He is your beast,' I said; 'if he was mine he would be shot now.'

"Den I felt at der back of my neck der fingers of Bimi. Mein Gott! I tell you dot he talked through dose fingers. It was der deaf-and-dumb alphabet all gomplete. He slide his hairy arm round my neck, and he tilt up my chin und look into my face, shust to see if I understood his talk so well as he understood mine.

"'See now dere!' says Bertran, 'und you would shoot him while he is cuddling you? Dot is der Teuton ingrate!'

"But I knew dot I had made Bimi a life's enemy, pecause his fingers haf talk murder through the back of my neck. Next dime I see Bimi dere was a pistol in my belt, und he touch it once, and I open der breech to show him it was loaded. He haf seen der

liddle monkeys killed in der woods, and he understood.

"So Bertran he was married, and he forgot clean about Bimi dot was skippin' alone on der beach mit der half of a human soul in his belly. I was see him skip, und he took a big bough und thrash der sand till he haf made a great hole like a grave. So I says to Bertran: 'For any sakes, kill Bimi. He is mad mit der jealousy.'

"Bertran haf said: 'He is not mad at all. He haf obey and love my wife, und if she speaks he will get her slippers,' und he looked at his wife across der room. She was a very pretty girl.

"Den I said to him: 'Dost thou pretend to know monkeys und dis beast dot is lashing himself mad upon der sands, pecause you do not talk to him? Shoot him when he comes to der house, for he haf der light in his eyes dot means killing — und killing.' Bimi come to der house, but dere was no light in his eyes. It was all put away, cunning — so cunning — und he fetch der girl her slippers, and Bertran turn to me und say: 'Dost thou know him in nine months more dan I haf known him in twelve years? Shall a child stab his fader? I have fed him, und he was my child. Do not speak this nonsense to my wife or to me any more.'

"Dot next day Bertran came to my

house to help me make some wood cases for der specimens, und he tell me dot he haf left his wife a liddle while mit Bimi in der garden. Den I finish my cases quick, und I say: 'Let us go to your house und get a trink.' He laugh und say: 'Come along, dry mans.'

"His wife was not in der garden, und Bimi did not come when Bertran called. Und his wife did not come when he called, und he knocked at her bedroom door und dot was shut tight — locked. Den he look at me, und his face was white. I broke down der door mit my shoulder, und der thatch of der roof was torn into a great hole, und der sun came in upon der floor. Haf you ever seen paper in der waste-basket, or cards at whist on der table scattered? Dere was no wife dot could be seen. I tell you dere was noddings in dot room dot might be a woman. Dere was stuff on der floor, und dot was all. I looked at dese things und I was very sick; but Bertran looked a liddle longer at what was upon the floor und der walls, und der hole in der thatch. Den he pegan to laugh, soft and low, und I knew und thank Gott dot he was mad. He nefer cried, he nefer prayed. He stood still in der doorway und laugh to himself. Den he said: 'She haf locked herself in dis room, and he haf torn up der thatch. *Fi donc.* Dot is so. We

will mend der thatch und wait for Bimi. He will surely come.'

"I tell you we waited ten days in dot house, after der room was made into a room again, and once or twice we saw Bimi comin' a liddle way from der woods. He was afraid pecause he haf done wrong. Bertran called him when he was come to look on the tenth day, und Bimi come skipping along der beach und making noises, mit a long piece of black hair in his hands. Den Bertran laugh and say, '*Fi donc!*' shust as if it was a glass broken upon der table; und Bimi come nearer, und Bertran was honey-sweet in his voice and laughed to himself. For three days he made love to Bimi, pecause Bimi would not let himself be touched. Den Bimi come to dinner at der same table mit us, und der hair on his hands was all black und thick mit — mit what had dried on his hands. Bertran gave him sangaree till Bimi was drunk and stupid, und den ——

Hans paused to puff at his cigar.

"And then?" said I.

"Und den Bertran kiil him with his hands, und I go for a walk upon der beach. It was Bertran's own piziness. When I come back der ape he was dead, und Bertran he was dying abofe him; but still he laughed a liddle und low, and he was quite content. Now you know der formula of

der strength of der orang-outang — it is more as seven to one in relation to man. But Bertran, he haf killed Bimi mit sooch dings as Gott gif him. Dot was der mericle."

The infernal clamor in the cage recommenced. "Aha! Dot friend of ours haf still too much Ego in his Cosmos. Be quiet, thou!"

Hans hissed long and venomously. We could hear the great beast quaking in his cage.

"But why in the world didn't you help Bertran instead of letting him be killed?" I asked.

"My friend," said Hans, composedly stretching himself to slumber, "it was not nice even to mineself dot I should lif after I had seen dot room wit der hole in der thatch. Und Bertran, he was her husband. Goot-night, und sleep well."

NAMGAY DOOLA

ONCE upon a time there was a king who lived on the road to Thibet, very many miles in the Himalaya Mountains. His kingdom was 11,000 feet above the sea, and exactly four miles square, but most of the miles stood on end, owing to the nature of the country. His revenues were rather less than £400 yearly, and they were expended on the maintenance of one elephant and a standing army of five men. He was tributary to the Indian government, who allowed him certain sums for keeping a section of the Himalaya-Thibet road in repair. He further increased his revenues by selling timber to the railway companies, for he would cut the great deodar trees in his own forest and they fell thundering into the Sutlej River and were swept down to the Plains, 300 miles away, and became railway ties. Now and again this king, whose name does not matter, would mount a ring-streaked horse and ride scores of miles to Simlatown to confer with the lieu-

tenant-governor on matters of state, or assure the viceroy that his sword was at the service of the queen-empress. Then the viceroy would cause a ruffle of drums to be sounded and the ring-streaked horse and the cavalry of the state — two men in tatters — and the herald who bore the Silver Stick before the king would trot back to their own place, which was between the tail of a heaven-climbing glacier and a dark birch forest.

Now, from such a king, always remembering that he possessed one veritable elephant and could count his descent for 1,200 years, I expected, when it was my fate to wander through his dominions, no more than mere license to live.

The night had closed in rain, and rolling clouds blotted out the lights of the villages in the valley. Forty miles away, untouched by cloud or storm, the white shoulder of Dongo Pa — the Mountain of the Council of the Gods — upheld the evening star. The monkeys sung sorrowfully to each other as they hunted for dry roots in the fern-draped trees, and the last puff of the day-wind brought from the unseen villages the scent of damp wood smoke, hot cakes, dripping undergrowth, and rotting pine-cones. That smell is the true smell of the Himalayas, and if it once gets into the blood of a man he will, at the last, forget-

ting everything else, return to the Hills to die. The clouds closed and the smell went away, and there remained nothing in all the world except chilling white mists and the boom of the Sutlej River.

A fat-tailed sheep, who did not want to die, bleated lamentably at my tent-door. He was scuffling with the prime minister and the director-general of public education, and he was a royal gift to me and my camp servants. I expressed my thanks suitably and inquired if I might have audience of the king. The prime minister readjusted his turban — it had fallen off in the struggle — and assured me that the king would be very pleased to see me. Therefore I dispatched two bottles as a foretaste, and when the sheep had entered upon another incarnation, climbed up to the king's palace through the wet. He had sent his army to escort me, but it stayed to talk with my cook. Soldiers are very much alike all the world over.

The palace was a four-roomed, white-washed mud-and-timber house, the finest in all the Hills for a day's journey. The king was dressed in a purple velvet jacket, white muslin trousers, and a saffron-yellow turban of price. He gave me audience in a little carpeted room opening off the palace court-yard, which was occupied by the elephant of state. The great beast was

sheeted and anchored from trunk to tail, and the curve of his back stood out against the sky line.

The prime minister and the director-general of public instruction were present to introduce me; but all the court had been dismissed lest the two bottles aforesaid should corrupt their morals. The king cast a wreath of heavy, scented flowers round my neck as I bowed, and inquired how my honored presence had the felicity to be. I said that through seeing his auspicious countenance the mists of the night had turned into sunshine, and that by reason of his beneficent sheep his good deeds would be remembered by the gods. He said that since I had set my magnificent foot in his kingdom the crops would probably yield seventy per cent. more than the average. I said that the fame of the king had reached to the four corners of the earth, and that the nations gnashed their teeth when they heard daily of the glory of his realm and the wisdom of his moon-like prime minister and lotus-eyed director-general of public education.

Then we sat down on clean white cushions, and I was at the king's right hand. Three minutes later he was telling me that the condition of the maize crop was something disgraceful, and that the railway companies would not pay him enough for

his timber. The talk shifted to and fro with the bottles. We discussed very many quaint things, and the king became confidential on the subject of government generally. Most of all he dwelt on the shortcomings of one of his subjects, who, from what I could gather, had been paralyzing the executive.

"In the old days," said the king, "I could have ordered the elephant yonder to trample him to death. Now I must e'en send him seventy miles across the hills to be tried, and his keep for that time would be upon the state. And the elephant eats everything."

"What be the man's crimes, Rajah Sahib?" said I.

"Firstly, he is an 'outlander,' and no man of mine own people. Secondly, since of my favor I gave him land upon his coming, he refuses to pay revenue. Am I not the lord of the earth, above and below — entitled by right and custom to one-eighth of the crop? Yet this devil, establishing himself, refuses to pay a single tax . . . and he brings a poisonous spawn of babies."

"Cast him into jail," I said.

"Sahib," the king answered, shifting a little on the cushions, "once and only once in these forty years sickness came upon me so that I was not able to go abroad.

In that hour I made a vow to my God that I would never again cut man or woman from the light of the sun and the air of God, for I perceived the nature of the punishment. How can I break my vow? Were it only the lopping off of a hand or a foot, I should not delay. But even that is impossible now that the English have rule. One or another of my people"— he looked obliquely at the director-general of public education —" would at once write a letter to the viceroy, and perhaps I should be deprived of that ruffle of drums."

He unscrewed the mouthpiece of his silver water-pipe, fitted a plain amber one, and passed the pipe to me. " Not content with refusing revenue," he continued, " this outlander refuses also to beegar " (this is the corvee or forced labor on the roads), " and stirs my people up to the like treason. Yet he is, if so he wills, an expert log-snatcher. There is none better or bolder among my people to clear a block of the river when the logs stick fast."

" But he worships strange gods," said the prime minister, deferentially.

" For that I have no concern," said the king, who was as tolerant as Akbar in matters of belief. " To each man his own god, and the fire or Mother Earth for us all at the last. It is the rebellion that offends me."

"The king has an army," I suggested. "Has not the king burned the man's house, and left him naked to the night dews?"

"Nay. A hut is a hut, and it holds the life of a man. But once I sent my army against him when his excuses became wearisome. Of their heads he brake three across the top with a stick. The other two men ran away. Also the guns would not shoot."

I had seen the equipment of the infantry. One-third of it was an old muzzle-loading fowling-piece with ragged rust holes where the nipples should have been; one-third a wire-bound matchlock with a worm-eaten stock, and one-third a four-bore flint duck gun, without a flint.

"But it is to be remembered," said the king, reaching out for the bottle, "that he is a very expert log-snatcher and a man of a merry face. What shall I do to him, sahib?"

This was interesting. The timid hill-folk would as soon have refused taxes to their king as offerings to their gods. The rebel must be a man of character.

"If it be the king's permission," I said, "I will not strike my tents till the third day, and I will see this man. The mercy of the king is godlike, and rebellion is like unto the sin of witchcraft. Moreover, both the bottles, and another, be empty."

"You have my leave to go," said the king.

Next morning the crier went through the state proclaiming that there was a log-jam on the river and that it behooved all loyal subjects to clear it. The people poured down from their villages to the moist, warm valley of poppy fields, and the king and I went with them.

Hundreds of dressed deodar logs had caught on a snag of rock, and the river was bringing down more logs every minute to complete the blockade. The water snarled and wrenched and worried at the timber, while the population of the state prodded at the nearest logs with poles, in the hope of easing the pressure. Then there went up a shout of "Namgay Doola! Namgay Doola!" and a large, red-haired villager hurried up, stripping off his clothes as he ran.

"That is he. That is the rebel!" said the king. "Now will the dam be cleared."

"But why has he red hair?" I asked, since red hair among hill-folk is as uncommon as blue or green.

"He is an outlander," said the king. "Well done! Oh, well done!"

Namgay Doola had scrambled on the jam and was clawing out the butt of a log with a rude sort of a boat-hook. It slid forward slowly, as an alligator moves, and

three or four others followed it. The green water spouted through the gaps. Then the villagers howled and shouted and leaped among the logs, pulling and pushing the obstinate timber, and the red head of Namgay Doola was chief among them all. The logs swayed and chafed and groaned as fresh consignments from up-stream battered the now weakening dam. It gave way at last in a smother of foam, racing butts, bobbing black heads, and a confusion indescribable, as the river tossed everything before it. I saw the red head go down with the last remnants of the jam and disappear between the great grinding tree trunks. It rose close to the bank, and blowing like a grampus, Namgay Doola wiped the water out of his eyes and made obeisance to the king.

I had time to observe the man closely. The virulent redness of his shock head and beard was most startling, and in the thicket of hair twinkled above high cheek-bones two very merry blue eyes. He was indeed an outlander, but yet a Thibetan in language, habit and attire. He spoke the Lepcha dialect with an indescribable softening of the gutturals. It was not so much a lisp as an accent.

"Whence comest thou?" I asked, wondering.

"From Thibet." He pointed across the

hills and grinned. That grin went straight to my heart. Mechanically I held out my hand, and Namgay Doola took it. No pure Thibetan would have understood the meaning of the gesture. He went away to look for his clothes, and as he climbed back to his village, I heard a joyous yell that seemed unaccountably familiar. It was the whooping of Namgay Doola.

"You see now," said the king, "why I would not kill him. He is a bold man among my logs, but," and he shook his head like a schoolmaster, "I know that before long there will be complaints of him in the court. Let us return to the palace and do justice."

It was that king's custom to judge his subjects every day between eleven and three o'clock. I heard him do justice equitably on weighty matters of trespass, slander, and a little wife-stealing. Then his brow clouded and he summoned me.

"Again it is Namgay Doola," he said, despairingly. "Not content with refusing revenue on his own part, he has bound half his village by an oath to the like treason. Never before has such a thing befallen me! Nor are my taxes heavy."

A rabbit-faced villager, with a blush-rose stuck behind his ear, advanced trembling. He had been in Namgay Doola's con-

spiracy, but had told everything and hoped for the king's favor.

"Oh, king!" said I, "if it be the king's will, let this matter stand over till the morning. Only the gods can do right in a hurry, and it may be that yonder villager has lied."

"Nay, for I know the nature of Namgay Doola; but since a guest asks, let the matter remain. Wilt thou, for my sake, speak harshly to this red-headed outlander? He may listen to thee."

I made an attempt that very evening, but for the life of me I could not keep my countenance. Namgay Doola grinned so persuasively and began to tell me about a big brown bear in a poppy field by the river. Would I care to shoot that bear? I spoke austerely on the sin of detected conspiracy and the certainty of punishment. Namgay Doola's face clouded for a moment. Shortly afterward he withdrew from my tent, and I heard him singing softly among the pines. The words were unintelligible to me, but the tune, like his liquid, insinuating speech, seemed the ghost of something strangely familiar.

"Dir hane mard-i-yemen dir
To weeree ala gee,"

crooned Namgay Doola again and again, and I racked my brain for that lost tune.

It was not till after dinner that I discovered some one had cut a square foot of velvet from the center of my best camera cloth. This made me so angry that I wandered down the valley in the hope of meeting the big brown bear. I could hear him grunting like a discontented pig in the poppy field as I waited shoulder deep in the dew-dripping Indian corn to catch him after his meal. The moon was at full and drew out the scent of the tasseled crop. Then I heard the anguished bellow of a Himalayan cow — one of the little black crummies no bigger than Newfoundland dogs. Two shadows that looked like a bear and her cub hurried past me. I was in the act of firing when I saw that each bore a brilliant red head. The lesser animal was trailing something rope-like that left a dark track on the path. They were within six feet of me, and the shadow of the moonlight lay velvet-black on their faces. Velvet-black was exactly the word, for by all the powers of moonlight they were masked in the velvet of my camera-cloth. I marveled, and went to bed.

Next morning the kingdom was in an uproar. Namgay Doola, men said, had gone forth in the night and with a sharp knife had cut off the tail of a cow belonging to the rabbit-faced villager who had betrayed him. It was sacrilege unspeak-

able against the holy cow! The state desired his blood, but he had retreated into his hut, barricaded the doors and windows with big stones, and defied the world.

The king and I and the populace approached the hut cautiously. There was no hope of capturing our man without loss of life, for from a hole in the wall projected the muzzle of an extremely well-cared-for gun — the only gun in the state that could shoot. Namgay Doola had narrowly missed a villager just before we came up.

The standing army stood.

It could do no more, for when it advanced pieces of sharp shale flew from the windows. To these were added from time to time showers of scalding water. We saw red heads bobbing up and down within. The family of Namgay Doola were aiding their sire. Blood-curdling yells of defiance were the only answer to our prayers.

"Never," said the king, puffing, "has such a thing befallen my state. Next year I will certainly buy a little cannon." He looked at me imploringly.

"Is there any priest in the kingdom to whom he will listen?" said I, for a light was beginning to break upon me.

"He worships his own god," said the prime minister. "We can but starve him out."

"Let the white man approach," said Namgay Doola from within. "All others I will kill. Send me the white man."

The door was thrown open and I entered the smoky interior of a Thibetan hut crammed with children. And every child had flaming red hair. A fresh-gathered cow's tail lay on the floor, and by its side two pieces of black velvet — my black velvet — rudely hacked into the semblance of masks.

"And what is this shame, Namgay Doola?" I asked.

He grinned more charmingly than ever. "There is no shame," said he. "I did but cut off the tail of that man's cow. He betrayed me. I was minded to shoot him, sahib, but not to death. Indeed, not to death; only in the legs."

"And why at all, since it is the custom to pay revenue to the king? Why at all?"

"By the god of my father, I can not tell," said Namgay Doola.

"And who was thy father?"

"The same that had this gun." He showed me his weapon, a Tower musket, bearing date 1832 and the stamp of the Honorable East India Company.

"And thy father's name?" said I.

"Timlay Doola," said he. "At the first, I being then a little child, it is in my mind that he wore a red coat."

"Of that I have no doubt; but repeat the name of thy father twice or thrice."

He obeyed, and I understood whence the puzzling accent in his speech came. "Thimla Dhula!" said he excitedly. "To this hour I worship his god."

"May I see that god?"

"In a little while — at twilight time."

"Rememberest thou aught of thy father's speech?"

"It is long ago. But there was one word which he said often. Thus, ''Shun!' Then I and my brethren stood upon our feet, our hands to our sides, thus."

"Even so. And what was thy mother?"

"A woman of the Hills. We be Lepchas of Darjiling, but me they call an outlander because my hair is as thou seest."

The Thibetan woman, his wife, touched him on the arm gently. The long parley outside the fort had lasted far into the day. It was now close upon twilight — the hour of the Angelus. Very solemnly the red-headed brats rose from the floor and formed a semicircle. Namgay Doola laid his gun aside, lighted a little oil-lamp, and set it before a recess in the wall. Pulling back a whisp of dirty cloth, he revealed a worn brass crucifix leaning against the helmet badge of a long-forgotten East India Company's regiment. "Thus did my father," he said, crossing himself clumsily.

The wife and children followed suit. Then, all together, they struck up the wailing chant that I heard on the hill-side:

"Dir hane mard-i-yemen dir
To weeree ala gee."

I was puzzled no longer. Again and again they sung, as if their hearts would break, their version of the chorus of "The Wearing of the Green":

"They're hanging men and women, too,
For the wearing of the green."

A diabolical inspiration came to me. One of the brats, a boy about eight years old — could he have been in the fields last night? — was watching me as he sung. I pulled out a rupee, held the coin between finger and thumb, and looked — only looked — at the gun leaning against the wall. A grin of brilliant and perfect comprehension overspread his porringer-like face. Never for an instant stopping the song, he held out his hand for the money, and then slid the gun to my hand. I might have shot Namgay Doola dead as he chanted, but I was satisfied. The inevitable blood-instinct held true. Namgay Doola drew the curtain across the recess. Angelus was over.

"Thus my father sung. There was much more, but I have forgotten, and I do not know the purport of even these words,

but it may be that the god will understand. I am not of this people, and I will not pay revenue."

"And why?"

Again that soul-compelling grin. "What occupation would be to me between crop and crop? It is better than scaring bears. But these people do not understand."

He picked the masks off the floor and looked in my face as simply as a child.

"By what road didst thou attain knowledge to make those deviltries?" I said, pointing.

"I can not tell. I am but a Lepcha of Darjiling, and yet the stuff ——"

"Which thou hast stolen," said I.

"Nay, surely. Did I steal? I desired it so. The stuff — the stuff. What else should I have done with the stuff?" He twisted the velvet between his fingers.

"But the sin of maiming the cow — consider that."

"Oh, sahib, the man betrayed me; the heifer's tail waved in the moonlight, and I had my knife. What else should I have done? The tail came off ere I was aware. Sahib, thou knowest more than I."

"That is true," said I. "Stay within the door. I go to speak to the king." The population of the state were ranged on the hill-side. I went forth and spoke.

"Oh, king," said I, "touching this man,

there be two courses open to thy wisdom. Thou canst either hang him from a tree — he and his brood — till there remains no hair that is red within thy land."

"Nay," said the king. "Why should I hurt the little children?"

They had poured out of the hut and were making plump obeisances to everybody. Namgay Doola waited at the door with his gun across his arm.

"Or thou canst, discarding their impiety of the cow-maiming, raise him to honor in thy army. He comes of a race that will not pay revenue. A red flame is in his blood which comes out at the top of his head in that glowing hair. Make him chief of thy army. Give him honor as may befall and full allowance of work, but look to it, oh, king, that neither he nor his hold a foot of earth from thee henceforward. Feed him with words and favor, and also liquor from certain bottles that thou knowest of, and he will be a bulwark of defense. But deny him even a tuftlet of grass for his own. This is the nature that God has given him. Moreover, he has brethren ——"

The state groaned unanimously.

"But if his brethren come they will surely fight with each other till they die; or else the one will always give information

concerning the other. Shall he be of thy army, oh, king? Choose."

The king bowed his head, and I said: "Come forth, Namgay Doola, and command the king's army. Thy name shall no more be Namgay in the mouths of men, but Patsay Doola, for, as thou hast truly said, I know."

Then Namgay Doola, new-christened Patsay Doola, son of Timlay Doola—which is Tim Doolan—clasped the king's feet, cuffed the standing army, and hurried in an agony of contrition from temple to temple making offerings for the sin of the cattle-maiming.

And the king was so pleased with my perspicacity that he offered to sell me a village for £20 sterling. But I buy no village in the Himalayas so long as one red head flares between the tail of the heaven-climbing glacier and the dark birch forest.

I know that breed.

THE RECRUDESCENCE OF IMRAY

IMRAY had achieved the impossible. Without warning, for no conceivable motive, in his youth and at the threshold of his career he had chosen to disappear from the world — which is to say, the little Indian station where he lived. Upon a day he was alive, well, happy, and in great evidence at his club, among the billiard-tables. Upon a morning he was not, and no manner of search could make sure where he might be. He had stepped out of his place; he had not appeared at his office at the proper time, and his dog-cart was not upon the public roads. For these reasons and because he was hampering in a microscopical degree the administration of the Indian Empire, the Indian Empire paused for one microscopical moment to make inquiry into the fate of Imray. Ponds were dragged, wells were plumbed, telegrams were dispatched down the lines of railways

and to the nearest seaport town — 1200 miles away — but Imray was not at the end of the drag-ropes nor the telegrams. He was gone, and his place knew him no more. Then the work of the great Indian Empire swept forward, because it could not be delayed, and Imray, from being a man, became a mystery — such a thing as men talk over at their tables in the club for a month and then forget utterly. His guns, horses, and carts were sold to the highest bidder. His superior officer wrote an absurd letter to his mother, saying that Imray had unaccountably disappeared and his bungalow stood empty on the road.

After three or four months of the scorching hot weather had gone by, my friend Strickland, of the police force, saw fit to rent the bungalow from the native landlord. This was before he was engaged to Miss Youghai — an affair which has been described in another place — and while he was pursuing his investigations into native life. His own life was sufficiently peculiar, and men complained of his manners and customs. There was always food in his house, but there were no regular times for meals. He eat, standing up and walking about, whatever he might find on the sideboard, and this is not good for the insides of human beings. His domestic equipment was limited to six rifles, three shot-

guns, five saddles, and a collection of stiff-jointed masheer rods, bigger and stronger than the largest salmon rods. These things occupied one-half of his bungalow, and the other half was given up to Strickland and his dog Tietjens — an enormous Rampur slut, who sung when she was ordered, and devoured daily the rations of two men. She spoke to Strickland in a language of her own, and whenever in her walks abroad she saw things calculated to destroy the peace of Her Majesty the Queen Empress, she returned to her master and gave him information. Strickland would take steps at once, and the end of his labors was trouble and fine and imprisonment for other people. The natives believed that Tietjens was a familiar spirit, and treated her with the great reverence that is born of hate and fear. One room in the bungalow was set apart for her special use. She owned a bedstead, a blanket, and a drinking-trough, and if any one came into Strickland's room at night, her custom was to knock down the invader and give tongue till some one came with a light. Strickland owes his life to her. When he was on the frontier in search of the local murderer who came in the gray dawn to send Strickland much further than the Andaman Islands, Tietjens caught him as he was crawling into Strickland's tent with a dagger between his

teeth, and after his record of iniquity was established in the eyes of the law, he was hanged. From that date Tietjens wore a collar of rough silver and employed a monogram on her night blanket, and the blanket was double-woven Kashmir cloth, for she was a delicate dog.

Under no circumstances would she be separated from Strickland, and when he was ill with fever she made great trouble for the doctors because she did not know how to help her master and would not allow another creature to attempt aid. Macarnaght, of the Indian Medical Service, beat her over the head with a gun, before she could understand that she must give room for those who could give quinine.

A short time after Strickland had taken Imray's bungalow, my business took me through that station, and naturally, the club quarters being full, I quartered myself upon Strickland. It was a desirable bungalow, eight-roomed, and heavily thatched against any chance of leakage from rain. Under the pitch of the roof ran a ceiling cloth, which looked just as nice as a white-washed ceiling. The landlord had repainted it when Strickland took the bungalow, and unless you knew how Indian bungalows were built you would never have suspected that above the cloth lay the dark, three-cornered cavern of the roof,

where the beams and the under side of the thatch harbored all manner of rats, bats, ants, and other things.

Tietjens met me in the veranda with a bay like the boom of the bells of St. Paul's, and put her paws on my shoulders and said she was glad to see me. Strickland had contrived to put together that sort of meal which he called lunch, and immediately after it was finished went out about his business. I was left alone with Tietjens and my own affairs. The heat of the summer had broken up and given place to the warm damp of the rains. There was no motion in the heated air, but the rain fell like bayonet rods on the earth, and flung up a blue mist where it splashed back again. The bamboos and the custard apples, the poinsettias and the mango-trees in the garden stood still while the warm water lashed through them, and the frogs began to sing among the aloe hedges. A little before the light failed, and when the rain was at its worst, I sat in the back veranda and heard the water roar from the eaves, and scratched myself because I was covered with the thing they call prickly heat. Tietjens came out with me and put her head in my lap, and was very sorrowful, so I gave her biscuits when tea was ready, and I took tea in the back veranda on account of the little coolness I found

there. The rooms of the house were dark behind me. I could smell Strickland's saddlery and the oil on his guns, and I did not the least desire to sit among these things. My own servant came to me in the twilight, the muslin of his clothes clinging tightly to his drenched body, and told me that a gentleman had called and wished to see some one. Very much against my will, and because of the darkness of the rooms, I went into the naked drawing-room, telling my man to bring the lights. There might or might not have been a caller in the room — it seems to me that I saw a figure by one of the windows, but when the lights came there was nothing save the spikes of the rain without and the smell of the drinking earth in my nostrils. I explained to my man that he was no wiser than he ought to be, and went back to the veranda to talk to Tietjens. She had gone out into the wet and I could hardly coax her back to me — even with biscuits with sugar on top. Strickland rode back, dripping wet, just before dinner, and the first thing he said was:

"Has any one called?"

I explained, with apologies, that my servant had called me into the drawing-room on a false alarm; or that some loafer had tried to call on Strickland, and, thinking better of it, fled after giving his name.

Strickland ordered dinner without comment and since it was a real dinner, with white table-cloth attached, we sat down.

At nine o'clock Strickland wanted to go to bed, and I was tired too. Tietjens, who had been lying underneath the table, rose up and went into the least-exposed veranda as soon as her master moved to his own room, which was next to the stately chamber set apart for Tietjens. If a mere wife had wished to sleep out-of-doors in that pelting rain, it would not have mattered, but Tietjens was a dog, and therefore the better animal. I looked at Strickland, expecting to see him flog her with a whip. He smiled queerly, as a man would smile after telling some hideous domestic tragedy. "She has done this ever since I moved in here."

The dog was Strickland's dog, so I said nothing, but I felt all that Strickland felt in being made light of. Tietjens encamped outside my bedroom window, and storm after storm came up, thundered on the thatch, and died away. The lightning spattered the sky as a thrown egg spatters a barn door, but the light was pale blue, not yellow; and looking through my slit bamboo blinds, I could see the great dog standing, not sleeping, in the veranda, the hackles alift on her back, and her feet planted as tensely as the drawn wire rope

of a suspension bridge. In the very short pauses of the thunder I tried to sleep, but it seemed that some one wanted me very badly. He, whoever he was, was trying to call me by name, but his voice was no more than a husky whisper. Then the thunder ceased and Tietjens went into the garden and howled at the low moon. Somebody tried to open my door, and walked about and through the house, and stood breathing heavily in the verandas, and just when I was falling asleep I fancied that I heard a wild hammering and clamoring above my head or on the door.

I ran into Strickland's room and asked him whether he was ill and had been calling for me. He was lying on the bed half-dressed, with a pipe in his mouth. "I thought you'd come," he said. "Have I been walking around the house at all?"

I explained that he had been in the dining-room and the smoking-room and two or three other places; and he laughed and told me to go back to bed. I went back to bed and slept till the morning, but in all my dreams I was sure I was doing some one an injustice in not attending to his wants. What those wants were I could not tell, but a fluttering, whispering, bolt-fumbling, luring, loitering some one was reproaching me for my slackness, and through all the dreams I heard the howling

of Tietjens in the garden and the thrashing of the rain.

I was in that house for two days, and Strickland went to his office daily, leaving me alone for eight or ten hours a day, with Tietjens for my only companion. As long as the full light lasted I was comfortable, and so was Tietjens; but in the twilight she and I moved into the back veranda and cuddled each other for company. We were alone in the house, but for all that it was fully occupied by a tenant with whom I had no desire to interfere. I never saw him, but I could see the curtains between the rooms quivering where he had just passed through; I could hear the chairs creaking as the bamboos sprung under a weight that had just quitted them; and I could feel when I went to get a book from the dining-room that somebody was waiting in the shadows of the front veranda till I should have gone away. Tietjens made the twilight more interesting by glaring into the darkened rooms, with every hair erect, and following the motions of something that I could not see. She never entered the rooms, but her eyes moved, and that was quite sufficient. Only when my servant came to trim the lamps and make all light and habitable, she would come in with me and spend her time sitting on her haunches watching an invisible extra man

as he moved about behind my shoulder. Dogs are cheerful companions.

I explained to Strickland, gently as might be, that I would go over to the club and find for myself quarters there. I admired his hospitality, was pleased with his guns and rods, but I did not much care for his house and its atmosphere. He heard me out to the end, and then smiled very wearily, but without contempt, for he is a man who understands things. "Stay on," he said, "and see what this thing means. All you have talked about I have known since I took the bungalow. Stay on and wait. Tietjens has left me. Are you going too?"

I had seen him through one little affair connected with an idol that had brought me to the doors of a lunatic asylum, and I had no desire to help him through further experiences. He was a man to whom unpleasantnesses arrived as do dinners to ordinary people.

Therefore I explained more clearly than ever that I liked him immensely, and would be happy to see him in the daytime, but that I didn't care to sleep under his roof. This was after dinner, when Tietjens had gone out to lie in the veranda.

"'Pon my soul, I don't wonder," said Strickland, with his eyes on the ceiling-cloth. "Look at that!"

The tails of two snakes were hanging between the cloth and the cornice of the wall. They threw long shadows in the lamp-light. "If you are afraid of snakes, of course —" said Strickland. "I hate and fear snakes, because if you look into the eyes of any snake you will see that it knows all and more of man's fall, and that it feels all the contempt that the devil felt when Adam was evicted from Eden. Besides which its bite is generally fatal, and it bursts up trouser legs."

"You ought to get your thatch overhauled," I said. "Give me a masheer rod, and we'll poke 'em down."

"They'll hide among the roof beams," said Strickland. "I can't stand snakes overhead. I'm going up. If I shake 'em down, stand by with a cleaning-rod and break their backs."

I was not anxious to assist Strickland in his work, but I took the loading-rod and waited in the dining-room, while Strickland brought a gardener's ladder from the veranda and set it against the side of the room. The snake tails drew themselves up and disappeared. We could hear the dry rushing scuttle of long bodies running over the baggy cloth. Strickland took a lamp with him, while I tried to make clear the danger of hunting roof snakes between a ceiling-cloth and a thatch, apart from the

deterioration of property caused by ripping out ceiling-cloths.

"Nonsense!" said Strickland. "They're sure to hide near the walls by the cloth. The bricks are too cold for 'em, and the heat of the room is just what they like." He put his hand to the corner of the cloth and ripped the rotten stuff from the cornice. It gave a great sound of tearing, and Strickland put his head through the opening into the dark of the angle of the roof beams. I set my teeth and lifted the loading-rod, for I had not the least knowledge of what might descend.

"H'm," said Strickland; and his voice rolled and rumbled in the roof. "There's room for another set of rooms up here, and, by Jove! some one is occupying 'em."

"Snakes?" I said down below.

"No. It's a buffalo. Hand me up the two first joints of a masheer rod, and I'll prod it. It's lying on the main beam."

I handed up the rod.

"What a nest for owls and serpents! No wonder the snakes live here," said Strickland, climbing further into the roof. I could see his elbow thrusting with the rod. "Come out of that, whoever you are! Look out! Heads below there! It's tottering."

I saw the ceiling-cloth nearly in the center of the room bag with a shape that was

pressing it downward and downward toward the lighted lamps on the table. I snatched a lamp out of danger and stood back. Then the cloth ripped out from the walls, tore, split, swayed, and shot down upon the table something that I dared not look at till Strickland had slid down the ladder and was standing by my side.

He did not say much, being a man of few words, but he picked up the loose end of the table-cloth and threw it over the thing on the table.

"It strikes me," said he, pulling down the lamp, "our friend Imray has come back. Oh! you would, would you?"

There was a movement under the cloth, and a little snake wriggled out, to be back-broken by the butt of the masheer rod. I was sufficiently sick to make no remarks worth recording.

Strickland meditated and helped himself to drinks liberally. The thing under the cloth made no more signs of life.

"Is it Imray?" I said.

Strickland turned back the cloth for a moment and looked. "It is Imray," he said, "and his throat is cut from ear to ear."

Then we spoke both together and to ourselves: "That's why he whispered about the house."

Tietjens, in the garden, began to bay

furiously. A little later her great nose heaved upon the dining-room door.

She sniffed and was still. The broken and tattered ceiling-cloth hung down almost to the level of the table, and there was hardly room to move away from the discovery.

Then Tietjens came in and sat down, her teeth bared and her forepaws planted. She looked at Strickland.

"It's bad business, old lady," said he. "Men don't go up into the roofs of their bungalows to die, and they don't fasten up the ceiling-cloth behind 'em. Let's think it out."

"Let's think it out somewhere else," I said.

"Excellent idea! Turn the lamps out. We'll get into my room."

I did not turn the lamps out. I went into Strickland's room first and allowed him to make the darkness. Then he followed me, and we lighted tobacco and thought. Strickland did the thinking. I smoked furiously because I was afraid.

"Imray is back," said Strickland. "The question is, who killed Imray? Don't talk — I have a notion of my own. When I took this bungalow I took most of Imray's servants. Imray was guileless and inoffensive, wasn't he?"

I agreed, though the heap under the

cloth looked neither one thing nor the other.

"If I call the servants they will stand fast in a crowd and lie like Aryans. What do you suggest?"

"Call 'em in one by one," I said.

"They'll run away and give the news to all their fellows," said Strickland.

"We must segregate 'em. Do you suppose your servant knows anything about it?"

"He may, for aught I know, but I don't think it's likely. He has only been here two or three days."

"What's your notion?" I asked.

"I can't quite tell. How the dickens did the man get the wrong side of the ceiling-cloth?"

There was a heavy coughing outside Strickland's bedroom door. This showed that Bahadur Khan, his body-servant, had waked from sleep and wished to put Strickland to bed.

"Come in," said Strickland. "It is a very warm night, isn't it?"

Bahadur Khan, a great, green-turbaned, six-foot Mohammedan, said that it was a very warm night, but that there was more rain pending, which, by his honor's favor, would bring relief to the country.

"It will be so, if God pleases," said Strickland, tugging off his boots. "It is

in my mind, Bahadur Khan, that I have worked thee remorselessly for many days—ever since that time when thou first camest into my service. What time was that?"

"Has the heaven-born forgotten? It was when Imray Sahib went secretly to Europe without warning given, and I—even I—came into the honored service of the protector of the poor.

"And Imray Sahib went to Europe?"

"It is so said among the servants."

"And thou wilt take service with him when he returns?"

"Assuredly, sahib. He was a good master and cherished his dependents."

"That is true. I am very tired, but I can go buck-shooting to-morrow. Give me the little rifle that I use for black buck; it is in the case yonder."

The man stooped over the case, handed barrels, stock, and fore-end to Strickland, who fitted them together. Yawning dolefully, then he reached down to the gun-case, took a solid drawn cartridge, and slipped it into the breech of the .360 express.

"And Imray Sahib has gone to Europe secretly? That is very strange, Bahadur Khan, is it not?"

"What do I know of the ways of the white man, heaven-born?"

"Very little, truly. But thou shalt know

more. It has reached me that Imray Sahib has returned from his so long journeyings, and that even now he lies in the next room, waiting his servant."

"Sahib!"

The lamp-light slid along the barrels of the rifle as they leveled themselves against Bahadur Khan's broad breast.

"Go, then, and look!" said Strickland. "Take a lamp. Thy master is tired, and he waits. Go!"

The man picked up a lamp and went into the dining-room, Strickland following, and almost pushing him with the muzzle of the rifle. He looked for a moment at the black depths behind the ceiling-cloth, at the carcass of the mangled snake under foot, and last, a gray glaze setting on his face, at the thing under the table-cloth.

"Hast thou seen?" said Strickland, after a pause.

"I have seen. I am clay in the white man's hands. What does the presence do?"

"Hang thee within a month! What else?"

"For killing him? Nay, sahib, consider. Walking among us, his servants, he cast his eyes upon my child, who was four years old. Him he bewitched, and in ten days he died of the fever. My child!"

"What said Imray Sahib?"

"He said he was a handsome child, and patted him on the head; wherefore my child died. Wherefore I killed Imray Sahib in the twilight, when he came back from office and was sleeping. The heaven-born knows all things. I am the servant of the heaven-born."

Strickland looked at me above the rifle, and said, in the vernacular: "Thou art witness to this saying. He has killed."

Bahadur Khan stood ashen gray in the light of the one lamp. The need for justification came upon him very swiftly.

"I am trapped," he said, "but the offense was that man's. He cast an evil eye upon my child, and I killed and hid him. Only such as are served by devils," he glared at Tietjens, crouched stolidly before him, "only such could know what I did."

"It was clever. But thou shouldst have lashed him to the beam with a rope. Now, thou thyself wilt hang by a rope. Orderly!"

A drowsy policeman answered Strickland's call. He was followed by another, and Tietjens sat still.

"Take him to the station," said Strickland. "There is a case toward."

"Do I hang, then?" said Bahadur Khan, making no attempt to escape and keeping his eyes on the ground.

"If the sun shines, or the water runs,

thou wilt hang," said Strickland. Bahadur Khan stepped back one pace, quivered, and stood still. The two policemen waited further orders.

"Go!" said Strickland.

"Nay; but I go very swiftly," said Bahadur Khan. Look! I am even now a dead man."

He lifted his foot, and to the little toe there clung the head of the half-killed snake, firm fixed in the agony of death.

"I come of land-holding stock," said Bahadur Khan, rocking where he stood. "It were a disgrace for me to go to the public scaffold, therefore I take this way. Be it remembered that the sahib's shirts are correctly enumerated, and that there is an extra piece of soap in his wash-basin. My child was bewitched, and I slew the wizard. Why should you seek to slay me? My honor is saved, and — and — I die."

At the end of an hour he died as they die who are bitten by the little kariat, and the policemen bore him and the thing under the table-cloth to their appointed places. They were needed to make clear the disappearance of Imray.

"This," said Strickland, very calmly, as he climbed into bed, "is called the nineteenth century. Did you hear what that man said?"

"I heard," I answered. "Imray made a mistake."

"Simply and solely through not knowing the nature and coincidence of a little seasonal fever. Bahadur Khan has been with him for four years."

I shuddered. My own servant had been with me for exactly that length of time. When I went over to my own room I found him waiting, impassive as the copper head on a penny, to pull off my boots.

"What has befallen Bahadur Khan?" said I.

"He was bitten by a snake and died; the rest the sahib knows," was the answer.

"And how much of the matter hast thou known?"

"As much as might be gathered from one coming in the twilight to seek satisfaction. Gently, sahib. Let me pull off those boots."

I had just settled to the sleep of exhaustion when I heard Strickland shouting from his side of the house:

"Tietjens has come back to her room!"

And so she had. The great deerhound was couched on her own bedstead, on her own blanket, and in the next room the idle, empty ceiling-cloth wagged light-heartedly as it flailed on the table.

MOTI GUJ--MUTINEER

ONCE upon a time there was a coffee-planter in India who wished to clear some forest land for coffee-planting. When he had cut down all the trees and burned the underwood, the stumps still remained. Dynamite is expensive and slow fire slow. The happy medium for stump-clearing is the lord of all beasts, who is the elephant. He will either push the stump out of the ground with his tusks, if he has any, or drag it out with ropes. The planter, therefore, hired elephants by ones and twos and threes, and fell to work. The very best of all the elephants belonged to the very worst of all the drivers or mahouts; and this superior beast's name was Moti Guj. He was the absolute property of his mahout, which would never have been the case under native rule: for Moti Guj was a creature to be desired by kings, and his name, being translated, meant the Pearl Elephant. Because the British government was in the land, Deesa, the mahout, enjoyed his prop-

erty undisturbed. He was dissipated. When he had made much money through the strength of his elephant, he would get extremely drunk and give Moti Guj a beating with a tent-peg over the tender nails of the forefeet. Moti Guj never trampled the life out of Deesa on these occasions, for he knew that after the beating was over, Deesa would embrace his trunk and weep and call him his love and his life and the liver of his soul, and give him some liquor. Moti Guj was very fond of liquor — arrack for choice, though he would drink palm-tree toddy if nothing better offered. Then Deesa would go to sleep between Moti Guj's forefeet, and as Deesa generally chose the middle of the public road, and as Moti Guj mounted guard over him, and would not permit horse, foot, or cart to pass by, traffic was congested till Deesa saw fit to wake up.

There was no sleeping in the day-time on the planter's clearing: the wages were too high to risk. Deesa sat on Moti Guj's neck and gave him orders, while Moti Guj rooted up the stumps — for he owned a magnificent pair of tusks; or pulled at the end of a rope — for he had a magnificent pair of shoulders — while Deesa kicked him behind the ears and said he was the king of elephants. At evening time Moti Guj would wash down his three hundred

pounds' weight of green food with a quart of arrack, and Deesa would take a share, and sing songs between Moti Guj's legs till it was time to go to bed. Once a week Deesa led Moti Guj down to the river, and Moti Guj lay on his side luxuriously in the shallows, while Deesa went over him with a coir swab and a brick. Moti Guj never mistook the pounding blow of the latter for the smack of the former that warned him to get up and turn over on the other side. Then Deesa would look at his feet and examine his eyes, and turn up the fringes of his mighty ears in case of sores or budding ophthalmia. After inspection the two would "come up with a song from the sea," Moti Guj, all black and shining, waving a torn tree branch twelve feet long in his trunk, and Deesa knotting up his own long wet hair.

It was a peaceful, well-paid life till Deesa felt the return of the desire to drink deep. He wished for an orgy. The little draughts that led nowhere were taking the manhood out of him.

He went to the planter, and "My mother's dead," said he, weeping.

"She died on the last plantation two months ago, and she died once before that when you were working for me last year," said the planter, who knew something of the ways of nativedom.

"Then it's my aunt, and she was just the same as a mother to me," said Deesa, weeping more than ever. "She has left eighteen small children entirely without bread, and it is I who must fill their little stomachs," said Deesa, beating his head on the floor.

"Who brought you the news?" said the planter.

"The post," said Deesa.

"There hasn't been a post here for the past week. Get back to your lines!"

"A devastating sickness has fallen on my village, and all my wives are dying," yelled Deesa, really in tears this time.

"Call Chihun, who comes from Deesa's village," said the planter. "Chihun, has this man got a wife?"

"He?" said Chihun. "No. Not a woman of our village would look at him. They'd sooner marry the elephant."

Chihun snorted. Deesa wept and bellowed.

"You will get into a difficulty in a minute," said the planter. "Go back to your work!"

"Now I will speak Heaven's truth," gulped Deesa, with an inspiration. "I haven't been drunk for two months. I desire to depart in order to get properly drunk afar off and distant from this heav-

enly plantation. Thus I shall cause no trouble."

A flickering smile crossed the planter's face. "Deesa," said he, "you've spoken the truth, and I'd give you leave on the spot if anything could be done with Moti Guj while you're away. You know that he will only obey your orders."

"May the light of the heavens live forty thousand years. I shall be absent but ten little days. After that, upon my faith and honor and soul, I return. As to the inconsiderable interval, have I the gracious permission of the heaven-born to call up Moti Guj?"

Permission was granted, and in answer to Deesa's shrill yell, the mighty tusker swung out of the shade of a clump of trees where he had been squirting dust over himself till his master should return.

"Light of my heart, protector of the drunken, mountain of might, give ear!" said Deesa, standing in front of him.

Moti Guj gave ear, and saluted with his trunk. "I am going away," said Deesa.

Moti Guj's eyes twinkled. He liked jaunts as well as his master. One could snatch all manner of nice things from the road-side then.

"But you, you fussy old pig, must stay behind and work."

The twinkle died out as Moti Guj tried

to look delighted. He hated stump-hauling on the plantation. It hurt his teeth.

"I shall be gone for ten days, oh, delectable one! Hold up your near forefoot and I'll impress the fact upon it, warty toad of a dried mud-puddle." Deesa took a tent-peg and banged Moti Guj ten times on the nails. Moti Guj grunted and shuffled from foot to foot.

"Ten days," said Deesa, "you will work and haul and root the trees as Chihun here shall order you. Take up Chihun and set him on your neck!" Moti Guj curled the tip of his trunk, Chihun put his foot there, and was swung on to the neck. Deesa handed Chihun the heavy *ankus* — the iron elephant goad.

Chihun thumped Moti Guj's bald head as a paver thumps a curbstone.

Moti Guj trumpeted.

"Be still, hog of the backwoods! Chihun's your mahout for ten days. And now bid me good-bye, beast after mine own heart. Oh, my lord, my king! Jewel of all created elephants, lily of the herd, preserve your honored health; be virtuous. Adieu!"

Moti Guj lapped his trunk round Deesa and swung him into the air twice. That was his way of bidding him good-bye.

"He'll work now," said Deesa to the planter. "Have I leave to go?"

The planter nodded, and Deesa dived into the woods. Moti Guj went back to haul stumps.

Chihun was very kind to him, but he felt unhappy and forlorn for all that. Chihun gave him a ball of spices, and tickled him under the chin, and Chihun's little baby cooed to him after work was over, and Chihun's wife called him a darling; but Moti Guj was a bachelor by instinct, as Deesa was. He did not understand the domestic emotions. He wanted the light of his universe back again — the drink and the drunken slumber, the savage beatings and the savage caresses.

None the less he worked well, and the planter wondered. Deesa had wandered along the roads till he met a marriage procession of his own caste, and, drinking, dancing, and tippling, had drifted with it past all knowledge of the lapse of time.

The morning of the eleventh day dawned, and there returned no Deesa. Moti Guj was loosed from his ropes for the daily stint. He swung clear, looked round, shrugged his shoulders, and began to walk away, as one having business elsewhere.

"Hi! ho! Come back you!" shouted Chihun. "Come back and put me on your neck, misborn mountain! Return, splendor of the hill-sides! Adornment of all

India, heave to, or I'll bang every toe off your fat forefoot!"

Moti Guj gurgled gently, but did not obey. Chihun ran after him with a rope and caught him up. Moti Guj put his ears forward, and Chihun knew what that meant, though he tried to carry it off with high words.

"None of your nonsense with me," said he. "To your pickets, devil-son!"

"Hrrump!" said Moti Guj, and that was all — that and the forebent ears.

Moti Guj put his hands in his pockets, chewed a branch for a toothpick, and strolled about the clearing, making fun of the other elephants who had just set to work.

Chihun reported the state of affairs to the planter, who came out with a dog-whip and cracked it furiously. Moti Guj paid the white man the compliment of charging him nearly a quarter of a mile across the clearing and "Hrrumphing" him into his veranda. Then he stood outside the house, chuckling to himself and shaking all over with the fun of it, as an elephant will.

"We'll thrash him," said the planter. "He shall have the finest thrashing ever elephant received. Give Kala Nag and Nazin twelve foot of chain apiece, and tell them to lay on twenty."

Kala Nag — which means Black Snake

— and Nazim were two of the biggest elephants in the lines, and one of their duties was to administer the graver punishment, since no man can beat an elephant properly.

They took the whipping-chains and rattled them in their trunks as they sidled up to Moti Guj meaning to hustle him between them. Moti Guj had never, in all his life of thirty-nine years, been whipped, and he did not intend to begin a new experience. So he waited, waving his head from right to left, and measuring the precise spot in Kala Nag's fat side where a blunt tusk could sink deepest. Kala Nag had no tusks; the chain was his badge of authority; but for all that, he swung wide of Moti Guj at the last minute, and tried to appear as if he had brought the chain out for amusement. Nazim turned round and went home early. He did not feel fighting fit that morning, and so Moti Guj was left standing alone with his ears cocked.

That decided the planter to argue no more, and Moti Guj rolled back to his amateur inspection of the clearing. An elephant who will not work and is not tied up is about as manageable as an eighty-one-ton gun loose in a heavy seaway. He slapped old friends on the back and asked them if the stumps were coming away easily; he talked nonsense concerning labor and the inalienable rights of elephants to

a long "nooning;" and, wandering to and fro, he thoroughly demoralized the garden till sundown, when he returned to his picket for food.

"If you won't work, you sha'n't eat," said Chihun, angrily. "You're a wild elephant, and no educated animal at all. Go back to your jungle."

Chihun's little brown baby was rolling on the floor of the hut, and stretching out its fat arms to the huge shadow in the doorway. Moti Guj knew well that it was the dearest thing on earth to Chihun. He swung out his trunk with a fascinating crook at the end, and the brown baby threw itself, shouting, upon it. Moti Guj made fast and pulled up till the brown baby was crowing in the air twelve feet above his father's head.

"Great Lord!" said Chihun. "Flour cakes of the best, twelve in number, two feet across and soaked in rum, shall be yours on the instant, and two hundred pounds' weight of fresh-cut young sugar-cane therewith. Deign only to put down safely that insignificant brat who is my heart and my life to me!"

Moti Guj tucked the brown baby comfortably between his forefeet, that could have knocked into toothpicks all Chihun's hut, and waited for his food. He eat it, and the brown baby crawled away. Moti

Guj dozed and thought of Deesa. One of many mysteries connected with the elephant is that his huge body needs less sleep than anything else that lives. Four or five hours in the night suffice — two just before midnight, lying down on one side; two just after one o'clock, lying down on the other. The rest of the silent hours are filled with eating and fidgeting, and long grumbling soliloquies.

At midnight, therefore, Moti Guj strode out of his pickets, for a thought had come to him that Deesa might be lying drunk somewhere in the dark forest with none to look after him. So all that night he chased through the undergrowth, blowing and trumpeting and shaking his ears. He went down to the river and blared across the shallows where Deesa used to wash him, but there was no answer. He could not find Deesa, but he disturbed all the other elephants in the lines, and nearly frightened to death some gypsies in the woods.

At dawn Deesa returned to the plantation. He had been very drunk indeed, and he expected to get into trouble for outstaying his leave. He drew a long breath when he saw that the bungalow and the plantation were still uninjured, for he knew something of Moti Guj's temper, and reported himself with many lies and salaams. Moti Guj had gone to his pickets for breakfast.

The night exercise had made him hungry.

"Call up your beast," said the planter; and Deesa shouted in the mysterious elephant language that some mahouts believe came from China at the birth of the world, when elephants and not men were masters. Moti Guj heard and came. Elephants do not gallop. They move from places at varying rates of speed. If an elephant wished to catch an express train he could not gallop, but he could catch the train. So Moti Guj was at the planter's door almost before Chihun noticed that he had left his pickets. He fell into Deesa's arms trumpeting with joy, and the man and beast wept and slobbered over each other, and handled each other from head to heel to see that no harm had befallen.

"Now we will get to work," said Deesa. "Lift me up, my son and my joy!"

Moti Guj swung him up, and the two went to the coffee-clearing to look for difficult stumps.

The planter was too astonished to be very angry.

THE MUTINY OF THE MAVERICKS

WHEN three obscure gentlemen in San Francisco argued on insufficient premises, they condemned a fellow-creature to a most unpleasant death in a far country which had nothing whatever to do with the United States. They foregathered at the top of a tenement-house in Tehama Street, an unsavory quarter of the city, and there calling for certain drinks, they conspired because they were conspirators by trade, officially known as the Third Three of the I. A. A.— an institution for the propagation of pure light, not to be confounded with any others, though it is affiliated to many. The Second Three live in Montreal and work among the poor there; the First Three have their home in New York, not far from Castle Garden, and write regularly once a week to a small house near one of the big hotels at Boulogne. What happens after that, a particular section of Scotland

Yards knows too well and laughs at. A conspirator detests ridicule. More men have been stabbed with Lucrezia Borgia daggers and dropped into the Thames for laughing at head centers and triangles than for betraying secrets; for this is human nature.

The Third Three conspired over whisky cocktails and a clean sheet of note-paper against the British Empire and all that lay therein. This work is very like what men without discernment call politics before a general election. You pick out and discuss in the company of congenial friends all the weak points in your opponents' organization, and unconsciously dwell upon and exaggerate all their mishaps, till it seems to you a miracle that the party holds together for an hour.

"Our principle is not so much active demonstration — that we leave to others — as passive embarrassment to weaken and unnerve," said the first man. "Wherever an organization is crippled, wherever a confusion is thrown into any branch of any department, we gain a step for those who take on the work; we are but the forerunners." He was a German enthusiast, and editor of a newspaper, from whose leading articles he quoted frequently.

"That cursed empire makes so many blunders of her own that unless we doubled

the year's average I guess it wouldn't strike her anything special had occurred," said the second man. "Are you prepared to say that all our resources are equal to blowing off the muzzle of a hundred-ton gun or spiking a ten-thousand-ton ship on a plain rock in clear daylight? They can beat us at our game. Better join hands with the practical branches; we're in funds now. Try and direct a scare in a crowded street. They value their greasy hides." He was the drag upon the wheel, and an Americanized Irishman of the second generation, despising his own race and hating the other. He had learned caution.

The third man drank his cocktail and spoke no word. He was the strategist, but unfortunately his knowledge of life was limited. He picked a letter from his breast-pocket and threw it across the table. That epistle to the heathen contained some very concise directions from the First Three in New York. It said:

"The boom in black iron has already affected the eastern markets, where our agents have been forcing down the English-held stock among the smaller buyers who watch the turn of shares. Any immediate operations, such as western bears, would increase their willingness to unload. This, however, can not be expected till they see clearly that foreign ironmasters

are willing to co-operate. Mulcahy should be dispatched to feel the pulse of the market, and act accordingly. Mavericks are at present the best for our purpose.—P. D. Q."

As a message referring to an iron crisis in Pennsylvania it was interesting, if not lucid. As a new departure in organized attack on an outlying English dependency, it was more than interesting.

The first man read it through, and murmured:

"Already? Surely they are in too great a hurry. All that Dhulip Singh could do in India he has done, down to the distribution of his photographs among the peasantry. Ho! Ho! The Paris firm arranged that, and he has no substantial money backing from the Other Power. Even our agents in India know he hasn't. What is the use of our organization wasting men on work that is already done? Of course, the Irish regiments in India are half mutinous as they stand."

This shows how near a lie may come to the truth. An Irish regiment, for just so long as it stands still, is generally a hard handful to control, being reckless and rough. When, however, it is moved in the direction of musketry-fire, it becomes strangely and unpatriotically content with its lot. It has even been heard to cheer

the queen with enthusiasm on these occasions.

But the notion of tampering with the army was, from the point of view of Tehama Street, an altogether sound one. There is no shadow of stability in the policy of an English government, and the most sacred oaths of England would, even if embossed on vellum, find very few buyers among colonies and dependencies that have suffered from vain beliefs. But there remains to England always her army. That can not change, except in the matter of uniform and equipment. The officers may write to the papers demanding the heads of the Horse Guards in default of cleaner redress for grievances; the men may break loose across a country town, and seriously startle the publicans, but neither officers nor men have it in their composition to mutiny after the Continental manner. The English people, when they trouble to think about the army at all, are, and with justice, absolutely assured that it is absolutely trustworthy. Imagine for a moment their emotions on realizing that such and such a regiment was in open revolt from causes directly due to England's management of Ireland. They would probably send the regiment to the polls forthwith, and examine their own consciences as to their duty to Erin, but they

would never be easy any more. And it was this vague, unhappy mistrust that the I. A. A. was laboring to produce.

"Sheer waste of breath," said the second man, after a pause in the council. "I don't see the use of tampering with their fool-army, but it has been tried before, and we must try it again. It looks well in the reports. If we send one man from here, you may bet your life that other men are going too. Order up Mulcahy."

They ordered him up — a slim, slight, dark-haired young man, devoured with that blind, rancorous hatred of England that only reaches its full growth across the Atlantic. He had sucked it from his mother's breast in the little cabin at the back of the northern avenues of New York; he had been taught his rights and his wrongs, in German and Irish, on the canal fronts of Chicago; and San Francisco held men who told him strange and awful things of the great blind power over the seas. Once, when business took him across the Atlantic, he had served in an English regiment, and being insubordinate, had suffered extremely. He drew all his ideas of England that were not bred by the cheaper patriotic print, from one iron-fisted colonel and an unbending adjutant. He would go to the mines if need be to teach his gospel. And he went as his instructions advised, *p. d. q.*

— which means "with speed" — to introduce embarrassment into an Irish regiment, "already half mutinous, quartered among Sikh peasantry, all wearing miniatures of His Highness Dhulip Singh, Maharaja of the Punjab, next their hearts, and all eagerly expecting his arrival." Other information equally valuable was given him by his masters. He was to be cautious, but never to grudge expense in winning the hearts of the men in the regiment. His mother in New York would supply funds, and he was to write to her once a month. Life is pleasant for a man who has a mother in New York to send him £200 a year over and above his regimental pay.

In process of time, thanks to his intimate knowledge of drill and musketry exercise, the excellent Mulcahy, wearing the corporal's stripe, went out in a troop-ship and joined Her Majesty's Royal Loyal Musketeers, commonly known as the "Mavericks," because they were masterless and unbranded cattle — sons of small farmers in County Clare, shoeless vagabonds of Kerry, herders of Ballyvegan, much wanted "moonlighters" from the bare rainy headlands of the south coast, officered by O'Mores, Bradys, Hills, Kilreas, and the like. Never, to outward seeming, was there more promising material to work on. The First Three had chosen their regiment

well. It feared nothing that moved or talked save the colonel and the regimental Roman Catholic chaplain, the fat Father Dennis, who held the keys of heaven and hell, and glared like an angry bull when he desired to be convincing. Him also it loved because on occasions of stress he was wont to tuck up his cassock and charge with the rest into the merriest of the fray, where he always found, good man, that the saints sent him a revolver when there was a fallen private to be protected or — but this came as an after-thought — his own gray head to be guarded.

Cautiously as he had been instructed, tenderly and with much beer, Mulcahy opened his projects to such as he deemed fittest to listen. And these were, one and all, of that quaint, crooked, sweet, profoundly irresponsible, and profoundly lovable race that fight like fiends, argue like children, reason like women, obey like men, and jest like their own goblins of the wrath through rebellion, loyalty, want, woe, or war. The underground work of a conspiracy is always dull, and very much the same the world over. At the end of six months — the seed always falling on good ground — Mulcahy spoke almost explicitly, hinting darkly in the approved fashion at dread powers behind him, and advising nothing more nor less than mutiny. Were they not

dogs, evilly treated? had they not all their own and the natural revenges to satisfy? Who in these days could do aught to nine hundred men in rebellion? who, again, could stay them if they broke for the sea, licking up on their way other regiments only too anxious to join? And afterward . . . here followed windy promises of gold and preferment, office and honor, ever dear to a certain type of Irishman.

As he finished his speech, in the dusk of a twilight, to his chosen associates, there was a sound of a rapidly unslung belt behind him. The arm of one Dan Grady flew out in the gloom and arrested something. Then said Dan:

"Mulcahy, you're a great man, an' you do credit to whoever sent you. Walk about a bit while we think of it." Mulcahy departed elated. He knew his words would sink deep.

"Why the triple-dashed asterisks did ye not let me curl the tripes out of him?" grunted a voice.

"Because I'm not a fat-headed fool. Boys, 'tis what he's been driving at these six months — our superior corpril, with his education, and his copies of the Irish papers, and his everlasting beer. He's been sent for the purpose, and that's where the money comes from. Can ye not see? That man's a gold-mine, which Horse

Egan here would have destroyed with a belt-buckle. It would be throwing away the gifts of Providence not to fall in with his little plans. Of course we'll mutiny till all's dry. Shoot the colonel on the parade-ground, massacre the company officers, ransack the arsenal, and then — boys, did he tell you what next? He told *me* the other night, when he was beginning to talk wild. Then we're to join with the niggers, and look for help from Dhulip Singh and the Russians!"

"And spoil the best campaign that ever was this side of hell! Danny, I'd have lost the beer to ha' given him the belting he requires."

"Oh, let him go this awhile, man! He's got no — no constructiveness; but that's the egg-meat of his plan, and you must understand that I'm in with it, an' so are you. We'll want oceans of beer to convince us — firmaments full. We'll give him talk for his money, and one by one all the boys'll come in, and he'll have a nest of nine hundred mutineers to squat in an' give drink to."

"What makes me killing mad is his wanting us to do what the niggers did thirty years gone. That an' his pig's cheek in saying that other regiments would come along," said a Kerry man.

"That's not so bad as hintin' we should loose off at the colonel."

"Colonel be sugared! I'd as soon as not put a shot through his helmet, to see him jump and clutch his old horse's head. But Mulcahy talks o' shootin' our comp'ny orf'cers accidental."

"He said that, did he?" said Horse Egan.

"Somethin' like that, anyways. Can't ye fancy ould Barber Brady wid a bullet in his lungs, coughin' like a sick monkey an' sayin': 'Bhoys, I do not mind your gettin' dhrunk, but you must hould your liquor like men. The man that shot me is dhrunk. I'll suspend investigations for six hours, while I get this bullet cut out, and then ——'"

"An' then," continued Horse Egan, for the peppery major's peculiarities of speech and manner were as well known as his tanned face —"an' then, ye dissolute, half-baked, putty-faced scum o' Connemara, if I find a man so much as lookin' confused, bedad I'll coort-martial the whole company. A man that can't get over his liquor in six hours is not fit to belong to the Mavericks!"

A shout of laughter bore witness to the truth of the sketch.

"It's pretty to think of," said the Kerry man slowly. "Mulcahy would have us do

all the devilment, and get clear himself, someways. He wudn't be takin' all this fool's throuble in shpoilin' the reputation of the regiment."

"Reputation of your grandmother's pig!" said Dan.

"Well, an' *he* had a good reputation, too; so it's all right. Mulcahy must see his way clear out behind him, or he'd not ha' come so far, talkin' powers of darkness."

"Did you hear anything of a regimental court-martial among the Black Boneens, these days? Half a company of 'em took one of the new draft an' hanged him by his arms with a tent-rope from a third-story veranda. They gave no reason for so doin', but he was half head. I'm thinking that the Boneens are short-sighted. It was a friend of Mulcahy's, or a man in the same trade. They'd a deal better ha' taken his beer," returned Dan, reflectively.

"Better still ha' handed him up to the colonel," said Horse Egan, "onless — But sure the news wud be all over the counthry an' give the reg'ment a bad name."

"An' there'd be no reward for that man — but he went about talkin'," said the Kerry man, artlessly.

"You speak by your breed," said Dan, with a laugh. "There was never a Kerry man yet that wudn't sell his brother for a

pipe o' tobacco an' a pat on the back from a policeman."

"Thank God I'm not a bloomin' Orangeman," was the answer.

"No, nor never will be," said Dan. "They breed *men* in Ulster. Would you like to thry the taste of one?"

The Kerry man looked and longed, but forebore. The odds of battle were too great.

"Then you'll not even give Mulcahy a — a strike for his money," said the voice of Horse Egan, who regarded what he called "trouble" of any kind as the pinnacle of felicity.

Dan answered not at all, but crept on tiptoe, with large strides, to the mess-room, the men following. The room was empty. In a corner, cased like the King of Dahomey's state umbrella, stood the regimental colors. Dan lifted them tenderly, and unrolled in the light of the candles the record of the Mavericks — tattered, worn, and hacked. The white satin was darkened everywhere with big brown stains, the gold threads on the crowned harp were frayed and discolored, and the red bull, the totem of the Mavericks, was coffee-hued. The stiff, embroidered folds, whose price is human life, rustled down slowly. The Mavericks keep their colors long and guard them very sacredly.

"Vittoria, Salamanca, Toulouse, Waterloo, Moodkee, Ferozshah, and Sobraon — that was fought close next door here, against the very beggars he wants us to join. Inkermann, the Alma, Sebastopol! What are those little businesses compared to the campaigns of General Mulcahy? The mut'ny, think o' that; the mut'ny an' some dirty little matters in Afghanistan, and for that an' these and those"— Dan pointed to the names of glorious battles — "that Yankee man with the partin' in his hair comes and says as easy as 'have a drink' . . . Holy Moses! there's the captain!"

But it was the mess-sergeant who came in just as the men clattered out, and found the colors uncased.

From that day dated the mutiny of the Mavericks, to the joy of Mulcahy and the pride of his mother in New York — the good lady who sent the money for the beer. Never, as far as words went, was such a mutiny. The conspirators, led by Dan Grady and Horse Egan, poured in daily. They were sound men, men to be trusted, and they all wanted blood; but first they must have beer. They cursed the queen, they mourned over Ireland, they suggested hideous plunder of the Indian country-side, and then, alas! some of the younger men would go forth and wallow

on the ground in spasms of unholy laughter. The genius of the Irish for conspiracies is remarkable. None the less, they would swear no oaths but those of their own making, which were rare and curious, and they were always at pains to impress Mulcahy with the risks they ran. Naturally the flood of beer wrought demoralization. But Mulcahy confused the causes of things, and when a pot-valiant Maverick smote a servant on the nose or called his commanding officer a bald-headed old lard-bladder, and even worse names, he fancied that rebellion and not liquor was at the bottom of the outbreak. Other gentlemen who have concerned themselves in larger conspiracies have made the same error.

The hot season, in which they protested no man could rebel, came to an end, and Mulcahy suggested a visible return for his teachings. As to the actual upshot of the mutiny he cared nothing. It would be enough if the English, infatuatedly trusting to the integrity of their army, should be startled with news of an Irish regiment revolting from political considerations. His persistent demands would have ended, at Dan's instigation, in a regimental belting which in all probability would have killed him and cut off the supply of beer, had not he been sent on special duty some fifty miles away

from the cantonment to cool his heels in a mud fort and dismount obsolete artillery. Then the colonel of the Mavericks, reading his newspaper diligently and scenting frontier trouble from afar, posted to the army headquarters and pleaded with the commander-in-chief for certain privileges, to be granted under certain contingencies; which contingencies came about only a week later when the annual little war on the border developed itself and the colonel returned to carry the good news to the Mavericks. He held the promise of the chief for active service, and the men must get ready.

On the evening of the same day, Mulcahy, an unconsidered corporal — yet great in conspiracy — returned to cantonments, and heard sounds of strife and howlings from afar off. The mutiny had broken out, and the barracks of the Mavericks were one whitewashed pandemonium. A private tearing through the barrack square gasped in his ear: "Service! Active service! It's a burnin' shame." Oh, joy, the Mavericks had risen on the eve of battle! They would not — noble and loyal sons of Ireland! — serve the queen longer. The news would flash through the country-side and over to England, and he — Mulcahy — the trusted of the Third Three, had brought about the crash. The private stood in the

middle of the square and cursed colonel, regiment, officers, and doctor, particularly the doctor, by his gods. An orderly of the native cavalry regiment clattered through the mob of soldiers. He was half lifted, half dragged from his horse, beaten on the back with mighty hand-claps till his eyes watered, and called all manner of endearing names. Yes, the Mavericks had fraternized with the native troops. Who, then, was the agent among the latter that had blindly wrought with Mulcahy so well?

An officer slunk, almost ran, from the mess to a barrack. He was mobbed by the infuriated soldiery, who closed round but did not kill him, for he fought his way to shelter, flying for his life. Mulcahy could have wept with pure joy and thankfulness. The very prisoners in the guard-room were shaking the bars of their cells and howling like wild beasts, and from every barrack poured the booming as of a big war-drum.

Mulcahy hastened to his own barrack. He could hardly hear himself speak. Eighty men were pounding with fist and heel the tables and trestles — eighty men flushed with mutiny, stripped to their shirt-sleeves, their knapsacks half-packed for the march to the sea, made the two-inch boards thunder again as they chanted to a tune that Mulcahy knew well, the Sacred War Song of the Mavericks:

"Listen in the north, my boys, there's trouble on the wind;
Tramp o' Cossacks hoofs in front, gray great-coats behind,
Trouble on the frontier of a most amazin' kind,
Trouble on the water o' the Oxus!"

Then as a table broke under the furious accompaniment:

"Hurrah! hurrah! its north by west we go;
Hurrah! hurrah! the chance we wanted so;
Let 'em hear the chorus from Umballa to Moscow,
As we go marching to the Kremlin."

"Mother of all the saints in bliss and all the devils in cinders, where's my fine new sock widout the heel?" howled Horse Egan, ransacking everybody's knapsack but his own. He was engaged in making up deficiencies of kit preparatory to a campaign, and in that employ he steals best who steals last. "Ah, Mulcahy, you're in good time," he shouted. "We've got the route, and we're off on Thursday for a picnic wid the Lancers next door."

An ambulance orderly appeared with a huge basket full of lint rolls, provided by the forethought of the queen, for such as might need them later on. Horse Egan unrolled his bandage and flicked it under Mulcahy's nose, chanting:

"'Sheep's skin an' bees'-wax, thunder, pitch and plaster;
The more you try to pull it off, the more it sticks the faster,
As I was goin' to New Orleans ——'

You know the rest of it, my Irish-American-Jew boy. By gad, ye have to fight for the queen in the inside av a fortnight, my darlin'."

A roar of laughter interrupted. Mulcahy looked vacantly down the room. Bid a boy defy his father when the pantomime-cab is at the door, or a girl develop a will of her own when her mother is putting the last touches to the first ball-dress, but do not ask an Irish regiment to embark upon mutiny on the eve of a campaign; when it has fraternized with the native regiment that accompanies it, and driven its officers into retirement with ten thousand clamorous questions, and the prisoners dance for joy, and the sick men stand in the open, calling down all known diseases on the head of the doctor who has certified that they are "medically unfit for active service." And even the Mavericks might have been mistaken for mutineers by one so unversed in their natures as Mulcahy. At dawn a girls' school might have learned deportment from them. They knew that their colonel's hand had closed, and that he who broke that iron discipline would not go to the front. Nothing in the world will persuade one of our soldiers when he is ordered to the north on the smallest of affairs, that he is not immediately going gloriously to slay Cossacks and cook his

kettles in the palace of the czar. A few of the younger men mourned for Mulcahy's beer, because the campaign was to be conducted on strict temperance principles, but, as Dan and Horse Egan said sternly: "We've got the beerman with us; he shall drink now on his own hook."

Mulcahy had not taken into account the possibility of being sent on active service. He had made up his mind that he would not go under any circumstances; but fortune was against him.

"Sick — you?" said the doctor, who had served an unholy apprenticeship to his trade in Tralee poor-houses. "You're only homesick, and what you call varicose veins come from overeating. A little gentle exercise will cure that." And later: "Mulcahy, my man, everybody is allowed to apply for a sick certificate *once*. If he tries it twice, we call him by an ugly name. Go back to your duty, and let's hear no more of your diseases."

I am ashamed to say that Horse Egan enjoyed the study of Mulcahy's soul in those days, and Dan took an equal interest. Together they would communicate to their corporal all the dark lore of death that is the portion of those who have seen men die. Egan had the larger experience, but Dan the finer imagination. Mulcahy shivered when the former spoke of the knife

as an intimate acquaintance, or the latter dwelt with loving particularity on the fate of those who, wounded and helpless, had been overlooked by the ambulances, and had fallen into the hands of the Afghan women-folk.

Mulcahy knew that the mutiny, for the present at least, was dead. Knew, too, that a change had come over Dan's usually respectful attitude toward him, and Horse Egan's laughter and frequent allusions to abortive conspiracies emphasized all that the conspirator had guessed. The horrible fascination of the death-stories, however, made him seek their society. He learned much more than he had bargained for; and in this manner. It was on the last night before the regiment entrained to the front. The barracks were stripped of everything movable, and the men were too excited to sleep. The bare walls gave out a heavy hospital smell of chloride of lime — a stench that depresses the soul.

"And what," said Mulcahy in an awe-stricken whisper, after some conversation on the eternal subject, "are you going to do to me, Dan?" This might have been the language of an able conspirator conciliating a weak spirit.

"You'll see," said Dan, grimly, turning over in his cot, "or I rather shud say you'll not see."

This was hardly the language of a weak spirit. Mulcahy shook under the bedclothes.

"Be easy with him," put in Egan from the next cot. "He has got his chanst o' goin' clean. Listen, Mulcahy: all we want is for the good sake of the regiment that you take your death standing up, as a man shud. There be heaps an' heaps of enemy —plenshus heaps. Go there an' do all you can and die decent. You'll die with a good name *there*. 'Tis not a hard thing considerin'."

Again Mulcahy shivered.

"And how could a man wish to die better than fightin'?" added Dan, consolingly.

"And if I won't?" said the corporal in a dry whisper.

"There'll be a dale of smoke," returned Dan, sitting up and ticking off the situation on his fingers, "sure to be, an' the noise of the firin' 'll be tremenjus, an' we'll be running about up and down, the regiment will. But we, Horse and I — we'll stay by you, Mulcahy, and never let you go. Maybe there'll be an accident."

"It's playing it low on me. Let me go. For pity's sake, let me go! I never did you harm, and — and I stood you as much beer as I could. Oh, don't be hard on me, Dan! You are — you were in it, too. You won't kill me up there, will you?"

"I'm not thinkin' of the treason; though you shud be glad any honest boys drank with you. It's for the regiment. We can't have the shame o' you bringin' shame on us. You went to the doctor quiet as a sick cat to get and stay behind an' live with the women at the depot — you that wanted us to run to the sea in wolf-packs like the rebels none of your black blood dared to be! But we knew about your goin' to the doctor, for he told it in mess, and it's all over the regiment. Bein' as we are your best friends, we didn't allow any one to molest you yet. We will see to you ourselves. Fight which you will — us or the enemy — you'll never lie in that cot again, and there's more glory and maybe less kicks from fighting the enemy. That's fair speakin'."

"And he told us by word of mouth to go and join with the niggers — you've forgotten that, Dan," said Horse Egan, to justify sentence.

"What's the use of plaguin' the man? One shot pays for all. Sleep ye sound, Mulcahy. But you onderstand, do ye not?"

Mulcahy for some weeks understood very little of anything at all save that ever at his elbow, in camp, or at parade, stood two big men with soft voices adjuring him to commit *hari kari* lest a worse thing

should happen — to die for the honor of the regiment in decency among the nearest knives. But Mulcahy dreaded death. He remembered certain things that priests had said in his infancy, and his mother — not the one at New York — starting from her sleep with shrieks to pray for a husband's soul in torment. It is well to be of a cultured intelligence, but in time of trouble the weak human mind returns to the creed it sucked in at the breast, and if that creed be not a pretty one, trouble follows. Also, the death he would have to face would be physically painful. Most conspirators have large imaginations. Mulcahy could see himself, as he lay on the earth in the night, dying by various causes. They were all horrible; the mother in New York was very far away, and the regiment, the engine that, once you fall in its grip, moves you forward whether you will or won't, was daily coming closer to the enemy!

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They were brought to the field of Marzun-Katai, and with the Black Boneens to aid, they fought a fight that has never been set down in the newspapers. In response, many believe, to the fervent prayers of Father Dennis, the enemy not only elected to fight in the open, but made a beautiful fight, as many weeping Irish mothers knew

later. They gathered behind walls or flickered across the open in shouting masses, and were pot-valiant in artillery. It was expedient to hold a large reserve and wait for the psychological moment that was being prepared by the shrieking shrapnel. Therefore the Mavericks lay down in open order on the brow of a hill to watch the play till their call should come. Father Dennis, whose place was in the rear, to smooth the trouble of the wounded, had naturally managed to make his way to the foremost of his boys, and lay, like a black porpoise, at length on the grass. To him crawled Mulcahy, ashen-gray, demanding absolution.

"Wait till you're shot," said Father Dennis, sweetly. "There's a time for everything."

Dan Grady chuckled as he blew for the fiftieth time into the breech of his speckless rifle. Mulcahy groaned and buried his head in his arms till a stray shot spoke like a snipe immediately above his head, and a general heave and tremor rippled the line. Other shots followed, and a few took effect, as a shriek or a grunt attested. The officers, who had been lying down with the men, rose and began to walk steadily up and down the front of their companies.

This maneuver, executed not for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith, to

soothe men, demands nerve. You must not hurry, you must not look nervous, though you know that you are a mark for every rifle within extreme range; and, above all, if you are smitten you must make as little noise as possible and roll inward through the files. It is at this hour, when the breeze brings the first salt whiff of the powder to noses rather cold at the tips, and the eye can quietly take in the appearance of each red casualty, that the strain on the nerves is strongest. Scotch regiments can endure for half a day, and abate no whit of their zeal at the end; English regiments sometimes sulk under punishment, while the Irish, like the French, are apt to run forward by ones and twos, which is just as bad as running back. The truly wise commandant of highly strung troops allows them in seasons of waiting to hear the sound of their own voices uplifted in song. There is a legend of an English regiment that lay by its arms under fire chanting "Sam Hall," to the horror of its newly appointed and pious colonel. The Black Boneens, who were suffering more than the Mavericks, on a hill half a mile away, began presently to explain to all who cared to listen:

"We'll sound the jubilee, from the center to the sea,
And Ireland shall be free, says the Shan-van-Voght."

"Sing, boys," said Father Dennis, softly. "It looks as if we cared for their Afghan peas."

Dan Grady raised himself to his knees and opened his mouth in a song imparted to him, as to most of his comrades, in the strictest confidence by Mulcahy — that Mulcahy then lying limp and fainting on the grass, the chill fear of death upon him.

Company after company caught up the words which, the I. A. A. say, are to herald the general rising of Erin, and to breathe which, except to those duly appointed to hear, is death. Wherefore they are printed in this place:

"The Saxon in heaven's just balance is weighed,
His doom, like Belshazzar's, in death has been cast,
And the hand of the 'venger shall never be stayed
Till his race, faith, and speech are a dream of the past."

They were heart-filling lines, and they ran with a swirl; the I. A. A. are better served by pens than their petards. Dan clapped Mulcahy merrily on the back, asking him to sing up. The officers lay down again. There was no need to walk any more. Their men were soothing themselves, thunderously, thus:

"St. Mary in heaven has written the vow
That the land shall not rest till the heretic blood,

From the babe at the breast to the hand at the plow,
Has rolled to the ocean like Shannon in flood!"

"I'll speak to you after all's over," said Father Dennis, authoritatively, in Dan's ear. "What's the use of confessing to me when you do this foolishness? Dan, you've been playing with fire! I'll lay you more penance in a week than —"

"Come along to purgatory with us, father, dear. The Boneens are on the move; they'll let us go now!"

The regiment rose to the blast of the bugle as one man; but one man there was who rose more swiftly than all the others, for half an inch of bayonet was in the fleshy part of his leg.

"You've got to do it," said Dan, grimly. "Do it decent, anyhow;" and the roar of the rush drowned his words as the rear companies thrust forward the first, still singing as they swung down the slope:

'From the child at the breast to the hand at the plow
Has rolled to the ocean like Shannon in flood!"

They should have sung it in the face of England, not of the Afghans, whom it impressed as much as did the wild Irish yell.

"They came down singing," said the unofficial report of the enemy, borne from village to village next day. "They continued to sing, and it was written that our

men could not abide when they came. It is believed that there was magic in the aforesaid song."

Dan and Horse Egan kept themselves in the neighborhood of Mulcahy. Twice the man would have bolted back in the confusion. Twice he was heaved like a half-drowned kitten into the unpaintable inferno of a hotly contested charge.

At the end, the panic excess of his fear drove him into madness beyond all human courage. His eyes staring at nothing, his mouth open and frothing, and breathing as one in a cold bath, he went forward demented, while Dan toiled after him. The charge was checked at a high mud wall. It was Mulcahy that scrambled up tooth and nail and heaved down among the bayonets the amazed Afghan who barred his way. It was Mulcahy, keeping to the straight line of the rabid dog, led a collection of ardent souls at a newly unmasked battery, and flung himself on the muzzle of a gun as his companions danced among the gunners. It was Mulcahy who ran wildly on from that battery into the open plain where the enemy were retiring in sullen groups. His hands were empty, he had lost helmet and belt, and he was bleeding from a wound in the neck. Dan and Horse Egan, panting and distressed, had thrown themselves down on the ground by

the captured guns, when they noticed Mulcahy's flight.

"Mad," said Horse Egan, critically. "Mad with fear! He's going straight to his death, an' shouting's no use."

"Let him go. Watch now! If we fire we'll hit him maybe."

The last of a hurrying crowd of Afghans turned at the noise of shod feet behind him, and shifted his knife ready to hand. This, he saw, was no time to take prisoners. Mulcahy ran on, sobbing, and the straight-held blade went home through the defenseless breast, and the body pitched forward almost before a shot from Dan's rifle brought down the slayer and still further hurried the Afghan retreat. The two Irishmen went out to bring in their dead.

"He was given the point, and that was an easy death," said Horse Egan, viewing the corpse. "But would you ha' shot him, Danny, if he had lived?"

"He didn't live, so there's no sayin'. But I doubt I wud have, bekase of the fun he gave us — let alone the beer. Hike up his legs, Horse, and we'll bring him in. Perhaps 'tis better this way."

They bore the poor limp body to the mass of the regiment, lolling open-mouthed on their rifles; and there was a general snigger when one of the younger subalterns said: "That was a good man!"

"Phew!" said Horse Egan when a burial party had taken over the burden. "I'm powerful dhry, and this reminds me, there'll be no more beer at all."

"Fwhy not?" said Dan, with a twinkle in his eye as he stretched himself for rest. "Are we not conspirin' all we can, an' while we conspire are we not entitled to free dhrinks? Sure his ould mother in New York would not let her son's comrades perish of drouth — if she can be reached at the end of a letter."

"You're a janius," said Horse Egan. "O' coorse she will not. I wish this crool war was over, an' we'd get back to canteen. Faith, the commander-in-chief ought to be hanged on his own little sword-belt for makin' us work on wather."

The Mavericks were generally of Horse Egan's opinion. So they made haste to get their work done as soon as possible, and their industry was rewarded by unexpected peace. "We can fight the sons of Adam," said the tribesmen, "but we can not fight the sons of Eblis, and this regiment never stays still in one place. Let us therefore come in." They came in, and "this regiment" withdrew to conspire under the leadership of Dan Grady.

Excellent as a subordinate, Dan failed altogether as a chief-in-command — possibly because he was too much swayed by the

advice of the only man in the regiment who could perpetrate more than one kind of handwriting. The same mail that bore to Mulcahy's mother in New York a letter from the colonel, telling her how valiantly her son had fought for the queen, and how assuredly he would have been recommended for the Victoria Cross had he survived, carried a communication signed, I grieve to say, by that same colonel and all the officers of the regiment, explaining their willingness to do "anything which is contrary to the regulations and all kinds of revolutions" if only a little money could be forwarded to cover incidental expenses. Daniel Grady, Esquire, would receive funds, *vice* Mulcahy, who "was unwell at this present time of writing."

Both letters were forwarded from New York to Tehema Street, San Francisco, with marginal comments as brief as they were bitter. The Third Three read and looked at each other. Then the Second Conspirator — he who believed in "joining hands with the practical branches"—began to laugh, and on recovering his gravity, said: "Gentlemen, I consider this will be a lesson to us. "We're left again. Those cursed Irish have let us down. I knew they would, but"— here he laughed afresh —"I'd give considerable to know what was at the back of it all."

His curiosity would have been satisfied had he seen Dan Grady, discredited regimental conspirator, trying to explain to his thirsty comrades in India the non-arrival of funds from New York.

AT THE END OF THE PASSAGE

FOUR men, theoretically entitled to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," sat at a table playing whist. The thermometer marked — for them — one hundred and one degrees of heat. The room was darkened till it was only just possible to distinguish the pips of the cards and the very white faces of the players. A tattered, rotten punkah of whitewashed calico was puddling the hot air and whining dolefully at each stroke. Outside lay gloom of a November day in London. There was neither sky, sun, nor horizon — nothing but a brown-purple haze of heat. It was as though the earth were dying of apoplexy.

From time to time clouds of tawny dust rose from the ground without wind or warning, flung themselves table-clothwise among the tops of the parched trees, and came down again. Then a whirling dust-devil would scutter across the plain for a couple of miles, break and fall outward,

though there was nothing to check its flight save a long low line of piled railway-sleepers white with the dust, a cluster of huts made of mud, condemned rails and canvas, and the one squat four-roomed bungalow that belonged to the assistant engineer in charge of a section of the Gandhari State line then under construction.

The four men, stripped to the thinnest of sleeping-suits, played whist crossly, with wranglings as to leads and returns. It was not the best kind of whist, but they had taken some trouble to arrive at it. Mottram, of the India Survey, had ridden thirty and railed one hundred miles from his lonely post in the desert since the previous night; Lowndes, of the Civil Service, on special duty in the political department, had come as far to escape for an instant the miserable intrigues of an impoverished native state whose king alternately fawned and blustered for more money from the pitiful revenues contributed by hard-wrung peasants and despairing camel-breeders; Spurstow, the doctor of the line, had left a cholera-stricken camp of coolies to look after itself for forty-eight hours while he associated with white men once more. Hummil, the assistant engineer, was the host. He stood fast, and received his friends thus every Sunday if they could come in. When one of them failed to ap-

pear, he would send a telegram to his last address, in order that he might know whether the defaulter was dead or alive. There be very many places in the East where it is not good or kind to let your acquaintances drop out of sight even for one short week.

The players were not conscious of any special regard for each other. They squabbled whenever they met; but they ardently desired to meet, as men without water desire to drink. They were lonely folk who understood the dread meaning of loneliness. They were all under thirty years of age — which is too soon for any man to possess that knowledge.

"Pilsener," said Spurstow, after the second rubber, mopping his forehead.

"Beer's out, I'm sorry to say, and there's hardly enough soda-water for to-night," said Hummil.

"What filthy bad management!" snarled Spurstow.

"Can't help it. I've written and wired; but the trains don't come through regularly yet. Last week the ice ran out — as Lowndes knows."

"Glad I didn't come. I could ha' sent you some if I had known, though. Phew! it's too hot to go on playing bumblepuppy."

This was a savage growl at Lowndes,

who only laughed. He was a hardened offender.

Mottram rose from the table and looked out of a chink in the shutters.

"What a sweet day!" said he.

The company yawned unanimously and betook themselves to an aimless investigation of all Hummil's possessions — guns, tattered novels, saddlery, spurs, and the like. They had fingered them a score of times before, but there was really nothing else to do.

"Got anything fresh?" said Lowndes.

"Last week's 'Gazette of India,' and a cutting from a home paper. My father sent it out. It's rather amusing."

"One of those vestrymen that call 'emselves M. P.'s again, is it?" said Spurstow, who read his newspapers when he could get them.

"Yes. Listen to this. It's to your address, Lowndes. The man was making a speech to his constituents, and he piled it on. Here's a sample: 'And I assert unhesitatingly that the Civil Service in India is the preserve — the pet preserve — of the aristocracy of England. What does the democracy — what do the masses — get from that country, which we have step by step fraudulently annexed? I answer, nothing whatever. It is farmed, with a single eye to their own interests, by the scions of

the aristocracy. They take good care to maintain their lavish scale of incomes, to avoid or stifle any inquiries into the nature and conduct of their administration, while they themselves force the unhappy peasant to pay with the sweat of his brow for all the luxuries in which they are lapped.'" Hummil waved the cutting above his head. "'Ear! 'ear!" said his audience.

Then Lowndes, meditatively: "I'd give — I'd give three months' pay to have that gentleman spend one month with me and see how the free and independent native prince works things. Old Timbersides" — this was his flippant title for an honored and decorated prince —" has been wearing my life out this week past for money. By Jove! his latest performance was to send me one of his women as a bribe!"

"Good for you. Did you accept it?" said Mottram.

"No. I rather wish I had, now. She was a pretty little person, and she yarned away to me about the horrible destitution among the king's women-folk. The darlings haven't had any new clothes for nearly a month, and the old man wants to buy a new drag from Calcutta — solid silver railings and silver lamps, and trifles of that kind. I've tried to make him understand that he has played the deuce with the reve-

nues for the last twenty years, and must go slow. He can't see it."

"But he has the ancestral treasure-vault to draw on. There must be three millions at least in jewels and coin under his palace," said Hummil.

"Catch a native king disturbing the family treasure! The priests forbid it, except as the last resort. Old Timbersides has added something like a quarter of a million to the deposit in his reign."

"Where the mischief does it all come from?" said Mottram.

"The country. The state of the people is enough to make you sick. I've known the tax-men wait by a milch-camel till the foal was born, and then hurry off the mother for arrears. And what can I do? I can't get the court clerks to give me any accounts; I can't raise anything more than a fat smile from the commander-in-chief when I find out the troops are three months in arrears; and old Timbersides begins to weep when I speak to him. He has taken to the king's peg heavily — liqueur brandy for whiskey and Heidsieck for soda-water."

"That's what the Rao of Jubela took to. Even a native can't last long at that," said Spurstow. "He'll go out."

"And a good thing, too. Then I suppose we'll have a council of regency, and a tutor for the young prince, and hand him

back his kingdom with ten years' accumulations."

"Whereupon that young prince, having been taught all the vices of the English, will play ducks and drakes with the money, and undo ten years' work in eighteen months. I've seen that business before," said Spurstow. "I should tackle the king with a light hand, if I were you, Lowndes. They'll hate you quite enough under any circumstances."

"That's all very well. The man who looks on can talk about the light hand; but you can't clean a pig-sty with a pen dipped in rosewater. I know my risks; but nothing has happened yet. My servant's an old Pathan, and he cooks for me. They are hardly likely to bribe him, and I don't accept food from my true friends, as they call themselves. Oh, but it's weary work! I'd sooner be with you, Spurstow. There's shooting near your camp."

"Would you? I don't think it. About fifteen deaths a day don't incite a man to shoot anything but himself. And the worst of it is that the poor devils look at you as though you ought to save them. Lord knows, I've tried everything. My last attempt was empirical, but it pulled an old man through. He was brought to me apparently past hope, and I gave him

gin and Worcester sauce with cayenne. It cured him; but I don't recommend it."

"How do the cases run generally?" said Hummil.

"Very simply indeed. Chlorodyne, opium pill, chlorodyne, collapse, nitre, bricks to the feet, and then — the burning-ghat. The last seems to be the only thing that stops the trouble. It's black cholera, you know. Poor devils! But, I will say, little Bunsee Lal, my apothecary, works like a demon. I've recommended him for promotion if he comes through it all alive."

"And what are your chances, old man?" said Mottram.

"Don't know; don't care much; but I've sent the letter in. What are you doing with yourself generally?"

"Sitting under a table in the tent and spitting on the sextant to keep it cool," said the man of the survey. "Washing my eyes to avoid ophthalmia, which I shall certainly get, and trying to make a sub-surveyor understand that an error of five degrees in an angle isn't quite so small as it looks. I'm altogether alone, y' know, and shall be till the end of the hot weather."

"Hummil's the lucky man," said Lowndes, flinging himself into a long chair. "He has an actual roof — torn as to the ceiling-cloth, but still a roof — over his head. He sees one train daily. He can

get beer and soda-water, and ice it when God is good. He has books, pictures"—they were torn from the "Graphic"—"and the society of the excellent sub-contractor Jevins, besides the pleasure of receiving us weekly."

Hummil smiled grimly. "Yes, I'm the lucky man, I suppose. Jevins is luckier."

"How? Not—"

"Yes. Went out. Last Monday."

"*Ap se?*" said Spurstow, quickly, hinting the suspicion that was in everybody's mind. There was no cholera near Hummil's section. Even fever gives a man at least a week's grace, and sudden death generally implied self-slaughter.

"I judge no man this weather," said Hummil. "He had a touch of the sun, I fancy; for last week, after you fellows had left, he came into the veranda, and told me that he was going home to see his wife, in Market Street, Liverpool, that evening. I got the apothecary in to look at him, and we tried to make him lie down. After an hour or two he rubbed his eyes and said he believed he had had a fit—hoped he hadn't said anything rude. Jevins had a great idea of bettering himself socially. He was very like Chucks in his language."

"Well?"

"Then he went to his own bungalow and began cleaning a rifle. He told the ser-

vant that he was going after buck in the morning. Naturally he fumbled with the trigger, and shot himself through the head accidentally. The apothecary sent in a report to my chief, and Jevins is buried somewhere out there. I'd have wired to you, Spurstow, if you could have done anything."

"You're a queer chap," said Mottram. "If you killed the man yourself you couldn't have been more quiet about the business."

"Good Lord! what does it matter?" said Hummil, calmly. "I've got to do a lot of his overseeing work in addition to my own. I'm the only person that suffers. Jevins is out of it — by pure accident, of course, but out of it. The apothecary was going to write a long screed on suicide. Trust a babu to drivel when he gets the chance."

"Why didn't you let it go in as suicide?" said Lowndes.

"No direct proof. A man hasn't many privileges in this country, but he might at least be allowed to mishandle his own rifle. Besides, some day I may need a man to smother up an accident to myself. Live and let live. Die and let die."

"You take a pill," said Spurstow, who had been watching Hummil's white face narrowly. "Take a pill, and don't be an ass. That sort of talk is skittles. Anyhow,

suicide is shirking your work. If I was a Job ten times over, I should be so interested in what was going to happen next that I'd stay on and watch."

"Ah! I've lost that curiosity," said Hummil.

"Liver out of order?" said Lowndes, feelingly.

"No. Can't sleep. That's worse."

"By Jove, it is!" said Mottram. "I'm that way every now and then, and the fit has to wear itself out. What do you take for it?"

"Nothing. What's the use? I haven't had ten minutes' sleep since Friday morning."

"Poor chap! Spurstow, you ought to attend to this," said Mottram. "Now you mention it, your eyes are rather gummy and swollen."

Spurstow, still watching Hummil, laughed lightly. "I'll patch him up later on. Is it too hot, do you think, to go for a ride?"

"Where to?" said Lowndes, wearily. "We shall have to go away at eight, and there'll be riding enough for us then. I hate a horse, when I have to use him as a necessity. Oh, heavens! what is there to do?"

"Begin whist again, at chick points" (a "chick" is supposed to be eight shillings),

"and a gold mohur on the rub," said Spurstow, promptly.

"Poker. A month's pay all round for the pool — no limit — and fifty-rupee raises. Somebody would be broken before we got up," said Lowndes.

"Can't say that it would give me any pleasure to break any man in this company," said Mottram. "There isn't enough excitement in it, and it's foolish." He crossed over to the worn and battered little camp-piano—wreckage of a married household that had once held the bungalow — and opened the case.

"It's used up long ago," said Hummil. "The servants have picked it to pieces."

The piano was indeed hopelessly out of order, but Mottram managed to bring the rebellious notes into a sort of agreement, and there rose from the ragged key-board something that might once have been the ghost of a popular music-hall song. The men in the long chairs turned with evident interest as Mottram banged the more lustily.

"That's good!" said Lowndes. "By Jove! the last time I heard that song was in '79, or thereabouts, just before I came out."

"Ah!" said Spurstow, with pride, "I was home in '80." And he mentioned a song of the streets popular at that date.

Mottram executed it indifferently well. Lowndes criticised, and volunteered emendations. Mottram dashed into another ditty, not of the music-hall character, and made as if to rise.

"Sit down," said Hummil. "I didn't know that you had any music in your composition. Go on playing until you can't think of anything more. I'll have that piano tuned up before you come again. Play something festive."

Very simple indeed were the tunes to which Mottram's art and the limitations of the piano could give effect, but the men listened with pleasure, and in the pauses talked all together of what they had seen or heard when they were last at home. A dense dust-storm sprung up outside and swept roaring over the house, enveloping it in the choking darkness of midnight, but Mottram continued unheeding, and the crazy tinkle reached the ears of the listeners above the flapping of the tattered ceiling-cloth.

In the silence after the storm he glided from the more directly personal songs of Scotland, half humming them as he played, into the "Evening Hymn."

"Sunday," said he nodding his head.

"Go on. Don't apologize for it," said Spurstow.

Hummil laughed long and riotously.

"Play it, by all means. You're full of surprises to-day. I didn't know you had such a gift of finished sarcasm. How does that thing go?"

Mottram took up the tune.

"Too slow by half. You miss the note of gratitude," said Hummil. "It ought to go to the 'Grasshopper Polka'—this way." And he chanted, *prestissimo:*

"Glory to Thee, my God, this night,
For all the blessings of the light.'

That shows we really feel our blessings. How does it go on?—

"'If in the night I sleepless lie,
My soul with sacred thoughts supply;
May no ill dreams disturb my rest,'—

Quicker, Mottram!—

'Or powers of darkness me molest!'"

"Bah! what an old hypocrite you are."

"Don't be an ass," said Lowndes. "You are at full liberty to make fun of anything else you like, but leave that hymn alone. It's associated in my mind with the most sacred recollections ——"

"Summer evenings in the country—stained-glass window—light going out, and you and she jamming your heads together over one hymn-book," said Mottram.

"Yes, and a fat old cockchafer hitting you in the eye when you walked home. Smell of hay, and a moon as big as a band-

box sitting on the top of a haycock; bats — roses — milk and midges," said Lowndes.

"Also mothers. I can just recollect my mother singing me to sleep with that when I was a little chap," said Spurstow.

The darkness had fallen on the room. They could hear Hummil squirming in his chair.

"Consequently," said he, testily, "you sing it when you are seven fathoms deep in hell! It's an insult to the intelligence of the Deity to pretend we're anything but tortured rebels."

"Take *two* pills," said Spurstow: "that's tortured liver."

"The usually placid Hummil is in a vile bad temper. I'm sorry for the coolies to-morrow," said Lowndes, as the servants brought in the lights and prepared the table for dinner.

As they were settling into their places about the miserable goat-chops, the curried eggs, and the smoked tapioca pudding, Spurstow took occasion to whisper to Mottram: "Well done, David!"

"Look after Saul, then," was the reply.

"What are you two whispering about?" said Hummil, suspiciously.

"Only saying that you are a d——d poor host. This fowl can't be cut," returned Spurstow, with a sweet smile. "Call this a dinner?"

"I can't help it. You don't expect a banquet, do you?"

Throughout that meal Hummil contrived laboriously to insult directly and pointedly all his guests in succession, and at each insult Spurstow kicked the aggrieved person under the table, but he dared not exchange a glance of intelligence with either of them. Hummil's face was white and pinched, while his eyes were unnaturally large. No man dreamed for a moment of resenting his savage personalities, but as soon as the meal was over they made haste to get away.

"Don't go. You're just getting amusing, you fellows. I hope I haven't said anything that annoyed you. You're such touchy devils." Then, changing the note into one of almost abject entreaty: "I say, you surely aren't going?"

"Where I dines, I sleeps, in the language of the blessed Jorrocks," said Spurstow. "I want to have a look at your coolies tomorrow, if you don't mind. You can give me a place to lie down in, I suppose?"

The others pleaded the urgency of their several employs next day, and, saddling up, departed together, Hummil begging them to come next Sunday. As they jogged off together, Lowndes unbosomed himself to Mottram: ". . . And I never felt so like kicking a man at his own table in my

life. Said I cheated at whist, and reminded me I was in debt! Told you you were as good as a liar to your face! You aren't half indignant enough over it."

"Not I," said Mottram. "Poor devil! Did you ever know old Hummy behave like that before? Did you ever know him go within a hundred miles of it?"

"That's no excuse. Spurstow was hacking my shin all the time, so I kept a hand on myself. Else I should have ——"

"No, you wouldn't. You'd have done as Hummy did about Jevins: judge no man this weather. By Jove! the buckle of my bridle is hot in my hand! Trot out a bit, and mind the rat-holes."

Ten minutes' trotting jerked out of Lowndes one very sage remark when he pulled up, sweating from every pore:

"Good thing Spurstow's with him to-night."

"Ye-es. Good man, Spurstow. Our roads turn here. See you again next Sunday, if the sun doesn't bowl me over."

"S'pose so, unless old Timbersides' finance minister manages to dress some of my food. Good-night, and — God bless you!"

"What's wrong now?"

"Oh, nothing." Lowndes gathered up his whip, and, as he flicked Mottram's mare on the flank, added: "You're a good little

chap — that's all." And the mare bolted half a mile across the sand on the word.

In the assistant engineer's bungalow Spurstow and Hummil smoked the pipe of silence together, each narrowly watching the other. The capacity of a bachelor's establishment is as elastic as its arrangements are simple. A servant cleared away the dining-room table, brought in a couple of rude native bedsteads made of tape strung on a light wood frame, flung a square of cool Calcutta matting over each, set them side by side, pinned two towels to the punkah so that their fringes should just sweep clear of each sleeper's nose and mouth, and announced that the couches were ready.

The men flung themselves down, adjuring the punkah-coolies by all the powers of Eblis to pull. Every door and window was shut, for the outside air was that of an oven. The atmosphere within was only 104°, as the thermometer attested, and heavy with the foul smell of badly trimmed kerosene lamps; and this stench, combined with that of native tobacco, baked brick, and dried earth, sends the heart of many a strong man down to his boots, for it is the smell of the great Indian Empire when she turns herself for six months into a house of torment. Spurstow packed his pillows craftily, so that he reclined rather than lay, his head at a safe elevation above

his feet. It is not good to sleep on a low pillow in the hot weather if you happen to be of thick-necked build, for you may pass with lively snores and gurglings from natural sleep into the deep slumber of heat-apoplexy.

"Pack your pillows," said the doctor, sharply, as he saw Hummil preparing to lie down at full length.

The night-light was trimmed; the shadow of the punkah wavered across the room, and the *flick* of the punkah-towel and the soft whine of the rope through the wall-hole followed it. Then the punkah flagged, almost ceased. The sweat poured from Spurstow's brow. Should he go out and harangue the coolie? It started forward again with a savage jerk, and a pin came out of the towels. When this was replaced, a tom-tom in the coolie lines began to beat with the steady throb of a swollen artery inside some brain-fevered skull. Spurstow turned on his side and swore gently. There was no movement on Hummil's part. The man had composed himself as rigidly as a corpse, his hands clinched at his sides. The respiration was too hurried for any suspicion of sleep. Spurstow looked at the set face. The jaws were clinched, and there was a pucker round the quivering eyelids.

"He's holding himself as tightly as ever

he can," thought Spurstow. "What a sham it is! and what in the world is the matter with him? — Hummil!"

"Yes."

"Can't you get to sleep?"

"No."

"Head hot? Throat feeling bulgy? or how?"

"Neither, thanks. I don't sleep much, you know."

"Feel pretty bad?"

"Pretty bad, thanks. There is a tom-tom outside, isn't there? I thought it was my head at first. Oh, Spurstow, for pity's sake, give me something that will put me asleep — sound sleep — if it's only for six hours!" He sprung up. "I haven't been able to sleep naturally for days, and I can't stand it! — I can't stand it!"

"Poor old chap!"

"That's no use. Give me something to make me sleep. I tell you I'm nearly mad. I don't know what I say half my time. For three weeks I've had to think and spell out every word that has come through my lips before I dared say it. I had to get my sentences out down to the last word, for fear of talking drivel if I didn't. Isn't that enough to drive a man mad? I can't see things correctly now, and I've lost my sense of touch. Make me sleep. Oh, Spurstow, for the love of God, make me

sleep sound. It isn't enough merely to let me dream. Let me sleep!"

"All right, old man, all right. Go slow. You aren't half as bad as you think." The flood-gates of reserve once broken, Hummil was clinging to him like a frightened child.

"You're pinching my arm to pieces."

"I'll break your neck if you don't do something for me. No, I didn't mean that. Don't be angry, old fellow." He wiped the sweat off himself as he fought to regain composure. "As a matter of fact, I'm a bit restless and off my oats, and perhaps you could recommend some sort of sleeping-mixture — bromide of potassium."

"Bromide of skittles! Why didn't you tell me this before? Let go of my arm, and I'll see if there's anything in my cigarette-case to suit your complaint." He hunted among his day-clothes, turned up the lamp, opened a little silver cigarette-case, and advanced on the expectant Hummil with the daintiest of fairy squirts.

"The last appeal of civilization," said he, "and a thing I hate to use. Hold out your arm. Well, your sleeplessness hasn't ruined your muscle; and what a thick hide it is! Might as well inject a buffalo subcutaneously. Now in a few minutes the morphia will begin working. Lie down and wait."

A smile of unalloyed and idiotic delight began to creep over Hummil's face. "I think," he whispered—"I think I'm going off now. Gad! it's positively heavenly! Spurstow, you must give me that case to keep; you—" The voice ceased as the head fell back.

"Not for a good deal," said Spurstow to the unconscious form. "And now, my friend, sleeplessness of your kind being very apt to relax the moral fiber in little matters of life and death, I'll just take the liberty of spiking your guns."

He paddled into Hummil's saddle-room in his bare feet, and uncased a twelve-bore, an express, and a revolver. Of the first he unscrewed the nipples and hid them in the bottom of a saddlery-case; of the second he abstracted the lever, placing it behind a big wardrobe. The third he merely opened, and knocked the doll-head bolt of the grip up with the heel of a riding-boot.

"That's settled," he said, as he shook the sweat off his hands. "These little precautions will at least give you time to turn. You have too much sympathy with gun-room accidents."

And as he rose from his knees, the thick muffled voice of Hummil cried in the doorway: "You fool!"

Such tones they use who speak in the

lucid intervals of delirium to their friends a little before they die.

Spurstow jumped with sheer fright. Hummil stood in the doorway, rocking with helpless laughter.

"That was awf'ly good of you, I'm sure," he said, very slowly, feeling for his words. "I don't intend to go out by my own hand at present. I say, Spurstow, that stuff won't work. What shall I do? What shall I do?" And panic terror stood in his eyes.

"Lie down and give it a chance. Lie down at once."

"I daren't. It will only take me halfway again, and I sha'n't be able to get away this time. Do you know it was all I could do to come out just now? Generally I am as quick as lightning; but you have clogged my feet. I was nearly caught."

"Oh, yes, I understand. Go and lie down."

"No, it isn't delirium; but it was an awfully mean trick to play on me. Do you know I might have died?"

As a sponge rubs a slate clean, so some power unknown to Spurstow had wiped out of Hummil's face all that stamped it for the face of a man, and he stood at the doorway in the expression of his lost innocence. He had slept back into terrified childhood.

"Is he going to die on the spot?"

thought Spurstow. Then, aloud: "All right, my son. Come back to bed, and tell me all about it. You couldn't sleep; but what was all the rest of the nonsense?"

"A place — a place down there," said Hummil, with simple sincerity. The drug was acting on him by waves, and he was flung from the fear of a strong man to the fright of a child as his nerves gathered sense or were dulled.

"Good God! I've been afraid of it for months past, Spurstow. It has made every night hell to me; and yet I'm not conscious of having done anything wrong."

"Be still, and I'll give you another dose. We'll stop your nightmares, you unutterable idiot!"

"Yes, but you must give me so much that I can't get away. You must make me quite sleepy — not just a little sleepy. It's so hard to run then."

"I know it; I know it. I've felt it myself. The symptoms are exactly as you describe."

"Oh don't laugh at me, confound you! Before this awful sleeplessness came to me, I've tried to rest on my elbow and put a spur in the bed to sting me when I fell back. Look!"

"By Jove! the man has been roweled like a horse! Ridden by the nightmare with a vengeance! And we all thought

him sensible enough. Heaven send us understanding! You like to talk, don't you old man?"

"Yes, sometimes. Not when I'm frightened. *Then* I want to run. Don't you?"

"Always. Before I give you your second dose, try to tell me exactly what your trouble is."

Hummil spoke in broken whispers for nearly ten minutes, while Spurstow looked into the pupils of his eyes and passed his hand before them once or twice.

At the end of the narrative the silver cigarette-case was produced, and the last words that Hummil said as he fell back for the second time were: "Put me quite to sleep; for if I'm caught, I die — I die!"

"Yes, yes; we all do that sooner or later, thank Heaven! who has set a term to our miseries," said Spurstow, settling the cushions under the head. "It occurs to me that unless I drink something, I shall go out before my time. I've stopped sweating, and I wear a seventeen-inch collar." And he brewed himself scalding hot tea, which is an excellent remedy against heat-apoplexy if you take three or four cups of it in time. Then he watched the sleeper.

"A blind face that cries and can't wipe its eyes. H'm! Decidedly, Hummil ought to go on leave as soon as possible; and, sane or otherwise, he undoubtedly did

rowel himself most cruelly. Well, Heaven send us understanding!"

At midday Hummil rose, with an evil taste in his mouth, but an unclouded eye and a joyful heart.

"I was pretty bad last night, wasn't I?" said he.

"I have seen healthier men. You must have had a touch of the sun. Look here: if I write you a swingeing medical certificate, will you apply for leave on the spot?"

"No."

"Why not? You want it."

"Yes, but I can hold on till the weather's a little cooler."

"Why should you, if you can get relieved on the spot?"

"Burkett is the only man who could be sent; and he's a born fool."

"Oh, never mind about the line. You aren't so important as all that. Wire for leave, if necessary."

Hummil looked very uncomfortable.

"I can hold on till the rains," he said, evasively.

"You can't. Wire to head-quarters for Burkett."

"I won't. If you want to know why, particularly, Burkett is married, and his wife's just had a kid, and she's up at Simla, in the cool, and Burkett has a very nice billet that takes him into Simla from Sat-

urday to Monday. That little woman isn't at all well. If Burkett was transferred she'd try to follow him. If she left the baby behind she'd fret herself to death. If she came — and Burkett's one of those selfish little beasts who are always talking about a wife's place being with her husband — she'd die. It's murder to bring a woman here just now. Burkett has got the physique of a rat. If he came here he'd go out; and I know she hasn't any money, and I am pretty sure she'd go out too. I'm salted in a sort of way, and I'm not married. Wait till the rains, and then Burkett can get thin down here. It'll do him heaps of good."

"Do you mean to say that you intend to face — what you have faced, for the next fifty-six nights?"

"Oh, it won't be so bad, now you've shown me a way out of it. I can always wire to you. Besides, now I've once got into the way of sleeping, it'll be all right. Anyhow, I shan't put in for leave. That's the long and the short of it."

"My great Scott! I thought all that sort of thing was dead and done with."

"Bosh! You'd do the same yourself. I feel a new man, thanks to that cigarette-case. You're going over to camp now, aren't you?"

"Yes; but I'll try to look you up every other day, if I can."

"I'm not bad enough for that. I don't want you to bother. Give the coolies gin and ketchup."

"Then you feel all right?"

"Fit to fight for my life, but not to stand out in the sun talking to you. Go along, old man, and bless you!"

Hummil turned on his heel to face the echoing desolation of his bungalow, and the first thing he saw standing in the veranda was the figure of himself. He had met a similar apparition once before, when he was suffering from overwork and the strain of the hot weather.

"This is bad — already," he said, rubbing his eyes. "If the thing slides away from me all in one piece, like a ghost, I shall know it is only my eyes and stomach that are out of order. If it walks, I shall know that my head is going."

He walked to the figure, which naturally kept at an unvarying distance from him, as is the use of all specters that are born of overwork. It slid through the house and dissolved into swimming specks within the eyeball as soon as it reached the burning light of the garden. Hummil went about his business till even. When he came into dinner he found himself sitting at the

table. The thing rose and walked out hastily.

No living man knows what that week held for Hummil. An increase of the epidemic kept Spurstow in camp among the coolies, and all he could do was to telegraph to Mottram, bidding him go to the bungalow and sleep there. But Mottram was forty miles away from the nearest telegraph, and knew nothing of anything save the needs of the survey till he met early on Sunday morning Lowndes and Spurstow heading toward Hummil's for the weekly gathering.

"Hope the poor chap's in a better temper," said the former, swinging himself off his horse at the door. "I suppose he isn't up yet."

"I'll just have a look at him," said the doctor. "If he's asleep there's no need to wake him."

And an instant later, by the tone of Spurstow's voice calling upon them to enter, the men knew what had happened.

The punkah was still being pulled over the bed, but Hummil had departed this life at least three hours before.

The body lay on its back, hands clinched by the side, as Spurstow had seen it lying seven nights previously. In the staring eyes was written terror beyond the expression of any pen.

Mottram, who had entered behind Lowndes, bent over the dead and touched the forehead lightly with his lips. "Oh, you lucky, lucky devil!" he whispered.

But Lowndes had seen the eyes, and had withdrawn shuddering to the other side of the room.

"Poor chap! poor chap! And the last time I met him I was angry. Spurstow, we should have watched him. Has he —"

Deftly Spurstow continued his investigation, ending by a search round the room.

"No, he hasn't," he snapped. "There's no trace of anything. Call in the servants."

They came, eight or ten of them, whispering and peering over each other's shoulders.

"When did your sahib go to bed?" said Spurstow.

"At eleven or ten, we think," said Hummil's personal servant.

"He was well then? But how should you know?"

"He was not ill, as far as our comprehension extended. But he had slept very little for three nights. This I know, because I saw him walking much, and especially in the heart of the night."

As Spurstow was arranging the sheet, a big, straight-necked hunting-spur tumbled on the ground. The doctor groaned. The personal servant peeped at the body.

"What do you think, Chuma?" said Spurstow, catching the look in the dark face.

"Heaven-born, in my poor opinion, this that was my master has descended into the Dark Places, and there has been caught, because he was not able to escape with sufficient speed. We have the spur for evidence that he fought with Fear. Thus have I seen men of my race do with thorns when a spell was laid upon them to overtake them in their sleeping hours and they dared not sleep."

"Chuma, you're a mud-head. Go out and prepare seals to be set on the sahib's property."

"God has made the heaven-born. God has made me. Who are we, to inquire into the dispensations of God? I will bid the other servants hold aloof while you are reckoning the tale of the sahib's property. They are all thieves, and would steal."

"As far as I can make out, he died from — oh, anything: stopping of the heart's action, heat-apoplexy, or some other visitation," said Spurstow to his companions. "We must make an inventory of his effects, and so on."

"He was scared to death," insisted Lowndes. "Look at those eyes! For pity's sake, don't let him be buried with them open!"

"Whatever it was, he's out of all the trouble now," said Mottram, softly.

Spurstow was peering into the open eyes.

"Come here," said he. "Can you see anything there?"

"I can't face it!" whimpered Lowndes. "Cover up the face! Is there any fear on earth that can turn a man into that likeness? It's ghastly. Oh, Spurstow, cover him up!"

"No fear — on earth," said Spurstow. Mottram leaned over his shoulder and looked intently.

"I see nothing except some gray blurs in the pupil. There can be nothing there, you know."

"Even so. Well, let's think. It'll take half a day to knock up any sort of coffin; and he must have died at midnight. Lowndes, old man, go out and tell the coolies to break ground next to Jevins' grave. Mottram, go round the house with Chuma and see that the seals are put on things. Send a couple of men to me here, and I'll arrange."

The strong-armed servants when they returned to their own kind told a strange story of the doctor sahib vainly trying to call their master back to life by magic arts — to wit, the holding of a little green box opposite each of the dead man's eyes, of a frequent clicking of the same, and of a be-

wildered muttering on the part of the doctor sahib, who subsequently took the little green box away with him.

The resonant hammering of a coffin-lid is no pleasant thing to hear, but those who have experience maintain that much more terrible is the soft swish of the bed-linen, the reeving and unreeving of the bed-tapes, when he who has fallen by the road-side is appareled for burial, sinking gradually as the tapes are tied over, till the swaddled shape touches the floor and there is no protest against the indignity of hasty disposal.

At the last moment Lowndes was seized with scruples of conscience. "Ought you to read the service — from beginning to end?" said he.

"I intend to. You're my senior as a civilian. You can take it, if you like."

"I didn't mean that for a moment. I only thought if we could get a chaplain from somewhere — I'm willing to ride anywhere — and give poor Hummil a better chance. That's all."

"Bosh!" said Spurstow, as he framed his lips to the tremendous words that stand at the head of the burial service.

After breakfast they smoked a pipe in silence to the memory of the dead. Then said Spurstow, absently:

"'Tisn't in medical science."

"What?"

"Things in a dead man's eyes."

"For goodness' sake, leave that horror alone!" said Lowndes. "I've seen a native die of fright when a tiger chivied him. I know what killed Hummil."

"The deuce you do! I'm going to try to see." And the doctor retreated into the bathroom with a Kodak camera, splashing and grunting for ten minutes. Then there was the sound of something being hammered to pieces, and Spurstow emerged, very white indeed.

"Have you got a picture?" said Mottram. "What does the thing look like?"

"Nothing there. It was impossible, of course. You needn't look, Mottram. I've torn up the films. There was nothing there. It was impossible."

"That," said Lowndes, very distinctly, watching the shaking hand striving to relight the pipe, "is a damned lie."

There was no further speech for a long time. The hot wind whistled without, and the dry trees sobbed. Presently the daily train, winking brass, burnished steel, and spouting steam, pulled up, panting in the intense glare. "We'd better go on on that," said Spurstow. "Go back to work. I've written my certificate. We can't do any more good here. Come on."

No one moved. It is not pleasant to face

railway journeys at midday in June. Spurstow gathered up his hat and whip, and, turning in the doorway, said:

"There may be heaven — there must be hell.
Meantime, there is our life here. We-ell?"

But neither Mottram nor Lowndes had any answer to the question.

THE INCARNATION OF KRISHNA MULVANEY

ONCE upon a time, and very far from this land, lived three men who loved each other so greatly that neither man nor woman could come between them. They were in no sense refined, nor to be admitted to the outer door-mats of decent folk, because they happened to be private soldiers in her majesty's army; and private soldiers of that employ have small time for self-culture. Their duty is to keep themselves and their accouterments specklessly clean, to refrain from getting drunk more often than is necessary, to obey their superiors, and to pray for a war. All these things my friends accomplished, and of their own motion threw in some fighting-work for which the Army Regulations did not call. Their fate sent them to serve in India, which is not a golden country, though poets have sung otherwise. There

men die with great swiftness, and those who live suffer many and curious things. I do not think that my friends concerned themselves much with the social or political aspects of the East. They attended a not unimportant war on the northern frontier, another one on our western boundary, and a third in Upper Burmah. Then their regiment sat still to recruit, and the boundless monotony of cantonment life was their portion. They were drilled morning and evening on the same dusty parade-ground. They wandered up and down the same stretch of dusty white road, attended the same church and the same grog-shop, and slept in the same lime-washed barn of a barrack for two long years. There was Mulvaney, the father in the craft, who had served with various regiments, from Bermuda to Halifax, old in war, scarred, reckless, resourceful, and in his pious hours an unequaled soldier. To him turned for help and comfort six and a half feet of slow-moving, heavy-footed Yorkshireman, born on the wolds, bred in the dales, and educated chiefly among the carriers' carts at the back of York railway-station. His name was Learoyd, and his chief virtue an unmitigated patience which helped him to win fights. How Ortheris, a fox-terrier of a Cockney, ever came to be one of the trio, is a mystery which even to-day I can not

explain. "There was always three av us," Mulvaney used to say. "An' by the grace av God, so long as our service lasts, three av us they'll always be. 'Tis betther so."

They desired no companionship beyond their own, and evil it was for any man of the regiment who attempted dispute with them. Physical argument was out of the question as regarded Mulvaney and the Yorkshireman; and assault on Ortheris meant a combined attack from these twain — a business which no five men were anxious to have on their hands. Therefore they flourished, sharing their drinks, their tobacco, and their money, good luck and evil, battle and the chances of death, life and the chances of happiness from Calicut in southern, to Peshawur in northern India. Through no merit of my own it was my good fortune to be in a measure admitted to their friendship — frankly by Mulvaney from the beginning, sullenly and with reluctance by Learoyd, and suspiciously by Ortheris, who held to it that no man not in the army could fraternize with a redcoat. "Like to like," said he. "I'm a bloomin' sodger — he's a bloomin' civilian. 'Taint natural — that's all."

But that was not all. They thawed progressively, and in the thawing told me more of their lives and adventures than I am likely to find room for here.

Omitting all else, this tale begins with the lamentable thirst that was at the beginning of First Causes. Never was such a thirst — Mulvaney told me so. They kicked against their compulsory virtue, but the attempt was only successful in the case of Ortheris. He, whose talents were many, went forth into the highways and stole a dog from a "civilian"— *videlicet*, some one, he knew not who, not in the army. Now that civilian was but newly connected by marriage with the colonel of the regiment, and outcry was made from quarters least anticipated by Ortheris, and, in the end, he was forced, lest a worse thing should happen, to dispose at ridiculously unremunerative rates of as promising a small terrier as ever graced one end of a leading-string. The purchase-money was barely sufficient for one small outbreak which led him to the guard-room. He escaped, however, with nothing worse than a severe reprimand, and a few hours of punishment drill. Not for nothing had he acquired the reputation of being "the best soldier of his inches" in the regiment. Mulvaney had taught personal cleanliness and efficiency as the first articles of his companions' creed. "A dhirty man," he was used to say, in the speech of his kind, "goes to clink for a weakness in the knees, an' is coort-martialed for a pair av socks

missin'; but a clane man, such as is an ornament to his service — a man whose buttons are gold, whose coat is wax upon him, an' whose 'couterments are widout a speck — *that* man may, spakin' in reason, do fwhat he likes, an' dhrink from day to divil. That's the pride av bein' dacint."

We sat together, upon a day, in the shade of a ravine far from the barracks, where a water-course used to run in rainy weather. Behind us was the scrub jungle, in which jackals, peacocks, the gray wolves of the Northwestern Provinces, and occasionally a tiger estrayed from Central India, were supposed to dwell. In front lay the cantonment, glaring white under a glaring sun, and on either side ran the broad road that led to Delhi.

It was the scrub that suggested to my mind the wisdom of Mulvaney taking a day's leave and going upon a shooting tour. The peacock is a holy bird throughout India, and whoso slays one is in danger of being mobbed by the nearest villagers; but on the last occasion that Mulvaney had gone forth he had contrived, without in the least offending local religious susceptibilities, to return with six beautiful peacock skins which he sold to profit. It seemed just possible then —

"But fwhat manner av use is ut to me goin' widout a dhrink? The ground's pow-

dher-dry underfoot, an' ut gets unto the throat fit to kill," wailed Mulvaney, looking at me reproachfully. "An' a peacock is not a bird you can catch the tail av onless ye run. Can a man run on wather — an' jungle-wather, too?"

Ortheris had considered the question in all its bearings. He spoke, chewing his pipe-stem meditatively:

"'Go forth, return in glory,
To Clusium's royal 'ome;
An' round these bloomin' temples ang
The bloomin' shields o' Rome.'

You'd better go. You ain't to shoot yourself — not while there's a chanst of liquor. Me an' Learoyd 'll stay at 'ome an' keep shop — case o' anythin' turnin' up. But you go out with a gas-pipe gun an' ketch the little peacockses or somethin'. You kin get one day's leave easy as winkin'. Go along an' get it, an' get peacockses or somethin'."

"Jock," said Mulvaney, turning to Learoyd, who was half asleep under the shadow of the bank. He roused slowly.

"Sitha, Mulvaney, go," said he.

And Mulvaney went, cursing his allies with Irish fluency and barrack-room point.

"Take note," said he, when he had won his holiday and appeared dressed in his roughest clothes with the only other regimental fowling-piece in his hand — "take

note, Jock, an' you, Orth'ris, I am goin' in the face av my own will — all for to please you. I misdoubt anythin' will come av permiscuous huntin' afther peacockses in a disolit lan'; an' I know that I will lie down an' die wid thirrst. Me catch peacockses for you, ye lazy scuts — an' be sacrificed by the peasanthry."

He waved a huge paw and went away.

At twilight, long before the appointed hour, he returned empty-handed, much begrimed with dirt.

"Peacockses?" queried Ortheris, from the safe rest of a barrack-room table, whereon he was smoking cross-legged, Learoyd fast asleep on a bench.

"Jock," said Mulvaney, as he stirred up the sleeper. "Jock, can ye fight? Will ye fight?"

Very slowly the meaning of the words communicated itself to the half-roused man. He understood — and again — what might these things mean? Mulvaney was shaking him savagely. Meantime, the men in the room howled with delight. There was war in the confederacy at last — war and the breaking of bonds.

Barrack-room etiquette is stringent. On the direct challenge must follow the direct reply. This is more binding than the tie of tried friendship. Once again Mulvaney repeated the question. Learoyd answered

by the only means in his power, and so swiftly, that the Irishman had barely time to avoid the blow. The laughter around increased. Learoyd looked bewilderedly at his friend — himself as greatly bewildered. Ortheris dropped from the table. His world was falling.

"Come outside," said Mulvaney; and as the occupants of the barrack-room prepared joyously to follow, he turned and said furiously: "There will be no fight this night—onless any wan av you is wishful to assist. The man that does, follows on."

No man moved. The three passed out into the moonlight, Learoyd fumbling with the buttons of his coat. The parade-ground was deserted except for the scurrying jackals. Mulvaney's impetuous rush carried his companions far into the open ere Learoyd attempted to turn round and continue the discussion.

"Be still now. 'Twas my fault for beginnin' things in the middle av an end, Jock. I should ha' comminst wid an explanation; but Jock, dear, on your sowl, are ye fit, think you, for the finest fight that iver was — betther than fightin' me? Considher before ye answer."

More than ever puzzled, Learoyd turned round two or three times, felt an arm, kicked tentatively, and answered: "Ah'm

fit." He was accustomed to fight blindly at the bidding of the superior mind.

They sat them down, the men looking on from afar, and Mulvaney untangled himself in mighty words.

"Followin' your fools' scheme, I wint out into the thrackless desert beyond the barricks. An' there I met a pious Hindoo dhriving a bullock-kyart. I tuk ut for granted he wud be delighted for to convoy me a piece, an' I jumped in ——"

"You long, lazy, black-haired swine," drawled Ortheris, who would have done the same thing under similar circumstances.

"'Twas the height av policy. That naygur man dhruv miles an' miles — as far as the new railway line they're buildin' now back av the Tavi River. 'Tis a kyart for dhirt only,' says he now an' again timorously, to get me out av ut. 'Dhirt I am,' sez I, 'an' the dhryest that you iver kyarted. Dhrive on, me son, an' glory be wid you.' At that I wint to slape, an' took no heed till he pulled up on the embankment av the line where the coolies were pilin' mud. There was a matther av two thousand coolies on that line — you remimber that. Prisintly a bell rang, an' they throops off to a big pay-shed. 'Where's the white man in charge?' sez I to my kyart-driver. 'In the shed,' sez he, 'engaged on a riffle.' 'A fwhat?' sez I. 'Rif-

fle,' sez he. 'You take ticket. He takes money. You get nothin'.' 'Oho!' sez I, 'that's what the shuperior an' cultivated man calls a raffle, me misbeguided child av darkness an' sin. Lead on to that raffle, though fwhat the mischief 'tis doin' so far away from uts home — which is the charity-bazaar at Christmas, an' the colonel's wife grinnin' behind the tea-table — is more than I know.' Wid that I wint to the shed an' found 'twas pay-day among the coolies. Their wages was on a table forninst a big, fine, red buck av a man — sivun fut high, four fut wide, an' three fut thick, wid a fist on him like a corn-sack. He was payin' the coolies fair an' easy, but he wud ask each man if he wud raffle that month, an' each man sez, 'Yes, av course.' Thin he would deduct from their wages accordin'. Whin all was paid, he filled an ould cigar-box full av gun-wads an' scattered ut among the coolies. They did not take much joy av that performince, an' small wondher. A man close to me picks up a black gun-wad, an' sings out, 'I have ut.' 'Good may ut do you,' sez I. The coolie went forward to this big, fine red man, who threw a cloth off of the most sumpshus, jooled, enameled, an' variously bediviled sedan-chair I iver saw."

"Sedan-chair! Put your 'ead in a bag. That was a palanquin. Don't yer know a

palanquin when you see it?" said Ortheris, with great scorn.

"I chuse to call ut sedan-chair, an' chair ut shall be, little man," continued the Irishman. "'Twas a most amazin' chair — all lined wid pink silk an' fitted wid red silk curtains. 'Here ut is,' sez the red man. 'Here ut is,' sez the coolie, an' he grinned weaklyways. 'Is ut any use to you?' sez the red man. 'No,' sez the coolie; 'I'd like to make a presint av ut to you.' 'I am graciously pleased to accept that same,' sez the red man; an' at that all the coolies cried aloud fwhat was mint for cheerful notes, an' wint back to their diggin', lavin' me alone in the shed. The red man saw me, an' his face grew blue on his big, fat neck. 'Fwhat d'you want here?' sez he. 'Standin'-room an' no more,' sez I, 'onless it may be fwhat ye niver had, an' that's manners, ye rafflin' ruffian,' for I was not goin' to have the service throd upon. 'Out of this,' sez he. 'I'm in charge av this section av construction.' 'I'm in charge av mesilf,' sez I, 'an' it's like I will stay awhile. D'ye raffle much in these parts?' 'Fwhat's that to you?' sez he. 'Nothin',' sez I, 'but a great dale to you, for begad I'm thinkin' you get the full half av your revenue from that sedan-chair. Is ut always raffled so?' I sez, an' wid that I wint to a coolie to ask

questions. Bhoys, that man's name is Dearsley, an' he's been rafflin' that ould sedan-chair monthly this matter av nine months. Ivry coolie on the section takes a ticket — or he gives 'em the go — wanst a month on pay-day. Ivry coolie that wins ut gives ut back to him, for 'tis too big to carry away, an' he'd sack the man that thried to sell ut. That Dearsley has been makin' the rowlin' wealth av Roshus by nefarious rafflin'. Two thousand coolies defrauded wanst a month!"

"Dom t' coolies. Hast gotten t' cheer, man?" said Learoyd.

"Hould on. Havin' onearthed this amazin' an' stupenjus fraud committed by the man Dearsley, I hild a council av war; he thryin' all the time to sejuce me into a fight wid opprobrious language. That sedan-chair niver belonged by right to any foreman av coolies. 'Tis a king's chair or a quane's. There's gold on ut an' silk an' all manner av trapesemints. Bhoys, 'tis not for me to countenance any sort av wrong-doin'— me bein' the ould man — but — any way he has had ut nine months, an' he dare not make throuble av ut was taken from him. Five miles away, or ut may be six ——"

There was a long pause, and the jackals howled merrily. Learoyd bared one arm and contemplated it in the moonlight.

Then he nodded partly to himself and partly to his friends. Ortheris wriggled with suppressed emotion.

"I thought ye wud see the reasonableness av ut,' said Mulvaney. "I made bould to say as much to the man before. He was for a direct front attack — fut, horse, an' guns — an' all for nothin', seein' that I had no transport to convey the machine away. 'I will not argue wid you,' sez I, 'this day, but subsequently, Mister Dearsley, me raf-flin' jool, we'll talk ut out lengthways. 'Tis no good policy to swindle the naygur av his hard-earned emolumints, an' by presint in-formashin'—'twas the kyart man that tould me —' ye've been perpethrating that same for nine months. But I'm a just man,' sez I, 'an' overlookin' the presumpshin that yondher settee wid the gilt top was not come by honust'— at that he turned sky-green, so I knew things was more thrue than tellable —'I'm willin' to compound the felony for this month's winnin's.'"

"Ah! Ho!" from Learoyd and Ortheris.

"That man Dearsley's rushin' on his fate," continued Mulvaney, solemnly wag-ging his head. "All hell had no name bad enough for me that tide. Faith, he called me a robber! Me! that was savin' him from continuin' in his evil ways widout a remonstrince — an' to a man av conscience a remonstrince may change the chune av

his life. 'Tis not for me to argue,' sez I, 'fwhatever ye are, Mister Dearsley, but by my hand I'll take away the temptation for you that lies in that sedan-chair.' 'You will have to fight me for ut,' sez he, 'for well I know you will never dare make report to any one.' 'Fight I will,' sez I, 'but not this day, for I'm rejuced for want av nourishment.' 'Ye're an ould bould hand,' sez he, sizin' me up an' down; 'an a jool av a fight we will have. Eat now an' dhrink, an' go your way.' Wid that he gave me some hump an' whisky — good whisky — an' we talked av this an' that the while. 'It goes hard on me now,' sez I, wipin' my mouth, 'to confiscate that piece av furniture; but justice is justice.' 'Ye've not got ut yet,' sez he; 'there's the fight between.' 'There is,' sez I, 'an' a good fight. Ye shall have the pick av the best quality in my regiment for the dinner you have given this day.' Thin I came hot-foot for you two. Hould your tongue, the both. 'Tis this way. To-morrow we three will go there an' he shall have his pick betune me an' Jock. Jock's a deceivin' fighter, for he is all fat to the eyes, an' he moves slow. Now I'm all beef to the look, an' I move quick. By my reckonin', the Dearsley man won't take me; so me an' Orth'ris 'll see fair play. Jock, I tell you, 'twill be big fightin' — whipped, wid the cream above the jam.

Afther the business 'twill take a good three av us — Jock 'll be very hurt — to take away that sedan-chair."

"Palanquin." This from Ortheris.

"Fwhatever ut is, we must have ut. 'Tis the only sellin' piece av property widin reach that we can get so cheap. An' fwhat's a fight afther all? He has robbed the naygur man dishonust. We rob him honust."

"But wot'll we do with the bloomin' harticle when we've got it? Them palanquins are as big as 'ouses, an' uncommon 'ard to sell, as McCleary said when ye stole the sentry-box from the Curragh."

"Who's goin' to do t' fightin'?" said Learoyd, and Ortheris subsided. The three returned to barracks without a word. Mulvaney's last argument clinched the matter. This palanquin was property, vendible and to be attained in the least embarrassing fashion. It would eventually become beer. Great was Mulvaney.

Next afternoon a procession of three formed itself and disappeared into the scrub in the direction of the new railway line. Learoyd alone was without care, for Mulvaney dived darkly into the future and little Ortheris feared the unknown.

What befell at that interview in the lonely pay-shed by the side of the half-built embankment only a few hundred coolies

know, and their tale is a confusing one, running thus:

"We were at work. Three men in red coats came. They saw the sahib — Dearsley Sahib. They made oration, and noticeably the small man among the red-coats. Dearsley Sahib also made oration, and used many very strong words. Upon this talk they departed together to an open space, and there the fat man in the red coat fought with Dearsley Sahib after the custom of white men — with his hands, making no noise, and never at all pulling Dearsley Sahib's hair. Such of us as were not afraid beheld these things for just so long a time as a man needs to cook the midday meal. The small man in the red coat had possessed himself of Dearsley Sahib's watch. No, he did not steal that watch. He held it in his hands, and at certain season made outcry, and the twain ceased their combat, which was like the combat of young bulls in spring. Both men were soon all red, but Dearsley Sahib was much more red than the other. Seeing this, and fearing for his life — because we greatly loved him — some fifty of us made shift to rush upon the red coats. But a certain man — very black as to the hair, and in no way to be confused with the small man, or the fat man who fought — that man, we affirm, ran upon us, and of us he embraced some

ten or fifty in both arms, and beat our heads together, so that our livers turned to water, and we ran away. It is not good to interfere in the fightings of white men. After that Dearsley Sahib fell and did not rise; these men jumped upon his stomach and despoiled him of all his money, and attempted to fire the pay-shed, and departed. Is it true that Dearsley Sahib makes no complaint of these latter things having been done? We were senseless with fear, and do not at all remember. There was no palanquin near the pay-shed. What do we know about palanquins. Is it true that Dearsley Sahib does not return to this place, on account of sickness, for ten days? This is the fault of those bad men in the red coats, who should be severely punished; for Dearsley Sahib is both our father and mother, and we love him much. Yet if Dearsley Sahib does not return to this place at all, we will speak the truth. There was a palanquin, for the up-keep of which we were forced to pay nine tenths of our monthly wage. On such mulctings Dearsley Sahib allowed us to make obeisance to him before the palanquin. What could we do? We were poor men. He took a full half of our wages. Will the government repay us those moneys? Those three men in red coats bore the palanquin upon their shoulders and departed. All the money

that Dearsley Sahib had taken from us was in the cushions of that palanquin. Therefore they stole it. Thousands of rupees were there — all our money. It was our bank-box, to fill which we cheerfully contributed to Dearsley Sahib three sevenths of our monthly wage. Why does the white man look upon us with the eye of disfavor? Before God, there was a palanquin, and now there is no palanquin; and if they send the police here to make inquisition, we can only say that there never has been any palanquin. Why should a palanquin be near these works? We are poor men, and we know nothing."

Such is the simplest version of the simplest story connected with the descent upon Dearsley. From the lips of the coolies I received it. Dearsley himself was in no condition to say anything, and Mulvaney preserved a massive silence, broken only by the occasional licking of the lips. He had seen a fight so gorgeous that even his power of speech was taken from him. I respected that reserve until, three days after the affair, I discovered in a disused stable in my quarters a palanquin of unchastened splendor — evidently in past days the litter of a queen. The pole whereby it swung between the shoulders of the bearers was rich with the painted *papier-maché* of Cashmere. The shoulder-pads were of yellow

silk. The panels of the litter itself were ablaze with the loves of all the gods and goddesses of the Hindoo Pantheon — lacquer on cedar. The cedar sliding doors were fitted with hasps of translucent Jaipur enamel, and ran in grooves shod with silver. The cushions were of brocaded Delhi silk, and the curtains, which once hid any glimpse of the beauty of the king's palace, were stiff with gold. Closer investigation showed that the entire fabric was everywhere rubbed and discolored by time and wear; but even thus it was sufficiently gorgeous to deserve housing on the threshold of a royal zenana. I found no fault with it, except that it was in my stable. Then, trying to lift it by the sliver-shod shoulder-pole, I laughed. The road from Dearsley's payshed to the cantonment was a narrow and uneven one, and traversed by three very inexperienced palanquin-bearers, one of whom was sorely battered about the head, must have been a path of torment. Still I did not quite recognize the right of the three musketeers to turn me into a "fence."

"I'm askin' you to warehouse ut," said Mulvaney, when he was brought to consider the question. "There's no steal in ut. Dearsley tould us we cud have ut if we fought. Jock fought — an' oh, sorr, when the throuble was at uts finest an' Jock was bleedin 'like a stuck pig, an' little Orth'ris

was shquealin' on one leg, chewin' big bites out av Dearsley's watch, I wud ha' given my place in the fight to have had you see wan round. He tuk Jock, as I suspicioned he would, an' Jock was deceptive. Nine roun's they were even matched, an' at the tenth — About that palanquin now. There's not the lest trouble in the world, or we wud not ha' brought ut here. You will ondherstand that the queen — God bless her! — does not reckon for a privit soldier to kape elephints an' palanquins an' sich in barricks. Afther we had dhragged ut down from Dearsley's through that cruel scrub that n'r broke Orth'ris' heart, we set ut in the ravine for a night; an' a thief av a porcupine an' a civit-cat av a jackal roosted in ut, as well we knew in the mornin'. I put ut to you, sorr, is an elegant palanquin, fit for the princess, the natural abidin'-place av all the vermin in cantonmints? We brought ut to you, afther dhark, and put ut in your shtable. Do not let your conscience prick. Think av the rejoicin' men in the pay-shed yonder — lookin' at Dearsley wid his head tied up in a towel — an' well knowin' that they can dhraw their pay ivery month widout stoppages for riffles. Indirectly, sorr, you have rescued from an onprincipled son av a night-hawk the peasantry av a numerous village. An' besides, will I let that sedan-chair rot on our hands?

Not I. 'Tis not every day a piece av pure joolry comes into the market. There's not a king widin these forty miles "— he waved his hand round the dusty horizon —" not a king wud not be glad to buy it. Some day meself, whin I have leisure, I'll take ut up along the road an' dispose av ut."

"How?" said I.

"Get into ut, av course, an' keep wan eye open through the curtain. Whin I see a likely man of the native persuasion, I will descend blushin' from my canopy, and say: 'Buy a palanquin, ye black scut?' I will have to hire four men to carry me first, though; and that's impossible till next pay-day."

Curiously enough, Learoyd, who had fought for the prize, and in the winning secured the highest pleasure life had to offer him, was altogether disposed to undervalue it, while Ortheris openly said it would be better to break the thing up. Dearsley, he argued, might be a many-sided man, capable, despite his magnificent fighting qualities, of setting in motion the machinery of the civil law, a thing much abhorred by the soldier. Under the circumstances their fun had come and passed; the next pay-day was close at hand, when there would be beer for all. Wherefore longer conserve the painted palanquin?

"A first-class rifle-shot an' a good little

man av your inches you are," said Mulvaney. "But you niver had a head worth a soft-boiled egg. 'Tis me has to lie awake av nights schamin' an' plottin' for the three av us. Orth'ris, me son, 'tis no matther av a few gallons av beer — no, nor twenty gallons — but tubs an' vats an' firkins in that sedan-chair."

Meantime, the palanquin stayed in my stall, the key of which was in Mulvaney's hand.

Pay-day came, and with it beer. It was not in experience to hope that Mulvaney, dried by four weeks' drought, would avoid excess. Next morning he and the palanquin had disappeared. He had taken the precaution of getting three days' leave "to see a friend on the railway," and the colonel, well knowing that the seasonal outburst was near, and hoping it would spend its force beyond the limits of his jurisdiction, cheerfully gave him all he demanded. At this point his history, as recorded in the mess-room, stopped.

Ortheris carried it not much further. "No, 'e wasn't drunk," said the little man, loyally, "the liquor was no more than feelin' its way round inside of 'im; but 'e went an' filled that 'ole bloomin' palanquin with bottles 'fore 'e went off. He's gone an' 'ired six men to carry 'im, an' I 'ad to 'elp 'im into 'is nupshal couch, 'cause

'e wouldn't 'ear reason. 'E's gone off in 'is shirt an' trousies, swearin' tremenjus — gone down the road in the palanquin, wavin' 'is legs out o' windy."

"Yes," said I, "but where?"

"Now you arx me a question. 'E said 'e was going to sell that palanquin; but from observations what happened when I was stuffin' 'im through the door, I fancy 'e's gone to the new embankment to mock at Dearsley. Soon as Jock's off duty I'm going there to see if 'e's safe — not Mulvaney, but t'other man. My saints, but I pity 'im as 'elps Terence out o' the palanquin when 'e's once fair drunk!"

"He'll come back," I said.

"'Corse 'e will. On'y question is, what'll 'e be doin' on the road. Killing Dearsley, like as not. 'E shouldn't 'a gone without Jock or me."

Re-enforced by Learoyd, Ortheris sought the foreman of the coolie-gang. Dearsley's head was still embellished with towels. Mulvaney, drunk or sober, would have struck no man in that condition, and Dearsley indignantly denied that he would have taken advantage of the intoxicated brave.

"I had my pick o' you two," he explained to Learoyd, "and you got my palanquin — not before I'd made my profit on it. Why'd I do harm when everything's

settled? Your man *did* come here — drunk as Davy's cow on a frosty night — came a-purpose to mock me — stuck his 'ead out of the door an' called me a crucified hodman. I made him drunker, an' sent him along. But I never touched him."

To these things, Learoyd, slow to perceive the evidences of sincerity, answered only: "If owt comes to Mulvaney long o' you, I'll gripple you, clouts or no clouts on your ugly head, an' I'll draw t' throat twisty-ways, man. See there now."

The embassy removed itself, and Dearsley, the battered, laughed alone over his supper that evening.

Three days passed — a fourth and a fifth. The week drew to a close, and Mulvaney did not return. He, his royal palanquin, and his six attendants, had vanished into air. A very large and very tipsy soldier, his feet sticking out of the litter of a reigning princess, is not a thing to travel along the ways without comment. Yet no man of all the country round had seen any such wonder. He was, and he was not; and Learoyd suggested the immediate smashment as a sacrifice to his ghost. Ortheris insisted that all was well.

"When Mulvaney goes up the road," said he, "'e's like to go a very long ways up, especially when 'e's so blue drunk as 'e is now. But what gits me is 'is not bein'

'eard of pullin' wool of the niggers somewhere about. That don't look good. The drink must ha' died out in 'im by this, unless 'e's broke a bank, an' then — Why don't 'e come back? 'E didn't ought to ha' gone off without us."

Even Ortheris' heart sunk at the end of the seventh day, for half the regiment were out scouring the country-sides, and Learoyd had been forced to fight two men who hinted openly that Mulvaney had deserted. To do him justice, the colonel laughed at the notion, even when it was put forward by his much-trusted adjutant.

"Mulvaney would as soon think of deserting as you would," said he. "No; he's either fallen into a mischief among the villagers — and yet that isn't likely, for he'd blarney himself out of the pit; or else he is engaged on urgent private affairs—some stupendous devilment that we shall hear of at mess after it has been the round of the barrack-room. The worst of it is that I shall have to give him twenty-eight days' confinement at least for being absent without leave, just when I most want him to lick the new batch of recruits into shape. I never knew a man who could put polish on young soldiers as quickly as Mulvaney can. How does he do it?"

"With blarney and the buckle-end of a belt, sir," said the adjutant. "He is worth

a couple of non-commissioned officers when we are dealing with an Irish draft, and the London lads seem to adore him. The worst of it is that if he goes to the cells the other two are neither to hold nor to bind till he comes out again. I believe Ortheris preaches mutiny on those occasions, and I know that the mere presence of Learoyd mourning for Mulvaney kills all the cheerfulness of his room. The sergeants tell me that he allows no man to laugh when he feels unhappy. They are a queer gang."

"For all that, I wish we had a few more of them. I like a well-conducted regiment, but these pasty-faced, shifty-eyed, mealy-mouthed young slouchers from the depot worry me sometimes with their offensive virtue. They don't seem to have backbone enough to do anything but play cards and prowl round the married quarters. I believe I'd forgive that old villain on the spot if he turned up with any sort of explanation that I could in decency accept."

"Not likely to be much difficulty about that, sir," said the adjutant. "Mulvaney's explanations are one degree less wonderful than his performances. They say that when he was in the Black Tyrone, before he came to us, he was discovered on the banks of the Liffey trying to sell his colonel's charger to a Donegal dealer as a

perfect lady's hack. Shakbolt commanded the Tyrone then."

"Shakbolt must have had apoplexy at the thought of his ramping war-horses answering to that description. He used to buy unbacked devils and tame them by starvation. What did Mulvaney say?"

"That he was a member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, anxious to 'sell the poor baste where he would get something to fill out his dimples.' Shakbolt laughed, but I fancy that was why Mulvaney exchanged to ours."

"I wish he were back," said the colonel; "for I like him, and believe he likes me."

That evening, to cheer our souls, Learoyd, Ortheris and I went into the waste to smoke out a porcupine. All the dogs attended, but even their clamor — and they began to discuss the shortcomings of porcupines before they left cantonments — could not take us out of ourselves. A large, low moon turned the tops of the plume grass to silver, and the stunted camel-thorn bushes and sour tamarisks into the likeness of trooping devils. The smell of the sun had not left the earth, and little aimless winds, blowing across the rose gardens to the southward, brought the scent of dried roses and water. Our fire once started, and the dogs craftily disposed to wait the dash of the porcupine, we climbed

to the top of a rain-scarred hillock of earth, and looked across the scrub, seamed with cattle-paths, white with the long grass, and dotted with spots of level pond-bottom, where the snipe would gather in winter.

"This," said Ortheris, with a sigh, as he took in the unkempt desolation of it all, "this is sanguinary. This is unusual sanguinary. Sort o' mad country. Like a grate when the fire's put out by the sun." He shaded his eyes against the moonlight. "An' there's a loony dancin' in the middle of it all. Quite right. I'd dance, too, if I wasn't so down-heart."

There pranced a portent in the face of the moon — a huge and ragged spirit of the waste, that flapped its wings from afar. It had risen out of the earth; it was coming toward us, and its outline was never twice the same. The toga, table-cloth, or dressing-gown, whatever the creature wore, took a hundred shapes. Once it stopped on a neighboring mound and flung all its legs and arms to the winds.

"My, but that scarecrow 'as got 'em bad!" said Ortheris. "Seems like if 'e comes any furder we'll 'ave to argify with 'im."

Learoyd raised himself from the dirt as a bull clears his flanks of the wallow. And as a bull bellows, so he, after a short minute at gaze, gave tongue to the stars.

"Mulvaney! Mulvaney! A hoo!"

Then we yelled all together, and the figure dipped into the hollow till, with a crash of rending grass, the lost one strode up to the light of the fire, and disappeared to the waist in a wave of joyous dogs. Then Learoyd and Ortheris gave greeting bass and falsetto.

"You damned fool!" said they, and severally punched him with their fists.

"Go easy!" he answered, wrapping a huge arm around each. "I would have you to know that I am a god, to be treated as such — though, by my faith, I fancy I've got to go to the guard-room just like a privit soldier."

The latter part of the sentence destroyed the suspicions raised by the former. Any one would have been justified in regarding Mulvaney as mad. He was hatless and shoeless, and his shirt and trousers were dropping off him. But he wore one wondrous garment — a gigantic cloak that fell from collar-bone to heels — of pale pink silk, wrought all over, in cunningest needlework of hands long since dead, with the loves of the Hindoo gods. The monstrous figures leaped in and out of the light of the fire as he settled the folds round him.

Ortheris handled the stuff respectfully for a moment while I was trying to remember where I had seen it before.

Then he screamed: "What *'ave* you done with the palanquin? You're wearin' the linin'."

"I am," said the Irishman, "an' by the same token the 'broidery is scrapin' me hide off. I've lived in this sumpshus counterpane for four days. Me son, I begin to ondherstand why the naygur is no use. Widout me boots, an' me trousers like an open-work stocking on a gyurl's leg at a dance, I began to feel like a naygur — all timorous. Give me a pipe an' I'll tell on."

He lighted a pipe, resumed his grip of his two friends, and rocked to and fro in a gale of laughter.

"Mulvaney," said Ortheris, sternly, "'tain't no time for laughin'. You've given Jock an' me more trouble than you're worth. You 'ave been absent without leave, and you'll go into the cells for that; an' you 'ave come back disgustingly dressed, an' most improper, in the linin' o' that bloomin' palanquin. Instid of which you laugh. An' *we* thought you was dead all the time."

"Bhoys," said the culprit, still shaking gently, "whin I've done my tale you may cry if you like, an' little Orth'ris here can thrample my insides out. Ha' done an' listen. My performinces have been stupenjus; my luck has been the blessed luck of the British army — an' there's no better

than that. I went out drunk an' drinking in the palanquin, and I have come back a pink god. Did any of you go to Dearsley afther my time was up? He was at the bottom of ut all."

"Ah said so," murmured Learoyd. "To-morrow ah'll smash t' face in upon his head."

"Ye will not. Dearsley's a jool av a man. Afther Orth'ris had put me into the palanquin an' the six bearer-men were gruntin' down the road, I tuk thought to mock Dearsley for that fight. So I tould thim: 'Go to the embankment,' and there, bein' most amazin' full, I shtuck my head out av the concern an' passed compliments wid Dearsley. I must ha' miscalled him outrageous, for whin I am that way the power of the tongue comes on me. I can bare remimber tellin' him that his mouth opened endways like the mouth of a skate, which was thrue afther Learoyd had handled ut; an' I clear remimber his taking no manner nor matter of offense, but givin' me a big dhrink of beer. 'Twas the beer that did the thrick, for I crawled back into the palanquin, steppin' on me right ear wid me left foot, an' thin I slept like the dead. Wanst I half roused, an' begad the noise in my head was tremenjus — roarin' an' poundin' an' rattlin' such as was quite new to me. 'Mother av mercy,' thinks I,

'phwat a concertina I will have on my shoulders whin I wake!' An' wid that I curls myself up to sleep before ut should get hould on me. Bhoys, that noise was not dhrink, 'twas the rattle av a train!"

There followed an impressive pause.

"Yes, he had put me on a thrain — put me, palanquin an' all, an' six black assassins av his own coolies that was in his nefarious confidence, on the flat av a ballast-truck, and we were rowlin' and bowlin' along to Benares. Glory be that I did not wake up then an' introjuce myself to the coolies. As I was sayin', I slept for the better part av a day an' a night. But remimber you, that that man Dearsley had packed me off on one av his material thrains to Benares, all for to make me overstay my leave an' get me into the cells."

The explanation was an eminently rational one. Benares was at least ten hours by rail from the cantonments, and nothing in the world could have saved Mulvaney from arrest as a deserter had he appeared there in the apparel of his orgies. Dearsley had not forgotten to take revenge. Learoyd, drawing back a little, began to place soft blows over selected portions of Mulvaney's body. His thoughts were away on the embankment, and they meditated evil for Dearsley. Mulvaney continued: "Whin I was full awake, the

palanquin was set down in a street, I suspicioned, for I could hear people passin' and talkin'. But I knew well I was far from home. There is a queer smell upon our cantonments — smell av dried earth and brick-kilns wid whiffs av a cavalry stable-litter. This place smelt marigold flowers an' bad water, an' wanst somethin' alive came an' blew heavy with his muzzle at the chink of the shutter. 'It's in a village I am,' thinks I to myself, 'an' the parochial buffalo is investigatin' the palanquin.' But anyways I had no desire to move. Only lie still whin you're in foreign parts, an' the standin' luck av the British army will carry ye through. That is an epigram. I made ut.

"Thin a lot av whisperin' devils surrounded the palanquin. 'Take ut up,' says wan man. 'But who'll pay us?' says another. 'The Maharanee's minister, av course,' sez the man. 'Oho!' sez I to myself; 'I'm a quane in me own right, wid a minister to pay me expenses. I'll be an emperor if I lie still long enough. But this is no village I've struck.' I lay quiet, but I gummed me right eye to a crack av the shutters, an' I saw that the whole street was crammed wid palanquins an' horses an' a sprinklin' av naked priests, all yellow powder an' tigers' tails. But I may tell you, Orth'ris, an' you, Learoyd, that av

all the palanquins ours was the most imperial an' magnificent. Now, a palanquin means a native lady all the world over, except whin a soldier av the quane happens to be takin' a ride. 'Women an' priest!' sez I. 'Your father's son is in the right pew this time, Terence. There will be proceedin's.' Six black devils in pink muslin tuk up the palanquin, an' oh! but the rowlin' an' the rockin' made me sick. Thin we got fair jammed among the palanquins — not more than fifty av them — an' we grated an' bumped like Queenstown potato-sacks in a runnin' tide. I cud hear the women giglin' and squirmin' in their palanquins, but mine was the royal equipage. They made way for ut, an', begad, the pink muslin men o' mine were howlin', 'Room for the Maharanee av Gokral-Seetarun.' Do you know av the lady, sorr?"

"Yes," said I. "She is a very estimable old queen of the Central India States, and they say she is fat. How on earth could she go to Benares without all the city knowing her palanquin?"

"'Twas the eternal foolishness av the naygur men. They saw the palanquin lying loneful an' forlornsome, an' the beauty of ut, after Dearsley's men had dhropped ut an' gone away, an' they gave ut the best name that occurred to thim. Quite right too. For aught we know, the old lady

was travelin' *incog.*— like me. I'm glad to hear she's fat. I was no light-weight myself, an' my men were mortial anxious to dhrop me under a great big archway promiscuously ornamented wid the most improper carvin's an' cuttin's I iver saw. Begad! they made me blush — like a maharanee."

"The temple of the Prithi-Devi," I murmured, remembering the monstrous horrors of that sculptured archway at Benares.

"Pretty Devilskins, savin' your presence, sorr. There was nothin' pretty about ut, except me! 'Twas all half dhark, an' whin the coolies left they shut a big black gate behind av us, an' half a company av fat yellow priests began pully-haulin' the palanquins into dharker place yet — a big stone hall full av pillars an' gods an' incense an' all manner av similar thruck. The gate disconcerted me, for I perceived I wud have to go forward to get out, my retreat bein' cut off. By the same token, a good priest makes a bad palanquin-coolie. Begad! they nearly turned me inside out dragging the palanquin to the temple. Now the disposishin av the forces inside was this way. The Maharanee av Gokral-Seetarun — that was me — lay by the favor of Providence on the far left flank behind the dhark av a pillar carved with elephants' heads. The remainder av the

palanquins was in a big half circle facing into the biggest, fattest, and most amazin' she-god that iver I dreamed av. Her head ran up into the black above us, an' her feet stuck out in the light av a little fire av melted butter that a priest was feedin' out av a butter-dish. Thin a man began to sing an' play on somethin', back in the dhark, an' 'twas a queer song. Ut made my hair lift on the back av my neck. Thin the doors av all the palanquins slid back, an' the women bundled out. I saw what I'll never see again. 'Twas more glorious than transformations at a pantomime, for they was in pink, an' blue, an' silver, an' red, an' grass-green, wid diamonds, an' imeralds, an' great red rubies. I never saw the like, an' I never will again."

"Seeing that in all probability you were watching the wives and daughters of most of the kings of India, the chances are that you won't," I said, for it was dawning upon me that Mulvaney had stumbled upon a big queen's praying at Benares.

"I niver will," he said, mournfully. "That sight doesn't come twict to any man. It made me ashamed to watch. A fat priest knocked at my door. I didn't think he'd have the insolence to disturb the Maharanee av Gokral-Seetarun, so I lay still. 'The old cow's asleep,' sez he to another. 'Let her be,' sez that. ''Twill be

long before she has a calf!' I might ha' known before he spoke that all a woman prays for in Injia — an' for the matter o' that in England too — is childher. That made me more sorry I'd come, me bein', as you well know, a childless man.

"They prayed, an' the butter-fires blazed up an' the incense turned everything blue, an' between that an' the fires the women looked as tho' they were all ablaze an' twinklin'. They took hold of the she-god's knees, they cried out, an' they threw themselves about, an' that world-without-end-amen music was dhrivin' thim mad. Mother av Hiven! how they cried, an' the ould she-god grinnin' above them all so scornful! The dhrink was dyin' out in me fast, an' I was thinkin' harder than the thoughts wud go through my head — thinkin' how to get out, an' all manner of nonsense as well. The women were rockin' in rows, their di'mond belts clickin', an' the tears runnin' out betune their hands, an' the lights were goin' lower and dharker. Thin there was a blaze like lightnin' from the roof, an' that showed me the inside av the palanquin, an' at the end where my foot was stood the livin' spit an' image o' myself worked on the linin'. This man here, it was."

He hunted in the folds of his pink cloak, ran a hand under one, and thrust into the

fire-light a foot-long embroidered presentment of the great god Krishna playing on a flute. The heavy jowl, the staring eyes, and the blue-black mustache of the god made up a far-off resemblance to Mulvaney.

"The blaze was gone in a wink, but the whole schame came to me thin. I believe I was mad, too. I slid the off-shutter open an' rowled out into the dhark behind the elephant-head pillar, tucked up my trousies to my knee, slipped off my boots, and took a general hould av all the pink linin' av the palanquin. Glory be, ut ripped out like a woman's driss when you thread on ut at a sargent's ball, an' a bottle came with ut. I tuk the bottle, an' the next minut I was out av the dhark av the pillar, the pink linin' wrapped round me most graceful, the music thunderin' like kettle-drums, an' a cowld draft blowin' round my bare legs. By this hand that did ut, I was Krishna tootlin' on the flute — the god that the rig'mental chaplain talks about. A sweet sight I must ha' looked. I knew my eyes were big and my face was wax-white, an' at the worst I must ha' looked like a ghost. But they took me for the livin' god. The music stopped, and the women were dead dumb, an' I crooked my legs like a shepherd on a china basin, an' I did the ghost-waggle with my feet as I had done at the rig'mental

theater many times, an' slid across the temple in front av the she-god, tootlin' on the beer-bottle."

"Wot did you toot?" demanded Ortheris.

"Me? Oh!" Mulvaney sprung up, suiting the action to the word, and sliding gravely in front of us, a dilapidated deity in the half light. "I sung:

> "'Only say
> You'll be Mrs. Brallaghan,
> Don't say nay,
> Charmin' Juley Callaghan.'

I didn't know my own voice when I sung. An' oh! 'twas pitiful to see the women. The darlin's were down on their faces. Whin I passed the last wan I could see her poor little fingers workin' one in another as if she wanted to touch my feet. So I threw the tail of this pink overcoat over her head for the greater honor, an' slid into the dhark on the other side of the temple, and fetched up in the arms av a big fat priest. All I wanted was to get away clear. So I tuk him by his greasy throat an' shut the speech out av him. 'Out!' sez I. 'Which way, ye fat heathen?' 'Oh!' sez he. 'Man,' sez I. 'White man, soldier man, common soldier man. Where is the back door?' 'This way,' sez my fat friend, duckin' behind a big bull-god an' divin' into a passage.

Thin I remimbered that I must ha' made the miraculous reputation of that temple for the next fifty years. 'Not so fast,' I sez, an' I held out both my hands wid a wink. That ould thief smiled like a father. I took him by the back av the neck in case he should be wishful to put a knife into me unbeknownst, an' I ran him up an' down the passage twice to collect his sensibilities. 'Be quiet,' sez he, in English. 'Now you talk sense,' I sez. 'Fhwat'll you give me for the use of that most iligant palanquin I have no time to take away?' 'Don't tell,' sez he. 'Is ut like?' sez I. 'But ye might give me my railway fare. I'm far from my home, an' I've done you a service.' Bhoys, 'tis a good thing to be a priest. The ould man niver throubled himself to draw from a bank. As I will prove to you subsequint, he philandered all round the slack av his clothes and began dribblin' ten-rupee notes, old gold mohurs, and rupees into my hand till I could hould no more."

"You lie!" said Ortheris. "You're mad or sunstrook. A native don't give coin unless you cut it out av 'im. 'Tain't nature."

"Then my lie an' my sunstroke is concealed under that lump av sod yonder," retorted Mulvaney, unruffled, nodding across the scrub. "An' there's a dale more

in nature than your squidgy little legs have iver taken you to, Orth'ris, me son. Four hundred and thirty-four rupees by my reckonin', *an'* a big fat gold necklace that I took from him as a remimbrancer."

"An' 'e give it to you for love?" said Ortheris.

"We were alone in that passage. Maybe I was a trifle too pressin', but considher fwhat I had done for the good av the temple and the iverlastin' joy av those women. 'Twas cheap at the price. I would ha' taken more if I could ha' found it. I turned the ould man upside down at the last, but he was milked dhry. Thin he opened a door in another passage, an' I found myself up to my knees in Benares river-water, an' bad smellin' ut is. More by token I had come out on the river line close to the burnin'-ghat and contagious to a cracklin' corpse. This was in the heart av the night, for I had been four hours in the temple. There was a crowd av boats tied up, so I tuk wan an' wint across the river. Thin I came home, lyin' up by day."

"How on earth did you manage?" I said.

"How did Sir Frederick Roberts get from Cabul to Candahar? He marched, an' he niver told how near he was to breakin' down. That's why he is phwat

he is. An' now"—Mulvaney yawned portentously—"now I will go and give myself up for absince widout leave. It's eight-an'-twenty days an' the rough end of the colonel's tongue in orderly-room, any way you look at ut. But 'tis cheap at the price."

"Mulvaney," said I, softly, "if there happens to be any sort of excuse that the colonel can in any way accept, I have a notion that you'll get nothing more than the dressing down. The new recruits are in, and—"

"Not a word more, sorr. Is ut excuses the ould man wants? 'Tis not my way, but he shall have thim." And he flapped his way to cantonments, singing lustily:

> "So they sent a corp'ril's file,
> And they put me in the guyard room,
> For conduck unbecomin' of a soldier."

Therewith he surrendered himself to the joyful and almost weeping guard, and was made much of by his fellows. But to the colonel he said that he had been smitten with sunstroke and had lain insensible on a villager's cot for untold hours, and between laughter and good-will the affair was smoothed over, so that he could next day teach the new recruits how to "fear God, honor the queen, shoot straight, and keep clean."

THE MAN WHO WAS

LET it be clearly understood that the Russian is a delightful person till he tucks his shirt in. As an Oriental he is charming. It is only when he insists upon being treated as the most easterly of Western peoples, instead of the most westerly of Easterns, that he becomes a racial anomaly extremely difficult to handle. The host never knows which side of his nature is going to turn up next.

Dirkovitch was a Russian — a Russian of the Russians, as he said — who appeared to get his bread by serving the czar as an officer in a Cossack regiment, and corresponding for a Russian newspaper with a name that was never twice the same. He was a handsome young Oriental, with a taste for wandering through unexplored portions of the earth, and he arrived in India from nowhere in particular. At least no living man could ascertain whether it was by way of Balkh, Budukhshan, Chitral, Beloochistan, Nepaul, or anywhere else.

The Indian government, being in an unusually affable mood, gave orders that he was to be civilly treated, and shown everything that was to be seen; so he drifted, talking bad English and worse French, from one city to another till he foregathered with her Majesty's White Hussars in the city of Peshawur, which stands at the mouth of that narrow sword-cut in the hills that men call the Khyber Pass. He was undoubtedly an officer, and he was decorated, after the manner of the Russians, with little enameled crosses, and he could talk, and (though this has nothing to do with his merits) he had been given up as a hopeless task or case by the Black Tyrones, who, individually and collectively, with hot whisky and honey, mulled brandy and mixed drinks of all kinds, had striven in all hospitality to make him drunk. And when the Black Tyrones, who are exclusively Irish, fail to disturb the peace of head of a foreigner, that foreigner is certain to be a superior man. This was the argument of the Black Tyrones, but they were ever an unruly and self-opinionated regiment, and they allowed junior subalterns of four years' service to choose their wines. The spirits were always purchased by the colonel and a committee of majors. And a regiment that would so behave may be respected but can not be loved.

The White Hussars were as conscientious in choosing their wine as in charging the enemy. There was a brandy that had been purchased by a cultured colonel a few years after the battle of Waterloo. It has been maturing ever since, and it was a marvelous brandy at the purchasing. The memory of that liquor would cause men to weep as they lay dying in the teak forests of Upper Burmah or the slime of the Irrawaddy. And there was a port which was notable; and there was a champagne of an obscure brand, which always came to mess without any labels, because the White Hussars wished none to know where the source of supply might be found. The officer on whose head the champagne-choosing lay was forbidden the use of tobacco for six weeks previous to sampling.

This particularity of detail is necessary to emphasize the fact that that champagne, that port, and, above all, that brandy — the green and yellow and white liqueurs did not count — was placed at the absolute disposition of Dirkovitch, and he enjoyed himself hugely — even more than among the Black Tyrones.

But he remained distressingly European through it all. The White Hussars were —" My dear true friends," " Fellow-soldiers glorious," and " Brothers inseparable." He would unburden himself by the hour on

the glorious future that awaited the combined arms of England and Russia when their hearts and their territories should run side by side, and the great mission of civilizing Asia should begin. That was unsatisfactory, because Asia is not going to be civilized, after the methods of the West. There is too much Asia, and she is too old. You can not reform a lady of many lovers, and Asia has been insatiable in her flirtations aforetime. She will never attend Sunday-school, or learn to vote save with swords for tickets.

Dirkovitch knew this as well as any one else, but it suited him to talk special-correspondently and to make himself as genial as he could. Now and then he volunteered a little, a very little, information about his own Sotnia of Cossacks, left apparently to look after themselves somewhere at the back of beyond. He had done rough work in Central Asia, and had seen rather more help-yourself fighting than most men of his years. But he was careful never to betray his superiority, and more than careful to praise on all occasions the appearance, drill, uniform, and organization of her Majesty's White Hussars. And, indeed, they were a regiment to be admired. When Mrs. Durgan, widow of the late Sir John Durgan, arrived in their station, and after a short time had been proposed to by every

single man at mess, she put the public sentiment very neatly when she explained that they were all so nice that unless she could marry them all, including the colonel and some majors who were already married, she was not going to content herself with one of them. Wherefore she wedded a little man in a rifle regiment — being by nature contradictious — and the White Hussars were going to wear crape on their arms, but compromised by attending the wedding in full force, and lining the aisle with unutterable reproach. She had jilted them all — from Basset-Holmer, the senior captain, to Little Mildred, the last subaltern, and he could have given her four thousand a year and a title. He was a viscount, and on his arrival the mess had said he had better go into the Guards, because they were all sons of large grocers and small clothiers in the Hussars, but Mildred begged very hard to be allowed to stay, and behaved so prettily that he was forgiven, and became a man, which is much more important than being any sort of viscount.

The only persons who did not share the general regard for the White Hussars were a few thousand gentlemen of Jewish extraction who lived across the border, and answered to the name of Pathan. They had only met the regiment officially, and for something less than twenty minutes, but

the interview, which was complicated with many casualties, had filled them with prejudice. They even called the White Hussars "children of the devil," and sons of persons whom it would be perfectly impossible to meet in decent society. Yet they were not above making their aversion fill their money-belts. The regiment possessed carbines, beautiful Martini-Henry carbines, that would cob a bullet into an enemy's camp at one thousand yards, and were even handier than the long rifle. Therefore they were coveted all along the border, and, since demand inevitably breeds supply, they were supplied at the risk of life and limb for exactly their weight in coined silver — seven and one half pounds of rupees, or sixteen pounds and a few shillings each, reckoning the rupee at par. They were stolen at night by snaky-haired thieves that crawled on their stomachs under the nose of the sentries; they disappeared mysteriously from arm-racks; and in the hot weather, when all the doors and windows were open, they vanished like puffs of their own smoke. The border people desired them first for their own family vendettas, and then for contingencies. But in the long cold nights of the Northern Indian winter they were stolen most extensively. The traffic of murder was liveliest among the hills at that season, and prices ruled

high. The regimental guards were first doubled and then trebled. A trooper does not much care if he loses a weapon — government must make it good — but he deeply resents the loss of his sleep. The regiment grew very angry, and one night-thief who managed to limp away bears the visible marks of their anger upon him to this hour. That incident stopped the burglaries for a time, and the guards were reduced accordingly, and the regiment devoted itself to polo with unexpected results, for it beat by two goals to one that very terrible polo corps, the Lushkar Light Horse, though the latter had four ponies apiece for a short hour's fight, as well as a native officer who played like a lambent flame across the ground.

Then they gave a dinner to celebrate the event. The Lushkar team came, and Dirkovitch came, in the fullest full uniform of a Cossack officer, which is as full as a dressing-gown, and was introduced to the Lushkars, and opened his eyes as he regarded them. They were lighter men than the Hussars, and they carried themselves with the swing that is the peculiar right of the Punjab frontier force and all irregular horse. Like everything else in the service, it has to be learned; but, unlike many things, it is never forgotten. and remains on the body till death.

The great beam-roofed mess-room of the White Hussars was a sight to be remembered. All the mess-plate was on the long table — the same table that had served up the bodies of five dead officers in a forgotten fight long and long ago — the dingy, battered standards faced the door of entrance, clumps of winter roses lay between the silver candlesticks, the portraits of eminent officers deceased looked down on their successors from between the heads of sambhur, nilghai, maikhor, and, pride of all the mess, two grinning snow-leopards that had cost Basset-Holmer four months' leave that he might have spent in England instead of on the road to Thibet, and the daily risk of his life on ledge, snow-slide, and glassy grass-slope.

The servants, in spotless white muslin and the crest of their regiments on the brow of their turbans, waited behind their masters, who were clad in the scarlet and gold of the White Hussars and the cream and silver of the Lushkar Light Horse. Dirkovitch's dull green uniform was the only dark spot at the board, but his big onyx eyes made up for it. He was fraternizing effusively with the captain of the Lushkar team, who was wondering how many of Dirkovitch's Cossacks his own long, lathy down-countrymen could ac-

count for in a fair charge. But one does not speak of these things openly.

The talk rose higher and higher, and the regimental band played between the courses, as is the immemorial custom, till all tongues ceased for a moment with the removal of the dinner slips and the First Toast of Obligation, when the colonel, rising, said: "Mr. Vice, the Queen," and Little Mildred from the bottom of the table answered: "The Queen, God bless her!" and the big spurs clanked as the big men heaved themselves up and drank the Queen, upon whose pay they were falsely supposed to pay their mess-bills. That sacrament of the mess never grows old, and never ceases to bring a lump into the throat of the listener wherever he be, by land or by sea. Dirkovitch rose with his "brothers glorious," but he could not understand. No one but an officer can understand what the toast means; and the bulk have more sentiment than comprehension. It all comes to the same in the end, as the enemy said when he was wriggling on a lance-point. Immediately after the little silence that follows on the ceremony there entered the native officer who had played for the Lushkar team. He could not of course eat with the alien, but he came in at dessert, all six feet of him, with the blue-and-silver turban atop and the big black top-boots below.

The mess rose joyously as he thrust forward the hilt of his saber, in token of fealty, for the colonel of the White Hussars to touch, and dropped into a vacant chair amid shouts of "*Rung ho!* Hira Singh!" (which being translated means "Go in and win!"). "Did I whack you over the knee, old man?" "Ressaidar Sahib, what the devil made you play that kicking pig of a pony in the last ten minutes?" "Shabash, Ressaidar Sahib!" Then the voice of the colonel: "The health of Ressaidar Hira Singh!"

After the shouting had died away Hira Singh rose to reply, for he was the cadet of a royal house, the son of a king's son, and knew what was due on these occasions. Thus he spoke in the vernacular:

"Colonel Sahib and officers of this regiment, much honor have you done me. This will I remember. We came down from afar to play you; but we were beaten." ("No fault of yours, Ressaidar Sahib. Played on your own ground, y' know. Your ponies were cramped from the railway. Don't apologize.") "Therefore perhaps we will come again if it be so ordained." ("Hear! Hear, hear, indeed! Bravo! H'sh!") "Then we will play you afresh" ("Happy to meet you"), "till there are left no feet upon our ponies. Thus far for sport." He dropped one hand on his

sword-hilt, and his eye wandered to Dirkovitch lolling back in his chair. "But if by the will of God there arises any other game which is not the polo game, then be assured, Colonel Sahib and officers, that we shall play it out side by side, though *they*" — again his eye sought Dirkovitch — "though *they*, I say, have fifty ponies to our one horse." And with a deep-mouthed *Rung ho!* that rang like a musket-butt on flag-stones, he sat down amid shoutings.

Dirkovitch, who had devoted himself steadily to the brandy — the terrible brandy aforementioned — did not understand, nor did the expurgated translations offered to him at all convey the point. Decidedly the native officer's was the speech of the evening, and the clamor might have continued to the dawn had it not been broken by the noise of a shot without that sent every man feeling at his defenseless left side. It is notable that Dirkovitch "reached back," after the American fashion — a gesture that set the captain of the Lushkar team wondering how Cossack officers were armed at mess. Then there was a scuffle and a yell of pain.

"Carbine-stealing again!" said the adjutant, calmly sinking back in his chair. "This comes of reducing the guards. I hope the sentries have killed him."

The feet of armed men pounded on the

veranda flags, and it sounded as though something was being dragged.

"Why don't they put him in the cells till the morning?" said the colonel, testily. "See if they've damaged him, sergeant."

The mess-sergeant fled out into the darkness, and returned with two troopers and a corporal, all very much perplexed.

"Caught a man stealin' carbines, sir," said the corporal. "Leastways 'e was crawlin' toward the barricks, sir, past the main-road sentries; an' the sentry 'e says, sir —"

The limp heap of rags upheld by the three men groaned. Never was seen so destitute and demoralized an Afghan. He was turbanless, shoeless, caked with dirt, and all but dead with rough handling. Hira Singh started slightly at the sound of the man's pain. Dirkovitch took another liqueur glass of brandy.

"*What* does the sentry say?" said the colonel.

"Sez he speaks English, sir," said the corporal.

"So you brought him into mess instead of handing him over to the sergeant! If he spoke all the tongues of the Pentecost, you've no business —"

Again the bundle groaned and muttered. Little Mildred had risen from his place to

inspect. He jumped back as though he had been shot.

"Perhaps it would be better, sir, to send the men away," said he to the colonel, for he was a much-privileged subaltern. He put his arms round the rag-bownd horror as he spoke, and dropped him into a chair. It may not have been explained that the littleness of Mildred lay in his being six feet four, and big in proportion. The corporal, seeing that an officer was disposed to look after the capture, and that the colonel's eye was beginning to blaze, promptly removed himself and his men. The mess was left alone with the carbine thief, who laid his head on the table and wept bitterly, hopelessly, and inconsolably, as little children weep.

Hira Singh leaped to his feet with a long-drawn vernacular oath. "Colonel Sahib," said he, "that man is no Afghan, for they weep '*Ai! Ai!*' Nor is he of Hindoostan, for they weep '*Oh! Ho!*' He weeps after the fashion of the white men, who say '*Ow! Ow!*'"

"Now where the dickens did you get that knowledge, Hira Singh?" said the captain of the Lushkar team.

"Hear him!" said Hira Singh, simply, pointing at the crumpled figure, that wept as though it would never cease.

"He said, 'My God!'" said Little Mildred. "I heard him say it."

The colonel and the mess-room looked at the man in silence. It is a horrible thing to hear a man cry. A woman can sob from the top of her palate, or her lips, or anywhere else, but a man cries from his diaphragm, and it rends him to pieces. Also, the exhibition causes the throat of the on-looker to close at the top.

"Poor devil!" said the colonel, coughing tremendously. "We ought to send him to hospital. He's been mishandled."

Now the adjutant loved his rifles. They were to him as his grandchildren—the men standing in the first place. He grunted rebelliously: "I can understand an Afghan stealing, because he's made that way. But I can't understand his crying. That makes it worse."

The brandy must have affected Dirkovitch, for he lay back in his chair and stared at the ceiling. There was nothing special in the ceiling beyond a shadow as of a huge black coffin. Owing to some peculiarity in the construction of the mess-room, this shadow was always thrown when the candles were lighted. It never disturbed the digestion of the White Hussars. They were, in fact, rather proud of it.

"Is he going to cry all night," said the colonel, "or are we supposed to sit up with

Little Mildred's guest until he feels better?"

The man in the chair threw up his head and stared at the mess. Outside, the wheels of the first of those bidden to the festivities crunched the roadway.

"Oh, my God!" said the man in the chair, and every soul in the mess rose to his feet. Then the Lushkar captain did a deed for which he ought to have been given the Victoria Cross — distinguished gallantry in a fight against overwhelming curiosity. He picked up his team with his eyes as the hostess picks up the ladies at the opportune moment, and pausing only by the colonel's chair to say: "This isn't *our* affair, you know, sir," led the team into the veranda and the gardens. Hira Singh was the last, and he looked at Dirkovitch as he moved. But Dirkovitch had departed into a brandy paradise of his own. His lips moved without sound, and he was studying the coffin on the ceiling.

"White — white all over," said Basset-Holmer, the adjutant. "What a pernicious renegade he must be! I wonder where he came from?"

The colonel shook the man gently by the arm, and "Who are you?" said he.

There was no answer. The man stared round the mess-room and smiled in the colonel's face. Little Mildred, who was

always more of a woman than a man till "Boot and saddle" was sounded, repeated the question in a voice that would have drawn confidences from a geyser. The man only smiled. Dirkovitch, at the far end of the table, slid gently from his chair to the floor. No son of Adam, in this present imperfect world, can mix the Hussars' champagne with the Hussars' brandy by five and eight glasses of each without remembering the pit whence he has been digged and descended thither. The band began to play the tune with which the White Hussars, from the date of their formation, preface all their functions. They would sooner be disbanded than abandon that tune. It is a part of their system. The man straightened himself in his chair and drummed on the table with his fingers.

"I don't see why we should entertain lunatics," said the colonel; "call a guard and send him off to the cells. We'll look into the business in the morning. Give him a glass of wine first, though."

Little Mildred filled a sherry glass with the brandy and thrust it over to the man. He drank, and the tune rose louder, and he straightened himself yet more. Then he put out his long-taloned hands to a piece of plate opposite and fingered it lovingly. There was a mystery connected with that piece of plate in the shape of a spring,

which converted what was a seven-branched candlestick, three springs each side and one in the middle, into a sort of wheel-spoke candelabrum. He found the spring, pressed it, and laughed weakly. He rose from his chair and inspected a picture on the wall, then moved on to another picture, the mess watching him without a word. When he came to the mantel-piece he shook his head and seemed distressed. A piece of plate representing a mounted hussar in full uniform caught his eye. He pointed to it, and then to the mantel-piece, with inquiry in his eyes.

"What is it — oh, what is it?" said Little Mildred. Then, as a mother might speak to a child, "That is a horse — yes, a horse."

Very slowly came the answer, in a thick, passionless guttural: "Yes, I — have seen. But — where is *the* horse?"

He could have heard the hearts of the mess beating as the men drew back to give the stranger full room in his wanderings. There was no question of calling the guard.

Again he spoke, very slowly: "Where is *our* horse?"

There is no saying what happened after that. There is but one horse in the White Hussars, and his portrait hangs outside the door of the mess-room. He is the piebald

drum-horse, the king of the regimental band, that served the regiment for seven and thirty years, and in the end was shot for old age. Half the mess tore the thing down from its place and thrust it into the man's hands. He placed it above the mantel-piece; it clattered on the ledge, as his poor hands dropped it, and he staggered toward the bottom of the table, falling into Mildred's chair. The band began to play the "River of Years" waltz, and the laughter from the gardens came into the tobacco-scented mess-room. But nobody, even the youngest, was thinking of waltzes. They all spoke to one another something after this fashion: "The drum-horse hasn't hung over the mantel-piece since '67." "How does he know?" "Mildred, go and speak to him again." "Colonel, what are you going to do?" "Oh, dry up, and give the poor devil a chance to pull himself together!" "It isn't possible, anyhow. The man's a lunatic."

Little Mildred stood at the colonel's side talking into his ear. "Will you be good enough to take your seats, please, gentlemen?" he said, and the mess dropped into the chairs.

Only Dirkovitch's seat, next to Little Mildred's, was blank, and Little Mildred himself had found Hira Singh's place.

The wide-eyed mess-sergeant filled the glasses in dead silence. Once more the colonel rose, but his hand shook, and the port spilled on the table as he looked straight at the man in Little Mildred's chair and said, hoarsely: "Mr. Vice, the Queen." There was a little pause, but the man sprung to his feet and answered, without hesitation: "The Queen, God bless her!" and as he emptied the thin glass he snapped the shank between his fingers.

Long and long ago, when the Empress of India was a young woman, and there were no unclean ideals in the land, it was the custom in a few messes to drink the queen's toast in broken glass, to the huge delight of the mess contractors. The custom is now dead, because there is nothing to break anything for, except now and again the word of a government, and that has been broken already.

"That settles it," said the colonel, with a gasp. "He's not a sergeant. What in the world is he?"

The entire mess echoed the word, and the volley of questions would have scared any man. Small wonder that the ragged, filthy invader could only smile and shake his head.

From under the table, calm and smiling urbanely, rose Dirkovitch, who had been roused from healthful slumber by feet upon

his body. By the side of the man he rose, and the man shrieked and groveled at his feet. It was a horrible sight, coming so swiftly upon the pride and glory of the toast that had brought the strayed wits together.

Dirkovitch made no offer to raise him, but Little Mildred heaved him up in an instant. It is not good that a gentleman who can answer to the queen's toast should lie at the feet of a subaltern of Cossacks.

The hasty action tore the wretch's upper clothing nearly to the waist, and his body was seamed with dry black scars. There is only one weapon in the world that cuts in parallel lines, and it is neither the cane nor the cat. Dirkovitch saw the marks, and the pupils of his eyes dilated — also, his face changed. He said something that sounded like "Shto ve takete;" and the man, fawning, answered "Chetyre."

"What's that?" said everybody together.

"His number. That is number four, you know." Dirkovitch spoke very thickly.

"What has a queen's officer to do with a qualified number?" said the colonel, and there rose an unpleasant growl round the table.

"How can I tell?" said the affable Oriental, with a sweet smile. "He is a — how

you have it? — escape — runaway, from over there."

He nodded toward the darkness of the night.

"Speak to him, if he'll answer you, and speak to him gently," said Little Mildred, settling the man in a chair. It seemed most improper to all present that Dirkovitch should sip brandy as he talked in purring, spitting Russian to the creature who answered so feebly and with such evident dread. But since Dirkovitch appeared to understand, no man said a word. They breathed heavily, leaning forward in the long gaps of the conversation. The next time that they have no engagements on hand the White Hussars intend to go to St. Petersburg and learn Russian.

"He does not know how many years ago," said Dirkovitch, facing the mess, "but he says it was very long ago, in a war. I think that there was an accident. He says he was of this glorious and distinguished regiment in the war."

"The rolls! The rolls! Holmer, get the rolls!" said Little Mildred, and the adjutant dashed off bareheaded to the orderly-room where the rolls of the regiment were kept. He returned just in time to hear Dirkovitch conclude: "Therefore I am most sorry to say there was an accident, which would have been reparable if

he had apologized to that our colonel, which he had insulted."

Another growl, which the colonel tried to beat down. The mess was in no mood to weigh insults to Russian colonels just then.

"He does not remember, but I think that there was an accident, and so he was not exchanged among the prisoners, but he was sent to another place — how do you say? — the country. *So*, he says, he came here. He does not know how he came. Eh? He was at Chepany"— the man caught the word, nodded, and shivered — "at Zhigansk and Irkutsk. I can not understand how he escaped. He says, too, that he was in the forests for many years, but how many years he has forgotten — that with many things. It was an accident; done because he did not apologize to that our colonel. Ah!"

Instead of echoing Dirkovitch's sigh of regret, it is sad to record that the White Hussars livelily exhibited unchristian delight and other emotions, hardly restrained by their sense of hospitality. Holmer flung the frayed and yellow regimental rolls on the table, and the men flung themselves atop of these.

"Steady! Fifty-six — fifty-five — fifty-four," said Holmer. "Here we are. 'Lieutenant Austin Limmason — *missing*.'

That was before Sebastopol. What an infernal shame! Insulted one of their colonels, and was quietly shipped off. Thirty years of his life wiped out."

"But he never apologized. Said he'd see him —— first," chorused the mess.

"Poor devil! I suppose he never had the chance afterward. How did he come here?" said the colonel.

The dingy heap in the chair could give no answer.

"Do you know who you are?"

It laughed weakly.

"Do you know that you are Limmason — Lieutenant Limmason, of the White Hussars?"

Swift as a shot came the answer, in a slightly surprised tone: "Yes, I'm Limmason, of course." The light died out in his eyes, and he collapsed afresh, watching every motion of Dirkovitch with terror. A flight from Siberia may fix a few elementary facts in the mind, but it does not lead to continuity of thought. The man could not explain how, like a homing pigeon, he had found his way to his old mess again. Of what he had suffered or seen he knew nothing. He cringed before Dirkovitch as instinctively as he had pressed the spring of the candlestick, sought the picture of the drum-horse, and answered to the queen's toast. The rest

was a blank that the dreaded Russian tongue could only in part remove. His head bowed on his breast, and he giggled and cowered alternately.

The devil that lived in the brandy prompted Dirkovitch at this extremely inopportune moment to make a speech. He rose, swaying slightly, gripped the table-edge, while his eyes glowed like opals, and began:

"Fellow-soldiers glorious — true friends and hospitables. It was an accident, and deplorable — most deplorable." Here he smiled sweetly all round the mess. "But you will think of this little — little thing. So little, is it not? The czar! Posh! I slap my fingers — I snap my fingers at him. Do I believe in him? No! But the Slav who has done nothing, *him* I believe. Seventy—how much? — millions that have done nothing — not one thing. Napoleon was an episode." He banged a hand on the table. "Hear you, old peoples, we have done nothing in the world — out here. All our work is to do: and it shall be done, old peoples. Get away!" He waved his hand imperiously, and pointed to the man. "You see him. He is not good to see. He was just one little — oh, so little — accident, that no one remembered. Now he is *That*. So will you be, brother-soldiers so brave — so will you be. But you

will never come back. You will all go where he is gone, or —" he pointed to the great coffin shadow on the ceiling, and muttering, "Seventy millions — get away, you old people," fell asleep.

"Sweet, and to the point," said Little Mildred. "What's the use of getting wroth? Let's make the poor devil comfortable."

But that was a matter suddenly and swiftly taken from the loving hands of the White Hussars. The lieutenant had returned only to go away again three days later, when the wail of the "Dead March" and the tramp of the squadrons told the wondering station, that saw no gap in the table, an officer of the regiment had resigned his new-found commission.

And Dirkovitch — bland, supple, and always genial — went away too by a night train. Little Mildred and another saw him off, for he was the guest of the mess, and even had he smitten the colonel with the open hand, the law of the mess allowed no relaxation of hospitality.

"Good-bye, Dirkovitch, and a pleasant journey," said Little Mildred.

"*Au revoir*, my true friends," said the Russian.

"Indeed! But we thought you were going home?"

"Yes; but I will come again. My

friends, is that road shut?" He pointed to where the north star burned over the Khyber Pass.

"By Jove! I forgot. Of course. Happy to meet you, old man, any time you like. Got everything you want — cheroots, ice, bedding? That's all right. Well, *au revoir*, Dirkovitch."

"Um," said the other man, as the tail-lights of the train grew small. "Of — all — the — unmitigated —"

Little Mildred answered nothing, but watched the north star, and hummed a selection from a recent burlesque that had much delighted the White Hussars. It ran:

"I'm sorry for Mr. Bluebeard,
I'm sorry to cause him pain:
But a terrible spree there's sure to be
When he comes back again."

THE END.

On Greenhow Hill

ON GREENHOW HILL.

"*Ohé ahmed din! Shafiz Ullah ahoo!* Bahadur Khan, where are you? Come out of the tents, as I have done, and fight against the English. Don't kill your own kin! Come out to me!"

The deserter from a native corps was crawling round the outskirts of the camp, firing at intervals, and shouting invitations to his old comrades. Misled by the rain and the darkness, he came to the English wing of the camp, and with his yelping and rifle practise disturbed the men. They had been making roads all day, and were tired.

Ortheris was sleeping at Learoyd's feet. "Wot's all that?" he said, thickly. Learoyd snored, and a Snider bullet ripped its way through the tent wall. The men swore. "It's that bloomin' deserter from the Aurangabadis," said Ortheris. "Git up, some one, an' tell 'em 'e's come to the wrong shop."

"Go to sleep, little man," said Mulvaney, who was steaming nearest the door. "I can't rise an' expaytiate with him. 'Tis rainin' intrenchin' tools outside."

"'Tain't because you bloomin' can't. It's cause you bloomin' won't, ye long, limp, lousy, lazy beggar you. 'Ark to 'im 'owling!"

"Wot's the good of argyfying? Put a bullet into the swine? 'E's keepin' us awake!" said another voice.

A subaltern shouted angrily, and a dripping sentry whined from the darkness.

"'Tain't no good, sir. I can't see 'im. 'E's 'idin' somewhere down 'ill."

Ortheris tumbled out of his blanket. "Shall I try to get 'im, sir?" said he.

"No," was the answer; "lie down. I won't have the whole camp shooting all round the clock. Tell him to go and pot his friends."

Ortheris considered for a moment. Then, putting his head under the tent wall, he called, as a 'bus conductor calls in a block, "'Igher up, there! 'Igher up!"

The men laughed, and the laughter was carried down wind to the deserter, who, hearing that he had made a mistake, went off to worry his own regiment half a mile away. He was received with shots, for the Aurangabadis were very angry with him for disgracing their colors.

"An' that's all right," said Ortheris, withdrawing his head as he heard the hiccough of the Sniders in the distance. "S'elp me Gawd, tho', that man's not fit to live—messin' with my beauty-sleep this way."

"Go out and shoot him in the morning, then," said the subaltern, incautiously. "Silence in the tents now! Get your rest, men!"

Ortheris lay down with a happy little sigh, and in two minutes there was no sound except the rain on the canvas and the all-embracing and elemental snoring of Learoyd.

The camp lay on a bare ridge of the Himalayas, and for a week had been waiting for a flying column to make connection. The nightly rounds of the deserter and his friends had become a nuisance.

In the morning the men dried themselves in hot sunshine and cleaned their grimy accouterments. The native regiment was to take its turn of road-making that day while the Old Regiment loafed.

"I'm goin' to lay fer a shot at that man," said Ortheris, when he had finished washing out his rifle. "'E comes up the water-course every evenin' about five o'clock. If we go and lie out on the north 'ill a bit this afternoon we'll get 'im."

"You're a bloodthirsty little mosquito," said Mulvaney, blowing blue clouds into the air. "But I suppose I will have to come wid you. Fwhere's Jock?"

"Gone out with the Mixed Pickles, 'cause 'e thinks 'isself a bloomin' marksman," said Ortheris, with scorn.

The "Mixed Pickles" were a detachment

of picked shots, generally employed in clearing spurs of hills when the enemy were too impertinent. This taught the young officers how to handle men, and did not do the enemy much harm. Mulvaney and Ortheris strolled out of camp, and passed the Aurangabadis going to their road-making.

"You've got to sweat to-day," said Ortheris, genially. "We're going to get your man. You didn't knock 'im out last night by any chance, any of you?"

"No. The pig went away mocking us. I had one shot at him," said a private. "He's my cousin, and *I* ought to have cleared our dishonor. But good-luck to you."

They went cautiously to the north hill, Ortheris leading, because, as he explained, "this is a long-range show, an' I've got to do it." His was an almost passionate devotion to his rifle, whom, by barrack-room report, he was supposed to kiss every night before turning in. Charges and scuffles he held in contempt, and, when they were inevitable, slipped between Mulvaney and Learoyd, bidding them to fight for his skin as well as their own. They never failed him. He trotted along, questing like a hound on a broken trail, through the wood of the north hill. At last he was satisfied, and threw himself down on the soft pine-needle slope that commanded a clear view of the water-course and a brown bare hillside beyond it. The trees made a scented

darkness in which an army corps could have hidden from the sun-glare without.

"'Ere's the tail o' the wood," said Ortheris. "'E's got to come up the water-course, 'cause it gives 'im cover. We'll lay 'ere. 'Tain't not 'arf so bloomin' dusty neither."

He buried his nose in a clump of scentless white violets. No one had come to tell the flowers that the season of their strength was long past, and they had bloomed merrily in the twilight of the pines.

"This is something like," he said, luxuriously. "Wot a 'evinly clear drop for a bullet acrost. How much d' you make it, Mulvaney?"

"Seven hunder. Maybe a trifle less, bekase the air's so thin."

Wop! wop! wop! went a volley of musketry on the rear face of the north hill.

"Curse them Mixed Pickles firin' at nothin'! They'll scare 'arf the country."

"Thry a sightin' shot in the middle of the row," said Mulvaney, the man of many wiles. "There's a red rock yonder he'll be sure to pass. Quick!"

Ortheris ran his sight up to six hundred yards and fired. The bullet threw up a feather of dust by a clump of gentians at the base of the rock.

"Good enough!" said Ortheris, snapping the scale down. "You snick your sights to mine, or a little lower. You're always firin'

high. But remember, first shot to me. Oh, Lordy! but it's a lovely afternoon."

The noise of the firing grew louder, and there was a tramping of men in the wood. The two lay very quiet, for they knew that the British soldier is desperately prone to fire at anything that moves or calls. Then Learoyd appeared, his tunic ripped across the breast by a bullet, looking ashamed of himself. He flung down on the pine-needles, breathing in snorts.

"One o' them damned gardeners o' th' Pickles," said he, fingering the rent. "Firin' to th' right flank, when he knowed I was there. If I knew who he was I'd 'a' ripped the hide off 'un. Look at ma tunic!"

"That's the spishil trustability av a marksman. Train him to hit a fly wid a stiddy rest at seven hunder, an' he'll loose on anythin' he sees or hears up to th' mile. You're well out av that fancy-firin' gang, Jock. Stay here."

"Bin firin' at the bloomin' wind in the bloomin' treetops," said Ortheris, with a chuckle. "I'll show you some firin' later on."

They wallowed in the pine-needles, and the sun warmed them where they lay. The Mixed Pickles ceased firing and returned to camp, and left the wood to a few scared apes. The water-course lifted up its voice in the silence and talked foolishly to the rocks. Now and again the dull thump of a blasting charge three

miles away told that the Aurangabadis were in difficulties with their road-making. The men smiled as they listened, and lay still soaking in the warm leisure. Presently Learoyd, between the whiffs of his pipe:

"Seems queer—about 'im yonder—desertin' at all."

"'E'll be a bloomin' side queerer when I've done with 'im," said Ortheris. They were talking in whispers, for the stillness of the wood and the desire of slaughter lay heavy upon them.

"I make no doubt he had his reasons for desertin'; but, my faith! I make less doubt ivry man has good reason for killin' him," said Mulvaney.

"Happen there was a lass tewed up wi' it. Men do more than more for th' sake of a lass."

"They make most av of us 'list. They've no manner av right to make us desert."

"Ah, they make us 'list, or their fathers do," said Learoyd, softly, his helmet over his eyes.

Ortheris' brows contracted savagely. He was watching the valley. "If it's a girl, I'll shoot the beggar twice over, an' second time for bein' a fool. You're blasted sentimental all of a sudden. Thinkin' o' your last near shave?"

"Nay, lad; ah was but thinkin' o' what had happened."

"An' fwhat has happened, ye lumberin'

child av calamity, that you're lowing like a cow-calf at the back av the pasture, an' suggestin' invidious excuses for the man Stanley's goin' to kill. Ye'll have to wait another hour yet, little man. Spit it out, Jock, an' bellow melojus to the moon. It takes an earthquake or a bullet graze to fetch aught out av you. Discourse, Don Juan! The a-moors of Lotharius Learoyd. Stanley, kape a rowlin' rig'mental eye on the valley."

"It's along o' yon hill there," said Learoyd, watching the bare sub-Himalayan spur that reminded him of his Yorkshire moors. He was speaking more to himself than his fellows. "Ay," said he; "Rumbolds Moor stands up ower Skipton town, an' Greenhow Hill stands up ower Pately Brigg. I reckon you've never heard tell o' Greenhow Hill, but yon bit o' bare stuff, if there was nobbut a white road windin', is like ut, strangely like. Moors an' moors—moors wi' never a tree for shelter, an' gray houses wi' flag-stone rooves, and pewits cryin', an' a windhover goin' to and fro just like these kites. And cold! a wind that cuts you like a knife. You could tell Greenhow Hill folk by the red-apple color o' their cheeks an' nose tips, an' their blue eyes, driven into pin-points by the wind. Miners mostly, burrowin' for lead i' th' hillsides, followin' the trail of th' ore vein same as a field-rat. It was the roughest minin' I ever seen. Yo'd come on a bit o' creakin' wood windlass like a well-

head, an' you was let down i' th' bight of a rope, fendin' yoursen off the side wi' one hand, carryin' a candle stuck in a lump o' clay with t'other, an' clickin' hold of a rope with t'other hand."

"An' that's three of them," said Mulvaney. "Must be a good climate in those parts."

Learoyd took no heed.

"An' then yo' came to a level, where you crept on your hands an' knees through a mile o' windin' drift, an' you come out into a cave-place as big as Leeds Town-hall, with a engine pumpin' water from workin's 'at went deeper still. It's a queer country, let alone minin', for the hill is full of those natural caves, an' the rivers an' the becks drops into what they call pot-holes, an' come out again miles away."

"Wot was you doin' there?" said Ortheris.

"I was a young chap then, an' mostly went wi' 'osses, leadin' coal and lead ore; but at th' time I'm tellin' on I was drivin' the wagon team i' the big sumph. I didn't belong to that countryside by rights. I went there because of a little difference at home, an' at fust I took up wi' a rough lot. One night we'd been drinkin', and I must ha' hed more than I could stand, or happen th' ale was none so good. Though i' them days, by for God, I never seed bad ale." He flung his arms over his head and gripped a vast handful of white violets. "Nah," said he, "I never seed the

ale I could not drink, the 'bacca I could not smoke, nor the lass I could not kiss. Well, we mun have a race home, the lot on us. I lost all th' others, an' when I was climbin' ower one of them walls built o' loose stones, I comes down into the ditch, stones an' all, 'an broke my arm. Not as I knowed much about it, for I fell on th' back o' my head, an' was knocked stupid like. An' when I come to mysen it were mornin', an' I were lyin' on the settle i' Jesse Roantree's house-place, an' 'Liza Roantree was settin' sewin'. I ached all ower, and my mouth were like a lime-kiln. She gave me a drink out of a china mug wi' gold letters—'A Present from Leeds,'—as I looked at many and many a time after. 'Yo're to lie still while Doctor Warbottom comes, because your arm's broken, an' father has sent a lad to fetch him. He found yo' when he was goin' to work, an' carried you here on his back,' sez she. 'Oa!' sez I; an' I shet my eyes, for I felt ashamed o' mysen. 'Father's gone to his work these three hours, an' he said he'd tell 'em to get somebody to drive the train.' The clock ticked an' a bee comed in the house, an' they rung i' my head like mill wheels. An' she give me another drink an' settled the pillow. 'Eh, but yo're young to be getten drunk an' such like, but yo' won't do it again, will yo?' 'Noa,' sez I. 'I wouldn't if she'd not but stop they mill-wheels clatterin'.'"

"Faith, it's a good thing to be nursed by a woman when you're sick!" said Mulvaney. "Dirt cheap at the price av twenty broken heads."

Ortheris turned to frown across the valley. He had not been nursed by many women in his life.

"An' then Doctor Warbottom comes ridin' up, an' Jesse Roantree along with 'im. He was a high-larned doctor, but he talked wi' poor folks same as theirsens. 'What's tha bin agaate on naa?' he sings out. 'Brekkin tha thick head?' An' he felt me all over. 'That's none broken. Tha' nobbut knocked a bit sillier than ordinary, an' that's daaft eneaf.' An' soa he went on, callin' me all the names he could think on, but settin' my arm, wi' Jesse's help, as careful as could be. 'Yo' mun let the big oaf bide here a bit, Jesse,' he says, when he had strapped me up an' given me a dose o' physic; 'an' you an' 'Liza will tend him, though he's scarcelins worth the trouble. An' tha'll lose tha work,' sez he, 'an' tha'll be upon th' Sick Club for a couple o' months an' more. Doesn't tha think tha's a fool?'"

"But whin was a young man, high or low, the other av a fool, I'd like to know?" said Mulvaney. "Sure, folly's the only safe way to wisdom, for I've thried it."

"Wisdom!" grinned Ortheris, scanning

his comrades with uplifted chin. "You're bloomin' Solomons, you two, ain't you?"

Learoyd went calmly on, with a steady eye like an ox chewing the cud. "And that was how I comed to know 'Liza Roantree. There's some tunes as she used to sing—aw, she were always singin'—that fetches Greenhow Hill before my eyes as fair as yon brow across there. And she would learn me to sing bass, an' I was to go to th' chapel wi' 'em, where Jesse and she led the singin', th' old man playin' the fiddle. He was a strange chap, old Jesse, fair mad wi' music, an' he made me promise to learn the big fiddle when my arm was better. It belonged to him, and it stood up in a big case alongside o' th' eight-day clock, but Willie Satterthwaite, as played it in the chapel, had getten deaf as a door-post, and it vexed Jesse, as he had to rap him ower his head wi' th' fiddle-stick to make him give ower sawin' at th' right time.

"But there was a black drop in it all, an' it was a man in a black coat that brought it. When th' Primitive Methodist preacher came to Greenhow, he would always stop wi' Jesse Roantree, an' he laid hold of me from th' beginning. It seemed I wor a soul to be saved, an' he meaned to do it. At th' same time I jealoused 'at he were keen o' savin' 'Liza Roantree's soul as well, an' I could ha' killed him many a time. An' this went on till one day I broke out, an' borrowed th' brass for a

drink from 'Liza. After fower days I come back, wi' my tail between my legs, just to see 'Liza again. But Jesse were at home, an' th' preacher—th' Reverend Amos Barraclough. 'Liza said naught, but a bit o' red come into her face as were white of a regular thing. Says Jesse, tryin' his best to be civil: 'Nay, lad, it's like this. You've getten to choose which way it's goin' to be. I'll ha' nobody across ma doorsteps as goes a-drinkin', an' borrows my lass's money to spend i' their drink. Ho'd tha tongue, 'Liza,' sez he when she wanted to put in a word 'at I were welcome to th' brass, an' she were none afraid that I wouldn't pay it back. Then the reverend cuts in, seein' as Jesse were losin' his temper, an' they fair beat me among them. But it were 'Liza, as looked an' said naught, as did more than either o' their tongues, an' soa I concluded to get converted."

"Fwhat!" shouted Mulvaney. Then, checking himself, he said, softly: "Let be! Let be! Sure the Blessed Virgin is the mother of all religion an' most women; an' there's a dale av piety in a girl if the men would only let it stay there. I'd ha' been converted myself under the circumstances."

"Nay, but," pursued Learoyd, with a blush, "I meaned it."

Ortheris laughed as loudly as he dared, having regard to his business at the time.

"Ay, Ortheris, you may laugh, but you

didn't know yon preacher Barraclough—a little white-faced chap wi' a voice as 'ud wile a bird off an a bush, and a way o' layin' hold of folks as made them think they'd never had a live man for a friend before. You never saw him, an'—an'—you never seed 'Liza Roantree—never seed 'Liza Roantree. . . . Happen it was as much 'Liza as th' preacher and her father, but anyways they all meaned it, an' I was fair shamed o' mysen, an' so become what they called a changed character. And when I think on, it's hard to believe as yon chap going to prayer-meetin's, chapel, and class-meetin's were me. But I never had naught to say for mysen, though there was a deal o' shoutin', and old Sammy Strother, as were almost clemmed to death and doubled up with the rheumatics, would sing out, 'Joyful! joyful!' and 'at it were better to go up to heaven in a coal-basket than down to hell i' a coach an' six. And he would put his poor old claw on my shoulder, sayin': 'Doesn't tha feel it, tha great lump? Doesn't tha feel it?' An' sometimes I thought I did, and then again I thought I didn't, an' how was that?"

"The iverlastin' nature av mankind," said Mulvaney. "An', furthermore, I misdoubt you were built for the Primitive Methodians. They're a new corps anyways. I hold by the Ould Church, for she's the mother of them all —ay, an' the father, too. I like her bekase

she's most remarkable regimental in her fittings. I may die in Honolulu, Nova Zambra, or Cape Cayenne, but wherever I die, me bein' fwhat I am, an' a priest handy, I go under the same orders an' the same words an' the same unction as tho' the pope himself come down from the dome av St. Peter's to see me off. There's neither high nor low, nor broad nor deep, not betwixt nor between with her, an' that's what I like. But mark you, she's no manner av Church for a wake man, bekase she takes the body and the soul av him, onless he has his proper work to do. I remember when my father died, that was three months comin' to his grave ; begad he'd ha' sold the sheebeen above our heads for ten minutes' quittance of purgathory. An' he did all he could. That's why I say it takes a strong man to deal with the Ould Church, an' for that reason you'll find so many women go there. An' that same's a conundrum."

"Wot's the use o' worritin' 'bout these things ? " said Ortheris. "You're bound to find all out quicker nor you want to, any'ow." He jerked the cartridge out of the breech-lock into the palm of his hand. "'Ere's my chaplain," he said, and made the venomous black-headed bullet bow like a marionette. "'E's going' to teach a man all about which is which, an' wot's true, after all, before sundown. But wot 'appened after that, Jock ? "

"There was one thing they boggled at, and

almost shut th' gate i' my face for, and that were my dog Blast, th' only one saved out o' a litter o' pups as was blowed up when a keg o' minin' powder loosed off in th' storekeeper's hut. They liked his name no better than his business, which was fightin' every dog he comed across ; a rare good dog, wi' spots o' black and pink on his face, one ear gone, and lame o' one side wi' being driven in a basket through an iron roof, a matter of half a mile.

" They said I mun give him up 'cause 'he were worldly and low ; and would I let mysen be shut out of heaven for the sake of a dog ? ' Nay,' says I, ' if th' door isn't wide enough for th' pair on us, we'll stop outside, or we'll none be parted.' And th' preacher spoke up for Blast, as had a likin' for him from th' first —I reckon that was why I come to like th' preacher—and wouldn't hear o' changin' his name to Bless, as some o' them wanted. So th' pair on us became reg'lar chapel members. But it's hard for a young chap o' my build to cut tracks from the world, th' flesh, an' the devil all av a heap. Yet I stuck to it for a long time, while th' lads as used to stand about th' town-end an' lean ower th' bridge, spittin' into th' beck o' a Sunday, would call after me, ' Sitha, Learoyd, when's tha bean to preach, 'cause we're comin' to hear that.' ' Ho'd tha jaw ! He hasn't getten th' white choaker on to morn,' another lad would say, and I had to double my fists hard i' th' bottom of my Sun-

day coat, and say to mysen, 'If 'twere Monday and I warn't a member o' the Primitive Methodists, I'd leather all th' lot of yond'.' That was th' hardest of all—to know that I could fight and I mustn't fight."

Sympathetic grunts from Mulvaney.

"So what wi' singin', practicin,' and class-meetin's, and th' big fiddle, as he made me take between my knees, I spent a deal o' time i' Jesse Roantree's house-place. But often as I was there, th' preacher fared to me to go oftener, and both th' old an' th' young woman were pleased to have him. He lived i' Pately Brigg, as were a goodish step off, but he come. He come all the same. I liked him as well or better as any man I'd ever seen i' one way, and yet I hated him wi' all my heart i' t'other, and we watched each other like cat and mouse, but civil as you please, for I was on my best behavior, and he was that fair and open that I was bound to be fair with him. Rare and good company he was, if I hadn't wanted to wring his cliver little neck half of the time. Often and often when he was goin' from Jesse's I'd set him a bit on the road."

"See 'im 'ome, you mean?" said Ortheris.

"Aye. It's a way we have i' Yorkshire o' seein' friends off. Yon was a friend as I didn't want to come back, and he didn't want me to come back neither, and so we'd walk together toward Pately, and then he'd set me back again, and there we'd be twal two i'

o'clock the mornin' settin' each other to an' fro like a blasted pair o' pendulums twixt hill and valley, long after th' light had gone out i' 'Liza's window, as both on us had been looking at, pretending to watch the moon."

"Ah!" broke in Mulvaney, "ye'd no chanst against the maraudin' psalm-singer. They'll take the airs an' the graces, instid av the man, nine times out av ten, an' they only find the blunder later—the wimmen."

"That's just where yo're wrong," said Learoyd, reddening under the freckled tan of his cheek. "I was th' first wi' Liza, an' yo'd think that were enough. But th' parson were a steady-gaited sort o' chap, and Jesse were strong o' his side, and all th' women i' the congregation dinned it to 'Liza 'at she were fair fond to take up wi' a wastrel ne'er-do-weel like me, as was scarcelins respectable, and a fighting-dog at his heels. It was all very well for her to be doing me good and saving my soul, but she must mind as she didn't do herself harm. They talk o' rich folk bein' stuck up an' genteel, but for cast-iron pride o' respectability, there's naught like poor chapel folk. It's as cold as th' wind o' Greenhow Hill—aye, and colder, for 'twill never change. And now I come to think on it, one of the strangest things I know is 'at they couldn't abide th' thought o' soldiering. There's a vast o' fightin' i' th' Bible, and there's a deal of Methodists i' th' army; but

to hear chapel folk talk yo'd think that soldierin' were next door, an t'other side, to hangin'. I' their meetin's all their talk is o' fightin'. When Sammy Strother were struk for summat to say in his prayers, he'd sing out: 'The sword o' th' Lord and o' Gideon.' They were allus at it about puttin' on th' whole armor o' righteousness, an' fightin' the good fight o' faith. And then, atop o' 't all, they held a prayer-meetin' ower a young chap as wanted to 'list, and nearly deafened him, till he picked up his hat and fair ran away. And they'd tell tales in th' Sunday-school o' bad lads as had been thumped and brayed for bird-nesting o' Sundays and playin' truant o' week-days, and how they took to wrestlin', dog-fightin', rabbit-runnin', and drinkin', till at last, as if 'twere a hepitaph on a gravestone, they damned him across th' moors wi' it, an' then he went and 'listed for a soldier, an' they'd all fetch a deep breath, and throw up their eyes like a hen drinkin'."

"Fwhy is it?" said Mulvaney, bringing down his hands on his thigh with a crack. "In the name av God, fwhy is it? I've seen it, tu. They cheat an' they swindle, an' they lie an' they slander, an' fifty things fifty times worse; but the last an' the worst, by their reckonin', is to serve the Widdy honest. It's like the talk av childer—seein' things all round."

"Plucky lot of fightin' good fights of whats-

ername they'd do if we didn't see they had a quiet place to fight in. And such fightin' as theirs is! Cats on the tiles. T'other callin' to which to come on. I'd give a month's pay to get some o' them broad-backed beggars in London sweatin' through a day's road-makin' an' a night's rain. They'd carry on a deal afterward—same as we're supposed to carry on. I've bin turned out of a measly 'arf license pub. down Lambeth way, full o' greasy kebmen, 'fore now," said Ortheris with an oath.

"Maybe you were dhrunk," said Mulvaney, soothingly.

"Worse nor that. The Forders were drunk. I was wearin' the queen's uniform."

"I'd not particular thought to be a soldier i' them days," said Learoyd, still keeping his eye on the bare hill opposite, "but his sort o' talk put it i' my head. They was so good, th' chapel folk, that they tumbled ower t'other side. But I stuck to it for 'Liza's sake, specially as she was learning me to sing the bass part in a horotorio as Jesse were getting up. She sung like a throstle hersen, and we had practisin's night after night for a matter of three months."

"I know what a horotorio is," said Ortheris, pertly. "It's a sort of chaplain's sing-song—words all out of the Bible, and hullabaloojah choruses."

"Most Greenhow Hill folks played some instrument or t'other, an' they all sung so you might have heard them miles away, and they was so pleased wi' the noise they made they didn't fair to want anybody to listen. The preacher sung high seconds when he wasn't playin' the flute, an' they set me, as hadn't got far with big fiddle, again Willie Satterthwaite, to jog his elbow when he had to get a' gate playin'. Old Jesse was happy if ever a man was, for he were th' conductor an' th' first fiddle an' th' leadin' singer, beatin' time wi' his fiddle-stick, till at times he'd rap with it on the table, and cry out: 'Now, you mun all stop; it's my turn.' And he'd face round to his front, fair sweatin' wi' pride, to sing the tenor solos. But he were grandest i' th' chorus waggin' his head, flinging his arms round like a windmill, and singin' hisself black in the face. A rare singer were Jesse.

"Yo' see, I was not o' much account wi' 'em all exceptin' to Eliza Roantree, and I had a deal o' time settin' quiet at meeting and horotorio practises to hearken their talk, and if it were strange to me at beginnin', it got stranger still at after, when I was shut in, and could study what it meaned.

"Just after th' horotorios come off, 'Liza, as had allus been weakly like, was took very bad. I walked Doctor Warbottom's horse up and down a deal of times while he were inside,

where they wouldn't let me go, though I fair ached to see her.

"'She'll be better i' noo, lad—better i' noo,' he used to say. 'Tha mun ha' patience.' Then they said if I was quiet I might go in, and th' Reverend Amos Barraclough used to read to her lyin' propped up among th' pillows. Then she began to mend a bit, and they let me carry her on th' settle, and when it got warm again she went about same as afore. Th' preacher and me and Blast was a deal together i' them days, and i' one way we was rare good comrades. But I could ha' stretched him time and again with a good-will. I mind one day he said he would like to go down into th' bowels o' th' earth, and see how th' Lord had builded th' framework o' the everlastin' hills. He was one of them chaps as had a gift o' sayin' things. They rolled off the tip of his clever tongue, same as Mulvaney here, as would ha' made a rale good preacher if he had nobbut given his mind to it. I lent him a suit o' miner's kit as almost buried th' little man, and his white face, down i' th' coat collar and hat flap, looked like the face of a boggart, and he cowered down i' th' bottom o' the wagon. I was drivin' a tram as led up a bit of an incline up to th' cave where the engine was pumpin', and where th' ore was brought up and put into th' wagons as went down o' themselves, me puttin' th' brake on and th' horses a-trottin' after. Long as it was

daylight we were good friends, but when we got fair into th' dark, and could nobbut see th' day shinin' at the hole like a lamp at a street end, I feeled downright wicked. My religion dropped all away from me when I looked back at him as were always comin' between me and Eliza. The talk was 'at they were to be wed when she got better, an' I couldn't get her to say yes or nay to it. He began to sing a hymn in his thin voice, and I came out wi' a chorus that was all cussin' an' swearin' at my horses, an' I began to know how I hated him. He were such a little chap, too. I could drop him wi' one hand down Garstang's copperhole—a place where th' beck slithered ower th' edge on a rock, and fell wi' a bit of a whisper into a pit as rope i' Greenhow could plump."

Again Learoyd rooted up the innocent violets. "Aye, he should see th' bowels o' th' earth an' never naught else. I could take him a mile or two along th' drift, and leave him wi' his candle doused to cry hallelujah, wi' none to hear him and say amen. I was to lead him down the ladderway to th' drift where Jesse Roantree was workin', and why shouldn't he slip on th' ladder, wi' my feet on his fingers till they loosed grip, and I put him down wi' my heel? If I went fust down th' ladder I could click hold on him and chuck him over my head, so as he should go squashin' down the shaft, breakin' his bones at ev'ry timberin', as

Bill Appleton did when he was fresh, and hadn't a bone left when he brought to th' bottom. Niver a blasted leg to walk from Pately. Niver an arm to put round 'Liza Roantree's waist. Niver no more—niver no more."

The thick lips curled back over the yellow teeth, and that flushed face was not pretty to look upon. Mulvaney nodded sympathy, and Ortheris, moved by his comrade's passion, brought up the rifle to his shoulder, and searched the hillsides for his quarry, muttering ribaldry about a sparrow, a spout, and a thunder-storm. The voice of the water-course supplied the necessary small-talk till Learoyd picked up his story.

"But it's none so easy to kill a man like you. When I'd give up my horses to th' lad as took my place, and I was showin' th' preacher th' workin's, shoutin' into his ear across th' clang o' th' pumpin' engines, I saw he was afraid o' naught; and when the lamplight showed his black eyes, I could feel as he was masterin' me again. I were no better nor Blast chained up short and growlin' i' the depths of him while a strange dog went safe past.

"'Th'art a coward and a fool,' I said to mysen: an' wrestled i' my mind again' him till, when we come to Garstang's copper-hole, I laid hold o' the preacher and lifted him up over my head and held him into the darkest on it. 'Now, lad,' I says, 'it's to be one or

t'other on us—thee or me—for 'Liza Roantree. Why, isn't thee afraid for thysen?' I says, for he were still i' my arms as a sack. 'Nay; I'm but afraid for thee, my poor lad, as knows naught,' says he. I set him down on th' edge, an' th' beck run stiller, an' there was no more buzzin' in my head like when th' bee come through th' window o' Jesse's house. 'What dost tha mean?' says I.

"'I've often thought as thou ought to know,' says he, 'but 'twas hard to tell thee. 'Liza Roantree's for neither on us, nor for nobody o' this earth. Doctor Warbottom says—and he knows her, and her mother before her—that she is in a decline, and she cannot live six months longer. He's known it for many a day. Steady, John! Steady!' says he. And that weak little man pulled me further back and set me again' him, and talked it all over quiet and still, me turnin' a bunch o' candles in my hand, and counting them ower and ower again as I listened. A deal on it were th' regular preachin' talk, but there were a vast lot as made me begin to think as he were more of a man than I'd ever given him credit for, till I were cut as deep for him as I were for mysen.

"Six candles we had, and we crawled and climbed all that day while they lasted, and I said to mysen: 'Liza Roantree hasn't six months to live.' And when we came into th' daylight again we were like dead men to look

at, an' Blast come behind us without so much as waggin' his tail. When I saw 'Liza again she looked at me a minute, and says: 'Who's telled tha? For I see tha knows.' And she tried to smile as she kissed me, and I fair broke down.

"You see, I was a young chap i' them days, and had seen naught o' life, let alone death, as is allus a-waitin'. She telled me as Doctor Warbottom said as Greenhow air was too keen, and they were goin' to Bradford, to Jesse's brother David, as worked i' a mill, and I mun hold up like a man and a Christian, and she'd pray for me well; and they went away, and the preacher that same back end o' th' year were appointed to another circuit, as they call it, and I were left alone on Greenhow Hill.

"I tried, and I tried hard, to stick to th' chapel, but 'tweren't th' same thing at all after. I hadn't 'Liza's voice to follow i' th' singin', nor her eyes a-shinin' acrost their heads. And i' th' class-meetings they said as I mun have some experiences to tell, and I hadn't a word to say for mysen.

"Blast and me moped a good deal, and happen we didn't behave ourselves over well, for they dropped us, and wondered however they'd come to take us up. I can't tell how we got through th' time, while i' th' winter I gave up my job and went to Bradford. Old Jesse were at th' door o' th' house, in a long street o' little houses. He'd been sendin' th'

children 'way as were clatterin' their clogs in th' causeway, for she were asleep.

"'Is it thee?' he says; 'but you're not to see her. I'll none have her wakened for a nowt like thee. She's goin' fast, and she mun go in peace. Thou'lt never be good for naught i' th' world, and as long as thou lives thou'll never play the big fiddle. Get away, lad, get away!' So he shut the door softly i' my face.

"Nobody never made Jesse my master, but it seemed to me he was about right, and I went away into the town and knocked up against a recruiting sergeant. The old tales o' th' chapel folk came buzzin' into my head. I was to get away, and this were th' regular road for the likes o' me. I 'listed there and then, took th' Widow's shillin', and had a bunch o' ribbons pinned i' my hat.

"But next day I found my way to David Roantree's door, and Jesse came to open it. Says he: 'Thou's come back again wi' th' devil's colors flyin'—thy true colors, as I always telled thee'.

"But I begged and prayed of him to let me see her nobbut to say good-by, till a woman calls down th' stairway—she says, 'John Learoyd's to come up.' Th' old man shift aside in a flash, and lays his hand on my arm, quite gentle like. 'But thou'lt be quiet, John,' says he, 'for she's rare and weak. Thou wast allus a good lad.'

"Her eyes were alive wi' light, and her hair

was thick on the pillow round her, but her cheeks were thin—thin to frighten a man that's strong. 'Nay, father, yo' mayn't say th' devil's colors. Them ribbons is pretty.' An' she held out her hands for th' hat, an' she put all straight as a woman will wi' ribbons. 'Nay, but what they're pretty,' she says. 'Eh, but I'd ha' liked to see thee i' thy red coat, John, for thou wast allus my own lad—my very own lad, and none else.'

"She lifted up her arms, and they came round my neck i' a gentle grip, and they slacked away, and she seemed fainting. 'Now yo' mun get away, lad,' says Jesse, and I picked up my hat and I came down-stairs.

"Th' recruiting sergeant were waitin' for me at th' corner public-house. 'Yo've seen your sweetheart?' says he. 'Yes, I've seen her,' says I. 'Well, we'll have a quart now, and you'll do your best to forget her,' says he, bein' one o' them smart, bustlin' chaps. 'Aye, sergeant,' says I. 'Forget her.' And I've been forgettin' her ever since."

He threw away the wilted clump of white violets as he spoke. Ortheris suddenly rose to his knees, his rifle at his shoulder, and peered across the valley in the clear afternoon light. His chin cuddled the stock, and there was a twitching of the muscles of the right cheek as he sighted. Private Stanley Ortheris was engaged on his business. A speck of white crawled up the water-course.

"See that beggar? Got 'im."

Seven hundred yards away, and a full two hundred down the hillside, the deserter of the Aurangabadis pitched forward, rolled down a red rock, and lay very still, with his face in a clump of blue gentians, while a big raven flapped out of the pine wood to make investigation.

"That's a clean shot, little man," said Mulvaney.

Learoyd thoughtfully watched the smoke clear away.

"Happen there was a lass tewed up wi' him, too," said he. Ortheris did not reply. He was staring across the valley, with the smile of the artist who looks on the completed work. For he saw that it was good.

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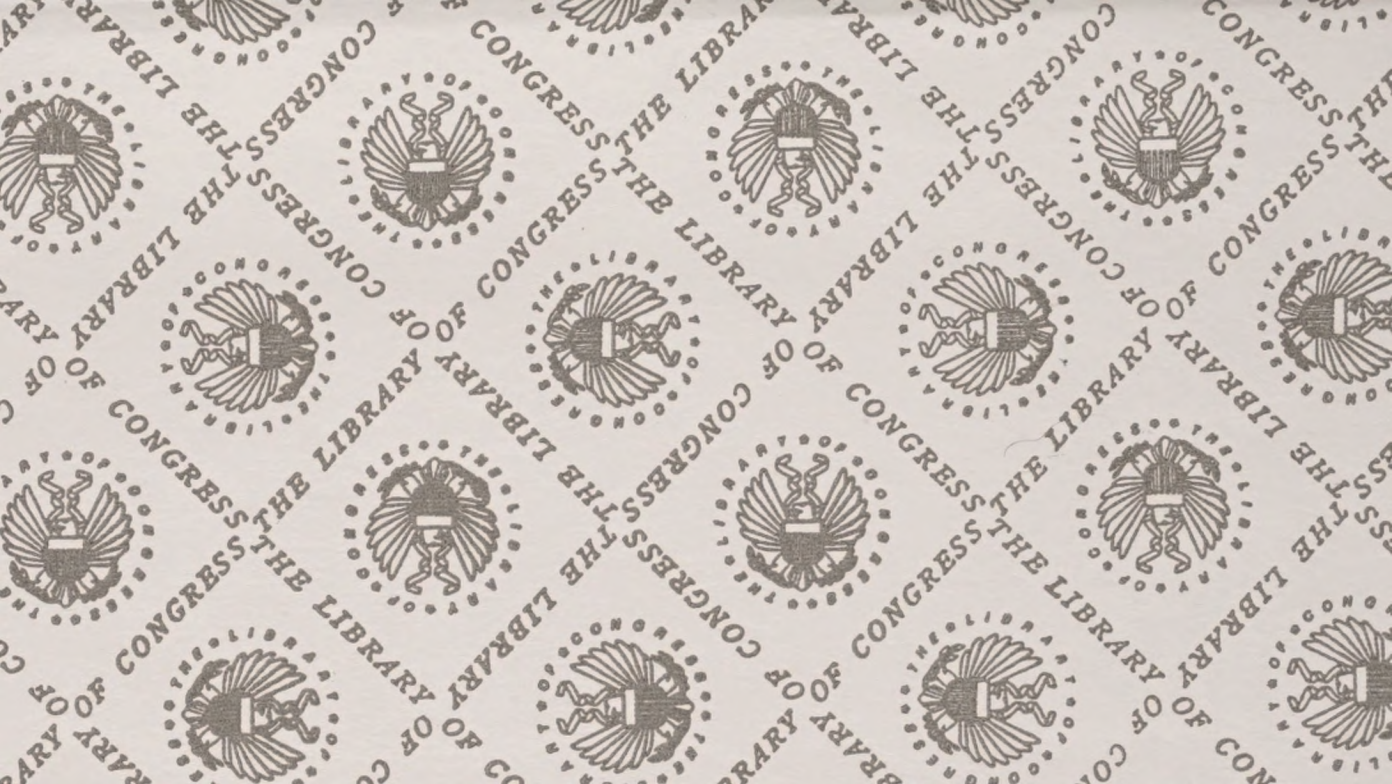
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