

PRIVATE MULDOON'S
TIMBER CLAIM.

A bit of a verse that was current five years ago recounts in impressive fashion some of the hardships of war, and ends with these touching lines:

It's rough to be a rider rough, but the roughest thing we know
Is going off to bloody war, when you get no chance to go.

For further particulars consult the cavaliers of the 2nd Volunteer Cavalry, under Col. J. L. Torrey, of the "dough boys" of the 1st Regiment Territorial Volunteer Infantry. The dough-boys had rather the worst of it, for they were kept in camp in Arizona until the war was over.

Arizona is a good place in which to mine for copper, but Whipple Barracks leaves a good deal to be desired in the way of a summer residence. Given officers who mean well, but have to study tactics between drills, squads that are all awkward, delays in the arrival of equipment, cactus plants and bad roads, together with wholesale vaccination and July weather, and there is a combination to try men's souls.

This was the firm, if unspoken, belief of Private Warren and Corporal Stanley one particularly warm Sunday afternoon, as they made their way to Prescott, half a mile distant from camp.

"Let's go to Muldoon's," said the private, and the corporal assented.

The mere mention of "Muldoon's," taken in connection with the unquenchable thirst which is supposed to be common to soldiers and to Arizona, would seem to signify that Muldoon was a vender of stimulants. This inference would, however, be a wrong to the regiment and to Muldoon, who conducted an innocent dairy.

"Come in," he said to the soldiers, "come in! I'm alone the day, an' ye're welcome as the flowers in June. 'Tis a hot day, 'tis so. Will I be stirring ye up a bit of milk shake, now? 'Twill be refreshin' after yer walk."

While he spoke he gave them chairs on the vine-shaped porch, then busily gathered chipped ice, lemon, and sugar, and began concocting the beverage without waiting for a reply. He had been a soldier himself. As he finally poured out the foaming mixture he eyed it critically, and, looking at the hot faces of the soldiers, he said:

"It completes the colors. Yer clothes are blue, yer faces are red, an' here's the white. The Flag, boys, bless her! Here's the Old Glory, the only flag in the world worth dyin' for that isn't green." He set his glass down and wiped his grizzled moustache with the back of his hand. His mind had gone back to other days. The corporal loosened the strings of one of his shoes.

"Are yer feet hurtin' ye, son?" Muldoon asked, kindly. "Take yer shoes off while ye sit. 'Tis a true word that man Roodyard Mulvaney says, that a marchin' man's no stronger than his feet. I know it by having learned it hard. An' there's another thing: If ye are sent to Cuba, yet want to be sure an' take a hammock along, no matter what ye do wid yer blankets. 'Tis sleepin' on the ground that puts ye under it there. Yer had better take turns holdin' the hammocks, or sleep standin' up, for the wan thing ye want to remember, an' it should come aisy to ye, is to kape off the grass. I was told so by a Cuban soldier I knew wance."

"An' yet another thing. There something about solderin' makes a lad soldier better times. Glory be, man's the time when the whole regiment I was wid in the Civil War hadn't more than wan row in their cartridge belts that could be fired. What did we do to the rest of them? We emptied out the powder to make them lighter. But 'tis different when ye're fighting foreigners an' Indians. Ye never know what they do be goin' to do next. My first winter with the Apaches made me content to carry all the ingredients that go wid a cartridge."

"I know ye're wonderin' how, havin' followed the flag so long, I could leave it, least of all to go to peddlin' milk in this dry and distressful country. But fightin' is for young men, and givin' advice and drivin' milk-wagons is for old ones. An' then I had a bit of a misunderstandin' wid the quarter-master."

The corporal asked where he had served last.

His keen old eyes twinkled. "Twas not to say far from here," he answered. "Ye see there wasn't any 'after the war' for me, for I kept right on solderin'. Sometimes 'twas havin' little playful rows wid the Apaches, and 'twas gettin' monotonous."

"I reckon all quartermasters are tough to get along with," said the private, sulkily.

"I don't know," said Muldoon, reflectively. "I don't know that they're worse than the others, but this one was unusual bad, by reason of the kind of a colonel we had. We hadn't been at the fort long—'twas not a thousand miles from here—when the quarter-master sent me for wood. You should know, if ye don't, that wood, water, and grass is what makes good campin', an' ye're lucky when ye find two of them in this country. The colonel thought the wood could be haul-

ed. Well, I got a load; 'twas not what ye'd call heavy timber if ye came from Maine, or yet from California, but 'twas the best I could do. I didn't expect to get honorable mention or a medal for it. I was at the quarter-master's next day when the colonel's orderly came by. 'Wid the colonel's compliments, and where did ye get that wood?'

"'Twas not for me to speak. 'Take the six mule team,' the quarter-master said, 'an' go after wood, and go quick, an' don't ye come back till ye get it, and get it dry. Do ye mind, now!' he says as I was going. 'Don't show yerself around here till ye get it, and get it dry, if it takes a year.'

"I went an' hitched up. 'Tis not necessary to say what I thought. There's only two things farther apart than the East an' the West, an' those are what a soldier says an' what he thinks. I was mad clean through, for I was no mule-skinner, nor yet a Gladstone, to be choppin' down trees for the fun of it."

"Once I started, I kept on drivin'. There was no wood of any kind, to speak of, in that territory. I had not been so vexed but I minded to take extra grub for the mules and rations for myself, an' I had two months' pay in my belt. I kept on drivin' for a matter of three weeks, when I saw a kind of park. There was a creek ran through it, an' there was trees, and the mules lifted up their voices for joy when they saw the grass. Sure we all needed a rest, an' for a few days we did nothin' else. Then I picketed out my mules, an' went to choppin'. I was intendin' to go back in a week or so, but there was nothin' but green wood. 'Sure,' I says to myself, 'Tis the Garden of Eden I've struck, for nothin' has ever died here.' The trees was fine an' tall, an' I cut all I could haul of them. Then, seeing I must wait for them to dry, I built me a wickiup, an' planted some of my beas an' potatoes, an' there was plenty of rabbits for the shootin'."

"'Twas a pleasant summer I spent there, but I'd have gone back, only for one thing. 'Twas an evenin', as I was sittin' before me wickiup, thinkin' of the lonesomeness of taking revenge, that I saw a prairie-schooner comin' slowly toward me. The cattle were beat out, an' as they came up I saw they were two middle-aged men an' a boy an' a fine slip of a girl, eighteen or twenty. They asked me could they stop."

"Well, to make a long story short, they stopped for two years. We built a house over the four corners of the section, and were making preparations for to prove up. Mine was a timber claim, that bein' more suited to my immediate business."

"One day the girl, Norah, says to me, 'Michael, how do yer mules all come to be branded US, when there's neither a U nor an S to yer name?'

"They're not my mules,' I says, 'They belong to a relative of mine, an' they are branded for him. He is my Uncle Sam.'

"But that set me thinkin' that 'twas time to go back wid the mules, for my time of enlistment was about yone, an' the wood was dry, an' the wages comin' to me, thirteen dollars a month for two years an' over, would be handy in provin' up my claim, for I did not intend to enlist any more—Norah had settled that. So I told them all I must return my uncle's mules, an' started off wid the six in good spirits an' a most terrible load of wood as dry as the colonel's laugh."

"'Twas a long pull back, an' the mules was trembly about the legs and droopy at the ears when I drew up before the quarter-master's. Well, there was wild doin's. The quarter-master nearly fell off the earth, an' within ten minutes the parade-ground was full of men an' officers. The colonel was ragin'."

"O, 'tis you!' he says, very scornful. 'So ye have come back?' he says. 'An' to what do we owe the distinguished honor?'

"I have,' I says. 'I come as soon as I could wid obedience to orders.'

"What orders?" says the colonel.

"Orders to go after wood, and stay till I got a load that was dry, if I stayed a year. I stayed, an' the wood is dry, but it took a long time drivin'."

"I'll have ye hung for a deserter!" he says; but I didn't answer for 'twas not my time to talk then. Well, they court-martialled me for desertion, but I proved my orders; an' there was no denyin' the facts, so they had to let me go wid kind regards an' deep regrets, an' all my back wages. That nearly broke the colonel's heart."

"When I got my civilian's clothes on, an' my discharge in my pocket, I called on the colonel. He was sittin' on the porch."

"I hope the wood suits ye," I says.

"There's plenty more like it three weeks' drive from this," I says, 'an' the mules know the way, but I'm thinkin' yer treatment of me is but a poor object-lesson for the recruitries of the reward that meets strict attention to the first duty of a soldier!'

"He looked like he would have a fit, an' wishin' him a pleasant evenin', I saluted an' went on, an' I haven't worn a uniform since. But for Norah I might be lookin' at yer brass buttons wid envy; but 'twas a wise man said, 'One war is enough for any man.'"

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A young postmaster of a village post-office was hard at work when a gentle tap was heard at the door, and in stepped a bashful maiden of sixteen, with a money order which she desired to cash. She handed it to the official with a bashful smile, and he, after closely examining it, handed her the money it called for. At the same time he asked her if she had read what was written on the margin of the order.

"No, I have not," she replied, "for I cannot make it out. Will you please read it for me?"

The young postmaster read as follows: "I send you ten shillings and a dozen kisses."

Glancing at the bashful girl, he said: "I have paid you the money, and I suppose you want the kisses?"

"Yes," she said; "if he has sent me any kisses I want them, too."

It is hardly necessary to say that the balance of the order was promptly paid, and in a scientific manner at that, and eminently satisfactory to the country maiden, for she went out of the office smacking her lips as if there were a taste upon them she had never encountered before.

After she arrived home she remarked to her mother:—

"Eh, mother, but this post-office system of ours is a great thing, developing more and more every year, and each new feature added seems to be the best. Jimmy sent me a dozen kisses along with the money order, and the postmaster gave me twenty. It beats the parcel delivery system all hollow."

Knew Her Weakness.

The slender woman faced the burly burglar's deadly revolver without a tremor of terror, for, as is well known, the weakest are often the bravest.

"Tell me where the money is hid," he hissed, most truculently, "or I'll fire!"

"Never," she answered, determinedly, and with a marked accent on the "r." "Kill me if you will, but I will never reveal the hiding place of my husband's hard earned hoard! Villain, do your worst!"

"I will!" snarled the scoundrel, baffled for the moment, but not beaten. "Tell me instantly, or I'll drop this big, woolly caterpillar down your neck!"

In three minutes more he had bagged the money and was running through the mid-night darkness in a north-easterly direction.

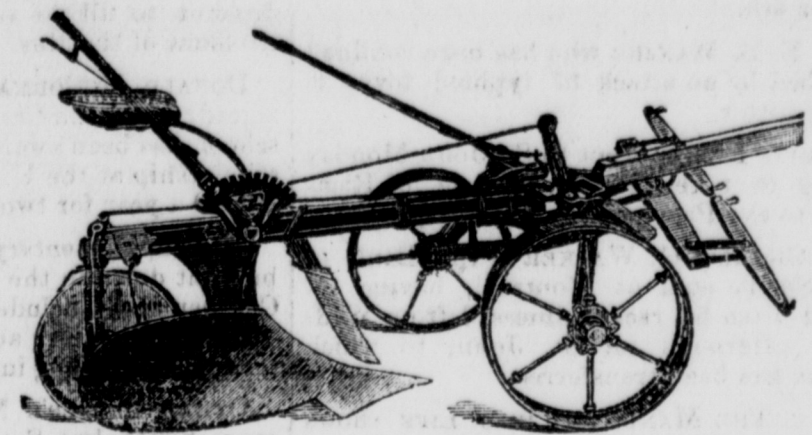
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