

'Oh, Trinity of love and power,  
Our brethren shield in that dread hour,  
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,  
Protect them whereso'er they go.  
Thus evermore shall rise to Thee  
Glad hymns of praise by land and sea.'

'Strikes me they'll go on singing that hymn all night. Imperfect sort of doctrine in the last lines, don't you think? They might have run in an extra verse specifying sudden collapse--like the Visigoth's. I'm going on to the bridge, now. Good-night,' said the Captain.

And I was left alone with the steady thud, thud, of the screw and the gentle creaking of the boats at the davits.

That made me shudder.

#### THE SOLID MULDOON

Did ye see John Malone, wid his shinin', brand-new hat?  
Did ye see how he walked like a grand aristocrat?  
There was flags an' banners wavin' high, an' dhress and shtyle were  
shown,

But the best av all the company was Mither John Malone.

John Malone.

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

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

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

Mulvaney came out of a reverie--he was lying down--and flourished his

heels in the air. 'You're a man, Learoyd,' said he critically, 'but you've only fought wid men, an' that's an ivry-day expayrience; but I've stud up to a ghost, an' that was not an ivry-day expayrience.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Is ut the shtory that's troublin' you? Av course I will. I mint to

all along. I was only gettin' at ut my own way, as Popp Doggle said whin they found him thrying to ram a cartridge down the muzzle. Orth'ris, fall away!

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

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

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

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

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

'Whin I was Corp'ril--I was rejuiced aafterwards--but, as I say, whin I was Corp'ril, I was a divil of a man.'

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

'Eyah! They was great times. I'm ould now; me hide's wore off in

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

'Whin I was Corp'ril I wud not ha' changed wid the Colonel--no, nor yet the Commandher-in-Chief. I wud be a Sargint. There was nothin' I wud not be! Mother av Hivin, look at me! Fwhat am I now?

'We was quartered in a big cantonmint--'tis no manner av use namin' names, for ut might give the barricks disreputation--an' I was the Imperor av the Earth to my own mind, an' wan or tu women thought the same. Small blame to thim. Afther we had lain there a year, Bragin, the Colour Sargint av E Comp'ny, wint an' took a wife that was lady's maid to some big lady in the Station. She's dead now is Annie Bragin--died in child-bed at Kirpa Tal, or ut may ha' been Almorah--seven--nine years gone, an' Bragin he married agin. But she was a pretty woman whin Bragin inthrojuiced her to cantonmint society. She had eyes like the brown av a buttherfly's wing whin the sun catches

ut, an' a waist no thicker than my arm, an' a little sof' button av a mouth I would ha' gone through all Asia bristlin' wid bay'nits to get the kiss av. An' her hair was as long as the tail av the Colonel's charger--forgive me mentionin' that blunderin' baste in the same mouthful with Annie Bragin--but'twas all shpun gold, an' time was when a lock av ut was more than di'monds to me. There was niver pretty woman yet, an' I've had thruck wid a few, cud open the door to Annie Bragin.

"Twas in the Cath'lic Chapel I saw her first, me oi rolling round as usual to see fwat was to be seen.

"You're too good for Bragin, my love," thinks I to mesilf, "but that's a mistake I can put straight, or my name is not Terence Mulvaney."

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

'I was always hangin' about there whin I was off duty an' Bragin wasn't, but niver a sweet word beyon' ordinar' did I get from Annie Bragin.

"'Tis the pervarsity av the sect," sez I to mesilf, an' gave my cap another cock on my head an' straightened my back--'twas the back av a Dhrum Major in those days--an' wint off as tho' I did not care, wid all the women in the Married Quarters laughin', I was pershuaded--most bhoys are I'm thinkin'--that no woman born av woman cud stand against me av I hild up my little finger. I had reason fer thinkin' that way--till I met Annie Bragin.

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

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

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

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

'An', sure enough, the Corp'ril was walkin' to us, hangin' his head down as though he was ashamed av himsilf.

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

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

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

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

'Wid that I slipped my arm round her waist, for, begad, I fancied she had surrinded at discretion, an' the honours av war were mine.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'She pointed to the veranda, an' by the Haight av Impart'nince, the Corp'ril man was comin' out av Bragin's quarters.

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

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

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

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

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

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

'But he niver hild up, an' I let go from the shoulther to where the

hair is short over the eyebrows.

"That'll do your business," sez I, but it nearly did mine instid. I put my bodyweight behind the blow, but I hit nothing at all, an' near put my shoulther out. The Corp'ril man was not there, an' Annie Bragin, who had been watchin' from the veranda, throws up her heels, an' carries on like a cock whin his neck's wrung by the dhrummer-bhoy. I wint back to her, for a livin' woman, an' a woman like Annie Bragin, is more than a p'rade-groun' full av ghosts. I'd niver seen a woman faint before, an' I stud like a shtuck calf, askin' her whether she was dead, an' prayin' her for the love av me, an' the love av her husband, an' the love av the Virgin, to opin her blessed eyes again, an' callin' mesilf all the names undher the canopy av Hivin for plaguin' her wid my miserable a-moors whin I ought to ha' stud betune her an' this Corp'ril man that had lost the number av his mess.

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

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

"That's bad hearin'," I sez, an' I knew that the pickets were dhriven

in. "What for, Sargint?" sez I.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

an' shifted ut a half pace to the lef'.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'As I finished speakin' the Corp'ril man came up to the veranda, an' Annie Bragin shquealed. The moon was up, an' we cud see his face.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

above ut--an' the times that was--the times that was!

#### WITH THE MAIN GUARD

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

Hans Breitmann's Ballads.

'Mary, Mother av Mercy, fwat the divil possist us to take an' kape  
this melancolious counthry? Answer me that, Sorr.'

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

'Slape,' said Mulvaney, 'is a shuparfluous necessity. This gyard'll