

NARROW ESCAPE FOR HONOR

The Code Duello Was Vulgarly Mixed Up With Scythes.

As a Gentleman Col. Bunker Objected to Fighting With Agricultural Implements—Saved by a Mule.

"I had gone to a small town in Mississippi to rest and recuperate, suh," said the colonel as he restored his glass to the table, "to rest and recuperate after my hard work in the state senate. I hadn't been there a day when I met up with a person who called himself General Blum. He didn't have the look of a general, suh, but I didn't start in asking questions. I accepted his word that he had been a general—accepted his word as a gentleman does, and he invited me into the nearest barroom to imbibe a cocktail. We didn't imbibe. When the general called for drinks for two, his order was not taken. In other words, suh, as he didn't put down his money the cocktails remained unmixed. The general looked at me appealingly, but I turned away. I would not hurt his feelings by offering to pay for the drinks.

"Had General Blum stopped there all would have been well, but he did not stop. Next day he called on me to talk over the late war. It wasn't ten minutes, suh, before I began to doubt him. I found that he didn't know the difference between a charge of cavalry and a drove of mews. When he had related how he led his division at Gettysburg, dashed forward at Spottsylvania and received three wounds at Petersburg, I rose up—I rose up to my full height, suh—and, looking him straight between the eyes, I said:

"General Blum, yo' will excuse me, suh, but where can I find yo'r wah record?"

"Nowhere," he replied. "They were so jealous of me that it has never been written up."

"We had a few other words, suh, and I felt that it was due to my dignity to challenge him. He received the challenge coolly and sent his friend to arrange matters. Claiming to be a soldier and a gentleman, he selected pickaxes as weapons. Think of it, suh—think of a gentleman taking such a course! I refused, of co'se. Then he turned to plantation hoes, to cotton hooks, to ball clubs and to long-handled shovels. It was my duty under the circumstances to preserve my dignity, and it has gone down in history that I preserved it. I insisted that we fight with sword or pistol, and refused to dignify him by debating his proposals. Then General Blum himself called to see me. He found me frigid and determined. 'Colonel Bunker,' says he, 'yo' have doubted my veracity, and I desire to shed yo'r blood. I desire to shed it by the quart and the gallon. If yo' are not a coward, yo' will meet me at sunrise across the river—across the river, suh! As the challenged party I have the choice of weapons. I will name scythes, suh—scythes—at two paces! The scythe is an emblem of time, Colonel Bunker, and it was with a scythe I mowed down scores of the enemy at Appomattox."

"I stood on my dignity, suh—stood on my dignity and rejected the weapons. No gentleman had ever fought a duel with a scythe in his hands. It would degrade the code—degrade the code, suh, and make me a public laughing stock. I stormed at that man, suh. I begged and entreated and even sought to bribe him to meet me with pistols or swords. But he was firm. He was settled on scythes and would not budge. I bowed him out and appealed to the public. And on my honah, suh, on the honah of the man who led the desperate charge at Cedar Mountain, the public agreed with General Blum! Yes, suh, the public contended that it was my duty as a gentleman to engage in a duel with scythes! I brought forward the code for 300 years past, but it made no difference.

"A duel with scythes, suh—a meeting on the field of honah with farming implements! No gentleman's dignity would permit of it. I argued and protested and disputed, but General Blum and the public were firm. In standing to my guns I lost prestige. At the end of three days scarcely a man in town would nod to me, and the newspapers were asking if Colonel Bunker was afraid. It was then, suh, and only then, that I resolved to fight the general with his own weapons. I must do it to save my prestige. The public was with me at once. I had my pick of 20 different scythes, and I was determined from the first that I would begin at the general's heels and gradually cut

him down to his neck. No mercy should be shown in such a case. Public excitement ran as high as if a state election was being held, and when the morning of the duel came there were hundreds on the ground to see. I set fo'th with my scythe on my shoulder and was first on the ground, but the general was only a few minutes behind me. I had planned to begin at his heels, but his plan was to begin at my head. I saw it in his eyes as we stood there. Yes, suh, he meant to decapitate me at the first sweep. Mo' than that, he had sent to New Orleans for a special scythe, and he had secured one about two rods long.

"By and by we were ready. I felt my loss of dignity, but I had to save my honah. The word was about to be given, and in another moment the emblems of time would have been swishing through the air, when a mawl who was chased by a nigger came galloping that way. He busted through the people, suh—he busted his way right along—and he struck the general and knocked him into a ditch and then planted both heels on my stomach and rendered me unconscious for half an hour. The duel didn't go on. When I got my breath again, I offered to proceed from a sitting position, and, although the general was telescoped by the collision, it is due to him to say that he would have stood on one leg and fought it out. But it was not to be. The public decided that all parties, including the mawl, had wiped away any stains on their reputations, and we were escorted to town by our partisans."

"And of course you and the general drank together and made up?" I asked. "Of co'se, suh, of co'se—that is, the general didn't invite me, and I didn't invite him, but when a third party proposed cocktails—a party whose credit was good at the bar—we accompanied him. And as to the making up, suh, we had imbibed and replaced our glasses when I looked at my late antagonist and said:

"General Blum, I cannot doubt your valor, suh."

"And he looked at me with eyes which were moist and replied:

"Colonel Bunker, the man who questions your chivalry is my enemy. Then our hands met, our friend called for three more, and the loving cup restored peace and good will."

M. QUAD.

Fate of the Eacret.

The Nome News of June 9 gives a tale of suffering, starvation and death on St. Lawrence Island, about 160 miles northwest from Nome, brought to that city by James Murphy, the only survivor of a party of six men, on the little schooner Eacret, headed for this city from Nome, Nov. 3 last. The crew and captain were made up as follows:

H. A. Johnson, captain; Augustus Lear, the owner, of Snohomish, Wash.; R. A. Nicoll, of Plymouth, Mass.; D. Smith, of this city; Chas. Elliott, of Denver, and J. Murphy, of New York City.

Murphy came from the mission of St. Lawrence Island on the bark Alaska, bringing with him the log of the schooner. It detailed the death or disappearance of five men.

The Eacret left Nome at 1 p. m., Nov. 3, with only twenty days' provisions. These consisted of 50 pounds flour, 25 pounds sugar, 50 pounds beans, 5 pounds coffee, 5 pounds lard, 25 pounds bacon, 16 cans roast beef, 10 pounds oatmeal, 10 pounds dried apples, 14 cans milk, 50 pounds hard tack, one case vegetable soup. With this meagre supply of food the schooner was headed westward, her destination being Seattle. According to the story told by the log, book stormy weather was encountered from the start. The ice became heavier every hour and it became a certainty that unless some point was reached soon the little vessel would be frozen in for the winter. Finally a landing was made upon the island on Nov. 6. Search was instituted for an Indian village which Capt. Johnson knew was somewhere on the island, but without result.

An otter boat was made ready and taken out into the open water in the hope of being able to reach some inhabited place. The ice continued to form so thick and fast that this plan was abandoned and the men were compelled to leave the schooner.

Capt. Johnson perished on Nov. 26 while on an exploring trip some twelve miles from where the party were camped. The diary is not clear in many particulars, but perhaps under the circumstances that is not to be wondered at. Others of the party had their feet and hands badly frozen. On Nov. 8 Lear started for the northwest to look for natives, but never returned.

An entry in the diary on Dec. 3 recounts the pathetic fact that "provisions are getting low," and that four

foxes had been killed with strychnine and eaten. The men had no firearms of any description and used this method of procuring their meat.

On December 14 it is related that "foxes are getting scarcer and there is no fish."

The men had moved back into the schooner, where they were more comfortable. On Christmas day they had four sticks of soup vegetables left, but on Dec. 26 they got some meat from the carcass of a whale and it is mentioned that "it went very good." On Dec. 28 Smith left for the southwest cape on another attempt to find an Indian village. He was the third victim, as he never returned. It was his tracks in the snow that were subsequently found by natives, who, according to Murphy's story, reported the discovery to Dr. Lorange at the mission, and who sent out a party of natives who found Murphy and Elliott still alive. On Jan. 2 a carcass of a walrus was found and an addition was thus made to their larder and another fox was caught on Jan. 5. All the men had their fingers frozen while cutting the meat.

And so the men existed until Feb. 16, when, it is related, that "Nicoll went out on the ice to see if he could find open water where they could fish." On the next day he had not returned and the diary states that "Nicoll must have perished last night, as it was very cold."

Only Murphy and Elliott were now left and Elliott was keeping the diary. On March 8 both were very sick and Elliott writes that "Murphy says we have a touch of dropsy of the head, caused from eating poor food." On March 18 natives arrived from the mission with a letter from the missionary, offering food and assistance, and having with them a small supply, "which was gratefully accepted." On the 19th they started for the mission, 60 miles away, but while on the trail Elliott died. Murphy completes the diary of death as follows: "March 21—J. E. Elliott, on the way to the mission, died. I, James Murphy, more dead than alive, arrived about noon."

Murphy is a large, robust looking man; a Scotchman by birth, with a decided accent. He says he is 33 years of age and a sailor by occupation. He made his story known to United States Commissioner Rawson, and a public meeting was held at Nome to take steps to have the bodies of the dead men, who could be found, decently buried. A committee, consisting of W. B. Bean, R. W. Smith, A. Brunell, L. Whitehouse, Alex McEwen, T. J. Nestor and J. C. Kennedy, was appointed to look into Murphy's statement and report back to the commissioner, who would lay the affair before Capt. Tuttle of the Bear. A number of papers and photographs belonging to Johnson were brought back by Murphy. — Seattle Times.

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