Private Sixsmith on Thirst

Private Sixsmith of Company Q of the Mateenth Infantry was a practical man with a philosophy generous enough to meet the emergencies that ordinarily arise in the life of a soldier, even when he is campaigning in the Philippines. He was serving his fourth enlistment and would have been a non-com. as he had been in his first, but for an unfortunate tendency to suit his own convenience sometimes at the expense of the exact requirements of whatever duty he happened to be doing. He found his philosophy, however, a fair substitute for his sergeant's chevrons, meaning always to win back the stripes in his final enlistment, so that he could enjoy the advantage of the increased pay after retiring. I met him first on a brutal hike south of Manila, when most of the men's brainpans were sizzling and half the command lay strung along the line of march, overcome by heat and waiting to be picked up by the stretchers that never came or to be boloed by smoking insurgents.

"I hope ye've no beer in the saddle pockets, sir," he said.

"Your hope comes late," I replied. "I left that in Manila this time."

"'Tis a wise play," he said. "Timperatures like this presint an antagonism to malt liquors that it ud be neither if th' averidge man the likes of us was more familiar wid."

He waved his hand suggestively back along the trail, where the remnants of a regiment that had started out full twelve hundred strong were halting for rest and to take stock of themselves.

"Thim granehorns," he said, contemptuously, "they pulled out of San Fedthro this mornin' wid half their haversacks loaded wid glass an' that, an it that 'ud parlize the interior mechanism of a stuffed elephant. Now look at thim."

We had been sitting in the sun, sparkled shade of a cinaguela bush, trying to get the most out of the five minutes' halt. Now a bugle sounded somewhere ahead and its inexorable "Get up! Go on!" floated down the column to an accompaniment of jeers and curses.

The men got up slowly and deliberately resumed something that approximated formation. The life was kind out of them, and there was no snap left. It would take water or cool weather or a fight to shake them up again.

As I swung into the saddle Sixsmith said, just as if we were continuing the discussion of a matter each talked about:

"An' I thrust ye have no wather in the canteen!" He turned his own upside down, and there was not enough moisture left in it to drip.

The appeal was irresistible. I unhooked the big aluminum water bottle from the saddle and held it out to him. He took it with a grin and held it in both hands. Then he shook it softly, holding it close to his ear. He was calculating the cubical contents.

A look of disappointment spread over his face and he slowly extended his arm toward me, without tasting the water. I completely misunderstood the action, and thought he would not drink because he thought there was not enough for us both.

But I was not so very thirsty, and, besides, it was against my rule to drink from the canteen before noon. So I said:

"Go on, man! Take it! I don't want any of it. I had a good swig just back here a ways."

"Thank you, sir," he said. "'Tis not that. If there was enough for us both there'd sure be enough for me; but there's not enough for me alone, saving you, an' ye'll find, sir, whin ye've been long enough at the business that it's a fair mistake to take less than enough anny time.

"Whin ye get yer chanst take yer skin full. Thin maybe ye can make out to get on till the next chanst. But this dhrap here and dhrap there only dhrives a man crazy. 'Tis cotton yez have in the mouth if ye do that and no wather.

"One swallow at a time is good wather wasted. Ye can hang out if ye got no wather at all, but for a thirsty man to take less than a drink is clane nonsense, for it's gone in a minute an' laves him worse off than he was.

"'Tis that an' the beer as makes thim granehorn Johnnies back there in the road fall down whin they shud be hikin' plinty betther than old men the likes o' me."

Half an hour later I saw Sixsmith again. He had his face down in a pool from the surface of which he had brushed away the green scum and was taking his drink. I stopped to see what he would say.

"'Tis not what I'd be choosin', sir," he explained, as he looked up and saw me. "But there's times, as undoubtedly ye've been afther finding out, when a man's no call to be overparticular.

We were going down over the Guadelupe ridge, where there is no water except an occasional pool, for thirty miles, and where not even cocoanuts grow thick enough to furnish any relief for such a column. It was the mango season, but every tree had been stripped clean long before by the ubiquitous insurgents.

The men were suffering as they had not on any of the previous expeditions. The salt crystallized out as the sweat dried under the fierce sun and left the backs of their coats covered with white patches. Canteen and haversack straps were coated with it.

Far ahead lay the line of trees that marked the river that would give relief. Sexsmith marched like a new man, good now, as he said, for a day's work. He had had his fill at the pool, as many of the others had, and the effect was marked all along the column. He scorned my offer to take his rifle across the saddle.

"It's a poor soldier, sir," he said, "that can't carry his own tools. Not but that they do give us too much to pack by times, but mostly it's all right.

"Whin a man has a full kit, wid shelter half an' poncho, besides his blanket, an' they put three days' rations in his haversack an' ask him to carry his extra clo's as well, I'm thinkin' they's not so much difference between him an' a pack mule as some might suppose. They's a power o' kickin' thim times from most o' the min.

"But d'ye iver notice, sir, what a lot o' complainin' a soldier does that he's no call for? Now you take this hike today.

"It's powerful hot, and the sun's right on the back of ivery man's head, an his hat's no conshequins in previntin' it from gettinj into his brains. It surely does make a man powerful thirsty an' that's where most av thim base a lot av kickin'.

"But whin ye raley come to think av ut, sir, they's not so much call to kick about being thirsty, leastwise whin they's goin' to be wather in plinty by an' by an' anny man can see that's what's comin' this day if we stick to ut. Fer it's only whin a man's got a power av thirst wid him that he's prepared proper to injoy the grand ricompinse av a full dhrink.

"'Tis a plisure to fill the empty skin, sir, an' the likes av ut I've yet to be findin' out. Most min ye see have no consipshun av the proper manin' av takin' a dhrink, an' it's wather now I'm talkin' about, an' not beer or ranny av thim things, though there's enough fer the averidge man to learn, God knows, about all that.

"But it's dhrinkin' wather that most min is so ignorant about. Take ut whin we're in camp and there's plinty all the time an' all a man has to do for ut is to turn up his cup. Ye'll see min as can't keep away from ut half an hour. They'll be always dhrinkin' but niver takin' a dhrink, always sip, sip, sippin', an' niver takin' the plisure av a good swallow.

"But whin ye're thirsty an' can put yer face on the inside av a bucket wid plinty in ut, then's whin ye taste solid injoyment. Thin's whin ye can swallow big an' fine like three or four av thim wud make the fill av a cup, an' every wan ye can feel all the way down.

"Why, a man that 'ud sthop an' give ut a thought 'ud know the minute he looked at ut how to do ut. Take a day like this, whin ivery man's a-sweatin' all he can an' the wather's runnin' out av him at ivery pore, what good 'ud ye think it 'ud do him to take a swallow here an' another by an' by?

"What 'ud ye think, sir, av a man that 'ud thry to run a locomotive that way, wid a bucket at wan station an' half a barrel at another? I'm thinkin' the master mechanic wud be havin' a job in the round house.

"But that's what most av thim min is thryin' to do. No, sir; whin the machine gets to the watherin' station she fills her tank, an' that's the schame as gives her the power to run to the next station.

"But spakin' av thim bugs in the wather, sir, did ye niver hear av the well the bhoys found at San Fernando the day we chased Misther Aggindo out av that? It was a fine well, sir, wid wather sweet as anny that 'ud come from home, an' they dhrank ut dhry before they found the dead Chinaman in the bottom."—New York Sun.

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Draught beer Rochester Bar.

Small Debt Procedures

Mr. Justice Macaulay presided over a short session of the small debts court Saturday disposing of such cases as were left over from the sittings of the Honorable Mr. Macdonald last week. The session was brief, not occupying over an hour or two. The case of Griffin vs Stackpoole was dismissed by consent. De Lion vs Adair was dismissed without costs. Stone vs McDonald was also dismissed without costs. Judgment was rendered in Ashland vs Bell for $74 and costs. Allen vs Nucci et al was enlarged until the next term of equrt by consent. Guilbeault vs Menard was settled out of court and the case dismissed. Brown vs MacDonald was an action whereby the plaintiff was seeking to obtain $50 for services rendered. A material witness for plaintiff being absent judgment was found in favor of the defendant the action being dismissed with costs.

Layfield vs Harrington was a suit for $9, the price of some wood sold and delivered. The defendant was in default and after proving his case judgment was given in accordance with the prayer of the complaint with costs.

De Lion vs Hagel was an action in which the plaintiff sued the learned K.C. for $75, a month's rent of the suit of offices formerly occupied in the Monte Carlo building by the defendant. The indebtedness was freely admitted but a counter claim was set up which more than offset the amount sued for. It is claimed the lease of the suite was for a year, the rooms to be heated by the landlord. When time for settlement arrived the defendant declined to pay the rent for the month of April on the grounds that plaintiff had not complied with the terms of the agreement in regard to heating the premises. In the statement of defense it is alleged that a counter claim of $210 was due the defendant being seven months at $30 a month wherein the rooms were not heated and damage to that extent was suffered. Voluntarily, however, defendant reduced his claim for damages to $100 which he alleged to be still due and owing. After the argument his lordship announced he would reserve his decision.

Will be Executed

Ottawa, June 6.—An Indian, A. Louie, who shot and killed a woman with whom he lived near Kamloops, B.C., was tried and sentenced to be hanged on June 19th. The cabinet has taken the case into consideration and it is understood that an order-in-council has been passed allowing the law to take its course. Louie will therefore be hanged on June 19.

Baby Burned

Guelph, June 3.—The fire bell rang about 6 o'clock this evening. It was for the residence of a widowed colored woman, Rebecca Harris, on Elizabeth street. The house was too far away for the city fire service. The firemen did their best to extinguish the flames, and brought out of the place the charred remains of a two-and-a-half-year-old girl. It seems that the mother had been working at Doran's hotel, and had left the little girl in charge of a boy about nine years of age. The origin of the fire is unknown. The police authorities are at work on the case. The remains of the infant were brought to the morgue.

"Let me sell you a letter-opener," said the clerk in the novelty store.

"Have one at home," responded the little Man.

"Indeed. What kind is it?"

"My wife."—Chicago News.

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