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hibition of animal idiocy in the Territory, barring the teamster. He follered their trail to the madhouse, yanking the mouths out of them, cruel and vicious.

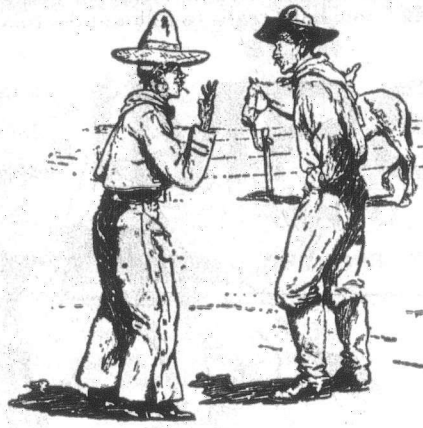
"Now one mule can cause a heap of tribulation, and six mules can break a man's heart, but there wasn't no excuse for that driver to stand upon his hind legs, close his eyes, and throw thirty foot of lash into that plungin' buckin' white eyed mess. When he did it, all the little words inside of me began to foam and fizzle like seidlitz; out they came, biling, in mouthfuls, and streams, and squirts, backwards, sideways, and through my nose.

"Here! you infernal half-spiled, dog robbing wallop!" I says; "you don't know enough to drive puddle ducks to a pond. You quit heaving that quirt or I'll harm you past healing."

"He turned his head and grit out some thing through his teeth that stimulated my circulation. I skipped over the wheels and put my left onto his neck, fingering the keys on his blow-pipe like a flute. Then I give him a toss and gathered up the lines. Say! it was like the smell of grease-paint to an actor man for me to feel the ribbons again, and them mules knew they had a chair-man who savvied 'em too, and had mule talk pat, from soda to hock.

"I just intimated things over them with that whip, and talked to them like they was my own flesh and blood. I starts at the worst words the English langwidge and the range had produced to date, and got steadily and rapidly worse as long as I talked.

"Arizony may be slow in the matter of standing collars and rag-time, but she



"I HATED TO SELL HIM."

leads the world in profanity. Without being swelled on myself, I'll say, too, that I once had more'n a local reputation in that line, having originated some quaint and feeling conceits which has won modest attention, and this day I was certainly trained to the minute.

"I addressed them brutes fast and earnest for five minutes steady, and never crossed my trail or repeated a thought.

"It must have been sacred and beautiful. Anyhow, it was strong enough to soak into their pores so that they strung out straight as a chalk-line. Then I lifted them into the collars, and we rumbled past the building, swung in front of the commissary door, cramped and stopped. With the wheelers on their haunches, I backed up to the door square as a die.

"I wiped the sweat out of my eyes and looked up into the grinning faces of about fifty swatties, realizing I was a mute—and a prisoner.

"I heard a voice say, 'Bring me that man.' There stood the Colonel oozing out wrath at every pore.

"I parted from that wagon hesitating and reluctant, but two soldiers to each leg will bust any man's grip. I lost some clothes, too, 'fer we hit the ground, but I needed the exercise.

"The old man was alone in his office when they dragged me in, and he sent my guards out.

"So you found your voice, did you?" he says.

"Yes, sir, I answers. 'It came back unexpected, regular miracle.'

"He drummed on the table for a long time, and then says, sort of immaterial and irreverent, 'You're a pretty good mule puncher, eh?'

"It ain't for me to say I'm the best in the territory," I says; "but I'm curious to meet the fellow that claims the title."

"He continues, 'It reminds me of an

exhibition I saw once, back in New Mexico, long time ago, at the little Flat-water canyon.

"Maybe you've heard tell of the fight there when the Apaches were up? Yes? Well, I happened to be in that scrimmage

"I was detailed with ten men to convey a wagon train through to Fort Lewis. We had no trouble till we came to the end of that canyon, just where she breaks out onto the flats. There we got it.

They were hidden upon the ridges; we lost two men and one waggon before we could get out onto the prairie.

"I got touched up in the neck, first clatter, and was bleeding pretty badly; still I hung to my horse, and we stood 'em off till the teams made it out of the gulch; but just as we came out my horse fell and threw me—broke his leg. I yelled to the boys:

"Go on! For God's sake, go on!" Any delay there meant loss of the whole outfit. Besides, the boys had more than they could manage, Injuns on three sides.

"We had a young Texan driving the last wagon. When I went down he swung those six mules of his and came back up that trail into the gut, where the bullets snapped like grasshoppers.

"It was the prettiest bit of driving I ever saw, not to mention nerve. He whirled the outfit between me and the bluff on two wheels, yelling, 'Climb on! Climb on! We ain't going to stay long!'

I was just able to make it onto the seat. In the turn they dropped one of his wheelers. He ran out on the tongue and cut the brute loose. We went rattling down the gulch behind five mules. All the time there came out of that man's lungs the fiercest stream of profanity my ears ever burned under.

I was pretty sick for a few weeks, so I never got a chance to thank that teamster. He certainly knew the mind of an army mule, though. His name was—let me see—Wiggins—yes, Wiggins.

"Oh, no, it wasn't I breaks in, foolish; 'twas Joyce."

"Then I stopped and felt like a kid, for the Colonel comes up and shuts the circulation out of both my hands.

"I wasn't sure of you, Bill," he says, 'till I saw you preside over those mules out there and heard your speech—then I recognized the gift. He laughed like a boy, still making free with my hands. 'I'm darn glad to see you, Bill Joyce. Now then,' he says, 'tell me all about this killing up in the hills, and I done so.

"After I finished he never said anything for a long time, just drummed the desk again and looked thoughtful.

"It's too bad you didn't speak out, Bill, when you first came in. Now, you've showed everybody that you can talk—just a little, anyhow," and he smiles, 'and they all think you're the man caused the trouble. I don't see but that you've got to stand trial. I wish I could help you, Bill.'

"But see here, Colonel," I says; 'I couldn't squeal on 'Kink.' We're pardners. I just had to give him a chance to cut. I played dumb cause I knew if I talked at all, being simple and guileless, you all would twist me up and have the whole thing in a jiffy.

That man gave me the last drop of water in his canteen on the Mojave, and him with his own tongue swelled clean out of his mouth too. When we was snowed in, up in the Bitter Roots, with me snow blind and starving, he crawled from Sheeps-Horn clean to Miller's—snow twelve foot deep too, and nary a snowshoe in miles, but he brought the outfit in to where I was lyin' 'bout gone in.

He lost some fingers and more toes wallering through them mountain drifts that day, but he never laid down till he brought the boys back.

"Colonel! we've slept on the same blanket, we've et the same grub, we've made and lost together, and I had to give him a show, that's all. I'm into this here trouble now. Tell me how I'm going to get out. What would you do?"

"He turns to the open window and says: 'Partners are partners! That's my horse out there at that post. If I were you I'd run like hell.'

"That was the willingest horse I ever rode, and I hated to sell him, but he was totable used up when I got across the line."

The pine is a native of America.

The poppy originated in the East.