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# *The Best Short Stories*

RUDYARD KIPLING



SELECTED STORIES

# THE BEST SHORT STORIES

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Rudyard Kipling

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藏书章



WORDSWORTH CLASSICS

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First published in 1997 by Wordsworth Editions Limited  
8B East Street, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 9HJ

ISBN 10: 1 85326 179 3  
ISBN 13: 978 1 85326 179 4

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Typeset in Great Britain by Antony Gray  
Printed and bound by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

**THE BEST SHORT STORIES**

## INTRODUCTION

Rudyard Kipling has always been a controversial literary figure. Enormously successful during his own lifetime, at one stage he achieved virtually the status of a national hero. Yet even then he had his critics, and was accused by some of crudeness and brutality. Though sales of his books never faltered, his reputation declined after he returned to England from the Boer War, and in recent times the jingoistic note and strident championing of British imperialism that mark his work have made him unfashionable. However, Kipling was the first British writer ever to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, and if some of his attitudes now seem questionable, his work has an undeniable power. He remains a cherished children's author, an esteemed and widely quoted poet, and a very fine storyteller of a particular era.

Kipling's tales for children are perhaps his best-loved, yet all his stories have admirable features. This representative selection comprises thirteen tales taken from four of his many published volumes, *The Day's Work* of 1889, *Life's Handicap* of 1891, *Many Inventions* of 1893 and *Traffics and Discoveries* of 1904. Subjects and locations vary widely, reflecting the much travelled author's own experience, and the vast range of his interests.

Like his poetry, many of Kipling's earliest stories celebrate the daily lives of ordinary British soldiers, far from home, employed in the business of maintaining an empire. This subject matter, which broke new ground, proved immensely popular. Kipling was dubbed 'the soldier's friend' for his insight into the feelings of the rankers. 'The Courting of Dinah Shadd' and 'On Greenhow Hill' feature Mulvaney, Ortheris and Learoyd, the principals of Kipling's earlier collection, *Soldiers Three*. Discriminated chiefly by marked differences of dialect, the three characters are vehicles for anecdotes full of variety and humour that reflect an admiration for action and power.

Badalia, heroine of 'The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot' (a stark

account of survival in the slums of London in the 1890s), is, like Ortheris and indeed many of Kipling's characters, an exemplar of a self-imposed code of conduct that derives from Kipling's sense of British sportsmanship, decency and public-school honour. Allegorical or symbolic tales, such as 'The Ship that Found Herself', which conveys Kipling's passion for machinery and technology, 'Below the Mill Dam' and 'The Maltese Cat' (an expression of the extraordinary feeling for animals that culminates in *The Jungle Books* and *Just So Stories*), illustrate in various ways the strong respect for social order and the sense of responsibility to all parts of a community that Kipling's discipline demands. Other tales such as 'The Finest Story in the World', 'Wireless' and 'They' (a very personal story that Kipling wrote after the death of his young daughter) display his fascination with fantasy, the supernatural, previous incarnation and after-life. Oriental wisdom, superstitions and philosophy colour much of his work, and Kipling's geographical reference points spread from England to the far-flung corners of India, Africa, New Zealand, Indonesia and beyond.

Kipling's training as a journalist furnished him with a keen eye for the dramatic moment, just as his upbringing gave him a sense of order and a respect for rules. These qualities are evident in the fine construction and skilful handling of narrative that characterise his short stories, and they are coupled to great effect with vigour, a powerful sense of place and a clear focus on moral conflict. Kipling has had countless worthy champions, among them Winston Churchill whose high praise seems irrefutable: 'no one has ever written like Kipling before, and his work has been successfully imitated by none. He was unique and irreplaceable'.

#### FURTHER READING

Lord Birkenhead, *Rudyard Kipling*

R. L. Green (ed.), *Kipling: The Critical Heritage*, 1971

Angus Wilson, *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling*, 1977

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## *The Courting of Dinah Shadd*

What did the colonel's lady think?  
Nobody never knew.  
Somebody asked the sergeant's wife  
An' she told 'em true.  
When you git to a man in the case  
They're like a row o' pins,  
For the colonel's lady an' Judy O'Grady  
Are sisters under their skins.

*Barrack-Room Ballads*

ALL DAY I had followed at the heels of a pursuing army engaged on one of the finest battles that ever camp of exercise beheld. Thirty thousand troops had, by the wisdom of the Government of India, been turned loose over a few thousand square miles of country to practise in peace what they would never attempt in war. Consequently cavalry charged unshaken infantry at the trot. Infantry captured artillery by frontal attacks delivered in line of quarter columns, and mounted infantry skirmished up to the wheels of an armoured train which carried nothing more deadly than a twenty-five pounder Armstrong, two Nordenfeldts, and a few score volunteers all cased in three-eighths-inch boiler-plate. Yet it was a very lifelike camp. Operations did not cease at sundown; nobody knew the country and nobody spared man or horse. There was unending cavalry scouting and almost unending forced work over broken ground. The Army of the South had finally pierced the centre of the Army of the North, and was pouring through the gap hot-foot to capture a city of strategic importance. Its front extended fanwise, the sticks being represented by regiments strung out along the line of route backwards to the divisional transport columns and all the lumber that trails behind an army on the move. On its right the broken left of the Army of the North was flying in mass, chased by the Southern horse and hammered by the Southern guns till these had been pushed far beyond the limits of their last support. Then the flying sat down to rest, while the elated commandant of the pursuing force telegraphed that he held all in check and observation.



Unluckily he did not observe that three miles to his right flank a flying column of Northern horse with a detachment of Gurkhas and British troops had been pushed round as fast as the failing light allowed, to cut across the entire rear of the Southern Army – to break, as it were, all the ribs of the fan where they converged by striking at the transport, reserve ammunition, and artillery supplies. Their instructions were to go in, avoiding the few scouts who might not have been drawn off by the pursuit, and create sufficient excitement to impress the Southern Army with the wisdom of guarding their own flank and rear before they captured cities. It was a pretty manoeuvre, neatly carried out.

Speaking for the second division of the Southern Army, our first intimation of the attack was at twilight, when the artillery were labouring in deep sand, most of the escort were trying to help them out, and the main body of the infantry had gone on. A Noah's Ark of elephants, camels, and the mixed menagerie of an Indian transport-train bubbled and squealed behind the guns, when there appeared from nowhere in particular British infantry to the extent of three companies, who sprang to the heads of the gun-horses and brought all to a standstill amid oaths and cheers.

'How's that, umpire?' said the major commanding the attack, and with one voice the drivers and limber gunners answered 'Hout!' while the colonel of artillery sputtered.

'All your scouts are charging our main body,' said the major. 'Your flanks are unprotected for two miles. I think we've broken the back of this division. And listen – there go the Gurkhas!'

A weak fire broke from the rear-guard more than a mile away, and was answered by cheerful howlings. The Gurkhas, who should have swung clear of the second division, had stepped on its tail in the dark, but drawing off hastened to reach the next line of attack, which lay almost parallel to us five or six miles away.

Our column swayed and surged irresolutely – three batteries, the divisional ammunition reserve, the baggage, and a section of the hospital and bearer corps. The commandant ruefully promised to report himself 'cut up' to the nearest umpire and, commending his cavalry and all other cavalry to the special care of Eblis, toiled on to resume touch with the rest of the division.

'We'll bivouac here tonight,' said the major. 'I have a notion that the Gurkhas will get caught. They may want us to re-form on. Stand easy till the transport gets away.'

A hand caught my beast's bridle and led him out of the choking dust; a larger hand deftly canted me out of the saddle; and two of the hugest

hands in the world received me sliding. Pleasant is the lot of the special correspondent who falls into such hands as those of Privates Mulvaney, Ortheris, and Learoyd.

'An' that's all right,' said the Irishman calmly. 'We thought we'd find you somewheres here by. Is there anything av yours in the transport? Orth'ris'll fetch ut out.'

Ortheris did 'fetch ut out', from under the trunk of an elephant, in the shape of a servant and an animal both laden with medical comforts. The little man's eyes sparkled.

'If the brutal an' licentious soldiery av these parts gets sight av the thruck,' said Mulvaney, making practised investigation, 'they'll loot ev'rything. They're bein' fed on iron-filin's an' dog-biscuit these days, but glory's no compensation for a bellyache. Praise be, we're here to protect you, sorr. Beer, sausage, bread (soft an' that's a cur'osity), soup in a tin, whisky by the smell av ut, an' fowls! Mother av Moses, but ye take the field like a confectioner! 'Tis scand'lus.'

'Ere's a orficer,' said Ortheris significantly. 'When the sergent's done lushin' the privit may clean the pot.'

I bundled several things into Mulvaney's haversack before the major's hand fell on my shoulder and he said tenderly, 'Requisitioned for the Queen's service. Wolseley was quite wrong about special correspondents: they are the soldier's best friends. Come and take pot luck with us tonight.'

And so it happened amid laughter and shoutings that my well-considered commissariat melted away to reappear later at the mess table, which was a waterproof sheet spread on the ground. The flying column had taken three days' rations with it, and there be few things nastier than Government rations – especially when Government is experimenting with German toys. Erbswurst, tinned beef of surpassing tinniness, compressed vegetables, and meat-biscuits may be nourishing, but what Thomas Atkins needs is bulk in his inside. The major, assisted by his brother officers, purchased goats for the camp, and so made the experiment of no effect. Long before the fatigue-party sent to collect brushwood had returned, the men were settled down by their valises, kettles and pots had appeared from the surrounding country, and were dangling over fires as the kid and the compressed vegetable bubbled together; there rose a cheerful clinking of mess-tins; outrageous demands for 'a little more stuffin' with that there liver-wing'; and gust on gust of chaff as pointed as a bayonet and as delicate as a gun-butt.

'The boys are in a good temper,' said the major. 'They'll be singing presently. Well, a night like this is enough to keep them happy.'

Over our heads burned the wonderful Indian stars, which are not all pricked in on one plane, but, preserving an orderly perspective, draw the eye through the velvet darkness of the void up to the barred doors of heaven itself. The earth was a grey shadow more unreal than the sky. We could hear her breathing lightly in the pauses between the howling of the jackals, the movement of the wind in the tamarisks, and the fitful mutter of musketry fire leagues away to the left. A native woman from some unseen hut began to sing, the mail-train thundered past on its way to Delhi, and a roosting crow cawed drowsily. Then there was a belt-loosening silence about the fires, and the even breathing of the crowded earth took up the story.

The men, full fed, turned to tobacco and song – their officers with them. The subaltern is happy who can win the approval of the musical critics in his regiment, and is honoured among the more intricate step-dancers. By him, as by him who plays cricket cleverly, Thomas Atkins will stand in time of need, when he will let a better officer go on alone. The ruined tombs of forgotten Mussulman saints heard *The ballad of Agra Town, The Buffalo Battery, Marching to Kabul, The Long, Long Indian Day, The Place where the Punkah-coolie Died*, and that crashing chorus which announces,

Youth's daring spirit, manhood's fire,  
Firm hand and eagle eye,  
Must he acquire, who would aspire  
To see the grey boar die.

Today, of all those jovial thieves who appropriated my commissariat and lay and laughed round that waterproof sheet, not one remains. They went to camps that were not of exercise and to battles without umpires. Burma, the Sudan, and the frontier – fever and fight – took them in their time.

I drifted across to the men's fires in search of Mulvaney, whom I found strategically greasing his feet by the blaze. There is nothing particularly lovely in the sight of a private thus engaged after a long day's march, but when you reflect on the exact proportion of the 'might, majesty, dominion, and power' of the British Empire which stands on those feet you take an interest in the proceedings.

'There's a blister, bad luck to ut, on the heel,' said Mulvaney. 'I can't touch ut. Prick ut out, little man.'

Ortheris took out his housewife, eased the trouble with a needle, stabbed Mulvaney in the calf with the same weapon, and was swiftly kicked into the fire.

'I've bruk the best av my toes over you, ye grinnin' child av

disruption,' said Mulvaney, sitting cross-legged and nursing his feet; then seeing me, 'Oh, ut's you, sorr! Be welkim, an' take that maraudin' scutt's place. Jock, hold him down on the cindhers for a bit.'

But Ortheris escaped and went elsewhere, as I took possession of the hollow he had scraped for himself and lined with his greatcoat. Learoyd on the other side of the fire grinned affably and in a minute fell fast asleep.

'There's the height av politeness for you,' said Mulvaney, lighting his pipe with a flaming branch. 'But Jock's eaten half a box av your sardines at wan gulp, an' I think the tin too. What's the best wid you, sorr, an' how did you happen to be on the losin' side this day whin we captured you?'

'The Army of the South is winning all along the line,' I said.

'Then that line's the hangman's rope, savin' your presence. You'll learn tomorrow how we rethreated to dhraw thim on before we made thim trouble, an' that's what a woman does. By the same token, we'll be attacked before the dawnin' an' ut would be betther not to slip your boots. How do I know that? By the light av pure reason. Here are three companies av us ever so far inside av the enemy's flank an' a crowd av roarin', tarin', squealin' cavalry gone on just to turn out the whole hornet's nest av them. Av course the enemy will pursue, by brigades like as not, an' thin we'll have to run for ut. Mark my words. I am av the opinion av Polonius whin he said, "Don't fight wid ivry scutt for the pure joy av fightin', but if you do, knock the nose av him first an' frequent." We ought to ha' gone on an' helped the Gurkhas.'

'But what do you know about Polonius?' I demanded. This was a new side of Mulvaney's character.

'All that Shakespeare iver wrote an' a dale more that the gallery shouted,' said the man of war, carefully lacing his boots. 'Did I not tell you av Silver's theatre in Dublin whin I was younger than I am now an' a patron av the drama? Ould Silver wud never pay actor-man or woman their just dues, an' by consequence his comp'nies was collapsible at the last minut. Thin the bhoys wud clamour to take a part, an' oft as not ould Silver made them pay for the fun. Faith, I've seen Hamlut played wid a new black eye an' the queen as full as a cornucopia. I remimber wanst Hogin that 'listed in the Black Tyrone an' was shot in South Africa, he sejuiced ould Silver into givin' him Hamlut's part instid av me that had a fine fancy for rhetoric in those days. Av course I wint into the gallery an' began to fill the pit wid other people's hats, an' I passed the time av day to Hogin walkin' through Denmark like a hamstrung mule wid a pall on his back. "Hamlut," sez I, "there's a hole in your heel. Pull up your shtockin's, Hamlut," sez I.

"Hamlut, Hamlut, for the love av decincy dthrop that skull an' pull up your shtockin's." The whole house begun to tell him that. He stopped his soliloquishms mid-between. "My shtockin's may be comin' down or they may not," sez he, screwin' his eye into the gallery, for well he knew who I was. "But afther this performince is over me an' the Ghost'll trample the tripes out av you, Terence, wid your ass's bray!" An' that's how I come to know about Hamlut. Eyah! Those days, those days! Did you iver have onendin' devilmint an' nothin' to pay for it in your life, sorr?'

'Never, without having to pay,' I said.

'That's thru! 'Tis mane whin you considher on ut; but ut's the same wid horse or fut. A headache if you dhrink, an' a bellyache if you eat too much, an' a heartache to kape all down. Faith, the beast only gets the colic, an' he's the lucky man.'

He dropped his head and stared into the fire, fingering his moustache the while. From the far side of the bivouac the voice of Corbet-Nolan, senior subaltern of B company, uplifted itself in an ancient and much appreciated song of sentiment, the men moaning melodiously behind him.

'The north wind blew coldly, she drooped from that hour,  
My own little Kathleen, my sweet little Kathleen,  
Kathleen, my Kathleen, Kathleen O'Moore!'

With forty-five O's in the last word: even at that distance you might have cut the soft South Irish accent with a shovel.

'For all we take we must pay, but the price is cruel high,' murmured Mulvaney when the chorus had ceased.

'What's the trouble?' I said gently, for I knew that he was a man of an inextinguishable sorrow.

'Hear now,' said he. 'Ye know what I am now. *I* know what I mint to be at the beginnin' av my service. I've tould you time an' again, an' what I have not Dinah Shadd has. An' what am I? Oh, Mary Mother av Hiven, an ould dhrunken, untrustable baste av a privit that has seen the reg'ment change out from colonel to drummer-boy, not wanst or twice, but scores av times! Ay, scores! An' me not so near gettin' promotion as in the first! An' me livin' on an' kapin' clear av clink, not by my own good conduct, but the kindness av some orf'cer-bhoy young enough to be son to me! Do I not know ut? Can I not tell whin I'm passed over at p'rade, tho' I'm rockin' full av liquor an' ready to fall all in wan piece, such as even a suckin' child might see, bekaze, "Oh, 'tis only ould Mulvaney!" An' whin I'm let off in ord'ly-room through some thrick of the tongue an' a ready answer an' the ould man's mercy,

is ut smilin' I feel whin I fall away an' go back to Dinah Shadd, thryin' to carry ut all off as a joke? Not I! 'Tis hell to me, dumb hell through ut all; an' next time whin the fit comes I will be as bad again. Good cause the reg'ment has to know me for the best soldier in ut. Better cause have I to know mesilf for the worst man. I'm only fit to tache the new drafts what I'll niver learn myself; an' I am sure, as tho' I heard ut, that the minut wan av these pink-eyed recruities gets away from my "Mind ye now" an' "Listen to this, Jim, bhoy" – sure I am that the sergint houlds me up to him for a warnin'. So I tache, as they say at musketry instruction, by direct and ricochet fire. Lord be good to me, for I have stud some throuble!

'Lie down and go to sleep,' said I, not being able to comfot or advise. 'You're the best man in the regiment, and, next to Ortheris, the biggest fool. Lie down and wait till we're attacked. What force will they turn out? Guns, think you?'

'Try that wid your lorrds an' ladies, twistin' an' turnin' the talk, tho' you miht ut well. Ye cud say nothin' to help me, an' yet ye niver knew what cause I had to be what I am.'

'Begin at the beginning and go on to the end,' I said royally. 'But rake up the fire a bit first.'

I passed Ortheris's bayonet for a poker.

'That shows how little we know what we do,' said Mulvaney, putting it aside. 'Fire takes all the heart out av the steel, an' the next time, may be, that our little man is fighting for his life his bradawl'll break, an' so you'll ha' killed him, manin' no more than to kape yourself warm. 'Tis a recruitie's thrick that. Pass the clanin'-rod, sorr.'

I snuggled down abashed; and after an interval the voice of Mulvaney began.

'Did I iver tell you how Dinah Shadd came to be wife av mine?'

I dissembled a burning anxiety that I had felt for some months – ever since Dinah Shadd, the strong, the patient, and the infinitely tender, had of her own good love and free will washed a shirt for me, moving in a barren land where washing was not.

'I can't remember,' I said casually. 'Was it before or after you made love to Annie Bragin, and got no satisfaction?'

The story of Annie Bragin is written in another place. It is one of the many less respectable episodes in Mulvaney's chequered career.

'Before – before – long before, was that business av Annie Bragin an' the corp'ril's ghost. Niver woman was the worse for me whin I had married Dinah. There's a time for all things, an' I know how to kape all things in place – barrin' the dhrink, that kapes me in my place wid no hope av comin' to be aught else.'

'Begin at the beginning,' I insisted. 'Mrs Mulvaney told me that you married her when you were quartered in Krab Bokhar barracks.'

'An' the same is a cesspit,' said Mulvaney piously. 'She spoke thru, did Dinah. 'Twas this way. Talkin' av that, have ye iver fallen in love, sorr?'

I preserved the silence of the damned. Mulvaney continued –

'Thin I will assume that ye have not. *I* did. In the days av my youth, as I have more than wanst tould you, I was a man that filled the eye an' delighted the sowl av women. Niver man was hated as I have bin. Niver man was loved as I – no, not within half a day's march av ut! For the first five years av my service, whin I was what I wud give my sowl to be now, I tuk whatever was within my reach an' digested ut – an' that's more than most men can say. Dhrink I tuk, an' ut did me no harm. By the Hollow av Hiven, I cud play wid four women at wanst, an' kape them from findin' out anythin' about the other three, an' smile like a full-blown marigold through ut all. Dick Coulhan, av the battery we'll have down on us tonight, could drive his team no better than I mine, an' I hild the worser cattle! An' so I lived, an' so I was happy till afther that business wid Annie Bragin – she that turned me off as cool as a meat-safe, an' taught me where I stud in the mind av an honest woman. 'Twas no sweet dose to swallow.

'Afther that I sickened awhile an' tuk thought to my reg'mental work; conceiting mesilf I wud study an' be a sargint, an' a major-gineral twinty minutes afther that. But on top av my ambitiousness there was an empty place in my sowl, an' me own opinion av mesilf cud not fill ut. Sez I to mesilf, "Terence, you're a great man an' the best set-up in the reg'mint. Go on an' get promotion." Sez mesilf to me, "What for?" Sez I to mesilf, "For the glory av ut!" Sez mesilf to me, "Will that fill these two strong arrums av yours, Terence?" – "Go to the devil," sez I to mesilf. "Go to the married lines," sez mesilf to me. "'Tis the same thing," sez I to mesilf. "Av you're the same man, ut is," said mesilf to me; an' wid that I considered on ut a long while. Did you iver feel that way, sorr?'

I snored gently, knowing that if Mulvaney were uninterrupted he would go on. The clamour from the bivouac fires beat up to the stars, as the rival singers of the companies were pitted against each other.

'So I felt that way an' a bad time ut was. Wanst, bein' a fool, I wint into the married lines more for the sake av spakin' to our ould colour-sergint Shadd than for any thruck wid womenfolk. I was a corp'ril then – rejuiced aftherwards, but a corp'ril then. I've got a photograff av mesilf to prove ut. "You'll take a cup av tay wid us?" sez Shadd. "I will that," I sez, "tho' tay is not my divarsion."

“ ‘T’wud be better for you if ut were,” sez ould Mother Shadd, an’ she had ought to know, for Shadd, in the ind av his service, dhrank bungfull each night.

‘Wid that I tuk off my gloves – there was pipeclay in thim, so that they stud alone – an’ pulled up my chair, lookin’ round at the china ornaments an’ bits av things in the Shadds’ quarters. They were things that belonged to a man, an’ no camp-kit, here today an’ dishipated next. “You’re comfortable in this place, sergint,” sez I. “ ‘Tis the wife that did ut, boy,” sez he, pointin’ the stem av his pipe to ould Mother Shadd, an’ she smacked the top av his bald head apon the compliment. “That manes you want money,” sez she.

‘An’ thin – an’ thin whin the kettle was to be filled, Dinah came in – my Dinah – her sleeves rowled up to the elbow an’ her hair in a winkin’ glory over her forehead, the big blue eyes beneath twinklin’ like stars on a frosty night, an’ the tread av her two feet lighter than waste-paper from the colonel’s basket in ord’ly-room whin ut’s emptied. Bein’ but a shlip av a girl she went pink at seein’ me, an’ I twisted me moustache an’ looked at a picture forninst the wall. Niver show a woman that ye care the snap av a finger for her, an’ begad she’ll come bleatin’ to your boot-heels!’

‘I suppose that’s why you followed Annie Bragin till everybody in the married quarters laughed at you,’ said I, remembering that unhallowed wooing and casting off the disguise of drowsiness.

‘I’m layin’ down the gin’ral theory av the attack,’ said Mulvaney, driving his boot into the dying fire. ‘If you read the *Soldier’s Pocket Book*, which niver any soldier reads, you’ll see that there are exceptions. Whin Dinah was out av the door (an’ ’twas as tho’ the sunlight had shut too) – “Mother av Hiven, sergint,” sez I, “but is that your daughter?” – “I’ve believed that way these eighteen years,” sez ould Shadd, his eyes twinklin’, “but Mrs Shadd has her own opinion, like iv’ry woman.” – “ ‘Tis wid yours this time, for a mericle,” sez Mother Shadd. “Thin why in the name av fortune did I niver see her before?” sez I. “Bekaze you’ve been thrapesin’ round wid the married women these three years past. She was a bit av a child till last year, an’ she shot up wid the spring,” sez ould Mother Shadd. “I’ll thrapese no more,” sez I. “D’you mane that?” sez ould Mother Shadd, lookin’ at me sideways like a hen looks at a hawk whin the chickens are runnin’ free. “Try me, an’ tell,” sez I. Wid that I pulled on my gloves, dhrank off the tay, an’ went out av the house as stiff as at gin’ral p’rade, for well I knew that Dinah Shadd’s eyes were in the small av my back out av the scullery window. Faith! that was the only time I mourned I was not a cav’l’ry man for the pride av the spurs to jingle.



'I wint out to think, an' I did a powerful lot av thinkin', but ut all came round to that shlip av a girl in the dotted blue dhress, wid the blue eyes an' the sparkil in them. Thin I kept off canteen, an' I kept to the married quarters, or near by, on the chanst av meetin' Dinah. Did I meet her? Oh, my time past, did I not; wid a lump in my throat as big as my valise an' my heart goin' like a farrier's forge on a Saturday morning? 'Twas "Good-day to ye, Miss Dinah," an' "Good-day t'you, corp'ril," for a week or two, and divil a bit further could I get bekaze av the respect I had to that girl that I cud ha' broken betune finger an' thumb.'

Here I giggled as I recalled the gigantic figure of Dinah Shadd when she handed me my shirt.

'Ye may laugh,' grunted Mulvaney. 'But I'm speakin' the trut', an' 'tis you that are in fault. Dinah was a girl that wud ha' taken the imperiousness out av the Duchess av Clonmel in those days. Flower hand, foot av shod air, an' the eyes av the livin' mornin' she had that is my wife today – ould Dinah, and niver aught else than Dinah Shadd to me.

''Twas after three weeks standin' off an' on, an' niver makin' headway excipt through the eyes, that a little drummer-boy grinned in me face whin I had admonished him wid the buckle av my belt for riotin' all over the place. "An' I'm not the only wan that doesn't kape to barricks," sez he. I tuk him by the scruff av his neck – my heart was hung on a hair-thrigger those days, you will onderstand – an' "Out wid ut," sez I, "or I'll lave no bone av you unbreakable." – "Speak to Dempsey," sez he howlin'. "Dempsey which?" sez I, "ye unwashed limb av Satan." – "Av the Bobtailed Dhragoons," sez he. "He's seen her home from her aunt's house in the civil lines four times this fortnight." – "Child!" sez I, dhroppin' him, "your tongue's stronger than your body. Go to your quarters. I'm sorry I dhressed you down."

'At that I went four ways to wanst huntin' Dempsey. I was mad to think that wid all my airs among women I shud ha' been chated by a basin-faced fool av a cav'ryman not fit to trust on a trunk. Presintly I found him in our lines – the Bobtails was quartered next us – an' a tallowy, topheavy son av a she-mule he was wid his big brass spurs an' his plastrons on his epigastrons an' all. But he niver flinched a hair.

'"A word wid you, Dempsey," sez I. "You've walked wid Dinah Shadd four times this fortnight gone.'

'"What's that to you?" sez he. "I'll walk forty times more, an' forty on top av that, ye shovel-futted clod-breakin' infantry lance-corp'ril."

'Before I cud gyard he had his gloved fist home on my cheek an' down I went full-sprawl. "Will that content you?" sez he, blowin' on