

PLEBES MUST CAPER TO AMUSE YEARLINGS.

State of War Will Not Save New West Pointers From the Latest Hazing Device—Embryo Warriors, Blindfolded, Forced to Feed Each Other With Molasses—The "Fins Out."



THE NEW WAY OF HAZING A PLEBE.

WEST POINT.—If the new fourth classmen, or "plebes," as they are most frequently called, who entered the Military Academy a week or so ago, think that on account of the war with Spain they will not be hazed their hopes are bound to be rudely shattered. For weeks the yearlings have been preparing a warm reception for them. War or no war, the time-honored custom of double stepping and choo-chooing "plebes" will be faithfully observed. A cavalry recruit might just as well hope to escape a blanket tossing as the new "plebe" to miss the setting up exercises, which Grant, Sherman and Sheridan tried in vain to dodge.

The "plebe" who has successfully passed the entrance examinations first reports to the adjutant and, after registering, is sent to the assembly room, where cadet officers are on hand to give him a warm reception. "Knock!" is the advice given by the tired looking orderly who showed him the way, and the new recruit is left to his own thoughts. The response to his timid tap is like the roar of the reveille gun. "Come in!" echoes from basement to roof. The tone is like a lion's roar. It strikes terror deep down in the heart of the new soldier, who instinctively recoils and for the first time wishes himself at home. The door opens and a dozen cadets who regard him with absolute indifference. Nobody questions the new arrival and he is forced to introduce himself.

It is then only his troubles begin. He finds that in addressing or answering upper classmen he must invariably use the word "Sir." He also discovers that all questions, however senseless or ridiculous, must be answered. Here are a few samples:

"Where are you from, Mr. Dumbjohn?"
"Chicago."
"Say, sir, Chicago, sir."
"Chicago, sir."
"How do you know you are from Chicago, Mr. Dumbjohn?"
"I don't know, sir."
"Well, you are a stupid product, Mr. Dumbjohn. Do you know anything?"
"Yes, sir."

"What do you know, sir?"

It is usually at this point that Mr. Dumbjohn wilts and admits he knows nothing. Then a corporal takes the new arrival in charge and his lot thenceforward for at least a year is not a happy one. In camp the "plebe" guard is usually tackled by ghosts on dark stormy nights and tossed into Fort Clinton's moat. The new fourth classmen are drilled continuously. Whether walking through the company streets or "off duty" on the plains, the "plebe" must be always at attention. In his tent work will always be found for him by the "yearlings." Cleaning guns, polishing accoutrements, carrying water, making lemonade and doing general police work leaves little time for homesickness. Sitting on a bayonet or chewing the side of a cot or double stepping by the hour are some of the things a "plebe" must do to amuse upper classmen.

A new amusement was invented last summer by a "yearling" who has since been discharged. He named it "plebe" and each is furnished with a jug of molasses and a spoon. The command "Feed!" is then given and one "plebe" tries to feed the other with the molasses. By the time half the stuff is exhausted nearly all the wasps and hornets in camp are settled on the "plebes" uniforms drinking in the surplus sugar deposited there. The recruits are then released and no time is lost in trying to doff the sweated blouses. He is a fortunate plebe who manages to escape from this exercise without at least a half dozen wasp stings.

When a "plebe" is ordered to laugh he usually "fins out," palms of his hands to the front, and, with his back against a tree, smiles pleasantly for an hour. This is regarded as great amusement by the upper classmen. Fistic combats may now be looked for between the "plebes" and "yearlings."

As the supply of ivory is becoming short, billiard balls of cast steel are being made in Sweden. By making them hollow the weight is made to correspond with that of ivory balls.

THE EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN

Now for the Egyptian campaign. It was in the last week of May, 1882, that Arabi Pasha seized the reins of power in Cairo. Did England strike a blow at once? Not a bit of it.

Diplomatic negotiations were tried in advance of force, and it was not until June 14 that war was declared. It was a month after that before the historic bombardment of Alexandria took place. England was then in much the same situation as that in which the United States was placed when Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet at Manila, having no army ready to occupy the city after practically destroying it. But the results were far more deplorable, since Alexandria was sacked and a large part of its buildings burned by a half savage mob.

Yet England was then, as now, one of the great military powers of the world, with many times more trained fighting men than the United States had when the war against Spain was begun. On the other hand, Arabi Pasha's army, in arms, organization and command, was about as poor as was ever lined up in fighting array. Its total strength amounted to only eighteen regiments of infantry and four of cavalry, twenty-two in all, or from 15,000 to 20,000 men. It was made up wholly of Egyptian peasants, untrained to withstand the onslaught of civilized soldiers and really worthless as military material.

England's organized army at that time numbered 131,853 men at home, and 62,653, all British soldiers, in India, a total force of nearly 200,000 men. And yet it was not until August 27, two months and a half after the declaration of war, that England managed to land 22,000 men at Ismailia and Port Said, where active land operations were begun.

Yet England is not now held to have acted unwisely in the Egyptian campaign. The result was, of course, complete victory for British arms and a highly beneficial extension of civilization followed the ending of the war.

FELINE WARRIORS.

Beef Rations Furnished for Tommy and Tabby.

RATS, NOT DONS, ENEMY

NEW YORK.—Lieutenant Colonel Woodruff recently advertised that the Commissary Department of the United States Army would receive sealed proposals for fresh beef, subject to the usual conditions, at the office of the department in New York.

This fresh beef was not intended for the men who are at the front fighting for the honor of the flag, nor for the soldier boys in less distant camps anxiously awaiting the summons to active warfare. Neither regulars nor volunteers, the hale and hearty on the field, nor the sick and wounded in the hospitals, were to have a share of this delicacy, but it was to furnish the rations for the members of a humble but useful branch of the service, the rat and mouse killing brigade, made up of cats, some of which have an honorable and brilliant record.

In the language of the advertisement, the beef was to be "fresh and sound, suitable for feeding cats, bone to be excluded, to be delivered at the contractor's place of business on such days as may be designated and in such quantities, not exceeding seven pounds per week, as may be required by him."

The army cats are more particular about their food than even the new recruit. They won't eat hardtack; it is useless to try to force pork and beans upon them; coffee is not in their line, and they don't hanker after a canteen. They don't tire of beef, if it is good, but they are extremely fastidious, and any contractor who tries to work off an inferior quality of meat upon them will find himself in trouble.

That a beef diet is a good one for the cat brigade is evident from their sleek and round appearance. Rations are given out only once a day, in the evening, just before the men leave the building. The cats gauge the time accurately, and are always on hand, meowing and growling in anticipation of their appetizing meal. The beef is cut in small pieces and put on tin plates. The cats sniff it gingerly and then fall to, and in a few moments the meal is over and the plates have been licked bright and clean.

Sometimes the employees about the building get milk for their lunch and share it with the cats. The oldest cat in the army building has seen fifteen years faithful service. He used to be called Tom, but since the war began his name has been changed to Weyler by the men. This is partly a mere pleasantry and partly a recognition of the veteran's savage disposition. They tell great tales in the army building about the number of mice and rats that he has slaughtered since his arrival. The place was overrun with these pests at that time, and the Government lost thousands of dollars through their raids and onslaughts upon the stores of provisions.

As far as numbers went the contest was a most unequal one, but Weyler kept up his attacks with undaunted spirit, and night after night his enemies fell before him, leaving their corpses strewn about as mute witnesses of his prowess.

The men and officers were delighted. Other cats were brought to aid the hero, and the work of extermination has continued, to the advantage of the Government and the misery of the rodents.

But Weyler's day is almost over. The damp of the army building cellar has gotten into his joints and stiffened him up so that he cannot limber up even when placed in a sunny doorway by a sympathetic friend.

"He'll have to go on the retired list," reads the sergeant. "You see, being so rheumatism he hurt himself by falling from some boxes, and now he finds it hard work to move. He's been a good cat and we'll miss him when he goes, but we hate to see him suffer."

Weyler is not the only cat with a Spanish name in the army building. There is the Queen Regent, who has been on the place about nine years, but is now retiring. During the day-time she never makes her appearance and keenly resents any attempt at familiarity.

General Blanco is almost as dignified, elusive and unapproachable as her majesty, but he does vastly more damage than his namesake has yet inflicted upon his enemies.

A pretty, half-grown kitten is Alphonso. He was unfortunate enough to run up against a moving truck and got the worst of the collision, and is now on the invalid list.

"Poor little feller," said one of the men, "he's in tough luck; but it's nothing to what'll happen to King Alphonso when he gets through running up against the United States."

Alphonso isn't eating much these days, but they are going to keep him for a while in the hope that he will recover from his injuries.

"We'll have to get some recruits," said the sergeant, "with Weyler on the retired list and Alphonso laid up with a sprained back. We've got a family of kittens over there, but we can't wait for them to grow up."

The cats cost the United States only about five cents a day. It is hard to tell just how much they save the Government, but, certainly, hundreds of dollars a year.

Chicago and San Francisco each has a detachment of army cats, provided for in the same way as those in New York.

An aeronaut says that there is the same difference in the air at the earth's surface and at an altitude of half a mile that there is between water in a muddy puddle and the purest spring water. He states that for a time one feels after coming down from an ascent as if one were breathing "solid dust."

MILLION AND A HALF DOLLARS' OF ARMY MULE

Most of Them Will Go to Cuba—Life and Habits of One of the Nation's Saviors. We Supplied Even Spain.

Since the Spanish war began Uncle Sam has bought one and a half million dollars' worth of mules. For teaming and packing purposes he owns now between 13,000 and 14,000 of these animals, 300 of which are for the Philippines. They are superior to horses because they will work harder and longer, eat less, drink less, sleep less, stand hot climate and resist disease better, are more intelligent and tractable, and are surefooted, which is an important item in mountainous regions. A great deal has been said about the contractors' corner in mules and the consequent enormous profit in supplying the Government's demand, but dealers declare that a profit of \$5 a head is all that was got in most cases.

The mules cost from \$95, for small ones for pack purposes, to \$135 for the team mules. These prices are about \$25 above the ruling prices before the outbreak of the war. The unusual demand for mules for Government use has more than offset the decreased exporting. The army had agents in all the mule States, and if the price of the article was high in one place that locality was given the go-by. Contractors who undertook to supply the Government at a certain price have found, in some instances, that to fill the contract and thus avoid forfeiting their deposit, they suffered a loss of \$10 or \$12 a head. The United States did not begin to buy until after the declaration of war.

Mules are a cross between a jackass and a horse, and the jacks are brought, most of them, from Spain. Instead of breeding their own mules, the Spanish find it cheaper and easier to buy their mule supply for Cuba from the United States. Since the present Cuban rebellion began Spain has bought of us upward of 5,000 mules, 1,500 of which she got in the interval between the blowing up of the Maine and the declaration of war. In the main, the mules Spain bought were undersized, the price to the dealers being from \$57 to \$62. This means that for mules Spain, in the last three years, has paid our dealers \$300,000, though the cost to Spain was much more, all

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By the time this is kept up for a weary ten minutes the listener yearns for sweet death, either to himself or to the mule. But the mule hesitates for a second, gives an apologetic cough and then goes right over saying it again. It brings tears to the eyes of man—tears that there isn't a stick or a stone handy. Mules, they say, don't bray at night unless they are thirsty or hungry, which is contrary to the general opinion; they sing simply from pure joy of living.

Woe be unto the town that shelters a jackass! His voice is no more insistent than that of the mule—it hardly could be—but it has infinitely greater endurance. When a jack begins to bray in the night either he or the town moves out, and it is a fact that villages in the mule States have got up at midnight and insisted that the jacks be deported at once.

Neat Camp Alger, opposite Washington, is another camp, which contains a thousand of the "long-eared mockers," which are called "mule birds." The songs which float through the County from this camp belie the statements of those who insist that a mule brays only when his stomach is empty. If one mule can make a village rise in rebellion, what can't a thousand do? These mules started from Missouri in box cars, which were mere skeletons of their former selves when Virginia was reached. Hereafter the railroad people insist that any more mules they may carry must have their hind shoes drawn. While this is to the benefit of the employees of the Quartermaster's Department, who care for the mules, because the kick is easier to bear, the mules

allowance having to be made for the cheating buyers, who charged Spain, say, \$100, for what they got at almost half that. The United States officers are not built that way. Neither does any old mule suit them. The animal must be just so high, weigh just so much, be just so old, and without a "pimple" or blemish. Uncle Sam is as particular in selecting his mules as he is in choosing men for the privilege of fighting for him.

Since the declaration of war Spain lost by the confiscation of this Government the load of mules on the Catalina, one of the prizes of our navy. Besides this, she had also to ensure the loss of the famous mule of Matanzas.

It is not generally known that the male progenitor of the American mule was brought to this country by George Washington. The supply of jacks and jennets has been kept up ever since, for mules will not breed from one another, whence arises the expression that the mule is "without pride of ancestry or hope of posterity." The hybrid mule, strangely enough, gets all the virtues and none of the vices of both his parents. He has the hardihood, the patience, the intelligence and the surefootedness of his foreign parent, without the smallness and the intolerable slowness, while from the other side of the house he gets the size necessary to draught, pack and saddle purposes, some of the alertness, and, last in the list, as well as least in importance, a reduction in the extent of his ears.

The ass, it is said, has become small through centuries of cruelty, his lot from the first being apparently to be regarded only as the drudge of the poor. But when he is crossed with the horse he gets big, acquires more intelligence and learns, too, that abuse is to be met with obstinacy—"mulishness," as his human masters call it.

There is one characteristic, however, which the mule inherits direct and without change from his diminutive parent, and that is his vocal organ. Contrary to the looks of the mule, these organs are in his throat and not in his tail; for, when he begins his song, he lifts his tail simultaneously with his

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light blue halo of profanity enveloped him has provoked many a joke about the campfires of the veterans.

GRANT OBEYED ORDERS. General Grant, as every one knows, looked as little like a general as any one could. He wore the blouse of the enlisted man, sometimes with the starred shoulderstraps and sometimes without. "Once, while he stood on the banks of a Virginia stream, watching the crossing of an army, a mule team got hopelessly tangled up in the harness."

"Hi, thar, mister," shouted the teamster to the plain-looking black-bearded man on shore, "straighten out them leaders, won't yeh?"

The black-bearded man did as he was told, and the team went on. A little ways on a soldier told the teamster who his helper was.

"Geat!" said the teamster, but the word wasn't directed at the mules. Mules, they say, are not extra good animals for saddle purposes. Their gait is all right, but usually they are too slow. Phil Kearney, however, rode a mule all through the war until he was killed at Chancellorsville, and many another officer found the hardy, if not swift, mule better than a horse in the campaigns.

Mules, of course, will stampede, sometimes on the slightest provocation. A wagon train broke loose on the plains once while the mules were being fed. For their dinner they had corn-stalks, and the waving end of a flag a mettlesome mule was carrying in his mouth started his imagination into fears of Indians, or some such thing. He began running, and pretty soon the whole train was on the skedaddle. It was on the road between Fort Dodge and Fort Hays, Kan., and for months any one in the State who wanted any part of an army wagon could find it by going over this trail. Mules, however, do not go it blind when they are on the rampage, like horses. If they come to the bank of a river they will not take a wild plunge over. That is when their obstinacy asserts itself. They will firmly plant their feet, and if they do go over it is against their

will, while sliding. Neither will they fall into a hole. And if, by any means, they are thrown down, instead of kicking like crazy horses they lie quietly until released.

Neither do mules get seasick like horses. This is an important matter in this war, for 300 mules will take the long trip to the Philippines, and the bulk of our mule possessions will go to Cuba and Porto Rico.

For the Astor Battery, which has left New York for the Philippines, 88 pack mules were bought for \$34, and two six-mule teams, at \$135 a mule. This makes for this battery \$9,872 expended for mules alone.

Each army mule is branded in two places. On the left shoulder are the letters "U. S.," and on the left forefoot his number. He keeps in the line of packs the same number with which he is branded. When he receives his rations—shelled corn and oats, which are placed on a canvas, either on the ground or on the saddles—he takes his place in line according to the same number, and he learns to pick the same place. Each pack train contains 30 animals, which one boss packer, one cargadore, and eleven packers, besides a blacksmith and a cook. The load for a mule is from 250 to 300 pounds, though they can carry 700 pounds, if properly adjusted. This is balanced upon the pack saddle. Of these saddles there are two kinds in use in the army, the Moore, devised by Tom Moore, now dead, and the Crook's chief packer in the West, and the Mexican "aparejo," pronounced ah-pah-ra-ho, accentuating next to the last syllable. The present chief packer of the army, Tom Mooney, who was brought here from Alaska, learned his business from Moore. Mooney is now in St. Louis.

In the main, either kind of pack saddle looks about like this: two pieces of leather, 23 to 25 inches wide and 54 to 62 inches long, are sewn together, being divided through the side by a fold. This fold fits across the back of the mule, allowing the sides of the pack saddle to fall around the mule's sides to a point 20 inches from the center of the mule's back.

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THE ARMY CAT AS SEEN IN FEDERAL SUPPLY BUILDINGS.

