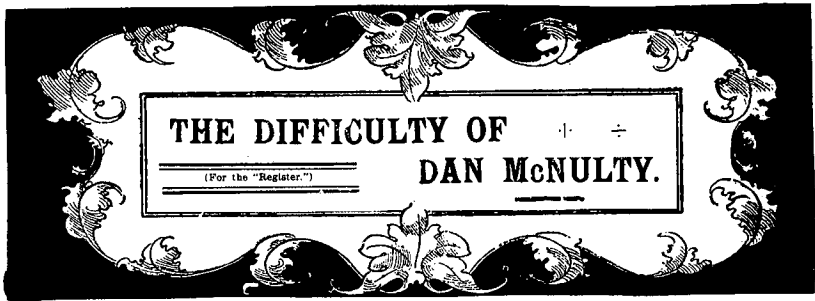


Where rare, clear note of the rifle-bird  
Rolls the ranges' Eastern side,  
And faint, far roar of the Barron's heard  
'Way over the big divide.

Where man sleeps light and in fitful dreams  
Is dwelling in fair, cool clime;  
That, Death's morn rousing with restful beams,  
He'll reach in his God's good time.



by W.A. Peeke

There's a dull and dusty township, situated in the West,  
Where they treat the gentle jumbuck to profanity and tar;  
A place where bullock-drivers quaff their vitriol with zest,  
Where "Jim" and "Joe" and "Billy" also "Mickey" and the rest  
Of the literary heroes of Australia mostly are.

Picturesquely speaking, there is little to be seen:  
A score or so of "humpies," and a maze of post and rail,  
The Barracks and the Court House, of dimensions rather mean,  
And in coy retirement standing, situated just between,  
A corrugated mansion, with the legend on it "jail!"

The time was festive Christmas, and the Township jubilated;  
Long beers were down to sixpence, for the patrons of the pub  
And the sinful population were in consequence elated;  
Was it "lash" that you were seeking, you could get accommodated,  
Unprecedented entries joyed the local Jockey Club.

A barmaid was imported, to the infinite undoing  
Of stockmen from the stations who were "doing in" their cheques:  
They hugged her by detachments, oh, the billing and the cooing!  
Never was a woman wooed with such a complicated wooing,  
By a wilder-eyed assortment of inebriated wrecks.

'Twas then that Dan McNulty — patriotic son of Erin,  
With the pride that comes of whisky, the bravado born of beer;  
After whooping down the main street, after rippin' round and tearin',  
Making use of lurid language of the sort that's known as swearin',  
Volunteered to fight the Township, said he'd "do it on his ear."

He paused outside the barracks to reiterate his statement,  
Whilst alluding to the occupants as "Sassenachs" and "swine":  
Till a Tipperary native got indignant at such "thratement,"  
And our hero consequently up before the Magistrate went,  
Getting fourteen days in jail without the option of a fine.

Now, Daniel "had the office" that a horse they called the Spider —  
A starter in the Handicap at any odds to one —  
Was bound to beat the favourite — the owner and the rider  
Stood on velvet, for the neddy was considered an outsider —  
But the races would be over ere McNulty's time was done.

Imagine Dan's emotion when he wakened on the morrow,  
His race would be decided on that very afternoon  
He'd nothing on the dark 'un — not a friend from whom to borrow,  
Nor a single sip of liquor to alleviate his sorrow.  
And a head — to crown his misery — the size of a balloon.

At last he sought the Sergeant: "Sargint, darlint," said McNulty,  
    "A fortune's waitin' for me, if I only get outside;  
I'd fix it in an hour widout the slightest difficulty,  
And it isn't wid a palthry little fiver I'd insult ye:  
    It is halves! No less, ma boucha! — every penny we'll divide."

The Sergeant was persuaded: so disguised from observation  
    With a pair of sandy whiskers and a large moustache attached,  
Our hero backed his fancy, while he smiled in jubilation  
For the odds he got surprised him — 'till he saw the information,  
    Most conspicuously posted, "No. 6, The Spider, scratched."

Then things began to happen which were not anticipated:  
    For Daniel seized a slip-rail, which he brandished round his head,  
And charging down the paddock where the bookies congregated,  
The local betting market was completely spifflicated,  
    And every son of Israel most incontinently fled!

The barmaid would have fainted, had enjoyment not debarred her,  
    When McNulty whacked the publican until he roared with pain.  
He went for the committee, and he thumped the crowd with ardour,  
And he treated every steward similarly — only harder,  
    Till he dropped at length exhausted, and was promptly "jugged" again.

\* \* \* \* \*

At Goodna, there's a mansion that affords a habitation  
    To a certain Sergeant Doolan — not apparently insane,  
And harmless as a baby, but his daylong occupation  
Is to work a mathematically hopeless calculation,  
    For the solving of this problem which he has upon his brain.

If you're given one exhausted, semi-moribund McNulty,  
    Produce two drunk, disorderly McNultys if you can.  
The Sergeant hopes by methods, which are more or less occult, he  
Will eventually solve the most tremendous difficulty  
    That has ever agitated the inventive mind of man.

