

The F-51 pilot was taken to the hospital and treated for minor injuries, and the fire in the B-29 was extinguished without too much damage. With the crash equipment returning to its station, another routine incident in the life of a control tower operator came to an end. Now my only thought was, "Where is Corporal Green with my coffee? Here it is 8:15 p. m. and he is nowhere in sight."

## The Stranger Decides to Stay

L. E. Sullivan

THE appearance of the man and the mule startled everyone. We were spending our regular Saturday relaxation period on the front porch of the general store when they ambled into town. Ours is a quiet town, but it never had been so silent as it was at the first sight of those two. "What in the world is that?" someone gasped just before the most terrible conglomeration of whoops, hollers, wheezes, and gasps ever assembled welcomed the stranger. Bedlam reigned for a full thirty minutes, whereupon we took time to breathe, looked again, and doubled up with laughter once more.

Eventually Jesse Willard, owner of the general store, gained control of himself long enough to ask the man his name and where he was from. "I'm Abe Flynn from everywhere and nowhere. This is Aloysius," he replied pointing to the mule. There was a braying quality in his voice that made many people wonder who was talking, the man or the mule; and, when a remark was made to that effect, another gust of laughter burst from the crowd.

The question arose as to how he happened to be touring our remote county and he answered, "Do you see these ears? They're natural wind catchers so I'm forced to always travel with the wind behind me or risk being blown off Aloysius." Immediately we knew that we were going to enjoy his stay. It's always more fun to laugh at a person if you can laugh with him.

"What do you do for a living?" he was asked.

"Well," he answered as he straightened his legs and allowed the mule to walk from under him, "I'm about the handiest handy-man you have ever seen. I can fix or fracture, mend or mutilate anything. I've been a banker, barber, blacksmith, butcher, carpet-bagger, ditch-digger, gandy-dancer, hod-carrier, parson, poet, and shyster." The laughter at this answer carried an undertone of respect. Any man who could do that great a variety of work deserved credit.

He was a likable six-foot-six bag of bones even if he did carry the aroma of mules wherever he went; and with a natural comedian like him around, the idea of having a hoe-down sprang forth. It was greeted with boisterous enthusiasm and nominations to make Abe our guest celebrity. Upon Abe's hearing our plans, his mournful brown eyes lighted up with happiness and glistened with tears. His

whimsically set lips drew apart in a flashing smile, revealing the only perfect set of teeth I have ever seen. That blob of flesh in the middle of his face, which he used for a nose, actually quivered from the intensity of his joy. His hair seemed to rise on end so that it more closely resembled a shock of wheat. Never had he been received with more friendliness. At once he decided to bless our town with his presence from then on. With his ability to make people smile, he was indeed a blessing.

## The Day

David W. Montgomery

**T**HROUGHOUT its long, violent history, Korea has been referred to as the land of the morning calm and the morning of April 27, 1951, started that way. The soft grey light of dawn spread over the silent, rugged countryside and the only movement that could be seen was that of the deep grey of the shadows forming beneath the stunted pines, as they replaced the slowly dispersing ground fog. I only half-saw this lovely panorama spreading out from my foxhole because I was more interested in the minute details of the hills before me. The slight hump of freshly turned earth, a rock that did not match its fellows, a clump of bushes that leaned the wrong way, a slight movement or a flash of reflected light—anything that might betray the presence of the enemy, I was constantly looking for. After a few minutes I was convinced that the Chinese had not reached our positions during the night. I checked my rifle to be sure that it was clean; and I turned to awaken Williams, who lay curled in his sleeping bag on a small ledge I had cut into the hillside above the hole. Williams was only seventeen and was the youngest man in the company. Since he had joined us only two days before, I decided to let him sleep while I tried to find some C-rations. I started up the hill toward the platoon command post.

But when I was about thirty feet from the foxhole, the slow, deadly fire of an automatic rifle caused me to drop to the ground. The ground shook as the entire line began to fire, and I dashed for the safety of my foxhole. I pulled Williams into the hole, where he clumsily fought his way out of the sleeping bag. The light machine gun on our right flank fired several short bursts, its only contribution to the battle. A long burst of fire from a machine gun ripped into the light machine gun emplacement and killed the G.I.'s there. The sound of running men caused me to swing around. The platoon leader and pivot squad were falling back to the company's positions. The platoon leader shouted for me to follow them, but I decided to stay and cover for the men who were still fighting. During the next few minutes the sound of fighting on the knoll diminished to only a few scattered shots.