

# FIDDLER'S GREEN

No one knows the exact origin of "Fiddler's Green" in the United States Army. Its concept seems to have been popular among 17th and 18th century sailors, soldiers, and masterless men of Europe, who knew that they would not qualify for Heaven, but trusted that a merciful God would agree to their credo that, "To live hard, to die hard, and to go to Hell afterwards would be hard indeed."

An article in the 1925 Cavalry Journal may give some credence to its origin in the U.S. Cavalry and the fact that it may have occurred during the Indian Wars.

"Fiddler's Green" was inspired by a story told quite sometime back by Captain "Sammy" Pearson at a camp-fire in the Medicine Bow Mountains of Wyoming.

Having mentioned Fiddler's Green and found that no one appeared to have heard of it, Pearson indignantly asserted that every good caval-

ryman ought to know of Fiddler's Green, and forthwith told this story.

"About half-way down the road to Hell there is a broad meadow dotted with trees and crossed by many streams. In this meadow, known as Fiddler's Green, is located an old Army Canteen (where liquor was sold), and near it are camped all the dead cavalymen, with their tents, horses, picket line and campfires, around which the souls of the dead troopers gather to tell stories and exchange reminiscences.

No other branch of the service may stop at Fiddler's Green, but must continue to march straight through to Hell. It is true that occasionally some trooper who has a longing, as most troopers have, for a change of station, pack his saddle, mounts his horse and continue his journey. But none of them has ever reached the gates of Hell; for, having emptied his canteen of liquor, he needs be returned to Fiddler's Green for a re-fill."

## FIDDLERS' GREEN

*In this ghost song for the vanished cavalry, at least the other services get mentioned. Author and composer are nameless, and the song, to judge from its content, must be at least as old as the Indian wars.*



Halfway down the road to hell,  
In a shady meadow green,  
Are the souls of all dead troopers camped  
Near a good old-time canteen.  
And this eternal resting place  
Is known as Fiddlers' Green.

Marching past, straight through to hell,  
The Infantry are seen,  
Accompanied by the Engineers,  
Artillery and Marine,  
For none but the shades of Cavalrymen  
Dismount at Fiddlers' Green.

Though some go curving down the trail  
To seek a warmer scene,  
No trooper ever gets to hell  
Ere he's emptied his canteen,  
And so rides back to drink again  
With friends at Fiddlers' Green.

And so when man and horse go down  
Beneath a saber keen,  
Or in a roaring charge or fierce melee  
You stop a bullet clean,  
And the hostiles come to get your scalp,  
Just empty your canteen,  
And put your pistol to your head  
And go to Fiddlers' Green.